

Happiness 308-317

The Promise of Happiness

### Chapter 308

Franklin and Sophia were reluctant to eat with Yara.

“Great-Grandpa...”

“Great-Grandpa...”

The twins looked at Kenneth with their big droopy eyes, hoping that he could change his mind.

Unfortunately, Kenneth had made up his mind. “Don’t look at me with those puppy eyes. Get into the car right now.”

“All right...”

Franklin and Sophia pursed their lips and got into the Lincoln reluctantly.

Yara was pleased to see how defeated the twins looked. She was also glad that Kenneth was on her side.

I’m still their ‘mother, after all. No matter how much they hate me, blood is thicker than water!

The four of them then traveled in the same car.

Franklin and Sophia puffed their cheeks and intentionally looked out of the window to avoid having eye contact with Yara.

They only got into the car because they respected Kenneth. But don’t expect us to talk to this woman!

After reaching the Bowers residence, Franklin and Sophia washed their hands and sat by the dining table.

When they were about to start the dinner, the butler walked over to Kenneth and said, “The Windt family called, Sir.”

“Go ahead and start the dinner without me.” Kenneth then stood up and walked out of the dining hall, leaving Yara with the two children.

Franklin studied Yara from the corner of his eyes and noticed she seemed to be in a good mood. His eyes twinkled with irrepressible mischief. How dare this evil woman use Great-grandpa to pressure us. I must teach her a lesson!

After making sure Sophia had enough food on her plate, Franklin put down his cutlery, turned to Yara, and grinned. “I want to eat shrimp, but I don’t want to remove the shell. Can you do it for me?”

Yara lifted her eyes and looked at the twins impatiently.

She had just gotten a manicure done yesterday, and now her nails were covered in shimmering

ornaments. It would be inconvenient for her to remove the shell from the shrimp, and most importantly, she did not want her nails to smell.

Yara wanted to respond to his request but hesitated.

“I thought you like my sister and me the most?” Franklin cupped his face with his hands and pouted. “Can’t you just peel the shrimp for us? I wonder how will Daddy and Great-grandpa think of you if they find out about this.”

Franklin’s remark instantly struck her Achilles’ heel.

Yara did not give a dime about what the twins thought about her, but she needed to play to Kenneth’s and Samuel’s tune.

After taking a deep breath, she plastered a smile on her face. “Sure. I’ll peel the shrimp for you. I’ll do anything you want unconditionally because I’m your mommy.”

Yara then started removing the shell from the shrimps.

Her long and elaborate nails made it difficult for her to peel the shrimps. Besides, growing up as a spoiled child, she never had to do this herself. Her skin started to become wrinkly after being in contact with the moisture from the shrimps for a long time.

Upon seeing Yara’s reaction, Franklin and Sophia exchanged looks. They decided to continue with their next course of action.

“I want to pee, Franklin.”

“Okay. Come back soon. The shrimps should be ready by then.”

“Okay.”

Sophia hopped down from the chair and left the dining hall.

By the time she returned, she carried a fluffy cat in her arms.

The cat, which appeared to be a few months old, started purring.

Upon seeing the stray cat, Yara frowned and said, “Why did you bring this dirty stray cat into the dining hall? It’s full of germs and bacteria! Put it away right now!”

“Leave the kitty alone. You’re the dirty one!” Instead of putting the cat away, Sophia placed her on the table. “Kitty is my friend, and she’ll eat with us.”

## **Chapter 309**

Yara hated stray cats and dogs.

The thought of those appalling creatures coming close had bile filling up her throat. Her disgust intensified at the thought of rabies vaccinations after getting scratched or bitten by one of them.

“Sophia, do you understand what I’m saying?”

"I don't."

Sophia shook her head vigorously, yet she still carried the stray cat gently in her arms.

"Meow."

"Are you hungry, Kitty?" Sophia gently caressed its head.

"Meow."

"I'll feed you, Kitty."

Sophia picked up the freshly-peeled shrimp with her little hand and fed it to the kitten.

The kitten took a bite into the shrimp when it caught the sweet yet fishy smell. Its eyes sparkled at the taste as it gulped down the rest of the shrimp down. In a blink of an eye, the entire shrimp was gone.

Peeling the shrimps had Yara's hands covered with the nasty smell. Her pretty manicured nails were also peeling off on the sides.

The twins didn't want to eat it, but they fed it to the filthy cat. Have they done it on purpose just to spite me?

"Franklin, Sophia, I peeled all these shrimps for you. How can you guys feed all of them to the cat?" Yara's temper spiked, and her voice turned shrill.

"Didn't you say earlier that you wanted us to be happy?" Franklin raised his eyebrow and asked, "Can't you see Sophia likes Kitty? Why are you getting mad at her?"

Yara's face was burning red from Franklin's challenging tone, then her gaze turned dark as she tried to keep it in check.

"You guys are playing a prank on me, am I right?"

"This doesn't even count as a prank." Franklin folded his arms over his chest and continued speaking like an adult. "Don't even think about becoming our mom, simply because we're blood related. We won't agree to it, even if Daddy did."

His defiant words had pushed Yara's anger over the edge.

I have waited for five years. I have plotted for five years. I had been thinking every moment and trying my best to marry Samuel these five years. I thought the twins were my key to the Bowers family. However, they turned out to be my obstacle. Vile spawns!! should've left them to burn to death with their mother in the fire so they wouldn't be my obstacle.

Yara clenched her fist tightly then slammed it on the table.

Her violent action startled the kitten in Sophia's arms.

The kitten meowed from shock, then jumped away from Sophia's arms to land beside Yara's foot.

Yara jumped away from the kitten, disgusted with the dirty creature. A stabbing pain burst through her back when she turned. She looked over her shoulder and realized her back slammed into the corner of the dining table roughly. Tears filled her eyes from the pain.

“You!”

Feeling pissed and hurt, the threat holding her rationale snapped at that last trigger.

She stomped with angry strides to Sophia and grabbed the latter’s arm, holding her in place. She then raised her hand, prepared to slap it across Sophia’s cheek.

Before her palm could fall, Kenneth’s furious yell came from the entrance.

“Stop! What do you think you’re doing to Sophia?”

With her hand still in the air, Yara wanted to complain to Kenneth.

But, this time, Sophia began bawling before she could even open her mouth.

“Great-grandpa, she wants to hit me!” Sophia screamed with all her might.

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Sophia was truly terrified.

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If Great-grandpa hadn’t arrived then, I would’ve to brace for Yara’s abuse. Recalling Yara’s cruel expression, tears began to flow continuously from her reddish eyes.

Sophia wrapped her arms tightly around Kenneth’s leg with teary eyes.

“I’m scared of pain. Great-grandpa, save me.”

Sophia had always been like the bright, shining sun to Kenneth. His heart clenched, seeing the tears flowing from her eyes.

“Don’t cry. There won’t be any pain. Now that I’m here, no one can hurt you.”

“I’m scared, Great-grandpa.”

“Don’t be.”

Kenneth picked up the wailing Sophia into his arms, gently patting her back, trying to calm her down. Despite his gentleness with Sophia, he sent a cutting gaze at Yara.

Yara’s stomach lurched at his sharp gaze.

He must have misunderstood.

She opened her mouth to explain, but Kenneth simply whirled around and left the dining room with Sophia.

“Isn’t it enough if you just focus on singling me out? But you even brought harm to Natalie. She got hurt trying to protect me.” Franklin paused, then snorted, “I will pay you back for all the tricks you have played in front of Great-grandpa.”

### Chapter 310

Natalie? That Natalie again? It wasn’t just Samuel who treated her differently. Even the picky twins cared about her?

Franklin leaped from the chair and left the dining room.

Yara was left alone, standing in the wide empty dining room. She tightened her clenched fist as she stared at the messy table.

How could there be such coincidence in this world? The woman who died in the fire five years ago was called Natalie. Yet, this woman that Franklin spoke of was also Natalie. It can’t be. They can’t be the same person. That woman was already dead five years ago. The current Natalie only has an average look with freckles sprinkled all over her cheeks. There were no similarities between her and the fair beauty in my memories.

Yara just couldn’t figure out

An uneasy feeling rose within her like being caught in a large, sticky web. Her frown deepened the more she thought about it.

Sophia continued to cry in Kenneth’s arms for a long while.

She had discussed with Franklin earlier to act in front of Kenneth, but fear had engulfed her when she saw the evil look on Yara’s face as the latter raised her hand.

Sophia’s usually bright eyes were swollen from all the crying.

She gripped Kenneth’s shirt with trembling hands then looked up at him. “Great-grandpa, I’m scared.”

“It’s alright. Tell me. Why did she raise her hand against you?”

“Kitty is my best friend. It got hungry, so I-I fed it some shrimp.” Sophia couldn’t help the hiccup after sobbing earlier. “She was disgusted with Kitty and me. She thought we were dirty. So she got mad at us.”

“What’s Kitty?”

“It’s the kitten from your house.” Sophia explained somberly, “My teacher from school taught me that kittens are our best friends. We need to play well with them.”

Kenneth finally understood the whole incident after her explanation.

Kenneth wouldn’t comfort Franklin if he cried, but it was Sophia, and he couldn’t bear to see her shedding sad tears. The scale in his heart had already tipped toward Sophia when she started to sob uncontrollably.

He did favor Yara, but she wasn't related to him.

Sophia, on the other hand, was his great-granddaughter.

She was his only precious granddaughter.

It was already seven in the evening when Sophia finally calmed down. The twins washed up, then turned on the cartoon in their room.

Kenneth summoned Yara to his study.

"Grandpa, listen to me." Yara finally had the chance to explain, so she swiftly explained, "I helped to peel the shrimps for the twins to the extent of my nails all rolled up, but they simply fed it all to that dirty stray cat. I got mad then I-"

Kenneth cut her off before she could finish.

"That's enough."

"Grandpa, I-"

"Yara, I didn't want to reprimand you. But you're a mother. You were merely peeling the shells of the shrimps. And you're complaining that it was hard work." Kenneth paused, casting a death glare at Yara, before continuing, "I used to think you weren't close to the twins because you didn't get to spend much time with them. But it seemed that I was wrong."

Yara was baffled by Kenneth's words.

She presumed Kenneth would've at least listened to her explanation. It was beyond her expectation that he would side with the twins entirely. It surprised her and made her feel uneasy.

"I'm sorry, Grandpa. I-I admit my mistake. It was all my fault." Yara covered her face with her hands as she started crying. "It had been so long since I got to spend time with them that I had forgotten how to get along with them."

"If you realize your mistake, then take some time to reflect on yourself." Kenneth gestured impatiently. "I'm tired today. You may leave now."

Yara left the study unwillingly. Cruelty filled her eyes from the injustice and hatred she felt.

I will crave the trap that the twins dug for me earlier today in my memory. I will never forget it.

It was ten at night, and the twins were already sleeping soundly in their beds. Suddenly, a car's exhaust sounded from outside the house.

Is it Samuel?

Yara's cheeks blushed at the thought. She quickly put on a coat and ran down the stairs with light steps.

## **Chapter 311**

"Samuel-"

Thinking she would see Samuel's handsome face the minute she reached the door, but as the man in a crisp white shirt turned around, she realized it was Steven instead.

"Oh, it's you, Steven."

Yara plastered a fake smile on her face, but it didn't mask the disappointment in her eyes.

Samuel had never given her his number. So the only way she could meet him was through the twins.

Samuel would usually ignore her.

But at least he would look and talk to her if the topic was about the twins.

But now...

"Good evening, Ms. Nichols." Steven smiled at Yara. "I'm afraid it's me instead of my brother. Sam has work to finish tonight. Knowing the twins are at Grandpa's, he asked for my help to send them home."

Yara nodded listlessly.

"Are the twins asleep?"

"They are."

"Good. I'll carry them into the car."

Yara simply muttered a nonchalant acknowledgment. Her disinterest in the twins was blatant.

After placing the twins safely in the car, Steven wrapped them with a blanket. Once he was sure they were all wrapped up nicely, he lightly shut the door.

He spun on his heels to see Yara standing behind him with a sullen look.

Assuming she was heavyhearted because of the twins, he comforted, "Don't worry. Even though the twins are cheeky, everyone at the Bowers residence pampers them. If anyone bullies them, as their uncle, I'll be the first--"

Yara rudely interrupted him before he could finish. She voiced her opinion impatiently, "Steven, can I ask you for something?"

"Huh?" Steven gave her a puzzled look. "Um, what do you want?"

"Can you give me your brother's number?" Yara bit her lip and pleaded with him with hopeful eyes. "I know you might be troubled by my request, but it has been a while since I talked to him."

Steven narrowed his eyes at her request. The light in his eyes slowly dimmed and kept his face expressionless.

Silence dragged on between them.

Yara was eager to have Samuel's number, so she begged persistently.

"Steven, I'm the mother to his babies. He had never acknowledged me as his wife for all these years. All I'm asking for is his number."

“It’s best if you ask for his number from him.” Steven pressed his lips into a line. “If you can’t get it from him, you won’t get it from me.”

Steven may seem unruly and a playboy on the outside, but he was hard to approach.

Noticing his distance and cautiousness, Yara realized she was too hasty. She urgently explained, “Steven, I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to trouble you but I don’t know why I’m behaving like this. Maybe I love him too deeply?”

Steven stared at the beautiful woman in front of him. Not even a tiny bit of sympathy stirred at her pitiful expression.

“It’s late. I still have to send the twins back.”

Steven got in the car and stepped on the gas, leaving a trail of dust behind.

Yara couldn’t help the tears streaming down her face as she stared at the two red streaks of taillights zooming off into the dark.

Five years. It has been five years. Why have I felt that victory was within my grasp? But my distance with Samuel now is growing wider?” All of these are Natalie’s fault. I will make sure that Natalie dies a painful death. How dare she try to steal Samuel away from me?

Arriving at the entrance of the Bowers residence, Steven saw Natalie getting off her bike, having just gotten home from work.

As she took off her helmet, the night breeze blew her bunched-up hair, fanning it out like she was in an advertisement. She looked absolutely dashing.

## **Chapter 312**

The moon was bright, and there weren’t many stars in the dark sky.

The autumn breeze was cooling and refreshing.

Natalie had spent the entire day in the autopsy laboratory.

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The intense pressure from her work kept her on her toes every second. At last, she could finally catch a breath now.

Natalie caught a glimpse of Steven getting off his sports car.

Steven walked over to Natalie. “There was something Sam had to deal with at the office, so he might not be back tonight.”

“Okay.”

Natalie nodded then placed her helmet on the handlebar.

“Then, why are you here?”

Steven explained with a chuckle, "Grandpa fetched the twins for lunch at his house after school ended. I just brought them back from there. They're currently sleeping in the backseat."

"Shall we carry them back to bed?"

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Natalie opened the backseat door gently.

She bent down and carried Sophia out from the car.

Maybe it was Natalie's warmth. Or the faint herby scent always surrounding her, Sophia wrapped her arms tightly over Natalie's neck like a koala hanging on a tree.

"Mom... Mommy..."

"Mommy's here. Don't worry. Go to sleep."

Natalie gently patted Sophia's back in a rhythm to bring the latter back to sleep. Patience and gentleness shone in her eyes.

In comparison, Steven seemed clumsy from the way he carried Franklin. Luckily, Franklin slept like a log. He merely mumbled something under his breath then allowed his Uncle Steven to carry him off to bed.

The two carried the twins back to their room.

Natalie tucked their blankets neatly over them. Then, she stealthily made her way out of the room after ensuring they were settled.

Steven was standing right by the door, watching her every move as she cared for the twins. His lips were pressed into a thin line as he looked on.

The difference between Natalie's and Yara's earlier behavior struck a huge blow at him.

Yara were the twins biological mother.

Yet, she didn't even help when he carried the twins into the car earlier. All she cared about was Samuel.

In contrast, this woman, who wasn't related to the twins, had cared so sincerely for them.

At that point, Steven finally understood why the picky twins didn't care for anyone else other than this average woman.

Because she was worthy of their loyalty and love.

Natalie didn't know about the thoughts running through Steven's mind. She had never considered her actions to be worth bragging. They were simply what she would have done for her own kids.

"Ms. Nichols, I have a question for you."

"Go ahead." Natalie turned to face him.

"What are you going to do if the twins' mother comes back?" Steven asked.

He thought his straightforward question would surprise her, but she merely replied casually, “Nothing. I’m not going to do anything. I’m fine as long as they’re happy. If they’re happy, so am I.”

Steven’s body stiffened at her answer.

I used to be so confused as to why Sam would fall for such an average woman. Samuel is indeed Samuel. I realized I was too shallow until this very moment.

Early morning, the next day.

Samuel didn’t return home the entire night. And Natalie slept in due to exhaustion from the day before.

Only four small figures were eating and chatting at the dining table.

“Franklin, that woman seems kind of close to you.” With a half-eaten bread in his hand, Clayton asked, “I got nothing from your answer yesterday. It was too cursory. What exactly is your relationship with her?”

Sophia was sipping on her milk as she answered hurriedly, “Clayton, she has nothing to do with us.”

“Really?”

Xavian and Clayton didn’t believe her one bit.

In contrast to Sophia’s nervousness, Franklin casually wiped the breadcrumbs on the corner of his mouth with a silk handkerchief. “Which part of my answer yesterday were you confused about?”

“I can repeat it a thousand times if you guys don’t understand. “We have nothing to do with her.

That woman was only interested in marrying Daddy and not forgetting his position. She wants to be our mommy. That’s it.”

### **Chapter 313**

Since the day before, Franklin and Sophia had come to an agreement.

They agreed to hide the fact of Yara being their biological mother from Xavian and Clayton.

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Xavian and Clayton would only laugh at them if they found out about such embarrassing information.

“We will never agree to that woman becoming our mommy,” Franklin emphasized as he bit into his bread harshly. “But Xavian and Clayton, you guys were behaving weirdly. You guys seem close to her.”

Xavian and Clayton immediately shook their head like a bobblehead.

“No, we’re not.”

“We’re not.”

Even though Yara and Natalie looked alike, they had seen through Yara's facade and were aware of the viciousness within her. They couldn't even pretend to be friendly with her and merely felt repulsed and disgusted with her.

Xavian and Clayton were embarrassed to admit that she was their aunt, so they didn't want to let Franklin and Sophia know about it.

"Since you guys are also not close with her, let's just stay away from her."

Franklin swallowed the last piece of bread in his mouth as he concluded.

"That woman is a snob. She likes to use the excuse of being our mommy to get closer to Daddy. If you guys heard her say so, ignore her. She's talking nonsense. Don't trust her."

Franklin had denied his relationship with her firmly and even commented on Yara's bad personality at the end.

"Understood."

Xavian and Clayton nodded with understanding and didn't even think otherwise.

Time passed by in a blink. And soon the day to film "Stay" had arrived.

It was Dream Entertainment's first television series, so it was important to them.

On that day, other than the main cast dressed in full costume and makeup were present at the opening ceremony, Hans, Yana, Yandel, and Ross were there too.

Even though the film was a collaboration between Dream Entertainment and Crown Entertainment, the real boss who was behind all of it was Natalie,

Hans and Yandel were merely the faces Natalie had used since it was inconvenient for her to reveal her identity.

Hans gave a speech first then Yandel officially announced the start of filming shooting in the ceremony

The two CEOs managed to gain attention from the public due to their handsome looks. And soon, they began trending on social media along with the actors and actresses of the show.

#Photos Of Stay Filming Scene#

#All Stay Cast Are So Good Looking#

#Stay Cast Has The Best Looks#

The short ceremony ended after that.

There were still numerous reporters waiting at the scene with their cameras and mikes. They wanted to know more about the private lives of the main cast and the two CEOs.

Then, they noted a strange occurrence.

They noticed Hans, Yana, Yandel, Ross, Lucas, and Wendy were all walking toward an inconspicuous corner.

There stood a girl dressed plainly in a blue sweater vest over a white shirt with navy jeans.

She was no different than any other average girl with her average facial features and freckles smattering her cheeks.

But this average girl had all the big shots surrounding her as soon as the ceremony ended.

Does this girl have a unique identity?

Despite their confusion, the reporters still aimed their cameras in her direction.

However, as soon as they pointed the camera at the girl, a group of burly bodyguards instantly used their bodies to block them.

“The ceremony has ended. You’re not allowed to take any more photos.”

Natalie was in the middle of the circle. Their bright sparkling eyes were all focused on her.

She could feel all the attention on her as though the others would be jealous if she talked to anyone first.

After pondering for a while, Natalie laughed. “I’m starved and crave for some steaks. Anyone with me?”

## **Chapter 314**

The group gathered at Duke Wellington’s Steakhouse which was the finest in Dellmoor.

Yandel had booked a private room prior. Upon arrival, he clicked his fingers and a waiter appeared smartly by his side an instant later.

As Wendy and Lucas were afraid of acne breaking out on set, they opted for their steaks to be served with the milder-tasting mushroom gravy.

Joining them were Yana who had just recovered from a severe illness, and Hans who kept her company.

On the other hand, Natalie, Yandel, and Ross were feeling adventurous and chose paprika gravy on their steaks, which was the specialty of the house.

With promptness that defied logic, seven perfectly done steaks arrived at the table before the party had even settled down in their seats. The room was soon bursting with aroma as the diners helped themselves.

“To think that it was just the two of us having steaks three years ago, Boss,” Yandel remarked. “Look at how many people are here with you now!”

Natalie is a true leader. She deserves all the recognition she has.

“You will always be my most trusted lieutenant, Yandel.”

Natalie raised her glass and knocked against Yandel’s with a clink.

Though Yandel was the CEO of Dream Corporation, Natalie's praise seemed to bring out the child in him. Grinning like an appreciative schoolboy, he raised his glass in return before tipping its entire contents down his throat in one smooth, practiced flourish.

Natalie giggled and reciprocated the gesture.

Before she had managed to set down her glass, Hans and his wife raised their glasses eagerly as soon as their turn to toast Natalie arrived.

The corners of her eyes crinkling with delighted surprise at the attention she was receiving, Natalie leaned forward and clinked her glasses against theirs.

As the last of the cutlery was put away with a sigh of content, a babble of chatter began to fill the room once more.

Suddenly, Natalie's phone rang.

"I'll step outside to take this," she said as she made her way out to the corridor. Though it was an unfamiliar number, she picked up nonetheless.

"Hello?"

"Good day, madam. Am I speaking to the mother of Xavian and Clayton, Ms. Natalie Nichols?" A gentle female voice came from the other end.

Natalie stiffened up at the mention of her children.

"Yes, speaking. And you are?"

"My name is Ms. Summers, a teacher at the kindergarten. It appears that there was an accusation that Xavian had stolen an heirloom pendant belonging to one of his classmates which resulted in his brother, Clayton, viciously assaulting the boy. We would like you to come over at once to discuss the matter."

"All right, I'm on my way."

After hanging up, she returned to the private room.

"Something's come up with the boys at the kindergarten. I'm going over to straighten it out now." Natalie's eyes returned to their familiar coldness as she spoke.

"I'll give you a ride, Boss." Yandel stood up at once.

Natalie pressed his shoulder firmly back into his seat. "And get arrested for drunk driving? Stay where you are. I will catch a cab there."

The rest saw quite plainly that Natalie was feeling anxious about her children, thus opting to leave her alone.

Natalie hailed a cab at the doorstep of Duke Wellington's Steakhouse and soon arrived at the kindergarten.

The teacher who had called Natalie, Veranne Summers, was waiting for her at the gates.

“Where are the boys, Ms. Summer?”

“They’re in the principal’s office.” Veranne’s gentle face was taut with worry. “It appears that Xavian had stolen a tourmaline pendant and is refusing to admit it. After that, Clayton assaulted the boy who is fortunately not gravely injured.”

Natalie frowned. Though she said nothing, her gaze became increasingly chilly.

Led by Veranne, Natalie soon arrived at the principal’s office. The first people she saw were her own sons who were sitting in sullen silence.

Though the boys said nothing when they saw their mother, their eyes were filled with indignant anger.

Standing beside them was a very chubby boy who had bruises all over his face exactly as Veranne had described. Clayton must have landed quite a few punches.

The principal stood in the middle of his office dolefully wiping his spectacles.

“Thank you for coming, Ms. Nichols.”

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Before Natalie could respond, the chubby boy’s mother, Minerva Young, stepped forth. “Finally made it, huh?” she said scornfully. “You’re their mother, I suppose?”

## **Chapter 315**

Minerva was a reasonably good-looking woman of about thirty years of age. As she approached Natalie, the signs of surgical enhancement on her symmetrical face became apparent.

Her body was not as chubby as her son’s. On the other hand, it was a figure carefully designed for seduction.

Natalie frowned as she regarded the sultry figure before her.

“What is going on here?”

Minerva chuckled. “Your sons have been a handful, haven’t they? One of them stole the heirloom of the Swan family while the other beat my son up to a pulp and you still have the cheek to ask that?”

“That’s not what happened,” Xavian piped up unexpectedly.

Every eye in the room flicked toward him at once.

“I did not steal his pendant!” Xavian declared a little louder. “Clayton punched Milton because he framed me for stealing his pendant!”

“Have you not been taught how to behave?” Minerva rounded on him as she pointed to her son’s face.

The principal, Wendell Fahnberg, felt the need to intervene when Minerva’s voice grew in volume.

“Please calm yourself, Mrs. Swan.”

“How do you expect me to do that when my son is being mauled in your school, Mr. Fahnberg?”  
Minerva turned to regard him with incredulity. With her hands on her hips, Wendell struggled to brace himself against her tirade that was to come.

“That tourmaline pendant is an heirloom of the Swans! Many experts have attested to its value of being over tens of millions by the certificate of authenticity that they have all signed. As Milton is the sole heir of the Swan family, all of its billions would one day be inherited by him. This isn’t over! I must first take him to the hospital. Rest assured, we Swans will pursue this matter to the end of the-”

“Are you done?” Natalie interrupted as she stared at the other woman with such cold hostility that the latter’s rant stuttered to a halt.

Though Natalie did not display any outward sign of anger, the cold disdain emanating from her body made her rage palpable.

There is more to this story. I know my children well enough to know that.

Ignoring everybody else in the room, Natalie walked toward Xavian and knelt before him.

“Did you take Milton’s pendant?”

“I did not.” Xavian shook his head firmly as he looked deep into his mother’s eyes.

“Did the two of you beat him up?”

The boys nodded as one.

“Yes, Mommy. We were the ones to start it.” Clayton lowered his gaze as his voice shook. “Milton accused Xavian of being a thief and of us being fatherless bastard boys. That was when we jumped on him!”

“I will not allow him to speak ill of my brother!” he continued, with passionate tears rolling down his cheeks. “And my mother! Even if I have to go to prison for what I’ve done, I will not allow him to speak of you this way! You are the best mother in the world. He has no right to say things like that!”

As Clayton was the elder among the two, he felt that he had to put on a brave front in front of his mother and younger brother who relied on him. Despite his best efforts, tears streamed down his pink cheeks.

Embarrassed to be seen crying, he rubbed his eyes so hard that his eyes soon became red, though that merely incensed the flow of tears.

Xavian tugged timidly on his mother’s sleeve.

“I’m sorry, Mommy. We remember what you taught us about attacking other people, but I was unable to control my temper.”

Natalie felt a lump in her throat at the sight of her sons looking so defeated.

Oh, my heart aches for my babies. They are obviously being bullied by this fatty! Why did they have to get themselves into trouble just to defend me?

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Natalie wiped both their cheeks comfortingly. "Since you did nothing wrong, there's no need to cry. Even less of a need to apologize."

Comprehension dawned on Wendell and Veranne's faces from observing the scene before them as they recollected Clayton and Xavian's obedience and thoughtfulness which contrasted starkly against Milton's arrogance and mischief. Now it's starting to make sense.

Minerva, however, was not going to let the matter go that easily. "It's no wonder how the brats are so stubborn. I see where they get that from!"

### **Chapter 316**

Natalie was beginning to grasp the true extent of the matter after interrogating her sons.

This fatty with a punching bag for a face is obviously not telling the truth. Though it can be forgiven if a five-year-old can't think for himself, isn't it ludicrous how the mother jumped to conclusions by accusing Xavian and commenting about the way he is being brought up? Stupid b\*tch, I'll show her!

Natalie clenched her fists so hard that her nails dug into the flesh of her palms, though she felt no pain.

"You may accuse my son of whatever you want," Natalie said quietly with a dangerous glint in her eyes. But you'd better have the evidence to back it up. All you're basing this upon is what your own child claimed. I don't think his word is sufficient enough proof."

At the mere mention of the lost pendant, Minerva became agitated once more.

"Your son's thieving little fingers did it! Why don't you ask him instead of accusing my son's integrity?"

"This pendant was given to Milton by his grandmother," she continued, getting more worked up by the minute. "It has been hanging from his neck since the day he was born. Five years ago, it was valued to be at ten million. I shudder to even imagine how much it would cost today. If your son doesn't return the pendant, you are going to have to pay for it. Otherwise, be prepared to go to prison!"

Natalie gave a sardonic smile.

Can't produce a shred of evidence, can you? Now I know you're full of sh\*t, just like your idiotic son.

"Aside from your son's bold claim, do you have nothing more to add to the credibility of your accusation?" asked Natalie once more, this time with a cold smile upon her lips. "Instead of going after my son for your precious pendant, why don't you ask your son where he'd left it?"

Milton shifted guiltily to the back at the sound of her words.

Minerva did not notice anything unusual with her son's behavior. Instead, she maintained her swagger.

“What for? Why would my son frame yours for no apparent reason?” Minerva cast Xavian another look of disgust before turning to address Wendell. “Isn’t this a prestigious institution? How could you allow such uncultured scum to be enrolled?”

Clayton and Xavian leaped to their feet, fists clenched as they bristled with rage.

Natalie gazed at Minerva with her eyes narrowed menacingly for a long while before uttering a single word. “Despicable.”

“Who do you think you are, calling me degrading names like that?” Minerva shouted as she jabbed a ferocious finger in the air inches from Natalie’s unflinching nose.

“According to my son,” she continued, her lips twisting into a sneer. “Your children never had a father figure around growing up. I used to feel pity for you but now that I’ve met all of you, I couldn’t blame the children’s father for ditching all of you. A better man than he might have even-”

Her verbal abuse was suddenly replaced by a shrill scream.

“Ah!”

Natalie had caught Minerva’s accusatory finger. All Minerva could do was watch in horror as her finger became dislocated with a deft flick of the former’s wrist.

Under the impression that her finger had been broken, she howled in pain as she threw furious and terrified glares at Natalie.

At that critical moment, Leonard Swan dashed into the office.

At the sight of her husband’s arrival, Minerva began crying pitifully. “Hubby, Milton’s pendant has been stolen by this woman’s brat and he has been beaten up by the other! She even broke my finger!”

Though she was plain in appearance, Minerva had managed to marry into the Swan family by a combination of manipulation and skills in the bedroom.

Some years before, Leonard had managed to make his fortune and a name for himself in Dellmoor in property development. As his business had been on an upward trajectory, his ego swelled alongside his assets.

Upon hearing about the suffering his wife and son had endured, Leonard’s eyes blazed with anger.

“How dare you, woman!” Leonard shouted as he rolled up his sleeves to reveal a set of thick forearms.

Natalie narrowed her eyes as she readied herself for his onslaught. The safety of her children not forgotten, she pushed them behind her out of harm’s way.

At the instant when Leonard raised his fist, a deep but menacing voice rang out.

“Step aside!”

## **Chapter 317**

In his rage, Samuel made a dash forward and grabbed Leonard by the arm.

Though of small stature, Leonard was a rather stout man. Ordinarily, his strength would have exceeded Samuel's but Leonard found himself unable to move when he had his arm grabbed by Samuel.

"Let go of me!" Leonard glared at the newcomer fiercely for interfering with the lesson he was about to deliver.

Finding himself face to face with Samuel's livid eyes, Leonard almost fell over as his knees buckled from fright.

Samuel returned the glare of his adversary with such a hostile one that even the others who were present felt a chill running down their spine.

"L-Let..." stammered Leonard, lacking the courage to complete his sentence.

Samuel turned his attention to Wendell whilst maintaining an iron grip on Leonard's wrist. "Is this how you repay Bowers Corporation? By running the school entrusted in your care so haphazardly?"

The main reason for Franklin and Sophia's enrollment into that particular kindergarten was because it was owned by the Bowers' family.

Wendell began mopping his brow where beads of anxious perspiration had gathered.

Despite being ignorant about Xavian and Clayton's parentage, he was fully aware of the identity of his employer.

I thought that it was merely a scuffle between children and their parents. Having my direct superior being dragged into this is the last thing I expected!

"Mr. Bowers," cried Wendell as he bowed profusely. "I apologize for my inattentiveness! How embarrassing it is to me for allowing you to catch a glimpse of such an ugly side of the kindergarten!"

Even Leonard and Minerva were stunned by the revelation that they were in the presence of a member of the Bowers family.

Minerva stared lustfully at Samuel's chiseled features. There is no way he will take action against us for that ugly b\*tch.

"Mr. Bowers, you must have misunderstood Mr. Fahnberg and my husband! The only one here who has truly brought shame upon this kindergarten is that woman and her two sons!"

Still feeling confident in her instigative efforts, Minerva was not aware that she was about to seal the fate of the Swan family.

"Look at those two scavenging little rascals," she screeched. "Theft plus assault and battery! The reason that they are capable of carrying out such heinous acts is that this woman accommodates them!"

Clayton and Xavian's eyes flashed dangerously. How dare she call us rascals! How dare she accuses Mommy of not raising us right! You're done for, lady!

"Enough!" snapped Natalie, her patience finally running out. "You will apologize to my sons!"

“Apologize?” repeated Minerva with a sneer. “I said nothing wrong! Look at you lower-class filth. You can’t even keep your brats on a leash! Where’s their father, then? You’re obviously not doing a good enough job!”

As soon as Minerva stopped to catch her breath, Samuel took a step forward. “I am their father. Her man.”

Still clutching Leonard by the arm, Samuel gave a mighty shove and sent his captive tumbling into Minerva. The pair of them fell over to the floor with an undignified crash.

“Here I am,” he announced as he stood over the trembling couple on the ground. “Is there anything else you would like to say to my face?”

Staring icy daggers from above at the Swans like a conquistador asserting his dominance, they felt unable to tear their gaze off his face as he held them paralyzed in fear and awe. Samuel’s frightening presence was enough for them to feel the life sucked out of their lungs.

Even Wendell and Veranne were unable to suppress their shock.

Minerva, who was rather eloquent mere minutes before, suddenly found that she had lost her capacity for fluent speech.

“She... Mr. Bowers, are you...”

In response, Samuel strode over to Natalie and pulled her into his embrace with one firm tug.

“She is my woman,” he announced to the entire room. “The most precious woman in my life.”

Despite the overwhelming evidence against them, Minerva still refused to concede.

“Mr. Bowers, even if she is your woman,” she argued, “it doesn’t change the fact that her children stole our treasured heirloom and assaulted my son! Such crimes should not be allowed to go unpunished just because one’s family is rich and powerful!”

At that moment, two small figures, who were revealed to be Franklin and Sophia as they approached, dashed excitedly into Wendell’s office.

Franklin raised his hand with the chain of the tourmaline pendant twisted around his fingers. “Still in denial, Chubby?” he said triumphantly.