

## **Divorced Me 1111**

### Chapter 1111

It was nothing short of breaking news!

If this got out, the entire company would lose their minds in an explosion of gossip!

The assistant fought to keep his excitement in check, pulled out his phone, and started digging into Jolie's situation.

In less than ten minutes, he returned, his expression serious as he knocked on Gavin's office door.

"Mr. Cooper, I've got an update. Miss Quin is currently at the Quin family home. I also found out she's booked on a flight tomorrow morning at 8 a.m. to Montara for a year-long program."

Gavin, who had been reviewing documents, looked up sharply, his brows furrowing. "Studying abroad?"

"Yes, that's correct," the assistant confirmed. "The Quins booked her ticket before she was even discharged from the hospital."

Such a rushed departure-why the urgency?

The assistant glanced at Gavin's unreadable expression and cautiously asked, "Mr. Cooper, should I dig further? Maybe find out the reason for her trip?"

"No need," Gavin replied coolly, before turning his attention back to his work.

The assistant exited, but his curiosity burned hotter than ever.

Mr. Cooper wasn't intrigued? Really?

Because he certainly was!

Unfortunately, without Gavin's orders, he couldn't investigate further.

As night fell, the city's lights glittered like stars, but the villa district remained serene and quiet. Jolie stood on her balcony, gazing at the night sky. Her eyes lingered on the scattered stars, her heart heavy with an indescribable weight. A soft knock broke her thoughts.

...

She turned, her voice calm. "Come in."

The door opened quietly, and a maid stepped inside, balancing a tray of fruit.

"Miss Jolie," the maid said softly, approaching her. Then, with a subtle movement, she handed Jolie a phone.

Jolie looked at the maid and asked, "Aren't you afraid my parents will find out?"

The maid nodded earnestly. "I am, but I want to help you. The worst they can do is fire me. But I know how difficult things are for you right now, and I owe you. If it weren't for you, I'd have lost my grandmother."

The maid's grandmother, who suffered from dementia, had wandered off one day, and Jolie happened to find her. Jolie had simply called the maid to let her know, thinking it was a minor act of kindness.

But to the maid, it meant everything. She knew how rare it was for someone from a wealthy family to even notice their staff, let alone remember anything about their families. en

To her, Jolie was extraordinary-kind and thoughtful in ways few others were.

Even if it meant losing her job, she was determined to help Jolie.

Jolie smiled warmly at her. "Thank you."

The maid shook her head, placed the fruit tray on the table, and quietly left the room.

Jolie glanced at the phone in her hand and powered it on.

Instantly, a flood of messages lit up the screen.

She went through them one by one, carefully reading and replying to each. Finally, she dialed Selena.

"Hello?" Selena answered almost immediately.

Jolie's voice caught in her throat, her words slow and hesitant. After a long pause, she said, "Sister, can you help me? I don't want to go abroad."

The next morning, at six sharp, Daisy came to wake Jolie.

Her luggage had already been packed. Without any chance to resist, Jolie was dragged out of the house and into the car heading to the airport.

The early morning roads were beginning to fill with cars. The soft light of dawn filtered through the mist, casting a dreamy glow over the city.

"I've arranged everything," Daisy said. "Someone will pick you up once you land. I'm busy right now, but when I have time, I'll fly over to visit you." Jolie stared out the window, silent.

Daisy didn't care about her daughter's attitude. After all, in decisions like this, Jolie had no say.

At the airport, after passing through security, Jolie suddenly said, "I don't feel well. I need to use the restroom."

Chapter 1112

Daisy said, "I'll go with you."

Jolie didn't respond, simply turning and heading toward the restroom.

The restroom was spacious, and Jolie entered one of the stalls, locking the door behind her.

Daisy waited near the sinks, glancing at her watch. After five minutes, her brow furrowed. "Jolie?" she called out.

From inside, Jolie answered faintly, "My stomach hurts."

Daisy stepped closer to the stall. "Is it serious?"

"It shouldn't be," Jolie replied. "I'll be fine in a bit."

"Alright, I'll wait outside," Daisy said, though her expression showed growing impatience.

The restroom wasn't in the VIP lounge, so it was busier and less pristine than Daisy was used to. She stood with an air of distaste, her irritation evident in her posture.

"Excuse me, whose luggage is this? One of the bags seems to be damaged," an airport staff member said, approaching with a phone displaying a photo of the suitcase in question. Daisy glanced at the screen, her frown deepening. "It's mine. What happened to it?"

"I'm not sure," the staff member explained. "It suddenly came apart. Could you come check it out?"

Daisy hesitated, glancing back toward the restroom.

She felt uneasy leaving, but the damaged suitcase contained some valuable items. If something was missing, it might delay the flight.

"Jolie, when you're done, come find me," Daisy called into the restroom.

"Alright," Jolie replied, her voice calm.

Daisy reluctantly exited the restroom.

Two minutes later, the stall door opened, and Jolie stepped out.

As she smoothed her clothes, the airport announcement began broadcasting the boarding call for her flight.

Jolie walked straight toward the boarding gate.

Daisy, standing a short distance away, quickly called out, "Jolie, your luggage!"

Jolie raised her hand, holding up a small bag that contained all her important documents.

Daisy froze, realization dawning-those items weren't in the suitcase?

By the time she looked up again, Jolie had already passed through the gate and was walking further inside.

Daisy stared at her daughter's retreating figure, a faint sense of unease creeping into her heart.

Jolie hadn't even turned back to say goodbye. Was she really that angry?

Feeling lost and unsettled, Daisy left the airport.

Half an hour later, a slim figure emerged from the airport lobby and slipped into a waiting car.

"Phew..." Jolie exhaled deeply, pulling off her hat and running a hand through her hair, her tension visibly easing.

In the front seat, Aaron and Selena turned to look at her.

"Hello, Aaron!" Jolie greeted with a bright smile, extending her hand confidently.

Aaron shook her hand and asked, "Any problems?"

"None. Everything went smoothly," Jolie replied, shaking her head.

Selena glanced at her. "Where do you want to stay? Larbor City, or somewhere else?"

"I'm not sure yet," Jolie said thoughtfully. "But I'm definitely not staying at your place. I don't want to be a third wheel."

Selena considered for a moment before offering, "Then stay at my apartment."

With that, the car pulled away from the curb and headed toward the city.

The car pulled into the underground

complex. Aaron and

parking lot of an upscale zie

to the elevator, taking it up to the 21st floor.

As they stepped out, Selena said, "You'll need to register your fingerprint for access. This will be your place for now, but if you don't like it, we can find somewhere else."

She turned to look at Jolie, only to be caught off guard when Jolie suddenly lunged forward and hugged her tightly.

Selena froze, her entire body stiffening in shock.

"What are you doing?" she asked, her voice awkward and rigid.

Jolie clung to her, her voice muffled but filled with emotion. "Sister, thank you. I don't know what I'd do without you."

Selena looked utterly distressed, her

eyes darting toward Aaron like a

silent plea for help. She desperately

hoped he'd step in and save her

from this overwhelming moment.

Chapter 1113

Aaron watched the scene unfold with a faint smirk, clearly amused and making no effort to intervene.

Selena's eyes grew even more resentful as she glanced at him, silently begging for rescue.

After a moment, Jolie finally released her, noticing the stiffness in her posture. With reddened eyes, she said softly, "I'll take a look around."

"Go on, go on," Selena said quickly, waving her hand like she had just been freed from a burden.

Jolie began exploring the apartment. The three-hundred-square-meter flat was spacious and fully equipped. With just a few groceries and some basic household items, it was ready to live in. When she returned to the living room, she saw Selena ending a phone call.

"I've already arranged for someone to pick up what you need. For now, don't go out," Selena said firmly.

Jolie hesitated. "The flight lands in a few hours. Are you sure no one will realize something's off?"

"They won't," Selena replied confidently. She opened her phone and pulled up two photos. Pointing at the first picture, she explained, "This is what your stand-in originally looked like." Then, with a swipe of her screen, she brought up the second image.

Jolie gasped, her eyes widening in shock.

The person in the photo looked almost identical to her.

"This is her after makeup and disguise," Selena said, her tone calm and assured. "Even if your parents were here, they might not recognize the difference right away."

Jolie stared at the image, astonished by the meticulous preparation. "Where did you find someone this skilled?"

"Plenty of people are good at makeup and disguise these days," Selena replied matter-of-factly. "I just found the best of them."

Jolie sighed with a mix of relief and amazement. "It feels good knowing someone's got my back."

Selena fell silent, her expression briefly unreadable.

An hour later, the person tasked with shopping returned, arms full of bags. Jolie helped unpack everything, organizing the kitchen and pantry.

As she worked, she called over her shoulder, "I'll cook lunch for you both. What do you want to eat?"

Selena shook her head. "I'm not staying for lunch."

Jolie looked at Selena and asked, "Why not? I'm a great cook, you know."

Selena shook her head again. "I've got other things to do."

At that, Aaron raised an eyebrow and said, "Other things? Funny, I don't recall hearing about that."

Selena immediately shot him a glare.



Why was he exposing her like this? Was he doing it on purpose?

Jolie blinked, quickly catching on. Selena clearly didn't want to stay, likely due to some awkward or stubborn reason.

Setting aside what she was doing,

Jolie walked over to Selena and latched onto her arm, saying, "Sister, stay for lunch. It's just one meal. It won't take long. Please? Pretty please?"

Jolie was an expert at playing coy, softening her voice and swaying Selena's arm gently, her bright, pleading eyes fixed on her. Selena could barely hold her ground

"Let go first," Selena stammered, her voice betraying her discomfort.

"Promise me you'll stay, and I'll let go," Jolie insisted, doubling down on her charm.

Selena's arm prickled with goosebumps, and she hurriedly relented. "Fine, fine! I'll stay. Just let go!"

"Deal!" Jolie released her immediately, satisfied, and went back to sorting through the groceries.

After over an hour of organizing and tidying up, everything was finally in place. Jolie then began prepping for lunch.

"Sister, what do you like to eat these days?" she asked, glancing back as she selected ingredients.

Selena gave her a sidelong look. "Anything. Just make whatever."

Jolie wasn't having it. She walked

over to Selena again and said,

"There's no such thing as 'whatever.'"

Come on, tell me what you like."

Seeing Jolie about to grab her arm again, Selena threw up her hands in surrender.

Chapter 1114

Selena rattled off a list of her favorite dishes as if reciting a menu, and only then did Jolie feel satisfied and leave her alone.

Selena let out a deep breath, visibly relieved.

Watching from the side, Aaron reached out and playfully pinched her cheek. "She's your sister. Why are you so tense and awkward around her?"

Selena pushed his hand away and walked to the balcony, her soft lips pressing into a thin line, her expression growing serious.

Aaron followed, studying her carefully.

"I don't know," she said after a long pause.

"I feel so much resentment toward the Quin family, but my feelings toward her are complicated. At first, every time I saw her, I'd think of the Quins, and it annoyed me.

"But over time, I realized she's not like the others. She carries the same last name, but she's different. On the surface, it looks like she's pampered, but in reality, she's living a much harder life."

As she spoke, her tone softened. "When I realized that, I found myself getting closer to her, almost unintentionally. I wanted to see if she was okay, and when she wasn't, I couldn't stop myself from helping her. But at the same time, I don't want to get too entangled with her. It's... confusing."

Aaron took her hand, gently playing with her fingers. "It's okay. Everything takes time. Deep down, you're already starting to accept her as your sister."

Selena lowered her gaze slightly, remaining silent.

Aaron lifted her hand to his lips and kissed it lightly before saying, "Even if you wanted to bring her into our lives completely, it's fine. The Quin family? They're insignificant to me." Selena glanced at him, meeting his warm and loving gaze. Without warning, she leaned in and kissed his cheek.

Aaron raised an eyebrow. "Just the cheek?"

Selena tilted her chin up. "Don't push your luck."

Aaron, however, pulled her into his arms and kissed her lips, murmuring against them, "Why shouldn't I push my luck with my own wife?"

...

Jolie prepared a feast, filling the table with all of Selena's favorite dishes.

When Selena entered the dining room and saw the spread, she paused, her fingers curling slightly as she asked, "What about you? What do you like to eat?"

Jolie smiled brightly. "It's funny that I love everything you love. We really are sisters."

Selena blinked, feeling the comment was a bit much. "That's... over the top."

They sat down to eat. Jolie watched Selena take a bite and eagerly asked, "Well? How is it?"

"It's nothing special," Selena said, her tone flat.

Jolie's expression instantly fell, her disappointment written all over her face.

Selena realized what she had just said, her gaze flickering awkwardly as she cleared her throat. "Ahem... mean, the rice isn't quite right. Did you add too much water? Next time, let me steam it for you. My rice always turns out perfect."

Jolie blinked, and a slow smile spread across her lips. "Alright."

The awkward atmosphere eased a little.

Aaron, watching the exchange, raised an eyebrow in amusement. Selena shot him a glare, warning him not to make it worse.

In truth, after years of eating meals

cooked by Aveline, Selena had developed quite a discerning palate, which was why she'd reflexively said, "Nothing special." But, to be fair, Jolie's cooking wasn't bad at all.

After the meal, Selena said, "Once

things settle down, I'll take you to et

the Cooper family home. Aveline's

cooking is incredible. You can learn

things from her."

"Really? Is cooking talent part of the Cooper family genes? Even Mr. Cooper's cooking is amazing," Jolie said, almost absentmindedly.

"What?" Selena's head snapped toward her. "Mr. Cooper? Gavin Cooper? He cooked for you?"

Chapter 1115

Jolie froze, realizing she'd let something slip. Her gaze darted nervously as she stammered, "Oh, uh, maybe? Maybe not? I might have remembered wrong..." Selena narrowed her eyes, scrutinizing her closely.

Under that piercing gaze, Jolie's confidence crumbled, and she finally avoided eye contact altogether.

The atmosphere in the living room grew tense as Selena remained silent, simply staring at her.

Unable to bear the pressure any longer, Jolie threw up her hands in surrender. "I give up! I'll confess! Just stop looking at me like that. You're making me panic!"

Selena crossed her arms and raised her chin. "Start talking. Tell me everything."

"Um..." Jolie coughed awkwardly, finding it hard to voice the details.

"Hmm?" Selena's sharp gaze cut through her hesitation, making Jolie deflate instantly.

"Well," Jolie began hesitantly, "at a banquet at the Cooper family home, I was, uh, drugged... and Gavin took me to a room to help me. Then... um... one thing led to another, and... something happened."

She coughed again, her voice growing softer. "After that, I told him I owed him for saving me. He... he said I could repay him... ten times. So, yeah, that's... basically it."

Selena was utterly stunned. She couldn't believe her ears.

That serious, stoic, and unapproachable Gavin Cooper was secretly bullying a young girl like this?

And... ten times?

What a shameless man!

Didn't he already benefit enough?

Selena's impression of Gavin, once tall and imposing, shattered into a million pieces. Truly, one should never judge a book by its cover.

Jolie glanced at Selena and continued, "After that, the Quin family hosted two more banquets and invited Gavin to both. He showed up, and they immediately started scheming, trying to push me into pursuing him.

"But I didn't want to. I don't like him. Once everything is settled, I don't plan to have any more contact with him. So, came up with a fake boyfriend and publicly introduced him during my birthday party, Who would've thought my father would hit me for it?

"He even ignored my wishes and tried to send me abroad, all to force me to break up and shift my focus to Gavin."

As she spoke, a bitter smile appeared on her face.

The series of events she'd endured recently had felt suffocating. Yet, strangely, saying it all out loud left her feeling oddly calm.

It was as though, from the moment she decided to fight back, her emotions had begun to stabilize.

Selena listened silently, unsure what to say.

Not liking Gavin, yet maintaining a close relationship with him. Refusing the Quin family's attempts to push her toward him, even though they were already deeply connected.

And then faking a boyfriend and suffering serious consequences just to avoid breaking up with him.

"Jolie." Selena's gaze was complex as she looked at her.

"Hmm?" Jolie met her eyes, puzzled.

"I honestly don't know whether to call you smart or foolish."

Jolie pouted, feeling wronged. "Why would you say that, Sister?"

Selena crossed her arms. "As an outsider, let me give you a rational analysis. How about that?"

Jolie hesitated, then asked, "Do you also think Gavin Cooper is the best option for me?"

Selena shook her head. "Let me explain first. Deal?"

Jolie blinked, then nodded. "Alright, go ahead."

Selena took a deep breath and began, "The Quin family has been putting immense pressure on you and in response, you've started to rebel. You've been rejecting

everything they've arranged for you, right?"

Chapter 1116

Jolie nodded. "Yes."

Selena continued, "So, because you already had some contact with Gavin, the Quin family saw an opportunity and started pushing you toward him."

Jolie nodded again.

"Then go along with it," Selena said simply.

"What?" Jolie looked at her in confusion. "But wouldn't that mean giving them exactly what they want?"

"Oh, you silly girl." Selena gave her a soft, almost indulgent smile. "Do you think someone like Gavin Cooper is that easy to manipulate? Do you really think the Quin family can control him just by sending you to him?"

"Quite the opposite. If you truly manage to win him over, to the point where he's devoted to you, then you'll hold all the cards. If you tell him to keep his distance from the Quin family, they'll end up with nothing-no leverage, no benefits. They'd be left with nothing but regret."

Jolie listened, her eyes gradually widening as if a whole new world had opened up before her.

Selena spread her hands. "Expand your perspective. The worst-case scenario? He doesn't fall for you, and you don't end up together. But in the meantime, you're not losing out.

"He's good-looking, powerful, and influential. If you're with him, do you think the Quin family would dare to oppress you? Of course not. They'd be terrified of Gavin coming after them. They'd treat you like royalty, out of pure fear."

Jolie's mouth fell open as she stared at Selena, stunned and awestruck.

Selena smirked. "Trust your sister. I've got this figured out."

Jolie stammered, "I-I think my brain is spinning. I might need some time to process this."

Selena patted her shoulder. "Take your time and think it over. See if what I said doesn't make perfect sense. I've got some errands to run, so I'll leave you to it."

With that, she stood and headed for the door.

Aaron followed her, and the room fell into silence once the door closed behind them.

Jolie sat there, replaying Selena's words in her head. It was as if a whole new door had been opened for her.

Why hadn't she thought of this?

If she was willing to make things work with Ian just to get by, why couldn't she do the same with Gavin?

Besides, Gavin had far more power and influence than Ian ever would.



Sure, it might seem like she was playing into the Quin family's plans, but whether they benefited in the end would entirely depend on her.

Even if things didn't work out with Gavin, she wouldn't lose anything. She'd have tried her best, and that alone would shield her from the Quin family's oppression. Brilliant. Absolutely brilliant.

It was like an epiphany, a revelation that left her almost giddy with realization.

In the elevator.

Aaron tilted Selena's chin upward, making her meet his gaze.

"What are you doing?" Selena blinked, her confusion evident as she stared at him.

Aaron leaned in slightly, a glint of mischief in his eyes. "When you proposed that we date for three months, were you employing the same strategy you just advised your sister?"

Uh-oh.

He'd figured her out.

Selena quickly put on an innocent act. "What? What are you talking about? I don't know what you mean."

Aaron let out a low chuckle. "Playing

dumb now, are we? Selena, do you really think I couldn't see through your little schemes? Just wait until we're home. Let's see how you explain yourself."

Selena was speechless.

Oh no!

She'd gotten too carried away and ended up dragging herself into trouble!

Help!

...

That evening.

Jolie received a message from Selena, letting her know everything in Montara was going smoothly.

Feeling relieved, Jolie exhaled deeply.

Although she agreed with Selena's advice and planned to act on it, she knew she still had to play her part for now. And the first step was breaking up with Ian.

She dialed his number.

"Hello?" Ian answered.

"Do you have time to meet?" Jolie asked. "There's something I need to tell you."

"I was just about to call you," Ian replied abroad.

Heard you were sent

country are you in?" Contohi

Did you just land? Which

Chapter 1117

Ian was surprised. "What's so urgent?"

Jolie paused for a moment before replying, "It's about our partnership."

"Alright," Ian agreed easily.

Jolie quickly sent him her location and then began deliberating on how best to approach the conversation. Since she was the one ending their arrangement, she felt it necessary to handle things with care. After some thought, she decided to invite him to dinner.

She couldn't leave the apartment, but fortunately, there were plenty of ingredients at home. She prepared a simple yet thoughtful meal.

By evening, the doorbell rang. Jolie walked to the door and cautiously peeked through the peephole. After confirming it was Ian, she opened the door.

"I didn't expect the address you sent me to be your home," Ian said with a polite, warm smile. "Is it okay for me to come in?"

Jolie nodded. "It's fine. Come in."

She handed him a pair of disposable slippers. After switching his shoes, Ian stepped inside and glanced around. "Why are you here? I thought you went abroad. By now, you should already be in another country." "It's a long story," Jolie said lightly.

Ian raised an eyebrow, his tone playful. "I like long stories."

"Why don't we talk over dinner?" Jolie suggested smoothly.

"You cooked?" Ian asked, visibly surprised.

"Yes. I'm not a great cook, but I hope you won't mind," Jolie said with a shy smile.

This was her first time cooking for someone who wasn't family, but she was confident her skills would suffice.

She led Ian into the dining room, where a beautifully prepared meal of four dishes and a soup awaited. The presentation alone made it look incredibly appetizing.

"I'd never have guessed you could cook, let alone make something this impressive," Ian remarked as he admired the spread.

"Try it first," Jolie said, gesturing to the table.

"Alright."

They sat down to eat.

Ian's dining manners were refined and unhurried, exuding the effortless poise of someone raised in privilege. He ate with a steady pace, without fuss or pickiness, his every

movement calm and elegant

Jolie watched as Ian ate a few bites before she finally spoke. "My situation is a bit complicated, and after thinking it through, I've decided it's best if we end our partnership here." Ian paused, setting down his chopsticks. "I had a feeling this was coming." Jolie looked at him, surprised. "You did?"

He nodded. "The Quin family must be putting a lot of pressure on you. You disappeared for a month, then suddenly there was news about you going abroad. I figured your family was adamantly against us being together. When you called and asked to meet, I suspected it might be about this."

Jolie's eyes flickered. The truth was slightly different, but the outcome was the same.

"I'm sorry," she said softly. "It's unfair of me to unilaterally end things without discussing it with you first."

Ian shook his head. "There's no need

to apologize. Our partnership was always mutual. If it's no longer achieving what we both intended, it's better to end it now rather than let it drag on. I respect your decision."

Despite everything, Ian was a considerate and respectful person. He exuded warmth and politeness, never pushing beyond what was appropriate.

If she hadn't met Gavin, Jolie thought she might have been more than willing to continue working with someone like Ian.

"Thank you for understanding," she said, offering him a small smile.

Ian gestured toward the meal. "Consider this dinner your way of thanking me. No need to say more."

"Alright."

After finishing the meal, Ian stood to leave, his actions decisive and without hesitation. His straightforward departure eased the weight in Jolie's chest. She walked him downstairs to see him off.

As Ian drove away, Jolie turned and headed back toward the elevator.

Chapter 1118

Just as Jolie turned to leave, she caught sight of a man standing not far away. She froze for a moment.

Gavin?

What was he doing here?

Beside him stood a property manager, seemingly discussing something with him.

Jolie hesitated, debating whether to greet him. But before she could decide, Gavin's gaze shifted away, making the decision for her.

Alright. No need to say hello then.

She let her half-raised hand fall back to her side and headed toward the elevator. After stepping in, she pressed her floor's button. Just as the doors were about to close, a hand suddenly reached in, triggering the sensors. The doors slid open again, revealing Gavin's cool, unreadable gaze.

"Mr. Cooper. What a coincidence," Jolie said awkwardly, now left with no choice but to acknowledge him.

Gavin stepped inside without a word, turning his back to her as he pressed the button for the 22nd floor—one floor above hers.

Seriously?

He had a place here too? In the same building, no less?

Jolie glanced at his tall, commanding figure. Selena's earlier words echoed in her mind, and she couldn't help but bite her lip.

The awkwardness was palpable. He had confessed to her before, and she'd turned him down. If she told him now that she regretted it, would that even work?

She felt a tinge of embarrassment.

The elevator hummed softly as it ascended. When she'd been in it alone earlier, the space had felt fine. But with Gavin's presence, it suddenly seemed stiflingly small. Even the air felt cooler, wrapped in an invisible chill.

Maybe it's just the air conditioning, she thought, trying to shrug off the tension.

"Ding!"

The elevator arrived at her floor. Jolie started to step out, but just as she passed him, a hand suddenly grasped her arm.

She stopped in her tracks, startled, and turned to meet Gavin's piercing gaze.

Jolie froze, turning to look at Gavin. "Mr. Cooper, is there something you need?"

His eyes locked onto hers, his grip on her wrist tightening slightly.

It had been a month since they last saw each other. She looked well, her complexion radiant, clearly

recovering just fine. The emotions

he'd been bottling up surged to the surface, demanding release.

But simply holding her hand wasn't enough.

"You didn't go abroad. Was it for him?" he finally asked, his voice low and controlled, though the tension in his tone was unmistakable. "What?" Jolie blinked in confusion.

"What is he talking about?" she thought.

Gavin stepped closer, closing the

gap between them in a single stride. The elevator doors shut behind him, trapping them inside the small

space.

He didn't let go of her wrist. When she instinctively tried to step back, his grip tightened, pulling her toward him.

"Aren't you afraid of being found out?" he pressed, his tone colder now.

Jolie was momentarily flustered, but she quickly pieced together what he was implying. He thought she hadn't left the country because of Ian. Ridiculous. Of course not!

She tugged at her wrist, saying, "Mr. Cooper, let go. We can talk this out properly."

Gavin's eyes darkened, but he managed to rein in his emotions, releasing her wrist after a moment.

Jolie glanced down at her hand, noticing the faint red marks left on her pale skin. He had gripped her so tightly it hurt.

She rubbed her wrist and said, "Mr. Cooper, you've got it all wrong. I didn't stay because of him."

"Hmm," he responded curtly, his tone detached, like he was listening to a subordinate's report.

Jolie resisted the urge to roll her eyes. "Why I didn't go isn't

something I feel obligated to explain

to you, Mr. Cooper. After all, we're

not that close."

Chapter 1119

Jolie smiled lightly and said, "If there's nothing else, I'll head back now. Goodbye, Mr. Cooper."

She turned toward the door, but the sound of steady footsteps followed her. He was coming after her. Frowning slightly, she turned back to face him. "What's this about, Mr. Cooper?"

Gavin met her gaze, his expression unreadable. "I haven't had dinner yet."

"Then go eat," Jolie replied flatly.

He countered calmly, "I hired Jackie for you."



Jolie froze.

Was he seriously trying to claim credit?

Unbelievable. How petty could this man get?

Pulling out her phone, she said, "Tell me how much it cost, and I'll transfer the money to you."

Gavin shook his head. "Just make me a plate of pasta. Consider it payment."

Jolie eyed him suspiciously. "That's it? Just a plate of pasta?"

"Yes," Gavin confirmed.

Still unsure, Jolie studied him for a moment, then turned and unlocked her door. She stepped inside, tossing a pair of disposable slippers at his feet.

Gavin's gaze fell briefly to the slippers, then to a second pair by the door. His expression cooled slightly as he changed into the slippers, his eyes scanning the apartment methodically. Ian had left earlier-were they living together?

The thought alone sparked a dark edge to his mood. He suppressed the urge to vent his frustration, his sharp eyes quickly assessing the room.

It didn't take long to notice the absence of anything that might belong to a man.

They weren't living together.

The tension in his chest eased, and his expression softened, though only slightly.

Oblivious to his inner turmoil, Jolie pulled out some pasta and asked, "Do you want vegetables in it?"

"Sure," he replied simply.

"Then take a seat. I'll call you when it's ready," Jolie said as she headed toward the kitchen.

"Alright."

Gavin responded with a low hum, shrugging off his suit jacket and tossing it over the armrest of the couch. He loosened his tie, sank into the sofa, and leaned back, closing his eyes as if to rest.

The pasta was ready in no time. Jolie tidied up the dining table first before heading to the living room to call Gavin.

"Mr. Cooper?"

She called out, but there was no response.

Walking closer, she saw him leaning back with his eyes closed, exhaustion etched into his features.

Seriously?

He'd fallen asleep just sitting there.

Jolie frowned. She wasn't about to let him nap here. The sooner he ate and left, the better-it was already disrupting her rest.

She reached out and gave him a gentle nudge. "Mr. Cooper, the pasta is ready."

Still no response.

Her frown deepened, and she pushed him a little harder.

But just then, his hand shot up, grabbing her wrist. Before she could react, a sudden force pulled her forward, and she landed against him, sprawled across his lap

One arm wrapped firmly around her waist, while the other pressed gently but insistently against the back of her head, drawing her closer.

Jolie's eyes widened in shock. Her

hands flew to his chest, pushing against him with all her might, but he easily overpowered her. No

matter how hard she struggled it was no match for his strength.

"What are you doing?" Jolie demanded, her voice sharp and

tense.

Gavin looked at her, amusement flickering in his dark eyes as she fought against him. A low chuckle escaped him. "Isn't it obvious? I want to kiss you." Before she could respond, his hand tightened, pulling her closer.

"Mmph!"

Her protest was cut off as his lips descended on hers.

Unbelievable!

His breathing was heavy, and his lips pressed against hers with an intensity that felt like he was releasing pent-up emotions.

Jolie squirmed, pushing against his chest, but his grip was relentless. His dominance overwhelmed her resistance, leaving her unable to fight back.

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Her body softened in his arms, and Gavin adjusted her position with ease, his hand steadying her thigh as he shifted her to straddle his lap.

His kisses were unrestrained, his breathing heavy and erratic as he trailed down to her chin, her neck...

When her shoulder strap slipped off and he pressed a firm kiss onto her bare shoulder, leaving a faint, suggestive mark, Jolie snapped back to her senses.

"Gavin Cooper!" she called his name sharply, a clear warning-though her voice came out far softer than she intended, almost trembling.

He didn't push further.

Instead, his breathing grew even heavier as he held her tighter, as though he wanted to pull her into his very being. It was a long moment before he finally released her.

As soon as she was free, Jolie scrambled to fix her clothes and slipped off his lap, putting as much distance between them as possible.

She sat on the sofa, her face flushed, her breath uneven, and her limbs weak from the intensity of the moment. Her red-rimmed eyes and rosy cheeks betrayed how shaken she was. Gavin stood abruptly and asked, "Where's the restroom?"

Jolie raised a hand and pointed silently in the direction of the bathroom.

He strode off, and moments later, returned with his hair damp and his sleeves rolled up to his elbows. Clearly, he had splashed water on his face and hands to cool down.

Jolie glanced at him briefly, her voice steady but detached. "The pasta is in the dining room. Eat and leave when you're done."

Without responding, Gavin walked straight to the dining room.

Jolie sat quietly, trying to calm herself. After a few moments, she headed to the bathroom to wash her face, the cool water helping her regain her composure.

When she returned to the living room, she turned on the TV and put on a variety show. The lively atmosphere lightened the tension, giving her something to focus on other than the lingering awkwardness. Not even ten minutes passed before Gavin returned from the dining room.

Jolie glanced at him and said flatly, "Goodbye, Mr. Cooper."

She didn't even bother getting up to see him out.

Gavin stood there, watching her sit on the sofa, engrossed in her show, as though he were no more important than background noise.

He had intended to leave, but now... he had no desire to go.

Instead, he walked over, sat down beside her, and fixed his gaze on the TV.

Jolie blinked, turning to him in confusion. "What are you doing?"

Gavin leaned back casually, his voice calm as he replied, "This is the fourth time."

Jolie froze, her lips parting slightly in disbelief.

Right. She had completely forgotten-there were still several more to go!

It seemed there was no escaping tonight.

Jolie asked cautiously, "So, now?"

But Gavin simply replied, "No rush. Weren't you watching the show?"

His gaze stayed fixed on the TV, giving no indication he noticed her questioning look.

Jolie blinked, puzzled.

Gavin could sit through a variety show? Him?

She found it hard to believe.

Shrugging off her doubts, she turned

her attention back to the screen. Soon enough, the antics of the guests drew her in, their comedic efforts eliciting laughter from the audience-and from Jolie herself.

She had a low threshold for humor and was soon laughing openly, her cheerful expressions inadvertently catching Gavin's attention. Was it really that funny?

But as he watched her laugh so freely, her brows relaxed and her entire demeanor unguarded, the irritation that had been simmering within him melted away completely.

For once, she was completely herself in front of him.

The two of them continued to chuckle without

restraint, the other quiet and

composed. Time slipped away el

without either noticing.

By ten o'clock, Jolie stifled a yawn. Turning her head, she was startled to find Gavin still there.

That was when she remembered. He'd mentioned the fourth time earlier.

Getting up, she said, "I'm going to take a shower. Wait here."

Gavin said nothing, only following her with his eyes as she walked into the master bedroom.

Once the door closed, he stood and left the apartment.

When Jolie came out of the shower, she found the living room empty. Surprised, she looked around. Where did he go?

Just then, the doorbell rang.

Walking over, she checked through the peephole and froze.

Why was he outside?