

N Destiny 51

Chapter 51

Anastasia had just finished drawing a design draft in the office, and her hands were a little sore. Just as she was rubbing her shoulders, the door to her office swung open before Nigel's figure suddenly appeared.

"Why are you here, Nigel?" Anastasia was still very happy to see him.

"I have a gift for you."

After Nigel finished speaking, he closed the door of the office before putting the flowers and the gift box on her desk. "Look! Guess what it is?"

Anastasia looked at the big characters of 'Cloud Residence No.

1' printed on the box. After feeling startled for a few seconds, she recalled that this was the name of the top real estate in the city center.

expensive."

"It's not expensive—it's just a unit of more than 200 square meters. I initially wanted to buy a duplex on the top floor, but I thought that it would be too big and empty looking since only the two of you would be living there.

Thus, I had to pick a smaller unit," Nigel said helplessly, thinking that he could have given her a better unit.

** Anastasia was at a loss for words. Sure enough, those with money can do whatever they want! He can even cherry pick units from such high-end real estate.

For an office worker like me, I can't even afford the bathroom of that unit even with a year's worth of salary.

"Nigel, we are friends. I won't accept any gifts from you other than your friendship." Anastasia spoke seriously.

"You saved my life; do you know how much my life is worth?" Nigel retorted immediately.

"Your life is priceless, and it's not measurable by money." Anastasia smiled and shook her head. "Saving you is also a way of accumulating good karma for myself."

“No. My life is yours, and my things are yours too. You must accept this house,” Nigel said stubbornly. Anastasia felt speechless again.

“You have helped me and my son a lot over the years. If you are going to send gifts like this one again, then I won’t dare to befriend you in the future. Besides, my dad has already bought me an apartment unit, and I can move in next month.”

“That will definitely not be as comfortable as Cloud Residence No. 1,” Nigel said anxiously.

“I really don’t need this house.

Anyway, I have a meeting soon, so please go back!” After Anastasia finished speaking, she picked up her notebook and went outside.

Nigel immediately thought of another way as he bit his thin lips. He took the gift box and went to the president’s office where Elliot was dealing with some work in his hands at that time. Glancing at the uninvited guest, he looked back down at his work.

“Do me a favor, Elliot!”

“Go on.”

“Well, I bought a house at Cloud Residence No. 1 for Anastasia. Can you give it to her in the name of the company? For example, you can say this is a year-end bonus for her.”

Elliot’s hand that was signing the documents paused.

Then, he said curtly, “No.”

“Why? I wanted to give it to her just now, but she rejected it. I don’t know what else to do!” Nigel leaned on the desk and spoke helplessly.

“If she doesn’t accept it, it means that she’s not interested in you.” Elliot scoffed. He had also offered a house in this property and was rejected by Anastasia.

“That’s not it! Anastasia likes me very much; I have the ultimate confidence in this,” Nigel said to himself.

Elliot frowned and said mockingly, “Don’t be too confident.”

“Don’t mock me, Elliot! I’m definitely going to marry Anastasia. Whether it’s three years, five years, or ten years, I’ll wait for her as long as she doesn’t marry another man.” Nigel looked like he was determined to make the woman his wife.

“Then do you know which man her child belongs to?” Elliot asked coldly all of a sudden.

Chapter 52

Nigel’s handsome face looked shocked, for this was the only thing Anastasia didn’t tell him. He had also tried hinting at her many times, but she just didn’t want to let him know.

“Do you know who it is, Elliot?” Nigel asked, a little curious that Elliot was also interested in this kind of employee gossip.

“The last time her sister came to the company to make trouble, she announced that Anastasia was the mistress of a man five years ago. She even sold her body in the club to make money.”

Nigel suddenly widened his bright eyes as he listened to the sudden new information in disbelief.

He immediately retorted, “Impossible! Anastasia is not that kind of person, and she would never do such a thing.”

“How much exactly do you know about her?” Elliot looked at his cousin, hoping that he wouldn’t bother with Anastasia anymore.

Nigel didn’t want to think more about it. He said firmly, “I don’t care what her past was like. I just want to spend my future with her, and I don’t want to know who her child’s father is.

Anyway, I’m willing to accompany her to raise the child together and treat him as if he’s my own.”

Elliot really underestimated his cousin’s determination to pursue this woman. He gritted his teeth and snorted, “What’s so good about her?”

Nigel curled his lips and smiled. “Anastasia has a unique kind of beauty.

Sometimes, she’s as bright as fire, sometimes as elegant as a rose. No matter which side of her, I am deeply fascinated by this woman.”

In Elliot’s heart, he only had three adjectives to evaluate Anastasia: unreasonable, barbaric and uncouth.

“Elliot, will you help me out?” Nigel couldn’t help sitting on Elliot’s desk as he looked at him pleadingly.

“No,” Elliot replied very coldly.

“You’re really terrible. Do you still think of me as family?” Nigel pouted.

Elliot decided to ignore him, and Nigel eventually left in unhappiness. He decided to continue persuading Anastasia until she accepted the gift, so he returned to her office. After a while, she came back. Upon seeing that he was still there, she had no choice but to say, “Nigel, I really cannot accept your gift. Go back!”

“I won’t leave if you don’t accept it,” Nigel replied mulishly.

Anastasia then laughed and said, “You know this doesn’t work on me.”

Nigel immediately shook his head and answered unhappily, “Anastasia, can’t you become a little more materialistic? That way, I can buy you with money.”

Anastasia burst out laughing. “I’m very much interested in money, but I only like the money I make.”

At this moment, Nigel’s phone rang. He picked it up and took a look before saying into the phone seriously, “Hello, Dad.”

“Come over to the company, Nigel. I have something to hand to you.”

“Okay, I’ll come over now.” Nigel’s vacation was coming to an end, and from tomorrow onward, he had to go back to work at the company obediently.

“I’ll go back to meet my dad first. Call me if you need anything-I’ll be there whenever you need me.” Nigel looked at Anastasia affectionately.

· Anastasia deliberately pretended not to see it and simply said to him, “Go! Don’t make your father wait.”

After Nigel left, Anastasia sighed slightly. At this moment, May called and said, “Anastasia, we are almost ready to get off work.”

“Yeah! Okay,” Anastasia responded.

After that, May hid in an empty corridor and called Hayley, who told her to do something on the other end of the phone. She told May to ensure that Anastasia’s phone was left in the office no matter what, and not to let Anastasia take it away with her.

May agreed immediately.

Although she didn't know why Hayley had asked her to do this, she only needed to be obedient.

Soon, May arrived at Anastasia's office and saw that she was sorting some documents while her bag was on the sofa.

As she deliberately sat next to Anastasia's bag, she then: said to the woman who was packing the documents, "Anastasia, have you completed your designs that are supposed to be submitted at the end of the month?"

Chapter 53

Anastasia didn't notice what May had done at all. After she put the documents in the cabinet, she glanced at the time and said to the woman, "Okay, we should go too. There are three stores to be inspected tonight, so we're a bit rushed for time."

"Okay, let's go!" May immediately took the initiative to hold the bag.

"I'll hold your bag for you, Anastasia."

As soon as Anastasia went out, she still took over her bag. "I'll hold it myself!"

May immediately returned it to her, and the two went downstairs. Since they both had no cars, they could only travel by cab.

Unfortunately, it was just in time for the cab shift, and no cabs were stopping for them. Anastasia was getting frustrated just then before a

Rolls-Royce Phantom suddenly drove over. The window rolled down, revealing a handsome man in a black suit who was sitting elegantly in the driver's seat. He looked domineering, mysterious, and particularly charming.

May was stunned at the sight. Is this President Presgrave's car?

"Get in the car. I'll take you both there," Elliot said with unprecedented kindness.

Anastasia replied politely, "There's no need for that, thank you."

However, Elliot had no intention of leaving at all. His deep eyes locked on Anastasia's stubborn face, and then he repeated a second time, "Get in the car."

May couldn't wait to sit in Elliot's car. If she could just take advantage of Anastasia's luck and ride in it once, she would be the luckiest girl on earth.

"Anastasia, we can't get a cab right now. We're going to be late, so let's take President Presgrave's car!" After speaking, May took the initiative to open the passenger's door and pulled Anastasia into the car.

Anastasia was naturally not very happy about it, but since Elliot insisted on sending them to the destination and May had already opened the car door, she said to May, "You sit in the front."

After that, she opened the back door and sat in the back seat.

Upon hearing that, May was going crazy with joy. She was fortunate enough to sit in the front passenger seat with Elliot. After she sat in, she didn't even dare to even breathe. Her whole body was tense, and she was so nervous the whole time.

As for Anastasia, she was sitting in the back seat. As soon as she raised her head, she met the man's deep eyes from the rearview mirror. She quickly looked out the window as the car slowly drove away, heading for the commercial street they were going to.

"How do you know that we are going there, President Presgrave?" May asked in surprise.

"I've read the information," Elliot replied.

Half an hour later, Elliot's car parked in front of a store in a commercial street. May got out of the car uncertainly, while Anastasia said quickly to the man in the driver's seat, "Thank you."

Following that, Elliot watched them walk into the Bourgeois store. He parked his car at a nearby location, but he didn't leave. Instead, he got out of the car and walked toward the store.

At the store, Anastasia introduced herself to the store manager, and was immediately assigned to a reception room.

At this moment, a man stepped into the entrance. He was dressed in a straight suit, which set off a superior and mysterious temperament. Under the lighting, he exuded a kingly aura.

"President Presgrave."

The manager was taken aback when she saw that the big boss had suddenly come without warning. It caught her off guard and she panicked.

Is there something wrong with this store?

“Where are Anastasia Tillman and the others?”

“Oh!

Miss Tillman is in the reception room, and I’ve given her the customers’ information.” After that, the manager hurried over to usher Elliot into the reception room.

Anastasia was looking at the information of recent customers and the sales records of the store’s most popular items when the door suddenly opened and a slender and handsome figure walked in.

May’s eyes widened at the sight at once. Why is President Presgrave here?

Meanwhile, Anastasia was only surprised but not happy at all. This man is following me everywhere persistently!

“Carry on with your work,” Elliot said in a low voice as he sat down beside them.

Chapter 54

Anastasia was speechless. Is this man supervising my work? Forget it, I’d better finish the job! After all, I must get this year-end bonus.

At this moment, Francis had brought Erica to pick up Jared and they were having dinner in a restaurant.

Erica looked at Jared under the lighting and felt jealousy surging in her heart. With which man did Anastasia give birth to this child?

When he grew up, he would look astoundingly handsome. If this little boy married a rich girl in the future, Anastasia would not be short of money.

“Dad, let’s take Jared to the nearby playground after dinner! It’s fun there,” Erica suggested.

Since Francis was an old man, he was naturally not as good at having fun as young people.

Nonetheless, he also wanted to take the little boy to the playground. “Okay, we’ll take Jared to the playground later.” He nodded.

“Eat more, Jared.” Francis looked at his grandson with dotting eyes.

Upon seeing that, Erica secretly felt resentful.

Sure enough, Anastasia's best weapon to win her father's heart was this little boy devil. Francis had always wanted a boy, but Naomi couldn't give birth to any more children. Now that Anastasia had given birth to a boy, Francis was overwhelmed with delight.

Thus, Erica was sure that Anastasia deliberately gave birth to a son and came back to rob her of the family assets!

The more she looked at this boy, the more disgusted she became. She wished that he would be kidnapped by some bad guys immediately, and that he would never appear in her house ever again in this life.

After they were finally done eating, they drove away and tried to find parking near the playground.

Since the available parking space was far away, Francis was afraid that they had to walk a long way, so he asked them to get off at the entrance of the playground first.

This happened to fit Erica's evil plan, so she hurriedly said to the little boy, "Come on, Jared. We'll get off here first. Your grandfather has to park some distance away!"

"Be a good boy and go with your aunt first, Jared," Francis said gently to the little boy.

Jared nodded obediently before following Erica out of the car. As Erica watched her father's car leave, she sneered in her heart, and a vicious light flashed in her eyes.

She stared coldly at the little boy beside her, feeling as much hate for him as she had for Anastasia.

"There are some delicious snacks over there. Let's go buy some first!" Erica wasn't going to take him into the playground because there would be staff who would look after his safety. On the contrary, she wanted to take him to the busy streets where no one would care about him.

The little boy had no choice but to follow her. When Erica saw the chaotic crowd, she said to Jared, "Wait for me here and don't go running around! I'll go buy some fruit."

"Okay!" The little boy nodded.

"Do you have a smartwatch?"

"No." The little boy shook his head.

At once, Erica was secretly delighted. If such a young child got lost, it would be terribly difficult to find him. Moreover, there were many people here—there could even be child traffickers lurking around. Thus, Erica left the little boy and went off.

10 minutes later, Erica went straight back to the entrance of the playground to wait for her father.

Jared waited in the same place for a long time, but he did not see Erica come back. As soon as he looked up, he saw a huge crowd of people all around him. He was still a small child, and he couldn't tell where he was at all. As he blinked his big eyes, there was a bad premonition in his heart as he felt that he had gotten lost. In fact, he didn't even know where to find his grandfather.

Nevertheless, he didn't panic or cry. He simply walked into a store and said to the clerk inside, "Excuse me, I'm lost and I can't find my family. May I borrow your phone to call my mommy?"

"Are you lost, little boy? Okay, here you go." The clerk immediately gave him the phone.

Jared dialed his mother's number and it rang on the other side, but no one answered. He made two calls in a row, yet no one picked up.

Apart from his mother's number, he didn't have anyone else's number.

"Did you mommy answer the phone, little boy?"

Jared shook his head, so the clerk said to him, "Well, you can wait a while before calling again. Don't worry, I'm a good person. I'll take care of you."

The little boy nodded immediately and decided to call again later...

As for Francis, he hurried to the entrance of the playground after he parked the car, but as soon as he arrived, he saw his daughter Erica coming over while sobbing.

She said to him sadly, "Dad, something bad happened—I've lost Jared! I took him to buy some ice-cream, but he ran off and I couldn't find him..."

Chapter 55

"What?" Francis was terrified. He turned his head and looked around. People came and went all around him, but his grandson was nowhere to be found..

"Jared! Where did you lose Jared?" Francis shouted angrily. In just a few minutes, Erica had lost his grandson! Moreover, the boy was only three-years-old!

“I’m sorry, Dad! He was too naughty, and he ran off to play. I didn’t manage to keep an eye on him!”
Erica immediately began to sob and blamed it all on Jared.

Francis hurriedly called the police before calling Anastasia, but even though he got through, Anastasia didn’t answer the phone. He then yelled at Erica anxiously, “Go find him! How dare you still stand here and cry?”

Erica was startled for a moment; she had never seen her father fly into a rage like this and was really scared. She wanted to go to the place where she left Jared to see if the child was still there, but she would not tell her father the exact location. Thus, she pretended to find the boy separately.

When she returned to the place just now and found that Jared was no longer there, she felt relieved. Anastasia, your son is finally lost. You will never find this child in your life again. This child is no longer a weapon for you to rob my family’s property. When Erica thought of this, her heart burst with ecstasy.

Meanwhile, Francis immediately contacted the customer service of Bourgeois. After he explained the situation, the service staff immediately called Felicia. When Felicia heard the news, she quickly recalled that May and Anastasia were together, so she quickly called May.

Anastasia was checking the information and making a detailed record of it. May was sitting next to her when she heard the phone ringing, so she picked it up and saw that it was from Felicia.

Hence, she quickly connected the call and said, “Hello, Felicia.”

“Is Anastasia with you?”

“Yes, she’s beside me.”

“Let her answer the phone.”

May handed the phone to Anastasia. “Felicia is asking for you.”

Anastasia reached out and took the phone. “Hello, Felicia.”

“Anastasia, I just received a call from the service desk. Your dad called while saying that your son got lost and asked you to contact him quickly.”

The documents in Anastasia’s hands slipped and fell to the ground when she heard the news. Her face went pale as she said shakily, “What? My son got lost?”

The man who was reading the news on his phone beside them raised his handsome face suddenly, and his pupils constricted upon seeing Anastasia's frightened face.

Then, Anastasia picked up May's phone and said, "Lend me your phone, May."

After speaking, she dialed her father's number with trembling fingers.

"Hey!" Francis' frantic voice was on the other end. "Is this Anastasia?"

"Dad, where did Jared go missing? Where are you?" Anastasia was so worried that she broke out in cold sweat.

"Near the playground. Erica and I decided to bring him here, but he suddenly went missing. Anastasia... I'm sorry... I..." Francis was so anxious at the end that he choked up and almost burst into tears.

Losing a child was a serious matter!

When Anastasia heard that Erica was there too, she instantly understood that it was not her father who lost her son, but Erica who had used some means to cause her son to go missing.

"Anastasia, does Jared remember your number? Why didn't you pick up your phone?"

Anastasia immediately opened her bag, but there was no phone in it. She was completely baffled. Where is my phone? Where did it go?

She clearly remembered it lying in her bag, and her son remembered her phone number too. Hence, she believed that her son was smart enough to find someone and try to call her.

"Dad, I'll go back to the company and look for my phone. Don't worry! Jared will be fine. If you find him, call this phone number. I'll go back to the company first."

After Anastasia finished speaking, she begged Elliot who was sitting on the sofa and said, "President Presgrave, will you take me back to the company?"

Chapter 56

Although Anastasia remained calm and rational, she didn't feel optimistic. She sat in the passenger seat in Elliot's car as they drove toward the company immediately.

Anastasia was so anxious that tears brimmed in her eyes. She held onto May's phone, hoping that her father would have good news for her soon.

"Your son looks very smart, so he will be fine."

While comforting her, Elliot weaved past the other cars deftly, and the black car rushed all the way to the Bourgeois Building

When the car came to the entrance, Anastasia pushed open the front passenger's door and hurried toward the steps, but because she was in a hurry, she tripped and fell.

Upon hitting her left leg on the sharp corner of the steps, she felt pain shooting through her leg and it hurt so badly she couldn't stand up for a while.

At this moment, a strong arm wrapped around her waist and lifted her up. Elliot wanted to check her injury, but she limped away from him and continued to run up the steps.

Then, Anastasia knocked on the entrance door anxiously. The security guard on duty inside recognized her and hurriedly opened the door for her, but he was even more surprised that Elliot was right behind her.

After that, Anastasia walked all the way to the elevator. As she pressed the elevator button, she was trembling nervously while blood oozed from her knee.

Elliot glanced coldly at her. When the elevator arrived, Anastasia rushed in, and he also stepped forward with long legs.

"Jared will be fine. Jared will be fine. Although he is young, he is very smart... No, my son will not be in trouble." Anastasia was about to lose her mind and her body was about to collapse; she couldn't help but murmur to herself as if trying to comfort herself.

In the depths of Elliot's eyes, there was a hint of distress that he himself didn't even realize. Soon, the elevator stopped at the design department floor. Then, Anastasia rushed out and went straight to her office. She dialed her own number with May's phone and heard her phone ringing from the corner of the sofa.

After digging into the sofa, Anastasia took out her phone with trembling hands. As she opened it up, she noticed 16 missed calls. Except for her father's contact, there

was an unknown number who had called multiple times. She held her breath and hurriedly called the number back.

Soon, the other end answered. "Hello?"

“Hello, did a child call this number with your phone?”

“Yes, are you the mother of the child?”

“I am. Is my son by your side?”.

“Yes, I had him wait for you in my store. Don’t worry, he’s fine and I’ll watch over him.” The female voice on the other end sounded very young but kind.

The boulder weighing down on Anastasia’s chest was finally lifted, and at this moment, her son’s tender voice came to her ear.

“I’m fine, Mommy. Don’t worry.”

“Jared... My baby...” Anastasia’s emotions were in turmoil at this moment, and her tears slipped down her cheeks. “My baby! Thank God! I’m going to pick you up right now.”

“Don’t cry, Mommy. I’m fine.” The little boy comforted her from the other end.

The girl answered the phone again and said, “Miss, I’ll send you the location of our store. Please come over quickly!”

“Okay, thank you! I’ll come right over.” Anastasia hung up the phone. All of a sudden, she felt dizzy. Now that her tense nerves suddenly relaxed, blood rushed to her head and caused a bout of dizziness.

She instinctively reached out and grabbed something nearby. What she happened to grab was a man’s arm, and she held on to it tightly to prevent herself from falling.

The next second, another arm wound itself around her waist, and her whole body was pulled toward a firm chest.

However, she didn’t struggle because she needed to rely on him urgently and waited for the dizziness to subside.

As he lowered his head, Elliot looked at the woman who was breathing heavily in his arms.

Chapter 57

“Feeling better?” Elliot asked in a deep voice.

The head-rush that made Anastasia sway on her feet was ebbing, but it was then that she suddenly realized Elliot was holding her in his arms. She quickly stepped backward to create some distance between them, only to bump into the table behind her.

“Ow!” she exclaimed.

The next second, she was pulled back into Elliot’s embrace, even though she had burrowed out of it mere moments ago.

When her face collided against the muscled planes of his chest, she heard a thud followed by a dull ache that spread over her cheekbone.

However, before she could fully register the pain, she felt a large palm clasp over her wrist.

She was in a stupor as she was pulled to the car that was parked by the curb. When the door on the passenger’s side opened, Elliot pressed her firmly into the seat.

As soon as she sat down, she fished out her phone and called her father’s number, only to hear Francis’ panicked cry on the other line.

“Anastasia, Jared hasn’t been found yet.”

“Don’t worry, Dad. Jared is just fine. He’s safe, and I’m on my way to pick him up right now.”

“What? Where’s Jared? Where is he?”

“A kind shopkeeper is watching over him now and I’m heading over to pick him up.”

“Give me the address and I’ll be right there as well.

Erica is supposed to be with Dad this evening, and because Erica is a dangerous person, there is no way I’ll let her near Jared. With that in mind, Anastasia responded hastily, “Dad, I’m sure you’re tired, so you should get some rest. I’ll go and pick up Jared myself.”

“No, I need to make sure that Jared is alright,” Francis insisted; he was so beside himself with worry that he thought his stomach might turn inside out.

“I know, but I’ll be right over to see you after I have picked Jared up,” she placated. She could get to the bottom of how Jared had gone missing by the end of the night since she suspected that Erica had something to do with it.

She hung up the phone and next to her was Elliot already driving over to the location of the store. As the car sped through the streets, Anastasia kept her eyes closed while she tried to recompose herself. Only heaven knew how terrified she had been earlier; she nearly lost her wits.

This was the first time since Jared's birth that she had found herself at the mercy of fear.

At last, they pulled up outside a boutique. Anastasia saw her son sitting on the couch as soon as she walked through the door and she broke down in tears of relief as she cried, "Jared!"

"Mommy, Mommy, you're here!" The little one ran up to her and threw his arms around her. She crouched low as well and pulled him into her embrace, her tears silently streaming down her face.

Meanwhile, the shopkeeper who had been watching over Jared noticed the man standing behind Anastasia, after which she immediately thought in surprise, Wow, what a catch! This has to be the kid's father. They look exactly like each other!

With his handsome features and tailored suit, Elliot looked dazzling where he stood tall and straight beneath the lights. There was no mistaking the grace and elegance that he emanated.

Although he didn't say anything, he seemed relieved as his gaze fell upon the embracing pair of mother and son.

Anastasia straightened her posture and unclasped the necklace she was wearing, which was the only valuable thing she had on her person at the moment.

She took the female shopkeeper's hand and thanked, "I don't have my purse with me, but take this necklace of mine as a reward for your kindness; the necklace is worth twenty thousand."

"Oh, no, there's no need for that. Anyone else would have done the same thing. The kid is precious. Make sure you keep an eye on him next time," the shopkeeper gently responded as she nudged Anastasia's hand away in her refusal to accept the reward.

"Thank you so much. You're my son's lifesaver. Could we at least get your number?" Anastasia gazed upon the shopkeeper, the gratitude pooling in her eyes.

The girl seemed a little flustered as she urged, "There's no need to be so formal with me. Take your child home now and get some rest."

Upon seeing how the girl had so adamantly turned down the reward, Anastasia had no choice other than to profusely thank her. The little one next to her looked up at: Elliot at that moment and asked, "Mr. Handsome, were you the one who drove my mommy over here?"

"That's right, buddy. Do you know how terrified your mom was? You gave her quite the fright," Elliot said as he crouched down and pulled the boy into his arms.

"I'm sorry, Mommy. It was my fault; I never should have run off on my own," Jared apologized guiltily, realizing the gravity of the situation.

After thanking the shopkeeper, Anastasia turned to him and asked, "Jared, can you tell me how you got lost?"

"Grandpa was parking the car when Aunt Erica told me she was going to buy me yummy snacks, but she went and never came back. I wanted to look for her, but I got lost," the little boy answered frankly.

Burning rage filled Anastasia when she heard this. Gritting her teeth, she thought, You were trying to abandon my son on purpose, weren't you, Erica?

Chapter 58

For a child this small to be left alone in a crowd, Jared could have been kidnapped by some ruffian working for a syndicate and no one would have noticed at all.

The amusement park was not too far away from here. Elliot drove over and pulled up outside the parking lot. At present, there weren't a lot of people at the amusement park entrance and only Francis stood there, waiting with Erica and Naomi in tow.

When Erica heard that Jared had been found, she started to become evasive and immediately denied having anything to do with his going missing.

The mysterious car was gleaming under the lights as it rolled to a stop. Then, the door swung open as Anastasia stepped out of the car with Jared in her arms.

Francis practically flew over to them and hurried to crush Jared against his chest, his tears streaming down his face as guilt ate away at him. "Oh, my darling grandson. You gave me a fright!"

However, in the midst of this joyous reunion, Anastasia's murderous gaze was fixed on Erica. The rage that boiled within her was urging her to look for an outlet; otherwise, she might combust on the spot.

At the sight of the baleful look on Anastasia's face, a wary Erica took two steps backward and demanded, "Why are you looking at me like that, Anastasia?"

It was when she saw how uneasy and evasive Erica was that Anastasia's anger renewed. She raised a hand and brought it down hard across Erica's face, the slap resounding in the crisp evening air.

"Ow!" Erica shrieked, her eyes wide in bewilderment.

"You just slapped me! You're out of your mind, Anastasia!" She darted behind Naomi for cover while whining, "Mom, she just slapped me!"

Naomi instantly wrapped her arms protectively around her daughter as she turned to snap, "How dare you strike my daughter, Anastasia!"

"If you can't take care of my son, Erica, then don't offer to do it!

Don't think I don't know what you were planning to do," Anastasia seethed as she glowered at Erica mutinously.

"You little wench! Do you have proof that Erica lost your son on purpose?" Naomi countered defensively, shielding her daughter.

Francis knew that he bore the bigger responsibility in this, so he walked up to the women and interjected in a pained voice, "Anastasia, it was my fault. Don't blame Erica."

Fueled by intense anger, Anastasia maintained her gaze on Erica as she warned darkly, "Stay away from my son! If you so much as get close to him or try to hurt him, I'll kill you where you stand!"

"Don't go around making baseless claims, Anastasia," Erica retorted, refusing to admit to her misdeed.

To the side, he felt his heart twist when he saw his two daughters snapping at each other. He turned to Anastasia and cajoled, "Anastasia, it was my fault. It really was.

I promise I won't let Jared out of my sight anymore."

Jared, on the other hand, pouted. "Mommy, don't be mad. I shouldn't have walked away on my own."

Anastasia's rage was quelled by the sound of Jared's voice. What mattered most was that her son had returned safely, so she swallowed her anger and turned to remove Jared out of Francis' arms.

“Dad, thanks for helping tonight. I’m sure Jared is badly shocked too. I’ll take him home now and you should get back and call it a day.”

Having said that, she cast Elliot a brief look and turned to saunter back to his car.

Meanwhile, Erica kept her eyes on Anastasia and it was only then that she noticed the man next to Anastasia. Her eyes widened in surprise when she registered the man’s features in the dim lighting. Why does this man look like Anastasia’s son? Could he be the kid’s father?

By the time Erica tried to get a second glimpse of the man, he had turned away from her and all she saw was the elusive silhouette of his back.

When Elliot’s car drove away, Francis let out a sigh of relief and said to Naomi and Erica, “Come on, let’s head home.”

He couldn’t bring himself to blame Erica for what had happened to Jared. After all, she had no experience in babysitting whatsoever, and while she had been careless, it didn’t necessarily mean she was at fault.

Naomi, however, was belligerent that her daughter had to suffer Anastasia’s wrath. She didn’t do anything wrong, so why was she the one to be slapped?

However, only Erica knew that she had truly intended to abandon Jared at a place that was somewhere crowded. In fact, she had so viciously wished that the boy would

be kidnapped. Alas, the universe was against her, for it brought the child back in one piece.

More importantly, she wanted to know who that mysterious man was. It had taken her all but one look to discern that he had the innate grace of nobility, and he definitely wasn’t just some average Joe.

Meanwhile, Elliot had stopped outside the apartment community where Anastasia lived. When he saw that there was a pharmacy next to it, he headed in without a word, leaving her baffled as she stared after him with Jared in her arms.

Not long after that, Elliot came back with a carrier bag of something.

Being extremely grateful for his help this evening, Anastasia said, “Thank you so much for what you’ve done tonight, President Presgrave. It’s getting late, and you should be going back.”

Elliot looked at her and offered, “I’ll walk with you to your apartment.”

Anastasia spun on her heels and headed into the elevator with Elliot in her wake. They made their way up the building, and upon arriving at her apartment, she opened the door and turned on the lights. The little one shuffled over to the couch and sat down on it, looking like a sad puppy waiting to be lectured.

“Mommy, I was wrong. Please don’t be mad anymore.”

“I’m not angry, just... flustered. I was too flustered and I lashed out,” she confessed. She knew that her son saw the violent confrontation she had with Erica.

Suddenly, Elliot reached out to grab Anastasia by the wrist and pulled her into a sitting position on the couch. She gaped at him, but before she could ask, the man crouched down in front of her. His large hand clasped her left calf, and it was only then that she noticed the bloody gash that measured up to about two inches in length on her leg.

Given how she had not tended to it in time, the blood had crusted over, even though the wound was still there.

Chapter 59

“You’re hurt, Mommy!” Jared exclaimed, sounding pained at the sight of Anastasia’s injury.

Anastasia was stunned as well. This guy went into the pharmacy just so he could get some ointment and bandages for me?

She watched as Elliot dabbed an antiseptic-soaked cotton bud over the gash that ran along her leg before carefully bandaging the area.

He tended to the wound deftly as though having done this routinely before, and it didn’t take long for him to wrap things up.

“Thank you,” Anastasia said a little stiffly. She thought he had done far too much for her this evening.

Elliot placed the carrier bag of first-aid stuff on the coffee table and said, “Change the dressing on your own for the next few days.”

“Got it.

Thank you.” Given how rudely she had been with him earlier that day, she dared not look at him for too long. What was more, all his help this evening only made her feel worse.

“Thank you, Mr. Handsome,” Jared chimed, looking up as he eyed Elliot with immense gratitude.

“You’re welcome.” Elliot reached out and rubbed Jared’s head affectionately. Then, he cast a long look at the woman who had her head down.

Wordlessly, he sauntered over to the front door, opened it, and left.

It was only then did Anastasia let out a sigh of relief. She pulled Jared into her arms, holding him close to ease the knots in her stomach and calm her wildly-beating heart. Similarly, Jared threw his arms around her in response to the embrace.

I will never leave my son with vicious people like Erica and her mother ever again, because I’d rather die than trust them.

That night, she felt a chill run down her spine while watching Jared sleep. She was terrified, and she was sure that she would lose the will to live should anything happen to her child.

She lay down and pulled Jared into her arms.

As she curled around him protectively, she felt a sharp pain radiate from her knee. She let out a low hiss and found herself

thinking about how Elliot had stayed with her for a better part of the night while she was looking frantically for Jared. He had become her personal driver who sped through the streets in the city and supported her when she swayed on her feet.

Anastasia suddenly felt an overwhelming surge of guilt. She had treated him like how a porcupine might treat a stranger, and that had definitely been uncalled for. Looks like I’ll have to be more amiable with him. Didn’t he say something about wanting me to meet his grandmother? I suppose I could entertain the idea and make things even between us.

That would work out for the best. She could meet with Old Madam Presgrave and dissuade the old lady from wanting to repay Amelia’s selfless deed all those years ago. After all, Amelia had only been carrying out her duty as a policewoman when she sacrificed her life to save Elliot’s.

The next morning, Francis came over to the apartment with fruits and gifts in hand. This time, he came alone without Erica and Naomi’s company. In any case, he understood that Erica had a role to play in allowing Jared to go missing yesterday.

Nonetheless, she was still his daughter at the end of the day, and he couldn’t bring himself to think of her as being capable of such cruelty.

Having heard Francis' repeated apology, Anastasia finally said in consolation, "Just let it go, Dad. It's all over now, so we don't have to talk about it anymore."

Francis stopped spewing guilt-riddled words, but his eyes were filled with self-blame. Even Jared was beginning to feel sorry for the man as he sat next to him and promised solemnly, "I won't ever run away on my own again, Grandpa. Pinky promise."

"You're a good kid, Jared," Francis muttered, seemingly comforted as he rubbed the little boy's head.

Meanwhile, over at the Tillman Residence, Erica was sprawled on her bed as she told Hayley about last evening's incident. On the other end of the phone, Hayley couldn't resist pointing out sourly after hearing the details, "This won't bode well for you, Erica. I bet Anastasia's going badmouth you in front of your father and tell him that you allowed her son to wander off on purpose. Who knows how much of the family fortune you would get after this?"

Erica blanched upon hearing this, and a fiery anger rose from the pit of her stomach. "If that b*tch so much as says a single bad word about me to my father, I'll give her hell for it!"

"She slapped you last night even while your dad was watching, so I wouldn't be surprised if she decides to spew nonsense about you!" Hayley said darkly out of her spite for Anastasia.

Erica pondered on the possibility of this and realized that there was some truth to it. Anastasia has probably told Dad about what a horrible person I am. It's bad enough that I barely mean anything to Dad as it is. He could be convinced by her and leave her everything in the family fortune while I get nothing at all! What should I do then?

"Anastasia won't even know what's coming! I won't let her get away with this." A sudden thought crossed her mind after she said this, and after a while, she muttered, "I saw Anastasia with a man last night, and admittedly, he and Jared looked similar. I don't know who he is, though."

"Well, what did he look like?" Hayley pressed, curious to know who the mysterious man in Anastasia's life was.

Chapter 60 Take the Day Off

Hayley was lazing around the opulent villa, looking like the very picture of privileged insouciance with a morning glass of red wine in hand and an expensive nightgown draped over her frame. Spread before her was an indulgent breakfast that the maids had decked out earlier that morning.

Just then, an incoming call interrupted her conversation with Erica, and Hayley quickly said, "I'll talk to you soon, Erica. I need to take another call." With that, she hung up the call with Erica and put May's line through. "Hello?"

"Miss Seymour, it's me, May."

"You did well last night."

"Thank you, Miss Seymour. There's something important I need to tell you, though—Anastasia was with President Presgrave last night."

The color drained from Hayley's face. "What?"

"I was supposed to be writing up an evaluation report with Anastasia last night, but President Presgrave was there as well, and the both of them left together shortly after."

Unbridled hatred flashed in Hayley's eyes as she thought seethingly, So Elliot was the man who accompanied Anastasia last night? Could he be the man Erica was talking about? The one who looked a lot like Anastasia's kid? Damn it! Anastasia must have put on quite the act to earn his sympathy and prompt his protective side!

Hayley had a feeling that Anastasia had set her eyes on Elliot. She wouldn't discount the possibility that the past five years had turned Anastasia into a greedy and shallow woman, though in all fairness, no woman in her right mind would turn away a fine specimen like Elliot.

Does this mean she's trying to steal my man? Hayley gritted her teeth and vowed that she would not let Anastasia get away with her dirty tricks.

That weekend, Anastasia refused to let her son out of her sight, and this continued until Monday rolled around.

When she had dropped Jared off at the kindergarten and watched him skip happily through the main entrance, she let out a sigh of relief. Then, upon glancing at the time, she hurried off in the direction of the company.

After arriving at her office, she took a sip of water. Now that the time was past 10.00AM, she summoned her courage and grabbed the phone on her desk, thereafter dialing the extension line for the president's office.

It wasn't long before a low and husky male voice sounded on the other line. "Hello?"

"It's me, Anastasia. I... I've decided that I would like to meet your grandmother," Anastasia said hesitantly, slightly fumbling with her words. After that night's event, she thought she ought to stop giving Elliot such a hard time.

For a few seconds, there was nothing but silence on the other end of the phone. She thought her heart might drop straight through her stomach when she suddenly heard him ask in a low baritone, "When are you free?"

"I'll be free as long as it's before 3.00PM," she answered. She needed to pick Jared up from school later in the day, and she didn't have time tonight, either.

"Okay, then we'll go right now," he said, his voice deep and alluring as he drawled each word over the phone.

At that moment, it was as if Anastasia's mind had imploded. Wait, what? Right now? That's too soon! "But I have work," she said, though even she could hear how forced the excuse sounded.

"Take the morning off, then."

"But I—"

"Do I have to do it for you?" he pressed in amusement.

“No, it’s fine. I’ll do it myself.” She didn’t want to trouble him, and she couldn’t very well risk having more rumors about them flying around after this.

“Then I’ll see you at the main entrance in ten minutes,” the man said conclusively and rather authoritatively before he hung up the call.

As such, Anastasia made her way over to Felicia’s office and asked for a day off, claiming that her son, having been traumatized from the events of that night, needed her company. Naturally, Felicia did not question her and agreed to her request.

May had only just walked up to Anastasia’s office when she saw the latter packing up her stuff and grabbing her purse to leave. She asked curiously, “Are you going somewhere, Anastasia?”

“I need to head out for a bit.”

“But I wrote this report and I was hoping you’d go over it for me.”

“Just leave it on my desk!” Anastasia said as she brisk-walked over to the elevators. May blinked and hurried to catch up.

“Well, I was going down to get some tea to-go, anyway.”

They were both standing at the entrance, and May was scrolling through her phone on purpose while she hid behind the glass door. She watched as Anastasia stepped forward at the sight of the familiar Rolls-Royce idling by the curb. Upon looking around to make sure that no one was watching her, Anastasia quickly opened the door to the passenger seat and slid into the vehicle.

Behind the glass door, May felt her jaw drop wide open. Is Anastasia going on a date with Elliot during office hours? She hastily snapped a picture of the car and sent it to Hayley.

Meanwhile, Hayley was strolling through the mall and seeking comfort through mindless shopping when she heard the subtle beep of a new text. She pulled out her phone and clicked into the text from May,

which read, 'Miss Seymour, this is a picture of Anastasia boarding President Presgrave's car. They look like they're going on a date.'