

Divorced Me 721

Chapter 721

Gernard's expression grew more serious.

"Juliet, I can agree to anything else, but not this. You are the heiress of the Skyler family; you must not do something that would destroy someone else's marriage."

"What do you mean by destroying someone's marriage?" Juliet pouted. "I've already looked into it; they're getting a divorce. Besides, didn't you also hire a lawyer to help? You've done so much already, so why won't you help me with this?"

Gernard was surprised at how much she knew, his brows furrowing. "Juliet, why not like someone else? Why must it be him? Since you've investigated him, you should know he isn't someone you can trust."

He tried to reason with her, "Aveline once saved his life, yet he wants to divorce her and has caused her so much pain. If that's how he treats his savior, do you think he'll treat you any better?"

Juliet dismissed his reasoning, saying, "He dares to treat his wife that way because she has nothing. He wouldn't dare do the same to me; I have the entire Cooper family behind me. If he ever tries to hurt me, he'll have to think twice about whether he can afford to provoke us."

Gernard's frown deepened. "Juliet, are you determined to be stubborn about this?"

Juliet released his arm abruptly, "I like him, and I'm going to be with him, whether you help me or not! If you won't, I'll find a way myself!"

With a cold huff, she pushed past Gernard and stormed off.

"Juliet!" Gernard called after her, a mix of worry and helplessness in his heart. She had developed this temper because they had spoiled her, and now it was getting out of hand.

...

Juliet wanted to find Lucas, but she was informed that a reservation was needed to visit the Chairman's office. She was stopped at the entrance, and feeling annoyed, she turned and left the Tudor Group. Sitting in her car, she received Aveline's file from her subordinate. After reading through it, an indescribable emotion flashed in her eyes. She called her subordinate, "Go buy a house and make sure Aveline is assigned to design it for me."

As evening approached, Aveline walked out of the building and immediately spotted a Rolls-Royce Phantom parked by the roadside its sleek, luxurious lines exuded an air of grandeur. The car door swung open, and Lucas walked straight toward her.

A slight frown appeared on Aveline's delicate brow.

"What are you doing here?" she asked.

"Can't you tell?" Lucas replied. "I'm here to pick you up from work."

Aveline's tone was cold. "That's not necessary."

With that, she moved to walk past him, pulling out her car keys.

Lucas followed closely behind her. "Well, you could always give me a ride home instead. After all, we both live in the same neighborhood." Clearly, he wasn't planning on leaving her alone.

Aveline's frown deepened as she shot him an annoyed look. "Lucas, clinging to me like this won't change anything."

Lucas responded, "How do you

know it won't change anything?

What if in the end, you get used to my persistence and even start missing me if you don't see me for a day?"

Aveline replied, "It's still early, Lucas. Stop dreaming."

She opened her car door and got in. Before he could join her, she locked the doors.

Lucas pulled at the door handle but found it wouldn't budge-she clearly didn't want him getting in. His handsome face remained emotionless as he turned back to his

own car.

Aveline's car took the lead, and his luxury vehicle followed closely behind, the two cars driving one after the other into Maple Garden.

Chapter 722

They both lived in the same building, so it was inevitable they would run into each other.

Inside the elevator, Aveline pressed the floor button and moved to stand in the corner. Lucas, tall and imposing, filled the space with a sense of pressure. His striking, sharp features showed little emotion as he watched her through the mirrored walls. "Want to come over to my place for dinner?" he asked.

"No," Aveline replied.

She wasn't particularly hungry and hadn't planned on having dinner.

"Are you sure?" Lucas persisted. "Why not try my cooking and give me some pointers? That way, if we part ways in the future, I won't starve myself."

Aveline was speechless for a moment. She glanced up at him and said, "Even if you can't cook, you wouldn't starve."

With his skyrocketing net worth and status as the youngest Chairman in Cloudflare City, there was hardly anything he couldn't get. If he wanted something to eat, all he'd need to do was put out the word, and people would likely line up to bring it to him. Lucas turned to face her fully, his eyes fixed on her. "But I wouldn't eat well, stay warm, or feel at ease."

Aveline's breath caught in her throat for a moment, and she looked away. Just then, the elevator doors opened. She glanced at the floor indicator and said, "This is your stop."

His apartment was on the floor below hers.

Lucas stepped closer, narrowing the distance between them. "Aveline, are you sure you won't reconsider?"

"No," she replied, her tone as cold as ice.

"Alright then," Lucas conceded with a sigh before stepping out of the elevator.

The doors closed slowly, shutting off their view of each other.

Aveline withdrew her gaze, feeling the walls around her heart begin to waver, sparking a faint sense of crisis within her. She didn't want to go through the same experiences again; she just wanted to live her life in peace.

Now that the order was complete, she planned to tell Maria about her resignation tomorrow.

She pressed her fingerprint against the scanner, and the door opened, but there was no sign of Selena inside.

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

"Hello?"

"Hey, beautiful Ave, I've moved out," Selena announced cheerfully. Aveline frowned, puzzled. "Why did you suddenly move out?"

Selena chuckled. "I plan to stay around for a while, and I can't just keep freeloading, you know. I found another job and I'm getting back to my career."

Aveline replied, "But you didn't have to move out."

Selena cleared her throat softly, "Well, I started dating someone. Living with you would make you a third wheel, wouldn't it?" Aveline paused. "...Alright."

Selena continued, "I've already found a job. Come out and have dinner with me; it's my treat."

Aveline leaned lazily against the sofa. "I'm not really hungry."

"Oh, come on, let's celebrate!" Selena pleaded playfully.

After thinking for a moment, Aveline asked, "Where to?"

Selena replied, "There's a restaurant etty good food. I'm going alt

with

out

Let me tell you, this is a

one-time offer."

Aveline's lips twitched. "Fine, just send me the location."

"Got it!"

Aveline changed into fresh clothes, grabbed her car keys, and headed out. By the time she arrived at the restaurant, the sky had already darkened. The warm lights

illuminated the cozy ambiance of the place, casting a serene glow.

"Over here, darling!" Selena waved at her.

Aveline walked over. Their table was tucked in a more private area, and once the sliding door was closed, it felt nicely secluded.

Selena handed her the menu. "Go ahead, order whatever you like."

Chapter 723

Aveline glanced at the menu and raised an eyebrow. "Aren't you worried I'll make you broke?"

Selena waved her hand dismissively. "Order whatever you like! I'm not afraid!"

Aveline smiled and ordered without being wasteful, choosing dishes she actually enjoyed. She called over the waiter, handed over the menu, and as the sliding door closed, she caught a glimpse of a few people passing by outside. Their eyes met briefly, and Aveline fell silent.

Lucas, Aaron, and Lance were there.

What a coincidence.

The door slid shut, cutting off their line of sight.

Selena started talking about her new job, filled with excitement and hope for the future. Aveline listened quietly before saying, "I'm planning to resign."

Selena paused for a moment, then nodded. "That might be for the best. Once the court hearing is over and the divorce is finalized, you'll be free of any restraints."

Aveline replied, "Let's hope it goes smoothly."

Selena smiled. "It definitely will."

In the private room next door, Aaron looked at Lucas with a teasing smile, then turned to Lance and said, "This guy's definitely got a plan. Did you see that? Aveline is just next door." Lance, expressionless, glanced at him. "Are you two on better terms now?"

Hearing this, Lucas' face darkened.

Lance quickly caught on. "Seems like that's not the case."

Aaron, confused, asked, "What's going on? Is there something I don't know about?"

Lance remained silent, sipping his tea without offering any explanation.

Lucas remarked coldly, "If coming here makes you unhappy, why did you come?"

Aaron chuckled lazily. "So, you're saying you're thinking of me? Should I be thanking you?"
Lucas replied, "No need."

Aaron rolled his eyes and then asked, "Has Aveline withdrawn the lawsuit yet?"

Lucas said nothing.

Aaron continued, "Then the court date will be set soon. What will you do then?"

Lucas' face turned stern. "What court hearing? I have no idea."

Aaron raised an eyebrow. "Are you planning not to attend?"

"I don't want a divorce. Why should I go?" Lucas retorted.

Aaron clicked his tongue. "Poor Aveline. She's so unfortunate to run into you; she can't even manage to get a divorce."

Lucas shot him a cold glance. "If you can't speak properly, then sew your mouth shut. I've been thinking about practicing my needlework lately."

Aaron laughed in a way that asked for trouble, then turned to Lance. "He's angry and embarrassed."

Lance gave him a calm, slow look. "Your death day is approaching."

Aaron genuinely felt a chill run down his spine and decided to drop the subject.

The soundproofing of the private rooms wasn't perfect. If one listened carefully, they could make out what was being said next door.

Selena, having had a bit too much to

drink, was starting to get carried away. She slapped the table and declared swear, I see Lucas'

stupid face in my dreams all the.I

time should never have gone. abroad back then. If I hadn't, you wouldn't have met him and brought him home!"

Aveline glanced at Selena's flushed face, hesitated for a moment, then said, "The person you're calling a bastard is right next door."

"So, what if he's next door? Event

he were standing right in front of me, I'd still curse him out," Selena replied, full of bravado and clearly not intimidated.

Aveline placed some food on her plate. "How about you try this? See if it's any good?"

But Selena grabbed her hand, her

eyes already clouded with a bit oret

drunkenness. "Ave, I can tell he's trying to make up with you. Will you forgive him?"

Chapter 724

The faint scent of alcohol lingered in the air.

The private room fell silent for a moment-not only there but even the room next door grew quiet. The lack of soundproofing made Selena's loud voice impossible to ignore.

Aaron and Lance both glanced at Lucas, their expressions unreadable. Lucas' striking face remained calm, betraying no emotion, though his fingers tightened subtly around his glass. After a long pause, a soft, clear voice came through from the other side, "No, I won't."

Lucas raised his glass and downed the drink in one go.

Selena let out a chuckle. "That's the spirit! Why jump into a pit of fire over and over again? Unless you want to be burned to ashes with nothing left."

Aveline's smile was faint, her tone calm. "You're drunk. Let's go."

Selena cupped her face with a playful grin, "Alright, but I'm sleeping over with you tonight."

Aveline stood up and helped her to her feet, and they left the private room together.

At the same time, the door next door slid open, and a man of distinguished presence stepped out.

Selena glanced over suspiciously and immediately spotted Aaron. She grinned and called out, "Hey... come over here and hold me!" Aveline was speechless.

Aaron walked over and wrapped his arms around her. "Can't you behave for once?"

Selena, holding onto his collar, looked up at him defiantly, "Why should I behave?"

She was clearly drunk, and Aaron knew whatever he said wouldn't get through to her, so he dropped the subject.

He turned to Aveline. "I'll take her home."

Aveline nodded. "Alright, be careful."

It seemed they really were dating.

The group left the restaurant. Lance called for a driver and, with a glance at Lucas, left without asking any questions.

Aveline headed toward her car, the sound of steady footsteps following her at a measured pace. She could feel the heated gaze lingering on her.

She opened her car door, ready to get in, when a hand suddenly pressed against it, preventing her from entering.

Aveline looked up at Lucas, her expression calm.

"What is it?" she asked.

Lucas' tall figure stood before her, the cool night breeze gently brushing past. His black coat, sharp and imposing, shielded her from most of the chill. "I've had some drinks and can't drive. Could you give me a ride?" he asked in a low voice, his dark eyes intently fixed on her.

Aveline replied, "It's not convenient."

He gazed at her without blinking. "You don't have to keep your distance from me like this. I'm just asking for a ride."

"You could call a driver," she suggested.

"My phone's dead," Lucas replied.

Aveline sighed.

Of course. He had got all the excuses lined up.

It seemed like she couldn't refuse.

Fine.

It was just a ride; she wasn't that petty.

"Let go," she said.

Seeing her soften, Lucas released his grip and moved to the passenger side, getting in.

The interior of the car felt confined, the faint scent of alcohol filling the air. Aveline started the engine and drove towards Maple Garden. The drive was quiet, both of them remaining composed.

After a while, his deep, magnetic voice broke the silence, slightly hoarse hard to read. "If someone

makes a mistake, do they not

deserve a chance to make amends?"

Aveline's fingers tightened around the steering wheel. "What happened between us isn't something that can be undone with a single apology or admission of guilt."

Chapter 725

"Even the law gives people a chance to redeem themselves, but you won't," Lucas remarked, his eyes on her.

In the dimly lit car, the streetlights flickered past, but they couldn't illuminate the darkness in his gaze.

Aveline pressed her lips together and replied, "But you've hurt me. I have a fragile heart. I won't touch anything that causes me pain again." Silence filled the car.

For a moment, Lucas wished he could go back in time and slap himself. Why had he been so foolish?

He closed his eyes...

There was no turning back in this world, no way to undo what had been done. At this point, words felt utterly meaningless.

They arrived at Maple Garden.

Aveline parked the car and left, heading directly towards the entrance. Lucas remained quiet, following her silently into the elevator.

The conversation in the car left them both in a heavy silence.

Aveline suddenly realized that some words were not as difficult to say as she thought. Speaking them out loud actually made her feel a bit lighter.

She raised her eyes to look at the mirrored elevator wall, catching a glimpse of his sharp and handsome face.

"Lucas, let's part on good terms. I think what you're feeling might be more about not wanting to let go because I once loved you. But I don't anymore, and you just don't want to face that. It's time to wake up. In the future, whether it's weddings or funerals, let's stay out of each other's lives."

Lucas' lips curved into a faint smile. "You seem to think you know me very well."

Aveline replied, "Isn't that true?"

"No," Lucas denied flatly.

He looked directly at her. "At first, I did question it-how could someone's love just vanish so easily? But it only bothered me for a few days. I don't want a divorce, simply because I don't want one. I don't want you to leave me."

His gaze was so intense and sincere that, even through the reflection in the elevator's mirror, she could feel the depth of his emotion.

Aveline felt a sharp pain in her heart, as if scalded.

It hurt.

She averted her gaze and said, "But I don't want to continue this."

Lucas replied, "That's fine. I'll wait for you. Someone like me will probably live a long time, so there'll be a day when you forgive me." Aveline kept quiet.

Back home, the house felt empty. Aveline stood at the door, dazed for a moment, before finally heading to wash up.

The next day.

Aveline arrived at the studio and knocked on the office door.

"Come in," came Maria's lazy voice.

Aveline pushed the door open and walked in, her delicate and refined face looking serious. "Boss, I'm here to submit my resignation."

"What?"

Maria shot up from her seat, startled. "Why do you want to resign?"

Aveline replied, "I want to try a different lifestyle, like maybe opening a restaurant or something."

Maria was stunned. Aveline had dropped this bombshell without any warning, and now she didn't know how to respond. But one thing was clear she couldn't let her go

Maria pulled her over to the sofa and asked, "Aveline, you can't leave now. You've seen it yourself; my studio is just getting started, and I really need a talented designer like you. If you leave, I don't think the studio will last very long."

Aveline smiled faintly and said, "Sidney is very capable. He can certainly help you. You could also hire from universities; many students are talented and

well suited for development

Maria sighed, realizing Aveline had made up her mind. "So, you're determined to leave, aren't you?" Aveline nodded. "I'm sorry for telling you so late. I'll stay until you find a new designer."

Chapter 726

Maria sighed helplessly. "I should have seen this coming. From the very beginning, you were always thinking about leaving."

Aveline lowered her eyes slightly, a faint smile on her lips, but she didn't respond. Taking this job had always been a temporary decision. Her goal had always been to move on and live her own life. "Alright, I'll start preparing to hire someone new. But after seeing your designs, my standards have risen, so you'll have to take responsibility. You'll handle the interviews," Maria said. Aveline nodded. "Sure, no problem."

She got up and left the office. As soon as the door closed behind her, Maria quickly dialed Lucas' number.

"What is it?" His deep, cold voice came through as soon as he answered.

Maria lowered her voice, "Bad news, boss. Aveline just handed in her resignation!"

Lucas' tone grew even colder. "And you accepted it?"

Maria replied, "What choice did I have?"

Lucas responded flatly, "Then there's no need for your studio to stay open. She leaves, and so does your business." With that, he hung up.

"Wait..." Maria tried to protest, but the call was already disconnected. She felt her frustration boil over. "Hello? Hello!" How infuriating!

If Aveline wanted to quit, how was she supposed to stop her? What could she possibly do to make her stay?

Maria began pacing in circles around her office, stamping her feet in frustration. Lucas really left no room for maneuver! Didn't he realize that being so heavy-handed would only widen the rift between him and Aveline? But then, she reconsidered.

If that rift grew, her own fate might end up even worse than Brian's...

Thinking about what had happened to Brian, a shiver ran down Maria's spine. She quickly dismissed any dangerous thoughts.

Alright, fine.

She would try her best to keep Aveline around.

Aveline returned to her desk and began sorting through potential candidates for the designer position. It wasn't long before there was a knock on the door.

The receptionist led someone in and quickly approached Aveline, saying, "Aveline, someone is here looking for you to design a house."

Aveline paused.

Looking for her?

She considered herself a minor figure in the industry; there were many talented designers out there. This was the first time someone specifically asked for her. Well, Lucas didn't count.

She got up and headed to the meeting room, where she saw a man in a suit holding a briefcase.

"Hello, I'm Aveline Young," she introduced herself as she walked over.

The man stood and shook her hand.

"Hello, Ms. Young. I'm Patrick

Gunner. I've seen some of your designs and found them very creative. I recently bought a piece of land and want to build a winery. Here are the details. I'd like to hear your thoughts."

Aveline hesitated for a moment and began, "I'm afraid I might not be able to—"

"Mr. Gunner, welcome, welcome!" Maria cut in, walking into the room with a warm smile.

"Aveline is full of great ideas. Here is our pricing list. Feel free to take your time to review it."

She gave Aveline a meaningful look before quickly reassuring Patrick and stepping back out. Aveline smiled politely.

"I'll be right back," she said, excusing herself from the room.

Outside the meeting room, Aveline asked, puzzled, "What's going on?"

Maria crossed her arms. "Were you just about to turn down his project?"

Aveline nodded. "Yes, I won't be here much longer. If I take on this project and then someone else has to finish it, he probably won't be happy. Better to refuse now."

Maria sighed helplessly.

Chapter 727

"Aveline, I know you plan to leave, but you're still here, still in this position. You have to complete your responsibilities. The studio isn't just mine," Maria said firmly. Aveline's eyelashes fluttered slightly before she replied, "Alright, I understand."

Though her relationship with Maria was friendly outside of work, here in the studio, they were just employer and employee.

Aveline's sudden decision to resign hadn't angered Maria, likely out of respect for their past friendship. But if Aveline were to do nothing now and simply wait to leave, she'd be taking advantage of that friendship. Maria reached out and squeezed her shoulder gently. "Thank you for understanding."

Back in the meeting room, Aveline continued discussing the contract details with Patrick. He had considerable assets, so he had no objections to the costs involved in building the house.

After they finished going over everything, Patrick paid the deposit. Aveline would need to visit the site for an inspection and then prepare the blueprints.

By the time they wrapped up the contract, it was the end of the workday. Aveline hadn't seen Sidney all day, which made her a bit curious.

"Where's Sidney?" she asked as Maria came out of her office.

Maria blinked and replied, "He took the day off. I think his mother's condition has gotten worse."

Aveline's brows furrowed in concern at the news.

Maria watched her for a moment before saying, "I'm planning to visit his mother at the hospital. Do you want to come with me?"

"Sure," Aveline agreed. She had always liked Ruth and saw no reason to refuse.

The two of them bought some things and headed to the hospital. The hallway was filled with the scent of disinfectant. Aveline knocked lightly on the door of the patient room. A nurse quickly came over and, seeing her, smiled warmly. "Miss Young, you're here."

Aveline nodded and asked, "Is she asleep?"

The nurse shook her head. "No, she's talking with Sidney."

Aveline and Maria entered the room together.

Sidney, hearing the noise, came out to see who it was. When he saw them, his expression froze for a moment.

"You're here," Sidney greeted them.

Aveline nodded. "We came to see your mom."

"Is that Miss Young?" Ruth called out as she heard Aveline's voice.

"Yes, it's me," Aveline replied, walking over to her.

Ruth looked delighted to see her, though she was visibly more frail and weak than before.

"Ma'am, have you eaten?" Aveline asked with concern.

Ruth nodded. "Yes, I have. Sidney ate with me."

Maria also came closer. "Ma'am, you look great today! It won't be long before you're out of here."

"Oh, Miss Maria, you're here too! I'm so happy you both came to see me. You didn't need to bring anything," Ruth said, noticing the items Maria had brought.

Maria smiled warmly. "These are all great for you, Ma'am. They'll help you get back on your feet faster. Mrs. Lowe from downstairs is eager for you to return so you two can dance again together."

Ruth chuckled with joy. "With my health right now, I can't dance at all."

Maria replied, "That's exactly why

you need to eat these goodies.set

that when you get out of here, you'll surprise everyone with your moves!"

"Alright!" she laughed.

They chatted with Ruth, lightening the heavy atmosphere in the room.

Sidney stood quietly to the side, his expression calm, but his eyes revealed a complex emotion.

Maria got up to head to the restroom, and Sidney immediately followed her out.

Chapter 728

Maria came out of the restroom, drying her hands, and spotted Sidney standing a short distance away, his dark eyes fixed on her. She flashed a smile. "What's wrong?"

Sidney's tone was cooler than usual. "What are you doing here?"

Maria walked slowly toward him, tilting her head slightly. "As your boss, I thought I'd check in on an employee's family. Is that not allowed?" Sidney replied, "It's not necessary."

"You're so cold," Maria teased, stepping a bit closer. "But that wasn't the case when we were at the hotel."

Sidney's expression instantly turned icy. "What are you trying to do?"

Seeing his tense and guarded look, Maria's smile widened. "Do you always do whatever I say?"

Sidney pressed his lips together, remaining silent.

Maria brushed her hair back over her shoulder. "I want you to kiss me."

Sidney's gaze grew colder, and he turned to leave without another word.

Maria couldn't help but laugh softly. "Let's see how long you can hold out, Sidney."

Back in the hospital room, Ruth had already fallen asleep.

Aveline was just about to leave when she saw them returning together. "Ma'am is asleep now, so I think I'll head out."

Sidney immediately said, "I'll walk you out."

Aveline shook her head. "No need, you should stay here with her."

But Sidney insisted, "There's a nurse here. Come on."

Without so much as a glance at Maria, he walked out with Aveline.

Maria watched his retreating back, arms crossed. Even after sleeping with her, he still had his mind on Aveline?

A bit of a player, wasn't he?

Well, no matter.

It was just one time. A few more, and he wouldn't be thinking about anyone else.

Outside the hospital, Sidney glanced at Aveline, a complicated look in his eyes. "I..." "Hmm?" Aveline looked at him, puzzled. "What is it?"

A flicker of hesitation crossed Sidney's eyes. After a long pause, he finally said, "Aveline, I..."

Aveline sensed something was off. He seemed strange, almost like he had something he couldn't bring himself to say. "If there's something bothering you, just tell me," Aveline suggested.

Forget it...

Sidney sighed inwardly. He lacked the courage to speak. He feared that if he did, there would be no turning back. "Take care on your way home," he said instead.

Aveline frowned slightly. "Is there something going on? Is someone causing you trouble?"

"No." Sidney shook his head. "I just wanted to see you off."

Although doubt lingered in her mind, his expression seemed sincere enough. She got into her car, gave him a small wave, and drove away.

"Why didn't you just tell her?" Maria

came up from behind

Aveline's car disappear into the

distance as she spoke to Sidney.

His gaze turned cold immediately. "Maria, I want to quit."

"Hmm?" Maria looked at him,

surprised. "Then go ahead and quit. But don't say I didn't warn you-you're not likely to find another boss generous as me. Given your mother's condition, are you sure you'll find a job with the same benefits and pay?"

Sidney's hand clenched into a fist at his side.

She was right-he wouldn't find another job like this. But staying here with Maria watching him like a hawk...

"Sidney, it's not so bad, you know,"

Maria continued, her tone light. "We're both adults. Why not enjoy the moment?" She placed her hand on his chest. "We got along pretty

well that day at the hotel, didn't we?"

Chapter 729

A vein throbbed at Sidney's temple, and without another word, he turned and walked away.

Maria chuckled softly, watching his retreating back.

There was no need to rush.

Aveline threw herself into work, heading out the next day to inspect the plot of land Patrick owned. It was surrounded by a vineyard, making it an ideal location for a winery. Patrick's main goal was to build a resort-style winery, catering to the elite for leisure and entertainment, so he was particular about every detail.

After gaining a general understanding of the terrain and Patrick's vision, Aveline returned to the studio and began working tirelessly on the designs, sketching day and night.

When the first draft was ready, Myron called to inform her that the court date had been set for a week from now.

At the same time, Lucas also received the court notification.

He was dining at Club Nine with a group of business partners. After hanging up the phone, his strikingly handsome face remained as impassive as ever, a cigarette held between his fingers. The people around him spoke cautiously, watching his expression. "You guys carry on. I'm leaving early," Lucas said suddenly, standing up as the cigarette burned to its end. He grabbed his coat and left the private room.

The wind outside was biting, with light snowflakes drifting down. He got into the car and instructed the driver, "To Maple Garden."

"Yes, sir."

As the car drove through the streets, the sky grew darker, and the snowflakes swirled in the air, mirroring the frost that seemed to settle over his mood, cold enough to seep into his bones.

Aveline had just come up from the underground parking garage when the elevator doors opened. Lucas' tall figure, cloaked in the biting cold, stepped inside.

She paused, then reached out to press the door close button.

"You got the notice, didn't you?" she asked, breaking the silence in the elevator.

""What notice?" Lucas feigned ignorance.

Aveline glanced at him and replied, "The court notice."

"Oh, I didn't receive it," Lucas answered, his tone indifferent.

Aveline hesitated for a moment, then told him the court date.

Lucas stuffed his hands into the pockets of his coat, his posture relaxed and casual. "I'm not going."

Aveline was speechless.

Even with the court date set, it was still up to Lucas whether he showed up or not. As long as he refused, the court session couldn't proceed. They were stuck in a deadlock once again.

Aveline frowned and asked, "Lucas, are you..."

But Lucas cut her off. "You don't need to say anything more. I've heard it all a thousand times. I'm not going, and that's final."

Aveline fell silent. The elevator grew quiet.

Soon, the doors opened, and Lucas walked out. Aveline felt unsure about what to do next.

When the elevator reached her floor, to her surprise, Lucas was there, standing right outside her door.

"What do you want?" Aveline asked warily.

Lucas replied, "I've made my position clear. We can't get divorced. Why don't you just withdraw the lawsuit? Let's stay as we are. What do you say?"

A coolness crept into Aveline's

expression. "I won't withdraw it. If it doesn't work once, then I'll try twice. If twice isn't enough, then three times. I will divorce you."

Her determined gaze caught Lucas off guard, a wave of bitterness swelling in his chest.

"Aveline," he called her name, his usually handsome face tinged with a hint of sadness. "Do we really have to get divorced?"

Aveline was about to nod, but for

some reason, seeing the look on his

face, she couldn't bring herself to say the words. She felt a flicker of frustration with herself and said, "This is pointless."

Chapter 730

Lucas suddenly moved closer to her, his voice low. "Then let's do something more interesting."

As he spoke, he grabbed her hand and pressed it against the fingerprint lock.

"What are you doing?"

Aveline froze, staring at him. This man was losing his mind again!

His cool fingertips brushed against the skin of her wrist, sending a chill through her. His grip was firm and unyielding.

"You were the one who said you wanted to try something interesting."

They were now standing very close. His clean, crisp scent filled the space between them. With his other hand, he swiftly opened the door and stepped inside, pulling her in with him. Aveline's inner alarm bells were ringing loudly.

Trying not to provoke him further, she stayed calm. But as soon as the door closed, Lucas spun her around and pressed her against the door.

His tall frame loomed over her, and he moved in to kiss her.

Aveline turned her head away, dodging his lips.

His hot breath brushed against her cheek, and he froze in place. His lips lingered against her skin, his gaze burning into her face, intense and unyielding.

Aveline's long lashes fluttered, and she finally spoke, "Lucas, I don't want this."

He eased back slightly, putting a little distance between them, his eyes still fixed on her delicate features.

"Why?" he asked.

But before she could answer, he continued, "Because I miss you... so much it hurts."

Aveline's lashes fluttered again, her whole body tense.

"I don't want this," she repeated.

Lucas leaned in closer again, but this time, he didn't force a kiss.

Instead, he pressed his forehead gently against hers, his voice rough and strained. "So, Aveline, do you really not like me anymore? Not even a little?" "Yes," Aveline whispered softly.

But inside, a wave of bitterness swept over her, though her face remained carefully composed, betraying nothing.

Silence fell over them once more.

It lasted so long that Aveline's legs began to ache. After all, anyone would feel uncomfortable standing in one position for too long.

Finally, Lucas released her. He opened the door and walked out without another word.

During that long moment of silence, Aveline couldn't tell what was going through Lucas' mind. But the fact that he chose to leave was the best outcome she could hope for at the moment.

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She had expected him to act as he always did-forcefully, without giving her a choice. That was his nature,

afterall. But to her surprise, bove

simply walked away.

His behavior was as unpredictable as ever.

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Aveline exhaled a long, deep breath, closed the door, and changed her shoes before heading to the kitchen to make dinner.

For the entire week, Aveline didn't see Lucas at all, and a heaviness settled in her heart. What if he really didn't show up at court?

The night before the court hearing, her lawyers had asked her to meet once more to discuss the details for the next day.

Aveline arrived at the restaurant as agreed, and when she entered the private room, she was surprised to see Gernard there. "Gernard, why are you here?" she asked in surprise.

Gernard smiled slightly. "I happened to have a few things to discuss with them, so I decided to join."

He handed her the menu. "Why don't you order first?"

Aveline nodded and took the menu.

While she was browsing through the

options, Gernard began chatting with the lawyers, mostly about business matters-things related to the legal aspects she didn't quite grasp. en FindNovel

Once she finished ordering, Gernard called over the waiter.

After the waiter left with the menu, Gernard looked at her and asked, "How have you been lately?"