

No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 151[858 words]

Chapter 151 Damian's Warning

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finished

“Baby, when I lose control, I make Vincent look tame. Trust me, you don’t want to see that side

of me.”

With that, Damian opened his eyes and turned to study Scarlett’s reaction.

She remained silent, but the tension in her brow betrayed her unease.

A low chuckle escaped him as he sat up. Noticing her disheveled clothes-nearly revealing more than intended-he fought back a surge of desire. Casually adjusting her collar, he smirked. “Your lips are something else, baby. Next time we meet, they’d better be even softer.”

His bold flirtation, combined with the warmth of his breath against her skin, sent shivers through her.

She stiffened, ready to push him away, but he was already stepping out of the car.

Leaning against the doorframe, his grin was pure trouble and charm. He blew a kiss toward Scarlett inside. “Don’t forget to think about me, baby. Make sure I’m in your dreams, got it?”

Vincent came across the news article about Damian and his alleged girlfriend just as he finished reviewing a stack of medical journals.

Seeing the trending headline, he instinctively clicked on it.

Vincent wasn’t one for celebrity gossip, but something about this story caught his attention tonight. The reporter had gone with a provocative title. “Damian’s Steamy Car Makeout With Mystery Girlfriend.”

The photos were blurry and didn't clearly show the woman's face, but something about her silhouette and clothing felt familiar.

He frowned, a thought forming in his mind-could that be Scarlett?

Before he could dwell on it, Sabrina came down the stairs.

"Vincent, what's got you so focused?" she asked as she walked over and settled beside him on the couch.

Quietly, Vincent set his phone aside. He looked up at her, a soft smile touching his lips. "Nothing important."

Then he asked, "Is Vanessa asleep already?"

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Sabrina nodded. "Yeah, she was exhausted from all the playing. Fell asleep right after her bath."

"And your mom? Did she turn in for the night too?"

Sabrina replied, "Yeah, everyone's asleep now."

Vincent studied Sabrina's face-clean and natural, with delicate features and smooth skin. Even without makeup, she was strikingly pretty.

Lately, though, she'd been looking worn out.

It tugged at his heart. "You should get some rest too. You've been carrying a lot these past few days."

Hearing that, Sabrina's eyes welled up. She lowered her head, tears tracing down her cheeks. "Vincent... thank you."

Seeing her cry stirred something in him. He reached out, gently wiping her tears away. "Hey, what's this for? Why the tears?"

Sabrina leaned into him, burying her face against his chest, her voice muffled. “You always show up right when I need you most.”

Vincent wrapped his arms around her, one hand softly stroking her back. “It’s what I should do. No need to thank me.”

But the more he comforted her, the harder she cried. So he just held her, his fingers gently threading through her soft, fine hair.

After a while, Sabrina’s crying eased. Her voice was hoarse as she spoke, “Vincent, I’ll find a place for my mom to stay soon.”

Vincent gently pulled back just enough to look down at her. “Once your mom moves to Rivergate, she can stay at Ravensshade Villa. Vanessa adores her, and it’ll be easier for you to manage everything in one place.”

Sabrina still seemed hesitant. “But...”

Vincent cut her off gently but firmly. “It’s settled. Now go get some rest. Once we’re back in Rivergate, you’ll have to catch up on all the classes you’ve missed.”

Finally, Sabrina offered a small smile. “Okay, I will.”

Vincent smiled tenderly back and motioned for her to head upstairs.

Sabrina turned and made her way up, lingering just a moment before disappearing from view.

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Finished

But once she was out of Vincent’s sight, a faint, almost scornful smirk flickered across her face.

After she left, Vincent picked up his phone again and reopened the trending article. The more he studied the photos, the more certain he felt-that really was Scarlett.

He needed to be sure. He tapped her contact and started a video call.

The call connected, but no one answered. He tried three times-each attempt ending the same

way.

Finally, he called Lily instead.

“Mr. Stewart?”

Vincent asked, “Is Scarlett home?”

Lily replied, “Mrs. Stewart left earlier after she found out Ms. Stewart wasn’t at Ravensshade Villa. She hasn’t come back since.”

There was a short silence before Vincent responded, “I see.”

After hanging up, Vincent held his phone, lost in thought.

The Scarlett he used to know was so warm, always smiling at him, never forgetting to check in.

But lately, she hadn’t been calling him at all.

Even when she did, it was only ever about Vanessa.

Something was definitely off about her recently.

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Awakened Housewife ignore Betrayer’s Begs

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 152[852 words]

Chapter 152 A Heart's Resolve

Could it be... Was she actually getting involved with Damian?

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Finished

Meanwhile, Scarlett had just finished her shower and stepped out of the bathroom. She stood still for a long moment, staring down at the bracelet on her wrist.

Not wanting to disturb Clara, she had left her phone on silent-and in doing so, missed every one of Vincent's video calls.

Even when she saw the notifications later, she didn't feel like calling back.

Before bed, she instinctively opened a social media app. The very first post tagged "Someone you may know".

Looking closer, Scarlett realized it was Sabrina's account.

in her feed was

Sabrina had posted a picture of herself being held in someone's arms-only the person's shoulder and jaw were visible.

Scarlett didn't need to examine the details to recognize Vincent instantly.

The caption was as cloying as ever. "You're always there when I need you the most. Your embrace feels like home. Vincent, I love you."

That single post killed Scarlett's mood completely. She tossed her phone aside.

But that night, she tossed and turned, barely managing to fall asleep as dawn approached.

The next day was Sunday. Scarlett took Clara to an amusement park and didn't return home until after 5

p.m.

Violet and Diana were already in the kitchen preparing dinner.

After the meal, the whole family went out for a walk.

Then, abruptly, Scarlett's phone rang. It was Claire-someone she hadn't heard from in a while.

Answering the call, Claire's calm voice came through. "Scarlett, can you come pick me up?"

Scarlett wasn't sure what was going on, but she wouldn't say no to Claire.

Without overthinking it, she agreed. "Okay, send me the address."

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Chapter 152 A Heart's Resolve

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After hanging up, Claire sent the location-it was a bar.

When Scarlett arrived, she found Claire sitting with Elias and his friends.

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Claire was quiet in the corner, looking completely out of place with Elias' crowd.

As Scarlett pushed open the private room door and stepped inside, Claire stood up and turned off the blaring music and the shifting, colorful lights.

Elias frowned, his face full of irritation. "Claire, what are you doing?"

About half an hour earlier, just as Claire had arrived at the private room door, she'd overheard the conversation inside.

"Elias, you and Claire have been together for eight years. When are you two getting married?"

"Get married? Her parents haven't even bothered to come talk to me properly about it. How are we supposed to get married? You expect me to pay for some fancy wedding? She's been around,

know. Is she even worth all that? If her family doesn't step up, I'm not bringing it up. She's comfortable, why ruin a good thing? I'll commit if I feel like it. If not, I'll just find some sweet twenty-year-old college girl to settle down with. Either way, I don't lose."

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A round of laughter erupted in the room, followed by flattery. "Elias, you sure know how to play it cool!"

Claire stood outside the door, biting her lip so hard it nearly bled, forcing herself not to shed a single tear.

A long moment later, she finally knocked and walked in.

Looking at the smiling faces in the room, she felt nothing but disgust.

Claire held her temper and quietly took a seat in the corner.

Elias ignored her the entire time, and she didn't reach out to him either. Instead, she texted Scarlett.

She thought it was finally time to end things—and having Scarlett here would serve as a witness to the finale.

The atmosphere in the private room grew tense. Scarlett quietly moved to stand beside Claire.

Claire's act of turning off the music and lights had angered Elias, and he immediately lost his temper.

The whole room fell silent.

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Chapter 152 A Heart's Resolve

Claire stood there, her gaze toward Elias calm and detached.

When she spoke, her voice was low. "Elias, have you been happy, being with me?"

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Finished

Elias sensed something different about Claire. She never brought up their relationship in front of others.

But here she was, asking so casually.

He paused, momentarily setting aside his annoyance about the music and lights.

“Yeah, I’ve been happy. What about it?” he said, his tone laced with reluctance.

Claire’s eyes instantly reddened, but she gave a faint smile. “But Elias, I’m not happy anymore.”

She could forgive Elias for cheating, even for yelling at her. But she couldn’t forgive his attitude toward her parents.

How dare he say that her parents needed to beg him for him to marry her?

If that was the case, Claire would rather never get married in her life.

Standing nearby, Scarlett could sense Claire’s resolve the quiet, unyielding strength of someone who had finally reached their limit.

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Awakened Housewife Ignore Betrayer’s Begs

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 153[782 words]

Chapter 153 The Final Straw

This time, Claire didn't seem to be playing games.

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Hearing her say she was unhappy, Elias frowned impatiently. "What do you mean? Are you starting something again?"

Every time they argued, Claire was always the first to back down. In that sense, Elias always held the upper hand.

But this time, Claire had no intention of letting him have his way.

She looked directly at Elias and said, "Elias, let's break up."

Her words took him by surprise, but he didn't try to stop her or persuade her otherwise. In his experience, Claire had threatened to break up more than once, and every single time, she had been the one to come back, asking to reconcile.

So, he assumed this time would be no different. He saw no need to beg or explain.

Claire had expected this reaction. She wasn't even disappointed. She simply took Scarlett's hand and walked out of the private room.

Elias didn't wait for them to fully leave before turning the music and strobe lights back on. The room instantly returned to its loud, chaotic state.

One of his friends spoke up, "Elias, maybe you should go talk to her. She seemed really upset this time."

Elias brushed it off. "Relax. She'll be back begging soon enough. No other guy would want her after I'm done with her. Who'd want someone who's been passed around?"

His friend pressed a little. "Elias, isn't that a bit harsh?"

Elias picked up the microphone. "Why worry? Let's keep having fun. She'll come back." His amplified voice was loud enough for Scarlett and Claire, now further down the hall, to hear clearly-a deliberate message to Claire not to push her luck.

Scarlett, concerned, instinctively tightened her grip on Claire's hand.

Claire stopped and smiled at her. "Scarlett, I'm really okay."

Feeling somewhat reassured, Scarlett didn't press further.

But then Claire pointed in a direction. "Scarlett, look over there."

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Chapter 153 The Final Straw

Scarlett followed her gaze and saw Vincent, Vanessa, Daniel, Sabrina, and Harris.

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Finished

The bar was loud and chaotic-completely unsuitable for a child as young as Vanessa. She shouldn't have been there at all.

Scarlett checked the time-almost 11 p.m. Remembering Vanessa's stomach ache from a few days prior, a surge of anger rose within her. She had specifically told Vincent to maintain a regular sleep schedule for Vanessa.

Clearly, he hadn't listened.

Frustrated and annoyed, Scarlett instinctively took a few steps toward them but stopped short.

Even if I take Vanessa away tonight, what about next time? If I confront them now, Vanessa would likely just accuse me of meddling.

After a moment's hesitation, she decided to let it go. Why bother when her efforts went unappreciated? She had already done what she could; the rest was Vincent's responsibility.

Scarlett held back. Without interfering, she left the bar with Claire.

Outside, they stood by the roadside, letting the cool night air wash over them. Feeling slightly better, they both silently avoided the topic of relationships.

Claire looked at Scarlett. "Come with me to pack my things?"

Scarlett agreed without hesitation. "Okay."

Claire seemed surprised. "Aren't you going to ask anything?"

Scarlett replied, "I can tell you're serious about moving on. You look exactly like I did when I finally gave up on Vincent."

Claire smiled faintly. “You know, Scarlett, I always knew clinging on was wrong. But sometimes, you have to hit rock bottom before you can turn back.”

Scarlett was taken aback. “Claire, you...”

Claire’s smile was bittersweet. “So, I begged him to get back together on purpose. I was deliberately good to him. I just wanted to see how heartless he could really be—to see if he had any heart left at all.”

Scarlett didn’t know what to say. She hugged Claire tightly. “It’s all over now. It’s never too late to let go.”

Some people let go in an instant; others need to be battered and bruised, leaving both parties wounded, before they can move on.

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At Claire’s place, Scarlett helped her pack, deciding what to keep and what to discard.

Halfway through, Vincent called.

Seeing his name, Scarlett was reluctant to answer, but worried it might be about Vanessa, she picked up.

“What is it?” she asked directly.

Vincent inquired, “Where are you?”

Scarlett didn’t want to answer. “Just say what you want.”

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Chapter 154 Drawing the Line

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Scarlett knew Vincent hadn't called just to make small talk.

"I don't need you to come back to Ravensshade Villa for the next few days," Vincent said.

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"Fine," Scarlett replied flatly. She had already expected this-with Sabrina back, there was no place for her at Ravensshade Villa anyway.

"Vanessa is doing well. You don't need to worry about her," Vincent added.

"I know." Scarlett's voice grew quieter. Of course Vanessa would be fine with Sabrina around.

She was about to hang up when Vincent spoke again, "Where were you on Saturday night? Why didn't you answer my calls?"

Scarlett knew he was referring to the night Damian was in her car. "Vincent, I don't owe you any explanations," she retorted matter-of-factly.

"You're my wife. I need to know you're safe." Vincent's tone darkened with displeasure.

Scarlett let out a bitter laugh. "Vincent, that really isn't necessary." Without another word, she ended the call.

Wife? Safety? How much of that was genuine concern? If this had happened before, she would have been overjoyed. But now, she didn't trust him. He loved Sabrina-how could he possibly care about her?

On the other end, Vincent leaned against the bathroom wall, irritated by the abruptly ended call. He lit a cigarette, the flame flickering in the dim light.

Daniel emerged from a stall. "Who were you talking to? Looking all secretive."

Vincent took a slow drag before exhaling. "My wife."

It took Daniel a moment to realize he meant Scarlett. "What's up? You never call her."

Lately, Vincent had noticed a change in himself. He often found himself thinking about Scarlett, wanting to know her whereabouts. But then he'd reason-she was Vanessa's mother, after all. It was only natural to be concerned.

He didn't answer Daniel's question. He didn't know how.

After finishing his cigarette, he straightened up and said vaguely, "My wife hasn't been very obedient lately. Should I... rein her in a bit?"

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Chapter 154 Drawing the Line

Daniel stared at him, speechless. How was he supposed to respond?

Vincent didn't press further, silently walking out of the bathroom.

When they returned to the table, Vanessa was dozing with her head on Sabrina's lap.

Sabrina looked up. "What took so long?"

Vincent sat down calmly. "Someone was taking their time in there."

Harris, sipping his drink, choked mid-swallow.

Daniel shot him a glare, knowing Vincent had shifted the blame.

Just then, Vanessa lifted her head from Sabrina's lap.

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Seeing how sleepy she was, Daniel leaned in and asked, “Vanessa, who do you usually sleep with at home?”

“I sleep with Sabrina,” she mumbled, rubbing her eyes.

Daniel put on a serious face. “How about sleeping at mine tonight?”

“Why?” Vanessa frowned.

Daniel crooked his finger. “Come closer, I’ll tell you a secret.”

Curious, Vanessa leaned in.

Daniel whispered, “Because you might interrupt your dad and Sabrina’s... alone time.”

In Daniel’s mind, Sabrina was the one who truly suited Vincent. Hearing Vincent mention Scarlett earlier had made him sense danger for Sabrina, so he decided to play matchmaker.

With Vanessa as a third wheel, how could the two share a bed and grow closer?

“What’s ‘alone time’?” Vanessa asked, confused.

Daniel whispered again, “Don’t you want your dad and Sabrina to always be with you? Don’t you want a little brother or sister?”

Hearing about siblings, Vanessa immediately resisted. “No! Having babies makes her bleed! I don’t want Sabrina to bleed!”

Her agitation drew looks from Vincent and Sabrina.

Daniel quickly soothed her. “Okay, okay, no bleeding.”

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Chapter 154 Drawing the Line

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After she calmed down, he asked, “So, are you brave enough to sleep by yourself?”

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 155[819 words]

Chapter 155 Unwelcome Discoveries.

Vanessa thought about it for a moment, then nodded. “Okay.”

Daniel immediately snapped his fingers. “Great! Starting today, you sleep by yourself.”

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Finished

Vanessa pouted. “Daniel, even though Sabrina usually sleeps with me, when I wake up in the middle of the night, she’s never in my room anymore.”

Her voice wasn’t loud, but it was clear enough.

Not only Daniel heard it, but Vincent and the others did too.

Daniel and Harris instantly understood the implication. They both looked at Vincent with expressions that screamed, “You sly dog!”

Sabrina, sensing their thoughts, blushed deeply, lowering her head in embarrassment without saying a word.

Vincent, on the other hand, met Daniel and Harris' gazes without a flicker of emotion on his face.

After a moment, he stood up and said to Vanessa, "Vanessa, time to go home."

Vanessa looked up at him, clearly reluctant.

Vincent frowned. "Have you forgotten what your mother told you?"

Mentioning her mother made Vanessa a little angry, but seeing the stern look on Vincent's face, she didn't dare argue further.

"Fine," she said, standing up and offering her hand to Vincent.

**

The next day was Monday. When Scarlett woke up, a light rain was falling outside. She threw on a coat, grabbed an umbrella, and left Theron Manor.

She was back at Ravensshade Villa before 7 a.m.

Vincent had only said she couldn't stay at Ravensshade Villa-not that she couldn't come back to cook for Vanessa.

Besides, Vanessa wasn't fully recovered yet, so she thought she'd come for a couple more days.

After starting some oatmeal on the stove, she saw it was getting late and headed upstairs to

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Chapter 155 Unwelcome Discoveries

wake Vanessa.

As she passed Vincent's room, the door suddenly opened.

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Finished

Vincent stood there in gray pajamas. Seeing Scarlett, clear surprise flashed in his eyes.

Scarlett looked past him. In the room behind him, Sabrina, wearing light blue pajamas, was sitting at the vanity applying her skincare.

There was a time when that was her spot, but Vincent was never standing beside her then.

Perhaps sensing Scarlett's gaze into the bedroom, Vincent instinctively stepped forward, blocking her view.

His voice held a note of displeasure. "What are you doing here?"

Scarlett met his gaze, her eyes cold. "I'm here to make breakfast for Vanessa. Once her lymph nodes are back to normal, I won't come again."

Vincent said, "Vanessa is much better now."

A hint of irritation colored Scarlett's tone. "Vincent, I'm a doctor. I only go by the results."

With that, she didn't want to waste another word on him. She turned and walked towards Vanessa's room.

Vanessa was still asleep in bed.

School was starting soon. Scarlett called softly, "Vanessa, time to get up for school."

Vanessa rolled over, mumbling discontentedly, "Mom, I want to sleep more. Stop bothering

me."

Scarlett said, "It's Monday. Aren't you going to school?"

Vanessa pulled the covers over her head. "Can't I just skip? I skipped last week too."

Scarlett felt a surge of anger. Her refusal was firm. "No. Your stomach doesn't hurt anymore, so you have to go to school. You need to develop good habits-no being late or leaving early."

Annoyed, Vanessa kicked the blankets a couple of times in protest before saying resentfully, "Fine, Mom. You're so naggy."

Seeing her daughter like this, a sharp pain pierced Scarlett's heart. She looked up, refusing to let the tears fall, and sighed. "I have to go to work. Have your dad take you."

With that, she stood up.

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Chapter 155 Unwelcome Discoveries

Vanessa gave an impatient “Mm-hmm” and said nothing more.

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Finished

Scarlett glanced back at the bed repeatedly, hoping her daughter would get up sorry, Mom.”

and say, “I’m

But no. Vanessa did nothing.

Steeling her heart, Scarlett left Vanessa’s room without a second glance.

Passing Vincent’s room again, the door was slightly ajar.

Scarlett instinctively glanced inside. Vincent was already dressed, standing with his back to the door. Sabrina stood in front of him, tying his tie.

He had even bent his head down slightly to help her reach.

Scarlett quickly averted her eyes after just one glance.

Walking downstairs, she couldn’t help but think. I know how to tie a tie too. But he never needed me to do it.

Vincent wasn’t one who liked being touched by others. But for Sabrina, he could throw all his principles out the window.

Downstairs, Lily, seeing Scarlett’s distraught state, called out softly, “Mrs. Stewart?”

Scarlett looked at her, forcing a faint smile. “Lily, I’m going to work.”

Lily quickly asked, “Aren’t you having breakfast?”

Scarlett said, “No. There’s no time,”

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**No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce -
Silent Dreams Never Die — 156[827 words
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**No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce -
Silent Dreams Never Die — 157[782 words
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Chapter 157 The Professor's Verdict

84

Finished

Thomas was a highly respected figure in academic circles, someone many looked up to. Even prominent figures like Vincent and Daniel knew to show him proper respect—especially since they needed a favor from him that evening.

Thomas glanced briefly at Vincent and Daniel before his gaze settled on Sabrina. Feeling the weight of his attention, she grew visibly nervous. “Dr. Newman,” she greeted hesitantly.

His eyes swept over her briefly. “Take a seat. No need to stand there staring.”

“Please have a seat as well, Dr. Newman,” Sabrina replied respectfully.

Thomas didn’t respond and seated himself directly.

Vincent signaled the server to begin preparing the dishes.

Meanwhile, Thomas looked at Vincent. “Let’s be clear-I don’t have much time. Twenty minutes, tops. If there’s something you want to discuss, get straight to the point. I have another commitment after this, and I can’t keep people waiting.”

Though Thomas maintained a polite smile, his words made it clear he wasn’t going out of his way to accommodate them.

Vincent remained composed, but Daniel’s smile had already faded. Sabrina sat quietly beside Vincent, not even daring to look directly at Thomas.

Sensing her discomfort, Vincent cut to the chase. “Dr. Newman, I’ll be direct. We’re here because Sabrina has some academic questions she’d like your guidance on.”

Thomas shifted his gaze to Sabrina. “What’s on your mind? Go ahead.”

Even with Vincent present, his tone wasn’t particularly warm.

Sabrina looked up, meeting his eyes timidly. “Dr. Newman, I’ve reviewed a lot of literature, but I’m still struggling to identify a research topic that’s both meaningful and feasible. I’d really appreciate your advice.”

After being accepted into the Ph.D. program, Sabrina’s main task was research, but she still lacked clear direction.

While others in her cohort were already deep into their projects, she remained the only one who hadn’t chosen a topic-a serious setback in academic terms.

That was why she had sought this meeting with Thomas.

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Chapter 157 The Professor’s Verdict

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Known for being strict and often unsmiling, Thomas intimidated most students. Sabrina was no exception. To secure this consultation, she felt she had no choice but to bring Vincent and Daniel along.

Hearing her question, Thomas remained stern. “The biggest mistake anyone in medicine can make is lack of commitment. You’re always performing here or there, taking weeks off at a time, never in the library after class, and completely unreachable in the evenings. If everyone acted like you, coming to me with every little issue, what would be the point of having standards? What would a Ph.D. even mean then?”

“I’m sorry, Dr. Newman,” Sabrina murmured, hanging her head in humiliation.

Thomas adjusted his glasses, his tone cutting. “You’re not apologizing to me. You’re letting yourself down. Wasting time on a master’s, now wasting time on a doctorate. If you’re not serious about practicing medicine, you should drop the idea early. The opportunities this country provides aren’t for you to polish your resume. Squandering medical resources is a disgrace.”

Every word dripped with disdain.

Over the years, Thomas had mentored many outstanding students. Which of them had been as frequently absent as Sabrina? While others spent evenings buried in the lab, repeating experiments for reliable data, she seemed to treat her studies as optional.

Sabrina’s head sank lower, her face flushed, her fingers clenching tightly on her knees. Thomas’ words felt more humiliating than a physical slap.

She had thought bringing Vincent and Daniel would ensure Thomas treated her more politely. She never expected him to reprimand her so bluntly in front of them.

What Thomas said wasn’t wrong-but his delivery was brutally harsh. Especially in front of Vincent.

Beside her, Vincent listened quietly to Thomas criticizing Sabrina, his expression cold and clearly displeased, yet he didn’t speak up.

Daniel, being more hot-tempered, couldn’t stand hearing Thomas talk to Sabrina that way. He slammed his hand on the table. “You pretentious old man, watch your tone! Even if Sabrina never practices medicine, she’ll be just fine. Who are you to talk down to her like that?”

Seeing Daniel’s outburst, Sabrina hurriedly tried to calm him. “Daniel, please, it’s my fault-”

Before she could finish, Daniel cut in, “Sabrina, I just can’t stand this guy bullying you.”

Thomas glanced calmly at Daniel. “If she’ll be ‘just fine,’ then maybe she should leave medicine sooner rather than later. Getting into a Ph.D. program isn’t the accomplishment-finish

is.”

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Chapter 158 Pride and Principles

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Finished

Thomas shifted his gaze from Daniel to Sabrina’s face. Her eyes were slightly red, as if she had been crying. She looked delicate and fragile-not at all like someone cut out for the rigorous demands of the medical field.

Seeing her like this seemed to irritate Thomas further.

He turned back to Sabrina, his words sharp and to the point. “Picking a research topic’s the very first thing any PhD student has to nail down. If you can’t even get that right, forget about finishing your dissertation-you’ll never make it. Studying medicine isn’t just about staying focused, you know? It means putting up with long, lonely hours-solitude that most people can’t stand. But you? You’re always running around with a bunch of people tagging along. Let’s be real-you’re not cut out for this field. You’d be better off finding someone to marry and settling down sooner rather than later.”

Tears streamed more heavily down Sabrina's cheeks. She kept her head lowered, not daring to look at Thomas or Vincent.

Seeing her silence, Thomas called her by her full name. "Sabrina Monroe, do you think what I'm saying is correct?"

She still didn't look up, merely giving a slight nod.

Thomas smiled faintly at that, then turned his gaze to Vincent, who had remained silent throughout. "Mr. Stewart, what about you? Do you think I'm right?"

Vincent leaned back in his chair, appearing casual and relaxed. When Thomas looked over, he met his gaze directly. In that moment, countless unspoken confrontations seemed to pass between them.

Instead of answering Thomas' question, Vincent turned to Daniel. "Daniel, it seems Dr. Newman has no intention of dining with us. Please see him out."

Daniel was taken aback. "Vincent..."

Vincent's expression grew colder. "See him out."

Sabrina had clearly been wronged by Thomas. With Daniel's protective nature, even if Sabrina were at fault, he would still defend her. Yet Vincent remained unmoved-even asking for

Thomas to be escorted out.

Reluctantly, Daniel stood up.

But just as he rose, Thomas stood as well.

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Thomas looked coldly at Daniel. "No need for the trouble, Mr. Lennox. But before I leave, I'd like to remind you-my student Nolan just saved your mom's life. I may be what you call an 'old fossil', but in the medical field, as long as someone studies medicine, I have the right-and the responsibility-to offer my criticism."

With that, Thomas picked up his briefcase indignantly and left the private room.

After Thomas departed, Daniel turned to Vincent discontentedly. “Vincent, does that old fossil not know who’s backing him? Without your funding, where would his precious labs be? How dare he speak to Sabrina like that—and to me!”

Daniel was furious, itching to chase after Thomas and confront him.

Beside them, Sabrina wept softly, her shoulders trembling.

The reason Vincent hadn’t defended Sabrina earlier was simple-Thomas wasn’t wrong.

But seeing her tears, he couldn’t remain indifferent. Under the table, he reached over and gently placed his hand on top of Sabrina’s.

At the same time, he looked up at Daniel. “Daniel, Thomas has the right to be proud. How many excellent doctors have studied under him? He’s not wrong. It was his student who saved Madeline.”

Daniel scoffed, brushing off the idea entirely. “Who cares? With our capital behind us, crushing them is just a matter of saying the word-no big deal.”

Vincent remained calm. “Do you really think we’re the only ones funding Thomas?”

Daniel was taken aback. From Vincent’s tone, it seemed Thomas had backers beyond just them.

Vincent didn’t specify who, but added, “Thomas isn’t someone we can easily touch.”

Daniel understood the implication-Thomas held a unique status that went beyond financial influence.

He stopped complaining.

But seeing Sabrina’s tears, Daniel couldn’t help saying, “Sabrina, if it really doesn’t work out, you don’t have to force yourself to stay in medicine.”

Sabrina, her eyes red-rimmed, shook her head. “No, I’ve put too much effort into getting where I am today. I don’t want to give up just like that.”

Vincent turned to look at her, his lips pressed slightly together. “Since you’re aware of your shortcomings, work hard to improve them.”

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Sabrina bit her lip and nodded. “I understand.”

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Vincent picked up a piece of pastry and placed it on the small plate in front of Sabrina. “Just focus on doing your research and writing your thesis well. If your work is solid, Thomas won’t dare make things difficult for you.”

Sabrina seemed to feel a bit better. She offered Vincent a small smile. “Vincent, thank you.”

He smiled back at her. “I’ve been reviewing medical literature lately too. If I come across a promising research direction, I’ll let you know.”

Daniel had finally calmed down. Watching the meaningful looks passing between Vincent and Sabrina, he felt a sense of relief.

Hearing Vincent mention Scarlett out of the blue yesterday had made him wonder if Vincent was developing an interest in her again.

Now, it seemed he had worried for nothing.

With a gentle, understanding woman like Sabrina by his side, why would anyone want a woman like Scarlett, who couldn’t offer any real value?

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Awakened Housewife: Ignore Betrayer’s Begs

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 159[863 words]

Chapter 159 A Different Side

In the main dining area, after learning that Thomas had met with Vincent's group, Nolan proactively summoned the server and asked for the menu.

Since Thomas had another engagement, he and Scarlett still needed to eat.

Firushed

Just as their dishes arrived at the table, Thomas emerged from the private room, briefcase in hand.

Walking over and seeing Scarlett and Nolan about to start their meal, he couldn't resist teasing them. "What's this? The supporting actors start eating before the lead arrives?"

Hearing his voice, both Scarlett and Nolan instinctively stood up. "Dr. Newman," they said in unison.

Thomas didn't stand on ceremony. He placed his briefcase on an empty chair and settled comfortably beside Nolan. After sitting, he removed his jacket and wristwatch, placing them nearby as if preparing for a proper meal.

Seeing that Thomas evidently hadn't stayed to eat with Vincent's group, Nolan pushed the menu toward him. "Dr. Newman, please order a couple more dishes."

Just as Thomas took the menu, Scarlett gently interrupted, "Dr. Newman, Nolan, perhaps we should move to a private room?"

The restaurant was upscale, but it still had its share of random patrons. Neither Scarlett nor Nolan wanted to slight someone of Thomas' stature.

"Dr. Newman, would you mind moving to the private room?" Nolan chimed in promptly after Scarlett's reminder.

Noting their concern, Thomas pressed the menu down onto the table, his tone sharp yet earnest. “No. We’ll eat right here in the main hall. You young people should save where you can. Besides, we’re conducting ourselves properly and have no need to avoid anyone.”

His words carried an implicit meaning. Scarlett and Nolan exchanged a glance, both understanding perfectly well what he meant. Since Thomas had made himself clear, they didn’t press further.

Soon, the two additional dishes Thomas ordered arrived-both vegetarian selections.

Scarlett glanced at Nolan, concerned they might be shortchanging Thomas.

Thomas noticed their unease. “I’m getting older. Less greasy, meaty food, more greens and simple fare-that’s the way to good health.”

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Chapter 159 A Different Side

Nolan smiled. “You are right. I’ll take that advice.”

Thomas looked

up and shot Nolan a mock-stern glance. “Still such a smooth talker.”

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Finished

Nolan responded with a faint smile and glanced toward Scarlett. Noticing she hadn’t started eating, he served some food onto her plate. “Scarlett, try the food here. It’s quite good.”

Scarlett nodded. “Thank you, Nolan.”

After tasting a bite, she found it genuinely delicious and ended up eating several more mouthfuls.

Throughout the meal, Nolan consistently looked after Scarlett-serving her dishes, filling her bowl with

soup and rice.

Thomas watched this with quiet amusement.

When they were almost finished, Thomas set down his fork. Pointing at Nolan, he asked Scarlett directly, “You know why Nolan invited me to dinner, right?”

Hearing his question, Scarlett quickly set down her utensils and dabbed the corner of her mouth. She glanced at Nolan before looking back at Thomas and shaking her head. “Dr. Newman, I’m a bit slow. Please enlighten me.”

Thomas was blunt. “The exams are coming up. He wanted me to give you some encouragement.”

Scarlett smiled faintly. “Dr. Newman, I’m confident.”

Seeing her self-assured expression, Thomas nodded approvingly. Then he continued, “Let me tell

you, this Nolan is a good one. All these years studying medicine, he’s endured the solitude. Not a single woman by his side, hardly any friends either. For those research datasets, he’d spend whole days buried in the lab, never seeming to tire. Of all the students I’ve mentored, he’s the only one I’ve had to force to take a break.”

Puffing out his chest proudly, he went on, “Luckily, heaven didn’t waste his efforts. He’s the talent who identified a new pathology in neurosurgery and developed targeted treatment drugs. Not to mention he holds the patents. In neurosurgery, if he claims second place, no one dares call themselves first. Among all the students I’ve taught, he’s the only one with such good character, proper looks, a stable private life, and such great achievements.”

Listening to Thomas praise Nolan, Scarlett couldn’t help but glance at him. She said to Thomas, “Dr. Newman, Nolan really is a very good person.”

Thomas, shedding his usual sternness, softened his tone. “He sure is-so if he’s that good, you’d better snap him up quick!”

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Scarlett naturally understood the implication, but she didn't know how to politely decline Thomas' well-meaning hint. She lowered her head slightly.

Nolan, seeing her discomfort, hurried to intervene. "Dr. Newman, don't you always tell us that the biggest mistake in medicine is not being fully committed?"

Thomas then turned to Nolan. His brows were stern, but his eyes held kindness. "Those words are for people whose hearts aren't truly in medicine. I can see you both are dedicated, so there's no need to be bound by those rigid rules."

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Silent Dreams Never Die — 160

Chapter 160 Chivalry in the Rain

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With Nolan and Scarlett around, Thomas might as well have been a completely different man -gone was his usual sharp, no-nonsense edge, and instead, he chatted with them like they were old friends, not just colleagues or academic acquaintances. No topic felt off-limits, and the meal unfolded into something thoroughly enjoyable.

Elsewhere in the restaurant, Vincent's group had just finished their own meal and filed out of their private room. Vincent headed straight for the host stand to settle the bill, his focus on the tab in front of him, so he didn't even glance toward the main dining area where Scarlett and the others sat.

But Sabrina and Daniel, who followed right behind him, spotted Scarlett's table the second they stepped into the main

space.

Scarlett had her back to the front desk, so she had no idea Vincent's group had emerged. Nolan and Thomas, though, noticed them right away—but even that didn't make them pause their conversation.

They were deep in a lively discussion, and Nolan, for one, had no interest in letting outsiders ruin the easy mood they'd built.

"Dr. Newman," Nolan said, leaning in slightly, "I've been digging into a new research topic lately, and it's really promising. Once Scarlett wraps up her master's and gets accepted into your doctoral program, I was thinking we could team up on this project together."

Thomas' eyes lit

up instantly—his interest was piqued, plain and simple. "C'mon, don't leave me hanging! What's the topic? A good research idea's meant to be shared, not kept under wraps. Scarlett's still three years out from her doctorate; you can always brainstorm another topic for her by then."

Nolan knew how passionate Thomas was about research, so he grinned and gave in. "Alright, fair enough."

Not far away, Sabrina had caught snippets of Nolan and Thomas' conversation, and the small lift in her mood from the meal vanished in an instant.

Why was Thomas so stern and dismissive with her, but so warm and amiable with Scarlett, who hadn't even started her master's yet? What did Scarlett have that she didn't?

And Nolan was her senior, too! Why did he go out of his way to be so kind to Scarlett—even planning a research topic for her doctoral studies, like it was no big deal?

Sabrina had spent weeks poring over endless academic papers, scrolling through journals late into the night, and still hadn't found a single feasible topic for her own work. So why did Scarlett get one handed to her on a silver platter?

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Resentment bubbled up inside her, hot and sharp, and when she looked at Nolan and Thomas, her eyes were hard with quiet anger.

Daniel, oblivious to the storm brewing in Sabrina's head, suddenly let out a small "oh" of understanding. "So that's the 'other commitment' the old fossil was talking about earlier."

Sabrina's voice was thick with sarcasm, sour and bitter. "Nolan's always been Dr. Newman's star pupil-his pride and joy. Of course he gets special treatment."

Daniel rolled his eyes, but he couldn't argue with her logic, so he just shrugged and stayed quiet.

Meanwhile, Sabrina's mind was racing. If only I can get Nolan to help me like that. If he'd just point me in the right direction, I wouldn't be stuck floundering with my research anymore.

By then, Vincent had finished paying the bill. He turned back to Sabrina, his tone casual. "Sabrina, let's head out."

That one word-"Sabrina"-carried across the dining area, and Scarlett heard it, too. But she didn't so much as twitch, let alone turn around. She just picked up her water glass, and took a slow sip.

Sabrina perked up at Vincent's voice. She hurried over, slipping her arm through his and pressing herself close. "Okay, let's go."

As Vincent started toward the exit, his gaze swept lazily over the main dining area—and when it landed on the table where Nolan and Thomas sat, his steps froze for half a second. He'd instantly recognized the woman with her back to him. It was Scarlett.

The pause was so subtle most people wouldn't have noticed it, but Sabrina did.

"Vincent, what's wrong?" she asked, turning to face him and deliberately blocking his line of sight to Scarlett. She didn't want any other woman lingering in his view, even for a second.

Vincent snapped his gaze away from the table, his expression smooth again as he looked down at Sabrina. "Nothing. Just thinking about something. Let's go."

Sabrina tightened her grip on his arm, pressing her body even closer to his, and walked with him toward the door.

Once Vincent's group was gone, Scarlett went right back to discussing medical topics with Thomas and Nolan.

But the restaurant had large floor-to-ceiling windows, and the street outside was clearly visible –and when she turned her head just a little, she saw Sabrina walking arm-in-arm with Vincent, their steps in perfect sync, their bodies pressed close. They looked like the picture of a happy,

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harmonious couple-like they belonged together.

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A bitter, hollow feeling settled in Scarlett's chest. She pressed her lips into a thin line, forced her gaze away from the window.

When the meal finally ended, Scarlett reached for her wallet, ready to split the bill-but Nolan waved her off, insistent.

By the time they stepped outside, a light, misty rain had started to fall.

Nolan glanced up at the sky, then turned to Thomas. "Dr. Newman, let me drive you home. It's pouring."

Thomas laughed, shaking his head and declining politely. "No need, Nolan-thank you, though. I'll take the bus."

Nolan knew Thomas well enough to know he meant it—he loved those small, simple moments of everyday life in his free time. So he didn't push.

Just then, the bus they'd been waiting for pulled up to the stop. Thomas grabbed his briefcase, gave them both a warm smile, and climbed aboard.

Scarlett and Nolan stood on the curb, waving until the bus pulled away. "Goodbye, Dr. Newman!"

As soon as the bus was out of sight, the rain picked up.

Nolan borrowed a large umbrella from the restaurant, holding it over both of them as they started walking toward the parking lot.

The rain had made the roads slick, and cars zoomed past, sending up sprays of water from the puddles.

Scarlett was walking on the outer edge of the sidewalk, and any passing car could easily splash her, drenching her clothes.

Nolan reacted before she even had time to realize the danger. He held the umbrella steady with one hand, then wrapped his other arm around her waist, pulling her gently but firmly into his side. Just as he did, a car sped by, and a wave of dirty water splashed exactly where she'd been standing a second earlier-soaking the lower half of his coat instead.

Rivergate City had been rainy for days now, and the roads were still slick and slippery. But with Nolan's arm around her, not a single drop of rain touched Scarlett.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 161[982 words]

Chapter 161 Midnight Intruder

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Scarlett snapped back to reality with a soft murmur, "Thank you," followed by a more hesitant, "I'm sorry."

Seeing the genuine guilt written across her face, Nolan offered a warm, reassuring smile. "Really, it's no trouble at all. I'm just glad you're okay."

His kindness sent a sharp pang of regret through her—not only for the inconvenience she'd caused him, but for her own poor judgment in the past. How could she have been so blind before?

Nolan stayed close, shielding her from the lingering drizzle until they reached her car. Once she was safely inside the driver's seat, he leaned in slightly and said, "Drive carefully, alright? Let me know when you get home."

Scarlett lifted her gaze to meet his. Under the warm glow of the streetlights, the misty rain cast a soft haze around them, blurring her vision just enough to match the fog in her thoughts.

"Here," she said suddenly, "let me take your coat. I'll have it cleaned and return it to you."

Nolan shook his head gently. "Don't worry about it—it's just a coat."

But Scarlett felt the weight of the gesture heavily. "You've helped me so much already. Please, let me do this for you."

What she didn't say—but what hung clearly between them—was that she didn't want the debt between them to grow any larger.

Nolan caught her meaning instantly, sensing the deliberate distance she was placing between them. His smile faltered for just a second before he recovered gracefully. "Alright then," he conceded, "if it makes you feel better."

He slipped off the coat and handed it to her.

Scarlett placed it carefully on the passenger seat before turning back to him. "You should head back soon too—don't stay out in this weather."

Nolan nodded. "I will. By the way... are you free for a meal this weekend?"

After a brief pause, Scarlett replied, "I should be, unless something comes up."

She started the engine and drove off, leaving Nolan standing under the lamppost. He watched her taillights disappear into the night before finally getting into his own car and driving away.

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Chapter 161 Midnight Intruder

It was half past nine when Scarlett finally arrived home.

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Clara was still awake, bent over a colorful drawing at the living room table. Hearing the door, she looked up, her face brightening. "Auntie!"

Scarlett set down the bag containing Nolan's coat and walked over. "Clara, sweetie, why are you still up so late?"

"I was waiting for you," Clara said cheerfully. "I have something to tell you."

Scarlett sat beside her, admiring the vibrant spring scene Clara had drawn. "This is beautiful, honey. You're so talented."

Clara beamed, wrapping her arms around Scarlett's. "Auntie, Vanessa didn't go to school today."

Scarlett froze for a moment. She thought back to that morning-how she'd gone to Ravensshade Villa to make breakfast for Vanessa, hoping to take her to school personally. It had all been for nothing.

Vanessa must have stayed out late at the bar again, slept in, and simply skipped school.

A bitter smile touched Scarlett's lips. She gently brushed Clara's cheek. "Well, you're a good girl, Clara. Always listen to your mom and never skip school, okay?"

Clara nodded earnestly. "I will! I always listen to Mom-and to you too, Auntie."

Looking at Clara's innocent obedience, Scarlett couldn't help but think of Vanessa again. Her own daughter used to be just as sweet and well-behaved... but that felt like a lifetime ago.

By ten o'clock, Scarlett had tucked Clara into bed and finally retreated to her own room.

As she opened the door, she saw a tall figure standing in the middle of the room. In the dim light, her mind jumped to Nathan. "Nathan?" she called out instinctively.

Thinking he must have come for a reason, she stepped inside and closed the door behind her.

But when the man turned around, the faint light from the hallway fell across his face-and her blood ran cold. It was Damian.

“Damian?” Her voice came out thin and shaky. “What are you doing here?”

A slow, amused smile spread across his face. He didn’t move toward her. Instead, he lay back casually on her light-blue duvet, propping his head up with one hand as he watched her with a teasing glint in his eyes. “What else, baby? I missed you. So I came to see you.”

Scarlett’s heart hammered in her chest as she struggled to steady her breathing. “How did you

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get in?” she demanded, her voice firmer now.

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Theron Manor was staffed, and Henry and Diana were both home. There was no way he’d come through the front door.

But Damian seemed in no hurry to answer. He lowered his head and inhaled deeply against her pillow, taking in the scent of her sheets with deliberate slowness.

When he looked up again, his expression was one of pure hunger. “You smell incredible, baby,” he murmured, his voice low and rough. “Absolutely intoxicating.”

He ran his tongue over his lips as though savoring the taste of the air.

Scarlett stared back, panic simmering beneath her skin. “Damian-answer me!”

He kicked off his shoes and settled more comfortably into her bed, stretching out like he owned the place. “If you won’t leave the door open for me,” he said with a lazy smirk, “I’ll just have to find another way. It’s only been a few days, but I couldn’t sleep-all I could think about was you. If you won’t come to me...” He shrugged. “Then I’ll come to you.”

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Chapter 162 Forced Proximity

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Damian lay nestled in the blue duvet, clutching the fabric and breathing in Scarlett's lingering scent with deep, deliberate inhales. It was as if he could never get enough-as if her very essence was a drug he craved.

Scarlett's expression tightened under the soft bedroom light. "Damian, my brother is right next door," she warned, her voice low but sharp. "One shout from me and he'll be here. You'd better leave the same way you came-or you're trespassing."

Rolling onto his side to face her, Damian flashed a roguish grin. "Are you really that heartless, baby? I came all this way. Won't you let me feel your warmth before I go?"

His eyes glimmered with unmistakable amusement.

The window stood slightly ajar. A cool late-October breeze drifted inside, raising goosebumps on Scarlett's arms. She was sure she'd closed it before leaving that morning—it had been raining.

There was no doubt-Damian had climbed through the window.

He was always like this-utterly without principles. His gaze could be so intense, so focused, it almost felt genuine. But Scarlett refused to believe he truly cared for her.

The bedsheets, fresh from being laundered a couple of days before, still carried the clean scent of sunshine and detergent. Damian seemed completely at ease, as if he had no intention of moving.

Growing more irritated by his boldness, Scarlett snapped, “Damian, get off my bed.”

He paused, then lifted his gaze with that same wicked smile. “If you insist, baby.”

In one fluid motion, he tossed the covers aside and rose. Within two or three strides, he was standing right in front of her.

He’d deliberately left his shirt unbuttoned, revealing lean, toned muscles that glowed with a honeyed warmth under the light.

As he moved closer, Scarlett instinctively stepped back-until the back of her legs hit the dressing table. Losing her balance, she started to fall backward into the chair.

But Damian’s arm shot out, catching her firmly around the waist and pulling her tight against

his chest.

He lowered his head, inhaling the scent of her hair. His breath was deep, almost hungry, like an addict finally getting his fix.

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Chapter 162 Forced Proximity

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Finished

The moment he held her, Scarlett crossed her arms between them, trying to create some space -but that only pressed her palms flat against his bare skin.

Damian’s laughter was low and velvety. “Like what you feel, baby?”

Scarlett’s face flushed crimson. “Damian, you bastard-let me go,” she hissed.

Instead of releasing her, he pulled her even closer. “This waist of yours... so soft and slender,” he murmured, his voice rough. “And you smell so good; it’s intoxicating. How could I possibly let go?”

She began to struggle in earnest-pinching, hitting, trying to shove him away. “Damian, you jerk! Let go of me right now!”

But her resistance seemed to barely register. He easily captured her flailing hands, his eyes still dancing with dark amusement. “Are you really that cold-hearted? Don’t you miss me at all?”

Scarlett was too frantic to reply. She twisted and writhed, trying to break his hold.

He subdued her effortlessly, a faint smile playing on his lips as he watched her struggle.

In the process, his shirt fell open even wider, the defined lines of his abdomen now fully exposed.

In her panic, Scarlett shifted her arms—and suddenly her body was pressed fully against his bare skin.

She could feel the heat radiating from him, burning through her clothes, leaving her nowhere to hide.

A haze clouded Damian’s gaze. His breathing grew heavy and ragged near her ear, its rhythm completely broken.

Scarlett could feel his body temperature rising. Desperate, she pushed against him. “Damian, let me go!”

But he had no intention of releasing her. Instead, he swept her up into his arms and over his shoulder.

The sudden movement forced a gasp from Scarlett’s lips.

Almost as quickly, he laid her down on the bed-but before she could react, he pinned her wrists, rendering her completely powerless. She could only lie there, trapped under his gaze.

Damian leaned over her, blocking the light. His face was shadowed, hard to read, but his rough, uneven breaths filled the space between them.

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Terrified he might go too far, Scarlett pleaded in a small voice, “Damian... don’t do this.”

Her tone was soft, almost gentle-yet it seemed to affect him like a powerful intoxicant, tensing his entire body.

Just then, a knock came at the door. “Auntie, are you okay?”

It was Clara. She must have heard Scarlett’s gasp earlier.

Scarlett’s panic surged-but Damian moved faster. In one swift motion, he rolled off her, pulled the covers over himself, and vanished beneath the duvet.

When no answer came, Clara’s small voice sounded again from the hallway, tinged with concern. “Auntie... I’m coming in, okay?”

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 163[908 words]

Chapter 163 Hidden Truths

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Finished

Before Scarlett could respond to reassure Clara, the door was already pushing open. Clara stepped inside, her small face etched with concern.

Scarlett quickly sat up in bed, leaning back against the headboard as she offered Clara a reassuring smile. "What's wrong, sweetheart?"

Clara's brows were knitted together. "Auntie, are you okay? I heard a noise."

Beneath the covers, Damian lay pressed against her, his body radiating heat. Scarlett could feel his hand moving restlessly along her leg, but she didn't dare react, forced to endure his wandering touch.

"Clara, I'm fine," she said, keeping her voice even. "I just twisted my ankle a little, that's all."

Clara's eyes widened with concern. "Let me see!"

She began moving toward the bed, but Scarlett stopped her quickly. "Clara, remember I'm a doctor. I know how to take care of it. Really, I'm okay."

The little girl hesitated, uncertainty clouding her features. "Should I go tell Dad and Mom then?"

Scarlett felt sweat dampening her palms. "No, honey, I just want to sleep now. Let's not bother them, okay?"

Clara thought about this for a long moment before finally nodding. "Alright..."

Just as Scarlett began to relax, Damian shifted beneath the covers again.

Clara's eyes caught the large bulge beside Scarlett. "Auntie," she asked, curiosity piqued, "what's that big lump next to you?"

Scarlett reached out and patted the raised portion of the duvet casually. "It's just my big stuffed toy."

Clara looked even more intrigued. "What kind of toy? It looks as big as a person!"

"It's a special custom-made one," Scarlett explained smoothly. "I need to hug it to sleep, otherwise I can't fall asleep properly."

Clara nodded, though she still seemed only half-convinced. "Oh... okay. Well, if you're really fine, Auntie, I'll go back to bed now."

Scarlett maintained her smile. "Goodnight, Clara. Sleep well."

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Chapter 163 Hidden Truths

“Goodnight, Auntie.”

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Finished

After Clara left, closing the door behind her, Scarlett finally let out the breath she'd been holding. She patted her chest lightly, taking several deep breaths to calm her racing heart.

Under the covers, Damian's hand continued its exploration.

Scarlett gave a slight kick. “Damian, what do you think you're doing?”

He emerged from beneath the duvet, looking up at her with that familiar glint in his eyes. “Just admiring the view, baby.”

Scarlett threw the covers off completely and stood barefoot on the floor, glaring at him angrily. “You're unbelievable! Get out of here right now!”

Seeing she was genuinely upset, Damian slowly sat up in bed. He moved to the edge and brought his face close to hers. “If you're mad, go ahead and hit me then.”

His clothes were disheveled, his posture deliberately provocative as he presented himself to her.

Looking at his infuriating expression, Scarlett couldn't resist the impulse-she slapped his cheek.

Instead of getting angry, Damian's smile only widened. “You know what they say-hits show affection, scolding shows love. Since you love me so much, I should treat you even better.”

Scarlett had always known Damian was a flirt, but she'd never imagined he could be this shameless. For a long moment, she was at a complete loss for words.

Remembering Nolan's coat still waiting to be cleaned, she changed the subject. “Damian, I need to go wash something. You should leave now.”

The smile vanished from his face. “Wash what?”

Scarlett frowned at him. "That's none of your business."

She moved toward the sofa to retrieve Nolan's coat, but as she turned around, Damian was already in front of her, snatching the garment from her hands. "Your hands aren't meant for washing some other man's dirty clothes."

His expression had turned cold as he threw Nolan's coat onto the floor. Now it was his turn to be angry.

Scarlett stared at him, furious and annoyed. "You!"

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83

Finished

Before she could finish, Damian looked at her with unusual seriousness. "Scarlett," he declared possessively, "from now on, don't let Nolan touch your waist. You're mine."

Scarlett studied his face, trying to discern whether he was being sincere or just playing games. The confusion must have shown on her face.

After a moment's hesitation, she told him quietly, "Damian, I'm a woman who's been married and has a child."

Call it pride or self-preservation, but she didn't want him entertaining any illusions about her. Even if he wasn't, she felt she needed to say it.

Damian simply shrugged, his expression unchanged. "So? What does that change?"

Scarlett tried to avoid his intense gaze. She could never read him properly, never figure out what he was really thinking.

"I'm not some young girl anymore," she said finally. "Don't make me the target of your jokes."

Damian had too many women in his life. Scarlett knew her place-how could someone like him possibly be genuinely interested in someone like her?

She bent down to pick up Nolan's coat and made to move toward the bathroom. But as she passed Damian, his hand shot out and caught her arm. "Scarlett," he said, his voice low and serious, "I've never been joking with you when I say things like that."

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14:55 Sat, Jan 10

Awakened Housewife Ignore Betrayer's Begg

Editorial board

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 164[969 words]

Chapter 164 Empty Excuses

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83

Finished

He didn't use his usual teasing "baby" this time-he said her name, as if to emphasize he meant every word.

For a moment, hearing him speak with such sincerity, Scarlett had to admit she felt something stir inside her. Yet she still found it difficult to fully believe him. Deep down, she wondered- did it even matter if he was being genuine?

Even if he were serious, she wouldn't be with him. And if he weren't, it changed nothing for her either.

After a long silence, she finally replied, "Damian, if you don't leave now, I'm really going to call for someone."

He released her hand. "I'll go after you
fall asleep."

She turned to face him. "How am I supposed to sleep with you here?"

Damian seemed caught off guard by her response, but then he nodded slowly. "Alright, I'll
go
now."

Scarlett didn't answer, simply watching him in silence.

A faint smile returned to his lips. He reached out and gently ruffled her hair, his voice
softening. "Get some rest. I'm heading out."

Scarlett gave a noncommittal hum, offering no further reply.

Seeing her indifferent attitude, Damian couldn't resist one last tease. "Next time I visit
your room, I hope it won't have to be in secret."

Then, before she could react, he smoothly snatched Nolan's coat from her hand, moved to
the window, and grabbed what appeared to be a rope hanging from above. In one fluid
motion, he swung himself out through the window.

A second later, he was pulled upward and disappeared into the night.

Damian was gone-and he had taken Nolan's coat with him.

Scarlett walked over to the window, closed it firmly, and drew the curtains shut.

It was destined to be a restless night.

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14:55 Sat, Jan 10

Chapter 164 Empty Excuses

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Finished

The next day, shortly after Scarlett finished her morning rounds and returned to her office, her phone rang. It was Vincent.

“What is it?” she answered.

Vincent’s voice was calm. “Grandpa says he misses Vanessa. He wants to see her.”

Scarlett replied indifferently, “Then take Vanessa to see him. You don’t need to tell me.”

There was a slight pause before Vincent continued, “Grandpa meant for you to bring Vanessa to see him.”

Scarlett fell silent for a moment, then responded flatly, “I see.”

Vincent added, “After you finish work, come to Ravensshade Villa to pick up Vanessa.”

Scarlett agreed. “Fine.”

That evening, after her shift ended, Scarlett drove straight to Ravensshade Villa.

When she arrived, Vanessa was already waiting, dressed and ready to go. She carried a small backpack and held two other small bags in her hands.

Scarlett didn’t ask what was inside them.

Vincent carried the backpack and bags out, escorting Vanessa to Scarlett’s car. He leaned down and spoke gently to his daughter, “Be good and listen to your mom at Great-Grandpa’s house. He’s getting older, so keep him company and chat with him a bit more, alright?”

Vanessa nodded obediently. “I know, Dad.”

After Vincent closed the car door, Scarlett rolled down the driver’s side window. She looked at him curiously. “Aren’t you coming?”

“I have something to take care of tonight,” he replied. “I’ll visit Grandpa another time.”

Scarlett didn’t press further. She began to raise the window, preparing to drive off.”

But just then, Vincent spoke again, “Oh, and if Grandpa asks later, just tell him I’m discussing business with Daniel and the others.”

Scarlett gave a quiet “Hmm” in response.

As the car pulled away, Vincent got into his own vehicle,

Throughout the drive to the Stewart Manor, Scarlett didn't attempt to make conversation with Vanessa, and Vanessa didn't speak to her either.

2/4

14:56 Sat, Jan 10

Chapter 164 Empty Excuses

(3)

Finished

The traffic was unusually heavy that night, and the car moved slowly, stopping and starting in the endless stream of red taillights.

Surprisingly, Scarlett's patience held—she didn't lose her temper even once.

While stopped at a red light, she glanced sideways and spotted Vincent's car in the right lane ahead.

He wasn't alone. Sabrina was seated in the passenger seat.

The two seemed to be engaged in a pleasant conversation. From time to time, Sabrina would cover her mouth and laugh, her demeanor noticeably coy.

And Vincent—he was smiling too. It was a relaxed, easy smile Scarlett had never seen on him before.

Watching them, Scarlett found herself unintentionally staring, her thoughts drifting.

She was so lost in the scene that she didn't notice the light had turned green.

Behind her, a chorus of impatient car horns began to blare.

Vanessa, startled, urged her anxiously, "Mom, what are you doing? The light's green!"

Snapping back to reality, Scarlett stepped on the accelerator and drove forward.

When they arrived at the Stewart Manor, Xavier greeted Scarlett warmly and asked how she had been lately.

After they exchanged a few pleasantries, Scarlett headed to the kitchen, thinking she'd prepare a few dishes for Xavier.

In the living room, Vanessa chatted and laughed with Xavier, keeping the old man company.

After dinner, Scarlett stayed in the living room with Xavier while Vanessa played with building blocks nearby.

But before long, they heard Vanessa cry out suddenly, “Mom, it hurts! My stomach really hurts!”

Hearing her daughter’s pained voice, Scarlett rushed over. “What’s wrong, honey?”

Vanessa’s face was contorted with pain, tears streaming down her cheeks. “Mom, I want to go back to Ravensshade Villa. My stomach hurts so bad.”

Assuming it was another flare-up of her lymph node issue, Scarlett agreed without hesitation. “Okay, sweetheart. I will take you back right now.”

Awakened Housewife Ignore Betrayer’s Begs

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 165[911 words]

Chapter 165 Stolen Affection

Vanessa’s medication was still at Ravensshade Villa-something Scarlett had completely forgotten when they left earlier.

Finished

Since Vanessa was complaining of a stomachache, going back to get the medicine seemed like the logical thing to do.

Seeing Vanessa visibly uncomfortable, Xavier didn’t try to keep them any longer and urged Scarlett to take Vanessa home right away.

The whole drive back, Scarlett pressed the accelerator harder than usual, her nerves tightening with every whimper of pain from the back seat.

But the moment they pulled into Ravensshade Villa, Vanessa's discomfort seemed to vanish into thin air. She hopped out of the car on her own, backpack slung over her shoulder, and announced brightly, "Mom, I'll go in by myself. I'll ask Lily to get my medicine. You can go back

now."

For a moment, Scarlett just stood there, completely bewildered.

It was clear now-her daughter hadn't been in pain at all. So why the act?

Watching Vanessa skip cheerfully toward the entrance, backpack bouncing, Scarlett felt a sharp tug of suspicion. Something wasn't right.

Quietly, she stepped out of the car and followed Vanessa inside, moving softly so as not to be noticed.

She had to know what had made Vanessa lie yet again.

Scarlett watched as Vanessa, once inside, gripped her backpack straps and hurried eagerly toward the living room.

As she ran, the girl called out happily, "Sabrina, I'm back!"

That cheerful, excited voice sent a cold pang through Scarlett's chest.

She moved cautiously closer, stopping just outside the doorway where she could see clearly into the room.

After handing her backpack to Lily, Vanessa ran straight to Sabrina, who had just stepped out of the kitchen. The girl wrapped her arms around Sabrina's legs and looked up eagerly, "Sabrina, where's Maria?"

Maria was Sabrina's mother, who had recently been brought to stay at Ravensshade Villa.

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14:56 Sat, Jan 10

Chapter 165 Stolen Affection

So that was the reason Vanessa had been so eager to return.

83

Finished

It wasn't that she disliked her great-grandfather-she just disliked being around Scarlett even

more.

Sabrina crouched down to Vanessa's eye level and gently stroked her hair. "She's in the kitchen, sweetie."

Just as Vanessa turned to head that way, Maria emerged into the living room.

"Oh! Vanessa's back! Come here, dear, let me get a good look at you," Maria said warmly, crouching with open arms.

She was beaming, her expression so tender it was as if Vanessa were her own granddaughter.

Vanessa didn't hesitate-she rushed right into Maria's embrace, wrapping her small arms around Maria's neck and covering her face with enthusiastic kisses and nuzzles.

"Maria, you're finally here in Rivergate! I missed you so much since last weekend. I still want to eat that potato casserole you made me."

The Monroe family was comfortably well-off, but Maria had always been a simple homemaker, not used to luxury. Her clothes were modest, even plain.

Yet Vanessa showed no sign of discomfort or distance-on the contrary, she was far more affectionate with Maria than she ever was with Scarlett.

Maria's work-roughened hands gently cupped Vanessa's face. "As long as you like it, dear, I will make you anything," she said, her voice raspy but full of warmth.

Vanessa planted another happy kiss on Maria's cheek. "Thank you, Maria! You're the best!"

Just then, Vincent came down the stairs. Seeing Vanessa clinging so tightly to Maria, his expression cooled slightly. "Vanessa, come here."

Pouting, Vanessa reluctantly let go and shuffled over to him.

Sabrina, watching from the side, noticed Vincent's stern look and initially worried he was displeased about Maria's presence.

But Vincent quickly cleared that up.

Once Vanessa was within reach, he looked down at her and said firmly, “Maria just had surgery. She’s not fully recovered yet. You have to be more careful around her from now on-don’t bump or jostle her. Understood?”

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Chapter 165 Stolen Affection

Vanessa nodded earnestly. “I understand, Dad.”

Sabrina let out a quiet sigh of relief.

83

Finished

After speaking to Vanessa, Vincent walked to the dining table, poured a glass of water, and brought it over to Maria. “Maria, have some water. From now on, please focus on resting and recovering here at Ravensshade Villa. We have staff for the cooking-just let Lily know what you’d like to eat.”

Maria accepted the glass gratefully. “Thank you so much, Vincent.”

He offered a slight smile. “It’s no trouble at all. No need to thank me.”

Vanessa slipped her hand through Vincent’s arm and grinned up at Maria. “Maria, you just rest well here. I’ll take walks with you every day after school.”

Maria’s eyes grew moist. “You’re such a good child.”

Then Sabrina came over and gently took her mother’s arm. She looked up at Vincent and asked softly, “Vincent, are you sure it’s not too much trouble?”

He shook his head with a light laugh. “Not at all. Your family is my family. You focus on your studies-Lily will take care of everything Maria needs.”

Sabrina smiled gently. “Thank you, Vincent.”

Vincent reached out and affectionately booped her nose. “Since when do you ceremony with me?”

stand on

Sabrina lowered her gaze, her cheeks instantly flushing a bright, telling crimson.

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14:56 Sat, Jan 10

Awakened Housewife Ignore Betrayer's Begs

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 166[931 words]

Chapter 166 Unwanted Gifts

83

Finished

From her position outside the door, Scarlett watched the entire scene unfold inside the house.

Her husband and daughter, out of their affection for Sabrina, were extending the same warmth and acceptance to Sabrina's mother as well.

Yet they had never shown that kind of patience or openness toward her own family.

Throughout their marriage, Vincent had never once set foot in Theron Manor. He probably didn't even remember what her parents looked like, let alone Nathan or Violet.

And Vanessa-her behavior cut even deeper. Diana had spent the entire afternoon carefully preparing a meal, only for Vanessa to pick at it disdainfully. Yet here she was, dreaming for days about a simple potato casserole made by Maria.

So that was it-Vanessa had faked a stomachache just so she could rush back to see Maria.

And Vincent's excuse about meeting Daniel? Clearly just a cover.

Perhaps Vanessa had even known in advance that Vincent and Sabrina were going to pick up Maria together.

Without another word, Scarlett turned and walked out of Ravenshade Villa, driving back to the Theron Manor alone.

That night, sleep eluded her once again.

The next morning, Clara knocked softly on her door. "Auntie, you've got another package."

Scarlett rose from bed and called back, "Alright, I'm coming."

Not wanting to worry her family, she dusted a light layer of powder over her tired face before heading downstairs.

The package had already been brought inside by one of the maids. Clara was crouched beside it, poking the box curiously.

When she saw Scarlett coming down, she looked up and asked, "Auntie, what is it?"

Scarlett wasn't sure either, so she went over to take a look.

As she opened the packaging, the item inside the bag began to slowly inflate before her eyes, growing larger and larger-until it became a giant stuffed toy, even bigger than a person.

Clara stared at the oversized plush, wrinkling her nose. "Auntie, you already have one like this.

1/3

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Chapter 166 Unwanted Gifts

Why did you buy another one?"

83

Finished

Realizing it was almost certainly from Damian, Scarlett replied calmly, "I must have placed the order by mistake."

Clara just said, "Oh," then added, "I'm off to school now. Bye, Auntie!"

A driver was already waiting by the door.

Left alone with the giant stuffed toy-taller than a full-grown man-Scarlett felt completely at a loss. What was she supposed to do with it?

After a moment's hesitation, she hurried out of the house and stood at the front gate, scanning the street in both directions, hoping to spot the delivery person.

Whoever had sent it, she wanted it sent right back.

But there was no sign of any courier.

Disappointed, she turned to go back inside-and unexpectedly bumped straight into a solid chest. Before she could even gasp, a low, playful chuckle sounded above her head. "Looking for me?"

That voice-it was unmistakably Damian's.

Startled, Scarlett jumped back, instinctively putting distance between them. "You... Why do you always appear out of nowhere like this?"

Damian stood his ground, arms crossed, not moving closer. He looked down at her, a bright, roguish smile playing on his lips. "Because I want to be on your mind every single moment."

He drew out the last few words, sending a shiver down Scarlett's spine. Her expression cooled. "Damian, stop sending things to my house."

He was wearing a black trench coat, left open, hands tucked casually in his pockets. His features were sharp and handsome, and he raised an eyebrow slightly, that same rogue's grin still in place. "Then where should I send them? Straight to your heart?"

Scarlett frowned at his wordplay. "Stop playing games. I don't need any of the things you're sending."

Damian took a light step closer, bending down until his warm breath brushed her face. He tilted his head slightly and offered his right cheek to her. "Then give me a kiss, and I'll stop sending them."

Scarlett looked up at his cheek. His jaw was sharp and defined, his nose straight, his deep, and his lashes rested thickly against his lower lids.

eye sockets

2/3

14:56 Sat, Jan 10

Chapter 166 Unwanted Gifts

83

Finished

It was a face rarely seen in this world-seemingly refined and handsome, yet filled with mischief when he smiled.

His true intentions were always hard to read.

And Scarlett had no desire to try. As far as she was concerned, they were little more than acquaintances.

Seeing him act unreasonably again, she lost all interest in arguing. “Damian, I’m going back inside.”

She moved to step around him and head back toward the house.

But just then, Damian suddenly caught her arm and pressed her against the wall behind her.

He was so tall-with just a slight lean, he could completely shield her within his embrace.

Confused, Scarlett looked up at him. “What are you doing now?”

Damian lifted one arm and planted his hand on the wall near her ear. He gazed down at her, eyes glinting with amusement. “Your brother just came out.”

Scarlett glanced sideways. Sure enough, Nathan had just stepped out of the main entrance.

Remembering Nathan’s repeated warnings, and not wanting him to see her standing so close to Damian, Scarlett instinctively shrank deeper into Damian’s embrace, pressing her face tightly against his chest.

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14:56 Sat, Jan 10

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 167[890 words]

Chapter 167 Hospital Vigil

83

Finished

Through the thin fabric of his shirt, Damian could feel the warmth of Scarlett's body. It wasn't actually hot, yet it seemed to burn right through him, stirring something restless deep inside.

For a moment, his entire body went rigid.

Scarlett clutched at Damian's sleeve, peeking cautiously around him as she watched Nathan walk to his car. Only when she saw him drive away did she finally try to pull free from Damian's embrace.

But Damian was quicker. In one swift motion, he captured her hand and pressed it firmly against his chest. He gazed down at her flushed cheeks, his voice dropping to a low, intimate murmur. "You're as captivating as ever, baby. It truly makes one's heart feel... restless."

Scarlett's other hand flew up to strike him, but he caught that one too. He brought it to his lips and brushed a light, teasing kiss against her fingertip.

A wicked grin tugged at his mouth. "Your hands are so soft, too."

Scarlett had had enough. She leaned forward and sank her teeth sharply into his chest. At his muffled grunt, she shoved him away and hurried back home.

Back in the living room, she sank into a chair, her heart still pounding wildly.

She wasn't sure how long she sat there before her phone buzzed with an incoming message.

It was from Damian. "You're truly heartless, baby. Next time, I won't let you off so easily."

Scarlett tossed her phone aside, but Damian's smiling face seemed imprinted in her mind— impossible to shake.

Unsurprisingly, she was late for work that morning. Fortunately, Spencer noticed how exhausted she looked and let it slide.

That afternoon, just as her shift ended and she reached the hospital parking lot, her phone rang. It was Vincent.

She didn't feel like answering at first, but he kept calling. Finally, she picked up. "What is it?"

Her tone was noticeably irritated.

Vincent's voice, on the other hand, was urgent. "Vanessa's in the hospital."

Scarlett's composure shattered. After getting the address, she drove straight there.

1/3

14:56 Sat, Jan 10

Chapter 167 Hospital Vigil

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83

Finished

She practically ran into the emergency department. From a distance, she spotted Vincent sitting on one of the blue chairs.

As she approached, she took in his weary expression. "What happened? Is Vanessa's stomach hurting again?"

Vincent looked up at her, the red veins in his eyes clearly visible. "During a school field trip, Vanessa got bitten by some kind of insect. But the doctor's already examined her.

Said it's nothing serious-just a mild allergic reaction. She needs an IV drip for two days and some medication. She'll be fine."

Scarlett finally let out a slow breath. "That's good to hear."

Vincent had accompanied Vanessa on the trip. He'd been walking all day and was exhausted, but Scarlett looked even more worn out than he did.

He studied her for a moment, then asked quietly, "And you?"

Scarlett had been about to leave. His question caught her off guard. "Me, what?"

"Is

your cold better? Still have a fever?"

Remembering that incident, Scarlett replied flatly, "Hmm."

Her tone was distant, her answer brief.

Vincent wasn't sure whether that "Hmm" meant yes or no-or which of his questions she was even answering.

He kept looking at her. Her detached, cold demeanor felt unfamiliar to him.

Even with something as concerning as Vanessa's hospitalization, she seemed calmer than he

was.

As his gaze drifted downward, he noticed a bracelet on her wrist.

If he remembered correctly, Damian had won that very bracelet at the charity auction.

But before he could ponder it further, his phone rang-Sabrina was calling.

Vincent answered. Her worried voice came through clearly. "Vincent, how is Vanessa?"

"She's fine. You don't need to come. I'll bring her back after the IV drip."

Sabrina sounded relieved. "Then Lily and I will prepare dinner at home. It'll be ready when you get back."

2/3

14:56 Sat, Jan 10

Chapter 167 Hospital Vigil

Vincent gave a quiet “Mm.” When he looked up, he found Scarlett watching him.

After hanging up, he heard her

he heard her say, “I’m going back now.”

Vincent was taken aback. “Aren’t you going in to see Vanessa?”

“I have things to do. I won’t go in. You stay with her.”

With that, she turned and walked toward the hospital exit.

But after only two steps, she paused.

Vincent watched, puzzled.

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Finished

Scarlett turned back and stood in front of him again. She looked down at him quietly.

“That agreement at Oakland Villa-haven’t you signed it yet?”

Hearing “agreement,” Vincent suddenly recalled the document Scarlett had given to Freya. But it hadn’t reached him yet, so he hadn’t signed it.

As for what exactly the agreement contained, Vincent assumed it was some kind of contract related to the property.

After a moment’s thought, he replied, “I’ll find time to go back in the next couple of days. Once it’s signed, I’ll have it delivered to you.”

Scarlett still seemed uneasy. “Then please do it quickly.”

Vincent nodded. “Hmm.”

Without another word, Scarlett turned and left.

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14:56 Sat, Jan 10

Awakened Housewife Ignore Betrayer's Beggings

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 168[924 words]

Chapter 168 A Child's Wish

83

Finished

As Scarlett stepped out of the hospital, the cool evening breeze brushed against her face, yet it did nothing to soothe the renewed ache in her heart.

Vincent's unresisting attitude just now-though she had long known he wanted the divorce— still felt like a fresh wound when faced with his readiness to let go.

Five years of marriage had ultimately amounted to nothing.

In his heart, she probably mattered less than a stray cat or dog.

Near the hospital entrance, a street vendor was selling fruit. Under the warm glow of the streetlights, the oranges looked especially inviting.

Looking at them, Scarlett couldn't help but remember how much Vanessa loved oranges.

Her heart softened. In the end, she bought two pounds.

Carrying them back into the hospital, she noticed Vincent was no longer sitting in the corridor outside the ward.

She reached the door and was about to knock when she heard Vanessa's small, weak voice from inside. "Daddy, didn't you say if I was good, you'd grant me one wish?"

Vincent was sitting on the edge of the hospital bed, his daughter leaning against him.

Remembering his promise, he smiled softly. "Yes, you can tell me your wish now."

Vanessa lifted her head and looked up at him, her round eyes blinking earnestly. "Daddy, I want to call Sabrina 'Mommy'"

Outside the door, Scarlett's grip loosened. The bag of oranges slipped from her hand and hit the floor, scattering in every direction.

In that moment, her heart felt as though it had been pierced by a sharp blade.

She pressed a hand to her chest, tears streaming silently down her face.

Even though she already knew Vanessa preferred Sabrina, this was still the child she had carried for ten months, nearly died delivering, and carefully raised for four years.

Clutching her chest, Scarlett could no longer focus on what Vincent and Vanessa were saying inside.

Stumbling away from the ward, distraught and disoriented, she wandered without direction.

1/3

14:56 Sat, Jan 10

Chapter 168 A Child's Wish

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(3)

Finished

Inside the room, Vincent's brow had furrowed slightly at Vanessa's request. He stroked her hair gently and looked down at her. "Why would you wish for that?"

Vanessa's small face was still pale, her eyes glistening with unshed tears. "That day when Mom came to pick up Clara, she ignored me completely. It was raining, and Lily was the one who came for me in the end. I even asked Mom to take me to Grandma's house too,

but she didn't even look at me. She just took Clara and left. Daddy... Mom doesn't want me anymore."

Vincent's heart ached at her words. He brushed a tear from her cheek, his own voice growing husky. "This is Daddy's fault for not making better arrangements. I'm sorry this has been bothering you for so long."

Vanessa shook her head. "I don't blame Daddy. Daddy works very hard. But Mom was already there that day. She could have taken me too... she just didn't want to."

Vincent held her slightly away, his hands gently framing her small face as he spoke with gentle seriousness. "Vanessa, no matter what happened, she is still your mother. Those are separate things-you mustn't confuse them."

Fresh tears rolled down Vanessa's cheeks. "Daddy, if Mom doesn't love me anymore... can't I have a new mom?"

His expression softened, but his voice remained firm. "No."

Recognizing the finality in his tone, Vanessa fell silent.

Seeing her distress, Vincent softened his approach. "Your mother carried you inside her and brought you into this world. That will never change. Even if you grow to love Sabrina very much, and even if someday you might call her 'Mom' too-that's for the future. For now, she can only call her Sabrina, and you must remember that."

Though too young to grasp the full weight of his words, Vanessa had always trusted her father. Despite her lingering sadness, she nodded slowly. "Okay, Daddy, I understand."

Vincent leaned forward and gently rested his forehead against hers before offering a warm smile. "You're the most wonderful, well-behaved little girl in the world. I will always love you."

That finally brought a fragile smile to her face. "What about Sabrina? Will she always love me too?"

Vincent nodded. "Yes, she will."

Comforted, Vanessa's smile grew brighter.

Just then, Vincent's phone chimed from the nightstand.

2/3

14:56 Sat, Jan 10

Chapter 168 A Child's Wish

After making sure Vanessa was settled comfortably, he picked it up.

It was a message from Scarlett. "Please sign the agreement as soon as possible."

83

Finished

He didn't reply, deciding instead to have the signed document delivered to her when it was ready.

Setting his phone aside, he noticed Vanessa was already engrossed in cartoons on her tablet, her earlier sorrow forgotten as quiet giggles filled the room. Children's emotions were indeed as changeable as spring weather.

Watching his daughter, Vincent felt a complicated mix of emotions swirling within him.

He remembered how tenderly Scarlett had once doted on Vanessa-how she'd been the center of her world. It was difficult to reconcile those memories with the image of her leaving their daughter waiting in the rain.

Yet he knew Vanessa wouldn't lie about something like this.

Lately, he had to admit-Scarlett truly seemed different.

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14:56 Sat, Jan 10

Awakened Housewife Ignore Betrayer's Begs

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**No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce -
Silent Dreams Never Die — 169[914 words
]**

Chapter 169 Liquid Courage

After sending the message, Scarlett lingered at the intersection for a while longer.

Vincent didn't reply, so she didn't press further.

But the thought lingered-their divorce had truly been dragging on for too long.

83

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Since he was at the hospital with Vanessa that day, she decided she would speak to him about the divorce face-to-face the next day.

Vanessa's earlier words still weighed heavily on her. Afraid her family would notice her low spirits if she returned to the Theron Manor, she called Claire instead.

Claire immediately invited her over. After getting the address, Scarlett drove straight there.

When she arrived, Claire had already laid out the spread-several large boxes of barbecue skewers and a case of ice-cold beer.

It had been years since the two friends had sat down like this-just the two of them, drinking and talking freely.

After finishing her first bottle, Scarlett's eyes grew red-rimmed as she said quietly, "I'm getting a divorce."

Claire opened another beer and handed it to her. "Good for you! Stay away from trash men and embrace a happier life."

Scarlett let out a soft, self-mocking laugh. "But I'd be lying if I said it didn't still hurt."

Claire clinked her bottle gently against Scarlett's. "You're handling it better than I expected. The old you would've been crying your eyes out by now."

Scarlett had to smile at that. "You're right. Let's just treat it like a dog bite. From now on, I'm putting myself first."

Claire downed her entire bottle in one go. Watching her drink so fiercely, Scarlett couldn't help asking with concern, "What about Elias? Has he contacted you?"

Claire shrugged indifferently. “Not a word. He’s probably waiting for me to come crawling back like a lost puppy. But Scarlett... I’ve finally woken up.”

Hearing that, Scarlett felt a little more at ease, and her mood lifted slightly.

They drank late into the night, talking about everything and nothing.

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14:57 Sat, Jan 10

Chapter 169 Liquid Courage

83

Finished

After several rounds, Claire rolled over and fumbled for Scarlett’s phone. Finding it, she pushed it into her hand. “Call Vincent. Right now. Tell him you want a divorce—that you don’t want him anymore.”

Scarlett shook her head. “Let’s wait till tomorrow. I’ll tell him in person.”

But Claire was insistent. “Do it now. Be firm. Tell him you’re done.”

Scarlett knew Claire was drunk, but on second thought, she didn’t resist the idea.

Taking the phone, she dialed Vincent’s number.

After two rings, someone picked up—but it was Sabrina’s voice that answered. “Hello, who is this?”

Hearing her, Scarlett froze for a second, then asked, “Where’s Vincent?”

Recognizing Scarlett’s voice, Sabrina replied flatly, “Vincent is helping me wash my If there’s something you need, you can tell me, and I’ll pass it along.”

underwear.

Scarlett couldn’t hold back a cold, derisive laugh. “That won’t be necessary.”

The call was on speaker. Claire heard Sabrina’s voice too and immediately snatched the phone. “Ms. Monroe,” she said sharply, “what you’re so desperately trying to snatch is nothing but the trash Scarlett has decided to throw away. Congratulations on your acquisition. Hold onto it tight—and make sure it doesn’t dirty anyone else’s space again.”

Without waiting for a reply, she ended the call.

Scarlett stared at Claire for a long moment, then finally gave a shaky thumbs-up. “That’s my girl.”

Claire took another swig of beer and sprawled lazily across the sofa. “After being doormats for so many years... it feels good to finally grow a backbone.”

Scarlett leaned back against the cushions and sighed softly. “Yeah. New chapter-no more being a pushover.”

Unsurprisingly, they both ended up drunk that night.

The next day, Scarlett forced herself to go to the hospital for her shift.

That afternoon, after her work was done, she made up her mind to go to Ravenshade Villa that evening and discuss the divorce with Vincent in person.

When she returned to Ravenshade Villa that night, the living room was empty-no sign of Vanessa, Vincent, or Sabrina. Only Maria and Lily were there.

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Chapter 169 Liquid Courage

Finished

Seeing Scarlett, Lily quickly stepped forward. “Mrs. Stewart?”

But her expression was complicated-a mix of surprise and unease.

Maria had never met Scarlett before, but hearing Lily address her as “Mrs. Stewart”, she understood immediately who she was.

“Lily,” Maria said, without a hint of courtesy, “I want some soup. Make me a bowl.”

“Alright,” Lily replied reluctantly. Vincent had instructed her to take good care of Maria, after

all.

One look at Maria told Scarlett she wasn’t a kind woman. The gaze she directed at Scarlett was sharp and venomous.

The moment Lily stepped into the kitchen, Maria dropped all pretense of politeness. “Mrs. Stewart? What kind of Mrs. Stewart? Still squatting in the lavatory but not doing your business?”

Her tone made it clear she knew Sabrina was the other woman-and she wasn’t the least bit ashamed. If anything, she seemed proud.

Even though Maria was a patient, Scarlett had no intention of tolerating her disrespect. She smiled coolly, her voice laced with sarcasm. “Worrying so much about other people’s business? What’s wrong-not enough going on in your own life to keep you occupied?”

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 170[913 words]

Chapter 170 Shattered Trust

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Maria’s face darkened instantly at Scarlett’s sharp retort. “Haven’t you figured it out yet? Vincent doesn’t love you anymore. The one he loves now is Sabrina.”

Scarlett met her gaze coldly, her eyes deep like smoldering embers. “I don’t need you to remind me. If anything, I should remind you—the place you’re staying in now is half mine. If I want you out, I can have you removed anytime. The fact that you’re able to rest here peacefully is by my grace. Do you understand?”

Since arriving at Ravensshade Villa, even Vincent had treated her with courtesy. But Scarlett showed nothing but open hostility. Maria couldn't tolerate it.

Without a second thought, Maria grabbed a decorative piece from nearby and hurled it at Scarlett, shouting, "You wretched woman!"

Seeing the object flying toward her, Scarlett instinctively sidestepped. The ornament struck the floor and shattered instantly.

She looked down. It was Vanessa's favorite action figure-the one she had spent days carefully assembling. She had adored that toy; even after a year, she still treasured it. Scarlett remembered staying up late with her, piecing it together section by section.

Seeing the broken pieces scattered across the floor, Maria finally realized what she had done.

Over the past few days at Ravensshade Villa, she had often seen Vanessa playing with that figure. And now she had destroyed it.

If Vanessa found out when she returned, she would be heartbroken.

Just then, Vanessa's cheerful voice rang out from the entrance. "Maria, I'm back! Look what I brought for you!"

A flicker of panic crossed Maria's face, but she recovered quickly. She got up, moved over to the broken toy, and deliberately sat down right on the shattered pieces.

She began wailing in exaggerated pain. "Oww! Why did you push me?"

Scarlett turned and looked down at Maria sitting among the broken fragments, crying and beating her legs-a perfect performance of the victim.

Hearing the commotion, Vincent and Sabrina hurried into the living room.

As soon as she entered, Sabrina saw her mother on the floor and rushed over, taking her hand. "Mom, how did you fall? What happened?"

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Chapter 170 Shattered Trust

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Maria, her eyes red, cried to Sabrina, “Sabrina, you’re finally back! I was just about to take my medicine when this woman came in, started yelling at me, and pushed me! I fell, and then she grabbed Vanessa’s favorite toy and threw it at me! I dodged, and the toy broke...”

Hearing Maria’s words, the things Vanessa was holding slipped from her hands and fell to the floor. She ran over, saw the shattered pieces of her action figure, and her eyes instantly filled with tears.

“Mom! This was my favorite toy! Why did you break it?” Vanessa looked up, her small face twisted with anger.

Scarlett looked down at her daughter and still explained calmly, “I didn’t break it. Maria broke it when she threw it at me.”

Vanessa grew even angrier. She kicked Scarlett hard. “Bad Mom! You’re still lying! Maria would never break my toy! It was you! You did it!”

Watching Vanessa react like this felt like a blade twisting in Scarlett’s heart.

She let out a bitter laugh and said nothing more. Her gaze swept over Maria, Vanessa, and Sabrina-each of them playing their part in this painful charade.

Just then, Vincent strode over. He grabbed Scarlett’s hand and pulled her out of the living room.

His grip was firm. Scarlett didn’t resist, allowing him to lead her away.

Once outside the room, he released her hand and demanded, “Didn’t I tell you not to come back to Ravenshade Villa? Maria is a patient. What exactly are you trying to do?”

Scarlett looked up at him, her gaze icy. “I’m not trying to do anything. I came back to tell you that we shouldn’t drag this out any longer. Please sign the divorce agreement as soon as possible and have it delivered to me. Preferably tonight.”

Divorce?

Vincent’s brow furrowed, then smoothed almost immediately,

He must have misheard. There was no way Scarlett would mention divorce to him.

She had loved him so deeply-she had left her family to be with him, and they had a daughter together.

Yes, he must have heard wrong. She couldn't have said divorce.

Even though he could no longer see the usual admiration in Scarlett's eyes, Vincent still believed she wouldn't easily bring up ending their marriage.

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Scarlett didn't linger. Having said what she came to say, she turned and left.

Vincent watched her resolute departing figure, a tumult of emotions swirling inside him.

After a long silence, he finally took out his phone and called Freya.

When she answered, her voice was hesitant. "Mr. Stewart, are you coming back tonight?"

Vincent paused, then belatedly remembered-it was the middle of the month again, the time Scarlett usually tracked for possible conception.

For the sake of trying for a second child, they had met regularly for several months, though eventually, for reasons he still didn't fully understand, the plan had been quietly dropped.

"Mr. Stewart?" Freya's voice came again, pulling him back to the present.

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Silent Dreams Never Die — 171

Chapter 171 The Elusive Document

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Finished

Vincent snapped back to reality and cut straight to the chase. “Did you manage to find that agreement Scarlett left with you?”

Freya seemed momentarily confused. “Agreement?”

He rubbed his temples, a flicker of frustration crossing his features. Freya had been his nanny since childhood and was practically family. Even now, in her later years, he had kept her employed, intending to provide for her retirement. But lately, her memory hadn’t been what it used to be.

Take this agreement, for instance. She’d supposedly been searching for it for nearly a month with no results. Or perhaps she had simply forgotten about the task altogether.

Suddenly, recognition dawned on Freya’s face. “Oh! Right, I remember now. Mrs. Stewart did give me an important-looking envelope. I tucked it away somewhere safe, but for the life of me, I can’t recall where. I’ve been turning the place upside down looking for it.”

Vincent held back any reproach, his tone remaining patient. “That’s alright. Did you happen to see what kind of agreement it was?”

“Mr. Stewart, you know I never finished high school,” Freya replied apologetically. “All those legal papers look the same to me. I couldn’t tell you what it was about.”

He sighed quietly. “I understand. I’ll stop by tomorrow to help you look for it.”

He ended the call just as Sabrina’s voice carried from the living room. “Vincent, could you give me a hand helping Mom up?”

Tucking his phone away, Vincent pushed Scarlett’s words from his mind. While he didn’t truly believe she’d mentioned divorce, a nagging unease lingered. For now, his attention was needed elsewhere—on the patient who had taken a fall in the living room.

He walked back in to find Sabrina, and together they carefully helped Maria off the floor, settling her onto the plush sofa.

Nearby, Vanessa was kneeling on the carpet, carefully gathering the broken pieces of her favorite superhero action figure. Her small shoulders shook with quiet sobs as she cradled the fragments.

Watching the scene, Maria's face crumpled with guilt. "Vanessa, sweetheart, I'm so, so sorry. I broke your toy"

Vanessa wiped her tears with the back of her hand and looked up. "Mommy broke it. It wasn't your fault."

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"How about I buy you a brand new one tomorrow?" Maria offered, her voice thick with emotion.

Vanessa shook her head, her lower lip trembling. "I don't want a new one. I only liked this one."

Maria's eyes welled up. She lifted her gaze to Vincent, her expression pleading. "Vincent, maybe... maybe it's better if I just go back home. I'm only causing more trouble for everyone here."

Vincent pushed aside his swirling thoughts about Scarlett. He looked at Maria, his tone even and deliberately calm. "There's no need for that, Maria. Please don't blame yourself. What happened today wasn't your fault in the slightest."

Back at the Theron Manor, Scarlett headed straight for the shower.

When she emerged, wrapped in a towel, she checked her phone. No new messages from Vincent. No missed calls.

She wondered if he had taken her words seriously-or if he had even glanced at the divorce papers.

Regardless, finalizing the divorce couldn't be put off any longer.

If there was no progress today, she would press him again tomorrow. If he was busy then, she'd find him the day after. She was resolved to bring up the divorce with him every single day until it was done.

The next morning, Scarlett tried calling Vincent several times, but each call went straight to voicemail.

With work demanding her attention, she had to let it go for the moment.

At lunchtime, she tried again. This time, his phone was switched off entirely.

In the evening, she made another attempt. To her surprise, he answered, but a cacophony of loud music and boisterous chatter flooded the line. He was clearly out with Daniel and Harris, probably at some upscale club or bar.

Seizing the moment he picked up, Scarlett didn't bother with pleasantries. "Have you signed the papers?"

The noise on his end was overwhelming. "It's too loud in here, I can't hear you!" he shouted into the phone, his voice slightly slurred. "I'll have to call you back later!"

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Chapter 171 The Elusive Document

Before Scarlett could insist, the line went dead.

Staring at the disconnected call screen, she let out a heavy, helpless sigh.

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When they had filed for their marriage license, it was only under significant pressure from Xavier that Vincent had reluctantly accompanied her. The entire process had taken mere minutes at the City Hall.

Now, getting untangled seemed to require navigating an endless maze of delays and excuses.

If she had known then how complicated it would be to get out, Scarlett would never have stepped into what she now saw as a gilded cage-one that had confined her for far too long.

Unsurprisingly, she waited up until she fell asleep, and Vincent's promised return call never came.

The next day was Friday, her day off. First thing in the morning, she sent Vincent a text. "Any update on the agreement?" He didn't reply.

With her exams looming, she couldn't afford to waste time. Gathering her heavy stack of review books, she headed to the public library to study.

Midway through a challenging chapter, her phone screen lit up. Thinking it might finally be Vincent, she was surprised to see Melinda's name flashing instead.

Scarlett slipped out to the library hallway to take the call. "Melinda?"

"Scarlett! Hey, your birthday's tomorrow!" Melinda's cheerful voice bubbled through the phone. "A bunch of us are thinking of driving up to Napa Valley for the weekend. Wanna come?"

"Melinda," Scarlett interrupted gently, "I really appreciate the offer, but I'm swamped with my grad school prep right now. And on top of that, I'm in the middle of sorting out the divorce. I don't think I can make it."

Hearing about the divorce and the exams, Melinda let out an excited squeal. "Wait, seriously? You're really doing it?"

"Yeah," Scarlett confirmed, a newfound determination in her voice. "It's time I started living for myself."

"I'm so happy for you!" Melinda exclaimed. "It's about time! You've always been the most driven person I know. You shouldn't be tied down by all this... this mundane routine, or by draining family obligations, or..." she paused, "...worthless relationships."

They talked for a while longer, with Scarlett even asking for some advice on managing the

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Chapter 171 The Elusive Document

intense study schedule.

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After hanging up with Melinda, Scarlett stared at her silent phone for another moment. Then, she typed out one more message to Vincent. “We need to talk. In person. When are you free?”

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 172[994 words]

Chapter 172 A Chilled Encounter

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Vincent didn’t reply until the afternoon, his message brief and impersonal. “I’m on a business trip. I’ll contact you when I’m back.”

Reading the text, a wave of frustration washed over Scarlett. The whole situation felt unnecessarily drawn out.

If Vincent was truly willing, finalizing the divorce could be remarkably straightforward.

So was his reluctance the issue, or was he genuinely just that busy?

Given how deeply he cared for Sabrina, outright refusal didn't seem to fit. It had to be his schedule.

Since Vincent was tied up, hounding him further felt pointless. She redirected her focus, burying herself in her textbooks.

After a full day with her nose in books at the library, her eyes felt gritty and strained.

That evening, her phone buzzed with a call from Nolan. "Scarlett, are you free to grab some dinner?"

Considering her empty evening, Scarlett agreed. "Sure, that sounds good."

"I can pick you up," Nolan offered. "Are you still at the library?"

Scarlett was already standing, packing her bag. "It's alright, Nolan. I can meet you there."

Nolan's chuckle came through the line. "Okay then. I'll text you the address."

After receiving the location, Scarlett made a quick stop back at the Theron Manor to drop off her heavy study materials.

Nolan arrived at the reserved restaurant right at 6:30 p.m.

He knew tomorrow was Scarlett's birthday. He also suspected she would likely be occupied with family celebrations then, so he had planned this dinner a day early to celebrate with her alone.

He was glancing over the menu when the hostess near the entrance cheerfully greeted new arrivals. "Welcome!"

Hearing the commotion, Nolan looked up instinctively, a soft, anticipatory smile already forming in his eyes, thinking it was Scarlett.

The smile, however, vanished almost as quickly as it appeared.

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Chapter 172 A Chilled Encounter

The people walking in weren't Scarlett, but Daniel and Sabrina.

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As they entered, Sabrina's eyes scanned the room and landed on Nolan. She made a beeline for his table, offering a bright, familiar greeting. "Nolan! What a surprise."

Nolan's expression cooled, his reply curt. "Sabrina."

Sabrina exchanged a quick, meaningful glance with Daniel, who stood slightly behind her.

After that silent communication, she gestured to the empty chairs at Nolan's table. "Since we've all run into each other here, such a coincidence! Would you mind if we joined you?"

Nolan didn't even look up from his menu, his refusal blunt and unequivocal. "Yes, I would mind."

Sabrina's polished smile stiffened on her face.

Daniel, meanwhile, looked like he was about to explode, his temper clearly fraying, but Sabrina shot him a subtle, warning look, shaking her head almost imperceptibly.

Recovering her composure, Sabrina tried again, her tone carefully respectful. "Nolan, we're both Thomas' protégés. I've always looked up to you in the field. I actually have a few complex case questions I've been struggling with. I'd be incredibly grateful if I could borrow a few moments of your expertise."

Hearing this, Nolan closed his menu. He looked directly at Sabrina, a faint, cynical smile playing on his lips. "I really don't think my qualifications are sufficient for you to be seeking my advice."

His eyes held a superficial politeness that didn't mask the distinct chill and mockery beneath.

Daniel had finally heard enough. "Nolan," he snapped, his voice low and angry, "who the hell do

think you are?"

you

Just then, the hostess' cheerful greeting echoed again. "Welcome!"

Nolan's gaze instinctively darted toward the entrance. This time, it was Scarlett walking in.

Following Nolan's line of sight, Sabrina also spotted her.

Nolan completely ignored Daniel's outburst. Seeing Scarlett had arrived, he stood up and leveled a cool gaze at Daniel. "Mr. Lennox, I have no need to put on airs. And I certainly have no obligation to offer explanations to someone with a compromised professional reputation."

He didn't name names, but the target of his comment was glaringly obvious to everyone present.

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Chapter 172 A Chilled Encounter

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Sabrina knew the barb was meant for her. She was taken aback by Nolan's open hostility.

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They moved in the same medical circles; it was a small world. Sabrina had always admired Nolan, and he had certainly known of her.

At dinners hosted by their shared mentor, Thomas, they had even sat at the same table.

She vividly remembered Nolan once complimenting her, calling her a promising talent in surgery—not just intelligent and composed but also remarkably diligent.

Those words of praise still echoed in her memory, yet now, he looked at her with such palpable disdain.

Was this sudden contempt because of Scarlett?

But Scarlett was just a medical student, a junior resident. How could Nolan possibly develop such animosity towards her because of someone like that?

There had to be some misunderstanding. Scarlett must have poisoned his mind against her.

As these thoughts raced through her mind, Sabrina looked at Nolan, eager to explain herself, but she saw him already walking away from the table and heading straight for Scarlett.

“Scarlett,” Nolan said as he reached her side, his voice having shed all its earlier coldness, replaced now by a gentle warmth. “Let’s find somewhere else to eat.”

Scarlett looked up at him. She understood he was trying to shield her from an uncomfortable situation, and she felt a surge of gratitude. She offered him a small, appreciative smile. “Okay. Whatever you think is best.”

Nolan naturally took the light jacket she was carrying and held it for her to slip into. “It’s gotten chilly out. Don’t catch a cold.”

“Thank you,” Scarlett said softly, her smile lingering as they turned to leave together.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 173[983 words]

Chapter 173 Shifting Allegiances

83

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They walked out of the restaurant side by side, the evening air cool against their skin.

Sabrina watched their retreating figures, feeling her eyes begin to sting with unshed tears.

Perhaps it was the sting of Nolan's blunt and dismissive attitude, or maybe it was the stark contrast to the praise and recognition he had once offered her.

Seeing her distress, Daniel quickly handed her a tissue. "Don't cry, Sabrina. You haven't done anything wrong," he comforted her in a low voice. "Vincent doesn't love Scarlett. The one who lacks character is the person who stubbornly holds on when they aren't loved."

Daniel's words provided some small comfort, and Sabrina felt a little better.

Yet, an inexplicable discomfort still churned inside her.

The rumor in their circles was that throughout his entire Master's and Ph.D. programs, there hadn't been a single woman consistently around Nolan. People had even whispered back then that he might not be interested in women. But later, at an academic dinner hosted by Thomas, Nolan had met Sabrina.

That evening, Sabrina had asked Nolan numerous questions about his research, and he had patiently answered every one.

To outsiders, the perennial bachelor-once deemed unlikely to settle down-seemed to have finally met the right woman.

After that, whispers spread through the medical community that Nolan had been captivated by Sabrina from their first meeting.

As the gossip intensified, Sabrina inevitably heard some of it. She had even allowed herself to fantasize that one day Nolan would formally ask her out.

But things didn't unfold that way. Nolan never made a move; in fact, he gradually became more distant.

Back then, Sabrina had just finished her undergraduate degree, while Nolan was already a postdoctoral researcher.

Even now, Sabrina sometimes wondered about Nolan's feelings back then.

Had he ever truly been interested in her?

Later, she met Vincent and largely stopped thinking about Nolan.

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Chapter 14 dating Allegiances

But within their professional field, Nolan was in a league of his own, a respected and brilliant figure.

He must have liked her, right? Otherwise, why was she the only woman he had ever been publicly and persistently linked with?

Daniel, unaware of the intricate thoughts swirling in Sabrina's mind, saw her continued somber expression and assumed she was still upset about her research project. "Sabrina, you're incredibly talented. Who needs that damn doctorate anyway?" he tried to console her.

"No," Sabrina said, a sudden, fierce determination igniting within her. "I will earn it. I'll graduate at the top of my class. I will outperform Scarlett. I will make Thomas recognize my worth."

Hearing this, Daniel assumed she was primarily motivated by Nolan's harsh words, but he nonetheless responded with earnest support. "Whatever you decide to do, Sabrina, just go for it. I'll help you. Vincent will help you. Harris will help you."

Meanwhile, after Nolan and Scarlett left the restaurant together, they coincidentally ran into Abbott's car pulling up to the curb.

As Abbott got out, Vanessa hopped out from the other side.

Seeing Scarlett and Nolan together, Vanessa froze for a second.

Remembering Scarlett breaking her action figure the previous day, Vanessa was still holding a grudge, so she didn't greet Scarlett.

But when her eyes landed on Nolan, she hesitated only a moment before walking over proactively, her voice sweet. "Mr. Huntley!"

Hearing this, Nolan was taken aback and glanced questioningly at Scarlett.

Scarlett merely returned his look, offering no explanation.

This was the first time Vanessa had initiated a greeting with Nolan so warmly.

Both Scarlett and Nolan were clearly puzzled, but Vanessa knew her reason perfectly well—it was because Nolan could help Sabrina. She had overheard Daniel saying so.

So, even though she was still angry with her mom, she knew she needed to try and get on Nolan's good side.

Nolan crouched down to her eye level. He looked gently at Vanessa and smiled. "Hello, Vanessa."

Vanessa blinked her big, innocent eyes. "Mr. Huntley, aren't you going to have dinner with us?"

Nolan maintained his warm smile. "No, we were actually planning to go to a different

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Chapter 173 Shifting Allegiances

restaurant."

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Hearing this, Vanessa quickly added, "But Sabrina has some questions she really wants to ask you!"

As soon as the words were out, not only Scarlett, but Nolan too, froze.

So that was the reason for Vanessa's sudden friendliness-it was all for Sabrina.

Everything clicked into place at that moment.

Nolan glanced at Scarlett. She seemed visibly hurt, turning her face away to compose herself.

Vanessa was still waiting for an answer, tugging lightly on Nolan's sleeve.

Nolan stayed crouched. He placed his hands gently on Vanessa's shoulders and asked softly, "Vanessa, can I ask you a question?"

Vanessa nodded eagerly. "Okay, Mr. Huntley, ask me anything."

Nolan looked intently into her eyes. "Do you remember what tomorrow is?"

Vanessa scrunched up her little face in concentration. She thought for a long time before answering, “Tomorrow is Saturday, right? My teacher said Saturday is a weekend, no school.”

Nolan was very patient, trying to guide her. “Think back. Around this time last year, did you anything special for someone?”

do

If he remembered correctly, Nolan recalled Scarlett once showing him a photo-Vanessa had handmade her a birthday card.

Vanessa shook her head, her expression blank. “No, I don’t think so.”

Nolan felt a pang of frustration, almost mentioning the birthday card directly.

Scarlett, understanding what Nolan was trying to do, felt it was ultimately pointless.

Even if she pressured Vanessa into remembering, what would it really change? The genuine sentiment was already missing.

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Silent Dreams Never Die — 174

Chapter 174 Birthday Wounds and Sunflowers

Vanessa’s heart was clearly no longer with her mother.

So, Scarlett gently intervened. She said to Abbott, “Abbott, they’re waiting for you inside. You should take Vanessa in now.”

Then, turning to Nolan, she added, “Let’s go eat. I’m getting a little hungry.”

Nolan understood her unspoken meaning and didn’t press further. He left the scene with her.

In the end, the two of them ended up at a casual grill and bar, ordering a spread of loaded fries, wings, and burgers.

Perhaps because her mood was low, Scarlett also ordered a whole case of local craft beer.

Nolan wanted to comfort her but didn’t quite know how. He could only offer his silent, supportive company.

When the food arrived, Scarlett opened the beers, drinking one after another.

After several drinks, she could no longer hold back her tears.

Fortunately, they were in a secluded booth, so she could let her emotions out relatively freely.

But Scarlett was never one for dramatic outbursts; even in her grief, she cried quietly, her shoulders shaking slightly.

“Nolan, I’m getting a divorce,” she confessed, her voice thick with emotion.

“But this was the marriage I fought so hard for. Now it feels like chains holding me down. The daughter I risked everything to bring into this world... She feels like a punishment sent from above. But what did I do wrong? I loved them with everything I had. How could they treat me like this?”

Scarlett was clearly intoxicated, voicing thoughts that were usually too painful to articulate.

She cried and questioned, but there were no answers to be found.

Even Nolan could only gently pat her head and reassure her, “Scarlett, it’s not your fault. You did the best you could.”

Scarlett cried until her eyes were swollen and red, eventually falling asleep, her head leaning against Nolan’s shoulder.

When she opened her eyes again, she realized she seemed to be in a car.

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Chapter 174 Birthday Wounds and Sunflowers

Finished

Her head throbbed painfully. As she reached up to massage her temples, Nolan's gentle, concerned voice came from beside her. "Scarlett, you're awake?"

Scarlett lowered her hand and looked around, realizing her head had been resting on Nolan's lap.

She hurriedly tried to sit up. Nolan slowly assisted her. "Take it easy; you'll feel dizzy if you move too fast."

Once Scarlett was sitting upright, she leaned back against the headrest. She turned to look at Nolan. "Nolan, what time is it?"

Nolan glanced at his watch. "Two in the morning."

Scarlett was stunned, then quickly said, embarrassed, "I'm so sorry for causing you so much trouble."

She knew she had gotten drunk and had said many things she normally kept buried.

Nolan looked at her. His gentle features were handsome and pleasing. When he offered a faint smile, his eyes were particularly captivating.

He didn't acknowledge her apology. Instead, he said to her, "Scarlett, happy birthday."

A wave of sorrow washed over Scarlett's heart. She turned her face away, momentarily speechless.

Nolan leaned over to the passenger seat and retrieved a bouquet of flowers and a gift bag.

He handed the flowers to Scarlett, simultaneously saying a bit sheepishly, "I should be giving these to you today, but I bought them yesterday. I wanted to be the first to wish you a happy birthday. But they've been in the car all night; they're looking a little wilted now."

Scarlett looked down. Nolan had given her a bouquet of sunflowers.

She took the flowers, her eyes reddening as she thanked him. "Thank you, Nolan."

Seeing her accept them, Nolan's smile widened. "About the divorce, let me help you find a lawyer."

Scarlett shook her head. "I'll talk to Vincent face-to-face when he's back from his business trip. If we can't reach an agreement, then I'll seek legal counsel."

Nolan didn't insist, simply telling her, "Don't ever settle for less than you deserve. You always deserve the best."

2/4

14:58 Sat, Jan 10

Chapter 174 Birthday Wounds and Sunflowers

82

Finished

The next day was Scarlett's 27th birthday.

In the morning, Diana made her a special birthday breakfast of pancakes with a candle on top.

After eating, Violet gave her the gift she had prepared in advance—a cashmere scarf from a high-end designer.

Nolan's gift was still sitting on the table, unopened. The flowers, after a night in the car, had wilted considerably.

She carefully arranged the sunflowers in a vase and placed it on her nightstand.

Clara had the day off. After getting up, she came to Scarlett's room, gave her a handful of carefully folded origami cranes and boats, and pestered her to let her braid her hair.

Cherishing this rare warmth, Scarlett naturally didn't refuse.

She spent the whole day quietly with Clara.

In the evening, Nathan had reserved a table at a popular downtown restaurant and took the whole family out for dinner.

Although Nathan didn't explicitly state the reason, everyone knew he wanted to celebrate his sister's birthday.

At the restaurant, the whole family was present; no one was missing.

Nathan had chosen a vibrant Italian bistro, full of lively chatter and clinking glasses.

He handed the menu to Scarlett, his expression calm but not unkind. “Order whatever you like.”

Taking the menu, Scarlett couldn’t help but feel a pang of poignant sadness.

It had been several years since she had celebrated her birthday surrounded by her family.

After marrying Vincent, she had almost lost herself, spending day and night caring for Vanessa, and had let her own birthday pass by unnoticed, year after year.

Thinking about it now, she realized just how much she had neglected herself.

After they ordered, the family enjoyed a rare, relaxed evening together, simply chatting and catching up a simple, ordinary happiness that felt more precious than anything.

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14:58 Sat, Jan 10

Awakened Housewife Ignore Betrayer’s Begs

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Silent Dreams Never Die — 175

Chapter 175 The Uninvited Guest

82

Finished

As the family meal progressed, Scarlett suddenly heard a voice from behind that sent an involuntary shiver through her. “Scarlett?”

It was Damian’s voice, but lacking its usual suggestive undertone. He hadn’t used his typical flirtatious term of endearment for her.

Scarlett turned her head, her brow furrowing slightly. “Damian?”

Damian’s gaze swept over Scarlett before shifting respectfully to Henry and Diana. “Mr. Theron, Mrs. Theron,” he greeted politely.

Then, he looked toward Nathan, whose expression had turned stony. “Mr. Nathan Theron.”

Finally, his eyes settled on Violet. “Mrs. Violet Theron.”

His social graces were thorough; he even remembered to acknowledge Clara with a warm, “Well, hello there.”

Scarlett was completely baffled by his intentions, her frown deepening.

Damian finally returned his attention to her, a glint of amusement in his eyes. “Fancy running into

you all here. I hope you don’t mind if I join your family dinner?”

Scarlett couldn’t decipher his game. Before she could formulate a response, Nathan slowly turned his head to fix Damian with a cool stare. His tone was icy. “Mr. Langley, you’re accustomed to the finest dining. I fear our casual family meal might be beneath your usual standards.”

Though Nathan didn’t explicitly say “no,” his meaning was abundantly clear.

Damian, however, feigned ignorance. Without a hint of ceremony, he pulled out the empty chair beside Scarlett and sat down, offering Nathan a charming smile. “You flatter me, Mr. Nathan Theron. We all put our pants on one leg at a time. There’s no such thing as being ‘above’ a good meal with good company.”

Seeing Damian settle in, Scarlett quickly glanced at Nathan. Nathan had explicitly warned her to keep her distance from Damian.

But Damian was proving as persistent as gum on a shoe.

Nathan didn’t lose his composure, but his demeanor remained decidedly unfriendly. “Our family can be rather... unrefined. I’m concerned we might not be compatible company for someone of your social standing.”

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Chapter 175 The Uninvited Guest

82

Finished

The subtext was heavy. Even Diana, who wasn't fully aware of the background, caught the implication. But Damian simply shrugged it off with an easygoing air. "Mr. Nathan Theron, if

you

call yourselves unrefined, then I'm downright feral. If it's alright, I'll follow Scarlett's lead and call you 'Nathan.'

With that, Damian unceremoniously reached for the wine bottle and poured himself a generous glass. He raised it and, completely disregarding Nathan's willingness, clinked it against the glass in front of Nathan. "Nathan, this one's for you."

He downed the entire contents in one go.

Since Damian had offered the toast, no matter how much Nathan disliked him, social decorum forced him to temporarily restrain his displeasure.

Scarlett, seated between Nathan and Damian, felt a cold sweat break out.

Given Nathan's temperament, he held no respect for people he disliked. But she never expected Damian to preemptively offer a toast.

This move effectively stripped Nathan of any valid reason to refuse Damian's presence at the table.

Though Damian often seemed to lack principles, he was, after all, a seasoned player in the business world. He knew precisely which approach to take with different people.

Once seated, Damian picked up his glass and made a round, toasting everyone starting with Henry. He didn't exclude even Clara.

Only after completing this social ritual did he begin to eat.

People from old-money families like the Langleys weren't typically seen in casual eateries like this.

But Damian was the exception. He showed no trace of condescension toward the Theron family's choice of restaurant, enthusiastically serving himself from the shared platters.

When he found a particularly delicious morsel, he would thoughtfully serve some to Scarlett and Clara.

Damian's behavior was impeccable. Clara took an instant liking to him and kept asking, "Sir, are you my aunt's friend?"

“Hmm, we’re friends,” Damian replied, a sly grin playing on his lips. “But we won’t stay just friends forever.”

Clara didn’t grasp his meaning. She wrinkled her little nose. “Why can’t you be friends forever?”

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Chapter 175 The Uninvited Guest

Damian smiled and ruffled her hair affectionately. “You’ll understand when you’re older.”

82

Finished

Hearing Damian speak this way to his daughter, Nathan felt a surge of instinctive anger, but under the table, Violet gently patted the back of his hand and shook her head almost imperceptibly.

The inexplicable fury subsided, banked for the moment.

Scarlett didn’t know Damian well, but during this meal, she witnessed a different facet of him.

In front of her family, he didn’t use inappropriate pet names or try any physical advances. Instead, he was considerate and attentive, looking out for her.

He served her food, refilled her water glass, and even gently reminded her to wipe a smudge from the corner of her mouth.

Even with Damian, an uninvited outsider, present, the atmosphere never grew stiff, as he proactively kept the conversation flowing and engaging.

All in all, the meal was surprisingly pleasant.

Vincent had just returned from his business trip and pulled up to the driveway of Ravensshade Villa. Before he could even get out of the car, a notification chimed on his phone.

Glancing down, he saw it was a message from Daniel-containing a single photo.

In the picture, Scarlett and Damian were seated side-by-side. Damian was in the act of serving her food from a shared plate, and the Theron's surrounding them appeared engaged in the conversation, the overall atmosphere seeming warm and harmonious.

Vincent stared at the photo for a long moment, an inexplicable feeling settling in his chest—it looked unsettlingly like a family giving their approval to a suitor.

He didn't reply to Daniel, silently locking his phone and slipping it back into his pocket.

Entering the villa, Vanessa spotted him immediately and came running. "Daddy! You're finally back!"

Vincent scooped Vanessa up into his arms. His eyes scanned the living room, but he didn't see Sabrina or Maria. A flicker of curiosity crossed his face. "Where are Sabrina and Maria?" he asked Vanessa.

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14:58 Sat, Jan 10

Awakened Housewife. Ignore Betrayer's Begs

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 176[891 words]

Chapter 176 Unexpected Encounter

82

Finished

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Vanessa, holding onto Vincent's neck, replied, "Sabrina took Maria to get cleaned me to play with my toys downstairs for a bit and said she'd give me a bath later."

Vincent touched his forehead to Vanessa's gently, then set her down on the sofa.

Remembering the photo Daniel had sent, he suddenly said, "Vanessa, why don't you call Mom?"

Hearing this, Vanessa pouted. "Daddy, I don't want to."

Vincent thought for a moment, then softened his tone. "I have something to ask Mom. Do it as a favor for me?"

Vanessa sighed dramatically but agreed. "Alright then."

Taking out her children's smartwatch, Vanessa called Scarlett.

The call connected, but no one answered.

Vanessa tried twice, both times with no response.

Vincent frowned. He took out his own phone and sent a message to Scarlett. "I'm back from my business trip."

After waiting several minutes, there was still no reply.

He knew Scarlett was currently having dinner with Damian and her family. He told himself not to overthink it, but an inexplicable irritation began to simmer inside him.

He stood up abruptly. To Vanessa, who was looking at him puzzled, he said, "Vanessa, I have to go out for a bit. Be good at home."

Just then, Sabrina appeared on the stairs. Seeing Vincent about to leave right after returning, she quickly called out, "Vincent, are you going out again?"

Vincent looked back at her. "Daniel needs me for something. I'm heading over."

After leaving Ravensshade Villa, Vincent called Daniel.

After getting the address, he drove straight there.

Parking outside the restaurant, as he stepped out of the car, he could clearly see the Theron family through the glass window.

Scarlett was sitting in her seat. Damian stood beside her, carefully placing a birthday hat on her

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Chapter 176 Unexpected Encounter

head. Violet pushed a cake in front of her. Nathan placed candles on it and lit them.

Clara sat on Diana's lap, clapping her hands and singing "Happy Birthday".

Fincher

Scarlett closed her eyes facing the cake, her hands clasped together, silently making a wish.

After making her wish, she blew out the candles. Violet handed her the knife to cut the cake.

The family was joyous and harmonious. Damian stood to the side. Though an outsider, he seemed to share in the feeling, smiling gently and happily.

Vincent froze where he stood. Seeing this scene, he finally realized-today was Scarlett's birthday.

After five years of marriage, he had never heard her mention her birthday, nor had he ever asked.

Just then, Daniel walked up behind him. He patted Vincent's shoulder, his voice low. "Scarlett and Damian seem quite close."

Vincent responded flatly, "Hmm."

Hearing this, Daniel frowned. "You have no thoughts about it?"

Vincent's voice was cold. "This doesn't prove anything."

Daniel's anxiety flared. "Vincent, do you really need to get cheated on right to your face before you're satisfied?"

But Vincent was unusually confident. "She wouldn't do that."

With that, Vincent stepped directly into the restaurant.

His presence was so out of place that many people turned to look. Vincent ignored the stares and walked straight towards the Therons.

Scarlett was distributing the cake. Since her back was to Vincent, she didn't know he had arrived.

Diana and Henry were the first to notice Vincent, their faces darkening.

Damian was most adept at reading expressions. Noticing the change in the elders' faces, he looked behind him.

Seeing Vincent, he slightly furrowed his brow,

Vincent wasn't familiar with the Therons, but it wasn't hard to tell who was who.

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Chapter 176 Unexpected Encounter

After approaching, he greeted them in turn. "Henry, Diana, Nathan, Violet..."

82

Finished

Hearing Vincent's voice, Scarlett turned her head to look at him. She was clearly startled but said nothing.

Vincent also looked at her, a faint smile in his eyes. He asked softly, "It's your birthday today? Why didn't you tell me in advance?"

His tone even held a hint of reproach.

The Therons knew Vincent had hurt Scarlett deeply. None of them had a pleasant expression for him.

Listening to Vincent's question, Scarlett found it ridiculous. But before she could say anything, Damian spoke up first, his tone mocking. "Mr. Stewart can't even remember his own wife's birthday. Even if she had told you in advance, the result would probably be the same."

Vincent glanced at Damian, his expression blank. "This is a family matter. There's no need for an outsider like Mr. Langley to concern himself."

Damian let out a clear, loud laugh. “Heh. I’m afraid Mr. Stewart is the one who doesn’t realize he’s the outsider.”

Vincent’s face darkened. The look he shot Damian was distinctly icy. Damian met his head-on, not backing down in the slightest.

Scarlett stood between the two men, caught in the crossfire.

As the standoff continued, Vincent’s phone rang, perfectly timed.

He glanced down, took a few steps to the side, and answered the call.

gaze

On the other end, Sabrina’s anxious voice came through. “Vincent, my mom’s surgical incision has reopened! She’s bleeding a lot!”

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14:58 Sat, Jan 10

Awakened Housewife Ignore Betrayer’s Begs

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 177[845 words]

Chapter 177 Empty Gestures

82

Finished

Upon hearing Sabrina’s urgent words, Vincent’s brow furrowed in concern. “Okay, I’ll be right back,” he replied immediately.

After hanging up, he returned to the Theron family's table with an apologetic expression. "Henry, Diana, I have some urgent matters to handle. Please let me take care of the bill for tonight's dinner."

From start to finish, the Therons avoided making eye contact with him.

Though his attitude remained respectful, no one acknowledged his presence.

Vincent didn't press further. Turning to Scarlett, he spoke gently, "For your birthday, I'll make it up to you when I'm free. I have to go now."

Scarlett looked up at him, her voice even. "It's not necessary."

Vincent's frown deepened. "Be reasonable."

She wanted to say more, but he had already turned and was heading toward the host stand, clearly intending to settle the bill.

Just then, Damian called out from nearby, "Mr. Stewart, wait a moment."

Vincent paused.

With a faint, confident smile, Damian continued, "I just acquired this restaurant. There's no need for you to pay, Mr. Stewart. This meal is on me."

Hearing this, Vincent offered no further response and quickly left the restaurant.

Scarlett resumed distributing the cake, then handed out forks to everyone.

Diana, her okay?"

eyes red-rimmed with heartache for her daughter, asked softly, "Scarlett, are you

Scarlett shrugged with practiced indifference. "I'm used to it."

She knew her family was worried, but the truth was, she didn't feel as deeply affected as she once would have.

Hoping to lighten the mood, she said, "Let's eat the cake."

Clara, with frosting smeared around her mouth, declared with childish sincerity, "Auntie, you're so nice. You'll definitely meet a good person, I will have a very, very, very good uncle someday."

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Chapter 177 Empty Gestures

82

Finished

Scarlett couldn't help but smile at Clara's innocent words.

Hearing this, Damian leaned toward Clara and asked with mock seriousness, "Clara, what do

think of me? How am I?"

you

Clara bit her fork, thinking carefully before replying, "Sir, you are good-looking, but good-looking people can be risky too."

Damian's smile widened. "But I'm different."

Clara nodded thoughtfully. "Then do

your best."

Listening to their exchange, Scarlett could feel the low pressure emanating from Nathan beside her.

After a moment's hesitation, she gently clarified to Clara, "Clara, Damian and I are just friends."

Clara let out a disappointed "Ah," then sighed, "Oh, alright then."

Damian turned to Scarlett and lowered his voice beside her ear. "But that might not be the case in the future."

Only Scarlett heard him. With her family present, she chose not to respond.

After finishing the cake, the dinner party came to a close.

Clara, exhausted from the excitement, had fallen asleep on Nathan's shoulder.

As the family prepared to leave the restaurant, Damian saw them off.

Only Scarlett and Violet hadn't drunk alcohol, so they were responsible for driving.

Violet drove off first. Just as Scarlett was about to get into her car, Damian suddenly grabbed her arm and pulled her into an embrace.

Startled, Scarlett pushed against him. "Damian, what are you doing now?"

He pressed her against the car door, trapping her between his chest and the vehicle. Leaning close, his voice was husky from the alcohol. "Baby, happy birthday."

Scarlett pushed him firmly. "Damian, that's enough. Stop this act."

He loomed over her, his alcohol-laced breath warm against her skin. "Baby, I prepared a surprise for you in your room. I hope you'll like it when you see it."

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Chapter 177 Empty Gestures

Scarlett was the last to return to the Theron Manor.

82

Finished

When she entered the living room, Nathan and Violet were still sitting on the sofa-it seemed they had been waiting for her.

Feeling slightly apprehensive, she called out timidly, "Nathan, Violet."

Nathan turned and fixed her with a stern look. "Come here. I have questions for you."

His tone left no room for argument; it was clearly not going to be a pleasant conversation.

Since childhood, Scarlett had always been somewhat intimidated by her brother.

Even though she knew he loved her deeply, that authoritative aura of his never failed to make her nervous.

She walked over and stood in front of the coffee table. Violet gestured for her to sit, but Nathan spoke first, "Has the divorce matter not been settled yet?"

Scarlett replied, “Still waiting for Vincent to sign.”

Nathan’s frown deepened. “Is he unwilling to sign? Or is there an issue with the asset division?”

Truthfully, Scarlett herself didn’t know why Vincent was delaying.

She shook her head, meeting Nathan’s gaze. “I don’t know either. He hasn’t discussed it with me yet.”

Nathan’s expression darkened, his voice cold and firm. “Since you’ve decided to divorce, don’t drag your feet.”

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Awakened Housewife Ignore Betrayer’s Beys

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 178[947 words]

Chapter 178 Midnight Surprise.

82

Finished

Scarlett could sense Nathan’s lingering anger over Vincent’s unexpected appearance that evening. Speaking softly, she reassured him, “Nathan, I’ll call him when I go upstairs. I’ll have a proper talk with him about the divorce.”

Only then did Nathan give a low “Hmm” and say, “Go on upstairs, then.”

Scarlett glanced at Nathan, then at Violet. “Good night, Nathan, Violet.”

With that, she made her way upstairs.

Nathan’s urgency about the divorce had momentarily overshadowed Damian’s whispered words in her ear. For a moment, she completely forgot about the so-called “surprise” he had mentioned.

When she pushed open her bedroom door, Scarlett instinctively reached for the light switch. The scene that greeted her made her gasp softly, her hand flying to her mouth.

Worried that Nathan or others might notice, she quickly closed the door behind her.

Her usually clean, cozy bedroom was now carpeted with deep red rose petals. A huge bouquet of champagne-colored roses lay in the center of her large bed, and beside them sat an elaborately wrapped, oversized gift box.

Scarlett walked slowly toward the bed, her steps rustling softly against the rose petals. Her eyes fell on a birthday card placed carefully atop the duvet.

“Happy Birthday to my baby.”

The words, written with bold, unrestrained strokes, perfectly reflected Damian’s personality- wild and flamboyant.

Inside the large box were numerous individually wrapped gifts. As she picked each one up, realized they corresponded to different birthdays she had celebrated without him.

Age 1: A lollipop.

Age 2: A picture book.

Age 3: An exquisite hair clip.

Age 4: A toy puzzle set.

The years slipped by, bringing with them a string of thoughtful, age-appropriate gifts that marked each chapter of her growth.

she

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Chapter 178 Midnight Surprise

82

Finished

Age 18: A pair of flawlessly crafted crystal high heels, clearly expensive and elegant.

Age 22: A delicate pearl bracelet.

Age 26: A striking red strapless gown.

Age 27: A card bearing Damian's cursive script. "Write the words 'I Do' to unlock a new birthday gift."

Scarlett knew there was a trick hidden here and naturally refrained from writing "I Do". Given Damian's methods, he had definitely set a trap for her.

But looking at the room's elaborate decoration, she could tell he had invested considerable time and effort into this

gesture.

She had been home all day. Presumably, he had entered her room after they left for the restaurant-decorating here before rushing to the restaurant and pretending to run into them.

Although she didn't fully understand his true intentions, Scarlett had to admit-Damian knew how to make a woman feel special.

But how much of his kindness was genuine?

Scarlett sat down on the edge of the bed. She reached out and gently touched the velvety rose petals, her thoughts drifting unexpectedly to Vincent.

In five years of marriage, Vincent had never once given her a birthday gift.

This was also the first time Scarlett had experienced such thoughtful attention.

Even if Damian had ulterior motives, his actions had genuinely made her feel a flicker of warmth.

Just then, her phone rang.

Thinking it might be Vincent, Scarlett answered immediately, but the voice that came through was Damian's low, muffled laughter. "Baby, do you like the surprise I sent you?"

After a few seconds of silence, just as Scarlett was about to respond, Damian spoke first, “Look outside the window.”

Curious, she clutched her phone and moved toward the window.

His voice came again, soft but clear. “Look down.”

Scarlett did. Parked by the roadside under the sycamore tree was a pure black car. Under the

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Chapter 178 Midnight Surprise

cold moonlight, a long shadow stretched across the pavement.

82

Finished

Damian leaned casually against the car door, his black trench coat open, the night breeze gently ruffling his hair. His handsome face wore a deep, knowing smile.

He held his phone to his ear with his left hand, while his right hand rose and waved deliberately in the direction of Scarlett’s window.

Through the receiver, she could hear the soft whish of the breeze, mingling with his voice-rich and pleasant, like a cello’s melody. “Do you like the gifts I gave you?”

Damian’s gaze accurately locked onto Scarlett’s. He stood under the night sky, his figure tall and striking.

He was undeniably handsome, like a figure who had stepped straight out of a painting.

Scarlett had to admit-those gifts had stirred something in her heart.

But she wasn’t a naive young girl anymore. She knew Damian must have his own agenda.

So, she deliberately replied coldly, “Damian, you really don’t need to do this. I’m a person of no particular value.”

She didn’t come from a prominent family. Even if he was approaching her because of Vincent, she held no real weight in Vincent’s eyes.

Having said that, she ended the call.

Downstairs, Damian didn't leave. Instead, he leaned over and lit a box of fireworks. As the sparks shot into the sky and burst into brilliant blooms, Scarlett thought she saw him turn his head and smile up at her.

At the same moment, her phone screen lit up with a new message from Damian.

"I will always be like this."

The fireworks quickly faded, and Scarlett drew her curtains closed.

She didn't reply to Damian's message. Instead, she picked up her phone again and called Vincent.

The call connected quickly, but the voice that answered was Vanessa's. "Mom?"

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 179[831 words]

Chapter 179 Corporate Snub

Scarlett was momentarily taken aback before she asked, "Where's your dad?"

Vanessa replied, "Maria was bleeding. Dad and Sabrina took her to the hospital."

Hearing this, Scarlett only responded indifferently, "Hmm."

With that, she was about to hang up.

But then Vanessa suddenly asked, "Mom, do you really hate Sabrina?"

Finished

Scarlett didn't know why her daughter would ask this, but she didn't see any reason to hide the truth. "Yes," she said simply.

Vanessa sounded confused. "But Mom, why?"

Scarlett didn't elaborate much, only saying, "You'll understand when you're older."

Vanessa pressed further, "What about Mr. Huntley? Why does he hate Sabrina? Did you tell him to?"

Scarlett paused, then replied coolly, "If you think so, then that's it."

Even if she tried to explain, Vanessa probably wouldn't believe her anyway.

Vanessa grew upset, huffing, "Mom, you're so mean! Is it just because Sabrina can play the piano, she's pretty, has a good figure, and is studying medicine, that you hate her?"

A sharp, dense pain spread through Scarlett's chest. She asked, almost amused, "So, is that why you like her so much too? For those reasons?"

Vanessa retorted angrily, "No! It's because Sabrina is gentler than you, better than you."

But by now, Scarlett felt numb to it all. She simply said flatly, "As long as you like her."

With that, she ended the call.

After hanging up, Scarlett sat blankly on the edge of the bed for a while.

Vanessa's words no longer stirred any emotion in her.

Since she already wanted Sabrina to be her mother, the reasons behind her preference hardly mattered anymore.

Pulling herself together, Scarlett began tidying the room.

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15:00 Sat, Jan 10

Chapter 179 Corporate Snub

After clearing away the petals and gifts, she washed up and went to bed.

82

Finished

The next morning, after getting ready, Scarlett left the Theron Manor.

Her goal was clear-to see Vincent face-to-face and discuss the divorce.

She went directly to his company.

Downstairs in the corporate building, Scarlett called Vincent. He didn't answer but sent a text instead. "I'm in an external meeting. We'll talk later."

Scarlett replied. "Then I'll wait for you at your company."

Vincent didn't respond further. Scarlett sat down in the first-floor lobby and waited quietly.

After about half an hour, the receptionist suddenly perked up, standing with a beaming smile. "Ms. Monroe! You're here?"

Her face was full of flattery, eyes curved into crescents.

Hearing this, Scarlett looked over and saw Sabrina entering.

"Where's Vincent?" Sabrina asked as she approached the front desk.

The receptionist replied eagerly, "Mr. Stewart is at an external meeting. But he instructed us long ago that whenever you come, if he's not here, you can wait in his office. Let me take you up right now."

Sabrina smiled gently. "Thank you for the trouble."

The receptionist quickly waved it off. "No need for formalities with us, Ms. Monroe. Just let us know what you need."

Sabrina nodded with an "Hmm" and said nothing more.

The receptionist then escorted her to the CEO's private elevator.

Scarlett watched everything unfold, an inexplicable bitterness settling in her heart.

In all her years of marriage to Vincent, she had hardly ever visited his company.

Yet Sabrina was already treated like the lady of the house here.

She was the legal wife, yet none of Vincent's friends or subordinates acknowledged her.

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Chapter 129 corporate Snob

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Instead, everyone showed respect and deference to Sabrina,

It spoke volumes about how much Vincent truly valued her.

Only because he cared would his inner circle extend such courtesy to Sabrina.

After waiting another half hour or so, the sound of a car horn finally echoed from outside.

Vincent walked in, surrounded by a group of associates. Spotting him return, Scarlett quickly stood up.

Abbott, walking beside Vincent, noticed Scarlett first and quietly alerted him, "Mr. Stewart, it's Mrs. Stewart."

Hearing this, Vincent glanced toward where Scarlett stood. His brow furrowed slightly.

He hadn't seen the message where Scarlett said she'd wait at his company, so her presence came as a surprise.

As he approached, he stopped, a hint of displeasure in his tone. "What are you doing here?"

Scarlett caught a subtle undercurrent of meaning in his voice-hinting she was someone who shouldn't be here, someone whose presence might embarrass him.

Even so, Scarlett no longer cared. She simply said, "There's something we need to discuss privately."

With so many people around, she avoided explicitly mentioning the divorce.

Vincent wasn't sure what she wanted to say, but he was indeed busy. "I have a meeting upstairs. Wait for me for a bit."

Scarlett frowned, "How long?"

Vincent thought for a moment before answering, "Half an hour."

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15:00 Sat, Jan 10

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 180[933 words]

Chapter 180 The Final Request

Though frustrated, Scarlett could only agree. "Fine, I'll wait."

82

Finished

She didn't want to drag this out any longer. The only one growing weary from the delay was herself.

The group accompanying Vincent clearly didn't recognize Scarlett. They watched her with undisguised curiosity and judgment.

She ignored their unfriendly gazes.

Vincent took the CEO's private elevator upstairs, and Scarlett resumed her seat in the lobby.

After nearly two hours of waiting, the receptionist hadn't even offered her a glass of water. But it didn't matter-she was only here to discuss the divorce.

Just as she was growing tired from sitting, her phone buzzed with a text from Vincent. "I'll pick you up at the hospital tomorrow. Whatever it is, we can talk tomorrow evening. I've already left the company. It's Sunday today; Vanessa is waiting for me to take her out."

Reading the message, Scarlett felt a surge of anger so intense she nearly wanted to slap him through the screen.

But things had come to this point, and she had no choice but to wait again.

The next evening, after her shift ended, Scarlett walked out of the hospital and spotted Vincent's car.

Once she got in, she noticed a bouquet of flowers on the back seat, along with a luxury-brand shopping bag. She didn't know what was inside, but she didn't have to guess-these were clearly gifts Vincent had prepared for Sabrina.

After driving out of the congested area, Vincent glanced at Scarlett and said, "The flowers and gift are belated birthday presents for you. I hope you like them."

Hearing this, Scarlett was momentarily stunned, but she quickly replied coldly, "Vincent, I don't need these."

Her tone was sharp with displeasure. Vincent assumed she was still upset about him forgetting her birthday.

He responded patiently, almost gently, "I'll remember your birthday from now on."

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Chapter 180 The Final Request

Scarlett felt it was pointless to argue. She simply asked, "Where are we going now?"

Vincent said, "I've already booked a restaurant."

Finished

Feeling a restaurant wasn't the right place for their discussion, she suggested, "Let's go to the Oakland Villa."

Oakland Villa was their marital home. It seemed fitting to end everything where it began.

Vincent was taken aback, frowning slightly. "I don't think today is your fertile window."

Realizing what he meant, Scarlett's expression turned icy. "Vincent, is a second child the only thing we have to talk about?"

Vincent sounded genuinely confused. "Hmm?"

The car was still moving. Scarlett said firmly, "Pull over."

Without further questions, Vincent complied-the first time he had ever listened to her so readily.

And the flowers and gifts in the back seat were also the first things he had ever given her.

Once the car stopped, Scarlett turned to face Vincent. Her eyes held only coldness and distance. "I prepared the agreement a long time ago. Is there something you're unsatisfied with that's preventing you from signing it?"

Vincent still hadn't seen the agreement and didn't realize it was a divorce settlement.

He shook his head, his reply brief. "No."

Scarlett felt a surge of frustration so intense it tightened her chest. She took a slow, deep breath, then spoke to Vincent with unusual calm, "Vincent, let's end this here. I won't stand in the way of you and anyone else, but this marriage in name only should be terminated."

Her expression was unreadable-devoid of sadness, joy, or anger, only a profound detachment.

This time, Vincent was certain. Scarlett was talking about divorcing him.

She sat quietly in the passenger seat, her gaze steady as she looked at him.

Vincent studied her face, still struggling to process what he had heard. "What did you say?" he asked, needing confirmation.

They had been married for five years. Throughout that time, she had always been compliant— a devoted mother to Vanessa, attentive to his parents, never one to make waves.

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Chapter 180 The Final Request

82

Finished

Vincent had appreciated this version of Scarlett. Her lack of drama had allowed their marriage to continue peacefully for half a decade.

But now, the ever-dutiful and accommodating Scarlett was asking for a divorce.

Even though he had heard her clearly, Vincent needed to hear it again.

Scarlett's gaze remained utterly calm. "Vincent, let's get a divorce," she repeated.

Her tone was as matter-of-fact as if she were commenting on what she had for lunch.

It was a statement that should have shattered worlds, yet she delivered it with unsettling serenity.

Vincent continued to watch her. He couldn't quite name the emotion stirring inside him, but he heard his own voice, relatively composed, ask her, "Is it because of Damian that you're asking for a divorce?"

In five years of marriage, he had always known he didn't love her, but she had consistently shown deep care for him.

For her to let go so calmly now, Vincent was convinced there had to be a reason.

Putting the pieces together, the only person who came to mind was Damian.

Scarlett shook her head slowly. Her voice carried the same detached quality as before. "No. It's for myself."

Vincent leaned back against his seat, closing his eyes briefly. When he opened them again, he turned to face Scarlett and asked, "What about Vanessa? What do we do about her?"

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 181[830 words]

Chapter 181 Letting Go

Finished

Scarlett's reply was crisp and decisive. "I won't fight you for custody of Vanessa. She can stay with you from now on."

Vincent frowned, his eyes clouded with confusion. "Are you sure you've thought this through?"

Scarlett nodded firmly. "Yes."

Seeing she wasn't joking, Vincent fell silent for a moment before responding, "Then allow me some time to consider. I need to go back and ask for Vanessa's opinion."

Noticing that Vincent showed not a hint of wanting her to stay, Scarlett felt an unexpected pang in her heart.

Perhaps he had been waiting for this day all along.

They shared a child; the divorce couldn't be decided by just the two of them.

But Scarlett believed Vanessa would undoubtedly approve.

So, she agreed to Vincent's suggestion. "Is one day enough?"

Vincent had never seen such resolute determination in Scarlett's eyes before.

He gazed at her for a long moment before finally giving a quiet "Hmm."

Seeing his agreement, Scarlett reached for the car door handle. "Then we'll contact each other tomorrow evening."

With that, she stepped out of the car.

Standing by the roadside, she took a moment to collect herself before preparing to leave.

But just then, the passenger side window rolled down. Vincent looked out at her. "The flowers and gift are for you. Take them with you."

Hearing this, Scarlett's eyes stung briefly, but she quickly composed herself.

When she turned back to Vincent, she offered a faint, distant smile. "No need. I'm past the time when I needed those things."

With that, she walked away without a trace of hesitation.

Five years, five birthdays. Each time, Scarlett had secretly hoped Vincent would prepare her birthday with flowers or a gift. And each time, she had been disappointed.

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Chapter 181 Letting Go

82

Finished

In truth, even a simple "Happy Birthday" from him would have meant something. But now, none of it mattered anymore.

Watching Scarlett's resolute retreating figure, Vincent felt strangely disoriented.

His mind drifted to memories of the Scarlett who always greeted him with a warm smile, took care of him meticulously, and showed endless patience and tenderness toward their daughter.

Now, only cold detachment remained.

Vincent couldn't quite identify what he was feeling. He didn't know whether he was willing to divorce or not.

He only thought, since Scarlett had brought it up, he couldn't very well refuse.

After returning to Ravensshade Villa, he found Vanessa already washed and tucked into bed.

Vincent knocked softly outside her door. "Vanessa, can I come in?"

Vanessa's cheerful voice replied, "Daddy, come in!"

When he entered, she was watching cartoons on her tablet.

She sat up eagerly, calling out, "Daddy!"

Vincent sat on the edge of the bed, stroking her hair affectionately. "Sleepy?"

Vanessa shook her head. "Daddy, I'm not sleepy."

He gently pinched her nose. "Then I want to talk to you about something."

Vanessa nodded brightly. "Okay, Daddy, go ahead."

Looking at Vanessa's innocent, cheerful face, Vincent felt a dull ache in his chest.

On the drive back, he had already rehearsed how to broach the subject.

But now, faced with her trusting gaze, he found himself at a loss for words.

Noticing his hesitation, Vanessa hugged his arm. "Daddy, what's wrong?"

Vincent looked down at her for a long moment. Finally, steeling himself, he asked, "If Daddy and Mommy live separately from now on, and you see Mommy less and less, would you be sad?"

Vanessa shook her head without hesitation. "No. Even if I never saw her again, I wouldn't be sad."

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Chapter 181 Letting Go

I just need you and Sabrina to be good to me."

Hearing this, Vincent fell silent.

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The topic he had struggled to bring up turned out to be something his daughter didn't mind at all.

But since she seemed unaffected, he didn't press further.

After leaving Vanessa's room, Vincent sent a message to Scarlett. "I've spoken with Vanessa. Regarding the divorce agreement, I'll have my lawyer handle it."

Within minutes, Scarlett replied. "Okay."

Staring at that single, cold word, Vincent sank into deep thought.

Was this really the same Scarlett who had loved him so deeply and cherished Vanessa so dearly? Was she truly willing to let go of their marriage so easily?

The next day, after her shift ended, Scarlett ran into Nolan at the hospital entrance and she also spotted Vincent's car parked nearby.

Seeing her come out, Nolan approached and asked, "Have dinner together?"

Scarlett offered a light smile. "I need to discuss the divorce with Vincent later. I'll treat you next time."

Hearing this, Nolan was visibly startled, but a subtle warmth flickered in his eyes. "Okay," he said gently.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 182[856 words]

Chapter 182 Family Pretense.

After saying goodbye to Nolan, Scarlett walked over to Vincent's car and got inside.

Once seated, she didn't waste any time. "Let's talk at the Oakland Villa. It's quieter there."

Finished

Hearing her bring up the divorce the moment she got in, Vincent couldn't help but frown. His gaze sharpened as he studied her.

Feeling uneasy under his intense scrutiny, Scarlett asked, "What is it?"

"Grandpa wants us to go back for dinner," Vincent explained. "I came to pick you up. He said it's to make up for your birthday."

Scarlett was taken aback, then quickly followed up, "How long until the divorce agreement is ready?"

"I've already given the instructions," Vincent replied.

Then, staring intently into her eyes, he asked, "Are you in a hurry?"

Scarlett didn't avoid his gaze. She met it directly and answered honestly, "Yes."

Vincent paused. As he lowered his eyes, he noticed the bracelet on her wrist-the one Damian had won at the auction. Now it was on her wrist.

He thought she must be asking for a divorce because of Damian. But it didn't really matter. He had never loved her anyway.

Before Vincent could say anything more, his phone rang. It was Xavier.

Answering the call, he heard Xavier's impatient voice. "You rascal, have you picked up Scarlett yet?"

Vincent replied, "Yes, I have."

Xavier urged, "Then hurry back. Everyone's waiting for you."

Vincent acknowledged and hung up.

After putting his phone away, he turned to Scarlett again. "Once the divorce agreement is drafted, I'll find time to contact you to sign it."

Scarlett knew the divorce couldn't be rushed, especially in a family like Vincent's. With a child involved and so many ties to consider, she simply agreed, "Hmm."

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Chapter 182 Family Pretense

Seeing her acceptance, Vincent added, "For now, let's go back for dinner."

With that, he started the car and drove off.

The ride to the Stewart Manor was spent in silence.

Thinking of Xavier, Scarlett felt a pang of guilt.

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Finished

Most people might accept their divorce, but Xavier was different. He genuinely wanted Scarlett and Vincent to stay together forever.

Their marriage had happened largely because Xavier had strongly pushed for it.

Back then, Scarlett had been deeply grateful to him and had always treated him with warmth and respect.

After the wedding, Xavier had treated her like his own granddaughter.

But now, getting a divorce... breaking the news to him would not be easy.

While stopped at a red light, Scarlett turned to look at Vincent. He stared straight ahead, jaw set tight, nose sharp, lips pressed thin, eyes gently closed, and thick eyelashes brushing his cheeks.

He was undeniably handsome-a face that had captivated countless people.

At one time, Scarlett had given everything for that face.

But now, it stirred nothing in her heart.

She studied him and asked, "How are you planning to explain things to Grandpa?"

Vincent glanced over. He answered plainly, "I don't know. But he won't agree to us divorcing."

He wasn't sure when it had started, but the way Scarlett looked at him had grown so distant.

After a moment's thought, Scarlett said, "Then let's keep it from him for now. After the divorce is finalized, you can break it to him slowly."

Hearing this, Vincent was momentarily stunned before finally giving a quiet "Hmm."

When they arrived at the Stewart Manor, the staff greeted them at the door.

After getting out of the car, Vincent didn't open the door for Scarlett but went straight to the trunk.

By the time she stepped out, he had already closed it, holding a large box that appeared to be a cake.

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Chapter 182 Family Pretense

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Finished

Inside the living room, Scarlett found Richard, Amanda, and Luke were also there, though Lucy hadn't returned.

Given Amanda's usual temperament, she would typically make sarcastic remarks toward Scarlett. But tonight, she was unusually quiet-not only did she refrain from speaking, but she also ate her meal peacefully.

Scarlett found it strange but didn't ask.

Once dinner began, Xavier instructed Vincent, "Vincent, serve Scarlett some food."

Vincent responded, "I know, Grandpa."

He placed a chicken drumstick and a piece of rib in Scarlett's bowl.

Looking at the food piled before her, Scarlett said flatly, "Thank you."

Luke, who happened to be sitting opposite her, couldn't resist a sarcastic comment. "So fake!"

Hearing this, Scarlett simply gave a low, dismissive laugh.

The meal proceeded relatively peacefully, largely because Amanda didn't pick any fights.

After everyone finished eating, the staff cleared the table.

Vincent had them bring the cake over and place it in the center. Once the candles were lit, the lights were turned off.

Xavier, sitting at the head of the table, called out to Luke, who was sitting in the corner. "Luke, stand up

and sing 'Happy Birthday' to Scarlett."

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 183[819 words]

Chapter 183 Birthday Disappointment

Finished

Luke was engrossed in his phone when Xavier’s voice cut through his focus. Without looking up, he muttered sarcastically, “Grandpa, she’s an adult, not a child. Why sing ‘Happy Birthday’?”

Xavier’s expression darkened with anger. “Fine! Then I’ll sing it for Scarlett myself!”

With that, Xavier cleared his throat and prepared to begin.

Richard and Amanda appeared to have been arguing earlier; they were now pointedly ignoring each other. Xavier didn’t bother involving them.

Vincent sat beside Scarlett, his attention fixed on his phone, fingers moving rapidly across the screen-probably texting someone.

Scarlett didn’t know who he was contacting, but she guessed it was Sabrina.

As for Luke, after bluntly refusing Xavier’s request, he had returned to his phone without another glance.

At the entire table, only Xavier genuinely wanted to celebrate her birthday.

Watching the scene unfold, Scarlett felt a dull ache in her chest.

Every person at this table was someone she had once tried so hard to please. But in reality, aside from Xavier, no one had truly valued her efforts.

Seeing Xavier’s slightly embarrassed expression, Scarlett said softly, “Grandpa, I feel your kindness. There’s no need to sing. Next time it’s your birthday, I’ll sing for you.”

Hearing this, Xavier’s eyes grew moist. He lowered his head, his voice raspy with emotion. “Then let’s cut the cake.”

Scarlett knew he felt sorry for her, but she managed a light smile. “Okay, I’ll give you the first piece.”

After cutting the cake, she carefully served the first slice to Xavier.

Xavier accepted it and began eating slowly.

Scarlett glanced at the others. Everyone was preoccupied with their own affairs, paying no attention to her birthday.

After serving Xavier, she cut a piece for herself and didn’t offer to serve anyone else.

As she sat down to eat her cake, Vincent finally put his phone away. He turned to her and said

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Chapter 183 Birthday Disappointment

quietly, “Happy Birthday.”

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Finished

The cake tasted sweet on her tongue, but her heart felt heavy. She offered him a strained smile. “Thank you.”

Xavier, being elderly, wasn’t accustomed to overly sweet foods, but not wanting to disappoint Scarlett, he finished the entire slice.

Putting down his fork, he looked at Scarlett. “Scarlett, come with me for a moment. I have something to discuss with you.”

Though puzzled, Scarlett stood up. “Okay.”

After helping Xavier back to his bedroom, they both sat on the edge of the bed.

Scarlett expected him to ask about her and Vincent, but that wasn’t the case.

Xavier said, “Lucy and her mother had a disagreement. As her sister-in-law, could you go talk to her? She still listens to you.”

Scarlett was confused. “What happened between them?”

Xavier explained plainly, “Although Lucy is studying medicine, she is still a Stewart. Amanda believes medicine isn’t her only path and wants her to find a suitable match and marry early. You’re also in medicine. Go see her, tell her how difficult and demanding the field can be. That should be enough.”

Hearing this, Scarlett instinctively refused. “Grandpa, I’m afraid I can’t persuade Lucy. She might not listen to me.”

Xavier, still concerned, insisted, “Whether it works or not, you have to try. Consider it a favor for me.”

Unable to refuse Xavier’s plea, Scarlett reluctantly agreed. “Grandpa, I can only do my best.”

Xavier told her, “She’s at a cocktail party right now. Go find her and have a good talk.”

Scarlett nodded. “I understand, Grandpa.”

After agreeing, she left Xavier’s room.

Just outside the bedroom, she ran straight into Vincent.

He looked at her, frowning. “What did Grandpa say to you?”

Scarlett didn’t elaborate, simply saying, “I need to go out.”

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Chapter 183 Birthday Disappointment

Vincent thought for a moment. “Then I’ll take you.”

Scarlett refused outright. “No need.”

As she tried to walk past him, Vincent followed. “Since when are you so formal with me?”

Before Scarlett could respond, Luke’s voice called from behind. “Vincent.”

Vincent stopped following her.

82

Finished

Turning, they saw Luke standing at his bedroom door in pajamas. He looked at Vincent and asked, “Isn’t Sabrina holding any concerts lately? I haven’t heard her play the piano in so long.”

Vincent replied, “She’s focusing on her studies recently. Concerts won’t happen for a while.”

Hearing this, Luke frowned. “You’re so influential. Are you telling me you can’t get Sabrina a graduation certificate?”

Seeing Vincent was held up by Luke, Scarlett didn’t linger to hear the rest of their conversation and simply walked away.

By the time she drove to the cocktail party Xavier had mentioned, it was exactly 10 p.m.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 184[842 words]

Chapter 184 Sisterly Bond

Finished

Xavier had provided Scarlett with an invitation, so she entered the venue without any issues.

Inside the banquet hall, all the guests were dressed in formal attire. Only Scarlett was in casual clothes.

Some people glanced over with curiosity, but she ignored the stares and began scanning the room for Lucy.

The hall was bustling with lively chatter and the clinking of glasses. The crowd was diverse, filled with handsome men and elegantly dressed women.

For a moment, Scarlett felt slightly overwhelmed.

But soon, she spotted Lucy sitting alone in a corner.

Unlike the others, Lucy wasn't socializing. Instead, she was quietly hiding away, focused on her plate of food.

As Scarlett moved toward her, a man of average height and unremarkable appearance also approached Lucy.

But before Scarlett could reach her, the man got there first.

Noticing his shifty eyes and furtive movements, Scarlett sensed something was wrong. She hurried over and sharply slapped the man's hand away just as it was about to touch Lucy.

"What are you doing?" Scarlett demanded, her voice sharp.

Hearing the commotion, Lucy stood up. Recognizing Scarlett, she quickly moved to stand beside her. "Scarlett?"

Keeping a wary eye on the scowling man, Scarlett said to Lucy, "Grandpa was worried about you. He asked me to check on you."

Lucy realized the man had been targeting her and felt a surge of fear, instinctively clutching Scarlett's sleeve. "Scarlett, I'm okay."

Hearing this, Scarlett growled at the man, "Get lost!"

The man's cheeks were flushed. He didn't speak, but the look he gave Scarlett was sinister, almost predatory.

Uncomfortable under his stare, Scarlett took Lucy's wrist. "Let's go outside to talk."

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Chapter 184 Sisterly Bond

To avoid further trouble, it was better not to stay in the main hall.

82

Finished

The two made their way to the venue's backyard, which was surprisingly spacious. It featured not only a swimming pool and a badminton court but also leisure swings and a gazebo for resting.

They sat down in the gazebo. At first, Scarlett remained silent, unsure how to begin.

After a brief pause, Lucy spoke first, "Scarlett, Grandpa sent you to persuade me, didn't he?"

Scarlett met Lucy's sincere gaze and nodded. "Yes."

Lucy smiled faintly. "Scarlett, I love medicine. I don't want to get married."

Scarlett still tried to advise her. "But Lucy, you're different from us. You're a Stewart."

Lucy wasn't offended. Instead, she looked seriously at Scarlett. "Scarlett, when you gave birth to Vanessa, you came back from death's door. I want to study medicine because I don't want women to face such dangers anymore."

Her words reminded Scarlett of her former self.

There was a time when she had felt the same passion and determination.

Back then, she had been resolved to become a highly skilled general surgeon.

But now, she was only a junior pediatric surgeon, not even qualified to perform major operations yet.

Touched, Scarlett didn't press further.

Just then, two girls waved at Lucy from a short distance away. "Lucy, come dance with us!"

Lucy called back, "Coming!"

Then, she looked down at Scarlett. "Scarlett, I'm going to hang out with my friends for a bit."

Scarlett nodded. "Okay, be careful."

Lucy stood up and walked a few steps before stopping. She turned back to Scarlett and smiled. "Scarlett, I won't change my mind about studying medicine. I think if I had been there when you had Vanessa, I wouldn't have let you be so afraid."

She wanted to specialize in obstetrics and gynecology, to ensure women wouldn't have to fear childbirth.

Hearing Lucy's words, Scarlett was deeply moved.

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Chapter 184 Sisterly Bond

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Finished

Memories of giving birth to Vanessa came flooding back, bringing a wave of panic. Tears welled in her eyes and began to fall.

The more she thought about it, the more her heart ached.

The child she had risked her life to bring into the world now wanted to call someone else "Mom".

Overcome with sadness, Scarlett covered her face with her hands.

After a short while, she caught the faint scent of tobacco behind her.

She turned around almost instantly, but her reaction was still too slow. Damian's hand was already resting gently on her shoulder.

As she turned, Damian chuckled softly at her wary expression. "Like a little puppy."

He could see she had been crying, but he didn't ask why. Instead, he teased her lightly, hoping to bring a smile to her face.

Scarlett looked up at him. “How are you always so... sneaky?”

Damian took a clean handkerchief from his pocket. He carefully dabbed the tears from the corner of her eye. “Because when you care about someone, you grow eyes all over your body, watching that person every moment, everywhere.”

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 185[780 words]

Chapter 185 Rescue in the Dark

There he was again-smooth-talking, one charming line after another.

82

Finished

Scarlett didn’t believe a word of it. She stood up from the stone bench and took a deliberate step back. “It’s late. I need to go back.”

With that, she turned to leave, but Damian was quicker. He caught her arm.

As Scarlett struggled, his grip tightened, effortlessly pulling her into his embrace.

His right arm wrapped firmly around her waist, holding her close against his chest.

At the same time, he guided her hand with his left, slipping it beneath his shirt until her palm rested against his abdomen.

He pressed her fingers against the defined lines of his stomach, looking down into her flustered, evasive eyes. "Feel it?"

Beyond the hard muscle under her touch, Scarlett felt nothing.

She tried to pull her hand back, but Damian held it firmly in place.

A cold sweat broke out on her skin. "Damian, let me go," she insisted, struggling weakly.

He lowered his head, his gaze fixed intently on her face. He saw only panic and discomfort there.

His expression softened into something almost wounded. "You really forgot," he said, his tone suddenly dejected. "Scarlett, you liar."

With that, he released both her hand and her waist.

Freed from his hold, Scarlett had no time to dwell on his cryptic words before her phone rang.

It was Vincent.

Wary of Damian causing more trouble, she answered promptly.

"Where are you?" Vincent's voice came through.

Before she could reply, he added, "Grandpa asked me to pick you up."

Scarlett glanced quickly at Damian. He was watching her with a look of unmistakable resentment that sent a chill down her spine.

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Chapter 185 Rescue in the Dark

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82

Finished

For some reason, she felt as though Damian believed she had wronged him.

But perhaps it was just her imagination.

After all, there was very little tying her and Damian together.

After a moment's hesitation, she replied to Vincent, "I'll be right out."

Hanging up, she didn't

she didn't say another word to Damian. Instead, she turned and hurried toward the banquet hall.

But the closer she got, the more she realized something was wrong-the sounds from inside weren't of celebration, but of panicked screams and the crashing of objects.

Only when she was near did she understand-something had gone terribly wrong in the hall.

The exit lay through that very room. Cautiously, Scarlett peered through the slightly open back door to assess the situation.

Inside, she saw overturned tables and shattered glass. A man was wielding a large machete, swinging it wildly.

Most guests had already fled. The armed man was scanning the room, shouting, "Where are you? Come out! Show yourself!"

When he turned, Scarlett recognized him-it was the same man who had tried to harass Lucy earlier.

Her heart sank. She suspected he might be targeting her.

Just then, a figure descended the staircase.

Scarlett saw clearly-it was Sabrina.

The enraged man spotted her and charged with the machete.

Sabrina seemed to realize the danger only then. Terrified, she screamed and scrambled back up the stairs.

As she ran, she cried out, "Vincent, save me!"

Scarlett watched as a door on the second floor flew open. Vincent rushed out at the sound of

the commotion.

Seeing the armed man chasing Sabrina, he grabbed the nearest object and hurled it downstairs, trying to distract the attacker.

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Chapter 185 Rescue in the Dark

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It was clear the man was likely dealing with mental health issues.

Vincent's move worked-the man's attention shifted toward the thrown item.

82

Finished

The object happened to strike the door near Scarlett, forcing it open just enough to reveal the color of her clothing. The man noticed immediately, turned, charged downstairs, and headed straight for her.

Seeing him coming, Scarlett spun around and sprinted back toward the courtyard.

The deranged man raised his machete, closing in on her.

Just as he was about to reach her-the gap between them narrowing rapidly-Damian appeared out of nowhere. He delivered a powerful kick to the man's side, sending him stumbling to the ground. The machete flew from his grip.

In one fluid motion, Damian kicked the machete into the swimming pool.

Overwhelmed by the rapid turn of events, Scarlett's legs gave way, and she collapsed to the ground.

Damian restrained the man until security arrived and took over.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 186[848 words]

Chapter 186 Abandoned Again

Scarlett sat dazed on the ground, her eyes vacant, staring into the distance.

82

Finished

Damian came over, held her close, and gently patted her back. "It's okay now. It's over," he murmured softly.

Scarlett's gaze drifted toward the banquet hall. She could just make out the figures of Vincent carrying Sabrina away.

He had left decisively, without a second thought for her still being at the party.

Scarlett thought, even if he didn't love her, surely he wouldn't be so indifferent to her safety?

After ensuring Sabrina was safe, he should have come back to look for her.

But it was all wishful thinking. Vincent never returned-not even a phone call.

He had said he was coming to pick her up. Yet in the end, he had picked up Sabrina instead.

Seeing Scarlett's distant expression, Damian followed her line of sight.

He too saw Vincent and Sabrina.

Guessing why she was upset, Damian let out a low, disdainful laugh. “Scarlett, you entrusted your life to the wrong person. You’ve not only let yourself down, you...”

You’ve let me down too...

But Damian left those last words unspoken.

Scarlett was indeed heartbroken, but after a while, she began to accept it.

If Vincent didn’t love her, why would he care whether she lived or died?

Once she had composed herself, Scarlett said to Damian, “Thank you for earlier.”

Damian turned his face away, his voice low. “Do you regret it?”

Scarlett answered honestly, “Yes.”

With that, she stood up, ready to leave the venue.

Damian walked beside her. “Since you know he’s not worth it, why waste time being sad?”

Scarlett stopped and looked at him. “Damian, I really am quite calm now.”

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Chapter 186 Abandoned Again

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It was the truth-though sometimes emotions defied logic.

After all, it had been eight years-nearly three thousand days and nights.

Damian didn’t press further, but he insisted on driving Scarlett back, even if it was to the Stewart Manor.

When they returned, Xavier was surprisingly still awake.

Seeing Scarlett enter the living room alone, he stood up quickly. “Scarlett, why are you back by yourself?”

Scarlett had already prepared an excuse. "Vincent brought me back, but he had something else to attend to, so he left again."

Xavier still seemed concerned. "What's wrong? Did you two argue?"

Scarlett offered a faint smile. "Grandpa, we didn't argue."

Without any feelings left, how could they even argue?

Xavier was only half-convinced but still urged, "You and Vincent must get along well. Once you've recovered your health, have another child for the Stewart family."

Not wanting to argue, Scarlett simply replied, "Hmm."

After chatting a while longer, she went upstairs to rest.

Sometime in the latter half of the night, half-asleep, Scarlett felt the bed dip beside her.

Then, someone pulled her into an embrace.

She was a light sleeper and opened her eyes instantly. By the moonlight filtering through the window, she recognized the face-it was Vincent.

"Vincent, why are you back?" she asked, confused.

She struggled slightly, slowly freeing herself from his arms.

Vincent noticed her movement but didn't stop her, letting her pull away.

After a long moment, he finally spoke, "There was trouble at the party. I had to leave urgently. Are you okay?"

Scarlett said simply, "I'm fine."

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Chapter 186 Abandoned Again

With that, she sat up, got out of bed, and went straight to the sofa.

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Seeing this, Vincent asked, puzzled, "What are you doing on the sofa?"

Scarlett lay down. "We're about to get divorced. It's better to keep some distance from now on."

Her aloofness reminded Vincent of how she used to be-every time they met, she had cherished those moments deeply.

She would hold him tightly, unwilling to let go, and tirelessly ask what he wanted to eat, offering to cook for him.

Whenever they stayed at the Stewart Manor, she would proactively curl up in his arms like a cat, trying to please him.

But now, she was like a hedgehog-prickly, sealed off, not letting anyone get close.

The Scarlett who had once loved him so deeply was completely gone, with no trace of her former self left.

Vincent didn't respond. He stared at the ceiling, gradually lost in thought.

But in the silence, his phone rang sharply.

It was Sabrina.

Answering, he heard her anxious voice. "Vincent, Vanessa is vomiting again, and she's complaining of stomach pain. Can you come back quickly?"

Hearing this, Vincent quickly sat up. "Okay, I'll be right back."

After hanging up, he turned on the light.

He got out of bed, put on his clothes and shoes, and glanced back. Scarlett, lying on the sofa, hadn't moved at all.

Seeing this, he paused for a moment, a flicker of something unreadable in his eyes.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 187[825 words]

Chapter 187 Distant Care

If Scarlett's indifference toward him was one thing, her apparent lack of reaction to their daughter's illness was another.

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After hesitating a few seconds, Vincent walked over to the sofa. He looked down and asked quietly, "Sabrina said Vanessa isn't feeling well. Do you want to come back with me?"

Scarlett didn't turn around. "I won't go back. You go," she refused flatly.

Before Vincent could respond, she sat up on the sofa.

He thought she might still be concerned about Vanessa-that even if she said she wouldn't go, her actions suggested otherwise.

But instead of getting dressed, Scarlett simply leaned back against the cushions, looked at Vincent, and instructed calmly, "At her age, with swollen lymph nodes, stomach aches are common. When you get back, make sure she takes her medicine and watches her diet. No snacks recently, and avoid spicy or irritating foods."

Vincent listened in silence. After a long moment, he asked, "Since you're so concerned, why not go see her yourself?"

Scarlett gave a faint, humorless laugh. "I have work tomorrow. I'm not going back."

He could feel the chill in her tone but didn't press further. "Hmm," he acknowledged.

With that, he left.

Alone again, Scarlett lay on the sofa, all sleepiness gone.

To say she wasn't worried would be a lie.

But half an hour later, she drifted into a surprisingly peaceful sleep.

When Vincent returned to Ravenshade Villa, the entire house was brightly lit.

Lily was still busy in the kitchen, likely preparing something for Vanessa.

Upstairs, Sabrina was holding the little girl, trying to soothe her.

Perhaps lacking experience, Sabrina was visibly flustered, beads of sweat dotting her forehead.

Vincent entered the room and gently took Vanessa from her arms.

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Chapter 187 Distant Care

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Relieved, Sabrina said, "Vincent, I'll go downstairs to get some soup for Vanessa."

Vincent nodded. "Go ahead."

After she left, he held Vanessa and paced slowly around the room. Seeing his daughter's pale, pained face twisted his heart.

Vanessa pressed her face against his chest. "Daddy," she asked hoarsely, "didn't Mom come back?"

Even though she often claimed to dislike her mother, in moments of sickness, she still longed for her

presence.

Hearing her question, Vincent felt a fresh pang of guilt. "No," he replied softly.

Vanessa's eyes reddened, tears spilling over. "Daddy, Mom doesn't love me anymore."

Vincent sat on the sofa, looking down at her seriously. "Last time I asked, you mind never seeing Mom again."

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you wouldn't

Vanessa's eyes were heavy with exhaustion. She blinked slowly. "But when I'm sick, Mom rubs my tummy."

She truly believed she didn't like her mom anymore-yet in her discomfort, she remembered her mother's tenderness.

Her mom's hands were always warm. After she rubbed her tummy, the pain really did ease.

Sabrina would try, too, but her hands held no such magic-the ache always lingered.

Thinking of Scarlett's cold indifference, Vincent didn't know how to explain it to Vanessa.

After a long pause, he lowered his head and nuzzled her forehead gently. "Daddy can rub it too. Daddy will rub it for you."

Vanessa gave a soft "Hmm" and lifted her little shirt to expose her belly.

Vincent placed his large hand gently over her stomach. Instead of soothing her, though, Vanessa began to giggle.

Seeing her laugh, Vincent couldn't help but smile-but then he sobered. "Vanessa, we need to get used to life without Mom from now on, okay?"

Vanessa kicked her legs lightly and shrugged. "I'm already used to it. I just miss Mom when I'm not feeling well. But if you're with me, Daddy, I won't miss her."

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Chapter 187 Distant Care

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Hearing this, Vincent felt a wave of relief. He held his daughter close, kissed her forehead, and promised, “Daddy will spend more time with you from now on. Whenever you call, no matter how busy or far away I am, I’ll come back, okay?”

Vanessa laughed happily. “Okay, okay! Daddy is the best!”

She wrapped her arms around his neck, but a faint, inexplicable sadness lingered in her chest.

Though Daddy’s hands were comforting too, it just wasn’t the same as when Scarlett rubbed her tummy.

Somehow, she still wanted her mother to be the one soothing her.

But it was fine. Having Daddy and Sabrina was enough.

At the first light of dawn, Scarlett was woken by the sound of arguing from downstairs.

After washing up, she opened her door and called over one of the staff.

“What’s going on downstairs?”

The staff member stood with her head slightly bowed. “Ms. Stewart is arguing with Mrs. Stewart.”

Scarlett frowned. “Lucy came back?”

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 188[873 words]

Chapter 188 The Final Insult

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The servant replied, “Yes, she returned last night.”

Scarlett continued, “And Grandpa?”

If Xavier had been present, Amanda wouldn’t have dared to act so boldly.

The servant answered, “Mr. Xavier Stewart went out for a walk early this morning.”

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Scarlett understood. Amanda was taking advantage of Xavier’s absence to throw her weight around.

But these family disputes weren’t something Scarlett needed to involve herself in anymore.

After getting ready, she headed downstairs.

As she descended, she saw Amanda sitting stiffly on the sofa, her expression dark and displeased.

Hearing footsteps, Amanda looked up. Recognizing Scarlett, her face grew even stormier.

Scarlett ignored her and walked directly toward the main entrance.

She had work to attend to and no time to entertain petty conflicts-especially not with Amanda who had never valued her efforts.

Seeing herself being disregarded, Amanda grew furious. “Stop!” she shouted.

Scarlett acted as though she hadn’t heard and continued walking.

But just as she was about to step outside, a tall figure emerged from the shadows, blocking her path.

Gradually, Scarlett recognized him-it was Luke.

He forced her back into the living room and demanded in a low, threatening tone, "Scarlett, what did you say to my sister?"

Scarlett met his gaze coldly. "None of your business."

Luke's anger flared. "My sister is a Stewart. She's not like you. She has a bright future. If you enjoy being an overworked doctor, that's your choice. But my sister can't waste her life like that."

Looking at his furious expression, Scarlett replied flatly, "I can't control anyone's life-neither

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Chapter 188 The Final Insult

can you."

With that, she moved to step around him.

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Luke watched her newfound confidence with disbelief. The woman who used to obey their family's every word now dared to speak to him like this.

Enraged, he instinctively stuck out his leg to trip her as she passed.

Scarlett didn't notice his petty move. Stumbling, she lost her balance and fell forward.

Outside the living room was a flight of stone steps. She tumbled down several stairs, her right arm scraping harshly against the gravel-paved ground.

She curled up in pain, her brow furrowed tightly, face contorted in agony.

The culprit stood at the top of the stairs, looking down at her with arrogant superiority.

Amanda stepped out as well. Elegantly dressed, she stood beside her son and gazed down at Scarlett with disdain.

“Scarlett, you better remember this. In the Stewart family, you will always be someone who keeps their head down. You are utterly unworthy of speaking to Luke as an equal. Consider this your lesson.”

With that, she even kicked the study book Scarlett had dropped down the steps toward her.

The book landed near Scarlett’s feet, now stained with dirt.

Luke draped an arm over Amanda’s shoulder and sneered, “Mom, why bother getting angry with someone like her? She’s just an outsider in the Stewart family.”

Amanda patted his hand. “Exactly. If she hadn’t gotten pregnant with Vincent’s child, she wouldn’t even be qualified to set foot in this house.”

The two of them laughed heartily, shamelessly pleased with themselves.

Scarlett lay on the ground, her arm scraped and bleeding, but the physical pain was nothing compared to the sting of their words,

For years, she had been diligent and respectful toward Amanda, and had treated Luke like a real brother—all because of her love for Vincent.

Whatever Luke liked to eat, she would painstakingly prepare, no matter how troublesome.

Even for dishes she couldn’t cook, she would privately learn from chefs.

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Chapter 188 The Final Insult

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But in their eyes, she was nothing more than an unwelcome presence, not even worth as much as the nanny.

She held the title of Mrs. Stewart but did the work of a nanny.

The old Scarlett had delighted in it tirelessly. But from now on, never again.

Gritting her teeth, she pushed herself up. Moving her arm carefully, she confirmed it wasn't broken, then picked up the study book that had fallen near her feet-the one she used to prepare for her exams.

After brushing off the dirt, she tucked it carefully into her bag.

On the steps, Amanda and Luke's condescending demeanor finally made Scarlett laugh out loud.

It was a laugh of mockery, scorn, and utter dismissal.

Hearing her laugh, Amanda's face darkened. "What are you laughing at?" she snapped.

Scarlett straightened up, her posture firm and unyielding. She looked directly at Amanda and said, "The two sons you're so proud of-one can't control his impulses, and the other has no brains. Yet you still sit here smug, thinking they're your pride. But no matter how 'excellent' they are, I, Scarlett, will not hold them in high regard ever again."

Then she turned to Luke and said bluntly, "Attacking a woman? What kind of man are you?"

Her words, calm yet cutting, struck a nerve. Luke was utterly provoked.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 189[893 words]

Chapter 189 Street Observations

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“Scarlett, how dare you speak to me like that! You’re asking for trouble!” Luke yelled, his face flushed with rage.

Nothing infuriated him more than being told he wasn’t manly enough.

It was bad enough when others said it, but coming from Scarlett-someone he considered beneath him—it was utterly unacceptable. She had no right.

After delivering her words, Scarlett completely ignored Luke’s roaring and Amanda’s murderous glare.

She had work to attend to; she couldn’t waste her energy on unworthy people and trivial conflicts.

Perhaps afraid Luke’s commotion would alert Xavier, Amanda didn’t let him chase after Scarlett. Instead, she said softly to him, “Luke, I’m here. I’ll make sure she pays for insulting you like that.”

Luke was still fuming. “Mom, make her pay! And we can’t just forget about her hitting me last time either.”

Amanda kept agreeing. “Okay, I’ll think of a way.”

When Scarlett arrived at the hospital, she had a colleague from her department treat her wound.

The skin on her arm was broken. Her colleague carefully disinfected and bandaged it.

Although it wasn’t a serious injury, it still slowed her down at work.

In the evening, because she had medical records to complete, she stayed an extra hour before finally leaving the hospital.

It was already past 7 p.m. Scarlett didn't dare return to the Theron Manor. She was afraid her family would worry, and even more afraid Nathan would impulsively seek justice for her.

The Stewart and Theron families were on completely different levels. If they truly offended the Stewarts, the Therons would suffer for it.

For her family's safety, Scarlett chose to endure.

She lied to Nathan, saying she had extra tutoring and would be back late, so they shouldn't wait

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Chapter 189 Street Observations

for her for dinner.

Nathan, knowing she was preparing for the exams, didn't question her excuse.

After her shift, Scarlett began wandering the streets.

She had no destination in mind.

Walking aimlessly, she unconsciously found herself outside an upscale restaurant.

Through the large glass windows, she saw Vincent, Vanessa, and Sabrina.

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Vincent sat alone on one side, typing on his laptop-probably busy with work. Across the table, Vanessa and Sabrina sat facing each other on a sofa. They were playing some kind of game, talking and laughing, occasionally leaning in to kiss each other's cheeks.

Vincent would look up at them from time to time, his eyes full of tenderness.

Scarlett stood on the bustling street, her right arm hanging limply, afraid to move it.

The contrast between their warmth and her own wretchedness made her heart ache with bitterness.

After a moment's hesitation, she took out her phone. With difficulty, she typed a message with her left hand. "Is the divorce agreement ready?"

After sending it, she looked back at the scene inside the restaurant.

Vincent wasn't looking at his phone or his computer. His attention was entirely on Vanessa and Sabrina, his gaze soft, a faint smile touching his lips.

In that moment, they looked like the perfect family of three.

Vincent didn't reply to her message. Growing impatient, Scarlett decided to return to the Oakland Villa to retrieve the divorce agreement she had prepared earlier.

Since they were divorcing anyway, the one she had drafted should be just as valid.

When she took a taxi back to the Oakland Villa, Freya was visibly surprised to see her. "Mrs. Stewart, you're back?"

Scarlett didn't waste words. "Freya, where is that document I gave you before?"

Hearing this, Freya quickly replied, "Mr. Stewart asked about that agreement a couple of days ago too. But I'm old, my memory is bad, and I'm always misplacing things. When you first gave me the agreement, I accidentally misplaced it. But since Mr. Stewart asked me to find it the other day, I've located it. Let me get it for you now."

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Chapter 189 Street Observations

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Hearing Freya's explanation, Scarlett finally understood why Vincent hadn't signed it yet.

If Freya weren't so forgetful, they probably would have finalized the divorce long ago.

Soon, Freya brought the agreement. The file cover was dusty.

Freya said, "Mr. Stewart kept telling me to deliver it, but I kept forgetting, so I never did."

Scarlett took the file. "Freya, I'll deliver it myself."

She carefully wiped the dust off the divorce agreement and left.

When she drove to Ravensshade Villa, she parked on the roadside and didn't go inside.

Ravensshade Villa used to be her home too, a place that held her daughter and her husband.

But now, Ravensshade Villa felt like Sabrina's domain.

Maria was inside. Scarlett didn't want to see that woman's face, so she stayed in the car.

She sat there for almost an hour before Vincent's car finally pulled up at the entrance of Ravensshade Villa.

Vincent got out of the driver's seat and opened the rear door. He lifted Vanessa out, then turned back to help Sabrina.

After both were out, he closed the car door.

For someone usually so proud, he was now willing to lower himself-for them.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 190[923 words]

Chapter 190 Late Night Delivery

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After locking the car, Vincent and Sabrina each took one of Vanessa's hands, and the three of them walked together toward the entrance of Ravensshade Villa.

Just as they were about to step inside, Scarlett got out of her car and called out to their retreating figures, "Vincent."

At the sound of her voice, not only did Vincent pause, but Vanessa and Sabrina also froze in surprise.

None of them had expected Scarlett to appear at Ravensshade Villa so late at night.

Vincent turned to look. He watched as Scarlett approached from the roadside, her expression unreadable-neither sad nor joyful.

Stopping about two or three meters away from him, she said, "Vincent, we need to talk."

Vincent thought for a moment, then turned to Vanessa and Sabrina. "You two go in first. I'll join you after a few words with her."

Vanessa positioned herself slightly in front of Sabrina, her round eyes fixed intently on Scarlett. For some reason, hearing her mother's voice had sparked a flicker of happiness in her just moments before.

But since her mom hadn't even acknowledged her, that flicker quickly faded, replaced by a sulky disappointment.

So after Vincent told them to go inside, she let out an annoyed huff and stormed into the house.

Sabrina, seeing this, followed her quietly.

Seeing Vanessa's reaction, Scarlett understood clearly that her daughter no longer held her in a special place in her heart.

But perhaps that no longer mattered.

Once Vanessa and Sabrina had disappeared inside, Scarlett used her left hand to offer the divorce agreement to Vincent. "This is the divorce agreement I prepared. Please take a look. If you find it acceptable, please sign it."

Vincent stared at the file held out under the warm glow of the streetlight, feeling a subtle chill

settle in his chest.

Still, he reached out and took it.

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Chapter 190 Late Night Delivery

Finished

Just as he was about to speak, Sabrina's voice called from inside Ravensshade Villa.
"Vincent, Vanessa's stomach hurts again!"

Hearing this, Vincent moved urgently toward the entrance.

But this time, Scarlett stopped him in time. "Vincent."

He paused once more. "I've got the agreement. I'll message you after I've reviewed it."

Scarlett didn't want to wait any longer. She said quickly, "Reviewing it shouldn't take more than a few minutes. If the terms are acceptable, we can proceed to the next step."

Vincent thought for a moment, then opened the
agreement.

After a brief scan, he closed it again and told her, "The agreement isn't comprehensive enough. You should wait for the one I'm having prepared. Don't worry-once it's done, I'll contact you immediately to come and sign it."

Scarlett took a deep breath. A heavy, suffocating feeling tightened in her chest.

Getting married had been so simple, but getting a divorce felt like navigating an endless maze of procedures.

She felt deeply weary but knew there was little she could say.

An uncontested divorce was still the best option. If they ended up in court, the only drag on longer.

process would

Vincent tucked the file under his arm and walked toward Ravensshade Villa. After a couple of steps, he stopped again, turned back, and asked, "Do you want to come in?"

Scarlett refused flatly. "No need."

Ravensshade Villa was no longer her home. Why would she step inside?

With that, she turned and left.

Vincent watched her retreating figure, vaguely sensing something off about her right arm, though he couldn't pinpoint what it was.

When she returned to the Theron Manor, the family had already retired for the night.

Scarlett went upstairs quietly and pushed open her bedroom door.

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Chapter 190 Late Night Delivery

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She didn't turn on the light right away. After closing the door, she leaned against it and let out a long, weary sigh.

The drawn-out divorce process had been draining her lately.

Even though Vincent had agreed to the divorce, progress was painfully slow.

They hadn't even finalized the divorce agreement yet.

But no matter how impatient she felt, she couldn't force the pace.

After steadying her emotions, she reached for the light switch, but her hand brushed against something warm.

Startled, she instinctively stepped back.

But in the next moment, a pair of strong arms pulled her back, pressing her firmly against the door.

The familiar scent of cigarettes filled her senses. She struggled and hissed, "Damian, let me go."

He leaned in closer, his breath warm against her face like glowing embers.

She turned her face away, and his exhale brushed against her neck.

Damian didn't speak. His hand moved to grip her arm, but the moment he made contact, she let out a sharp, pained gasp. "Sss..."

Hearing her pain, he released her instantly.

He flipped on the light, took her arm gently to examine it, and asked with concern, "What's wrong?"

Scarlett tried to pull her arm back, her expression cold. "I'm fine."

Not wanting to hurt her further, Damian let go when he saw her resistance.

Before he could ask anything else, Scarlett's phone rang.

She retrieved it with her left hand. Damian noticed how carefully she was protecting her right arm-and he also saw the caller ID on her screen-Vincent.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 191[929 words]

Chapter 191 Unspoken Wounds

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Scarlett was about to answer her phone when Damian swiftly took it from her hand and slipped it into his own pocket.

He gripped her right wrist firmly, his expression stern. “Stop moving. Let me see,” he said in a cool tone.

Leaning back against the door, Scarlett knew struggling was pointless against Damian’s strength, so she simply relented.

As he pushed up her sleeve, Damian’s gaze fell on the gauze wrapped around her forearm, already stained with patches of dried blood.

His expression instantly darkened, his voice turning icy. “What happened?”

Scarlett pulled her hand back, avoiding his gaze. “I just bumped into something.”

For some reason, Damian was certain she wasn’t telling him the whole truth. His cold eyes fixed on her as he probed, “Did Vincent do this to you?”

Hearing that, Scarlett quickly defended him, “No, it wasn’t him.”

That only seemed to anger Damian further. His voice dropped lower. “Still protecting him, are you?”

“I’m not,” Scarlett insisted, frowning.

Seeing her evasive expression, Damian let out a cold laugh. “Scarlett, you’re nothing but a liar. And me? I’m the fool you’ve been deceiving all these years. A complete idiot.”

He was furious, seething inside, yet “liar” was the strongest word he could bring himself to call her.

He was afraid of hurting her, afraid of doing something he would regret later.

When you truly care about someone, every word and action feels like walking on thin ice—terrified of saying the wrong thing, making a foolish move, or slipping up in the slightest way...

Seeing how agitated he was, Scarlett furrowed her brow, confused by his words.

When had she ever lied to him?

Ignoring her questioning look, Damian asked hoarsely, “Where’s the first aid kit?”

“Damian, I can take care of it myself. You really don’t need to worry about me,” Scarlett said.

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Chapter 191 Unspoken Wounds

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Her words felt like a sharp sting, twisting something deep inside him. After wrestling with his emotions for a moment, he finally pulled her against his chest.

“Scarlett,” his voice rumbled deeply, “sometimes I really wish I could just shrink you down and keep you in my pocket. That way, no one would ever dare try to take you away from me.”

With her cheek pressed against his chest, Scarlett could feel the vibration of his voice and the frantic beating of his heart. His words were so intense, they could make even a married woman’s heart flutter.

But she knew better. Damian was experienced with women; he knew exactly what to say to charm them.

Scarlett struggled briefly, but when it proved useless, she finally gave in. “The first aid kit is in the drawer.”

Hearing that, Damian released her, though his anger was still palpable. “Scarlett, only an idiot would waste his time looking after you!”

With that, he turned and strode toward the window. A rope still hung there, coiled on the floor. All he had to do was grab it, and he could be gone in an instant.

But Damian stopped. He stood frozen for several long seconds.

Scarlett watched his reflection in the window. He closed his eyes, as if fighting an inner battle.

Just a few moments later, he spun around angrily and marched over to the table. He quickly located the first aid kit, then shot a look at Scarlett, who was still standing near the door.

“Come here,” he commanded, his tone leaving no room for argument.

After a brief hesitation, Scarlett walked over and sat on the sofa, offering her arm to him. “Thank you.”

Damian didn't respond. As he carefully rolled up her sleeve, he muttered under his breath, almost inaudibly, "What an idiot."

Scarlett froze for a second, then glanced down at him. He was kneeling in front of her, his movements slightly clumsy but incredibly gentle, as though he was afraid of causing her any more pain.

Damian was handsome and tall, but his kindness made Scarlett uneasy. She knew his attentions weren't entirely innocent.

She understood this perfectly well, yet she didn't call him out on it. Some things were better left unspoken.

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Chapter 191 Unspoken Wounds.

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Finished

After he finished tending to her wound, Damian remained silent. He placed her phone back on the table, grabbed the rope, and climbed out the window. Within moments, he had vanished from sight.

Just as Scarlett was putting the first aid kit away, her phone rang again. She glanced at the screen-it was Vincent.

Thinking it might be about the divorce papers finally being ready, she answered without hesitation.

"I wanted to ask," Vincent's voice came through, "how do you usually rub Vanessa's stomach when it hurts?"

Vanessa's stomach was acting up again, and none of their attempts to soothe her had worked. Left with no other choice, Vincent had called Scarlett.

Hearing his question, Scarlett felt that familiar pang of disappointment, though it passed quickly. After taking a moment to collect herself, she patiently explained, "First, rub your palms together to warm them up. Then, use your palm to gently press and massage the area that hurts. Be very light with your touch."

"Okay, I see," Vincent replied flatly.

Just as he was about to hang up, Scarlett stopped him. “Vincent.”

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Awakened Housewife: Ignore Betrayer’s Begs

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 192[944 words]

Chapter 192 Terms of Parting

Vincent’s voice came through. “What is it?”

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Scarlett spoke with complete seriousness, “Unless it’s about the divorce papers being ready, please don’t call me anymore. I’m busy and don’t have time for these games. Besides, we’re not young anymore. Dragging this out is just a waste of both our time.”

Vincent remained silent for a long moment before finally responding, “Abbott called earlier. He said the divorce agreement is mostly finalized. I’ll check with him again tomorrow. Let’s meet tomorrow evening at Oakland Villa.”

Hearing this, Scarlett finally felt a wave of relief wash over her. “Alright. I’ll see you tomorrow night.”

The following evening, Scarlett went straight to Oakland Villa after work.

Freya was both surprised and pleased to see her. “Mrs. Stewart, would you like me to prepare some dinner for you?”

“No, thank you. I’m not hungry,” Scarlett declined politely.

Freya nodded and returned to her tasks.

Scarlett settled on the sofa, waiting for Vincent to return. She didn’t even take out her phone to pass the time. But as the minutes ticked by, there was still no sign of him.

By nearly 9 o’clock, he still hadn’t appeared. With each passing moment, Scarlett’s patience grew thinner.

Finally, she couldn’t take it any longer. She called Vincent, but he didn’t answer-instead, he hung up. Almost immediately, her phone rang again. It was Vincent calling back.

Scarlett answered promptly, her voice edged with anxiety, “Vincent, where are you?”

But the voice on the other end was Abbott’s. “Mrs. Stewart, there’s been an issue at the company. Mr. Stewart has called an emergency meeting. He asked me to inform you that signing the papers will have to be postponed until tomorrow night.”

Unwilling to give up, Scarlett pressed further, “He can’t make it back tonight at all?”

Abbott explained, “A project the company was about to secure has been taken by a competitor. The entire team invested significant effort, and Mr. Stewart isn’t willing to let it

They’re currently discussing countermeasures.”

go easily.

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Chapter 192 Terms of Parting

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Scarlett sighed, feeling utterly defeated. “I understand.”

After hanging up, she leaned back on the sofa, emotionally drained. It seemed the divorce signing was off the table for yet another night.

But for a project to be snatched right from under Vincent’s nose... the competitor must be formidable.

The next day, just before Scarlett’s shift ended, Vincent called.

“I’m waiting at the hospital entrance,” Vincent said.

“Okay,” Scarlett replied.

After freshening up and leaving her department, Scarlett spotted Vincent’s car as soon as she stepped out of the hospital. She opened the door and got into the back seat.

The entire car ride passed in silence. Vincent took several work-related calls, including one from Sabrina.

By the time he finished his calls, they had already arrived at Oakland Villa.

They got out of the car and went straight into the main hall.

Freya’s eyes widened in disbelief at the sight of them returning together. Vincent didn’t give her a chance to ask any questions. “Freya, you can take the rest of the night off. Scarlett and I have matters to discuss.”

Freya uttered a quick “Oh, okay,” twice and hurried away. The atmosphere felt unusually tense tonight, and she didn’t dare linger.

Once Freya was gone, Vincent brought out the prepared divorce agreement. He handed it to Scarlett. “Look it over. If you have any objections, we can discuss them.”

Scarlett gave a quiet “Mm” of acknowledgment and took the papers, reading through them carefully.

Clause 1: Vincent wanted custody of Vanessa.

Clause 2: He would provide Scarlett with one billion dollars as compensation. However, aside from the monetary settlement, neither Oakland Villa nor Ravensshade Villa would be transferred to her.

Clause 3: After the divorce, Scarlett could not remarry or have another child for five years.

Clause 4: Whenever Vanessa needed her mother, Scarlett had to be available immediately.

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Clause 5: Scarlett had visitation rights for Vanessa, but they were subject to approval from both Vincent and Vanessa herself.

Clause 6: They would keep the divorce a secret from Xavier for the time being. Whenever he asked them to visit, they had to pretend everything was normal.

After reading through all the terms, Scarlett found them reasonably acceptable. She looked up at Vincent and said calmly, "I have no objections."

Her composure was almost unnerving, as if they were discussing the most mundane matter- not the dissolution of a marriage she had once schemed so hard to secure.

But now, she was letting it go just like that.

Over the past couple of days, Vincent had even wondered if this was some sort of reverse psychology from Scarlett, a ploy to regain his attention.

But seeing her now, it seemed he had overthought it.

Vincent looked into Scarlett's eyes-the first time he had ever looked at her so intently. Even in bed, his attention had always been perfunctory.

But now, he found himself truly studying her. He had to admit, her features were exquisite— high nose bridge, deep eyes-she was genuinely beautiful.

He found himself momentarily lost in thought. Noticing his lack of response, Scarlett called out, "Vincent?"

He snapped out of it, pulling out a pen. "I have no objections either."

After he signed his name, he handed the pen to Scarlett.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die – 193[940 words]

Chapter 193 A Hurdle to Freedom

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She accepted the pen and carefully signed her name on the agreement.

With the matter formally settled, Vincent rose to his feet. "Tomorrow at nine, I'll meet you at the courthouse. We'll submit the divorce paperwork and move forward with the process."

"Sounds good," Scarlett replied.

The next day, at nine o'clock sharp, Scarlett arrived at the courthouse to find Vincent already waiting. His car was parked along the curb, engine off, though he hadn't yet stepped out.

Punctuality had never been his strong suit, yet today he'd kept his word. It wasn't hard to guess that he, too, must have been looking forward to this day.

Inside the car, Vincent was on the phone with Abbott, whose defeated tone came through the speakers. "Mr. Stewart, we couldn't salvage the merger deal."

Vincent stared at the oak trees lining the street, his expression darkening. “Understood,” he responded flatly.

Abbott continued, “The other party has already partnered with Langley Group. They’ll probably finalize the agreement in the next couple of days.”

Vincent’s jaw tightened, his voice turning icy. “It’s not the first time Damian has snatched a deal from us. He’s been quiet lately, but it seems his old habits die hard.”

“Mr. Stewart,” Abbott suggested, “maybe we should bid for the eastwood development. Even though Damian is almost certain to win it, he did steal this merger right from under us—the one we’ve been working on for months. All these years, he’s consistently opposed Stewart Group. We can’t let him have it too easily.”

“Do what you think is best,” Vincent instructed. “Even if we can’t secure it, we need to make sure Damian pays a price.”

If it came down to burning bridges, so be it. If Damian could play dirty, so could he.

For years, Damian had been competing with Stewart Group, both openly and behind the scenes. Whatever the business opportunity, he always managed to get involved. Even when he didn’t ultimately win the contract, he never seemed bothered.

Logically, such tactics cost him significantly, yet he never appeared to tire of them.

Before, Vincent had simply assumed Damian wanted to overtake his position in Rivergate.

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But now, he sensed there might be more to it.

The bracelet Damian had bought at such a high price was now adorning Scarlett’s wrist. It was difficult for Vincent not to let his mind wander.

What was it about Scarlett that would drive Damian to oppose him for so long? The thought left him unsettled.

Just as he was lost in speculation, a light tap came from outside the car window.

Vincent turned to see Scarlett standing there.

He rolled down the window, and her delicate, composed face came into view. Her voice was cool and calm as she said, "Let's go."

For a moment, Vincent found himself captivated by her gaze.

He couldn't pinpoint exactly when it had started, but there was no longer any warmth in Scarlett's eyes when she looked at him.

Yet, it hadn't always been that way.

After getting out of the car, Vincent's gaze drifted downward, and he noticed the bracelet on Scarlett's wrist.

Almost without thinking, he asked, whether intentionally or not, "That bracelet on your wrist... do

you like it a lot?"

At his question, Scarlett instinctively covered it with her other hand.

Both Vincent and Sabrina had been present when Damian won that bracelet at the charity gala. She wasn't sure if Vincent remembered it, but to avoid unnecessary complications, she replied casually, "It's alright."

Vincent noticed her protective gesture, and his brow furrowed slightly, though he didn't further.

Today, they were here to file for divorce.

It was best to focus on the matter at hand.

Even so, a vague sense of unease lingered within him-a strange feeling he couldn't quite define.

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Inside the courthouse, at the service counter, Scarlett said to the clerk, "Hello, we're here to file for divorce."

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The clerk glanced at her and Vincent, then replied, "Please submit your documents."

Scarlett turned to Vincent. "We need our driver's licenses, the divorce agreement, and our marriage certificates."

Vincent paused. "Weren't you supposed to bring the marriage certificates?"

Scarlett frowned. "They're at Ravensshade Villa. Didn't you know that?"

Seeing the two on the verge of a disagreement, the clerk interjected politely, "I'm sorry, but to file for divorce, you must submit your IDs, the divorce agreement, and your marriage certificates. We can't process the application if any document is missing."

Scarlett tried to see if the clerk could make an exception, but the woman shook her head apologetically. "I'm sorry. These are required documents. Please come back tomorrow once you have everything."

Left with no other choice, Scarlett and Vincent had to leave.

Outside the courthouse, Scarlett felt utterly frustrated, heaving several deep sighs.

In contrast, Vincent appeared completely unbothered, as though nothing could disturb his composure.

Seeing his calm demeanor, Scarlett felt a wave of inexplicable irritation. But knowing that arguing would be pointless, she simply said, "I only took an hour off. I need to get back to the clinic. As for the marriage certificates, please look for them carefully when you go back to Ravensshade Villa tonight. We can try again tomorrow once you find them."

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 194[861 words]

Chapter 194 Public Disgrace

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Vincent observed Scarlett's visible frustration over the failed divorce procedure, and an unexpected thought surfaced in his mind.

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This was the same Scarlett who had once loved him so deeply, yet now she was suddenly asking for a divorce. When he had questioned her, she denied it had anything to do with Damian.

But if there was no reason at all, why would she bring it up now, especially when everything between them had seemed... fine?

That afternoon, just before Scarlett's shift ended, Nolan appeared at the hospital.

His arrival stirred a wave of excitement among the nurses in the department. They watched him, faces cupped in their hands, completely captivated.

Nolan offered them a polite smile before heading to the doctor's office to find Scarlett.

She had just finished her work and stood up as he entered. "Nolan."

Nolan naturally took her bag and said softly, "Shall we get dinner?"

Scarlett hesitated briefly before nodding. “Okay, my treat.”

Nolan didn’t object, simply watching her with a quiet smile.

At the restaurant, Nolan handed the menu to Scarlett. “You order.”

She had just selected two dishes when she heard approaching footsteps. Glancing up instinctively, she saw Vincent and Sabrina walking in side by side, Sabrina holding lightly onto

Vincent’s arm.

Tonight’s encounter was no coincidence-Sabrina had planned it.

She still hadn’t finalized her doctoral research topic. Although Vincent had connected her with several renowned mentors, none of their suggested topics had worked out.

If she proceeded with a flawed direction, the research would be invalid, forcing her to start over

-a delay that could jeopardize her graduation.

So, she still hoped to consult Nolan.

Even though he had rebuffed her before, Sabrina wondered if his harshness that day had been because of Daniel. After all, back in their university days, many had said Nolan had feelings for

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Chapter 194 Public Disgrace

her.

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Reflecting on it now, perhaps it was true. Maybe he had simply been upset seeing her with Daniel.

That was why she had asked Vincent to accompany her today.

As they approached the table, Sabrina greeted Nolan with a bright smile. “Nolan!”

Nolan looked up, his expression neutral. “Hmm.”

Encouraged that he had acknowledged her, Sabrina adopted a humble tone. “There are a few questions I’d like to ask for your advice, Nolan.”

Vincent stood silently beside Sabrina the entire time. Though he didn’t speak, his alone made it clear he was there to support her.

Scarlett’s grip on the menu tightened almost imperceptibly.

presence

This was the same issue Nolan had already refused to help with once. She hadn’t expected Sabrina to bring it up again.

Nolan looked steadily at Sabrina, his face impassive. “If this is about your research topic, I’m afraid I can’t assist you. Selecting a topic is the very first step of a PhD. If you need help with that, it suggests you may not be suited for medical research. In my opinion, it might be better to reconsider your path early on.”

His words were blunt-perhaps truthful, but to Sabrina, they were unacceptable. Being spoken to like this in front of Vincent made her feel utterly humiliated, her face flushing deeply.

Before Sabrina could even tear up, Vincent’s expression darkened. “Mr. Huntley, Sabrina only said she wanted your advice. She didn’t even specify it was about her research. Your arrogance is uncalled for. Those who stand too high don’t always see farther-sometimes, they just have further to fall.”

Vincent’s tone carried a clear threat, both overt and implied.

Hearing this, Scarlett grew concerned that Nolan might be drawn into conflict. She stood and said to him, “Nolan, let’s eat somewhere else.”

Vincent watched her movement, his cold, proud eyes narrowing as he assessed the situation. Another suspicion took root in his mind.

Was Scarlett’s rush to divorce not because of Damian, but because of Nolan?

These past few days, he had repeatedly tried to uncover her motives, but he truly couldn’t pinpoint who or what was behind it.

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Chapter 194 Public Disgrace

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As Nolan stood, his calm gaze settled on Vincent. “Since Mr. Stewart claims it’s not about the research topic, then I have even less reason to stay.”

With that, he gently took Scarlett’s arm and led her out of the restaurant.

Sabrina watched Nolan’s retreating figure, her eyes reddening.

She couldn’t help but wonder-was Nolan’s coldness toward her because of Scarlett? But how could that be?

Vincent turned to Sabrina, sensing her embarrassment. He reached out and gently touched her cheek, his voice tender. “It’s alright. I’ll help you sort out the research topic.”

Hearing this, Sabrina felt even more wronged. “Vincent, I’m sorry. I’m just... not clever enough.”

Vincent drew her into a comforting hug, patting her back gently. “Don’t say that. You’re very smart.”

Sabrina rested her face against Vincent’s chest, gradually feeling soothed.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 195[910 words]

Chapter 195 The Missing Certificates

Fin bed

Nolan selected another restaurant nearby. Once they were seated, he let Scarlett take charge of ordering.

After she finished choosing the dishes, Scarlett looked up at him with concern. “Nolan, Sabrina is Vincent’s most treasured person. He wouldn’t allow her to suffer even the slightest inconvenience. You should really be more careful...”

Before she could finish, Nolan gently interrupted, “Scarlett, all I see are two individuals with questionable character. As for my words, I have a clear conscience. The path of medicine isn’t meant for everyone.”

Scarlett understood Nolan was defending her, but she couldn’t help worrying about his situation. Just as Vincent had said—the higher you stand, the harder you might fall.

Nolan wasn’t wrong in his stance, so Scarlett didn’t feel she could press the matter further.

When their meals arrived, Nolan passed her a fork and knife with a friendly nod.

As they ate, Nolan asked considerately, “The exam is coming up soon. How are your preparations going?”

Scarlett nodded. “I’m ready.”

She had already prepared for these exams years ago, before her pregnancy. Reviewing the material now didn’t feel particularly difficult for her.

Seeing her confidence, a slight smile touched the corner of Nolan’s mouth. He then asked, “Are you planning to pursue a professional master’s degree or an academic one?”

“Academic, I think,” Scarlett replied. “If everything goes smoothly, I should be able to finish my Ph.D. by thirty-three. Though I suppose I’ll be considered an old maid by then.” She had meant it as a light-hearted joke.

But Nolan took it seriously. “Not old at all. You’ve always been beautiful.”

When he finished speaking, Scarlett looked up and noticed the tips of his ears had turned bright red.

“Nolan, you...” she began.

Nolan, seemingly anxious about what she might say, quickly changed the subject. “Try this fish. I heard it’s very fresh.”

“Thank you, Nolan,” Scarlett said softly.

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Chapter 195 The Missing Certificates

After dinner, they took a brief walk together before Scarlett drove home.

Arriving back, she saw it was still early and didn’t consider calling Vincent.

While scrolling through short videos, she kept getting clips from Sabrina’s account, even after repeatedly selecting “Not Interested”.

In one video, Sabrina didn’t show Vincent’s face-only the lower half of his body. Though she had added a voiceover, Vincent’s voice was still faintly audible in the background, saying, “Yes, the Ph.D. research topic,” followed by, “Right, I need it ASAP.”

Sabrina didn’t need to flaunt it intentionally; Scarlett knew Vincent was willing to move mountains for her. While choosing a doctoral topic was indeed challenging, it wasn’t impossible to the point where only Nolan could provide the answer.

Scarlett clicked “Not Interested” once more. After watching a few more videos, her phone rang -it was Vincent.

She answered, and he said, “I couldn’t find the marriage certificates.”

Scarlett sat straight up in bed. “How is that possible?”

“They’re definitely not here,” Vincent confirmed.

Scarlett frowned deeply. “Then I’ll go check Oakland Villa.”

After hanging up, she changed into outdoor clothes and left.

At Oakland Villa, she went upstairs and searched thoroughly but still couldn’t find them.

Freya, hearing the noise, came upstairs to check. Seeing it was Scarlett, she asked, “What are you looking for, Mrs. Stewart?”

Feeling increasingly frustrated, Scarlett asked Freya directly, “Have you seen my and Vincent’s marriage certificates?”

Freya shook her head. “Mrs. Stewart, those are your private belongings. I wouldn’t dare touch them.”

Scarlett sighed in defeat. “I see.”

After a moment’s thought, she called Vincent. He seemed to be in the middle of something, as his line was busy.

He’s probably dealing with Sabrina’s research topic issue. She didn’t call repeatedly, choosing to wait a few minutes instead. Soon, Vincent called back.

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Chapter 195 The Missing Certificates

Finished

When she answered, she said firmly, “Vincent, come to Oakland Villa.”

He thought for a moment. “Okay, but it will be late.”

“I’ll be gone by ten if you’re not here,” Scarlett replied. Then, without waiting for his response, she hung up.

As time passed, it neared ten o’clock. Scarlett glanced toward the entrance outside the main hall.

He probably isn’t coming tonight.

Just as she stood up, the sound of a car horn came from outside. Soon after, Vincent walked in.

Seeing Scarlett holding her jacket, ready to leave, Vincent paused slightly before asking, “Did you find the certificates?”

Scarlett shook her head. “No.”

A shadow crossed Vincent’s features. He looked at Scarlett intently. “Ever since we got married, you’ve been handling all matters, big and small, in the household. Shouldn’t the marriage certificates have been in your care too?”

Hearing his accusatory tone, Scarlett let out a bitter laugh. “From the moment we married, my entire focus has been on Vanessa. When would I have had the mind to worry about where the marriage certificates were?”

Seeing her anger, Vincent’s tone remained flat. “I only saw the marriage certificates once, on the day we registered. Never saw them after that.”

Scarlett felt utterly exhausted, mentally and physically. This divorce process was giving her a headache. Feeling completely helpless, she finally asked Vincent, “Then what should we do

now?”

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 196[925 words]

Chapter 196 Bitter Truths

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Vincent stared at her anxious expression and couldn't resist a dry, humorless chuckle. "How about we get married again? Then we could get divorced properly this time."

Scarlett found no amusement in his remark. "Think harder. If you truly can't remember where they are, we'll have to apply for replacements."

Vincent gave a noncommittal "Hmm" and lit a cigarette.

As he lowered his head, Scarlett caught a glimpse of a vivid red mark on his neck. The sight sent a sharp pang through her chest.

His "late night"... had probably been spent with Sabrina, she thought involuntarily.

Vincent took a slow drag from his cigarette. Looking at Scarlett through the haze, he suddenly said, "At Oakland Villa, besides you and me, there's only Freya who could have..."

But before he could finish, Scarlett cut in, "No, your mother has been here too."

Vincent paused, then said, "Then I'll ask her." It seemed like a long shot, but what if she knew something?

He called Amanda and asked if she had seen their marriage certificates.

Amanda was instantly furious. "What would I have left to take from you two? Would I really steal your marriage certificates? Vincent, have you completely lost your mind?"

After enduring her outburst, Vincent hung up.

Scarlett had heard Amanda's yelling through the phone. She turned to Vincent and said, "Then replacement is our only option."

Vincent nodded. "Yeah."

As Scarlett moved to walk past him toward the door, he called out, "Scarlett."

"Yes?"

Vincent turned and came to stand directly before her. He looked down at her and voiced the question that had been weighing on his mind. "Why do you suddenly want a divorce?"

Scarlett stood perfectly still, studying his face. The face she had once dreamed of day and night was right in front of her, yet her heart remained completely unmoved.

Hearing his question, Scarlett let out a soft, self-mocking laugh. After a long moment, she

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Chapter 196 Bitter Truths

W5

replied, "Vincent, we don't act like a married couple at all. It's better to set each other free sooner rather than later."

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A flicker of confusion appeared in Vincent's eyes. He looked down at her, his tone serious as he asked, "Then what does constitute a married couple, in your eyes?"

Scarlett didn't know what he was thinking, but she told him honestly, "What you have with Sabrina seems a lot more like it."

Having said that, she made to leave again. But after a brief hesitation, she looked up at him once more and added, "Oh, and while I really didn't want to hurt your pride... in bed, it's honestly only ever three minutes with you."

Upon hearing this, Vincent's face darkened instantly, a storm gathering in his eyes. He suddenly grabbed Scarlett's wrist, leaning in angrily. "What? Have you tried with someone else?" he demanded in a low, tense voice.

Scarlett met his gaze without flinching, her eyes clear and direct. "So what if I have? Vincent, we're practically divorced already."

With that, she pulled her hand free from his grasp and walked out without a backward glance.

Vincent watched Scarlett's retreating figure, the light in his eyes flickering unpredictably. A strange, sour feeling churned in his chest.

Three minutes? That could never be

my

limit.

After leaving Oakland Villa, Scarlett drove toward Theron Manor. Her mind remained unsettled the entire way.

While stopped at a red light, she suddenly heard her passenger door open. Turning, she was shocked to see a disheveled and weary-looking Elias sliding into the seat beside her.

Scarlett immediately snapped to attention, her tone turning cold and hard. "Get out," she commanded in a low voice.

Elias didn't move. He glared at Scarlett, his eyes burning with fierce intensity. "Where is she? Where's Claire?" he demanded.

Scarlett's reply was crisp and direct. "I don't know."

Malice flashed in Elias' eyes. "She moved out. She won't answer my calls. Tell me, did you put

up to this?"

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Scarlett met his gaze with unnerving calm. "Don't you have the answer in your own heart? Why

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Chapter 196 Bitter Truths

she moved out, why she broke up with you?"

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Claire had been with Elias for eight years, giving everything selflessly. She had endured the fallout from his promiscuous lifestyle, had even had an abortion for him.

In recent years, she had been waiting for a proposal that never came, only to be met with repeated infidelity and disappointment.

Elias refused to hear any of it. “But she already forgave me!” he roared violently. “She said she wasn’t angry anymore! She said she would marry me! So where is she? Scarlett, if you didn’t encourage her, would she have run away? Would she ignore my calls?”

Hearing this, Scarlett couldn’t help but respond sarcastically, “Have you ever reflected on your own actions? You’re simply scum. Was she wrong to break up with you?”

Elias didn’t want to hear another word. “Shut up!” he yelled harshly.

Scarlett fell silent, then said to him with icy composure, “Get out of the car.”

Elias’ bloodshot eyes bore into her. He lowered his voice menacingly. “Take me to her.”

Scarlett refused him once more, her voice firm and resolute. “Impossible. I will never take you to her.”

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 197[916 words]

Chapter 197 A Dangerous Confrontation

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Before the words had fully left her mouth, Elias' hand shot out and clamped around Scarlett's throat.

Rage contorted his face. His expression turned icy, his voice dropping to a low, threatening growl. "Take me to her, or I'll kill you."

Scarlett clawed at his hand, struggling to break free. When she couldn't and felt her oxygen dwindling, she quickly reached for the car horn.

In the quiet of the night, even with the light green, the sound of a stationary car blaring its horn failed to draw any attention.

Seeing Scarlett's refusal to yield, Elias tightened his grip. "Are you taking me or not?" he roared.

Scarlett's face turned a deep shade of red, veins bulging at her temples. The blood rush made her feel as if her eyes were about to burst.

The sensation of impending death washed over her, yet even then, she refused to reveal Claire's whereabouts.

Just seconds before she lost consciousness, she heard the car door being wrenched open.

Someone had arrived, pulled Elias off her, and a scuffle broke out.

A few minutes later, as her awareness gradually returned, she heard an angry shout cut through the night. "Get lost!"

She recognized that voice-it was Damian's.

Elias must have gotten the worst end of the fight. Before fleeing, he shouted defiantly, "Scarlett, just you

wait!"

Damian's voice carried an innate authority. He let out a low, dangerous growl. "Lay a finger on my woman again, I dare you."

Elias' voice didn't return-only the fading roar of a car engine remained.

Scarlett leaned back in her seat, turning her head to see Damian standing by the passenger side door. He held his right hand behind his back, his eyes fixed intently on her.

Perhaps still upset with her, Damian remained silent.

Seeing his silence, Scarlett finally pressed her lips together and offered a faint smile. "Thank you."

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Chapter 197 A Dangerous Confrontation

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The palm of Damian's hidden hand was covered in blood. He was afraid Scarlett would see it, afraid it might trigger bad memories for her.

But seeing her strained smile only irritated him further. "Scarlett, if you really want to thank me, just fulfill your promise sooner rather than later."

Scarlett looked utterly confused, her brow furrowing slightly. "What promise?"

This made Damian even angrier. He turned away with a frustrated scoff. "Figure it out yourself!"

With that, he left without hesitation and got into his own car.

Through her rearview mirror, Scarlett noticed a woman sitting in the passenger seat of Damian's car. She was stunningly beautiful, with long, cascading curls over her shoulders and a purple dress that hugged her slender waist. In both looks and aura, she was a rare beauty.

As Damian got into the car, the woman took his hand, their intimacy evident.

As his car drove past, Scarlett could see Damian's hand resting on the woman's thigh.

Only after the car had completely disappeared did Scarlett let out a faint, wry smile.

From the very beginning, no matter what Damian said or did, she knew perfectly well that his interest in her was either a fleeting whim or because he saw some advantage.

Him calling her "baby", preparing birthday gifts for her-it was all just part of his game. Damian had a well-known reputation as a playboy; how could he ever settle for just one woman?

Pulling herself together, Scarlett locked her car doors and drove straight to Theron Manor without stopping.

Once home, she immediately called Claire.

“Claire, has Elias been bothering you lately?”

Claire replied, “Yes, he has. He even threatened suicide to get me to see him. Not just that—he wrote an electronic suicide note.”

Scarlett grew more worried hearing this and recounted the night’s events to Claire.

Claire was horrified. “He actually attacked you? Scarlett, are you okay?”

Assuring her she was fine, Scarlett suggested, “Why don’t you move in with me for a while?” Given Elias’ temperament, there was no telling what he might do next.

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Chapter 197 A Dangerous Confrontation

✎ 81

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After a moment’s thought, Claire declined. “Scarlett, I’m doing fine like this. Living alone, making my videos occasionally... life feels quite fulfilling now.”

Claire was a food blogger. She only needed to film herself cooking at home, edit the videos, and upload them online to earn a living. She cherished her freedom, which had been constrained by Elias for eight long years.

Scarlett didn’t push, simply urging Claire to be careful.

As their conversation was winding down, Claire suddenly said, “There’s an event tomorrow. Will you come with me?”

Worried for her friend’s safety, Scarlett agreed. “Okay.”

“See you tomorrow then,” Claire said.

The next day, Scarlett got off work early.

Claire picked her up and took her to get styled. Pressed for time, the makeup artist went for a relatively simple look.

Claire picked out a white, strapless, body-hugging gown for Scarlett. The dress was long, covering her legs, but the top half was revealing in just the right way.

Even after giving birth, Scarlett’s figure was still excellent-curvaceous in all the right places, with a waist so slim it looked like one could circle it with their hands.

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15:04 Sat, Jan 10

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 198[858 words]

Chapter 198 A Mother’s Heartache

Finished

Her figure was truly stunning. With the professionally done makeup and elegant high heels, even Claire couldn’t take her eyes off her.

“Scarlett, you’ve really got it all. Vincent truly doesn’t know how lucky he is,” Claire said, linking arms with Scarlett and teasing her good-naturedly.

Scarlett looked at her reflection in the mirror and was momentarily stunned herself.

In five years of marriage, Vincent had never taken her to any banquets or formal events. She rarely dressed up so elaborately.

Daily makeup was vastly different from gala makeup. Tonight, clad in the flowing gown her hair cascading down her back, Scarlett's gentle elegance was on full display.

By the time they arrived at the event venue, many guests had already gathered.

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There was a fashion show, a dance area, lounges for business discussions, and even a separate zone with food and games for children.

Shortly after Scarlett and Claire entered, they spotted Vincent in a tailored black tuxedo and Sabrina in a bold, striking red mini-dress. Sabrina was holding onto Vincent's arm as they headed upstairs, presumably for a business meeting.

Down in the dining area, two children were chatting nearby.

A little boy asked, "Is that pretty lady in the red dress

your mom?"

The little girl was Vanessa. They had their backs to the entrance, so they didn't see Scarlett and Claire come in.

Vanessa thought for a moment before answering truthfully, "No."

The boy sounded surprised. "Oh, really? You must be really close."

Vanessa, eating a small cake and swinging her legs, looked up proudly. "But she's just like my mom, maybe even better than my mom."

Hearing this, the boy, in his childish innocence, asked, "Then where is your mom? I've never seen your mom pick you up from school. Is she... Is she dead?"

Vanessa paused mid-bite. When she spoke again, her voice was quiet. "Pretty much."

Behind them, Scarlett and Claire had heard the entire conversation.

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Chapter 198 A Mother's Heartache

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Hearing Vanessa describe her that way did hurt Scarlett, but she wasn't exactly angry.

Claire, however, was different. She couldn't hold back and called out loudly, "Vanessa!"

Vanessa turned at the sound of her name and saw Scarlett and Claire. She guiltily averted her gaze and didn't greet them.

After Vanessa was born, Scarlett had unilaterally decided that Claire would be her godmother.

Although Claire could be a bit of a romantic, she had never been anything less than wholeheartedly devoted to Vanessa. Back when Vanessa was still close to Scarlett, she had adored Claire too.

But now, she wouldn't even address them properly.

The little boy also turned to look. Seeing Vanessa remain silent, he said, "Vanessa, why aren't you saying hello? Teacher said we should be polite and greet people when we're out."

Vanessa's face flushed with embarrassment. She jumped down from her stool, yelled at the boy, "None of your business!" and then, for good measure, pinched his arm before running off.

The boy, stung by the pinch, immediately started crying loudly.

Witnessing this, Claire turned to Scarlett. "Vanessa is acting like this. Are you really not going to do anything about it?"

Scarlett sighed helplessly. "Do you think she'd let me?"

Remembering how Vanessa hadn't even called Scarlett "Mom" earlier, Claire conceded, "You're right. I guess we have to respect her choices."

Although Scarlett said she wouldn't interfere, she was still worried inside. She looked in the direction Vanessa had run off, her face filled with concern.

The daughter she gave birth to might not need to be top of her class, but she shouldn't be using foul language or be so rude. Yet Vanessa wouldn't listen to anything she said. There was no use worrying about it now.

The little boy, hurt by the pinch, was still sniffing and crying, though not loudly enough to attract much attention.

Just then, a staff member approached Claire. "Hello. Mr. Saxton and the others are waiting for you upstairs."

Claire acknowledged, “Okay, I’ll be right there.”

She then said to Scarlett, “Scarlett, I have a meeting scheduled to discuss a collaboration. I’ll be

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Chapter 198 A Mother’s Heartache

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back soon. Why don’t you find a seat in the main hall and grab some food in the meantime?”

Scarlett nodded with a smile. “Go ahead. Don’t worry about me.”

After Claire went upstairs, Scarlett walked over to the still-sniffling little boy. She crouched down in front of him, used a tissue to gently wipe his tears, and comforted him softly, “Hey now, big guys don’t cry, okay?”

The boy’s shoulders still shook slightly, but the loud sobs had stopped. He looked at Scarlett and said obediently, “Miss, you’re so pretty. Even prettier than the lady in the red dress earlier.”

Scarlett’s heart clenched slightly, but a wave of warmth spread through her at the same time.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 199[883 words]

Chapter 199 The Banquet

She hadn't expected the little boy to find her prettier than Sabrina.

Scarlett gently patted his head. "Thank you," she said softly.

The boy opened his arms, his eyes still red-rimmed. "Miss, hug?"

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Being a mother herself, Scarlett couldn't resist the longing in his eyes. She picked him up, sat on the stool, and settled him on her lap.

"About that little girl pinching you... how about I apologize on her behalf?"

The boy blinked his big, round eyes. "No, it's not your fault. When I'm back at school, I'll tell the teacher. The teacher will talk to her."

Scarlett gave a light laugh. "Okay, we'll do it

your way then."

Vanessa might not listen to me, but she'll have to listen to her teacher.

The boy tilted his head and looked at Scarlett seriously. "Miss, can I have your contact info?"

Before Scarlett could respond, a sudden commotion arose at the entrance.

She glanced toward the entrance and saw Damian walking in. He was with the same woman who had been in his passenger seat the night before. Today, she was wearing a fitted cocktail dress and a simple pearl bracelet. Her long hair was styled in a soft, half-up look, and her high heels accentuated her long, toned legs, making her already slender frame appear even taller.

Her figure was striking, with the kind of perfectly balanced curves she'd expect to see on a video game character.

The woman held onto Damian's arm as they entered the main hall amidst the crowd. Their appearance drew envious glances from many of the women present.

Damian had noticed Scarlett the moment he walked in. He saw her holding the little boy, and his brow furrowed slightly.

But almost immediately, he looked away, engaging with the people fawning over him with an air of obvious indifference.

Many guests, using the pretense of toasting, glanced curiously at the woman beside Damian and asked, "Mr. Langley, who might this lovely lady be?"

Damian glanced at the woman beside him, a meaningful, broad smile spreading across his face. "This? This is the woman who is closest to me every single day."

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Chapter 199 The Banquet

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His suggestive explanation, combined with his roguish handsome face, made anyone who heard it let their imaginations run wild.

The "closest woman"... surely that meant she shared his bed, didn't it? Given Damian's notorious reputation, everyone immediately wore a knowing expression.

The clustered group burst into hearty laughter over something that was said.

Scarlett quickly glanced in Damian's direction, then averted her eyes.

It's a good thing I never believed a word he said. Otherwise, seeing him out and about with another woman like this would be heartbreaking.

The little boy in her arms noticed her distraction. He tugged gently on her dress. "Miss?"

Scarlett snapped back to attention and smiled at him. "Sure."

She wrote her phone number on a slip of paper and handed it to the boy.

He took it carefully and tucked it into his pocket. "Thank you."

Just then, a deep, pleasant male voice called out from behind them, "Eric, come here."

Scarlett turned and saw a man wearing glasses. He was dressed in a steel-gray suit that accentuated his mature demeanor. His neat, short hair didn't reach his ears. With his strong brows and deep-set eyes, he had a very handsome face.

However, there wasn't a trace of a smile on his face; he looked serious and meticulous, giving off an unapproachable, distant vibe.

Hearing the call, the little boy slid off Scarlett's lap. Looking at the newcomer, he called out happily, "Daddy!"

The man extended his hand toward the boy, his tone cold and flat. "Come here."

The boy placed his chubby little hand into the man's, uttering a reluctant "Oh."

From start to finish, the man's gaze didn't linger on Scarlett's face for even a second; he didn't even bother to look at her.

The little boy, however, kept turning back to smile at Scarlett as his father led him away. "Bye bye, Miss!"

Scarlett waved back. "Goodbye."

It was such a brief encounter; she hadn't even had time to ask the boy's name. But she really

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Chapter 199 The Banquet

liked this polite little child.

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After watching the boy and his father leave, Scarlett turned her attention back to the room just in time to see Vincent and Sabrina coming down the stairs together.

As soon as they descended, the crowd that had been surrounding Damian shifted their attention to Vincent, vying to curry favor.

Scarlett paid no mind to these people's social performances. She was about to turn away to get some food when she felt something press against her back from behind.

Before she could even react, she heard a soft, apologetic female voice say, "I'm so sorry! It was an accident! Let me pay for the dress?"

Scarlett turned around and saw a woman in a light blue floor-length gown. She seemed younger than Scarlett.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 200[902 words]

Chapter 200 Smeared Reputation

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The woman was holding a small plate of food stained with oil. The contents had spilled onto the floor, and the oily residue had dripped down the side of the plate, creating a mess.

Scarlett understood immediately-the young woman must have gotten the oil on her dress.

But the girl's apology seemed sincere, her face full of remorse. Thinking it was probably unintentional, Scarlett didn't scold her. "It's fine," she said simply.

With that, she left the dining area and headed for the restroom.

Standing in front of the mirror, she turned her back to it and saw a large stain of oil on the fabric. The pure white dress was instantly ruined by the blemish.

Scarlett reached back, trying to clean it, but found she couldn't properly reach the spot. Even if she could, she realized it wouldn't come out easily, so she gave up.

After washing her hands and looking up, she saw another figure reflected in the mirror.

Vincent was leaning against the wall, his gaze fixed on the stain on her back. "That person did it on purpose just now," he stated suddenly.

Scarlett straightened up. She pulled a paper towel to dry her hands and replied, "I'm not sure."

She genuinely wasn't. The banquet hall was crowded. It was hard for her to judge if the young woman had done it intentionally, especially since the bump had been on her back—she didn't have eyes there.

Vincent shifted his posture, crossing his arms as he looked at her. "I saw it clearly. She did it on purpose. Did you offend someone?"

Scarlett was silent for a few seconds before saying, "Even if I did offend someone, it would be someone from the Stewart family."

Vincent's gaze deepened as it held hers. "Do you really think anyone from the Stewart family would be that petty?"

Hearing this, Scarlett pressed her lips together in a faint, amused smile but didn't elaborate.

Whether the Stewart family is petty or not, Vincent might not know, but I certainly do. However, there was no use in saying more, and she didn't plan to explain.

She turned her head and met his gaze directly. "With the weekend coming up, why don't we go to the county clerk's office on Monday to get new copies of our marriage certificates? Then we can move forward with everything else."

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Seeing her complete lack of emotion, Vincent couldn't help testing the waters. "Do we have to be in such a hurry?"

He leaned in slightly, easily enveloping her in his shadow.

Scarlett looked up at him, displeased. "What do you want, then?"

Vincent's lips curled into a disdainful smirk. "You really think three minutes is my limit?"

Scarlett frowned at him. "I've experienced it firsthand. How could it be false?"

Vincent suddenly raised his hand and lifted her chin. His eyes bore directly into hers, his tone laced with a hint of resentment. "Try it again, and you'll know for sure."

Scarlett found his action flirtatious and disrespectful. Remembering that this same hand had also touched Sabrina filled her with revulsion. She pushed his hand away forcefully. "Vincent, that really won't be necessary. This Monday, we're getting the certificates reissued."

With that, she stepped around him and left the restroom.

Vincent's eyes followed her, lingering on the stain on her back, his brow furrowing slightly.

When Scarlett returned to the ballroom, Claire had already come downstairs. She approached Scarlett, asking curiously, "Where did you go? I was looking for you everywhere just now."

Scarlett smiled and explained, "I just went to the restroom to wash up."

Claire noticed the stain on Scarlett's back. "What happened here?" she asked, frowning.

Scarlett forced a smile. "It's nothing serious. Don't let it ruin your mood."

Claire wanted to ask more, but a small group of people not far away turned and looked over at them simultaneously.

The distance wasn't great, and Scarlett and Claire could hear their whispers,

"Is that the woman who seduced Ms. Crowley's father?"

“Yes, Ms. Crowley just said it’s her, the one with the oil stain on her back. She specializes in seducing middle-aged men, wreaking havoc in their families. Even after being clearly rejected, she still throws herself at them, letting them have their way for free.”

“Ugh, how does a woman like her deserve to be at this event?”

“What a disgrace. She looks decent, but she’s actually a sly temptress.”

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Chapter 200 Smeared Reputation

“She has no shame. If I were her, I’d want to find a hole to hide in.”

Claire turned to look at Scarlett, confused. “Are they talking about you?”

Scarlett was also baffled. She nodded uncertainly. “I think so?”

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Claire couldn’t take it. She immediately stepped forward to confront them, but Scarlett grabbed her arm and shook her head. “Let’s listen a bit more. Let’s see how far they’ll take this absurdity!”

Before the gossiping crowd could finish, Daniel and Harris came down from the second floor. As they descended, Vincent also happened to be returning from the direction of the restrooms.

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