Chapter 58

As Ryan and Claudia exited the main hall, their hands crossed over each other's arm.

Ryan glanced down at Claudia and gave her a small smile, he was happy how the night had went and she definitely boosted his status at the Stallion Night VIP party.

"Thank you for standing by me tonight, Claudia. I don't take it for granted," Ryan said calmly after taking a slight pause to look at her eyes, and then he continued walking.

She gave a warm smile, and her eyes met Ryan's for a moment and then they both started moving forward again. "You're welcome... boss," she said calmly, and Ryan's eyes narrowed.

Ryan chuckled slightly after realizing how formal her response still came. "Drop the boss. Just call me Ryan, okay?" He said inbetween a chuckle, and Claudia joined in.

Claudia looked up at him with a teasing hint in her eyes. "Thank you, Ryan," she said, the name rolling off her tongue smoothly.

They were almost at Ryan's lavish black sports car parked near the edge of the venue when suddenly they were startled by the sound there heard.

A loud screech hit their ears, so loud Claudia had to even cover her ears with her hands.

A black van spun around the corner and halted aggressively just feet from them. Before either of them could process it, the van's side door slid open with force. Three men, all in black and masked, leapt out.

"What the..." Ryan began, instinctively pulling Claudia behind him to

protect her despite still trying to understand who they were.

"Ryan!!" Claudia screamed, panic exploding in her voice the moment the masked me advanced.

The masked men charged toward Ryan with so much aggression that made Ryan instantly know that he was targeted and not just a random attack. It wasn't a coincidence, they came for him with a personal beef. Ryan pushed Claudia to the side. "Run! Get help!"

But she didn't run, instead she remained standing there. She stood frozen, screaming louder, watching helplessly as the men lunged at him with their fists and legs.

Ryan met the first man with a swift jab to the jaw, following with a kick that sent him stumbling back. The second attacker came with a baton, swinging it in an arc. Ryan ducked, grabbed the man's wrist, twisted, and slammed him into the side of the van. The third came from behind... Ryan turned just in time to block the punch, and threw him over his shoulder.

For a moment, Ryan seemed to have the upper hand and control in the fight. His movements were sharp, trained, precise with a military precision in motion. But they were too many. As he struggled with one, another struck him with a crowbar from behind. Ryan stumbled, then spun, blood trickling from a wound at the back of his head.

"Ryan!" Claudia sobbed, rushing forward, only to be grabbed and shoved away by one of the attackers. They didn't come for her, they didn't need her so they didn't care about harming her, they only cared about preventing her from stopping them.

Ryan roared, adrenaline was burning through his body. He charged at them again, landing two solid blows, but a second strike, this time from a

metal rod to his temple sent him staggering. Then came a third blow to his abdomen, bringing him down completely.

He dropped to his knees then, slumped forward.

"No!" Claudia shrieked as Ryan hit the ground, groaning in pain.

The masked men quickly dragged his unconscious body into the van.

Claudia ran toward them, screaming loudly, banging on the van door. " Let him go! Ryan!"

The van roared to life and sped off, the tires screeching against the pavement. All that remained was the sound of Claudia's cries and a small drop of blood on the concrete where Ryan had bled on after he was hit.

Moments later, footsteps pounded in the distance from behind Claudia.