

Divorced Me 1101

Chapter 1101

While Selena was at the Cooper residence, she accidentally burned herself and had to be taken to the hospital.

After getting her wound treated, she stepped out of the treatment room only to see a group of people hurriedly pushing a hospital bed through the hallway. Following closely behind were none other than Terence and Daisy. What were they doing here?

Selena's eyes flickered with surprise. She instinctively stepped out of their line of sight, keeping to the side. Although she was standing nearby and easily noticeable, neither Terence nor Daisy paid her any attention. Their entire focus was on the person on the bed. Selena pressed her lips together and glanced toward the hospital bed. Her eyes widened in shock as the person lying on it came into view. It was Jolie!

Jolie was face down, her back covered in blood. Her clothes were stuck to her wounds, the sight both chaotic and horrifying.

What happened?

How could Jolie be so seriously injured?

"What's going on?"

Aaron's voice broke through her daze. He had walked up beside her, noticing her stunned expression as she stared at the scene ahead.

Selena turned to him. "I just saw someone I know."

"Do you want to go over and say hello?" Aaron asked.

A complicated look flickered in Selena's eyes. "Not yet. I want to figure out what happened to her first."

Aaron nodded. "I'll take care of it."

"Alright," Selena replied, grateful.

Aaron pulled out his phone and made a call, then gently guided Selena out of the hospital.

Soon after, Aveline called, her voice anxious. "How bad is it? Are you seriously hurt?"

"It's nothing major," Selena reassured her. "Just a minor burn. A couple of days with some ointment, and I'll be fine."

Aveline sighed in relief. "You scared me to death!"

Selena chuckled softly. "Don't worry, it's just a superficial injury. By the way, I saw Jolie at the hospital."

"Jolie?" Aveline sounded startled. "What's she doing there?"

Selena frowned. "I don't know either. Her back was covered in blood-it looked serious."

Aveline asked, "Did you go to see her?"

"No," Selena replied, shaking her head slightly. "They were there."

Aveline immediately understood who she was referring to.

Instead, she said, "Which hospital are you at? I can find someone to help you get more information."

"No need," Selena said. "Aaron's already looking into it."

"Ah, good," Aveline responded with relief.

Just then, Aaron returned and relayed the information. "I found out. It's a case of severe whip wounds across her back. She passed out from excessive blood loss." "Whip wounds?" Selena's eyes widened in shock.

Aveline, who overheard, sounded equally stunned. "What? Whip wounds? How could that happen? Who would do such a thing?"

Selena remained silent for a moment.

Who could hurt Jolie?

Jolie was the cherished daughter of

the Quin family-gentle, polite, elegant, and charming. She was the kind of person who rarely made enemies. The only ones who might lay a hand on her were... her own family.

Aveline suddenly remembered something. "By the way, I heard she announced her relationship with the heir of the Moore family at her birthday party last night. Could it be related to that?"

Selena blinked in surprise. "She's dating someone? What about her and Gavin?" Aveline fell quiet for a moment, the complexity of the situation dawning on her.

It seemed they'd all assumed there was something between Jolie and Gavin. But now, Jolie had publicly declared a boyfriend—and it wasn't Gavin. And not long after, she ended up beaten and hospitalized.

This... was impossible to figure out.

Aveline finally said, "Selena, if you're really worried about her, maybe you should find someone to dig into what happened. You might be able to help her."

Chapter 1102

"I... I haven't decided yet," Selena said hesitantly.

Aveline replied, "Take your time. There's no rush. You're in Larbor City now, and so is she. When you're ready, you can always go see her."

"Mm." Selena gave a soft hum of acknowledgment and ended the call.

When she looked up, she met Aaron's gaze. He was staring at her intently.

Selena's breath caught slightly. "What's wrong?"

Aaron reached out and gently brushed her cheek with his fingertips. "If something's troubling you, you can always tell me."

Without a word, Selena leaned into his chest, seeking comfort in his silent presence. Aaron wrapped his arms around her, holding her close without pressing for answers.

He had long since resolved to be with her and had quietly investigated her background. He knew her family life had been far from happy, though she had never spoken of it. He hadn't brought it up either, respecting her silence.

His earlier question had simply been a gentle nudge, hoping she might open up and feel better by sharing. But if she wasn't ready, that was fine.

He could wait. Even a lifetime, if necessary.

...

At the Cooper family villa.

Aveline ended the call and turned to head back to her room, only to stop in her tracks at the sight of Gavin standing a short distance away.

"Brother?" she exclaimed, startled. Walking over to him, she asked, "When did you get back?"

Gavin's voice was low and steady as he asked, "Who did you just say was injured?"

Aveline blinked, a trace of confusion crossing her face. "It's Jolie. She was beaten badly, covered in wounds, and passed out from blood loss. She's in the hospital now."

As she spoke, she studied Gavin's expression and noticed how his face darkened immediately.

"Who did it?" Gavin demanded coldly.

Aveline shook her head. "I don't know."

After a pause, she hesitated before asking, "Brother, what's going on between you and Miss Jolie?"

Aveline didn't ask outright, but her curiosity was evident.

Gavin responded flatly, "She's my woman."

Aveline's jaw nearly dropped. "What?!"

Oh my god! It was true!

Gavin actually admitted it, and from the look on his face, he wasn't joking-he was dead serious.

Without waiting for her reaction, he turned and strode off, his steps purposeful and sharp, his entire demeanor radiating a chilling determination.

"Brother! Don't be impulsive! You need to figure out what's really going on first!" Aveline called after him, hurrying forward a few steps.

But Gavin didn't respond or even glance back. He was already in his car, driving off at high speed.

Just as Aveline stood there, trying to process everything, her phone rang. She looked down to see a video call from Gernard.

"Brother," Aveline greeted as she answered, smiling faintly.

"Hey, baby sister," Gernard replied, his voice full of mock exasperation. "Missed me yet? I finally got the base station set up, so I have internet again. Honestly, what Gavin did to me feels like exile-like being banished to Siberia. Am I even his real brother?"

Aveline stifled a laugh. "That's not important right now. I have something way more urgent to tell you."

Gernard raised a skeptical brow.

"Baby sister, my living conditions are like some sort of trial-by-fire survival course, and you think it's not

Yortant? Do you even care about

your brother anymore?"

Aveline sighed, exasperated. "What I'm talking about is a major event in Gavin's life. Do you want to hear it or not?"

The mention of "Gavin's life" instantly piqued Gernard's interest. His eyes lit up. "What is it? Spill it!"

As expected, gossip immediately trumped hardship.

Aveline recounted her recent conversation with Gavin in vivid detail.

When she finished, Gernard's

expression was one of utter

disbelief. "He really said that? Gavin

That emotionally repressed, uptight person actually said that?!"

Chapter 1103

Aveline said, "It's absolutely true. I should've recorded it. Then you wouldn't doubt me."

"No, no, I'm not doubting you," Gernard replied quickly.

"I just didn't expect it. Brother actually said something like that? He's always been distant from women. Growing up, there were girls who liked him, but he never paid them any attention. During school, he focused on studying, and after that, on work. Honestly, I thought he might never learn how to date. And now... he's finally thawed!"

He sounded amazed, but soon his brows furrowed. "This Jolie-she's Selena's younger sister, isn't she?"

Aveline nodded. "That's right."

Gernard's frown deepened. "I think I've seen her before. She does resemble Selena a bit. Baby sister, you know Gavin had feelings for Selena before, but he came into the picture too late. She was already married. Do you think... is it possible he sees Jolie as a stand-in for Selena?"

Aveline's expression immediately grew tense. If that were true, it would indeed be unsettling.

What woman could tolerate being treated as someone else's replacement? Especially when that someone was her own sister?

After a pause, Aveline said firmly, "I don't think so. Brother isn't the type to do something like that."

Gernard clicked his tongue thoughtfully. "You never know. Unrequited love can make people act in strange ways."

Aveline fell silent, her thoughts drifting. Suddenly, she was reminded of Lucas.

Hadn't he done his fair share of outrageous things for love?

Just as she was about to respond, the video feed froze, and Gernard's image on the screen went completely still.

"Gernard?" Aveline waved her phone and adjusted her position, but the call remained stuck.

It seemed the connection had dropped.

She sighed and ended the call. Turning, she walked back to her room and opened the door.

Inside, Lucas was sitting by the twin stroller, his strikingly handsome face softened by an expression of quiet tenderness as he gazed at the two babies, Pax and Joy. The gentleness in his eyes was something Aveline had never seen before. She blinked, her heart warming at the sight.

What a beautiful, peaceful moment.

Aveline walked over to Lucas, cupped his face, and kissed him twice.

Lucas wrapped an arm around her waist, his warm gaze fixed on her. "What's gotten into you? Why are you being so forward today?"

"Just felt like kissing you," Aveline replied with a playful smile.

"Feel free," Lucas said, his eyes filled with affection. "Anywhere you want."

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When Jolie woke again, the sky outside was dim. The hospital room was silent, and a glance around revealed that she was alone.

Her back throbbed with searing pain,

making her brow furrow as tears threatened to spill. She exhaled shakily, a wave of sadness washing over her.

This was the first time she had ever been hit in her life. From childhood, she'd always been cherished and protected.

Was this the punishment she'd face every time she defied her family's wishes?

What did she truly mean to them?

As her thoughts spiraled, the door to the room opened, and Daisy walked in. Seeing her awake, Daisy immediately broke into a smile.

"Jolie, you're finally awake. Does

your back still hurt? Are you hungry?

Thirsty?" she asked, her voice filled with

genuine concern.

Her worry wasn't feigned; every bit of it was real.

Jolie looked at her pale-faced and said, "It hurts."

Daisy's eyes turned red as she reached out to gently touch Jolie's face. "If you knew it would hurt, why didn't you just listen to your father? He was angry-you could have just given in."

Chapter 1104

Jolie closed her eyes and said weakly, "I won't break up."

"You..." Daisy was taken aback by her stubbornness.

Jolie had always been the most obedient child, the one who listened without question. Yet now, she was completely unyielding.

Sighing heavily, Daisy sat down beside her. At this point, there was little she could do. Terence had already lashed out, but even that didn't make Jolie relent. If she refused to break up, what more could they do?

For now, Daisy decided to leave the matter alone. If talking to Jolie wouldn't work, perhaps convincing Ian would be the way forward.

"Are you hungry?" Daisy asked after a pause.

"No," Jolie replied faintly. The only sensation she could focus on was the pain radiating from her back. She lay on her stomach, too afraid to move.

Daisy let out a soft sigh. "If you get hungry, let me know. I'll make you whatever you want."

"Mm." Jolie barely responded, closing her eyes as exhaustion pulled her into a restless sleep.

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Night fell, and Jolie stirred uneasily, a strange feeling washing over her as if someone was watching her.

She opened her eyes groggily, her vision adjusting to the dim room. Her breath hitched when she saw a figure seated beside her bed, staring at her intently. The room was dark, and at some point, Daisy had left.

Fully awake now, Jolie's gaze focused on the figure. Her voice, weak and hoarse, broke the silence. "Mr. Cooper?"

Gavin sat there, his eyes fixed on her, his expression unreadable. "You've surprised me," he said, his voice low and steady.

He had investigated the situation, uncovering the truth effortlessly. He knew why she'd been beaten-because she'd refused to break up with Ian.

And the reason for her resistance? Her unwavering attachment to Ian.

How laughable.

All of this for Ian?

Jolie caught the faint mockery in his tone. Pressing her lips together, she replied softly, "You shouldn't be here, Mr. Cooper."

She and Gavin had no official connection. If someone saw him in her hospital room, it would cause unnecessary trouble.

Gavin suddenly stood, leaning over her. Before she could react, he grabbed her chin and, despite the awkward angle, pressed his lips firmly against hers. "Mmph!"

Jolie gasped in surprise, letting out a muffled sound. She couldn't move any attempt to do so sent sharp pain shooting through her back, bringing tears to her eyes.

His kiss was intense, almost devouring as if he wanted to consume her whole. It ended just as abruptly as it began, and he released her with a look of cold satisfaction.

"So eager to draw boundaries with

me," he said, his tone biting. "Does your boyfriend know that the night before you so resolutely refused to

break up, you were still in my arms?"

Jolie's eyes filled with tears, shimmering with indignation. "Gavin, I don't owe you anything anymore. You don't have the right to say that to me!"

Whatever she had owed him, she'd repaid. Those encounters had settled the debt.

It was he who had taken advantage of the situation. If not for his interference, she wouldn't be in this position, enduring such pain.

The pain was unbearable.

Despite her effort to hold them back, tears spilted down her cheeks. One teardrop fell onto Gavin's hand, which was still holding her chin, startling him with its unexpected warmth.

He released her abruptly and sank back into the chair, a sudden wave of frustration washing over him.

Jolie sniffled and turned her face away, avoiding his gaze. "You should leave. In my current state, I'm not in any condition to continue repaying my debt." Gavin's sharp eyes remained fixed on her. "You keep resisting your family, refusing to be tied to me. Are you afraid it won't lead anywhere?" Jolie stayed silent.

He pressed on. "You don't want to be pushed into anything by your family. The more they try to force you, the more you push back, isn't that right?" Her hands clenched tightly around the bedsheet. Every time he laid her thoughts bare, she felt an acute sense of vulnerability.

Gavin leaned forward slightly, his

voice lowering. "Jolie, what you're doing is pointless. You're so determined not to break up, but do

you even know what kind of man lan

is?

Chapter 1105

Gavin pulled out a document and handed it to her.

Jolie glanced at it, her eyes widening in shock as she realized it was a detailed dossier on lan.

Staring at Gavin in disbelief, she asked, "What... what is this supposed to mean?"

She didn't even look at the contents again, her mind swirling with chaos.

"To show you the kind of person you're so adamantly defending," Gavin said coolly, his expression steady.

Jolie's grip on the bedsheet tightened as her thoughts spun out of control. She struggled to process what was happening.

"Why are you doing this?"

Their relationship was supposed to be simple—a transactional repayment of a favor. So why was he meddling in her life? Why investigate Ian? Why did he care so much about her relationship with Ian?

A flood of questions filled her mind, and though the answer seemed obvious, she couldn't bring herself to believe it.

Gavin looked into her dark, clear eyes, finding something there he couldn't quite decipher. It was rare for him to not understand someone's emotions, and it unsettled him.

He frowned slightly. "What are you asking?"

"I..." Jolie opened her mouth but couldn't find the words. She hesitated, a wave of embarrassment washing over her.

Pressing her lips together, she closed her eyes briefly, then decided to ask outright. "Gavin, are you doing all this because... you like me? Because you want to date me seriously?" Her question hung in the air, plunging the room into silence.

Jolie's lashes quivered with nervous tension, her breaths shallow as her heart pounded wildly. She couldn't believe she'd just said that, yet now that it was out, all she could do was wait for his response. Gavin's sharp gaze remained fixed on her, his expression unreadable. Her direct question seemed to catch him off guard, as though it had unlocked a thought he hadn't fully explored before.

He didn't respond immediately, the weight of her words filling the space between them.

Jolie felt her chest tighten with every passing second. The quiet tension was unbearable, and her mind raced with what his answer might mean. Would he confirm her suspicion? Or would he dismiss her outright? Finally, Gavin leaned back slightly in his chair, his lips curving into a faint, enigmatic smile. "And what if I am?" he said, his voice steady, yet carrying a depth she couldn't quite grasp.

Her breath caught. For a moment, the world seemed to tilt, and she wasn't sure how to respond.

Gavin could clearly recognize it now-he cared about her far more than he should.

It wasn't just about physical attraction. He wanted to see her, to witness her every smile, every frown, every emotion, knowing they were connected to him.

Gavin had never been in a relationship, nor had he paid much attention to others navigating romance. He only knew one thing he wanted her to stay by his side. "Maybe," he finally said after a long pause.

"Huh?" Jolie blinked, thinking she'd misheard him.

"It's either yes or no. What's with the 'maybe'?" she asked, her face a mix of confusion and frustration.

Gavin's tone remained calm. "I have

no reason to hide it from you. I've never been in a relationship, and I don't really know how to be in one. I don't even know what certain emotions mean." en

What?

Jolie's eyes widened in disbelief. The rumors were true? He'd really never been in a relationship before?

She hesitated for a moment, then asked, "So... what do you feel about me? What emotions are you experiencing?"

As soon as the words left her lips, her face flushed red. It was too embarrassing to ask something so direct.

Unlike her Gavin seemed completely

unfazed. His tone was steady, almost clinical, as he replied, "I want to see you all the time. I don't want

you with another man."

Jolie was speechless.

Okay, he clearly liked her.

Everything he'd done suddenly made sense.

"Also, I want to kiss you. And to—"

"Stop!" Jolie quickly interrupted, waving her hands to cut him off. She turned her face away, refusing to look at him.

All Gavin could see was the back of her head. He frowned slightly. "What's with that reaction?"

He thought back on his words and

realized they had essentially been a confession. If he could admit to Aveline that Jolie was his woman, there was no reason to hold back in front of Jolie herself.

Jolie's muffled voice broke through his thoughts. "Give me a moment. I'm feeling overwhelmed."

"There's nothing to be overwhelmed about," Gavin said calmly. "Either you agree to be together or you reject me. Those are the only two options."

Chapter 1106

Upon hearing this, Jolie looked at him. "Can I refuse you?"

"Of course you can," Gavin replied without hesitation.

Jolie eyed him skeptically, finding it hard to believe he would give in so easily.

Gavin figured that even if she refused, there were still six obligations left to fulfill. Once those were over, their ties would be completely severed. He was confident that by then, she wouldn't occupy any more of his thoughts. In his life, emotions had never been a priority. Career and power were always paramount. He had set his goals clearly from a young age.

So even though he now realized he liked Jolie, he wouldn't do anything irrational for the sake of feelings. That wasn't who he was.

Jolie's eyes gradually brightened. She had assumed he was the kind of person who would stop at nothing to get what he wanted, resorting to forceful tactics if she disagreed. His rationality made things much simpler! "Mr. Cooper, I'm sorry," Jolie said after deliberating for a moment. "We're not very compatible."

"Alright."

The rejection was evident.

Gavin's expression remained neutral as he replied calmly, "There are still six obligations left. Don't forget them."

With that, he got up and left the hospital room.

Silence enveloped the room. Jolie let out a sigh of relief. It seemed that after six more encounters, they would have no connection at all. That was ideal.

Her gaze fell on the documents in front of her. Reaching out, she flipped through them. Gavin had conducted a thorough investigation, covering everything from Ian's birth to events from his childhood. Every detail was meticulously documented. Jolie's lips twitched slightly.

This man... she really didn't know how to describe him.

She continued reading and noticed that after lan went abroad, he met a girl who was also studying overseas. They fell in love and started a relationship.

However, lan had never introduced her to his family. Even now, they were still together. In fact, right after attending her birthday banquet, lan had gone to see his girlfriend.

Tsk, tsk...

The investigation was far too detailed.

Does this man have OCD or something?

After finishing all the documents, Jolie felt no waves of emotion. After all, she didn't love lan, so she was indifferent to anything about him.

She tore the documents into pieces

and threw them into the trash can.

Feeling a pang of hunger, she

realized she was all alone in the

hospital room and couldn't move on her own.

The lighthearted ease on her face quickly faded, replaced by a deep sense of loneliness.

Just then, the door to the room opened.

Jolie looked up to see a woman she didn't recognize entering. The stranger was dressed in a caregiver's uniform.

"Miss Quin, hello. I'm your caregiver.

You can call me Jackie. Here's your dinner. Would you like to eat

something?" Jackie spoke with an et

warm smile, her kind demeanor radiating an inexplicable sense of comfort.

Jolie nodded. "Alright."

Then she asked, "Where were you earlier?"

"Huh?" Jackie blinked in confusion. "I just got here."

Jolie paused. "Just arrived?"

"Yes," Jackie confirmed with a

"A man came to the caregiver station earlier and asked for

someone. It happened to be my turn, so I came over."

Jolie tightened her grip on the spoon in her hand.

It was Gavin who had arranged for the caregiver.

So, the Quin family hadn't even bothered to get one for her? Was this part of their punishment for her?

At that moment, Jolie felt completely disheartened.

Jackie added, "Miss Quin, if you need anything, just let me know. I'll be staying here overnight."

"Alright," Jolie replied gloomily and began to eat.

Because of her injuries, her meals had to be light and bland. After finishing the meal, she felt no satisfaction, just a filled stomach.

Chapter 1107

The next day, Daisy came to visit Jolie. Noticing Jackie in the room, she frowned and asked, "Who are you?"

Jackie replied with a friendly tone, "I'm Miss Quin's caregiver. And you are?"

Daisy's expression shifted briefly before she responded, "You can leave now. There's nothing for you to do here."

Jackie grew wary and glanced at Jolie for guidance.

Jolie said calmly, "Jackie, I'd like some fruit."

Jackie immediately understood that Jolie was subtly asking her to step out.

"Alright," she nodded and left the room.

As soon as the door closed, Daisy turned to Jolie. "Jolie, did you look into that caregiver? What's her background? Is she reliable?"

Jolie met her mother's gaze, her tone flat. "Sure. I'll investigate later."

Daisy hesitated for a moment as if she suddenly remembered something. "I'm sorry, Jolie. Yesterday I forgot about you. There was an issue at the company, and your father and I were tied up until late. Were you alright? You didn't go hungry, did you?" Jolie found it laughable.

Forgot? That was just an excuse.

It was nothing more than her father's attempt to make her bend to his will by withholding care.

"It's fine," Jolie replied evenly. "If you don't want to arrange a caregiver for me, I can find one myself."

For a moment, Daisy looked uncomfortable. The Quin family had always prided itself on how much they cherished their daughter, but this was a poor reflection of that claim.

The atmosphere in the room grew tense.

Jolie's back injury still hurt terribly, and when the doctor came to change her bandages, the pain was almost unbearable. After forcing down a few bites of breakfast earlier, she now felt pale and drained, with no energy to engage in conversation. She finally spoke, her voice faint. "Mom, if there's nothing else, you should go. I need some rest."

Daisy frowned. "I came to see you, and you're actually trying to send me away?"

Jolie, too exhausted to argue, said, "You don't have to leave if you don't want to, but I'm going to sleep."

With that, she closed her eyes.

Daisy stood there speechless. She was annoyed but couldn't bring herself to express it as she looked at Jolie's pale, fragile face. After a moment of silence, she relented. "Fine, I won't bother you. Calme if you need anything."

With those words, she turned and left.

Jolie's lips curled into a silent, mocking smile.

For the next month, no one from the Quin family showed up. Jolie had expected this, so it didn't bother her in the slightest.

What surprised her was Selena's

regular visits. Every few days, Selena

would drop by. She didn't do much and just sat on the couch playing with her phone. Sometimes she came in the morning, other times in the afternoon, but she never stayed for meals.

By now, Jolie could sit up in bed, and the pain in her back had lessened. One day, unable to hold back her curiosity, she asked, "What are you doing here?"

Selena glanced at her and replied nonchalantly, "Just hanging out."

Jolie was speechless. Though exasperated, she found herself smiling more frequently.

The hospital room door opened, and Jackie walked in. Seeing Selena, she greeted her cheerfully. "Miss Quin, you're here! I bought some fresh oranges today. Let me peel them, and you two can share."

"Thanks, Jackie," Selena replied with a faint smile.

As Jackie began preparing the oranges, she asked casually, "You both have the last name Quin. Are you sisters? It's hard to keep track sometimes!" Jolie smiled and said, "You can call her Selena and call me Jolie."

Selena shot her a quick glance. "Jackie, just call me Selena."

Jackie chuckled. "You two remind me of my daughters. Always bickering, but in the end, neither can stay away from the other. It's really sweet."

Chapter 1108

Jolie instinctively glanced at Selena after hearing that, noticing the awkward expression on her face. After a brief pause, she suddenly called out, "Sister." Selena shot up from her seat as if startled.

"I think I'll skip the oranges. I just remembered I have something to do. I'll head out first," she said quickly.

Without waiting for Jolie to respond, she hurried out of the hospital room, looking like she was running from a pack of wild animals.

Jackie blinked in surprise. "What was that about?"

Jolie replied casually, "Maybe... she felt embarrassed."

Jackie chuckled warmly. "That's normal, perfectly normal. When there's tension and one side tries to make peace, the other usually feels awkward. Your relationship with Selena always seems a bit like this, doesn't it?"

Jolie lowered her gaze slightly and said softly, "She left home a long time ago."

Jackie raised her eyebrows. "Sounds like there's been some serious conflict."

Jolie didn't elaborate. The fact that Selena was willing to visit her was enough to make her happy. She had called her "sister," and Selena hadn't objected. For that, Jolie felt content. In this world, she still had family who cared for her in their own way. Her phone buzzed, pulling her from her thoughts. She glanced at the screen. It was a message from Ian.

"Do you have time today? Can you meet?"

Jolie typed a reply. "Not really. I've been busy with scheduled courses."

A moment later, another message appeared. "Your mother came to see me. She asked me to break up with you. Seems like your family isn't too fond of me."

Jolie's expression darkened as she quickly responded, "What did you say?"

"I said that we're truly in love, and no matter what, I wouldn't break up with you," Ian replied.

"That's a bit dramatic," Jolie wrote back.

"Our goals are aligned, so we need to stay firm," Ian messaged.

"Agreed," Jolie replied, setting her phone aside. Her emotions remained unmoved.

Their determination was clear. So, what would her parents do next?

If all went as expected, she and Ian would soon be engaged. They would marry, share a courteous and predictable life, and grow old with quiet companionship. It would be a life so predictable that she could see it unfold to the very end.

Jolie closed her eyes, staying silent for a long while.

...

Her back injury had scabbed over, and she was ready to be discharged.

On the day of her discharge, Daisy showed up unexpectedly. Seeing her mother appear out of the blue, Jolie felt momentarily dazed but kept her expression neutral.

"I'm here to handle your discharge paperwork," Daisy said. "Once that's done, you'll be heading abroad. You'll study overseas for a year. I've arranged everything. You just need to pack and leave."

"Abroad?" Jolie froze in shock.

Daisy nodded. "That's right. You love photography, don't you? I won't stop you from studying it. Use this time to focus on your craft, and when you return, you can hold your own photography exhibition. As for

everything else, we'll discuss it later."

A chill ran through Jolie's body.

So, this was their next move. Unable to pressure her, unable to make Ian break up with her, they had resorted to this.

Sending her abroad, separating her from Ian—an entire year away—was enough to change everything.

Jolie shook her head firmly. "No. You made this decision without consulting me. I don't agree with it."

Daisy, however, smiled as if Jolie's

refusal was nothing but childish defiance. "Jolie, don't be silly.

Everything we do is for your own good. Of course, there's no need to consult you. Now, let's head home for dinner. Your flight leaves tomorrow morning."

Chapter 1109

Daisy's stance was unyielding, leaving Jolie no room to argue. She took her straight back to the Quin family home and even confiscated her phone. Meanwhile, just half an hour after they left, Selena arrived at the hospital. Noticing the empty room, she froze for a moment before grabbing a nearby nurse. "Excuse me, where is the patient from this room?" Selena asked.

The nurse replied, "She's been discharged."

"Discharged?" Selena was stunned. "So soon?"

It wasn't surprising that Jolie was ready to be discharged, but Selena couldn't believe she'd leave without saying a word. She pressed on, "Did she leave on her own?"

The nurse shook her head. "No, her mother came to take her."

Selena nodded slowly, her expression darkening. So that was it.

Anger flickered in Selena's chest. Jolie had been severely injured, and Daisy hadn't bothered to visit her in an entire month. Yet, the moment it was time for her to leave, Daisy suddenly showed up.

For the longest time, Selena had assumed Jolie was the favored one, the daughter cherished and protected by her parents. She thought Daisy would be heartbroken over Jolie's injuries. But now, she realized she had been completely wrong. No wonder Jolie always seemed unhappy.

Standing in the hallway, Selena frowned deeply, lost in thought. Was there more to this family dynamic than she understood?

Back at the Quin family home, Jolie had been trying to get her phone back, but Daisy refused every time.

"I'm going abroad," Jolie argued. "At least let me inform my friends."

"There's no need," Daisy replied coolly. "Your so-called friends are of no help to you. In fact, they might even lead you astray. It's better if you cut ties with them altogether."

Jolie's frustration boiled over. "Mom, what exactly do you take me for?"

Daisy frowned. "You're my daughter, of course. What else would I take you for?"

"Then why don't you treat me like an adult?" Jolie shot back. "I'm grown up now, yet you've taken my phone and meddled in my relationships. Don't you think you've gone too far?"

Daisy's expression hardened. "Everything I'm doing is for your own good. You're young and naive, unable to see how dangerous people can be. I'm only trying to protect you from getting hurt in the future. Why can't you understand that?"

Jolie felt an overwhelming sense of suffocation pressing in from all sides. She struggled to breathe, her gaze turning cold and unfamiliar as she looked at Daisy.

It dawned on her that she might have never truly known this woman who was supposed to be her mother.

Without saying a word, Jolie turned and headed upstairs.

Daisy didn't stop her. She didn't need to. She was confident that Jolie had no way to rebel and would ultimately fall in line.

In her room, Jolie stood in the middle of the lavish, cozy space. A bitter smile crept onto her face.

Look at this.

This place was nothing more than an ornate birdcage.

And she was the bird, her wings chained, doomed never to fly.

As evening fell, Terence returned home. Daisy instructed a servant to call Jolie downstairs.

When Jolie entered the dining room, her face was void of emotion. She saw her parents already seated at the table.

Terence glanced at her and asked, "How's your recovery?"

"It still hurts," Jolie replied flatly.

Terence's expression darkened as

he let out a cold snort. "If it didn't

hurt, would you learn your lesson? I heard from your mother that you don't want to go abroad?"

Jolie met his gaze. "Does it matter if I don't want to go?"

"It does," Terence said with a nod.

Jolie's expression didn't change. She knew there was a catch. There always was.

Sure enough, Terence added, "If you break up with Ian Wheeler and start seeing Gavin Cooper, you won't have to go."

Chapter 1110

As expected.

Jolie lowered her gaze slightly. Her pale face carried a fragile determination as she sat at the edge of the dining table. Her slender frame looked too weak to resist, yet the defiance in her eyes told another story. She couldn't escape.

But she wasn't willing to give in.

"I won't break up with him," she said, raising her eyes with a clear and unwavering resolve.

Terence let out a cold laugh. "Well, you've got guts. You really are my daughter. Let's see how long your resolve lasts!"

With that, he abruptly stood and stormed out of the dining room.

Daisy frowned at Jolie. "Jolie, why are you so stubborn? Ian Wheeler isn't the right person for you. Why won't you listen to us? Do you really think we'd harm you?" Jolie replied calmly, "Is what's 'right' always the best?"

"Of course," Daisy said firmly. "If someone fits in every way, that's what's best."

"I don't agree," Jolie said softly, her gaze dropping as she rejected her mother's words.

"You're being too narrow-minded," Daisy sighed in frustration. "One day, you'll understand that everything we're doing is for your own good."

Jolie didn't respond further and began eating, though there was no life to her actions. She looked like a lifeless robot, her spirit dulled and devoid of any vibrancy.

...

After Jolie was discharged, Jackie immediately passed the news to Gavin.

Gavin sat in his expansive office, his fingers lightly gripping his phone. He kept tapping the screen to wake it, only to let it go dark again moments later. This repeated several times, his brow furrowing more deeply with each cycle.

What was he waiting for?

Was he hoping for a message from her?

But that night, she had rejected him.

And for the past month, he hadn't reached out to her either.

Even though he received updates about her every single day.

Jackie, always warm-hearted, seemed to have sensed his thoughts and took it upon herself to report everything about Jolie's daily life.

She told him what Jolie ate each day, how her injury was healing, whether she was resting well, how long she watched TV, how much time she spent on her phone and who came to visit her.

Through Jackie's updates, it felt as though a vivid, living image of Jolie appeared right in front of him.

Gavin had assumed that since they weren't together, time would eventually dull his feelings.

To his surprise, the opposite was true—he found himself wanting her more with each passing day. To see her. To hold her. To kiss her. To make her his, entirely and without restraint.

These thoughts grew wilder and more uncontrollable with each passing day.

Gavin knew this wasn't right. She had rejected him. She had her principles, and he ought to respect them.

But another part of him argued what was wrong with this?

If he wanted her, he should have her.

Her current boyfriend was worthless and unfit for her. He should help her make the right choice.

Caught in this internal conflict, Gavin grew increasingly agitated.

His hand, which had been spinning a pen between his fingers, froze

mid. After a brief pause, he

grabbed his phone and dialed her number.

"Beep... beep... beep..."

After three rings, the call was automatically disconnected.

She wasn't answering his call?

Had she forgotten she still owed him six more obligations?

Gavin's gaze darkened, the usual calm in his eyes disrupted by an unusual storm of emotions.

Pressing the intercom button, he called his assistant into the office.

"Yes, Mr. Cooper? Do you need something?"

Gavin's voice was low and firm. "Look into her situation."

The assistant blinked in confusion. "Her?"

Gavin shot him a glance. "Jolie Quin."

Understanding dawned on the assistant. "Oh, right! Got it. I'll handle it right away!"

As he turned to leave, his face betrayed his shock.

Gavin actually cared about a woman!