

Mr. Edwards' Unraveled Life Chapter 324

Chapter 324

Bianca eagerly awaited the moment Norah would embarrass herself.

Norah had failed as a reporter and had foolishly ventured into TV show investments, only to lose everything. Bianca relished the thought of her eventual downfall into poverty.

Kevin, sitting beside Bianca in the Rolls-Royce parked outside, remained silent, though his gaze betrayed a flicker of emotion.

Bianca tried to lean against him, but Kevin's tone was cold. "You've posted so much online. When will you get married? And what about the antidote?"

A sly smile tugged at Bianca's lips. "Relax. I'm about to start filming, so I don't have much time. Besides, Norah can't die yet—and I won't let her. She'll suffer a bit more, but I'll make sure she stays alive and healthy in the end."

Kevin's eyes hardened. "I hope you stick to your word."

Bianca looked at him affectionately. "Do you think I'd bet against Norah and risk losing your trust? I wouldn't throw myself into that fire pit. I want a grand wedding, to be the happiest woman alive—and only you can give me that."

She rested her head on his shoulder, savoring the rare moment of calm. She had longed for this, and now it was finally within reach.

It was clear: achieving her dreams required effort and, sometimes, manipulation.

At the film and television base, Emani rushed Norah. "Hurry up, we're already late!"

Norah, wearing loose clothing and black-rimmed glasses, carried a large bag and tried to keep pace. She had recently started wearing glasses due to nearsightedness—likely caused by long hours of work and screen time.

As they hurried along, they crossed paths with Kevin and Bianca.

Emani hesitated but still greeted politely, “Mr. Edwards.”

Norah barely spared them a glance.

Bianca’s voice broke the moment. “Norah, congratulations! You’re an investor now.”

Norah looked at her, offering a polite “thank you,” though her gaze hinted at doubt about the success of Bianca’s project.

Bianca pressed on smugly, “Did you know I chose the lead actress for *Demon Bone*?”

Norah replied coolly, “Sorry, I’ve been busy with new projects and haven’t kept up with entertainment news.”

Bianca smiled. “Well, we’re not exactly on the same level. I heard the script for your project isn’t by a well-known director. Be careful investing in it.”

Norah met her gaze firmly. “I have my own vision, but thanks for your concern.”

With that, Norah and Emani walked away, heading to their smaller, more modest set.

While *Demon Bone* boasted big budgets and a bustling crew, Norah’s production had fewer resources—but they were determined to create something great.

The day was hectic. Nellie, holding a script and sweating, shouted, “Cut!”

Sasha, dressed in war-torn modern attire, exuded a sense of brokenness and resilience that matched the script perfectly.

Norah reviewed the footage, impressed by Sasha’s ability to embody the heroine’s emotions.

Suddenly, chaos erupted as an actor suspended by wires collided with others on the set, causing a commotion.

“We’re sorry,” said the actor, clearly indifferent.

Emani, frustrated, shot back, “Your space is huge. Why are you intruding on ours?”

The suspended actor smirked. “We’re just on the edge. If you’re upset, maybe it’s because you’re encroaching on our territory.”

“You—” Emani began, but Nellie intervened. “Let’s focus. We’ll get through this.”

Still, the disruptions continued, delaying their shoot.

Norah, fed up, suggested a tennis scene to keep things moving. The actor playing the tennis player quickly got into character, striking balls with impressive precision—some of which “accidentally” hit the suspended actors.

The disruptions ceased immediately.

“Well done, Norah!” Emani cheered, finally feeling vindicated.

During a shared meal break, Bianca took the chance to flaunt her generosity. “Kevin, this is Auntie’s famous stew. You should try it.”

She then announced loudly, “There’s plenty for everyone! Please help yourselves!”

The opposing crew gushed over her kindness, but Emani muttered under her breath, “What a show-off.”

Norah ignored the theatrics, reviewing footage on the camera.

Just then, Steven arrived, carrying a large bag.

“Steven! What are you doing here?” Norah asked, surprised.

“First day on set—I had to come support you. These are treats for everyone.”

“Wow, haute cuisine!” someone exclaimed.

Emani, clearly unimpressed by Bianca’s earlier stew, chimed in loudly, “Finally, something worth eating!”

The crew couldn’t help but laugh, enjoying the well-timed gesture of kindness.

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This news soon reached Bianca.

Determined not to lose face in front of Norah, Bianca forced a smile and addressed the crew, “Kevin and I will treat everyone to a feast. Order whatever you want—it’s on us!”

“Wow, that’s generous!”

The crew buzzed with excitement.

“Thank you, Bianca! Thank you, Mr. Edwards! You truly deserve to be Mrs. Edwards one day—so kind and thoughtful!”

The compliments inflated Bianca’s pride, and she beamed. Supporting the title of *Mrs. Edwards* in front of everyone gave her a sense of triumph. She added, “Everyone’s working so hard. A full stomach means more energy for work. This is also Kevin’s and my prayer for our project—may it be a huge success!”

“To a big hit!”

The crew raised their glasses, though they were only filled with soft drinks.

Meanwhile, Bianca’s assistant, Cleo, was rushing around, noting everyone’s orders and managing logistics.

Emani watched Bianca with a mix of disdain and disbelief. She couldn’t understand why Norah had divorced Kevin, or how Kevin ended up with Bianca. It was all so messy, and the more Emani thought about it, the angrier she felt for Norah.

Kevin’s marriage to Norah had been kept private, yet here he was flaunting his relationship with Bianca for the world to see. It felt like a betrayal of Norah’s feelings.

Emani’s frustration deepened.

Norah, on the other hand, seemed unaffected as she observed them. She caught Steven’s eye and offered him a warm smile. “This is really good—you should try it.”

She picked up a snack and held it out for Steven to taste.

Steven hesitated, visibly surprised. He hadn’t expected Norah to feed him, but he quickly leaned forward and took a bite. “Mmm, it’s delicious,” he said with a wide smile.

Kevin saw everything, and his expression darkened immediately. His sharp gaze bore into Steven, and his clenched jaw radiated cold fury.

Norah continued casually, "You've been looking out for everyone all day. Have you even had a proper meal?"

Steven responded gently, "It's second nature to take care of people. I don't mind."

"Well, let me take care of you for once." Norah handed him another piece of food, which Steven accepted with a chuckle.

Then she grabbed a tissue and wiped Steven's mouth.

Smash.

The sudden sound of shattering glass made everyone freeze.

Kevin had crushed his goblet in his hand.

"Mr. Edwards, are you all right?" someone asked anxiously.

Bianca, alarmed, immediately grabbed his hand. "Kevin, let me see! Oh no, you're bleeding!" She turned to Cleo, panicking. "Cleo, bring the first-aid kit!"

Cleo scurried off to fetch it.

But Kevin seemed unbothered by the bleeding, as if the physical pain couldn't compare to what was raging inside him.

Norah noticed the scene and met Kevin's cold, accusatory eyes. She smirked, her tone laced with mockery. "Better get that bandaged quickly, or it might leave a scar."

Bianca shot Norah a sharp look. "Norah, I'm trying not to hold grudges for the past, but could you stop making sarcastic comments?"

Norah shrugged, her voice icy. "It's not sarcasm—it's the truth. A cut like that is nothing for him."

Bianca snapped back, "Even so, I care about him."

She reached for Kevin's hand again. "Let me treat it before it gets worse."

Kevin pulled his hand away abruptly. "No need," he said curtly. "It's just a scratch. It'll heal on its own."

"But—" Bianca protested, only for Norah to interject.

"Listen to Bianca," Norah said, her voice dripping with irony. "She's worried about you—might even lose sleep over it."

Kevin's expression grew even darker, his irritation barely contained.

Norah turned away, no longer interested in their theatrics.

Emani leaned closer to Norah, whispering, "Ugh, I can't stand Bianca's fake concern. She's so over the top."

Norah smiled faintly but said nothing. She had dealt with Bianca's facade too many times to be fazed by it now.

Later, Norah excused herself to the restroom. After splashing water on her face to cool off, she turned to leave, only to find someone blocking the door.

Kevin.

Before she could say anything, he slipped inside and locked the door behind him.

Norah frowned, her voice sharp. "What are you doing? This is the women's restroom!"

Kevin's intense gaze held hers, and she felt a moment of unease. But then she steadied herself, her tone turning cold. "What do you want?"

After a tense silence, Kevin finally spoke. "Have you been avoiding me?"

Norah narrowed her eyes. "And if I have?"

His brows furrowed. "That night... did I say anything to you?"

Norah blinked, momentarily caught off guard. But then she smirked and said lightly, "You were drunk. Whatever you said doesn't matter."

Kevin's jaw tightened. "Norah—"

"Look," she interrupted, stepping around him. "You have a fiancée now. This kind of behavior isn't appropriate. You should focus on treating the woman you chose properly."

With that, she brushed past him and yanked open the door, walking out without looking back.

Once outside, Norah paused, her chest tightening with an inexplicable ache. For a brief moment, she felt like she'd lost something, but she shook the thought away and forced herself to move on.

Back with the crew, Steven was preparing to leave.

Norah walked him to his car.

"I'm heading abroad," Steven said suddenly.

The news startled her. “A business trip?”

“Not exactly.” He hesitated before explaining, “It’s risky. I don’t know what’ll happen, but I have to go.”

Norah frowned, concern flashing across her face. “What kind of work would force you into such danger?”

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Steven smiled, his gaze lingering on Norah. “Maybe it’s faith,” he said softly.

“Can’t you just not go?” Norah’s voice held a trace of worry.

Steven’s expression remained steady. “I have to. Don’t worry about me—I’ve weathered plenty of storms. I’ll come back safely, I promise.”

The words felt out of character for him. Why take such a risk, especially when the danger seemed so evident? Norah’s concern deepened, her face heavy with unease. She didn’t want him to go, but she knew she couldn’t stop him.

“Can I hug you?” Steven asked suddenly. “I might not see you for a while.”

Norah hesitated, then stepped forward. It felt like the embrace of an old friend—a bittersweet moment of comfort.

Steven’s arms wrapped lightly around her back, his touch reassuring. He gently patted her shoulder. “Don’t worry, everything will be fine.”

Norah’s voice softened. “You said it’s dangerous. Of course, I’ll worry.”

Steven’s smile deepened, his voice dropping to a near whisper. “Hearing that from you makes it all worthwhile.”

They held each other for a brief moment before parting. Steven waved at her as he walked away, but the gesture felt final—like a farewell.

“Steven!” Norah called out just before he left.

He stopped, rolling down the window to meet her gaze.

“Come back soon,” she said, her tone filled with quiet urgency.

Steven nodded gently and drove off, disappearing from her view. Norah stood there, her heart uneasy. She couldn’t shake the feeling of something being out of place—a tug in her chest that lingered long after he was gone.

Over the next few days, Norah poured herself into filming. The drama wasn't mainstream and didn't aim to be. It had no paparazzi following or flashy promotion. In contrast, Bianca's show was thriving. The combination of a strong IP and daily gossip about Bianca and Kevin's romance had turned them into an overnight sensation.

Soon, Bianca and Kevin had a devoted fan base, and the public quickly forgot Kevin's earlier proposal to someone else. Social media moved on, erasing the past in favor of the next trending topic.

Meanwhile, time flew by, and Norah couldn't ignore the changes in herself—most notably, her growing belly. She found it increasingly difficult to move comfortably.

"Norah, are you overworking yourself? You barely stand up these days," Nellie observed, concerned.

Norah smiled faintly. "I'm fine. It's just my stomach—it's getting harder to manage."

Nellie's eyes dropped to Norah's belly, and a look of realization crossed her face. "Hey, is it just me, or is your stomach getting bigger? Wait... are you pregnant?"

Norah's lips pressed together. Before she could respond, Emani chimed in, her tone laced with nonchalance. "Of course she's pregnant. You didn't know?"

Nellie gasped, wide-eyed. "Norah, you're so young! Are you married?"

The question hit a nerve. Norah kept her composure. "I'm divorced," she said simply. "This child is mine alone."

Nellie's expression shifted to one of admiration. She grabbed Norah's hand tightly. "You're amazing. Not only are you carrying a child, but you've also invested in my drama. You're like a guardian angel to me!"

Norah smiled, brushing off the praise. "It's just business. I believe in this project."

To Nellie, however, Norah's actions were extraordinary. "You're not just an investor—you're the heart of this production. Without you, this drama wouldn't exist. Honestly, you deserve to be a director."

The suggestion startled Norah. "Director? No, no, I don't know the first thing about that."

Nellie shook her head. "Don't underestimate yourself. You've been heavily involved—reviewing scripts, guiding scenes—you might not be formally trained, but you clearly have a knack for it."

"You're overhyping me," Norah said, laughing it off.

But Nellie wasn't joking. For Norah, this project had been a calculated risk—an attempt to secure a future for Sasha and herself. She'd never expected it to become such a personal endeavor.

While they spoke, chaos erupted outside the set.

"Where's my son? Did you kidnap him? He hasn't been home in over two weeks!" A woman's voice rang out, full of panic.

"Ma'am, you can't go in there!" the security guards tried to hold her back.

Norah perked up at the commotion. The mention of Steven's name made her heart skip a beat.

"Let them in," she ordered calmly.

The woman, Milena, stormed in, dragging a younger woman—Emma—behind her. Their faces were frantic as they scanned the room.

Milena's gaze landed on Norah. "Are you Norah? The woman my son's been in contact with?"

Norah, taken aback, nodded slowly. She'd never met Milena before but quickly pieced things together. "You're Steven's mother? What do you mean he hasn't been home?"

Milena's tone grew sharper. "He disappeared two weeks ago. He hasn't called, hasn't checked in—nothing. The last time we heard from him, he mentioned seeing you. What did you say to him?"

Emma, glaring at Norah, jumped in. "You're the one Steven's obsessed with, aren't you? What did you do? Did you manipulate him? If you don't tell us the truth, we'll call the police!"

"Don't accuse her!" Emani snapped. "Steven only came here to have dinner and left. Whatever happened after that has nothing to do with us!"

Norah frowned, recalling her last conversation with Steven. "Before he left, he told me he was going abroad—to a dangerous place. Wasn't it for business?"

Milena's face went pale. "A dangerous place? He never mentioned anything like that! Where did he go? What kind of danger?"

Emma froze, realization dawning on her. "Could he have gone to the Yi Tribe? I told him it was too risky! Why didn't he listen?"

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When Milena heard the news, she nearly fainted.

“Aunt Lord,” Emma quickly stepped forward to support her.

“Yi tribe?” Norah asked, her brow furrowing. “What kind of place is the Yi tribe?”

Emma shot her a sharp look, her tone brimming with accusation. “That’s a place where people are ruthless! How could he suddenly go there and start asking strange questions? Was this your idea?”

Norah was bewildered. “What strange questions are you talking about?”

Emma’s eyes reddened with frustration. “He asked me about the Yi tribe and whether they could make drugs or medicine. I told him what I knew, but if I’d known this would happen, I never would’ve said a word! He told me he was just curious, but now he’s gone to that dangerous place! How could he do this?”

Norah’s heart sank.

Medicine...

Could there be a connection?

She felt a wave of dizziness from the worry, and Emani reached out to steady her.

There was something they weren’t telling her.

Milena began to sob. “I only have one son! How am I supposed to live if something happens to him?”

Emma tried to comfort her. “Don’t worry. I’ll ask my dad to find Steven. Everything will be fine.”

But Norah couldn’t shake the feeling that something was deeply wrong—not just with Steven, but with Jace and Kevin too. They’d all been acting strangely.

“I need to go back,” Norah said, her voice trembling. She could only hope things hadn’t spiraled too far out of control.

“I’ll go with you,” Emani offered, noticing how pale Norah looked.

But Norah only had one thought—she needed to find Jace. He might have the answers.

“You can’t leave!” Emma blocked her path. “The last person Steven saw was you. If he told you he was leaving the country, then you must know where he is!”

“I don’t know!” Norah shot back. “I’ve already told you everything. Right now, I need to confirm something else!”

Milena, overcome with worry, turned her anger toward Norah. “This is all your fault! Steven has always refused to follow our plans, and it’s because of you. Now, you’re putting him in even more danger. I should never have let him see you! He’s always been so impulsive, and it’s all for you!”

Her words were harsh, but Norah listened in silence, her unease deepening.

If Steven really went to such a dangerous place for her, she’d never forgive herself.

“Our priority now is to find Steven,” Norah said firmly. “Blaming me won’t help anything. I’ll find him!”

Emma nodded in agreement. “The most important thing is to bring him back.”

Norah left without another word.

She headed straight for Jace’s studio.

When Jace opened the door and saw how frantic she looked, he removed his gloves and handed her a tissue. “What’s wrong? Why are you so anxious?”

Still catching her breath, Norah demanded, “What are you hiding from me?”

Jace’s expression stiffened. “Hiding? What could I possibly be hiding?”

“Steven went to the Yi tribe!” Norah exclaimed. “You know what kind of place that is. He’s missing, his phone’s off, and you, Steven, and Kevin have all been acting strange. What’s going on?”

Jace froze in shock. “He went to the Yi tribe?”

Norah grabbed his sleeve and stared into his eyes. “I know you won’t lie to me. Tell me—why did he go there? Is it because of me?”

Jace’s gaze grew conflicted, then dropped. “Julie…”

“Tell me!” Norah’s grip tightened. “Is there something wrong with me? Did he go to get medicine?”

“Julie…” Jace’s voice faltered, his confidence crumbling.

He’d tried to shield Norah from the truth, hoping to protect her from worry. But now she’d pieced it together on her own.

Norah saw the answer in his hesitation. She let go of his sleeve, her eyes reddening as a bitter smile crept across her lips.

“No wonder...” Her voice broke. “No wonder I’ve been feeling off. I keep losing strength. There really is something wrong with me, isn’t there? No wonder you’re always around. No wonder...”

She couldn’t finish her sentence.

“No wonder Kevin left me. It’s because of my body.”

“Don’t say that.” Jace’s voice softened, guilt flashing in his eyes. He reached out to touch her but hesitated, dropping his hand midway. “You’ll be fine. I won’t let anything happen to you.”

“Die?” Norah repeated, her voice trembling as she locked eyes with him. “Is it that serious? Why don’t I feel it? Tell me—what’s going to happen to me?”

Jace clasped his hands behind his back. “It’s not that serious. There’s still time to fix it.”

Norah pressed him further. “What’s the worst-case scenario? Will I die?”

Jace’s lips tightened, but his voice was steady. “I won’t let you die.”

His certainty was unshakable.

Norah gave him a faint smile. “Don’t try to comfort me. If you’d told me earlier, I could’ve stopped Steven.”

“You couldn’t stop him,” Jace replied. “He did this because he wants you to live.”

Norah’s frustration spilled over. “Why would he risk his life like that? Is there even a guaranteed cure in the Yi tribe?”

“There’s hope,” Jace admitted.

“Hope?” Norah’s voice rose. “It’s not even certain? He’s risking everything for a gamble!”

Jace held his ground. “Where there’s hope, there’s life.”

Norah felt crushed, guilt and helplessness weighing her down.

She couldn’t let Steven’s efforts go to waste. “I’m going to find him!”

Jace grabbed her arm. “He took this risk for you. Don’t be impulsive. You can’t fix this by rushing in!”

“Am I just supposed to wait?” she demanded, her voice cracking.

“Yes,” Jace said firmly. “You have other goals—your career, your dreams. You can’t throw everything away. Focus on what’s ahead of you!”

“But what about Steven?” Norah asked, her fists clenching tightly.

“He’ll come back,” Jace assured her. “If you risk your life, everything he’s done will be for nothing.”

Norah struggled to accept his words, her torment growing with each passing second.

“What’s wrong with me? What’s this illness? Is there no cure? I need to go to the Yi tribe.”

Jace’s expression darkened. “You’ve been poisoned. It’s not something ordinary medicine can cure.”

“Poisoned?” Norah was stunned. “When? How? I didn’t even notice!”

The realization hit her like a thunderbolt. She recalled the injection she’d received when Karina kidnapped her.

Could it have been from that?

At that moment, the door to the studio suddenly knocked, drawing their attention. Norah’s terrified eyes darted toward the sound.

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Jace’s eyes followed the sound, and he walked over to open the door. Standing there was Karina.

Karina’s worried eyes locked on Jace as she asked, “How are you?”

Noticing someone behind her, Karina turned and saw Norah.

Karina was momentarily taken aback but quickly composed herself, her lips tightening into silence.

Seeing Karina triggered a wave of emotions in Norah.

When Norah first heard about her poisoning, she felt an instinctive pity for Karina. But now, all that pity had been replaced with anger and resentment.

“It’s you,” Norah said, walking over.

Karina lifted her gaze to meet Norah’s. “It’s been a while.”

“Did you poison me?” Norah demanded.

Karina's expression shifted uncomfortably, and she remained silent.

In her heart, Karina was just as conflicted. The situation was far more complicated than anyone could understand.

But Norah wasn't interested in complexities. Her anger flared. "Why? Why would you do this? You wanted to kill me, so why not just push me over the edge? Instead, you gave me just enough hope to live, only to burden everyone else around me!"

The weight of her own helplessness crushed Norah. The idea that her illness might cost others their safety or lives was unbearable.

"Norah, calm down," Jace said softly, trying to ease her rising emotions.

Norah's eyes darted between Jace and Karina.

Karina finally spoke, her voice defensive but pained. "I didn't know the injection was poison. Archer prepared it. I was just following orders!"

"Following orders?" Norah repeated bitterly. "You make it sound so simple! Those orders could've cost me my life. Do you even care how many lives you destroy? I've never done anything to you!"

Karina struggled to find the right words. "It's not like that... We don't have a choice."

"A choice?" Norah's voice dripped with sarcasm. "You're saying you had no choice but to poison me? Does that justify your actions? You can't hide behind excuses forever."

Karina remained quiet, the weight of her decisions etched on her face.

Norah's anger wavered for a moment as she realized the futility of her questions. Blaming Karina wouldn't change anything, and targeting those above her seemed just as pointless.

Feeling defeated, Norah slowly turned and began to leave.

Jace, worried, reached out and gently grabbed her sleeve. "Julie..."

"Let me go!" Norah snapped, pulling free. She looked up at him, her gaze icy. "You and her—you're the same. Both of you hide behind excuses, claiming you're powerless. But that doesn't absolve you of the harm you've caused. People like you will never wash away the blood on your hands!"

With that, Norah stormed out.

Jace stood frozen, her words cutting deeper than he expected.

Karina watched him silently for a moment, then said bitterly, “She knows who you really are now, and she despises you for it. No matter how much you do for her, it’ll never be enough. You and she are from completely different worlds!”

A trace of sorrow darkened Jace’s expression, but he said nothing.

“She doesn’t appreciate you,” Karina pressed, her voice growing louder. “Why waste your life on her? You’ve survived so much already. Why sacrifice everything for someone who doesn’t care?”

Jace’s gray-brown eyes met hers, and for a moment, the fire in them dimmed.

Karina grabbed his arm and pleaded, “Don’t throw your life away for her. Please.”

Jace pulled his arm free, his tone distant. “This is my choice. You don’t have to understand it.”

Karina’s voice cracked as she nearly shouted, “Is it worth it? Have you lost your mind? We fought so hard to survive, and now you’re ready to die for her? I’ve done everything I can for you—stood in front of Archer, protected you—and you just dismiss it like it means nothing!”

Jace’s shoulders slumped, his voice low. “I never asked you to do any of that. This is my burden to bear.”

“Your burden?” Karina echoed, her voice rising again. “Do you even care about yourself? Don’t you want to live?”

Jace met her gaze, his voice flat. “I’m not afraid to die.”

Karina took a step back, stunned by his apathy. “If that’s how you feel, I should’ve killed her when I had the chance!”

Hearing this, Jace’s demeanor changed instantly. His eyes sharpened with rage, and he stepped closer to Karina. “Don’t even think about it.”

Karina laughed bitterly, though tears welled in her eyes. “You’d protect her even now? Even after everything?”

Her voice cracked as she added, “I overestimated my place in your life. You’d rather die for her than live with me. What’s the point of my existence, then?”

Karina started to leave, but Jace’s hand shot out and gripped her throat.

Karina gasped for air, her wide eyes meeting his unyielding, furious gaze.

“You dare?” Jace’s voice was cold and lethal.

For a moment, Karina didn’t resist. She looked at him with a mix of despair and acceptance.

Jace released her, letting her collapse to the ground, coughing and struggling to breathe.

He looked down at her, his tone even. "You cling to me because I'm all you have left. But have you ever thought about what happens when I'm gone? Would it matter if I left a day earlier or a day later?"

Tears streamed down Karina's face, her voice breaking as she whispered, "I just don't want to see you die."

Jace knelt down and gently wiped her tears away. "Do you know what I want?"

Karina shook her head, unable to speak.

"I want to live a life without regrets," Jace said softly.

Karina clung to him, crying into his shoulder. "You call yourself 'worry-free,' but you've never been free of sorrow. You're chasing a dream that will never come true!"

Jace smiled faintly. "That's my choice. My life."

Karina's voice trembled. "I don't want to watch you burn out."

Jace stood, his tone firm but kind. "When this is all over, I want you to be free."

Karina's heart sank. "Will that day ever come? Will I even live to see it? Or will I die alone, with no one to even bury me?"