

No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 341[801 words]

Scarlett bit down hard on her lip, afraid Violet might hear the sob rising in her throat.

Hearing only silence on the line, Violet asked softly, “Scarlett?”

Drawing a shaky breath, Scarlett pressed her lips together. “Violet, I... I can’t make it back tonight.”

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Finished

“Is everything alright?” Violet’s voice grew concerned. “Did something happen at work? Or is someone giving you trouble?”

“It’s neither,” Scarlett lied. “Just... a lot of overtime.”

“But you haven’t been home in so long,” Violet persisted gently. “Nathan and Clara miss you. Your parents are always asking about you.”

A choked sob escaped before Scarlett could stop it. She quickly covered her mouth. “I’ll be back in a few days, Violet. I have to go—a patient’s family needs me.”

Without waiting for a reply, she ended the call.

After hanging up, she picked up the apple Claire had peeled for her and took a mechanical bite.

Tears streamed down her face as she chewed.

Claire watched, her own heart aching.

The bruises covering Scarlett’s body hadn’t faded overnight—they’d darkened, a stark map of the violence she’d endured. It was clear how brutally she’d been hit.

When Scarlett finished the apple, she wiped her hands with a tissue.

Then she reached for her phone again.

Unlocking it, she dialed the police station.

After a few rings, a man's voice answered. "Hello."

"This is Scarlett Theron," she said, her voice tight. "I filed a report shortly after two a.m. last night. I'm calling to ask if there's any update—if you've reviewed the surveillance footage yet."

There was a pause on the other end. "We've looked into it, ma'am. But without a clear evidence chain, we can't proceed with any arrests."

Hearing the dismissive tone, Scarlett's composure snapped. "No evidence? What about the

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Chapter 341 Evasive Lies and a Hollow Laugh

injuries all over my body?"

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The officer responded slowly, almost casually. "And how *do* we know you didn't inflict those on yourself?"

Scarlett felt a surge of furious disbelief. "Why would I do that? Do you think I'm insane?"

He gave a short, mocking laugh. "Well, you are in the hospital, aren't you?"

For a moment, Scarlett was too stunned to cry. Instead, a hollow, bleak laugh escaped her—filled with utter helplessness.

She didn't wait to hear more. She hung up.

Of course. If Amanda, Luke, and Naomi had been bold enough to attack her in a hospital room, they'd surely covered their tracks in advance.

Calling the police had been pointless from the start.

Claire had heard the entire exchange. Her expression darkened. "Scarlett, this is Rivergate. Influence runs everything here. Asking 'the right people' for help won't change that. Sometimes... matters are better settled outside the system." She leaned closer. "Tell me who did this."

Scarlett shook her head weakly. "Claire, I don't want to drag you into this."

But Claire's patience was wearing thin. "It's the Stewarts, isn't it? I'm not afraid of them."

Before Scarlett could protest further, Claire turned away, her mind made up. "I may not be able to force an apology out of them, but I can sure make them hurt a little."

She knew her own limits—but she also knew someone who didn't have any.

Seeing her determination, Scarlett didn't argue further.

Scarlett spent the rest of the day resting in bed.

With Claire there, the heavy loneliness lifted slightly.

By evening, Claire mentioned she needed to leave—she had a livestream to host.

Scarlett had no real reason to ask her to stay. "Okay," she said quietly.

But her fear must have shown,

Noticing her unease, Claire quickly added, "Actually, I'll just do the stream from the bathroom here. I'm not going anywhere."

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Chapter 341 Evasive Lies and a Hollow Laugh

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Only then did Scarlett relax a little.

The terror of the previous night still clung to her.

She couldn't face another evening alone in that quiet, vulnerable room.

Even with Claire in the adjacent bathroom, Scarlett remained on edge.

Her eyes kept drifting to the door, her nerves taut.

Inside the bathroom, Claire started her livestream, offering a brief apology to her followers for the missed upload earlier in the day.

Meanwhile, miles away, Zachary was idly watching Claire’s stream, swirling a glass of red wine in his hand. He took a slow sip, his eyes fixed on his phone screen.

Just then, a scrolling comment caught his attention—a crude, provocative message from a user named Damian Rivergate.

“Hey host, how much of a tip do I need to send to get a private night with you?”

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 342[738 words]

Chapter 342 A Provocative Livestream Bargain

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Faced with such a vulgar comment, most streamers would likely ignore it. But Claire didn’t.

After carefully reading the remark, she repeated it aloud, then replied with a bright, unbothered smile, “Your username is ‘Damian’. I’ve heard you have quite the rivalry with someone named Vincent here in Rivergate. Tell you what—if you can snatch a major, long-term project from Vincent, one he’s heavily invested in, then I might just meet you in person... and let you get a whiff of my perfume.”

When Zachary heard Claire’s self-deprecating reply, he didn’t feel disgust—instead, a faint smile touched his lips.

Maybe others wouldn't grasp her meaning, but he did.

Vincent was one of the most powerful figures in the city. Who would dare—or even be able—to cross him?

On one level, Claire was deflecting an unwelcome advance. On another, she was issuing an indirect, impossible rejection.

Yet her playful tone made it sound almost as if she'd really go through with it under those absurd terms.

Thinking this, Zachary's smile widened. He drained the wine in his glass and looked back at Claire's face on the screen. Softly, he said to himself, "You know... I'm actually tempted to try."

In the hospital room, Scarlett lay weak and exhausted.

Elsewhere, the night was lively and loud.

Vincent sat in the most exclusive booth of an upscale lounge. Bass-heavy music pulsed through the space.

On the dance floor, young men and women moved under the swirling lights.

Inside the booth, Vincent had already finished more than a bottle of red wine, pouring glass after glass.

A heavy, frustrated ache sat in his chest—one he was trying to drown.

Daniel was the last of their group to arrive. Seeing Vincent nearly two bottles in, he leaned toward Harris. "What's going on with him?"

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Harris shook his head but kept his voice low. "Lucy had a high-risk exposure during a surgery today. I think it's eating at him."

Daniel had already heard about it from Sabrina.

He looked at Vincent with concern, then leaned over and clapped him on the shoulder. "Lucy started post-exposure prophylaxis right away. It's not over yet—there's still hope. Try not to let it consume you."

Vincent looked up. His eyes were bloodshot.

After a moment, he just nodded. "Yeah."

Daniel thought the reassurance might help, but Vincent's mood only seemed to darken.

He turned back to Harris. "Is there something else bothering him?"

Harris frowned, sensing it too. "I'm not sure."

Daniel ventured a guess. "Could it be about Scarlett?"

Harris shook his head. "Unlikely. There were never real feelings there. Why would he be over her?"

"Then who else?" Daniel pressed.

"Maybe Vanessa... or Sabrina?"

upset

At Sabrina's name, Daniel replied simply, "Sabrina's always been gentle. She's stayed by his side all these years without pushing for anything more. That says enough about her character. I doubt she's the reason."

Harris fell silent.

After a pause, he said, "Just leave him be. He's been like this since I got here—won't say a word no matter what you ask."

Daniel nodded in agreement.

Vincent had drunk deeply. After finishing the second bottle, he opened a third.

But halfway through it, he suddenly stood up. Without a word, he turned and headed for the exit.

Seeing him leave, Daniel and Harris instinctively moved to follow.

Just then, Luke and Naomi appeared, stepping into Vincent's path.

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Chapter 342 A Provocative Livestream Bargain

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"Vincent, you heading out already?" Luke asked bluntly.

Vincent paused, slightly surprised. "What are you doing here?"

"Grandpa was worried about you," Luke said. "Sent me to check in."

Na lingered quietly behind Luke, keeping her distance.

Vincent just grunted in acknowledgment. "I'm going to the hospital to see someone. You stay here with Daniel and Harris. Have fun, but don't stay out too late-go home straight after."

Hearing hospital, Luke's heart began to race.

He searched Vincent's face. "Which friend are you visiting?"

Without much thought, Vincent answered, "My wife."

At the word "wife", Luke's composure cracked. A jolt of panic ran through him, and he nearly stumbled where he stood.

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Chapter 343 An Ultimatum in the Bar

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Fortunately, Naomi was right behind him and quickly steadied him. At the same time, she gave his arm a sharp squeeze—a silent signal to pull himself together.

Luke’s mind was reeling, a complete mess.

Seeing him silent and frozen, Vincent stepped around him, moving toward the exit.

But Luke quickly called after him. “Vincent, what’s wrong with her? With Scarlett?”

Vincent frowned and looked back. “Why do you ask?”

Luke didn’t answer. Instead, he glanced helplessly at Naomi.

After a tense moment, Naomi gritted her teeth and stepped out from behind Luke.

She offered Vincent a sweet, practiced smile. “Hello, Vincent.”

Vincent studied her face. It looked familiar, but he couldn’t immediately place her.

He gave a curt nod. “Hello.”

Then it came back to him—she was the woman who had “accidentally” spilled wine on Scarlett at the charity gala, the one Damian had publicly humiliated.

And now she was here with Luke.

Vincent’s gaze

shifted coldly from Naomi back to Luke. “And who exactly is this beside you?”

“She’s... a friend,” Luke said.

As he spoke, Naomi turned to look at him, her eyes holding a meaning Vincent recognized all *too* well.

He didn't bother sparing her feelings. "A friend? Is that what we're calling it now?"

Luke was taken aback. "What do you mean?"

Vincent kept his voice low but firm. "This 'friend' of yours deliberately targeted my wife. Think carefully—can you really stay friends with someone like that?"

Luke stood stunned, thrown by Vincent's sudden protectiveness toward Scarlett.

He had acted boldly because he believed Vincent didn't care. But now...

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Under Vincent's piercing stare, Luke stammered, "Is that... is that true?"

"Yes," Vincent replied calmly."

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Despite nearly three bottles of wine, he showed no sign of intoxication—his gaze was steady, his composure intact.

Sensing the shift, Naomi quickly interjected, "Vincent, I think there's a misunderstanding. That day at the gala, spilling the wine was truly an accident."

Vincent ignored her, his eyes fixed on Luke. "You'll have to choose. Your sister-in-law, or your 'friend'."

With that, he stepped past them and headed for the door.

The thought of Scarlett alone in the hospital tugged at him relentlessly.

Even after everything—even after the abortion—he couldn't just leave her there.

As Vincent moved away, Luke and Naomi exchanged panicked looks.

Luke was visibly trembling; Naomi looked on the verge of collapse.

Just as Vincent reached the entrance, Sabrina walked in from the cold night.

A light winter mist clung to her coat.

They saw each other at the same moment and both stopped.

Sabrina's face lit up with a warm smile. She moved forward and took his arm. "Vincent, where are you going?"

Looking at her smiling face, Vincent managed a faint smile in return. "Daniel and Harris are in the VIP lounge. Go join them. I have something I need to do."

Sabrina's smile wavered. "But Vincent... Vanessa has been asking for you."

Since the day of the field trip, Vincent had barely seen his daughter.

It wasn't just busyness, nor was it deliberate avoidance—Scarlett's decision to terminate the pregnancy had been weighing on him, and he'd stayed away from Ravensshade Villa.

Xavier was there too, and he's constant disappointment over the lost grandchild had become exhausting. Every visit meant another round of quiet disapproval.

It was easier not to go back.

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Chapter 343 An Ultimatum in the Bar

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Vanessa had been staying at Sabrina's place these past few days. Haunted by guilt over what she'd said to Eric, she'd been waiting nervously for Vincent to scold her.

But he never mentioned it.

As the days passed with no word from him, a new fear began to grow in her—what if he didn't want her anymore?

Why else wouldn't he come to see her?

Lost in these anxious thoughts, Vanessa had turned to Sabrina again and again, seeking reassurance.

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Every day, she would ask endless variations of the same question. “Does Daddy still love me?”

At first, Sabrina could handle it, but as time wore on, the constant neediness grated on her nerves. That was why she’d come out tonight—to find Vincent and get him to visit. Once he did, maybe Vanessa would finally stop pestering her.

Vincent hesitated. “Another time. I have something important to take care of tonight.”

Hearing his refusal, Sabrina wondered if he was genuinely upset.

But desperate to quiet Vanessa’s endless questions, she pressed on. “She won’t go to sleep, Vincent. She’s crying and carrying on, saying you don’t want her anymore.”

At those words, Vincent’s resolve wavered.

He told himself Scarlett was in the hospital—she wouldn’t starve. Besides, she had her family and friends.

After a moment’s internal debate, he finally relented. “Alright. Let’s go back now.”

A relieved smile spread across Sabrina's face. "I knew you still cared about her," she said softly.

Vincent didn't reply. He simply turned and walked out of the bar, Sabrina following close behind, her hand lightly holding his sleeve.

In the parking lot, Vincent handed the car keys to Sabrina. "I've been drinking. You drive."

Once they were in the car—Sabrina in the driver's seat, Vincent in the passenger's—he gave her a quick lesson on shifting and starting the engine.

Sabrina fumbled for a while before realizing the car's safety system wouldn't allow ignition unless the passenger's seatbelt was fastened.

Knowing Vincent was tipsy, she leaned across him to buckle him in.

Unseen by them, a camera snapped a photo from a distance, capturing an image that looked far more intimate than the reality.

Once the engine finally turned over, Sabrina asked, "By the way, where were you heading earlier?"

Vincent answered vaguely. "It doesn't matter now. Let's just go."

Sabrina nodded. "I'm off tomorrow. Will you come shopping with me?"

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Chapter 344 A Change of Heart.

Almost absently, Vincent agreed. "Sure, I'll go with you."

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Finished

The paparazzi photo was soon published, accompanied by a wildly exaggerated headline about the couple's "deep, passionate love".

When Scarlett came across the trending topic online, a fresh wave of pain shot through her, making sleep impossible.

Her body ached in a hundred different places, each bruise and cut a reminder of her helplessness.

Trying to distract herself, she scrolled further—past the news about Vincent and Sabrina with only a fleeting glance—until another headline caught her eye, this one about Claire.

“SHOCKING: Popular Food Vlogger Offers Herself as a ‘Bargaining Chip!’”

Scarlett’s heart dropped. She clicked on the article, bracing for the worst.

But to her surprise, the comments were largely reasonable. While there were a few nasty remarks, most were supportive.

[Not everyone in a livestream chat is a real fan. Look at the garbage question that started this.]

[She wasn’t offering herself—she was setting a boundary. Since when is self-protection wrong?]

[Exactly. Her point was that no one in Rivergate can actually touch Vincent. It was a figure of speech.]

Reading the supportive comments, Scarlett felt a flicker of relief.

Still, Claire’s words worried her.

When Claire came out of the bathroom, Scarlett got straight to the point. “I saw the trending topic.”

Claire paused, then laughed lightly. “So? It’s not like anyone can actually do what I said.”

“But what if someone tries?” Scarlett pressed, anxiety creeping into her voice.

Without hesitation, Claire replied, “Then I’ll meet them. If it means getting justice for you, I’d do it.”

Seeing the fear on Scarlett’s face, Claire softened. “Don’t worry. ‘Meeting them’ doesn’t mean I’d actually follow through with anything.”

Chapter 344 A Change of Heart

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That only made Scarlett more uneasy. “No, Claire. What if they’re dangerous? You could get hurt.”

Claire walked over and sat on the edge of the bed, giving her friend a gentle hug. “Okay, okay. I won’t go. Please don’t worry about me.”

Tears welled in Scarlett’s eyes. She leaned into Claire’s shoulder, her voice barely a whisper. “I’m serious. Don’t ever joke about your safety like that. I’d rather have you safe and sound than see you risk yourself for me.”

Claire patted her back soothingly. “I promise. I won’t.”

Meanwhile, at Theron Manor, a figure moved quietly in the darkness.

On the second floor, outside Scarlett’s bedroom window, there was a soft thud as someone climbed swiftly and skillfully inside.

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wakened Housewife: Ignore Betrayer’s Begs

Chapter 345 An Empty Bed

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The room was dark. With only the faint glow from outside, the furniture was little more than indistinct shapes in the shadows.

Damian had been here many times and knew the layout by heart.

Even in the darkness, he found his way unerringly to Scarlett's bed.

But when his hand touched the edge of the mattress, he felt no residual warmth. After a brief search, he confirmed she wasn't there.

He checked the bathroom—empty.

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The room felt still and unused.

Realizing Scarlett probably hadn't been home at all, Damian took off his coat and slid openly beneath her covers.

The bedding carried no trace of her scent—it seemed no one had slept here for some time.

Ever since Scarlett had begun distancing herself, Damian had told himself not to come back to Theron Manor.

But he couldn't help it. The pull was too strong.

So he'd given up fighting it.

He'd decided it didn't matter why she was pulling away. His feelings were real. His desire to be

with her was real.

Why should he hold back just because she was hesitant?

Maybe he'd been wrong to be so careful with her heart.

Whether she returned his feelings wasn't the point.

The point was, he wasn't going to wait politely anymore.

He wanted her, and he wasn't going to stop until she was his.

Having settled that in his mind, he shifted in the bed, telling himself he was warming it for her.

When she finally came home and showered, she could slip right into a cozy, pre-heated spot and fall asleep.

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Chapter 345 An Empty Bed

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Finished

But he waited... and waited. He'd nearly finished an episode of a streaming series on his phone, and still no sign of her.

Just as his patience was thinning, voices drifted from the hallway—Violet and Nathan.

“Nathan, you’re back.”

“Yeah. You’re up late.”

“I waited because I wanted to talk about Scarlett. Something seems off.”

“What do you mean?”

Violet lowered her voice. “I called her earlier and invited her for dinner. She said she was working overtime and couldn’t make it. But after you mentioned you’d be late because of work, I thought I’d pack up some food and drop them by the hospital for her. When I got there, she wasn’t on shift. I asked the attending—she’s not scheduled for nights until next week. And she hasn’t been at the hospital today at all.”

Nathan’s brow furrowed. “Maybe she went to Ravensshade Villa to stay with Vanessa?”

Violet shook her head. “Even if she did, why would she lie about it?”

Nathan’s frown deepened. “Let me call her.”

He tried, but the call went straight to voicemail.

Violet looked uneasy. “You don’t think something’s happened?”

“We should check Ravensshade Villa,” Nathan decided.

As they turned toward the stairs, the door to Scarlett’s bedroom opened.

Both Violet and Nathan turned at the sound.

Seeing Damian, Nathan paused. “What are you doing here?”

Damian ignored the question, striding forward. “Did you say Scarlett hasn’t been home?”

Nathan shot him a dismissive look but said nothing.

Violet nudged her husband, then answered softly, “She’s been staying at Ravensshade Villa lately.”

Damian’s expression darkened. A short, humorless laugh escaped him. “I see.”

Sensing his disappointment, Violet added, “But tonight was different. When I called, she said

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Chapter 345 An Empty Bed

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she was working overtime, but she wasn’t at the hospital. And she isn’t on duty.”

Damian felt a stir of unease. “Then let’s go to Ravensshade Villa.”

Soon, their car pulled up near the entrance to the Ravensshade Villa community.

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Before they even got out, Damian spotted them—the “family of three” on an evening stroll along the pathway.

Vincent and Sabrina each held one of Vanessa’s hands, and every few steps Vanessa would lift her feet, swinging briefly between them.

Her cheerful laughter carried clearly through the quiet evening.

Hearing it, Damian felt a sudden, sharp anger—and thought immediately of Eric.

Here was Vanessa, having caused real hurt, now laughing without a care, as if her cruel words had never been spoken.

But for Eric, those words would leave a lasting scar.

Damian's gaze fixed on Vincent's retreating back. Unconsciously, his hands tightened into fists.

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He had often envied Vincent. Why did he get to have Scarlett? Why was he the one she treated so well?

Looking at the warm scene unfolding before him, Damian finally turned his face away.

Just then, Nathan cursed under his breath. "Disgusting."

Damian looked up, confirming Nathan was directing his anger toward Vincent.

Seeing that neither he nor Nathan was moving, Violet suggested, "I'll go down and ask."

Damian's phone buzzed with a series of messages. He stopped Violet as she reached for the door handle. "Don't bother. Scarlett isn't here."

Nathan pressed immediately, "Then where is she?"

Violet looked equally bewildered.

After a pause, Damian replied with a strained, hollow laugh. "She's in the hospital."

Violet, misunderstanding, said anxiously, "But I went to the hospital. She wasn't on duty."

"Not as a doctor," Damian clarified, his voice tight. "As a patient."

The realization hit Violet. Remembering Scarlett's evasiveness on the phone, she whispered, "No wonder she was hiding it from us... We need to see her."

Damian turned to stare out the window, his heart growing cold. "She's in the obstetrics ward."

Obstetrics.

What did that mean? A pregnancy? A termination?

Violet froze. "What?"

"You two *go*," Damian said, his tone flat and final. "I... won't be joining you."

Nathan sneered as he pushed open the car door. "Figures. They're two of a kind."

He opened the rear door for Violet. "Let's go."

Before getting out, Violet glanced back at Damian. Seeing his stony expression, she followed her husband silently.

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Chapter 346 A Chilling Realization

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Finished

Once they were gone, Damian slammed his fist into the steering wheel with a force that split the skin across his knuckles.

He didn't flinch. He just stared at the blood welling in his palm, his eyes unblinking.

As he watched, tears suddenly spilled over, falling onto the blood and scattering tiny crimson droplets.

In that moment, Damian felt utterly shattered.

He didn't know what to think anymore.

His contact's message was clear. Scarlett was indeed hospitalized—in the maternity wing.

The only two possibilities he could imagine were the two most painful ones.

So, all this time, she and Vincent had still been that intimate.

The thought was a physical ache. He raised his hand and struck himself twice across the *face*.

It turned out he had been the fool all along.

Violet and Nathan hurried to the hospital and found the obstetrics ward.

At the nurses' station, they got Scarlett's room number.

As they rushed down the hall, Claire stepped out of the doctor's office and nearly collided with

them.

Seeing them, Claire's heart jumped. She quickly pulled out her phone and typed a message to Scarlett. "Nathan and Violet are here."

Then she looked up, forcing calm into her voice. "Nathan, Violet... what brings you here?"

Nathan frowned, getting straight to the point. "Where's Scarlett?"

Claire hesitated, then ventured carefully, "Nathan, here's the thing—Scarlett just fell asleep. Let's not go in and disturb her now, okay?"

Nathan sensed something was wrong. His brows knit tighter as he pressed on, "What exactly happened to her?"

Claire knew she couldn't stall any longer. She had no choice but to use one truth to cover up another.

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Chapter 346 A Chilling Realization

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Finished

Claire chose her words carefully. "When Scarlett decided to finalize the divorce, she... had a procedure. The D&C wasn't complete, and it led to hemorrhaging. She's here recovering."

For a moment, Nathan stood completely still, processing the information.

When it sank in, he moved to step around Claire. "I need to see her."

But Claire blocked his path, her voice pleading. "Nathan, please. She hasn't slept properly in two days. She just finally drifted off. If you wake her now, she'll be up all night again."

Nathan halted. He desperately wanted to see his sister, but the thought of disturbing her fragile rest gave him

pause.

Though parts of Claire's story felt incomplete, he couldn't take the risk—what if it was true? Disturbing Scarlett would only add to his guilt.

Seeing his resolve waver, Claire pressed gently, "The doctor said sleep is the best thing for her recovery right now."

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Chapter 347 Family at the Door

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Nathan lowered his head with a muted “Okay.” Then he added, “Let her rest.”

Violet was still worried. Without thinking, she said, “I’ll just look in on her from the doorway. Just a peek.”

She started toward the room, but had taken only one step when Nathan caught her arm.

Violet turned and saw him shake his head slightly.

Understanding his silent message, she didn’t press further. Instead, she said to Claire, “I’ll come by tomorrow with some food for her. Nathan and I will head home now. If she wakes up, tell her we’re worried, and that no matter what, her family is here for her.”

Claire’s eyes grew damp. She nodded. “I will.”

After Violet and Nathan left the maternity wing, Claire returned to the room.

Scarlett was lying flat on the bed, staring at the ceiling, her eyes filled with silent tears.

She had heard every word of the conversation outside.

So now, she felt a deep, aching sorrow.

Claire sat down beside the bed, picked up a tissue, and gently wiped Scarlett’s cheeks. “You heard them, didn’t you?”

Scarlett nodded. “Yes.”

“I don’t think we can keep this hidden much longer,” Claire said quietly.

After a moment’s thought, Scarlett replied, “When Violet comes tomorrow, tell her I’ve gone back to Ravensshade Villa.”

Claire frowned. "You're really not going to tell them?"

Scarlett pressed her lips together. "My brother has a temper. If he finds out what happened... he won't let it go."

Understanding her friend's fear, Claire reluctantly agreed. "I'll do my best tomorrow."

Then Claire went to prepare warm water and a towel, carefully washing Scarlett's face and

arms.

Once she was cleaned up, Scarlett felt the sharpest edges of her pain ease slightly.

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Chapter 347 Family at the Door

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About half an hour later, as she drifted in and out of sleep, the sound of the door opening made her eyes fly open.

Over the past two days, Scarlett had grown acutely sensitive to that sound. Even the faintest noise from the doorway would startle her awake.

"Who's there?" she asked, her voice thick with caution.

The room was dark. With only moonlight from the window, she couldn't make out the figure.

The person didn't answer, only walked slowly toward the bed.

Feeling the approach, Scarlett instinctively shrank back against the pillows.

Then a pair of warm hands closed over her cold, fear-chilled arms.

Out of the darkness came a low, husky voice. "It's me."

Scarlett recognized Damian's voice.

On the sofa nearby, Claire stirred. Seeing who it was, she asked softly, “Scarlett, do you want me to step out for a bit?”

Hearing Claire might leave, panic gripped Scarlett. “Don’t go.”

Damian sat on the edge of the bed, holding Scarlett’s hand tightly. He didn’t want to let go. Looking down, his vision was blurred by the dark—he could only vaguely make out her shape.

He’d said he wouldn’t come. But after returning home, sleep had been impossible—thoughts of her had crowded his mind.

So he’d stopped fighting it and come straight to the hospital.

Leaning forward slightly, he pinned Scarlett’s blurred features with his sharp gaze, his voice dropping to a low growl. “You sure?”

Claire could feel the intensity radiating off Damian. Stepping forward to break the tension, she said, “Scarlett, I’ll leave you two to talk. I’ll come back later.”

With that, she slipped out of the room, gently pulling the door shut behind her.

The moment she left, a heavy silence settled over the room.

He leaned in slightly. Even in the dimness, his gaze felt intense, fixed on the shadow of her face. “Were you pregnant?” he asked, his voice low.

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Chapter 347 Family at the Door

Scarlett tried to pull her hand back, but Damian’s grip was firm.

63

Finished

She couldn’t see him clearly either, only the outline of his features in the faint light. “I don’t owe you an answer to that,” she said.

Damian’s temper flared. He tightened his hold. “Just tell me. Yes or no?”

As he leaned closer, his weight pressed against her, making it hard to breathe—and brushing against her wounds.

Scarlett couldn't hold back a sharp gasp of pain.

She sounded truly hurt, struggling to contain it.

Hearing it, Damian instantly released her hand. "What's wrong?" he asked, concern cutting through his anger.

Scarlett bit her lip and stayed silent.

Worried now, Damian reached over and turned on the bedside light.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 348[728 words]

Awakened Housewife: Ignore Betrayer's Begs

Chapter 348 Bruises and Silent Tears

A 663

Finished

When the light filled the room, Damian took in the bruises covering Scarlett's body at a glance.

Her face, arms, neck—everywhere—were marked with injuries in various stages of fading.

Damian stood frozen, speechless for a long moment.

Feeling uncomfortable under his gaze, Scarlett raised a bruised hand to switch the light back off.

But before she could reach it, Damian gently caught her wrist.

His fingers trembled slightly. “Who did this to you?” he asked, his voice unsteady.

Scarlett turned her face away. “It’s no one. It’s none of your concern.”

Growing agitated, Damian stood. “Then I’ll go ask Vincent. I’m sure he knows.”

At that, Scarlett quickly relented. “It was Amanda. And Naomi.”

Hearing those names, Damian stiffened.

He lowered his voice. “When did this happen?”

Scarlett’s nose stung. When she answered, her voice was thick with tears. “The... The night before last.”

As she spoke, tears traced down her cheeks.

Seeing her cry broke something inside Damian—but it also stirred a deep, cold anger. “If I hadn’t come tonight, were you ever going to tell me?”

Scarlett pressed her lips together and didn’t answer.

“Scarlett,” he pressed, louder now. “Answer me.”

She kept her face turned away. “I don’t owe you an explanation. You don’t need to know everything about me.”

Though her words were cold, her own heart felt damp and heavy.

Hearing her response, Damian reached for her arm again.

But the moment his hand brushed her skin, she flinched with a pained grimace.

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Chapter 348 Bruises and Silent Tears

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Finished

Alarmed, he carefully took her hand instead. Looking down at the bruises along her forearm, his eyes reddened instantly.

All his

anger dissolved into aching sorrow.

He held her hand, studying the marks, and tears fell from his eyes.

Scarlett initially tried to pull away. But seeing Damian cry made her heart twist unexpectedly.

“You...”

He held her hand gently. “You should rest. I’ll stay with you.”

Scarlett said nothing more, just watched his face.

Though he tried to hide it, she saw the tears—and the raw pain and worry in his eyes.

Yet she couldn’t make sense of it, part of her still doubting his sincerity.

Damian turned off the light and quietly coaxed her to sleep.

In the dim room, what Scarlett didn’t see was the silent tears that continued to streak his face.

It was very late, and exhaustion soon pulled Scarlett under.

Within minutes, she was asleep.

Damian sat beside the bed, seemingly dazed, his gaze fixed on her.

Every bruise on her body felt like a needle piercing him.

Once she was deeply asleep, he carefully tucked the blanket around her.

After watching her for a long while, he leaned down, kissed her forehead, and slipped quietly

out of the room.

Outside, he found Claire waiting in the hallway.

After steadying himself, Damian said to her, “Please stay with her a while longer.”

Claire looked confused. “Where are you going?”

He thought for a moment. “Nowhere in particular.”

Without waiting for her reply, he turned and walked away.

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Chapter 348 Bruises and Silent Tears

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63

Finished

After Sabrina had left with Vincent, Luke and Naomi rejoined Daniel and Harris in the VIP lounge.

The group sat together, drinking and sharing stories, the bar still buzzing even in the early morning hours.

Naomi had finished two beers and was feeling uncomfortably full.

Seizing a lull in the conversation, she stood up. “I’ll be right back—just need to use the restroom.”

Luke nodded, and she made her way out of the booth.

Straightening her dress, she stepped into the aisle—and immediately bumped into a passing

woman.

The woman had bleached blonde hair, heavy makeup, and was dressed in a revealing outfit.

After the collision, she whirled around, glaring at Naomi. “Watch where you’re going!”

Naomi, startled, retorted rudely, “It was nothing.”

That only seemed to anger the woman more. She stepped forward, crowding Naomi back step by step until she was pinned against a corner. “You bumped into me,” the woman growled, her face close. “Aren’t you going to apologize?”

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A 63

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“I didn’t do it on purpose. Why should I apologize?” Naomi wasn’t about to back down, so she shot back defiantly.

The woman clearly wasn’t one to be trifled with. Without another word, she grabbed Naomi by the hair, yanking her head back.

Leaning down, she spat directly into Naomi’s partly open mouth.

Naomi swallowed it reflexively, then immediately gagged, retching violently.

But the woman didn’t care. She slapped Naomi hard across the face. “You think my spit’s beneath you? You should be honored. Calling me dirty? You’re really asking for it.”

The slap left Naomi dazed. When she regained her senses, she instinctively shouted toward the booth, “Luke!”

Maybe the commotion had already drawn attention—Luke hadn’t heard her shout, but he noticed the crowd staring in one direction.

Following their gaze, he saw Naomi being assaulted.

Luke couldn’t stay seated. He jumped up from the booth and yelled, “Hey! What the hell are you doing? Touch my friend again and you’ll regret it!”

The woman ignored him completely.

Infuriated, Luke started toward them, ready to step in.

But as he got closer, the woman suddenly pulled out a folding knife and, without hesitation, slashed it across Naomi's face.

A piercing scream echoed through the bar.

At the sight, Luke's legs froze mid-step.

The woman wasn't done. She slashed twice more.

Within moments, Naomi's face was a mask of blood.

Naomi clutched her face, crying out, "Luke! Help me, please!"

She looked toward him, and drops of blood dripped into her eyes.

Seeing her horrific condition, Luke felt his strength drain away.

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Chapter 349 A Vengeful Reckoning

63

Finished.

Daniel and Harris had also stepped out of the booth. They steadied Luke, who seemed on the verge of collapse, but made no move to intervene.

Their duty was to protect Luke-Vincent's brother. As for Naomi...

Naomi saw

Luke hanging back and Daniel and Harris standing silently by.

In that moment, the physical pain faded beneath a crushing sense of betrayal.

After disfiguring her face, the woman even climbed on top of Naomi and beat her further.

As blood loss took its toll, Naomi finally blacked out.

When she woke, she saw a figure sitting by the window.

Through blurred vision, she made out a straight, imposing silhouette.

Instinctively, she whispered, “Luke?”

The person turned in the chair.

Naomi’s vision cleared enough to recognize a face that had haunted her for a long time.

She would never forget that day at the charity gala—how Damian had humiliated her, shown her not an ounce of respect.

She watched as Damian walked toward the bed. A faint, cold smile touched his handsome features. “Were you calling for me?”

Realizing it was him, Naomi stiffened. “Why are you here? Where’s Luke?”

Hearing her still ask for Luke, Damian let out a derisive laugh. “That coward? What did you expect him to do?”

Naomi’s slashed face was now wrapped in bandages.

She stared at Damian warily. “What do you want?”

Damian leaned down and tapped her forehead lightly. “Does it hurt?”

Confused, Naomi shook her head.

His expression darkened instantly. “It doesn’t hurt?” he asked, his voice dropping to a dangerous low.

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Chapter 349 A Vengeful Reckoning

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Finished

There was a threat coiled beneath his words that made Naomi’s skin crawl.

Before she could reply, Damian’s demeanor shifted. His hand shot out and pressed directly against the wounded flesh beneath the bandages.

He pressed slowly, deliberately, then suddenly squeezed with brutal force.

Naomi screamed, her body convulsing in agony.

Damian easily pinned her shoulder with his other hand, never relenting his grip on her wound.

Tears streamed down Naomi's face as her whole body trembled from the pain.

Damian showed no mercy. Only when fresh blood began to seep through the bandages did he lean close, his voice icy. "Now tell me... does it hurt?"

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 350[738 words]

Chapter 350 Retribution and a Silent Vigil

63

Finished

Naomi's body twisted and convulsed in agony, but Damian held her down firmly—she couldn't break free.

All she could do was sob out a trembling reply. "It hurts... It hurts so much."

Her face was a mess of sweat, blood, and tears beneath the gauze wrapping. She stared up at Damian with terrified eyes.

When Damian leaned in, the veins in his neck stood out with suppressed rage. His voice was icy, seeming to seep into her very bones. “But the pain in my heart is worse than anything you’re feeling.”

Naomi stared at him in horror. “What do you want from me?”

Damian released his grip on her wound. He let out a long, slow breath. “I don’t want anything. I just want this ache inside me to stop.”

The image of Scarlett lying battered in a hospital bed flashed in his mind—a sharp, stabbing pain in his chest.

In that moment, the only way to dull his own suffering was to make Naomi hurt a thousand- no, ten thousand-times worse.

With that, he pressed down hard on her wound again.

Naomi screamed, but no one came to her rescue.

The pain was so intense she blacked out.

Seeing this, Damian clicked his tongue in satisfaction. He picked up a bottle of water and splashed it over her face.

Naomi jerked awake, coughing violently.

Damian grabbed her face again, watching as fear reduced her to pleading. “Damian, please... let me go.”

He ignored her words and continued his methodical torment.

The more she suffered, the more a grim satisfaction settled over him—though it did nothing to ease the ache in his own heart.

Naomi passed out several more times. Each time, Damian revived her with cold water.

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Chapter 350 Retribution and a Silent Vigil

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Finished

It wasn't until the tenth time she was splashed back to consciousness that he finally eased his grip. "When Scarlett begged you for mercy," he asked coldly, "did you ever think about letting her go?"

Naomi froze.

Damian was

known as a playboy—women came and went like changes of clothes.

Naomi had assumed he'd already forgotten about Scarlett.

She never imagined his brutal retaliation today was still because of her.

Seeing her stunned expression, Damian lit a cigarette. He took a deep drag, then exhaled the smoke with a contemptuous sneer. "Have you forgotten your last lesson so soon?"

Naomi inhaled the secondhand smoke and broke into a fit of coughing. Between gasps, she insisted, "It was Luke! He told me to do it—to go after Scarlett. He ordered me to take revenge. It was all his idea!"

Damian arched an eyebrow. "Oh?"

Seeing his skepticism, Naomi rushed on, "It's the truth, I swear! He and his mother both hate her."

Damian narrowed his eyes. "You're not lying to me?"

Naomi nodded vigorously. "Every word is true."

Damian considered this. Given the Crowley family's standing, Naomi wouldn't dare target Scarlett without backing. Luke's support made sense.

Satisfied, he stubbed out his cigarette.

"Fine. I'll let you go... for now."

With that, he turned and left.

Naomi watched his retreating figure, her racing heart finally beginning to slow.

By the time Damian returned to the hospital, dawn was breaking outside.

Claire was asleep in a chair beside the bed. Half-awake, she felt a gentle tap on her shoulder.

Opening her eyes, she saw Damian's face and startled, but he put a finger to his lips.

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Chapter 350 Retribution and a Silent Vigil

They stepped quietly into the hallway.

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Finished

"Thank you for staying with her," Damian said. "Go home and rest. I'll stay with Scarlett now."

Claire hesitated, then added softly, "After what happened... she's terrified of being alone in the room. Please don't go far."

Her words sent another pang through Damian's chest.

He nodded. "I won't."

After watching Claire leave, he slipped back into the room.

Sitting by the bed, he looked down at Scarlett's sleeping face. Her breathing was even, her expression peaceful.

A faint, weary smile touched his lips. He reached out, wanting to brush a strand of hair from her cheek—but stopped himself and drew his hand back.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 351[751 words]

Awakened Housewife: Ignore Betrayer's Begs

Chapter 351 A Silent Vow at Her Bedside

He was careful not to wake her.

63

Finished

As Damian took in the bruises and wounds covering every visible part of Scarlett's body, his heart clenched like a fist.

The pain was so sharp that he struck himself hard across the face—twice.

Tears blurred his vision.

Gazing down at Scarlett sleeping deeply, he whispered, "Scarlett, I don't know if you can hear me. And I don't care anymore—not about you having a husband and a daughter, not even about whether you love me. From now on, I'm not walking away from you again."

After saying it, he slumped into the chair beside her bed and eventually dozed off.

Once Damian's breathing steadied in sleep, Scarlett's eyes opened.

She studied the red marks his own hands had left on his face, and her eyes welled up.

She had heard every word.

But were those words true, or just another performance?

Scarlett couldn't tell, so she pushed the thought away.

Early the next morning, when she opened her eyes again, the room was empty. Sunlight streamed through the window, and the brightness kept the fear at bay.

She shifted slightly, and immediately Damian's voice came through. "Just freshening up in the bathroom. I'll be right out. Don't worry."

She turned toward the sound and realized her phone was propped up, video-calling him.

After a pause, she replied quietly, "Okay."

Just then, the hospital room door swung open.

Scarlett instinctively tensed, thinking it might be Violet—her mind raced with escape plans. But instead, Amanda walked in.

Seeing who it was, Scarlett relaxed, though only slightly.

Amanda carried a small paper bag, which she tossed onto the bedside table with little grace. "Vincent was worried you'd starve in here all alone," she said, her tone sour. "Sent me to check

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Chapter 351 A Silent Vow at Her Bedside

on you."

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Scarlett frowned. "I don't need your fake concern."

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Finished

Amanda let out a contemptuous laugh. "You think I want to be here? I could be at home binge-watching my shows, tending my garden, or feeding my koi. Anything beats looking at you, washed up and pathetic."

Scarlett almost smiled at that. "Then get out."

Amanda's temper flared. "You've got some nerve, Scarlett, talking to me like that. Do you really still think you're some princess?"

She sneered, leaning closer. "Take a good look in the mirror. You're no princess. You should be thanking your lucky stars Vincent married you—it was the one break you ever got."

Scarlett's laugh came out colder this time, but she stayed silent.

Amanda scowled. "Too good to even answer me? You think I'm just some pushover?" She rolled up her sleeves. "I'll teach you some respect."

But Scarlett didn't feel the same panic she had that night alone. Damian was here.

Just as Amanda raised her hand, the bathroom door opened.

Damian stood leaning against the frame, dressed in gray lounge pants and a t-shirt. He didn't move closer, just leveled a steady gaze at Amanda and said, "Go ahead. Touch her."

Amanda spun around. When she recognized him, she faltered for a second. "Damian?"

He was calmly running an electric shaver along his jaw. A faint smile touched his lips. "Mrs. Stewart. Long time no see."

She bristled. "Don't 'long time no see' me. We're not friends.",

Damian chuckled softly. "Still as charming as ever, I see."

There had always been rivalry between the Stewart and Langley families—not just between Vincent and Damian, but across both households.

Amanda lifted her chin. "I have every reason to be proud. Look at who my son is."

Damian's smile turned mocking. "That deadbeat Vincent? Sounds a lot more impressive coming from you."

Her eyes widened in outrage. "You're one to talk! Look at yourself."

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Chapter 351 A Silent Vow at Her Bedside

63

Finished

He raised an eyebrow. "Oh? Look at what? How I manage to stay handsome and surrounded by beautiful women?"

"You're shameless," Amanda spat.

Damian shrugged, but his expression hardened in an instant. "So. Are you going to leave now, or do I have to make you?"

Amanda shot back, “And what gives you the right to stay?”

Slowly, Damian repeated her words, “What gives me the right...?”

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 352[872 words]

Chapter 352 The Lover’s Bold Declaration

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Damian paused briefly, his gaze shifting thoughtfully to Scarlett. With deliberate emphasis, he replied, “Why don’t you ask Ms. Theron that question?”

Hearing this, Amanda immediately turned to Scarlett, her voice low and demanding. “Well? What is he talking about?”

Scarlett pushed herself up with effort, settling back against the headboard. Seeing Amanda’s bewildered expression, the words slipped out almost without thinking. “Mr. Langley is my lover.”

The statement hung in the air, stunning not only Amanda but even Damian, who watched from the sidelines.

He had expected Scarlett to call him a friend, or even deny knowing him—never that she would state so calmly that he was her lover. Even if it wasn’t true, her composure in that moment left him momentarily dazed.

Amanda stood frozen before stammering, “What did you say?”

Scarlett repeated, her voice clearer now, “Mr. Langley is my lover.”

This time, Amanda heard every word. Her face tightened with disapproval. “Have you lost your mind? I think you’ve finally gone off the deep end. How dare you cheat on Vincent?”

As she spoke, Amanda’s hand rose, poised to strike.

Damian observed from across the room, showing no trace of panic. Instead, he spoke to Amanda in a measured, calm tone, “Before you do anything, you should carefully consider the consequences. Can you handle them?” He paused, letting his words sink in. “Since I’m her lover, you should understand—she means everything to me. Hurting her is like taking my life. Can the Stewart family really afford to bear that weight?”

After a tense silence, Amanda lowered her hand angrily. But the fury still burned inside her, and she directed it back at Scarlett. “Do you think this is fair to Vincent?”

Scarlett, weary of the confrontation, shot back, “What does it matter whether it’s fair or not?”

Amanda was seething. She pointed a trembling finger at Scarlett. “You have no shame. Getting involved with someone like Damian...”

Scarlett remained unmoved, looking up at her. “So? What are you going to do about it?”

“Divorce!” Amanda spat, stamping her foot for emphasis. “I want you to divorce him. And you’ll walk away with nothing—not a single cent from Vincent.”

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Chapter 352 The Lover’s Bold Declaration

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63

Finished

She expected the word “divorce” to frighten Scarlett, but instead, Scarlett let out a soft, almost grateful laugh. “In that case,” she said, “I should thank you.”

Amanda was beyond furious. “You-!”

But before she could continue, Damian approached. He stopped beside her, his tall frame casting a shadow over her. “Now,” he said, his voice leaving no room for argument. “Will you leave?”

Amanda refused to look at him, yet she couldn’t ignore the intimidating presence he carried. In the sprawling city of Rivergate, the Stewart family held considerable influence, but Damian was a force in his own right. Their power had long been locked in a standoff, neither able to overpower the other.

Finally, with a frustrated huff, Amanda turned and left.

Once she was gone, Damian picked up the small paper bag she had brought. He opened it to find a container of thin, watery oatmeal, the grains separated from the liquid as if barely cooked. Without a word, he tossed the whole bag into the trash bin.

A moment later, his phone buzzed—a call from his assistant. Damian stepped toward the door, and after a short wait, the assistant arrived with a carefully arranged breakfast tray.

Back at the bedside, Damian unpacked the meal. It was a proper spread: warm oatmeal with berries, scrambled eggs, crisp bacon, and a small stack of buttermilk pancakes.

With Scarlett injured and her movements limited, Damian offered to feed her.

As he stirred the oatmeal, he lifted the first spoonful to her lips, then met her eyes with sudden seriousness. “Terminate the pregnancy,” he said quietly. “Leave Rivergate with me. I’ll give you the life you’ve always wanted.”

He hadn’t forgotten what she once said—that she longed for a simple, peaceful kind of happiness.

His words made Scarlett go still. She looked down at him, finding his expression utterly sincere.

For a heartbeat, she felt that old, dangerous pull—the thought that maybe she really could go with him and live the way she dreamed.

But the illusion lasted only seconds.

Wasn’t Damian also being kind for his own reasons? Scarlett chose not to voice that suspicion. Instead, after a long pause, she said, “Damian, my whole life is here in Rivergate. I don’t think I can ever really leave.”

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Chapter 352 The Lover's Bold Declaration

63

Finished

Her reply didn't seem to surprise him. He continued feeding her, steady and patient. Scarlett started to say she could manage on her own, but Damian seemed to read her thoughts. "Let me do this," he said gently.

Seeing his insistence, she relented.

He offered another spoonful of oatmeal, then said, as if it were the simplest truth, "Then I'll stay. However long you're here, I'll be right beside you."

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 353[809 words]

Scarlett was taken aback for a moment, looking at Damian with confusion. "What?"

Damian met her gaze, his expression serious. "Lover."

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It was only then that Scarlett realized what he was referring to. She hurried to explain, "Damian, I just said that without thinking. Of course, I had my reasons—I wanted to use your status to put Amanda in her place. I just—"

Before she could finish, Damian cut in, "Scarlett, I took it seriously."

Scarlett fell silent, unsure how to respond. That earnest look in Damian's eyes always seemed to disarm her.

Which version of Damian was real?

The one who was gentle with her now, or the one she'd seen kissing Sabrina?

Maybe neither was the full truth—or perhaps both were part of him.

Pulling her thoughts back, she looked at him and said, "What I said really was just in the moment. Please don't read too much into it."

Damian didn't reply, but his grip on the spoon tightened slightly.

After leaving the hospital, Amanda felt a knot of frustration tightening in her chest.

Damian held considerable influence, and she didn't dare confront him directly—but Vincent would.

She directed her driver to take her to Vincent's company downtown.

Once there, she called his assistant, Abbott, who soon came down to meet her.

"Mrs. Stewart, what brings you here?" Abbott greeted politely.

Amanda didn't waste time. "Take me to see Vincent."

Abbott hesitated. "Mrs. Stewart, Mr. Vincent Stewart isn't in the office today. Please don't put me in a difficult position."

"Not in?" Amanda pressed, her stare unwavering. "Then where is he?"

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Chapter 353 A Mother's Fury

«63)

Finished

"He mentioned personal matters," Abbott replied with a cautious shake of his head. "I didn't feel it was my place to ask for details."

Seeing she wouldn't get further, Amanda waved him off. "Fine, go back to your work. I'll call him myself."

Once Abbott was gone, she took out her phone. Vincent didn't always answer her calls—being his mother didn't grant her special access.

That was precisely why she'd waited until Abbott was gone to dial him.

What surprised her, though, was that for once, Vincent picked up almost instantly.

"What is it?" his voice came through, cool and direct.

Hearing him only fueled Amanda's irritation, though she kept her tone controlled. "What are you doing right now?"

"I'm out shopping with someone," Vincent replied.

composure snapped. "You have time to go shopping? Do you even know Scarlett has

Amanda's

taken a lover?"

There was a slight pause on the line before Vincent responded, a hint of amusement in his voice. "Oh?"

"'Oh'? Is that all you have to say?" she fired back. "You should file for divorce immediately. I made sure to ask the doctor—the chances of her conceiving again are practically zero. Our family doesn't need a woman who can't carry on the line. Divorce her, and I'll find you someone better suited."

After she finished, Vincent said simply, "I'll think about it."

He didn't mention that they were already in the mandatory separation period required before finalizing a divorce.

Amanda opened her mouth to argue further, but the line went dead before she could get another word in.

After ending the call, Vincent turned a page of the luxury catalog resting on his lap.

He was seated in the lounge of an upscale boutique, sipping his espresso slowly, unfazed by his mother's outburst.

If Scarlett really had taken a lover, it could only be one of two men—Damian or Nolan.

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Chapter 353 A Mother's Fury

63

Finished

His musings were interrupted as the fitting room door opened.

He glanced up and saw Sabrina step out, wearing a deep crimson wool coat over a long white lace-trimmed dress. Her hair fell softly over her shoulders, giving her an elegant, composed air.

She caught his eye in the mirror and smiled softly. "Vincent, how does it look?"

Vincent nodded. "It looks beautiful on you."

Standing under the soft boutique lighting, Sabrina seemed to outshine everything around her.

She turned to examine herself in the full-length mirror, evidently pleased with the coat.

Seeing her approval, Vincent gestured to the attentive sales associate nearby. "We'll take it."

Sabrina touched the sleeve almost shyly. "Vincent, you really don't have to buy something this expensive."

"It's worth every penny when you wear it," he replied smoothly.

A faint blush rose to her cheeks. Noticing the exchange, the sales associate chimed in warmly, "Mr. Stewart is so generous to his girlfriend."

It was widely known that Vincent was seen with Sabrina, though very few were aware he was still legally married—and a father.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 354[812 words]

Chapter 354 A Proposal With Conditions

Vincent made no attempt to correct the sales associate's assumption.

Sabrina glanced at him. "I'll go change back into my clothes."

Vincent nodded. "Alright, I'll settle the bill."

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Finished

He set the catalog aside and stood up. Just after completing the purchase, Sabrina's voice drifted from the fitting room. "Vincent, could you help me for a second? My hair is caught in the zipper."

Without hesitation, he replied, "Of course."

When he entered the fitting room, Vincent positioned himself behind Sabrina and began carefully working her hair free from the metal teeth.

The back of her dress was open, revealing smooth, bare skin. As his fingers brushed lightly against her back, Sabrina shivered slightly. "Vincent, that tickles."

A large mirror hung on the wall. Through it, Sabrina watched Vincent's focused expression, occasionally biting her lip with a shy, pleased smile.

Noticing her gaze in the mirror, Vincent suddenly met her eyes and asked, "Sabrina, would you like to be Vanessa's mother?"

The question caught Sabrina off guard. It took her a moment to process his meaning.

Before she could form a reply, Vincent continued, his gaze steady in the reflection. "Unless you don't want to?"

“No, it’s not that,” Sabrina quickly said. “I was just thinking... I’m not her biological mother. How could I ever truly take her real mother’s place?”

Vincent finally freed the last strands of hair. Gently smoothing it over her shoulder, he said, “Vanessa adores you. In many ways, you’re already more of a mother to her than Scarlett has been.”

After his words, the smile faded from Sabrina’s face. She had waited so long for this moment, yet now that it had arrived, she felt no joy.

Being with Vincent meant becoming a stepmother—and what would that mean for her career? For her independence?

When Sabrina remained silent, Vincent called her name softly. “Sabrina?”

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Chapter 354 A Proposal With Conditions

She snapped back to the present. “Do you really think I could do it?”

Vincent offered a reassuring smile through the mirror. “I have no doubt.”

Sabrina lowered her eyes. “Okay, then.”

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Finished

Her mind was racing, but none of her thoughts carried any happiness. If she committed to Vincent, what would become of her own aspirations?

She remembered the wish she’d made—writing on a card tied to a lantern release days ago, hoping all men would adore her. Was giving up that possibility worth it for only Vincent?

As these thoughts swirled, Vincent spoke again, “There is one condition, however.”

Sabrina looked up, surprised. “What condition?”

His eyes held hers in the mirror. “Vanessa would be our only child. We wouldn’t have any of our

own.”

Sabrina fell silent.

Seeing her hesitation, Vincent didn't press. "Take your time to think it over," he said gently before turning and leaving the fitting room.

Alone before the mirror, Sabrina felt truly torn. Marrying Vincent meant a life of secured luxury.

Refusing meant preserving her freedom to be admired and desired by many.

Truthfully, the idea of being a stepmother held little appeal. Her kindness toward Vanessa had always been partly performance. But if she said no to Vincent now, would he withdraw all his support and affection?

After leaving Stewart Group, Amanda, still in a foul mood, decided to go shopping at the downtown plaza. Laden with shopping bags, she stepped into the elevator. When it stopped on the fourth floor, a middle-aged woman wearing a brightening sheet mask entered.

Judging by her figure and the skin around her eyes, Amanda guessed she was in her fifties.

Inside the elevator, Amanda's mind kept returning to Scarlett and Damian. Lost in her thoughts, she muttered under her breath, "That shameless pair. Damian, just you wait. Your day will come."

When the elevator chimed for her floor, Amanda, still absorbed in her internal tirade, felt a light tap on her shoulder. The woman behind her said politely, "Excuse me, I need to get past."

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Chapter 354 A Proposal With Conditions

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Finished

Annoyed at being touched, Amanda spun around. "Do you have any idea who I am? How dare you speak to me that way!"

The woman with the sheet mask simply rolled her eyes, then reached up and peeled it off.

As her face was revealed, Amanda froze for a second before her expression twisted with impatience. “You!”

It was Ruth Harrington, Damian’s mother.

The long-standing rivalry between the Langley and Stewart families meant hostility extended to all members. Ruth looked at Amanda coolly. “Well? Are you going to move?”

With great reluctance, Amanda shifted aside, muttering under her breath as Ruth passed, “What lousy luck.”

1.1K

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 355[854 words]

Chapter 355 An Enemy in the Elevator

Her voice wasn’t quiet, and Ruth heard every word.

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Finished

As she passed, Ruth finally stopped and turned, her expression icy. “A petty mind sees only filth.”

Amanda didn’t back down. She sneered disdainfully. “Ruth, you’d better keep your son on a tighter leash. For him to set his sights on a Stewart’s wife—even if my son doesn’t want her anymore—that’s still Vincent’s business. What right does your son have *to* interfere?”

Ruth let out a sharp laugh. “Why? Because he can. That’s why.”

Amanda paled with fury, pointing a trembling finger. “You... you have no shame.”

Ruth shot her a contemptuous look. “You can barely string a sentence together and you’re still running your mouth. What, you think you’re somebody? I was ignoring you to avoid a scene, but you just keep pushing.”

Amanda grew even angrier, feeling a wave of dizziness as her blood pressure spiked.

Seeing her struggle, Ruth found it all the more amusing. “You can barely stand, yet you want to lecture me about my son? My son is upfront about what he wants. So what if he’s seeing someone? He’s with the person he likes, not yours. Look at you, getting so worked up. Don’t come crying to me if you drop dead from rage later—I want nothing to do with you.”

As she spoke, Ruth took a deliberate step back, as though avoiding contamination.

Amanda took several deep, steadying breaths. Once her composure returned somewhat, she spat at Ruth, “Your son likes sloppy seconds.”

Ruth gave a cold, dismissive snort. “Oh, so when you lose the argument, you resort to cheap insults. What’s wrong with my son boldly pursuing someone? I not only support him, I’ll back him all the way—even help him win her over.”

Seeing Ruth’s mocking expression, Amanda’s anger boiled over, and she raised her hand as if to strike.

But before she could move, Ruth’s expression darkened into a warning glare. “Go ahead, Amanda. Hit me. If you dare lay a hand on me today, we’ll see whether Rivergate belongs to the Langleys or the Stewarts tomorrow.”

Under Ruth’s fierce stare, Amanda’s raised hand slowly fell back to her side.

In this clash, Amanda had been thoroughly defeated.

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Chapter 355 An Enemy in the Elevator

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Finished

Watching her tremble with suppressed rage, Ruth couldn’t resist one last jab. “Your son is so perfect, isn’t he? If you’re so capable, make him someone’s lover, too. Let’s see if he’s willing!”

Amanda stormed off, seething.

At the hospital, after Damian finished helping Scarlett with her meal, he stayed by her bedside while she received an IV drip.

Scarlett had drifted off to sleep. Just then, a message from his mother lit up Damian's phone.

Ruth sent, "Objective achieved. I expect a reward."

Damian said, "Well done."

Ruth asked, "How's my future daughter-in-law?"

Damian glanced over at Scarlett, asleep in the hospital bed, then typed back. "Recovering well."

Ruth fired off a flurry of questions. "How's the courtship going? Still just the "lover"? Haven't sealed the deal yet?"

Damian chuckled softly at Ruth's bluntness and replied, "Correct. And coercion is illegal, you know."

Ruth said, "Sigh. Your path to winning her over is a long one."

Damian replied, "Don't rush her. She's skittish. I have to go slow."

Ruth sent, "Wishing you a swift and successful... 'conquest'."

She'd even placed suggestive emphasis on the last word. Damian's quiet laugh deepened.

Scarlett was a light sleeper. The soft sound of his laughter stirred her awake.

When she opened her eyes, she saw him smiling at his phone. She couldn't help but assume the message was from Sabrina.

After finishing the exchange, Damian looked up and was surprised to find Scarlett watching him.

Thinking she was still asleep, he hadn't expected her to be awake. "What's wrong?" he asked, concerned. She'd been sleeping peacefully just a moment ago.

He put his phone away and studied her with a worried expression, his eyes carefully tracing over her. While most of the bruises had begun to fade, several large, darker ones remained.

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Chapter 355 An Enemy in the Elevator

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Finished

Meeting his gaze, Scarlett offered a faint smile. “It’s nothing. I just need to use the restroom.”

Hearing this, Damian immediately stood and reached for the IV bag. “Alright, I’ll take you.”

Scarlett quickly shook her head. “I can just call the nurse.” She reached for the call button beside the bed.

But Damian was quicker, gently catching her wrist. “They’re all busy right now. I’ll help you.”

His tone left no room for argument. Scarlett could tell he wasn’t going to relent. Despite her intense embarrassment, her need was urgent.

Finally, she reluctantly nodded.

In the small hospital bathroom, Damian held the IV bag aloft while standing beside her. Scarlett’s face burned crimson. Squatting down with him right there was a uniquely excruciating experience.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 356[758 words]

Chapter 356 A Divorce Clause

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Damian, likely sensing her discomfort, spoke up in an effort to divert her, “Would you like to meet my mother?”

Scarlett was taken aback. “What?”

Keeping his gaze politely averted, he continued, “She’s a wonderful person. She’s been wanting to meet you for a while now.” While he said this partly to ease the awkward moment, the sentiment was genuine.

Once she finished, Scarlett quickly adjusted her clothing, flushed the toilet, and said softly, “I don’t think it’s appropriate for me to meet her.”

Damian finally turned to look at her, a broad smile spreading across his face. “You’ll have to meet her eventually anyway.”

Seeing how serious he seemed, Scarlett frowned. “But I never considered that.”

“The day will come,” Damian said, his smile persistent.

“No, it won’t,” Scarlett replied, her tone firmer.

Hearing this, a flicker of annoyance crossed Damian’s features. Disregarding the IV bag he was holding, he used his free arm to scoop Scarlett up effortlessly. In a low, resolute voice, he stated, “I say it will.”

His tone was commanding. He carried her back to the hospital bed and deposited her there gently. After re-hanging the IV bag, he sat on the edge of the mattress, leaning in close.

His larger frame cast a shadow over her as he looked into her eyes, a playful yet determined smile in his own. “You can’t out-stubborn me. Why not just humor me this once?”

His plea held a childish, wheedling quality that left Scarlett momentarily speechless. She averted her gaze, staring blankly ahead as she scrambled for a

Just then, her phone chimed with a new text notification.

response.

Seizing the excuse, Scarlett quickly said, “Let me check my phone. It might be from the hospital.”

The reason was plausible enough. Damian nodded and leaned back slightly, giving her space.

Scarlett picked up her phone and opened the messaging app. Her expression shifted immediately upon seeing the sender.

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Chapter 356 A Divorce Clause

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Finished

It was a message from Vincent. The text read, “Come back to Ravenshade Villa.”

The commanding tone grated on her. She had no intention of replying and instinctively wanted to lock her screen.

Before she could, a second message arrived. “We need to discuss the divorce again.”

Seeing it concerned the divorce, she typed back, “What is there *to* discuss?”

Vincent replied, “I want to add a clause.”

Confused, Scarlett wrote, “Explain the gist of it here.”

Two minutes later, his response came. “After the divorce, you will have no further contact with Vanessa.”

Scarlett didn't understand and sent a simple question mark.

Another message followed quickly. "I will provide additional financial compensation."

But Scarlett was unwilling. "Vanessa is my own child, my flesh and blood."

Vincent's reply was cold. "You gave birth to her. But if you don't mind watching her bond with Sabrina as her new mother, then suit yourself."

Reading his harsh words, Scarlett's fingers flew over the screen. "Once the mandatory separation period is over, we'll finalize the divorce. Regarding Vanessa, I can't promise complete non-involvement, but I will minimize contact as much as possible."

After sending the message, she placed the phone face down on the bedside table, not waiting to see if he would reply.

While Scarlett had been texting, Damian had been watching her intently.

Once she set the phone down, he asked gently, "Was it Vincent?"

Scarlett nodded. "Yes."

Damian could have easily glanced at the screen to read the exchange, but for some reason, he resisted the urge. He asked instead, "What did he want?"

Not wanting to elaborate, Scarlett offered a vague answer. "Nothing important. He was just... checking in."

"Checking in?" Damian repeated with a derisive snort. "If he were genuinely concerned, he'd be here at the hospital with you, not typing out a few hollow words on a screen."

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Chapter 356 A Divorce Clause

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Finished

He had taken her statement at face value, imagining their prolonged silence had been over something significant. To learn it was merely about "checking in" felt absurd.

Seeing Damian's growing impatience, Scarlett offered a weak defense. "He's probably busy."

“Right, busy,” Damian retorted bluntly. “Busy spending time with his girlfriend.”

Scarlett said nothing more, choosing silence. Her offhand explanation had provoked a stronger reaction from Damian than she’d anticipated.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 357[798 words]

apter 357 An Interrupted Call

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Finished

Scarlett had expected Damian to storm out in anger, but he didn’t. Instead, after a silence of more than ten seconds, the corner of his mouth lifted into a smile again. “Since he’s playing around so freely, you should too. Sleep with me—let’s annoy him together.”

Hearing this, Scarlett instantly flared up. “You... you’re impossible!”

But Damian’s smile only widened. “We’ve slept together before.”

“That was different!” Scarlett retorted angrily.

Unfazed, Damian drawled, “How so? Did you have a different kind of sleep in mind?”

The implication in his words was clear, and Scarlett understood immediately. Knowing she couldn’t win this war of words, she pulled the hospital blanket over her head and muttered, “I’m going to nap.”

Damian simply watched as she buried herself under the covers. He knew she wasn't really sleepy—she just didn't want to talk to him anymore. So, he didn't call her out on it.

Yet, lvi

ere in the quiet, Scarlett genuinely began to drift off. Damian felt a wave of

o and settled into the chair beside her bed, resting his head against the back.

ater, a sudden, insistent ringtone jarred them both awake.

fumbled for her phone, realizing it was hers. Damian was holding it at that moment; as
anded it to her, her fingers brushed against his skin. The brief contact sent an unexpected
ter through Damian's chest.

Taking the phone, Scarlett saw Nolan's name on the screen. She answered, "Nolan?"

His concerned voice came through. "A colleague mentioned you took sick leave."

Scarlett didn't go into detail. "I wasn't feeling well, so I took a couple days. It's nothing
serious, please don't worry."

Nolan wasn't fully reassured. "Where are you? I can come by."

Not wanting to trouble him, Scarlett insisted, "Really, I'm much better now."

Nolan didn't press further. Instead, he tentatively asked, "Does that mean you'll still
attend Mr. Newman's dinner tomorrow?"

The dinner had been scheduled earlier but postponed due to Thomas' busy schedule.
Scarlett agreed without hesitation. "Yes, I'll be there."

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Finished

Even though her graduate school admission wasn't secured yet, taking this step was
largely thanks to the courage Thomas had inspired in her. She was determined to go.

Hearing her confirmation, Nolan's tone lightened. "Alright then. I'll pick you up tomorrow afternoon."

Scarlett nodded, though he couldn't see it. "Okay. Thank you, Nolan."

"It's no trouble at all. I'm happy to," he replied before ending the call—perhaps to avoid any potential refusal from her.

As she set the phone down, Scarlett felt the weight of Damian's intense stare. She looked over at him. "What is it?"

Damian narrowed his eyes slightly. "You're going to a dinner tomorrow night?"

"Yes."

His expression darkened abruptly. "Scarlett, do you even care about your own health?"

She met his gaze and explained patiently, "A few days of rest will be enough. It's really not a big deal."

Damian's frown deepened, a note of unease in his voice. "Are you... keeping the pregnancy?"

From the start, Damian had misunderstood. Seeing her in the hospital, he had assumed it was for prenatal care or a pregnancy-related issue—that worry had drawn him here.

In the past two days, he hadn't checked her medical chart or the information card at her bedside.

Now, hearing her plan to attend a dinner so soon, a vague sense of foreboding settled over him.

Seeing how serious he looked, Scarlett felt compelled to clarify. "Damian, I'm not pregnant. Well, I was, but I lost the baby a while ago."

A visible wave of relief washed over Damian, followed by an almost scolding tone. "Why didn't you say so sooner?"

"You never gave me a chance to explain," Scarlett replied softly.

Damian paused, then let out a low chuckle. "It's for the best. I wasn't keen on being a stepfather

anyway."

His bluntness caught her off guard. After a moment of stunned silence, she asked, “Can I go back to sleep now?”

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Chapter 357 An Interrupted Call

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Finished

Mimicking her tone, Damian countered, “So, after your dinner tomorrow, will you come with me to meet my mother?”

She hadn’t expected him to circle back to that. Scarlett was momentarily speechless, then said seriously, “You clearly have someone else you’d rather take home. Why insist on it being me?”

Damian leaned forward in his chair, his eyes holding hers steadily. “You’re the only one I want to bring home. The only one.”

Scarlett looked at him, and once again, she felt herself getting lost in his gaze.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 358[829 words]

Awakened Housewife: Ignore Betrayer’s Begs

Chapter 358 Brother’s Plea

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Finished

When he spoke those words, his expression was serious and earnest, as if every syllable were

true.

Scarlett, however, offered no reply.

That night, Vincent returned to Ravensshade Villa from the neighboring villa just after eleven. By then, Xavier had already retired for the evening.

Upon entering, Vincent was surprised to find a figure sitting in the dark on the living room sofa. A closer look revealed it was Luke.

Hearing the footsteps, Luke turned his head sharply. Seeing Vincent, a strained, weary smile finally broke through. He stood up. "Vincent, you're back."

Just by Luke's demeanor, Vincent could tell he needed something. He cut straight to the point. "Out with it. What's the matter?"

Luke stepped forward, grabbing Vincent's arm. "Let's talk upstairs."

Understanding that Luke didn't want Xavier to overhear, Vincent agreed.

Once they were inside the study upstairs, Luke seized Vincent's hand. His anxiety was palpable, his eyes glistening. "Vincent, I need you to help me find someone."

Vincent ventured a guess. "Naomi?"

Luke nodded vigorously. "Yes."

Frowning, Vincent asked, "What happened? Is she missing?"

After a hesitant pause, Luke nodded again. "Something like that."

Growing more puzzled, Vincent pressed in a low voice, "What exactly is going on?"

Intimidated by Vincent's tone, Luke reluctantly confessed. "It's probably Damian."

Hearing this, Vincent eyed him doubtfully. "You're sure?"

At that moment, Luke's composure broke. He clutched Vincent's hands and sank to his knees, the impact against the hardwood floor echoing in the quiet room. Simultaneously, he struck himself hard across the face—once, then twice.

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Chapter 358 Brother's Plea

Vincent was utterly bewildered, his mind racing with questions.

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Finished

When Luke finally stopped, he lifted Vincent's hand and pressed it against his own stinging cheek. "I'm no better than dirt, Vincent. I deserve whatever you do to me."

Utterly confused, Vincent demanded sternly, "Explain yourself. Now."

Seeing no way out, Luke decided to come clean with everything.

After Naomi's "accident" that day, Luke had thought it over. Damian hadn't been physically present, but if he wanted someone dealt with, he certainly didn't need *to* do it himself.

Since being cut by the knife that day, Naomi had vanished completely. It was obvious she must still be enduring some form of retribution.

After hours of agonizing, Luke had finally resolved to ask Vincent to intervene.

Still on his knees, his eyes rimmed red, Luke recounted the incident where Naomi had attacked Scarlett.

When Vincent heard the full story, his face darkened immediately. He shot Luke a look of pure ice, a rage simmering within him that left him momentarily speechless.

When he finally moved, he delivered a sharp kick to Luke's side, his voice a harsh whisper. "She was still my wife, legally. And you stood by while some outsider laid hands on her? Do you have a death wish, Luke?"

Luke crumpled to the floor, wincing in pain. Seeing the fury on Vincent's face, fear and panic truly set in. He didn't dare utter another word, just stared up at Vincent with pleading eyes.

Vincent said nothing more. In silence, he grabbed his suit jacket from the back of a chair and strode out of the study.

Luke scrambled up from the floor, stumbling after him for a few steps. “Vincent, please. You’re the only one who can help me now.”

Ignoring him, Vincent descended the stairs without a backward glance.

At the entrance, Vincent slid into his car. After getting the hospital address from Abbott, he drove straight toward it, his mind in turmoil.

As he drove, he couldn’t stop thinking about how pale and fragile Scarlett had looked when she fainted, and again when she awoke in the hospital. A sharp, inexplicable pang of guilt struck

him.

Someone that vulnerable had been beaten for no reason that night. That night, she had argued with him first, and then faced Naomi’s violence. The mere thought tightened his chest.

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Chapter 358 Brother’s Plea

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Finished

Guilt washed over him now, cold and heavy. If he hadn’t left the hospital that day, if he had chosen to stay with her, could all of this have been avoided?

He didn’t dare dwell on it. The more he thought, the more unsettled he felt.

Halfway to the hospital, his phone rang. At a red light, he glanced down—it was Abbott.

Answering, he heard Abbott’s urgent tone. “Mr. Stewart, we’ve been outbid for the development rights on the project. Your presence is required at the office immediately.”

Vincent’s brow furrowed. After a brief internal struggle, he replied flatly, “Understood.”

Ending the call, he checked the navigation. The display showed less than ten minutes to Scarlett’s hospital, but over an hour back to the company headquarters.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die – 359[785 words]

Even so, Vincent made a U-turn and headed back to the office.

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Finished

By the time he arrived, several senior executives were already assembled in the conference

room.

Abbott stepped forward to brief him. “Mr. Stewart, I’ve confirmed it was Zachary’s group that outbid us for the project rights.”

Vincent frowned, perplexed. “I thought his holdings were in hospitality. Since when did he move into construction and development?”

Abbott shook his head. “It’s unclear.”

After a moment’s consideration, Vincent replied dismissively, “Let him have it. It’s not a critical loss. We just need to ensure the subsequent handover is managed smoothly.”

“That was our assessment as well,” Abbott agreed. “However, there is a substantial amount of documentation that still requires your personal review and signature.”

Knowing he couldn’t leave at this point, Vincent acquiesced. “Very well.”

And so, Vincent remained at the office, working through the night. By morning, his eyes were bloodshot from the all-nighter. He was just wrapping up as dawn began to lighten the sky.

Abbott brought in a simple breakfast. After eating quickly, Vincent tackled the final tasks. By the time everything was signed off, it was pushing ten o'clock.

A nagging concern for Scarlett prompted him to drive to the hospital.

Upon arrival, however, he learned from the nurse that Scarlett had been discharged that very morning. "She left about an hour ago," the nurse informed him.

Back in his car, Vincent didn't hesitate. He pulled out his phone and called Scarlett.

The line was answered almost immediately, and Vincent demanded, "Where are you?" His voice was hoarse and deep from the sleepless night, laced with an edge of irritation.

Instead of Scarlett, a smug male voice answered. "She's sleeping."

Vincent's brow furrowed. "Damian?"

Damian let out a low, satisfied laugh. "The one and only."

Vincent got straight to the point. "Where have you taken her?"

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Chapter 359 Night's Work

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63

Finished

Damian, however, dismissed the question with mockery. "Since when do you have the right to ask?"

Before Vincent could retort, the line went dead. Listening to the dial tone, a sharp, sour feeling twisted in his gut.

They had filed for divorce and were in the mandatory separation period—so why did this bother him so much? He couldn't even pinpoint the exact nature of his discomfort.

As he sat there, lost in the uneasy feeling, his phone rang again. For a fleeting moment, he thought it might be Scarlett calling back. Glancing down, he saw Sabrina's name.

He paused, then answered. "Sabrina."

Hearing the roughness in his voice, Sabrina guessed he'd pulled an all-nighter.

After a brief internal debate, she ventured, "Mr. Newman is hosting a dinner tonight. Would you accompany me?"

Vincent agreed without hesitation. "Of course."

They spoke for a few more minutes, the conversation mostly revolving around Vanessa. Afterwards, Vincent said he needed to go.

He initially considered having Abbott track Scarlett's location but decided against it. He needed sleep. Being well-rested was essential for the dinner with Sabrina later.

With Xavier staying at Ravensshade Villa, Vincent headed to Oakland Villa to get some rest.

When he arrived at the villa, Freya was in the kitchen having a late lunch—a simple meal of reheated leftovers. Hearing the door, she looked up, surprised. "Mr. Stewart! What brings you back?"

Hearing her tone, Vincent couldn't help but ask, "Is it that unusual?"

Freya nodded. "It is, Mr. Stewart. You and Mrs. Stewart haven't been back in quite some time."

Her words evoked a strange pang of melancholy. In his memory, whenever he returned to Oakland Villa, Scarlett was always there, attending to every detail. Now, she was gone.

Musing on this, he murmured in agreement, "It has been a while."

His gaze swept the familiar space, and for a moment, it felt as if no time had passed at all. Yet everything was undeniably different.

Seeing his pensive look, Freya added softly, "Mrs. Stewart used to come by often too, but now..."

Chapter 359 Night's Work

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Finished

Not wanting to dwell on Freya's reminiscence, Vincent cut in, "I'm going to get some sleep. Please wake me at four."

Freya simply nodded. "Yes."

At Theron Manor, Damian was lounging on the living room sofa. He had just ended the call with Vincent when the front door opened and Nathan walked in, arms laden with grocery bags.

Seeing him, Damian quickly pocketed his phone, stood up, and went to the doorway to help. "Here, let me get those for you."

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 360[816 words]

Chapter 360 An Unwelcome but Persistent Guest

Finished

Nathan didn't hand the bags over. Keeping a straight face, he said, "I've got it. You should go sit down."

Nathan and Violet had been the ones to handle Scarlett's discharge paperwork that morning.

Afterwards, Violet had turned to Damian and said, “Thank you for looking after Scarlett. If you’re free, please join us for a simple lunch at the house.”

It was exactly the invitation Damian had hoped for, and he accepted without a second thought. But while some were pleased he was coming, others were not.

Nathan was distinctly unenthusiastic about Damian’s visit to Theron Manor.

Damian tried again to help, but Nathan wouldn’t budge.

After a brief, awkward standoff, Damian suddenly reached out and took the bags from Nathan’s hands. “Nonsense, you need the help,” he insisted, striding past him toward the kitchen with the groceries.

Nathan stood frozen in the entryway, momentarily stunned.

Just then, Violet came in from outside, her own arms full of bags. She had witnessed Damian taking the groceries from Nathan.

Waving a hand in front of her brother’s dazed face, she said with a soft chuckle, “If he wants to help, let him. It won’t kill you.”

Nathan turned and gave her a look of deep disapproval. “I know what you’re trying to do, but I don’t approve,” he stated firmly.

Violet’s smile didn’t fade. “What you approve of doesn’t matter nearly as much as what Scarlett

wants.”

Nathan said nothing more. Taking the bags from Violet, he headed for the kitchen.

Damian had just finished putting away the first load. Seeing Nathan enter with more, he moved to take them, but then spotted Violet behind him, also carrying packages. Without a second thought, Damian took the bags from Violet’s hands instead.

“Violet, you shouldn’t be carrying all this. Leave the heavy lifting to me.”

Violet beamed at him. “Scarlett would be so lucky to marry someone like you.”

Damian felt a flush of embarrassment and scratched the back of his head. “You’re too kind. I’m

Chapter 360 An Unwelcome but Persistent Guest

nothing special.”

A 63

Finished

Violet was about to say more, but Nathan stepped between them, his posture making his feelings clear.

Damian got the message. Realizing he might have overstepped, he finished putting the groceries away and made himself scarce for a moment.

Not only was Violet lovely, but she was also an excellent cook. Having been the one to invite Damian, she was determined to prepare a proper meal.

Nathan didn’t comment, simply helping her quietly in the kitchen.

Violet spent the next two hours cooking. She prepared a soothing soup for Scarlett, a savory stir-fry of mushrooms and pork, a large platter of garlic-infused ribs, a hearty serving of braised lamb, and several fresh vegetable sides.

When lunch was ready, Damian went upstairs specifically to carry Scarlett down to the dining

room.

Throughout the meal, he was attentively caring. He kept serving her from the various dishes and made sure her bowl of soup was always full.

Nathan observed it all but remained unconvinced. A significant disparity in family background could be problematic. Moreover, Damian’s reputation outside these walls was far from pristine.

As the meal was winding down, Damian excused himself to use the restroom.

Once inside, he sent a rapid series of ten “URGENT!” texts to his mother.

Ruth soon replied with a single question mark.

Damian typed frantically. “After lunch, should I offer to do the dishes or just let it be?”

Ruth seemed to consider for a moment before her advice came through. “Absolutely rush to

wash them.”

Heartened, Damian washed his hands and returned to the dining room. Everyone was nearly

finished.

As Violet began clearing the table, Damian stood up again. “Please, let me handle this. I’ll do the washing up.”

Seeing his eagerness, Violet couldn’t help but laugh warmly. “Mr. Langley, we have help for that. It’s really not necessary.”

In Violet’s eyes, a man willing to go to such lengths for a woman couldn’t be all bad.

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Chapter 360 An Unwelcome but Persistent Guest

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Damian’s cheeks flushed slightly. “Then at least let me sweep or mop.”

Violet smiled gently and then turned to Scarlett. “Scarlett, talk some sense into him, will you?”

Scarlett had been observing the entire exchange. She couldn’t decipher Damian’s motives.

The woman he was interested in was Sabrina—so why was he going to such humble lengths here in her home?

Unable to make sense of it, and seizing the opportunity Violet handed her, she said to Damian, “Didn’t you mention an important meeting at your office this afternoon? Come on, I’ll walk you

out.”

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Damian recognized Scarlett's subtle cue for him to leave, but he remained stubborn. "I've already passed the meeting to my deputy. It can go ahead without me. My priority today is to accompany you to the dinner tonight."

Having said that, and to preempt any objection from Scarlett, he turned to Nathan and Violet with a disarming smile. "I'm sure Nathan and Violet would feel better knowing you weren't going alone."

Scarlett grew flustered. "Damian, you..."

Damian responded with a faint smile, his eyes holding a determined, possessive glint.

Scarlett thought that, given Nathan's protective nature, he would never agree to let Damian

stay.

But to her surprise, Nathan simply said, "Then go upstairs and rest first." He then turned to a member of the household staff. "Please show Mr. Langley to the guest room."

The attendant complied, leading Damian upstairs. Once he was gone, Scarlett turned to Nathan with a frown. "Why did you let him stay?"

Nathan looked at her, his tone serious. "Because, for tonight at least, he can keep you safe."

"But I—" Scarlett started to protest.

Nathan cut her off gently but firmly. "Just this once."

Reluctantly, Scarlett conceded.

At five in the afternoon, Nolan's car pulled up at the entrance to Theron Manor.

After receiving his call, Scarlett slipped a long coat over her fitted evening dress and headed downstairs. She hoped to leave quietly, but as she reached the staircase, the door to the guest room swung open.

"Ms. Theron, forgetting something?" Damian's voice was low, tinged with amusement, yet Scarlett could detect a thread of irritation beneath it.

Feeling a pang of guilt, she turned to face him, her eyes avoiding his directly.

Seeing her discomfort, Damian smiled and closed the distance between them. As he neared, he lowered his voice. "Even if you leave without me now, I'll just find my own way there later. Why *go* to the trouble?"

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Chapter 361 Leaving No Room for Escape

Scarlett said nothing and continued down the stairs, Damian following closely behind.

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Before they even reached the front door, Scarlett could see Nolan's car through the sidelights. He stood beside it, looking strikingly handsome in a black wool coat.

A fine, misty drizzle fell outside—the kind that dampens everything slowly. Though it was just past five, the gray sky had already brought an early dusk.

Nolan stood calmly by the car, holding a large, clear umbrella. When he saw Scarlett emerge, he lifted the edge of the umbrella slightly, and a warm, gentle smile spread across his face.

There was something so inherently kind and steady about his presence in the soft rain that it felt reassuring.

For a fleeting moment, a—sharp, needle—like pang struck Nolan's heart as he saw Scarlett step out with Damian close behind her.

But as she approached, his expression softened back into its usual gentle warmth. He walked forward to meet her, holding the umbrella high.

When they met, Nolan tilted the umbrella completely over Scarlett, sheltering her from the drizzle. He looked down at her, his smile tender. "Scarlett."

She looked up and returned his smile. "Nolan."

Before leaving, she had taken care with her makeup, using concealer to hide the faint remnants of bruising. To Nolan, she looked perfectly well.

He shifted the umbrella to his other hand, moving to stand beside her. "Let's get you in the car."

From the side, Damian rolled his eyes at Nolan's attentive gesture, muttering under his breath, "What a performance."

Scarlett heard him and shot him a warning glare. In response, Damian deliberately turned his face away, refusing to meet her eyes or speak.

Nolan heard the comment *too* but showed no irritation. He simply smiled faintly and repeated, "Scarlett, the car is this way."

Scarlett nodded. "Okay."

Side by side, they walked toward the vehicle under the shelter of the umbrella. When they reached it, Nolan opened the passenger door.

Just as Scarlett was about to slide into the front seat, Damian, who had been trailing them, quickly stepped forward. He took gentle hold of her arm and smoothly guided her away from the door.

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Turning to Nolan with a roguish half-smile, he said, "Darling can keep me company in the back."

Scarlett tried to pull her arm free, but Damian’s grip was firm yet gentle as he deftly ushered her into the rear seat instead.

It all happened so quickly—a brief, fluid motion—that Nolan barely had time *to* react before Scarlett was settled in the back.

Damian then slid in beside her and rolled down the window, his handsome features framed against the evening light. He raised an eyebrow at Nolan, his tone laced with playful challenge. “Well, Mr. Huntley? Shall we go?”

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Chapter 362 An Awkward Arrival in the Rain

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Nolan closed the umbrella and glanced back at Scarlett in the rear seat. He saw the apology in her eyes but still offered her a reassuring smile. “Scarlett, please fasten your seatbelt.”

Scarlett nodded. “Okay.”

She leaned over to reach for the belt, but Damian was quicker. In one smooth motion, he grabbed it and buckled it securely for her.

Once it clicked into place, he turned his head toward the front with a broad, deliberate smile. "I'll take good care of my sweetheart. No need to worry, Mr. Huntley."

Nolan didn't look at him or offer a reply. He simply got into the driver's seat and pulled away from the curb.

During the drive to the restaurant, Damian kept up a steady stream of commentary aimed at Scarlett.

"Darling, are you tired? Want a shoulder rub?"

"Sweetheart, your hair's coming loose. Let me fix it."

"You're so quiet, but I adore that about you."

"Come on, give me a smile."

He tried every angle to engage her, but Scarlett saw right through his act. She knew he was deliberately trying to get under Nolan's skin, so she refused to play along, maintaining a steady silence the entire way.

Noticing her stance, Nolan allowed himself a small, private smile in the rearview mirror.

Even though Scarlett ignored him, Damian seemed to relish the one-sided banter. He just wanted to see some reaction from her—any reaction.

Before long, the car eased into the valet area outside the upscale restaurant. As they pulled in, Scarlett immediately spotted Vincent's luxury sedan parking a few spaces away.

Vincent had just come to a stop. He unfastened his seatbelt, stepped out swiftly, and circled the car to open the passenger door.

Bending slightly, he shielded Sabrina from the doorframe with his hand and helped her out with evident care.

Watching the scene, a deep, familiar ache settled in Scarlett's chest. In all her five years of

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marriage to Vincent, he had never shown her that kind of attentive courtesy. Yet with Sabrina, every gesture of bending, shielding, and caring seemed to come naturally, as if it were the most obvious thing in the world.

Once Nolan parked, he got out and moved to open the rear door for Scarlett. Simultaneously, Damian exited from the other side and reached his hand into the car toward her.

In perfect, awkward unison, they both said, "Come on out."

Their synchronicity startled Scarlett, pulling her gaze away from Vincent and Sabrina. Only then did she register Nolan standing by her left side and Damian on her right, each with a hand extended.

She hesitated, momentarily paralyzed by the choice.

After a brief internal debate, she chose the hand closer to her—Nolan's. She placed her fingers in his, and he gave them a gentle, reassuring squeeze before helping her out of the car. A faint, understanding smile touched his lips.

Across from them, Damian's confident smile vanished the instant Scarlett made her choice. But the lapse lasted only a second. He closed the car door firmly and strode around to join them.

Meanwhile, after being helped from the car by Vincent, Sabrina had noticed Nolan and Damian standing beside the other vehicle.

Through the windshield, she had vaguely made out Scarlett in the back seat. Seeing both men hovering around her stirred a peculiar, unsettled feeling in Sabrina's stomach.

Vincent shut the passenger door and joined her. Noticing her strained expression, he asked with concern, "You look pale. Are you feeling unwell?"

Sabrina snapped back to the present and shook her head. "I'm fine. Maybe I'm just a little chilled." For the sake of appearance, she was wearing a delicate, thin winter dress without a coat.

Hearing this, Vincent immediately shrugged off his own tailored wool coat and draped it over her shoulders. Then he wrapped a protective arm around her, and they began walking toward the restaurant entrance together.

Vincent seemed entirely focused on Sabrina, completely unaware of the trio nearby.

After getting out, Damian had also witnessed Vincent's gallant gesture. Concerned Scarlett might be cold, he moved to offer her his own jacket.

Scarlett anticipated him and quickly waved a hand in refusal. "I'm perfectly fine, Mr. Langley. Please don't."

While she was speaking, Nolan, who stood behind her, had already slipped off his coat and

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placed it gently over her shoulders.

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"Scarlett, we should head in," Nolan said, his tone practical. "Mr. Newman just texted; he's wondering where we are."

Hearing this, Scarlett stopped fussing about the coat. "Alright, let's go."

Damian said nothing, falling into step silently behind them.

Just as the group reached the restaurant's grand entrance, Damian called out again, "Sweetheart, wait."

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Scarlett paused. Damian closed the distance, reached up as if to adjust a stray strand of her hair, but as his hand came down, he deftly lifted Nolan's coat from her shoulders.

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Chapter 363 The Protective Coat

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At the same time, he draped his own coat over her shoulders, saying, “I’ll wait outside. If you need anything, just call, and I’ll be right in.”

Seeing her coat swapped so abruptly, Scarlett felt more resigned than angry. She chose not to

engage.

Instead, she replied indifferently, “If you have other matters to attend to, please do. Nolan is here with me. I’ll be fine.”

Damian clearly wasn’t convinced and showed no intention of leaving. “My only matter is ensuring your safety,” he stated firmly.

Hearing this, Scarlett was momentarily at a loss for words.

Sensing her discomfort, Nolan gently touched her shoulder. “Let’s go inside,” he suggested softly.

Without another word to Damian, Scarlett turned and followed Nolan into the restaurant’s private dining area.

When she pushed open the door to the reserved room, she found it already quite full. She recognized many of the people seated there, though they wouldn’t know her.

Most were established names in the medical field. Among them, of course, were Vincent and

Sabrina.

As the door opened, most of the guests rose to greet Nolan. A chorus of welcomes filled the air – “Nolan” or “Dr. Huntley.”

Nolan had recently received a promotion, though his future had always been bright regardless. A returned scholar from abroad, he held not only advanced degrees but also a patent related to primary brain tumors.

In the medical community, he was a respected and top-tier figure.

The atmosphere, which had been somewhat subdued when Vincent and Sabrina arrived, instantly became lively with Nolan's entrance. In this circle, his reputation preceded him.

Finally, Sabrina also stood and greeted him. "Nolan."

He acknowledged her with only a brief glance and a faint, distant smile. After exchanging nods with the others, Nolan guided Scarlett to their seats.

A large round table dominated the room, set for about twenty. When choosing seats, Nolan

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deliberately selected a spot somewhat removed from Vincent and Sabrina.

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Once seated, Scarlett glanced around. Thankfully, no one seemed particularly curious about her identity.

That was a relief—she had no illustrious resume and was essentially a nobody in this professional circle. Her credentials weren't worth mentioning here.

Her gaze eventually drifted across the table to Vincent. His attention was entirely on Sabrina. He was leaning in, speaking to her in a low voice, and both were smiling.

After a moment, Vincent happened to look up, and his eyes unexpectedly met Scarlett's across the room.

She quickly averted her gaze, but his lingered, scrutinizing her face and exposed skin for any signs of injury.

Unfortunately for him, Scarlett's careful makeup concealed all traces of bruising. A subtle sense of relief washed over him. *At least the damage isn't too severe.*

Soon, Thomas arrived. His entrance lifted the atmosphere even further, with everyone rising once more to greet Thomas.”

Aside from Vincent and Scarlett, everyone present was, in some form, a student or protégé of

Thomas.

After a few opening remarks and customary pleasantries, Thomas invited everyone to be seated and for the dinner to begin.

The round table was expansive, with dishes placed far apart. Concerned Scarlett might not be able to reach, Nolan served several selections onto her plate.

Once everyone had begun eating, Thomas raised his glass for a toast. The gathering was an annual dinner, a tradition in their circle, though this was Scarlett’s first time attending.

Scarlett’s glass had been filled with a clear liquor. Picking it up, she felt a twinge of unease but said nothing.

As a doctor, and given her recent surgery, she knew she shouldn’t be drinking alcohol. Yet, in this moment, she felt compelled to raise her glass with the others.

Vincent noticed this too, his eyes narrowing slightly in confusion as he watched her. Seeing she made no move to object, he let it go.

After the clinking of glasses, Thomas spoke, “I’m truly honored you could all join me tonight. I’ll drink first to show my respect.” With that, he downed the nearly full shot of liquor in one go.

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Everyone present was from a field where professional networking often involved social drinking; a single glass was typically no issue. Moreover, when Thomas drank, who would dare refuse?

Looking at the strong spirit in her own glass, Scarlett frowned, caught in a dilemma. As she watched the others tip their heads back and finish their drinks, her anxiety grew.

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Chapter 364 A Toast Taken

Vincent had finished his drink. Watching Scarlett hold her glass motionless, he guessed it contained the same clear liquor.

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Nolan had also downed his whiskey. Setting his glass down, he noticed Scarlett's hesitation and was puzzled.

He had dined with her several times and knew she could hold her liquor quite well—it wouldn't be an exaggeration to say she could handle her share.

Yet at the moment, her glass held only a standard pour, and she hadn't touched it.

Everyone else had finished and resumed their seats, but Scarlett remained standing, glass in hand.

She understood enough about social etiquette to know that when a respected figure like Thomas toasted the group, refusing to drink could be seen as a slight. No matter what, it seemed she would have to drink tonight.

Steeling herself, Scarlett closed her eyes and prepared to down the whiskey.

But just then, Vincent spoke up from across the table, "Mr. Newman, she is a woman, after all. If she really can't drink, it's perfectly fine."

Thomas glanced at Scarlett but said nothing. Vincent continued, “If needed, I’ll drink this for her.”

As he said this, Vincent began refilling his own glass. Seeing this, Scarlett was about to insist she could manage when Nolan suddenly reached over and took the glass from her hand. “Mr. Newman,” he said smoothly, “Scarlett isn’t feeling her best today. Allow me to drink this on her behalf.” With that, he finished the whiskey in her glass.

Thomas smiled genially. “It’s all in good spirits. The important thing is everyone enjoys themselves.” Though he said this, had no one intervened, his impression of Scarlett might have cooled.

After this small interlude, the guests began toasting Thomas one by one, followed by toasts among themselves.

Vincent wasn’t truly part of this professional circle, so he only raised his glass when Sabrina prompted him to.

After Sabrina toasted Thomas, she began making her way around the table. When she reached Nolan, the chatter in the private room noticeably quieted.

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Everyone who knew Nolan well remembered how thick as thieves he and Sabrina had once been. Then, out of nowhere, all trace of their closeness had vanished without a trace.

Now that they were face-to-face again, every pair of eyes in the room was silently glued to them, hungry for a front-row seat to the drama.

No one breathed a word, but an unspoken understanding hung in the air—every single person was watching, waiting, their curiosity piqued. After all, neither of them had come alone tonight; each had arrived with a new companion in tow.

As the atmosphere grew still, Sabrina, well aware of the watching eyes, maintained her smile.

She raised her glass to Nolan. “Nolan, thank you for your guidance and for helping me narrow down my doctoral research topic. This toast is for you.”

After Vincent's earlier pressure on Thomas, Nolan had indeed assisted Sabrina with her research direction.

Though reluctant, he had complied out of respect for Thomas.

In the past, Nolan had often answered Sabrina's academic questions, but he had never harbored romantic feelings for her. She had been persistent, and Nolan, not one to easily refuse a reasonable request within his expertise, had helped.

With few other women around him at the time, speculation about their relationship had naturally arisen, though there was never any truth to it.

Later, after learning more about Sabrina's character from Scarlett, Nolan's regard for her had diminished further.

So now, as Sabrina toasted him, Nolan felt a distinct lack of enthusiasm. But with Vincent present, he knew refusing would cause a scene.

If his actions made the entire gathering a target for Vincent's displeasure, Nolan would feel responsible.

After a brief internal debate, he picked up his glass and clinked it lightly against hers. With a polite but distant smile, he said, "No need for thanks. You earned it through your own merits."

The word "merits" sent a subtle ripple through the room. Sabrina caught the slight edge in his tone but forced a smile and drank her whiskey. Nolan followed suit.

As he set his glass down, someone nearby asked casually, "So, Nolan, does she have any notable publications yet?"

Nolan gave a small, noncommittal laugh. "You'd have to ask Ms. Monroe about that," he said, glancing up at Sabrina and deftly passing the question to her.

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The attention of most at the table shifted to Sabrina. She remained composed, offering a faint smile. "No significant publications yet," she replied smoothly. "The research is still in

progress."

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Chapter 365 A Truth Told

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Hearing this, the group murmured with polite disappointment before someone else inquired, “What is the primary focus of your research, Ms. Monroe?”

Sabrina knew everyone present was accomplished in the medical field and was aware her own credentials were modest. She avoided specifics, maintaining a calm smile. “A paper will be published in due course.”

Vincent, seated beside her, had naturally noticed Nolan’s subtle provocation. Once the brief curiosity about Sabrina subsided, he turned the tables with a tone of polite inquiry. “Dr. Huntley is considered a benchmark in our field. I presume the lady beside you must have an equally impressive background?”

As soon as he spoke, attention shifted back to Scarlett. Questions arose from around the table.

“Nolan, is this lady also one of Mr. Newman’s students? I don’t believe we’ve met.”

“Yes, which specialty does she pursue? Which hospital is she affiliated with now?”

When the focus turned to her, Nolan instinctively moved to intervene. But before he could speak, Scarlett addressed the room herself.

“Hello, everyone. My focus is pediatric surgery. Currently, I hold a bachelor’s degree and am preparing for graduate school admissions. I am not yet Mr. Newman’s student, but I hope to have the opportunity to earn that position.”

Scarlett held nothing back, stating her actual situation plainly. She believed that only by not fearing condescension could one avoid being belittled.

Vincent watched her from across the table, surprised. He hadn’t expected her to admit her circumstances so straightforwardly—to lay her current reality bare before this distinguished

group.

After Scarlett finished, the murmurs of reaction were more pronounced than before. Yet, these sounds mattered little to her.

Compared to the judgment of strangers, what stung more deeply was Vincent’s role in this- using her to deflect attention and bolster Sabrina’s position.

Around them, the whispered discussions grew louder.

“If she starts grad school now, she’ll be well into her thirties by the time she finishes a doctorate.”

“Exactly. If everything goes perfectly, maybe thirty-three. If not, she might not finish at all.”

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“Does it even matter if she graduates? By then, she’d be... rather established. What prospects would she have?”

They spoke without restraint, unconcerned that Nolan sat beside her.

Observing Scarlett become the subject of derision, Sabrina allowed a faint, satisfied smile to touch her lips as she glanced across at Nolan.

Nolan, however, had turned his head, his attention wholly on gauging Scarlett's reaction. In his eyes, only she existed.

Seeing this, Sabrina's brow furrowed slightly.

The discussions continued. Scarlett remained outwardly composed, but feeling Nolan's concerned gaze, she met his eyes. She offered him a small, reassuring smile. Before she could say anything, however, Nolan raised his voice slightly.

"Everyone, the lady beside me is actually my—"

Scarlett guessed his intention—to claim her as his partner to shield her. She spoke up, her voice clear and firm, overriding his, "Thank you for your interest. But in life, it's never too late to pursue a new path."

Across the table, both Vincent and Sabrina had also sensed what Nolan was about to declare. Scarlett's interruption left a palpable silence in its wake.

Thomas, seated at the head of the table, observed everything. He, too, had understood Nolan's unspoken intent, but he was more impressed by Scarlett's response.

She hadn't crumbled under the scrutiny or hidden behind someone else's status. She had claimed her own ground. In Thomas' eyes, that integrity was paramount.

It was regrettable she didn't seem inclined toward his prized student romantically. But matters of the heart were separate. He still saw great potential in her as a student.

As the room quieted, Thomas cleared his throat. "Everyone, Ms. Theron is the doctoral candidate I have personally earmarked a place for. Whether it takes three years or five, a position in my program will be held for her."

His declaration sent a new wave of murmurs through the room.

"In all our years knowing the professor, he's never reserved a spot for anyone beforehand."

"Indeed. And for someone with just a bachelor's degree..."

"If the professor says so, she must possess exceptional promise."

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“I thought there was something distinctly poised about her demeanor.”

With Thomas’ endorsement, the perception of Scarlett shifted visibly.

Across the table, seeing both Nolan and Thomas rally to Scarlett’s defense, Sabrina slowly clenched her fist in her lap.

Vincent also recognized what Nolan had been about to say. The fact that Scarlett had stopped him sparked an unexpected, inexplicable flicker of satisfaction within him. He didn’t examine the feeling closely, but a thought whispered in the back of his mind. Perhaps she still only has eyes *for me*.

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Chapter 366 Nolan’s Subtle Support

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After allowing the group to chat and mingle for a while, Thomas raised his voice slightly. “Why don’t we all dig in?” he suggested.

The private dining room quieted down almost at once.

Nolan had noticed Scarlett’s liking for the herb-crusted lamb chops. He casually turned the Lazy Susan, picked up another portion with the serving tongs, and placed it on her

plate. As he did, he leaned closer and murmured, "Don't let outside opinions get to you. Just stay true to yourself—and try to be a little more confident."

Scarlett nodded, offering him a grateful smile. "Okay."

Nolan smiled back and started to straighten up, but then Scarlett added softly, "Thank you,

Nolan."

He knew exactly what she was thanking him for, yet he couldn't help feeling a sting of disappointment. "I'd have preferred to hear those words spoken aloud," he replied quietly.

Scarlett paused, her expression turning complicated. She didn't seem to know how to respond.

Seeing her unease, Nolan softened and gave her a reassuring look. "Let's just enjoy the meal," he said gently.

Across the table, Sabrina kept her head down, pretending to focus on her food while her attention remained fixed on Nolan.

Before, she had only admired him for his looks, his competence, and his promising career.

But watching him protect Scarlett just now stirred a sense of envy in her.

How wonderful it would be if Nolan were looking out for her like that.

Before Scarlett entered the picture, Nolan had always been kind and attentive toward Sabrina.

Ever since Scarlett appeared, though, something had shifted.

Sabrina felt her resentment toward Scarlett deepen.

Noticing Sabrina's distracted mood, Vincent served her a lamb chop as well.

At the sight of it, Sabrina's appetite faded, but she forced a polite smile. "Thanks, Vincent."

As she picked at the meat, she continued to watch Nolan. His eyes hardly left Scarlett; he barely even glanced at Thomas more than a few times.

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Chapter 366 Nolan's Subtle Support

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Others around the table also took note of Nolan's attentiveness to Scarlett.

A couple of guys who were seated nearby and knew Nolan well teased him lightly. "You're really looking out for your junior, huh?"

Nolan smiled faintly, almost with a touch of pride. "Yeah, well, she deserves it. She's a genuinely good person—really special."

He said it with such sincerity that it caught people's attention.

Then someone who knew him even better chimed in, "I haven't seen you treat anyone this way since... well, since Ms. Monroe."

Nolan didn't shy away from the comment. "That was different," he clarified calmly. "Ms. Monroe and I were just classmates."

"And what about your junior here?" the friend pressed.

Nolan turned toward Scarlett. Seeing the faint plea in her eyes, he simply smiled and replied, "That's a secret."

Though he kept his tone light, a quiet ache settled in his chest.

Sabrina watched it all unfold, bitterness and jealousy simmering inside her.

She convinced herself that Nolan must have liked her too—it was only because she'd grown closer to Vincent that he had turned his attention to Scarlett.

As dinner was winding down, Thomas turned to Scarlett and Nolan. "Stay behind for some coffee later," he said. "There's something I'd like to discuss with both of you."

"Of course," they replied almost in unison.

Sabrina felt another pang of resentment.

If only she hadn't aligned herself with Vincent earlier, maybe Nolan would have been her supporter in the medical field, helping her build a reputation of her own.

Even though the dinner continued, the atmosphere had lost its flavor for her.

Outside the private room, Damian sat in the restaurant's lounge area, scrolling through his phone to catch up on work.

He had pushed aside quite a bit over the past two days to spend time with Scarlett.

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Chapter 366 Nolan's Subtle Support

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Now, with a moment to himself, he figured he should clear as much as he could.

Just as he was typing a reply to an email, a male voice carried over from the host station. "Do you have any private rooms available for two?"

Something about the voice sounded familiar.

When Damian glanced up, he recognized Luke almost immediately.

In seconds, his expression cooled, though he restrained himself in the public space.

Luke secured a table and followed the server toward the dining area.

About half an hour later, Luke reemerged and headed toward the public restrooms near the lobby.

Damian watched where he went, then slowly rose and made his way to the same restroom.

Leaning against the sink, Damian lit a cigarette and waited quietly in front of the mirror.

He finished one cigarette completely. Luke still hadn't come out.

Damian lit another. Halfway through it, the stall door finally opened and Luke stepped out.

As soon as Luke entered the main restroom area, the sharp scent of smoke hit him. He coughed lightly and muttered with irritation, “Do you mind not smoking in here? It’s gonna choke someone to death.”

Damian didn’t turn. He remained with his back to Luke, who clearly hadn’t recognized him

yet.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 367[856 words]

Are you hear me? You got a death wish or something?”

As he spoke, Luke reached out to grab Damian’s shoulder.

Damian didn’t move, allowing Luke’s hand to clamp down on him.

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deaf? Can’t

Then, using the momentum of Luke's grip, he slowly turned his head.

Luke was about to fire off another insult, but the moment he saw Damian's face, he froze as if he'd seen a ghost. He stumbled several steps backward, only stopping when his back hit the wall.

Staring at Damian in horror, Luke managed a shaky, uneasy whisper. "How... how did you me here?"

Damian didn't answer. He dropped his cigarette to the floor, crushed it under his heel, and began closing the distance between them step by step.

With nowhere left to retreat, Luke blurted out, "Damian, don't come any closer."

find

A low, mocking sound escaped Damian's lips. "I heard Naomi's your girl?" he asked, his voice dangerously quiet.

At the mention of Naomi, Luke instinctively shot back, "Where did you take her?"

Damian only sneered and ignored the question. "And I heard," he continued, his tone dripping with contempt, "*that* you can't stand my girl."

Luke shrank back into the corner, trembling all over. "Wh-who?" he stammered.

Damian raised an eyebrow. "Who do you

think?"

Luke avoided Damian's gaze, shaking his head frantically. "I don't know who you're talking about."

Damian's voice hardened. "You let Naomi push her around, hit her, humiliate her. Luke," he said, each word sharp and deliberate, "who do you think I'm talking about?"

Before he even finished speaking, Luke finally cracked under the pressure. He made a sudden, desperate lunge toward the door.

But Damian was faster. He seized Luke by the collar and yanked him backward, slamming him hard against the wall with a heavy thud.

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Chapter 367 Damian's Fists

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Finished

In the bright bathroom light, tiny particles of dust swirled in the air where Luke's body had struck.

Damian's anger burned hotter. He shot his hand out and gripped Luke's throat. His eyes turned a frightening shade of red, the corners dark and intense.

His voice dropped to a raw, almost broken whisper. "She hurts me, and I don't even dare raise my voice to her," he said, the words thick with emotion. "How dare you let someone lay a hand on her?"

Luke's throat was locked in Damian's vise-like grip; he could barely draw a breath.

But Damian's bloodshot eyes remained fixed on him. "You think I won't touch you just because Vincent's your brother?" he pressed.

Luke clutched at Damian's wrist with both hands, trying to pry the fingers loose, but it was

useless.

Realizing he was overpowered, Luke went limp. In a strained, raspy voice, he muttered, "If you lay a finger on me today... Vincent, Daniel, and Harris... they'll make you pay."

There wasn't a trace of remorse in his tone—if anything, he sounded even more defiant.

Damian had heard enough. He hated being threatened more than anything.

And Luke's defiance only made him want to act.

He was going to see exactly what Vincent, Daniel, and Harris could do to him.

Luke didn't have time to react before Damian's fist connected with his face.

The blow stunned him; he didn't even try to fight back.

After releasing some of his pent-up rage, Damian finally stepped back.

Luke slumped into the corner of the bathroom, his face a mess of fear and bruises.

Damian walked over to the sink, turned on the faucet, and held his bruised, bloodied knuckles under the cool stream.

He watched as the water in the basin swirled red, then gradually cleared as the blood was washed away, leaving no trace behind.

Once his hands were clean, Damian left the water running. He lifted his gaze to the mirror, staring at Luke's cowering reflection.

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Chapter 367 Damian's Fists

"Go ahead," Damian said flatly. "Call them."

Luke didn't respond or move.

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Damian let out a cold, humorless laugh.

Then he shut off the faucet, pulled a couple of paper towels from the dispenser, and dried his hands thoroughly.

After crumpling the towels into a ball, he tossed them toward Luke. "I'll be here all night," he said, his voice steady and cold. "I really want to see what you and your friends can do."

Without another glance, Damian turned and walked out of the restroom.

Back in the private dining room, dinner was winding down, but nobody seemed in a hurry to leave. The conversation and laughter continued to flow.

Vincent had just finished toasting Thomas with Sabrina by his side when he felt his phone vibrate in his pocket.

He ignored it at first.

But it buzzed again shortly after.

After several persistent vibrations, Vincent realized it might be important. Leaning close to Sabrina's ear, he murmured, "I need to take this call. I'll be right back."

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 368[881 words]

Chapter 368 A Confrontation of Rivals

Sabrina, hearing him, gave a quick nod. "Okay."

From across the room, Scarlett watched the entire interaction unfold.

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In her five years of marriage to Vincent, she had never once imagined he could be capable of such minute, considerate attention.

She used to believe his coldness toward her was just part of his nature, or a reflection of his position.

But now, seeing it all clearly, she understood it had never been about that—it was simply that he hadn't loved her.

As Vincent stepped out of the private room, Damian—who had just returned to the lounge area and settled onto the sofa moments earlier—spotted him immediately.

Their eyes met briefly, but neither man spoke.

Damian leaned back, picked up his coffee cup, and took a slow, deliberate sip.

Vincent stood a short distance away. He pulled out his phone, saw the missed call was from Luke, and promptly returned it.

Luke answered on the first ring.

“Vincent,” came Luke’s raspy, strained voice through the receiver, “I just got jumped.”

Vincent’s brow furrowed. “Where are you? Who hit you?”

Before Luke could reply, Damian—still seated on the sofa—set his cup down with a soft clink.

He turned his head slightly toward Vincent and said, his tone casual, almost indifferent, “He’s in the restroom. And it was me.”

Damian said it so lightly, as if he were commenting on the weather.

Hearing his response, Vincent’s expression tightened. Without another word, he turned and strode quickly toward the restrooms.

Damian rose from the sofa and followed at a leisurely pace.

Just as they reached the entrance, Damian could hear Luke’s tearful, aggrieved voice from inside. “Vincent, it was Damian! That bastard Damian did this to me. You have to make him pay!”

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Chapter 368 A Confrontation of Rivals

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Finished

Luke’s face was a mess—blood smeared across his skin, looking raw and unsettling. He hadn’t even bothered to wash it off.

Vincent froze for a moment at the sight.

Before he could even form a question, Damian, leaning against the doorframe, let out a cold, quiet laugh. “Vincent, I’m the one who hit your brother. I’m right here. Let’s see how you plan to ‘make me pay’”

Vincent turned, his gaze sharp and angry. “Why would you do this?”

Damian’s expression turned to ice. “Luke let Naomi lay hands on my girl,” he shot back, his voice rising. “You tell me—did he deserve it or not?”

Hearing this, Vincent’s eyes narrowed. “For Scarlett? You’d go this far over her?”

From his tone, Damian caught the unspoken implication—that it wasn’t worth it.

And in that instant, Damian’s temper exploded.

He uncrossed his arms and took a step forward, his voice fierce. “You think all these of years rivalry were for nothing? You think I never wanted to just work together and move on?” He let out a bitter, sharp laugh. “But Vincent, you took what should have been mine—and then you didn’t even treat her right. I’ve hated you every single day, wished you were gone for good. She was everything to me, and you... you treated her like she was nothing.”

He paused, his eyes blazing, jaw tight. When he spoke again, his voice trembled with barely controlled emotion. “How could you, Vincent? How did you ever dare?”

Seeing Damian this raw, this exposed, Vincent was momentarily taken aback.

Could this man—the one everyone saw as a careless playboy—really care this deeply?

Vincent pushed the thought aside. “The one who isn’t loved,” he said coolly, “is the one to be pitied.”

Damian just sneered. “So what if I am? I’d rather be her fool than your kind of king.”

The words struck Vincent as absurd. He let out a short, derisive laugh. “You’re pathetic.”

Damian didn’t flinch. He kept his voice low, almost soft. “You really think your Sabrina is so perfect, don’t you?”

When Vincent didn’t answer, Damian continued, “One day, you’ll regret the choice made today. You gave up someone who loved you completely for someone who only loves what you represent.”

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Chapter 368 A Confrontation of Rivals

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Vincent shook his head dismissively. “My life isn’t a romance novel.”

But Damian only smiled—a cold, knowing smile. “I’ll be waiting for the day you realize what you’ve lost.”

In their heated exchange, they had almost forgotten the third person in the room.

Luke couldn’t take it anymore. “Vincent!” he shouted from behind Vincent. “Are you just going to stand there? Call someone! Have him dealt with—now!”

Hearing Luke’s outburst, Damian laughed outright—a mocking, unrestrained sound. “If he was going to do anything, he would’ve done it by now.” He shook his head, still grinning. “Did you really think he’d dare touch me?”

With that, Damian let out another low chuckle, turned on his heel, and swaggered out of the

restroom.

Even after he was gone, the echo of his laughter seemed to hang in the tiled space.

Luke found the sound grating, unbearable. He covered his ears, as if he could block it out.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 369[888 words]

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Chapter 369 A Stubborn Defense of Pride

After Damian left, Vincent took a moment to properly assess the damage *to* Luke's face.

It was bruised and swollen, with a few open cuts here and there.

Fortunately, none of it looked serious or life-threatening.

62

Finished

Vincent felt a surge of frustration, but he kept it in check. He placed a hand on Luke's shoulder and said, "Whatever grievance you're holding onto today, you'll have to swallow it."

In Rivergate, the influence held by Vincent and Damian was evenly matched, locking them in a stalemate where neither could gain absolute upper hand.

But compared to Damian, Vincent was far less reckless.

Damian was the type who would burn everything down for Scarlett.

Luke's eyes were red-rimmed. It had never occurred to him that there could be a problem even Vincent couldn't solve.

Just then, Vincent's phone buzzed.

He pulled it from his pocket and saw Sabrina's name on the screen.

"Vincent," her voice came through, "dinner's wrapping up. Where are you? I'll come find you."

After a brief pause, Vincent replied, "I'm in the restroom area."

From beside him, Luke immediately started shaking his head, signaling frantically for Vincent not to let Sabrina come.

Luke had always put Sabrina on a pedestal.

If she weren't with Vincent, he'd told himself more than once, he would have moved heaven and earth to win her over.

Even though he knew he could never have her, his infatuation had only grown over time..

So the moment he heard Sabrina might come, panic set in.

If his goddess saw him like this—beaten, bloody, and humiliated—Luke felt he wouldn't be able to face her again.

Vincent wasn't fully aware of Luke's feelings for Sabrina; he simply thought Luke was being overly vain. So he still said into the phone, "It's fine, just wait for me in the lobby. I'll be right

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Chapter 369 A Stubborn Defense of Pride

there."

"Okay," Sabrina replied before hanging up.

Vincent turned back to Luke. "Wash your face and come out with me."

62

Finished

Luke refused instantly. "Just go back. Don't worry about me. I can't go out there looking like this. Sabrina would... She'd laugh at me."

Vincent's expression remained steady. "Sabrina isn't like that."

Luke dug in his heels. "I'll leave after you guys are gone."

Growing concerned, Vincent offered, "I'll call Daniel to pick you up."

"No," Luke insisted, "I'll get home on my own."

Seeing he wouldn't be moved, Vincent didn't push further.

Still, he made a quiet promise. “I won’t forget what happened today. Your payback will come later.”

Luke gave a stiff, red-eyed nod.

Sensing his brother’s shame and anger, Vincent lowered his voice. “Naomi’s been located. I’ll text you the address. It’s up to you whether you go see her or not.”

With that, Vincent turned and walked out. Once in the hallway, he pulled out his phone and sent Luke the details.

Alone in the restroom, Luke stared at the address on his screen, uncertainty washing over him.

Should he go see Naomi, or not?

As dinner concluded, most of the guests had already filtered out of the restaurant.

Sabrina lingered in the lobby, waiting for Vincent.

Damian was also still there, seated in one of the lounge chairs. When Sabrina glanced around, her eyes landed on him.

He was sitting quietly, his sharp profile and straight nose outlined in the soft lobby light.

He was handsome, undeniably so—enough to make Sabrina’s pulse skip, despite everything.

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Chapter 369 A Stubborn Defense of Pride

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He was looking down at his phone, but seemed to sense her gaze. Slowly, he looked up.

When his eyes met Sabrina’s, Damian’s lips curved into a mischievous, knowing smile.

Just then, Vincent appeared, walking toward them from the direction of the restrooms.

Sabrina’s attention snapped back to him.

Finished

Noticing her shift in focus, Damian's smile turned provocative. He rose smoothly and began making his way toward her.

Sabrina saw him approaching, but instead of pleasure, a chill of fear ran through her.

Damian was closer, so he reached her first.

Seeing that Sabrina was deliberately avoiding his eyes, he deliberately raised his voice just enough to be heard clearly. "You're all sweetness and charm online, Ms. Monroe. How come in person you're acting like you don't know me?"

He was doing this on purpose.

He simply didn't want Vincent to have a moment's peace.

Confronted with Damian's pointed question, Sabrina took a small step back. She looked up at him but offered no defense.

It wasn't that she didn't want to explain—it was because Vincent was right behind her now, and she couldn't risk saying the wrong thing.

One misstep could ruin everything.

Vincent saw from a few paces away that Damian appeared to be confronting Sabrina.

He quickened his stride, closing the distance rapidly, and moved to shield Sabrina behind him.

His expression was cold as he addressed Damian. "Watch your step, Mr. Langley."

Sabrina shrank behind Vincent, not even daring to peek out.

Seeing her reaction, Damian couldn't hold back a derisive smirk.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 370[842 words]

Chapter 370 Damian's Plea

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He then turned his gaze back to Vincent, a mocking glint in his eyes. "You've always had terrible judgment when it comes to people, Vincent."

Vincent shot back bluntly, "You're not exactly an expert yourself."

Damian simply smiled faintly. "Really, now?"

Vincent didn't bother to reply further; he saw no point in wasting his breath.

Seeing his silence, Damian added, "Genuinely, I hope you won't live to regret this."

Vincent looked him squarely in the eye, his tone firm. "Don't worry, Mr. Langley. That day will never come."

In Vincent's view, he had no reason to feel any loss over Scarlett.

Even though she was Vanessa's mother, Vanessa herself had grown attached to Sabrina.

As for romantic feelings, he had never held any for Scarlett.

And from a practical standpoint, the Theron family could never offer the Stewarts any meaningful social or business advantage.

So, from every angle, Vincent was convinced he would never regret his choice.

Even as a faint, sour pang echoed in his chest after saying the words, he dismissed it—it wasn't concern, he told himself, just residual tension.

Just then, the door to the private room behind Sabrina swung open.

Scarlett, Nolan, and Thomas stepped out together.

The moment Damian saw Scarlett, he hurried over. "Everything okay?" he asked, his voice low.

Scarlett met his concerned gaze and nodded. "Yes, I'm fine."

"Ready to head out?" he pressed.

"Actually," Scarlett said, "Mr. Newman has invited Nolan and me for a private chat. You can go ahead."

Damian's brow furrowed slightly. "Then I'll join you."

Thomas stepped forward, his tone polite but firm. "Mr. Langley, this is a casual dinner among

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Chapter 370 Damian's Plea

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mentor and students. I'm afraid it wouldn't be appropriate for you to attend."

Damian opened his mouth to object, but caught himself.

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He remembered—Scarlett would soon be Thomas' student. Causing a scene now would only make things difficult for her.

Swallowing his pride, he nodded to Thomas. "You're right. It wouldn't be appropriate."

He then turned back to Scarlett. "I'll wait for you in the car, then."

Seeing his stubbornness, Scarlett replied coolly, “Damian, you really don’t need to wait. I can get back on my own.”

Damian pretended not to hear. “Take your time,” he said gently. “I’ll be waiting in the car, like I promised.”

Everyone present witnessed Damian’s uncharacteristic humility, and each reacted differently- Vincent was bewildered, Sabrina seethed with envy, Scarlett was perplexed, Nolan felt a spike of alarm, and Thomas watched with surprised interest.

Damian had a well-known playboy reputation, yet he had never shown this kind of deference to anyone in public.

Now, he seemed to have cast aside all his pride in front of Scarlett.

Given his status, Damian truly didn’t need to lower his head to anyone—not even Vincent.

The whole display left the small group quietly unsettled.

It was Thomas who finally broke the silence. “Alright then,” he said to Scarlett and Nolan. “Shall we go out? Let’s not be distracted by... unrelated matters.”

Scarlett murmured, “Yes.”

Nolan nodded. “Of course.”

Thomas gestured for the two to walk ahead, following a step behind.

Just like that, the three of them made their way out of the lobby.

Vincent didn’t try to stop Scarlett from leaving. A heavy, unspoken discomfort settled in his chest, but he kept quiet.

As Scarlett’s figure disappeared from view, a shadow of gloom flickered briefly in Vincent’s

eyes.

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Chapter 370 Damian’s Plea

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Beside him, Sabrina gently touched his arm. “Vincent,” she said softly, “shall we go?”

Vincent snapped back to the moment. “Yes,” he replied flatly.

Together, they turned toward the restaurant exit.

As they passed Damian, Sabrina glanced up at him deliberately.

Damian noticed but didn’t return her look.

Frowning faintly, Sabrina felt a pang of confusion. Not long ago, he had been all playful charm, even teasing her with suggestive remarks.

Now, it was as if she were invisible.

Meanwhile, Thomas led Scarlett and Nolan to a nearby casual barbecue spot.

After ordering a few skewers, Thomas eased into conversation with Nolan—talking shop about recent medical papers, research grants, challenging surgeries, and persistent diseases.

Every so often, he would pose a question to Scarlett. She answered each one fluently, revealing a solid grasp of medical theory.

However, no matter how strong her theoretical foundation was, she had never had the chance to apply it in real clinical practice.

Thomas spoke warmly of her potential, “In time,” he remarked, “I believe you’ll become an excellent physician, just like Nolan here.”

Scarlett didn’t take the praise for granted. “I’ll keep working hard,” she said modestly.

Her humility only deepened Thomas’ favorable impression.

She was nothing like Sabrina, he reflected—someone with limited natural aptitude yet relentless in her pursuit of advanced degrees and titles.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 371[994 words]

Chapter 371 Unspoken Feelings

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When Thomas turned his attention back to Nolan, he noticed his former student seemed distracted, his thoughts clearly elsewhere.

Sensing his preoccupation, Thomas smiled knowingly. “The person you’re thinking about is right here beside you. What else could possibly be on your mind?”

Nolan was quiet for a long moment. Then he slowly turned his head to look at Scarlett.

Feeling his gaze, Scarlett gently lowered her eyes.

Thomas’ eyes moved between the two of them before he asked Scarlett, his tone deliberately light yet meaningful, “So, Scarlett, what are your thoughts on Nolan?”

Scarlett looked up at Thomas. After a brief silence, she answered, “Nolan is... exceptional.”

Hearing this, Thomas replied in a tone that was half-joking, “If he’s so exceptional, then should go for it. Don’t wait until someone else snatches him up.”

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Scarlett understood Thomas was playfully trying to nudge them together, but she felt a flush of awkwardness. “Mr. Newman, I actually...” she began.

She wanted to say she was already married, but before she could form the words, Nolan cut in smoothly.

“Mr. Newman,” he said, rising from his seat, “it’s getting late. I should take Scarlett home. Next time, I’ll treat you to a proper meal.”

Thomas saw the quiet plea and worry in Nolan’s eyes. He sighed, a mixture of fondness and resignation. “You stubborn kid.”

Nolan stood, then picked up his own coat and carefully draped it over Scarlett’s shoulders.

The two of them walked side-by-side out of the barbecue spot. Thomas watched them leave, thinking they looked good together, yet wondering if fate would ever allow it.

Once they were a good distance down the sidewalk, Scarlett spoke tentatively into the cool evening air, “Nolan, there’s something I need to tell you.”

Nolan halted. Scarlett noticed his frame seemed to tense momentarily.

Then he turned to face her. Without a word, he suddenly closed the distance between them and pulled her into a tight embrace.

He held her, resting his chin gently on top of her head.

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Chapter 371 Unspoken Feelings

62

Finished

His voice, when it came, was thick with a quiet, pleading ache. “Don’t. Please don’t say it.”

He could guess what she was going to say, and he couldn’t bear *to* hear it.

He’d spent years regretting why he hadn’t been more decisive back then, why he’d never found the courage to tell her how he felt.

He’d waited, focused on building his career, and by the time he felt he had something to offer, she was already someone else’s wife.

And now, he envied Damian with a fierce, bitter jealousy—envied how openly, how recklessly Damian could proclaim his feelings.

Scarlett’s heart ached for him, but she knew she had to be clear. “Nolan, some things... need to

be said.”

He only held her tighter. She thought she felt a tremor run through him. “Just... do this one thing for me,” he whispered, the words muffled against her hair.

A profound sadness washed over Scarlett, and she fell silent.

Feeling her acquiescence, Nolan murmured, “Just let me hold onto a little bit of hope.”

“What if there isn’t any hope left?” Scarlett asked, her own voice rough with emotion.

“But what if there is?” he countered softly.

Scarlett opened her mouth to say more, but Nolan gently released her. He looked down at her, his expression vulnerable in the dim streetlight. “Let me take you home,” he said softly.

As he spoke, Scarlett suddenly remembered.

Damian had said he would wait for her.

Even though part of her hadn’t truly believed he would, she still found herself glancing around the nearly empty street.

Sure enough, his car was nowhere to be seen.

A part of her wasn’t even surprised. His absence simply confirmed what she’d already suspected about his fleeting attentions.

Nolan caught every one of her small, searching movements. The sight sent another pang through him.

She had Vincent in her past and Damian crashing recklessly into her present. Why couldn’t

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Chapter 371 Unspoken Feelings

there be room for him, too?

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The thought crossed his mind—he'd take any place in her life, even if he were last in line.

Seeing no sign of Damian, Scarlett said quietly, "Let's go, Nolan."

Nolan looked at her, but the words lodged in his throat just wouldn't come out.

He wasn't like Vincent, who could command her attention simply by being there.

And he wasn't like Damian, who could shamelessly, publicly lay claim to her affections.

Too often, Nolan despised his own caution, his inability to be bold.

Ten minutes earlier, Damian's Panamera had been idling at the curb. He'd been sitting in the driver's seat, tapping absently at a game on his phone.

Every so often, his eyes would flick to the entrance of the barbecue restaurant.

Seeing no sign of Scarlett, he'd look back down at his screen.

In the middle of a level, a call notification popped up—from an unknown number.

Worrying it might be Scarlett calling from a different phone, he answered immediately.

The connection was filled with harsh, staticky noise and the distant wail of sirens.

Then a harried male voice came on the line. "Hello? Is this Damian Langley? There's been a serious accident on the Rivergate Bridge. Your mother is involved. You need to get here now."

The words hit Damian like a physical blow, a cold numbness spreading through him limb by limb.

He sat frozen in the driver's seat for a long, disbelieving moment.

When the reality finally shattered his shock, he didn't even bother to end the call. He slammed the car into gear, and peeled away from the curb, the tires screeching against the asphalt as he sped toward the bridge.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 372[891 words]

Awakened Housewife: Ignore Betrayer's Begs

Chapter 372 Accident on the Bridge

Nolan booked a ride service and asked the driver to take Scarlett back to Theron Manor.

Inside the car, neither spoke a word; a heavy silence filled the space between them.

Finished

As they crossed the Rivergate Bridge, Scarlett glanced toward the opposite lanes. Traffic was at a standstill, and a crowd had gathered around one particular section of the roadway.

"Looks like a bad accident," Scarlett murmured, more to herself.

Nolan followed her gaze. "Seems serious," he agreed.

The crowd was too dense to make out any details of what had happened.

Then, from across the divide, shouts pierced the air, "Is anyone here a doctor? Someone's bleeding badly! The ambulance is stuck in traffic—if you have medical training, please help!"

At the sound, Scarlett turned her head and met Nolan's eyes.

Without a word, Nolan leaned forward and asked the driver to pull over.

Once the car was stopped, he said to Scarlett, "Let's go take a look."

Scarlett nodded. "Okay."

They climbed out, hurried across the lanes, and made their way toward the gathering.

Nolan pushed gently through the onlookers ahead. "We're doctors—please let us through."

Scarlett stayed close behind him until they reached the center of the scene.

The accident was severe. Several vehicles had collided, and one car had been shoved against the bridge railing, teetering precariously close to the edge.

A few people with minor injuries sat dazed to the side. But in the middle of it all, a woman lay on the asphalt in a widening pool of blood. Kneeling beside her, his back to them, was a man whose posture looked achingly familiar.

From behind, Scarlett thought it might be Damian—though she couldn't be sure.

Nolan moved immediately, crouching down beside the injured woman.

Scarlett knelt as well and placed a light hand on the man's shoulder. "Sir, we're doctors. Could you step aside to give her some air?"

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Chapter 372 Accident on the Bridge

The man turned his head. When Scarlett saw it was Damian, her breath caught.

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His eyes were filled with raw helplessness; his face was streaked with blood and etched with panic.

Seeing him like that twisted something inside her—a mix of heartache and helplessness.

Until that moment, Damian had held himself together. But the instant he saw Scarlett, his composure shattered.

His eyes reddened, and a sob broke from his throat.

Scarlett's own throat tightened. She gently squeezed his hand. "She's going to be okay," she whispered, though she knew she couldn't promise anything.

Damian didn't speak, just stared at her as if she were an anchor in a storm.

Scarlett had never seen him so vulnerable. The fear in his eyes would stay time.

with her for a long

Nearby, Nolan completed a quick assessment. “Scarlett,” he called, his voice steady but urgent, “she’s got a femoral artery hemorrhage. I need pressure now—give me your sweater.”

As a trained medic, Scarlett understood at once. Without hesitation, she stripped off her coat, then pulled her knit sweater over her head, leaving only a thin tank top underneath.

She ignored the chill. Folding the sweater into a thick pad, she passed it to Nolan.

He took it and pressed firmly against the bleeding site on Ruth’s leg.

“Keep pressure here,” he told Scarlett. “Check for any other bleeding points.”

Scarlett moved to help, but Damian suddenly caught her wrist.

She turned back to him. “I’m scared,” he whispered, his voice ragged.

Her heart ached anew. She placed her free hand over his. “Nolan’s here. I’m here too. We’ll do everything we can.”

After a moment, Damian released his grip.

Scarlett, now in only her thin top, carefully examined Ruth’s torso and arms.

“No other major bleeds,” she reported.

Nolan kept pressure on the wound, sweat beading on his forehead, his hands stained dark red. “Monitor her pulse and breathing. Ambulance is on the way.”

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Chapter 372 Accident on the Bridge

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Finished

Scarlett nodded. “Understood.”

Damian watched his mother lying motionless on the cold pavement, her face growing paler by the second. A deep, cold dread settled in his chest.

Ruth had raised him mostly alone. He'd learned early that his father was good for little—a man who drank, gambled, and wandered in and out of their lives.

But through it all, Ruth had never wavered. She'd been his constant, his safety.

There were two women who mattered deeply to Damian—Ruth, who gave him life and love, and Scarlett, who'd once saved it.

That day years ago hadn't been so different from this one—a crash, chaos, and then Scarlett, still a med student at the time, kneeling in the wreckage to keep him alive.

From then on, she'd held a place in his heart no one else could touch.

And now here she was again, fighting to save the other most important woman in his world.

Damian's heart hammered violently against his ribs.

He noticed Scarlett's lips were bluish from the cold. Moving almost on instinct, he shrugged off his own coat and draped it carefully over her shoulders.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 373[820 words]

Chapter 373 A Mother's Life in the Balance

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Finished

Scarlett was focused on monitoring Ruth's pulse and breathing when she felt a sudden warmth settle over her shoulders. Instinctively, she glanced back.

Damian was looking right at her. His face was smeared with blood, obscuring his features, but his eyes—deep-set and intense—were unmistakably clear.

For a moment, Scarlett felt a strange sense of déjà vu.

Something about his face in that instant tugged at a distant memory.

But before she could grasp it, the ambulance arrived, speeding in from the opposite lane.

The EMTs quickly transferred Ruth onto a gurney and loaded her into the back of the vehicle.

With their immediate role over, Scarlett and Nolan didn't plan to follow to the hospital.

Yet as Damian climbed into the ambulance, he reached back and caught Scarlett's hand. "Come with me," he said, his voice raw. "Please."

She saw the plea in his eyes. Her mind hesitated, but her body had already decided—she placed her hand in his.

Damian pulled her gently but firmly inside.

Seeing this, Nolan stepped up and boarded the ambulance as well.

Damian shot him a dark look but said nothing.

At the hospital, Ruth was rushed into the emergency room for wound cleaning, hemorrhage control, and stabilization.

Two hours later, a doctor emerged.

Damian had been sitting on a bench in the waiting area, head resting against the wall, exhaustion and worry etched into his posture.

Scarlett had suggested he go

clean up,

but he'd refused.

Nolan, concerned for Scarlett, had stayed too.

The moment Damian heard the ER doors swing open, he pushed to his feet. “How is she?” he asked, his voice tense.

The doctor removed his surgical mask. “Thanks to the first-aid measures administered by Dr.

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Chapter 373 A Mother’s Life in the Balance

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Finished

Huntley and this young woman, the patient is stable. However, she lost a significant amount of blood and requires a transfusion. Our current supply of Type A blood is running low...”

“I’m Type A,” Scarlett said immediately. “I can donate.”

But Damian remembered—Scarlett had recently undergone a D&C procedure. His expression tightened. “Don’t take her blood,” he told the doctor firmly. “I’ll arrange a direct donation or a blood-bank exchange.”

Scarlett touched his arm. “Damian, it’s faster if I do it now. Going through the bank exchange will take time.”

He looked at her, his face stern. “You’ve done enough. I won’t let you go through more because of me.”

Scarlett frowned at him. “This is a matter of life and death, Damian. Don’t be like this.”

His tone left no room for argument. Then he turned to Nolan. “Make sure she stays here.”

With that, Damian strode off down the corridor.

Seeing his resolve, Scarlett didn’t press further.

Not long after he left, a nurse arrived with a unit of Type A blood that had been rushed from another hospital floor.

Scarlett considered calling Damian back, but Nolan stopped her. “Even with this, given her condition, she’ll likely need a second transfusion. Let him arrange the exchange—it’ll be needed soon enough.”

After a moment, Scarlett nodded. Nolan was right.

A short while later, Damian returned.

Scarlett saw him step out of the elevator. He looked utterly drained, his face pale.

He swayed slightly as he walked, and Scarlett moved quickly to support him. "Are you alright?" she asked.

Damian had just given a substantial donation. He'd pushed himself to walk back from the blood-draw station.

If he was going to collapse, he wanted it to be near her.

So the moment Scarlett took his arm, he let his weight lean into her.

She braced herself, holding him up.

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Damian rested heavily against her, then bent his head close to her ear. "Scarlett," he whispered, his voice faint and unsteady, "what am I going to do?"

Confused, she asked softly, "About what?"

He brushed his cheek lightly against her hair. "I think I'm falling for you even more."

Then his body went slack—he'd fainted.

Scarlett struggled under his full weight, unable to hold him up.

In a few quick strides, Nolan was beside them, catching Damian before he could fall.

With the help of nearby hospital staff, they got Damian into an observation bay in the ER.

After a brief exam, the doctor confirmed he'd passed out from acute weakness—a combination of stress, exhaustion, and the blood donation.

Scarlett knew it wasn't serious; he just needed rest.

Nolan stood quietly beside her, watching as Scarlett's eyes remained fixed on Damian, her expression lined with concern.

After a long moment, Nolan asked gently, "Are you still planning to go home tonight?"

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Scarlett considered the question seriously for a moment. She turned her gaze from Damian back to Nolan. "I'd like to stay," she said. "Make sure he's alright."

Nolan's brow creased slightly. "His family will be here soon. Besides, the hospital staff is right outside. He fainted from donating blood and the stress; it's not a critical condition."

Scarlett understood his logic, yet a quiet insistence held her firm. "I know," she replied. "But he was there for me before."

Recognizing her resolve, Nolan simply nodded. "Then I'll stay with you."

Scarlett frowned, looking at him with gentle concern. "Nolan, it's very late. You should go home and get some rest."

"I'm not leaving," he stated, his voice soft but unwavering. "I'd rather be here, knowing you're okay."

She tried to persuade him a few more times, but he remained steadfast. Eventually, she sighed and let the matter drop, accepting his silent companionship.

As they kept vigil, Nolan's phone buzzed insistently in his pocket.

He excused himself, stood up, and walked over to the window to take the call.

Scarlett couldn't hear the details from the other end, but she caught the low, strained tone of Nolan's voice. "I can't come in right now. You'll have to find someone else to cover it."

It was rare to hear Nolan sound so abrupt, almost sharp.

He ended the call, his expression tightening as he stared at his phone for a second. When he turned back, he found Scarlett watching him.

Their eyes met, and Nolan quickly smoothed his features into a calmer, more familiar smile.

Scarlett offered a small smile in return, then asked quietly, "Something urgent at the hospital?"

Nolan saw no point in hiding it. "They need me for an emergency craniotomy."

Her expression grew more concerned. "Shouldn't you go, then?"

If they were calling Nolan specifically, it meant the case was complex, beyond the scope of the surgeon on duty. If there had been any other choice, they wouldn't have phoned him.

Nolan slipped his phone back into his pocket but said nothing, his silence heavy with internal

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Chapter 374 Nolan's Silent Vigil

conflict.

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Finished

Scarlett could guess his struggle. He was staying out of worry for her, yet a part of him knew a patient needed his skills. The pull of duty was clearly warring with his personal feelings.

Afraid the weight of a potential regret would haunt him, she spoke gently but firmly, "Nolan, you really should go."

She knew his character. If a life was lost because he chose to stay, that burden would linger with him forever.

Even without her saying it, Nolan knew he would have to leave. His professionalism and conscience wouldn't allow otherwise. Still, his worry for her persisted.

"Come with me, then," he suggested, a hopeful note entering his voice. "Be my assistant for the procedure."

Scarlett gave a faint, apologetic shake of her head. "I can't. You go ahead. Don't let me delay the surgery."

Seeing she wouldn't be moved, Nolan's shoulders dropped slightly in disappointment. "I'll come back as soon as it's over," he promised.

Scarlett nodded. She walked him out to the elevator bank and waited until the doors closed before returning to the observation room.

When she stepped back inside, she found Damian stirring, half-awake.

Seeing a figure enter the dim room, he instinctively curled in on himself. "I'm cold," he murmured, his voice faint and shaky.

Hearing him, Scarlett hurried to the bedside.

She leaned over to pull the thin hospital blanket more snugly around him.

Just as she began to straighten up, Damian's arm shot out. His hand caught her wrist, and with a weak but surprising pull, he drew her down onto the narrow bed.

In one fluid motion, he turned and wrapped himself around her, his arms locking firmly around her waist, his hands clasping together against her stomach.

He nestled his chin against the top of her head. His next words were a raw, vulnerable whisper against her hair. "Forget about Vincent. Just... let me love you. Please?"

Scarlett stiffened, then tried to push gently against his hold. "Damian... we're from two different worlds," she said, her own voice tinged with helplessness.

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Chapter 374 Nolan's Silent Vigil

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He only held her tighter, his body a tense line against her back. “No,” he murmured into her ear, the word thick with emotion. “There’s no ‘we’. There’s just me. I’m yours. Whatever you need me to be.”

The intensity of his declaration made her struggle anew, but his grip, fueled by a desperate strength, held fast.

“Scarlett,” he whispered, and now his voice held a note of pure physical misery. “I’m so cold. Don’t go.”

She stilled. He was cold. A deep chill was seeping from his body into hers through the thin layers of their clothes. The blood donation had left him weak and likely hypothermic.

Damian felt her relent. Holding her seemed to siphon the last of his energy. Dizziness washed over him, but concentrating on the feel of her in his arms grounded him. A faint warmth began to seep back into his limbs.

For Scarlett, exhausted by the long, traumatic night and enveloped in his gradually warming embrace, a deep drowsiness became irresistible. Her breathing soon deepened and evened out into sleep.

Hearing the soft, rhythmic sound, Damian let out a quiet, weary sigh that was almost a laugh. Comforted by her presence, he too finally surrendered to sleep.

By the time Nolan finished the intricate, seven-hour brain surgery, the dark sky outside the operating room windows was softening to the deep indigo of pre-dawn.

His body ached with a profound numbness from standing motionless for so long. Yet, his first thought as he stripped off his surgical gown was of Scarlett.

After a quick scrub, he hailed a taxi and directed it back to the first hospital.

In the Emergency Department, he approached the nurse’s station. The nurse on duty confirmed with a tired smile that, yes, the young woman was still in the emergency observation

room.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 375[933 words]

Chapter 375 A Bedside Discovery

So he made his way down the quiet hallway.

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Finished

The door to the observation room was slightly ajar, and a strip of bright light fell across the floor.

Just as Nolan reached to push it open, his hand stilled.

Through the narrow gap, he saw them. Scarlett and Damian, sharing the single narrow hospital bed.

The bed was so small, yet Damian had curled himself around her, his larger frame enveloping hers completely. In sleep, Scarlett looked utterly small, her form entirely surrounded by his.

She seemed less like a separate person and more like an extension of him, nestled against his chest.

The hand Nolan had extended slowly fell back to his side.

A hot, tight feeling rose behind his eyes. He took a single step back from the doorway, then another, finally turning away.

Scarlett woke in the early morning, roused by a suffocating heat.

She felt damp with sweat and, in her disorientation, suddenly became aware of the solid weight of an arm around her, the press of a body against her back.

Damian was holding her tightly, his embrace so close it felt difficult to breathe.

Gently, she eased his arm away and slipped out from the bed.

Standing beside it, the events of the night rushed back. Nolan had said he would return after his surgery.

So much time had passed. He hadn't come back.

A thread of worry pulled at her. She decided to step out and try calling him.

But as she opened the door, she found him right there, sitting on a bench in the hushed corridor.

He looked utterly spent. His eyes were red-rimmed, dark shadows bruised the skin beneath them, and a faint stubble dusted his jaw, making him appear years older and wearier.

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"Nolan?" Scarlett's voice was a soft gasp of surprise. "Have you... have you been here all night?"

He looked up at her, and in his gaze was a quiet, profound sorrow. "Yes," he replied, his voice barely above a whisper.

Seeing his devastated state, her first thought was for his patient. "The surgery... Was it not successful?"

Nolan shook his head slowly. "No. It was. Very successful."

Scarlett was confused. "Are you hungry?" she asked, the most basic concern surfacing.

He gave a small, tired nod. "Yes."

"Should we... go get some breakfast, then?"

"Yes."

His terse, one-word answers were unnerving. “Nolan,” she said, her voice gentle with concern, “what’s wrong?”

He lifted his eyes to meet hers again. In their dark depths was a vulnerable, almost desperate hope. He studied her face intently, as if trying to memorize it.

“If it were me who had fainted,” he asked, the words raw, “would you have held me like you held him?”

Scarlett blinked, taken aback. “What?”

Before she could process the question, Nolan’s eyes fluttered closed. His body slumped forward, collapsing toward her.

Scarlett lunged, barely managing to catch him, cradling his head against her shoulder. “Doctor!” she cried out, her voice sharp with alarm. “Someone, help!”

After the doctors came and ran their tests, they gave Scarlett the diagnosis. “It’s not serious,” one assured her. “Severe fatigue, missed meals–his blood sugar bottomed out. He just needs rest and food.”

Scarlett nodded, relief washing over her. “I understand.”

When Nolan awoke, the first thing he registered was the silence and the empty space beside his bed.

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Chapter 375 A Bedside Discovery

Scarlett wasn’t there.

In that moment, a sharp, needle-like pain lanced through his chest, followed by a dull, spreading ache.

When Damian was unwell, she had stayed by his side, even shared his bed.

But for him, had she not even waited until he woke up?

The thought cut through him with a brutal clarity.

Finished

Pushing himself up on weak arms, he swung his legs over the side of the bed. He was halfway to the door when it opened.

Scarlett walked in, her hands full—a paper bag smelling of warm food and a smaller bag holding fresh fruit.

Seeing her, a smile broke through the cloud on Nolan's face instantly.

"Nolan!" Scarlett hurried toward him, her expression worried. "You shouldn't be up."

Before she could even set the bags down, Nolan stepped forward and pulled her into a tight embrace.

His voice was rough and thick against her hair. "I know they both matter more," he whispered, the confession spilling out. "I know that. I just... I just need a little corner in your heart. That's all. Just a small corner."

Scarlett stood rigid in his arms, a pang of profound guilt and sorrow hitting her. "Nolan," she said softly, "you are an exceptional man. You deserve to find someone who will love you completely, with their whole heart."

Nolan didn't respond to that. Instead, he gently released her, his eyes dropping to the bags in her hands. He forced a lightness into his tone. "Is that breakfast for me?"

Scarlett understood he was changing the subject, retreating from the painful vulnerability. She let him. "Yes," she said simply.

A fragile smile touched his lips. "Let me have some then. I'm starving." He reached out and took the warm bag from her hands.

In another room, Damian stirred awake.

His first conscious action was to reach out, his hand searching the space beside him in the bed.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 376[901 words]

Chapter 376 A Sudden School Emergency

Scarlett was already gone.

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Finished

With no idea where she might be, Damian shoved his feet into the disposable hospital slippers and walked out into the hallway.

He wandered, looking for her, and his steps eventually brought him to the doorway of an outpatient infusion room.

The door stood slightly open. From inside, he heard voices—Scarlett’s and Nolan’s.

Nolan was saying, “Scarlett, try a bit of this oatmeal. It’s good.”

Scarlett replied, “It’s okay, Nolan. I’m not hungry.”

“Just a spoonful? Here, let me.”

Scarlett seemed about to refuse again, but before any words came out, the infusion room door was kicked inward with a sharp bang.

Startled, Scarlett turned. Damian stood framed in the doorway, backlit by the hall lights so his face was in shadow.

But she didn’t need to see his expression to feel the anger rolling off him in waves.

A second later, he was striding toward her.

As he moved into the light, his face became clear—and the rage etched there was unmistakable.

Scarlett didn’t even have time to speak before Damian snapped, his voice low and dangerous. “You’re something else, Scarlett. Playing the field with three different men?”

Scarlett’s brows drew together. “I am not. Stop making things up.”

Seeing her denial, Damian's gaze dropped pointedly to her hand. "Then what's this? Why are you holding another man's hand?"

Scarlett looked down.

Nolan was, indeed, holding her hand.

As if challenged by Damian's attention, Nolan's grip tightened. He looked up, meeting Damian's glare squarely. "You're not the only one with feelings for her. I'm here, too."

Hearing Nolan's bold declaration, Damian scoffed, the sound harsh. "You don't get to have

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feelings for her."

"Why not?" Nolan shot back, not backing down.

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"Because I knew her first," Damian said, the words gritted out. "And because she promised she'd

But before he could finish, the door was pushed open again, this time by a young nurse who looked harried.

"Mr. Langley," she said urgently, "Mrs. Ruth Langley is awake. She's asking for you."

At the news that his mother was conscious, Damian's argument with Nolan was instantly forgotten. With one last, searing glance at Scarlett, he turned and hurried out of the room.

Scarlett watched him go, a strange sense of relief washing over her. If he had stayed any longer, she dreaded what else might have been said.

She gently extracted her hand from Nolan's, took a small step back, and said, "Nolan, I should go home."

Nolan stood. "I'll drive you."

Instinctively, Scarlett resisted. “You need to rest. I can take a cab.”

But Nolan was insistent. “I won’t be able to rest if I’m worrying about you getting home safe. Please.”

Hearing the quiet determination in his voice, Scarlett relented. If she refused, he’d likely just follow her anyway.

Nolan drove her back to Theron Manor in silence and left without another word once she was at the door.

Scarlett was grateful for the quiet.

Back inside, the house was still. Only the staff was around. A deep, bone-weary exhaustion settled over her, and she went straight upstairs.

After a hot shower, she collapsed into bed, hoping for a few hours of solid sleep.

She had just begun to drift off when her phone rang on the nightstand.

Without even looking at the caller ID, she fumbled for it and answered, her voice rough with sleep. “Hello?”

Clara’s panicked voice came through the line. “Auntie! It’s Vanessa! She fell at preschool! She’s

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Chapter 376 A Sudden School Emergency

awake but... she says she can’t stand up!”

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All drowsiness vanished. Scarlett was instantly awake, throwing back the covers and sitting bolt upright.

She dressed in a frenzy and drove toward the preschool, her heart hammering against her ribs.

When she arrived, a cluster of children near the gate pointed and called out, “Vanessa’s mom is here!”

Scarlett didn't stop to explain or correct them. She hurried straight inside.

The children in the hallway parted to let her through.

Vanessa wasn't unconscious. She was lying on a mat in the nurse's office, crying hard—loud, scared sobs that tore at Scarlett's heart. Several teachers stood nearby, looking anxious, not daring to move her.

Without a second thought for her own recent surgery and the physical strain, Scarlett knelt and carefully gathered Vanessa into her arms. Holding her close, she strode back out of the building.

In the back of the taxi, Scarlett kept up a steady stream of quiet questions, her professional training warring with maternal fear. She gently squeezed Vanessa's small fingers. "Does this hurt, sweetie? Can you feel me touching your toes?"

Vanessa, nestled against her, continued to cry, her small body shaking. She shook her head. "It doesn't hurt... It feels tingly and sleepy."

Even through her tears, she was trying to answer her mother's questions.

The word "tingly" sent a fresh wave of alarm through Scarlett. "Driver, please, as fast as you can," she said, her voice tight.

Vanessa burrowed her face into Scarlett's neck, her cries softening to whimpers. "Mommy," she mumbled, "my tummy hurts. And my head hurts, too."

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Finished

Hearing her daughter's complaints, Scarlett felt a fresh wave of helpless anxiety.

Soon, the taxi pulled up at the hospital entrance. Scarlett, with Vanessa still clutched in her arms, rushed inside, barely pausing to throw cash at the driver before hurrying straight to the Emergency Department.

As a pediatric surgeon herself, when the nurses wheeled Vanessa into a trauma bay, Scarlett followed right in.

A series of examinations and X-rays followed. The results came back clear—no broken bones, no visible trauma.

Fearful of missing something subtle, Scarlett asked the nurses to run a full blood panel and check Vanessa's vitals.

All the tests came back normal.

Vanessa, listening to the doctors talk, kept up her complaints. "Mommy, my tummy really hurts. And my head is pounding."

Scarlett turned to look at her daughter on the gurney. Vanessa's cheeks were pink, her eyes wide and alert. She didn't look like a child in distress at all.

In that moment, putting the pieces together, a suspicion dawned on Scarlett. Vanessa was putting on an act.

Playing along, Scarlett put on a grave face and addressed the ER physician. "Well, if all the scans are clear, I suppose we'll need to proceed with a more invasive exploratory procedure."

The doctor looked puzzled. "What did you have in mind?"

"An exploratory laparotomy," Scarlett said, her tone deliberately clinical. "We'll have to open the abdominal cavity to visually locate the source of the pain. It's the only way to be certain."

Before the doctor could express his surprise, Vanessa bolted upright. "No! Mommy, I want to go home! Now!"

That reaction confirmed it for Scarlett. She turned back to the medical staff, her expression softening into one of embarrassed apology. "I'm so sorry for the trouble. Please, give us a moment alone."

The doctors and nurses filed out, leaving mother and daughter in the quiet, sterile room.

Once the door clicked shut, Scarlett's posture changed. She looked directly at Vanessa, her voice

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Chapter 377 Vanessa's Painful Deception.

low but firm. "Why the act, Vanessa? Why the lies?"

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Vanessa, seeing she'd been caught, dropped the pretense. Her face scrunched into a defiant scowl. "It's none of your business."

The hostility in her tone took Scarlett aback, but she pressed on. "Did something happen at school? Were you fighting with another child again?"

Vanessa jutted out her lower lip. "No."

"Then who was spitting at people?" Scarlett asked, her voice rising slightly. "And who was calling other kids bastards?"

"You're so annoying," Vanessa shot back, her voice dripping with disdain. "Just stop."

Scarlett felt her patience snap. "Right now," she said through gritted teeth, "I have half a mind to put you over my knee."

Vanessa didn't flinch. Instead, she leaned forward, almost taunting. "So do it then."

She even tilted her head, presenting her cheek. "Go on! Hit me!"

Seeing such brazen defiance, Scarlett's hand moved before she could fully think—a sharp, stinging slap across Vanessa's cheek. The sound echoed in the quiet room.

Vanessa froze, stunned. Then, as the shock wore off, a loud, wounded wail burst from her. "Waaah!"

Simultaneously, her small fist shot out and struck Scarlett hard in the abdomen. "You're a bad mommy! A bad, mean mommy!"

The blow was sudden. Scarlett initially just registered the impact.

A second later, a sharp, nauseating pain bloomed deep in her core, stealing her breath. She couldn't suppress a pained gasp.

Hearing the sound, Vanessa stared blankly for a second.

But seeing the genuine pain on Scarlett's face seemed to please her. Her tears stopped abruptly, replaced by a cold, hard glare. "I wish you were dead."

A chill ran down Scarlett's spine. "Who taught you to say something like that?" she demanded sharply.

Vanessa pointed a trembling finger right at her. "You did! You taught me!"

Blind anger surged through Scarlett. Her hand rose again.

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This time, Vanessa was ready. She ducked nimbly out of reach.

Scarlett, having thrown her weight into the swing that didn't connect, stumbled forward off-balance.

The edge of the hard hospital gurney caught her squarely in the same tender spot Vanessa had

hit.

She straightened up slowly, already breaking out in a cold sweat from the pain.

Vanessa watched, not a trace of remorse in her eyes. Instead, she climbed to her knees on the bed, drew her foot back, and kicked out-aiming once more for Scarlett's stomach.

The connection was weak but precise. Scarlett doubled over, a wave of weakness threatening to buckle her knees.

At that exact moment, the door to the trauma bay swung open.

Before Scarlett could even see who it was, Vanessa scrambled off the bed and flew across the room, throwing herself into the newcomer's arms.

Vincent caught her, lifting her up. Vanessa immediately framed his face with her hands, her voice a masterpiece of wounded innocence. "Daddy! The bad mommy hit me!"

Vincent's gaze shifted from his daughter's tear-streaked face to Scarlett, who was still hunched over, pale and breathing heavily.

After a heavy pause, his voice was flat. “Why would you hit her?”

The question, so devoid of context, sparked a bitter laugh from Scarlett. “I’m starting to regret ever having her.”

The “her” was unmistakably Vanessa.

Vincent heard the bitterness. “What’s the point of saying things like that?” he asked, his voice low and controlled.

His calm demeanor only stoked Scarlett’s fury. “If I had known my own daughter would turn out like this,” she said, her voice rising, “I would have done anything to avoid bringing such a cruel, spiteful child into this world!”

The words were harsh, cutting. Vincent’s frown deepened. “That’s enough. She’s just a child.”

Seeing him immediately take Vanessa’s side, shielding her from any consequence, Scarlett could only shake her head, a sarcastic, weary smile touching her lips. “You keep protecting her like this, Vincent.,One day, you’re going to live to regret it.”

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Awakened Housewife: Ignore Betrayer’s Begs

Chapter 378 Waking in Damian’s Care

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 378[876 words]

Chapter 378 Waking in Damian’s Care

62

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Vincent seemed unmoved. “You’re the one who should feel regret,” he said flatly.

With that, he adjusted Vanessa in his arms and turned to leave.

Scarlett stood rooted to the spot, a wave of pain and dizziness washing over her so intensely her vision swam. Her legs gave way, and she crumpled to the cold linoleum floor.

Vanessa, peering over Vincent’s shoulder, saw the whole thing happen.

Vincent heard the soft thud and instinctively began to turn his head. But Vanessa suddenly piped up, her voice bright and distracting, “Daddy, can we get ice cream later?”

Vincent’s attention snapped back to his daughter. “Of course,” he said gently, his voice softening. “Anything you want.”

Out of the corner of her eye, fading into darkness, Scarlett watched their silhouettes disappear through the doorway. It felt as if her heart were being shredded.

Once, these two people had been her entire world.

Now, they were the source of her deepest hurt.

Lying on the unforgiving floor, a dark, weary thought whispered that maybe it would be easier not to get up at all.

She fell into a long, troubled dream. In it, Vincent and Vanessa were searching for her, their faces etched with remorse.

Vincent pleaded, “I was wrong. Please, just forgive me this once. From now on, you’ll be the only one.”

Vanessa cried, “Mommy, I’m sorry! I’ll be good, I promise! I’ll listen to everything you say!”

But dreams, however poignant, must end. Scarlett fought her way back to consciousness.

The first things she registered were the stark white ceiling tiles and the steady, electronic beep of a heart monitor.

Then, a figure leaned into her field of view.

Scarlett turned her head slowly. It was Damian.

He was watching her with naked concern. When he spoke, his voice was rough. “You’re awake.”

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Chapter 378 Waking in Damian's Care

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Confusion clouded her thoughts. "How... how did I get here?"

A small, relieved smile touched Damian's lips. "I carried you."

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Scarlett frowned, a flicker of her old spirit returning. "Who asked you to do that? What if you'd hurt yourself again?" The words were out before she could think.

Immediately, she regretted them. Why did she say something that sounded so... caring?

But Damian's smile widened into a full grin. "Are you worried about me, Scarlett?"

Flustered, Scarlett looked away, focusing on the window. "I need to get home."

Damian's expression softened. "Scarlett," he said, his voice low and sincere, "from now on, wherever I am, that can be your home."

A flush crept up Scarlett's neck. Just then, a soft, deliberate cough came from elsewhere in the

room.

The sound made Scarlett start.

She turned her head further and saw Ruth propped up in the other hospital bed, watching them with an amused, warm smile.

"Well, hello there," Ruth said, her voice still a bit weak but cheerful. "I'm Damian's mother, Ruth."

Scarlett's nerves returned. "Hello, Mrs. Langley."

"Oh, just Ruth is fine," she said, her eyes twinkling as she looked Scarlett over. "My goodness, you're even prettier than he said. What a lovely girl."

Scarlett wasn't used to such open, generous praise. It was unexpectedly disarming.

Still, what woman didn't appreciate a kind word? A faint, genuine smile touched Scarlett's lips. "Thank you."

Ruth waved a dismissive hand. "No need for thanks. And no need for such formality either. We'll be family soon enough."

Scarlett, thoroughly flustered now, shot a look at Damian.

Seeing her glance, Damian shrugged, playing innocent. "I may have mentioned you. Just in passing."

Scarlett glared at him, but he just kept smiling, unfazed.

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Ruth, meanwhile, was happily running ahead. "So, you two make a perfect pair. Have you set a date yet?"

A faint, proud smile still on his face, Damian deferred. "Whatever you think is best, Mom."

Panicked, Scarlett quickly interjected, "Mrs. Langley-Ruth-actually, I'm still..."

She wanted to explain the truth-that she wasn't free, that a divorce wasn't final.

But Ruth cut her off with cheerful determination. "Here, give me your phone-I'll transfer you some money for a proper welcome."

Damian nodded in enthusiastic agreement. "Sounds perfect to me."

Scarlett felt the situation slipping wildly out of control. She needed an exit.

"I really should be going," she said, hurriedly pushing the hospital blanket aside. "My... my brother is expecting me for dinner."

“Nonsense, don’t go alone,” Ruth insisted, then winked pointedly at her son. “This big lump will see you home. Won’t you, Damian?”

Catching the cue, Damian was already on his feet, taking Scarlett’s hand. “I’ll take you.”

Scarlett opened her mouth to refuse, but thought better of it. Arguing seemed futile.

Seeing her acquiesce, Ruth beamed. “You two have a nice time,” she said, her tone brimming with hope. “And Damian, honey, no need to rush back here to keep me company tonight. You just... make sure she gets home safely.” The implication in her voice was clear and utterly unsubtle.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 379[908 words]

Awakened Housewife: Ignore Betrayer’s Begs

Chapter 379 A Chilling Truth Revealed

Damian didn’t argue. He simply followed Scarlett out in silence.

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When they reached the hospital entrance, Scarlett suddenly stopped and turned to him. “You should go on your way. I’ll be fine.”

Damian understood she was asking him to leave, but he shook his head. “I’m worried about you. I’ll see you home.”

Her face was still pale. “Really, I’m okay.”

“I spoke to the doctor while you were resting,” Damian said, his voice dropping. “He said you’re hemorrhaging again.”

Scarlett was quiet for a moment. “It’s... it’s manageable. Please, don’t worry about me.”

His concern only seemed to deepen. He stepped closer, taking her hands in his and fixing her with an intent gaze. “Tell me the truth, Scarlett. Did someone hurt you again?”

Scarlett shook her head, a bitter twist to her mouth. “No. No one.”

But Damian saw the lingering redness around her eyes. He gripped her shoulders gently. “Scarlett,” he urged, his voice firm yet soft. “Tell me what really happened.”

As he spoke, he gave her a slight, insistent shake.

The motion made Scarlett’s head swim, a wave of nausea rising. When she steadied herself, he looked ready to ask again.

She finally relented. “Alright, alright. I’ll tell you.”

Damian released her shoulders, waiting.

Scarlett met his eyes. “It was Vanessa,” she said quietly. “She kicked me.”

Damian went very still.

After a long moment, he let out a slow, heavy sigh. “Anyone else, and I’d know what to do. But she’s your daughter. I don’t know how to fix that.”

Scarlett understood his meaning—the helplessness of it. She didn’t press the point.

With Damian insisting, Scarlett didn’t refuse his offer to drive her home again.

He dropped her off at the gates of Theron Manor and drove away without coming inside.

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Chapter 379 A Chilling Truth Revealed

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Back at the house, Nathan and the others were out. Only the household staff moved quietly through the rooms.

Scarlett went straight upstairs to her room. She ran a hot bath.

Afterwards, she collapsed into bed and fell into a deep, exhausted sleep.

She woke to a soft knock on her door. One of the housekeepers called through gently, “Ms. Theron? You have a visitor downstairs.”

Still groggy, Scarlett replied, “Thank you. I’ll be right down.”

After a quick splash of water on her face, she headed downstairs.

She expected it to be a relative or a family friend, but was surprised to see Lucy standing in the foyer.

It had been quite a while since she’d last seen her.

Hearing the footsteps on the stairs, Lucy turned quickly, a warm smile spreading across her face. “Scarlett!”

Seeing that smile, Scarlett’s first, instinctive thought was of what Luke had claimed about Lucy’s health. But Lucy looked genuinely well-happy and full of energy.

Pushing the dark thought aside, Scarlett managed a faint smile of her own. “Lucy. This is a surprise. What brings you here?”

Members of the Stewart family rarely visited Theron Manor. Some, she suspected, had never set foot in it at all. It had been years since anyone from Vincent’s side had come by.

Lucy stepped forward and took Scarlett’s hands. “Scarlett, Grandpa sent me. He’d like you to come to dinner at Ravensshade Villa tonight.”

At the mention of Xavier’s invitation, the smile vanished from Scarlett’s face, replaced by a guarded coolness. “No,” she said, her voice firm. “I’m... I have plans tonight. I can’t make it.”

Lucy looked puzzled, her brow furrowing. “But Scarlett, Grandpa specifically asked me to come and get you.”

Scarlett knew Lucy wasn’t aware of the underlying tensions. She didn’t want to explain, to drag her into it. “I’m not feeling very well today,” she said, falling back on the partial truth. “Another time.”

She had fainted right in front of Xavier that day. He must have known about the procedure, about the loss.

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Yet during her entire hospital stay, he had never once come to see her.

He had always shown her kindness before, but since that incident, there had been only silence.

Scarlett could guess the reason. No matter how fond Xavier might have been of her, his last name was Stewart. His ultimate loyalties lay with his family's name and legacy.

She understood that now, with a painful clarity.

Lucy, unaware of this rift, tried again lightly. "Please? Consider it my celebration—for being back on my feet."

Scarlett's expression softened momentarily. "Lucy, seeing you healthy and standing here truly makes me happy. But I can't come for dinner. Please don't ask again."

Hearing the finality in her tone, Lucy realized it was pointless to push further. Her shoulders slumped slightly. "Alright," she said, resigned. "I understand."

That evening, when Lucy returned alone to Ravensshade Villa, a lavish dinner was already laid out in the dining room, prepared by Lily.

Xavier was sitting in his favorite armchair in the living room. The sound of a car pulling up made him instinctively straighten his posture, adopting a more formal air.

But when Lucy walked through the front door, she was alone. No one else followed behind her.

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No Second Baby, No You, Only Divorce - Silent Dreams Never Die — 380[910 words]

Awakened Housewife: Ignore Betrayer's Begs

Chapter 380 Poisonous Words at the Dinner Table

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Seeing Lucy alone, Xavier's expectant smile faltered. "Where's Scarlett?" he asked, unable to mask his disappointment. "Why didn't she come back with you?"

Lucy didn't see any reason to hide the truth. "Scarlett... wasn't feeling up to it. I didn't want to push her."

This only seemed to irritate Xavier further. "She's in a bad mood?" he muttered dismissively.

Hearing the clear disapproval in his tone, Lucy asked, "Grandpa, what's going on? Did something happen?"

Xavier, his frustration mounting, was about to snap a reply when Vincent's calm, measured voice cut through from the hallway. "We should start dinner before everything gets cold."

The interruption forced Xavier to swallow his words, though his displeasure remained evident.

Once seated at the dining table, he couldn't help but grumble under his breath, "If I'd known she'd turn out like this, I never would have welcomed her into the family."

Lucy was now thoroughly confused. Instead of pressing Xavier, she turned to her brother and whispered, "Vincent, what is Grandpa talking about?"

Vincent didn't answer directly. He simply said in a low voice, "Just eat, Lucy."

As Lucy murmured an acknowledgment, Vanessa came pattering down the stairs.

She was dressed in soft pink pajamas, her hair loose around her shoulders. When she smiled, two shallow dimples appeared in her cheeks.

Lucy's heart melted at the sight of her little niece. "Come sit by me, sweetie," she said warmly.

After Vanessa settled into a chair next to Vincent, Lucy scooted her own chair closer. She then picked up the serving tongs and placed a honey-glazed spare rib on Vanessa's plate.

Reaching out, Lucy gently went to tousle the girl's hair.

But before her hand could make contact, Vanessa slapped it away, her face scrunching up. "Don't touch me!"

Lucy pulled back, surprised. "Vanessa, what's wrong?"

Vanessa stared back defiantly. "You're icky. I don't want you touching me, and I don't want food you touched."

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Before Lucy could even react, Vincent's stern voice intervened. "Vanessa. Where did you learn to say something like that?"

Vanessa looked up, reading the seriousness in her father's expression. Her confidence wavered. "It... it was Mommy," she stammered.

"That can't be right, Vanessa," Lucy said quickly, disbelief coloring her voice. "Are you sure you remember correctly?"

But Vanessa doubled down, her lower lip jutting out. "I'm sure! Mommy said it."

Lucy frowned, feeling both confused and hurt.

Vincent's own brow was furrowed, but he addressed his daughter in a controlled tone. "Lucy is perfectly healthy now. She isn't sick."

Vanessa looked between the adults, her expression one of feigned confusion. “Oh,” she said simply.

Yet, throughout the meal, she quietly pushed the spare rib Lucy had given her to the very edge of her plate, refusing to eat it.

Lucy noticed the small, deliberate rejection. It stung more than she wanted to admit.

The rest of the dinner passed in a strained, heavy silence.

Afterward, Vanessa scampered back upstairs.

Once she was gone, Lucy turned to her brother. “Vincent, can we talk? Outside.”

Without waiting for an answer, she walked out through the doors to the patio.

Vincent followed a moment later, his posture stiff.

In the chilly evening air, Lucy faced him. “Who do you really think taught her to say those things?”

Vincent’s expression was cold. “She said it was Scarlett.”

“And you believe that?” Lucy asked, her voice rising with frustration. “Vincent, your wife isn’t capable of that.”

A sardonic smile touched Vincent’s lips. “Really? How well do you actually know her?”

“Well enough to know she wouldn’t poison a child against her own family!” Lucy insisted.

After a tense pause, Vincent’s voice grew rough. “Then who was it, Lucy? Me? Our mother? Our

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father? Grandpa? Pick one.”

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“What if she overheard the staff gossiping?” Lucy countered desperately.

“We’ve never discussed your condition with the staff. Not once,” Vincent stated flatly.

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Lucy felt a wave of exhaustion. Defending Scarlett to her stubborn brother felt futile. “I don’t care what you think,” she said finally, her shoulders slumping. “I believe her.”

“Believe whatever you want,” Vincent replied, his tone final. He turned and walked back into the warmly lit house, leaving her standing in the cold.

Lucy stood there for a long minute, the winter wind biting through her clothes. The chill she felt had little to do with the temperature.

She had argued so passionately for Scarlett, and for what? Vincent’s mind was as unmovable as

stone.

Upstairs, Vincent entered Vanessa’s bedroom after stopping in the kitchen to heat a glass of milk.

Vanessa was curled up in bed, playing a game on her tablet. She looked up as he entered. “Daddy, will you stay with me tonight?”

Vincent considered for a moment, then nodded. “I can. But first, you need to answer a question for me honestly.”

Vanessa’s eyes widened with a mix of curiosity and caution. “Okay...”

Vincent handed her the warm mug. “At dinner,” he began, his voice calm but intent, “who really told you *to* say those things about Aunt Lucy?”

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