

Kissed AOM 2041

Chapter 2041

Shaun's action made everyone view the man from a different perspective. It was the man who suddenly appeared on the set. After all, in this crew, Shaun practically called the shots. Shaun showing utmost respect indicated that this man held an extraordinary status.

"If I hadn't come, were you planning to ignore the whole situation?" Lucas glanced at him, clearly dissatisfied with the occurrence of this matter.

Shaun was the one who hired Melody, and he knew that Melody had not managed her properly. Being reprimanded by Lucas left him with no excuses. He could only bow and admit his mistake. "Indeed, I didn't handle this matter well. I'm truly sorry."

"So you know you didn't handle it well, huh? Let me take care of it for you today." Lucas did not say much more and walked toward Melody.

Watching him approach step by step, Melody was still in shock. "Lucas, why... Why are you here?"

"If you feel wronged and uncomfortable, then go home and rest for a few days," Lucas said as he lowered his head, looking at her tenderly. "The household will be fine even without your contribution."

Initially filled with grievances, Melody had no outlet for her emotions, so she could only endure. But now that Lucas appeared and spoke such words to her, the pent-up grievances in her heart erupted, and she could no longer contain them. "But I haven't done anything wrong, Lucas! I don't know why it turned out like this..."

Upon hearing her words, Lucas pulled her into his embrace. "Don't worry, I will handle this."

Edmund had presented the results of his investigation to him before he came.

Since the makeup artist enjoyed talking nonsense so much, it was time to teach her a lesson. Edmund had been by his side for many years, and Lucas trusted that he could handle this matter perfectly. After entrusting the aftermath to Edmund, Lucas drove to the film set. While this matter was easily resolved, repeated occurrences could tarnish the reputations of both Melody and the Riveras.

If they believed that Melody did not earn this role on her own, Lucas would solidify that reputation. He wanted the public to know that Melody indeed did not achieve it independently, not through Shaun, but through him, Lucas.

Subsequently, Lucas took Melody away from the set.

Shaun ordered everyone to stop working and take half a day off.

The two returned to the hotel together, but Melody's mood remained low. Lucas sat beside her and received a call from Edmund.

"Mister Lucas, the matter has been resolved."

"Good." Lucas acknowledged and then turned to Melody. "Why don't you see what's happening in VeeTube, then?."

Melody lifted her head, asking, "What am I supposed to see? How people are cursing me and smearing me and Mister Shaun online?"

"I'm asking you to take a look, so do it. No need for so many questions."

Lucas was quite assertive, and Melody could only obediently take out her phone and open VeeTube. With an expectation of criticism, she was surprised to find that the incident was no longer trending. Her eyes widened. "What's going on? The news is gone!"

She looked at Lucas and asked, "Did you resolve this for me?"

"What do you think?" Lucas looked at her, neither admitting nor denying. Even if he did not say it, Melody knew he had intervened in the matter.

Chapter 2042

After all, Melody did not know anyone else who could help her resolve this matter so quickly apart from Lucas. She entered the hot keywords of the incident in her search, and the first public message she clicked on was from a newly posted makeup artist, explaining that the situation was not as rumored online.

The message had been sent half an hour ago, and after its release, the entire narrative shifted. People stopped berating Melody and speculating about her relationship with Shaun. Instead, they started blaming the makeup artist, accusing her of talking nonsense and deliberately stirring up controversy for attention.

"I'm here voluntarily clarifying this matter. The content sent earlier was maliciously hacked, intending to smear Melody's reputation. In reality, she's a good person, easygoing with the staff, and nothing theft-related happened. I left the crew due to other job arrangements, unrelated to the female lead. I declare this sincerely."

The makeup artist deleted the previous public message and posted this clarification message. After she shared this VeeTube post, many social media users came out in support of Melody, sympathizing with her for being wrongly accused. Some claimed to be industry insiders, vouching for Melody's character and asserting that there was no theft involved, nor any abnormal relationship with the director.

With this series of maneuvers, online sentiments toward Melody transformed from harsh criticism to support and goodwill.

[Poor girl, being slandered even before entering the industry!]

[She's obviously very beautiful. Why do people still say such bad things about her?]

[It's 'cause of jealousy, duh. She can star in such a big-budget film right after her debut!]

At this moment, Wendy witnessed this sudden reversal and was infuriated.

She finally seized the opportunity to suppress Melody, but the situation was resolved so quickly. The group of social media users who had been criticizing Melody suddenly rushed to her comment section to berate her instead.

The post 'Sly and Scheming Wendy' shot up to the top trending list. Everyone was blaming Wendy for speaking out without understanding the facts.

'Melody is despicable! Why is she so lucky?!

Wendy was furious, on the verge of exploding.

Meanwhile, Melody observed the online shift and looked up at Lucas sitting beside her, a complex expression on her face.

To quickly quell the heat of this incident within such a short time, and to find a makeup artist willing to release a clarification statement voluntarily, Melody knew that only Lucas could accomplish this. "Lucas..." Melody held up her phone to him. "Thank you. Handling this matter must've been tedious, huh?"

Lucas replied indifferently, "Edmund took care of it. It was simple."

For many people, dealing with this matter was impossible. If it were left to Melody, she would not know what to do and lack the capability to resolve the issue.

For Lucas, a single sentence could prompt his subordinates to handle it. Although it was simple for him, Lucas was not obligated to step in and help her with such trouble. Melody was genuinely grateful for his assistance.

"Thank you, and I'm sorry for the trouble I caused you this time. I promise I'll be more careful and ensure such incidents don't happen again." Melody extended her hand, making a solemn pledge.

"The entertainment industry isn't a simple place. Such incidents may happen again in the future, and they might be even more severe next time. Are you truly prepared to be a celebrity?" Melody would be lying if she said that she was prepared.

Chapter 2043

Melody initially took on this role just to make money, with no intention of becoming an entertainer. As she delved into the entertainment industry, gaining insights into its true nature, she realized that her decision might alter the course of her life.

Fear crept in.

Nonetheless...

"Even if I wasn't prepared, it's too late now. I've signed the contract, and the penalty for breach is steep. I'm already drowning in debt, and if I add a breach of contract, I'll never get out of it in this lifetime." "I've said it many times that you don't have to repay the money you owe me. As for the penalty, if you decide not to continue with this role, I'll take care of it."

Melody was surprised by Lucas' words. Regardless of whether she decided to leave the production or not, she could not let Lucas bear the burden of the penalty for her. She owed him a great deal, and she could not burden him further.

"No need, Lucas. Thanks for your kindness, but I'll handle it." Melody made a decision, smiling as she spoke, "Since I promised Shaun to film this movie, I must uphold the spirit of the contract, keep my promises, and insist on making it well. Besides, War Song is a captivating project, and I don't want to give up on it just like that."

"Alright." Lucas' visit was not to make her abandon the film. Since she was not intimidated and was ready to continue filming, he did not need to say much.

"Well, I'll take my leave. If you ever encounter any troubles, feel free to call me."

Lucas implied that the Riveras would be Melody's support should she need it. Whenever she faced insurmountable difficulties, Lucas would step in to help her.

Melody was stunned. Even though she dared not hope for Lucas to help her like this, the fact that he said it made Melody's heart feel warm. "Well, thank you, Lucas." Lucas did not linger much. After reminding her of a few things, he left.

Melody could not quite explain why, but a tiny part of her wanted to hold him back. However, knowing that his company had many matters to attend to, she did not want to inconvenience him further and just smiled as she saw him off.

Seeing Lucas off, Melody closed the door and sighed. She would still have to face these things alone in the future.

Just as she sat down on the sofa, Melody noticed Lucas' phone on the coffee table. Since he needed it for his contacts, Melody did not want to delay him. She quickly grabbed the phone and rushed out of the

room.

Afraid of wasting his time, Melody stared at the changing numbers in the elevator, almost sprinting down before it even reached the ground floor. Exiting the elevator, Melody hurriedly ran outside, heading toward the hotel entrance at her fastest pace.

Just as she reached the hotel entrance, Melody stopped in her tracks, staring blankly at the scene not far away.

Lucas had not left. He stood at the entrance, holding Stella in his arms.

Stella pitifully leaned against Lucas' chest, tears streaming down.

Suddenly, a very uncomfortable feeling surged within Melody.

Just a moment ago, this man stood in front of her, caring for her, assuring her that she should not worry, and he would be there for her no matter what trouble came her way. This very man was holding another woman in his arms.

Chapter 2044

As Melody stood frozen in place, Lucas gave Stella a shove, attempting to push her away slightly.

It was then Stella spotted Melody standing not far away. Her gaze suddenly turned sinister, and she deliberately leaned closer to Lucas, playfully saying, "Lucas, look over there. Isn't that Melody standing there?"

At the sight of Melody, a moment of panic flashed through Lucas' eyes. That earlier scene would appear ambiguous to any observer.

Melody stared at them for a while, then briskly walked up, thrusting her phone into his hand before turning away.

"Melody!" As she walked away, Lucas knew she must have misunderstood. He pushed Stella aside and turned to chase after her. Stella, having just achieved her goal of making Melody see the misunderstanding, was not going to let the man go so easily.

"Ah!" Before Lucas could take a few steps, Stella suddenly screamed and collapsed into his arms. "Lucas, help!"

After saying this, Stella immediately 'fainted'.

Witnessing this, Lucas helplessly turned back. No matter how he tried to shake her, Stella remained completely motionless. Lucas could not just ignore her, so he could only watch as Melody disappeared from his sight.

"Edmund!" Lucas shouted, and Edmund immediately ran in from outside, appearing by his side.

Lucas pushed Stella into Edmund's arms. "Take her to the hospital."

"Yes, sir." Edmund promptly led Stella away. Stella, feigning unconsciousness, was unwilling to leave like this. However, she could not wake up. If Lucas found out that she was pretending, the longstanding affection between them would truly be shattered.

After handing Stella over to Edmund, Lucas headed toward the hotel. He needed to explain this situation to Melody and clear any misunderstandings between them and Stella.

Just a few steps out, his phone rang. "Hello," he answered.

"Mister Lucas, all the executives are here, waiting for you."

Today's meeting was crucial. If anything went wrong, it could affect the company's development goals for the second half of the year.

Glancing in the direction Melody had left, Lucas hesitated for a moment. Eventually, he spoke into the phone with determination, "Alright, I'm coming."

After ending the call, Lucas stood still for a minute, gazing in the direction of the hotel, then resolutely turned and left.

Back at the hotel, Melody closed the door and sat down on the sofa, feeling lost. Scenes of Stella leaning in Lucas' embrace involuntarily flashed in her mind, making it impossible for her to calm down.

"Read the script, read the script," Melody muttered, picking up the script from the table. Despite flipping through it, not a single word registered in her mind.

"This is so annoying!" Melody leaned back on the sofa, covering her face with the script. She could not be like a saint, indifferent to seeing Lucas with another woman in his arms.

Chapter 2045

Melody felt hurt and jealous. How could Lucas show so much concern for her and hold Stella so intimately?

Ugh, men.

After a sleepless night, Melody seemed a bit dispirited the next day.

"Melody, you don't seem to be in good shape today," said a supporting actress from the TV series. She was a sort of number ten among the female characters, someone not quite in the limelight on set.

Melody had a previous scene with her, but they were not particularly familiar with each other. She had not expected someone to approach and talk to her since the last news incident. Everyone had been respectful but distant.

"Thanks for your concern. I'm fine, just didn't sleep well."

"Is it because of the new bed? Always feels uncomfortable?" Monica put on a mysteriously suggestive look, pulling out a can from her bag. "This is something I found, works wonders for insomnia. Take it! Give it a try next time you can't sleep."

Melody hesitated for a moment, looking at the tube in front of her, then reached out and accepted it. "Thank you."

Even though she did not understand why this fellow actress would be so proactive in caring for her, she did not want to reject the kindness of others.

"By the way, Melody, what's your relationship with Stella? On the first day of shooting, she specifically timed her visit to bring milk tea, obviously coming for you."

This actress seemed young and quite innocent, not one to go with the flow like the others in the crew. Just by looking at Stella, she could not help but feel a dislike and voiced her suspicions directly. "Do you not like Stella?" Melody was somewhat surprised. "But everyone in the crew likes her. Why don't you like her?"

The supporting actress frowned, shaking her head with some difficulty. "Well, I don't know. It just feels like she always smiles at everyone, never losing control of her expression in public. I feel like people like that are fake and scary, so I don't like her."

It seemed that this was also the reason Melody did not like Stella from the beginning. People have their emotions and desires; someone who never showed their emotions in public would indeed seem unreal. "Hey, did you know?" Monica looked around, adopting a mysterious expression, lowering her voice. "I heard that she's not very nice to her assistants, often treating them like servants and getting angry at them."

Melody was taken aback, not expecting Stella to have such a personality in private. "How do you know all this?"

"I have a friend of a friend who works in the company she's signed with. She often complains to me about Stella, so the information must be true."

Looking at it this way, perhaps it was true. Melody remained silent for a moment and asked in confusion, "But... If her life is so difficult, why doesn't her assistant quit?"

The supporting actress sighed helplessly. "Melody, you really don't understand the hardships of life. It's because being her assistant is too tough, and the salary the company pays is higher than average. People aren't willing to give up on the money."

Melody recalled the time when she was looking for a job before, sending countless resumes without any response. If it were not for the coincidental opportunity to shoot that advertisement, she probably would not be here filming the TV drama.

"You're right. Finding a job isn't easy for everyone."

The supporting actress tugged at Melody's hand again. "Melody, do you want to hear some gossip?"

"What gossip?" Melody was not a very gossipy person, but chatting with this colleague felt relaxing, so she wanted to continue the conversation.

Monica lowered her voice again. "Actually, Stella's acting skills are not that good. The director often has to explain scenes to her one-on-one during filming. It's really funny. She has poor acting skills, yet she dares to come to our crew and lecture you."

Chapter 2046

"Is that so? How truly fortunate, then, that she can still get the Best Actress award," remarked Melody. She had never seen Stella's TV dramas or movies, and she planned to take the time to appreciate them properly when she had the chance.

As the two engaged in lively conversation, the crew on the other side was ready. When the director signaled the official start, Melody quickly tidied up and hurried to her designated spot. After chatting with the actress for a while, Melody felt her mood easing.

With her composure restored, the filming went smoothly for Melody. Over this period, she became proficient in acting her role, making the shoot much smoother and ahead of the original schedule.

After completing the morning's shoot, Shaun expressed exceptional satisfaction. "Melody, your acting has improved tremendously. I thought you could perform well, but your state is even better than I imagined. Keep it up!"

Melody, not expecting such high praise from Shaun, felt a bit embarrassed. "Director, you're too kind. I didn't perform that well. I'm far behind compared to veteran actors. But I'm very happy to perform under your guidance."

"I'm telling the truth-you did a great job! You're very talented," insisted Shaun as he gave her a thumbs up. "War Song is sure to be a hit this year!"

Little did he know, Stella was watching this scene, and there was a sharpness in her gaze when she saw how Shaun praised Melody.

Yesterday, in an attempt to keep Lucas, Stella feigned fainting and was taken to the hospital by Edmund.

Adhering to her principle of fully committing to acting, Stella stayed overnight in the hospital before being discharged. Returning from the hospital, passing by the set of War Song, she decided to make her presence felt.

Unexpectedly, upon arriving, she witnessed this scene.

She had not expected that in Shaun's eyes, Melody, who never acted before, would be seen as a talented actress, while she was considered unsuitable for the role.

Intently observing the interaction between two people, Stella turned and headed back to the MPV vehicle. Her assistant and manager exchanged a glance, both wearing uneasy expressions, yet they followed suit.

Upon returning to the MPV and just as Stella took her seat, she swept everything off the table, saying, "Melody is quite something. She's even more impressive than me now, leaving Shaun completely dumbfounded. She's got some skills!"

Witnessing this scene, the manager tried to console her with a forced smile. "Stella, why are you getting upset with her? We have a shoot tomorrow. Getting angry now might affect your skin, and it won't look good on camera."

"What's the use of looking good? I've told you, 'War Song' is crucial for my transformation. Why didn't you fight harder for it?" Stella directed her frustration straight at her manager.

The manager listened to the complaint, acknowledging its validity without a suitable response.

Stella had expressed her desire to use 'War Song' as a means to transition away from commercial roles.

The manager also saw it as an inevitable step and had been actively contacting people from Mister Shaun's company, securing Stella an audition opportunity. Still, what good did it do? Throughout the audition, Shaun's expression was notably unpleasant, and he promptly declared that she was not suitable for the role.

Unexpectedly, Stella shifted the blame for losing the 'War Song' role onto her manager. The manager felt a deep sense of injustice, but in front of Stella, she could not utter a word and could only try to placate her with gentle words.

"Stella, even without 'War Song', there are plenty of other scripts for us to choose from! Besides, you're young and beautiful, so there's no rush for a transformation. Many people want to play the pretty-face role, but they can't pull it off like you can."

Chapter 2047

Stella's manager, Alvin, cast a meaningful glance at the assistant by his side. The assistant quickly caught on and immediately put on a smile, saying, "That's right, Stella. You're a renowned fairy in the industry. There's no rush for a transformation."

Despite their synchronized efforts to reassure her not to be anxious or bothered by the newcomer Melody, Stella could not shake off the feeling. If she did not settle the score, she would not find peace. "I want to see for myself whether this newcomer can really surpass me!"

The morning shoot concluded, and Melody had no scenes in the afternoon. After removing her makeup, she planned to return to the hotel for some rest. As she left the set, Melody spotted Stella standing by the MPV, smiling at her.

"Come over, Melody! I have something to discuss with you."

Melody did not like her and did not want to get involved with her unnecessarily. Nonetheless, people might start speculating on her nature if she refused to comply.

After much hesitation, Melody approached with a smile. "Miss Stella, what can I help you with?"

Stella smiled and affectionately took her hand. "I just came back from the hospital and didn't expect to run into you. How about we grab a meal together?"

"No need, Miss Stella. I want to go back to the hotel and review the script." Melody declined without hesitation.

Rejected, Stella immediately wore a very aggrieved expression. "Melody, why do you always reject me? We're friends, and it really hurts my feelings when you do this!"

In front of everyone, Melody found it difficult to refuse and could only reluctantly nod in agreement.

Seeing her agree, Stella's face lit up with a brilliant smile. "That's better. Come on, let's get in the car."

Melody, feeling somewhat helpless, took a seat in Stella's car. Throughout the journey, Stella maintained an appearance of great camaraderie, engaging Melody in discussions about filming. "Be extra careful during your first shoot, and don't get hurt. Also, Mister Shaun has very high expectations; don't be disheartened if you receive criticism."

Every word seemed to convey concern for Melody's well-being. However, upon closer inspection, each sentence carried a subtle undertone.

Arriving at the restaurant, Stella ordered dishes without inquiring about Melody's preferences. "Have you been to this restaurant before?"

Melody glanced around and shook her head, asking, "No. Why?"

"You haven't? I thought Lucas would have brought you here. When I was filming here before, I couldn't stand the food, so Lucas opened this restaurant and made dishes tailored to my taste." Melody paused, then faintly curled her lips. "I see. Lucas is indeed very considerate toward you."

"Yeah, he's always been so good to me. It's just that I want to focus on my career, so I haven't agreed to him..."

Agreed to what?

Chapter 2048

Stella made it seem that Lucas was after her, and she turned him down because of her commitment to her career.

"In fact... I know about the nature of your relationship with him."

As Stella spoke, a hint of guilt appeared on her face as she closely watched Melody's expression. "For years, Grandma Beatrice has been pushing him to get married and has arranged many blind dates for him. He had no choice but to ask you to be his shield."

Melody suddenly lifted her head, looking surprised. "What are you saying?"

"You're quite pitiful, marrying someone in a fake marriage at such a young age. Even though it's fake, you've gone through the proper procedures and obtained a marriage certificate. When you truly get married next time, it'll be considered a second marriage. Gosh... I'm afraid your future boyfriend might find fault with that."

Since signing the contract with Lucas, Melody had strictly adhered to its terms, never revealing the contractual marriage to anyone. However, Lucas had informed Stella.

The fact that such a private matter was disclosed made Melody think that there must be something special between them. However, Lucas clearly told her that he and Stella were just ordinary friends, nothing

more.

Who was telling the truth? Who was deceiving her?

Melody was starting to lose clarity.

Sensing her changing expression, Stella wore a smug smile.

In truth, Lucas had not mentioned any of these things to her. Stella was just testing, and unexpectedly, the reaction she got was quite satisfying.

After the meal, Melody could not shake off her unease.

She could not quite make out whatever Stella said next, only occasionally responding with a nod. After finishing dinner, Melody returned to the hotel with no particular thoughts in mind, simply lying on the bed for the night.

The next day, with no filming scheduled, Melody visited the Riveras to pick up some fresh clothes. Upon entering the house, she spotted Beatrice sitting in the living room, sipping tea. "Grandma Beatrice," Melody weakly called out, moving to sit beside her. "I'm sorry for not coming by today."

"Ah, you're back, Melody," remarked Beatrice. Since Melody had left for the shoot, she had not returned. Although they occasionally spoke on the phone, it was not the same as having her around. "The filming schedule has been quite tight. I happened to have a rare gap today, so I rushed back," Melody explained somewhat sheepishly. "I'll make an effort to come back more often from now on and spend time with you, Grandma Beatrice."

Beatrice, observing Melody's expression, could not help but feel puzzled. "Melody, did something happen?"

"Huh?" Melody was taken aback, shaking her head in confusion. "No, Grandma."

Beatrice sensed something amiss from Melody's demeanor, suspecting that she might have encountered some difficulties while away. "Is it that you don't like this job? If you don't, just quit. Stay at home with me."

Melody was not feeling at her best due to the dinner with Stella, but she could not reveal that to Beatrice. "No, Grandma Beatrice, I really like this job. It feels refreshing, and I want to experience what it's like to be an actress."

Upon hearing Melody's assurance, Beatrice felt relieved. "That's good to hear. Remember, the Riveras will always be your strongest support. If you ever face any problems, you can always come back to the Riveras. Let me know, and I'll be at your side."

These words from Beatrice warmed Melody's heart. Lucas also made similar promises, but he seemed to fall short.

When these words came from Beatrice, Melody found the words to be incredibly trustworthy. Beatrice had always been sincere and genuine toward her.

Chapter 2049

After finally returning home, Melody spent most of her time accompanying Beatrice. Beatrice was the first person in her life to treat her so well, and Melody wanted to do everything she could for her. After dinner, Melody escorted Beatrice back to her room and retired to her own. It had been a while since she was in this room, and it felt somewhat unfamiliar. This was not her room, after all. She did not belong here, and this place did not belong to her.

Melody stood at the doorway, silent for a moment.

After taking a shower and changing into her clothes, she lay down on the bed. Despite not having slept well the night before, Melody felt exhausted, yet she could not seem to fall asleep no matter how hard she tried. Tossing and turning in bed for a while, she still could not find rest, and the sound of a car outside indicated that Lucas had returned.

As Melody was about to get up, she remembered what Stella had said to her earlier in the day. A surge of anger ignited within her, and gritting her teeth, she lay back down on the bed, closing her eyes. When Lucas entered the room, he saw Melody lying on the bed, unmoving. It seemed she had fallen asleep.

After taking a shower and returning to the room, Lucas lay down on the bed as well, moving carefully to avoid disturbing Melody, who he believed was already asleep. However, as soon as he settled down, he heard irregular and uneasy breathing beside him. It was clear she was not asleep; she was pretending.

Lucas felt somewhat displeased. What was the meaning of this? She clearly was not asleep and was just pretending. Did she not want to see him?

The man reclined toward Melody, closely nestled by her side. Sensing Lucas' proximity, Melody felt uneasy. Resisting his closeness, she shifted away. Her resistance intensified, causing Lucas to feel even more uncomfortable. His expression darkened as he moved closer once again.

Melody continued to shift away, maintaining distance between them. The tug-of-war persisted until Melody eventually tumbled to the ground.

"Ah!" she exclaimed in pain. "What are you doing?"

Watching her fall, Lucas teased, "I didn't do anything. Just didn't know you could move so quickly while sleeping."

He surveyed her up and down, ensuring she was not injured before feeling relieved.

Seated on the ground, Melody rubbed her sore bottom and retorted, "I just woke up, give me a break."

"Is that so?" Lucas snorted. "I never knew that people could breathe so erratically while asleep. Maybe I should take you to the hospital." Upon hearing this, Melody realized he had noticed her pretense of sleep from the beginning, and everything that followed was just a playful act. "Heh, thanks a lot," Melody scoffed, standing up from the ground. "Even if I pretend, I can't match your acting and pretending skills." Lucas, already displeased with her ignoring him while feigning sleep, became even angrier at her response. "What do you mean?"

Chapter 2050

"What does that mean? It's just the literal meaning," Melody sat on the nearby chair and frowned at him. "Do I have to remind you of the things you do yourself?"

Lucas sat up from the bed with a stern face. "Melody, make your words clear. What do you mean by 'acting and pretending skills'? What am I pretending?"

The man in front of her was two-faced, saying one thing in public and another behind her back. Denying the things he had done was not a good trait. She realized she idealized him too much. "What else do you want me to say?" Melody was determined today and gave Lucas no mercy. "You're just good at pretending, at everything. Lucas, can't you be more genuine?"

Lucas had no idea what he had done to make her say such things. "Genuine? Like what?"

"You and Stella clearly have more than just a casual friendship, yet you pretend to be just friends in front of me. Isn't that pretending?"

This again.

Lucas felt irritated. He had explained this matter countless times, but Melody still did not believe him because of it. "Melody, let me tell you one last time: Stella and I are truly just friends." After saying this, Lucas stood up. "Making a fuss out of nothing!"

He left the room and went straight to the study. Melody was left in the room, feeling upset. She could not sleep the whole night.

For two consecutive nights, she could not sleep well. In the early hours of the morning, Melody finally drifted off to sleep.

The next morning, when Beatrice saw Lucas coming out of the study, she knew that something must have happened between the two.

"Edmund, make a trip to the Riveras," urged Beatrice without questioning what had happened with Lucas. Knowing his personality, he would not share the details with her. She had to find another way to gather information about the situation between the two.

Upon receiving Beatrice's call, Edmund, despite his concerns, reluctantly made his way to the Riveras residence. Beatrice summoned him to the garden, where she was holding a pair of scissors, and began trimming unwanted branches on recently planted saplings.

"Did Lucas and Melody have a quarrel?" she inquired.

This was a delicate matter, and Edmund found it hard to broach. "Um... Mister Lucas and Miss Melody simply had a misunderstanding. Once it's explained, everything will be fine. Please don't worry too much, Madam," he replied with a forced smile, grasping for a suitable pretext.

Beatrice, clearly dissatisfied with his response, set the scissors aside and scrutinized him. "You've been with Lucas all this time, not just assisting him with work. What exactly transpired between Lucas and Melody? You'd better tell me now."

Beatrice turned to Edmund, her gaze piercing. "So, are you ready to tell the truth now?"

Edmund genuinely wanted to shield Lucas, but under Beatrice's intense scrutiny, concealing the matter seemed impossible. "Well, it's not a significant issue...just a misunderstanding between Miss Melody and Mister Lucas regarding his relationship with Miss Stella. That's what caused a bit of discord."

Upon hearing Edmund's explanation, Beatrice finally grasped the situation. That tactless woman, Stella, had been getting too close to Lucas. For a while, Beatrice had even suspected that Lucas had a romantic interest in Stella.