

Chapter 15

Ryan sprang out of bed, his heart thudding in his chest as the sharp vibration of his phone woke him up from sleep. His hand trembled slightly as he grabbed the phone from the side drawer. The screen glowed with the caller ID Dr. Jerry.

Without thinking, he answered.

“Hello? Doctor?” Ryan’s voice cracked slightly, he was becoming anxious. “Is...Is something wrong? Is it... is it my mom?”

There was a pause, just a second or two but it felt like forever to Ryan as his minds wandered to very negative thoughts about his mother.

All of a sudden, a cheerful chuckle came from the other end of the line.

“Calm down, Mr. Walker. It’s good news,” Dr. Jerry said, his voice sounding warm and reassuring. “The surgery was successful. Your mother made it. She’s going to live.”

Ryan gasped loudly, his chest rising and falling as he shut his eyes for a second. He slowly sank onto the edge of his bed, one hand over his heart. Relief hit him hard, almost making him dizzy. The tension that had been choking him for days finally started to fade.

“Thank you,” he breathed out, his voice coming like a whisper. “Thank you so much, Dr. Jerry. I’m coming over right now.”

“I’ll be waiting,” the doctor replied kindly before ending the call.

Ryan jumped to his feet, he felt so much energy suddenly surging through his tired body. His eyes swept across the room. Expensive clothes hung neatly in the closet, shiny shoes lined up the entire shoe rack, and sparkling watches were all resting in their glass case. They

were gifts from Claudia. But none of that mattered now. Not today. 1

"I have to go to hospital. Mom needs to know how much our life has transformed," he said to himself, looking at the ceiling of the mansion.

He didn't even think about changing. Dressed in his wrinkled, simple T-shirt and jeans from the previous night, Ryan threw on his sneakers without tying the laces properly. He grabbed his phone and dashed out of the room.

Down in the garage, Ryan saw the black Maybach and all his other super expensive sport cars as he thought about going to the hospital faster, but then he shook his head. 1

"I know nothing about driving" he muttered and shrugged to himself.

He still didn't know how to drive, and Claudia was probably still asleep upstairs.

There was no time to waste.

Without hesitation, he stepped out into the cool morning air and began walking fast toward the nearest bus stop. His heart was pounding, but this time with excitement. His mother was alive. She had survived. The operation had worked.

As he hurried down the street, his sneakers made soft slapping sounds against the pavement as the ground was wet from the rain that fell the last night.

Just as he turned a sharp corner, rushing forward blindly, he crashed into someone.

A sharp "Oof!" escaped from both of them as papers flew into the air.

Ryan stumbled back, wide-eyed. The man he had collided with wore a navy-blue suit and shiny black shoes. A lady clung tightly to his arm, dressed in a tight red dress and heels too high for comfort.

"Watch where you're going!" the man snapped, sounding so annoyed.

"I'm so sorry," Ryan said quickly, already bending down to help gather the scattered papers. "I didn't see—"

"You're still so clumsy, huh?" the man interrupted, his tone suddenly changing into what sounded like mockery.

Ryan paused, his fingers still reaching for a file. That voice. It wasn't just familiar—it was unforgettable. He had heard that voice in the worst state of his life, the time he was still in the university.

Slowly, he looked up to confirm and his stomach dropped.

It was Jessica Shawn, that very Jessica who was his girlfriend once in the university.

And beside her stood Matthew, dressed like a businessman from a luxury magazine, holding a folder in one hand.

Jessica's lips curled into a smile as her eyes raked over Ryan from head to toe. She gave a small chuckle, amused by what she saw.

"Oh my God," she said with a mocking tone. "If it isn't Ryan, the poor dreamer. Still walking around like a homeless dog?"