

Divorced Me 1091

Chapter 1091

Daisy smiled warmly at Jolie, speaking to her softly, "Mr. Cooper is over there. Go and invite him."

Following Daisy's gaze, Jolie looked over. Standing at the intersection of light and shadow was Gavin's tall figure. His face was devoid of any unnecessary expression, his dark, deep eyes fixed intently on her as he held a glass of champagne in one hand. For no apparent reason, she felt an air of domineering authority emanating from him. It was as if she was already his possession.

Jolie quickly averted her gaze and nodded slightly. "I understand."

"Go on." Daisy patted her hand with a smile.

Taking a deep breath, Jolie turned and began walking toward Gavin.

The scene drew curious looks from the surrounding guests.

"Is Miss Quin inviting Mr. Cooper to dance?"

"Is the Quin family planning to form an alliance with the Cooper family?"

It wasn't entirely impossible. After all, Gavin had attended Jolie's birthday banquet.

As everyone watched Jolie's approach, their astonishment grew when she walked past Gavin and extended her hand to a man behind him.

"Would you like to dance with me?" she asked, smiling brightly.

Ian took her hand and replied, "It would be an honor to dance with you, Miss Quin."

Ian's parents, who were also present, looked surprised at first but soon broke into smiles. They had always liked Jolie.

From a distance, Daisy's smile faltered almost imperceptibly. What was Jolie doing? Why didn't she invite Gavin? And who was that man? She had never seen him before!

But regardless of who that man was, Jolie had silently defied their decision! And at an occasion like this, they couldn't even stop her. Doing so would undoubtedly offend the Moore family! Daisy struggled to maintain her smile, though a glint of coldness flashed in her eyes.

Jolie and Ian entered the dance floor. As they passed Gavin, her gaze unintentionally collided with his, his eyes holding a faint, inscrutable smile.

She quickly averted her eyes, a

flicker of unease creeping into her

heart. Surely, he wouldn't do

anything outrageous in front of so many people, would he? That wasn't his style. en

Suppressing the unease, Jolie focused on dancing with Ian. As the music began, their movements intertwined gracefully like a pair of butterflies dancing in harmony.

One by one, other young guests joined them on the dance floor.

Ian glanced at her and suddenly asked, "You seem tense and uneasy."

Jolie shot him a quick look and replied, "Aren't you nervous?"

Ian smiled lightly. "A little, but compared to you, I'm far behind."

Jolie pressed her lips together and said, "Maybe the pressure isn't as heavy for you." "Perhaps."

As the dance ended, Jolie took Ian's arm and walked over to Daisy and Terence.

"Mom, Dad, let me introduce you this is my boyfriend, Ian."

Ian gave a polite nod. "Good evening, Mr. and Mrs. Quin."

For Terence and Daisy, this was nothing short of a bolt from the blue!

The fact that Ian was her partner for the opening dance had already left them shocked and furious, but to learn that he was her boyfriend? That was beyond anything they had expected!

Daisy's smile faltered, barely holding its place. She asked, "Jolie, when did this happen? Why didn't you mention it earlier?"

A hint of mockery flickered in Jolie's eyes. If she'd told them in advance, would tonight's scene have played out the same way? This was exactly the effect she wanted!

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Ian spoke up, his tone calm and polite. "I met Jolie half a month ago. It was love at first sight for me. After spending some time together, I grew quite fond of her, and we decided to be together. I apologize for not informing you sooner, Mr. and Mrs. Quin. That was my oversight." Jolie playfully blinked at her parents and added, "Mom, Dad, I just wanted to surprise you."

Surprise? This was clearly a shock!

However, with Ian standing there, Terence and Daisy couldn't say much. They forced polite smiles and nodded.

"Alright, as long as you're both happy. Go on and enjoy yourselves for now," Daisy said with a strained smile.

Jolie looped her arm through Ian's and led him a short distance away.

"Phew..." Jolie exhaled deeply, glancing at Ian as she blinked mischievously. "Well, I'd say I've made it halfway through with my family."

Ian raised an eyebrow, puzzled. "Why only halfway?"

Jolie sighed. "To be honest, my parents will never agree to us being together. They'll find ways to make us break up."

Ian studied her intently for a moment before asking, "Because the Quin family is looking for a better match?"

Jolie handed him a glass of champagne and replied with a wry smile, "People always aim for the top, just like rivers naturally flow downhill."

If Ian didn't genuinely care for someone, he'd likely choose a more influential heiress to pursue as well. The Quin family, after all, was respectable but unremarkable in Larbor City.

Ian accepted the champagne, clinking his glass with hers. "Then it's up to you now."

Jolie nodded resolutely. "I won't give in."

She would never let their plans succeed!

As she sipped her champagne, she suddenly felt a piercing gaze on her. The intensity of it was impossible to ignore, its presence looming over her like a tangible weight. Her grip on the glass tightened, but she refused to look in that direction.

The dance floor remained lively for a while longer before the cake-cutting ceremony began. Jolie approached the towering cake, holding the knife as she prepared to cut it. Ian stood right by her side, and the first slice of cake she cut was handed directly to him.

Ian accepted it with a smile and then presented her with a delicate, beautifully wrapped box. "Happy birthday, Jolie."

"Thank you."

Jolie accepted the box and met his gaze, their eye contact lingering just a second too long, making it seem to the onlookers like a tender moment.

"Is that Miss Quin's boyfriend?"

"Looks like it. I recognize him-it's Ian Moore, the heir of the Moore family. He just returned from studying overseas." "They make such a stunning couple."

Whispers rippled through the crowd

as Jolie continued slicing the cake, personally handing out pieces to the guests. Only after ensuring everyone had a slice did she take a small piece for herself and head to the deck.

Once the cake was done, there would be a fireworks display over the sea. Terence and Daisy had spared no effort in planning tonight's banquet. Yet Jolie found it all terribly dull.

Nibbling on her cake, she gazed out at the pitch-black sea, its vastness like an endless abyss, as if it could pull her in at any moment. Lost in thought, she stared blankly at the

horizon when the mass the

ship suddenly rocked. The

cruise

unexpected movement threw her off balance, and her cake slipped from

her hands, tumbling straight into the ocean!

"Ah!"

She yelped, her body lurching forward as she nearly fell over the railing into the dark waters below. She couldn't swim!

Just as panic overtook her, a strong arm suddenly encircled her waist, pulling her back and away from the railing.

Instinctively, she clung to her rescuer, steadying herself. Her face was still pale with fright.

"Thank you," she managed, her voice trembling.

When she looked up to see who had saved her, her words caught in her throat.

It was him.

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Gavin wrapped an arm tightly around her slender waist, refusing to let go. Instead, he pulled her even closer, his grip firm and unyielding.

Jolie pressed her hands against his chest, trying to push herself back. "Thank you, Mr. Cooper."

But before she could retreat, his grip tightened, holding her in place. Instead of creating distance, it only brought her closer, their bodies now pressed together, every movement amplified by the proximity. Jolie frowned slightly and asked, "What are you doing, Mr. Cooper?"

"You've got a boyfriend now," Gavin said, his dark eyes fixed on her. "When did that happen?"

Jolie pursed her lips. "I don't think that's any of your business."

"Is that so?" His tone remained cold, but there was a dangerous edge to it that sent a chill down her spine.

"You're my woman. Getting a boyfriend now is that your way of insulting me?" His voice dropped further, laced with a quiet menace, his gaze sharpening as he spoke.

"Don't be ridiculous, Mr. Cooper," Jolie said, her tone forced but firm. "I'm not your woman."

Gavin leaned in close, his warm breath brushing against her ear, sending shivers through her.

"Really? Because not long ago, you were in my bed, moaning my name. And now you're going to tell me you're not mine? Do you believe that? Do you think anyone else would?" "Shut up!" Jolie snapped, glaring at him, her face flushing with embarrassment and anger. "Gavin, we both know

exactly what our arrangement is. Eight more times, and when it's over, we'll have nothing to do with each other."

"You said it yourself when it's over. So, tell me, is it over yet?" Gavin watched her, his amusement evident as he noted her frustration.

She still had to come to him, still had to fulfill their agreement, and yet here she was, parading around with a new boyfriend? The thought disgusted him.

Jolie bit her lip, her eyes glaring at him. What was he playing at? Was he here to sabotage her?

"Jolie Quin," he said suddenly, his voice low but commanding as he called her name.

Jolie froze for a moment. Since meeting him, this was the first time Gavin had ever called her by full name.

Still dazed, his voice came again, calm but cutting. "I know exactly what you're thinking. But I've told you before-everything you're doing is futile. As long as I'm here, your parents will never agree to you being with him. The two of you are

destined to fail."

He threw her own words back at her, word for word.

Frustration bubbled inside Jolie. The way he so effortlessly saw through her, as though she had no secrets left, made her feel utterly exposed. Worse, there was a suffocating sense of inevitability-as if no matter how hard she tried, she could never break free of his control.

Dropping her hands in defeat, she let him hold her. Her voice turned cold as she replied, "Gavin, the more you tell me something is impossible, the more I want to prove you wrong. Let's see if what I'm doing really is futile."

"A defiant little thing, aren't you?" he murmured, his tone laced with faint amusement.

Gavin's gaze softened for a moment, settling on her lips, delicate and petal-like. Before she could react, he leaned in and kissed her.

His lips pressed against hers with a forceful intensity, moving and dominating, his tongue parting her lips and claiming her space with unwavering determination.

"Mmph!" Jolie whimpered, pushing against him in protest, but he stepped closer, pinning her firmly against the railing. One arm wrapped tightly around her waist, the other cradling the back of her head, as he deepened the kiss. The kiss was relentless, a display of raw possession and overwhelming dominance.

Jolie struggled at first, unable to endure his overpowering assertiveness, but soon she felt herself giving in. Her fingers clutched his suit jacket, gripping it so tightly that the fabric crumpled beneath her hands.

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Gavin released her, his gaze lingering on the flush that painted the corners of her eyes. For once, the edges of his lips curved into a faint smile.

He leaned down, brushing a light kiss against her earlobe, and murmured, "Tonight. My room. The third time."

With that, he let her go and walked away without looking back.

Jolie clutched the railing, her breathing uneven, her cheeks tinged with a deep blush. She bit her slightly swollen lips, glaring at his retreating figure. She was certain he had done it on purpose. She announced her relationship in front of everyone, only for him to demand that she fulfill their agreement-how infuriating!

"Boom!"

A deafening explosion startled her, and fireworks lit up the night sky. Jolie looked up to see colorful blooms bursting one after another over the ocean, painting the darkness with vivid, dazzling colors.

Guests began gathering on the deck to watch the fireworks display. Yet Jolie felt no joy, only a growing sense of chaos in her life. Everything was a tangled mess, and she couldn't find a way out. "Happy birthday."

Ian's voice came from beside her. He approached with a gentle smile, standing at her side.

Jolie turned to him, offering a small smile. "Thank you."

The two stood quietly on the deck, the vibrant fireworks above reflecting in their eyes as they gazed at each other. From a distance, they looked perfectly matched.

Daisy observed the scene, her expression darkening with a trace of coldness.

Terence broke the silence beside her, saying firmly, "I don't agree with them being together."

Daisy, however, replied with a measured tone, "Jolie has made up her mind. That's why she chose to reveal their relationship tonight, in front of so many people. The Moore family knows now we can't easily intervene."

Terence's face remained grim. "I won't agree to it. When the time comes, we'll find a way to make them break up. I can tell Mr. Cooper is interested in her. We must seize this opportunity and make sure she ends up with him. Gavin is the best choice-not just for Jolie but for our family."

In the entire city, Gavin Cooper was unmatched. For the Quin family, and for Jolie, he was the only option worth considering.

In the past, they wouldn't have dared to entertain the thought. But with Gavin attending two consecutive Quin family events, their confidence soared.

Daisy nodded. "Alright, I'll speak to her."

Terence cast a cold glance at Jolie and Ian, who were still standing together watching the fireworks, then let out a disdainful snort and turned to leave.

The fireworks show was

spectacular dazzling bursts of

color lighting up the night sky, captivating the hearts of those

watching. Yet Jolie only lingered for a short while before quietly

retreating to the ship's interior.

Ian noticed her departure and followed, his brows furrowing slightly. "You seem upset. Did something happen? Can I help?"

Jolie shook her head. "Not for now, but maybe in the future."

Ian gave her a reassuring smile. "Whenever you need me, I'll be here."

"I'm going to rest for a bit," Jolie said, her tone soft but firm.

"Alright," Ian replied, watching her leave. His smile faded slowly, replaced by a pensive expression.

He had seen her earlier with Gavin-how they embraced and kissed. As a man, Ian could clearly sense Gavin's possessiveness toward Jolie.

Was this what she was fighting

against? Ian couldn't quite

understand. Why resist? For

someone like her, Gavin seemed like

the best possible choice. What

exactly wasn't she satisfied with?

Back in her cabin, Jolie found Dolly waiting for her.

Seeing her return, Dolly beamed with excitement. "I saw you two watching the fireworks together! I even snapped some pictures-they turned out so beautiful!"

She eagerly pulled out her phone, scrolled to the photos, and showed them to Jolie.

Jolie glanced at them. Dolly's photography skills were surprisingly good. The images were romantic and dreamlike, especially the shot capturing the two of them gazing at each other. The moment seemed frozen in time, filled with an unspoken tenderness.

"Send me the pictures," Jolie said suddenly. Dolly blinked in surprise, then grinned. "Of course!"

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"Sure, no problem!" Dolly agreed eagerly, sending all the pictures to Jolie.

Then, propping her chin on one hand, she grinned mischievously at her. "I have to say, you really caught everyone off guard tonight. Were your parents shocked? It's such a pity I wasn't nearby-I would've recorded the whole thing." Jolie scrolled through the photos again and replied, "They were definitely stunned, but they had to keep up appearances, so they didn't say much."

Setting her phone down, she glanced at Dolly. "Honestly, it's the first time I've seen them so flustered in years. It felt amazing."

Jolie sighed lightly. "It's not that simple."

Dolly gave her a thumbs-up, then asked, "So, what's next for you and Ian? I mean, he's already met your parents. Is the next step meeting his family and planning the engagement?"

"What do you mean?" Dolly's brows furrowed in confusion. "The Moore family isn't bad at all. Your parents still don't approve?"

Jolie looked at her friend seriously. "Do you know who they have in mind for me?"

Dolly blinked a few times, then gasped, covering her mouth in disbelief. "No way! Your parents want Gavin Cooper?"

Even as she spoke Gavin's name, Dolly instinctively lowered her voice, as though saying it too loudly might invite trouble. "Exactly," Jolie said, nodding in confirmation.

"Oh my God!" Dolly exclaimed, her shock evident. "Gavin Cooper! The legend of our generation in Larbor City! Your parents are really aiming high. I mean, seriously, Gavin's family is in a completely different league. No offense, but your family doesn't exactly bring any benefits to the Coopers. If anything, they'd see it as a burden. There's no way the Coopers would agree to it."

She paused, her eyes glinting with intrigue as she added, "And besides, Gavin Cooper is... well, strange. He became a legend in his twenties, and after taking over Cooper Enterprises, he skyrocketed it to new heights. But he's known to be utterly ruthless. Oh, and here's some juicy gossip-I heard he's... not great in that department."

"What?" Jolie, who had been listening intently, froze at the unexpected twist. She stared at Dolly, caught off guard.

"Yeah," Dolly nodded emphatically. "Word is, Gavin has... issues. You know, physically."

Jolie's expression faltered as she processed the abrupt turn in the conversation. "Gavin Cooper... has issues?"

"Where did this rumor even come from?" Jolie asked, her expression frozen in disbelief. As someone with firsthand experience, she was far too aware of whether Gavin Cooper had any such "issues." Leaning in conspiratorially, Dolly lowered her voice and said, "I heard this story once. Apparently, some woman tried to seduce him, hoping to get pregnant and climb her way up the social ladder.

"Guess what? She pulled out all the stops, but Gavin didn't even bat an eye. Not a single reaction. That

same night, she was thrown out of his room, stark naked. By the time people found her, she was completely exposed!"

Dolly shook her head, clicking her tongue. "Imagine that-a gorgeous woman, completely nude, practically throwing herself at him, and he didn't even blink. No response at all. If that doesn't scream 'issues

don't know what does."

Uh... what?

Jolie listened to the tale, utterly dumbfounded. The Gavin she knew seemed like a completely different person from the one Dolly was describing. Noticing her dazed expression, Dolly nudged her. "What's the matter? You don't believe me?"

"Well..." Jolie hesitated. "It's just... rumors are rumors."

Dolly shrugged. "There's usually

some truth to them. I mean, it's not like this came out of nowhere. But honestly with his looks-those sharp features, that perfectly

straight nose-you'd think he'd

be...

well, you know, quite capable in that department. Such a shame..."

Jolie was speechless.

Chapter 1096

She almost wished the rumors about Gavin were true.

Dolly piped up, "How about I stay over tonight? Living by myself is so boring."

Jolie shook her head. "That might not work. My mom could show up later."

"What?" Dolly groaned, dragging out the word as she slumped dramatically against Jolie. "Then let me hug you for a little while longer. I won't get the chance once she's here!"

Jolie chuckled softly, but her thoughts began to drift. Those rumors... she'd never heard them before.

She had always been the obedient daughter of the Quin family. During her school years, her focus had been entirely on academics. Now, with more free time after graduation, she occasionally heard about society gossip through Dolly.

Her gaze turned toward the window. Her life really did feel like that of a meticulously kept songbird in a gilded cage. Before marriage, she was expected to bring benefits to her family. After marriage, she'd be expected to be the perfect wife and mother. As the night deepened, the cruise ship sailed steadily across the calm sea. Dolly lingered for a while longer before finally leaving.

Jolie sat at her vanity, carefully removing her makeup, when her phone buzzed. She glanced at the screen, and her brows furrowed immediately.

It was a message from Gavin. He'd sent a room number.

Earlier, he had told her to go to his room.

The third time.

But she didn't want to go.

With a resolute gesture, Jolie flipped the phone face down and pretended not to see it. After removing her makeup, she took a shower and changed into comfortable pajamas before lying in bed.

Just as she was about to drift off, a sudden knock at the door startled her awake.

Sitting up quickly, she hesitated for a moment before getting up to open it. Standing in the doorway was Gavin.

Her eyes widened slightly. "What are you doing here?"

Standing backlit by the corridor light, his expression was unreadable. His tall figure moved forward, prompting Jolie to instinctively step back. Before she could protest, he casually entered her room, shutting the door behind him.

"I told you to come to my room

tonight, didn't?" Gavin said as he

shut the door behind him with a decisive motion. Tugging at his tie with one hand, his movements were slow and deliberate, but there was an unmistakable air of danger in them that sent a shiver down Jolie's spine.

She instinctively stepped back, swallowing nervously. "I got caught up entertaining guests and forgot."

"And the message I sent you? Did you see it?" Gavin asked, advancing step by step. His chiseled face betrayed no emotion, but his dark eyes grew colder, a faint glint of menace flashing within them.

Jolie frowned, her tone sharper now. "Gavin, I didn't go because I didn't want to. You're a smart man-don't you understand that?"

A low chuckle escaped him, humorless and cold. "Who was it that once said they'd come whenever I called?" he asked, his voice calm yet filled with quiet dominance as he continued to close the distance between them.

Jolie backed up again, only to bump

against the edge of the couch. Her knees buckled, and she sank onto it, forced to tilt her head back to meet his gaze. "Can't you wait until tomorrow night?" she tried, her voice trembling slightly.

"No."

Without another word, Gavin leaned down, pulling his tie free and swiftly binding her wrists together.

Jolie gasped in alarm. "What are you doing?"

"You're being disobedient," Gavin said, his tone clipped and unyielding. "You made a promise, but you broke it. Tell me, shouldn't I punish you for that?"

"You can't do this!" Jolie's voice

wavered, pain rising in her chest as

her bound wrists left her feeling utterly vulnerable. She began to struggle, her voice trembling. "No, Gavin I'm not your possession. I

ha

the right to say no-let me go!"

Her defiance only seemed to fuel his intensity. His expression darkened further as he captured her lips in a forceful, unrelenting kiss.

Chapter 1097

"Mmph!"

Jolie struggled fiercely, but she was no match for Gavin's strength. With ease, he bound her wrists and pinned them above her head with one hand, leaving her utterly defenseless. She could do nothing but endure his unrelenting kiss and the way he invaded her space. She pressed her lips tightly together, refusing to let him deepen the kiss.

Gavin, however, was in no hurry. He kissed the tip of her nose, then the corners of her mouth, his lips trailing leisurely across her cheeks and down to her neck, lingering in every sensitive spot.

His breath, hot and intoxicating, brushed against her skin, igniting her nerves and eroding her composure. It was as if he were a patient hunter, skillfully luring his prey to surrender, to show its most vulnerable side and allow him to claim it completely.

Jolie could barely withstand his calculated tenderness. It left her with an inexplicable sensation-a fleeting illusion that he was cherishing her, treasuring her.

No! That was a lie!

Snapping herself out of it, she opened her eyes and looked at the man kissing her with his eyes closed.

As his lips brushed against her shoulder, she finally found her voice. "Gavin, what are you thinking?"

From the beginning, he had always seen right through her, yet she had never truly understood him.

She had once thought he was interested in Selena, but since that Cooper family banquet, he hadn't shown Selena any particular attention.

If he didn't like Selena, could it be that he liked her?

What would he even like about her?

Her youthful, beautiful body, perhaps? That seemed plausible. After all, in bed, he had always been relentless, even showing a rare obsession that was entirely absent from his usual demeanor.

Gavin's lips pressed firmly against her shoulder, leaving behind a faint mark. He straightened slightly, his eyes flashing with satisfaction as he noticed the mark on her pale skin.

"You don't know what I'm thinking by now?" he said, his voice low and teasing.

As he spoke, his free hand moved to his shirt.

Slowly, deliberately, he began unbuttoning it, one button at a time. From her position, Jolie had a clear view of his chiseled chest and the defined contours of his muscles, revealing themselves bit by bit with

each movement.

Gavin knelt on one knee at the edge of the couch, positioned closely between her legs. The proximity left Jolie with an uncomfortably clear view of his defined abs, each sculpted muscle tempting her hand to reach out. She shifted her bound wrists, her face flushing as she murmured, "Let me go."

"No," Gavin replied firmly, his tone leaving no room for negotiation. He seemed intent on carrying out his so-called "punishment."

Jolie bit her lip in frustration.

Suddenly, his hand tilted her chin upward, and his breath washed over her again as he pressed against her, his body molding softly but firmly against hers. His kisses resumed, tender yet relentless, wrapping her in an intimacy that left her both

breathless and trapped.

Her limbs ached from the awkward position, bound and unable to move freely. Her discomfort mounted, both physically and mentally. Was this what he meant by punishment? If so, it was unbearable. Then, there was a knock at the door.

Jolie tensed up instantly, her entire body stiffening. Gavin's expression darkened as the veins at his temple throbbed in annoyance. His grip on her waist tightened. "You planned this, didn't you?" he asked, his voice low and accusing.

Her breathing was uneven as she stammered, "The knock-you didn't hear it?"

"Ignore it," he replied, his tone cold and dismissive.

Jolie had no strength left to fight him. Desperation setting in, she whispered, "It must be my mom. Please, let me go..."

Gavin's eyes narrowed as he caught the pleading look in hers. She genuinely seemed on the verge of panic.

"Beg me," he said softly, his breath grazing her cheek as his lips brushed against the corner of her mouth.

"Please," Jolie blurted without hesitation, her tone soft and yielding. There was no point resisting him further in such a situation.

Her voice, already softened by exhaustion, sounded even more delicate and pleading. Combined with her lowered demeanor, it was as though she were coquettishly appealing to him.

Chapter 1098

Gavin couldn't resist her soft, pleading tone and surrendered with a resigned sigh.

"Knock, knock, knock!" The knocking grew more insistent, and Jolie, catching her breath, glanced at him.

"Untie me," she said softly, her voice still tinged with warmth, her eyes carrying a dazed allure. She looked utterly captivating.

Gavin swallowed hard, his Adam's apple bobbing visibly. He really didn't want to let her leave the bed, but reluctantly, he unbound her wrists.

Jolie stumbled slightly as she got up, quickly making her way to the bathroom. After washing her face and wrapping herself in a robe to look composed, she approached the door and opened it. Standing outside, as she had feared, was Daisy.

"Jolie, what's going on? Why did it take you so long to open the door?" Daisy frowned, her expression stern.

"I just fell asleep," Jolie replied, her voice calm. "Is something wrong, Mom?"

Daisy stepped forward. "Let me in. I have something to talk to you about."

No way!

Gavin was still inside, and if Daisy discovered him here, she'd likely demand they get married on the spot!

Jolie bit her lip and lowered her gaze. "Mom, it's my birthday. Can we not have this conversation tonight? I really don't want to hear it."

"You..." Daisy faltered, caught off guard by her response.

She gave Jolie a conflicted look, sighed, and said, "Fine. We'll talk when we get back. But my stance remains the same I do not approve of you and Ian." With that, she turned and left.

Jolie watched her retreating figure, the fleeting joy from moments earlier thoroughly extinguished. Closing the door, she turned and froze at the sight before her. Gavin stood by the window, his upper body bare, the defined lines of his muscles illuminated by the soft light, making his physique look both powerful and striking.

"Mr. Cooper, you should leave. I'm tired tonight," Jolie said flatly. She had no desire to continue. Her mood was entirely gone. Hearing her, Gavin turned his head, his gaze flickering briefly over her. Then, without a word, he began walking toward her.

Jolie stared at him, confused by his intentions. "What are you doing?"

Gavin scooped her up without hesitation and carried her toward the bed.

Jolie frowned. "Gavin, I don't want to continue this. Can you just leave me alone?"

He said nothing, placing her gently on the bed. Before she could react, he slid onto the mattress beside her, pulled open her robe, and tossed it to the floor. Her body stiffened immediately-she wasn't wearing anything underneath.

Without hesitation, Gavin's hands moved over her, kneading her softness firmly before wrapping her tightly in his arms. "Sleep."

He held her so securely it felt as though he intended to fuse her into him. The sensation left Jolie feeling uncomfortably restrained.

"Gavin, why don't you go back to your own room to sleep?" she suggested, her voice tinged with awkwardness. Sharing a bed like this wasn't something she was used to

Eyes closed, Gavin's deep voice rumbled, "If you don't want to sleep, we can keep going."

"I'll sleep! I'm sleeping right now," Jolie blurted out, closing her eyes instantly without a moment's hesitation.

The room plunged into darkness. Jolie focused on steadying her breathing, trying to will herself into sleep.

But in the stillness, her senses

seemed amplified. She could feel

the firm strength of the arm wrapped around her, the broad expanse of his chest, and the steady, powerful rhythm of his heartbeat—a sound she'd found herself drawn to in the past, wanting to lean closer and listen more intently.

It was all a mess now. Everything was spiraling out of her control.

Turning onto her side, she shifted to face away from him. Yet in the next moment, Gavin tightened his embrace, pulling her even closer into his arms.

Jolie opened her eyes, staring out

into the pitch-black night beyond the

window. A faint trace of

bewilderment flickered in her gaze

as if she couldn't quite understand how things had come to this

Chapter 1099

The next morning, Jolie woke up nestled in Gavin's arms. His position hadn't changed much throughout the night, holding her securely as if she might vanish if he let go. Turning slightly, she glanced at his peaceful sleeping face. Still asleep, he seemed less sharp, more tranquil, the usual coldness in his features softened. "What are you staring at?"

Just as she was lost in thought, his slightly hoarse voice broke the silence.

Jolie quickly averted her gaze, her tone defensive. "I was wondering why you're still here."

Gavin opened his eyes, his gaze landing on her delicate profile. Without a word, he got up and walked into the bathroom.

The bathroom had disposable toiletries prepared, and Gavin began washing up right there. Jolie cast him a quick glance before silently moving to stand beside him, brushing her teeth as well. Neither of them spoke, but as Jolie caught sight of their reflection in the mirror, a strange thought crossed her mind: they looked like a married couple who had been together for years. Ridiculous. Completely ridiculous.

Finishing quickly, she left the bathroom in a hurry.

However, before she could take more than a few steps, Gavin strode over, wrapped his arms around her, and pulled her back.

"Hey!" she exclaimed, startled, turning to look at him. "What are you doing?"

Gavin's intense gaze locked onto hers, his Adam's apple moving slightly. "The fourth time."

"What? Wait, you-"

Jolie tried to protest, but before she could finish, he had already carried her back to the bed. His kisses, faintly tasting of mouthwash, began to fall one after another.

Jolie was speechless.

Was this man possessed?

...

By the time everything was over, an hour and a half had passed.

The seventh time felt rushed, and it seemed Gavin wasn't entirely satisfied. If Jolie hadn't insisted they stop-reminding him she had things to do-he probably would have kept going, determined to make the most of every opportunity. After all, every chance used meant one less to come, and he seemed intent on treasuring each one.

Jolie dressed and adjusted herself, then said, "I'll go first. Wait a while before you leave."

Gavin glanced at her. "Am I someone who has to hide?"

Jolie gave him a sidelong look. "What do you think, Mr. Cooper?"

Gavin stared at her silently, his gaze heavy but unreadable.

Jolie glanced away indifferently, uninterested in engaging further. She applied her lipstick and walked toward the door.

Behind

Gavin's deep, resonant

voice echoed. "Jolie, your

made the right choice. I

you unfairly."

Her expression immediately turned icy.

"Not necessary," she replied coldly, throwing the words over her shoulder as she opened the door and left.

What a joke.

Not treat her unfairly? What did he take her for?

There were only six times left.

Clenching her teeth, she silently hoped these six times would be over soon.

Later, Jolie joined Daisy to see off the guests. Ian approached her with a smile and asked, "Did you sleep well last night?"

"Yes, well enough," Jolie replied with a nod. "And you?"

Ian chuckled lightly. "Not very well-I was a little excited."

She looked at him, surprised. "Excited about what?"

"Having a girlfriend now," Ian said with a grin. "And knowing we're heading toward marriage

Isn't

it natural to feel excited net

Jolie was momentarily speechless. Forcing a small smile, she said, "I'll get back to work now."

"Alright," Ian said, watching her leave, the smile on his face deepening.

As the cruise ship docked and all the guests disembarked, Jolie returned home with Terence and Daisy.

The moment they entered the house, the atmosphere turned tense.

Terence sat on the couch, his expression grim and foreboding. Daisy stood nearby, her brows furrowed as she looked at Jolie.

Their postures made it clear that

were ready to interrogate her as if she'd committed some unforgivable crime.

Jolie took a seat in a single chair, her gaze lowered, her face calm and composed.

Daisy broke the silence. "Jolie, explain. What is going on?"

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Jolie lifted her gaze to meet Daisy's, a hint of confusion on her face as she asked, "What do you mean by that?" Bang!

Terence slammed his palm on the coffee table, his face already clouded with anger. "Jolie, are you playing dumb? What's going on between you and Ian? Why didn't you tell us beforehand? Do you have any idea how important your future is to this family?" Daisy's expression wasn't much better, her cold gaze fixed on Jolie, carrying an air of disapproval.

Jolie had never seen Terence this furious before. She was momentarily startled but quickly steadied herself.

"I like Ian, and Ian likes me," she said firmly. "Naturally, we ended up together. What's the problem with that?"

"No. Absolutely not!" Terence snapped, his voice harsh and resolute. "You must break up with him immediately."

Jolie shook her head. "I'm not breaking up with Ian."

"Disgraceful!" Terence glared at her, pointing a trembling finger in her direction. "Do you think I won't lay a hand on you? Jolie, I've clearly spoiled you too much. You've grown completely unruly, daring to hide something as significant as a relationship from your family. Go, bring the whip!"

Daisy's face shifted at his words. She quickly grabbed his arm and tried to reason with him. "Don't do this. Jolie will listen to us. We can't hit her-she's a young woman. What if she gets hurt?"

Jolie, however, stood her ground. "I won't break up."

"Bring the whip!" Terence roared, shaking off Daisy's hand. His voice was cold and commanding.

Even Daisy seemed momentarily frightened. She cast a reluctant glance at Jolie before standing and leaving the room.

The whip...

How laughable.

Jolie's mind drifted back to her childhood, to the time when Selena was punished with the so-called whip.

Little Selena had cried and screamed at first, but eventually, she'd fallen silent, enduring the pain without a sound.

Jolie had been terrified back then, hiding in a corner, too scared to make a noise.

And now, would that same whip fall on her?

Before long, Daisy returned, holding a leather whip in her hands. She hesitated, clearly unwilling to hand it over to Terence.

"Jolie, just listen to us. Break up with

Ian. He's not right for you," Daisy pleaded, her tone softer yet firm. "We're your parents. Every decision we make is for your own good. Don't be stubborn. Do you hear me?"

Jolie stood up abruptly, then knelt on the living room floor, her head bowed. "I won't break up," she said quietly but resolutely.

Terence's face darkened as he snatched the whip from Daisy's hands. Without hesitation, he raised it high and brought it down hard on Jolie's back.

"Ah!" Jolie couldn't hold back a cry of pain.

It hurt so much-like fire searing through her skin. The spot where the whip landed felt as though it had been torn open. Her face turned ghostly pale in an instant.

"Will you break up now?" Terence demanded, his voice wavering slightly as he saw her pale face. Despite his anger, there was a flicker of hesitation-after all, this was his beloved daughter. "No," Jolie gritted out through clenched teeth.

Crack!

Crack! Crack!

The whip landed repeatedly on her back, the sharp sound of leather striking flesh reverberating through the room. Jolie cried out only at the start. Afterward, she remained silent, enduring the pain without a sound.

Daisy, unable to watch any longer, rushed forward and grabbed Terence's arm. "That's enough! Stop it! If you keep going, you'll seriously hurt her! She's still our daughter!" Terence paused, his anger having subsided somewhat. Tossing the whip aside, he sat heavily on the couch, glaring at Jolie with frustration and disappointment.

"You'll break up with Ian immediately. I won't allow you to continue seeing him!"

Jolie's mind was hazy from the pain. Her back throbbed with a searing agony that left her lightheaded, every breath shallow and strained. Gathering the last of her strength, she exhaled a shaky word.

"No."

The moment the word left her lips, she collapsed to the floor, her vision going dark as she lost consciousness.