

Chapter 42

Julian stomped out of the police station, his expensive shoes hitting the pavement with an angry force. Elizabeth followed him closely behind, her high heels clicking as she struggled to keep up.

"Julian, wait! Slow down!" she called after him.

At that point, Julian was angry and nervous, and also he still felt the shame from earlier and he was even considering how it would feel for Elizabeth to look at him again after he lost his job in front of her.

"What the hell, why are you so afraid of the police? Why in such a hurry?" Elizabeth said with a colder voice now as Julian still ignored her, seeming to be focusing too much on reaching his car quickly and driving out fast.

He didn't respond. His jaw was tightened, his eyes fixed on his car ahead only like it would disappear if he didn't reach it on time. As they approached, Detective Mark stepped out of the station's entrance, his voice breaking the silence as he shouted.

"Julian Knight! You're not dismissed yet! Come back here immediately!"

Julian didn't even glance back, he kept walking really fast, it was so obvious he was trying to escape as fast as possible. Detective Mark only stepped out once and that was all it took for Julian to walk out of the office..

With a flick of his wrist, he unlocked the car and yanked the door open. Elizabeth barely managed to get in before he slammed the door shut and started the engine. In seconds, the car roared out of the parking lot, leaving behind a trail of dust.

Detective Mark sighed deeply, frustration filling his face as he watched the car disappear. "Damn it." He banged the wall beside him.

He walked back into the station, his pace brisk as he returned to the interrogation room.

Inside, Ryan still sat, his body now looking visibly tense and his hands fidgeting in his lap. Detective Kevin sat in front of a computer screen, his fingers were flying over the keyboard, trying to trace the number that had sent Ryan the threatening message.

Ryan looked up as Detective Mark entered. "He left, didn't he?"

Mark nodded, pulling out a chair and dropping into it. "Coward. He couldn't even stay to answer basic questions. This tells me a lot about him and probably his involvement in this whole kidnap case. I believe you may be right in a way about your suspicion."

Ryan looked at Kevin. "Detective, please. I need you to find something, anything, anything at all that could help you. That number has to be traceable. If we can figure out who sent that message, maybe we can get a lead on where my mother is."

Kevin shook his head and let out a slow sigh. "Mr. Walker... I've tried five different databases and ran a triangulation scan. The number is masked by a virtual network. Whoever sent that text used an untraceable ID, it's like they don't exist."

Ryan slammed his palm against his forehead in frustration. "Then how are we ever going to find her? If the police can't trace the message, then who can? This is really getting out of hand, how would I be able to get to her on time, if the police can't do anything about it?"

Kevin placed a firm, calming hand on Ryan's shoulder. "Look, just be

patient with us. The system might be temporarily down or being blocked by a high-level encryption. I'll keep trying, and we'll escalate this to cybercrime too if we have to. We'll do everything we can to get her back. I promise."

Ryan looked down, breathing hard. His fists clenched. The thought of his mother somewhere in danger while he sat helplessly in a chair was tearing him apart.

Mark leaned forward, his voice suddenly serious. "Mr. Walker. Earlier, did you notice how Julian was behaving? The way he kept his phone hidden? The timing of that text message that came to you... it was too close to be a coincidence."

Ryan blinked, looking up slowly. "What are you trying to say?"

Mark's eyes narrowed. "What if Julian sent that message? Or if he didn't, what if he was in contact with someone who did? The timing was too perfect. He got nervous, started hiding his phone, and then boom— you get a threat from the same unknown number."

Ryan's brow furrowed. He sat up straighter, thinking. "I didn't think of it that way. But now that you mention it... it adds up. That's why I dragged them in here in the first place. I've suspected Julian and Elizabeth all along."

Kevin, who was still at the computer, sighed again and shook his head. "I'll keep pushing. But for now, we're running into a wall. Whoever's behind this doesn't want to be found."

The room went quiet for a while and Ryan felt so helpless at that point in time.

Then Mark leaned back in his chair and asked, "Didn't you say you had a

party to attend tonight, Mr. Walker? Around 8 PM?"

Ryan nodded slowly. "Yeah. The Stallion Night VIP party. I'm supposed to be there to make some donations for the state's development fund and ... also receive an award."

Mark raised an eyebrow. "And Julian and Elizabeth? They'll be there too?"

Ryan raised his head and nodded again. "Yes. Julian, Elizabeth, and probably her parents too. The McCarthys usually attend that kind of high-society thing, parties and events."

He ran a hand down his face. "But I'm not even sure I want to go anymore, not after everything I just heard about the caller being untraceable. My mother's missing and I'm in a bad place emotionally. I should be out looking for her, not at some damn party."

Mark looked directly into Ryan's eyes. "You are totally missing the point, Son."

"No. You should go. Listen to me, finding your mother is our job now. Yours is to stay visible enough to know what is happening. Stay close to the people you suspect... the McCarthys, especially Julian—he's looking shadier by the second. We need eyes in that room and you can give us that."

Ryan stared at him, processing it.

"If you really want to help find your mother," Mark continued, "you need to show up at that party and watch everything, Closely... every move they make. Especially Julian. You might be the only one in that room who knows what to look for."

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Ryan took a deep breath. He closed his eyes for a moment, as though gathering the last strength remaining in his body, and then he sighed.

Finally, he opened them again and gave a slow nod. "Alright. I'll go."

Mark gave him a small, reassuring pat on the back. "Good. Keep your phone close, and Mr. Walker... be careful."

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