

Chapter 141

Ryan walked beside Edna, guiding her toward his table.

As they reached the table, Ryan pulled out a chair for Edna.

"Madam Franklin," Ryan said politely, "you may take your time with your designer. Once you are finished, I will be here, ready for our business discussion. Whatever the terms, I believe it will be a conversation worth having."

Edna turned to him slowly, and a soft smile spread across her lips, and she let out a faint. "Mr. Walker, you carry yourself with such composure. I admire men who do not rush, men who know that power does not need to shout. I assure you, whatever we discuss will be of great benefit to you. In fact, it may be of greater benefit to me."

Ryan gave her a short nod, a half-smile playing at his lips. "We will see."

Edna smiled lightly. 1

Elizabeth stood frozen where she had been left behind. Her breathing was shallow, her chest rising and falling rapidly as she struggled to keep herself composed.

For years, she had lived with the belief that she was untouchable, that her family name was armor, that her beauty and arrogance could carry her anywhere. But tonight, that illusion had shattered like glass.

For the first time, she saw Ryan Walker for who he was now, not the man she had mocked as unworthy, but a giant. A man respected by the police, admired by billionaires, powerful enough to bend any situation to his favor. 1



And she? She was just a spoiled daughter of a family that no longer had its empire.

Julian touched her softly at her sleeve, his voice was low, almost pleading.

“Elizabeth... let's go. Please. We've already been humiliated enough. Staying here will only make it worse.”

Elizabeth's jaw tightened, her fists clenching at her sides. She blinked rapidly to keep the tears from falling, her pride refusing to give the diners the satisfaction of seeing her cry. “You think I don't know that?” she whispered back sharply.

Julian's eyes darted nervously around the room. Every pair of eyes were on them.

He bent closer, his grip tightened on Elizabeth's arm. “Then move, Elizabeth. For once, stop fighting the obvious. We need to leave now, before you collapse under this shame.”

Her lips trembled, her entire body went stiff with resistance. But finally, she let out a shuddering breath and turned.

Julian followed closely, his head lowered in shame, refusing to meet the eyes of anyone around them.

They hadn't even taken three steps before the whispers began again, louder this time.

“So those were the McCarthys?” one woman scoffed loudly. “They only know how to talk.”

Another diner, a man with a glass of wine in his hand, chuckled. “Imagine, can't even pay for dinner! And yet she had the audacity to call herself powerful.”



A younger woman added, "What a joke. They should never show their faces in Vilaris Bites."

Elizabeth's fists clenched tighter, her nails digging into her palms until it hurt. She walked faster, her pride dragging her like a heavy chain.

Julian kept his head bent low, pretending not to hear, though every word stabbed at his gut.

By the time they reached the exit, the whispers had become laughter. Laughter that rang in Elizabeth's ears. She pushed the door open with trembling hands and stepped outside.

She stopped abruptly, sucking in a sharp breath as if the air could cleanse her humiliation.

Julian stood beside her, his hands shaking slightly. He finally dared to speak. "Elizabeth... are you... are you okay?"

She turned to him slowly, her face pale, her eyes filled with rage and despair. "Do I look okay to you, Julian?" she hissed. Her voice cracked, and she jabbed a finger toward the restaurant behind them. "I have never felt so humiliated in my life. And do you know the worst part? Do you know what kills me the most?"

Julian swallowed hard, not answering.

Elizabeth's voice dropped, low and bitter. "It was Ryan. Ryan Walker. The man I left behind, the man I mocked. He's the one who saved me. He's the one who made sure I wasn't dragged out like a criminal."

Her throat tightened, and for a moment, she covered her face with her hands. Then she dropped them, her eyes blazing. "This is not the end, Julian. Do you hear me? This is not the end. Ryan will not always have the



advantage. I will not let him win.”

Julian wanted to tell her the truth—that Ryan’s advantage was too vast, that they were already drowning. But her pride was a fire, and he knew better than to pour water on it. Instead, he nodded quietly, murmuring, “We’ll figure something out. We have to.”