

KINDA SWEET 261

Chapter 261 Victoria Leaves the Country

And this child would be the only memento he'd ever leave her!

Victoria didn't say it out loud. She simply smiled mildly, her delicate features sparkling with gentle, peaceable light.

"I've thought it over. I'll give birth to him properly and raise him to adulthood. No matter what hardships

come in the future, I won't regret my decision today. Besides, no matter how difficult it gets, I still have you, right? It's not so easy to be a godmother. Are you going to support us mother and child?"

Natalia fumed.

She couldn't resist the urge to roll her eyes.

"Yes, yes, fine. I'll support you two. But how would you explain this to the old man? I heard you left home because you two argued. He probably won't permit you to give birth to this child."

Victoria was silent for a while.

Then she murmured, "I can't budge on this. If he won't forgive me, then he'll just have to treat it like he's never given birth to me as a daughter. After all... I haven't done anything to be proud of."

Natalia's heart ached as she heard that.

"Victoria."

Victoria forced a smile and lifted her head.

"I'm alright. No need to comfort me, really. I've thought it all through in this time. The most important thing for me right now is to raise this child properly. The environment inside the country is messy and chaotic. Even though I've decided on all this, I still don't want the public to know, so I'll be leaving the country all the same for these days. If you miss me, you can fly over to see me. When the dust settles, I'll be back."

Natalia couldn't voice her bitterness.

But since Victoria had made her decision, she had no other choice than to support her.

She got up, walked over to her, and held her hand.

"Don't forget you still have me no matter where you go, Victoria."

Smiling, Victoria nodded.

...

Three days later, Victoria left.

That day, Natalia went over to the airport to see her off, even giving her a list of people she'd been

close to in Othua. If something really came up, she'd have someone to contact.

Jokingly, Victoria noted that, five years ago, she'd seen Natalia off, and now it was Natalia's turn to see

her off. No matter how you looked at it, what went around came around.

Natalia could only smile helplessly, missing her already even though they could meet whenever they

wanted in Othua.

It wouldn't be as convenient as it had been in Julio. She was also worried about the secret that Victoria

wouldn't tell her.

But Natalia didn't say any of that out loud. She went back to the office after she'd seen Victoria off.

Archie had gone back to Eqitin for a couple of days, taking Ariana and Anne back with him.

Anne's health wasn't good, and she needed regular checkups. Archie was there for it every time.

Natalia had wanted to go as well, but with Kiera's case in Julio demanding her attention at any

moment, she couldn't leave. They'd have to leave it for next time.

Knowing that she'd come back safely, Nathan and Hamlin were overjoyed.

They hadn't believed Jessica before, and this proved that they were right. Only, hearing about Natalia's mother, they had to sigh about the whole affair.

But sigh as they would, they still had work to do.

This night, Nathan booked a spot in the Parlour and held a gathering. Natalia was invited.

The people attending the gathering were all bigshot seniors in entertainment, and because it was a private affair, not too many people were attending, so it didn't count as official business.

Since Natalia was making her living in such circles, she'd have to interact with such people eventually.

Nathan had invited her to the gathering with some intention to pave the way for her, so of course she couldn't turn him down.

At eight in the night, social lubricants were in full flow in the Parlour.

The compartment that Nathan had booked was on the third floor. The banquet hall was inside, leading out into a small garden with a nice view.

Of course, drinking was a given in a gathering like this.

Thankfully, Natalia could handle her alcohol, so she wasn't too put off.

Everyone who attended were seniors in the entertainment business, most of them having a great

relationship with Nathan.

They hadn't known who Natalia was before, but after this incident and knowing she was Archie

McCarthy's wife, they naturally all tried to get in good with her.

As night fell, the atmosphere was one of relative harmony and enjoyment.

At about eleven, everyone had had about enough to drink.

Natalia went to the washroom for a moment, and suddenly received a call from Archie as she came out.

The man's voice was as low and clear as always. "What are you doing?"

Natalia walked over to the balcony on the side, enjoying the breeze as she replied, "Drinking."

"Is that so?"

She didn't need to look to tell that Archie seemed to be frowning.

Archie didn't like it when she attended to business like this. With his status, it was enough for her to not go anywhere.

Natalia laughed and didn't want him to overthink it. "Nathan put together a banquet. It's all bigshots

here. He wanted me to make an impression.”

The man’s voice calmed somewhat. “How much did you drink?”

“Not that much. They’re all seniors, so it wouldn’t be fitting to have me drink too much. Besides, with

you at my back, they’ve given me more consideration, so it’s a good deal for me.”

Archie laughed too. “What kind of good deal is that? If you don’t want to deal with them, don’t. With me

here, no one would dare tread on you.”

His words were casual, but they were infinitely warm.

A gentle smile graced Natalia’s lips as she nodded. “All right. I’ve got it.”

Seeing her like this, Archie’s mood improved even more, and he murmured, “I’ll be back tomorrow

morning. Come pick me up at the airport?”

Natalia blinked and didn’t think that he’d be back so soon, so she agreed.

The two chatted for a while longer and hung up.

After she put her phone away, Natalia enjoyed the breeze for a while longer, felt the alcohol fade, and

got ready to head back.

But the moment she lifted her head, she saw a young man headed her way.

“Stephen? What are you doing here?”

Stephen was still keeping up his lollygagging pretty-boy image. He lifted his glass.

“There’s a banquet, so I’m coming over to sit around. What are you doing here instead of going back to

Eqitin with my brother?”

Natalia chuckled. “So only you are allowed to deal with business, and I’m not?”

Stephen poked his nose. “With my brother at your back, you’ve got no reason to attend to business.”

All right. Guess those two really were brothers.

Natalia took a look at the time and found it was getting late, so she didn’t linger to chat.

“All right, I’m going back in. Don’t drink too much, all right?”

Stephen nodded.

Natalia headed back into the hall.

At that moment, the compartment next to theirs was pushed open from the inside, and a drunken man stumbled out with his hand over his mouth.

Natalia jumped. She’d just made it to the door to the compartment, so the man crashed squarely into

her the moment he emerged.

Chapter 262 Plastic Love

“Excuse me, where’s the restroom?”

Natalia blinked.

That voice sounded familiar?

She tilted her head and looked over, while the man looked up. The two started.

“Shawn?”

“Natalia?”

“What are you doing here?”

“What are you doing here?”

They spoke the same sentence at once.

After that, their expressions didn’t look too good.

Natalia was bemused.

Of all the people she could bump into here!

Ever since that day she’d made their boundaries clear on the island, she’d thought she’d never see him

again, but with her rotten luck, she wasn't just bumping into him here, but his compartment was right next to hers.

Shawn's face changed slightly, but he calmed soon enough.

He looked Natalia up and down.

It had to be said that she was getting more and more beautiful.

A beige one-piece dress emphasized her slim, slender figure, with sandals of the same color on her feet. Her black tresses flowed behind her, and she looked delicate and pure.

He'd only thought she was pretty before, but lacked the womanly aura that he liked, so he'd never been that interested in her.

But now, seems like if she put her mind to dressing up, her charms wouldn't lose to Jessica's.

In fact, they'd even surpass hers.

Shawn's gaze dimmed, and he suppressed his drunkenness, straightening up as he smiled. "I'm here to meet some friends of mine. What a coincidence seeing you here."

Natalia didn't grace him with a nice face.

"I'm not interested in what you're doing here. Please move out of the way if there's nothing else. I'm

going back to my room.”

Shawn cocked an eyebrow and looked at the compartment next to his.

“You’re next door?”

Natalia rolled her eyes.

She must have inherited eight past lives’ worth of bad luck to get a compartment next to his.

“It’s all entertainment people next door. I just saw a few famous directors... oh, right, I forgot, you’re a famous actor now, too.”

These past couple days, “Strategies for Cannon Fodder” had started airing online. Even though it was a web series with small production value, reception was great, and it was getting plenty of clicks.

He smiled, looking a bit lonely. “I saw your performance in that show, Natalia. It was great. I loved it.”

Natalia sneered. “What does my performance have to do with you? Do you think I need your approval?

Your own wife’s still sitting in prison, while you’ve got the mood to come out and drink? What? Getting ready for a new partner already? That’s some real plastic love!”

Shawn’s expression stiffened.

After Jessica's incident, he'd gone back to see her once. He'd felt that she was gentle and elegant

before, but looking at her now, she was just a madwoman trying to think of ways to force him to bail her

out. Forget everything else, she was just an annoyance.

He started regretting things.

Especially seeing Natalia's performance in the show – with an aura and technique that didn't lose to

Jessica's, she couldn't have given that performance without some natural talent.

That was a woman he deserved.

And Jessica...

Ever since half a year or so ago, she'd changed. She wasn't the Jessica that he knew anymore.

At first, he'd thought that she couldn't take the blow, which was why her personality had changed.

But after spending so much time together, he finally discovered that she was really completely different

from what he'd seen before.

She was jealous, incompetent, cheap, cunning but stupid enough to get caught each time.

Worthless!

If it hadn't been for the fact that they couldn't get divorced yet, he'd have left her well enough alone

long ago.

Still that thought had only been dancing around in his head, and it wasn't a strong feeling.

Seeing the way Natalia looked and behaved now, though, that feeling intensified to the point that he couldn't keep it down anymore.

Smiling mildly, Shawn said, "I didn't know you could act before and never thought you could perform this well. As a friend, I'm happy for you. No matter what, that counts as a sort of success!"

Natalia rolled her eyes again.

She didn't waste time chattering with him and had started walking off when he suddenly grabbed her wrist.

"Hey, wait up."

Natalia frowned.

If it hadn't been in public, she'd have kicked him off her.

Still, she kept her patience and grunted, "What do you want now?"

Shawn paused, then said gently, "Mrs. Wright is in there with my father. Now that you're here, aren't

you going to go greet her?”

Natalia blinked.

Mrs. Wright was here too?

That was all well and good, but what was she doing getting mixed up with the Millers?

She had her doubts, but no matter what, Mrs. Wright had always treated her well. It was well and good

if she hadn't known, but not going in to greet her knowing full well that she was here didn't seem right.

Natalia wrenched her hand out of his grip and muttered, “I've got it!”

With that, she pushed her way in.

Shawn's expression softened a little and he smiled as he followed her in.

Not far away, Stephen looked at the scene and frowned, a bit of deep thought running through his

eyes.

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The compartment was large and crowded.

Every single compartment in the Parlour was the equivalent of a home for a normal family of three.

There were stages for performance, arcade rooms, and the nicer ones even had back gardens and a

swimming pool for summers. Plenty of entertainment.

As they went inside, Mrs. Wright and Henry were sitting on a sofa, and across from them sat a middle-aged man in a suit.

The man was in his forties but looked young. His hair was slicked back impeccably. He wore a tailor-made suit. His identity wasn't apparent, but from the aura he emanated, it was clear he wasn't a common person.

Why were the Wrights and the Millers meeting such a man in a place like this? Who was he?

Natalia had her doubts, but didn't overthink it.

Walking over, she called, "Mrs. Wright."

Mrs. Wright had seen her a while ago already. She was surprised, but still nodded.

"You're here too, Natalia? Meeting with friends?"

Natalia nodded. "Yeah, some friends in entertainment circles."

"Oh, right, right. You're part of the entertainment industry now as an actress. You have to be careful; it's a complicated world out there. But your god-granny believes in you. You're a good kid, and you won't

lose your way.”

The old lady’s gently words warmed Natalia’s heart somewhat.

No matter what had happened before and what misunderstandings had occurred, Mrs. Wright was the only person on this side who truly cared for her after her mother passed.

The old lady had known her grandfather before. When the two were alive, they’d been close as siblings. Maybe they’d hoped that their later generations could continue to be friends. That was why

Mrs. Wright had been godmother to her mother, and god-grandmother to her.

Chapter 263 Coup de Grace

It was a pity that fate had other ideas.

Some relationships had broken down eventually.

Natalia didn’t say much of anything else. Having said hello, she prepared to leave.

At that moment, the middle-aged man sitting across them spoke.

“This is Mrs. McCarthy?”

Natalia blinked and looked over.

The middle-aged man wore a gentle and calm smile. The lenient smile of an authority figure looking down on a peasant.

She nodded. "Yes."

"I've seen your performance. You were great. I heard you also sang the theme song for that show? I

especially liked that song. Could you sing it for me again tonight?"

Natalia was a little taken aback.

"Strategies for Cannon Fodder" was just a web series with small production and small investment, after

all. To save costs, Vicente hadn't hired professional singers.

He'd just discovered that Natalia could sing pretty well by accident and had her sing the opening

theme.

She hadn't thought that the man would have heard it.

Natalia was a little embarrassed. She tucked up the hair next to her ear.

"That's.. not so good, since it's your gathering..."

"No, I won't mind. It's just that the song is quite similar to a tune an old friend of mine once wrote. I was

quite moved when I heard it. Now that I've met you today, I wanted to hear it again live. It's my fault for

making such a sudden request."

The man smiled gently as he spoke.

To be honest, it really was a rather sudden request to make of someone you were meeting for the first time.

But because of this man's lenient aura and the honesty in his tone, he gave off the impression of really just wanting to hear the song instead of trying to make her a laughingstock.

Natalia wasn't so stingy. Besides, she could see that the people here were of pretty significant status.

Besides, the man's gaze looked true. Maybe there was some special meaning to him wanting to hear that song.

Since she didn't want to go back to business so early, she really could go and sing that song.

Thinking of that, she looked at Mrs. Wright.

The old lady nodded imperceptibly.

Natalia pursed her lips and finally nodded. "Okay."

There was audio equipment in the compartment. It couldn't be compared to the professional types in recording studios, but to get put in the Parlour, the quality of sound was already quite good.

Natalia had someone put the song on, took up the microphone, and began to sing.

Really, every time she sang this song, she devoted her full self to it. This time was no exception.

When the first note rang out, Natalia devoted her entire body and mind to the world of the music.

This song had been written by a famous composer about a lover of his that he'd once cherished. They had passed away from an accident and he'd kept on thinking about them. The song was about meeting them in his next life.

It was a tune about the parting of life and death, but the overall tone wasn't too sad. There was still a bit of mild sorrow permeating the song, so in general, it meant to mourn without hurting.

Natalia focused entirely on singing, while the middle-aged man had frozen to the spot the moment she opened her mouth.

His face went from gentle leniency to disbelief. He was deeply shaken.

It was different hearing it live compared to hearing it on the television.

On TV, he'd still been shaken, but he'd reacted quickly enough and realized she wasn't her.

It was different live.

The person was right before you, with those eyes, that posture, that tone...

It was as if she was right here, alive.

With the song over, Natalia tugged herself out of the mood of the music and turned around, smiling.

“Sorry for the rough performance.”

Then she realized that the middle-aged man wasn’t reacting at all, only staring at her in a daze.

Natalia’s gut twitched.

Was something wrong?

Mrs. Wright had also seemed to notice the atmosphere wasn’t right, and hastily clapped. “That was

amazing, Natalia. Wouldn’t you say so, Mr. Kawn?”

The man called Mr. Kawn reacted. Looking uncomfortable, he hurriedly nodded. “Yes, that was

amazing.”

Natalia felt that his reaction was really quite strange, but didn’t linger on it. She put the microphone

down and said, “I’m heading back, Mrs. Wright.”

The old lady nodded and smiled. “All right, go! Let’s have Shawn escort you.”

Natalia had wanted to refuse, but Shawn had already walked over to the door. If she refused, it

wouldn’t look too well on her, so she didn’t say anything.

Outside, Shawn chuckled, "That was great. Even better than hearing it on television."

Natalia cocked an eyebrow. "Then how was it compared to Jessica?"

After all, as an all-star on the stage, Jessica had sung plenty of times before!

Shawn's expression stiffened.

He was a little sullen. "What are you bringing her up for?"

Natalia stopped in her tracks, looked at him, and sneered, "I know full well what goes on through that

head of yours, Shawn Miller, so there's no need to pretend in front of me. In the past, the Dawson

family was headed by Clara and Aleena, so to get Clara on your side, you pulled Jessica to your side

only to get the Dawson family into the Miller family. Now that Clara's in trouble, Jessica and Aleena are

facing charges, you're afraid that it'll affect yourself or the Miller family, so you're trying to give her the

boot and come back to me. Do you think everyone's as stupid as her, Shawn? That they'll just stand by

and become your plaything after you feed them your lies?"

Shawn's expression grew ugly.

"What are you saying? Am I such a person in your mind? I'll admit that things aren't good between me

and Jessica right now, but things hadn't been going well even before this mess. I'm not trying to give a coup de grace here!"

Natalia had to laugh at his audacity.

"You're not trying to give a coup de grace? You're serious, Shawn Miller! Do you even believe your own words? I'm telling you, I would have respected you more if you took responsibility and still stood with her, but did you? You didn't! At the end of the day, you only care about yourself, and you've only ever loved yourself. So quit with the act, will you? I feel nothing but disgust. And one last thing, if you've chosen her, then take up the responsibility you should as a man, or else I'd just hate you and look down on you more!"

With that, she turned to leave.

Shawn had never thought that she'd come down on him so hard.

His face turned a collection of different colors.

Finally, he lost his temper and said through clenched teeth, "Natalia! You'll regret what you've said today!"

Natalia didn't turn around.

Shawn was losing his mind with rage.

His eyes worked as he darted up suddenly and pulled her in place. "Wait. I've got a secret. Want to know what it is?"

Natalia examined him and scoffed. "I don't care if you've got a hundred secrets! Let go!"

"I mean it! What would it take for you to believe me? Yes, I admit it, I've done a lot of wrong before; a lot of things I shouldn't have. Maybe I hurt you then. But at least right now, I'm genuinely trying to apologize. Why won't you just give me a chance?"

Chapter 264 A Severe Beating

A bit of mockery flashed through Natalia's eyes.

"You're genuine? In the past, when Clara and Jessica were banding together to lie and keep me down, you stood by, but now you're coming over and saying you're genuine? I'm sorry, but you're genuinely cheap!"

"You..."

"Let go! I'm going in!"

"Natalia, listen to me..."

“I said let go!”

Natalia jerked her hand back, but used too much force and slammed him bodily into the railing.

Shawn let out a pained grunt. Plenty of onlookers saw the scene and were taken aback.

“...”

Natalia blushed slightly.

Well, it wasn't good to drink too much, it seems. She couldn't control her temper and revealed a bit of her abilities without measuring her strength.

Surrounded by confused looks, she wavered between leaving right away or going over to look.

Finally, as low murmurs started emerging around her, she made her decision. She was a celebrity now.

Even though celebrities were dime a dozen in a place like the Parlour, it wouldn't be good to have word get out that she was hitting people in public.

She was thin-skinned and still wanted to save face.

So she ended up walking back towards Shawn and whispering, “Hey! Stop playing dead and get up.”

Shawn massaged his belly, where he'd hit the railing, his face scrunching up with pain.

He staggered up and said through grit teeth, “I'm – I'm fine.”

His face was pale and his forehead beaded with sweat.

Natalia looked at his weak posture and found it hard to believe he really was fine.

She felt a little irritated.

A grown man getting bowled over like this, and now they couldn't argue anymore, could they?

Nothing was broken, right?!

Shawn looked up at her.

"No need. My stomach hurts a little. Can you help me to the restroom?"

Natalia thought about it. She'd just been to the restroom, and it wasn't far, so she agreed.

She helped him all the way to the doorway and muttered, "All right. If they're nothing else, I'm going."

With that, she turned to leave. But then Shawn grabbed her and yanked her all the way into the male restroom.

Natalia wasn't expecting him to pull her in like this. Her surprise quickly mingled with rage.

"Have you lost your fucking mind? Hands off!"

Unable to hold it in, she swore.

Shawn sneered and crushed her against a cubicle, whispering, "Try calling again? Let's see how you explain it away when they see you outside!"

Natalia gritted her teeth.

This was one bad part about being in entertainment.

Sometimes, you had to suffer for your reputation and put up with it.

But she wasn't someone who put up with things. Since she couldn't yell, she clapped her hand over

Shawn's mouth, lifted her high heel, and stomped down hard.

"Nng..."

Shawn groaned with pain.

He tried to struggle, but he didn't know where this woman got her strength from. She pinned her arms behind his back and pressed him against the cubicle door, his face to the wall.

Then countless fists rained down on the back of his head.

Natalia had had it up to here!

Goddamnit! She'd had enough of him already! He just couldn't take the hint!

He wanted her to come to him, was that it? Then he could try!

Having been lied to, Natalia didn't care about breaking him this time. She just started beating him.

One hand wasn't enough, so she took his belt off and tied his hands behind his back, took off his socks and stuffed it in his mouth, then freed her hands and started kicking and punching.

Some people who'd just come into the restroom heard the noise.

They'd been a bit shocked and didn't know what was going on.

Then they heard the male grunts and female pants and understood.

Men usually kept quiet about this sort of thing, so they didn't talk about it. They finished their business and left the restroom.

Shawn wanted to yell for help, but no one cared.

Natalia beat him up for over a dozen minutes and finally got tired.

Panting, she put her arms on her hips, her face red, her forehead getting sweaty.

As for Shawn, he'd given up on resisting and curled up next to the toilet, head down in a fetal position.

Still angry, Natalia kicked at him again.

She snarled, "If it hadn't been for Mrs. Wright, I'd have hit you a long time ago! You asked for this

yourself today. Approach me again, and I'll cripple you! Hear me?"

Shawn had been beaten black and blue. Blood was seeping out of his eye. He was close to fainting

and didn't have the strength to reply.

Finally realizing that she'd probably used too much force, Natalia thought about it and used his phone

to send Henry a text.

"I've been attacked. Come to the male restroom and help me."

With that sent, she washed her hands and left.

Natalia was pretty sure that someone as prideful as Shawn would never admit that she was the person

who'd beaten him up.

After all, to everyone else, she was just a weak little girl.

She'd been weak growing up and didn't know martial arts, so even if word of her beating him up got

out, no one would have believed it.

It turned out exactly as she'd expected.

After waking up in hospital the next day, no matter how Henry pressed him for it, Shawn wouldn't say

who it was that had attacked him.

Henry had been angry to begin with, yelling about calling the police and monitoring him.

But Shawn had just raised too much of a fuss. Exasperated, Henry gave up.

Still, Shawn's grudge against Natalia had dug its roots deep.

He didn't understand. How did someone so weak become so powerful all of a sudden?

He really hadn't held back in the restroom back then. He had genuinely been struggling.

But he just couldn't get loose!

That woman was a demon!

Terrifying!

As scared as he was, Shawn's hatred also intensified.

Plenty of people had seen him get carried out of the restroom that day. And all of them were Julio

upper crust.

Everyone know knew that the young master of the Miller family had been beaten up in the toilet.

Someone had even let it loose that they'd heard erotic noises coming from the cubicle beforehand.

Rumors flew that he'd been peeking on someone in the toilet, or that he'd been seduced and

scammed, or he'd done something dirty to get beaten up.

There was no way Shawn could explain it away!

He'd pulled Natalia in only to use her feelings for him before to talk her back to his side.

But it had turned into this!

Natalia!

Just thinking of that name brought resentment and hate bubbling up like bile.

She hated him, then?

She didn't want to be with him, then? Then he would force her to!

One day, he would trample all her pride under his feet and give her a taste of what it meant to make an

enemy of him!

Chapter 265 A Chance Encounter at the Airport

The Wright household.

The whole Wright mansion was well-lit.

Mrs. Wright reclined, all smiles, on a sofa in the living room, facing Mr. Kawn, who was all business.

"Don't worry, Mr. Kawn! I'll treat what you've tasked me with as my own business."

Wilson Kawn chuckled, "Of course I believe you, Mrs. Wright. We've investigated for so many years

and only just found that that child was probably taken to Julio by human traffickers. Then the leads

went dead. For all our work, we had nothing to show for it and could only count on someone else.

When it comes to finding people, no one can measure up to the Wright family. I've come to Julio

personally for this. Only, this are the private affairs of the Kawn family, so I hope you can all keep this

secret. Our father has been sick for a long time, and his greatest wish is to find that child. So whether

or not you manage to do so, please notify me at once and allow me to confirm it, so the old man

doesn't get his hopes up for nothing."

Mrs. Wright nodded.

"Of course. Please don't worry, Mr. Kawn. I'll notify you of any news at once."

"If that's the case, thank you. This is a photo of the child, but it was taken only at a few months old. It

might not be of any use."

Wilson passed a yellowed old photo over, a bit of regret in his face.

Mrs. Wright took it and looked it over.

The photos was over a dozen years old, but other than a bit of yellowing, it had been well-preserved.

It was clear that the person who owned the photo cherished it greatly.

Mrs. Wright looked at it for a while and chuckled.

“You know, children all look pretty much the same, but this child has especially great features. I think it resembles Natalia when she was young.”

To the side, a middle-aged man hurriedly said, “What are you talking about, Mom? Natalia’s got a mother and father. We even went over to their place when Kiera was bearing her. How could it be related to Miss Kawn?”

Mrs. Wright laughed it off. “Right, right. I was just saying it.”

Wilson, though, was interested.

“You’re talking about the same Natalia who sang in the Parlour the other day?”

Mrs. Wright nodded. “That’s her.”

Wilson smiled. “Honestly, the first time I saw her, I thought she looked a lot like Yvonne. I don’t just mean her features, but also the aura and the feeling I get from her gaze. How old is she now?”

“Twenty-five, I think!”

“Twenty-five?” Wilson’s face changed.

If Yvonne was alive, she'd happen to be twenty-four or twenty-five.

Suddenly growing emotional, he blurted, "You said her mother's name was Kiera? Did you see this Kiera give birth to her with your own eyes?"

Mrs. Wright was taken aback.

She hadn't been in Julio at the time, so of course she hadn't seen it personally. She'd only gone to visit Kiera when she was pregnant, and hugged the child a few times after she'd given birth.

The old lady didn't have a reply this time.

As she pondered, a voice came from the doorway. "Of course I saw it with my own eyes."

Everyone looked towards the source of the voice. A middle-aged woman walked in.

Mrs. Wright introduced, "Ah right. This is my daughter-in-law, Penny. Penny, this is Wilson of the Kawn family of Eqitin. You can call him Mr. Kawn."

Penny gave a hasty greeting.

Wilson asked right away, "You saw it personally?"

Penny smiled faintly. "Yes, Kiera's mother died early. She had no reliable female friends around her

when she was about to give birth. Our families have been friends for generations and I gave birth two years earlier than she did, so I went over to look. It wouldn't be fake.

Seeing that she seemed sincere, Wilson was a bit disappointed.

Mrs. Wright, though, was dubious.

When Kiera had been in labor, she had been overseas and hadn't gone, but she'd also sent a servant to ask around and didn't remember Penny saying that she'd been there.

Had she remembered things wrong, or had Penny gone there in secret?

She had her doubts, but she believed that her daughter-in-law wouldn't lie with something this big.

So she didn't say anything.

Wilson had clearly gotten his hopes dashed, so they chatted with him for a while longer before escorting him out.

When Wilson had left, Mrs. Wright called out after Penny and asked, "Did you really go over to Kiera's place when she was giving birth?"

Penny's eyes worked subtly.

Smiling, she confirmed, "Of course I went. Would I lie on that? But I'd been in a rush and the driver

hadn't come back yet, so I'd called a taxi myself."

Hearing that, Mrs. Wright nodded.

That made sense. She didn't know because Penny didn't use their own driver.

Mulling things over, Mrs. Wright headed upstairs. Behind her, Penny dipped her head, a small, mysterious light flashing across her eyes.

...

At noon, Natalia saw that it was about time and Archie was arriving, so she packed up her things and rushed to the airport.

But before she'd reached the airport, she received a text from the man.

His flight was delayed and he'd probably be late by a couple hours.

Natalia hadn't expected it, but since she was out here now, it would be troublesome to head back.

Thankfully, there was a pretty busy square next to the airport, so she decided to head there and walk around the place while she waited.

It was twelve sharp at noon, right in time for lunch.

Natalia had planned to pick up Archie and head to lunch together, but it looked like they wouldn't make it.

So she decided to look for a restaurant on her own.

Unexpectedly, just as she found a restaurant and prepared to go in, she met someone at the doorway.

Mr. Kawn? What was he doing here?

Wilson hadn't expected to bump into her right now either. He smiled, "Oh, Mrs. McCarthy. You're eating here too?"

Natalia smiled and nodded. "Yes. You too?"

"Yes. I'm getting ready to fly back to Eqitin, and it's lunchtime. I've got some time, so I'll just eat something now."

Natalia nodded. There was an awkward silence where she didn't know what to say, so she got ready to say goodbye and leave.

Wilson, though, suddenly asked, "Are you alone, Mrs. McCarthy?"

Natalia nodded again. "I am."

"I'm alone too. If you don't mind, we could eat together."

Natalia was a little embarrassed. “Won’t... that disturb you?”

“No, it’s fine. You sang for me last time and I hadn’t the chance to thank you yet. How about I treat you this time?”

Natalia didn’t feel up to it and was about to refuse.

Wilson added, “It’s boring eating by myself. If it’s okay with you, then you can tag along.”

He’d said this much, so refusing would seem a bit too cold.

Besides, eating was the same with one person or two.

So Natalia hesitated, then said, “All right.”

Chapter 266 Looking for Someone

The restaurant was high end for Julio, but it was clearly not good enough.

And the standards that Wilson seemed to have made it quite clear that he wasn’t the type of person

who’d eat at a place like this. He’d come today either because he was in a hurry or because something

special had attracted him.

Natalia was curious about it, but they didn’t know each other too well, so she didn’t ask about it.

The two went into the restaurant, chatting as they ate. The atmosphere was quite friendly.

Still, she didn't know if she was imagining it or not, but she felt that the way Wilson looked at her wasn't quite right.

The passion he was showing wasn't like someone who'd only met her once or twice at all.

Natalia put herself on guard as she asked, "Are you in the city on business, Mr. Kawn?"

Wilson replied, "I'm looking for a person."

"Oh? May I ask who you're looking for?"

Wilson paused, then chuckled, "An old friend's child."

At that, he didn't continue. Seeing that he wasn't willing to say too much about it, Natalia didn't press him.

She just laughed it off.

A new dish came up, and seeing as she was a local of Julio, Natalia introduced, "These pork chops are pretty famous in our city. I don't know how the tastes over at Equitino go, but you could give this a try, Mr. Kawn."

Wilson looked at the pork chops and stared out into space a little.

Seeing that, Natalia asked carefully, "Are you all right?"

Wilson recovered his wits and forced a smile. "I'm fine."

Yvonne had loved pork chops too.

How nice would it be if she was here?

Natalia didn't know if she was imagining it, but she kept feeling that this Mr. Kawn seemed a bit down.

Considering that he was here in Julio looking for someone, maybe he hadn't found them. Or maybe it was something else.

This was only their second time meeting, and it wasn't appropriate to ask too many questions, so

Natalia didn't comment on it.

After the meal, it was about time. Wilson was heading to the airport to catch a plane and didn't have a car with him, so Natalia drove him there.

They chatted for a while longer on the road. Natalia kept it tasteful and didn't ask about the man's identity.

After all, no matter who he was, it didn't have anything to do with her. She'd just made a friend by chance; that was all.

At the airport, Natalia texted Archie and told him she was there.

Archie's flight was arriving at one fifty. There was still half an hour to spare.

Either he was worried that a lone girl was waiting for someone here or he wanted to speak to her a

while longer, Wilson stayed at Natalia's side and refused to go in on his own.

Since he'd gone that far, Natalia didn't refuse.

After a while of waiting, Archie emerged.

The man was in a black suit and grey jacket, looking as refined, dignified and handsome as ever!

She couldn't help beaming as she ran up to him.

"Natalia!"

From the moment he laid eyes on her, his smile didn't diminish. Taking her in his arms, he hugged her

fiercely.

"Miss me yet?"

Natalia's heart hammered.

She buried her face in his chest, feeling his heart pound forcefully as well.

Feeling a warmth in her eyes, her heart suddenly throbbed.

She forgot everything else for just this moment and circled her arms around his waist, nodding.

Joy raced up the man's chest and he took up her face, kissing her hard.

The kiss dazed Natalia a little, but she still closed her eyes and took in his being with all her senses.

Imperious, deep, overbearing...

He wanted her all to himself.

Standing close by, Wilson was thoroughly embarrassed.

He'd seen Archie and had been pleasantly surprised, ready to greet him.

But now...

The kiss didn't last long and ended soon enough.

After all, they were in the airport. It might have been the VIP passage, but there were still plenty of

people. He still had to consider her reputation.

As he'd thought, the moment he loosed his grip, he found her face completely red, like two particularly pretty ripe apples.

Natalia never imaged that she'd get seduced by this man into kissing him full on the mouth in broad

daylight.

Her prim and proper manners had all been reduced to atoms from sheer longing.

Only then did she find that some emotions had, perhaps, already been long seeded in her heart. She'd

just been unwilling to see it and hid from them, treating them as if they didn't exist.

But how could she ignore something that did exist?

A small seed only needed a bit of nourishment to break through the topsoil and become a great tree.

And time and distance were excellent nourishment.

Feeling heated gazes on her back, Natalia lifted her head.

And then she saw many passersby looking their way. Her face was buried in the man's chest, so they

couldn't make out her features.

Even so, from her figure and her aura, anyone could imagine how beautiful she was.

Gorgeous men and women always drew attention, much less actions as bold as this.

Natalia's face went even redder as she swept her hair and blocked her face, afraid she'd get

recognized.

She was a mildly famous actress now, wasn't she?

There were enough bad points about that. She couldn't afford to get a picture snapped and ending up on headlines again tomorrow.

Looking at the way she was covering her face, Archie chuckled.

"Getting shy?"

Natalia shook her head and tugged on his sleeve. "Let's go!"

"Yeah." He paused and didn't move, raising his hand to cover her face.

Her face had been small to begin with, so his palm almost blocked it completely.

Natalia was a bit taken aback. Raising her head, she looked into his glimmering eyes, a gentle smile in

them as he murmured, "I missed you too. A lot."

Natalia laughed.

This man, really...

She'd replied that she missed him, so he had to say the same?

Was it that serious?

For some reason, honeyed sweetness emerged from the bottom of her heart, driving into her chest.

She nodded. "Yeah, I know."

Taking his hand, she said, "Come here. I've got someone I want to introduce to you."

He let her lead him in front of Wilson obediently.

Natalia was a bit embarrassed that Wilson must have seen all of that, but she'd done it anyway and couldn't wipe it clean, so she could only act calm.

"The person I'm picking up is here, Mr. Kawn. Archie, this is a friend of Mrs. Wright's – Mr. Kawn."

Wilson laughed and exclaimed, "How unexpected, Archie! I'd been wondering why you were sticking around Julio so much recently. Turns out you've got a girl here."

Archie smiled faintly too. "That's a bit far, Uncle. I didn't think you'd know Natalia. Looks like I won't need to introduce you."

Chapter 267 That's Not Like Him

Natalia was bewildered.

What was going on?

Looking at her confused expression, Archie rubbed her head pamperingly and explained, "This is

Wilson Kawn, second son of the Kawn family of Eqitin. You ought to call him Uncle with me."

Natalia's eyes widened with surprise.

The Kawn family of Eqitin?

Wasn't that... Selena's family?

She turned to look at Wilson, who simply smiled gently and nodded. Clearly Archie was telling the truth.

Natalia's head buzzed, sensing how tangled the world was.

Of course. That was why Mrs. Wright and the Miller family had been so respectful to him.

Wilson chuckled, "So when are you taking her home? I want to tag along."

Archie smiled faintly. "Grandma and Grandpa have seen her already. When we're done with business

on this side, we'll go back after a while."

"Great, that's great!" Wilson nodded repeatedly, quite happy about it. "Seems like the old lady has a

happy year ahead of her."

With that, he looked at Natalia again, feeling more and more satisfied with her.

"The McCarthy and Kawn families are longtime friends, kiddo. Archie calls me Uncle, so I can lord it

over him, got it? If he bullies you from now on, tell me, and I'll beat him up for you!"

Natalie chuckled awkwardly and nodded. "All right. Thanks, Uncle."

“Oh!”

That “Uncle” sent a warm current into Wilson’s chest. He produced a black and gold-tinted card and handed it to her.

“I’m a rough man and didn’t have the time to prepare any gifts, so take this card. You might be able to use it.”

Natalie gaped.

She didn’t know what sort of card this was, but one look at it and she knew it had incredible value. It wasn’t something a normal person could get their hands on.

She waved it off hurriedly. “No need for that, Uncle, I know you mean well...”

“Just take it!”

Archie, on the other hand, straight up took the card and stuffed it into Natalia’s hands.

“You’re in luck, Natalia. Uncle’s feeling generous today. He used to be called an ironclad miser, you know. If you don’t take it now, it’ll be a waste.”

Natalia had no words.

Wilson laughed out loud. “You little brat! Didn’t weasel enough out of me when you were little? Now

you're giving me a bad name out here, eh? Seems like I've looked after you for nothing!"

Archie smiled peaceably and didn't retort.

It was clear these two were really close.

Natalia loosened up and took the card.

"Thank you, Uncle."

Archie asked, "What are you doing in Julio?"

The moment the topic came up, Wilson's face darkened.

"Don't even bring it up. I said we've found that child's news over here, right? So I came over personally

to check it out, but... hmph! They're trying to mess with the Kawns now, it seems!"

Hearing the cold in his voice, Archie frowned.

"How do you mean?"

Wilson paused, thought of something, then waved it off irritably.

"Forget it. No need to mention it. Basically, we've lost a lead we worked so hard for. That family really

thinks us Kawns are all idiots, trying to fake me out with a necklace, saying it's something Yvonne had

before she died. Heh! What a joke, eh? Yvonne's never had something like that!"

Natalia's brow furrowed.

A necklace?

She didn't know why, but she thought of the ruby necklace around her own neck and felt for it under her

clothes.

Wilson didn't notice her motions and shot a look at the time.

"All right, I need to board soon. You two go on ahead. Oh, right, Archie. Since you're in Julio for a while

right now, pay attention to any news about that child for me. Your Grandpa Kawn isn't doing so well,

and his life's wish is to find this child. I don't want to disappoint him."

Archie nodded.

"All right. I'll do that."

There the three parted.

After they got in the car, Natalia asked curiously, "That child that Uncle Wilson's talking about, is that

the child that went missing from the Kawn family twenty or so years ago?"

Archie nodded.

He paused, then said, "The Kawn family's never stopped looking for her. Only, there haven't been too many clues all this time. Maybe they're gone after having been missing for over twenty years."

Natalia blinked.

"Why do I feel like you're not too enthusiastic about this? It's not like you."

She knew full well what kind of person Archie McCarthy was.

He looked cold, but in reality, if he acknowledged someone as one of his people, he usually took their business personally instead of being so cool about it.

Archie looked at her deeply.

"Do you still remember what I told you when you asked me about Selena?"

Natalia started.

She thought about it and realized.

"Archie, you..."

"Yes, I'm just that selfish. I don't want someone to come back and disturb our little world, and I don't want any trouble. So I don't really care whether we can find that child or not."

Natalia had to laugh.

“Why are you like this? They’re raising such a fuss while you’re here talking behind their back.”

Archie leant over, smiling as he wrapped an arm around her waist.

He snuggled in close to her face, the tips of their noses touching.

“Yes, that’s how I am. I don’t care about anything other than you.”

“Archie...”

Natalia hadn’t let it go yet, but her lips were already being sealed by his in another entangling kiss.

Only when it was over could she take a gasp of fresh air. She held her hands against his shoulders,

panting, “But is that really okay?”

Archie laughed mildly. “You really want a woman to come fight to take your husband, Natalia?”

Natalia rolled her eyes at him.

“Maybe they won’t even like you! Quit flattering yourself.”

Archie chuckled.

Natalia continued, “Really, though. If you can help them out, do your best to help them out. Look at how

frantic they are. If you really have a clue, you shouldn't stand by."

Archie let go of her, fixed up her hair and clothes – which he'd messed up himself – and sat down properly.

Seriously, he explained, "I understand everything you're saying, but don't worry. The Kawn family aren't as panicked and nervous as they're acting right now. Uncle Wilson is so anxious to find this child because old man Kawn is sick and about to die and remembered the things he's sorry for in life. Uncle doesn't want to let the old man pass with regret, which is why he wants the child found. But the rest of the Kawn family might not feel that way. A house can't stand without a pillar, after all. The internal affairs of the Kawn family are a complicated mess. In these few years, they've divided into different squabbling factions. If that child comes back, she might command some attention in the beginning because the old man's still here. Once the old man passes on, have you thought about how she would survive in the power struggle of the family?"

Chapter 268 Fortune or Misfortune

Natalia jolted. She'd never thought that far. She just felt instinctively that having a chance to get back to one's real family was always a good thing.

Hearing Archie say this, though, she started thinking that maybe the Kawn family was a dragon's den,

not to be easily intruded upon.

And it might not be a good thing for the child to return.

She suddenly recalled Selena again.

Back then, it was said that Selena had only been adopted by Mrs. Kawn to make up for that child's disappearance.

The Kawn family had always treated her as one of their own and raised her properly. It could be said that, if the old man hadn't gotten sick this time, they wouldn't have remembered to keep looking for the child.

And if that child really returned, where would that leave Selena?

Considering Selena's personality, she couldn't possibly not care.

Thinking of that, Natalia sighed.

Archie watched her set there, all dazed and sighing.

He couldn't help but laugh and pat her head, soothing, "Don't worry. If a clue comes up, I'll definitely tell them. I'm just reminding you not to be too optimistic about this. That child's been missing for over

twenty years now. Other than the first couple years where they devoted everything into searching for her, the Kawn family haven't really moved these past dozen or so years. Up until now, when the old man's health is failing, they restarted their search. I don't need to explain the intricacies behind it all, since I'm sure you get it. It's hard to say if it'll be fortune or misfortune for this child to go back to the Kawn family as well."

Natalia nodded.

Of course she understood that, having produced no results after the search, the family had tired themselves out and given up.

Now that the old man was sick, looking back, he felt he owed this child something.

Everyone didn't want to let the old man go with regret in his heart, so they were giving it their all to find the child.

In other words, this child was just a tool for them to get into the old man's good books.

After all, who knows how much conflicts of interest over his inheritance surrounded the old man's death.

With the old man dead and the tool now stripped of its purpose, nobody could tell how they were going

to deal with the child.

Thinking of that, she felt a surge of sorrow.

Seeing her low mood, Archie felt that wasn't the best topic to linger on, so he stopped and changed the subject.

As the two chatted, they drove home.

Knowing that they were coming back, Mrs. Dottie had prepared a rich afternoon tea.

Having eaten, Archie didn't head to the office in the afternoon and stayed at home with Natalia.

Anne's body had gone through checkup and was apparently fine, even better than before.

All in all, she was getting better.

Natalia relaxed after hearing that.

In the evening, the police sent word, saying that they'd found out what happened five years ago.

Even though Clara hadn't confessed yet, Aleena had broken under interrogation.

The pictures of the brakes that Natalia had submitted, alongside the testimony of the repair shop worker back then, had had a great effect as well.

The truth was close to what Natalia had guessed. Back then, Kiera had caught Philip and Aleena in flagrante delicto, and realized they had an eighteen-year-old daughter.

In her anger, she wanted the Hawkins stock back, so she brought up divorce with Philip.

But with a family from the farmlands who'd relied all on the Hawkins to get to this point, how would Philip and gang agree to it?

That day, under his gentle words, her mother had held down her rage, while Philip had promised an ideal solution. Then he'd gone right around and sent people to tamper with her car.

To rise to the place of Mrs. Dawson, Aleena had driven her own vehicle and slammed into Kiera's car on the bridge.

Kiera had flipped over the railing along with her car and fell into the water. The car was destroyed; her life ended.

Natalia listened to the police report in silence. She'd thought she'd be enraged, but she was unexpectedly calm.

After all, it had been six years since then.

And she'd long since known the truth before this. She'd just never had the proof.

Only now did she realize that, no matter how horrific, how hurtful some things were, their immediate impact would fade over time, leaving you calm, with only an endless weight and sorrow.

As for how to deal with the Dawson family, Natalia didn't have an opinion and left them to be prosecuted by the law.

Archie didn't comment on that.

That approach was soon reported down the chain of command.

Philip was sentenced to death on account of murder, and so was Aleena. Since Clara hadn't done anything and only orchestrated things behind the scenes, taking her age into consideration, they only sentenced her to life in prison. But for her age, life in prison was essentially a death sentence.

After the report came through, Jessica's future was basically ruined.

She'd been young then and hadn't been involved in the incident. The most they could say about her was that she'd kept it to herself, so they couldn't put her in prison.

But the power of public discussion was great. She had murderers for parents and such a vicious grandmother.

Add to that what she'd done to Natalia, there was enough there to bury her!

Besides, she still needed to cooperate with the investigation into Natalia's kidnapping.

But during the investigation, Jessica still claimed that she'd been kidnapped as well.

The investigation revealed that she'd been telling the truth.

Natalia also knew that Jessica had been kidnapped back then, but not who'd done it.

The police were unable to turn up any clues, so it had ended up a cold case.

It was a good thing nobody got hurt, so the results were still optimistic.

After Clara, Philip and Aleena were locked up, the board gave an executive decision over the

inheritance of the Dawson Group.

They all recommended that Natalia become the heir.

Natalia had been Hawkins to begin with. Since Kiera was her biological mother, it made sense to have

her inherit the property.

And with something like this having happened with Jessica, she'd naturally lost the right to compete for

the company's ownership, so the only logical heir was Natalia.

But Natalia wasn't too interested in the idea. Even though Dawson had started off as Hawkins, she

didn't have much interest in the company before her mother's death, so she'd never gotten involved.

And with all the work Philip had put into getting it there, Dawson was not the Hawkins of old anyway.

Even if she took over, she was just giving herself more trouble.

Having gone through so much, the Dawson stock had dropped excessively. This was just a scrapheap

now. Whoever took it over would be taking over a huge headache.

Luckily, the Millers had invested plenty of money into the Dawson Group, so they meant to buy it up.

Natalia didn't stop them.

After discussing it, the two parties signed an agreement to a suitable price, and the incident drew to a

close.

Chapter 269 Creating a Person

Time flew by.

In the blink of an eye, a month had passed.

"Strategies for Cannon Fodder" had met with exceptional reception as it aired. It was a web series, but

it had started a wave of discussion online, and seemed set to break through genre circles.

As the lead actors, Natalia and Mac were busy running around doing advertisements and activities.

Their feet didn't even have time to touch the ground.

Seeing she was so busy, Archie was afraid she'd get too tired, so he passed all the PR work for Annie

International to another assistant manager under her.

Natalia didn't have an opinion on that. She wasn't superhuman, after all. She only had one brain and

one pair of hands, so it was impossible for her to take care of so many things at once.

Besides, she hadn't liked performing or stagecraft before, only feeling uncomfortable at being stared at

like a rare animal in a cage.

But after getting settled in after a while, she'd grown used to it. Not just that, there were times where

she was starting to enjoy it.

Not just Annie International, but she was also leaving almost all the work for Star Entertainment to Elsa.

Archie didn't stop her full advance into the entertainment industry.

But sometimes, deep in the night when they were lying in bed, he'd give her some jealous orders.

No kiss scenes, no bed scenes, no intimacy, no emotional scenes with male actors at all!

Natalia didn't know whether to get mad and laugh at his actions.

She couldn't argue with him, though. If she wanted to talk about respecting her occupation, he could

show her some respect right there that night.

An unspoken rule began to appear in the business soon afterwards.

A certain up-and-coming actress' husband had set rules for her to take nothing romantic, no kisses, no

intimacy. If she took the role, the whole show would get cancelled.

Naturally, everyone knew who that person was, but then again, Archie had long since gone public with

his relationship to Natalia.

So aside from teasing them a little bit, people didn't take it seriously.

Natalia's head hurt at how possessive the man was, but she didn't really need shows with those

elements in them anyway. After all, it depended on the script. If it was needed, it would be there; if it

wasn't needed or required, that was fine.

Besides, with the internet cleanup movement that was affecting the whole country right now, even

dramas were shot in a purer manner. Except for certain artistic pieces, normal kiss scenes could be

accomplished just by staging.

The days passed in a busied peace.

In the middle of the year, Archie took Natalia with him back to Egitin, planning to formally introduce her.

Annie International was based in Egitin. As a sister company, Star Entertainment had moved here too after some discussion.

Natalia didn't pine for Julio. She could live well no matter which city she was in.

Not to mention that the head of McCarthy Properties was also in Egitin. No matter how things went,

Archie was a shot-caller of the company and it was easier to work from this end. So Natalia had stayed in Egitin with him.

No one was happier with that decision than Anne herself.

Archie had a house in Egitin called Pinewood Manor. He'd bought it specifically for Natalia.

Anne was yelling every day that she wanted to move over from the McCarthy family home, but Archie had stopped her every time.

She didn't understand, and every time the driver took her back, she'd been inconsolable.

Until one time, Archie gave it to her straight.

"Do you want a little brother? If you want one, be a good girl and go back. After a while, Daddy and

Mommy will give you a little brother to play with."

Hearing that, Anne was overjoyed.

“Really? I can have a little brother to play with?”

“Yes, really.”

So from that day forth, for a whole week, Anne didn’t come over to disturb them.

Finally getting to have their own little world to themselves, big boss McCarthy was quite satisfied.

Afterwards, he just had to convince his wife to start making a little person.

Unfortunately, Natalia was really busy.

Anne wasn’t here, but neither was Natalia. She was so busy she was spending every day with the cast.

Big boss McCarthy was mad about it, but looking at the way Natalia was fighting hard for her dreams,

he couldn’t stay mad.

One afternoon, Natalia received an invitation to attend an event in the evening, at the largest sports

center in the Equin city center.

It was a charity night for celebrities. There was charity, was, but it was also to attract attention and

views and generate positive comments. So it was an all-star night, and the largest star there was

undoubtedly Tim Crusoë.

Tim Crusoë was thirty this year and had been in the business for ten years. He'd acted in countless roles, a handsome rogue who also acted well.

He'd also been a small-time actor in his early years, but he'd gotten in a car accident before, causing slight disfigurement on his face and causing him to disappear for a while.

Later, though, with surgery, he hadn't just gotten his looks back but also improved his acting skills a great deal. His whole personhood emanated maturity and reliable charm.

Years ago, he shot his way to blockbuster stardom after a particularly successful movie. His fanboys and fangirls were uncountable, and he was currently the most popular actor by a long shot.

Natalia appreciated him as well. She'd seen his movies before, and his acting was insanely good.

So knowing that she'd be meeting him tonight, she was actually looking forward to it a little.

Superstars were everywhere on the scene, and many fans of many different stars were outside. Most, though, were fans of Tim.

Natalia arrived and planned to walk quietly down the red carpet. If she had the chance, she wanted to get close to some of her idols and have them give her a signature or something.

However, the moment she stepped out, she heard screams.

She turned and saw her own name being waved around desperately by a group of fans. Even though it was just a small group in a sea of people, she was still overjoyed.

She waved it them, which made them even more excited.

Ah! What a cute bunch of angels. She'd never thought such a day would come for her.

She didn't know that, ever since "Strategies for Cannon Fodder" went online, it had swept across most major video hosting websites in just a few short months.

Videos of her were all over the internet, on Twitter, on Discord spaces, on friend groups, everywhere.

She'd been reposted and viewed over a hundred million times!

Natalia didn't go online often, so she didn't know her show had already reached that kind of popularity.

It was just moving to her seeing so many people support her.

After walking the red carpet, it was time for the dinner party.

It wasn't just movie stars on the scene but also a lot of upper class socialites. Natalia didn't have too much interest in a dinner party like this, so she'd stayed in a corner and ate snacks.

At that moment, a familiar voice rang out.

“Natalia.”

She turned to look. It was Laura.

“You’re here too?” She stood up hurriedly.

Her dress was a little messed up from her sitting stance, and she patted it down embarrassedly. “I was a bit hungry. Sorry for looking like this.”

Laura smiled faintly. “You haven’t had dinner?”

“Er...” She’d rushed here and really hadn’t eaten yet!

Chapter 270 Chasing Stars

Laura chuckled. “This sort of activity lasts for hours. From now on, it’s best to remember to eat before showing up. Otherwise, if the tabloids get ahold of you, it might end up as another black mark in your history.”

Saying that, she pointed at a few reporters not far in the distance clutching their cameras.

Natalia agreed, but didn’t think much of it.

Celebrities were people too. They got tired and hungry. What was wrong with eating?

Back when she was in the PR business, she hated those tabloids who made a big deal out of nothing.

They could make peanuts into headline news.

To be sure, some celebrities needed a bit of exaggerated drama to boost their popularity, but if it was negative, most celebrities probably didn't want that sort of publicity.

But she didn't care.

After all, acting was just her passion right now. She liked it for the moment, but it didn't mean she'd like it going forward. She'd go wherever she felt like going. Without a large goal she'd set for herself, she didn't mind at all.

Seeing her carefree look, Laura smiled and mostly understood her meaning. "Then I'll head over first!

Oh, right. Mr. Crusoe is over there. Want to go greet him?"

Tim Crusoe?

Natalia's eyes lit up.

Following the direction of Laura's pointing finger, she saw Tim Crusoe surrounded by a large mob and hastily shook her head.

"Never mind, I'll pass. You can go yourself!"

“All right, I’ll go, then.”

Laura left Natalia there to curl up on her chair and eat.

Even though she’d wanted to see what Tim Crusoe looked like in person, with that many people around, forget it!

She didn’t know what to say if she met him anyway, so might as well skip out on seeing him so she didn’t ruin the perfect image she had of her.

After a while, she’d finally eaten her fill.

Her stomach hurt a little, and she needed to go.

So she headed to the restroom alone.

Nathan had come as well tonight. They were supposed to have come together, but Natalia had been too tired lately and didn’t want to attend to any more people, so they’d parted ways.

Unexpectedly, after dealing with important figure after important figure, she was nowhere to be found when he came back. Only a few empty plates stood where she’d been staying, and he shook his head, bemused.

Relationships and connections were an important part of the entertainment business. Tonight might

have looked like a charity dinner, but there were plenty of deals happening in the shadows!

With Natalia's personality of not caring about anything, it was a mystery how she'd made it this far.

But, considering who she had at her back, Nathan relaxed.

So what if she didn't like dealing with people? With that man supporting her, what kind of resources were out of her reach?

Considering that, Nathan stopped fretting and let her go.

In the restroom.

Natalia just got done relieving herself and came out, hearing a gaggle of girls in the corner discussing

Tim Crusoe.

They were fans who'd blended their way in with their familial connections, all here to see Tim.

Because they hadn't managed to get into the banquet hall, they waited around in the toilets.

Natalia had to chuckle.

She thought they'd probably be disappointed. By accident, she'd heard that Tim was supposed to fly

elsewhere that night, so he was just here to make an appearance and was going to leave soon.

But she didn't butt in and remind them. Done with her business, she left right away.

After sticking around for a while, she found it boring, so she texted Nathan about it and decided to leave first.

The driver was waiting for her outside.

Natalia walked out and suddenly heard a chorus of excited shrieks.

"Tim Crusoe is coming out!"

"Time! I love you!"

"Ahh-! It really is him!"

" ... "

Countless screeches halted Natalia in her tracks as she beheld the man with brimming star power emerge from the doorway, escorted by a band of bodyguards.

He smiled at the screaming fans, which made them scream some more!

The fans flowed towards him in a tidal wave. Despite the bodyguards' best efforts to stop them, they still tried to squeeze towards his car.

Tim Crusoe walked over to his car and didn't rush to get on. Instead, he turned to command his

bodyguards, "Go over there and watch out for accidents so that everyone can get home safe."

The bodyguards nodded and turned to relay their orders to the rest of them.

Everyone started cheering again.

Oh em gee, their idol was concerned about them!!!!

Natalia took out her phone and hurriedly snapped a few photos.

Her car wasn't far away from Tim's; about five or six meters away, so she'd gotten a good, clear shot.

This was an excellent chance. She might not have been able to speak face to face with her idol, but at

least she could take a high-definition photograph!

Just the right time to get back home and switch the photo she'd set as her desktop background.

At that moment, a wispy voice sounded behind her.

"Can you send me a copy of that picture, young lady?"

Natalia blinked, turned around, and saw a white-haired old lady standing there.

The old woman was in her sixties. She wore a dark red suit with classic-looking gold-rimmed glasses,

and a gentle smile hung on her face.

Natalia hastily said, "Of course."

Internally, she exclaimed how great it was to still chase after celebrities at this age! What a diehard fan!

With Tim Crusoe gone, Natalia turned around and said, "Here's my Twitter account. I'll send you the picture."

The old woman beamed. "Sure."

She took out her phone, sent her Twitter details, and the two friended each other. Natalia sent her the two photos she'd just snapped.

Seeing that her Twitter tag was "@TimCrusoesBigBaby", Natalia's lips twitched.

Old people really knew how to play around these days!

The old woman received the photos and grew overjoyed, like a three-year-old with candy.

"Thank you, young lady."

Natalia waved it off hastily. "No need for that, it was a simple thing."

"You're a star too, right, young lady!"

"Err... yes." She smiled a little awkwardly.

"You're so pretty. If my grandson's wife was as pretty as you, that'd be great!"

Natalia was finding this old woman more and more interesting as she rambled on and laughed, “I’m sure your granddaughter-in-law is prettier than I am.”

“Don’t be so sure.” The old lady shook her head and her eyes suddenly gleamed. “What’s your name, young lady? What do you do? Act? Sing? I’ll follow you.”

“ ... ”

Is it that easy to get into someone, old timer?!

But she didn’t have the heart to refuse. She told the old lady her name and let her follow her online.

The old woman smiled with satisfaction and said, “You’re such a nice person, young lady. I’m sure you’ll make a name for yourself.”

Natalia had to laugh. “As you say, ma’am.”

The woman strolled away in a slow pace.

Natalia didn’t linger. She got in her car, which rolled off.

At the same time, a middle-aged man led a group of frantic-looking bodyguards out of the avenue, searching with sharp-eyed expressions amongst the crowd.

When he finally saw the old woman tottering slowly towards their direction, the man's face instantly lit up as he ran over to her.

"Mom! Where did you go? We've been worried sick, you know!"

"Why did you run off on your own, madam? We were so shocked when we turned around and didn't see you there!"