

I Want a Divorce [On-Going] 911-920

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Troublemakers

As they exited the tea house, Abigail and Sean settled into the car. Suddenly, Abigail felt a surge of nervousness. "What if we ruin it?"

"Mr. Norris is renowned for his powerful scripts, especially his adaptations of suspense dramas that boast high ratings. It's just the romantic aspect that worries me. I fear he might not handle it well, but as long as the drama serves its promotional purpose," Sean reassured her in a soothing tone.

Lando's intention to film Sean and Abigail's experiences was swiftly uncovered by the Hinton Family.

Early one morning, Max escorted Callen to Pearson Residence, where they sat respectfully in the living room.

Max addressed Lawrence, "My daughter has visited Mr. Graham numerous times, displaying sincerity. He mentioned his reluctance to adapt the story to protect his family, a decision we respected. However, now he has concealed it from us and sold his experiences to Mr. Norris. Aren't you being unfair?"

Pearson Group had recently become the subject of an investigation, and Lawrence had already discerned the hand of the Hinton Family behind it.

However, lacking concrete evidence, he refrained from making direct accusations.

Lawrence maintained a pleasant smile as he spoke, "While Ms. Hinton has indeed helmed several successful dramas, Sean's decision to collaborate with Mr. Norris suggests his confidence in Mr. Norris' ability to portray his experiences effectively."

One should be courteous; hence, he decided against replying spitefully despite the unpleasant tone in Max's voice.

"So, are you suggesting that my daughter lacks the competence to direct TV dramas, hence why Mr. Graham shared his experiences with Mr. Norris and not her?" Max's courteous demeanor faltered at Lawrence's implication.

With an arched eyebrow and a genial smile, Lawrence replied, "Isn't it the case? Eight-point score is the best result of your daughter's directed production whereas others hovered around seven points. While acceptable, compared to shows scoring above eight points and even one with a remarkable 9.7 directed by Mr. Norris, the difference is apparent."

Callen, unable to contain her agitation, interjected coldly, "At the time, Sean expressed a desire to keep his past private, hence his reluctance for adaptation. What has changed now?"

This change left Callen visibly angered.

What further fueled her anger was the discovery that Abigail was not only pregnant but even married to Sean. What had been the purpose of all her efforts?

What was the point of everything she had done?

"This matter should be addressed by yourselves, shouldn't it?" Lawrence's tone carried a touch of chill.

The Hinton Family had someone pose as an official to interrogate Sean, and Sean even had to maintain a smile while greeting her. How shameless could they be?

"I demand to see Sean in person!" Callen rose from her seat.

As soon as Abigail came out of her room, she caught wind of her statement.

"Dad, why are you entertaining these irrelevant individuals?" she questioned while leaning against the second-floor corridor with a hint of disdain in her voice.

While they were having issues with Harold, the Hinton Family suddenly began causing a commotion.

"They already came knocking at our door. It wouldn't be right to turn them away, would it?" Lawrence's tone was gentle and accommodating.

Scarlett, who was bustling in the kitchen, heard Abigail's voice and hurried out. "Abby, why are you up? The dessert I'm making for you isn't done yet!"

"I took a long nap, so I felt like getting some fresh air," Abigail explained as she made her way to the elevator.

Soon, she came out of the elevator.

Callen noticed her slightly fuller cheeks and deduced she had been well cared for lately.

Despite facing challenges with Danielle, L.Moon's luck shifted at the exhibition. The two designers from L.Moon headed the team, and the garments adorned with the Phoenix element drew a wave of visitors back to the brand.

Undeniably, she admired Abigail's work ability.

Upon the debut of the Phoenix outfit, it immediately formed partnerships with gaming and official media outlets to promote traditional culture, greatly enhancing L.Moon's reputation.

"Ms. Hinton, if you've come for the adaptation rights to Sean's story, kindly leave. He has already given authorization to Mr. Norris, who's handling the script," Abigail calmly declared before returning to the kitchen.

Callen took a deep breath, grabbed her bag, and left, followed swiftly by Max.

Once they were back in the car, Callen tossed her bag aside, crossed her arms, and asked, "Why did you try to talk sense into him? Why didn't you just threaten him? If necessary, just get rid of her child to put her in her place!"

"Doesn't your uncle know about the situation? You can also adapt the story," Max suggested with a sinister tone. "Once you start filming it, what can Mr. Norris do?"

Upon hearing Max's suggestion, Callen paused to consider for a moment.

After a prolonged silence, a smile gradually spread across her face. “Sounds feasible. Anyway, I got the story from the police. What does it have to do with Sean, right?”

Days passed in an orderly manner.

Since Luna resumed her work routine, her health has steadied, yet she began to notice an increase in weight attributed to the medication.

With Independence Day approaching, Leap Gaming Technology commenced sending out various promotional materials.

Luna was so occupied that she even brought Abigail to the company.

Abigail, now four months pregnant, had a visibly protruding belly, so she opted for loose clothing.

“The recent influx of orders is overwhelming. I was thinking, maybe you could assist me with a few designs?” Luna’s spirits were lifted, no longer as subdued as before.

Observing Luna’s improved mood, Abigail readily agreed, “Of course. Just send me the specifications, and I’ll work on them from home. There are too many computers in the office. Sean would be anxious if he saw me working here.”

“You’re four months along the pregnancy now. Shouldn’t you be allowed to use the computer?” Luna suggested, sounding somewhat resigned.

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The Peacemaker

More importantly, Luna wanted to have a conversation with Abigail.

“I’ll work on my design here, then,” Abigail decided as she switched on her laptop.

Luna propped her chin up, studying her friend. “Despite seeing each other daily at Pearson Residence, we hardly ever talk to each other.”

"I've been feeling unusually fatigued since the pregnancy," Abigail confessed with a light chuckle.

"You've gained some weight, just like me," Luna smiled outwardly, though a hint of sadness lingered within her.

"We can hit the gym together once I deliver the baby, to shed those extra pounds," Abigail suggested, hoping to motivate Luna.

Luna sighed, "I have to stick to my medication regimen for now. Weight loss can wait until I'm fully healthy again."

Her complexion wasn't at its best either, leading to occasional bouts of low spirits. After all, everyone valued beauty.

"Is Josh put off by your appearance?" Abigail inquired with a playful smile.

"No, I'm put off by myself," Luna admitted with a wry smile.

Abigail sighed softly, "Luna, appreciating beauty isn't wrong, but it's crucial to embrace yourself at every stage, whether you're carrying a few extra pounds, have flawless skin, or show signs of aging. You're one of a kind. If you don't love yourself, how can you expect others to?"

Luna was about to respond when the office door flung open abruptly.

A woman clutching a bag stood in the doorway as she addressed Luna and Abigail, "Are you the ones in charge of L.Moon?"

Luna rose swiftly. "Yes, how can we assist you?"

"Get my son, Leon Yancey, expelled," the woman demanded as she entered, her voice firm.

"He needs to submit a resignation letter himself," Abigail uttered indifferently.

Luna sized her and realized she must have disapproved of her son's relationship with Irene.

"Ms. Quinn, does your company condone office romances like this? In a professional setting, employees should focus on work, not relationships!" the woman questioned sharply.

“Love is a personal freedom, especially for young people. Why should we impose restrictions?” Luna responded casually to Leon’s mother, Dana Willow.

“I disagree,” Dana retorted, her voice quivering with emotion.

“In that case, you should discuss it with your son,” Luna replied, feeling somewhat helpless.

“He’s involved with a girl from your company. Moreover, she lost both parents and has to take care of her elderly grandparents! She doesn’t deserve to date my son!” Dana’s anger intensified, her eyes reddening.

Abigail discreetly touched her nose.

Leon came from Capitalis, so his mother’s disapproval of Irene was a common occurrence in today’s society.

“Mrs. Yancey, if you believe they’re not suited for each other, I suggest speaking to Leon directly. It wouldn’t be appropriate for the company to intervene in employees’ personal lives,” Luna gently

reasoned, attempting to calm Dana.

Meanwhile, Abigail swiftly poured her a glass of water.

“Please, have a seat and relax. Young people have their own minds nowadays. Even if the company prohibits relationships, they’ll find ways to meet in private. Prohibition might even cause conflicts. Don’t you agree?” Luna handed the glass to Dana, gesturing for Abigail to return to her seat with a glance.

The woman was still agitated, so Luna feared that she might hurt Abigail. How was she going to explain to Sean if something were to happen?

“You’re absolutely right. It makes perfect sense. If you have prohibition, I couldn’t have known what kind of girl he was dating!” Dana breathed heavily before she took a sip of water.

“Calm down. The more agitated you get when discussing this with him, the more he will reveal his rebellious side,” Luna comforted Dana, demonstrating her adeptness in handling such delicate situations.

Under Luna’s persuasion, Dana’s anger gradually faded.

“You get me perfectly! When I confronted him, he decided to leave home, and now, I have no idea where he’s staying. The reason I came to seek your help was because I had no choice,” she confessed with tears welling.

Luna swiftly handed her a tissue, gently dabbing away the tears. “Your son has taken an interest in a designer named Irene, right? To be honest, Irene has faced many challenges but is remarkably ambitious. From fretting over a few thousand dollars in student loans to making consistent strides, she’s truly impressive. Your son seems drawn to her ambitious drive. He appears to have a keen eye for talent.”

When her son was praised, the woman’s pride swelled, though she still complained, “What do you mean he has a keen eye? He’s simply too kind-hearted.”

“Well, that’s because he takes after you, and you’ve raised him well. Irene is actually a talented young lady. She is currently working with the crew under Madam Wright’s leadership. Are you familiar with Madam Wright? She’s the director of many historical dramas, Doris Wright,” Luna didn’t want to say Irene’s background is not well.

Tracing the origin, everyone’s ancient ancestors were tough. Hadn’t mankind all progressed step by step?

“It just... the one without parents is unacceptable.” Dana looked at Luna avoided harsh judgment, because she thought Luna was a reasonable person.

“It ultimately depends on the child,” Luna gently reasoned.

Dana sighed, holding the glass of water. “You don’t get it. It’s easier for me to communicate with him, but if his father intervenes, things might become complicated. I recognize Irene as a decent girl, but if his father disapproves, the marriage will not proceed.”

Abigail remained silent upon hearing that.

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Forcibly Separating the Lovers

Abigail figured they weren’t in the right position to meddle in others’ affairs.

"We may give our advice, yet if they choose not to heed it, then so it shall be. Their fate lies in their own hands," Luna expressed softly.

Every romantic tale encountered its twists and turns.

Throughout the ages, it had often been either the bride's parents or the groom's who dissented a couple's relationship. Smooth marriages were rare occurrences.

"His father has a hot temper," Dana fretted.

After eventually soothing Dana and sending her away, Luna sighed in resignation. "Irene has encountered countless obstacles. She believed she had found someone with similar living conditions to her, but she failed to realize a man who owned a car and a house couldn't be just moderate."

Moreover, there were many in Capitalis who carried prejudice toward immigrants.

"It's really hard for the local families in Capitalis to accept her conditions," Abigail murmured softly.

Luna let out a weary sigh and remained silent.

As the workday neared its end, Leon finally turned up.

"Miss Smith." He stood by the office entrance, looking visibly restrained and nervous.

Abigail peered over her computer screen. "You're back."

"Um..." Leon seemed somewhat embarrassed.

"You haven't been working on the team's design. Where were you?" Luna asked with a stern expression.

Leon nervously chewed his lip before asking, "Did my mother stop by? Did she cause a commotion?"

"What could she possibly do? Do you think our company is just for show? We can handle anyone," Luna replied icily.

"I'll manage my parents to avoid any trouble for the company!" Leon declared before departing.

Abigail looked at Luna. "Should we let Irene know?"

"Isn't she incredibly busy these days? I've tried calling her multiple times, but she hasn't answered any of my calls. She only responds to texts." Luna wanted to speak with Irene, but she was way too occupied with her own affairs.

"Let me try calling her." Abigail retrieved her phone.

When she tried calling Irene, there was no answer either.

...

In the evening, Irene returned to the hotel from the film set and checked her phone, only to see a missed call from Abigail.

It was almost 10 p.m. by now, so she decided to text Abigail.

'I just got out from the set. I had so much work to do, so I hardly had time to check my phone. Sorry about that.'

It only took a few minutes for Abigail to reply to her. 'Don't worry about it. Take good care of yourself and get some rest.'

Irene breathed a sigh of relief.

Putting down her phone, she ordered takeout and hurried to take a shower.

She was cautious even in the hotel, wearing her clothes properly after her shower.

She then replied to Leon's texts while waiting for her takeout.

'Anyway, I've been preoccupied with work lately, so just focus on your affairs. You don't have to pick me up from the set every day.'

Leon had texted her earlier in the day, saying he wouldn't be able to come to the set for the next few days.

In truth, she didn't really want him to come and pick her up every day.

She was capable of living independently. She also didn't want to occupy his time and drain his energy.

Leon didn't reply to her message.

The takeout arrived soon after, and Irene hurried to open the door.

But as soon as she opened it, the delivery man forcefully pushed it open further, and behind him were several men.

A group of people rushed into the room, and the door slammed shut with a loud bang.

Irene's mouth was covered by the delivery guy, her struggles futile as she stared fearfully at the middle-aged man emerging from behind the bodyguards.

With a menacing look on his face and a sturdy build, the man bore a striking resemblance to Leon in his features. Hence, Irene realized instantly who he was: Zeke Yancey, Leon's father.

"You should understand why I'm treating you this way." Zeke approached Irene slowly, his voice chilling.

Irene gazed at him and calmed down.

Zeke made one of his subordinates loosen their grip on her, and with a solemn look, he demanded, "Break up with Leon, unless you want to be taken away to somewhere nobody would find out. I'm warning you that I'm no good man, and I have my ways to treat a woman in the most merciless way."

"Why don't you bring Leon—"

"Shut up. I've tied Leon up at home. How do you expect him to come? I acknowledge your persistence. Achieving success in Capitalis with your background is remarkable, but you can't deny your humble origins." There was no way Zeke would accept her.

Even if Leon were worse off, he should still marry a girl from Capitalis instead of someone of her status and background.

Irene pressed her lips together and responded, "I had no idea about his family background."

She only realized the fact that Zeke was his father when she answered Leon's phone one time. Back then, she merely thought he was Leon's brother or something.

"Now that you're aware, can you break things off with him?" Zeke coldly issued a threat.

"You're being unfair to us. Even if I were to end things, it should be because of a breakdown in our relationship. I cannot comply with your request to treat him unfairly." Irene attempted to reason with him.

Zeke stared at her silently, sending chills down her spine.

"You can't do it, huh?" Zeke inched forward.

Irene attempted to run, but another man was holding her in place.

A heavy slap landed on her face, making her cheek numb and her teeth loose.

"How about now?" Zeke questioned icily.

Sending a determined glare at him, Irene stated defiantly, "I won't do it even though you slapped me."

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Misfortune Strikes Repeatedly

As the sun rose, a firm rap echoed on Abigail's door, disturbing Sean's peaceful slumber.

Grumbling softly, he dragged himself out of bed to answer it.

Standing in the doorway was Josh, his demeanor urgent. "Can you get in touch with Irene? Madam Wright has been searching for her all morning. She's checked out of the hotel without notifying anyone from the office!" Josh whispered urgently.

Abigail, still half-asleep, stirred from the bed, her curiosity piqued. "What's going on?" she mumbled groggily.

“It’s nothing to worry about, Abigail. Just a work matter. Go back to sleep,” Josh reassured her before turning back to Sean.

“Oh.” Abigail nestled back under the covers and closed her eyes.

Sean closed the door behind him.

“I suspect Irene is missing. Madam Wright hasn’t been able to locate her, and Luna is growing increasingly anxious,” Josh confided in a low voice.

“I recall Abby mentioning that Leon’s family disapproves of his relationship with Irene. Could it be connected to Leon’s father?” Sean’s tone inadvertently softened.

“I’ll look into it. You stay here and rest,” Josh instructed before hurrying off.

As Sean returned to the room, he noticed Abigail stirring awake once more just as he was about to change clothes.

“Are you getting up?” she inquired, lifting her head from the blankets.

“Yeah, you go back to sleep. I’ll wake you when breakfast is ready,” Sean responded. Despite his limited acquaintance with Irene, the circumstances urged him to delve deeper into the situation.

“Okay,” Abigail replied casually, settling back under the covers and drifting into a drowsy sleep.

Sean proceeded downstairs and promptly instructed Xavien to look into the matter.

He had barely settled in the living room when Kevin’s call came in.

Answering the call, Sean’s tone was less than pleasant. “What’s the matter?”

“What’s the matter? Irene is missing, isn’t she? Why didn’t you inform me?” Kevin’s voice conveyed a sense of urgency, as if his significant other had vanished.

Sean remained silent, feeling that Kevin was overstepping their agreement not to interfere in Irene’s affairs any longer.

“I’ll handle the situation here—” he began before his words were abruptly cut off.

“Sean, I understand you’ll investigate. But as they say, strength lies in numbers,” Kevin interjected with reasoning.

After a brief pause, Sean responded, “Then, take charge of the investigation. Begin with Leon, the male designer at L.Moon.”

He preferred to keep Kevin out of the loop on this matter.

If Leon and Irene’s relationship ended due to this situation, Kevin would slyly believe he still had a chance.

“Understood.” Kevin quickly ended the call.

...

Upon awakening, Irene found herself bound in an unfamiliar location.

Despite the darkness, distant car horns could be heard, hinting at movement.

Am I being transported out of Capitalis like merchandise?

She attempted to resist but found it futile.

Her body felt feeble and devoid of strength. Irene experienced a sense of disheartenment and helplessness.

Believing it to be a society governed by law, she couldn’t have fathomed that even someone as audacious as Zeke could operate without hindrance. She underestimated the sheer audacity of these individuals empowered by their authority.

Uncertain of the duration elapsed, the container door swung open.

Dragged out of the car by someone grabbing her collar, she was then transferred into another vehicle.

Several men in the car appraised her slowly.

“An exceptionally talented fashion designer like her would ensure that her children inherit her beauty and intelligence, making them stand out in your village.” The man outside the car smiled with subtle significance as he observed her.

Irene comprehended that Zeke intended to sell her to a remote village.

Then, her plea for help would be futile.

“I demand to speak with Zeke!” Irene struggled to shout.

The man outside the car lit a cigarette, placing it between his lips. “Miss, nobody said you could meet anyone. You had your chance earlier, but you didn’t seize it.”

With that, he forcefully shut the car door.

Irene attempted to reach the door, only to be pulled back by someone clutching her collar.

“Let go of me!” she screamed, wrestling against the grip.

The man beside her silenced her by covering her mouth with a handkerchief.

Irene inadvertently inhaled and promptly held her breath.

The man appeared to catch on to her strategy, smirking as he spoke in a menacing tone, “You can hold your breath as long as you like. Before you’re shipped off as a breeding machine, you might as well suffocate yourself into unconsciousness.”

Terror seized Irene, prompting her to take another breath.

Dizziness gradually crept into her consciousness.

When she came to, Irene found herself in a dilapidated room, furnished with only a hard bed and a filthy blanket.

Fear threatened to engulf her, causing uncontrollable tremors.

She had seen numerous instances where girls were kidnapped and taken to rural areas, exploited not just for breeding but also subjected to unwelcome advances, resulting in the erosion of their mental stability.

Falling from the bed, tears streamed down her face as she struggled to free herself from the ropes just as the door of the room clicked shut.

Irene shuddered violently, her eyes reflecting deep-seated fear.

...

Kevin paced anxiously while Abigail, equally unsettled, intermittently peered outside, her fingers clasped tightly together.

As October approached, the temperature in Capitalis plummeted, accompanied by a gentle drizzle.

When Sean arrived, he was still adorned with raindrops.

“How is the situation?” Kevin inquired urgently.

Sean’s face turned grave as he delivered the news. “There are reports indicating that she’s been transported to a rural area, but the precise whereabouts are still elusive.”

Irene had vanished for almost a week by now, and given the advancements in transportation, myriad possibilities loomed.

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Confrontation

Kevin’s fury erupted as he violently kicked the chair adjacent to the coffee table.

Josh attempted to soothe him, reminding him, “The chair is blameless...”

Sean interjected, “The hotel’s surveillance footage was inactive that day, leaving us devoid of any proof regarding Leon’s father’s involvement.”

Confronting Zeke without evidence seemed like an insurmountable task.

Even Leon found himself powerless against Zeke’s tactics.

Zeke’s ruthlessness knew no bounds; he was capable of binding his own son even under the threat of death.

Frustration evident, Kevin adjusted his tie hastily, declaring, "I won't be dissuaded. I'm confronting Zeke!"

Persisting down this course would only invite graver repercussions.

"What's your strategy?" Abigail inquired solemnly.

Zeke's actions had crossed all bounds of decency, pulling down someone who had fought hard to rise again.

Sean asserted, "I've addressed it. Delaying further would only spell trouble."

Gratitude flickered in Kevin's glance towards Sean, though he quickly succumbed to self-reproach, murmuring, "Had I intervened during Leon's relationship with Irene, perhaps this tragedy could have been averted."

Sean's response was unyielding. "What's done is done. Self-blame achieves naught."

Abigail, too, grappled with guilt as she reflected on her failure to remain vigilant when Leon's mom approached her and Luna.

The same night, Xavien relayed the news of Zeke's apprehension.

"I'll take charge. Whatever the outcome, the responsibility won't fall on your shoulders," Kevin asserted, rising promptly.

Though Zeke's standing in Capitalis might not be towering, his network and determination were formidable.

"Exercise caution," Sean warned, disinclined to involve himself further.

Kevin's dissatisfaction was palpable. "Your response seems overly fast," he rebuked.

Sean's response was unabashed. "If that's your take, then I'll just retire with my wife. Any questions?"

With a silent sigh, Kevin composed himself, patting Sean's shoulder resignedly. "Fine. If I require aid after your rest, remember to collect my remains."

"Isn't that rather excessive..." Abigail was rendered speechless.

Sean grinned and gently nudged Kevin, saying, "You should go."

The opportunity had been bestowed upon him, and now it rested upon his shoulders to harness it to its fullest potential.

Following Kevin's departure, Abigail couldn't help but cough. She inquired, "Is this endeavor truly feasible?"

"Why wouldn't it be feasible? Its efficacy hinges entirely on Kevin's actions." Sean draped his arm around her shoulder as they ascended the stairs.

"You seem quite enamored with the notion of a heroic rescue," Abigail remarked with a sigh.

A smile graced Sean's lips. "The success of this heroic endeavor relies heavily on Irene's participation. I'm merely providing Kevin with an opportunity; the outcome rests on his ability to capitalize on it."

Abigail turned to him, a query glinting in her gaze. "Admit it. You harbor aspirations for Irene to align with Kevin as well. Am I right?"

"I once deemed my thoughts excessively idealistic. It would be ideal if Kevin's family harbored no prejudice." Sean believed it would be beneficial for Irene to have someone to protect her.

In doing so, she would be less susceptible to harassment.

Abigail nodded, opting not to delve further into the matter. Her sole desire was for Irene's welfare, fervently hoping for her safety and unblemished fate.

As the night deepened, Kevin confronted Zeke, bound and shrouded in darkness. He ordered those present, "Remove his blindfold."

Upon catching sight of Kevin, Zeke sneered, "Well, it is you."

Kevin's reputation paled in comparison to Sean's; he was predominantly perceived as a diligent laborer. Zeke assumed he lacked Sean's prowess.

Had Sean been physically present, Zeke might have harbored some trepidation.

After all, Sean wielded a certain international renown and wasn't easily subdued.

“What? Do you doubt my capability to handle you in Sean’s absence? Questioning whether I can manage without him?” Kevin’s lips curved into a cold smile, radiating arrogance.

Before Zeke could retort, Kevin swiftly delivered a blow to his visage.

“Tell me, where have you taken Irene?” Kevin pressed down on Zeke’s face, his usual expressive demeanor replaced by a cold detachment.

Blood trickled from Zeke’s mouth and nose as his face was pushed into the ground, his gaze locked onto Kevin with a sinister grin. “Are you aware of the extent of my influence in Capitalis?”

“I’m aware of your extensive connections, yet I still confronted you without fear. You can’t even control your own son, yet you resort to hurting a woman. How can someone as despicable as you have a spouse?” Kevin stared at him with disdain, as if he were insignificant.

“And what kind of person are you? No wonder Irene, despite knowing that Leon pales in comparison to you, still seeks his favor!” Zeke sneered, his reputation for philandering spreading from Pendorf to Capitalis.

Kevin clenched his teeth, his cheeks tense, his gaze dark and foreboding. “Since when did Irene develop feelings for Leon? It’s none of your concern whether I’m worthy or not! You’re nothing but worthless trash, capable only of mistreating women!”

He took a couple of steps back and addressed the bodyguard beside him, “Is the needle prepared? Pierce his fingertips, one by one, until he speaks. If he faints, revive him by any means necessary. I won’t go easy on this scoundrel!”

“Kevin, how dare you!” Zeke exclaimed.

Kevin chuckled, “There’s nothing I wouldn’t dare. I have the support of Graham International, the Pearsons, L.Moon, as well as the Copper Family, Willis Family, and numerous other allies. Do you

think I’ll be intimidated by a lowly thug like yourself?”

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Still Counting on You for Protection

Screams echoed through the basement.

Zeke's fingers bled profusely. His whole body trembled as the stream of curses he spewed earlier vanished.

Kevin leaned against the car, staring at him coldly.

Saltwater splashed onto Zeke's wounds, making his face contort in agony. His fingers quivered violently until he couldn't take it any longer. In the end, he cried out, "Alright, alright! I'll talk!"

...

Irene lay weakly on the cold, hard bed, her neck chained to a stake in the ground.

Outside, rain pattered softly.

Wrapped in a thin blanket and suffering from blood loss, she teetered on the edge of death.

"This girl's got a fiery temper and nearly lost her life. Noah says we need to patch her up, or she'll die. We spent too much on her. She still needs to give birth to more sons for Walter's family. Otherwise, it's not much of an investment."

"What a waste of money! We even have to foot her medical bills..."

The voices of a man and a woman could be heard outside the door. Irene couldn't stop the tears from flowing.

Will I never find peace, not even in death?

"They say she's a university student from Capitalis, an artist with good genes. If she gives birth to a son who makes it to Capitalis, Walter's family will be known far and wide."

The man's voice was full of anticipation.

Soon, a short, chubby woman walked in.

She helped Irene sit up and handed her a bowl of medicine.

Irene gritted her teeth, refusing to speak.

The woman glanced at Irene's pale face and sighed before commenting, "You can't escape from this valley. Even if you die, they'll find a way to bring you back. Drink this medicine to stay alive. Staying alive is all that matters now. Think of your family."

"Let me go!" Irene cried.

Without hesitation, the woman pried open her mouth, forcing the medicine down her throat. "You're so naive, coming here from the big city, believing what anyone says. This is good stuff, made from the placenta of a healthy boy from the next village. Usually, we can't afford such luxuries."

At that, Irene leaned over and retched violently.

The rain hadn't let up in days.

The damp room and the infection from the old man's abuse had left Irene's wrists infected.

Despite trying to clean the wounds, her fever lingered.

Noah, the local doctor, checked her pulse and shook his head. "She needs to go to a hospital. This infection won't heal without proper treatment. If we don't get her there soon, she won't last."

Puffing on a cigarette, Walter grimaced. "We spent thousands on her, and now we have to spend more on a hospital bill!"

Suddenly, he stood up, grabbed a broom, and swung it hard at Irene.

She couldn't dodge, quickly passing out from the pain.

In a feverish haze, Irene felt herself being lifted.

She figured she was on her way to be buried in some unknown village.

With bloodshot eyes, Kevin carried her out of the dark room without a word, wanting nothing more than to burn the entire village to the ground.

Xavien saw Irene's battered face and knew they had no time to waste. "We need to get her to the hospital immediately."

"You handle the rest. The whole region's neck-deep in bride-buying. Clean it up!" Kevin muttered as he placed Irene on the helicopter.

Onboard, he removed the dark bed sheet covering her.

She was swollen and bruised from the beatings, and he could only imagine her agony.

"Irene, it's Kevin. I'm here to rescue you. You'll be alright," he whispered gently.

They hadn't realized how dire her condition was and didn't have a doctor with them.

The moment they landed in Capitalis, Kevin hurried Irene to the hospital.

In the emergency room, Kevin approached a doctor, his voice strained as he stated, "Check if she was assaulted."

The doctor nodded and headed inside.

Abigail, who was with Sean, overheard and approached Kevin. "If she was, would you just look the other way?"

"I'm not obsessed with purity. I just need evidence," Kevin replied angrily, adjusting his collar. Then, with a bitter smile, he added, "I'm no saint, so why expect her to be?"

"Xavien phoned me and mentioned that dealing with Irene's matter would be tough because the women there are exploited, and the authorities do nothing. That whole village is rotten," Sean muttered.

Kevin stayed silent.

"Don't be stupid. Don't throw your life away over them. Someone else will handle it. Your job is to protect Irene and keep her from doing anything rash," Sean said, reading Kevin's thoughts.

Any clash with the locals would surely end in a jail sentence.

“You’re safe now, but if anything happens to you, who’ll protect Irene next time she’s in danger?” Abigail added.

I Want a Divorce [On-Going]

5-7 minutes 10/27/2024

Love Beyond Measure

Just in the nick of time, Irene was saved, having teetered on the brink for two harrowing hours. The doctor stepped out to meet Kevin and whispered with a calming assurance, “She’s unharmed. You can breathe easy now.” Relief washed over Kevin, his joy immense.

Nearby, Sean and Abigail also exhaled in relief, thankful the crisis wasn’t as grave as anticipated.

The next morning, Irene awakened to the stark whiteness of the hospital ceiling. Confusion clouded her mind briefly before clarity returned. She tried to sit up, wincing from the pain in her hands.

Kevin, who had spent the entire night by her side, stirred at the sound and looked over. Relief flooded his face as he saw her awake.

After a night of staying by her bed, his shoulders and back ached terribly.

“How do you feel? Need anything to eat?” He reached for her hand.

Irene paused, overwhelmed, then murmured, “Was it you who rescued me?”

“Yes, but it wasn’t just me. Everyone who cares about you was looking.” Kevin replied, holding her hand with gentle care.

“You’re safe now. Everything’s going to be okay, hmm?” he reassured her.

Memories of her ordeal came flooding back, and Irene clung to Kevin, whispering a heartfelt, “Thank you...”

In the darkness, she pondered the consequences of accepting Leon's advances as she wanted to avoid Kevin. She wondered if things might have been different had she chosen another path.

Indeed, choices carried weight.

"Feeling hungry?" Kevin's voice was soft as he comforted her.

"I am. It's been a while since I've eaten anything," Irene admitted.

Kevin smiled faintly and suggested, "I'll have Abigail bring us something."

"Do you mean Miss Quinn? But she's expecting! We shouldn't trouble her. There are others who can help," Irene countered. "Then, I'll ask her brother instead. Would that be better?" Kevin found her thoughtfulness endearing.

Even amidst her distress, Irene's concern for others shone through.

Stepping aside, Kevin called Josh. "Yes, Abigail's quite the whiz with food therapy. It might be good for Irene, too. She needs nourishment." After a pause, Kevin added humbly, "Could you bring it over? I have to take care of her."

After the call, Kevin reassured a now restful Irene, "Don't worry. Josh's bringing it soon."

"Thank you," she said, grateful once more.

"No need to thank me. We all care about you," Kevin replied, settling back by her side.

Irene hummed in response

However, her thoughts were all over the place.

"What's troubling you?" Kevin inquired softly, noting her distant look as she gazed at the ceiling.

"What's become of Leon? Do you know how he is?" Irene was worried about the trouble she might have caused Kevin.

Kevin's face clouded over. "Why worry about him? When you needed help, he was nowhere to be found—not even at the company. If he had just cooperated, his father might have let you come back."

"Mr. Stewart... Is this the truth you've learned about him?" Irene inquired

Despite her doubts, from what she knew of Leon, he was a man of principle.

"Irene, you might think you know him, but do you really know his past?" Kevin had looked into Leon's history recently.

He found out that Leon had emulated his father during his school years.

He was known for bullying, his academic performance was lacking, and he was often involved in altercations.

It wasn't until his junior year that, worried about his younger brothers' futures, he decided to change.

He quit fighting and began studying, though he barely managed to get into art college.

Without his artistic talent and his father's resources, he wouldn't have made it into the prestigious art college in Capitalis.

"Mr. Stewart. I'm really quite tired. I need to rest," Irene said, not wanting to debate, especially given Kevin's role in her rescue

Kevin was utterly frustrated upon hearing that. However, at her avoidance, he tried to soften his tone and said, "Irene, I don't like speaking ill of others, but this time Leon genuinely did nothing."

"I understand," she replied quietly.

"What exactly do you understand? You aren't still thinking about him, are you?' Kevin's frustration flared: didn't rescue you expecting anything in return, but surely you aren't still considering him? He and his father are good-for-nothings!"

belongs ©

“Mr. Stewart. I really am very tired...” Irene deflected, believing it best to wait for Leon’s own explanation of his actions and involvement. Kevin’s frustration boiled over at that point.

Is it true that nice guys finish last?

He couldn’t believe he might lose out simply for not being bad enough.

Josh and Abigail entered the room with breakfast, immediately sensing the strained atmosphere between Kevin and Irene.

Abigail took a seat at the edge of the bed, watching Irene as she ate.

Meanwhile, Josh ushered Kevin out of the room and asked, “What’s going on with you guys? Have you two had a falling out again? She’s a patient of Kevin’s. She was just starting to appreciate your help, and now: you’ve upset her.” to Swnovel.net 2)

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Kevin was visibly agitated, frustration evident in his voice as he growled, “Is she still caught up with, Leon? She even made an appearance since this whole mess.”

Started A man who vanishes. when she’s in trouble, showing no concern for her wellbeing... What’s so appealing about that?”

I Want a Divorce [On-Going]

5-6 minutes 10/27/2024

The Art of Persuasion

Josh exhaled deeply. “Maybe she’s dealing with issues she can’t discuss.”

Kevin’s frustration mounted. “What troubles could she have that would make her choose Leon over anyone else?” “Keep it down! They might hear us from the room,” Josh warned gently, patting Kevin’s shoulder.

Love is complex; sometimes, all we can do is hope for the best.

Inside the hospital room, Abigail heard the men outside and turned to Irene. "What do you think about all this?"

"It's not that I'm head over heels for Leon. I don't believe he would disappear without reason. Anyone who knows him would say the same," Irene replied, finding the whole situation odd.

Maybe Leon is struggling with his own issues, especially with a father like his.

"That makes sense. Leon's always been reliable at work. It's only natural you'd stand by him. If it were me, I'd also doubt he'd just do nothing." Abigail supported Irene, sensing pressure from Zeke might be influencing the man.

A father's command could overpower even the most defiant spirit, regardless of age. As long as the father was in control, even the most rebellious child might have to question their conscience.

"Could you talk to Mr. Stewart for me? I don't know what to say to convince him..." Irene asked, visibly distressed

"Mr. Stewart is set in his ways, and I can't sway him. You should talk to him yourself," Abigail suggested, preferring to stay out of their personal matters.

Before this turmoil, Kevin managed to keep his temper in check. Now, with everything unraveled, he couldn't ignore it "Okay," Irene replied, deciding to tackle the situation herself without burdening Abigail

After Irene was done with her meal, Abigail stood up. "I'll leave you to handle things with Kevin. Try to stay calm." "Thank you, Miss Quinn."

Abigail then left the room, signaling Josh to follow.

"Wait a minute! You're leaving so soon? Aren't you going to try to change Irene's mind?" Kevin asked, puzzled by Abigail's lack of intervention after overhearing his earlier conversation with Josh.

"What's there for me to change? Emotions must be navigated personally," Abigail responded coolly, clutching her lunch box. "You know very well that feelings are too delicate for outsiders to tamper with," Josh added A disappointed Kevin stood there silently. In the end, he muttered, "I'd hoped you'd back me up."

Abigail gave a short laugh before countering, “And what if your feelings aren’t permanent? I might end up apologizing for a lifetime.”

After Irene’s return, Leon handed in his resignation

“Do you think he’s resigning because of guilt toward Irene?” Abigail asked Luna as she read the email.

Luna reviewed the email thoughtfully. “It’s unusual he didn’t resign in person, though.”

“Given his family dynamics, it’s best we don’t interfere,” Abigail reasoned, believing Irene’s feelings might change after this ordeal.

And if she does end up with Leon, who knows what Zeke might do?

“That’s true. Besides, the company has assigned all the projects. You can focus on the designs from home, away from the electropics— it’s better for the baby,” Luna advised, touching Abigail’s growing stomach, remembering, “I got what it was like when I was pregnant with Larry.” swnovel.net

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“Isn’t Larry yet to be officially named? Perhaps you and Josh should decide,” Abigail suggested, her hands also resting on her belly, her gaze tender. Luna smiled. “We’ve been so used to calling him Larry... Maybe it’s time to ask him what he thinks when we get home.”

Amidst the hustle and bustle, Independence Day approached.

Irene was discharged from the hospital and returned to work.

On Independence Day, Leap Gaming Technology launched a new collaborative product that caught Abigail’s attention

“Word has it Damon and his wife bought a hundred sets today to distribute to” friends. They’ve been -> loyal to-) the game for nearly a decade” Luna shared with Abigail as they scrolled through Instagram on her phone early in the morning.

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Leaning back and sipping her milk, Abigail mused, ‘ ‘He’s been with that group for’so long. They’re all old friends: ‘from over a decade ago. If I coult, I’d do the same, maybe on a smaller scale.” –

As they chatted, Lina and Colby arrived with bags, having caught an early morning flight. “Grandma, Grandpa, why are you up so early?” Abigail stood, setting down her milk

Luna, who was feeling better lately, helped with the bags.

She also stood up and assisted Abigail in carrying things for them.

Lina entered in slippers. “Oh, take it easy! You’re pregnant. Watch where you’re stepping.”

“Exactly! Luna, you have to take care. You’ve been feeling better, but don’t strain yourself, alright?” Colby advised, handing off his bags to the nanny who greeted them

Luna smiled reassuringly. “I’m doing much better now, thanks.”

Lina and Colby still held onto two paper bags, reluctant to hand them over to the nanny.

I Want a Divorce [On-Going]

5-7 minutes 10/27/2024

Dreams for the Future

As everyone settled into the room, Abigail began making tea.

Lina quickly stepped in. “Take your time. I’ve brought something special for you and Luna.” From their bags, the two elders pulled out elegant red brocade boxes.

Lina handed one to Abigail, while Colby slid his across to Luna.

“These are blessed gold locket. We had someone chart Larry’s future, and this one is meant for him. The other is for your unborn child, assuming all goes well,” Lina explained to both Abigail and Luna.

Luna, pleasantly surprised that Larry was included, accepted the gift with a smile. “Thank you so much, Grandpa and Grandma.” “There’s no need for thanks. We’re family. after all.” Colby

dismissed with a casual wave. Abigail examined her locket, admiring the intricate craftsmanship.

“So you traveled all this way just to deliver these lockets?” Abigail tucked them away safely, expressing her gratitude. “Thank you for going to such lengths.”

“We’ve been meaning to do this for some time, but catching you two has always been a bit of a challenge...” Lina confessed with a resigned laugh. Abigail felt slightly guilty. “We’ve settled down now. Once the baby is born, we’ll hold the wedding. The paperwork is already complete.”

“Stability is key. With secure jobs, our priority is our children, got it?” Lina affirmed, squeezing Abigail’s hand. “I prayed for Analise yesterday and told her about your pregnancy. Oddly, I dreamt of her last night. She told me to look after you both.”

Abigail was moved. “Thank you for thinking of her.” “You’re always so polite with us. By the way, is it just you two at home today?” Lina scanned the room, noticing the absence of other family members.

“My parents thought you’d be here later, so they went out early to shop for groceries. You’ve surely not had breakfast, yes? Let’s eat together,” Abigail commented, standing and taking Lina’s hand.

“I’m actually quite hungry. I had just a nibble before the flight to avoid feeling queasy,” Lina admitted, standing up alongside Abigail. Luna smiled and guided Colby toward the dining area

“Why didn’t you let Sean know you’d be arriving now? He had to leave early but mentioned he’d pick you up once you called.” Abigail settled into a conversation with Lina at the table

“Although we’re old, we’re quite accustomed to flying on our own. Your grandfather traveled a lot in his younger days, and I often joined him. These days, traveling is so convenient. We really don’t need much help,” Lina replied with a warm smile.

Lina’s eyes often drifted toward Abigail’s belly during breakfast. “It’s just starting to show. You can have a closer look once we’ve eaten.” Abigail chuckled, guessing Lina’s thoughts.

Perhaps it was the delay in getting pregnant that made everyone so affectionate toward her belly. From Sean to her parents, and even Josh, they all enjoyed a moment with it, and now two more were eager to join in.

Post-breakfast, Colby gingerly touched her belly while Lina couldn't help but lovingly stroke it, murmuring to herself. "Only four months and it's already so big. Seems like the little one is thriving."

"Do you think so?"

Abigail couldn't help but chuckle.

Since her pregnancy, she had developed a robust appetite, gaining nearly fifteen pounds, and her face was noticeably fuller.

"I wonder if twins run in our family?" Colby pondered aloud, deep in thought

"No guesses needed, Grandpa. We checked, and it's not twins. I just indulged a lot during the pregnancy," Abigail responded playfully. As they conversed, there was a stir at the door.

"Don't let them be alone together. They'll just bicker!" Eilane announced as she walked in.

"Why are they already arguing? They were supposed to be childhood sweethearts, yet it doesn't seem to be the case," Damon remarked resignedly. 'ite)

The room soon filled with familiar faces. Lina recognized only a few, like Josh, Kevin, and Cameron, among the new arrivals

"These folks are friends from Capitalis," Abigail introduced them to Lina.

Eilane arrived with her daughter, 2. Yanine Copper, and Cameron came with his son, Calvon Hopkins. Alfie, still unmarried, brought his gir friend, Shaunee. .to –

Irene needed no introduction.

"Why are you here so early, Old Mrs. Graham?" Kevin entered with a smile.

"Happy Independence Day, Old Mrs. Graham!" Irene greeted.

"You're fitting in well on this side, aren't you?" Lina pulled Irene aside for a chat.

As the room hummed with lively chatter, Abigail gestured for Shaunee to come over and join the group.

Just as the adults were settling in, a small commetion broke out among the children

"Larry, stop being mean!" Yanine's voice rang out.

"You're the one being mean, not me! This is my car!" Larry retorted, gripping his toy car tightly, his face showing his annoyance. Nearby, Calvin, always the quiet one, sat quietly next to Isla, watching the others squabble.

"Go and calm her down," Isla whispered to Calvin.

Observing the children bicker, Abigail mused aloud, "It makes me wonder when they grow up. will they turn out like us, lifelong friends?"

'I don't want her to be my friend. > She's always taking my stuff!" Lacry grumbled in a youthful whine, < clutching his toy closer before he traited off to find Josh. Coritent ~

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One More

Yanine furrowed, her face filled with unhappiness.

"You're always playing with it. Letting Yanine have a turn won't hurt." Josh squatted, attempting to calm Larry down.

"We didn't get a sufficient number of toy cars." Abigail grumbled, directing the nanny to buy several more of the same type. The nanny smiled before departing

"The atmosphere in the house has suddenly improved." Lina laughed heartily.

As individuals progressed in age, they would typically develop a preference for some activity in the house. Given the presence of the occupants in the house and the three kids, experiencing happiness was inevitable for her.

Even Colby took a breather from his preferred poker game and crouched beside Larry, watching him control the toy car.

When Sean returned, he stopped and watched the kids' commotion from the doorway.

There are quite a few people here, Sean pondered in silence as he changed his footwear and headed inside. His eyes fell on Abigail. The noise created by the kids playing left him unconsciously anticipating the prospect of having his own children.

“What led Mr. Norris to look for you?” Abigail approached him while holding his hand and inquiring.

“He informed me about Callen’s release of a TV series trailer online, which resembles my story. So, he inquired whether I sold my story to other directors,” he replied. Mr. Norris was only appeased after Sean clarified matters.

Callen visited the police station to retrieve the case files related to this subject matter.

Fortunately, the police station was not informed of the details, and Sean had reassured Mr. Norris that he and Abigail would share the information on Instagram after the TV show was broadcast. Regarding Callen, Sean harbored no concerns.

“Callen might have some foresight, but I don’t think her skills are satisfactory. She seems to have too much emphasis on the romantic side of things. For a drama that’s focused on deception, the audience might not be able to connect the abundance of romantic elements,” she remarked casually.

Sean nodded slightly. “Romance can also be a selling point, especially if there are high-profile actors in the cast and crew.”

He thought, That pure talent might not measure up to individuals proficient in marketing and promotion. Mr. Norris is incensed upon discovering her actions. He favors filming on-site, which results in a slower pace of progress than Callen’s. If Callen seizes the opportunity before others, it may give the impression that he is rehashing old ideas.

Nevertheless, Sean had no intention of resolving this matter with Mr. Norris. He recounted the experiences of both himself and Abigail. Mr. Norris was responsible for independently managing the entertainment industry’s intrigues.

When Lina noticed Sean had returned, she expressed her displeasure by smacking him. “Abigail is pregnant. Can’t you allocate more time to be at home with her? Is your financial situation so dire that you feel compelled to work on Independence Day?”

“I always spend time with her whenever possible. Are you turning your back on me as soon as you’re here?” Sean feigned annoyance. Abigail restrained her smile.

By the time Lawrence and Scarlett returned, they saw a room packed with people and couldn't contain their laughter.

"Let me give you a hand." Lina held Scarlett's hand. Shaunee and Eilane were intrigued by Josh's esports room as they helped each other upstairs "Keep an eye on the kids," Sean directed the nannies overseeing the living room.

"I can do it!" Calby volunteered himself.

The adults then divided themselves into smaller groups before entering Josh's esports room. As soon as they entered, they could tell that the room was spacious, with rows of computers and a large screen. Adjacent to the screen were several game consoles and a separate snack cabinet and refrigerator.

Upon opening the fridge, Alfie saw the variety of drinks, alcoholic and non-alcoholic. Then, he got a bottle of SparkleFizz and handed it to Shaunee. "Here you go, Shaunee."

"Give one each to everyone!" she exclaimed while holding the bottle.

"Thanks, but no, thanks," Abigail declined promptly, citing her strict adherence to a specific diet during pregnancy. "Smoking is prohibited in this area. Abigail is pregnant," Sean cautioned the group.

On the verge of retrieving a cigarette, Kevin discreetly put the box back.

"Wanna have some games with us?" Eilane posed the question to the group.

Damon had already switched on the computer and gave a relaxed sigh. 'I'll need to come here more often. Abigail has a kid, so Yanine can play with the kid. She's causing a ruckus at home, which is draining me and my wife. We don't even have time for recreational activities.' Content

Despite Damon's severe demeanor and diligent work ethic, he was passionate about gaming.

"Oh, the anticipation before the child's birth. Now that the child's born, there's dissatisfaction," Elaine joked as she sat next to him. The group assembled collectively, engaging in games, viewing theatrical performances, and relishing their time together.

"Do you know the baby's gender?" Isla asked Abigail in a whisper, taking advantage of everyone being engrossed in the games.

“No, we have chosen to maintain the element of surprise,” Abigail responded. She and Sean prioritized the baby’s health over determining its gender during the prenatal check-ups.

“I’m thinking of having a second child. Having a nanny has definitely made my days a tad bit easier. Calvin also desires a younger sister,” Isla uttered with a bashful grin.

“Just go for it if that’s your wish,” Abigail responded nonchalantly while reclining on the plush couch.