

“There is no passion to be found playing small—in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living.” -Nelson Mandela

**September 15th, 2023 – Ryan and Nina’s
Residence (Miami, Florida)**

Their shared wrestling memorabilia room hummed with the energy of a thousand screaming fans, a symphony of cheers and boos that echoed through Ryan's bones. Championship belts winked under the spotlights like proud battle scars, framed posters captured moments of glory and sweat-drenched triumph, and the plush carpet still bore the ghostly imprints of countless victory dances—hers and Nina's, a swirling tango of joy and exhaustion.

Ryan prowled the room like a lioness revisiting her den, her gaze lingering on each trophy, each photo. A bittersweet symphony played in her heart, a melody of pride and longing. A lifetime of sacrifices, of bruises and broken bones, all laid out before her like a wrestling ring awaiting the final bell.

Has it been worth it? The question echoed in the silence of the room, a whisper that threatened to consume her. *Was this the dream they'd chased together?* A fleeting embrace in a dimly lit arena hallway, a whispered “I love you” *amidst the roar of the crowd? Was it enough?*

The life-size Nina cutout, smirk in full effect, seemed to wink at Ryan from across the room. It was ridiculous, yet it always made her smile. *Was this the life she'd promised Nina?* Memories flooded back, some bittersweet, some... well, she'd rather forget those.

"Babe, have you seen my –" Nina's voice faltered as she stepped into the room, her eyes widening at the sight of Ryan lacing up her more recent wrestling boots. "What are you doing?" The question was of general concern, Nina's perception was always sharp and direct—like a knife.

Ryan's fingers traced the roadmap of scars on her knuckles, a tactile history of past battles. "Just... reminiscing," she murmured, meeting Nina's gaze. That look, a cocktail of amusement and "Oh god, what did I do?", was all too familiar. The England debacle replayed in her mind, a montage of questionable choices and regrettable tattoos.

If she could rewind time, would she stop herself? Probably. Maybe. But then she wouldn't have met Ashley, the unexpected friendship forged in the chaos. A silver lining, at least.

Still, that chapter was best left out of any future wrestling biographies. Let the historians spin tales of her triumphs, not her drunken escapades across the pond.

"Dinner can wait," Nina conveyed, her hand finding Ryan's, rough and calloused. "But tell me... what exactly are you reminiscing about?"

Warm breath caressing Nina's face, Ryan laughed. "Just appreciating the blessings I have," she said, her voice hardly audible above a whisper. She drew Nina nearer as their bodies matched like two mismatched jigsaw pieces falling into place.

"Blessings?" Nina cracked up openly. "Do tell."

Ryan looked softer, her eyes taking in the room's glittering lights. Breathing in, she embraced Nina with her fingers. "You," she said. "You are the most incredible, exasperating, stunningly beautiful person to ever step foot in a wrestling ring and become my spouse."

A wave of warmth raced through Nina's chest, making breathing laborious. Even while she knew Ryan's words weren't always easy to come by, when they came, they began to fall like spring rain and were priceless.

With her fingers following Ryan's pointed jawline, Nina muttered back, "And you are the most obstinate, dedicated, stunningly attractive pain in my ass that I wouldn't swap for anything in the world."

She was completely infatuated with this woman, damn it.

They were speaking silently to one other as their eyes met. Their love was evident in the way their hands touched, the warmth of their embrace, and the unsaid promises in their gaze screamed louder than words could. It was a language of dreams together, of struggles faced and triumphed over, of love that grew beyond the confines of the wrestling arena to become something unique and all their own.

Their love language was the roar of the crowd, the electric crackle of a bodyslam, a symphony of sweat and sacrifice woven into the canvas of the wrestling ring. Then something a little extra, afterwards at home.

Beneath Ryan's affectionate words, a tremor of guilt betrayed her lie. Nina, ever perceptive, sensed the unspoken truth. It didn't matter. Ryan's heart might waver, but Nina's wouldn't. She knew her wife, that stubborn, passionate fire. Protestations were pointless. Come hell or high water, Nina would stand by her side, a fierce and unwavering ally.