

# Mr. Edwards' Unraveled Life

7 min read

Chapter 571.

"Norah, I'm honored to have met you and to have been with you before anyone else. A lot has happened along the way, but one thing has always stayed the same: the person I love is you. That's never changed. I know there are rumors calling you a mistress, and I know that's been hard on you. I don't know who started them, but it doesn't matter. Because today, I want to say this—".

The screen behind them flashed a montage of their daily photos, each one radiating love and affection—something people could only envy.

Kevin picked up the mic and stood. Gently, he pulled Norah to her feet. She looked flustered, unsure of what was happening.

"Norah, they have no idea how incredible you are. They think you're marrying up. But I know the truth—I'm the one marrying up. It's a privilege to be loved by you. People don't know how we met or how we fell in love. But you do, don't you?".

Kevin's eyes welled with emotion. He'd planned to clear up the mistress rumor, but seeing their old photos had hit him hard.

Their journey hadn't been easy—but thankfully, they'd never strayed from their love.

Norah's eyes shimmered with tears. When Kevin asked, "Do you believe that the person I've always loved is you?" she shyly turned away—and nodded.

"Then remember this," he said gently, "You are not a mistress. And I've never loved anyone else. Never forget that."

He kissed her forehead, then turned to the reporters. "Today, thanks to Master Laurin's event, I get to show the world the love I have for my wife. I apologize for taking up your time, but I want everyone here to know—when you see her, call her Mrs. Edwards."

That's when it hit everyone—Norah was Mrs. Edwards.

Kevin's statement might've seemed over-the-top at first, but the reporters quickly realized: this wasn't overemphasis. It was a public declaration of love.

It gave them a headline.

Kevin treated Norah like royalty. In fact, it felt like he was sending a message to Isaac—this is how you treat your wife.

Before nightfall, the news had updated again: Kevin Edwards had made it crystal clear—if Isaac Laurin wanted to marry into the Edwards family, he had to treat his wife the same way.

Isaac was livid when he saw the headlines.

He slammed his phone onto the table and said coldly, "When you first made that suggestion, I had a bad feeling. And now it's clear why. You've taken it upon yourself to be my parent. Mr. Edwards, that's not very kind of you."

Kevin gave a sheepish smile. "I didn't expect the reporters to spin it like this. You can't really blame me, Mr. Laurin."

Isaac shot back, "Of course I can. You made yourself look like the perfect husband. Now if I don't live up to that, I'm not even qualified to marry Bonnie."

Kevin was taken aback. As far as he knew, Isaac and Bonnie weren't even a couple—how did marriage come into the picture?

"Mr. Edwards, you owe me," Isaac said, his eyes gleaming.

Kevin, still a bit distracted, remembered the issue with Mr. Jacob and quickly replied, "Alright. I won't work with Mr. Jacob. We'll call it even."

Isaac shook his head. "That's not good enough. Whether you partner with him or not, that's your call. I'm not here to push anyone's agenda. But the compensation I want—it's a little different."

Seeing Kevin's confusion, Isaac didn't hold back. "You owe me a meal. An apology. And ideally... you bring Bonnie along. Then maybe I'll forgive you."

Kevin burst into laughter, nearly doubling over. Only Isaac could be so shameless—and somehow still likable.

But honestly? A dinner wasn't a bad idea. A strong alliance still sounded appealing.

They booked a private room at a hotel downtown with a cozy engagement theme. After letting Bonnie know, Kevin took Norah to a movie.

Bonnie showed up at the hotel on time—only to find Isaac waiting alone. Just as she was about to leave, she got a message from Norah:

"The truth is out now. If you really feel nothing for him, just be honest tonight. But if there's even a tiny spark left... maybe give it a chance. He could be the one."

Getting relationship advice from someone younger felt a little ridiculous to Bonnie—but Norah had a point. Isaac was a good guy.

Fine, she thought. Just friends.

Bonnie sat across from Isaac and said, "Looks like it'll just be me tonight. Mr. Laurin, do you mind if I apologize on everyone's behalf?"

Isaac smiled. "That's way too serious. I wasn't looking for compensation. I just wanted to see you. That's all."

His eyes were no longer calm—they held something deeper.

Tonight, Bonnie looked stunning. He couldn't look away. Isaac felt like a bee that had just found its favorite flower—and wasn't going anywhere.

Still, he held back his emotions, waved the waiter over, and had the dishes served. As they ate, he explained each dish—how it was made and the stories behind them.

He'd traveled a lot since he was young, soaking up knowledge and culture everywhere he went. He'd become a walking encyclopedia of food.

Bonnie listened, intrigued—and a little humbled. She'd never realized food had so much history. She always thought it was just about cooking skill.

A few drinks in, and their nerves melted away. Conversation flowed naturally. At some point, they ended up sitting side by side.

Meanwhile, at the theater, Kevin was practically dragged out by Norah.

He was mortified. His secretary had messed up and booked tickets for a cartoon. If Cooper had come, it might've made sense—but two grown adults watching a kid's movie? Awkward.

People around them started whispering about Kevin having "wife-control syndrome."

Norah let go of his hand and muttered, "We'll talk about this at home."

"I'll make it up to you right now," Kevin said with a grin. "Babe, I know I screwed up. Let me treat you to barbecue or hot pot, whatever you want."

"I don't want either. I'm trying to lose weight," Norah grumbled.

Kevin looked around and spotted a boutique nearby. Taking her hand, he said, "Wait here for just a second, okay? I'm going to get you a gift to apologize."

"Hurry up, then," Norah mumbled. She wasn't usually like this, but tonight—with all the attention—it brought out a new side of her. A little spoiled. A little dramatic.

Kevin came back quickly, holding a shopping bag. Inside was a beautiful new skirt.

The girls around them gasped in admiration.

Norah's lips curled into a proud smile—her vanity totally satisfied.

"How much was it? Was it expensive?" she asked, trying to hand the skirt back.

Kevin grinned. "Your husband's loaded, remember? Besides, husbands make money so wives can spend it. If you won't spend it, what's the point?"

Norah said, "Then I want hot pot and barbecue. Oh, and I haven't bought jewelry in forever."

"Done. After dinner, we'll shop. Whatever you want, you got it."

He pulled her into a hug, and Norah shyly kissed his cheek.

The crowd around them erupted in cheerful chatter.

## Chapter 572

Norah never expected Bonnie to show up early in the morning just to borrow clothes. If Bonnie weren't the eldest daughter of the Edwards family, it wouldn't seem so strange—but she *was* the eldest daughter.

Bonnie could wear anything she wanted. So why was she here, asking to borrow clothes?

Norah studied her for a long moment but didn't see anything unusual. Either way, even if Bonnie were asking to borrow money, Norah wouldn't hesitate—let alone just clothes.

Setting her teacup down, Norah stood up with a smile. "Come on, let's go upstairs and pick something out."

Bonnie raised her eyebrows. "Aren't you going to ask me why I want to borrow clothes?"

Of course Norah was curious—but if Bonnie wasn't offering an explanation, she clearly had her reasons. So Norah didn't press.

They headed into the dressing room together. With racks of clothes lined up, the selection was dazzling, but Bonnie still couldn't find anything she liked.

She sighed. “Forget it. I don’t think anything here suits me.”

“That’s because these are all for someone my age,” Norah said with a playful glance. “You’re a few years older than me, so naturally you want something more mature.”

She paused, then added in a softer tone, “But don’t you have plenty of clothes yourself? Even if you didn’t have anything that fits the occasion, you could just buy something new. Why come borrow from me?”

Bonnie’s face turned pink, and the corners of her mouth lifted slightly—like she was thinking of something sweet.

If October wasn’t about love, then what else could it be?

Norah wasn’t slow—she caught on right away. She leaned in with a teasing smile. “So… things are moving along with Young Master Laurin? Spill it. How far have you two gotten?”

“Gotten where? I just think he’s okay,” Bonnie said quickly, face red enough to drip. “I’m planning to get to know him better first—I haven’t agreed to anything. Stop teasing.”

Norah smirked. Whether Bonnie admitted it or not, she was clearly falling for him.

“So you came to me for clothes because he’s younger than you and you’re trying to look younger to match?” Norah asked with a knowing look.

Bonnie nodded. “Exactly. But none of your clothes seem right for me.”

She was about to give up and go shopping, but she had plans with Isaac at noon. There wasn’t enough time. And if she wore something too mature, everyone would instantly notice the age gap—and talk. She didn’t want to be that woman—the one getting side-eyed for “robbing the cradle.”

Bonnie reluctantly picked up a denim set. “What about this one? I saw you wear it before. It doesn’t look *too* young.”

Norah gently took the outfit from her hands and handed her a white dress instead. The moment Bonnie tried it on, the effect was undeniable—it not only suited her temperament but gave her the youthful vibe she wanted.

Bonnie loved it. She changed right then and there.

The two women had similar body types, so the dress fit perfectly. Standing in front of the mirror, Bonnie couldn’t help but smile.

Norah fixed her hair and spoke with genuine concern. “We all think Isaac’s a great guy, but still—keep your eyes open. If something seems off, don’t hesitate to walk away.”

“I know. But really, he’s sweet. He’s traveled a lot, he’s thoughtful, and he treats people well.” Bonnie’s tone softened, and she couldn’t stop saying good things about him.

Norah wasn’t sure how much of it was real love and how much was infatuation—but it was clear Bonnie wasn’t in the mood for advice, so she let it be.

As they came downstairs, Kevin walked in from the gym. He immediately walked over to hug Norah and gently asked if she’d eaten.

When he noticed Bonnie, he looked surprised. “Why are you wearing Norah’s clothes? You have nothing to wear?”

Then he pulled out his bank card and handed it to her. “Go buy whatever you want. Don’t be stingy on my account.”

Bonnie rolled her eyes. “What if I spend it all and your wife has nothing left?”

Kevin just laughed and hugged Norah. “All my money is with Norah. What I just gave you? That’s just my pocket change.”

“Wait, seriously?” Bonnie raised an eyebrow. Kevin was a CEO—his “pocket change” could be in the millions. “You’re saying you actually let Norah handle all your money?”

Kevin and Norah didn’t look like they were joking.

“If Isaac gave me all his money, I’d be too scared to take it,” Bonnie admitted.

Kevin shook his head. “That’d be stupid. If he doesn’t hand it over, that’s when you should be worried.”

What Norah held wasn’t the company’s accounts—those were still in Kevin’s control. But when it came to personal funds, Norah had the reins.

“Kevin, are you serious? Most men would never do that.” Bonnie still looked skeptical. “Even in marriage, handing over *everything* is kind of extreme.”

“I’m not planning to divorce Norah,” Kevin replied easily. “So if I’m not giving it to her, who would I give it to?”

He kissed Norah and smiled. “Right, babe? We’re in this forever. Let people envy us.”

Norah smiled and snuggled up to him.

Bonnie couldn’t handle the PDA. She grabbed her bag and made a quick exit, heading out to meet Isaac. If she stuck around, she’d end up being the third wheel in a rom-com.

As soon as Bonnie left, the atmosphere shifted. Kevin and Norah each sat on opposite sides of the couch, quiet.

“You seriously don’t want Cooper to take part in the school sports meet?” Kevin finally asked, his brow furrowed.

Norah didn’t flinch. “That’s right. If he wants exercise, I can make him a training plan myself. He doesn’t need whatever the school’s offering.”

“That’s not the point,” Kevin said, clearly frustrated. “The meet isn’t about turning him into an athlete—it’s about letting him be with his classmates. You’re missing the bigger picture.”

“There’s nothing to discuss. I’m not letting what happened last time happen again.” Norah’s tone was final. She stood and walked upstairs.

Kevin followed her, catching her wrist gently. “Admit it—you don’t have confidence. You’re afraid of losing to other parents.”

He paused, smirking. “Sure, you’d dominate in the sports competitions. But the meet also includes a cooking contest. That’s where you’re nervous.”

Each parent is assigned a dish. Everyone tastes and rates them.

Norah glared. “You’re trying to provoke me.”

“Nope. Just speaking the truth. Am I wrong?”

Norah crossed her arms. “Fine. It’s a sports meet, right? We’re going.”

She was determined now—Kevin was going to regret doubting her cooking. She already had a plan: she’d handle every dish herself, make something unforgettable, and leave all the other parents in the dust.

## Chapter 573.

Norah agreed to join the sports meet, walking straight into Kevin’s trap.

Kevin gave a slight smile, stepped closer, and said calmly, “Then go upstairs and change your clothes, Norah. I’ll call Cooper. Once we’re ready, we’ll head out.”

“Go where?” Norah asked, confused.

Kevin gently tapped her nose. “To the sports meet.”

Wait—was the school’s sports day today?



Still filled with doubt, Norah headed upstairs to change. By the time she came back down, Kevin and Cooper were already waiting in the car.

The whole ride there, Norah couldn't shake the feeling that Kevin had set her up—and dammit, she'd willingly walked right into it with no way out.

She kept sighing. She'd let her guard down and fallen for Kevin's bait.

The school gate was packed with cars. Kevin couldn't find a parking spot, so he told them to head in first and that he'd join them after parking.

Norah walked Cooper to the stadium. Seeing the joyful kids and the sunburned, squinting parents, she couldn't understand why anyone thought a sports meet needed to involve parents. Activities were fine, but why drag the adults into it?

School was for the kids. Why were parents getting roped in?

She grew even more annoyed watching some parents chat with the teachers, raving about how meaningful the event was. It was so fake.

What was so meaningful about it?

Why did she have to be all covered up in the heat, while other people got to show off?

"You're... Cooper's aunt, right?"

The same mother who had just praised the event walked up, giving Norah a judgmental once-over. "I heard Cooper's dad is a businessman, but I don't buy it. No way a real aunt-for-hire would dress like that."

"So how do you think I should dress? Like you?" Norah snapped.

She was already itching to vent her frustration. This woman just walked straight into her crosshairs. It would've been wrong not to fire.

The woman realized she was being insulted and jabbed her finger toward a girl standing near the teacher. "That's my daughter. Ask your boss whose kid she is."

Norah looked at the braided girl and replied with a smirk, "No need to ask. That's your daughter, right?"

A few nearby parents chuckled, but one glare from the woman shut them up fast.

With a dramatic flick of her hair, she pinched Norah's sleeve with her perfectly manicured fingers, then looked disgusted and walked away, resuming her flattery of the teacher.

Norah figured this woman just wanted attention and brushed it off. She told Cooper to check in with the teacher and get info about the lunch arrangements.

The main reason she agreed to come was to prove her cooking skills to Kevin.

Just then, another parent leaned over and whispered, "That's Maleah Lalonde, head of the Parents' Committee. I heard her husband's some big-shot manager. Looks like you offended her. You'd better be careful."

"Why should I be afraid of her?" Norah smiled. "Her husband's a manager, not the principal. What can she do to me?"

"Well... a lot, actually. She's the president. She decides what food we moms cook. Whatever she says, we have to make."

Norah blinked. She hadn't realized the chair of the PTA had that much power. If she had, she would've run for the position herself.

She could've been the one standing in the shade, giving orders instead of getting them.

She should've done her homework first. She acted too fast.

Just as Norah was kicking herself, Maleah showed up again and shoved a note practically in her face.

Norah, annoyed, snapped, "If you've got something to say, just say it."

Maleah giggled softly. "Just bringing you the rules. On the back is the dish you're responsible for at lunch. Make sure it's something everyone likes. If no one eats your food... well, your son's sports scores today will mysteriously disappear."

"My son has nothing to do with my cooking. If you've got a problem, take it up with me. Leave him out of it."

Just because Norah didn't want to join the sports day didn't mean Cooper didn't.

But what if no one did eat her food? Would Cooper suffer because of it?

Norah frowned. The school wouldn't enforce something so ridiculous. This was clearly Maleah abusing her position.

Still, she figured she'd just do her best. Maleah hadn't said she had to personally cook. If it came down to it, she'd just order takeout from a hotel.

Norah took the paper and flipped it over.

A full Manchu-Han banquet.

Her eyes nearly popped out. Her jaw almost dropped.

"You're kidding me," she muttered.

Maleah eyed her smugly. "What, can't handle it? You're just an aunt, right? You should be used to this sort of thing. I never cook. I doubt the other moms do either. We're counting on you."

Norah grinned. "Oh, no trouble at all. Solving problems is what I do best. Relax, Madam President."

"You—" Maleah huffed. "You love to talk nonsense. Fine. I'll let you off for now." She walked away and didn't bother Norah again.

The sports meet officially began after a long series of ceremonies and the principal's speech.

Kevin still hadn't shown up. Norah kept glancing at the entrance, debating whether she should just ditch the whole thing.

She didn't care about any sports meet.

Cooper caught her drifting thoughts and quietly made a funny face at her, trying not to be spotted by the teacher.

He didn't seem to mind at all and gave Norah a big smile.

Once the teacher handed out the competition list, the kids went back to their parents to prep for their events.

Even though Norah had told him not to sign up, Cooper ended up with the most events of anyone.

No doubt, Maleah's handiwork.

Norah looked over and caught Maleah's smug stare. She narrowed her eyes and shot back a deadly glare.

"Next up is the boys' 50-meter dash. If your name is called, head to your teacher and get ready," the loudspeaker blared.

Norah nudged Cooper. "Take it easy, okay? It's not about winning. Just have fun."

Cooper nodded and asked in a quiet voice, "Mom, if I lose... do we get to go home early?"

"No," Norah said stubbornly. "I just don't want you to feel pressured."

But honestly, she hoped that was the rule. Then she could escape to some AC instead of baking under the sun.

Cooper grinned. "Don't worry, Mom. I'll win for sure."

Norah wasn't sure if he was trying to be sweet or just messing with her.

The kids all reported to their teachers and started heading to the starting line. Cooper was last in line, and Norah noticed the starting equipment looked off.

She tried to call out and warn him to stand properly, but just then, the starting gun fired—and the race began.

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The starting gun went off, followed by a sharp cry—"Ah!" Cooper hit the ground hard, clearly hurt.

Norah was the first to rush over. She scooped him up, heart clenching as she saw a large patch of skin scraped off his knee.

"Mom, it hurts! My leg hurts so much!" Cooper sobbed into her arms.

"Don't worry, baby. Mommy's got you. We're going to see the doctor right now." Norah quickly scanned the area and spotted a makeshift infirmary nearby. Without hesitation, she ran toward it with Cooper in her arms.

Teachers and parents rushed over, frowning when they saw Cooper's injured leg. The school doctor calmly asked everyone to step outside so the child could be treated in peace.

Once the room quieted, Norah asked anxiously, "Doctor, is there any bone damage?"

That was the most important thing. If Cooper had a fracture, he'd need to be taken to a hospital immediately.

The doctor examined the injury again and reassured her, "No fractures, ma'am. It's a surface wound. The skin's badly scraped, though, and it'll take some time to heal. Make sure the area stays clean and dry. Don't let him scratch it."

Norah nodded, taking mental notes of every instruction.

After cleaning the wound, applying medicine, and bandaging the area, Cooper whimpered softly, looking heartbroken.

Norah gently stroked his head and whispered, "If it hurts, don't hold it in, sweetheart. It's okay to cry. Grown-ups cry when they're hurt too."

Cooper sniffled. "But Mom... what if the other kids laugh and call me a crybaby?"

"They won't. And even if someone does, Mommy's on your side. I'll never think you're weak. You're strong and so, so brave."

Still hurting, Cooper finally let himself cry a little.

Norah's chest tightened. Had Cooper been going through things like this at school all along? She suddenly felt a pang of guilt. She realized how little she actually knew about his day-to-day life at school. They never really talked about it after he got home. That had to change.

She pulled out her phone, still no message from Kevin. She called, only to find he was already on another call. That made her angrier.

As she carried Cooper toward the school gate, Maleah approached them with a faux-concerned look.

"Oh dear," she clucked, "that looks painful. And such a shame—without a win, no red flower for Cooper today."

Cooper's tears came rushing back, streaming down his face again.

Maleah patted his hand. "But chin up, Cooper! Even though you didn't finish, your class still won something. My Leonel took second place in the jump rope competition. Isn't that great?"

Leonel was Maleah's son. Norah instantly realized she was deliberately taunting Cooper.

Norah's tone turned sharp. "Leonel's mom, shouldn't you be heading to his next event? Isn't he in the ball-bouncing race? You wouldn't want him crying because you weren't there."

Right then, an announcement rang out: "Next event, volleyball. Participants, please line up. Parents, stand by your assigned red flag."

Norah smiled coolly. "Look, someone's already at the first flag. You might want to hurry."

Sure enough, Maleah stomped off and started arguing with another parent at the red flag, trying to shove her way in. Norah just shook her head.

Cooper watched the scene, then turned to Norah. "Mom, are you okay?"

Norah smiled and gently squeezed his cheek. "I'm fine, sweetheart. Thank you for asking. But what about you? Want to go home or stay and watch the games?"

Cooper looked out toward the field, paused, then said softly, "I want to stay. The teacher said we should try to place, but more important is to participate. And you need to prepare the big lunch later, right? I want to help you."

Norah gave him a big kiss on the cheek. "Of course, baby. I could use my little helper."

"I promise to help with everything!" Cooper said, raising his hand with a grin. The pain seemed forgotten for now.

His injury had sidelined him from the rest of the events, and Norah made sure his name was removed from all the remaining competitions. Nothing mattered more than his well-being—not some silly kindergarten sports meet.

From across the field came a familiar voice: “Go Leonel! Come on, let’s cheer for little Leonel!”.

Several parents nearby half-heartedly waved red flags and mumbled cheers. Cooper, always the enthusiastic one, shouted, “Come on, Leonel! Hold that ball steady and run forward!”.

Unfortunately, Leonel heard him. He glanced up—just in time to lose focus and fumble the ball. It rolled away.

Panicked, Leonel chased after it. But in his rush, he stepped on the ball, slipped, and fell flat on his face.

“Wahhh! Bad ball! Mommy, throw it away! I hate this ball!” he screamed, rolling around in the dirt, not even noticing the sand in his mouth.

Maleah dashed over, tried to comfort him, and then—shockingly—started smacking the ball in frustration.

Some nearby parents were stunned by her reaction. Murmurs broke out.

Maleah snapped at them, “What do any of you know about parenting? At least my Leonel can draw circles! Can your kids even sing on key or run fast?”.

“You’re going too far!” one parent shouted. “Our kids are just as good. Why are you comparing them?”.

“That’s right! My child is the best in my heart, and you have no right to insult him.”.

The crowd turned on her. Realizing she couldn’t take them all on, Maleah stormed over to Norah instead.



"This is your fault! What kind of example are you setting? You distracted Leonel! He wouldn't have fallen if it weren't for you and your brat!"

She jabbed a finger close to Cooper's nose.

Norah slapped her hand away, stood up, and faced her squarely. "You're blaming us? You were the one shouting for us to cheer him on. Now that he messed up, it's our fault? Seriously?"

"You—!" Maleah sputtered. "Forget it. I won't argue with a glorified nanny. It's almost lunchtime, so here's a friendly reminder: don't screw up. If you delay our meal, I'll have your boss fire you."

"She's not my nanny. She's my mom!" Cooper shouted angrily and smacked Maleah's foot. She kicked him away.

Cooper landed on the ground, looking up at her in shock and pain.

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The accident happened so quickly that by the time Norah reacted, the child had already fallen. She scooped him up into her arms and shot a cold glare at Maleah as she stood.

Maleah stepped back in fear, stammering, "What are you trying to do? I didn't use any force, okay? He fell on his own—it has nothing to do with me!"

"Maleah, right? I'll remember that name. If my child gets sick, my lawyer will be in touch. Oh, and isn't your husband a manager at some big company? I'm sure he's doing well financially. So don't act stingy when it comes to covering medical expenses."

Norah hadn't planned on arguing with Maleah. If Maleah wanted attention, Norah was willing to give her some. But kicking her child? That crossed the line. If she stayed silent now, she wouldn't be Norah.

Maybe it was the icy tone in her voice, but not only did Maleah shrink back, even a few nearby parents instinctively stepped away.

Norah didn't care. She simply carried Cooper back to the rest area.

The games continued in full swing. The kids who won cheered, while the ones who lost threw tantrums and cried. Around noon, Norah got a message from Kevin—something urgent had come up at work and he had to head back to the office.

She didn't make a fuss. Instead, she called the restaurant to arrange lunch.

There was no reason for her to cook.

If the teacher had trusted Maleah with organizing lunch, it meant she didn't care much about the truth—or maybe she just wanted to have a good time. In that case, Norah figured she might as well let everyone enjoy a decent meal.

The announcement came over the speakers, signaling the end of the morning events. Everyone returned to their respective rest areas. Parents from other classes were busy preparing lunch. Only Cooper's class parents were either chatting on video calls or snapping pictures—waiting for food.

"Are you really Cooper's mom?"

A parent—clearly sent over by others—walked up and asked Norah.

Norah nodded. "You don't think I'm his mom?"

"It's not that. It's just... I've never seen you pick up Cooper from school. You're not in our moms' group either. Honestly, I thought you might be the nanny. No offense."

Norah smiled calmly. "That just means I give off a practical vibe. I don't take it personally. So, what did you want to talk about?"

People didn't just approach her for no reason. And this one was being overly polite—definitely had a favor to ask.

The woman looked embarrassed but finally whispered, "I didn't want to be the one to ask, but everyone's getting anxious—and honestly, I am too. The kids

are starving. So... when are you planning to start cooking? It doesn't have to be fancy. No one expects a full-blown banquet."

Truth be told, she was hungry too.

Norah checked the time. It was about time for the food to arrive.

She made a call, and the voice on the other end answered right away, "Madam, I'll be there shortly. I'm already at the school gate. Please wait a moment—we won't delay your lunch."

"Great. Just be careful not to bump into any kids when you come in."

After hanging up, Norah smiled at the parent. "Just hang tight. Lunch will be ready soon."

The woman glanced toward the makeshift kitchen in the distance, looking confused, and gave an awkward smile.

Minutes later, a food truck rolled onto campus and parked by the playground. A crew of chefs got out, each carrying a dish.

Everyone's attention snapped to the scene. Sharp-eyed parents recognized the chefs' uniforms—from the most renowned hotel in Belourvinelle—and gasped. It looked like the school had really gone all out.

The principal, however, looked helpless. He hadn't hired those chefs. He had no idea which parent had pulled this off.

"Madam, just as you ordered—the banquet is ready. Where should we set up?"

The hotel manager addressed Norah respectfully, leaving everyone stunned.

Maleah's face turned red, then pale. She was visibly uncomfortable.

"That hotel is outrageously expensive... and that woman doesn't exactly scream 'rich,' does she? Is she trying to show off?"

“Right? I just saw her arguing with the parent committee chair. Maybe she’s trying to make a point.”.

No one knew who made the comments, but Maleah heard them loud and clear. She walked over to Norah with a fake smile.

Before even reaching her, Maleah sneered, “Is that really the hotel manager? Or did you just get some broke relative to play the part?”.

She yanked a chef aside as he walked by. “Let me see what kind of banquet this really is. If it’s just some cheap dish, I’m calling you out.”.

She lifted a plate cover—and a dish of steamed lamb was revealed.

The rich aroma spread instantly, prompting gasps from the crowd.

Norah chuckled, “Maleah, isn’t this a dish from the Manchu-Han Imperial Banquet?”.

Maleah had no clue. But judging from everyone’s reaction, she was losing ground. Her lips twitched. “Smells good, but who knows how it tastes?”.

“We’ll know soon enough. You’re blocking the food—are you trying to stop us from eating?”.

Norah had been waiting for this moment. If she was going to shut Maleah down, she’d do it when Maleah was riding high—then bring her crashing down.

Maleah quickly stepped aside, watching nervously as the dishes were placed on the table. Panic crept in—what if Norah had actually splurged on a full banquet?

Even if it wasn’t, just the hotel’s name carried weight.

Then a thought struck her.

Maleah smirked and said coldly, "Cooper's mom, this event was supposed to be about parents cooking. You cheated. This sets a bad example for the kids. You're not being a good role model."

"Oh really? I thought the point of today was for everyone to have fun. If my cooking wouldn't bring joy, why not find another way to make everyone happy?"

Norah cut her off, then turned to the others. "Ladies, come grab a seat. Honestly, I've never had a full-course banquet like this. If it weren't for Maleah, I wouldn't have had the chance. So let's all thank her, shall we?"

The parents looked at Norah in silence.

Everyone knew she and Maleah were clashing, and no one wanted to get dragged in. But this meal changed the game—they owed her now.

Someone stepped up and took Norah by the arm. "If you ask me, the one we should thank is Cooper's mom. Without her, we wouldn't be eating anything this good. Just the smell is making my mouth water."

Once one parent stepped forward, the rest followed. One by one, they sided with Norah.

Maleah stood off to the side, seething.

Chapter 576.

The food Norah arranged became a huge hit, instantly making her the talk of the school. In the eyes of all the parents, she was now that mom—generous and willing to spend big. Naturally, she stole Maleah's spotlight, and Maleah wasn't about to let that slide.

Since Cooper wasn't feeling well after getting hurt during the afternoon sports events, Norah asked for leave and took him home right after lunch.

As soon as she got back, Norah received a group chat invite from Maleah, followed by a message emphasizing that it was for all the moms in the class to discuss their kids' education in the future.

Norah ignored the invite.

She saw no point in joining a kindergarten parent group—it was just noise.

Once Cooper fell asleep, Norah went downstairs and tried to call Kevin. But all she got was a busy tone.

Thinking back to everything that had happened at the sports day, she felt increasingly frustrated. A quiet anger simmered inside her with no outlet.

Her phone buzzed again—it was a voice call request from Maleah. Norah didn't have the slightest interest in talking to her, but curiosity got the better of her and she picked up.

"Cooper's mom, why didn't you join the group?"

Norah kept her tone light but impatient. "Oh, that? If I don't want to, then I won't. That's all. Unless you've got something important to say, I'm really busy."

Maleah seemed flustered by the reply. After a few tries, she finally got Norah to stay on the line and sighed.

"Here's the thing. A few of us moms are meeting at the mall downtown. It's one of those rare days when we're free from the kids. Thought we'd treat ourselves, relax a little."

"I'll pass. You ladies have fun."

"Come on, Cooper's mom. I get it—you think there's no point in making friends at this stage. But think ahead. Today it's kindergarten, but next it's elementary, then middle school. These kids are going to grow up together, and you're going to keep seeing the same faces."

Norah smirked. "So, it's just a casual hangout, right? Where do I meet you? I'll come now."

"Awesome! Meet us at Bamboo House Café—right at the entrance to the pedestrian street downtown."

Maleah barely finished speaking before Norah ended the call.

Norah regretted ever attending that sports day. Her son had gotten hurt, and now she was tangled up with this petty, drama-hungry woman.

At Bamboo House Café, Norah got out of her car and looked around. Not a familiar face in sight. She hesitated, then walked in.

The café was peaceful. Soothing music played in the background, setting a calm mood.

Norah had just sat down when a bearded man approached with a polite smile.

"Excuse me, ma'am. Are you Cooper's mother?"

She nodded.

He looked visibly relieved. "Finally found you. The others already left. They asked me to wait here for you. Come on, let's go—we'll be late if we don't catch up."

"They?"

Annoyance flashed across Norah's face. Was Maleah seriously being this childish?

"Who asked you to wait here?" she asked, wanting to be sure it really was Maleah behind this.

The man pulled out his phone and showed her a message. "My wife asked me to. She said you finally joined their group and would be upset if you missed out, so she told me to wait here for you."

So it was Maleah.

Norah sighed. Petty as ever.

Still, she didn't overthink it and got into the car with him. On the way, Kevin finally replied to her earlier message. He mentioned there were issues with a business deal and he'd probably be working late into the night.

Since it was work-related, Norah didn't blame him. She arranged for their housekeeper to watch Cooper and texted Kevin that she was heading out with the moms from school.

Before she knew it, the car had left the city limits.

"Didn't you say they were shopping downtown?" Norah asked, puzzled.

"Yeah, but you know how the parent committee chair is—changes her mind constantly. Otherwise I wouldn't have had to wait back there. Don't worry, we're not far behind."

But as they drove down a winding country road with no sign of a village—just the looming mountains—Norah grew uneasy.

Soon, the road narrowed and they reached a gas station. While the man stepped out to refuel, Norah tried calling Maleah.

No answer.

"Miss?"

She looked up to see two familiar faces—Pharaoh's men.

She was about to greet them when the bearded man returned. Sensing something was off, Norah subtly motioned for Pharaoh's men to back off.

They'd been sent by Pharaoh to check in on her and Cooper, but clearly hadn't expected to run into her like this.



As the car pulled deeper into the mountains, the two men quietly followed from a distance.

Eventually, the car stopped. Two other vehicles were already parked at the base of a mountain.

"Is Maleah in one of those cars?" Norah asked, eyeing them warily.

"We were a little late. They've probably already gone up. There's a temple on the mountain—they went up to pray for the kids."

A temple? Here?

Norah narrowed her eyes. The path ahead was steep, barely a trail at all. No way there was a temple up there.

"Funny, I just texted Maleah and she said she was at Commercial Street. Are you sure you're not mistaken?"

She grabbed a thick branch and leaned against a nearby tree, staring coldly at him.

The man stopped faking it and grinned. "Too late to be suspicious now. Be smart and go up the mountain. Or I'll kill you here and drag your body up myself."

"That woman isn't your wife, is she?"

The smirk on his face gave her all the confirmation she needed.

It was a setup—and she'd walked right into it.

As the man approached, Norah struck. But she'd underestimated him—he was no amateur. A few quick moves and he disarmed her, whipping her hard with the branch.

"Still want to fight? I've gotta admit—you've got some skills."

Norah wiped blood from her lip and sneered. "Oh, you haven't seen anything yet."

She let out a sharp whistle—and instantly, Pharaoh's men sprang from the shadows, attacking from both sides. Within seconds, the bearded man was pinned to the ground.

Norah squatted beside him, slapped his face lightly, and asked coldly, "How many of you are up there?"

"Five. We saw you were alone and thought we'd have a little fun. Please, ma'am—we messed up. Let me go."

He was clearly trying to take the fall for Maleah. But Norah wasn't about to let that slide.

She gave her men a nod. "You handle it. I'm not going up there. Just make sure no one finds out who you are."

She had bigger things to worry about. Whatever was happening on that mountain was just another pathetic attempt by Maleah to ruin her.

Let her try. Norah was done hiding.

Chapter 577.

Kevin's phone was unreachable again, and Norah was fuming. Just then, Bonnie called, and in a burst of frustration, Norah told her everything that had happened and what she planned to do.

Bonnie suggested they meet at a suburban bar just a few minutes away from Norah's place.

Norah knew Bonnie picked the location because she hadn't driven, so she walked there and waited a bit before they arrived.

"Mrs. Edwards, I heard you want to investigate someone," Isaac said as he got out of the car, cutting straight to the point.

Norah nodded and handed him a photo of Maleah. "I heard her husband is a company manager. Find out where he works. She tried to kill me—so I'm going to destroy her family."

Norah never started trouble. But if someone crossed her, she'd return it a thousandfold.

Isaac wasn't the least bit surprised. After securing a private room for Norah and Bonnie, he left to make arrangements immediately.

Less than ten minutes later, Isaac returned with a printed document and handed it to Norah.

Maleah's husband, Jamison Lalonde, was a purchasing manager at a hotel under the Edwards Group—a very profitable position. There was also a key detail: Jamison had a mistress named Maia, who was now pregnant and living in a suburban apartment to rest. The real kicker? Jamison's own mother was there taking care of her.

"There's always something detestable behind a so-called pitiful person," Bonnie said, sighing.

Norah sneered. "You can pity her all you want. If she hadn't schemed first, would I be doing this now?"

Then she turned to Isaac. "Mr. Laurin, I need a favor. I want Maleah to find out about Maia—but I can't be directly involved."

Isaac let out a hearty laugh, clearly entertained by the drama. Lowering his voice, he said, "Don't worry, I'm the best at this kind of thing. Just wait. By tomorrow, you'll have a great show to watch."

Naturally, the sooner the revenge hit, the better—it'd be far more satisfying.

Late that night, the city was quiet, wrapped in sleep.

Kevin returned to his office from the conference room and sipped a bitter coffee to stay awake. Just then, his desk phone rang.

It was Pharaoh.

Kevin answered instantly, not daring to delay. "Father-in-law, is something wrong? It's late..."

"Kevin," Pharaoh said coldly, "tell me what's going on with you. Do you even care about my daughter and grandson anymore? A while ago, someone bullied Cooper. And today? Norah was nearly abducted in the mountains. Did you know about that?"

Kevin was stunned. Norah was supposed to be shopping with the other parents—how did she nearly get kidnapped?

He immediately asked for details. As Pharaoh explained everything, Kevin's expression turned grim.

"I've sent you the files on the people involved," Pharaoh said. "This better never happen again. Or I swear, I'll bring them back under my protection. And believe me, if that happens, you won't see them easily again."

Kevin knew his father-in-law was furious—and he had every right to be. Kevin made no excuses.

After making a few promises and ending the call, Kevin reviewed the email, then immediately called his secretary to rearrange his schedule. Without another word, he rushed home.

When he opened the door and saw Norah sipping coffee, he rushed over and pulled her into a tight hug.

Startled by the sudden embrace, Norah asked, "What's going on? Are you okay?"

"Let me hold you," Kevin said softly. "You must've been terrified today. This is all my fault. I promised I'd be there for Cooper's sports meet, but instead I ditched you for work. I'm sorry."

The thought of what could've happened made Kevin's heart pound in fear.

Norah could feel how shaken he was. Her earlier resentment melted away, replaced by forgiveness.

Wrapping her arms around him, she comforted him gently. "I'm fine. You know I can handle myself. No ordinary thug can take me down."

"I was really scared, babe. I swear, I won't leave you again—not even for work. No more."

"Well, I'm okay now, aren't I?"

She pouted a little and said playfully, "I'm hungry. I barely ate anything at that fancy banquet earlier. Everyone was too busy chatting and taking pictures. Since they didn't eat, I didn't either."

Truth was, the food was great. But she wanted to distract Kevin and ease his guilt—what happened was over and done.

Kevin picked her up and carried her out. "Then let's go. I'll treat you to a big meal. Tell me what you want."

"I haven't decided yet," Norah said, giggling into his chest.

When Kevin set her down, he gave her a deep, passionate kiss.

Later, at a spicy hotpot restaurant, Kevin stared at the flaming dish with a forced smile. He was willing to go to war for her, but this was a different kind of battle.

Norah teased him. "If you can't handle it, we can get something else."

"Nope. This is fine."

He held firm, picked up a slice of beef, and took a bite—instantly turning red.

"Not bad, huh? Try this Maoxuewang," Norah said, dropping a piece into his bowl. "Come on, babe, don't tell me you're going to disrespect me."

Kevin braced himself and popped the piece into his mouth. It was like swallowing a fireball.

And then she kept piling more into his bowl—fireball after fireball—until he finally raised his hands in surrender.

“I give up! Let’s go eat something else.”.

“Okay, ice cream it is.”.

Kevin groaned. But as he took a breath, something hit him.

After downing a huge glass of water, he leaned over and cupped Norah’s face. “I really messed up. I ignored your calls, I dragged you to that sports meet even though I knew you hated it. I screwed up, and I hurt you. I’m sorry, baby.”.

Norah was still holding onto her grievances. She kept telling herself to move on—but the more she thought about it, the more upset she felt.

She knew Kevin had rushed back the moment he realized what happened, and he truly regretted it.

So, yeah—she chose hotpot on purpose. She wanted to watch him suffer just a little.

Kevin understood that. But there was no way he could eat any more spicy food, so he surrendered to her second option: ice cream.

Even if it meant diarrhea later, ice cream was better than lava in a bowl.

After finishing a giant bowl of ice cream, Kevin drove straight to the hospital without Norah needing to ask.

As soon as they arrived, a waiting doctor saw Kevin and rushed him into the emergency room.

"Mrs. Edwards, are you trying to kill him?" the doctor scolded. "If anything happens, it's on you. You're really playing with fire!"

A nurse ran over from the emergency room. "Dr. Cody, Mr. Edwards said it wasn't Madam's fault—he insisted on eating the spicy and cold food himself."

Dr. Cody sighed. "This isn't how you pamper your wife, Kevin. But I guess there's no helping the two of you."

Chapter 578.

After spending the night at the hospital with Kevin, Norah went downstairs to grab breakfast. Just as she stepped outside, she spotted Maleah rushing into the inpatient department.

Norah smirked and didn't pay her much attention.

"Norah."

Not wanting to be seen, Norah walked right up to her and gave her a once-over.

"What's the matter? Surprised I'm still in one piece?"

As they got closer, Norah noticed the red marks on Maleah's face, clearly from a beating. She couldn't help but laugh out loud.

"What are you laughing at? You're the one who told me about Maia, right? You trying to ruin my family?"

Norah was taken aback. She hadn't expected Maleah to put it together so quickly.

She nodded calmly and admitted, "Yeah, I told you. Compared to what you did to me, I was being merciful."

Furious, Maleah shouted, "I'm gonna fight you!"

She lunged, but Norah dodged easily.

Maleah lost her balance and slammed into the consultation desk, knocking things to the floor. The nurses nearby immediately swarmed in.

One nurse held Maleah back, while another approached Norah.

"Mrs. Edwards, are you alright?" the nurse asked with concern.

Norah nodded and stepped closer to Maleah, eyeing her up and down. "You shouldn't be mad at me. You should be thanking me."

"Thank you? For what? If it weren't for you, I wouldn't have found out my husband had another woman. I wouldn't have lost control and caused a scene. He wouldn't be divorcing me. You ruined everything!"

Norah sighed. "No good deed goes unpunished, huh?"

Knowing the nurses wouldn't let Maleah get close again, Norah whistled and strolled out of the hospital, leaving Maleah shrieking in frustration.

Later, Norah found out what had happened: Maleah had confronted Maia and hit her in the stomach. Maia was now in the hospital, trying to save the baby.

Maleah had given birth to a daughter, but her husband always wanted a son. Word was, Maia was pregnant with one.

Her husband had always favored Maia, but after the blow-up, he had no choice but to choose. Naturally, he picked Maia.

Norah felt extremely satisfied. After taking Kevin home, she even went shopping for groceries and cooked for him herself.

But on her way out of the supermarket, she noticed someone following her. So she led them into a quiet alley.

When she reached the end, she turned around and looked at the two men tailing her with a smirk. "Let me guess—Maleah sent you?"



"Yeah," one man said, grinning. "She said if we got some nudes of you, she'd throw in a fifty grand bonus."

"Come on, sweetheart," the other added. "It's just a little loss. Help us out, yeah?"

Just then, a couple more guys showed up.

Norah didn't flinch. She sidestepped, grabbed one guy, and slammed him into the wall, then spun around and kicked another away.

"Damn, no wonder she told us to be careful. This chick's tough!"

The two pulled out knives, smiling menacingly.

Norah picked up a stick nearby and calmly asked, "Did your dear Ms. Lalonde tell you who'd pay your hospital bills if I crushed you?"

"You're cocky. I like that," one of them growled as they charged again.

Norah handled them with ease. A few minutes later, both were moaning on the ground, clutching their legs. She grabbed their knives, kicked them once each for good measure, and walked out of the alley.

Just ahead, a car stopped. Maleah stepped out with two bodyguards and blocked her path.

"Get her!" she shouted.

The two men moved toward Norah, who didn't budge.

Before they could lay a hand on her, a police car pulled up. Two officers jumped out and arrested the men.

"I-I don't know them," Maleah stammered. "I was just passing by."

But Norah had already called the police earlier, and everything the attackers had said was caught on record. The cops didn't even bother listening to Maleah's excuses—they hauled her off, too.

"Mrs. Edwards, are you okay?" one officer asked.

Maleah froze.

She stared at Norah in shock. "You're Kevin's wife?"

Norah smiled. "What, I don't look the part?"

Maleah was crushed. If she'd known Norah was the president's wife, she never would've messed with her. Who was she, really? Just a nobody.

Norah felt even more triumphant. That night, Kevin brought home a giant cake. When he asked about it, she just smiled and said she had a craving.

Kevin didn't call her out—he went along with the act. The police had already briefed him earlier.

As for Maleah and the others, the law would handle them.

After dinner, Norah cut up some fruit and went into the study. Spotting a contract, she asked, "Didn't you decide not to work with Mr. Jacob? Why the change of heart?"

Kevin handed her some papers. "Isaac said that batch of medicinal herbs Jacob traded is still missing. He asked me to reach out and see if we can trace it."

He added, "I thought about it. The timing lines up with the last attack on your dad. That time, the enemy had more men than expected. If I'm right—"

"You think they bought the herbs."

Kevin nodded, and Norah's eyes widened.

If that was true, Mr. Jacob was going to pay dearly.

"Did you tell my dad?"

She didn't want Pharaoh to find out just yet—he'd likely throw Jacob in jail on the spot. Or worse.

Kevin smiled. "Relax. I know how he is. I won't say anything until we're sure."

"Thank you. For always thinking of me."

Norah hugged him from behind. "I know you've been through a lot lately, and you're still trying to protect me. I really appreciate it."

Kevin pulled her into his lap and frowned. "There's one more thing. You'll need to pick up Cooper tomorrow. Auntie said that when she picked him up today, a strange woman came up to him. She left when Auntie appeared."

That was all Norah needed to hear. She nodded right away.

Cooper was her son—no one was getting close to him.

The next day, Norah arrived at school early.

About half an hour before school let out, a black SUV parked across from the gates. A flashy-looking woman got out and walked straight to the entrance.

She chatted with the security guard like they knew each other, and he even poured her tea.

That morning, Norah had asked Cooper about the woman. He said she only spoke to him—not to any other kids—and it was the first time they met.

None of this made sense.

Then the school bell rang, and a group of kids came out, singing as they walked hand-in-hand behind their teacher.

Chapter 579.

"Cooper!" the woman called out, waving as if she had nothing to hide.

She didn't seem like a human trafficker at all.

Since his parents hadn't arrived yet, Cooper wasn't allowed to leave the school gate. The woman passed a bag of food to him through the fence.

Norah hurried over and stopped him. "Cooper, have you forgotten what Mommy taught you?"

"I didn't forget, Mom. That's Aunt Luella. The other kids said she used to teach dance here."

Cooper was honest. From what he heard, she had worked at the school before, so he didn't consider her a stranger.

But he'd only started school this semester—he didn't actually know her.

Before Norah could respond, the woman extended a hand politely. "You must be Cooper's mom. I'm Luella Goyette. I really did teach dance here before, but now I work as a talent agent. Here's my card."

The business card read clearly: Luella Goyette, Talent Agent, Yunji Entertainment Co.

Norah didn't completely trust her, so she returned the card and asked calmly, "So you're an agent? I heard you came by yesterday, too. What exactly do you want with Cooper?"

"To be honest, I was going to reach out to you even if you hadn't shown up today," Luella said candidly. "Cooper has the kind of look that's perfect for the screen. I think he could do really well in the entertainment industry. I was hoping to see if you'd be open to it."

Luella seemed sincere—there were no telltale signs of lying in her expression.

"That depends on what he wants," Norah replied evenly.

Her son didn't need to enter showbiz for money. Whether he joined or not didn't matter.

Luella knelt down beside Cooper and gently explained what working in entertainment meant. Then she asked, "So, Cooper, what do you think? Want to give it a try?"

"Can Grandpa watch me on TV?" Cooper asked. He hadn't seen Pharaoh in a while and missed him.

Luella laughed. "Of course. And when you become a star, everyone will know who you are—and you can do lots of things you like."

"Mom, I wanna do it," Cooper said, tilting his head up eagerly.

Norah gave an awkward smile. "Well, it's a big decision. I'll need to talk to my husband first. Is that okay?"

"Of course!" Luella handed her another card. "Give me a call after you two talk. I'll work on a child star plan tonight—we can go over the contract tomorrow."

Norah still had her doubts, but seeing Cooper so excited, she chose not to shut it down right away.

Later at home, Norah told Kevin everything. He immediately had someone look into Luella and confirmed she was a real agent—not super famous, but credible.

"So, what do you think?" Norah whispered, not wanting Cooper to overhear.

Kevin smiled, pinching her nose gently. "If he likes it, let him try. He might lose interest quickly. Just tell Luella to start with a short-term contract. That way, we have an easy out."

Norah agreed. She called Luella the next day and explained the terms.

Luella seemed surprised but accepted.

After serving Norah tea, she left the room to get a fresh copy of the contract.

On her way back, she bumped into someone at the door, and the papers fell. The other person picked them up and scoffed at the contents.

“Seriously, Luella? A short-term child star contract? What if they bail after a month? You’ll lose money and time. I know you’re broke, but are you really that desperate? Trying to make a quick buck like this—watch out, or you’ll just end up deeper in debt.”

“This is none of your business, Ms. Fortier,” Luella replied sharply, grabbing the contract and walking into the tea room with a forced smile for Norah. “Sorry about that.”

“No worries,” Norah said. “I thought the entertainment world would be different—but I guess it’s just as messy as any other industry.”

Looking at the contract, Norah decided to be upfront. “You know how young Cooper is. He might think this is just fun and games. Don’t set your hopes too high.”

“I’ve thought about that. By the way, what should I call you?”

Norah had only signed the contract herself—she hadn’t filled in Kevin’s information.

She didn’t want Cooper to succeed just because of Kevin’s name. She also didn’t want to draw too much attention to him. Without real talent, fame would only bring jealousy and trouble.

“You can call me Sister Norah,” she said with a smile.

“Alright, Sister Norah. Since we’re all set, can you bring Cooper by tomorrow for an audition? It’s for a commercial—nothing too hard. I’ll send you the script later.”

Luella sounded nervous, like she feared Norah would change her mind.

Norah patted her on the shoulder. “It’s fine. We signed the contract, so we’ll follow through.”

“Thank you so much.”

Luella walked her downstairs. Along the way, Norah noticed all the judgmental stares and couldn't help but feel sorry for her.

The entertainment industry really wasn't for the faint of heart.

The next day, Cooper went to shoot his first commercial—for children's shampoo. His naturally soft, smooth hair made him the perfect choice.

Everything at the photo studio was new and fascinating to him. As soon as they walked in, he looked around like a curious little explorer, eager to touch everything.

Luella gently pulled him to sit down on the couch and explained what he needed to do: when to smile, when to look at the camera, when to move.

Norah scanned the studio. Two groups were filming. Their setup was pretty simple, but the other group's was extravagant—clearly for a big-name star.

When it was time to shoot, the director called Cooper over. He caught on fast and needed almost no guidance.

The shoot was scheduled for an hour but wrapped in thirty minutes. The footage looked great.

The director was full of praise, which seemed to upset the other team.

A woman from the other side came over, watched the playback, and shook her head disapprovingly.

"Director Lacroix," she said, "you're always too kind to newbies. But being overly nice isn't doing them any favors. It lowers standards."

"You're wrong, Ms. Fortier," he replied. "This ad turned out really well. It's going to be a hit."

So that was Ms. Fortier—the same woman who mocked Luella the day before.

Ms. Fortier's expression shifted as she glanced at Norah and sneered, "Another mom trying to get rich off her kid. There are so many of them these days—completely ignoring their child's well-being just to satisfy their own ambitions."

Norah gave her a frosty smile. "You're absolutely right. But with a son like mine, wouldn't it be dumb not to cash in?"

Chapter 580.

"I've seen a lot of moms like you," Ms. Fortier sneered. "But hey, it's true—child stars only stay hot for a few years. If you don't cash in now, when will you?"

The disdain in her eyes was obvious, but Norah didn't even glance at her. Instead, Luella casually changed the topic to where they should go for lunch after the shoot.

That nonchalance pushed Ms. Fortier over the edge.

Before the situation escalated, the other set's director yelled out—apparently their actor was off today—and Ms. Fortier rushed over to handle it.

Luella used the chance to quietly advise Norah, "Try not to clash with her again. It won't help us. Sister Norah, please just bear with it."

Norah gave a small, apologetic smile. "Did I make things harder for you? Sorry, I'll be more mindful next time."

She watched Ms. Fortier sucking up to the director across the room, a far cry from the attitude she'd shown them just moments ago. Norah couldn't help but laugh softly to herself.

That's the entertainment world—brutally real.

Once the commercial shoot wrapped, Cooper officially entered showbiz. But according to Luella, to really make a name for himself, Cooper would need to land a role in a TV drama or get on a variety show.



TV dramas require acting skills, but there's flexibility in shooting. Variety shows, on the other hand, demand energy and real-time performance, with no do-overs.

Luella recommended a variety show—it would give Cooper more exposure and help him build a fan base. Norah agreed. Since she had already committed, she wouldn't be picky.

When Pharaoh found out that Cooper had entered the industry, he surprised them with a huge gift. It was a massive cardboard box that took two people to carry. No one knew what was inside.

They placed the box in Cooper's room. With Norah's permission, Cooper eagerly climbed onto a stool and started tearing off the tape.

"Hi there, little Cooper baby!"

Pharaoh popped out of the box, startling Cooper.

Once he realized it was his grandpa, Cooper screamed with joy and threw his arms around him. "Grandpa! Grandpa!"

Norah shook her head, smiling helplessly. "Dad, really? You just had to be dramatic."

"I'm only staying the night. I missed my little guy."

Pharaoh picked Cooper up and spun him around, laughing. The two of them played nonstop. Norah, knowing how much Pharaoh missed Cooper, didn't interrupt—she simply went downstairs to ask their housekeeper to set an extra place for dinner.

That evening, under a quiet, star-filled sky, Pharaoh and Cooper sat on the rooftop, saying nothing but sharing plenty with their eyes.

Cooper suddenly whispered in Pharaoh's ear, "Grandpa, I can earn money now. When I do, I'll buy you a big present—whatever you want!"

Pharaoh laughed. "You're really my grandson. Grandpa has everything he needs. I'll love anything you get me."

"Really?"

"Absolutely. But no matter what you do, remember to be polite and kind to everyone you meet, okay?"

Pharaoh had come because he was worried Cooper might get hurt in the entertainment world. Norah couldn't always be by his side, and the industry was complex. Cooper needed to learn how to navigate it on his own.

Cooper nodded solemnly. "The teacher says to greet everyone, so I'll remember that."

"And don't forget to smile, too."

"Yes, sir!"

Then Cooper giggled and snuggled into Pharaoh's arms.

The moon hung low among the trees, and soft laughter floated from the rooftop. Norah and Kevin smiled at each other downstairs.

"You mentioned before that another agent in the company doesn't get along with Luella," Kevin said, closing his laptop. "Want me to step in and handle it?"

He leaned back. "That variety show starts filming tomorrow, right? I'll treat the entire crew to dinner in Cooper's name—make it classy. Let's book a hotel downtown."

Norah shook her head quickly. "I don't want people to know that Kevin is Cooper's dad—at least not yet. I can handle it, and so can Luella. If she can't, then she's not the right agent."

"I don't care about her abilities. I just don't want you or Cooper getting mistreated."

Kevin took her hand and smiled. "Babe, I know you can handle this easily. But I want to be your safety net."

Norah smirked, leaning in playfully. "Are you upset because you feel left out?"

Kevin froze, then gave an embarrassed grin.

Lately, Norah had been solving everything on her own. Even when she hit roadblocks, she turned to Bonnie before she ever came to Kevin. Of course he felt a little left out.

Norah leaned in and kissed him softly. "Don't worry. The time will come to reveal that Kevin is Cooper's father. Once Cooper's got a solid fanbase, I'll let you have your moment."

Kevin nodded. She made it sound so simple, and since she clearly had a handle on everything, he didn't push.

But what neither of them expected was that the company suddenly reassigned Ms. Fortier to be Cooper's temporary agent.

Officially, it was because one of her artists was filming abroad and she couldn't leave her own kids behind. It sounded like a kind, considerate reason—but Norah didn't buy it.

On the way to the shoot, Luella called Norah to give her a rundown on Ms. Fortier's style and how variety shows worked.

Norah listened carefully. The only thing that confused her was why Luella warned her not to be too affectionate with Cooper in front of Ms. Fortier.

She asked directly, and Luella paused before answering quietly, "Ms. Fortier's child isn't doing well. People at the company avoid talking about kids around her. It's sensitive."

Norah understood. "Got it. Don't worry—I'll be careful. Just focus on your trip. I'm counting on you to make Cooper a star."

Between Luella and Ms. Fortier, Norah clearly trusted Luella more.

Her instincts were confirmed the moment she met Ms. Fortier again.

It was a bright, sunny day. Norah had dressed Cooper in sporty clothes with a cute blue hat that made him look extra adorable.

When Ms. Fortier saw him, she gasped in dismay. She circled around Cooper, shaking her head dramatically.

"Cooper's mom, what are you thinking? Don't you know today's theme is the opening ceremony? Why are you dressing him in something so childish—with a babyish hat, no less?"

She wagged her finger. "From now on, you'll video call me every morning. I'll tell you what Cooper should wear each day."