

Too Far 231

Chapter 231

Soon, Elliot drove Anastasia through a bridge, seemingly making his way to the beach. In the meantime, Anastasia was delighted, sitting in her new car while admiring the power of her new ride. Oh, I love my car so much! It's like a wild horse that's sprinting freely in an empty space.

Not long after that, they arrived at a coastal freeway without any signs of other cars in sight. Then, he stepped out of the vehicle to let Anastasia sit in the driver's seat just when the lady noticed how immediately the man fastened his seatbelt and clamped the handle tightly with his hand. Does this man have no trust in me at all? Are my driving skills that terrible?

"Change the gear. Then, step on the accelerator gently and drive forward."

Under Elliot's instruction, Anastasia stepped on the accelerator gently to feel what it was like when her car slowly moved forward. It was then that she began to feel more and more relieved as she curled her lips upward happily. At the same time, Elliot slowly lightened up as well, his eyes becoming gentler with a smile as he was seemingly influenced by her positive aura.

As Anastasia began to drive back and forth on the same road, her grip on the steering became more and more relaxed. Meanwhile, she also started to get the hang of how much pressure she should put on the gas pedal, acting calmly, unlike her previous nervousness.

Not long after that, Elliot told her to continue driving forward as she did exactly what she was told. In the end, they arrived at a 5-star hotel, whereupon Elliot opened the door and stepped out of the car. "Why don't you repay my favor by treating me to a meal?"

Feeling happy about her new car, Anastasia raised her eyebrows and gave an affirmative reply. "Sure!" At that moment, her phone rang, at which point she took a closer look and tapped her forehead because she had just remembered she was supposed to treat Oliver to lunch that afternoon.

"I'm sorry, Oliver. I'm a little busy at the moment, so I don't think I can meet you for lunch. Why don't I treat you to a meal later at night?" Anastasia postponed her appointment to the night, thinking she had more time to spare since Felicia had given her time to work on her draft.

"Alright, see you tonight then," Oliver replied pleasantly.

"Sure, see you tonight." Anastasia smiled, thinking she must repay the man's favor with the dinner later for the help he had offered her earlier. As soon as Anastasia hung up the call, her eyes were met with the man's menacing gaze like a hungry beast that was about to eat her. "What's wrong? Can't wait to treat another man to a meal?" Elliot mocked Anastasia.

Anastasia speechlessly replied, "You did me a favor, which is why I'm going to treat you to a meal now, but when someone else did me a favor, don't you think I should do the same to show my appreciation? Be reasonable, could you?"

As someone who was rather sensitive with words, Elliot felt even more jealous after hearing Anastasia's reply, wondering whether she was complaining about him. What kind of person was so kind enough to

fix her computer in the middle of the night? At the thought of that, Elliot entered the restaurant with a darkened look.

When Anastasia was ordering their dishes, he appeared to be in a sulk and let her make all the decisions, which ruined her mood the moment she noticed his expression. Therefore, she propped her chin with her hands and stared at the man's good looks with her big eyes.

This man is so handsome that I'd almost describe him as perfect if only he weren't so arrogant. After all, his sulky look is keeping all the ladies away from him. "What pissed you off, man? Did someone owe you money?" Anastasia teased the man.

Elliot glared at the lady with an intimidating gaze. "You mustn't fall for any other man besides me, Anastasia."

Needless to say, Anastasia could clearly tell that the man's words were an order instead of a warning, but nonetheless, she had grown tired of hearing them again and again, so she squinted and looked him in the eye. "President Presgrave, I'm in a good mood today, but why must you ruin it?"

Bothered by his pent-up emotions, Elliot felt as if he wanted to jump into the sea to calm himself down, but when Anastasia didn't seem to care about that, he couldn't help but feel disheartened about that. I've been by her side for so long, so does she not feel my presence at all?

"Anastasia, is your heart made of stone or something? Won't your heart melt for someone who seemed sympathetic to you?" Elliot's eyes were filled with resentment.

"President Presgrave, I think you should stop wasting your time on me. There is only enough room in my heart for two men in this world. One of them is my son, and the other one is my father." Anastasia picked up the teacup, trying to play it cool, but she forgot that the tea she poured into the cup was still hot. Thus, she dropped it immediately and ended up making a fool out of herself.

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Overwhelmed by her panic, Anastasia covered her mouth and reached for the tissue paper while Elliot, who was sitting opposite her, immediately showed his concern. "Did the tea scald you? Show me."

Anastasia covered her mouth, shaking her head. "I-I'm fine." It's just my tongue that got scalded.

Therefore, Elliot quickly sent for the waiter to get Anastasia a glass of ice water to cool her scalded tongue off. When the seafood was served, the lady began to dig in happily and indulge herself in it, but nonetheless, Elliot was calm and graceful like he usually was, even in front of the mouthwatering seafood. After all, he had grown up trying all kinds of nice food and was hardly impressed with the seafood Anastasia was enjoying.

In the meantime, Anastasia was biting the crab leg like a hungry little kitten, making sure she bit off all the flesh underneath the shells as she demonstrated just how strong her teeth were by leaving nothing behind.

"Watch out for your teeth." The man reminded her out of kindness with a pair of furrowed brows on his face.

Halfway through their meal, Elliot got up from his seat and excused himself. Meanwhile, Anastasia was satisfied with her meal as she turned her attention to the window and noticed how beautiful the scenery was. Wow! There seemed to be no boundaries across the sea, and the yachts that were sailing on it made this scene look even more relaxing. I wish it could take away all the problems that are bothering me. When Elliot returned to his seat once again, he took a look at the time on his watch and said, "It's time to go now."

"Alright, wait for me here while I foot the bill." Anastasia finished her words and stood up from her seat.

"No need for that. I just took care of it." Elliot looked at her in a mischievous manner, stunning Anastasia as she was bewildered why he would beat her to it and foot the bill.

What?! Why was he desperate to foot the bill? "Why did you rush to pay the bill? Are you obsessed with footing restaurant bills?" Anastasia felt slightly unhappy that the man wouldn't let her treat him to a meal, even though she was ready to do it.

"Let's go." Elliot ignored the lady's complaint and gracefully made his way to the restaurant's exit, turning many heads with the glamorous aura that he gave off in the process. At the same time, there were a few other women sitting at the table on the other side, as they couldn't take their eyes off the handsome man.

Needless to say, Anastasia naturally became the person that those ladies envied, which was something she frequently experienced ever since Elliot entered her life. The next moment, Anastasia

followed behind Elliot and reached her car, proudly reaching for her car keys to open the door. However, she soon saw Elliot walking toward the front passenger seat and called out to him. "President Presgrave, why are you sitting there? You need to help me drive my car back."

"No, you're going to drive it yourself." Elliot opened the car door and gave Anastasia an indifferent reply.

"Wait a second! But we're going back to the city!" Anastasia felt her anxiety surging through her, but as she saw the man sitting in her front passenger seat, she could only stomp her feet helplessly and brace herself for what she must do. Then, she saw the man fastening his seatbelts with his hand on the handlebar above his head like he had a severe phobia of female drivers. Thus, Anastasia playfully scared Elliot and said, "Sit tight, President Presgrave. Your new female driver is about to hit the road."

"Stop messing around and focus on the road." Elliot tilted his head, lecturing Anastasia and urging her to take her driving seriously.

After that, Anastasia nervously hit the road, driving on a highway that stretched all the way from the coast to the city. At first, she was driving comfortably in the light traffic with barely any cars on the road, but as the traffic got heavier and heavier, she began to feel so uneasy and stressed out that her palms and forehead started to sweat.

Upon entering the urban area, Anastasia couldn't help but murmur in a fidgety manner. "Why do the people behind me keep urging me? Am I driving in the wrong lane?"

"President Presgrave, can you tell me when I can switch to another lane?"

"Is the map directing me the wrong way? I don't seem to be driving on the right path, President Presgrave."

"Why is the car in front of me moving so slow? Even a tortoise moves faster than it. Now, how do I overtake this car?"

"Why are you urging me, idiot?! Can't you treat new drivers better on the road?"

As Anastasia began to lose her temper, the man standing beside her reminded her to stay calm. "You need to keep a cool head when you're driving."

Anastasia replied in frustration, "What's he doing?! If I hadn't stepped on the brake in time, I would have crashed into him." After traveling for a few moments, a sports car suddenly sped past Anastasia's car, shocking her so much that she turned her steering to the side while Elliot looked at her in bewilderment.

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"That was a sports car worth a few million! If I had caused so much as a scratch on it, I could kiss my car and money goodbye," Anastasia replied, knowing well about the risk.

Elliot was rendered speechless. "Screw that. Just drive like you're supposed to. I'll pay for the damage if the worst comes to the worst." His face darkened before he asked the lady on the inside if she had forgotten who was sitting right next to her.

Oh, come on, I'm someone who is going to ensure everything turns out as a success for her. Has she really forgotten who is sitting beside her now?

"What's wrong? Are you getting scared of being my passenger?" Anastasia chuckled in irony.

Although Elliot felt helpless about the lady's mischief, he somehow felt happy on the inside because no one else had made him feel so relaxed in a while. When they stopped at the traffic light, Anastasia

turned to the man and said, "President Presgrave, there is a box of tissue paper that they gave as a gift. Could you please give me two pieces of tissue paper? Thank you."

Elliot then reached for the box and gave the lady two pieces of tissue paper. With sweat covering her forehead, Anastasia immediately grabbed them and wiped her forehead just as the man sitting next to her chuckled at the sight of her rare true self.

Not long after that, Anastasia anxiously drove her car to the basement car park at Bourgeois. With Elliot's guidance, she successfully parked her car in the VIP lot, which was among the lots where Elliot usually parked his car in.

"This is going to be your parking lot from now on," Elliot said as he opened the car door and stepped out of the vehicle.

When Anastasia stepped out of her car, she started to feel a soreness in her back and shoulders, her legs feeling a little numb. Thus, she swung her shoulders in circles to relax the muscles in her arms, kicking to stretch her legs at the same time. Meanwhile, Elliot, who saw that, couldn't help but look the other way with a chuckle, thinking he shouldn't embarrass her by letting him see her laughing at her.

As soon as the elevator arrived on the sixth floor, Anastasia stepped out of it and looked back at the man behind her, meeting his gaze by coincidence. In that instant, she felt her heart pounding rapidly just as she decided to walk away immediately. Then, she entered Felicia's office and told her that she had just collected her new car earlier. Also, she invited Felicia, along with both of their assistants, for lunch the next day at noon to celebrate her new car. Moments later, Anastasia returned to her office shortly before Alice entered in a hostile manner. "Where is the draft, Anastasia?"

"I talked to Felicia about that, and I'm allowed to submit it tomorrow."

"That's just procrastination. You're abusing your power because you think you're given the privilege to do so." Alice then propped herself with her arms on the table, ridiculing Anastasia. "Don't ever think that

you're going to win it all after seducing President Presgrave and stealing his heart."

"Well, it takes a lot to win it all. Do you know that? But speaking of that, I don't think my capability is outmatched by yours in any way!" Anastasia folded her arms, refuting Alice's words.

"A true woman never relies on a man to achieve success. You're a disgrace to all the ladies!" Alice humiliated Anastasia.

"Watch your mouth, lady! You'd better show me some respect." Anastasia stood up and glared at Alice.

"If you want somebody else's respect, you're going to have to make sure you behave yourself. Everyone in our company knows that President Presgrave has a girlfriend, but you won't stop hanging around with him every day. Do you know you look like a filthy lady to me, Anastasia?" Alice fixed her gaze upon Anastasia in a sarcastic manner, yet her eyes were filled with envy and jealousy.

On the other hand, Anastasia was aware of how her relationship with Elliot was viewed to be a laughingstock in her company, but only she knew that she didn't do anything to seduce Elliot. Therefore, she had no choice but to bear with the misunderstanding and disdain that everyone had toward her.

"Get out of my face! I still have work to do." Anastasia immediately cut the argument short as Alice walked away satisfactorily. After all, she only swung by Anastasia's office to get on the latter's nerves, trying to play on her emotions.

Soon, Anastasia gave Oliver a call fifteen minutes before she could leave work and discussed the dinner they were going to have together later that night.

"Anastasia, I applied for a leave later in the afternoon, and I'm ready to make a move anytime."

"Really? I'll pick you up then since I just got my new car today." Anastasia finished her words and mocked herself. "Well, that is, if you're not afraid to let a new female driver give you a ride."

"No worries, I'm pretty gutsy. I'll come to your office right now."

"Sure. I'll be waiting then." Anastasia smiled and hung up the call.

As soon as Oliver arrived, Anastasia descended to the basement car park with him. Then, Oliver rode shotgun just as Anastasia switched her phone to hands-free mode and played some music. After the first time she drove on the road with Elliot by her side, she felt less nervous now that she was driving again,

not to mention the fact that it was past peak hour. Therefore, her driving journey was smooth all the way until she arrived at her son's kindergarten.

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"Are you sure your husband is fine with you treating me to a meal, Anastasia?" Oliver asked in embarrassment.

It was then that Anastasia realized she didn't tell Oliver about herself. Thus, she smiled and replied, "I don't have a husband. I'm a single mother."

Although Oliver had long had a feeling that Anastasia was a single mother, he was still surprised when he heard the lady admitting that by herself. "Isn't the man I saw in your house last night your husband?"

"Oh, no. Of course not. He... is just a friend of mine." Anastasia refused to reveal Elliot's identity, but Oliver was sure about what he saw. After all, he could still remember Elliot's menacing gaze the night before, as if he was a beast that wanted to devour him alive. Thus, he was sure that Elliot was Anastasia's admirer.

"Since we're living so close to each other, please don't forget to tell me what you need, Anastasia." Oliver scratched his head, enchanted by Anastasia's pretty looks as he considered her a beauty, although she was already a mother.

In fact, when Oliver first laid eyes on Anastasia, he was deeply attracted by her elegance and gracefulness. After all, a charming lady like Anastasia was most attractive to men who hardly ever socialized.

"Alright. By the way, what time do you go to work? Would you like me to give you a ride to work? Because that should also help you save some money on traveling," Anastasia asked.

Oliver's eyes lightened up as he happily smiled and replied, "Sure, but I'll either pay for your fuel or according to the mileage traveled."

Anastasia laughed it off and said, "No need for that. I'm driving to work anyway, so it causes me no trouble to pick you up along the way."

"No way. You're putting me in a tough position to accept your offer." Oliver insisted that he pay for her car fuel.

"Alright then, pay for me once every month when I gas up my car."

"Well, I'll pay for your fuel then." Oliver insisted.

Anastasia smiled and said, "Sure, when we happen to stop by a gas station."

Thinking the chances of them stopping by the petrol station were slim, Anastasia was willing to give Oliver a ride to work because she wanted to have some company so that she wouldn't feel bored.

At that moment, Anastasia's phone, which was connected to her car's audio, rang, whereupon the caller's name made her heart sink when she saw it. Seriously, Elliot? Why are you calling me?

Unwilling to answer the call, she let her phone ring while Oliver caught a glimpse of the caller's name—President Presgrave.

"Is he your boss?"

"Yeah, he is."

"Hurry up and answer the call, then." Oliver felt worried about Anastasia.

Thus, Anastasia showed Oliver a quiet gesture and picked up the call. "Hello, President Presgrave. What's the matter?"

"Where is your car?" The man's magnetic voice reverberated in the car's interior.

"It's with me. I'm on my way to pick up my son now, so if there is nothing important.."

"Watch out, Anastasia!" Oliver shouted out because Anastasia's car was about to crash into another car.

Therefore, Anastasia applied an emergency brake, realizing that she must not let herself get distracted when driving.

"Who's the man in your car?" The caller questioned Anastasia, his voice echoing in the car.

"I'm driving now, President Presgrave, so it's not really a good time for me to talk now. Bye." Anastasia eventually lost her patience and told the man that she was about to hang up the call.

In the meantime, Oliver was puzzled by what was going on, as he couldn't help but wonder about the relationship between Anastasia and her boss. Why is her boss so angry after he heard my voice?

"Anastasia, if you ever dare to..." Before Elliot could finish his sentence, Anastasia went ahead and hung up on the former, only to receive another call from the man. Just when Oliver was nervously

wondering why her boss was calling again, she heard Anastasia's reply that was about to surprise him.

"Don't bother picking it up. Just let it ring."

Oliver was speechlessly stunned upon hearing Anastasia's words but was impressed by her courage to let her boss' call go unanswered. His respect for her grew greater when she subsequently switched her phone to silent mode.

In the meantime, Elliot was seen with a darkened gaze in the basement car park. I was only a few minutes late, and that lady is now gone with another man in her car. Who's that man, by the way? Why is he calling her Anastasia instead of Miss Tillman like she is his... What's worse is that she had the guts to hang up my call. Did I interrupt her affair with another man? At the thought of that, Elliot clenched his fists, feeling jealous of the man who was with Anastasia as it seemed to him that Oliver was having a good time with the woman he loved, just like he did earlier that afternoon.

Overwhelmed by his jealousy, he began to feel restless and uneasy.

Chapter 235

Imagining the man who was with Anastasia enjoying the sight of her sweet smile when she was driving, Elliot called his assistant, Rey, and asked him to collect him. "Come pick me up."

Meanwhile, Rey quickly got to his car and drove from Presgrave Group. Just when he parked his car and was about to get out of the vehicle to open the door for his boss, Elliot had already gotten in, radiating an aura of rage and anger. I wonder who's gotten on my boss's nerves. Upon running through a list of faces in his mind, he couldn't think of anyone else besides Anastasia.

"Start driving now. We're heading to the area where Anastasia lives." The man's voice was heard coming from the backseat, as expected.

In the meantime, Anastasia, who pulled up outside her son's kindergarten, sneezed as she felt a cold chill running down her spine. Because of that, she couldn't help but wonder if someone was speaking ill of her behind her back. While Oliver waited for Anastasia to return with her son, the kid was excited at the sight of his mother's new car. Soon, they entered the car, but in order to accompany the boy, Oliver decided to sit in the backseat with him. "Let's go. It's dinnertime." Concerned about her son's safety, Anastasia reckoned she should buy a harnessed seat for him as soon as she could.

At the same time, the boy was able to hit it off with Oliver, having a liking for him because he appeared to treat his mother well.

Not long after that, Anastasia went to a restaurant near the area where they lived with Oliver and her son. Upon settling down around the dining table, Oliver soon found himself enchanted when he laid eyes on the young and beautiful mother. After all, he reckoned no man could have resisted the motherly charm and love that Anastasia was giving off when she looked at her son. In that instant, Oliver slowly lost the courage to look at Anastasia's smile because he was afraid that she would see through his feelings for her.

When Anastasia footed the bill at the cashier, she reached for her phone and was shocked to see 28 missed calls on her phone. The moment she viewed them, she saw the same name for each one of them—Elliot.

What's wrong with this man? Is he out of his mind or something? Why did he call so many times? Wait a second. Could there be anything urgent? But if there was really something urgent, his bodyguards would have protected him, so I can't see how his safety could have been threatened.

After paying the bill, Anastasia returned to her seat shortly before she exited the restaurant. Then, Anastasia drove them back to the basement car park in their residential area. Upon arrival, they were greeted by the sight of a luxurious black car that seemed to be waiting there for no one knew how long.

On the other hand, the man in the car was able to recognize the familiar BMW to be Anastasia's even before he saw the license registration number. "Get in her way."

Meanwhile, Anastasia was about to drive her car into the car park just when another black car suddenly appeared right in front of her and forced her to brake. She then stared at the car in surprise, wondering if the driver knew any manners. What's this fella doing here? Does he know that his car is now at the car park's entrance? Nonetheless, at that moment, the tall silhouette exited the car like the intimidating and fearsome demon himself from hell. As soon as Anastasia saw the man, she was puzzled and surprised. Elliot? What's he doing in my residential area?

"Mr. Presgrave doesn't seem to be happy." The child sitting in the backseat could tell from the man's expression.

At that moment, Anastasia was reminded of the 28 missed calls she saw earlier, thinking Elliot must have been mad because of that as her heart pounded rapidly. Furthermore, the man's hot temper only served to make her fear the worst even more. Therefore, she gulped in fear before she revealed her adorable side and leaned closer to Elliot, sticking her head out to greet the man. "What a small world, President Presgrave."

Then, Elliot slowly leaned closer in an intimidating manner just as his silent facial features became clearer and clearer, making him look like an emotionless statue. On the other hand, Anastasia, who sensed the man's intimidating aura, believed that someone like him would overshadow every other man in the same domain. Thus, she couldn't help but feel overwhelmed by her panic because she had no idea what the man would do to her.

Is he going to be mad and shout at me? Or is he going to lay me off directly?

Chapter 236

Soon, it turned out that neither of what Anastasia was expecting happened as the man propped his body with his arms on his car frame and bent over slightly. The next second, he spoke with a magnetic voice, "I've been waiting for you at your doorstep. Hurry up and get inside."

Before Anastasia could react, Elliot went to the backseat and greeted Jared with a gentle smile. "Hello, Jared."

"Mr. Presgrave, you're not mad, are you?" the child asked.

"Of course, I'm not." Elliot smiled as he worked past his anger about the 28 missed calls that Anastasia didn't pick up earlier. However, when he shifted his gaze to Oliver, his eyes were like a sharp blade, warning him not to get any closer to the lady.

Needless to say, Oliver understood the man's warning gesture, knowing that Elliot was trying to assert his dominance over Anastasia.

After the car in front of Anastasia made its way, Anastasia turned her attention to Elliot and said, "I'll park my car in the basement first."

Then, she went ahead to park her car in a serious manner after locating a nice parking lot. In the meantime, Oliver caught a glimpse of the side view of Jared's face, feeling shocked by what he saw when he was trying to remind the kid to bring his belongings out of the car with him. This kid looks just like the man we just met. Is he the father of this boy? So, does that mean Anastasia bore a child for her boss?

Although Oliver was not someone who was afraid of trouble, he was a man with a sense of shame within him. At the same time, he pitied himself for having to give up the idea of wooing Anastasia before he even had the chance to do anything. "Anastasia, I'll deliver your computer to you in a while."

"Sure, I'm going to be working overtime later anyway." Anastasia expressed her gratitude, whereupon she entered the elevator with her son and made their way to the 15th floor. As soon as they stepped out of the elevator, Anastasia was greeted by the sight of a man leaning against the wall with a gloomy look on his face.

"Have you eaten, Mr. Presgrave?" Jared asked the man in a concerned manner.

"No, I haven't." Elliot shook his head in exhaustion.

The child told his mother, "Mom, Mr. Presgrave hasn't eaten yet!"

"Why didn't you eat dinner?" Anastasia looked at the man in surprise after hearing her son's words.

"I'm not hungry." The man grunted unhappily.

When she heard Elliot's reply, Anastasia couldn't help but frown at his unconcerned attitude about his own health, asking herself deep down whether he wasn't afraid that his health would worsen because of that. After opening the door, she entered the house with her son as the man followed them and closed the door behind him.

"What would you like to eat? Is there anything I can cook for you?" She turned around and asked.

"Maybe some spaghetti will do." Elliot wasn't particular with what he was going to eat as long as it was prepared by her.

On the other hand, Anastasia put down her purse and walked toward the refrigerator, feeling fortunate that she still had the ingredients she needed in it. She then took some chicken and a jar of marinara sauce out of the refrigerator before she began cooking. While Anastasia was busy preparing Elliot's meal, Jared stayed in the living room to keep the man company.

In order to keep the air in her house fresh, she closed the kitchen door when cooking, but at that moment, the doorbell rang just when Jared said, "It must be Mr. Shaw who has come to deliver Mom's laptop."

Elliot stood up and looked at the boy. "Sit here. I'll check it out."

When Oliver opened the door, he was greeted by the sight of a tall, buff man who stunned him. "Where is Anastasia?"

"She is busy, so just pass me the computer."

"Well... I still need to take care of the installation for her." Oliver insisted on finishing his business despite the pressure Elliot was giving him.

"No need for that. From now on, she will no longer require your service to fix her computer." He extended his arms and took the computer away from Oliver's embrace while staring at Oliver. "Stay away from her and leave her alone."

Before Oliver could react, the door was shut right in front of him. Then, when he snapped out of his trance and made sense of what was going on, the man's face began to seem familiar to him. Where have I seen him before?

Deep down, Oliver believed he had seen Elliot's face before, thinking it was probably on the list of the world's richest men. Therefore, he made his way to the elevator while reaching for his phone, browsing through the list of the world's richest men on the internet. Soon, he found an analysis of the richest men

in the world for the last five years, feeling shocked and stupefied when he saw the first person's picture on the top of the list.

Chapter 237

Goodness! Are you telling me that the guy who's been hanging around Anastasia is the heir to the country's foremost elite family and the president of Presgrave Corporation?

As the revelation dawned upon him, Oliver felt his legs grow weak. He couldn't believe he had the good fortune of meeting someone as important as Elliot under such circumstances. When he came to his senses and searched up the list of billionaires in the country, he was surprised to find that Elliot's name was no longer on it.

However, he did come across an article that explained why some of the country's billionaires had mysteriously disappeared from the aforementioned list. Upon clicking into it, he saw that Elliot was the first person mentioned in the article, and the only reason that was accorded for his disappearance from the list was that he simply didn't care about the status. Not declaring his family's net worth only made it all the more elusive, so much so that no one could even make a fair estimation.

Whatever the public had seen or heard about his wealth was but the tip of the iceberg; what lay beneath the surface could be far more astounding than anyone might imagine.

Having read this passage, Oliver suddenly felt glad that he had not been so ignorant as to offend the man earlier. Otherwise, he would be in a world of trouble.

Meanwhile, Anastasia plated the spaghetti after she had cooked it and brought it over to the dining table, whereupon Jared told her happily, "Mommy, your laptop is back!"

She froze. Did Oliver drop by? She hurried into the master bedroom, only to see someone crouching by the desk and assembling something with fervor.

It wasn't Oliver, but Elliot instead.

He had shrugged off his suit jacket and rolled up his sleeves, and right now, he was setting up her laptop.

"You do know what you're doing, right?" Anastasia asked casually as she peered over his shoulder. She wasn't so much doubting him as she was concerned about having him work on such tedious tasks. After all, he had grown up with a silver spoon in his mouth, and he was probably used to ordering those around him.

"You have such little faith in me," he pointed out sarcastically as he went about the work without so much as sparing her a look.

She did not miss the hostility of his tone. "Mind telling me what's the deal with the 28 calls you gave me tonight? I actually thought something happened to you."

Elliot's gaze darkened just then, and he turned to glare at her furiously as he demanded, "Anastasia, don't you feel the slightest bit of guilt for treating me this way?"

Upon hearing this, she gaped at him speechlessly. Those who didn't know better would have heard his angry accusation and assumed that she had taken his money after toying with his heart. Alas, she was innocent, and the only crime she could have possibly committed was missing his calls.

Anastasia looked at him awkwardly. "Sure, I didn't pick up your call, but you don't have to behave this way." For a moment, she thought he resembled a disgruntled housewife. The idea of it made her sputter, and she laughed so hard that she had to hold onto the door frame to steady herself.

Elliot glowered at her grimly. If looks could kill, she would be dead by now. "I can't believe you find this funny."

She knew that laughing at him like this was rather disrespectful, but it was highly entertaining to see him crouching next to a laptop while trying to assemble its parts. At last, she swallowed her remaining giggles. "Okay, I'll stop, but you have to promise me that you won't spam me calls just because I don't pick up the first time. I'd be scared out of my mind," she said, showing that she truly had been worried

by his incessant phone calls. Then, she put on a concerned front as she added, "I made spaghetti. Why don't you have some before you set up the laptop?"

Elliot was admittedly hungry, and he was pretty much done setting up the computer anyway. He rose to his feet and narrowed his eyes at her. "That guy earlier—what did you say his name was?" he asked in a low voice.

"Oliver," she replied, blinking.

"Where does he work?"

"At the building next to mine."

"What does he do?"

"He's a programmer." She was a little baffled by his line of questioning. Is he actually interrogating me right now?

Presently, Elliot was but one step away from Anastasia. His gaze darkened considerably as he bit out, "Right. I'll remember him."

She finally understood why he had asked about Oliver. Her hand darted out and clutched his arm as she pressed frantically, "Wait, what do you mean by that? You're not going to pick on him, are you?"

"If he keeps pestering my woman, I'll do more than just pick on him. He ought to watch his back if he wants to stay alive." There was a murderous gleam in his dark eyes as he said this, and Heather thought she saw an insidious look flash over his handsome features.

When he was about to walk out the door, Anastasia felt the abrupt need to clear things up with him. She hurried to the door and closed it to keep her son from overhearing this conversation. "Elliot, don't even think about hurting him."

"You seem worried about him. What? Do you like him or something?" Elliot asked icily without a shred of warmth in his obsidian, stormy eyes.

Chapter 238

Anastasia was left speechless following Elliot's outburst. Where is all this jealousy coming from? I'm not his girlfriend, and nothing is going on between us, so why is he getting jealous of Oliver out of the blue? Is there even a point to this?

The lights brought out the defiant edge to her delicate features as she raised a brow at the man in front of her and pointed out sardonically, "Elliot, I think you have yet to reconcile with the fact that I can like or fall for someone without having to get your permission. What right do you have to butt into my personal life?"

However, little did she know that every one of her gestures and expressions only drew Elliot in deeper. Even the way she behaved like an agitated kitten was stroking and stirring his wildest desires.

A devious smirk curled on his lips as he drawled ominously, "True, you can choose to love whoever you want, but I can promise you that person will end up in the most unfortunate of situations. In the end, I'll make sure all the men who think they have a chance with you become so miserable that they'd wish they were dead."

Anastasia had never met anyone so unbelievably unreasonable. Just as she was about to retort, Elliot closed the distance between them and backed her up against the wall. He then said, "Let me tell you something, Anastasia—a man's body language says a lot about what he feels for a woman."

The next second, she was made acutely aware of just how dangerous and domineering he was. It wasn't just the insidious gaze in his eyes that sent chills running down her spine, but also the way he moved so lithely and cornered her like she was helpless prey.

She could even feel the heat coming off him through the fabric of their clothes.

It was as if her mind had imploded at that moment, and blood subsequently rushed to her face. Elliot had discarded his gentlemanly and civilized front, revealing the starved and ferocious beast within him. He wanted her to know with every fiber of her being that he was not as tame as he seemed; he was just as tempestuous as anyone else, and he was not one to be messed with.

The 28 calls he had made to her tonight were the last of the walls that kept his rage at bay.

Anastasia was about to push him away when his lips crashed down on hers, demanding and punishing as ever.

Her skin prickled as something warm and electrifying coursed through her, but just as she was about to lose herself in the kiss, the man pulled away from her and walked out the door, leaving her startled and slumped against the wall.

Anastasia left the room after regaining her composure, only to see Elliot sitting at the dining table enjoying the spaghetti she made, and he even served a small portion of it to Jared. The both of them looked like a jolly pair as they sat across from one another and slurped on the noodles hungrily.

Anastasia had a hard time believing that this man, who looked like a warm and affable house-husband type, had pinned her against the wall like a roguish brute moments ago. He's just a jerk with a pedigree, that's what, she thought grimly.

She was starting to hate herself for allowing Elliot to make her feel all those things back in the room. Perhaps she really was a pushover.

Elliot brought Jared out for an evening stroll after dinner. Though it was getting late, Anastasia knew that her child would be safe with him. Presently, she sat on the couch and let her mind wander, but she chewed on her lower lip when she realized that she was thinking about that kiss earlier.

The kiss had been a demanding and unforgiving one. Elliot was in every way despicable, but for some reason that Anastasia couldn't quite fathom, she was swept up in the sweet and overpowering current of his kiss. She distinctly remembered feeling like there was a hollow part of her that was finally being filled up, and she was disappointed when he pulled away abruptly in the end.

What in the world is going on? I'm not falling for him, am I?

She wanted to slap herself in the face. No, I can't fall for him. He's Hayley's man!

As much as she wished to take revenge on Hayley for putting her through the horrific ordeal years ago, and even though Elliot presented himself as the perfect pawn for revenge, Anastasia had no intention of stooping so low. She didn't want to mess up the life that she had carved out for herself despite all the adversity, after all.

She might have considered revenge if she didn't have Jared, taking any crazy idea and running with it. Alas, she did have a son to care for, and her motherly duties tethered her to reason. She refused to do anything that could potentially hurt Jared in the end.

More importantly, she could still hear Hayley's threat echoing in her ears. The male escort who had found her not too long ago could have shown up out of the blue courtesy of Hayley's doing. This could only mean that Hayley and the escort had been in contact all this while.

If that jerk were to appear in front of Jared one day, Anastasia shuddered to think how the little boy would react to having an unfamiliar and hostile scumbag for a father. What if that man decides to take my son away from me?

She began to drown in paranoia, and she was truly worried and terrified that one day, that scumbag of a man would show up and wreck her life again.

Chapter 239

However, Hayley had only warned Anastasia to stay away from Elliot.

Anastasia was more than happy to oblige, but Elliot simply wouldn't leave her alone. As things were, she was at her wits' end trying to shake him off.

Initially, she thought it was a brilliant plan to have a fling with another man so that Elliot would see that she was taken and back off, but having heard his very ominous warning just now, she was starting to have second thoughts. If Elliot made good on his threats and decided to go berserk, the men whom she had taken advantage of for the sake of a tactical fling would become sacrificial lambs.

At that moment, her phone chimed with a new message. She picked it up and saw that it was a text from Alex which read, 'Miss Tillman, will you be dropping by the company to see how things are anytime soon?'

It was only upon reading this that she remembered she had promised Francis to drop by the company and check things out. A while had passed since then, yet she still had not gotten around to it.

‘How about this Saturday? I’ll try to clear my schedule.’

‘Friday might be better; we don’t work on Saturdays.’

‘Oh, right. Well, Friday it is. I’ll see you at my dad’s company,’ she replied.

‘Very well, Miss Tillman. I’ll see you then.’

After the conversation ended, Anastasia suddenly recalled the matter of Francis’ company getting acquired. She wondered how that was going. If Dad hasn’t said anything about it, does it mean that the acquisition won’t be happening?

She was still deep in thought when she heard the sound of keys turning outside the door. Jared had returned from his evening stroll, and his little face was flushed and glistening with sweat following the exercise.

“Time to shower up and go to bed,” Anastasia said. It was already 9.40PM, and it was a school day tomorrow. She stood up from the couch and added stoically, “President Presgrave, you ought to be getting home now that it’s so late at night.”

Elliot was drinking when he heard this and choked. As he coughed, he turned to look at the cold and unfeeling woman that he was so in love with.

Meanwhile, Anastasia didn’t think he would actually choke on water. She hurried up to him and asked out of concern, “Are you alright?”

He was exasperated. The woman had mood swings that were as unpredictable as the June weather. She had been fine moments ago when he and Jared left for their evening stroll, but now, she was treating him like he was wholly unwelcome in her home. He thought his anger was perfectly justified.

“Go and give Jared a bath while I catch my breath here,” he said in clipped tones as he walked away with the drinking glass in hand. Then, he sat down on the couch and took another graceful sip of water.

Anastasia gave him an incredulous look, but she proceeded to ignore him as she turned to give Jared a bath.

Ten minutes later, the little guy was dressed in pajamas, and he padded over to where Elliot was on the couch. Anastasia, on the other hand, was bringing in the laundry from the balcony when she saw this scene, and even she had to admit that Jared and Elliot shared a striking resemblance.

However, not even their striking resemblance could change the fact that they were not biologically related. Unfortunately for Jared, his father was a douchebag through and through.

Anastasia took a deep breath and said to her son, “I think it’s time for bed now, Jared. I need to talk to Mr. Presgrave about some work stuff.”

Jared blinked his large doe-eyes at her and asked, “Can I stay and listen?”

"No. This conversation is strictly adults-only, so you have to go into your room," she insisted. Then, she took on a semi-threatening tone as she added, "You wouldn't want me to drag you out of bed tomorrow if you wake up late, would you?"

It was only then that Jared clambered out of Elliot's arms and hurried into his bedroom. She went to tuck him in and turned on the air-conditioning. Then, she closed the door behind her as she left.

She glanced over at the man lounging on her couch and steeled herself for the conversation she was about to have with him.

Elliot seemed to have sensed this as well, for he appeared to be waiting to see what she wanted to talk to him about. Whatever it was, it definitely wasn't about work.

She poured out a cup of tea for him and set it down on the coffee table. Anastasia then looked at him solemnly as she said, "Elliot, we need to talk about whatever is going on between us right now."

"I'm listening." He would very much like to hear what she was thinking.

Anastasia sighed. "First of all, I'd like to thank you for all the help you've given to me and Jared. You're a good man, and you shouldn't have to waste your time taking care of us. Secondly, I want you to walk out of my and my son's life and leave us alone. I can tell that Jared is starting to grow attached to you, and I don't want whatever might happen between us to hurt a kid like him. Thirdly, I'd like to make it clear that ours is a strictly professional relationship, especially in the workplace where any dating or flirting is prohibited. Finally, I'm really grateful for all the help you've given to my father's company. I promise you that I'll find a way to repay your kindness."

Chapter 240

The implication behind such carefully-phrased and stoically-arranged words did not escape Elliot. Anastasia was asking him to walk out of her life entirely.

She never tried to see things from his point of view; instead, she tried to build wall after wall between them so that she could hide from the feelings they had for each other.

Presently, the chord in Anastasia's heart was wound taut, and it felt like something in her would snap at any given moment. She stared at him intently, her gaze tracing over his handsome features in hopes of finding even a flicker of emotion. Alas, the man was a champ when it came to putting on a poker face, for she couldn't see even the slightest shift in his expression.

"I'll agree to whatever you've proposed, but there's something I want you to do for me as well," Elliot finally said as he propped his elbows up on the back of the couch and leaned into the seat insouciantly. He had tipped his chin up at an almost haughty angle, revealing his flawless jawline. The elegant curve of his neck extended down to where his chiseled collarbone was partially obscured by his shirt lapel, and for some reason, he looked particularly alluring and dangerously seductive.

Anastasia couldn't help sneaking a few more glances at him. He wouldn't ask me to do anything crazy, would he? She decided to hear him out. "What is it? Just forewarning you, I might not be able to do whatever you want me to," she said.

"Oh, you'll certainly be able to," he said confidently.

She eyed him skeptically. "Let's hear it then."

He raised a brow as amusement and mischief glittered in his dark eyes. "Give me a kiss."

Shock rippled through her, and it was almost as if she was operating on instinct when she snapped, "No way!"

He didn't seem like he was going to force her into doing it, for he rose to his feet and drawled nonchalantly, "Fine. That just means I don't have to agree to anything you've asked me to do either. We can just let this will-they-won't-they trope go on for as long as it can!"

Panic filled her at the prospect of this, and she put out an arm to stop him. "Hey, you can't leave until we clear things up between us!"

"I've already made my part clear, but you refused to go along with it," Elliot pointed out unhappily. Is it so hard for her to kiss me? Will it shorten her lifespan or make her bleed a pint of blood or something?

Anastasia's thoughts were clamored. Bewildered as she was, she blurted out, "Are you serious? Will you really leave me alone if I just... kiss you?"

"You have my word," he promised as his lips curled into a roguish smirk. After all, there might still be a chance for him to turn things around.

She was so flustered that blood rushed to her face, and she pursed her lips as she fell into a furious debate with herself. The idea of kissing him was enough to plunge her into this unprecedented crisis. If she agreed to do this and kissed him, they would go back to being strangers; if she refused, their continued entanglement would only come with the risk of Hayley showing up with that male escort and threatening to wreck her and Jared's lives.

Putting a safe distance between herself and Elliot was clearly in her best interests at this point, and she wondered why she was even having a dilemma in the first place.

Anastasia was in such deep thought that she didn't even notice how Elliot's expression had soured. He could hardly believe that she would be so reluctant to kiss him, so much so that she appeared to be weighing out the pros and cons of it.

At long last, a clear and unwavering look flashed in her eyes, and she met his gaze as she agreed, "Alright. I'll kiss you, but you have to make good on your word. No take-backs."

He felt his amusement drain out of him in record time. She was only agreeing to kiss him so that he would leave her and her son alone. It was like playing a game of truth or dare, and the person who chose the latter would be rewarded with a million in cash prize if they followed through.

In this case, Elliot was getting kissed because it was a dare on her part, and she was getting her old life back in return.

Since he didn't want to back down so easily, he said, "You have five seconds. If you don't kiss me within that time frame, the deal's off the table."

Anastasia's heart dropped to her stomach. She had to crane her neck just to look up at him, and there was no way she could kiss him while he was standing at his full height!

"Let's go to my room," she suggested after considering the embarrassment that would come from having her son walk in on them while they were kissing in the living room.

Elliot narrowed his eyes and watched as she retreated into her bedroom. At that moment, he looked like a hungry wolf who had zoned in on a helpless bunny.

He went into the room after her, and she closed the door. She took a deep breath and said, "I can't kiss you while you're standing. You're too tall."

"It's not my fault you're short," he retorted wickedly.

"You..." She glowered at him, cursing him inwardly. "Do you still want me to kiss you or not?"

He smiled, and it looked like he had resumed his playful mood as he said in a husky, magnetic voice that sent tingles up her spine, "Of course I want you to kiss me." There was no hiding the excitement and love in his eyes.