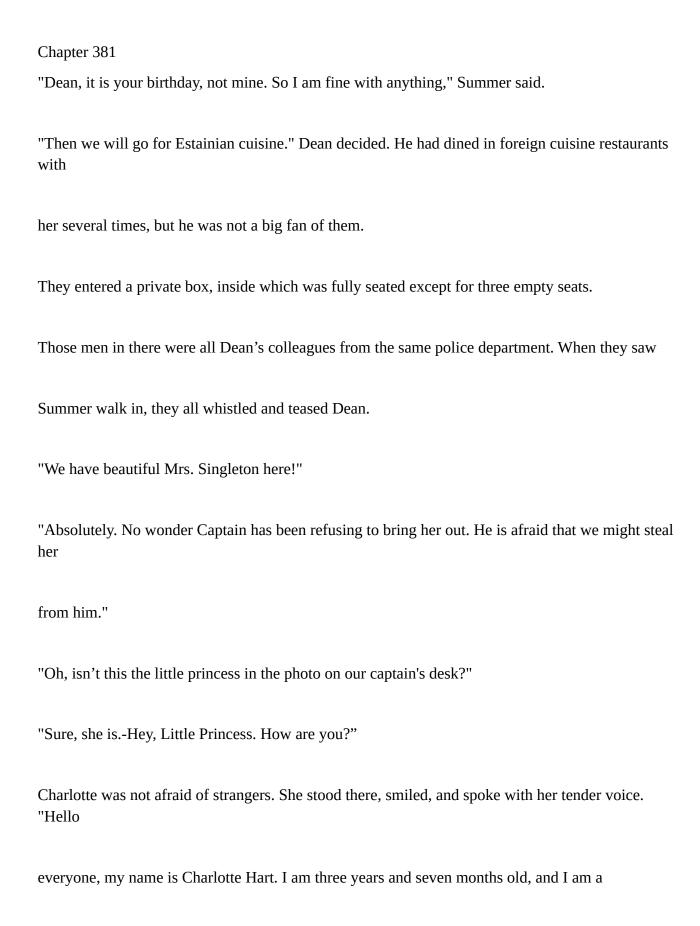
## **President 381**



kindergartener."
Everyone at the table was amused by her innocent
and earnest look, wanting to give her a hug.
Summer felt awkward when they addressed her as Mrs. Singleton. Dean gave them a stern warning.
"Come on, Captain. We know you haven't won her over. We are just conducting a drill, so that when we
line up and salute her in uniform when you two tie the knot, she won't feel too intimidated."
They certainly knew that the captain was still in unrequited love. They were doing this to cheer for their
captain.
"Yeah, everyone in the department knows that you have a crush on her. It is not so hard to tell when
you have her and the little princess's photos on the desk."
Everyone laughed. Dean felt embarrassed for being exposed, his hard blocky face whiskery red.
On the contrary, Summer appeared natural and graceful. She let out a smile and said hello. "I am
Summer. Nice to meet you all."
She just did not expect that Dean would put her and Charlotte's photos on the desk in his office. It was
completely out of a shy guy's character.

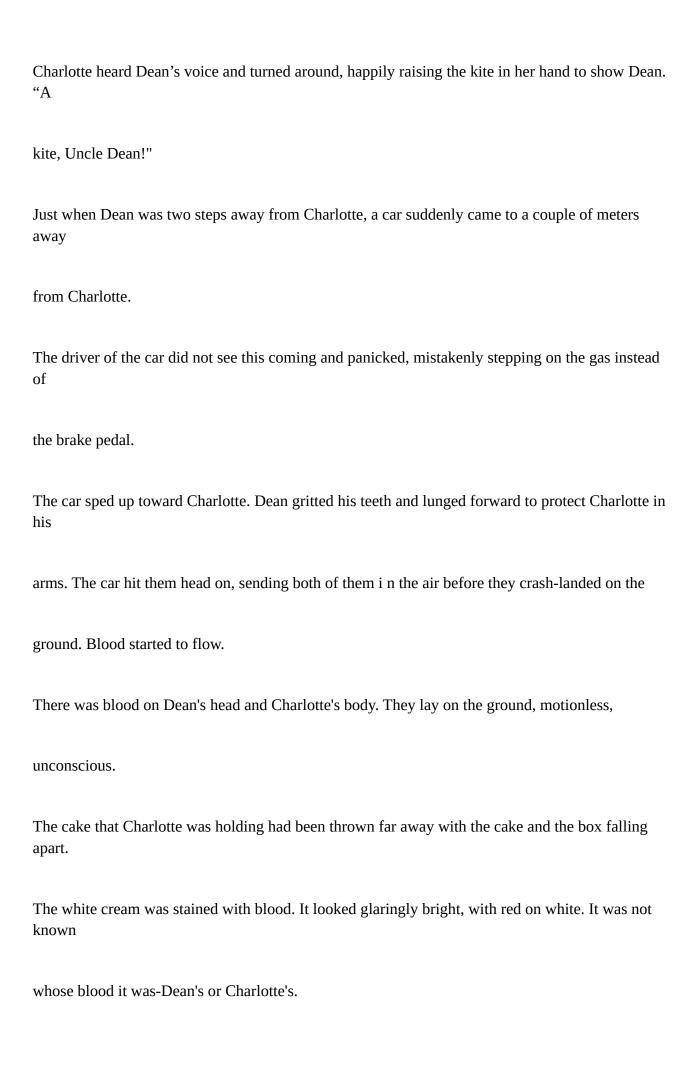
"Captain, why do you blush like a baboon's bottom?" "Look how natural and graceful Mrs. Singleton is. You look nothing like her, Captain." "Hahaha, Captain looks more like a woman than a man." "Hahahaha..." "Knock it off! Shut up and eat now." Dean snapped. These men took special care of Summer and Charlotte. They were generous and always spoke their mind. Everyone got along well with each other, and laughter had never stopped. Because of the presence of Charlotte, they just sipped on the liquor. The most important thing was to have a good time, and drinking was secondary. "Captain, are you sending us away just like this? Aren't you going to invite us to the bar tonight?" "Exactly. Mrs. Singleton and Little Princess should come along, too." "No kid at that kind of place. If you guys really want it, I will go with you all tomorrow night, but not tonight." Dean vehemently opposed it. How could he let Charlotte go to such a place? Chapter 382 "Look how protective you are. Your thinking is still a little too conservative."

"What is wrong with being conservative? You are not married and have children. You will know when you do. Whether it is a boy or a girl, they must receive proper teaching of conduct." Immediately afterwards, those men at the table started to discuss parenting. Summer was genuinely impressed. They knew not only how to solve crimes but also a thing or two about parenting, and they all talked like experts. Charlotte poked out her little pink tongue to lick the strawberry cake in front of her, while her two little hands were busily unpacking the present box. There were so many presents, all for Uncle Dean. Well, Uncle Dean said, as long as those presents were his, they were all Charlotte's. But when Charlotte finished unpacking them, she looked at those leather shoes, ties, belt, and wallet in disappointment. There was not a single piece of candy. They ate and chatted for a long time. At the end of the day, everyone said their goodbye to one another and left. There were only the three of them in the private box. Men were still men. Except for Charlotte, they

basically did not touch the strawberry cake.
Before Summer got up, Charlotte stood up on the chair, grabbed the strawberry cake and struggled to
hold it with her short arms.
"What are you doing, Charlotte?" Summer asked.
Charlotte did not look up, but licked her cream-stained lips like a cat licking its lips. "Mummy, since
those uncles didn't eat it, I will take it back and eat it myself."
Summer laughed, pinching Charlotte's rounded cheek.
"You may have it all."
Dean could not help but laugh, too. He extended his hand, took the cake, and put it in its box, then
handed i t to Charlotte. "Here you go. Hold it."
"Thank you, Uncle Dean." Charlotte's eyes smiled into a pair of crescent moons. They looked curved
and bright.
Summer had also prepared a present for Dean. It was a wallet. She shrugged helplessly. "I know. Too
many wallets now. Nevertheless, happy birthday."

There were at least two other wallets in the pile of presents, and this one was the third one.
Dean smiled and rubbed his hair. "How about giving m e another present?" "What present?" she asked.
She would like to know what he wanted so she could know if she could meet his request.
"A home-cooked meal. Just a simple one."
This was not difficult at all. Summer agreed. "You have just had your meal. Are you sure you can still
take more?"
"I had my lunch. There is still dinner."
"Okay. I will cook it at your house. Let's go to the supermarket and buy some ingredients."
They decided so and went to a nearby supermarket together. Dean was pushing the cart while Summer
chose what to buy.
Charlotte was following behind them, feeling bored to death. Her round eyes darted around when she
spotted a kite flying in the sky outside the supermarket. Her eyes lit up instantly, and she ran out at
once.
Summer and Dean had not noticed that Charlotte had left them, and they continued with their
shopping.

When Summer saw Charlotte's favorite yogurt and wanted to ask Charlotte what flavor she preferred,
she found Charlotte was nowhere to be seen.
Summer broke out in a cold sweat, her face turning pale, her hands and feet sweaty. She hurriedly
called out to Charlotte at the supermarket. "Charlotte,
Charlotte"
Chapter 383
But she did not find Charlotte, nor heard her answering. Dean was calm. He asked around if anybody
had seen a four-year-old in a pettiskirt with a strawberry cake box in her hand.
At last, one person responded. "I saw a little girl you just described. She ran out of the supermarket
seconds ago."
Dean chased out at once, while Summer was on his heels.
Men run faster than women. Dean had his heart in his mouth when he found Charlotte standing in the
middle of the road, picking up a kite in the traffic.
He quickened his pace and ran as fast as he could while calling out to Charlotte. "Stand there,
Charlotte! Don't move!"



A crowd had gathered, and people were discussing among themselves. Some were taking out their cell

phones to call for an ambulance.

Summer saw the scene as soon as she rushed out of the supermarket.

The blood was terrifyingly red. She did not know if it was Dean's or Charlotte's blood. She could not tell.

Dean was motionless. Even the hyperactive Charlotte was quietly lying there. Summer's vision started

to turn dark. She went weak at the knees, nearly stumbling to the ground. But she gritted her teeth.

Ignoring her trembling body, she took out her phone and called the emergency service.

It was just a simple act of dialing a number, but she had to use all her strength to do that.

Her hands and legs were shaking. Even the muscles i n her cheeks stiffened and quivered. She had

never felt so scared before.

But she knew she must not collapse; she absolutely must not collapse, and she could not afford to

collapse now.

She had to remain sober and stayed with the two of them. Fortunately, the hospital was close to the

scene of the incident. The ambulance arrived in just a short while.

Watching the medics lifted Charlotte and Dean into the ambulance, respectively, she followed closely

behind.
The lights in the emergency room came on.
Summer sat on the bench outside the emergency room, her face pale. She buried her head between
her legs, her delicate shoulders shivering uncontrollably.
She would never forget the scene she just saw. She would never forget it.
She was to blame. Had she held Charlotte's hand and not let go; had she warned Charlotte not to run
around; had she kept an eye on Charlotte all the time
This thing would not have happened had she not let down her guard. She was to blame.
She did not dare to think about the consequences.  Chapter 384  In the apartment.
While preparing dinner, Maria could not help sighing when she saw the quiet living room.
When Charlotte and her mom were here, the place was always full of life and laughter and the child's
innocent voice. But now
She could see that although Charlotte's mom and Mark were constantly giving each other cold
shoulder, they had feelings for each other.

Mark was unsmiling and had an intimidating, stony face.

But since Charlotte and Charlotte's mom came along, things had been different. Maria could see a smile always hanging on Mark's lips, his expression never this soft.

They had been getting along like a happy family for the past few days.

But now, alas!

Mark walked in just then, and the first thing he did was ask, "Are they back?"

Maria shook her head. "I called Ms. Hart last night, and she agreed to come. But she hasn't come back

yet."

Mark's brows were raised slightly. He spun his tall body around and walked out of the house. Maria quickly asked, "What about the dinner, Mr. Valentine?"

"Carry on. I am going to get them." Mark was heard saying, but he was already out of Maria's sight.

He drove his black Land Rover and sped toward the hotel.

It took him only 15 minutes for the usual 20-minute journey. He parked up the car right outside the hotel

a s he could not find a parking spot.

He came straight into the lobby and walked up to the reception. The two hotel staff members were

talking with each other and did not notice Mark's arrival.

Mark knocked on the counter with his knuckle, making a loud, crisp sound. His raised brows showed he

was impatient. "May I know what is Summer Hart's room number?"

The lady at the reception did not look up. "I am sorry, sir. We can't divulge our guests' details."

"Call your manager." Mark's voice went an octave higher.

At this time, the two ladies at the reception looked up and were stunned. "M-Mr. Valentine!"

His charming face was calm as he repeated himself with a deep voice. "Call your manager." "A moment

please. We will check the check-in information about Summer Hart for you right away." One lady

receptionist checked the guest registry on the computer. "Mr. Valentine, her room number is 1112."

"Thank you," Mark nodded at them before walking toward the elevator.

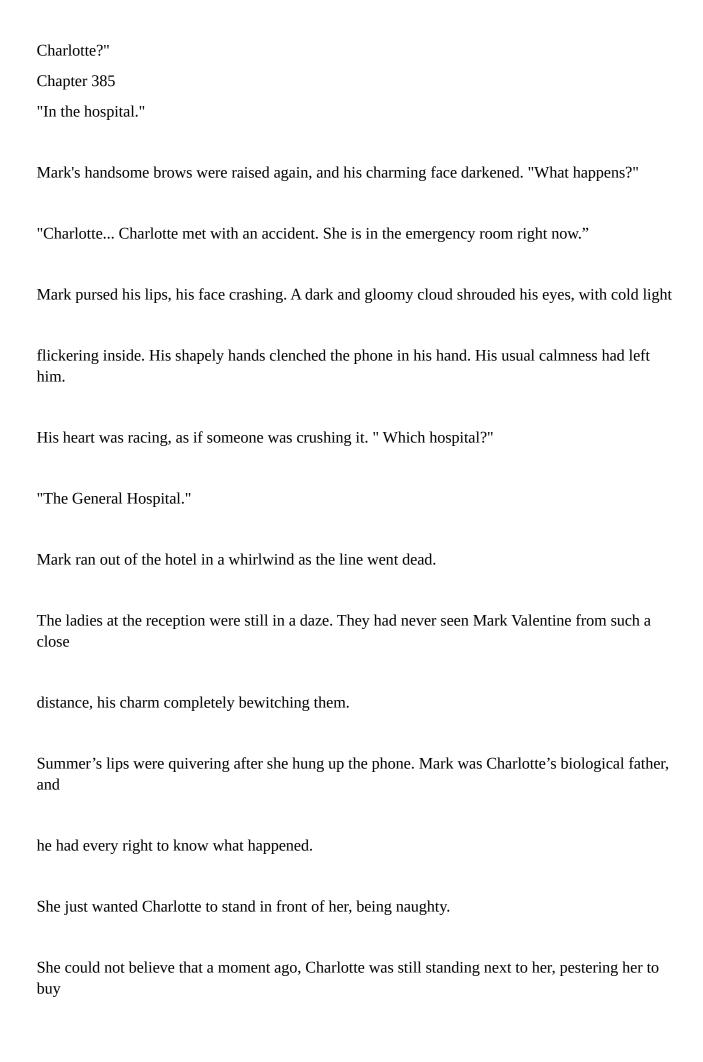
But one lady said, "Mr. Valentine, Ms. Hart brought a little girl and went out this morning."

Mark stopped in his tracks and took up his cell phone to call Summer.

After a long while, the phone was finally picked up, and the feeble voice of a woman answered,

"Hello?"

Mark could hear something amiss in her voice. He frowned with his lips twitched. "Where are you and



yogurt, but the next second, she was already lying on the street in a pool of blood. Charlotte was still so small, only three years old. If she could, she wished she could take Charlotte's place. It only took a moment before Mark arrived. Right away, he spotted a feeble figure sitting on the bench outside the emergency room. Summer heard footsteps and looked up. "Charlotte had a car accident. She is still in the emergency room." Mark gave a faint response. He made a telephone call with his deep, hoarse voice, calling for the best doctors in Santabaca to come over right now. He then walked to the bench, his deepening gaze landing on her. Summer's face had never been paler, her body shaking. She was in shock, not saying a word or looking up, just remaining in the same posture. Feeling sorry and sad, Mark squatted down and drew her into his arms, and then a deep voice flew from his throat. "Charlotte will be fine." The warmth of his touch seemed like a driftwood in the ocean of desperation. She held onto it, gripping

on the lapels in front of his chest with both hands. "But she isn't out yet." "She will be out soon. She is

my daughter; no one dares to touch her nor take her away." His voice was deep, as if it came from his

bones. It was bone-chilling.

"I shouldn't have let go of her hand. I should have kept holding her. I should have always kept an eye

on her. I t was my fault. It was my fault..."

She seemed to have found a vent at this moment, her tears that gathered in her eye sockets flowing

out at once. She could hold back no more.

She had barely cried more than a dozen times since childhood. But sadness was billowing inside her

and drowned her like a storm. She could no longer take it.

"It was not your fault. Charlotte will be fine. Trust me." Mark patted her on the back with his hand to

comfort her while his eyes were fixated on the operating theater doors.

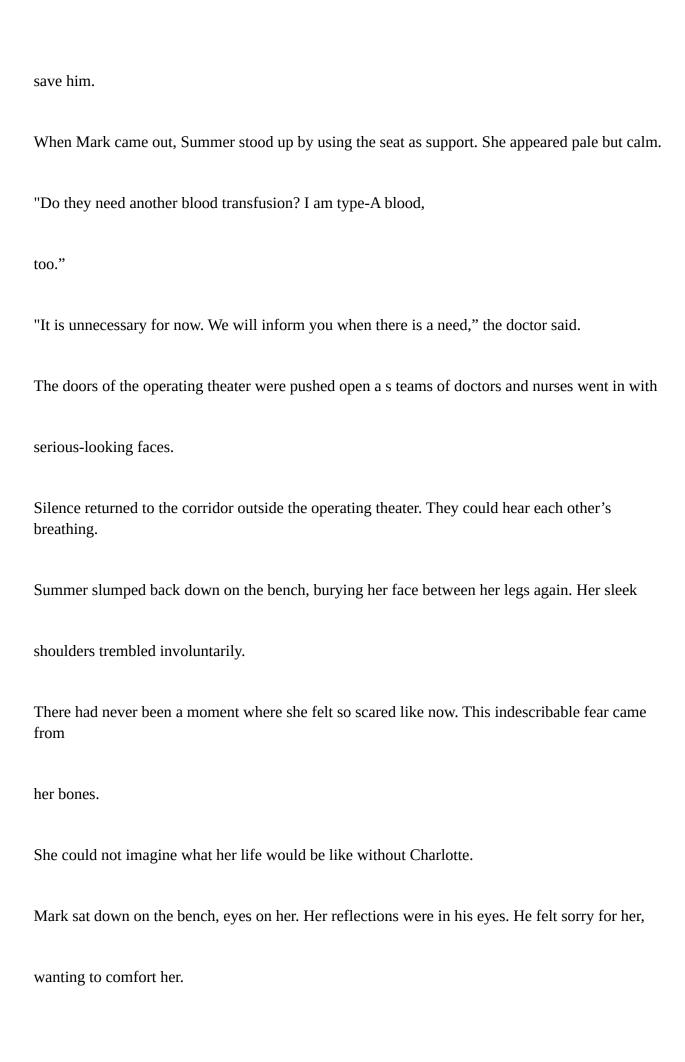
"And Dean, trying to save Charlotte, is in the emergency room, too."

The attending doctors had arrived. Mark had two teams of doctors to save Charlotte and Dean,

respectively.

The doors of the operating theater swung open as a nurse came out and told them that the child lost too much blood and urgently needed a blood transfusion. "I am her dad. Take my blood," Mark quickly said. Chapter 386 The blood type of both of them was type-A. The nurse planned to draw 400ml, but Mark wanted the nurse to draw 1,000ml from him. The nurse refused, saying that the maximum permissible amount of blood a person could donate was 800 ml. Mark narrowed his eyes and said sternly, "Don't make me repeat myself. If anything happens to them, I will hold you responsible." The nurse trembled and was too afraid to say otherwise. She lowered her head and drew 1,000ml of blood from Mark. There was little change in Mark's expression. He rolled down the sleeve of his black shirt and looked at the nurse. "Save Dean. Let me know if you need anything. Inform me if anything happens." Mark never liked owing someone else's favors.

Especially when it was from Dean, who was injured from saving Charlotte. He would do his best to



So he reached out his arm, lifting her, who was curled up in a ball, on his strong, muscular lap. "Don't worry, Charlotte will be okay." Summer tried to get away from his embrace. But when raised her hands, she found herself so helpless and frail, as if strength had left her body. "Put me down. I am fine." She spoke slowly, her voice weak. "Just stay this way." Mark glanced down at her, his voice extremely deep and cold, with an unquestionable tone, but there was still some gentleness in it. She stopped arguing with him but just quietly waited i n her current posture, occasionally glancing over at the doors of the operating theater. Two hours had passed since then, and the doors of the operating theater had not opened yet. She tightened the clench of her hands on her sides, sinking her fingernails into the tender skin of her palms. But she did not feel the slightest pain. As time went by, Mark's body stiffened like a stone. He could never ease up for a moment. Anxiety and

gloom, and more worries, shrouded his brows.

He reached to undo a few buttons on his shirt. Otherwise, he could suffocate himself.

Time was passing quietly, and every minute was a torment, the worst kind of mental torture.

Chapter 387

A long time had passed before the doors of the operating theater finally swung open. Summer jumped

out of Mark's arms at once, ran up there and grabbed the doctor's arm. Anxiety and fear filled her.

She was afraid to hear the outcome she dreaded to hear. She was scared to hear the worst news.

Mark watched and took her fears and hesitations all i n. He stood up, strode forward, and put his arm

around her and drew her into his embrace. Just when he was about to speak, Summer spoke with a

somewhat trembling voice. "How is my daughter, doctor?"

She looked calm on the outside, but the tremble coming from her body gave her emotion away. So he

held her tightly and supported her silently.

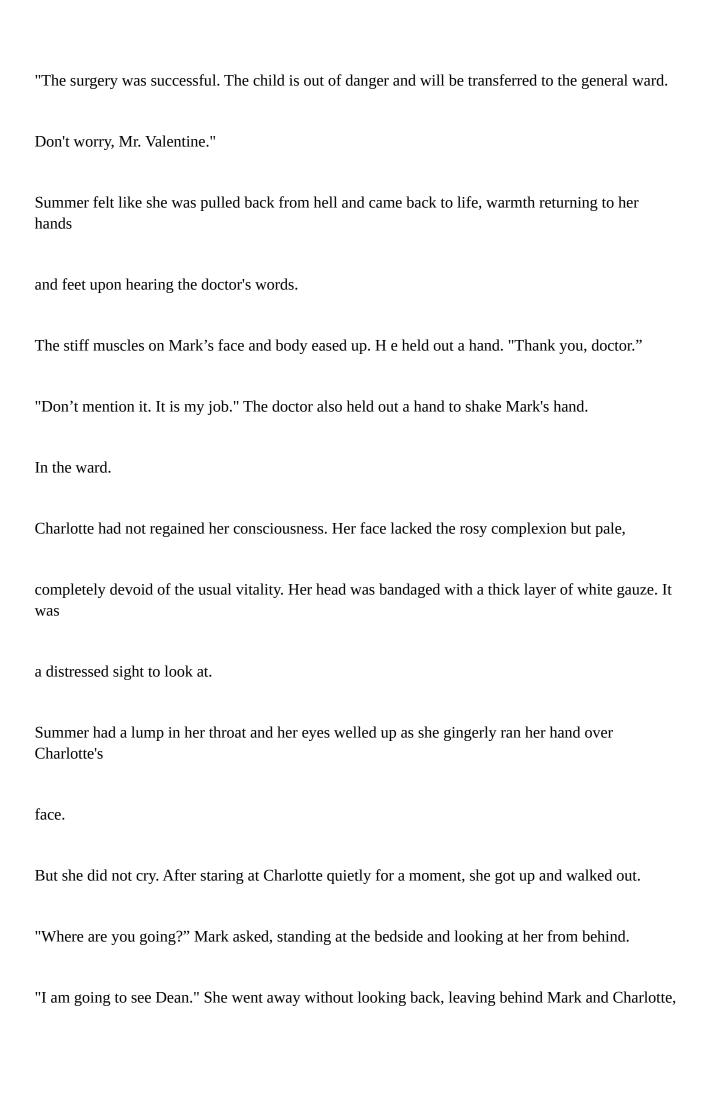
The warmth of his embrace calmed her. She was less anxious. At least her legs had stopped shaking.

The doctor then looked at the man beside Summer. "Mr. Valentine-"

"Just tell me." Mark interrupted the doctor, his voice low and cold. His shapely hand involuntarily

tightened the grip on Summer's shoulder. The blue veins on the back of his hand revealed his truest

emotions.



who was still in a coma, in the ward.

Dean had not come out of the operating theater. But Summer had learned to be calm. She clenched her hands and waited outside the operating theater.

She believed that all would be well and Dean would pull through.

Dean was an upright and kind man. God would be blind if he could not make it through.

Dean would definitely make it, no matter what. This was her wish and the strongest hope right now.

An hour later, the doors of the operating theater were pushed open, and the surgeon took off the mask

and said to her, "The surgery went well. We will place the patient under observation once he regains

his consciousness."

"Thank you! Thank you very much!" Summer was excited and grateful.

Just like Charlotte, Dean was admitted into a VIP ward, and Mark had arranged for nurses to take care

of him.

Chapter 388

Summer sat quietly at the bedside, waiting for Dean to come out of his coma.

She sat there for over five hours, but Dean was still sleeping. There was no telling when he would wake

u P-

It was at this moment that the attending doctor was doing his ward round. Summer asked with concern." Doctor, why hasn't the patient woken up yet?"

"The cerebral hemorrhage has not pressed against the nerves of the brain. So don't worry, the patient

will probably wake up in a day or two." The attending doctor said to Summer and asked the nurse

behind him to take notes while observing the patient's condition.

She felt a great sense of relief upon hearing what the doctor said.

Her cell phone vibrated. She went out of the ward before picking it up. "Hello?"

"Has he regained consciousness?" Mark's deep voice came through the phone.

"Not yet."

"Then come back first. Charlotte is awake," he said in a gentle voice.

Summer briefly talked to the two nurses who took care of Dean in the room before she left.

As soon as she stepped back into the ward, she heard Charlotte say, "Mark, is Mommy back yet?"

She walked to the bedside, looked at Charlotte, and asked softly, "Where does it hurt?"

Charlotte's face still looked pale, and she shook her head. "It doesn't hurt anymore, Mommy."

"Are you sure it doesn't hurt?"



body sank into the couch. He had no intention of leaving.
"I will stay," he said in a deep voice after a while.
Summer said nothing, but just quietly sat at the bedside. Whether he left or stayed, she had no right to
dictate his actions.
Silence fell in the ward. Even the darkness outside the window seemed to have turned darker.
A long time had passed before Summer finally fell asleep at the bedside.
Mark put down the file in his hand and came to the bedside. Summer was holding Charlotte's hand in
hers.
He squinted as something struck his heartstrings. His expression was extremely gentle as he stared at
them i n silence.
It was not after a few moments later that Mark bent down to carry Summer with both hands, his action
so gentle as he was afraid of waking her up.
Chapter 389
Mark turned around, walked back to the couch, and put her down, then took out a quilt and put it on
her.
Never had once Summer been awakened. She seemed to be really sleepy. Mark ran his shapely hand

over her tear-stained face, his thin lips twitching. "This is really ugly." As far as he could recall, he had never seen Summer cry. This was the only and first time she did. Charlotte was also sound asleep on the hospital bed. Just that the white gauze on his little head was hard to ignore. Mark, again, stroked her little face with his finger as he sat down at the bedside. The next morning. Summer opened her eyes and found herself on the couch. Her mind was drifting for a while before she snapped back. She then got up and saw two nurses in the ward, busying back and forth, but they made little noises. Whisking away the quilt, Summer walked to the bedside. "Is there anything wrong?" "No, Charlotte recovered fast. She didn't hurt any important part of her body, so she will be discharged soon." "Then what are you all doing here?" Summer looked at their actions in confusion. "Mr. Valentine requested a change of ward before he left." "Why change the ward? Is this ward not good enough?"

"We are not sure why. Just that it was Mr. Valentine's request, and he had completed the procedures.

Just so you know; the medical expenses that you have paid have been refunded to your credit card account." Summer frowned. He paid back all the medical expenses she paid? Charlotte was transferred from the ward on the third floor to the one on the fifth floor, where it was more luxurious, with TVs, couches, carpets, everything else, and one extra bed. Charlotte was still asleep, and there were two nurses taking care of her. So Summer was relieved. She went to Dean's ward. She only learned that Dean had been awake last night when she entered the door. Both he and Charlotte hurt their heads. Both their heads were also wrapped in white gauze. "Where is Charlotte? How is she?" Dean asked when he saw Summer coming in. "She is fine. How about you? How do you feel?" Dean was relieved. He let out a sincere smile, but his eyes were evasive. "I am fine. I am doing good." There were some things that he did not want to tell her. Summer looked at him with concern. "I will call the attending doctor to have a look at you again."

"Summer, that won't be necessary. The doctor has just left." "Then would you like to eat something? I will get it for you." After thinking for a moment, Dean said, "Maybe some tuna sandwiches. After this, you should go back to take care of Charlotte. She is too young and someone has got to be by her side." "I will. Give me a moment and I will be right back." After Summer walked out of the ward, Dean tried to move his legs, but he could not feel them. All he got was a headache and soreness in his arms. There was not the slightest sensation coming from his legs, as if they were no longer his. His mates from the police department came to visit. They all cracked jokes. Some said the captain was a hero, risking his own life to save the little princess. Chapter 390 Dean was not cheerless. He listened to the jokes and laughed, though not as much as his mates. After

Just when everyone was about to leave, Dean said to Brandon Tyson, his second officer, "Can I

all, h e had just come out of a coma and his body was still weak.

have a

moment with you, Brandon?"

Brandon nodded and sat down on the edge of the bed." What is it, Captain?"

"I have a backlog of several cases to follow. Go back and tell the chief to assign the cases to someone

else."

Brandon furrowed his brows, looking not too happy." Why assign them away now? You have spent a

great deal of time and effort on those cases. I am not going t o do it."

"Don't be emotional. How can I work on those cases with my current condition?"

"You are only hospitalized temporarily. After you recover, you can continue to work on them."

"Brandon! Don't you dare to say something like this to me again. Those are murder cases. How can

you take them lightly?" Dean became dead serious.

Brandon did not dare to say a word again. So he

reluctantly obliged. "Yes, Captain."

At this moment, the attending doctor walked in. He looked at Dean. "The accident did not hurt you

anywhere else. Judging from your X-ray images, you are only injured in the legs. What you are

experiencing now is a manifestation of paralysis caused by dislocation and compression of the spinal

cord, and requires timely surgical treatment."



When Dean celebrated his birthday last time, Brandon was there and had a few words with Summer.
So he recognized Summer.
But at this moment, Brandon was obviously not too happy with Summer. He did not say hello, let alone
speak with her. He just glanced at her and left.
Brandon was still young. His thinking was that his captain would not have met this accident if not for
Summer.
After the two left, Summer stood there with the young police officer's words echoing in her mind. 'Dean
might be paralyzed from the waist down? What exactly is going on?'