

No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce

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When Freya reached the study, she found Vincent flipping through papers on the desk. He looked up when he heard her footsteps.

“Where’s Scarlett?” he asked, his voice sharp.

Freya pointed toward the front door. “She left in a hurry. Said she had to go somewhere.”

Vincent stood up, his jaw tight. He’d gone to the study to find the “papers” Scarlett had mentioned, but the desk was empty. Now she was gone again. He was starting to get annoyed.

“You didn’t see any papers on the desk?” he asked.

Freya's eyes widened. "Oh! Right! Mrs. Stewart told me to give you an agreement. I was scared I'd lose it, so I put it in my room. Let me go get

it!"

Vincent frowned. "Don't touch anything in the study without asking first."

"I'm sorry, Mr. Stewart!" Freya said, rushing downstairs.

Vincent was about to sit down and wait when his phone rang. It was Amanda.

"Vincent, are you still with Scarlett?" she snapped. "Vanessa won't sleep-she keeps asking for you."

Vincent sighed. "I'll be there in ten minutes."

He hung up and left the study, forgetting all about the divorce papers. Freya returned a minute later, holding the agreement, but Vincent was already gone. She stared at the empty room, confused. "Where did he go?" she muttered, setting the papers on the desk.

That night, it started to rain. The heater in Scarlett's car hummed softly, but the air was heavy with tension. Claire sat in the passenger seat, her face in her hands, sobbing uncontrollably.

Scarlett didn't say anything. She just handed her a box of tissues and let her cry. After a few minutes, Claire finally spoke, her voice broken.

"Elias cheated again," she said.

Scarlett wasn't surprised. Claire and Elias Rothwell had been together since college-eight years. They'd broken up and gotten back together more times than Scarlett could count. Claire always hoped he'd change, that he'd finally propose. But all she got was more lies, more betrayal.

"I can't leave him," Claire said, wiping her tears. "I've given him half my life, Scarlett. Eight

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years... That's half of everything I am."

Scarlett turned to her, her voice firm but gentle. "You're the one holding on, Claire. I left Vincent. If I can do it, so can you."

Claire looked

up, her eyes red. “I don’t believe you’re over him. Not really.”

Scarlett nodded, her voice sincere. “I am. It took me five years to realize he’ll never love me. But I finally get it. And so will you-when you’re ready.”

Claire looked away, her shoulders slumping. “Easy for you to say. You have your family. I have nothing without him.”

Scarlett didn’t argue. She knew from experience that advice didn’t help-you had to hit rock bottom on your own.

For the next half hour, Claire called Elias over and over. He didn’t answer. She borrowed Scarlett’s phone, dialing his number again. This time, he picked up.

“Claire, are you insane?” he yelled, his voice loud through the speaker. “It’s two in the morning! Do you have to harass me 24/7? Do I need to get a restraining order?”

“Elias, I just want to talk-

“I have nothing to say to you!” he snapped. “I’m going to bed. Don’t call me again.”

He hung up. Claire tried to call back, but his number was now blocked. She dropped the phone, tears streaming down her face.

Scarlett watched her, her heart breaking. She remembered being that desperate-begging Vincent to answer her calls, crying herself to sleep when he didn’t, making excuses for his cruelty. It wasn’t worth it.

She put a hand on Claire’s shoulder. “I’m here for you. Whenever you’re ready to let go. you.”

I’ll help

Claire nodded, still crying. Scarlett didn’t say anything else. She just turned up the heater and started driving toward Claire’s apartment.

The next morning, Scarlett woke up at 5 a.m. She went to the market, buying fresh ingredients for Henry’s birthday dinner. She spent the entire day in the kitchen-steaming fish, braising pork ribs, stir-frying vegetables, making a chocolate cake from scratch. Clara helped her peel garlic and chop onions, chattering about her school play.

By the time the family arrived, the house smelled like home. Nathan walked in, his briefcase in hand, and stopped short when he saw the spread. He looked at Scarlett-she was wearing an apron, her hair tied back, no makeup on. She looked tired, but happy.

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He set his briefcase down, his voice gruff. “We have maids, you know. You don’t have to cook. There are restaurants that make better food than this.”

Scarlett knew he was just worried. She smiled, “I wanted to. I’ve spent five years cooking for Richard’s birthday. It’s time I cooked for my own dad.”

Nathan’s jaw tightened. He didn’t say anything else—just grabbed a towel and started setting the table.

The dinner was a success. Everyone laughed, told stories, and ate until they were full. After dinner, they cut the cake. Clara smeared frosting on Scarlett’s cheek, and Violet did the same to Nathan. For the first time in years, Scarlett felt truly happy.

That night, she posted a photo on Instagram-nine photos, actually, of the family laughing, eating, and blowing out candles. The caption read, “From now on, every birthday will be spent with the people who love me. Happy birthday, Dad. I love you.”

She put her phone down, smiling. For the first time in five years, she didn't think about Vincent, or Vanessa, or the Stewarts. She just thought about her family-and the future. A future that was finally hers.