

A Cue for Happiness Chapter 121-130

Chapter 121 New Beauty Standards

Among the three men, Jerome stood out the most because of his outfit.

Kenneth did not recognize him at first. After staring for a while, he realized that the young man was the grandson that Finley had recently found. Finley was constantly engaged in battles during his early years, so he hardly had any connection with his family. Now that he finally found his grandson, he was eager to make up to the latter.

Jerome immediately recognized Kenneth and asked in surprise, "Mr. Bowers? What are you doing here?"

Kenneth replied grandiosely, "Ms. Nichols was injured from saving Sophia. As Sophia's great-grandpa, I came to visit her and express my gratitude."

As a cunning man, Kenneth ensured that his reply would not reveal anything about him bribing Natalie to keep her distance from Samuel.

On the contrary, he cast a sharp glance at Jerome and questioned, "What about you, Jerome? How are you related to Ms. Nichols?"

Jerome glanced at Natalie and replied without reservation, "Mr. Bowers, Natalie is my childhood playmate."

"I see."

Kenneth nodded in response. Although he didn't say anything about it, he could see that Jerome had romantic feelings for Natalie.

He had initially thought that Natalie was a shameless woman lusting for Samuel, a man who was way out of her league.

However, it seemed like the three men in the ward were very concerned about Natalie, especially Jerome.

What is happening to this world?

I thought Samuel's taste in women is peculiar enough. Now, even Finley's grandson is crazy about this woman?

Kenneth had never felt so speechless and confused at the same time. He quickly bade them goodbye and left the ward.

After he was gone, Jerome asked with knitted eyebrows, "Natalie, how did you get involved with the Bowers family? They are very powerful and influential. The current head of the family, Samuel Bowers, is known to be a ruthless person."

Yandel chimed in, "Boss, Jerome is right. It's good if you're on friendly terms with the Bowers family, but if you offend them, things would become troublesome."

"I'd like to avoid them, too." Natalie pouted. But somehow, things happened, and I ended up in a situation like this.

Honestly, she had no idea how she got involved with Samuel.

She could not understand how Samuel could be interested in her current "face." Not just that, he would even kiss her so passionately.

The ward fell silent upon the mention of the Bowers family.

Sensing the tension, Yandel changed the topic. "Boss, I've brought the medicine you asked for."

"Thank you." Natalie took the medicine and mumbled to herself, "I have to quickly recover so that I can be discharged as soon as possible..."

Just then, she lifted her head as if she remembered something.

Looking at Ross, she inquired, "Any updates on the Green family?"

"Just as you expected, Belle came to me and asked for forgiveness for stealing my research results. She also asked about you and tried to probe into our relationship."

"I knew it."

Back then at the restaurant, Natalie could see that Belle was interested in Shawn.

It was expected of Belle to investigate Natalie after she saw how close the latter was with Shawn.

Natalie got Xavian to create some fake information about her and Ross and sent them to Belle's subordinate using hacker skills. Unfortunately, Belle still had yet to repent after getting the information and even proceeded to go against Natalie and Ross.

Jerome asked, "Do you need me to handle her for you?"

"No," Natalie replied as a hint of slyness flashed across her eyes. "This revenge is not for me, but for Ross. I promised him that if he works for me, I'll give him a chance to rise and crush his enemy."

The three men were stunned upon hearing her reply.

Chapter 122 Caught Half-naked

Yandel beamed as he felt proud working for a boss like Natalie.

On the other hand, Jerome recalled how Natalie had protected him when they were children and realized that he shouldn't even be surprised by her words.

Whereas for Ross, he clenched his fists tightly. His heart was filled with gratitude, and he was touched beyond words.

She never forgot her promise to me.

He made a vow to himself that he would never forget her kindness. He swore that he would follow and serve her for the rest of his life.

Natalie played with her ponytail and lazily said, "When my arm recovers, it will be the end of Belle's happy days."

After sending off Jerome and the rest, Natalie removed her hospital gown and bandage to apply medication on her wound.

It was a challenge for her to put a bandage on herself. Despite a long struggle, she still failed to do it properly.

Natalie hissed in pain when she accidentally scratched her wound.

Suddenly, the door was pushed open, and Samuel slowly walked in.

At that moment, Natalie's hospital gown was unbuttoned and left draping loosely over her shoulders, exposing her half-naked body.

A dead silence followed as their eyes met.

Natalie was flabbergasted. She quickly pulled up her hospital gown to cover her chest.

As she was panicking, she forgot about the wound on her arm. She winced in pain as she accidentally hurt herself again.

"Turn... Turn around!" she growled furiously. "Where do you think you're staring at? Turn around this instant!"

Samuel gulped, his eyes darkening.

In fact, he had already seen everything the moment he stepped into the ward.

However, he still followed Natalie's instructions and turned around, trying to calm down the flame of desire within him.

The image of her cleavage was tempting the wild beast within Samuel to break free from its cage of rationality.

Natalie bit on her lip as she buttoned up her hospital gown.

"Why didn't you knock before you enter?"

"The door was left slightly open," Samuel replied with a hoarse voice. "I thought you were asleep, so I didn't want to wake you."

"You..."

Natalie wanted to scold him, but she held back because there was no point in doing so. After all, he had already seen everything.

The best way to handle the situation was to pretend that nothing had happened.

Natalie then buried herself in her blanket and slept with her back facing him.

Samuel, on the other hand, glanced at her figure and walked toward the bathroom connected to the ward.

He turned on the shower and stood under the running water to extinguish the burning desire within him.

After staying under the water for some time, Samuel finally managed to calm himself down.

The incident earlier was tormenting for Natalie, but even more so for him.

She was right within his sight and reach, yet he could not lay his hands on her.

Meanwhile, after Kenneth left the hospital, he met Yara in a private room at a cafe.

The moment he arrived, Yara poured a cup of warm tea for him thoughtfully.

"Grandpa, have some tea."

"Thank you." Kenneth's mood was lifted when he saw the gentle and obedient Yara. "I don't understand what Samuel is thinking. You are obviously the one most suitable to be his wife."

Yara was pleased with his words.

“Grandpa, I’m most willing to be your granddaughter-in-law.” She then lowered her eyes and put on a disappointed expression. “I’ve been trying my best to win Samuel’s heart all these years, but nothing seems to work.”

After taking a sip of tea, Kenneth let out a heavy sigh.

“You’re such a wonderful lady! How can Samuel be so blind? If it weren’t for you back then, I would have died long ago!”

Chapter 123 Claiming Credit

Six years ago, Kenneth had a car accident on the city’s outskirts.

The massive impact caused his lungs to collapse.

Even though the driver had called for an ambulance immediately, the pain in his chest was so unbearable that he began to have extreme difficulty breathing.

During the long wait for the paramedics, he had mentally prepared himself to leave this world.

It was at that time that Yara suddenly appeared beside him. Calmly and resolutely, she stabbed his lungs with the tip of a fountain pen. As the blood that clogged his lungs was released, he could finally breathe with ease.

Back then, both his chauffeur and butler kept criticizing her. Despite that, Yara focused on saving him and buying him time to get to the hospital.

“Oh, Yara. You’re not only Franklin’s and Sophia’s mother, but you’re also my life savior,” Kenneth said with a dotting gaze. “It was you who gave me another chance to live and enjoy the company of two great-grandchildren.”

“Don’t mention it, Grandpa,” Yara replied with an awkward smile.

Worried that Kenneth would notice her unnatural expression, she quickly lifted her teacup and took a sip to hide her guilt.

Yara was not at all involved in the two matters that Kenneth had mentioned.

Both Franklin and Sophia were birthed by her twin sister. Even Kenneth was rescued by Natalie.

Five years ago, when she brought the twins to the Bowers residence, she had thought that Kenneth would give her the cold shoulder. To her surprise, he began to call her his savior when he saw her.

At first, Yara was confused. However, after listening to the story, she decided to go with the flow and claim the credit.

“Don’t worry, Grandpa,” Yara replied with reddened eyes, looking as if she was on the brink of tears. “No matter what happens in the future, even if Samuel were to marry Natalie, I would still treat you like my grandfather.”

“What nonsense are you spouting, silly girl?”

“Grandpa, I don’t really have to marry Samuel.” Yara paused to sniffle before continuing reluctantly, “I just hope that Samuel, Franklin, and Sophia can be happy. Natalie...”

“What about her?”

“A few days ago, she came to me and asked me to give her ten million if I want her to leave Samuel. I admit that I was blinded by jealousy and immediately gave her a cheque. However, she did not keep her promise after taking the money. She even told me that it’s Samuel who is clinging onto her and that she can’t do anything about it.”

Yara buried her face in her hands as tears spilled from her eyes.

Seeing that, Kenneth slammed the table in anger. “How bold of her to say such words! Who does she think she is?”

“Grandpa, please calm down. Don’t get too worked up. It’s not good for your health,” Yara persuaded insincerely.

In response, Kenneth pulled out a dark green box from his pocket. Inside, there was a red braided bracelet.

The bracelet’s pendant was a brilliant emerald piece of jadestone shaped like a flowing river.

“What is this, Grandpa?”

Even though Yara was knowledgeable about jewelry, she was not familiar with gemstones. Nevertheless, even an amateur like her could see that the bracelet was priceless.

“This pendant is the heirloom of the Bowers family.” Kenneth placed it in Yara’s palm as he explained, “It is shaped like our family’s emblem, and it has been passed down for centuries. Today, I gift this to you to express my support. No one else in the world suits the role of the lady of the Bowers family more than you do. No other woman other than you can set foot into the Bowers family.”

As she listened to Kenneth's words and studied the pendant, a wave of happiness and excitement washed over Yara.

The bracelet was more than just an heirloom. It also meant recognition and acknowledgment from Kenneth.

Meanwhile, in the hospital, Natalie suddenly thought of something.

It's my first time meeting Old Mr. Bowers today, but why does he look oddly familiar?

Chapter 124 He Savored Her

Natalie was still clueless despite racking her brain for a very long time. Eventually, she gave up trying to recall if she had previously met Kenneth.

Even if she had encountered him before, Natalie felt it was likely for a mere passing moment.

Else, she would have remembered him instead of feeling that he looked vaguely familiar.

While Natalie was still deep in thought, Billy brought over a takeout box adorned in intricate packaging. On the box was the restaurant's name —Acapella.

As soon as he opened the takeout box's lid, some delectable-looking seabass and shrimp came into view. The food's tantalizing aroma wafted over to Natalie, arousing her appetite.

She hurriedly grabbed the cutlery and was about to pick up a piece of seabass meat. However, Samuel snatched the fork from her hand.

"Samuel, what are you—"

"Who said you could dig in?" He cast a sideways glance at her before casually adding, "I'll decide when you can eat this food."

Upon hearing that, Natalie's eyes widened in disbelief. This wicked man wants me, an injured patient, to sit here and starve while watching him gobble all this food? How dare he!

"You may head home now, Billy. Bring the files on the couch with you."

"Yes, Sir."

After Billy did so and left, Samuel placed the takeout box on the coffee table near the couch and picked up a set of cutlery.

Natalie refused to sit idly by and watch him savor the food. Hence, she turned in the other direction while searching for an online novel on her phone before settling down to read.

Shortly after reading ten chapters of the novel, she heard Samuel's magnetic voice emanating from behind her.

He said, "You may eat now."

What? Natalie did not quite believe what she had heard.

As she turned around, her gaze settled on the twelve neatly arranged prawns that had their shells peeled off. Even the seabass had gotten sliced into ready-to-eat, bite-sized chunks.

Samuel even removed the seabass' bones, leaving only its snow-white and buttery flesh that glistened.

Natalie's heart skipped a beat at that sight.

She had never experienced such extent of care before. Thus, she could not help but feel a little flabbergasted.

"Don't you want to eat?" Samuel raised a brow and teased, "Or are you waiting for me to feed you?"

"N-No..."

At once, Natalie grabbed the cutleries and shoved a prawn into her mouth.

Even the black vein that ran down the back of every prawn had gotten cleared. A burst of freshness and sweetness erupted in Natalie's mouth as she chewed on the prawn's tender meat.

Her gaze lifted to meet with Samuel's eyes.

Meanwhile, the latter placed a hand on his temple while gazing affectionately at Natalie.

At that, the latter's heartbeat began to accelerate uncontrollably. Samuel's skin is as dewy and flawless as always. Gosh, I'm pretty sure any woman would melt into a puddle if they stood before this intense gaze that he's giving me right now.

It felt as though he was savoring every inch of her body, like how she was enjoying the juicy prawns.

“Samuel.” Natalie swallowed before continuing, “Umm... How about I set you up on a date with someone?”

Deep down, she did not want to let herself fall for Samuel, nor did she want him to waste his time on her.

Natalie was aware that they were from utterly different worlds, and there was no way they could be together.

After a brief pause, she resumed speaking. “I can introduce you to a respectable woman. Her family background may not be as great as yours, but she’s good-looking and very well-behaved-”

Samuel’s features darkened to a murderous shade as he interrupted, “Is that really what you think of me? That I’m someone who’s desperate for women?”

Hearing that, Natalie did not know how to respond.

Not a single word came from her lips as her eyes locked on Samuel.

“You don’t have to drop any more hints at me.” Samuel cast a vicious gaze while stating, “I refuse to be with some random woman. That’s not the man I am. Besides, you of all people should know who it is I desire.”

A chilly aura radiated from him with every word he uttered. Right after, he turned to leave the ward.

While watching him leave, Natalie’s lips pursed into a self-deprecating smile.

She knew that she could not give him what he wanted.

The fire five years ago had almost burned everything she had, including her ability to trust others.

She felt that she could never fall in love with anyone else for the rest of her life.

Chapter 125 You Have To Accept It

Samuel suppressed the fiery anger that roared in his chest. Shoving those feelings aside, he returned to the Bowers residence.

Meanwhile, Steven finally had some free time to play games on the couch now that he had tucked the two kids into bed.

His peace did not last long. A moment passed before he caught sight of a furious Samuel who walked over. The latter’s gaze was much frostier than usual.

A series of shivers tingled down Steven's spine at once.

Even so, he decided to bite the bullet and ask, "S-Sam... Didn't you say you'll be in the hospital for a few days? Why have you suddenly returned?"

"I got attacked by a wolf."

"What? A wolf?" Steven was puzzled but did not forget to back his brother up. He declared, "Tell me, Sam. Which wolf had the audacity to attack you? I'll end its life right now!"

Instantly, Samuel's brows drew close into a sharp glare as he snapped, "Don't you dare!"

Only then did Steven realize what was going on.

Wait. Samuel is defending the wolf that attacked him? It can't possibly be a real wolf. No. I'm absolutely sure that Natalie is the so-called wolf that broke his heart.

An awkward chuckle slipped from Steven as he finally responded, "I won't actually kill that wolf, Sam. I was only kidding."

"How have Franklin and Sophia been during these two days when I was away?" asked Samuel as he unbuttoned his collar.

"Things have generally been fine. The only issue was that they constantly asked to see Natalie." Steven rubbed his temples before adding, "I almost couldn't fend off against their whining. Fortunately, Grandpa gave me a hand, and we managed to stop them from barging into the hospital."

"Where are they now?"

"Asleep..."

"I'll go upstairs to see them," Samuel announced.

He rose to his feet and slowly walked over to the children's room.

Inside the blue and pink cots were Franklin and Sophia. Both children slept in odd positions; the former's blanket had slipped off his body while the latter's feet poked out of her blanket.

They seemed to sleep soundly.

Still, their sleeping positions with their arms all stretched out were a mess to watch.

Samuel could not help but see a resemblance between their sleeping positions and Natalie's.

He tucked his two little ones' limbs under their blankets before silently leaving the room.

After heading back to his room, Samuel lit a cigarette.

It seems that she still doesn't believe in me... Perhaps, she has gotten hurt so badly that she can no longer trust others.

At that thought, he felt too afraid to uncover Natalie's deepest secret as he knew it would hurt her even more.

Amidst puffs of cigarette smoke, a glint of determination flashed across his eyes.

I'll wait for however long as it takes for her to trust me.

Ever since Samuel left Natalie's ward, he never returned.

Apart from a small spike of disappointment in Natalie's heart, she felt relaxed for the following days after his departure.

On the day she got discharged, Franklin, Sophia, and Steven picked her up from the hospital.

Franklin entered the ward with a bouquet of red roses in his hands. He immediately handed them to Natalie and said, "These are from me, so you have to accept it. You can't say no!"

Natalie had never received a single rose throughout her life.

Thus, she could not help but smile while looking at Franklin's adorably blushing face. "Of course, I'll accept them. Thank you."

A surge of glee went off in Franklin's chest. He was overjoyed but tried to hide it from Natalie. As his lips curved upward, he hurriedly covered it with his hand, not wanting anyone to see how pleased he was.

"You don't have to thank me. I-I bought it for you just because we passed the florist on our way here."

Just then, Steven interjected, "Well, actually... We were indeed on our way here when Franklin told me to stop at the roadside for about half an hour..."

"Uncle Steven!"

A brilliant shade of red crept up Franklin's cheeks as the truth had gotten exposed.

"Jeez! Can't you keep your mouth shut? Y-You've embarrassed me!"

Chapter 126 Talented And Loving Children

Seeing how the little boy's face contorted with rage, Natalie sniffed the fragrance of the roses with a smile and said, "I love these very much..."

Franklin seemed taken aback for a moment before turning around to hide his smug smile.

Not wanting to be outdone, Sophia took out some colorful candies from her little backpack and handed them to Natalie.

"C-Candies... Sweet..."

Steven was just about to translate that, but Natalie spoke up. "These are your favorite... Wait, I understand. You're giving them to me so that I can taste the sweetness and forget about the pain of my wound, right?"

"Mm-hmm." Sophia nodded enthusiastically.

Steven looked at Natalie in astonishment but suddenly felt that he should not be surprised. After all, this was not the first time the latter's ability had impressed him.

There was nothing she could not do for the twins and Samuel; she was invincible.

Natalie's gaze subconsciously landed behind Steven to see if Samuel was there.

Noticing that, Steven hopped in to explain the situation. "Sam has been on a business trip these past few days to attend an important meeting for Centurion Corporation. That's why he's not here to pick you up."

Natalie bit her lip.

She instantly shot a cold glance at Steven while snapping, "Why are you telling me this? I don't recall asking about Samuel."

Steven was absolutely speechless.

Indeed, she didn't ask me about him but can't I explain things out of my own will?

Nevertheless, he completed the discharge procedures and drove Natalie home.

Xavian greeted Natalie once she arrived with a loving hug and a warm bowl of mushroom soup.

While watching her enjoy the soup, Xavian held his chin and asked, “Mommy, why didn’t Mr. Bowers come with you?”

Natalie’s eyes narrowed at that. With lightning speed, she put down her spoon to ask, “When did you and Samuel get so close?”

“I-I. That’s not true...”

Xavian denied her statement, yet inexplicable anxiety kept flickering in his dark eyes.

“You better not be close with him.” After taking another spoonful of mushroom soup, she resumed in a grim tone, “Samuel and Mommy are from different worlds, so... there will never be a happy ending between us.”

Yet, Xavian’s brows only scrunched in confusion at her statement. “Mommy, what do you mean by ‘different worlds?’ I don’t understand what you’re saying. It’s too complicated!”

“You don’t have to understand it.” Natalie lovingly tapped Xavian’s nose and said, “You shouldn’t get involved in the affairs of adults. All you need to know is that although you and Clayton only have me as a parent, I’ll do my best to protect both of you.”

A solemn look shrouded Xavian’s face as he responded, “Clayton and I only want you to be happy, Mommy. Although we’re only five years old now, we’ll grow up quickly and make a lot of money for you in the future. By then, Clayton and I will support the family, so you can sit back and relax.”

A warm feeling swelled in Natalie’s heart.

I must have done so many good deeds in my previous life to have such a pair of talented and loving children.

Xavian did the dishes after Natalie finished up the soup. Meanwhile, she headed back to the room to deal with her work.

It was then that she received a call.

“Hello?”

“Hey, it’s me.” Shawn’s gentle voice rang out from the other end of the phone.

His sudden call made Natalie worry as she felt it had something to do with Max’s health condition. Concerned, she inquired to the phone, “Has something happened to Old Mr.

Watsons? Are you calling because he finished the medicine I previously prescribed him?"

"No..."

"Oh." Natalie stiffened before finally speaking up. "Then what's up?"

"It's my grandpa's birthday this weekend. I hope you can attend his party as my partner."

Natalie stroked the hyper-realistic mask on her face and asked tentatively, "I'm not going to take off the mask on my face. Knowing that is my term, are you still willing to have me as your partner?"

Chapter 127 Mom Is Leaving For Another Guy 1

On the other end of the call, Shawn's lips curved into a smile.

He continued sincerely, "Of course, I am. You're my grandfather's savior, and it's my honor to have you as my partner."

Natalie hesitated for a moment.

It was not a problem for her to attend Max's birthday party. However, she was afraid that it might cause misunderstandings if she attended as Shawn's partner.

Thus, she hinted at her reluctance through a polite statement. "Mr. Watsons. I doubt it's necessary for you to show up with a partner at your grandfather's birthday party-"

"I need you as a shield to ward off other women. Is that a good enough reason to convince you?" Shawn's candid voice elaborated, "Grandpa invited many of his elite friends. If they notice that I'm alone at the party, they will definitely try to promote their daughters and granddaughters as ideal wives to me. Man, just the thought of that already gives me a bad headache."

Natalie had never experienced that, nor could she imagine how awful it would be.

Her dubious voice asked, "Is it really that bad?"

"You'll know when you get here for the party." Shawn's tone turned into one of helplessness as he resumed, "Those wealthy, modern-day princesses all act the same way. It's like they got shaped from the same mold or something. These women would do anything to get closer to me. Hell, there's no doubt that they'll flock over to me right when the party starts. How annoying..."

Natalie visualized the scene and mentally agreed that it would be distressing.

Thus, she decided to do Shawn a favor.

“Okay, I’ll go as your partner.”

“It’s a deal, then.”

After hanging up the phone, Natalie sent Ross an email about the arrangements for the birthday party during the weekend.

It was not long before the day of Max’s birthday party arrived.

Ding dong!

Xavian opened the door and saw a middle-aged man in a dark blue suit.

His cheeks reddened at the stranger’s sudden appearance as his shy voice queried, “Who are you looking for, sir?”

“Is this Natalie Nichols’s house? Is Ms. Nichols in now?”

“She was examining a body the entire night and has just returned, so she’s taking a nap right now.” Xavian blocked the door with his tiny body as he said, “She’s tired. You may leave a message with me if you have anything you’d like to tell her. I’ll relay it when she awakes.”

The middle-aged man then handed an intricately embellished box to the little boy.

He explained, “Mr. Watsons has specially prepared this for Ms. Nichols. He hopes that she will wear this dress to attend Old Mr. Watsons’ birthday party later in the evening.”

“Okay, I’ll pass it to her and let her know.”

“Thank you.”

Xavian shut the door and carried the surprisingly heavy box with all his strength inside.

He also noticed the box’s packaging was way more luxurious and expensive than ordinary boxes.

Curious, Xavian’s little hands grazed the box as he muttered, “He even sent someone to deliver a special dress for the party. Mommy, who has the world’s slowest wit, is probably the only one who doesn’t realize what’s going on here...”

There were many moments where he wanted to open the box and see what dress lay inside.

However, he knew better than to open his mother's parcel without her permission.

Therefore, the little boy could only hold the box until Natalie finally woke up.

Hours later, a woozy feeling hit Natalie as soon as her eyes opened.

She got up and walked out of her bedroom. It was then that she noticed a sparkly-eyed Xavian, who gawked at the elegant box in his hands.

Natalie approached him while pointing to the box. "What do you have there, Sweetheart?"

"Mr. Watsons sent someone to deliver it to you, Mommy. He wants you to wear this dress at the birthday party."

Shawn?

Natalie was a little surprised at first. However, knowing that Shawn had always been thoughtful, she did not question his motives.

Meanwhile, Xavian seemed to be more eager than Natalie. He kept urging, "Mommy, hurry and open up the fancy box!"

Moments passed before she untied the shimmery ribbon and removed the lid. Inside was a silvery-white, elegant mermaid dress.

In addition to the dress' exceptionally silky fabric, tiny crystals got strategically placed in different areas, giving off an ethereal and dazzling shine under indoor lighting.

It was evident that a famous tailor had created this dress.

Natalie picked it up, placed it against her body, and gazed in the mirror.

Next to her, Xavian's brows twisted into a frown as he thought, Samuel is doomed! He has met a formidable opponent! What should I do?

Anxiety surged in his veins. He quickly pulled out his phone and sent a message to Samuel.

He texted: Bad news, Mr. Bowers! Mommy is going to a party with another man!

Chapter 128 Mommy Is Leaving For Another Guy 2

After Xavian sent the message, he stared at the screen in anticipation of Samuel's reply.

Time passed by, but there was not a single word from Samuel.

What's taking him so long? Does he want to be our stepfather or not?

Xavian texted again: Mommy is wearing the gown the other guy gifted her! Where are you? Are you giving up now? That guy will become our stepfather if you do not appear immediately! Humph!

As Xavian stared at his phone with a downtrodden expression, Natalie changed into the silver gown that Shawn gifted her. The bottom of the gown flared out like a mermaid's tail, and hundreds of in-laid diamond bits glittered under the light. The gown outlined Natalie's curves and complemented her figure well.

Xavian raised his head and looked at his mother. "You look beautiful, Mommy."

"Of course I am! It's all thanks to the designer of this dress," said Natalie as she winked at him. "I just spoke to Cecilia on the phone. Apparently, this dress was her best creation of the year, and she spent ten million to design this gown..."

Xavian mumbled to himself, "So it was designed by Aunt Cecilia. No wonder the gown looks so pretty."

Ten million. I can't believe Mr. Watsons willingly spent so much money on Mommy. If things go on this way, Samuel will definitely lose the race.

"Sweetheart, what's with the long face?" asked Natalie.

"It's... nothing." Xavian forced a smile through his bitter expression. "I'm just worried..."

"What are you worried about?"

Amidst his anxiety, an idea flashed through Xavian's mind. He dashed toward the side table, picked up the freckled hyper-realistic mask, and shouted, "The mask, Mommy! I'm worried that you might forget to bring your mask. Please remember to wear it tonight!"

"I know." Natalie reached out to take the mask and frowned. "Sweetheart, you're acting weird. I thought you always hated it when I wore the mask."

"No, I don't," Xavian replied as he fiddled with his fingers, trying to hide his feelings of guilt. If Mommy shows up without her mask and wearing this beautiful dress, she will undoubtedly be the center of attention at the gala dinner. Then, Samuel will have to deal with even more competitors besides Shawn.

Xavian was only five years old; he was much too young to be this stressed over his future stepfather's love life.

Natalie put on the hyper-realistic mask, tidied herself up, and prepared to leave the house. "Xavian, make sure you take care of yourself while I'm out, okay?" she instructed.

"Okay!"

"Good boy." Natalie turned around and put on her high heels. At that moment, Xavian picked up his phone and snapped a photo of her from behind.

"I'm leaving!"

"Bye, Mommy!"

The door shut, leaving Xavian alone in the house. He immediately sent the photo he took to Samuel through WhatsApp.

He still isn't replying!

Xavian was now beyond pissed.

He texted: I gave you a tip-off and yet you ignored me! Mommy is going to get stolen away by another guy! You're going to regret this!

After sending the string of messages, Xavian blocked Samuel in a fit of anger.

Hmph!

I hereby announce: the alliance is dissolved!

...

Elsewhere, Natalie arrived at the Watsons Residence in her floor-length gown.

The doorman opened the car door and saw Natalie's long snow-white legs through the slit of the dazzling gown. This girl must be a stunning beauty.

Yet, the moment Natalie emerged from the car, the doorman was shocked beyond words.

What the hell? Her body figure was worthy of a goddess, but what's up with her face?

With faint amusement in her eyes, Natalie nodded at the doorman in acknowledgment and made her way to the front door.

Well-known figures from both the business and political fields had been invited to celebrate the birthday of Max. Security was tight, and each guest needed to verify their identity at the entrance before they were allowed to enter the residence.

A man standing at the entrance quickly spotted Natalie and approached her. "Are you, Ms. Nichols?"

Chapter 129 Jealousy Supersedes The Mind

Natalie nodded. "Yes, I am."

"I am the Watsons' butler, Aaron Timbber. You can just call me Mr. Timbber," the man said politely. "Mr. Watsons and Mr. Shawn have instructed me to await your arrival. Let me guide you into the main banquet hall."

Realizing that the celebrity guests at the entrance were all looking at her, an unbothered smile grew on Natalie's face.

"Lead the way," she said. She followed the butler into the residence and bypassed the identity verification process.

This must be the courtyard. The European-styled building radiated an aura of grandeur under the evening sun, and it was clear that meticulous care had gone into every tree and bush planted in the courtyard.

A large fountain pool was located beside the walkway leading to the main banquet hall. The lights reflected in the flowing water created a mystical aura, making it seem like an entrance to the wonderland.

Natalie surveyed the surrounding guests as soon as she entered the main banquet hall. Everyone present was all people who occupied the highest places and statuses of society, making connections and developing relations with each other.

The guests all wore custom-made garments from luxurious, high-end brands or limited edition designer clothes.

Natalie smiled to herself.

I'm definitely going to be laughed at if I wore one of my cheap, ordinary gowns to such a high-class occasion.

Shawn knew that Natalie would dress casually to the banquet. Hence, he had taken the initiative and gifted her a gown to prevent Natalie from being scorned by the guests.

"Ms. Nichols, please have some wine for now. I'll inform Mr. Shawn of your arrival," said the butler.

“Thank you.”

After the butler left, Natalie took a glass of red wine from a waiter and sipped from it slowly, ignoring the fact that the guests had been uncontrollably stealing glances at her since the moment she entered the hall.

They seemed... astonished!

That woman is wearing “The Ocean” — the gown designed by Cecilia, the new and mysterious cutting-edge designer!

That gown was the only creation that Cecilia had released that year. Handcrafted by top artisans, it took five months to complete, and real diamonds were used to decorate the skirt.

Countless rich and famous ladies had vied for the gown, but Cecilia refused to put it up for sale.

It was no surprise for the white mermaid gown to finally make its appearance at this banquet. However, everyone was flabbergasted that such an ugly woman was the one wearing it.

The crowd whispered among themselves, trying to figure out the identity and status of Natalie.

“Have you seen that woman before?”

“Never. I would recognize her freckled face anywhere if I had.”

“Max instructed his butler to greet her personally. She must definitely come from extraordinary roots!”

“That very well may be, that expensive gown doesn’t take away from the fact that she’s hideous.”

...

Even though the crowd toned down their voices, their mumbling created a humming sound as irritating as that of a buzzing fly that refused to go away.

Natalie raised her arm and finished her red wine in one gulp. She licked the corner of her mouth with the tip of her tongue.

What a bore.

She didn’t think that her appearance had anything to do with these people.

Besides, they were just dissing the appearance of her hyper-realistic mask, not her true appearance.

“Ms. Nichols! What a coincidence. You were invited to Old Mr. Watsons’s party, too?” asked Belle, scanning Natalie from head to toe. “Did you buy this gown from Cecilia?”

With hints of amusement in Natalie’s eyes, she gave Belle a sidelong glance. “I’m Shawn’s partner for tonight. He gave me this gown.”

Stunned, Belle gritted her teeth inconspicuously. “Shawn treats you well,” she commented, squinting her eyes.

“He asked me to be his partner and even gifted me this gown...” Natalie smirked slightly. “Perhaps his next move will be asking me to be his girlfriend. I’ve heard that Shawn has never been in a relationship before and that this was his first time treating a woman so nicely...”

Belle knew that Natalie would be invited to the banquet, and she had made plans to embarrass the latter on that day.

However, Natalie had predicted Belle’s moves and made preparations beforehand. She uttered those words on purpose to make Belle jealous of her. Once jealousy and rage reached a certain point in Belle’s mind, she would no longer be able to think rationally.

Chapter 130 Break Free From His Wrist

Belle’s grip on her glass tightened as her eyes glowered with rage. “Do you really think that you’re going to marry Shawn?”

“Of course.” Natalie swiftly glanced at Belle before looking away again, placing her now-empty glass onto a passing waiter’s serving plate. “Who else would he marry? You? You’ve known Shawn for so long, but it seems like you two can never be anything more than friends.”

Upon hearing those words, Belle’s face immediately fell, and the graceful image she had been maintaining instantly disappeared. “You b*tch! Don’t get so full of yourself!”

Natalie continued with her onslaught. “Why not? If you were in my shoes, you would have said worse things than I did.”

“You...!”

Belle had been the most pampered child in the house since young. Even as a girl, her status surpassed even that of her brother. Not once had a person of lower status ever spoken to her in such a manner.

Provoked by Natalie's words, Belle threw her glass of red wine in the woman's direction.

Natalie saw her actions and took a step backward, followed by a nimble turn of her body. She dodged the wine completely and managed to keep her gown spotless.

Instead, the wool carpet on the floor was now dyed red as a result.

Internally, Natalie sneered.

I knew it. These spoilt brats have no other tricks up their sleeves.

Belle's last-ditch attempt to embarrass Natalie in front of the crowd had failed. Meanwhile, Shawn rushed over towards them.

"Are you alright, Natalie?" Shawn immediately wrapped an arm around Natalie's waist, glaring at Belle.

Belle was caught off guard by his sudden appearance.

"Belle! Natalie is an important guest invited by Grandpa and me. What do you think you're doing?" Shawn lashed out.

"Shawn, I... I'm just..." Belle knew that her actions were caused by a fit of anger. As she calmed down, she realized that splashing wine in front of a large crowd was a low blow.

I already set up a trap for her. I shouldn't have acted so early.

"She didn't do it on purpose. Her hand slipped," explained Natalie as she gave Belle a friendly smile. "Am I right, Ms. Green?"

Knowing that there was no other way to save herself from this awkward situation, Belle reluctantly agreed with Natalie and put on a smile. "Yes, you're right."

Of course, the three of them knew that Belle was lying.

Without sparing Belle another look, Shawn took Natalie's hand and proceeded toward the second floor of the hall. "Come on. Grandpa is waiting for you."

Shawn's gesture caught the attention of everyone in the banquet hall. Gossiping with each other loudly, they fixed their gazes on the duo as Shawn and Natalie ascended the stairs.

"What just happened?"

"What's wrong with Shawn's beauty standards? Why does he prefer a freckled-faced woman over a flawless beauty like Belle?"

“Argh! I wouldn’t have gone for laser treatment if I had known he liked freckles!”

“Is that woman going to become the granddaughter-in-law of the Watsons family soon?”

Belle stood rooted to her spot. Her face was drained of color, but anger flared up within her heart.

I’m going to make you suffer a complete defeat and cause your fall from grace tonight, right here at this banquet. You can stay smug for all you like, but there’s something big coming your way.

After reaching the upper floor, Natalie lightly twisted her wrist to release herself from Shawn’s grasp.

Startled, Shawn said, “I’m sorry for acting so abruptly…”

“Don’t misunderstand.” Natalie gazed into Shawn’s eyes. “My feud with Belle was purely personal. It had nothing to do with you.”

Natalie’s eyes were clear and bright. Shawn had seen numerous pairs of eyes, but they had all been filled with desire and greed. This was his first time seeing someone with such a pure gaze.

Natalie had said all those in order to establish her boundaries and keep her distance from him, but Shawn only grew even more mesmerized by her.

His finger slowly moved upward, and his gaze fell to her jawline. He wanted to rip off the hyper-realistic mask from her face and see what she truly looked like.