

Kissed AOM 1871

Chapter 1871

Jeremy silently sped up the car.

Lucas and Sunny silently sat in the back seat. They were both surprised and impressed by Corinne's computer skills as she pinpointed the location of a phone number in such a short time.

Sunny was particularly interested in hacking and network systems, so he was taken aback when he saw what was on Corinne's laptop screen.

"Holy sh*t, Corinne! Y... You're Jade Rabbit?"

Corinne did not have time to entertain Sunny. Instead, she shot him a glare and said, "Just sit tight and keep quiet."

Sunny pouted and settled back into his seat in resignation, though his admiration for Corinne quietly grew.

'Good grief, my idol has been Corinne all this time!' Sunny marveled in disbelief.

Meanwhile, on the outskirts of New Capital City.

The middle-aged balloon seller wrapped up a call from his former boss. He tucked his phone away and swatted at the pesky mosquitoes. Anya stepped out of the cave, eyeing him suspiciously. "Who were you talking to?"

The balloon seller grinned. "Don't worry, I was just talking on the phone."

"What? On the phone? Didn't you toss your phone into the river like I told you to do?" asked Anya angrily.

The balloon seller shrugged and said, "Phones are expensive, you know? It's a waste to throw it away!"

Anya was furious. "Then at least throw away the SIM card! Do you have any idea how easily we can be traced with that thing?"

The balloon seller thought Anya was being too cautious. "Come on, it's not just about you. I have important contacts on my phone, especially my family. What if they need to reach me? I can't ignore my own life for your sake. Besides, I doubt they can find us. They don't even know we're connected!"

Anya was annoyed but too tired to explain everything. "Just tell me who called and what they wanted!"

"It's our former boss. She said that I still have unpaid wages to be claimed. I'll meet her tomorrow afternoon at the fast-food restaurant where we used to work. It's a pretty decent sum."

Anya sensed something was off about the matter. She snatched his phone to check the time and date. Then, she said nervously, "Sh*t! This place isn't safe anymore! We need to get out of here!" The balloon seller was, at this point, tired and not up for a change of location.

"Anya, you're overthinking this! Who's going to find us so quickly in the middle of nowhere? Plus, it's the middle of the night, so where can we go? Just carrying that kid up the mountain today wore me out. I can't move any farther!"

"We have to move, even if you can't! You fool, don't you know they're on to us right now?"

The balloon seller was sure Anya was overreacting. "Who's on to us?"

"You idiot! Why would our former boss call you at this hour for wages? The restaurant should be closed by now! Plus, today isn't even payday. Are you dumb? Someone must've tracked me down to that restaurant!"

Chapter 1872

Realization finally dawned on the balloon seller. "What? That fast?"

Anya, not wanting to waste time explaining things, rushed into the cave to bring Joey out of the cage. After all, Corinne and Jeremy were not like the others. They were capable of tracking her down swiftly. She needed to find another hiding place promptly.

The pitiful Joey was still crying and shivering in the dog cage. Alas, the heartless Anya roughly pulled Joey out, tied him up with a piece of hemp rope, and called the balloon seller from outside to come in and carry the kid. She did not even care about the boy's well-being.

The balloon seller was visibly reluctant, but since he had not received the promised 14000 dollars, he begrudgingly went along. With Joey on his back, they left the cave.

Anya even tossed the balloon seller's phone into the cave, promising to buy him a better one.

The desolate mountains were quite far from the city center. It took Jeremy and Corinne two hours to reach there, and by then, it was dawn. The mountains were truly barren, covered in dense and tangled weeds with no roads for cars to drive on.

Driven by anxiety, Corinne got out of the car and was ready to hike up the mountain in search of Joey, but Jeremy held her back.

"Stay calm! How could we find Joey on such a big mountain?"

How could Corinne stay calm? She could not sit still and do nothing at the thought of Anya taking her anger out of poor, little Joey. "But Joey is..."

Jeremy embraced Corinne and patted her back gently to comfort her. "I know. I'm really worried about him too, but just give it a little more time. Our team and the police should be here soon." Corinne looked up at him, a mix of surprise and curiosity in her eyes. "When did you call the police? I was afraid their arrival might tip off Anya..."

Jeremy narrowed his eyes. "If I guessed correctly, the call from the store owner's wife may have alerted Anya already. Our next move is to surround this mountain as fast as possible and let the police dogs search. Our cars can't climb up, and neither can theirs. I

don't think they've made it down the mountain so quickly since that call. Stay close to me, or we may have to look for you, too."

Corinne found Jeremy's speculation reasonable. She tightly gripped Jeremy's hand to steady herself.

"Jeremy's right, Corinne. You shouldn't act rashly," added Lucas.

Corinne reluctantly agreed with them.

A dozen minutes later, a convoy of black cars stopped behind theirs. Among the occupants were Jeremy's men while the rest were made up of police officers. Before they came, the police officers were told not to blare their sirens to avoid unnecessary attention.

Everyone got out of their cars. Some of them were accompanied by well-trained police dogs. With a single nod from Jeremy, they silently began to search the mountain as if they had received an unspoken cue. Only after that, Jeremy guided Corinne to follow a police dog up the mountain, with Lucas and Sunny behind them. The path ahead was challenging, especially in the deep night with dim lighting. One could easily get scratched by brambles.

However, Corinne did not care that much as those were just minor obstacles for her. All she wanted was to find Joey as quickly as possible.

Fueled by the desperate need to find Joey, they discovered a cave a little over an hour later.

The police dog barked fiercely at the entrance which drew everyone's attention.

Corinne sprung on her heels and headed straight for the cave. However, Jeremy quickly pulled her behind him, and Lucas also stepped forward to protect her.

Chapter 1873

The police dogs entered the cave. Jeremy and Corinne followed suit.

The cave was enveloped in darkness, and there was the smell of burning wood in the air. As the police illuminated the space with powerful flashlights, they saw the dog cage in the cave and the ashes of burnt firewood.

At the sight of the dog cage, Corinne's eyes stung with tears. "They must've kept Joey in this dog cage! D*mn it! How could they treat a child like this?!"

Jeremy's expression did not look good either.

The police dog, sniffing around, barked twice after catching a peculiar scent.

Sunny moved forward to investigate with the police. He saw a puddle on the ground.

'Is that...the kid's pee?' thought Sunny.

The intuitive connection between mother and son allowed Corinne to grasp the situation immediately upon seeing the puddle. "That must be Joey's pee. He left it as a scent trail for us! Since it's still wet, it means they haven't gone too far!"

"Yeah, they shouldn't be too far. Men, have the police dogs get familiar with Joey's scent and intensify the search!" added Jeremy.

"Yes, Mister Jeremy!"

On the other side of the mountain, the balloon seller-looking visibly exhausted-trudged down with Joey on his back; his breaths becoming heavier with each step he took.

They were unaware of the search happening on the opposite side of the mountain and remained oblivious to the approaching danger.

Finally, the balloon seller decided he could not go on. He set Joey down and said, "Anya, I'm telling you: You're overthinking this. No one will find us up here in the middle of the night! I can't go on. I'm done!" Anya immediately panicked after seeing him stop. "How can you stop?! Pick up the child and get down the mountain this instant!"

The balloon seller waved his hand dismissively. "I can't carry him anymore! You'll have to carry him yourself if you want to get him off the mountain! I skipped my dinner today just to drag him up the mountain, and you expect me to carry him down again? Not only did he get his sweat all over me, but he peed all over me as well!"

Anya's ominous premonition intensified. "So what? I'll give you money to buy new clothes later. Just pick him up right now and go!"

"I really can't move anymore. I'm going to die if I take another step."

"Do... Do you still want the money or not?"

The exhausted balloon seller lay sprawled on the ground. "In any case, I can't go on anymore. If you don't pay me because of this, I'll go to the police and report you for forcing me to kidnap someone's child! I'm not going down for this alone!"

"Why you!" Anya gritted her teeth. Left without a choice, she carried Joey herself. "Fine, I'll carry him myself! Stay here and get caught for all I care! Don't blame me for not helping you then! Hmph!" After saying that, Anya carried Joey briskly down the hill. It was only when she held Joey that Anya noticed his pants were all wet.

Anya frowned in disdain. "Useless kid. How is it possible that you can't even hold your pee at your age?"

Joey, tightly bound and exhausted from crying, hoarsely spoke, "Why did you take me back if you hate me so much?"

Chapter 1874

Anya continued walking downhill as she laughed disdainfully. "Why? Because you're the child I adopted! My belongings, even if they're not the best, are still mine. I won't allow anyone to take what's mine!" Joey's eyes were filled with resignation and despair. "But...you don't like kids at all... You don't like me. Why can't you let me stay with my mommy and daddy..."

When Anya realized that Joey was not referring to her as his mommy, her irritation spiked as she slammed Joey fiercely onto the ground.

"What did you say? Who did you call your mommy?"

The mountain path was rugged with plenty of brambles. After being roughly thrown to the ground, Joey's exposed skin was pierced by some sharp prickles. This caused him to wince in pain.

As if that was not enough, Anya kicked his stomach harshly. "You little brat! Who were you calling 'mommy'?!"

Joey was not able to speak anymore. He could only cry silently inside.

Unfortunately for him, Anya was still unsatisfied and stomped his stomach again.

"You traitor! If I hadn't adopted you from abroad, you'd still be in that miserable orphanage, barely surviving. You might've succumbed to a disease and not even be alive today! How dare you be so ungrateful and look down on me?! You'd rather accept that b*tch Corinne as your mommy than me?! I was the one who was kind-hearted enough to adopt you! Did she give birth to you, or did she adopt you? Huh?!"

Joey's eyes were starting to bulge from the forceful stomping. He felt that his life had come to an end and used his last bit of strength to retort, "She... She's really good to me..."

That made Anya even angrier. "Good to you? Why would she be good to you? It's all an act! That b*tch is a professional in acting. She'll do anything to secure her position as Jeremy's wife. You really think she sees you as her son? She has her own kids, so why would she treat you as her son?!"

Red in the eyes, Joey stubbornly defended Corinne, who was perfect in his eyes.

"She's still a good mommy... Even if she doesn't see me as her son, she at least...respects me... She's better than you. She's just better..."

Joey's parting words stirred an intense rage in Anya. She gritted her teeth and viciously kicked Joey on the ground.

"Fine! If she's better than me, I'll grant you your wish! I'll show you just how cruel I can be! Since you no longer recognize me as your adoptive mother, I might as well send you straight to hell!" With each word, she mercilessly kicked the defenseless five-year-old Joey.

It was unclear how much time passed, but Joey stopped moving. Only then did Anya cease her assault.

She steadied herself with a heavy breath and said unsympathetically, "Enough, stop pretending! Get up!"

Yet, the child remained unresponsive.

Frowning, Anya crouched and checked Joey's breath, only to realize he had stopped breathing.

'He's dead? Man, he's really fragile, huh? I don't remember him being this fragile. He used to be able to take more than this! Well, everything is ruined now that he's useless.'

Anya showed no remorse or sadness for the loss of a young life, only thoughts of disdain and dissatisfaction. All she could think about was her own interests.

Ever since her release from prison, she knew she was no longer the same person she used to be. She had lost the halo of being the Riveras' second daughter. Even if she returned to the Riveras, she would only be despised by the people around her. Thus, she chose not to go back and took on temporary jobs. She did all this while plotting revenge against Corinne, whom she blamed for her miserable state. She observed Corinne for a long time and was surprised to find her adopted son in her care. However, she soon concluded that Corinne was using her adopted son to feign righteousness and morality.

Chapter 1875

Therefore, Anya planned to snatch Joey back from Corinne. She believed that if the Holdens were willing to take in Joey, it meant they valued him. If she could regain control of Joey, they would also give her respect and benefits.

More importantly, she would be able to reconnect with Jeremy if she got Joey back. She was sure their former relationship would be rekindled.

Unfortunately, Joey turned out to be more fragile than she thought. He passed away quite easily after just a few kicks from her. She was pondering how to deal with his lifeless body when the sudden barking of dogs startled her.

'Why are there dogs in the mountain? Wait, could it be wolves? Sh*t, I don't have any weapons on me...'

Anya looked around and quickly ran down the mountain. She did not care whether those were stray dogs or wolves. What if they were hungry? They could just feast on Joey's body. All she had to do was to take the opportunity to escape.

The barking of the dogs drew nearer. Several police dogs emerged from different directions, headed straight for Joey who was lying on the ground. They then barked, alerting they had found the boy.

Corinne and her group, who were following one of the police dogs, also quickened their pace to see what was happening up ahead.

At the sight of Joey lying on the ground, Corinne's world crumbled. She hurriedly crouched to touch his forehead and shake him.

"Joey! Joey! It's Mommy! Mommy's here! Wake up! Joey! Open your eyes and look at Mommy! Mommy's here! Joey..."

However, Joey remained unresponsive, no matter how Corinne shook and called out to him.

It was then the worst-case scenario hit her, and she reached out to feel for Joey's breath. When she felt none, she immediately passed out from the shock. Jeremy quickly held her with one hand while reaching out to check Joey's breathing with the other. His expression darkened.

"Quick! Where's the medical team? Resuscitate the kid!"

The medical personnel, who arrived with the police, rushed forward upon hearing the order to assess Joey's condition and initiate emergency measures. Sunny could hardly believe that Anya was responsible for this.

'How could she treat her own child like this?! He's just a boy!' Sunny thought in disbelief. After all, Joey was adopted by Anya, and she once cared for him. The last Sunny saw Joey, he was happily playing with Bryan and Christine. In just a few days, everything had changed.

Lucas remained composed as he surveyed the surroundings. He instructed Jeremy's men to continue searching the area for any other suspicious individuals.

Chapter 1876

Corinne woke up to find herself in a hospital. The light above her was eye-piercingly bright, causing her to break out in cold sweat. "Joey!" she cried out.

Through her blurry vision, she could see someone gently stroking her head and whispering in a deep voice into her ear, "It's okay, it's okay..."

Corinne's breathing slowly calmed, and the scene before her became clearer. She made out Xante, Aaron, Annie, Lucas, Sunny, and Maxwell. They were all looking at her with a mix of concern and tenderness.

Jeremy was the one who was cradling her gently, comforting her with soft-spoken words.

Corinne was still in a state of shock. She straightened up in Jeremy's arms and asked with reddened eyes, "Where's Joey?"

Jeremy looked at her gently and said, "Don't worry. The doctor saved him. He's fine and awake now."

Fearing Jeremy was just trying to comfort her, Corinne asked with disbelief, "Where's Joey? I need to see him now!"

She tried to get out of bed to look for Joey. Jeremy did not stop her but got up with her. He supported Corinne carefully to make sure she would not fall in her haste.

"Don't rush. Put on your shoes first." Jeremy held her hand carefully, preventing her from rushing out. He bent down and handed her a pair of slippers.

Corinne was so anxious that she could not care that much. However, Jeremy insisted she wore the slippers before leaving. With no other choice, she hurriedly put on the slippers. "Where's Joey? Hurry, take me to him!" she urged.

Jeremy held her hand and said, "I'll take you there, don't worry. Joey's in the pediatric ward, with his grandparents and Francine by his side."

Corinne nodded and followed Jeremy out of the ward, leaving the rest of them.

There was admiration in Sunny's eyes as he sighed and said, "I really respect Corinne. She's not even Joey's biological mother, yet she's still so concerned for him. Anya, though..." Lucas remained silent. They had not found Anya on the mountain, but they had caught the balloon seller. After the police interrogated him, it was almost certain that Anya was the mastermind behind Joey's kidnapping. As for Anya's whereabouts, they searched the entire mountain but found no trace of her.

Sunny suddenly noticed Maxwell was looking a bit off. He reached out to support him and asked with concern, "Dad! Are you okay?"

Maxwell was also at the hospital because Sunny blurted it out. He woke up in the middle of the night to find they were all missing. He then had a bad feeling about it, so he called to ask what had happened and got to know everything from Sunny.

Maxwell was very worried about Corinne and insisted on coming to the hospital to see her, no matter how much he was persuaded otherwise.

However, Maxwell's health had not fully recovered yet. He looked even paler after the restless night.

"Dad, why don't you go home first? Corinne is awake, so there's nothing to worry about anymore. Go home and have a nice sleep," said Sunny. Maxwell waved his hand and said, "I'm fine. Just help me over to that chair."

Sunny sighed defeatedly and assisted Maxwell to a nearby chair.

Chapter 1877

Jeremy led Corinne to the pediatric ward.

Joey sat absent-mindedly on the bed, eating an apple that Francine had peeled for him.

Greg and Pamela's worried expressions faded when they saw Corinne entering.

"Corinne! You're awake, too!"

"Thank God!"

Corinne nodded toward Greg and Pamela. She then released Jeremy's hand and quickly walked to the bedside. Tears fell as she looked at Joey.

'He's alright. Joey really is alright...' thought Corinne.

When Joey saw Corinne, he instantly released the apple in his hand and threw himself into Corinne's arms.

"Mommy... I thought I'd never see you again..."

Corinne hugged him tightly. "Mommy's here! I'll never lose you again!"

"Mommy..."

There was not a dry eye in that ward. Jeremy also subtly furrowed his eyebrows, his emotions quietly dancing behind his slightly reddened eyes.

He turned to ask Francine, "Why are you here? Shouldn't you be at home looking after the other three?"

Francine wiped away her tears and said, "Don't worry! We've got more than enough people at home to protect them. I even asked Chester to stay with the kids. I was just too worried about Joey, so I came with Grandpa and Grandma to check on him. I'll go home shortly!"

Jeremy nodded. "Take Grandpa and Grandma back home with you. We have enough people here."

Pamela chimed in immediately. "Jeremy, we're fine! Even if you send us back home, we won't be able to sleep. It's better for us to stay here with Joey. Plus, Corinne needs to rest too, so let us help you out a bit. We're here for you!"

"Grandma, you and Grandpa should know your health better than anyone. If anything happens, it'll only complicate things for us. Just go home, okay? Joey is fine. He's just suffering from some minor injuries and shock. He should be discharged by tomorrow morning," said Jeremy sternly.

Pamela did not want to add to his worries, so she nodded and said, "Alright, we'll go back with Francine, then. Take good care of Corinne. She's been through a lot these past few years, waiting for you."

"Of course I will."

After spending some time together, Jeremy arranged for someone to drive Francine, Greg, and Pamela back home. The ward became quieter after they left.

Corinne was feeding Joey some oatmeal. As she studied the wounds that riddled his skin, her anger swelled.

'You better hide yourself, Anya. My little Joey is only five! How could you treat him like this? You'll pay a thousand times over for what you've done!' snarled Corinne internally.

"Mommy, I'm full. I can't eat anymore." Sweet little Joey shook his head, refusing the last spoonful of oatmeal that Corinne brought to his mouth.

Corinne nodded and ate the last bit of oatmeal herself. She then set the bowl aside. She reached over and gently rubbed Joey's face, saying, "Alright, no more eating, then. You must be feeling sleepy, so why don't you take a nap?"

Joey shook his head again, his eyes filled with fear. "No... Joey doesn't want to sleep..."

Corinne furrowed her eyebrows. She had raised Joey and brought him up by herself, so she could easily tell whether he was tired.

Despite the tired look in his eyes, Joey stubbornly shook his head. He tightly held onto Corinne's clothes as if afraid they might be separated again.

Corinne felt a pang in her heart after seeing through him. "Okay, you're not tired. Let's talk a while more."

Chapter 1878

Joey blinked and nodded. "Okay."

Corinne helped Joey get comfortable in the bed. She draped a blanket over him before she started to talk.

"Joey, what happened today was just an accident, and I promise it won't happen again. Remember the lessons from this experience, and be more careful in the future. Also, can you promise Mommy you won't be traumatized because of it?"

Corinne was trying to counsel Joey out of worry that he might suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder.

Joey pouted pitifully. "But it was so scary... Every time I close my eyes, I see that woman hitting me... Mommy, can I go to work and come home with you every day from now on? I don't ever want to be away from you anymore."

Corinne's heart ached as her once cheerful, sensible son had become shell-shock. She gently stroked his head. "Silly boy... Daddy is back now, so Mommy doesn't have to go to work every day. I can stay home with you guys all the time!"

"Really?" Joey visibly relaxed after hearing that.

Corinne continued to gently stroke Joey's soft hair as she said, "But you should know that Mommy can be with you all the time because you're still a kid. Soon, you'll grow up to be an adult! Mommy won't be able to be with you every day by then. You'll need to be

independent once you grow up because Mommy can't always stay with you, or you'll be annoyed."

Joey's gaze was firm as he said, "No way! I'll never find Mommy annoying. I want to be with Mommy forever and ever!"

Before Corinne could say anything, Jeremy walked over and pinched Joey's cheek. "You're quite the dreamer, huh? Daddy's the one that's going to be with Mommy forever and ever! You can find your own wife to be with when you grow up!"

Joey looked at Jeremy, baffled, before looking at Corinne. He then smiled. "Oh yeah! Mommy and Daddy are together again!"

Corinne smiled at Joey before giving Jeremy the side-eye. "Why did you have to talk like that to him?"

Jeremy pulled up a chair and sat next to Corinne and Joey. "This little guy is already fighting over you with me at such a young age. I have to make him understand that he needs to find his own wife when he grows up."

Corinne rolled her eyes. "I can't believe you'd feel jealous over something like that."

Jeremy did feel a tinge of jealousy, but it was not as serious as it would be in other situations.

Jeremy and Corinne's relationship had been challenging, to say the least. They hardly had the chance to enjoy their couple time before their four children came along. They even suffered years of separation due to external forces.

How could he bear to share her with anyone else?

Suddenly, Jeremy's phone rang. He took it out, glanced at it, and stood up. "You two carry on. I need to take this call."

After that, he strode out of the ward.

Corinne did not think too much of it. She turned her focus back to Joey. "Joey, did you intentionally pee in the cave? Were you leaving a clue for Mommy?" Joey nodded.

Corinne felt heartened and affectionately patted Joey's head. "You're such a clever boy to leave such an important clue for Mommy."

Joey pouted. "I was really scared at that time, afraid I might never see you again. You told us that should we encounter bad people, we should find a way to leave a clue for you so you can have a chance to find us! I couldn't leave any belongings because I was tied up all over, so I thought I'd leave my scent... That woman had her partner carry me down the mountain, and I peed a little along the way... Mommy, you're not going to be mad at me, right?"

Corinne shook her head. "How could Mommy be mad at you? In fact, I think you're very clever. Looks like you really did listen when I was teaching you. What a good boy you are."

Chapter 1879

Joey visibly relaxed when he heard what Corinne said. After all, even he himself felt what he did was disgusting.

"You weren't breathing when Mommy found you. Was that intentional, too?" asked Corinne when she suddenly recalled something.

Joey pursed his lips and nodded. "Yeah. Before Mommy arrived, that woman kept hitting and kicking me. I held my breath, hoping she'd think I was dead and leave me behind so I could go find you by myself. I wasn't long until I heard your voice calling me, but I didn't dare to believe it. I was afraid it might be my own imagination, so I didn't open my eyes..."

Corinne felt relieved and smiled. "You did so well. It's remarkable of you to come up with such a plan at your age! Mommy is very proud of you!"

Joey had indeed saved himself. The police dogs would not have found him so quickly if he had not left such a noticeable scent by wetting his pants.

It was infuriating that Anya could be so heartless to mistreat such a clever, adorable child. Just how miserable did she have to be to take all of her anger out of a child? It was utterly inhumane! Meanwhile, Jeremy received a call from his subordinate in the corridor, informing him that they had caught Anya.

Jeremy then returned to the ward and told Corinne he was going out to get some food, promising to be back soon. He then arranged for a significant number of people to stand guard outside Joey's room to protect them.

It was only then Jeremy geared up to settle things with Anya once and for all.

Jeremy was walking briskly to the elevator when Lucas appeared in front of him.

"Have your men caught her?" he asked helplessly.

Jeremy nodded. "Yeah."

"I want to go with you to see her."

Jeremy glanced at Lucas. "Even now, you still want to protect her?"

Lucas sighed. "No. I just want to ask her why she turned out to be like this."

Jeremy coldly withdrew his gaze, neither agreeing nor refusing, and entered the elevator in one stride.

Lucas followed him inside, feeling a mixed bag of emotions.

Sunny could not bear to see Maxwell's complexion worsening as he struggled to sit on the sofa. "Dad, Lucas has left too. You should go home! Corinne is with Joey in the pediatric ward and probably won't be back. We can come back tomorrow to visit Corinne."

Maxwell looked at Sunny, then glanced disappointedly at the empty bed that Corinne once occupied. 'He's right. Corinne probably won't come back. Well, if she doesn't come back, it means she's fine.' He mentally sighed. 'I'll just come to see her tomorrow.'

Maxwell finally nodded, accepting Sunny's support to stand up. "Sure, let's go."

Chapter 1880

Sunny helped Maxwell to his feet. Matching his pace, they slowly walked toward the exit.

As they passed by Xante, Sunny leaned over and whispered, "I'll take my dad to the driver outside now. I'll come back to find you in a bit, so wait for me."

Xante nodded and adjusted her golden-rimmed glasses before turning back to continue her conversation with Aaron and Annie.

After Sunny and Maxwell left the ward, Aaron chuckled and teased, "Xante, I can see Mister Sunny is quite serious about you. Ever thought of getting married just like Annie and me?"

Aaron had his arm around Annie as he spoke. They looked really happy and intimate.

Xante rolled her eyes at him. "Is this the right time for such comments? The boss' family just went through a major crisis, and she's just woken up. How can you crack jokes at a time like this? Have you forgotten that we owe what we have now to her?"

"Hey, you got the wrong idea about me again! I just felt the atmosphere was a bit heavy and wanted to lighten it up!" explained Aaron in a more serious tone.

Xante scoffed and ignored him. She turned to Annie and said, "I pity you for marrying such an idiot."

Annie shrugged. "Well, I had no choice. I had to take him in so he wouldn't roam freely and harm other innocent girls!"

Xante gave Annie's shoulder a comforting pat. "They should give you the Nobel Peace Prize."

Hearing this, Aaron pulled Annie into a corner. "What are you saying? You 'had to' take me in, you say? Do enlighten me just how reluctant you were." Annie rolled her eyes. "In any case, I was quite reluctant."

Aaron lifted her chin. "Why don't we get a divorce now if you're so reluctant? Give me back my freedom so that I can find other girls to play with!" Annie widened her eyes. "Don't you dare!"

Aaron immediately chuckled. "Relax, I was only kidding! You can tease me to Xante, but I can't crack a joke?"

"Hmph!"

Sunny accompanied Maxwell into the elevator. As the doors closed, he noticed a familiar girl running toward the elevator entrance.

Maxwell noticed Sunny's unusual expression. "What's wrong? Did you see someone you know? If it's a friend, go say hi. I can go to the car by myself."

Sunny immediately shook his head. "No, it's not someone I know well. I just remembered seeing Corinne visit another woman at a different hospital once. I don't know who that woman was. There was a little girl in her hospital room. Just now, I saw that little girl running toward the elevator here. I wonder why she's back at this hospital."

Maxwell acknowledged with a nod but did not pay much attention until the elevator reached the ground floor and opened. It seemed like Maxwell suddenly realized something.

"Sunny, you mentioned Corinne visiting a woman at this hospital before. How old was that woman?"

Sunny found Maxwell's reaction a bit strange. "Uh... Around her fifties, but she looked much younger and well-maintained. She had some injuries and was hospitalized. By the way, that hospital was the same one where you stayed for a while. When I found out Corinne visited a stranger, I had my people look into the matter. Strangely, the hospital

couldn't find any information about her, and they transferred to another hospital afterward."