

Feel the Way You Feel, My Love Chapter 126

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Shane stood up and pulled out a dazzling red necklace from his pocket. "Are you looking for this?"

Natalie fixed her eyes on the necklace and saw that it was indeed the Heart of Fire. Her head bobbed furiously. "Yeah!"

"Here." He held it out toward her.

She hurriedly waved her hand in rejection. "Mr. Shane, please help me return that to Sean."

Once this necklace was returned to Sean, she would owe him nothing anymore.

"You want me to give this back to Sean?" Shane furrowed his brows.

"Yes."

His fingers curled around the necklace tightly as the surrounding temperature seemed to drop several degrees.

Sensing the change in atmosphere, Natalie blinked in confusion. "What's wrong, Mr. Shane?"

The man shut his eyes and seemed to be reining in his emotions. A few seconds later, he spoke up in a frosty tone, "This necklace has absolutely nothing to do with Sean!"

"What?" She froze in surprise.

Does he mean that Sean didn't buy this necklace for me? Then it was...

Swallowing hard, her heart was pounding as she ventured to ask, "Mr. Shane, were you the one who gave this necklace to me?"

He lowered his eyes and kept silent, clearly a sign of admission.

Natalie's lips twitched slightly. "I honestly didn't know. I thought Sean bought it for me. But then why did you gift that to me, Mr. Shane?"

"It was meant to be a reward for Project Rebirth," he answered casually while pressing the necklace into her hand.

She bit her lip and protested, "But it's way too expensive! I can't accept this, Mr. Shane! You should take it back."

He did not move to accept the necklace she thrust toward him. Instead, he locked eyes with her. "I can't take back something I've already given out. Just throw it away if you don't want it."

Cough! She nearly choked on her own saliva at hearing that.

He must be joking! This necklace costs tens of millions and he expects me to throw it away if I don't want it? Only someone as filthy rich as him will be able to say something like that so flippantly!

Suddenly, there was a loud knock on the door.

Twisting his body slightly, Shane called out, "Come in!"

Click. The door swung open before a middle-aged woman stuck her head inside. "Sir, lunch is ready. Will you be coming down now?"

Shane glanced over at Natalie before replying, "Please prepare another set of cutlery."

The middle-aged woman blinked before smiling. "Is the miss awake already?"

"Yes."

"Alright. I'll set a place for her right away!"

With that said, the woman shut the door and departed.

"She's Mrs. Wilson, my housekeeper," Shane informed Natalie of the identity of the middle-aged woman.

Natalie nodded in understanding.

Picking up a big box from beside him, he passed it to her. "Change into these clothes then come down for lunch."

"Okay." She accepted the box with both hands.

She waited till Shane had left the room before opening the box and changing into the clothes inside.

When she was done, she stared at the Heart of Fire lying innocently on the bed. After a few seconds of hesitation, she pocketed the necklace.

Since he doesn't want it, I'll just keep it for now. I'll return it to him when I get a chance in the future.

After that, she tidied the bed before heading for the door. She had only just stepped out of the room when she spotted Shane leaning against the wall beside the door. She jumped a little in fright, her hand coming up to soothe her racing heart. "Mr. Shane! I thought you had already gone downstairs."

"I was waiting for you." Shane uncrossed the arms he had folded against his chest.

Natalie grinned as she smoothed her ruffled hair. "Were you worried I wouldn't be able to find the stairs?"

He did not deny it. Turning, he strode for the stairs. "Let's go."

She followed along dutifully, her head swiveling around all the while as she took in his villa.

It was quite a large villa. Despite that, the interior design was incredibly simplistic. Much like his apartment, it felt cold and empty.

They arrived at the dining room where the table was already laden with food.

Natalie's eyes were wide while she stared at the veritable feast. She blurted out, "Wow! What a lavish meal!"

Mrs. Wilson, who was coming out of the kitchen with a pot of soup, burst into laughter. "Hurry up and sit down so you can try them out then!"

"Sure." Natalie made herself at home as she instantly pulled out a chair and sat down. Using a fork, she stabbed a slice of meat and popped it into her mouth.

"How is it?" Mrs. Wilson asked her.

Shane was toying with his fork as he, too, watched her for her reaction.

Natalie shot them a thumbs up in response. "It tastes great!"

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Mrs. Wilson was smiling so wide her eyes were but small slits on her face. "Then do have more!"

"Okay!" Natalie nodded happily.

Thus, she stuffed herself till she was close to bursting.

After lunch was over, Shane went off to his study for a video conference.

Natalie moved to sit on the couch in the living room, cradling her food baby.

Mrs. Wilson came over with a glass of lemonade and offered it to Natalie. "Here, Ms. Smith."

"Thanks." Natalie took the glass from her gratefully.

Mrs. Wilson seated herself beside the younger woman. She scrutinized Natalie closely, though her gaze was kind.

A little uncomfortable at how the older woman was staring at her, Natalie self-consciously reached up to feel her face. "Mrs. Wilson, is there something on my face?"

"No, there isn't. I'm just curious about you, that's all. Ms. Smith, you're the first guest Sir has ever brought back."

"The first guest?" Natalie paused in drinking the lemonade. "Haven't Dr. Baker, Mr. Shane's fiancée, or Ms. Graham ever been here?"

The housekeeper shook her head. "No. Sir has never let them come here before. That's why I was so surprised to see him bring you back last night, Ms. Smith."

"I see." Natalie twisted the glass in her hands even as a warm feeling curled in her.

Something caught her attention and she pointed at the photo on the opposite wall. "Mrs. Wilson, are they-?"

The photo showed a man and a woman, both very young. She could almost see the resemblance Shane had with them.

Are they his parents?

Mrs. Wilson's reply proved her guess right. "It's Sir's parents. They've already passed away."

Natalie set down the glass and queried, "How did they die?"

Mrs. Wilson sighed. "I'm sorry, Ms. Smith. I can't tell you that. This is a taboo topic for Sir."

"Oh, okay. I won't ask again." Natalie nodded to show she understood.

The housekeeper got to her feet and stated, "Well then, I still have some work to do. There's still dirty laundry waiting to be washed. Please stay here and rest as long as you like, Ms. Smith."

"Got it," Natalie replied with a smile.

After Mrs. Wilson left, Natalie took up the remote control and turned on the TV.

A while later, her stomach started digesting the food and she felt a lot less like she was about to explode. It was time for her to take her leave.

I didn't go home last night so Sharon and Connor must be out of their minds with worry.

Spurred by that thought, she stood up. She decided to head upstairs to let Shane know she was leaving.

However, before she could take a step toward the staircase, Shane appeared at the bottom of it.

“Mr. Shane, just the man I was looking for.”

“What is it?” Shane raised a brow at her.

Pointing at the clock, she explained, “It’s getting late so I should be going home. I was just about to find you to let you know.”

“Let me send you back.” He headed for the front door without even giving her a chance to respond.

In the car, Shane’s fingers tapped against the steering wheel before he abruptly said, “Regarding the incident last night, we have no conclusion for what happened just yet.”

“How can that be?” Natalie clenched her fingers into fists.

An apologetic look flashed past his eyes. “Sean had all the security cameras in the banquet hall turned off beforehand. That’s why there’s no evidence to prove whether Jasmine deliberately stepped on your dress or not.”

“Is that so…” she muttered with a frown.

Her instinct was telling her Jasmine had done it on purpose. Unfortunately, the lack of evidence was incredibly frustrating.

“Don’t worry. I still arranged for her to be punished,” he assured her.

She tilted her head to look at him. “What’s her punishment?”

A smirk played on Shane’s lips as he replied, “Seventy-two hours of community service with a live broadcast.”

Natalie’s eyebrows rose upwards at that.

That would make Jasmine the laughingstock of the entire industry!

She quickly took out her phone and searched for a live broadcast of Jasmine's punishment.

It did not take her long to find one.

Tapping inside, she was just in time to see Jasmine – dressed in a cleaner's uniform – step on a banana peel. The woman slipped and instantly fell flat on her face.

"Pfft!" Natalie was unable to restrain herself as her joyous laughter filled the interior of the car.

Shane eyed her from the corner of his eyes. Seeing her laughing so heartily had his heart melting. "What's so funny?"

"Ms. Jasmine slipped and fell on her face. It was so hilarious!" She wiped the tears leaking from her eyes before adding, "The comments are super funny and interesting too!"

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"Really?" Shane's expression was indifferent. He was clearly not very interested in what she was saying.

At that moment, a cat suddenly darted out of the flowerbed a few meters ahead of them. It came to a stop in the middle of the road.

Natalie's face fell when she saw it. She shouted in warning, "Mr. Shane!"

Shane had a grim look on his face. He knew it was too late to pull the brakes now. Left with no other choice, he hastily jerked the steering wheel to the side. The car swerved to the left, heading right for the flowerbed. At the same time, he swiftly undid his seatbelt and lunged toward Natalie. Wrapping her in a protective embrace, he pinned her to the passenger seat.

BANG!

The car shuddered violently before the car alarms went off.

Natalie screamed in shock and terror, causing Shane to tighten his hold on her.

After a moment, the car stopped moving while the alarms stopped blaring. Everything seemed to return to normal.

It was only then Shane released Natalie and slowly moved away from her.

Natalie straightened up before glancing at the windshield. To her horror, the entire windshield was spiderwebbed with cracks. Her hair stood on end as a shiver raced down her spine.

"Mr. Shane, are you hurt?" she asked in a quavering voice. Her face was incredibly pale.

"No," Shane dusted himself off, "You?"

She shook her head. "I'm not injured either."

How can I be? He protected me with his body. This is the second time he's moved to protect me without a moment's hesitation.

She was incredibly touched and surprised at that thought.

Knock knock! Someone was rapping on the car window.

Natalie calmed her pounding heart before looking over. There was a traffic policeman standing outside the car.

When Shane rolled down the window, the policeman leaned down to ask, "You guys okay?"

"Yes, we're fine," Shane answered placidly.

The policeman nodded and said, "Then could you please exit the vehicle? I'll need your statements."

Shane did not protest as he opened the door and got out of the car.

Natalie did not remain in the car either. Swiftly taking off her seatbelt, she slipped out to join him.

Once she was out of the car, she could see that the entire front end had run over the flowerbed and rammed into the divider. The headlights had also shattered with the force of the impact.

She gasped softly at the terrible sight.

It really was a miracle that she and Shane were completely unharmed when the car was in such a mess!

By this point, Shane had finished giving his statement. He walked over to her side and declared, "I'm done. Let's go."

"What about the car?" She pointed at the Maybach in question.

He glanced at it, noting the sad state it was in. "It can't be driven anymore. I'll send someone here to drag it away to the junkyard."

"The junkyard?" Blinking her eyes in astonishment, she exclaimed, "Mr. Shane, do you mean you don't want that car anymore?"

"Yes."

"What a pity! It's such an expensive car too," she lamented while putting her hand down by her side.

Shane could not help the amused smile that crossed his face when he saw how pained she was at his decision.

Natalie's keen eyes caught the motion and nearly popped out of her head. It was like she had seen something miraculous happen. "Mr. Shane, you're smiling!"

The aforementioned smile instantly vanished from his face, his expression returning to its default cold and distant look. "I'm not. You must be mistaken."

"No, I'm sure of what I saw. You were clearly smiling just now!" she insisted.

Shane did not deign that with an answer as he turned to hail a taxi for them.

Not wanting to be left behind, Natalie rushed after him.

Half an hour later, they arrived back at her apartment.

Natalie pressed the doorbell. They did not have to wait long before the door swung open.

Joyce immediately scooped Natalie into a tight hug. "Nat, you're finally back!"

"Alright, alright. Let me go!" Natalie patted Joyce's arm before pointing out, "We have a guest."

"A guest?" Joyce released her before glancing behind her at Shane. She froze in surprise when she got a closer look at his face. "Oh my god, did Connor become an adult when I wasn't looking?"

Natalie smacked her forehead in exasperated annoyance.

I just knew Joyce would react like that!

"Hey, hey, stop speaking nonsense!" Natalie hastened to introduce the two. "This is my boss, Mr. Shane."

Then, she pointed at Joyce and continued, "Mr. Shane, this is Joyce Rivers, my best friend and also godmother to the children."

"Hello." Shane dipped his head at Joyce in greeting.

Joyce's reply was a little distracted, "Hi, hello. You're the CEO of Thompson Group?"

"Yes." Then, Shane focused his gaze on Natalie. "I'll be taking my leave."

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Natalie was taken aback that Shane was leaving so soon. "You're leaving already? Aren't you going to come in and sit for a bit?"

"No. I see that you have a friend with you already." Shane's brows furrowed when he noticed how Joyce kept staring at him.

Knowing he did not like to be around strangers, Natalie reluctantly nodded. "Alright then. Be careful on your way back."

"Okay," was his only response before he turned to leave.

Joyce watched him go. Once he was out of sight, she complained, "Oh my god, they're just so similar! Nat, why didn't you ever tell me that he looks just like Connor!"

Natalie shrugged and replied, "I thought there wasn't any point since you two would never meet."

"That's a good point." Joyce rubbed her chin thoughtfully before something seemed to occur to her. Her voice was urgent as she asked, "Nat, you don't think he's Connor and Sharon's – "

Predicting what she was about to say, Natalie's eyes flashed before she hurriedly interrupted, "No! I already told you that their father is an old man in his fifties."

Joyce, who had been getting worked up at the prospect, instantly deflated at Natalie's words. She sighed regretfully and lamented, "But they seriously resemble each other so much! How could they not be related?"

Natalie chuckled nervously before quickly changing the subject. "Alright, that's enough about this. Where are the kids?"

"They were playing games earlier and only just fell asleep."

"I'll go check on them." Natalie changed into a pair of house slippers then padded into the apartment.

Joyce shut the door behind them and followed her inside.

Natalie stared down at her sound asleep children, her eyes filled with warmth and love. "Joyce, thanks for looking after them."

"Don't mention it." Joyce waved her hand to brush off her thanks.

Gently closing the children's room door, Natalie asked, "Wanna drink?"

"Sure!" Joyce's eyes lit up at the idea.

Thus, Natalie headed into the kitchen and pulled out two cans of beer. She tossed one at her best friend.

Joyce caught it with both hands and instantly popped it open. She took a deep gulp and smacked her lips. "Ahh, that hits the spot!"

Laughing at her friend's antics, Natalie drank from her own can. Then, she asked about how things were going at the studio.

Ever since she started working at Thompson Group, she had not stepped foot in the studio again. That was why she knew absolutely nothing about what was going on there.

Joyce was the one who managed everything there now.

Upon hearing that question, Joyce stopped drinking as a solemn expression appeared on her face.

Natalie noticed it and put down her beer. "Did something happen?"

Joyce ran her fingers through her hair before answering, "It's not something really serious. It's just that a studio much bigger than ours has been causing a lot of trouble for us lately."

"Why?" Natalie frowned.

"I guess they're jealous of us!" The can in Joyce's hand crumpled as her fingers clenched tightly, fury blazing through her. "You're always coming up with new designs, so we're able to constantly launch new clothing lines and at a relatively fast rate. They sent someone over in hopes of poaching you."

"Oh?" Natalie raised an eyebrow.

Joyce scowled and continued, "You're one of my studio's boss and also our chief designer; I would be a fool to agree to them! So now they're deliberately going against us. They even ruined our collaboration with one of the clothing factories! Not only that, but they're also even plagiarizing our designs!"

"What's the name of that studio? Who owns it?" Natalie questioned while pressing her lips into a thin line.

Finishing off her beer, Joyce set the crumpled can down and replied, "The studio is called Jasminum. I have no idea who the boss is. It's a mystery."

After some thought, Natalie suggested, "I'll have Connor look into them later."

Even though using such tactics was quite despicable, she absolutely hated it when she did not know who her enemy was. Hidden in the shadows, it was easy for the enemy to have the advantage.

"Okay. Let me know what you find out." With that said, Joyce got to her feet.

Natalie knew the other woman was preparing to leave so she nodded in agreement.

That night, Natalie told Connor everything after he woke up from his nap.

It was not hard for him to find out who the boss was.

When Natalie saw who it was, she was delighted.

It was none other than Jasmine!

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With a name like Jasminum, I should've known it was Jasmine!

When Connor saw his mother laughing, he could not help asking, "Mommy, is this woman your arch-nemesis?"

"Why would you say that?"

"Because she's everywhere! You're working at Mr. Shane's company and she bullies you there. Now, she's even using her studio to pick on your studio! She's so despicable!" Connor ranted while shaking his fist angrily.

"Yeah, she's so annoying!" Sharon chimed in.

Natalie stroked her darlings' heads. She was about to speak when Connor narrowed his eyes and announced, "Mommy, I'll teach her a lesson for you!"

His cold tone had her knitting her brows. It was then she realized he had an extremely hostile air around him.

"Connor!" She took his face in her hands and fixed him with a stern look. "Listen to me. This is Mommy's business, okay? Mommy will handle this matter myself. I don't need you to help me nor are you allowed to aid me from afar. Do you understand me?"

She had always been aware of Connor's high intelligence, which led to him maturing a lot faster. However, that did not mean that his mind was that of an adult's just yet. She did not want him to experience the darker side of being an adult at such a young age. That would be incredibly detrimental to his mental health and growth.

In fact, she was even beginning to regret having him investigate who the boss of Jasminum was. Thankfully, she had discovered his less-than-healthy mindset now. She would have to refrain from making a similar mistake in the future.

Connor did not know what his mother was thinking about to make her so angry. Nevertheless, he nodded obediently since he did not want to piss her off further. "I understand, Mommy!"

"Good boy!" A smile graced Natalie's features again.

Sharon cocked her head to the side, a bewildered expression on her face. Her mother and brother seemed to be talking in riddles and she had absolutely no idea what they were saying.

"Alright. Go outside and play now. Mommy needs to give your Aunt Joyce a call." Natalie waved her phone at them.

Connor hopped off his chair and took his sister's hand. Then, he led her to the living room to watch TV.

Natalie dialed Joyce's number and told her about what they had found out.

When she was done, they discussed what action they would take next. If they were to sue Jasminum for design infringement, Jasmine would probably receive a court summons.

After a moment of thought, Natalie chuckled and told Joyce her plan.

She decided she would not personally appear for this court case. Joyce would handle everything on her behalf.

For now, she had no intention of revealing herself to be the designer that Jasmine wanted to poach.

The next day.

Natalie was in her office working on the design draft she had promised Shane. Suddenly, her desk phone rang shrilly.

Her pencil never stopped moving even as her other hand reached out to pick up the receiver. Placing it against her ear, she stated, "Hello, this is Natalie Smith."

"Ms. Natalie, this is the front desk in the lobby," a woman's voice sounded out gently.

She did not pause in her work as she asked, "Yes, what is it?"

"A woman came looking for you."

"A woman?" At last, Natalie stopped her work. "Who is she?"

"She refused to say. She wanted me to tell you to meet her at the café next door in ten minutes."

"Okay, I got it." Hanging up the call, Natalie nibbled on her lip in thought.

A woman who refused to give her name. How very mysterious! Just who is she?

For the next few minutes, she wracked her brain but was unable to think of who it could be. Setting down her pencil, she stood up and grabbed her bag. It was time to meet this unknown woman.

Since the café was literally next door to the Thompson Group building, it did not take her long to get there.

The entire café was empty when she arrived. There was only a single woman sitting at a window seat.

The middle-aged woman sat with her back toward Natalie, so she was unable to see her face. Judging from the way the other woman was dressed lavishly, Natalie guessed that she was from a wealthy family.

She must be the woman looking for me earlier.

Natalie moved over to that table and greeted the older woman politely, "Good day, ma'am. Are you the one who wanted to meet with me?"

The woman set down her coffee cup before raising her head to scrutinize Natalie. She did not speak.

Natalie took this opportunity to take in the older woman as well. She was in her fifties, though she was clearly diligent in caring for her skin. She would be considered quite beautiful if not for her high cheekbones and the way her nose was upturned slightly. They made her look rather snobbish and unapproachable.

"You're Natalie Smith?" Finally, the older woman spoke in a cool voice.