

Chapter 16

Samuel's facial features were flawless as if they were carved out by God himself. Combined with his strong and imposing aura, he was a person that most people would find hard to ignore.

Natalie pursed her lips.

When I met Samuel, I was wearing that hyper-realistic mask and looked completely different from now. Besides, I'm already shielded by my sunglasses, mask, and cap. There's no way he'll recognize me, right?

When Samuel's gaze swept over her, she continued tapping her fingers rhythmically and kept her gaze under the sunglasses steady.

As soon as she retrieved her coffee, she turned to leave the establishment. Alas, the rain had only gotten heavier by the time she got to the door.

With the intention of waiting for the rain to subside, she found an inconspicuous seat in the corner of the cafe and sat down.

It was then her phone began vibrating inside her bag.

Franklin's haughty yet adorable voice rang out the moment she picked up the call. "Woman, the other time, my daddy got between our time together. He wasn't really picking on you. In truth, he's a misogynist. When a woman gets close to him, he becomes very temperamental."

Natalie was rendered speechless.

This kid is so bad at choosing a time to complain about his father. Why did he choose a time when his father is in the same cafe as me? If I put him on speaker right now, Samuel will definitely punish him badly at home.

"Why are you not speaking? Have you forgotten who I am?"

"How's that possible? You're Franklin."

"Why aren't you calling me Mr. Franklin?" the boy questioned.

"Do you wish for me to call you Mr. Franklin?"

“Everyone else has to call me Mr. Franklin, but you don't have to. I will only give you this privilege. Other women can only dream about it,” Franklin stated fiercely.

Natalie almost burst out laughing.

Tsk tsk. Indeed, he is Samuel's son. He totally inherited his father's domineering personality.

“The reason why I called you today is not just to apologize on behalf of my difficult daddy. It's mainly because Sophia misses you. Can you speak with her? She's right here.”

Natalie could not stop smiling when she thought of the adorable Sophia.

However, she still did not know what to say after racking her brains, so she could only say what she usually told Xavian and Clayton.

“Do not use electronic devices for too long as it harms your eyes. Remember to take breaks in between when you use them. Drink lots of milk and eat lots of eggs. You can't only eat meat because you dislike vegetables. Brush your teeth well. Don't eat too many sweets before bed, or your teeth will rot.”

She paused for a moment to think before adding, “If you miss me, you can call me yourself. You don't have to call me through your brother. If you tap the phone thrice, I will know that it's you who called me.”

Natalie wasn't a very sympathetic person, but it was a different case when it came to Franklin and Sophia.

Her adoration for them was comparable to what she felt for Clayton and Xavian, so much so that even she was surprised.

A warm and fuzzy feeling swept over her after speaking to them on the phone.

However, just when she was about to take a sip of her coffee, a large and rough hand grabbed her wrist, pulling her right out of her seat.

Her heart skipped a beat upon meeting the man's sullen gaze.

Samuel?

She could feel his icy and emotionless gaze on her even through her sunglasses.

“Who were you talking to?” he asked, staring down at her.

There's no way he could have heard my conversation with Franklin and Sophia. “I was talking to my children. What's wrong?”

“Why are you here?”

Startled and confused by Samuel's question, Natalie did not even notice that he had removed her cap, and her luscious long hair had cascaded down in waves.

Subconsciously, she tried to cover her head, but he used this opportunity to remove her sunglasses and mask. Immediately, a stunning face with a layer of light makeup appeared before him.

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Natalie's eyelashes fluttered in shock.

Oh no! Samuel has seen my face! I can't hide it anymore!

Furrowing his brows, Samuel asked, "Aren't you filming in Xenhall?"

"Xenhall... Filming..."

Isn't Clayton filming his drama there? Does this mean that he mistook me for that woman?

Her question was immediately answered the next second.

"Yara Nichols, are you following me?" Samuel asked coldly with a dangerous undertone.

Natalie calmed herself down and gathered her thoughts.

He mistook me for Yara, and he knows that she's currently filming in Xenhall. This means that he's close with her. If he realizes that I'm not Yara, Yara will know that I'm still alive. I mustn't reveal my identity now! Since he has already mistaken me, I'll have to play along with it.

She twisted her wrist around to release herself from Samuel's grip, but to no avail. She sighed resignedly. "Samuel, can you let go of my wrist? It hurts."

She had failed to realize how mellow her voice was and how her eyes were filled with grievance. She was like a hurt kitten, so soft and docile that he could stare at her forever.

Samuel's gaze was still locked on her, but his grip had loosened.

I've never seen Yara so lively. In my memory, she has always been spoilt and weak. She carries herself in a sophisticated manner. Although her gazes and her smiles are all practiced and refined, they don't stir my interest.

Natalie let out a hiss of pain as she checked her bruised wrist.

Raising his brows, Samuel asked frostily again, "You have yet to answer my question. Why are you here?"

"Because I miss you." She gazed at him innocently with clear, sparkling eyes. "I had some free time in my filming schedule, so I sneaked back to see you. But I didn't want you to find out."

These words should sound cheesy and straightforward enough, right? Just now, Franklin told me over the phone that Samuel is a misogynist. If I say such disgusting words to him, he will definitely be disgusted by me and tell me to get out of his sight, right?

Natalie squeezed her eyes shut in preparation for the man's anger, but it never came.

She slowly opened her eyes a moment later and found herself staring straight into his mesmerizing, deep-set eyes.

"You missed me so much, huh, Yara?"

As she was still pretending to be Yara, Natalie decided to continue messing around. "Of course! I want you by my side every night! I can't sleep well without you beside me."

She was so disgusted by her own words that a layer of goosebumps rose on her skin.

Just then, a waiter carrying a steaming cup of coffee was walking past behind her when she took a step back unknowingly.

However, right before they collided, Samuel pulled her out of harm's way and into his arms.

He lowered his gaze and stared at the woman in his embrace. A refreshing and alluring scent hung in the air, tugging at his heartstrings.

Has Yara always been this enticing? So enticing that I'm no longer able to form any rational thoughts?

Following such close contact with Natalie, a stream of desire coursed through him.

All it took for him to make his heart race was to lower his head and gaze at her.

His Adam's apple bobbed up and down as he stared down at her soft and inviting lips. They looked as if they were luring him in for a taste.

Natalie tried to push him away to stand on her own, but before she could react, he

had wrapped her in his arms, swooped down, and captured her lips.

“Mmph!”

Her eyes bulged in shock as she stared at Samuel in disbelief.

How the hell is he a misogynist?

Samuel grasped her waist so tightly that she could not escape his embrace. It was as if he was going to mold her into his flesh. In no time, her pitiful lips had turned red and swollen after being ravished by him.

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Natalie felt as if all of her energy had been sucked out of her body. She could not escape from his clutches and could only tremble in anger in his arms.

Although he had kissed her roughly, he did not do anything else.

When he released his hold on her, her mind was still dizzy from the lack of oxygen, and her eyes were unfocused.

Except for that night six years ago... I've never kissed a man before. I was so drunk that night that I don't even remember what that man looked like. Yet, this man here simply forced my mouth open and drove his tongue in roughly to take what he wants. He's driving me utterly crazy!

Natalie only managed to regain her bearings after a long while. A sense of frustration and rage rushed over her upon recalling the kiss. She raised her hand to slap Samuel, but he caught her wrist effortlessly.

"Aren't you a misogynist?" she asked huffily.

"Should I remind you that you were the one who said that you missed me," he whispered beside her ear as he leaned in abruptly.

His hot breath fanned against her neck, and her eyes immediately met his penetrating gaze upon turning her head.

*Sh*t! I'm going crazy! I thought that I can escape this mess by pretending to be Yara, but all I got in return is this forceful kiss. Is he a dog? His kiss even tore the skin off my lips!*

The rain had already subsided by the time Natalie and Samuel left the cafe.

When Billy drove a Hummer to pick up Samuel, he noticed Samuel sharing an umbrella with a woman wearing a long black dress. Upon seeing her face clearly, he was utterly stunned.

Isn't that Yara? Why is Sir standing beside her?

Noticing that Billy had arrived, Natalie raised her chin and said, "My assistant will be here soon. Since Mr. Morin is already here, you should leave first."

“Mm.”

Right as Natalie heaved a sigh of relief internally, the man pulled her into his arms once more.

Her body immediately tensed up, and she pounded him with her fists. Gritting her teeth, she reminded, “Mr. Morin is here...”

She was about to call him a pervert, but her voice trailed off when she remembered that she was supposed to be pretending to be Yara. She instantly fluttered her eyelashes and crooned, “We shouldn't be doing this.”

Samuel smirked and leaned in even closer to sniff her neck.

Her clean and refreshing scent enveloped him. All of a sudden, he bit her round earlobe.

“That hurts! Are you a vampire?” Natalie complained as she rubbed her earlobe.

Samuel's gaze darkened as he stared at her. “I'm leaving a mark. I'll check it next time.”

Her heart dropped upon hearing his words. He pursed his lips and looked at her indifferently. However, a dark gleam flashed in his eyes, just like how a hungry wolf would look at its prey.

“Mr. Morin is still here!” she stated in embarrassment as her face flushed.

“You can treat him like he's invisible. He wouldn't look, nor would he dare to.”

Indeed, Billy did not dare to look at them. He was standing with his back facing them and gazing at the sky, wondering if he was dreaming.

Samuel took one final look at the bite mark on her earlobe in satisfaction before leaving on the Hummer.

Meanwhile, a cunning smirk graced Natalie's lips as she stared at the car as it drove away.

If not for fear of revealing my identity, how can I do nothing while that jerk takes advantage of me? Since the Nichols family and Yara hate me so much, they will never allow Samuel to get

hold of any information in relation to me.

After putting on her sunglasses and mask, she took a taxi home.

The minute she reached home, Xavian ran out on his short stubby legs to welcome her back. However, upon seeing her face without the mask, he knitted his brows.

“Mommy, what happened to your mouth? Is it an allergic reaction?”

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Natalie lowered her head upon hearing that. Guilt crawled over her as she met Xavian's clear, innocent eyes. *A-Allergic reaction? This clearly isn't. However, I can't possibly tell a five-year-old child what a kiss is. Besides, how do I explain the kiss with Samuel?*

As she could not find a better explanation, she decided to go with the flow.

“Yes! I-It's an allergic reaction...”

“I see...”

“Mhm. That's all there is to it.”

Blinking his big eyes, Xavian asked in an anxious yet serious tone, “Mommy, what about your ear? Why is it bleeding?”

His eyes were pure and innocent, with worry written all in them.

Natalie choked on her own saliva upon hearing that. She cleared her throat before replying, “Sweetheart, thank goodness that you didn't visit Granny's grave on the mountain with me today. There were so many insects! My lips and ears were all bitten by them.”

“Mommy, I'll get you some ointment.”

Despite his high intelligence, Xavian was still merely five years old. Hence, he did not find Natalie's words suspicious.

Natalie felt relieved upon seeing the boy take her words for it. She then cursed at Samuel ferociously on the inside.

Tsk tsk! It seems like Yara failed to satisfy Samuel's desire. I was dragged to this, thanks to her!

Xavian soon returned with an anti-inflammation ointment and his laptop.

After Natalie took the ointment from him, he placed the laptop in front of her and rubbed his tiny hands eagerly. “Mommy, I've found a man who's identical to Clayton and me. Clayton agrees that we do look alike after viewing the photo I sent.”

Natalie rested her head on one hand and revealed Xavian's true thoughts with a

single sentence.

“Are you guys still searching for your ideal dad because you don't believe that man is your father?”

After leaving Chanaea, she had asked someone to investigate the man who had slept with her six years ago. The intel showed that Yara had hired an outlaw named Jim Zarate.

He had vanished after receiving Yara's money, and there was no trace of him at all.

The odds were that Yara had taken his life so that she could conceal her crime.

Hence, Natalie could not find any other evidence. Not planning to hide the truth about the children's father's identity, she had shown them the only photo she had.

To her surprise, her children denied her belief about Jim being their biological father and firmly stated that it had got to be someone else.

Owing to that, the two fellows walked their own paths, seeking their real father.

Clayton was scouted as a child actor. He had accepted the offer, hoping that his real father could see him on the TV.

Meanwhile, Xavian learned to code and hack by himself so that he could search for his real father on the internet.

“That man looks hideous and doesn't resemble us at all! He can't possibly be our dad! On the contrary, the man I found today looks more like our daddy!” Xavian pouted grumpily.

Fine. Xavian is persistent when it comes to this. It seems like I have no choice but to take a look at what he found.

“All right. Why don't you show me the man? Let me see if you and he look alike.”

Xavian fiddled with the laptop upon hearing that. Soon enough, a photo appeared on the screen.

In it, the man had a refined silhouette, a pair of eyes that looked like the dark abyss, and exquisite facial features.

Even though he wasn't the only one in the photograph, he looked outstanding among the crowd. Everyone would instantly lock their gazes on him at first glance.

“Mommy, what do you think? He's handsome, right?”

Samuel Bowers? Natalie sucked in a breath when she recognized the man in the photo.

It was none other than Samuel, who had pressed her against the bookshelves in the cafe and kissed her forcefully earlier.

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Staring at Samuel's face, Natalie was dumbfounded, unable to utter a single word.

Right then, Xavian switched the computer screen to another interface. He then pointed at it.

“Samuel Bowers, the head of the wealthiest family in Chanaea. He's thirty years old and has tens of billions of net worth. Doesn't he look identical to Clayton and me? Clayton doesn't look exactly the same as this man. But, Mommy, take a good look at me. Don't Samuel and I look alike?”

Natalie cupped Xavian's face and took a good look at him.

Oh my goodness! He does look identical to Samuel! The thought of comparing their looks never crossed my mind, for Samuel's facial features are sharp, while Xavian has a chubby face. Now that Xavian mentioned it, he does look like he's a replica of Samuel.

“You guys do look a tiny bit alike, but he isn't your and Clayton's father.”

With his cheeks pinched by his mother, Xavian explained with a muffled voice, “Mommy, I look totally the same as him. H-He must be Daddy!”

“Sweetheart, don't waste your time on him. Anyone can be your father but him.”

“Why?” he asked in astonishment.

“There's no why.”

Having closed her eyes for a brief moment, Natalie turned around and closed the laptop. She then carried the boy to the bedroom. “Let's go to bed.”

It was evident to the child that she was deliberately changing the subject. Afraid of upsetting her, Xavian stopped probing any further.

Quieted down, he wrapped his arms around Natalie's neck and kissed her on the cheek. “Good night, Mommy.”

“Good night.”

After closing Xavian's bedroom door, Natalie slumped against the wooden door,

feeling a tight squeeze in her heart.

Over these five years, even though I've been doing my best as their mother, I could never substitute their yearning for a father's love. Clayton and Xavian do indeed look identical to Samuel. However, it's impossible that Samuel is their biological father. Yara would never have let him be involved with me. On top of that, Samuel isn't someone who allows people to manipulate him either. He'd never fall for Yara's scheme. It's better to get the pain over with than to prolong the agony.

She knew that her words could break Xavian's heart. However, all she wished for was to stop the latter from having false hopes.

In the meantime, Xavian was clutching onto his blanket in his bedroom. It seemed like Natalie's words had no effect on him at all.

I must continue to look into more information about Samuel Bowers. Even if he isn't our biological daddy, we'll think of ways to make him our stepfather!

Clayton and Xavian had reached a consensus that only a man like Samuel was worthy of their intelligent, enchanting mother.

The next day, Samuel was having a meeting at Bowers Corporation.

Billy went to the waiting room to greet Steven, who had arrived at the office early.

He then told the latter regarding the incident between Samuel and "Yara" the day before.

Steven spat out the coffee he just sipped upon hearing that.

Billy handed a piece of tissue over to him without revealing his disgust. "Mr. Steven, please use this."

"That's impossible! No way! It can't be happening!" Steven was in denial.

Billy shook his head in response. "Mr. Steven, initially, I didn't understand why Sir and Ms. Nichols would have Mr. Franklin and Ms. Sophia together either. However, I get it now. Yesterday, I saw with my own eyes that Sir was watching Ms. Nichols passionately."

Steven could not hold himself back and spat out the coffee once again.

How could it be possible? Sam, who has never had any sex drive, stared at a woman with burning passion in his eyes? However, after knowing Billy for so many years, I can tell that an honest man like him will never exaggerate.

Nonetheless, Steven still found something amiss about the incident.

Wait a minute! Isn't Yara filming in Xenhall now? Did she come back secretly in the middle of filming?