

No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce

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Scarlett slipped the pregnancy test into her pocket and walked into the living room. The sound of Amanda and Vincent's voices died instantly-like they'd been caught talking about something they didn't want her to hear.

She didn't bother greeting them. Not like she usually did-with a smile, a "how was your day, an offer to make coffee.

For years, she'd tried to be the perfect wife-kind to her in-laws, quiet when they criticized her, always putting Vincent's needs first. She'd thought if she just tried hard enough, he'd notice. He'd care.

But reality had slapped her awake. Even if she gave them her whole heart, the Stewarts would just step on it. Five years of giving and getting nothing in return? That was enough.

Vincent knew clearly he'd come back to take care of their "monthly business", and he glanced at her, then nodded at Freya. "Freya, see my mom to the door."

Scarlett stood there, silent, but there was a new coldness in her eyes-something Amanda and Vincent had never seen before.

Everyone loved Vincent. He ran the family business like a genius, was polite to his elders, loyal to his friends, fair to his employees. People always said Scarlett'd been lucky to marry him— like she'd won the lottery. But only Scarlett knew the truth—all that kindness, all that charm? It stopped the second he walked through their bedroom door. To her, he was just cold. Distant. A

stranger.

And she was done with it.

As Amanda turned to leave, she paused when passing by Scarlett, and then she snapped, "If you can't give the Stewarts a grandson, how do you plan to face the family ancestors?"

Once, Scarlett would've bowed her head, mumbled an apology, let Amanda's words sting.

But not now. She turned to look at Amanda, her gaze sharp. "Amanda, we're both women. You know having a son isn't just my responsibility."

Amanda's eyes widened in shock. She was used to Scarlett being meek-easy to push around. But this? This was defiance. Amanda didn't back down either—she raised her hand and slapped Scarlett hard across the cheek, the sound echoing in the quiet room. "Is that how you talk to your elders? Apologize!"

She glared at Scarlett, sure she'd back down. Amanda knew how much Scarlett loved Vincent—knew she'd do anything to keep him, even humiliate herself.

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But now, she no longer wanted to swallow her pride and compromise. Since none of them had ever valued her efforts or her life, she refused to comply with anyone anymore.

Scarlett didn't apologize. She didn't even rub her cheek. She just stared at Amanda, her jaw tight, then stepped forward, her hand raised to hit back.

Before she could, though, a strong hand grabbed her wrist-hard. Vincent's voice was low, angry, in her ear. "Scarlett, are you done acting out?"

She looked up at him. His face was handsome, the same face she'd fallen in love with eight years ago—but now, it just made her sick. The coldness in his eyes fell on her and stung her like a needle.

How could he be so cruel?

He didn't love her, he cheated on her, and he treated her coldly-those were already bad enough. But how could someone be so cruel as to treat her like a mere baby-making machine?

What's worse, he even demanded a second child, completely disregarding the risk of amniotic embolism she faced during her first pregnancy. Wasn't that practically trying to kill her?

Just thinking about all this, Scarlett couldn't help but feel a sickening wave of nausea.

She opened her mouth to speak, but Vincent shoved her wrist away. "I don't have time for this today," he said, cold as ever. "We'll talk about the baby next month." He took Amanda's arm and started for the door, like Scarlett wasn't even there.

Amanda looked over her shoulder, a smug smile on her face—as if to say, "See? My son's on my side. You're just an outsider."

Once, that smile would've made Scarlett cry. Now, it just made her tired. She'd gotten used to Vincent choosing everyone but her.

"Vincent," she called out, before he could reach the door.

She'd made up her mind, and she wasn't backing down. When she'd fallen for him, she'd jumped in with both feet, even when her family told her not to. Now, she was jumping out-for good. Eight years of loving him had drained her. She had nothing left to give.

He saw no value in her and never invested in their marriage. He only wed her out of a sense of obligation when she got pregnant.

Their union was a grave, but Scarlett was the only one buried there.

It was long past time for her to see things for what they were.

Vincent stopped, but he didn't turn around. Scarlett thought he was listening to her and took a

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deep breath, her voice steady. "I don't want to be married to you anymore. Let's get a divorce."

Saying it felt like a weight had been lifted off her shoulders.

But then Vincent's phone rang. He answered it, his voice softening-something he never did for her. "Yeah, I'll be right there," he said, then hung up. He didn't even glance at her, just led Amanda out the door, leaving Scarlett standing alone.

Her big "liberation" speech? It hadn't meant a thing.

Only when the door shut behind them did Scarlett let out a bitter laugh.

Freya came back a minute later, after seeing them out, and found her standing there, looking distracted. “Mrs. Stewart?” she said, gently.

Scarlett shook herself out of her daze and walked to the sofa, sinking into it. “Freya, can you make me something to eat? I’m starving.”

Once, she’d cooked every meal herself, hoping Vincent would stay for dinner. Even when he only showed up a few times a year, she’d spent hours in the kitchen, making his favorite dishes. But he never cared.

Now, she just wanted to eat-something for herself, not for him. She remembered who she

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used to be a girl spoiled by her parents and brother, someone who never had to cook or clean, someone who was loved for just being herself.

After dinner, Scarlett went upstairs to the study and pulled out a sheet of paper. She was going to draft a divorce agreement.

She didn't need Vincent's money-her family was comfortable, and she was a pediatric surgeon, good at her job. She could give Vanessa a great life on her own.

But five years of being quiet, of not fighting for herself? That had only gotten her hurt. So this time, she was fighting.

In the agreement, she wrote-Vincent would split half of his post-marriage income with her, and

pay two million dollars a month in child support for Vanessa. But then she paused. Vanessa was four years old-who did she want to live with? Scarlett hadn't even asked her.

She folded the unfinished agreement and put it in her bag. She needed to see her daughter.

After Vanessa was born, Vincent had bought a small villa, Ravensshade Villa, for them, away from Oakland Villa. Scarlett had stayed home with her for four years, then gone back to work at the hospital.

Six months ago, she'd taken a training position at a big hospital in Oakridge-so she'd been even farther from Vanessa. The last two times she'd seen Vincent, she'd been so desperate to fix

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their marriage that she'd focused all her energy on "trying" for a second baby.

She'd swapped shifts with coworkers, pulled three all-nighters in a row, just to get a few days off to see him.

She'd never stopped to think-if he really cared about having another baby, he could've come to her. But he'd been too busy with Sabrina.

Scarlett hailed a cab to Ravensshade Villa. It was just after nine, and she couldn't wait to hug her daughter. As she got out of the cab, her phone pinged-a notification from the video app. "Rina, someone you follow, has posted a new video."

Her heart sank. Even now, even when she'd made up her mind to leave, that woman's posts still found a way to hurt her.

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