

Spoiled 191

Chapter 191: She is my ex-wife.

Besides, to further convince Justin Battleson, Charlotte Thompson forced herself to take a few more bites.

Her usually rosy face looked utterly pale today.

"If it's delicious, eat more. This fennel pork is also not bad, why don't you try it?"

Upon hearing Justin's words, Charlotte cursed him in her heart.

He was doing this on purpose!

What a fox-like cunning man!

Knowing that Sophie Allen hated fennel, he purposefully pushed the big plateful of it towards her.

If she didn't eat it, then that would confirm everything.

Charlotte dithered, her chopsticks suspended in mid-air.

After some struggle, Charlotte picked up a piece of pork and put it into her mouth.

She held her breath and chewed it, finding it so disgusting that she wanted to retch.

The sharp tips of her nails dug into her palm, and successfully held back her gag reflex.

Seeing her distressed face, Justin, feeling slightly guilty, put some of his dishes on her plate and didn't give her a hard time anymore.

"Actually, I didn't ask you here to discuss work, but there's something I want to ask you." Justin finally came to the point.

The moment of reckoning had arrived. Charlotte slowly sat up straight; this time, she couldn't let herself fall into a trap.

"I feel like you resemble someone I know." As soon as he said that, Justin realized that his expression was incorrect and corrected, "Not just resemble, you're exactly the same."

"But I've had no news from her for many years. Do you know Sophie Allen?"

After a pause, Justin asked the question indirectly.

Charlotte knew Justin would suspect her because of her similar appearance. He had suspected the same thing at the auction last time, hadn't he?

"Sophie Allen? Mr. Battleson, you said the same thing at the auction last time."

"Unfortunately, I'm sorry, but I don't know anyone named Sophie Allen."

With a serious expression and wide, innocent eyes, Charlotte calmly replied.

However, her fingers tightened around her purse until they turned pale, which she didn't even notice.

The name Sophie Allen belonged to her past and brought back unbearable memories.

Every time someone mentioned it, there was a flutter in her heart.

Justin's sharp gaze was fixed upon her as though trying to read her.

Unfortunately, it was no avail because Charlotte was really good at hiding her feelings.

"You've been looking for her for so many years, Mr. Battleson. Who is this Miss Allen to you? Does she hold any special significance?"

Charlotte asked gently.

She admitted that she did this on purpose.

She had her own little thoughts. She wanted to know what Sophie Allen meant to Justin Battleson.

"She's my ex-wife." A hint of unnamed sadness flashed through Justin's eyes.

He'd lost her.

These four simple words stirred up a wave of emotions in both their hearts.

Especially Charlotte, who was taken aback by the word "ex-wife," she forced herself to appear calm.

The clutch in her hand wrinkled under her constant clenching, any more force and she'd puncture it with her nails.

Charlotte began to doubt herself. Had she seen wrong?

Did Justin actually show... sadness in his gaze?

Wasn't it him who wanted the divorce back then?

Why was he... feeling sad?

In his heart, Sophie Allen was legally his ex-wife.

But... what about emotionally?

Emotionally, what did Sophie Allen mean to him?

There was a tinge of unwillingness and impatience in Charlotte. She wanted to ask Justin directly.

But in the end, reason prevailed over emotion.

She did not ask.

Chapter 192: Can't Help Falling

Justin Battleson had already convinced himself that Charlotte Thompson was Sophie Allen, feeling it was something one couldn't fake.

If she wouldn't admit it, he'd bide his time.

Justin didn't know why she'd changed her identity, why she'd vanished without a trace.

He wasn't insistent on exposing her; he just wanted to take things slow.

For some reason, Charlotte felt that Justin had some sort of interest in Sophie.

Otherwise, why would he be so determined to find her?

Good, just as well.

Then, she would use this subtle interest to get close to him.

She had to figure out whether it was Evelyn Curtis who intentionally let her play into Justin's hands, or if he had taken a fancy to her and suggested it to Evelyn.

In any case, she had to understand the specifics of what happened back then, she couldn't be deceived for no reason.

The hardships she'd endured, surely they weren't for naught?

Looking at Charlotte lost in thought, Justin spoke, "If you insist you don't know her, let's forget it and eat."

As his words fell, he calmly averted his gaze, not wishing to pressure her.

The atmosphere between them was eerily strange, causing the attending waitstaff to glance their way.

The private room was quiet. Once their conversation ended, not a word was spoken, with only the sounds of clashing ceramic dishware to fill the silence.

Still immersed in her thoughts, Charlotte mechanically filled her mouth with food, unable to taste anything.

The dishes she used to think were unappetizing no longer bothered her, and the dishes that Sophie liked, which Justin had ordered, didn't seem appetizing either.

Unknowingly, sauce smeared on the corner of Charlotte's mouth, yet she continued stirring her rice bowl.

Stuffing grains of rice into her mouth, her bowl was emptied without her notice, yet she continued stirring.

Watching this, Justin involuntarily furrowed his brows.

He then put down his chopsticks, pulled out a napkin, and extended it towards her mouth.

The moment Charlotte felt his warm fingers against her, she was jolted back to reality, instinctively recoiling.

Her eyes widened, looking at Justin warily.

As though she was looking at a wolf.

"You've got a bit of sauce on your mouth." Justin's tone was matter-of-fact, as though he was doing something quite ordinary.

He couldn't help but treat her well, as it gave him a faint sense of regaining what he had lost.

Realizing she was overreacting, Charlotte gave an awkward smile and took the tissue from him.

"Thank you, I can manage." With that, she wiped the sauce off her mouth.

The atmosphere that had just eased became tense once more.

Charlotte felt her heartbeat quicken, as if it was going to burst out of her chest.

She couldn't bear this stifling atmosphere for even a moment longer.

Indeed, what she couldn't overcome five years ago, she still couldn't now.

"I'm going to the restroom." Leaving these words behind, Charlotte hastily left the room.

By a stroke of bad luck, she emerged just as a waiter was delivering food and she nearly collided with him. Justin saw and stood up out of concern.

The waiter continuously apologized for his clumsiness, but Charlotte, understanding it wasn't his fault, didn't mind.

She fled to the restroom, leaning against the wall to calm her racing heart.

Out of breath, she noticed her pale face had grown flushed at some point.

Realizing this only made her more agitated, she hurriedly cupped some water from the sink and splashed it onto her face.

The cold water provided some relief, she leaned tiredly against the counter, looking at her disheveled reflection in the mirror.

Strands of her hair, wet from the water, clung to her face, and the heat in her cheeks had cooled.

Her emotions were still in turmoil, she got the impression that Justin was intentionally flirting with her, otherwise, why would he do what he did.

But in reality, she had no idea that Justin hadn't intended to flirt.

His previous action was simply an impulsive act.

Chapter 193: Really Like to be One Step Ahead

The meal finally came to an end amidst Charlotte Thompson's nervous vigilance.

Looking out of the window, it was already nightfall without her realizing it.

After leaving the room, the quiet of the night was shattered by the noise from not far away, with successive honks coming from a distance.

This made Charlotte couldn't help but marvel at the exceptional soundproofing in the restaurant's private dining room.

Also, the sense of privacy seemed quite good.

Otherwise, how could they not hear any outside noises or notice how the sky outside was gradually darkening?

Neon lights on the tall buildings continuously flashed various colors, beneath them, luxuriance pervaded Qiver City.

Across the restaurant was a mall, glancing up, Charlotte's smile became somewhat intriguing.

A large screen up there was continuously scrolling a girl's name, presumably rented by some rich young man.

Charlotte couldn't help but exclaim, how many years old was this way of confessing love?

Did the rich young men of this generation forget how to keep up with the times?

Are they trying to be unconventional?

Little did they know that girls don't find such actions romantic at all.

Instead, they would feel embarrassed and humiliated. This public way of pursuit can only add to the psychological burden of the girls.

"What are you thinking about?" a chilled voice from Justin Battleson suddenly interrupted Charlotte's thoughts.

Charlotte shrugged slightly and didn't respond, continuing to move forward.

Hustle and bustle on the road, even the sidewalks were filled with hurried passersby.

Everyone seemed to be so busy, moving at a pace too fast to stop and appreciate the scenery around.

Everyone seemed caught up in the hustle and bustle of life, becoming somewhat worldly.

Charlotte was the first to step out of the restaurant.

She halted her steps, closed her eyes, and took a deep breath of the surrounding air.

Maybe due to her mood, she surprisingly found the air felt unusual.

It was as if....it contained a hint of refreshing minty scent.

From behind her, a man stepped out with long strides and stood shoulder to shoulder with her.

A server followed them, with a generous and composed standard smile on his face, bowing forty-five degrees.

"Sir, Madam, we welcome you to visit us again."

The server spoke softly, but his calm and sweet voice provided a kind of auditory pleasure.

A scent unique to men radiated from his body, aggressively rushed into Charlotte's nostrils.

Charlotte's heart 'thumped' suddenly, caught off guard as if she had missed a beat.

Standing shoulder to shoulder like this felt as if she was in some antiquity.

This time she came back bearing animosity towards Justin and Evelyn Curtis.

Therefore, their position should have been adverse right from the start.

Not like it was now.... standing shoulder to shoulder.

She lowered her gaze, trying her best to hide the unusual emotions in her eyes, and then conspicuously took a small step forward.

Even a very light movement caused her high heels to make a slight noise on the smooth ground.

Justin squinted at her small movements, the color of his pupils deepened subtly.

After a while, he chuckled lightly, his eyes didn't show any stirred ripples.

"Miss Thompson, I've noticed you like to be one step ahead."

One has to say, Justin had an almost confirmative hunch in his mind.

Charlotte, was Sophie Allen, who five years ago had casually collected her divorce papers from him, then hopped onto Henry Hudson's car nonchalantly.

But she seemed not to be Sophie Allen at all.

The former Sophie was completely unperturbed, not because she lacked edges, but because her placid personality had subdued her edges.

Chapter 194 Thorny Roses

"Charlotte Thompson was like a diminutive feline hiding lethal claws, sensing danger, she would bare her fangs and claws without hesitation.

A rose with thorns.

At his words, Charlotte blinked, but then laughed: "You flatter me."

At some unknown point, the pitch-black night had turned into a curtain of rain.

The rain pattered on the ground, making a crispy sound.

A slight chill in the air seeped into their skin, bringing a liberating pleasure.

Not far off, a bodyguard jogged down from a vehicle, holding an umbrella.

He stood in front of Justin Battleson, intending to hold the umbrella for him.

But in the next second, the umbrella had already left the bodyguard's hand and ended up in Justin's.

The man opened the umbrella, the brunt of it over Charlotte.

He nodded slightly, a playful smirk tugging at the corner of his lips.

"Miss Thompson, shall we go together?"

Behind them, the bodyguard watched as the two walked side by side into the curtain of rain, their hair tousled by the wind.

...

Go together? Was he offering to take her home?

Did he know where she lived?

Charlotte didn't have time to think it over, the rain was getting heavier, her sheepskin heels were getting wet and were likely to be ruined.

Justin Battleson had also opened the car door, Charlotte hesitated for a few seconds before climbing in.

The man took the driver's seat, put on his seatbelt, and started the engine.

The car moved steadily in the rainy night.

"Mr. Battleson, do you know where I live?" After thinking for a long time, Charlotte finally asked.

Justin Battleson seemed quite puzzled: "Did I say I was going to take you home?"

Um... okay then.

Charlotte was at a loss for words.

She turned her head to look outside the window, the city in the rain had an indescribable hazy beauty.

Looking at the retreating scenery outside the window, based on her memory of Qiver City from five years ago, Charlotte had a rough idea of where Justin was taking her.

In reality, when Justin suggested they go together, he meant going to the office.

Vanguard Jewelry was also in the Riley Group's building and was close to the CEO's office.

Charlotte had a vague suspicion, but also felt a sense of inexplicable strangeness.

After getting out of the car, Charlotte brushed her coat, and the man followed her closely.

Charlotte stood in front of the high-rise, maintaining her usual aloof and vigilant demeanour that kept people at arm's length.

She slightly lifted her eyelids and looked at the massive building in front of her. The past surged out of her recollections, bursting forth like a deluge.

It was a part of her past that Charlotte has always been reluctant to revisit.

Not because it was dreadful, but because she viewed it as a "blot" on her life.

Perhaps the five years had turned that Charlotte into someone who found the weakness and vulnerability of Sophie Allen both pathetic and laughable.

The marriage with Justin was as elusive as a cloud.

Now, thinking back, she realized she had rarely visited this place.

To be precise, she had never been here.

Justin had always been protective of Sophie Allen, so how could he ever have allowed her to appear in front of the Riley Group and the public?

Little did she expect that after so many years, having assumed a new identity, she would eventually find herself here.

Brazenly.

Only this time, everything had changed.

And Charlotte was burdened with doubts and revenge.

Charlotte secretly sighed, lifted her face slightly and looked at the magnificent skyscraper in front of her, a place that once seemed unreachable.

This was the heart of the Battleson empire, a place that countless people yearned for.

She was about to step into this place.

Charlotte's scarlet lips moved slightly, whispering: "Why did it turn out this way?"

Her voice was so faint, it dissolved into the sound of the rain.

Chapter 195: Trending Search

A large portion of Justin Battleson's left shoulder and hair were wet, and he simply wiped it off with a tissue.

Hearing a sound, he lifted his head slightly, his hand movements pausing, leaving his gaze filled with a touch of bewilderment and confusion.

"What did you say?"

Charlotte Thompson quickly hid the expression on her face, casually glanced at Justin Battleson, lightly coughed and smiled politely at the corner of her mouth, saying, "It doesn't matter, since I'm here, could you Mr. Battleson take me in?"

"Wait a minute."

Just as she was about to step forward, she heard Justin Battleson suddenly call her, subconsciously turning her head back, her face filled with a trace of doubt as she looked at him.

Justin Battleson slightly looked down at her, his eyes lazy, but inexplicably soft as moonlight.

The soft lighting from the building spilled onto them, Justin lifted his hand and gently wiped the corner of Charlotte's mouth with his thumb.

Her warm, soft lips came into contact with the man's cold fingertips, in a moment that lasted less than a second, but seemed to impart something extra.

Charlotte was stunned, feeling as though a current had just flashed across her lips.

She subconsciously took a step back, clearly feeling her face getting hotter.

She quietly swallowed her saliva, her voice slightly cold, "Mr. Battleson, what are you trying to do?"

Her hackles lifted.

Justin Battleson took back the hand that was hanging in the air, gave her an indifferent look.

Then somewhat playfully spoke, "Miss Thompson, now you're a senior designer and have signed with Vanguard Jewelry, you need to maintain your image."

Charlotte's eyebrows slightly frowned, confused.

Justin Battleson casually added another sentence, his voice calm and unflustered, "Miss Thompson, you still have cream on your face. It strangely clashes with your personality."

Charlotte: "..."

For some reason, faced with such a serious matter, she ended up laughing uncontrollably.

What was she laughing about?

She found it amusing that Justin Battleson thought he knew her well when he didn't know her at all.

Justin Battleson watched her cover her mouth laughing, it was unexpected, but it made the corners of his mouth uncontrollably lift up a bit.

The two of them just standing there, made for a matchlessly beautiful scene.

When she had finished laughing, Charlotte returned to her previously indifferent and composed look.

She cleared her throat slightly, her voice had a hint of a laugh, but a bit more polite, "Mr. Battleson isn't planning to stand out here till tomorrow, right?"

"Of course not." The door was opened, with someone respectfully standing by. Justin Battleson nodded slightly, and continued, "Come on."

The interior of the building was luxuriously decorated with bright lights, and the wave of warmth that greeted them dispelled the cold.

What they didn't know was that just a second before they entered, not too far from the company, a man wearing a duckbill hat and a mask was looking at a photo on his phone with a strange smile on his face.

In the photo on the screen, the man and woman were standing in front of the car, the woman slightly tilting her head, and the man's hand was on her face.

An angle that was particularly ambiguous for a couple.

He switched to Weibo, messaged the photo to an account.

It wasn't long before a long post with four photos appeared on Weibo, generating a bombshell.

Engagement began to rise rapidly, pushing towards the trending list, with netizens in the comment section picking up the pace, rapidly dividing into two factions with divergent views.

Some were supporting, others disapproving.

Chapter 196: Meddle in

In just a few minutes, numerous bloggers with millions of followers had begun to repost and comment on the situation, which kept this topic trending.

Even many netizens couldn't help themselves from expressing strange and sarcastic remarks in the comments sections.

Online revelations and netizens reacting are common phenomena on the internet nowadays.

However, the two people involved in this scandal are the ones who've been trending lately.

The people in that photo are Charlotte Thompson and Justin Battleson.

It was taken right outside the Riley Group building.

Yes, it's the moment Justin Battleson reached out to wipe the cream from Charlotte's lips.

Frozen in the picture, it was posted online for everyone to comment on. Keywords popped out, and the situation escalated relentlessly.

One is the commercial tycoon, the other a top-notch jewelry designer who has just signed a contract with Vanguard Jewelry.

Given their prestigious and prominent status, it's fair to say Charlotte is at a disadvantage.

Yet, while everyone was talking about these two, they didn't forget to bring up Justin's "rumored girlfriend" — Evelyn Curtis.

The drama involving these three people became much more intriguing.

Netizens were taking sides and heatedly argued in the comments section.

Microblogs were almost paralyzed.

The number of comments reached hundreds of thousands, and was even closing in on a million.

This shows how influential these three people are.

Claiming they are top celebrities would not be an exaggeration.

"I'm disgusted. Why is this woman named Charlotte Thompson getting in the way everywhere? First in the jewelry competition where she was the center of attention, then acting shamelessly like this."

"The comment above is too biased. The truth about the jewelry competition is out. It was clear that Charlotte was wearing the genuine piece. So, are people getting hated for wearing a dress these days?"

"Inducing the group's boss just after signing the contract, only a money-grubbing designer who returned to Druarus from a foreign country would do that. Who knows if she's here to sell designs or something else?"

"Are you jealous? You just can't bear the sight of other people's success. You are full of sour grapes. Do you have the talent of Charlotte? She's a full-fledged designer. Accusations of her seducing others are really harsh!"

"Tsk, ts, ts, everyone is being a bit too aggressive. An innocent passerby who is familiar with the jewelry competition, Evelyn Curtis, one of the judges, was wearing a counterfeit while Charlotte had a genuine one. The gap between the two suddenly widened when they heard about Justin Battleson being involved. Are we in for another love triangle?"

"What love triangle? Over these years, who has seen any official announcement about Justin Battleson's relationship with Evelyn Curtis?"

"Exactly, wasn't it just a bit flirtatious when Evelyn Curtis called Justin Battleson during a certain interview program? Does a bit of flirting mean they're an item now? No way!"

"I support that! I think Evelyn Curtis is acting on her own accord, with Justin Battleson not caring about her at all."

"You're all calling each other jealous, but I think you're just sour. Dream Watson and Justin Battleson are a match made in heaven!"

"Evelyn Curtis' fans should just shut up, you'll get her into more trouble."

"With all of you arguing like this, it could just be a hype. Just wait patiently for the people involved to speak up. Why worry for nothing?"

.....

Many netizens brought up the jewelry competition, which only happened a few days ago. In everyone's minds, the relationship between Evelyn Curtis and Justin Battleson has already been verified.

Chapter 197: Full Firepower

Although only Evelyn Curtis was the one usually hinting at Justin Battleson, it was an open secret in the circle.

Of course, there were also those who mocked Evelyn for her wishful thinking.

Opinions diverged into two camps, naturally there were also those who stayed neutral and simply enjoyed the drama.

But looking at the current situation...

The intimate photos of Charlotte Thompson and Justin Battleson, they didn't look photoshopped at all.

Since Charlotte had rounded up a wave of fans in the jewelry competition, naturally, people hoped that she could find a good man.

They were all star-chasers, of different ages, but it was clear to see, they all possess stubborn and competitive spirits trying to protect their idols.

Never a moment of peace, when one group got tired of typing, another would take over, the bickering continued relentlessly.

"Let's not mention the jewelry competition for now, let's say, the fact that Evelyn Curtis heavily invested in the production of "Republic of China's Beauty"... Although it was a big production, and what they've managed to do with details was quite impressive, but we all know, the only thing that made this drama flop was Evelyn Curtis's acting."

"I agree with the above post, calling Evelyn Curtis a vase is flattering her. To be fair, Charlotte Thompson is a hundred times more beautiful than her."

"If Charlotte had debuted, she would definitely be the top in the entertainment circle! Evelyn's ratings and box office are all bought with money!"

Facing such attacks, Evelyn's fans naturally wouldn't back down, they fought back immediately.

"Oh, please, it's 2021 and people still judge a person by their acting? Do you have a complex or what? Isn't my Dream Watson working hard enough?"

"Charlotte is nothing but an opportunist, stepping into someone's relationship, rushing to be a mistress, and the wronged one ended up being the rightful partner? Don't make me laugh, Charlotte, as a senior designer named Joy from abroad, is simply a disgrace to the name. It makes me sick."

"I agree with the above post, no matter what, there is a principle of who comes first."

Both sides' fans were not willing to back down, not caring about being polite, they were tearing each other apart in the comment section.

Two comments holding opposing views were quickly pushed to the top comments, instantly gaining over a hundred thousand likes.

"My Evelyn is the best, what Charlotte Thompson is doing now, is clearly a mistress, she's obviously wrong, her title as a high-level designer, makes one laugh, it's all insignificant and meaningless."

"Not to belittle you all, Evelyn Curtis has been in the entertainment circle for a few years, haven't you realized that all her gigs were only secured due to Justin's involvement? Compared to being a couple, I'd say a relationship of being used and exploiting fits them better."

"If you follow design, you must've heard Joy's name. In my opinion, she and Justin Battleson suit each other the best. As for Evelyn Curtis, she's just a play-acting and vulgar person. Stop standing on high moral ground to criticize Charlotte."

The comment section was now a deadlock between the two sides.

However, less people dared to directly hint at Justin Battleson.

Those involved ambiguously with two women usually get the title of 'scum'.

However, Justin was an exception, he didn't.

And when people hinted at him, their words were slightly more polite.

That was Justin's charm, he had power and status, and an irresistible charm.

In fact, the reason some people were so jealous could be because they took Justin Battleson as the standard for their other half.

Of course, it was just a standard, it didn't necessarily have to be realized.

The key point is, if you offend Justin Battleson, they couldn't hide on the internet.

Chapter 198: She is Charlotte Thompson, not Sophie Allen.

When leaving the Riley Group building, the rain had finally stopped, leaving a faint smell of rainwater in the air.

This strange scent is reminiscent of the earthy smell from the country lanes of my childhood, seeping into the heart after a rain shower.

I thought I would never be able to smell this comforting scent again. Today somehow feels like a dream come true.

Justin Battleson insisted on taking Charlotte Thompson home, Charlotte objected repeatedly, but eventually had to compromise.

She watched as Justin opened the car door in a gentlemanly and elegant manner, gesturing for her to get in.

Hesitant, Charlotte was left with no choice but to go in.

The car was warm, with dim yellow lights turned on.

Justin got in the car and shut the door with a "thud", creating an atmosphere of unspoken intimacy.

Perhaps due to the warmth, Charlotte's face started heating up rapidly, and her heartbeat accelerated without her realizing it.

Charlotte wound down the window, greedily inhaling the fresh air outside.

The two of them sat silently in the car, and somehow, flashes of what had occurred in the restaurant filled her mind.

Justin wiping her mouth seemed like a move he had mastered after countless repetitions.

Not only then, but also his behavior outside the building gave the impression of two lovers at the apex of intimacy.

Thoughts like these only served to heighten Charlotte's blush.

Barely acknowledging the heat, she casually touched her burning cheeks, the coldness of her hand slightly easing her discomfort.

Her heart missed a beat, and her gaze turned somewhat vacant, quickly followed by shock.

Why on earth was she thinking about all this?

She suddenly couldn't see herself clearly anymore.

Taking a deep breath, she tried to calm her racing heart.

She knew very well that all of this was just the normal reaction to intimate contact between two people of opposite genders.

She was Charlotte Thompson, not Sophie Allen.

A heart that had never been stirred before shouldn't be stirred now.

The ride seemed endless, and it wasn't until the car smoothly pulled to stop that Charlotte, who was dozing off, straightened up.

She had unconsciously found Justin reliable enough to fall asleep in his car!

But realizing this, she understood the danger!

Her face was still slightly hot, and she hurriedly opened the door, hastily getting out as if escaping.

Justin watched her frantic movements, seemingly unable to speak.

"I'll pick you up tomorrow..."

Charlotte's mind was buzzing, she hardly heard what he was saying, only interjected: "Thank you, Mr. Battleson. It's getting late, you should head back."

With that said, she turned on her heels, her high-heeled shoes tapping on the floor and waking up the sound-activated lights downstairs.

She walked along the fickle path of light that danced on the ground, taking one step at a time as a rose among thorns.

"Sigh, this light. I have to get someone to fix it." she murmured softly.

The man's gaze lingered on her with a complex and subtle expression, until her graceful silhouette disappeared behind the closing front door.

...

The next day.

The weather warmed gradually, the faint sunlight permeating through thick clouds, casting a soft glow on the ground.

Charlotte rubbed her groggy eyes, turning over to grab the constantly buzzing phone on her bedside table, her voice carrying a hint of disruption to her sweet dreams.

She lazily answered without looking, "Hello?"

"Miss Thompson?"

The woman who had not yet fully awoken, softened her voice incredibly swiftly the moment she heard the man on the other end.

Chapter 199: I'm Downstairs

Justin Battleson's gaze deepened slightly as he looked up at the small villa in front of him, with the thick, light-colored curtains pulled tightly shut.

It was peacefully silent, without any sign of movement, suggesting that the owner had not yet woken up.

He chuckled, "I'm downstairs."

A second, two seconds...

Charlotte Thompson's blurry thoughts were finally awakened.

She shot up from her seat with a startled look in her eyes and an involuntarily raised voice.

She glanced at the time; it was not yet seven.

"You're downstairs now!?"

Justin Battleson nonchalantly responded with a "Hmm," reminding her, "I already informed you last night that I'd be taking you to the company for orientation this morning, but you cut me off."

Like being hit over the head with a sledgehammer, Charlotte vaguely recalled Justin mentioning it, but she hadn't heard him clearly.

After hanging up the phone, she hastily got out of bed and quickly packed her things before going downstairs.

Due to time constraints, she had hastily pulled on a black ankle-length dress and slipped into black low-heels.

The casually tied hair and her delicate, makeup-free face were equally alluring.

She stood in front of the man, panting, and after she had managed to regulate her breathing, she forced a composed smile.

"Sorry for the trouble, Mr. Battleson."

Justin Battleson looked at the woman before him, slightly stunned, but he regained his composure within a few seconds.

Corner of his lips slightly upturned, he quietly said, "Get in the car."

In less than half an hour, they arrived at the company.

Since both had arrived home late the previous night and had gotten up very early, they had not had a chance to check their phones, and were completely unaware of the news that had been intensifying online.

Charlotte's phone was vibrating non-stop in her bag. As she stepped into the lobby, she impatiently pulled it out and turned it off without even a glance.

It was probably just a bunch of junk news notifications, anyway.

On her first day at Vanguard Jewelry, she needed to make a good impression.

Having attracted much attention at the jewelry competition, she knew she was now a focus of attention.

If she did well, everyone would be overjoyed, but if she messed up, she would become a target for criticism.

While she had BK's patronage and wasn't afraid of anything, she decided to keep a low profile this time and wouldn't reveal her relationship with BK unless absolutely necessary.

Justin Battleson walked slightly ahead, somewhat acting as the host, he personally accompanied Charlotte to the personnel department.

Actually, he just wanted to spend more time with her.

But since it was his company and his territory, whatever reason he gave would ultimately be up to him, right?

Seeing that he had no intention of stopping, Charlotte, after weighing her options, tactfully voiced, "Mr. Battleson, if you're busy, you can just assign a colleague to show me around. There's no need for you to take the trouble."

Her words were understated, but the underlying message was clear.

Justin Battleson went along with what she said, but did not agree.

"Miss Thompson, you're being too formal. We are honored to have the senior designer Joy join Riley Group, and as the group's president, it's my duty to show hospitality."

He paused, his eyes obscure, "Furthermore, Miss Thompson, you are a distinguished figure, a rare talent, who should be treasured."

Even though his words were quite commonplace, spoken from Justin's mouth, they unexpectedly carried a hint of sentiment.

And an inexplicable... ambiguity?

Charlotte frowned slightly, feeling something was off, but she was still unclear about his intention.

Chapter 200: Radiating Splendor

Justin Battleson turned to continue walking, "However, Riley Group is a large corporation after all, and you won't miss out on the benefits that come with it."

He paused slightly, smiled and said, "Come along, Miss Thompson, your future will surely shine brightly."

Shine brightly? Her life had already been quite thrilling, how could it shine even brighter?

Charlotte Thompson couldn't help but scoff internally.

However, that's not what Justin Battleson had in mind.

There are many ways to shine.

As long as she stayed here, Justin Battleson would find the time and opportunity to make her shine brightly.

Listening to his words, Charlotte was slightly moved. Even though she was secretly scoffing, her body honestly followed suit.

Her black low-heeled shoes made a crisp sound on the ground, her steps firm and strong, and the receptionist couldn't help but throw a few glances in her direction.

Seeing Justin Battleson leading her forward, she was slightly shocked and took a sharp breath of cool air.

The President personally leading her in was a sight she had never seen in her ten years at Riley Group.

Thanks to the lady behind her, they finally witnessed such a scene.

Other staff also saw this and took sidelong glances.

Only when Justin Battleson and Charlotte had disappeared from sight did they hide and whisper to each other in soft secretive tones.

For an event of this epic caliber, they only dared to whisper and not tell everyone.

However, just after a few words, the floor manager patrolled past them. A single look from him silenced everyone on the scene.

The manager coughed lightly, "Get back to work!"

...

On the other side, Evelyn Curtis was hurrying on the set, with the photographer standing not a meter away from her, snapping photos.

The blinding white flash and the constant clicking sound echoed in her ear.

In addition to the clicking sound, there were also some off-topic whispered conversations.

A few fresh college graduates had joined the crew for internships.

It was normal for young people to love gossip, but this time Evelyn Curtis sniffed out something unusual.

Somehow, she had a bad feeling about this.

At first, she faintly heard the names "Justin Battleson" and "Evelyn Curtis" and thought the netizens were talking about their relationship.

However, when she heard the name "Joy", her expression froze.

The photographer stopped his actions, and politely said, "Evelyn, please manage your expression."

Only then did Evelyn Curtis manage to adjust her demeanor and smile at the camera.

However, she was already tense inside.

Joy was Charlotte Thompson, and she knew this better than anyone else.

It was normal for Charlotte Thompson to be discussed because she was trending due to the jewelry competition.

But why were her and Justin Battleson's names being dragged into it?

Evelyn Curtis had a sense of unease, resulting in inadequate expression management, and took many unusable photos.

Unfortunately, the photographer didn't dare call her out on it. All he could do was coax her gently to complete the shoot as best she could.

Evelyn Curtis knew her reputation had taken a dip in recent days and she couldn't afford any mistakes at this critical time.

If rumors of her diva behavior surfaced, along with Justin Battleson ignoring her, she would be done for.

After much thought, for her own career, Evelyn Curtis had to suppress her worries and focus on her work.

After shooting a series of photos, it was nearly ten o'clock.

Evelyn Curtis's tightly coiled nerves finally got a chance to relax.

The makeup artist came up to touch up her makeup, and the young girls behind her continued their energetic discussions.