

No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce

Chapter 15

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Vincent frowned, his voice tight. “Is there really no other option?” He hated the idea of a public bathhouse-crowded, unhygienic, nothing like the marble bathroom in his penthouse. But he couldn’t sleep without a shower; the day’s grime and alcohol made his skin itch.

Scarlett could’ve offered to let him use the small bathroom in her dorm-she had a portable water heater she’d borrowed from the school-but she wasn’t in the mood to be nice. “No,” she said, short and final.

With that, she turned and left. Letting him stay in her room was already more than he deserved. She wasn’t about to coddle him like she used to.

After Scarlett left, Vincent paced the tiny room, his expensive shoes clicking against the linoleum floor. The space was clean-Scarlett had always been neat-but it felt cramped, suffocating. He pulled out his phone and called Abbott. "Find a driver in town. We're heading back to Rivergate right now." He'd rather spend three hours in a car than one night in this dorm.

Scarlett walked to the school parking lot, climbed into her old sedan, and folded down the back seats. She spread a blanket over the upholstery and lay down-October nights were mild, so she didn't need much warmth. But she'd barely closed her eyes when she heard voices outside— Abbott and Vincent.

"Mr. Stewart, Ms. Monroe is here with Vanessa. They should be here any minute," Abbott said.

A second later, bright headlights cut through the dark. A sleek black car pulled up, and Vanessa's voice rang out, high and excited. "Daddy!" She jumped out and ran into Vincent's arms, clinging to him like a koala.

"What are you doing here?" Vincent asked, lifting her up. His gaze softened when he looked at Vanessa, but it turned cold when it landed on Sabrina, who was stepping out of the car.

Sabrina didn't get a chance to answer. Vanessa poked Vincent's cheek, grinning. "I missed you! And Sabrina said you'd hate staying in the country, so she wanted to come pick you up."

Vincent smiled faintly. "You have school tomorrow. Aren't you worried about being late?"

"I care more about you sleeping well!" Vanessa said, wrapping her arms around his neck.

Vincent's chest tightened. He thought of Scarlett-how she'd left him in that dorm without a second glance, how she'd never once asked if he was comfortable. Sabrina, at least, cared enough to drive all this way.

"Let's get in the car," Sabrina said, stepping closer. She touched Vincent's arm, her fingers lingering just long enough to be noticeable.

Vincent put Vanessa in the backseat, then turned to Sabrina. "Thanks for coming."

Sabrina stood under a streetlight, her face half in shadow. Her eyes were soft, warm-nothing like Scarlett's cold indifference. They stood close, so close that if Vanessa hadn't been watching, they might've kissed.

Scarlett watched from her car, her throat tight. She'd told herself she was over him, that their marriage was just a mistake. But seeing him with Sabrina-laughing, touching, looking at each other like they belonged together-it still hurt. Tears pricked her eyes, and she turned away, staring at the dashboard until their car drove off.

The next morning, Scarlett packed her things. It was her last day in the town-her two-month volunteer stint was over. The school held a small farewell ceremony; the kids gave her drawings, and Marcus handed her a bouquet of wildflowers. She felt a twinge of sadness, but it was time to go home.

Back in Rivergate, she stopped by Ravenshade Villa to collect her things. She'd lived there for two years, but most of her stuff was just clutter-she only

took her medical books, her clothes, and a few photos of her family. The rest, she left behind. She didn't need reminders of her marriage.

The next day, she arrived at the hospital early. The chief surgeon asked her to assist with a pediatric surgery-her first since returning. She was scrubbing in when a familiar voice spoke up beside her.

"Scarlett?"

She looked up, surprised. It was Nolan Huntley-her college classmate, the one who'd been top of their year alongside her. "Nolan? What are you doing here?"

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Nolan smiled, his eyes crinkling. "I'm here for a consult surgery. You free at noon? Let's grab lunch-I owe you for that time you helped me study for finals."

Scarlett laughed. "Sure. My treat, though-I'm the one who's back in town."

“Noon it is,” Nolan said.

At lunch, they went to a quiet soup restaurant. Scarlett remembered Nolan hated spicy food, so she ordered a creamy corn soup and a plate of steamed fish. “It’s been what-five years?” she said, ladling soup into his bowl.

“Six,” Nolan corrected. “How’ve you been?”

“Good,” Scarlett said, avoiding the details. She didn’t want to talk about Vincent, about the divorce, about Vanessa’s anger.

Chapter 15 You Are Coming

Nolan noticed the faint ring mark on her finger. “You got married?”

Scarlett nodded. “Yeah. I have a daughter-she’s five, really cute.”

Nolan grinned. "Congrats! Why didn't you tell us? We would've thrown you a party."

Scarlett looked down at her soup. "We didn't have a wedding. Just... eloped, I guess."

Nolan sensed she didn't want to talk about it, so he changed the subject. "What's your specialty now? I remember you loved pediatrics."

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