

## **Kissed AOM 1931**

### Chapter 1931

Melody felt disgusted with herself at the thought of being defiled by William. Filled with anger, all she wanted was to get out of there and find out what Ethan and Helen were really up to. However, the bathroom door swung open just when she reached the hotel room door.

"What's the matter? Are you thinking of running away right after waking up?" a familiar voice froze Melody in her tracks. She turned to find...a shirtless Lucas.

"Ah!" Melody screamed and covered her eyes shyly. "What... What are you doing here?!"

"Who were you hoping to find here?" Lucas asked.

Melody was wearing Lucas' white shirt, and her slender legs captivated his gaze. He furrowed his brows slightly, and his Adam's apple involuntarily bobbed. Melody was made uncomfortable by the way Lucas was staring at her. She awkwardly moved to the side and picked up the blanket to cover her legs.

"Um, I couldn't find my clothes, so I just grabbed something to wear. Is this your shirt?"

"Yeah. Whose shirt do you think it is?" Lucas walked over and sat on the sofa. "Did you perhaps think it was Mister William's?"

The mention of William shocked Melody. "How do you even know about Mister William?"

"Melody, I don't ask anything from you. But during our agreement, please make sure you don't do anything to bring disgrace to my family's name."

Melody lowered her head. "Sorry, it was my fault. I got careless and almost got into trouble. I promise it won't happen again! Um... Did you save me yesterday? Then, did we..."

'Mister William must've spiked my drinks last night. If it was Lucas who saved me, then maybe we did...'

The thought made Melody lower her head even further as she did not dare to meet Lucas' eyes again. While she was not exactly hoping for something to happen between her and Lucas, she would choose him over the disgusting William any day.

"You wish!" said Lucas teasingly.

Melody suddenly looked up. "Are you saying...that nothing happened between us? So... What about Mister William? He didn't do anything to me either, right?"

Lucas casually grabbed his coffee from the table and took a sip. "No. Even though you're my wife only in name, I'm not about to let anyone mess with what's mine." Melody sighed in relief. "Thank god nothing happened last night!"

Whether it be William or Lucas, she did not want anything to happen while she was passed out drunk. Thus, she was beyond relieved to hear nothing happened last night.

"Oh... Thank you for saving me!" said Melody sincerely. Had it not been for Lucas, she surely would not have escaped!

She could not fathom how she would have felt waking up to William's violation. What kind of emotions would have overwhelmed her, and what beliefs she would need to have the strength to keep going? Thankfully, Lucas' interference altered the entire story.

"Don't thank me. I saved you for more than just your sake."

Lucas set his coffee aside, crossed his legs, and looked at Melody with utmost seriousness. "Melody, I'm sure you haven't forgotten your current role as Missus Rivera, right?"

"Of course not!" Melody felt a bit uneasy under Lucas' intense stare. She sat up involuntarily. "I'm sorry. There were some unusual circumstances that led me to meet Mister William yesterday. It's not what you might be thinking."

Lucas continued to gaze at her indifferently. "It'll be a scandal for my family if word gets out you, my wife, had a fling with someone else. Also, our deal is for a year. During this time, please avoid getting into affairs with other men. I need you to keep that in mind."

It was the most Lucas had spoken since Melody had known him.

Melody was caught off-guard by Lucas' statement. After a brief moment of bewilderment, she hurriedly waved her hands. "It's not what you think. I can explain."

Melody suddenly stood up, anxious to prove her innocence. In her haste, she forgot that she was not wearing anything underneath, thus revealing her naked legs again.

Chapter 1932

Lucas' gaze once again fell onto Melody's slender legs.

Feeling his stare, Melody quickly sat back down and covered her thighs. "Uh, I can explain...but where are my clothes? Can I please change back into my own clothes?"

Melody could not fathom why, given that nothing happened, she woke up naked in bed. Plus, she had searched the entire room and could not find her clothes anywhere. "You had too much to drink last night, and you puked all over me. So both your clothes and mine are in the wash," said Lucas.

He then pointed to the white shirt she was wearing. "The shirt you have on now is a new one the hotel provided for me."

Melody looked down at the white shirt and felt even more awkward. "Oh, sorry. I couldn't find my clothes earlier, so I just put this on." Melody would have taken the shirt off immediately if she had another one. However, she could not find any other clothing anywhere.

"By the way, with such a low alcohol tolerance, drinking alone with a man does leave room for some misunderstandings," said Lucas.

Melody got the point without Lucas explicitly stating it. In fact, she would not have ended up drinking alone with a man if it were not for the relentless calls from her family. She lowered her head in shame and tugged at the blanket covering her.

"Lucas, could you please have the hotel send over my clothes? I can return yours to you then."

"Sure." Lucas called the hotel service and gave them Melody's size accurately.

'How does Lucas know my size so well? Did he see it yesterday?' The thought made her blush involuntarily again.

After hanging up the phone, Lucas maintained his usual aloofness while staring at Melody.

"Melody, are you in need of money?"

"What?" Melody suddenly looked up, nodding but immediately shaking her head. "Well, I am a bit short on cash, but I won't be anymore after you pay me."

"If money isn't an issue, then why are you doing this?"

Melody could tell he must have misunderstood what happened yesterday. She quickly explained, "It's not like that. My parents tricked me into coming here to meet Mister William for the sake of my sister. I thought they'd come with me, but it turned out they had planned to bail on me all along."

"Tricked? By your own parents?" Even Lucas found the situation pretty baffling.

Melody wished there was some other explanation as well, but the stark truth remained.

"You find it hard to believe too, don't you?" Melody laughed self-deprecatingly. There was a hint of irony in her gaze when she looked up. "I never thought my own parents would treat me like this either." Melody lowered her head again, sighing softly. "My mom told me it would be the last time. She promised me they won't bother me again if I come with them to apologize to Mister William and help my sister secure a movie role."

She could not hold back her tears anymore after recalling all the events that happened yesterday. "I didn't want to get involved, but when my mom pleaded with me like that, I just didn't have the heart to turn her down."

"So you came alone?" Lucas' gaze softened when he noticed her teary eyes.

Chapter 1933

Melody nodded with a bitter smile. "When I got to the club, they said they were stuck in traffic and asked me to go in first. I know my mom favors my sister, but I never expected her to put me in harm's way. I guess I was just too naive. They planned from the beginning to offer me to William like some sacrificial lamb."

Lucas narrowed his eyes. At this moment, he pitied Melody.

He could not fathom what kind of parents would plot against their own daughter, treating her as a sacrifice to an older man for the sake of her sister.

'If that's the case, the night when we first met... Was she also manipulated by her family? Is she just an object that can be passed on from one man to another in her parents' eyes?' wondered Lucas.

After a long silence, Lucas finally said, "If you need, I can accompany you back to your family's home. I'm sure they pull a stunt like this anymore once they know you're married to a Rivera."

Melody looked up at Lucas in surprise. She only wanted to clear up the misunderstanding, not play the victim. Unexpectedly, Lucas was willing to stand up for her. After all, apart from that one night, they were practically strangers, not even friends.

Although Lucas' offer deeply touched Melody, she could not bring herself to accept it.

Lucas could indeed step in and warn her family, making them afraid and ensuring they would not force her into such situations again. Alas, Melody knew the true nature of her family. Once they caught wind of her connection to the Riveras, they would use that as an opportunity to climb the social ladder. They would stop at nothing to force Melody to use the Riveras' status for Wendy's benefit.

Moreover, Melody was not genuinely a Missus Rivera. Their relationship was just a contractual agreement.

She neither had the capacity nor the inclination to engage in such manipulations. The Riveras had been kind to her, especially Cedric and Beatrice. Thus, Melody did not want to disappoint them, and she certainly did not want to take what did not really belong to her.

After a moment of hesitation, Melody shook her head. "Thank you, Lucas. I appreciate your kindness, but this is a family matter. I'll handle it on my own."

'D\*mn it. She knows that's the easiest fix, yet she'd rather take the hard way out than let me help! Fine, whatever.' Lucas felt an inexplicable anger at her refusal.

Nevertheless, Melody had a point. It was her family problem, and he, as an outsider, should not be meddling too much.

"Fine." Lucas suppressed his displeasure, grabbed a set of clothes from the cabinet, and headed into the bathroom. After putting on the ensemble sans the shirt, he left. Melody was not certain what had gotten into him but sensed she might have unintentionally irked Lucas.

After Lucas left, the hotel staff promptly delivered her clothes. She was about to leave after changing when a sudden realization struck her.

She turned to look at the large bed in the room and thought, 'If Lucas brought me here yesterday, did he also undress me and put me in this bed?'

Melody immediately blushed at the thought. Although nothing else happened, the notion of Lucas having seen her entirely naked flustered her greatly.

#### Chapter 1934

Melody received a call from Wendy once she left the hotel.

"Melody, what on earth did you do last night? Why won't Mister William even answer my calls now?" snarled Wendy. Melody was reminded of the events of yesterday once again. Her gaze then turned cold. "Do you really want to know?" "Cut the crap! Why else would I be calling you?" Wendy's tone was aggressive as if Melody had done

something to betray her. Melody clenched her fists tightly. "Alright. Since you want to know, I'll tell you in person. I'm heading home right now, so wait." Before Wendy could say anything else, Melody hung up. She hailed a taxi and made her way back to the Sanders' residence.

Melody arrived 20 minutes later. When she entered, Wendy immediately rushed over and slapped her across the face.

"Melody, what have you done? Why is Mister William ignoring me?! Do you find pleasure in seeing me struggle in the entertainment industry?"

Melody touched her stinging face and retaliated by slapping Wendy in return. "Who do you think you are to hit me, Wendy? I don't owe you anything!"

"How... How dare you hit me!" Wendy looked at her in shock, unable to believe that Melody had the guts to strike back. For so many years, Wendy had been the one to bully her, and Melody never stood her ground so vehemently before.

"I'm not the person you can casually bully anymore. Get away from me!" Melody shoved her away in disgust and walked quickly toward the living room, where Helen sat beside Ethan.

Seeing Melody enter, Helen abruptly stood up and asked, "Melody, didn't I ask you to apologize to Mister William? Why did you make him ignore Wendy's calls again?"

"Apologize? Mom, is that all you expect from me? How can you even ask that?" Melody scoffed and sat on the sofa. She looked at her parents coldly. "Mom, just what were you hoping that I'd do after you tricked me into meeting Mister William? Should I have taken off all my clothes and offered myself up to him on a platter?"

Just then, Wendy ran in from the foyer with her cheek covered and eyes red. Glaring at Melody, she said, "Dad... Melody didn't just cause Mister William to ignore me. She slapped me as soon as she walked in the door!"

"What?!" Helen rushed to Wendy's side, gently touching her face with a concerned expression. "How do you feel? Is your face okay?"

Wendy looked aggrieved. "My face is going to be swollen. How can I continue to work as an actress if it's disfigured? Melody is trying to ruin my career!"

"Wendy, calm down... Go get an ice pack for your face. I'll handle Melody." After easing Wendy's frustration, Helen ushered her toward the kitchen to fetch an ice pack.

Wendy shot Melody a fierce glare before storming off to the kitchen.

Chapter 1935

It was clear that scolding Melody was not the immediate concern; Wendy's face mattered more.

After Wendy headed to the kitchen, Helen yanked Melody up from the sofa.

"Melody, how can you be so heartless? I told you to make Mister William happy, but you come back and hit Wendy instead? Do you know how crucial Wendy's appearance is? It's her livelihood!" lectured Helen.

Melody glared at Helen.

Despite being her biological mother, Helen poured all her motherly love into Wendy, who was not even related by blood, leaving all grievances for Melody to bear.

Thus, Helen did not deserve to be her mother at all.

"What does her appearance have to do with me?" Melody forcefully pushed away Helen's hand, sneering. "Her career is none of my concern. If she wants success in the entertainment industry, she can fight for resources on her own. Why should I sacrifice myself for her?"

Helen did not expect Melody to rebut her like this. After a moment of stunned silence, she reached out to slap some sense into Melody.

However, Melody swiftly blocked the slap with her hand.

"That's enough! Don't ever think you can hit me like that again!" growled Melody



She forcefully pushed Helen away, causing her to stumble and almost fall to the floor. "Mom, I've been more than considerate to you. In fact, you don't deserve me calling you 'Mom'!"

"How dare you, Melody?!" Ethan, who had been silent, could not hold back any longer. He stood up and began scolding her, "Is this how you treat the woman who birthed you? You must be out of your mind!" Melody scoffed. "So what if she birthed me? Have you forgotten she's also the woman who's willing to pimp me out to secure a role for her stepdaughter? No woman deserves to be called a mother for doing that! I used to do whatever you all told me to do because I thought we were a family, but I'm not stupid enough to let you humiliate me like this!"

Helen looked at her disappointedly. "You've been sleeping around anyway, so what difference does it make if you sleep with Mister William? You can bask in Wendy's success too if you help her secure some roles! Melody, I used to think you were sensible. How did you become like this?"

Melody did not expect her mother would say something like that. Even though she no longer considered Helen her mother, hearing those words still broke Melody's heart.

At that moment, Wendy walked out of the kitchen, holding an ice pack to her face. "Melody, how could you talk to Dad and Helen like that? Are you even their daughter? It's downright rebellious!"

"I don't mind not being their daughter if this is the treatment I get," Melody replied with a bitter smile. She gazed coldly at Helen. "Starting from today, I'm no longer your daughter. I'm cutting ties with you." Melody thus turned to leave. However, Helen was not about to let her go so easily. She stretched out her arm to block her from leaving.

"You're cutting ties with me? Hmph! It's not that simple, Melody. We've spent a lot of money raising you over the years. Did you really think you could just leave without giving anything back? Even if I agree, your dad won't!"

It was clear that Helen was not concerned about losing Melody. Instead, she was just worried that the years of investment might not yield any returns.

"Just give me a number, and I'll pay you back for all the money you've spent on raising me. But in return, all of you aren't allowed to bother me again," said Melody.

Honestly, Melody would be more than willing to settle everything with money.

Wendy sneered, eyeing her with contempt. "My, my, I see you've gotten some spine into you, haven't you? Do you even know how much Dad has spent over the past twenty or so years to raise you? It's not an amount that you can just conjure out of thin air, so there's no way you can pay him back!"

Chapter 1936

Over the years, Melody endured every emotional and physical abuse at her home. She had always done her best to show understanding and tolerance, but her family's insatiable greed only grew. Thus, Melody could not bear another day of such a life.

She glanced at Wendy but ignored her, focusing instead on their biased, emotionally distant parents. "Alright, just tell me how much do you want. I'll pay you back every penny with interest for your so-called nurturance!"

Helen and Ethan looked at each other before Helen held up three fingers. "If you can come up with three million dollars, I'll consider things even between us. And you have my word we won't bother you with family matters anymore."

"Three million dollars? What a greedy bunch of b\*stards!" thought Melody.

Melody had lived a modest life since childhood. She could not possibly have spent three million dollars of her parents' money.

Nonetheless, giving them the three million dollars seemed to be her only way out. However, she could not possibly come up with three million dollars on her own. She had no choice but to borrow the money from a certain someone.

"Fine, just give me a moment."

After leaving the living room, Melody returned to the small room she used to live in and called Lucas.

The phone rang for a long time without being answered. Just when she was about to lose hope, the call went through.

Lucas' indifferent voice came through the phone. "What's up?"

Melody hesitated before speaking, "Um... Lucas, could you lend me three million dollars?"

It was the best solution Melody could come up with. Besides this, she had no idea how else to come up with the three million dollars.

There was a brief silence on the other end of the line. "I see your desire for money seems to be growing. What do you need three million dollars for?"

Melody persistently said that she was not someone who cared about money, yet there she was asking for three million dollars as if it was just chump change. She had never felt so humiliated at having to go back on her own words.

"No, Lucas. I have an urgent need for the money right now. I'll pay you back as soon as possible," said Melody uneasily.

She knew the Sanders would keep bothering her if she could not come up with three million dollars. She had had enough of those days. All she wanted at that moment was to break free from the Sanders as soon as possible and live a life for herself.

Sensing her discomfort, Lucas could not help but become suspicious. "Tell me why you need three million dollars so urgently."

Melody did not plan to tell Lucas about the mess she had stumbled into. After all, they were not a real couple, and dealing with the Sanders was her own problem. She did not want to burden him with too much. However, given the circumstances, she would not be getting the three million dollars if she did not tell him the truth.

"Well, it's for my parents..." said Melody with a sigh. She then explained the whole situation to him, including why she had gone to see William last night.

"I just want to pay my parents the three million dollars they wanted so they won't bother me anymore! Lucas, I know it's a big sum, but please believe me when I say I'll pay you back."

Truth be told, Lucas was not indifferent to Melody's plight.

Chapter 1937

Lucas could not fathom parents like Ethan and Helen existing in the world.

Despite having both parents alive, Melody had not received an ounce of their love. She was even used as Wendy's sacrificial lamb. It was both pitiful and tragic.

"Do you really think handing them three million dollars today will make them keep their promise and leave you alone? From what you've told me, they'll probably latch onto you even tighter once they know they can get money from you!"

Lucas's warning left Melody stunned.

'Lucas is right. I'm giving them the three million dollars hoping to put an end to everything, but considering their nature... They'll latch on to me even tighter,' thought Melody.

After all, the Sanders were insatiable. Once they found out she could provide money, they would surely treat her like a bottomless ATM.

"I've got something to do. Edmund will get in touch with you later," Lucas stated before hanging up.

'Uh... So is he giving me the money?' Melody thought to herself somewhat bewilderedly.

A few minutes later, Edmund's call came in.

"Miss Melody, I've already done what Mister Lucas instructed me to do just now. The legal department has drafted an agreement, and I've sent you the digital copy. You can decide whether you want the Sanders to sign it. Also, please send me your bank details. I'll wire the three million dollars to your account right away."

Melody was a bit flattered to hear that Lucas had made such an arrangement for her. "Um... Okay, I'll send it to you now."

After ending the call, Melody received the digital agreement from Edmund. Essentially, the agreement stated that after receiving the three million dollars, Melody would sever all ties with the Sanders. She would not have to fulfill any daughterly duties, and the Sanders could not guilt-trip her in any way.

Lucas had indeed thought things through. With this agreement in place, even if the Sanders came knocking for money again in the future, Melody would be able to whip out the agreement to make them leave. After sharing her bank details with Edmund, Melody patiently waited for his confirmation. Once she received it, she returned to the living room and slammed her bank card on the table in front of Ethan and Helen.

"There's three million dollars in this card. Just sign the agreement with me, and I'll give you the pin number."

"Whatever. I think you're just bluffing," said Wendy with a sneer. She was clearly skeptical that Melody could have three million dollars.

Melody looked at her with disdain and put the bank card inside her bag again. "It's your loss if you don't believe me."

"Melody, wait!" Helen hurriedly interjected when she saw Melody putting the card away. She reached out to grab her. "Wendy was just being cautious. But you do need to prove that there's really three million dollars in there. We can't just take your word for it."

Helen was crazy about money. She certainly would not let the chance of getting three million dollars slip by like that.

Melody took a step back to create some distance between the two of them. "How do you want me to prove it?"

"Isn't that easy?" Wendy pulled out her phone and showed the bank's contact details to Melody. "Just call the bank, check the balance, and then we'll know for sure if there's really three million dollars in your card."

Melody did not waste a moment. She immediately took out her own phone and dialed the bank's number. "Hello. I'd like to check if there's three million dollars in my account."

"Sure, please wait a moment." The bank staff verified her identity politely before saying, "Miss Melody, your account balance has been sent to your phone as a text message. Please check."

After expressing her gratitude, Melody ended the call and showed Wendy and Helen the text message. "This should clear things up, right?"

Wendy's eyes widened in disbelief after seeing the bank's confirmation message that Melody indeed had three million dollars.

"Melody, how in the world did you get three million dollars? What did you do, and where did the money come from?"

Chapter 1938

"Didn't you accuse me of being someone's mistress? Well, let's just say that I got it from my sugar daddy," said Melody. She did not bother elaborating. Instead, she just put away her phone and glared at the three people in front of her.

In terms of blood ties, they were the closest people to her in this world. Ironically, they were also the most heartless and malicious toward her.

"The balance check is done. Do you want this three million dollars or not? Are you signing the agreement?"

Helen smiled obsequiously at her. After all, she stood to get three million dollars. "We'll sign, of course."

"All three of you need to personally sign it," said Melody.

Lucas was right-there was a high chance that the Sander family would pull some underhanded stunt again once they had gotten the money.

That was why Melody insisted on getting their signatures. This way, she could use the agreement to fight back against them if they went back on their word.

"Ethan, do we sign?" Helen could make her own decisions, but she could not speak for Ethan. Thus, she needed to quietly wait for his decision.

Ethan frowned at Melody for a while before nodding. "Well, she's not planning to stick around and listen to us anyway, so why hesitate? Just sign it."

With Ethan's approval, the three of them quickly signed the digital agreement on Melody's phone.

Melody then tossed the bank card onto the coffee table. It was at that moment she had completely lost hope in them.

"The money is all yours. I'm no longer your daughter from now on. Keep that in mind!" announced Melody.

Helen eagerly took the bank card and sat next to Ethan, slipping it into her pocket excitedly. They only cared about money, and Melody was dispensable to them.

Melody sighed and left the Sanders' residence. Oddly enough, breaking free from her toxic family should have brought her joy, but there was not even a sense of relief. Instead, she felt a profound sense of rootlessness.

'This might be the last time I come here. From now on, I won't have a home...' Melody thought sadly.

"Alright, Melody! It's time to live for yourself!" she said out loud to herself.

After all, she did not have much time for sorrow. There were still many things waiting for her to tackle. She had a year to find a job and save enough money to sustain herself. Plus, she had to find a way to pay Lucas back the three million dollars she owed him.

'How in the world am I going to earn that much money?' wondered Melody. This heavy debt was stressing her out, and she began to fret.

A black car pulled up beside her, and Edmund stepped out, opening the car door for her. "Miss Melody, Mister Lucas asked me to pick you up."

Melody was somewhat surprised to see him there, but she did not press for details. She nodded at him and got into the car.

"Miss Melody, Mister Lucas asked me to give you this." Edmund handed her a box after he got into the car too.

'Lucas gave me this box?' Melody accepted the box and opened it to find a beautifully crafted dress inside.

"Lucas gave me a dress? Is there an occasion he needs me to attend?"

Chapter 1939

Edmund nodded. "Yes. Mister Lucas has been invited to a banquet tonight, and he needs you to go with him. Are you able to make it?"

Melody nodded. "Of course. That's what I should do."

After all, being by Lucas' side meant shielding him from unnecessary troubles. As long as Lucas needed her, she would cooperate with him in attending these events for a year. "Sit tight, Miss Melody. We need to make a stop somewhere before going to the banquet."

Edmund sped up the car and brought Melody to a high-end styling studio.

"This studio is a partner of our company, and they've styled many A-listers for the red carpet. You can trust them to make you look stunning. Let them doll you up a bit." "Alright..." Melody rarely wore makeup, but she knew that as Lucas' wife, she represented the image of the Rivera family. She had to dress up accordingly.



Melody followed Edmund inside. It was her first time in such a styling studio, and everything seemed a bit extravagant for her.

At that moment, Zeke stepped out and greeted Edmund with a smile, "Edmund, it's been a while. What brings you here today?"

Zeke then shifted his gaze and noticed Melody. "And who do we have here?"

"Hello, I'm Melody," greeted Melody with a smile.

Edmund stepped forward and informed Zeke of their purpose. "Miss Melody is accompanying Mister Lucas to a banquet tonight. We need your help in styling her. This is the outfit Mister Lucas selected, so please make her up accordingly."

As he spoke, Edmund handed over a box containing the outfit.

Melody thought the dress would be simply exquisite, but she did not expect Lucas to personally choose it. After all, would a busy man like him have time to do something like that?

Zeke smiled and said, "So you're Lucas' date for the night! Miss Melody, I'm Zeke. Come with me."

He then Melody inside. "This is our fashion zone, but with Lucas' stunning pick, we won't need to browse through the clothes here."

As they walked deeper into the studio, Melody realized it was massive, with a clothing area spanning hundreds of square meters.

"Take a seat, Miss Melody!" Zeke gestured for her to sit in a small room. Then, he studied Melody in the mirror beside her. "You've got delicate features, Miss Melody. Any specific style you're into?" Melody hesitated and shook her head. "I don't usually wear much makeup, so I don't have a specific style in mind."

"Is that so?" Zeke seemed somewhat surprised.

'How can such a down-to-earth woman be Lucas' date?' Zeke could not help but wonder. Nonetheless, he said, "It's okay! Since you don't have any preferences, I'll take the lead." Zeke started moisturizing Melody's face with gentle movements while asking, "Miss Melody, if you don't mind me asking, what's your relationship with Lucas?"

"Well, it's a bit complicated..." Melody was not sure how to explain her connection with Lucas to others, especially since Edmund only told him she would be accompanying Lucas to the banquet that night. What if she said something she should not have?

Zeke did not press further and smiled as he began applying makeup. "Well, you don't have to tell me if you don't want to. I'm just a bit curious. After all, Lucas has never brought any lady here, let alone personally choose an outfit. I assume you must be someone different and special to him."

'Different? No way does Lucas think that! We wouldn't even have met each other if I hadn't mistakenly knocked on his hotel room door that night! As for why he personally chose this outfit for me, maybe he just didn't want me to embarrass him at the event,' thought Melody.

#### Chapter 1940

"It's nothing special. We're just friends," explained Melody briefly. She just smiled and looked at herself in the mirror.

Zeke caught on that Melody did not want to delve deeper into her connection with Lucas, so he did not push for more. He smiled and focused on putting makeup on her.

Melody could not shake the surreal feeling washing over her as the transformation unfolded in the mirror. Throughout her life, she never had the chance to wear anything remotely glamorous. Wendy's stylish dresses had always been a source of envy, but Melody never dared to dream of having one herself. That was just a wish that would never come true, she said to herself back then.

She then recalled a particular incident in her childhood...

"Mom, tomorrow is my birthday. Can I have a pretty dress?" pleaded Melody hopefully.

However, Helen only glanced at her coldly. "Why do you need a dress? Haven't I already bought you enough T-shirts? You need to learn to be content and stop comparing yourself to Wendy!"

In the end, eight-year-old Melody never got the dress she wished for.

Melody snapped back to the present, but even as she finally got to don the beautiful dress she dreamt of, the excitement was not quite there.

Perhaps it was because there was no point in getting what she wanted once the moment was gone.

After more than two hours of makeup and styling, Melody finally stepped out in the dress Lucas had chosen. Even though Edmund was used to seeing stunningly beautiful women, he could not help but be amazed when Melody appeared in front of him.

Melody always looked simple and rarely wore make-up. Even if she did, it was only a coat of foundation.

Edmund could see that she had naturally lovely features, but he was surprised at how striking she looked after some meticulous styling. It was the kind of eye-catching presence that stood out in a crowd. "Edmund, is this okay? Is it too much?" Melody had never worn a gown like that before. She felt somewhat uneasy in it, and her confidence seemed to waver even while standing.

Edmund smiled and stood up. "Miss Melody, you look absolutely stunning! Let's go. Mister Lucas will meet you at the venue. But first, let's grab a quick bite. After all, you won't be able to eat much at the banquet, and it might go on until very late. We can't have you hungry all night."

After a brief stop at a fast-food restaurant for a light meal, Edmund escorted Melody to the banquet venue.

Upon learning that Lucas had already arrived, he instructed Melody to go in and find him herself.

"I have to go in alone?" asked Melody nervously at the entrance. She had never been to an event like that before. "What if I can't find him?"

Sensing her anxiety, Edmund said reassuringly, "Don't worry, Miss Melody. Once you're inside, you'll definitely see him. He'll be waiting for you."

"Well... Okay, then." Melody sighed defeatedly before turning to face the grand entrance of the banquet hall. She took a deep breath and said, "Here goes nothing."

She walked into the banquet hall, handed the invitation Edmund gave her to the usher at the entrance, and smoothly made her way inside.

The banquet hall was buzzing with people, and Melody blended into the crowd without attracting too much attention. She scanned the surroundings, searching for Lucas, but he was nowhere in sight. 'Wasn't he supposed to wait for me here? Where could he be?' she thought as rising panic began to fill her body.

She weaved her way through the crowd, cluelessly searching for Lucas.

"Miss, do you need help?" A man in a black suit approached her with a smile. "Are you searching for someone? I can help you if you want."

Melody took a step back, eyeing him cautiously. "No, thanks! I'll manage. Just let me through, please."