

## Chapter 87

Ryan stared at Lena for a moment longer, her face still damp with tears, her eyes swollen from crying and yet holding the kind of hope that refused to die. She had already been kicked down by life and humiliated by the McCarthys but he thought she was bold for her to still stand there.

He took a deep breath, then gently reached for her hand. "Lena," he said softly, "I want you to trust me. Don't ask questions just... walk with me."

Her fingers twitched slightly in his palm as she hesitated. Ryan didn't tell her exactly where he was taking her to, but then, she had already figured it was back into Elizabeth's party.

"Where are we going?" she still asked just to be certain and as Ryan opened his mouth to speak, she frowned instantly.

"I'm going to make that dream birthday happen for you. Right now, and all you have to do is to follow me, you don't have to do anything other than listening to me."

She pulled her hand back with fear in her eyes. "No, how?? No way... If you're thinking of going back in there, if you want us to walk back into that party then count me out."

She pulled her hand out of Ryan's grip quickly, fear written all over her face as if she couldn't even understand how Ryan thought of that idea. To her it was impossible for them to be allowed into the party again.

"Please, just... count me out okay?"

"Why?" Ryan asked, as if it was totally normal for them to walk into such a party looking like people of the lower class. Although Ryan was way above the middle class and was even more high class than the



McCarthys, the lady had no idea of it, so she was skeptical of the step Ryan was about to take.

"Because," she said, her voice rising slightly, "Elizabeth already humiliated me once. What if she calls security again? What if this time she doesn't just slap me? What if she calls the police and tells them I'm harassing her? Just... think about it please, it is not wise to go back in there."

"She won't do that, trust me... she can't. Elizabeth might be crazy but she knows very well who she cannot push over, and I am that person, okay?" Ryan assured her.

"Oh really?" Lena laughed bitterly. "What makes you so sure? You saw the way she looked at me? I was less than dirt to her, and you're dressed like me. What makes you think she'll treat you any differently? Those high class guests would treat us both like trash even if Elizabeth doesn't catch us sneaking in."

"Hey, we won't be sneaking in, we would go in to celebrate your birthday," he said to her with a calm voice.

Ryan's jaw tightened. "Just walk with me and don't be afraid of anyone, I'll handle everything."

"Well, I don't care," Lena said. "You might want to get slapped in the face tonight, but I'm not going back in there just to be thrown out again. It's humiliating, and frankly, I'm not built for that kind of embarrassment."

Ryan stepped forward, his voice lowering. "Lena. I swear to you, just trust me this one time. I promise, no one will lay a hand on you. Let me give you the birthday you deserve."



Lena stared at him for a long moment, searching his eyes. There was something there that made her want to give him a chance to try even though it sounded too stupid to go back in there.

"But... you're just a regular guy. You don't belong here, just like me," she whispered.

Ryan smiled faintly. "Just walk with me, okay?"

She bit her lip, clearly still confused on what to do next. But slowly, reluctantly, she nodded.

He reached for her hand again, and this time she didn't pull away.

Without another word, Ryan turned toward the red carpet entrance of the APEX HALLS and Lena followed him behind.

Inside, the party was in full swing. Waiters moved gracefully between high-profile guests carrying trays of champagne. Men in tailored suits and women in stunning gowns laughed and posed for photographs.

At the center of it all stood Elizabeth McCarthy, she was surrounded by admirers, all trying to please her with compliments, as if basking in her presence would earn them favor.

Just then, a woman with dark red lipstick leaned toward her and whispered, "Isn't that your ex-husband?"

Elizabeth's eyebrows lifted as she turned to look toward the entrance.

Her smile vanished instantly the moment she set her eyes on Ryan. Recently, all the places that Ryan showed up, it didn't end well for her, and the moment her eyes met him, she had a bad feeling. But she shook the feeling off and it was replaced by a cold expression on her face.



There stood Ryan, unbothered by the eyes that were on him.