

Kissed AOM 2241

Chapter 2241

Roland gazed helplessly at the woman before him. Her calmness made him wonder if she realized the gravity of what she had done, or if even the tiniest sense of guilt was weighing on her conscience.

Roland's body grew weak and he seemed to have lost control of his limbs when he saw what Tracy had done. He flailed in the sea and nearly choked on the seawater, but someone from the crew eventually came to his aid. However, Tracy did not seem to struggle in such a manner.

Roland shuddered when he noticed that, and Tracy happened to catch his unease through the mirror. She asked impatiently, "What's the matter with you? Did you catch a cold because you were drenched? Or are you scared by that woman from earlier?"

'She cares about me,' Roland thought to himself. He approached Tracy and embraced her affectionately despite her seeming impatience.

"I'll never betray you," he said.

Tracy smiled in satisfaction after hearing what he said. "Good. Now tidy things up. I don't want you to catch a cold. I'd be worried if you do."

An unsettling feeling lingered when Penny left. She sensed someone observing her closely, but she did not dare to look back. Thoughts of the large wet footprints in Tracy's room haunted her thoughts because she knew that those footprints could not possibly belong to Tracy. Tracy was not that short, but the tracks resembled boat tracks, suggesting it could be a man.

'What is she hiding?' Penny wondered. Tracy mentioned having taken a shower to try and imply that the footprints were hers, but Penny doubted it. She was not stupid enough to accept such an explanation. Her first thought was that Tracy might not be worried at all if Penny found out the truth, and was merely saying that for the sake of it.

A chill ran down Penny's spine, and she found it frightening when she sensed that ice-cold emptiness behind Tracy's smile. "I shouldn't dwell on it. I'm just a nobody..."

Penny approached Shaun to relay what she knew, but Shaun dismissed her worries with a wave of the hand. "Okay."

Despite Penny's attempts to divert her thoughts, she could not help herself from thinking about it whenever she was alone. At some point, Monica patted her shoulder. "Ah!" Penny yelled.

Monica was a little startled by Penny's yell and asked, "What's gotten into you? I greeted you from across the room earlier. Didn't you see me?"

Penny shook her head in fear. "Sigh... I haven't told you this yet, but I'm considering finding a new job now. I can't bear working in this industry anymore."

Monica chuckled. "Why would you think that way all of a sudden? You used to be so ambitious! Didn't you say you wanted to become one of those gold-rated agents?"

Before Penny entered the industry, she had dreamed of becoming a gold-rated agent, one that was capable of transforming any artist into a sensation. However, the high entry barriers to that position forced her to start as a general crew member.

Little did she know that the entertainment industry was so full of intrigue. Friendships she believed were genuine turned out to be fraught with rivalry, while the two people she thought were adversaries revealed themselves as lovers in disguise. Everything was a topsy-turvy and surreal experience.

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Penny sighed bitterly and took a few steps back. "I guess I was just too naive. All I want now is to expedite my exit from this industry. Once this film wraps up, I'll do as my mother advised me to and get an accounting degree. I'm not going to delude myself into thinking about a career in the entertainment industry."

Monica was rather surprised to see that Penny's usual optimism had been replaced completely by pessimism. She held Penny's arm and led her to a secluded spot.

Once they were alone, Monica asked cautiously, "Okay, we're alone now. There's no one around. Now tell me the truth. Did you discover something?"

Penny trembled and glanced at Monica with a panicked expression. "No!" she denied vehemently. "What are you talking about? I... I didn't discover anything!"

Monica narrowed her eyes. She did not expect to have pinpointed the source of Penny's jitteriness, having asked the question offhandedly. "But if that's the case, why are you being so defensive? You don't seem like yourself today, and you've been spacing out for some reason too. We're friends, aren't we? You don't have to keep everything to yourself when you're with me."

Penny forced a bitter smile. Monica was the only true friend she had in the crew. Though Monica was an actress and Penny was merely a crew member, Monica never saw her as anything less than a friend. They grew close, and one would be forgiven for thinking that they were friends during their school days. Monica frequently held Penny's hands whenever they met on set. As a result, Monica was the only person she trusted, which was precisely why Penny could not bring herself to share what she had discovered. Otherwise, Monica would be pulled into the storm too.

"Well, I trust you, and I'm willing to tell you anything, but we're both newcomers to this industry. A lot of things are more complex than we imagine. You understand that, don't you? It's not that I don't want to tell you... Sometimes, ignorance can be a good thing!" Penny explained sincerely.

Monica might decide to risk it all and confront those involved if the information was made known to her, and Penny wanted to avoid that.

Monica and Penny exchanged silent glances, and Monica finally caved in.

"Okay. I won't pressure you. If you do decide to tell me one day, please don't hesitate to talk to me about it. Don't carry all the burden alone. I'm your friend. I know there are risks involved, but I'm willing to share the burden with you, okay?"

Penny knew Monica was a woman of her word. Monica's offer to share the burden was a genuine one. Penny was incredibly grateful to have such a reliable friend and found some solace within her challenging work environment.

"Okay!"

Monica smiled and hooked her arm-a sign of their tacit understanding.

Unfortunately, disaster struck Penny shortly after they parted ways.

Elsewhere, at the hospital, Melody closed her eyes even though she was struggling to sleep. She was waiting for Lucas, and she wondered why he had yet to arrive. He had promised to return within an hour, and his absence left her frowning dejectedly.

She wondered if it was a little unbecoming of her to be so bitterly anticipating his company. She missed him sorely as soon as she woke up. With no familiar faces around, the eerily quiet atmosphere in the vastly empty VIP ward exacerbated her loneliness.

Melody sighed and comforted herself by saying that it was time to rest. Perhaps Lucas would be by her side when she woke up.

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To her surprise, a knock echoed on the ward's door. Melody's eyes widened as she gazed at the man who entered her room. "Sherman?" Melody asked.

Sherman had not expected Melody to be awake. He swiftly approached the hospital bed and placed a pillow behind her head for her added comfort. With a chuckle, he asked, "What's wrong? You don't seem overly thrilled to see me."

Melody smiled. "That's not it. You're welcome here, of course. I just didn't expect you to visit. It's a pleasant surprise."

The smile faded from Sherman's face in an instant. He reached out to tuck a strand of Melody's hair behind her ear, but he immediately withdrew it and sighed deeply. Melody blinked and was puzzled by his sudden change in demeanor.

"What's the matter? Are things not going well at the company?" Melody asked.

Sherman shook his head. "The company has received several large projects recently, and we've already achieved a lot of positive results for the second half of the year."

Melody became even more perplexed. If everything was going well for the company, then he should not have any reason to frown.

"You must be curious about why I'm frowning," Sherman said.

Melody nodded.

"That's because I'm worried about you. You've been plagued with endless troubles ever since you entered the industry. I'm starting to find it hard to bear, too. I hope you don't mind me asking you this-have you ever considered leaving the industry?"

Melody was taken aback. She did not expect Sherman to express such genuine concern for her, and she felt conflicted as a result. However, Melody had a few words to say when it came to the career she loved so much.

"Issues like this don't pop up that often. It's just..."

"What do you mean, it doesn't pop up that often? You've been slandered, framed, and nearly lost your life! Is this career truly worth risking your life for?"

"Don't answer me right now. I understand that I'm just your senior, and I'm not that important a person in your life, but stop for a moment and ask yourself where's Lucas? Where are his grandparents? What is their opinion on this?"

Melody hesitated despite wanting to blurt out her determination to press on. Sherman's mention of Lucas and Lucas's grandparents had struck a chord. Their concern for her, which stemmed from her association with showbiz, made her feel rather unsettled because the old couple cared more about her than her own family.

"I don't want you to give up on this industry either, but I feel sorry for you. It pains me to see all these things happen to you time and time again. Aren't there other behind-the-scenes roles in showbiz? Working in these positions might spare you from all those life-threatening situations."

Melody kept quiet. She understood Sherman's intentions, but it was simply too difficult for her to entertain the prospect of abandoning her passion.

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Sherman became visibly anxious. "I hope you'll consider my advice, even if it means having to treat me as a stranger. Are you sure it's a good idea to continue with something so risky?"

"I'm sure your fans are aware of the pressure you face. Why don't you ask them whether they're willing to see you get yourself in harm's way again? Those who truly care about you wouldn't want you to go through that."

Melody frowned, wondering if she was being pressured to give up. "I understand your concern, but this is my first career. I... I don't want to abandon this halfway."

Melody's averting gaze led Sherman's frown to grow deeper. "Must you be so stubborn? Why are you clinging so hard to this? Shouldn't you prioritize your life over everything else?"

"Did you come here just to persuade me to consider giving up acting?" Melody asked. "I appreciate the concern, but this is my life, and I will do what I think is best for myself. I'm entitled to make my own choices, and I'll make sure I'm always safe."

"Thank you for visiting today. I'm a bit tired now, so if that's all, you should go back home and get some rest."

Melody turned away and closed her eyes.

Sherman sighed and smiled bitterly. "I knew that bringing this up would make you resent me, but I felt I had to say it nonetheless. Now that you've made yourself clear, I think that's a cue for me not to disturb you any further. I'll come visit you again when you feel better."

Melody felt a pang of guilt at Sherman's lament. Perhaps she had been too assertive, but he believed that voicing out his concerns out of consideration for her was the right thing to do.

Lucas entered the room as Sherman prepared to leave, and his expression darkened upon seeing that Sherman was there. Melody was also surprised by Lucas' entrance, and her eyes lit up in a way that Sherman had never witnessed before.

"Lucas " Sherman greeted respectfully.

"Why are you here?" Lucas was holding several bags. It seemed as though he had packed things from home.

"Oh, I heard something happened to Melody, so I found out she was hospitalized here and came to check on her," Sherman answered.

Lucas walked past Sherman and went into the ward to set down the stuff he brought. "In that case, allow me to thank you on behalf of Melody. Now that you've visited her, it'd be great if you could let her have some rest."

Sherman sighed. "You should spend more time caring for Melody so she doesn't have to repeatedly endure all this unnecessary harm. Better safe than sorry."

Lucas halted what he was doing and turned to look at Sherman with a stiff expression. After a few seconds, he asked sarcastically, "In what capacity are you advising me?"

"What I'm about to say might sound bold, but remember, Melody isn't yours alone. She's admired by more people than there are stars in the sky."

The sneer faded from Lucas' face and was replaced by a cold stare.

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Exasperated by Sherman's statement, Melody called out to him. "Sherman!"

He was seemingly describing their pure friendship to be more than that, which it was not.

Lucas' growing anger was fueled even more after Melody called out to Sherman. He suppressed his frustration and instructed Sherman to leave.

As soon as Sherman heard the pleading tone in Melody's voice, he glanced at her to try and comfort her but soon realized that she had directed her gaze elsewhere. He could only sigh bitterly in the end. "Okay, I got the message. You should rest. I'll come by to visit y-"

Lucas slammed the door shut before Sherman could finish. Lucas did not pay any attention to Melody on the hospital bed. Instead, he continued unpacking with an icy air to him. His displeasure was evident to anyone who witnessed it.

"Were you home? Did you water the two pots on the windowsill? Have you brought my favorite pair of pajamas?" Melody struggled to engage Lucas in conversation. She was trying her best to try and quell his anger.

Though she looked forward to Lucas' company, Melody found herself feeling helpless after that unexpected episode.

Lucas was still angry as Melody did not reveal what had transpired between Sherman and Melody during his absence. He wondered when Melody and Sherman became that close and how Sherman found out where Melody's ward was.

When Melody fell asleep, Lucas vowed to investigate the incident personally. He sensed that things were not as it seemed. Melody's memories were hazy, and she believed the incident was because she had gotten entangled in some seaweed or perhaps a psychological fear that prevented her from surfacing to breathe. Despite her uncertainty, Lucas suspected that there was more to the story.

"What took you so long? Didn't you tell Patty that you'd be back in an hour?" Melody asked in a gloomy tone, prompting Lucas to turn.

"Don't you have Sherman with you? Why do you still need me?" Lucas retorted, leaving Melody stunned.

"I didn't know he'd find out that I was here! I never told him I was in the hospital!"

"You don't need to explain it to me. You enjoyed your time with him, didn't you?" Lucas' tone suggested that he was jealous, which made Melody uncomfortable. She felt as though he was suspecting her of having covert meetings with Sherman.

"Sherman and I have a normal relationship. We have never, and will never have, an inappropriate relationship," Melody retorted stiffly.

Lucas had already finished unpacking. "Then can you explain why he said those words?" He asked, turning around to look at Melody.

"How would I know? I have no control over him, and all I can say is that he's a friend of mine. Nothing less, nothing more!"

Melody felt that Lucas' accusation was unfair, considering his own involvement with Thalia.

"A friend? Tch. He obviously wants to be your boyfriend!" Lucas snorted coldly.

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Lucas was simmering with anger. Sherman's intentions were glaringly transparent, and he doubted that Melody could not sense what was going on.

"I view him as just a male friend who shows concern for me from time to time. There's nothing wrong with that. Or are you suggesting that I don't deserve anyone else's care and concern?" Melody's lips were pallid, and her discomfort was apparent. Though she was still unwell, she still mustered the strength to dispute with Lucas.

Lucas noticed her straining and initially refrained from arguing with her, but Melody's unwavering defense of Sherman left him feeling incredibly uneasy.

"Do you think defending him is going to prove anything? That's enough. I'm in no mood to argue right now. You should rest," he said before leaving the ward.

Melody felt alone and suffocated. Distressed and aggrieved, Melody could not understand why they had to quarrel over such insignificant things as soon as they met.

She longed for Lucas' company, and he seemed to feel the same way from how hastily he packed his stuff from home to come and see her. She wondered what it was that made it so difficult for them to sit down and have a proper conversation. Good communication could have prevented them from so many misunderstandings.

Once outside, Lucas sought out the nurse to find the doctor and Patty. "She seems to be a bit weak. Could you please check on her?"

Patty observed Lucas' stern expression and deduced that he was clearly agitated after an argument. Their office was very close to Melody's ward, and they heard the commotion within.

It was rather obvious that he cared deeply for Melody and had rushed home to pack. Even his tie was crooked.

There was no reason to argue at a time like that, and the doctor had advised against upsetting Melody's mood.

Lucas' eyes narrowed. "I apologize. I won't do it again."

"Apologizing to me isn't going to change a thing. You should be apologizing to the lady in the ward."

Lucas did not nod but simply urged the doctor and Patty to conduct the checkup. Alone outside the ward, he waited until the doctor confirmed that everything was all right before leaving somewhat hesitantly. He headed directly to Melody's film set where Shaun and the producer were discussing ways to resolve the situation. Lucas' presence startled them.

"Mister Lucas!"

The atmosphere seemed to drop as soon as Lucas entered, and he was immediately ushered to the main seat.

"How's the investigation progressing?" Lucas asked.

"There hasn't been any progress yet," the producer said. "A lot of people have had disputes with Melody before, and if there aren't any witnesses or suspects, finding out who did it will be like searching for a needle in a haystack."

Lucas tapped on the table without an immediate response.

"That means you have no further information for me then," he finally remarked.

Shaun then said, "I'm sorry, we-"

"Save your breath. I don't want to hear your apologies," Lucas waved his hand. "If you can't get this matter done, then don't get in the way of what I'm about to do."

"But sir, we're all members of the crew here," Shaun protested. "Melody would want all our scenes to proceed safely in the future, and-"

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Before Shaun could finish, the producer stopped him from pissing off an already enraged Lucas. They had already failed to identify the suspect after Melody faced an incident on set, and Shaun's remarks seemed to insinuate to Lucas not to act recklessly with the crew.

Lucas glanced coldly at them, prompting both of them to lower their heads.

"Are you trying to give me a lecture on how I should handle my affairs?"

"No! That's not what he meant. Mister Lucas. He is just concerned about the movie and doesn't really understand the intricacies of the situation. This is our problem, though. Please don't hesitate to inform us if you need anything."

Lucas remained silent as he contemplated how best to compel the suspect to come forward. While many in the crew had clashed with Melody, he knew her personality could not have been able to provoke such opposition. Moreover, the disputes seemed trivial, yet the culprit was escalating it to a point where Melody's life was endangered.

Fame and infamy hung in the balance within the crew. The question that should be posed in such a situation was to identify who would stand to gain the most by harming Melody. Normal staff members would not profit from that, as they relied on having a stable team for their wages. That left only supporting roles, and Lucas's attention was soon shifted to the second female lead.

"Who is the second female lead in your crew, and how is her relationship to Melody?" Lucas tapped his fingers on the table and asked. To his surprise, the director and producer looked disgusted at the mention of the second female lead.

Lucas frowned. "Is she not here?"

"She's here, but she's become public enemy number one for the entire crew. She hasn't had any conflict with Melody, but she seemed to loathe everyone and received the same treatment in return. The rumors regarding bullying on set were all her fabrications."

"Why are you only sharing this critical information now?" Lucas asked, visibly irritated.

"She has already achieved her goals when she brought negative publicity to our crew, and we don't think she will resort to harming Melody. It's too risky, and she gains nothing from it..." came the explanation. Lucas found their reasoning ridiculous. Just because she had obtained the effect that she wanted did not mean that she would automatically refrain from harming other people. Nothing could ever be enough for those people.

"Have you considered she might not be satisfied with what she has achieved and wants more? There will always be a next time. She might resort to harming the female lead simply because she hasn't gotten enough."

Lucas's words prompted a sudden realization. They had foolishly excluded Tracy and clung to their ridiculous rationale.

"Oh, yeah. After what happened to Melody yesterday, she tried to rally everyone on the crew to stand with her. One of our newbies exposed her, and I can see why it would be suspicious now."

Lucas had nothing more to say to them and instructed them to recount the events from the previous day. At the end of it, he remarked, "Tch, it looks like she's guiltier than the two of you," Lucas remarked, ending the conversation.

The two guilt-ridden individuals lowered their heads.

Their lack of proactiveness in getting to the bottom of what happened to Melody was a damning display of the way they carried themselves. They deserved the disdainful expression that Lucas gave them. "Uh... It slipped our mind," Shaun said.

Chapter 2248

Lucas contemplated in silence. The director and producer were both perceptive enough to leave him alone. He was a strong force in the business world, and he injected investments for many film projects. Seldom did one see his plans falter once he set things in motion, as things would generally go his way.

Lucas remained with the crew until dusk before heading back, thinking Melody must have fallen asleep.

At the hospital, Patty organized the daily records and was surprised to see Lucas' return. She whispered, "Your wife is now asleep. If you need to discuss anything with her, do save it until tomorrow morning." Her words were a gentle reminder in the hopes that Lucas would stay with Melody in the ward. That might help Melody sleep a little more soundly that night.

Melody had earlier found it difficult to sleep when Lucas was not around. She tossed and turned, which was more than enough for Patty to sense her restlessness. Patty stayed in the ward and talked to Melody about unrelated matters in the hopes of diverting her attention.

By nearly ten o'clock, Melody finally went to bed, frowning even in sleep. Patty could not understand why they just had to argue when they were supposed to have a strong bond.

Lucas acknowledged the nurse's words with a nod and entered the ward quietly. As he approached the bedside, he observed Melody's restless slumber and gently brushed his fingers across her forehead. 'Are you in distress because of me?' he pondered. He never wanted to quarrel with Melody in the day, and he only felt uncomfortable because she sided with Sherman. 'Why are you reluctant to give me a definitive answer, even though I chose you first?'

Lucas sensed Melody's attachment to him, but if that attachment hinged on compromise when there was no alternative, perhaps it was better not to pursue it.

Melody did not know what Lucas was thinking, but she viewed her relationship as one where she never held the initiative in the first place. If Lucas cared so deeply about Sherman's presence, then he should know that the situation is the same with him and Thalía.

Thalia's name was always the catalyst for disputes between them. As time passed, Melody did not know whether there was any need to be embroiled in all of that. She knew what her heart desired, and that was to have Lucas by her side.

When she talked with Patty earlier in the day, her mind constantly drifted to thoughts of Lucas. She wondered if he was once again talking with Thalia, or complaining to Thalia about her and wishing that Thalia was in her stead.

Melody did not want to portray herself to be in a disadvantageous situation, but she refrained because she realized that Lucas had already made his choice very clear.

Melody remembered the question that Patty asked earlier in the day, about the disputes that Melody often had with Lucas despite their affection for each other. Patty thought that their relationship should have been strong enough to weather all hardships together.

At that time, Melody smiled in silence and did not rush to answer that question. It continued to linger in her mind, and she recognized that the premise for weathering such hardships was a depth of connection that they had not yet reached.

Chapter 2249

Melody and Lucas' acquaintance, encounter, and cohabitation all stemmed from the foundation of a false marriage contract. A foundation built on falsehood, no matter how well-adorned with beautiful vows, could only ever be a deception.

Patty perceived it as being the unconscious blossoming of genuine love between the two. Even two strangers who lived together as roommates might begin to develop some feelings over time.

That night, Lucas held Melody's hand tenderly and remained by her bedside throughout the night. He woke up early the next morning and ensured that Melody's body temperature was normal before leaving the hospital.

Numerous tasks awaited him. Before Melody returned to the crew, he needed to identify the suspect and eliminate all potential risks.

Shortly after Lucas arrived on set, Monica showed up in a panic. The director tried to calm her and encourage dialogue, but Monica burst into tears and left the director at a loss for words. "Ugh-" There was a hint of impatience in Lucas' eyes, and he wondered why she would just burst out in tears in front of them.

The director sought to console her as he felt that he would receive more of a headache if things did not go well. "Why couldn't she tell us about the problems she faced on set? Even though she's just an ordinary staff member, this must've happened to her because of something on set!"

Although they were both unaware of what Monica was crying about, her tearful conviction forced Lucas to halt his footsteps.

"Do you even know what you're talking about? How are you going to explain yourself if Tracy has nothing to do with the person you're talking about?" the director questioned.

Before Lucas could say anything, Monica vehemently shook her head. "Impossible! I'm very sure that Penny's accident is linked to them."

Through soft sobs, she continued, "Penny is one of the most honest people out there. Why does she have to face this sort of situation? Who else could be responsible for this?"

As Lucas listened to Monica's muttering, he decided to stay behind and meet Tracy. For some unknown reason, he sensed that he was already drawing closer to the truth.

He believed that Tracy was a meticulous woman. She was not as arrogant as he thought, and she did not respond to ordinary provocations because she felt that others were beneath her.

That was a very stark contradiction from the director's description, and Lucas was therefore able to deduce that Tracy was adept at concealing her true nature. In normal interactions, the things she said might not necessarily be the truth.

If Lucas were to invest all his efforts in finding out the truth, he would not want to see things play out according to Tracy's plan. He learned that Monica was instrumental in exposing Tracy that day and had displayed remarkable courage in doing so, yet that not a hint of sharpness could be detected when she wept so vulnerably in front of Lucas.

"She usually has a very good relationship with Penny, so it's understandable for her to feel sad and anxious now that Penny has disappeared," Shaun explained helplessly to Lucas.

Chapter 2250

Tracy never wanted to do anything to Penny. She had no desire to derive pleasure from harming others. If Penny had just obediently refrained from discussing the incident, Tracy could easily pretend as if nothing had occurred. She could have even turned a blind eye even if the acting skills displayed by that small group were worse than her own.

Unfortunately, everything was going smoothly until Penny suddenly went haywire and planned to spill the beans to the meddlesome Monica. Tracy was aware that Penny was merely contemplating an idea, but once an idea took root, it was only a matter of time before that idea was acted upon.

Furthermore, Monica always opposed her many times. Going against her had essentially sealed Monica's fate, as Tracy was not prepared to let a blonde jeopardize her future as a superstar.

'I'm not ruthless,' Tracy thought to herself. 'It's a shame that Roland had to find out what you knew. He's terrified of other people discovering his misdeeds, which is why he took the initiative to deal with you. It has nothing to do with me.'

Tracy looked at the cityscape from her high-floor vantage point, and she did not even bother to draw the curtains because the light outside did not fear her.

What Roland did was independent of her actions. He was a coward who decided to deal with Penny simply because he was afraid of the possibility that he would get into trouble. Only Tracy had leverage over him, and Roland would always keep his mouth shut and behave obediently in her presence.

Tracy swirled the red wine in her glass and took a sip as if imbibing some blood between her lips.

"I hope you don't blame me for what's going to happen to you, Penny. You're just unlucky. Hope you don't get a next life so you don't scare people anymore!"

Penny found herself amid the biggest crisis of her life. She did not expect the perpetrator to discover her. Her intention was never to reveal anything to Monica and implicate her in it, but in a moment of desperation and with no one else to turn to for help, she had no choice but to give Monica a call. After all, Monica was the only one who would believe her unconditionally!

Even her most trusted friend doubted her when she called to explain the situation.

"Don't you believe me? If you don't, just say so, and I won't bother you again!" Penny panted heavily.

Monica got a jolt from that and said, "What's gotten into you? Why wouldn't I believe you? Do you think I'd trust Tracy? I should've known it was Tracy's fault. You seemed like you've changed ever since you came out of the room that day. I should've guessed that she was the cause."

Monica felt deeply remorseful, thinking that Penny had chosen to keep it all to herself because she had been too slow to notice anything.

However, Penny did not dwell on that at all because it had been her choice to hide the truth and actively protect Monica from being dragged into the tumult. Unfortunately, the person she sought to shield so ardently was the one she resorted to turning for help at the last moment. Penny wondered just when she would be able to truly repay Monica.

Penny's labored breathing caused Monica's eyes to well up. "What should I do? Do you want me to talk to the director and ask him to intervene? Or should I call the police directly?"

"Calling the police won't help. I don't have clear evidence. Everything's just an assumption. I think it'd be better to go directly to the director and ask him to bring someone over..."

Penny gasped loudly, and the tail end of her sentence was barely audible. Monica guessed that she had found a hiding place. At that moment, she thanked her lucky stars that she had chosen to stay near the production crew to try and learn more from the other actors.

Without a pause, she sprinted toward the director and producer. Penny's life rested in the hands of these two individuals.

The call ended abruptly, and she frowned when she looked down at the phone. She could not even imagine just how frightened Penny must be on the other end.

All she could do was run faster and faster, by which time she ran into Lucas.