

“That’s right,” Natalie replied, looking levelly into Annie’s eyes.

Instantly, Annie’s features contorted in disdain. Raising her voice, she demanded, “What about Dr. Quinn? Isn’t he your boyfriend? How did it end up being Mr. Shane?”

At Annie’s question, Shane turned to look at Natalie, his gaze unfathomable.

Shane knew that Natalie had only been pretending to be in a relationship with Stanley when they attended Antony’s wedding together.

However, he couldn’t shake the feeling of uneasiness that filled him whenever that matter came to mind. After all, Natalie’s name would always be linked to Stanley’s in some way, just as it was now.

Mercede was similarly baffled by Annie’s statement. Peering at Natalie, she asked carefully, “My dear, you refused to date while you were here, even when I asked you to. I didn’t expect you to be so quick when you got home. You’ve even gotten two boyfriends!”

Shane’s handsome face looked somewhat downcast. Deep inside, he felt a mixture of frustration and hurt.

I’m clearly Natalie’s first boyfriend! Yet, in everyone’s mind, I’ll always come second.

Natalie could sense the wave of resentment that radiated from Shane. In that instant, she could thoroughly taste the bitterness of regret.

If I’d known that I would eventually be together with Shane, I would not have attended that wedding with Stanley!

Annie, in the meantime, had grown impatient. She reached forward and grabbed Natalie’s arm, pressing, “So? What’s going on between you and Dr. Quinn, then?”

“Annie!” Andre was alarmed by his daughter’s sudden bout of violence. After all, Shane was present, and the Hills couldn’t afford to offend him.

Before Annie could react, however, Shane had already leaped forward and pulled Natalie over to his side. He fixed Annie with a frigid glare, saying icily, “Don’t touch her!”

Mercede, who had been spectating the scene at the side, nodded heartily.

Annie turned to Shane with a troubled look on her face. She gulped, then stammered, “W-What happened to Dr. Quinn?”

“Nothing happened. Stanley and I broke up, that’s all,” Natalie replied shortly.

When Natalie finished speaking, however, she immediately felt a sharp pain in her arm, a result of a vehement pinch from Shane.

She turned toward him indignantly but realized that he was punishing her for not telling the truth.

Helpless, Natalie groaned inwardly.

She longed to be as frank as Shane wanted her to be and admit to the Hills that she and Stanley had never been in a relationship.

However, that confession would be akin to a slap in Stanley’s face.

“Broke up?” Annie gaped. The look of wrath on her face disappeared instantly and was replaced by one of incredulity. “Have you both really broken up?”

Natalie wrestled her arm free from Shane’s grip, then took his hand in hers, interlocking their fingers. Swinging their clasped hands forward, Natalie sneered, “Why else would I be with Mr. Shane now?”

Natalie’s blatant profession of their relationship succeeded in dissipating Shane’s displeasure. His grim expression faded away, and a faint smile hovered over his lips.

Mercede was impressed by Natalie’s turnaround of the situation and gave a low whistle.

Who would’ve thought that Natalie would be so good at flirting with so little experience?

Having confirmed that Natalie had indeed broken up with Stanley, Annie felt a shiver of glee run down her spine.

However, she checked herself and merely clutched both trembling hands together in a bid to restrain the joy in her heart.

“How is Dr. Quinn?” Annie asked hurriedly. She did not care about the reason behind the break-up, only the fact that it had happened.

Natalie was aware of Annie’s feelings for Stanley and knew exactly what was going through her mind.

If not for Joyce, Natalie would have wholeheartedly given Annie her blessing.

However, she could not tell Annie the truth for Joyce’s sake.

Thus, Natalie quickly volunteered with a bright smile, “He’s doing great! He’s even gotten himself a new girlfriend now.”