

### Chapter 27

Jessica's lips trembled as her hand hovered over her mouth. No sound escaped her throat, though her jaw moved like it was trying to form a sentence. She looked like she had just seen a ghost.

"I... I know I..." she stuttered, but nothing came out of her meaningful.

Her knees felt weak beneath her. The once-confident look in her eyes had vanished, replaced with disbelief and raw fear. The cold silence in the executive meeting hall was making her and Mathew stand out.

Matthew stood frozen beside her. He didn't dare breathe too loudly. His eyes darted from Ryan's calm face to Claudia's cold expression, and then back to Jessica again, as though hoping she would say something, anything, to defuse the situation.

The two of them who were supposed to start their dream jobs as secretaries to the CEO now stood like criminals caught red-handed, their hopes shattering immediately. The opportunity that had lit up their faces just minutes ago had gone into nothingness.

Matthew was so desperate he was sweating without control. Trying to save himself from the shame, he took a step toward Ryan's chair. His foot dragging on the floor as it felt heavy with the shame.

"Ryan..." he began, his voice was tight and lower than usual. "I- uhuhh... I ... Please... J-Just reconsider. For old times' sake. We've known each other for a long time. We were in the same department back in school." 1

He attempted a nervous chuckle, but it died in his throat.

Ryan leaned back slightly in his chair, one arm resting on the armrest, his expression remained as calm as ever. Almost too calm that it scared

Matthew to go close to him. There was no trace of anger in his eyes, and it made Mathew wonder what he was thinking.

"Old times?" he repeated softly, arching a brow, his voice came as a whisper. "That's interesting. How about you remind me of those old times, Matthew? You know... refresh my memory."

Matthew's mouth opened, then closed. His throat bobbed as he swallowed hard. His eyes wandered across the ceiling and the walls and over several objects in the room before it finally landed on Ryan again.

His fingers twitched slightly at his sides, as he thought of what to say next.

Ryan tilted his head slightly. His voice was still composed as he spoke his next words. "Come on. Don't be shy. Tell everyone here what the 'old times' looked like. The good memories. Like how you used your father's influence and money to humiliate me. Or how you helped Jessica leak my private messages to the university gossip group."

Jessica stiffened at that.

"Or maybe the part where you both laughed when I was evicted from my dorm because I couldn't afford rent?" Ryan added, his voice lower now, but somehow louder than anything in the room.

Matthew's lips parted in shock. He looked at Jessica briefly, as if begging her to interrupt or speak up, but she remained still.

He tried to form a something in his mouth to say, but there was nothing...

"That's what I thought," Ryan said calmly and then he scoffed. His eyes moved to Claudia. "Claudia, what are you waiting for?"

Claudia didn't need further explanation. She stood from her chair slowly.

She walked over to where Jessica and Matthew were still frozen.

"The CEO has made his decision," she said, her tone firm but professional. "You both will have to leave the building immediately. He doesn't want to see you here again."

Jessica's eyes widened. color drained from her face. Panic rushed through her as she heard Claudia. Her heels scraped the floor as she turned toward Ryan desperately, and then she dropped to her knees with a thud that made everyone flinch.

"Ryan... please," she said with a trembling voice. "I'm sorry. I'm so sorry for everything. I didn't know, I never thought..."

Tears spilled over as she spoke, her mascara beginning to smudge. Her hands shook as she placed them on her thighs, bowing her head slightly in shame.

"If you want... I'm still here," she added quickly, lifting her eyes. "I'm not with Matthew anymore. Not really. I'm available. I know I made a terrible mistake, but I regret it every single day."

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