

Divorced Me 751

Chapter 751

Gernard hadn't expected Lucas to be so direct.

He wondered if Lucas had any sense of boundaries.

Gernard frowned slightly as he looked at Lucas and said, "Naturally, it's something between her and me, and it has nothing to do with you."

Lucas, however, replied with a half-smile, "I don't believe you."

Aveline ignored Lucas and said to Gernard, "Let's go over there."

A short distance away, a small park lay bathed in warm sunlight, a few people leisurely strolling along its paths. The air was filled with a light breeze, just enough to feel refreshing without a hint of chill. "Alright."

Gernard nodded and walked with Aveline toward the park. After a few steps, he glanced back at Lucas with a look of mockery in his eyes.

Lucas just stared at Aveline for a long moment before sighing in resignation.

What else could he do? Right now, she was his queen, and he had to keep her happy!

In the park, Gernard asked, "Have you made up with him?"

Aveline shook her head. "No."

Gernard looked at her, puzzled. "But you're here together with him."

Aveline glanced at him and replied, "If I said it was a coincidence, would you believe me?"

Gernard seemed a bit exasperated. "It doesn't strike me as a coincidence. Feels more intentional. Aveline, Myron's schedule is packed. If you don't make it to court soon, your case is going to get pushed back even more." Aveline nodded. "I know. I'm planning to drop the lawsuit."

Hearing this, Gernard was even more surprised and asked, "Why?"

Aveline sighed. "Divorce requires mutual consent. As long as one of us refuses, it won't happen. Filing a lawsuit is pointless."

If Lucas wanted to play stubborn, there wasn't much anyone could do.

Gernard frowned and said, "That's true, but dragging things out like this isn't a solution either."

"That's true," Aveline acknowledged. "But can I do? Lucas refuses to

divord there's nothing I can

do

about it. I'll just have to take it one step at a time."

She added, "It's fine. Given enough time, he'll agree." Gernard looked at her with concern, unable to find the right words.

returned. Lucas was already standi

After half an hour, the two o

by a car, a cigarette

between his fingers, his expression cold and impatient.

Aveline walked over and turned to Gernard. "I'm leaving now, Mr. Cooper. Goodbye."

Gernard nodded. "If you need anything, just call me."

"Alright."

Aveline nodded, but suddenly, her wrist was grasped by someone. She paused and turned, only to meet Lucas' sharp, icy gaze. "What are you doing?" she asked.

Lucas replied, "Just checking if someone's been brainwashing you."

Aveline looked at him, puzzled. "What nonsense are you spouting?"

Lucas's voice was cold as ice. "Why else would you be gone for so long? It's the middle of the day-keep your distance from other men."

Aveline scoffed. "I think you're mentally sick."

She pulled her hand free and got into the car.

Lucas' dark eyes glinted with a hint of gloom. He extinguished his cigarette and turned to get into the car as well.

When they returned, Zachary was in the middle of teaching a class to the children.

Aveline glanced at Lucas and asked, "Are you leaving tonight?"

Lucas responded, "Do you want to leave? Then let's go."

Aveline nodded. "Alright, let's leave together."

There was still a lot of time left in the afternoon, and Aveline decided to head back to her room to rest for a while-she hadn't slept well the previous night.

But suddenly, a loud banging sound came from the direction of the warehouse.

Chapter 752

Aveline glanced in the direction of the warehouse. Hilda was still banging on the door. She didn't seem worried about getting caught anymore, thinking she had Aveline cornered and was now acting with reckless confidence. Aveline hesitated for a moment, then walked over and opened the warehouse door.

Hilda's face was full of irritation. "Why haven't you sent me away yet? Aveline, do you not want to know who your real parents are anymore?"

Aveline's expression remained cold as she looked at her. "If you don't want to tell me, I can find out myself. I don't need you anymore. I might as well call them to take you away now."

At this, Hilda's eyes widened. "You... you can't do this, Aveline! I've raised you all these years. You can't be so ungrateful!"

Aveline let out a mocking laugh. "You did take me in, but any debt I owed you was canceled out when you kept trying to sell me off. And now you want to lecture me about gratitude? Where do you get the nerve?" "You"

Hilda was struck speechless, panic setting in.

What should she do now? Was she really going to be taken back?

If she went back, she'd be as good as dead!

Hilda's face went pale with fear, her eyes shifting frantically. "Fine! If you don't want to know, I won't say a word! I'll leave right now, like I was never even here!"

With that, she shoved Aveline aside and made to leave, but a tall figure blocked her path.

Seeing this, Hilda took a step back, wariness in her voice. "You... what do you want?"

Lucas' sharp, handsome face was clouded with an icy expression, his eyes cold as they bore into her. "So, this is how you've been treating her?"

He didn't need to do anything more than stand there; the sheer force of his presence made Hilda's knees go weak. As his words sank in, her face grew even paler.

"I... I had no choice," she stammered. "I was managing the whole orphanage back then. If I didn't listen to Mr. Portal, he wouldn't let me keep running it. I had no other choice." Hilda was scrambling for excuses, her voice filled with self-pity.

Lucas' voice remained icy. "Whether you had a choice or not is none of my concern. I only care about her."

He pointed to Aveline, then took out his phone and sent a message.

It wasn't long before Braden walked in, his face expressionless.

"Take her away, and make sure she gets special attention," Lucas commanded.

"Yes, Mr. Tudor," Braden replied.

He stepped forward and grabbed Hilda's arm. He didn't seem to use much force, but Hilda immediately started screaming in pain, too terrified even to struggle. She was quickly escorted out.

Lucas moved closer to Aveline,

gazing at her delicate, indifferent et

face. In a low voice, he said, "Your

husband just got you some

o|

payback."

Aveline responded with silence, walking past him without so much as a glance.

Lucas's deep voice trailed after her, "Aveline, are you really that heartless? Don't you even feel a tiny bit grateful for me?"

"Yes," she replied, pausing mid-step

without turning around. "I'm

heartless, so stop wasting

on me. Let's just get divorcetime

swne

"That's fine." Lucas walked over, a smile playing on his lips. "I've got experience in giving someone a heart."

Aveline shot him a look. "So, you're just going to keep pushing, no matter what?"

Lucas raised an eyebrow, his smile deepening.

Aveline turned away, heading off without another word.

Lucas watched her retreating figure, his gaze growing darker and more intense.

Chapter 753

As evening fell and the sun dipped below the horizon, the orphanage's dining hall buzzed with lively chatter.

There were twenty children in all, seated around several tables, the older ones looking after the younger ones. After making sure everything was in order, Zachary made his way over to Aveline. "You don't have to leave in such a hurry," Zachary said. "You haven't even had a chance to see the changes in Arthur Town yet. The resort villas, for example, they're already starting to take shape."

Aveline smiled. "I'll come back when I have more time," she replied. "And really, I should be thanking you for all you've done this time. Here's to you."

She lifted her beer with a grin, her eyes sparkling as she looked at Zachary.

Zachary raised his glass in response. "There's no need to talk about gratitude. We grew up together; we're practically family."

Aveline nodded. "You're right. Cheers."

They clinked their glasses and took a drink, the cheerful sounds of children laughing and playing filling the air around them.

Lucas, sitting off to the side, watched as Aveline kept toasting Zachary. His brow furrowed. He reached over and gently pressed her hand down. "Don't drink too much. You'll end up with a headache." Aveline frowned and pushed his hand away. "You... don't control me. I want to drink."

Zachary chimed in, "It's fine. We have some ginger tea here. She can have a little of that later."

Lucas shot him a cold glare, clearly displeased. "Is that how you look out for your family? Just sit back while she drinks, knowing she'll suffer later?"

Zachary's face stiffened for a moment, caught off guard.

But Aveline cut in, "So what if I have a drink? Lucas, why do you have to be so infuriating?"

Her frustration was plain on her face, not the slightest hint of pretense.

Lucas' expression darkened with irritation.

Aveline waved her hand dismissively. "Let's not worry about him. Now, where were we?"

With that, Lucas abruptly stood up and stormed out of the dining hall.

Zachary watched him leave but chose to say nothing, continuing to reminisce with Aveline about old times.

Outside, the night had fallen, and a cold wind swept over Lucas, cooling his temper as it bit through the evening air.

It was rare for her to let her emotions show so freely-what was he even doing?

Lucas let out a resigned smile and was about to head back inside when his phone rang. He glanced at the screen-it was a call from the focal head of the Tudor Group in Arthur Town. en FindNovel

"Hello?"

"Mr. Tudor, there's been a problem. The city council has stalled the approval of funds. A substantial amount still hasn't been released, and we can't move forward with the next phase of the project."

Lucas' brow furrowed. The development here had been fully approved by the government, so how could there be an issue now?

"I'll be there right away," Lucas

replied in a low voice. He glanced

back at the brightly lit dining hall," hesitated for a moment, and then turned away to leave.

...

Aveline had drunk a bit too much. The children had all gone back to their rooms, and she was slumped over the table, staring blankly ahead. Zachary came over with a cup of ginger tea. "Aveline, drink this. You won't have a headache tomorrow."

Aveline slowly sat up and looked at him.

"Thanks," she muttered, then took the cup and downed it in one go.

Zachary was a little surprised-she was quite well-behaved after drinking.

He checked the time and said, "It's getting late, and who knows where Lucas has gone. Why don't you stay another night and leave tomorrow?" Aveline looked around, confused. "Lucas?"

She called out his name but got no response, so she took out her phone and dialed his number.

Chapter 754

"Lucas..." Aveline murmured his name as she dialed his number.

Zachary watched her, shaking his head with a sigh.

Maybe she didn't even realize it herself, but her resistance to Lucas had softened.

After all, she wasn't heartless. How could anyone remain unmoved in the face of sincere apologies and requests for forgiveness? The busy signal droned in her ear, and as the dull beeping continued, Aveline's expression turned sour.

Why wasn't he picking up? Where had he gone?

In the end, the call disconnected automatically.

"He won't take my call... then I don't need him," Aveline muttered, wobbling slightly as she stood up and headed toward the door. Zachary quickly stepped in to steady her, preventing a fall.

But Aveline pushed him away. "I... I'm fine. I can manage on my own."

He stayed close, ready to catch her if needed.

Given how much she had drunk, her unsteady gait was no surprise.

Thankfully, despite her zigzagging path, she managed to avoid falling.

Back in her room, Zachary said, "Get some rest. I'll leave now but call me if you need anything."

"Okay... sure." Aveline nodded, her voice a little slurred.

Before closing the door, Zachary took one last look at her-she was lying on the bed with her eyes closed, completely defenseless.

With a soft sigh, he shut the door and turned to leave.

The moment her head hit the pillow, Aveline fell into a deep sleep.

But in her half-conscious state, she began to notice a sharp, acrid smell.

Smoke?

Why did it smell like smoke in the orphanage?

The odor grew stronger, jolting her fully awake. She opened her eyes and saw thick smoke swirling through the room.

Her mind was still foggy, but as she sat up and looked around, she caught sight of flames flickering outside the window.

In an instant, the haze of alcohol cleared from her head.

Fire!

Aveline jumped out of bed, grabbed her coat, and rushed to the bathroom. She soaked the coat thoroughly with water, then draped it over herself before dashing toward the door, ready to escape.

But as soon as she cracked the door open, a surge of flames leaped inside! The fire in the hallway was even fiercer than she'd imagined. Amidst the chaos, Aveline could just make out the cries of the children.

Panicking, she slammed the door shut, her face draining of color.

How did this happen? How did a fire break out so suddenly?

She grabbed her phone, intending to call the fire department, but there was no signal. She couldn't even make an emergency call!

This wasn't an accident. Someone had done this on purpose!

Whoever it was, they meant to burn them alive. What a cruel and twisted plan!

"Aveline! Aveline!" Zachary's muffled voice came from outside.

Aveline quickly shouted back, "I'm fine! Save the children!"

It seemed he heard her because he stopped calling out.

But staying in this room wasn't a long-term solution. The smoke was getting thicker, and if she didn't get out soon, she could pass out from the fumes and never wake up.

Aveline rushed to the window but then realized that to prevent the children from getting into trouble, the orphanage had all the screens welded shut. She couldn't get out that way!

At least there was some ventilation. The smoke slowly began to clear, but Aveline kept her ears trained on the sounds outside the room.

With the window open, she knew she couldn't risk opening the door. The airflow could cause the flames to surge into the room.

She had no choice but to wait.

Suddenly, a loud bang hit the door.

Aveline tensed up immediately. "Who's there?"

"It's me, Mrs. Tudor!" came Braden's voice.

Chapter 755

Aveline's face lit up with relief.

She quickly asked, "Has the fire outside died down?"

Braden replied, "It's under control now. Please, open the door."

Wrapping the wet clothes around herself to shield against any remaining flames, Aveline carefully opened the door.

Braden, covering his mouth and nose with a damp towel, exhaled in relief when he saw she was safe.

"Mrs. Tudor, come with me!" he urged.

Aveline stepped out and saw the source of the fire-it had spread from the kitchen, consuming the nearby rooms and sending thick smoke billowing through the air.

Zachary, who had woken up early, had already evacuated the children and was now fighting the flames with a fire extinguisher.

Baron, with a team of bodyguards, had hooked up a hose and managed to contain much of the blaze, giving Braden the chance to get inside and lead Aveline to safety. Aveline's room was dangerously close to the kitchen; if the fire hadn't been brought under control, it would have soon reached her.

"Mrs. Tudor, are you alright?" Baron rushed over as soon as he saw her, concern etched across his face.

Aveline shook her head. "I'm fine."

Baron breathed a sigh of relief and said, "Please, head over there to rest. We've just destroyed the signal jammer, and we've called the fire department. Help should arrive shortly." Aveline nodded, "Okay."

In the courtyard of the orphanage, the children huddled together, their small faces filled with fear as they stared wide-eyed in the direction of the fire. Aveline walked over and checked each child, asking if anyone was hurt. Seeing that none of them were injured, she let out a big sigh of relief.

Zachary, covered in soot, approached and noticed her wrapped in damp clothes.

"Aren't you cold like that?" he asked.

Aveline shook her head. "I'm fine. I was just trying to be prepared in case the fire spread."

As soon as she finished speaking, she sneezed.

Zachary chuckled. "You shouldn't keep that on. It's freezing out here; you'll catch a cold."

Realizing he was right, Aveline tossed the wet clothes aside and started moving around to warm herself up.

Soon, the sound of sirens filled the air as the fire trucks arrived.

The firefighters arrived, and the blaze was quickly brought under control. By the time everything was settled, dawn had already broken.

Braden approached with two bodyguards behind him, escorting a restrained woman.

"What's going on? Let her go! That's Mrs. Lana!" Zachary's brows furrowed as he immediately spoke up.

Lana was the cook at the orphanage, beloved by the children for her meals.

Braden remained expressionless. "I checked the security footage. Just before the fire, she was sneaking around the kitchen. And when the fire started, she didn't leave; she stayed in the shadows, watching. I suspect she's the one who started it.

"I didn't do it! It wasn't me!" Lana quickly shook her head, denying the accusation, and turned to Zachary for help. Mr. Wills, I swear I didn't do it! I just came back to grab something, and I left right after!"

swn yel

Zachary frowned. "Do you have any evidence?"

Braden replied, "She's the prime suspect for now. Finding evidence is the police's job."

He had already called them.

Zachary seemed like he wanted to say more, but Aveline intervened, "If you're truly innocent, the police will clear your name." Lana's face turned pale, her plump body trembling with fear.

Soon, the police arrived, and Lana was taken away.

Zachary and Aveline went with them to provide their account of what had happened.

Meanwhile, Baron and Braden were left to look after the children. The

two hors glanced around at the

group of little ones, falling into a sudden silence.

Taking care of kids? This was definitely out of their realm of experience.

Chapter 756

Jessie blinked her big eyes and walked straight up to Baron, staring at him with wide-eyed curiosity.

Baron, feeling a bit uneasy under her intense gaze, cleared his throat, crouched down, and asked, "Hey there, little one, what's up?"

Jessie flashed him a bright smile. "Sir you're amazing! You put out the fire!"

The sudden compliment caught Baron off guard, leaving him momentarily stunned.

He felt a little embarrassed. "Huh? Really?"

"Yes!" Jessie nodded enthusiastically.

The other children chimed in, nodding their heads eagerly.

"Sir, you're all amazing! You put out the fire! You're our heroes!"

The children's sincere eyes fixed on Baron, and he couldn't help but puff up with pride.

He glanced over at Braden, grinning. "See that? They called me a hero."

Braden's face remained expressionless.

So childish!

Jessie walked over to Braden and tugged at his sleeve, her voice soft and sweet, "Sir, you're awesome too! You're not even afraid of the fire. Are you a superhero?"

"Yeah, are you a superhero? Only superheroes aren't afraid of fire!"

"Superman isn't afraid of fire either!"

Braden's mouth twitched slightly. Catching the look in Baron's eyes, he suddenly said, "I am a superhero."

Baron was speechless.

When Aveline returned, she found Baron and Braden surrounded by the kids, all having a great time together. She was a bit surprised, and Zachary commented, "Looks like the children really like them." Zachary walked over and said, "Find a room where you can rest. We'll all take a break for a few days."

The children quickly scattered, heading off to rest.

Zachary made a call to get someone in to clean up. A third of the building had been destroyed by the fire and would need to be renovated.

Aveline, feeling a chill, crossed her

arms and looked over at Baron and

Braden. "Thank you both for

everything. You should go and get

some rest now."

Baron smiled and shook his head. "Mrs. Tudor, we're not tired. Mr. Tudor instructed us that until he gets back, we aren't to leave your side." Aveline paused for a moment and asked, "Where did he go?"

Baron shook his head. "We're not sure about that."

Lucas had left the previous night and hadn't returned since. It must have been something urgent.

Aveline didn't think much more

about it and moved into one of the undamaged rooms to help the children settle in. Four rooms had been spared from the fire, so she arranged for the children to rest there. . FindNovel

She herself went to the classroom.

Sitting down in a chair, her head felt heavy, and she was clearly not in great shape.

Just then, she felt a warm coat drape over her shoulders.

Startled, Aveline looked up and met Zachary's concerned gaze.

"You don't look well. Are you feeling sick?" he asked.

"A bit," Aveline admitted. "I think I might have caught a cold."

Zachary suggested, "Then let these two take you to the town. If it gets worse, you'll be the one suffering."

Aveline considered it for a moment and nodded. "Alright."

She stood up, intending to return the coat, but as soon as she rose, a wave of dizziness hit her, and she started to fall to the side. Zachary quickly reached out to steady her, asking with concern, "Are you okay?"

At that moment, Lucas walked in, taking in the entire scene.

From his perspective, it looked

Aveline had thrown herself into

Zachary's arms while he gentle

comforted her. They appeared far too close for his liking.

And to top it off, she was wearing another man's coat.

Chapter 757

"Did I come at a bad time?" Lucas' voice, laced with sarcasm, cut through the room just as Aveline managed to steady herself.

Her head throbbed even harder.

Zachary frowned and turned to Lucas. "You're mistaken. She felt unwell, and I was just helping her."

Lucas walked over, noting Aveline's flushed cheeks and her lack of energy. She didn't look well at all. His brow furrowed, and without a word, he bent down and scooped her up in his arms. Zachary released her at the right moment and said, "She seems to have a fever. You should take her to the town hospital right away."

Lucas' narrowed eyes were filled with a frosty chill as he shot Zachary a cold look before striding out.

Baron and Braden had already slipped away quietly.

Lucas carried Aveline to the car, eyeing the coat she wore with irritation. He swiftly tore it off and tossed it out.

Feverish and dazed, Aveline squinted at Lucas, her voice hoarse. "Don't be unreasonable. He was just worried I'd catch a cold."

Lucas replied coolly, "So, should I hang up his coat like some kind of trophy and send him a thank-you card every day for his noble act?" Aveline closed her eyes, too tired to argue. "You're insufferable."

Lucas noticed the disdain in her eyes, his expression tightening slightly.

He directed the driver, "Drive faster!"

The driver, feeling the tension, pressed harder on the gas pedal.

By the time they reached the hospital, Aveline's fever was alarmingly high. Lucas immediately took her to the emergency room. There was a whirlwind of exams, prescriptions, and IV drips.

Hours passed before they finished.

As the medication began to take effect, Aveline's furrowed brow gradually relaxed, and she started to sweat.

Lucas had someone buy a towel and

a basin, and he began to gently wipe her down. The process was far from smooth; she mumbled and resisted, pushing his hand away.

He coaxed her softly, "We need to clean you up properly, so don't move around, or they'll have to give you another injection."

At the mention of another injection, Aveline stopped struggling.

After he finished wiping her down, Lucas found himself looking rather disheveled.

Lucas glanced down at himself, then closed his eyes briefly before heading to the bathroom.

When Aveline groggily woke up, it

...

l.ne

was already afternoon. She felt refreshed, with none of the sticky sensation that comes from

sweating. The IV had been removed from her hand, and the room was quiet.

"Awake?"

A deep male voice broke the silence.

Aveline turned her head and saw Lucas walking in, carrying a bag with a lunchbox inside.

She vaguely recalled that he had been the one who wiped her down, and her cheeks flushed a little. Trying to change the subject, she

asked, "Where did you go last night?"

Lucas glanced at her and replied, "There was an emergency last night. Were you scared when I wasn't around?"

Aveline frowned. "I'm asking you a serious question."

He responded, "So am I. With a fire that big, who wouldn't be scared?"

Aveline looked at him, exasperated. "It's not the first time I've seen a fire like that. I'm used to it."

Lucas raised an eyebrow. "Oh, impressive."

Aveline fell silent.

He set up the small table and began placing the lunch box in front of her. "Are you feeling well enough to eat, or should I feed you?"

Chapter 758

Aveline replied, "No need."

She picked up the utensils and began to eat. After nearly a day and a night without food, she was starving and no longer cared about the way he was watching her, almost obsessively. Lucas sat by

the side of her bed, his gaze fixed intently on her. He seemed so mesmerized that he reached out to touch her face.

"What are you doing?" Aveline immediately dodged his touch, eyeing him warily.

Lucas' hand froze in mid-air. "Your hair fell in your face. I thought it might get in the way while you're eating, so I was just going to help you tuck it back."

Aveline reached up and tucked her hair behind her ear. "I can do it myself."

Lucas smiled faintly. "You're very capable."

Aveline gave him a look. What was wrong with this man?

Ignoring him, she focused on finishing her meal. Once she was done, she asked, "How's the orphanage?"

Lucas shrugged. "How would I know?"

It wasn't his concern.

Aveline paused, then asked, "Have you found out who started the fire?"

Hearing this, Lucas looked at her seriously and said, "Are you asking for my help?"

Aveline fell silent. Asking for his help would certainly come with a cost. His intentions were all too clear.

She sighed, then nodded. "Yes, I'm asking for your help to look into it. I suspect this whole thing was aimed at me."

A faint smile curved Lucas' lips. "You're half right. They were also after Hilda."

"What?" Aveline was surprised. "The people who wanted to take Hilda away started the fire?"

"Exactly," Lucas confirmed. "The warehouse was smashed up, and everything inside was torn apart."

Aveline's eyes lowered thoughtfully. After a moment, she looked back up at him and asked, "Lucas, you already knew who did it, didn't you?" Lucas didn't answer immediately; he just looked at her intently. "There's something I want to know, and I haven't gotten my answer yet." Aveline gripped the blanket, her voice steady as she asked, "Who?"

Who were her real parents?

"Are you sure you want to know now? It might not be in your best interest," Lucas replied, frowning slightly.

Aveline insisted, "This is my business. I believe I have the right to know. Whether I choose to acknowledge them or not is my decision to make."

"Fair enough," Lucas nodded, a hint

of approval in his gaze. "Your biological parents are from the Cooper family in Larbor City. The person who's been living under your identity is Juliet."

Upon hearing this, Aveline felt a strange sense of confirmation. She had suspected as much.

There were signs she'd pieced together. It could only be Juliet; she was the one who knew Hilda well and had her unwavering trust from the start. Why had Hilda been so hostile toward her? It seemed clear

she either wanted to break her or drive her away.

There was only one reason to prevent Aveline from being found by her real parents.

If Juliet was behind this, it all made sense.

Lucas watched her closely, noting the lack of surprise in her expression. He seemed to understand and said, "So, you'd already guessed." Aveline gave a small smile. "Hilda made it pretty obvious. I'm not stupid; of course, I could figure it out."

Lucas asked, "What do you plan to do now?"

Aveline replied, "I haven't decided yet."

She needed time to think. Should

she go and meet them? And there was the matter of the fire—was it set by someone from the Cooper family, or was it Juliet?

She had to get to the bottom of it. Otherwise, how could she even consider a reunion? "Take your time," Lucas said earnestly. "I'll be here, by your side."

Chapter 759

Aveline looked at him and said, "But I don't need you by my side."

Lucas reached out and tapped her forehead lightly. "Aveline, where did you learn this from? You just asked me to help investigate, and now you're saying you don't need me?" Aveline pulled back a little and replied, "Aren't you expecting something in return?"

If he didn't want anything, maybe she could believe his words. But his intentions were too obvious. She couldn't trust him.

A flicker of exasperation passed through Lucas' sharp eyes. "The only thing I want in return is for you to become addicted to my body and my capability in bed."

Aveline stared at him, utterly stunned.

Was he serious?

"What's with that look?" Lucas guessed what she was thinking from her expression. "Did you think I only cared about my own pleasure?"

He leaned in closer, his deep, magnetic voice dangerously seductive. "Aveline, be honest with yourself-haven't I always made sure you were satisfied first before thinking of myself?" Aveline felt her ears burning, avoiding his gaze. "In any case, there's no future for us."

Lucas' eyes lingered on the flush of her ears. He didn't argue. Whether there was a future or not-that was something they could figure out in time.

Besides, her blushing and flustered reaction was a promising sign. He wasn't in a hurry; he could wait patiently.

"Alright, I'll stop teasing you. Are you feeling any discomfort?" he asked as he started to gather up the lunch boxes on the small table.

Aveline shook her head. "No, I'm fine."

Her fever had broken, and aside from feeling a bit weak, she had no other symptoms.

"Let me check your temperature," Lucas said, reaching out toward her.

Aveline immediately pulled back, her clear eyes wary and watchful.

Lucas smirked. "If I really wanted to do something to you, do you think you could stop me?" Aveline pressed her lips together and said, "I'm fine now. The fever is gone."

"I don't believe you," Lucas replied, determined. He reached out, placing the back of his hand against her forehead and his other hand against his own.

""Hmm, you're right, no fever," he confirmed.

Aveline was speechless.

What a weirdo.

After completing her discharge paperwork, Aveline headed straight back to the orphanage.

Reconstruction had already begun, and Zachary was overseeing the work nearby. When he saw her return, he stood up and asked, "How are you feeling?" "I'm fine now," Aveline replied.

"That's good to hear." Zachary

breathed a sigh of relief and then

Well, I guess this means I i

can't convince you to stay a few

more days."

Aveline smiled. "It's alright. I'll be back in the future. I just came to say goodbye; I'm heading back to Cloudflare City."

"Safe travels!" Zachary wished her.

After saying her farewells to the children, Aveline left.

On the way back, her emotions were mixed. Learning about her true identity had left her in yet another difficult situation.

Lucas sat beside her, a laptop balanced on his knees, his fingers tapping away at the keyboard. His expression was distant and aloof.

She glanced at his handsome face, hesitating to speak.

Without looking at her, Lucas seemed to sense her thoughts.

"What do you want to ask?" he said.

Aveline lowered her gaze, her fingers nervously twisting together. After a long pause, she finally asked, "If what happened to me happened to you, what would you do?"

Chapter 760

Hearing this, Lucas closed his laptop, a slight smile playing at the corners of his lips as he looked at her. "Are you asking me for advice?"

Aveline nodded. "Yes, after all, your family is far more complicated than mine."

Lucas felt a slight sting at that remark, but he pushed it aside.

After a brief pause, he said, "If it were me, I'd first find out who set the fire. If it was Juliet, I'd present the evidence and the paternity test to the Cooper family without hesitation. If it was the Cooper family, I'd find a way to destroy them." Aveline was taken aback.

Her own thoughts had only gone as far as not acknowledging the Cooper family if they were behind the fire, pretending she knew nothing about it.

But Lucas's approach was far more ruthless.

Seeing her reaction, Lucas seemed to read her mind.

"Aveline, some people already know about you. You may want to ignore it all, but keeping quiet can be dangerous. They might try to eliminate you to protect themselves. After all, if you're gone, there's no one left to threaten them." Aveline nodded slowly. "You're right."

Lucas took her hand in his, his grip firm but gentle. "Aveline, I really like this feeling."

She frowned and tried to pull her hand away, but he held on tighter, making it impossible for her to break free.

"Let go of me!" she demanded.

"I don't want to," he said, his gaze locked on hers. "I want to hold on to you like this forever."

Aveline felt a wave of helplessness wash over her. She looked at him and asked, "Lucas, after everything we've been through, do you even know what you really feel for me? If it's just obsessive possessiveness, then-" "I love you."

Lucas cut her off before she could finish, his eyes filled with sincerity and warmth as he gazed at her.

"Aveline, I know I was too extreme in the past. I even thought, for a fleeting moment, that I should erase you from my life. You saw me during my darkest year, my lowest point, and I wanted to eliminate anyone who had witnessed that weakness. But thankfully, that thought was fleeting. I crushed it the moment it appeared."

Aveline looked into his eyes, taken aback by the raw honesty and depth of his confession.

"Without you, I wouldn't be who I am today. I've come to terms with my own feelings, Aveline. I love you."

Her heart felt as if a strong hand had

gripped it tightly, and for a moment, all Aveline felt was a rush of bittersweet emotion, an inexplicable urge to cry. If only he had said these words to her sooner.

"But Lucas," she heard herself say, her voice catching, "I don't love you anymore."

Lucas kissed her fingers softly and replied, "That's alright. I'll become the Lu you once loved. I'll make you fall in love with me again."

Aveline turned her gaze away.

His hand still held hers, but she didn't have the energy to care anymore. His words were like a heavy blow to her heart, causing cracks in the walls she had so carefully built around herself. Could she handle the consequences of letting him in again? Could she endure another heartbreak?

Aveline sniffed, then asked, "Are you trying to win me back?"

"You could say that," Lucas replied.

She looked back at him, her expression clear and earnest. "Alright then, let's get divorced first. You can court me like any other couple, bit by bit, winning me over. If, in the end, I truly fall for you again, we can remarry."

Lucas was silent for a moment, his gaze deep and searching. Aveline's eyes were clear and sincere; she was genuinely offering him a chance. "Alright," he finally agreed.