

## Divorced Me 581

### Chapter 581

"What's the rush? You'll find out soon enough," Lucas replied coolly, his deep, magnetic voice laced with indifference.

Sophia's sense of dread intensified.

Suddenly, she stood up, saying, "If you two have things to discuss, I'll just leave."

She quickly headed for the door, but before she could reach it, she was met by five or six disheveled men being escorted in by the bodyguards. Each man looked filthier than the last, with some even covered in unsightly warts, making the sight revolting.

The bodyguards blocked her path. "Miss Winter, the matter isn't over yet. You can't leave."

Sophia's face paled as she eyed the men. "What are you planning to do?"

The bodyguards didn't answer. Instead, they pushed her back into the room and shut the door behind her.

Sophia stumbled, losing her balance—her prosthetic leg making it difficult to steady herself—and fell to the ground. Panic spread across her face as she looked up at Lucas, desperately asking, "Lucas, what's going on? What are you planning to do?"

With everyone now in the room, Lucas gave a signal, and a bodyguard approached Sophia with a small bottle. He grabbed her by the chin and forced the liquid inside down her throat.

"Mmph!" Sophia struggled, but she was no match for the bodyguard. Half the bottle's contents went down her throat, while the rest dribbled down her chin.

Fear overwhelmed her as she gasped, "What did you make me drink? What is this? Lucas, what are you doing?"

Lucas looked down at her with cold, piercing eyes. "Still playing dumb?"

He slowly rose to his feet and stood beside her, his gaze icy as he took in her pitiful state. "You've repeatedly plotted against her, yet now you have the nerve to ask what I'm doing?" "I..." Sophia froze, realizing that Lucas intended to avenge Aveline.

Terror gripped her heart as she clutched at Lucas's pant leg, pleading, "Lucas, I'm sorry. I know I was wrong. I'll never do it again, I swear. Please, forgive me. I promise, I'll stay out of your lives from now on!" She begged desperately, but before she could finish, her body began to feel strange.

A deep, unbearable itch spread from within Sophia's body, and she immediately realized it was from whatever she had just been forced to drink. "Lucas, I'm sorry, I truly am..." Sophia's voice was filled with desperation, fear gripping her as she imagined the horror about to unfold.

But Lucas stepped back, his expression cold.

"Take her inside," he ordered.

With a wave of the bodyguard's hand, the disheveled men moved forward, lifting Sophia off the ground.

"No! Don't touch me! Get your hands off me!" Sophia screamed in terror, but no amount of struggling could change what was about to happen.

Aveline stood up and walked to the doorway, glancing inside. She saw Sophia pinned beneath one of the men, who was covered in sores and filth. Despite Sophia's frantic attempts to break free, it was futile— her hands and feet were restrained, leaving her no choice but to endure the horror.

Aveline looked away after a moment and turned to Lucas. "Take photos and videos. I want to make sure she never recovers from this."

Lucas stared at her, realizing how much she had changed after everything that had happened. And he found himself drawn to this new side of her ruthless and unyielding, the only way to truly protect herself. "Whatever you want," Lucas replied in a low voice, signaling the bodyguards to go in and record the scene.

## Chapter 582

"No! Don't do this to me, Lucas! I hate you, I hate you!" Sophia's screams echoed from the room, filled with utter despair.

Aveline looked at Lucas, noticing his calm demeanor. His sharp, narrow eyes remained fixed on her, unreadable. She suddenly smiled faintly. "She saved your life once, even lost a leg because of it. And now, seeing her like this—doesn't it stir anything in you?"

Lucas' handsome, sharp features twisted into a mocking smile. "Her downfall is her own doing."

He gazed intently at Aveline's unnervingly calm face and added, "I've never had any real feelings for her, Aveline. From the beginning, you're the only one I've ever truly cared about."

Aveline glanced away, walking toward the exit. "Then why did you want to marry her two years ago?"

Lucas pulled out a cigarette, lighting it as a cloud of smoke surrounded him. His narrow eyes narrowed further as he replied, "I never intended to marry her two years ago."

Aveline paused, briefly considering his words. If he never planned to marry Sophia, why did she become his fiancée? But she wasn't particularly interested, so she didn't press further.

As Lucas followed her out, he observed her indifferent expression and asked, "Is this enough for you?"

Aveline looked at him. "Do you have any better ideas for punishment?"

Lucas met her gaze. "Didn't you say you wanted to take everything she desired? This is just the appetizer."

Aveline raised an eyebrow.

Lucas continued, "Leave the rest to me. The outcome will be something you'll find satisfying."

"Alright, I'll be waiting," Aveline replied, stepping into the elevator and leaving.

Lucas didn't follow her. Instead, he turned to the bodyguard and ordered, "Make sure the photos and videos are taken and send them directly to the Winter family. Let them know that if they don't kick Sophia out of the family, those images will be everywhere."

"Understood."

With that instruction, Lucas pressed the elevator button and left.

When it came to punishing someone, all it took was a single command from him.

But his priority now was calming Aveline's nerves.

She must have been terrified.

That very night, everyone in the Winter family received the explicit photos and videos of Sophia. After hearing Lucas' demands, their faces were filled with anger and distress. "This is outrageous!" Riley Winter, the head of the Winter family, fumed, throwing the photos onto the coffee table, his expression dark with rage.

His wife, Melanie Stone's face was equally grim. "Dear, Sophia has always been troublesome. We can't let her drag our family down with her. It's best if we do as Lucas says." Riley grew even angrier. "Who does Lucas think he is? Why should we bend to his demands?"

Sasha, who had been standing by, spoke up. "Dad, you've seen what Lucas is capable of. If we push him too far, destroying our family would be as easy for him as crushing an ant."

The others in the room shared the same grave expressions. They had once believed that Sophia marrying Lucas would elevate the Winter family's status in Cloudflare City, perhaps even taking it to new heights.

But instead, Sophia had fallen from grace, sinking into a mire from which she couldn't escape.

Melanie continued to urge her husband, "I know you've always had a soft spot for Sophia, but let's do as Lucas says for now. You can quietly support her from the shadows. But right now, we simply can't afford to cross him."

Chapter 583

Hearing Melanie's words, Riley's expression softened slightly.

He sighed and said, "Alright, you go ahead and have someone bring Sophia back."

"Understood," Melanie replied, a hint of satisfaction flashing in her eyes as she stood up and left the room.

Sasha also rose and followed her mother out of the villa.

As they stepped into the dark night, Melanie took Sasha's hand, her face filled with relief. "Sasha, my dear daughter, you've finally helped me get rid of this major threat."

Sasha smiled faintly. "She brought this on herself. How can it be my fault?"

Melanie nodded approvingly and then asked, "But are you sure they won't trace this back to you?"

Sasha shook her head confidently. "Don't worry, Mom. They won't find anything. I've already sent those people out of the country. Once they're abroad, there's no way they can be found."

Melanie nodded again, clearly pleased. "Well done. You should also try to get closer to Aveline. It's clear Lucas is very fond of her. If we maintain a good relationship with her, our family stands to gain a lot."

Sasha nodded. "I understand."

As Aveline entered the elevator, she heard footsteps behind her. Turning around, she saw Lucas stepping in as well. Her gaze flickered with surprise. Why was he here?

Lucas entered, pressed the floor button, and asked, "What are you thinking about?"

Aveline replied, "Aren't you supposed to be handling the rest of the situation?"

Lucas looked deeply into her eyes and said, "None of that is more important than you."

Aveline's brow furrowed, her expression growing colder.

Lucas continued, "I've already set things in motion. By tomorrow, you'll see the news of Sophia being kicked out of the Winter family."

Aveline lowered her gaze slightly, her emotions a mix of thoughts and feelings.

As the elevator slowly ascended, the atmosphere grew tense.

Lucas, with his hands in his pockets, watched Aveline's composed face and asked in a deep voice, "Aveline, if there's anything else you're unhappy with, tell me. Whatever it is, I'll make it happen." Upon hearing his words, Aveline lifted her gaze to meet his, a faint, ironic smile tugging at her lips. "Lucas, you know exactly what I want most."

Lucas' eyes grew colder. "Choose something else."

Aveline fell silent, realizing there was no point in continuing the conversation. After all, it was clear he had no intention of letting her go. What was the use of saying anything more? Ding!

The elevator doors slid open, and Aveline stepped out, only to hesitate when she recognized the floor. She frowned slightly.

Lucas let out a low chuckle. "Planning to visit my place? You're more than welcome."

As he spoke, he grabbed her hand and started leading her toward his door.

"Let go of me!" Aveline shouted, her voice laced with panic. She yanked her hand away with such force that her entire body trembled.

Lucas noticed her distress, his strong brows furrowing with concern. "Aveline, what's wrong?"

"I'm fine. I just want to go home," Aveline replied, her voice shaking. She turned to press the elevator button, but her fingers trembled so much she could barely control them.

Seeing this, Lucas moved closer and gently took her hand. "Aveline, I won't hurt you. There's no need to be afraid of me."

Aveline's eyes widened slightly as she tried to pull her hand away again, but Lucas held on, pulling her into his embrace.

His broad arms enveloped her completely, and the crisp, distinct scent that was uniquely his surrounded her with an overwhelming intensity.

Chapter 584

Aveline struggled fiercely, but Lucas' arms were like iron clamps, holding her tightly, leaving her no room to break free.

"Let go of me, Lucas, let go of me!"

Her voice was hoarse, her eyes reddening, and her entire body trembled in his embrace.

Lucas only held her tighter. "Never, Aveline. I will never let you go in this lifetime. I'll hold you like this until you're willing to accept me again."

His warm breath brushed against her neck, and tears blurred her vision. His scent was one she knew so well, one she had once depended on deeply—it was etched into her very soul, impossible to forget. At this moment, being held by him eased some of the fear in her heart, though she hated herself for feeling this way.

He had been so cruel, so why did she still feel so attached to him?

Her emotions gradually settled. She closed her eyes, her voice now raspier, "I'm fine now. Let go of me."

Lucas slightly loosened his hold, creating some distance between them, but didn't immediately release her. He studied her expression, and only when he saw that she was truly calm did he slowly let go.

"I'm not comfortable leaving you alone at home. Either you come to my place to rest, or I'll stay at yours," Lucas said in a deep voice.

Aveline looked up at him, anger flashing in her eyes. "Lucas, don't push it!"

He raised an eyebrow. "How am I pushing it? I'm not asking to sleep with you. Besides, sleeping with you isn't unreasonable-we're husband and wife."

Aveline frowned. "We're divorced."

Lucas' eyes darkened. "Once married, always married."

Aveline was speechless.

How could someone be so shameless? He didn't listen to a word she said, insisting on his own logic!

Aveline didn't want to continue arguing. She turned and pressed the elevator button, her voice cold. "Don't come over, and I won't go to yours. I'll be fine on my own." Lucas replied, "I said, I'm not comfortable with that."

The elevator doors opened, and Aveline stepped inside. Lucas placed his hand on the door, staring at her intently. "Your silence is that your way of telling me to come over?" Aveline still didn't speak, but the resistance in her eyes remained strong.

Lucas knew he couldn't push her any further, so he sighed and said, "I won't go into the master bedroom. I'll stay in the living room or the guest room. Aveline, I'm genuinely worried about you."

Hearing this, Aveline glanced at him, her eyes filled with obvious doubt.

Lucas raised an eyebrow. "Have you forgotten what the doctor said to me?"

His mention of it only made things worse-Aveline's expression turned even colder. The mere thought that he'd discussed such an intimate issue with a doctor left her reeling. And to top it off, he'd come back with a solution? She felt suffocated just considering it.

The elevator started beeping in warning, the sound grating on her nerves.

"Lucas, I need my personal space," she said, clearly irritated.

Lucas nodded. "I understand, so I won't enter the master bedroom."

Aveline was speechless.

That was as good as saying nothing.

Annoyed, she snapped, "Just come in already."

She couldn't stand the elevator alarm any longer.

Lucas' lips curved into a faint smile as he released his hold on the door and stepped inside.

Back at her place, Aveline headed straight to the master bedroom. After locking the door, she went directly into the bathroom.

Chapter 585

Lucas watched her, a touch of helplessness flickering across his handsome face. Instead of heading to the guest room, he sat down on the living room sofa, lighting a cigarette. The sharp click of the lighter echoed loudly in the quiet room.

Just then, his phone rang. Glancing at the screen, he saw it was his bodyguard calling. "Mr. Tudor, Miss Winter has been taken back by her family."

"Alright," Lucas replied indifferently, not giving the matter much thought.

His mind was entirely occupied with figuring out how to get Aveline to forgive him and take him back.

The next day.

News of Sophia being kicked out of the Winter family indeed made the headlines.

Aveline lay in bed, reading the news with a blank expression. After a moment, she got up, washed up, and opened her bedroom door. She immediately saw Lucas, wearing an apron, walking out of the kitchen and placing a plate on the dining table.

"You're up? Perfect timing, breakfast is ready."

Aveline walked over, glancing at the simple breakfast he had prepared- omelettes and a few side dishes. Without hesitation, she sat down and started eating.

Seeing this, Lucas raised an eyebrow and asked, "How does it taste?"

Aveline replied, "It's average."

Unfazed, Lucas said, "If you're willing to eat something average, it must have tasted good."

Aveline was speechless.

He sure knew how to comfort himself.

After eating half the breakfast, Aveline put down her utensils and got up to leave for work.

But Lucas remarked, "Didn't your boss tell you to take a day off?"

Aveline responded, "I don't need it."

Lucas looked at her calm face—there was no trace of the emotional breakdown she had the night before. Her emotions were buried too deeply.

He blocked her path, insisting, "You need to rest. I've already spoken with your boss. Today, your time belongs to me."

Aveline frowned. "Lucas, are you out of your mind? What gives you the right to control my time?"

Lucas responded with a smirk, "The fact that I'm shameless."

Aveline was at a loss for words!

This man was invincible—completely shameless and impossible to argue with.

They stood in a standoff at the door until Aveline finally changed back into her indoor shoes and sat down on the sofa. "Even if I'm not going to work, I'm not spending the day with you. You can leave." Lucas nodded. "You're right, I should go."

Aveline hadn't expected him to say that.

But as Lucas removed his apron, he added, "However, you'll have to come with me."

Aveline frowned. "I'm not going."

Lucas replied, "Whether you go or not isn't for you to decide."

"You-!"

Aveline's face turned livid with anger. As Lucas took a step closer, she quickly stood up to avoid him. "Lucas, what exactly are you trying to do?"

Lucas said, "Come with me, and I'll tell you. Don't worry, I won't trick you."

Aveline's expression showed clear disbelief.

Crossing his arms, Lucas said, "Aveline, give up the fight. Eventually, you're going to come with me. You can't win against me."

That was the harsh reality.

It had always been this way—no matter how much Aveline resisted, things seemed to unfold according to Lucas' plans.

Her resistance was futile.

Feeling utterly drained, she let out a self-deprecating smile. "Fine, let's go."

This time, she didn't even bother asking where they were going or what they were going to do. Wherever he said to go, she would go.

After all, in their relationship, he had always been the one in control.

Chapter 586

Seeing the light in her eyes suddenly dim, Lucas' expression grew a bit tense.

Why was it so painful for her to be with him?

The atmosphere between them grew even colder.

"Well, what are you waiting for? Let's go," Lucas said in a low voice, turning to open the door.

Aveline quietly followed him, not bothering to think about where they were going or what they were going to do.

The weather was pleasant, and as Lucas rolled down the car windows, the cool autumn breeze swept in, easing a bit of the tension in Aveline's heart-but only just a little. However, when Lucas stopped the car at the base of a mountain, confusion flickered across Aveline's face.

"Why did you bring me here?"

She stepped out of the car, looking at the golden-hued mountain with a puzzled expression.

Lucas glanced at her coolly. "I thought you didn't care?"

Aveline pressed her lips together, staying silent.

His tone softened slightly. "We're going hiking."

Aveline was speechless.

She looked at him in shock, then glanced back at the autumn-covered mountain, wondering if she had misheard. Hiking, at this time?

Lucas had already started up the steps. When he noticed she wasn't following, he turned back and asked, "What are you standing there for? Don't feel like hiking?" Aveline started to say something but then reconsidered and kept quiet.

No point in arguing; better to stay quiet.

Following Lucas up the steps, she gradually found her mind distracted from the chaotic thoughts that had been plaguing her.

Her body, lacking in exercise, quickly grew tired, and she began to pant heavily.

Lucas, a few steps ahead, glanced back and teased, "Aveline, you're really out of shape."

Leaning against the railing, Aveline shot him an exasperated look. "You're crazy for dragging me out here to hike."

Lucas replied, "What else should we do? Let you go back to work or lie around at home all day? With the time we have, we might as well do something meaningful."

Aveline's expression remained cold. "I don't see hiking as something meaningful."

Lucas looked out into the distance and said, "Aveline, you're only focusing on the path right in front of you. Have you noticed the scenery around you? Hiking might seem exhausting and pointless, but if you take a moment to look up, you might find the view is actually beautiful, and the climb doesn't feel so hard."

Her thoughts shifted, and she glanced to the side. As soon as she did, her breathing eased.

Just as Lucas had said, she had never paid attention to the scenery around her—she had only focused on the path right in front of her.

When she saw the thorny road ahead, she felt a deep pain within her soul.

But what if she paused and took in her surroundings?

At that moment, the sunlight was just right, autumn's presence growing stronger. The entire mountainside was a blend of interwoven golden and fiery red hues, with mist swirling in the distance, hiding the vibrant colors.

As the autumn wind blew, golden leaves fluttered through the air, and one landed in front of her.

She instinctively picked it up, staring at it in a daze for a long while.

The restlessness in her heart suddenly smoothed out.

"Let's keep going."

Lucas' deep, magnetic voice broke the silence. "Maybe when we reach the top, you'll see an entirely different view."

Aveline let the leaf slip from her hand, and without realizing it, a newfound determination settled in her. Within a few steps, she had caught up with Lucas.

Lucas arched a brow slightly, surprised that she had caught up. His pace remained steady, unlike Aveline, who was breathing heavily, her face flushed. His even breathing highlighted the benefits of regular exercise—hiking was hardly a challenge for him.

Aveline ignored his gaze and kept moving forward, occasionally glancing around. The higher they climbed, the more varied the scenery became. She pulled out her phone and started capturing the beautiful views she encountered, sending them directly to Selena.

"I think we should go hiking together sometime."

Selena called right away, her voice laced with surprise, "Sweetheart, is the world upside down? You've never been into outdoor activities, and now you're hiking?"

As Aveline continued upward, she replied, "Yes, I never noticed before, but now I see it. I'll make an effort to get out more."

Selena chuckled softly, "That's good to hear. You really do need to get out more. Otherwise, stress will keep piling up when you just focus on working. Even a machine would break under that kind of pressure." Aveline laughed at her words, then asked, "Want to come over tonight? I'll cook for you."

"Sounds good to me."

Selena readily agreed.

Aveline planned to discuss Aaron's upcoming engagement with her once she arrived. It was a matter that couldn't be taken lightly.

Lucas had been following behind her, and upon hearing their conversation, he suddenly spoke up, "Why didn't you invite me to dinner?"

Selena overheard him and quickly asked, "What's going on? Are you with Lucas? The two of you are hiking together?"

Aveline responded wearily, "He dragged me out here."

Selena sighed. "I don't even know what to say to that."

Aveline replied, "You don't need to say anything. Just pretend he's not here."

Selena sighed again, "I suppose that's all we can do now."

Aveline paused to take in the scenery, and this time, she was struck by the sight of a vast forest of fiery red maple leaves. A look of awe flashed in her eyes. "Let me send you some pictures," Aveline said.

"Sure," Selena replied.

After hanging up, Aveline took the photo and sent it to Selena.

Lucas stared at her with a deep gaze. "Aveline, don't you have a conscience? I brought you here to help you relax, so why aren't you inviting me over for dinner?"

Aveline's cheeks were flushed, and despite her cold expression, she looked endearingly stubborn, lacking any real intimidation.

"I didn't want to come here."

Lucas raised an eyebrow. "But you did hike, didn't you?"

Aveline was speechless.

Lucas continued, "Yes, I forced you, but your legs are your own. Whether or not you hiked was entirely up to you—you could have stayed at the bottom of the mountain if you wanted." Aveline snapped, "Why are you so shameless?"

Lucas replied, "You always say that about me. If I didn't live up to the name, wouldn't that be unfair?"

Aveline gave a slight tug at the corner of her mouth, then turned and walked away.

Lucas followed her at a leisurely pace, keeping two steps behind. "Aveline, talk to me. Why won't you invite me?"

Aveline shot back, "You really don't know?"

Lucas, unfazed by her irritation, responded calmly, "No idea."

Chapter 588

Aveline didn't want to engage with him, so she quickened her pace. But catching up with her was effortless for Lucas.

He maintained a two-step distance behind her. "Aveline, are you going to invite me or not, hmm?"

Aveline replied curtly, "No."

Lucas sighed dramatically. "You're really heartless, aren't you? I brought you hiking and showed you beautiful scenery, but you won't even invite me over for dinner." Aveline was speechless.

"And," Lucas continued his relentless chatter, "I even stayed with you all night, got up early to make you breakfast, and you just eat and forget all about me. I never imagined you could be this kind of woman." His constant complaints from behind began to wear on Aveline's nerves. But then she realized that no matter what she said, he would ignore it and keep doing whatever he wanted. So why should she care? With that thought, Aveline's mood instantly calmed. No matter how much Lucas rambled, her expression remained unchanged.

Since it wasn't the weekend, the trail wasn't crowded, though they passed a few hikers here and there. An older man eventually caught up to Aveline, huffing as he reached her. "Young lady, your husband's been chatting nonstop, and you're just tuning him out? If it's not bothering you, it sure is bothering us."

Aveline was speechless.

A faint blush of embarrassment crept onto her face.

Lucas, with a smirk, stepped forward and tugged at her sleeve. "Honey, are you going to invite me?"

"Honey?"

"Honey, honey?"

"Enough!"

Aveline turned to face him, her cheeks even redder than before, though it was hard to tell if it was due to the old man's comment or Lucas's behavior that had embarrassed her more. "Lucas, do you ever stop?"

Lucas raised an eyebrow, his expression calm and steady. "I just want to eat your cooking. Is that too much to ask?"

Aveline responded, "Yes, it is too much. You don't deserve to eat anything I make."

That was a serious blow.

Without waiting for his reaction, she continued her climb, not sparing him a glance.

The smile on Lucas' lips faded slightly, surprised that Aveline would say something like that. After all, she hadn't lost her temper despite his relentless teasing.

He lowered his gaze, hiding the emotions in his eyes.

So, playing the rogue wasn't working anymore?

It looked like he would have to go back to his old ways with her. Aveline was the type who reacted better to firmness than to gentleness.

By the time they reached the mountain peak, it was nearing noon. Aveline was drenched in sweat and wanted to take off her jacket, but Lucas placed a hand on her shoulder, stopping her. "Don't take it off. The wind is strong up here."

Aveline shrugged off his hand but decided not to remove her jacket. She certainly didn't want to catch a cold.

Walking to the edge of the cliff, Aveline gazed out at the distant view, and her mood shifted once again.

Indeed, the scenery at the summit was different from that at the base.

It felt as if the barriers in her heart had been shattered, and those moments of despair and pain she once thought insurmountable were slowly fading away.

Taking a deep breath, Aveline placed her hands around her mouth and shouted at the top of her lungs, "Ahhh!!"

Lucas stood behind her, startled by the raw emotion in her scream. In that instant, he saw the intense pain and fragility in her, her slender figure teetering as if she might collapse at any moment. Almost instinctively, Lucas reached out and pulled her into his arms, holding her tightly.

Her scream was abruptly cut off, and Aveline was left disoriented.

"Lucas, what's wrong with you now?" Aveline struggled to push him away, but his grip was unyielding.

Chapter 589

"Don't move."

Lucas held her tightly. "Aveline, right now, I just want to hold you."

Aveline rolled her eyes dramatically, but after hiking all the way up, she didn't have much energy left to struggle. Her face rested against his chest as she gazed at the scenery beyond the mountain, her breathing gradually calming.

She unintentionally became aware of his heartbeat, which was growing faster and louder, as if it might burst from his chest.

Aveline's lashes fluttered slightly. "Lucas, are you having a heart attack?"

Lucas tightened his arms around her briefly, then suddenly released her. "Aveline, I want to kiss you."

She instantly pushed him away. "Don't even think about it."

Lucas' narrow eyes locked onto her lips, a clear intent in his gaze.

Aveline quickly covered her mouth, looking at him with a wary expression.

A faint smile curved Lucas' lips. "Do you really think covering your mouth will stop me? If I want to, you won't be able to escape."

Aveline rolled her eyes again and turned back to the scenery.

After that outburst, the dark clouds that had been hanging over her seemed to have lifted.

She took out her phone, capturing photos and videos to remember the moment.

When she turned around to ask when they would head back, she noticed Lucas holding his phone up, pointing it at her-who knows for how long.

Aveline frowned and asked, "Were you taking pictures of me?"

Lucas replied, "I was capturing the scenery."

She walked over to him. "But your phone was pointed right at me."

Lucas put his phone away and casually said, "Well, you were standing in the scenery."

Aveline paused, her breath catching. "Delete the photos."

Lucas responded, "You can't tell me what to do. It's my phone."

Aveline was speechless.

That familiar sense of helplessness washed over her again.

Lucas glanced at her and suddenly said, "But if you give me a kiss, I might consider deleting one." Aveline ignored him and walked over to a nearby drink stand, where she bought a bottle of water. Seeing this, Lucas asked, "Where's mine?"

Aveline took a sip, her dry lips instantly becoming moist. "When did I ever say I'd buy you one?" Lucas, sitting right next to her, suddenly snatched the water bottle from her hand and took a big gulp. "You!" Aveline was left speechless.

Lucas handed the nearly empty bottle back to her. "I left you a little. No need to thank me."

Aveline almost cursed out loud but instead stood up and moved to sit far away from him.

Lucas followed her, and since the space at the top of the mountain was limited, Aveline eventually ended up at the very edge of the bench, with no room left to scoot away. She turned and shot Lucas an angry glare.

He seemed completely unaffected, still leaning close to her as if nothing was wrong.

The mountain breeze picked up, adding a chill to the air.

Aveline stood up and headed toward the cable car. She paid for her ticket and boarded without a second thought.

Lucas, knowing she wouldn't cover his fare, casually pulled out his phone to pay for himself.

"What a heartless woman," he thought.

As they descended the mountain, Aveline's mood was markedly different from when they first arrived. She looked out at the passing scenery, her expression more relaxed.

Just then, her phone rang. She glanced at the screen-it was a call from Russell.

She looked up at Lucas, thinking that if he knew Russell was calling, he'd probably throw her phone out of the cable car.

Chapter 590

Aveline immediately hung up the call.

Lucas glanced at her and asked, "Why didn't you answer?"

Aveline responded curtly, "That's none of your business."

Lucas chuckled, clearly amused, as if he hadn't expected this rebellious side of her.

Aveline kept her gaze out the window, but inside, she was tense.

Then Lucas spoke again, "Afraid to answer? Worried I might find out? Who was it, Russell?"

Aveline frowned and turned to him. "Lucas, do you ever stop?"

His eyes locked onto hers. "Then why didn't you take the call?"

Aveline closed her eyes briefly, exhaling a heavy sigh before calmly replying, "Lucas, I don't feel like I need to report every little thing I do to you. You mean nothing to me." Lucas crossed his arms and leaned back, his handsome, sharp features becoming even colder and more distant. His eyes regarded her with a cool indifference.

"And so what? Do you think I care about what place I hold in your heart or if I have any status at all?"

Aveline was momentarily stunned. "If you don't care, then why are you still clinging to me?"

Lucas let out a low laugh. "I've told you before, the reason I keep you around is simple. You're a woman, I'm a man, and I need you to satisfy my needs-nothing more." Anger flashed across Aveline's face, and she raised her hand to slap him.

But Lucas didn't flinch, his gaze remaining cold and steady on her.

Aveline's hand paused mid-air, her fingers curling into a fist as her expression grew colder. She didn't bother responding to him after that.

The cable car soon reached the base of the mountain. Aveline stepped out and immediately walked toward the roadside.

Lucas followed leisurely behind her, watching her slender figure with growing frustration.

Their relationship was twisted-she despised him, yet all he wanted was to keep her by his side. But no matter what he did, he couldn't find the right way to make it work. Keeping her with him, did it really cause her that much pain?

He wondered if he had ever truly done anything to hurt her.

Lucas got into his car and drove behind her, keeping a steady distance. He didn't offer her a ride, instead waiting for her to ask. But his expectations were bound to be disappointed. Aveline walked straight to the bus stop, sat on a bench, and began waiting for the bus.

Lucas parked nearby and walked over, sitting beside her.

Aveline took out her earbuds from her bag, put them on, and started playing music, completely ignoring his presence.

Lucas noticed and, without hesitation, grabbed one of her earbuds and put it in his own ear.

Aveline was speechless.

The shamelessness was beyond her.

She couldn't outdo him in this game.

Just then, the bus arrived. Aveline quickly took back her earbud and got on, scanned her payment, and found a single seat by the window to sit down. Finally, she thought, Lucas won't be able to follow her now.

She glanced at him and saw him standing by the bus door, frowning as he fumbled with his phone, seemingly struggling with the scanning process.

For the first time in a while, Aveline felt a bit of relief, even allowing herself a small smile.

But her relief was short-lived. Within a couple of minutes, Lucas managed to scan the code and walked straight over to her, catching sight of the slight curve of her lips as he approached. "So, you were hoping to see me struggle?" he asked, sitting down beside her.

Aveline turned her gaze back to the window, ignoring him entirely.