

Jennifer had come back to grab her phone and walked straight into the scene. She froze, stunned. Her first instinct was to rush over and check on Stella. But Evan shot her a cold look. Jennifer's temper flared instantly. "Stella—" Evan's hair was slightly disheveled now, anger pounding visibly in his temples. "Stella Rowan." He grabbed Stella's wrist, squeezing so hard it felt like he might crush her bones. The entire room was thick with fury. "Let go of her!" Jennifer shouted. Stella met Evan's icy stare. "What? Are you going to hit me for Summer now?" As soon as the words left her mouth, Evan's grip tightened even more. "You're completely unreasonable." With that, he flung her hand away. Then he turned and started pushing Summer's wheelchair out of the room. As Summer was wheeled past Stella, she shot her a look full of contempt. When they reached the doorway, Stella, still sitting on the hospital bed, let out a soft, mocking laugh. "Remember this," she said calmly. "Those slaps today were just a little interest." Evan froze. Summer did too. The message couldn't have been clearer. Whether it was about the children or the Redcrest Valley project, Stella wasn't letting anything go. Evan paused, then turned back to look at her. "Evan," Summer said quickly, clutching her stomach. "It hurts. Take me to the doctor." Whatever Evan had been about to say died on his lips. In the end, he said nothing and pushed Summer away down the hall. Only after they were gone did Jennifer turn back to Stella. "Why did she even come here?" Didn't she realize how disgusting she was? "And her face," Jennifer added, staring. "That swelling... you did that, didn't you?" Both sides of Summer's face were red and swollen. It was obvious she'd taken several hard slaps. "She wanted to play the victim," Stella said coolly. "I helped her sell it." Summer was already pitiful enough. And the Wright family couldn't wait for her and Evan to divorce. Jennifer fell silent. The worry in her eyes only deepened. "If her overbearing, vicious mother finds out," Jennifer said grimly, "there's no way she'll let this go." Stella picked up the glass of water from the bedside table and took two big gulps. A dull ache twisted in her lower abdomen. Jennifer noticed immediately. "What's wrong?" "My stomach hurts a little." "I'm calling the doctor," Jennifer said at once. "I already told you, you need to keep your emotions steady right now. Why did you have to blow up like that? You're the one paying for it with your body." She scolded her even as she went to get the doctor. The doctor examined Stella and said there was nothing serious, but stressed again that she needed to avoid emotional stress and stay calm. After the doctor left, Stella asked quietly, "Isn't the whole city saying Evan's about to take responsibility for Summer?" Those rumors had started in the second month after Steven's death. Back then, Summer had been showing up at events with Evan constantly. Jennifer snorted. "It's worse than that. People are saying Steven's death had something to do with Evan and Summer." "They're saying they were already having an affair, that the babies Summer gave birth to are Evan's." It was ridiculous. Wasn't that damaging enough to the Wright family already? And yet the family still let Evan and Summer appear together—just because Summer had a rich, powerful mother backing her. "I know you're furious," Jennifer said seriously, "but don't do anything reckless." "Summer's mother is a lunatic. After what you did to Summer today, she'll definitely come after you." Jennifer was genuinely afraid Stella would be targeted for revenge. A flash of cold light crossed Stella's eyes. "Isn't it better if she doesn't want to let it go? I don't plan on letting it go either." Seeing that look made Jennifer's chest tighten. "Stella...?" "Aren't you supposed to get my pajamas?" Stella said calmly. "Go." "But—" Jennifer hesitated, uneasy. Especially seeing Stella like this. "I'm fine," Stella said. "...Okay. I'll be back soon." Jennifer went to the restroom to retrieve her phone. The night before had been rushed, and she hadn't expected Stella to be hospitalized this long. The moment the hospital room door closed again— Stella picked up her phone and dialed a number. The call connected almost instantly. "Little Star." That nickname was gentle, familiar. It warmed Stella's otherwise icy chest just a little. "Brother," she said quietly. "I'm in the hospital." ... Evan escorted Summer back to her hospital room. Dora arrived moments later, carrying a thermos of chicken soup prepared at the family estate. She entered with a soft, indulgent smile. "Summer, Marianne cooked the chicken soup herself this morning. This soup—" She stopped short. "Oh my... what happened to your face?"

Only then did Dora notice the fingerprints on Summer's cheeks. She hurriedly set the thermos down and went over, carefully lifting Summer's face to look. "What happened? This—" Clear handprints marked both sides of her face. Summer covered her cheeks and sniffed quietly, glancing at Evan without saying a word. That single look was enough. Dora straightened at once, fury flashing across her face as she turned on Evan. "It was Stella, wasn't it?" "She's gone too far. Summer just gave birth, and she actually dared to hit her?" Already resentful toward Stella, Dora was now absolutely livid. "Mom, this isn't Stella's fault," Summer said softly. "It's my fault. I—I—" Dora didn't listen. She pulled out her phone and dialed Stella's number. It rang once before a cold, mechanical voice answered: "The number you have dialed cannot be reached." Cannot be reached? It had worked earlier. This was clearly a block. That realization sent Dora's anger through the roof. "She actually dared to block me. I see now. She doesn't want to be part of this family anymore." "Mom, please don't say that," Summer said quickly. "It's really my fault. I knew Stella had been upset these past two years because she couldn't get pregnant, and I still went to see her at a time like this." Dora froze. "What did you say? You went to see her?" "You just gave birth. You're the one who should be visited. Why would you go see her?" "I..." Summer lowered her head even further, looking utterly wronged. Dora felt dizzy with rage. "You went out of kindness, and she dared to lay hands on you? She can't have children, and whose fault is that? Isn't it because—" "That's enough." Evan's voice cut through the room. The suppressed anger in it made Dora fall silent instantly. She met his gaze—cold, heavy with pressure—and swallowed the rest of her words. He was her own son, but when Evan lost his temper, even she didn't dare push back. Still, seeing Summer's swollen face, Dora couldn't let it go. "No matter what, what she did to Summer was wrong. You need to do something about her." Evan glanced at her, a warning glint flashing in his eyes. That was enough. Dora shut her mouth completely. Evan didn't say another word. He turned and strode out of the hospital room, his entire presence sharp with cold fury. "Mom..." Summer called after him softly. Dora's heart clenched. "Alright, alright. You've suffered enough. Don't worry, I will make sure you get justice." An orphanage girl with no upbringing, no backing, daring to act this arrogantly? She didn't even know who she was up against. Dora wasn't about to let this go.