

Kissed AOM 1971

Chapter 1971

Lucas pulled Melody out of the Parr Group building, and they got into the car.

"Melody, do you turn a deaf ear to everything I say? I just warned you yesterday to be more mindful about your status as my wife, yet you still come so eagerly to Sherman's company today?"

"What are you talking about?" Melody could tell by Lucas' expression that he was misunderstanding her intention again. "I came here for an interview. I didn't even know Sherman was the president!" Lucas scoffed and sarcastically responded, "Aren't the two of you old school friends? Do you expect me to believe that you didn't know he's the president?"

"I really didn't! Yes, Sherman and I were high school buddies, but we didn't keep in touch much back then. I don't know anything about his family. I just needed a job." As feeble as Melody felt her explanation was, she still had to say it out loud. She did not care whether he believed it or not.

Lucas grabbed her wrist. "Who allowed you to go out and look for a job?"

At that moment, Lucas' gaze turned icy as if Melody had committed a grave mistake.

"Hey... Let go of me." Melody pulled her arm forcefully, trying to break free from his grip. "Lucas, you're hurting me! What are you doing?"

Lucas gripped her arm even harder, not giving her a chance to break free. "You're my wife now. You don't need a job, especially not in someone else's company! It would only bring disgrace to my family! People will think we're mistreating you!"

"Ouch!" Melody could not help but whimper with tears of pain.

It was only then that Lucas let go of her arm. He realized that he might have been too forceful. Glancing down, he was surprised to find not just the red mark he left but also several scratch marks on Melody's

arm.

Melody withdrew her arm and said, "I didn't think that much. I'm just trying to plan for my future! I can't rely on your family forever. We're not really married, and I want to be able to stand on my own after our contract is up! Plus, I still need to pay back the three million dollars I owe you. How can I do that without a job?"

The area Lucas gripped was throbbing red, and the scratch marks made it look quite painful.

Lucas furrowed his brows slightly, his expression softening. "No one is asking you to return the money."

"But I want to pay it back! I did say it was a loan, so I need to keep my promise!" Melody asserted firmly.

She had not done anything dishonest or shameful. All she wanted was to find a job. The accumulated grievances of the past days weighed on her heart. She was really on the verge of crying, so she blinked hard to hold it back.

She did not want to shed tears in front of Lucas. She would rather bear all the distress than give Lucas the chance to mock her.

As Lucas watched her from the side, he felt a sudden tug at his heart.

'She's clearly on the verge of tears. Why is she so stubborn about holding them back?' Lucas thought soft-heartedly.

He then pulled out a tissue and handed it to Melody. He wanted to say something but ended up staying silent.

Melody was somewhat surprised to see the tissue appear in front of her. She thought Lucas would never care about others at all. It seemed he still had some feelings that a human being should have.

"Thanks, but I'm not crying. It's just a bit hot and stuffy in the car, so I'm actually swearing," said Melody stubbornly. Nonetheless, she accepted the tissue and wiped the corners of her reddened eyes. Lucas simply scoffed and thought, 'What a stubborn woman...'

Chapter 1972

Lucas did not want to press the matter further. Instead, he shifted his attention to the scratch marks on Melody's arm. "What happened to your arm?"

"It's just a little scratch," Melody replied. Her mood had been all over the place, so she did not notice that she was hurt. It was only until Lucas grabbed her that she felt the pain.

She had scratched Wendy's face during their altercation, and Wendy had not held back either, leaving deep marks on Melody's arm.

Lucas frowned. "An accidental scratch wouldn't look like this. Tell me what really happened."

Melody sighed and proceeded to recount the events of the day to Lucas. "It was Wendy, my half-sister. She's been smearing my reputation and messing up my interviews. She even attacked me! I couldn't just take it anymore, so I fought back..."

Lucas looked at her with a mix of emotions. 'Just what kind of upbringing did she have? What has she been through?' he pondered silently.

"Why didn't you tell your family that you're my wife now? If you did, they wouldn't dare to lay a hand on you," said Lucas.

Melody fell into a contemplative silence. The power of the Rivera name could indeed act as a shield against the Sanders, but it also meant inviting a different kind of trouble.

The Sanders were known for their unscrupulous tactics. Should they learn about her ties to the Riveras, they might try to exploit it to climb the social ladder for their own gains.

She was not truly Lucas' wife, so she did not want to burden the Riveras with unnecessary problems.

"The Sanders are shameless beyond your imagination. They're capable of doing anything for the sake of their interests. Even the three million dollars won't guarantee that they won't come after me again. I'm afraid they'll come knocking for more favors if they find out about my connection to your family, so it's better to steer clear of that."

Melody then turned her head and spread her hands. "Besides, I'm only your wife for a year. After that, I'll be nobody again. What's the point of telling them?"

Lucas narrowed his eyes at her with a slight smirk. "You seem quite clear-headed now. At a critical moment, you still know to turn to me for help!"

The subtle smile on Lucas' face surprised Melody. 'This icy guy can actually smile! Well, he looks quite attractive when he smiles,' mused Melody.

Lost in her thoughts, she gazed at him for a while before realizing it was not ideal to stare so openly. She then quickly shifted her gaze.

"I was worried about Parr Group coming after me, which would bring embarrassment to the Riveras... I'm sorry. I'll be more careful in the future and not cause you any more trouble!"

Lucas continued to gaze at her pensively. "If something like this happens again, you can just be upfront about our relationship."

It seemed like Lucas was giving Melody the green light to use the Riveras as a shield if needed. It would be a safety net for anyone, as having the Riveras' support meant there was nothing to fear anymore. However, Melody glanced at him and remained silent. She had no intention of relying on the Riveras as a shield. The immunity they offered had an expiration date of just one year, and time would catch up to her.

Plus, she was aiming for an independent life in the future, so she needed to learn to grow and stand on her own.

"Would you still have messaged me if you knew Sherman was the president of Parr Group in the first place?" asked Lucas suddenly.

Melody pursed her lips and hesitated for a moment. "I don't think so. I know he won't give me a hard time, and you won't have to waste your time coming down here."

Lucas fell into a contemplative silence as he drove.

Initially, Melody thought Lucas was taking her back home. However, it was not until he parked the car in the hospital's parking lot that she realized where they were. "Why did you bring me to the hospital?" she asked.

Lucas glanced at her and said, "What do you think? Let's get your arm treated before heading back."

Melody felt that Lucas was making a big deal out of it. She waved her hand dismissively, saying, "Come on, it's just a scratch! I can disinfect it with iodine when I get home."

Even though Wendy had been rough, Melody only suffered a surface-level injury. There was no need to go to the hospital specifically for this. Her wounds would have closed up on their own if the hospital had been further.

"Get it treated, or Grandma is going to make a fuss if she sees it." Lucas got out of the car, walked to the passenger side, and opened the door. "Get out."

Melody looked at him frustratedly. 'He does have a point. Instead of arguing here, it's better to go to the hospital quickly and get out even faster.'

Chapter 1973

"Fine!" Melody relented and got out of the car.

Just as she got out of the car, she lost her balance and fell forward.

Fortunately, Lucas reached out and steadied her by the shoulders, preventing her from taking a tumble.

Melody looked up as she regained her balance, and the two of them looked at each other. They were so close that it made Melody's heart race.

She quickly straightened up and backed away from Lucas, awkwardly saying, "Thank you."

"Be more careful next time." Lucas looked at his empty hand with a deep scowl.

As she walked behind Lucas, Melody could not help but replay the recent close encounter in her mind.

The vivid image of Lucas' face being so near lingered in her mind, his flawless skin and long eyelashes etched in her memory.

Melody patted her chest lightly, forcing her heartbeat to return to normal.

'Lucas will hear my beating heart if it continues to beat so loudly,' she thought.

"What's wrong? Are you not feeling well?" Lucas asked.

"It's nothing," Melody replied.

The two of them made their way to the hospital's examination room. After the nurse sterilized her wound, she put ointment on it before wrapping a bandage around it.

"All done!" said Melody to Lucas after she walked out of the room.

Lucas had been waiting outside the corridor with his hands in his pockets for her.

"Does it still hurt?" he asked when he saw her walking out.

"Nah, it's fine now. It didn't hurt much to begin with. Thanks for your concern," answered Melody.

For Melody, her injury was no big deal. Even when she had more severe injuries before, no one bothered to ask if she was in pain. Of course, Lucas expressing concern made her feel unexpectedly appreciative of him.

Lucas was about to say something when his phone rang. He walked over to the side to answer the call.

"Hello. Everything okay? Alright, I'll be there in a while!"

Despite not mentioning the caller's name, Melody could faintly hear the voice on the other end of the line.

It was Stella.

Lucas' tone seemed to warm slightly when speaking to her, unlike his usual icy demeanor.

"I have something to attend to. I need to go now," Lucas informed Melody after hanging up the phone.

Melody anticipated this outcome and was unsurprised. "Was it Miss Stella? Is everything alright?"

"She needs my help, so I have to go now," Lucas answered casually without offering much explanation. Melody nodded. "Alright, then. Just go. I'll take a taxi back later."

Chapter 1974

"No, I'll drive you home," said Lucas.

Melody had expected Lucas to promptly leave and attend to Stella or, at most, ask her to contact Edmund for a ride. Strangely enough, Lucas did not immediately leave this time. Perhaps he could not bring himself to abandon Melody in her injured state.

"Let's go. I'll take you home."

Melody did not want to take up any more of his time, so she insisted she could manage on her own. Lucas insisted on sending her back.

"Thank you," said Melody upon reaching the entrance of Rivera's residence, and proceeded to open the car door.

Suddenly, Lucas called out to her. "Rest well, Melody. You don't need to look for a job, and you don't have to pay me back the three million dollars."

Melody paused for a moment, then replied, "No. I know you don't want me to pay you back because you pity me, but I insist on paying you back since we agreed from the start that it's a loan."

Lucas frowned. "It's enough for you to play the role of my wife for the year. Just take the three million dollars as your bonus."

His words left Melody stunned, and all kinds of thoughts started racing across her mind.

As Melody watched Lucas drive away, she once again placed her hand over her chest.

'What's going on? Why is my heart acting up like this? No, I can't let myself feel anything for him. We're worlds apart,' thought Melody.

Her thoughts then turned to Stella. 'His heart already belongs to Stella. A single phone call from her can make Lucas drop everything and run to her. So stop dreaming, Melody Sander. Don't forget who you are!'

Upon entering Rivera's residence, Melody spotted Cedric and Beatrice arranging flowers in the living room. She approached them with a warm smile, asking, "Grandpa, Grandma, what are you doing?" "Hi, Melody! Sherman brought over some potted plants, and we're figuring out where to place them!" Cedric explained with a smile.

"Oh, I see! You two are quite fond of flowers and plants, huh?" asked Melody. She quite admired the relationship between Cedric and Beatrice; they always seemed so happy together. "Well, there's not much to do in retirement, so we play around with this!" answered Beatrice with a chuckle. She genuinely enjoyed her time tending to the potted plants.

Thinking that she had nothing better to do, Melody decided to join them in their activity.

She smiled and said, "Grandma, how about taking me under your wing? I'd love to learn a thing or two about cultivating flowers and plants from you."

As they worked on the potted plants together, Melody noticed a news headline notification on her phone.

[Female Celebrity Spotted with Mysterious Boyfriend at Hotel, Suspected Relationship Exposed.]

Melody was normally uninterested in such gossip news, but she found herself oddly intrigued at that moment. She picked up her phone and clicked on the notification.

The news article featured several pictures with Stella as the female lead. However, the man beside her had his face blurred out, making it impossible to discern his features.

Despite the obscured details, Melody recognized the outfit he was wearing. It was the same clothes Lucas wore when he dropped her home.

Even though Melody knew Lucas was meeting Stella, she did not expect them to check into a hotel room together. When news of their relationship surfaced, Melody could not help but feel frustrated and saddened.

How ironic, she thought to herself. Lucas emphasized the importance of her avoiding any interactions with other men to prevent unfavorable rumors about the Riveras. All that, and he then publicly revealed a romantic involvement with Stella. This left Melody, the so-called 'wife', somewhat feeling like a fool as if she had been cuckolded.

'Isn't it a bit crazy that they're in a relationship but not just getting married? Why drag me into this fake Missus Rivera act? That's just stupid and crazy!' thought Melody.

Chapter 1975

Melody's expression worsened as she debated on the matter even more. Even her gestures with the flowers became inadvertently forceful. Noticing the changes in her, Beatrice chuckled and said, "Melody, you're going to snap the stems of these flowers if

you keep going like that." "Huh?" Melody snapped back to reality, realizing she almost damaged Beatrice's potted plants. "Sorry, Grandma," she apologized sheepishly. "I didn't mean to..."

Beatrice smiled and took the trowel from Melody's hands, saying, "Don't worry about the flowers. Now, what's really bothering you?"

"Oh, nothing!" Melody forced a laugh. "I was just a bit distracted by some celebrity gossip."

Beatrice was not entirely convinced by Melody's explanation, but she did not press further. Instead, she turned back to tending the plants and said, "Melody, appearances can be deceiving. When it comes to these tabloids, it's crucial to get the full story from the people involved before passing judgment."

Melody pondered Beatrice's words, her thoughts drifting elsewhere. 'Grandma's right. The paparazzi love to create stories out of thin air.'

Even so, Melody could not ignore how differently Lucas treated Stella compared to everyone else. She also knew that she herself was only Lucas' wife by contract, so she did not have any right to interfere in Lucas' private life.

Whether he was dating someone or caught in rumors was none of her business.

Still, her mind kept going back to those pictures, causing her to become even more irate.

Melody could not possibly concentrate on the flowers anymore, so she excused herself. "Grandma, I'm a bit tired. I think I'll go upstairs and rest for a while. Let's do this again next time."

Beatrice did not pry further. She just nodded and reminded Melody to take care of herself before letting her go back to her room.

Back in her room, Melody plopped down on her bed and tried to get a little nap, but sleep eluded her. Every time she closed her eyes, images of Lucas and Stella entering the hotel together flashed in her mind leaving her chest heavy.

Despite lying in bed for the entire afternoon, she had not slept a wink. It was not until dinner time that she finally went downstairs.

As she passed through the foyer, Lucas happened to open the door and walked in.

Their eyes met in a silent exchange.

The thought that Lucas had just come back from Stella's side made Melody choose to ignore him. Without offering a greeting, she turned away and headed toward the dining room.

Lucas frowned at Melody's silent treatment. He found it somewhat perplexing but decided to change his shoes and follow her into the dining room.

"Grandpa, Grandma," Lucas greeted as he entered and found Melody had already taken her seat.

Upon seeing Lucas, Beatrice cheerfully said, "You didn't call to say you were coming back for dinner. What brought you back so suddenly?"

"I just wrapped up some work, so I decided to come back," Lucas explained. He then took a seat next to Melody. However, she remained focused on her food and did not spare him a glance.

Although Melody and Lucas did not have much to talk about in the past, she never dared to ignore him or treat him with such blatant disregard.

"Melody, Lucas is back. Why aren't you talking to him? Did you two have an argument?"

Beatrice's words snapped Melody back to attention. She turned to Lucas and forced a bright smile. "Grandma, we didn't have an argument! I was just a bit hungry and didn't get a chance to talk to Lucas! I'm sure you're hungry too, Lucas!"

With that, Melody grinned and served some food onto Lucas' plate, saying, "Dig in, darling!"

Chapter 1976

At that moment, Melody seemed like a completely different person from the one who ignored him at the door.

Lucas gazed at her with probing eyes.

'What's wrong with her again?' Lucas wondered.

Melody noticed his gaze and nervously asked, "What's wrong? Don't you like this dish?"

"No, I love it!" Lucas picked up a forkful and tasted it.

Despite their personal feelings, they had to keep their act in front of Cedric and Beatrice.

Throughout the meal, Melody played the role of the ideal wife, serving Lucas with unwavering devotion. Lucas, in turn, accepted everything she offered, even though there were a few dishes he was not particularly fond of.

Beatrice had her doubts about whether there was some conflict between the two, but as she observed their interactions, she became more at ease.

After the meal, Melody found an excuse to go back to their room. Playing the act of a devoted wife was draining. She found the whole thing quite cringy and nauseating.

Lucas entered their room just after Melody finished showering.

Melody combed her hair, which she had just blown-dry, and sat on the edge of the bed. She then said nonchalantly, "Grandpa and Grandma probably haven't returned to their room yet, so you should wait a bit before going to sleep in the guest room later."

In the past few days, Lucas had not been home much. Even when he was back, he always slept in the guest room. Consequently, they hardly get to spend much time in the same room.

After a brief acknowledgment, Lucas headed to the bathroom for a shower.

When he came out, Melody was sitting on the balcony with a cup of milk on the table.

Lucas stared at her forlorn back for a moment before walking over. He then settled down in the rattan chair next to Melody. "What's going on with you today?"

Although Melody had not said anything and kept up the charade of the perfect wife in front of Cedric and Beatrice, Lucas still sensed something was amiss.

Melody took a sip of her milk without acknowledging him. Lucas' coming over seemed to be the reason for her to leave the balcony, so she stood up and walked back to the room. Her dismissal left Lucas feeling displeased. He, too, got up and followed her in.

Just as Melody had put the milk on the nightstand and was about to go to bed, Lucas pushed her down onto the mattress!

Before she could react, Lucas pressed his body against hers, rendering her unable to move.

"What's with the attitude? Why are you ignoring me?" he questioned.

"Hey! Let go of me!" Melody's struggle was futile against Lucas' overwhelming strength.

They were so close that every touch from Lucas seemed to set Melody's skin on fire. Melody could feel her heart racing once again. "Tell me, why are you ignoring me?" asked Lucas.

Melody looked away to avoid direct eye contact with him. "I'm not ignoring you. I just don't feel like talking. Is that such a crime?" "Alright, why don't you feel like talking?"

"There's no reason! Why are you back, anyway? I thought you were planning to have a lovely night out with some enchanting lady!" The sarcasm in Melody's tone betrayed her

bad mood. Lucas was slightly stunned and stared at her for a moment. "Are you...jealous?"

"Of course not!" Melody retorted with a disdainful frown, turning her face back to glare at him. "I just find it hilarious that a certain someone warned me not to get too close to the opposite sex, yet he himself got into a scandal with another woman!"

Chapter 1977

Lucas had a good idea of the reason behind Melody's unusual behavior. He asked, "Is it really bothering you that much about the gossip of me being with another woman?"

"O-Of course not! You're overthinking! I... I don't care at all!" Melody stammered.

"Is that so?" Lucas clearly was not buying her sophistry, but neither did he expose her for lying.

Melody's eyes flickered with undisguised panic. "I just think that during the contract period, you should maintain a clean image and not be seen with other women in hotels! Otherwise, it'll be hard for me to explain it to Grandpa and Grandma!"

There was a brief silence before Lucas explained, "I know. But Stella got injured while filming today, and she had no one else to help her. I just gave her a ride to her hotel, that's all."

Melody was somewhat surprised that he bothered to explain. She met his gaze and asked, "Uh, why are you telling me this? It's not like I asked you to do that."

"Stella and I have been friends since childhood, so there are certain things I can't ignore. With that said, I don't want there to be any misunderstanding between us. The press likes to make up stories, and I've already asked Edmund to bury those false reports," he calmly clarified.

Lucas' calm, open demeanor made it hard for Melody not to believe his words.

'Is what he said true?' wondered Melody. She pursed her lips, feeling inexplicably cheerful. She awkwardly shifted her gaze away.

"Fine, I believe you. Can you get up now? I'm about to run out of breath!"

"No," replied Lucas coldly without giving her a good reason.

Melody's cheeks flushed as she struggled to control her racing heart. "This position is just too weird. It's not appropriate for a conversation! Stop fooling around and get up!"

"Inappropriate?" Lucas lowered his head slowly. "Have you forgotten that we're married now?"

Melody felt her heart pounding, yet she lacked the strength to push Lucas away.

'Come on! This might be normal for real couples, but we're not actually married!' she thought.

Melody met Lucas' gaze helplessly. As his face drew closer, Melody felt she had no chance to escape and instinctively closed her eyes.

However, the expected touch did not fall on her lips.

After a moment of silence, she heard Lucas chuckle lightly.

Realizing she had been played, Melody snapped her eyes open to find Lucas looking at her with a teasing smile.

It dawned on her that she had fallen for his prank. "Lucas Rivera!"

"Yes?" Even though he was the one pulling the prank, Lucas showed no sign of embarrassment. It was as if he had nothing to do with just what happened. Melody, embarrassed and frustrated, summoned all her strength to push Lucas away. She then sat up and tidied her hair, saying, "Lucas, you've gone too far." "What did I do that was too much?" Lucas also sat up. "Why did you close your eyes just now? Were you hoping for something?"

"I..." Melody found herself in an awkward position. There was no way she could admit that she had thought Lucas was about to kiss her. Closing her eyes and anticipating it willingly? She could not believe she had let her imagination run so wild and wished she could just disappear. "There... There was some dust in my eyes! Not that that's any of your business!" replied Melody.

Lucas clearly did not buy her lame excuse, but he did not tease her further. Instead, he got up and went to the balcony to have a smoke.

There was a shift between them as if an invisible barrier had materialized, and the recent incident felt like a tiny tear in that delicate divide.

Chapter 1978

That night, Lucas went to the guest room after Cedric and Beatrice had gone to sleep. It was the best arrangement for him and Melody, after all.

The next morning, Melody woke up to a headline.

Stella had issued a public statement clarifying the rumors from the previous day. She stated that the man from yesterday was just a friend who dropped her off at the hotel and left. In fact, she was sharing her hotel room with her assistant.

With that, the scandal died down.

Although the paparazzi knew that exposing Lucas as the man in the picture would become big news that could break the platform, they did not dare to go against the Riveras.

It turned out that the news from yesterday was leaked by a few inexperienced paparazzi who did not know Lucas. Thus, they daringly spread the rumors and ended up being reprimanded by their bosses. Aside from Stella's clarification, Melody noted that the previous news posts had disappeared.

"Come, Melody. Let's have a stroll together." After breakfast, Beatrice took Melody for a stroll in the garden. She took Melody's hand and kindly asked, "Melody, did you see the news from yesterday?" The news was so everywhere that Beatrice must have known about it already.

Melody could not keep anything from Beatrice either, so she nodded and said honestly, "Yes, I saw it yesterday."

"No wonder I sensed something off between you and Lucas yesterday." Beatrice took her hand and walked forward. "I've taken care of it all. You won't have to deal with those false stories again." As expected, Beatrice's intervention was the reason that it was handled so quickly.

Melody was no longer that bothered by the incident after listening to Lucas' explanation yesterday. Thus, she said, "Sorry to make you worry again, Grandma! Lucas and I have already made up since he has explained everything to me."

"It's all Lucas' fault. He's married, yet he still doesn't know how to steer clear of troubles like that. Why did he have to send his female friend back to the hotel? I'd be upset too if I were in your shoes," said Beatrice.

Suddenly, she stopped walking and turned to look at Melody resolutely.

"Melody, you are my granddaughter-in-law! Nothing and no one can ever change that! I won't let anyone mistreat you, including Lucas-I can assure you of that!"

Melody suddenly felt guilty when faced with Beatrice's determined gaze.

'But Grandma, we're just a fake couple...' she thought to herself.

Melody pursed her lips lightly and looked down to avoid Beatrice's gaze. "Grandma, the sun's out. Let's head back before it gets too hot."

"Okay, dearie!" Beatrice did not sense Melody's unease and went back to the house with her.

In the following days, Lucas did not return home. According to the family, there were some issues with a project at the company, and he needed to work overtime to address them. After the incident that night, Melody found it awkward to have any one-on-one interactions with Lucas, so it was a relief that he had not been back lately.

Even after the job at Parr Group fell through, Melody insisted on trying to find another job.

While Lucas claimed she did not have to return the money as it was her bonus for 'working' as his wife, Melody intended to land a job so she could repay him.

She sent out numerous resumes, hoping for some responses. Regardless of the job, she just wanted something that could help her gain more experience and improve her skills.

Chapter 1979

Just as Melody shut down her laptop, she received a call from Sherman. She hesitated for a moment before answering the call.

Yes, Melody promised Lucas not to have too much contact with him, but it should be fine for her to talk to an old friend over the phone... No?

"Hello, Sherman."

"Melody, are you busy?"

"Not really. What's up? Why are you calling?"

"Melody, I was wondering if you've reconsidered joining our company?" Sherman had not given up on recruiting her. "Although Parr Group may not be one of the top companies, the overall benefits are good. Won't you give it another thought?"

The role of Advertising Director at Parr Group was indeed a sought-after position. However, Melody promised Lucas not to have too much contact with Sherman, so she could not go back on her word. "Sherman, I really can't work at Parr Group. Thank you for your offer, but I'm sorry," replied Melody.

There was a moment of silence on Sherman's end, and he sighed. "Alright, then. Though, Wendy can't come to shoot because you've injured her face, and we can't find a suitable replacement on such short notice. The firm will have to pay a hefty penalty if we can't finish the advertisement by the time stipulated in the contract."

"What?!" Melody felt a pang of guilt at the realization of causing such heavy damage. Sherman had always been very considerate and helpful to her, so she did not want to be a source of trouble for him. "Sherman, I'm sorry... Is there anything I can do to make amends?" Melody asked.

Sherman chuckled. "Yes, there is. Come work at Parr Group."

Melody felt torn. "Um... Sherman, I really can't work for you. But I can pay the penalty. How much is it?"

Despite offering, Melody was not confident that she would be able to fork out the money.

Sherman laughed and replied, "Silly girl! I don't need money. What I want is you."

"Huh?" Melody once again found herself feeling confused. "Sherman, you know I don't flirt around... Plus, I'm married!"

Amused by Melody's reply, Sherman laughed heartily again. "Melody, what on earth are you thinking? Is that how you really see me?"

"No, Sherman! I... I was just joking!" Melody, realizing her misunderstanding, felt embarrassed and quickly found an excuse to cover her awkwardness.

Sherman stopped laughing. "Melody, what I meant is that my company needs a suitable actress for the advertisement. Since Wendy is out for the count, and you two share some resemblance being sisters, how about you step in for the shooting?"

"Me, in a commercial shooting?" Melody frowned doubtfully. "But I've never done shooting before, and I don't have much fame. I don't think I'm the right person for the role."

"Melody, you can do it. If you don't help me now, my company will really incur significant losses!"

'I'll definitely have some contact with Sherman if I go to Parr Group for the shooting. Lucas is gonna blow his top if he finds out,' thought Melody.

Chapter 1980

Melody was the instigator of the whole situation. She would feel immensely guilty if Sherman ended up losing money because of her.

After much hesitation, Melody succumbed to her sense of guilt and reluctantly agreed to Sherman's request. "Alright. But I'm not sure if I can make your client happy..."

"Don't worry! They'll definitely be happy with the change once they see how beautiful you are," said Sherman quickly. Next, he confirmed the shooting schedule with her. Melody still felt a bit uneasy after hanging up the phone. 'Can I really do it?' she wondered.

Moreover, she had to keep it all a secret from Lucas. After all, it would surely lead to another argument if he found out. Therefore, Melody aimed to complete the shoot as quickly as possible and cut off contact with Sherman in the future.

Sherman promptly sent the script to Melody.

Melody immediately got to work memorizing the script to ensure that the shoot would go smoothly.

The fact that Lucas had not returned home in the past few days provided Melody with a sense of relief. It allowed her to focus on her task without the need to be discreet about it.

On the day of the shoot, Melody got up early and took extra time to make herself presentable before heading out.

"Melody, where are you going so early?" Beatrice asked as Melody was about to leave.

Melody turned and smiled sheepishly. "I need to run a few errands. I'll be eating out too, so there's no need to wait for me."

Beatrice did not press for details, only reminding her to be careful and to contact Edmund if needed.

"Yes, Grandma."

Melody quickly left the house after that. It was almost the agreed-upon time when she arrived at Parr Group, and Sherman had arranged for a staff to wait in the lobby for her.

The staff hurriedly approached Melody. During the last interview, she could tell that Melody held special significance to Sherman, so she did not dare cross her.

She treated Melody with the utmost respect. "Miss Melody, Mister Sherman is waiting for you upstairs. Please, follow me this way."

Melody followed the staff up the lift to the fifth floor.

"The shoot is set on the fifth floor, and everyone's waiting for you. Let's first go change and do some styling," said the staff while they walked to the shooting room.

Melody followed the staff into a room where the stylists and makeup artists were waiting for her. The makeup table was filled with an array of beauty products, and a selection of gorgeous outfits filled the other side of the room.

"Everyone, this is Mister Sherman's friend, Miss Melody. I leave her in your hands now," said the staff before leaving Melody in the care of the makeup and styling team.

Sherman walked in just as Melody changed into the outfit needed for the shoot. He cast an appreciative look over her and smiled. "You look absolutely gorgeous."

"Sherman, do you really think I can do this?" Melody was somewhat embarrassed to be sitting at the dressing table. She rarely dressed up like this, so she did not quite know how to conduct herself. Sherman stood behind Melody and looked at her in the mirror with a thoughtful look. "Of course. You're so beautiful; just believe in yourself."

This was not the first time Sherman complimented her on her looks.

The makeup and styling team worked swiftly, and within half an hour, they finished styling Melody.

Melody was completely made up from head to toe. The transformation was so striking that she appeared entirely different from when she first arrived.