That Can Be Arranged chapter 16

Chapter 16 Can You Bathe Me?

"Huh?" Tessa thought she was hearing things.

Nicholas's tone was calm. "It's going to rain soon anyway, and it's not easy to hail a cab around here. You can stay the night, and Greg will be elated as well. I can get the driver to send you back tomorrow morning."

Tessa was stunned.

I was not hearing things. Nicholas really allowed me to stay the night. But... Why the sudden behavior change?

"I... don't think I should." She didn't like the idea of staying in a man's house all alone.

Just then, Gregory rushed over and wrapped his arms around Tessa's thigh, pleading in a spoiled manner, "No, you should! I think it's a great idea! Please stay! Stay with me, please?"

Tessa's heart melted when she heard his voice, but she still hesitated for a long time. While she wavered, the rain had begun to pour outside, and it seemed to be getting heavier by the minute.

In the end, Tessa could only nod her agreement helplessly.

Later that night, she gave her brother a call. "Something came up with the orchestra tonight, so I won't be going home today. Don't wait for me, and remember to rest early."

Timothy's warm voice sounded. "All right, got it. Don't overwork yourself, okay?"

As the siblings talked, Nicholas stared at Tessa behind her, seemingly trying to overlap her figure with that of the woman from that night six years ago.

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That night was a night of madness, and he hadn't even taken a good look at the woman's face. Now, as he looked at her figure, he still didn't have a clue.

Tessa ended the call. She didn't notice anything unusual with Nicholas as she said tentatively, "President Sawyer, pardon my intrusion tonight."

Nicholas came to his senses and nodded nonchalantly. Then, he turned around and said to Gregory, "Take her to see the guest room upstairs. It's also time for you to wash up and go to bed."

Gregory nodded obediently, and then he seemed shy as he asked with a blush, "Miss Pretty Lady, can you bathe me?"

Tessa smiled lightheartedly. "Of course."

The two proceeded to ascend the stairs together. After watching them go, Nicholas turned his gaze out the window.

As the rain was pouring outside, he silently lit a cigarette. The curling smoke was reflected in his eyes, hiding his thoughts from view.

Meanwhile, in the bathroom upstairs, Tessa had filled the tub with water, and she was helping Gregory bathe. He seemed to be a little shy as his adorable cheeks burned red. However, there was also glee in his eyes.

Miss Pretty Lady feels a lot like Mommy! I love this so much!

As Tessa bathed Gregory, there was a wavering look in her eyes. She thought about the child a few years back...

If he had stayed with her, he would probably be the same age. These years, she had held a deep regret in her heart, along with endless guilt.

She had never even met him, and she couldn't be there with him as he grew up, but she knew that she wasn't fated to be with her son.

I might never have a chance to see my child in this lifetime!

Every time she thought this, there would be a piercing pain in her heart.

"What's wrong? Why... are you crying?"

Gregory had looked up then, and he panicked as he saw Tessa.

Tessa came to and realized that there were tears pooling in her eyes. She had blinked just now, and the tears had slid down her face.

Gregory was terribly anxious. "Is it because you don't like it here? Did I upset you?"

That Can Be Arranged chapter 17

Chapter 17 Butterfly Mark

With that, Gregory's eyes began to redden, as if he were about to cry as well.

Tessa didn't expect him to have such a huge reaction. Hence, she was guilty, and she also felt pity for the boy. Instantly, she wiped her tears as she said, "That's not true. I cried because I remembered something in the past. Sweetheart, it has nothing to do with you."

With that, she wiped the tears away and carried Gregory in her arms.

The little boy in her arms was soft and adorable, and one couldn't help but want to pamper him. How would anyone bear to blame him, even a little?

Gregory wasn't quite ready to believe it yet, but when he saw Tessa returning to her usual self, he relaxed. Then, he wrapped his arms around her neck and said, "Don't cry. I'll protect you if you get bullied, so don't cry anymore! I'll feel bad."

Tessa felt warmth in her heart as Gregory comforted her. "All right, I'll count on you."

As the two talked, Tessa dried Gregory with a towel. The boy had a pleasant smell, and his cute cow-themed pajamas, coupled with his exquisite features, only served to enhance his cuteness.

As Tessa gazed at him, she could feel her heart melt. She hugged him and simply refused to let go. "Sweetheart, you're too cute! I've never seen a child so cute like you!"

"You're very pretty too. You're the prettiest lady I've ever seen!"

Gregory was overjoyed to receive praise, and he praised Tessa in return.

"You're so good with words." Tessa laughed at the sight.

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Just then, Nicholas had just finished a cigarette, and he was striding up the stairs. He had just arrived at the door to the room when he saw the two chatting away happily.

Gregory leaned into Tessa's embrace as he asked softly, "Can I sleep with you tonight?"

"Uh..." Tessa hesitated, unable to agree right away. She was quite willing herself, but she should get the green light from Nicholas first.

Nicholas walked in slowly. When Gregory saw his father, he immediately asked for permission. "Daddy, can I sleep with Miss Pretty Lady tonight?"

Nicholas didn't want to let the boy down, so he parted his thin lips and said, "Since you're here already, Miss Reinhart, I guess you'll have to accompany Greg for a while longer. He rarely gets this close to other people, you see."

Tessa didn't expect him to agree, and she was even more curious now. Why did he have a complete change of attitude?

That night, Tessa accompanied Gregory to sleep, and she also told him a bedtime story. Nicholas, on the other hand, calmly sat on a couch beside them.

The woman's gentle words rang in his ears, her sentences accentuated with a particular tone that was slightly attractive.

As Nicholas listened, he gradually felt as if her voice coincided with some voices in his memory, but it also didn't feel real at the same time.

Six years ago, the woman's small and weak figure was like a fragile flower. Her breaths were so labored that they almost broke, and she also made some faint sounds with her hoarse voice.

It had been too long, so Nicholas could barely remember it. At that moment, however, he felt a sense of familiarity.

He examined Tessa with a searching gaze. The look in his eyes grew darker as he attempted to see through the woman.

Tessa managed to get Gregory to sleep, then she hastily got off the bed and whispered to Nicholas, "President Sawyer, he's asleep."

"Good work." As the words left his thin lips, Nicholas stood up and got ready to leave Gregory's room. Tessa naturally followed suit.

After they went out, Nicholas stood coldly by the door as he said nonchalantly, "You may stay in the guest room next to Greg's room."

Tessa nodded lightly. "Understood. Pardon the intrusion. I'll be off now." With that, she went through the door and finally let out a huge sigh of relief.

For unknown reasons, whenever she was face to face with Nicholas, she would always feel a sort of heavy pressure. Also, she always felt that Nicholas's eyes looked terribly dark and deep, harboring a frightful abyss within.

Now that she was alone in a room, she was considerably more relaxed. She quickly took off her clothes and went for a bath in the bathroom.

Meanwhile, Nicholas had returned to his own room as well. He suddenly remembered it was Tessa's first time sleeping over, and she probably hadn't brought a change of clothes with her.

After some hesitation, he went to his wardrobe and picked out a clean shirt. I guess I'll need to lend her my shirt.

Soon, he arrived at the door to the guest room. He knocked softly at first, but there was no response after a while, so he simply opened the door and went in.

When he got in, he heard the sounds of a hairdryer coming from the bathroom. Tessa seemed to be done with her bath, and she was drying her hair now.

Nicholas held the shirt in his hand as he walked toward the bathroom. Surprisingly, the door wasn't locked.

Tessa had her back to the bathroom door with a towel wrapped casually around her body. Her long black hair was dancing in the hot air.

Subconsciously, Nicholas averted his gaze, but he caught sight of a spot on Tessa's body near her scapula. There was a red butterfly on her skin, with its wings spread out and ready to take flight!

That Can Be Arranged chapter 18

Chapter 18 Is It Her?

Nicholas's dark pupils constricted as countless scenes flashed across his mind. That night six years ago, when the woman was squirming under him, he could make out a mark on her shoulder in the dark. It was a mark shaped like a butterfly with its wings spread out!

As Nicholas watched the butterfly mark coming in and out of sight under Tessa's hair, he strode forward. Sensing movement behind her, Tessa turned around to look. She was suddenly held down by Nicholas and forced against the washbasin.

Tessa was terrified as she began to struggle. "Nicholas! What are you doing?!"

"Don't move!" The man's large body was pressed tightly against hers. Mercilessly, he grabbed her struggling arms and pinned them behind her.

As Nicholas stared at the bare skin under the woman's hair, his breaths quickened. Reaching out his hands, he brushed her long hair aside...

The butterfly mark was well-defined on the skin near her scapula, extremely similar to the one he saw six years ago. Still, it was dark that night, so he couldn't make out the color of the butterfly mark on the woman's body.

But he remembered a scar near the skin bearing the butterfly mark, and it felt slightly rougher to the touch... With that in mind, Nicholas reached out toward Tessa's tattoo.

"Ah!" Tessa panicked as she registered the unfamiliar sensation.

"N-Nicholas! Let go!"

Ignoring Tessa's struggles, Nicholas carefully touched the spot near her tattoo. However, he felt only smooth skin, entirely different from the sensation that night...

Nicholas trained his gaze on the butterfly mark. He refused to give up as his finger inspected Tessa's skin further.

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The spot was near the scapula on her back, and Tessa immediately felt a wave of numbness, as if an electrical current had gone through her.

She was terribly confused, and she shouted in her mind, Nicholas looks like a gentleman, so how can he do such horrible things so suddenly?!

"Nicholas, what are you trying to do? D-Don't do this to me!"

Tessa's voice was trembling. She feared that the man would get aggressive, so she could only talk in a quiet voice. There was a discernible panic between her breaths.

Nicholas could hear it, and her voice sounded ever so familiar to that voice from six years ago. It was a fearful murmur akin to sleep talking.

The look in his eyes went dark, and then he forced Tessa to turn around so that they faced each other. He yanked her closer to him, so close they could feel each other's breath.

Wait? Why do I not hate this woman?

He didn't spend nights with women, for he wasn't interested in them and maybe even disliked them. The only woman he wasn't disgusted with was that very woman six years ago.

Now, the aura emanating from Tessa was similar to that woman, an aura that negates any feelings of disgust.

Meanwhile, Tessa almost stopped breathing. She could feel Nicholas's palm on her spine, slowly inching downward...

"N-Nicholas?" Tessa tensed up, deciding that once he went over the line, she would discard all courtesy.

Nicholas was silent as he focused on his actions. He could still remember the woman six years ago had a scar on her lower back.

If Tessa's waist had the same scar, he could be sure this woman was Gregory's biological mother!

Nicholas felt around for the scar, but just when his fingers were about to reach it, the towel on Tessa's body fell off!

The air seemed to have frozen solid!

Tessa was terrified as she struggled. "Nicholas, let go of me-"

Nicholas was equally surprised. He realized how rude he was behaving, so he subconsciously moved to let go. However, he remembered Tessa wasn't wearing any clothes.

Her struggles had produced some friction between the two. The next moment, he could feel a fierce fire leaping to life from the depths of his body!

This was the first time this had happened in years! Save for that instance with Gregory's biological mother...

Nicholas returned to his senses and gripped Tessa's wrist even tighter. "Tessa, if you don't want me to make the next move, you'd better stay still!"

His voice was slightly hoarse and attractive, a thick sense of warning in his tone. Clearly feeling the change in a certain area of the man, Tessa widened her eyes and held her breath.

She didn't dare struggle anymore. However, her eyes were already reddening.

This seemed to be too much for her, as fear and injustice invaded her senses. She was so scared that she wanted to cry.

Seeing that, Nicholas didn't suppress the fire inside him. Instead, the self-control he was so proud of was beginning to unravel. The little woman in his arms had tears pooling in her watery eyes.

Her pitiful expression was like the morning dew that came with the dawn, like a fragile bud waiting to bloom. It nagged at his urge to invade and pluck the flower off its stalk...

The sudden urge seemed to burst forth from his body.

Dang it! Am I possessed or something? He just wanted to confirm the tattoo, but now he was the one getting excited.

A strong desire kept stimulating his sense of reason, and a part of him began to shift uncontrollably in a direction...

That Can Be Arranged chapter 19

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Chapter 19 Rashness

"Nicholas, don't you dare! I'll kill us both!" Seeing the man's look that threatened to swallow her up, Tessa shouted in part embarrassment.

As the woman's sobbing roar entered his ears, Nicholas was stunned. He saw the woman's tiny face twisted in rage, and the look in his eyes slowly returned to normal.

Forcing his urges away, Nicholas let go of Tessa. Then, he hastily grabbed another towel and draped it over Tessa's body, saying calmly, "I have acted too rashly tonight. Don't take it to heart. You can wear this shirt for the time being."

With that, he turned around and left without looking back. Tessa remained alone in the bathroom, her panic still lingering.

She gripped the towel around her, trembling as her legs threatened to give way. After a long while, she finally released a sigh and looked at the shirt on the floor. Why would he assault me? He came just to deliver this shirt, didn't he?

She didn't think Nicholas would actually be interested in her.

Nevertheless, he behaved as if he were a lecher!

The more Tessa thought about it, the angrier she got. In the end, she decided that she really couldn't get along with Nicholas.

If it weren't for Greg's cuteness, I would've left long ago!

After cursing the man for a while, she told herself that she absolutely must keep a distance from him, in case he did anything spontaneous again!

...

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After returning to his room, Nicholas began to regret his rash actions just now. When he saw the mark on Tessa's shoulder, he hadn't thought twice before touching her.

My actions were so inappropriate.

However, he also felt curious about the experience. He couldn't believe that he would be interested in Tessa in that sense.

All these years, many women flocked to him, trying their best to appeal to him so that he would be interested in them. However, he only felt disgusted by them!

But that woman just now almost made me lose control...

Nicholas felt that he must have been possessed. After forcing himself to calm down, he started to brainstorm ideas about how he should confirm Tessa's identity.

He had to halt his attempts tonight, so he would have to leave it for another time. He had all the time in the world, anyway!

As Nicholas settled on his decision, his phone rang. He stopped his train of thought and picked up the call. "Hello, Mom?"

Stefania Buchanan's voice sounded over the phone. "Nicholas, were you asleep? Did I disturb your rest by calling you at this hour?"

"It's all right, Mom. I haven't slept. What's the matter?" Nicholas' voice regained its usual steady calmness.

Stefania said, "I'll make it quick, then. Can you fetch someone at the airport for me tomorrow afternoon? It's my friend, and I wanted to go myself, but something came up so I can't go after all. Can you go on behalf of me?"

Nicholas didn't decline as he asked, "Which friend of yours?"

Stefania said gently, "It's Yana Johnson from the Gingham Family and her daughter, Roselle Gingham. You should know her, right? I remember you played with her when you were little."

Nicholas paused for a while. He did remember the Gingham Family; they had a long history with the Sawyers, but he hadn't seen them ever since the entire family moved overseas.

As for Roselle, he did remember someone like that, but it had been too long, and he had already forgotten what she looked like.

Nicholas nodded gently, saying, "Got it. I'll go fetch them when the time comes."

After that, they chatted for a bit before hanging up.

The following morning, Tessa woke up with dark rings under her eyes. She hadn't slept the whole night, and she only had some shuteye near dawn. Thus, she had some weird dreams as a result.

She even dreamed about that incident six years ago, where she was entangled with a man in the dark, crazed with lust for the whole night...

"It's all his fault!" Tessa growled in embarrassment.

Just then, Gregory came over and shouted at the door in his childish voice, "Are you awake, Miss Pretty Lady? It's time to get up for breakfast."

"Ah, sure. I'll be right there." Tessa hurriedly got out of the bed and washed up before leaving the room.

As she emerged from the room, she saw Gregory waiting for her in the corridor. The boy was wearing overalls and a white shirt, looking cute yet stylish. Tessa gave him a warm smile, then walked up to him and took his hand as they descended the stairs.

Meanwhile, Nicholas was already eating at the table. As the two met each other's gazes, Tessa couldn't help but recall what happened last night.

Uneasiness crept onto her face as she averted her gaze. The look in Nicholas' eyes wavered a little before returning to normal. He looked calm and nonchalant, as if nothing had ever happened.

Really? I can't believe this man is acting as if nothing happened?

That Can Be Arranged chapter 20

Chapter 20 Temptation

"Good morning, Daddy!" Gregory headed downstairs and politely greeted his father.

Nicholas nodded in response and greeted the boy back. "Good morning. Come and have your breakfast."

Tessa was about to make a move, but Gregory wouldn't let go of her hand. Unable to walk away, she helplessly stayed behind and kept him company for breakfast.

In the meantime, Andrew's eyes lit up with warmth when he witnessed the interaction among the trio, which he found surprisingly harmonious because they looked just like a family.

Nonetheless, his feelings were not mutual as Tessa didn't feel the same way because she hurriedly tried to leave right after breakfast.

Nonetheless, Gregory seized the lady's hand with a heavy heart and asked, "Miss Pretty Lady, can I pay you a visit when I miss you?"

Tessa curled her lips upward when she heard the boy's question. "Of course, provided that I have an off day and you're allowed to visit me. However, I have a brother whom I need to look after at home, so I can't be away overnight like I did last night, even if I'm with you."

"Alright, understood." Gregory nodded his head, clearly telling the lady he understood with his gesture.

"I knew you're the most obedient and lovely kid ever." Tessa smiled, gently pinching the boy's rounded cheek lovingly.

While Tessa's compliment put a smile on Gregory's face, Nicholas suddenly realized something at the sight of their interaction. No, I mustn't let her just leave like that. After a few seconds of contemplation, he calmly said, "Wait, Miss Reinhart."

Tessa paused upon hearing the man's voice as she subconsciously kept her distance from him and asked, "W-What's the matter, President Sawyer?"

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Nicholas raised his eyebrows in slight astonishment.

Hmm. She was calling me by my first name last night, but now she is addressing me as President Sawyer.

Soon, he pursed his lips and said, "I have something I'd like to tell you, Miss Reinhart. I'm sorry if my action startled you last night, and I hope you didn't take that to heart. After all, I just... The mark on your shoulder simply looks familiar to me, so I wasn't trying to do you any harm or hurt you."

Tessa didn't expect Nicholas to apologize to her, feeling stunned, but after a short while, she calmly answered, "Don't worry, I didn't take it to heart at all." Despite her reassurance, she continued to deliberately keep her distance from the man.

Although Nicholas could sense her wariness, he wasn't bothered by that as he changed the subject and asked, "By the way, would you be interested in teaching Gregory the violin, Miss Reinhart?"

Tessa was stunned into a trance.

Wait, what? Am I being offered to be Greg's teacher?

"Would you, Miss Pretty Lady?" Gregory excitedly looked at Tessa.

"Well..." Tessa knitted her eyebrows hesitantly as she was about to turn the man down. However, before she could do so, she was interrupted by Nicholas' timely reply.

"Of course, I'll make sure your classes with Greg won't clash with your orchestra's schedule. All you have to do is just teach Greg when you're not busy preparing for your performance. In return, I'll pay you an hourly rate of two thousand. What do you think?"

An hourly rate of two thousand?! Tessa was dumbfounded and surprised upon hearing how much she was offered. In spite of her initial intention to stay away from Nicholas after what happened the night before, she was somehow tempted to take him up on it.

After all, she would be able to live a better life with her brother if she could have an extra source of income. Besides, her brother wouldn't have to work so hard as a home tutor either for meager earnings that barely helped them make ends meet.

Nevertheless, Tessa didn't accept her offer right away despite her temptation. "President Sawyer, you had previously tried to keep me away from Greg, hadn't you? I can tell that you didn't really like me."

So, the question is—why did you change your mind now?

Nicholas was surprised by her blunt question, but after he paused shortly, he directly answered, "Honestly, I did a little digging about you. Although I know this might have been a violation of your privacy, I didn't have much choice in order to ensure Greg's safety. Anyway, as far as my investigation results suggest, your resume seems clean, Miss Reinhart. The reason I want to make you stay is that I think you're reliable, but of course, the most important thing is..."