

Divorced Me 931

Chapter 931

Herman fell silent for a moment before responding, "I just got back. Let's not get into such heavy topics-it might ruin our sibling bond." Tiana burst out laughing.

Maria sat quietly in the backseat, listening to the banter between the siblings. She felt her mood ease, enjoying their lighthearted conversation.

Soon, they arrived at the restaurant, a familiar place Maria had been to before. The food was always good. After everyone got out of the car, the server led them to a private room.

Maria was the last to enter, but just as she was about to step inside, she heard a familiar voice from downstairs.

"I'm glad you like it."

"I do. Sidney, you really know how to pick a spot."

Maria paused, her footsteps halting as she stepped back, glancing over the railing. Sure enough, she spotted Sidney walking into the restaurant with a girl by his side. They headed to a booth in the main dining area. What a coincidence.

"Maria, what are you looking at?"

Tiana, noticing her delay, called out curiously.

Maria shook her head, pulling her gaze away. "Nothing, let's go inside."

Meanwhile, downstairs, Sidney had also heard Tiana call out Maria's name. He instinctively glanced upward but saw nothing but the empty railing.

Had he imagined it?

"Sidney, what are you looking at?" Diana waved her hand in front of him, puzzled.

Sidney snapped back and replied, "It's nothing."

Diana smiled warmly at him. "I still haven't properly thanked you for helping me with that huge problem. I got a bonus this month, so dinner's on me." Sidney smiled lightly. "There's no need to be so formal. You've helped me too."

"No way. I insist on treating you. Don't try to argue with me!" Diana replied, grinning.

Sidney didn't press the issue and simply handed her the menu. "Go ahead, choose whatever you like." "Alright." She beamed.

...

Upstairs, Tiana was busy ordering from the menu while Maria sat distracted, her thoughts elsewhere.

Her friend beside her reached for the teapot to pour some tea but accidentally spilled it on Maria's dress. "Sorry, sorry!"

Maria froze for a second, reaching for a napkin when a hand extended one to her.

"Thank you." She smiled, accepting the napkin.

Herman smiled kindly. "Did it burn you?"

Maria shook her head. "No, it wasn't hot."

She wiped her dress, though a stain remained, causing her to frown slightly. But it wasn't a big deal.

Throughout dinner, Tiana, always the lively one, kept the conversation flowing. By the time they finished, dusk had set in, and everyone began leaving. "You all go ahead," Maria said. "I'm going to the restroom."

She headed back into the restaurant, freshened up, and as she exited the restroom, she glanced toward the main dining area, curiosity gnawing at her. She wanted to see what that girl with Sidney looked like.

The previous photos from Alex hadn't given her a clear view.

However, the dining area was empty-Sidney and the girl were gone.

Huh? Had they already left?

"Miss Conner."

Herman's voice broke her thoughts.

She turned to see him approaching. "Tiana and the others already left. Let me give you a ride home."

Maria immediately understood

Tiana's intentions. She had half a

mind to decline, but as she looked at

Herman's handsome face, she

smiled and nodded. "Sure, thanks for the offer."

With that, they walked out of the restaurant together. Ever the gentleman, Herman opened the car door for her. Maria climbed in, but as she glanced up, her gaze landed on Sidney, standing not too far away.

And he was staring right back at her.

Chapter 932

Maria smiled faintly and waved at Sidney, like greeting an old friend. Sidney, however, coldly averted his gaze and walked off with Diana. Maria finally got a clear look at the girl, who was undeniably beautiful. Herman got into the car and asked, "Miss Conner, where do you live?" Maria gave him the address.

"Thank you, Mr. Evans."

Herman chuckled lightly. "You're Tiana's friend, no need to be so formal with me."

Maria's smile became a bit more relaxed. "Tiana is Tiana, and you're you. It's not the same."

Herman was momentarily at a loss for words.

He glanced at Maria again.

Earlier, she'd been quiet, almost reserved.

But now, in this more private moment, he realized she was different from most people.

She didn't seem to care about others' opinions, acting on her own whims with a laid-back, carefree attitude. It was as though she possessed a truly free spirit. Soon, they arrived at the entrance to her complex.

Maria got out of the car. "Goodbye, Mr. Evans."

Herman nodded slightly, watching as she walked away.

Just then, a middle-aged couple rushed toward Maria, grabbing her by both arms.

"Mary! I finally found you! I'm your mother!" The woman clung to her like she'd never let go, tears streaming down her face.

Maria frowned, pulling against their grip but unable to free herself.

She snapped, "Let go of me! I don't know you!"

The woman cried even harder. "You are Mary! You're my daughter! If you don't believe us, we can go to the hospital for a DNA test!" The man beside her added, "That's right, I'm your father."

The absurdity of the situation struck Maria, and she said, "Let go, or I'm calling the police."

But the woman tightened her hold. "Go ahead, call the police! They'll confirm we're your real parents!"

Without hesitation, Maria pulled out her phone and called the police.

The middle-aged man lunged forward, snatching Maria's phone from her hand and smashing it onto the ground, shattering it instantly.

"What do you think you're doing?" Maria's expression grew colder.

The woman was just as stunned. "Why would you break our daughter's phone?"

The man ignored her, grabbing

Maria's arm. "No need to call the et

police. We'll just go to the hospital for a DNA test. We'll cooperat

Maria, her voice icy, said, "You just destroyed my property. This won't be resolved without the police."

With that, she turned to leave, but the man stepped in front of her, trying to grab her again.

Just then, Herman rushed over, shoving the man aside and positioning himself between them and Maria.

"Who are you? I've already called the police. What exactly are you trying to do?" He waved his phone in front of them.

The man's face darkened as he stared at Maria for a long moment, before turning to drag the woman away.

But Herman wasn't letting them off that easily. "You're not getting away!"

Right then, the sound of police sirens filled the air, and the couple's faces paled.

They hadn't expected the police to arrive so quickly.

With Maria's statement, the couple was swiftly taken away by the police. Since more details were needed, Maria and Herman were also asked to go to the station in a patrol car.

"Are you alright?" Herman asked.

Maria shook her head. "I'm fine. Thank you."

Herman nodded. "Don't mention it. You're Tiana's friend. If I didn't help, she'd have yelled at me for sure."

Maria smiled faintly, but a flicker of coldness passed through her eyes.

So, they had found her. But who gave them her address? And how were they so sure she was the daughter they abandoned at the

orphanage all those years ago?

Chapter 933

At the police station, the identities of the middle-aged couple were confirmed.

The man was named Gorden Yates, and the woman was Tracy Harris.

Both of them insisted that Maria was their daughter.

They even presented a birth certificate from years ago.

When the police asked why they were only looking for their daughter now, they explained that the child had been lost years ago, and a relative had recently seen Maria in Cloudflare City and remarked on the striking resemblance, prompting them to come find her. It was clear they had come prepared with their story.

Since the situation had drawn police attention, it couldn't just be brushed aside. The authorities arranged for a DNA test to first confirm if there was a parental relationship.

Tracy looked at Maria with a face full of excitement and guilt. "I'm sorry, darling. It was my fault back then. After I gave birth to you, I was too weak. I had no idea you'd be taken away. You've suffered all these years."

Maria remained indifferent. "The test results aren't out yet. Don't try to get close to me."

Even after getting the test results, it wouldn't make a difference.

Tracy's smile faltered as she took in Maria's cold demeanor. She exchanged a nervous glance with Gorden, clearly uncertain. They didn't know much about Maria, and now they worried-would she even give them money? Gorden, however, seemed calm and confident.

His look reassured Tracy not to worry.

With the DNA test results still pending, Maria left the police station without delay.

"Mary, Mary! Wait for us!" Tracy hurried after her.

Maria turned, her gaze frosty. "What do you want?"

Tracy looked embarrassed. "We're new here and don't really have a place to stay. Can you take us in for a few days?"

"No."

Maria's refusal was immediate and absolute.

Gorden then snapped, "Mary, you're our daughter. We're sure of it. You have a responsibility to take care of your parents. You have to take care of us!" Maria scoffed. "And you think you deserve it?"

With that, she turned and walked away.

Not far off, Herman was waiting for her in his car. Seeing her approach, he opened the door, and she got in.

Gorden's face darkened. "Ungrateful brat. I raised her, and she'll pay for it, one way or another!"

Tracy, feeling anxious, whispered, "But she doesn't seem easy to deal with."

"Hmph, a girl like her? What's to fear? A few smacks will set her straight," Gorden dismissed her concerns. Tracy hesitated. "What should we do next then?"

Gorden grumbled, "Let's just find a motel for now. Things will fall into place in a few days."

That was their only option at the moment.

In the car, Herman glanced over at Maria, noticing the cold expression on her face. He hesitated briefly before asking, "If you need help, I can take care of this for you"

Maria's lips curled into a faint smile. "Thanks, but there's no need. I can handle it myself."

Since it was their first real interaction, Herman didn't press further and simply dropped her off at her building. Maria waved goodbye and entered the building.

Stepping out of the elevator, she was greeted by an unexpected sight.

Her expression shifted slightly, a mix of surprise and amusement playing on her features as she approached the figure standing there. She stopped directly in front of him her gaze lingering on him with a playful, teasing glint in her eyes.

"Sidney," Maria's voice carried a hint of curiosity, "What are you doing here?"

Sidney had been standing there for a while, having witnessed Herman drop her off. The sight of them chatting and laughing together sent

a sudden wave of irritation through him, souring his mood instantly.

Chapter 934

At that moment, as Sidney looked at Maria's radiant smile, his thoughts briefly drifted.

That afternoon, she had been out having dinner with another man.

She'd returned without letting him know.

And yet...

Sidney stopped himself from spiraling further into speculation. His tone was calm as he spoke, "I came to update you on the recent situation at the studio."

"Oh?" Maria raised a surprised brow, clearly not expecting such an excuse from him.

Nonetheless, she opened the door and said, "Come in, then."

After changing her shoes, Maria added, "Make yourself comfortable. I'm going to take a shower first."

Having spent the day out, she felt uncomfortable with the mix of lingering scents on her, especially after being grabbed by Tracy and Gorden earlier-it made her feel unclean.

Sidney didn't respond, simply stepping inside and taking a quick look around. The place was spotless, and there were no signs of anyone else being there.

She hadn't had other visitors.

Sidney sat down on the sofa.

As dusk slowly turned into evening, Maria finally emerged from her room after about thirty minutes. She was dressed in simple sleepwear, her long hair wrapped in a towel, and her cheeks were slightly flushed from the steam of her shower. Sidney's gaze lingered on her, his eyes darkening almost imperceptibly.

Maria pulled a drink from the fridge and glanced at him, asking, "Want one?"

Sidney nodded. "Sure."

She grabbed another bottle, setting it down in front of him before settling into the armchair across from him-keeping a noticeable distance between them.

That small gesture didn't escape Sidney's attention. His eyes flickered for just a moment. She hadn't used to be like this.

"Go ahead," Maria prompted, opening her drink when Sidney still hadn't said anything.

Sidney cleared his throat, nodded, and took out his tablet.

Opening the report he had prepared, he placed it in front of her and began explaining the recent developments at the studio.

As Maria listened, she quickly realized that Sidney had real capability.

The studio was running smoothly under his management, and he had even taken on several personal projects while recruiting talented designers. Her decision to let him take a stake in the

studio and manage it seemed to be paying off. However, Maria's attention soon drifted away from the content of his report.

Instead, it shifted to his voice.

His smooth, clear tone flowed like a gentle stream in the mountains.

The thought crossed her mind: If this voice ever softly called someone "dear," it would probably be intoxicating.

Leaning back in her chair, Maria's gaze landed on Sidney's face.

He was still focused on the tablet, speaking as if he had a lot to say.

His lips, slightly dry, softened after a sip of the drink, glistening under the light.

His voice grew even smoother, more soothing, as his Adam's apple bobbed with each swallow a strangely alluring sight.

For a fleeting moment, Maria felt the urge to reach out and touch him.

But she held back.

Suddenly, the image of Sidney and that girl having dinner together flashed through her mind.

That... was probably his girlfriend, right?

Hmph.

She

brought up the idea of them

together, he'd

trying

wasn't appropriate.

Yet, as soon as she left, he seemed to have started dating someone else.

Clearly, he wasn't interested in her anymore.

Fine, then.

She wasn't one to dwell on things that weren't meant to be.

Before, she could afford to keep things playful, but now it was different.

With him handling the studio's operations, if she continued with the same carefree attitude, he might have leverage over her-and that would mean risking her finances.

Absolutely not.

Sidney had been speaking for a

while when he finally looked up, only

to find Maria staring off into space with a faint smile on her lips

His eyes instantly darkened with a cool intensity.

What was she thinking about? That man?

Chapter 935

Maria had been lost in thought for a while, and when she snapped back to the moment, the room had gone silent.

Puzzled, she glanced over at Sidney.

"Hm? Why did you stop talking?"

"I'm done," Sidney replied, his tone cool.

"Oh." Maria nodded, handing the tablet back to him. "Got it. You did great. Keep up the hard work."

She even flashed him a harmless smile, then casually stood up.

"I'm going to dry my hair. Feel free to see yourself out," she said, grabbing her hairdryer from the drawer and standing off to the side as she began drying her hair.

Her arm lifted, exposing the soft curve of her waist, while her long hair cascaded down, filling the air with a faint scent.

Sidney's fingers twitched, his gaze fixed on her back for a long moment.

Maria wasn't paying attention to whether Sidney stayed or left.

He clearly wasn't interested in her, and she had shown him that she knew about his intention.

Continuing to dry her hair, she assumed he would take the hint and leave.

But after only a couple of minutes, she felt his hand gently wrap around hers, stopping the dryer mid-air.

Maria turned, confused. "What are you doing?"

Standing behind her, Sidney looked down, meeting her puzzled gaze. "I'll help you."

Maria chuckled. "It's late, aren't you going to head out?"

"Drying your hair won't take long," he said evenly.

"Alright then." She let go of the dryer and stood still, letting him take over.

Sidney switched the dryer back on, his fingers gliding through her hair as he dried it.

The warm breeze from the dryer, paired with the gentle movement of his hands through her hair, made the moment unexpectedly calming. Maria's eyes fluttered half-closed, her face relaxed in quiet contentment. Soon, her hair was dry, and Sidney turned off the dryer, setting it down on the table in front of them.

"Thanks. Well, good night..." Maria began to say, but her words were cut off when Sidney suddenly pulled her close, his arm wrapped firmly around her waist.

Before she could process what was happening, he leaned down and kissed her.

"Mmph?" Maria froze, completely caught off guard.

She had never expected him to kiss her so abruptly!

Without giving her much time to think, Sidney's kiss deepened, fervent and thorough, exploring every inch of her mouth.

Maria felt her body weaken under his touch.

His kissing skills had only improved over time.

Sidney's arm tightened around her, holding her firmly in place as his kisses grew more intense. Their breaths mingled, thick with unspoken desire.

He gently pushed her onto the

couch, his body following closely behind and their lips never parted. Maria's arms wrapped around his neck, responding in kind.

It was like a spark hitting dry tinder, igniting a fire that consumed them both instantly. Their breathing became erratic, their bodies intertwined, moving together with an undeniable chemistry.

Maria's leg rested on his shoulder as she watched the tension in his face, his temple veins pulsing, her breath quick and uneven. She opened her mouth to say something, but at that moment, words seemed entirely unnecessary.

So instead, she closed her eyes and gave herself over to the moment.

Again and again...

From the couch to the balcony, and finally to the bedroom...

Their presence lingered in every corner of the room, a trace of their passion left behind. By the end of it all, Maria was utterly spent, drained of any energy.

When everything finally settled, dawn was already breaking through the windows.

In a haze, Maria found herself wondering what had gotten into Sidney tonight.

He had been relentless, almost overwhelming.

He now lay beside her, still breathing in her scent, occasionally planting soft kisses on her skin.

Half-asleep, Maria muttered, "...Get me some pills..."

Before she could finish her thought, she was already drifting off to sleep.

She didn't have any protection at her place, and she definitely wasn't planning on getting pregnant, so the morning-after pill was a necessity.

Chapter 936

However, she didn't notice the brief coldness that flickered in Sidney's eyes.

...

When Maria woke up, it was already midday.

She struggled to sit up, her body sore and tired.

Memories of the night before rushed back to her, leaving her momentarily dazed as she sat on the bed.

Turning her head, she spotted her phone-and next to it, a bottle of water and a small packet of birth control pills.

Maria stared at the packet for a moment before taking a pill and swallowing it.

When she walked out of the bedroom, she was surprised to see Sidney still there, cooking in the kitchen.

"You're still here?" she asked, leaning against the doorframe.

Sidney glanced at her briefly, then returned to the stove. "I'll leave after you eat."

She watched his busy movements. "Last night..."

Her words trailed off, and he didn't seem inclined to pick up the conversation either. It was as if last night had been just a fleeting moment of indulgence, something acted on a whim with no strings attached. No need for explanations, no need for responsibility. Maria couldn't quite read him anymore. He wasn't supposed to be interested in her, so why did things keep happening between them? She wasn't the type to play guessing games, so she decided to ask directly, "Sidney, what are you thinking?" Just then, Sidney finished plating the last dish.

He glanced at her and said, "What about you?"

He brushed past her, placing the plate on the table.

Maria raised an eyebrow. "You were the one who made the first move last night."

Sidney replied calmly, "And you didn't say no."

Maria paused. Well, that was true. She hadn't rejected him. The truth was, she liked his kisses, his voice, and yes, even his technique.

She slowly made her way to the table. "So, what are we now... friends with benefits?"

Sidney's brow furrowed slightly, clearly displeased by the term, but he didn't deny it either.

Suddenly, Maria's fingers lifted his chin, and Sidney frowned as their eyes met.

Her gaze held a playful glint.

"So, does that mean whenever I want, I can call you over?" she asked.

Sidney brushed her hand away, his tone calm. "You're overthinking it. There won't be a next time."

Maria let out a soft chuckle. "Oh, really? You get to decide when it happens and when it doesn't? Don't you think you're being a little too controlling, Sidney?" "The food's going to get cold," Sidney replied, his tone still even.

Maria's smile faded, turning cold. "Do you really think I'm joking with you?"

Sidney looked up, meeting her gaze with the same calm demeanor. "Then what do you want?"

His composed attitude only fueled her frustration, especially after he claimed there wouldn't be a next time. Her temper flared, and without warning, she flipped the table.

"Get out."

Her voice was steady, but the sound of dishes crashing to the floor was sharp. Sidney's brow furrowed tightly, but he said nothing. After a moment of silence, he turned and left without a word.

Maria called the cleaning service before retreating to her bedroom, feeling utterly drained.

Why did things have to end up this way?

It became clear to her-it was

because she liked him more than she thought. Liking someone without getting any real response in return yet still sharing moments of intimacy, had ignited her anger.

In that light, he really did seem to have the makings of a jerk.

With a bitter laugh, Maria threw the covers over herself and tried to sleep.

The housekeeper came later, cleaned up, and even left some food behind. When Maria woke up feeling a bit better, her phone began to ring.

Chapter 937

"Hello?" Maria answered the phone, hearing Tiana's voice on the other end.

"My dear, from the sound of your voice, it seems like you just woke up. Want to go out and have some fun?"

Maria stepped out of her room, glancing at the spotless kitchen. Feeling even more pleased, she asked, "Where are we going?"

Tiana replied, "My brother's friend opened a vineyard. We can experience immersive grape-picking. Want to join?"

Maria laughed. "Immersive grape-picking? Can we turn the grapes into wine right after?"

"If you want, I think that can be arranged," Tiana said.

"Alright."

Maria thought for a moment.

Since she had nothing else to do, she agreed.

"Great! We're leaving tomorrow morning. I'll send you the address. Everyone's meeting there," Tiana informed her.

"Okay," Maria replied.

Tiana let out a mischievous giggle.

Maria switched to speakerphone, continuing her meal as she said, "If you have something to say, just say it. Stop being so sneaky." Tiana cleared her throat and asked, "Yesterday, you spent quite some time with my brother. What did you think of him?"

Maria responded, "He's pretty nice."

Tiana's excitement was obvious, "Really? You actually think he's alright?"

Maria replied, "I believe any girl who spends time with him would think he's nice."

"Well, except for the girl who chased after him back in the day," Tiana added. Maria burst out laughing, quickly grabbing a napkin to wipe her mouth.

"So, do you want to consider getting to know him a little better?" Tiana asked.

Maria answered, "No, I haven't thought about it. I've only met your brother once."

"Tomorrow will be the second time. He's really great, I highly recommend you give him a shot," Tiana urged.

Maria teased, "And if it doesn't work out, can I return him?"

Tiana cleared her throat. "...Of course you can!"

Maria laughed. "Alright then, I'll think about it."

"Great, it's settled!"

The next day.

Maria drove to the agreed meeting spot and noticed two cars had already arrived.

Wearing sunglasses, Tiana stepped out and, upon seeing her, said, "Finally, you're here. Let's go."

Maria lowered her car window. "Wasn't the meeting time nine? It's only nine now."

How early did these people get here?

Tiana leaned against her window and whispered, "You have no idea My brother was up at the crack of dawn, and he got me up too. Since we had nothing to do, we came early."

Maria chuckled. "I sympathize with you... for a minute."

Tiana waved her hand. "Alright, let's go!"

The group got into their cars and drove toward the vineyard.

After about an hour and a half, they finally saw the gates.

They parked in the lot and were led to their rooms to settle in.

Tiana and Maria had rooms next to each other, while Herman's room was across from theirs.

As soon as Maria set down her luggage, the doorbell rang.

"Coming."

She walked over and opened the

door

to find Tiana standing t

he

to the vineyard! I'm craving grapes!"

Maria sighed. "Aren't you going to rest for a bit?"

Tiana shook her head. "Rest? There'll be plenty of time to rest tonight."

Maria muttered, "...Fair enough."

At that moment, Herman stepped out of his room. Seeing they were heading out, he asked, "Grape-picking?" Tiana nodded. "Yep, want to join?"

"Sure." Herman nodded, "Besides the

Vis place also has a small

horse Stable. If you're interested, you can try horseback riding later

Chapter 938

Tiana's eyes lit up at the mention of horseback riding, "We can ride horses?"

She turned to Maria and asked, "Do you know how to ride?"

Maria shook her head. "No, I don't."

A hint of disappointment appeared on Tiana's face. "If you don't know how to ride, it wouldn't be fun for me to go alone."

Maria said, "There are others here, though."

Tiana waved her hand dismissively. "Nah, I don't want to go already."

Maria sighed.

Alright, if that was what she wanted.

Herman, also looking a bit helpless, shifted his gaze to Maria and said, "If you're interested in learning, I could teach you how to ride."

Tiana immediately perked up at that, grabbing Maria's arm excitedly. "Are you interested? I really want to go horseback riding."

Maria gave her a knowing look. It wasn't hard to see what she was really up to.

"We'll head to the vineyard first," Maria suggested. "There's plenty of time. Who knows, maybe later I'll want to try riding." "Good idea, vineyard first."

Tiana nodded and shot Herman a look, silently encouraging him to keep trying.

Herman raised an eyebrow, a faint smile playing at his lips as he followed them out of the lounge area.

The vineyard was vast, and as they arrived at the entrance, the staff handed each of them a small basket.

They were free to eat grapes on-site or pick them to take home.

Tiana eagerly moved ahead while Maria strolled behind, taking her time. She plucked a plump bunch of grapes and popped one into her mouth. It was sweet and delicious. Not bad.

Herman maintained a respectful distance, his gaze occasionally drifting to Maria.

Sunlight filtered through the gaps in the vines, casting dappled patterns on her as she walked. She wore a relaxed smile, looking carefree and unbothered. With a stylish straw hat perched on her head and a simple sundress, her whole demeanor exuded effortless grace.

She didn't seem particularly interested in picking grapes herself but enjoyed watching others get excited about it. It was as if she was just an observer.

Herman was curious about her, wondering what kind of person lay beneath her relaxed exterior. Who was she, really, when the

nonchalance was stripped away?

"Have that couple tried to contact you again?" Herman asked.

Maria shook her head. "No, they haven't."

"They don't seem like good people," Herman remarked. "Maybe you should consider moving somewhere else. That way, they won't be able to find you." "There's no need," Maria said. "Even if they come back, I won't acknowledge them."

Herman nodded, not pressing the matter further.

"Look! I picked so many grapes!" Tiana's excited voice rang out about an hour later.

Maria turned to see her running over, her basket brimming with plump, juicy grapes.

Maria picked one and took a bite. It tasted quite good.

"Tired? Want to head back and grab something to eat?" Maria asked.

Tiana nodded. "Yeah, I'm tired. But why didn't either of you pick any grapes?"

Her gaze shifted to the empty baskets Herman and Maria held, and then she suddenly asked, "Have you two been hanging out together this whole time?" Maria nodded. "Yes."

Tiana's face immediately lit up with a mischievous grin. Linking her arm through Maria's, she asked, "So? Did you have fun talking?"

"It was fine," Maria replied.

Tiana almost squealed with excitement, barely holding herself back. She shot Herman a series of exaggerated winks.

Herman just smiled without saying a word.

As they headed back to the guest area, they made their way to the buffet.

However, the moment they walked in, Maria spotted someone familiar.

Chapter 939

Sidney and Diana, along with a few others, were seated at a nearby table, eating. Sidney was sitting sideways, facing away from Maria, so while she noticed him instantly, he hadn't spotted her. Maria quickly averted her gaze after a brief glance.

"Let's sit over there," Tiana said, linking arms with Maria and leading her toward a window seat.

Coincidentally, the spot was diagonally across from Sidney's table.

Maria nodded and followed.

Once seated, Tiana quickly pulled Herman over to sit next to Maria.

Whether by coincidence or design, Herman's presence perfectly blocked Sidney's view. Even if he turned to look, it was unlikely he would notice Maria.

Maria's eyes flickered briefly, but she didn't say a word.

Tiana took the seat opposite them and waved for a waiter. This place offered both a buffet and table service.

Tiana ordered a few dishes and then turned to Maria. "What would you like?"

"I'll take a look at the menu," Maria replied.

"Alright."

Tiana handed her the menu, then immediately pulled out her phone, giving Herman a pointed look.

Herman sighed, pulling out his phone to see Tiana's messages.

Tiana texted, "How do you feel about my friend?"

"She's great," Herman replied.

"Don't you want to take things further? Make her my sister-in-law?" Tiana asked.

Herman responded, "Whether or not she becomes your sister-in-law depends on you."

Tiana nearly squealed, sending another message, "Ahhhh!"

"So, you do like her, right?" she added. "You can't fool me with that look in your eyes!"

Herman didn't reply, putting his phone away. He turned to Maria and asked, "Do you have any food preferences? I know a few dishes here that are quite good." Maria shook her head. "I'm fine with anything."

Herman then relayed their order to the waiter, requesting a few of the dishes he knew would be tasty.

Maria said, "Isn't that too much food?"

Tiana shook her head. "No, no, don't worry. Just eat as much as you want."

Maria handed the menu back to the waiter, saying, "I can't eat that much."

"My brother's here too, he eats a lot," Tiana added.

Herman sighed silently.

His sister was clearly not very tactful. If she was trying to matchmake him and Maria, why point out his flaws? Maria glanced at Herman. "A big eater?"

Herman shook his head. "Not really. It's just that I've been living abroad for years and wasn't fond of the food there. After returning home, I've been eating more, and she

remembers it."

Tiana stuck out her tongue, realizing she'd said the wrong thing. She quickly tried to fix it. "Don't worry. If we can't finish, we'll take the leftovers home. My family has a dog."

Maria nodded.

The dishes were served one after another, each looking more delicious than the last. Maria's eyes lit up as she admired the food. It did look appetizing. Standing up, she said, "I'm going to the restroom."

As she turned to leave, someone carrying a glass of champagne walked by, and the two accidentally collided. The champagne spilled all over her.

"Do you not have eyes? Didn't you see me coming?" Diana glared at Maria, clearly annoyed by the spilled drink.

Maria had been about to apologize, but seeing the woman's attitude, her smile turned cold.

"I don't have eyes? Then what about you? Didn't you see people sitting here? And yet you walked so close. I'm starting to think you did it on purpose," Maria shot back.

Diana's face flushed red with anger at Maria's words.

Chapter 940

"You... what nonsense are you spouting? When did I ever do this on purpose?" Diana retorted angrily.

Maria replied coolly, "Oh, so it wasn't intentional? Then you bumped into me and didn't even apologize? That's just bad manners."

"You!" Diana was stunned, not expecting this woman to be so sharp-tongued.

She had no idea how to respond.

Maria crossed her arms and said, "Well? Still not going to apologize? This dress isn't cheap, you know."

The champagne had spread over her dress, and Diana recognized it as a new luxury brand piece, worth thousands. It wasn't that she couldn't afford to pay for it but spending that much on a dress seemed unreasonable to her.

Just as Diana tightened her grip on her glass, about to say something, a figure approached her and asked, "What's going on here?"

Diana turned to see Sidney. Her eyes immediately reddened, and she spoke in a pitiful tone, "I was just walking by, and this lady suddenly stood up. The champagne accidentally spilled on her dress, but she's been yelling at me, not letting it go. It wasn't on purpose." Maria raised an eyebrow, glancing at Sidney beside Diana.

Hmm... What was he here for? Backing Diana up?

A hint of a smirk appeared on Maria's face.

Sidney looked at Maria's dress, then said, "It's just a little champagne. It'll dry off soon."

"Oh?" Maria arched her brow slightly. "So, you're saying she splashed me with champagne and doesn't even need to apologize?"

Sidney's eyes lingered on her before he said, "I'll apologize on her behalf."

"You'll apologize for her?" Maria let out a short laugh, as if she'd heard something amusing, then asked, "Who are you to her? Why do you think you can apologize on her behalf?"

Diana's eyes flickered slightly before she wrapped her arm around Sidney's, saying, "It's my fault. I'll apologize to the lady myself."

She turned to Maria and said, "I'm sorry for accidentally staining your dress."

Maria's gaze shifted to their linked arms.

For some reason, it irritated her. She suddenly didn't feel like letting this go so easily.

"I don't accept verbal apologies," Maria said, pulling out her phone. "This dress cost fifteen thousand dollars. How would you like to transfer the money?" She demanded compensation outright.

Diana's eyes reddened even more as if she might burst into tears at any moment. "Miss, I've already

apologized. Why are you still doing this? Do you want me to kneel and beg for forgiveness before you'll let this go?"

Saying that, she placed her glass aside and continued, "Fine, I'll kneel and beg."

She made a move as if she were about to kneel.

Sidney immediately grabbed her, frowning as he looked at Maria. "She's already apologized. Why are you still pressing the issue?" Maria's voice turned cold. "My dress is ruined. Am I not allowed to ask for compensation?"

He was really defending another woman!

Maria felt a surge of anger, a burning need to do something-anything to destroy the situation in front of her.

Her gaze sharpened as she looked at Diana. "Either pay up, or we call the police. Your choice."

There would be no reconciliation.

Tiana and Herman exchanged glances, both sensing the tense atmosphere.

Maria was normally easygoing, but today she was especially sharp.

Tiana walked over, glancing at Diana, who was still sniffing, before saying, "You bumped into her, didn't apologize, and even questioned whether she had eyes. Now you're

crying? Who are you trying to fool?"