

Divorced Me 1041

Chapter 1041

One of Jolie's long, slender legs was exposed to the cool air, and Gavin's fingers instinctively tightened, as if they could still feel the smoothness of her thigh under his grip.

His gaze darkened, though his expression only grew colder. His sharp, chiseled features gave him a distant, unapproachable aura-a man who seldom smiled and whose demeanor warned others to stay away. He was cold, almost like an ice block.

"Debt's owed," he said flatly, tossing out the two words before sitting on the sofa and picking up the phone to make a call.

Jolie blinked in surprise, processing what he said.

Debt owed?

Was that something you could even keep on hold?

But thinking about it, he probably didn't need anything right now. So, if he wanted to leave the debt hanging, so be it.

Stretching lazily, Jolie sat up and said, "Have someone bring me a change of clothes."

With that, she pulled the blanket aside, slowly rising from the bed despite the discomfort between her legs and headed toward the bathroom.

Gavin's eyes trailed after her, lingering on her body-perfect proportions, a slender waist, curvy hips, and long legs. Her pale skin was marked everywhere with evidence of their encounter, bruises, and faint imprints of his touch... Initially, he had planned to stop after helping her through the drug's effects, but once he'd started, restraint had become harder than expected. When she had finally come to her senses and asked him to stop, he should've done so. Yet in that moment, he hadn't cared. He hadn't wanted to listen.

When the bathroom door clicked shut, Gavin snapped out of his thoughts and turned his attention away.

Inside the bathroom, Jolie stared at herself in the mirror, momentarily stunned by what she saw.

"Is this even possible?"

Her neck, collarbone, and chest-anywhere she could see were covered in marks.

"Was he stamping his name all over me?"

It was everywhere!

"This is absolutely infuriating!"

Jolie, clearly annoyed, pulled her gaze from the mirror and began her shower. Unfortunately, there were no spare towels in the bathroom, so after her shower, she was left with no choice but to walk out as she was, bare-skinned.

Gavin, already dressed in a crisp suit, was in the process of buttoning his shirt, just as she stepped out. His chest was still on display, the subtle curve of his pectoral muscles

leading down to the faint outline of his abs.

On the bed, a set of clothes had been laid out.

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Jolie picked them up, inspecting them with a smirk. "He got my size just right-how precise."

Ignoring the way his dark gaze briefly lingered on her, Jolie slipped into the clothes and then casually tossed her hair over her shoulder. She walked to the mirror, pulling out her makeup kit from her purse to touch up her appearance. Thankfully, she had her foundation and concealer with her, enough to cover the marks on her neck.

Meanwhile, Gavin, now fully dressed, couldn't help but glance at her as she touched up her makeup. At first, he thought she looked somewhat like Selena, but now, watching her, he realized they were entirely different. Selena was lively and vibrant, like a bold, beautiful red rose-striking and impossible to ignore.

Jolie, on the other hand, exuded a certain laid-back, indifferent charm. She was beautiful, but there was an ethereal, distant quality to her as if nothing truly mattered to her and nothing could fully capture her attention. Without another glance, Gavin coolly turned and left the room.

As he stepped into the hallway, he immediately spotted Gernard standing not far away, grinning at him.

Gernard checked his watch, then chuckled. "I've been keeping track of the time. Two hours, exactly two hours. Brother, you really surprised me quiet for so long, then suddenly making a move like this." Who would've thought the Cooper family's cold, meticulous heir would be the type to indulge in a one-night stand in his own home?

Chapter 1042

"Got too much free time on your hands?" Gavin's cold gaze fixed on Gernard.

Unbothered, Gernard strolled over and patted his brother's shoulder, grinning. "So, what's your plan now? I got a little bored and did some digging on the Quin family. Guess what? Turns out they're Selena's birth family. She left them ages ago to make it on her own, but the girl you were with? That's Jolie Quin, the pampered princess of the family."

With a knowing smirk, Gernard added, "Brother, I couldn't help but notice Jolie and Selena do look a bit alike. Could that be why you...?"

"Get lost," Gavin cut him off, not in the mood for Gernard's teasing. He brushed past him, heading downstairs.

Of course, that only fueled Gernard's enthusiasm. "Hey, don't walk away! I haven't finished my gossip yet!" he called after him, but the conversation came to an abrupt end as they reached the main floor, where the guests were still gathered for the celebration.

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Aveline noticed Selena seemed a bit distracted and asked, "What's on your mind?"

Selena blinked, coming back to the moment, and glanced at her before replying after a brief pause, "Jolie is here too."

"Who?" Aveline was unfamiliar with the name at first.

With a sigh, Selena clarified, "My sister."

Aveline thought back for a moment and remembered. Selena had a twin sister, one who had always been the favored child. Despite being twins, their lives had been drastically different. "Did she come looking for you?" Aveline asked.

Selena shook her head. "No, I think the Quins were invited because they've made some achievements in Larbor City. The Coopers probably sent them an invitation."

"And what do you plan to do?" Aveline pressed gently.

Selena shook her head again. "I don't plan on doing anything. That's not my family, and I don't belong there."

She hadn't even told Aaron about her connection to the Quin family. To her, that place had never been home.

Aveline thought for a moment and then said, "Just follow what feels right for you. Your happiness is what matters most."

"Yeah," Selena nodded, though her mind seemed elsewhere, her hands absently playing with Pax and Joyet was clear she was distracted, but Aveline couldn't tell if it was because of Jolie attending the celebration or something else entirely.

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Jolie stepped out of the room, glancing around briefly but noticing Gavin was nowhere to be seen. Shrugging, she didn't dwell on it and headed outside. She had delivered her gift; it was time

to leave. However, as soon as she stepped out the door, she spotted Selena standing nearby, looking lost in thought.

"Waiting for me?" Jolie teased with a smirk as she approached.

Selena turned at the sound of her voice, giving her a quick once-over. Seeing that Jolie seemed fine, she replied dryly, "Don't flatter yourself. I'm just out for some air."

"Alright then, take your time. I'm heading out," Jolie said with a casual nod and started walking past her.

After a few steps, though, she paused and added, "You should come home sometime. Mom and Dad miss you."

Selena's response was instant, a bitter laugh escaping her lips as she spun on her heel and walked away the tension clear in every step. Her relationship with their parents was something she had no desire to

Jolie watched her sister's retreating figure with a small frown before letting out a soft sigh and continuing on her way.

The celebration wrapped up

smoothly, and after all the guests had been seen off, Gernard hurried over to Aveline, an excited glint in his eyes. Hey, little sis, I've got some

juicy gossip to share with you!"

Chapter 1043

"What gossip?" Aveline's interest was instantly piqued, her eyes sparkling as she looked at Gernard.

Gernard leaned in conspiratorially, about to spill the juicy details. "It's about Brother. You won't believe what happened today..."

"Ahem!"

Before he could finish, Gavin appeared, clearing his throat just loud enough to interrupt. He grabbed Gernard's arm, pulling him away. "Let's talk about the company," he said, his tone leaving no room for argument. Gernard protested, "Brother, wait, I wasn't finished!"

Aveline, her curiosity fully ignited, took a couple of steps forward. "Hey bros, don't leave me hanging! Finish the story first!"

Without slowing down, Gavin replied, "He's headed to South Africa soon. Work comes first."

"South Africa?" Gernard's jaw dropped. "Wait, since when am I going to South Africa? I didn't hear about this! What's going on?"

Aveline stopped in her tracks, equally puzzled. "South Africa? Does the Cooper family even have projects there?"

Just then, Wilfried walked over, chuckling. "Aveline, haven't you figured it out yet? Gavin just doesn't want Gernard spilling the gossip." "Why not?" Aveline asked, confused.

With a grin, Wilfried replied, "Because the gossip is probably about Gavin himself."

Aveline's eyes widened in realization. "Ohhh, that's why! Now I'm dying to know what it is!"

Gavin had always been the calm, composed one, never involved in any scandals or gossip. The idea that there might be something juicy about him was almost unbelievable.

Bursting with curiosity, Aveline couldn't resist and immediately shared the news with Selena.

After hearing the story, Selena was quiet for a moment before saying, "I think I might know what it's about..."

"You do?" Aveline looked at her in surprise.

Selena, munching on an apple, nodded vaguely. "Yeah, I think so. It probably has something to do with Jolie."

Aveline's curiosity was instantly piqued. "Don't leave me hanging! Spill the details."

Suddenly, Wilfried popped over, chiming in, "Yes, yes, Selena, tell us everything." Startled, Selena nearly choked on her apple. "Mr. Wilfried, you scared me!"

Wilfried chuckled. "I'm just concerned about my eldest. He's almost thirty and still hasn't found someone. I see all of you getting married and having kids, and honestly, I'm envious. I want to be a

granddad already!"

Selena couldn't help but smile. "Well, I can't say for sure, but here's what I think happened..."

She then recounted the events-how Jolie had been drugged, and how she handed her over to Gavin for help.

"After that, I don't know what happened," she finished.

Aveline stroked her chin

thoughtfully. "Looks like brother didn't take Jolie to the hospital after all. And Gernard knows what really went down... interesting."

Selena paused for a moment, then asked, "So, are you saying something might've happened between Gavin and Jolie?" Aveline nodded. "It's very possible."

Selena fell silent, unsure how to react. After a beat, she simply turned away, "I'm going to check on Pax and Joy."

Wilfried, still mulling over the situation, finally said, "That Jolie is a good kid responsible and beautiful. If Gavin really did... take advantage of the situation, then we'll need to make sure we handle this properly."

Aveline quickly interjected, "Dad, let's give brother a chance to sort this out on his own first."

Wilfried frowned slightly. "But we can't just let it slide."

Aveline nodded. "I know, but maybe talk to him first. See where his head is at before we make any decisions."

Chapter 1044

"Hmm, you're right. I'll talk to your brother and see what he thinks," Wilfried said thoughtfully.

Aveline nodded and went on her way.

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In the study, Gernard sat on the sofa, a mischievous grin plastered on his face. "Brother, why didn't you let me finish? I was about to spill the best part."

Gavin ignored him and pulled out a document, handing it over. "Take a look at this. If everything's in order, you'll be leaving the day after tomorrow."

"What's this?" Gernard blinked, taking the file and flipping it open..

His eyes widened as he scanned the pages.

He shot up from his seat, staring at Gavin in disbelief. "Wait, you're serious? You're actually sending me to South Africa? Do people live there? When did we even expand into that region?" Gavin, seated in his leather chair, remained cold and composed. "Recently."

Gernard's face twisted in disbelief. After a long pause, he finally blurted out, "No way. I'm not going."

Gavin's gaze flickered over to him, calm but stern. "You don't have to go."

Gernard, sensing danger, immediately became wary. "If I don't go, who are you sending?"

"I'll go," Gavin said casually, "and you'll stay here to manage the Cooper family's affairs in Larbor City."

Gernard stared at him, dumbfounded. "Wait, so my options are either South Africa or taking over the entire Cooper business while you're gone?"

Gavin didn't respond, but his silence spoke volumes.

"Great," Gernard muttered, collapsing back onto the sofa. "South Africa or running the family business. Just great. Can't I just be left alone and live the quiet life of a happy slacker?" "Cooper family doesn't support freeloaders," Gavin said flatly, clearly aware of what his brother had been thinking.

Gernard sighed, utterly defeated. "You're giving me no choice."

Gavin glanced at him. "You don't have much time to decide."

Gernard let out a heavy sigh. "Fine, I'll go to South Africa."

He tucked the file under his arm and walked toward the study door. Just before leaving, he glanced back at Gavin with a smirk. "But before I go,

I'll

make

ake sure to spill the beans to sis about your little secret. Think you

silence me? No chance

With that, he slammed the door behind him.

Gavin's temple throbbed, the muscles in his jaw tightening as his expression grew even darker.

"There's no privacy in this family," he thought, his mind briefly flashing back to the memory of that slim figure.

His eyes narrowed in frustration, and he shook off the thought, turning to his computer to bury himself in work.

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As Gernard stepped out of the study, he was greeted by Wilfried walking up the stairs.

"Hey, Dad," Gernard greeted, ready to move along.

"Hold on," Wilfried said, stopping him..

"Huh?" Gernard paused, surprised. "What's up?"

Wilfried gave him a stern look. "Is what I've been hearing about your brother true?"

Gernard raised his eyebrows in mild shock. "You already know?"

Wilfried's expression darkened further. "So, it's true then. What's Gavin thinking?"

Gernard shrugged. "I don't know. You know how he is, always keeping things close to the chest. I've never

been able to figure out whatever

going

on in his head."

Wilfried frowned, his concern deepening. "That's always been his problem too closed off. No wonder he hasn't had any serious

relationships, let alone a girlfriend."

"Exactly," Gernard agreed. "But I think we should stay out of it this time, Dad. Gavin probably has his own plans."

Wilfried shook his head. "No, I'm still going to have a word with him."

Without further discussion, he marched over to the study and opened the door.

Watching his father disappear inside, Gernard decided not to intervene, simply turning and heading downstairs to leave.

Chapter 1045

"Got something on your mind, Dad?" Gavin asked, noticing Wilfried's serious expression as he entered the room. His own demeanor softened a bit.

Wilfried didn't waste time, sitting down heavily on the sofa with a stern look. "What are you planning to do about what happened today?"

Gavin froze for a moment, realizing that the whole situation had become an open secret within the family. His response was calm, though. "I don't have any specific plans."

At this, Wilfried's expression darkened even further. "That won't do. You've taken advantage of someone, so you need to take responsibility. I'll have someone look into that girl's background tomorrow, prepare the bride price, and we'll go make the proposal immediately." Gavin blinked, his typically composed expression faltering slightly. After a brief silence, he replied, "Dad, I'm willing to take responsibility, but what if she doesn't want to marry me?"

Wilfried paused, momentarily caught off guard by this possibility. His gaze swept over his son before he scoffed in frustration. "You always look so serious and brooding-no wonder girls don't fall for you easily."

Gavin remained silent, feeling the sting of his father's remark. "Nothing like some good old-fashioned fatherly critique to cut deep."

He composed himself and said, "I'll handle it. If she wants me to take responsibility, I'll marry her. If she doesn't, I'll find another way to make things right. Everything will be based on what she wants. How does that sound?" Wilfried's stern demeanor relaxed slightly. "That's more like it!"

Regardless of what had really happened, the fact remained that his son had been involved in a compromising situation, and responsibility needed to be taken. But if the girl wasn't interested in Gavin, there wasn't much else they could do. Satisfied with Gavin's response, Wilfried stood up and left after issuing a final warning.

Gavin rubbed his temples in frustration, realizing how seriously the family was treating the situation. In hindsight, maybe stepping out of the house altogether would've been the better choice.

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Back at the Quin family home, Jolie

emerged from the bathroom, feeling refreshed after a long, relaxing shower. As she exited, she noticed her mother, Daisy Ridley, standing at the door, about to knock.

"Mom? What's going on?" Jolie asked, a puzzled look on her face.

Daisy handed Jolie the bowl of soup, saying, "The kitchen made your favorite chicken soup. I thought I'd bring you some."

Jolie accepted it with a small smile. "Thanks, Mom."

Instead of leaving, Daisy followed her into the room, sitting on the sofa with a hesitant expression. After a moment, she asked, "Did you see your sister?" Jolie, sipping her soup gracefully, nodded. "Yeah, I did."

Daisy's concern came out in a rush.

"How is she? Is she doing okay? Has she gained or lost weight? Is her husband treating her well? I've heard the Fletcher family isn't easy to deal with, and they've been going through some troubles recently."

After finishing the soup, Jolie looked at her mother and replied, "Mom, if you're that worried, why didn't you go yourself?"

The invitation had been sent to the Quin family, and as Mrs. Quin, it would have made sense for Daisy to attend. But she hadn't gone, choosing to send Jolie instead.

Daisy paused, then softly explained, "You've always had a close relationship with your sister. I thought she might want to open up to you if she saw you."

Jolie's response was sharp. "You're imagining things. She looked at me like I was the enemy, like she couldn't stand the sight of me."

Daisy was stunned, clearly not

expecting that. "How could she act that way? You've never mistreated her. You even gave up things you liked just to make her happy. How could she do this to you?"

Jolie's expression turned cold. "Mom, what do you mean by 'gave up'? Aren't we twins? Shouldn't she have the same things I do?"

Chapter 1046

Daisy's expression darkened slightly at Jolie's words, but she held back from lashing out. "That's all in the past. What's the point of bringing it up now? You and Selena are sisters, after all. You should reach out to her more. Convince her to come back. She's still part of the

Quin family."

In recent years, both her parents, especially her father, had become fixated on reconnecting with Selena.

Despite multiple attempts, Selena had kept her distance, and even after finally making contact, she barely exchanged a few words with them before cutting off all communication again. The more they tried, the further she drifted away.

Jolie remained quiet, observing Daisy. She had no right to criticize her mother-after all, it was she who had always been favored growing up. The Quin family had never done anything wrong by her.

"I understand. I'll try," Jolie finally relented, though the thought of facing Selena's distant and prickly demeanor again made her uneasy.

Perhaps, deep down, her sister did care for her in some way.

Daisy smiled, satisfied. "Good. That's the right attitude. It's getting late; you should get some rest."

She rose to leave but stopped at the door, seemingly remembering something. "Oh, by the way, you have that meeting tomorrow. The one Mrs. Lowe introduced. You should at least go meet him. Even if you don't like him, skipping it would leave a bad impression. Understand?" Jolie's brow furrowed. "Mom, I don't want to go."

Daisy's tone became softer but firm. "Jolie, the Lowe family is a business partner of ours, and right now, the Quin family needs this opportunity. Mrs. Lowe just wants to introduce you to a friend.

"I know you don't like these setups, but we have to make an effort. Show them we're serious, even if you're not interested. Just go for a little while. You don't even have to dress up if you don't want to. Can you do that?"

Jolie lowered her eyes, a flicker of bitterness crossing her face. She had always been the favored one growing up, but now, when the family's interests were at stake, her importance seemed to take a backseat.

In the Quin family, business always came first. Her "favor" had only been due to a fortune-teller's words years ago, claiming that anyone who treated her well would experience good luck.

It felt laughable now.

Still, she couldn't bring herself to refuse outright.

"Fine," she said quietly.

With that, she stood up and closed the door behind Daisy as she left.

The next day.

Selena pulled Aveline out for a much-needed break. Aveline had been cooped up at home for a while during her postpartum recovery, and now that she was done with it, she was eager to relax and enjoy some time out.

Aveline didn't refuse-she'd been itching to go shopping. With Pax and Joy well cared for by the nanny and plenty of people around the house, a short outing wouldn't hurt.

However, Lucas, being overprotective, insisted on coming along.

As they sat in the car, Selena couldn't help but tease him. "Mr. Tudor, shouldn't you be more worried about the twins?"

Lucas' voice was serious as he replied, "You're mistaken. It's not the kids I'm worried about. It's you."

Selena blinked in confusion. "What do you mean by that? Explain yourself!"

Lucas kept his tone steady. "I'm concerned you'll put strange ideas in Aveline's head."

Aveline's lips curved into a small smile, recalling how Selena used to constantly encourage her to divorce Lucas back in the day.

Selena remembered that too and

huffed. "Let me tell you

something you better love Ave with everything you've got. If you make her suffer even a little, I won't

hesitate to whisk her away, and you won't find her no matter how hard you try!"

Chapter 1047

Lucas responded in a calm, low voice, "You won't get that chance in this lifetime."

Selena huffed. "You better hope so!"

She lifted her chin defiantly and then playfully winked at Aveline.

Aveline smiled softly, a hint of exasperation in her eyes. When would these two ever stop bickering?

Once they arrived at the mall, Selena dragged Aveline into a whirlwind shopping spree. Whatever caught their eye, they bought-no hesitation, no restraint. It felt exhilarating to indulge so freely!

Lucas followed quietly behind them, occasionally making a few phone calls and handling work without missing a beat.

After shopping all morning, the group started to feel tired. Selena led Aveline into a restaurant across the street.

"I read reviews on this place, and they say the food is amazing. They've got some dishes from Cloudflare City too. It's been a while since you've been back-want a taste of home?" Selena asked, grinning while flipping through the menu. Aveline nodded. "Yeah, I've been craving it. Let me take a look at the menu."

"Sure, you order," Selena said, handing her the menu before excusing herself to the restroom.

Since the restroom on the second floor was under maintenance, Selena headed downstairs to the one on the ground floor. As she came out, she noticed a familiar figure sitting at a nearby table. A man with a brutish demeanor stood before her, pointing his finger aggressively at her face.

Curious, Selena stepped closer, overhearing their conversation.

"Jolie, who do you think you're fooling? Everyone knows your family needs this project. My family holds the deciding vote, and it's up to me whose bid gets accepted. I picked you because I'm doing you a favor. Don't act like you don't need it. Piss me off, and your family will get nothing!" The man's voice was loud and arrogant, his tone dripping with condescension.

Selena's brow furrowed in irritation.

So the Quin family wanted this project, and they sent Jolie to handle it?

"So much for being the favored daughter," she thought bitterly.

Clearly, her parents weren't as doting as they seemed if they were willing to put Jolie in such a humiliating situation.

Jolie's expression remained calm, her eyes holding a hint of mockery as she looked at the man. "Oh? I wasn't aware that the Lowe family had the final say over this project. Should I inform the other companies about this?"

The man's face darkened at her

words, but he quickly retorted, "The Lowe family put in the most money, so, of course, we have the most control. Your Quin family barely invested anything and you still expect to have a say? Isn't that a bit delusional?"

He adjusted his suit and sat back down, his posture dripping with arrogance. "I'm only talking to you about this because I like you, Jolie. I'm even willing to cut you in on some profits. But don't push your luck. If you keep refusing, you'll only have yourself to blame when you lose out."

Jolie's fingers tightened around her water glass, her upbringing and self-control keeping her from

tossing it at his smug face. She

lowered her gaze, deciding she

wouldn't bother engaging with him anymore. Whether or not this project was vital to the Quin family didn't matter to her at this point.

She stood up to leave, but before she could walk away, a deep, magnetic voice sounded from nearby.

"Talking about the Southside business district project?"

Instinctively, Jolie turned to see where the voice had come from and was startled to recognize one of the men sitting a few tables away-Gavin, the same man she had been entangled with the previous night. Why was he here?

The man who had been bullying Jolie also looked toward Gavin. The instant he saw who it was, all the arrogance drained from his face.

"Mr. Cooper?"

Gavin's cold gaze flickered over the man before he calmly addressed the person sitting across from him, ignoring Jolie completely. "Bring me the Lowe family's bid again. I'd like to take another look."

Chapter 1048

"Yes, sir," replied the man across from Gavin, who was clearly his assistant, Quentin Rhett.

Jolie had figured out the situation. The Southside business district project was primarily led by Cooper Enterprises, with various companies competing for the most lucrative contracts and land rights. It seemed the Lowe family's bid had been favored so far. The arrogant man sitting across from her immediately adopted a more respectful demeanor upon recognizing Gavin. "Mr. Cooper, our bid is solid. There are no issues."

Gavin, still ignoring him, continued with his meal.

Jolie smirked slightly before standing up and walking directly to Gavin's table.

"Hey, you" The man started, then quickly silenced himself, nervously watching Gavin's reaction to her. If they were connected, his earlier attitude would make things extremely awkward for him.

Without hesitation, Jolie called over a server, requested utensils, and casually began eating at Gavin's table.

Quentin, surprised by her boldness, spoke up, "Miss, who might you be?"

He had seen plenty of people try to get close to Gavin, but none had been this direct. Sitting down without hesitation as if they were old friends—who was this woman?

Jolie smiled at Quentin. "Hi, I'm Jolie Quin."

Quentin returned a professional smile. "Nice to meet you, Miss Quin. I'm Mr. Cooper's assistant, Quentin Rhett. If there's something you need, feel free to contact me first. This is Mr. Cooper's private time, and it might not be the best moment for—" He was trying to politely steer her away without causing a scene.

"No worries," Jolie responded coolly, continuing to eat.

At that moment, Gavin finally spoke, his tone calm yet authoritative. "It's fine."

Quentin was visibly taken aback. "What?"

Gavin was actually allowing this woman to join them for lunch?

Did they know each other?

Since when?

Quentin was baffled. It had always been his job to fend off women trying to get close to Gavin, and yet here he was, letting this one stay without question. His gaze darted between Gavin and Jolie, scanning for any signs of familiarity.

But one icy glare from Gavin was enough to make Quentin sit up straight and quit staring.

"There's definitely something going on here," he thought. "This Miss Quin must be someone special."

Meanwhile, Jolie seemed oblivious to Quentin's internal drama. She glanced at the dishes in front of her and casually asked, "Is it good?"

Gavin, in his usual detached tone, replied, "Try it for yourself."

Jolie nodded. "Perfect, I haven't eaten yet."

Without hesitation, she began eating, and the casual exchange between them made it seem as if they were long-time acquaintances.

Not far off, the man who had earlier berated Jolie was now in a state of near-panic. Seeing how familiar she was with Gavin made him regret every word he'd said. "She really knows Gavin Cooper?*"

The realization sent a chill down his

spine. If Jolie decided to tell Gavin what he'd said, he'd be in deep trouble. Not daring to approach, he quickly slunk away, hoping to find a way to fix his mess before it got worse.

Meanwhile, upstairs, Selena witnessed the entire scene. Her previously furrowed brow relaxed, and her eyes sparkled with

amusement. She glanced once net

more at Jolie and Gavin before turning to head back to the private room, a faint smile on her lips.

Humming a tune, she looked pleased as she entered the room. Aveline noticed and asked, "What's got you in such a good mood?"

Selena smirked. "I just watched a great show."

Aveline raised an eyebrow, intrigued. "What kind of show?"

Clearly entertained, Selena recounted the scene she'd just witnessed downstairs. As she shared the story, Lucas, who had been quietly listening, glanced up at her with a look that carried a wealth of meaning.

Chapter 1049

Selena continued her playful banter, even giving Lucas a pointed glare without missing a beat.

Aveline stifled a laugh, listening carefully to the story Selena was recounting. After a moment of thought, she asked, "So, you stayed downstairs that long because you were planning to help out?"

Selena's expression shifted to one of mild discomfort, her tone defensive. "I wasn't going to help. If she's getting pushed around, she deserves it!"

Her words didn't fool Aveline. She had known Selena for years and was well aware of her complex feelings toward the Quin family. While Selena often expressed her disdain for her parents, she had never spoken ill of Jolie.

It was clear to Aveline that Selena cared about her sister, even if she wouldn't admit it outright. But since Selena wasn't ready to talk about it, Aveline decided not to press the issue.

"Alright, let's eat. The food's here."

"Good idea."

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Downstairs.

After the man had scurried off, Jolie looked visibly more relaxed. Once she had finished eating, she set down her utensils, smiled at Gavin, and said, "Thanks. This meal's on me." With that, she stood up and headed to the register.

Gavin glanced briefly at Quentin, who quickly intervened, "Thank you, Miss Quin, but I've already taken care of the bill."

Jolie paused, surprised at how fast they had moved.

She nodded, not dwelling on it. "Got it. Thanks, then. See you."

She turned and left without any further exchange, not even sparing a glance at Gavin, as if the entire interaction had been nothing more than a casual meal.

Quentin was left slightly puzzled. "Is there something going on here or not?"

He couldn't figure it out.

Gavin, having finished his meal, wiped his mouth with a napkin, stood up, and walked out.

Once outside, he spotted Jolie standing in the sunlight. Her fair skin. seemed to glow, and her pale yellow dress shimmered softly in the light. Her long hair, braided and tied with a delicate ribbon, fell over one

shoulder as she checked her phone.

She looked ethereal, completely absorbed in her messages.

Jolie lowered her gaze slightly, her flushed cheeks glowing with warmth. Her long, curled lashes fluttered delicately, and her soft lips curved into a subtle smile, giving her an innocent, almost ethereal charm.

Her figure was slim yet curvy, with a defined waist that led into graceful, flowing lines. Her pale, slender legs peeked from beneath her skirt, and Gavin's eyes lingered for a split second on her ankle before he quickly looked away. Quentin pulled the car around, and without another glance in Jolie's direction, Gavin got in.

The car drove off, passing by Jolie

as she put her phone away. She happened to catch sight of Gavin through the half-open rear

window-his sharp features and net

short, dark hair were unmistakable. His eyes were closed, exuding a distant, cold aura that seemed to surround him like a shield.

Jolie didn't linger on the image. *

She wasn't into cold, aloof men.

What she liked were warm, affectionate types-guys who were expressive and gave her the emotional connection she craved As for his cryptic comment about her "owing" him, if he didn't bring it up, she would just pretend it never happened.

...

That evening, when Jolie returned home, she found Daisy sitting on the couch, grinning so widely she could barely contain her excitement.

"Jolie, why didn't you tell me you knew Mr. Cooper?" Daisy beamed as soon as she saw her daughter, quickly guiding her to sit on the sofa.

A housekeeper arrived just then with a glass of Jolie's favorite juice. She took a sip before replying, "I met him at Ms. Cooper's baby shower. We've only spoken briefly."

Daisy, however, wasn't convinced. "But I heard from Mrs. Lowe that you seemed quite familiar with Mr. Cooper. You even had lunch together!"

Chapter 1050

As soon as Jason Lowe got home, he told his mother, Wendy Evans, all about what had happened at lunch.

Wendy immediately passed the news on to Daisy, saying, "Oh Daisy, Jolie is really something! I didn't realize she knew Mr. Cooper! You should've told me earlier-we're friends, after all!

"If I'd known she had that connection, we could've avoided all those setbacks. You should talk to Jolie. Let's arrange a dinner with Mr. Cooper for both our families. It'll help strengthen ties and make the partnership even smoother." Jolie, observing her mother's bright, eager expression, could already guess what she was thinking.

She frowned slightly and said, "That guy from the Lowe family basically told me that if I 'entertained' him, he'd consider giving the Quin family a bit more influence in the deal."

Daisy's smile vanished instantly.

"How outrageous!"

Her expression darkened with anger.

She had never imagined Jason would be so shameless and despicable. Jolie was the daughter she had carefully nurtured for over a decade there was no way she'd let a man like him lay a hand on her.

"I never imagined he'd be that kind of person. We're cutting all ties with him," Daisy said firmly. "He really needs to take a good look in the mirror-thinking he stands a chance with you? What a pathetic creep aiming way out of his league." Jolie remained silent, her gaze lowered. She didn't feel the need to engage further.

After venting her anger, Daisy softened and said, "Jolie, Jason's a creep, but Mr. Cooper is different. He even had lunch with you today, which shows you hold a special place in his mind. You need to stay in touch with him and maintain that connection." Jolie frowned, feeling her mother's double standards.

She stood up. "I'm a bit tired. I'll head upstairs and rest."

"Alright, go ahead," Daisy replied, deciding to give Jolie some space.

Later that evening, when Terence Quin returned home, Daisy shared the events of the day with him. He was overjoyed, suggesting they invite Gavin to dinner to strengthen their ties and explore future partnerships.

Cooper Enterprises was the leading company in Larbor City, and a partnership with them could propel the Quin family to new heights.

Daisy, brimming with excitement, remarked, "Sending Jolie to the Cooper baby shower was the right decision after all."

Terence pulled her into a hug and said, "You're my perfect partner. Tomorrow, talk to Jolie about setting up that dinner with Mr. Cooper." "I will," Daisy agreed with a satisfied smile.

Jolie had a good night's sleep, though she had a strange dream.

The scenes shifted, and finally, she found herself staring at a shaking crystal chandelier. Heat surrounded her, and a pair of strong hands. gripped her waist with a force that felt like they might break her in two.

"No... stop..." she murmured, drifting in and out of consciousness.

Meanwhile, in a luxury apartment near Cooper Enterprises, Gavin abruptly opened his eyes. He glanced down, seeing the mess between his legs. Recalling the vivid dream, he rubbed his temples and got up to strip the sheets, tossing them straight into the trash.

The next morning, Jolie was heading out when she found Daisy arranging flowers downstairs.

"Morning, Mom," Jolie greeted as she made her way toward the door.

"Wait a minute, Jolie," Daisy called, setting down her tools and pulling Jolie to sit with her on the sofa.

"I've been thinking about it all night,

and I'm sure Mr. Cooper was helping you out yesterday, wasn't he? It's only right that we show our gratitude. Why don't you reach out to him and see when he's available? We should invite him to dinner to properly thank him."