

Mr. Edwards' Unraveled Life Chapter 415

Chapter 415

When Norah woke up, she found herself surrounded by rows of cots, with army-green tents looming above her.

Quilts, cups, and a few tools were scattered nearby, and a yellow five-pointed star caught her eye.

"Teacher! You're finally awake!"

Ahsan threw himself into her arms, his voice filled with relief and excitement.

Norah gently stroked his head.

As she moved, she noticed her left hand was wrapped in gauze. She pursed her lips, just about to speak, when a man in a military uniform pulled back the tent flap and stepped inside.

"How are you feeling?"

He walked up to Norah.

Earlier, when they were preparing for a rescue mission at the school, they had heard someone speaking fluent Chinese. Upon rescuing Norah, they realized she had an Oriental face.

Hearing the familiar language, Norah's eyes welled up with tears. Her voice trembled. "I'm okay now. Are you... peacekeepers?"

"Yes," the man confirmed.

Norah's heart pounded. "Then... are you Kevin's soldiers?" Her throat tightened as she asked.

The man seemed surprised. "You know Captain Edwards?"

Norah's fingers clenched into her palm. She hadn't expected it to really be Kevin's unit.

“Then... he...” Her voice faltered. The words stuck in her throat, hesitant to come out.

But the man answered before she could finish. “He’s not here. Our unit was the closest to this area. What’s your relationship with Captain Edwards?”

“...No real connection. I just happen to know of him.”

That was all Norah could say.

It didn’t matter that she and Kevin were divorced. Right now, in front of his soldiers, she couldn’t bring up that she was his ex-wife.

“Oh, I thought you knew him personally.” The man didn’t dwell on it.

But his response confirmed something—Kevin had never mentioned being married.

“You’re the least injured person in this tent. Keep an eye on the others, and if there’s an emergency, call for help. We have other duties to attend to. Thank you for your cooperation.” The soldier gave Norah a respectful nod and placed a bottle of boiled water on the table before leaving.

Norah glanced around. The wounded in the tent had injuries on their heads, feet, and shoulders.

“Teacher, I was wrong before. Can you forgive me? I promise to listen to you from now on, never disobey you again, and never make you angry. Please?”

Ahsan clutched Norah’s hand, his black eyes shimmering with unshed tears.

Norah believed in Ahsan.

Children had pure hearts. Once they recognized their mistakes and made amends, they often did better than adults.

But suddenly, she realized something—

She hadn’t seen Arlene.

Norah’s chest tightened with anxiety. “Where’s Arlene? And why haven’t I seen the other students?”

“Teacher, don’t worry. Arlene is fine. She went to take care of her mother. As for the others... Teacher Baimo kept making us practice, but some of us...”

Ahsan trailed off, lowering his head. His voice choked with emotion.

Some of their classmates hadn’t made it in time. Two of them had died.

Norah exhaled shakily and gently stroked Ahsan’s head. “War is cruel. Those of us who survive must work even harder to live.”

“...Okay.”

Ahsan’s voice was thick with emotion, but he nodded, determined to listen to Norah.

Recalling what the soldier had said, Norah didn’t stay in bed. Instead, she got up and started tending to the wounded.

The entire day passed in a blur. She was too busy to eat, but she saw Kevin’s soldiers helping the villagers rebuild their homes.

She gave up her bed in the tent. But her mind kept drifting to Ogura.

Ogura was gone.

She wanted to search for him, but before she could, an off-road military vehicle rumbled in from the distance.

She froze in place.

The vehicle stopped just ahead.

Levi and Frank stepped out first—

Then Kevin.

Kevin stood tall in his military uniform, his towering 6’3” frame exuding authority.

As he approached, Norah found herself struggling to breathe.

But before she could react, a soldier jogged up to Kevin. “Captain Edwards, we’ve made a new discovery.”

“Understood.” Kevin’s voice was steady as he turned away.

Each step he took felt heavier than the last. For some reason, an inexplicable weight settled in his chest.

And Norah—

Her heart felt crushed, like a boulder had been dropped onto it.

She hadn’t expected him to walk away just like that.

Did he not see her?

Or... had he forgotten her entirely?

It felt as though invisible hands were squeezing her throat, making it impossible to breathe.

Levi and Frank passed by her as well.

“Teacher! Over here!” Ahsan’s voice suddenly cut through her thoughts.

Norah snapped out of it. She looked up to see Ahsan waving at her.

Pressing her lips together, she walked toward him.

Ahsan tugged at her hand. “Teacher, you’ve been working all day. I haven’t seen you eat anything. Come with me.”

“I can’t. I need to find someone—”

Norah tried to pull away.

But Ahsan gripped her hand tighter. “Teacher, I know who you’re looking for. The boy who came into the village with you—he’s at my house.”

Norah’s eyes widened. “Really?”

Ahsan nodded.

Not far away—

Levi turned to Frank, frowning. "That's odd... I thought I heard Madam's voice just now."

"Impossible. This is a well-protected Yi village. If it weren't for the alliance's dispute over medicinal supplies, the other forces wouldn't have even thought of attacking it."

Frank's words echoed in Levi's mind.

They were peacekeepers. Their mission was to maintain peace. He knew Levi had been searching everywhere for Norah.

And he knew Kevin barely slept at night, worrying about her. He had grown even more haggard, but he couldn't afford to show weakness.

This village was home to the Yi people. Though it wasn't entirely safe now, it was still one of the most secure places. Everyone here spoke the Yi language. How could Norah have ended up in such a place?

And if she had... why hadn't she sought out Captain Edwards?

"Don't overthink it. The people I arranged are keeping watch. If there's any news of Madam, we'll be notified immediately. Let's focus on tending to the wounded first."

"...Alright."

Levi let go of the thought.

Meanwhile, Norah followed Ahsan to his home—

Or what was left of it. Half of the house had been destroyed by an explosion.

Thick smoke curled into the air. Near the stove, Arlene crouched, while Ogura tended the fire.

"Norah."

Ogura noticed her first. Arlene flinched at the sound of her name, hurriedly hiding a spatula behind her back.

Standing before the stove, she glared at Ahsan. "Why aren't you resting? What are you doing here?"

"I—"

“No excuses! Get out!”

Arlene snapped.

Norah saw through her instantly. “Arlene, were you cooking for me?”

She glanced at the steaming pot.

The Allied forces had ravaged the village, but the Chinese peacekeepers had arrived just in time. The village was damaged, its people injured, but nothing had been stolen.

Except for the medicinal herbs.

Arlene refused to admit it. “Don’t flatter yourself! Why would I cook for you?”

Norah just smiled.

Suddenly—

“Captain Edwards, this is it. There are medicinal herbs growing behind the house.”

A voice came from outside.

Norah looked up—

Kevin stood just a few steps away.

His uniform was dusty, his presence commanding. And when his eyes met hers—

Something unspoken passed between them.

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Their eyes met, as if they had been looking at each other for eternity.

Despite spending countless days and nights together in the past, nothing felt as precious as this moment after being apart for so long.

Norah’s eyes reddened. Seeing Kevin safe meant more than any words could express.

She didn’t take a step forward, trying to suppress her emotions.

Before coming here, she had wondered if they would ever meet again.

Just seeing him was enough.

And whatever resentment she once held toward him now felt insignificant compared to the relief of knowing he was alive.

Neither moved closer. They only exchanged a lingering glance, eyes filled with longing.

“Captain Edwards.” A soldier called out, breaking the silence. “We’re waiting for you inside.”

Kevin turned. “Hmm.”

Without hesitation, he walked in.

Only after he disappeared did Norah step forward, her heart sinking as his figure vanished from sight. But she forced herself to stay clear-headed. She reminded herself—they were divorced. There was nothing more to lose. The divorce certificate had sealed their fate.

Norah stood outside for a long time, gathering herself. Instead of returning to the tent, she noticed a group of soldiers gathered around a bonfire not far away.

A black pot hung over the flames.

They were cooking.

This village was underdeveloped. There were no modern kitchens—just open fires for cooking.

The soldiers made do with even less. They built fires, using whatever pots they could find, no matter how worn out.

She approached. One of the soldiers noticed her and greeted her warmly. “Miss, your wounds—are you alright?”

“I’m fine,” Norah replied with a small smile. “Call me Norah.”

“Alright, Ms. White.” The soldier remained polite.

“You haven’t eaten yet?” he asked. “We’ll have food ready soon. When the leaves float up, it’ll be done.”

The troops, all men, cooked simply. Their conditions were rough.

Norah picked up some firewood and added it to the flames. Then she glanced at the ingredients they had.

“Is this what you’re eating?” she asked.

The soldier, rolling up his sleeves, peeled potatoes with practiced ease. “Yes. The villagers gave us this food. It’s a good meal for a place like this. Some areas have nothing at all.”

Hearing that, Norah felt uneasy.

Back home, even though life wasn’t extravagant, no one starved. No one begged in the streets.

But in war-torn places like this, even getting a meal was a struggle.

She had seen entire villages destroyed, families displaced. People barely surviving.

The door behind her opened.

A group of armed soldiers stepped out.

“Just in time—dinner’s ready!”

Hungry, they eagerly sat down, some staying in their vehicles as the food was distributed.

The moment they received their meals, they ate without hesitation.

Norah watched them, moved by their resilience. They weren’t picky—just grateful to have something warm to eat.

The meal was simple. There was meat, but it didn’t look particularly appetizing.

As for the rice—it was dark, not the usual white rice she was used to.

She had no idea what was mixed in.

It looked rough. Probably didn’t taste great either.

Suddenly, the aroma of freshly cooked rice filled the air.

She looked up.

Kevin stood in front of her, his expression unreadable.

In his hand was a bowl of clean, white rice.

Norah was momentarily stunned.

Seeing that she wasn’t moving, Kevin placed the rice next to her, setting a pair of chopsticks on the bowl. “Eat.”

Then he picked up a bowl of the darker rice and started eating without hesitation.

Norah studied him. “That’s all you’re having?”

Kevin sat on a nearby stone. “Hmm.”

Norah pressed her lips together, noticing how much he had changed.

Before, Kevin lived a life of luxury. He had never touched rough rice. Everything about his lifestyle had been of the highest standard.

Looking around at the harsh environment, she realized—even if he had traveled back a hundred years, his past life would still have been far better than this.

She glanced at the bowl of white rice. “I’m not that fragile. I’ve been with the Yi Tribe long enough. I don’t need special treatment.”

Kevin gave her a sidelong glance. “There isn’t much white rice left. Don’t waste food.”

She met his gaze and nodded.

He was right.

Food should be cherished.

She took the bowl and started eating in big mouthfuls.

It had been so long since she’d had hot, properly cooked rice. It tasted incredible—even without any side dishes.

Kevin watched her, his lips curving into a faint smile as he noticed her puffed cheeks as she ate.

He glanced at a nearby soldier.

The soldier immediately handed over a cup of hot water.

“Drink this so you don’t choke,” Kevin said.

Norah nodded, focused on her meal.

The food was simple, but to her, it was the best meal she had ever had.

The soldiers nearby had never seen Kevin act this way with anyone.

Curious, they exchanged hushed whispers.

“Who is that girl? Captain Edwards looks different around her. I’ve never seen him this soft.”

“Right? It’s like he actually cares about her. I mean, when have you ever seen him take care of someone like this?”

Another soldier chimed in, puzzled. “I don’t know. She asked if he was part of the Edwards team—so they must have known each other for a while.”

“It doesn’t make sense! You think Captain Edwards has a crush on her?”

“Captain Edwards? With his looks and stature? He wouldn’t just have a crush. If they were together, they’d be all over each other by now. No way would they keep their distance like this. Must be a secret lover situation.”

“Damn. So even Captain Edwards knows what it’s like to suffer from a one-sided love?”

“What are you guys whispering about?”

Levi walked over and caught them gossiping.

The moment they saw him, they straightened up. “Brother Levi!”

Levi shot them a stern look. “Enough with the rumors. Captain Edwards has plenty of women around him. Just because he speaks to one doesn’t mean you need to start spreading gossip. You’ll ruin his reputation.”

The soldiers quickly shut up.

But they still exchanged knowing looks.

Because from what they saw—Captain Edwards wasn’t just talking to some random woman.

This was different.

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“Got it, Brother Levi!”

“You guys keep talking. I want to see who it is...” Levi wasn’t convinced Kevin had an interest in another girl—after all, there was already someone else in the picture. But his curiosity got the best of him. He stretched his neck to get a look, only to catch a glimpse of a familiar-looking figure.

Then he saw Kevin’s expression. Just as the others had said, his gaze was practically burning.

This is bad.

The backyard was about to catch fire.

A few more heads popped in, curious. “Brother Levi, what do you think?”

Levi pushed them back. “You’re not allowed to talk about this! Captain Edwards isn’t that kind of person!”

“Oh, oh, okay!” They backed off, heeding Levi’s warning.

But Levi was unsettled. More anxious than even the man in question. He was certain Kevin was deeply devoted to Norah—there was no way he had eyes for someone else.

And yet, that back... It looked eerily similar to Norah’s.

Damn it.

Was Captain Edwards looking for a stand-in?

...

Norah had just finished eating and was stepping outside when she spotted Ogura rushing over, breathless.

His head was wrapped in gauze, his hands bandaged.

She nearly forgot. “Are you okay?”

“Are you okay?” Ogura asked at the same time.

She saw the concern in his eyes, and it softened her.

“Just some wounds, nothing life-threatening,” she reassured him. “But what about you? Why are you here? Have you eaten?”

Ogura shook his head. “I came looking for you as soon as I woke up. Thank God you’re fine.”

Norah smiled. “Worried about me? That’s rare.”

Ogura shifted awkwardly. “Who’s worried? We’re partners. Of course, I need to know if you’re alive or not.”

“Don’t be stubborn,” she teased, knowing he was still embarrassed.

“I haven’t eaten yet. I just finished, but there’s still some food left. You should eat—it’ll help you recover faster.”

Ogura nodded and responded softly.

Norah asked a nearby soldier for some food, and he brought her a portion of meat.

She handed it to Ogura.

Without hesitation, he took two quick bites and chewed in silence.

After a while, he finally spoke. "Who are these people? They're not from our side. They're with you, right?"

"Yeah," Norah said proudly. "They're from our military."

Ogura had already noticed the difference.

They weren't like the so-called Confederates on his side. These soldiers protected the villagers. Meanwhile, their so-called allies only raided homes and stole from their own people.

Their country was still fractured, controlled by countless factions, each with its own army. Chaos ruled. The government had no true control, and the infighting was so severe that progress was impossible.

Ogura had never experienced what it was like to be protected by an army.

"Your soldiers are amazing," he said sincerely. "They fight for the people. Sometimes, I really envy you. Just looking at you, I can tell you've been well taken care of. Your country must be a good one."

Norah felt a swell of pride.

Sure, there were good and bad people everywhere, but her country was still safe.

"It is," she admitted. "To be honest, coming here completely shattered my perspective. I thought the whole world was as peaceful as my home. I never imagined people still lived like it was the 1940s or 50s. I feel for you."

Ogura gazed at the sky. It was the same sky above them all, yet the gap between their lives was so vast.

Norah patted his back. "One day, you might get a chance to see it for yourself."

Ogura's expression darkened. "Do I even have that chance?"

He looked at Norah, his eyes empty of hope. "In a place like this, there's no chance to grow up."

Norah felt a pang in her chest.

They were living through the same hardships her ancestors had endured.

She had never personally experienced it, but every time she read about it in books or saw it on the news, she felt their pain.

She was grateful her country had advanced so rapidly.

Never forget the struggles of the past.

Just then, Kevin appeared in the doorway.

His steps faltered as he spotted Norah and Ogura talking.

Norah was gently patting Ogura's back, comforting him. They looked close, like they'd known each other forever.

Kevin's expression darkened. His brows furrowed slightly.

Ogura hung his head. To Norah, he seemed like a little brother.

She sat down beside him, wanting to offer him a shoulder to lean on. Maybe, just maybe, she could pass on some of her optimism and reignite a spark of hope in him.

"Fight for your country's future," she told him.

Ogura met her gaze, momentarily uplifted by her conviction.

"Ahem. Ahem. Ahem..."

A sudden cough interrupted them.

Ogura jumped up, instantly on guard.

Norah turned and saw Kevin approaching.

"Sorry to interrupt your conversation," Kevin said, his voice low.

"It's fine," Norah replied.

Ogura eyed him warily. "Who's he?"

Norah gestured toward Kevin. "This is Kevin, Captain Edwards—the man who saved this village. You can call him Captain Edwards."

Kevin's gaze was unreadable as he looked at Ogura.

Ogura seemed to grasp something. "You're the protector they talk about."

Kevin's expression didn't change. "Not a protector. Just peacekeeping."

Ogura shook his head. "You saved the village. That makes you our protector. Our government could never do what you did."

His disappointment was obvious, as was his admiration.

Kevin took a step closer. His voice was calm but firm. "The future belongs to young people like you. If there's hope, there's a chance. Maybe one day, your country will be unified, and you'll finally have peace."

"Yeah," Ogura nodded.

Norah stood up. "Let's go. You need rest."

"Alright."

Kevin turned to her. "Aren't you sleeping in a tent? Where are you going to sleep?"

"I need to make sure Ogura is settled first."

Kevin signaled to a soldier. "Take care of this kid."

"Yes, Captain Edwards!" The soldier immediately stepped forward.

Norah smiled at Ogura. "Go with him. Rest well."

Ogura hesitated, then turned back. "Sister, can I hug you?"

Norah blinked in surprise but nodded. "Of course."

Ogura hugged her tightly.

Behind her, Kevin's frown deepened.

"Thank you," Ogura whispered. "I finally know what I need to do."

His words reassured Norah. At least she had helped him find some direction, something to believe in.

"I'm glad."

Ogura let go and walked away, never looking back.

Norah watched him go, a mix of emotions stirring within her.

Kevin stepped beside her. "I had someone prepare bathwater for you."

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“Huh?” Norah was taken aback.

Kevin glanced at her and said in an indifferent tone, “Your clothes are dirty. You probably need a bath.”

Norah looked down at herself.

Back home, she made sure to bathe every day. But here, with the harsh conditions, it wasn’t that easy. She had already given up on daily showers. If she could avoid it, she would.

After being buried under rubble and tossed around for so long, she certainly wasn’t clean. Still, she hadn’t expected Kevin to be so considerate.

She instinctively sniffed herself. “Do I smell?”

“No.” Kevin’s deep gaze met hers. “I just know you like to stay clean.”

His words left Norah momentarily dazed.

She looked up at him. The distance between them felt vast. After all, they were officially divorced. He didn’t need to care about her anymore.

And yet, he still did.

Norah pursed her lips slightly, shifting her gaze to avoid the complicated emotions between them. “Mm.”

She hesitated before saying, “Then I’ll head back.”

“Alright.”

Norah turned and walked away. Kevin watched her until she disappeared from sight.

As he turned around, he caught sight of Levi lurking in a corner.

Kevin’s expression hardened. “What are you doing there?”

Levi had just arrived and had caught part of Kevin’s conversation with Norah. He had also seen her silhouette as she left.

Sighing, Levi muttered, “Three points of resemblance is enough.”

Kevin frowned. “What are you talking about?”

Levi hesitated, debating whether to speak.

The idea of a stand-in had crossed his mind more times than he could count. When someone was far away, the ache of longing often led to seeking replacements. He had thought about this scenario at least eight hundred times.

“Spit it out!” Kevin snapped impatiently.

Levi swallowed hard, still wary. “Look, I know three points of resemblance can be tempting, but she’s not her. Captain Edwards, you need to think twice before you go down a path you might regret.”

Kevin’s face darkened. Without a word, he kicked Levi hard.

“Bullshit!”

Levi clutched his leg, wincing. Even though Kevin dismissed his words, Levi couldn’t shake the thought. But surely Kevin could tell the difference, right?

Seeing that Kevin had no interest in discussing it further and had already walked away, Levi turned back and glanced in the direction Norah had gone.

What was really going on here?

When Norah returned, she was met with an unexpected aroma drifting from her tent.

The scent of food.

She frowned in confusion. She had already eaten—where was this smell coming from?

Stepping inside, she saw a steaming meal on the table.

The rice in the bowl looked clean and carefully prepared, not the usual dark and unrefined grain they were used to here. The dishes were made from wild vegetables, but there was also meat—game hunted by the villagers.

By their standards, this was a feast.

“Whose food is this? Was it delivered by mistake?” she wondered aloud.

Stepping outside, she asked around.

“No idea,” someone responded. “Someone must have brought it for you. There’s no one else here.”

Norah scanned the area but saw no one suspicious.

With no other choice, she stepped back inside.

As she did, someone hiding in the shadows let out a quiet sigh of relief.

As long as Norah accepted it, that was enough.

The person turned to leave, but Norah's voice called out behind her. "Was it you?"

The figure stiffened. Awkward and caught off guard, she turned around slowly, her expression unreadable.

She snorted lightly. "So what if it was?"

Norah crossed her arms, studying her for a long moment. "Why are you giving me this? Weren't you trying to kick me out just two days ago?"

Arlene hesitated before looking up at Norah. "I don't want you starving to death. The village has been destroyed, and now everyone has to share what little food we have. You have no one here, and I don't want our village responsible for another death."

The excuse was flimsy at best.

Norah thought back to Arlene's petty tricks from a few days ago and the fact that she had saved Arlene's brother.

So this was guilt.

Norah walked in, sat down, and glanced at the food. "There's meat. You really went all out."

"Who said that?!" Arlene huffed. "It's just part of the communal meal. I didn't give you any special treatment."

She was still a young girl, unable to hide her emotions behind a tough facade.

Norah didn't call her out on it. Instead, she picked up her chopsticks and took a bite.

Arlene watched with anticipation. "Well?"

Norah nodded. "Not bad."

Arlene's face lit up with satisfaction. "Of course! It's just as good as your cooking!"

Norah raised an eyebrow. "Have you eaten yet?"

Arlene rubbed her stomach. She had been so focused on making this meal that she had forgotten to eat.

The question suddenly made her realize how hungry she was.

Norah noticed and pushed the bowl toward her. "Here, you eat."

Arlene frowned. "What about you?"

"I'm cutting back on rice. Just having some vegetables."

Arlene eyed her skeptically. "You think you need to lose weight? What hope does that leave for the rest of us?"

"Gotta stay in shape," Norah said casually. "Go on, eat. Wasting food in times like this is a crime."

Truthfully, Arlene wanted to eat with Norah.

"Of course I know that! Every grain is precious!" Arlene huffed, before eagerly digging in.

"Mmm! This meat is amazing!" she said happily, savoring the taste.

In their remote village, meat was a rare luxury, only available when they managed to hunt wild boars in the mountains.

Norah watched her like she was a little kid. "Then eat up."

Arlene nodded enthusiastically.

Halfway through, she suddenly paused, put her bowl down, and muttered, "Thank you for saving my brother."

Norah waved it off. "Ahsan already thanked me. No need for formalities."

"It's different," Arlene said seriously. "I won't forget what you did."

Seeing Norah finish eating, Arlene quickly scarfed down her last few bites. "I'm full."

Then, without another word, she gathered up the dishes and walked out.

"Be careful—it's dark outside," Norah reminded her.

"I know. I have to go up the mountain tomorrow to collect herbs."

The village had been destroyed, and most of their medicinal supplies were gone. They needed to gather new ones to make a living.

Without them, they wouldn't even have food to survive.

Meanwhile, a young Yi woman approached. She had wheat-colored skin, bold features, a high nose bridge, and a striking figure.

She walked forward confidently but was stopped at the entrance.

“You can’t go in.”

She smiled softly. “I’m here to see Captain Edwards.”

“He’s resting. Come back tomorrow.”

She hesitated. “Then when can I see him?”

“I don’t know.”

The woman’s excitement dimmed.