

Happiness 771

Chapter 771 Come With Me

"Were you following me, little girl?" Natalie asked.

"I like you. You've been good to me." The little girl bit her lip. "I wanted to see you again."

Some children within the orphanage were unassuming schemers. In order to guarantee their adoption, they pretended to be well-behaved. However, Natalie could tell that the child standing before her was sincere and genuine.

Upon Natalie's unexpected appearance, the little girl became flustered as she did not intend to be seen.

Natalie found it hard to explain the desire to protect that girl. "Would you like to come home with me?"

The little girl was surprised. "Really?"

Natalie stroked her braid. "Yes, I mean that. Would you like to?"

The little girl nodded vigorously. "I would love to."

"I'll go through the formalities with the director then. With any luck, you'll be coming home with me by evening." Natalie clutched the little girl's hand in hers. "I will be your Mommy from today onwards. I promise to protect you and care for you."

The little girl could not speak. Tears of gratitude welled up in her eyes.

Diane saw Natalie holding the little girl's hand when she emerged from the theater with a bouquet of flowers in her hand.

"Who is this child, Natalie?"

"I'm attached to this child, Lady Diane," Natalie explained with a smile, "and I plan to adopt her."

Diane leaned forward to examine the girl. Being a frequent patron of the orphanage, she was familiar with who amongst the children were schemers. After a while, she was sure that the little girl was not one of them.

"She's a sweet girl." Diane patted the girl's head in approval as she looked up at Natalie. "Don't take this the wrong way, Natalie, but you need to hear this. I hope that you have thought it through instead of rushing impulsively into this adoption."

Natalie did not take offense. Instead, she nodded firmly. "I've given it much thought."

A smile spread across Diane's lips. "That's good."

The director had the adoption procedures arranged at once when he heard of Natalie's intention in adopting the little girl.

Diane kept the little girl company while Natalie made the final confirmations with the director in his office.

Natalie was busy perusing the document she was about to sign as the director sighed. "This child is a little withdrawn as she barely speaks to anybody. Have you considered the extra effort on your part to draw her out of her shell?"

"I assure you that she is quite capable," Natalie said lightly after glancing up from her document. "And she is most definitely not withdrawn."

The director was visibly incredulous before he composed himself. "She can talk? But she has never even- You know what, Mrs. Bowers? I'm sure that you two are destined to meet. I believe that you are just what she needs."

After Natalie signed her name for the last time, the procedure was successfully completed without a hitch.

Natalie opened the door and had Diane bring the little girl in.

Diane looked at her companion reluctantly. "I'm sorry, Natalie, but I'm afraid I have to go. Loang has been very chaotic recently with riots in some places. There are matters that need my attention."

"You are one of the women I admire from the bottom of my heart," Natalie said solemnly. "If you need the money, Dream will support you."

"I'll be sure to ask if I ever need it."

Natalie left with the little girl after saying goodbye to Diane.

"The director told me that he doesn't know your name as you've never spoken in front of him." Natalie gazed down to meet her ward's eyes. "Can you tell me what your name is?"

The little girl . "My name is Yumi."

"It's nice to meet you, Yumi." Natalie smiled and shook her tiny hand. "My name is Natalie."

Chapter 772 The Secret

In the meantime, a man was seated atop a towering chair toying with the cat in his lap in a quiet garden in Loang.

"Benjamin escaped? What about the child?" The man narrowed his eyes dangerously as he stared at the quaking figure of the woman on one knee before him.

"The maid who had helped the child escape bit her tongue and died on the spot after being caught by our men before we could force her to reveal the girl's whereabouts." The woman's hand was lightly placed on her left shoulder. Her fearful, bulging eyes were kept firmly on the ground. "Rest assured, Your Majesty, we will renew our efforts to locate the child in Chanaea."

"I'm sure you're aware of the importance of locating this child, Zophie," the man said coldly, "and of the meaning behind the jade key she carries with her."

"I do."

“You and Gale were always my favorites to delegate my most important tasks to.” The man suddenly stood up from his throne and caused the cat to jump off his lap with a yowl. He walked to Zophie and lifted her chin with a cruel finger. “I’m growing tired of disappointments from the both of you,” he said. “I will not allow your careless blunders to undo years of intricate planning just when it is about to come to an end!”

Despite the deliberate slowness in his tone, the chilling menace emanating from his words made Zophie shudder.

Not daring to move a muscle, Zophie did all she could to express her loyalty to her liege. “I understand, Your Majesty. I will leave for Chanaea tonight and bring you that child.”

The man relinquished his grip with a grunt of satisfaction. “If you fail to locate the girl within a month, I’ll be expecting you to carry out your own punishment.”

Blissfully ignorant of the complications surrounding Yumi, Natalie returned to the Bowers residence with her newly adopted daughter.

Gavin was a little surprised at the sight of the pretty newcomer. “This child is...?”

Natalie made the introductions. “I’d adopted Yumi from the orphanage. Yumi, this is Gavin, our butler. You can call him Mr. Gavin.”

Yumi demonstrated her obedience by curtsying to Gavin. “Hello, Mr. Gavin. My name is Yumi.”

“Pleased to meet you, little one.” Though Gavin liked Yumi immediately, he felt obliged to question Natalie, “Have you discussed this with Mr. Samuel and the children?”

“Not yet. I understand your concerns, Gavin, but I will explain things to them in time. From now on, Yumi will be a part of the family. Please care for her as you do for the others.”

Gavin’s reservations had not gone unnoticed. However, Yumi was touched by how Natalie stood up for her decision.

Taking her hand, Natalie led Yumi into the living room.

The four children ran down the stairs as quickly as their short legs could carry them when they heard Natalie’s return.

To their surprise, they found that their mother was accompanied by an unfamiliar little girl.

Like a pretty little doll by the window of a toyshop, the girl took in her surroundings with her beady eyes as she clung to Natalie’s arm.

The quadruplets exchanged puzzled glances before asking in unison, “Who is she, Mommy?”

Natalie bent down to address the children. “This is your new sister,” she announced. “Though she is not related to you by blood, she’s part of the family now. I’m very fond of her, and I hope that you will be too.”

Especially you, Franklin, Xavian, and Clayton,” Natalie added, turning to the older ones. “Sophia is not your only sister to care for anymore. You have Yumi now!”

The four children merely gazed at the newcomer without a word.

“Don’t start thinking that I have a new favorite!” Natalie said patiently. “The two of you who have grown up with me have been accustomed to the inclusion of the other two, haven’t you? With or without Yumi, I still love you all the same.”

Chapter 773 Jade Key

The children were initially silent not because they disliked Yumi, but because they feared exactly what Natalie assured them will not happen.

Emboldened by her mother’s promise, Sophia stepped forth and patted her chest. “As I’m not the youngest anymore, Mommy, I will do my best to care for my little sister Yumi. We will include her in our games and share all of our delicious food with her!”

Yumi gazed at Sophia and found her anxiety disappeared instantly despite being initially intimidated that the latter was a little older than herself. Instead, she returned Sophia’s toothy smile.

“Thank you, sister.”

Xavian and Clayton also gathered around to introduce themselves.

“I’m Clayton, the second oldest out of the four.”

“I’m Xavian, and I’m only seven minutes younger than Clayton.”

Yumi nodded after each introduction, earnestly trying to match the name with the face.

Franklin’s turn came last. With a wary glance at Yumi who was as good-looking as his sister Sophia, he said slowly, “My name is Franklin.”

Though she was aware that Franklin treated her differently than the others, Yumi still smiled sweetly at him. “Hello, Franklin. You must be the oldest.”

Natalie had Gavin prepare a set of clothes for Yumi.

As the four children were at that point still sharing one bedroom, Natalie decided that since the boys and the girls would have to have their own separate bedrooms anyway. With that notion in mind, she had Gavin prepare a room and move Sophia’s things in next to Yumi’s.

After Gavin brought the clothes, Natalie took Yumi into the bathroom.

“Did you give birth to all four of them, Mommy?” Yumi asked curiously as she sat in the bathtub.

“I did,” Natalie said with a nod. “They were born at almost the same time. Only Xavian and Clayton lived with me at first. Franklin and Sophia have only come back to me recently.”

“How lucky of them,” Yumi sighed. “I can’t see my mother anymore.”

Natalie froze in her act of rinsing the girl’s hair. “Yes, you can,” said Natalie slowly, careful to shatter her innocence. “Didn’t you tell me that she became a star in the heavens? Whenever there are stars in the sky, it’s your mother missing you and dropping by to check up on you in secret.”

Yumi nodded vigorously. "She does! She winks at me!"

As Natalie was toweling Yumi dry after the shower, she caught sight of an ancient-looking jade in the shape of a key hanging around her neck.

The pattern engraved on this jade was exquisite. At the spot where the handle was sat the sculpture of a phoenix. The inclusion of a tiny ruby in its eye sockets was all it took to bring it to life.

The dragon is the emblem of Chanaea while the phoenix is the emblem of Loang. This is no ordinary jade. The phoenix totem is auspicious to them.

Natalie was stunned at the realization that Yumi hailed from Loang.

Moreover, she could tell that the jade key was not of ordinary quality at first glance. The near-universal custom of entrusting a child with a valuable artifact was definite proof of her noble parenthood.

Unlike Chanaea, the system of monarchy had not been abolished in Loang. Absolute power still lay in the hands of the king.

A thought flashed in Natalie's mind. Whoever she is, Yumi is definitely of no ordinary birth.

"Mommy," Yumi called, conscious that Natalie had been staring at the jade key around her neck.

Natalie grabbed Yumi's shoulders. "This key looks very valuable, Yumi," she began seriously. "It must be of great significance to you. I would hate to see it lost or damaged. How would you feel about entrusting it to my care? When the time is right, I'll return it to you."

Yumi's little hands clenched around the jade key in response.

After a long time, she stammered, "Can I... can I trust you?"

Natalie's eyes twinkled with determination. "Yes, you can. You have become my child from the moment I signed the papers."

Chapter 774 Lovely Braid

Yumi regarded Natalie's warmth for a moment before removing the jade key from her neck meekly. "Here you go."

Natalie solemnly accepted the jade key, helped Yumi into a clean pair of skirts, and dried her hair before concluding the ritual by putting on a little blue headband that held her hair neatly of her brow.

The quadruplets were already standing in wait outside the bathroom when Natalie emerged with Yumi.

Except for Franklin, who remained a little unapproachable, the other three surrounded her enthusiastically. "Are you hungry, Yumi? Let's have dinner together! Our chef makes delicious food!"

Yumi felt Natalie's warm hospitality shining through her children. As a result, the nervousness that had accompanied her from the moment she first arrived began to be gradually replaced by a sense of complacent security. She beamed and accepted their offer to dine gratefully.

As one, The five children thundered down the stairs to the dining table in boisterous anticipation for a hearty dinner.

Natalie, on the other hand, slipped away to the bedroom and carefully placed the jade keys entrusted to her into the safe.

The reason why she wanted to take the jade key away was that, on the one hand, Yumi may damage the precious jade key. More importantly, Natalie was worried that the jade key would bring danger to Yumi. I'm sure there are people out there who are aware of the special meaning that the key might hold. Such a valuable artifact will undoubtedly drive people with ulterior motives to obtain it with every means necessary. In addition, the recent turmoil in Loang makes this coincidence even more unsettling. This complication does not change the commitment I have made to raise Yumi and keep her safe. I will return it to her when she is in need of it.

After a double-check on her safe to placate her sense of foreboding, Natalie went downstairs to join her children for dinner.

Five ravenous children seated around the slightly cramped table made for a lively scene.

Instead of being irritable at the noise, Natalie savored the commotion by watching her own children satiate their curiosity with the newcomer.

To her surprise and pride, Natalie noticed that her own four must have come to a private agreement against asking sensitive questions about Yumi's past. Their efforts seemed to have paid off as Yumi appeared very relaxed, even more so after having a larger dinner than the other four.

Natalie retired to the study at the conclusion of one of the best dinners she had ever been a part of.

As per their custom, the four children retired to the playroom they shared.

Sophia wanted to review medical books while Clayton was working on learning a new language.

On the other hand, Xavian delved into system management.

Once the three little ones were focused, they took no further notice of their surroundings.

Yumi did not know how to engage with them, so she got up and went into the corridor. and when she looked up, she saw the quiet night outside the window.

In the vastness of the dark sky above, there seemed to be one or two stars emitting a bright and dazzling light.

"I met a very nice person, Mommy, Yumi stood on tiptoe, wanting to see the stars more clearly.

A boy's voice rang out. "What are you sneaking around for?"

Yumi was startled. She turned her head and found Franklin beside her. "Sneaky? That's not very nice, is it? Why would you say that to me?"

"My mother is a very good person, as are my younger siblings." Franklin put one hand in his pocket and warned with his eyebrows raised. "They like you very much. Don't hurt them."

Yumi stood her ground and met Franklin's gaze. "I know," she said stubbornly, "you don't need to remind me."

"I'm glad I made myself clear." Franklin's gaze turned sharper. "I'll be watching you. Don't let me catch your little braid where it's not supposed to be! Otherwise, I will drive you out of this house!"

After speaking, Franklin turned around and left.

Biting her lip, Yumi looked back at the night sky and muttered to herself.

"Should I tell them that I'm a jinx, Mommy? Daddy doesn't want me and you are too far away from me. Even Shannon shed a lot of blood to save me!"

"I-I don't want them to get hurt," she continued sadly, "I really like this family. Watch over them from the skies, will you?"

Chapter 775 Reward Applicable Only Here

Samuel came back a little late that night.

Knowing that Natalie was in the study, he took off her coat and headed straight there.

When he arrived, Samuel found that the door of the study was opened a crack as opposed to being fully closed. He raised his hand and knocked on the door before walking in.

Hearing the knock on the door, Natalie smiled at the sight of Samuel.

"You're back?"

Samuel walked to Natalie's side and found several books on Loang's history and architecture on the desk. He picked one up at random. "When did you suddenly become interested in Loang?"

"I'd lived in Loang for a year," Natalie said with one hand on her cheek. "The local customs appeal to me very much. "Dream's presence in Chanaea is already a little saturated, in my opinion. As a groundwork for future plans, I'm thinking of expanding overseas by getting started in Loang. On the one hand, Loang and Chanaea share an origin to have similar cultures and traditions. On the other, I am relatively familiar with there..."

There's another reason. The key.

Natalie flipped through these books in an attempt to find some clues about the jade key.

Having the instinctive feeling that the key was more than just a beautiful artifact, she was curious to find out what it opened.

As her inferences were still preliminary, Natalie did not feel comfortable sharing them with Samuel.

Samuel put down the book in his hand and rested them on both sides of Natalie's hips. "Gavin told me you adopted a little girl today," he said as his eyes twinkled.

"I was about to talk to you about this," Natalie explained, "I went to the orphanage with Diane today and I signed the papers as soon as I met Yumi. I'm sorry, I should have discussed it with you instead of making this decision without authorization, I-"

"Thought you did something wrong?" Samuel asked in a low voice.

"It's just... Though I stand by what I did, I feel guilty for neglecting your feelings," Natalie admitted.

Samuel kissed the top of Natalie's head gently. "You don't need to feel that way. If you are happy, I will be happier than anyone else. As I said, I will not let you be my caged bird. If you ever want to do anything you like, you have my full approval."

Natalie's heart throbbed at his love. She reached up and kissed Samuel's thin lips forcefully.

"It's nice of you to take the initiative tonight, Nat," Samuel said croakily.

"You can think of this as a reward," Natalie said with a grin.

"Can I have some more?"

Though visibly startled, Natalie nodded under the man's expectant gaze.

The next second, Samuel swept the books off the desk. They scattered to the ground with a crash.

He lifted Natalie to the desk and forced her to meet his gaze before kissing her alluring red lips deeply.

For several minutes, the sound of clashing teeth and soft moans filled the study.

Gradually, Natalie was pressed against the table. The cold wood of the table that was in stark contrast to the heat of passion emanating from her body made her tremble uncontrollably.

"Can we go back to the bedroom?" Natalie asked tentatively.

"It only counts as a reward here," Samuel rasped mischievously. "It's no longer valid once we return to the bedroom."

Taking advantage of Natalie's stunned silence, Samuel once again took the lead in infusing the place in the house where he spent the most amount of time with some of his deepest fantasies.

In the meantime at the Nichols residence, Thomas received the resignation call of his assistant.

"I've been good to you, haven't I?" Thomas said in an accusatory tone. "How can you just resign when I need you? Trust me, Dexmed Pharmaceutical will be turned around! It'll take more than this to bankrupt us."

Even Thomas' hysteria did nothing to change the assistant's mind.

"Mr. Nichols, even married couples go their separate ways when they know that disaster is imminent. You and I are only professional colleagues. Don't drag me into your mess with you."

Chapter 776 Suspicious Circumstances

"Give me more time! I can turn this around! Once we're on top again, I promise to double your salary--"

Before Thomas could finish, the assistant hung up the phone. A beeping tone was all he heard from the other end.

"B*stard!" Thomas bellowed as he threw the phone in his hand, gritting his teeth in frustration.

After Yara's disappearance, his servants in his home and his employees in his company resigned one after another. Despite their apparent loyalty to him in the past, nothing Thomas said at that point could convince anybody to even come close to him.

Not a single one is left to help me at the merest sign of disaster!

As a result of his foul mood, the wound on his left hand festered. It became so bad that the severe pain kept him up at night.

Thomas could not bear it any longer. Fumbling for the painkillers on the coffee table, he swallowed the pills with a gulp of water and felt slightly better.

Sprawled helplessly on his carpet, Thomas knew that only Natalie could save him at this juncture.

As long this daughter of mine can forgive me, I have a chance of reattaining my past glories.

Over the following couple of days, Natalie had been bombarded with Thomas' requests to speak across every communication medium conceivable.

Yandel watched Natalie end the call for what seemed like the twentieth time as he was seated in her office. "This old man actually got a hold of your contact information, Boss," he said with a frown. "You're his last chance for salvation, it seems."

There was no change in Natalie's expression. "When a person is desperate enough, any form of therapy will seem like salvation. Thomas seems to have forgotten that I was the biggest catalyst to have put him in this wretched situation he is in today. If he tries reaching to me for help, he will only fall quicker and more painfully."

Yandel smiled at the capacity of the beautiful woman before him for cruelty. "This acquisition will be completed in about five days, Boss. By then, Dexmed Pharmaceutical will become part of Dream, and Thomas will fall as its CEO."

Natalie nodded with a smirk on the corner of her mouth. "After years of waiting, this day has finally come."

Later that afternoon, Natalie received an email from Thomas.

Just when Natalie was about to drag it to the spam folder out of habit, she suddenly caught a glimpse of the title of the email. You don't have to reply to this, it wrote, but aren't you curious about how your grandfather died?

"How did Grandpa die back then?" Natalie murmured, her heart tightening suddenly.

After investigating the case all those years, Natalie had never come close to cracking the case except for some small, misleading facts surrounding the circumstances of Arnold's death.

Within a short period of time, Thomas had been able to embezzle Grandpa's property and replace the owner of Dexmed Pharmaceutical from Bayer to Nichols. He must have participated in the conspiracy back then and knew how Grandpa died!

Though Natalie was comfortable ignoring her estranged father, she could not ignore the possibility of uncovering the truth.

Intrigued, she clicked on the email only to find that there was no text in the main body. Staring at her in the middle of the screen was a string of numbers similar to a phone number.

Natalie made the call without thinking.

Sure enough, Thomas' voice answered. "I knew that you would call, Nat."

"Since you have it all worked out," Natalie said coldly, "then you'll also know why I'm calling. I just want to know the truth about Grandpa's death. He didn't die of natural causes, did he? It was murder."

Under ordinary circumstances, Natalie would not have deigned to even speak with Thomas. However, she knew that her father would not relinquish the truth if she did not play along.

"No matter what, Nat, I'm still your father!" Thomas laughed dryly before continuing, "It's a little strange to talk about this over the phone. Besides, messages will get distorted and feelings will get hurt. For the sake of ensuring that you are properly informed, let's meet and air out our past grievances. What say you?"

Chapter 777 Hurray For Mommy

Natalie knew very well about the tricks Thomas was capable of, but she could see no other way in learning the truth about her grandfather's death.

If she could find out the truth surrounding her grandfather's death, Natalie was certain that she could also understand why her mother had taken her to hide in the backcountry all those years ago.

"Fine," Natalie agreed. "I'm free tomorrow morning, you can decide the location."

"I knew that you would agree to meet for your grandfather's sake." Thomas laughed again. "I'll send you the location later. I'm looking forward to catching up with my daughter tomorrow!"

Natalie hung up the phone without answering as she was not interested in anything else her father had to say aside from the truth. She knew the propensity of his honeyed tongue for falsehood.

After arriving home, Natalie was greeted by the sight of the children playing in the living room.

Although she had not called the Bowers residence her home for very long, Yumi quickly befriended Sophia, Xavian, and Clayton. Recalling the orphan's reluctance to mingle with new faces, Natalie was once again convinced of the correctness of her decision to adopt Yumi.

Franklin's coldness, however, was proving to be a challenge.

Unlike the other three children, who had already accepted Yumi as their sibling, Franklin was often found on the sidelines while the others played.

"Franklin, come here." Natalie beckoned at her eldest and led him out to the yard.

"Yes, Mommy?"

Without answering immediately, she sat on the small wooden bench in the yard and patted the vacant seat beside her.

“What do you really think about Yumi?” Natalie asked calmly.

“Not much,” Franklin replied stoically.

After being with all four children for over half a year, Natalie felt that Franklin’s temperament and appearance, especially the cold and haughty dominance, were most reminiscent of his father than the rest of his siblings.

She sighed at the reminder of the insurmountable task of convincing Samuel to do something he did not want to do. “Are you worried about Yumi having ulterior motives toward us? Do you think she’s here for something?”

Franklin nodded after considering the question for a moment.

“It’s good to be wary.” Natalie pinched her eldest son’s cheek. “But being too wary isn’t good. Your wariness is written all over your face, my dear. It’s a bit too much!”

“I couldn’t help it,” Franklin admitted. “Being the eldest brother, I have a duty to protect my younger brothers and sisters. Nobody will hurt them while I’m here.”

Natalie burst out laughing.

No wonder Franklin is growing up too quickly. He regards himself as the protector of his siblings! Back then, Sophia was the only one he had to protect. Now he has two other brothers to care for.

“Mommy, what are you laughing at?”

“Laughing at you, silly. You remind me of Daddy.” Natalie’s lips twitched as she struggled to straighten her expression. “It’s lovely of you to spoil your younger brothers and sister, but do try not to worry too much, will you? Even if you feel like the whole world is crumbling around you, you still have me and Daddy.”

Franklin froze at his mother’s words.

“Besides,” Natalie continued, “it’s not fair to watch over Yumi like she’s a thief. She’s your youngest sister now, not an enemy to be wary of all the time.”

Franklin nodded after a long while. “I understand, Mommy.”

“I’m proud of you.” Natalie scratched his nose dotingly. “If you ever feel uncomfortable, remember come talk to me. Five years of being absent in your life are long enough. I don’t want to miss being part of your life any more.”

Franklin’s lips trembled. Yara has never spoken to me like this before.

Gazing back at the warm and loving eyes before him, Franklin clenched his fists and vowed in his heart to cherish Natalie and become a man like his father to protect her.

When Franklin returned to the living room, Natalie was pleased to see all five of them engaging in play.

As soon as she stood up from her seat on the bench, she saw Samuel slowly walking in from the other side of the yard.

“You’re back?”

Samuel grunted in response.

“Did you hear my conversation with Franklin?” Natalie asked.

“Well, I heard the last part.” Samuel walked to Natalie’s side and wrapped her soft body in his arms.

Chapter 778 The Guarantee

“You’re so much better at observing and speaking to children than I am,” Samuel sighed in her ear.

“Looking back now, I would have spent the past five years with you if I didn’t get involved with the wrong person. Sophia might not have contracted aphasia.”

His laments of remorse, accompanied by the coolness of the night wind, tingled Natalie’s ears.

“If you didn’t waste those five years, we might not have fallen in love with each other,” Natalie replied with a smile. “Only through suffering will we know what true happiness feels like. I would much rather have tasted bitterness without you to know how sweet life is with you than any other way.”

His heart skipping a beat at her words, Samuel lifted Natalie up in his arms and carried her straight to the bedroom on the second floor.

Without pausing to set her down, he kicked open the bedroom door deftly and placed her gently down on their vast bed.

“It’s only eight,” Natalie squealed as her cheeks reddened, “isn’t it a little too early for bed? Besides, we’d only just done it last night.” Wasn’t the reward he claimed in the study enough?

“That was last night,” Samuel grunted as he unbuttoned his shirt to reveal his firm pectorals. “Today is a new day.”

The masculine power emanating out of his Apollo’s belt mesmerized Natalie.

She could not believe how his primal muscles were concealed beneath the guise of his unassuming business shirt. A body like this can only be found in medical textbooks as a case study for human perfection.

Feeling her eyes on his abdomen, Samuel grinned wickedly as he placed her hand on his Apollo’s belt. “I’m all yours. Touch me.”

Spurred on by the lustful words uttered in his deep and magnetic voice, Natalie’s heart began pounding uncontrollably.

He’s turned me into a depraved nympho like him! How did he know that I wouldn’t reject him? Oh, I want to run my hands all over him so badly!

Natalie’s hands coming to life as she caressed him all over was exactly what stoked Samuel’s own burning desire.

He kissed her desperately and created a feverish heat in her that she never knew was possible.

“We’ve been doing this a lot of late,” Natalie gasped. “Will I get pregnant?” Having been worried about not taking precautions lately, she was not looking forward to any accidents that would occur given their reckless passion for one another. Though she adored children, Natalie was not ready for another pregnancy.

“You won’t.”

“Eh?” Natalie was momentarily stunned as she gazed confusedly at the man on top of her. How can he be so sure? We’ve been going at it like rabbits every day. I’d be surprised if I didn’t get pregnant. Could he be lying to reassure me?

As the heat of her passion died down a little from anxiety, Samuel kissed her forehead gently. “I guarantee you, we won’t get pregnant. I’d gotten a vasectomy.”

Natalie could not believe her ears. “Vasectomy? When did you get one?”

“Before the first time we did it after reuniting,” Samuel replied as panted. “Condoms are uncomfortable, and I worry about the stress contraceptives place on your health. I don’t want you to experience the pain of childbirth again. Even worse, I don’t want to have to not touch you for so long. It’s something I’m willing to do.”

Classic Samuel. He would do something for me and not tell me until I ask him about it.

Natalie had been wondering if there was something wrong with her womb. Unexpectedly, it was due to Samuel’s selflessness that had put her at ease without her having to worry about it. She knew many men who would not give up something like that for their wives, yet he did it for her.

At that thought, Natalie’s heart erupted with a renewed bout of love and gratitude for the man on top of her.

Not knowing how to repay his affection, Natalie could only please him with the most primitive of pleasures. What she did not know, however, was that it was enough for Samuel.

Chapter 779 The Bold Demand

On the following morning, Natalie went to the old Bayer residence according to Thomas’ wishes at the appointed hour.

Although the old house was located in the middle of the city, it had long lost its former grandeur. A dense wall of green creepers had covered the entirety of the red brick wall and blocked the sunlight from reaching indoors, making the house look more gloomy than it already was.

Natalie was not afraid of ghosts and spirits. She pushed open the rusted iron door and strode right in.

As if to prove her wrong, a black cat suddenly jumped out of the unkempt grass with a yowl and made Natalie jump.

After comforting herself with the reasoning that a stray cat would undoubtedly find comfort in the tall, scraggly lawn, Natalie found herself wondering about Thomas' motives for inviting her to a place where few people came.

As she walked, Natalie kept a wary eye. Before entering the house, she had sent a location link to Samuel who was keeping an eye on her. As added precautions, she had turned on the real-time recording and online transmission functions of her phone.

Although Thomas had become powerless and disgraced, she was afraid that he might be tempted to act desperately should he feel like he was being backed into a corner.

Within a few steps into the yard, she saw him.

Thomas looked several decades older than when Natalie had last seen him. More than half of his hair had turned white. His face was haggard and worn from the loose skin that hung about his cheeks. In short, he looked as different from the middle-aged man in his prime as he could possibly look.

During their last encounter at the door of Dream's office building, Natalie had not noticed the stump on Thomas' left arm. This time, she saw the obvious discrepancy in the length of his left hand compared to his right. As if to complete the puzzling sight, his left stump bulged in its snug gauze enclosure.

Being familiar with human anatomy, Natalie frowned at once. "What's wrong with your hand?"

"Er," Thomas mumbled vaguely as he avoided her gaze, "I had an accident. My arm had been cut off by a machine. As the infection was becoming serious, the doctor suggested removing it all to contain the spread."

"What machine?" Natalie asked, her eyes narrowing further. To her knowledge, businessmen like Thomas did not have any need to operate dangerous machinery.

"I..." Thomas did not know how to answer. The only thing he could do was to change the subject. "I was at the factory for an inspection and I... Never mind, that's not the point. I came to you today because I have more important things to tell you."

"Fine," Natalie said coldly, "let's get straight to the point. What happened twenty-three years ago?"

Thomas licked his dry lips and wore an unctuous smile. "I'm your father no matter what, Nat. Can we talk about Dexmed Pharmaceutical first? I promise we'll talk about your grandfather soon."

"Dexmed Pharmaceutical is my life's blood," he continued at Natalie's curt nod, "and I have paid too much for it to be taken from me. Don't you think two million for all the shares in my possession to be too cruel?"

"Two million is too little?" Natalie repeated mercilessly, "Dexmed Pharmaceutical had a sterling reputation, no doubt, but it has been declining over the years. Coupled with the recent scandal, you should be content that somebody would pay two million for the mess you've made."

"It's too paltry a sum for-"

"Two million, if you live frugally, is more than enough for the rest of your life," Natalie sneered. "You should have thought of that before you betrayed my grandfather and my mother!"

Thomas gazed at her with despair. "I...but I'm your father! It was your mother's fault that I'd treated you badly before! Without me, you wouldn't have been born! How is two million enough for me to live out my days? Two hundred million! Give me two hundred million for me to enjoy my twilight years, and I will tell you everything that happened to your grandfather!"

Two hundred million? He's got balls to ask for a hundred times what he got.

Natalie pursed her lips and regarded the stubborn and shameless man before her.

"So that is why you wanted to meet today." Natalie stared at Thomas coldly. "Is this your term for a peace negotiation? You want me to spend two hundred million to buy the truth of my

Chapter 780 Thomas Is Not Your Biological Father

Thomas said bashfully, "There's no need to be so formal between the two of us. Only strangers negotiate the terms and conditions. Both of us will always be related. It's your responsibility to take care of me. Now that you have Dream Corporation, Samuel, and so much money, it shouldn't be too difficult for you to give me two hundred million for me to enjoy my retirement life. Right?"

A sarcastic smile appeared on Natalie's face.

She had never seen anyone who was so shameless. He had never done anything for her in his entire life, and yet, he had the cheek to say something like that!

"No, it won't be an issue," Natalie blurted.

Thomas started grinning shamelessly. "I knew it..."

"It isn't an issue, but I just don't want to give it to you." An icy glint flashed across Natalie's eyes. "If you think you can use this kind of method to get money from me, think again."

When Thomas heard that, his expression changed drastically. His earlier honorable look was long gone. "Natalie, you care a lot for your granddad and mother, don't you? Two hundred million is all you need to find out about the truth. What? You claim you care a lot about them. Yet, you aren't willing to fork out the money!"

Natalie had no wish to carry on with the conversation, so she turned and prepared to leave.

Before she came to meet him, she had thought that Thomas might feel a little remorseful after what had happened.

Little did she realize that it was only her wishful thinking!

Even if she did pay Thomas the two hundred million that he demanded, the story from him might not be entirely accurate. If that was the case, there was no need for her to pay Thomas at all.

Seeing that Natalie was about to leave, Thomas panicked and chased after her. "If you think two hundred million is too much, we can talk about it! How about one hundred and eighty million? A hundred and fifty? All right! One hundred million! That's the lowest I can go!"

The bargaining from Thomas did not stop Natalie from walking away.

It was so close for Thomas to get what he wanted. He could not just let her leave.

“Natalie, do you really not care about me? I’m your father after all. D-Do you really want to see me dead? No matter what, we are father and daughter!”

Natalie sneered coldly in her heart when she heard that.

Pfft! Pfft! Just then, she could hear the sound of a knife plunging into flesh followed by a groan from Thomas.

Sensing that something was amiss, Natalie turned around immediately and saw that Thomas had been stabbed twice close to his heart.

They were deep stab wounds, and blood was gushing out furiously.

Thomas looked down at his wounds in disbelief before slumping to the ground.

The moment he collapsed, the identity of the murderer was revealed.

It was none other than Thomas’ wife, Yvonne. Her hands were dripping with blood. Not only that, even her eyes had been splattered with Thomas’ blood.

Yvonne shouted emotionally, “Thomas, you deserve to die! You are a beast. You’re not fit to be Melissa’s father. I will kill you for Melissa! Kill you!”

Both Thomas and Natalie did not expect Yvonne to escape from the psychiatric hospital.

Thomas was well aware of Natalie’s medical expertise. Trying to crawl to her, he called out in pain, “Natalie, save me. I’m your dad. If I die, you won’t have a father anymore!”

He loved money and fortune, but he was also scared of dying.

He knew he had been stabbed in the chest, but he had no wish of dying so soon.

When Natalie saw Thomas squirming like a bug on the ground, she felt helpless all of a sudden.

He was wicked beyond redemption, but he was still her biological father after all. No matter how much she hated him to the core, she could not help but feel worried when she saw him in such a weakly state.

Just as Natalie took a step forward to try to save Thomas, Yvonne laughed out loud. “Father? He’s not fit to be your father. What a joke! He’s not even your biological father!”