

A Cue for Happiness Chapter 151-160

Chapter 151

Melissa explained at once, "Don't worry, Yara! The Natalie we're talking about is not the country bumpkin that you know and hate. It just so happens that our Natalie shares the same name with the one that has been giving you trouble..."

Yet. Yara's fists clenched tightly as her face fell into a dark and gloomy expression.

"Why don't you head upstairs? I'd to have a chat with Yara," Yvonne quickly said while shooting a look at Melissa

The latter asked, "Is this something that you guys don't want me to know about?"

"Yes. Glad you know that," Yvonne casually replied.

"Ugh. Fine!" Melissa pouted as she departed the living room and stormed upstairs.

Once she was out of sight, Yara spoke up. "Mom, there's something I need to ask you. That Natalie-

Yvonne ushered, "Yara, let's not talk about Natalie right now. I have something more important to discuss with you. It's about the marriage between you and Samuel. How are the two of you progressing?"

A doubtful look flashed on Yara's face when she heard her mother's sudden question. "Why do you ask?"

"Yara, you've rejected countless eligible suitors for Samuel. It's also been five years since you birthed his kids. Why has he still not proposed to you?" Yvonne worryingly held Yara's hands as she went on. "Be honest with me. Has Samuel fallen for another woman?"

"Why would you say that?" Yara asked while raising a brow.

"Because I saw Samuel flirting with woman in a discreet corner yesterday at Old Mr. Watsons' birthday party!"

"What!" Shock overwhelmed Yara as she dropped the glass in her hands, its shards scattering on the ground.

She ignored the shattered web of glass by her feet. Instead, a vicious gleam flitted past her eyes as they focused on Yvonne. "Did you get a good look at that woman? Who is she? Which prestigious family is she from?"

"Umm, well, I tried to get a close look at the woman, but Samuel was in the way. He blocked the woman from my view by pressing his body against hers..." Yvonne shook her head and uttered, "I couldn't see anything at all, not even a glimpse of that woman's dress."

His body pressed against that woman?

Yara could not believe that Samuel would behave intimately with another woman during a formal occasion like Old Mr. Watsons' birthday party.

Having spent five years trying to get along with Samuel, she had always felt that he was an aloof, cold, and unapproachable man, just as his reputation states.

Yara could have never gotten close to Samuel under normal circumstances. However, she managed to trick him into believing she was the mother of his children-Sophia and Franklin. That put her at an advantage over other women as she now had a relationship with him, albeit a vague one.

Who? Who the hell could that woman be? Yara fumed.

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Just then, a thought crossed her mind.

"Mom, tell me this. That other 'Natalie' you and Melissa spoke about earlier, does she have freckles all over her face?" A vicious sneer curled on Yara's lips as she continued, "With a flat nose bridge, thick lips, and other hideous facial features?"

Yvonne nodded at once. "Yeah... That's exactly how she looks! You just described Natalia's appearance to a tee!

"I knew it!" Yara scoffed.

That sly woman! Natalie accepted ten million from me! How dare she go back on our deal and seduce Samuel!

By then, Yvonne finally put two and two together.

She asked, "Yara, do you mean that both our Natalies are the same woman, who also seduced Samuel...?"

Yvonne desperately wanted to believe that Samuel would not fall for someone homely like Natalie. Yet, she knew it was possible since even Shawn had taken a particular liking toward Natalie.

A snort came from Yara. "So what if she is? I'm still Sophia and Franklin's mother! Even if those brats dislike me, they can't deny our mother-child relationship!"

Yvonne wanted to say more but quickly silenced after noticing Yara's stern expression.

"It's about time. I have to go pick up Sophia and Franklin from school," Yara said.

She then grabbed her sunglasses before departing the Nichols residence.

Sometime later, numerous children walked out of the kindergarten.

Franklin held Sophia's hand as they exited the school gate.

It was then that Yara's voice called out, "Franklin, Sophia! I'm here to pick you guys up!"

Chapter 152

Franklin's brows twisted into a scowling look. Displeased with the sight of Yara, he muttered to himself, "Why is she here again?"

Even Sophia shook her head. "A-Annoying..."

The two kids turned away from Yara and raced in the opposite direction.

To this, Yara tensed for a brief second. She then forced herself to maintain a smile as she cheerily trailed behind the children. "Franklin and Sophia. Why are you two running? Did you not hear me? Or are you running away from me on purpose?"

She was trying her best to please the twins.

However, the two refused to show her any respect.

"Stop right there!" Yara yelled at the top of her lungs. Offended, she approached the twins and warned, "I'm your mommy! What kid would treat their mom with such a rotten attitude that you're showing me now?!"

"You're not our Mommy!" Franklin snapped with a look of conviction.

"Not your Mommy?" Yara took a sharp inhale before scoffing confidently, "Didn't your Daddy tell you that I'm the one who gave birth to the both of you?"

At that, Franklin and Sophia clenched their jaws.

While they did not trust Yara, they knew their father would never lie to them.

“So what if you did?” Franklin balled his fists and lifted his head high. “It’s not like Daddy would ever allow you to live with us! Quit trying so hard because we will never call you our Mommy!”

“Mm-hmm... We never...” Sophia added firmly.

Their words hit right on Yara’s sore spot.

Even so, she refused to give up.

“The two of you can never cut off our relationship no matter how much you want to,” Yara snarled before gripping Sophia’s arm tightly. “Come, now. I’ve reserved a table for us at a five-star hotel. There will be ice cream, chocolates and mousse cakes, so I’m sure the two of you will enjoy yourselves.”

Sophia mustered all of her strength to resist Yara’s grip.

She screamed, “I... No...!”

“How dare you!” Yara roared as she forcefully grabbed Sophia’s shoulder. “I made such a sincere effort to order all those desserts for you, and this is how you repay me? Well, I don’t care. You two are joining me whether you like it or not.”

Her long nails dug into Sophia’s shoulders.

Yara had intentionally picked on Sophia, knowing that the latter was weak and susceptible to pain.

True enough, Sophia began tearing up from Yara’s claw-like grip. She cried out, “P-Pain... Hurt...”

Despite that, Yara continued to sink her nails into Sophia’s skin.

Forget playing nice! It’s not like these two are my biological children. I was probably too kind to them.

That must be why they’ve grown quite the nerve to treat me with such disrespect. I have to teach these two brats a lesson today!

“Let go of Sophia!” Franklin yanked Yara’s arm after seeing Sophia scream in pain. He thundered. “You’re an evil woman! Let go of her right now!”

“Who do you think you are? How dare you talk to me with that tone, Franklin!” Yara reprimanded.

"I don't care who you are!" Franklin was enraged as he bellowed hatefully, "I'll make you pay dearly for hurting Sophia!"

Even though he was only a five-year-old, Franklin's words gave off an air of murderous intent.

"How am I bullying Sophia?" Yara replied coldly, "I'm merely disciplining my child! I am your mommy! You don't need another woman to give you the love of a mother! I can give it to you!"

Franklin sneered

Then, he lunged forward to bite down hard on Yara's arm.

It did not take long before a trail of bloody teeth marks formed on her skin.

"Franklin! How dare you..." Yara bellowed, letting go of Sophia due to the stinging pain coursing through her arm.

After tasting blood in his mouth, Franklin let go of Yara and looked up at her. "I told you to leave my sister alone!"

Still disgruntled, he kicked Yara's leg for good measure.

The latter fell to the ground as she did not expect Franklin's attack.

A voice sounded from behind them just when Yara was about to reprimand the twins, "Franklin Bowers! Who taught you to behave like such a wild brat?! Stop your tantrum at once!"

Chapter 153

Kenneth alighted the Maybach that pulled up nearby. He then walked toward Franklin and Sophia with an icy expression before lecturing, "What kind of behavior is this? I heard that you two have been treating Yara poorly, but this is unacceptable! She gave birth to the both of you after ten difficult months of pregnancy. Is this how you repay your mother's hardships?"

The twins fell silent as that was the first time Kenneth had yelled at them with such a harsh tone.

However, the twins refused to give in.

They thought in unison, Treat Yara as our mother? Never! Over our dead bodies!

“Great-grandpa, I’ve done nothing wrong!” Franklin exclaimed. “That woman started it! She forced us to call her our mommy, and she even hurt Sophia! I told her to let Sophia go, but she refused! Sophia was crying in pain!”

He would not have reacted so violently if Yara had chosen to hurt him instead of his sister.

Meanwhile, Kenneth’s arrival had surprised Yara too. She did not expect him to witness Franklin’s attack on her but was pleased that it worked in her favor.

Yara knew the twins harbored a great deal of respect for Kenneth. Thus, she decided to brainwash the latter into taking her side. That way, the twins would have to think twice before ever disobeying her again.

“It’s my fault...” she uttered, fake tears rolling down her cheeks. “I know that you two don’t like me very much, but I’ve been trying my best. All I wanted was for us to spend some quality time today. I didn’t think that you guys hated me that much...”

“You’re a wicked woman!” Franklin clenched his jaw. “Who would want to spend quality time with you? Why don’t you talk about how you hurt Sophia?”

“I would never do that!” Yara uttered pitifully. “I’m your mother! Plus, all I want is to spoil Sophia rotten. Why would I ever hurt her?”

“You’re lying!” Franklin rebuked.

Yara feigned a hurt expression as she said, “Fine. This is all my fault, okay? Please don’t be upset...”

Franklin was a smart kid, but he could never win against Yara’s sly acting.

Kenneth was losing his patience as he stood by and listened.

Eventually, he had enough and bellowed furiously, “Shut your lips, Franklin! I will punish you once we get home!”

Franklin and Sophia were the precious twins of the Bowers family.

Even Steven had to give in to them when they played tricks on him.

The only people that the twins feared were Samuel and Kenneth.

Thus, the twins obediently entered the car under Kenneth’s instruction.

Sophia glanced over at her brother with an anxious look. “F-Franklin... Franklin...”

“Don’t be afraid, Sophia...” Deep down, Franklin was afraid of whatever punishment awaited them at home. However, he did not want Sophia to worry, so he reassured her, “I’m not afraid of a little punishment! I would rather suffer than apologize to that woman!”

Sophia nodded but held tightly onto her teddy bear out of guilt.

She secretly felt bad that Franklin was getting punished for protecting her.

Once they got home, Kenneth sat in front of the twins at the Bowers residence’s living room.

It was the first time that the two witnessed Kenneth’s anger, and thus, they were starting to worry.

Yara, who sat beside Kenneth, felt utterly pleased with the situation.

Even without Samuel’s help, she was confident that she could deal with the twins; After all, she had Kenneth’s support.

“Grandpa, I’m fine...” Yara pretended to assure as she exposed the wound on her arm. “I haven’t been a good mother. I failed to spend quality time with them while they were growing up. I am to blame for our estranged relationship... Everything is my fault!”

“Blood runs thicker than water,” Kenneth emphasized firmly. “Family comes first. Yet, those two don’t seem to understand something fundamental like respect for family members at all.”

The twins remained silent.

Family comes first? They thought to themselves.

Does Great-grandpa think we’re idiots? Of course, we understand the importance of respect within our family! But this woman isn’t our Mommy!

“I want you both to prove that you’ve learned your lesson by apologizing to Yara at once!” Kenneth ordered.

Chapter 154

Kenneth valued Sophia and Franklin.

Although he pampered them, he would never allow them to behave nastily.

He had handed the Bowers family to Samuel, so he knew Samuel would hand it down to the twins in the future.

Hence, he could not let the two children get away with such arrogant behavior.

“As long as both of you apologize and admit that you’re wrong...” Kenneth trailed off. Nevertheless, his voice remained stern as he continued, “I’ll be lenient in meting out your punishment. What I want to see is to admit your mistake.”

However, the two children didn’t even take a second glance at each other.

They knew very well that all they needed to do was apologize, and their great-grandfather would not punish them.

Even so, they shook their heads simultaneously as if they had a telepathic connection.

At once, Kenneth’s blood pressure surged. He raised his voice and scolded, “You... What do you mean by shaking your heads?”

Franklin had a look of determination on his face as he stated, “I didn’t do anything wrong, so I’m not going to apologize to that woman.”

“Franklin didn’t do anything wrong,” Sophia chimed in.

On the other hand, Yara did not expect the twins to be so stubborn.

What people say is true indeed! Someone else’s kids would never become my own. How dare they team up to bully me and still refuse to repent!

Yara scoffed internally. Since they’re not my kids, they deserve to be punished.

“Grandpa, they are still young...” she muttered, fanning the flames. “Please don’t take it to heart. They will understand by the time they grow up. I know that no one in this family acknowledges me, and no one likes me. Maybe I’m the crux of the problem!”

“I’m glad you know that,” Franklin retorted. “Don’t ever appear in front of Sophia and me. We hate it whenever we see you!”

I detest all these! Why is our mommy like this? What a joke!

When Kenneth heard how blatant Franklin was with his words, he had no reason to persuade himself not to punish them.

“How defiant! Since your dad doesn’t have the time to discipline you, I will do it for him personally!” Kenneth yelled with a stern look on his face. “Gavin, hand me the cane.”

Instantly, a look of worry crossed Gavin’s face. “Old Mr. Bowers... Please don’t do this!”

“I said, hand me the cane! Did you hear me?” Kenneth barked, glowering at Gavin. They became so defiant because they’ve never been disciplined before! Are you questioning my command?

Although Gavin felt concerned for the two children, he could not do anything to help. After all, he was only a housekeeper. Trembling, he went to bring the cane.

“Old Mr. Bowers, please think twice! Both of them are still so young...” Gavin muttered.

On the contrary, Yara merely sat on the couch without a word.

Holding the cane in his hand, Kenneth pointed it at Franklin and said, “Franklin, I’m going to ask you one last time... Are you going to apologize or not?”

Without a hint of hesitation, Franklin lifted his head and replied in a loud, clear voice, “No! If I’ve done something wrong, I’ll apologize. However, I did nothing wrong this time, so I’ll never apologize! You can punish me, Great-grandpa, and I will not resist.”

“Very well. As you wish!”

With that, Kenneth raised his arm and swung the cane.

Smack!

Franklin let out a grunt in pain.

Although Sophia did not feel the pain physically, tears began rolling down her cheeks.

Franklin did this all for me! However, just like him, I don’t want to admit it’s my mistake when it’s not. I don’t want to bow my head in defeat, and I don’t want to call that woman my mommy!

Sophia couldn’t watch them any longer. She hurried off to a corner and fished out a phone from her backpack. Immediately, she dialed a number that belonged to someone she regarded as her guardian angel.

As the ringing tone resounded through the phone, she felt her heart wrenching with anxiety.

Please pick up the phone! Quick!

Chapter 155

Natalie had just stepped out of the autopsy room.

Next to her, Effie put a palm over her mouth and nose even though she was wearing a mask. Still, she looked like she was about to throw up anytime soon.

“I can’t stand this...” Effie muttered, waving her hand. “Heaven knows how long this body had been soaking in the sewer before they dug it up.”

“Well, that’s the reality of being a coroner. It’s no easy job,” said Natalie, patting Effie’s shoulder gently. “Besides conducting autopsies, we also need to provide evidence for criminal investigation.”

“I understand.”

When Effie could not stand the stench any longer, she dragged Natalie along and headed to the restroom to freshen up.

Just then, Natalie’s phone rang.

When she realized it was Sophia calling, her mood lightened in an instant, and she picked it up with a smile.

Immediately, the sound of Sophia crying came from the other side of the phone.

“Save Franklin...”

Upon hearing Sophia’s words, Natalie froze.

“What happened to Franklin?” Natalie felt a pang of heartache as her throat tightened. “Take your time and tell me what happened. I’m here. Everything’s going to be fine.”

For some reason, Sophia felt soothed and relieved by Natalie’s voice.

“Great-grandpa... H-He is punishing Franklin... Franklin didn’t do anything wrong...” Sophia mumbled hurriedly between sobs.

At that moment, she hated the way she stuttered when she spoke.

Nevertheless, Natalie understood what she wanted to tell her because she could vaguely hear the sound of Franklin being punished.

Although there were some noises in the background, she could somehow hear the sound of the cane clearly

The sound of one stroke after another was enough to infuriate Natalie to the point where her body trembled with anger.

At that moment, all she could think about was that no one could ever touch Franklin without her permission.

“I’m coming right now, Sophia.”

With that, Natalie hung up the phone.

Effie was taken aback when she noticed the fury in Natalie’s eyes. “Boss, what’s wrong? You look SO scary!”

“Effie, I’ll leave the data to you guys. I’ll email you the diagnosis report later,” said Natalie, turning off the tap. “Right now, I have something more important to handle.”

“Oh... All right.”

After that, Natalie turned around to leave.

Staring at Natalie’s retreating figure, Effie had a feeling that she looked more like she was going to fight someone.

As Natalie headed downstairs, she saw a police officer who was about to pull out the key to his motorcycle.

Stepping forward, she took the keys and the helmet from the police and said, “I’m Natalie Nichols, a senior coroner. I need to borrow this motorcycle for now. I’ll return it afterward.”

“Huh?” The police officer was puzzled.

However, she had put on the helmet, started the engine, and sped away.

Along the way, she traversed the roads while the wind blew through her long hair, the noise of the motorcycle’s exhaust pipe roaring.

This was her first time riding a motorcycle in Dellmoor.

Although it had been a long time since she rode a motorcycle, she could overtake the other cars swiftly.

In the Bowers residence’s living room, Kenneth was still punishing Franklin. Although he didn’t exert much force, it hurt whenever the cane landed on Franklin.

Franklin’s once delicate and adorable face was contorted in a grimace of pain.

Yet, he was adamant about suffering in silence. Till then, he had not let a single tear fall and would only let out a low grunt when he could not bear it.

Meanwhile, Yara merely watched on without saying a word.

I've disliked Franklin since a long time ago. He looks too much like that woman! Besides his features, his stubborn attitude is exactly like her! Heaven knows how much I have to put up with him over the years!

Now that she witnessed Franklin punished by Kenneth, she felt as if her pent-up frustration had been vented.

Soon, Kenneth could not bring himself to punish Franklin anymore. Therefore, he intentionally paused and asked, "Franklin, I've already punished you for your mistake. As long as you admit it and apologize, I won't continue anymore!"

"Apologize?" Franklin breathed as his face paled. In the next second, he directed a glare toward Yara and said, "Never!"

Chapter 156 Protecting Franklin

Yara clenched her teeth in hatred.

Franklin has been punished so much already. Why is he still choosing to remain silent?

Yara forced herself to speak. "Grandpa... Forget it. Since Franklin is this unwilling to admit it, don't force him anymore. I don't want him to hate me even more..."

"No! I am a man of my word." Kenneth turned red with anger as he felt Yara had been bullied. "I'll continue punishing him until he confesses."

"No..." Yara feigned her objection while posing elegantly on the couch. She used a tissue to dab at the tears she had forced out from the corners of her eyes.

"Great-grandpa, you're being foolish! This evil woman has got you by the balls!" Franklin shouted agitatedly.

"You... You..."

This provoked Kenneth even more. Just as he wanted to punish Franklin, a figure dashed out and stopped in front of him.

She hugged Franklin tightly from behind, shielding his small and frail body in her arms.

Her act caught Kenneth off guard, and the cane struck Natalie squarely on her back.

A low thud sounded where the cane hit flesh. It echoed louder than before.

Franklin opened his eyes and raised his head, surprised that he felt a warm hug instead of pain.

All he saw was Natalie's face.

"Natalie, w-why are you here?"

Even though Franklin was scared and in pain, he resisted the tears.

At this very moment, however, his heart ached when he saw that Natalie had protected him by suffering the brunt of the cane instead.

"You don't want me here? Are you hurt?" Natalie asked Franklin gently.

Her actions had made him feel very vulnerable as if something had struck the most tender spot in his heart.

Franklin was on the verge of crying, and his throat had seized up, but he forced out, "Why would I be hurt? I don't need your protection! This is none of your business. What happens if you get hurt?"

"You're so young, yet you already say things you don't mean... I'm here to protect you!" Natalie let out a small sound of displeasure.

Kenneth and Yara did not expect Natalie to barge into the Bowers residence.

Furthermore, they never thought that she would use her own body to protect Franklin from the cane.

"N-Natalie? How did you come in? I'm disciplining my great-grandchild. Who are you to interfere?" Kenneth gripped the cane tightly and stared at her.

Natalie slowly got to her feet. She could not stand it any longer and rebutted, "Look at the difference in your age! The cane is not something that should be used to educate children!"

Seeing his own authority challenged, Kenneth replied angrily, "Who do you think you are? I used to be the head of this family. How dare you talk to me like this! Do you even want to live and work in Chanaea anymore?"

"Don't use that to threaten me. Even if Samuel were here, I would have still said the same thing."

The Bowers were deeply rooted in Chanaea, and she had no power against them.

However, after she entered and saw Franklin's condition, her heart broke for him.

In such a situation, she could not say anything that would show weakness.

If there's no place here for me in Chanaea anymore, so be it! Even if I die for it, I will still protect them.

"If Franklin and Sophia don't listen to your reasoning, then you should reflect on that, Old Mr. Bowers. Maybe there is something wrong with your logic."

Natalie raised her chin defiantly, the light in her almond-shaped eyes arrogant and untamed.

"Natalie Nichols, how dare you? You've taken my cheque for ten million yet have not done what you've promised me. Have you come running to the Bowers again because you've run out of money? What kind of scheme are you planning this time to get our money?"

Chapter 157 Luck

When Yara saw Natalie, it reminded her of Yvonne's words.

Samuel had always been aloof and never bothered himself with women, but he was now chasing such an ugly woman.

It had already been five years that her elder twin sister Natalie had burned to death, but Yara had not been able to escape from Natalie Nichols, which bothered her to no end.

"Gavin, why didn't you stop outsiders from entering?" Yara turned toward Gavin beside her.

"According to Mr. Samuel's instructions, Ms. Natalie is free to enter and leave the Bowers residence," Gavin replied. He felt that Natalie was here to protect Franklin and Sophia, so he defended her.

With that, Yara's expression contorted drastically.

Kenneth's own expression did not look much better. "What is going on!"

Natalie raised her eyebrows in amusement. "Old Mr. Bowers, I've told you this before—it's your grandson who has been pestering me. I have no interest in him. You should really figure the situation out clearly."

"You..."

Natalie retrieved a check from her bag and tossed it at Yara.

“That’s the ten million I’m returning to you. Don’t think that you can talk to me like that just because you have money. I’m not patient enough to deal with it any longer.”

Yara had never thought that Natalie dared to speak to her this way, and her face flushed with anger.

Natalie’s focus turned toward Franklin.

She had never intended to bother with Kenneth and Yara in the first place.

“Franklin, Sophia, let’s go.” Natalie carried Sophia in her arms, then turned to look at Franklin, whose eyes were brimming with tears.

Kenneth was old, but he still held the most authority amongst them.

He raised the cane he was holding and struck down upon Natalie’s back.

She accepted the blow fully and did not attempt to avoid it.

“Natalie... Great-grandpa, why did you hit her!” Franklin could not hold back his tears any longer.

Natalie regained her senses, and she cast her reddened eyes on Kenneth and Yara.

“Today, the Bowers family have opened my eyes...”

After that, she took Franklin and Sophia with her, leaving the Bowers residence.

As she had to bring the two little ones along, she drove away in a Bentley belonging to the Bowers.

Perhaps it was because of Natalie’s scary aura, but no one stopped her.

At the Nichols residence, Xavian opened the door to greet them. He saw Franklin and Sophia behind Natalie and pursed his lips with curiosity.

“Mommy, who is he? Why are they here?”

Natalie made introductions. “You’ve met Sophia. That’s Franklin, Sophia’s brother.”

“What? He calls you Mommy? Natalie, you... already have children?” Franklin was shocked, and his heart ached.

“Yes. I have two sons, Xavian and Clayton.”

As soon as Franklin heard those words, his heart sank again.

He had taken Natalie as his sweetheart and wished to marry her when he grew up. He had never expected that she had children as old as he was.

That made him angry.

Both Xavian and Franklin's expressions were sour.

Xavian thought that Samuel had only Sophia as a daughter. However, a boy had popped up and seemed extremely attached to his mother.

After a moment, the two boys were staring at each other, neither accepting of the other.

Thinking about how Franklin must be in pain, Natalie asked, "Xavian, please fetch the first aid kit."

Xavian stood still, only responding reluctantly after Natalie narrowed her eyes at him and repeated her instructions patiently.

"Fine."

While Xavian retrieved the first aid kit, Franklin sat on the couch while Natalie lifted his clothes to check on him.

Franklin felt a little awkward initially, but after seeing her serious gaze, he swallowed his uneasiness.

Chapter 158 Utterly Heartbroken

Natalie did not expect Franklin's injury to be that severe.

The sight of his purple bruise blotches tugged at her heartstrings.

Franklin is only five years old. What has gotten into Old Mr. Bowers? How could he lay such a heavy hand on his great-grandson?

Meanwhile, Franklin could not see the sorrowful look on Natalie's face as his back faced her.

Wanting to cheer her up, he told a white lie. "I hope my bruise didn't scare you too much, Natalie. Don't worry. My great-grandpa is nearly eighty years old, so there's not much strength left in him. The pain isn't as bad as it seems."

"There's no need to act tough. Plus, I bet your mommy will be utterly heartbroken when she sees this," Natalie murmured in response.

"I have no mom. Sophia and I only have our daddy. No mommy," Franklin said in a matter-of-fact tone.

Upon hearing that, Natalie was at a loss for words.

No mommy? Could it be that Sophia and Franklin's biological mother has passed away?

At that thought, her heart ached even more for Sophia and Franklin.

"Here." Xavian reluctantly brought over the medical kit. However, after seeing the bruises on Franklin, his heart churned with pity for the latter.

"Sweetheart, why don't you invite Sophia to play in your room?" said Natalie.

"Alright, mommy," replied Xavian. He then took Sophia's tiny hand in his and spoke with care. "Follow me, Sophia."

"Okay," the little girl obediently responded.

After applying some of her special ointment on a cotton swab, Natalie gently dabbed it onto Franklin's back.

The five-year-old wanted to act tough but failed to tolerate the sharp pain on his back, so he let out a hiss of pain.

"That was an accident... I'm not that weak!" Franklin explained with a pout, desperately trying to make up for himself.

"Mm-hmm, sure. Hang in there for a while more, okay?" Natalie coaxed as she blew gently at his bruise.

"Natalie, I already told you that it doesn't hurt!" Franklin insisted.

"Oh, stop with that tough guy act! If it hurts, it hurts. It won't get any better if you pretend not to be in pain." Natalie gradually exerted more force on the cotton swab in her hand.

The boy immediately fell silent as he bit down on his arm to suppress his wincing.

Natalie was indeed harsh and forceful while applying the ointment for him.

However, Franklin felt an inexplicable flow of warmth in his heart.

It was a foreign feeling to him.

After applying the ointment, Natalie straightened out Franklin's clothes before dealing with the ins and outs of her day.

“Franklin, why did your great-grandpa hit you?” Natalie suddenly asked in a gentle tone.

“Earlier today, that woman, Yara, came to pick Sophia and me up from kindergarten. She insisted on forcefully dragging Sophia by the shoulder, and it hurt so much that Sophia cried. So, I bit Yara’s arm until it bled and shoved her onto the ground. Sadly, in a twist of fate, Great-grandpa appeared and saw everything. He got mad, insisting that I apologize..”

“And you didn’t apologize?”

“Of course not! That woman just wanted to please Sophia and me so that daddy would like and eventually marry her. That’s not something that Sophia and I want. We refuse to give her even the slightest chance to become our mommy!” Franklin clenched his fists tightly.

Natalie had suspected that Yara was responsible for Franklin’s punishment when she saw the latter at the Bowers residence earlier.

It looks like Yara hasn’t changed one bit. She’s still resorting to such dirty tactics, even when dealing with children, Natalie thought to herself.

She then stroked Franklin’s hair while soothing, “You did a good job protecting Sophia today.”

“You think so?” asked a bubbly Franklin with a hint of happiness in his voice.

“Of course.” For the faintest moment, Natalie’s eyes narrowed to slits. Even her voice grew colder as she added, “Isn’t it normal to make yourself ten times tougher so that you can protect those you care for and love from your enemies?”

Meanwhile, the Bowers residence was in utter chaos after Natalie had left.

Kenneth heaved in anger. Rage seethed from his body as he rubbed his chest continuously.

Having lived till now, this was his first time encountering a rebellious young woman like Natalie.

Darkness loomed over Kenneth’s face; he was as mad as a wet hen. “H-How dare she take Franklin and Sophia away like that! Who does that brat think she is? It’s evident from her unpolished tone that she doesn’t respect me at all!”

“Careful, Grandpa! Your health comes first,” urged Yara.

Just then, Samuel dashed in from the entrance.

His enraged gaze fell upon Kenneth. "Let me ask you this, Grandpa. Did you use corporal punishment on Franklin earlier?"

Chapter 159 I Do Not Care

Faced with Samuel's question, Kenneth answered loudly and unashamedly, "Yes, I caned him. Franklin is my great-grandson, and he did something wrong but refused to apologize. How is there anything wrong with me caning him for misbehavior?"

The old man then walked tremblingly toward Samuel before adding, "Why do you ask? Are you questioning my decision?"

A subtle but murderous emotion gleamed in Samuel's darkened gaze at once.

He bravely locked eyes with Kenneth and said, "Grandpa, Franklin is my son. I will personally discipline him for any of his wrongdoings, so please stop using your outdated and violent ways to educate my children as you did to Steven and me."

"You-" Kenneth was speechless.

"I believe I've made myself very clear, Grandpa."

Although Samuel did not use a single vulgar word, every word he said was profound.

"Well then, Samuel, let us talk openly about something I wish to discuss now that Yara is here. We're all aware that she has birthed Franklin and Sophia, both of your children. So why is it that you haven't given her a proper place or title in this family? What kind of a man are you?" Kenneth stated while candidly pointing at Yara.

To this, Samuel gave a curt response. "Five years ago, I only acknowledged her as Franklin and Sophia's biological mother, but not once did I promise to give her any place in this family."

Kenneth's trembled with rage upon hearing that.

Likewise, Yara's expression immediately turned sour. She could not help feeling annoyed that Samuel chose to keep a distance from her, as he did throughout the last five years.

I've successfully persuaded Samuel that I'm Franklin and Sophia's biological mother. Why won't he give me a single chance to share a bed with him? Ugh! I don't get it. Why would he rather have a fling with Natalie instead of marrying me, the mother to his children? She and I have the same face; most people can't even tell the difference between us. So why doesn't he feel the same way for me as he does for Natalie?

“Samuel, my feelings for you and the kids are genuine!” Yara pleaded as she forced out a couple of fake tears.

“I don’t care,” Samuel snapped.

His response to Yara made Kenneth’s blood boil once more.

The latter bellowed, “So that’s how you usually treat Yara? With such disrespect? This lovely girl bore your children, but you don’t even know how to cherish her. Instead, you fall head over heels in love with a hideously freckled woman! How absurd!”

Samuel immediately flew off the handle as he let out a menacing roar, “Don’t you dare speak ill of Natalie!”

“Why? Do you value her more than me, your very own Grandpa?” Kenneth challenged.

Samuel’s fists balled up at his sides. It took him a while to calm down before asking in a low voice, “Where’s Franklin and Sophia?”

“That shameless woman of yours took them away with her.”

Hearing that, Samuel whipped around and headed toward the main gate.

“And where do you think you’re going?” Kenneth yelled from behind.

“To get Franklin and Sophia.”

Not wanting Samuel to see Natalie again, Kenneth called out loudly, “You’re staying here. I’ll get my assistant, Leo, to pick the children up.”

However, Samuel continued walking out of the Bowers residence as if he had not heard Kenneth.

“Samuel! Get back here right now!” Kenneth’s voice boomed angrily, but Samuel was persistent and did not even turn to spare him a single glance.

“Grandpa, what do I do? I’ve completely lost to that woman! I’ve sacrificed so much for Samuel, but why can’t he see it...?” Yara sobbed uncontrollably.

At this, Kenneth felt a lump in his throat. He gently patted her on the shoulder while reassuring, “Don’t you worry. I’ll always support you as long as I still live and breathe.”

Just as Samuel headed to the courtyard, Gavin walked over.

The former said, “Thank you for immediately reporting today’s incident to me, Gavin.”

“No problem, Mr. Samuel. I was only doing my job.” Gavin paused to think for a moment before hesitantly adding, “I’m all right, but Ms. Natalie-”

“What happened to her?” Samuel asked as soon as he heard Natalie’s name.

“Ms. Natalie took two canes from Old Mr. Bowers while protecting Mr. Franklin and Ms. Sophia. Old Mr. Bowers evidently held back when he caned Mr. Franklin. However, with Ms. Natalie, he used his full strength...” A chill went down Gavin’s spine as he mentally recalled details from the scene.

Shock and concern loomed over Samuel’s now paled face.

At that moment, a breeze brushed by and ruffled the men’s hair.

It was not long before a dangerous and cold aura thickened in the air around them; Samuel seemed like a manifestation of the devil at that very moment.

Chapter 160 Why Are You Here

Xavian brought Sophia to his room, where they watched a video on pandas together.

Well-behaved, Sophia ate her strawberry pudding while gently swaying her short legs.

She glanced at the panda on the computer screen before shifting her gaze to Xavian, who seemed to have his head in the clouds. Her lips pouted briefly before parting to ask, “Y-You... don’t look... happy?”

Xavian remained silent with his brows knitted close together.

Previously, he and Clayton had often fought over Natalie’s affection under the drive of jealousy. Now, it seemed that Franklin had joined their competition and was seizing all of their mother’s attention. Because of that, it felt like a cold day in hell for Xavian.

Sensing the former’s glum mood, Sophia scooped a spoonful of pudding before bringing it close to Xavian’s face.

“S-Smile...” Anticipation was written all over her face.

Xavian had served the strawberry pudding to Sophia earlier, but he was not a fan of the dessert himself.

Nonetheless, he could not bear to let her down after seeing the sincerity on Sophia’s face as she offered the pudding to him.

Xavian opened his mouth cooperatively and ate the spoonful of pudding in one bite. To his surprise, the sweet and bouncy dessert helped improve his mood slightly.

I guess it's true that sisters are better than brothers. Man, I wish I had a loving sister like her. How thoughtful and sweet! Such a little angel!

Soon, it was dinner time.

With Franklin and Sophia in the house, the dishes Natalie prepared earlier that day were insufficient for all. Hence, she decided to make a big bowl of pasta.

Not long after, the four gathered around the freshly served pasta.

A warm current flowed through Natalie's heart as she watched the three children heartily chow down on their food with flushed cheeks.

Our daily dinner would have been like this if my other twins were still alive...

Natalie barely touched her food as she was busy casting an affectionate look at the kids.

Noticing that, both Xavian and Franklin simultaneously placed a prawn on Natalie's plate.

"Have some, Mommy."

"This is for you, Natalie."

Xavian and Franklin tensed at their sudden synchronization. The two then glared at each other, green with envy.

"Have mine, Mommy."

"Have mine, Natalie."

Facing their generosity, Natalie had no choice but to swallow both prawns speechlessly in front of them.

A reddish tinge of shyness flushed on her cheeks as she, a twenty-four-year-old woman, was being mooned over by two five-year-old kids.

Sadly, that was not the end. A private competition had ensued between Xavian and Franklin for the rest of the meal.

After the prawns came the shredded chickens, then the salad, and it went on. It was an endless match until the two could prove that one of them was Natalie's favorite.

At first, Natalie refrained from voicing out as she was busy stuffing herself with the food added to her plate.

However, as the contents on her plate piled higher and higher, she finally burst out, "Xavian, Franklin, that's enough!"

The boys glared at each other in discontent. None of them were willing to lower their heads first.

"You two, get over here," Natalie ordered.

The boys refused to move a single muscle.

"Are you sure that you don't want to listen to what I have to say?" Natalie intentionally dragged her voice while pouting.

At that, Xavian and Franklin hurried over to Natalie's side in a trice.

Natalie took both of their hands and joined them together into a hold.

A lighthearted chuckle came from her lips as she teased, "The two of you will hold each other's hand from now on. Do this for an hour. The first one to let go will be the loser. If you lose, then I won't speak to you at all."

Xavian and Franklin were initially planning to retract their hands.

However, upon hearing Natalie's plan, their fingers instantly locked against each other in a tight grip.

Their faces wrinkled with frustration, yet they had no choice but to endure each other's close company until one of them gave up.

After all, they could not bear to be ignored by Natalie.

The two thought in unison, Let's do it then. Besides, it's only for an hour...

Natalie burst out laughing as she watched the two grumpy boys hold hands.

Ding dong!

When the doorbell rang, Natalie got up and walked over to the front door.

It was not long before the smile on her face dropped as her gaze fell on the grim-looking man who stood outside.

She stammered, "W-What are you doing here?"

