

No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce

Chapter 16

Scarlett sipped her soup slowly, the warmth spreading through her chest. “I specialize in pediatric surgery now,” she said. It felt good to talk about her work-something that was hers, not tied to the Stewart family.

After college, she’d put her career on hold to marry Vincent. Most of her classmates had gone on to get their master’s or PhDs, some even moving abroad for fellowships. Nolan, for example, was now a top neurosurgeon, known for his work with brain tumors. He had articles published in medical journals, awards on his shelf, and a waiting list of patients.

Scarlett could’ve had that too. She’d been top of their class, with offers from prestigious hospitals. But she’d chosen marriage instead. Now, she was just starting out as an attending physician-years behind her peers.

Nolan smiled, noticing her faraway look. “Pediatric surgery’s tough. You need so much patience -kids are scared, parents are stressed. But you’ve always been good with that.”

Scarlett shrugged, picking at her rice. "I'm still learning. I just passed my boards, so I'm not exactly an expert yet."

Nolan leaned forward, his voice serious. "Scarlett, you were the smartest person in our class. Remember when you aced that anatomy exam everyone else failed? You've got the skills—you just need to believe in yourself. It's never too late to start over."

His words made her throat tight. No one had told her that in years—not Vincent, not Amanda, not even her own family. She nodded, not trusting herself to speak.

When the bill came, Scarlett reached for her wallet, but the waiter shook his head. "The gentleman already paid, ma'am."

Scarlett turned to Nolan, surprised. "I said I'd treat!"

Nolan laughed. "Next time. I owe you for all those late-night study sessions."

Before Scarlett could argue, a voice called out behind them. “Nolan?”

They turned to see Sabrina-dressed in a tailored dress, her hair styled perfectly-standing with Vincent and Vanessa. Sabrina’s smile faded when she saw Scarlett, but she acted like she didn’t exist.

“Sabrina, what a coincidence,” Nolan said, standing up. He didn’t know who Vincent or Vanessa were, but he could tell Sabrina didn’t want to acknowledge Scarlett. He slid closer to Scarlett, a silent gesture of support.

Sabrina’s eyes flickered to Scarlett, then back to Nolan. “Have you eaten? We were just about to

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order-join us!”

Nolan shook his head. "We already finished. Maybe another time."

Sabrina's smile faltered, but she quickly recovered. She grabbed Vincent's arm, leaning into him. "Vincent, this is Nolan-my college senior. He's one of the best neurosurgeons in the country."

Vincent nodded, his gaze cold as he looked at Scarlett. She was dressed nicely-her hair was styled, her lips were tinted, and she looked more alive than he'd ever seen her. But what bothered him most was how she ignored Vanessa. Their daughter was standing right in front of her, and Scarlett didn't even glance her

way.

Vanessa saw Scarlett too, but she turned her head. She was still mad about the time Scarlett had yelled at Sabrina. She thought her mom should apologize, and until she did, Vanessa wasn't going to talk to her. But a small part of her hoped Scarlett would hug her, would say she was sorry, would beg for her forgiveness.

But before she could finish that daydream, Sabrina waved a hand in front of her face, pulling her back to reality.

“Vanessa? What’s wrong, sweetie?” Sabrina asked, worried. She reached out to touch Vanessa’s forehead, checking for a fever.

Vanessa looked back instinctively-only to see Scarlett walking out with Nolan. Scarlett didn’t even glance over her shoulder, not even for a split second, as she passed by.

Anger bubbled up in Vanessa. She stamped her foot hard on the floor, her little fists clenched tight. She thought fiercely. Bad mom! I’ll tell Dad not to want you anymore either!

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