

President 341

Chapter 341

"Wipe your tears first..." He took out his cell while staring at his cutie.

The moment the little girl saw it, she wiped her tears away quick as a flash, sitting still like an obedient

little puppy, waiting for him to dial the number.

With his gaze fixed on her, Mark dialed the cell, and the line was connected after a few seconds.

Before he could react, Charlotte immediately snatched the cell away from him and pressed it to her ear.

She yelled in a mild yet aggrieved tone, "Mommy, I miss you so much. When will you bring me home?"

The moment Summer heard her cutie's tender and soft voice, she felt as if her heart was lifted in an instant. "Mommy will bring you home soon. Have you taken any meal?" She sounded gentle and affectionate.

Initially, when she saw his number on the caller ID, she had wanted to decline the call as she thought of

the humiliations she had gone through in the afternoon. Luckily, she did not do that!

"I did, Mommy. I had a bowl of mushroom soup..." What Charlotte did not tell her was, 'because that

Uncle Rascal brought a big doggy and threatened me i f I refused to eat, it would bite me.'

She had wanted to complain to her mommy about Mark. However, when she saw him sitting there

staring at her, she was afraid that he would take the cell away once he heard her say bad things about

him. Therefore, she did not dare to badmouth him.

At first, Charlotte was not comfortable speaking on the cell in front of him, but after a while, she

became a tease and even ignored his presence.

She kept calling Summer 'Mommy' with her sweet voice, gluing the cell to her ear and not wanting to let

go. She missed her mommy so badly as she had not seen her for two days.

Summer, on the other end of the call, missed Charlotte so much that she was reluctant to hang up the

cell the moment she heard the sweet voice calling her mommy.

Mark looked down with his deep eyes to check the time. The two had been talking for nearly 40

minutes from the time the call went through, without the slightest intention to end their conversation.

His brows were slightly knitted. With no warning, he took the cell away from Charlotte and hung up the

call. "It's your bedtime."

Charlotte's gaze remained on his cell. She clenched her two soft and fair little hands together. "Can I

call Mommy again tomorrow?"

"It depends on how you behave..."

"Does it mean I can call Mommy if I am well-behaved?"

She blinked, her bright eyes lit with anticipation.

Looking at her little face, Mark could not bring himself to talk tough. He gave her an affirmative response and picked her up.

'There's no way I would let her sleep in the room alone again since she could end up crying in the middle of the night.' Mark could not feel at ease to leave her alone.

When they passed by the living room, they saw Kaka sleeping on its stomach. Charlotte was frightened; she buried herself into Mark's chest, her heart fluttering with fear.

"Don't worry. Kaka doesn't bite..." It seemed that he had got her scared so badly earlier on.

"But, it is so big. Its mouth is big too. And it's taller than me. It will bite me for sure."

Mark's lips curled. He grabbed some kibbles. His voice was deep and magnetic as he called the dog

"Kaka."

The German Shepherd, which was sleeping soundly just now, instantly woke up. Happily wagging its

tail, it approached its master and finished off the kibbles in his hand.

Charlotte blinked with curiosity. "It really doesn't bite?"

"Would you like to try?"

"But I'm scared." She said in her mind, "This doggy barked so loud at me just now!" "Don't worry. Daddy

is here..." He bent down to set her small body on the ground, grabbed a handful of kibbles, and placed

them on her fair and soft palm. He then called the dog with a deep voice.

The Tibetan Mastiff rushed towards Charlotte. She was trying to back away as she flinched, but Mark

kept her from moving further by hugging her in his arms. 1

At this moment, Kaka butted its head into Charlotte's hand and licked her palm. At first, she would move her little hands away as she was afraid. However, after a while, especially knowing that Uncle

Rascal was behind her, her fear fled.

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Charlotte, with her little pink tongue stuck out, was looking at Kaka in curiosity. She then imitated Mark

as she called Kaka.

Kaka was wagging its tail happily as if it knew she was its young master. It gently bit her clothes, then

rolled on the ground with its belly facing upwards.

Charlotte giggled as she felt it was funny. She stuck out her little butt and gave Kaka a good pet.

Not until she had enough fun did Mark take her back to the room. After setting her on the bed, he laid

his willowy body next to her.

"Can I play with Kaka again tomorrow?" She tilted her head.

"Can..."

Upon hearing his approval, she pushed her luck a little bit further. "But I want to go to the park with

Mommy tomorrow, is that okay?"

Mark raised his eyebrows and said nothing.

Despite being at young age, Charlotte knew how to please others. She leaned over and kissed Mark on

the cheek. "Uncle, please?" Her voice was tender and soft.

Mark was slightly startled; his heart melted the second he felt the soft, moist sensation. Impulsively, he

gave her an affirmative response.

From the looks of it, his daughter knew the right thing to do way much better than that woman!

'But she is still a little girl, who could have taught her feminine wiles?

"You're awesome, Uncle!" she yelled in joy and gave him two pecks with no hesitation.

Children were like that. Although they held grudges, they would forget the unpleasant things as long as

you treated them nicely.

As the agitation lingering in his heart had been dissipated by her kiss, his lips curled in spite of himself.

"Who else have you kissed?"

Stretching out her soft little hands, the little girl started counting and murmured, "Well, I have kissed

Mommy, Grandma, Grandpa, Uncle, Daniel, Uncle Dean, Ms. Bailey, and Uncle Handsome..."

Mark's charming countenance turned grave. His mood would have been better off if he had not asked

the question. "From now on, don't simply kiss anyone.

You hear me?" He tried to educate her.

"Why?" Charlotte was puzzled. Just why can't she kiss other people?

"They have bacteria," replied the man in a straight face without batting an eye.

"But Grandpa and Grandma like me to kiss them. Uncle Dean and Uncle Handsome like it too. They

often praise me as lovely, well-behaved, and sensible!"

Mark squinted, "You can still kiss Grandpa and

Grandma but not Uncle Dean and Uncle Handsome." "Is that because Uncle Dean and Uncle

Handsome have bacteria?"

"Yes..."

"How about you, Uncle? Does it mean I should not kiss you since you have bacteria too?"

His eyes moved faintly. "No. I don't have that."

"How come you don't have bacteria while Uncle Dean and Uncle Handsome have that? Aren't you all

uncles? H

"I'm not your uncle. I'm your Daddy. Go sleep..."

"Uncle, you have promised to let me visit the park with Mommy tomorrow. Pinky swear!"

Mark was lying still. Charlotte raised his big hand by herself and then hooked her finger with his with

great effort. "Piggy Promise, Pinky Swear, I'll do my best to b e aware, of the promise that I make, Not

to break for goodness sake!"

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Fortunately, Charlotte did not have difficulties sleeping on a different bed in a different room. She did

not take long to fall into her slumber, likely because she had been worn out by her sobs and the ruckus

she raised for the day.

Suddenly, Mark's cell emitted a dim blue light, followed by vibration. He bent his arm to pick it up, got

up, walked to the French window, and answered the call, "Mom..."

He purposely kept his husky voice down as he was afraid that the little one on the bed would wake up

from her slumber.

"Why are you speaking so softly?" Yvette, of course, noticed it.

His thin lips moved. "I've just woke up. What makes you call me at this hour?" said the man in a casual

tone. 1

"Mark, how's your Grandma's recovery lately? I'm thinking of visiting her in Athana," Yvette said.

"You don't need to go to Athana. She is almost fully recovered and will return to Norwood in a few days."

Mark's words took a weight off her mind. "Oh good. I was kept in the dark because I couldn't reach your

Grandpa and Grandma by phone. Then nothing else. It's already so late. Hurry up and rest."

"All right, you too..."

After Mark hung up, he could no longer sleep. He strode off on long legs to the living room to fetch a

bottle of red wine and poured it into a crystal clear wine glass.

The viscous red liquor slowly poured along the glass was mellow and aromatic.

The living room was so silent that all one could hear was the rhythmic ticking of the Quartz clock-tick,

took, tick, took—and Kaka's snoring.

Nevertheless, the tranquility failed to wash away the tingling irritability in his mind. Contrary, it made his

fretfulness grow further.

With his chin slightly raised, he lifted the wine glass to his lips. His Adam's apple was bobbing as he

drank. As soon as he finished the entire glass of red wine in no time, his lips curled into a cold smirk.

In an instant, every word that woman had said—that she would still have felt the same even if it wasn't

him—came to his mind again.

'Tsk, nothing has changed a bit after four years except that she has become more open and bold in her

sexual relationships. Just how impressive is that!'

After two more glasses of red wine, he returned to the room with his eyes narrowed.

Apparently, the little girl had got the same sleeping posture as that woman. While she was lying on her

side, she held a quilt in her arms, resting her calf across the quilt.

Mark's long and narrow eyebrows twitched. He approached her with mindful steps and pulled the quilt

over to cover her before gently lying down.

Early the next morning.

Sunlight filtered in through the curtains, illuminating the large and luxurious bed.

There lay a man and a child who were sleeping soundly. Obviously, Charlotte had a rather bad sleeping

posture, so bad that her head and feet were in opposite directions.

And now, her soft and fair little feet were blatantly placed on his handsome face. God knows what

dream she was having. She licked her lips with her little pink tongue, making squishing sound as her

mouth was drooling.

"Mr. Valentine, it's time for breakfast," Maria tapped on the door and called.

Mark moved a bit and opened his eyes. He felt lazy, his deep eyes somewhat bleary. Immediately, they

met with the fair, and soft little feet rested on his face.

Frowning, he raised his big hand to move her little feet to the bed first and then helplessly kneaded his

forehead.

'Just how could her sleeping posture be this bad?'

Mark went to the bathroom to take a shower as soon as he got up. After the shower, he sat in the living

room. Only then Maria entered the bathroom while holding Charlotte-whose eyes remained close—and

helped her to wash her face and brush her teeth.

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The little girl who was drowsy and could not wake up no matter what he tried just now was now

energetic. She held a handful of kibbles in each hand and said, "It's meal time, Kaka." Her voice was

sweet and tender.

Kaka wagged its tail briskly. It was much taller than Charlotte. The ferocious and majestic dog lowered

its head while licking her little palms, quietly enjoying the kibbles.

"Wow, Kaka is awesome!" Charlotte's smiling eyes became crescent like, her rosy cheeks full of

excitement. Series of loud clapping sounds were heard as she was brushing her two little hands

together.

Upon seeing this, Kaka was also excited. It leaped, resting its front paws on Charlotte's shoulders, her

tongue licking her small face.

The little girl was playful. Maria was left with no choice but to squat in front of her while holding her

breakfast plate and patiently fed her.

Charlotte did two things-playing with Kaka and having breakfast-simultaneously, without neglecting any.

Mark's deep eyes filled with a faint joyous look as he

glanced over her. His lips curled while he was gently sipping the cup of coffee in his hand.

On the other side, the hotel.

After returning from Nokocola Bay, Summer did not go home but stayed in the hotel.

If she had returned home, Daisy and Solomon would certainly have asked about Charlotte's

whereabouts. Her parents were already very old, and their health conditions were not so good, so she

tried her best not to make them worry.

Moreover, Mark had no plan for talks, so all she could do was to hire a lawyer and have everything

fully prepared.

Perhaps, what she was planning to do was akin to throwing straws against the wind. But there was no

way she would give up her child as long as there was a glimmer of hope.

She was determined to win Charlotte's custody and would not back away the slightest bit.

Her cell suddenly rang at the moment. Summer looked away from her laptop screen and picked up her

cell. It was his number.

Without hesitation, she answered the call. The next thing she heard was Charlotte's crisp voice.

"Mommy, I'll be waiting for you in front of Grandpa's house.

Come here fast!"

Slightly startled and puzzled, Summer said, "Tell

Mommy, where are you now? Why did you plan to meet Mommy in front of Grandpa's house?"

"That Uncle Ras- Uncle allowed me to see Mommy today. Come quick, Mommy!"

"Charlotte-"

When she was about to ask her something else, the husky and clear voice came from the other end. It

was icy cold. "South Lane's KFC, thirty minutes. We will leave if you are late..."

Once he finished his words, a long beeping sound was heard. Apparently, the call was ended abruptly.

Summer had no choice but to swallow back the words she had wanted to say. Although she was a little

surprised, she hurriedly picked up her bag after checking the time and walked out of the hotel without

the slightest delay.

She knew Mark well. After all, the two had been together for some time.

Charlotte was a little unhappy that Mark had taken the cell away. However, as soon as she saw the car

parked in front of her, she did not dare to make a scene.

"We are about to set off now. Who knows what Uncle Rascal will do if I anger him. I have not seen Mommy for two days, and I miss her so much!"

The black car moved steadily on the road. It did not take long to arrive outside KFC at South Lane.

Charlotte leaned her little body against the car window with her butt stuck out. She was looking out from the car window, searching for her Mommy.

Something seemed to have popped up in her mind. She turned around and looked at Mark, "Uncle, don't you have to work?"

With his brows raised, Mark stared at her for a while, waiting for her next sentence.

"It's okay. Uncle can go to work. I can wait for Mommy here." Her voice was soft and tender. Deep down in her little heart, she wished this bad guy would leave her as soon as possible.

"Huh-" Mark's thin lips curled as he was staring at the little girl. "I'm not going to work today. I will accompany both of you..."

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Mark could read all her thoughts on that little face of hers. Her eyes were obviously telling him, Hurry

up and leave already!

'You are not going to work?' Charlotte's heart was a little distressed. She was thinking about complaining to her Mommy and badmouthing him. There was no way she could do that if this Uncle

Rascal refused to leave.

"Uncle, isn't your partner looking for you today?"

"He is not coming..."

"Uncle, do you have other things to do?"

"No..."

"So you must tag along?"

"Yes..."

"Uncle, Mommy and I are girls, and Uncle is a boy.

That's very inconvenient."

"It's okay..."

"Oh!" Charlotte's little head drooped with a wilting look. She stopped asking.

As for Mark, his handsome countenance turned grave. 'Just how much you wish me to leave. Don't you

want my company?'

Suddenly, Charlotte's eyes lit up with joy. All her gloominess fled. She happily tapped the car window

with both hands and yelled softly, "Mommy! Mommy! I'm here! Here!"

Apparently, Summer saw her too. She sped up her pace and quickly crossed the sidewalk. Charlotte jumped out of the car and leaped into her arms.

It had been only two days that they hadn't seen each other, but Summer felt as if she had not seen her

for two years. With her little girl in her embrace, she felt that her empty heart was filled.

"Come on. Let Mommy take a good look at you, Charlotte." Summer could not hold back the bitterness

in her nose. She squatted and touched Charlotte's little face.

Charlotte stood obediently to let her look at her. After a while, Summer got up and held her little hand.

"Who brought Charlotte here?"

Without speaking, Charlotte opened her little mouth and uttered two inaudible words, "Uncle Rascal!"

Summer frowned as she could hear it clearly. Just when she was about to speak again, a tall figure had

already stepped out of the car. He moved his lips and uttered four words coldly, "Get in the car!"

'He doesn't plan to leave?'

Her brows were knitted further immediately. "Are you not going to work?"

'Like mother, like daughter. They even asked the exact same question. Just how loath they are to have

his company?'

His expression was grim, his heart full of dissatisfaction, perhaps accompanied with rising anger. Mark

gave her a cold stare. "You refuse to get i n?"

There was a hint of disappointment in Summer's heart.

Upon seeing this, his expression became grimmer, as grim as undertaker's. With a cold snort from his

throat, he got in the car after turning around. "I suppose If you don't plan to go, I will have to cancel the

itinerary..."

Upon hearing this, Summer glanced around and suddenly noticed two more men in suits standing behind her, not knowing how long they had stood there. Apparently, they were keeping their eyes on her.

"This is how shameless a CEO of a big corporate can be. I finally get to witness this!"

Gritting her teeth, Summer had no choice but to get in the car with Charlotte in her arms. The three of

them sat in the back seat next to each other, with Charlotte seated in the middle.

Charlotte was still a little child, so naturally, she couldn't notice the conflicts between the adults.

Instead, while shaking her two fair, tender little legs, she looked at her Mommy, who remained silent,

and

turned to Uncle Rascal. "Where are we going, Uncle?"

Although she was still a little girl, she was observant enough to know who was in charge!

"A place where you will like..." His deep voice still sounded hard and cold.

At the apartment--

Yvette stood in front of the apartment door and was about to reach out to key in the code. Suddenly,

the door opened. Maria showed up holding a garbage bag in her hand. She wanted to throw the garbage out.

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Yvette frowned and looked at her. "Why are you here?" "I have been assigned here by Mr. Valentine."

Maria knew that she was Mark's mother.

"Impossible, Mark disliked having maids!" other than places that required cleaning, Mark was never

pleased with anyone else that showed up at his apartment.

"I'm not serving Mr. Valentine but Ms. Valentine."

Yvette was baffled by her words. "Who is this Ms. Valentine?"

"She is the daughter of Mr. Valentine..."

Yvette couldn't believe her ears. "Whose daughter did you say she is?"

"The daughter of Mr. Valentine..." Maria repeated herself.

Yvette felt it was ridiculous. When did Mark ever had a daughter!

Then, she suddenly remembered Summer. Her heart began to race. Could it be...

'Could it be that Summer gave birth to a daughter?'

Yvette's heartbeat palpitated and suddenly felt her throat dry up. She asked Maria, "How old is the

child?"

"She's three years old; a very cute and sensible child." Maria answered honestly.

‘Three years old. When Mark left for Athana with Raine, Summer was in her fifth month of pregnancy.

Four years had passed now, the child should be around three years of age...’

In her heart, Yvette was very certain that the child was Summer's!

But Mark had just returned from Athana not long ago, did he reconcile and got back with Summer, that

b*tch?

However, she wasn't at all worried about their relationship.

If, four years ago, Mark had treasured Summer, why did he divorce her?

Therefore, four years ago, Summer wasn't the young lady of the Valentines; thus, she would never be

the Valentines' daughter-in-law four years later!

That b*tch had been completely defeated by her without much hassle.

There was no way she could weather through it!

Relaxing herself on the sofa, Yvette placed her exotic handbag on the table and called on Maria, "A cup of coffee, please."

Then she looked at Kaka and frowned as if she was going to crush a fly. Mark had mysophobia, why

had h

e brought a stray animal into his home?

"Did Mark mention when he would return?"

"He didn't mention anything." Maria answered as she continued to grind the coffee beans to make coffee.

"Did he go to the office, or somewhere else?"

"Madam Valentine, pardon my lack of knowledge, I only know that Mr. Valentine had brought Ms. Valentine out."

Acknowledging, Yvette stopped probing but took out her phone to make a call. However, it went unanswered, and was met with an automated message to call back later.

Frowning, she placed her finger on the redial button. Just as she was about to make the call, an incoming call interrupted her. She picked it up and answered gently, "Mom, are you back in Norwood?"

"Ya, I'm in the car right now." Ms. Moore sounded weak and not as energetic as before. She was already in her old age, and a serious illness had caused her to lose much of her vitality.

"Alright, I'll get Mark to take a few days off work and visit you at Norwood together."

After a few coughs, Ms. Moore responded clearly, "There is no need for Mark to come, you alone are

enough."

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Hearing that, Yvette was puzzled. "Mom, isn't Mark your favorite? Why won't you let him come, don't

you miss him?"

"I do, but I can't let him visit. He must have worn himself out during the three years in Athana. You must

help him recuperate and let him have more rest."

"Mark can't be as weak as you, could he? Don't worry too much, you rest well."

"The three years in Athana had really worn Mark out..."

"Mom, like I said, you pampered Mark too much; believe it or not, which of your words are not trying to

defend him?"

"If I don't defend or pamper him, who else will do it?"

At this, Ms. Moore raised her voice and continued,

"When Mark was in Athana for over a year, he was searching every day for doctors and surgeons who

could cure Raine's face. But as Raine was recovering, I felt unwell and was sent to Athana to treat my

cerebral hemorrhage. Mark had labored to care for me and had not rested. 1

When I was in a coma for three months, he stayed by my side to care for me. Although I awoke after

the surgery, my body condition was awful, yet Mark remained by my side.

Then the economic crisis hit Athana; the headquarters in Athana experienced great turbulence, and

there were cases of disloyalty; although the company didn't suffer heavy losses, the stakeholders were

restless and were at loggerheads with Mark. Did you know how stressful it was to have only a few

hours of rest a day..."

Yvette remained silent; Mark had indeed suffered a lot.

"and you were not at all reliable. You spent less than five days in Athana and returned home because

you couldn't adapt. Your father had a fractured leg and had limited mobility, but Mark handled all the

labor and care. He had to shoulder such a heavy burden alone; how can he not be worn out? 1

I've lost hope in both you and Ronald; I was warded for such a long time, yet never once did he visit

me. How busy could he possibly be? Was he only going to see me at my funeral?" 1

Yvette couldn't take her words anymore. "Mom, what are all these, and why are they such ugly words?"

"You didn't do a good job, yet u still dare to condemn m e? At such a crucial moment, I couldn't even

depend o n my daughter or son-in-law; all I could rely on was m y grandson!"

"I had a hard time trying to get accustomed to Athana, and I was constantly unwell because of that;

Ronald was busy at work, and you know it. Why do you need t o lose your temper?"

"Busy? I think he won't even have time to attend my funeral when I die!" 1

Ms. Moore hung up immediately after letting out her anger.

Yvette sat there exasperatedly, but she knew her mother was concerned about Mark's health; thus, she

and Maria went out together to buy some food and supplements.

On the other side.

Gordon observed his panting wife. His stern face looked exasperated. He patted her on the back gently

t o help her breathe better. "What's the point of making yourself angry?"

"How can I not be angry? While I spent such a long time in coma, my son-in-law had not visited me even once!"

"Alright, alright. Don't let yourself be angered anymore. You had just recovered; if your anger causes

you to fall ill again, I will be deeply hurt!"

Gordon had not eaten well while she was in a coma; while watching her in her unconscious state, he felt a n emptiness in his life.

"You're already so old, how can you still be making such cringy statements?" Ms. Moore calmed herself

down, but she still felt disappointed.

As a mother who had been bedridden for more than a year, not only didn't her son-in-law visit her at all,

even her daughter had defended him, how could she not be disappointed?

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In these recent years, Ronald had become more unruly.

It was a quiet atmosphere in the car. Nobody said a word. Charlotte looked around her, feeling bored.

'Why isn't mommy talking to the rascal?'

"Mommy, why aren't you talking to uncle?"

Hearing that, Mark looked at her, then turned and locked his eyes onto Summer.

Summer did not seem to notice him; she took out a Yogurt drink, plunged a straw into it, and gave it to

Charlotte. "Because mommy has nothing to speak to uncle."

Charlotte bit the straw and nodded as if she understood it. "Now I know, mommy must hate uncle a lot!"

"Why?" Mark interrupted.

"Because when mommy is with uncle Dean or uncle Handsome, she isn't like this. They will talk and

laugh, but when she is with you, she doesn't say anything. She must hate you!"

Hmph, she also hated uncle Rascal, just like mommy! That was what her tiny brain concluded.

She was afraid of him because when he got angry, he shouted at her, but mommy, uncle Dean, or uncle

Handsome never shouted at her!

Mark's face stiffened; coincidentally, they had also arrived at their destination. The car came to a stop,

and the chauffeur said, "Mr. Valentine, we've arrived."

"Am I blind to not know it for myself?" he let out his anger onto the innocent chauffeur.

The chauffeur stopped speaking and became silent.

He opened the door and got off angrily. He slammed the car door behind him, and the door rattled.

Charlotte became frightened and hid herself in Summer's bosom. "Mommy, uncle is so fierce!"

'If he didn't feel like coming, he didn't need to come; n o one insisted that he had to come, right?'

Thus, there was no need to throw a tantrum here!

She frowned as she carried Charlotte and got off the car. She thought he had gone ahead, but as she raised her head, he was standing not far away, his face sullen, as if he was waiting for her and

Charlotte.

"Mommy, the smell is so nice, where is this place?" Charlotte was filled with curiosity, and her round

eyes couldn't stop looking around.

"Mommy has never been here too. When we go inside, we will know. What a curious child you are!"

she tapped on her tiny nose gently.

Mark only began walking forward when she had walked up to him.

As they went around the main entrance, astounding scenery appeared before them. Charlotte gave a loud cry, her eyes brightened, and pranced about excitedly. "Mommy, look! So many grapes!"

Summer was stunned; she had not expected him to bring them to the vineyard.

The view was a vast field of vine racks arranged in order, and the leaves of the grapevines extended beyond the horizon, hiding it from view.

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The leaves were emerald green, and under the sunlight, its greenery was in full display; the leaves rustled at the gentle breeze, and the grapes dangled in the air like crystals.

The air was filled with the scent of grapes, accompanied by the scent of nature; it was very aromatic.

She turned and saw that he was at a booth beside them, and in it sat a middle-aged man.

He took out fifty dollars from his wallet and handed it to the man; in return, he picked up three baskets,

two large and a small one.

Charlotte could no longer hold her excitement. She wanted to get down and struggled to free herself from her embrace.

Summer bent down to let her stand on her feet. The notice board read adult tickets, twenty dollars per

person; children, half price.

There were extra charges for eating grapes; for takeaway, it would be measured by kilograms; tiny grapes cost six dollars per kilogram; large grapes and raisins cost twelve dollars per kilogram.

The price was reasonable; furthermore, the grapes were very fresh. Moreover, a child could enjoy the

hands-on experience and excitement; it was like

hitting three birds with a stone, and very worthwhile indeed.

Charlotte had already hurried over to Mark and took the small pink basket from him. She didn't cease

to smile. "Uncle, you're the best!"

Mark's sullen expression finally brightened at her words; he walked up to Summer and gave her the other basket.

But instead of looking at him, she looked sideways as she received the basket from him.

His eyes fixed on her, and they squinted.

Charlotte couldn't be bothered by their interaction; like a kite flying freely, she dashed toward a rack,

and a children song echoed in the wind. 'A little maiden with her basket is picking grapes; her dress

floating through the vineyard in the afternoon; the grapes she picked were many, countless as the stars

in the sky!"

As she listened to her daughter's modified version of the song, Summer's weariness was wiped out instantly; she let out a burst of laughter; she was indeed a bubbly and cheerful child!

Mark was allured and charmed by her fair and graceful appearance and the slightly visible curl on her

lips.

Summer noticed his gaze but ignored him entirely like thin air and chased after Charlotte.

At first, the little one was full of excitement, but when she arrived at a rack, she stood there frozen, like

a wilted eggplant.

She looked discouraged and pouted as she tip-toed and reached out her short arms. "Mommy, I can't reach them."

Summer chuckled and carried her in her arms; her smile returned, and her little hands began picking the grapes.

Above them were green vines and bunches of purple grapes; both mother and daughter shared the same heartwarming smile as they stood beneath the grapevines.

Mark's anger slowly faded and was replaced with a gentle, comforting, and satisfying feeling.

Handing some grapes she picked to Summer, she lovingly pecked Summer twice on her cheeks and said sweetly, "Mommy, let me sing you another song."

"I've listened to your song just now; can we sing a new song?"

"Sure..." she chirped and began to sing in her tender voice. "Look, look, we're looking for grapes, here's

a big one; let's take a bow, shake our hands, and pick another big bunch of grapes!"

Summer couldn't help but let out a tiny cough and praised, "Wow Charlotte! That was amazing!"

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Charlotte beamed, and her eyes squinted; she raised her tender arms and picked more grapes.

After a while, Summer felt fatigued in her arms; they were sore and numb and could hardly carry

Charlotte any longer.

Just as she prepared to put Charlotte down so she could rest her arms, Mark had swiftly stretched out

his arms and carried Charlotte.

Dumbfounded, Summer stared at his back for a moment and then retracted her gaze.

Mark was athletic and could naturally carry Charlotte to a greater height. Reaching out her hand,

Charlotte plucked a purple-reddish grape. "Mommy, ahh."

Seeing the compelling look on the little one, she couldn't resist but walked up and ate it.

The grapes here were different from the ones available in the shops; they were fresh, sweet, and very

juicy.

Retracting her hand, she plucked a tiny and unripe grape and looked at Mark mischievously; in a soft

voice, she said, "Uncle, ahh."

Mark couldn't tell what she had in mind; he twitched his eyes but kept his mouth closed.

"Is uncle not happy with the grape that I give?" she

blinked, "uncle doesn't want it because he must hate me; if it was uncle Dean or uncle Handsome, they would have eaten it."

He couldn't bear himself being compared with them. He leaned forward and took the grape she held

with his mouth.

Suddenly, his mouth was filled with a bitter and sour taste. Mark's throat rumbled; the sourness caused

him to flinch, and his handsome face became a little crooked.

'Sh*t! It's f*cking sour!'

Charlotte cheered at sight. Her chuckle sounded like a n oriole, "Mommy, look at uncle!"

Summer raised her head and saw his face frowning; his left eye was half closed, his teeth gritted, and

he looked kinky as if he had a vendetta against the grape, with a strong desire to crush it.

The sight made her burst into laughter. For him to be in such a predicament, it was indeed embarrassing.

At the same time, she was finally relieved of her depression and tension.

Both the laughter of mother and daughter cheered him up; his dark pupils began to reflect gentleness;

he pretended to be angry and tossed Charlotte high up into the air.

At first, Charlotte was frightened and cried; her tiny mouth kept screaming, “Mommy! Save me!

Mommy!

Save me!”

But after being tossed several times, she wasn’t afraid anymore but started to enjoy it because she knew that uncle Rascal would never drop her!

After having fun, Charlotte eyed a big fat and red grape that hung the highest. She started to drool."

Uncle, over there!”

Unfortunately, it hung too high up; it was still out of reach despite Mark lifting her as high as he could;

there was still a huge distance between them.

She became discouraged, but when she looked at her mommy, her eyes glittered.

She couldn't reach it because she was too short, but Mommy was tall. Mommy could reach it.

"Mommy, can you ride on uncle's shoulder, and pluck me that big fat red grape, please?"