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Chapter 2

Daniel's phone blinked on the dining table. As usual, he never even tried to hide his infid elity in front of me.

Did he really think I was that naïve?

The sound *of* water running in the bathroom

echoed through the house. With a sigh, I struggled with my pregnant belly and slowly st ood up. Hoping for a quick solution, I tried all the

obvious. passwords from our wedding anniversary and our birthdays, but none of them worked. My hands trembled as I entered the date from Cara's ultrasound report.

Success!

Biting my lip in frustration, I sneered as I opened the messaging app's storage. Sure enough, Cara's profile picture was there. Their avatars matched.

He said, "If love lasts forever," and she replied, "Does it matter if we're together every day?"

I clicked into the chat and was greeted by a flood of "Darling, I miss you" and "Baby, wh en will I see you again?" Determined not to let my emotions take over, I activated the sc reen recording feature.

Next, I opened Daniel's shopping app. To my dismay, his order history was filled with pr egnancy supplements, skincare products, and makeup. They were all sent to the same address. Every delivery was made to Cara.

With one hand resting on my restless baby, I took screenshots with the other. I sent the videos

and screenshots to myself, then carefully deleted the evidence. Satisfied that everything was in order, I placed the phone back exactly where I'd found it.

Waddling back to the bedroom, I lay down on my side. The weight of betrayal settled ov er me as my heart felt like it had a hole ripped. through it, and I couldn't stop shivering fr

om the cold weight of betrayal. After seven years of marriage, I had been reduced to a c ruel joke.

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When Daniel came out of the shower, his phone rang. From my vantage point, through the crack in the door, I saw his face soften as he answered the call. Glancing toward the bedroom, he carefully stepped out onto the balcony, closing the door behind him.

Curiosity gnawing at me, I forced myself up and stood by the door, watching him. I could n't make out the words, but his expression was tender, with a slight smile. At some point, whoever was on the other end must have said something that made him frown in discomfort. But soon enough, he caved, agreeing with a subtle smile.

The chill in my chest deepened. Slowly, I turned and dragged myself back to bed, feeling as if the air had been sucked out of the room. Even breathing felt like a burden.

A few minutes later, I heard Daniel tiptoe back inside. One of his. hands rested on my belly while the other gently brushed the hair from my forehead.

His voice was soft as he whispered, "Baby, there's an urgent project at work. I need to g o in."

I turned my head and stared deeply into his eyes. My last shred of hope flickered weakly as I asked, "I don't feel well. Could you stay?"

For a brief moment, I thought that if he chose to stay with me instead of running to her, I could try to forgive him.

But then I remembered: Once the kite string snaps, it can never be fixed.

As expected, Daniel gave me a troubled smile, trying to reassure me. "Sweetheart, this project is essential for the company. Lean't miss it." "I'll call Mom to come over and stay with you, okay?"

A wave of nausea washed over me, goosebumps prickling my skin. Still, I managed to f orce out the words, "Drive safely."

I lay there in silence, watching him get dressed and leave. Slowly, I got up, holding my b elly, and made my way downstairs to hail a taxi. "Maplewood Estates," I told the driver.

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He sped through the streets, and just as we arrived, I saw Daniel's car pull in. My stoma ch clenched as I asked the driver to park behind a tree. From the back seat, I watched a s Cara fluttered into Daniel's arms like a butterfly.

He caught her gently, placing a hand on her flat stomach. His face softened with a look of tender reproach, and he playfully tapped her

nose.

Cradling my belly with one hand, I took out my phone and switched to video mode. With trembling fingers, I watched through the screen as Daniel lifted Cara into the passenger seat and carefully buckled her seatbelt.

My eyes burned, but I blinked back the tears.

"Driver, follow that car," I said.

The car climbed onto the overpass, neon lights flashing by outside the window. In a daz e, my nails dug into the window frame until they split, the sharp pain snapping me back to reality. I put my bleeding fingers into my mouth and bit down hard.

As the car wove through the city streets, I repeated to myself repeatedly, "Olivia, endure it. The pain will pass."

When we arrived at Riverside General Hospital, I scanned the QR code to pay the drive r.

As I stepped out of the car, the usually quiet driver turned to me and said, with unexpect ed kindness, "Miss, take care of yourself. For the baby's sake, don't hurt yourself."

Since discovering Daniel's affair, I hadn't told a soul. The secret felt like poison, slowly e ating away at me from the inside. The kindness of a stranger felt like a fresh breath of ai r, pulling me back from the abyss.

I gently closed the car door, offering him a small smile. "Don't worry, *Sir.* No—one can hurt me anymore. Because I'm ready to throw the trash where it belongs."