

The Day I Kissed An Older Man By Cher the Cherished

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While eating, Lucas hummed lazily. It seemed like he responded to him, but at the same time, he did not. He was very polite the whole time, but he also seemed cool and distant.

While Lucas was having lunch, he received a call, so he got up and headed out.

Seeing Lucas leave, Rosie got a little worried. Lucas finally had a few bites, but he left the office again. Was it because the food she made was not to Lucas's taste?

Anya could tell that her best friend was feeling uneasy. Being considerate, she patted Rosie's hand and comforted her, "Rosie, my brother's like this. He often neglects his sleep and skips meals for work. Don't

overthink it."

Rosie nodded, feeling slightly relieved.

Anya suddenly thought of something and said, "Rosie, my aunt's birthday party is tomorrow. Have your prepared a dress for the party?"

Rosie was dazed. She already forgot about it if Anya did not mention it. "Anya, I remember your aunt, Missus Benet, has a rule that everybody has to bring a partner to her birthday party, is that right? I wonder if Lucas has found a girl to attend the party with him this year."

Anya understood what her best friend meant. "Don't worry, Rosie. I'm here. You have always been his partner all these years, so there would be no exception this year either!"

Rosie was so touched, she smiled. "Thank you for knowing me so well, Anya."

Anya said, "But you just came out of prison, so you probably haven't had the time to buy a new dress, am I right? Do you want me to go shopping with you now? Let's buy you a beautiful dress, then you can make my brother stun and fall for you when you wear it tomorrow!"

Rosie said, "Of course! But would it be inconvenient for us to go shopping with Joey?"

It was only then that Anya thought of Joey. Looking at the boy in her arms, she realized he was yawning- He was so sleepy that he could not open his eyes at all.

After a while, the door to Lucas's office opened when Corinne was still busy translating the document. Anya and Rosie walked out of the office together.

Anya went to Corinne's desk, asking politely and gently, "Corinne, Rosie, and I would like to head out for a moment. Can you please help me look after my child?"

"Me?" Corinne raised her head, looking at Anya in confusion. Business is business, so Corinne rejected her, saying, "I'm sorry. Taking care of a child is not part of my job scope."

Anya requested nicely again, "We'll be quick. Rosie and I have not met each other for a long time, so we just want to shop at the mall downstairs for a while. I also have to buy some things for Joey."

Corinne did not budge. "Miss Anya, you can either bring your child with you as you shop or let your brother -the child's uncle and my boss-help you look after him. Either option would be much better than leaving your child in the care of an outsider like me."

Anya felt troubled. "But Joey's asleep and my brother went out. Also, my brother doesn't know how to take care of a child!"

Corinne did not stop working at all, and she did not yield when Anya asked her nicely for a favor. She smiled and said, "I've never given birth before, if Mister Lucasn't know how to look after a child, I'm

worse. Also, I have a lot of work on my plate that's not finished yet, and I don't have the time. I'm sorry but my hands are tied."

"Alright. Forget it." Anya lowered her head bitterly, then she sighed helplessly. With regret, she turned to Rosie and said, "Rosie, it looks like I can't pick out a dress with you anymore. How about you ask other friends to go with you?"

“What do you mean by forget it? Rosie simply could not stand how arrogant Corinne looked. “Anya. Corinne is your family’s employee now. Who is she to refuse following your order?”

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Anya’s gaze was innocent and weak, making others feel the urge to protect her. “But-”

Rosie stood up and knocked on Corinne’s desk. Then, she crossed her arms and said arrogantly, “Corinne, listen to me! Joey is sleeping on the couch in Lucas’s office now. Anya and I are going out, and we’ll be right back! If we notice something’s wrong with Joey when we come back, then it’s your fault!”

Corinne did not even look up and was still going to reject her.

However, without even giving Corinne the chance to reject her, Rosie held Anya’s hand and said, “Let’s go, Anya.”

Corinne frowned. She looked up and saw Anya and Rosie entering the elevator in a rush.

Corinne was at a loss for words.

Never mind Rosie, but how could Anya, a mother, feel at ease to leave her child in the hands of a person who did not have a good relationship with her? Something must be up!

Whether something was fishy or not, Corinne could not be bothered with Any’s business.

However, Lucas stepped out to get a call earlier, so there was indeed nobody in the office at that moment. It was really dangerous to leave a child there alone.

After thinking about it, Corinne went into the office with her laptop in the end.

Just like Rosie said before she left, the boy named Joey was sound asleep on the couch with Anya’s jacket covering his body.

Corinne was afraid she would wake him up, so she tip-toed over and put her laptop on the coffee table..

After that, she took advantage of this chance to go to Lucas's table. She took out a mini high-definition camera she purposely brought from her pocket, snapped a shot of her mother's photo on the desk, and saved it before putting the camera away.

Corinne walked back to the couch and sat near the child before continuing to translate the documents. She looked up from time to time to see if he woke up or if he rolled off the couch.

Lucas did not return at all during that time. Soon, more than an hour passed. Corinne finally was done with translation, so she stretched deeply.

Seeing that the child was still asleep, she leaned against the couch and closed her eyes to take a breather, giving her eyes a rest.

Not long after that, she heard the sobbing of a child, so she immediately looked in that direction. She saw that Anya's son already woke up and sat up on his own. He was looking left and right, probably looking for his mother.

In that instant when she saw Corinne, a look of terror suddenly appeared on his face, and he burst into -tears!

Corinne was frightened by his reaction. She had no idea what to do and what he was thinking for a

moment.

She was pregnant, but she had no experience cheering children up.

"Hey, you, your mother's coming back soon, so don't cry!"

The child was more than one year old. He still could not speak well and could not understand what an adult was saying, so he showed no signs to stop crying at all.

Corinne got up as she wanted to comfort him. However, Joey cried even louder when he saw Corinne moving toward him. It was as if he had seen a scary monster!

Feeling helpless, Corinne had no choice but to stop approaching him. “Fine. I’m not going to go over, so stop crying, alright?”

Joey did not listen to her at all. He climbed off the couch and stumbled out of the office by himself. Corinne could not let a child run out on his own, so she quickly ran after him. “Hold on!”

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At that moment, Anya and Rosie walked through the door while chatting, carrying a bunch of shopping bags.

“Anya, the dress you picked for me just now is too pretty. I love it so much! I’ll wear that to Missus Benet’s birthday party tomorrow!”

“Mm-hmm. I feel it’s very pretty as well! If you wear that tomorrow, you’ll certainly stun everybody!”

“Waah!” Seeing that his mother returned, Joey became more worked up. He rushed toward her like he lost his mind, but he fell because he was running too fast. He then cried even harder.

Anya was stunned when she saw that, then she quickly helped him up. “What’s the matter, Joey?”

Joey quickly hugged his mother’s neck and nestled in her arms seeking protection. However, he was still crying without stopping.

“Joey, talk to me. What’s the matter? Are you not feeling well?”

Other than crying, a one-year-old child could not express his experience and feelings.

Anya was worried, so she started to check on his body. As soon as she rolled up his sleeves, she saw his arms were covered in bruises that looked terrifying!

Anya felt heartbroken, and tears instantly welled up in her eyes. “H-how did this happen?”

Joey was still crying and his tiny frame was trembling all over.

Rosie was shocked to see those bruises as well. In the next second, she turned her condemning gaze to the only other person present in the office earlier.

“It’s you, Corinne! You must have abused Joey when we weren’t around!”

“I didn’t.” Corinne found it strange. He was such a young child, and he was Jeremy and Anya’s precious son. He should be doted on like the apple of their eyes. Why would he have such bruises? How dared to lay a finger on him?

Rosie, however, glared at her fiercely. “You said you didn’t, but are we supposed to take your word for it? Only you and Joey were here the whole time. If it wasn’t you, who else?”

Corinne was calm. “Miss Rosie, you need to have evidence to make such claims.”

Rosie sneered. “Evidence? Your lack of alibi is the strongest evidence!”

Anya picked up her son while feeling sorry for him. She looked at Corinne with teary eyes, and said with grievance and anger, “Corinne, I only asked you to help me look after my child for a while. No matter how unhappy you were, you shouldn’t do this to a child! I trusted you so much..”

Trust? Anya said she trusted her? What a joke!

Seeing Anya’s realistic performance, Corinne immediately understood that this was a setup she designed.

However, Corinne never would have expected that she would be so vicious that she used her son!

At that moment, Lucas returned. As soon as he entered his office, he saw his sister and nephew crying. He frowned and asked, “What’s the matter?”

“Lucas!” Anya rushed into her brother’s arms while carrying Joey. She broke down sobbing like she was aggrieved.

Lucas had no idea what happened. When he looked down and saw his sister and nephew were crying so

hard, he felt heartbroken. “Anya, what’s the matter? What happened?”

Rosie complained angrily, "You came back just in time, Lucas! Corinne abused Joey when Anya and I went out for a moment! Look! Joey's body is covered with bruises that were pinched by her. He is in so much pain that he kept crying! What a poor thing!"

While saying that, Rosie lifted Joey's clothes for Lucas to have a look.

Lucas frowned. After he saw the spots on Joey's body, his gentle eyes turned cold as he looked up and stared at Corinne. "Are you even human, Miss Corinne? How could you do this to a child?"

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Corinne was not surprised at all that Lucas would believe Rosie's words. Without batting an eye, Corinne made her stance clear as she said, "Mister Lucas, this is what happened. An hour ago, Miss Anya and Miss Rosie said they wanted to go shopping and asked me to help take care of the child. I repeatedly refused but to no avail. I had no choice but to watch Miss Anya's child sleep the whole time. I did not touch him at all. As for how injuries on his body happened, I have no idea."

Hearing what Corinne said, Anya sobbed even harder in Lucas' arms. She blamed herself and said, " Lucas! It's my fault! It's all my fault! I shouldn't have left Joey in the care of your secretary. I didn't expect she'll do this to my child."

Rosie said furiously, "Lucas, don't listen to Corinne! Joey came running in fear while crying as soon as we entered. If we came back any later, there's no telling how Corinne will abuse Joey! I feel we should call the police straight away and detain her. Child abuse is a serious crime!"

Lucas glanced at Rosie and did not listen to her opinion. He looked at Corinne again with an unfathomable gaze. "How can you prove that you didn't touch Joey?"

Carrying her child and being in her brother's arms, Anya turned her face timidly and choked back a sob as she said weakly, "Corinne, why? Why did you do this to my child?"

Rosie questioned her as well, “Corinne, is it because Joey is Anya and Jeremy’s child that you felt jealous, so you can’t stand the sight of him and deliberately abused him to vent your anger?”

Jealous? Corinne sneered and ignored Rosie. She looked at Anya-who was sobbing-and said, “Usually, when a mother sees that her child is injured, her first response should be rushing the child to a hospital, then find out who’s the person who hurt her child after that! However, I see that you’re not worried about your child’s injuries at all. Instead, your focus is on slandering me!”

Anya’s eyes were shifty, and there was a hint of guilt on her face that was barely noticeable. “I’m not trying to slander anybody. I’m heartbroken to see Joey’s injuries! Lucas, hurry up and get the doctor!” She sobbed.

Rosie disliked Corinne, so she defended her best friend and said, “Anya is just in a panic. Of course, she cares about the child’s injuries very much. Lucas and I care about it very much too. We’ll take Joey to the hospital immediately! Don’t you try to create a distraction? Just admit it honestly and be prepared to be imprisoned!”

Corinne glanced at Rosie indifferently, then she looked at her boss, Lucas, and said, “Mister Lucas, you asked me earlier how I can prove I didn’t touch the child, didn’t you?”

Lucas stared at her seriously. “Do you have a way to prove it?”

“Yes.” Corinne nodded calmly and said, “I don’t know how to take care of a child, and I was afraid I won’t be able to explain myself if anything happened, so I started recording a video with my phone starting from the moment I entered the office. My phone is recording this whole time without stopping in between.”

Hearing that, Anya’s eyes darted. What? Did she record a video?

Rosie was a little surprised as well. Could it be that Joey’s injuries were not caused by Corinne?

Lucas squinted. “Where’s the video?”

Corinne raised her hand to point. “Mister Lucas, my phone is next to the photo frame on your desk. You can go and stop the recording now and watch the playback. Also, the surveillance camera at your door captured the precise

time I came in, which is also the time my phone started recording. There are no gaps in between. The video will prove that I've never touched Miss Anya's child at all."

Hearing what Corinne said, Lucas patted his sister's shoulder while she was still sobbing in his arms, then he left her in Rosie's care. After that, he went to pick up the phone on his desk to have a look.

The phone was still recording a video. Lucas stopped it and watched at high-speed everything that happened in the one hour Corinne was looking after the child in the office

Following that, Lucas walked over, returned the phone to Corinne, and said, "This indeed has nothing to do with M

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Lucas looked at Anya with suspicion. "Anya, that means Joey was already injured before you brought him here. What's going on? Who has been in contact with Joey at home?"

Anya felt extremely sheepish when her brother asked her that question. She blinked and big drops of tears streamed down her face.

Yes, she was the one who deliberately pinched Joey to injure him. She wanted to frame Corinne and make her brother fire her! She also got Rosie to come over to be a witness and fan the flames.

However, she did not expect that Corinne would be so vigilant and thought of recording a video with her phone for the whole time!

Anya's fear of being found out was covered up by her sorrowful tears. "Lucas, I have no idea either! How could this happen? Who would be so evil to abuse such a young child? Could it be the nanny who did it when I'm not around because she finds Joey naughty?"

A person who abused children must be punished without mercy!

Lucas frowned. "Call the police and investigate! We'll look into the nanny, maids, and teachers who were in contact with Joey during this time!"

Seeing her brother making such a big fuss, Anya was afraid he would find out what she did, but she did not dare to stop him because it would make her look very suspicious. She could only take her time to think of a plan after she went home.

She wiped her tears and turned toward Corinne while carrying Joey, pretending to be very apologetic. "I'm sorry, Corinne! I wrongly blamed you earlier because I was too worried about my child!"

Corinne smiled. "It's fine. It's not the first time you've done this, Miss Anya."

Anya's was as white as a sheet. She suddenly did not know what to say.

Rosie glared at Corinne and said angrily, "What are you trying to say? Anya has already apologized! Don't be ungrateful!"

Corinne ignored Rosie, who was oblivious that she was just a tool to Anya. Then, Corinne said to Anya again, "Since you're so worried about your child, you should quickly send your precious son to the hospital for an examination!"

"Mm-hmm. Thank you for your concern, Corinne. We'll go right away!" Pretending to be anxious, Anya said to her brother, "Lucas, Rosie, and I are going to first take Joey to the hospital for a checkup! Since you're occupied with work, you don't need to come along!"

Lucas indeed had some urgent matters to take care of, so he could not leave. He just sent Edmund away to do something as well. Because he was worried about his sister and his nephew, he looked at Corinne, ordering her in a serious voice, "Miss Corinne, go to the hospital with them on my behalf. Notify me -immediately if anything were to happen."

"Alright, Mister Lucas." Of course, Corinne was reluctant. However, she could not go against her boss' orders on the first day she came to work.

It was not easy for her to get this job. She had to stay in the Rivera Group to continue Investigating her mother,

The place Corinne hated the most was the hospital. Being at the Children's Hospital made her feel upset.

Anya did not let Corinne follow them into the consultation room, so she waited for them in the corridor.

Later, Anya made Rosie leave the room as well by asking her to buy a bottle of water for Joey.

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At first, Rosie wanted to order Corinne to run the errand. However, she thought that Corinne might still be harboring ill intentions and might do something to Joey's water. In the end, she glared at Corinne with disgust and decided to buy it herself.

Not long after that, Anya came out of the consultation room with Joey in her arms.

There were no signs of concern or caution that a mother worrying about her child's injury should have on Anya's beautiful face. On the contrary, she was smiling sweetly at Corinne. "You're quite good, Corinne! I've meticulously designed this setup today, yet you're able to dodge it so easily!"

Anya revealed her true colors. Corinne was not surprised at all, but she got to know a new side of her.

In the past, she only felt that Anya was a hypocrite and a scheming person. At that moment, Corinne felt that this woman who looked weak and harmless was far scarier than she imagined.

Anya used the health of her child—who was so young that he could not speak and tell his experience verbally—to create trouble. She truly would go to any lengths!

Corinne curled her lips coldly. "You flatter me, Miss Anya. I'm not as good as you. You're able to do such cruel things to your son. Aren't you afraid that his father will find out?"

Anya was still beaming. She said without fear and with certainty. "His father won't know! Because the doctor said just now that Joey, like you, just has an allergy! The bruises on his body were caused by coming in contact with unknown allergens! No matter who asked, that's what the doctor would say."

Corinne was stunned, but she understood it very quickly. The reason Anya asked Rosie to leave the room earlier was probably to get a chance to bribe the doctor.

Looking at the boy in Anya's arms, who looked frightened and overly well-behaved, Corinne could not help but pity him. He was truly a poor thing to have such a mother.

"He's your son. How could you have the heart to do this?"

Anya did not care. She was still smiling as she looked at her son in her arms. "Corinne, there's no need for

you to worry

about other people's family affairs. You may leave now. Jeremy will be coming to the hospital in a while to pick us up!"

Corinne felt her chest tighten a little when she heard Anya mention Jeremy's name.

She took a deep breath, ignoring the feeling in her chest, and said to Anya in a businesslike manner, "Mister Lucas asked me to make sure you and your son are safe before I can return to the office, so I have to wait for Mister Jeremy's arrival and watch him pick both of you up before I leave."

Seeing that Corinne had no intention to leave, Anya frowned, feeling wary. "Corinne, I thought you didn't want Jeremy to see you. Why are you insisting on leaving after he arrives? You can't have changed your mind and want to take this chance to seduce Jeremy, can you?"

Corinne chuckled. "Don't worry. I won't let Mister Jeremy see me. I just need to make sure you and your son are picked up by him so that I can report it to Mister Lucas later. That's all!"

Anya stared at her, feeling skeptical. Her eyes showed that she was still a little wary and uneasy. "Corinne, you better not have any ideas that you shouldn't have about Jeremy. Otherwise-"

Before she managed to finish her threat, she was cut off by Rosie, who returned from purchasing a bottle of water. "Anya, why are you out here? What did the doctor say about Joey's condition?"

Anya's expression immediately changed. She went back to looking innocent like how she was always in

front of her family and friends. "You don't have to worry, Rosie. The doctor said Joey was just having an allergic reaction. He was not abused by somebody."

Rosie handed the bottle of water to Anya. "Allergy? What's Joey allergic to? You have to check for the allergen properly and pay more attention in the future!"

Anya nodded. "Mm-hmm. The nurse would be coming in a while to draw Joey's blood for the test!"

"What should Joey do now? What treatment does he need?"

"The doctor said he needs to be hospitalized for an IV drip."

Corinne could not help but frown when she heard Anya say that the child would be getting an IV drip. He did not have an allergy. It was probably not good to give him an IV drip like he was having an allergic reaction. Why would Anya have the heart to torture her child like this?

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It looked like Rosie cared more about the child's health compared to Anya, who was the child's mother!

Joey lay in bed in the pediatric ward with tears welling in his eyes. Under Anya's guidance, he obediently reached out his hand to let the nurse insert the needle for the IV drip.

He was too well-behaved. He did not resist or cry when facing the infusion needle.

Corinne was worried, so she went up to look at Joey's prescription given by the doctor Anya bribed.

The fluids given were some saline and vitamins and no other complicated medication.

However, it was still not suitable to give saline at random to a child as young as him. Would he be able to take it?

As an expecting mother, Corinne truly could not stand Anya using the child like that and she wanted to stop her.

However, Anya's phone suddenly rang. She quickly picked up the call and said gently, "Jeremy, you're here! Mm-hmm. We're on the sixth floor of the inpatient department, ward number 602. Joey is getting ready to get an IV drip!"

Corinne was dazed when she heard that Jeremy arrived. She was about to stop Anya, but she could not be bothered anymore. With great self-knowledge, she immediately hid in the restroom in the ward to avoid him.

When Anya saw Corinne hiding, a vicious gaze appeared in her eyes for a brief moment. She was quite satisfied. She did not wish for Jeremy to see Corinne at that moment!

At first, Rosie was also worried that Corinne would seduce Jeremy again. Seeing her hide in the restroom with such fear, Rosie felt at least Corinne had some self-knowledge. It was much better for Corinne to

avoid him!

Not long after that, someone entered the ward with steady footsteps.

The man's voice was deep and serious as he asked, "What happened to the boy?"

With a catch in her throat, Anya replied gently, "It's fine Jeremy. The doctor said Joey was just a little allergic! I called you just now because I was too anxious. I didn't interrupt your work, did I?"

"No." Jeremy walked toward the bed to look at the child who was already having the drip.

Anya said, "Don't worry, Jeremy. The doctor said Joey will be fine!"

Jeremy hummed in response, then turned round. "That's good to know. I'm going to use the restroom."

Anya and Rosie's expressions changed when they heard him saying that he wanted to go to the restroom. Their eyes widened and a sense of nervousness washed over them!

Corinne was hiding in the restroom!

Jeremy got to the door in just a few steps. He put his hand on the handle, but he noticed it would not budge

He frowned. "Is someone in there?"

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Anya knew that Jeremy never asked Tommy to stop searching for Corinne's whereabouts for the past month or so.

Therefore, she expected that if Jeremy saw Corinne at that moment, the situation that followed certainly would not be what she wanted to see. What if they clarify the misunderstanding caused by this child on the spot?

She could not let that happen. She finally removed Corinne from Jeremy's side, so how could she watch them reconcile before her own eyes?

Anya was racking her brain. There were some things she could not speak about herself, so she deliberately tugged at Rosie's hand

Rosie was stunned when Anya suddenly pulled her hand Then, she turned to see Anya asking for help with a weak and pitiful expression, and she could not help but feel sorry for her Suddenly, she got an idea, so she said, "It's Lucas. I remember it's Lucas who just went in. It should be Lucas in the restroom!" "Lucas was inside? Jeremy took his hand away from the handle and turned around as he was prepared to use the restroom in the corridor.

However, before he opened the door, someone pushed the door open from outside, and in came Lucas." Anya, how's Jeremy doing?"

Seeing Lucas walking in, Anya and Rosie's expressions changed again. Gosh! Why did Lucas come at this moment? Their lie would soon be exposed, would it not?

Jeremy was slightly dazed. He looked at Lucas, then he turned to look at the door to the restroom that he could not open earlier, squinting his eyes to ponder

Lucas had no clue about what happened, so he nodded to greet him. "Jeremy, you're here too."

Jeremy did not answer Lucas. He looked at Rosie from the corner of his cold eyes, questioning. "What is it in the restroom?"

Anya and Rosie were both speechless.

Their expressions were very awkward. They looked at each other, stammering to find the words to say.

Lucas did not see Corinne in the ward, and he could tell that the atmosphere was strange. After giving it a quick thought, he figured it out and said calmly. "It's Edmund Jeremy, if you want to use the restroom. Turn left after walking out of the room and you'll see it."

Edmund is in there? Jeremy stared at the restroom for a few seconds before the doubts in his eyes gradually vanished.

He never would have thought that the little rascal he had his men searched for like mad for a month was

in the restroom behind that thin door!

His deep set eyes looked a little exhausted. "Lucas, since you're here, I'll leave the two of them to you. I'm rushing to catch a flight, so I'm going to leave now."

Lucas frowned and was unhappy when he saw that Jeremy was going to leave. He secretly felt that Jeremy was irresponsible and was not taking Anya and Joey seriously at all!

When Jeremy turned to get the door, Anya ran up to him and grabbed his sleeve. "Jeremy "

Jeremy stopped in his tracks and looked at her. "Anything else?"

Anya looked up at him with doe-like eyes and said gently and thoughtfully, "It's getting colder nowadays, Jeremy. You should put on more layers when you're on your business trips!"

Jeremy nodded a little. "You should take care of yourself and the child as well."

Anya smiled obediently. "Mm-hmm. Don't worry. I will. Joey will have recovered by the time you return. from your business trip!"

Jeremy hummed as an acknowledgment and said nothing else. Then, he opened the door and left.

Anya felt sad that her crush left, but it was not time to make Jeremy stay longer either because Corinne was still hiding in the bathroom!

Thinking of Corinne, a wicked smile appeared on Anya's face, and she glanced at the restroom door from the corner of her eyes.

Corinne must be dying of jealousy when she heard Jeremy and her showing concern for each other and bidding each other farewell earlier!

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Corinne better know her place and never appear in front of Jeremy anymore!

After Jeremy left, Lucas said to the person in the restroom in a cold voice, "Come on out! He's gone."

Within seconds, the restroom door opened, and out came Corinne. Being respectful, she said, "Thank you, Mister Lucas, for appearing in time and getting me out of a tight spot."

Lucas glanced at her coldly without responding to her. After that, he walked to the bed to check on his nephew, who was receiving the infusion. He touched the child's forehead to feel if he was burning or not. Seeing that the child looked fine, he felt much relieved.

Anya walked up to him. "Lucas, Joey's fine. The doctor said he's just a little allergic. You don't need to have someone investigate the maids and nanny anymore. It has nothing to do with them."

"Mm-hmm. Good to know that Joey's fine." Lucas nodded, then he turned to look at his sister in a slightly stern manner. "Anya, this is your first time being a mother. You should do your homework. Raising a child. is not easy. Since you already have a child, you have to take full responsibility for him. After all, Joey is-

It sounded to Anya as if Lucas was almost going to reveal that Joey was adopted, so she immediately cut him off and said, "I got it, Lucas. I've been reading parenting books recently. I'll do my best in learning. to be a mother! Lucas, you're so busy with work, so why did you rush here? Joey's fine. Hurry up and go back to your company. Don't let your work get delayed!"

When Lucas was back at his company, he could not put his mind at ease. He took care of the urgent matters he had on hand, then rushed to the hospital to check on the situation.

Seeing that his sister and her child were both fine, he felt relieved. "Anya, you and Miss Rosie should stay here to keep Joey accompanied. I'll have someone pick you guys up later."

Anya nodded. "Mm-hmm. Alright!"

Lucas was almost going to leave, but Rosie still had something important in mind; so she gave Anya a signal with her eyes.

It was after Anya got Rosie's signal that she remembered it. "Oh yes, Lucas. It's our aunt's birthday tomorrow. Have you prepared a gift for her?"

Lucas said, "Mm-hmm. I've already got it prepared."

Anya asked again, "How about your partner? You probably haven't decided, right?"

Lucas' gaze was intriguing. He glanced at Rosie-who was standing next to his sister and saw her eager and bashful expression. He then figured out what his sister had in mind. "I already have a partner. You don't need to worry about that for me."

Hearing that, Rosie's expression visibly changed from bashful to disappointed.

-Anya was surprised. "You already have a partner? Who is it?"

Lucas fell silent for a moment, then he called out, "Miss Corinne."

"Huh?" Corinne was standing at the side, thinking that it was none of her business. However, she was stunned when her name was called. Why was she involved?

Then, she saw that Lucas was pressuring her with his gaze.

Corinne was a smart person. No matter how unwilling she was, she had to go along with him. "Yes! That's right. Mister Lucas' partner for tomorrow is me!"

"What?" Rosie frowned and glared at Corinne with a resentful gaze. It was her!

Anya was taken aback as well. "Lucas, you and Corinne-"

"Alright. You two should stay with Joey." Lucas waved and did not listen to what his sister wanted to say. He no longer wanted to stay there anymore. "Miss Corinne, follow me back to the office."

Corinne said, "Yes, Mister Lucas!"

Corinne sat with proper posture in the front passenger seat as they returned to the Rivera Group.

Sitting in the back, Lucas suddenly asked mockingly, "Miss Corinne, are you that afraid of meeting Jeremy?"

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"It's not that I'm afraid. I just didn't want to make things complicated and create unnecessary problems between your sister and Mister Jeremy," answered Corinne, looking at Lucas' elegant and handsome face

in the rearview mirror.

Lucas squinted his eyes, looking relaxed and arrogant, then he sneered. "So you feel as long as you appear in front of Jeremy, you'll affect my sister and

my future brother-in-law's relationship. Is that so?" Corinne turned to look at the scenery outside the window that was moving in reserves and said honestly, Mm-hmm. It will, more or less."

Lucas curled his lips. "Miss Corinne, where did you get such confidence that made you feel you can compete with Anya?"

Corinne was neither humble nor arrogant when facing his mockery. She just smiled. "Mister Lucas, it's very normal for you to think that nobody can compete with your sister, whom you've doted on since childhood. For example, to me, a man as outstanding as you, Mister Lucas, is just not as cute as the dog I've raised since childhood. It's the same principle!"

At that moment, the driver was pursing his lips as tightly as he could. He was so amused by what Corinne said earlier, he almost could not hold it in and burst out laughing!

However, in the next second, he felt a chill down his spine. That was because he could feel the gloom and unhappiness Lucas was exuding all over.

Truth be told, he was Lucas's driver for more than a decade, yet he never heard an employee have the guts to say that to Lucas.

Lucas was speechless.

He stared at Corinne's face in the rearview mirror for a while, looking sullen. Then, he smiled again and said, "Do tell me which is the part of you that you think s'enough to be compared to my sister.

Corinne looked young and childish, but she had a very strong and mature mind. Her confidence never wavered just because other people criticized, questioned, and took a jab at her. She was completely unfazed by all that.

She was confident, not the kind of confidence that comes from being blindly pompous, but clarity in self-knowledge and self-assurance. It was the tenacity that stems from her hardships ever since young, her fearlessness toward the future that was resulted from the adversities, and her nonchalance toward others' views and opinions of her.

"Of course, my circumstances are not better than Miss Anya's. I don't have a powerful family, a good, protective brother, and the delicate beauty Miss Anya has as a result of being meticulously cared for like a flower in a greenhouse.

“The biggest difference between me and your sister is that she is a delicate flower parasitically growing -by your side while I am a wild plant growing independently on the cliff. There’s no doubt that Miss Anya is a lucky girl. She could rely on a big and strong tree like you from the day she was born, and she has the Riveras, which is like an environment suitable for survival and nourishment from fertile soil.

“On the other hand, the environment. I grew up in made it so that I must grow into a big tree that could support myself. I can’t be the vine climbing along a big tree because there isn’t one that I could rely on forever. Otherwise, the vine would die once the tree does.

“I’ve gone through countless hardships since childhood. No matter what kind of environment I’m in, I can. live a beautiful life by relying on the experiences and abilities I’ve gained.

“Therefore, I think that both Miss Anya and I each have our strengths, and I’m not lacking in anything.”

Looking at the rearview mirror, Lucas stared at the girl sitting in front who stated her strengths and weaknesses objectively. This was the first time he saw a piercing radiance filled with life in a girl and felt. the power to strive to be better exuded by her.

That unyielding and calm life force indeed was not something Anya had.

However, Anya did not need that kind of excessive strength. As long as he was around, Anya could enjoy the best of everything in this world effortlessly.

Lucas did not argue with Corinne anymore. He just closed his eyes slowly to take a rest. “I hope your self- knowledge is right, and you can grow into a big tree that will never collapse.”

Corinne smiled. “Thank you very much for your kind wishes, Mister Lucas,”