

Chapter 35

Detective Mark shook his head at her arguments. "Miss Elizabeth McCarthy," he spoke formally, "you and Mr. Julian Knight will have to come with us to the station for questioning regarding the kidnapping of Mrs. Walker."

"What?" Elizabeth's voice rang across the compound like an alarm. "You must be out of your mind! I'm not going anywhere with you!"

Her brows furrowed as her voice went higher. "Do you even know who I am? Do you know who my father is?"

Julian, who had been standing quietly beside her with a stiff expression, shifted nervously, glancing toward the McCarthy mansion where Mr. and Mrs. McCarthy were now standing on the porch.

Detective Mark raised his hand. "Miss McCarthy, this isn't an arrest. It's standard procedure for investigation. You're being asked to come for questioning, not being dragged into a cell. We ask you to cooperate so that due process is followed."

"Don't preach legal ethics to me!" Elizabeth snapped, her eyes flashing in anger. "This is harassment!"

"Refusing to follow police protocol can carry legal consequences of its own," Detective Kelvin interjected. "And for someone of your public image, it might be best to comply rather than escalate."

Before Elizabeth could respond, Mr. McCarthy stomped forward, his expensive shoes making loud noises on the floor.

"That's enough!" he thundered. "I don't care what procedure or due process you're talking about. This is my property, and if you don't vacate

this premises in the next minute, I'll have my security team reduce your vehicle to scrap metal."

The officers remained calm, but their eyes heart thudded a little by the threat.

Elizabeth folded her arms coldly, clearly reassured by her father's appearance.

"Detectives," Mr. McCarthy continued, "my daughter isn't going anywhere with you. Neither is her fiancé. You touch a strand of hair on their heads, and I'll ensure you lose not only your badges but your careers."

"Are you threatening law enforcement, sir?" Detective Mark asked, still composed.

Mr. McCarthy scoffed. "I'm stating facts. You think being in a uniform gives you the right to barge into my home and start slandering my family? I am the tenth richest man in this country! You're standing on my property!"

Behind the detectives, Ryan had been silent. Watching. His face was unreadable.

But now, he took a calm step forward.

His hands were in his pockets. Clearly, it showed no threat shook him at all.

"Mr. McCarthy," Ryan said, "you speak so boldly about power and status, but I wonder...do you even understand the weight of what you're doing right now?"

Mr. McCarthy turned toward him slowly, his eyes narrowing in disbelief.

"What did you just say to me?"

"You heard me," Ryan replied.

Mr. McCarthy's voice exploded. "Who is this insect? Who let this useless boy even open his mouth here? Someone I fed! Someone I clothed! You have the audacity to speak back at me in my own house?"

Ryan's jaw clenched, but he didn't react. He let the older man vent.

"I made you!" Mr. McCarthy shouted, pointing a finger. "You were nothing but a stray dog sniffing around my daughter. A broke, homeless wretch!"

Ryan didn't move, his hands still in his pockets as he watched the outburst. Instead, he said with a small, steady voice, "I'm curious to see the full extent of your power. You said you'd crush the police? That you'd destroy their car? Go ahead. I'd like to watch."

Mr. McCarthy blinked, stunned.

"What?" he said, uncertain now.

Ryan stepped forward again. "You said you were powerful. So let's see it. Show us how far your power reaches."

Elizabeth's lips parted. "You're trying to provoke him?" she asked in disbelief.

"Yes," Ryan replied calmly. "Let him show the world the man he claims to be."

Mr. McCarthy's hands shook slightly in anger. "You, You arrogant..!"

But before he could finish, Julian stepped forward with a scoff. "Ryan,

you don't know when to shut your mouth, do you?"

He adjusted his collar and gave a prideful smirk. "Do you forget who I am? I work for Nova. You think my father-in-law even needs to get involved when I have powerful connections that stretch across this country and beyond?"

Julian walked closer until he stood directly in front of Ryan, his voice was low and arrogant. "Don't think that just because you've grown slightly bold, you can challenge us. You still reek of the street. You can't match me."

Ryan remained still.

Julian chuckled. "You dare insult me in front of my family? Let me remind you. I'm still a top-level staff at Nova. You don't mess with people like me and walk away untouched."

Ryan's eyes narrowed. "Are you sure you're still working at Nova?"

Julian froze for a split second. "What kind of stupid question is that?"

"No reason," he said smoothly, brushing invisible lint from his sleeve. "I just thought you might want to confirm before you open your mouth."

Julian scoffed, clearly irritated. "Ugh, enough with the games, Ryan. You know nothing about Nova. Do you seriously think you can keep pretending to be a seer. Because you predicted my engagement party wouldn't be completed at that event center and it turned out true? Grow up. That was just a coincidence."

As he was still talking to Ryan, his phone make a notification sound.

Beep!

The sudden sound from Julian's phone was loud enough for everyone to hear.

Everyone, Elizabeth, Mr. and Mrs. McCarthy, the detectives, even the bodyguards near the porch, paused.

Julian's expression twitched.

He reached for his pocket slowly, his fingers curling around the phone like he didn't want to see what had arrived.

Elizabeth squinted. "Was that your phone?"

Julian didn't answer. He fumbled with the device, his hands oddly unsteady now. His eyes fell on the screen.

And then... he just stood there, frozen like snow. His eyes widening.

His Mouth fell open, his eyes reddened in shock.

Elizabeth stepped forward, sounding a little impatient now. "Julian? What is it?" She moved closer, peering at his frozen expression. "Why are you just standing there? What's wrong?"

She spoke but there was No response from Julian.

"Julian, for heaven's sake, you're freaking me out," she snapped. "What's on your phone?!"

Still, he didn't speak. He just continued to stare at the screen.

"Oh, give it to me!" Elizabeth hissed, snatching the phone out of his hand.

She turned the screen toward herself and as her eyes skimmed the



message, her lips stopped moving. Her perfectly manicured fingers loosened. The phone slipped from her grasp and hit the ground.

Everyone watched her, seeing how her face drained of all color.

She took a shaky step back and looked at Julian like he had personally betrayed her.

Mrs. McCarthy was the first to speak. "Elizabeth? Is everything alright?"

Elizabeth's voice came out weak, barely above a whisper.

"He's... he's been fired..."