

## Divorced Me 591

### Chapter 591

Lucas, with his striking features and tall, commanding presence, stood out starkly from the rest of the bus passengers. His innate air of nobility seemed out of place in the crowded vehicle.

He held onto the handrail with one hand, the other casually tucked into his pocket, his gaze resting on Aveline, who sat quietly in her seat. A faint smile tugged at his lips, drawing the attention of several onlookers.

Two girls sitting behind them took out their phones to snap a photo, whispering, "He's so handsome. I take this bus all the time, but I've never seen him before."

Her friend chuckled. "Didn't you notice he's been watching that girl the whole time? They're clearly a couple!"

An older woman also noticed Lucas and approached, patting him on the arm. "Young man, do you have a girlfriend?"

Lucas raised his brows slightly, not expecting the sudden question. But his eyes fell on Aveline as he replied, "I have a wife."

The woman glanced at Aveline with a hint of regret on her face. Hearing Lucas' words, any hopeful thoughts others might have had quickly faded.

Aveline frowned and shot him a glance. "I'm not your wife."

Lucas leaned in closer. "Aveline, if you keep denying our relationship, I'll kiss you right now."

"You!" Aveline's expression changed, her eyes flashing with anger.

Lucas' eyes held a dangerous glint, as if he really would kiss her if she said another word.

Aveline held back, not wanting to cause a scene in front of so many people. He might not care about his dignity, but she did.

The bus swayed and bumped along for an hour before finally reaching a stop near Maple Garden. Aveline got off immediately, heading straight toward the complex.

Lucas was about to follow her when his phone rang. Glancing at the screen, he saw it was a call from Frederick. His expression grew colder, but he answered, "Hello?"

Frederick's tone was sharp. "Lucas, what did you do to Sophia? You caused her to get kicked out of the Winter family! Have you forgotten that if it wasn't for her, you'd be dead by now?"

Lucas' voice turned colder. "You might want to ask her why I ended up in a coma for a year and lost my memory for another year."

Frederick's tone became serious. "What do you mean by that?"

Lucas asked, "Is Sophia at the Tudor family's main estate?"

Frederick let out a cold snort. "You may be heartless, but I can't ignore it. After all, she's the one who saved your life!"

"Perfect," Lucas replied, "I'll have something sent over soon. You should all take a look."

With that, he ended the call and immediately dialed Desmond, giving him brief instructions.

When he looked up again, Aveline was nowhere to be seen.

His expression darkened, and he quickly made another call. "Keep an eye on Russell. Find out who he's closest to at the main estate."

Aveline took a different route after turning the corner, heading straight to Selena's place.

As she stepped out of the elevator, she saw Selena saying goodbye to someone from the property management. Aveline asked curiously, "What's going on?" Selena's face lit up with surprise. "What brings you here?"

Aveline replied, "I didn't have much to do, so I decided to drop by. What's happening?"

Selena sighed. "Don't even ask. Lately, I've had a string of break-ins. The place gets turned upside down, but nothing's ever stolen. Isn't that strange?"

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Aveline frowned slightly and asked, "That is strange. Did you change the locks?"

Selena nodded. "I did, but it didn't help. I'm starting to wonder if these thieves are expert locksmiths. Maybe they learned how to pick locks before deciding to become burglars."

Aveline chuckled at her comment but still said, "If it's that unsafe here, maybe you should find a new place to live."

Selena sank into the couch with a sigh. "I'd love to, but the landlord won't refund my deposit. It's a lot of money."

Aveline gave her a sympathetic look. "How much longer is your lease?"

Selena thought for a moment. "Just one more month. After that, I'm definitely moving."

"Good." Aveline nodded.

That seemed like the best solution.

But she couldn't shake the feeling of unease-why were there repeated break-ins at Selena's place? She recalled the first time it happened, which coincided with her staying there. Unable to make sense of it, Aveline got up and headed to the kitchen to check what ingredients were available.

Seeing this, Selena asked, "Weren't we going to your place?"

Aveline replied, "I'm already here. Why bother going back to my place? Isn't that a hassle?"

Selena hugged a stuffed toy, giving her a knowing look. "Is it really about avoiding trouble, or are you trying to dodge someone?"

Aveline glanced at her. "Wow, you're so sharp."

"Hmph, of course, I am," Selena said, lifting her chin proudly. "But seriously, how did you end up hiking together?"

Aveline's lashes fluttered at the question. She hadn't told Selena about what happened the night before, and if she did, Selena would definitely want to confront him.

"He lives below me. He caught me when I was leaving, and he insisted on taking me hiking," Aveline explained.

Selena shook her head. "That guy is really something else."

"Right?" Aveline said with a slight smirk. "I must be cursed to have met someone like him."

Selena sighed. "What's worse is, I've had the misfortune of meeting someone like that too."

Aveline closed the refrigerator door and said, "Let's go grocery shopping. Your fridge is empty. What do you usually eat?"

Selena walked over to a cabinet, opened it, and revealed an assortment of instant noodles. "Here you go, all sorts of flavors. Just tell me which one you want-I've got them all!"

Aveline was speechless. Her resolve to take Selena to the supermarket only grew stronger.

The two of them headed out the door. As Selena was locking up, she looked at the keychain in her hand and asked, "Aveline, where did you buy this keychain? It's a bit worn out, and I want to get a new one." Aveline took the keychain, examined it closely, and a look of confusion crossed her face. "I don't remember buying a keychain like this."

It was a simple, round keychain with a five-pointed star design on it.

Selena raised an eyebrow. "How is that possible? When you moved out and gave me the keys, this was already on it."

Was that so?

Aveline thought about it for a moment, then shook her head. "I really don't remember. Maybe I just bought it randomly."

Selena shrugged, not thinking much of it. "Alright, then."

She put the keys back in her pocket, and the two of them got into the elevator.

The supermarket wasn't far from the complex, just a ten-minute walk. They picked out their favorite vegetables and fruits, then took a taxi back home. However, when they stepped out of the elevator and saw the door to Selena's apartment wide open again, both Aveline and Selena were stunned. "Ah... this..." Selena was completely dumbfounded.

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Aveline pulled out her phone. "What are you standing there for? Call the police."

Selena, however, seemed unfazed. "I've reported it before, but nothing was stolen, and the security cameras were out of order, so it was pointless."

Aveline frowned. "But it's too dangerous for you to stay here. You should come to stay at my place."

Selena hesitated. "But... the deposit..."

Aveline's expression grew stern. "What's more important, your deposit or your life?"

Selena sighed. "The deposit..."

Ignoring her, Aveline started packing up Selena's belongings. In no time, she had most of it sorted out.

When she turned around, she saw Selena still organizing her collection of stuffed toys.

Aveline felt a bit exasperated. "You can move those later. Right now, just take what you need."

Selena hugged a large plushie tightly and said, "This is essential. I can't sleep without it."

Aveline was speechless.

Selena then clutched a plush carrot. "And this one stays by my side, like a fortress of security."

Aveline fell silent again.

She pretended to dial a number. "Hello, psychiatric hospital?"

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They ended up heading to Maple Garden together.

Aveline handed Selena her suitcase. "Pick any room you like and get settled in. I'm going to start on dinner."

"Got it, rich lady," Selena replied with a grin.

Aveline shook her head with a smile and headed into the kitchen. Just as she started, her phone rang again. She looked at the screen-it was a call from Russell. Only then did she remember that he had tried to call her earlier and she hadn't returned the call.

"Hey, Russ," Aveline answered, her tone tinged with apology. "Sorry, I was busy earlier and just finished up."

Russell replied, "No problem. I just wanted to check in because I heard about what happened with Sophia, and I wondered if you knew anything about it." Aveline responded, "Yes, I saw the news."

Russell asked, "Do you know why she was suddenly kicked out of the Winter family?"

Aveline replied, "I have no idea."

Russell paused for a moment before saying, "I thought you might know. I've heard that Lucas pressured the Winter family into letting Sophia go."

He hesitated briefly, then added, "I thought this might have something to do with you."

Aveline bit her lip, not wanting to reveal what had happened the previous night. "I really don't know. I only found out when I saw the news this morning."

Russell sighed. "Well, in any case, without her around, you'll have a bit more peace of mind."

Aveline nodded. "Yes."

Russell continued, "I've got a meeting now, but if you need anything, give me a call."

"Okay," Aveline agreed and ended the call.

She briefly closed her eyes, trying to push away the memories of last night. The incident had happened before she even left the club, which was why Mason and Jason hadn't shown up immediately.

Not wanting to dwell on it any longer, Aveline focused on finishing the meal. By the time she was done, Selena had unpacked and joined her at the dining table. After a moment's hesitation, Aveline said, "Selena, I found out something about Aaron."

Selena, still eating, asked, "Oh? What is it?"

Aveline replied, "He's getting engaged to the Johnson family's daughter."

Selena paused mid-bite. "A strategic marriage? How cliché."

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Aveline's expression grew serious as she asked, "Selena, don't you have any other thoughts about this?"

Selena took a bite of her chicken wing and replied, "What thoughts? I don't have any. If he wants to marry for business' sake, let him."

Aveline frowned. "But what about the two of you...?"

Selena laughed at that. "Oh, you're worried about that? Don't be. If he really goes through with this marriage, I won't be involved with him anymore. The thing I despise most in this life is being the other woman."

Aveline finally felt relieved. It was a great relief that Selena thought this way. Regardless of what Aaron decided to do, if Selena maintained this attitude, he wouldn't be able to keep her tangled up in his life. Aaron didn't have the leverage over Selena that Lucas did over Aveline.

Seeing Aveline lost in thought, Selena said, "Alright, stop worrying. Those things aren't going to happen."

"Yeah." Aveline nodded, pushing the thoughts aside.

After they finished eating, the two of them took a walk around the neighborhood. As they were heading back, Aveline's phone rang. She answered it with a puzzled expression. "Hello?"

"Hello, Miss Young, there's a gentleman at the gate who wants to see you. He says he's a friend of yours," the security guard informed her.

Aveline asked, "What's his name?"

There was a brief pause before the guard replied, "He says his name is Sidney Troy."



Aveline responded, "Let him in."

Guard replied, "Understood."

"Who is it?" Selena asked curiously.

Aveline replied, "Sidney is here."

"Oh?" Selena's eyes lit up. "Why is he here? It's late. Don't tell me he's here to ask you out on a date?"

Aveline gave her an exasperated look. "Stop jumping to conclusions. He might just need something. Let's go see what he wants."

Selena chuckled. "If it was just something simple, couldn't he have called? Why come over in person? And without even giving you a heads-up? He must be trying to surprise you." Aveline was speechless.

She responded, "With that kind of imagination, it's a shame you're not writing novels."

Selena just grinned.

As they reached the plaza near the entrance, they saw Sidney approaching. A smile spread across his face as soon as he saw Aveline.

"Aveline!"

She asked, "It's pretty late. Is there something you need?"

Sidney scratched his head awkwardly. "Yeah, I do. I was going to call, but I was afraid you might say no, so I decided to come over instead."

Selena's eyes sparkled with curiosity. "So, what's up?"

Aveline also looked at him, puzzled.

Sidney rubbed his nose and cleared his throat. "Well, I wanted to thank you for everything before, and I know I caused you some trouble afterward. So, I was hoping to treat you to dinner. Do you have some time?"

Selena jumped in, "She has plenty of time. In fact, she's got nothing but time right now. So, when's the dinner? Mind if I tag along? Don't worry, I don't eat much—I've got a small appetite." Aveline was speechless.

Sidney smiled shyly. "No problem at all. Aveline, how about tomorrow?"

Selena nodded eagerly. "Perfect, tomorrow it is."

"Selena!" Aveline called out in exasperation.

Selena just shrugged. "What? You two are colleagues, right? It's perfectly normal for colleagues to treat each other to dinner."

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Aveline fell silent, realizing there was no way to resist the combined efforts of Sidney and Selena. She nodded reluctantly. "Alright, tomorrow it is." Sidney's face lit up with joy, his eyes sparkling like stars, making it hard for anyone not to soften toward him.

As the sky darkened and the last traces of orange faded, the lights in the neighborhood flickered on, and the sounds of laughter echoed in the distance.

Selena suddenly remarked, "Why do I feel like we're a family of three right now?"

Aveline shot her a blank look before turning to Sidney. "She's always like this-don't mind her."

Sidney's face softened with a smile. "I think her personality is charming."

Selena immediately puffed up with pride. "Did you hear that? Did you hear what he said? And you still want to ignore me? Admit it-you don't love me anymore!" Aveline was speechless.

She quickly changed the topic. "By the way, have you encountered any challenges at work recently? I noticed that Maria hasn't been taking you out to meetings as much."

At the mention of Maria, a flicker of discomfort crossed Sidney's face. He shook his head and replied, "No, I've been spending most of my time in the office drafting plans. I've sent a few initial drafts to clients and am waiting for their feedback. But there's one client request that I didn't fully understand."

Aveline said, "Let's talk about it. I have some free time now, so we can go over it together."

"Sure," Sidney agreed, walking beside her as he explained the client's request. Aveline listened intently, occasionally offering suggestions.

Selena trailed behind them, deliberately creating some distance. She pulled out her phone, snapped a photo of their silhouettes under the streetlamp, and sent it to her social media. The overlapping shadows and the cozy atmosphere spoke volumes without any need for captions those who knew would understand.

By the time they reached the elevator, Aveline noticed how far behind Selena had fallen. "What are you doing back there? Why are you taking so long?"

Selena, still holding her phone, replied, "Oh, I was just messaging someone."

As they entered the elevator, Selena suddenly said, "I just remembered I might have something to do. How about I head out, and you two can continue chatting?"

But before she could leave, Aveline blocked her way. "What do you have to do that I don't know about?"

Selena grinned sheepishly. "It just came up... suddenly..."

Aveline wasn't having it. "It's late. You're not going out. It's not safe."

Selena was speechless.

"Oh no, Ave is so strict," she thought, sulking.

The elevator slowly ascended, but when it reached Aveline's floor, it stopped, and the doors opened to reveal Lucas standing there, his handsome figure framed by the doorway. Upon seeing him, Selena rolled her eyes dramatically.

Aveline merely glanced at him with a calm expression, saying nothing.

Sidney, however, frowned, a sharp look flashing in his eyes.

Lucas' cold gaze swept over the three of them, finally settling on Aveline. "Why didn't you wait for me?"

Aveline replied coolly, "Is there something you need?"

Lucas stepped into the elevator, his tall frame making the previously spacious compartment feel cramped.

"Didn't we agree you'd invite me to dinner?" he asked.

Aveline raised an eyebrow as if she'd heard a joke. "You must be dreaming."

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"Pfft..." Selena couldn't hold back her laughter, bursting out at Lucas's audacity.

She glanced at Sidney and asked, "Do you think he's dreaming too?"

Sidney offered a faint smile, keeping his reaction subtle.

Lucas ignored the two of them, his intense gaze fixed solely on Aveline.

The elevator doors had closed, and it continued its ascent.

"I never said I'd invite you," Aveline stated firmly.

Lucas' handsome face remained indifferent. "Oh? Well, it's not too late to say it now."

Selena suddenly turned to Sidney and asked, "Are all men this thick-skinned?"

Sidney responded, "Not all of us."

Selena rubbed her chin thoughtfully. "Or maybe it's selective hearing? They just ignore what they don't want to hear."

Sidney remained silent this time, perhaps because there was some truth to it.

Lucas' sharp gaze shifted to Selena, who met his stare without backing down, even lifting her chin defiantly. However, Lucas's imposing presence was overwhelming, and despite her initial bravado, Selena soon averted her eyes, feeling the pressure.

A hint of disdain flickered in Lucas' eyes as he was about to say something, but the elevator doors opened.

Aveline quickly stepped out, brushing past him without a word, with Selena and Sidney following closely behind her.

Lucas watched as they all entered Aveline's apartment, his expression growing colder.

One Russell wasn't enough; now Sidney too?

"Aveline, you certainly know how to attract attention!" Lucas thought.

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Selena nudged Aveline's arm. "Babe, has he always been this shameless?"

Aveline sighed in exasperation. "You're only realizing that now?"

Selena thought for a moment and said, "But I remember, he wasn't like this before. Back then, if I teased him, he'd blush, and his eyes would be glued to you. Whatever you told him not to do, he wouldn't do. He was so obedient."

A trace of sadness flickered in Aveline's eyes. "Like you said, that was in the past."

Selena sighed. "I still don't get it. He just got his memory back; it's not like he lost the memories from that year. How could he change so much?"

Suddenly, an idea seemed to strike her, and she widened her eyes. "Oh my gosh! What if his body has been taken over by someone from another world on a mission? And you're his target for the mission?" Aveline was speechless for a second before she commented, "Babe, your imagination is running wild."

Selena grinned. "That's how it always goes in those novels, right? How else do you explain such a huge personality shift?"

Aveline shook her head. "I don't know how to explain it, and I don't want to care."

She had deeply buried the memories of the old Lucas, unwilling to dig them up again. The current Lucas bore no resemblance to the man he used to be, except for the identical face.

Not wanting to dwell on the topic any longer, Aveline turned to Sidney. "Shall we discuss this in the study?"

Sidney nodded. "Sure."

As they headed toward the study, Aveline called back to Selena, "Bring us two cups of coffee."

Selena thought, "Great! Now I'm a secretary!"

Deep down, though, this was exactly what Selena wanted. She'd support Aveline being with anyone-anyone at all—as long as it wasn't Lucas.

By the time their discussion ended, it was already late at night.

Sidney looked apologetic. "I only meant to invite you to dinner, but I ended up keeping you so late. I'm really sorry."

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Aveline smiled wryly. "Don't say that. Our conversation gave me a lot of new insights too. We should definitely discuss and explore these ideas more often."

"Absolutely," Sidney replied, his eyes shining brightly. Then he added, "I should get going now."

Aveline nodded. "Alright, take care on your way home."

She watched as Sidney stepped into the elevator. As soon as she closed the door and turned around, she found Selena standing behind her with a teasing grin on her face. "What's up with you?" Aveline asked, startled and confused by her friend's expression.

Selena crossed her arms, her eyes gleaming with mischief. "So, did you feel that subtle, romantic tension yet?"

Aveline's mouth twitched slightly. "You're imagining things. We spent the entire time working on a design concept."

Selena's playful smile vanished. "How dull! If it were me, alone in a room with such a charming and shy guy, I'd definitely make a move."

As if lost in her thoughts, Selena's expression grew a little dreamy.

Aveline gave her a gentle push. "It's late. Stop daydreaming, or you'll end up oversleeping tomorrow."

Selena pouted. "I'm currently unemployed, remember?"

Stunned into silence, Aveline chose to cut the conversation short.

As Sidney exited the elevator, he spotted Lucas, dressed in workout gear, returning from a run. His breath was slightly uneven, but his gaze remained icy.

Lucas jogged up to him and asked, "Do you know how to box?"

A hint of caution flickered in Sidney's eyes. "What do you want?"

A faint smile tugged at Lucas' lips. "Just thought we could spar a bit. How about it?"

Sidney's eyes narrowed slightly, but he nodded. "Sure, but I'm not very good. I hope you will go easy on me."

Lucas turned and headed toward his car, with Sidney following closely behind.

They drove to a private boxing gym, where the manager respectfully nodded at Lucas. "Mr. Tudor."

Lucas walked straight to the innermost area of the gym. It was late, and the place was empty.

He grabbed a pair of boxing gloves and began putting them on. When he glanced at Sidney, he noticed the younger man was examining the gloves before slowly putting them on. A glimmer of disdain flashed in Lucas's eyes.

Once in the ring, Lucas loosened up his neck and arms, his cold gaze fixed on Sidney. "Kid, once you're in the ring, there's no holding back."

Compared to Lucas, Sidney's presence was less intimidating, but there was determination in his eyes. "I'll give it my all!"

Lucas didn't waste any time and threw the first punch.

Sidney was no match for him.

It wasn't long before Lucas had him on the ground-no contest at all.



Lucas' eyes darkened with a hint of red as he continued to land brutal punches. Sidney's face soon bore the marks of the fight, bruised and bloodied.

Finally, Lucas delivered a hard punch to Sidney's chest, watching him struggle to catch his breath. He sneered, "Someone like you thinks you're worthy of her? Hmm?"

Sidney coughed painfully, his face battered and bruised, looking utterly defeated.

After catching his breath, he spoke with difficulty, "Pursuing her is my right. You have no say in it."

"Oh?" Lucas raised an eyebrow, surprised by his response. He stood up, removed his boxing gloves, and said with a cold smile, "Let's see what you're really made of, if you think you can keep chasing her."

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The next day.

When Aveline arrived at the studio, she was shocked to see Sidney at his desk, his face covered in bruises and his fingers struggling to type on the keyboard.

She hurried over and asked, "Sidney, what happened to you?"

Sidney looked up at her and managed a smile, though the effort caused his lips to twitch in pain, contorting his expression.

"I'm... fine," he said with difficulty. "After I left your place last night, I ran into Mr. Tudor. He suggested we spar a bit, so I agreed. Don't worry about me, I'm really okay." Aveline frowned. "Just a spar?"

If it was just a sparring match, how did he end up in such a bad state?

Sidney chuckled softly. "Yeah, it was just sparring. I'm really okay-it looks worse than it is, just some surface wounds. Please, don't hold it against Mr. Tudor because of me." There was a hint of self-deprecation in his eyes. "In the end, it's just because I'm not strong enough."

Aveline pressed her lips together and then turned to leave. When she returned, she was carrying a few items—a cold pack and some bruise ointment.

She pulled over a chair and sat directly in front of Sidney. "Turn around, I'll help you apply the ointment."

Sidney was taken aback and shook his head. "That's not necessary, really, I'm fine."

But Aveline's expression was stern. "Do you plan on facing clients with that face? They might run away before you even get a chance to speak."

Sidney let out a small laugh, though it was followed by a grimace of pain. "Alright, I guess I'd rather not scare off the clients I've worked so hard to build relationships with." He turned to face her, and Aveline handed him the cold pack. "Hold this against your mouth."

"Okay."

Sidney obediently pressed the cold pack to the corner of his mouth, the coolness soothing the burning pain. His eyes, still full of gratitude, watched Aveline as she carefully applied the ointment to his bruised

cheek and forehead.

"All done," she said after a few minutes, finishing the treatment. She left the ointment on his desk and added, "Follow the instructions, and you'll be better in a few days."

"Got it. Thank you," Sidney replied, his appreciation evident in his voice.

Sidney gave her a faint smile, and for a moment, Aveline felt a pang of nostalgia.

Her mind flashed back to when Lucas had first learned to write. He had written her name with such pride, looking at her as if seeking approval. The memory sent a sharp pain within her. She quickly said, "I'm going to get back to work. If your hands aren't up to it, take a break. The boss won't mind."

"Alright," Sidney replied, watching as she turned and walked away.

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As she walked away, he glanced down, and moments later, his phone buzzed with a new photo. Someone had captured the moment perfectly-the sunlight illuminating Aveline as she carefully applied ointment to his face, while he gazed at her with a look full of affection.

Such a beautiful moment.

Sidney found a contact in his phone and sent the photo without hesitation.

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At DK Group, in the CEO's office.

Lucas' phone buzzed, and when he checked it, his expression immediately darkened. His eyes flashed dangerously, and after a moment, a cold, ruthless smile curled his lips.

Just then, Desmond knocked and

entered the office. "Mr. Tudor, here's the information on Sidney Troy. His mother is currently hospitalized, and he's the sole financial provider for his family."

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Lucas scanned the information briefly before saying, "Make it clear-any hospital that accepts his mother will be considered an enemy of the Tudor family."

"Understood!" Desmond nodded and left the office.

Lucas picked up his phone again, glaring at the image that had irritated him earlier. A cold, disdainful glint flashed in his dark eyes.

Later that afternoon, Sidney received a frantic call from the caregiver.

"Sidney, what do we do? Your mother's been kicked out of the hospital! They said the medical bills have gone unpaid for too long, and they won't take her back."

Sidney shot up from his seat. "Where are you now?"

"We're at the hospital entrance. Your mother's passed out, but no one's coming to help her. Sidney, what should we do?"

Panic overtook Sidney as he quickly left the studio.

As he rushed out, he nearly collided with Aveline. She stepped back and asked, "What's wrong?"

"Sorry, something's happened at home. I need to go," Sidney said, his face full of anxiety.

"Do you need help?" Aveline offered.

"No, it's fine," Sidney replied curtly before hurrying off.

Aveline picked up the scattered documents from the floor and returned to her desk. She couldn't help but press her lips together in thought, still troubled by the bruises on Sidney's face.

"What is Lucas' problem with Sidney, anyway?" she wondered, letting out a small sigh as she resumed her work.

As evening fell, Aveline was about to clock out when her phone rang. It was Selena.

"Hey," Aveline answered.

Selena's voice was full of curiosity. "What's going on? Weren't we supposed to have dinner tonight? It's already this late-don't tell me you two went ahead without me!"

Aveline stepped out of the elevator and sighed. "He had an emergency at home, so we had to cancel."

"Hmm?" Selena sounded puzzled. "What happened? Was it serious?"

"I'm not sure," Aveline replied. "But he looked really worried."

Selena suggested, "Why don't you give him a call to check in? After all, he did go all the way to Maple. Garden to find you and invite you to dinner. It's only fair to show some concern."

Aveline agreed that she had a point. "Alright, I'll give him a call."

"Good, go ahead," Selena encouraged.

Aveline dialed Sidney's number, and after what felt like a long time, he finally answered. "Hello?"

His voice sounded exhausted.

Aveline's brow furrowed with concern. "Sidney, how are you doing?"

Sidney's breathing was noticeably heavy, and after a pause, he said, "Aveline, could you do me a favor?"

Hearing the strain in his voice, Aveline's expression grew serious. "Of course. What do you need?"

An hour later.

At the Skyler family's private hospital, Sidney's mother had been

settled into a room. As Sidney

stepped out of the ward, his eyemet

were red as he looked at Aveline. "Thank you. If it weren't for you,

don't know what I would have done."

Aveline responded, "It's really Russell who helped. Without him, I wouldn't have been able to do much."

Sidney turned to Russell and bowed deeply.

Russell dismissed it with a wave. "No need to thank me. Your mother's settled now, so stay here and focus on comforting her. Make sure she doesn't worry too much."

Sidney nodded. "I will."

Russell then looked at Aveline. "Shall I take you home?"

Aveline nodded. "Alright."

After saying goodbye to Sidney, Aveline and Russell left the hospital together.

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Russell glanced at her and asked, "Do you think this is just a coincidence?"

Aveline lowered her gaze, her expression complicated. "I have a pretty good idea who's behind this."

When she first met with Sidney, he had already told her that none of the major hospitals in Cloudflare City would admit his mother for treatment, no matter how much he pleaded. In Cloudflare City, there were plenty of people with the power to do something like this, but only one person who actually would.

So, she had called Russell.

By moving Sidney's mother to the Skyler family's hospital, they were out of the reach of the Tudors. With Russell's influence, Sidney's mother wouldn't be turned away again.

She felt deeply grateful for Russell's timely help but was equally saddened, unable to understand why Lucas was being so ruthless.

Was he really that heartless?

Russell studied her. "Aveline, if you keep going back and forth with him, the number of people he targets will only grow."

Aveline didn't respond, a faint sadness washing over her.

Russell opened the car door. "Get in. With his mother here, you can rest easy."

Aveline exhaled a shaky breath. "Thank you, Russ."

Russell had helped her so many times that she wasn't sure how she could ever repay him.

Russell smiled slightly. "No need to thank me. If we're keeping score, a few thank-yous wouldn't even come close to balancing the scales between us." Aveline gave a bitter smile. "Yeah, I owe you so much."

Russell's gaze softened. "That's what friends are for, right? So don't worry about it."

But even between friends, there was only so much one could take without giving back.

Aveline nodded silently.

When they arrived back at Maple Garden, Aveline didn't go straight home. Instead, she stood outside Lucas' door and rang the bell.

After a moment, the door opened, and Lucas stood there, his expression cold and distant. "What do you want?"

Aveline looked at him icily. "Why are you targeting Sidney?"

Lucas let out a mocking laugh. "Him? You think he's worth my time to target?"

Aveline's expression darkened. "If that's the case, why did you hit him and go after his family? Lucas, if you have a problem, take it out on me. What's the point of targeting others?"

Lucas looked down at her with a cold, superior gaze. "Take it out on you? Can you handle it?"

Aveline was momentarily speechless.

"So, you're admitting it-you did all of this, didn't you?" she pressed.

Instead of answering directly, Lucas shifted the conversation. "Aveline, in what capacity are you questioning me? As my wife, or as his girlfriend?"

Her brows furrowed in frustration.

"Let's focus on the issue. What you're doing is wrong, and even if I were just a bystander, I'd still have the right to question it."

Lucas sneered. "If you're just a bystander, then why should I answer you?"

With that, he moved to close the door.

Aveline instinctively reached out to stop him. "Lucas, leave Sidney alone!"

She had come here determined to make him stop. Sidney was innocent and only caught in the crossfire because of her.

Lucas raised an eyebrow. "Are you begging me?"

Aveline's breath caught. "If that's what it takes, then fine. I'm begging you, don't go after innocent people."



But Lucas' expression grew even

colder. He grabbed her chin firmly,

forcing her to meet his gaze. "But Aveline, if you're going to beg, you'd better have the right attitude And this? I'm far from satisfied.