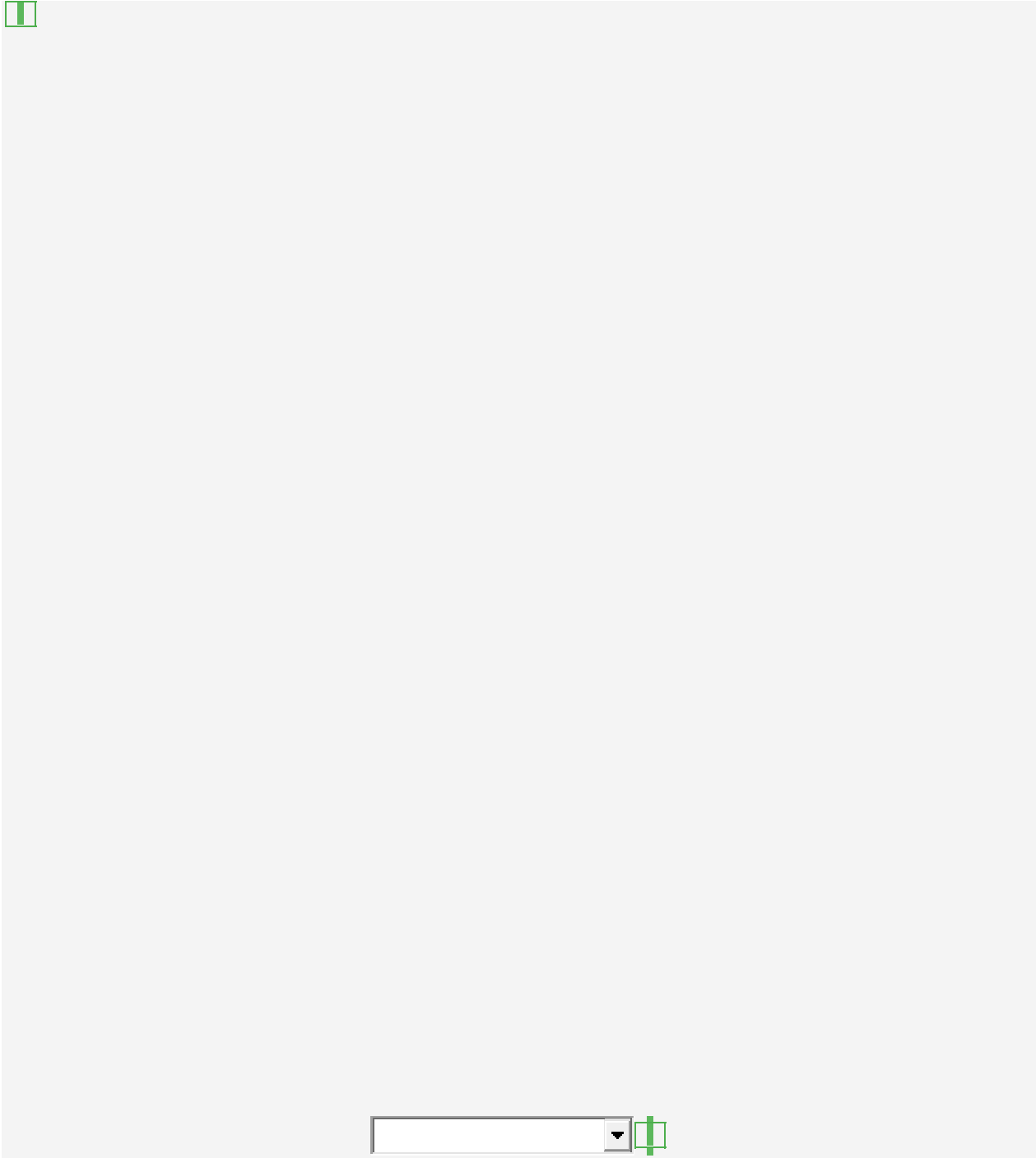## Chapter 1281

Sophia held on to the banister and looked down at where Corinne was. "It's just a feeling of mine. I mean, Corinne is standoffish to everyone except for Jason, and they always seem to have something in common to talk about."

Jeremy's grip tightened around the stem of his wine glass, which looked like it would break if he exerted just a little more strength.

Sophia was about to say something else when she saw Jeremy striding down the stairs. She chased after him, asking, "Jeremy! Where are you going?"

"Enjoy your party. I just remembered I have something else to do," said Jeremy. He walked down the stairs with both of his hands shoved into his pockets. Even though he looked casual, he was obviously brooding. Anyone would think twice about following him.

Thus, Sophia stopped chasing after him. Instead, she watched him leave while a smile gradually appeared on her face.

…

Corinne was annoyed. She had gone one round around the room but still failed to find her mother's self-portrait. She was not only annoyed at failing to find her self-portrait but also by the noise and lights given off by the rock band.

"What's the matter? Didn't you see any paintings you like? Is that why you look so upset?" whispered Jason when he noticed the frown on her face.

Corinne sighed. "It's too noisy in here, and I'm feeling a little bit thirsty. Can you please get me a glass of juice? Thanks."

It was even noisier in the drinks area. Just looking at the place made Corinne dizzy.

Jason smiled. "Wait here. I'll go get you some water."

Even though there was juice being offered in the drinks area, there was no guarantee that it had not been spiked with alcohol. Since Corinne was pregnant, it would be safer for her to drink water.

Corinne nodded and waited where she was for Jason to come back. However, it was not long before she started to feel like she could not catch her breath due to how noisy the place was. She blamed her pregnancy hormones for the increase in sensitivity, but then her vision started to blur.

She squeezed her eyes shut to wake herself up a little, but that just made her even dizzier, causing her to lose her balance and fall backward.

'Am I falling? I hope the baby will be fine…' thought Corinne. She tried to steady herself but found she had no strength to do that at all. Just when she was bracing for the impact, she felt someone holding her up from behind. After that, she was scooped up from the floor and carried away.

When she woke up, she found herself in a place filled with the smell of cigarettes and alcohol. The ceiling was so low that she could touch it if she reached out her hand.

'Where am I?' she wondered.

She waited until she was a little bit more awake before looking around her surroundings. It was then she discovered she was lying in the backseat of a car.

However, she was not alone. In fact, her head was on top of someone's lap. Corinne jumped up in fright when she saw the man's face under the dim light.

"Who are you?!" she asked after bolting up from her seat.

Jeremy looked at her. 'She looks like she has seen a ghost,' he thought helplessly, though he did not show any emotions on his face.

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Jeremy leaned into the seat, so Corinne did not see him when she woke up. She just thought he was part of the seat. It was not until he moved his body that the light from outside of the car fell on his face.

Corinne was not happy to see him at all. She frowned out of embarrassment and asked, "It's you! How… How did I end up in your car?!"

Jeremy glanced sideways at her. "You should first ask yourself why you fainted on me of all people."

Corinne remembered someone scooping her up from behind to prevent her from falling before she blacked out.

'So it was Jeremy who saved me…' thought Corinne. She decided to be nicer to him since he did her a big favor.

"Sorry, I must've fainted because of low blood sugar. Thank you for saving me. Well, I guess I'll be off, then," she said.

After that, she opened the car door. Jeremy did not stop her. Instead, he just said breezily, "I guess you don't want to see Nellie Nymphaea's self-portrait, then."

Corinne's hand instantly froze, and she snapped her head back to look at him. "You have the painting?"

'No wonder I couldn't find the painting even after searching every corner of the venue!' thought Corinne.

Jeremy rested his chin on his hand and simply replied, "Yeah."

Corinne closed the car door and sat back down. "Where is the painting now? Can I please see it?"

Jeremy looked at her mockingly. "Why should I let you see my private collection?"

'Oh, so he bought the painting!' thought Corinne. She started to panic. However, she forced herself to calm down and suppress all of her anger for the sake of her mother's painting. "I'm just asking to see it. It's not like I'm asking you to give it to me."

Jeremy scoffed. "How do I know you won't steal it? It's not like we're very close."

Corinne puffed up her cheeks. 'He's being an *sshole!'

"You're right. We're not close, but we worked together once. Can you please find it in your heart to let me see the painting? I don't mind even if I could see it from afar," said Corinne.

Jeremy lifted her chin as though he was checking something interesting. His eyes roved all over her face and after a long while, he finally said two words, "Beg me."

Corinne was already not in the best of mood. Nonetheless, she had no choice but to suppress her anger again since Jeremy was holding the painting hostage. She took a deep breath and begged, "Okay, Mister Jeremy. I beg you to ple—mph!"

She did not even get to finish her sentence before he leaned down and kissed her. He even bit her lips possessively.

Corinne's eyes widened in shock. She quickly pushed him away and wiped her mouth. "Have you lost your mind?!"

Jeremy panted. He glared at her angrily and shouted, "Yes! I've lost my mind!"

Corinne kept wiping her mouth vigorously in a bid to calm her wildly beating heart. "Why don't you find someone else to torture? I don't have the time to play with you anymore!"

She was so angry that she did not even want to see the painting anymore. All she wanted to do was to get out of the car as fast as possible.

However, this time, Jeremy stopped her by pulling her back and closing the car door.

"What the hell are you doing? I'm going to scream for help if you don't let me out this instant!" shouted Corinne as she tried to break free from Jeremy.

However, she was no match for his strength at all. He plonked her down on his lap and hugged her gently due to her being pregnant, but it was enough to keep her trapped.

Not being able to move, Corinne glared at him and asked, "Jeremy Holden, just what the hell do you want?"

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Jeremy's expression remained impassive, but Corinne could tell he had no intention to let her go.

"You'd rather beg me than talk to me nicely?" asked Jeremy.

Corinne frowned. "How am I not talking to you nicely? Plus, you were the one who asked me to beg you!"

Jeremy chuckled coldly. "When did you become so obedient? Why didn't you listen to me when I asked you to stay at home?"

Corinne was speechless. She did not know what he was trying to say, and apart from glaring at him, she did not know how else to express her anger. After all, it was not like she could break free and escape from him.

The bitterness in Jeremy's eyes gradually disappeared when he saw her angry yet puffy face. He pinched her cheek playfully and said dotingly, "How can you still be so cute when you're so puffy?"

Corinne was once again speechless. 'Why did his tone suddenly change?'

"Ahem! Don't even think I'll forgive you just because you called me cute!"

Jeremy raised an eyebrow. "Then how can I make you forgive me?"

Corinne was stunned. She looked at his inky-blue eyes and fell into a trance. When she said she was not going to forgive him, she meant she was not going forgive him for holding her captive in the car. However, it was obvious Jeremy was asking her forgiveness for something else.

'Forgive him? How can I ever forgive him for lying about being single and playing with my feelings?' thought Corinne.

Jeremy rested his chin on top of Corinne's head when he saw she was not going to say anything.

"Tell me. What can I do to make you forgive me?" he asked again.

Corinne's heart trembled. She instantly snapped out of her trance and pulled her head away. She did not want him so close to her.

"Don't touch me!"

Jeremy did not move closer anymore. He simply looked at her quietly, his gaze both imposing and vulnerable.

Somehow, Corinne could not help but pity him. However, that feeling did not last for long. 'What the hell am I pitying him for? He's pure bad luck!' she thought.

"Mister Jeremy, please stop confusing me with your words and actions, and let me get out of the car!"

Jeremy frowned. "I would if you tell me why you ran away in the first place."

'Why did I run away? The nerve of him for asking!' thought Corinne.

Corinne looked coldly at him. "Because I'm a woman of principles, and you just happened to cross a line that you shouldn't have crossed! Why should I not run away?"

Jeremy looked at her deeply. "Is it because you found out I got married to Sophia abroad?"

Corinne scoffed. "Why do you still need to ask me when you already knew?"

"It's not what you think it is. Why didn't you ask me to explain before running away?"

Corinne found his question so absurd that she nearly laughed out loud. "Did you forget? I did ask you back then, but you avoided telling me the truth!"

"You did ask me? When?"

"I asked you if you're hiding anything from me, and you said nothing!"

Jeremy looked down and sighed heavily. "I got married to Sophia to please my grandfather. Before I met you, I asked Sophia to play along so that he'd agree to go for the surgery. But her flight got delayed on the day of our staged

wedding, and then I met you. So you see, there's really nothing going on between me and Sophia."

Corinne found his explanation laughable.

"In any case, you lied to me! So I'm never going to believe anything you say anymore. Now let me go!"

About -

Jeremy did not let Corinne go. Instead, he muttered, "I didn't mean to lie to you. I forgot I was legally married to Sophia. It wasn't until I thought of marrying you that I remembered it. I planned to tell you everything after I revoked my marriage license with Sophia because I assumed you'd get angry at me if I told you before then…and I didn't want you to get upset while you're pregnant. I know this is all my fault…"

Corinne fell silent after that. After a long while, she finally said, "Mister Jeremy, I don't think you ever see me as someone who can understand you. Now, it doesn't matter whether there's anything going on between you and Sophia. All the trust has gone from our relationship."

After that, she tried to free herself from Jeremy's grip so she could escape from the suffocating car.

…

Jason went back to where he left Corinne with a bottle of mineral water in his hand. When she was nowhere to be seen, he started to look around for her in

panic. Instead of finding Corinne, he ran into Sophia, who looked like she was enjoying the party.

He pulled her aside and asked, "Have you seen Corinne?"

Sophia was a little taken aback. "Corinne? I thought she was with you."

"I went to get some water for her, but she was gone by the time I got back."

Sophia did not really care where Corinne was, but she started to worry after she suddenly remembered Jeremy was gone too.

Jason must have realized what she was thinking about because he asked, "How about Jeremy? Where is he right now?"

"He said he had to leave because he remembered he had to do something. But I'm still going to call him to ask him whether he has seen Corinne."

Jason nodded. He, too, suspected Jeremy had taken Corinne away, but he was not in the position to call him.

Sophia and Jason went to a quieter place to call Jeremy, but he did not pick up at all. Thinking it off, Sophia tried calling him again. This time, he picked up after a long time.

"Yes?" said Jeremy impatiently.

Sophia did not know what was up with him, so she just laughed and asked, "Jeremy, we can't find Corinne. Jason has been looking for her all over the place. Did you see her when you were leaving?"

"No," said Jeremy coldly and hung up without warning.

Sophia turned to Jason and shrugged helplessly. "He said he didn't see Corinne."

Jason narrowed his eyes. He did not believe Jeremy at all. Knowing him, Jeremy would never be this calm if he knew Corinne was missing. 'If my guess is right, Corinne must be with Jeremy right now,' he thought.

"Sophia, there are surveillance cameras all over the hotel. Ask the hostess of the party; you have the right to check the footage," he said.

"Oh, you're right! Let's go check the surveillance footage now to see if Corinne has left the hotel!"

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Chapter 1285

"Okay, let's go now!"

Sophia and Jason went to the security room and asked the security guard on duty to let them see the footage. Soon, they came to the part where they saw Jeremy carrying Corinne out of the hotel.

Sophia subtly clenched her fists. "Oh my god. How could Jeremy lie to us? Doesn't he know how worried we are about Corinne?"

She managed to maintain a smile on her face, but everyone there could tell how sad she was.

Jason was no better than her. He did not wish for Corinne to have any contact with Jeremy as he wanted her for himself. Also, he was worried Jeremy would hurt her in a fit of anger.

"Happy birthday, Sophia. Forgive me, but I have to leave now," said Jason before he quickly walked out of the room.

Sophia immediately chased after him. "Jason! You're going to look for Jeremy and Corinne, right? Wait for me. I want to go too!"

Jason was a little taken aback. "But you should go back to your birthday party."

Sophia smiled nonchalantly and said, "It's just a party. Plus, a friend's safety is more important. You might not know this, but there seems to be a misunderstanding between Jeremy and Corinne. I'm worried that Jeremy's temper might get the better of him. What would happen to Corinne then? I should go with you in case I need to calm him."

Jason was well aware that Sophia wanted to go out of her own interest, but he did not have the luxury to care so much anymore. He just wanted to find Corinne as fast as possible.

"Fine. Let's go, then."

Thus, Sophia followed Jason into his car, and the two of them drove out of the hotel. Along the way, they kept checking every car to see whether it was Jeremy's car, but they came up empty-handed every time.

Sophia was starting to lose hope about finding Jeremy and Corinne. However, she did gain something at that moment. She looked curiously at Jason, who was still checking out every car.

"Jason, tell me the truth. Do you have a crush on Corinne?"

Jason was so focused on looking for Jeremy's car that he was caught off-guard by Sophia's question. He glanced at her.

After a brief moment of silence, he smiled and said, "Yeah, a huge one."

Sophia beamed at him. "I like how straightforward you are. So I was right all along! Your eyes become so much gentler when you look at her."

Jason smiled. He kept his eyes on the road to look for Jeremy's car.

After thinking it over, Sophia asked another question, "What do you plan to do now?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, what are you going to do about Corinne? Are you going to keep your feelings to yourself while you continue to protect her from the side, or are you going to make her yours?"

Jason smiled again. "To be honest, I'm leaning toward the latter. But whether I succeed or not depends on how lucky I am."

Sophia was a little surprised. "You really plan to make her yours? You don't mind that she's pregnant with Jeremy's kid? Aren't you worried you'll lose him as a friend if you get together with Corinne?"

Jason narrowed his eyes. "I'd be lying if I said I don't mind, but I can't do anything about it since Corinne met Jeremy first. As for the baby… Well, I trust that the Holdens would want their grandchild back."

Sophia knew what he meant. "So you're going to wait until the baby is born and taken away by the Holdens before getting together with Corinne?"

Jason raised an eyebrow. "The Holdens would take the baby to live with them. I want to be with Corinne now, but she doesn't want to. I need to work extra hard to make her fall in love with me."

Read

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Sophia gazed admiringly at Jason before praising him, "I respect you, Jason. Not many men can be so forgiving about their partners' past."

Jason simply smiled. Not wanting to talk about himself anymore, he asked her, "What about you?"

"What do you mean, what about me?"

"What kind of attitude are you bringing into your and Jeremy's relationship? I mean, you don't seem like you mind that he's having a baby with Corinne."

Sophia did not mind telling him the truth since he was honest with her. "To be honest, I don't really mind. Worst comes to worst, I'll just raise the baby with Jeremy. Besides, I think I'm more compatible with Jeremy since our personalities complement each other's. We can just be ourselves when we're together. Jeremy might still have feelings for Corinne, but they're not compatible with each other. They're not going to be happy or last long together. That's why I think Jeremy will eventually choose her over me."

Jason glanced sideways at her and sincerely smiled. "I wish you nothing but success, then."

Sophia smiled back at him. "And I, you."

After driving for a while more, Jason finally spotted a black car parked at the side of the road ahead. He instantly recognized it to be Jeremy's car.

He parked at the side of the road too. He then got out of the car with Sophia, ran over to the car, and banged on the window.

The window slowly rolled down to reveal Jeremy's cold face.

Jason immediately stuck his head through the window to look for Corinne.

"Jeremy, where's Corinne?" he asked.

Jeremy glanced at him coldly from the corner of his eyes. "Why are you looking for her?"

"Cut it out, Jeremy! We saw the surveillance footage, so we knew you took her away! Where is she now?"

Jeremy calmly took out a pack of cigarettes from his pocket and stuck one into his mouth before lighting it up. He took a puff and blew out some smoke before answering, "She's left."

"She left? Where?" asked Jason with a worried frown.

Jeremy held the cigarette between his fingers. "She refused to let me send her home and asked to be let out of the car. As to where she went after that, I don't know."

Jason was furious. "How can you let a pregnant lady go home by herself this late at night?"

Jeremy raised an eyebrow. "Why are you getting angry at me?"

Jason knew he was at fault, so he took a deep breath and apologized, "Sorry for shouting at you. I was just too worried. But you shouldn't have let her go home by herself in any case."

"She insisted on going home by herself. She even threatened to jump out of the car if I didn't do what she said. So what do you say? Should I have let her go back by herself or jump out from a moving car?" asked Jeremy impassively.

After a few seconds of silence, Jason asked, "Did you manage to get a cab after that?"

Jeremy puffed out a cloud of smoke. "I don't know."

Jason knew he was not going to get a straight answer out of Jeremy anymore, so he looked around the road to see if Corinne was still there. When he failed to locate her, he ran back to his car and drove off to look for Corinne.

'I should check her home next if I can't find her along the road,' he reminded himself.

He was in such a rush that he forgot about Sophia.

Jeremy narrowed his eyes as he watched Jason's car sped off. No one could tell what he was thinking from his cold face.

Sophia walked over to Jeremy's side of the car and said, "Jason, I think Jason has forgotten all about me so I hitch a ride with you?"

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Jeremy did not look at Sophia. With the cigarette still between his fingers, he emotionlessly replied, "Sure. Get in."

Sophia looked smug for a second before walking around to get in from the other side of the car. After she sat beside him, Jeremy puffed out another cloud of smoke before gesturing with his chin to the driver as a signal for him to drive off.

The car started moving steadily. Sophia looked out the window for a while before turning back to look at Jeremy. She then blinked innocently and asked, "Jeremy, why the long face? Did you fight with Corinne?"

Instead of answering her, Jeremy asked her coldly, "Where do you want to go? Back to your hotel, or the party?"

Sophia pretended to give some thought to the question before answering, "I'd like to go back to my hotel. The party is about to end soon, so there's no point going back there. I'll call Zeke later to tell them I've gone back to the hotel and ask them to help me entertain the guests."

"Okay," said Jeremy. He gave the driver a look from the rearview mirror.

The driver made a turn in front and drove toward the hotel where Sophia was staying.

Sophia did not give up on getting an answer out of Jeremy. "You still haven't answered my questions! Is Corinne still unwilling to forgive you?"

Jeremy stubbed out his cigarette. "I don't want to talk about her."

"Oh dear. It looks like it won't be that easy to clear up the misunderstanding, huh? But don't you find it odd? I mean, you're so good to her, so by right, she should trust you more. All that, and she doesn't!"

Jeremy chuckled coldly and said nothing. 'I'd like to know why too,' he thought mockingly.

Sophia continued to talk to him, but she gradually fell silent as Jeremy barely responded. She was also worried that Jeremy would find her annoying should she misspoke.

20 minutes later, the car stopped in front of Sophia's hotel. The driver turned and said, "Miss Sophia, we've arrived."

Sophia nodded and got out of the car, but before she closed the door, she bent down and said, "Jeremy, you really look like you need some cheering up. Why don't you come up to my room for some drinks?"

…

After he got to Corinne's apartment, Jason rang long and hard at the doorbell, but no one came to answer it. He tried calling her, but her phone seemed to have been switched off. He was so worried about her that he felt his heart was about to explode.

Suddenly, the door opened. Sunny, who looked like he had just woken up, appeared in front of him.

"Jason? What are you doing here?" asked Sunny in surprise.

In a fit of panic, Jason simply pushed him aside and went into the apartment to look for Corinne.

"Sunny, is Corinne back yet?" he asked when he discovered Corinne was not in her room either.

Sunny scratched his head. "Corinne? She's not back yet. Isn't she supposed to be at Sophia's birthday party?"

'Sh*t!' thought Jason.

"Jason, what happened? Didn't Corinne go to Sophia's birthday party?" asked Sunny in confusion.

"She did but she left early. She should be home by now," said Jason.

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Sunny frowned. "What do you mean? Did Corinne go missing?"

"It's still too early to tell. I'm going to look for her nearby. Call me if she's back."

After that, Jason rushed out to the elevator again.

Sunny watched as Jason left, feeling confused.

Xante, who just finished showering and was dressed in a bathrobe, came out of her room. "Who was at the door?"

"It was Jason. He came to look for Corinne. He said Corinne left the birthday party early, and it sounds like she went missing."

Xante frowned and went back to her room to call Corinne. In the end, she got the same response as Jason—her phone was switched off.

'This can't be good!' Xante ran over to her closet to change into something more presentable.

"Xante, are you going out to look for Corinne too?" asked Sunny when he saw her panicking.

"Yeah. Can you go home first?" she asked while changing.

Sunny frowned. "No, I want to go with you!"

As much as she did not want to bring Sunny with her, Xante had no choice but to let him follow her since she did not have the bandwidth to deal with him. After she finished changing, she grabbed her car keys with one hand and called Aaron with her other.

Sunny quickly threw on her jacket and followed her out of the apartment. The three of them drove along the streets for a long time but still failed to find Corinne. Her phone was switched off, so they could not

call her either.

Xante, Aaron, and Jason were so worried about Corinne that they went to the police station to report Corinne as missing. However, they knew they could not do that since it had not been 48 hours yet.

Xante stopped her car at an intersection. "We're close to your house. Go home, Sunny."

Sunny looked at his watch. It was already quite late at night. Lucas would definitely send someone to haul him home if he did not go back then.

Thus, he decided to listen to Xante. "Fine. But remember to call me when you've found Corinne."

"Okay," replied Xante with a nod.

Sunny got out of the car and waved to Xante before turning into the street where his mansion was.

The moment he entered the mansion, Felix came up to him fearfully and said, "Mister Sunny, you're home late! Mister Lucas is going to be angry again if he finds out about this!"

"Where is he now? Maybe he won't be that angry since I did finish my homework before going out," said Sunny sheepishly.

Felix pointed to the half-emptied coffee on the table and said, "Mister Lucas was sitting there, waiting for you to come home just moments ago. He didn't look too happy, so I assumed you were going to get it tonight."

Sunny gulped nervously after taking a glance at the living room. "Where… Where is he now?"

"He's upstairs talking to a guest. It's a good thing he went out to pick up a guest just now, or I don't think you're going to survive the night…"

Sunny sighed in relief when he heard that. "So who's the guest?"

'All of Lucas' friends have gone to Sophia's birthday party. He must've received an invitation too, but it's not surprising he didn't go since he never liked those kinds of events. But since all of his friends are at the birthday party, who else can the guest be that he'd bring them up to his room?'

Felix shook his head. "I don't know. I only know we have a guest because the maid said he brought a woman back home."

'A woman?' wondered Sunny.

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Sunny's curiosity was piqued, so he said, "I'm going up to take a look!"

Felix stopped him. "Mister Sunny, I think you should go back to your room. That way, Mister Lucas might forget all about your transgression today."

Sunny flung his hand away. "Don't worry. I'm just going to listen from outside the door to see if it's anyone I recognize. I'll make sure Lucas doesn't find out about it."

Felix wanted to stop him again, but Sunny ran off before he could grab him.

Meanwhile, in Lucas' room…

Lucas was peeling a mandarin orange for Corinne. "Here, Corinne. Have some mandarin oranges," he said gently.

Corinne waved her hand. "No, thanks. I'm not hungry."

Lucas placed the mandarin orange back on the table with a resigned sigh before picking up a glass of milk again. "The milk isn't that hot now. Do you want to drink it?"

Corinne took the glass of milk from his hand, but instead of drinking it, she placed it back on the coffee table. "Mister Lucas, you don't have to tiptoe around me."

Lucas sighed again. "I'm not tiptoeing around you. I'm just trying to show you my concern."

Corinne looked at him quietly. "Thank you for your concern and…for picking me up just now."

"You don't have to thank me, Corinne. I'm glad you were willing to ask me for help."

Corinne fell silent. She would not have asked him for help if she had a choice. When Jeremy would not let her out of the car, she knew it would be useless to ask Aaron, Xante, or Jason for help since Jeremy

feared none of them.

The only person who could make Jeremy budge was Lucas, despite the animosity between them. Not to mention, she was well aware that Lucas would come to her rescue if she asked for his help.

Thus, she secretly sent her location and a message to Lucas, asking him to pick her up, while Jeremy was not looking.

Lucas arrived swiftly. Surprisingly, Jeremy did not become angry when he saw Lucas. After the two men talked, Jeremy released Corinne and let her get out of his car so she could get into Lucas' car.

Corinne assumed Lucas was going to drop her home or at least somewhere where she could call a cab, but he brought her to the Riveras' mansion instead.

"Mister Lucas, why did you bring me here? It's getting late. My friends will start worrying about me if I'm not home soon," said Corinne with a frown.

Lucas looked at her gently. "This is your home. You can stay here tonight. I've asked the servants to keep your room clean so you can move in straight away."

"Sorry, but there seems to be some misunderstanding. I don't have any plans to move back home. I asked you for help with the assumption you'll give me a ride home."

Lucas clamped his hand down on Corinne to stop her from getting up. "Be a good girl and listen to me, Corinne. The baby's due date is near. Heck, you might even go into labor now. The only way for me to not worry about you is if you stay at the mansion with me."

"But I'm staying with my friends! They'll send me to the hospital at the first sign of the baby coming. I know you're worried about me, Mister Lucas, but I don't think it's appropriate for an outsider like me to stay at your home," said Corinne.

Lucas felt a pang in his heart when she said that. "Corinne, how can you call yourself an outsider? Grandpa, Grandma, and even our dad… They never stopped missing you or hoping you'd come home over the years!"

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Corinne smiled in a way that seemed polite and a little contemptuous altogether. "Is that so?"

Lucas nodded. "Yeah! What happened with our mother had nothing to do with you! Yes, they did for a brief moment suspect that you were a product of an affair because of the rumors going around, but after they calmed down, they realized how wrong they were."

Corinne scoffed. "Oh, how nice of them to think that!"

Lucas sighed helplessly when he saw how stubborn Corinne was. His gaze went down to her protruding belly, and the worries of her leaving gripped him again. After thinking it over, he said, "Fine. I won't talk about the past anymore. But you don't want to see Jeremy, right? Well, I can guarantee he won't bother you if you just stay here."

Corinne was a little taken aback and, to be honest, very tempted by Lucas' suggestion. She only came back to the city because Jeremy found out her hiding place in the countryside and also because the baby was about to be due.

Even though Jason said he would hire the best doctor to deliver the baby, she was still worried there might be complications during the delivery and that lives would be lost due to lack of hospital equipment.

She did not want to die nor did she want to put the baby at any risk, but then again, she was also worried that Jeremy would steal the baby while she was still unconscious after giving birth.

Thus, the more she thought about Lucas' suggestion, the more tempted she was to take it.

"But what are you going to tell your family if I decide to stay here? You know I don't want them to find out who I am, right?" she asked after a while.

Lucas was pleasantly surprised to see Corinne actually giving his suggestion some thought. "You don't have to worry about that. I won't tell them who you are. Dad has brought our grandparents abroad to visit some relatives, and they won't be back for three months. The only people here are me and Sunny. That means you can stay here without worrying what other people would think."

After thinking it over, Corinne finally nodded. "Okay. I'll take your word. I hope you can make good on your guarantee to keep Jeremy as far away from me and the baby as possible."

"Don't worry. I'm not fit to be your brother if I can't even do something as easy as that," assured Lucas with a grin.

Corinne yawned. "My phone is out of battery. I need to call my friends to let them know, or they'll think I've been kidnapped again."

Lucas passed her his phone. "Here, use mine to call them. I'll ask the servant to bring you a phone charger later."

Corinne accepted his phone and briefly explained to Xante what happened. As much as Xante thought it was a bad idea for her to move in with Lucas, she knew nothing she said would be able to change Corinne's mind after she decided.

Xante was just glad that Corinne was fine. After all, both she and Aaron had a fright of their lives when they found out she went missing from the party.

Corinne hung up the phone and gave Lucas back his phone. "Thanks," she said.

Lucas smiled and stroked her hair. "You don't ever need to thank me, Corinne. Since you've decided to stay, I'll ask the servant to bring you your stuff later. Is there anything they should pay particular attention to?"

Corinne thought about it and said, "Not really. But there's one thing I'd like you to help me with."

Lucas would give her the world if he could to make up for the lost time. "What is it?"

"The only reason I attended Sophia's birthday party was because I heard a self-portrait of Nellie Nymphaea would be displayed at the venue."

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