

Mr. Edwards' Unraveled Life Chapter 411

Chapter 411

A child spotted Baimo and immediately lit up with excitement.

“Teacher Baimo!”

Norah turned her head at the sound.

Baimo was dressed in a black shirt, the top two buttons undone, his sleeves rolled up to his forearms. He stood in the sunlight, one hand casually tucked into his pocket, the other holding a few books. His dark eyes, framed by gold-rimmed glasses, carried an unreadable depth, but a subtle smile played at his lips.

The next moment, the children around Norah swarmed toward Baimo.

“Teacher Baimo! She said she pronounced the word wrong!”

“Teacher Baimo, didn’t you teach us last time that this word was a beckoning gesture?”

“Teacher Baimo, we only trust you!”

“Teacher Baimo, we don’t know her! Who is she?”

Their voices overlapped in a flurry of chatter. Some of the children even shot Norah sharp, unwelcoming looks.

Suddenly, a young boy grabbed a rock and hurled it at her.

Norah reacted quickly, dodging just in time. But in that instant, Baimo rushed forward.

The stone struck his thigh instead.

His expression darkened. “Ahshan,” he said firmly, “what have I always taught you?”

The boy, Ahshan, lowered his head. “Teacher Baimo, you always tell us to be kind to others and never use violence to solve problems.”

Baimo didn't just teach these children—he guided the entire village through his actions. If not for his presence, Norah and Kokura wouldn't have even been allowed inside.

Ogura, after all, was a member of the Yi tribe.

Ahshan, still defiant, frowned. “Teacher Baimo, you're our only teacher. Who is she to us?”

He spoke in the Yi dialect.

Strangely enough, Norah understood him. His resentful gaze made his meaning clear, and though Ogura had only taught her basic phrases, she had studied the language on her own the night before. She hadn't expected to comprehend it so soon.

Baimo's voice was steady but firm. “Even if she isn't your teacher, if she corrects you, you should listen with an open mind. I won't always be here. Now, apologize to her.”

Ahshan hesitated but eventually walked up to Norah, lowering his head. In broken Chinese, he muttered, “I'm sorry...”

“It's fine,” Norah said gently. “Maybe you just confused one gesture with another. But now that Teacher Baimo is here, he can explain it to you properly.”

Since Baimo had chosen to stay and teach these children, it was clear he carried a deep sense of responsibility. He wouldn't defend them blindly.

Still, there was something about him that didn't quite fit.

She couldn't reconcile this patient, bookish teacher with the rumors surrounding Pharaoh.

But she couldn't let her guard down.

Leaving the scene, Norah followed their host and helped Ogura repair the school. Ogura worked in silence, avoiding conversation.

Before long, the sound of children reading filled the air.

Hearing it in the midst of such chaotic times was almost surreal. It was a reminder of how well this village had been shielded from the outside world.

“This is our lunch today,” a voice suddenly said beside her.

A man handed her a small roasted potato.

“Thank you,” she replied in Yi dialect.

Sitting on a tree stump, she started peeling the potato.

A shadow fell over her.

Looking up, she saw Baimo standing in front of her.

A gentle smile tugged at his lips. “The children are young, and I’m the only teacher here,” he said. “I’m sorry for earlier.”

Without another word, he sat down next to her, peeling a piece of food of his own. Then, he extended a cheesecake toward her.

Norah didn’t take it. “The boy already apologized,” she said.

“He only did it because of me,” Baimo replied, maintaining his relaxed posture. “If you hadn’t dodged in time, he would have hit you.” He paused. “I don’t know your name.”

Norah hesitated, sensing the weight behind his words. But she still answered, “Norah White.”

She knew she was being watched. Pharaoh’s men were searching for her. If revealing her name could serve a purpose, then there was no reason to hide it.

Baimo’s smile remained, unreadable. The next moment, he placed the cheesecake in her hand.

“The situation here is unstable,” he said. “What brought you here?”

His voice was calm, almost too smooth—another test.

Norah met his gaze and smiled faintly. “Just passing through. I happened to pick up some of the language along the way.”

A breeze swept past, lifting strands of her hair. She instinctively raised a hand to brush them back.

As she did, the string of emerald-green beads on her wrist caught the sunlight, shimmering brilliantly.

Baimo's eyes flickered slightly before he looked away, still smiling.

"You heard the children call me Teacher Baimo," he said. "I'll be leaving for a while, but since you're here, you can teach them Chinese in my place."

Before she could protest, he added, "Don't worry, I'll make sure you're paid. If you need anything, let me know—I can bring supplies back when I return."

Norah's instincts told her that "Baimo" was just an alias.

He seemed to be a good man in every situation.

But Pharaoh was a monster.

And now... Baimo was leaving on purpose.

She kept her expression neutral. "You saw what happened earlier. The children only recognize you as their teacher."

"That's fine," Baimo said. "I'll explain it to them. You don't have to worry about that."

"Alright," she replied. "You don't need to pay me—as long as I can stay and stay safe from the war. But I do need a charger for my TPC."

If Baimo could leave so easily and return unscathed in this dangerous region, then his influence ran deep.

And he wasn't just acquainted with Pharaoh.

"I'll get it for you later," he said smoothly.

Everything about him seemed kind, almost too perfect.

No wonder the children adored him.

"Thank you," Norah said automatically.

Baimo stood up and left.

Norah finished her roasted potato.

Ogura approached, and Norah instinctively offered her the cheesecake.

But Ogura's expression hardened.

"You heard him say he knows Pharaoh," she snapped. "And you still dared to eat his food? You even sat there, chatting with him like it was nothing!"

Before Norah could react, Ogura smacked the cheesecake out of her hand, sending it tumbling to the ground.

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Baimo watched the scene unfold, his expression unreadable.

Without rushing forward, he picked up the charger in his hand.

Just then, his phone rang.

He glanced at the caller ID, and his eyes turned cold.

He answered.

A gentle voice drifted through the speaker. "Brother, when are you coming back?"

"Not for a while." His tone was indifferent.

At that moment, the warm, patient man the children adored—the same one who had spoken so gently with Norah—seemed like an entirely different person.

Silence stretched on the other end of the call.

Then, after a moment, a hopeful voice said, "Brother, when you do come back, at least let me know in advance, or have someone tell me..."

"Hmm." Baimo's response was short. "I have things to do. I'm hanging up."

Without waiting for a reply, he ended the call.

On the other end, the woman heard the abrupt disconnect and clenched the phone tightly, anger flashing in her eyes. He had hung up too fast.

It wasn't enough for her.

After Ogura knocked the cheesecake from Norah's hand, she stared at it for a moment. Then, without hesitation, she picked it up, dusting off the dirt.

"I've told you more than once, and yet you still can't control your temper," she said, her voice laced with irritation.

Norah wasn't the type to back down easily.

If Ogura kept pushing her, it would be impossible for them to work together.

"So what, I should be like you?" Ogura snapped, his voice thick with sarcasm. "Sure, Baimo is different. You two get along. You both speak the same language. Maybe you should stay and teach together. Great future ahead!"

His fists clenched, his eyes burning with hatred.

Norah hadn't forgotten how he'd pushed her away to protect her, nor the determination in his eyes when his entire village had been slaughtered.

Hatred could consume a person.

But—

Some things required patience.

"Ogura, when you get to my age, you'll understand that not everything can be rushed. Besides, Baimo hasn't hurt you. He hasn't confirmed any ties to Pharaoh. He wasn't the one who wiped out your village." She held out the cheesecake to him again. "We're already here. We can only move forward. Right now, we're relying on others to survive. Shouldn't we be a little more adaptable?"

Her voice was steady. "He's keeping up appearances. If he wanted to poison us, he wouldn't be so obvious about it. Eat. We need our strength."

Ogura hesitated.

Norah sighed. "Take it."

This time, she shoved the cheesecake into his hand before turning and walking away.

Outside, she surveyed the area. The school needed repairs. Weeds surrounded the buildings, needing to be cleared.

Baimo still hadn't returned.

She had no way of knowing if he was connected to Pharaoh.

No one had ever seen Pharaoh's real face.

But if Baimo was just a village teacher, it would be too simple.

A few minutes later, she heard footsteps approaching.

Baimo emerged, his usual gentle smile in place. "Sorry for the delay. Here's the charger." He handed it to her. "I'll be leaving soon. You'll start teaching tomorrow—does that work for you?"

"That soon?" Norah hadn't expected such urgency.

Baimo nodded.

"Alright."

She didn't press the issue.

"There are extra cakes in my room," he added casually. "And some books. If you need anything, you can go in and grab them." He held out a key. "Here."

Norah took it without hesitation.

Baimo's eyes flicked toward her wrist before he finally voiced his curiosity. "Your beads are beautiful."

Norah glanced down and instinctively touched them. Jace had given them to her. She smiled. "Thanks. Just a simple set of beads."

Baimo's gaze darkened slightly. "Did you buy them?"

"A friend gave them to me," she replied.

His expression shifted subtly. "A man or a woman?"

"A man. Just a friend."

Baimo seemed lost in thought for a moment, his eyes lingering on the beads before he finally spoke again. "Get some rest. I'll be going now."

"Goodbye." Norah nodded politely.

She didn't realize that someone nearby had been watching the entire exchange.

A pair of eyes burned with jealousy.

Norah continued pulling weeds.

Suddenly, something flew toward her.

A rat.

“Ahh!” she yelped in disgust.

Laughter rang out.

“Hahaha!”

Her brows furrowed as she looked up sharply—

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Norah spotted a girl standing nearby in a long brown dress, her bronzed skin glowing under the sun. Contempt filled her gaze.

Norah smirked. “Trying to scare me? Throwing rats? That’s such a low-level tactic.”

The girl crossed her arms and took a step closer. “No, I’m warning you! Stay away from Teacher Baimo. Don’t even think about seducing him!”

Her Chinese was slightly better than the children’s, but still somewhat broken.

Norah chuckled. “You’re warning the wrong person. I have no interest in Teacher Baimo.”

“Who are you trying to fool?!” The girl’s eyes burned with resentment. “You’re not from our village. You came here with bad intentions!”

Her anger escalated. “And the moment you arrived, you got close to Teacher Baimo. If that’s not seduction, then what is?”

Norah found the accusation amusing, but her laughter only fueled the girl’s fury.

The girl suddenly lunged, trying to shove Norah to the ground. But as Norah stepped aside, something caught her eye—a cauliflower snake coiled in the grass.

An idea struck her.

Without hesitation, she grabbed the snake and flung it at the girl.

“Ahhh!”

The girl shrieked in terror, stumbling back, her face drained of color. She pointed a trembling finger at Norah, her voice faltering. “You—you—you’re vicious! Just wait!”

Then, without another word, she turned and ran.

Norah calmly went back to pulling weeds.

She wasn't one to pick fights, but she also wasn't someone people could push around. When the girl threw a rat at her, she had let it slide. But then she tried to attack her? That was a mistake.

What Norah didn't expect was for the girl to return—this time, with a crowd of villagers.

They surrounded her, gripping wooden sticks, hoes, and sickles.

The girl pointed at Norah, her face full of spite. "She seduced Teacher Baimo and threw a snake at me! She's dangerous! We can't let her stay in the village!"

"Get out!"

The villagers began shouting, gripping their weapons tighter.

Norah remained calm, saying nothing.

Just then, a steady voice cut through the chaos. "What's going on here?"

Baimo pushed through the crowd, his eyes sweeping over the scene.

The villagers immediately turned to him. "Teacher Baimo, we let this woman stay in the village out of kindness. But she threw a snake at Arlene!"

Another villager added, "Snakes are the most hated creatures in our Yi culture! She's bad luck. We can't keep her here!"

"We want her gone!"

Murmurs of agreement rippled through the crowd.

Baimo glanced at Norah, noting her composed expression. Then, he turned back to the villagers. "Has anyone stopped to ask why she threw the snake at Arlene? What caused the conflict?"

All eyes shifted to Arlene.

She hesitated, suddenly unsure. "I..."

Baimo's voice remained calm. "Everything has a reason. She's a refugee. What would she gain by causing trouble? Outside this village, the Confederate troops are stationed, and there's constant fighting."

The villagers exchanged uncertain glances, realizing the truth in his words.

Norah took the moment to speak. "I was allowed to stay here thanks to the kindness of the man who owns my house. I'm just trying to earn money for food. All I did was exchange a few words with Teacher Baimo, and suddenly I'm accused of seducing him? I was innocent, yet they threw a rat at me and tried to attack me. Am I not allowed to defend myself?"

Arlene's face turned red with shame.

The villagers murmured amongst themselves before turning on Arlene. "She has a point."

"We jumped to conclusions too fast."

They began apologizing to Norah. "We're sorry. We didn't understand the situation. We almost wronged you."

"Don't take it to heart. You're welcome to stay."

"Arlene, you should apologize."

Norah could only understand part of their dialect, but their tone was clear.

Arlene, however, was fuming. She had never dared to confess her feelings for Baimo, and now, thanks to Norah, her emotions were out in the open. And on top of that, she was being scolded in front of everyone.

Her humiliation burned.

Baimo's voice was firm. "Arlene, apologize to Norah."

She flinched at the direct order. His tone left no room for refusal.

With clenched fists and gritted teeth, Arlene lowered her head and mumbled, "I'm sorry. I was wrong. I apologize."

"I hope this won't happen again," Norah replied evenly. "I just want to live in peace."

"Fine." Arlene's voice was barely above a whisper, but her nails dug into her palms.

She wouldn't forget this.

Baimo addressed the crowd. "Starting tomorrow, Norah will be teaching the children."

The villagers nodded. "Of course, Teacher Baimo. We'll make sure they listen to her."

The incident was finally over.

Norah knew she had Baimo to thank for that. Without him, these villagers would never have believed her.

She turned to him. “Thank you, Teacher Baimo.”

“It’s fine,” he replied. Then, with a small smirk, he added, “But I have to admit, catching a snake with your bare hands? That was impressive.”

Norah shrugged. “When you’re backed into a corner, you have to fight back. And besides, it was just a cauliflower snake. Not even venomous.”

Baimo nodded, a hint of amusement in his eyes. “Hmm.”

Without realizing it, the corner of his mouth lifted into a slight smile.

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That night, Norah’s phone was fully charged.

She turned it on, but the signal was weak—just one bar. Messages wouldn’t send, and calls wouldn’t go through.

Frustrated, she stepped outside, holding the phone up, searching for a better signal. No luck.

The owner of the house saw her and chuckled. “Don’t waste your time. The only signal tower nearby was blown up. It hasn’t been fixed.”

Norah sighed in disappointment.

Everywhere she went, there was either no signal or no battery. Now, she was in a village with shelter, yet still cut off from the outside world.

The man added, “Don’t go out at night. Lately, we’ve been selling medicinal herbs, and the allies aren’t too friendly. During the day, it’s fine, but at night, it’s a different story.”

Norah’s expression turned serious.

Their village was being watched.

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Norah nodded. “Okay.”

She returned to her room, gripping her phone, as countless faces flashed through her mind.

She was restless at first, unable to sleep. Eventually, exhaustion took over, though she didn’t even remember when she drifted off.

By the time she woke up, it was already the next day.

She had promised Baimo that she would start substituting for the children at school today.

In the morning, the man's mother prepared some corn porridge. Norah drank half a bowl before setting off for school with him.

Recalling how the students misread a word last time, she decided to teach them the words for "birth mother" and "rhyme."

The classroom was basic, with a black-painted wall serving as a chalkboard. The chalk itself was short and worn down.

She wrote "birth mother" and "rhyme" on the makeshift blackboard, then introduced herself in Yi dialect. "Hello, everyone. My name is Norah. Since Teacher Baimo is away, I'll be your substitute teacher for now."

Regardless of Baimo's character, these children were innocent.

By helping them, she was not only doing a good deed but also improving her image in Baimo's eyes. Maybe, through him, she'd get the chance to meet Pharaoh.

But the children didn't listen to her.

They deliberately spoke loudly, ignoring her presence entirely.

"Quiet!" Norah commanded.

She knew they weren't convinced by her, but she had already taken on this responsibility—she intended to see it through.

A little boy immediately shot back, "Just because you can speak some Chinese doesn't mean you're Chinese, and it definitely doesn't mean you can be our teacher!"

Norah instinctively turned toward the voice.

It was Ahsan—the same boy who had picked up a stone to throw at her yesterday.

"If you don't want to listen, you can leave. But don't stir up trouble here," she said firmly.

Before coming here, she had done her homework. She could speak Yi dialect, though she was a little slow.

"What do you mean by 'stirring up trouble'? You're twisting things again! We don't want you here!"

With that, Ahsan kicked over the desk in front of him.

“Ahh!”

A little girl sitting in front of him was caught off guard and crushed beneath the falling desk, letting out a cry of pain.

Instead of helping her up or realizing his mistake, Ahsan sneered, full of disdain. “Are you stupid? Why didn’t you move out of the way?”

Tears welled up in the little girl’s eyes, and she began to sob.

Norah’s expression darkened. She stepped forward, lifted the desk off the girl, and helped her up. A red mark had already formed on the girl’s back.

Meanwhile, Ahsan stood there, arms crossed, his face indifferent and arrogant, as if nothing had happened.

Norah crouched beside the little girl. “Don’t cry. I’ll put some medicine on it later, okay? For now, just sit over there and rest.”

After settling the girl, she turned back to Ahsan, her expression stern.

She spotted a long ruler on the lectern, picked it up, and said, “Hold out your hand.”

“No way!” Ahsan shot back, unbothered and defiant.

If she wanted to gain control over the classroom, she needed to handle Ahsan first.

Besides, he had not only hurt his classmate but also refused to acknowledge his mistake.

Norah grabbed his wrist and gave him two light slaps on the palm with the ruler—a warning more than a punishment. “Go stand outside. You’ll come back when you’re ready to apologize. The rest of you—stay seated. If anyone doesn’t want to attend class, you can leave now.”

With that, Norah carried the injured girl to Baimo’s room in the school building.

The other children, shocked by her strictness, sat quietly at their desks.

Ahsan, on the other hand, clenched his sore palm, scowling as he ran off.

Norah unlocked Baimo’s room and found it neatly arranged. Spotting a bottle of red medicinal ointment by the window, she carefully applied it to the girl’s injury.

“I’ll treat it again after school. You should take this home with you. I’ll also talk to your parents. Next time, if something like this happens, don’t just cry—tell a teacher or an adult. And don’t be afraid of Ahsan, okay?”

The little girl hesitated, her eyes still teary. “But... I’m scared. If I tell, Ahsan will beat me.”

“You don’t have to be afraid when the teacher is here.”

Norah gently patted her head, reassuring her for a long while before leading her back outside.

Just as they stepped out of Baimo’s room, they found themselves surrounded by a group of villagers.

Norah recognized them immediately—these were the same people who had confronted her yesterday.

A man stepped forward. “Yesterday’s incident was Arlene’s fault. But today’s issue—this can’t be on our family again!”

Norah suddenly made the connection—Arlene and Ahsan were siblings.

Ahsan’s outburst today was likely fueled by both past grievances and new resentment.

She lifted the little girl’s shirt, revealing the red welt on her back for everyone to see.

“I’m substituting for Teacher Baimo today. I haven’t even gone looking for Ahsan’s parents yet, but you’ve already shown up on his behalf. So, let’s talk about what actually happened.”

Her voice was steady as she continued, “I was teaching when Ahsan refused to listen. Instead, he flipped over a desk, injuring a classmate. Not only did he show no remorse, but he also encouraged the other children to defy the lesson. Do you send your children to school just so they can act like bullies?”

“If a teacher can’t discipline a student, then what’s the point of having teachers at all?”

Norah’s words were sharp and fluent in Yi dialect.

The villagers fell silent.

Then, the little girl spoke up, “Ahsan always bullies us! Today, he said the new substitute teacher is a bad person and told us to gang up on her. If we didn’t agree, he said he’d beat us!”

“Liar!” Ahsan yelled, unwilling to admit anything.

The little girl held her ground. “If you don’t believe me, ask the other students.”

Ahsan’s father’s face darkened. “So you’re a little tyrant now? You bully your classmates and even a teacher? Get over here! Let’s see if I don’t teach you a lesson!”

With that, he raised his foot to kick Ahsan.

As he reached to grab his son's ear, Norah intervened, gripping his arm. "Mr. Ahsan, beating him won't solve the problem. He needs to understand what he did wrong. That's why I had him stand outside earlier. Let me handle it. I'll teach him properly."

Ahsan, clearly terrified of his father, hesitated but followed Norah back to the classroom.

Before she could say another word, a sudden explosion rocked the school.

"Boom!"

The building trembled violently.

Then came a sharp whistle—"Tutu—"

Norah's instincts kicked in. She turned to the children, her voice urgent. "Everyone, follow me! Now!"

She tried to lead them to safety, but before they could move far—

"Boom!"

A fiery explosion lit up the sky. The sheer force of the blast sent a wave of heat crashing over them.

Norah instinctively shielded Ahsan and the little girl, pulling them close.

The village erupted into chaos.

And less than a minute later, just as the Allied troops arrived, a convoy of vehicles waving Chinese flags rolled into the village.