

A Cue for Love Chapter 1081

Chapter 1081 Blew Up Their Underground Base

Mother handed me the jade key back when she was still alive, urging me to protect it no matter what. Never will I hand over such a crucial treasure as the jade key to this evil woman before me!

Widening her eyes, Yumi riposted, “No, I didn’t... I don’t know anything about a jade key! Let me go! My mommy will definitely come and save me! At that time, you’ll be dead!”

“Mommy? Are you referring to Natalie? Will she really save you when the two of you aren’t related by blood at all?” Zophie scoffed with a mirthless smirk.

She deliberately said that to break Yumi. Unexpectedly, Yumi insisted obstinately, “My mommy will definitely come and save me!”

“You’re still being stubborn, brat? Is that woman pure just because she’s standing in the sun? Her hands are similarly stained with blood! Such a two-faced sl*t can only dupe a four or five-year-old kid like you!” Zophie snarled, loathing her to the core.

Chagrin swamped her as she took note of the unwavering trust in Yumi’s eyes toward Natalie. If it weren’t for that woman, Gale wouldn’t have died in that explosion, blown to bits and pieces!

Yumi didn’t quite understand the meaning of the word “sl*t.”

Nonetheless, she was certain that the woman was scolding Natalie.

From the instant Natalie appeared at the orphanage and helped her, a glimmer of light seemingly broke through the darkness she once imagined her life to be.

Natalie adopted her and took her away from the orphanage, bringing her home where Franklin, Sophia, Xavian, and Clayton resided. She could sense that everyone in the family loved and cared for her sincerely.

All that was given to her by Natalie. In this world, no one had ever treated her so well other than her biological mother.

Hence, she was so livid upon hearing Zophie scold Natalie that her face flushed bright red. Opening her mouth, she bit Zophie’s hand hard. She exerted all her might while doing so, giving it her all.

Never having expected such a young child to be so aggressive, Zophie only realized what had happened when her hand was bleeding. As pain assailed her, she shoved Yumi away.

Yumi failed to brace herself for it. The back of her head hit the wall with a thud. Lifting her hand, Zophie wanted to slap her. But just when her hand was about to land on Yumi's face, she stilled and thrust a finger in her face instead.

"Brat, don't think that you can fool me just by playing dumb! You're the kid the organization is looking for. Since the jade key isn't with you, it's naturally with Natalie. Since you're so sure that she'll come and save you, I'll exchange you for the jade key. If she isn't willing to hand it over, I'll set you on fire!" Zophie warned through clenched teeth.

All at once, Yumi's heart jolted. *Crap!* This evil woman wants to exchange me for the jade key! Meanwhile, the four children were picked up by Yandel.

When Natalie received a message from the man telling her that the children were with him, the weight on her heart finally lifted.

Jerome went to her, and they both watched the surveillance footage Xavian sent over together.

The footage was taken from a distance, so it only captured the woman's features roughly. That aside, the resolution was pretty low.

Natalie combed through her circle of acquaintances before shaking her head. "I don't know this woman. Shall we start by investigating this woman—"

Before she had finished speaking, Jerome interrupted her. "I know this woman." "Who is she, Jerome?" Natalie asked nervously. "She's Zophie, a member of Blaze."

With an icy expression on his face, Jerome continued, "It's a mysterious crime syndicate whose leader and organization is unknown. Many filthy and unethical things are spurred by Blaze behind the scenes. When did you get involved with Blaze, Natalie?"

At the mention of Blaze, Natalie finally had some recollection of things. She sucked in a breath. "I know why, then. Half a year ago, I blew up Blaze's underground base in Dellmoor, Chanaea."

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Chapter 1082 Only Death Awaits Her

The instant Natalie's words rang out, Jerome exclaimed in astonishment, "What? You were the one who blew up Blaze's underground base in Dellmoor, Chanaea? The

internal rumors credited it to Prince Jonathan, claiming that it was his subordinates who accomplished the raid and detonation in Chanaea this time.”

His voice brimmed with regret on Natalie’s behalf. On the contrary, Natalie didn’t find it meritorious and didn’t mind whoever the rumors credited.

Back then, she only slipped into Blaze’s underground base to obtain the antidote for Samuel’s accelerated aging. Even if she could reverse time and make a different decision, she would still choose to find the antidote and blow up the underground base filled with biochemistry perils.

“It doesn’t matter.” Natalie shook her head indifferently as she maintained solemnly, “I’m only concerned about this woman known as Zophie. Where is she now, and why did she kidnap Yumi? Wouldn’t it have been better to take Sophia if she wanted revenge against me? Since she knew that the kids are my weakness and wanted to use them to threaten me, why did she take Yumi instead of Sophia when it boiled down to a choice between the two of them?”

She simply couldn’t make any sense of that. Although Blaze was exceedingly mysterious, they didn’t seem the type to make such a careless mistake, judging from her few confrontations with them. “Could it have been an accident?” Jerome wondered with a frown.

“That’s impossible,” Natalie answered intuitively. “I asked Sophia, and at that time, she and Yumi were the only ones there. When it boiled down to a choice between the two girls, picking Sophia would’ve been the smarter choice. There must be some reason that woman took Yumi away instead of Sophia, my biological daughter.”

“My men are already investigating the matter. They’ll report back as soon as there’s news. Natalie, that woman must have had some motive to choose to capture Yumi alive. As such, Yumi’s life won’t be in danger for the time being. No matter what, I’ll figure out a way to help you rescue her together,” Jerome vowed.

Natalie felt much more at ease with Jerome helping her. “Thank you so much, Jerome.” She cast her gaze back at the man. At that, Jerome pursed his lips. “How many times have I repeated this? There’s no need for such formalities between us.”

Time ticked by. There was no news from Jerome’s side, but Natalie’s phone on the table started ringing. The caller ID indicated an unknown number. Swiping the answer button, Natalie brought her phone to her ear. “Hello—”

“Turn off your phone’s location tracker.” A woman’s eerily cool voice drifted out of the phone. “You’re Zophie?” Natalie inquired, cutting straight to the chase.

“Sure enough, you’re something else that you even know my name.” In a flash, the woman’s voice turned chilly. “Since you know who I am, you must know that your

precious daughter is in my hands. If you want her to remain safe and sound, do as I said and turn off your phone's location tracking!"

"Okay, I'll do it." Exiting the phone call interface, Natalie turned off the location tracking function Xavian developed for her. "I've turned it off, Zophie. Now, you can tell me why exactly you kidnapped my daughter," she uttered, her brows furrowed.

Zophie glanced back over her shoulder at the girl tied in the corner before sneering, "This kid should've had a jade key on her. But now, it isn't with her. Thus, it must be in your hands. Hand me the key, and I'll return her to you. I'll slowly settle the score for our other past grievances with you in the future."

A jade key? Immediately, Natalie recalled the precious jade key hanging around Yumi's neck when she first adopted her.

At that time, she felt that it was more of some insignia or a key to some sort of mechanism besides being valuable, so she suggested that Yumi entrust it to her for safekeeping.

Never had she thought that Yumi was kidnapped by a member of Blaze because of that jade key. Since Blaze wants the jade key, it proves that its importance far exceeds my expectations previously.

When Zophie received no response from her, her voice suddenly turned vicious. "Speak up! Did you not hear my demand clearly? I want the jade key! Give me the jade key on this little girl! As long as you do so, I promise that she'll remain alive. Otherwise, only death awaits her!"

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Chapter 1083 You Threatened Me First

Yumi must have been terrified when she was kidnapped by the woman! Besides the fact that Blaze was a crime syndicate involved in all sorts of immoral activities, Zophie was sounding like a crazy woman over the phone.

As such, Natalie was extremely worried about Yumi's current situation. She tightened her grip on her phone as a determined gaze flashed across her eyes. "I'm the one you're after. Let the kid go and don't hurt her! Otherwise, not only would you not get the key, I'll make sure you and your organization pay a terrible price for this!"

Although they were just speaking over the phone, Zophie could not help but feel slightly intimidated by Natalie.

"Natalie, I've already said that I don't care whether the child lives or dies. I only care about getting the jade key." Zophie raised her voice as she continued, "Give me the

jade key and I'll let the child live. If you don't give it to me or play any tricks, I'll make sure you never see the girl again. Not only that, I'll make sure she dies a painful death!"

Zophie did not sound like she was joking. As Natalie was worried that Zophie would get too agitated and end up hurting Yumi, she replied without hesitation, "Yup! I have the jade key. I will give it to you, but I want to hear Yumi's voice now to make sure that she's still safe!"

There was silence on the other end of the line, and Zophie seemed to be hesitating.

However, Natalie was not intending to back down. "Zophie, since you are holding the child hostage to threaten me, you have to let me know that she's safe! If I can't be sure that you have not harmed her, not only would I not give you the key, but I would also destroy it so that you and your organization can forget about having it ever!"

Natalie had set a clear bottom line. She could always get the key back again after losing it. However, if something bad happened to Yumi, it would be irreversible!

"All right then. I'll let you hear her voice," Zophie finally replied. A few seconds after rustling sounds sounded through the phone, Natalie heard the girl speaking in between sobs. "Mommy..."

"Yumi, are you okay?" Natalie's voice softened instantly. "Mommy, I'm fine," Yumi reassured Natalie, trying her best to control her emotions as she did not want her mother to worry. "Tell me the truth."

Yumi was taken aback for a moment when she heard the woman's words. The next instant, tears started flowing down her cheeks. After all, she was only five, and it wasn't easy for her to force herself to be brave in such a situation.

Unable to hold back any longer, the girl answered, "Mommy, I feel a little dizzy, and I feel like puking... I'm very scared..."

"All right, hang in there. Mommy is coming to save you." Natalie could feel her heart aching badly. "When you're scared, just think about what you want to do with me, Franklin and Sophia after you get home. When you are back, tell me all about it and we will do all of them together..."

Yumi felt a lot better after hearing Natalie's words. "Okay, Mommy! I will wait for you!"

"That's my good girl!" Zophie was not sure what Yumi and Natalie had talked about exactly, but she could tell that the girl was visibly more relaxed and did not look as terrified and flustered as before.

Zophie felt extremely uneasy about the change. She did not like it at all. What the h*ll just happened?

What did she say to the girl?

Zophie snatched the phone back from Yumi's hands and said, "That's enough for you to confirm that she's safe." "Did you hit her?" Natalie questioned.

"You—" "You don't have to answer me," Natalie interrupted the woman before continuing, "Let me repeat myself. Even though you have Yumi now, I will only give you the key on the condition that she's perfectly safe. If you hurt her even a little bit, I'll make sure that the jade key is destroyed to a similar extent..."

Zophie could barely believe what she had just heard. Narrowing her eyes, she asked, "Natalie, are you threatening me now?"

"You threatened me first," Natalie replied coldly. "I'll give you the key, but I've hidden it in a secret place. As such, I'll need some time to prepare. Two days is all I need. Two days later, you can decide on the method of our exchange."

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Chapter 1084 Silver Tongue

"Two days?" Two days seemed rather long to Zophie. "Yup," Natalie replied in an unwavering manner. "If you are not even willing to wait two days, there's nothing I can do. Just remember that I'll be treating the jade key in the exact same way you treat Yumi. You can weigh the consequences yourself."

Zophie did not find anything amiss with Natalie's request, and given how firm the woman seemed, Zophie had no choice but to agree. "Sure. I'll give you two days then. Two days later, I'll send you a message with the details of our exchange."

"No problem." Natalie thought for a brief moment before continuing, "For the next forty-eight hours, you have to send me a video of Yumi every six hours so that I'll know that she's still safe. If you delay in sending the videos, our exchange shall be delayed by an equal amount of time."

"You!" Zophie did not expect Natalie to keep pushing her luck. "I think that's a reasonable request," Natalie said in a frosty voice. "If you can't even do that, how am I supposed to believe that you'll return Yumi to me safely after I've given you the key?"

It felt as if Natalie knew exactly what Zophie had up her sleeves. Getting the jade key was not enough for Zophie to forgive the woman for causing Gale's death!

Although they were just speaking over the phone, Natalie had a silver tongue and was pretty much talking Zophie into agreeing to all of her requests.

Sensing that she was losing control of the situation, Zophie quickly said, "I will do as you say. I don't think there's anything else we need to talk about. I'm hanging up now."

The next moment, the line went dead. Natalie slumped into her chair in exhaustion after putting down her phone.

Jerome had been beside Natalie all the while when she was speaking with Zophie. Even though he could not hear the full conversation, he had clearly heard what Natalie said and noticed that the jade key had been brought up many times during the conversation.

As such, the man could not help but ask, "Natalie, what's the jade key that you kept mentioning? What has it got to do with Yumi?"

Yumi was Natalie's adopted daughter, and the latter had mentioned to Jerome how she adopted the little girl previously.

However, she had not told him about the jade key, which was connected to Yumi's background.

As Natalie trusted Jerome greatly, she decided to tell him the full story. "Back then, when I adopted Yumi, I discovered that she was wearing a unique jade key. As I was worried that she might accidentally break it while playing, I decided to keep it safe for her so that she could use it to search for her family in the future. But now, it seems like there's indeed something special about the jade key, and that's why Blaze has been trying so hard to get their hands on it."

"That's for sure." Jerome frowned and said with a solemn expression, "Blaze has wild ambitions. If I'm not wrong, that's probably the key to some kind of treasure. That's why they are trying to get it at all costs! If it ends up in Blaze's hands, the world might be in danger!"

Natalie had already considered everything the man just said.

No doubt, it would definitely be detrimental to let Blaze have the key.

"Do you really intend to give Zophie the jade key?" Jerome asked uncertainly before continuing, "And you're going to try to get the key back after making sure that Yumi is safe?"

"That's not the best plan," Natalie answered while tapping her fingers on the table lightly. "Whatever we thought about, I'm sure Zophie would have thought of it as well. Once the key is with her, it would be very difficult for us to get it back. Moreover, after giving her the key, there would be more things for us to take care of, and it might put Yumi in danger too. She's my child. I don't really care what happens to me, but I am not going to put my daughter at risk."

If that's the case, it seems like there are not many options left for us.

With a deeper crease between his brows, Jerome asked, "Natalie, what do you think is the optimal solution then?"

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Chapter 1085 Would Not Expose

Natalie lifted her head under Jerome's stare and met his eyes. "I'm not going to hand this jade key to Zophie or Blaze before I can determine its usefulness. I'll keep the key by my side. Now, I just need to find a way to duplicate the key in two days."

His mouth was left slightly ajar as he was shocked by Natalie's idea. "I may not have personally seen the jade key, but I imagine it's not going to be easy to replicate a piece of jade that was carved into the shape of a key. I don't think two days will be enough for you to copy it..." said Jerome. His concerns were already considered by her.

Thus, she nodded and said, "That's right! There's no way an ordinary person can do it. However, if that person is willing to help out, then two days is possible."

"Who?" "Varre Appleby," Natalie uttered his name slowly.

"Varre used to be a master craftsman hired by the government. However, I heard from my father that there has been no news about him in recent years." Jerome sighed. "His skills can be described as divine, but his whereabouts are unknown. Two days may not even be enough time for you to find him..."

Despite that, Natalie didn't seem at all dejected. In fact, she smiled confidently. "What if I say I know his daughter?"

Jerome couldn't believe his ears. "What? You know Varre's daughter?"

"Mhm." Raising her chin, she continued, "I need to ask Mr. Appleby to replicate that jade key as fast as possible to fool Zophie. Even if I make the exchange with her, it's not guaranteed that she'll return Yumi to me. If I have to choose one over the other, I will do my best to protect Yumi. It won't matter to me if the fake key is shattered or not. I don't care how other people view my relationship with Yumi, but since I've adopted her, I'm not going to give up on her. She is my daughter, and she's so very obedient. To me, there's no difference between her and Xavian, Franklin, Clayton, or Sophia. This is the only way I can protect her and the children for now, so I must give it a try!"

When Natalie finished speaking, admiration and infatuation surfaced in Jerome's eyes as he stared at her.

He thought the days he spent away from her and in the army would help him grow powerful enough to protect her. Yet, it surprised him that she was getting increasingly capable at an astonishing speed when he wasn't paying attention.

It was as though the present and the past were overlapping. He could only stand by her side and stare at the confident glow emanating from her body, just like how it was when they were young. "I'll go with you to look for Varre," Jerome suggested.

With a shake of her head, Natalie declined, "I know you want to protect me, and I'm grateful for that, but you can't come with me. There's no way Zophie's letting me roam around for forty-eight hours without having someone keeping an eye on me. I still need your help to put up a smokescreen!"

Since she had made her reasoning clear, he had no choice but to agree with the plan.

"Okay, I'll continue to put up the act as you wish. However, you must maintain contact with me. If you encounter any danger at all, you must call me right away. Promise me."

"I promise," said Natalie without hesitation. After their conversation ended, Natalie summoned Billy. Before Samuel went to look for Jorden, he intentionally left Billy behind for her.

Even though on the surface, he simply left her a skilled bodyguard, the truth was anything but. Not only was Billy skilled as a bodyguard, but he also represented the power and resources that Samuel had secretly cultivated over the years.

"I've sent someone to track down Zophie, Mrs. Bowers," Billy informed.

"Try to keep it discreet." Natalie continued, "She's a member of Blaze, so she has likely received professional training before and has a powerful anti-detection awareness. I'd rather have the process of tracking her down be slow than to have it noticed by her."

"I understand." "Oh yeah, help me find someone." As she pulled out a hyper-realistic mask from the drawer and handed it to Billy, she informed, "I need someone who can act well to wear this mask before traveling between Chanaea and Loang once.

Also, remember to reinforce security and prevent any accidents from happening. You need to treat this substitute like she's me. So, remember to use the Bowers family's and Dream's resources if it's necessary to ensure she isn't exposed."