

No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce

Chapter 13

After setting her wine glass down, Scarlett didn't spare Vincent a single glance. To her, he might as well have been a stranger at the next table—someone she'd never met, let alone married.

Just then, a peeled shrimp landed in her bowl. She looked up to find Marvin Winslet, one of the school's math teachers, smiling at her. Marvin had a soft, bookish charm; when he smiled, his eyes crinkled at the corners, warm and sincere. They'd gotten to know each other over the two months, chatting about the kids or sharing lunch on quiet afternoons.

"Thanks, Marvin," Scarlett said, returning his smile.

Marcus, ever observant, perked up. "Dr. Theron, are you married?"

Scarlett didn't hesitate. "Yeah, I am. I have a daughter."

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Across the table, Vincent's jaw tightened. He'd watched Marvin pass Scarlett the shrimp, watched her smile at him like he meant something-and for a split second, he felt a strange, unfamiliar twinge in his chest. When he heard her say she was married, that twinge faded into something like relief. He even noticed Marvin's smile falter, his shoulders slumping slightly.

But then Scarlett added, "We're getting divorced, though."

Vincent missed that part. His phone had started ringing-a video call from Vanessa. He answered it right there, not bothering to step outside. The table went quiet as everyone glanced over, curious.

"Dad, where are you?" Vanessa's sweet voice came through the screen.

Vincent's face softened, a look Scarlett hadn't seen in years. "I'm working in a small town. I'll be home tomorrow. Sabrina's coming over tonight to stay with you, okay? You can sleep with her if you want."

He couldn't help but sneak a look at Scarlett. She was talking to Marvin, a faint smile on her lips -like she hadn't even heard him.

"Okay, Dad," Vanessa said.

Then, out of nowhere, Vincent said, "Mom's here too. Do you want to say hi?"

The room went even quieter. Everyone turned to look around-there were three women at the table, two of whom were married. The only single one was Scarlett, but she was sitting as far from Vincent as possible. No one dared ask, but the curiosity hung thick in the air.

Vanessa's voice turned petulant. "No! I don't want to talk to her. I'm still mad. She has to say sorry first, or I won't forgive her."

Chapter 13 Mom's Here Too

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Her words were loud enough for everyone to hear. Scarlett didn't look up. She just kept eating, like Vanessa's anger was nothing more than background noise. What did she do wrong? She fed her, clothed her, stayed up with her when she was sick. But Vanessa hated her because she didn't let Sabrina take over.

Vincent glanced at her again. She was so calm-too calm. Once, she would've cried if Vanessa so much as frowned at her. Once, she would've begged Vincent to let her talk to their daughter, to explain. But now? She didn't care.

"Dad, Sabrina's here! I'm gonna play blocks with her!" Vanessa said, then hung up.

Marcus cleared his throat, trying to lighten the mood. "Sounds like your daughter's pretty close to Sabrina."

Vincent's brow furrowed. "Sabrina? You know her?"

Marcus looked confused. “Well, your daughter mentioned her-isn’t she your daughter’s nanny?”

Vincent didn’t answer. Suddenly, he didn’t want to be there anymore. He stood up, his chair scraping against the floor. “I’m done eating. Enjoy the rest of your dinner.”

He grabbed his jacket and headed for the door. As he passed Scarlett, he stopped-for no reason he could name. “Not leaving yet?”

He wasn’t even sure if he was talking to her. Once, she would’ve jumped up, grabbing her bag to follow him. But now, she just stared at her plate, like she hadn’t heard.

After a beat of silence, Vincent called out, “Abbott.”

Abbott. “Coming, sir!”

Scarlett hid a small smile. He isn't talking to me. I should stop thinking I matter to him.

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