

No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce

Chapter 19

Nolan didn't believe her. He gently took her wrist, checking her pulse-steady, but her face was tight with tension. "Tell me what's wrong," he said, his voice soft but firm.

Scarlett sighed. She couldn't keep it from him. "The pianist-'Night Rain'-that's Sabrina. The same woman you met at the restaurant earlier. The one with Vincent."

Nolan's eyes widened. He'd had no idea Sabrina was the famous pianist everyone was talking about. He looked back at the stage, admiration in his eyes. "I had no clue. She's talented-really talented. I've heard her name before-my colleagues rave about her concerts. Now I see why."

Sabrina's stage name-"Night Rain"-suited her. The veil, the white gown, the way she played like she was pouring her soul into the piano-it all added to her mysterious, ethereal vibe. People came for her music, but they stayed for her-the whole package.

Scarlett nodded, her throat tight. "She is. Dazzling, even." She meant it. If Vincent had fallen for her, how could she not be? Sabrina had everything Scarlett didn't-talent, beauty, confidence, Vincent's attention.

Nolan turned to her, his expression serious. "But you're more dazzling."

Scarlett laughed, a bitter sound. "Don't say that. I know what I am." She was a woman who'd put her career on hold for a marriage that fell apart, a mother her daughter didn't want, a wife who'd been replaced.

Nolan leaned forward, his voice earnest. "Scarlett, you were top of our class. You could've been a surgeon, a researcher-anything you wanted. You chose marriage, but that doesn't make you any less amazing. Sabrina's got the spotlight now, but once it's gone? We're all just people. You've got something she doesn't-kindness, empathy, heart. That matters more."

His words made her eyes sting. No one had spoken to her like that in years. She nodded, not trusting herself to speak.

The concert ended soon after. Sabrina bowed deeply, and the audience cheered so loud the walls seemed to shake. Scarlett clapped, too-she couldn't deny Sabrina's talent. As Sabrina stood

up, she glanced toward the front row, then did a double take when she saw Scarlett. Her smile faltered for a second, then she recovered, waving toward Vincent and Vanessa in the second row.

Most of the audience left, but Scarlett and Nolan stayed, waiting for the crowd to thin. Suddenly, Vanessa ran toward the stage, yelling, "Sabrina!" She darted behind the curtain, and Scarlett heard her say, "You're so pretty! I want to be just like you when I grow up!"

Sabrina laughed, her voice warm. "With a sweet mouth like yours? You'll be even prettier."

Chapter 19 Tears for Vanessa's Admiration

Scarlett froze. Her legs felt like lead. Tears pricked her eyes-her own daughter, admiring the woman who'd taken her place.

Nolan noticed. He stepped in front of her, blocking her view of the stage, and knelt down. “Scarlett? What’s wrong?”

She couldn’t hold it in anymore. Tears streamed down her face. “That’s my daughter,” she whispered. “Vanessa. The little girl with Vincent.”

Nolan’s face fell. He looked toward the stage, where Sabrina was crouched down, chatting with Vanessa like she was her mother.

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