No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 201[859 words]

Chapter 201 The Gala's Spotlight

81

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The moment the most influential figures made their entrance, the room filled with flattering greetings, drowning out all other conversation.

Damian and his female companion had vanished; Scarlett hadn't seen them since returning from the restroom.

When Vincent, Daniel, and Harris converged, Daniel asked curiously, "Vincent, where did you disappear to earlier?"

Vincent accepted a glass of red wine from Daniel. Swirling the liquid, his voice was husky and carried a hint of amusement. "Saw a little calico cat. Went to play with it for a while."

Daniel frowned, studying Vincent with curiosity. "Since when did you start liking cats? Have you changed?"

As a longtime friend, Daniel knew Vincent had never been fond of small pets.

Vincent took a sip of his wine, his reply ambiguous. "Not sure. Maybe."

Daniel didn't quite grasp his meaning, so he changed the subject. "Where are Vanessa and Sabrina? I haven't seen them."

After savoring his wine, Vincent answered, "Sabrina went to look for Vanessa."

Their business discussion was mostly wrapped up, and Daniel had no interest in staying for the hollow socializing. He suggested, "Let's go find them then."

No sooner had he spoken than a commotion arose at the entrance.

Someone exclaimed loudly, "Look, it's Mr. Langley!"

Another woman shrieked, "Oh my god, it's Damian! He's so handsome!"

Both Vincent and Damian were top-tier figures in their social circle, but they differed in one key aspect. One had a reputation for being devoted, good only to Sabrina; the other was known as a charismatic playboy who charmed every woman he met.

So, even though both were exceptionally handsome and powerful, women tended to gravitate more toward Damian. The reason was simple-what if she were the one who caught his eye?

The shrieking irritated Daniel. He complained, “Dressed like some peacock. What’s so handsome about him?”

Vincent, however, just shrugged indifferently. “Let’s be fair and objective. He’s not bad-looking.”

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15:04 Sat, Jan 10

Chapter 201 The Gala’s Spotlight

Harris chimed in beside him, “I have to admit, that’s the truth.”

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Hearing his two friends agree, Daniel felt even more indignant. “I think both your brains have rusted. You must be sick.”

Scarlett and Claire were also drawn by the noise at the entrance, temporarily setting aside the slanderous remarks they’d overheard.

This time, Damian entered alone. Wherever he passed, the crowd parted away. He remained silent to anyone who tried to speak to him, his gaze fixed ahead as he cut through the room.

Finally, Damian stopped. He came to a halt in front of a young woman.

Scarlett’s gaze followed his path, and she saw the girl standing before him was the same one who had apologized to her earlier. For some reason, a chill ran down her spine.

The banquet hall was packed, and Damian made no attempt at discretion, so all eyes were on them.

Many looked on with envy. Even the girl herself was flabbergasted, her eyes wide as she stared at Damian. So many people longed for a chance to talk to him without success, yet here he was, ignoring everyone else and walking straight to her.

Could he really be interested in me? The thought made color instantly flood the girl's cheeks. She was so nervous she could barely speak.

Damian looked down at her, a broad smile on his face. "You're very pretty. What's

your name?"

The girl was flustered but answered obediently, "Hello, Mr. Langley. My name is Naomi Crowley."

Damian raised an eyebrow slightly. "Do you have a boyfriend?"

Naomi shook her head. "Not yet."

The directness of the exchange seemed to confirm everyone's suspicions. Wasn't Damian clearly showing interest in Naomi and checking her out?

The people around them murmured with envy, but Damian acted as if he heard nothing.

"Then, Ms. Crowley, what do you think of me? How am I?"

Naomi was stunned. Looking at Damian, she said shyly, "Mr. Langley's status and reputation are naturally unmatched."

Damian laughed appreciatively and nodded. "Not bad. You know how to talk."

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Naomi felt even more pleased with herself. She bowed her head slightly. "You flatter me, Mr. Langley."

With that, Naomi picked up a glass of champagne and offered it to Damian. He looked down at it but didn't take it for a long moment.

Seeing his hesitation, Naomi's hand, holding the glass, began to tremble slightly.

Finally, however, Damian accepted it.

Naomi immediately broke into a delighted smile. She picked up another glass for herself and clinked it against Damian's. "Mr. Langley, this one's to you."

With that, she downed the entire glass in one go.

Whispers broke out among the onlookers.

"Damian is truly a player. He just brought one date, and now he's already scouting another."

"A playboy's women are like seasonal collections-you get used to seeing new ones every time."

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15:04 Sat, Jan 10

Awakened Housewife Ignore Betrayer Begn

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 202[831 words]

Chapter 202 A Public Lesson

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“With so many women around him, I wonder who Damian will finally settle with? I’d really like to see his final choice.”

Scarlett overheard these murmurs too, Her thoughts aligned with theirs-Damian was a womanizer; he wouldn’t commit to just one woman.

After Naomi finished her drink, Damian couldn’t help but praise her, “Ms. Crowley, you hold your liquor well”

Encouraged by the compliment, Naomi grew bolder, Shyly, she asked, “Then, Mr. Langley, would it be convenient to exchange numbers?”

“Sure,” Damian replied generously,

Naomi handed her phone to Damian, who took it and entered a string of digits.

When she got her phone back, Naomi ventured further, “I wonder... would it be okay if I called you tonight, Mr. Langley?”

Damian raised an eyebrow. “Of course. My driver is available anytime.”

Naomi’s mind immediately went somewhere else entirely, and her cheeks flushed even deeper.

But the next moment, Damian clarified casually, “I hope you’ll like my family’s chauffeur.”

Naomi thought she had misheard. “W-what do you mean?”

Damian’s smile was brilliant, his tone lazy. “What? Don’t think he’s good enough? He makes over a thousand a day.”

Naomi’s face fell instantly. “Mr. Langley, I don’t know how I’ve offended you, that you would humiliate me like this in public.”

With so many eyes watching, Damian had first lifted Naomi to the clouds, only to brutally drop her with his next sentence. This public embarrassment was worse than a slap in the face.

Damian’s expression cooled immediately, all pretense gone. He turned, held out his hand to the attendant beside him, who handed him a small plate-the very same dish that had stained

Scarlett’s dress earlier.

Damian lifted the plate and dumped its contents directly onto Naomi's head.

The oily pasta scattered through her hair and began dripping down, splattering marinara sauce all over her light blue gown.

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In that moment, she was completely awkward and humiliated, tears streaming down her face.

The spectators fell into stunned silence.

Damian tossed the plate aside with a flourish, then took a linen napkin to wipe his hands. His expression cold, he looked at Naomi, his voice devoid of warmth. "You didn't offend me. I just purely dislike you. Is that not allowed?"

Damian's face was full of arrogance as he looked down at Naomi, his gaze cold as he watched her awkward state. The harder she cried, the deeper the curve of his smile became.

The onlookers gasped and muttered among themselves.

"What's gotten into Damian today? He's always been so charming with women. Did he wake up on the wrong side of the bed?"

"Even if this woman offended him... but the Crowley family just owns a restaurant chain. How could they possibly have any connection to someone of Damian's stature?"

"Right, Damian seems like a completely different person today."

Despite the surrounding chatter, Damian remained unmoved. After wiping his hands, he threw the napkin directly onto Naomi's face.

"Ms. Crowley, you are only the third woman to earn my dislike."

With that, Damian turned. His icy demeanor caused the people around him to instinctively clear a path.

He was arrogant, proud, cocky, and roguish. His height allowed his gaze to easily sweep over the surrounding crowd, finally landing in the direction of Vincent and his group.

A complex, indescribable emotion flickered in his eyes.

Vincent, Daniel, and Harris all noticed Damian's gaze directed their way. It was filled with unmistakable disdain, scorn, and mockery.

Receiving this unfriendly signal, Daniel asked his companions, puzzled, "Is that a blatant challenge?"

Vincent held his wine glass, his voice lowered. "Has he ever been subtle about challenging us before?"

Harris straightened up, frowning in confusion. "There's something off about Damian today. Isn't he usually so smooth with women? Why would he go out of his way to humiliate one publicly?"

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Vincent took a sip of his merlot. His gaze suddenly shifted to Scarlett, who was standing not far

away.

At that moment, everyone's attention was focused on Damian's dramatic exit. Only Scarlett wasn't looking at him; instead, she was browsing the hors d'oeuvres in the dining area.

The more indifferent Scarlett seemed toward Damian, the more Vincent felt something was amiss.

Is this indifference genuine? Or is it because she was certain Damian would stand up for her? Was that why, back in the restroom when I asked if she'd offended anyone, she said what she did?

His mind raced with thoughts, but he still offered Harris an explanation. "Someone here might know the answer to that question."

Harris followed Vincent's gaze, saw Scarlett, and chose to remain silent.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 203[832 words]

Chapter 203 A Mother's Instinct

81

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How fiercely Damian had defended Scarlett before was something Harris and the others had witnessed firsthand.

But Daniel wasn't convinced. "Even if Damian was standing up for Scarlett, it's just a passing whim. A man like him—no matter how interested he seems-is just playing games. Sooner or later, she'll realize she not only wronged Vincent but also chose the wrong person to rely on."

Both Vincent and Harris remained silent in response to Daniel's words. But what if Damian's defense of her was genuine?

Meanwhile, Scarlett had prepared a plate of appetizers. As she handed it to Claire, she heard her friend click her tongue disapprovingly. “Scarlett, see? A man like Damian is exactly the kind you should stay away from. Always surrounded by rumors, known for being charming and smooth with women, yet capable of humiliating them in public. If you ever meet a man like that, you should run.”

Scarlett offered a faint smile. “I know.”

Though she smiled, her heart felt heavy. Damian had no prior issue with that woman, yet he suddenly targeted her.

Scarlett didn’t dare dwell on it; she was afraid Damian had acted because of her. The only explanation she could think of was that she held some value he needed.

But what does Damian want from me?

As she was lost in thought, a sharp cry came from the entrance. “Vincent! Vanessa is missing!”

The cry instantly silenced all the chatter about Damian.

Hearing Sabrina’s shout, Vincent, Daniel, and Harris immediately rushed out of the ballroom.

Scarlett heard it too. Instinctively, she dropped the plate in her hands and ran outside. Claire, seeing this, grew alarmed and followed close behind.

The group reached the garden area of the venue and split up to search for Vanessa.

Scarlett was frantic with worry, unable to tell if the moisture on her face was sweat or tears. She looked around desperately, running and calling out anxiously, “Vanessa! Where are you? Don’t scare Mommy! Answer me, please!”

She passed the playground, the pool area, but saw no sign of Vanessa. Her anxiety mounted, tears and sweat streaming down together.

Chapter 203 A Mother’s Instinct

Vincent also made his way to this area. Seeing Scarlett, he paused briefly.

“Have you found Vanessa?” Scarlett looked at Vincent, her voice urgent.

Vincent was equally worried. He shook his head. “Not yet.”

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Scarlett grew even more frantic. She instinctively lashed out, her voice a low roar, “Vincent, if anything happens to Vanessa, I’ll never forgive you!”

She was trembling so violently her legs could barely support her.

Seeing her about to collapse, Vincent reached out to steady her. “Don’t worry, I’ve got security looking. She should be fine.”

Scarlett struggled against his hold. When she couldn’t break free, she went limp, just standing there, but her treacherous tears kept falling. She scanned the area, desperate to catch sight of that familiar little figure.

But wherever she looked, there was no sign of Vanessa.

Just then, barks came from the side, followed by a crying, pleading voice. “Waaah... Mommy... Mommy, save me...”

Scarlett recognized the voice instantly. It was Vanessa’s.

A mother’s instinct kicked in. Strength surged through her weakened body in an instant. Without a second thought, she sprinted toward the source of the sound. Somehow, she ran even faster than Vincent.

Dashing past the hedges near the pool, Scarlett saw Vanessa running toward her, chased by a medium-sized dog that was barking ferociously.

Ignoring the danger, Scarlett ran toward Vanessa and the dog. As she ran, she tried to calm her daughter, “Vanessa, don’t be afraid! Come to Mommy! I’m here! Mommy won’t let anything happen to you!”

Vanessa saw Scarlett and ran toward her, but the dog caught up, sinking its teeth into Vanessa’s leg.

Once the dog had a hold of Vanessa’s calf, it refused to let go.

Seeing this, Scarlett’s mind went blank. But a mysterious, powerful maternal force took over. She lunged forward and grabbed the dog’s neck with her bare hands.

Vanessa lay on the ground, crying and screaming.

Scarlett used all her strength to choke the dog, but it wouldn’t release its grip. Seeing blood

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Chapter 203 A Mother’s Instinct

flowing from Vanessa’s calf, she started hitting the dog’s head with her free hand.

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Finally, the dog released Vanessa’s leg but turned and bit down hard on Scarlett’s arm several times.

Freed, Vanessa scrambled up and ran to Vincent. “Daddy, hold me! Daddy, hold me!” Her voice shook with fear.

Vincent didn’t stop to help Scarlett—instead, he knelt down, lifted Vanessa into his arms, and soothed her gently, “It’s okay now, sweetie. Daddy’s right here.”

Just then, Sabrina, Daniel, and Harris arrived on the scene.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 204[822 words]

Chapter 204 Choices Made

When Vanessa saw Sabrina, her cries intensified. “Sabrina, hold me!”

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Sabrina took Vanessa from Vincent’s arms, pressing her forehead against the child’s. Her voice was full of guilt. “I’m sorry; I’m so late.”

As the group gathered, Sabrina focused entirely on comforting Vanessa.

Daniel saw Scarlett being bitten but watched impassively, making no move to help.

Harris, however, found a branch from nearby and started striking the dog’s body with it. But the animal, for some reason, refused to release Scarlett’s arm.

Seeing this, Harris alternated between hitting the dog and shouting to intimidate it.

Daniel couldn’t be bothered with Harris. He turned back to look at Vanessa and noticed blood seeping from several wounds on her calf.

Frowning, Daniel said urgently, “Vanessa’s wounds are bleeding badly. We need to get her to the emergency room immediately.”

Hearing this, Sabrina immediately carried Vanessa toward the exit. Daniel followed a few steps but noticed Vincent wasn’t coming.

He looked back and saw Vincent kicking the dog repeatedly. Even when kicked hard, the dog only whimpered but maintained its grip. Daniel understood Vincent was trying to free Scarlett.

But right now, Vanessa’s situation was more critical. “Vincent, hurry! Vanessa needs tetanus shots and antibiotics. Don’t worry about her right now-Harris is here.”

Hearing Daniel’s call, Vincent hesitated, then said to Harris, “I’m taking Vanessa to the hospital first. Please make sure Scarlett gets medical attention.”

The situation was urgent. Harris didn’t overthink it. “Go ahead, I’ve

got this.”

Vincent glanced down at Scarlett. She had her arms protecting her head while the dog was clamped onto her right arm, which was already bleeding profusely.

Both situations required immediate attention, but Vanessa was just a child with lower pain tolerance. After a moment's internal conflict, Vincent decided to prioritize getting Vanessa to the emergency room.

As the

group hurried away with Vanessa, they ran into Claire, who had heard the commotion and was coming to investigate.

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Claire was baffled seeing them rush off with the child. But walking further into the garden, she saw Scarlett being mauled by the dog, with Harris ineffectually beating the animal with a branch.

Harris wasn't a violent person and couldn't stand the sight of blood. So even though the dog was viciously attacking, he wasn't using his full strength to injure it.

Claire was different. Seeing Scarlett being bitten, she ran over and delivered a powerful kick to the dog's head.

The dog still didn't release its grip. She kicked it several more times, hard.

Maybe the dog was exhausted, or maybe it was genuinely hurt by the kicks. It finally lost the strength to bite and collapsed to the ground, tail between its legs, panting heavily.

Claire moved quickly. She pulled Scarlett up, and Harris helped support her.

"Are you okay?" Harris asked, looking at Scarlett with concern.

Scarlett was in a daze. She couldn't even feel the pain in her arm. She just shook her head numbly. "I'm fine."

Harris looked at her bloodied arm and pale face. "Let me drive you to the hospital," he offered.

Before Scarlett could respond, Claire glared at Harris. “Get lost. I have my car right here.” Claire knew Harris was part of Vincent’s circle and guessed they had abandoned Scarlett. She was furious.

Harris, rebuked by Claire, was momentarily speechless.

Claire held onto Scarlett, her heart aching for her friend. “They’re all complete bastards,” she muttered under her breath.

Scarlett felt unsteady on her feet, each step feeling weak and insubstantial.

Claire cursed extensively-Vincent, Sabrina, the whole situation-but Scarlett barely registered the words. She felt utterly drained, not from the pain, but because she was growing faint at the sight of so much blood.

It was almost ironic. She was a doctor, a surgeon no less, yet she had hemophobia. It wasn’t innate; it was a lingering effect from her traumatic childbirth experience.

Despite this, she had resolutely chosen medicine, believing she could overcome this psychological barrier. And she had, for the most part. But tonight, that familiar fear had returned with overwhelming force.

As Claire helped Scarlett through the main doors of the ballroom, Scarlett’s legs finally gave

way, and she pitched forward.

“Scarlett!” Claire cried out urgently.

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But as Scarlett fell, the expected impact with the marble floor never came. In her hazy state, she sensed a figure moving toward her with swift determination. The scent was familiar-a mix of faint tobacco and expensive cologne.

She felt herself being lifted into strong arms and sensed a pair of intense, burning eyes fixed on her, so hot they felt like they could incinerate her on the spot.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 205[888 words]

Chapter 205 Fragile Trust

Then, she felt her body moving rhythmically; someone was carrying her while walking.

At the same time, a voice filled with complex emotions sounded near her ear. It carried resentment, guilt, heartache, and reluctance...

81

Finished

“Why is it that whenever you’re with him, you end up like this? I was gone for less than an hour, and you’re hurt again. If you had chosen to marry me back then, I would never have let you face any danger...”

When Scarlett opened her eyes again, the sharp scent of antiseptic filled her nostrils.

A throbbing pain pulsed through her arm, and she furrowed her brows slightly.

Memories came flooding back, reminding her of what had happened right before she lost consciousness.

Claire was sitting by the bed. Seeing Scarlett open her eyes, she asked with relief, “Scarlett, you’re awake?”

Scarlett parted her lips, her voice hoarse. “Yeah.”

Claire grabbed Scarlett’s hand, tears welling in her eyes. “You have no idea how scared I was.”

Scarlett rubbed the back of Claire's hand with her thumb. "I'm okay now."

After composing herself, Claire finally said, "It was Damian who brought you here."

Scarlett had already guessed it would be him.

She wasn't sure whether his kindness was genuine or performative, but at that banquet, it seemed like he was the only one who would come to her aid.

After a moment's thought, Scarlett asked, "Where is he now?"

Claire, who was peeling an apple, replied, "He left after the doctor gave the diagnosis. A woman came to pick him up."

Hearing this, Scarlett just gave a quiet, noncommittal, "Hmm."

Claire cut a small piece of the peeled apple and handed it to Scarlett. "I really didn't expect this. Just earlier, I was saying we should stay away from men like him, and then right after, he helps

you out."

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Chapter 205 Fragile Trust

Scarlett smiled faintly without saying much more.

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Claire's train of thought jumped around. After talking about Damian, she started cursing Vincent. "That bastard really doesn't care about you at all. You were bitten like that, and he was only worried about Vanessa."

Scarlett curved her lips into a faint smile. "He's always been like that."

Claire was furious, but worried about upsetting Scarlett, she held back.

After Scarlett finished the apple, Violet and Nathan arrived at the hospital.

After Scarlett fainted, Claire had received a call from Nathan. Claire told him everything, and they said they were coming over.

The injection had been administered, the wound cleaned, and Scarlett didn't need to stay in the hospital, so Violet suggested they head back.

Scarlett was worried about Claire, so she asked Nathan to take Claire home first.

After dropping off Claire, the family returned to Theron Manor.

It was already past midnight when they arrived.

When Scarlett entered her bedroom, she noticed the bed sheets, which had been perfectly smooth without a single wrinkle when she left that morning, were now rumpled.

She sat down and reached out to touch the sheets, finding them still warm.

Scarlett looked toward the window. It was half-open, the late autumn night breeze drifting in, lifting a corner of the curtain.

Mixed with the wind, Scarlett thought she could catch a faint trace of Damian's cologne.

She guessed Damian had been in her bedroom, not long before she returned.

Scarlett got up and went to the window. She looked left and right but didn't see any sign of him.

So, she reached out and closed the window.

Just as she shut it, her phone rang.

Returning to the bedside, she picked up her phone and saw it was Vincent calling.

Hesitating for a second, she answered anyway.

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Chapter 205 Fragile Trust

"Hello." Her voice was cold and sounded weak.

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Finished

It was quiet on Vincent's end. "Did they take care of your wound?" he asked, concern in his voice.

Hearing his belated concern sent a sharp pang through her heart, but her face remained expressionless as she replied, “Yes, it’s handled.”

Vincent seemed to let out a sigh of relief. “Good, that’s good.”

Scarlett thought for a moment, then asked him, “What about Vanessa? Is her wound taken care of too?”

Vincent answered, “Yes, she’s already back from the hospital.”

“Okay.” As soon as she said that, she moved to hang up.

Vincent, seeming to sense her intention, quickly called out, “Scarlett, wait a moment.”

Scarlett paused her finger over the “end call” button. “Is there something else?”

Vincent’s voice was raspy as he said, “Damian and I have conflicting business interests. I don’t want you getting close to him.”

His tone was domineering, like he was giving her an order.

Hearing his words, a wave of irritation rose instantly within her. She let out a cold, dismissive snort. “Vincent, worry about yourself.”

With that, she directly ended the call.

On his end, Vincent listened to the dial tone, his face darkening.

Behind him, Vanessa was lying in bed. She blinked her big, round eyes at Vincent’s back and called out, “Daddy?”

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 206[853 words]

Chapter 206 A Child’s Longing

Her voice was soft, carrying a hint of a whimper.

Vincent

put his phone away and turned back, forcing a smile. “What is it, sweetheart?”

Vanessa asked worriedly, “Is Mommy okay now?”

Vincent nodded. “Yes, she’s fine.”

Vanessa then asked curiously, “Did she go back to her place?”

Vincent paused. “I... forgot to ask.”

Vanessa frowned, her expression unhappy. “So... Mommy can’t come see me?”

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Finished

For some reason, even though Vanessa claimed she didn’t like her mother and didn’t want to see her, whenever she felt unwell or scared, thoughts of her mom instinctively surfaced.

Seeing Vanessa’s discontent, Vincent sat on the edge of the bed. He gently stroked his daughter’s hair and asked softly, “Do you want Mommy to visit you?”

Vanessa buried her face in the pillow, only showing her profile to Vincent. She mumbled, “Maybe a little. But not that much. I have you and Sabrina. That’s enough.”

Vincent rubbed her cheek, recognizing her unspoken longing. He didn't press further, simply coaxing her to sleep.

It was late, and Vanessa soon drifted off.

Vincent looked down at Vanessa's peaceful face, a heavy feeling settling in his chest.

After she was sound asleep, he left the bedroom and went to his study.

There, he called Scarlett again.

After a moment, she picked up.

Vincent got straight to the point. "Vanessa would like to see you."

Hearing this, Scarlett was slightly taken aback.

But then it struck her-her daughter, who seemed to dislike her so intensely-how could she possibly want to see her?

With that thought, Scarlett refused. "It's too late. As long as you take good care of her, that's

what matters. I need to rest."

Finished

Not giving Vincent a chance to say more, Scarlett decisively hung up.

After disconnecting, she set her phone to silent mode.

That night, Scarlett had a nightmare, reliving the agony of giving birth to Vanessa.

It had been a natural delivery. Her cervical blood vessels had ruptured, leading directly to massive hemorrhaging and infection. To save her life, the doctors had to perform multiple blood transfusions, replacing nearly all the blood in her body.

The pain was something only she could truly comprehend. The terror she felt then was nearly overwhelming.

But in the end, she had pulled through.

Yet, every time she remembered that experience, she felt suffocated.

She woke the next morning, her face streaked with dried tears.

She sat on the bed, staring blankly into the space before her.

She didn't know how much time had passed when a knock came at the door. Clara called from outside, "Auntie, are you awake? Can I come in?"

Hearing the voice, Scarlett snapped out of her thoughts. She quickly answered in a hoarse voice, "I'm awake, come in."

Clara pushed the door open. Dressed in pink pajamas and holding a doll, she walked in and climbed onto the bed.

Snuggling up to Scarlett, Clara asked worriedly, "Auntie, Mom and Dad said you got hurt by a dog. Are you better now?"

Scarlett held Clara close and said softly, "I'm fine now."

Clara looked up at Scarlett, her voice sweet. "Mom and Dad told me to cheer you up today, to take you out to have some fun."

Scarlett stroked Clara's hair. "Just having you here makes me very happy."

Clara hugged Scarlett, gave her a kiss on the cheek, and then handed her the doll she was holding. "Auntie, one of the housekeepers gave this to me. She said someone left it for you."

Scarlett looked down at the plush toy in Clara's hand. It wasn't large or elaborate, just a simple child's toy, but Clara said it was meant for her.

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Chapter 206 A Child's Longing

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She picked it up and examined it. It wasn't a branded doll, quite plain really, with embroidered eyes and a stitched smile.

After a moment's thought, Scarlett figured it was probably from Damian. She couldn't think of anyone else.

Placing the toy beside her pillow, Scarlett heard Clara say, "Auntie, get ready. I'm taking you out to play."

It was Saturday. Not wanting to disappoint the little girl, Scarlett agreed.

Clara said she was taking Scarlett out, but they ended up at the theme park.

Scarlett didn't call her out on it and simply went along, enjoying the day with her.

At the park, while Clara was on the carousel, Scarlett stood by, taking photos and cheering her on, giving her all the positive attention.

Meanwhile, Vincent had also brought Vanessa to the theme park.

"Daddy, I want to ride the carousel!"

Vincent, holding Vanessa's hand, agreed without hesitation. "Okay, let's go."

But just as they approached the merry-go-round, both Vincent and Vanessa spotted Scarlett, who had her back to them, taking pictures of Clara.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 207[814 words]

Chapter 207 Park Encounters

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“Clara, smile! Open your arms wide. Yes, that’s perfect! You look absolutely beautiful!”

“Auntie, take another one!”

Finished

“Oh Clara, you’re such a natural in front of the camera! So adorable! I could watch you all day”

The carousel kept turning, and Scarlett held up her phone, continuously capturing moments.

Watching this scene, Vanessa suddenly felt a pang of sadness. “Daddy, I don’t want to ride anymore,” she said, her voice tinged with annoyance.

Vincent noticed Vanessa’s shift in mood, concerned she might be feeling unwell again. “What’s wrong, sweetheart?”

Vanessa buried her face in his shoulder, her voice muffled. “Let’s go find Sabrina.”

Vincent held her with one arm while gently stroking her hair with his other hand. “Sabrina’s busy with her doctoral research lately; she doesn’t have much free time. We shouldn’t disturb her.”

This made Vanessa even more upset. “But then there’s no one to play with me.”

Scarlett was with Clara, and Sabrina was occupied with her studies.

What about her?

Who was left to play with her?

Her words tugged at Vincent’s heartstrings. He rested his chin on top of her head. “Daddy’s here. I’ll stay with you.”

“Fine then,” Vanessa replied without further argument, though her tone clearly indicated reluctance.

Vincent knew she wasn’t happy, but he didn’t realize her discontent stemmed from longing for her mother’s attention. A child’s emotions can be complex, sometimes even confusing to themselves.

Vanessa leaned against Vincent’s chest. Turning slightly, she could still see Scarlett taking photos of Clara. They were having such a wonderful time, laughing together, completely unaware of her and Vincent standing behind them.

But her mom wasn’t willing to share that happiness with her.

1/3

15:07 Sat, Jan 10

Chapter 207 Park Encounters

Vanessa didn’t want to watch any longer. “Daddy, let’s go play something else,” she said.

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Finished

Eager to lift her spirits, Vincent agreed immediately. Still concerned, he added gently, “Just for a little while, okay? Your injury hasn’t fully healed yet.”

Vanessa nodded. “I know. I’ll be careful.”

Vincent took her on the mini-train and the swings. She seemed to enjoy herself, yet a strange, unsettled feeling lingered within her. She couldn’t quite identify what that discomfort meant.

After a few rides, Vanessa began to lose interest.

Back at the carousel, as it gradually slowed to a stop, Scarlett helped Clara

Just as she straightened up, she heard a cheerful boy’s voice call out, “Miss!”

step down.

Scarlett turned toward the sound and saw the little boy she’d met at the gala the previous night. Today he was wearing athletic wear and a black baseball cap.

She remembered him clearly, even recalling his father calling him Eric.

Recognizing him, Scarlett smiled warmly. “Oh, it’s you, Eric.”

The boy told her earnestly, “Miss, my full name is Eric Wilson.”

Scarlett’s smile widened. “I remember your name now.”

When Clara turned around, Eric spotted her. “Clara? Is that you?”

“Eric, what are you doing here?” Clara asked as she stepped out of the carousel area.

Instead of answering, Eric turned his head, scanning the surroundings, and called out loudly, “Mr. Langley!”

Mr. Langley?

Damian?

Scarlett looked around but didn’t see him at first. Then, gazing further ahead, she spotted Damian walking toward them, hands in his pockets, radiating his characteristic casual confidence. He had a lollipop in his mouth, making one cheek bulge slightly.

As he approached, he didn’t even glance at Scarlett, looking down at Eric instead. “What’s up, kid?” he asked.

Eric stood beside him, linking his small finger with Damian’s. Before the boy could speak, Clara chimed in, “It’s you! How do you know Eric?”

15:07 Sat, Jan 10

Chapter 207 Park Encounters

AB

81

Finished

Damian looked at Clara and gave her a gentle smile. “I’m good friends with Eric’s dad.”

Clara understood immediately. She stepped forward, took Eric’s hand, and announced, “Perfect! Then let’s all play together!”

Before Eric could protest, Clara was already pulling him toward the next attraction. They were classmates with Vanessa at kindergarten, so they all knew each other well.

As the two children ran ahead, Scarlett called out worriedly, “Clara, slow down! Watch your step!”

Clara shouted back an acknowledgment while pulling Eric onto a bouncy castle. The two of them started jumping, their laughter filling the air.

Scarlett turned to look at Damian. He had averted his face, offering only his profile to her.

Even so, Scarlett spoke up, “About last night... Claire told me what happened. Regardless of everything, thank you.”

Damian didn’t respond, didn’t look at her, but he didn’t walk away either. He just stood there beside Scarlett, his face turned

away.

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15:07 Sat, Jan 10

Awakened Housewife Ignore Betrayer’s Begs

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 208[915 words]

Chapter 208 Small Steps Closer

When he ignored her, Scarlett tried again, “Damian?”

Still no response came from him.

81]

Finished

Scarlett knew he was doing it intentionally, and she knew he could hear her perfectly well.

So she continued calmly, “Please don’t send things to Theron Manor anymore. I have no use for those items.”

Damian remained silent. No matter what Scarlett said, he wouldn’t respond.

His attitude even made Scarlett doubt for a moment whether it had really been him who took her to the hospital. But she knew Claire wouldn’t lie to her.

She didn’t understand what kind of mood Damian was in, nor did she plan to press the matter. They moved in different circles with little connection anyway. If he wanted to ignore her, perhaps that was for the best.

Worried Clara might get hurt, Scarlett walked over to where the children were playing.

As soon as she moved, Damian followed her.

After tiring themselves out on the bouncy castle, Clara came over to Scarlett asking for water.

Damian, inexperienced with children, hadn’t brought any. Fortunately, Scarlett had packed an extra bottle, which she offered to Eric.

After drinking her water, Clara went and took Damian’s hand. “Mr. Langley, will you come on the roller coaster with me? Auntie’s hand is hurt; she can’t go with me yet.”

Damian smiled gently and agreed, “Of course.”

Holding his hand, Clara happily pulled him toward the large roller coaster.

The two of them boarded the ride, with Damian securing Clara safely beside him.

Eric didn’t join them, claiming he was afraid of heights. Clara called him a scaredy-cat, but he still refused.

Scarlett sat with Eric on a bench in the shade, using her phone to capture her niece’s joyful

moments.

On the ride, Clara wasn't just excited; she turned serious and asked Damian, "Mr. Langley, did you come here to see my auntie?"

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Chapter 208 Small Steps Closer

Finished

Damian replied, "Yes, but don't tell your auntie. She's still upset with me."

It wasn't really Scarlett who was angry; it was Damian himself who was sulking, still stewing over how Scarlett had defended Vincent that day.

Clara held onto the safety bar in front of her, looking down at the view below. She said curiously, "But Auntic is usually very easygoing. If she's upset with you, you must have done something not very nice to make her angry."

Damian fell silent at her words, thinking. After a few seconds, he said, "You're right. It's my fault for not... being persistent enough."

His words were vague, and Clara didn't fully understand, but she adopted a mature tone, "Then you should try harder! Our teacher says we need to keep trying and never give up, so we can grow up to be responsible adults."

Damian was amused. He ruffled her hair and said, "Understood. I will definitely keep trying."

Clara lifted her chin proudly. "My auntie is very popular, you know. Before, there was another handsome gentleman who brought her home."

This got a reaction from Damian. "What?"

Clara thought for a moment. "Yeah, Mr. Huntley. He's also very good-looking, and Grandpa and Grandma liked him a lot."

Damian knew she was talking about Nolan. A wave of irritation washed over him, but there wasn't much he could do about it. He lowered his voice and asked Clara, "Then let me ask you, who is more handsome, Nolan or me?"

Clara considered it seriously. "You're both very

Damian pressed, "But if you had to choose one?"

handsome."

Clara lowered her voice too. "I won't choose. I just want Auntie to be happy. When she was with my uncle, she never smiled. I don't like my uncle. I want Auntie to have someone who can make her happy every day."

Clara's words struck a chord deep within Damian, touching a nerve that was already sensitive.

He looked down toward the shaded area. Scarlett and Eric were sitting on a bench. They seemed to be engaged in conversation, and a faint smile appeared on Scarlett's face. It wasn't a broad smile, but Damian saw it clearly. She was smiling.

Gazing in Scarlett's direction, Damian said to Clara with utmost seriousness, "Clara, I will become the person who can make your auntie happy."

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15:07 Sat, Jan 10

Chapter 208 Small Steps Closer

20

Finished

Under the tree, Scarlett handed the water bottle to Eric. He took a sip, then looked up at her and said, "Ms. Theron, Vanessa, Clara, and I are all classmates. We attend the same kindergarten."

Scarlett had already guessed as much. She gave him a gentle smile and then asked, "Why did you and Damian decide to come to this theme park today?"

She couldn't help but feel a little suspicious about this "coincidental" meeting.

As Eric handed the water bottle back to Scarlett, he replied, "My dad went on a business trip today. Dad asked Mr. Langley to take me out to play."

Listening to his explanation, Scarlett nodded in understanding. "Oh, I see."

It seemed she had been overthinking it. Maybe their meeting really was just a coincidence.

Soon, the ride came to a stop, and Damian brought Clara down.

Seeing them return, Eric stood up, and Scarlett rose to her feet as well.

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15:07 Sat, Jan 10

Awakened Housewife Ignore Betrayer’s Begs

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 209[841 words]

Chapter 209 Contrasting Scenes

81

Finished

As Damian approached carrying Clara, Eric turned and stretched out his arms. “Ms. Theron, I want a hug too!”

Scarlett hesitated, about to mention her injured arm, but Damian spoke first, “Eric, I’ll carry you.”

With that, he lifted Eric with his other arm, effortlessly holding a child on each side.

Seeing him manage two children so easily, Scarlett couldn’t help but smile faintly.

Damian noticed her smile and paused briefly, but still didn’t speak, simply continuing forward.

Scarlett followed behind. Clara pointed toward a nearby vendor stall. “Mr. Langley, can I get cotton candy?”

Damian smiled. “Of course.”

He set the children down in front of the stall and let them choose.

Clara picked a cotton candy shaped like a bunny, while Eric chose one resembling a tiger.

Seeing that they had made a decision, Scarlett pulled out her phone to pay. But Damian was faster and managed to complete the transaction before her. He then pointed toward a vibrant, swirled cotton candy and said, “I’ll take that one as well.”

The vendor, pleased with the sale, thanked him cheerfully.

Scarlett didn’t insist on paying. It was a small amount, nothing he would think twice about.

When the cotton candies were ready, Damian took the colorful one.

From the moment he ordered it, Scarlett assumed it was for himself.

But as soon as he received it, he turned and offered it to Scarlett. “Here. Got this for you.”

Scarlett was surprised, pointing at herself. “For me?”

Damian gently pressed it into her hand. “Mhm.”

Having done that, he turned and walked between the two children, taking each by the hand and leading them forward.

Watching this scene, Scarlett couldn’t help but recall the struggles and loneliness of raising Vanessa alone over the years.

1/3

15:07 Sat, Jan 10

Chapter 209 Contrasting Scenes

81

Finished

She had always been on her own. Even with household staff around, she handled everything concerning her child personally.

Countless times, she had imagined Vincent helping her out-just holding Vanessa for a moment, or changing a diaper... but over the years, Vincent had never lifted a finger.

Yet here was Damian, effortlessly managing two children at once. The sight brought a sudden, sharp sting to her nose, a prickle of unshed tears.

If only Vincent had acted even a little like Damian was now, perhaps those memories wouldn't be so filled with bitterness.

*****

Vincent had taken Vanessa to play a ring toss game nearby.

Just as it ended, his phone rang.

Holding Vanessa with one arm, he answered the call with his free hand.

It was Freya.

"Mr. Stewart," Freya said, "I think I remember now. The marriage certificate... I believe your grandfather took it."

Vincent fell silent at her words.

After a long moment, he finally replied flatly, "I see."

When he and Scarlett first married, their relationship had been unstable, and Xavier had often subtly encouraged them to make it work. Vincent hadn't paid those words much mind at the time.

When the marriage certificates went missing recently, he never suspected Xavier.

But now, with Freya mentioning it, everything suddenly made sense.

After hanging up, Vincent had just put his phone away when he glanced up and spotted Damian not far away. Damian was holding both children's hands, while Scarlett walked leisurely behind them, holding a colorful cotton candy and taking occasional licks.

The scene looked exactly like a family outing-a couple with their children.

Watching them, Vincent felt an inexplicable tightness in his chest.

Almost without thinking, he called out, "Scarlett."

81

Finished

His voice was loud enough not just for Scarlett, but for Damian to hear as well.

Damian had been about to lead the children to the next ride, but seeing Vincent, he changed his mind.

Vincent, holding Vanessa, walked up to Scarlett and stopped in front of her. He said to her softly, “Grandpa wants us to come to Stewart Manor for dinner.”

Scarlett was taken aback for a moment, but her expression remained neutral as she refused. “Not today. I came out with Clara. I need to take her home.”

Vincent said, “Then I’ll go with you to drop Clara off, and then we can go to Grandpa’s together.”

Vanessa, slumped against Vincent’s chest, looked listless, like a wilted flower.

Hearing Scarlett’s voice, she lifted her head slightly, a silent “Mom” forming on her lips. But seeing her mother wasn’t even looking at her, she swallowed the word back down.

Listening to Vincent, Scarlett remained unmoved and refused again. “No, that’s not necessary.”

Just as Vincent opened his mouth to say more, Damian stepped in front of Scarlett. He said impatiently, “Haven’t you pushed enough, Mr. Stewart? Forcing a woman isn’t something a real man would do, is it?”

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W

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15:07 Sat, Jan 10

Awakened Housewife Ignore Betrayer’s Begs

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 210[862 words]

Chapter 210 Protective Stances

81

Finished

Vincent held Vanessa closer, pressing her against his chest. His expression was cold, his gaze icy as it settled on Damian. “This is a private family matter. It has nothing to do with you, Mr. Langley.”

Damian let out a disdainful snort. “Hah. Don’t say I didn’t warn you, Mr. Stewart. Having affairs during marriage might not be illegal, but acting against a woman’s will... that’s crossing a line.”

Hearing Damian’s words from behind him, Scarlett instinctively reached out and tugged gently on his sleeve, whispering, “Damian, let’s just go.”

She didn’t want to cause a scene or waste time arguing pointlessly with Vincent.

Damian looked down at her fingers clutching his sleeve, and his expression softened immediately. He turned, took Eric’s hand, and said to her, “Alright.”

Scarlett took Clara’s hand. “Clara, we’re heading home now.”

With that, their group walked away together.

Vincent watched them leave, the muscles along his jawline tightening visibly.

Vanessa looked up and saw Scarlett holding Clara’s hand, the younger girl skipping happily beside her. The sight felt sharp and irritating to her eyes, stirring a wave of resentment within her.

Wrapping her arms tighter around Vincent’s neck, Vanessa said in a small, slightly sour voice, “Daddy, let’s go home. My leg hurts a little.”

Concerned, Vincent carefully set her down on a nearby bench to examine the injury. Once satisfied it wasn’t inflamed, he picked her up and left the theme park.

*****

Damian, holding Eric's hand, walked behind Scarlett and Clara.

Once they were a reasonable distance away, Damian bent down and whispered to Eric, "Eric, go ask Ms. Theron if you can join them for dinner tonight."

Eric immediately drooped. "But Mr. Langley, you promised! You said if I came out with you today, you'd take me to the haunted house! Why are we talking about dinner now?"

Worried his voice was too loud, Damian quickly crouched down, covered Eric's mouth gently, and made a "shush" gesture.

1/3

15:07 Sat, Jan 10

Chapter 210 Protective Stances

Eric understood and nodded quickly.

81

Finished

Once Damian released him, he gave Eric's head an affectionate pat. "Once I sort out his... situation, I'll definitely take you to the haunted house. To all the best ones in town."

Eric rolled his eyes at Damian. "Xavier, you're all talk."

Damian clasped his hands together in a playful pleading gesture. "Please? Do this one thing for me?"

Eric's

eyes shifted thoughtfully before he reluctantly agreed. "Alright, fine."

But then another thought occurred to him. "But Mr. Langley, Clara is really fierce! I want to be friends with her, but I'm kinda scared to talk to her."

Damian had already noticed Eric was somewhat intimidated by Clara. But he also knew that while Clara might seem tough, she was actually a very kind-hearted and well-behaved child.

He couldn't help but reflect on his own past. If only he had been more determined, more insistent on fighting for what he wanted before Scarlett married Vincent... then maybe things wouldn't be so complicated now.

But back then, Scarlett was so deeply in love with Vincent that Damian felt he had no choice but to step back.

If he had known it would end like this, he would have fought for her with everything he had.

So, stroking Eric's cheek gently, Damian said seriously, "Listen, a real man does what he believes is right. Don't wait until later to realize you should have acted, and then live with regret."

He was telling this to Eric, but also, deeply, to himself.

Eric nodded. "Okay, I understand."

Gathering his courage, he trotted up behind Scarlett and Clara. "Ms. Theron!"

Scarlett stopped and turned to look at him. "Yes, Eric? What is it?"

Eric looked up at her earnestly. "Ms. Theron, I want to have dinner with you tonight."

Before Scarlett could respond, Clara cut in firmly, "Eric, my mom just called. She wants me and

Auntie to come home for dinner."

Eric's face fell. "Huh?"

Seeing his disappointed expression, Clara couldn't help her sharp tone. "What? If we can't

today, we'll do it another time! There will be plenty of chances later."

Faced with Clara's stern look, Eric instinctively glanced back at Damian for support.

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Damian wasn’t about to let this opportunity slip away. He signaled frantically with his eyes for Eric to plead with Scarlett directly.

Eric turned back to Scarlett. “Please, Ms. Theron? Can’t you come?”

Clara had had enough. She raised her voice at Eric. “Eric, you’re being difficult! I told you, we have to go home for dinner!”

Eric instantly backed down. “O-okay then...”

Seeing Clara being a bit too harsh, Scarlett gently reminded her, “Clara, speak nicely to Eric.”

Clara mumbled an “Okay” and stepped back to stand beside Scarlett.

Scarlett crouched down to Eric’s eye level and rubbed his shoulder reassuringly. “Eric, let’s have dinner together next time, okay? Next time, it’ll be my treat.”

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H

3/3

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 211[841 words]

Chapter 211 Forced Return

Eric nodded. “Okay.”

Z (6)

Finished

With that, Scarlett stood up and looked toward Damian, who stood a short distance away. “Mr. Langley, we’re heading back now. See you next time.”

Damian had already let go of his earlier frustration, but for some reason, when Scarlett spoke to him, he simply couldn’t bring himself to respond. Like now–he truly wanted to say “See you next time“, but his lips felt sealed, and the words refused to come out.

Scarlett knew he wouldn’t answer her, so she didn’t press further. She simply took Clara’s hand, turned, and left.

After they were gone, Damian smacked his own forehead in frustration.

Finally, he looked down at Eric and said discontentedly, “So unreliable.”

Eric shot back, “Well, why didn’t you say anything? It’s not like Ms. Theron is scary.”

Damian was annoyed with him too. “And is Clara scary?”

Eric, unable to win the argument, huffed, “Hmph! I’m telling my dad you’re bullying me.”

*****

S

ck to Theron Manor.

ned the entrance, she was surprised to see Vincent’s car parked outside.

still two hours away. Violet and Nathan weren’t back yet. Henry and Diana weren’t ther.

when Scarlett walked in holding Clara’s hand, she saw Vincent sitting on the sofa. A cup of coffee sat on the table in front of him, untouched.

If any other family members had been home, Vincent probably wouldn’t have even made it through the door.

Seeing Scarlett return, Vincent, who had been leaning back on the sofa replying to messages, looked

1. up. “You’re back,” he said.

After leading Clara into the living room, Scarlett said to her, “Clara, go upstairs and play for a bit. I need to talk to your uncle for a moment.”

Clara was reluctant, but Scarlett insisted, so she had to give in.

1/3

19:54 Wed, Jan 14

Chapter 211 Forced Return

68

Finished

Once Clara was upstairs, Scarlett walked over to Vincent. “Vincent, what are you doing here?” she asked, her tone unfriendly, her expression clearly displeased.

Vincent put his phone down. He spoke calmly, as if it were the most natural thing. “Grandpa asked me to come pick you up.”

Scarlett turned her face away from him, her voice cold. “That won’t be necessary. I’m not going back with you tonight.”

Vincent looked at her profile, feeling a sudden sense of disorientation. After a moment’s pause, he gave a faint, wry smile. “I found the marriage certificates.”

As he expected, this got a reaction from her.

She turned back to him, asking eagerly, “Where are they?”

He could see the hope in her eyes, but he felt no joy himself. The Scarlett who had once loved him so deeply seemed to be truly gone.

After a silence, he replied, “Come back to Stewart Manor with me, and I’ll tell you.”

Hearing his conditional exchange, anger flared within her. “Vincent, what exactly are you trying to do?” she demanded, her voice rising.

Vincent met her furious gaze directly and repeated his demand. “Come back to Stewart Manor with me.”

Scarlett took a deep breath. “Fine. I’ll go with you.”

Having the marriage certificates would make the divorce process much simpler.

Seeing her agree, Vincent finally stood up.

As the two prepared to leave together, Clara came rushing down the stairs.

“Bad Uncle! Where are you taking my auntie this time?” Clara planted herself in front of Vincent, blocking his way.

Vincent looked down at Clara, then bent down to her level. He reached out to pat her head.

But Clara swatted his hand away angrily. “Don’t touch me!”

Vincent pressed his lips together, silently retracting his hand. His tone was gentle. “I’m just taking Auntie to Grandpa’s house.”

Hearing this, Clara refused outright. “No! This is Auntie’s home.”

2/3

19:54 Wed, Jan 14

Chapter 211 Forced Return

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A

68

Finished

Vincent was an adult; he shouldn’t really be arguing with a child.

But today, he couldn’t help himself. A faint smile touched his lips as he explained seriously to Clara, “Clara, Auntie is my wife. Her home isn’t here. Her home is where her husband’s home is. Where I am, that’s her home. Understand?”

Clara didn’t understand his “logic“. She just rebutted him with firm, childlike conviction. “That’s not true at all! Mom and Dad said Auntie is a Theron. As long as Auntie wants to come back, Theron Manor will always be her home. So her home is here, not with you!”

Vincent’s face darkened at her words. He looked at Clara with a complicated gaze, unsure how to respond.

Clara was protecting her aunt because she loved her. What right did he, as the uncle, have to criticize a child for saying that?

Seeing Vincent silent, Clara added, “I won’t let you take Auntie away.”

Standing to the side, Scarlett watched Clara's fierce protectiveness, and her eyes welled up despite herself.

1.1K

B

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 212[843 words]

Chapter 212 Broken Promises

68

Finished

But then she reconsidered—if Vincent truly knew where the marriage certificates were, as he claimed, then she was willing to make this trip.

So, before Vincent could lose his patience, Scarlett picked Clara up and set her down gently in the center of the living room.

"Clara, Auntie needs to go with Uncle to take care of something important. I'll be back very soon, I promise. I'll have the chef prepare your favorite fish tonight, okay?"

Tears rolled down Clara's cheeks. Her small hands clutched tightly at Scarlett's clothes, unwilling to let go, unwilling to agree.

Seeing this, Scarlett's heart ached. She hugged Clara close and coaxed her gently, "Be a good girl, Clara. I always keep my promises."

Leaning against Scarlett, Clara finally sniffled and agreed, "Okay then. But you have to come back early, or I'll get Mom and Dad to come find you."

Scarlett rubbed the top of her niece's head, her heart melting. "I will."

Then Clara cupped Scarlett's face, gave her a soft kiss on the cheek, and said, "Bye, Auntie."

Tears finally fell from Scarlett's reddened eyes. She pressed her lips together and whispered, "Bye."

As she stood up to leave, Vincent approached again.

He crouched down in front of Clara and gently ruffled her hair. "Next time, come visit Auntie and Uncle at our place, alright? Vanessa will be there too; she can play with you."

Clara pulled away, glaring at him resentfully, and didn't agree to his suggestion.

Seeing her rejection, Vincent didn't push further, merely offering a faint, somewhat helpless smile.

Outside Theron Manor, Vincent opened the passenger door for Scarlett.

Scarlett glanced at it and refused. "No, thank you. I'll sit in the back."

Hearing this, Vincent quickly moved to block the rear door handle with his body.

Scarlett frowned at his action.

Vincent didn't speak, just insisted wordlessly with a firm attitude that she sit in the front.

1/2

19:54 Wed, Jan 14

Chapter 212 Broken Promises.

68

Finished

Arguing would only waste time, so Scarlett reluctantly got into the passenger seat.

But then, Vincent leaned most of his upper body into the car after her. Scarlett tensed immediately.

Vincent leaned over, pulled the seatbelt across her, and buckled it securely. As he straightened up, he noticed spots of blood seeping through the sleeve of her white blouse.

He paused, then reached for her arm.

Scarlett flinched, quickly pulling her hand back and looking at him warily. “What are you doing?”

Seeing her strong reaction, Vincent frowned slightly. “Your arm is bleeding. Let me see.”

Scarlett’s expression remained cold. “I don’t need your help.”

Vincent crouched beside the car door and reached for her arm again, but she refused once more. “Vincent, I said I don’t need you to.” Her tone was sharp now, edged with anger.

Vincent’s face was half–hidden in the shadowy light, his gaze complex as he stared at Scarlett.

After a long moment, he asked, “Are you afraid of me? Or are you just repulsed by me?”

In his memory, she had never been like this. She had always welcomed his touch.

But now...

Scarlett turned her face, her eyes cool and distant as they met his. “Vincent,” she said, using his full name, “let’s just keep interacting the same way we used to. You don’t need to worry about me, and I don’t need to worry about you.”

Vincent didn’t agree or disagree. In the dim, shifting light, his expression was hard to read. Scarlett couldn’t tell what he was thinking.

But after a few seconds, his voice came again. “Do you think I was too distant with you before? Is that why you resent me now?”

Scarlett found it ridiculous. “What’s the point of talking about this now?”

Vincent shook his head, his meaning unclear. “Maybe there is.”

Tired of his rambling, Scarlett grew impatient. “Are we going or not? If not, I’m getting out of the car.”

Hearing this, Vincent looked at her for a long moment before finally straightening up.

2/2

19:54 Wed, Jan 14

Chapter 212 Broken Promises

ab

(68)

Finished

Once in the car, he drove off.

Before reaching Stewart Manor, Vincent pulled over and parked in front of a supermarket.

Scarlett, not understanding why, remained in the car.

Vincent got out, then opened the passenger door. “Aren’t you coming?” he asked.

Scarlett was confused. “What do we need to buy?”

Vincent said, “We should bring something for Grandpa.”

Hearing that, Scarlett got out.

They walked into the supermarket together. Scarlett browsed the gift section, but Vincent wasn’t beside her.

After selecting a gift, Scarlett turned to look for Vincent.

She saw him take something from a shelf in another aisle. As he walked closer, she saw clearly what it was–a box of condoms.

He made no attempt to hide it, holding it openly in his hand, completely unbothered by Scarlett seeing it.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 213[850 words]

Awakened Housewife: Ignore Betrayer’s Begs

Chapter 213 Empty Performances

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Finished

They were on the verge of divorce. And they hadn't been intimate in three or four months.

So, naturally, the condoms he purchased were clearly intended for use with Sabrina.

After seeing them, Scarlett quickly averted her gaze after just a brief glance.

When they placed their items on the checkout counter, she heard Vincent's puzzled voice behind her. "Why don't you pick up some snacks you like?"

Scarlett didn't even turn her head, replying flatly, "No need."

Vincent paused. He genuinely wanted to buy her something she enjoyed, but the frustrating truth was, he had no idea what her favorite snacks were.

When they arrived at Stewart Manor, Xavier hadn't eaten yet.

Seeing them return together, Xavier was overjoyed and immediately bustled about, instructing the household staff to prepare additional dishes for the meal.

After giving directions, he asked happily, "What brings you back today?"

Usually, the young couple didn't visit unless there was a specific occasion. It was especially rare to see Scarlett and Vincent arriving together.

Vincent placed the gifts they'd purchased on the table and answered calmly, "Scarlett wanted to come see you."

Hearing Vincent refer to her so familiarly, Xavier's face broke into a wide smile. "Wonderful! You've finally come to your senses. You understand now that a good marriage is built by two people together."

Scarlett remained silent, simply turning her head to look at Vincent. He glanced back at her, a rare smile appearing on his face.

Seeing his smile, Scarlett felt nothing, offering no response in return.

Xavier, however, was thrilled to see Vincent smiling at Scarlett. He couldn't help but hope that Vincent had finally recognized Scarlett's worth and intended to cherish her properly.

During dinner, even before Xavier could prompt him, Vincent began serving food onto Scarlett's plate.

Scarlett frowned, completely baffled by his behavior. But with Xavier present, she refrained from speaking up.

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Chapter 213 Empty Performances

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Finished

Seeing them getting along so harmoniously, Xavier finally felt a sense of relief.

After the meal, Xavier insisted, “You’re staying the night here. Tomorrow is Sunday, perfect for the two of you to accompany me for a walk.”

Scarlett didn’t reply, but Vincent agreed first. “Whatever you arrange is fine, Grandpa.”

Seeing Vincent agree made Xavier even happier.

Scarlett held back her questions until Xavier had retired for the evening.

Once they went upstairs, Scarlett stood by the doorway, unwilling to even step fully inside. She got straight to the point. “Vincent, what is the meaning of all this?”

She had come with him because he claimed he’d found the marriage certificates–not to put on an act for Xavier.

What was the point of all this performance? It was entirely artificial.

Seeing her angry expression, Vincent gave a slight smile. He took her arm and said, “Let’s talk inside.”

Scarlett resisted, pulling her arm free. “I can walk by myself.”

She strode angrily into the room and sat down on the sofa.

Vincent sat down beside her, turning to look at her. “The marriage certificates are with Grandpa.”

Hearing this, Scarlett was momentarily stunned, but she quickly understood.

In the entire Stewart family, only Xavier genuinely wanted her and Vincent to make their marriage work. Him hiding the certificates was likely because he feared they might divorce suddenly.

After a few seconds of silence, Scarlett looked at Vincent. “Since Grandpa has them, then we’ll treat them as lost. We can apply for replacements. We can still proceed with the divorce.”

Hearing her bring up divorce again, Vincent’s expression darkened.

But soon, he spoke again, his tone light, “There’s one more thing.”

Scarlett frowned. “What else?”

Vincent leaned back against the sofa cushions. “Let’s do it one more time,” he said, as casually as discussing the weather.

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Chapter 213 Empty Performances

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Finished

Scarlett shot to her feet. “Vincent, you’re being completely unreasonable!” she snapped.

She turned to leave, but Vincent grabbed her arm and pulled her back toward him with little effort.

He leaned in close, his breath warm against her skin. “You’re always saying I only last three minutes. Don’t I deserve a chance to prove myself?”

Scarlett leaned back as far as she could, putting distance between them. She turned her face away, not wanting to look at him. “Vincent, it’s too late for all that now. I’m not going to let you do whatever you want like I used to.”

But her resistance didn’t faze him. He wrapped an arm around her waist, pulling her firmly against his body.

He bent his head, aiming for her lips.

Scarlett pushed against him fiercely. “Vincent, this is illegal! Do you understand that?” she cried out sharply.

Unmoved, Vincent reached into his pocket and retrieved a condom.

He placed it on the sofa beside them, then began unbuttoning his own shirt with his other hand.

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(68)

Finished

The entire time, his arm remained locked around her waist. No matter how much she struggled, a little pressure from him was all it took to keep her pinned in place.

Seeing he seemed completely serious, Scarlett yelled urgently, “Vincent, snap out of it! Do you realize what you’re doing?” She was trying to shock him back to his senses.

But the more she struggled, the tighter his grip on her waist became.

Only when his shirt was fully open, revealing his muscular, well–defined chest, did he rise and push her down onto the sofa, looming over her.

His hand slid under her blouse, touching her warm, smooth skin.

Unlike his usual rush to the main event, this time there was a clear intention of foreplay.

Scarlett crossed her arms protectively over her chest. Tears of humiliation welled in her eyes, but Vincent acted as if he didn’t see her crying, lowering his head to kiss her lips.

At the same time, his other hand closed around the condom

wrapper.

Just as his lips were about to meet hers, Vincent's phone rang sharply.

The sound was especially jarring in the quiet night.

Vincent's movements halted. Annoyance flashed in his eyes, but he still sat up, pulling away from Scarlett.

Having his mood interrupted left him feeling inexplicably irritated.

But when he looked down and saw it was Sabrina calling, the annoyance on his face eased slightly.

He answered the call. "Vincent, you're not at Ravenshade Villa?" Sabrina's voice came through, sounding confused.

Vincent replied flatly, "No, I'm at Stewart Manor."

Sabrina seemed to be crying; her voice was terribly hoarse. She asked tentatively, "Can you come back? There's something I need to talk to you about."

Hearing her tears, Vincent stood up immediately. Not bothering with his open shirt, he agreed, "Okay, I'll be right there."

After ending the call, he started buttoning his shirt while looking at Scarlett.

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Chapter 214 Interrupted Moments

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Finished

She was huddled in the corner of the sofa, arms wrapped tightly around herself.

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She seemed to be crying, her shoulders shaking slightly.

Seeing this, a flicker of guilt passed through Vincent. But it quickly faded.

He hadn't meant to hurt her; he just wanted to prove himself.

What was so wrong about that?

What man could tolerate that kind of insult?

Once he had straightened his clothes, he tucked the condom back into his suit pocket.

He looked down at Scarlett. “Sabrina needs me for something. I have to go.”

Hearing this, she lifted her face. Her eyes were bloodshot, dense with red veins. She glared at Vincent and demanded sharply, “So what was the point of bringing me here? What was your real goal?”

Vincent explained softly, “The marriage certificates really are with Grandpa.”

Scarlett let out a bitter laugh. “And so? What are you trying to say? That I should be the one to tell Grandpa? To tell him I’m the one who wants the divorce?”

Vincent frowned, confused. “But aren’t you the one who keeps bringing up divorce?”

Hearing this, Scarlett laughed until tears streamed down her face.

Yes, she was the one who brought up divorce.

But why did she bring it up?

He, Vincent, was the one who knew the reason best of all.

Seeing Vincent’s self–righteous attitude, anger surged in her. “Vincent, I could also choose not to mention divorce. As long as I don’t say the word, then some people will never have their place legitimized.”

Just then, Vincent’s phone rang again. It was still Sabrina, crying as she asked, “Vincent, are you almost here?”

Hearing her sob, he quickly replied, “Almost. Don’t cry, I’m here for you.” He spoke into the phone while walking out of the bedroom without a backward glance.

Watching his resolute departing figure, Scarlett let out a bitter, choked laugh.

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Chapter 214 Interrupted Moments

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Finished

From the sound of it, Vincent knew the certificates were with his grandfather, but he had no intention of asking for them back.

If he wasn't willing to get them, then Scarlett would.

Xavier was asleep now, so she would find another time to be honest with him.

They were getting divorced anyway; they couldn't hide it from Xavier forever.

Having made up her mind, Scarlett decided to return to Theron Manor first. Someone was waiting for her there.

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When Vincent returned to Ravenshade Villa, Sabrina was sitting alone in the living room. A few crumpled tissues lay on the coffee table, likely from her wiping her tears.

Hearing footsteps at the door, Sabrina turned. Seeing Vincent, she stood up and ran to him, throwing her arms around him tightly. "Vincent, you're finally back."

The impact made Vincent take a slight step back, but he steadied himself.

He gently held her shoulders and asked softly, "What's wrong?"

Sabrina sobbed, "Mom said her stomach hurts again. She said she's afraid she might..." She couldn't finish the sentence.

Vincent quickly comforted her. "It's okay. Medical science is advanced now. The biopsy already confirmed your mother's tumor is benign. She'll be fine, don't worry."

But Sabrina kept crying. "But she keeps talking about unfinished wishes, and we had a fight...

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hapter 215 Family Support

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Vincent felt his shirt growing damp from Sabrina's tears. He didn't scold her, instead asking gently, "What wish?"

Sabrina looked up at him. "I'm twenty–six now. She says I'm still not married."

Vincent paused at her words and fell silent.

Sabrina quickly added, "Vincent, I know I'm putting you in a difficult position."

Vincent's expression stiffened slightly, but he force

d a faint smile. "No, you're not. I'll figure something out."

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When Scarlett returned to Theron Manor, the lights were still glowing warmly inside.

Entering the main hall, she saw Nathan and Violet still sitting at the dining table.

Both looked over as she came in.

Scarlett walked toward them. "Nathan, Violet."

Nathan looked Scarlett over carefully, ensuring she was unharmed, then said, “Sit down.”

Scarlett settled into the chair beside Violet.

Violet studied her face, her heart aching. “Did you have dinner?”

Scarlett nodded. “Yes, I have.”

Only then did Violet seem to relax. “Clara cried for a long time tonight. She just cried herself to sleep, so I had the nanny put her to bed.”

Scarlett felt a pang of guilt but didn’t know what to say.

Violet reached under the table and held Scarlett’s cold hand. “Thank you for taking Clara out today. It must have been exhausting.”

Scarlett shook her head with a soft smile. “It wasn’t tiring at all. I was happy spending time with Clara. It made me feel... truly happy.”

Violet patted the back of her hand. Though she didn’t speak, Scarlett understood the silent sympathy. As mothers, they both understood the particular pain of a daughter’s rejection.

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Finished

While they were talking, Nathan produced a bank card from his wallet. He placed it on the table and slid it toward Scarlett. “Take this card. If the divorce settlement negotiations keep dragging on, don’t get stuck haggling over money. The Stewart family is wealthy, but that doesn’t mean they’ll be generous with you. Rather than waiting for his reluctant offers, it’s better to walk away with your dignity. After the divorce, Violet and I will support you. You won’t have to worry about finances.”

Hearing this, Scarlett’s eyes instantly welled up. She refused, “Nathan, I have enough savings to support myself. I can’t accept this.”

She hadn’t gone into the specific terms of the divorce with her family, so it was natural Nathan assumed the settlement wasn’t finalized.

In reality, Vincent had been relatively generous, offering her a substantial financial compensation.

Seeing her refusal, Violet still pressed the card firmly into Scarlett's hand. "Don't say it's too little. It's our way of showing we care about you."

Clutching the bank card, a wave of emotion washed over Scarlett. Tears rolled silently down her cheeks.

She still couldn't bring herself to share all the divorce details with her family.

The process had already dragged on for so long; now they were just waiting for the marriage certificates to start the mandatory waiting period at the courthouse.

This only strengthened her resolve to be honest with Xavier.

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The next day, when Vanessa woke up, there was no one beside her..

Vincent wasn't there. Sabrina wasn't there either.

The room was spacious, but eerily quiet, without a single sound.

Vanessa immediately started crying, calling out, "Daddy! Sabrina!"

Lily, hearing Vanessa's cries, hurried upstairs from the first floor.

She entered the bedroom and picked Vanessa up.

Vanessa buried her face in Lily's shoulder, sobbing. "Lily, where are Daddy and Sabrina?"

Lily explained, "Ms. Monroe had to go to the university research lab. She left early this morning. Mr. Stewart took Maria to the hospital for a follow–up appointment."

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Chapter 215 Family Support

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Hearing this, Vanessa's mood plummeted.

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She tried to suppress the discomfort in her heart, leaning limply against Lily.

But for some reason, she suddenly missed Scarlett a little.

If Mom were here, she would never have left her alone at home.

For as long as she could remember, Scarlett had always been by her side.

But now, Mom wasn't with her anymore.

Lily noticed Vanessa seemed down. "Vanessa, what's wrong?" she asked, leaning down.

Vanessa shook her head. "Lily, I want to call Daddy."

Having just woken up, Vanessa's hair was a mess, and she still looked sleepy.

Lily agreed and dialed Vincent's number.

He answered quickly, but it was noisy on his end, likely because he was at the hospital.

"Vanessa." Vincent's voice came through the phone.

Hearing her father's voice, Vanessa couldn't hold back anymore. Her eyes instantly turned red, and tears started falling. "Daddy," she wailed, "there's no one here with me."

Vincent's heart clenched at his daughter's words. He could only coax her softly, "Be a good girl, Vanessa. I will come back as soon as I'm finished here."

Vanessa asked tentatively, "Can you be back by ten o'clock?" It was only a little past eight now.

Vincent hesitated, but told her the truth. "Vanessa, I probably won't be back until this evening."

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Chapter 216 Morning Tears.

The hope in Vanessa's heart instantly died. "Okay, then," she said, defeated.

After hanging up, Vanessa burst into loud sobs.

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Finished

"Lily, I want Mommy! Mommy would stay with me! Mommy wouldn't leave me! Mommy, I want Mommy! Waaah...!"

Vanessa cried hysterically. Lily held her, pacing back and forth in the room.

It took half an hour of comforting before Vanessa, exhausted from crying, finally quieted down.

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At Theron Manor, for once, Scarlett slept in.

It was the first time in what felt like forever that she had slept until ten o'clock.

Well-rested, she felt refreshed and clear-headed.

Before she was fully awake, a small arm wrapped around her. "Auntie, you're finally awake!"

It was Clara's voice.

She had come over around eight, but seeing Scarlett still asleep, she hadn't had the heart to

wake her.

Scarlett turned on her side and pulled the round-faced Clara into her arms. "What brings you here, sweetie?"

Clara nuzzled against Scarlett's neck. "Auntie, I want you to help me paint an autumn landscape. It's my homework, and it's due tomorrow, Monday. I haven't finished it yet."

Scarlett was about to say yes when her phone rang.

She looked down; it was an unfamiliar number.

Hesitating for a second, she answered.

Before she could speak, an excited voice came through. "Is this Ms. Theron?"

Recognizing Eric's voice, Scarlett smiled. "Eric, it's me."

Hearing the confirmation, Eric said happily, "Ms. Theron, can you come out and play with me?"

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Remembering her promise to Clara, Scarlett declined. "Eric, I'm not free today. Maybe next time, okay?"

Eric persisted. "What about tonight?"

Scarlett chuckled. "I think our family might be having a dinner together tonight."

Eric quickly asked, "Can I come too?"

Before Scarlett could respond, Clara couldn't hold back anymore. She yelled into the phone, "It's a Theron family dinner! Why would you come? You're not a Theron!"

Even through the phone, Eric was startled by Clara's tone. He stammered, "O–oh... okay then."

Before Scarlett could smooth things over, Clara hung up the phone. "That Eric seems so quiet and shy at school, who knew he could be so clingy? Like super glue."

Scarlett was amused by Clara's description. She stroked her niece's cheek affectionately. "Don't be so fierce. He doesn't mean any harm."

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Meanwhile, the very same "harmless" Eric, whom Scarlett had just defended, sneezed twice in quick succession.

A finger poked him in the back. "Well? Did you manage to invite her?"

Eric shook his head. "No."

Damian's face fell. "Those cheese sticks you had this morning... I want you to spit them out within two minutes."

He had bribed the boy with snacks to help him invite Scarlett out. He hadn't expected her to refuse.

Eric turned to look at Damian, his little face scrunched up in displeasure. "Mr. Langley, Ms. Theron was the one who said no. Why are you taking it out on me?"

Damian was annoyed. He glanced at the boy. "So you get to eat my cheese sticks for free?"

Eric retorted, "If you're so great, why don't you ask her out yourself?"

Damian moved closer, lightly pinching Eric's ear. "Not learning good things at such a young age, huh? Talking back to your elders? Did your dad teach you that? He's a lawyer, no wonder you're such a little debater."

Eric wasn't really hurt, but he pretended it hurt, yelping a couple of times before sticking out

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his tongue. "Dad didn't teach me! You did!"

Finished

Damian let go of his ear, cupped the boy's face in his hands, and put on a mock–fierce expression. "I have never been a coward around women. Unlike you, scared of a little girl like Clara."

Eric said indignantly, "Clara's a total tomboy! There's nothing girly about her!"

Damian released him, leaning back in his chair and closing his eyes lazily. "Making excuses for your own incompetence, huh?"

Hearing this, Eric let out a loud, dramatic "Waaah!" and started crying.

Damian immediately sat up straight, flustered. He reached out a hand, unsure how to comfort him.

Eric cried harder and louder. Damian, at a loss, finally barked, "If you don't stop crying, I'll call Clara over to deal with you!"

The threat worked instantly. Eric's crying stopped abruptly.

He turned his head, glaring at Damian with tear–filled, angry eyes. "Hmph! I'm telling my dad!"

No sooner had the words left his mouth than a pleasant, deep voice sounded from behind them. "What's going on here?"

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hapter 217 Desperate Measures

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Hearing his father's voice, Eric immediately jumped up from the couch. "Daddy, you're back!" he cheered happily.

Felix Wilson walked over and scooped up his son. "What's going on? Did Damian upset you again?"

Before Eric could respond, Damian cut in first, "Your son takes after you. Completely shameless."

Felix didn't take offense; instead, he offered a faint smile. He sat down on the sofa with Eric in his arms and looked at Damian. "I'd say he probably takes after you more." His words subtly implied Damian was the shameless one.

Damian caught the implication. He raised an eyebrow, feigning nonchalance. "I certainly didn't teach him to be so persistent in chasing after little girls."

Felix, while adjusting his son's collar, responded, "And what else? Did you teach him anything useful?"

He then turned his full attention to Damian. His gaze was calm yet penetrating, making Damian feel uncomfortably exposed.

Shifting under the stare, Damian averted his eyes. "You're a lawyer. I'm not getting into a debate with you."

With that, he stood up. "I'm heading out. Don't miss me too much."

Felix made no move to stop him, simply looking down at Eric. "Daddy will take you to the park *to* paint an autumn landscape."

Hearing this, Damian immediately turned back. "Painting autumn?" he asked, intrigued.

Felix looked up at him. "It's Eric's kindergarten assignment. Due tomorrow."

Damian's eyes lit up with an idea. The next moment, he declared, "Then have the kindergarten organize an autumn field trip for next week. I'll take Eric."

Felix naturally understood what mischief Damian was plotting. He said, somewhat exasperated, "You..."

Damian cut him off. "It's settled then. You arrange it. Don't worry, I won't lead your son astray." He grinned mischievously as he spoke, making Felix feel an inexplicable urge to smack him.

But given their years of deep friendship, Felix trusted Damian's character. His tongue might be

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Chapter 217 Desperate Measures

sharp, but he'd never truly done anything dishonorable.

Damian left Felix's place and headed to the parking garage.

Once in his car, he didn't start the engine immediately.

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He took out his phone, scrolling through his message history with Scarlett. In the text box, he typed and deleted messages repeatedly.

In the end, he didn't send a single one.

His eyes darted around, and a mischievous idea popped into his head.

He found a very realistic photo of an injured finger online, saved it, and then posted it to his social media feed.

"Posting to ask: What should I do with a finger injury like this?" he wrote.

The photo showed a finger covered in blood, with a deep, long gash clearly visible.

He set the post to be visible to Scarlett only.

After posting, he locked his phone screen and tossed it onto the passenger seat.

He turned on some music, humming and tapping the steering wheel, trying to mask the restlessness inside.

After waiting several minutes, his phone screen finally lit up–a notification had come in.

He practically lunged for the passenger seat, grabbing the phone.

But after unlocking the screen, there was only one notification–a promotional alert. It wasn't the concerned message from Scarlett he'd hoped for.

The smile froze on his face, and he threw the phone aside again.

But then he thought, what if Scarlett had commented on his post?

So, he grabbed the phone again and checked his notifications. Sure enough, there was a red indicator.

Damian clicked on it immediately, but his smile vanished once more.

The notification showed–A friend liked your post.

Furious, Damian immediately removed that friend from his contacts.

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He held his phone, waiting and watching, but no message or comment came from Scarlett.

Finally, Damian gave up. He hit the steering wheel hard in frustration and muttered discontentedly, “Scarlett, you’re so heartless. You must have ice running through your veins.”

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He was genuinely upset. Sure, he’d said something about her defending Vincent, but did that mean she didn’t care if he lived or died?

If Vincent had posted something like this, Scarlett would probably have blown up his phone with calls by now.

But when he was hurt, she didn’t offer a single word of concern.

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At Theron Manor, Scarlett was putting Clara’s hair up in a ponytail. Just as she finished, she sneezed twice involuntarily.

Clara, admiring herself in the mirror, swung her little legs and took a bite of her custard tart. She smiled sweetly. “Auntie is so good at this! It looks just as nice as when Mommy does it.”

Scarlett touched Clara's ponytail and said without thinking, "Vanessa really likes this hairstyle too. I always used to do it for her..."

Her voice trailed off, her mood sinking.

Clara saw her aunt's sad expression in the mirror and quickly said, "Auntie is so wonderful. It's Vanessa who doesn't know how to appreciate you. She'll regret it someday."

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Chapter 218 Professional Distance

68

Finished

Scarlett forced a faint smile. "It's alright. I've... come to accept things as they are now." Some matters averen't worth forcing; it was better to let them unfold naturally.

Clara hopped down from the stool and wrapped her arms around Scarlett. "When Auntie becomes someone else's mommy someday, you can just forget about Vanessa."

Scarlett didn't respond, simply stroking Clara's hair gently. Some things were difficult to explain to a child.

After holding the hug for a moment, Scarlett said she needed to go change her clothes.

Clara said she'd wait in the room for her.

While Scarlett was changing, her phone chimed with a message from Claire. "Want to go shopping this afternoon?"

Remembering she had promised to paint with Clara, Scarlett declined. "Next time. I'm spending the afternoon with Clara."

Claire replied, "Okay."

Scarlett didn't respond further, but she noticed the red notification indicator on her social media app.

She had a habit of browsing her friends' updates.

So, she instinctively tapped on it.

After scrolling through a couple of posts, she saw Damian's.

Scarlett clicked on the photo. Seeing the injured finger, she frowned and began typing a comment under Damian's post. As a doctor, her advice was professional.

"The finger wound appears quite severe. You need to go to the hospital for proper cleaning and stitches. If it was caused by rust, you'll also require a tetanus shot. This should be taken seriously."

After commenting, Scarlett took another look at the photo. Just as she was about to lock her phone, she noticed Damian's reply.

"Are you at the hospital? I'll come find you to clean it."

Scarlett didn't overthink it. If she had, she might have realized that someone like Damian likely had a personal physician. Even if he didn't, the people around him would be more concerned

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Chapter 218 Professional Distance

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Finished

about his safety than he was. And even without them, he could simply go directly *to* the hospital instead of seeking advice online. By the time he received an answer, he might have lost a significant amount of blood.

Looking at Damian's message, Scarlett simply replied, "It's the weekend. I'm not at the hospital. Just go to the emergency department and register. The doctors there will take care of it for you."

Soon, Damian replied again, "Forget it then. It's not like I'm going to die."

Reading this, Scarlett's frown deepened. She was about to urge him again when Clara called out, "Auntie, are you ready yet?"

The little girl was clearly growing impatient. The assignment was due tomorrow, and Clara was a diligent student who naturally wanted all her work completed properly and on time.

Scarlett locked her phone and smiled. "All set. Let's head to the park."

Clara grabbed Scarlett's hand. "Yay! Let's go!"

The two left Theron Manor together. Scarlett drove them to a nearby park.

The autumn park was vibrant and colorful, perfect for children to play and paint.

Once at the park, Clara ran freely across the grass, spinning in circles as she went.

After tiring herself out, she plopped down on the ground.

Scarlett walked over, set up the easel, and handed Clara a paintbrush. "What would you like to paint?"

Clara nibbled on the end of the brush, thinking seriously. "I want to paint maple leaves."

There was a maple tree not far away, its leaves carpeting the ground, with a few even blown near their feet.

Scarlett sat down beside Clara. "Then paint. Whatever Clara wants to paint, just go ahead. After you're done, you can pick the best one to give to your teacher."

Clara giggled happily. "Auntie is the best! I love you so much, Auntie!"

Hearing her say she loved her filled Scarlett with both warmth and sorrow.

If she were only an aunt, she would feel pure joy.

But she wasn't. Besides being an aunt, she was also a mother. And her own daughter didn't seem to like her.

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Finished

Just as these emotions churned inside her, a tentative, questioning voice came from behind. "Mrs. Stewart?"

Hearing the voice, Scarlett instinctively turned around.

She was surprised to see Lily, and she was holding Vanessa's hand.

Vanessa was wearing a pretty dress with black leggings underneath and a pair of cute sneakers. Her hair was styled in two braids, and she was holding a few maple leaves in her arms.

Seeing her daughter, Scarlett couldn't help the sting in her nose. Vanessa looked back at her but didn't call out or make any move toward her.

After a moment's hesitation, Scarlett averted her gaze. She looked at Lily and said with a smile, "Lily, what a coincidence meeting you here."

This park wasn't exactly close to Ravenshade Villa, but it wasn't terribly far either.

Seeing Scarlett, Lily's eyes brightened. "Mrs. Stewart, Vanessa kept saying she was bored and anted me to bring her out for a walk, so we came here. Since you and Clara are here too, erhaps Vanessa could play with Clara?"

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 219[826 words]

Chapter 219 Silent Goodbyes

Scarlett glanced subtly at Vanessa. Seeing she wasn't resisting, Scarlett agreed softly, "Alright."

Surprisingly, Vanessa didn't make a fuss either, though she didn't seem particularly enthusiastic.

Hearing Scarlett agree, Clara suppressed her usual impatience with Vanessa. She looked back and asked curiously, "Vanessa, have you finished your autumn painting assignment yet?"

At school, Clara had never been particularly fond of Vanessa, and after seeing how Vanessa treated Scarlett, she liked her even less. But since Vanessa was Scarlett's daughter, she could try to be civil.

Vanessa, still clutching the maple leaves, looked at Clara's easel and frowned. "The teacher gave us homework?"

Clara's brow furrowed as well. "Didn't anyone tell you?"

Vanessa shook her head. "I didn't know about it."

Clara held back the urge to lecture her and explained patiently, "The teachers post weekend assignments in the parents' group chat. Parents are supposed to tell their kids. Didn't anyone inform you?"

Vanessa pressed her lips together tightly, refusing to answer.

Seeing her silence, Clara continued, "My mom told me. She had to work today, so Auntie is helping me with my

homework."

Sitting nearby, Scarlett felt a sharp pang in her heart as she listened to their exchange. She knew exactly why Vanessa was unaware–Sabrina and Vincent had neglected to check the messages.

Looking at Vanessa, Scarlett felt both distressed and helpless, unsure what she could possibly

say.

Clara pulled several sheets of paper from her easel and offered them to Vanessa. “Here, you can have some of my paper. We can paint together. Auntie can teach us both.”

Vanessa looked down at the offered paper but refused to take it. After a few seconds, she pushed them back. “No, thank you. Sabrina will help me paint later.” With that, she turned and walked

away.

Watching her lonely retreating figure, Scarlett instinctively started to call out, “Van-” But the name caught in her throat, and no sound came out.

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Chapter 219 Silent Goodbyes

68

Finished

As Vanessa walked further away and Scarlett made no move to follow, Lily grew increasingly anxious. She called out loudly, “Vanessa, wait for me!” Lily, who had just settled down, had to scramble to her feet and hurry after her.

After a few steps, she turned back to look at Scarlett. “Mrs. Stewart, perhaps you should go comfort her? You are her mother, after all.”

Scarlett didn’t look at Lily, instead carefully placing the papers Clara had pulled out back onto the easel. But she replied calmly, “Lily, you go comfort her. I need to stay with Clara for her painting. I can’t leave her now.”

Lily sighed helplessly and shook her head. “Very well then.”

After catching up with Vanessa, Lily took her hand and coaxed gently, “Vanessa, your mother does care about you. You are her child.”

Vanessa didn’t respond, just continued walking, tears streaming silently down her face. She knew her mother hadn’t followed. She knew her mother really wasn’t going to bother with her anymore. She thought she didn’t like her mom, so why did she feel like crying?

Once in the car, Vanessa cried and demanded to call Vincent.

Vincent answered quickly, his voice gentle. “Vanessa, what’s wrong?”

Vanessa sobbed, “Daddy, the teacher gave us homework. Why didn’t you or Sabrina tell me?”

Vincent explained, “Don’t cry, sweetheart. I have been very busy and didn’t check the kindergarten messages. I’m sorry, okay?”

Vanessa cried even harder. “What about Sabrina? Why didn’t she tell me?”

Vincent explained again, “Sabrina is busy with her research. She must have forgotten to check the messages too.”

Tears poured down Vanessa’s face. “But it’s due tomorrow!”

Vincent’s heart ached. He had no choice but to say, “Then I will come back right now and take you *to* finish

your homework.”

*****

Back at the park, after Vanessa left, Scarlett began teaching Clara how to paint maple leaves and the autumn grass.

As they were painting, someone called out from behind, “Ms. Theron?”

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Chapter 219 Silent Goodbyes

A 68

Finished

Scarlett turned toward the voice and saw Eric. Next to him stood Felix, who had traded his usual tailored suits for casual wear and sneakers. The man, now in his thirties, showed no trace of age, only growing more distinguished with time.

It was a cloudy day, the light shifting between soft and bright.

Felix stood on the grass in his light-colored attire, with large, fluffy white clouds drifting above him. Beneath the clouds stood this strikingly handsome man.

Scarlett withdrew her gaze, looking at Eric with a warm smile. “Eric.”

Eric had lost his mother during childbirth, and over the years, he had quietly yearned for maternal affection. Around Scarlett, he seemed to find a little of that warmth he’d been missing.

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Chapter 220 Parallel Worlds

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Finished

Regardless of Damian’s usual demeanor, Eric genuinely liked Scarlett.

He ran over and gave her an enthusiastic hug. “Ms. Theron, you look so pretty today.”

Scarlett, who had been feeling somewhat down, smiled more warmly at his compliment. “Thank you, Eric.”

Clara heard Eric too. She turned to look and asked, “Are you here to paint autumn scenes as well?”

Eric released Scarlett and nodded. “Yes.”

Clara then looked up at Felix and greeted him politely, “Hello, Mr. Wilson.”

Felix, who rarely smiled and maintained a serious expression, nodded in return. “Hello.”

Scarlett also acknowledged Felix with a slight nod.

Clara tugged at Eric’s sleeve. “Come over here and paint with me.”

Eric hesitated slightly. It wasn’t that he was afraid of Clara; he just wanted to find a way to notify Damian.

Despite Damian’s sharp tongue, Eric knew very well that he was a genuinely good person. During the most difficult years for his father, it was Damian who had helped them through.

Clara pulled at him again. “Sit down already! Why are you so stiff? I don’t bite.”

Eric glanced back at his father and then said to Clara, “Okay, I’ll sit. Stop pulling, you’re going to tear my shirt.”

Clara rolled her eyes. “So dramatic.”

Seeing Felix still standing, Scarlett offered with a faint smile, “Mr. Wilson, if you don’t mind, you’re welcome to sit on the grass with us.”

Felix nodded but declined politely. “No need, thank you. I should make a phone call.” He had understood the look in his son’s eyes. Even if Eric hadn’t signaled, he would have contacted Damian anyway.

Scarlett didn’t press further, turning her attention back to guiding Clara with her painting.

Felix took out his phone and captured a photo. In the frame, Scarlett, Clara, and Eric were sitting on the grass with an easel before them and the picturesque park in the background.

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He had just sent the image when Damian called.

668

Finished

Felix walked some distance away before answering. “What is it?”

Damian got straight to the point. “You’re with her?”

Felix replied flatly, “Yes.”

Damian urged, “Send me the location.”

“Okay.” After ending the call, Felix sent the park coordinates.

It wasn’t long before Damian arrived.

And just as Damian appeared, Vincent also showed up on the grass, carrying Vanessa.

Damian stood beside Felix, muttering under his breath, “Ugh. He’s everywhere.”

Felix smiled faintly without comment, his gaze returning to his son.

Scarlett noticed Damian and hesitated about whether to greet him, but then she saw Vincent and the others arriving. In the end, she didn’t end up acknowledging Damian.

Vincent also spotted Scarlett and the group. He paused briefly while holding Vanessa but didn’t say anything, simply settling down not far away.

After they were seated, Lily set up an easel for Vanessa and handed her a paintbrush.

Vincent had brought a small folding table. He placed his laptop on it and began working, not participating in Vanessa’s painting but focusing on his screen.

Meanwhile, Damian, seeing that Scarlett was ignoring him, didn’t initiate conversation either. Instead, he went over to Eric, glanced at his painting, and said discontentedly, “You’re doing it wrong.”

Eric pouted. “Then how should I paint it?”

Damian said, “Why are you painting flowers in an autumn scene? You should paint maple leaves, or maybe goldenrod.”

Eric said dejectedly, “But I don’t know how.”

Hearing this, Scarlett proactively leaned over. “Eric, let me show you.”

It wasn’t that she wanted to get close to Damian; she was just concerned he might discourage the child.

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Chapter 220 Parallel Worlds

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Finished

As Scarlett leaned in, the breeze carried a faint, fresh scent from her. Damian inhaled subtly, the tips of his ears growing wärm.

Soon, Scarlett had sketched out a goldenrod plant. Both Clara and Eric clapped their hands and praised her.

“Auntie, you’re amazing!”

“Ms. Theron, you draw so well! The teacher will definitely praise it!”

Scarlett didn’t think her drawing was particularly special, but the children’s enthusiastic admiration made her slightly embarrassed.

She touched her ear and smiled, asking, “Is it really that good?”

The two children answered in unison, “Yes!”

Mingled with their voices was Damian’s quiet, almost inaudible, “Yes.” His voice was so soft it was drowned out by the children’s.

Vanessa could hear the laughter and lively conversation from their group.

She held her brush, her hand poised over the paper on her easel, but she didn’t know where to begin.

The teacher had said to paint autumn, but what did autumn really look like?

Vanessa turned her head. She saw Vincent typing on his computer, and Lily watching a series on her phone with her head down.

They were kind to her, but they weren’t truly concerned about whether she could complete her assignment.

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Awakened Housewife: Ignore Betrayer's Begs

Chapter 221 Autumn's Unspoken Lessons

Vanessa felt tears welling up but fought them back. "Daddy?" she called softly.

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Vincent glanced up from his work. "Yes, sweetheart?"

"I don't know how to paint autumn," she admitted.

68

Finished

Vincent had been so absorbed in his own canvas that he hadn't noticed the cheerful scene nearby. Following his daughter's gaze, he saw Scarlett guiding Eric through his painting. Without a second thought, Vincent called out, "Scarlett."

She looked over, expression neutral. "Yes?"

"Vanessa would like you to show her how to paint autumn," he said.

Scarlett seemed taken aback. Her eyes shifted to Vanessa, who kept her head down, neither meeting her gaze nor denying Vincent's words. After a brief pause, Scarlett nodded. "Alright."

Damian, seated to Eric's right, watched Scarlett intently as she stood.

His sharp gaze seemed to carry a silent warning, but she didn't notice. She simply rose and walked over.

Both Clara and Eric looked up.

"Ms. Theron?" Eric began, but Clara gently hushed him.

"It's okay," Clara murmured. "She knows what she's doing."

Eric nodded and returned to his painting.

Scarlett settled cross-legged beside Vanessa. She didn't look directly at her daughter, instead focusing on the blank canvas. "What did you have in mind, Vanessa?"

"I want to paint a kite," Vanessa said quietly.

Scarlett thought for a moment. "Since the theme is autumn, you could paint the kite with a tree shedding its leaves in the background. That would really capture the season."

Vanessa nodded. "Okay." Her eyes drifted toward Scarlett-her mother's eyes were so pretty, framed with long, curved lashes. She smelled nice, too, a soft and comforting scent.

Vanessa's lips parted. She wanted so badly to say "Mommy," but the word caught in her throat.

Just then, Scarlett finished the rough sketch. "There, all set," she said, starting to rise.

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Chapter 221 Autumn's Unspoken Lessons.

(68)

Finished

But Vanessa's eyes caught a patch of blood seeping through Scarlett's sleeve.

“Mommy...” The word slipped out before she could stop it. “Your arm–it’s bleeding.”

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Scarlett froze for a heartbeat at the sound of that word. Then, forcing calm into her voice, she said, “It’s nothing, sweetie. Don’t worry.” She made to leave again.

But Vincent had heard. He turned and saw the blood staining her sleeve.

“Come here. Let me see,” he said, his tone leaving no room for argument.

Scarlett shot him a cool look. “It’s fine.”

Before she could react, Vincent was on his feet, his hand closing around her arm. She tried to pull back, but his grip was firm.

As she stepped away, he swept her up into his arms, right in front of everyone.

“Vincent! Put me down! What do you think you’re doing?” she hissed, struggling.

His expression was grim as he carried her off the field. Over his shoulder, he called to Lily, “Keep an eye on the girls for *a* bit.”

“Yes, Mr. Stewart,” Lily replied, her voice uneasy.

Back on the grass, Clara heard the commotion and turned. She started to run after them, but Eric caught her hand. “Clara, you won’t catch up.”

Nearby, Damian watched the whole scene unfold, his jaw tight. He’d been holding a colored pencil, but as Scarlett was carried away, it snapped between his fingers. He tossed the broken pieces aside, his face dark, and kicked angrily at the turf, sending grass and dirt flying.

Felix observed it all in silence.

Scarlett struggled in Vincent’s arms, but his hold was unyielding. Only when he’d placed her in the back seat of his SUV did she manage to kick out at him.

Vincent’s expression didn’t change. He leaned in, blocking her exit, and tapped the door lock. Then he reached for the first–aid kit he kept in the console.

When his hand moved toward her injured arm, Scarlett pushed it away. “I can do it myself.”

He released her, but his eyes didn’t leave the bloodied sleeve. “You’re a doctor, Scarlett. You know better than to let a wound go untreated. What if it gets infected?”

Scarlett shrugged out of her jacket and rolled up her sleeve. “If it gets infected, then it does,” she

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Awakened Housewife. Ignore Betrayer’s Begs

Chapter 222 Wounds and Confrontations

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 222[855 words]

Chapter 222 Wounds and Confrontations

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Vincent had no response to her sharp words. He looked away, deciding not to engage further.

Scarlett finished cleaning and bandaging her wound in silence. As she was organizing the first- aid supplies back into the kit, Vincent’s gaze drifted back to her. His eyes landed on the bracelet adorning her left wrist–the one Damian had given her.

His expression darkened instantly. “This bracelet...” he said, his voice dropping lower, “Damian gave it to you, didn’t he?” He already knew the answer, but he asked anyway.

Scarlett closed the kit with a snap. “That’s none of your business.”

In one swift motion, Vincent caught her wrist, lifting it between them. His eyes were cold and intent. “I told you,” he said, each word deliberate, “I don’t like you getting close to him.”

Scarlett let out a short, humorless laugh. She met his stare head–on. “And I don’t like you getting close to Sabrina.”

He released her hand and turned his face away. “It’s not the same.”

This time, she laughed outright. “Open the door. I’m getting out.”

Vincent made no move to unlock the car. Instead, he turned back to her, his tone flat. “As long as we’re not divorced–even for a single day–you’re still my wife.”

Scarlett found the statement utterly absurd. “Am I really your wife?” she challenged.

years, didn’t

His face was unreadable. “Whether you were or not, you played the part for five years, you?”

The words struck a raw nerve. A bitter smile touched her lips. “Do you really think I still care

about that now?”

This time, it was Vincent who fell silent.

Seeing he had nothing more to say, and unwilling to drag out the argument, Scarlett changed the subject. “You’re Vanessa’s father. I hope you’ll pay more attention to her schoolwork.”

Vincent’s eyes lifted to hers, gleaming with sarcasm. “You have time to accompany other people’s children. Why can’t you spend time with your own?”

Scarlett almost laughed at the irony.

The

way Vanessa treated her versus how Clara did–Vincent might not see the difference, but she felt it deeply.

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Chapter 222 Wounds and Confrontations

She had no interest in explaining herself to him.

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68

Finished

After a long pause, she spoke calmly, “Vincent, there’s no point in going back and forth. Just tell me–when are we going to the courthouse to start the divorce proceedings?”

His tone matched hers in coolness. “And as I’ve said, before the divorce is final... we do it one more time.”

Scarlett had heard enough. “You’re despicable.”

In an instant, Vincent seized her hand and pulled her toward him. She braced her uninjured arm against his chest, trying to keep distance between them.

He looked down at her, then slowly leaned closer, his breath hot against her skin.

She pushed back hard, but her strength was no match for his.

Vincent pressed his forehead to hers, his voice dropping to a murmur. “How about we try right now?”

Scarlett glared at him, fury in her eyes.

He seemed almost amused. “With so many people around... want to find some excitement?”

Unable to bear another word, she raised her hand and slapped him hard across the face.

The impact stung her palm. His jaw was like iron.

Vincent’s head snapped to the side. He closed his eyes for a second, and when he turned back, his gaze was blazing.

In one movement, he shifted his weight, pressing her into the corner of the back seat. His lips trailed along her neck and ears.

Scarlett struggled violently. “Vincent, let me go! You’re insane!”

Unmoved, he bit her earlobe–not hard, but enough to sting.

She jolted at the sharp sensation.

Feeling her reaction, he only intensified his hold. His hand slipped beneath her shirt, circling her waist with ease.

Trapped and unable to break free, Scarlett felt her eyes burn. Tears of frustration welled up and rolled down her cheeks.

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Chapter 222 Wounds and Confrontations

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Finished

Just as his mouth found the corner of her lips, Scarlett seized her chance–and bit his cheek. Hard.

She didn't hold back. The taste of blood spread in her mouth almost instantly. Startled, Vincent pulled away.

He didn't

go far, his large frame still caging her in, casting her fully in his shadow.

He touched the spot where she'd bitten him; his fingertips came away stained with blood.

But he wasn't angry. Instead, he let out a low, scornful laugh.

Outside the car, Damian had grown restless back on the lawn. Worried about Scarlett, he'd eventually followed the path Vincent had taken.

When he reached the vehicle and looked through the windshield, what he saw looked like Vincent and Scarlett locked in a passionate kiss.

Inside, the two figures seemed completely absorbed in each other.

Watching the scene, the anger in Damian's chest finally cooled, and hardened into something far heavier–a deep, settling disappointment.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 223[865 words]

Awakened Housewife: Ignore Betrayer’s Begs

Chapter 223 A Heart’s True North

No matter what Damian did, Vincent was the only one in Scarlett’s heart.

->

He had known it from the very beginning–Scarlett loved Vincent.

A68

68

Finished

From start to finish, he was the only one who refused to accept it, the only one still clinging to a childhood promise.

Even if he gave his life for her, she probably wouldn’t remember his devotion.

Her heart had always belonged to Vincent.

Still, a stubborn part of him wondered–what if someday she did remember that promise?

After Scarlett bit him, Vincent didn’t

press

further.

He unlocked the car door and watched her rush out as if escaping a trap.

Leaning back against the seat, he observed her hurried retreat with a faint, mocking smile.

Then his gaze shifted toward the spot where Damian had been standing moments before.

He'd noticed Damian watching long before she had.

By the time Scarlett returned to the lawn, Felix was already packing Eric's easel and art supplies.

Clara had finished her assignment and was playing tag with Eric nearby.

With Lily's help, Vanessa had completed her autumn painting.

Everyone seemed accounted for–except Damian.

Scarlett scanned the area, but he was nowhere in sight.

She assumed he must have left for some reason.

Once Felix finished organizing everything, he told Eric to say goodbye.

After waving to the others, Scarlett began gathering Clara's belongings.

Only after Eric and his father had driven off did Clara tug at Scarlett's sleeve and whisper, "Auntie, can we eat out tonight? I'm really craving pizza."

Scarlett smiled down at her. "But your mom said we were all having dinner at home tonight."

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Finished

Clara raised her smartwatch. "Mom just called. Family dinner is canceled–Dad's working late, and she's going to keep him company."

Scarlett thought for a moment. "Let me call your mom to make sure."

Clara nodded eagerly. “Okay.”

Scarlett called Violet to ask if she could take Clara out for pizza. Violet agreed but reminded her to avoid anything too spicy and make sure Clara didn’t have soda too late.

Scarlett noted each instruction before ending the call.

Just as she put her phone away, she noticed Vincent and Sabrina approaching from the parking lot.

They walked side by side, sharing a lighthearted conversation as if enjoying a private joke.

A small bandage on Vincent’s cheek likely covered the mark she’d left earlier.

When Vanessa spotted Sabrina, she ran over excitedly. “Sabrina, you’re here!”

Her voice carried clearly, almost as if she wanted to make sure Scarlett heard.

Sabrina bent down to catch Vanessa, then lifted her into her arms.

As she stood, she seemed to wobble slightly–whether intentionally or not–and Vincent reached out to steady her, his hand resting briefly on her waist.

“You okay?” he asked softly, his tone unusually gentle.

Sabrina shook her head, a soft smile gracing her lips. “I’m fine, Vincent.”

Vincent gently brushed a stray strand of hair from her face. “Let’s head back then. We shouldn’t keep your mother waiting.”

Sabrina blushed and nodded. “Alright.”

Vincent held his hands out toward Vanessa. “Come here, sweetheart. It’s a long walk–Sabrina can’t carry you the whole way.”

Vanessa pouted slightly but agreed. “Okay, then.”

Sabrina chuckled softly. “Vincent, it’s alright. I can manage.”

But Vincent didn’t indulge her; he firmly took Vanessa into his own arms.

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Chapter 223 A Heart's True North

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Finished

With Sabrina around, Vanessa no longer seemed to need Scarlett.

As for Vincent, he didn't so much as glance in Scarlett's direction.

Father and daughter really were alike in that way.

Lily, standing nearby, shot Scarlett an apologetic look.

But as a hired helper, there was little she could say or do about her employers' personal

matters.

Clara, noticing where Scarlett's attention had drifted, gently tugged her hand. "Auntie, let's go too."

Scarlett withdrew her gaze, gathered their things, and took Clara's hand.

After leaving the park, Scarlett drove them to a nearby pizza place.

Once they were seated in a booth, she let Clara choose what she wanted.

They settled on a medium pepperoni pizza and a fresh apple juice for Clara, while Scarlett ordered a burger for herself.

Just after they'd placed their order, a familiar young voice called out, "Ms. Theron!"

Scarlett looked up and saw not only Eric but also Damian, who'd disappeared that afternoon.

"Eric," she greeted warmly, then turned to Damian. "Mr. Langley."

Damian had seen her the moment they walked in. He hadn't come looking for her–this was a genuine coincidence.

His mood had been sour since the incident in the car, and running into the source of his frustration now only deepened his irritation.

He didn't respond to Scarlett, simply shifting his gaze away.

Unaware of the tension, Eric slid into the seat beside Scarlett.

The boy still held out hope that he could create a chance for Damian to spend some time with her.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce Silent Dreams Never Die — 224[799 words]

Chapter 224 Questions and Bandages

A 68

Finished

So, despite the risk of earning another glare from Clara, Eric slid in beside Scarlett anyway.

Damian considered calling the boy back, but it was too late.

Eric turned to him and said, “Mr. Langley, come on, join us!”

With a quiet sigh, he took a seat across from them.

Scarlett handed him the menu. “Mr. Langley, would you mind ordering for Eric? I’m not sure

what he likes.”

Damian accepted the menu without a word.

He flipped through it distractedly, pointing at two items at random. “These will be fine.”

Scarlett noted the choices and signaled for the server.

Damian made no move to pay, so Scarlett settled the bill quietly.

An awkward silence settled over the table as they waited for the food.

When the pizza and burger arrived, Scarlett realized Damian hadn't ordered anything for himself.

She studied him carefully. He hadn't seemed like himself lately–distant, almost cold.

But then again, now that he'd lost interest, maybe this was how he really was.

Perhaps it was for the best. They moved in different circles anyway.

Pushing her thoughts aside, she finally asked, "Aren't you going to eat, Mr. Langley?"

Her tone was polite, carefully measured, and distant.

Hearing her concern, Damian muttered under his breath, "I'm full–on anger."

Scarlett's brow furrowed slightly. Seeing his foul mood, she decided not to press further.

But her silence seemed to irritate him even more.

The two children clearly sensed the tension.

As soon as they finished eating, Eric tapped Clara's hand. "Clara, want to go play with the building blocks?"

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Chapter 224 Questions and Bandages

Eager for an escape, Clara agreed right away.

Once the children had left, only Scarlett and Damian remained at the table.

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Scarlett finished her burger and drank about half her juice.

68

Finished

Damian stayed quiet, leaning back in his chair, lost in thought. His silence was heavy, almost unnerving.

Scarlett didn't attempt small talk. She simply lowered her head and began scrolling through her phone.

There wasn't much to see, so she opened her social media feed.

That was when she remembered Damian's injured finger.

She looked up and found his eyes already fixed on her–with a hint of resentment in them.

Trying to ignore it, she said, "Let me see your finger."

Damian stared back. He'd wanted her to notice he was upset.

But her first words to him were about his injury.

Caught off guard, he averted his gaze.

He couldn't very well show her the nonexistent injury, so he stood up abruptly. "I'll be right back–restroom."

Scarlett watched him leave, puzzled by his odd behavior.

Damian returned a few minutes later and took his seat again.

Without a word, he held his hand out to her. "Here."

Scarlett looked down and saw his finger wrapped in a tissue now stained with blood.

She always carried a small first-aid kit in her bag–bandages, antiseptic wipes, gauze–just in case Clara got hurt while they were out.

She retrieved the supplies and carefully unwrapped the tissue.

A deep, fresh cut was revealed.

Scarlett paused almost imperceptibly.

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Chapter 224 Questions and Bandages

68

Finished

As a doctor, she could tell this wound was recent–and clearly different from the one she'd seen in his social media post that morning.

She didn't understand why he'd done it, but she didn't call him out.

His finger was still bleeding steadily, so she focused on stopping it.

After a quick cleanup and bandaging, she said, "There. Make sure you change the dressing regularly."

She packed the medical supplies back into her bag.

When she looked up again, he was still watching her. She met his gaze directly.

Feeling uneasy under her stare, Damian looked down at his bandaged finger. "Is it serious?"

Instead of answering, Scarlett asked quietly, "Damian, what exactly do you want from me?"

The dining area was nearly empty now. In the play area nearby, Clara and Eric were happily stacking blocks.

ing her question, Damian realized she'd seen through his ruse.

en he'd intentionally hurt his finger in the restroom, he'd forgotten she was a doctor.

only occurred to him while she was treating him.

But it was too late.

Even though he was still upset, Damian answered her honestly, "I want you to be happy. I want you to stay away from Vincent. I want you... to be mine."

Scarlett studied him. In his eyes, she saw nothing but sincerity.

But even so, she found it hard to believe that Damian–known for his flirtatious reputation- could truly have feelings for her.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce Silent Dreams Never Die — 225[865 words]

Chapter 225 Midnight Confessions.

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Scarlett's response was painfully rational. "We're not even friends, Damian. You really don't need to go this far for me."

Damian shot to his feet, his eyes burning into her. "So you were lying to me that day after all."

Scarlett frowned, confused by what he meant.

When he didn't explain, she pressed on, "And please don't come to my house anymore."

Damian's hands clenched. She could see a slight tremor run through him.

He seemed to be replaying something from that afternoon in his mind. When he opened his eyes again, they were bloodshot and cold.

"Scarlett, I've known many women," he said, his voice low, "but you're the one who understands the least about what really matters."

With that, he turned and walked away.

He stopped by the play area and called out, "Eric, we're leaving."

Eric looked up, surprised. "Already?"

Damian didn't repeat himself. "Now."

Eric didn't understand what had happened, but he knew better than to argue.

Damian left with the boy, his steps firm and final.

This wasn’t just jealousy or anger anymore.

He was starting to think that maybe he shouldn’t keep forcing his way into her life.

Scarlett was still married. Whether her marriage was happy or not, she clearly still loved

Vincent.

All those words she’d said, those promises she’d once made–they meant nothing now.

If she didn’t care anymore, why was he still holding on?

Clara returned to the table and wrapped her arms around Scarlett’s neck. “Auntie, what’s wrong?”

Scarlett held her close, her voice thick. “It’s nothing, sweetie.”

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Chapter 225 Midnight Confessions

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Finished

For some reason, she felt like crying.

Clara patted her back gently. “Did Mr. Langley make you sad?”

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Scarlett shook her head. “No, it’s not him. It’s my fault.”

Clara nuzzled against her cheek. “You’re a good auntie, and Mr. Langley is good too. He can draw maple leaves, wheat fields, and even farmers. He can draw things I’ve never even seen.”

Scarlett rested her chin on Clara’s shoulder. “Do you like him that much?”

Clara thought for a moment. “Yeah. But I like Nolan too.”

Scarlett couldn’t help but laugh, ruffling her hair. “Our Clara is already learning to judge people, huh?”

Auntie? Which one do you like more?”

Clara pulled back and asked, “What about you, Auntie? Which one

The question caught Scarlett off guard.

After a long pause, she smiled softly. “I don’t like either of them.”

Nolan was outstanding and had a clean reputation.

Damian might have been known as a playboy, but after spending time with him, Scarlett felt he was a good person deep down.

But no matter how good they were, how could she dare to hope for anything?

She wasn’t even divorced yet.

The next day, after getting ready for work, Scarlett called Vincent.

He picked up quickly–or rather, Sabrina did. “Hello, looking for Vincent?”

Scarlett didn’t hang up. Instead, she said calmly, “Yes. Please give him the phone.”

Sabrina knew exactly who it was. She didn’t disconnect.

A few seconds later, Scarlett could hear her handing over the phone.

It was clear they were in the same room.

“Vincent, it’s for you.”

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Chapter 225 Midnight Confessions

The sound of running water came through the line.

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Scarlett guessed Vincent was in the shower and Sabrina was in the bedroom.

Then Vincent’s voice came out. “Got it. Sabrina, can you grab me a pair of boxers?”

Sabrina replied, “Okay. I’ll leave the phone on the vanity. Don’t forget to answer it.”

After the sound of a door closing, the water stopped.

A moment later, Vincent said, “I’ll call you back later.”

Just before the call ended, Scarlett thought she heard Sabrina murmur, “Vincent, I haven’t showered yet...

She didn’t need to think hard to imagine what was happening.

But it didn’t matter anymore.

About forty minutes later, Vincent called back.

Scarlett was already doing her rounds at the hospital.

Unable to take the call, she let it go to voicemail.

After she finished, she called him back. He answered.

“What is it?”

Scarlett got straight to the point. “I can take time off later. Let’s go to the courthouse and get our marriage certificate reissued.”

But Vincent refused. “I have a meeting. Besides, I’ve made my

conditions very

clear.”

Scarlett knew he meant sleeping together one last time before the divorce.

But why should she agree?

Before, when she didn’t care, she might have accepted being intimate with him.

But now it was different. The thought disgusted her.

Still, if he was going to be difficult...

Without overthinking it, she said, “If you’re that desperate, I’m sure you can find someone else to help you with that.”

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Chapter 225 Midnight Confessions

Then she hung up.

If he wanted to play dirty, she could too.

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If he was too busy to reissue the marriage certificate, she'd go to Stewart Manor and come clean to Xavier.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 226[842 words]

Chapter 226 The Fall and the Promise

Finished

Scarlett worked her regular shift that day. In the afternoon, after she was finished, she called Xavier.

He answered cheerfully. "Scarlett, my

dear!"

She spoke softly, "Grandpa, will you be home tonight?"

Xavier replied warmly, "Of course I will."

After a brief hesitation, Scarlett said, “Grandpa, I’d like to come by the estate. There’s something I need to discuss with you in person.”

Xavier felt a twinge of unease but agreed without hesitation. “Alright, I’ll be waiting for you.”

After her shift, Scarlett drove directly to Stewart Manor.

As soon as she stepped through the front door, she heard panicked voices from the staff. “Mr. Xavier Stewart has fallen! Quick, call everyone!”

The entire household descended into chaos.

Alarmed, Scarlett rushed toward the commotion.

Xavier had collapsed on the flagstone pathway in the garden. The back of his head was bleeding, and he *lay* completely unconscious.

Remembering her medical training, Scarlett didn’t attempt to move him. She immediately called 911 for an ambulance.

At the hospital, emergency room doctors worked urgently to stabilize him.

Scarlett called Vincent to inform him that Xavier had been hospitalized after a serious fall.

He arrived at the hospital within minutes.

Just as he reached the emergency area, the doors swung open. A doctor in scrubs and glasses approached Scarlett and Vincent. “Mr. Xavier Stewart is conscious. He’s asking for both of you.”

Scarlett felt a knot tighten in her stomach. She had a good idea what he wanted to say, but now wasn’t the time for arguments. She had to go in.

Nothing was more important than his wellbeing.

Inside the ER, Xavier was connected to multiple monitors and an IV.

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Chapter 226 The Fall and the Promise

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The room carried the sharp, sterile scent of antiseptic and medication.

Machines beeped rhythmically in the background.

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As a doctor herself, Scarlett understood all too well how critical his condition was.

She and Vincent approached the bedside. Xavier's face was pale, his eyes barely open. He looked fragile.

His lips moved faintly as he whispered, "Scarlett..."

She quickly took his hand, her eyes moist. "I'm right here, Grandpa."

It was Xavier who had originally encouraged and supported her marriage to Vincent.

Scarlett had always been grateful to him. It was his insistence that had made it possible for her to marry the man she loved.

Even if things hadn't turned out as she'd hoped, back then, his blessing had meant everything.

And throughout their five years of marriage, Xavier had never been anything but kind to her.

She had never forgotten that.

Xavier patted her hand weakly, then turned toward Vincent. "Vincent."

Vincent placed his hand over his grandfather's.

Xavier pressed their hands together, his voice raspy. "I'm old. I don't have many years left. I don't ask for much. I just want you two to be happy. Give me another great–grandchild—then I can rest in peace."

Scarlett had expected this.

Vincent, however, didn't agree right away. "Luke and Lucy are old enough to start their own families. If you want to hold a baby, you need to focus on getting better so you can hold theirs."

Xavier choked, coughing violently. One of the monitors began beeping urgently.

Scarlett quickly soothed his chest. “Grandpa, please calm down. Take slow, deep breaths.”

After a moment, his breathing steadied.

Vincent didn’t dare say anything else, his eyes fixed on his grandfather with clear concern.

Xavier glared at him. “I want your and Scarlett’s child. The others are too young–I’m afraid I

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Chapter 226 The Fall and the Promise

won’t live long enough to see theirs.”

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Vincent was silent for a long moment before finally relenting. “Alright. We’ll do our best.”

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Scarlett shot him a sharp look, but with Xavier’s life hanging in the balance, she bit back her

anger.

They didn’t get to stay much longer before the medical staff asked them to step out.

Outside, Vincent took Scarlett’s arm. “Come with me.”

Confused, she followed him out to the hallway.

They stopped by the railing overlooking the hospital atrium. Vincent pulled out a cigarette and

lit it.

The glow burned brightly in the dim corridor.

Scarlett didn’t speak, simply watched him. His face was shadowed, difficult to read.

He took a long drag before asking, “Why did you go back tonight?”

Scarlett told him the truth. “I went to ask Grandpa for our marriage certificate.”

Vincent threw his cigarette down and crushed it under his shoe.

“Scarlett, you actually went to Grandpa for the certificate? Do you even understand why he took it in the first place?”

She could hear the anger in his voice, but she didn’t back down. “Vincent, I’ve never hidden my intentions. I told you I want a divorce. You’re the one refusing to cooperate.”

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 227[848 words]

Chapter 227 Terms and Ultimatums

Vincent turned away, struggling to regain his composure.

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He knew Scarlett had arrived at the estate after his grandfather’s fall, yet some part of him still instinctively wanted to blame her.

Recognizing how unfair that was, he fought to steady his emotions.

It took him a long moment before he could speak again, his voice rough. “You know perfectly well Grandpa would never agree to us divorcing.”

Scarlett met his gaze steadily. “Even if he doesn’t agree, we can’t keep pretending forever.”

Vincent’s eyes narrowed. “If something really happened to Grandpa because of this, could you live with yourself?”

Scarlett didn’t flinch. “If you’re so concerned about Grandpa, then do what needs to be done. Let’s get the certificate reissued and start the legal process.”

Vincent rubbed his forehead tiredly, then pulled another cigarette from the pack. He held it between his lips but didn’t light it.

“Scarlett, are you really in such a hurry to end this?”

She stood quietly in the dim hospital hallway, her voice firm. “Yes, Vincent. I stopped wanting this marriage a long time ago.”

Vincent didn’t want to question whether she meant it. He flicked his lighter, but as the flame leaped up, he let it

1. go.

He looked at Scarlett, his tone flat and final. “With Grandpa’s condition now, I can’t divorce you. Not yet.”

Scarlett let out a bitter laugh. “Our divorce and Grandpa’s health are two separate things. Why are you mixing them together?”

Vincent ignored her protest. “And we need to talk about having another child.”

In the Stewart family, Xavier was the person closest to Vincent.

When he was growing up, his parents were always absorbed in their careers. It was Xavier who had played with him, taught him, been there for him.

Vincent had been raised by his grandfather–their bond was unshakable.

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Chapter 227 Terms and Ultimatums

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Right now, nothing else mattered to him. He just wanted his grandfather to leave this world without regrets.

If holding another great–grandchild was Xavier's final wish, then Vincent was determined to fulfill it.

Hearing his selfish demand, Scarlett smiled sarcastically. "Then go ask Sabrina to have one with you."

Vincent took a deep drag of his cigarette. Through the haze of smoke, his expression was unreadable. Then his voice came, firm and unyielding. "I'll only have another child with you."

His words sent a sharp pang through her heart.

Why only with her?

She knew the reason all too well.

He had watched her nearly die giving birth to Vanessa. He was afraid Sabrina might face the same risk.

And aside from Sabrina, he had no interest in other women.

Except for Scarlett–after all, from the very beginning, she had just been a convenient stand–in. A vessel.

The thought turned her stomach. Fighting back the turmoil inside, she snapped, "In your dreams."

With that, she turned and walked away.

Vincent reached for her, but his hand closed on empty air.

He didn't go after her.

Xavier's fall had shattered all his plans.

It looked like everything would have to be rearranged.

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By the time Scarlett returned to Theron Manor, she was so exhausted she could barely stand.

Not wanting to worry her parents, she forced herself to sit through dinner.

Afterward, she pleaded fatigue and went upstairs.

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Chapter 227 Terms and Ultimatums

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After a quick shower, she silenced her phone and collapsed into bed.

Somewhere in her drowsiness, she heard the balcony glass door slide open.

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Scarlett was a light sleeper. She woke instantly.

She looked toward the balcony and saw a dark figure tumbling into her room.

A heavy thud echoed in the silent night.

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Scarlett sat up. Just as she was about to get out of bed, a knock came at the door. “Scarlett? Are you okay?”

It was Nathan.

Scarlett saw that the intruder was Damian. The night breeze carried the strong smell of alcohol -he’d been drinking heavily.

Afraid Nathan would discover him, she quickly called out, “It’s nothing, Nathan! I just rolled out of bed.”

Nathan sounded doubtful, but as a man, he couldn’t just barge into her room.

“Be careful. Don’t hurt yourself,” he said gently.

“I will!” Scarlett replied, raising her voice slightly.

She waited until his footsteps faded down the hall before getting up and approaching Damian.

He had landed face down and hadn’t moved since.

Worried he was hurt, she knelt and gently shook his shoulder: “Damian?”

Hearing her voice, he slowly pushed himself up. He leaned back against the glass door, reeking of bourbon, his face flushed.

His eyes were unfocused at first, but when they landed on her, they gradually sharpened.

His voice, though, was thick with resentment, like a child who’d been unfairly wronged. “Scarlett, you liar. You’re a big, fat liar.”

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 228[844 words]

Chapter 228 Drunken Truths

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Damian leaned heavily against the glass balcony door, his suit jacket hanging open and his dress shirt beneath rumpled enough to reveal the defined lines of his chest and shoulders. His long legs stretched awkwardly across the floor, and his eyes burned with drunken accusation.

“Why did you lie to me?” he demanded, his words slightly slurred.

Scarlett frowned, kneeling beside him. “Damian, I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

He was clearly intoxicated–though to what extent, she couldn’t tell.

Hearing her denial, he slapped his own cheek lightly. “I’m an idiot. So many women out there, but you’re the only one I think about.”

As he spoke, a single tear traced a path down his cheek.

The sight twisted something inside her.

She reached out and took his arm. “Damian, you’re drunk.”

When her hand touched him, his eyes darkened. In one swift motion, he grabbed her wrist and pulled her into his arms, holding her tightly against his chest.

Her neck pressed against the solid curve of his shoulder. He held her so firmly she could feel the coiled strength in his embrace.

He rested his chin against her neck, his voice rough with emotion. “Scarlett, I’m not drunk.”

She tried to push him away. Interpreting the movement as rejection, he only tightened his hold.

His arms felt like they could crush her.

He complained again, his voice thick, “Scarlett, you promised to sleep with me. You owe me. But you never followed through, and now you’re back with Vincent.” His voice broke slightly. “I want to hit you, but I can’t bring myself to.”

He swallowed hard. “Scarlett, don’t you understand? I could never hurt you. I can’t stand to see you in pain. I’m good to you. Why won’t you have me?”

His words brought unexpected tears to her eyes.

He was always so proud, so arrogantly self–assured. Yet here he was, drunk and vulnerable, holding her and saying things that laid his heart bare.

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Chapter 228 Drunken Truths

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He had everything–wealth, looks, any woman he could possibly want.

Yet he was saying these things to her.

Scarlett stayed silent. She didn't know whether to believe him.

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They had no deep history together. She refused to believe her charm alone could captivate a man like him so completely.

Not knowing how to respond, she didn't push him away. Instead, she gently patted his back. "Damian, you're drunk. Let me help you to bed so you can rest."

He nodded slowly. "Okay."

His voice was gravelly, as though his throat were full of sand.

She nudged him gently. "Can I help you up?"

This time, he didn't resist. "Okay."

She stood and helped him to his feet. He was tall, and in his intoxicated state, most of his weight leaned heavily on her.

After guiding him to her bed, she sat beside him. "Get some sleep."

She reached to pull up the covers, but he suddenly caught her hand.

He stared at her, his eyes full of reproach. "Scarlett, you have no heart."

She looked down at him, her brow furrowing deeply. "Damian, stop saying things I don't understand."

He released her hand, turned his face away, and fell silent.

He was drunk, but not completely gone.

He buried his face in the blankets, breathing in her scent.

It was soft and sweet, subtly intoxicating.

The bed was comfortable. He didn't want to leave.

He hugged the covers closer, a strange ache tightening in his chest.

Here he was, a grown man nearly six–foot–three, crying in front of a woman.

He felt ashamed, but he couldn't help himself.

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Chapter 228 Drunken Truths

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Scarlett caught the strong scent of alcohol on him. "Let me get a towel. You should clean up a bit."

He resisted sharply. "No."

He was being difficult. Her bedding smelled too good, too clean. He wanted *to* leave his scent all over it.

But Scarlett insisted, "If you don't, you can't sleep in the bed."

He grumbled reluctantly, "Fine. Go ahead."

She went to the bathroom for a basin of warm water and a clean towel, then handed it to him.

He took it and wiped his face roughly.

When he was done, he handed it back. "There."

She knew he hadn’t done a thorough job, but she let it go.

She put the basin and towel away. When she returned, he had switched off the main light, leaving only the soft glow of the bedside lamp.

Scarlett knew she couldn’t make him leave, not in this state.

She decided she would take a pillow and sleep on the sofa.

But as she reached the bed, Damian suddenly grabbed her and pulled her down beside him.

His burning body pressed against hers, so intensely hot that she froze in place.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 229[802 words]

Chapter 229 Fleeting Comfort

Damian held Scarlett from behind, his face buried in the curve of her neck.

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Finished

He didn’t move, but his voice was pleading. “Just let me hold you for a little while. Please, just a little while.”

Scarlett lay stiffly in his arms, still attempting to push him away.

Feeling her resistance, he tightened his embrace. A choked sound escaped him. “Scarlett, let me be your lover. You can love him all you want, but... don’t shut me out completely.”

He was trembling, his words raw with emotion.

Scarlett felt something damp against her skin.

She didn’t know if he was crying, but the sensation made her chest tighten.

She stopped pushing against him and allowed the embrace, speaking softly, “Damian, you’re drunk.”

Hearing this, Damian forcefully turned her to face him. His eyes were intense as they searched hers. “You’re Scarlett. I’m Damian. The man you love is Vincent. Your daughter is Vanessa. You’re five–foot–six. You like light blue and white. You studied medicine. Your best friend is

Claire. You...”

His voice broke, and he lowered his gaze. “Now tell me, am I drunk?”

His words left her speechless. Emotion prickled behind her eyes, but her voice came out weary. “Damian, why are you doing this to yourself?”

He buried his face in the hollow of her shoulder. He didn’t try anything further, just leaned against her, breathing in her scent.

He muttered, “I don’t care. I don’t have to be more important than Vincent, but I have to be above Nolan.”

Scarlett frowned. She pushed gently at his shoulders, but when he didn’t move, she worried about making noise and alerting Nathan downstairs.

So she let him stay.

She felt his warm breath against her neck.

Staring into the darkness, she patted his back gently, comforting him as if he were a child. “Get some sleep now.”

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Chapter 229 Fleeting Comfort

He murmured, “Okay.”

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Perhaps he was truly exhausted, because as soon as he closed his eyes, his breathing evened into sleep.

Scarlett lay rigid, not daring to move. She held the position until her limbs grew numb, eventually drifting into a fitful sleep herself.

In the haze between sleep and wakefulness, she felt a persistent gaze on her.

She was a light sleeper. The sensation made her uneasy, so she opened her eyes.

Damian’s face filled her vision.

He was sitting cross-legged on the bed, watching her intently.

He wasn’t smiling; his expression was unreadable.

Seeing him like this, Scarlett knew his earlier vulnerability had been drowned in alcohol.

She didn’t dwell on it, asking calmly, “Are you sober now?”

He didn’t answer. He slid off the bed, picked up his jacket, and moved toward the balcony.

In the dim morning light, his shadow stretched long across the floor.

Scarlett smiled faintly. “Damian, don’t come here again.”

He stopped abruptly in the middle of the room, jacket in hand.

For a long moment, he stood completely still.

Scarlett watched him, her gaze steady.

Finally, he turned around. He slung his jacket over his shoulder, hooking it with one finger.

Sober now, his usual confident demeanor had returned, and he was still impossibly handsome.

“Your words don’t count. I’m not listening to you.”

If her promises had meant anything, she would have kept the one she made to him.

She was a liar. He wouldn’t obey her now.

Scarlett wanted to say more, but Damian had already turned away.

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Chapter 229 Fleeting Comfort

Finished

At the balcony door, he glanced back once more, then strode back *to* the bed. He cupped her face in his hands, leaned down, and planted a firm kiss on her forehead.

When he pulled back, he gave a satisfied smirk. “Call me a fool if you want.”

With that, he grabbed his jacket and slipped out through the balcony, disappearing into the early morning.

Sitting on the large bed, Scarlett stared at the empty balcony doorway. Damian was long gone.

But his scent still lingered in the room.

She lay back down, gazing blankly at the ceiling.

Slowly, her thoughts drifted into silence.

The sky was turning pale with dawn when Vincent finally returned home.

Sabrina had waited up all night. Hearing the door, she hurried from the couch.

“Vincent, you’re back.”

Seeing her tired face, he frowned. “Why didn’t you go to bed?”

She shook her head. “I couldn’t sleep until you were home.”

He reached out and gently touched her cheek, his voice rough with fatigue. “Silly.”

Her eyes reddened, but she said nothing, only shook her head again.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 230[759 words]

Chapter 230 The Legal Step

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Vincent managed a tired smile. “Go get some rest. Don’t just stand there.”

Still concerned, Sabrina asked softly, “How is your grandpa doing?”

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Vincent’s eyes were bloodshot from lack of sleep. “Not well. I’ll probably need to stay at Stewart Manor for a while to look after him.”

Her expression fell. “I understand.”

Seeing her disappointment, he added gently, “Once Grandpa’s condition stabilizes, I’ll keep my promise to you.”

Tears glistened in her eyes. “It’s not about me, Vincent. I’m just worried Mom will read too much into this.”

Vincent checked his watch. It was almost 7 AM. Maria would be waking soon.

“Don’t worry. I’ll speak with her myself.”

He walked toward Maria’s bedroom and knocked firmly.

Sabrina wanted to stop him, but it was too late.

“Come in,” Maria called from inside.

Vincent entered with a practiced smile. “Good morning, Maria.”

From the living room, Sabrina couldn’t make out their full conversation, but she occasionally heard Maria’s bright laughter echoing down the hall.

Soon, Vincent emerged.

Sabrina approached him curiously. “Vincent, what did you say to Mom? She sounded so happy.”

He smiled mysteriously. “That’s my

little secret.”

She didn’t press further. If he wanted to tell her, he would eventually.

Besides, she could always ask Maria about it later.

Vincent guided Sabrina upstairs, then asked Lily to wake Vanessa.

Back in his room, he texted Scarlett. “Can we talk?”

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Chapter 230 The Legal Step

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Scarlett replied promptly, “Unless it’s about the divorce, I don’t think we need *to* meet.”

He typed, “It’s related. And with Grandpa in the hospital, even if you avoid me today, we’ll run into each other there eventually.”

She understood his meaning perfectly–if she refused to meet, he’d simply find her at the hospital.

But that would be messy and complicated.

Finally, she relented. They agreed to meet at noon, at a quiet café downtown.

When Scarlett arrived, Vincent had already finished his first cup of coffee.

She took the seat across from him, and he came straight to the point. “Grandpa’s condition is still unstable. For now, we need to maintain appearances. We might even need to act close occasionally—it’s better for his recovery. Once he’s improved, we can proceed with the divorce.”

Scarlett responded calmly, “For Grandpa’s sake, I’m willing to pretend with you. But we should at least file for legal separation now. By the time the waiting period is over, Grandpa should be much better.”

Vincent didn’t respond immediately, just watched her with a complicated expression.

After a moment, Scarlett added, “Even after we divorce, I’ll still care about Grandpa.”

He pressed further, “What about having another child?”

Her refusal was immediate and firm. “I won’t have another child.”

He frowned. “If we fake a pregnancy, the truth will come out eventually.”

“Vincent, you can have a child with someone else. Why does it have to be me?”

She was tired of having the same argument.

Frustrated by her stubbornness, he said sharply, “Scarlett, how could I possibly have a child with anyone else?”

She met his gaze directly. “Why couldn’t you?”

Sabrina was already living at Ravenshade Villa. Vanessa saw her as a mother figure.

What was stopping them from starting a family together?

Vincent studied her closely. He'd never seen her like this before.

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Chapter 230 The Legal Step

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In his memory, she had always been compliant.

But now, she was different–steadfast and resolute.

He didn't want to argue. "This is going in circles. At least while Grandpa's in the hospital, let's not discuss divorce. We can revisit this after he's discharged."

Scarlett had heard enough. She stood up. "I can refrain from mentioning it, but we need to start the legal process."

The mandatory waiting period took thirty days. She didn't want to delay any longer.

Vincent hadn't slept all night. Her insistence on starting the process made his head throb.

He felt utterly defeated.

"Fine," he said wearily. "I don't know where Grandpa put our marriage certificate, but if you're in such a hurry, we can get a replacement this afternoon."

Seeing him finally relent, she agreed quickly. "Good. Let's

go now."

She didn't have much time before her afternoon shift. She wanted to get this done immediately and start the waiting period.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 231[861 words]

Chapter 231 The Waiting Period Begins

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Finished

Before heading to the county clerk's office, Scarlett remembered they would need passport- style photos for the replacement certificate, so they stopped at a photography studio for the required portraits against a plain background.

Unlike other couples getting their pictures taken–laughing, holding hands, or sharing intimate glances they stood stiffly side by side, looking more like strangers forced into a business portrait than a married couple. Even their proximity felt awkward and unnatural.

After managing to take the acceptable photo, they proceeded to the county clerk's office to apply for the replacement marriage certificate.

As soon as the new document was in her hands, Scarlett immediately filed for divorce.

The clerk handed them the necessary forms. Scarlett completed hers swiftly and without hesitation.

Vincent glanced up at her while filling out his own form. He could see the determination written all over her face.

Once the paperwork was submitted, the clerk explained the procedure, noting that the mandatory 30–day waiting period started that day. After that timeframe, they could finalize the divorce, though either party could withdraw the application during the cooling–off period.

Stepping out of the government building, Scarlett looked at the “Notice of Acceptance of Divorce Application” in her hand, feeling as if a heavy weight had finally lifted from her shoulders.

Seeing her visible relief, Vincent felt a complicated mix of emotions.

He simply said, “I’ll pick you up from the hospital tonight. Grandpa will be happy to see us together.”

Scarlett agreed quietly. “Alright.”

That afternoon, as Scarlett left the hospital after her shift, she ran into Nolan near the main

entrance.

He seemed to be waiting for her specifically, his face lighting up with a warm smile when he saw her.

As she approached, Nolan asked gently, “There’s an alumni gathering tonight. Would you like to come?”

Scarlett, remembering Xavier’s hospitalization, was about to politely decline.

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Chapter 231 The Waiting Period Begins

68

Finished

But before she could speak, Vincent’s voice came from behind. “Scarlett, Grandpa is waiting for

us.”

She turned and saw Vincent’s car parked in the hospital’s drop-off zone, not far from where she stood with Nolan.

Vincent didn’t get out, merely rolling down the driver’s side window to call out to her.

Scarlett turned back to Nolan apologetically. “Maybe next time. I have something to take care of today.”

Nolan, ever gracious and never one to impose, was disappointed but didn't press further. He smiled and nodded. "Of course. I'll ask again when there's another opportunity."

After waving goodbye, Scarlett got into Vincent's car.

She still chose to sit in the back seat.

Nolan noticed her choice and couldn't help a slight, knowing smile.

Xavier wasn't hospitalized at Scarlett's workplace but at Rivergate General Hospital, the city's top medical center.

The drive there would take over half an hour.

Once in the car, Scarlett didn't speak to Vincent. He didn't engage with her either, instead making a video call through his phone.

His contacts list had a pinned entry. Whether intentional or not, the contact wasn't saved under a name–just a heart emoji.

The call connected after a moment, and Sabrina's face appeared on the screen.

"Vincent, what is it?"

While driving, Vincent glanced briefly at the screen. "I wanted to check on Vanessa."

Sabrina replied gently, "Vanessa, come here. Daddy wants to see you."

Vanessa's cheerful voice came through. "Coming!"

Her voice was full of excitement.

Sabrina turned the camera, and Vanessa came into view, running from the living room couch to stand in front of the phone.

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Chapter 231 The Waiting Period Begins

"Daddy, are you done working? I miss you."

Vincent replied, "I still have to visit Great–Grandpa at the hospital. I'll be back later."

Vanessa said, "Drive safely, Daddy."

Vincent agreed, then asked, “Did you eat your dinner nicely?”

Vanessa replied, “Yes! I had a small plate of pasta.”

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Finished

Vincent smiled. “Good. Listen to Sabrina and Maria. I’ll bring you a present when I get

Vanessa clapped her hands, jumping up and down happily. “Yay! I love you, Daddy!”

Vincent’s smile deepened. “Go play now.”

Vanessa agreed and ran off.

In the back seat, Scarlett turned her face toward the window, trying hard to ignore the conversation between her daughter and her husband.

But the more she tried to block it out, the clearer their words became.

back.”

Vanessa said she loved her daddy, but wasn’t it Scarlett who had stayed with her day and night all these years?

It had been so long since Scarlett had heard Vanessa say “I love you” to her.

1

Then Sabrina’s voice came through again. “Vincent, should I hang up?”

Vincent said, “No, leave it on. I just want to hear your voices.”

Sabrina chuckled softly. “Alright. I’ll prop the phone here so you can see us.”

Vincent said, “Okay.”

Vanessa’s cheerful voice occasionally drifted from the phone.

“Maria, look! Isn’t this pretty? I made it for you!”

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 232[863 words]

Awakened Housewife: Ignore Betrayer's Begs

Chapter 232 A Performance for Xavier

"Sabrina, look–I made a little clay figure of you!"

"Sabrina, my teacher said there's a field trip next weekend. Will you come with me?"

"Maria, are you thirsty? I'll get you some water."

Laughter and lighthearted chatter filled the car's interior.

668

Finished

Though focused on driving, Vincent occasionally responded with a brief comment or two.

Even though he wasn't physically at Ravenshade Villa, his attention remained fully engaged with the scene unfolding through the screen.

Scarlett sat silently in the back, pressing herself against the door, half–afraid Sabrina might catch a glimpse of her through the video call and witness her current discomfort.

She was Vincent's legal wife, Vanessa's biological mother, yet in that moment she felt like an intruder–completely out of place.

The entire car ride felt like slow torture.

She tried distracting herself by counting the trees flashing past her window, but eventually lost track as the voices from the phone pulled her attention back.

Finally, Vincent pulled into the hospital parking garage. After exchanging a few more words with Sabrina, he ended the video call.

Before visiting Xavier, Scarlett stopped at the hospital florist to buy a fresh bouquet, then selected a fruit basket from the gift shop.

The basket was heavier than she expected, and she struggled slightly under its weight. Noticing her difficulty, Vincent stepped over. “Let me get that.”

Scarlett released her grip, allowing him to take the basket from her.

She carried the flowers; he carried the fruit. They walked side by side through the hospital’s automatic doors.

Outside Xavier’s room, Scarlett noticed a small crowd had gathered. Not only were Richard, Amanda, Daniel, and Harris present, but several of Xavier’s old friends had come by as well.

Fortunately, it was a spacious VIP suite with enough room to accommodate everyone.

When Scarlett and Vincent entered together, all eyes turned toward them.

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Chapter 232 A Performance for Xavier

A68

Finished

Xavier looked over too, his smile widening. He beckoned to Scarlett. “Come here, dear. Sit by me.”

Scarlett approached with the flowers, arranging them carefully in a vase before saying, “Grandpa, I hope you have a speedy recovery and enjoy many more healthy years.”

Vincent followed, placing the fruit basket among the other gifts.

Straightening up, he asked, “Are you feeling better today?”

Xavier beamed at both of them, reaching to take their hands. His smile was warm and genuine. “I don’t need a long life. As long as you two are happy together, even if I passed now, I’d die

content.”

Scarlett frowned gently. “Grandpa, please don’t say things like that.”

But Vincent responded smoothly, “Don’t worry, Grandpa. Scarlett and I will be just fine.”

As he spoke, he placed his arm around Scarlett’s waist.

Right in front of everyone, he held her without hesitation.

Though intensely uncomfortable, Scarlett suppressed the urge to pull away.

Xavier had heard Vincent’s assurance but not Scarlett’s, so he looked at her expectantly.

Feeling the pressure of the moment, Scarlett reluctantly added, “Yes... Vincent and I will make it work.”

Not far away, Daniel and Harris observed the scene from near the window.

Daniel narrowed his eyes, his tone dripping with disdain. “What a performance.”

He was, of course, referring to Scarlett.

Harris nudged him. “What did you say?”

Daniel didn’t repeat himself. Shooting Harris a warning look, he turned and left the room.

Xavier had stated his wish in front of everyone and received the public commitment he wanted.

He scanned the faces in the room one by one, then declared firmly, “Since you’ve all heard it, I want you all as my witnesses.”

Some murmured agreement; others turned away with displeasure.

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Chapter 232 A Performance for Xavier

(68)

Finished

Scarlett didn’t care what these people thought of her.

After staying with Xavier a while longer, she excused herself to use the restroom, needing a break from the stifling atmosphere.

As she stepped out of the bathroom, someone called out to her.

“Wait.” It was Daniel’s voice.

Scarlett turned to see him emerging from the shadowed corridor.

He stepped forward, and the light revealed the undisguised disgust on his face.

Closing the distance between them, Daniel looked down at her. “Is it really that satisfying-clinging to the Stewart name and refusing to let go?”

Scarlett understood he was defending Sabrina.

Her reply carried a sharp edge. “No, it’s not satisfying at all.”

Daniel’s eyebrow rose slightly, his gaze curious.

In his memory, Scarlett had always been meek and accommodating.

But now, she met his eyes directly, unflinching.

Daniel took two more staps forward, his taller frame casting a shadow over her. He asked bluntly, without pretense, “Vincent has always loved Sabrina. When are you going to step aside?”

Scarlett didn’t back down. She lifted her chin, meeting his challenging stare. “What if I refuse to make room for her? What exactly do you plan to do about it?”

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 233[877 words]

Daniel found Scarlett's defiant expression almost laughable.

68

Finished

He let out two sharp, mocking laughs before his face hardened completely. "The Theron family really has no shame. You're just as cheap as Violet."

The contempt in his eyes was unmistakable.

His words ignited a fire in Scarlett. "What did you just say?" she demanded, her voice rising.

Daniel kept his hands in his pockets, oozing condescension. "I said, you and Violet are both cheap. No self-respect whatsoever."

He raised an eyebrow, taunting her further. "Did you hear me clearly that time? If not, I can—"

Before he could finish, Scarlett's hand shot out, landing a hard slap across his face. "Shut your mouth!"

Daniel's head snapped to the side from the impact. He worked his jaw, feeling the sting, then touched the corner of his mouth–his fingers came away stained with blood.

Scarlett's palm throbbed; she'd put all her strength into that strike.

Her voice was low and unwavering. "You can insult me all you want. But you don't get to talk about Violet like that. You have no right."

Daniel wiped the blood from his lip with his thumb, staring at the crimson smear.

After *a* long pause, he suddenly laughed.

When he looked back at Scarlett, his tone dripped with sarcasm. "No shame? She took her clothes off right in front of me, begging me to sleep with her. Tell me, is that shameful or not?"

Hearing him slander Violet so viciously, Scarlett fired back, "That's a lie! Violet would never do such a thing!"

Daniel's laughter grew louder. "Is that so?"

Scarlett shot back, "Stop making things up. Do you really think I'd believe you?"

Ignoring her question, Daniel shifted gears. “A married woman, no matter how beautiful, is just second-hand goods. It’s like driving on a clear road-no challenge, no feeling at all. What a waste of a pretty face. So boring.”

Scarlett couldn’t stand to hear any more. She tried to slap him again, but this time he was

quicker, catching her wrist in a vise-like grip.

He glared at her with icy menace; she met his

gaze

with

pure,

unadulterated rage.

A668

Finished

“Daniel, stop spewing nonsense! Violet is nothing like that!”

He merely shrugged, unconcerned, and let out a low chuckle. “Nonsense? More like I was tasting Violet’s—”

He deliberately left the crude word unspoken, but Scarlett knew exactly what he meant.

She was so furious she could barely breathe, her chest rising and falling rapidly.

She began lashing out blindly-kicking, hitting, even trying to headbutt him.

Daniel wasn’t about to let her land another blow. With a powerful shove, he sent her stumbling backward onto the hard floor.

Scarlett looked up at him from the ground, her eyes blazing. She heard him say, “Scarlett, I’m advising you to step aside for Sabrina. That position was never meant for you.”

With that, Daniel turned and walked away, leaving her there alone.

Scarlett remained on the floor. The wound from the dog bite had reopened; she could feel warm blood seeping through her clothes.

She didn't care about her own injury, but Daniel's vile words about Violet filled her with a deep, sorrowful anger.

Yet confronting Daniel felt like an ant trying to shake a tree–utterly futile.

Just then, her phone rang.

It had fallen beside her. She glanced over and saw Vincent's name flashing on the screen.

She didn't want *to* answer, but at the last moment, she picked up.

Vincent didn't ask where she was. His tone was detached. "You can find your own way back later. Lucy and the others are here at the hospital. I've already left–something came up."

Scarlett knew he was going back to Vanessa and Sabrina. But what could she say?

No words came out.

Remembering Daniel's viciousness, she was about to speak up when the line went dead-Vincent had ended the call.

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Chapter 233 The Line Crossed

68

Finished

She didn't call back. Silently, she put her phone away and straightened her clothes.

Once she was sure nothing looked out of place, she left the hospital.

When she arrived at Theron Manor, she found Violet waiting in the living room, as if expecting her or Nathan.

Thinking of Daniel's words, her heart ached.

Violet was a good person. Scarlett refused to believe a word Daniel said.

Standing outside the hall, she took a couple of deep breaths before walking in.

Hearing footsteps, Violet looked up. Seeing it was Scarlett, she smiled warmly. “Scarlett, you’re back.”

Scarlett approached, returning the smile gently. “Violet, it’s so late. Why aren’t you resting?”

Violet was dressed to go out. Usually by this time, she would have finished her skincare routine and been settling into bed.

But tonight, she wasn’t even in her pajamas.

Violet explained softly, “Your brother is still working late at the office. I was just about to go check on him. I’m not sure if I’ll be back tonight, so I wanted to ask if you could take Clara to school tomorrow morning.”

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 234[866 words]

Chapter 234 Rescue Mission

It was already very late. Worried, Scarlett said, “Let me come with you.”

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Finished

Touched by her concern, Violet reached out and gently patted her cheek. “It’s alright, really. I can go alone. Clara’s still here–she’ll be upset if she wakes up and finds both of us gone.”

Scarlett insisted, “Violet, I really think-”

But Violet cut her off gently yet firmly. “It’s settled. I should get going now. You go upstairs, get washed up, and stay with Clara.”

Seeing her determination, Scarlett didn’t push further.

After Violet left the hall, Scarlett stood for a long moment, a growing unease settling in her chest. Eventually, she decided to follow her out.

By the time she reached the manor’s main entrance, she saw Violet stepping into a dark sedan.

Violet took the back seat. As the car pulled away, Scarlett caught a clear glimpse of the driver.

If she remembered correctly, she had seen him before–he was Daniel’s personal assistant.

Why would Violet get into a car driven by Daniel’s assistant so late at night?

Could there be any truth to what Daniel had said earlier?

No, it was impossible. Scarlett refused to believe it.

Walking back inside, she called Nathan.

When he answered, Scarlett asked, “Nathan, are you coming back tonight?”

After a brief pause, he replied, “If I do, it’ll be

very late.”

Scarlett said, “I’ll wait up for you. No matter how late, I’ll wait.”

Nathan’s tone turned firm. “Go to sleep. Don’t wait for me.”

Hearing the finality in Nathan’s voice, Scarlett didn’t dare argue further.

After hanging up, she remained standing in the hallway, her mind racing.

She couldn’t make sense of why Violet would get into a car with Daniel’s assistant in the middle of the night.

68

Finished

But she trusted Violet completely. She would never be the kind of person Daniel had described.

Back in her bedroom, after her shower, Scarlett received a message from Claire.

“Scarlett, Violet is being pressured to drink.”

Attached was a photo.

The picture showed a large, upscale private dining room. Besides Daniel, there were several other men she didn’t recognize.

Panic surged through Scarlett. She quickly typed back, “Where is this? How did you get this photo?”

Claire replied, “I’m sending you the location now. A friend of mine who works there as a server took the photo. I saw Violet earlier and was worried, so I asked someone to keep an eye on the situation.”

Once she had the address, Scarlett told Claire, “Got it. Please keep watching. I’m on my way.”

Without even properly drying her hair, Scarlett threw on some clothes and rushed out.

The drive took about twenty minutes.

Claire, who had been waiting outside, hurried over as soon as Scarlett pulled up.

They entered the restaurant together, and Claire pointed to a private room named “The Florentine“. “Violet’s in there.”

Scarlett knocked firmly on the door. A deep male voice called out from inside, “We’re not ordering anything else.”

After he spoke, Scarlett heard Daniel’s voice clearly. “Caleb, she’s completely out. Go ahead, take her with you. You know what they say–opportunity knocks but once. Don’t waste a chance like this.”

Then another man’s voice replied, “Alright then. I’ll take her.”

Hearing this, Scarlett understood exactly what was happening. She couldn’t hold back any longer. With one powerful kick, she slammed the door open.

The sudden crash startled everyone inside. All eyes turned toward the doorway, filled with confusion and surprise.

Scarlett stormed in and saw Violet slumped unconscious over the table. The man closest to her was just reaching out to lift her.

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Chapter 234 Rescue Mission

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Finished

There were only two men in the room now–Daniel and another man Scarlett didn't recognize.

The man who was about to touch Violet frowned deeply at the intrusion. "What the hell is this? You looking for trouble?"

Scarlett had come prepared. She was carrying a small tactical knife in her pocket.

Her face was cold as ice. "Don't you dare lay a hand on Violet," she said, her voice low and dangerous.

The man looked intrigued. His eyes roamed over Scarlett, his gaze unpleasant and predatory.

Seeing Scarlett causing trouble again, Daniel lost his temper. "Scarlett, not only are you shameless, but you also have terrible timing."

Ignoring him, Scarlett swept a plate off the table with a crash. "Daniel, don't you dare act innocent! You got Violet drunk and set her up to be assaulted. Did you really think you'd get away with it?"

Claire had followed Scarlett into the room. Standing firmly beside her, she announced, "We've already called the police. You can explain everything to them."

Hearing this, both Daniel and the other man visibly paled.

Exchanging a quick glance, they stood up and headed for the door.

As he passed Scarlett, Daniel gave her a long, hostile glare. The other man simply muttered, "This just got interesting," before following Daniel out.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 235[853 words]

Awakened Housewife: Ignore Betrayer's Begs

Chapter 235 Picking up the Pieces

A 68

Finished

After Daniel and the other man had left, Scarlett and Claire helped Violet to her feet and guided her out of the restaurant.

Once their car had pulled away, two figures emerged from the shadows near the valet stand- Daniel and the man who had tried to take Violet with him.

In the cool autumn night, they lit cigarettes, the flames briefly illuminating their faces.

Daniel glanced at the man and said with a smirk, "What a shame. You missed out on some fun tonight."

The man ignored the comment, instead gazing in the direction Scarlett's car had disappeared. "So that's the woman standing in my sister's way?"

Daniel raised an eyebrow. "That's her."

The man was Caleb Monroe, Sabrina's biological brother.

In business, Daniel had helped Caleb before–partly out of his own affection for Sabrina.

Over time, they had grown closer.

Hearing Daniel's confirmation, a flicker of surprise crossed Caleb's eyes. "I have to say, she's got some nerve. And she's not bad-looking either-almost as striking as Violet."

Daniel thought for a moment before replying, "She's definitely attractive. The problem is her stubbornness-she just won't give Vincent a divorce."

Caleb chuckled. "A man like Vincent is rare. Once you've latched onto him, of course you wouldn't want to let go."

As soon as he said it, he realized his words could apply to more than just Scarlett.

He fell silent for a moment, then his expression turned cold. "But she ruined my fun tonight and is stealing my sister's future. She's bringing trouble on herself."

Daniel took a couple of drags from his cigarette before responding casually, "I didn't hear a word of what you just said."

His meaning was clear-he was giving Caleb implicit permission to act as he pleased.

*****

On the way back to Theron Manor, Claire was driving while Scarlett sat in the back with Violet's

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Chapter 235 Picking up the Pieces

head resting on her lap.

Throughout the journey, Violet tossed restlessly, muttering fragments of conversation.

68

Finished

"Mr. Lennox, Lennox Group has always processed transactions through our financial platform. All these years, there haven't been any issues. Our technology is mature. Please, you mustn't terminate our cooperation."

"Mr. Lennox, you flatter me. I have a husband. I'm a married woman. I'm not qualified to warm your bed-I'm not even fit to shine your shoes."

“Mr. Monroe, I don’t know how I’ve offended you. Please tell me directly so I can correct my mistakes.”

From Violet’s ramblings, Scarlett pieced together what had happened.

The Theron family was in the financial services industry. Partnerships with major corporations were essential for substantial revenue and the company’s survival.

But Daniel, who had long cooperated with their company, had suddenly withdrawn his business, plunging the financial firm into crisis.

To resolve the issue, Violet had gone to meet Daniel in person.

Scarlett was sure Violet had humbled herself, but she also knew Daniel’s earlier claims were

fabricated.

Violet had sacrificed so much for this family.

She had gone to that meeting alone, disregarding her own safety, all for the sake of a slim

chance.

Thinking of this, Scarlett’s eyes

welled up

with tears.

After getting Violet back to her room, Scarlett stayed by her side, caring for her without leaving.

She wiped her hands, cleaned her up, changed her clothes...

Violet vomited twice before finally settling into a deep sleep.

Scarlett kept vigil in the room. It was well past midnight when Violet gradually woke up.

The first thing Violet did upon waking was frantically feel her own body.

Realizing her clothes had been changed, she slapped herself hard.

Hearing the sound, Scarlett quickly grabbed her hand. “Violet, no! It was me who changed your

clothes. You’re safe.”

Hearing Scarlett’s voice, Violet’s panic slowly subsided.

68

Finished

Scarlett hugged her tightly, feeling Violet’s body tremble. “Why would you do something so foolish?” she whispered soothingly.

Violet said, “I see your brother working himself to the bone, not even sleeping, all for the company. I just wanted to help him in some small way.”

Tears streamed down Scarlett’s face. “Having someone as good as you in our family is a blessing for all of us,” she said, her voice choked.

Violet was still dejected. “It’s just a pity I couldn’t actually help. I almost...”

Scarlett gently patted her back. “What matters is that you’re safe. Nothing else is important. There are ways to live whether we’re rich or poor. As long as our family stays together, we can overcome any difficulty.”

Violet was comforted, but thinking of Nathan, she anxiously warned Scarlett, “No matter what, your brother must never find out about what happened tonight. With his temper, he would never let it go.”

Scarlett understood the gravity of the situation and promised Violet she wouldn’t tell.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 236[790 words]

Chapter 236 A Business Proposition.

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Finished

The following evening, after Scarlett and Vincent finished visiting Xavier at the hospital, they walked out together into the cool night air.

Standing near the curb, Scarlett hesitated for a moment before turning to Vincent. “There’s something I wanted to talk to you about.”

“What is it?” he asked.

Not one to drag things out, Scarlett got straight to the point. “Would you consider routing your company’s transactions through my brother’s financial platform?”

The streets outside were still busy, even though the evening commute had eased.

A steady stream of headlights flowed past, and the sidewalk was dotted with people heading home or out for the night.

Under the soft orange glow of the streetlamps, the city hummed with a low, constant energy.

She hadn’t really expected him to agree. In fact, after everything that had happened recently, she was almost certain he’d say no.

Just the other night, Claire had told her the rougher side of the story—the man who’d been drinking with Daniel and putting pressure on Violet was none other than Sabrina’s own brother.

Regardless of how things had unfolded that evening, from Caleb’s point of view, Scarlett had messed up his plans. And Caleb was Sabrina’s brother, while Vincent was deeply in love with Sabrina. Given all those layers, there was no reason for him to do her any favors.

But seeing Violet swallowing her pride to secure deals, and Nathan working late every night without a break, had pushed Scarlett to ask anyway.

Vincent seemed to consider it for a moment, then replied, “Sure.”

Scarlett was visibly surprised. She hadn’t expected that.

“Why did

you agree?” she asked, unable to hide her confusion.

He answered without hesitation, “Your brother’s financial firm is solid. It makes good business sense. This would be a win–win.”

Scarlett’s brow furrowed slightly. “But Caleb’s also been looking for partnerships lately.”

Given Vincent’s feelings for Sabrina, she assumed he’d use this kind of opportunity to help her

brother.

But surprisingly, he’d agreed to route the business through Nathan’s platform instead.

Finished

Vincent understood what she was implying. A faint smile touched his lips. “I know what you’re thinking. I’ve looked into the financial company Sabrina’s brother started. His platform is still new. Even if you hadn’t asked, I wouldn’t have chosen it at this stage. And if Sabrina finds out I didn’t give the business to her brother, she won’t hold it against me. She trusts me, she understands how I operate, and she always puts me first.”

He paused briefly, then added, “Once her brother’s company is more established, I’d be open to collaborating on other projects.”

Hearing the quiet confidence in Vincent’s voice when he spoke about Sabrina, Scarlett fell silent. She didn’t quite know how to respond.

Finally, she just said, “Alright.”

With that, she got into her car and drove off.

*****

It was 8:30 p.m. when Scarlett arrived back at Theron Manor.

Dinner had been served later than usual lately–either Violet or Nathan often got work.

held

up at

When Scarlett walked in, the family had just settled at the dining table. Seeing her, Henry motioned for one of the staff to set another place.

The mood around the table was heavy. Nathan wasn't smiling, and Violet looked worn out. Scarlett knew they were both worried about the company.

No one spoke much as the meal began.

About halfway through, Nathan's phone buzzed on the table.

Even with everyone present, the room instinctively quieted when his phone rang.

So when he answered, the caller's voice came through clearly.

It was Abbott. "Mr. Theron, hello. This is Abbott, Mr. Stewart's assistant. He asked me to reach out to you about a potential collaboration."

Abbott's tone was respectful and professional.

Scarlett watched Nathan, waiting for his response. Abbott was waiting too.

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Chapter 236 A Business Proposition

67

Finished

After a short silence, Nathan finally replied, "Hello, Mr. Abbott. Please thank Vincent for me. I appreciate the offer, but the Theron family prefers not to be in his debt. There's no need to discuss this further."

Nathan’s refusal took Scarlett by surprise. Countless firms would jump at the chance to work with Stewart Group, and here they were, reaching out proactively–and Nathan was turning them down.

Especially now, of all times. Shouldn’t he have accepted Vincent’s help?

Without new business, Theron Financial wouldn’t last much longer.

Abbott seemed like he wanted to say more, but Nathan ended the call before he could.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 237[776 words]

Chapter 237 The Anonymous Benefactor

67

Finished

Before Scarlett could say anything about the ended call, Nathan looked up and cut her off firmly. “I’ve already secured a new partnership. It’s not with a major corporation, but it’s solid enough to stabilize our foundation for now.”

He continued in a calm tone, “You and Vincent are heading for a divorce. Yes, my company was in a tough spot, but I won’t have you compromising yourself or making deals with Vincent out of desperation. I know perfectly well his offer wasn’t made because my company is so exceptional.”

Scarlett listened quietly, lowering her head without arguing.

Nathan didn’t elaborate further, simply offering a faint smile. “Let’s just eat. Consider these past couple of days behind us.”

Scarlett looked up at him, still uneasy. “Which company did you partner with, Nathan?”

Nathan took a bite of food before answering, “An aerospace company–moderately sized. Theron Financial is secure for now.”

“So these past two days, you were finalizing this partnership?” Scarlett pressed.

Nathan nodded. “Yes.”

Violet, who had been silent all this time, suddenly teared up at his words.

Seeing her cry, Nathan quickly handed her a tissue. “What’s wrong?”

Violet shook her head, wiping her eyes. “Nothing. I just feel that marrying you was the best decision I’ve ever made.”

Nathan wrapped an arm around her, soothing her gently. “And being able to marry you is my greatest pride.”

With the Theron family’s crisis resolved, a weight finally lifted from Scarlett’s heart.

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At Felix’s place, it was rare for the friends to be gathered together like this.

Eric had already gone to bed, so only Felix, Damian, and Zachary remained in the living room. A bottle of red wine and three glasses sat on the coffee table.

Zachary was on a call by the floor–to–ceiling window, while Damian lounged lazily on the sofa and Felix sat upright. Through the glass, they could see Zachary’s reflection as he spoke.

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Chapter 237 The Anonymous Benefactor

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Finished

Soon, he ended the call and walked back over.

Damian sat up straighter. “Well?” he asked, sounding unusually tense.

Zachary frowned slightly but told the truth. “It’s done.”

Hearing that, Damian relaxed, leaning back against the sofa with a long exhale. “Good.”

Truth be told, he’d been more worried about Nathan’s lack of partnerships than Nathan himself. If the Theron family was in trouble, Scarlett was in trouble.

Seeing Damian so invested, Zachary couldn’t help asking, “Why not help them directly? Helping anonymously like this–the Therons won’t see it, Scarlett won’t see it. What’s the point?”

Damian closed his eyes, his tone detached. “If I showed my face, do you think Nathan would accept the deal?”

Zachary didn’t answer that. Instead, he stated matter–of–factly, “You’ve developed real feelings for her.”

The word “feelings” seemed to irritate Damian. He scoffed, “Get lost.”

Zachary pressed on, undeterred. “It’s unrequited, isn’t it?”

Damian’s eyes snapped open, shooting a cold glare at Zachary. “No one would mistake mute if you shut up.”

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Zachary continued, “Since you can’t have her, why not play dirty? Get her pregnant with your child first.”

Damian didn’t respond, just kept glaring fiercely.

Once Zachary finished his teasing, Felix spoke to Damian seriously, “Eric’s fall field trip is next week. Are you going?”

Damian picked up his glass, the crimson liquid sliding down his throat. His Adam’s apple bobbed twice before he set the glass down heavily.

He shot a cold glance at Felix. “Stupid question.”

With that, he stood and left without another word.

Zachary and Felix exchanged a look.

Zachary said, “When Damian falls in love, it’s us who suffer.”

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Chapter 237 The Anonymous Benefactor

Felix agreed, “I feel that deeply.”

Zachary added, “But still, I hope he succeeds.”

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The next evening, as Scarlett finished work, Vincent was waiting for her again.

This time, he wasn’t sitting in the car. He stood leaning against the hood in the open parking lot, smoking a cigarette.

Scarlett spotted him from afar and walked over, intending to get directly into the car.

But Vincent pressed his hand against the back door. “Sit in the front.”

Scarlett turned to look at him. Through the haze of smoke, even with the strong smell of tobacco, she could detect a hint of a woman’s perfume on him.

Undoubtedly, it was Sabrina’s.

Scarlett took a step back, waving the smoke away. “Stay away from me. You smell awful.”

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Vincent frowned at her words. He lifted his collar and sniffed it himself, then said with genuine confusion, “It smells fine to me. What’s so bad about it?”

Hearing that, Scarlett didn’t see the point in arguing further. In his mind, everything about Sabrina was perfect. Why bother with a pointless debate?

In the end, she still insisted on sitting in the back seat.

Vincent had no choice but to accept it. Remembering that Xavier was waiting, he started the car and drove off.

He kept all the windows down the entire way, letting the chilly night air rush through the vehicle.

Scarlett sat upright in her seat. Her eyes instinctively drifted to the storage compartment between the front seats, where two lipsticks and a compact powder case were visible.

They were from high-end brands—the kind only someone in Vincent’s social circle would typically afford. There was no doubt they belonged to Sabrina.

Scarlett stared for a moment before turning her gaze away.

The windows remained open throughout the drive. Rivergate City was already in early winter, and the night wind wasn’t just cold–it felt like it was cutting right through to the bone.

Scarlett’s hair whipped wildly in the wind, tangling across her face.

She knew Vincent was doing this on purpose, trying to provoke her into complaining.

But she didn’t utter a single word of protest.

Only when the car finally came to a stop did Scarlett slowly begin smoothing her wind-tossed hair and straightening her clothes.

Vincent glanced at her through the rearview mirror. “Well? Does it smell better now?”

Scarlett, now tidied up, pushed the car door open and stood outside, watching as he got out.

When he stood before her, she met his eyes and said calmly, “Vincent, you’re saturated with it. No amount of airing out or washing will get that scent off you.”

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

Hearing her words, Vincent raised an amused eyebrow, then quickly caught up with her in a

few strides.

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As he reached her, he naturally took her hand. She tried to pull away, but his grip was firm. Stopping in her tracks, she glared at him. “Vincent, what are you doing?”

Vincent smiled faintly, looking down at her. He lowered his voice. “Grandpa is in the hospital. Dozens of people visit him every day. He has eyes everywhere. If we don’t act a little closer and he finds out, he’ll get upset again.”

Hearing this, Scarlett gave up struggling.

Fine. She could endure it. It would all be over soon.

Inside the elevator, Scarlett finally broke free from his grip. “We don’t need to pretend in here.”

Vincent stood straight, glancing at her. “It’s our turn for night duty tonight.”

Scarlett was taken aback. “You didn’t tell me that.”

Vincent replied casually, “I just remembered. But don’t worry, I’ll have Abbott bring over toiletries for us.”

Before Scarlett could protest, the elevator doors opened, revealing Xavier himself standing there in his hospital gown, leaning on his wooden cane.

Seeing Scarlett and Vincent, his previously stern face immediately broke into a warm smile.

“You’re here?” he asked, clear delight in his voice.

As Vincent stepped out, he reached back and took Scarlett’s hand again.

With Xavier right there, Scarlett didn’t resist.

He led her out of the elevator. Seeing this, Xavier’s smile widened even more.

Xavier had been about to take a walk downstairs, but since Scarlett and Vincent had arrived, he decided to return to his room with them.

The room was now free of other visitors, but it was filled with bouquets, fruit baskets, and various gifts.

Xavier sat on the edge of the bed, gesturing for Scarlett and Vincent to take the sofa across from him.

Once everyone was seated, Xavier asked, puzzled, “Where’s Vanessa? Why didn’t you bring her?”

Knowing it was Scarlett and Vincent’s night to stay, he had been expecting to see his great-

granddaughter.

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Vincent replied smoothly, “Vanessa has school tomorrow, so I left her at Ravenshade Villa. Lily is looking after her, so don’t worry, Grandpa.”

Hearing this, Xavier frowned. “That won’t do. Lily is a nanny. She can’t replace her parents. Let it slide for today, but tomorrow I’ll go to Ravenshade Villa to see her.”

Scarlett sat silently the entire time.

Hearing Xavier's words, she instinctively glanced at Vincent, curious about his reaction. .

Sure enough, he seemed slightly panicked. His voice came out a bit strained. "Grandpa, if you really want to see Vanessa, I'll bring her to see you tomorrow. Your health hasn't recovered yet; you shouldn't be leaving the hospital randomly."

Perhaps Xavier didn't grasp the underlying meaning, but Scarlett understood perfectly.

While Vincent was concerned about Xavier's health, his greater fear was his hidden arrangement being discovered.

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Chapter 239 An Unwelcome Matchmaker

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Xavier was clearly displeased with Vincent's response. His tone sharpened as he demanded, "What? Am I no longer welcome at Ravenshade Villa?"

Vincent maintained a calm facade, replying evenly, "Let's wait until you're discharged, Grandpa."

This only deepened Xavier's irritation. His expression tightened. "Are you suggesting I'm becoming a burden?"

Vincent attempted to explain, “No, I’m only thinking of your health.”

Xavier waved him off impatiently and turned to Scarlett, his voice softening. “What about you, Scarlett? Do you not want me to visit either?”

Caught off guard by the direct question, Scarlett showed no outward panic. She met his gaze steadily.

Just as she was about to respond, she felt a subtle tug on her sleeve–Vincent silently urging her to support his position.

After a moment’s consideration, she carefully replied, “Grandpa, your health should indeed come first. But you’ll always be welcome at Ravenshade Villa whenever you wish to visit.”

While her words temporarily resolved Vincent’s immediate concern, they created potential complications for the future.

With Scarlett’s reassurance, Xavier reluctantly conceded. “Well, since Scarlett says so... Alright then. I’ll drop by unannounced another time. And Vincent–if I discover you’re treating Scarlett poorly, you’ll face serious consequences.”

Vincent forced a strained smile. “Of course, Grandpa. You’re welcome anytime. I treat Scarlett better than I treat myself.”

Scarlett knew exactly how much those hollow words cost him.

Xavier didn’t press further but stood up, leaning on his cane. “Now, come take me for a walk.”

Scarlett glanced at Vincent, who returned her look with a sharp glare. His meaning was clear- he believed she had misspoken.

But she hadn’t misspoken at all. She had chosen her words deliberately for Xavier’s benefit. Only if Xavier witnessed Vincent’s true nature firsthand would he finally accept their inevitable divorce.

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Chapter 239 An Unwelcome Matchmaker

Together, Scarlett and Vincent each took one of Xavier's arms and escorted him from the

room.

They had just reached the hospital's garden courtyard when they encountered Nolan in casual attire.

He seemed genuinely surprised to see Scarlett.

When he spoke, his voice held noticeable warmth. "Scarlett?"

That particular tone when he said her name made Xavier frown, his expression turning. guarded.

Scarlett was equally surprised to see Nolan.

After a brief hesitation, she smiled and greeted him. "What a coincidence, Nolan. I didn't expect to run into you here."

Nolan returned her smile. "Indeed. Actually, I was just about to call you."

Scarlett, still supporting Xavier's arm, looked at Nolan, completely unaware of the disapproval in Xavier's eyes.

Vincent seized the opportunity while they were talking to pull out his phone. To Xavier, it likely appeared he was handling business matters.

Scarlett's attention remained on Nolan. "Did you need something, Nolan?"

Nolan's smile lingered. "Dr. Newman is holding an academic seminar this weekend. Will you be attending?"

Scarlett agreed without hesitation. "Yes, I'll be there."

Before Nolan could respond, Xavier suddenly interjected, "You seem quite young. Are you married?"

Vincent, who had been on his phone, immediately put it away upon hearing Xavier's question.

When Scarlett glanced at Xavier, she also noticed Vincent's quick movement. She suspected he had been messaging Sabrina–perhaps exchanging affectionate words or checking on Vanessa.

Nolan shifted his gaze from Scarlett to Xavier. "Not yet," he replied calmly.

Hearing this, Xavier adopted a kindly demeanor. “Since you’re a friend of Scarlett’s, I’d be happy to make introductions. What would you say to me setting you up with someone suitable?”

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Chapter 239 An Unwelcome Matchmaker

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Nolan didn’t need to consider the offer. He refused outright. “Thank you, but that won’t be necessary. I already have someone in mind.”

As he spoke, he instinctively glanced toward Scarlett.

Xavier, experienced in such matters, immediately recognized Nolan’s unspoken interest.

Vincent had known from their first meeting that Nolan’s interest in Scarlett wasn’t purely professional, though he hadn’t particularly cared.

Now, however, Xavier was taking issue with it on his behalf.

Even after Nolan’s refusal, Xavier persisted. “What about the daughter of the Warren family?”

In their social circles, the prominent families were well–known: the Stewarts, the Langleys, the Lennoxes, the Grahams, the Whitmores, and the Warrens...

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 240[744 words]

Awakened Housewife: Ignore Betrayer's Begs

Chapter 240 Different Worlds

The "daughter of the Warren family" Xavier mentioned was clearly from a prominent background.

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Scarlett even thought that if Nolan could marry the Warren heiress, his professional standing would undoubtedly rise given his capabilities.

But before she could ponder further, Nolan responded firmly, "I appreciate the offer, but it's really not necessary."

Xavier had expected the Warren name to give the young man pause. To his surprise, he saw only quiet determination in Nolan's eyes.

Still, Xavier wasn't ready to concede. He hinted meaningfully, "For a young man, choosing the right connections is often more important than choosing the right career path."

His words carried clear implication.

Nolan remained unmoved. "Some things were never meant to be mine. Why force them?"

Seeing Nolan's steadfastness, Xavier sighed faintly. "You're still young."

Nolan offered a faint smile. "The path you speak of may not necessarily lead where I want to go."

Xavier didn't reply, merely letting out a soft, dismissive sound.

Vincent, noticing his grandfather's waning interest, suggested, "Grandpa, shall we continue our walk?"

Scarlett released Xavier's arm. After Vincent led him away, she turned to Nolan. "Don't take Grandpa's words to heart. Just stay true to yourself."

Nolan understood perfectly that Xavier had been testing him, dangling the shortest path to success as temptation.

But in Nolan's view, status built through marriage was hollow. He wasn't someone who would climb socially using a woman's connections.

Hence, his refusal had been firm.

That brief exchange was enough for Nolan to sense that Xavier was a formidable man.

After a moment's thought, he couldn't help asking Scarlett, "I thought you were planning to divorce?"

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Chapter 240 Different Worlds

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Scarlett nodded. "Yes. We're in the separation period now."

Hearing this, Nolan relaxed slightly. "The Stewarts are businesspeople through and through. Businesspeople prioritize profit above all. Don't place too much trust in Xavier."

Scarlett agreed quietly. "I know."

Just from Xavier's attempted manipulation of Nolan, she could tell Xavier was no benign figure.

Perhaps he treated her with relative kindness simply because she was still his granddaughter- in–law.

Xavier, who had walked some distance ahead, noticed Scarlett hadn't caught up. He looked back.

Seeing her still conversing with Nolan, his expression darkened. He called out firmly, "Scarlett, aren't you coming?"

Hearing him, Scarlett quickly responded, "Coming!"

She then said to Nolan, "Once the divorce is finalized, I'll distance myself from the Stewarts, including Xavier."

Nolan felt relieved. “Good. Everything will work out. You should go.”

Scarlett nodded and hurried to catch up.

When she rejoined Vincent and Xavier, she remained silent.

Xavier didn’t press further. They continued strolling through the garden, eventually resting in a gazebo.

After about half an hour, Xavier announced it was time to return to his room.

In the elevator on the way up, Scarlett saw Xavier’s reflection in the polished metal doors. His expression was stern, his voice laced with displeasure. “Scarlett, I want to ask you– what exactly is your relationship with that man from earlier?”

Vincent, standing beside her, glanced at her as if ready to answer, but she didn’t give him the chance.

Scarlett explained truthfully, “Grandpa, Nolan was my senior in college. He’s a good friend.”

Xavier nodded slowly, a look of understanding dawning, then said, “Your grandmother was an accomplished writer before we married. She published several books, had many readers, and countless admirers. But after we married, she set aside her writing. As for male friends... she

maintained none after our marriage.”

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When speaking of his late wife, Xavier’s eyes softened with warmth and pride.

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Scarlett immediately understood his implication. He was indirectly reminding her that as a married woman, she shouldn’t maintain close friendships with other men.

But Scarlett found his reasoning flawed. Without directly challenging him, she said, “Grandmother must have been remarkable. To set aside her own passions for love...”

Xavier quickly countered, “It wasn’t really a sacrifice. I provided her with a comfortable life, free from financial worries. Besides, writing never brought in significant income.”

Hearing Xavier dismiss his wife’s passions so casually, a pang of sadness struck Scarlett. “Perhaps what Grandmother wanted, from beginning to end, was never financial security?”

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 241[856 words]

Chapter 241 The Hospital Vigil

Xavier fell into a thoughtful silence at her words.

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As the elevator doors slid open, he finally spoke with a touch of irritation, “Oh, never mind! There’s no reasoning with you young people!”

Stepping out into the corridor, Scarlett watched his retreating back and murmured under her breath, “It’s not about reasoning, Grandpa. You’re just being selfish.”

Xavier was already too far away to hear, but Vincent, walking beside her, caught every word.

He didn’t confront her immediately, instead filing her comment away mentally.

Back in the hospital suite, Xavier completed his evening routine and settled into bed.

The private room included a separate sleeping area for family members–perfectly adequate for both Scarlett and Vincent.

But the thought of sharing a bed with Vincent made Scarlett distinctly uncomfortable.

Nevertheless, they ended up lying side by side in the dim light.

Once Xavier's breathing became even and steady in sleep, Vincent turned onto his side. He slid an arm around Scarlett's waist, pulling her firmly against his chest.

Her cool back met his warm torso.

In the contrast of temperatures, Vincent brought his lips close to her ear and whispered, "Do you really believe Grandpa was wrong?"

Scarlett stiffened slightly. "Vincent, I'm trying to sleep."

He acted as if he hadn't heard. "Grandpa treated Grandma exceptionally well. He loved her deeply throughout their marriage."

At this, Scarlett's eyes snapped open. She turned her head to glare at him, whispering sharply, "Love isn't about confinement. Love isn't about making someone change who they are for you."

Vincent met her gaze directly, his voice still hushed. "Then what is love, in your view?"

Scarlett wasn't sure how to answer. After a moment's hesitation, she replied honestly, "It's like what you have with Sabrina. You-"

Before she could finish, Xavier's eyes suddenly opened. He addressed Vincent, "Vincent, I almost forgot to tell you. This weekend is Ethan's birthday gala. I want you two to attend as my

representatives."

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Vincent considered for a moment. "Which day exactly?"

"Saturday evening," Xavier clarified.

Vincent agreed. “Alright.”

Soon, Xavier’s breathing evened out again in sleep.

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Once certain his grandfather was sound asleep, Vincent turned back to Scarlett. “What were you saying earlier?”

But drowsiness was already pulling at her consciousness. Scarlett didn’t respond, choosing silence instead.

When she woke the next morning, Vincent was already gone.

Xavier remained asleep, though a staff member had already delivered breakfast to the room.

Remembering she had work commitments, Scarlett instructed the attendant to stay with Xavier and left the hospital.

That evening, Vincent didn’t come to pick up Scarlett, nor did she plan to return to the hospital *to* stay overnight with Xavier.

Instead, she went back to Theron Manor.

As soon as she stepped through the door, Clara came bursting out from the living room and clung to her like an excited little monkey.

“Auntie, I missed you so much! I haven’t seen you for two whole days!”

Clara nuzzled her face against Scarlett’s, expressing her longing with childish enthusiasm.

Scarlett picked up her niece, pressing her own cheek against the child’s plump one. “I missed you too.”

Clara gently poked Scarlett’s cheek. “Auntie, my school has a fall field trip next week. Will you come with me?”

“A fall field trip?” Scarlett’s tone held mild puzzlement. It was already early winter; wasn’t it rather late for such an outing?

But Clara didn’t see any issue, simply nodding earnestly. “Yes, that’s what the teacher said.”

Scarlett mentally, reviewed her work schedule. “Clara, I’m scheduled to work that day. How

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Chapter 241 The Hospital Vigil

(67)

Finished

about Mom and Dad take you?”

Clara explained, “Mom said she’ll go, but Daddy can’t make it. So I want you to come with us.”

Seeing no alternative, Scarlett reluctantly agreed. “Alright, I’ll try to swap my shift. If I can arrange it, I’ll go with you.”

Clara jumped for joy, waving her arms excitedly.

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It being Saturday, Scarlett had allowed herself to sleep in.

By the time she woke, it was already after 10 a.m.

Just then, Vincent called.

Scarlett answered to hear him say, “I’ll pick you up this afternoon. We need to get ready for the

event.”

He arrived just before noon.

After collecting her, they went directly to an upscale styling salon.

Vincent escorted Scarlett inside and informed her, “I need to stop by the office for a brief meeting. I’ll return to collect you afterward.”

Scarlett didn’t question his whereabouts, simply nodding. “Alright.”

She spent the afternoon having her hair and makeup meticulously done.

The stylist selected a sophisticated black evening gown for her. Her hair was styled in a low chignon at the nape of her neck, with a few artfully arranged tendrils framing her face- accentuating her delicate features.

The makeup artist completed the elegant look with carefully chosen jewelry and earrings.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 242[848 words]

Chapter 242 The Birthday Banquet

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Vincent didn’t return until six in the evening. Scarlett had been ready and waiting for about half an hour by then.

When Vincent saw her, he stopped in his tracks, visibly stunned. In their five years of marriage, he had never realized his wife could look so breathtaking.

She was naturally slender, and with professional styling, she had transformed into someone radiantly beautiful. Even Vincent, who had encountered countless beautiful women in social circles, was momentarily taken aback.

Ignoring his gaze, Scarlett remained seated quietly, waiting for his next move.

Vincent also had his hair styled. By the time he was finished, it was already 6:30 p.m.

As he stood up, Scarlett rose as well.

As they were leaving, Scarlett's sharp eyes caught a faint, light-colored smudge on the collar of Vincent's dress shirt. She recognized it immediately as foundation–a subtle mark, but noticeable to someone looking closely.

Scarlett guessed Sabrina must have accidentally transferred it while being close to Vincent earlier.

The car was parked outside. Out of habit, Scarlett moved toward the back seat. But when she opened the door, she found the seat occupied by gift bags and boxes of various sizes.

Noticing her hesitation, Vincent stepped closer. "Those are birthday gifts for Mr. Warren. You'd better sit up front."

Scarlett didn't argue. She simply walked around the car and settled into the passenger seat.

The drive to Warren Villa took less than half an hour.

After parking, Vincent directed the household staff to unload the gifts from the vehicle.

Once everything was carried inside, he returned to open the car door for Scarlett, extending his hand to assist her.

Looking at his offered hand, Scarlett ignored it. She stepped out on her own, gathered the hem of her gown, and walked toward the main entrance in her high heels.

Vincent watched her for a moment before following.

They had just reached the entrance when Ethan Warren, alerted by a servant, emerged from

the house.

Seeing Vincent, he hurried forward to shake his hand and offered him a cigar.

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Ethan lit Vincent's cigar with a warm smile. "Vincent, you're quite the rare guest! We don't see you often enough."

Vincent returned a faint smile. "You're too kind, Mr. Warren."

After exchanging a few pleasantries, Ethan finally noticed the woman accompanying Vincent.

Remembering Xavier's message that Vincent would bring his wife to the banquet, he asked cautiously, "Vincent, is this your—"

Before he could finish, Vincent quickly interjected, "Mr. Warren, this is Scarlett. She's my..." He gestured toward Scarlett as he spoke, but hesitated when defining their relationship.

Seeing his reluctance to acknowledge their marriage, Scarlett stepped forward and finished for him, "Executive assistant."

Ethan was visibly taken aback. But since neither Scarlett nor Vincent seemed willing to elaborate, he didn't press the matter.

Vincent, too, seemed surprised by her response.

Before anyone could say more, a bold, arrogant voice sounded from the entrance. "I've heard Mr. Stewart is a generous man. I wonder if I, Damian, might have the honor of asking you for a small favor?"

Damian's car had pulled up to the curb. As he stepped out, he undid the button of his suit jacket.

Dressed in a black suit worn open, hands in his pockets, he walked out of the shadows with a carefree, confident swagger.

Despite his notorious reputation, he was undeniably handsome–every movement carried a natural charisma that, while rakish, was unexpectedly captivating.

Everyone at the entrance turned toward the voice as Damian approached.

Stopping before the group, he smiled at Ethan. "Mr. Warren, since it's your birthday, would you be so kind as to bear witness to a small request?"

Damian had arrived empty-handed, though Ethan knew his gift had been delivered that afternoon.

While both were prominent families in their social circles, the Langley family outranked the

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Warrens. Ethan was tempted to agree immediately, but being a seasoned businessman, he sensed Damian was targeting Vincent. He also knew the Langleys and Stewarts were longstanding rivals.

Ethan laughed off the request diplomatically. “Damian, I’m an old man now. I don’t get involved in you young people’s games.”

Understanding Ethan’s difficult position, Vincent addressed Damian directly. “What is it you want? Let’s hear it.”

Scarlett stood to the side, sensing Damian’s hostile intent. But she had no standing to speak among these people. Besides, Damian might not even be here for her.

So she remained silent, quietly observing the situation.

Damian didn’t press Ethan further. Seeing Vincent’s directness, he replied equally bluntly, “Mr. Stewart, as you know, I have a certain reputation. A day without beautiful company feels like a day my heart is dying. So I’m asking you, as a favor–let this lovely assistant here keep me company for a while.”

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 243[795 words]

Chapter 243 A Public Request

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Damian’s request was blunt, but Vincent responded with mild amusement, “Mr. Langley, first you say you want something from me, and now you’re asking for my assistant’s company? Are you suggesting she’s some kind of object to be handed over?”

Hearing this, Damian raised an eyebrow slightly. His gaze drifted *to* Scarlett, registering clear appreciation for her appearance tonight. He gave her a faint, knowing smile before turning back to Vincent.

“Mr. Stewart, what I’m asking for is the pleasure of this assistant’s company. Studies show men live longer when they spend time around beautiful women. Even though our companies compete, I’m sure you don’t wish me an early demise, do you?

Damian’s words were deliberately provocative.

Vincent listened with a silent, measured smile.

Seeing no response, Damian pressed further. “Does your silence mean you’re agreeing?”

Vincent clearly had no intention of agreeing and was about to refuse when several luxury cars pulled up at the curb.

Simultaneously, Sabrina’s voice cut through the air. “Vincent!”

Vincent turned to see Sabrina arriving with Daniel, Caleb, and Harris.

Ethan, noticing the new arrivals, hurried over to greet them and offer cigars.

He recognized Daniel and Harris, but Caleb and Sabrina were unfamiliar. Still, since they came with Daniel, he treated them with equal respect.

After Ethan’s greetings, Vincent moved to stand beside Sabrina. He looked at Caleb and addressed him respectfully, “Mr. Monroe.”

Caleb smiled faintly. “Vincent, just call me Caleb like Sabrina does. Adding ‘Mr.‘ makes it sound so distant. We’ll be family soon anyway.”

Ethan, having welcomed everyone, excused himself to attend to other guests, suggesting they mingle freely.

Hearing Caleb’s remark, Vincent corrected himself simply, “Caleb.”

Behind them, Scarlett overheard Vincent addressing Caleb with such familiarity and felt a bitter amusement twist inside her.

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Chapter 243 A Public Request

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Vincent’s affection for Sabrina had become so transparent he didn’t even bother hiding it

anymore.

He treated Sabrina’s brother as his own.

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Yet her own brother, Nathan... Vincent had never once visited Theron Manor during holidays. He hadn’t just avoided visiting–he hadn’t even bothered saving their contact information.

Throughout this, Damian had remained standing near Scarlett. He noticed her heartbreakingly bitter smile and felt a surge of conflicting emotions–both pain and anger.

With everyone gathering around, Vincent seemed to have forgotten about refusing Damian’s request.

Seeing them all chatting and laughing together, Scarlett had no desire to remain. She turned to enter the villa.

But then Caleb looked directly at her. “Ms. Theron, what a coincidence. We meet again.”

His face was all smiles, but his eyes held a sharp, calculating edge.

Scarlett turned back, meeting his gaze steadily and without fear. “What’s so amusing, Mr. Monroe? Is running into each other again supposed to be some kind of fortunate occasion?”

Caleb disgusted her.

Not only had he made inappropriate advances toward Violet, but even knowing Scarlett was Vincent’s wife, he dared to address her so openly.

She didn’t know what he was plotting, but she felt nothing but revulsion toward him.

Caleb hadn’t expected Scarlett to be so direct. His smile stiffened before he asked, “Ms. Theron, you seem to have some hostility toward me?”

Scarlett didn’t mince words. “Not hostility. I simply don’t respect people like you.”

Her phrase “you people” implicitly included Sabrina in the insult.

Hearing this, Caleb flushed with anger. “You-”

Sabrina quickly grabbed his arm, soothing him quietly. “Caleb, this is Mr. Warren’s birthday banquet. Let’s not make a scene.”

Vincent was conversing with Daniel and Harris and likely hadn’t noticed the exchange between Caleb and Sabrina.

Damian, witnessing everything, couldn’t stand it any longer. He subtly shifted to shield Scarlett

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Chapter 243 A Public Request

and called out loudly, “Mr. Stewart!”

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Vincent turned at the sound, his brow slightly furrowed. “What is it?”

67

Finished

Damian gave him a meaningful smile, then cast a lingering glance toward Sabrina standing nearby.

But he quickly looked back at Vincent and said in a tone of mock admiration, “You’re a fortunate man, Mr. Stewart. The lady beside you is not only beautiful and refined but also understands her place. You should hold tightly to a woman like that. If it were me, given my nature, I’d definitely try to steal her away for some enjoyable company.”

His words were deliberately provocative, half-teasing and half-serious. No one present except Sabrina took them at face value.

Sabrina knew Vincent and Damian were business rivals, but being complimented so boldly by Damian sent a secret thrill through her.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 244[806 words]

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Finished

A sudden thought crossed Sabrina’s mind–perhaps that lingering glance from Damian meant he too had been captivated by her beauty.

She’d heard all the rumors about Damian Langley. Being noticed by him, even briefly, sent a secret thrill through her.

She had to admit, Damian carried himself with the same commanding presence as Vincent. But the idea of winning over Damian’s heart felt like an even greater conquest. After all, Vincent only had Scarlett, while Damian was known for his wandering eye.

Sabrina even entertained the fantasy that if she could make the notoriously fickle Damian settle down, wouldn’t that prove her charm surpassed that of other women?

Though Damian had only glanced at her once, her imagination had already constructed an entire romantic narrative. Lost in these nonexistent thoughts, Sabrina even blushed faintly.

go

inside.

Vincent didn't take Damian's words seriously. He took Sabrina's hand and said, "Let's I'll introduce you to some prominent figures in the medical field."

Sabrina snapped out of her reverie. "Oh, alright."

After they entered, Daniel approached Damian with a smirk. "Mr. Langley, you may have many women, but not every woman is easily won. Sabrina, for instance–you'll never have her."

Daniel looked utterly confident. Damian found it laughable.

"Mr. Lennox, so sure of yourself? What are you, Sabrina's personal guard dog?"

Daniel's face instantly paled with anger. "Damian, don't you dare be so arrogant!"

Damian raised his chin, looking down on him with condescending mockery. "You think you're worthy of challenging me?"

Furious, Daniel looked ready to throw a punch, but Harris grabbed his arm. "Daniel, calm down. This is Mr. Warren's birthday party."

Picking a fight with Damian would only end badly for Daniel. Knowing this, Daniel stopped his bluster. He flicked his sleeve in anger. "Let's go."

Caleb's gaze shifted from Scarlett, who stood behind Damian, back to the group. He followed Daniel and Harris into Warren Villa.

As he entered, he glanced back at Scarlett once more, a cold smile curling his lips. "Interesting."

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Chapter 244 The Uninvited Guest

(67)

Finished

This was his second time seeing Scarlett. He found her not only beautiful but also intriguingly appealing.

Maybe after Vincent divorced her, he could swoop in and comfort her broken heart. And when he got bored, he could just kick her to the curb. The thought excited him strangely.

After the unpleasant group had entered the villa, Damian turned to Scarlett. “Are you okay?” he asked softly.

Scarlett’s face showed no emotion, no ripple of feeling. She shook her head. “I’m fine.”

Seeing her composure, Damian felt relieved.

Noticing her high heels, he took her hand and tucked it into the crook of his arm. “Hold onto me,” he instructed.

Scarlett didn’t refuse. She gently held his arm. “Alright.”

Inside Warren Villa, a vast lawn opened up before them, dotted with numerous tables and chairs laden with a dazzling array of fruits and petits fours.

Besides the food, there was champagne, wine, soft drinks... The guests were numerous, spanning all age groups.

Scarlett didn’t know anyone, so she didn’t attempt to mingle. Not seeing Vincent and the others made her feel more at ease.

Damian stayed with her in a corner seat, fetching her various fruits and cakes until her table was piled high, then he finally stopped.

Scarlett stared at the mountain of food in astonishment. She turned to Damian, frowning. “Are you trying to fatten me up like livestock?”

Damian chuckled. “Just try a bit of everything. See what you like.”

Knowing he meant well, she thanked him. “Thank you.”

Damian was about to reply when a male voice sounded behind him. “Mr. Langley?”

The birthday banquet, put nicely, was a celebration. Put bluntly, it was an opportunity for networking and currying favor with influential figures.

Someone of Damian’s status naturally attracted many sycophants.

Damian turned to the speaker with a faint smile. “Hello.”

The man quickly, raised his glass to clink with Damian’s. “Mr. Langley, I’ve long admired you.

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Chapter 244 The Uninvited Guest

This drink is in your honor.” He downed his glass in one go.

Damian watched him but only took a small sip.

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Finished

The man wasn’t embarrassed. Instead, he looked at Scarlett and asked tentatively, “Mr. Langley, and this lovely lady is...**?”**

Damian glanced at Scarlett. She was slowly peeling a chestnut, a strand of hair falling over her cheek. She sat there quietly, serene as a painting.

He found himself momentarily captivated.

Snapping out of it, he said to the man, “Unlike my usual companions, this is my goddess. The woman I dream of making mine.”

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 245[829 words]

Chapter 245 Confessions in the Garden

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Finished

Damian didn't hesitate to express Scarlett's importance to him in front of others.

Hearing this, the man immediately understood Scarlett held special significance for Damian and quickly offered flattering words, "You're a fortunate man, Mr. Langley."

Damian smiled faintly. "It's only good fortune if I can win her heart."

Though Scarlett wasn't actively participating in the conversation, she heard every word clearly. She felt increasingly bewildered, uncertain why Damian behaved this way toward her.

Seeing the situation, the man bowed slightly toward Scarlett. "Miss, let me propose a toast to you."

Damian reached out to intercept the gesture. "My apologies. My darling doesn't drink."

Hearing this, Scarlett finally turned her head. "I can drink," she told Damian firmly.

Then she picked up a glass of red wine, clinked it with the man's, and finished it in one go.

Seeing her cooperation, the man complimented her several more times, seized the opportunity to leave his business card, and politely excused himself.

After he left, Damian moved his chair directly beside Scarlett's. He turned to look at her seriously. "Are you upset about something?"

Scarlett continued peeling the chestnut without meeting his gaze. "Not upset. nothing *to* be particularly happy about either."

There's just

Seeing her subdued mood, he couldn't help asking, "Then tell me, what would make you happy?"

The chestnut in her hand seemed undercooked and difficult to peel, so she eventually gave up and placed it on the table.

She looked up at Damian with sincere eyes. "I like a simple, peaceful life."

He was surprised her desires were so modest. He responded immediately, "I can give you that."

Scarlett heard him and smiled faintly. "Damian, how many people born into wealthy families can truly live a simple life? You're no exception."

Damian looked down at his own hands, then held them out for her to see. "If that's what you want, these hands can bring you wealth and luxury, or they can plant flowers and vegetables for you."

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Finished

Scarlett looked down at his hands. They were beautifully shaped, with distinct knuckles and long, slender fingers.

For a moment, she felt dazed, but still maintained her gentle smile. "Damian, birds and fish walk different paths. We come from different worlds."

Hearing this, Damian grew visibly agitated. He wanted to say he could give up his status and position, but before he could, someone else called his name.

"Damian." This time, it was a woman's voice.

Damian's eyes darkened momentarily. He took a deep breath before turning to look.

Scarlett also observed the approaching young woman. She recognized her–the same girl who had accompanied Damian to the previous event.

Not only had she attended the event with him, but Damian had also been intimately touching her leg in the car.

Remembering this, Scarlett lowered her eyes, pressing her lips slightly. Someone like Damian could never truly return to an ordinary life.

Seeing it was Kylie Warren, Damian controlled his temper.

Kylie twirled playfully in front of him. “Well? Do I look nice today?”

Damian glanced briefly and nodded. “Yes, very beautiful.”

Kylie was direct. “I dressed up just for you.”

Listening *to* their conversation, Scarlett straightened up and quietly moved her chair further

away.

Damian offered a polite smile. “You put thought into it.”

Kylie sat down beside Damian, enthusiastically linking her arm with his. “When the banquet begins, will you sit with me?”

Damian looked down at her hand on his arm, frowned slightly, gently pushed it away, and smiled at her. “No, I’ll be sitting with my darling.”

Then he turned to look at Scarlett.

Noticing she had already moved two seats away, he frowned with displeasure, leaned over, grabbed her chair, and pulled her back to his side.

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Scarlett had braced herself to resist, but he effortlessly drew her back.

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Kylie's curious gaze followed the movement, and when she clearly saw Scarlett's face, the smile vanished from her own.

Kylie remembered that last time at the intersection, she and Damian had been on their way *to* a dinner engagement.

While waiting at the traffic light, a man had approached Scarlett's car, an argument seemed to break out inside her vehicle, and the car hadn't moved when the light turned green.

When the light changed, Damian should have driven off, but instead he got out and confronted the man.

After chasing him away, he appeared to exchange words with the driver of the other car.

Kylie, sitting in the passenger seat, hadn't heard what was said, but when Damian returned to the car, his eyes were unusually bright.

So, Kylie had curiously glanced at the driver of the vehicle.

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Chapter 246 A Rival's Tears

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She saw her–a female driver, quite attractive though not stunningly beautiful. Kylie had initially thought Damian's red-rimmed eyes were from being struck by the troublemaker.

But that night, there had been a tissue box near her leg, and Damian had taken one to carefully wipe his eyes.

Now, seeing Scarlett's face clearly, Kylie belatedly realized that perhaps Damian hadn't been physically hurt that night. Maybe he had genuinely been crying.

Having known Damian for years, Kylie had never seen him get emotional over anyone. But if her intuition was correct, then this woman was the first–which spoke volumes about her significance in Damian's heart.

The thought sent a sharp pang through Kylie's chest. Though Damian had a certain reputation, having grown up alongside him, she believed he wasn't truly promiscuous.

She, Kylie, was the only female friend who had remained consistently by his side all these years, their relationship never crossing beyond friendship.

Because of this special position, Kylie had quietly hoped that one day she might truly stand beside Damian as more than a friend. But now, there was another woman occupying that space.

After pulling Scarlett back, Damian stretched his long leg out, effectively blocking her path to prevent another

escape. At the same time, he asked discontentedly, "What? Am I going to bite? Running so far away!"

Scarlett didn't answer his question. Instead, she turned her attention to Kylie. Ever since being pulled back, she had felt Kylie's gaze fixed intently on her.

So, she took the initiative to greet her. "Hello."

Kylie paused briefly before replying, "Hello, I'm Kylie." Though she wore a smile, it didn't reach. her eyes–the expression seemed somewhat strained.

Scarlett curved her lips slightly. "Scarlett."

Kylie continued studying her, her gaze unmistakably unfriendly, filled with scrutiny and

assessment.

Damian's arm rested casually along the back of Scarlett's chair, his leg still blocking her front. He turned to Kylie.

Before he could speak, she asked first, "Damian, shall we go toast my dad together?"

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Chapter 246 A Rival's Tears

Ethan was Kylie's father.

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Finished

Damian didn't hesitate, refusing politely but firmly, "No, I'll go toast Mr. Warren separately with my darling later."

Kylie was visibly disappointed but maintained her composure. "Oh."

Damian had always understood Kylie's feelings and had explicitly rejected her before.

But seeing her like this, he felt compelled to remind her again. "Kylie, at the company, you're my executive assistant. But outside work, you are the Warren heiress. In unnecessary situations, you should maintain appropriate distance from me. Otherwise, my darling might easily misunderstand our relationship."

Kylie, as the Warren heiress, didn't need to work. But for Damian, she had willingly taken the position as his assistant–a role she had faithfully filled for years:

Last time, when Damian brought Kylie to an event and someone inquired about her identity, he had deliberately described her as the woman closest to him in his daily life.

Though the statement carried suggestive undertones, it was technically true—as his assistant, close professional contact was unavoidable.

Damian's blunt words sounded harsh even to Scarlett, let alone to Kylie, who had been accustomed to privilege since childhood.

Hearing this, Kylie's eyes instantly reddened. Tears of humiliation welled up as she snapped at Damian, "Damian, you're such a jerk!"

With that, Kylie hurried away.

Damian didn't chase after her. Instead, he turned Scarlett's chair to face him, compelling her to meet his gaze. His tone was stern and serious. "Why were you avoiding me earlier?"

Scarlett looked at his handsome features. Instead of answering directly, she remarked, "Speaking to her like that must have been very hurtful for Ms. Warren."

Damian responded firmly, "If I have feelings for someone, I should make that clear to others."

Scarlett paused, then lowered her head. “Damian, I’m a married woman. I don’t understand why you...”

Damian didn’t let her finish. He popped a grape into her mouth. “Let’s not talk about that right

now.”

Scarlett ate the grape, her emotions in quiet turmoil.

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Soon, an announcement invited guests to proceed to the main hall for the formal dinner.

Ethan had arranged specific seating. Those with stronger backgrounds or higher status were assigned to designated tables.

Consequently, Vincent, Damian, and several others were all seated together.

The table accommodated ten people. Their group included Vincent, Damian, Daniel, Sabrina, Harris, Caleb, Felix, Zachary... One seat remained vacant, so Ethan hadn’t assigned anyone else to it.

The table was lavishly set with an extensive variety of dishes.

Nine people sat around the table, representing two distinct social factions.

No one initiated conversation; everyone ate quietly.

Sabrina sat between Vincent and Caleb. Both men attended to her, serving her food, so she barely needed to lift a finger herself.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 247[921 words]

Chapter 247 The Toast of Pretense

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Occasionally, when a particularly exquisite dish rotated by, Daniel would also serve some to Sabrina. The entire group opposite seemed dedicated to attending to Sabrina's every need.

On this side, Scarlett sat between Damian and Zachary, and neither of the men beside her remained idle either.

Damian peeled shrimp for her, placing them neatly in her bowl. "Darling, try the shrimp I peeled just for you."

Though it was Zachary's first time meeting Scarlett, he found the pretentious atmosphere from the opposite side of the table utterly insufferable. Wanting to lighten the mood and show his support, he prepared a lettuce wrap with a slice of roasted duck and handed it to her with a warm smile. "You've got to try this, Scarlett. The duck is perfectly seasoned and absolutely delicious."

Throughout this, Harris and Felix didn't participate in the silent competition, though they observed everything with keen interest.

Opposite them, Sabrina ate slowly and elegantly, occasionally glancing up at Damian. She noticed how attentive and caring he was toward Scarlett.

Yet even so, Sabrina couldn't shake the thought that since Damian had praised her so openly earlier, he must truly be interested in her. Perhaps he was only being nice to Scarlett to make her jealous?

When the meal was nearly over, Caleb raised his glass. He looked at Vincent and Daniel, speaking with formal politeness, "Vincent, Daniel, this toast is for you both. Thank you for trusting Monroe Financial and choosing our platform for your major corporate transactions."

Hearing this, Scarlett immediately looked up at Vincent.

Across the table, Vincent was looking back at Caleb, listening with apparent patience.

He could be so tolerant and respectful toward Caleb, yet toward her, over all these Vincent had never shown an ounce of patience.

years,

Recalling Vincent's promise that night to route his company's transactions through Nathan's platform, Scarlett belatedly realized–how much of what he said could truly be trusted?

He had clearly stated that Monroe Financial's platform wasn't mature enough and that he wouldn't entrust them with the business. Yet now, it appeared he had.

Regardless of the process, the outcome remained the same.

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Chapter 247 The Toast of Pretense

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Finished

Seeing Caleb propose the toast, Sabrina also raised her glass. "Caleb, as long as you continue to work diligently, Vincent will always treat you fairly."

Hearing this, Caleb beamed at Sabrina. "I owe you one, Sabrina, for bringing a guy like him into our family."

Sabrina lowered her head shyly, a delicate blush coloring her cheeks.

Vincent watched her blush with a doting smile and said to Caleb, "If anything, I should thank you, Caleb, for having such a wonderful sister."

Caleb felt a surge of pride at Vincent's flattering words.

He straightened his posture, clinked glasses with Vincent, and said softly, "My sister can be *a* bit mischievous at times–she was quite spoiled growing up. If she ever does anything to upset you, Vincent, just let me know. As her brother, I'll certainly speak to her on your behalf."

Hearing this, Sabrina tugged lightly at Caleb's sleeve. "Oh, Caleb, I'm not nearly as mischievous as you make me out to be!"

Caleb turned to look at her, patting her head affectionately. "I've known you since we were children–don't I know you better than anyone?"

Sabrina took the opportunity to hide slightly behind Vincent, shaking his arm in a playful whine. "Vincent, look at him! He's always exposing me like that!"

Vincent smiled faintly, shielding Sabrina behind him. "Caleb, Sabrina is truly a good person. She's never given me any reason to be upset."

Caleb laughed heartily. "You just spoil her too much."

Daniel seized the moment to add, "Caleb, I can vouch for Vincent. Sabrina really hasn't caused him any trouble."

Then he turned to Harris. "Right, Harris?"

Harris stood up with a somewhat stiff smile, raising his glass to join the others. "That's certainly

true."

Although Harris didn't hold particularly strong feelings for Sabrina, objectively speaking, she was indeed well–behaved–not overly demanding or competitive, and she treated Vanessa kindly. For that alone, he held a degree of respect for her.

On this side of the table, Scarlett desperately wanted to block out their conversation, but seated so closely, it was impossible.

Not wanting to listen any further, she drank her wine in silence.

Chapter 247 The Toast of Pretense

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Finished

Damian knew she was upset. He pulled his chair closer to hers, draping his arm over the back of her chair in a protective, almost encircling gesture.

His attention remained entirely on her. Not only was he shielding her physically, but he also kept trying to engage her in quiet conversation. Damian hoped that distracting her might ease the ache in her heart.

Zachary also noticed Scarlett's subdued mood. He observed the group opposite and found their behavior hypocritical and distasteful.

Scarlett was, after all, Vincent's legal wife, yet that entire circle treated her as if she were invisible.

Zachary had seen enough. He wiped his hands with a napkin and was about to stand when Felix, seated beside him, beat him to it.

Felix stood up, retrieved a business card from his pocket, placed it on the rotating tray, and spun it directly in front of Vincent.

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Felix's action was witnessed not only by Zachary but also by the group opposite, who had just finished their toast and taken their seats.

As the business card came to a stop directly in front of Vincent, Felix halted the rotating tray. He offered a meaningful smile, his gaze deceptively sincere as he addressed Vincent. "Mr. Stewart, I'm certain you maintain an excellent legal team. However, you're likely aware of my professional reputation. No disrespect intended–I simply wish to inform you that should you ever require financial litigation services in the future, my firm specializes in that area."

Felix, typically serious and reserved, delivered his words with such earnest calm that it almost sounded like he was predicting the Stewart Group's impending downfall.

Hearing this, Zachary felt the frustration in his chest ease. Under the table, he gave Felix a discreet thumbs–up, whispering, "Masterfully subtle, Felix. You're my hero."

Across the table, several faces darkened–Caleb and Daniel's expressions turned particularly grim.

Sabrina also frowned slightly, but mindful of Vincent and Damian's presence, she maintained her composure.

Harris merely looked surprised, showing no other visible reaction.

Vincent remained the calmest of all. His expression was unreadable, but his eyes held a trace of mockery as they rested on Felix.

He said nothing, simply watching him in silence.

Scarlett and Damian also observed the scene unfolding opposite them.

The implication behind Felix's words was clear–a company like Monroe Financial, which hadn't yet stood the test of time, had easily secured Vincent's cooperation. Whether Monroe Financial would even remain stable in the future remained an open question.

Daniel was the most hot–tempered among them. He slammed his wine glass onto the table with a sharp crack.

Simultaneously, he demanded sharply, "What's this? Mr. Wilson, are you jealous that others are succeeding where you haven't?"

Felix, ever reasonable and unshaken by Daniel's outburst, looked at him with mild contempt and was about to respond when Zachary reacted more forcefully.

Zachary let out a derisive laugh. "Hah, Mr. Lennox, don't speak too soon. Whether their success

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Chapter 248 Words Like Daggers

67

Finished

is real or not remains to be seen. If you burn bridges with Felix now, don't come begging him to handle your litigation when your company faces financial disputes."

your

mind? Do you

lost you Hearing this, Daniel laughed scornfully. "Hah, Zachary, have

think I, Daniel, would ever need his legal services? Even if my company goes under, even if I end up bankrupt, I would never seek him out!"

Zachary leaned back leisurely in his chair, crossing his legs. His tone was almost casual as he reminded him, "If I recall correctly, your mother underwent cranial surgery not long ago, didn't she? At that time, to find a qualified surgeon, didn't you, Mr. Lennox, humble yourself pleading everywhere? What? Have you already forgotten how desperate you were back then?"

Daniel's face instantly paled. "Zachary, you—!"

Zachary narrowed his eyes, his voice dropping lower. "Me, what? Did I say anything that wasn't true?"

Seeing he was losing the argument, Daniel instinctively grabbed his wine glass, poised to hurl it at Zachary.

But at that moment, Damian, who had been quietly shielding Scarlett, spoke up calmly, "Is there a problem, Mr. Lennox? Are you trying to ruin Mr. Warren's birthday celebration?"

It wasn't that Daniel feared Zachary or Damian, but they were all guests at Ethan's birthday banquet. Causing a scene here would only damage his own reputation.

After a tense internal struggle, Daniel slowly lowered the raised glass.

He sat there fuming, consumed by a sense of humiliation.

As Damian withdrew his gaze, he looked toward Vincent.

Their eyes met across the table. Without a single word spoken, a thousand silent confrontations seemed to pass between them in that exchanged glance.

One table, two opposing factions. Beneath the surface calm, turbulent undercurrents swirled.

Sabrina sat beside Vincent, but she couldn't help observing Damian's behavior. He seemed intensely protective of Scarlett, deliberately shielding her from the tension.

But Sabrina reasoned–how could someone of Damian's social standing genuinely be interested in a married woman like Scarlett? Especially one who already had a child.

She convinced herself that Damian must be using Scarlett to get her attention.

Yes, that had to be it.

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Chapter 248 Words Like Daggers-

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67

Finished

Just as she was lost in these thoughts, Ethan approached their table with his glass to propose a

toast.

He made his rounds, clinking glasses with each person, exchanging the usual pleasantries about enjoying the food and company.

Finally, when it came time for a group toast, Vincent noticed Sabrina holding a wine glass.

Seeing this, he gently pressed her hand down and said softly, "Sabrina, you have research at the lab tomorrow. No alcohol tonight."

Earlier, when she had toasted with Caleb, she had been drinking a non–alcoholic beverage.

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Vincent took the glass from her hand and said to Ethan, “Mr. Warren, I’ll drink this on Sabrina’s behalf.”

With that, he finished the drink in one go.

Seeing Vincent treat Sabrina with such care, Ethan couldn’t help glancing once more at Scarlett.

He was genuinely confused now. Which one was actually Vincent’s wife?

Vincent had arrived with Scarlett.

But recalling how Scarlett had introduced herself as Vincent’s executive assistant, and now witnessing Vincent’s attentiveness toward Sabrina, Ethan privately concluded that Sabrina must be the one.

Once convinced, he smiled warmly at Sabrina. “It’s perfectly alright. Please, don’t feel obliged.”

Appreciating his kindness, Sabrina smiled gently. “Thank you, Mr. Warren.”

Ethan nodded, then turned his attention to Caleb. “Vincent, and this distinguished young gentleman is...?”

He had noticed this person earlier at the entrance.

Although he didn’t recognize him, he understood the individual must hold considerable status.

After all, over the years, the only people consistently seen with Vincent were Daniel and Harris.

This unfamiliar face was certainly no ordinary figure.

Before Vincent could respond, Zachary on the opposite side couldn't resist snorting dismissively. "Mr. Warren, he's hardly worth remembering. No need to trouble yourself with him."

Hearing this, Vincent quickly explained to Ethan, "Mr. Warren, this is Caleb. He has business dealings with Daniel and me."

Ethan withdrew his gaze from Zachary. Looking back at Caleb, his eyes held considerably more appreciation. "I see. A rising star, then. Impressive–so young and already making your mark."

Caleb stood up and shook hands with Ethan, replying modestly, "I'm flattered by your kind

words, Mr. Warren."

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Finished

Ethan smiled, exchanged a few more pleasantries with everyone, and moved on *to* the next table.

This kind of bustling, noisy socializing was commonplace for the young heirs of established families, but Scarlett had never enjoyed it.

So, she remained seated quietly, occasionally refilling her glass with red wine.

Damian sat beside her, watching her subdued mood. He felt a pang in his heart but didn't know how to comfort her.

Under the table, he took her cold hand in his. "Stop drinking. You'll end up getting drunk."

But she gently pried his fingers away, offering him a faint smile. "It's alright."

Her alcohol tolerance was fairly good; this amount wouldn't affect her much.

It was simply the environment she disliked.

Vincent sat directly opposite. He too noticed Scarlett drinking continuously. Seeing her like this, he frowned slightly.

Just as he was about to tell her to stop, Sabrina suddenly took his arm and whispered, "Vincent, I need to use the restroom."

Hearing this, Vincent withdrew his gaze from Scarlett. "Let's go, then. I'll accompany you."

After Sabrina stood up, Vincent followed closely.

He stayed near her, as if concerned she might stumble, even placing a protective hand lightly near her back.

With just a slight lift of her head, Scarlett could see Vincent and Sabrina walking away together.

They were inseparable, always side by side.

The sight felt utterly ironic.

After watching them leave, complex emotions flickered across Scarlett's face.

Daniel, sitting opposite, easily noticed her despondency and felt an inexplicable sense of satisfaction.

Caleb, observing Scarlett's apparent sadness, found himself wishing she would finalize her divorce from Vincent sooner.

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Chapter 249 The Wrong Assumption

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67

Finished

As for Damian, sensing Scarlett's unhappiness made him equally upset–even frustrated and

angry.

He was frustrated with his own past indecisiveness and angry that Scarlett still seemed affected by Vincent.

Around the table, emotions varied. No one spoke further, each lost in their own quiet reflections.

Meanwhile, after toasting two more tables, Ethan's phone rang.

He glanced at the screen, then said to the group he was about to toast, "My apologies, I need to take this call. I'll be right back."

No one dared object as Ethan stepped away to answer the phone.

In the quieter backyard, he finally took the call. It was Xavier on the line.

"So? How are things there?"

Hearing Xavier's eagerness, Ethan smiled. "Don't worry, Mr. Stewart. Vincent and his wife are getting along wonderfully."

Hearing this, Xavier laughed heartily. "Really?"

"Absolutely true," Ethan confirmed. "Vincent not only drinks for her but even personally accompanies her to the restroom. You can set your mind at ease."

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 250[907 words]

Silent Dreams Never Die — 2

Chapter 250 A Promise in the Moonlight

Xavier chuckled warmly. “That’s wonderful! It seems the boy truly cares for his wife.”

(67)

Finished

Ethan laughed along, then inquired, “Mr. Stewart, I heard Vincent’s wife studied medicine?”

Xavier confirmed, “Yes, she did.”

Ethan expressed admiration. “That’s quite impressive. Medical school is incredibly demanding.”

Xavier, however, seemed somewhat dismissive. “It’s alright. You should return to your guests. I’m off to play chess.”

After ending the call, Ethan made his way back to the banquet hall.

When he returned, Vincent and Sabrina were also coming back from the restroom.

This time, Vincent walked behind Sabrina, carefully holding the train of her gown. He made no attempt to conceal his actions, willingly performing what some might consider servile tasks for Sabrina without hesitation.

Scarlett also noticed them returning, but before she could get a clear view, a hand suddenly covered her eyes.

She knew it was Damian’s.

Opposite her sat the man she had once tried so hard to please, a man who now seemed to take pleasure in seeing her humiliated and broken.

But Damian and his friends... she wasn’t particularly close to them. To them, she likely held no special value.

Yet they showed no malice toward her. On the contrary, they consistently helped her maintain her dignity.

The thought brought involuntary tears to Scarlett’s eyes. But to Damian, those tears seemed to

be for Vincent.

Damian felt a surge of anger, but more than that, heartache. He took Scarlett's hand firmly. "Come with me."

Scarlett stumbled slightly as he stood, following his lead. Zachary, noticing Damian preparing to leave, couldn't resist asking, "They haven't served all the courses yet. Aren't you staying?"

Damian, still holding Scarlett's hand, didn't look back, his tone sharp. "Skipping a meal won't kill anyone. But staying where the atmosphere is toxic just might."

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Chapter 250 A Promise in the Moonlight

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67

Finished

Hearing this, Zachary didn't attempt to stop them, instead nodding in approval. "Now that's acting with integrity. Well done."

Damian paid no further attention to Zachary's remark. At that moment, all he wanted was to get Scarlett away from that environment.

Once outside the banquet hall, he led her to a swing set up on the lawn.

He didn't insist she sit, nor did he look directly at her, instead turning his gaze toward the distant lights.

They stood together on the grass, neither using the swing nor speaking.

The unusual silence stretched between them for what felt like a long time.

Finally, Damian couldn't bear it any longer. He turned back, glaring at Scarlett, his hands gripping her shoulders firmly. "Tell me, what is it about Vincent that you still care for?"

Scarlett met his gaze steadily. "I don't care for him anymore."

Her words were truthful. She had long since stopped loving Vincent.

But achieving complete emotional detachment was still beyond her reach.

Especially in situations like the one earlier–how could she possibly remain unaffected?

The man she had loved wholeheartedly for eight years showed not the slightest concern for her feelings.

Who wouldn't be wounded by that?

Hearing her firm denial, Damian's frown deepened. He stared intently, as if trying to see through her very soul. "Then why were you crying just now?",

He felt utterly helpless when it came to her. Even knowing she might still harbor feelings for Vincent, he still foolishly wanted to protect her.

Damian felt as if he were under Scarlett's spell.

If he couldn't have her in this lifetime, he thought he might truly lose his mind.

The night breeze swept across the lawn, where only the two of them remained.

Hearing Damian's question, Scarlett looked back at him, her voice suddenly hoarse. "I just feel it wasn't worth it. For my own sake."

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Chapter 250 A Promise in the Moonlight

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Wasting years of her youth to finally see a man's true colors.

It was early winter. Scarlett, in her evening gown, was growing numb from the cold.

Hearing her answer, Damian's heart ached sharply.

67

Finished

He stepped forward, draping his still–warm suit jacket over her shoulders, then drew her into his embrace.

He held her tightly, as if wanting to merge her into his very being. He pressed his face against her neck and spoke with careful, almost pleading tenderness, “Can you please stop being.sad over him?”

The moment the jacket settled around her, Scarlett was enveloped in Damian’s warmth.

His body, his coat–everything radiated comforting heat.

She didn’t push him away. Instead, she leaned closer, almost greedily absorbing the warmth.

In all her life, aside from her family, Scarlett had never experienced such protective warmth from anyone.

She suddenly felt reluctant to pull away.

Sensing her leaning in, Damian instinctively held her even tighter.

Scarlett lifted her face within his embrace. “Alright,” she agreed softly.

Hearing her consent, a jolt of electricity seemed to shoot through Damian. His body trembled slightly. He gently pushed her back just enough to look into her eyes, his expression one of disbelief. “Really? You promise me?”

Scarlett nodded. “Yes, I promise.”

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Awakened Housewife: Ignore Betrayer’s Begs

Chapter 251 A Kiss at the Corner

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 251[860 words]

Awakened Housewife: Ignore Betrayer's Begs

Chapter 251 A Kiss at the Corner

67

Finished

Her makeup was flawlessly applied that evening, highlighting her sharp, elegant features. Every blink of her lashes seemed to send a subtle ripple through Damian's composure.

The black evening gown hugged Scarlett's curves just right, its dark fabric a striking contrast against her pale skin.

Standing there in the dim light, she left Damian's thoughts in disarray.

He knew perfectly well she was still married–that he shouldn't overstep–but his body responded more honestly than his conscience.

His arm found its way around her waist, drawing her closer as he leaned in, lips just *a* breath

away.

He wanted to kiss her.

More than anything, he wanted to kiss her.

Sensing his intention, Scarlett didn't pull back. Instead, she closed her eyes.

A thought crossed her mind–if Vincent was already involved with Sabrina, what did it matter if something happened between her and Damian?

She was a grown woman with needs of her own. If Vincent couldn't meet them, why not let Damian try?

Even if he was a flirt, where was the harm in a little fun?

Damian's lips descended, but at the last moment, he held back. The kiss landed softly at the corner of her mouth.

If he had kissed her properly, he knew he wouldn't have been able to hold back his desire.

But he couldn't let himself do that.

Feeling him withdraw, Scarlett opened her eyes, a hint of confusion in her voice. "Why did you stop?"

Damian turned his face away. The tips of his ears were flushed, betraying the desire he was struggling to restrain.

When he finally spoke, his voice was rough, like gravel warmed by the sun. "This isn't just about me. I have to think about what's right for you."

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Chapter 251 A Kiss at the Corner

Scarlett studied him, perplexed. "Why are you so good to me?"

67

Finished

Damian lifted his gaze toward the night sky for a few seconds before looking back at her, his expression earnest. "If you agree to let me be the one for you, I'll tell you why."

Scarlett frowned, letting out a soft scoff. "Damian, you haven't had that much *to* drink. Why are you talking like this again?"

She hadn't taken any of his words seriously since that night in her bedroom.

He'd been drunk then–she doubted much of what he'd said was genuine.

Damian turned back to her, gently taking her hand and guiding it to rest against his abdomen, his eyes never leaving hers. "I'm not talking nonsense. You can feel it–my body could give you something different. I promise, once you try me, you won't think about Vincent anymore."

His words were bold, tempting and teasing without shame.

Scarlett tried to pull her hand back, but Damian held it firmly in place. Through the fabric of his shirt, she could feel the heat of his skin and the defined muscles beneath.

Her cheeks flushed instantly, and she lowered her head, muttering, “You... you have no shame.”

Seeing her blush, Damian couldn’t help but smile. He released her hand but added softly, “You look incredible tonight.”

Scarlett withdrew her hand, feeling unsettled. She moved to the swing chair and sat down.

Without looking at him, she still replied, “You don’t look so bad yourself.”

Damian chuckled and took a seat beside her on the swing. His laughter was light and clear. “If you like it, I’ll dress like this every day.”

Scarlett didn’t respond this time, letting silence settle between them.

From inside the banquet hall, the sounds of clinking glasses, laughter, and lively conversation drifted out endlessly.

Remembering it was Ethan’s birthday celebration, Scarlett took a moment to steady herself before speaking again. “We should head back. If Ethan notices we’re gone, he’ll come looking.”

Leaving before the party ended would be rude to the hosts. They’d been outside long enough- it was time to return.

Damian understood, so he stood and walked back with Scarlett toward the hall.

Near the entrance, Scarlett noticed a small group gathered around Vincent, raising their glasses

in his direction.

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Sabrina had risen as well, standing beside him with her own wine glass in hand.

Someone offered a compliment, “Mr. Stewart, you’re a lucky man to have such a remarkable woman by your side. You two make quite the pair–a match made in heaven.”

Vincent smiled, clinking his glass with the others before glancing at Sabrina beside him. Looking back, he replied, “I appreciate the kind words.”

Watching the scene, Scarlett felt neither sorrow nor joy. She simply returned to her seat at the table. Damian followed and sat down beside her.

Zachary, noticing their return, quickly poured wine for Scarlett and raised his glass toward hers. “Scarlett, this one’s for you.”

Before she could fully process his gesture, he had already finished his drink.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 252[832 words]

Chapter 252 Declarations Across the Table

She had no choice but to finish her glass.

67

Finished

Seeing her drain it, Zachary clapped his hands and cheered loudly, “Scarlett’s not just beautiful and sweet–she can hold her liquor too. If Damian ever steps out of line, you just let me and Felix know. We’ve got your back.”

Scarlett knew Zachary was trying to smooth things over for her. Grateful, she gave him a warm smile and said softly, “Okay, I’ll remember that.”

Zachary had spoken up on purpose. Naturally, Vincent and Sabrina heard him, and their attention shifted over.

Sabrina noticed Damian looking toward Vincent, his eyes sharp with hostility and anger.

Seeing Damian like that, Sabrina pressed her lips together tightly.

He *must be jealous of Vincent. That’s* why *he’s staring him* down like *that*.

Noticing their exchanged looks, Zachary pulled out a business card and handed it to Scarlett, announcing clearly, “Scarlett, here’s my card. Keep it safe. If anyone gives you trouble later, just call me. You won’t even need Damian–I’ll take care of everything.”

Scarlett accepted the card with another gentle smile. “Thank you.”

Across the table, Vincent narrowed his eyes at Scarlett. Seeing she didn’t refuse or offer any explanation, he frowned.

Sabrina shot a dark look at Zachary, thinking how clueless he was.

How could Damian be in love with Scarlett? His sights were clearly set on her.

Everyone at the table was lost in their own thoughts.

Only Harris and Felix seemed like they were just along for the ride.

Watching Zachary play the protector, Daniel couldn’t help but let out a scoff.

He didn’t hold back, asking bluntly, “Zachary, are you blind? You’d stick up for just anybody?”

Zachary stayed perfectly calm. Instead of getting angry, he threw a meaningful glance toward Sabrina before looking back at Daniel. “I think the blind one might be someone else. In fact, I was about to ask you the same thing.”

Daniel had had enough. He slammed a hand on the table and stood up, barking, “Zachary!”

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Chapter 252 Declarations Across the Table

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Finished

Zachary didn't even rise from his chair. He just gave Daniel a cool, indifferent look. "What are you gonna do about it?"

The tension spiked, thick enough to cut with a knife.

Damian instinctively moved closer to Scarlett, shielding her slightly, while shooting a frosty glare toward Vincent.

Sensing Daniel was about to explode, Vincent stopped him. "Daniel, not here."

Only then did Daniel sink back into his seat, seething with frustration.

This was the second time Zachary had shut him down that night. And they were at Warren Villa -hardly the place to make a scene.

Zachary knew Daniel was boiling over, but he couldn't resist adding fuel to the fire. "Yeah, that's what I thought."

This was Warren Villa, and Zachary was betting Daniel wouldn't dare start a real fight.

As long as Daniel was miserable, Zachary was happy.

Beside him, Felix nudged Zachary's arm under the table and muttered, "Don't start something you can't finish. You're playing right into their drama."

Hearing that, Zachary finally let it

1. go.

Putting Vincent's table out of his mind, Zachary turned back to Scarlett. "Scarlett, you and Damian relax here. I'm gonna grab you a slice of cake."

Scarlett felt a surge of gratitude. “Thank you, Zachary.”

Watching Zachary fuss over Scarlett, Sabrina had to resist the urge to kick the table leg in frustration.

Could Zachary be any more clueless? He doesn’t even realize who Damian actually wants, and he’s over there playing knight in shining armor.

Vincent noticed Sabrina’s stiff posture and leaned toward her. “Everything okay?”

Sabrina shook her head quickly. “Oh, it’s nothing.”

The banquet was winding down. After making his rounds, Ethan returned to their table.

He stopped behind Vincent, placed a hand lightly on Sabrina’s shoulder, and said in a low voice, “There’s something Mr. Stewart asked me to pass along to you.”

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Chapter 252 Declarations Across the Table

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Finished

With that, he handed her a small velvet box.

Sabrina accepted it with surprise. “Oh?”

Ethan explained, “It’s from Vincent’s grandfather. For you.”

Sabrina froze for a second. *Does Xavier already know about me?*

Was this his way of showing approval–of blessing her and Vincent?

Seeing her hesitate, Ethan added gently, “Take good care of Vincent. He’s one of the good ones.”

Hearing that, Sabrina felt sure Xavier must know and support their relationship.

She beamed up at Ethan. “Don’t worry, Mr. Warren. I absolutely will.”

Ethan gave a satisfied nod before addressing the whole table. “We’ll be starting the dancing soon. Stay and enjoy yourselves before you head out.”

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wakened Housewife. Ignore Betrayer’s Begs?

Chapter 253 A Choice on the Dance Elabor

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 253[914 words]

Chapter 253 A Choice on the Dance Elabor

67

Finished

ot wanting an awkward silence to fall, Zachary respondedlhdartiytilyo You got it, Mr. Warren.”

fter Ethan walked away, Felix checked his watch. Seeing how dardatditchad gotten, he rose to ave. He said his goodbyes to Damian, Scarlett, and Zachalyarhe heatedled to get back to keep ic company and couldn’t stay any longer.er.

eforedong, the dinner portion of the evening drew to a close. Ethathhnchard staff usher the

maining guests to the adjacent ballroom. m.

pon entering, they were all struck by the understated opulence of thetspaspace. Alt elegant bar as set up, offering wine, cocktails, and champagne. Platters of fresh fruitdellelicate pastries, and burner petits fours were artfully arranged on side tables.les.

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eyreid the refreshments, the room featured sophisticated lighting, agslighththisised erforroance area, and a grand piano.

elycdierely taken by the lavish setup, Zachary turned to Scarlett with alplayful gulgrific Scarlett," aentinextending his hand gallantly, "may I have this dance?"

alert orariety could even form a reply, another hand swatted Zachary's awayway.

nonamorata mock–offended look at Damian. "Wow, possessive much?"h?"

roomhSabrina Sabrina's gaze had locked onto the grand piano. She seemed rootedical ethe

Dot.

ad been about abbhot ask her to dance, but Sabrina spoke first, pointing toward the sagage. she asked herkoeier voice bright with feigned spontaneity, "should I go play somethinging to going?'s going?"

wallowed his inviabiniaiibinvitation. "Of course," he replied smoothly. "Whatever you'duikeike."

ased smile, Sabrina, gabena gathered her skirts and made her way gracefully to the stage.ge. de the polished parlo, dhiaid she deliberately looked back, letting her gaze sweep overver efore settling meaningfudhyongfully on Damian. She offered a practiced, charmning smile.ile.

e was for both of thein. Sabrana prbana prided herself on her piano skills and was convinced ed

would capture Damian's anteiansattention. Her suggestion to play was as much about stirringing phere as it was a calculated inalated inove to intrigue him.

potential dance partner qiheneisetherwise occupied, Vincent's interest in dancing waned. Budst

ed, his eyes landed on Scarlet Scarlett.

ief hesitation, he walked toward herward her.

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Chapter 253 A Choice on the Dance Floor

67

Finished

Damian, standing protectively beside Scarlett, watched Vincent's approach with immediate wariness.

Stopping before them, Vincent extended his hand toward Scarlett, his voice low and slightly rough. "Would you care to dance?"

Scarlett looked at his offered hand–the fingers long, well–defined, undeniably elegant.

Damian stayed quiet beside her. He didn't speak for her, merely watched her face, waiting for her answer just as Vincent was.

Seeing her hesitate, Damian felt a sharp, needle–like pang in his chest. His fingers slowly curled into fists, nails biting into his palms.

She probably won't *refuse him*. *After all, she loved him* so *deeply*.

Vincent, too, was certain she wouldn't decline. She was still his wife, and he her husband. Regardless of recent tensions, they weren't divorced. They were still a pair in the eyes of many.

Zachary and Daniel had also turned to watch, the entire group seemingly holding its breath to see Scarlett's choice.

After a silence that stretched for several heartbeats, Scarlett finally moved her hand.

Seeing this, Zachary's brow furrowed, his expression clouding with displeasure and concern.

Daniel, witnessing the motion, already began composing a mocking remark for Zachary in his head.

Damian, seeing Scarlett's hand begin to lift toward Vincent's, shut his eyes briefly, as if bracing for a blow.

But the next moment, Scarlett gently but firmly pushed Vincent's hand aside. "Mr. Stewart," she said, her voice clear and composed, "I'm sorry. I already have a dance partner."

With that, she turned and slipped her hand through the crook of Damian's arm.

Damian felt the pressure of her hand on his sleeve and his eyes flew open. Looking down, he saw her hand resting there.

She had initiated the contact.

A storm of emotion suddenly surged within him, chaotic and overwhelming. For a moment, it felt unreal, like a scene from a dream.

“Scarlett,” Zachary chimed in promptly, a grin spreading across his face, “well played!”

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Chapter 253A Choice on the Dance Floor

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Seeing Scarlett reject Vincent, Daniel lost interest and turned his attention back to Sabrina, who was beginning to play on the stage.

Vincent watched Scarlett’s hand on Damian’s arm, his expression darkening. Yet, in the end, he said nothing and simply turned away.

Once Vincent had left, Scarlett made to withdraw her hand from Damian’s arm.

But in the next instant, Damian’s own hand came down, firmly trapping hers in place against

his sleeve.

She looked up and found him gazing at her, his eyes suspiciously bright.

People milled and chattered around them, but in that moment, his world seemed to have narrowed to only her.

Damian bent his head closer, his voice dropping to a low, gravelly murmur meant only for her cars. “I’ve taken so many steps toward you. Every single time, I’ve tried to talk myself into giving up.” He paused, letting the words hang between them. Then a faint, arrogantly confident smile touched his lips. “But just now, you reached for me on your own.” He leaned in a fraction closer. “Scarlett, you can’t walk away from me now.”

His smile was like a potent, slow–acting toxin, one she feared could seep straight into her heart and take root.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 254[954 words]

Chapter 254 Retreat Into the Cold Night

67

Finished

Scarlett looked at him and for a moment felt herself getting pulled in. She quickly averted her gaze and stepped back, putting space between them.

What does a guy like Damian even want, saying such things to me? She couldn't figure it out and didn't dare believe him. The world was full of smooth talk and empty promises. Believing him would only lead to getting hurt.

She'd managed to put some distance between them, but she could still feel his eyes on her, following her every move.

The dance floor filled up. Zachary, Vincent, and Daniel quickly found partners.

Scarlett stood at the edge of the crowd. A few people tried to make conversation, but she just offered polite smiles, showing no interest in joining the dancing.

Damian remained beside her, a silent, watchful presence.

The room was lively and loud, but none of the excitement felt like it was meant for her. She felt utterly out of place.

On the stage, Sabrina was playing the piano. She seemed to be in her element, a soft glow around her as she commanded everyone's attention.

Scarlett suddenly remembered what Daniel had said—that Sabrina was the kind of person who excelled anywhere. It seemed true. Sabrina always knew how to be the center of attention.

Scarlett couldn’t take it anymore and decided to slip outside for some air. But just as she turned, a sharp, startled scream cut through the music behind her.

Instinctively, she looked back and saw Vincent push past his dance partner, rushing through the crowd toward the stage.

On the platform, Sabrina appeared to have been struck by a small, falling object from the lighting rig. She had crumpled to the floor and wasn’t moving.

Vincent vaulted onto the stage and gathered Sabrina into his arms.

Daniel rushed up too, his voice tense with alarm. “Sabrina!”

Caleb was right behind him, calling out worriedly, “Sabrina, you okay?”

Vincent lifted Sabrina carefully. “Daniel, Caleb–go get the car started, now,” he directed, his voice tight.

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Chapter 254 Retreat Into the Cold Night

(67)

Finished

The two men responded immediately, hurrying toward the exit. As they rushed past Scarlett, they stirred a gust of air that brushed against her.

Damian moved swiftly, shielding Scarlett from the jostling crowd with his body.

Everyone was so focused on Sabrina that they were gone in a frantic, hurried blur.

After such an unsettling accident, Ethan quickly worked to reassure the remaining guests before leaving for the hospital himself.

With the host gone, there was no reason for Scarlett to stay. She turned and made her way outside. Damian followed close behind, his hand closing firmly around hers. “I’ll take you home,” he stated, leaving no room for argument.

Scarlett didn’t resist, letting him lead the way.

The drive back was quiet. Damian didn’t say a word to her. Scarlett didn’t know what was on his mind and didn’t ask.

When the car finally stopped in front of Theron Manor and Scarlett moved to open her door, Damian spoke up, his tone uncharacteristically sulky, “Why are you giving me the silent treatment?”

Scarlett paused, turning to look at him with genuine confusion.

Seeing her blank expression, Damian glanced away, as if the words were difficult. “If it’s because of what I said earlier... just forget I said it. Pretend it never happened.”

He was terrified that his confession had scared her off, that she’d retreat completely and he’d lose any chance with her. He wanted her–badly–but he wouldn’t force the issue. He never should have let those words out.

Scarlett hadn’t expected him to bring that up. It wasn’t that she was giving him the silent treatment; she just didn’t want to complicate her life any further.

She studied his profile for a long moment before speaking softly. “Damian, you’re a good guy. We can be friends.”

Hearing this, Damian’s expression tightened. He shook his head, his earlier retreat instantly revoked. “Then I take it back. I’m not taking back what I said.”

Scarlett was taken aback. “You...”

Damian stared straight ahead, refusing to look at her. “Just get out of the car.”

Feeling a pang of helplessness, she tried again. “Damian, come on. Don’t be like this.”

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Chapter 254 Retreat Into the Cold Night

67

Finished

He finally turned to face her. In the shadowy interior of the car, a roguish, defiant smile touched his lips. “What’s the matter, sweetheart?” he asked, his voice dropping to a low, teasing murmur. “Not getting out? Does that mean you want to come home with me instead?”

He made a show of reaching for the ignition.

Seeing that, Scarlett quickly pushed the door open and

got out.

Damian watched her stand on the curb. He rolled down the passenger window, all trace of his previous teasing gone, replaced by a quiet, protective seriousness. “Go on inside. I’ll wait until you’re in.”

His changeable nature was exactly why Scarlett found it impossible to trust his words.

Without another word, she turned and walked up the path to the manor’s entrance.

Damian watched her figure disappear inside, then slumped back in his seat. He lifted a hand and pinched the bridge of his nose, a weary gesture.

In the heavy silence, he pulled a cigarette from the console. He brought it to his lips, then paused. He remembered Scarlett mentioning once that she hated the smell of smoke. With a soft sigh, he tossed the unlit cigarette back down.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 255[932 words]

Chapter 255 A Child’s Midnight Fears

In front of her, every line he’d ever drawn for himself seemed to blur into irrelevance.

67

Finished

At Ravenshade Villa, Vanessa jolted awake from a nightmare with a sharp gasp, immediately bursting into loud, frightened sobs.

Downstairs, Lily had just finished tidying up the kitchen when she heard the cries from above. She hurried up the staircase.

Pushing open the bedroom door, she found Vanessa sitting upright in the middle of the big bed, her face wet with tears.

“Sweetheart, what’s the matter?”

Lily rushed to the bedside, bending down to gather the little girl into her arms.

Vanessa buried her face in Lily’s shoulder, her small body shaking. “Lily,” she whimpered, “I dreamed Daddy and Sabrina both left and didn’t want me anymore.”

Lily rocked her gently. “Oh, honey, of course not. Your father and Ms. Monroe just went to a party. They’ll be home soon.”

Vanessa’s eyes, swimming with fresh tears, looked up at her. “Then why aren’t they back yet?”

Lily glanced at the wall clock. It was already past two in the morning.

She didn’t have a good answer for the child.

After a moment’s thought, she settled on, “They must have been delayed, sweetie.”

“I want to call Daddy,” Vanessa insisted, her voice thick with sleep and sorrow.

Lily had no choice but to agree.

She dialed Vincent’s number. The phone rang and rang, but no one picked up.

Seeing this, Vanessa’s crying intensified. “He doesn’t want me, Lily! He doesn’t!”

Lily carried her, pacing slowly around the room. She soothed and patted her back for what felt like ages, but the tears wouldn’t stop.

Finally, Lily ventured softly, “Vanessa... would you like to call your mom?”

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Chapter 255 A Child’s Midnight Fears

67

Finished

At the word “mom“, Vanessa’s sobs hitched. She grew quiet, thinking seriously for a few seconds before giving a small, hesitant nod.

Lily could see it plainly–the little girl missed her mother terribly.

What child didn’t?

Vanessa was only five. For all her apparent closeness with Sabrina, a mother’s place was something entirely different, impossible to replace.

Vanessa probably didn’t even understand her own feelings fully. The crying and fussing were just her way of dealing with the big, confusing emotions inside.

Lily found Scarlett’s number and dialed.

Once the call connected, she handed the phone to Vanessa. “Here, sweetie. It’s

your mom.”

Vanessa, however, turned her face stubbornly away, refusing to speak.

Just as Lily was about to coax her, Scarlett’s voice came through the receiver. “Hello?”

Hearing it, Vanessa’s ears perked up slightly. She was listening, waiting to see if her mom would ask about her.

Lily tried again to hand her the phone, but Vanessa just stared at it, making no move to take it.

Sighing inwardly, Lily brought the phone back to her own ear. “Mrs. Stewart, it’s Lily. Vanessa... She was saying she misses you.”

She said it hoping to bridge the growing distance between mother and daughter.

But the words had the opposite effect. Overhearing, Vanessa immediately protested, “Lily! I did not! I said I miss Daddy and Sabrina!”

On the other end of the line, Scarlett heard the defiance loud and clear.

She had just gotten home, wiped off her makeup, and was drained. Hearing Vanessa’s sharp correction, a wave of weary frustration washed over her.

Without stopping to filter her thoughts, she replied to Lily, “She doesn’t miss me, Lily. She’s just lonely because there’s no one else there.”

It was two a.m. A call at this hour only meant two things–either the child was sick, or Vincent and Sabrina weren't around.

And wasn't it just perfect timing? Sabrina had gotten hurt tonight, and Vincent had undoubtedly gone to the hospital with her.

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Chapter 255 A Child's Midnight Fears

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So, Vanessa had no one. And now, suddenly, she remembered her mother.

After stating that blunt truth, Scarlett ended the call, not waiting to hear Lily's response or consider what they might think of her.

Back in the bedroom, Lily was still holding the phone to her ear when the dial tone began to buzz.

In all her years at Ravenshade Villa, Scarlett had always been endlessly patient and attentive with both Vincent and Vanessa, caring for every detail.

Now, everything was different.

But Lily understood why. She couldn't blame Scarlett, not one bit.

A husband and child like that... They really weren't worth the heartache.

Still, she was the household help. It wasn't her place to say anything.

As she set the phone down, Vanessa started up again, crying even harder. She flopped back on the bed, kicking her feet. "Mean mommy! She's a mean mommy! I don't want her!"

Lily watched the display, feeling a deep, helpless weariness.

When Scarlett had been the one taking care of Vanessa daily, the little girl had never thrown tantrums like this. She'd never been so openly spiteful.

But now... Vanessa had picked up some nasty habits somewhere. To speak about her own mother that way...

If she could say such things at home, what might she say to others outside?

The thought made Lily sigh heavily once more.

Vanessa's cries were climbing in volume again. Lily was steeling herself to offer more comfort when the bedroom door opened softly, and Maria walked in.

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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 — 256[955 words]

Awakened Housewife: Ignore Betrayer's Begs

Chapter 256 An Unwelcome Midnight Call

"Lily, what's all this noise?"

Seeing Maria, Lily simply explained, "Vanessa had a bad dream."

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Maria walked over and gently nudged Lily aside. "Let me handle this. You go get some rest."

Lily was taken aback. "Huh?"

Maria bent and scooped Vanessa up, then glanced back at Lily. “Go on to bed. You can trust me with her?”

Lily fell silent. It was true–besides being attached to Sabrina, Vanessa was also quite fond of Maria.

Maybe it wasn’t a bad idea to let Maria comfort her.

Besides, Vanessa’s sobs had already quieted to sniffles now that she was in Maria’s arms.

After a moment’s hesitation, Lily left the bedroom.

She had just finished washing up downstairs when Maria came down a short while later.

Seeing her, Lily asked with concern, “Maria, is she settled?”

Hearing the casual address, Maria’s brow furrowed in clear displeasure. She corrected Lily with a pointed tone. “Lily, I call you by your name out of courtesy. But don’t you think it’s a bit informal for you to call me the same? I am Sabrina’s mother, after all. Shouldn’t that warrant a bit more respect?”

Lily didn’t know how to argue.

Given how Vincent was treating Sabrina these days, what Maria said was likely to become a reality.

Too tired to pick a fight, Lily asked flatly, “Fine. What should I call you, then?”

Maria pondered this seriously for a few seconds before declaring, “From now on, you may address me as Mrs. Monroe.”

Lily was momentarily stunned. Though she found Maria presumptuous, she was, at the end of the day, the hired help. She could only nod in reluctant agreement. “Yes, Mrs. Monroe.”

With Vincent clearly favoring Maria’s side, it was even less wise for Lily to oppose her.

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Chapter 256 An Unwelcome Midnight Call

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Finished

She was about to drop the subject when she remembered Vanessa. “Mrs. Monroe,” she asked, unable to hide her worry, “is Vanessa really alright now?”

The title seemed to satisfy Maria. She nodded. “Children are resilient. A little comfort goes a long way.”

Lily remained skeptical but simply said, “I see.”

Come to think of it, Vanessa had been hard to soothe lately, yet Maria had managed it quickly. It was clear the little girl had grown genuinely fond of both Sabrina and Maria.

With that thought, Lily bid Maria goodnight.

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Early the next morning, just as Scarlett’s alarm stopped buzzing, her phone began to ring.

She had been contemplating ten more minutes of precious sleep, but the ringing shattered any hope of dozing off.

She answered without checking the caller ID.

Vincent’s voice, hoarse and heavy with fatigue, came through the line. “You need to take Vanessa to school today.”

The words snapped Scarlett fully awake.

Assuming Vincent must be at the hospital with Sabrina at this hour, her refusal was instinctive. “I have teaching rounds this morning. I don’t have time to drop her off.”

The rounds were real. So was her resentment.

Vincent continued, “I won’t be able to handle school drop–offs or pick–ups for the next couple of days. I’ll need you to *go to* Ravenshade Villa in the evenings to look after her, too.”

Scarlett couldn’t help letting out a bitter, incredulous laugh. “Let me guess,” she said, her voice sharp. “Working late? Or is your grandfather unwell and needs you?”

Vincent didn’t bother to hide it. “Sabrina’s in the hospital. Her condition isn’t great. I need to stay with her.”

A cold sneer escaped Scarlett. “So, for her sake, you’re just going to shove Vanessa aside?”

“I’m not shoving her aside,” Vincent argued, a defensive edge creeping into his tired voice. “I just can’t be in two places at once. It’s a temporary situation.”

A wave of inexplicable anger washed over Scarlett. “The result is the same, Vincent! What’s

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Chapter 256 An Unwelcome Midnight Call

A 67

Finished

there to explain?” she shot back, her voice rising. “Don’t you always put Sabrina first in your heart? Why pretend otherwise?”

Vincent seemed to start another sentence, but Scarlett had heard enough. “Save your explanations for Vanessa,” she cut in, her tone final and furious. “Don’t waste them on me. I don’t want to hear it.”

She ended the call before he could respond.

That conversation with Vincent cast a shadow over Scarlett’s entire day. Her mood stayed foul.

Even though she’d declared she was done taking care of Vanessa, the worry gnawed at her all afternoon. Vanessa was, after all, her daughter. A mother’s concern wasn’t something she could simply switch off.

With neither Vincent nor Sabrina around, what would happen to the little girl?

The question haunted her through every meeting and patient consult.

When her shift finally ended that evening, Scarlett got into her car. Almost on autopilot, her hands turned the wheel toward the direction of the kindergarten.

By the time she pulled up, the parking lot was nearly empty, and the stream of departing children had dwindled to a trickle.

Scarlett didn’t see Vanessa among the few remaining kids. Anxiety tightening her chest, she approached the security guard at the gate. “Excuse me,” she asked, trying to sound calm. “Has Vanessa Stewart been picked up already?”

The guard looked her over, his expression turning appraising and slightly suspicious.

Scarlett opened her mouth to say, “I’m her mother,” but the words stuck in her throat, unsaid.

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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 — 257[871 words]

Chapter 257 The Teacher’s Troubling Report

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Vanessa had been attending the kindergarten for a while, yet none of the teachers or staff seemed to recognize Scarlett in connection with her.

A pang of disappointment shot through Scarlett. She was about *to* leave when Bianca Fairfax, Clara’s honteroom teacher, spotted her. “Clara’s aunt?” she called out, sounding surprised.

Scarlett turned and offered a polite smile. “That’s right.”

Bianca walked over. “Are you here to pick up Clara?”

Scarlett shook her head. “Actually, I wanted to ask if Vanessa Stewart has been picked up already.”

Bianca didn’t expect the question. Her brow furrowed slightly. “Vanessa? I don’t believe she came to school today.”

The words sent a jolt of unease through Scarlett. Her immediate fear was that no one had taken Vanessa to school at all.

While kindergarten attendance wasn’t the end of the world, Scarlett believed in structure and consistency. She didn’t want Vanessa picking up bad habits so early.

The worry began to settle in her stomach.

Just as she turned to go, Bianca spoke again, “Clara’s aunt?”

Scarlett looked back, confused. “Yes, Bianca?”

“I just wanted to say,” Bianca began warmly, “Clara is an absolute delight. She completes her tasks beautifully, gets along wonderfully with all her classmates–she’s like a little ray of sunshine. We all adore her. You must be so proud.”

Hearing the praise for Clara lifted Scarlett’s spirits, and she thanked Bianca sincerely.

Almost as an afterthought, she ventured, “And Vanessa? How is she doing?”

At the mention of Vanessa, Bianca’s expression shifted. A small, subconscious frown appeared.

After a careful pause, she replied, “Well... perhaps due to her home situation, Vanessa can be rather... assertive. She’s had issues with spitting at other children. We’ve addressed it with her several times, but the behavior persists. I’m afraid she hasn’t made many friends here as a result.”

A chill ran down Scarlett’s spine at Bianca’s words.

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Fortunately, Bianca was needed elsewhere, and their conversation ended shortly after.

Driven by a growing sense of dread, Scarlett decided to head straight *to* Ravenshade Villa to check on Vanessa.

During the drive, Bianca's assessment echoed in her mind. Spitting? No friends?

Vanessa had once been such a sweet, gentle child. What had happened?

The year before Scarlett returned to work, when Vanessa was just four, she'd been polite,. bubbly, and cheerful. Strangers at the park would often stop to compliment her cheerful demeanor and bright smile.

Now, she couldn't even make friends. Even Clara seemed to keep her distance.

When Scarlett arrived at the villa, the main hall was quiet. Lily was busy in the kitchen, and only Maria was in the living room, lounging on the sofa watching a talk show and snacking from a bowl of chips.

Hearing the door, Maria glanced up. The moment she recognized Scarlett, open distaste flashed across her face.

Scarlett ignored her and walked directly to the kitchen.

Lily looked up, surprised. "Mrs. Stewart?"

Scarlett didn't waste time. "Where's Vanessa?"

"She is upstairs in her room," Lily replied.

"Why wasn't she in school today?" Scarlett pressed.

Lily thought for a moment. "Mr. Stewart called this morning and asked me to take her. But when I went to get her ready, Vanessa complained of a stomachache, so she stayed home."

A terrible suspicion formed in Scarlett's mind. Was she faking illness because she was unhappy at school? Because she was behaving poorly and felt disliked?

The thought brought a wave of sadness.

Lily noticed Scarlett's troubled expression. She seemed to want to say more but instead asked, "Will you be staying for dinner tonight, Mrs. Stewart?"

Scarlett snapped back to the present. “Yes, please go ahead and prepare something. I’m going up to see her.”

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Chapter 257 The Teacher’s Troubling Report

“Of course,” Lily said.

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Scarlett made her way upstairs. She paused outside Vanessa’s bedroom door, not entering immediately. She peeked quietly inside.

Vanessa was sitting on the floor by the low play table, listlessly moving a few *toy* figures around. There was no smile on her face, no sense of engagement in her play.

Seeing her daughter look so solitary and joyless twisted Scarlett’s heart.

After gathering herself for a moment, she gently knocked on the doorframe.

At the sound, Vanessa’s head whipped around. For a split second, her face lit up, and she almost blurted out, “Sabr-?”

But the name caught in her throat. The fleeting hope in her eyes vanished instantly, replaced by blank disappointment.

Scarlett saw it all clearly. The unguarded rejection was like a sharp, unexpected knife to her chest.

Steeling herself, she walked into the room.

She sat down on the edge of the sofa near Vanessa. Looking down at her daughter’s bowed head, she asked softly, “Vanessa, sweetheart, can you tell me why you didn’t go to school today?”

From the moment Scarlett had entered, Vanessa hadn’t looked at her directly. She hadn’t called out to her.

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Silent Dreams Never Die — 258

Chapter 258 A Clash at the Dinner Table

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When Scarlett asked the question, Vanessa flinched slightly, but she still didn't answer.

Seeing no response, Scarlett let out a long, quiet sigh. She tried again, her voice gentle but firm. "Vanessa?"

Vanessa kept her head down, focusing intently on her toys, maintaining her stubborn silence.

Scarlett's patience wore thin. Her voice rose, sharper this time. "Vanessa Stewart!"

The use of her full name carried a weight of maternal authority, but even that earned no reaction. Vanessa simply tuned her out.

Scarlett stood up, her initial impulse to scold warring with a deeper hurt. Seeing her daughter's complete refusal to even acknowledge her, the urge to lecture died away.

So a heavy, wordless stalemate settled over the room. Vanessa played in a bubble of quiet defiance. Scarlett stood watching, a silent observer shut out of her child's world.

When Lily finished cooking and came upstairs, she expected to find some reconciliation. Instead, she was met with a cold, impenetrable silence between mother and daughter.

Standing in the doorway, she knocked softly. "Mrs. Stewart, Ms. Stewart, dinner is ready."

Scarlett stood. She looked down at the top of Vanessa's head. "Come on, Vanessa. Time for

dinner."

Only then did Vanessa set her toys aside. She scooted past Scarlett without a glance and went straight to Lily, taking her hand. “Lily,” she asked, looking up, “what did you make for dinner?”

Lily’s eyes flickered toward Scarlett before she answered. “I made your favorite, honey. Garlic butter shrimp.”

A small, sweet smile touched Vanessa’s lips. “Thank you, Lily. You’re the best.”

Scarlett remained standing in the center of the bedroom, feeling a cold numbness seep through her. Vanessa was affectionate with everyone–except her. And she was her mother.

By the time Scarlett came downstairs, Vanessa and Maria were already seated at the dining table, starting their meal.

As Scarlett took her seat, Maria shot her a sidelong glare and muttered under her breath, “No shame at all.”

Her voice was low, but Scarlett heard it clearly. Right in front of Vanessa, Maria showed no

concern for setting a poor example, speaking her mind freely.

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Finished

Scarlett bit back her retort. Not for Maria’s sake, but for Vanessa’s. She refused *to* start a shouting match or use harsh language in front of her daughter. Children picked things up far too quickly.

Lily had just finished setting the last dish on the table and hadn’t even caught her breath when Maria issued a command. “Lily, sit down and shell the shrimp for Vanessa. You know she loves them but can’t manage the shells.”

Scarlett looked sharply across the table at Vanessa. “Vanessa,” she said, her tone clear and firm. “You know what I’ve taught you. If you want to eat something, you learn to handle it

yourself. No one is going to do everything for you forever. You need to learn independence."

Maria felt Scarlett was deliberately contradicting her. She raised her voice. "Lily! Are you just going to stand there? Get moving."

Lily froze, caught in the middle, her gaze darting uncomfortably between the two women.

Scarlett did not yield. She kept her eyes on Lily. "Lily, we've talked about this. Vanessa is old enough to start doing things for herself. Please, go attend to your other tasks. She can feed herself."

In the end, Lily quietly obeyed Scarlett and left the dining room.

Seeing that no one was going to shell the shrimp for her, Vanessa's lower lip trembled, and she began to cry.

Scarlett simply watched, making no move to comfort her.

"Oh, sweetheart, don't cry," Maria cooed, immediately turning to Vanessa. "Here, let me do it for you." She pulled the plate of shrimp toward herself.

Vanessa nodded, her eyes red–rimmed. "Okay. Thank you, Maria."

As she began peeling a shrimp, Maria said to Vanessa in a carrying voice, "See now, honey? Now you know who really cares about making you happy and who doesn't, don't you?"

That was the final straw for Scarlett. Before Vanessa could even respond, Scarlett threw her napkin down on the table and stood up abruptly. "Vanessa, upstairs with me. Now. We need to talk."

Vanessa continued to ignore her, acting as if Scarlett wasn't even in the room.

A surge of frustrated anger broke through Scarlett's restraint. She marched around the table, scooped a startled Vanessa up from her chair, and carried her toward the staircase.

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Vanessa kicked and squirmed in her arms, but she was no match for her mother's determined strength.

A moment later, Scarlett deposited her onto the sofa in the upstairs bedroom.

"Do you have any idea what you did wrong?" Scarlett demanded, her voice loud and strained.

Vanessa didn't answer. Instead, she unleashed a fresh wave of loud, dramatic sobs.

Scarlett didn't offer a hug or a soothing word. She didn't yell again either. She simply sat down in a nearby armchair and waited, her expression unyielding, for the storm to pass.

Vanessa cried, expecting the tears to bring fear or pity. But after several long minutes, Scarlett remained silent and unmoved.

Seeing that her tears weren't working, Vanessa changed tactics. She clutched her stomach, curling into a ball on the sofa. "Oww! My stomach hurts!" she wailed, contorting her face into an exaggerated mask of pain.

Scarlett still didn't react. She simply watched, letting the performance run its course.

Downstairs, when Scarlett had carried Vanessa away, Maria had jumped up to follow. But Lily quickly caught her arm.

"Mrs. Monroe," Lily said quietly but firmly, "that is her mother. A mother disciplining her own child is only natural. It's best if you and I don't interfere."

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Silent Dreams Never Die — 259

Chapter 259 A Shove in the Dark

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Maria was furious. She shoved Lily hard. “What kind of mother is she? She dragged Vanessa upstairs just to punish her! If she hurts one hair on that child’s head, Sabrina will be devastated. Now move! Don’t you dare stand in my way. I’m going up to see my poor Vanessa!”

No matter what Maria said, Lily held her ground, gripping her arm firmly.

“Mrs. Monroe, Mrs. Stewart has a gentle heart. She would never lay a hand on Vanessa. Please, just calm down.”

Maria struggled, trying to pry Lily’s fingers loose, but failed. Eventually, she gave up with a huff.

Still, Lily remained watchful, staying close to ensure Maria didn’t try to storm upstairs and

escalate the situation.

Upstairs, Vanessa had finally cried herself to exhaustion and lay still on the sofa. Before long, her breathing evened out into sleep.

Scarlett watched her, her own heart a tangled knot of frustration and love.

Once sure Vanessa was asleep, Scarlett gently lifted her, carried her to the bed, and tucked the covers around her.

She then settled into a chair beside the bed, lost in troubled thought about how to reach her daughter, how to steer her back.

She didn’t know how long she’d been sitting there when a soft voice came from the hallway. “Scarlett. Come out for a minute.”

Scarlett thought she’d imagined it, but the call came again.

Recognizing Vincent’s voice, she stood and went out into the hall.

Not wanting *to* risk waking Vanessa, Scarlett led him to their old bedroom, the one they used to share.

When she flicked the light on, the room felt foreign. The dressing table was cluttered with an array of skincare bottles and cosmetic cases. The bedsheets were a light, unfamiliar blue, and the whole room carried a faint, floral perfume.

Vincent seemed agitated. “I need to take Vanessa to the hospital,” he said without preamble.

It was already late. A trip to the hospital now would mean returning in the early hours of the morning.

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Chapter 259 A Shove in the Dark.

67

Finished

Scarlett, baffled by the sudden demand, refused flatly. “It’s the middle of the night, Vincent. Whatever it is can wait until tomorrow.”

“Sabrina says she misses her,” Vincent pressed, his voice tight. “She wants *to* see Vanessa.”

Hearing that, a flare of anger ignited in Scarlett’s chest. “Vanessa just fell asleep. It’s eleven o’clock at night!”

Seeing her resistance, Vincent tried again. “I know the time. I won’t keep her out long. I’ll bring her right back.”

This only fueled Scarlett’s anger. “Vincent, is Sabrina that important to you?” she demanded, her voice rising. “So important that you’d drag a sleeping child across town in the middle of the night for a social visit, ignoring what’s best for her?”

Vincent paused, then offered an explanation. “Sabrina was hit by falling equipment at the party. The doctor diagnosed a concussion. She’s still in the hospital, and she says she can’t sleep. She thinks seeing Vanessa would help her rest, so I thought...”

Scarlett let out a bitter, incredulous laugh. “A concussion isn’t a death sentence. If she misses Vanessa that much, she’s welcome to come here and see her when she’s discharged.”

Seeing Scarlett wouldn’t budge, Vincent gave up on reasoning. He turned on his heel to leave the room.

Scarlett guessed his intention–to go wake Vanessa. She stepped forward quickly and grabbed his arm. “Vincent, if you do this, you’re the one who’ll end up hurting her.”

Vincent, already on edge and frustrated, felt his temper snap at being physically restrained.

He turned back and instinctively wrenched his arm free, shoving her hand away. “Get out of my way.”

The motion was forceful. Scarlett, caught off–balance, stumbled backward. Her shoulder hit the doorframe, and she fell to the floor, her forehead striking the hardwood with a dull thud.

For a moment, the world spun, a dizzying blur of pain and disorientation.

Vincent stared at his own hand in shock. He’d been rushing, annoyed, but he hadn’t meant to use that much force.

Seeing her on the ground, he froze for a second before crouching down beside her. “Are you okay?” he asked, his voice now laced with concern as he helped her sit up.

Scarlett, supported by him, saw stars dancing in her vision. Vincent’s face above her seemed to warp and swim.

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Chapter 259 A Shove in the Dark

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Finished

She didn’t answer. Thinking she was just silently fuming, he murmured a soft apology. “I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to push you.”

His voice sounded distant, muffled, like a buzz in her ears.

It took Scarlett a long minute for the dizziness to recede and her sight *to* clear. Gradually, Vincent’s worried face came into focus.

Seeing he was still holding her shoulders, she pushed his hands away coldly and stood on her own. “Vincent,” she said, her voice low and steady with a finality that chilled the air, “if you keep prioritizing like this, you will be the one who ruins Vanessa.”

With that, she walked past him and out of the bedroom, leaving him standing there.

Vincent watched her retreating back but didn't call after her. No words came.

Alone in the bedroom, he pulled out a cigarette and lit it, then immediately thought better of it. He stubbed it out and went to smoke in the hallway instead.

By the time he finished, Scarlett was nowhere to be seen downstairs.

After tossing the cigarette butt into a bin, Vincent went to Vanessa's room. He sat on the edge of her bed, watching her peaceful sleeping face for a long time.

Finally, as if reaching a difficult decision, he leaned over and gently shook her shoulder.

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Silent Dreams Never Die — 260

Chapter 260 The Late–Night Hospital Visit

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Vanessa's eyes fluttered open, heavy with sleep. When she saw Vincent, a sleepy smile spread across her face. "Daddy, you're back."

Vincent helped her sit up, smoothing her hair with a hand that held a trace of guilt. He kept his voice to a whisper. "Vanessa, how about Daddy takes you to see Sabrina? Would you like that?"

Hearing this, Vanessa nodded eagerly. "Yes! I've been so worried about her. I wanted *to go* see her, but Lily said it was too late."

Vincent still hesitated, testing the waters. “What if... your mom doesn’t want you to go?”

Thinking of Scarlett’s sternness earlier, a flicker of defiance sparked in Vanessa. “It’s my choice, Daddy. I can go if I want. It doesn’t have anything to do with Mom. Besides,” she added, her lower lip jutting out slightly, “she doesn’t even care. She wouldn’t even let anyone help me with my shrimp.”

Her words settled in Vincent’s chest with an unexpected weight. But the image of Sabrina, alone and waiting in her hospital room, pushed the feeling aside. He clenched his jaw slightly and scooped Vanessa into his arms.

After helping her into a warm jacket, he carried her out into the night.

They left the house close to midnight and arrived at the hospital just after twelve–thirty.

When Vanessa pushed open the door to the private room, Sabrina was propped up in bed, scrolling through her phone. Hearing the door, she quickly set it down and turned. Seeing Vanessa, her face lit up with a wide, welcoming smile. She held out her arms. “Vanessa! Come here, sweetheart, come to me.”

Vanessa scampered across the room and launched herself into Sabrina’s embrace.

Sabrina had a white bandage wrapped around her forehead. ‘Dressed in a standard hospital gown, she looked paler and more fragile than usual.

Vanessa clung *to* her tightly, her eyes welling up. “Sabrina, I missed you so much. I couldn’t sleep without you.”

Sabrina held her close, stroking her hair. “I missed you too, my darling. I couldn’t sleep a wink either, without my little Vanessa here.”

Even as she said it, Sabrina had, in fact, dozed off earlier in the evening.

Her sudden request for Vanessa’s company had come after a text from Maria, warning her that Scarlett was at the house and that she should be careful not to let the mother reclaim the child’s

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So, Sabrina had claimed insomnia, knowing Vincent would move mountains *to* grant her wish. She hadn't expected him to actually bring Vanessa out so late.

Now, Vanessa nestled against her, seeking comfort. Sabrina cooed and murmured sweet praises until the girl's earlier upset seemed forgotten, her mood visibly brightening.

Watching the two of them wrapped in a tight hug, whispering how much they'd missed each other, a sudden, sharp ache pierced Vincent's chest.

The pair chatted on the hospital bed for what felt like a long time before Vincent finally spoke

his voice gentle but firm. "Vanessa, it's time. Daddy needs to take you home."

up,

Vanessa's face fell. She shook her head, burrowing deeper against Sabrina. "No! I want to stay here with Sabrina."

Vincent was about to insist when Sabrina intervened, her tone soft and pleading. "Vincent, please? Let her stay just for tonight. It would mean so much to me."

Hearing her, Vincent wavered. After a brief internal struggle, he relented. "Alright. Just for tonight."

After leaving Ravenshade Villa, Scarlett drove aimlessly for a while before pulling into a nearby neighborhood park.

Vanessa's defiance, Vincent's blatant disregard for their daughter's wellbeing and routine–it all festered inside her like a splinter she couldn't dislodge. She wanted to tear it out, to fix everything, but no clear path presented itself.

She sank onto a cold wooden bench, buried her face in her hands, and let the silent tears fall. She could try to numb herself to Vincent's actions, but Vanessa was just a child. Without proper guidance, she was headed down a difficult path. And these erratic, late–night disruptions were terrible for her health.

The thoughts churned, leaving a thick, suffocating weight in her chest. The night air was chilly, but the cold inside her ran deeper.

She wasn't sure how much time had passed when a pair of polished leather shoes came into her blurred line of sight, stopping directly in front of her.

Startled, she quickly looked up.

It was Caleb's face looking down at her, wearing a faint, unreadable smile. There was something in that smile that, made her skin crawl.

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Chapter 260 The Late-Night Hospital Visit

Seeing it was him, Scarlett shot to her feet, ready to leave.

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Caleb took a casual step to the side, blocking her path. "Ms. Theron," he said, his tone deceptively light. "It's quite late for you to be out here alone. Do you need a ride somewhere?"

Scarlett ignored him, attempting to step around him on the other side.

As she moved past, his hand shot out, his fingers closing around her forearm.

Scarlett tried to yank her arm back, but his grip was firm. When she couldn't break free, she leveled a cold glare at him. "I have my own car. I don't need your performative chivalry."

Caleb's gaze dropped to her red-rimmed eyes. He tilted his head, a flicker of mock confusion in his expression. "You really do despise me, don't you?"

Scarlett let out a short, bitter laugh. "What did you expect? A thank-you card?"

Caleb seemed amused by her retort. When he chuckled, faint lines crinkled at the corners of his eyes, but the humor didn't reach their assessing gaze. "Well," he mused, his voice dropping to a suggestive murmur, "Vincent's clearly preoccupied with Sabrina. If you decided you wanted to... redirect your affections, I certainly wouldn't object."

His words were like a physical slap. Scarlett's voice shook with a mixture of rage and disgust. "Let *go* of me. You're disgusting."

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Silent Dreams Never Die — 261

Chapter 261 An Unwelcome Advance Thwarted

Instead of letting go, Caleb tightened his grip and tried to pull her closer, his other hand moving to encircle her waist.

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Seeing his intentions turn physical, Scarlett shouted, “Caleb, what the hell do you think you’re doing?”

Caleb shed any pretense of civility, his expression turning ugly. “What does it matter? Vincent doesn’t want you. That body of yours is going to waste. Why not let me have a little fun? I’ll even marry you once you’re divorced. How’s that for a deal?”

He yanked her against him, leaning down to hiss the disgusting proposal directly into her ear.

Scarlett jerked her head back, glaring at him with pure venom. “You sick bastard, let me go!”

Caleb wasn’t offended; he actually chuckled. “And what are you going to do about it?”

Without a second thought, Scarlett drove her knee upward toward his groin. He reacted quickly, blocking the strike with his thigh, and her attempt to incapacitate him failed.

The fact that she fought back seemed to extinguish the last of his amusement. His eyes turned cold. “Scarlett, have I been too gentle with you?” he snarled, his hand moving to claw at the neckline of her blouse.

Just then, a furious shout cut through the night. “Caleb! You’ve got some nerve putting your hands on a woman under Damian’s protection. You looking to get buried?”

It was Zachary’s voice.

Before the words had fully faded, Zachary was already striding over from behind Scarlett. He didn’t waste time on conversation.

As soon as he was within reach, his fist shot out, connecting solidly with Caleb’s jaw.

The impact snapped Caleb's head to the side. A trickle of blood immediately seeped from the corner of his mouth.

Caleb clutched his bleeding lip, shooting a murderous glare at Zachary. "I'll touch whoever I want. Who are you to stop me?"

Zachary moved swiftly, placing himself squarely between Caleb and Scarlett. He stared the other man down. "Go ahead. Try touching her again, Don't think that just because your pathetic little company is cozy with Vincent and that prick Daniel, you're untouchable. Damian could crush your business like a bug without breaking a sweat. You think you're in her league?"

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The words sent a visible chill through Caleb. In this city, the business world was essentially divided between two spheres of influence–one centered around Vincent, the other around Damian.

Caleb had managed to ingratiate himself with Vincent's circle, but that didn't grant him immunity from the other side. Crossing Damian was a completely different game.

Zachary's threat hit home, and fear flickered behind Caleb's bravado.

Still, he tried to salvage some pride. "We'll see about that, Zachary. Maybe one day you'll be the one coming to me for *a* favor."

Zachary scoffed, his disdain palpable. "Come to you? Don't make me laugh."

Knowing he was outmatched and out–powered, Caleb had no choice but to retreat. He shot them one last hateful look before slinking away into the shadows, nursing his injured pride along with his bleeding mouth. In this world, without real power, you learned to swallow your anger and disappear.

Once Caleb was gone, Zachary turned to Scarlett, his demeanor shifting instantly to one of concern. "Scarlett, are you alright?"

Scarlett shook her head, though she was still visibly shaken. “I’m fine,” she managed to say.

Zachary noticed her red–rimmed eyes. He didn’t know the source of her earlier distress and didn’t feel it was his place to pry. Instead, he offered, “Let me drive you home.”

Scarlett gave him a grateful look. “Thank you, but I drove myself. I can get back.”

Zachary clearly wasn’t satisfied with that. “Then I’ll follow you in my car. I’ll leave once I see you’re safely inside.”

Scarlett started to protest, but Zachary cut her off gently. “Come on, don’t argue with me on this.”

She finally nodded in weary acceptance.

*****

After tailing Scarlett’s car all the way to Theron Manor and watching her front door close behind her, Zachary’s phone rang. It was Damian.

An impatient voice came through the line. “Where are you? You’re late.”

“Got held up,” Zachary replied vaguely.

“By what?” Damian pressed.

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“I’ll tell you when I get there,” Zachary said, a hint of drama in his tone.

Ten minutes later, Zachary walked into the private room of the upscale lounge. Damian and Felix were already there, the only occupants in the softly lit space.

Zachary dropped onto the plush sofa, plucked a few grapes from the fruit platter on the table, and popped one into his mouth. He chewed slowly, his eyes settling on Damian, who sat across from him looking sullen.

“I just saw Scarlett,” Zachary said casually.

Damian, who had been studying the ice in his glass, looked up sharply. “Where?”

“In a park near Ravenshade Villa,” Zachary answered.

“Oh,” Damian said, trying to sound nonchalant and looking away again.

Seeing right through the act, Zachary continued, “She didn’t look too good. Pretty upset, actually.”

Damian’s hand tightened subtly around his glass. He shrugged, aiming for indifference. “She’s not upset because of me. Don’t bring me her problems.”

Zachary knew Damian was all talk. He swallowed the last grape. “Caleb was bothering her. Got a bit handsy. Looked like she’d been crying, too.”

The effect was immediate. Damian was on his feet in an instant, his expression turning to ice. Without a single word, he strode out of the room, the door swinging shut behind him.

Watching him go, Zachary couldn’t help but laugh softly and shake his head. He called out to the empty space Damian had just vacated, “Yeah, I knew it. Tough exterior, soft heart. That’s gotta sting, doesn’t it?”

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 262[927 words]

Chapter 262 An Unexpected Nighttime Visitor

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Hearing Zachary’s teasing remark, Damian didn’t bother with a reply. He just quickened his pace out of the lounge.

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Back at Theron Manor, Scarlett went straight upstairs to shower.

Once done, she stepped out of the bathroom with a towel wrapped around her body.

After towel-drying her hair a few times, she let the damp towel fall away.

Just then, she heard a soft thud from behind her.

Startled, she instinctively covered herself. “Who’s there?” she asked, her voice tight with alarm.

As she spoke, she glanced over her shoulder while hurriedly grabbing for the towel, though it did little to conceal her.

When she saw who was standing by the window, she froze in surprise.

“Damian?”

Damian stood rooted to the spot, his face flushed.

Scarlett had managed to wrap the towel around her torso, but her long legs were still largely exposed, and the line of her collarbone and shoulders was bare–too much skin on display, and it held his gaze captive.

When he’d first climbed in, he’d accidentally gotten a full view of her back–the elegant slope of her shoulders, the slender curve of her waist–an image that immediately threw his thoughts

into chaos.

Flustered, he completely forgot to look away.

Seeing him stare, Scarlett felt her own cheeks grow hot. “Damian, how long are you planning to stare?”

Snapped back to reality by her sharp tone, Damian hastily averted his eyes. The tips of his ears burned crimson as he stammered, “S–Sorry.”

Scarlett let out an exasperated huff. “Get out. Now.”

Damian gestured vaguely toward the window. “I need to talk to you. I’ll leave in a minute. Just... get dressed first.”

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His mind was stubbornly replaying the glimpse of her bare back—the memory refused to fade.

But he clenched his jaw, forcing himself to regain control.

Seeing him turn his back to her, for some reason, Scarlett found herself trusting him in that

moment.

She let the towel drop and quickly pulled on her silk pajamas.

Once dressed, she said to his back, “I’m decent.”

When Damian turned around, he kept his eyes carefully lowered, focusing on her feet. “Right**.”**

Scarlett was actually annoyed that he’d scaled her balcony and come through the window again in the middle of the night—this wasn’t the first time he’d given her such a fright.

And she’d been undressed, no less.

The thought made her speak with strained patience. “Damian, don’t do this again. If you come through *that* window one more time, I’m having it nailed shut.”

Hearing this, Damian’s head snapped up. He fixed her with a fierce, penetrating glare. “Go ahead, nail it shut. If you dare, I’ll just come through the front door instead.”

Then, a roguish, mischievous grin spread across his face. “Might as well let Nathan and Violet know I’ve already been in your bed. That way, you’ll have to take responsibility for me.”

Scarlett’s face flushed a deep crimson. “Damian, you’re impossible…”

Damian closed the distance between them in two strides, his tall frame casting a shadow that seemed to engulf her.

Seeing her speechless and flustered, a full, satisfied smile finally broke through. He leaned in slightly, his voice tinged with amusement. “You get to scold me, but I can’t tease you back?”

Scarlett had no retort. She turned her face away. “What are you doing here, anyway?”

Instead of answering, Damian brushed past her and flopped down directly onto her bed.

Watching him, Scarlett said angrily, “Damian, get off my bed.”

The last time he’d lain there, she’d forgotten to change the sheets before work. That in

Clara had come to her room to play. Tired out, the little girl had decided to sleep over.

Lying on the pillow**,** Clara had crinkled her nose and said, “Auntie, your pillow smells kinda funny.”

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Hearing that, Scarlett had picked up the pillow and sniffed it. It wasn’t a bad smell–just the lingering scent of whiskey and Damian’s cologne, subtle but distinct. Mixed together, it had been enough for Clara to notice.

Faced with the little girl’s innocent confusion, Scarlett hadn’t known what to say.

So now, seeing Damian sprawled on her bed again, a wave of irritation washed over her.

Damian lay flat on his back, making himself at home. Even as Scarlett told him to get off, he acted as if he hadn’t heard, choosing instead to finally answer her question. “I couldn’t sleep. Thought I’d come check on you.”

As he said it, his eyes searched her face closely, looking for any sign of what Zachary had mentioned–any trace of earlier distress.

But he saw nothing out of the ordinary.

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Seeing him behaving so shamelessly, Scarlett shot him a withering look. “Fine. Don’t get off. I’ll just sleep on the sofa, then.”

With that, she turned on her heel, marched to the plush sofa in the corner, and lay down on it

with her back to him.

Scarlett pulled the throw blanket over her head and turned firmly away from the bed.

He won’t stay all night. Once he gets bored, he’ll leave on his own.

Exhaustion was tugging at her, but with Damian in the room, she didn’t dare let herself fall asleep just yet.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 263[942 words]

Chapter 263 An Escape to the Riverwalk

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It was impossible to tell how much time had passed. Just as Scarlett was finally on the verge of drifting off, Damian’s voice cut through the quiet. “Let’s

Scarlett was instantly alert. “Go where?”

She pushed the blanket down and turned to look at him.

go

out.”

Damian was lying on his side on her bed. He met her gaze and then jerked his chin toward the window. “Out there.”

Scarlett was startled. “What?”

“I’ll take you to the night market downtown,” he said, his voice low. “The one by the river. You can set out those floating lanterns they have. Make a wish.”

The suggestion stirred something unexpected in Scarlett. A flicker of longing.

She had gone to college here in Rivergate. Years ago, she’d visited that very riverwalk night market with her roommates. But that felt like a lifetime ago.

Even though she’d always lived in the city, since having Vanessa, her own life had shrunk to the margins. Any outing had to be planned around her daughter’s needs and moods.

Hearing Damian mention it now sparked a genuine interest. When she’d gone with her friends, she’d been captivated by the vibrant energy, the strings of lights, the smell of food in the cool air. She hadn’t been back in years and found she suddenly wanted to see it again.

Seeing her silent contemplation, Damian knew she was tempted.

He knew she’d also talk herself out of it. So he didn’t give her the chance.

He swung his legs off the bed and strode toward the sofa. “Well?” he asked, a challenge in his tone. “Are you getting up, or do I need to come over and persuade you?”

He deliberately let the question hang. Hearing it, Scarlett sat bolt upright. “Fine. I’m up.”

“Then go change,” he said, nodding toward her closet.

Scarlett got off the sofa, found a pair of jeans and a sweater in her wardrobe, and made a beeline for the bathroom.

Watching her retreat, Damian couldn’t resist a jab. “What’s the matter? Think I’m going to pounce? You have to change in another room?”

Scarlett ignored him and shut the bathroom door behind her.

When she emerged, Damian was still standing in the same spot.

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Seeing her, he stepped forward, slid an arm around her waist, and looked down at her. “Shall we use the front door?”

The suggestion horrified her. “Absolutely not. Nathan and Violet would see us.”

Damian laughed softly. “What? That scared of getting caught with me?”

Scarlett tried to push his hand away, but he only held her tighter. He guided her toward the window, a grin spreading across his face. “Hold on tight, sweetheart. Around my waist. Don’t let go.”

Before she could fully process the instruction, he reached down and grabbed a thick, anchored rope she hadn’t noticed on the floor. He looped it deftly around his wrist and forearm.

Then, with a slight tensing of his body, he gave a signal. A powerful pull came from above.

Damian moved with it, swinging out the window in one smooth motion, his arm locked securely around Scarlett.

Just like that, they were pulled clear of the windowsill and into the open air.

A rush of terror stole Scarlett’s breath. There was no time to protest. As they dangled, her fear instinct took over. She clutched desperately at his jacket, her legs wrapping around his waist of their own accord, terrified she’d fall.

Damian showed no fear. He looked utterly calm, even amused, as he glanced down at her clinging to him. Her panicked grip seemed to delight him, and a low laugh rumbled in his chest.

The descent was controlled and swift. Soon, Damian’s feet touched the soft grass of the lawn. below. Scarlett, still wrapped around him like a koala, hadn’t yet registered they were safely down.

Seeing her like that, Damian’s laughter broke free. He patted her back gently. “We’re down, sweetheart. You can let go now. Afraid I’ll vanish?”

Scarlett, her face buried against his shoulder, didn’t move.

His smile softened. He leaned his head down, his lips close to her ear, and murmured with a tenderness that surprised even him, “It’s okay. I’m not going anywhere. I’m right here. But *if* you hold on any tighter, you might just squeeze the life out of me.”

Scarlett was still trembling, lost in the aftershock of adrenaline.

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Worried, Damian carefully pried her loose enough to look at her face. To his shock, her cheeks were wet with tears.

His amusement vanished, replaced by instant concern. His hands came up to frame her face. “Hey, what’s wrong? What did I do? Did I scare you that much?”

Finally feeling the solid ground beneath her feet, Scarlett’s grip slowly relaxed. She swiped at her cheeks with the back of her hand and shook her head, avoiding his intense gaze. “I’m okay. It was just... a lot. The height.”

Damian searched her face, not entirely convinced. “Really?”

“Yes, really,” she insisted, her voice still a little unsteady.

Seeing the lingering sadness in her damp eyes, a different suspicion crept into his mind. His voice was quieter, more tentative, when he asked, “Are you... thinking about Vincent again?”

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Awakened Housewife: Ignore Betrayer’s Begs

Chapter 264 Trinkets and Whispered Promises

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 264[916 words]

Chapter 264 Trinkets and Whispered Promises

Scarlett shot Damian a look. “Why on earth would I be thinking about him?”

Seeing her defensive reaction, Damian thought to himself that she must still care, or she wouldn’t protest so strongly.

But so what? He wasn’t going to dwell on it.

By the time Damian drove them to the downtown, it was well past midnight.

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Even at that hour, the area was alive with energy. Crowds still drifted along the cobblestone paths. Many young women wore vintage–inspired outfits, and the sidewalks were lined with little carts and stalls selling all sorts of trinkets–handmade jewelry, pendants, bracelets, painted fans, and various local snacks.

The district at night had a different charm than during the day–more intimate, bathed in the warm glow of string lights and lanterns, full of murmured conversations and the enticing smells of food.

As Scarlett and Damian walked past one such stall selling small crafts, the vendor called out to them. “Sir, how about a little something for your lady?”

Hearing the word “lady“, a peculiar warmth bloomed in Damian’s chest. A smile instantly spread across his face. He stopped in front of the stall and turned to Scarlett. “See anything you like? Pick one. It’s on me.”

Scarlett glanced over the display. Among the various handmade items, her gaze settled on a delicate, miniature model of a water mill, intricately crafted from wood and tiny stones.

Noticing her interest, the vendor quickly picked it up. “You have excellent taste, ma’am. This is one of our finest pieces.”

Hearing that, Scarlett hesitated, her hand pausing mid–reach.

Damian caught her hesitation and immediately said to the vendor, “We’ll take it. Wrap please.”

it up,

He genuinely wanted to get it for her–it was rare to see her show interest in anything lately.

Scarlett tried to stop him. “Damian, it’s okay. Don’t worry about it.”

He ignored her protest, pulling out his wallet. Before the vendor could even state a price, Damian handed over several bills. “Will this cover it?”

It was far more than the item was worth. The vendor’s smile widened considerably as he

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accepted the money. “Oh, absolutely, sir! Thank you!” He carefully placed the water mill into a small gift bag and handed it to Damian. “You’re very generous to your lady. She must be very happy.”

Taking the bag, Damian couldn’t suppress a smirk. He leaned in slightly and said in a mock- conspiratorial tone to the vendor, “She’s not my lady... yet. But give it time.”

The vendor chuckled. “Well then, best of luck to you, sir. May you succeed soon.”

Damian clicked his tongue playfully. “Oh, I plan on it.”

He turned and offered the bag to Scarlett. “Here. It’s a done deal now. You have to take it.”

Scarlett looked at the bag, hesitated for another second, then finally accepted it. “Thank you,” she said softly.

Damian smiled down at her. “Don’t just thank me with words. If you’re really grateful, you should show it with actions, don’t you think?”

Scarlett knew what he was hinting at, but she played along seriously. “What kind of action did you have in mind?”

Seeing her earnest expression, the flirtatious reply that was on the tip of his tongue died away. He wanted to say, “Be with me,” but it felt too crude, too disrespectful to say as a joke when she looked so sincere.

So, he changed course. “Then come make a wish with me. Release one of those lanterns.”

Scarlett had braced for something else. His actual suggestion caught her off guard. She paused, then nodded. “Alright.”

Damian took her free hand and led her through the thinning crowd toward the river’s edge.

Under a canopy by the water, there was a small booth selling paper, pens, and an assortment of floating wish lanterns. A hand-painted sign read, “Write your heart’s desire. Set it afloat. Let the night carry your prayer.”

The attendant saw them approaching and stood up. “Looking to make a wish tonight?”

Damian nodded. “Yes. We’ll need some paper and pens, and two of your largest lanterns, please.”

“Of course!” the attendant said happily, gathering the items. “That’ll be 145 dollars even.”

Damian tapped his phone to pay. Once the transaction was complete, the man handed them two flat-packed paper lanterns, along with sheets of thick paper and two pens.

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Chapter 264 Trinkets and Whispered Promises

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Scarlett took the paper and pen. “We write our wishes on this?” she asked, confirming.

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Damian nodded. “That’s the idea. Write down whatever you want most. Then we’ll light them and let them go.”

A faint, wistful smile touched Scarlett's lips. "There are no gods out there listening, you know. It's just... a nice thought."

Damian stopped unpacking his lantern. He turned to look at her. In the soft lantern light, with a few strands of hair fallen across her cheek as she looked down, she appeared quietly pensive, almost fragile. She held the pen, her gaze distant, lost in some private thought.

Seeing her drift away, Damian smiled softly. His voice was low, meant only for her. "Who says you need a god?" he murmured. "Can't I be the one who makes it come true?"

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 265[904 words]

Awakened Housewife: Ignore Betrayer's Begs

Chapter 265 Wishes Upon the Water

His voice was so soft that Scarlett didn't catch the words.

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But whether she heard him or not didn't matter to Damian anymore. He would do everything in his power to make her wishes come true, regardless.

The thought made a quiet smile touch his lips.

He lowered his head and began writing his own wish on the sheet of rice paper.

Seeing him start, Scarlett tilted her head, trying to sneak a peek at what he was writing. Damian immediately shielded the paper with his hand. "No peeking. If someone else sees your wish, it

won’t come true.”

His seriousness made Scarlett laugh softly. She shook her head. “I didn’t expect a grown man to be so superstitious.”

Damian jutted out his lower lip in a mock

pout. “That’s my business.”

Scarlett shifted, turning her body further away from him. “Fine. Then you don’t get to see mine either.”

Damian glanced *at* her. She had angled herself completely, and he genuinely couldn’t see the words forming on her page. It didn’t matter, though. What mattered was that she was participating, that she was here with him.

He looked back down and finished writing his own message.

“I wish for her happiness. I wish for her to let go of Vincent. I wish for her to be my wife.”

After writing, he carefully folded the paper and tucked it into the delicate frame of his wish lantern.

Nearby, Scarlett finished as well. She had just secured her note inside the lantern when Damian looked over.

Their eyes met. “I’m done,” she said.

Damian smiled. “Shall we go release them, then?”

Scarlett nodded. “Okay.”

She picked up her lantern, and together they walked to the water’s edge. They gently placed the lanterns on the slow–moving current and watched as they began to drift away, joining a others carrying flickering candlelight downstream.

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Chapter 265 Wishes Upon the Water

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Scarlett brought her hands together under her chin, closed her eyes, and made a silent wish. *Please let* it *come true*.

Damian watched her, momentarily mesmerized by the serene, earnest expression on her face illuminated by the distant lantern light.

He shook himself out of it and quickly pulled out his phone, sending a swift text to his assistant, “Retrieve the lantern now. The one with the blue trim.”

After seeing the confirmation reply, he slipped his phone back into his pocket.

Scarlett opened her eyes, the moment of quiet reflection over. She turned to Damian. “Where to next?”

Before he could answer, movement at the entrance of the lantern stall caught his eye. Two figures had just stepped under the low canopy.

It was Vincent and Sabrina.

The easy warmth vanished from Damian’s eyes in an instant.

Seeing his expression harden, Scarlett asked, confused, “What’s wrong?”

Damian realized she hadn’t noticed the newcomers. A mischievous, impulsive idea took hold.

Suddenly, he grabbed Scarlett’s hand and pressed it flat against his chest. He contorted his face into a grimace. “Baby, quick,” he said, his voice strained. “Check me. I feel this... tightness. Right here.”

He sounded convincingly pained, and Scarlett, caught off guard, switched immediately into professional mode.

Seeing his apparent distress, she moved closer to support him, her other hand instinctively slipping beneath the open collar of his shirt to feel his chest wall. As a doctor, propriety took a backseat to triage.

She palpated one area. “Pain here?”

Damian winced. “Yes. Sharp.”

She moved her fingers slightly. “What about here?”

He looked down at her, his expression still convincingly pained. “Yeah, that hurts too.”

Scarlett’s brow furrowed in clinical concern. “That’s unusual,” she murmured to herself. She applied gentle pressure lower, on his abdomen. “Any pain here?”

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While she was examining him, Damian kept one eye on Vincent and Sabrina. They had seen them the moment they entered, but neither had offered a greeting.

The stall attendant had gone to assist them. Sabrina was drawn to the display of lanterns, her gaze lingering on the promotional sign. In truth, her mind was on Damian.

Did he just fake an illness the second we walked in? Is this some pathetic ploy for my attention? She thought, though she pointedly ignored him and busied herself with the lanterns.

Vincent stood beside her, but his attention was fractured. His eyes kept drifting across the small space, back to where Scarlett's hands were on Damian's chest.

Scarlett was checking Damian's body, but he winced in pain no matter where she pressed.

Then, as she pressed firmly near his sternum, Damian let out an excessively loud, dramatic moan. It was completely unrestrained, drawing a few glances from others nearby.

The sound made Scarlett jump. She pulled her hands back as if burned and shoved his shoulder. "Damian! What is wrong with you?" she hissed, her professional concern evaporating into irritation.

Damian looked down at her, the picture of pain instantly replaced by a wide, unrepentant grin. He shrugged, the very image of innocence. "Nothing. I just felt that as soon as you touched me, that awful tightness in my chest... It just miraculously vanished."

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Scarlett didn't feel like arguing with him. She turned away and started walking toward the exit.

But as she turned, her eyes landed on Vincent and Sabrina.

Sabrina was examining the lanterns, while Vincent watched her, a soft smile on his face. They stood close, wrapped up in their own world.

The way Vincent looked at Sabrina was filled with a gentle fondness that was impossible to

miss.

Seeing it, a cold, humorless laugh escaped Scarlett before she could stop it.

She was about to walk away when Sabrina looked up at Vincent. "Vincent, let's make a wish with the lanterns too."

Vincent smiled and nodded. "Of course."

Sabrina's face lit up, her eyes crinkling. "Thank you."

Vincent's smile lingered on her before he addressed the vendor. "We'll take two of your largest lanterns, please."

"Right away!" the vendor said, clearly pleased.

Hearing Vincent's words didn't stir any particular emotion in Scarlett's heart. But thinking of Vanessa, a sharp pang went through her.

It was the middle of the night, and Vincent had taken their young daughter out to see someone unrelated, and now here he was, casually strolling with Sabrina.

After overhearing their exchange, Scarlett finally moved to leave.

Behind her, the sound of Sabrina and Vincent's playful banter followed her out.

“Vincent, no peeking at my wish!” Sabrina said.

Vincent’s voice held mock curiosity. “I just want one little look.”

“Vincent!” Sabrina pretended to scold, covering her note. “I’m serious!”

Vincent seemed to relent. “Alright, alright. It’s your secret.”

“Good,” Sabrina said, her tone sweetly victorious. “Now, no pouting.”

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Chapter 266 An Unwelcome Encounter

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“Do I look like I pout?” Vincent replied, amusement in his voice.

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“As long as you’re not upset,” Sabrina said, and Scarlett could almost hear the grin in her voice. “Now let me finish writing.”

Damian lingered in the shop a moment longer. Once he saw Scarlett was a good distance away, he went after her.

Seeing Damian hurry out, Sabrina’s smile grew even more satisfied. *He just wanted an excuse* to *stay and look at me a little longer*.

She thought, the idea bringing a secret pleasure.

By the time Damian caught up, he heard Sabrina’s voice drifting over. “Vincent, I’ve finished writing my wish. What about you? Aren’t you going to pen yours?”

Vincent’s reply was quiet, matter–of–fact. “Nah, I don’t have any wishes worth writing down.”

It wasn’t that he had no desires at all–he simply never believed in such trivialities as wishes coming true just because you jotted them on a piece of paper.

Damian tuned out the rest of their chatter after that.

When Damian caught up to Scarlett outside, he found her oddly composed. Shouldn't she be upset after seeing Vincent and Sabrina like that? But she seemed completely unaffected.

His gaze sharpened, scanning her face for any hidden crack in her calm exterior. He found none. She was steady, unreadable.

He desperately wanted to ask if she was okay, but he was afraid that mentioning Vincent would only hurt her more. So he stayed quiet for a beat before suggesting, "There's a food market up ahead, with street performers. Want to check it out?"

Scarlett nodded. "Okay."

The district was even livelier at night. Even past midnight, a steady flow of people moved through the cobblestone streets. A little further on, a crowd had gathered around some street performers doing acrobatics.

Scarlett stopped to watch, captivated.

Damian took the opportunity to quietly pull out his phone and send another quick text to his assistant, "Intercept another one. Match the photo." The photo was of Sabrina's distinctively decorated lantern. He was morbidly curious what she would wish for.

Scarlett was so engrossed in the performance she didn't notice.

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Chapter 266 An Unwelcome Encounter

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Soon, Damian's phone buzzed with a reply. His assistant had sent two photos–one of Scarlett's retrieved wish note, and one of Sabrina's.

Damian opened Sabrina's first. It read, "I wish for all men to adore me, to be willing *to go* to great lengths for me, and to spend generously on me."

Looking at the note, Damian let out a soft, derisive snort. "Talk about ambition," he muttered under his breath.

Hearing him, Scarlett glanced over. "What was that?"

Damian, not wanting her to know he'd intercepted the lanterns, shook his head. "Nothing."

Scarlett turned her attention back to the performers.

Damian stared at the thumbnail of the second photo–Scarlett's wish. For a long moment, he couldn't bring himself to open it. He was afraid of what he might see. In her heart, she probably still longed for Vincent. Her wish would surely be about him, wouldn't it?

He took a deep, steadying breath. Finally, gritting his teeth, he tapped the image to open it fully.

Worried she might glance over, he gently touched her shoulder. "I'm just going to find a restroom. Don't wander off. Call me if you need anything."

Distracted by the acrobats, Scarlett simply nodded without looking away. "Okay."

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 267[799 words]

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Damian stepped into the shadow of a large oak tree and slowly zoomed in on the photo *to* read Scarlett's wishes.

"May my family stay healthy and safe.

"May my career continue to progress smoothly.

"I hope to meet a good man someday."

A smile tugged irresistibly at Damian's lips.

The first wish–well, as long as the Therons kept up with their check–ups, that should be fine.

The second he could help with indirectly.

And the third... meet a good man?

Wasn't he right here?

But how could he make her see that?

Lost in thought, he noticed an old man sitting at a small folding table a little way off, with a hand–painted sign that read "Psychic Readings". An idea sparked.

He glanced back at Scarlett. She was still in the crowd, completely absorbed in the street performers.

Damian walked over to the reader.

After a brief, quiet negotiation, he transferred a generous payment to the man's mobile.

By the time the acrobatics show ended, Scarlett looked around but couldn't spot Damian. Suddenly, she felt a tap on her shoulder.

"Looking for me, sweetheart?"

She turned to find Damian standing there, a necklace dangling from his outstretched hand. He tilted his head, a bright, tender smile on his face.

For a second, her heart fluttered–but she quickly looked away. "It's getting late. We should head back."

As she turned to go, Damian caught her wrist. "Stay a little longer."

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Chapter 267 A Fortune Teller's Prediction

Scarlett glanced down at his hand. "Let go first."

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“Only if you promise to stay with me a while more.”

“Fine.”

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He released her, but at the same time pressed the necklace into her palm. “Saw it at one of the stalls. It’s not fancy. Just thought you might like it.”

Scarlett held the delicate chain. She wasn’t used to luxury pieces, but she could tell this wasn’t some cheap trinket. Feeling awkward, she tried to hand it back. “Damian, I can buy my own jewelry. Thank you, but you really don’t have to.”

Seeing her refusal, Damian took it back. His expression darkened. “If you don’t want it, I’ll just toss it.” He drew his arm back as if to throw it into the nearby bushes.

“Damian!” Scarlett stared at him, exasperated. “What are you doing?”

He met her gaze evenly. “You said you didn’t want it.”

“That doesn’t mean you just throw it away! It still cost money.”

A smile returned to his lips. “So, do you want it or not?”

Scarlett opened her mouth to refuse again, but Damian raised his hand–the necklace still safely curled in his palm. “Last chance,” he said, his tone suddenly serious. “Do you want it?”

It was as if, if she said no again this time, he really would cast it aside for good.

He had a way of backing her into a corner. Sighing in defeat, she said, “Fine. Give it here. I’ll hold onto it for now.”

Satisfied, Damian placed it back into her hand.

They continued walking. The crowd had thinned out.

As they passed a small canopy with a few tables, an older man in loose, bohemian–style clothing called out, “Young lady, wait a moment.”

Scarlett turned. The man had a short, salt–and–pepper beard and an air of weathered wisdom. He looked like the kind of intuitive reader you might find at a street fair.

She pointed to herself, confused. “Me?”

The man gestured to the empty chair across from him. “Sit. Let me read for you.”

Scarlett offered a polite smile. “No, thank you.”

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Chapter 267 A Fortune Teller’s Prediction

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“Don’t worry,” he said warmly. “I won’t charge you if it doesn’t ring true. Think of it just as a conversation.”

She was still hesitating when Damian gave her a gentle nudge. “Go on. Let’s hear what he has to say.”

The reader nodded. “Exactly. Sometimes it helps to talk things through.”

Eventually, Scarlett sat down.

After asking for her birth date, the man spent a few moments in quiet contemplation, his half–closed.

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Then he spoke softly, “You work in healing... a doctor, yes? You’re capable, but you haven’t yet reached your full potential. There’s a strong energy of success around you–in time, you’ll achieve great recognition. But your current marriage...” He paused, his tone turning sympathetic. “It’s become a weight. It drains your spirit and clouds your focus. Carrying it longer will only exhaust you further. Some ties are meant to be released–the sooner you make a clean break, the sooner you’ll find your footing.”

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“The young lady is destined to have three children,” the reader continued, his voice taking on a prophetic tone. “The first is a daughter, already here. The second and third... They will not come from your current marriage. This first child draws deeply from your own vitality. Rather than endure this drain, it may be wiser to release what no longer serves you. As for your birth family, they are good–hearted people. Your brother’s wife–you would do well to maintain harmony with her. Strained relations there will only bring you further weariness, both in body and spirit.”

Scarlett sat at the small table, listening with growing unease. How could he know so many specifics?

Could this man actually have some kind of insight?

Damian stood beside her. After hearing the reader’s words, he gave a subtle, satisfied nod, then watched Scarlett, waiting for her reaction.

Scarlett felt disoriented by what she’d heard. Against her better judgment, a spark of curiosity about her future, especially her romantic life, was ignited.

The old man noticed her shifting interest. “Do my words resonate, young lady?”

Instead of answering, Scarlett asked, “You said I would have two more children in the future?”

The reader nodded. “Yes, that is what I see.”

Scarlett turned her head to look up at Damian. “Could you give us a moment, please?”

Damian frowned. “Something I can’t hear?”

“It’s... personal,” she said.

Hearing that, he relented. “Alright.”

It doesn’t matter. I’ll find out what *was said sooner or later*.

Once Damian had walked a short distance away, Scarlett leaned in slightly. “Can you tell... who my future husband will be?”

The reader closed his eyes, moving his fingers as if tracing invisible threads. He stroked his beard, then looked at her with knowing eyes. “I cannot say too much. But this person... He has been in your orbit for years. A promise was made, long ago. And at this very moment, he is right beside you.”

Scarlett was stunned. She instinctively turned to look at Damian’s retreating figure. He was only

giving her his back now, but the reader had said right beside you.

Did he mean Damian?

Her gaze as she looked at Damian became complex, clouded with doubt.

If the reader was right–if Damian was her destined partner–how could that be? Their connection was tenuous at best. They weren’t even close friends.

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With a faint, dismissive smile, she said to the reader, “Thank you for your time, but I don’t put much stock in these things.” She began to rise.

The old man stroked his beard once more, a sage–like smile on his lips. “Young lady, some people are written into your story by fate itself. The bond is already tied; struggling against it is futile. Acceptance will bring you peace far sooner than resistance.”

Scarlett heard him but didn’t engage. “How much do I owe you?”

“My reading did not satisfy you, so there is no charge.”

Ignoring his refusal, Scarlett leaned over and transferred a hundred dollars to his mobile payment account.

As she straightened to leave, his voice followed her. “It is pointless to be stubborn. The one meant for you bears the surname Langley. There will be no other.”

Scarlett heard the words but didn’t acknowledge them. She simply walked away.

Damian, seeing her depart, quickly caught up. “What’s wrong?” he asked, seeing her stony expression.

Scarlett stopped and turned, studying his face for a long moment. Looking at his features, she could recall no deep history between them, certainly no promises.

The reader’s words had to be nonsense. Perhaps there were kernels of truth, but that didn’t make him infallible.

Her prolonged silence made Damian anxious. “Sweetheart, did that so-called psychic say something upsetting?”

He had, after all, paid the man to plant the idea that he was her destined partner. But not being present, he didn’t know the exact script. He worried the man had overplayed his hand and offended her.

Scarlett’s continued cold silence worried him further. He turned back toward the canopy, muttering, “I’m going to ask him what he said. How dare he upset you? I’ll have a word with him.”

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Chapter 268 A Prophecy of Fate

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His aggressive tone alarmed Scarlett. She quickly reached out and caught his hand. “Damian, don’t. It’s fine. I’m okay.”

“Then tell me what he said,” Damian pressed, his expression determined.

How could she repeat the actual prediction? Instead, she invented a harmless, generic misfortune. “He just said... that I have a difficult road ahead. That my energy is complicated and might bring challenges to any partner. He suggested after my divorce, I should perhaps stay single to avoid causing... complications.”

But as soon as the words left her mouth, Damian suddenly pulled her into a tight embrace. He pressed a gentle finger to her lips, his voice filled with superstitious alarm. “Shh, don’t say things like that. Don’t give those words any power. They’re not true.”

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 269[848 words]

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Scarlett herself wasn’t particularly superstitious, but she was taken aback by how seriously Damian seemed to take her offhand remark.

She stood frozen for a moment, unsure how to respond.

Seeing her immobile, Damian grew even more frantic. “Scarlett, come on, take it back. Say it’s not true. You’re worrying me sick!”

Finally, Scarlett looked up at him. “Even if I ‘spit it out‘, as you say, the idea is out there. We can’t change what was said.”

Uncertain of the reader’s exact words but taking Scarlett’s somber tone at face value, Damian suddenly pulled her into a fierce embrace. He rested his chin on her shoulder, his voice low and intense against her ear. “Scarlett, even if you were the worst luck in the world for a husband, I’d still want to marry you. If your life is meant to be short, then I’ll give you years from mine. It doesn’t matter. In this lifetime, I only want you. No one else.”

He held her so tightly she could barely breathe. Yet, as his words sank in, the reader’s prediction echoed in her mind. “The one meant for you bears the surname Langley.”

Could it possibly be true?

When she thought about it, Damian had consistently shown himself to be a good man. Despite the rumors that swirled around him, aside from Kylie, Scarlett had never actually seen another woman in his orbit.

She didn't struggle. She let him hold her, feeling the slight, involuntary tremble that ran through him. He seemed genuinely afraid.

She was about *to* confess that she'd been joking, to tell him the bleak prediction was her own invention. But before she could speak, her phone rang.

The sound broke the moment. Damian loosened his grip. "You should get that," he said, his voice rough.

She looked up and was startled to see his eyes were red–rimmed. She couldn't tell if he'd been crying, but the sight twisted something in her chest.

The phone kept ringing. She saw it was Lily. After a brief hesitation, she answered.

"Mrs. Stewart, thank goodness!" Lily's voice was pitched high with anxiety. "I've been trying to reach Mr. Stewart, but he isn't answering."

Scarlett's brow furrowed. "What's happened, Lily?"

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Chapter 269 An Embrace and a Panicked Call

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"It's Vanessa. She's burning up with fever. I went to check on her and she was drenched in sweat. I took her temperature–it's already 104 degrees!"

All other thoughts vanished. Scarlett's doctor's instincts kicked in. "Lily, give her children's acetaminophen right now, the correct dose for her weight. I'm coming straight there."

"Yes, Mrs. Stewart. I will."

"Keep me updated. I'll try to find her father."

Lily agreed and ended the call.

Damian had heard enough of the conversation to understand. The fragile connection of the moment shattered, replaced by cold worry. But seeing the panic on Scarlett's face, he pushed his own tangled feelings aside. "You need to go?"

"I have to find Vincent," Scarlett said, already turning.

She took a few hurried steps toward the lantern stall, then stopped and looked back at Damian. "You should go home. I'll... I'll take that walk with you another time."

Her promise, however vague, lifted his mood slightly. Yet, the old bitterness–the memory of a broken promise from long ago–surfaced just as quickly, darkening his thoughts again.

Scarlett had no time to decipher his shifting emotions. After her hurried promise, she was off.

Damian had no choice but to follow.

Scarlett hurried back to the stall and saw Vincent and Sabrina from a distance, examining some trinkets together. Without preamble, she walked straight up, grabbed Vincent's arm, and said, "Vanessa has a high fever. We need to go. Now."

A fever of 104 degrees was serious. If not managed properly, a child could suffer seizures or lasting harm. Vanessa was willful, but Scarlett wouldn't gamble with her health. If anything happened because they delayed, she would never forgive herself.

Vincent looked stunned, as if he couldn't process her words. He pulled out his phone and called Lily himself for confirmation.

After hearing Lily's frantic confirmation, Vincent's face drained of color, panic setting in.

He had taken Vanessa out late to visit Sabrina at the hospital. Sabrina had even wanted Vanessa *to* stay the night. It was only after Lily called, reminding him Vanessa had school the next day, that he had brought her home.

Later, Sabrina, claiming she still couldn't sleep, had asked him to go for a walk with her here, to

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Chapter 269 An Embrace and a Panicked Call

the lively riverwalk.

He never expected to run into Scarlett here of all places. Just hours ago, they had argued bitterly over Vanessa.

And now, in such a short time, Vanessa was dangerously ill? A part of him was skeptical, but he couldn't doubt Lily's verified report.

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After hanging up the phone, Vincent turned to Sabrina beside him. "Why don't you stay and look around for a little while?" he said gently. "I'll send a car to pick you up and take you

back to the hospital shortly."

Sabrina nodded. "Alright."

Vincent still seemed uneasy. He looked at her for a few more seconds, his gaze lingering.

Seeing his hesitation, Sabrina offered a reassuring smile. "Vincent, I'll be perfectly fine. Vanessa's health comes first. Please, go take her to the hospital. You can call me later. I'm really worried about her too."

Her words made Scarlett's brow furrow almost imperceptibly.

Vincent was already walking away as he replied, “I will.” He and Scarlett then left together.

By the time Damian arrived, all he saw were Scarlett and Vincent’s retreating figures. He stood there, watching them walk away side by side, a complex mix of emotions churning inside him.

Sabrina, still standing near the stall, saw Damian approach. She smoothed her dress and tucked a strand of hair behind her ear before walking toward him.

“Mr. Langley,” she said softly as she drew closer, “would you care to take a walk with me?”

Damian pulled his eyes away from the distance and settled them on Sabrina. “Are you speaking to me, Ms. Monroe?”

Sabrina smiled and nodded. “Yes, I am.”

With her looks and charm, she was confident it wouldn’t be difficult to capture the attention of a man like Damian. She was being deliberately forward and bold.

However, Damian responded with detached calm. “Asking me for a walk isn’t the issue. You’d simply need permission from Vincent, and I’d need the same from my sweetheart. If they both agreed, then I’d walk with you.”

Damian stood out in the crowd–tall, handsome, drawing appreciative glances from passersby. He was, in that moment, the center of attention, and his focus was entirely on Sabrina. He looked at her with a faint, unreadable smile on his lips.

While others stared at him, he was looking at her. Several young women nearby shot envious looks toward Sabrina.

Sabrina felt a surge of triumph. To be the object of such envy from other women–how could

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Even though Damian's words were a clear refusal, Sabrina refused *to* believe he was genuinely rejecting her. She was convinced she could still pique his interest.

So, she maintained her bright smile and pressed on. "And who, may I ask, is Mr. Langley's 'sweetheart?"

Remembering the wish Sabrina had written inside her lantern, Damian felt a wave of disgust. Where did she get the audacity to write something so vain?

Damian had once said to Kylie, "You're the third woman I can't stand." Regardless of his reputation, women were generally drawn to him–his humor, his wealth, his presence. He rarely actively disliked any woman.

What he'd said that day was true. The first woman he despised was Amanda, for how she'd bullied Scarlett. The second was Sabrina, for stealing Scarlett's happiness–even if she hadn't completely won Vincent yet.

Facing a woman he disliked, Damian had no desire to be pleasant. But recalling Sabrina's wish gave him a devious idea. The higher they climb, the harder they fall.

He decided not to hold back. "My sweetheart is Scarlett," he stated plainly. "I, Damian, answer to her and her alone."

Sabrina's smile faltered for a split second before she recovered with a light laugh. "Mr. Langley, you may not be aware, but Scarlett is actually..."

Damian had no intention of letting Sabrina speak ill of Scarlett. He cut her off. "Ms. Monroe, you are truly beautiful. I am... genuinely drawn to you." He let the admission hang for a beat, watching her reaction. "But, after all, you are Vincent's woman. So..."

He trailed off, leaving the implication hanging, deliberately ambiguous.

Damian had seen enough women to know exactly what someone like Sabrina craved–the undivided attention of every man, to be desired by many. If that was what she wanted, he'd give her a taste of it.

He watched her expression closely. When she heard him say he was drawn to her, a blush instantly colored her cheeks, and he could almost see her heart flutter.

Vincent already treated her like a precious treasure, but Sabrina didn't want to be cherished by just one man. She wanted Damian's admiration, Nolan's, Daniel's, Harris'...

Damian had made his position–and his supposed conflict–clear. Sabrina understood his implied dilemma but didn't address it directly. Instead, she lowered her voice to a soft,

suggestive murmur. “Mr. Langley... it’s not a certainty that Vincent and I will end up together,

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Awakened Housewife. Ignore Betrayer’s Begs

Chapter 271 A Deliberate Provocation

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 271[762 words]

Chapter 271 A Deliberate Provocation

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She had said it deliberately–almost certainly to provoke Damian into competing with Vincent over her.

Damian understood the implication behind her words but chose to ignore it. Shoving his hands into his pockets, he flashed a cool, arrogant smile and said, “A girl as pretty as Ms. Monroe... It’s a shame she’s out of my reach. What a pity, really.”

Hearing Damian sigh like that, Sabrina almost wished she could tell him outright to fight for her.

She was growing anxious, though some things simply couldn’t be said directly.

Seeing Damian look so genuinely disappointed gave Sabrina a twisted sense of satisfaction, mixed with lingering restlessness. She ventured, “Mr. Langley, you’re charming, handsome, and talented. Actually... you’re just my type.”

Damian hadn’t expected her to be so blatant. The corner of his mouth twitched, and he replied flatly, “If the interest were mutual, it’d be different. Pity you’re with Vincent. Otherwise, I’d have loved to get to know you... much better.”

He made sure his tone was deliberately forward, almost flirtatious, thinking it would scare her off. To his surprise, Sabrina only blushed and whispered, “To be honest with you, Mr. Langley... I’m still untouched.”

After saying that, she lowered her head, her cheeks glowing like apples, looking utterly captivating.

For a moment, Damian was taken aback.

If Sabrina was telling the truth, then Vincent hadn’t been with her all this time?

But that seemed impossible.

Sabrina must have been lying.

Even though Damian tried to convince himself of this, unease still gnawed at him.

Then again... what if she wasn’t lying?

What if nothing had ever happened between her and Vincent? Would Scarlett change her mind about the divorce if she found out?

The questions swirled in Damian’s mind, stirring a quiet fear–fear that Scarlett might still have feelings for Vincent.

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Chapter 271 A Deliberate Provocation

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He’d already missed the first eight years with her. He refused to miss another eight.

This time, whatever it took–whether begging, stealing, or fighting—he would keep Scarlett by his side.

She’d been hurt once before; he wouldn’t let it happen again.

In this lifetime, Damian truly believed only he could make her happy.

Seeing Damian's shifting expressions after her confession, Sabrina assumed he was already plotting how to win her from Vincent.

Seizing the moment, she asked proactively, "Mr. Langley, would it be too forward to ask for your number?"

Damian's thoughts had drifted far away, but her question slowly pulled him back.

After *a* brief pause, he replied. "How could I refuse when my dream girl is asking?"

He took out his phone, and the two added each other on WhatsApp.

Once connected, Sabrina's smile widened.

But Damian had lost all interest in keeping up the conversation. Coolly, he said, "I should get going. Something's come up."

Without waiting for a reply, he turned and walked away, not looking back.

Sabrina watched him leave so decisively and smiled to herself–he must be thinking hard about how to pursue her now.

The thought lifted her spirits, finally easing the lingering humiliation from the incident at the banquet a few nights prior.

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Back at Ravenshade Villa, Scarlett and Vincent returned to find Vanessa burning with fever, barely conscious.

Scarlett hurriedly gave her water, cooled her with a damp cloth, then carried her carefully downstairs.

Vincent followed, hovering anxiously, unsure what to do.

Seeing him pacing helplessly, Scarlett felt a flash of irritation.

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Chapter 271 A Deliberate Provocation

“Vincent, would

you stop pacing? Vanessa needs a hospital. Go get the car ready.”

He didn’t argue–just nodded. “Alright.”

During the drive, Vanessa slipped in and out of awareness.

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Scarlett kept calling her name, reminiscing softly about past moments, her eyes welling up.

Her once lively, smiling little girl now struggled to make friends, and it broke Scarlett’s heart.

Seeing her daughter so vulnerable and in pain felt like a personal failure–had she failed as a mother?

Before long, they pulled up at the hospital entrance. As Scarlett moved to lift Vanessa, Vincent gently touched her arm. “Let me carry her. You’ve done enough.”

Too exhausted to protest, Scarlett stepped back.

Vincent scooped Vanessa up and hurried toward the ER, with Scarlett close behind.

Inside, Vanessa was settled onto a gurney, and the doctor quickly ordered a series of blood tests.

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Because of the high fever, the doctor ordered an urgent dose of fever–reducing medication.

Vanessa was so out of it she didn't even flinch when the needle went in, which only made things worse in Scarlett's mind–her daughter was usually so sensitive to pain.

A deep, frantic worry gripped Scarlett's heart, pounding hard against her ribs.

She was a doctor herself, a pediatric surgeon, and she knew exactly how serious this could get.

With something like this, a single misstep could mean...

She couldn't finish the thought. Even brushing close to it made her feel like she was suffocating.

Vincent had stayed right beside her the whole time. He wasn't a medical professional, so he'd mostly kept quiet, not daring to offer an opinion. But seeing Scarlett so tightly wound scared him, too–enough that for a while he couldn't find any words at all.

Soon, the blood test results came back. A nurse called them into the doctor's office.

The physician on duty adjusted his glasses, looked up from the report, and asked, "Your daughter has influenza. Has she been in any crowded places recently?"

As soon as Scarlett heard "influenza", she understood. Children's immune systems were still developing, and crowded spaces were breeding grounds for infection. Thinking back over the last couple of days, she answered quietly, "She was at the hospital."

"The hospital?" The doctor frowned. "Why would you take a child to a hospital right now? We're in peak flu season–the place is full of circulating viruses. Kids are especially vulnerable. Taking her there without any real protection... What were you both thinking?"

His tone grew sharper as he spoke, edging into clear disapproval. Since this wasn't Scarlett's own hospital and she hadn't mentioned she was also a doctor, she stayed silent, feeling both guilty and unfairly accused.

Seeing her quiet response, the doctor seemed to take it as an admission of fault. "If you'd arrived any later tonight," he said sternly, "your daughter's condition could have become critical. Is that the kind of risk a responsible parent takes?"

The words stung, leaving a sour ache in Scarlett's chest. When Vanessa was happy and healthy, Vincent got the credit. When she was sick, it was suddenly Scarlett's failure as a mother. How unfair it all felt.

Vincent, who had been listening quietly, finally stepped in. “This was my mistake,” he said flatly. “Don’t blame her.”

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Chapter 272 Feverish Crisis

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But the doctor only seemed more annoyed by the defense. “Your child is this sick, and you’re still making excuses?”

Vincent’s patience ran out. His brow furrowed, and his voice turned cool. “Just tell us what needs to happen now.”

The shift in his tone was clear, and the doctor caught it. Not wanting to escalate the situation, he backed off. “She needs IV fluids, medication, and to be admitted overnight. We’ll keep her for observation.”

Vincent gave a short nod. As he turned to leave, he noticed Scarlett wasn’t following. He paused and glanced back. “You coming?”

Scarlett felt paralyzed. In her year as a surgeon, she’d grown familiar with life–and–death situations–maybe too familiar. She’d thought she was numb to the fear.

But tonight, it was her own daughter lying there, and that changed everything. Her mind had gone blank, tangled up in panic.

Seeing how shaken she was, Vincent bent down and wrapped an arm around her shoulders. “Let’s go,” he said, his voice lower now. “Vanessa’s going to be alright.”

Leaning into him, Scarlett let herself be guided out, her steps unsteady.

Watching her hollow, distracted form, a dull, gnawing discomfort settled heavy in Vincent’s chest.

Just then, a young nurse in scrubs hurried around the corner toward them. Before she could even reach them, Scarlett’s anxiety spiked. “What’s wrong? Is it Vanessa?”

The nurse quickly shook her head. “No, no–she’s awake. I was just coming to find you.”

Hearing that, Scarlett pulled away from Vincent and rushed down the hall to the ward.

Vanessa was indeed awake, her eyes open but still glazed with fatigue.

Scarlett sat gently on the edge of the bed and stroked her daughter's cheek, her touch soft. "Hey, sweetheart," she whispered. "Are you feeling any better?"

Vanessa looked at her, eyes watery, but she pressed her lips together and didn't speak.

Scarlett understood. The person Vanessa wanted right now wasn't her. Quietly, she moved aside to make space. Vincent stepped forward and sat where Scarlett had been.

"Daddy," Vanessa murmured, her voice raspy.

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Chapter 272 Feverish Crisis

"Are you feeling a little better?"

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Vanessa gave a small nod. "A little."

Vincent managed a smile and brushed her hair back from her forehead. "That's good. I'm right here, okay? I'm not going anywhere."

Vanessa nodded again, then closed her eyes, too tired to say more.

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Chapter 273 Erupting Resentment

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Vincent looked at her softly and asked, “Why don’t you say anything to Mommy?”

Vanessa didn’t answer, just kept her eyes fixed on him.

He gave her a gentle smile. “Mommy was the one who carried you all the *way* to the hospital. She’s been so worried. If you don’t talk to her, she’ll be really sad. You understand that, right?”

At those words, Vanessa’s eyes instantly welled up.

Part of her felt she was supposed to be upset with her mom, but another part just wanted her mother to stay close–like right now, all she really wanted was to be held and fall asleep in her mom’s arms.

But for some reason, she couldn’t make herself say it. Still, since her dad had asked, she finally whispered, “Mom.”

Hearing that, Scarlett quickly took Vanessa’s hand. Her own eyes were red–rimmed as she replied, “I’m right here, sweetie.”

Vanessa seemed to settle a little, but soon a nurse entered the room pushing a cart.

“We need to place an IV line for Vanessa,” the nurse said kindly. “It might be easier if both parents wait outside for a few minutes.”

The moment Vanessa heard she was getting a needle, she burst into tears. “Mom, I don’t want a shot! I want to go home!”

Scarlett’s heart clenched at the sound of her daughter’s cries, but she knew the IV was necessary. Gritting her teeth, she stood up and gently guided Vincent out of the room.

Seeing her mom leave, Vanessa cried even harder.

Outside, Vanessa’s sobs echoed down the hallway. Scarlett braced her hands against the wall, her whole body trembling as tears streamed silently down her face.

Seeing her like that, Vincent couldn’t hold back. He stepped closer and rested a hand lightly on her shoulder. “She’s going to be okay,” he said quietly. “I’m here. We’ll get through this together.”

But Scarlett felt weak all over, her heart racing wildly. Each cry from inside the room felt like a tug on her very nerves. This was her daughter–her own flesh and blood–in pain, and it tore at her.

When Vincent moved to pull her into a hug, she suddenly pushed his hand away.

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Chapter 273 Erupting Resentment

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“Don’t touch me, Vincent!” Scarlett looked up,

her eyes

bloodshot and blazing with a mix of

hurt and anger.

He withdrew his hand silently.

Inside, Vanessa’s cries grew louder, each one sharp and desperate. The sound was almost too much for Scarlett to bear.

Vincent felt it too. Though his expression remained controlled, worry churned inside him. This was his only daughter–if anything serious happened to her, he knew he’d never forgive himself.

Scarlett tried to steady herself, not wanting to lash out or place blame. But as Vanessa’s crying continued, rising in distress, she finally snapped.

She turned on Vincent, her tear–filled eyes full of accusation. “I told you this would hurt her, Vincent! Why didn’t you listen to me?”

Her chest heaved with emotion. In all their years of marriage, even during his long absences, she had never broken down like this. But now, standing outside that hospital room, she shouted at him with everything she had.

Vincent had never seen her like this–not even when she asked for a divorce. Her words left him speechless.

Scarlett stared at him, tears now falling freely. She was on the verge of breaking down, unable to hold back her sobs or her racing thoughts.

Worried, Vincent moved to hold her again, but she stepped back, raising a hand to stop him. “Don’t come near me. I don’t want to see you right now.”

Frowning, Vincent spoke quietly, “I know you blame me. But Sabrina said she really missed. Vanessa that day. She hadn’t rested well in the hospital, and I thought having Vanessa there might help...”

His voice trailed off.

Scarlett didn’t let him finish. Through her tears, she gave a bitter laugh. “You always bring up Sabrina. Why doesn’t she have your child, then? One that actually belongs to both of you.”

Vincent’s frown deepened. “I’ve told you–Vanessa is the only child I’ll ever need. But if you wanted to, we could have another. If you don’t, that’s fine too. There won’t be a second child.”

Scarlett knew he was trying to spare Sabrina the hardship of pregnancy and the risks of childbirth. But why did that mean she could be treated as disposable? Wasn’t she a person too?

From inside the room, Vanessa’s cries had grown hoarse but showed no sign of stopping.

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Chapter 273 Erupting Resentment

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Hearing her daughter’s distress, Scarlett remembered the happy, lively little girl she used to be and what the teacher had said recently–it felt like a piece of her heart was being ripped out.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 274[857 words]

Chapter 274 A Father's Outrage

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The memory of Vincent's choices stoked Scarlett's resentment even further.

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With her eyes still rimmed red, she pressed him, "Vincent, Vanessa is only five years old. She might be upset with me right now, but she's just a little girl. What more do you and Sabrina want from her?"

Scarlett was visibly emotional. Seeing her state, Vincent shot back, "Can you try to stay calm? What kid never gets sick? What kid never sees a hospital? And how can you be so sure she caught the flu at the hospital? Couldn't she have picked it up at school?"

"Vincent, Vanessa is lying in there like this, and you're still defending Sabrina?"

Vincent turned his face away, unwilling to meet Scarlett's accusing gaze. In a measured tone, he replied, "I'm only stating facts. You can't decide where she got sick based on feelings alone. What's done is done–why keep fixating on how it happened?"

Scarlett pressed a hand to her chest, feeling a sharp, stabbing pang. She took several deep, deliberate breaths, forcing herself to steady down.

Then she looked at Vincent and asked, coolly this time, "You're always saying I'm not fit to be a mother. Well, Vincent, are you fit to be a father?"

Hearing that, he turned back and stared at her. "What are you trying to say?"

Scarlett only let out a cold, quiet laugh. “Nothing. Just think it over, Vincent. If she’s going to be your only child, you’d better find a conscience.”

Before Vincent could respond, the ward door opened.

The nurse stepped out, wheeling her cart, her forehead glistening with sweat. She looked at Scarlett and Vincent and said, “The IV is placed and running. Please keep an eye on her here. I’ll be back shortly to check her temperature.”

Scarlett answered hoarsely, “Thank you.”

Then she pushed through the door into the room, Vincent following close behind.

Vanessa lay against the pillow, her small face streaked with dried tears, eyes swollen and red. She had stopped crying, but her little body still trembled with occasional shudders.

Scarlett sat beside the bed and gently smoothed Vanessa’s sweat–damp hair. “Are you feeling any better?”

At the sound of her mother’s voice, Vanessa’s eyes fluttered open, fresh tears pooling almost

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Chapter 274 A Father’s Outrage

instantly. But she didn’t speak, only cried silently.

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Scarlett didn’t press her. Instead, she took Vanessa’s chubby hand and examined it. There were two raised bumps on the back from the needle, the skin swollen and red, with a tiny bead of blood still visible at the puncture site.

When Vincent leaned in and saw it, his heart clenched. Even accounting for the difficulty of finding veins in children, Vanessa was five–this shouldn’t have been so rough.

Just then, the nurse returned, a digital thermometer in hand.

The sight of her reignited Vincent’s anger. “What kind of injection was that? Was my daughter a practice dummy for you?”

The nurse's face flushed–bright red. "Sir, I... I'm newly licensed. I'm still improving my technique, and the child was moving quite a bit. I—"

Vincent cut her off, not interested in explanations. He gave her a cold glance and said flatly, "Don't bother coming in tomorrow."

The color drained from the nurse's face. She didn't know who Vincent was, but something in his bearing and tone terrified her. Fresh out of training and unprepared for such a confrontation, she burst into tears.

The sound of her crying grated on Vincent's already frayed nerves, but before he could say more, Scarlett stepped between them.

"Vincent, if you want to lose your temper, do it at home. This is a hospital, not your personal

stage

for a meltdown."

As a medical professional herself, Scarlett understood the nurse's position all too well. Vanessa's veins were fine and fragile, and she hadn't been cooperative–a few–attempts were often unavoidable.

She could understand Vincent's fear for their daughter, but that didn't give him the right to berate hospital staff. Besides, Vanessa needed calm and rest now.

Surprisingly, Scarlett's sharp words seemed to snap Vincent back. He fell silent, his anger receding.

Relieved, the nurse moved forward to take Vanessa's temperature. The reading still showed over 102.2°F.

Seeing the number, both parents' worry deepened. Unsure what to do, the nurse said quietly, "Let me check with the doctor to see if we need to adjust anything."

Scarlett nodded şilently, letting her go.

Chapter 274 A Father's Outrage

Vincent sat down next to Scarlett, his eyes fixed anxiously on Vanessa.

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A short while later, the nurse returned and advised them to wait a bit longer to see if the fever would break.

Scarlett, being a doctor herself, knew these things couldn't be rushed. Since Vanessa was stable and awake, there was no need to escalate treatment immediately.

Vincent, still aching for his little girl, reached out and gently stroked her warm cheek.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 275[864 words]

Chapter 275 A Mother's Heartache

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Vanessa's cheeks were pale, but she managed a weak smile for her father. "I'm okay, Daddy."

Hearing that, a lump formed in Scarlett's throat, and heavy tears spilled silently down her face.

Seeing her break down, Vincent whispered, "Vanessa isn't critically ill. You don't have to cry like this."

Scarlett didn't answer–she didn't want to.

She wasn't crying just because Vanessa was sick; she was crying because even now, Vanessa only sought to comfort Vincent, not her.

She was just as worried, just as terrified, as he was. Yet her daughter's comfort went only one

way.

For Vanessa's sake, Scarlett stayed. She remained in the hospital room through the night. ·

Half an hour later, Vanessa's fever broke, but she grew increasingly listless.

They finally got her to sleep, but soon after she woke up vomiting, and the high fever spiked again.

That night, the fever came in waves. Scarlett and Vincent barely slept, taking turns comforting her, cooling her forehead, and watching the clock crawl toward morning.

Around five a.m., after the last wave of fever subsided, Vanessa murmured drowsily, "Mommy..."

Hearing her daughter call for her, Scarlett leaned in immediately. "I'm right here, sweetheart. Mommy's right here."

She took Vanessa's small hand and pressed it gently to her lips.

Vanessa, still half in dreams, had tears clinging to her lashes. "Mommy," she whispered hoarsely, "I want fish."

Scarlett's heart melted at once. "Okay," she promised softly. "I'll make it for you today."

Vanessa didn't say anything else and soon drifted into a deeper sleep.

Seeing her daughter finally resting peacefully, Scarlett let out a long, weary sigh.

Vincent, noticing her exhaustion, said quietly, "Go home and get some rest. I'll stay Vanessa."

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Chapter 275 A Mother’s Heartache

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Scarlett almost laughed. He had been there through the night, yes–but it was she who had held Vanessa through the worst of it, who had soothed and cooled and comforted.

Now that Vanessa was asleep, he told her to leave. But when their daughter was burning up and crying at two a.m., he hadn’t offered to take over so she could rest.

A flare of unreasonable anger rose in her chest. “Get out of my way,” she growled.

Vincent’s own temper surfaced. “Scarlett, would you try to be reasonable?”

She didn’t even look at him. Pushing herself up, she strode out of the room.

“I’ll drive you home,” Vincent called after her.

“No,” she said flatly. “Stay with Vanessa.”

He didn’t argue further, and she left.

Outside the hospital, the streetlights were still glowing in the dim early light.

Scarlett stood at the curb trying to hail a cab, her head swimming with dizziness.

She hadn’t slept all night, and the emotional strain had left her utterly drained—yet the thought of her sick daughter pushed her forward. She would go home and make Vanessa a proper breakfast.

Finally, a taxi stopped for her. She collapsed into the back seat and fell asleep almost instantly, only waking when the driver gently called to her at her destination.

After paying the fare, she walked into the quiet stillness of Ravenshade Villa.

It was *too* late to return to Theron Manor–she’d risk waking the whole household. Besides, Vanessa was more accustomed to things here.

In the kitchen, Scarlett moved slowly, fatigue weighing her limbs, but she focused on preparing a gentle, nourishing breakfast for Vanessa. She simmered oatmeal with apples and cinnamon, something easy on the stomach. Once it was ready, she packed it carefully into an insulated container and set it on the dining table.

She was about to prepare a side of soft scrambled eggs when she walked back out and found Maria seated at the table, the lid of the oatmeal container already open.

Maria peered inside and complained, “Is this all? It’s not even enough for one person.”

Scarlett didn’t respond. She walked straight to the table, and as she got closer, she firmly took the container from Maria’s hands.

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Chapter 275 A Mother’s Heartache

Without a word, she began placing it into a small tote bag.

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Maria immediately reached out to grab it back. “What’s wrong with you? You can’t even cook enough to feed people properly, and now you’re hoarding it? You should be ashamed!”

As Maria tugged at the container, Scarlett held on tightly. In the struggle, the container slipped and fell to the floor, oatmeal splattering across the tiles.

Looking at the mess on the floor–the breakfast she’d made with such care for her sick child- Scarlett’s last thread of patience snapped.

Her eyes red–rimmed and blazing, she shoved Maria back by the shoulder. “What is wrong with you?”

Maria lost her balance and stumbled to the floor. Before Scarlett could even process what had happened, Maria shrieked, “Scarlett! Are you trying to kill me?”

Scarlett didn’t answer. She just stood there, staring blankly at the oatmeal spilled across the floor.

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She had simmered that oatmeal for over an hour.

And just like that, Maria's interference had ruined it all.

Just then, footsteps sounded at the front door.

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Before Scarlett could even turn, Maria–who had seen Vincent enter–immediately raised the volume of her wailing.

Vincent walked in frowning, but before he could speak, Maria rushed to accuse, "Vincent, you're just in time. Look at her–she actually pushed me!"

Vincent's gaze shifted to Scarlett.

He didn't say a word, just watched her silently.

Feeling his eyes on her, Scarlett looked up and saw the doubt in them.

At that moment, she simply offered a faint, bitter smile and turned back toward the kitchen.

There had never been any "trust" in Vincent's eyes when it came to her.

Since it wasn't there, she didn't feel like explaining.

Vincent didn’t follow her. Instead, he glanced back at Maria, who was still sitting on the floor.

“I only wanted a little oatmeal,” Maria said, her tone grievance–laced. “She was already making breakfast, but she made such a small portion. She knows exactly how many people live in this house.”

Between the lines, she was painting Scarlett as selfish and inconsiderate.

Vincent didn’t argue. He bent down, helped Maria up, and guided her to the sofa.

“I’ll go check on her,” he said quietly, then walked toward the kitchen.

Scarlett had turned the stove back on. She stood in front of it, sweating and visibly exhausted.

When Vincent came up beside her, he said, “Maria would like some too. You should make a bigger batch.”

Scarlett hadn’t slept all night. She was running on empty.

Hearing his words now, anger surged hot and sudden inside her.

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Chapter 276 Shattered Breakfast-

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She clenched her jaw, took a sharp breath, and said, “If you want more, make it yourself. I’m only making this for Vanessa.”

Vincent noticed her red–rimmed eyes, the dark circles beneath them.

But her refusal still made him frown.

After a short silence, he said, “You weren’t like this before. Why act this way now? It’s just a bit more oatmeal–it won’t kill you.”

Scarlett rarely lost her temper in front of him, but lately it had become almost routine. “Vincent, you said it yourself—that was before. People change. No one stays the same forever, and neither do I.”

Vincent rarely saw Scarlett lose her temper, but it had become far too common these days.

He couldn't help wondering if she now saw him and Vanessa as nothing but burdens.

The thought stirred his own frustration. "If you're not feeling well, see a doctor," he snapped. "Yelling at me won't fix anything."

Scarlett stared at him, stunned. Finally, she let out a hollow laugh. "You're right, Vincent. I am sick. Sick for ever falling for you. Stupid to think a child could make you stay. I'm a fool—a complete idiot."

Seeing how raw she was, Vincent realized his words had cut too deep.

He reached for her arm, but Scarlett swatted his hand away. "Don't touch me," she said, voice trembling. "I don't want you to touch me."

She was shaking all over, the wooden spoon still clutched in her hand. The oats had just been added to the pot; she hadn't even had time to stir.

Vincent felt a sudden pang of panic. He tried again to reach for her, but before he could make contact, she hurled the spoon at him.

He didn't dodge in time. It struck his forehead with a sharp crack.

A stinging pain spread instantly. Vincent touched the spot–his fingertips came away smeared with blood.

Scarlett looked at the cut on his brow without a flicker of emotion. Her voice was eerily calm when she finally spoke. "The only tie between you and me is Vanessa. From now on, I won't- and don't want to–have anything more to do with you. It's true, I loved you once. But now, and in the future, you're just my ex–husband. A stain on my life I can't erase."

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Chapter 276 Shattered Breakfast

Without giving him a chance to respond, she turned and walked out of the kitchen.

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Finished

In the living room, Maria was sitting on the sofa watching TV, casually snacking on sunflower seeds.

Scarlett’s eyes passed over her briefly before she walked straight out of the house.

Once Scarlett was gone, Maria tossed the seeds aside and headed into the kitchen.

She’d heard the argument from outside–not every word, but enough.

As long as they were fighting, Maria was pleased. It only improved her daughter’s chances with

Vincent.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 277[848 words]

Chapter 277 Oatmeal and Rejection

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When Maria reached the kitchen, she saw the blood on Vincent’s forehead and hurried over. “Vincent, are you all right? Why would she hit you like that?”

Vincent didn’t answer. He brushed aside her helping hand without a word.

A trickle of blood slid down his temple into his eye. He blinked, his expression cold, and walked out of the kitchen.

Maria was briefly taken aback by his dismissal, but a moment later, a satisfied smile spread across her face.

*****

By the time Scarlett left Ravenshade Villa, daylight had fully broken outside.

The weather was grim that morning–the sky was heavy and overcast, the air damp and chilly.

It was nearly time for her shift, but thinking of Vanessa still in the hospital, Scarlett decided to call Spencer. She requested three days off, and after a brief explanation, it was approved.

Her next thought was to get Vanessa something to eat. She went to several diners and cafés before finally finding a place that served oatmeal she was satisfied with.

When she returned to the hospital room, Vanessa was still asleep.

Scarlett sat quietly beside the bed, watching her daughter's pale face. Her heart ached, tight and heavy in her chest.

About half an hour later, Vanessa's eyes fluttered open.

Seeing Scarlett there, she felt a flicker of gladness inside, but she couldn't bring herself to say "Mommy".

Scarlett didn't press her. Instead, she asked gently, "Are you feeling any better?"

She reached over and touched Vanessa's forehead. It felt cooler than before.

Vanessa swallowed with difficulty–her throat burned as if lined with blades. Her eyes reddened, and tears slipped out.

Knowing she was uncomfortable, Scarlett softened her voice. "I brought you some oatmeal. Try a little, then you can rest some more."

Vanessa gave a small nod. "Okay."

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Chapter 277 Oatmeal and Rejection

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Scarlett helped her sit up, fixed her pillows, and helped her wash her face and hands before carefully feeding her a spoonful.

But as soon as the oatmeal touched her tongue, Vanessa gagged and spat it back out.

Scarlett quickly caught it with a napkin. “What’s wrong, sweetie? You don’t like it?”

Vanessa’s lower lip trembled. “This isn’t yours. I want the oatmeal you make.”

The memory of the spilled breakfast twisted sharply inside Scarlett. She kept her voice calm. “Just try a little for now, Vanessa. I’ll make you something nice for lunch, okay?”

Vanessa looked up at her mother–she saw the tired shadows under Scarlett’s eyes, but instead of sympathy, she felt a surge of resentment.

She was sick, and her mother couldn’t even be bothered to make her oatmeal. Didn’t she care at all?

The thought filled her with a hot, wounded anger.

If her mother didn’t care, then she didn’t want her here either.

Vanessa turned onto her side, facing away from Scarlett. “You can go do your own things. Daddy and Sabrina can stay with me.”

Even then, Scarlett tried to explain patiently. “Vanessa, I’m a pediatric surgeon. I know how these flu cases go–the fever can last three to five days, and the first few are the most important. I’ve already taken time off. I’ll stay with you for the next three days.”

She sounded almost pleading, but Vanessa wasn’t moved. “I don’t need you to.”

“Just one day, then. Just today.”

Vanessa held her ground. “Really, I don’t need you. Go away.”

A cold numbness spread through Scarlett’s chest. Still, she stayed. Even if Vanessa didn’t want her, even if she was ignored, she couldn’t leave her daughter.

She’d rethink after the first critical days passed.

If she wasn’t here watching closely those first forty–eight hours, a high fever could turn dangerous fast. Scarlett had seen it happen–children seized by febrile convulsions, lives changed in moments.

Even if she was divorcing Vincent, Vanessa was her daughter, the one she’d carried and brought into this world. How could she ever stop loving her?

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Chapter 277 Oatmeal and Rejection.

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So she stayed.

Vanessa didn't eat breakfast. Seeing Scarlett wouldn't leave, she stopped arguing and just lay quietly.

By late morning, Scarlett was about to call Vincent–to ask him to come stay with Vanessa while she went home to prepare lunch.

But before she could dial, the hospital room door opened.

Scarlett turned and saw Vincent walk in, followed closely by Sabrina.

Sabrina was carrying a small insulated lunch bag.

The moment Vanessa spotted them, even in her weakened state, her face brightened. "Daddy! Sabrina! You came!"

Vincent and Sabrina moved to the bedside together. Silently, Scarlett stepped back toward the

corner.

As she did, her hand at her side tightened slowly into a fist.

The moment Sabrina sat down, Vanessa pushed herself up and wrapped her arms around her. "Sabrina, I missed you so much. You finally came to see me."

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Sabrina held Vanessa close and gently stroked her cheek. “This is all my fault, sweetheart. I’m the one who made you sick.”

Vanessa shook her head. “No, it’s not you. My immune system just isn’t very strong.”

Tears welled up in Sabrina’s eyes, her voice thick with remorse. “If I had known you’d get this sick, I never would have let you come to the hospital. Please don’t be upset with me.”

Vanessa raised a small hand and wiped Sabrina’s tears away. “I’m not upset with you, Sabrina. I’ll be back to my usual self in a couple of days.”

Sabrina managed a weak smile and brushed Vanessa’s hair from her forehead. “You’re such a sweet girl.”

Vanessa wrapped her arms around Sabrina again, clinging to her tightly.

Vincent watched them, a slight smile on his face though his tone held a hint of admonishment. “Vanessa, Sabrina isn’t fully recovered herself. You shouldn’t squeeze her so hard.”

Hearing that, Vanessa immediately loosened her grip.

Seeing his daughter’s slight deflation, Vincent picked up the insulated lunch bag. “Look what Sabrina made for you–a special ‘get–well‘ lunch.”

Vanessa’s face instantly brightened. “Wow, I’ve never tasted your cooking before, Sabrina! Daddy, let me try it right now.”

Back at Ravenshade Villa, Sabrina was usually occupied with her research, and meals were typically handled by Lily.

Seeing Vanessa’s excitement, Sabrina felt the need to lower expectations. “Don’t get your hopes up *too* high, sweetie. I don’t cook very often. It might not be that great.”

Vanessa didn’t seem to care. She looked eagerly at Vincent. “Come on, Daddy, open it!”

Vincent complied, unzipping the bag and lifting out a container. Inside was a thick, creamy fish soup, though it was dotted with small, charred flakes floating on the surface.

Even so, Vanessa didn't show any sign of distaste. She picked up a spoon, took a sip, and immediately felt a strange, almost metallic tingling on her tongue. She couldn't help but frown slightly.

Scarlett had remained in the room, standing in an inconspicuous corner near the window.

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Chapter 278 A Rival's Comfort

She watched Vincent, Vanessa, and Sabrina gather around the bed.

They looked like a perfect, loving family of three.

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Vanessa's polite effort despite the questionable soup twisted something inside Scarlett. Though the soup looked utterly unappetizing, Vanessa drank two big spoonfuls *to* be nice.

After swallowing, she smacked her lips and said to Sabrina, "It's really good, Sabrina. I'd love to have it again sometime."

Scarlett saw it all clearly. A numbing ache spread through her chest. A simple bowl of poorly made soup could bring Vanessa such visible joy, while her own efforts seemed to go entirely unnoticed.

Standing there, she felt utterly superfluous–a joke no one was laughing at.

She couldn't take it anymore. Unclenching her hand from the fabric of her pants, she turned and walked quietly out of the room.

When Vanessa glanced up, she caught sight of her mother's retreating back.

Even though this was what she thought she wanted, a peculiar, hollow feeling settled in her chest at the sight–a faint but persistent sting she couldn't quite name.

She pushed the feeling away and looked up at Vincent, finally noticing the bandage on his forehead. "Daddy, what happened to your head?"

“It’s nothing,” Vincent replied smoothly. “Just an accidental bump.”

Scarlett, stepping into the hallway, heard his answer. She knew he wasn’t trying to preserve her image in their daughter’s eyes–he just wanted to avoid further drama.

After leaving the hospital, Scarlett took a cab back to the hospital where she worked and withdrew her request for leave.

She worked through the entire afternoon.

In the evening, she stayed an extra half hour to finish up some charts.

As she was leaving, a colleague invited her to grab dinner.

By the time she returned to Theron Manor, it was already past eleven.

Vincent hadn’t called once since she’d left the hospital where Vanessa was staying that morning, and Scarlett hadn’t asked about Vanessa’s condition either.

Henry and Dianą had retired for the night hours ago.

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Chapter 278 A Rival’s Comfort

B

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Finished

A light was on in Nathan and Violet’s room, but they weren’t inside–likely still downstairs.

Clara, too, had gone to bed early.

Mindful of waking anyone, Scarlett moved through the quiet house on silent feet.

Once in her bedroom, she didn’t even bother to shower. She simply collapsed onto the bed and was asleep almost instantly.

The sleepless night followed by a full workday had drained her completely.

Some time later, she drifted into a feverish half–sleep. Her whole body felt like it was burning

1. up.

She touched her skin–it was clammy with sweat yet radiating heat.

She swallowed, and a raw, cutting pain shot through her throat.

Every limb felt weighted with lead, and her eyes were sore and swollen behind their lids.

Scarlett knew what this was. She'd been infected and was now running a fever herself.

She tried to summon the strength to get up and search for some fever reducers, but her body was too heavy, too weak to even lift herself from the mattress.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 279[888 words]

Awakened Housewife: Ignore Betrayer's Begs

Chapter 279 Damian's Midnight Rescue

A

66

Finished

After that feeble attempt, Scarlett felt completely drained and sank back onto the mattress.

The brief movement had left her skin clammy with sweat.

Her energy was gone, her mind adrift in a fog, and she had no idea how much time passed before she slipped back into a restless, fevered sleep.

Somewhere in that haze, she heard a faint sound from the direction of the window.

When she managed to open her eyes, she thought she saw a figure approaching through the dim room.

As the silhouette moved into the faint light, Scarlett's blurred vision gradually recognized him -Damian.

She couldn't tell if this was a dream or reality; everything felt surreal, almost hallucinatory.

After climbing in through the window, Damian hurried to her bedside.

Seeing her flushed face and sweat–dampened clothes against the rumpled sheets, his heart tightened. He sat on the edge of the mattress and immediately pressed a hand to her forehead.

Her skin was burning hot, the feverish heat searing against his palm.

Alarmed, Damian didn't hesitate. "Scarlett, look at me," he said, his voice low but urgent. "Do you know who I am?"

As he spoke, he gently patted her cheek.

Scarlett's gaze was glazed and distant, clouded with fever and confusion.

Worried she might slip into a febrile seizure, Damian acted quickly. He slid his arms beneath her and lifted her from the bed.

Cradled against him, Scarlett felt weightless and detached, as if floating in a fever dream.

Holding her close, Damian didn't waste a moment. He turned and headed for the bedroom door.

But just as he stepped into the hallway with Scarlett in his arms, he nearly collided with Nathan, who had just returned home.

Seeing Damian holding his sister, Nathan's eyes widened in confusion. "Damian?"

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Chapter 279 Damian's Midnight Rescue

Then, his voice sharpened with disbelief. "How did you get in here?"

A

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Finished

Clutching Scarlett tightly, Damian was equally startled to see Nathan, but there was no time for explanations. "Nathan, I'll explain later. She's burning up–I need *to* get her to the ER now."

Nathan stood frozen at the top of the stairs, his laptop bag still in hand, watching as Damian carried Scarlett toward the staircase.

The questions on his lips died when he caught sight of Scarlett's flushed, unconscious face. He swallowed hard and stepped aside.

On his way down, Damian also passed Violet, who had just walked in through the front door.

Even with Scarlett in his arms, Damian managed a tense nod. "Violet."

Seeing him, Violet startled, but she quickly gathered herself. Noticing Scarlett's limp form, she asked urgently, "What's wrong with her?"

"High fever," Damian called back, already moving toward the door. "Taking her to the hospital."

Violet barely had time to process his words before Damian was out the door, Scarlett held close.

Nathan came down the stairs just then. Meeting Violet's worried gaze, he said quickly, "Let's go. We should follow them."

Right now, all that mattered was Scarlett.

Why Damian had been in her bedroom could be addressed later.

*****

In the quiet early hours of the morning, Scarlett's eyes fluttered open.

The first thing she saw was the sterile white ceiling of a hospital room, and the sharp, clean scent of antiseptic filled her nose.

She felt a dull sting on the back of her hand. Turning her head slightly, she saw an IV line taped there.

Then, a gentle voice spoke beside her. "Scarlett... you're awake?"

It was Violet.

Scarlett turned toward the sound and saw Violet seated in a chair to her right, while her left hand was connected to the IV stand.

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Chapter 279 Damian's Midnight Rescue

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Parting dry lips, Scarlett managed a hoarse whisper. "Violet."

Her voice was scratchy and weak, her eyes still glassy with residual fever.

A

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Finished

Violet reached over and lightly touched Scarlett's forehead. "Your fever's come down," she said softly. "Do you feel any better?"

Scarlett offered a faint, tired smile. "A little."

Now that her mind was clearing, a memory surfaced–Damian's voice in her bedroom. She was certain she had seen him.

Anxious, she asked, "Violet... where's Damian?"

Hearing her ask about him, Violet hesitated for a moment before answering honestly. "He was the one who brought you here. But after you were checked in and started on the IV, your brother asked to speak with him outside."

Scarlett's worry deepened. "I need to see him."

If Damian had brought her here, then Nathan must have discovered him in her room.

Given Nathan's protective nature, the conversation wouldn't have been pleasant—it might have even gotten heated.

Scarlett was worried about Damian, and it showed in her strained expression.

Violet gently brushed a damp strand of hair from Scarlett's temple. "You still have a fever, sweetie. Just rest for now," she said quietly. "Your brother wouldn't actually hurt him. They just needed to talk."

Scarlett ached all over, and her throat felt raw and scraped. Hearing–Violet's calming words, she allowed herself to relax slightly, sinking back into the pillow.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 280[835 words]

Chapter 280 Night Watch

Nathan did have a short temper, but he usually listened to Violet.

If Violet said he wouldn't resort to violence, he probably wouldn't.

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Finished

Lying in the hospital bed, Scarlett felt tears well up unexpectedly, tracing warm paths down her cheeks.

Seeing her cry, Violet leaned closer, concerned. "What's wrong, sweetie?"

As she spoke, she gently brushed the tears from the corners of Scarlett's eyes.

A heavy, stifled feeling sat in Scarlett's chest. She looked at Violet and whispered, "I just... I want to go home."

She still couldn't shake what had happened earlier that day.

Seeing her so downcast, Violet's heart ached. She softly stroked Scarlett's hair. "Just rest a little longer. Once you're better, I'll take you home."

The doctor had explained that Scarlett needed to stay hospitalized for a few days–at least until her fever broke completely and she finished the course of IV antibiotics.

Scarlett didn't argue. She simply nodded, her voice quiet. "Okay. I'll listen to you."

Noticing Scarlett's chapped lips, Violet smoothed her hair once more. "Just lie still. I'll go get

you some warm water."

It was the peak of flu season–the temperature had dropped sharply across the city, and cases were spreading widely.

Scarlett felt a pang of worry. "Violet, please wear a mask. I don't want you to catch this from

me."

"I will, don't worry," Violet assured her. "Just rest. I'll be right back."

Scarlett gave a soft hum of acknowledgment and closed her eyes again.

Her body felt heavy and weak, her thoughts drifting in a feverish haze.

Somewhere between sleep and wakefulness, she dreamed of Damian–Nathan confronting him, maybe even hitting him.

When she jerked awake, she was drenched in cold sweat.

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Chapter 280 Night Watch

At that moment, footsteps sounded from the doorway.

Finished

Thinking it was Violet returning, Scarlett didn't have the energy *to* turn. Instead, she spoke toward the wall. "Violet... are you sure my brother won't hurt Damian?"

As soon as the words left her lips, she heard a soft, familiar chuckle, followed by Damian's voice. "Oh? Worried about me, are you?"

Hearing him, Scarlett turned her head slowly. "Damian... what are you doing here?"

Her hair was damp with sweat, her face still flushed.

Damian stood beside the bed dressed in dark athletic wear, his short hair slightly tousled. A faint, warm smile touched his

eyes.

He had one of those strikingly handsome faces–sharp features, a strong jawline, a look you didn't see every day.

Even when he seemed a bit like a troublemaker, his smile held none of that edge. Instead, it softened into something handsome, almost gentle.

Damian pulled the chair closer and sat down, his long legs bent casually. The athletic jacket hugged his lean frame. His expression turned sincere as he lowered his voice. "I'm fine. Really. Don't worry about me."

Scarlett didn't press further. Seeing no visible injuries, she murmured, "You should I'll be alright."

go

home.

She said it mostly out of concern–if Nathan saw him here again, things could get heated.

Damian picked up a cup with a straw from the bedside table and brought it to her lips. "I'm not going anywhere tonight. I'm staying right here with you. Here, have some water. It'll help your throat."

Instead of drinking, Scarlett frowned slightly. "Where's Violet?"

Damian gently tucked a stray strand of hair behind her ear. "She and your brother went home."

Scarlett looked even more confused. "But... how?"

Knowing Violet, she wouldn't just leave her alone in the hospital.

Damian answered honestly. "Violet convinced your brother. They left together."

Scarlett wasn't entirely sure whether to believe him, but the fact remained–Violet wasn't here.

Too tired to dwell on it, she let the matter drop. She still felt awful and didn't have the energy

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Chapter 280 Night Watch

for more questions.

66

Finished

These past few days had been the height of the flu outbreak. Scarlett had likely caught it from Vanessa.

Damian was staying here without any real protection. She felt grateful but uneasy. "Damian, you should go. If you stay, you might catch it too."

But Damian just shook his head lightly. "If I get it, I get it. That's just how it goes. Besides, it's a little late to send me away now."

He had a point–he'd already been in close contact with her. A little longer wouldn't change much.

When Scarlett stayed silent, Damian continued, his tone softening. "Maybe it'd even be better if I did catch it. Then I could stay right here in the same room with you–take care of you, keep you company."

Scarlett didn't know how to respond to that.

After a long pause, she finally looked up and met his eyes. "Damian... why do you have to be like this?"

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 281[838 words]

Chapter 281 Confessions in the Dark

(66)

Finished

Damian guessed what Scarlett was about to say, and he didn't want to hear it. So he gently cut her off. "Alright, enough talking for now. Have some water first."

He lifted the cup again and guided the straw to her lips.

Scarlett's mouth was parched. She didn't refuse and took several slow sips.

After watching her drink, Damian couldn't help a soft, approving murmur. "That's better."

Hearing his tone–so gentle, almost as if soothing a child–Scarlett felt her cheeks grow warm.

She didn't reply, but instead *lay* back and avoided his gaze.

The IV bag was nearly empty. Noticing it, Scarlett said quietly, "Could you change the bag for me?"

Damian glanced up and saw that it was indeed time. He stood and reached for the new bag hanging on the stand.

As he lifted his arm, his sweatshirt rode up slightly. When Scarlett turned her head, she caught a glimpse of toned, warm–toned skin at his waist.

He really did keep in shape–the kind of physique that looked both strong and lean.

In that moment, her face flushed even deeper.

After changing the bag, Damian sat back down. His eyes lingered on Scarlett's face, now flushed a vivid pink. A flicker of concern crossed his expression. He reached out and touched her cheek. "Is your fever spiking again?"

Scarlett turned her face away, the tips of her ears also reddening. "No... it's not that."

Not entirely convinced, Damian stood again and leaned close, pressing his forehead gently against hers. Feeling no unusual heat, he relaxed slightly.

As he drew near, Scarlett instinctively tensed, her eyes closing.

Just as Damian was about to pull back, his cheek brushed lightly against her eyelashes.

The sensation sent a subtle shiver through him.

He stayed there for a second, looking down at her closed eyes, her lashes trembling faintly. They felt like the softest brush against his skin, stirring a quiet, tingling warmth that spread under his skin.

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Finished

Scarlett's body radiated a low, feverish warmth. Damian knew she wasn't fully recovered, but seeing her like this–lips slightly parted, face softly flushed–he felt pulled in, anchored beside her.

He remained leaning close, half over her, reluctant to move away.

Gazing at her lips, he heard himself ask, his voice lower now, "Scarlett... can I kiss you?"

He rarely asked so directly–and never with such quiet sincerity.

Scarlett felt the question came from somewhere deep and unguarded. It made her heart stumble, then race with a flutter of alarm. She opened her eyes, finding his gaze. Hers was defensive, wary. "Damian... no."

Hearing it, Damian forced himself to straighten up.

Scarlett could sense the restraint in him, the way he held himself back.

He closed his eyes briefly–they were faintly rimmed with red–and sat still in the chair for several seconds before slowly opening them again.

They looked at each other then, a wordless quiet hanging between them.

After a while, Damian asked softly, “Are you hungry?”

Scarlett realized she was. She gave a small nod. “A little.”

“I’ll have something brought over,” he said.

Scarlett nodded again and closed her eyes.

She felt caught between chills and fever, uncomfortable in her own skin.

Seeing her discomfort, Damian moved from the chair to the edge of the bed. He took her hand. “Do you want me to hold you while you rest?”

Scarlett ached with weakness, unsure whether she was cold or hot. She opened her eyes–they were glassy and bloodshot–and looked at him. Her voice was rough, as if filled with sand. “Damian, I’m okay.”

Even pale and exhausted, she was still stubborn.

Damian didn’t listen. He reached to feel her neck. Her skin was cool, not sweaty–the fever was retreating, leaving chills in its wake.

Worried, he made a decision. Without waiting for permission, he took off his sweatshirt and

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Chapter 281 Confessions in the Dark

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carefully slid onto the narrow hospital bed beside her.

The bed was small, barely wide enough for one.

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Finished

Damian was tall. Lying on it, his legs dangled partly off the edge. He curled himself along the side, then drew Scarlett gently against him.

Half his body was supported by the bed, the other half suspended in air.

But he didn't complain. He simply held her close, tucking her against his chest, his chin resting lightly on her shoulder. His lips brushed her ear as he whispered, "Still cold?"

As her chilled skin began to absorb his warmth, Scarlett instinctively curled closer into his hold.

Only then did she realize her body had been trembling.

Damian felt her shift nearer. He wrapped his arms more securely around her, sharing his warmth, holding her until the shivering slowly stilled.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce Silent Dreams Never Die — 282[823 words]

Finished

Through the thin layers of their clothing, Damian could feel the soft curves of Scarlett's body. His face flushed a deep, warm red, heat spreading across his skin.

Unaware of the effect she was having, Scarlett nestled even closer, her movements sleepy and unguarded:

"Damian," she murmured, her mind still hazy with fever, "hold me a little tighter."

Her mind was swimming in a haze, foggy and unfocused. She couldn't believe she'd let such a needy request slip out.

Damian drew her closer, wrapping his arms around her as if he could shield her from everything–pulling her gently but firmly against him.

Pressed against the steady warmth of his chest, Scarlett gradually relaxed, her breathing slowing as she drifted back into a light sleep.

Only when he was sure she was deeply asleep did Damian allow his own grip to loosen slightly.

Still mindful that she might be chilled, he carefully tucked the blanket around her shoulders.

He held her like that for a long while, not daring to move.

Even when his arm grew stiff and numb, he didn't shift

away.

About half an hour later, Scarlett stirred in her sleep, turning slightly away from him.

Damian looked down at her face–peaceful, soft, and unguarded.

He rarely saw her this relaxed around him.

The sight stirred something tender in him. Without thinking, he leaned down and pressed a gentle kiss to her forehead.

Scarlett didn't wake, still lost in quiet sleep.

Holding her like something fragile and precious, Damian felt a swell of quiet happiness-followed almost instantly by a pang of fear.

He was afraid that when she woke, she would pull away. Maybe even blame him.

This closeness felt borrowed, temporary, something meant only for the dark.

How he wished time could freeze just like this–with Scarlett safe in his arms.

Finished

Another half hour passed before a nurse came in to disconnect the IV.

She worked quietly, but not long after she left, Scarlett's eyes fluttered open.

Her gaze was still cloudy with sleep as she found Damian's face so close to hers.

Seeing her awake, Damian's expression softened with a touch of melancholy. He parted his lips but didn't speak.

Scarlett realized he was still holding her. She didn't push him away or make a scene–she stayed calm.

Even feverish, she remembered–she had asked him to hold her. She couldn't blame him now.

After a quiet moment, she lifted a hand slightly and touched his chest.

"Damian," she said softly, a little embarrassed, "I need to use the restroom."

When her first words weren't a demand to let go, something tight in Damian's chest eased.

A relieved smile touched his lips as he carefully shifted to sit up. "I'll carry you," he offered.

Scarlett felt sticky and uncomfortable–suddenly self–conscious. What if she smelled of sweat and fever?

"I just have a fever," she murmured weakly. "I can walk."

The light in Damian's eyes dimmed almost instantly.

Before she could explain further, he was already off the bed. He drew back the blanket, slid his arms beneath her, and lifted her firmly against his chest.

Looking down at her, his gaze was intent, his tone leaving no room for argument. "I'm carrying you, Scarlett. Don't try to talk me out of it."

Too weak to protest, she gave in.

Damian carried her into the bathroom and set her down carefully on the floor mat, then returned to fetch her slippers from beside the bed.

Back in the bathroom, he knelt, lifted one foot and then the other, slipping the slippers on with gentle care.

Once they were on, he straightened. “Take your time,” he said quietly. “I won’t look. I’ll be right here.”

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Chapter 282 Tender Moments

He turned his back to her, standing perfectly still.

Even with him facing away, Scarlett felt awkward.

“Damian,” she whispered, “could you wait outside?”

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Finished

He paused, then nodded. “Alright. I’ll be right outside the door. Call me when you’re done.”

He stepped out, closing the door behind him.

Seeing his silhouette through the frosted glass, Scarlett still locked the door–just in case.

After using the toilet and washing her hands, she unlocked it and pulled the door open.

Damian was already leaning in, his face full of concern. “You okay?”

Seeing the worry etched between his brows, Scarlett felt a confusing rush of emotions.

A guy like him–known for being a player–could he really care this much?

It was hard to believe. Part of her wondered if it was all just an act.

Maybe, in his eyes, she was useful in some way. A means to an end.

If not... she couldn’t think of any other reason he’d be so attentive.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 283[783 words]

Chapter 283 A Mother's Cooking

Scarlett pushed the confusing thoughts aside and replied offhandedly, "Yeah, I'm fine."

But as soon as the words left her mouth, Damian scooped her

up again.

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Finished

Once he had settled her back in bed and pulled the blanket over her, Scarlett–now free of fever and thinking more clearly–stared up at the ceiling.

She could feel Damian's eyes on her. Turning her head, she asked quietly, "Do I smell bad?"

The question caught Damian off guard. After a brief pause, he answered, "No, not at all."

"You're lying," Scarlett insisted.

"I'm really not," he said, a hint of urgency in his voice. "Honestly, there's no smell."

Seeing him so earnest, Scarlett studied his face, a probing look in her eyes.

But she couldn't read him, couldn't quite figure him out.

Finally, she turned away and went back to staring at the ceiling.

Just then, Damian’s phone buzzed.

The room was quiet enough that Scarlett could hear a male voice on the other end. “Mr. Langley, I’ve got the delivery. Should I bring it up?”

“Yeah,” Damian replied.

“Which room are you in?”

“Call when you’re on the floor. I’ll come out and

get it.”

After hanging up, it wasn’t long before the phone rang again.

Damian got up and left the room, returning in under two minutes with a takeout bag in hand. Inside were several stacked containers.

Scarlett realized he’d arranged for a meal to be delivered.

One by one, he unpacked the containers–chicken noodle soup, a fresh garden salad, soft rolls, mini sandwiches, and a few grilled shrimp.

Propping a pillow against the bed rail, Damian helped Scarlett sit up, then picked up a bowl and began feeding her slowly.

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Chapter 283 A Mother’s Cooking

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Scarlett was truly hungry. She didn’t resist, letting him spoon small bites for her.

The food was comforting and well–seasoned. She ate willingly, visibly soothed by the warmth and flavor.

Halfway through, Damian asked, “Is it good?”

Scarlett nodded honestly. “Yes, it is.”

Hearing that, Damian picked up a shrimp and began peeling it. Casually, he added, “If you like it so much, you should come over for dinner sometime. I’ll have my mom make you more of her specialties.”

Scarlett, who still had a bit of food in her mouth, nearly choked. She coughed, her face flushing, tears springing to her eyes from the sudden fit.

Damian quickly set the shrimp aside, reached for the water cup, and held it to her lips. “Easy now,” he said softly. “My mom prepared all this for you tonight, you know.”

After a few sips, Scarlett caught her breath. She looked at him, unsure how to respond.

When she stayed silent, Damian smiled gently. “Nothing to say?”

Scarlett swallowed. “You know very well I’m still married to Vincent. I’m a mother, Damian. Why are you putting me in this position?”

Damian’s expression turned serious. “I’ve already explained everything to my family. No one gets to decide who I marry–they can either support me or stay out of my life. And my mom isn’t like Amanda. I’m not like Vincent either.”

His words

gave Scarlett

pause.

There was a time she’d wished Vincent would say something like that.

But she wasn’t the same Scarlett anymore.

Damian’s smooth words didn’t sway her as they might have once.

She met his gaze steadily. “What is it you really want from me? Just tell me directly. If it’s something I can give, I will. But if it’s beyond me, you’re wasting your time.”

Damian held her look. Her face was guarded, revealing nothing.

After a moment of silence, he asked quietly, “Would you really give me what I want?”

Scarlett understood the implication behind his question. She didn’t answer, letting the silence

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Chapter 283 A Mother’s Cooking.

stretch.

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Finished

When she didn’t reply, Damian offered her the peeled shrimp. “My mom went to a lot of trouble for you. I’d like to take you to meet her when you’re feeling better. Please believe me- she’s a kind person. And so am I.”

He stressed the last four words deliberately.

Scarlett could tell he genuinely wanted to prove he was a good man.

But she didn’t know how to respond, so she remained quiet.

Damian didn’t push. He understood she still struggled to trust, and she was still recovering. Now wasn’t the time to pressure her.

So he let the subject drop and simply continued making sure she ate.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 284[784 words]

Chapter 284 Silent Devotion

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Finished

After helping Scarlett finish her dinner, Damian poured her a cup of warm water and made sure she drank it.

Not long after, her fever returned.

Damian gave her fever reducers, and she eventually drifted back to sleep.

That entire night, Damian didn't close his eyes once.

He stayed beside the bed, constantly dabbing the sweat from her brow, pulling the blanket up when she shivered, and easing it down when she grew too warm.

It wasn't until the first light of dawn that he finally rested his head on the edge of the mattress, still holding her hand, and fell into an exhausted sleep.

Curled awkwardly beside the bed–too tall for the space–he looked uncomfortable, but exhaustion overtook him quickly.

Scarlett stirred vaguely, aware of someone clutching her hand almost too tightly.

When she opened her eyes, she found Damian asleep beside her, his grip firm as though afraid she might slip away.

She tried to shift her hand, but he didn't wake. Instead, he turned his face closer to hers–so close that if she leaned down slightly, she would touch his cheek.

She studied his sleeping face–the straight nose, defined features, thick lashes, and well–shaped

brows.

It was a face that had charmed plenty of women.

Yet here was Damian–known for his playboy reputation–asleep beside her hospital bed, having cared for her through the night.

How could Scarlett not be suspicious?

A man like him could have anyone he wanted.

But what he'd done for her felt undeniably real.

Scarlett wasn't heartless. Even if Damian's kindness was an act or served some hidden motive, his actions were rare.

He could have carried himself with arrogance, yet he'd knelt to put shoes on her feet. He could

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Chapter 284 Silent Devotion

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have spent the night with someone glamorous, yet he'd held her–sweaty and feverish-without hesitation.

The thought stirred something in her.

She watched his sleeping face, a tangle of emotions swirling inside.

Just then, the phone on the bedside table lit up.

Scarlett's attention shifted. She picked it up and saw a text from Vincent. "Vanessa needs someone with her today. I have meetings. Can you come?"

She held the phone for a long moment, then set it down without replying.

It was true Vanessa was sick–but did she really want her mother there?

66

Finished

Scarlett left the message unanswered and didn't dwell on going. She muted the phone and placed it back on the table.

Damian was still sleeping soundly. Scarlett didn't have the heart to wake him and let him keep holding her hand.

Around eight in the morning, the door opened quietly, and Violet walked in.

Hearing the sound, Damian opened his eyes–they were bloodshot from lack of sleep.

Seeing she'd disturbed him, Violet offered an apologetic smile. "I'm sorry–I should have called first. I didn't mean to wake you."

Damian sat up.

There was no annoyance in his expression, only a tired but genuine smile. “Don’t worry about it, Violet.”

Violet set down an insulated food container on the bedside table, then turned to him. “Thank you for staying with her last night.”

Damian’s grin came easily. “It’s no trouble at all. I’m glad I could be here. And thank you for trusting me with her.”

Violet glanced from Damian to Scarlett.

Even as an outsider, she could read the dynamic–Damian’s eyes held Scarlett with unmistakable focus, while Scarlett’s response was harder to decipher.

Seeing how intently Damian watched Scarlett, Violet said gently, “I have a photoshoot today, so I may need to ask you to stay with her a while longer. I’ll come by this evening to relieve you.”

Hearing that, Damian’s smile widened. For him, this wasn’t an inconvenience–it was a gift.

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Chapter 284 Silent Devotion

(66)

Finished

Any chance to be near Scarlett was one he’d gladly take.

“If you’re busy, I can stay with her as long as needed,” he offered warmly.

Violet understood his meaning but didn’t commit. Instead, she said softly, “Nathan and I both want what’s best for her.”

Damian met her gaze steadily. “You don’t have to worry, Violet. I’ll take good care of her.”

Violet didn’t reply directly. She turned toward Scarlett, who lay quietly in bed, her expression thoughtful and complex.

Walking over, Violet gently touched Scarlett’s forehead. Finding no fever, she whispered, “I’ll be back tonight to stay with you, okay?”

Scarlett nodded softly. “Okay.”

****

By nine o’clock, the morning was fully underway.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 285[829 words]

Chapter 285 ICU Scare

Vanessa had just woken up when a nurse came in to start her IV.

The hospital room was empty except for her.

ab

65

Finished

After hanging the bag, the nurse asked kindly, “Sweetie, can you tell me where your mom is?”

Vanessa answered in a sulky tone, “I don’t have a mom.”

Seeing how firmly she said it, the nurse didn’t press further.

Not long after the drip began, Vanessa’s fever spiked again.

The nurse quickly brought some fever reducers, but even after taking them, Vanessa’s condition didn’t improve much.

Growing concerned, the nurse consulted the doctor, who explained it was normal–the flu fever could take a few days to break.

Worried about leaving Vanessa alone in such a state, the nurse kept checking on her.

Not only did the fever not go down, but when the nurse took her temperature again, it was even highe

asked, “Honey, can you tell me your mom’s phone number?”

nning to drift, but she managed to recite a string of digits.

noted them down and made the call.

ut the phone just rang and rang–no answer.

Still uneasy, she sent a text to the same number. “Vanessa is running a persistent high fever. Please come to the hospital as soon as possible.”

The message went unanswered, like a stone dropped into still water.

When the nurse looked back at Vanessa, she realized the child had lost consciousness.

She immediately pressed the call button.

Soon after, Vanessa was rushed to the pediatric emergency department.

Meanwhile, Lily had prepared breakfast and taken a cab to the hospital. It was exactly 9:20 a.m.

1/2

20:04 Wed, **Jan** 14

Chapter 285 ICU Scare

65

Finished

Weekday traffic was heavy, and she spent the ride anxious that Vanessa would be hungry with nothing to eat.

Earlier that morning, Vincent had called to ask Lily to bring breakfast over and take her time. Lily had asked then, “Mr. Stewart, you’re heading to the office and Ms. Monroe is at the lab- who will stay with Ms. Stewart?”

Vincent had replied, “Vanessa’s mother will be there.”

Hearing that, Lily had felt somewhat reassured.

Wanting to make sure Vanessa had a good meal, she had taken extra care with breakfast, which had delayed her a bit.

By the time she paid the cab driver and hurried to the ward with the food container, it was already 9:30 a.m.

But when she arrived, neither Scarlett nor Vanessa was there.

Setting the container on the bedside table, Lily went to the nurses‘ station to ask about Vanessa.

As soon as the nurse heard the name, she said quickly, “Vanessa spiked a high fever and passed out. She’s been taken to the emergency room.”

Lily froze, tears springing to her eyes.

For a moment, she was too panicked to think straight.

After the nurse called her name twice, she finally snapped back. “Right–I need to call. I’ll call Mr. Stewart.”

Vincent was in a meeting, his phone on silent. But on the projection screen, the caller ID showed Lily’s name.

Knowing she wouldn’t call unless it was urgent, he paused the meeting and stepped outside to

answer.

As soon as he picked up, Lily’s tearful voice came through. “Mr. Stewart, it’s bad. Ms. Stewart has been taken to the emergency room.”

Vincent’s heart clenched as if gripped by an icy hand. His legs moved before his mind could catch up.

Without a word, he strode toward the private elevator.

While pressing the button, he finally managed to speak, “I understand. I’m on my way.”

Chapter 285 ICU Scare

65

Finished

After hanging up, he stared at the descending floor numbers, his thoughts in turmoil.

He even wondered–what if he was too late? What would happen to Vanessa then...

In that moment, he felt a sharp pang of regret for not listening to Scarlett, for taking Vanessa to the hospital in the first place.

Down in the parking garage, his hands trembled as he started the car.

He hardly remembered the drive to the hospital, his heart lodged in his throat the entire way.

His phone rang–Abbott was calling–but Vincent couldn't bring himself to look at the screen. He was afraid it might be Lily again, afraid of hearing worse news.

Fortunately, it wasn't.

When he finally rushed into the hospital, he found Lily pacing outside the emergency room.

Seeing him, she stopped. "Mr. Stewart, you're here."

Vincent's eyes were red–rimmed, his voice rough. "How is she?"

Lily shook her head. "No doctor has come out yet. I don't know."

Vincent closed his eyes, his jaw tight.

Confusion and fear churned inside him, his heart pounding heavily.

He sank onto a bench, hunched forward with his hands pressed to his forehead, silently pleading that his daughter would be okay.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 286[744 words]

Chapter 286 Missed Calls

65

Finished

Seeing Vincent like that, Lily opened her mouth as if to speak, then swallowed her words.

Vanessa's condition was still uncertain–it wasn't the time *to* voice every worry.

After a few minutes, Vincent looked up abruptly. "Where is Scarlett?"

Lily turned to him and shook her head. "When I arrived, Mrs. Stewart wasn't here. I don't know where she went."

Frowning, Vincent pulled out his phone and checked. There was his earlier text asking Scarlett to come to the hospital–still unanswered.

Even without a reply, he'd assumed she wouldn't ignore their daughter's wellbeing. Maybe she'd just stepped out briefly.

But after another ten minutes passed and she still hadn't appeared, Vincent tried calling. ·

The phone rang through to voicemail.

He tried several more times with the same result.

A knot of uncertainty tightened in his chest. Was she deliberately ignoring him, or had she not seen the calls?

Just as his anxiety peaked, the emergency room doors opened.

Vincent stood quickly. "Doctor, how is my daughter?"

The doctor, wearing glasses, removed his mask. “She’s stabilized. But she’ll need to stay in the Pediatric ICU overnight. We can move her to a regular room once she’s more stable:”

Vincent released a breath he hadn’t realized he was holding.”

Noticing his relief, the doctor’s tone turned stern. “Your daughter is only five. You can’t leave a child alone in the hospital. Where were her parents?”

Vincent’s brow furrowed. “Wasn’t her mother here?”

“If her mother had been here,” the doctor replied bluntly, “she wouldn’t have ended up in the ER.”

Then Scarlett hadn’t come at all.

Vincent stopped hearing the rest of the doctor’s words.

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20:04 Wed**, Jan** 14

Chapter 286 Missed Calls

(65)

Finished

All he could think was–Why hadn’t she come?

A hot, restless anger simmered inside him. He tried calling Scarlett again.

Again, no answer.

This time he felt sure–she wasn’t just missing his calls. She was ignoring him.

Because she’d ignored his message and his calls, their daughter had nearly been in serious danger.

Thankfully Vanessa was alright. But if something had happened to her...

Vincent couldn’t finish the thought.

Back in Scarlett’s hospital room, Violet had already left. Scarlett had finished her breakfast.

Damian, who hadn't slept properly all night, had stubble shadowing his jaw and faint dark circles under his eyes. Even so, he showed no sign of leaving.

He sat beside the bed now, carefully peeling an apple with a small knife.

The peel came off in one long, curling ribbon–a testament to his oddly focused patience.

Though he looked tired, there was something quietly arresting about him sitting there, head slightly bowed.

Scarlett's phone on the bedside table had lit up several times. She knew calls or messages were coming in, but she didn't look.

Damian had seen it too. A glance showed it was Vincent calling.

When Scarlett made no move to answer, he didn't comment.

Once the apple was peeled, he finally asked, "Not going to pick up his call?"

Scarlett knew he meant Vincent.

After a pause, she said, "No."

She guessed Vincent wanted her to go to the hospital for Vanessa.

But in her current state, how could she?

20:04 Wed, Jan 14

Chapter 286 Missed Calls

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Even if she weren't sick, she didn't want to go anymore.

Vanessa didn't need her–why humiliate herself trying?

665

Finished

Seeing her resolve, Damian allowed himself a small, pleased smile. He sliced the apple neatly, arranged the pieces on a plate, and picked one up with a toothpick.

Scarlett accepted it without protest, eating quietly.

Watching her attitude toward Vincent, Damian's smile lingered.

He'd always believed that if he stayed persistent–and if Vincent kept acting as he did—he and Scarlett would find their way to each other eventually.

Maybe the time was coming for Scarlett to keep the promise she'd once made him.

His unguarded expression didn't escape Scarlett's notice.

"Damian," she asked, "what are you smiling about?"

He looked back at her, warmth still in his eyes. "I'm just glad you're finally letting go of him."

His words sent a faint, unexpected flutter through her chest.

She'd always suspected Damian had ulterior motives for being kind to her.

But moments like this—when his emotions showed so plainly on his face–left her genuinely

uncertain.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 287[816 words]

Awakened Housewife: Ignore Betrayer's Begs

Chapter 287 Guarded Hearts

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Could someone really go this far just for personal gain?

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Finished

Scarlett couldn't help wondering whether Damian was putting on an act or speaking from the heart.

It was so difficult to separate truth from performance.

So, she decided not to dwell on what was real and what wasn't.

Considering his words, she replied, "Actually, there isn't anything left to care about anymore."

Her tone was calm, and Damian could tell she wasn't just speaking out of momentary anger.

Seeing she could say that, he continued, "You know, it's never too late for a fresh start. There's nothing wrong with seeing what else—or who else is out there."

Scarlett was leaning against the raised bed, feeling drained. Damian's comment made her frown. She looked at him, a touch of weary amusement in her voice. "I'm lying here sick, and you're still in the mood to tease me."

But Damian looked back seriously. "I'm not teasing you, and it's not a joke. I mean it."

She knew the "who else" he meant was himself.

Scarlett didn't want to keep debating the point with him.

As it was almost noon, she changed the subject. "Damian, I'd like some shrimp."

She really did want shrimp–and she really didn't want to keep talking about feelings.

It was rare for Scarlett to ask for something herself. Naturally, Damian was pleased. "Alright," he said promptly. "I'll have some sent over."

Seeing his smile, Scarlett suddenly remembered something. “Don’t have your mother make it,” she added quickly.

But Damian glanced up, still smiling, and showed her his phone screen. “Too late. Already told her.”

Scarlett looked at the text conversation on the screen. She almost asked him to unsend the message, but the reply was already there.

“Of course. If she likes it, I’ll make it for her anytime.”

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20:04 Wed, Jan 14

Chapter 287 Guarded Hearts

And just above it, Damian’s text read, “Mom, my future wife wants shrimp.”

(65)

Finished

Scarlett didn’t bother reading the earlier messages. Seeing there was no taking it back, she closed her eyes briefly. “Damian,” she asked, “do you always chase women this way?”

She sounded genuinely curious, her eyes searching his.

Putting his phone away, Damian raised an eyebrow. “I’ve never tried to chase anyone else. Only you.”

Scarlett didn’t take his words to heart. “Well,” she said lightly, “if that’s the case, your methods are... quite creative.”

Hearing that, Damian’s expression cooled. “Could you stop trying to annoy me?” he asked, frustration edging his voice.

Scarlett could tell he was upset. She looked over and clarified, “I’m not trying to.”

Damian took a slow breath. He’d been about to say he was used to it—that it didn’t matter–but before he could speak, Scarlett’s phone lit up again on the bedside table.

As expected, it was another call from Vincent.

Given the string of missed calls, Damian asked carefully, “Are you sure you don’t want to answer? What if it’s important?”

Just as firmly as before, Scarlett said, “No.”

Seeing her resolve, Damian didn’t push further. Vincent was his rival–he wasn’t about to steer Scarlett back toward him.

*****

Outside the emergency room, Vincent finally stopped calling after yet another attempt went unanswered.

He stayed at the hospital for two more hours before Abbott called again.

“Mr. Stewart, this morning’s meeting is still on hold. Everyone is waiting for you to resume.”

Vincent instructed Lily to stay with Vanessa and call immediately if anything changed. As the housekeeper, Lily naturally agreed.

Leaving the hospital, Vincent returned to the office and worked through the afternoon.

Lily never called.

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Chapter 287 Guarded Hearts

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By the time he finished, it was already around seven in the evening.

When he drove back to the hospital, Scarlett still wasn’t there.

He asked Lily, “Has Mrs. Stewart been here at all this afternoon? No calls either?”

Lily could hear the anger in his voice but could only tell the truth. “No, Mr. Stewart.”

Vincent didn’t ask anything else. He went to check with the doctor, who said Vanessa’s condition had stabilized but she needed to remain in the Pediatric ICU overnight for observation. She could be moved to a regular room the next day.

Exhausted, Vincent suddenly felt the need for a cigarette.

He left the inpatient wing, went downstairs, and sat on a bench in the hospital courtyard.

65

Finished

As he exhaled a cloud of smoke, he noticed Violet and Clara walking along the path toward the hospital entrance.

Violet was holding Clara’s hand with one hand and carrying a bag of fruit with the other. Engrossed in their conversation, they didn’t see Vincent sitting in the garden.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 288[710 words]

Chapter 288 Encounters in the Garden

, (65)

Finished

Just as the two were about to leave the garden, Vincent couldn’t hold back any longer. He stood up and quickly caught up to them.

“Violet.”

Hearing her name, Violet turned, slightly startled. Recognizing Vincent, she relaxed a bit and asked, “Is everything alright?”

Vincent didn’t beat around the bush. “Have you seen Scarlett?”

Instead of answering, Violet asked, “Why do you ask?”

“Vanessa spiked a high fever and lost consciousness. She’s in the ICU. I’ve called Scarlett over and over, but she won’t pick up. She’s usually reachable–I’m worried something might be wrong.”

Violet didn't tell him Scarlett was in the same hospital.

She simply said, "I'm just her sister–in–law, Vincent. I'm not really in a position to know her whereabouts. I'm sorry–I can't help you."

Vincent didn't press her. He just replied wearily, "I see. Thanks anyway."

Violet looked *at* him for another moment, then took Clara's hand and continued toward the

entrance.

But Vincent suddenly called after her again. "Violet, the flu's going around with the season change. You probably shouldn't bring Clara to the hospital."

Violet had actually forgotten about that. She offered a small, polite smile. "You're right. Thanks."

Then she led Clara away.

When Violet returned alone later, Vincent was no longer in the garden.

She carried a bag of fruit to the inpatient wing and entered Scarlett's room, where Damian was helping her with dinner.

Violet glanced at the containers–the meal looked nourishing and thoughtfully prepared, gentle enough for someone recovering.

"How considerate, Mr. Langley," she remarked. "This doesn't look like hospital food."

Damian looked up and smiled. "Good eye. My mother made it."

Finished

Violet's eyes widened slightly. "Does your mother know about Scarlett?"

While carefully feeding Scarlett another bite, Damian said, “Yes, I told her a while ago.”

“And about Scarlett being married... and having a child?” Violet ventured.

Seeing Scarlett was nearly finished, Damian gently wiped her mouth, then stood to face Violet more fully. “Violet, everyone in my life knows there’s a woman I care about. They also know I won’t marry anyone else.”

Violet studied his expression. He seemed completely sincere.

After a pause, she said with a soft smile, “It sounds like you’re the kind of man worth trusting with a future.”

She deliberately glanced toward Scarlett as she said it–clearly meaning for her to hear.

Scarlett did hear, but she pretended not to, quietly sipping the last of her soup.

Damian looked at her too. He knew she’d heard and was choosing not to react.

He didn’t push. He just returned Violet’s smile and said, “Thank you. But whether I’m worthy or not depends on what Scarlett thinks. If she says I am, then I am.”

Violet nodded gently. “I believe effort is rewarded, sooner or later.”

“I hope so,” Damian replied, his tone touched with quiet resolve.

In his pursuit of Scarlett, his confidence wavered sometimes. Moments like this–when Violet was subtly encouraging things–Scarlett’s lack of response made the road ahead feel long.

But maybe it was just because she wasn’t divorced yet. Maybe once she was free, and if he kept showing up for her, day after day, she might finally let him in.

After Scarlett finished, Damian took the bowl and began tidying the containers from the bedside table.

Watching his attentive, thorough care, Violet couldn’t help smiling warmly.

She sat beside the bed, took Scarlett’s hand, and glanced toward Damian before lowering her voice. “I ran into Vincent on my way in.”

Scarlett’s expression tightened. “Did he give you a hard time?”

Violet gave her hand a reassuring pat. “No, he didn’t. But he said he couldn’t reach you. And it sounds like Vanessa’s in the ICU.”

213

20:04 Wed, Jan 14

Chapter 288 Encounters in the Garden

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Hearing that, Scarlett straightened up. “I should go check on her.”

As a doctor, she knew being moved to the ICU even with the flu was serious.

No matter what, Vanessa was still her daughter.

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Finished

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 289[726 words]

Chapter 289 Heated Words

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Whether Vanessa was doing well or poorly, Scarlett couldn’t simply stop caring.

As a mother herself, Violet understood that worry perfectly. “I’ll go with you,” she said.

Scarlett knew Violet was concerned and simply nodded. “Alright.”

Though Damian was tidying up, he'd overheard their conversation.

Seeing both women preparing to visit Vanessa, he spoke up quickly, "Then I'll come too."

It wasn't that he was worried about anyone else–only Scarlett.

65

Finished

If she were healthy, he might have held back. But she was still feverish, and he couldn't help but

worry.

After *a* brief hesitation, Scarlett quietly declined.

Damian didn't argue. Even if she said no, he'd find a way to keep an eye on her.

Supported by Violet, Scarlett made her way to the pediatric unit.

From a distance, she spotted Vincent and Lily sitting silently on a bench in the waiting area.

Hearing their footsteps, Vincent looked up. Seeing how pale and weak Scarlett appeared, his frown deepened slightly.

The accusatory questions he'd prepared died on his tongue.

Vanessa was stable now–arguing felt pointless. He stayed quiet.

When Vincent didn't speak, Scarlett asked first, her voice strained, "How is Vanessa?"

"She's in the ICU," Vincent replied tersely.

Scarlett's temper flickered. "I asked about her condition, not her location."

Hearing her sharp tone, Vincent couldn't hold back any longer. "You have time to ask me now— why didn't you come when I texted you?"

Scarlett let out a hollow, bitter laugh. "Are you sure Vanessa even wants me here? The people she asks for are you and Sabrina. If I stayed, would it really make her happy?"

Vincent ignored her question. His eyes were red–rimmed as he said, "You're still her mother."

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20:04 Wed, Jan 14

Chapter 289 Heated Words

That word–mother–had bound Scarlett for so long.

65

Finished

She felt her body begin to tremble, barely able to stand. Violet tightened her grip, holding her steady.

Staring into Vincent's cold, bloodshot eyes, Scarlett drew a shaky breath. "Vincent, I'm a person, not a machine. I can't revolve solely around Vanessa forever."

Exhaustion made her voice crack.

Vincent looked up at her, fighting to control his own emotions. "So you can just ignore whether your daughter lives or dies? You saw my messages—"

But before he could finish, Scarlett broke. Her voice rose, raw and strained, cutting him off. "And who has ever cared–whether I live or die?"

The force of her shout made the veins in her neck stand out. Red streaked the whites of her

eyes.

As the words left her, a fit of coughing seized her. She covered her mouth, and when she pulled her hand away, a smear of blood stained her palm.

Violet quickly passed her a tissue, gently rubbing her back. "Scarlett, don't strain yourself. If others won't look out for you, you have to look out for yourself."

Lily, watching in alarm, stood up instinctively–but Violet turned toward Vincent, her own voice tight with anger.

"Scarlett has been running a high fever since last night. I only told her Vanessa was in the ICU after I saw you. The moment she heard, she insisted on coming. She nearly fell several times on the way here, but she still came. If you think she doesn't care about her daughter, I don't believe it. If she didn't care, she wouldn't have risked her own health to be here."

Then, softening her tone, she said to Scarlett, “Come on, let me take you back to your room.”

Too weak to argue, Scarlett simply nodded.

As Violet helped her turn to leave, she looked back at Vincent one last time. “Vincent... think about what you’re doing.”

Hearing Violet’s words, Vincent’s anger began to dissolve.

Seeing Scarlett like this–she clearly wasn’t in much better shape than Vanessa.

He still cared underneath it all; he just didn’t know how to say it.

Lily wrung her hands anxiously. “Mr. Stewart, Mrs. Stewart is in such a state... shouldn’t you go

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20:04 Wed, Jan 14

Chapter 289 Heated Words

65

Finished

Vincent didn’t answer. Instead, he said quietly, “You should head home. Remember to bring breakfast for Vanessa early tomorrow.”

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 290[822 words]

ng this, Lily let out a helpless sigh and left as well.

Meanwhile, Violet had just helped Scarlett to the elevator when the doors slid open.

Damian stepped out.

65

Finished

Seeing Scarlett on the verge of collapse, he didn't say a word–in two quick strides, he swept her up into his arms.

At the same moment, the elevator across the hall also opened.

Sabrina walked out just in time to see Damian lifting Scarlett.

Stunned, she couldn't help calling out, "Mr. Langley?"

Damian ignored her, but the usually gentle Violet snapped back, "Good dogs don't block doors. I assume you don't want to be one, Ms. Monroe?"

With that, Violet hit the button to close the doors.

Just as the elevator shut, Sabrina sneered coldly, "Pathetic."

Inside, Violet heard the insult.

She didn't care–her focus was entirely on Scarlett.

Surviving in the modeling industry required thick skin; she'd have been gone long ago without it.

Sabrina's cheap shots were nothing to Violet. She'd heard far worse and met far more unpleasant people.

Damian held Scarlett tightly, his heart pounding. Seeing the trace of blood still on her face, he panicked even more.

Scarlett's cheek rested against his chest, her eyes already closed.

"Scarlett, don't fall asleep. Please don't. Look at me. I'm begging you, look at me."

He lowered his head, pressing his face gently against hers.

He was frantic, terrified she might never open her eyes again.

He'd waited so long for this chance–he couldn't lose her now.

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20:04 Wed, Jan 14

Chapter 290 Emergency Dash

65

Finished

"Stay awake. I won't ask to be your boyfriend anymore, I won't push you to marry me. If you want to stay with Vincent, then do it. Just please get better. I'll never pressure you like that again."

He buried his face in the crook of her neck, his words dissolving into muffled, shaky breaths.

Seeing Damian like this, Violet felt a pang of sympathy. She reached over and gently patted his shoulder. "Mr. Langley, she'll be alright. Don't worry so much."

Damian hardly heard her. Soft, choked sounds escaped him.

When the elevator reached the first floor, he carried Scarlett straight into the ER.

After the doctors examined her, they confirmed she was stable and would wake up soon.

Even with their reassurance, Damian kept pacing anxiously back and forth in the ER hallway, his figure moving restlessly under the fluorescent lights.

Finally, a nurse came out and said, "Sir, she's awake."

Hearing that, Damian shot into the room.

Scarlett had just come to, still feeling dizzy and out of it.

But Damian didn't hesitate–he rushed in, pulled her gently into his arms, and held her close.

A shaky, frightened whisper brushed her ear, again and again. "Scarlett, please don't scare me like that again. I was so scared. Really scared."

As he spoke, warm tears slid down his cheeks.

Scarlett felt the dampness against her skin–Damian's tears.

Coming back to herself, she remembered what had just happened.

She'd always doubted Damian's kindness, thinking it might be an act. But in this moment, she felt the real, raw weight of his fear.

If he didn't truly care... why would he cry?

Scarlett stayed still for a long moment. Damian was still trembling against her. Unable to bear it, she slowly raised a hand and patted his back.

"Damian, it's just the flu. It's not that serious. Please don't cry."

Instead of letting go, he held her even tighter. "Scarlett, everything I said earlier–I take it back.

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20:04 Wed, Jan 14

Chapter 290 Emergency Dash

I still want to be with you."

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Finished

Scarlett couldn't help a soft, weary laugh. "Damian, you're a man of your word–aren't you? How come you're going back on it?"

Hearing that, he finally pulled back slightly. His eyes fixed seriously on hers. "I don't mind. Let me be the one who cares for you. I'll help you with your shoes, I'll cook for you, I'll keep you warm–anything. As long as you let me stay by your side, I'll do whatever you want."

Scarlett was moved. Even if part of her still wondered, she was moved.

Her eyes reddened, and she turned her head away slightly. “Why would you do things like that... for someone like me?”

Damian took her hand and pressed it firmly against his chest. “Because I care about you. I’ve cared for a long time. When you married Vincent, when I told you to choose me instead... I wasn’t joking. It’s because I really do care.”

Scarlett’s palm felt the strong, rapid beat of Damian’s heart.

Her cheeks warmed, and she tried to pull her hand back, but Damian held it gently in place. “Can you feel it?” he asked, his voice low and earnest.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 291[808 words]

Chapter 291 A Lover’s Kiss

Scarlett’s cheeks flushed. “Damian, let me go.”

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65

Finished

But Damian didn’t release her. Instead, he guided her hand to his waist, his own arm wrapping firmly around her to draw her closer.

Then he lowered his head–no longer holding back, no longer holding anything in check. He closed his eyes and kissed her.

His kiss was intense, almost overwhelming, like a sudden storm. His tongue swept into her mouth, claiming her with a hunger that left her breathless.

He took her air, her scent, everything.

Against her lips, between deep, seeking kisses, came his low, ragged plea. “Baby, please... let me be yours. I don’t need a label. I just want to be the one you turn to.”

Even as he kissed her, he begged so persuasively.

Scarlett’s mind spun under his relentless advance.

Her scalp tingled, her thoughts scattered, and she didn’t know where to put her hands.

Her mouth was filled with the taste of him.

Damian seemed to want to imprint himself on her completely.

In the end, he didn’t push further. He just kept kissing her until her resistance melted away, then gathered her gently against him and began placing soft, lingering kisses across her face- every inch, as if committing her to memory.

Even the faint traces of sweat and dried tears, he kissed them all

Scarlett slumped against his chest, her face burning as if on fire.

She was still a married woman. The divorce wasn’t final.

away.

Yet, despite herself, a fragile flicker of happiness warmed her from within.

A man like Damian–powerful, wealthy, handsome, capable–and he wanted her.

Even if it was only temporary, even if it wasn’t entirely real... she had felt it.

Scarlett closed her eyes. Like a lamb yielding to the shepherd, she had no strength left to pull

away.

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20:05 Wed, Jan 14

Chapter 291 A Lover’s Kiss

A 65

Finished

When Damian finally drew back, he looked down at her, studying her face as if to memorize every detail.

Scarlett hadn't answered his question, and he didn't press her. Instead, he leaned close again, his lips brushing her ear as he whispered, "You didn't say no, *so* I'll take that as a yes. From now on, I'm yours."

There was so much quiet joy in his voice.

Too weary to protest, Scarlett let him have the last word.

Since she didn't object, a faint, almost boyish smile touched the corner of Damian's mouth.

*****

Meanwhile, after her exchange with Violet, Sabrina straightened her jacket and walked toward the pediatric unit.

She'd been tied up in the lab all day and hadn't checked her phone.

It wasn't until she left that evening that she saw the message from hours earlier. "Vanessa is running a persistent high fever. Please come to the hospital as soon as possible."

The text was sent in the morning; she was only seeing it now.

Though Vanessa wasn't her child, she mattered to Vincent.

So Sabrina came straight from the lab.

When she reached the unit, she spotted Vincent sitting alone on a bench in the hallway. He seemed lost in thought, his expression complicated.

She walked over and sat beside him, taking his hand. "How is Vanessa?"

Hearing her voice, Vincent replied quietly, "Stable now, but she needs another night under observation."

Sabrina could feel his exhaustion: "I'm sorry I'm so late."

"It's alright," he said. "You have your work."

Sabrina shifted closer, letting him lean against her shoulder. "Rest for a bit. You're tired."

Vincent was tired. He hadn't slept the night before, had worked through the day, and had spent the afternoon at the hospital. After the confrontation with Scarlett, he felt completely drained.

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20:05 Wed, Jan 14

Chapter 291 A Lover's Kiss

B

(65)

Finished

When Sabrina offered, he didn't refuse. He tilted his head against her and closed his eyes.

Sabrina gently stroked his hair. "Just rest," she murmured.

Vincent's tense posture eased. "Okay."

And he let himself drift.

But as Sabrina sat there with Vincent leaning on her, her mind wandered–unbidden–to Damian.

Damian had called her the one who made his heart race. So why was he being *so* attentive to Scarlett?

*****

Back in the emergency area, after Damian's emotional outburst, Scarlett was too worn out to

argue

with him about labels.

He said he was hers; she didn't have the energy to correct him.

Still feverish and weak, she slipped back into sleep.

When she opened her eyes again, it was Violet's face she saw.

Violet had removed her makeup. Though her features weren't as sharply defined as usual, her clear skin and natural beauty still held a gentle, arresting warmth.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 292[858 words]

Chapter 292 Returning to Her Side

A 665

Finished

Seeing Violet, Scarlett's thoughts immediately returned to Vanessa. With red-rimmed eyes, she asked, "How is Vanessa doing?"

Violet smoothed the blanket around her. "Mr. Langley had someone check. She's stable now. Try not to worry."

Hearing that, some of the tightness in Scarlett's chest eased. She nodded quietly.

Violet gently dabbed the perspiration from Scarlett's forehead with a tissue. "Damian went home for a bit. I'll stay with you tonight."

At the mention of Damian, Scarlett paused briefly.

Then she caught herself–he was a wealthy heir, accustomed to a certain life. How could he truly lower himself to do things like "warming the bed" or "washing intimates"?

She should probably treat those words as a joke.

After taking more fever reducers, Scarlett felt clammy and uncomfortable. She burrowed under the covers, hoping that sweating it out would let her feel better by morning.

Before settling in, Violet sat in the chair beside the bed, quietly flipping through a magazine.

Sometime in the middle of the night, Scarlett woke up shivering.

As she opened her eyes, a gentle voice came from beside her. “Cold?”

It was Damian.

At first, she thought she was dreaming. But when she turned her head, his face was really there.

Confused, she whispered, “Why are you back?”

Damian pulled the blanket up closer around her shoulders, a soft smile touching his lips. “I’m yours now. Where you are is where I should be.”

Hearing that, Scarlett frowned, her displeasure clear.

Not wanting to upset her, Damian explained, “I didn’t make it clear to Violet earlier. I just went home to shower–I never said I wasn’t coming back. She has Clara to look after, so I asked her to go home. You... you aren’t upset with me, are you?”

Seeing the concern in his expression, Scarlett felt a faint pang in her chest. Her voice softened. “Damian... thank you.”

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Chapter 292 Returning to Her Side

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Finished

A wide, relieved smile spread across his face. Knowing she was still chilled, he asked carefully, “Then... would it be alright if I held you to help you warm up?”

He was only trying to do what he thought someone who cared for her should.

But the question made Scarlett’s cheeks grow warm. She shook her head instinctively. “No, I’m fine.”

Seeing her reluctance, Damian didn’t push. “Then try *to* sleep. I’ll rest here beside the bed. If you get cold, just say so. I can join you anytime.”

Scarlett didn’t answer. She simply watched him quietly.

Even after being turned down, he still seemed content.

After lying down on the narrow space beside the bed, he let out a low, pleased chuckle, then closed his eyes.

But Damian was tall. Curled awkwardly beside the hospital bed, his body was cramped–hardly a comfortable way to rest.

Scarlett had slept on and off and wasn’t really tired now.

She turned her head to look at him. His handsome face was tilted toward her, his brow faintly furrowed even in sleep.

Knowing he couldn’t be resting well, she reached over and gently touched his shoulder. “Damian.”

His eyes opened, drowsy. “Yeah, baby? What’s wrong?”

Scarlett shifted slightly toward the edge of the mattress. “I... I am a little cold. You can come up.”

Truthfully, she was more worried about him being uncomfortable–but the words that came out were about the chill.

Damian didn’t hesitate. He slipped onto the bed behind her, wrapping an arm around her waist and resting his chin lightly on her shoulder.

He still carried the faint, clean scent of soap from his shower. Scarlett, by contrast, was acutely aware of the stale, feverish smell clinging to her own skin.

She’d been in and out of sweats, unable to wash properly. She knew she must not smell pleasant.

Yet Damian didn’t seem to mind. If anything, he held her a little closer.

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Chapter 292 Returning to Her Side

A 665

Finished

Wide awake now, he lay perfectly still behind her. Scarlett, too, couldn’t fall back asleep.

Damian shifted slightly, sliding his left arm beneath her neck and wrapping his right securely around her waist, until her entire back was nestled against the solid warmth of his chest.

Their body heat began to mingle. Through the thin fabric of her shirt, Scarlett could feel the steady, radiating warmth of his skin.

In the quiet darkness, neither of them spoke.

A long while passed, but sleep still wouldn’t come for Scarlett.

Damian, too, remained awake.

After a time, he brushed his lips lightly against the curve of her ear. “Are you still worried about Vanessa?”

The touch sent a faint shiver through her. She shifted slightly. “No,” she murmured. “I’m not thinking about anyone.”

Damian understood her better than that. “If you want to see her, we can go check. I’ll go you.”

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After a moment’s hesitation, Scarlett finally surrendered to the thought. “Alright.”

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 293[692 words]

Chapter 293 A Misleading Sight

Once they were ready, the two of them made their way *to* the pediatric unit.

From a distance, Scarlett saw Vincent leaning against Sabrina's shoulder.

She paused, and Damian stopped with her.

Scarlett didn't approach them. Instead, she went straight to the doctor's office.

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Finished

She needed to hear about Vanessa's condition directly from the physician. Only then would she feel settled.

The doctor on duty went over Vanessa's status patiently. Being a doctor herself, Scarlett understood the details. After the explanation, a quiet relief finally settled over her.

Leaving the office, she couldn't help one last glance toward Vincent.

He was still in the same position, head resting on Sabrina's shoulder. Their backs were to her, two figures leaning into each other, close and intimate.

Sensing Scarlett's mood, Damian stepped forward. Without waiting for her to agree, he gently lifted her into his arms.

Looking down at her, he said softly, "You know, if you'll let me... I could be the one you lean on,

too."

Scarlett met his gaze but didn't reply.

The movement caught Sabrina's attention. She glanced over just in time to see Damian carrying Scarlett away–and caught a fragment of what he'd said.

A thought sparked in her mind–those words felt like they were meant for her. Damian must have seen her with Vincent and gotten jealous.

Maybe she needed to find a moment to explain things to him.

Lost in thought, she barely registered Vincent stirring beside her.

“Sabrina.”

He sat up straight and turned to her, noticing her distant expression. “Everything alright?”

Sabrina blinked, refocusing. “Yes, Vincent. What is it?”

He studied her with concern. “Are you tired?”

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Chapter 293 A Misleading Sight.

She shook her head with a gentle smile. “No, not at all.”

Vincent reached over and touched her hair, his voice softening. “Let me take

you home.”

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Finished

“It’s fine,” she insisted. “I can stay with you–with Vanessa.”

“I’ll stay with her,” he said firmly. “You should rest. You have lab work tomorrow.”

Seeing his resolve, Sabrina yielded gracefully. “Alright.”

Vincent stood and offered his hand. “Come on, I’ll walk you out.”

Sabrina stared at his outstretched hand, her mind drifting again to the image of Damian carrying Scarlett. Maybe this was an opportunity.

If Damian had misunderstood, now was the time to clarify.

She smiled up at Vincent. “You’re exhausted. Really, I can just take a cab. You should stay with Vanessa.”

“I’d feel better if I took you myself,” he insisted.

Sabrina’s eyes softened persuasively. “But Vanessa needs you here. I’ll be fine–I got here on my own, didn’t I?”

Vincent hesitated, thinking of his daughter. Finally, he relented. “Then let me call Abbott to drive you.”

Touched by his worry but focused on her own plan, Sabrina shook her head. “I’ll text you when I’m home. Don’t fuss, okay?”

He didn’t argue further but still walked her out to a taxi, watching it pull away before returning inside.

Once in the cab, Sabrina said to the driver, “You can let me out up ahead. I’ll still pay the full fare.”

Pleased with the arrangement, the driver agreed.

After getting out, Sabrina took out her phone, opened her messages, and typed to Damian. “Mr. Langley, are you free to talk?”

She hit send, then turned back toward the hospital. It was late, and waiting outside alone didn’t feel safe. Returning to the hospital grounds was the wiser choice.

Instead of going back to the unit, she found a bench in the courtyard and sat down, phone in

hand, waiting for Damian’s reply.

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Finished

Back in the room, Damian had just carried Scarlett to her bed. He was about to offer some comforting words when she spoke first.

“Damian,” she said quietly, “I’d like to take a shower.”

Damian paused, studying her face for any hint of what she might be feeling.

3/3

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 294[842 words]

Chapter 294 A Humble Gesture

A

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Finished

But there was a softness in her gaze, as if the image of Vincent leaning on Sabrina no longer held any weight for her.

Damian didn't press further. He stood up promptly. "Alright, I'll draw you a bath."

Once the water was ready, he fetched her pajamas and a change of underclothes from the bag.

When everything was prepared, he returned to the bedside. "Let me carry you over," he offered gently.

Seeing how attentively he had moved around the room, Scarlett felt a quiet warmth stir inside her. At his offer, though, her cheeks colored slightly. "I can walk, Damian."

Damian paused, then withdrew his hands without argument.

If she preferred to walk, he wouldn't insist.

Scarlett moved slowly into the bathroom and closed the door behind her, the soft click of the lock echoing in the quiet room.

Damian stood outside, hearing the sound, and a faint, contented smile touched his lips,

Soon, the gentle rush of water could be heard from within.

Worried she might catch a chill, Damian waited by the door, her robe draped over his arm.

About half an hour later, Scarlett emerged, a towel wrapped around her damp hair, her body clothed in soft, fleece pajamas.

The winter night was cold.

The moment she stepped out, Damian moved forward and wrapped the robe snugly around her. “Are you warm enough?”

Scarlett shook her head gently. “I’m fine.”

Seeing the calm in her eyes, Damian’s own expression softened with relief.

He guided her to sit on the edge of the bed. “Stay here–I’ll get the hairdryer.”

Before she could protest, he was already across the room, retrieving it from the cabinet.

He moved with an unassuming diligence that felt nothing like the proud heir he was supposed to be–more like someone caring for a loved one.

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Chapter 294 A Humble Gesture.

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Finished

Watching him, Scarlett found it hard to believe this was real.

How could a man like him humble himself like this–for her?

While Damian carefully dried her hair, Scarlett turned the question over in her mind, finding no clear answer.

Once her hair was dry, he put the dryer away.

As Scarlett began to lie down, Damian stopped her gently. “Wait just a moment.”

He returned to the bathroom and came out with a basin of warm water, placing it at her feet. “Soaking your feet might help you sweat out the fever and sleep better.”

Scarlett, trained in medicine, almost commented on the lack of scientific proof–but Damian spoke first, a touch of self–awareness in his tone. “I know, you’re the doctor. Maybe it’s just an old remedy. But even if it doesn’t cure anything, it should help you relax.”

Before she could respond, he pulled a small stool from beneath the bed, sat down before her, and reached for her feet.

Scarlett’s heart tightened. “Damian, you don’t have to-

But he had already guided her feet into the warm water and begun massaging them with careful, if unpracticed, hands.

His touch was clumsy, yet so earnest that tears welled in Scarlett’s eyes before she could stop them.

If all this was just an act for some hidden gain, he wouldn’t go this far.

Maybe... he truly did care for her.

She tried to pull her feet back more than once, offering to do it herself, but Damian held them gently. “Let me,” he said softly. “This is what someone who cares for you should do. Just let me take care of you.”

Hearing that, Scarlett fell silent.

She looked down at him–bent at her feet, his handsome face focused intently on the task, as if tending to her was the most natural thing in the world.

If not for features impossible to counterfeit, she might have wondered if this was really Damian

at all.

When the foot soak was done, Damian helped her into bed.

Chapter 294 A Humble Gesture

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Finished

After emptying the basin, he returned to tuck the blankets snugly around her.

Then, leaning close, he asked softly, “Would it be alright if I stepped out for a little while?”

Scarlett was bundled tightly, only her face visible. She met his gaze, struck again by how genuinely he seemed to embrace the role he’d claimed.

She didn’t feel she deserved a “lover” like him–but she didn’t voice the thought.

Instead, she said quietly, “You don’t need my permission to go somewhere.”

Damian’s expression turned earnest. “Yes, I do. My time is yours when you allow it.”

Scarlett didn’t correct him. “Then go ahead,” she murmured.

Before leaving, he brushed a tender kiss against her forehead. “Get some rest. I won’t be long.”

Then he was gone.

Alone in the quiet room, Scarlett found sleep elusive–her mind clearer and more awake than

ever.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce Silent Dreams Never Die — 295[723 words]

Chapter 295 Garden Rendezvous

65

Finished

Her thoughts kept circling back to Damian's kindness these past two days–everything he'd done, everything he'd said.

She had always told herself he must want something from her, yet even now she couldn't pinpoint what value she could possibly hold for him.

And yet, here he was, lowering himself without hesitation, even washing her feet.

It was a small gesture, but because it was Damian doing it, it felt utterly significant.

Scarlett's defenses were quietly softening.

What if his care was genuine?

The more she turned it over, the more restless she became.

The room felt close, so she slipped out for some air.

Walking without direction, she reached the end of the corridor where a door led to the stairwell.

She stepped through and stood by a slightly open window, letting the cool night breeze brush her face.

Stars dotted the clear sky–a serene, beautiful night.

Below the window lay the hospital courtyard.

Scarlett's eyes were sharp, and the floor wasn't too high. When she glanced down, she immediately spotted Damian–and Sabrina.

When Damian had received Sabrina's text, his first instinct was to ignore it. But after a moment's consideration, he replied, "Fine. Where?"

Sabrina sent the location–the hospital courtyard.

Damian found her sitting on a bench, arms wrapped around herself against the chill.

Hearing his approach, she turned. A gentle smile touched her lips. “Mr. Langley, you came.”

It was early winter, but Sabrina wore only a long–sleeved dress, no coat.

Damian felt no pity. His tone held a faint edge of mockery. “What? No longer keeping Vincent company?”

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Chapter 295 Garden Rendezvous

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He meant it as a straightforward question, but to Sabrina it sounded like jealousy.

She didn’t take offense. Shivering slightly, she looked up at him with soft, appealing eyes. “I’m a little cold... Could I borrow your jacket?”

Damian’s brow twitched, then smoothed. He offered a casual smile. “Sure.”

He took off his jacket and dropped it onto her lap–not gently, but in Sabrina’s eyes, the act itself meant he cared. Otherwise, why would he give it to her?

Once she’d put it on, she felt warmer almost instantly.

Seeing him still standing, she shifted over on the bench. “Would you like to sit, Mr. Langley?”

Damian glanced at the narrow space she’d made. Sitting there would bring them close, unavoidably touching.

After a brief pause, he tilted his head, a sly arch to his brow. “Sit... or something else?”

He deliberately let the suggestion hang, his tone teasing.

Coming from someone with his roguish charm, the words carried clear implication. Sabrina flushed, momentarily flustered.

Damian didn't wait for a reply. He sat down beside her, close enough that their arms almost brushed.

Sabrina's heart began to race, her cheeks growing warm.

Noticing her reaction, Damian turned his head to study her, his gaze openly appraising. "You really are untouched, aren't you?"

His eyes held a smile, but beneath it stirred something darker, harder to read.

Sabrina met his look and nodded quietly. "Yes."

Damian let out a low, soft laugh.

The sound made Sabrina both nervous and strangely excited.

But just as suddenly, his smile faded. He kept his eyes on her. "Since you are... maybe we should get together sometime when you're free?"

His bluntness made Sabrina's face burn hotter. She played innocent. "Get together? For what, Mr. Langley?"

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Chapter 295 Garden Rendezvous

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65

Finished

Seeing her act coy, Damian felt a flicker of disgust–but he kept it hidden.

He maintained his easy smile, leaning slightly toward her until his face was close to hers, stopping just short of touching her cheek.

His voice dropped to a murmur. "You'll find out when you show up, Ms. Monroe."

He didn't spell it out, leaving the suggestion hanging, deliberately ambiguous.

Yet his meaning was unmistakable. Sabrina understood perfectly.

And upstairs at that moment...

From Scarlett's vantage point, the distance and angle made it look as though Damian and Sabrina were kissing.

She couldn't hear their words, but the closeness, the intimacy of their posture–it clearly spoke of a connection that wasn't simple at all.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce Silent Dreams Never Die — 296[821 words]

Chapter 296 Cold Shoulder

Just moments before, Scarlett had genuinely been moved by Damian's kindness.

65

Finished

She had even allowed herself to wonder–what if his care was real? What if, by pushing him

she was turning her back on someone who might truly cherish her?

away,

But now, looking down from above, it seemed nothing had changed after all.

Whether it was Vincent or Damian, they were all the same–men she couldn't afford to trust with her heart.

Even as the thought formed, tears escaped her eyes.

She stayed by the window, letting the night air chill the wet tracks on her cheeks.

In an instant, the fragile warmth inside her vanished, replaced by a familiar, hollow coldness.

Perhaps it was for the best–she hadn't fallen too deeply yet. There was still time to pull back.

Scarlett didn't watch any longer. Slowly, she made her way back to her room.

She had just settled into bed when Damian returned.

He entered quietly, careful not to make noise, thinking she was asleep. But when he reached the bedside, he found her eyes open, gazing into the dimness.

"Still awake?" he asked softly, a trace of surprise in his voice.

Scarlett glanced at him. "Yes."

Something in her tone felt distant. Gently, Damian probed, "Would it help if I held you?"

Instead of answering, she asked a question of her own, "You were gone a while. What were you doing?"

She was giving him a chance–if he told her the truth, she thought she might still listen.

But Damian didn't mention Sabrina. "Just took a work call," he explained.

At that, the last bit of warmth in Scarlett's chest dissolved. She offered a faint, empty smile. "I see."

Seeing her smile, Damian tried again. "Can I... hold you while you sleep?"

He began to move onto the bed, but Scarlett didn't shift to make room. She simply looked at

him, her voice cool and detached. "No. I'd prefer to sleep alone."

Then she turned onto her side, her back to him.

65

Finished

Damian stood frozen, suddenly at a loss. Everything had seemed fine just a short while ago...

A restless unease settled in his chest. He sat on the edge of the bed. “Are you feeling worse? Is it the fever?”

Scarlett didn’t turn. “No. I’m just tired.”

Her tone was closed off again, guarded–exactly as it had been in the beginning.

Damian fell silent, but his eyes remained fixed on her, unwilling to look away.

He stared at the curve of her shoulder, the back of her head, as if he could see through her–but

he couldn’t.

Was she upset over Vincent again?

Just as the thought crossed his mind, Scarlett suddenly turned back.

The small bedside lamp cast soft, shifting shadows, leaving her expression hard to read.

She studied him for a moment, then said quietly, “You smell like perfume.”

There was no actual scent–she said it deliberately, testing whether he would admit to seeing Sabrina.

Hearing her speak again, Damian’s thoughts scattered briefly. He lifted his collar and pretended to smell it, then flashed her a playful, rogue’s smile. “It’s your scent, I think.”

Scarlett’s lips pressed into a thin, humorless smile. “Let’s just sleep, Damian. I’m tired.”

With that, she turned away once more.

Damian had hoped she might shift over, even a little–if she had, he would have curled beside her. But she left him no space at all.

Not wanting to disturb her rest, he didn’t push.

He sank into the chair beside the bed, leaned forward, and lowered his head to text Zachary, “Come to the hospital tomorrow. Keep Scarlett company.”

He thought Scarlett might be in low spirits. Having someone else around could help.

Lying on her side, Scarlett couldn't sleep.

2/3

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Chapter 296 Cold Shoulder

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665

Finished

Before, she'd always believed Damian wanted something from her–she just couldn't figure out

what.

Tonight, she thought she might finally understand.

What Damian wanted was likely Sabrina.

And since Sabrina was fixated on Vincent, he was starting by getting close to her.

*****

The next morning, just as dawn tinged the sky, Vincent's phone buzzed with a message from Lily.

"Mr. Stewart, I've prepared breakfast and am leaving Ravenshade Villa now. If Ms. Stewart is still asleep, could you meet me outside to get it?"

Vincent replied, "Okay."

Vanessa had been moved to a regular room overnight.

About half an hour later, Lily arrived outside the door.

Vanessa was still sleeping, so Vincent rose quietly and stepped into the hallway.

When Lily handed him the insulated bag, he didn't take it immediately.

After a brief pause, he said, "Lily... give Scarlett a call."

Lily looked startled. “Pardon?”

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 297[754 words]

Chapter 297 Vincent’s Hesitation

Vincent had turned Violet’s words over in his mind all night. A quiet guilt had taken root.

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Finished

“Just give her a call,” he said, his tone subdued. “Ask how she’s feeling–casually, like you’re just checking in.”

Lily understood but felt compelled to speak frankly. “Mr. Stewart, if you’re truly concerned about your wife, you should be the one to call.”

Vincent looked away, his voice low. “It’s not about concern. She’s still Vanessa’s mother. I don’t wish her ill.”

Lily sighed softly. “Mr. Stewart, your wife is a good woman. You shouldn’t let her slip away. As you said, she’s Vanessa’s mother. No one will care for the child like her own mother. If you lose that, you’ll regret it–and so will Vanessa.”

Vincent was quiet for a long moment. He thought of the divorce papers already signed, the final decree only weeks away. Finally, he said, “There’s nothing left between us.”

“But you have your daughter,” Lily pressed gently.

Vincent didn't answer.

After a pause, he took the insulated bag from her hands. "I'll go feed Vanessa."

Inside the room, Vanessa stirred, rubbing her eyes sleepily.

Seeing Vincent approach with the food, she murmured, "Daddy."

Vincent sat beside the bed and offered a small smile. "Lily made something nice for you. Let me help you get washed up, then we'll eat, alright?"

Vanessa's hair was tousled. She nodded.

Vincent fetched a warm washcloth from the bathroom, gently cleaning her face and hands before helping her brush her teeth.

When he tried to tie her hair, his fingers were clumsy–he managed only a simple, loose ponytail.

Then he began feeding her oatmeal, spoonful by spoonful.

As she ate, Vincent asked quietly, "Vanessa... do you miss your mom?"

At the word "mom", Vanessa's small face pinched. She shook her head.

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20:05 Wed, Jan 14

Chapter 297 Vincent's Hesitation

465

Finished

Seeing her discomfort, Vincent let the subject drop.

But a moment later, Vanessa looked up. "Daddy, where's Sabrina?"

Vincent's smile softened. He stroked her hair. "Sabrina stayed with me *to* watch over you last night. She left this morning. She wanted to be here when you woke, but I told her to go on to the lab."

Vanessa wriggled happily. "Sabrina's so good to me. She loves me almost as much as you do, Daddy."

Vincent simply smiled and continued feeding her, saying nothing more.

Vanessa was over the moon; the faint flush of joy finally chased the pallor from her face.

Seeing color return to his daughter's pale cheeks, Vincent felt the white lie was justified. Sabrinal hadn't actually stayed, but she had intended to.

Once Vanessa finished, Vincent tidied up the containers.

When he stepped out to return the bag to Lily, he paused. "Stay with Vanessa, please. I need to make a call."

Lily nodded. "Of course."

Before leaving the ward, Vincent stopped at the nurses' station to ask which unit typically handled adult cases of fever and pneumonia.

With the information in hand, he headed for the pulmonary department.

After turning it over in his mind, he decided it was right to check on Scarlett himself.

At the pulmonary nurses' station, he inquired about Scarlett's room and was directed to the VIP wing.

Thanking the nurse, he made his way down the hall.

Outside Scarlett's door, he heard a cheerful male voice–Zachary's. "Scarlett, look–I brought you a cupcake, some fruit, and oh! Milkshake! And I picked up a few graphic novels, too. Which one do you like?"

Through the glass panel in the door, Vincent could see inside.

Scarlett was propped against the raised bed. Damian sat beside her, carefully peeling an orange. Zachary was perched near the foot of the bed, enthusiastically unpacking his gifts.

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Chapter 297 Vincent's Hesitation

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Vincent had intended to go in–but seeing two other men already there, the urge vanished.

He’d worried no one was looking after her. Clearly, he’d been mistaken.

Without another thought, he turned and walked away.

Inside the room, Scarlett watched as Zachary laid out his offerings.

After his lively presentation, he looked at her expectantly, waiting for her to choose.

Not wanting to dampen his spirits, Scarlett considered, then pointed. “The cupcake, please.”

Zachary brightened instantly, passing it to her. “Since you love cupcakes, you must be just as sweet, Scarlett.”

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 298[750 words]

A playful smile touched Zachary’s handsome face.

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Finished

Beside him, Damian was slowly peeling an orange, his movements careful and deliberate, as if handling something fragile. Though his attention seemed fixed on the fruit, his gaze kept drifting toward Scarlett.

Since the night before, he had sensed something was off with her. But she had always been reserved around him, making it hard to pinpoint exactly what had changed.

Even with Zachary here and Scarlett smiling in response, Damian still felt an underlying distance.

Then again, he reasoned, she wasn't really familiar with Zachary.

Responding to Zachary's light teasing, Scarlett said with a polite smile, "You're quite the charmer, Mr. Graham."

Hearing the formal address, Zachary wrinkled his nose. He gave her a friendly wink. "Just call me Zachary like Damian does."

Scarlett took another small bite of her cupcake with the spoon. "Alright," she said pleasantly.

When Damian heard that "alright," his fingers tightened slightly, piercing the orange peel.

A little juice spurted out, landing on Scarlett's sleeve.

Zachary quickly passed her a napkin, shooting Damian a look. "What's with the assault on the orange, man? You got juice on her."

Damian set the damp, partly peeled orange aside. He wiped his hands clean with a couple of tissues, then looked down at Scarlett. "Sorry. Are you okay?"

Scarlett glanced up, shook her head, and offered a faint smile. "It's fine. I'm not that fragile."

Seeing her smile–and remembering how readily she'd agreed to use Zachary's first name—Damian wondered if she was just feeling under the weather. The thought eased his mind a little.

Noticing the quiet exchange between them, Zachary couldn't resist chiming in. "Scarlett, you're a lady–you're supposed to be pampered. Damian messed up; don't let him off easy. In my book, men need consequences when they slip up. Otherwise, they'll keep pushing boundaries."

Damian shot him a warning look. "You could always choose not to talk."

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Chapter 298 Game of Strategy

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Knowing better than to escalate, Zachary turned back to Scarlett. “See? That’s exactly the attitude that needs correcting. You’ll have to train him properly.”

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Scarlett watched their back–and–forth with an amused smile, understanding more than she let

1. on.

But she had no interest in calling anyone out.

Claire would be here soon anyway, and then Damian wouldn’t need to stay.

Seeing Zachary so relentlessly chatty, Damian not only glared but gave him a light shove.

Zachary exaggerated a wince and ducked behind Scarlett playfully.

Worried he might jostle or bump her, Damian growled, “Get over here.”

Zachary stayed put behind Scarlett, sticking out his tongue. “No.”

Damian rubbed his temples, a sign his patience was thinning.

Seeing this, Scarlett stepped in to diffuse the tension. “Zachary, how about a game of five–in–a- row later?”

Among the things Zachary had brought was a compact Go set she could use for the simpler

game.

Claire had said she’d arrive within the hour. A game would help pass the time.

Zachary’s eyes lit up. “Sure! I’m practically unbeatable at that, though. Don’t come crying if you lose too many rounds.”

Scarlett smiled mildly. “I won’t.”

In truth, she was quite good at five–in–a–row–she just hadn’t played in years.

Seeing Scarlett initiate the game, Damian let his irritation with Zachary fade.

Soon, Zachary had the grid drawn and the pieces ready.

Scarlett took white; he took black.

She lost the first three games, though each match was closely fought.

By the fourth game, Damian had quietly risen from his chair and settled beside Scarlett on the bed.

Though it was a simple game, it required focus when played seriously.

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Chapter 298 Game of Strategy

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At first, Scarlett and Zachary were evenly matched. But as the board filled, a single move could decide the outcome.

Just as Zachary seemed poised to win again, Damian reached over, gently guiding Scarlett's hand to place her white stone on a specific intersection.

As he leaned in, his lips accidentally brushed the curve of her ear. His voice was soft, meant only for her. "Here. That's the winning move."

His tone was warm, sending a faint shiver through her.

For a moment, she lost her composure.

But she masked it well, simply replying in an even tone, "That is a clever move."

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 299[783 words]

Awakened Housewife. Ignore Betrayer's Begs

Chapter 299 A Standoff

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With that single move, the tide of the game turned, connecting several lines at once.

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Damian studied Scarlett's profile, suddenly unable to look away. He leaned in slightly, catching her scent, and said with a playful, intimate smile, "I've got more where that came from. You'll see in time.

Watching them exchange affectionate glances right in front of him, Zachary grumbled, "Hey, no fair–two against one!"

Damian straightened up and glanced at him, lifting his chin slightly. "Then call for backup."

"Where am I supposed to find backup?" Zachary retorted, even more exasperated. "I've been single for years!"

Damian seized the moment to tease him. "You should be embarrassed saying that. Planning to stay alone forever?"

Zachary replied while tidying up the game board, "If I can't find someone right for me, I'd rather end up alone."

Just then, a knock sounded at the door.

Knowing it was Claire, Scarlett called out, "Come in."

The door opened, and Claire stepped inside, her arms laden with shopping bags.

Zachary glanced toward the sound. There stood Claire, wearing a baseball cap, a casual hoodie, fitted jeans, and a crossbody bag. Her outfit was simple, her makeup minimal–just a touch of foundation and lip color.

Though dressed plainly, her figure was proportionate and tall, and her deep-set eyes held a striking intensity. Zachary had seen plenty of women, but Claire caught him off guard.

When Damian saw it was Claire, he instinctively looked back at Scarlett.

She met his gaze evenly. “Damian, you and Zachary should go take care of your own things. I’ll be fine with Claire here.”

Sitting beside the bed, Damian went still. Even he could read between the lines–she was asking him to leave.

He had no intention of going. Frowning, he said, “I’m not busy. I want to stay with you. I worry when you’re sick.”

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Chapter 299 A Standoff

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Scarlett’s expression remained placid, neither cold nor warm. “Go home. It’ll be easier for Claire to help me.”

Damian’s frown deepened. “But you agreed last night...”

He started to say she’d accepted him as hers, but Scarlett cut him off. “I had a fever last night. I wasn’t thinking clearly. Mr. Langley, you shouldn’t take certain words to heart.”

He knew she was pushing him away, but he refused to budge. “I’m not leaving. If you want Ms. Wright to stay, that’s fine. I’ll just be here in the room. Pretend I’m not even here.”

After entering, Claire placed the lilies she’d brought on the bedside table and the fruit on the side table.

Seeing Damian’s stubbornness, she felt a flicker of surprise–a man so proud, now acting so humble before Scarlett.

Zachary's eyes hadn't left Claire since she walked in. His admiration was open and direct, yet not overbearing.

Noticing his gaze, Claire looked over and gave a slight, polite nod.

Seeing she couldn't persuade Damian, Scarlett relented quietly. "Fine. Do as you like."

If he wouldn't leave willingly, she'd find another way.

Then she turned to Claire. "Claire, I'd like to get some air outside."

Claire moved to the bedside and bent to help her up.

But Damian, who had been watching Scarlett closely, asked in a low voice, "You're not fully recovered. Where do you think you're going?"

Scarlett pushed back the covers and met his eyes. "I'm going to see Vincent. He stayed with Vanessa all night–it's my turn to relieve him. He needs rest."

She said it deliberately, for Damian's benefit–solely to make him leave.

As she swung her legs over the side of the bed, Damian suddenly caught her wrist. His gaze turned sharp, his voice cool. "Scarlett, you're still unwell. I'm not letting you go see them."

Scarlett didn't struggle. She held his stare and said clearly, "Vincent is my husband. Vanessa is my daughter. If I don't go see them, who should I see? You? And who are you to me?"

The air in the room grew tense, charged with the standoff between them.

Zachary finally tore his eyes from Claire and looked at Damian. He could tell–Damian was

truly angry this time.

And so was Scarlett.

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Damian didn’t release her. Instead, his grip tightened. His deep, intense eyes locked onto hers as he said, his voice low and deliberate, “Yes. You see me. Because I’m the one who cares for you, Scarlett. The only one.”

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 300[773 words]

Chapter 300 A Painful Goodbye

Scarlett was taken aback by his words. She stood frozen for a moment.

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If they had been alone, she might have let his declaration pass unacknowledged. But here, with Zachary and Claire present, Damian seemed to cast aside all pride in front of his own friend.

Scarlett looked at him helplessly. “Damian, you...”

He moved as if to embrace her, but the moment he leaned close, the memory of him with Sabrina flashed in her mind.

A wave of resistance surged through her. She pushed him back abruptly and stepped off the bed.

Barefoot on the cool floor, she said firmly, “Forget last night. I never agreed to any of the roles you decided for me.”

Then she slipped on her shoes, took Claire’s hand, and said, “Let’s go.”

Claire, confused but supportive, followed her lead.

As they reached the door, Zachary spoke up, “Scarlett, if there’s some misunderstanding about Damian, you should talk it out with him. I’ve known him for years–you’re the only one he’s ever really cared about.”

Scarlett paused. After a moment, she turned back to Zachary. “Thank you for coming today, Zachary. I appreciate it. And thank you, Mr. Langley, as well. But there’s no misunderstanding

between us.”

She turned to leave again. Zachary looked as if he wanted to say more, but Damian stopped him quietly. “Let it go, Zachary.”

Frowning, Zachary insisted, “She’s obviously misunderstood something. Let me explain.”

Damian held his friend’s arm. He lowered his gaze, a bitter smile touching his lips. “Vincent has always been the one in her heart.”

“You should still talk to her,” Zachary urged.

Damian shook his head. He looked toward the empty doorway where Scarlett had disappeared and said, his voice rough with emotion, “I lost, Zachary.”

“Don’t be ridiculous,” Zachary said fiercely. “You’re Damian. You don’t lose.”

Damian’s eyes were rimmed with red. He swallowed hard, his voice strained. “I lost to her.

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Chapter 300 A Painful Goodbye

Maybe... maybe that’s not such a terrible thing.”

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Finished

Zachary placed a comforting hand on his shoulder, at a loss for words.

With a hollow smile, Damian said, “Let’s go. She doesn’t need me here anymore. I’m just in the way.”

Even filled with frustration, helplessness, and unwillingness to give up, all Damian could do was leave.

In Scarlett’s eyes, he could never measure up to Vincent.

*****

Downstairs, Scarlett and Claire stepped out of the elevator and walked into the hospital garden.

When they reached a small gazebo, Claire asked quietly, “I thought we were going to see Vincent and Vanessa?”

Scarlett sat on a stone bench without answering. Her eyes were red.

Sensing her sorrow, Claire sat beside her and wrapped an arm around her shoulders. “What happened?”

Scarlett didn’t explain. She simply leaned into Claire’s shoulder. “I just need a hug.”

Claire didn’t press. She gently stroked Scarlett’s hair. “You should have told me you were in the hospital sooner. I would have come immediately.”

“I’m sorry, Claire,” Scarlett murmured.

Claire gave a soft laugh. “What you said back there... You didn’t really mean it, did you?”

Scarlett stayed quiet for a moment, then whispered, “Let’s just treat it as a dream. It’ll be over when we wake up.”

With Claire beside her, Scarlett’s thoughts felt less tangled, and her mood gradually lightened.

As they talked, Scarlett even asked about Elias.

Claire said he’d been trying to reach her lately, but she hadn’t responded.

She had cut an eight-year relationship out of her life-painfully, but decisively.

The love had been real, but so had the betrayal.

Elias had not only been unfaithful and at times harsh, but he'd also treated Claire as something

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Chapter 300 A Painful Goodbye

disposable.

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Scarlett was proud of her friend for having the strength to walk away.

Just then, a familiar voice called from behind them. "Mrs. Stewart?"

Scarlett turned and saw Lily approaching.

She offered a faint smile in greeting.

Lily stepped into the gazebo and stood near Scarlett. "Mrs. Stewart, Mr. Stewart went to your room earlier. Did you not see him?"

Scarlett looked puzzled. "No, I didn't."

Before Lily could say more, Scarlett asked, "How is Vanessa? Is she alright?"

"She's been moved to a regular room," Lily said gently. "She's doing much better-back to her lively self."

Hearing that, Scarlett let out a slow breath of relief. "That's good."

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