

Happiness 226-236

The Promise of Happiness

Chapter 226

Natalie took a bite of the butter cookie and commented, "She's quite pretty, just not very friendly."

Christopher drummed his finger on the table. "Nicholas, please fire Cherry," he instructed the moment Nicholas entered the room.

Nicholas stared at him in disbelief. However, he immediately caught on as he turned to face Natalie and nodded in acknowledgment.

"Understood."

Natalie couldn't be bothered to comment after Nicholas left. She simply stared at Christopher as if he was crazy.

He's crazy, so I shouldn't be too surprised.

She had no desire to know Christopher, nor get herself involved with him.

In fact, she would keep her distance and stay as far away from Christopher as she could the moment she got her hands on the snakeblood fruit.

Christopher thought Natalie had a really unique character as she glared at him. She would never go along with the crowd nor ingratiate herself with the rich and powerful. On the contrary, she had a strong sense of self and was always level headed.

Christopher reached out in an attempt to remove her hyper-realistic mask. It was as if he had been bewitched by her.

He couldn't forget her real face ever since he saw what she really looks like when she passed out last time.

However, Natalie stood up before he could even lay a finger on her face.

A red-orange glow outlined her form as the sun's late evening rays shone on her. "I've kept my promise to you. Isn't it time for you to hand the snakeblood fruit you promised over to me?" Natalie said coolly.

Christopher froze in midair. He stared at his hand for a moment, burst into laughter, and put his hand down.

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He then retrieved a wooden box from his drawer before handing it over to Natalie.

Natalie opened the box excitedly. Sure enough, there was a glowing bright red fruit in the box. There was even a faint scent of herbal wafting from it as she drew closer.

It was the snakeblood fruit.

Moreover, this snakeblood fruit had a stronger medicinal effect than the other three fruits she used on Yana:

Yana can have more time now. Natalie smiled from the bottom of her heart upon the thought, and her eyes shone in happiness.

“Thank you.”

Natalie closed the wooden box and thanked Christopher.

“I’ll be getting out of your way, then.”

Christopher knew Natalie was going to chuck him aside the moment she got her hands on the snakeblood fruit. However, instead of getting angry, he mentioned something that would pique her interest.

“Brat, you’re already so happy with one snakeblood fruit. I can’t imagine just how much happier you will be if I gift you the dragonblood fruit.”

Natalie paused when she heard him mention the dragonblood fruit.

“Do you know where it is now?”

“One of my doctors suggested that I use the dragonblood fruit to manage my pulmonary disease. Hence, I’ve been looking for it ever since.” Christopher walked over to Natalie. “The dragonblood fruit is of no use to me anymore now that I’ve recovered, thanks to you. However, I’ve recently received news of the whereabouts of the dragonblood fruit...”

“Really? So, where is it?”

Christopher smiled devilishly as he watched Natalie’s eyes lit up. “Brat, I only promised you the snakeblood fruit. Why should I tell you the whereabouts of the dragonblood fruit for no reason?”

Natalie saw this coming. However, she couldn’t help but try again for Yana’s sake.

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“Then, tell me what you want me to do in order for you to disclose the whereabouts of the dragonblood fruit.”

“I don’t know.”

“What do you mean you don’t know? It’d mean the world to me if I could get my hands on the dragonblood fruit. The medicinal effect can help cure a good friend of mine.” Natalie narrowed her eyes and said coldly, “I promised her she would live with her husband to a ripe old age. So, I’m not in the mood to joke around with you.”

"I'm not joking around with you either. I just haven't figured out what I want from you." Christopher's eyes lit up. "I can tell you the whereabouts of the dragonblood fruit first, but you'll owe me one wish from now on. I will come to you the moment I figure out what I want. Do you still have the guts to carry on?"

Christopher thought Natalie would need some time to think about it. However, she replied without missing a beat, "Bring it on, Christopher."

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A peculiar glint flashed past Christopher's eyes upon Natalie's words.

He knew how merciless Natalie was on herself. Nevertheless, he never thought she would agree to his terms without even knowing what it was.

"Aren't you worried that I'll ask you to do some heinous crime?"

"Since you're willing to tell me the fruit's whereabouts before I even fulfill your wish, I reckoned that just proves you have a kind heart." Natalie grinned mischievously. "Hence, you're not as bad of a person as you look. There's no way you're going to ask me to commit a heinous crime."

"You're the first person ever to say that to me." Christopher paused and changed the subject. "Nonetheless, you will have a hefty consequence to pay should you decide to renege on your words in the future."

No matter. This is for Yana's sake, after all. There's no turning back now, was the thought that popped into Natalie's mind.

"All right."

"I will get my subordinate to prepare the message and email it to you by tonight," Christopher said.

"Christopher." Natalie's eyes curved into a crescent shape as she smiled. "Thank you."

In response, Christopher looked away and directed his gaze to the scenery outside.

Of course, Natalie didn't know that Christopher shifted his gaze away because of her mesmerizing smile. She simply thought that her ugly hyper-realistic mask was an eyesore for him. Nevertheless, she wasn't the least bit affected by it as she left Christopher's office with a bright smile on her face.

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Yana and Hans will live to a ripe old age once I cure Yana of her illness with the dragonblood fruit.

Back home.

Natalie immediately called Hans to tell him of the good news. She assured him that everything was going to be fine once she gets her hands on The dragonblood fruit.

She could tell that Hans' eyes were brimming with tears of joy upon the news through the phone.

Yana's illness was tormenting his heart as much as it was tormenting Yana's body.

One could even say that Hans might be the happiest if Yana recovers, instead of Yana herself.

Natalie heaved a sigh of relief after hanging up the phone.

She then took out a tub of strawberry-flavored ice cream from the freezer, sat down on the sofa, and began to dig in.

After a few bites, the door to her house swung open.

Natalie placed her tub of ice cream down and turned to face the corridor. She saw a young boy with a baseball cap holding on to a small luggage bag standing in the doorway.

"Clayton?"

Clayton removed his baseball cap and made his way toward Natalie.

"Mommy, I'm home."

"Clayton, you should have told me you were coming back." Natalie's eyes reddened when she saw him. After all, it had been a long time since she last saw her son.

She adored both Xavian and Clayton. However, she rarely had the chance to see Clayton ever since he started shooting dramas and commercials. Natalie couldn't help but pinch the boy's chubby cheeks the moment she saw him.

"Mommy... Stop... I'm a celebrity, you know.." However, he gave up the fight and allowed Natalie to do whatever she wanted with him.

"Well, I'm your mother."

"Okay, fine, my Queen."

Clayton may appear nonchalant, but he really missed Natalie's presence.

He purposely kept it a secret that he was going home because he wanted to give Natalie a surprise.

"Darling, are you done filming?" Natalie asked after she was done pinching his cheeks.

"Yes, I'm done." Clayton took out another tub of strawberry ice cream from the fridge as he spoke. "Yara never came on set ever since the rumor of the pre-recorded music. The director and producer were so pissed off that they got the screenwriter to turn the second female lead to the female lead. Hence, we finish filming my part early."

Natalie nodded. "Very smart of your producer to cut off his losses like that, or else this drama would have been a flop. It wouldn't be fair for the other actors and actresses if they had to pay for Yara's mistakes like that."

Natalie removed her hyper-realistic mask the moment she got home because it was too uncomfortable.

Clayton couldn't help but gape when he saw Natalie.

"Mommy, she really looks exactly like you," he exclaimed.

"Then, are you able to tell us apart?"

"Of course, I can." Clayton nodded profusely. "You guys might have the same facial features, but the two of you carry yourselves very differently from one another. There's no way I would mistake you for her."

Indeed, Yara looked very pretty. However, her beauty was nothing compared to Natalie's.

"Mommy, you should have joined the entertainment industry. You could have easily beaten Yara with your looks and acting skills." Clayton's eyes sparkled with admiration as he spoke.

"I'm not interested." Natalie smiled faintly.

This was the biggest difference between her and Yara.

Yara liked to be in the limelight, whereas Natalie wasn't the least bit interested at all.

Natalie felt much better now that Clayton was back by her side since Samuel had whisked Xavian away.

That night, she was waiting for Christopher to email her the whereabouts of the dragonblood fruit.

However, she received a call from Xavian instead.

Xavian's panicky voice sounded from the other end the moment she picked up the phone.

"Mommy, bad news! The firewall that I've built has been hacked. All your personal information has been stolen."

"What?" Natalie exclaimed. She never expected this to happen.

Even though Xavian was only five years old, he was way ahead in his hacking skills compared to many of her adults out there. By this fact alone, it was obvious just how good the other hacker was.

"Xavian, do you know who it is?" Natalie frowned as she tried to calm herself down. "Do you know who stole my personal data?"

Xavian tapped on his keyboard before getting back to Natalie.

"It might be the Todds. They're already tracking you down with the IP address and will probably find out who the anonymous female doctor is soon."

“Julian?”

“Yes.”

Natalie remembered that name.

Just a few months ago, Julian offered her one hundred million if she would attend to him, but was rejected by her. She never thought that he would be so ruthless as to track her down like that when he was at the brink of death.

Natalie had mixed feelings about it.

If Julian was willing to go through all that trouble just for her treatment, she figured she would probably be buried alive if she refused to or failed to cure him.

Now that her identity had been revealed, she was in danger.

I don't care much about myself, but what if they drag Clayton and Xavian into the picture as well?

“Xavian, just pretend this never happened. You mustn't tell anyone about this.” Natalie narrowed her eyes and said coldly, “Noi the Bowers, and especially not your brother...”

“G—Got it,” Xavian replied obediently as he was aware of how dire the situation was.

Not long after she hung up the phone, Clayton saw that Natalie had already packed

his bags when he emerged from the bathroom.

“Mommy, w—what is the meaning of this?”

“Weren't you and Xavian planning to get Samuel to become your stepfather behind my back?” Natalie smiled. “I'm going to take you there now so that you can get to know him better.”

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Clayton clenched his fists as tears brimmed in his eyes upon Natalie's words.

“Mommy, are you sure?”

Natalie was completely distraught after her phone call with Xavian. However, she was able to keep her cool in front of Clayton.

“Do you and Xavian really want me to date that badly?”

“Mommy, our biological father is a b*stard. He doesn't deserve you even if he's still alive,” Clayton said matter-of-

factly. “Samuel, on the other hand, is handsome, has a good figure, and is the head of the Bowers. Xavian also said he's very good

to you. So of course, he's a man worth marrying. We're not that naive to insist that our biological parents must be together. We only have your best interest at heart."

All along, Natalie thought that her sons only got close with Samuel because they were yearning for a father's love,

Turns out they just wanted her to be happy instead of enjoying a father's love.

They wanted to pamper her even though they were only five years old.

I'm so lucky to be their mother.

"Clayton, remember this." Natalie caressed his head and smiled fondly. "It would make Mommy happiest

to see you and Xavian grow up happy and healthy. I don't need you to make a name for yourselves because all I want is for the two of you to be healthy."

After they left the apartment, Natalie hailed a cab and headed toward the Bowers residence with Clayton.

She received Christopher's email on her way there.

Natalie felt her heart skip a beat when she saw his email.

The dragonblood fruit is with Julian? What a twist of events!

Back

then, Julian contacted her online to seek treatment. She rejected him for two reasons. The first one being she considered him a heartless businessman that didn't deserve to be saved. The second reason was that there was no cure for his illness.

She learned TCM, not witchcraft. She was able to treat some of the illnesses that seemed severe because it still wasn't life-threatening. However, there was nothing she could do for terminally ill patients. The acupuncture skills and medicinal books passed down by her grandad were of no help either.

Julian didn't get enough rest during his early stage of illness and consumed a lot of illegal drugs. He had been running on empty for the past few years now since illegal drugs couldn't help him anymore. When he finally realized he was on the brink of death, he began hunting for skilled doctors and famous medicines to treat himself.

The power to defy the laws of heaven and change fate only exists in novels.

It could never happen in real life.

Could it be that I'm destined to face Julian?

Clayton noticed how pale Natalie had become. He reached out and squeezed her hand. "Mommy, what is it? Why are your hands so cold?"

“It’s nothing.” Natalie smiled. “It’s just the wind.”

At the Bowers residence.

Gavin saw Natalie holding on to a little boy’s hand when he opened the door. There was even a small luggage bag in the boy’s free hand.

Gavin had seen a lot of good-looking children.

The Bowers’ fraternal twins inherited the Bowers’ superb genes, and they command attention wherever they go. Moreover, the little boy that followed Franklin and Sophia back a few days ago looked exactly like Samuel, so naturally, he too had superb looks.

However, the little boy standing before him at the moment outshone them all.

He had a pair of eyes that shone like black pearls, an upturned nose, and a grin that hung on his lips. His features were way more exquisite than any of the three kids combined.

“Ms. Natalie, this is...” Gavin asked.

“Gavin, this is my oldest son, Clayton.” Natalie turned to Clayton after her brief introduction. “You can call him Mr. Gavin, Clayton.”

Clayton was way more mature as compared to Xavian. “Hello, Mr. Gavin.” He bowed.

Gavin nodded and quickly let Natalie and Clayton in.

“Ms. Natalie, Mr. Samuel isn’t home yet. He’s still in the office.”

“It’s okay. I’ll wait.”

Natalie and Clayton could hear footsteps running down the stairs not long after they step foot into Bowers’ residence.

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“Mommy!”

Xavian, Franklin, and Sophia ran downstairs, with Xavian taking the lead.

He clung onto Natalie’s leg the moment he saw her and looked up at her worriedly.

Natalie bent down and cupped Xavian’s cheeks. She then locked eyes with him to signal him to keep quiet about the incident.

A son knows his mother by instinct. So naturally, Xavian understood what she was implying

He kept quiet even though he had a lot to say to her.

This was because he knew how much effort Julian had spent to locate her. She wanted him to keep it a secret not only because she didn't want the others to worry, but also because of how dangerous the situation was.

Natalie didn't want her kids to be involved in this mess. She was planning to handle it all on her own.

A veil of sadness shrouded his eyes even though he understood her intentions.

"I sent Clayton over since you're all alone in the Bowers residence." Natalie stood up and introduced Clayton to Franklin and Sophia. "This is Xavian's big brother, Clayton."

The four kids sized each other up.

Instead of hating on one another, the four of them felt as if they had been long-lost siblings even though they had different last names.

That was especially the case for Sophia. She quickly became the center of attention.

Sophia's eyes shone brightly as she took in Clayton, Franklin, and Xavian. They were really gentle even though all three of them had different personality types. A sweet smile appeared on her face.

"I have three big brothers now besides Franklin. Welcome to the family, Clayton, and Xavian."

Clayton and Xavian had always wanted to have a baby sister. As such, they clenched their fists tight as their hearts burst with excitement when Sophia referred to them as her brother. They swore to themselves that they would pamper Natalie and Sophia from this day onward even though Sophia wasn't their biological sister.

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After settling down, Franklin brought Clayton around the Bowers residence while Sophia followed behind with a teddy bear in her arms.

Meanwhile, Xavian stayed behind.

He frowned and turned to face Natalie. "Mommy, can I tell Mr. Bowers about the incident?"

"No." Natalie shook her head and smiled. "I'm already knee-deep in this mess. It's best if fewer people know about this."

"But--"

"No buts, Xavian. Listen to me."

Clayton's room was soon ready under the instructions of Gavin.

At nine in the evening.

Natalie thought all four of the kids would go straight to bed after she bathed them.

However, much to her surprise, Sophia tugged the corner of her shirt with one hand while holding on to her teddy with the other. Her eyes were glistening as she looked **up**.

“C–Can you tell us a bedtime story? Daddy promised he would, but he never did. Franklin has always been the one to tell me bedtime stories.”

Sophia had recovered from aphasia and would no longer stutter when she speaks.

She had a sweet and soft voice ever since then.

Natalie probably wouldn't have agreed to it if the request came from the three boys.

However, she couldn't bring herself to refuse Sophia. It felt as if she was her beloved child.

Natalie was surrounded by Sophia and the three boys when she read them their bedtime story.

She didn't know why, but it reminded her of the fraternal twins she had lost.

*If they're still alive right now, can I tell them
bedtime stories and put them to bed like what I'm doing right now?*

Natalie suppressed her emotions and started reading them a fairytale.

The kids listened to her with gusto even though her storytelling tone was flat.

They only returned to their rooms reluctantly to sleep when she declared that she was tired

After the four kids fell asleep, Gavin walked over to Natalie and said, “I don't know when Mr. Samuel will get back. I've already prepared a room for you. Do you want to get some rest first?”

Natalie planned to leave first thing tomorrow. Hence, she must meet Samuel that night.

“Gavin, you should get some rest. I'll wait for him in the living room.”

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It was already one in the morning when Samuel got back home.

He had received a visit from the Loang's royal siblings to discuss the mining rights of the vein. After the meeting, he had arranged a welcome banquet for Prince Richard and Princess Kelly

The prince, Richard Sinclair, had tried to matchmake him with his sister, Kelly Sinclair, throughout the entire banquet, while Kelly had been aggressive in her approach by continuously sending him sultry looks.

Seeing as she was royalty, Samuel had maintained his bearing and didn't reject her outright.

He had merely gulped champagne down his throat with a deadpan expression throughout the entire banquet, not wanting to give the royal siblings even a chance to misunderstand him.

Samuel was slightly sluggish from the alcohol by the time he got home.

After unlocking the door and passing the dark hallway, he saw a soft, orange glow coming from the living room.

He had told Gavin not to stay up late for him, since the elder was in his later years. He hadn't expected Gavin to disobey him and wait up for him even after midnight.

Samuel loosened his tie and started unbuttoning his shirt as he slowly headed toward the living room

He didn't see Gavin there as he neared the living room, but a petite figure was lying on the couch with her eyes closed.

The soft light shone on her face, leaving long stripe shadows on her face from her dark lashes. At that moment, her countenance was not gorgeous, but the quiet and elegant vibe she gave out captivated him, urging him to approach her.

He didn't care for the reason she was there.

He merely wanted to be closer to her.

He got down on one knee to get a closer look at her. There was mirth in his eyes as he admired the most precious gem in his life.

Samuel lowered his head the next second and kissed her tenderly.

Natalie wasn't asleep. She was so lost in her thoughts as she tried to figure out a plan that she didn't even notice Samuel had returned.

Feeling the silk of lips against hers, she snapped back from her deep thoughts.

Her lips had parted slightly from gasping with surprise. Seizing the opportunity, Samuel easily slipped his tongue inside, tasting her sweetness.

"Be good. I won't do anything else. I'm just going to kiss you."

After he uttered those words softly with his deep voice, he continued to kiss her more deeply without giving her the time to respond, as though he was ravenous.

He knew she had constructed an invisible wall around her to protect herself, unwilling to open up her heart easily. He was willing to wait, but his desire for her accumulated gradually every day that passed!

She knew it would be futile to break free from him. Also, remembering she needed help from Samuel to care for her kids while she was gone, she didn't put up any resistance and even opened her mouth wider for his entry.

Her concession encouraged Samuel.

He finally released her when she started having trouble getting air into her lungs.

Her long, dark hair fanned out across the couch. Her chest rose and fell at a quick pace as she stared dazedly at him with desire glazing her hazel eyes.

Samuel almost went back on his words at her sensual look.

She's killing me with that look.

"Nat, you're killing me!" said Samuel as he felt a pulse throbbing in his temple,

I promised her that I wouldn't do anything she didn't want, but she always turns me on so easily.

The urge to kiss her stirred within him.

Before his lips could touch hers, she covered his mouth with her hands. "Samuel, we've been kissing for half an hour. That should be enough."

He was stunned, then pecked her on her hands softly. "It has been that long?"

"Since you weren't sleeping, what were you thinking about? You were so focused that you didn't even notice me coming back." Samuel wrapped her small hands in his and toyed with them as he continued, "Nat, have you gotten into trouble?"

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Natalie was surprised by his sharp observation. She hadn't thought he would ask right on point.

She lowered her head to contemplate for a moment before she answered, "I'll be going to Livingsfill tomorrow, so I might not be in Dellmoor for the next ten days. I'll send Clayton over, since no one will be taking care of him while I'm gone."

The Todd family was influential in Livingsfill.

She wasn't sure when or if she would make it back from her trip. Besides, she didn't want Samuel to know about her worries, so she only told him she would be gone for ten days.

He stopped playing with her hands and stared fixedly at her. "Anything else?"

"Nothing."

"I have something."

"Huh?"

Natalie looked at him puzzledly.

He clenched her small hands tightly in his, then he gently pushed her back onto the couch, covering her body with his. His eyes darkened, and his voice turned husky. "Don't flirt with other guys. Don't forget about me and don't endanger yourself..."

Taken aback by his concern, Natalie lifted her head with unsteady breath to look up at him.

For the one moment, she thought he could see right through her lies.

Her lips moved to say something, but no words came out in the end.

His eyes darkened as he gulped. He gently caressed her rosy, soft lips with his fingers.

She still won't tell me anything! She still doesn't trust me after all this time.

As that thought crossed his mind, an urge to punish her rose within him.

He pressed his lips into a thin line. His gaze turned cold as he stared at her, causing

Natalie to shudder. Just as she was about to slip out from under Samuel, he slammed his lips down against hers.

He bit her lips, then lightly sucked on them.

Samuel was using the primitive way to tire her out and conquer her. His lips rubbed harshly against her mouth that wouldn't open up for him.

Her heart was pounding fiercely.

She never thought a guy with such a cold personality could be so hot when his passion burned. He continued to kiss her already swollen red lips despite their earlier makeout session.

The worst thing was that she realized she wasn't as resistant to his kisses as before. An unfamiliar feeling rose within her.

She couldn't discern the reason for not pushing him away. *Is it because I didn't want to or I couldn't?*

Her mind was in a mess.

a mess.

Early next morning, the first thing Natalie felt when she woke up was the stinging pain on her lips.

Samuel was a man of his words. He had promised that he wouldn't touch her against her will, and he kept his word. However, it was a pity that her lips had to suffer for it.

As she moved to get up, a slender arm pulled her back against a warm chest.

"Samuel..."

"Don't move. Let me hug you for a little while longer." Samuel's voice was husky as he warned, "You're a medical student, so you should know about men's biological response in the morning. If you move, I can't promise you that I won't go back on my words and take you right here and now."

Natalie's heart skipped a beat.

“Don’t you need to go to work today?”

“I used to scorn the kings who don’t hold councils in the morning after a late-night tryst with a beauty..” Samuel breathed in her herby scent and nipped her ear lightly. “But I can empathize with them now. You’ve made me one of them.”

Chapter 232

Natalie decided to leave for Livingsfill after breakfast.

Clayton, Franklin, Sophia, and Xavian had left for the kindergarten.

Although she felt disappointed at not being able to see her children one last time before she left for Livingsfill, knowing the children would be safe and sound under the Bowers family’s care had put her mind at ease. Even if Julian found out about Xavian and Clayton, he wouldn’t dare make a move against the kids when the kids were with the Bowers family.

Before she left, she pleaded, “Please help me take care of Clayton and Xavian while I’m not around.”

Samuel narrowed his eyes at her. “I will.”

“Thank you.”

Natalie knew Samuel would keep his promise.

The reason she had waited up for Samuel the night before was to get his promise.

She could only rest assured now that she had someone taking care of her kids even if she couldn’t return to Dellmoor.

“Just a ‘thank you’ is not enough.”

“I’ll thank you properly once I get back from Livingsfill.”

Natalie’s heart pounded as she felt uncertain about the future. Before she could think clearly, she tiptoed and planted a kiss on the corner of Samuel’s lips.

“Consider this as a deposit.”

She got in the taxi and headed to the airport. The car slowly drove away, disappearing from Samuel’s sight.

Samuel’s heart clenched as he caressed the spot she kissed.

Since he could only kiss her the night before, he didn’t exercise any restraint. He was in charge the entire time. Like all the other times, he dominantly took her. He didn’t allow her to resist or escape, forcing her to be familiar with his scent and his

demands.

Even though it was merely a kiss on the corner of his lips, it was still the first time she kissed him.

It didn't satisfy him, but it was sweeter than ever.

At the same time, an uneasy feeling rose within him. He had a feeling that she was hiding something from him.

Hence, he gave Billy a call.

"Mr. Bowers, how may I help you?"

"Natalie will be heading to Livingsfill, and I want you and Sarah to follow her." Samuel paused for a brief moment before he coldly emphasized, "Sarah must protect her closely without being detected. She can't reveal herself unless it was an urgent situation."

Billy had known Samuel cared deeply for Natalie. Even so, he couldn't hide his shock at Samuel's instructions.

It was easy to protect someone, but the way he cared for Natalie gave Billy a shock.

This is not protecting his woman! This is protecting his life!

"Understood, Mr. Bowers. We'll take action immediately."

Ver

The plane from Dellmoor touched the ground of the Livingsfill's airstrip.

Natalie called a taxi to Julian's place.

Livingsfill was located in the North, while Dellmoor was in the South. They were significant cities of the nation. There were numerous historic structures in Livingsfill left from the olden days. The culture from them had blended well with the modern city.

The street view from the car's window was stunning, but Natalie wasn't in the mood for sightseeing.

When she arrived at Julian's place, surprise filled her as she studied the building.

The manor was magnificent and grand. One could feel the top quality of the materials and talents it took to build the structure. It was comparable to ancient

castles and palaces.

She knew Julian had gained wealth from his connections, and he had spent it lavishly, but those were simply rumors she heard.

Now that she had seen it for herself, she was certain Julian had done more bad deeds than she had heard.

The security guard at the gate pointed at Natalie with his stun baton. "Who are you?"

"I'm the doctor your employer is searching for." Natalie glanced at the stun baton with a cold smile. "Are you sure you want to point that thing at me?"

Chapter 234

Imagining Julian in a wheelchair, she wondered how she could get the dragonblood fruit from him and retreat safely.

However, as she spun around, the scene in front of her stunned her.

The person approaching wasn't a sickly, obese middle-aged man as she had expected, but a graceful woman in her late twenties.

The woman was dressed in a fiery red body-fitting gown, showing off her curvy yet slim figure. A white fox fur scarf was draped over her shoulders like a shawl. She looked pure and innocent. Those eyes brightened with joy and surprise the moment she looked up and saw Natalie.

"You're Dr. Nichols?" Liliana Hoffman smiled gracefully. "Do you know how long I have been looking for you? It has been challenging to find you."

Natalie was taken aback by her words.

Wasn't it Julian the one who spent a billion to find me? Wasn't it him who hired a top hacker to attack Xavian? How can it be this beautiful lady?

"You..."

"Hi, I'm Liliana Hoffman. Just calling me Liliana will do."

Liliana reached for Natalie's hand, but Natalie almost flung the former's hand away the moment her hand touched hers.

Liliana's hand was as cold as ice.

Liliana apologized, "Dr. Nichols, I'm sorry. Have I chilled you? I already have Milton prepare some warm soup for you. Please have some first before we discuss my husband's condition."

Husband? So she's Julian's wife?

Natalie wasn't in a rush to see Julian but wanted to familiarize herself with the Todd residence and everyone there.

From the moment she stepped into the manor, she couldn't help feeling that something was off about it.

Natalie was led into a luxurious dining room. The table was piled with a variety of delicious dishes.

Liliana filled

Natalie's plate with some crab meat. Then she said with a smile, "Dr. Nichols, I know you have no intention of revealing your identity, but I have been searching for you since a few months back. I had no choice but to use this method, since you were unwilling to show yourself. But it's good that you approached me, or else I'd have to go to Dellmoor myself to invite you personally."

Chapter 235

Liliana's eyes were beautiful, and she looked amiable when she smiled.

Her face was full of concern and anxiety. It could be seen that she really cared about Julian's body condition.

Natalie mused, *I wonder what makes this woman in her twenties fall in love with Julian, who has a bad reputation and is in his fifties.*

She was bothered by the question and was absentmindedly chewing the food in her mouth.

Liliana dined with her. Probably because Natalie was willing to help her, she was in a good mood and ate a lot.

After they finished eating; Liliana smiled at the butler, Milton Cheney, and uttered, "I'll leave here to you. I've something to discuss with Dr. Nichols in private."

"Yes, Mrs. Todd."

Moments later, Liliana linked arms with Natalie, and they took a stroll together.

Because of that, Natalie realized that Liliana's hands were much warmer than before.

"Mrs. Todd—"

"Dr. Nichols, please call me Liliana. I prefer others to call me by my name," uttered Liliana with an elegant smile.

"All right. Liliana, who did you hire to crack my website?"

"Oh, about that... I asked Mr. Lawrence for help." Liliana tilted her head and paused for a while before continuing, "Initially, he was reluctant, but I asked his wife for help. Only then did he agree."

In actuality, Natalie had heard of Lawrence from Xavian before.

He was a top international hacker. When he was young, he hacked into many political organizations and companies. However, after he got married at the age of thirty, he stopped being a hacker.

Xavian used to look forward to having a face-off with him, but the latter was

determined to stop being a hacker.

Why does it sound like it was easy for Liliana to get Lawrence to assist her?

Even though Natalie still had a lot of doubts, she could only follow Liliana.

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Soon, they arrived in front of a bedroom.

Liliana unlocked the door with her fingerprint and led Natalie in.

“Please come in, Dr. Nichols.”

As soon as Natalie entered the room, she was stunned by the scene in front of her.

Everything she wanted to say was stuck in her throat. She could not utter a single word.

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Julian was kneeling on the ground in ragged clothes. He looked extremely ill, and his clothes were stained with blood. Apart from that, his body was tied up with an iron chain. The moment he heard footsteps, he moved his body slightly, but he could not make any sound.

At that instant, Natalie narrowed her eyes and made a judgment in her heart—
It was not because of this man who was chained like a beast that Liliana spared no effort and did everything she could to look for her!

“Liliana, he—”

“Dr. Nichols, don’t bother about him.” Looking down at Julian, who was lying on the ground, Liliana stated, “This creature has harmed many and did countless evil deeds. He isn’t worth saving. He should live in despair and be tortured to death!”

Ever since Natalie met Liliana, the latter had always kept a smile on her face. It was the first time Natalie saw such an intense hatred in Liliana’s eyes,

At that moment, she saw the ruthlessness that did not match Liliana’s appearance.

“Who do you want me to cure then?” Natalie asked.

“Please come with me.”

Moments later, they arrived in front of a curtain. Across the curtain, Natalie could feel the temperature drop a lot.

The freezing temperature reminded her of the coldness of Liliana’s hand when she touched her for the first time.

Later, Liliana opened the curtain. Behind it was a fully transparent coffin, and inside the coffin lay a young man.

The man had handsome facial features and pale skin. His eyes were closed as if he was asleep.

All of a sudden, a chill ran down Natalie's spine.

She was a coroner as well as a doctor.

When she was a coroner, she conducted autopsies on corpses.

When she was a doctor, she gave treatments to the living.

However, no matter how superb her medical skills were, it was impossible to resurrect the dead.

Chapter 236

"Liliana, he's—"

Before Natalie could finish

her sentence, Liliana interrupted her, "Dr. Nichols, do you want to say that Josiah is dead?"

A hint of paranoia flickered across her eyes when she continued, "He's not dead. Now, he's just badly injured and fell asleep. Once you heal his wounds, he'll wake up."

Hearing that, Natalie gasped.

No one can come back from the dead. It's just impossible!

Liliana wrapped the scarf tightly around her body. As she thought of her past memories, there was a painful expression on her face. "My parents died because of

Julian. Then, he took a fancy of me and asked me to be his woman. In order to protect me, my younger brother was killed by a so-called accident orchestrated by that bastard."

Natalie could not tell what to feel.

Perhaps, those things were not the worst among the evil deeds Julian had done, but when a victim like Liliana gave an account of what she had experienced in person, it still made Natalie feel suffocated.

"That was when Josiah appeared in front of me. He said he could take me away and save me. But how could I leave? I want to avenge my family! Hence, I seduced Julian and made him fall for me. In the end, I became his legally married wife. In order to protect me, Josiah lurked around Julian. When Julian's confidant found out what I had done and wanted to assassinate me, Josiah rushed out to protect me. He was seriously injured, and his body was covered in blood. Every doctor told me that he was beyond saving."

Liliana's eyes reddened as she spoke.

Clenching her

fists tightly, she added, "Who says he can't be cured? Those doctors are useless! They don't know how to save my beloved Josiah. Dr. Nichols, you're a miracle doctor. If you can cure those incurable diseases, you can definitely save Josiah too! Please help me! As long as you can save him, I'll give you everything. I can give you everything that Julian has. I don't need anything. I only want Josiah to be alive!"

Tears streamed down her face as she was overwhelmed by emotions.

Listening to her, Natalie felt sad and was on the verge of tears as well.

Nevertheless, sympathy could not change the fate of a person.

If the man lying in the transparent coffin was at his last gasp, she was willing to do whatever she could do to help them.

However, he was already dead. She could never resurrect a person who had been dead for a few months.

"Liliana, I'm sorry, but I can't do it," enunciated Natalie while looking into Liliana's eyes.

"No!" Unwilling to accept the fact, Liliana shook her head violently. "You can do it. You just don't want to try, right? If you're willing to try, Josiah will definitely come back to life!"

Her tearful eyes made people feel sympathetic toward her, but the paranoia in her eyes made people shudder.

For some reason, Natalie shivered when she met Liliana's eyes.

"Dr. Nichols, I'll show you something. I believe you'll agree to help after this." Wiping away the tears from the corners of her eyes, Liliana picked up a tablet from the coffee table and fiddled with it for a moment before handing it to Natalie.

The next moment, Natalie saw a woman lying on a haystack with her hands and feet tied on the tablet screen.

At a glance, she recognized the woman as Cecilia Fane, her best friend in the past five years.

"Cecilia? She's in your hands?" questioned Natalie.

"She's your best friend, right?" Liliana narrowed her eyes, and a hint of viciousness flashed across her crystal clear eyes. "As long as you save Josiah, she'll be fine."