

The Promise of Happiness

Chapter 540 Did He Bully You

Samuel took Natalie's hand in his and glared at Kenneth. "Now that you've seen Natalie and the kids, I believe there's nothing else to say or do," he said bluntly, "so we should get going."

"How dare you!" Kenneth looked outraged.

Samuel knew he could not deal with his grandfather the same way he was accustomed to dealing with people who displeased him. Therefore, the only way he could assert his dominance was by being firm with his grandfather that Natalie was his woman and that was an irrefutable fact. He would defend her from everything to the best of his ability, whether he had Kenneth's support or not.

Samuel turned to leave while holding her hand but Natalie did not budge.

"Nat?" Samuel asked with a frown.

"I appreciate your concern for me, Samuel." Natalie glanced at Kenneth before continuing. "Your grandfather treated me with respect tonight. Even the kids hardly get to see their great-grandfather. Let's stay a little longer. I need to catch my breath after getting up."

"Are you really..."

"Yes." Natalie was amused yet touched by Samuel's anxiousness. "Ask the kids if you don't believe me."

The four kids nodded in unison.

Franklin raised his hand as if taking an oath. "Great-grandpa did not misbehave today. I can vouch for him."

"Me too!" Sophia piped up.

"I believe you." The knot in Samuel's brow loosened with the overwhelming reassurances.

Kenneth watched in admiration at how loyal the children and Samuel were to leap to Natalie's defense.

Before, he was under the impression that Natalie was a manipulative woman.

Their most recent encounter had changed his mind. Kenneth began to realize that she deserved everything she had because she was loyal to them in return.

As the excitement simmered down, the three adults and four children sat huddled around the fireplace that wintry night.

Having been left unsatisfied with the outcome of the earlier game of Go, Kenneth coerced Natalie into another with Samuel and the children spectated the game attentively from the side.

Amidst the sound of wood crackling merrily in the fireplace and the delicate waft of tea intermingled with the rich buttery scent of scones, the children were lost in the thrill of the game.

Samuel, on the other hand, had his mind far removed from the game as he watched Natalie who was moving the white pieces with his eyes reflecting the dancing flames to startling effect.

With the graceful direction of her lanky arm, every piece moved and fell into place calmly. With the aggression of Kenneth's black pieces at her heels, Natalie nimbly sidestepped every attempt to force her against the corners of the board.

Just when Samuel thought that he had understood Natalie's steps, she surprised him yet again.

As he admired her, he could not resist wondering how many more tricks she had up her sleeve that he had yet to know about.

When would I finally be able to know her as well as she knows me?

The second game took longer than the first as Kenneth tread with extreme caution, not daring to underestimate his young adversary again.

Despite his precautions, Natalie once again led the scoreboard with a majority of her pieces intact by the end of the second game.

Undeterred, Kenneth demanded the third match before Jefford was forced to intervene.

"It's half-past ten, Mr. Bowers," he reported. "Bedtime for you, sir. Doctor's orders."

Kenneth shot him a fierce glare. "Stay out of it."

Jefford grimaced. "Yes, sir."

Natalie carefully sorted the pieces by color before placing them back into the box and making sure that the lid was secure before taking her leave.

Samuel glanced at the four children who were beginning to nod off. "The kids are tired. I'll have Billy come over and take them home."

Kenneth did not wish to force Samuel to stay when he clearly was not keen on doing that. This brat needs time to get over this grudge. I'll only make things worse if I speak up.

A little later, Billy arrived outside the mansion and assisted Samuel and Natalie in carrying the sleeping children to the car.

Kenneth lapsed into a thoughtful silence with his eyes fixed on the neatly packed chess set.