

Fractured Affection

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I knelt outside for three hours. My legs were completely numb. As soon as I tried to stand, I collapsed.

grew impatient with my

Adam and Noah didn't make any move to help me. Only when Noah stillness did he sto mp over. "She's faking it again! Let me expose her act!"

He kicked me too hard that my body flipped onto the ice. Only then did he notice how pale I was, and he hastily called for a doctor.

I woke up two hours later. The first thing I heard was Noah's exasperated scolding.

"Sylvia, you leukemia and didn't tell us?" he exclaimed. "Making us look like

had a relapse of heartless monsters! After all our childhood years together, you still distrust us?"

Hearing the concern in his voice, I felt a moment of disorientation. The doctor explained my collapse was due to leukemia-induced anemia.

They hadn't given me a chance to explain, yet they blamed me for not telling them anything. Everything was always my fault. Perhaps even breathing in the Fowler residence was a mistake. Looking at them, I recalled the first time I had a relapse. I had fallen from a swing, terrifying Adam and Noah. They rushed me to the hospital, carrying me like shattered porcelain. I was diagnosed with leukemia, and the doctor said I required careful care.

From then on, Adam and Noah were incredibly attentive. They monitored my meals, had the housekeeper prepare various nutritious dishes, and made sure I got enough rest. Later, even the housekeeper's cooking bored me, so Adam and Noah had to constantly find new ways to coax me

to eat.

Even with my difficult behavior, they never grew impatient. Two shadows followed me everywhere. Whenever I turned around, I would see them smiling at me.

of brown sugar

That period was my most precious memory. For a moment, it felt like I was back then. This scene was too beautiful to be real. As I drifted in a daze, Adam took a cup of water from the housekeeper and gently brought a warm spoon to my lips. "You've still can't take care of yourself," he said, his coldness edged with something almost tender.

grown up, and

Adam was usually cold, and this was his most tender side. Even Noah, who was usually tough, felt guilty and offered me two candies. "Here, your favorite Tiger candies."

Tiger candies had closed down three years ago. Noah must have tracked down the last stockpiles.

I opened my mouth. The sweetness slid down my throat, warming me from the inside out. I felt like I was dreaming.

But the next second, Adam said, "Sylvia, Charlotte needs an assistant. I'll send you to her film set later. You'll be her assistant. Consider it... atonement."

Noah, arms crossed, chimed in, "Even though we feel sorry for can't go unpunished. Two weeks as her errand girl—count yourself lucky. Be grateful."

you, what you did to Charlotte

15:14

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Menu

Their gentle words were like ice in the dead of winter, shattering my illusion. Of course. They've nursed me only to better serve Charlotte.

I lowered my eyes, my long lashes hiding the sarcasm in my eyes. How naive I was to think Adam and Noah cared about me

I simply said, "Fine," a heavy stone settling in my chest. To escape the suffocating feeling, I picked up the calendar on the table and silently crossed out the numbers. In six days, I would be reborn.

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