

# Mr. Edwards' Unraveled Life chapter 151

## Chapter 151

Gwen scoffed, her voice laced with defiance. "If Siena dares to show up here again, she won't leave unscathed! We're not in the wrong, and we won't let anyone push us around."

Norah's heart swelled with emotion. Her parents were willing to stand up for her no matter what.

With a hoarse voice, she replied, "I don't want you to have to fight with anyone, Mom. I'll handle things with Siena myself."

Although Siena didn't seem to want Norah around, Kevin's refusal to grant a divorce left Norah considering if Siena might offer a way to change his mind.

After cooking dinner for her parents, Norah headed out. As she reached the community gate, she noticed a black luxury car across the road. Through the open window, she saw Kevin's face, shadowed but clear, with a lit cigarette between his fingers.

Hesitating only a moment, she approached the car and opened the passenger door, catching his attention. She slid into the seat, immediately hit by the overpowering scent of smoke—a scent she could hardly stand lately, likely due to her pregnancy.

Kevin turned to her, his tone icy. "Did you groom Scarlet to be your replacement?"

Norah blinked, startled. She hadn't expected that question but quickly shook her head. "No."

If it hadn't been Scarlet, someone else would have taken the role. Scarlet was just particularly good at adapting, reading people's moods. She was clever and shrewd—skills Kevin clearly valued.

Kevin let out a humorless laugh. "Do you know what Scarlet did as soon as you left? She's practically trying to take over your spot. If you didn't approve of this or actively encourage it, do you think she'd be so bold?"

He flicked his cigarette out the window, his voice growing colder with each word.

Norah met his gaze, her voice steady. "Kevin, you've known me for years. If I had arranged that, I'd admit it."

There was a heavy silence before she continued, “Your mother already spoke to mine. Both our families want this divorce. If you think I’m pushing for it, then fine—why don’t you file in a month yourself?”

She looked ahead, avoiding his gaze as she suggested it.

Kevin’s mouth twisted in a bitter smile. “You think marriage is some kind of game?”

“It’s not,” Norah replied quietly. When she’d first married him, she’d been full of hope, imagining a life where her love could win him over. But that dream had faded into the emptiness between them.

Kevin’s expression was hard, but before he could respond, his phone rang. Bianca’s voice, weak and trembling, came through the line. “Kevin... why haven’t you come to see me? I feel like I’m dying...”

Kevin frowned. “Aren’t you already receiving treatment?”

Bianca hesitated, realizing something was off. “Didn’t Mr. Kian tell you I called?”

“All he said was that you were poisoned,” Kevin replied.

Norah froze. Poisoned? Bianca was in the hospital because of poisoning?

Bianca’s voice turned desperate. “Kevin, I’m not faking this! There are medical reports—everything points to the soup. It’s even been sent for testing.”

Understanding dawned on Norah. Bianca had been poisoned by the tonic soup. Siena, who adored Bianca, had sent her the soup to help her recover. Siena couldn’t be behind it. The only person left to blame... was Norah.

Norah spoke, her voice as steady as she could manage. “I only delivered the soup to the hospital at your mother’s request. I never opened it, and if I had tampered with it, Ms. Lynch would have noticed right away.”

Bianca’s voice sharpened on the other end. “I never said you poisoned it, Norah. Are you confessing to something?”

Kevin interrupted, tired of the tension. “Let’s wait for the test results. That will clear things up.”

“Are you coming to see me?” Bianca asked, her voice wavering. But Kevin ended the call abruptly, leaving her with only the busy tone.

Inside the car, the silence stretched on. Kevin made no move to start the engine, and neither of them spoke, the air heavy with unresolved tension.

Finally, Norah broke the silence. “I’ve said what I needed to. If you don’t believe me, there’s nothing more I can do. I came back to pack my things.”

“So, are we divorcing?” Kevin’s voice was sharp, his anger barely contained.

Norah met his gaze, steady but firm. “We’re going to divorce sooner or later, Kevin. I’ve held off to avoid fighting with you, but look at what’s happening. Siena despises me and wants you with Bianca. Even Bianca, who’s lying in the hospital poisoned, would rather see us apart.”

Kevin’s eyes narrowed, a storm brewing in them. “So, because you’re afraid of confrontation, you’re ready to throw in the towel? To walk away because people are talking and causing drama? Do you even know who you are?”

Norah felt her heart tighten. She knew exactly who she was—his hidden wife, his trusted secretary. But now he was putting the blame on her.

She met his gaze with a calm strength. “Kevin, I’m sorry if I’ve complicated things for you. To avoid more trouble, maybe it’s best we draw the line now. Otherwise, I fear my presence will only keep affecting you.”

Her voice was composed, but inside, a quiet pain bloomed, one she’d carry long after their marriage ended.

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Kevin sat in silence, his lips pressed into a thin line, his expression cold and unreadable.

“Norah, you’re really playing the pity card for this divorce. Maybe I should just get you into show business?” His voice was low and mocking, cutting through the quiet.

Norah was stunned. “You think I’m putting on a show?” she asked, disbelief flashing across her face. “After all this time by your side, don’t you know me better than that?”

She couldn't help but feel disappointed. "Think what you want. This marriage was always a contract, nothing more. Outside of that, I have my own life, and you have no say in it," she said firmly.

Kevin didn't respond, just threw the car into drive and headed back to the mansion. Norah kept silent, resigned to get her things and finally move on. She wouldn't tolerate being wronged—not by Kevin, not by anyone.

As soon as they arrived, she went straight to gather her belongings. The media had been running wild with accusations, painting her as a schemer, even hinting that she'd poisoned Bianca to get closer to Kevin. Unable to bear the lies, Norah had released evidence online proving her innocence. She posted only one message: "I will not tolerate slander."

The tide of public opinion quickly turned. Netizens now accused Bianca of orchestrating the scandal to gain sympathy. Comments flooded in, marveling at Bianca's supposed acting skills and warning others about Kevin's company, Banyan Media. They painted her as a master manipulator, willing to use her fame and resources to bring Norah down.

Norah didn't bother reading further. She had done what she needed to; she cleared her name. Now, she just wanted to leave this life behind.

Packing her last bag, Norah turned to find Kevin standing in the doorway, his gaze cold and hard.

"I was going to show you the proof," she said, "but the backlash online was brutal. I had to clear my name." She paused, gauging his reaction. "Whatever happened with Bianca is between you two. My part here is over."

Kevin didn't care for the online noise. His gaze remained fixed on the bag in her hand. "Norah, don't test my limits," he said, his voice icy.

Norah felt the frustration build. "Is proving my innocence pushing your boundaries, Kevin? Or are you angry because it involves Bianca?"

His silence answered her. For all his composure, his loyalty to Bianca was clear. Norah felt a pang of bitterness but reminded herself that leaving was her only option.

Kevin grabbed her bag and set it aside. "Go back to your room," he commanded, a finality in his tone.

Norah's eyes flashed with defiance. "I made myself clear in the car. We are in a contract marriage, nothing more. You have no right to keep me here."

She reached for the bag again, her tone calm but resolute. "Ending this marriage will protect you, too. It's not public, and no one has to know. Even Bianca wouldn't expose it; it works in her favor."

Kevin's jaw tightened. "Are you really set on divorce?"

"Yes," she said without hesitation.

Better a clean break than endless pain, she thought. She had to think about her child now, and she didn't want it raised in this toxic environment. This was her baby—hers alone.

Looking at Kevin, her voice was cold but determined. "Kevin, let's go to the Civil Affairs Bureau. This can be amicable, or it can get ugly. The choice is yours."

Kevin's mouth curled into a sardonic smile. "Do you really think I'll let that happen?"

She held his gaze, unflinching. "And do you think I'll just keep giving in?"

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Norah's dark eyes were filled with determination. She was different now, more resolute than ever.

"Fine. I'll meet you at the Civil Affairs Bureau next Wednesday," Kevin said coldly.

Norah thought it over. Wednesday was still days away, and anything could happen in that time. But she was ready now; she didn't want to wait around, giving time for more issues to surface. "Why not do it today? I don't want to drag this out."

Kevin's tone was ice-cold. "Bianca's situation isn't settled yet."

Norah clenched her jaw. Despite her innocence being proven online, Kevin's mistrust lingered. Still, he had agreed to the divorce. That was at least something.

Back in his study, Kevin lit a cigarette as he took a call from his assistant, Kian.

“Mr. Edwards, since Madame posted her evidence, public opinion has turned against Ms. Lynch. People are saying she staged the whole thing, and it’s now affecting the company.”

Kevin had expected the backlash. “What’s the status on the gift analysis? Any leads on who’s behind the poisoning?” he asked, his voice sharp with impatience.

Kian replied, “Nothing definitive yet. All signs still point to Madame as the prime suspect, though she’s proven her innocence. If anyone’s likely behind it, it’s Bianca.”

Kevin frowned. The Bianca he knew was self-sacrificing, even putting herself in harm’s way to help others. This scheming behavior didn’t align with the person he thought he knew. “Keep tabs on Bianca. Leave the online chatter alone for now.”

“Understood,” Kian said, ending the call.

But Kevin’s phone rang again. This time, it was his father’s number. He hesitated, but ultimately answered. To his surprise, it was Siena, not his father, on the line.

“Kevin, haven’t you seen the news? Bianca’s reputation is on the line. If this keeps escalating, her career could be ruined,” Siena said urgently. “Kevin, we have to clear this up.”

She continued, clearly emotional. “The gift only went through my hands and Norah’s. Sure, Norah’s evidence looks convincing, but she could have faked it. You need to make Norah confess. Bianca deserves an explanation!”

Kevin cut her off, his tone steely. “I’ll handle it, Siena. I don’t need instructions from you.”

He hung up without a word to his father.

Siena was fuming as she turned to her husband, Martin, who was sitting calmly with his tea, detached from the family’s drama. Her frustration boiled over. “You came back here for the first time in forever, and you can’t even be bothered to support your son or me! Did you hear how he spoke to me?”

Martin, unbothered, set his teacup down and responded, “Kevin said he’d handle it. Let him.”

“Handle it?!” Siena’s anger flared. “He’s so entangled in this that he doesn’t know what he’s doing! He’s going to let everything spiral out of control.”

Martin's gaze was steady but cold. "Whatever happens is his business. Stop meddling."

Siena's voice wavered, tears welling up. "He's our son! How can you act like this doesn't matter?"

But Martin simply stood, grabbing his things. "I'm leaving. Don't bother with dinner." And with that, he walked toward the door.

As he left, Siena's anger and hurt bubbled over. "Go ahead! Don't come back, not ever!"

Martin ignored her outburst, got in his car, and drove away without a backward glance.

With no work commitments and plenty of time on her hands, Norah tried to keep herself busy. She got a call from Gloria, who was quick to notice her friend's distress.

"Norah, I saw everything online. You should have taken my advice and used this opportunity to finalize your divorce. You'd be free by now."

Norah sighed, explaining that Kevin had agreed to meet her at the Civil Affairs Bureau on Wednesday. While she was relieved, the whole situation still felt hollow. Three years, and she was still leaving empty-handed, without Kevin's heart.

Sensing her friend's disappointment, Gloria offered, "I'm hosting an art exhibition tomorrow. Why don't you come stay with me tonight? Afterward, we could even go abroad to clear your mind."

Norah hesitated, recalling how Kevin had once suggested taking her to Foutumsally for a getaway. But that was then. "Thanks, Gloria. I'll come by tonight."

"Perfect," Gloria replied. They ended the call, and Norah went to find Kevin.

"I'm heading over to Gloria's," she told him. "I won't be back tonight, and maybe not tomorrow. Are we still going to Foutumsally, or was that just talk?"

Kevin's gaze was unreadable. "What's this, Norah? Planning a last trip before the divorce goes through?"

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Kevin's words hit Norah like a slap, icy and devoid of sympathy.

What she held onto so tightly now seemed pathetic to him, almost laughable.

Trying to mask her hurt, Norah scoffed, “Just making the most of a free trip, that’s all. If there’s nothing else, I’ll get going.”

Kevin didn’t respond, so Norah turned and left without another word.

Meanwhile, Kevin’s phone rang. Cleo was on the other end, her voice filled with panic.

“Mr. Edwards, Ms. Lynch... she... she cut her wrists! She kept saying she didn’t want the blame pinned on Norah, that she couldn’t stand people dragging your company through the mud. I tried to help her, but she was set on proving her innocence by... by dying!”

Kevin’s heart raced. “How is she now?”

“They’re still trying to save her, but it doesn’t look good... you should come,” Cleo said, barely holding back tears.

“I’m on my way.”

Kevin grabbed his keys, hurrying to his car. As he drove out, he saw Norah waiting for a taxi by the side of the road.

He pulled over and rolled down the window. “Get in. I’ll drop you at Gloria’s.”

Norah looked at him, uncertain. “I’ve already called a taxi.”

He stared at her, leaving no room for argument. Silently, she canceled the ride, absorbing the penalty fee as she slipped into his car.

The atmosphere was thick with tension. Norah could feel Kevin’s mood shift, the darkness surrounding him. Then, a notification popped up on her phone: Bianca attempts suicide in bid to prove her innocence.

The realization hit Norah hard. Kevin must be driving her straight to Bianca, assuming she was responsible for all of this. Panic bubbled up, and she turned to him, voice shaking, “Kevin, stop the car. I don’t need you to drive me anywhere. I had nothing to do with Bianca’s suicide attempt!”

Kevin remained silent as he kept driving, but he reached over and locked the doors, ensuring she couldn’t jump out in her state.



Finally, he pulled over and turned to her, speaking softly but firmly. “Norah, you’re misunderstanding. I’m not taking you to Bianca. I’m just getting you to Gloria’s, like I said.”

He tried to reassure her, his tone gentle yet weary, but Norah wasn’t convinced. “Bianca’s deathly important to you, isn’t she? You practically built an entire entertainment company just for her, and now you’re acting like none of this affects you at all! I’ve done nothing wrong here, Kevin, I just want a divorce, as we both agreed to at the start.”

Seeing her distress, Kevin reached out, gently holding her shoulders. “Norah, listen. You can even call Gloria right now if you want to confirm it. I’m only taking you to her, nothing more.”

Still shaken, Norah took out her phone and called Gloria. Her voice trembled as she relayed the location, and Gloria, hearing the fear in her voice, assured her, “I’m coming.”

With her hands still trembling, Norah ended the call. She looked over at Kevin, his calm expression somehow both reassuring and disconcerting.

“See? I’m not trying to involve you in this,” Kevin said softly. He glanced at her with a steady gaze. “You have nothing to do with Bianca’s actions. I understand that, Norah.”

Norah’s voice was barely a whisper. “I hope you’re right. Bianca’s suicide attempt feels like some sort of twisted, ultimate proof of her innocence. But I would never do anything to harm her—or anyone else. If you still have doubts, go ahead and investigate.”

Kevin’s voice softened even further. “You’ve already shown proof of your innocence. I don’t need any more investigations.”

Norah fell silent, trying to process his words, still feeling the weight of doubt.

He broke the silence first. “Stay with Gloria if that’s what you need. And about that trip to Foutumsally... we can aim for next Friday or Saturday.”

Norah gave a slight nod, signaling the end of their conversation.

Gloria arrived soon after, and as Kevin unlocked the doors, Norah quietly slipped out. She walked over to Gloria’s car, relieved yet emotionally drained.

As Norah climbed in, Gloria gave her a concerned look. “What happened? Why’d you need me to come get you?”

Norah explained with a sigh, “Siena had me send Bianca a gift, and Bianca ended up poisoned. I proved my innocence, but now Bianca tried to commit suicide, and for a moment, I thought... I thought Kevin was taking me to her, like he wanted me to pay for it.”

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Gloria grasped the situation instantly.

With a smirk, she muttered, “A suicide attempt, huh? Who knows if she actually meant it. No one tampered with the package—it was sealed when it arrived. Bianca must be playing her own game.”

Bianca was using her suicide attempt to divert public outrage, hoping to paint herself as the innocent party. It was a risky move, but some would take it as proof of her innocence and turn their suspicions back onto Norah.

Norah didn’t respond, but a heavy weight settled in her chest.

Whatever Bianca’s intentions, Norah knew Kevin wouldn’t want to see anything happen to Bianca, nor would Siena. They both held Bianca in high regard.

As they drove, Gloria couldn’t resist bringing up a bitter truth. “This is the 21st century, Norah. Yet here we are. You’re still technically married to Kevin, but is your mother-in-law really setting things up so that Bianca can play second wife?”

Norah sighed. “Honestly? Maybe.”

It was clear Siena adored Bianca and likely would have preferred her as Kevin’s wife. If things had gone Siena’s way, Bianca would probably be married to Kevin by now, with kids of their own.

Norah leaned her head back against the seat. “Gloria, I’m exhausted. Can you wake me up when we get there?”

“Sure thing. Get some rest.”

Gloria adjusted the temperature and kept the drive smooth and steady, allowing Norah to drift off.

Meanwhile, Kevin arrived at the hospital.

Bianca was lying on the hospital bed, pale as a ghost, her wrists wrapped in thick white bandages. As soon as she spotted Kevin, her dull eyes brightened. “Kevin... you came?”

His face was tight, his voice cold. “This was reckless, Bianca. It was foolish to put yourself through this just to make a point.”

He knew how powerful the word innocent was, but in the end, even proving innocence could mean nothing if someone had to die for it. Those harsh online critics wouldn’t feel guilty; they’d move on, leaving only tragedy in their wake.

Tears streamed down Bianca’s face, falling one by one. “It’s not foolish to me. I couldn’t bear to see people accusing me. I didn’t even mention Norah’s name. I started my own investigation. How was I supposed to know that Norah would throw everything online?”

“There’s no way to control public opinion. Don’t do something this reckless again,” he said, pulling up a chair beside her bed.

Bianca’s voice was hoarse as she looked at him with pleading eyes. “Kevin, I’ve put your company at risk. I’m sorry—I let you down.”

Kevin’s voice softened just a little. “I’ve already told you not to worry about what others think. No more of these stunts.”

A weak smile softened Bianca’s pale face. “Thank you, Kevin. I’m so grateful you don’t hold this against me.”

She sniffled, eyes still brimming with unshed tears. “I want to get discharged. I can’t stand being here with those awful comments still out there.”

Kevin replied, “I’ll have Kian make the arrangements, but you’ll need to stay a few more days to recover. Kian will also set up some extra security, so you don’t have to worry.”

Bianca forced a smile, but Kevin’s distant tone stung. Despite her attempts to draw him closer, he hadn’t even mentioned Norah, which made it clear his protective instincts lay with her instead.

“I know I’m in good hands,” Bianca whispered, trying to keep the hurt from her voice. “But... some people online are ruthless. I just couldn’t take it anymore.”

Kevin handed her a tissue, brushing her words off lightly. “This will pass. If you need anything else, Kian can help you.”

Without giving her a chance to respond, he stood and left, leaving her with the hollow ache of rejection.

Half an hour later, Gloria pulled into the driveway at home, but she hesitated to wake Norah, who was still sound asleep.

Norah eventually stirred on her own, blinking at the familiar surroundings. “Gloria, I thought you were going to wake me?”

Gloria chuckled. “You looked so peaceful—I couldn’t bring myself to do it.”

Just then, Gloria’s eyes narrowed, spotting a figure standing outside the car.

A man in a white shirt and black trousers waited nearby, holding a bouquet of pink roses. He wore gold-rimmed glasses, and his expression was one of determined anticipation.

Gloria rolled down the window, her tone sharp. “Why are you here? I told you not to come around anymore.”

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The man’s smile didn’t waver, and his voice remained calm and gentle. “You mentioned it, so I thought I’d bring you a little something along the way.”

Gloria’s expression hardened, and she scoffed. “A ‘little something’? You mean flowers?”

“Exactly.”

He didn’t deny it.

Gloria’s tone turned icily cold. “I’m not interested. And if you keep bothering me, I won’t hesitate to call the police.”

Norah, sitting beside her, was taken aback. She hadn’t expected Gloria to be so indifferent towards this man, who, by all appearances, seemed perfectly pleasant.

Still unfazed, the man offered a hopeful smile. “I went out of my way to get these for you. Flowers and a lovely woman—they go hand in hand. Could you just accept them for my effort’s sake?”

“There’s a trash can on the left. Feel free to drop them there.” Gloria didn’t even glance his way as she spoke.

Then, she rolled up the window without a second thought.

The man stood for a moment, flowers in hand, before eventually walking away, shoulders slumped.

Norah couldn’t help but watch him go, sensing a bit of sadness in his retreating figure.

“Let’s head inside.”

After a moment’s pause, Gloria spoke up, unbuckling her seatbelt and gesturing for Norah to follow.

Gloria led Norah to the supermarket downstairs, saying, “Normally, I just grab takeout. But with you here, a pregnant woman, I wouldn’t dream of letting you eat greasy, processed food. Only problem is, my cooking’s awful, and the kitchen gets smoky. So, I’m thinking about hiring a meal-prep chef for us.”

Norah looked puzzled. “A meal-prep chef?”

“Yep. They come over two hours before each meal to cook on-site. Costs anywhere from \$100 to \$500 per meal, but for three meals a day, I’d have to schedule them ahead,” Gloria explained, tapping on her phone.

Norah raised an eyebrow. “Wouldn’t that get expensive? If it’s for three meals a day, why not just hire a live-in chef? Although, I won’t be here that long, so I can handle it myself.”

Gloria considered her words and nodded thoughtfully. “You’re right. If you were staying longer, a live-in chef would be more practical. But I’m not letting you in the kitchen while you’re pregnant. I’ll place the meal orders online for the next few days, at least.”

Norah looked at her in surprise. “Wait, you’re ordering a chef online?”

Gloria chuckled. “You really need to get with the times. You can get anything online these days, and some services are fantastic. Don’t you want that divorce from Kevin?”

Norah was a little startled by the mention of her marriage. Gloria's modern approach made her realize just how much of her life was confined to legal documents and contracts.

Gloria shook her head. "Kevin probably had you wrapped up in so much paperwork and luxury, you never saw how the rest of us live. But hey, this is the digital age. If the local lawyers won't take your case, plenty of online platforms can connect you with lawyers from out of town."

Norah nodded slowly. "You're right. Makes sense."

Gloria gave her a determined look. "We'll wait and see if your Mr. Edwards holds up his end of the deal. If not, you go online, file the papers, get that divorce, and move on. You don't owe him a thing."

"Agreed," Norah said, resolved.

Meanwhile, Kevin was back at the Edwards Group offices.

"Norah, make me a coffee," he called out as he rubbed his temples, exhausted after hours of paperwork.

But the words barely left his mouth before he remembered—Norah wasn't there. She'd left. The quiet in the office felt sharper, emptier without her presence.

A rich aroma wafted through the air, carrying a faint hint of osmanthus. Kevin looked up to see Scarlet entering, a steaming cup in her hands.

"Mr. Edwards, here's your coffee," she said respectfully, approaching his desk.

Scarlet was taller than Norah, with a different complexion and more understated features. Her outfit, a fitted dress with bubble sleeves, highlighted her figure, the plunging neckline just barely showing her collarbones.

Kevin noticed and his expression immediately turned cold. "Did I ask you to make coffee?" His voice sliced through the room like a blade.

Scarlet kept her smile in place, unshaken. "Mr. Edwards, I noticed you've been working all morning. And Ms. White specifically instructed me to bring you coffee whenever you looked tired."

Mentioning Norah's name softened Kevin's reaction, though he still watched her with a critical eye.

Scarlet stood waiting with the coffee in hand, and when he didn't respond, she cautiously asked, "Do you still want it, Mr. Edwards?"

Kevin's frown deepened. "Take it away. And don't wear that kind of outfit to work again."

"Yes, sir."

Scarlet's composure faltered, but she quickly recovered.

Just then, there was a sudden clattering sound as Scarlet stumbled and the coffee cup slipped from her hands, spilling across the floor.

"Oh! I'm so sorry, Mr. Edwards," she stammered. "I didn't mean to drop it! I'll clean it up right away. Um... would it be okay if I borrowed your hairdryer?"

Kevin's eyebrow lifted. "What does my hairdryer have to do with cleaning up coffee?"

Scarlet looked down, her voice low. "I spilled some on my clothes. It would look bad to take a break just to change, so I thought I'd rinse it out and use a hairdryer to dry it quickly."

Her explanation was perfectly reasonable on the surface.

If she hadn't brought it up herself, Kevin might have given her permission to go home and change. But something about her excuse felt off.

He stood, looking down at her with a trace of skepticism.

Scarlet scrambled to her feet, but as she did, she stumbled again, reaching out as she fell forward, straight towards Kevin.

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Kevin's lips curled into a faint smile.

Thud!

Scarlet hit the floor hard, looking a bit humiliated but genuinely hurt. Tears pooled in her eyes as she apologized softly, "I'm so sorry, Mr. Edwards. I think I twisted my ankle. I... I don't deserve your kindness."

Kevin looked down at her, his voice icy, “You’re right—you deserve none of it. Do you think a little act like that will make me fall for your tricks?”

Scarlet’s eyes widened. “Mr. Edwards, you’ve misunderstood. I really just slipped! These cheap shoes... the heel snapped,” she muttered, glancing at her broken shoe.

Unimpressed, Kevin turned away, coldly responding, “Well, if it’s money you need, go see Kian for an advance.”

“Thank you, Mr. Edwards!” Scarlet said, bowing slightly.

“Get out,” he said curtly.

Since Scarlet was hired on Norah’s recommendation, Kevin figured he’d tolerate her, but he had no patience for her theatrics.

Back at Gloria’s home, Norah relaxed on the sofa, engrossed in a news article about a young girl caught in a scandal. The headline unfairly blamed her, turning public opinion against her despite her innocence. Norah’s heart ached for the girl.

Suddenly, Gloria’s irritated voice filled the room, “For the last time, Lincoln, I don’t need you coming over! If you can’t understand basic English, maybe you should go back to kindergarten!”

With a frustrated sigh, Gloria tossed her phone onto the coffee table.

Norah glanced up. “Lincoln? The same guy who showed up with roses earlier?”

Gloria nodded, rolling her eyes. “Yep. He’s Johnny’s business partner, can you believe it?”

Norah knew Johnny was Gloria’s half-brother, and their relationship was strained at best.

“Is that why you dislike him so much?” Norah asked.

“Not entirely,” Gloria replied, exasperated. “I told him flat-out that I’m not interested, but he keeps showing up—he’s like a stalker! It’s unsettling.”

Norah was about to respond when her phone buzzed with a message in her college group chat. The message was from Micah, announcing a class reunion combined with a celebration for Preston Erickson’s newborn son at Red Leaf Villa.



“A little ridiculous, don’t you think? Preston’s baby turns a month old, and he’s not even the one inviting us—he has Micah doing it,” Gloria grumbled.

Micah quickly replied in the chat, explaining that Preston had been at the hospital recently, so he was helping with arrangements. Norah turned to Gloria, “I actually ran into Micah during a check-up, and he told me Preston’s son has a congenital heart condition.”

“Ah, so it’s more than just a reunion—it’s a fundraiser,” Gloria realized. Her expression softened.

Looking at Norah’s belly, Gloria’s tone became serious. “Norah, you need to take care of yourself, okay? Regular check-ups, no junk food, no heavy lifting, and stay away from anything toxic. If you don’t have somewhere else to stay, you can live here. I’ll take care of everything—even when the baby’s here, milk formula and all!”

Norah chuckled, “You’re making it sound like I’m some kind of endangered species. I’m just pregnant, Gloria, not a national treasure!”

Gloria patted her belly. “No, to me, you’re more precious than any treasure!”

She could already imagine Norah’s child—charming and adorable, with the best traits from both parents. Gloria sighed, “Are you sure you don’t want to tell Kevin about the baby? This is his family’s only grandchild—the Edwards’ heir! You could even claim half the estate if things go south.”

Norah smiled ruefully. “If Kevin knew, he’d probably make me end the pregnancy.”

Gloria’s expression turned sour. “Why would he want that?”

They both knew the answer—Bianca. Gloria’s face darkened. “If murder weren’t illegal, I’d handle Bianca for you myself!”

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Norah smiled slightly. “Come on, Gloria—if it wasn’t Bianca, someone else would still get in the way between me and Kevin.”

Gloria’s expression darkened. “Fine. I’ll drop it.”

The housekeeper soon finished dinner, but Norah barely ate, feeling exhausted.

The next day, Norah and Gloria went to an art exhibition. As a well-known painter, Gloria tried to go incognito, but it didn't take long for someone to recognize her in the crowd.

There were simply too many people.

"Norah, go on home," Gloria said, dashing off as fast as she could to avoid the attention.

Left alone, Norah was about to leave when she spotted Kevin approaching the exit. Their eyes met, and for a moment, time seemed to freeze.

Norah snapped back to reality, intending to slip past him, but Kevin blocked her path. "Norah, practicing your disappearing act?"

"No," she replied, not meeting his gaze. "Just between jobs right now, so I won't be around much."

Kevin's tone was quiet but firm. "I came to find you. Come back with me. There are some documents that need your attention."

Without waiting for her answer, Kevin turned and began walking, clearly expecting her to follow. After a moment's hesitation, Norah did.

As they reached the car, Norah couldn't resist asking, "Couldn't Scarlet handle the paperwork?"

Kevin replied dryly, "You brought Scarlet into the office. Now you want her in my private life, too?"

Norah pressed her lips together. "That wasn't my intention."

Kevin didn't respond.

Kian was in the driver's seat, and within forty minutes, they arrived at the Edwards mansion. Once inside, they headed directly to the study, where Kevin sat at his computer. Norah made him a cup of coffee, but the faint scent of osmanthus reminded him of Scarlet's attempt to impress him the previous day.

Kevin frowned. "Don't make this kind of coffee again."

Surprised, Norah nodded. He used to love this coffee and had even praised her for her creativity. She simply responded, "Got it."

After a few silent moments, Norah gathered her courage and asked, "With the new civil affairs regulations, they're requiring a one-month waiting period. Should we set up an appointment at the Civil Affairs Bureau tomorrow?"

She kept her head down, avoiding Kevin's gaze. She had resolved to distance herself, even if it hurt.

Kevin responded with a simple, "Hmm."

Seeing his agreement, Norah said, "I'll make you another cup of coffee." She returned to the kitchen, but just the scent of the coffee beans made her nauseous. She took a deep breath, drank a glass of water, and waited for the feeling to pass before heading back to the study.

When she opened the door, a strong smell of smoke hit her, mixed with the unmistakable aroma of alcohol. She winced, her stomach churning again.

Kevin glanced at her, his brows furrowing. "You've been to the doctor, right?"

"Yeah, I'm taking medicine," she replied, her voice tight.

His eyes narrowed. "You said that a while ago. I'll ask Cody about your medication, or have him send over something more effective."

The medication she'd been taking—prenatal vitamins and folic acid—would be an obvious giveaway. Panicking slightly, she diverted the topic, "It's only been a day or two since I last mentioned it, and didn't you give me some stomach meds already?"

Kevin recalled that and nodded, still watching her closely.

Norah quickly set down the coffee. "I didn't add any osmanthus this time. I'll head to my room to organize a few things."

He didn't respond, but as she left, she could feel his suspicious gaze on her back.

Once in her room, she remembered she hadn't taken her prenatal vitamins the night before. She took the bottle out, but the sudden sound of a knock startled her, and the bottle slipped from her hands.

Kevin's tall figure filled the doorway, his expression cold and unyielding. "Show me your medication."

Her heart pounded. She handed over a bottle she'd disguised as vitamins. Kevin inspected the pills, noting they were marked as vitamin A.

"If it's just vitamins, why all the secrecy?" His dark gaze seemed to see right through her.

Trying to stay calm, she replied, "You caught me off guard, that's all. I'm not hiding anything."

Kevin's expression softened slightly, though he still seemed unconvinced. "Let Cody check you out."

Her pulse quickened. Cody was a top doctor; he'd immediately recognize her prenatal vitamins.

"Honestly, Kevin, I've already seen a doctor. He said it's just stress and some bad eating habits. I don't want to go back just for that."

Kevin stepped closer, gently brushing a hand over her head. "It's only a checkup. Cody doesn't bite."

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Norah was taken aback. Kevin had never been this gentle with her before.

If it weren't for the three-year agreement, and if Bianca weren't in the picture, she might've been swayed to stay by Kevin's sudden warmth.

Norah nodded. "I know Cody's not a monster. But Kevin, there's nothing wrong with me. Why don't you believe me? Do I look sick to you? Or do I look... pregnant?" She threw it out there, hoping to crush any suspicions Kevin might have.

Kevin didn't respond immediately, but her words seemed to trigger something. He studied her closely, recalling how recently she looked thinner, a bit pale.

"I'll have the maid prepare some good food for you, and you should stay here while we're going through this cooling-off period," he said, his voice low and rough.

Norah nodded, resigned.

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That night, as she got ready for bed, Norah chose a loose, checkered nightdress—something that didn't cling to her shape. She lay down tensely, but soon Kevin joined her in bed.

"Relax. I'm just here to hold you," he murmured in the dark.

Men's promises were flimsy, and Norah knew better. She lay still, wary of him noticing her belly. "Let's just sleep, Kevin. Tomorrow, we have an appointment. After that, I'll start sleeping in a separate room. I don't want any... accidents."

Kevin didn't argue like he usually would. "During the cooling-off period, if you were to get pregnant... we'd just go forward and have the baby."

Norah froze.

Was he hinting he didn't actually want a divorce? That he wanted to have a child with her? Without Bianca around, she might've believed him.

She rejected the idea quickly. "I don't want to have a child with you, Kevin. Let's just end this cleanly. We've had our contract marriage, each of us getting what we need. I'm still young—I don't want to waste more time."

"Just sleep."

Kevin turned away, and Norah stayed wary, lying stiffly until she fell asleep. When she woke, she found herself nestled in his arms.

She felt a chill. Had Kevin done something while she was sleeping?

"I didn't do anything," Kevin said as if reading her thoughts. "Just held you while you slept. Now, get up and come downstairs for breakfast." He watched her pull away and get dressed quickly.

She went down first and took over breakfast preparations from the maid, making porridge, egg noodles, and even stewing pears.

When Kevin came down, she greeted him warmly, "Breakfast is ready."

The sunlight streaming in bathed Norah in a golden glow, and for a fleeting moment, Kevin felt a sense of peace, a memory of simpler times. But he knew it wouldn't last—they had an appointment at the Civil Affairs Bureau.

They drove there together. Kevin drove, as he had when they got married. But today, the sky seemed clearer than it had on their wedding day.

Inside, they waited nearly half an hour at the divorce counter. When their turn came, the staff glanced over their marriage certificates and explained, "The soonest we can set you for is two months out."

Norah's heart sank. "Two months? Isn't the cooling-off period only a month?"

"Yes, but demand is high, so that's the earliest we can do. And since there are no disputes, it won't go to court," the staff added.

The realization hit Norah like a punch. By then, she'd be visibly pregnant. How could she divorce Kevin with a baby on the way? Would he even let her go?

Her mind raced, and a new idea formed: if she could prove Kevin's attachment to Bianca, she could push for a quicker divorce. With proof and the terms of their marriage contract, she could argue to void the marriage.

"Norah," Kevin's voice broke through her thoughts. "Are you really so thrilled about divorcing me?"

His gaze bore into her, questioning her sudden shift from despair to determination.

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Norah wasn't happy, but she kept her composure. She didn't have many options.

"Yes, I'm happy," she replied, knowing full well it was a lie.

Kevin saw right through her. "Is this 'better way' you're talking about getting a lawyer involved?"

Norah didn't deny it. After a brief silence, she turned to him. "Mr. Edwards, we're headed in different directions now."

She had no intention of going with him; she was on her way to see a lawyer. Kevin understood her intentions, and there was no chance he'd offer her a ride out of kindness.

"The Edwards family has a lot to handle," he commented dryly.

"Right," she replied, keeping quiet after that.

Once they arrived at Edwards Group, Kevin headed to his office, while Norah returned to her desk.

Scarlet, one of the newer employees, seemed surprised to see her. "Ms. White, I thought you'd decided not to come in today."

Scarlet's words caught Norah off guard. She was polished and dressed in a professional suit—something that, for whatever reason, felt irritating to Norah today. Kevin clearly had high hopes for Scarlet, who was hired to eventually replace her. But somehow, hearing her say this struck a nerve.

"It's not time for me to leave yet," Norah replied coolly.

Scarlet moved closer. "Ms. White, before you go, I have a few things I'd like to ask you."

Before Norah could respond, Kevin's voice cut in from across the room. "Does her business have anything to do with you?"

Scarlet turned red, clearly rattled. She had thought Kevin was in his office, but he'd overheard everything.

"Mr. Edwards, I didn't mean anything by it," Scarlet said, trying to explain, her eyes glued to the floor like a guilty child.

Kevin didn't let her continue. "Get out of Edwards."

Scarlet was stunned, unable to process what just happened. She looked to Norah for help, but Norah stayed silent. She wasn't about to cross Kevin, especially when his decisions were final.

Kevin noticed Scarlet hesitating. "Leave. Don't make me say it a third time," he barked, his tone brooking no argument.

Scarlet, visibly upset, had no choice but to leave without another word.

Once she was gone, Norah glanced at Kevin. "I'll start looking for a new assistant."

"Make sure you don't bring in another Scarlet," he replied coldly, turning his back to her, his tone icy.

Norah knew Kevin was furious. His reaction seemed out of character—he'd been quite optimistic about Scarlet, yet he dismissed her without a second thought.

Being left to pick up the slack after Scarlet's departure, Norah found herself overwhelmed. Her body felt heavy with fatigue, a constant reminder of her pregnancy. All she wanted was a moment of rest, to just lie down and sleep.

"Norah."

Kevin's voice startled her back to attention. She moved toward him immediately. "Yes, Mr. Edwards, what do you need?"

Without looking up, Kevin gave her a series of tasks. "Pick up the Jenkins delegation from their hotel. Set up the lunch location, and book a private venue for tonight."

"Yes, sir," Norah replied, resigned.

She went to the underground parking lot, heading toward her car. As she opened the door, she felt a sudden grip on her wrist. Startled, she turned to see Scarlet standing there.

"Ms. White, you're the one who brought me into this company," Scarlet pleaded. "You know what kind of person I am. Can't you talk to Mr. Edwards for me?"

Scarlet didn't want to leave and was prepared to do whatever it took to stay. She'd been waiting in the parking lot, hoping for a chance to speak to anyone who could help her.

Norah pulled her wrist free. "Mr. Edwards made his decision. You know his temperament. Do you think he'll change his mind?"

She wasn't willing to risk her own standing with Kevin over Scarlet. She knew that in Kevin's eyes, everyone was replaceable—everyone except, perhaps, Bianca.

Seeing Norah's resolute expression, Scarlet's last hopes seemed to crumble. "Did I do something wrong? You were the one who told me to ask questions. I thought I was following your lead, Norah. Are you just upset that I'd be replacing you?"



“What are you talking about?” Norah’s initial goodwill toward Scarlet evaporated. She hadn’t expected Scarlet to turn against her so quickly.

Norah kept her voice even, not wanting to prolong the exchange. “Mr. Edwards decides who stays and who goes. Focus on your skills, prove your worth, and earn respect.”

With that, Norah shut the door, effectively ending the conversation.

As Norah drove to the hotel, Scarlet was left standing alone. Scarlet had seen enough in her time at Edwards Group to know there was something between Norah and Kevin. The fact that he had stepped in so fiercely for Norah was not lost on her.

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It took less than an hour for Norah to reach the hotel, where she was greeted by Jamie Jenkins, a strikingly beautiful young woman from the Jenkins family.

Jamie wasted no time in voicing her irritation. “Your Edwards team keeps switching people without notifying us. Do we mean nothing to you?”

Norah, calm and collected, was unfazed by Jamie’s attitude.

“Get Kevin to come here himself,” Jamie continued, crossing her arms. “Otherwise, this deal is off.”