

Too Far 301

Chapter 301

However, this was the exception that Elliot couldn't have no matter how much he wanted her...

After Anastasia came out of the office, she breathed a sigh of relief. She really didn't want to accept too much kindness from the man since she feared that she would not be able to repay him enough if she were to give herself up as collateral.

In order not to get to that place, she had to refuse wherever she could.

As expected, the regular meeting held at 3:00PM that day was to introduce the airborne designer, Aliona Dora, to the rest of the company. Despite Felicia making a formal introduction to the other workers, other than the male employees, the female ones were obviously lacking in enthusiasm as they welcomed her into the team. It was to be expected as beautiful women were naturally the enemies of other women. Furthermore, why would they be happy about having one more competitor whose strength they didn't know?

"Hi, everyone! My name is Aliona Dora. I graduated from a design institute in Flor, and I specialize in jewelry design. I look forward to working together." She herself did not expect the education she received from young would turn out to be one of her advantages in approaching Elliot.

Alice was visibly more irritated now that there was another person who joined via personal connections when she wasn't even done dealing with Anastasia.

Anastasia was also feeling the pressure. Bourgeois would soon be holding a grand jewelry show in the early spring of the new year and it was her chance to show her talents. She, too, wanted to have this opportunity to show what she was capable of.

"Alright, let's talk about the jewelry show in early spring," Felicia continued. "Since we have become one of the brands under QR, the jewelry show will be set up in the country. We must not miss this opportunity to show what we have in store during the show. The company will also provide utmost support to our designers to participate in the competition."

She then added calmly, "This is a show worth millions of dollars. It depends solely on your potential to win the race and be the one on top. I wish all of you the best of luck. The deadline will be at the end of this month."

After the meeting ended, Anastasia was in the middle of clearing the desk when Aliona came to greet her in a surprisingly friendly tone. "Hello, Miss Tillman. We met earlier in President Presgrave's office."

"It was my fault for interrupting." Anastasia smiled lightly.

Aliona pressed her lips together and replied with a smile as well, "No worries. We were done talking by then."

Anastasia thought that she shouldn't be too cold to the daughter of Elliot's father's friend, so she politely said, "Since we are colleagues now, I look forward to working together with you."

However, as soon as Anastasia left, Aliona's eyes immediately darkened. She only came to the company with one purpose in mind: she was going to become Elliot's woman and marry him. She was fully prepared to sacrifice anything and everything else to achieve the purpose. She was even willing to sacrifice herself to Elliot, give birth to his child, and use the child to legally obtain the right to the inheritance.

Riley had given her 2 years to get everything done. When the time came, Riley would get rid of Elliot and the entirety of the Presgrave Group would fall in the hands of Aliona and her child.

Aliona was a child Riley had adopted from an orphanage. He had spent a lot of money to raise her. Not only did she learn all the advanced etiquette, she also graduated from a prestigious school and she was fluent in 4 languages. At the same time, in order to hide from the Presgrave Family's investigation, Riley had made her a member of the Dora Family, and had presented her as Lucas' illegitimate daughter to Elliot.

Lucas was a close friend of Elliot's father and unfortunately had a weakness that Riley had gotten hold of. He was the puppet Riley was using through Aliona to take over Presgrave Group.

Since she wanted to repay Riley for raising her, Aliona listened to his words as though they were absolute. Her mission in life was to help her adoptive father regain the Presgrave Group.

And Anastasia was, undoubtedly, the biggest obstacle in her completion of the task.

She decided to first become good friends with Anastasia, and after she had gained her trust, Aliona would find an opportunity to let her disappear from Elliot's side.

Anastasia was sitting in the office since Felicia had asked her to solely focus on the upcoming jewelry show. The company was also putting great importance in the developing haute couture.

Not long after that, Grace pushed the door open from outside and she came in with a cup of coffee in her hand. "Here, Anastasia. This is for you," she said to Anastasia.

A frown began to appear on Anastasia's face as she looked at the coffee before she asked, "Who is this from?"

"Didn't you know? Miss Dora has gotten all of us coffee. The coffee beans are freshly ground!"

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Knowing that this was a common thing for the newbies to do to start off on the right foot with their colleagues, Anastasia gave a small 'oh' before she unhesitantly took the coffee and drank it.

"Anastasia, everyone is saying that Miss Dora is the president's relative. What do you think?" Grace came to her to pick up more gossip.

To her disappointment, Anastasia only shook her head with a laugh. "I am not sure about that."

Grace could only absent-mindedly blink as she mumbled, "You don't know as well, huh?"

Anastasia was not a busybody who would spread this kind of gossip. She wouldn't say a word even if Aliona was the daughter of Elliot's father's close friend.

“Stop your tittle-tattle and get back to work!” she urged Grace.

Anastasia’s female instinct was telling her that Aliona had come to Bourgeois for Elliot. Ah, she thought. Elliot has another suitor again.

The man had so many admirers that whoever ended up marrying him would definitely live a married life being constantly worried. Even if he had never approached women, there were a ton that would throw themselves at him.

It was at this moment when the landline in front of her started to ring. She then reached out to pick it up. “Hello?”

“I might not be able to pick up Jared with you this evening. I will go with you tomorrow.” He sounded apologetic as he informed her that in his low voice.

Anastasia immediately knew that Elliot had a prior date tonight and he wouldn’t be able to spend time to accompany her in picking her son up. “Don’t worry about it. I understand that you are a busy man, President Presgrave. You don’t have to worry about picking up Jared from now on,” she said politely.

He teased her again in his magnetic voice. “Are you angry?”

I definitely am not angry, she thought as she responded, “Why would I be? You think too much, President Presgrave.”

The man still added another explanation. “I have a dinner that I can’t say no to tonight.”

“You don’t have to explain yourself to me.” As soon as she finished saying that, she hung up the phone and left the office feeling slightly irritated. She went to the pantry to get herself a glass of lemon water, but just as she was about to look for a place to sit, she heard someone entering from the door.

Aliona had a leery old bird of an employee who also happened to be single sticking close to her side. “Miss Dora,” the man pestered. “Are you free tonight? Let’s have dinner together.”

She only turned with a polite smile as she rejected him. “My apologies as I have a date tonight.”

When he heard that, the man tried to speak in a roundabout manner to fish out more information. “Oh, so you have a boyfriend, Miss Dora.”

Her sharp gaze fell on Anastasia at that moment and she only smiled without giving a definite answer. “I am really sorry! I have dinner with someone really important to me.”

Anastasia automatically knew that she was talking about Elliot when she said that it was an important person.

The male colleague somewhat awkwardly laughed as he left and when he did, Aliona poured herself a cup of tea before she sat across Anastasia. “Anastasia,” she called out abruptly, “we have actually met before.”

“Oh? When was it?” Anastasia tried her best to recall but to no avail. It was impossible for her not to have any recollection at all if she had met such a beautiful woman before.

Aliona laughed gently. "It was during Old Madam Presgrave's birthday banquet. I also know about how you fell into the pool. I was there at the time. You really had me worried when you fell in!"

Anastasia's face turned pink when she heard that. Aliona had probably seen Elliot giving her CPR those few times if she was present at the banquet.

"I must have looked silly," Anastasia calmly replied.

"Anastasia, your relationship with President Presgrave must be quite good! I can see that he worries about you," Aliona probed. Even though she knew the truth behind Anastasia and Elliot's relationship, she tried her best to pretend like she didn't.

When Aliona said that, Anastasia immediately denied. "No, no. Our relationship is strictly professional. He is my boss and I am his subordinate. That is all."

She actually is denying having a personal relationship with Elliot? Aliona's heart skipped a beat. "Please take care of me since I am new here, Anastasia."

However, Anastasia unexpectedly comforted her, "Don't worry, I am sure President Presgrave will take very good care of you."

Aliona's thoughts immediately went haywire at that. Does she not feel the least bit jealous? Isn't she supposed to really like Elliot? Did Father's resources give us the wrong information?

Instead of continuing beating around the bush, she spoke bluntly, "Anastasia, do you like President Presgrave?"

Pfft! Anastasia choked on her glass of lemon water. After letting out a small cough to clear her throat, she nonchalantly explained, "We are merely a boss and his subordinate. Please don't misunderstand if you were to hear any rumor about this, Miss Dora. President Presgrave and I are innocent. There is nothing between us."

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Aliona was slightly caught off guard when Anastasia had denied it without even needing to give it a second thought and she couldn't help but wonder, Could it be that she really does not like Elliot? Does this mean she won't get in my way?

"I am sorry that I was being presumptuous," Aliona hurriedly apologized.

"It is fine." Anastasia smiled with pursed lips as she picked up her teacup. "I will be heading back to the office then."

Aliona's gaze seemed to darken as soon as Anastasia left the pantry. She wondered whether the reason Anastasia denied having a relationship with Elliot was because she was being careful or if she really didn't like the man.

Anyhow, no one could disrupt her plan. She admitted that Anastasia was a gorgeous woman, but Aliona was confident that she would be able to win over Elliot.

She was going to look her best during dinner tonight with Lucas and Elliot.

Anastasia had just returned to the office when the landline began to ring again.

Picking up the call, she spoke into the phone. "Hello?"

"Come up for a bit," Elliot's voice came through the other end of the call.

"It is almost time for me to get off from work."

"It is about work."

And of course, Anastasia wouldn't possibly believe him. "Let's talk tomorrow."

"Anastasia Tillman, can you please show your boss a little respect?" he grumpily huffed in reply.

However, she really didn't want to see him, so she insisted, "President Presgrave, just say what you want on the phone."

He stubbornly insisted, "We will talk in my office."

Anastasia already had a feeling that he wasn't going to talk about work, so naturally, she wouldn't fall into his trap.

"Forget it then." She hung up the call after throwing that out.

The look on the big boss' face in the president's office immediately fell when the call was dropped. His tall and lean figure swiftly stood up before he started taking big strides out of the office.

Anastasia was editing a few old drafts in her office when she clumsily dropped the documents in her hands. Then, she sucked a deep breath before she squatted down.

At this moment, she heard the sound of someone opening the office door. Thinking that it was Grace, she spoke from under the table. "Grace, help me to pick up these documents."

The person who had just come in didn't say anything in return and only reached down to help Anastasia with her request. It was only when Anastasia crawled out from under the desk that she had the surprise of her life.

Instead of Grace, it was Elliot standing there with some documents in his hands. There was a sour expression on his face as he tossed the papers on her desk. "Do you think this kind of sloppy work is acceptable?"

Anastasia knew that she probably deserved the scolding because she hadn't been in her best condition during work today. Like a dead mouse that felt no cold, she fearlessly challenged him, "Go ahead and cut my salary then!"

"You want a deduction on your meager salary? Do you plan on feeding Jared air?" He let out an annoyed puff.

Her eyebrows wiggled as she let out a bright laugh. "Then, maybe you should give me a raise!"

"You want a raise with the kind of attitude you are giving me?" Elliot was already being nice by not cutting her salary.

Suddenly realizing that he had come all the way to her office, Anastasia looked at him solemnly and asked, "Do you need me for something, President Presgrave?"

"Aliona's father has invited me for dinner. He seldom asks me out and he is my senior. I can't reject him," he started explaining without leaving out a single detail.

Anastasia froze for a moment with the only moving thing being her blinking eyelids. She couldn't really process the words she was hearing. Is this what he meant when he said he has something important to talk to me about? Why does he need to report this kind of thing to me? It is not like I am his wife!

"No need for that. Please go ahead with your busy schedule, President Presgrave." She was staring at him with serious eyes. "You don't have to go out of your way to worry about Jared and me in the future."

Elliot really didn't have to tell her. It was not like she would have minded, anyway.

"Umm... You don't have to tell me things like who you are having a meal with..." She let out an awkward smile as she pressed her lips together into a tight line.

"I just don't want you to misunderstand." His dark gaze was locked onto hers.

When Anastasia heard that, she smilingly replied, "What is there for me to misunderstand? To be honest, President Presgrave, I think you and Miss Dora look like you would suit each other. You can definitely consider her if you are in a hurry to marry someone."

She continued to ramble on in a serious manner when he didn't answer her. "Miss Dora is both beautiful and capable. She has a good background, and on top of that, she is your father's best friend's daughter! You would know her in and out. I honestly think that you can try dating her."

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Elliot's eyes gradually turned dark as he listened to Anastasia generously sending him off to another woman. With his arms crossed, he stared at her and asked, "Come again?"

She immediately lost her fighting spirit and began stammering, "I am only doing this for your own good! You need a woman, and coincidentally, Miss Dora fancies you—"

"I do need a woman," he unhurriedly interrupted, "but you are the only woman I want." He then slowly approached her and eventually came to a stop in front of her. "Hurry up and give yourself to me if you really care about me."

Anastasia unconsciously tensed up and she only let out an embarrassed laugh as she told him, "I hope you have a good time tonight."

However, he still looked rather unhappy.

As Elliot turned around to leave, he casually threw these words out: "I will come and look for you later".

"Oh, you don't have to—" She was just about to rebuke when he went out and had closed the door behind him.

She went to sit down in her chair. She was already not in the mood to work in the first place, but her head was not an absolute mess after her conversation with Elliot.

Right at this moment, her phone rang and she picked up the call after seeing that it was from Francis.
“Hello, Dad.”

“Do you have time tonight, Anastasia?”

“Yes! Is something the matter, Dad?”

“I want you to have dinner with Alex tonight. He has something to tell you about the company. You can leave little Jared with me.”

“Dad, did something happen to the company?” a worried Anastasia asked.

“Nothing is wrong. It is a date, then. Alex has booked a table at a restaurant. I will go to your place and keep Jared company tonight.”

Confused by the vague answer, she was about to say something again, but the call had already been hung up at the other end. She knew that her father had the intention to match her and Alex together. But isn't it more awkward the harder we try to force it? she thought with a sigh.

Anastasia received another call from Francis around 6.00PM when he informed that he was waiting to pick Jared up at the end of a street. When she saw him, she stopped her car and brought her son to her father.

Alex's car was parked nearby. After Anastasia had safely passed her son to his grandfather, Francis reassured her, “Leave Jared to me. You young guns can go ahead!”

“Dad, why don't we go together?”

“I want to spend some alone time with Jared. You both can go now! Let Alex talk to you about the company while you two have your dinner.”

Alex opened the door to the passenger seat and he invited her with a smile, “Miss Tillman, please hop on!”

Having no choice but to accept the arrangement, she said to Francis, “Dad, you can just find a place to have something to eat with Jared!”

“Okay, I got it.” The older man waved her off.

She started feeling somewhat self-conscious as she and Alex sat in the quiet car parked at the end of the street.

“Mr. Hunter,” she started. “Thank you for helping my father all this time.”

“Oh no, I am grateful that President Tillman recognizes and acknowledges my ability. That is why he lets me handle the company's businesses.” Alex's eyes were filled with anticipation and happiness. It seemed to be his and Anastasia's first time spending time alone together.

He had booked a table at an extremely romantic restaurant. Anastasia placed a few orders and Alex added a few others on top of that afterward. He noted how flawlessly beautiful she looked under the restaurant lights.

She had a subtle kind of beauty that made her comfortable to look at. His heart was pounding in his chest as he ate with her. He seemed to have fallen in love with her at first sight.

The only problem that stopped Alex from confessing his feelings was the difference in their statuses. Still, he couldn't hide the fiery emotions in his gaze as he looked at Anastasia.

"Miss Tillman, President Tillman has informed me that he wants to pass the company to you. You can ask me anything about the company if you need help understanding. I will go into detail about it with you."

"Dad is a healthy man. It still isn't time for me to take over the company. We don't have to rush into this." Alas, she still didn't have the confidence to handle her father's company.

"Miss Tillman, President Tillman hasn't been in his best condition ever since his hospitalization that time. I think he has hopes for you to start preparing to take over the company."

Anastasia immediately became worried when she heard his words. "Is that so? How has my father been?"

"The president has been to the hospital a few times these days. He has been complaining about a discomfort in his chest that makes him feel stuffy. The doctor has also told him to take it easy, Miss Tillman," Alex answered before he sighed. "Your father really needs you."

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Anastasia started blaming herself at that point. "It is my fault for neglecting Dad's health. Mr. Hunter, you have to let me know firsthand if something were to happen to my father."

"President Tillman didn't let me tell you because he didn't want you to worry." Alex had a hopeful glint in his eyes. "Miss Tillman, please be ready to take over the company within these 2 years!"

She was immediately slammed with an overwhelming pressure after hearing his words. Taking over and managing her father's company was something way out of her ability.

Alex's passionate gaze continued to stay on her. "I will do my best to assist you, though."

Then, he proceeded to tell her about the agenda of some of the company's events and she made sure to listen to his every word. There were a lot of things she didn't comprehend, but he patiently explained through it all and she also tried to understand it all with an open mind.

After the dinner, Alex walked beside her as they left the establishment. She was in a rush to return to her son and father. At this moment, her ringtone started going off. She could feel her heart skip a beat when she saw that it was a call from Elliot.

"Hello, President Presgrave. What is wrong?" she asked in a calm voice.

He didn't answer her and instead threw her an abrupt question. "Where are you?"

"I am at—"

"Watch out, Anastasia." Alex suddenly called out as he wrapped his arm around her shoulder to move her away from a swerving car.

She turned to look at him with grateful eyes, but the voice from the phone soon rang out again. "Who was the one talking next to you?"

As she wanted to pay full attention to her surroundings as she was walking on the road, she quickly answered, "I am hanging up, President Presgrave. I am going home now."

There was a hint of jealousy in Alex's eyes as he walked alongside Anastasia. In fact, he had intentionally made himself known to Elliot by speaking during the phone call. He wanted to sabotage the relationship that Anastasia and Elliot had between them.

At the same time, there was a handsome man standing in the corridor outside the private dining room of a high-end restaurant. He wore a gloomy expression as he stared at his phone. She must be on a date with a man, he thought in disappointment.

Then, Elliot went back into the dining room and apologized to the father and daughter, "Mr. Dora, Miss Dora, I am afraid I have to leave now to attend to an emergency. Let's have a meal together some other time."

"Elliot, are you not going to stay any longer?" Lucas glanced at him guiltily.

"No, Mr. Dora. We will talk next time." After saying that, Elliot took the suit he had taken off, gave them a polite nod and eventually left.

Aliona had a sexy silver evening gown on, but despite how beautiful and classy she looked, she noticed that Elliot's gaze had only fallen on her a number of times throughout the dinner.

She couldn't believe that this was all she received from him even with her level of charm.

"Could it be that he has seen through my cover?" She suddenly turned to look at Lucas. "Don't tell me that you betrayed Riley, Mr. Dora?"

A surprised Lucas quickly shook his head and sputtered, "How would I dare to betray him when my son's life is in his hands?"

Of course, she knew what it was about Lucas that Riley had a hold on. Lucas had a son who murdered someone abroad and the CCTV recording of the crime had somehow gotten into Riley's hands. There was no way Lucas would have the guts to betray Riley.

Aliona then raised her glass, and with a smile, she said, "I will be needing you to play matchmaker from now on, Mr. Dora."

"It has nothing to do with me whether or not you manage to take down Elliot and Presgrave Group. I don't want to get involved in a fight with the Presgraves. I only want my son to come back to me safely."

The glass in Lucas' hand was shaking as he spoke. He was now treading a tightrope, and he was not the one determining if he would stay on or fall.

He didn't wish for anything bad to happen to the Presgraves, but in the end, his son's life was what mattered most to him.

She swiftly pressed a button on her phone, and she pressed it to her ear. "Are you tailing him?"

"Miss Aliona, we are right behind."

She couldn't help but wonder what made Elliot suddenly decide to leave.

Anastasia was sitting in Alex's car now as he drove her home. What she hadn't realized was that there was a car heading in the same direction as her.

Elliot was in the backseat of his car as he loosened his necktie in an annoyed manner and barked at Rey driving the car, "Go faster."

Rey obediently floored the gas and he started to worry whether something had happened to Anastasia.

He stopped the car at the end of the street at her residential area, but Elliot only continued to sit in the car with an unreadable expression on his face. He seemed to be waiting for something to happen.

Alex's car finally arrived at the same place after a few minutes. He even came out of the car to open the car door for Anastasia, who in turn, gave him a grateful smile. "Thank you, Mr. Hunter."

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"Keep in touch, Miss Tillman. I will report to you about President Tillman's condition whenever I can."

"Alright. Thank you, Mr. Hunter," Anastasia said with a smile. "I will have to trouble you with this."

Alex then locked his car and offered, "Let me send you upstairs. I can also bring the president home from there as well."

She didn't have a reason to reject, so she and Alex started walking side by side to the entrance of the street. They looked good together as they walked the street illuminated by the streetlights.

Anastasia had not realized from the start till the end that there was a pair of eyes watching them from a black sedan parked aside and how it happened.

Rey glanced at Elliot through the rearview mirror and asked, "Are you not getting out of the car, President Presgrave?" He didn't know what his employer was waiting for.

Elliot squinted with eyes that seemed to be covered by a layer of ice. So, this is why she was sending me off to another woman so generously, he fumed. It turned out that she already had her eyes on another man and he was none other than the capable financial manager who worked for Francis.

Francis had always been training Alex to be the one assisting Anastasia to inherit the company. Apart from that, Francis had actually intended to have Alex marry into the Tillman Family.

So, has she accepted her father's arrangement? She would rather throw me aside and get together with Alex?

Elliot's thoughts were so tiring that he had to shut his eyes. It was the first time where he had felt this kind of mental exhaustion and instead of it being about work, his mental strain was caused by his inability to have the woman he loved. Am I still not doing enough? he sighed.

By the time Alex and Anastasia went up, Francis was at home like they had expected him to be. He had a relieved look on his face when he saw the two of them coming back from the date.

I will have to create more chances to get them together. 1 year should be enough before they get married. I can finally retire by then.

This was the first time Alex had visited Anastasia's abode. As he took in the comfortable environment, he couldn't help but think how beautiful life would be if he were to marry her.

"Alright now, Alex. We should leave. Jared has to go to school tomorrow!" Francis didn't want to further disturb his daughter's rest.

When she heard that, Anastasia quickly reminded Alex, "Mr. Hunter, please drive Dad home safely. Don't speed through traffic."

"Yes, Miss Tillman. Please don't worry about it."

Francis suddenly joined the conversation. "What is this 'Miss Tillman' nonsense? Don't be a stranger, Alex. Just call her Anastasia!"

"Okay." Alex smiled. "I will start calling you Anastasia then."

"Sure thing!" she replied in an easygoing manner.

She could finally let out a relieved breath after Francis and Alex left her place. Little Jared, who was behind her, had his cheeks puffed out as he grumbled, "Mommy, why did Grandpa ask you to go on a date with Uncle Alex? Don't you want Mr. Presgrave anymore?"

Anastasia stayed quiet for a while before explaining to the child, "It wasn't a date. We only went out to talk about Grandpa's company."

"Mr. Presgrave will get angry if he knows! I am sure he doesn't like it when you eat with the other misters other than him."

She immediately put a finger on Jared's lips. "Jared, you can't tell him, okay? Mr. Presgrave is a busy man. We shouldn't disturb him."

"Then, does Mommy like Uncle Alex or Mr. Presgrave?"

"I only like you," she answered in a singsong manner as she rubbed his fluffy head.

Her doorbell made a sound right this moment. Thinking that her father had left something behind, she unhesitantly reached out to open the door.

Unexpectedly, it was Elliot standing there with fury exuding out of him.

Her eyes went round as she wondered why he had come.

"You... Why are you here?" Anastasia asked, in which he mockingly answered, "Alex Hunter can come and I can't?"

She was even more surprised as she wondered how he knew that Alex had dropped by. Did he bump into Dad and Alex when he came up?"

"Mr. Presgrave, you are here!" A soft voice called out in surprise. Jared had always welcomed Elliot's presence.

His rage disappeared in that instant when he heard his name being called and with an equally gentle demeanor, he carried Jared in his arms and caressed the crown of the boy's head. "Did you miss me?" he asked.

"I did."

"How was your new school? We can change schools if you don't like it."

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"I really like it!" Jared answered.

Why isn't he at home resting? Anastasia quietly asked herself after seeing that it was already 9:40PM. I wonder why he came here.

Trying her best not to sound like she was chasing him off, she started, "It is late, President Presgrave. I need to give Jared a shower and he has to go to school tomorrow. You should go home and rest."

She could tell that Elliot wasn't having the best of mood today, and she knew better than to get on his nerves at a time like this.

"Jared, go take your bath. I will play with you when you are done." Then, he lowered the child back onto the floor and he went to take a seat on the couch.

Anastasia had no choice but to leave Elliot alone as she brought Jared to the bathroom. After the boy was all clean, he ran to the sofa again to play with the Rubik's Cube with Elliot.

Seeing that Elliot was keeping her son occupied, she went on to do some house chores until 10:00PM, which was the time that Jared had to go to bed.

"Jared, it is bedtime," she urged.

"But I still want to play."

"I will keep you company until you fall asleep." Instead, it was Elliot who spoke up as he carried the boy wearing the cartoon-printed pyjamas into the bedroom.

Anastasia was slightly stunned by his actions. Why is he sticking around and not going back to his own house?

At the same time, the people sitting in a car outside the building were reporting Elliot's whereabouts to Aliona. She knew that it was Anastasia's residential area as soon as she heard the name of the street.

Was she the reason Elliot left the dinner? Did she call him away on purpose? Why is she saying she doesn't like him on one hand and sabotaging my date on another?

Aliona was currently sitting in her condominium, her gaze painfully cold as the questions filled her mind. Anastasia is suicidal, isn't she? Anyone who gets in the way of Father's plans shall die.

It was 10:10PM when an exhausted Anastasia, who had done most of the chores, sat on the sofa with a glass of water in her hand.

She couldn't help but open her son's door where she saw that Jared was already asleep under the dim light. Elliot made a soft hushing voice to tell her to keep her voice down before he slowly got up and walked out of the room.

Anastasia stepped back to make way to him, and it was at this moment she received a text message on her phone. Startled, she took a look at it, only to see that it was a message from Alex. 'Anastasia, your dad is back home safely.'

'Thank you, Mr. Hunter.'

'Don't call me that. You can just call me Alex!'

Seeing the message, she politely replied to him with a short 'okay'.

She was extremely polite with Alex because she knew she would be relying on him a lot regarding matters of the company takeover.

Elliot suddenly snatched her phone out of her hand. Coincidentally, Alex sent another message over. As Elliot's icy gaze darted through the content of the new message, his expression immediately froze.

'Anastasia, I had a good time tonight. Thank you for giving me an amazing night.'

An amazing night? What did she do to make him feel so "amazing"?

Anastasia's eyebrows immediately furrowed and she hurriedly said, "Give me my phone."

The man who had easily physically overpowered her narrowed his eyes at her and questioned, "What were you doing with Alex?"

"We had dinner!" She was baffled after hearing his question. What else could they have possibly done together, if not having a meal together?

As Elliot still did not trust her words, he asked, "Only that?"

The text message seemed to have an underlying meaning to it.

"Elliot, stop messing around, and give me back my phone." Anastasia didn't want anyone to see her private messages.

A message suddenly came again. 'Goodnight, Anastasia. Sweet dreams. I will see you next time.'

He read the new message too and his thin lips curled up as he asked, "How did you get so intimate in just one night?"

"Give me my phone." Anastasia was serious now as she looked at him with unnerving eyes.

"If you want it," Elliot raised the phone above his head and retorted, "come and get it."

She knew better than to fall for a measly trick that men often used to fool women. "Never mind, then. When are you planning to leave?"

"I am not leaving tonight. I am staying overnight here," he haughtily declared with his arms crossed.

Anastasia was finally exasperated after hearing his words and she spat, "I don't have a bed for you."

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"I am fine with sleeping on the floor or the couch." Elliot insisted on staying no matter what since his mood today was terrible.

Anastasia couldn't help but glare at him. "Elliot Presgrave, there is a limit to being so shameless."

"I will stop if you tell me what you and Alex did." He threw his suspicion at her again.

He guessed that they had kissed, and he imagined how happy all the men who had kissed her must have felt when they had a taste of her soft and sweet lips.

Did she really kiss Alex? As though he had his belongings stolen from him, he started to feel miserable as he thought about it.

She marched to the front door before she turned to him and insisted, "Please go home!"

The man started striding toward her and she was about to heave a relieved sigh as she saw him making his way outside when he suddenly reached out with his long arm to turn off the light switch on the wall.

With a click, the brightly lit living room went dark in an instant.

The sudden dimming of the room made it difficult for her eyes to adjust. She let out a small yelp, but the next second, she was being pushed against the wall before a domineering kiss was pressed against her lips.

Everything had happened so fast that Anastasia could only suck a breath in just as the man took the chance to thrust his muscle into her hot cavern. Everything went out of control from that point on.

It frustrated her that she always seemed to fall for the traps Elliot had laid out. There seemed to always be a miscalculation on her part. She tried to pry him off her, but it was all futile when she was going against the man who was physically stronger than her.

As if he had been starved of her sweetness for a few centuries, he kept nibbling and biting her, leaving her completely defenseless against him.

She started pleading in a weak voice, "Elliot... Let go of me... Wait..."

He held her forehead in place and gasped in between labored breaths, "I can't wait anymore. You are the one who is making me do this, Anastasia."

Anastasia's own breathing had fallen out of pace as well and she pushed him away from her in anger. "You better stop," she warned.

"Tell me something." Elliot's aura made the air thick with pressure as he forced her to answer him. "Has Alex ever kissed you?"

"Kiss, my foot! We only had dinner together." She was still simmering with anger.

"How will you explain his messages, though?" Elliot recited the texts he had memorized at a glance. "What is this about a good time and you giving him an amazing night?"

Speaking to the stubborn man might have caused a vein in her head to erupt then. "We only ate food together."

"So, you guys haven't kissed?" It suddenly felt a lot less suffocating for him then.

Anastasia forcefully pushed him away. On top of the room being dimly lit, the pheromones coming off from him were making her head spin as she began to imagine things.

"Do you think I am as easy as you are?" She snappishly turned the lights back on.

At that instant, all she saw was the blinding lights and his fervent, clear gaze on her. He looked like a beast that was ready to devour her.

"I am only easy toward you," he said in a firm tone.

She was feeling so warm that she started breaking out in sweat and she quickly shoved him another time. "Quickly go home." Not wanting to bother herself with him any longer, she left to get herself a glass of water.

Elliot's voice suddenly rang out again. "I know that your father is trying to make the math out of you two. If a son-in-law is what your father wants, he should also consider me."

When Anastasia heard that, she whipped her head in his direction and asked in surprise, "What did you say?"

He looked her in the eyes and told her in all earnesty, "I am willing to marry into the Tillman Family."

She couldn't help but do a doubletake on his handsome face when she heard his words. "Did you hit your head on a door or something?"

"I am serious about it," he answered with a frown.

"No, that won't do," she immediately rejected. "You are too noble and rich. My dad won't allow you to change your last name. You better get that thought out of your head."

Anastasia felt somewhat heartbroken that a man like Elliot was suggesting something that didn't match his status.

"I have to be the one to marry into the Tillmans. No other man should stand a chance," he declared and left no room for negotiation. He wanted her more than anything. All the other men can piss off, he thought.

She had to swallow the lump in her throat as she looked at herself from head to toe. She really couldn't understand what it was about her that made the man speak such insane words. I didn't put a curse on him, did I? I am sure I didn't cast a spell on him either! Why does he want me so badly?!

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As she truly felt like she didn't deserve Elliot, Anastasia croaked, "Elliot, you don't have to lower yourself like this. You deserve a better woman in your life. Take Miss Dora for example."

"And let you and Alex be together? Do you think that I am not half as qualified as he is to be a member of the Tillmans?" he argued.

He was really going to get angry if she kept pushing him to another woman.

She was stiff with surprise when she heard the question. Since when did marrying into the woman's family become such a sought-after matter? she thought.

"Why don't you head back first, Elliot? It is late and you have to go to work tomorrow!" Anastasia really didn't want to stay with him a second longer.

When she noticed that he was not moving from his position, she could only approach Elliot and give him a push on his firm chest to start chasing him off. "Shoo. Shoo."

He looked down at the soft hands on his chest and he pouted as he hummed. "Don't even think of sending me away without giving me a good night kiss."

Anastasia's blood seemed to rush to her head then and she kissed him on his cheek. "Off you go!"

"Lips," the man curtly demanded.

In order to get Elliot to leave, she tiptoed and gently pecked him on his thin lips. "Are we done?"

With that, the man finally turned around and left through the door. It was like she had finally ended the war and breathed a sigh of relief as soon as she closed the door.

She thought about it, and she didn't understand what gave him the right to threaten him like this.

After Elliot returned to his car, he asked Rey with a depressed expression, "Rey, have you ever successfully pursued a woman? Care to share your experience with me?"

The assistant only turned his head in shame and muttered, "President Presgrave, I have never had a girlfriend."

Elliot halted for a few seconds after hearing his words and when he eventually spoke again, he asked, "You probably are too busy from the work that I have given you. Do you want to take a vacation?"

"There is no need for that, President Presgrave. I like doing my job." Rey was used to this kind of work intensity. Ever since he became Elliot's executive assistant, he had enjoyed the sense of achievement from doing his work.

Elliot eventually gave up on the conversation. As he looked at the neon lights outside the window, his mind was filled with Anastasia's stubborn face. It annoyed him how their relationship had remained stagnant for a long time.

"President Presgrave, are you troubled by your relationship with Miss Tillman? I have a suggestion. Maybe you can hear me out," Rey suggested.

"Let me hear about it." This was the exact problem that Elliot was worried about. Pursuing women was never something he was good at. In fact, he was never interested in women until he met Anastasia.

"President Presgrave, you have to also pay attention to your methods and strategies in pursuing women. For example, you have to take a step back in order to advance. You should give Miss Tillman some space in order for her to know what her heart wants." Although Rey had no experience in love whatsoever, he still knew a way or two to a woman's heart.

Now that he found Rey's words interesting, Elliot gave it some thought. He suddenly let out an evil smile as his mood improved since he knew exactly what to do now.

Alex had just left Tillman Residence and had only been on the road for a while when his phone started to ring. The caller ID showed Naomi's name, of whom he had saved in his phone before.

"Hello, Mrs. Tillman." He picked up the call without missing a beat.

She went straight to the point as soon as he picked up. "Alex! Can I trouble you with something? Erica is wasted in a bar. Please bring her back home for me."

"What? Miss Erica is drunk in a bar? That is not safe for her!" Alex immediately became concerned about her.

"Exactly! I am so worried about her! Is it inconvenient for you to pick her up?"

"No problem at all." The man then asked, "Which bar is she at?"

"I will send you the location. Her friend has just sent it to me."

"Alright. Rest assured, I will bring Miss Erica home."

"Okay, thank you!" Naomi then hung up the call.

Alex received a text with the location of the bar after a while and he made haste to the establishment.

Erica, who was sitting in her car outside the bar, was listening to her mother talk on the phone. She was extremely against her mother's plans for her. "Mom, do I really have to seduce Alex? He isn't even on my level!"

"Erica, listen to me. You have to get Alex back from Anastasia. Or else, you and I won't even be a part of your father's company."

Chapter 310

"Even if we get him on our side, what advantage can we have?" After all, Erica had not yet mastered the art of planning ahead at such a young age.

“Of course, having Alex in our hands is preferable to him assisting Anastasia. Since he’s coming over to look for you now, you should use this chance to pull him over. He will be our best chance to seize your father’s company’s shares.”

Biting her lips, Erica reluctantly replied, “Fine. I’ll make do with it.”

Half an hour later, after receiving Alex’s call, she pretended to be drunk and walked out in a drunken stupor. When she arrived at the bar’s entrance, she pretended to trip and immediately fell into Alex’s embrace, her hands hugging him at the same time.

“Mr. Hunter, thank you for picking me up! I’m feeling so dizzy!”

“Are you all right, Miss Erica?” he asked as he assisted her to her feet. Despite this, he absolutely had no other intentions on her.

After all, Anastasia was the woman he liked as well as the one who would eventually take over Tillman Constructions.

Erica sensed that he did not take any advantage of her in any way and she was dissatisfied. Am I not attractive enough?

“Can you send me to the nearest hotel, Mr. Hunter?”

“Miss Erica, I’ll send you home.”

“No, I’m not going home. I’ve already reserved a hotel room. Please send me there!” She decided to win him over tonight.

With that, Alex was left with no choice but to send her to the nearest hotel. Right after they entered the room, she again took the initiative to hug him, claiming to be dizzy.

“Miss Erica, please don’t behave in such a way.” The ambitious Alex was clear as to what he wanted and hence, he would not lose control here.

Furthermore, he already had Anastasia in his heart and Erica wasn’t attractive to him at all.

“Why, Mr. Hunter? Am I not pretty to you? Don’t you like me?” Erica said as her eyes squinted while her hands were around his waist. Her gaze was of a seductive one.

“I apologize, Miss Erica. I already have someone in my heart.” He pushed her away calmly, not wanting to offend her, but did not want to get too close to her either.

“Who’s that?” she asked, pouting her red lips and staring at him through blurry eyes. At the same time, she tried to lean in closer.

Alex answered right away, “Your sister, Anastasia.”

That immediately snapped Erica out of her drunken state. Her eyes filled with resentment as she snorted .

With eyes filled with resentment, she snorted. “You like her? In which way is she better than me?”

Alex grabbed such an opportunity to free himself from Erica's grasp. "I'm sorry. Have a good rest, Miss Erica." Right after he finished his words, he opened the door and left.

"Mr. Hunter..." Erica panicked and yelled, but he ignored her and left without hesitation.

Seeing that, she slumped onto the sofa in frustration. She had assumed that Alex would be easy to win over, but it turned out that he had already been captivated by Anastasia.

Then, Erica called her mother and told her what had just happened. Of course, Naomi would not reprimand Erica for being useless and instead told her that Anastasia was far more cunning than them, and that Anastasia had already bought over everyone around Francis. Despite this, she refused to let Erica give up.

If things really reached the point where Anastasia was going to take over the company, Naomi would undoubtedly use her own means to seize it. She would not allow Anastasia or Anastasia's son to gain such an advantage.

At night, while Jared was asleep, Anastasia sat in front of her desk in front of her bed and huddled under her coat to draw her design sketch. It was absolute silence outside the window with an immense sense of impending winter. On the other hand, in the silent cold night, her thoughts raced with all sorts of ideas and as a result, a drawing of scattered stars appeared on her sketch paper.

The necklace she had in mind, which she had now drawn on the sketch paper, was like the Milky Way as it was surrounded by shining stars that glistened in the dark sky. Thanks to her exceptional drawing skills, the design sketch was well-proportioned. She had created an entire set of jewelry based on the concept of a starry night within a short span of time.

She only returned to reality after she finished her last sketch and as she looked at it, she was overjoyed. Finally, the first sketch of her design for the upcoming competition was completed.

Anastasia was so tired that she hit the sack right after finishing her sketch.

The next morning.

Just when she was about to leave for her company after sending Jared, she received Francis' call.

"Hello, Dad."

"Drop by my company, Anastasia. There's an important meeting today that I want you to join too."

"What meeting is that?" she asked in surprise.