

## **Yo Daddy 401**

### **Chapter 401**

Jedayton town was about ten kilometers away from Dellmoor.

Although ten kilometers was not very far, it felt as if they had entered another world.

When the car drove past the muddy roads, dust flew in the air. Ruins left behind from the war lined both sides of the roads. The terrible state of the place was enough for anyone to imagine the kind of horrific devastation that had taken place in the past.

Finally, the car came to a stop at a bend. The people around looked at them once in a while. There was no fear or even envy in their eyes. On the contrary, they appeared so calm. It was as if they had given up.

Looking at them made Anthony and Benjamin feel very emotional.

If they were not there in person, they would have never known about the poverty and suffering the people there were going through.

However, the people staying there no longer cared about poverty and suffering. Being alive was of utmost importance instead.

Both brothers led a good and peaceful life. Scenes like those in front of them should only appear in the movies. Yet, it was unfolding right before their eyes.

The two kids stared at one another for a long time without saying a word.

Thalia, on the other hand, was used to seeing such a disturbing scene. After parking the car, she looked at them through the rearview mirror and reminded them, "Things can be quite chaotic here. Just be careful."

It was only then the two kids returned to their senses and nodded at Thalia.

"Let's go!" With that, Thalia got out of the car, and the two brothers followed suit.

The trio began walking on a path.

At that moment, Benjamin could not help but ask, "Thalia, have you been here before?"

Thalia shook her head in response. "No." Knowing what he was trying to get at, she explained, "But I have been to places that are worse than this. To these people here, they aren't worried about their next meals. Instead, they wonder if they get to live to see tomorrow."

For a long while, the two kids looked at her and kept quiet.

Curling her lips, Thalia could not help but say, "What's wrong with the two of you? Did it just dawn on you how lucky you are?"

Compared to those people, they were indeed blessed.

It was rare to see Anthony so quiet. "That's why it's important to cherish each day," Thalia said. "We are so much luckier than these people here." She then looked around her, and a hint of pity flashed across her eyes, too.

Both Anthony and Benjamin nodded in agreement.

Just then, someone appeared in front of them and started waving.

When Benjamin saw that, he asked, "Is that the guy, Thalia?"

Thalia looked up and was taken aback when she saw the person. After taking a closer look, she nodded. "I think so. Let's go over!"

The three of them quickened their steps and walked toward the man.

"My savior," greeted the man with a smile as he approached them. "I can't believe I get to see you again."

As it had been years, Thalia could barely recognize him. "That's right, Justin. It has been a long time."

"Yeah. It has been six or seven years since we last saw each other." Noticing Anthony and Benjamin, Justin asked Thalia, "Are these two your children, savior?"

Thalia immediately shook her head. "No, they are my... brothers!"

Smiling, Justin looked at the kids. "Nice to meet the two of you."

"Nice to meet you, too," greeted the kids.

Then, Justin uttered, "Come, let's go to my place."

The trio then followed him to his so-called home.

The partially-battered house had bare concrete walls and various kinds of broken furniture. There was also some damaged kitchenware.

The floor was clean even by their standard, and there was even a carpet on the floor.

Inside the house, there was a child around the age of four hiding behind the man. There was also an elderly person lying next to a pile of random stuff.

It was a heart-wrenching sight.

Justin found a clean space and placed a piece of a plastic bag on the floor. "Please have a seat."

There was indeed no other place for them to sit down. The only place that was clean was right where they were standing.

Thalia took one look and sat down; Anthony and Benjamin mirrored her actions with no hesitations.

A smile appeared on Justin's face.

He looked as if he wanted to serve them some refreshment, but there was nothing available.

Thalia seemed to be able to read his mind, so she stated, "Justin, it's all right."

Justin turned around to look at her before sitting down in front of them reluctantly. "I really have nothing at home that I can serve all of you with. I'm sorry, savior."

"I remember that you didn't use to stay here, Justin. What happened?" asked Thalia.

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A while later, Justin shook his head. "I've never heard of this name."

Disappointment flashed across Anthony and Benjamin's faces.

"He's not local, like me," Thalia added, hoping to jog his memory.

Justin shook his head yet again.

Seeing that, Thalia pursed her lips and nodded. She was not disappointed as she had prepared herself for the worst on the way here.

After all, there was no simple matter in the world.

Suddenly, the man in the mess made a noise. Hearing the commotion, Justin turned over his shoulder and told Thalia, "I'll go take a look at my father."

Thalia shot Justin a nod, and the latter got up to leave.

Right then, the kid standing beside them stared at Anthony and Benjamin unblinkingly. They were about the same age, and the kid's gaze was innocent and kind.

Benjamin seemed to recall something as he placed his backpack down. Unzipping it, he fished out some chocolate and snacks.

He held them carefully and offered them to the little girl.

Despite his gifts, the kid stared at him fearfully and dared not take a step forward.

With his gaze fixed on her, Benjamin got up to head to her.

"Have some!" he said in Ustranian.

The little girl seemed to understand him, for she took the snacks from him hesitantly. After grabbing the snacks, she beamed and ran to Justin as though she was showing off to her father.

Seeing her reaction, Justin told her something inaudible, and she carefully went to a corner to remove the packaging.

Benjamin was lost in a whirlpool of emotions.

Meanwhile, Anthony shut his eyes as though he had made up his mind.

Suddenly, Justin turned over his shoulder and said something that made Thalia leap to her feet.

Seeing her reaction, Anthony glanced at her. "What's wrong?"

"Justin's father said he had met Theodore previously!" Having said that, Thalia strode over to Justin solemnly.

Both Anthony and Benjamin trotted behind her.

Justin's father was paralyzed. His legs were gone, and only his upper torso remained. However, he was still lucid.

"Ms. Jacoway, the Theodore Watson you mentioned is a Chanaean, right?" Justin's father asked.

Thalia nodded. "Yes. How do you know that?"

Right then, Justin spoke up. "My father is one of the earliest men to join Vermillion Base. He couldn't take care of me and had no choice but to take me along with him. That was how I joined the base."

Comprehension dawned on Thalia as she turned to his father. "What do you know about him?"

"I remember he was a kind man and held a high position in Vermillion Base. However, he was different from the rest. He cared a lot for us. He was a good man," Justin's father muttered.

"What else do you know?" Thalia urged. "Please tell me everything."

"He was in the base for around one year. One day, he got into a fight with someone in the base and claimed he would leave. I saw him packing up his stuff. After that, I don't think I ever saw him again," Justin's father revealed.

Upon hearing that, Thalia narrowed her eyes. "You never saw him after that?"

Justin's father inclined his head. "That's right. After he left, the base changed locations. I'm sure I never saw him after that."

Thalia pressed her lips into a thin line as though she was pondering over something.

"Why are you asking about him, Miss? Did something happen to him?" Justin's father asked.

Thinking about it for a while, Thalia revealed, "He's dead."

Justin's father was slightly taken aback, but he did not seem surprised at all.

"Aren't you surprised?" Thalia probed.

Justin's father looked at her and suddenly inquired, "Do you know the consequences of wanting to leave the base?"

"What?"

"For people like us, they would chop off our legs, blind our eyes, or make us deaf and mute. Those who can read would be killed immediately."

Thalia's gaze turned icy as she furrowed her brows. Unlike their organization, Vermillion Base was just a local organization and was not a threat to them, so she did not know much about them. However, learning about the harsh truth made her ball up her fists.

They are monsters.

After her initial fury, Thalia continued with her questions. "Do you know Theodore's position inside? Who was the man who fought with him back then?"

Justin's father knitted his brows. "I don't know what his job was. However, I remembered that he

brought a laptop everywhere he went. It seemed very important to him. As for the man who fought with him, he's already dead."

Thalia had barely processed his first answer when he dropped a bombshell. Shocked, she asked, "He's dead? How did he die?"

"I heard someone shot him in the heart when there was a riot."

"I heard someone shot him in the heart when there was a riot."

"Are you sure?" Thalia urged.

"I was right beside him, so I saw how he died," came the elderly man's answer.

At that, Thalia fell silent, while Anthony and Benjamin frowned.

Justin broke the silence. "Savior, why are you so curious about Theodore? How was he related to you? Was he your relative?"

### **Chapter 403**

On the way back, the three of them remained silent.

Despite getting some new information, they could not calm down after seeing the situation back there.

Benjamin reclined in his seat and observed the star he received from the kid before they left.

Anthony glanced at the star and took it from Benjamin. Twitching his lips, he said, "This must be very important to her. Look how well-kept it is."

Benjamin could see the kid's innocent smile whenever he looked at the star.

A tensed silence filled the car.

Thalia glanced at them through the rearview mirror and smiled. "Why do you both look downcast?"

Letting out a sigh, Anthony returned the star to Benjamin. "You're asking the obvious."

Thalia flashed a smile. It was rare to see Anthony this dejected. Before she could speak, Benjamin uttered, "Our desires grow every day as we think about how to achieve outstanding achievements in the world. On the contrary, they are struggling to survive."

Seeing how upset they looked, Thalia drove with one hand and glanced around. Slowly, she said, "In the future, when you travel the world and visit every corner, you'll understand that many people are struggling to survive in unexpected corners of the world. This is the reality and how the world runs."

I never knew that, but I do now.

Benjamin listened to her and turned to look out of the window.

Countless collapsed buildings and ruins were in sight. They seemed to tell the story of how prosperous this land used to be.

Anthony looked at him. "All right. Thalia said this is just the tip of the iceberg. Are we going to be this depressed every time we run into similar situations?"

"Got it." Benjamin nodded.

"No matter what, we made good progress today," Anthony added.

Benjamin nodded yet again.

As they were back to their cheerful selves, Thalia grinned. Suddenly, something popped up in her mind, and she asked, "By the way, do you know what Theodore did in Vermillion Base?"

Anthony and Benjamin shared a look. The latter then said hesitantly, "I think he was like me..."

Surprised, Thalia asked, "Like you? A hacker?"

Anthony inclined his head. "I guess so."

"Uh, was he capable?" Thalia queried.

"I'm not sure about that. The Internet wasn't that developed back then. Nat told me briefly that Granddad was good with computers, but I'd never met him before. Nat didn't make it clear that he was a hacker, so this is just a pure guess," Anthony revealed.

After hearing his explanation, Thalia nodded thoughtfully.

Well, he has a point.

Natasha was young when Theodore passed away. Back then, the Internet was not as developed as it was right now. Many people did not even know what it was unless they were geniuses.

Thalia could not hide her shock when she realized this family had so many geniuses.

It would be wild if they were to gather together.

With that thought in mind, Thalia blurted out, "So you inherited your skills from your granddad? It

skipped a generation and went to you?"

Anthony was speechless.

It didn't actually skip a generation. Nat got it and passed it down to me.

However, Anthony could not reveal that, so he gave a tentative nod. "I guess so."

Thalia grew excited. "You guess so? No, it must be the truth!" She then praised, "I was wondering why you're a genius at such a young age. Turns out it's in your genes. By the way, what was your granny's job?"

Her question rendered both kids speechless.

Anthony and Benjamin shared a look as they realized they had never asked Natasha about that.

Seeing their reaction, Thalia asked, "You don't know?"

Anthony shook his head. "We knew Granddad and Granny died a horrible death. Their deaths had always haunted Nat, so she rarely spoke about them. We never asked her about that to prevent rubbing salt on her wound."

Suddenly, Thalia realized she should not be this excited.

She might be curious about Natasha's past, but these experiences were deadly to a young Natasha.

Thalia promptly offered an apology. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean anything else. Your granddad was talented, so I thought your granny would be the same. Your family's genes are amazing, so perhaps Benjamin inherited her skills."

Hearing that, Anthony glanced at Benjamin and chuckled. "Perhaps you're right." He then turned to Thalia and told her, "You don't have to apologize. I know you don't mean anything else."

## **Chapter 404**

Benjamin stared at him in confusion. Through the rearview mirror, Thalia shot him a baffled look.

"What makes you say that?" Benjamin inquired.

"There must be a reason the men from Vermillion Base left without doing anything after suffering a huge loss. Nat also left back then."

"Are you saying they took Nat with them?" Benjamin asked. "Didn't Nat contact you?"

"There are many ways to take her with them. I don't think they kidnapped her. Besides, they couldn't do



that in Daddy's territory. However, it's different if they tricked her," Anthony revealed darkly.

Benjamin felt his words made sense.

Upon hearing that, Thalia uttered, "Then why did they take Nat with them?"

Taken aback, Anthony furrowed his brows. She's right. Why did they take Nat with them? Was Nat's identity exposed? No, I don't think so. Though it might be a possibility, it's highly unlikely.

Anthony was not sure, but he could not stop a sense of urgency from rising in his heart.

After mulling over the matter, Benjamin slowly said, "Did they do that after discovering Nat was investigating Granddad's death? Or, if it isn't that complicated, do they want revenge?"

"Revenge?" Thalia scrunched up her brows.

Turning to her, Benjamin explained, "We stole the goods from them on Daddy's territory, but Vermillion Base thought it was Daddy who took their goods. Thus, they might be doing this to take revenge against Daddy."

"That makes sense, but isn't this too complicated? They could've taken revenge by killing Nat," Thalia responded.

"Perhaps they didn't have a chance to do so."

Thalia did not share their sentiments. "Do you think those outlaws will fail to find a chance to kill her?"

Anthony and Benjamin said nothing.

Glenport City was Kenneth's territory, so it was hard to find an opportunity to take action. However, they could still pull it off if they tried hard enough.

"Unless they are after something else..." Thalia mumbled under her breath as she thought hard about it.

Anthony and Benjamin shared a guilty look.

Was it because of that?

"Let's stop pondering over the matter and see if we can get in touch with Nat. We should inform her about the matter," Benjamin remarked.

With a nod, Anthony whipped out his phone to give Natasha a call. Alas, his call did not go through.

"Send her a text. She'll definitely receive it!" Benjamin suggested.

Anthony nodded.

Since Natasha knew they were here, she would not relax until they left.

Hence, despite refusing to answer her phone, she would definitely read their text.

With that thought in mind, Anthony typed out a text that explained their findings and sent it to Natasha.

After the text was successfully sent, he stared at the screen intently as though he was waiting for her reply. However, the reply never came.

A deep line appears in the middle of Anthony's brow.

"No reply yet?" Benjamin questioned.

In response, Anthony shook his head.

"Nat won't contact us as she's worried about dragging us into her mess," Benjamin comforted him.

"She's always like this. She loves bearing all the responsibility herself," Anthony said sadly as his heart ached for her.

"Yes."

"That's because you're her babies!" Thalia chirped. Her gaze was fixed on the road as she drove the car.

This time, it was her turn to become the center of attention as the two boys looked at her.

"All mothers love their children. She could risk her life to protect you!" Thalia added and sighed silently.

Suddenly, a scene flashed across her mind. Lying in a puddle of blood, a pretty woman raised her bloody hands to cover Thalia's eyes. "Lia, you must survive. Remember, I love you. I love you forever. I'm afraid I can't stay by your side to protect you, but I can be your guardian angel in another way. So, stay strong and live a good life."

The most painful thing about one's memory was that it would not fade away with time. On the contrary, it would grow more memorable as time passed. Over the years, Thalia got to know how helpless her mother was. Tears threatened to spill from her eyes.

Grabbing her sunglasses lying aside, she put them on to conceal her tears.

In the backseat, Anthony and Benjamin did not notice the change in her emotions.

They thought over her words carefully before saying, "We can sacrifice for Nat the same way she sacrifices for us, too!"

Hearing that, Thalia curved her lips. "Thus, you'll have to grow up quickly to become strong and capable men. That way, you can keep your promise and protect her."

For the first time in his life, Anthony did not refute her words and gave a firm nod, growing increasingly determined to become stronger.

## **Chapter 405**

Seeing her reaction, Anthony asked, "Why don't you copy Nat?"

"I want to, but I didn't get any chance. Besides, it's hard to find a man with good genes. You'll get upset if I give birth to fools."

Something glinted across Anthony's eyes as he muttered, "Actually, Spencer has great genes. He is a medical volunteer. Nat says he's capable of resurrecting the dead. I think you can try having a baby with him. Maybe your baby will be good at medicine."

His reply rendered Thalia speechless. Her face turned dark as she snapped, "Why did you even bring him up?"

"I'm just giving a suggestion. You can ignore me if you don't like it."

Thalia glared at him. "Come on, time to get out of the car."

Anthony and Benjamin grinned when they realized how impatient she was.

When the door clicked shut, Thalia turned to them. "When will I receive the money?"

"I thought you're going to be generous and fork out your money!"

Thalia threw him a glare and snickered. "It's rare for you to offer your money, so I'll definitely give you the chance to do that."

Pulling his phone out, Anthony typed something on it. "I've transferred the money to you."

As he spoke, Thalia's phone beeped. She took it out and glanced at it. Arching a brow, she whistled. "You're quite generous, huh? Good for you."

"Really? It's nothing much."

"You inherited your boasting skills from Kenneth, I see."

Anthony was at a loss for words.

Benjamin also fished his phone out to transfer some money to Thalia.

After realizing how much he gave her, Thalia exclaimed, "Benjamin, this is a lot."

"It's a little something from me," Benjamin said.

"A little something? You're practically spending all the money you have!" Thalia declared.

"I'm not really in need of money, so it's worth it to spend it on them," Benjamin replied.

Thalia gazed at him adoringly. "Benjamin, why are you so kind? Your future wife is so lucky!"

Hearing that, Anthony interjected, "Are you sure she isn't unlucky? After all, she'll get herself a husband who spends all his money in the blink of an eye."

Thalia glowered at him. She was about to reprimand him when she belatedly realized his words made sense.

Even though her heart was convinced, she insisted, "That only happens to incapable men. It's different for Benjamin. He's rich."

Thalia was full of praises for Benjamin.

At that, Anthony rolled his eyes.

"Benjamin, don't you worry. I'll make sure to introduce you to a great young woman who you can spend the rest of your life with!" Thalia promised.

"It depends on fate," came Benjamin's calm answer.

"Oh, what a good boy."

Thalia only had eyes for Benjamin. Sticking his head out, Anthony glanced at the amount on Benjamin's screen. Furrowing his brows, he questioned, "Thalia, how could you have double standards? We donated almost the same amount of money!"

"Really?"

"Yeah!"

"Then perhaps I just don't like you." Thalia did not bother mincing her words.

Anthony had no words to retort.

What else could he say?

“All right. You may go upstairs now. I need to leave,” Thalia urged.

“Be careful,” Benjamin reminded her.

“Got it.”

Anthony added, “If possible, get someone else to do it on your behalf. Don't act on your own.”

“I know. Don't worry!” Thalia assured them.

Hearing that, Anthony slammed the door shut.

Thalia started the engine and was about to leave when she recalled something. “When I'm not around, stay in the hotel and don't go anywhere, all right?”

“Yeah.”

“All right!”

After they both agreed to stay in the hotel, Thalia stepped on the gas and drove the car away.

As Thalia drove, she could not help but recall Anthony's previous suggestion.

It sounds great to have a baby who's a medical genius, right? Should I copy Nat?

Her imagination went wild.

In the meantime, Anthony and Benjamin were about to head back to their room when the former's phone rang.

He fished it out and saw that it was a call from Natasha. At once, his eyes lit up.

After answering the call, he greeted, “Nat, you're finally calling me back!”

“Where did you get the information?” Natasha went straight to the topic.

Anthony thought about it before replying, “Thalia saved a man when she was on a mission a few years ago. He used to be a member of Vermillion Base. When we paid him a visit, he told us he never heard of Granddad. However, his father knew who Granddad was and had met him previously.”

His words were met with silence from the other end of the line.

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## **Chapter 406**

"What's the matter?" Benjamin asked Anthony.

"I can't get through again!" Anthony cried out anxiously.

"What did Nat say?" Benjamin then asked.

With a frown, Anthony muttered, "There's something in my head telling me that Nat's message means something else. It's as if she's trying to inform us about something..."

Even though he did not finish his sentence, Benjamin understood what he was trying to say.

Both boys paled, and Benjamin asked, "Were we too hasty to tell Nat about the news?"

"We were, but at the very least, Nat will be mentally prepared. If we didn't do that, I'm afraid she might end up too trusting with others!" Anthony stated.

"Now what?" Benjamin mumbled.

"Let's go back to the room and think about it before anything else."

Thus, the two boys returned to the room and began pacing.

A while later, Benjamin chirped, "What we should do right now is to look for Nat first."

Sitting in front of the computer, Anthony solemnly replied, "That's easier said than done. Do you think Nat's that easy to find?"

Benjamin frowned. "What about Daddy? Has he heard anything about Nat yet?"

Narrowing his eyes at the mention of Kenneth, Anthony shook his head. "I don't know, but probably not."

"Why don't we make a call and ask him about it?" the other boy suggested.

Anthony mulled over that for a while before replying, "You do it."

Drawing his brows together, Benjamin remarked after a while, "Fine." With that, he took the phone and went to the side.

Benjamin felt as though he had some kind of communication disorder as he stared at Kenneth's number; he kept constructing and deconstructing the sentences he was about to say to Kenneth.

Meanwhile, Kenneth was sitting in front of the computer with Dave as they watched Miguel work away.

His eyes were narrowed as he asked, "How is it?"

"I can't find it. I've been searching on both routes, but I can't find anything."

"Are you sure?" Kenneth questioned.

Miguel never stopped typing as he replied, "I'm sure. I've looked through each and every one of them, and I haven't missed out on anything..."

Right then, Miguel paused and began frowning at the computer.

"What's wrong?"

"I think I've found out the reason," Miguel stated.

"Which is?"

Miguel's fingers flew across the keyboard again. Things popped up and disappeared on the screen. Soon, a window appeared in front of them.

"Look here. There is a gap between the surveillance footage's time, and it's about fifteen seconds. That means someone has done something to the footage before we accessed it," Miguel explained.

Kenneth studied the footage for a while before realizing that Miguel was right. The frames did not quite link up, and there was a fifteen-second gap.

"So you mean to say that someone has deleted fifteen seconds of the footage?" Kenneth asked.

Miguel nodded. "That's right."

Kenneth then narrowed his eyes and mulled over something.

Just then, Dave came over to look at him. "J, the men have reported that they've combed through the spot you've said. They found nothing."

A grim look flashed past Kenneth's face when he heard that. He could not bring himself to believe that Natasha would disappear just like that.

To his knowledge of Natasha's character, she was bound to be living in the area where she had appeared

twice in. However, he had failed to find her.

Kenneth continued to stare at the computer screen as he thought about those things. At that moment, a thought popped into his head. "Say, do both routes have dozens of seconds of a gap, or is it just this footage?"

Miguel quickly pulled up another footage. Ten minutes later, he replied, "The rest are fine. It's just this one footage."

"Does that mean she has gone in this direction, and that's why the footage is missing a section?" Kenneth analyzed.

Dave inclined his head. "Yes, that's correct."

Miguel then leaned forward and rapidly typed away. "I'll continue to search this route and see if I find out anything else."

A glint flashed past Kenneth's eyes as he watched Miguel work away.

Dave was right beside Kenneth, so he could see the anxious look the latter had on his face.

Right then, Kenneth's phone rang.

He promptly took out his phone. When he saw it was a call from Benjamin, he stood up and moved to the side to pick up the call.

"Hello?"

"Daddy," Benjamin started.

"What's wrong?"

Despite having mentally prepared himself for the call, Benjamin found his mind going completely blank.

"What's wrong?" Kenneth repeated when he heard no sounds from the other end of the line.

In the end, Benjamin straightforwardly said, "I-I just wanted to ask if you've found Nat."

Kenneth was quiet for a while before he answered, "Not yet."

"No news at all?"

"Not exactly. There's something we're on. Soon, I'll be able to find her," Kenneth informed.



“Really?”

“I almost met her at a place I ate the other day, but I missed her by just a while. Nevertheless, I know she's near me. I'll be able to find her soon!”

Benjamin was thrilled to hear that. “You saw Nat?”

“My friend did,” Kenneth corrected.

“And?”

“And Nat disappeared. She's quite wary, and I think she's just protecting herself. But don't worry, I'll find her soon,” Kenneth reassured.

“Daddy, remember to tell us when you find Nat,” Benjamin uttered.

“Okay.”

#### **Chapter 407**

He recalled feeling something amiss about the boys' behaviors, but he was too preoccupied with Natasha's matter, so he did not dwell much on them.

Now that he thought about it, it was not strange for them to follow him here.

Nevertheless, to make sure he would not wrongfully accuse them, Kenneth called Liam.

“Grandpa.”

“Oh? Did you just remember you have a grandpa?” Liam sarcastically said the moment he picked up the phone.

“I've been busy, Grandpa.”

“Yes, yes. You're so busy, and I'm so free,” Liam continued.

Kenneth pursed his lips at that. Knowing that Liam's words were born out of anger, he changed the topic and asked, “How are you feeling?”

“Great, since you're not here to make me mad!”

Kenneth was rendered speechless.

Liam knew when to stop with the sarcasm, so he stated, “Go on. Why did you call me?”

“Nothing. I just wanted to ask how you're doing.”

“Are the pigs flying now? I'm surprised you're actually concerned about my health!”

Kenneth was used to his grandfather's tone, so he ignored it and went straight to the topic. “By the way, where are the kids? Have they been good at home?” he asked.

Liam gloomily muttered, “Denise went to join the film crew, and the boys followed Thalia out to have fun. They haven't been back for days. Once Nat's away on a business trip, you've all run away, too. You left me and Terence—two lonely elderly men—at home.” Just then, someone else chimed in, “It seems like a woman is really needed at home, or else no one can keep a rein on you all.”

Kenneth furrowed his brows upon hearing the other voice coming from the other end of the line. “Are you playing chess with Old Mr. Watson?”

“Yes...” Liam muttered distractedly. Then, he grumbled, “Terence, can't you do a normal move!”

“It's none of your business!”

“Fine. In that case, you can't blame me for resorting to tricks. I'll move here!”

Hearing the busy voices, Kenneth remarked, “Continue with your chess match with Old Mr. Watson, then. I have something else to do now, so I'll call you another time.”

“Bye,” Liam uttered.

Once the call ended, Kenneth furrowed his brows again.

The two boys had asked if they could tag along when he departed the other day. Now, it seemed like his answer was irrelevant—regardless of whether he said yes or no, the boys were going to come.

At the end of the day, he was to blame for underestimating them.

Right. They can even join Darknetz. These things are nothing in comparison.

At that, Kenneth's gaze darkened. Since they're lying to me, I guess I'll have to deal with the problem from its roots.

After keeping his phone, Kenneth turned and walked back.

Dave glanced at him and asked, “What's the matter? Did something happen?”

Kenneth mulled over it for a while before answering, “How's your relationship with Darknetz recently?”

"Darknetz?" Dave snorted when he heard that name. "What else? Everything's fine if we don't encounter each other, but if we do, we end up fighting."

Kenneth remained calm, for he had expected that answer from Dave.

Nevertheless, he still could not help but feel a little worried when he thought about Anthony's relationship with Darknetz.

I wonder what Darknetz will do when they find out about Anthony's relationship with me.

Upon hearing silence from Kenneth, Dave narrowed his eyes. "What's the matter? Why are you suddenly asking about this?"

"Nothing. I'm just asking," Kenneth replied.

"Just asking?" Dave studied him. "Are you someone who will just ask random questions? There must be a reason for this. God knows what you're up to this time," Dave teased. He knew Kenneth quite well, after all.

Kenneth only gave him a smile in response.

Dave did not insist on an answer, either. They were adults, and adults knew when to not push their luck. If Kenneth was not going to say anything, then Dave was not going to keep asking.

Right then, Miguel muttered, "I've filtered through the surveillance footage along the road, but I lost track after reaching this junction."

Hearing him, Kenneth walked over.

"Mr. Hamilton, is the person you're looking for a computer expert? Or could it be that they have a computer expert helping them out?" Miguel abruptly asked.

Kenneth froze for a moment before asking in deliberate nonchalance, "Why would you say that?"

"To access the footage, I needed to connect to these central networks, but it seems that the other person did this with ease."

Dave whipped his head over to look at Kenneth.

"She's only a normal programmer."

"Then..."

Right then, Kenneth pointed at the upper part of the computer screen. "Are you talking about this?"

Miguel's attention was instantly distracted as he glanced at the screen and nodded. "Yes. There are several seconds of gaps in each footage, but there isn't a gap at this junction. I tried to filter through these two sides, but coincidentally, the surveillance cameras are undergoing an upgrade, so they've been temporarily switched off. I won't be able to follow this lead."

"That coincidental?" Kenneth wondered out loud.

"I heard that the area was getting an upgrade, so this shouldn't be intentional," Miguel replied.

## **Chapter 408**

Kenneth kept quiet as he watched Miguel fight his opponent.

As the windows flashed on the screen, Miguel's brows furrowed deeper and deeper. Finally, with a loud thump, Miguel smacked his hands on the keyboard.

"What's wrong?" Kenneth asked.

"I..." Miguel hesitantly started, finding it hard to answer Kenneth.

"You lost?" Kenneth quirked a brow.

Despite his reluctance to admit it, it was still a fact. Hence, Miguel nodded with much difficulty. "The other person has tracked me down. Now, not only do they know that I've been stalking them, but they even know our location."

"Is it that simple?"

Miguel drew his brows together as if he had been humiliated by Kenneth's dubious gaze. "I..."

He wanted to say something, but he did not know how to phrase his words. After a while of thinking about it, he uttered, "There aren't many people in this world who are better at this than me. One is Shadow Seeker, and the other is Anonymous. There are two more, actually, but those two never appeared after the competition ranking at Hacker Community was published. So, I'm not bluffing when I say that I'm in fifth place!"

"Fifth place... Are you sure about that?"

"Of course. Or at least, that's the case at the Hacker Community's ranking," Miguel replied.

Kenneth raised his brows at the sight of Miguel's agitated demeanor. "If not for the ranking?"

"It'll be hard to say if we put aside the ranking, but hackers will all come to the Hacker Community to compete with each other. Who would know who's better if not for the ranking?" Miguel uttered.

A hint of gloom then flashed past Miguel's face as he looked at his computer. "Why am I bumping into so many experts recently? This is so strange."

With that, Miguel began chatting with the other person.

He typed: May I have the honor of knowing your name?

The other person was silent for a moment before replying: I am nameless.

Miguel asked: Nameless? Why haven't I heard of you before? Did you not join the Hacker Community's competition?

The other person typed: Miguel, it seems like you aren't as smart as I thought you'd be.

Miguel's eyes widened before he rapidly typed: You know who I am? How did you know it was me?

The other person gloomily replied to his questions: I genuinely don't know how you ended up in the top five with a brain like this.

Miguel turned speechless.

At that very moment, he knew well that the other person was much, much more skillful than him.

Nevertheless, the other person did not seem to have any malicious intent, so Miguel answered: I admit that I'm not as skillful as you, but you can't say that I'm stupid. I have a high IQ!

The person: Yes, yes. Sure.

Miguel typed: Who are you, really?

The person: Take a guess.

Miguel mulled over it before responding: Are you Shadow Seeker?

The person: No. I'm Shadow Seeker's fan.

At that, Miguel gasped and typed: You're Anonymous?

The person: My, you're not as dumb as I think you are.

Again, Miguel was rendered speechless.

He had only guessed it was Anonymous because he heard others talk about how Anonymous was

Shadow Seeker's fan, for Anonymous had chatted about it in private. Although one was in the first place and the other was in the second, the second place felt no envy at all, nor did he seem to want to surpass the first place. It was as if Anonymous was content with being a protector of the other.

Miguel typed in disbelief: Are you really Anonymous?

Anonymous: What's the matter? Do you have a problem with that?

Miguel agitatedly typed: I... I just never thought I'd be able to interact with you one day. Even though I've been looking forward to this day for a long time, I... I'm your fan!

Anonymous was speechless for a while.

Is it that easy to get a fan? he wondered.

Miguel proceeded to write in excitement: Where are you? Can we meet?

Anonymous: Sorry. I can't.

Miguel: Then... Then can you leave your contact details? I'd like to get to know you!

Anonymous wasted no time rejecting him: No.

Miguel: All right...

Miguel was disappointed by Anonymous' outright rejection. Right then, Kenneth peeked at the conversation between Miguel and the other person before frowning. "How did you know he's Anonymous?"

Miguel responded, "I was chatting with a few hacker friends the other day, and one had the pleasure of interacting with Anonymous. At that time, someone tried to sow discord between him and Shadow Seeker, but Anonymous told them he was Shadow Seeker's fan and that Shadow Seeker deserved first place. He even announced that whoever wanted to challenge Shadow Seeker would have to go through him first. News about that incident soon spread among the hackers, but it's nothing verified. I'm just making a bold guess today."

Hearing that, Kenneth frowned again.

At that moment, Miguel's gossip mode activated, and he added, "Someone even said that Anonymous admires Shadow Seeker, and that's why Anonymous is willing to guard Shadow Seeker and let Shadow Seeker remain in the first place."

That only made Kenneth scrunch his brows even more.

Guard Shadow Seeker? Why have I never heard about this person before?

## **Chapter 409**

After Miguel watched Kenneth turn and leave, he returned his gaze to his computer and continued chatting.

Miguel: I can stop tracking you down, but can you compete with me again?

Anonymous: You make it sound as if you'll be able to find out where we are if you want to.

Miguel: At the very least, I can ally with the other hackers against you. I refuse to believe a few of us won't be a match for you.

Anonymous: I'm not being full of myself, but doing this still won't change anything.

Miguel: I admit you're impressive, but aren't you too arrogant to say that?

Anonymous: Am I?

Miguel: You are!

Anonymous: I'm only giving you a warning out of the kindness of my heart.

Miguel: Just once. Just one time! I just want to know how wide the gap is between our capabilities!

Anonymous: What if I say no?

Miguel: If you refuse, then I'll... I'll get into an alliance with the other hackers to harass you. I'll make your life a hard one!

Anonymous: Aren't you horrible?

Miguel: So, just once will be fine! Just one!

Anthony mulled over Miguel's pleas before he continued typing on the keyboard.

Anonymous: What if you still lose?

Miguel: What do you want?

Anonymous: If you lose, you'll be my apprentice, and you'll have to address me as your master.

Miguel reluctantly answered: Fine.

Anonymous: You're actually saying yes to that?

Miguel: Yes, so let's start.

There was nothing Anthony could say after that; he could only go along with Miguel.

Otherwise, he would not be able to do anything if Miguel were to continue harassing him.

With that thought in mind, the two of them turned on an application. Their screens soon turned black.

In the next second, Miguel's expression turned solemn. As various menus popped and disappeared on the screen, he typed faster and faster. As though the people around him sensed something, they crowded over to watch him.

Meanwhile, Anthony only lazily stretched his arms and began counterattacking a few seconds after Miguel started.

Miguel frowned at the start, but soon, his face paled.

"What the heck?"

"Hurry up, Miguel!"

"Be quicker!"

"Be careful! What if it's a trap?"

The people around him blurted out continuous reminders.

"Sh\*t!"

With that curse, the match ended.

"The battle ended in thirty-seven seconds..." the person beside Miguel mumbled before turning to him.

"Who is this? They're unbelievable!"

"And they didn't even do anything for the first few seconds!" another cried out.

Miguel's expression was dark as he typed: Another round. Someone interrupted me in the previous round.

Anthony took a while before responding: Okay.



Hence, another round of the match started. Miguel turned to the other people around him and stage-whispered, "Be quieter!"

The crowd immediately made a mouth-zipping gesture.

Miguel then put on his earphones and returned his focus to the screen.

He soon entered the page again.

Miguel was already swift, for he attacked before the other person could make a move. At the start, it seemed as though he had control of the situation. However, the moment Anonymous began counterattacking, Miguel began faltering until he was completely defeated.

Staring at his computer screen, Miguel froze.

The others around him had no idea what to say to console him.

After all, Miguel was the highest-ranking and most capable person around. Even he could not hold up against the other party, let alone the others.

One patted his shoulder in consolation. "Major differences in results might come from a slight difference in skills for people like us. Perhaps you're only a little less skillful than the other person."

His consolation did not help the situation at all. On the contrary, Miguel even became gloomier.

Seeing him keeping mum, the crowd around him exchanged a few more words before dispersing.

As for Miguel, he continued to stare at the computer somberly.

A moment later, Anonymous messaged: Are we done?

Miguel: Another one!

Anonymous: What?

Miguel: You distracted me!

Anonymous: Me?

Miguel: You weren't doing anything at the start, and although it's as if you were trying to let me have a head start, you were actually messing with my mind and making me focus on you instead. So, we're going to do this one more time! Don't show me any mercy!

Anonymous reluctantly replied: Fine.

Once again, they started another match.

A few seconds later, the same results returned.

By then, Miguel had nearly run out of patience.

Miguel: How is this possible?

Anonymous: Do you want to know why?

Miguel: Of course!

Anonymous: What did you promise at the start?

Miguel was a man who knew when to relent and when to persist, so he replied: Master!

#### **Chapter 410**

Everyone looked at him in shock.

“Twenty-five seconds? What's going on?”

A weird glint flickered in Miguel's eyes as he curled his lips upward.

The crowd started commenting, “What happened? The difference wasn't this huge in the past!”

Miguel smirked smugly. He could tell that something had changed vastly.

“No way! Let's go for two more rounds.”

Cocking a brow, Miguel obliged.

After competing for umpteen rounds, the crowd had no choice but to admit defeat.

Miguel's speed was getting faster and faster each time, and his strategies were constantly changing. No one could read his mind nor predict his next move.

“Are you here to give us a hard time?” the crowd asked.

“Precisely!”

“Seriously, you weren't this great last time. What has gotten into you?” Everyone was flabbergasted.

Right then, Miguel stared at the dimmed computer screen.

This won't do! I must find a way to meet him.

Meanwhile, after Anthony went offline, Benjamin asked, "How come you're in the mood for teaching others today?"

"This person piqued my interest," Anthony replied.

"How so?"

Pondering for a while, Anthony replied, "He's Miguel."

Hearing that, Benjamin was stunned. "The one who ranks fifth?"

"Yup." Anthony nodded.

Frowning, Benjamin snapped, "Why did you become entangled with him then?"

"He's one of Daddy's men now," Anthony clarified.

"He has been recruited?"

"Rumor has it that he's been headhunted by a large organization a while ago, but I didn't know it was DX Group. I was only able to confirm that today after testing his skills," Anthony explained.

"So, just now..."

Anthony nodded. "He knew it when you called Daddy. I guess Daddy sent him to check your address. That's why we chatted for a while."

"How did he know I called Daddy?" Benjamin snapped his brows together, puzzled.

"He has probably installed a tracking device in your phone. Perhaps Daddy was with him, and the location was indicated on the screen when you called," Anthony expressed his speculations.

"If that's the case, has Daddy discovered we're in Zaewora?"

"I'm not sure. These are just assumptions," Anthony uttered.

Pursing his lips, Benjamin swept a glance at his phone. There are no phone calls or messages from Daddy.

"If Daddy is aware of our location, he would have given us a call directly, right?"

"Who knows? Daddy's intentions are never obvious. It's so hard to guess what he's up to," grumbled Anthony.

Right then, Benjamin looked him in the eyes and posed a question. "Were you trying to sabotage Miguel when you spoke with him just now?"

"It's very challenging to take him down. Though they seem divided and undisciplined, they are grounded in their principles. Hence, I can't do that."

"So? You won't waste your time and effort on something that doesn't yield results. I don't believe you did all that simply because you find him interesting."

"Well, even if I can't turn the tables at the moment, there's no harm trying to get his phone number."

Benjamin was rendered speechless.

I knew it! Anthony would never do others a favor for no reason.

He scrutinized his brother and remarked, "Thalia was right about one thing."

"What is it?"

"You're just like Daddy—shrewd and cunning," Benjamin said upfront.

Narrowing his eyes, Anthony questioned, "What about you?"

"Me? We're totally different. I take after Nat—pure and kind," Benjamin responded proudly.

"Please don't misuse those words and give the two adjectives a new meaning."

Benjamin shot him a cold glare. "You're just jealous."

"Yeah, you're right. I turn green with envy when I see how skillful you are at playing dumb."

"Are you talking about yourself?"

"Come on, don't deny it. You purposely gave Daddy a call to reveal our location. Do you really think I was oblivious to your little trick?" Anthony questioned.

"I..." Benjamin thought for a while and decided not to admit it. "I did not."

Anthony rolled his eyes at him. "Save it! How can I not know what you're thinking when we both came out of the same womb?"

"Do you have any proof?" Benjamin retorted.

"My evidence is right here." Anthony pointed at his heart.

"Unfortunately, you can't take it out to support your claim," remarked Benjamin contemptuously.

Anthony gazed at him intently. "I'm really curious as to why you wanted Daddy to know our whereabouts."

Benjamin cast him a look. "You're obviously fishing for information. Do you think I can't read your mind?"

Anthony fell silent.

"That's enough. Don't treat me like a fool." With that, Benjamin strode toward the couch and sat down cockily with his legs crossed.

A faint smile formed on Anthony's face when he saw that.

I must use a new strategy next time.