

Yo Daddy 391

Chapter 391

Meanwhile, in an expansive presidential suite in Central Hotel, Dellmoor, Thalia was sprawled languidly on the couch, barefooted. Her striking red toenails accentuated her porcelain-white legs.

The table in front of her was brimming with fruits and snacks which she munched on while surfing on her phone, making for a leisurely sight.

As for Anthony, he was busy at the computer with Benjamin watching him closely from the side.

It wasn't until Anthony exited the program without a hitch that Benjamin breathed a sigh of relief.

"Tony, what are you doing all this for?" Benjamin asked. "On top of that, you even got yourself detected."

"Detecting me and finding me are two different matters," Anthony replied calmly, his gaze fixed on the screen. "Besides, it's not that they found me. I was the one who revealed my presence to them." He was staring at the screen with a confident and steady expression. The gravitas he exuded belonged to someone a lot more mature than his age.

"But what are you planning?" Benjamin prodded.

"Obviously, I'm trying to see how capable Daddy's men are and whether they have found any useful information. Even though Daddy promised to keep us updated, how much has he shared so far? Despite knowing that we're extraordinary and have joined Darknetz, we will always be children in his eyes. He will definitely not want us to worry, let alone get us involved," Anthony explained.

Even though Benjamin shared his sentiments, he still couldn't resist asking, "Aren't you worried that Daddy would notice?"

"He won't."

"Why won't he?" At that moment, Thalia's drawl rang out. "Looks like both of you don't know Kenneth well enough."

Upon hearing her words, Anthony asked, "What do you mean?"

Thalia looked up from her phone and inquired, "What? Don't you know?"

"Know what?"

"I remember telling both of you about Kenneth's background," Thalia said.

"Just spit it out." Anthony sensed something amiss.

"Back then, Kenneth established DX when he was going against Darknetz. Don't you know this?"

"We do."

"DX's headquarters is located here."

Anthony was stunned. "Here? Isn't it in Irushea?"

"Hmm? Was that what I said back then?" Thalia knitted her brows while trying to recall that memory.

"Did I not tell you that DX moved its headquarters here shortly after it was founded? Not long after they moved, Kenneth retired for some unknown reason, and DX was left in the hands of another founder. That person is similarly capable and ruthless. Under his management, DX expanded significantly and even recruited many hackers to their side." Thalia paused briefly before she continued, "From what I've learned, the majority of the top-twenty hackers within the community were hired by him. As to who exactly they are, I have no idea."

Anthony and Benjamin were both rendered speechless.

"Other considerations aside, DX is filthy rich and was willing to make very attractive offers. As Darknetz was established later and wasn't as well-funded, it was late to the game in terms of recruitment." Thalia shook her head in regret as she spoke.

Benjamin and Anthony stared intently at her, upset at the unwelcome piece of news.

"Why didn't you tell us this beforehand?" Anthony questioned her.

Thalia tilted her head to look at him. "I assumed that both of you were already aware. Who could've guessed that you don't even know your daddy at all?" She shifted the blame back onto them.

I'm not going to take responsibility for something like that.

Anthony added, "Please tell us everything next time."

"Okay."

At that moment, Benjamin, too, heaved a heavy sigh.

When she saw how exasperated they were, Thalia advised them, "Actually, this isn't that big of a deal. So what if Kenneth finds out? He's your daddy, not your enemy. Besides, he didn't protest when he learned that both of you have joined Darknetz."

Anthony took a deep breath. "It's not that he doesn't object. He just hasn't gotten the opportunity to do so."

"So what if he's against it? It's not like he can do anything to you," Thalia retorted.

"That's easy for you to say."

Thalia raised a brow. "Of course. It's none of my business, after all."

Anthony and Benjamin were so exasperated by her words that they were speechless.

Thalia smiled at them. "Don't worry. Worse comes to worst, you can pin the blame on me. After all, Kenneth doesn't have a good impression of me, and I don't give a d*mn anyway."

Just when Anthony was about to reply, the phone on the table suddenly rang.

They were subsequently stunned to see the name splashed across the caller ID.

They were subsequently stunned to see the name splashed across the caller ID.

When she saw the boys motionless, Thalia asked, "What's wrong? Who's calling?"

Both of them said nothing.

"Don't tell me it's Kenneth?" she asked again.

After giving her the side-eye, Anthony picked up the phone.

At the same time, Benjamin and Thalia quickly fell silent.

"Hello, Daddy," Anthony answered.

"Anthony, have you gone to bed yet?" Kenneth's caring voice rang out over the line.

After looking out the window, Anthony responded swiftly, "To bed? What do you mean? It's still early." As if something had occurred to him, Anthony asked, "Daddy, have you arrived?"

Chapter 392

After pondering for a moment, Anthony said, "Daddy, actually..."

"Actually what?" Kenneth asked.

The words were on the brink of rolling off his tongue, but Anthony swallowed them back at the very last

moment.

After a brief hesitation, he answered, "It's nothing. When you find Nat and come home, we'll talk about it in more detail. For now, I promise you that Darknetz will not take any action."

Kenneth digested his words before grunting in acknowledgment. "All right."

"In that case, Daddy, please be careful."

"You, too, should behave. Take good care of Great-grandpa and Gramps," Kenneth reminded.

"I know!"

When Anthony finally ended the call, Thalia and Benjamin stared at him.

"Has Daddy begun to suspect us?" Benjamin asked.

"I don't know." Anthony shook his head. "It feels as if he's threatening me or perhaps trying to probe for more information. It's really hard to guess what's going through his mind."

Lazing on the couch, Thalia grumbled when she heard their exchange, "Isn't that typical of members of the Hamilton family? All of you have plenty of agendas and speak in riddles. That's why you're so hard to understand!"

Anthony gave her the side-eye. "Isn't this all your doing? If only you had made things clear earlier, I wouldn't have needed to hack into Daddy's system and subsequently be detected."

"That's why you shouldn't act impulsively the next time," Thalia asserted.

"In that case, the next time you tell us something, please do so in one shot."

Thalia, with a defiant cock of her brow, smiled faintly at him. "I'll try."

Watching them banter, Benjamin interrupted, "I heard Daddy mention Anonymous on the phone. How did he know it was Anonymous? And from where did he hear that Anonymous had joined Darknetz?"

"Didn't Thalia mention just now that the top twenty hackers had joined DX? Therefore, it's not a surprise that someone recognized my methods. Besides, considering how close Kyle and I are, it's just a matter of time before rumors begin to spread like wildfire," Anthony explained.

"Are you saying that Daddy has begun to suspect you?" Benjamin clarified.

"Not necessarily. He might just be using me to convey a message to Darknetz instead of knowing that it was me."

Benjamin nodded in acknowledgment. "You have a point. Nonetheless, I don't think we can hide this matter for much longer."

"That's right. If Daddy wasn't busy trying to locate Nat, he would already have found out. We just got lucky, and that's how we managed to follow him here. As long as we can find Nat, I don't mind telling him the truth at all," Anthony remarked.

Benjamin nodded in agreement.

At that moment, Thalia casually added, "By then, you will have no other choice than to speak candidly. Otherwise, how are you going to join me at Darknetz?"

Upon hearing the topic, Anthony looked at her, his eyes filled with resignation. "Is it necessary to speak so candidly?"

Thalia grinned mischievously. "I just wanted to remind you. That's all."

She had barely finished when she popped a cherry into her mouth.

Hmm, it's really sweet!

Meanwhile, in an open-air restaurant, Kenneth had just returned after ending his call.

There, he saw Dave talking to a woman.

The moment he joined them, the woman quickly left.

Kenneth was surprised. "Why did she leave so fast? I don't mind giving up my spot."

"Friends are always more important than women," Dave quipped.

Chuckling, Kenneth scanned the surroundings. "What made you decide to come here?"

"Doesn't it look familiar?" Dave asked.

Now that he had mentioned it, Kenneth did find the place familiar.

"This was where we got to know each other after fighting!" Dave reminded.

After giving the place a closer look, Kenneth reconfirmed, "Are you saying that this used to be Bar Street?"

Dave nodded. "Hasn't it changed a lot?"

"It's no longer recognizable," Kenneth commented.

"Indeed. It has gone through significant changes over the years, having evolved from a dilapidated street littered with bars into one that's filled with chic restaurants. It's undeniable that its development was swift," Dave elaborated.

Observing the surroundings, Kenneth could feel the memories flooding back into him.

The flashbacks he experienced elicited a smile from his face. He couldn't deny that he had been living on the knife's edge back then. Despite the dangerous circumstances, it was a lot more exciting than his current life.

Back in the day, they lived and died by the sword, fighting with real weapons. That was in contrast to the current age, which was dominated by technology. Nowadays, battles were fought without smoke or bloodshed.

"Thinking about it makes it feel like it was just yesterday," Dave remarked, staring into the horizon.

Kenneth concurred with a smile, "Indeed."

Subsequently, Dave looked at him. "Do you have any regrets?"

Kenneth cracked a smile at the thought as he, too, gazed out at the horizon.

From the open-air balcony, he could see the sky dotted with stars.

A long while passed before he finally spoke. "There's no such thing as regrets. Everything we have been through is very much part of living."

Dave wasn't sure if Kenneth meant what he said. He figured that just part of it was true.

Regrets might also be a form of blessing too.

Regrets might also be a form of blessing too.

He got to his feet and patted Kenneth on the back. "I'm heading to the men's." With that, he left.

In the meantime, Kenneth picked up the beer on the table and took a mouthful. His heart was filled with mixed emotions as he stared blankly into space.

Meanwhile, when Dave came out of the restroom, he saw a young child running around the restaurant before falling onto the ground and bursting into tears.

At the same moment, a lady walked over to help the boy up.

"Are you all right?" she asked.

Chapter 393

She looks awfully familiar.

Suddenly, he was able to match the person in the picture with the one in his mind.

The very next second, Dave slammed on the brakes, bringing the car to a halt.

A curious expression descended on his face as he stared at Kenneth's wallpaper.

The frowning Kenneth looked at him from the corner of his eye. "What's wrong?"

"The woman on your wallpaper, is she your girlfriend?" Dave asked in sotto voce.

Kenneth glanced at his wallpaper which was a picture of Natasha looking downward. With her hair draped freely on her shoulder, she exuded an invigorating aura. He then shifted his attention to Dave. "What about it?"

As the scene in the restaurant emerged in his mind, Dave pursed his lips in hesitation before speaking. "If I'm not wrong, she's the beauty I saw in the restaurant just now."

Widening his eyes, Kenneth asked in a low voice, "Are you sure?"

Dave took another look at the picture. "I'm not entirely sure, but her looks and charm are... unmistakable."

Without another word, Kenneth opened the door and sprinted back to where they came from.

As they hadn't driven for long, they weren't really far from the restaurant.

A conflicted look flashed across Dave's eyes as he sat in the car and stared into the rearview mirror, watching Kenneth run.

After lingering for a few seconds, he spun the car around and followed the latter.

Upon returning to the restaurant, Kenneth searched every corner but failed to find Natasha anywhere.

Consequently, he began to grow desperate.

"Dave, did you see where she was headed?" Kenneth asked anxiously.

Dave's eyes were calm. "She might have already left."

All of a sudden, Kenneth smashed his fist against the wall. "If only I had arrived earlier, I might have been able to see her."

In the meantime, Dave was scanning their surroundings and noticed a surveillance camera nearby. If I'm not wrong, the camera should have captured her presence.

Hence, he walked to the reception. "I would like to see the surveillance footage for the last ten minutes or so."

Scrutinizing the two of them, the staff could see that the two men before him were extremely distinguished. Nonetheless, he still had rules to follow. "Sir, we'll need my boss' permission before you can see—"

Dave, not wanting to waste any time, plonked a wad of cash in front of the staff.

The receptionist's expression changed at once. "Of course, if you have lost something, I'm more than happy to give you access to it."

With that, they began to review the surveillance footage.

As Kenneth and Dave watched from the side, the feed was rewound to more than ten minutes ago.

It showed a child rushing across the restaurant and falling down. Subsequently, the figure of a beautiful woman helped him up.

Even though all he could see was a silhouette, Kenneth instantly recognized her as Natasha.

It wasn't until she turned around and he could see her face that he clenched his fists tightly.

It's her! That's really her! She's doing fine. She doesn't just look unharmed; her face is even glowing.

Kenneth was overwhelmed with rage, desperation, and relief at the sight of her.

Nevertheless, the anger he felt paled in comparison to the relief at knowing she was safe.

"Is she the reason why you want to see the feed?" the receptionist asked.

"Do you know her?" Kenneth responded.

The staff shook his head. "I don't know her, but she has dined here twice and always left a generous tip. That's why I clearly remember her. However, she has settled the bill and left a short while ago."

As Kenneth's eyes narrowed at the figure in the surveillance feed, he asked, "Do you have a surveillance camera at the entrance?"

"We do, but it was broken since last week, and we haven't repaired it yet," the receptionist replied.

Kenneth's face darkened in response.

Meanwhile, Dave picked up a pen and paper on the table and began scribbling a string of numbers.

"Next time the lady comes here, give me a call at once." After handing over the number, he brought out another wad of cash to go along with it.

The receptionist's eyes lit up. "I understand. No problem."

"Also, circulate the woman's photo among the people in the restaurant. Whoever is able to locate her will be well-rewarded," Dave instructed.

The receptionist felt as if he had struck the lottery. "Don't worry. If she ever returns, I'll be the first to call you."

Only then did Dave nod in approval.

Back outside, Kenneth leaned against the car and lit a cigarette.

At that moment, he stared at the surveillance camera above his head and inquired, "Dave, how many exits does this restaurant have?"

"Two?"

Kenneth gestured for him to look at the surveillance camera above.

The restaurant they were in was located on the top-floor balcony, while there was a different establishment downstairs. The moment he saw the surveillance camera, Dave understood at once.

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Chapter 394

Upon hearing his words, Dave pursed his lips tightly.

Even though he had no clue as to what Kenneth had gone through over the past few years, he could clearly feel the latter's desperation and anxiety.

In contrast to the usual Kenneth, who never seemed to care for anything, this was the first time he saw

his friend visibly worried.

Holding that thought, he threw his arm around Kenneth's shoulder. "Regardless of what you plan to do, you have my unconditional support and blessing."

At that moment, Kenneth looked at Dave from the corner of his eyes.

As if words were not needed, both men shared a deep and unspoken understanding with each other.

Dave added, "I sincerely mean it!"

Kenneth, too, couldn't help but smile. "I know. I was just thinking of inviting you to be my best man during my wedding."

At the sound of the suggestion, Dave narrowed his eyes cheekily, "I would advise you to reconsider. Or else, it would be bad if I end up stealing the limelight from you."

"Even though I have no idea where you got such confidence from, I would like to remind you not to let your imagination run wild."

Dave burst into laughter.

After their short banter, Kenneth no longer felt as tense.

Nevertheless, his eyes were still tinged with anxiety.

At that moment, Dave advised, "I know how concerned you feel right now, and whatever I say won't change a thing. But, we have ascertained that she's safe and not in captivity. Isn't that what's most important?"

Kenneth nodded in silence.

He couldn't deny how relieved he was to learn that she was safe.

"Don't worry. Since we ran into her today, it means that we're not far off from finding her," Dave reassured him.

His words triggered an idea in Kenneth's mind. "Dave, do you remember what the receptionist said just now?"

"What?"

"He mentioned that she had dined in the restaurant twice. That's an indication that she lives nearby, for she's someone inherently lazy and would never travel far for a meal. Therefore, she must be staying

around this area!" Kenneth exclaimed.

The more he thought about it, the more certain he became. "That's right. This has to be it. She has never been picky about food and would definitely choose someplace nearby!"

No sooner had Kenneth finished than an idea struck Dave. Without a moment's hesitation, he picked up his phone to make a call.

A few minutes later, Dave came over and looked at Kenneth. "I have ordered my men to move into this area. Don't worry; they will sweep every corner of this place, and we will definitely find her."

As Kenneth stared at the surroundings, an unfathomable look glistened in his eyes.

Natasha, no matter where you are, I'll definitely find you!

Meanwhile, Natasha had returned to the hotel.

After taking a quick bath, she walked up to the computer and turned it on with a solemn expression.

It was then that her phone suddenly rang.

Thinking that it was Boss, she froze when her phone indicated it was Terence.

Kenneth must have realized that I've left by now. As for Anthony and the rest, they are probably aware of the same too.

After giving it some thought, she decided to take the call.

"Grandpa."

"Nat, are you busy?" Terence asked.

From his tone, Natasha could tell that Terence wasn't aware of the matter yet.

"I'm not busy. I'm just resting."

"When will you be done over there?"

"It'll still take some time, as the matter is more complex than I imagined," Natasha explained.

"Complex? Even for you?" Terence was surprised.

"Grandpa, I'm talking about the collaboration, not the actual matter itself," Natasha elaborated.

"It's not that bad then. I was wondering what sort of problem was capable of causing my granddaughter grief." Terence chuckled over the phone.

His words filled Natasha with a sudden sense of guilt.

She was well aware that given Terence's advanced age, it was her duty to be by his side, taking care of him.

He should be living out his last years in peace instead of spending them worrying about her.

At the same time, Terence continued nagging her over the phone. "No matter what, remember to be more vigilant when you're out and avoid going out alone at night..."

"Grandpa!" Natasha interrupted him all of a sudden.

"Hmm?"

"If the negotiations for the collaboration are successful, I'll tell my boss that I won't be going on business trips anymore. Going forward, I'll just stay home to keep you company. How about that?" Natasha suggested.

Terence was briefly stunned before he chuckled. "Will your boss agree to that?"

"If he doesn't, I'll just quit since I've made enough money anyway. When the time comes, I'll take you on a trip around the world," Natasha replied.

Her words brought a smile to Terence's face. "All right then. I'm looking forward to it."

"Mmm-hmm!"

"Anyway, I won't hold you back from your work any longer. Let me know when you return home, and I'll cook up a feast for you," Terence said in an affectionate tone.

"All right," Natasha answered in acknowledgment.

"All right," Natasha answered in acknowledgment.

"By the way, do you know that Thalia has taken Anthony and Benjamin on a trip to the neighboring city?" Terence suddenly inquired right before he ended the call.

"The neighboring city? When?"

"Two days ago. The moment you left, Denise rejoined the film crew while the boys went on their trip, leaving both Liam and myself alone at home."

Natasha was taken aback. "What about Kenneth?"

"I'm not sure about him. He hasn't shown up over the last few days," Terence replied.

Chapter 395

Natasha tiptoed to the door and looked outside through the peephole.

A hotel staff was standing outside, knocking on the door relentlessly.

Seeing that it was a hotel staff, Natasha was about to open the door. However, when she put her hand on the door handle, she paused.

If he really is a hotel staff, he won't keep looking around and knocking on the door anxiously.

Just as Natasha was pondering what she should do, a voice sounded outside.

"The person may not be in the room now," said the hotel staff.

"Then do you know who's staying here?"

"I don't know. All I know is that she's a pretty woman!"

Listening to the conversation outside, Natasha knew that they must be looking for someone, and they were probably looking for her.

After thinking for a moment, Natasha returned to her laptop and sat down.

Her fingers flew on the keyboard as she wore a frosty, mysterious expression.

Just as the door was about to be opened, Natasha tapped lightly on the keyboard with her finger and looked in the direction of the door.

Two seconds later, the fire alarm sounded in the corridor outside the door.

It was at that moment that everything went silent outside.

Subsequently, it became chaotic. People were shouting, running, and calling for help, while whoever was at her door stopped whatever they were doing.

After a while, when Natasha heard that it was finally quiet outside, she walked to the door. She looked through the peephole and was relieved to see that the coast was clear.

Natasha attached the safety lock again after checking the door and making sure that it wasn't unlocked.

She didn't know who came, but her intuition told her that those people were coming for her.

Apart from Boss' men, I can't think of anyone else.

Thinking of that, Natasha turned around, took a black backpack out of the cabinet, closed her laptop, and stuffed it directly into the bag. She then packed her things swiftly. After scanning the room and making sure she didn't leave anything behind, she got up and walked outside.

In such a dangerous place, Natasha knew that it was best not to get into a fight unless absolutely necessary.

She was unaware of the visitors' identity and their motives, but her plan would definitely get affected if she took action.

To Natasha, the most important thing was to find out the truth about her father, and she didn't care about what methods she would use.

She wanted to find out the truth and go back alive.

For Grandpa, for Anthony, and... for myself!

With that thought in mind, Natasha put on a cap and a mask before walking out with a determined look on her face.

Meanwhile, Anthony stared at the computer screen and realized that Natasha was gone.

"Nat? Nat? Are you mad, Nat? I won't leave even if you're mad, Nat. I will never leave you here alone."

Alas, no matter what Anthony said, he received no response from the other side. Moments later, Natasha went offline.

Anthony furrowed his brows. He continued typing on the computer to try and track Natasha's location. However, he was running out of time, and Natasha even set up an anti-tracking setting. There was no time for Anthony to crack it, so he couldn't locate her whereabouts.

That made Anthony slam his fist on the table angrily.

He then stared at the computer screen and typed a sentence that read: Nat, I don't care what you think. I will never leave if I don't see you!

Then, he tapped the keyboard and sent the message.

That was probably the first time that Anthony ever “disobeyed” Natasha.

Even if he knew that Natasha would be angry, he wasn't afraid.

He would never let Natasha face it alone no matter what.

Besides, Nat contacted me today, so she will definitely reach out to me again!

Determined, Anthony sat in front of the computer persistently, staring at Natasha's avatar.

At that moment, Benjamin and Thalia returned with some food.

“Have some food, Tony!”

“Okay,” Anthony responded shiftlessly while keeping his eyes glued on the computer screen, for fear of missing Natasha's appearance.

After putting the food on the desk, Benjamin looked at Anthony and asked, “What's the matter? Are you angry?”

“Nat—” Anthony paused as he glanced at Thalia, who was standing aside. His eyes glinted and he changed his way of expression. “Nat called me just now.”

Benjamin asked, “And then? Where is she?”

“I don't know. She didn't tell me, but she knows that we're here. She's very angry and she wants us to go back!”

Benjamin furrowed his eyebrows. Looking at Anthony's expression, he suddenly understood something.

“And then?”

“She hung up after speaking, and she didn't even give me a chance to say anything,” said Anthony.

Chapter 396

Anthony and Benjamin were taken aback by her question.

When Anthony was thinking about what to say, Thalia's eyes were fixated on them.

“The two of you know Shadow Seeker and are very close with her, right?” Thalia asked.

“Why do you ask?” said Anthony.

“Why do you think I asked? As we all know, Shadow Seeker never sticks her nose into the business of

others. Besides, based on the message she sent me, she seems to be worried about the two of you, so you must know each other very well.”

Um...

Anthony never thought that Natasha would send a message to Thalia.

Looks like Nat is really anxious, but fortunately, at least it means that she is all right now.

Anthony secretly let out a sigh of relief.

However, as he looked at Thalia's displeased face, his mind began spinning rapidly, trying to come up with a plausible explanation.

When he finally thought of something, he said calmly, “Yeah, I know her. Why? Don't you know that?”

“How would I know if you didn't tell me?” Thalia's brows snapped together, and she raised her voice. “You clearly know that my mission this time is to find her, and yet you're still messing around? How many times have you promised me that you will no longer hide secrets from me and lie to me? Yet you still do it!”

Seeing Thalia's anxious expression, Anthony quickly tried to comfort her, “Calm down first!”

“How am I going to calm down?”

Anthony sighed and explained slowly, “Everyone knows that I know her. Besides, just because I know her doesn't mean I know where she is!”

“You're still fooling around with me!”

“I'm telling the truth. Besides, Kyle knows her too, so why aren't you mad at him?” asked Anthony.

“I—”

“Kyle was the one who introduced her to me last time. Why don't you know about this? You even called me that night!” said Anthony, shirking the responsibility.

Hearing Anthony's words, Thalia was momentarily speechless. She blinked and fluttered her long eyelashes as she asked, “What do you mean?”

“Last time, Kyle arranged for me to compete with Shadow Seeker. Everyone in the entire hacker world knows about it. When we were competing that night, Nat came and I went to chat with her. Didn't I tell you about this?” asked Anthony.

“So, you're saying that the two of you knew each other last time? W-When you were competing?” asked Thalia. She suddenly felt like she lost her strength, and even her tone became feeble.

“Yeah!” Anthony nodded.

Benjamin, who was watching at the side, couldn't help but look away.

He's so good at making stuff up! Also, it's surprising that Thalia is seriously deceived by Tony's innocent expression.

Thalia looked at Anthony, not knowing what to say. Moments of silence later, she asked, “T-Then if you two met last time, why does Shadow Seeker care about you so much? How does she know that you're here?”

“Shouldn't you ask her about this?” said Anthony. After glancing at Thalia, he continued, “But according to my guess, the reason why she cares about me might be because I'm a good rival. We're both the top hackers, so she cherishes me as her rival, I guess. After we competed with each other last time, our relationship has indeed become quite ambiguous. So, if anything happens to her, I will be worried, too.”

The reasons and excuses he provided were enough to convince Thalia.

After he finished speaking, Anthony even nodded in affirmation as if he was trying to persuade himself, too. “Yup, that's it.”

Thalia listened with her brows furrowed.

If that's the case, it does make sense.

However, she still felt that something was off, though she couldn't pinpoint what exactly didn't make sense.

She then looked at Anthony and asked, “Then how does she know that we are in Zaewora?”

Anthony replied, “Hmm... Maybe I accidentally told her when I was chatting with her. I don't even remember it. But it's not surprising that she knows. Think about it. Shadow Seeker is the top hacker. She's everywhere and also at the same time nowhere to be found. So, it isn't hard for her to know about this.”

Benjamin was at a loss for words.

What a whole bunch of nonsense! And while he's at it, he even praised and flattered Nat. Judging by Thalia's expression, she's almost brainwashed by his words.

Benjamin tried his best to hold back his laughter and hung his head, tucking into his food. The whole

conversation had nothing to do with him, so even if Thalia found out about the truth afterward, he would not be held accountable.

Thalia paused for a long time, and she couldn't find anything wrong with Anthony's explanation. Looking at the boy, she said, "Well... what you said made sense."

"Because that's the truth!" Anthony then looked at her with an aggrieved expression. "You can't just reprimand me without knowing everything! I'm just a kid! You'll scare me like that..."

"I—" Thalia didn't know how to respond.

"Forget it. You didn't mean it. You don't have to apologize. I've forgiven you," said Anthony.

"Forget it. You didn't mean it. You don't have to apologize. I've forgiven you," said Anthony.

Thalia was speechless.

"Sit down and eat!" Anthony said.

Thalia sat down as told and only regained her senses after taking a seat. "You're just a kid? Why didn't you say you were a baby?"

Anthony raised his head and looked at her. "Well, if you put it that way, I guess I am!"

Fixing her gaze on the boy, Thalia put on an ingenuine half-smile. "Look at you! You don't even look like a child, let alone a baby! Let this be a warning, Anthony. If I catch you fooling me again, I'll let you face the consequences!"

Anthony replied, "You're threatening me again!"

Chapter 397

Anthony's heart skipped a beat when he heard that.

Did she notice something?

He asked her, "What's not right?"

"I keep forgetting to ask you. Why did Nat come all the way here by herself? Also, why did she have to be so stealthy about it?" asked Thalia.

"Uh, didn't I tell you?"

"If you already told me, will I still ask?" Thalia asked in return.

"Oh."

Thalia looked at him. "What do you mean 'Oh?' Tell me!"

Anthony explained resignedly, "As a beautiful woman, can't you be more gentle like Nat?"

When she heard that, she questioned, "Are you sure that Nat is gentle?"

"I think... she is quite gentle!"

"Are you blinded by your love for her? Or did you forget what Nat did in the hospital?" Thalia queried.

Anthony couldn't agree with her. "She was forced by someone!"

"I was forced by you, too!" retorted Thalia.

Anthony was rendered speechless.

"What? Isn't that the truth?"

"How am I capable of doing so?"

"Don't underestimate yourself. You are indeed capable!"

Anthony looked at her and didn't know what to say. In the end, he could only flash her a wide smile.

"Whatever you say."

Thalia snorted victoriously.

That was the first time she defeated Anthony in a war of words. It felt great.

She leaned back lazily and looked at the boy with arrogance. "Say it!"

"Say what?"

Her eyes narrowed into slits. "Anthony Watson, if you're acting dumb again, don't blame me for being rude!"

"How are you going to be rude?"

"So, you're forcing me to pull out my trump card?"

Anthony stared at her, looking forward to what her trump card was.

Thalia bobbed her head, rolled up her sleeves, and stood up.

She took a glance at Benjamin, who was sitting beside them, and said, "Get out of the way, Benjamin, so that you don't get splattered with blood!"

Benjamin immediately got up and gave way. "Make it fast, or I'll feel sorry for him as his brother."

Anthony looked at Benjamin in disbelief. "How can you say that?"

"You brought this upon yourself, so you'll have to face the consequences!" After finishing his sentence, Benjamin immediately went and sat opposite them.

"Just you wait, Benjamin!" said Anthony.

Benjamin merely arched a brow and didn't care.

When Anthony was about to say something, Thalia interrupted him, "Stop looking at him! You should worry about yourself."

Anthony turned and saw that Thalia was already sitting beside him.

"What are you going to do?" he asked.

She stared at him, and in the next second, she suddenly reached out her hands to tickle the boy.

He didn't see that coming at all and jumped up from his seat.

"H-How did you know this?" he asked with a bewildered expression.

Thalia felt very pleased of herself when she saw his reaction.

"What do you think of my trump card?"

At that moment, Anthony looked at his brother.

Sensing his glare, Benjamin immediately defended himself, "It wasn't me! I won't do something like that!"

"If it isn't you... Could it be, Denise?" Anthony guessed.

Only Nat, Benjamin, and Denise know about this. Nat won't tell, Benjamin doesn't lie, so it must be Denise who always uses this trump card to "beg" me.

Anthony looked at Thalia and asked, "Did Denise tell you?"

Thalia looked down at her slender hands and asked, "Does it matter? You're not afraid of me when I'm holding a knife and pointing it at you, but you're afraid of me when I'm not even holding a weapon. That's amazing."

Anthony was rendered speechless.

Thalia looked at him and asked, "So, what do you think? Do you want to try again?"

No matter how angry Anthony was, he had to endure it.

"N-No need!" he replied.

She smiled and felt extremely satisfied.

"Come, sit!" She beckoned him over with her finger.

"It's okay. I'll just sit next to Benjamin," said Anthony.

At that moment, Thalia looked at him and put on a smile that didn't reach her eyes. "I said, sit."

He had no choice but to do as told when he saw her threatening smile. Hence, he walked over and sat down next to her.

As soon as she raised her hand, he jumped and reflexively lifted his arm to block her.

She said, "Don't be so anxious. I won't do anything to you."

"Are you sure?" he asked uncertainly.

"Of course. As long as you are obedient, I won't bully you!" Thalia sounded like the cunning wolf in The Little Red Riding Hood.

"Thalia, I have something I don't know if I should say or not!"

Chapter 398

Benjamin knew very well that he would have to make things up in order to not reveal Natasha's identity. However, Thalia hated it when people lied to her. Although she had mentioned countless times that she wouldn't blame them, Benjamin still refused to get involved in such a troublesome matter.

Thus, Benjamin shifted his gaze from Anthony to Thalia. "Tony, I think Thalia is like family to us. She has gone through a lot with us, and you still don't trust her? Don't try to hide it from her anymore. Just tell her!"

As soon as Benjamin finished his sentence, Anthony looked at him in shock.

Thalia also lifted her head and stared at Anthony.

Benjamin was clearly implying that Anthony had used Thalia and still didn't trust her.

"You..." Anthony looked at Benjamin and was momentarily at a loss for words.

"What's wrong? Isn't that the truth?" Benjamin asked. His expression was innocent, but the look in his eyes was full of complacency and provocation.

Anthony had sabotaged Benjamin a lot of times over the years. It was also Benjamin's fault that he trusted his brother too much. However, things were different now. Benjamin wouldn't necessarily jump into the trap that his big brother set up for him.

Thalia looked at Anthony and narrowed her eyes. "So that's how it is, huh?"

Anthony turned and stared at Thalia with horror. "No, that's not true!"

"Then, what does Benjamin mean?" she asked.

"He misunderstood. I definitely don't mean it that way!"

"Misunderstanding?" she sneered.

"I'm telling the truth, I swear! I have unconditional trust in you!" he said.

"Do you think that I believe you?" she asked.

"Erm... You are so smart, beautiful, and wise, so you will definitely believe me!" replied Anthony.

"Do you think that I'll believe you after you flattered me?" asked Thalia.

Anthony put on a smile. "Of course not. How can a wise person like you believe me just because I said something nice? You have a brain and you will definitely be able to tell what's true!"

He is certainly good at smooth talking his way out of trouble!

In fact, Thalia knew that Benjamin said that on purpose to do his brother dirty. She was just taking the opportunity to frighten Anthony, and now that she had succeeded in doing so, there was nothing more she could say.

"Stop flattering me! If you really do trust me, tell me the truth!" said Thalia.

Anthony instantly put on an ingratiating smile when he saw that Thalia wasn't angry. "Of course, I will tell you even if you didn't ask me to!"

Thalia merely glanced at him wordlessly, and he heaved a sigh of relief. Subsequently, he stared daggers at Benjamin, who arched an eyebrow nonchalantly.

Anthony knew that his top priority was to appease Thalia, and he must not lie when he was telling her. Otherwise, Thalia would get mad when she found out in the future.

He began, "I haven't mentioned this before because it has something to do with Nat's privacy and past trauma!"

Thalia furrowed her brows while looking at him.

"Nat is here for the sake of my granddad."

"Your granddad?"

"Which is Nat's father."

"Of course, I know that he's Nat's father. It's just that you've never mentioned that you have a maternal grandfather!"

"That's because he has passed away!" Anthony said.

Thalia was momentarily stunned. "Passed away?"

Anthony sighed. "Yeah!"

"If he has passed away, what is your mother doing here then?"

"Because my granddad didn't die of natural causes," said Anthony.

Thalia went speechless. She had experienced a lot throughout all these years, and her sharp instincts told her that it was a complicated matter.

"Did your grandfather stay here?" Thalia asked.

"Maybe. I'm not too sure. I only heard a little bit about my granddad from my Great-grandpa. Nat didn't tell me much about my granddad, and neither did she say anything when she came here this time. I only found out by accident. Otherwise, I wouldn't have secretly followed her here," said Anthony.

Thalia nodded as she listened. "I see. Did Nat come here to find out the truth about your grandfather's

death?”

“I suppose so!”

“Did she receive some intel?”

Anthony thought for a while and asked, “Do you remember the time when we had a birthday party?”

As that topic was brought up, Thalia remembered how she met Spencer last time. She subconsciously lowered her head and said, “Yes I do. Why?”

“You already left back then, so you might not be aware. Nat ran into a group of people at the entrance of the hotel, and they had tattoos that were similar to Granddad's. So, Nat went over to them.”

“What a coincidence!” said Thalia.

Chapter 399

At that moment, both Anthony and Benjamin looked at her simultaneously.

“What does that mean?” Anthony questioned.

Benjamin also kept his eyes trained on Thalia with puzzlement and anticipation.

Thalia pondered for a moment and slowly said, “I know someone from Vermillion Base. I can try and see if I can get some info.”

The two brothers were excited to hear that.

“You know someone there?”

“Kind of. I rescued him when I was on a mission a few years ago. He is very grateful to me and even insisted on getting my contact information. I can't say no, so I gave him my number... But I haven't been in contact with him for a long time, so I don't know if I can still reach him.” Thalia took out her phone and scrolled through her contacts.

Anthony and Benjamin watched expectantly.

After a while, Thalia narrowed her eyes at one of the contact numbers. “I found it.”

The two brothers stared at her quietly.

Thalia looked at the number. “It should be this one. I'll make a call first and see if I can get through!”

When Thalia was about to make the call, Anthony suddenly grabbed her hand.

"What's wrong?" Thalia asked.

Anthony stared at the woman, wondering what he should say.

Then, he asked, "Thalia, are you sure you want to be a part of this?"

Although they were members of the same organization, they had only known each other for a while. Thalia had already helped him a lot, but the situation this time was different. Their opponent was not just any typical bad guy, but a group of vicious villains.

If something happened, Thalia will definitely get into trouble, and even...

Thalia's lips curved to form a smile. "What do you mean?"

"You have helped us a lot, but this time, our opponents are people from Vermillion Base. You know the stakes better than I do," said Anthony.

"So you're saying that I'm only capable of defeating ordinary people and not the powerful ones?" Thalia asked.

"This isn't what I meant!"

"If it isn't, then shut up!"

"Thalia, I just want you to think clearly because I'm afraid that you will... regret it," said Anthony.

"Regret? How would I know I'd regret it if I haven't even done it?"

"That's why I want you to think it through!" Anthony said.

"Then I'm done thinking!" said Thalia.

Anthony was speechless and confused.

"So, can I make the call now?" asked Thalia.

Anthony said, "You're too rash!"

"Anthony Watson, since when have you become such a coward?"

"I'm not a coward!"

"Of course you are!" said Thalia. She then suddenly thought of something and questioned, "What's

wrong? Are you moved by my kindness and feel guilty for the way you treated me?"

Anthony was dumbstruck for a moment before a hint of embarrassment flashed across his immature face. "No. I just don't think it has anything to do with you, and I'm afraid that you'll get into trouble because of us..."

At that moment, Thalia saw a word written all over his face.

Duplicity.

She leaned over and stared at him. "Oh, really?"

"Of course!"

"Get into trouble? Ha, I eat trouble for breakfast since the day I met you, so you don't have to worry about that. Don't you think it's a little too late for you to be saying that?" she asked.

Anthony said, "You can't put it like that..."

"Then how should I put it?"

Anthony looked at her and suddenly had no idea what to say.

Nevertheless, he knew that Thalia was just saying that to shut him up.

Thalia said with a smile, "Also, if you're really touched, then treat me nicely. When I'm old, the three of you must look after me."

Even though he was really moved, Anthony was a stubborn person. "If the three of us are going to look after you, then what about your child? What should he or she do?"

"Who said I'll have a child?" Thalia asked.

A bitter smile appeared on Thalia's face as she continued, "How can I have a child if I can't even find a man right now?"

While Anthony was thinking about how he should reply to that, Thalia looked at him and said, "Okay, stop dilly-dallying. Are you letting me make the phone call or not? If not, then I really don't care anymore!"

Anthony stared at her and finally let go of her after moments of hesitation.

Thalia smiled and made the call.

Anthony and Benjamin watched while holding their breaths in anticipation.

A series of beeping sounds came from the phone.

"I can still get through!" said Thalia.

The two brothers' eyes flashed with joy.

They then continued to wait until the phone was connected after three to four beeps.

"Hello? Is this my savior?"

Thalia smiled when she heard someone speaking. "That's me."

Chapter 400

Thalia was stunned.

She didn't expect Benjamin to say that. Moreover, after getting to know the boy, she knew that he rarely joked. At that moment, the words that came out of his mouth were like a promise.

Initially, she was just messing around when she asked them to look after her when she was old, but as she looked at Benjamin's serious expression, she felt touched.

She asked, "Are you... serious?"

He nodded solemnly. "Yes, I'm serious!"

"Aww..." Thalia's maternal love flooded as she ruffled the boy's hair and said, "You're such a good boy, Benjamin. You're so smart and loyal! If only you were a few years older, then I will surely marry you."

Benjamin looked at her calmly, as he was indeed serious about that.

When Anthony heard that, he couldn't help but say, "Wait, didn't you say that you're going to wait for me to grow up?"

"Can't I change my mind?"

"Are all women so fickle?" Anthony asked.

Thalia curled her lips. "As humans, we have to learn to adapt to different situations. We must change our minds right away when we make the wrong choices."

After saying that, she turned and looked at Benjamin who was sitting across from her. The more I look at

him, the more I become fond of him. He's so different from his brother!

Anthony didn't know what to say. "You're just implying that I'm not good enough."

"Whoa. So you could tell?" Thalia feigned surprise.

Anthony was speechless.

"It's a good thing that you know you're not good enough. Looks like you're not incorrigible after all!" said Thalia.

Anthony took a deep breath. "Women nowadays are so..."

Just as he was about to say something, Thalia glanced over at him. He immediately smiled and swallowed what he was about to say.

"What are you going to say?"

He shook his head. "Nothing!"

Thalia's lips curved in satisfaction. Then, she looked at him and asked, "What's the matter? Are you jealous because I praised Benjamin?"

"Do you think that's possible? How could I get jealous over such trivial matters? Besides, you're complimenting my brother. Why would I be jealous of that?"

"Then what are you babbling about?"

"If I didn't say that, you wouldn't have a sense of accomplishment!" said Anthony.

Thalia rolled her eyes at him. "So, I have to thank you now?"

"You're welcome!" Anthony smiled.

Thalia looked at the smile on his face, which resembled his father, Kenneth, and became inexplicably annoyed. It was probably because she disliked Kenneth.

She narrowed her eyes. "Sure, continue being stubborn. I'll see how long can you keep this up."

Anthony smiled and stopped saying anything.

Benjamin merely looked at them smilingly.

A friend in need was a friend indeed.

They were lucky to have a friend like Thalia.

The next morning, when Thalia was about to go out, Anthony and Benjamin had already packed their things and were waiting for her in the living room.

Seeing them, Thalia walked over. "What are you two doing up so early?"

"Aren't we meeting the person?" Anthony asked.

"Yeah..." Thalia thought of something and said, "Oh, I forgot to tell you two yesterday that I can go by myself. Don't worry, I will definitely bring the news back to you!"

"No!"

"No!"

The brothers said in unison.

Thalia frowned. "Oh. You two are in sync at times like this."

Benjamin asked, "Why can't we go?"

"The two of you are still young. I don't want you to be exposed to the public too early. You don't have the ability to protect yourself. What if someone notices something and something happens?" said Thalia.

One of them was a genius, and the other was a gifted person. She was very worried about taking them with her.

"We're just going to ask for some info. Nothing will happen!" Anthony said.

"What if something went wrong?"

"Then you can say that we're your younger brothers. No one will suspect anything!" Benjamin said.

"But—"

"We have to go, Thalia!" Anthony looked at her and said with unwavering determination.

Looking at his gaze, Thalia knew that if she didn't bring them with her, they would still find a way to follow her.

She knew nothing would be able to stop the brothers since they had come all the way here without their

father knowing.

However, no matter how high their IQ was, they were still children to Thalia, so she couldn't help worrying.

Therefore, it was better to take them with her.

With that thought in mind, she looked at them and said, "Okay, I will take you there, but I have the say in everything. You don't act without my permission."

Anthony nodded immediately and said, "Okay."

Benjamin nodded too.