

Kissed AOM 2261

Chapter 2261

Shaun sighed as he sat across from Roland, who was being watched by others. "At this point, do you regret it?"

Roland chuckled bitterly. He then lowered his head and grabbed his hair, unwilling to meet Shaun's gaze. "What's the point of talking about regrets now? Whether I regret it or not, it doesn't change anything." His indifference infuriated the producer, who stood up abruptly. "So this is how your attitude is going to be? Do you still think you're being noble by sacrificing for love?"

Roland raised his head despondently; his eyes were bloodshot.

"We've already come to this point, what else can I do? Tell me!"

Lucas did not care about the relationships between these people. He was getting really impatient with their talks.

"Who's the mastermind? Perhaps your charges could be lightened if you tell us."

His icy voice almost made Roland shiver.

"I advise you not to play tricks with me. Even if you don't say it, I have plenty of ways to find out about the woman you're trying to hide."

Tracy's name was on the tip of Roland's tongue. Even if he did not say it, Shaun and the producer were well aware that only she could drive Roland to such madness. However, Roland remained stubborn and kept his mouth shut.

He had done so much for Tracy, and their relationship would be irreparably damaged if he exposed her at that critical moment.

Lucas could not help but feel contempt for such a weak and foolish man. 'No wonder Tracy could manipulate him so easily.'

Lucas would also find it easy to control such a man like Roland if he were Tracy. She did not need to offer him rewards, yet he willingly played the role of a loyal servant. Who would not take advantage of that? Previously, on the mountain, Roland was shouting and blaming Tracy for everything. After getting caught, he suddenly acted like a romantic, stubbornly refusing to utter her name. It was all quite laughable, really.

"You think that woman will feel any pity for you when she finds out you've been caught?" asked Lucas with a sneer.

Even if Roland stubbornly refused to reveal her name, Tracy would not trust him anymore. She had many desires, and sacrificing Roland was a small price to pay. She had no feelings for him whatsoever. In fact, without him, it was just one less obstacle.

Only Roland was still hoping for Tracy to turn and look at him. Thus, he stubbornly refused to give them her name, no matter how much Lucas tried to talk some sense into him.

Finally, Lucas nodded. "Alright, then. Let's see just how long you can keep your mouth shut."

He did not want to waste his breath anymore. Since he knew who the mastermind was, the rest was straightforward.

There were so many crew members present on the day Melody had drowned, so Lucas was sure he would be able to find some traces of Tracy's wrongdoing. Moreover, they had a witness, and that was Penny.

Monica accompanied Penny to the hospital, and as she looked at her unconscious friend, she regretted not probing further when she first sensed that something was wrong. 'What exactly happened?' she wondered.

Even if Penny was reluctant to involve Monica, it would have been better than letting herself bear the immense pressure alone. In the end, she became a target for Roland and almost ended up losing her life. Fortunately, the doctor's examination revealed no serious issues-just exhaustion combined with excessive shock, leading to her passing out. It was also fortunate that she encountered Roland and not Tracy. Tracy was much more ruthless than Roland.

At the film set, Lucas-accompanied by his men-forcefully kicked open the door to Tracy's dressing room.

It was very likely that what Melody thought was seaweed entangling her legs on the day she was drowning was actually Tracy using a rope to pull her down.

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Only a rope could make Melody have such illusions.

They searched everywhere, turned everything upside down, but found nothing.

This made Shaun unable to resist asking Roland, "Did you help her dispose of the murder weapon?"

The despondent Roland felt lifted. He glanced at the dressing room where he and Tracy had briefly stayed and chuckled foolishly.

"You guys are overestimating me. Handling a murder weapon is such a critical matter. How could she possibly trust me with it?" Tracy was the extremely cautious type who only trusted herself.

Just when they were thinking what they could do next, Tracy unexpectedly appeared at the door of the room wearing a coat.

Her eyes visibly lit up when she saw Lucas. However, her smile faded when she saw everyone else looking at her with an unfriendly expression. "What's going on, Mister Shaun? It's not appropriate to show up with a bunch of people in a young actress's dressing room so late at night, is it?" Tracy appeared quite intimidating with her hands in her pockets and half of her face hidden in the collar of her black coat.

"You're right. It's not right for us to show up here, but it's a different story if the actress in question is a suspect."

Tracy's first reaction was surprisingly to check Lucas' expression.

Shaun's heart sank. 'Could it be that she had set her sights on Mister Lucas?'

The thought of Melody being harmed by her sent shivers down his spine.

'This woman is too cunning. If she hadn't been discovered for harming Melody, she might really have left a good impression on Lucas with her underhanded tactics.'

"Suspect? What suspect? Mister Shaun, don't joke around. This isn't funny at all."

Tracy raised her eyebrows, completely unruffled even when faced with so many people.

Shaun would have admired her for her courage if it was not for the fact that she tried to murder Melody. The more they interacted with her, the more they became deeply unsettled by her.

This woman would stop at nothing to achieve her goals. She might become a truly terrifying presence in the future if they failed to find any evidence linking her to her crime.

Tracy's cheeks flushed, and she looked at Lucas bashfully. "Mister Lucas, did you also come to my dressing room for the same reason?"

Lucas had been searching for possible hiding spots for evidence in the dressing room. He turned around when he heard her questioning him.

"What else would I be here for?"

'Did she think I might have come for her?'

Tracy bit her lip in frustration. She could not figure out if Lucas genuinely did not understand or was pretending not to.

What was so good about Melody anyway? Tracy could not fathom why every man was so captivated by Melody.

"Do you also suspect me, Mister Lucas? I haven't done anything!" exclaimed Tracy.

Lucas smirked. "How did you know we were looking for evidence the moment you arrived? We didn't say anything."

Tracy's face turned pale. She had indeed been careless. Her attempt at removing herself as a suspect had backfired.

She forced a smile. "The recent incident on the set is probably the only reason you'll come, right? So of course I know about it. After all, I'm part of the cast."

"Well, if that's the case, why don't you tell us what incident you're talking about? Do you have any connection to it, Tracy?" inquired Lucas.

Tracy's expression darkened. He really had her cornered.

"Isn't it the incident where Melody nearly drowned in the sea? It's been a hot topic in the crew. I thought it was simply because of Melody's fear of water that the incident happened. After all, no one would've wished for things to turn out like this. So there's really no reason for you to stop us from filming, right?"

Tracy tried to downplay the significance of the incident, but her mentioning Melody's name so confidently, considering she was the culprit, did not sit well with others. She was not worthy of even uttering Melody's name.

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"Shut up!" shouted Lucas, startling Tracy, who nearly dropped something from her pocket.

"Who do you think you are? You're not even worthy to mention her name," Lucas continued.

Lucas's words hit Tracy right where it hurt the most. She believed she had the looks and acting skills, and Melody was only luckier.

Tracy could not fathom why she would be considered less deserving. In her opinion, she was more deserving to have millions of fans than Melody.

"How am I unworthy? What else can Melody do apart from creating scandals every now and then? She's the one truly unworthy!"

Tracy clenched her fists and gritted her teeth.

Lucas discreetly glanced at her pocket, which seemed to be bulging suspiciously. What they were looking for might be in her pocket.

"How dare someone like you speak about Melody like that?"

"What do you mean by someone like me? How am I unworthy? You understand nothing. If it weren't for your family backing her up, who in this industry would even bother with her!" Lucas paid no attention to Tracy's words. He was determined to be Melody's backbone and support, even if it meant facing criticism.

Taking advantage of her anger, he had already approached Tracy.

"You say Melody is unworthy, but are you?"

Shaun held his breath. 'Why... Why is Mister Lucas getting so close to Tracy? Could he really be interested in her? Shouldn't he be more focused on finding the evidence?'

Tracy thought Lucas was truly enchanted by her. She lifted her head and exhaled gently.

"Mister Lucas, I have much more to offer than Melody. Invest in me, and I'll make sure you won't regret it."

She extended her hand, almost reaching Lucas's chest, when he grabbed her hand.

Lucas smiled cryptically. "Found it!"

His other hand was grabbing her coat pocket.

Tracy's face turned pale immediately, and she struggled to break free.

"Let go of me! Release me this instant!"

It was only then that Shaun and the others realized that Lucas pretended to seduce Tracy so that she would drop her guard.

No wonder his attitude changed so drastically all of a sudden; he must have noticed something was off about her early on.

Dressed in all black on a late night, it was quite different from Tracy's usual style. She tended to be ostentatious and loved vibrant colors. Most importantly, her hands never left her pockets, which was quite peculiar.

Lucas had been contemplating since the moment she appeared. Would such a vigilant woman really hide crucial evidence where she could not keep an eye on it at all times? After all, if he were Tracy, he would definitely keep it close to his sight.

Hiding it at home was not a secure option either because she was busy acting during the day, and she would only feel at ease if she could constantly see it. Combined with her unnatural movements, Lucas speculated that she might have hidden the evidence on herself.

As expected, as soon as grabbed her coat pocket, he felt the rough shape of the rope, rendering her struggles futile.

"Help! He's molesting me! I'm going to sue you for molestation! This isn't fair! How can you all gang up to bully me?" shouted Tracy.

Shaun's expression was grim, and his movements stalled.

'Is she going to use the same way to harm the production team again? How does she always make herself to be the victim? Just what kind of mental gymnastics does she go through to be able to act as the innocent party when she's been caught red-handed? Does she think we're that easy to fool?'

Tracy never expected to be caught on such a calm evening when everything seemed perfect. Everything was going smoothly, and she even managed to deal with Roland, only to find herself bound alongside him.

Even then, she still had not fully grasped the situation.

"Huh! Bet you never thought you would've gotten caught, huh?" mocked Roland.

Tracy turned to glare at him resentfully. "Was it you? Did you tell them what I did? You despicable man!"

It was only then that she noticed Roland was in the dressing room as well. After all, she had been trying to seduce Lucas, completely overlooking the existence of the painfully ordinary Roland.

Roland especially noticed the shy expression on Tracy's face as she looked at Lucas. That was the way a woman should appear in front of someone she was attracted to.

Unfortunately, Roland had never seen this side of her. She would have completely overlooked his presence if he had not spoken up. It was a painful realization for him.

His unrequited love, which came to an abrupt end, made him lose himself and ruin his future.

"What does it matter if it was me? Whether I admit it or not, you've already made up your mind that it was me who did it."

Roland, being the person who knew Tracy the best, was right. Even before he gave an answer, she had already made up her mind.

Even if he had not voluntarily revealed her involvement, what difference would it make? The outcome would be the same. He felt like a failure for not even having the ability to deal with a woman properly. "Pah, you're useless. Don't ever tell anyone that you used to have a crush on me!"

Tracy was absolutely terrifying when she let her mask drop. She was unwilling to keep up the pretense anymore. Her eyes were full of arrogance and disdain.

Roland sighed and asked her, "Did you... Did you ever like me, even for just one second?"

Shaun shook his head helplessly, thinking Roland was beyond help. How could he still harbor that kind of help from Tracy?

Tracy rolled her eyes, and looked him up and down disdainfully.

"Why don't you take a good look at yourself in the mirror first? Why would I, someone with a bright acting career ahead of me, ever be interested in a weak and incompetent man like you?" Although they were never truly together, it could be said that no one understood each other better. They knew what each other cared about the most and what each other detested the most.

It would be a lie to say Tracy had never been attracted to Roland in all the years she knew him. Before signing with the company, she worked on numerous production teams, only to end up with supporting roles.

She accepted them all because she was confident that even with just one shot, she could captivate the audience. However, who would have thought that her prominence in that one shot would lead to her being targeted by the leading actress in the industry?

After being humiliated, she vowed to make a name for herself and return all the humiliation she had received. At that time, Roland was by her side. Even though he had no power or influence, he still secretly beat up the assistant of the leading actress who had insulted her. However, that act brought on even more intense retaliation.

Roland did everything for Tracy's sake. Since that day, Tracy no longer tolerated being humiliated. She wanted to climb to the top and surpass everyone. Fast forward to the future, the leading actress who had humiliated her back then was already locked away.

Tracy did not trust anyone in the industry. In fact, the only person she trusted was Roland, yet he was a nobody. His incompetence had long extinguished any hint of affection Tracy might have had for him.

Eventually, Roland was nothing more than a convenient tool for Tracy.

Lucas packed them up and sent them to the police station. The police officers who had dealt with them before were shocked. How could a film crew repeatedly encounter such incidents? This time, they even attempted to take someone's life.

Listening to Tracy's motives and methods was enough to send shivers down one's spine. It was hard to imagine she could be so ruthless toward fellow actresses all for her selfish desires. Even in front of the police officers, she showed no remorse.

Seeing her attitude, the officer in charge of the interrogation knew this would be a tough battle. On the other hand, Roland-who seemed to be on the verge of a nervous breakdown-seemed easier to handle. Lucas sat outside, waiting for the outcome. He could finally breathe a sigh of relief. He might have never been at ease regarding Melody's safety if they had not captured Tracy.

"Miss Tracy, why did you suddenly go to your dressing room tonight? According to other crew members, the filming has been halted for more than two days. How do you explain yourself?" The officer inquired. Tracy smiled calmly. "Mister Shaun has always advocated for all staff to treat the film set as their own home. Why should I need a reason to return to my own home?"

The officer did not buy her explanation. "You need to take this seriously, Miss Tracy. This is the police station, not the film set. Don't give us these useless excuses."

Tracy slowly wiped the smile off her face. "Well, then, I have nothing more to say. I want to see my lawyer. I won't say anything until my representatives from the company arrive."

The interrogation ended without getting anything from Tracy. Surprisingly, it was actually Lucas who suggested the officers stop the interrogation. He thought it would be better for everyone to get a good night's sleep in preparation for the long battle ahead.

At that moment, he was heading to meet with the president of Brightstar Entertainment. He wanted to see which option he would choose go against the entire Rivera family, or fire Tracy.

Even the president of Brightstar Entertainment was alarmed by what Tracy had done. He never expected that the actress they signed, who seemed to have a promising future, would cause so much trouble for the company one after another.

When the headhunter recommended her, they praised her not only for her acting skills but also for her strong work ethic. They never anticipated her 'work ethic' would cause her to be so ruthless.

Just the thought of facing off with Lucas later made the president of Brightstar Entertainment shudder. There were countless actresses out there, so it was not like the company had to depend on Tracy. Only Tracy was hanging on tenterhooks, unsure if someone would step forward to protect her this time. She had only been with Brightstar Entertainment for a short time and had not generated much profit for the company yet.

However, when she signed the contract, the headhunter expressed strong optimism about her. He told the president of the company that if she continued to develop in the industry and maintained her level of effort, becoming a leading actress was just a matter of time.

She hoped the company would consider her potential for the future and find a way to keep her. Otherwise, she really did not know who she could rely on. Who could have thought that Lucas would catch her in the act?

However, the one she hated the most was still Melody. She regretted she did not finish her off. In the end, she went soft. Otherwise, she would never have let that woman go.

Tracy became even more resentful at the thought of that. She would be on her way to a bright future if it were not for Melody.

She used to hold absolute power over the crew, so it was quite hard for her to find herself in a situation where she had to wait for others to decide her fate.

To make matters worse, all of this was the fault of Melody, a newbie actress who appeared out of nowhere!

Tracy laughed coldly, thinking, 'This world is really unfair. Why does Melody get everything she wants? I only wanted to make the world a bit fairer, so why don't those people understand me?'

She felt like the whole world was against her, that no one understood her struggles, not even Roland.

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'Hmph! Roland promised that no matter what I asked for, he'd fulfill it unconditionally. Now, not only does he resent me, but he gave me up to the police! Is this what he calls love?' thought Tracy vehemently. It seemed to her that she could only trust herself in the world.

Tracy curled up in a corner and hugged her legs, waiting for the final verdict on her fate.

As Lucas stepped out of the car, the president of Brightstar Entertainment rushed over and greeted him obsequiously. "Mister Lucas, hello, hello! Your reputation precedes you, and I'm so glad I finally get to meet you!"

Lucas remained expressionless, nodding slightly. "Hello, Mister Digby. It's quite unfortunate to meet under these circumstances. I wish we could've met each other for a better reason, rather than..." Lucas lowered his head subtly, and Digby Townsend immediately understood.

Who in their right mind would want to go against Lucas from Rivera Group? Besides, it was not like Tracy had brought much profit to the company. In fact, she had been causing trouble everywhere. No matter how ambitious she was, no matter how dedicated she was to climbing up, Brightstar Entertainment would not want to keep her.

After all, the person Tracy crossed happened to be Melody, Lucas' wife. Moreover, Tracy was too impatient and opportunistic. Who knew what crazy and despicable things she might do in the future since she had no qualms about drowning Melody to achieve her goals?

Brightstar Entertainment had a strict requirement for hiring actors and actresses- absolutely no engagement in illegal or criminal activities. Otherwise, the company might be affected. Who knew how many times they would have to clean up the mess for them?

The company had not even recovered the money they invested in training Tracy, and to make matters worse, they would have to pay for the damages caused by her actions. Only a fool would choose to keep such trouble around!

"So, Mister Digby, I take it you have no objections to letting the police handle Miss Tracy?" asked Lucas with a raised eyebrow. He did not expect things to be resolved so smoothly.

Digby immediately put on a righteous expression. "Rest assured, Mister Lucas, that we won't support a problematic actress like her. Brightstar Entertainment may not be a top-tier company in the industry, but we absolutely won't engage in such criminal activities."

Lucas smiled in satisfaction. "Good to hear that."

Digby sighed in relief, ready to flatter Lucas a bit more. To his surprise, Lucas walked past him. He was not upset by the snub. Instead, he scratched his somewhat sparse hair and followed Lucas into the police station.

Unfortunately, Tracy kept clamoring that she would only give her statement with the company's lawyer present. Without a lawyer, she refused to speak, causing significant obstruction to the officers' interrogation process.

Digby was there to tell her that there would be no lawyer speaking for her and to give up any hope of the company bailing her out.

As soon as Tracy saw Digby, she rushed over. "Mister Digby, you're here to bail me out, right? I didn't do any of the things they said. I'm being falsely accused! Where's the lawyer? I asked them to call you to bring the company's lawyer, why hasn't he come? What's the use of you being here without a lawyer?"

Digby's face darkened as he confronted Tracy. He never expected that she would bring so much trouble to the company. He had her to thank that he still had to squeeze out a smile and apologize to Lucas at his age.

"I suggest you give it up. I had the lawyer arrange the termination of your contract when you got into trouble. Our company can't afford to accommodate actresses like you. It's best if you find another company to work with," he declared sternly.

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Tracy was not being polite in her words and tone, and she had already put Digby in a bad mood. She seemed to overestimate her importance as just a small actress.

"Mister Digby, how can you abandon me at a time like this? When I signed the contract, it was clear that I could bring so much profit and value to the company. My fan base has increased a lot, can't you see that? You can't treat me like this!" Tracy protested.

Digby leaned in slightly toward Tracy. "Of course, I can treat you like this. You're just one of many actresses under my management. Yes, your fan base has grown relatively quickly among new talents, but you're still nothing compared to Melody.

"You and Melody started together at the same time, yet she had so many more fans than you. Plus, your fans are surely going to abandon you once they find out what you did. Don't even think they'll still blindly follow you forever after this."

Digby patted his coat, unwilling to engage in further conversation with the crazy woman.

After he turned and walked away, Tracy remained leaning on the railing, continuously reaching out and shouting after him. "Mister Digby, you can't leave! Come back! You can't abandon me! Melody is nothing, can easily surpass her in no time. If you give up on me, you'll definitely regret it! Mister Digby!"

However, Digby did not even spare her a glance, no matter how much she screamed.

Tracy continued her pleas until she could only hear her echoing voice. Eventually, she slowly sank to the ground. She could not believe that her promising future had been ruined by Melody.

"Melody, you just wait. I'm going to haunt you even if I die," Tracy muttered.

When the officers saw that she had exhausted herself, they began recording her statement again. She maintained a despondent look throughout.

"Miss Tracy, you've seen it yourself. There's no lawyer to craft a defense for you now. I suggest you tell the truth about everything. It might help you get a more lenient sentence," one of the officers advised. Tracy, realizing her struggle was futile this time, knew no one would rescue this fallen pawn.

"Miss Tracy, please provide a detailed account of the events on that day," another officer requested.

She lifted her head, looked at the officers, and coldly chuckled. "What a bunch of useless people. Can't you all solve the case without my confession?"

The officers responsible for recording the statement were getting frustrated. They did not expect her to remain defiant and uncooperative after what happened.

"Do you think we haven't been investigating you? Recording statements is just a part of our job. Miss Tracy, you're already under arrest. I hope you'll stop being so cocky. Do you really think you're capable of winning against modern investigative techniques," one officer said.

In reality, they had already dispatched a team to trace the purchase records of the rope and investigate her motives for the scheme.

Tracy's popularity among the crew members was indeed quite bad. The investigation revealed that most of the crew members had a negative impression of her, especially after she caused the whole bullying saga online, leading to the crew members being labeled as bullies.

Lucas quietly observed Tracy, who remained stubbornly defiant, by the window. She was much more ruthless than he had imagined. He dared not think about what might happen if they had not caught her. After all, there was no guarantee that Melody would be as fortunate to escape from her clutches next time.

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'Was it merely because Melody had more fans and held the female lead role that Tracy harbored murderous intentions? Would eliminating Melody ensure Tracy's perpetual success?'

Lucas frowned tightly. After Tracy confessed, he would have to go back and deliver the news to Melody.

Despite Tracy's initial denial, in the face of overwhelming evidence, she eventually admitted to her wrongdoing.

"I did it out of jealousy. I'm just as good as her when it comes to our looks and acting skills, so why does she get to be the female lead? Would she still have been the female lead if she didn't have the backing of the Rivera family? She might not have so many fans if she wasn't the female lead!"

The officers were surprised by Tracy's deep-seated obsession with Melody. She would inevitably grit her teeth whenever Melody's name was mentioned. She continued to shift the blame onto others, hating Melody to the bone.

Still, even if Melody did not get the female lead role, it would never have been Tracy's. Tracy was not even considered for the role. Moreover, Melody became the female lead because Shaun himself saw potential in her.

Even without Lucas, Shaun would have chosen Melody. Tracy, however, remained delusional, convinced that the world was against her. She strongly believed that she was a talent being overlooked while others succeeded only due to connections.

The incident finally reached a conclusion, and Lucas chose not to delve any further. Knowing that Tracy would be sentenced was sufficient for him.

He walked out of the police station, finding the weather outside just right. It was time to share the news with Melody.

[I have good news to tell you when I'm back at the hospital.]

Lucas could not resist giving Melody a heads-up.

Melody, who had just woken up, smiled as she received Lucas' message and replied with a simple [Okay.]

She looked out the window, which Patty had just opened for her. The weather outside was perfect, and it seemed like everything was moving in a positive direction. However, before Lucas could reach his car, he received a phone call.

"Hello, Lucas."

Lucas was surprised. He did not expect Thalia to call him at that hour. Typically, she would be attending her cello lessons at this time.

"Why are you calling me now? Aren't you supposed to be in class?" Lucas inquired.

"I took a leave from my cello lesson today. Lucas, guess where I am right now?"

Lucas, feeling a bit rushed, was eager to get back to share the good news with Melody. "I'm busy right now. I'll call you back once I'm free."

Thalia did not expect him to be so cold, showing no concern for her situation. A sense of crisis began to creep into her heart. This feeling had been growing since Melody came into Lucas' life, and she realized that this woman's influence on Lucas was gradually surpassing her own...

"Lucas, where are you rushing to? You haven't heard me out yet. I'm at the airport right now!"

"Where did you say you are?" Lucas, who was about to hang up, halted at Thalia's words.

He thought she might be joking. She should be at home or attending cello lessons. Why would she be at the airport, and where was she planning to go?

"Lucas, I'm back in the country! I'm currently at the airport in New Capital City!"

"Why did you suddenly fly back alone? Couldn't you have asked Quinn to accompany you?"

Quinn was Thalia's good friend, and typically, she would accompany Thalia on her travels.

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Thalia had never flown alone on a plane. Her health condition made her uncomfortable during flights, and friends and family had always tried to dissuade her from flying. All that, and she surprisingly flew back

on her own.

How could she risk her own health like that?

Thalia felt a slight sense of relief when she finally heard the concern in Lucas' voice.

"Lucas, I thought you didn't care about me at all! Quinn has some urgent matters, so I came alone. Aren't you going to pick me up at the airport? It's been so long since I returned to the city, and I have no idea how to find you..."

Lucas' frown deepened. He could not understand why Thalia would do something so risky. What if something had happened to her?

"Stay where you are. I'll come over right away."

Lucas quickly drove to the airport. He was worried that something could have happened to Thalia while he was on his way there. It would be disastrous if she failed to seek help in an unfamiliar place. As Lucas got out of the car, he spotted Thalia standing at the airport.

"Thalia."

She looked up happily. As Lucas approached, she eagerly skipped over and embraced him.

Before Lucas could reprimand her, she took a deep breath in his arms and looked up at him cutely. "Lucas, I missed you so much. It feels like an eternity since we last met, even though it's just been a short time."

Once Lucas confirmed that Thalia was truly okay, he pushed her away and patted her shoulder. "The cheek of you to say that. Do you know how worried you made me just now?"

Thalia pouted. "But I missed you. You're so busy with work, so you can't fly to see me often! Plus, it's been years since I last came back here. Sometimes I do miss the place where I grew up, you know. Now that I'm back, you don't have to fly to Molomia for me. Isn't this a win-win situation?"

Seeing that Thalia still had not grasped the seriousness of the situation, Lucas held her and said sternly, "You need to tell me or your family in advance the next time you're coming back. You're not allowed to do this again! What if something happens to you on the plane, and there's no medication? How am I supposed to face your sister if something happened to you?"

Thalia's face crumbled along with her tone. "I get it. It's all about my sister. Would you even care about me if it weren't for my sister?"

Lucas' expression truly darkened then. He would not even be alive if it were not for Thalia's sister saving his life back then. It was one of the reasons he had been taking care of Thalia all these years. Realizing Lucas' deep respect for her sister, Thalia stuck out her tongue in apology. "Fine, I'm sorry. Can we go now? I'm getting tired, and I haven't even visited Grandpa and Grandma yet! I was in so much of a rush that I didn't get them any souvenirs. Can you take me to the mall to pick out a couple of gifts?"

Lucas became somewhat hesitant at the mention of taking her back. "I can't take you home now. I need to make a quick stop at the hospital."

Thalia was taken aback. She grabbed his hands and checked him over. "Why do you need to go to the hospital? Are you injured? Lucas, are you sick? Why didn't you tell me?"

Lucas gently freed his hands. "I'm not the one who's sick. It's Melody. I mentioned it on the phone last time."

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"Melody is still in the hospital, so I need to take care of her there. If you want to take a rest, I can drop you off first and then go to the hospital later," said Lucas hesitantly. Thalia's expression suddenly turned blank.

Lucas instinctively thought that it might not be the best time for Melody and Thalia to meet.

Thalia bit her lip, thinking, 'That Melody again! Lucas has excused himself more than once because of her! Let's just see what's so great about her!'

Suddenly, Thalia broke into a wide smile. "Oh, so it's Melody. I remember now. I haven't met her yet. How about you take me to visit her together?"

Seeing Lucas still hesitating, Thalia gave him a little push. "Take it as I want to be friends with Melody. We're probably around the same age. I don't have many friends here, so it'll be wonderful if I can get along with Melody. Plus, it's only polite to visit someone who's unwell."

Seeing how sincere Thalia was, Lucas decided to agree to her request. They first went to the mall, where they bought gifts for Melody and his grandparents. Only then did they head to the hospital.

Lucas-holding bags of gifts-suddenly stopped in front of Melody's hospital room and turned to Thalia. "Try to keep the conversation light when you go in there. She's not feeling well, and she doesn't know

you."

"Lucas, why are you suddenly being so cautious? So what if she doesn't know me? I just want to meet her. I heard Melody is quite popular in the country now. In fact, she's being considered for the next leading actress! Take it as a starstruck fan meeting a big star, okay?"

Since Thalia already said that, Lucas reluctantly brought her into the room.

Thalia knocked on the door first, and upon hearing Melody's voice, she pushed the door open.

Melody's face lit up with a smile the moment she saw Lucas. "Is the good news you mentioned earlier..."

Before she could finish her sentence, Melody noticed Thalia following behind Lucas. The appearance of Thalia made her feel uneasy for some unknown reason.

Melody instinctively looked at Lucas, but he unconsciously avoided her gaze, making her feel quite uncomfortable.

"And who is this?" Melody asked reluctantly.

Thalia walked over to her enthusiastically.

"Hello! I'm Thalia, a good friend of Lucas! Nice to meet you! Melody, we briefly chatted on the phone before. Wow! You're even more beautiful in person than in the movies." "Thalia? So, she's Thalia The Thalia that keeps calling Lucas. But what is she doing here? Did Lucas bring her here intentionally? If so, just what is he trying to achieve?" thought Melody. Melody's gaze became complex. She hesitated for a moment before extending her hand to shake Thalia's.

Melody could not comprehend why this woman suddenly appeared in her hospital room. Was Thalia the good news Lucas wanted to share with her earlier?

All three of them, with Thalia being the only one excited, had their minds occupied by different thoughts.