

## Divorced Me 531

### Chapter 531

Selena was surprised. Aveline was usually a light sleeper, but the loud knocking hadn't woken her. Maybe it was the alcohol.

Not dwelling on it further, Selena yawned as she went to check the peephole. Seeing who was outside, she narrowed her eyes. Why was he here?

Just as she was pondering this, the person outside started knocking again.

Selena quickly opened the door to find Aaron with his hand raised, about to knock once. more. If she'd been two seconds slower, his palm might have landed on her instead.

"What's wrong with you, pounding on the door in the middle of the night? Are you crazy?" Selena snapped irritably.

Aaron lowered his hand and glanced at her. "It's just you here?"

Selena yawned. "Who else would it be?"

She squinted, as if remembering something. "Oh, and Russell."

Aaron had started to relax, but his brow furrowed at her words. "You're saying Russell slept here?"

Selena retorted, "How's that your business?"

Aaron pinched the bridge of his nose, feeling the situation had become quite thorny. If something had really happened between Russell and Aveline... Lucas might go on a rampage. Things could spiral out of control.

Selena thought he was being ridiculous and moved to close the door. "It's late, Mr. Fletcher. Can you please stop disturbing people's rest?"

She was about to shut the door in his face when Aaron put his hand on the door frame, his expression gravely serious. "Which room are they in?"

Selena frowned. "What?"

Aaron's face grew even colder. "I'm not joking around. Tell me which room they're in. Or should I go in and find out myself?"

As Aaron moved to enter, Selena quickly blocked his path. "Hey, did I say you could come in? What are you talking about?"

Aaron eyed the petite woman in front of him, then suddenly scooped her up under his arm and strode into the apartment, checking each room.

Selena was shocked. "What the hell, Aaron! Do you know you're trespassing? Let me go!"

Being carried like that was extremely uncomfortable for her. The disparity in strength between men and women became painfully clear - she was like a helpless lamb, unable to resist at all. Aaron opened two guest rooms, finding them empty. His gaze fell on the master bedroom, his expression darkening further.

Were they sleeping in there?

Seeing his reaction, Selena realized who he was looking for. Connecting his earlier questions and attitude, she hurriedly said, "Aaron, calm down! It's just me and Ave here, no one else!" Aaron paused as he was about to open the master bedroom door. He looked down at Selena. "Are you serious?"

Selena nodded vigorously. "Yes, that's right. Russell did come earlier, but he left after dinner!"

Aaron let out an almost imperceptible sigh of relief. Then he tightened his grip slightly and narrowed his eyes. "Are you lying to me?"

Selena squirmed uncomfortably in his hold. "You... let me go first."

Aaron carried her towards the exit. "Selena, it seems I've been too lenient, making you think you can do whatever you want in front of me." He left the apartment with Selena still in his arms.

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"Aarón, what are you doing? Let go of me!"

Selena kicked and struggled.

She reached out to scratch Aaron's face but couldn't reach him!

Aaron carried her down to the next floor, approached a door, entered a fingerprint code, and walked inside. Without saying a word, he threw Selena onto the sofa!

"Ah!"

Selena let out a short cry, only to find herself pinned beneath him!

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

Aaron gazed down at her. "Selena, it's not just once or twice-do you really think my patience is limitless?"

Selena suddenly felt a sense of danger.

She swallowed hard, stopped struggling, and tried to calm both her emotions and his.

"Aaron, I was just joking with you. Do you really need to react like this?"

Aaron responded coldly, "Do you realize how serious the consequences of this joke could be?"

Selena pouted. "Even if it wasn't a joke, what does it have to do with you? Ave and that scumbag Lucas/

are already divorced. She has the right to be with whoever she wants."

Aaron almost blurted out that the divorce certificate was fake, but he held back.

Never mind. He could keep it under wraps for now.

But right now, he had to settle accounts with this woman!

"As long as Lucas hasn't given up on her, she's still his woman. I can't just stand by and watch her do something that betrays him," Aaron said in a low voice.

Selena's brows furrowed. "Are you insane? Are all of you crazy?"

They were already divorced, and he still couldn't let her go?

What was wrong with them? Why couldn't they just let Aveline be?

Suddenly, Aaron leaned in, gripping her chin. "You insulted me again. Tell me, how should I deal with you?"

The curse words that were about to fly out of Selena's mouth got stuck. She pressed her hands against Aaron's shoulders. "Aaron, can't we just stop? I'll apologize. I was wrong before; I shouldn't have provoked you. I..."

"Too late."

Seeing Selena back down only made Aaron more uncomfortable.

He cut her off abruptly, then suddenly kissed her!

"Mmph!"

Selena's eyes widened in shock; she hadn't expected things to escalate in this direction.

No... no, that wasn't right.

She had anticipated this-why else would Aaron pin her down on the sofa?

However, she just hadn't expected it to happen so quickly!

She had planned to buy herself some time!

Selena began to struggle, not wanting to let things go any further between them.

But Aaron's strength was overwhelming; she had experienced it before, and now, her attempts to resist seemed futile in his eyes.

Effortlessly, Aaron gripped both her wrists and pinned them above her head, kissing her with no restraint.

His other hand slipped under her clothes, finding its way to her smooth skin, and caressing her body without hesitation.

Selena's body tensed up, and she tried to bite him, but he quickly invaded her mouth, dominating every

inch.

His kiss was wild, ravaging every corner of her mouth, almost brutally entwining her tongue with his.

Selena couldn't handle such intense kissing.

In no time, she was breathless and weakened.

As he finally kissed her, Aaron felt the emptiness inside him from these past days gradually being filled,

But it wasn't enough. Just kissing wasn't enough.

Amid their ragged breaths, Selena heard the sound of fabric tearing.

"Damn it, you bastard..."

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Aaron bit her earlobe. "This is the consequence of provoking me."

Selena immediately bit down on his shoulder, but what followed left her unable to even curse.

This man was truly a beast!

Aveline had a good night's sleep.

Perhaps it was because Selena was beside her, making her feel at ease.

She opened her eyes and said, "Selena, time to get up. I'll make some pasta for you. What kind would you like?"

As Aveline spoke, she got up, but when she looked beside her, Selena was nowhere to be found.

Where did she go?

Startled, Aveline quickly put on her shoes and hurried out to look for her..

But Selena was nowhere in the room.

She quickly grabbed her phone and called her, only to hear Selena's phone ringing in the bedroom.

Aveline's face darkened immediately!

What was going on?

Where did Selena go?

Why didn't she take her phone?

In the modern world, no one would leave their home without their phones.

And when did Selena leave?

Why didn't Aveline have any memory of it?

As Aveline was lost in thought, there was a knock on the door.

She rushed over to open it, only to see Selena standing there, looking utterly exhausted and drained, as if someone had sucked the life out of her. "Selena, where did you go?" Aveline asked, grabbing her hand.

Selena forced a weak smile. "I wasn't feeling well after drinking last night, so I woke up early and went for

a walk."

Was that really it?

Aveline looked at her suspiciously, noticing her awkward gait and the heavy exhaustion that seemed to weigh her down.

"Are you okay?" Aveline asked, clearly worried.

Selena waved her hand. "I'm fine. I didn't sleep well last night. Looks like I need to quit drinking. I'm going

to take a nap. Ave, sweetheart, you don't need to worry about me. Just go to work."

With that, she returned to the bedroom, collapsed onto the bed, and closed her eyes, ready to fall asleep.

Damn it, Aaron had kept her up all night!

It was like he was trying to wear her out, not even letting her sleep!

Aveline tucked her in and was about to leave when she suddenly paused.

She noticed the hickey on Selena's neck.

The mark was fresh and vivid, clearly left there last night.

So, Selena had lied.

But since she didn't want to talk about it, Aveline didn't press her.

She quietly left the room, prepared breakfast, and after eating, left the rest in the pot so Selena could have it when she woke up.

Then she headed out for work.

As she reached the underground parking garage, Aveline's phone rang.

She checked the caller ID-it was Russell.

"Hello, Russ," Aveline answered, a hint of a smile in her voice.

"Good morning. Are you free right now? I'd like to introduce you to the two bodyguards I arranged for you, "Russell said.



Aveline glanced at the time and replied, "Not right now. Can we do it at noon? I'm running late for work." "Sure, no problem," Russell agreed. After hanging up, Aveline drove to work.

Around noon, Aveline called Russell to arrange a meeting place.

They decided to meet at the restaurant right below her office.

Russell arrived quickly, followed by two tall bodyguards.

Aveline stood up. "Russ."

Russell waved his hand. "No need to be so formal; you're making me feel like some kind of mob boss. Let's sit and talk."

Aveline smiled. To be honest, when Russell had walked in, he really did have the aura of a big shot.

Russell turned to the two bodyguards and said, "From now on, you two are responsible for her safety. Go ahead and introduce yourselves."

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"Miss Young, hello. My name is Mason West."

"And I'm Jason West."

As soon as they finished speaking, the atmosphere fell into an awkward silence.

Aveline asked, "That's it?"

Mason and Jason exchanged glances before Mason dryly replied, "That's it."

Aveline couldn't help but laugh. Then she asked, "What are your skills? And what are your salary expectations?"

Mason and Jason exchanged another look and then both turned to Russell.

Russell sighed and said, "Have a seat first."

Mason and Jason sat down.

Russell briefly introduced their situation and concluded, "As for the salary, just give them what you think is appropriate."

Aveline shook her head, saying, "I can't just decide on a whim. They're responsible for my safety, and it isn't exactly safe to be around me. This job can be quite dangerous. Whatever you're paying them, I'll double it."

Russell raised an eyebrow, "You're being so generous? Can I apply to be your bodyguard too?"

Mason and Jason immediately became nervous.

No way!

Russell was going to steal their job?

They couldn't let that happen!

If Aveline hired them, they'd be getting triple the pay-it was like winning the lottery!

Russell couldn't be serious, right?

Aveline hadn't expected him to say that and quickly responded, "Russ, don't joke around. If you became my bodyguard, I wouldn't even be able to sleep peacefully."

Russell smiled at her. "Oh? You're that worried about me?"

Aveline's eyelashes fluttered slightly as she turned to Mason and Jason. "You two don't mind, right?"

"No objections."

They both responded in unison.

With triple the salary, how could they have any objections?

Aveline took out her phone. "From now on, I'll be counting on you both to protect me."

Mason and Jason exchanged numbers and saved each other's contact information.

Just then, the waiter brought all the dishes to the table.

Aveline said, "Alright, let's eat."

Russell looked at her serene smile, and a faint hint of disappointment flickered deep within his eyes.

After the meal, he said, "I'll pick you up tonight and take you somewhere."

Aveline asked curiously, "Where to?"

Russell smiled mysteriously, "You'll find out when we get there, but I can give you a little teaser-you've been there before." Hmm?

What place could that be?

Seeing the smile on Russell's face, Aveline couldn't quite figure it out. But whatever it was, she'd find out tonight.

Back at the studio.

As soon as Maria saw her, she said, "Aveline, you're finally back. Just in time, come with me to the hospital."

Aveline frowned and asked, "The hospital? Are you not feeling well?"

Maria shook her head, "It's not me. It's the father of one of our previous clients-he's been hospitalized. We should go visit him. If the client sees our sincerity, they'll be more likely to continue working with us." Aveline thought for a moment, then nodded. "Alright."

Maria grabbed various gift boxes from the office, and together they headed to the hospital.

In the VIP ward.

Maria and Aveline entered a room where Maria exchanged pleasantries with the people inside while Aveline remained in the background.

Since it wasn't appropriate to disturb the patient for too long, they only stayed for a short while before leaving.

Maria said, "Wait for me here. I'm just going to the restroom."

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"Alright." Aveline nodded and walked over to the elevator, waiting for Maria to return.

She glanced down at her phone, and just then, the elevator doors opened, followed by a surprised voice.

"Mrs. Tudor?"

Aveline looked up to see Desmond stepping out of the elevator, a hint of delight on his face. "Are you

here to see Mr. Tudor?"

Aveline's expression remained indifferent as she shook her head. "No."

Desmond was taken aback, rubbing his nose awkwardly. It was clear that Aveline's attitude was cold, which made him smile uneasily before continuing, "Mr. Tudor was seriously injured. He's on this floor. Mrs. Tudor, are you really not going to check on him?"

Aveline calmly looked at him and said, "Desmond, Lucas and I are divorced."

"Ah?" Desmond was stunned for a moment before realizing what she meant.

He smiled apologetically, "Sorry, Miss Young."

Aveline's expression softened slightly at that.

However, Desmond didn't leave and continued to stand beside her.



Aveline asked, "Is there something else?"

Desmond hesitated before saying, "Miss Young, both of you were once husband and wife. Now that Mr Tudor is injured, are you really not going to see him?"

Aveline's brows furrowed slightly. "Are you trying to guilt-trip me?"

Hearing that, Desmond quickly waved his hands. "No, that's not what I meant!"

Aveline replied, "Then you shouldn't be standing here chatting with me."

Desmond's enthusiasm deflated like a balloon, and he turned to leave.

Aveline lowered her gaze slightly, her delicate and impeccably made-up face showing a calm expression.

Whether he was injured or not-what did it have to do with her?

It didn't.

There was nothing left between them. Nothing at all.

The elevator doors opened and closed again. About twenty minutes later, Maria finally returned.

Aveline asked with concern, "Are you okay?"

Maria replied, "Just feeling a bit unwell, but it's nothing serious. Let's go."

"Alright." Aveline nodded.

Before stepping into the elevator, Maria glanced in a certain direction and let out an almost imperceptible sigh.

She had tried her best!

After returning from the hospital, they saw a few people gathered, chatting.

When Vivian spotted Aveline, she immediately wore a disdainful expression. "Oh, isn't this the former Mrs. Tudor of DK Group?"

Aveline glanced at her indifferently. "Is there something you need?"

Vivian smirked. "Oh, nothing at all. I just wanted to see what you look like after being dumped by Lucas Tudor. Tsk tsk, who do you think you are? Lucas Tudor is in a completely different league. Marrying you was just a game to him. With a family background like his, he's destined to marry someone of equal standing."

She pulled out her phone and sneered. "Look at these heiresses from wealthy families-so elegant, so dignified, a perfect match for Lucas Tudor!"

Vivian's words were completely unapologetic.

Sidney frowned upon hearing that. "And what does that have to do with you?"

Vivian let out a cold laugh. "Nothing at all. Can't I enjoy watching the drama? But even if it doesn't concern me, it sure concerns you. Now that Lucas has dumped her, you've got your chance. Why don't you hurry over and start courting her?"

Vivian had a strong hostility towards Aveline, seizing every opportunity to mock and taunt her. If she didn't get a few sarcastic remarks in, she wouldn't feel satisfied.

Aveline gave her a calm look and said, "At least I was with Lucas Tudor, and even in divorce, I walked away with a considerable settlement. What about you?"

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Vivian's expression darkened. "What do you mean by that?"

Aveline let out a light scoff. "You can't figure it out? I'm mocking you. All you can do is sit in an office and throw out sarcastic remarks. If you were braver, you'd be an internet troll. Is that all you're capable of?"

Vivian abruptly stood up, her face twisted with anger. "Aveline, do you think I'm afraid of you? You have no one backing you up now!"

"Oh? So what?" Aveline's expression remained calm. "Are you planning to kill me?"

Vivian gritted her teeth, feeling incredibly frustrated. This woman used to stay quiet, but lately, whenever Vivian mocked her, Aveline would retaliate!

And she couldn't even match her!

Aveline looked away. "Instead of wasting time being jealous, why don't you focus on improving your performance? Jealousy won't make you better; it'll only make you uglier." "You-!"

Vivian tried to rush at her, but two people quickly held her back.

The atmosphere in the office grew tense as if a fight could break out at any moment.

Yet Aveline was completely unaffected, calmly returning to her work.

Vivian, held down in her chair, shot a venomous glance at Aveline.

Just wait-one day, she'd destroy her!

At the hospital.

Desmond stood in the hospital room, not daring to lift his head to look at the man sitting on the bed. Lucas had a laptop in front of him, his fingers tapping away on the keyboard. After finishing a document,

he sent it off.

He closed the laptop and finally looked up at Desmond. "She really said that?"

Cold sweat formed on Desmond's forehead. "Y-yes."

Lucas said nothing, reaching up to pinch the bridge of his nose.

That sounded exactly like something she would say.

Even though she was just a few steps away, she refused to come and see him.

An intense irritation bubbled up within Lucas. He pulled out his phone and dialed Aaron's number.

"Hello?"

A groggy voice answered, clearly just waking up.

Lucas' voice was cold, "How did the thing I asked you to handle last night go?"

Aaron yawned and replied, "They weren't together. You don't need to worry."

Lucas asked, "Then why didn't you tell me last night?"

Aaron replied, "Because something unexpected came up that I had to handle."

Lucas pressed, "And it took you all night to handle it?"

"Uh?" Aaron was momentarily stunned, not expecting Lucas to guess so accurately. He then said, "If there had been an issue, I would have told you. Besides, you're only calling me now, so you must have already figured it out."

Lucas let out a light scoff and hung up the phone.

Aaron clicked his tongue. What was wrong with him?

He got up, the bed still in disarray, memories of the previous night flashing through his mind.

In the morning, Selena had kicked him out of bed.

He hadn't expected that after a whole night of activity, she still had the energy to kick someone.

He had really underestimated her and swore he wouldn't hold back the next time.

He pulled out his phone and dialed Selena's number.

After three rings, the call was abruptly cut off.

Aaron narrowed his eyes. She dared to hang up on him?

Ha!

Selena sat on the sofa, staring at the number on her phone, feeling a headache coming on.

She couldn't quite understand how things had escalated to this point.

How had she and Aaron ended up here?

And what about "Snow"?

Did Aaron really not care anymore?

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Selena ruffled her hair in frustration. Just then, her phone rang again. It was her boss calling.

Taking a deep breath, Selena answered, "Hello?"

"Selena, Mr. Fletcher has an issue with the blueprint and says you're not answering his calls. Are you trying to ruin our entire studio? Call Mr. Fletcher back immediately..." "I'm quitting," Selena replied calmly.

There was a pause on the other end. "What did you say? You're quitting? Are you joking? You know the consequences of resigning, right?"

Selena responded, "Yes, I know. I'll bear all the consequences myself."

The person on the other end was completely stunned. Are you crazy? If you finish this project, you'll earn a substantial income."

Selena tugged at the corner of her lips. "But what if it never gets done? Aaron keeps giving me a hard time. I'm tired. I don't want to play his games anymore.

"You..." The person hesitated, unable to find the words.

Selena said calmly, "That's it. Goodbye."

With that, she hung up the phone.

It was pointless.

She thought it was time to leave Cloudflare City.

But first, she needed to figure out how to tell Aveline about this.

Aaron was not someone she could afford to mess with.

After work.

As Aveline exited the building, she noticed Russell leaning against a fiery red Ferrari, smoking a cigarette.

His hair was dyed a light blue, making him look even more devilishly attractive.

His striking appearance and the flashy car drew a lot of attention, with nearly everyone turning to look at

him.

Aveline paused, suddenly feeling too nervous to approach him.

But Russell had already spotted her and started walking toward her. "Off work? Let's go!"

Aveline tugged at the corner of her lips and asked, "Russ, are you always this flashy?"

Russell raised an eyebrow. "You think this is flashy? Just wait; I'll show you something even more extravagant someday." Aveline forced a dry laugh. "No, no need for that..."

She couldn't handle more than this.

Under the gaze of countless onlookers, she got into the car.

Russell handed her a box as he started the engine. "Eat something first to fill your stomach."

Aveline hesitated for a moment, then asked, "Where exactly are we going?"

Russell thought for a moment before replying, "It's quite far."

Then he gave her a meaningful look. "Don't worry, I won't sell you off."

Trusting Russell, Aveline opened the box and found a few delicate cakes inside.

She didn't hesitate, grabbing a spoon and starting to eat.

Seeing this, the smile on Russell's lips deepened.

The sports car roared down the road, speeding past everything in its path.

About 50 minutes later, the car came to a stop on a road beside an abandoned dock.

The area was nearly abandoned, with only a few cars in sight and a beach littered with scattered, discarded shipping containers. Seeing this scene, Aveline suddenly remembered her past ordeal.

Cold, dark, helpless...

When the seawater filled her ears, she thought she was going to die in that pitch-black container.

Aveline asked, "Russ, why did you bring me here?"

Russell pointed to one of the containers. "Sophia is in there."

"What?"

Aveline was stunned.

Russell continued, "I keep my promises. I told you I'd make her understand despair. Now, let's see if anyone comes to save her." Aveline clutched her bag tightly. This was exactly the outcome she had wanted.

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The tide started to rise.

The distant shipping containers loomed like monsters in the darkness, slowly swallowing anyone trapped inside. Aveline stared calmly at the scene, though the encroaching darkness made it hard for her to clearly see the tide's advance.

Her mind drifted to the time when she was trapped inside a container, her hands and feet bound, filled with despair and helplessness.



She watched as death approached, powerless to stop it.

"Sophia, is this how you feel now?" Aveline thought and lowered her gaze slightly, choosing not to look any longer.

Just then, a phone appeared in front of her.

"Hmm?" Aveline looked at Russell in confusion.

A faint smile appeared on Russell's strikingly handsome yet cold face. "I installed a camera on top of that container. You can watch Sophia's entire descent into despair."

He gazed into her eyes. "Do you want to see it?"

Aveline was taken aback, not expecting him to have gone to such lengths.

Russell added, "No need to be shocked. I just believe that if you don't see the punishment of those who wronged you, it loses its impact."

His gaze faltered for a moment as if recalling something, but he quickly regained his composure.

Aveline's eyes fell on the phone in his hand. With just one touch, she could see Sophia's despair and pain.

Should she watch?

She asked herself.

Suddenly, Aveline closed her eyes. She wasn't Sophia; she couldn't bring herself to be that ruthless.

Russell noticed her expression and sighed softly. "Aveline, you can't be too soft-hearted. It will only harm you."

Aveline replied quietly, "But if I do this, how am I any different from Sophia?"

Russell countered, "And what's wrong with being like her?"

"What?" Aveline looked at him, puzzled.

Russell shrugged. "We're all born to live for ourselves. Sophia understands that well. She uses whatever means necessary to get what she wants, and because of that, she thrives." He looked at Aveline. "If you want to live well, being as ruthless as she is can work too."

"No, that's not right." Aveline shook her head. "My well-being can't be built on someone else's suffering."

She wasn't Sophia.

She was *Avéline*.

She would only be herself.

Russell gave her a long, deep look before slowly curling his lips into a smile. "Alright then, shall we head

back?"

"Yes." Aveline nodded.

There was no need to see what would happen to Sophia. If she was lucky, she might survive; if not, there was nothing Aveline could do.

As Russell turned the car around, he remarked, "I thought you might ask me to let Sophia go."

Aveline smiled slightly. "I'm no saint. She did hurt me, and I do believe in an eye for an eye."

"Good.

Russell nodded in approval. She could seek revenge, but she couldn't bring herself to retaliate a hundredfold.

She didn't have the ruthlessness-how would she handle things in the future?

Now that Lucas had set his sights on her, how could she possibly escape?

A faint chill flickered in Russell's eyes, but he dismissed it. It didn't matter-he would help her.

As the car drove away, a figure dashed toward one of the shipping containers.

"Miss Winter?"

Brian knocked on each container, searching for Sophia, a look of growing anxiety on his face.  
"Bang! Bang!"

At that moment, a sound came from one of the containers.

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Brian's eyes lit up instantly. He rushed toward the container and shouted, "Miss Winter, is that you? Miss Winter?"

"Bang! Bang!"

The sound came from inside the container again, confirming someone was there.

Overjoyed, Brian began inspecting the lock. Since these were abandoned containers, the locks weren't particularly strong. He found a rock and, after about a dozen strikes, managed to break the lock. He swung the door open to find Sophia lying inside, her hands and feet bound. The rising seawater had already seeped in, reaching her ears.

Seeing Brian, Sophia burst into tears..

Brian hurried over to help her up, untying the ropes around her and ripping the tape off her mouth.

"Ah..." Sophia gasped, then sobbed with tears streaming down her face. "It was Aveline! It had to be that bitch Aveline who did this to me! She sent someone to have me tied up here!"

Brian hesitated, saying, "But I've been with Miss Young all this time; she didn't do this."

Sophia clung to his arm. "Brian, I saved Lucas, but Aveline wants me dead! You have to help me get revenge!"

Something didn't feel right to Brian, but this wasn't the place to discuss it. He helped Sophia to her feet. "Miss Winter, let's get out of here first."

Sophia snapped back to reality and nodded. "Yes, we need to leave this cursed place!"

Just moments ago, she had woken up here, terrified out of her mind.

She had been locked inside a container!

She had gone through the same ordeal as Aveline!

Last time, she was the one who had arranged for this to happen to Aveline. So, this time, it had to be Aveline getting back at her!

That wretched woman-she deserved to die!

Once they were back on the road and sitting in the car, Sophia began to calm down. Yet, she remained fixated, insisting, "It had to be Aveline who did this to me! She wants revenge, Brian-you have to help me!"

Brian hesitated, then asked, "Why would she want revenge on you?"

"Because..." Sophia started to reply, but then realized something and looked at Brian, her eyes welling up with tears. "Brian, if it weren't for you, I would've died in there. You saved me..."

Brian replied, "Miss Winter, I'm just repaying the debt Mr. Tudor owes you. There's no need for this."

Yes.

Brian was a man of principle. Two years ago, Sophia had saved Lucas' life by sacrificing her own leg, and

Brian never forgot that act of kindness.

That was why he had targeted Aveline so relentlessly afterward.

Although he no longer targeted Aveline, the debt of gratitude remained in his heart.

Even if he didn't understand why Lucas had stopped caring about Sophia, Brian felt it was his duty to step

1. in.

Sophia cried pitifully, "But Brian, I shouldn't have to go through this. I just love Lucas-why should I be targeted like this? Do I have to die for that person to finally be at peace?" Brian's brow furrowed slowly.

Targeted?

Targeted by whom?

Sophia continued to sob. "As long as I'm around, I'm the obstacle standing between them. If I had never appeared, Lucas and Aveline might never have divorced. They'd be living happily together right now."

Her face was full of guilt and self-blame. "My presence shook Lucas' resolve, and that's why he divorced Aveline. That's why Aveline is taking it out on me."

Sophia clung to Brian's arm. "Brian, will you protect me? I don't want to die-I really don't want to die..."

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Brian became flustered. "Miss Winter, please don't cry. No one's going to let you die, so please don't cry..."

Sophia looked at him through her tear-filled eyes. "But you came to save me. What if you hadn't? I really would have died!"

Brian stammered, "Uh... well, I..."

Sophia tightened her grip on his arm., "Will you help me? I really don't want to die..."

Brian remained silent for a long moment before asking, "Miss Winter, what do you want to do?"

A faint glint of triumph flashed in Sophia's eyes.before she quickly replied, "Will you protect me?"

Brian frowned. "No, I only take orders from Mr. Tudor."

Sophia's face fell as she lowered her head. "But if you don't protect me, I'll end up dead. She's going to kill me because I took Lucas away..."

Brian furrowed his brows, sensing something wasn't right. After another long pause, he said, "Let me... think about it, okay? Besides, Miss Winter, this place isn't safe. Let me take you home first." Sophia nodded. "Okay."

The car drove away.

Meanwhile, on a narrow road under the night sky, Russell's fingers drummed lightly on the steering wheel as he looked at Aveline with interest. "You saw everything, didn't you?"

Aveline appeared somewhat dazed. "I did..."

Russell continued, "He always had someone follow you. He knew you wouldn't let Sophia off, so he timed it perfectly to rescue her tonight."

He kept his gaze fixed on Aveline. "Aveline, to him, Sophia is the most important person."

Aveline's eyelashes trembled slightly before she responded, "Well, that has nothing to do with me anymore."

She and Lucas were divorced. Whatever he chose to do was no longer her concern.

Russell, however, continued to watch her closely. "Are you sure? Now that you know the truth, are you really not hurt? Not even a little?"

Aveline pressed her lips together before turning to him. "Russ, did you know all along that Brian was following me?"

"Yes." Russell nodded. "Mason told me. Those two have been watching over you, reporting anything suspicious directly to me."

Aveline looked at him quietly. "So, you deliberately let me see this scene?"

Russell responded, "It makes no sense to hide it from you, only for you to discover the truth later—that would've been even harsher." Aveline was speechless for a moment.

Everything felt chaotic. Her emotions were tangled, her thoughts scattered.

Lucas had Brian follow her, worried that she might harm Sophia?

But she had already taken action against Sophia.

Russell added, "By the way, there's something else you should prepare yourself for."

"What?" Aveline looked at him.

Russell seemed hesitant, almost reluctant to share the news, but after a brief pause, he said, "I've received word that DK Group has invested in Sophia's company."

"What?!"

Aveline's eyes widened in shock. "Lucas invested in Sophia's company?"

"Yes, that's right," Russell confirmed with a nod. "Everything you planned before has failed."

Sophia was supposed to go bankrupt because of this, which would have severely weakened her position within the Winter family. But now, things had taken a different turn. Lucas' investment had saved her company, giving her even more leverage.

Aveline's face drained of color. She tried her best to control her emotions, but she couldn't stop herself from trembling.

She bit down on her lip, her eyes flickering with an overwhelming sense of powerless anger brewing deep

within her.