

Chapter 75

Lord Ryder pressed a button on the black remote, and the massive screen split into two. On the left was Ryan's mother, hunched over on the cold floor of the room where she'd been locked up.

Her hands were still tied, and her face was pale, showing signs of weakness and fatigue.

On the right, the screen displayed the lavish auction hall within the Lord's Villa, buzzing with guests who were sitting around the tables and sipping wine as they waited for the main event. ⓘ

Ryan, who was still strapped tightly to the steel chair, watched helplessly. He felt frustrated and angry. ⓘ

Lord Ryder gave him one final glance before turning away and exited the underground room.

She strode into the auction hall and took her place at the podium. The chatter in the room died down as soon as she lifted the mic.

"Good evening, ladies and gentlemen," she said as her voice echoed through the room. "Thank you all for being here tonight."

Applause broke out.

Lord Ryder smiled. "Tonight, we have something... unique. Something that doesn't just have value but has meaning. Now, if you'll allow me, I'll have my men present the item."

Back in the underground room, Ryan's jaw clenched the moment she snapped her fingers. The screen clearly showed her speaking to one of her men, giving an order. Though she didn't mention names, Ryan could read her lips.



"Bring out the item," she said.

The man she instructed didn't need clarification. He nodded firmly and disappeared through a side door. A moment later, he was walking toward the dark room where Ryan's mother was kept. Her weak frame barely reacted when he entered.

Ryan's pulse quickened as he saw his mother slowly being pulled to her feet and the man dragged her out. 1

"Stop! Don't touch her!" Ryan shouted, struggling violently against the leather straps digging into his wrists.

The guard standing near him chuckled, shaking his head. "Waste of energy, my friend. These straps were designed for torture chairs, you're not breaking free." 1

Ryan's breath came in short bursts while he tried to steady himself. "Let me go. I swear I'll—"

"You'll what?" the man interrupted. "You think threats scare people here?"

Ryan glared at him. "You're working for a lunatic. That woman's insane."

The guard rolled up his sleeve slowly, revealing a detailed black falcon tattoo stretched across the skin of his forearm.

"I'm a Falcon," he said in a low voice. "Loyal to Lord Ryder and the Falcon Creed. Say what you want about her, insane or not, but she feeds me and my family."

Ryan's head snapped toward him as disbelief spread across his face. "Your family?" he repeated, with his tone rising. "Then why are you



standing here helping someone destroy another man's?"

The guard, Anton, opened his mouth to respond, but before he could speak, the ring of his phone echoed through the underground chamber. With an irritated grunt, he fished it out of his pocket and swiped to answer.

Ryan's ears twitched when he realized Anton had put it on speaker without noticing.

"Hello?" Anton said quickly, turning slightly away as though trying to hide the call from Ryan.

A woman's voice came through. She sounded breathless and worn, like someone who hadn't slept properly in days. There was panic in her tone, but even more than that there was desperation.

"Doctor, please, I'm begging you," the woman pleaded. "My daughter needs that surgery. I promise I'll bring at least part of the money today. Please just start, please. She's all I have, I swear I'll bring more soon."

There was a pause before a different voice spoke. It was a male with a sharper and harsher tone.

"I've told you already, Mr. Anton. The surgery costs one hundred thousand dollars. You want us to begin with just fifty? This is not a charity clinic."

Ryan's eyes widened slightly. His gaze flicked back to the guard, who now stood completely still, the phone pressed closer to his ear. His jaw was tight.

"I'm not saying don't collect the rest," Anton said with his voice low now. "But she's getting worse. Her organs are shutting down and I just



need you to stabilize her until I can pay the rest. She's only seven Please, she hasn't eaten in days."

There was another pause. Then the doctor spoke again in a clipped tone.

"Look, Anton, I understand your pain, but this isn't a government hospital. We've already lowered our fees because of the severity of her case. This is not some flu you can treat with rest. Your daughter needs immediate intensive care, oxygen support, constant observation, and surgery within forty-eight hours. And none of that can happen without full payment upfront. We don't take chances with our facility's resources." 2

Anton's voice cracked slightly. "But I'm close. I have a job tonight, one that pays twenty thousand and that'll put me past halfway. Please, can't you—"

"Halfway," the doctor interrupted, "is not the surgery. Do you even hear yourself? This is your daughter's life not a negotiation."

"I'm not asking you to take a loss," Anton said. "Just start the treatment, just try to keep her alive until I can bring the rest. I promise I'm not walking away, I'm doing everything I can to raise the money."

"We've done what we can," the doctor said coldly. "We've already held your daughter for two extra days without progress, and there are protocols we must follow. If you can't bring the money, then come and discharge her. We need that bed for someone who can pay, you're out of time."

The line went dead.

Anton stared down at his phone for several seconds, breathing heavily. His fingers trembled before he slipped the phone back into his pocket. He



didn't look at Ryan, his eyes were glossy and locked on some distant point on the wall.

Ryan's voice broke the silence. "So that's it? You're doing all this to pay for your daughter's surgery?"

Anton clenched his jaw but refused to answer.

"She's seven," Ryan said again in a more soft tone now. "And yet you're helping someone auction off another man's mother."

Anton finally looked at him with pain etched on his face. "I didn't choose this life," he muttered. "But if I don't do this job she dies."

Ryan stared at him in silence, understanding the horror of the situation but also knowing it didn't make it right.

"So how is 20,000 dollars paid to you by Lord Ryder going to help you save your daughter?" Ryan asked.

Anton stiffened, and looked up suddenly. "Shut up!"

Ryan didn't flinch. "You're selling your soul for twenty thousand dollars ... while the woman who hired you plans to auction someone else's mother like she's livestock."

Anton looked away.

