

Spoiled 501

Chapter 501: Are you guys immature?

A faint smile emerged from the corners of Charlotte Thompson's mouth, giving off a tender glow. The fatigue of the whole day seemed to vanish into thin air at the sight of the children.

Opening her arms, she watched Grace Thompson trotting over with her little legs and then threw herself into her arms. The nice milky scent of the little girl filled her nostrils. She lifted Grace up and nuzzled her cheek, complaining somewhat humorously, "Where have you been, Grace? Why did you come so late?"

Charlotte looked up with a smile, only for her eyes to suddenly halt.

Behind the children, Justin Battleson and Adam Ross walked side by side towards her.

Her face stiffened a bit. She subconsciously glanced at Jack Bryant, who was holding Hank Thompson's hand. He noticed her gaze and looked back at her with a somewhat helpless expression.

Her lips twitched as she listened to Grace excitedly recounting the interesting snippets of her conversation with Olivia Thompson and Justin a few minutes ago. Before Charlotte could say anything, the little girl herself was tickled and broke into giggling laughter.

The weather was a bit chilly. Charlotte raised her hand in resignation and rubbed Grace's little legs, which were exposed because of her short skirt, a thin layer of goosebumps forming on her fair and smooth legs due to the cold.

Olivia Thompson was not back yet, so Grace was the only girl.

With Grace in her arms, Charlotte felt unexplainably secure.

The footsteps of the men stopped in front of her simultaneously. Adam lowered his head to look at his wristwatch.

The hour hand pointed to one.

It was already 1 a.m.

Thinking of Chad Thompson's stern face urging him to seize the opportunity, something stirred in Adam's heart. He looked up at Charlotte who was standing still with Grace in her arms. A light bulb went off in his head.

Wasn't this the opportunity?

Clearing his throat slightly, he stepped forward, closed the distance with Charlotte, and softly said, "It's too late now, I am not quite comfortable letting you guys go back by yourselves. The car is just outside, why don't I give you a ride back?"

As soon as his words fell, a satisfied smile appeared on Chad's face who was standing behind Hank as he saw what was happening.

This is right, isn't it? If you don't take the initiative to attack, how can you have more control?

Seeing this, Hank grimaced, snorted coldly, but sneakily shifted his gaze onto Justin.

Sensing his gaze, Justin looked at him, understanding his thoughts.

So, he also took a step forward, shot a glance at Adam, and said nonchalantly, "Michael Richard is also here, and I have a lot of things to talk to Grace, so I should be the one to send her. Speaking of which, Adam, aren't you usually enjoying yourself in a bar at this time?"

He raised the corners of his lips slightly. Even though they were brothers, his words left no room for evasion, "Let's not hold you back further today, get going."

Upon hearing this, Adam nearly choked on his own disbelief. Somewhat surprised, he looked at Justin and laughed, "Second bro, it has been long since I went there, how could you call that my usual routine?"

Neither of them backed down, locking eyes, the tension between them was palpable, as if a fierce battle was about to break out.

Jack, on the side, was feeling a bit entertained. He knew that these two were now openly seen as rivals in love, and such an open confrontation was rare.

If not now, when?

Jack stood there, discreetly following the drama unfold, waiting for the real beginning.

The silence in the air lasted a few seconds until Charlotte, seemingly impatient, furrowed her brows and broke the silence.

"Are you guys childish or what?"

Chapter 502: Can't I, Charlotte Thompson, do without you?

The two speaking cut their words short, turning their heads to look at Charlotte Thompson.

The latter's eyes were clear and cold as she smoothed out Grace Thompson's dress with her hand.

Feeling that the girl was getting drowsy in her arms after speaking, she lowered her voice slightly, "Do you all really think I, Charlotte, can't do without you?"

Adam Ross opened his mouth to say something, but seeing her somewhat irritated expression he chose to remain silent.

He had intuition after all.

Charlotte glanced at them, her tone slightly mocking.

"You all saw it." She paused slightly; her wandering gaze slowly landed on Jack Bryant.

The later was still holding Hank Thompson. Feeling Charlotte's gaze, he shivered slightly. As if he had expected something, he gazed sorrowfully up at the sky at a forty-five-degree angle.

He knew the atmosphere was not simple now.

He didn't want to offend these two big shots!

To be precise, he couldn't afford to offend anyone.

He let out a heavy sigh in his heart, and Charlotte's mocking voice rang in Jack Bryant's ear.

"I have two bodyguards by my side, and besides, I have the Thompson family behind me. I don't need any man."

At her words, the two men's movements paused slightly, but Charlotte didn't bother with them and just instructed Jack Bryant while turning around.

"Take the kids and go."

Justin Battleson and Adam Ross cast hostile glances at Jack Bryant following the sound of her voice.

The latter felt like he had a thorn in his back, but still pretended to be calm, reaching for Hank Thompson and Jack Thompson's hands, ready to leave.

Seeing that they were about to leave, Chad Thompson could only sigh, turned his head and mouthed a goodbye to Adam Ross.

Cyrus Thompson was more composed, with no expression on his face, he walked ahead first.

After getting into the car, Charlotte Thompson pulled the car door shut, and a layer of fog arose on the window.

Looking through the window casually, she saw two figures standing upright under the dim streetlight outside the hospital, their eyes all turned towards her.

The hazy figures looked as if they were the ethereal fog rising in the winter morning.

Something stirred in Charlotte Thompson's heart, and she couldn't help but pause for a few seconds, before clearing her throat to hide her emotions and stating to Jack Bryant, "Let's go."

Jack Bryant pulled a face as he started the car, sighing again in his heart.

That's how the young lady is, always saying one thing and meaning another, and so stubborn too.

However, there was nothing he could do. Everyone in the Thompson family, old and young, all cherished her and doted on her.

As long as it was something Charlotte wanted to do, she was allowed to do it in whatever way made her happy.

The car slowly started, with Grace Thompson comfortably resting in Charlotte Thompson's arms.

Her long eyelashes trembled slightly, there were faint blushes on her round and white cheeks, her chin occasionally resting on Charlotte Thompson's warm palm.

The children sitting in the backseat were all energetic.

Hank Thompson excitedly shared his new method of building blocks that he'd come up with in his room today with Jack Thompson, who listened attentively with a gentle smile on his lips.

And Chad Thompson was reading a book borrowed from a nurse.

Cyrus Thompson leaned back, rubbing his sore eyes and turning off his tablet. Seeming to remember something, he leaned forward slightly and asked Charlotte Thompson.

"Mommy, did Annie not come back?"

The children were very concerned about Olivia Thompson. Hearing Cyrus' question, they all turned to look at Charlotte Thompson, waiting for her answer.

Charlotte Thompson smoothed out Grace Thompson's skirt again and gently explained, "Annie is staying with her godmother in the ward, you don't have to worry about her, Uncle Hudson is there too."

Having seen Oliver Hudson in the hospital, the kids naturally knew that Uncle Hudson referred to him.

Jack Bryant had seen the tension between Oliver Hudson and Charlotte Thompson, but he was just a kid; he wasn't supposed to interfere in adults' matters.

Receiving the answer, Cyrus Thompson didn't ask anything more, just leaning back into the seat thoughtfully.

Chapter 503: It's Unfair to Annie Anne

The ride home was still long, so Cyrus Thompson simply closed his eyes and began to doze off.

He didn't know when the car finally came to a stop from its constant bumps.

Cyrus Thompson didn't actually fall asleep. He opened his eyes, taking only a few seconds to react. A trace of clarity flashed in his pure, clear eyes.

They were now in the hotel room.

Once her children had washed up and got into bed, Charlotte Thompson knew they were also exhausted from the day's activities. After tucking them in and ensuring they were asleep, she took her room card and returned to her room.

The first thing Charlotte did upon returning to her room was to head straight into the bathroom.

The warm water from the shower washed over her body, washing away the fatigue. The fragrant bath gel allowed her to relax a little.

The only moment she felt relaxed these days was during her shower.

By the time she finished taking a bath, it was already late into the night.

She sat in a chair by the floor-to-ceiling window, wearing her bathrobe.

From this angle, you can see the stars that appeared after the rain and the clouds that looked like thin white veils in the sky.

There's no denying that being in the high-rise rooms of the BK Hotel had its advantages.

On ordinary days, one could only see skyscrapers when looking up in this big city, devoid of clear skies, let alone stars.

But now, Charlotte Thompson, sitting here, was easily able to witness it all.

Looking down, all she saw were the glittering lights and the intoxicating colors of the city.

Fragmented scenes flashed slowly through Charlotte's mind.

All the events of the day played over in her mind like a slow-motion feature.

From the disappointment in Justin Battleson's tone to Annie Anne's desperate cries, all the way to Oliver Hudson's pleas devoid of all pride.

All of these stacked together, their onslaught was rapid and continuous.

Too many complicated things piled up at once, almost suffocating her.

It was the dead of night, the dew was heavy, and the chirping of cicadas sounded from outside the window, blending with the rustling of the wind.

These little creatures were truly enthusiastic, their tiny bodies producing such loud sounds, which were still audible even at this height.

Charlotte Thompson paused for a few seconds before standing up to prepare for bed.

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The next day.

When Charlotte awoke, the sun was already high in the sky.

The warm, dazzling sunlight shone through the window, spilling onto the soft white blanket. The person in bed lazily turned over.

Charlotte's long eyelashes quivered, casting a soft shadow on her slightly purplish eyes.

The moment she opened her eyes, she instinctively raised her hand to shield herself from the harsh sunlight. It was only after a few seconds that she pushed off the blankets to get out of bed.

After freshening up, she made sure to carefully conceal the large dark circles under her eyes.

Then, she put on a long-sleeved T-shirt, went downstairs, got in her car, and drove to the hospital where Henry Hudson was.

After several months of restful recuperation, Henry's wounds and complexion had improved significantly.

When Charlotte walked in, the man was already out of bed, sitting in a chair reading a book, with a steaming cup of tea on the small table in front of him.

Charlotte's lips formed a slight smile. She placed the packed chicken soup she had picked up on the way onto the table.

Then, moving to sit across Henry Hudson, she asked with a smile, "Henry, you've been getting better recently, right?"

At her words, Henry closed the book in his hands, lifted his head to look at her, and said warmly, "Much better... By the way, I didn't see you yesterday. Was there something up?"

To prevent Henry from working while injured, all work-related matters had been handed over to his assistant.

So he didn't usually touch any electronic devices, naturally, he was oblivious to the uproar about the Evelyn Curtis arrest.

Of course, Charlotte didn't want to inform him about that either.

After some thought, Charlotte decided not to hide the matter about Oliver Hudson from him.

After all, the two were blood-related cousins, and Henry's involvement might help in resolving the matter smoothly.

Having cleared her thoughts, Charlotte roughly explained the situation with Annie Anne to Henry, to avoid unnecessary complications, she left out the parts about Adam Ross and Justin Battleson.

After hearing her out, Henry's expression became serious. After a while, he let out a soft sigh and said, "My brother is usually very steady in his actions, I didn't expect him to lose restraint when it comes to his feelings."

Charlotte pursed her lips, not knowing what to say, so she added, "He's currently in the hospital room with Annie. It seems that everything will have to wait until Annie recovers her memory, before they can make any final decisions."

The matter between the two of them, such as reconciliation, would be unfair to Annie Anne.

Because she had made that decision when she lost her memory, and unknowingly, with her blank memory and love for Oliver Hudson, she had inadvertently forgiven his deeds.

Chapter 504: Transfer to another hospital?

After idle chatting with Henry Hudson in the hospital for several hours, the day gradually darkened. After considering her words carefully, Charlotte Thompson told Henry that she had decided to visit Annie Anne in the hospital.

Henry naturally had no objections. His face still wore the same gentle smile as always. The sunlight fell on his face, unbelievably mild.

He nodded slightly at Charlotte and said, "Okay. If she's awake, please say hello to her for me."

After nodding back, Charlotte picked up her bag and left the ward.

The two hospitals were a bit far apart. On the way, she passed a restaurant. After thinking for a few seconds, she decided to stop and get some takeaway before driving to the hospital where Annie was.

It was now evening, the noise in the hospital had quieted down. People came and went in the lobby where some were taking an IV drip on long benches, and nurses were softly explaining dietary precautions to patients.

The scene was peaceful and harmonious.

Unconsciously, Charlotte smiled, took the food and headed straight for the elevator. The ward where Annie was staying was an exclusive high-end room arranged by Charlotte herself, located on the fifth floor of the entire hospital.

Though the floor wasn't very high, the equipment in the ward was of the highest standard.

Pushing open the ward door, Charlotte tiptoed in. She saw Olivia Thompson propping her chin in the chair looking a little lost at Annie who was still sleeping soundly on the bed.

Glancing over, she saw Oliver Hudson sitting on the other side of the bed, holding a warm towel while gently wiping Annie's face.

The room was eerily silent, and Charlotte noticed Olivia's occasionally odd glances at Oliver.

Charlotte sighed, it seemed that this father and daughter probably hadn't spoken to each other the entire day.

She placed the food on the table making a slight noise.

Only then did the two of them notice her arrival and turned their heads to look at her.

Charlotte pulled up a chair and sat down, lowering her voice with a hint of worry, she asked, "Is she still not awake?"

Hearing this, Oliver's face didn't look well. Dark circles weighed heavily under his eyes and tiny noticeable red veins were visible. Signs of profound fatigue quietly spread from his eyes.

He put the towel down, sighed and said, "She did wake up once, but she was emotionally unstable. The doctor gave her a tranquilizer, and she's been asleep since."

Charlotte wasn't surprised by this. She raised her eyes, hesitated and asked, "Have you...not slept all night?"

As her words fell, Oliver seemed surprised by the question. When he finally responded, he smiled bitterly, "As soon as I close my eyes, I imagine the despair that Annie must have felt. How can I dare to sleep peacefully?"

It was not that he could not but dared not.

Charlotte opened her mouth but ended up saying nothing. She sighed, took out the food from the bag on the table, and said, "I suppose you two didn't have dinner. Come have some."

She glanced at Olivia whose thoughts seemed to be brought back by her voice. After hesitating, Olivia finally got off the chair and walked over.

Oliver glanced at Olivia, and a hint of indulgence that he himself hadn't noticed flashed under his eyes.

After dinner, Charlotte gave Oliver a knowing look. The two of them went to see the chief doctor together. As soon as Oliver entered the office, he asked directly.

"Doctor, if we want to transfer her to another hospital, can we do it now?"

Charlotte was taken aback and said, "Transfer hospitals?"

Chapter 505: Pushed to the Limit

Oliver Hudson looked at her seriously, "Miss Thompson, I've been in contact with the best hospitals abroad. If possible, Annie will soon be able to receive better treatment."

Upon hearing this, the physician across from him, sitting in the office chair, looked at him disapprovingly, and said, "Miss Anne's condition is quite complicated. We shouldn't be too hasty, otherwise, too much of anything will only lead to the opposite effect."

Charlotte glanced up, "What do you mean?"

The physician respectfully looked at Charlotte and said, "Miss Thompson, Miss Anne's mental and emotional traumas are severe, so I suggest keeping Miss Anne in the hospital for monitoring for a while before discussing the transfer."

Since the physician had said so, the two of them didn't say anything more.

When they left the office, they saw an unexpected person in the hallway.

Oliver Hudson seemed slightly depressed. He gave Charlotte a complex glance upon seeing the person, then said, "Miss Thompson, Annie needs someone to look after her now. I should go to her."

Hearing his words, Charlotte nodded slightly. Only after watching Oliver leave did she turn her gaze to the person standing across from her.

She had a complicated look in her eyes, but her tone was surprisingly softer.

"What are you doing here?"

The man hesitated for a few seconds, looked up at her, and said softly, "Miss Thompson, would you like to accompany me for a late-night snack?"

"Justin Battleson, what are you up to?" Charlotte sounded a bit helpless, at least she was not as defensive as before.

Justin was silent for a few seconds, his face remained expressionless, but a subtle tinge of disappointment was detectable in his eyes.

Charlotte's heart suddenly ached.

After a while, she coughed lightly, saying, "Fine, I choose the place, you pay the bill."

As her words fell, Justin looked somewhat startled. After a few seconds, the expression on his face changed from surprise to suppressed joy.

He nodded his head. His voice was filled with restrained delight.

"Okay."

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Charlotte chose her favourite food stall. The stall's owner was a robust, straightforward man in his forties, who always smiled sincerely and heartily.

After exchanging greetings with the stall owner, Charlotte indulgently ordered lots of crayfish. It did not take long for the owner to bring the crayfish to the table, laughing as he said, "Are you here with your boyfriend?"

At his words, Charlotte paused imperceptibly. Her calm smile remained intact as she replied, "Just a friend."

Opposite her, Justin masked the complex light in his eyes, a faint smile playing at his lips. He watched as Charlotte enthusiastically ate her food, unconcerned about the grease smeared around her mouth.

He did not eat, just watched Charlotte attentively. His gaze softened involuntarily.

Only when Charlotte was full did she finally have a moment to rest. She hastily wiped her mouth with a napkin and casually glanced at the man across the table.

The man, dressed in a black suit, had a detached temperament that made him appear out of place in the bustling and noisy food stall. He didn't eat anything and just watched her without blinking.

Charlotte lowered her head and silently looked at the crayfish shell in front of her. She then looked at him and asked, "Why aren't you eating?"

Caught off guard, Justin stuttered after a few seconds, "I'm not hungry."

Hearing his answer, Charlotte's mouth twitched as she responded, "How many people do you know who eat late-night snacks because they are hungry?"

Before he could answer, she pushed a plate full of crayfish towards him, gestured at it and said, "It's boring if I'm the only one eating, why don't you have some too?"

Chapter 506: Crawfish

Justin Battleson glanced at the overflowing plate of crayfish in front of him, frowning subtly. But as he met the enigmatic gaze from Charlotte Thompson after a brief second, he paused, smiled and said, "Okay."

He didn't hesitate; he grabbed a plastic glove from the edge of the table, and slipped it on. He then casually picked up a crayfish from the plate, and calmly began to peel the shell.

His pale fingers against the orange shell highlighted his elegant manner, a vibrant harmony between the two attracting the eye.

Charlotte found herself momentarily entranced.

Only when the man put a juicy piece of crayfish into his mouth did she suddenly snap back to reality. She masked her awkwardness with a light cough. As if nothing had transpired, she went back to peeling the crayfish.

Neither of them said a word, enjoying their meal in silence. Despite the quiet, they served as the most vivid and enticing sight in the entire restaurant. A group of young girls at the adjacent table took notice, stealthily whipping out their phones to snap pictures, their faces displaying their amusement.

Charlotte was indifferent to the attention. Even after they finished eating, with people still coming and going in the bustling eating place, she felt cheerfulness bubbling in her heart, a pleasant smile playing on her lips.

From where he was, Justin too noticed the cheerful feeling around them. He showed a faint smile, then removed his plastic glove. And like he was asking for her opinion, he asked, "It's not that late, shall we stroll around?"

Opposite him, Charlotte who had a rather full stomach was contentedly wiping her mouth. At his words, she hesitated for a few seconds, but eventually, she gave a nod of approval.

After all, a walk after a late-night snack isn't a bad idea.

When they exited the restaurant, they were greeted with the bustling activity of the street – the city's most famous night market that attracted countless young people.

Under the bright lights of the night market, there were numerous small food stalls along the way. The tantalizing aroma drew Charlotte to a stall for a while, but remembering how much she had already eaten, she tamped down her cravings, forcing herself to move on.

Trailing behind, Justin found her indecisiveness amusing. A flicker of laughter flashed in his eyes as he kept pace with her.

A few minutes later, they reached a densely crowded spot. Charlotte's eyes brightened up; she moved deftly, weaving through the crowd, prompted by the passionate cheers in the vicinity, a wider smile replacing the small one on her lips.

The stall owner was passing rings to customers who had paid. He announced loudly, "There's a discount for everyone today due to the crowd. Seize the opportunity, there might not be another after this!"

Cheers answered him from the crowd. Many were eager to try their luck, paying and taking a ring from the stall owner, focusing their attention on ring-tossing competitions a few meters away.

Whoever got the ring over the target could win a stuffed toy, a keyring, a hairpin among other small prizes. But most weren't interested in the prize; they were just playing for fun.

Many left after they finished their games, leaving fewer people behind. With crossed arms, Charlotte was contentedly observing when the observant stall owner noticed her. He handed her a ring, asking, "Miss, want to give it a try?"

Charlotte was startled but then she smiled, "Sure."

She paid, took the ring, and started to focus on this intriguing game of ring toss.

Not until she was sweating profusely did she cheerfully step away, a toy in her arms.

Chapter 507: Allergic to Crayfish

At some unknown point in time, Justin Battleson stood beside her with his long legs, holding a soft pink cotton candy in his hand.

The color severely clashed with the icy demeanor of the man in front of her.

Charlotte Thompson blinked, then stifled a laugh and asked, "Mr. Battleson, did you disappear all this time just to get this trinket?"

Without hesitation, Justin nodded and handed the cotton candy over to Charlotte. He chuckled softly and said, "It's for you."

It was the exact same stall that Charlotte had paused at just moments before, selling cotton candy.

The man stood beside her against the light, his brows and eyes unconsciously softened. His usually cold demeanor was nowhere to be seen, drawing people in and making them want to lean on him.

Charlotte was a bit dazed. She lowered her head and blankly stared at the cotton candy she took. Her heart softened a bit.

Seconds later, she tasted the sweetness filling in her mouth and couldn't help but look at the man, surprised. "It's so sweet," she exclaimed.

Justin Battleson smiled lightly. It felt as if the softest part in his heart had sunk lower, he raised his hand to touch her soft hair.

However, he suddenly felt a convulsive-like pain in his stomach.

The man's hand abruptly stopped in place, his face turned paler and he staggered a few steps.

Charlotte's heart tightened, instinctively supporting him. Her voice became cooler, "What's wrong?"

Justin Battleson looked pale, instinctively clutching his stomach. His voice was so low it was almost inaudible, "I'm fine."

He raised his head, apparently trying to give Charlotte a reassuring smile. But as their eyes met, Charlotte watched him as his eyes slowly closed and he collapsed.

Charlotte could barely hold his weight. After she managed to support him, her mind went blank.

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Inside the hospital.

Justin Battleson was rushed into the hospital by Charlotte Thompson. Watching him being pushed into the operating room, Charlotte stood there in a daze against the wall in the hallway, hardly believing what was happening.

Who would have thought that a man like him could be so vulnerable?

Before she could fully comprehend the situation, a nurse walked out of the operation room and asked Charlotte, "Are you a family member?"

Charlotte blinked, hastily responded: "Yes, I am. What happened?"

The nurse nodded after receiving the affirmative reply and handed a few pages to her, "The patient has food poisoning, he consumed a lot. He's now scheduled for stomach pumping. If there's no problem, please sign here."

Without much thought, Charlotte signed the paper. After watching the nurse return to the operation room with the paper in hand, it finally hit her.

Food poisoning?

Justin Battleson only had crayfish tonight.

Charlotte paused for a moment.

Could it be that he can't eat crayfish?

Realizing this, Charlotte Thompson raised her head in confusion, drawing a blank.

Justin Battleson couldn't possibly be unaware of his crayfish allergy, but he ate it without batting an eye. Despite consuming so much, he never uttered a word of complaint.

Was it all just to accompany her and make her happy?

The cold wind outside was howling, whistling past the window sill, giving out muffled cries of loneliness. In the lengthy corridor, there was only Charlotte. She lifted her head to look at the operating room light, a complex emotion flickered in her eyes.

Chapter 508: Sleepless Night

The stomach flushing process took nearly an hour. Charlotte Thompson sat on the bench in the hallway dazedly, her eyes fixed unblinkingly on the lit light outside the operating room as though she was subjected to a silent, lingering torture.

She didn't know how much time had passed, when the light outside the operating room suddenly went out, then the door opened.

Charlotte's eyes flashed with confusion. A moment later, she hastily stood up seeing Justin Battleson being wheeled into a ward by a nurse. Her heart, hung in the air, finally settled.

She approached. The doctor was removing his mask. Seeing her, he straightened up and explained, "The patient is no longer in any immediate danger, but he cannot eat for a few days and needs to stay in hospital."

At his words, Charlotte breathed a sigh of relief. After thanking the doctor, she headed straight for the ward.

The usually cold and distant man seemed to have softened a little. His face was pale as paper, his lips tightly shuttered, like he was silently enduring something.

Charlotte approached the bedside softly, each step feeling like treading on her own heart.

It wasn't until she sat down that it dawned on her. Even someone like Justin Battleson had his vulnerable moments.

It was now the middle of the night. After all the chaos, Charlotte had no intention to sleep; she just felt endless fatigue. A light, chilly breeze wafted in from the window. With her hand cupping her cheek, she gazed at Justin Battleson, whose sleeping eyes seemed softer than usual.

She had no idea when everything had changed so much.

The Charlotte of five years ago seemed like a different person. And Justin Battleson, too, wasn't the same as he was five years ago.

He looked both similar and different.

Five years ago, he was full of life. With an intimidating aura, yet now and then, he would look at her seriously and call her "young lady".

Now, this man was lying quietly on the hospital bed, his brow slightly furrowed even in sleep.

No one knew better than Charlotte how much she detested Justin Battleson after that reckless and absurd night five years ago. She had even despised him.

Yet, things seemed to have strayed off course, step by step.

Gazing at the man's face, a masterpiece as if created by God, Charlotte was somewhat puzzled about herself.

She couldn't be as confident as before.

She was wavering.

Watching Justin's face quietly, Charlotte spent almost the entire night without sleep.

The next day, the sun rose as usual, beautiful like a newborn.

Half-squinting, controlling the sourness in her eyes, Charlotte stretched uncomfortably. As she lowered her gaze, her eyes met Justin's, silently.

The latter's face was still pale as a ghost but at the sight of her, a glimmer of child-like joy lit up in his eyes.

He opened his mouth, his voice raspy, "Did you not sleep all night?"

Charlotte was slightly stunned. At the same time, a flash of pain flickered in her eyes. She stood up, suppressing the tremble in her voice. Her words were blunt.

"Justin Battleson, are you still a child? Surely, you must know you're allergic to crayfish?"

Hearing this, Justin didn't rebut. He seemed to have anticipated her accusation and simply, with a pale face, nodded.

Charlotte was infuriated. Raising her voice slightly, she snapped, "Are you an idiot? You knew and still ate it. Do you have a death wish?"

At the end of her words, Justin Battleson coughed weakly. The sound of his cough jolted Charlotte back to reality. She bent down anxiously and adjusted his blanket, her voice a little frantic.

Chapter 509: I can also be desperate

"What's wrong? Are you still feeling unwell? I'll call the doctor..."

Before she could finish her sentence, Charlotte noticed her hand pulling the quilt was held in the strong grasp of the man. His hand was cool, wrapping her hand with a slightly tingling chill.

Her movements halted, her voice stopped abruptly.

Feeling the constant warmth in her hand, Justin Battleson almost imperceptibly tugged at his lips, whispering softly, " Miss Thompson, in this world, Henry Hudson isn't the only one who can take a bullet for you."

This was the first time he spoke with such a soft tone, as fragile as a doll's. For a brief moment, Charlotte saw a glimpse of Henry in him.

Although their characters were vastly different, in that moment, Charlotte suddenly thought they were quite similar.

She stared blankly as Justin held her hand, a hint of puzzlement flashing in her eyes.

Justin suddenly laughed.

A low, magnetic laughter resonated from his chest. Seeming to experience a moment of pain in his stomach, his brows knitted inconspicuously, and then a relieved smile bloomed on his face.

He softly continued the second half of the sentence.

"What I mean is, I can too."

"If Henry Hudson can risk everything, so can I."

"As long as you're happy, I can even die; what does an allergic reaction even matter?"

Suddenly, sunlight spilled in from the window, dotting the man's face like warm specks of light.

Charlotte stared blankly at him, the seriousness on his face was rare, lacking any indication of joking.

Though her mind was buzzing, she realized a tranquil quietness had fallen around them.

The man's deep, magnetic voice seemed to echo by her ear.

"As long as you're happy, I can even die."

Charlotte raised her eyes, speechless. The inexpressible emotion from deep within her heart overwhelmed all her senses.

In a daze, a warm sensation filled her eyes. Her tears fell, drop by drop, shattering on the back of their intertwined hands.

Watching her tears, Justin was a little bewildered and tightened his grip on her hand, saying, "Don't cry. I'm alive and well, aren't I?"

His comforting voice was childlike in its innocence. A lump formed in Charlotte's throat and tears cascaded down her face, her slender shoulders trembling. She choked out, "Justin Battleson, why are you such a fool? How can you casually talk about dying?"

What followed was uncontrollable sobbing.

Justin Battleson sighed softly, rubbing her back gently, saying, "Okay, I won't talk about it anymore."

Applying a bit of force, Charlotte was pulled towards him before she could react. Their faces were only a few centimeters apart. Justin lifted his head to wipe away her tears, the corners of his mouth curving upwards.

The moment their lips met, Charlotte's mind went blank.

The man's lips were gently taking away all her breaths, rendering her immobile. She just stared blankly at him. It took her a while to react, but she could not bring herself to resist.

Justin still had an IV needle in his hand. If she lifted her hand, it would touch the tube connected to the needle.

Suddenly, a wild thought surged in the depths of Charlotte's heart.

If she was to fall, she might as well let go this once.

She closed her eyes, not resisting anymore, a hot teardrop rolled down from the corner of her eye.

Chapter 510: Caught between a Rock and a Hard Place

Just as Charlotte Thompson was feeling suffocated, the man reluctantly let her go. There was a touch of tenderness in his eyes and, subtly, a hint of heartache in his tone.

"No more crying," he said. "I didn't tell you all of this to make you cry."

At his words, Charlotte hurriedly sat up, hastily pulled out a couple of tissues from the bedside table to wipe her face. Her eyes were still red. She turned away, giving a light cough and quickly said, "I'm going to wash my face."

With that, she hastily escaped from the charged atmosphere.

Justin Battleson gently sat up, leaning against the pillow behind him. He watched Charlotte's retreating figure - no matter how you looked, it seemed like a hasty retreat - and felt inexplicably pleased. The gloominess in his heart, which had been accumulating for days, seemed to be swept away by sunshine.

He hooked his lips into a smile and looked out the window.

The sun outside was just right, and a few birds were perched on tree branches, occasionally making crisp chirps.

Everything was incredibly beautiful.

Meanwhile, Charlotte had embarrassedly entered the bathroom. She looked in the mirror at her own red eyes and flushed cheeks, harshly slapping her own face as if dissatisfied.

It was a kiss scene, wasn't it? It's not like she hadn't seen it before!

After all, when she had first arrived in Ashton, Henry Thompson had told her that it was an open-minded country where people expressing their love and kissing could be seen everywhere she turned.

She'd never eaten pork, but she'd certainly seen a pig run! Hence, at that time, she had managed to witness everything without her face turning red and her heart pounding.

Jordan Thompson had even remarked that her skin had become thick. She even began to doubt herself at that point.

Until now, with her head on the verge of exploding, did Charlotte finally dare to confirm: she still blushed and her heart still pounded when she imagined herself as the protagonist in those scenarios.

Could it be true?

Palette touched her burning face; an explanation was surfacing in her heart, struggling to be voiced, but she forced it back down.

She had been following the rules for too long; she wanted to be brave once.

Perhaps it's love then, she thought.

Only in front of the one we love would we behave like this: blush and have a racing heartbeat.

Only now did she have to admit to herself that she was in love with him.

As soon as this idea sprang up, the familiar face of another man followed.

Henry Hudson.

Charlotte's eyes fell, a feeling of guilt welled up in her heart.

No matter the past or the present, she had always been unfairly to him.

At this point, even she didn't know whether she should accept Justin Battleson or maintain the status quo, even if it was to slightly alleviate the guilt in her heart.

Now, Charlotte finally understood what it means to be caught between a rock and a hard place.

Palette leaned her hands on both sides of the sink, feeling the warmth emanating from her face, then splashed some water on it. Once her temperature had dropped a bit, she wiped the water droplets falling off her face with a tissue, took several deep breaths, fixed her facial expression, and then opened the door to leave.

When she entered the sickroom, Justin Battleson's gaze was still fixed out the window, his ethereal and laid-back expression was something Palette had never seen before.

Charlotte paused for a moment, taking a few soft steps forward, and followed his gaze to look out the window.

Two birds nestled together on the tree branch, their feathers fluttered by the breeze. Yet they remained motionless, seemingly in their own world.

Unintentionally, Charlotte became somewhat lost in the scene.