

Spoiled 691

Chapter 691: It's a Misunderstanding

Returning his coat to the chair, Justin Battleson raises an eyebrow at the neatly tidied cleaning supplies, then sits down next to Charlotte Thompson with a hint of guilt, murmuring:

"Sorry, Charlotte, there was an urgent meeting at the company, and it ran long, so I couldn't make it back for lunch."

At his words, Charlotte's long eyelashes flutter slightly. She lowers her eyes and does not respond.

Without recognizing her odd behavior, Justin instinctively tries to wrap his arm around her petite waist, but to his surprise, Charlotte quietly moves a few steps away.

His hand clasp at empty air, Justin looks at her with mild surprise.

The latter has put some distance between them in an instant, her face devoid of any expression, her rosy lips drawn into a line, her downcast eyes concealing any discernible emotions.

Slightly taken aback, Justin opens his mouth, "Charlotte?"

He is answered by silence.

Seeing this, a man's puzzlement deepens. He's settled matters concerning the two children, and Charlotte had not been holding any grudges for a long time now.

But now...

Charlotte's sudden cold treatment has him completely confused. His thin lips press into a line, and after a few seconds of thought, he raises his eyes to the still frowning woman in the distance.

His voice is very soft, "Charlotte, what's wrong?"

But she remains indifferent, her gaze fixed on the TV screen, though clearly preoccupied.

Justin subtly shifts towards Charlotte, gingerly starts, "Did something upset you?"

He pauses slightly, continues, "You can tell me, maybe I can help solve it?"

Upon seeing Charlotte's stone-faced reaction, Justin decides to approach directly and cajoles her at length, finally succeeded in softening her a little with all his skills.

With a halting sweep of her gaze upwards, Charlotte locks her dark, heavy eyes on the man's finely sculpted features. After few seconds of contemplation, she finally loosens her lips,

Her eyes fixed on the man's face.

"I saw a jade pendant in your room while I was cleaning. There were two characters on it, 'Rui' and 'R'."

Charlotte gazes intently at Justin, trying to capture any unusual expression on his face.

And she succeeds.

Upon hearing this, the man oddly falls silent, a fond reminiscence in his eyes that Charlotte hasn't seen before.

Just at this moment, Charlotte's heart suddenly feels as if a bucket of cold water has been poured over her, the shock overwhelming her completely.

It's actually funny, though she'd already understood everything in her heart, she can't help but keep pursuing an answer that has always been obvious.

She gives a self-deprecating laugh, her eyes gradually becoming red, "I have another question. Is this 'R' from the Riley Group?"

The Riley Group is a commercial empire founded by Justin Battleson. Many journalists have asked about the significance of the letter 'R' in the past, but Justin has never publicly answered.

Now the silent one is Justin.

Grimly curving her lips, Charlotte feels her heart falling into an icehouse. She nods, stands up: "You don't need to answer, I understand."

With that, she prepares to step around Justin and return to her room, but just as she takes her first step, Justin extends his hand and grips her wrist.

She halts her steps and takes a deep breath, "Is there anything else you want to say?"

After a long pause, Justin finally smiles reluctantly. He pulls Charlotte back towards him and after choosing his words carefully, he starts, "You don't understand, everything is just a misunderstanding."

The character "Rui" is the root cause of this misunderstanding.

Chapter 692: Mia White

Charlotte Thompson furrowed her brows as Justin Battleson forced her to sit on the sofa.

Puzzled, she looked up at the man in front of her, "Misunderstanding?"

Justin paused for a few seconds before speaking in a low voice, "The jade pendant indeed belonged to the woman I loved, but this woman wasn't Evelyn Curtis."

His voice was deep and magnetic, sounding like pure enjoyment as he earnestly narrated the story.

"You may not know this, my mother's name is Mia White," Justin admitted.

Mia White?

Her name also contained the word "white."

Charlotte's eyes flickered but she did not interrupt him. Instead, she quietly listened to him continue.

"She was once the daughter of a prominent business family here, later encountering my father. The White and Battleson families are both well-known in Druarus, making the match of their marriage quite a sensation."

With an indifferent tone, Justin recounted these events. But in his voice, Charlotte detected a suppressed sorrow.

The union of Mia White, the heiress of the White family, and Oliver Battleson, the charismatic patriarch of the Battleson family, naturally became a splendid tale.

Together, the White and Battleson families created a legend in the business world, a marvel that astonished everyone.

Though Mr. White had grown old and the White family had no male heirs, he slowly faded away from the business scene, merging his corporation with Battleson Group.

With Mr. White's full support, the already flourishing Battleson Group once again became the industry leader.

But what nobody expected was, Oliver Battleson, after achieving fame and success... changed his mind.

Justin clearly remembered a rainy night twenty years ago when his father walked openly into their home with a glamorous woman.

His mother held him tightly. Her gaze was icy, her black hair falling naturally, brushing against her ears, as she looked at the man not far from them, a boundless chill on her face.

Following this was Oliver Battleson's harsh and filthy scolding, and the glamorous woman's triumphant laughter.

His mother held him calmly, whispering in his ear.

"Justin, the achievements of Battleson today is all thanks to your grandfather's full support. It is also our White Family's. One day when you grow up, you have to be strong, you can't let others take what is ours."

At the time of these words, the glamorous woman's belly was slightly bulging.

She was pregnant with Oliver Battleson's child.

Her gradually growing belly became her boasting asset, but due to Mia White still holding fifty percent shares in Battleson, there was some caution towards her.

But Mia White was extraordinarily calm, living under the same roof with the glamorous woman every day. Only Justin, then a few years old, could make out the dull despair in his mother's eyes.

On a night just as ordinary as others, his estranged father grasped his mother's jaw, his usually hideous face bearing a trace of a smile.

He said: "Mia White, do you know? Just an hour ago, Tiana gave birth to my child, my own flesh and blood."

His gaze moved towards Justin, and then he gritted his teeth angrily: "This child must surely be a bastard you had with another man. Mia White, just how cheap are you to have made me a cuckold all these years?"

Cuckold?

Mia White was forced to lift her head, a faint smile on her gorgeous face. Even when faced with the man she had loved since childhood, faced with his suspicion and betrayal, her voice remained steady:

"Oliver Battleson, do you truly believe her and not me?"

She only stated this one sentence, without a trace of extra decoration.

Perhaps she was disillusioned, or perhaps she didn't care anymore.

Chapter 693: Mom will Always Love You

Upon hearing this, Oliver Battleson didn't hesitate for a second. His hand, gripping Mia White's jaw, slowly tightened as he laughed coldly, "Mia White, in my heart, you will never compare to Tiana, never."

The alluring woman named Ella White was the daughter of the White Family's driver and grew up with Mia White.

Finally, Mia White told a bedtime story to Justin Battleson as she usually did, with an unusual calm. But strangely, young Justin Battleson seemed to sense something was off and couldn't fall asleep.

Fearing that his mother would tire herself from storytelling, he pretended to be asleep with his eyes tightly shut.

Mia gently put down the storybook, bent over to imprint a light kiss on his forehead, and removed a jade pendant from around her neck, placing it next to Justin's pillow.

Along with it, she left a stock transfer document, to take effect when Justin came of age.

Mia spoke softly, her voice as light as a feather.

"Justin, Mommy is tired and needs to rest. If you wake up and can't find me, don't be sad. I will be watching over you from another place, seeing you grow up safely and reclaim everything that belongs to you."

At that moment, the little Justin Battleson felt his act collapse, but he still kept his eyes shut, even though his trembling eyelashes had given him away.

The last thing he heard was the woman's gentle whisper.

"Our Justin has grown up."

In the darkness, little Justin couldn't help but half-open his eyes, watching Mia dressed in a pure white gown, her long hair, like spilled ink, naturally falling down her back.

Her pale feet stepping on the cold floor, one step after another, she walked towards the balcony.

Time suddenly stretched out, as if a century had passed, Mia stopped in front of the balcony, suddenly turning her head to steal a glance.

Meeting the half-opened eyes of the little boy, she suddenly smiled.

The last thing he saw was her mouthing six words.

"Mommy will always love you."

Facing the wind, her light skirt billowing in the cold night wind. The wind mercilessly blew her hair, strands falling in front of her eyes.

Yet, her lips curved up in a smile that was as untamed as before she was chained by marriage, her face radiating relief.

She slowly tipped back her head, then calmly fell backward.

Even from far away, it seemed like Justin could hear the sound of her body hitting the ground.

Underneath her white dress bloomed a vivid red amaryllis. Even in death, the woman's eyes remained open.

In the darkness, the tiny him lay on the bed on his side, motionless, the only sensation being the hot tears that fell drop by drop from his face, burning against his cheeks.

Only later did he learn that the final straw for Mia White wasn't Ella White successfully having a child.

But rather, the name of that child: Leon Battleson.

Leon...

What a great name.

Justin Battleson was also named by Oliver Battleson himself. It was only many years later that Justin discovered his mother's diary in a drawer.

On the day he was born, Oliver received an anonymous email containing provocative photos of Mia with another man and even doubted whether Justin was his child.

At the time, Battleson Group was at the pinnacle. Everyone was looking for a loophole to exploit the Battleson family, Oliver, considering the bigger picture, chose not to make the issue public.

He threw the photos down on the table, nonchalantly suggesting: "Let's name this child Justin Battleson. Justin..."

He paused for a moment, before continuing indifferently: "I wish his life, his future, everything about him, to be as cold as a snowy night, blanketed by endless snow."

From then on, he was plunged into an endless darkness.

Chapter 694: Sworn to Die Loyally for You

After listening to all this, Charlotte Thompson's pupils abruptly narrowed, and she opened her mouth in indescribable shock.

She had never imagined Justin Battleson had gone through such experiences.

Witnessing his own mother jumping off a building to escape her pain, how did the child, who was barely six at the time, survive through night after night of nightmares?

Justin Battleson moistened his parched lips and lowered his eyes in silence, masking the deep-seated sorrow in his gaze.

The woman who always laughed freely, her voice gentle and soft, still lived forever in his memory.

A long while passed with the two of them sitting on the sofa, silent.

After a long time, Charlotte finally managed to suppress the sadness welling up in her heart, and moved forward to embrace him gently.

She rubbed her warm cheek against his slightly cold neck, her emotions a tangled mess, and said in a hoarse voice, "Your mother has always been watching over you from heaven. You've accomplished all that she wished for."

Justin Battleson had single-handedly established the Riley Group, and not a single thing from the White Family was taken away by Ella White and Leon Battleson.

He had done it.

Blinking, Charlotte suddenly felt a warmth in her eyes.

How had he grit his teeth and persevered through the countless difficult steps these years?

Lowering his gaze, Justin reached out to hug her back, then closed his eyes with exhaustion, resting his chin on Charlotte's shoulder like a homeless cat.

...

In a basement somewhere in Druarus, Loshad City.

A man in a white coat not far away slowly removed the bandages from the woman's face. After many seconds of unwinding layer after layer, the bandages were finally off.

The woman's naked body was covered in scars of varied sizes. Her arms were marked with terrifying wounds made by a sharp stone, each one a testament to the trampling and humiliation she had once suffered.

Underneath the bandage was a fair and pretty face, flawless in appearance.

A man sitting at some distance, eyeing her appreciatively, a smile bowed his lips, and his eyes were filled with ruthless bloodlust. "Jack, your skills have improved considerably. This work of art is infinitely superior to your previous attempts."

As soon as he finished speaking, the woman, who was originally sitting in the chair, suddenly stood up and then heavily kneeled on the ground, her bare body colliding with the hard, rough floor.

Her voice was as coarse as an old woman's, unpleasant to the ear. "Mr. Battleson, it was you who saved me from that living hell. As long as you help me take revenge, even if you want to take my life, I will willingly hand you the knife."

At her words, the man in the chair laughed suddenly. He casually threw the suit jacket that was hanging on the back of his chair onto the woman's naked body. His voice concealed a hint of undetectable coldness.

He curved his lips slightly, his eyes filled with a chilling darkness.

"From now on, you are no longer the Evelyn Curtis who struggled to survive in prison ..."

The man paused slightly, squinted his eyes, and a hint of bloodthirst flashed in his eyes.

"I've got you a whole new identity. Remember what you just said. From now on, you're my most loyal dog, and I, I'm your only master."

As his words ended, there was a quiet silence in the basement.

Without hesitation, the woman bowed and knocked her head three times against the floor. Her voice was clear and loud.

"Master, I am willing to be your most loyal dog, to serve you till death."

Chapter 695: Truly Vicious Person

The man nodded calmly and only allowed a smile to play at the corner of his lips as he watched Evelyn Curtis being led away.

At his side, his assistant handed him the laptop she held in her hand. The screen displayed the trending topics on social media.

Glancing at it, the first trending topic was the public announcement of Justin Battleson and Charlotte Thompson's relationship. The second one was about netizens digging up information about their past and their several children, who were living a blissful life.

His deep gaze turned icy as he gripped the laptop tighter.

Justin Battleson...

Why was he allowed to live a carefree life under the sun, while he was forced to hide in the darkness, barely clinging onto life like a parasite?

He was from the Battleson Family too, after all...

Taking a deep breath, the man forcefully smashed the laptop onto the ground. The impact was so huge it completely shattered the device.

The assistant beside him barely blinked an eye, as if accustomed to these outbursts. And promptly summoned someone to clean the mess.

Leaning back, the man moistened his dry lips. Lifting his gaze up slightly, his bloodshot eyes were inundated with cold, hidden rage.

He still remembers witnessing his mother's flesh being torn apart by a whip.

The hatred bubbling up within him was hard to suppress.

...

Ten years ago. Winter.

Leon Battleson, only ten years old, huddled fearfully in a corner. His wide, innocent eyes were filled with terror. He helplessly watched the scene unfolding in the living room, his body trembling uncontrollably.

Oliver Battleson raised his hand, using all his strength to slap Tiana White. Tiana took the hit and stumbled, falling right before Leon's eyes.

Leon's gaze hardened. On instinct, he rushed over to embrace his mother. Tiana's cheek was swelling at a visible rate.

Oliver squatted in front of the two, his face seething with deep-seated hatred.

"Tiana White, so the truly vile person is you!" he snarled.

Raising his other hand, he took a thick stack of documents and ruthlessly threw them at Tiana, who instinctively lifted her arm to shield her face from the blow.

Leon's face turned white with fear, but he still stepped forward to grab his father's arm.

"Dad, stop hitting mom. It hurts her," he pleaded.

As soon as those words left his mouth, Oliver roughly shook him off and sneered, "Don't call me dad. Tiana's child doesn't deserve to carry the Battleson name!"

His gaze shifted, the man paused briefly before speaking in a cold voice, "Tiana White, so you can feel pain too? Did you know that by deliberately creating ambiguous photos between me and Mia ten years ago, causing me to misunderstand her, and by replacing Mia as the saviour by my side..."

Back when he was a child, Oliver almost drowned and was saved by a girl around his age. After a lot of effort, he managed to dig up decades-old information only to realise his life had been saved by Mia White, not Tiana.

However, Tiana falsely assumed the role of his saviour and slowly encroached on Mia's life.

His eyes swirled with raw hatred. Grabbing a piece of the document, Oliver sneered at Tiana, "Such a pity, you thought you could seamlessly hide events from ten, even decades ago. But you didn't anticipate that my methods would exceed yours, did you?"

He harshly grabbed her jaw, "Tiana White, you've lied to me for so many years. Did you know that Mia couldn't even close her eyes when she died!"

Chapter 696: It Was All Stolen by You

"Her blood spread on the ground and she suffered a thousand, million times more than you!"

The man's murderous gaze fell straight onto Ella White, as if he wanted to physically torture her with his eyes alone.

Time ticked on agonizingly slowly until at last the man waved his hand dismissively, disgusted, "Lock this woman and her son in the basement."

At his words, Ella White's deadened eyes lit up with fear. She shook her head desperately, grabbing at the trouser leg of Oliver Battleson as she lay on the floor.

"No, Oliver, I know you hate me, blame me, you can do whatever you want to me, but, but Leon..."

Ella White looked at Leon with trembling and continued, "Oliver, let Leon go for the sake of our marital bond of over ten years. He's just a child, he has school tomorrow..."

"Marital bond of over ten years?" The man casually lifted his foot, viciously stepping on Ella White's supporting hand. His voice was icy cold, "Ella White, these years, were all stolen by you."

As his words fell, a nearby butler understood, stepped forward, and dragged Ella White away.

Leon Battleson knelt on the floor as someone came to drag him away as well. He stared blankly at his familiar yet foreign father.

Just yesterday, his father had been carrying him on his shoulders, playing with him. So why had he become a completely different person today?

Leon furrowed his little eyebrows.

What was the basement? Were there lots of fun toys there?

But what he didn't know was that from this point on, his life would fall into an unfathomable darkness, and even if he struggled desperately, he could only end up wounded all over.

Since Mia White's suicide, Justin Battleson had been sent to the old house to be raised by his grandparents. The fifteen-year-old was quiet and reserved, but the coldness in his eyes was nothing like Mia's.

After facing the truth, Oliver Battleson's first thought was to return to the old house to see his son he hadn't seen in almost ten years.

But as he arrived at the doorstep, his steps suddenly froze.

What right did he have to appear before a child he had abandoned for ten years? What right did he have to tell him, 'I am your father'?

Through a small crack in the door, he glimpsed the child's clean, fair profile, and it hit him. He realized his overwhelming sense of guilt.

He had lost the face to face this child.

Upon returning to the villa, Oliver Battleson went straight to the basement.

The basement was incredibly dim and humid, even the corners were moldy, and an unpleasant smell permeated the air.

Ella White sat on the only chair, moldy from water damage, her hair disheveled as she held Leon. Her face had an expression of madness.

The servant in the basement handed Oliver Battleson a whip soaked in salty water with deep barbs on it.

Seeing him come in, Ella White's face showed undisguised terror. She pushed Leon away, her voice trembling, "Leon, sit over there and turn around. Your father and I are going to play a game, and you mustn't look back. Promise mommy, okay?"

But Ella White had underestimated Oliver Battleson's hatred towards her. The man turned his head to signal the servant, who nodded and then forced Leon to look at Ella White.

Without any warning, Oliver Battleson raised the whip, cutting through the air.

That was followed by the sound of skin being pierced again and again.

And, the piercing wails of a woman.

Chapter 697: Escape from the Secret Room

In the living room.

Charlotte Thompson felt Justin Battleson's breath near her ear, carrying a warm hint with it as the faint wind licked her earlobe.

At first, his breathing was noticeably heavy. She could feel her chest rising and falling with Justin due to their close proximity.

She felt a trace of moistness on her shoulder.

Knowing she had touched his deepest memory, she held him tighter around his solid back.

After a while, Justin's breathing returned to normal, and he took a step back voluntarily.

Then he was greeted by her delicate and soft hands, with slender knuckles, gently holding his cheeks.

Justin was enjoying the warmth she was bringing to him, and lifted his hands on top of hers.

He was looking straight into her eyes. Her gaze was filled with care for him and the movement as lively as splashing water making him reluctant to look away.

"I'm sorry."

Charlotte's voice was soft, even sobbing, "It was my suspicion that made you think of those things again. I'm very sorry."

Her slender hands stroked his face, also easing the pain in his heart.

"It won't happen again in the future, I'll be with you all the time."

With that, a healing smile appeared on her face.

When she spoke again, her tone was so relaxed that it was like she had become a different person, completely putting the heavy topic behind.

"To apologize to you, I'm allowing you to go on a date with me for a day."

"A reward?" Justin's usually serious face lit up with a smile. "You're rewarding me for an apology?"

Charlotte pretended to lose interest and reluctantly pulled back her hand.

"Yes, eh...If you don't want it then forget it."

Justin Battleson saw through everything, a faint smile on his face as he intertwined her hand with his, "Wait for me to change clothes, and we can set off right now."

"I'm going too!"

Justin Battleson's so-called changing clothes was merely switching his suits for something more casual. Seeing Charlotte still locked in her room, he sat down on the sofa and patiently waited.

Ten minutes passed according to the clock on the wall, but there was no sign of Charlotte coming out.

"Charlotte? Are you done?"

"Almost."

From the tone of Charlotte's response, she didn't seem to be in a rush.

Listening carefully, he could still hear the music playing in the room.

Justin Battleson, who usually had no interest in makeup, suddenly realized why there would be hundreds of songs in the makeup playlist on the music app. The lengthy makeup time was fully demonstrated by Charlotte.

"Charlotte?"

Seeing that half an hour was approaching, Justin Battleson, who couldn't wait any longer, asked again. He got up and moved closer to the door, worrying whether there was any issue.

Her door opened in response, and Justin standing at the entrance looked somewhat awkward.

"You are ..."

Charlotte, wearing large frame sunglasses on her high nose bridge and a mask covering her small face, looked like a female celebrity at the airport trying to avoid recognition.

If it weren't for the clothing she wore that they had chosen together, he would probably not recognize her when walking on the street.

"What are you laughing at?"

Even with the sunglasses on, Charlotte was still sharp-eyed, catching a slight uplift at the corner of his mouth which he failed to suppress.

"Being fully armed can sometimes attract more attention."

Charlotte argued persuasively, "I'm now participating in a variety show as a public figure, so it's better to be careful with my appearance."

Justin didn't know what to do with her, so he reached out to drape his arm over her shoulder and walked towards the door.

"Since it's a reward, we'll go wherever you want."

Charlotte raised her hand and pulled the edge of the mask up slightly, tilted her head and thought, "Then let's go to the newly opened escape room."

"Escape room?"

Justin Battleson didn't know much about it.

"Let's go."

Charlotte took his hand.

Chapter 698: Don't Want to Trend

Dressed so conservatively, Charlotte Thompson struggled quite a bit to even walk.

The weather was still in early autumn, she wore an extra-long trench coat over her short-sleeved t-shirt, which covered her white knees and concealed her slender neck.

Justin Battleson frowned slightly, eyeing her attire from head to toe.

Unable to bear the sight of her struggling walk, when they were just a few steps away from the parking lot, he finally spoke.

"I doubt anyone will notice you. Maybe you should go home and change."

Charlotte shook her head resolutely: "I've been trending several times. I don't want to be again."

"Your clothing is hindering your walk."

She pointed to the car in the parking place: "I don't need to walk much."

Justin was rendered speechless. He had to let her have her own way.

The shop Charlotte introduced didn't appear large from the outside, but inside there were several rooms, each marked with a skull sign on the doorframe.

Unlike Justin's frowning look, Charlotte glanced around with great interest.

"Which room would you like to enter?"

The receptionist handed over a stack of room information, which was quickly snapped up by Charlotte.

"We have many escape rooms here, a summer water escape room with raincoats provided, a horror escape room..."

Before the receptionist could finish, Charlotte pointed at a creepy promotional poster.

"We will go into this horror version. What do you think, Justin?"

"Hmm?" Justin Battleson was startled, "Whichever, you pick."

The receptionist laughed lightly: "Alright, I'll show you the way."

Following the staff member, who took them to the escape room blindfolded, they opened their eyes to find themselves in a dim room.

Charlotte, familiar with the routine, quickly found a map in a drawer close to her, which she examined closely to locate their current position.

"The red dot indicates our current location, and the destination is here."

She pointed it out to Justin, to which he simply responded with a "Hmm."

Even with the faint light in the room, Justin still noticed Charlotte's enthusiasm wane slightly.

"I'll help you find clues."

Justin, slightly taller than Charlotte, reached over the top of a cabinet, his hand coming away damp. Upon closer inspection, his hand was smeared with prop blood.

Along with that, he found the key soaked in blood on the top of the cabinet, which he handed to Charlotte.

"I didn't realize you had such a talent for these games."

Having obtained the map, Charlotte led the way. The narrow hallway was still unclear under the flashlight, the hanging vines and fallen leaves creating a sense of decay.

"Gulp."

Following a sudden movement, a life-like puppet head fell from the ceiling splattering fake blood all over Charlotte's trench coat.

Justin, who had been a few steps behind her, quickly stepped forward, grabbed her arm and pulled her close to him, allowing the later falling props to miss her completely.

"Are you alright?"

Justin Battleson gently stroked the top of Charlotte's head.

Unexpectedly, a violent crash echoed from a tightly shut door in the room next to them, as if someone inside was desperately trying to break it open.

Remembering the key he had found earlier, he was about to use it to try to unlock the door, but Charlotte stopped him, having somehow picked up the puppet head that had fallen earlier.

She put one finger against her lips, signaling him to be quiet.

The very moment the people inside the door opened it and rushed towards them, Charlotte, hiding next to the door, lifted the puppet head towards them.

Chapter 699: Even Ghosts Have to Eat Dog Food

The person who rushed in froze on the spot. Their scream was less like a ghost trying to alarm others and more like a non-player character (NPC) terrified by the sudden appearance of a severed head.

Charlotte took it a step further by letting her hair hang in front of her face and disappearing into the doorway after dropping the severed head.

The corridor light flickered, casting a faint white beam that painted her slightly pale face with an even whiter hue.

The mournful wails of the NPC became more pitiful, causing a figure in a zombie mask to peek out from a crack in the wall to see what was happening.

While others came to the haunted house to be frightened by ghosts, Charlotte came to frighten the ghosts.

After waiting for a while and receiving no response from Justin Battleson, Charlotte looked back at him with a puzzled expression in her eyes.

Justin's face was devoid of any smile, and his gaze towards her was somewhat embarrassed.

"You're brave," he commented.

Seeing Charlotte hesitate, Justin let out a light sigh, gave her a gentle pat on the back, and said nonchalantly, "Let's keep going."

An idea flashed in Charlotte's mind on how to please him.

The next second, she changed her behavior completely. Charlotte deliberately moved closer to him, rubbing lightly against his chest like a cat.

"You lead the way, I'm scared," she said.

Her plotting paid off. Justin's tone became more confident compared to before, "Follow me."

Without words, Charlotte felt the warmth his hand conveyed when he tightly held hers.

The walls of the corridor were illuminated by dim yellow candle-shaped lights, providing them with just enough visibility to see the path ahead.

The moment both of Charlotte's feet touched a stone slab, two hallway lamps went out simultaneously, plunging the hallway into darkness.

Taking advantage of the darkness, she took a big step forward, leaning against his back, and whispered fearfully, "It's so dark, I'm scared."

Her distressed words had already depleted Justin's resistance. He stopped, held her in his arms and said, "Don't worry, we'll wait until the lights come back on before we continue."

"Okay."

They stood facing a small house with an open door. Instead of rushing to find new clues, they chose to cling tightly to each other in the silent darkness.

"Ah!"

Feeling a cold sensation on her ankle, she looked down to find a skeletal hand gripping it.

A screech from a female ghost erupted from behind her. Charlotte was unable to dodge and was pulled backward into a pair of arms.

"Justin!" she cried.

Upon hearing her call, Justin rushed forward, prying the arms that were holding Charlotte.

Charlotte, who had previously been scaring the ghosts, was now trembling like a frightened rabbit.

Her teary eyes met his, her every move invoking a protective instinct in him.

"I'm here, it's okay now."

He pulled the shaking girl into his arms, patting her back gently to comfort her.

"Uh..."

Charlotte didn't say much, but her mewling was enough to let him know she was terrified.

"It's okay. As long as I'm here, no one else is allowed to hold you."

In an instant, the arms around her let go. Before she could react, Justin was facing her, gently cupping her face in his hand.

His breath was getting closer to her. Charlotte closed her eyes and took in his scent.

Justin's lips made gentle contact with hers, leaving a trace of wetness.

The zombie that had been pulling her earlier suddenly stopped. For a moment, the clamor in the corridor went quiet.

The two candle lights in the corridor lit up this time, casting a uniquely romantic atmosphere in the eerie darkness.

"Even as ghosts, we're third-wheeling," a NPC muttered under its breath, heard by Charlotte.

Chapter 700: I am Holding You

A moist sensation spread across her lips, causing Charlotte Thompson to anxiously tug at the corner of her clothes.

The occasional envious laughter of the nearby NPCs made her feel somewhat shy.

"That's enough." She gently pushed Justin Battleson away, her fair, slender fingertips brushing across his chest to remind him to be mindful of their surroundings.

"Hmm, you shouldn't be scared now," Justin Battleson smiled teasingly, a hint of mockery about Charlotte's earlier timidity in his voice.

Charlotte Thompson looked down, a hint of satisfaction flashing in her clear eyes.

How could she possibly be afraid of those ghosts?

She gently pressed her lips together, a trace of Justin Battleson's taste still lingering there, making her chuckle in amusement.

Battleson had already walked ahead. He turned around to see Charlotte spacing out and gently urged her, "Come on, I'll hold your hand."

"Alright." Charlotte Thompson softly answered, reaching out her hand to him.

The room's lighting flickered erratically to the point of combustion, yet Justin Battleson was always a shining beacon in her eyes.

"Remember to hold onto me tightly. There might be more ghosts ahead," Justin Battleson murmured, protectively leading Charlotte from behind.

A giggle escaped from Charlotte's heart; Justin hadn't realized she was pretending.

But why did her head feel so dizzy?

Justin felt her lagging behind and promptly stopped in his tracks.

"Charlotte?" he asked.

Charlotte brought her hand to her forehead, feeling dizzy and faint before leaning against the nearby wall.

"What's wrong? Where do you feel uncomfortable?" he asked, leaning down, his soft hand gently placing on her forehead.

"You don't have a fever." He felt relieved upon feeling his own forehead.

Charlotte shook her head, crouching down into a ball hoping that would alleviate her discomfort.

"Ugh, it's all your fault for kissing me earlier," Charlotte Thompson started to grumble. Only after that kiss had she began to feel hot all over, her face flushed.

Upon hearing her words, Justin Battleson casually sat alongside her, resting his head against the wall, teasingly remarked, "Then, shall we kiss again?"

"Stop it." Charlotte Thompson turned away, feigning anger.

All jokes aside, she truly doesn't feel well.

"How about we scare people by pretending to be ghosts?" Justin Battleson suggested, looking to spend more time with Charlotte Thompson.

Charlotte chuckled and played along, keeping her head down and fiddling with the props that the NPCs had left in an attempt to distract herself.

"Charlotte, let's go." Justin whispered after a pause.

The lights in the room flickered intensely, and Charlotte's breathing grew heavier and heavier.

Realizing something was wrong, Justin quickly helped her up.

"Ah!" Charlotte suddenly opened her eyes wide, making a ghost-like face, catching Justin completely off guard.

"How about that? Got scared, didn't you?" Charlotte gloated, although her voice was notably weak.

Justin couldn't help but smirk, watching Charlotte's rare childish behavior; he didn't know whether to laugh or to cry.

"Let's go." He opened his arms, waiting for Charlotte to nestle in, where he could protect her.

"Hmm." Charlotte agreed, but she couldn't seem to move her feet. She felt so dizzy.

"Justin, let's go out quickly. I'm feeling so uncomfortable." She had just finished speaking when she started to stumble.

"Charlotte! Charlotte!" Justin rushed over to support her, his voice echoed throughout the enclosed space as he called her name.

Sweat soaked through her clothes, and cold sweat continued to drip from her forehead.