

## Kissed AOM 2091

### Chapter 2091

A bottle of red wine had even been prepared, and its purpose needed no explanation.

"Hmm... I don't think your reaction is natural for someone afraid of a late-night power outage. You've even prepared a marvelous candlelight dinner. It seems to me you're quite at ease in this dim atmosphere," Beatrice remarked. She could tell that Stella had spent a considerable amount of time and effort preparing food for just two people.

"You've even spent all that effort in preparing dinner after the power went out," Beatrice continued sarcastically.

Stella was beginning to feel a little guilty, but she defended herself and said, "I'll come back home to make a home-cooked meal if I'm not too busy on that day. I like trying out new recipes, and I think I've got a pretty good knack for cooking."

She figured that she could leverage the situation to impress the old woman with her ability to cook.

Beatrice then pressed further. "Who did you prepare all this for?"

Stella's expression turned a little awkward and she fiddled with her hair. "It's... They're all for me. As you know, I'm rarely home, so I do meal preps. They keep pretty well in the refrigerator, and I can reheat them whenever I need. I don't have to worry about my food anymore."

Beatrice glanced at the small apartment and teased, "Well, aren't you a romantic at heart? Can't say I've ever seen someone having candlelight dinners on their own."

Stella froze. "Uh... It's only because of the power outage! By the way, why isn't Lucas here yet? He knows about the power outage, and he said he'd come check on me."

Beatrice scoffed and said, "Power outages are under the jurisdiction of the property's management, which you ought to have rung up to inform them of the situation. That way, they can send an electrician over. What business do you have in calling a married

man for something like this? Do you expect him to come and keep you company? I've always thought that girls are very particular about keeping up appearances and having some self-respect. That doesn't seem to be the case for you, though."

Stella's expression soured. "You've misunderstood! I asked a friend for help because I was scared."

Beatrice was not too pleased at Stella's continued insistence on playing dumb. "What do you take me for? A fool? I've seen my fair share of tomfoolery in my life. Stop playing games."

Stella continued to feign innocence. "I don't know what you're talking about! Why don't you call Lucas over so he can explain?"

Beatrice scoffed. "You don't honestly think that Lucas answered your message, did you? No one knows about the outage except for me."

"What? That can't be... He was the one who replied to my message earlier..." Stella said in disbelief.

"Melody is ovulating today," Beatrice revealed. She glanced at Stella as if the latter was a clown. "Lucas is busy getting it on with her. He doesn't have the time to entertain your nonsense." Disbelief was etched across Stella's face as she clenched her fists. She took a few steps back, and the candlelight dinner became even more laughable.

Beatrice then warned her sternly, "You've seen how well Lucas and Melody are getting along. Nothing you do will be able to shake the bond they have with each other. I don't mind reminding you again if you forgot what I told you the last time. Not every woman gets our approval, and we're very happy with Melody. We won't let you ruin what she has with Lucas right now. Keep your schemes to yourself if you want the best for your acting career."

Stella was willing to forgo her career if that meant being able to get together with Lucas. She thought that perhaps Beatrice might look at her differently if that happened. However, she changed her tone as soon as she heard what Beatrice said. "You must've misunderstood. My relationship with Lucas is untainted, and that is precisely why I called him over to help. I trust him, and I wouldn't ask anyone else for help."

Stella then continued to explain in a pitiful tone, "The power outage came so suddenly, and the entire building was plunged into darkness. I was just instinctively afraid."

She doubled down simply because she knew how influential Beatrice was. The old lady was capable of carrying out that threat. As a result, playing the long game was better, for the day would come when she became Lucas' wife and thus exact revenge on Beatrice.

"Do you think I'm that easily fooled? I've already checked the situation before I came here." The old lady walked slowly to the main door and reached out to pull the power box switch. The power then returned in an instant, and the entire house was bright again. "What else do you have to say now?" Beatrice asked coldly.

Stella stammered in stupefaction. "This... This can't be. The switch must've tripped..."

"You're a decent woman, Miss Stella," Beatrice replied with a smile. "I know that your father once helped Lucas, so I hope this situation between us won't get any uglier than it already is. This is my last warning to you. If you attempt this again, I'll make sure that no film director will ever seek your services again. Do I make myself clear?"

Frightened by the old woman's smiling facade, Stella replied, "I... I understand. I won't bother Lucas anymore!" She had stopped just shy of swearing an oath.

Beatrice knew that such promises were as good as empty, but it did not matter as much. She showed up there in person because she wanted to make the Riveras' stance clear to Stella. If Stella continued to insist, then she would have to face the brunt of Beatrice's wrath.

Stella could only breathe a sigh of relief when Beatrice left. She collapsed on the ground and leaned against the wall in resentment and dejection.

"Ah! Why!" Stella grabbed the wine goblet and hurled it against the wall. "Why is this happening to me?! Everything should've been mine! Why does Melody get to take all of it away from me?! She snatched the man I love! Who gave that old woman the right to threaten me?!"

Beatrice believed that Stella was not the type to give up. However, the Riveras had given Stella two chances, and Beatrice was prepared to go through with her threat if Stella continued to pester Lucas again. She knew that Lucas was reluctant to break off a

friendship with Stella because of the kindness that Stella's father had shown to him. Since she did not want Lucas to be caught up in such a dilemma, she decided that she had to play the villain.

By the time Lucas went downstairs to fetch his phone, Beatrice had already deleted all the messages. Realizing that Beatrice was nowhere to be seen, he asked Cedric, "Where did Grandma go?" Cedric waved his hand and said, "Don't worry about her. She said she had something to take care of, but she won't be out long. You should stay with Melody."

Lucas nodded and did not think much of it. "You should rest as soon as she's back. I'll go back up now."

When Lucas returned to the room, Melody was leaning on the headrest while reading her script. He glanced at her and went to the sofa to do his work.

#### Chapter 2093

Stella's home, meanwhile, was in utter chaos. The candlelight dinner she meticulously prepared for Lucas had turned into a farce. All that effort went to naught because of the old woman's meddlesome behavior. Had Beatrice not interfered with Lucas's affairs, Stella was convinced that he would have visited her after seeing her message.

"I'm sure Lucas still has feelings for me. I'm sure of it... Just wait for me, Lucas. I'll overcome any obstacles in my way, even if it involves having to deal with your relatives. I won't let you go that easily!" she gritted her teeth and declared.

The red wine trickling down the wall added to the intensity of the atmosphere, making her look like someone who had been driven to insanity.

When Stella arrived on set the next day, her face was noticeably swollen. She had drowned out her anger with a full bottle of red wine the previous night.

She took off her sunglasses to reveal her bloodshot eyes. Her manager was startled to see her condition. "What happened to you? What did you do last night? Don't you remember that you have an important scene to shoot today?!"

The frustrated manager asked an assistant to bring over some eggs and ice cubes. "There's another half hour before filming starts. Here, take these ice cubes and use them to reduce your awful swelling!" Stella, however, was still worked up because of the previous night's events and completely ignored the advice.

Determined to discover what drove Lucas to ignore her for Melody, Stella initiated an investigation into Melody's background. She wanted to know just how far Stella was able to win over the old lady's trust. Clearly, she had underestimated Melody, who seemed to be cunning enough to get on the old woman's good side. Perhaps Melody's strategy was to win over Lucas's elders, even if there was a chance that Lucas might not like her. That could be a reason why Lucas was playing into Melody's hands.

Stella drank a cup of americano that her agent handed over to her without batting an eye. Such was her routine to reduce swelling after late-night drinking sessions, as the water retention made it unsightly during filming.

Once the filming started, the director—who was very displeased with her condition—berated her assistant severely because he knew he could not scold her.

"Is this how you manage your stars? How stupid can you be to let her drink her heart out a day before a shoot? Her bloodshot eyes are so darn obvious! How am I supposed to continue filming, huh? I'm supposed to film a girl in the prime of her youth, not a wasted alcoholic!"

The assistant was already numb to all that scolding. Everyone took out their anger on him. That was a harsh reality of his job, which he had to endure as part of his role.

Realizing that she was in no condition to continue with the filming, Stella sent someone to buy some coffee and desserts to appease the director. "I'm sorry, director. I know that we had some filming to do today but I just couldn't decline last night's invitation. I'm just an actress, after all... You know that..."

Although the director accepted the cakes she offered, he did not let her off the hook. "You're a big star now. Why do you need to attend all these social events?"

Stella maintained her composure and responded diplomatically by diverting the situation. "I still have ways to go from becoming a star. I'm relatively new in the industry, and I wouldn't call myself a star. I promise you that my team will ensure such incidents don't occur again in the future."

"Fine," the director grunted. "Go get some rest. We'll reshoot your scene once you look better."

## Chapter 2094

Stella agreed with a smile on the surface, though she did wish that she could give him a piece of her mind. 'You must be delusional if you think you're a great director. What's your motive for saying all that? Are you trying to tell the whole cast that you're sidelining me?'

"Shall I escort you to the lounge so you can get some rest? Last night was taxing on you," the assistant suggested.

Stella glanced at him and suppressed her anger. It was not until they reached the lounge that she lashed out at him.

"Are you dumb? You know that I'm not at my best today, so why didn't you order takeout for everyone? Must I spell everything out for you? You're a useless, pea-brained idiot!" Stella tore into the assistant and pushed him away.

The manager hesitated to intervene, knowing that it would be a waste of his breath to reason with someone like Stella.

After venting her anger, she was told that the investigation she had instructed earlier had yielded results.

"Hmph. And I thought Melody had an impressive family background. It seems like they're not even middle-class! She's got nothing against me!" Stella laughed in disdain while browsing her phone. The assistant had some respite but shuddered at Stella's rapidly changing mood.

"Oh, and it looks like Melody has a sister in the industry whom she can't even maintain a good relationship with! Pfft! And she's thinking about becoming Lucas' wife? Please!" Stella's contempt was evident. The Sander sisters were both actresses, but Wendy's reputation lagged far behind Melody's overnight fame. Wendy was nothing more than an insignificant actress who would be relegated into oblivion. "Melody has risen far quicker than Wendy even though she entered the industry much later. I wonder if Wendy resents her because of that?" Stella zoomed in on Wendy's photo and smiled, noticing the rather striking resemblance to Melody. "I can't wait to see them turn on each other!" said Stella, bursting into a manic laughter that left her assistant somewhat frightened.

Stella, with her years of experience in the industry, believed that it would be relatively easy to approach Wendy.

When Wendy's boss learned Stella contacted their company, he personally came down to welcome her in a profound display of courtesy.

Stella then removed her sunglasses and smiled, "Let's cut to the chase. I'm here because I'm interested in collaborating with one of your actresses."

"Who is it? We'd be delighted to have you collaborate with anyone in our company!"

Stella smiled. "As we all know, it's not easy to secure roles in movies. The actress I'm eyeing in your company is Wendy Sander. Do you think you could arrange for her to meet me?"

"Wendy Sander?" came the puzzled reply. Wendy was not a standout artist in the company, and Stella's interest seemed to make no sense. "Wendy isn't as exceptional as the other actresses. Are you sure you've got the right person?"

Stella nodded, and the man reluctantly agreed to arrange a meeting between the two. He felt sorry for the other talented actresses in the company. Luck sometimes worked in wondrous ways, and he could only lament that some people—even the undeserving ones—could be luckier than others.

"Well, well, you're in luck, Wendy! A renowned actress wants to meet you, so free up your schedule in the afternoon," he spoke with a noticeable coldness when addressing the younger actresses. "A renowned actress? Who is it?" Wendy checked her phone to confirm who it was that her boss was calling.

Chapter 2095

"Just do as I say, and don't ask so many questions."

Young talents like Wendy generally had a lot of free time around the clock. Wendy found it a bit odd, and she had to do a double take at her phone with the suspicion that her boss might be dreaming and talking in his sleep.

There seemed to be no logical reason for why a renowned actress would want to meet her, and she wondered if that was her turning point to become popular and perhaps even match Melody's success. She believed that if Melody could do it, then so could she.

Wendy read on social media that a lot of people were retweeting Melody's movie highlights. Every single comment praised Melody and bemoaned the supposed lack of good-looking and capable actors. It was utterly ridiculous in Wendy's opinion. She felt that the social media users lacked good taste and found it appalling that someone like Melody was exalted in such a manner.

After refreshing further, Wendy found that Melody's official account gained 800000 followers overnight. It was frustrating enough that she nearly had an aneurysm. She managed her public account diligently and posted tons of beautiful selfies, yet she failed to gain even one-tenth of Melody's fans.

However, Wendy's fortunes seemed to take a turn for the better. Though she had no idea which actress wanted to meet her, the mere fact that said actress expressed interest in her was enough to make her thrilled.

If she could chat with the actress, then she was already a step away from convincing her to make a movie. Established actresses had a wealth of resources and connections that many others were unable to

access.

Wendy's excitement grew with each passing thought, and she made sure to dress up specifically for the meeting. Even the tiniest bit of resources from that actress would be able to sustain a newbie like her for a long time.

She maintained a sense of skepticism before meeting Stella, as she suspected that it might be some sort of prank by the company. As soon as she entered the VIP room, she was surprised to see that the woman waiting for her was none other than actress Stella!

"Miss Stella?! You're the one who wanted to meet me?! I thought my boss was pulling my leg! I didn't expect that you'd be interested in meeting me. I can't believe my luck! I'm a loyal fan of yours, and I've watched every one of your movies since your debut at least five times. If I had known I could meet you today, I would've brought my film collection for you to autograph."



Wendy was genuinely happy. Stella had defied all odds to become a renowned actress despite being rather less favored during her debut, and she became Wendy's role model for as long as she remembered. Stella smiled with her sunglasses on. "I didn't expect to meet my own fan."

Wendy happily sat opposite her and expressed her admiration. "One out of ten people in the company is your fan. Your acting is just out of this world, and I genuinely admire your ability."

After Wendy finished flattering her, she finally realized that she had not asked the real question yet. "Sorry for getting ahead of myself. I haven't even asked you why you decided to see me today." Wendy wondered if she was finally getting lucky. The chances of her shooting to fame were a tangible possibility if Stella took her to a movie. Wendy could almost visualize her bright future. "Very nice to meet you. Well, I saw your resume on a website, so I did a search on some of the films you've acted in. That was when I discovered your talent in acting," Stella said.

Chapter 2096

Wendy never imagined that she would hear such praise from Stella.

"I'm getting a little embarrassed now. You're being too kind..."

Stella shook her head. "Don't feel that way. There's a difference between those with real energy and those without. Nowadays, many actors use that vigor to market themselves, but the fake will stay fake, and nothing is going to make that real."

For Wendy, that remark brought to mind the praise that social media users had for Melody.

She nodded empathetically. "Nowadays, even the worthless actresses can be praised to high heavens as long as they have a strong backing."

"Hahaha, that's right! It's a big loss for the industry that a good talent like you hasn't yet been able to make it."

Stella then lowered her head and sighed as if she lamented some sort of downward trend in the industry.

Wendy also felt a little sorry for herself. "I'm super happy that you recognized my talent. I might just need a stroke of luck and a turning point. I'm sure I'll be able to make progress if you're willing to guide me," Wendy looked at her eagerly, stopping only short of asking Stella for resources.

Stella then pondered for a moment and asked, "If I remember correctly, you have a younger sister, don't you?"

A deep frown appeared across Wendy's forehead as soon as Melody was mentioned.

"Hold up. How did you know about that?" she asked in bewilderment, nearly forgetting her decorum.

"I watched your sister's movie a while ago, and I also know some of the rumors about her in the industry..."

Wendy was very curious. "What rumors?"

"You don't know? But she's your sister," Stella remarked.

The mention of Melody made Wendy rather unhappy, and she leaned back slightly to distance herself from Stella.

"Honestly, my sister and I don't have that good of a relationship. Not all sisters are close. It's different with each family, after all. Besides, she moved out of her home long ago and deliberately broke off all contact. We have no idea of her current situation."

Stella could tell that the rest of Melody's family had yet to know of Melody's marriage to Lucas.

"That's a shame..." Stella said with a frown.

"How so?" Wendy asked, puzzled.

Someone of Stella's status would usually care very little about Melody.

"Don't you know that she now has a strong supporter who can provide her with endless resources?"

"What?" Wendy nearly fell over in surprise. "A supporter? That can't be. You must be mistaken. Where would she get such a backer?"

Stella rolled her eyes under her sunglasses and sighed. "I guess Melody doesn't tell your family anything, then. She has a powerful financial backer who can support her in terms of all her resources. Why else do you think a mediocre actress like her would suddenly become famous simply from her latest work? You of all people should understand that, right?"

Wendy's emotions became even more unstable after hearing that. She could not accept that Melody was able to secure someone that powerful.

Chapter 2097

Wendy scoffed when she thought about the schemes that lay beneath Melody's show of confidence. Securing a mysterious financial backer was beyond despicable. Stella cleared her throat and said, "Melody's rise to stardom seems inevitable with that backing. She might even eclipse seasoned actresses like us one day." Wendy did not hide her complex mix of envy and indignation.

Stella continued to press further. "Do you have Melody's contact information? Didn't she think of sharing her newfound fortune with you during her rise to prominence? A few crumbs from her powerful backer won't hurt the wallet."

"I wouldn't touch such filth!" Wendy spat before immediately composing herself. "I'm sorry, Miss Stella. That wasn't meant for you. My past with Melody makes me stir up some uncomfortable emotions. I hope I didn't frighten you."

Stella masked her agenda with an understanding expression. "No offense taken. You shouldn't sever your familial ties that easily, though. If you have her contact number, I hope you can help me reach out to her."

Wendy was caught off guard and stared at Stella in confusion. "Reach out?"

"Yes," Stella affirmed. "I admire her talent and would love the chance to collaborate." Stella's smile was smooth and calculated.

"Does this mean you never once intended on collaborating with me?" Wendy asked with an awkward smile.

"Talent is crucial, but success is dependent on fame. I'll gladly collaborate with you if you reach Melody's level, but for now, I'm interested in working with Melody. Collaborating with her can boost our movie's popularity. No one will refuse publicity."

Wendy lowered her head and gritted her teeth in a bitter pang of humiliation. Melody's absence was not a hindrance to stealing the spotlight, it seemed.

Wendy gritted her teeth and asked, "You don't even know her character, Miss Stella. Are you sure you want to work with her?"

Stella feigned pity and sighed. "Is character such an important matter in this circle? What will it take for you to see the reality, Wendy? What's important is not her character, nor her talent, but the financial backer that is supporting her. If fate had blessed you with someone similar, I'd be seeking to collaborate with you today too. I do think that life is unfair, especially in this industry. Talents like you should be allowed to flourish, but you were usurped by someone who has better finances."

Wendy gnashed her teeth. "You're right. Why must it turn out this way?!" She gazed into the distance with a complex expression.

Stella tried to soothe her, saying, "Chin up. Your time will come. And if you're a little impatient, then perhaps reaching out to Melody for a role isn't such a bad idea. She's quite influential within the circle, after all."

Chapter 2098

Wendy gritted her teeth and slammed her hands on the table. "I don't need her help! I'd rather beg for food than have her pity me!"

A smile of success flashed across Stella's lips, and she did not waste much time there. Having achieved her goal, she picked up her bag and prepared to leave. "Okay then, Wendy. Either way, I'm glad to meet you today. I'd be happy to collaborate with you if the opportunity ever arises."

Wendy lost control at that moment and began cursing, "B\*tches! You're all bitches!"

Wendy never imagined that Melody would get such a powerful backer even after swearing not to get involved with those old men. The thought of Melody going viral on the Internet made Wendy feel agonizingly jealous and aggrieved.

Wendy stood up abruptly with a vicious look in her eyes. If Melody wanted to be popular, then Wendy would be more than happy to show everyone Melody's ugly side!

She remembered someone who would be very helpful at that moment and took out her mobile phone to search for that contact. It was saved on her phone as 'BD-Black Dragon'.

"Hey, BD? This is Wendy. I need your help."

"Well, hello there, Miss Wendy! What can I do for you?"

Wendy sent Melody's photo to BD and said, "I want you to kidnap this woman."

"My, oh my. She's a beauty!" BD made a lewd whistle when he received the photo. "What did she do to piss you off?"

Wendy tightened her grip on her phone and said, "I can't tell you yet. Are you brave enough to take this job, BD? If you are, I can pay you a deposit first. Once you get the job done, I'll transfer a hundred thousand to your account. If you're not keen, I'll get someone else to help me."

BD answered unhesitatingly, "I'll do it! Nothing scares me! Just tell me the time and place. I'll round up my boys and make a video recording for you."

Wendy smiled viciously after getting BD's answer. The thought of a viral video depicting Melody being violated made her tremble with excitement.

"That'll show the world what sort of person you are!"

Melody's fame, as well as the presence of a backer, would mean nothing once Melody was violated by a bunch of goons. In fact, she wanted Melody to be the first actress who was canceled by the public quicker than Melody's rise to fame!

Wendy began to imagine just how disgusted Melody's backer must be after knowing that she was unclean. The thought of that brought so much joy to her heart, and all she needed to do was wait for BD's good news!

Meanwhile, Melody was oblivious to all the scheming that was being plotted behind her back. She was done for the day after her scene in the afternoon had finished filming. After saying goodbye to the crew, she took a taxi to one of the bookstores which she had been longing to visit.

Though she did not have that many fans yet, there were already people recognizing her on the street due to her growing popularity. Luckily for her, those people did not clamor to meet her.

Melody's director had once advised her to cherish the freedom of being able to walk in public without attracting much attention, as that freedom would diminish once the movie was released and she shot up to fame.

Melody felt that Shaun had overestimated her. She did not think that she was capable of reaching stardom in just one movie.

The bookstore she went to might have one of the titles that she was interested in, so she decided to drop by there and browse the shelves. There, she stumbled upon a fan who recognized her. "Are you Melody Sander?" the fan asked.

Melody turned when she heard those words. Her overall appearance was much more natural after she changed into normal clothes and had her makeup removed.

Chapter 2099

"Yes, I'm Melody," said Melody while cradling the book she had just found. It was the first time that a fan recognized her, and she blushed as a result.

"Ah! I really liked that scene you shot! Your acting was superb, and you're so beautiful too! I didn't expect you to be even more beautiful without makeup on! Are you okay if we take a selfie?"

The compliment made Melody feel a little shy. "Thank you for your kind words. Yes, I'm fine with a selfie, but I hope you don't mind that I'm not wearing makeup now."

Melody was worried that her audience might prefer to see a side of her that was similar to the character she played in a movie, but her fan shook her head and said, "Why would I? You're already beautiful enough as you are!"

"You're super pretty, too! I'm happy to meet you." Melody smiled as her fan took the selfie.

The fan was overjoyed. "Good luck in your acting career, Melody! You'll become a super popular woman for sure! I'll be your fan for as long as I live!"

Melody nodded with a smile, yet she still had difficulty trying to digest the situation after her fan left. She wondered if that was how it felt to finally meet a fan. The desire to get to know an actress simply because of the actress's role in a movie was a novel concept for her.

Melody took a deep breath. Her fans' excitement was contagious, and she seemed to enjoy the feeling of receiving affirmation from other people. She had some difficulty calming herself down because no one had ever acknowledged her in such a way since she was a child.

While she held the book and headed for the cashier, Melody encountered another couple. They seemed to be standing to one side with a pile of books while talking to each other in a hushed tone. The girls kept on poking the boy as if to urge him to do something, while the boy had an uneasy expression.

Melody noticed their jitteriness and asked them, "Do you two need any help?"

The girl did not expect Melody to take the initiative to talk to them. She nearly screamed in excitement, but the realization that she was in a bookstore prompted her to cover her mouth.

"You... You're Melody, aren't you? You're super recognizable!" She was a fan of countless celebrities in the past and had taken plenty of pictures with them. Some celebrities were incredibly beautiful, yet there were those who could not help themselves from doing digital touch-ups on their photos. As a result, many celebrities lose their charm in person.

However, Melody was different-she was more beautiful in person than on camera! Her skin was supple, and her facial features were incredibly delicate too!

With no time to marvel at Melody's beauty, she shoved her phone into her boyfriend's palm and asked him to take a photo of her with Melody.

"Can I get a photo with you? It's such an honor to take a photo with a superstar like you!"

Melody nodded, but then immediately shook her head. "Sure, but I wouldn't call myself a superstar yet."

She then placed her hand on the girl's shoulder, which made the girl so excited that she was about to jump for joy. She never knew that Melody smelled that good. They took plenty of photos until the girl was satisfied.

"May I post them on social media? You have plenty of fans, and I'm sure they'd be excited to see your photos too."

Melody nodded. "Of course. Thank you so much for supporting me."

The female fan nodded vigorously. "I know you're busy with a lot of things outside of acting, but posting a couple of selfies here and there will be enough to please your fans! We're not that demanding! All the best to you!"

Although Melody was not irritated by the girl's rambling, her fangirling was attracting a little too much attention from the onlookers.

Chapter 2100



Eventually, her boyfriend felt so embarrassed by the entire situation that he had to drag his girlfriend away.

Melody was still amazed at the thought that someone would admire her so deeply. She could not help but wonder if her fans liked the heroine she portrayed in the movie or if they genuinely liked her as a person.

The couple continued to talk about Melody. "She smells so good! It must be her natural scent! Gahh! Melody is so amazing! I love her so much!"

Her boyfriend had long grown accustomed to his girlfriend's fangirling tendencies and earnestly shared his first impression of Melody. "Yeah, she is beautiful."

"Right?!" his girlfriend fawned.

Melody's grace and character could be likened to a pearl that should be cherished, or a flower that stood taller than the other blooms around it. Everyone liked hearing compliments, and Melody was no different.

After leaving the bookstore, Melody seemed to have gained a bit more confidence, and she was not as scared when she walked through the alley that made her uncomfortable. Unfortunately, disaster struck at just that moment.

A pair of hands came from behind and covered her face with a towel. The pungent chemical that was soaked in the towel knocked her out in less than three seconds.

The man who attacked her wasted no time in dragging Melody to the van waiting by the roadside, which drove away as soon as she was shoved in. The book she bought was left on the ground after she dropped it during the scuffle.

"How much commission will we get for kidnapping this girl? She's a small-time celebrity. I remember seeing some news about her a while ago..." The man then held up Melody's arm. "Tsk, tsk, tsk. Look at how fair her skin is!"

His boss smacked his hand away. "Keep your hands off her and get in line!"

"Hehe, I wasn't even thinking about doing anything! I was just curious to know what makes her different from ordinary people like us. I mean, just look at her! Her body is so different from us! Her skin is so smooth and supple! It's almost as if she hasn't stepped foot outside the house before!"

The other gangsters gathered curiously around Melody. "She probably has people to clean up after her. She doesn't seem to be the kind who does housework."

That group of blonde guys had gotten themselves involved in shady business before even completing middle school. They later worked under their boss, BD, and relied on bounties or similar jobs to make a living. At times, they would be asked to target more influential people, but the added risk brought with it much higher pay too.

"All these actresses need to do is show their faces in front of the camera. They don't do real work, but the money they make in one day is more than we can make in eight lifetimes! Don't you think it's so unfair?"

BD took out his phone and sent a message to Wendy. [We've got her in the car. What do you want us to do next?]

Wendy smiled when she looked at the message. She was pleased with how well her plan had progressed, and she believed that someone like Melody ought to be left to rot in the gutter instead of becoming a superstar admired by many. [She's all yours! Do whatever you want to her. Treat this as a little gift from me to you and your bros!]

BD did not say a word. Wendy's ruthlessness knew no bounds, and he wondered what grudges she had against Melody to warrant such extreme measures.

That being said, money was the be-all-and-end-all for people like him, and he could forsake his morality like the flip of a switch as long as he received money in exchange.