

Too Far 391

Chapter 391

Felicia had just come out of the washroom when she heard the noise. At that, she asked with a frown, "Who are you guys?"

"I'm George Walden, the director of Savill Jewelry Atelier. We suspect your employee has stolen one of our designer's work, and we have the right to pursue legal liability," the guy said confidently as though it did happen, and it was even dire.

No doubt they were merely causing a ruckus since something like this was normal between rival companies. At that, Felicia sneered and asked, "Where's your proof? Don't slander our employees for no reason, or we'll sue you for defamation."

"We definitely have proof, or why do you think we'd dare come to you? You have a designer named Anastasia Tillman, working under your company, don't you? She has submitted a sketch for next year's spring jewelry show, hasn't she? In reality, she stole my employee's masterpiece and claimed it as her own. We have the right to pursue her legal liability, so if you'll please have her come out."

Felicia couldn't help feeling shocked at that. Who knew that Anastasia would be caught up in a plagiarism scandal? How could this be, though?

"She's on leave right now. I can deal with this."

"Oh, we're not just holding her accountable. We're also suing Bourgeois for mismanagement," George announced arrogantly.

Clearly, they weren't going to quit until they heard the end of it.

"Alright, I'll contact my designer and have her come forward to clarify the incident." With that, Felicia went into her office and called Anastasia.

Anastasia happened to be at Tillman Constructions right then. The reports she was reading were giving her a headache, and she eased immediately upon hearing the ringtone. "Hey, Felicia."

"A director of another jewelry atelier has come to us saying that you allegedly plagiarized their employee's work, Anastasia. Are you free to come and deal with this?"

"What? Plagiarize? Me?" The news baffled Anastasia as there was no way she would ever do something like that!

"Yeah, they're even claiming that the piece you stole is the one you submitted to the jewelry show."

"Impossible! That's my own design and my own inspiration." Anastasia retorted.

"I believe you too. However, those guys won't leave until you come and verify it yourself. Can you rush over?"

"Sure, I'll be there in a second."

With that, Anastasia dashed to Bourgeois.

Back at Bourgeois, gossipers began crowding together. Alice was among them as she listened to their whispers about the incident. More than that, it delighted her when most of them were evidently mocking Anastasia.

“Goodness! They’ve even paid to be on the trending page.”

At that, someone read out the headline, saying, “Designer of a famous jewelry atelier shamelessly steals other’s work after running out of ideas. Evidence to prove.”

“Designer, Anastasia Tillman, of Bourgeois by QR is guilty of plagiarizing.”

Alice smiled as she listened to all that. Looks like Savill really wants to make a big deal out of this! Will Anastasia still have the nerve to stay in this industry?

At this point, Felicia ushered the people from Savill to wait in the conference room. After coming out, she deliberated whether to call Elliot, but in the end, she decided to wait until Anastasia had arrived before doing so.

After all, it was an inglorious issue for Anastasia.

As she dashed toward the lobby, the receptionists all shot her nasty looks. Clearly, everyone at Bourgeois had heard about her incident.

When Anastasia showed up in the office, the gossip stopped immediately, leaving only a mocking gaze staring at her.

“Here, Anastasia,” Felicia called out to her.

At that, Anastasia went into Felicia’s office. As soon as the door closed, Felicia looked at her gravely. “Anastasia, they’re making a big deal out of this. They are clearly planning to ruin Bourgeois’ reputation.”

Of course, Anastasia could understand Felicia’s worries. At that, she raised her hand and swore, “I swear that I’ve never stolen anyone’s work.”

“Alright, I trust you. Also, I haven’t told President Presgrave about this yet. You decide whether to inform him.”

“I want to meet these guys first.” An exasperated Anastasia wanted to set the record straight. How dare they accuse her of plagiarizing for no apparent reason.

Chapter 392

“Take it easy. I have a feeling they’ve come prepared, so we’d better not fall into their trap.” Felicia patted Anastasia’s shoulder.

After entering the conference room, Anastasia looked toward the five people sitting there. There were two lawyers, two Savill staff, and the director.

“Are you Anastasia Tillman, the person who stole my designer’s work?” George sneered as soon as he saw Anastasia.

At that, Anastasia stared coldly at him. “On what basis do you say that?”

“We have proof, of course. In fact, you replicated nearly the whole of my designer’s piece and submitted it to the show.”

“I know well if I’ve done so.” Anastasia continued to stare coldly at George, not intimidated at all.

Just then, one of them took out an iPad and opened the sketch before handing it to Anastasia. “Miss Tillman, why don’t you take a look at these two pieces first? One of them is our designer’s drawing and the other one is yours. They’re practically identical.”

Anastasia took the iPad with a frown and couldn’t help being stupefied upon seeing the sketches. They were indeed identical with only differences in a few details.

“This is my work. You guys stole it!” Anastasia retorted as she put the iPad down.

“We get that you’re not talented enough, Miss Tillman, and that you want to establish your reputation as a designer by plagiarizing my designer’s work,” George said with utter sympathy.

At that, Felicia stood up for Anastasia. “That’s where you’re wrong. Miss Tillman is our most talented designer, and she will never steal somebody’s work.”

“Naturally, we would gather all the evidence before coming to look for you. Firstly, this piece is from our chief designer, Jacqueline Sherman. Secondly, she released it earlier than you did. What’s more, the finished product was placed in our company’s display case last month. However, Miss Tillman submitted her sketch on the twelfth of this month. According to the timeline, she could’ve plagiarized the piece.”

“Impossible!” Anastasia held her breath, shocked that Savill had moved so quickly.

Felicia’s face turned slightly grim as well. She remembered that Anastasia had keyed her piece into the company’s system on the second of this month and submitted the sketch to the show a week ago. Hence, the timing was very unfavorable for Anastasia.

Nonetheless, she still trusted that Anastasia wouldn’t do something like this.

“Miss Tillman, Savill will not tolerate such behavior. You have two options—take down your piece, apologize to Savill publicly on behalf of Bourgeois, and compensate for our loss. Otherwise, we will pursue your legal liability for plagiarizing our work and demand compensation. Of course, you’d still have to apologize to us.”

George pressed on, and he even concluded that Anastasia was the thief.

At that, Felicia said, “We need to dig into this before giving you an answer. Why don’t you guys head back first?”

“Alright, seeing that we’re fellow traders, I’ll give you until 3.00PM tomorrow.” George added disdainfully, “How unfortunate for something like this to happen within the jewelry design industry.”

Anastasia was still baffled when the door closed behind her. How did Savill manage to display her work in advance?!

She was certain that was her design, for she had sketched it out with her own hands. In fact, that piece came to her when she sat alone until late at night under the starry sky.

How did she become the plagiarist?!

The true thief was Jacqueline!

Anastasia heard people gossiping about her the entire way back to her office. Some who long had a problem with her couldn't care less about offending her anymore.

"I thought she really was capable, but it turns out she got to her position by stealing other people's work."

"Well, isn't that the truth? Thanks to her, our company's reputation will be ruined."

"I swear, one rotten apple spoils the whole barrel."

Meanwhile, Alice entered Anastasia's office with a cup of coffee, gloating. "I thought you were something! Who knew that you only rose to fame with such shortcuts?!"

Chapter 393

Anastasia remained silent in her seat.

"I think it's best if you don't ask President Presgrave to save you, for it'll only make things worse. You'd better quickly apologize and compensate Savill to save our company from further losses," Alice reminded her.

Of course, she didn't want Elliot to be involved in this. Though she was confident that they wouldn't have anything on her, she didn't want to be panicky either.

"Why should I apologize when I never plagiarized in the first place? The one who should be apologizing is Savill." Anastasia looked up and stared coldly at Alice.

Alice hit the roof at that. "Are you going to keep acting stubborn, Anastasia? You've already become a joke in the jewelry design industry. Are you only going to apologize after you've ruined all of Bourgeois' reputation? I will not let you destroy the company's future!"

Anastasia's only option was to apologize.

Anastasia stood up in response and said firmly, "I will not apologize before I get to the bottom of this."

Alice couldn't help choking and snapped, "Just because President Presgrave likes you doesn't mean you can act lawlessly, you know. It's already embarrassing that you've plagiarized. Are you going to make a bigger deal out of this?!"

"I didn't plagiarize, so I won't apologize." One could tell from Anastasia's beautiful face that she wasn't about to compromise.

Alice was taken aback, for she had never seen someone as stubborn as Anastasia.

At that, she glared at Anastasia and uttered, "Well, I can't wait to see what your fate will be!"

Meanwhile, Felicia pondered over something as she stood in her office. Savill was coming at Anastasia with full force, putting her at a disadvantage. With that, she decided to give Elliot a call.

“Hello?” Elliot’s voice came from the other end of the line.

“President, there’s something you need to know.”

After hearing the whole story from Felicia, he asked concerningly, “What did she say?”

“Anastasia is sure that she didn’t plagiarize.”

“Alright, I’ll come over now.” With that, Elliot ended the call.

Bourgeois was still in the process of moving; since Elliot was at the Presgrave Group, he needed some time to get there.

Meanwhile, Grace brought a cup of tea for Anastasia while she sat in her office. “Anastasia, I believe you didn’t plagiarize. No matter what everyone else says, I believe you,” said Grace as she comforted her, feeling bad for the woman.

“Thanks, Grace.” Anastasia was grateful to have an assistant like Grace.

After Grace left, Anastasia propped her forehead, trying to figure out how the whole thing came to be.

She had finished her first draft on the tenth of last month, and Savill had already put the piece on their display by the end of last month. In other words, they had about twenty days in between amending and coming up with the finished product. If their workshop worked overtime on this piece of jewelry, it was indeed possible for them to launch it in about a fortnight at best.

However, the sketch had always been with her, so who could’ve handed it to Savill?

Someone had evidently leaked it, and it had already happened when she came up with the first draft.

However, who wanted her gone for good? A designer would no longer have a place in the industry if they were branded for plagiarizing. After all, it was just as bad as murder.

In the end, Anastasia determined that someone had stolen her sketch between the tenth and eighteenth of November.

Still, several people had come in and out of her office, and she needed more time to find out exactly who did it.

Then again, Savill wanted her to answer by 3.00PM the next day. They clearly didn’t want to give her time to investigate.

More than that, they were also being ruthless, dragging Bourgeois’ reputation down while suing her for plagiarism.

Bourgeois’ fame now had overshadowed many companies in the market and also garnered a high approval rate. Hence, no doubt fellow traders would want to bring down this strong competitor.

Anastasia was searching for her first draft when she heard someone pushing the door open. At that, she looked up and was surprised.

Elliot had come!

"Felicia told me about your situation." Elliot propped his hand on the desk and asked when he saw her searching for something, "What are you looking for?"

Chapter 394

After Anastasia finally found her first draft, she put it on her desk and said, "This is my first draft, but it can't be used as evidence to prove I didn't plagiarize."

The time and date the company assessed were based on when the piece was keyed into the system. Clearly, Savill had the upper hand in this.

"I believe you." Elliot looked at her with absolute trust.

Anastasia choked at that, and she smiled wryly. "Do you really have that much faith in me?"

"Who am I suppose to believe when I don't even believe in my woman?" Elliot's gaze was filled with resolution.

He got her a little stump, and she evaded his gaze. Nonetheless, his words had given her a confidence boost.

"Thanks. Now, I want to get to the bottom of this and see who leaked my sketch to Savill." With that, she looked down at her sketch.

This was one of her favorite sketches, but now, Savill claimed it as their own and even slandered her for it. How exasperating it was!

"Find that person, and I'll teach them a lesson for you." Elliot's face turned grim. That person probably had a death wish since they dared to touch his beloved woman.

Right as Anastasia looked up, he continued, "Also, Savill will have to pay a heavy price for slandering you."

Anastasia was rendered at a loss for words.

She had a feeling Savill would be facing their doom.

"Alright, tough guy. Let's investigate first!" Anastasia decided to check the office's surveillance footage before they did anything further.

The security didn't dare snub Anastasia's request, sending the footage of said time to her laptop. With that, Elliot and Felicia kept her company as they looked through it together.

Meanwhile, Alice couldn't help but begin to panic in her office. She hadn't expected Elliot to actually step in, and it got her seriously tensed.

Elliot was all-powerful, and he had very strong influences. What was more, he had a bunch of formidable lawyers. Even if Anastasia was sued, his lawyers would be able to win the case.

Since it had come to this, Anastasia definitely wouldn't put up with it. Right then, she sat in front of her laptop while she looked through the footage. She swore that she would find the culprit.

Elliot's heart ached as he sat next to her, watching her stare into the screen with her brows locked into a deep furrow, non-blinking. "Do you have any enemies in the office? Alternatively, is there anyone who wants to harm you?"

Two people immediately came to her mind—Alice and Aliona. These two were openly hostile toward her. However, she couldn't rule out the possibility of someone using her sketch to make money, or that Savill had planted a spy in Bourgeois.

"Hold on. We'll talk after I'm done watching the footage." Anastasia watched the surveillance footage frame by frame, fast-forwarding and rewinding from time to time.

"Why don't you get back to work, Director Evans? I'll keep her company." Elliot pulled a chair over and sat next to Anastasia. He decidedly ignored the important work in Presgrave Group, choosing to solve the incident with her instead.

"You should go back to work too! I can handle this myself." Anastasia didn't want to take up his time either.

"I'll watch with you." Elliot wasn't going anywhere. After all, nothing was more important than clearing her name now.

Anastasia's head spun from watching an hour of footage. Seeing that it was about time to pick Jared up, she turned to Elliot. "I might have to stay and watch the footage tonight. Can you please ask Nigel to pick Jared up and babysit him for the night?"

"Alright, I'll call him." With that, Elliot dialed Nigel's number.

Nigel was their number one nanny, and more than that, he was among the only few Anastasia trusted.

After hanging up, Elliot stayed by Anastasia's side with peace of mind, watching the surveillance footage with her. Meanwhile, Anastasia had been recording the time and person who came in and out of her office.

She didn't relax for a moment since she didn't want to falsely accuse the innocent, nor would she spare the culprit.

As Savill wanted an answer by the following afternoon, she had to look through all the footage and find the culprit by that night.

Now that Nigel was babysitting Jared, she could focus on work. Sometime later, Grace brought her a little pick-me-up. After taking a few sips of the coffee, Anastasia went back to staring at her laptop screen.

Chapter 395

"Do you want me to help you out?" Elliot wanted to take over for Anastasia.

"No, thanks." She had to inspect it herself.

"In that case, you should take a short break."

"I'm good." Anastasia's eyes were a little bloodshot, but she wasn't in the mood to take a break.

“You’ll wear your eyes out.” Elliot’s heart broke as he watched from the side.

“I have to finish watching it all.” At that, she forced herself to close her eyes and take a break. While she rubbed her temples, she suddenly felt a big, warm palm massaging her neck lightly. It felt super relaxing.

Meanwhile, Alice snuck a peek outside to find Elliot massaging Anastasia’s neck, causing her to feel jealous yet horrified.

She had clearly underestimated Anastasia and Elliot’s relationship. More than that, she feared that they’d discover her crimes.

After returning to her office, she unlocked her phone and grew nervous upon seeing the five hundred thousand transferred into her account earlier that day.

Anastasia returned to work after taking a short break. Meanwhile, Elliot took a sip from her coffee and suddenly thought of something. With that, he took his phone and headed out.

He didn’t affect her progress, but it didn’t mean he didn’t have other ways of investigating.

When he came back in, Anastasia was still fixing her eyes on the laptop screen. However, her brows suddenly locked into a deep furrow upon seeing someone coming out of her office.

Alice had stayed in her office for less than two minutes before coming out. However, when she left, she looked visibly guilt-ridden.

At that, Anastasia rewound and scrutinized Alice’s expression. Then, she saved this portion of the footage before continuing her search.

Time had unknowingly come to 7.00PM, and Anastasia already had two cups of coffee at this point. Meanwhile, Elliot never looked away from her this whole time either. He finally grabbed her hand when he saw that her eyes were bloodshot and that she was refusing dinner.

“Dinner first, and you can continue your search later.”

“I don’t want to eat.” She was stressed out since she was being accused of plagiarism.

At that, Elliot’s deep, domineering voice traveled to her ears. “You have to even if you don’t want to. If you’re worried that Savill won’t let you off the hook, then there’s no reason for you to fear at all. At worst, I’ll acquire them tomorrow, and your problem will be solved.”

“Alright, you win! We’ll eat at the restaurant across here,” Anastasia said, brushing her hair to the back.

While leaving Anastasia’s office hand in hand, Elliot had his bodyguards come up and guard the space, forbidding anyone from entering.

When Alice found out that Anastasia was staying back to investigate, she stayed as well. Right then, she was texting Jacqueline and telling her about Anastasia’s investigation progress.

‘You guys are sure you’ll win the lawsuit, right? You can’t drag me down with you.’

“My boss is confident. Rest assured!”

Naturally, Alice couldn't be assured, for she didn't mention one important fact to Jacqueline—Anastasia's relationship with Elliot. Savill only knew that Anastasia was one of Bourgeois' designers. What they didn't know was that she was also the girlfriend of Presgrave Group's CEO.

This time, Alice had a creeping sense of panic that Savill would be meeting their doom.

She thought she should pack up and leave the country. When she came out, she snuck a peek at the two bodyguards stationed in front of Anastasia's office, and it affirmed her decision to leave the country immediately.

In the restaurant, Anastasia didn't have much appetite despite the table of good food in front of her.

"Don't overthink stuff. If anything, I'll support you." With that, Elliot put some food on her plate, which she ate before saying with integrity, "I can support myself."

Financially independent women were the most confident, after all.

Following that, he pushed a bowl of bird's nest soup to her. "Finish this."

Anastasia suddenly had a feeling she was being force-fed by this man. However, she still did as she was told.

Elliot's phone beeped just then, and he checked it to find a text from Rey. 'President, I discovered that half a million was transferred to Alice Thompson's account at 2.00PM today. It was transferred from Savill Jewelry Atelier's public account.'

In response to that, he replied, 'Keep an eye on her.'

Chapter 396

After she was done drinking the bird's nest soup, Anastasia grabbed her bag and said to Elliot, "I'll head back to the office first."

There was no reason for Elliot to stay anyway. With that, they paid the bill and headed back to Bourgeois. When they arrived back in the office, those who were working overtime had all gone home by now.

Elliot followed Anastasia into her office lazily. Meanwhile, she removed her jacket, finding it a bother. The khaki-colored bodycon dress beneath it made her curves especially alluring underneath the lights.

With that, he sat across from her and admired her.

The bright lighting made the pair of eyes underneath her thick, long lashes as clear as crystals, and her delicate facial features made her palm-sized face exceptionally charming.

He grew more infatuated with her the more he looked.

How can there be a woman who matches my aesthetics so perfectly in this world?

They were practically formed according to his preferences, and she was a beauty from every angle.

Feeling tired, Anastasia decided to look away from her laptop only to find a certain someone staring at her with his chin propped.

Who knew how long he had been watching her like that. Underneath the lights, his eyes were like vortexes that sucked her in, and his pursed lips were laced with temptation beneath his tall nose.

Just then, Elliot curled his lips and smiled. "Found anything?"

"Not really." Anastasia leaned back and raised her head a little.

"Will you give me a reward if I help you find the culprit?" He asked out of the blue, seemingly confident.

Of course, Anastasia had never planned on relying on him. However, since he had suggested it, she agreed jokingly and said, "Sure!"

"That's a yes?"

"Yes, I'll give you a reward if you can find this culprit." I've watched the surveillance footage for hours, and I still haven't gotten anything. As if you'd be able to find the culprit.

Elliot smiled confidently and said, "Alright. It's a deal." With that, he closed her laptop. "Don't look anymore. I've already found the person."

The news got Anastasia stumped. "Who is it?!"

"I'll let you know tomorrow. Now, let's go home!" It pained Elliot to see her so exhausted.

"Tell me who it is!" Anastasia shot up from her seat, surprised.

He wasn't going to keep it from her anyway. With that, he explained, "I've asked Rey to retrieve all of Bourgeois' employees' recent bank transactions and found half a million transferred into Alice's account. The sender? Savill Jewelry Atelier's public account."

Anastasia's eyes widened at that. It was just as she had suspected! She thought Alice had been acting rather suspicious in the clip she had saved earlier.

"I knew it. I figured it was her." Anastasia slapped her desk in anger. "That wretched woman."

"I'll send you home now and deal with this tomorrow." Malice shot from Elliot's cold gaze as he swore, "I'll make them pay for what they did to you." These guys really had a death wish for messing with his woman.

Anastasia gave up checking the rest of the surveillance footage at this point, certain that the clip she saved could prove that Alice had been into her office.

It was already 8.30PM when they came out of Bourgeois. Just then, a gust of cold wind blew past, leading Anastasia to hug herself since she was feeling chilly.

At that, Elliot pulled her into his arms and wrapped her up in his suit jacket, causing her to blush slightly.

She was enveloped in his pleasant scent which invaded her senses.

Anastasia checked the time when they arrived at her home to find it was already 9.30PM, so she gave up on picking up Jared. However, someone began devising his schemes when she was about to get out of the car.

"Can I go in for some tea?" Elliot's true intentions were evident in his eyes.

"No." Anastasia rejected as she looked at him.

"I'm just going to drink some tea. I won't do anything else," he swore.

To that, she reminded, "President Presgrave, do you not realize you have lost all credibility with me?"

Then, he looked somewhat defeatedly at her. "You heartless woman. Go on, go home!"

After exiting the car, Anastasia watched him drive away before heading up to her apartment. Just then, what Alice had done to defame her popped into her head. She would have to solve this issue thoroughly.

Later at 3.00AM, Alice arrived at the international airport in a taxi, entering hurriedly with her suitcase. Meanwhile, one of Elliot's bodyguards received a call as he sat inside a black sedan not far from her.

Chapter 397

"There's no need to stop her. She won't be able to leave the country anyway." Rey's voice came from the other end of the line.

Alice had now become a wanted fugitive, so there was no way would she be able to get through airport security.

Currently, Alice was waiting in line. She had prepared to hide abroad with the five hundred thousand until all of this was over.

She had a feeling the whole of Savill would give her trouble, for she had brought them devastating disaster by pissing off Elliot.

Finally, it was Alice's turn. She handed the customs officer her documents, only to find them glancing at her. With that, she asked anxiously, "Is everything alright, sir?"

The customs officer returned her documents and announced, "I'm sorry, miss, but you've been banned from leaving the country. Please go back."

Blood drained from Alice's face upon hearing their words. "What?! How? What for? Why am I banned?!"

"Anyhow, you've been banned from leaving the country. As for the reason, I'm pretty sure you know it well!" The customs officer glanced impatiently at her.

Alice was genuinely freaking out now, but all she could do was leave the airport with her luggage. Am I still not able to escape when I've already moved so quickly?

With that, Alice got to public security through her friends and asked if she had committed some sort of crime. However, she still got no answers.

Anastasia came to work at 8.30AM, and just like the day before, her colleagues looked at her with mocking gazes as she entered Felicia's office.

"Did you find anything?" Felicia asked.

"It's Alice. Savill transferred half a million into her bank account. I also have a clip of her coming in and out of my office around that time."

Felicia sighed in response. "She's the mole? How disappointing."

Lo and behold, Alice didn't show up for work. Anastasia had been waiting for the people from Savill to show up at 3.00PM, but what came was even bigger news. Savill had been sued for bribing a Bourgeois employee, stealing a design sketch, being involved in violating Bourgeois' trade secrets, and even defamation.

The trending pages the day before were all about Savill prosecuting Bourgeois, but it was the other way around now.

Certainly, it was commercial warfare.

Felicia got a call just then, and she fell silent for a few seconds after answering it. Then, she looked toward Anastasia. "Alice has been arrested, and Savill's CEO will make an official apology."

"Elliot's behind this." Anastasia was surprised at how Elliot moved so quickly, for he had turned the tide in one night.

Did he stay up all night to deal with this? Anastasia thought.

When afternoon came, an even more shocking piece of news came. Savill's stock market crashed and even hit the limit at one point, causing it to be on the verge of bankruptcy. In other words, its several-billion worth of assets were turning into dust.

Savill had probably never expected their one mistake to cost them everything after taking legal action against a designer, and for that, they pissed off the mystery business magnate backing her.

All in all, the issue came to an end by that afternoon. Savill would be withdrawing from the jewelry-making industry, and their CEO even held a press conference himself to apologize to Anastasia, admitting they had stolen her sketch and even defamed her. For that, they would be compensating her with 1.8 million.

Everyone at Bourgeois watched the live stream, and when they heard the compensation amount, they all turned into green-eyed monsters. Not only had Anastasia recovered her reputation, but she would also be getting 1.8 million as compensation.

It sure was different having Elliot's support!

Meanwhile, Anastasia was also watching the press conference in her office. Of course, she was happy to get a whopping amount for nothing, but she also wished that something like this would never happen again.

After all, it seriously polluted the industry's culture.

When Anastasia took a trip to the pantry later on, everyone fawned on her wherever she went.

"Congratulations, Anastasia! We all know you were innocent."

"Yeah, why would Anastasia need to steal their work when she's so talented?"

Chapter 398

"Alice is just jealous of you."

Anastasia only laughed it off. Alice had it coming, and Savill brought their ending upon themselves. Though Elliot's move left them bankrupt, they didn't deserve any pity.

When she returned to her office, her phone rang. "Hello?"

"Let's celebrate tonight." Elliot's voice came from the other end of the line.

"Sure. My treat." Anastasia had to give him proper thanks.

Though she'd be leaving the jewelry-making industry and returning to help her father's business, he had retained her reputation for her. This would retain her footing if she ever returned to this industry.

"Nigel said that he'd babysit Jared. I'll be just us tonight," Elliot said.

"Okay, I'll make the reservation." She didn't have a problem with it either.

"I'd like a special thanks tonight," he reminded.

However, Anastasia didn't quite get him. "What kind of special thanks?"

"We'll see at the restaurant." Elliot acted all mysterious.

Seeing that it was already 4.30PM, Anastasia ended the call and picked a restaurant. Thanks to him, she got a whopping 1.8 million. She'd still obtain a million or so after tax, and it was only right that they had a fancy dinner that night.

Meanwhile, a plane took off from Hogland. Hayley smiled as she looked out to the evening sky, sitting in first class. She could finally go home.

Her eyes were still a little puffy under her sunglasses, but her face was no longer swelling, and with makeup, she was now a beauty.

Now that 'average' was no longer a part of her, she'd be every man's dream girl.

How she wished she could be in front of Elliot right now. She'd captivate him with her brand new self.

Back at home, Anastasia booked a private room for 6.30PM at a high-end restaurant to treat Elliot to dinner. While she was making the orders, all Elliot could care about was staring at her, for she looked drop-dead gorgeous and was in an excellent mood that night.

"Thanks for sticking up for me."

"It's what I should do. Anyone who dares hurt you will have to pay." No way would Elliot be merciful.

This time, Alice would be prosecuted for theft, selling trade secrets, as well as other crimes, sentencing her to at least five years of jail time. Savill, on the other hand, would have to compensate Bourgeois up to a hundred million for infringement apart from compensating Anastasia for her losses.

Elliot's team of lawyers were no slouches, and they could easily have the opposing side pay up every last bit of their assets.

“Can you attend a charity auction as my plus one tomorrow night?” Elliot asked out of the blue.

“Sure,” Anastasia agreed without hesitation. He had been a big help, so she shouldn’t say no to his requests so quickly.

It was a pleasant dinner, and Elliot enjoyed himself very much. It wasn’t until after Anastasia was done eating that she realized how beautiful the nightscape was outside the window. With that, she walked to the window and admired the music square outside.

Just then, a firm chest pressed onto her back, and Elliot circled her in his arms following that, causing her to tense up a little.

There was barely any space between them, and despite the layer of clothing, they could feel each other’s body heat. The last time they were this close was before Riley had kidnapped her.

“We’re done with the main course, but I still haven’t had my dessert!” Elliot’s deep, amorous voice traveled to her ear.

To that, Anastasia suggested, “Would you like me to order it for you?”

Elliot smiled at that. “You know well that you’re my dessert.”

No way was she going to become his dessert. Then again, he was hugging her too tightly, and she wouldn’t be able to escape anyway.

Meanwhile, her scent was intoxicating him, leading him to plant a kiss on her neck like he was truly savoring a dessert.

“Cut it out,” Anastasia warned.

This is a restaurant, for heaven’s sake!

However, Elliot knew that the servers here were well trained. They wouldn’t come in for no reason.

At that, he turned her around, forcing her to face him. However, she looked everywhere but his eyes, for an active man-eating beast lived within it.

On the other hand, Elliot stared at her, his fathomless gaze drifting from her eyes to her nose, landing on her lips at last.

Chapter 399

Her soft, red lips beckoned him, and instantly, his gaze turned unfathomable and dangerous.

Before Anastasia knew it, Elliot had already pressed her onto the window, kissing her. However, she held his waist as she shivered.

Heavens, she was acrophobic!

She couldn’t help freaking out with him pressing her back against the window.

However, her nervousness fueled his appetite. His possessive kiss tingled her senses, and it overwhelmed her.

She pinched his waist when she finally couldn't stand it anymore, for she was on the verge of breaking down.

Elliot could only release her then. "I-I have a fear of heights!" Anastasia said bashfully before grabbing her bag. "I'm going to pay the bill."

After exiting the restaurant, Anastasia said knowingly, "I still have to buy something. Why don't you head home first?"

Clearly, she didn't want him to send her home.

"What are you getting? I'll go with you." How could he leave her out here on her own when it was already this late?!

"I'm going to watch a movie with a friend." Anastasia checked the time to find it was a little over 8.00PM, and she'd be able to catch a movie.

"What friend?" Elliot knew her lifestyle and social circle better than she did, after all.

Knowing that her plan wasn't working, she held her forehead and admitted, "Alright, I'm not meeting a friend, nor am I going to buy anything. I just don't want you to send me home. Happy?"

Elliot smirked in response. "Are you really this afraid of me?"

Suddenly, Anastasia had the urge to watch a movie. Since she had to take care of Jared, it had been ages since she last went to a cinema. With that, she turned to Elliot. "Do you want to watch a movie?"

"Sure!" He was more than happy to do anything with her.

With that, the couple went to a mall nearby since Anastasia had already bought the tickets online. Elliot's tall and handsome figure was exceptionally eye-catching among the crowd. Some thought he was a celebrity, while others thought he was a model.

He would have people amazed on the first look and sinking on the second.

As the Presgraves had shielded him from the public eye since he was a child, it was normal for the average Joe not to know who he was.

When it was time to enter the movie theater, Anastasia handed Elliot a drink before they sat down and enjoyed a blockbuster.

Amidst the darkness, Elliot held her hand and interlaced their fingers, and whenever the movie cut to a salacious scene, he would even stare at her with a beaming and captivating gaze, for he dreamed of reenacting such scenes with her.

Anastasia's face flushed amidst the darkness, mortified. A certain someone wasn't just playing with her hand, but he was also rubbing her palm amorously.

Her face was bright red for the entire movie, and she had no clue what she had just watched. All she remembered were Elliot's every fidget.

Why did she suggest watching a movie?!

It was already 11.30PM by the time they left the cinema. Elliot wrapped his arms around her as they walked to his car parked in the parking lot outside. His tall stature acted as a windbreaker for her, shielding her from the cold winter wind.

After entering the car, Elliot said contentedly to Anastasia, "Let's go home!"

"Sure!" Anastasia nodded before pulling her phone out to check for any messages. Later, she flipped through the trending pages to find the news of Savill declaring bankruptcy everywhere. Alas, a domestic brand was gone just like that.

With that, she looked over at the man driving. The dark blue ambient lights inside the car brought out his nobility and otherworldliness. His slender fingers controlled the steering wheel elegantly, just like how he controlled the commercial world with ease.

"Am I a sight to behold?" Elliot smiled as he looked ahead, seeming as though he knew she was staring at him.

"Yeah!" Anastasia admitted.

"Would you like to have me? I'm very easy to get. You just have to reach out, and I'm all yours," he joked.

"I don't want to," she answered bashfully.

"Well, may I have you?" Elliot rephrased.

"No."

"It's freezing today. I can help warm your bed."

Anastasia chuckled as she looked out the window, amused. "Thanks, but no thanks. My heater is doing perfectly fine."

"You have to pay for heating, whereas I'm free of charge." Elliot tried to sell himself.

She turned to him in response, still chuckling. "I can still afford to pay for heating."

Chapter 400

At that, Elliot smiled with resignation. "Alright then!"

When he pulled over in front of Anastasia's apartment, he could only watch her get out and go home. Alas, it would be another lonely night.

Just then, his phone rang. He checked the caller ID to find it was Hayley, someone he hadn't been in contact with for about a month.

He had really forgotten all about her. "Hello?"

"Elliot, it's me. I'm back. I've missed you so much!"

"Nice to hear that you're back safely," Elliot answered perfunctorily.

"Are you available for a meal tomorrow?"

"I'm occupied tomorrow."

"How about the day after?"

"I have to work overtime this weekend."

"Well then... can I visit you next week?"

"Sure, we'll talk some other time. Goodnight." With that, Elliot ended the call.

Soon after, another call came in. It was Rey this time. With that, Elliot pressed the answer button on the steering wheel and drove away.

"President, I've got news from the Abyss Club. We've managed to trace the phone call to an address, but what's strange is that it's from Summit Mansion."

Elliot's brows furrowed lightly upon hearing Rey's news. "Isn't that the area where Hayley lives?"

"Yes, sir! It's exactly where you bought Miss Seymour's mansion. The number originated from that area."

"Can you get more information apart from that?"

"The number isn't registered, and the SIM card was sold illegally. Hence, we can only track where the call had come from. I'll check Summit Mansion's surveillance next. It's an upscale mansion community, after all. Surely there will be cameras everywhere. I'd like to find this guy."

"Sure! Go ahead!" Likewise, Elliot wanted to hunt down the person who had destroyed the server room.

He had to get to the bottom of this no matter what; he lost the truth to Anastasia's misfortune five years ago because of this person, and it hindered him from finding that b*stard.

Daniel showed up in Hayley's mansion two hours later, and his jaw dropped upon seeing the woman swirling a glass of red wine on the couch.

"Miss Seymour, you..." The fact that Hayley had undergone cosmetic surgery left Daniel gobsmacked, what more when she now looked somewhat like Anastasia.

"Am I pretty?" Hayley asked, smiling with a quirked brow.

"Yes. Yes, you are." He had to admit that her surgery was a total success.

However, he also knew everything she did was only to win Elliot's heart.

Hayley smiled contentedly when she saw Daniel's amazement for her in his eyes. "Do you think Elliot will like my face?"

Yes, the all-new Hayley Seymour was even more beautiful now, but Daniel still preferred how she looked initially, for this version of Hayley looked somewhat fake.

"Miss Seymour, why would you want to torture yourself like this?" His heart ached for her.

She must've experienced extreme pain and mustered all of her courage to look like this. Surely no ordinary person would have the guts to even reshape their skull.

"I can even give my life to get Elliot's attention, what more just by changing my face." Hayley's obsession with winning Elliot's heart had now evolved to a maddening degree.

Daniel said nothing more after that and brought her some food. At that, Hayley commanded, "Tell me what Elliot and Anastasia have done while I was away."

"I'm sure you know someone publicized President Presgrave and Miss Tillman's relationship."

The reminder rendered animosity to surge within Hayley. "Anastasia leaked those photos out on purpose. She wants to claim Elliot for herself."

"As far as I know, President Presgrave has been the one courting Miss Tillman, though," Daniel pointed out honestly.

Naturally, Hayley wouldn't believe this to be true, and she sneered at that. "They won't ever end up together in this lifetime."

Daniel didn't quite get what she was saying, but his gaze at her was now laced with passion. They had shared a few romantic nights, after all.

Too bad Hayley only saw her as something to warm her bed with, and he was practically non-existent to her.