

Mr. Edwards' Unraveled Life

7 min read

Chapter 551.

As soon as Baimo spoke, he gave Freyja a long, meaningful look.

And in that moment, Freyja understood everything.

She smiled softly. "It's okay. If it helps you, the wedding is just a formality."

Baimo gently touched her head, then kissed the center of her forehead.

Freyja's heart stirred—like a still lake rippling with the lightest breeze.

With both of them in agreement, the wedding was set for the following week.

The Yi tribe quickly spread the news.

Family and friends were notified right away.

Pharaoh was surprised by how fast Baimo moved this time and couldn't help but poke fun at him.

"So now you're telling me you don't like her? You were acting like you didn't care. Look at you now—slapping your own face, huh?"

Baimo chuckled.

Yeah, it was a slap in the face. But it also proved that nothing in life is absolute—never say never.

Pharaoh said, "If you're really thinking about marriage, then do it properly—with Norah."

He had gotten used to calling her Norah now. The name Julie was long gone.

To Pharaoh, as long as she was his daughter, the name didn't matter.

Besides, Bianca used the name Norah for a while too.

Norah's memories had stayed frozen in the capital.

So if Norah was happy, that's all that mattered.

"I know you don't want to leave the capital, but you have to be at my wedding," Baimo told him.

If even his own dad and sister didn't show up, people would start to talk.

"Alright. I'll tell Norah—we'll head out tonight," Pharaoh agreed.

There was no way he'd miss his son's wedding.

He already felt like he'd let Norah down—he couldn't do the same to Baimo.

When Norah came home, Pharaoh filled her in.

She was thrilled. "That's wonderful—true love finally becoming family."

She had seen Freyja's unwavering support and love for Baimo.

And she truly admired Freyja—she would be the perfect partner by Baimo's side.

"Isn't Cooper supposed to be in kindergarten?" Pharaoh suddenly asked, thinking of the boy.

Lately, Cooper's grandpa had been picking him up from school, and Pharaoh kept tabs on his daily progress.

Cooper talked more now and had made friends.

But if they went to the wedding, he'd have to miss kindergarten for a bit.

Norah smiled. "He's just in kindergarten—they're mostly just playing. Besides, his uncle's getting married. Do you really think he'd want to be left behind?"

Baimo loved Cooper like his own, and Freyja had poured her heart into the boy too.

Now that they were getting married, Cooper had to be there. He'd even be the flower boy.

Back when there was civil unrest in Country S, Baimo and Freyja had gone to help together. She had feared for their safety the whole time.

Now that they were finally tying the knot, there was no way they wouldn't be there.

Pharaoh smiled. "Exactly."

So, they all headed off to the Yi tribe together.

At the airport, Norah ran into Steven.

It had been five years.

Steven still wore his signature black suit and carried himself with quiet confidence.

The moment he saw her, a warm smile crept onto his face.

"Norah, long time no see," he said.

"Steven, how've you been all these years?" Norah asked.

After they returned to the capital, Steven had gone back to the Lord family.

She knew how he had felt about her—she knew what he had done for her.

Since then, they hadn't seen each other. She'd texted him, but he never responded.

Her words cut like a knife.

How had he been?

When he got back to the Lord family, they took his phone. He'd been tortured while in the Yi tribe—his body was wrecked. His family had restricted his freedom, forcing him into recovery.

They even arranged a marriage for him—and he had a child.

He hadn't dared to reach out to Norah all these years. He feared he wouldn't be able to control himself.

Because... he didn't feel worthy of standing by her side anymore.

At that moment, it felt like invisible hands were squeezing his throat.

He couldn't say a single word.

Norah picked up on the tension. She was about to speak again when Kevin walked over.

When Kevin saw Steven, he greeted him first. "Steven, it's been a while."

Steven nodded. "Yeah, it really has."

Norah loved Kevin. He wasn't dead—he was right there, by her side. And because of that, she would never leave him.

That much was clear.

Steven forced a smile. "I've got something to take care of, so I'll head out."

"Take care," she replied politely.

But Norah could tell—something was off.

Kevin placed a hand on her shoulder. "Everything turned out the way it was meant to. You can relax now."

But Norah couldn't let it go.

She murmured, "Everyone seems to be doing fine... except Steven. He doesn't look okay."

Steven felt distant. But more than that—his eyes were different. They were clouded with sorrow.

He hadn't responded to her messages in years, and Norah had been so busy with her work as a war correspondent, she hadn't followed up. She realized now—she'd missed a lot of what had happened to him.

She thought it over, then made up her mind and ran after him.

"Steven," she called out. "Are you still using the same WhatsApp and phone number?"

Steven shook his head. "No. I changed them."

No wonder he'd never replied.

But still—if he changed them, why didn't he tell her? Something had definitely happened.

"You... you changed your contact info and your whole identity without telling me? Steven... what's going on?"

She never expected Steven's entire life to revolve around her. But still—they were friends.

Something wasn't right.

Steven gave a bitter laugh. "I'm married now. I have a kid. I've got to draw a line between who I used to be and who I am now."

He wanted to give her his number now, but he couldn't.

He wasn't the same man anymore. And she had Kevin.

As long as she was happy, that was enough for him.

"That's good, then," Norah said quietly. "I'm glad you're okay. I wish you all the best."

Paulina didn't make things hard for Tessa. "Alright, go on," she said.

Tessa let out a breath of relief. She'd been worried it would drag on. Now that Paulina let her off the hook, she rushed away, afraid she'd change her mind.

Just then, Norah's phone buzzed.

It was a group message.

When she opened it, she saw it was from her junior high school classmates. They were still talking about a class reunion.

It was supposed to be today, but she'd never confirmed if she'd go.

Someone had just added her.

She didn't use the chat much—too busy with work.

The new contact had a profile pic: white hands holding a bouquet of lilies.

She thought it was a girl.

But when she clicked it—it was Steven.

That didn't match him at all.

Still, Norah accepted the request.

Steven messaged her:[Norah, this is my WhatsApp.].

She replied:[Your suit's been washed. I'll send it to you.].

Steven:[Class reunion—are you coming? Hope to see you there.].

Norah scrolled through the group chat. She hadn't seen Steven in years. He'd only recently joined the group, and everyone had welcomed him enthusiastically.

They were definitely planning something for him.

She hadn't been to a reunion in a long time—work always got in the way. Now, she felt it would be rude not to show up.

So she agreed.

Paulina noticed Norah chatting during work hours—totally out of character. Something was definitely up.

That afternoon, there was a meeting.

Paulina got the materials ready.

After three hours, Kevin walked out of the meeting room.

"Ms. Paulina," her assistant said, handing her a bag.

Paulina took it quickly. "Thanks. You can go."

She followed Kevin into the office and placed the bag on the desk.

"Mr. Edwards," she called out.

"Something else?" Kevin asked, not looking up.

Paulina had learned her lesson from last time. She didn't rush into it.

"I had your dry-cleaned suit brought over," she said calmly.

Kevin frowned and turned to her. "What suit?"

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"Thanks."

Steven turned her down. He didn't want to say thank you to Norah, and he definitely didn't want to hear her offer him any kind of blessing.

But what could they do?

This was already the best possible ending for them.

"I have other plans. When I return to Craggaville... if there's a business opportunity, we can always meet again." Norah smiled, her words perfectly measured.

"Okay."

Steven watched her walk away, and his heart twisted more with each step. In the end, the pain swallowed him whole, like a monster consuming him from the inside.

Some people, he realized, are better off never crossing paths.

....

Norah returned to Kevin, who had bought her a cup of milk tea.

Not just for her—Cooper and Pharaoh were taken care of too.

Cooper had fries and fried chicken, while Pharaoh got Dahongpao tea. Kevin had brought Kian along this time as well. It was Kian's first visit, and he was curious to see the place.

More importantly, Kian could keep them updated on business matters.

Kian was a workaholic—he didn't stop working, even while waiting for a flight.

Pharaoh couldn't help but comment, "I know you all love the kid, but Cooper's health isn't great. You really should cut back on the fried foods."

"Dad, I know. I only let him eat it once in a while."

Kevin was actually very sensitive about this stuff. Cooper had never had fried food before. But the truth was, he and Norah still carried a lot of guilt.

Besides, Pharaoh had always been strict with him.

"Eat slowly. Don't choke," Pharaoh added, still attentive as he gently wiped the oil from the corners of Cooper's mouth.

This—this was what a happy family looked like.

On the plane, Norah had a dream.

She saw a little girl holding a rose, smiling sweetly at her. "Pretty auntie, can I go home with you?"

The little girl was adorable.

As Norah reached out to her, she suddenly woke up.

It didn't feel like a random dream. It felt like fate.

If she got pregnant again, and this time had a daughter, she'd have both a son and a daughter.

Still, doubts tugged at her.

Cooper had been taken to Mousse right after he was born. She hadn't been there for his early years. If she had another child now, all her attention would naturally go to the new baby.

"What's wrong? Nightmare?" Kevin asked, noticing how unsettled she looked.

Norah pressed her lips together and shared what she was thinking.

Kevin wrapped his arms around her. "It's okay. Just let things happen naturally. Even if your focus shifts, Cooper still has me, his grandfather, and his uncle."

That was true—Cooper was deeply loved by everyone.

But—.

Could anyone else's love ever match a mother's?

Norah shook her head. "I don't want a second child. Not yet. I'll wait until Cooper fully recovers."

"Okay. If that's how you feel, that's all that matters."

It was a shame they'd missed out on their child's early years. But Kevin respected all of Norah's choices.

Eight hours later, they landed in the Yi tribe. Baimo and Freyja came to meet them personally.

The moment they saw Cooper, their attention was fully on him. Freyja wouldn't let go of him and handed over all the gifts she'd brought for him.

In their arms, Cooper looked like part of a perfect little family.

Norah laughed. "Once you two get married, you should start a family right away. And when the baby comes, I better get to babysit."

"You're not even in the Yi tribe. Your dad moved with you to the capital too. Why don't you move back? I'll pay you well," Baimo said, half-joking, half-serious.

He had a point—distance was an issue. Though Norah had chosen to stay in the capital, Baimo genuinely wished she'd return.

The Yi tribe was their spiritual home. As her brother, Baimo wanted to make up for lost time in every way possible.

Norah understood what he was really saying. But Kevin was in the capital. So were her adoptive parents. Her entire life was there.

She had no interest in managing the Yi tribe.

Norah chuckled. "When my sister-in-law gives birth, I'll come stay and help take care of her."

They didn't have a mother. Sure, Baimo could hire help, but nothing could replace family.

Freyja's eyes welled up when Norah called her "sister-in-law".

Baimo had chosen her, and everyone in his circle had accepted her. It felt amazing.

Still, Baimo brought up something serious with Pharaoh regarding Arlene. "A friend of mine was injected with a drug. It's an enhanced version of one Calvin developed. Dad, I'd like you to take a look."

At the mention of Calvin, Pharaoh's expression darkened.

An enhanced drug by Calvin? But Calvin had already been turned into a human pig, stripped of his humanity. His tongue had been ripped out, and he could only squeal like a pig now.

How could someone like that have the power to do this?

Or... who were these people dumb enough to keep following Calvin?

Meanwhile, Norah caught the name "Arlene".

Her memory was sharp. She remembered meeting Arlene when she first visited the northern Yi tribe. "Is it the Arlene I know?" she asked.

"Yes," Baimo replied honestly.

Back then, there was war, but Arlene had cooked for her. Now, five years later, Arlene was here—and Norah felt compelled to see her.

But the sight of Arlene shocked her.

"Is it the potion? Is that what did this to her? Dad, do you think you can help? Please..."

The fact that Arlene was in a lab meant she had a connection with Baimo.

Norah couldn't just stand by and watch her die.

Pharaoh nodded. "Let me take a look. Don't worry—I'll do everything I can to help."

But Arlene's condition didn't look good.

Pharaoh's face fell. "The toxins have reached her internal organs. This new formula is deadly. There's no antidote."

In other words, whoever gave Arlene the potion never planned to let her live. They used her and discarded her.

If she couldn't be saved... she would've died because of Baimo.

Baimo was devastated. "Dad, you've worked in the lab for decades. You must have a way. Please—save her!"

"If there's a way, I won't hesitate," Pharaoh said, his tone grave.

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Norah never expected to hear news like this. What could she possibly say to comfort him?

After all, now wasn't the right time....

Baimo hadn't anticipated this outcome either. He had made so many promises to Arlene. And now... he walked toward her, heavy with guilt.

"I'm sorry. You gave me such important information, and I still couldn't save your life."

Arlene lay on the bed, her body ravaged by the drugs. Despite her suffering, she forced a smile when she saw Baimo approaching.

"This wasn't anything important. Even if I hadn't told you, you would've figured it out eventually."

She had done it willingly. She didn't want Baimo to carry any guilt.

Baimo felt like his heart was being crushed. Arlene was dying because of him... and there was nothing he could do but watch.

But he didn't want her to die with regrets.

"I failed you," Baimo said, his voice low. "I couldn't get the antidote in time. But I'm not giving up. The reward is still posted on the dark web. And if I can't save you... I swear I'll avenge you. Just tell me—what's your last wish?"

Determination flared in his eyes.

If Arlene had a final wish, he would move heaven and earth to make it happen.

But Arlene knew Baimo was about to marry Freyja. She didn't want to complicate things for him or darken his mood before the wedding.

She smiled gently. "Teacher Baimo, it's enough for me that you know, that someone tried to save me, and that you're here with me."

"I wish you and Miss Johnstone a happy marriage... and a beautiful family."

It was her most heartfelt blessing.

Baimo didn't expect that in her final moments, Arlene was still trying to make things easier for him.

She had once gone after Norah for his sake, but now....

"Arlene, you're a good girl. If there's a next life, I hope you find true love and live a long, happy life with them."

His voice broke with emotion.

Arlene shook her head. "But I don't want another life."

If she couldn't have the love she wanted in this one, what difference would the next life make?

Besides, when people die, they return to nothing. What afterlife could there be?

Baimo stayed by her side, while Freyja stood nearby, feeling conflicted. If Arlene hadn't been poisoned—if she'd held on—she would've been a powerful rival.

Was she supposed to feel lucky?

Freyja couldn't bring herself to think that. Arlene was dying, after all.

Seeing Freyja's mood dip, Norah walked over, gently patting her shoulder. "Sister-in-law, don't overthink it. My brother is just grateful to Arlene. They knew each other before."

That friendship was why Norah stayed by Arlene's side.

Freyja drew a shaky breath. After a moment of silence, she shared her thoughts with Norah.

"Norah, I know all that. Honestly, I should thank Arlene. If it weren't for her, your brother might not have realized his feelings for me or proposed so soon. I know where I stand... but I still hope she pulls through."

This was life and death. How could she feel good about someone dying?

That wasn't who she was.

Freyja was a kind, grounded woman—an ideal partner, admired by many.

"I get it," Norah said warmly. "So don't put too much pressure on yourself."

Freyja managed to let go of the darkness in her heart.

At the wedding, Baimo used the celebration as a trap to catch those responsible for poisoning Arlene.

He showed them mercy—but with one condition.

“If you want to walk away, hand over the antidote to the poison you used.”.

The wedding was a grand event. Everything was orchestrated to look joyful, so the culprits would let their guard down.

But the moment they made a move, they were caught.

“It’s been so long,” one of them said. “You have the Pharaoh, the top poison developer, on your side. If there was an antidote, wouldn’t he have used it by now?”.

If one existed, Pharaoh would’ve already saved Arlene.

Now, she only had days left.

They had hoped to use Arlene and walk away clean. But they never imagined she would be so loyal to Baimo, willing to die rather than betray him.

And they never thought Baimo would turn his wedding into a sting.

Baimo’s expression hardened. “If there’s no antidote, then you all die.”.

He pulled the trigger—then handed the weapon to Arlene. Nothing could be more satisfying than taking revenge yourself.

But for Arlene....

Even killing them wouldn’t change her fate.

Still, since Baimo handed her the gun, she followed through.

Bang. Bang. Bang.

The traitors dropped like crops in a storm.

Then, without warning, Arlene collapsed. Baimo caught her.

In the next moment, blood poured from her mouth... even her eyes began to bleed.

"Someone! Help!" Baimo shouted.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Baimo. I wanted to hold on until your wedding was over... but I overestimated myself. I shouldn't have let myself hope."

Arlene's voice was barely a whisper.

She had told him the truth—warned him—and should've left right after. That way, he wouldn't have had to go through all this for her.

Even if she had to die from an incurable poison, she shouldn't have done it in front of him. How unlucky was that?

Arlene tried to push herself up from his arms, but her body was completely drained. She couldn't even lift her hands.

"Don't move," Baimo said softly. "Tell me what you want, and I'll take you there."

His voice was so gentle, so warm.

Arlene's last little wish escaped her lips. "Then... can you take me to see the stars?"

The night sky over the Yi region was filled with bright stars.

There's a saying among the Yi people: after people die, they become stars in the sky.

Baimo couldn't let her die without even granting that.

He took her out to see the stars. Arlene leaned gently on his shoulder.

The stars were beautiful... but Arlene had never felt so cold. Her eyelids were getting heavier.

"Teacher Baimo, I'm sorry for ruining your wedding... for affecting your wedding night. I wish you nothing but happiness in the future..."

"And in your next life, I hope things are even better."

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Chapter 554 This was Baimo's most heartfelt and helpless wish.

He had believed his father would be able to cure Arlene's poisoning. But in the end, his father couldn't do anything. All Baimo could do was watch her die.

He stayed by Arlene's side through the night, then buried her himself.

Freyja didn't come looking for him. She knew he was grieving and needed space. She understood and chose to wait.

Life is full of regrets.

She hugged Baimo. She didn't say a word—because sometimes silence speaks louder than anything.

"Take a shower and get some rest. Some things are beyond our control. But those of us who are still here... we have to keep going. The Yi people need us."

She had made up her mind: she would be a good wife, and she'd stand by Baimo's side to build a better future for their people.

Baimo opened his mouth, wanting to say something—but the words wouldn't come. It was like something was stuck in his throat.

His heart felt unbearably heavy, as if crushed under a massive weight.

Freyja said in a raspy voice, "Arlene was a good person. She gave her life to protect you from those who wanted to hurt you."

If Arlene had been a coward, she would've worked with the enemy.

But she didn't.

Because of her, Baimo found out about the plot in time—and took them down.

"Baimo, from now on, let's visit her grave every year and take care of her family."

"...Yeah."

"About our wedding night... I'm sorry—".

Baimo's lips trembled into a bitter smile. His voice was hoarse.

Arlene had truly cared for him and died for him. Freyja also loved him deeply—she almost died for him too. Yet on the night he married Freyja, he'd been with someone else.

Freyja gently ran her fingers through his hair. "Look at you. I know you. I understand. How could I ever blame you? This wedding was for show. I don't feel hurt at all. As long as you're with me, every day from now on will feel like our wedding night. I'll be with you—working to build the future of the Yi people."

She meant every word. But Arlene's family... they wouldn't take it so lightly.

Especially Arlene's brother.

Arlene had been grateful to both Baimo and Norah, and she knew they were good people. But this time, it involved her own sister.

Pharaoh had spent years in the lab. He'd experimented through wars, slave camps, and on medicine men—yet in the end, he still had no cure?

Norah had brought Cooper back. Pharaoh had performed surgery on Cooper—and on Kevin too.

Ahshan was furious. "I get it. We're not your family. We're just civilians. Our lives mean nothing to you. You had all this knowledge and power, and you still let my sister die? What did she ever do wrong? Even poisoned, she never betrayed you!".

Arlene had served as a soldier. Now, only Ahshan and Arlene remained in their family. And now, she was gone—he was alone in the world.

He'd rushed over as soon as he heard the news. He didn't care about the consequences anymore. What was the worst that could happen? If he offended Pharaoh or Baimo, would they kill him? Fine. He had nothing left to lose.

"I know I was wrong before. But I didn't know what else to do. The poison in Kevin was cured by his own father.".

"Cooper had a bone marrow transplant. As for the rest... I was just helping him recover.".

"Then what about all your research? What about the medicine men?".

Ahshan shouted, the pain in his chest almost unbearable. There had been thousands of people in those slave camps. After all those experiments, there were no results? Even with all the Yi people's medicinal herbs?

How could they not save his sister?

Wasn't it just because she had feelings for Baimo, and they didn't want her to be a distraction?

Ahshan clutched his chest. It hurt so bad. "You could've saved her! You had the power! Why didn't you save her?".

Worried that Ahshan might lose control, Baimo stepped in front of Pharaoh. His voice was firm. "I tried everything, but I failed. I couldn't save your sister. That's on me. If you want revenge, take my life."

His eyes were steady.

"No! You're the leader of the Yi people now. If someone has to die to make things right, then take my life instead!"

Freyja loved Baimo too much to watch him die. She immediately stepped in front of him, shielding him with her body.

Baimo and Freyja were newlyweds. Their marriage had a purpose. Even their wedding night was filled with regrets.

If either of them died now, what would be the point of it all?

At that moment, Pharaoh stood up and said calmly, "If you think I'm the one who let you down, then kill me."

Pharaoh's tone was calm.

Baimo was his most promising successor. Everyone in the Yi tribe knew his abilities. If Baimo died, it would be a massive loss for the entire tribe.

Even if he had to die—Baimo couldn't.

The living must live well and carry on. Baimo and Freyja had done nothing wrong. If anyone was to blame, it was Pharaoh. He was willing to take full responsibility.

Ahshan was overwhelmed with grief. But if he killed Pharaoh or Baimo now, wouldn't he become the enemy of the whole tribe?

Pharaoh had made mistakes—he'd ignored the Yi people while conducting experiments, giving Calvin the opening to launch an attack. That led to years of war.

Yes, Pharaoh was wrong.

But he had also once led the Yi tribe to greatness. And now, there was Baimo, doing his part in his own way. The tribe was finally at peace.

"Ahshan."

Before he could respond, a soft, hoarse voice echoed from the distance.

He turned and saw Norah slowly walking toward him.

He could still vividly remember how she'd protected him with her body five years ago.

"Teacher Norah..."

She'd only taught him briefly, but a teacher is like a parent. And she had saved his life.

Norah walked up to Ahshan, her expression firm. "I only taught you for an hour, but you still call me 'Teacher.' What about Baimo?"

Baimo had taught them much longer—yet Ahshan no longer acknowledged him?

Norah wanted him to think about that.

Then, in a calm voice, she said, "You have to understand, Baimo didn't want your sister to die. It was those people. And he's already captured them. He'll get justice for you and your sister."

"Justice? She's already dead. What justice is there?" Ahshan sneered, bitter to the core. "Pharaoh had all those experiments, all those medicine men. How could he still not find a cure?"

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"Ahshan! We didn't cause your sister's death! You're one of the Yi people. I believe that even if your sister didn't love Baimo, she still loved her country."

What citizen would ever think of harming their own leader?

That one sentence brought back Ahshan's conversation with Arlene.

She had been almost obsessed with Baimo. She read every bit of news about him, collected newspaper clippings of his photos, even printed out screenshots from videos.

He had once asked her, "You and Teacher Baimo are worlds apart. You're so obsessed with him—are you really going to die for him someday?"

He never imagined those words would come true.

But he remembered her answer clearly: "Even if I don't have personal feelings for him, he's the leader of our country. If I ever die for him, then it would be a sacrifice for the nation—and that's an honor."

Now Norah had brought this up again.

All of it—this was what Arlene had chosen. She had already accepted this outcome long before it happened.

Ahshan took a deep breath. "I overreacted. I want to volunteer for the border post. My sister... she died for her country. I want her to be remembered with honor. That's all I ask."

Baimo had been planning to offer Ahshan some compensation, but he hadn't expected Ahshan to volunteer so quickly. "It is honorable," Baimo said. "But I thought we'd talk first. Since you've decided, I'll have the arrangements made. Still, I want to make sure you get what you deserve. You—".

Ahshan was still just a kid.

How old had you been back then?

He's only twelve now, which meets the Yi tribe's age requirement for conscription. Even so, there was a kind of determined calm on his young face.

"I don't want anything. My sister's gone, and no reward will bring her back. I'd rather serve my country while I still can."

That's all Ahshan wanted.

Baimo opened his mouth to say more, but Pharaoh gave him a subtle nod. Baimo had no choice but to respect Ahshan's decision. "Then we'll do as you say."

Arlene's love for Baimo had always been her own choice. She had never pursued him, and she'd always claimed it was for the good of the country. No one ever linked it to romance.

Among the Yi people, everyone talked about Ahshan. They called Arlene brave. Her name gained respect only after her death—but no honor could bring her back.

Ahshan had just one thing on his mind: protecting the Yi tribe and protecting Baimo—because those were the two things his sister had died for.

On the day Ahshan left, Norah came to see him off.

He didn't care about money, titles, or anything material. The only thing Norah could give him was a protective amulet she had specially asked for.

"Ahshan, life at the border is hard. Please take care of yourself. Your sister may be gone, but we're still your family. You can come back anytime."

Ahshan smiled.

But deep inside, he knew the truth: with his sister gone, he didn't really have a home in the Yi tribe anymore. Norah and Baimo had their own lives to live.

Ahshan wasn't a little kid. He understood that.

Arlene was gone, and with her, that chapter had ended.

Norah stayed in the Yi tribe for a while out of concern for Baimo. He didn't act any differently, but still....

His eyes were bloodshot, and he looked absolutely exhausted—like he was running on empty.

Norah was worried. "You really don't look well. Are you having trouble sleeping? If it keeps up, I'll call Jace to come see you."

Knowing Baimo, he'd never willingly open up to his father. But it would be different with Jace.

Jace was thoughtful, intuitive—and their age. There'd be less pressure.

"I'm fine—".

Baimo didn't want to tell Norah the truth. But before he could finish, Freyja cut him off. "How can you say you're fine? You can't sleep, and you're dreaming about Arlene every single night! Baimo, she's becoming your inner demon! You tried, okay?! You did everything you could!"

Baimo had seen death before—he'd been through countless battles with the Yi people.

Freyja knew Arlene died saving Baimo, but she also knew Baimo had never wanted that. He had done everything he could.

So why had her death affected him this deeply?

Freyja wrapped her arms around him, but his face was clouded with a darkness she couldn't shake. It was like a heavy shadow that refused to lift.

He didn't want Norah to worry, but Freyja couldn't hold it in.

"Freyja, why are you telling her this? You didn't have to say anything!"

"This is serious! You're in pain! Why shouldn't I tell her?".

Freyja's voice broke with emotion. Her tears fell like a snapped string of pearls.

Norah gently placed her hand on Freyja's shoulder. "Sister-in-law, I understand. Please don't cry. Brother... you can't go on like this."

"I'm fine!".

Baimo's voice was cold and sharp.

But he was far from fine.

Anyone looking at him could tell.

And people who insist they're fine usually aren't.

Norah's heart felt heavy. "Brother, calm down. Let's talk. This isn't the end. You can get through this. You need to get back to living your life. Don't let Arlene become your demon. She wouldn't want this for you."

"No, I didn't—I wasn't—Ah—!!".

Mr. Edwards' Unraveled Life

6 min read

Chapter 556.

Baimo clutched his head with both hands and let out a roar of pain.

Seeing him like this shattered Norah's heart—and Freyja's even more so, since she was by his side every day.

Norah stepped forward, gently placed a hand on his shoulder, and said softly, "Brother, this isn't your fault. Please stop blaming yourself...".

But Baimo cut her off. "It is my fault. If it weren't for me, she wouldn't have died. I've seen so many people die, but nothing has ever hit me like this. Norah, do you understand? I watched her die right in front of me..."

His voice was raw, each word forced out like it scraped his throat.

It was the first time Norah had seen him this broken. She wanted to help, but she was completely helpless.

Fearing that Baimo might spiral and hurt himself, Norah quickly called Pharaoh.

Soon, Pharaoh arrived with members from the lab.

His heart ached when he saw Baimo like this. Baimo was his son.

But upon examining him, Pharaoh discovered that Baimo had been secretly taking phenobarbital—a drug he had personally modified to make it addictive.

Baimo had lost control simply because he missed a dose.

Pharaoh immediately laid down strict rules: From now on, no drugs were allowed in the lab without official approval.

He also took action against everyone who had known about Baimo's drug use.

Baimo was the leader now, and many were just waiting for a chance to bring him down. If word got out about his drug use, those with hidden agendas would definitely exploit it.

Freyja wanted to stay with Baimo, but Pharaoh stopped her.

"Baimo's disappearance might be due to official matters. But what about you? Why are you missing?"

Freyja realized the weight of his words, but she couldn't walk away. "He didn't even spend our wedding night with me. He's been in so much pain lately. If I can't stay by his side now, then what am I?"

Her voice cracked, as if something was caught in her throat.

Her chest felt like it was being crushed by invisible hands.

Baimo had thought about this too. Circumstances had forced them apart, and she'd been left out. But now, she wasn't backing down.

"Dad, please... let me stay with him."

Pharaoh didn't speak. His expression was grave.

Norah couldn't bear to see Freyja so heartbroken. "Dad, let my sister-in-law stay. You're managing the Yi tribe—things will be fine for now."

After thinking it through, Pharaoh nodded. "Alright. Stay and take care of him."

"Thank you, Dad..."

Freyja wiped her tears and immediately rushed to Baimo's side.

She gripped his hand tightly, her heart resolute.

No matter what happened, no matter when or where—she would never leave him. She would share life and death with Baimo.

She even blamed herself for not protecting him, for letting things spiral so far that he turned to medication to cope.

Baimo heard every word she said.

When her tears finally spilled, he reached up and gently wiped them from her cheeks.

"Silly girl... none of this is your fault. Why are you crying?"

The moment he opened his eyes, Freyja was overwhelmed with relief.

"Baimo, you're awake! You have no idea how scared I was..."

He stroked her hair and smiled faintly. "I'm sorry I made you worry."

"Baimo, please get better. You can't leave me. We still have so much left to do—too many things we'd regret missing out on." She held him tightly, her voice hoarse, clinging to him as though her fear could be crushed if she just held on hard enough.

As for Arlene....

Forget everything else—just look at the basics.

She had choices. But she didn't take them.

She didn't want Baimo to carry this guilt forever.

Baimo gently stroked Freyja's head. "I heard everything you said. I'll try to climb out of the darkness. I promise."

Freyja told him she didn't care about the past. And Baimo understood where things had gone wrong—he didn't blame her.

Jace arrived soon after he got the news.

Baimo's addiction was partly Pharaoh's doing, and it was now Jace's responsibility to provide him with counseling.

Baimo understood some of it.

But he couldn't get past the pain. After all, Arlene had died in his arms—because of him.

Jace understood.

He put Baimo under hypnosis and slowly unraveled the knots in his heart.

Baimo's voice was hoarse. "I didn't kill Arlene... but she died because of me. I never knew death could feel so heavy... or come so quietly."

Tears welled in his eyes and spilled down silently.

Jace spoke in a calm whisper. "Regret is part of life. You did what you could. That doesn't mean you give up. Yes, the truth is harsh—but it's not your fault. For her, maybe death was a kind of peace. So many people were in that slave camp. During Pharaoh's experiments, Calvin was interfering. How many lives were lost? Baimo, we're not heartless. But the dead are gone. We, the living, have to keep going.

You still have your father, your wife, your sister—and the entire Yi tribe counting on you. If something happens to you, what will become of them?"

Jace knew Baimo better than anyone. He couldn't let him fall into this spiral.

Responsibility—that was what Baimo held most sacred. And Jace knew he had to appeal to that.

Baimo didn't speak. His face twisted in pain, his silence deafening.

Jace pressed on. "Baimo, as the leader of the Yi tribe, you carry the hopes of a nation. You're not just a man anymore. Arlene had feelings for you—otherwise, she never would've dared to hurt you, knowing who you are."

There was nothing else Jace could say—Arlene's fate was tragic.

Still, Baimo remained silent.

So Jace continued, "Every person has their own fate. Her death is heartbreaking—but the country still needs you. And Freyja... how long have you two been married? Are you really going to destroy yourself and leave her a widow?"

As soon as Jace mentioned Freyja, her face appeared in Baimo's mind.

And slowly, the darkness in his eyes began to clear.

He pressed his lips together and whispered, "I understand."

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6 min read

Chapter 557.

"With your willpower, I believe you'll get through this. I'll keep checking in and supporting you the whole way," Jace said slowly.

He meant every word.

Withdrawal was brutal, but Baimo wasn't alone. He had people around him—especially Freyja.

It took Baimo a week to kick his drug addiction.

That was a win for everyone, especially Freyja. She was overjoyed. "Baimo, let's head to the grassroots level. There are still so many people out there who need our help."

Freyja's thinking was simple: if she threw herself into work with Baimo, he'd have less time to dwell on Arlene's death.

During this time, Baimo felt like they'd just gotten married—and he couldn't shake the feeling that he owed her. He wanted to be with her, to make up for lost time.

But fate had taken a harsh turn, and it had changed everything.

Baimo wrapped his arms around Freyja. "That's a great idea. Let's go. As for the Yi tribe, Master Clown and I have it covered."

"Okay."

With Baimo and Freyja leaving, Pharaoh would have to stay behind to look after the Yi tribe for a while. Otherwise, he wouldn't feel at ease.

But it wasn't easy for Pharaoh to say goodbye to Cooper. While they were in the capital, their bond had grown strong and natural. Pharaoh had even planned to attend Baimo and Freyja's wedding—until everything changed.

"Cooper, you're going back with your mom and the others this time. Be good, okay? Grandpa will come visit you soon."

Pharaoh gently patted Cooper's head, his affection clear in every gesture.

Cooper nodded. "Don't worry, Grandpa. I'll listen to my parents, study hard, and wait for you to visit."

"Good."

Pharaoh personally took them to the airport.

Kian was handling government matters, and Norah was in charge of business affairs. While Kevin respected Norah's judgment, Kian was the first to speak.

"Boss Edwards, why don't you and your wife stay in the Yi tribe for a little while? I can take the young master back to school. Don't worry—I'll talk to your wife's adoptive parents."

Norah looked at Cooper.

She hadn't been with him for the first five years of his life. Now that he was finally in school and adjusting well, the idea of leaving him behind made her uneasy.

She couldn't bear to send him back alone.

"No," Norah said. "I'm not staying here. Once they come back from the grassroots, Cooper's grandpa will return too."

From the beginning, they'd agreed to settle in the capital.

Kevin understood her decision, but he still pulled her aside and said quietly, "I know you're worried. If it's about Cooper going back alone, I'll go with him. But if you stay here by yourself, I'll worry about you."

The distance between them was too great. It wasn't like they could just drive back and forth.

At that moment, Norah fully grasped what “distance” really meant.

But her biological father was Pharaoh. He had a lifetime of experience and trustworthy people around him. And Baimo had Freyja—he’d be okay.

Right now, her priority had to be Cooper.

Norah ultimately chose to return to the capital.

But in her absence, Martin began stirring up trouble. He reached out to people, trying to manipulate them.

He managed to deceive a few, though not for long. Martin wanted full control of the family’s assets—but there were still those loyal to Kevin, who kept reporting everything.

Unfortunately, neither Kevin nor Kian picked up their phones.

They were on a flight.

Martin had one goal now—and it couldn’t be clearer. He wanted wealth and power.

What he hadn’t gotten before, he was determined to take now.

Martin made such a scene within the Edwards family that it even reached Bonnie.

She came in person and confronted him.

“I’ve already said everything I needed to. Kevin made his stance clear at the wedding—how can you still act like this?”

“Has Kevin not treated you well?” she asked pointedly.

The Edwards family had once been on the brink, and it was Kevin’s hard work that brought it back to life.

And yet....

Martin didn't want to hear it. "Yeah, Kevin built the Edwards Group up—but that doesn't mean I'm walking away empty-handed!".

"You didn't want any part of it back then! When Dad asked you to come home, you refused. And now you want a share? Isn't that a little hypocritical?"

Bonnie never sugarcoated her opinions, especially when it came to people or things she disliked.

And truth be told, her brother had never amounted to much—and now he was spiraling even more.

Bonnie was deeply disappointed in Martin.

"That was then. This is now. I don't even know what to say to you."

"Then don't say anything," she shot back. "You're not even touching my interests, so what are you getting defensive about? And don't act like you don't know—Kevin's not even an Edwards by blood. Why are you siding with him?"

Martin was fuming. Kevin had refused him. Bonnie was calling him out. His rage boiled over.

Bonnie didn't back down. "Siding with Kevin? Where were you when I was looking out for this family? You let Dad and Kevin carry everything for you. And now you show up asking for money? If I were you, I'd be too ashamed to even show my face. If you don't leave now, I'll call the cops myself."

Martin stared at her in disbelief.

They were siblings. But Bonnie—she was choosing Kevin?

And even threatening to have him arrested?

His fury exploded. He slapped Bonnie across the face.

"Bonnie, I'm your older brother. Is this how you talk to me? I'm telling you—if the Edwards family still bears the Edwards name, then I'll always have a share! You and Kevin can stand together all you want. But if you dare block me, I'll make sure both of you suffer!"

He was completely unhinged now. His own family had turned against him—siding with Kevin of all people. Even Bonnie.

Fine. Let's see what Kevin does when Bonnie's the one in danger.

Martin followed through on his threat.

He kidnapped Bonnie.

And in that moment, Bonnie's disappointment turned to disgust.

"From now on," she said coldly, "I don't have a brother. The Edwards family will never acknowledge you again."

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7 min read

Chapter 558.

"If you don't want to admit it, fine. But once I've got the money and power, I'll get whatever I want with just a word."

After saying that, Martin knocked Bonnie out and locked her in the attic.

That night, Norah and Kevin's plane landed. As they stepped out of the airport, they were stunned to see the billboards along the road had been changed.

The largest billboard near the airport had previously advertised Edwards' trendy cosmetics, but it had now been replaced by a food ad.

Changing ad content without Kevin's approval? That wasn't normal.

The two exchanged a glance, immediately sensing that something had gone down in the capital.

Just as Norah was about to speak, Kevin's phone rang.

As the Planning Department's director—and a senior figure in the Edwards family—Kevin had always been loyal to them.

Kevin: "Mr. Wang, I was just about to call you. Why was the airport billboard changed?"

Mr. Wang: "Boss Edwards, I'll explain everything. Come to my place right now. We're all waiting for you."

Mr. Wang's tone was urgent. Kevin didn't ask more questions—he and Norah jumped into a taxi and headed over.

When they arrived, Mr. Wang's study was packed. As soon as Kevin walked in, everyone stood up.

"Boss Edwards," they greeted him in unison.

Kevin motioned for everyone to sit. "Tell me directly—what's going on?"

He had his suspicions, but without proof, that's all they were.

"Martin's bribed the company's finance director, procurement head, and a few clients. Right now, most of Edwards is leaning toward him, and we... sigh..."

Mr. Wang and the others laid it all out. What Martin had done was beyond anything they had imagined.

Norah frowned. She'd hoped for a few quiet days back in the capital—but clearly, that wasn't going to happen.

She let out a soft sigh.

Kevin stepped over to her and gently reassured her, "Don't worry. Martin won't get far with this. But with all this chaos, why hasn't Aunt Bonnie stepped in to stop him?".

His words made everyone pause—Bonnie hadn't been seen or heard from.

Someone voiced their concern. "If we're being suppressed in the company, wouldn't Miss Edwards be in danger too?".

Mr. Wang quickly shut that down. "Martin's not that heartless."

But no one really knew, and guesses wouldn't help. Kevin dismissed the group and headed off to confront Martin.

The night was dark, and a soft fog drifted through the streets.

The lights were on at the villa, and inside, the laughter of men and women rang out.

Kevin pushed open the living room door, ignored the couple on the sofa, and sat down directly across from them.

The woman blushed, grabbed her clothes off the floor to cover herself, and ducked behind Martin.

"Boss Edwards, who is he?" she asked.

She had called Martin "Mr. Edwards." Kevin looked at Martin and smiled, curious how he'd respond.

Martin cleared his throat, his expression tightening. "Go. Come back when I call you."

"She's just a girl—why would you care so much?" he muttered.

Kevin wasn't budging. He casually tossed his car keys on the table, leaned back on the sofa, and propped up his feet.

Annoyed, Martin tossed his suit jacket over the woman and snapped, "Wait for me upstairs. Don't come down unless I tell you to."

She nodded and ran off.

Now, it was just father and son in the room.

Kevin went to the kitchen and grabbed some beer, giving Martin time to throw on some clothes.

"Bring the red wine," Martin barked.

But when he saw Kevin return with only beer, he scoffed in irritation.

Kevin shot him a look, and Martin swallowed his protest.

"Put the red wine in the kitchen—seems like the former Young Master Edwards isn't all that impressive anymore."

"Spare me the sarcasm, Kevin. You're here because you know I've made changes at Edwards. I'm not just taking over the company—I'm going after the whole Edwards fortune." Martin lifted his chin, proud and defiant like a teenager.

Kevin took a sip and asked quietly, "Where's my aunt?"

He hadn't come for the company—he came for Bonnie. On the way over, he'd sent people to her house, but she wasn't there. That confirmed his suspicions.

Martin's expression faltered for a second, then he smirked.

He laughed—a long, chilling laugh—then abruptly stopped. "If you want to see her, come to the office tomorrow and sign the transfer agreement. Give me full control of the shares."

Kevin: "And if I don't?"

Martin: "Then you can forget about ever seeing Bonnie again. But I'm guessing you care about her, right? You should. I told her not to side with you—after all, I'm her brother. But she didn't listen." His smile twisted into something cruel.

Kevin didn't waste another word. He grabbed his keys and stood up, his cold stare locked on Martin.

"You've stashed away a lot of cash lately, and your girlfriend probably helped you do it. But your name is already garbage. If you don't want to go down in flames, you'd better back off while you still can."

Martin snorted.

"You've seen what I'm capable of. Mercy isn't my thing." With that, Kevin walked out without a backward glance.

Martin was shaken by Kevin's warning. He stormed upstairs, grumbling, and took it all out on the woman.

With nothing useful from Martin, Kevin turned his focus to the company's surveillance footage.

Bonnie had been at the office—there had to be a record of it.

Thankfully, Kevin had a plan. His personal computer had access to the internal surveillance system.

Sure enough, Bonnie appeared in the footage. Several employees had seen her, and she had gone straight to the top floor to Martin's office. But once she entered, she never came back out.

Kevin: "She's still in the building?"

Norah was stunned. Martin was bold, sure—but hiding someone in the company? That was insane. Kevin still technically owned the company.

Norah: "Wouldn't someone notice? Hiding a person inside the office building? That's crazy..."

Then she frowned, thinking out loud. "Maybe the most obvious place is the safest..."

Kevin shook his head.

Norah: "Yeah, it doesn't add up. I mean, I wouldn't keep someone there unless..."

She trailed off, afraid to finish the thought.

Kevin's fists clenched. Rage flashed in his eyes.

Kevin: "If that's what happened... Martin's dead."

Right then, Martin popped up in the footage—dragging a large box.

Kevin and Norah exchanged a look and focused on the screen.

Martin had taken the box out of the company, but the outside cameras couldn't track it. Kevin immediately pulled strings and got access to traffic surveillance.

A short while later, a video came through to his phone. It showed Martin taking the box back to the villa.

Norah: "She's at his house!"

She slapped her thigh, finally piecing it together.

Knowing Martin, it wasn't surprising.

Norah: "Should we go get her now?"

She was fired up and ready to move.

Kevin shook his head. "I'll handle it. You stay with Cooper and get his schooling sorted."

She understood what he meant and nodded.

Kevin didn't need to personally show up to rescue Bonnie. The next morning, the woman who had spent the night at Martin's house was quietly taken away.

Just thirty minutes later, the police arrived and arrested Martin on charges of soliciting prostitution.

The moment the police left, a black car that had been parked at the intersection rolled into the villa. Two men stepped out.

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7 min read

Chapter 559.

The two men easily entered the villa and came out with Bonnie half an hour later.

When Norah saw her at the hospital, her eyes welled up. She grabbed Bonnie's hand tightly.

Bonnie gently patted her and spoke softly, "I'm fine, really."

"We should've been more careful."

"I don't blame you. I blame fate for giving me a brother like that." Bonnie turned her head to look at Kevin. "Martin's already wrecked the company. You need to clean things up fast before someone takes advantage. And don't worry about Martin—just do what needs to be done."

Kevin nodded.

He knew the score. After everything they'd been through, he understood exactly how to handle people like that.

While Bonnie was recovering in the hospital, the company went through a major shake-up.

Everything moved so fast that even though Martin paid off a woman to change her statement and got himself released from custody, it was already too late.

All of his people were dismissed, and no one could argue it. As for the clients he brought in, they were no longer needed.

The man who came to pick Martin up was one of those shady clients—Boss Fleury.

His business? Passing off fake goods as the real thing. Even if Martin hadn't bribed him, Kevin would've eventually cut ties.

Once in the car, Boss Fleury handed Martin a folder. It contained details on Edwards' operations and Norah's schedule for picking up the kids.

Martin frowned. "You've got a death wish going after Kevin's woman?"

"Boss Edwards," Fleury said low and slow, "if you want to turn things around, this is your shot. Or are you really gonna let that guy walk all over you? Don't forget, your last name's Edwards."

He leaned in. "Everything's in place—just give the word, and we'll bring her to you."

Martin hesitated. His heart pounded.

The Edwards family was a gold mine. Whoever got control could rule the capital like a king.

He wasn't about to let that chance slip by.

Without waiting for Fleury's reply, Martin ordered, "Take the guys to the old mass grave site on the outskirts. I'll be waiting at the top of the hill."

—.

After watching Cooper walk into school, Norah got back in her car and drove off.

Kevin had been buried in work trying to fix the Edwards mess. He hadn't slept in days. She decided to cook something nice for him—a little reward for all his hard work.

But the moment she stepped into the market, two thugs snatched her handbag and bolted down an alley. She gave chase.

The alley led her to a deserted, run-down sports field.

There, more than a dozen men stood on the court, each holding a metal pipe.

A gang fight?

Norah turned to leave, not wanting any part of it, but one of them stepped in her way.

"Since you're here," he said with a smirk, "don't leave so soon. Come have a little fun with us."

He reached out to touch her face.

Norah dodged and spat, "Keep your filthy hands off me."

"Ooh, a feisty one—I like it."

He reached again, but Norah let out a sharp yell and kicked him hard, sending him flying.

That was the signal.

"Take her alive!" the leader shouted.

Norah quickly realized this wasn't just a robbery—it was a setup.

Her expression hardened as she fought off everyone who charged at her. She managed to take down four of them, but more kept coming.

She was outnumbered. As she kicked one guy away, two others blindsided her. She was knocked out.

—.

When Norah came to, she was tied up near the edge of a cliff. Martin stood a few feet away, grinning.

"It's you?" she sneered. "Figures. No one else would dare come after me but you."

"Call Kevin," Martin said. "Tell him to hand over the company and the Edwards family's remaining assets—or you'll die right here."

He gestured for her to look behind her.

Norah didn't turn. Her voice was cold. "Kevin wouldn't cave to you. Don't waste your time."

"If he refuses," Martin said with a smirk, "then I'll kill you and bring your son here. If Kevin still says no... well, guess I'll just have to kill one more person."

He pulled out a knife, walked up to her, grabbed her chin, and dragged the cold blade across her cheek.

"Talk him into it. Or else..."

Norah's eyes narrowed.

Martin had completely lost his soul to money. If he stayed alive, peace would be impossible.

An idea struck her, and she chuckled. "Fine. I'll talk to him—but I need your phone, right? How else am I supposed to call?"

Confident in his manpower and the fact they'd blocked all exits from the mountain, Martin gave the order. They untied her and handed over a phone.

Norah rubbed her sore wrists and pretended to make the call. "Kevin, I'm at the mass grave site on the mountain. Come quickly..."

"You think you can fool me, bitch?" Martin lunged for the phone, but Norah grabbed him and jumped off the cliff.

"You're insane!" Martin screamed mid-air.

Boss Fleury's men rushed to the edge—but there was no sign of anyone below.

Norah wasn't dead.

She knew she couldn't win against all of them—but Martin alone? That was easy.

Right after Martin's scream, she let go of him. He fell. She clung to the cliffside rocks and climbed down, slowly and carefully.

By the time Kevin arrived, she was standing beside Martin's lifeless body.

"I'm okay," she said.

Kevin wrapped his arms around her and whispered comforting words as he signaled his men to talk to the police.

Since surveillance footage clearly showed Martin kidnapping Norah, and Boss Fleury flipped on him to save his own skin, agreeing to be a witness, the police let Norah go without any charges.

—.

Valentine's Day came in the blink of an eye.

Kevin had been back in the capital for a few days, but he was always gone early and back late.

Norah felt like a woman left behind—and Cooper, a child left behind.

All day, Norah waited for a sign that Kevin remembered what day it was. But nothing.

He rushed out after breakfast. Didn't come back for lunch. Wasn't even home when the kids got back from school.

Norah sighed. Maybe he'd really forgotten.

Ding-dong.

The doorbell rang. It was Bonnie.

She looked serious. "Norah, I need your help. But I don't want to ruin your date with Kevin."

Norah smiled sadly. "There's no date. Auntie, just tell me what you need—I'll help."

Bonnie hesitated, then said, "Okay... put this on and meet someone for me. Try to convince him to give up on me."

Norah glanced at the gift bag in her hand—it was a limited edition—and hesitated, wanting to turn it down.

"Oh, come on. If you don't help me, who will?" Bonnie said quickly. "Don't worry, I'll explain everything to Kevin, and I'll take care of Cooper too. You've got nothing to worry about."

As she spoke, she shoved the gift bag into Norah's hands, then turned around, went inside, and carried Cooper back to her room.

At this point, Norah didn't really have a choice. She changed clothes and headed out to the location Bonnie had sent her.

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Chapter 560.

The capital city shimmered at night, showing off its full charm—especially tonight, Valentine’s Day. Shops and vendors pulled out all the stops to draw in customers, like they were trying to claim the whole city for the holiday.

Norah arrived at the entrance of the theme hotel but didn’t go inside right away. Instead, she scanned the lobby through the floor-to-ceiling windows, looking for the man Bonnie said would be wearing a blue rose on his chest.

Every table was taken by couples, but there was no sign of the man Bonnie described.

She was tempted to call and ask if he had already left, maybe tired of waiting. She longed to see a familiar face.

At that moment, Kevin turned a corner and disappeared into a private room on the second floor.

He wasn’t going home on Valentine’s Day—so what was he doing here?

A flood of thoughts rushed through Norah’s mind, all pointing to the same conclusion: Kevin must be seeing someone else.

Without hesitation, she walked straight into the hotel and headed for the second floor.

“Miss, how many in your party?” a waiter stopped her politely.

Norah smiled and slipped him a wad of cash. “If you answer me honestly, everything inside will be yours.”

The waiter grinned and held up two fingers.

Just as she suspected—booking a hotel like this on Valentine’s Day had to be for two people.

She pushed open the private room door and scoffed coldly, "Boss Edwards seems to be in a great mood. I didn't know—".

The rest of her sentence froze in her throat. Kevin was the only one in the room.

Norah spun around and questioned the waiter. "Didn't you say there were two people in here?"

"Mr. Edwards said two—his wife hasn't arrived yet."

"You can go now. I'll take it from here."

Kevin sent the waiter away. When he turned to close the door, he realized the lock was busted. He chuckled, "Looks like we'll need a different room."

The waiter caught on quickly and made the arrangements.

Norah, however, was completely thrown off. Kevin wasn't acting like someone who got caught red-handed. And the waiter had called her his wife.

Aren't I his wife?

"What is going on? Don't you know today's Valentine's Day?" Norah snapped, clearly upset.

Kevin took her hand, looked her up and down, and smiled warmly. "This dress looks amazing on you. Honestly, I don't think anyone else could pull it off like you do."

Norah looked down, still puzzled. "What's happening?"

"I picked that dress myself. It's Valentine's Day—of course I had to surprise you."

"I get it now."

It finally clicked for Norah.

Bonnie's so-called 'help' was actually her way of guiding Norah to meet Kevin here.

Thankfully, she hadn't made a scene. Glancing back at the half-broken door, Norah gave a sheepish smile.

The waiter handled everything smoothly and invited them into another private room.

Same setup. Gotta admit—the hotel really knew how to handle business.

Roses filled the center of the round table, and red balloons shaped into a heart adorned the wall.

They took their seats. Norah looked down, feeling a bit embarrassed thinking about how upset she'd been just minutes earlier.

"It's chilly tonight, and you're sitting near the window. Mind closing it?" Kevin said.

In the past, Kevin never gave Norah orders.

And even if he had, she never would've listened.

But tonight was different. She had doubted him—and she felt guilty.

So she got up and closed the window.

Suddenly, the billboard across the street lit up. The plain advertisement was replaced by Kevin's heartfelt confession.

Every word struck her deeply, bringing tears to her eyes.

"What's wrong? Not happy?" Kevin asked, wrapping his arm around her shoulder and whispering softly.

Norah shook her head. How could she not be touched? He'd clearly gone all out.

"I didn't know what else to do," he said. "So I figured—why not confess to you again?"

Then Kevin dropped to one knee, pulled the blue rose from his chest, and held it out to her.

"Norah, I like you. I love you. I'll love you for the rest of this life—and the next. Will you let me take care of you, protect you, and spoil you?"

His voice was gentle, and the words hit right at her heart.

Tears streamed down Norah's face as she took the rose, nodding over and over. Finally, she whispered, "I do."

As soon as the words left her mouth, Kevin stood, lifted her into his arms, and spun her around.

In that moment, time felt like it stopped. Just the two of them—heartbeats intertwined.

"If you're really willing," Kevin said in her ear, "open the rose and take a look."

She stared at him, surprised, then gently opened the petals.

A ring sparkled inside.

"Kevin, you're incredible," she gasped.

"You like it?" he asked with a grin. He couldn't count how much effort—and how many people—had gone into making this night perfect.

Thankfully, Norah loved it.

How could she not? Any woman would.

She rose on tiptoe and kissed him sweetly. But as she tried to pull away, Kevin wrapped an arm around her waist—and turned the kiss into something deeper.

Time blurred. He only let her go when she was almost breathless.

"Dang it, I'm starving. Go ask the waiter to bring some food," Norah said, using the excuse to break the romantic tension.

Kevin had gone all out—the dinner was themed for Valentine's Day, from presentation to meaning.

She couldn't deny it: any girl would love this kind of thoughtful setup. Still, Norah couldn't shake the frustration over how Kevin had ignored her in the past.

After dinner, she glared at him. "So this whole thing was your idea?"

"Not just mine," he said mysteriously. "I asked Bonnie to take care of the baby. This was only the beginning."

Then he slipped around the table and stole a quick kiss.

When Norah shot him a look, he didn't get annoyed—he just smiled, full of joy.

From the center of the rose display, Kevin pulled out two movie tickets. "My love, would you do me the honor of joining me for a film?"

Norah nodded shyly.

The theater was packed, but thankfully Kevin had booked in advance. Otherwise, getting seats would've been impossible.

He even had drinks ready. As they entered, he pulled a paper bag from behind his back—like a magician—with drinks and snacks inside.

The couple next to them looked over, clearly impressed. Norah instantly became the envy of the room.

"Don't act so smug," she said, playfully nudging him. "Give others a chance too."

Still, she felt proud.

What woman doesn't want to be the center of attention—especially on a night like this?

By the time the movie ended, it was already midnight. Norah felt a pang of worry for Cooper and quickly texted Bonnie.

Bonnie replied, telling her to enjoy the holiday and soak in the love.

In that moment, Norah felt both grateful and moved. Bonnie, being older, could've acted distant or bossy.

But she didn't. She always treated Norah like family.

Norah would never forget that.

After they left the theater, Kevin suggested checking out the night market.

It wasn't going to be an ordinary night. Alongside the usual bustle, there'd definitely be romantic activities designed for couples.

Norah was excited. She hadn't felt this lighthearted in a long time.

"I'm just saying now," she warned, "it's going to be crowded. You better hold my hand the whole time."

And she wasn't wrong. The night market was always buzzing—but tonight, it was packed.