

Chapter 9

Elizabeth dialed the number with ease. Her lips curled into a cold smile as she hit the call button.

She didn't even glance at the audience. Her attention was fixed solely on Ryan, knowing he was in big trouble now.

The phone began to ring, and everyone's attention was drawn to it immediately, waiting for the voice from the other end.

With a flick of her finger, Elizabeth turned on the speaker and leaned toward Ryan with a smirk.

"I hope you enjoy the last few minutes of your mother's hospital stay," she whispered with a low but vicious tone.

Ryan didn't respond. He stood still with his hands relaxed at his sides, his face was emotionless. His expression didn't show anything, not anger, not fear, not sadness.

The guests waited, most with anticipation, others with discomfort beginning to show on their faces. Still, no one said a word.

"Hello?" a voice answered on the line. It sounded deep and authoritative.

Julian stepped forward slowly and place his mouth near the phone. He adjusted his already-perfect suit, taking the phone from Elizabeth gently. His polished shoes moved slowly against the floor as he walked, each step full of arrogance.

"Good evening, Mr. Henry. It's Julian. Julian Knight, your assistant."

There was a brief pause before recognition flowed through the speaker.

"Oh! It's you, Julian. What's going on? It's quite late. I wasn't quiet expecting your call," Mr. Henry said through the phone.

Julian laughed softly, his voice oozing with respect. "Yes, sir, I know. I'm sorry to disturb you at this hour. But I wouldn't call if it wasn't important."

On the other end, Mr. Henry chuckled. "You're one of the few I'd answer this late. You have earned that privilege, I guess. After all, I still owe you, don't I?"

Julian smiled wider. "Yes, sir. I was hoping to cash in on that tonight. Do you remember the time you lost that folder with the quarterly finance breakdowns? The one that could've landed you in serious trouble?"

Mr. Henry's voice became more serious. "How could I forget? You found it just in time. I was ready to push for a twenty percent raise for you to reward you for your help, remember?"

Julian chuckled again. "I do. But I told you I'd rather ask for a favor when I needed one."

"And I meant it. I mean it, Mr. Knight. Whatever, just mention, as long as it's within my power," Mr. Henry said warmly. "Anything you need, just say the word."

Julian lifted his head and met Ryan's gaze with a slow, calculated smile. One that stretched across his face like victory in motion. It wasn't just a smile—it was a message—you're finished.

Ryan's expression didn't even shift. There was No reaction. No twitch of a brow. Nothing. He just stood, looking at them with what looked like amusement.

Julian turned his focus back to the phone and cleared his throat dramatically.

"Well, sir, tonight's a special night. Elizabeth and I just got engaged. By Elizabeth, I mean Elizabeth McCarthy. It is all happening right now..."

A few polite claps went up from the crowd. Some looked around, unsure if they should be clapping. Others remained silent, watching Ryan.

"But unfortunately," Julian continued, "we've run into... an unwanted disturbance. A man named Ryan. He's trying to ruin the celebration."

Mr. Henry's tone shifted. "I see. And what exactly do you want from me?"

Julian's voice grew confident.

"You have significant influence, sir—especially in the medical network connected with Nova. This Ryan... he's emotionally unstable. I think he needs a reality check. His mother is currently hospitalized, and I was wondering if... you could pull some strings. Have her discharged. Immediately. No treatments. Nothing."

Gasps rang out through the hall. One woman at the front covered her mouth. A man muttered, "That's cold."

But Julian kept going, as if he hadn't noticed the shifting atmosphere.

"Also, I want her blacklisted," he added casually. "From every major hospital in town. That way, Ryan will be too busy saving her life to ever show his face around here again."

Mr. Henry was quiet for a moment. "Are you sure about this, Julian? That's a serious request."

"Absolutely," Julian replied without hesitation. "Just two minutes of your time, sir. That's all I ask. After this, we'll consider the favor returned."

There was silence for a few seconds as if Mr. Henry was considering his request. He could have lost his job if it wasn't for that folder that Julian helped him retrieve. So he felt indebted to Julian.

"Alright," Mr. Henry said after several minutes. "If that's what you want. I'll contact the hospital board immediately. But I'll need the patient's name."

Elizabeth stepped forward like a queen addressing a servant. Her voice was sharp and unapologetic.

"Lucia," she said clearly, her chin held high. "That's the name of the crazy old woman."

Ryan's eyes narrowed for just a moment. Wondering what the so called Mr. Henry was about to do. But he said nothing.

Mr. Henry replied, "Understood. Give me two minutes. I'll call back when it's done."

The line disconnected.

Julian slowly lowered the phone, the arrogance radiating off him like heat. He turned to Ryan with a shrug and brushed invisible dusts of Ryan's chest.

"There you have it," he said, his voice was filled with satisfaction. "Two minutes, Ryan. Just two. And your dear mother will be lying outside in the street. Hope she packed a blanket."

"You know... I'm a very nice gentleman who would have wanted to accommodate your kind of arrogance. But you have reached the limit, and your wretched mother will suffer for it," he whispered into Ryan's face.

Elizabeth slipped her hand through Julian's arm. "You should've known better than to act proud around us," she said with an icy tone. "You were worth nothing without me. Lived under my roof. Wore clothes I bought. Ate meals I paid for."

Julian chuckled darkly. "And now? You're done. You'll finally learn your place."

Ryan finally moved. Slowly. He looked down at the floor, then back up—his gaze locking on Julian, then Elizabeth.

"You really think this is power?" he asked, his voice was calm but loud enough.

Julian raised an eyebrow. "Excuse me?"

"This," Ryan repeated. "This little performance—hurting someone who's helpless. Using your so-called connections to threaten a dying woman. Public humiliation, phone calls, fake smiles. That's power to you?"

Elizabeth rolled her eyes. "Spare us the philosophy. You're just bitter because you're about to lose everything."

Ryan's eyes moved around the room. The silence was now intense.

"I haven't lost anything," he said. "If anything, I just learned what you both really are."

Julian laughed loudly. "Oh, you'll lose alright. Once Mr. Henry calls back, your mother will be sleeping outside the emergency room tonight. And you? You'll be too busy groveling to bother us again."

Ryan turned toward him one last time with a calm and composed look.

"We'll see."

A single moment of silence followed, and it was just Julian and Elizabeth's eyes boring into Ryan's.

Then suddenly, the soft buzz of Julian's phone cut through the tension and broke the silence.

All heads turned to Julian's ringing phone.

The screen lit up. Incoming Call – Mr. Henry

Julian grimaced with satisfaction.

"It is done! Now, let's all hear Mr. Henry confirm it.. hahaha," Julian chuckled darkly.

He held up the phone like a prize and waved it slowly toward Ryan's face.

"Well, well... here comes the end of your pride," he said smoothly. "Let's see where this takes you, Ryan Walker."

Everyone's faces lit up with anticipation...