

Yo Daddy 321

Chapter 321

"Uh... No particular reason. I'm just not as good as you are." Anthony giggled.

Natasha folded her arms in front of her chest and stared at him silently.

He immediately gave up and lowered his eyes when he saw that. "Fine. I felt pretty conflicted about it because I knew you would learn the truth one day. Rather than waiting to be discovered, I thought it would be better if I turned myself in instead. At least I'd be coming in clean."

"In that case, why did you give me a fake address?" Her eyes narrowed.

"Because I hesitated at the last second, so I sent that fake one instead..."

She continued to stare at him. I didn't expect him to consider that at the last second. He's still a child. I really have no idea what kind of person he'll grow up to become.

Seeing how she remained silent, he continued, "Besides, didn't you also show me mercy? Don't you know that's a blatant insult to a hacker?"

"You were insulted?"

Anthony took in a deep breath. "Maybe a little bit, but it doesn't matter because I can't win against you, anyway..."

"Really?"

He nodded seriously. "Of course! It was a close call, but I did need more time! You didn't think I was letting you win, did you?"

"It's not impossible for me to think that way if you're good at acting."

"I admit, in the beginning, I did think about doing it. If I were somehow better than you, I would have to lose to you to protect your status as the number one hacker in the world. However, after I started battling with you, I realized I was being naïve. I shouldn't have thought I could win."

Natasha found his explanation amusing, regardless of whether what he said was true.

"I'm not kidding, Nat. If we have another battle next time, don't show me any mercy. I want to know just how big of a difference there is between your skills and mine!"

"Okay." She nodded.

"If I have something I don't understand in the future, can I ask you about it?"

"Sure you can."

"You're so great, Nat. You're the smartest mommy in the world!" Anthony smiled innocently and brightly at her.

Truthfully, Natasha had never seen him being that excited before. As she gazed at his smile, the edges of her lips curved upward, too.

Moments later, she spoke up. "Anthony."

"Hmm?"

"Promise me that no matter what happens, you must protect yourself first. You're the eldest brother, so you need to be a good role model for Benjamin and Denise, okay?"

"I know, Nat. Don't worry! I'll do that." He nodded.

In response, she smiled. "Don't forget about your promise, okay?"

"I won't!"

Natasha wanted to say something else, but when the words arrived in her mouth, she didn't let them out.

"All right, it's getting late. You should rest early!" As she spoke, she stood up, preparing to head back to her room.

"Nat!" Anthony called.

"Yeah?"

"Please don't tell Daddy about my hacking thing yet, Nat."

She nodded without inquiring why. "Okay."

"You're not going to ask why?"

"It's your matter, so it's your decision to make, like what you did today. I only found out about it because you wanted me to know."

Anthony felt he was lucky to have an open-minded mother like her.

At that moment, his heart was urging him to give her a hug and tell her that he loved her.

However, he wasn't the type of person to do that, so he suppressed the desire to do so.

In the next moment, he asked, "Have you reconciled with Daddy, Nat?"

"Why do you ask?"

"That morning, Denise and I saw Daddy walk out of your room."

Natasha wasn't sure how to reply to that.

"Denise said you're interested in Daddy. You like Daddy, don't you, Nat?"

While he didn't want to admit it in the past, he was fully aware that his mother treated his father differently.

The gears in her mind turned as she stared at him silently.

"I have no intention of stopping you, Nat. If you really like Daddy, then I'll support you!"

"I thought you were against it in the past?"

"I was against it because of how he used to treat you. However, from what I've seen of him lately, his dedication is evident. Most importantly, it was just a misunderstanding back then. Now that Daddy has decided to change, I approve of him, maybe just a little. Of course, the most important thing is still whether you like him!"

Natasha couldn't help but smile. "Your daddy will be happy to hear that!"

"So, do you like Daddy, Nat?"

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Natasha looked at Anthony and answered, "No."

His smile slowly vanished as he furrowed his eyebrows. "Why? You like Daddy, and Daddy likes you. Sure, he forgot about the promise he made in the past, but we have all seen how he's treating you now!"

She looked away, unable to be truthful with him. "Liking someone and wanting to stay with them are two different things, Anthony."

"No, they are the same thing! If you like someone, you should stay with them!" he uttered resolutely, as

though he wasn't going to accept any other answer on the matter.

She smiled at him. I'm glad he thinks that way.

With a nod, she answered, "If you meet a girl you like in the future, remember to stay determined like this and don't give up easily!"

"Of course, I will... Wait, we're talking about you and Daddy!" A thought entered his mind as he asked, "Is it because of Gramps? If it's because of him, I can try to convince him!"

"It has nothing to do with your great-grandfather!"

"Then why?" Anthony couldn't understand why his parents wouldn't stay together when they liked each other and no one was getting in their way.

That stumped Natasha as she wasn't sure what to say.

Seeing how deep in thought she was, he asked, "Is there a hidden reason why you can't do it? Or did Daddy do something bad again?"

"No." Her head shook.

"Then why?"

Since Anthony seemed so determined to learn the truth, she knew he wouldn't give up until she gave him an answer. Even if she tried to brush past it, it wouldn't guarantee he wouldn't turn to Kenneth for answers.

If Kenneth learned what was going on, her plan would be ruined.

So, she said, "It's not that I don't want to. I just need more time."

Natasha's thoughts were always difficult to grasp.

Anthony thought he knew her, but at that moment, he really had no idea what she was thinking.

He theorized about the reasons and asked, "Are you testing Daddy again, Nat?"

"You could say that."

He directed his suspicious gaze at her before he muttered, "You aren't this kind of person, Nat..."

"Isn't it better to be more cautious about a matter like this?"

It wasn't a big problem, but he still frowned. "Daddy doesn't have it easy at all. He had to win all of us over first, and then he had to persuade Benjamin and me. Now that I've agreed, you want to test him again..."

"Are you starting to feel bad for your daddy?" She smiled.

"Not really. He's a man, after all. A man isn't afraid of tests!"

Anthony wasn't at all worried about Kenneth not passing the test. He was concerned about Natasha because he could feel she was feeling rather down lately, as though something was bothering her.

However, he didn't want to draw any conclusions.

Worry could be seen between his eyebrows as he stared at Natasha.

It was then she spoke up. "All right, there's no need for you to worry about his and my matters. I know what I'm doing. It's getting late. In any case, you should come up with an explanation for Kyle. Since we disappeared right after our battle formally concluded, I bet he's looking for you like a madman. Maybe he even thought I had found your address and hurt you," she joked.

"It's fine if he goes crazy for a bit." It wasn't every day he got the chance to have a late-night chat with his mother, so he was pretty hesitant on the matter.

"Aren't you afraid he'll come over to your location?"

"Even if he does, it'll still take him time to arrive!"

The moment he finished his sentence, his phone rang.

Upon picking up his phone, he saw it was Thalia calling him and frowned.

Natasha raised her eyebrow. "Thalia?"

Anthony nodded.

"Kyle probably asked her to find you."

He answered the phone.

Thalia's worried voice immediately flooded into his ear. "Where are you, Anthony? Are you all right?"

"I'm as fine as I'll ever be."

"Kyle said you had a battle with Shadow Seeker, and when it ended, both of you disappeared. He was

worried something had happened to you, so he asked me to find you. Are you sure you're all right?"

"I'm a hundred percent sure."

"Then what are you doing?"

"Having a chat with Nat!"

Thalia was taken aback slightly before she replied, "Got it." Then she hung up the call.

"I can see Kyle and Thalia truly care about you." Natasha grinned.

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Terence woke up early to prepare breakfast. To his surprise, he spotted Natasha coming out of Anthony's room.

Confused, he checked the time. Natasha doesn't usually get up so early.

Before he could say a thing, Natasha approached him and greeted, "Morning, Grandpa."

"I'm usually up at this time, but why are you already awake?" Terence suddenly moved closer to his granddaughter and scrutinized her face. He asked, "Why are your eyes so red? You didn't sleep last night?"

"I didn't," said Natasha with a nod.

"Why not? What were you doing?"

"I was chatting with Anthony!"

Terence was incredulous. "The whole night?"

"Well, somehow it turned out that way."

After some thought, Terence asked, "What happened? Did Anthony do something wrong?"

Natasha smiled and clarified, "No. We were just chatting about everything and nothing."

That earned her a displeased glance from Terence, who chided, "Staying up late may be commonplace for you, but Anthony's still a growing boy. Staying up late can't be good for his development."

"All right, I won't do it next time," came Natasha's reply.

“Hungry?”

“Yeah.” Natasha nodded.

“I’ll whip something up for breakfast. You should catch up on your sleep after you eat.”

“Okay.”

“Just give me a couple of minutes. I’ll be quick.” As he spoke, Terence hastily put on an apron before preparing breakfast.

Natasha perched on a stool near the island and watched her grandfather working skillfully in the kitchen. As she stared at his frail figure and salt-and-pepper hair, she was suddenly struck by the realization that her grandfather had aged a great deal.

Her eyes pricked with tears, unbidden.

A plate of simple yet nutritious breakfast suddenly appeared before her.

Natasha hurriedly wiped the sorrowful expression off her face as Terence coaxed, “Food’s ready! Now hurry up and eat before you catch up on your sleep.”

Natasha slowly lowered her eyes to the fried eggs on her plate and nibbled at her breakfast.

Her behavior initially went unnoticed by Terence, who was busy preparing more breakfast portions. When he next turned around to look at her, his brows furrowed in concern, and he asked, “What’s wrong? Does it taste bad?”

“No.” Natasha shook her head firmly before meeting her grandfather’s gaze. Smiling, she explained, “I wanted to commit the taste of your cooking to memory.”

“You don’t have to do that. I can cook for you whenever you want,” Terence huffed.

Natasha nodded her head solemnly in response.

Her grandfather glanced at her before returning his attention to his cooking. He did not think too much of her solemn mood.

She finished off her plate just as Terence was almost done with his cooking.

“I’m heading back to my room to rest, Grandpa,” Natasha announced.

“Shoo. Get some rest.”

Natasha glanced at her grandfather before heading to her room.

The moment she closed her room door, Terence stiffened and paused in the middle of cooking. He turned and stared thoughtfully at Natasha's room door.

Meanwhile, Anthony was so excited after his conversation with Natasha that he could not fall asleep.

Instead, after some thought, he switched on his computer.

Kyle's message immediately popped up once Anthony was online.

Kyle: Where the heck did you go? I didn't think you remembered how to come online anymore.

Anthony did not expect him to be so upset. Still, high on excitement after his conversation with Natasha, Anthony was unbothered by Kyle's message and replied: Polished language, please!

Kyle: To heck with polished! You have no idea how worried I was! I almost flew over!

Anthony: I would also appreciate it if you would mind your language.

Kyle did not reply, prompting Anthony to type: Didn't you ask Thalia to look for me? Didn't she tell you about it?

Kyle: She said your mom had a heart-to-heart talk with you.

Anthony: Yeah, so you do know!

Although Kyle was used to Anthony's incessant mention of his mother, he still could not help but cringe. Nevertheless, a thought niggled at Kyle's mind. Of all days, why did Anthony have to do his heart-to-heart yesterday? Doesn't he realize how rare yesterday's competition was?

Kyle fired off a text: Do you understand what yesterday's competition means?

Anthony: It showed that I'm still pretty amazing even though I'm a bit weaker than Shadow Seeker?

Kyle: Do you even have a shred of humility?

Anthony: Well, what do you think it means, then?

Kyle took a deep breath before replying: Yesterday, you almost won by a hair. A HAIR. If you won, Darknetz's reputation would be through the roof!

Anthony: Ah, that's a shame then!

Kyle: I can't sense a hint of regret in your tone.

Anthony: Patience, patience. Darknetz will eventually triumph.

Kyle: I love it when you're bluffing.

Anthony: Hey, trust me!

Kyle: I still think yesterday was a wasted opportunity. Even though you lost, you could've learned a trick or two from Shadow Seeker or become her student!

Confused, Anthony replied: Become her student? Aren't you worried Shadow Seeker will dismantle your group?

Kyle: Our group!

Anthony hastily corrected himself: Yes, that's what I meant. Aren't you worried Shadow Seeker will destroy OUR group?

Kyle's faith in Shadow Seeker never wavered. He replied: She would never!

Anthony: How could you be so sure?

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Kyle's mind continued to whirl. Or did something happen while Anthony went offline?

Kyle hastily typed: What do you mean?

Anthony: Exactly what you read.

Kyle: Were you so thoroughly defeated by Shadow Seeker for you to decide that, or did you bang up your head or something?

Anthony: You're the one with the banged-up head!

Kyle: Then what's going on with you?

Anthony explained: I wasn't utterly defeated. I have always been defeated.

Kyle was speechless. He never expected someone as arrogant as Anthony to utter these words.

Suddenly, he remembered Anthony and Shadow Seeker had disappeared at almost the same time during the competition. Wait a minute. What if something really happened during that time?

An outrageous thought crossed his mind, and Kyle asked: Did you rendezvous with Shadow Seeker?

Anthony was shocked by Kyle's question, and he replied: Hey, watch your language!

Kyle: Is that not the case? Both of you disappeared at the same time during the competition. You didn't reply to me when I contacted you, nor did Shadow Seeker. I can only arrive at one conclusion—both of you rendezvoused!

His conclusion struck Anthony dumb.

It's true we met, but it's hardly appropriate to describe our meeting as a rendezvous.

Still, Anthony knew he could not tell Kyle the full story.

Meanwhile, his prolonged silence prompted Kyle to text: So? Did I guess right? Don't worry! I'm very open-minded! I wouldn't judge you if you did!

Anthony was at a loss for words.

Meanwhile, Kyle carried on: Tell me what Shadow Seeker looks like! To this day, no one knows her appearance! Or his! I can't believe you were lucky enough to meet the legend in person!

Anthony frowned as he read Kyle's message, and he replied: Well, I only have my exceptional charisma to blame for that!

Kyle: Wait, so you really met Shadow Seeker in person!

Anthony had no idea how to explain the situation and gave up.

Knowing Shadow Seeker's true identity hardly changed his stance. Anthony would never give away any information about his mother, after all!

Normally, Kyle would have peppered Anthony with hundreds of texts, begging the latter to share a sliver of information about Shadow Seeker. Currently, however, Kyle was preoccupied with other thoughts.

If Anthony is acquainted with Shadow Seeker, we could even use their relationship to convince Shadow Seeker to join our ranks. That would make things a lot simpler!

Kyle's excitement grew as he recalled how far they had come. From failing to track Shadow Seeker down to making contact and Anthony meeting the hacker in person, the signs all seemed to indicate to Kyle that Shadow Seeker's and Darknetz's fates were intertwined. It was only a matter of time before Shadow Seeker joined their organization.

Suddenly, Kyle felt as though lady luck was smiling upon him. If Shadow Seeker joins Darknetz, our

growth can literally be measured in seconds!

With that thought in mind, Kyle asked: What is Shadow Seeker like as a person?

Anthony: Hmm, how should I put it? One-of-a-kind, maybe!

Kyle: Really? How?

Anthony: Shadow Seeker's aura, appearance, figure, temper, and abilities are all one-of-a-kind!

His dreamy description hardly helped Kyle to imagine the legendary hacker's appearance.

Kyle: Do you have more concrete descriptions? Like facial features? Height?

Anthony: I can't share that.

He quickly sent another text: You also know there are far too many people trying to cause Shadow Seeker trouble.

Kyle: What? You don't trust me?

Anthony: Uh-huh!

Kyle was flabbergasted.

The slightest crack appeared in their friendship.

Kyle argued: You're protecting Shadow Seeker already? After one meeting? Don't you trust me anymore?

Anthony: Yup!

He even sent a smiley-face at the end of his text, seemingly unbothered by Kyle's feelings on the matter.

After a moment of silence, Kyle texted: I can just imagine the goading look on your face right now!

Anthony: Jealousy is warping your sight!

Despite his curiosity, Kyle understood Anthony's reasoning. If he was so eager to share the news of Anthony and Shadow Seeker's rendezvous, he was hardly a friend deserving of Anthony's trust.

More importantly, if Anthony easily revealed important news about Shadow Seeker, it would show that he was not a discreet person.

Kyle instantly felt better about the situation.

He texted: Can I ask a question then?

Anthony: Ask away.

Kyle: Did Shadow Seeker like you too?

Anthony: To tell you the truth, I'm Shadow Seeker's precious darling!

Kyle: Oh my God, I'm gonna puke!

Anthony: Hmph, whatever!

Doubts lingered in Kyle's mind. Still, despite Anthony's audacious behavior, he had never failed on a promise yet. Kyle could only concede that Anthony had the chops to behave audaciously. Plus, Anthony did not boast about his abilities, nor did he enjoy submitting in deference to someone else.

Kyle's curiosity toward Shadow Seeker was piqued.

Just how charismatic can Shadow Seeker be to make Anthony bow in deference?

After some thought, Kyle texted: Which of you took the initiative?

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"Tony, Tony!"

"How is he still sleeping so soundly?"

"What was he up to last night?" Denise asked.

Just as Anthony was dead asleep, Benjamin and Denise's voices sounded in his ears.

"Quiet!" Anthony complained with a frown.

"But the sun's already setting, Tony. Are you planning to sleep for an entire day?" Denise asked again after hearing Tony's complaint.

Her question had Anthony frown even harder before he slowly opened his eyes. Darkness was slowly taking over the sunlight, just as Denise said.

He picked up his watch to look at the time, realizing that it was already five in the afternoon and that he had slept for a very long time.

Denise crawled up to the side of his bed and asked, "What were you up to last night, Tony? Why are you so tired?"

Speaking of this, Anthony failed to hold back the smile waiting to crack open on his face.

"This smile... Hmm... There's definitely something going on!" Benjamin stated as he stared at Anthony.

It was then Anthony finally got up lazily from his bed. He was also smiling with his eyes narrowed. "I'm actually afraid of telling you. I'm worried that both of you might get jealous."

Benjamin and Denise exchanged a glance immediately after hearing Anthony's reply. They knew it. Anthony was up to something behind their backs!

"Jealous? What could make us jealous?" Benjamin asked.

"That's right!" Denise backed her brother up.

Anthony, however, remained silent while keeping a smile on his face.

"So you're not going to tell us?" Benjamin raised his eyebrows and turned his vision toward Denise after seeing how Anthony was still trying to keep them in the dark. As the two of them exchanged a glance, they, too, were seemingly conveying something through their glances.

Anthony was still sitting on the bed. He pressed his lips together as the little boy fell back into the sweet memories of whatever he did last night.

"It seems like I'm going to have to use that move!" Denise reached out her two little hands toward Anthony after seeing the look on his face and tried to tickle him.

Anthony was a brave boy, one that feared nothing but Natasha and being tickled.

Hence, as soon as he saw Denise trying to tickle him, his eyes widened immediately, and he ducked out of instinct.

"No, no, no!" The sleepiness in Anthony was gone right away.

"Are you going to tell us now?" Denise smiled back at him.

"All right, all right! I'll tell you," Anthony gave in.

Benjamin then said, "Speak."

"I'm being serious and not going to speak. I'm doing this for your own good!" Anthony acted like he was

left with no choice.

Seeing this, Benjamin wasted no time. He gave Denise a signal, and the little girl jumped onto Anthony again.

This time, Anthony finally felt scared, and that had him immediately saying, "Okay, I'll tell you."

"This is your last chance. You'll be facing our wrath if you try to do anything funny again!" Benjamin threatened.

Standing beside him was Denise, who also nodded in agreement.

At this moment, Anthony knew that if he tried to make them yield using his identity as their elder brother, he would be punished by them for sure. Hence, after considering the odds, he decided to give in.

"Uh... It's actually nothing. Nat and I just talked for the entire night," Anthony confessed. The cheeky smile was still on his face as he dwelled on the sweet memories.

Hearing this, the other two exchanged another glance.

"What did you talk about?" Denise asked.

"Everything. From some important things like the philosophies of life to little things like matters in our daily lives. The most important thing is that Nat now knows our secret."

The confession had Benjamin and Denise caught off guard for a second, for they definitely did not see this coming.

"Y-You confessed?" Benjamin looked at him in surprise.

"Sort of." Anthony then explained what had happened to them last night.

His explanation had Benjamin and Denise left voiceless for a brief moment.

"What's wrong? Aren't you supposed to be happy now that we don't have to do our things secretly behind Nat's back anymore and worrying that she will find out?" Anthony asked.

"We don't know if she will treat us differently compared to you! We haven't confessed, you know?" Denise asked.

"Don't worry. Nat didn't look angry at all," Anthony comforted her.

It was then did the two finally feel relieved.

"But this is not what I wanted to tell you!" Anthony said before he suddenly moved closer to them. "I also learned a new secret last night!"

"What secret?" Denise blinked her curious eyes as she asked.

On the side, Benjamin, too, looked at Anthony in the same fashion.

Yet, Anthony could not refrain from being secretive again when he saw the spiking curiosity in them.

Without a doubt, Anthony's behavior left Benjamin speechless once more, and Benjamin did not plan on letting Anthony have his way.

Hence, Benjamin gestured Denise immediately. "Denise, go ahead!"

"I got it!"

Anthony yielded immediately as soon as he saw Denise reaching her hands out again. "Stop! I'll tell you!"

"If you keep this up, we will show you no mercy!" Denise threatened.

Anthony looked right back at them and said, "When I was talking to Nat last night, I found out that Nat loved Daddy since they were still young!"

The other two were dumbfounded by this, leading Benjamin to ask, "Nat told you about this?"

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"Could it be that Nat has some sort of terminal illness or something?"

As soon as she finished talking, Anthony heartlessly knocked her head and scolded, "You're talking nonsense again."

Denise rubbed her tiny head and protested, "Oh, come on. I was just talking about the possibility of that being true. We all saw it with our eyes. Nat actually likes Daddy, but she refuses to get back together with him. Why else would she turn him down if it's not because she has some sort of terminal illness? That's what always happens on the TV."

"If you keep talking nonsense, you will not be allowed to watch any television dramas ever again," said Anthony.

"Ben, did you see that? Tony is being mean again!"

"I'm with Tony this time," replied Benjamin.

Realizing that no one was on her side, Denise challenged, "Okay, then you boys come up with a theory. Why won't Nat get back together with Daddy?"

"I read Nat's medical report earlier. She's healthy, so your theory doesn't work at all," replied Anthony.

"By the way, do you guys also find it weird that Nat suddenly wants us to move?" asked Benjamin.

"That is strange," murmured Anthony while nodding in agreement.

"How about I go to Daddy and ask him about it? He might know what's going on," suggested Denise.

Both Anthony and Benjamin turned to one another upon hearing that.

"That might actually work," replied Benjamin.

"Okay, try to coax an answer out of him, but be discreet."

"Don't worry. I know what to do."

"Oh, and don't tell him that Nat has feelings for him. That information might get to his head," reminded Anthony.

Denise looked away. The glow in her beautiful eyes suggested that she was a little embarrassed because she would definitely have blabbed if Anthony hadn't warned her.

She was still weighing her options and wondering if she should let that secret slip anyway when she realized her siblings were looking straight at her.

"Okay, okay, I won't say anything," murmured Denise softly.

Only then did Anthony nod in satisfaction.

He stretched a bit and asked, "Is Nat up yet?"

"She's already at work. In fact, it's almost time for her to clock out."

Anthony arched a brow. "She had a long night. Didn't she sleep in?"

Denise shook her head in response.

"I knew it. Talented people have to work hard, too. Only then can we be perfect," said Anthony as he lay back down on his bed. He was tired and wanted to go back to sleep.

Benjamin stared at him and asked, "Did you tell Nat about us wanting to go for training?"

Anthony sprung his eyes open. He turned to Benjamin right away because he completely forgot about it.

"You didn't tell her?"

"It slipped out of my mind yesterday," replied Anthony honestly.

Benjamin thought about it for a while. "It's fine. At least Nat knows our biggest secret now. That means she likely won't feel too bad when we tell her the other news in the future."

"By the way, have you really thought things through? Are you sure about going for the training?" asked Anthony.

"Do I look like someone who would change his mind easily?" challenged Benjamin.

He was right about that. Of the three kids, he had always been the one who was most firm about his decisions.

Anthony saw the way Benjamin moved his arm and recalled how things were when Denise was in trouble. That memory prompted him to say, "I haven't told Nat about the training, but I managed to tell her what I want to do in the future. I'm sure she is emotionally prepared for it. Besides, we all know that Nat isn't the kind of woman who would demand that her children stay by her side. She was very supportive of what I want to do, actually."

That was something Benjamin could agree to. Ever since they were babies, Natasha had always allowed them to do whatever they wanted.

It didn't matter if it was right or wrong or if their plan would work. She would always let them try things before explaining things to them.

That was why the kids had always been independent and could make their own decisions. It was all the fruit of Natasha's labor.

"I'm not worried about her stopping me. I just don't want her to be heartbroken," said Benjamin.

That was also something they couldn't deny would happen.

"That is inevitable, but there is no point in worrying or fearing that. We can't exactly stay by her side forever and never leave," replied Anthony.

Benjamin arched a brow but didn't say anything else.

Denise, who was standing at the side, didn't join their conversation.

She still hadn't decided if she wanted to go, so she kept quiet. She knew that she needed more time and an opportunity to allow her to know what choice to make.

"By the way, does Kyle know that you are Nat's son?" asked Benjamin.

Anthony shook his head and replied, "I didn't tell him. All I said was that we are acquainted. There are too many people out there who want to know who Nat really is, and I just can't bring myself to tell Kyle... even if he is one of us."

"I understand," said Benjamin while nodding. The matter was similar to how they had to hide their identities, so it was easy to relate. "It's just... I mean, given Kyle's personality, he's probably planning something now that he knows you and Shadow Seeker know each other."

"Oh, he can try. In fact, I think he already is. I just won't let him get what he wants," said Anthony while smiling.

Benjamin laughed aloud. "You're really messing with him, huh?"

"He deserves it. He shouldn't have suddenly gotten Nat and me to go against each other in that competition. We're lucky that Nat is nice and wasn't angry. If she was upset, I wouldn't have known what to do," complained Anthony. "It's only right that I punish him a little for it."

"Speaking of the competition... Did you lose? Or did you let her win?" asked Benjamin, who was rather suspicious about what had happened.

"What do you think?" challenged Anthony.

Benjamin narrowed his eyes and scrutinized Anthony, trying to find a hint of the truth in Anthony's gaze.

Just then, Denise looked up from her phone and said, "Zachary is downstairs and asking to meet me."

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It turned out that the item in question was an expensive, limited edition doll.

"I'm sorry, Denise. I only learned about what had happened recently, so I didn't drop by to visit earlier. Here, this is for you," said Zachary.

Denise stared at that doll and was momentarily stunned.

"What's wrong? Do you not like it? I remember you saying that you liked this, so I asked a friend to send one here from overseas," said Zachary.

Denise shifted her gaze around a little before she answered, "It's not that. I love it. It's just... I already have one. Daddy gave it to me."

The smile on Zachary's face stiffened at the mention of Kenneth. The way Zachary looked at Denise became a little less warm as well.

"I am so sorry, Mr. Zach," said Denise apologetically.

Zachary came back around at that moment. He forced his lips to curve into a smile. Then he said, "It's fine. I just didn't know about that. What else are you into? I'll get it for you."

"There's no need for that, Mr. Zach. It's the thought that counts, and I've received your good intentions, so there's no need to buy me anything," replied Denise politely.

As Zachary stared at Denise, he sensed that she was keeping her distance from him. She was no longer the cheery kid who would act freely around him.

The mere thought of that prompted Zachary to murmur, "Denise, we're growing apart, too..."

Denise looked into his eyes. For a moment there, she didn't know what to say.

That was when Anthony stepped up. "Mr. Zach, are you here today just to visit Denise?"

Zachary shifted his attention to Anthony when he heard that. The latter's tiny face didn't just resemble Kenneth's. Their facial expressions were ridiculously similar as well.

Zachary nodded and replied, "That's right. Is there something wrong with that?"

"No, not at all. It's just that I saw you and Thea met up a few times, so I assumed the two of you were friends. I got curious and thought I'd ask," answered Anthony.

Zachary narrowed his eyes a little. He wondered if he was overthinking things and making the kid eviler in his mind because he felt as though Anthony was hinting at something else.

"When did you see the two of us together? And where?" asked Zachary.

"I was in a cab and was going past the entrance of a bar at the time," replied Anthony before smiling harmlessly and innocently. "Mr. Zach, I have to warn you. That woman, Thea, is a big meanie, so don't get too close to her, okay? Or you might get hurt one day."

Zachary kept his eyes on Anthony. A hint of suspicion flashed past the former's eyes. "We ran into each other a couple of times, and those were just coincidences, so there is no way she can hurt me," stated Zachary.

Anthony nodded while grinning. "Ah, I see. Okay, then."

Zachary couldn't take his eyes off Anthony. The former kept sensing something strange in the latter's eyes... It's almost as if he knows everything.

Just then, another car stopped right beside them. Natasha and Kenneth got out of the car soon after.

When Anthony saw them there, the glow in his eyes changed. He smiled and greeted, "Daddy, Nat, you're home!"

Kenneth and Natasha had just gotten out of the car when they heard Anthony saying the word "Daddy." The duo was taken aback. They looked at their son with a questioning look.

He actually said Daddy?

Just as Kenneth was reeling in his emotions, he saw Anthony running toward them while smiling. Anthony's eyes, however, were signaling for them to look to the side.

Kenneth came around quickly and saw Zachary standing there. That was when he understood what Anthony was trying to say. Kenneth smiled and made his way to the others immediately.

"Daddy, Nat!" greeted Denise. She ran into their arms immediately, and her eyes shone with the kind of glee that couldn't be faked or concealed.

Kenneth reached out to pat her tiny head. Seeing all that stung Zachary's eyes.

That was when Kenneth shifted his gaze to Zachary and arched his brows. "Hello, Mr. Lynch. What a coincidence. We meet again."

Zachary glared at Kenneth and gritted his teeth a little. "It's not a coincidence. I came all the way here to visit Denise."

"Oh, is that so?" replied Kenneth. He grinned tauntingly when he saw the toy that Zachary was holding. "I see you know my daughter very well. You even know what kind of toys she likes."

Zachary shifted his gaze to the gift he had with him, then back to Kenneth. "That's because I know them much better than you realize."

Kenneth wasn't angry to hear that. He simply turned to Denise and asked, "Why didn't you accept the gift? Don't let his efforts go to waste."

"Uh, but Daddy, didn't you already give me one?" asked Denise while blinking at Kenneth to signal him.

“When did that happen? I don't even know what that is, so how could I have given it to you? Perhaps you were dreaming?” suggested Kenneth.

Denise was utterly speechless.

Does he have to expose my lies like that?

“Denise, I understand that you don't enjoy accepting gifts from people, but sometimes, it is necessary to do so. That way, we won't break others' hearts,” said Kenneth to “teach” his daughter a lesson.

Denise replied, “O-Okay.”

Chapter 328

When Kenneth turned around and glared at Zachary, his eyes glowed with the kind of hatred that seemed as though it could consume everything.

Zachary's lips curved into a smile. It seemed the guy could tell that Kenneth was angry because the former's eyes also glowed tauntingly.

At the very next second, however, Kenneth laughed. “It seems you have paid extra attention to my matters, Mr. Lynch.”

“Oh, I wouldn't say that I paid extra attention. Your cruelty simply sent a chill down my spine,” replied Zachary.

“In that case, you should be careful not to step on my toes. If you do, I might just do something so bad that it sends a chill down every single bone in your body,” threatened Kenneth menacingly.

Those words prompted Zachary to narrow his eyes once more.

“Oh, and one more thing,” said Kenneth as he grinned mockingly. “Since you are so heartbroken for her, then may I suggest that you be her hero and save her? I will wish you both a lifetime of happiness together.”

After that, Kenneth turned around once more. He held Natasha and Denise's hands before entering the building.

Anthony and Benjamin raised their brows a little before they followed along.

Zachary was left alone in the street. As he watched everyone move away, his gaze became dark.

On the other side, Kenneth's jaw was clenched in the elevator, and the aura he exuded was extremely hostile.

Denise reached out and tugged his sleeve lightly before cautiously asking, "Daddy, are you angry?"

Kenneth quickly readjusted his stance and turned to Denise. He smiled and lied, "Not at all. I won every round, so why would I be angry?"

Denise didn't sigh a breath of relief until she heard those words. Still, when she looked at him, she couldn't help commenting, "I guess you're right. There's no reason for you to be angry since you got Mr. Zach so furious that he was all mean earlier."

Kenneth scoffed, "He had it coming."

Denise pouted at that moment and complained in a childish tone, "And another thing, Daddy, shouldn't you consider my wellbeing, even when you are putting on an act with my brother? I've already turned the gift down, so why must you insist on exposing my lies? It was so awkward for me!"

Kenneth grinned when he thought about that. "Sorry. I will let you know in advance the next time I do something like that."

"No, there will not be the next time," insisted Denise.

Kenneth couldn't help smiling at that. He was rather happy with his daughter's reaction.

Anthony turned to Kenneth and frowned a little. "So... Is what Zachary said earlier true?"

Kenneth shifted his gaze to Anthony. The former seemed to have recalled something crucial because the glow in his eyes changed when he said, "Huh? What do you mean?"

"Zachary hinted that you sent that woman away. Is that true?" asked Anthony. He found that to be rather strange.

Kenneth thought about it for a while before replying, "What do you think?"

Anthony frowned. He was about to answer that question when Kenneth grinned mischievously and offered, "Call me 'Daddy' again, and I'll tell you the truth."

Anthony was speechless.

He blushed red when he thought about what had happened earlier.

At the time, he simply wanted to put on a show for Zachary and had uttered that word instinctively.

He never expected Kenneth to pay attention to any of that.

Kenneth's words brought everyone around and reminded them of what had happened earlier. They

simultaneously looked at Anthony.

Anthony was blushing so much that his face was almost as red as an apple.

Kenneth saw that and couldn't help grinning. An inexplicable joy spread out in his heart. Seeing Zachary there was an unpleasant experience, but it was undeniable that the guy showing up had benefitted Kenneth a lot.

If nothing else, hearing Anthony calling him Daddy was more than enough to make up for the unpleasantness Zachary caused.

A few pairs of eyes were stuck on Anthony at the moment.

"Tony, are you going to start calling him Daddy, too?" asked Denise.

Anthony was about to answer when the elevator's bell rang. He turned around and ran out of the elevator as though he were fleeing.

Benjamin worried that he would be teased next, so he quickly followed along.

Denise and Kenneth turned to one another when they saw how the boys reacted. Neither could resist smiling at that.

Natasha made her way past them at that moment. When she saw how happy they were, she asked, "Aren't you celebrating just a tad too early?"

"Is this too early?" replied Kenneth.

"Yes, obviously," answered Natasha before she exited the elevator as well.

The father-daughter duo became the only ones left in the elevator.

"Has Ben started calling you Daddy?" asked Denise as they walked out of the elevator together.

Defeated, Kenneth shook his head.

"It'll be fine. You managed to get Tony to change. Getting Ben to change will be a piece of cake compared to that," replied Denise.

Kenneth narrowed his gaze and said, "I think you might have underestimated Ben."

"No way. They might not say it out loud, but they've already accepted you," declared Denise.

"Really?"

"Yeah," replied Denise while nodding. "They told me that themselves."

Kenneth grinned, but his gaze shone in a way that suggested that he was thinking about something else.

Just then, Denise suddenly recalled the mission entrusted to her. She turned to Kenneth and asked, "Daddy, can I ask you a question?"

"What is it?"

"When will you get back together with Mommy?"

Kenneth sighed at the mention of that. "Shouldn't you be asking your mom about that? Do I look like the one who gets to decide?"

I guess he is right about that. Denise blinked before asking, "B-But aren't the two of you already sharing a room? Why hasn't Nat taken you back?"

"It's strange, right? That Nat can be so irresponsible sometimes," complained Kenneth before putting on an exaggerated pout.

"Nat is not an irresponsible person!" insisted Denise before she turned to Kenneth. "Daddy, did you do something to upset Nat again?"

Chapter 329

Natasha stood before the counter, drinking water.

Kenneth looked up, feeling delighted. The next second, he strode up to her.

After she was done drinking the water, he suddenly leaned down and kissed her lips.

Natasha was taken aback as she gazed at him in bewilderment.

"What are you doing?" she asked.

"Nothing. I'm just a little thirsty."

Natasha directly handed him the half glass of water in her hand while slightly raising her brow at him.

Kenneth received the glass of water. With his eyes fixated on the lipstick mark left on the glass by her, he smirked faintly and gulped the content of the glass, drinking from where her lipstick stain was.

Natasha curled her lips while gazing at him. "Mr. Hamilton, aren't you too old to still be into these

flirting techniques?”

“Too old?” He narrowed his eyes. “Is my age considered too old?”

“Aren't you considered old when compared to those handsome young teenagers?” she asked.

“Handsome young teenagers? Who are they?” Kenneth questioned her cautiously.

She inched closer to him at the sight of his tense facial expression. “What's the matter? Are you nervous?”

Sensing her obvious intent to tease him, Kenneth pulled her into his embrace and gazed down at her. “That's right. I'm nervous. So, who are the handsome young teenagers?”

“Why don't you make a guess?”

“Are they your company's employees?”

“If they are my employees, wouldn't your informant have notified you?”

“So, who are they?” He narrowed his eyes. “Were you lying to me?”

“This is not considered a lie.” She turned to look at the television aside. “All those idols starring in the television shows Denise watches, aren't all of them handsome young teenagers?”

Kenneth took a glance at the television, following her line of vision. Then, he fixated his gaze on her face and vaguely curled his lips. “I think it is time for Denise to set right her social perception.”

“What's wrong? Did you realize the gap between yourself and the younger generation?” she asked.

“I just want her to understand which qualities of a man are worth admiring,” Kenneth enunciated.

Natasha arched her brow while listening to him. “I shall let you handle such an arduous task then!” She attempted to break free from his embrace as she spoke.

However, he did not show any inclination of letting her go.

“Mr. Hamilton, you should know when to stop groping me, right?”

He stared at her and asked, “Don't you want to know what Denise told me at behind earlier?”

“What did she say?”

“She gave me a valuable lecture.”

Natasha narrowed her eyes at him in curiosity.

"She asked me why I have yet to establish an official relationship with you," he said.

Natasha was stunned. She blinked at him, evidently wishing to avoid discussing that topic too.

Kenneth carefully observed her facial expression and added, "Denise also mentioned I'm not being sufficiently dominant, and she even taught me a few tricks."

Natasha did not need Kenneth to elaborate further to figure out what Denise had taught him. Undoubtedly, Denise had coached Kenneth on the methods she learned from the television shows.

"So?" she questioned him.

"I wish to practice now," he replied.

"How do you want to practice—"

Before she could finish her sentence, Kenneth had lifted her and placed her on the counter.

The man directly kissed Natasha's lips the next second while she was still caught up in a daze.

She was stumped.

Natasha could not deny that he had successfully seduced her.

Her heart palpitated in arousal. All the handsome young teenagers were nothing compared to Kenneth.

Afterward, she discreetly placed her hands on his back, hugged him, and reciprocated his kiss.

Initially, Kenneth merely wanted to tease her. However, when he sensed her response, an impulse overwhelmed him.

He wrapped his arms around her tightly and kissed her fervently.

Natasha responded in kind.

Amidst their excited state, the door to Anthony's room was pushed open with a clack.

Benjamin and Denise exited the room.

Anthony's bedroom was coincidentally facing the counter. As a result, the hot scene featuring Kenneth and Natasha was plain to see once the door was opened.

Denise widened her eyes at that sight.

Benjamin immediately covered his sister's eyes. "Don't look."

Disregarding all else, Denise quickly pushed his hand aside and continued taking in the scene.

In the little girl's opinion, that view was pleasing to the eyes and even comparable to the romantic moments captured in the drama series.

Not to mention, her daddy and mommy were much better looking than those male and female leads in the television shows.

Denise beamed at that thought.

Meanwhile, Kenneth and Natasha let go of one another after hearing the noise. They turned to look at Benjamin and Denise.

"Daddy, you're a quick learner!" Denise said.

Kenneth gazed at Denise leisurely with one arm resting on the counter. "Do you two have to show up at this time?"

Chapter 330

Kenneth was infuriated. "Natasha, are you thinking of taking advantage of me for free?"

Natasha was dumbfounded. However, upon careful deliberation, she thought there was nothing wrong with his interpretation of her statement.

Upon regaining her senses, she asked, "So, you think you're being taken advantage of?"

Kenneth pursed his lips and stared at her in silence.

Natasha took a deep breath and said, "The timing cannot be better. You can choose to leave now while nothing has yet to happen!"

Kenneth was instantly rendered speechless.

For some reason, she makes me sound like a jerk.

She started to close the door while he was still in a daze. "I'm going to change my clothes now!"

As Kenneth looked at the door shutting before his eyes, various images flashed across his mind. Bang! He suddenly reached out and stopped the door from being completely closed at the final second.

Natasha was stunned. Then, she looked up at him. "Is there anything else?"

Kenneth bore his eyes into her. Her words had undoubtedly angered him, but then, he was reminded of how they drifted apart after their previous discussion ended on an unhappy note. It was easy for them to engage in an argument, but the reconciliation process was tough.

He truly did not desire to stay mad at her because he was not fond of that feeling.

At that thought, he suppressed the discomfort churning within him and stared at her. "Your suggestion is not completely unacceptable."

Natasha was dumbstruck.

"What do you mean?" she asked. What is he playing at now?

Kenneth pushed the door open and said, "In this case, Natasha, shouldn't you act more mature and quit dithering?"

"What?"

He strode into the room and locked the door behind him, all the while boring his eyes into her.

She looked at him in utter perplexity.

Kenneth stepped closer to her. "I accept your suggestion. Therefore, shouldn't something happen between us now?" he asked.

Natasha kept her mouth shut.

"We should do something gratifying to adults. Otherwise, we would be wasting your proposal," he added.

Natasha had made up that speech as an excuse to brush Kenneth off. She did not expect him to pursue that issue further. She also knew her words would irritate him, but little did she anticipate his sudden change in attitude.

She gazed at him, not knowing how to respond at that moment.

He regarded her with gleaming eyes. "Don't worry. My stamina is still good. I should be able to satisfy you."

Natasha was rendered speechless.

“Do you want to take the initiative, or should I take the lead?” A hint of displeasure laced his deep voice as he uttered in a slightly intrigued tone.

Sensing her silence, Kenneth said, “All right. I'll take the lead then.” With that, he strode forward. Natasha instinctively took a few steps back, and Kenneth conveniently pressed her onto the bed, following her motion.

They stared into one another's eyes in close proximity, to the extent of being able to listen to each other's breathing sounds.

Natasha's long eyelashes trembled as she sensed his breathing turned labored.

At that same time, Kenneth leaned forward and slowly appreciated the alluring sight of her delicate forehead, eyebrows, eyes, nose, and mouth.

He gulped and gradually leaned in.

Just as his lips were about to make contact with hers, she piped up, “Kenneth, the three kids are home.”

Kenneth froze.

He shifted his gaze and met her eyes, glinting with determination.

He looked away and returned to his senses. I just wanted to teach her a lesson initially. Unexpectedly...

Still, Kenneth did not wish to let slip the chance to tease her, so he said, “Do you mean to tell me we can proceed if they are not home?”

“Kenneth, do you have to be so blatant when discussing this kind of topic? It's not like I've never given you the opportunity!” Natasha retorted.

Kenneth narrowed his eyes at her. “Are you talking about the other night?”

She kept quiet.

So, she wasn't confused or acting out of the ordinary because she was drunk. She was actually providing me with a chance...

Kenneth felt remorseful after that incident. However, only at that moment did he understand everything. “Does that mean you've already planned to establish this kind of superficial relationship with me?”

Taking in his enraged demeanor, Natasha realized the consequences of telling a lie because she needed to fabricate more lies to cover up the initial falsehood.

She did not foresee her trumped-up story to develop to this stage.

Natasha was at a loss for an explanation, so she decided to go along with Kenneth's assumptions.

"I thought you are willing to do this too," she replied.

Kenneth discovered Natasha could really invoke his wrath at any given moment.

"Natasha!" he growled. The fury on his face was distinctly visible. Anyone could have sensed his uncontrollable rage.

He wanted to speak further, but staring at her innocent and righteous facial expression, Kenneth knew his attempt to change her mind would be futile regardless of what he said. Therefore, the best solution he could come up with was to outplay her at her own game.

After brief contemplation, Kenneth uttered, "All right. I can agree to your proposal, but I have one condition."