

Too Far 441

[Chapter 441-450](#)

Hayley's hatred for Anastasia persisted even now, and the former believed that Anastasia was to blame for her current plight.

Christmas was around the corner, and Bourgeois Jewelry Atelier was preparing an event for the joyous season. Early in the morning, Felicia gave Anastasia a call.

"Hello?" Anastasia was still laying on the bed, unwilling to get up.

How cozy the bed was in the winter!

"Why? Are you that tired after last night?" Felicia joked indecently.

That stumped Anastasia. "What are you thinking of, Felicia?"

"What? Am I wrong? Is President Presgrave by your side now?"

"We haven't gotten there yet, Felicia!" Anastasia replied, burying herself in her blanket.

On the other end of the call, Felicia was surprised to hear that. "Oh my! You spend every day with him and have managed to keep your cool until now? Well, I admire you for that," Felicia teased. Then, she went straight to the point. "Do you have time to attend the annual celebration that Bourgeois Jewelry Atelier planned two weeks ago?"

"Oh? I would like to go." Anastasia was interested.

"Great! Ask President Presgrave if he has the time to attend as well. Vice-president Young requested me to confirm with you," Felicia said.

Larry Young was the atelier's boss for the outsiders. Anastasia rarely saw him, but she knew that he played a significant role in the atelier's success today.

"Okay, I'll ask him."

"It's quite a big celebration this time. We invited our spokesperson and singer too."

"Which singer will be there?"

"The more well-known ones will be Bobby Moore and Hendrix O'rion."

Anastasia was elated to hear that and she exclaimed with much anticipation, "I like Hendrix O'rion a lot!"

She was in a good mood after ending Felicia's call. The annual celebration was on this Friday, and she wanted to continue working as well although it was just two days before Christmas Eve. Design was her lifelong hobby; it was not merely her job, but her dream as well.

She hoped that her designs would one day be a treasure admired by many, just as an artist would wish for the most dazzling stage. That would give Anastasia an indescribable sense of accomplishment.

After getting up from the bed, she went to Jared's room, only to find that he wasn't there. At that point, she was embarrassed to learn that she had become even lazier than her own son.

She then went to the kitchen and saw a portion of breakfast that had been kept warm. After finishing it, she went to the garden and heard Jared's laughter from the lawn.

Walking in the direction of the sound, she noticed him kicking a ball with Elliot, who was dressed in a gray sports suit.

Elliot is the only one who can be this handsome even in a sports suit.

And his figure was absolutely superb.

Jared saw her coming and immediately demonstrated his kicking abilities. She smiled lovingly at him, her eyes full of praise, and gave him a thumbs up.

Elliot turned around and looked at her too. His black hair was in a messy state from the wind, but it made him appear younger.

She hesitated whether to look at him or Jared, but it was obvious that Jared was not as eye-catching as Elliot just then.

She felt sorry for her son. He was kicking the ball so hard that she could see it, but she was distracted by another man.

Jared, drenched in sweat, finally ran up to her and hugged her. "Mommy, am I skillful?"

"Yes. It's wonderful." She gave him a peck on his cheek.

Elliot walked toward them too, holding a towel in his hand. He then thoughtfully replaced the one on Jared's back. Such attentiveness moved Anastasia's heart, but she felt ashamed at the same time as she, being Jared's mother, was not as attentive to Jared.

Jared was like Elliot's biological son; each and every of the child's moves affected Elliot. Because he cared for Jared, he was always thinking about how to treat Jared better.

After changing his towel, Jared ran back out to the lawn again, whereas Elliot simply sat down beside Anastasia. Remembering the annual celebration, she asked, "It's Bourgeois Jewelry Atelier's annual celebration this Friday. Are you free to attend?"

Upon hearing that, he shook his head. "Larry informed me about this, but I have no time for it."

"I see." She nodded. "Then I'll go on my own."

Elliot had just turned his head to look at Jared, but upon hearing her words, he immediately turned and looked at her again. "You're going?"

"Felicia said there will be some good performances. I'm interested." At that point, Anastasia was already looking forward to seeing her favorite singer.

Elliot changed his mind and said in a deep tone, "Okay. I'll ask Rey to allocate some of my time then."

That startled Anastasia. "That's not necessary. Your work is more important."

“Work will never be more important than my girlfriend,” he replied casually. He initially refused to attend the annual celebration because the atelier was unimportant to him in the first place. That was just a jewelry brand he bought for fun.

In fact, Elliot acquired it to get closer to Anastasia.

His words gave her a warm feeling. Even the cold air surrounding her became warmer now. Pursing her lips, she smiled and said, “But I’m not planning to bring Jared along. Too many people will be there.”

“That’s great. If you don’t mind, I plan to send Jared to Grandma’s house. She had been nagging to see him.” Elliot looked at her, to which Anastasia nodded in agreement. “Send him there then!”

She did not mind it at all. She merely hoped that Jared would not be too mischievous and cause trouble for Harriet.

When they mentioned that to Jared, he happily agreed and asked, “Mommy, are you going on a date with Mr. Presgrave?”

‘No. We’re just attending a work event,” she explained.

However, Elliot did not go along with her. “You’re right, Jared. We are going on a date.”

“Enjoy your date then! I’ll be good.” Jared hoped that they could be together more than anyone else.

Seeing them both, Anastasia was rendered speechless.

Jared was still young, but he was preoccupied with adult issues.

There were still two days until Friday. The next morning, Anastasia received a call from Francis informing her that there would be a year-end inventory meeting in the afternoon and inviting her to attend.

Though it was still too early for her to take over Francis’ business, she was trying her best to become a qualified successor.

“I’m dropping by my dad’s company, so I’ll leave Jared to you,” she told Elliot.

Elliot had just woken up and his hair was still in a messy state. But not long later, Jared came down with the same hairstyle.

Anastasia couldn’t control her laughter when she saw that. Indeed, hair in the winter is uncontrollable.

“What are you laughing at?” Elliot asked while handing her a cup of milk.

“Both you and Jared really look alike sometimes,” she answered.

Hearing that, Elliot turned around to look at Jared and smiled. “This is our fate as father and son.”

Anastasia had no idea what to reply to that. Jared, on the other hand, hugged Elliot’s legs and asked, “Mr. Presgrave, when can I have such long legs as yours?”

He already had Elliot’s looks and now, he wanted to have Elliot’s long legs as well.

Elliot then put a cup of milk before him and answered, “You will have long legs if you eat more and drink more milk.”

That immediately prompted Jared to take the milk and said, "Okay. I will finish this!"

"Jared, I need to go to your grandpa's company later. Stay at home and listen to Mr. Presgrave, will you?"

"Sure! I can play with Mr. Presgrave then!"

"Don't. He is now working from home and has a large amount of work to complete. Don't bother him," Anastasia mentioned. In fact, Elliot chose to work from home because they were at home.

However, Elliot consoled Jared, "Don't worry. I will play with you."

When he heard that, Jared proudly raised his brows at Anastasia. The child looked exactly the same as Elliot while doing this, leaving her speechless.

She did not drive her car here and hence, she couldn't go out. It wasn't practical for someone to pick her up either.

In the end, Anastasia could only borrow a car from Elliot.

"Don't you have other cars which are not that eye-catching?" Standing in the basement garage, she was taken aback by the array of sports cars in front of her.

All of the cars were either cool, dark, or wild in color, making them completely unsuitable for her to drive.

"That suits you." Elliot pointed to a gray Ferrari.

Anastasia wasn't choosy, so she got into the driver's seat right away and adjusted the seat. Elliot couldn't help but to admire her from outside the window for a while before she left.

At the same time, Francis walked out from the Tillman Residence. Coincidentally, Erica returned from breakfast with Hayley and when she saw Francis, she asked, "Where are you going, Dad?"

"Of course I am going to work. There's a year-end inventory meeting today."

Just as he finished his words, Naomi approached them and said, "Go with your father, Erica. Year-end inventory meetings are very important, so join it and learn from your father."

With that, Erica had no other option but to say, "I'll go with you, Dad."

"You don't need to. Rest well at home."

"Dad, please let me go! You can leave first and I'll drive there on my own." She then looked towards Hayley and asked, "Hayley, do you want to visit my dad's company?"

"Sure. Let's go together!" Hayley figured that since she had nowhere else to go, she might as well check out Francis' company.

Chapter 442

Erica followed Francis shortly after he left, taking Hayley with her. Erica treated Hayley like a family member and talked to her about everything throughout the journey.

“My dad wanted to leave the company to Jared, Anastasia’s illegitimate son. Hmph, he’d better dream on! As long as my mum and I are around, we will never let that happen.”

“Of course! What rights does she have to take away what is yours for her son? Don’t let her do that, Erica.” Hayley encouraged Erica to fight for her share in Francis’ estate as well.

“That’s for sure.” Just after she ended her sentence, Erica stepped on the accelerator harder.

When they were near Francis’ company, a gray sports car dashed out from the other junction. Under the winter sun, the paint on the sports car shone brightly. It appeared exceptionally elegant and luxurious, with a commanding presence.

“Oh my! Who would drive such a car on the road? He’s got to be some wealthy young master!” Erica sighed. How wonderful it would be to meet someone like this.

Hayley looked at the car as well, thinking that in order to return to her previous extravagant lifestyle, she could use her pretty face to seduce some wealthy men.

And that included the man in the gray sports car in front of them now.

The sports car was obviously a popular style among men, so they both assumed the driver was a man.

“He just drove into my dad’s company. Perhaps he’s my dad’s client!” Erica couldn’t help but be ecstatic about it.

Hayley, on the other hand, had already begun to style her hair. She was dressed elegantly in clothes borrowed from Erica today and she looked stunning, at least for the time being.

Hence, she wondered if the man from the sports car would be attracted to her.

The sports car came to a halt and its engine stopped. Just as they were expecting a charming young prince to get down the car, they saw the car door open and Anastasia step out.

Meanwhile, Anastasia did not notice Erica’s car. After walking away for a few steps, she turned around and pressed the lock button on the keys. The lights of the sports car then flashed, resembling an elegant crouching cheetah.

Erica and Hayley exchanged jealous glances at that.

“That’s Anastasia? How did she get such a posh car?” The rage, envy and jealousy in Erica’s heart was about to explode.

Hayley, on the other hand, was well aware that Anastasia was Elliot’s precious now. Of course she can have whatever she desires!

Elliot would gladly buy her an entire shopping mall if Anastasia so desired.

After Erica parked her car, she noticed that Hayley was still spacing out. “Let’s get down, Hayley.”

In fact, that was what Hayley was thinking about—whether she should get down and face Anastasia. But then again, she had nothing to be afraid of.

Hence, she took her bag and alighted from the car.

Meanwhile, Anastasia bumped into Alex just as she reached Francis' office. When he saw her, a tinge of excitement flashed in his eyes and his heart started racing. She was, after all, the woman that he could not forget.

Even though he couldn't be with her, he couldn't help but be drawn to her every time she appeared.

"Hey, Anastasia. There you are! The meeting will be in conference room No. 3."

"Alright. Thank you." Anastasia nodded with a smile and walked into Francis' office after that.

Seeing that she was here, Francis took the documents and stood up. "Let's go."

Just when the both of them exited the office, Erica and Hayley appeared. When Anastasia saw Hayley, her gaze dimmed. Why is she here?

"Dad, I want to attend the meeting too." Erica then continued angrily, "Why did you inform her but not me?"

Chapter 443

However, Francis did not intend for Erica to come, so he muttered, "Don't make a scene here, Erica. Bring your friend to rest somewhere else!"

"Dad, you leave for the meeting first. I'll be there in a short while," Anastasia then said.

Francis had to oblige since the time for the meeting was approaching. "Come quickly," he hurried her before walking to the conference room.

After Francis left, Anastasia immediately stared coldly at Hayley and asked, "Why are you in my dad's company?"

"Erica brought me here," Hayley replied, her brows raised.

"That's right. I brought her here! Can't I even bring my friend here now?" Erica asked aggressively.

Being Erica's half-sister, Anastasia tried to kindly warn Erica, "Don't be with such a person in the future."

"Do you think you are better than me, Anastasia? What gives you the right to say that?" Anastasia's words enraged Hayley. She was in such a pathetic state now all because of this woman.

Anastasia only responded with a cold stare. "At the very least, unlike you, a dog that bites its owner, I have a conscience."

Hayley understood what she was hinting at. Gritting her teeth in rage, she replied, "You've no right to humiliate me, Anastasia. I merely did some foolish things."

"Elliot was gracious enough not to send you to jail. Otherwise, based on what you did, you will almost certainly be imprisoned for at least ten years" Anastasia stated solemnly. Even she, as an outsider, was enraged by what Hayley had done, let alone Elliot.

Meanwhile, Erica, who was standing beside them, did not understand their conversation.

But Hayley's face turned pale. "Stop pretending to be kind, Anastasia. You aren't fair to Erica as well since you wanted to take over your dad's company as your own."

Hayley began to incite conflict between Erica and Anastasia, intending to drag Erica into the battlefield.

Erica felt that what Hayley said was right too, so she immediately stared at Anastasia and said, "That's right. Why did Dad only inform you about the meeting and not me? You're the one who asked him to do so, right?"

Anastasia couldn't help but be concerned about Erica's naïve and gullible personality, as she knew how well Hayley exploited such people.

"I did not do so." After Anastasia finished her words, she walked to the conference room right away, without even sparing Hayley a second glance.

Chapter 444

Staring at her retreating figure, Erica turned around and looked at Hayley. "Why did she say you need to be imprisoned?"

"It's nothing." Hayley did not intend to explain it to Erica. "I understand your concerns now, Erica. It seems that your father indeed wants her to take over the company."

"The lounge is there, Hayley. You can wait for me there. I'll check out the situation in the conference room now."

"Sure thing." Hayley nodded as she watched Erica leaving for the conference room. She wasn't in a hurry anyway, so she roamed around the company.

As she stood beside the guardrails, reading the advertisement brochure on the wall, a man's hand was suddenly placed on her shoulder. "Why aren't you in the conference room yet, Anastasia?"

Feeling shocked, she turned around, startling the man behind her as well. Alex, too, was surprised to see this lady who looked like Anastasia.

Then, he realized that he had gotten the wrong person.

"I'm sorry. I mistook you for someone else," he apologized while staring at Hayley. She did resemble Anastasia, even though she lacked Anastasia's elegance when observed closely.

Hayley, on the other hand, recognised Alex as the finance manager Erica had mentioned, and she found him quite attractive.

"Hi, I'm Hayley Seymour, Erica's friend," she said.

"Erica's friend, you say? Hello, I'm Alex Hunter, and I work as the finance manager here at Tillman Constructions," Alex replied, his eyes still drawn to her face. She looks very much like Anastasia!

He initially almost mistook her for Anastasia. It was probably due to the fact that he fell in love with Anastasia at first sight, which resulted in him developing a good impression of Hayley, who now resembled Anastasia, when he met her.

When Hayley sensed his admiration in the eyes, something in her mind clicked. Therefore, with a pleasing smile, she asked, "Mr. Hunter, may I have your phone number? This way, it will be easier for me to ask questions related to finance in the future."

At first, Alex was stunned by the request but when he felt Hayley's enthusiasm for him, he was delighted and immediately took out his cell phone to exchange numbers with her.

"I have to attend a meeting now. You may come to me anytime if you have any questions, Miss Seymour." After saying that, Alex left with a gentle smile.

The corner of Hayley's mouth turned into a sinister smile as she watched the man leave. He is the right-hand man of Francis. Anastasia, the feud between us will not end in this life; either you die, or I die!

When Alex pushed open the door and entered the conference room, he noticed Anastasia was sitting next to Francis. Her head was lowered as she was reading the documents. Despite being right in front of him, she had an unapproachable atmosphere.

"Alex, over here!" Erica beckoned him over.

However, he responded, "Erica, I need to preside over the meeting. I will be sitting here."

After saying that, he sat beside Anastasia. Erica was not assigned a seat, so she could only sit in the back.

Erica felt an unpleasant and conflicted emotion in her heart as she witnessed this because she could tell that Alex was just seeking an opportunity to be closer to Anastasia.

Feeling jealous, she darted a resentful glance in Anastasia's direction. Throughout the previous month of dating Alex, she had unknowingly fallen in love with him. Except for not being wealthy enough, he had been treating her well in every way, making her feel pampered and indulged.

And that had added another charge on Anastasia—seducing Erica's man.

Chapter 445

Furthermore, Anastasia emanated the aura of a decision-maker. Currently, she sat next to her father dressed in a suit while looking like the future female president of Tillman Constructions.

All these realizations had intensified Erica's jealousy toward her.

In the lounge, Hayley was bored to death, but Alex's figure kept hovering in her mind. If she had not fallen to this level, she would never entertain a man of his status.

However, she could not afford to be fussy any longer. She just wanted to take advantage of her current face as much as she could.

Although Hayley felt sorry for Erica, she was also aware that Erica was taking advantage of Alex. So, Hayley could use the same way to seduce him and with that, she would have an extra hand when dealing with Anastasia in the future.

While Francis was sitting on the main seat, Anastasia was at the side to sign some internal company documents for him.

Alex's eyes were drawn by Anastasia's neat gesture of signing, which made him envious of Elliot. Why is he able to have her?

Without Elliot, he would undoubtedly pursue Anastasia with all his heart. However, with a man like Elliot in the picture, Alex didn't stand a chance at all.

Erica assumed she was here for a conference, but she wasn't prepared for the torture of watching Anastasia deal with documents by her father's side and Alex peering at Anastasia from time to time. Erica didn't even have the chance to speak, and she had nothing to do.

Just like a fool.

In the end, Erica could no longer bear it and thus, she found an opportunity to slip out. Then, she went to get Hayley before they left together.

"You should stay," Hayley advised Erica.

"What's the point? To see how Anastasia learns to manage my dad's company? Not to mention her seductive appearance. She knows nothing better than how to seduce a man! Even Alex was peeking at her several times!" Erica whined.

"Really? Your boyfriend was there as well? Then, Anastasia really has no sense," Hayley said as a smug expression flashed across her eyes.

Hayley thought of the way Alex looked at her. Even if she was aware that the stare was because he couldn't get Anastasia and it was why he was partly interested in her, she didn't care.

"Damn her. My father only has Anastasia in his eyes and never me. Hayley, let's go shopping and watch a movie!" Erica stated.

"Okay. I will follow whatever your plan is," Hayley replied. Deep down, she mused, I have got a lot of time these days.

While Erica complained about her father's negligence, all she could think about was having fun.

After the conference was over, Francis invited everyone to lunch and naturally, Anastasia would not go against her father's decision.

Anastasia's cell phone rang at around half-past eleven in the morning. She picked up the call as soon as she glanced at the phone screen. "Hello?" she answered with a cheerful tone, and her red lips curled up.

"Are you not coming home for lunch?" Elliot asked on the other end of the phone.

"Nope. I'll be having lunch with my dad and coworkers," Anastasia replied.

"Is Alex there too?" he asked, slightly annoyed.

"Is President Presgrave always doubtful of himself? Do you believe I'll have feelings for other men?" she responded in an amused tone.

"No talking to him, let alone physical contact," Elliot ordered overbearingly.

Okay, I'll try my best." Anastasia chuckled.

As soon as Elliot's furious sighing sound came through the phone, Anastasia immediately became serious. "Alright. I will do as you say, okay?" she comforted.

"Okay, I trust you." Elliot felt a sense of helplessness and he grumbled to himself, What else can I do other than trust her?

"Take care of Jared for me. I'll come home to cook dinner tonight," she remarked.

"You can leave Jared to me. Don't worry," he assured.

It was really relieving to have him taking care of Jared, so she giggled. "Okay. I'll accompany my dad to lunch now."

Alex, who was not far away, was staring at Anastasia's smiling face obsessively. Deep down, he knew that Elliot was the only man who could make her smile so brightly and charmingly.

When they arrived downstairs, Anastasia got into her father's car and set off. When they passed by the sports car in the parking lot, Francis couldn't help but glance at it a few times.

Similarly, as a car geek, Alex was also eyeing the sports car, as he knew it was the car which Anastasia drove today.

Meanwhile, at the Presgrave Residence, Jared was expectantly waiting for lunch to be ready as he watched Elliot working away in the kitchen.

Elliot knew the few dishes that Jared liked, so there he was, wearing an apron and learning to cook the dishes by watching and following the step-by-step instructions on the iPad.

However, even if he was a big shot in the business world, he was not a genius when it came to cooking. When Elliot finished cooking the chicken casserole, he realized that there was a layer of black paste underneath, which made it inedible.

Not giving up, he tried to stir fry some carrots, which was Jared's favorite, but the taste of the sauteed carrot wasn't right either.

In the end, after Young Master Elliot spent ages busy cooking in the kitchen, he came to a conclusion—he spent half an hour and cooked for nothing.

At first, he was so confident in taking care of Jared but now, his self-confidence had been hit hard.

As he was helplessly taking off his apron, Elliot noticed it was already 12.10 PM. Generally, Jared would be having his lunch by now.

"Let's go, Jared. I'll take you out to a nice lunch," he said. Although Elliot might not have the cooking talent, he possessed another superpower—money.

"Really? That's fantastic! But didn't you just cook, Mr. Presgrave?" Jared inquired innocently.

In the end, Elliot chose to go with the truth. "Ahem! It's not that good and we are not eating it."

"You still did a great job, Mr. Presgrave!" Jared had seen the man's hard work in cutting and washing those ingredients earlier. He had put effort into it, even if it didn't turn out well.

When Elliot heard Jared's compliment, his frustrated heart was healed instantly. He leaned down toward Jared and solemnly said, "Thank you!"

After that, Elliot couldn't help but cup Jared's cheek and kiss it, as the child was way too cute.

Normally, he wouldn't kiss Jared in front of Anastasia for fear of offending her. Now that she wasn't here, however, he could kiss Jared a few more times.

At this moment, Jared wrapped his arms around Elliot's neck and kissed him back on the cheek several times. "Mr. Presgrave, after Mr. Nigel, you are one of the few good men that I have ever met."

Elliot hummed, his heart filled with a warm sensation as he held Jared's hands and headed out.

Chapter 446

After Anastasia finished lunch, she followed Francis' car back to the company's parking lot. "Dad, I will be leaving now," she declared as soon as she stepped out of his car.

"Anastasia, will you come home for dinner on Christmas Eve?" Francis asked before she left.

Looking at her father's eyes which were filled with anticipation, Anastasia thought for a moment and said, "Sure. I'll bring Jared home for Christmas Eve."

Upon hearing that, Francis beamed. "Great! I will ask Naomi to prepare more food, especially some of Jared's favorites," he said with excitement.

Anastasia understood that her father only wanted the family to be harmonious, but certain things could not be changed; just as there is no way to eliminate Naomi and Erica's resentment of her.

As Anastasia drove out of the parking lot in her sports car, she came across Alex's car. He stopped and lowered the window to wave goodbye at her. Out of courtesy, she reciprocally lowered the window. Meanwhile, Alex's heart was completely captured by her.

Dressed in her suit and driving the gray sports car, Anastasia looked stunning and elegant.

"Anastasia, drive slowly," Alex said.

"I will. Thank you." After saying that, she stepped on the accelerator and left.

Anastasia drove home all the way without making any stops. As she noticed it was already 2 PM, she wondered what Elliot and Jared were doing after lunch.

When she reached, the gate system automatically verified Elliot's sports car and granted her entry. After she entered the password and walked into the hall, she could feel the absence of Elliot and Jared. However, just as Anastasia was about to head upstairs, she detected a burnt scent coming from the kitchen.

Shocked, she quickly put down her bag and dashed to the kitchen. However, the kitchen was clean and tidy, with some vegetables on the counter. She then noticed the burnt smell was coming from a cooking pot. Out of curiosity, she had a peek at it and she was both amused and moved.

Apparently, Elliot failed in cooking lunch for her son. Did he take Jared out to eat?

So, Anastasia took off her coat and started to clean up the kitchen. Every time she tidied up something, she could imagine Elliot working hard in the kitchen. As a pampered young master, it must have been difficult for him to learn how to cook.

Chapter 447

After she was done cleaning the kitchen, she sat in the hall and started reading the documents she brought back from the company. Managing a construction company was indeed challenging for her, but she would not back down.

She went through those documents and before long, it was already a little after 3 PM. She began to feel drowsy and she could barely keep her eyes open. Eventually, she lay down on the sofa and fell asleep.

Soon after, Elliot and Jared came home from lunch and he led Jared into the hall. As soon as they entered the hall, his sharp eyes spotted a sleeping Anastasia on the couch. Upon seeing that, he shushed Jared, who was standing beside him. Meanwhile, Jared got the hint and complied, staying silent.

It was winter now. Even if Anastasia was wearing a coat, she could still feel the cold. However, she was too tired to move. So, Elliot gestured to Jared, informing him that he was going to carry her upstairs to sleep.

While covering his mouth with his palm, Jared nodded with a grin. Then, he pointed upstairs, indicating that he would be spending time in the playroom.

Elliot nodded in response. After Jared went upstairs, Elliot sat beside Anastasia and felt her hands. It was cold to the touch.

Is she not afraid of catching a cold? Noticing the document that she was still holding in her hands, he could feel his lips curl up. Hmm. She is putting in a lot of effort. Then, he took the document from her hand, bent down and carried her in his arms.

Anastasia's face naturally rested against his chest. As if knowing that he was back, she didn't wake up and remained fast asleep.

As Elliot was carrying her upstairs, he originally thought of taking her back to her room. However, he changed his mind halfway through and headed to the main bedroom.

Sleeping on Elliot's huge gray bed, Anastasia curled up into a comfortable position and continued to sleep.

Seemingly infected by her sleepiness, Elliot began to feel a little sleepy too. He then lay down beside her, arms supporting his face as he stared at her. She was breathing evenly, and the corners of her mouth were curved up slightly.

On the other hand, Anastasia was fast asleep and she had no idea her profile was greatly admired by Elliot.

Chapter 448

His gaze gently traveled across her eyebrows and nose before settling on her slightly pursed red lips. The pink lips of hers exuded some kind of fatal attraction to him.

At first, Elliot was suppressing his desire, but because it was too hard to hold back, he gave in and leaned down, pecking her on her lips.

However, the soft touch made him want more.

Elliot's kiss awakened Anastasia. Her eyelids fluttered slightly and her eyes widened in the next second.

His face was so close to hers that he seemed to be about to take things to the next stage at any moment.

With a smile, Anastasia couldn't help but accuse him, "Do you consider yourself a gentleman if you take advantage of someone while they are sleeping?" Just as she was about to roll over and get out of bed, Elliot's long-arm domineeringly seized her. "You are running away after telling me off?" he asked.

"You took advantage of me first. Why can't I tell you off?" Her big bright eyes glowed, a cheeky look to them.

"Okay. If you truly want to argue over who is to blame for this, it's you. It's your fault that you look so alluring and seduced me." Elliot's ability to shirk responsibility was top-notch.

At that point, Anastasia was rendered speechless. She never knew that he could turn black into white with a few sentences.

"Alright, but it's not my fault that I looked this way. The fault lies in that I shouldn't have lingered at your house. I'll pack up my things with Jared and leave in a while," Anastasia retorted. She was nobody's fool.

As expected, she could see a trace of panic flash in Elliot's eyes. In the next second, he tightened his arm around her and ordered, "Don't go."

The smugness in Anastasia's eyes increased as she heard him. "Then who is at fault now?" she asked.

"I was wrong." He admitted honestly.

Suddenly, she felt pity for him. "Alright. I forgive you and I won't hold you accountable."

"Really?" After saying that, Elliot quickly sealed her red lips with a lingering and deep kiss, which made Anastasia unable to resist. In the end, she fell deep into it.

Elliot was a man who had such ability. Although he was domineering, she still willingly became his prey and even enjoyed it.

The kiss made the both of them pant. Glassy-eyed, Anastasia reached out and pushed him away as she said, "Stop messing around."

"I know you want it too." Elliot's deep eyes were filled with suffering and restraint.

She knew that there was nothing she could hide from him. She did enjoy the intimate time with him, but it was also accompanied by trauma.

"I'm cooking tonight. Take it as a token of appreciation for the meal you cooked for Jared in the afternoon," Anastasia said gratefully.

"It was unsuccessful," Elliot replied in frustration.

"It's okay. The fact that you're putting effort into it is highly appreciated." Anastasia smiled and added, "It's Jared's blessing."

After hearing that, Elliot lowered his head and kissed her between the brows, then rubbed the tip of his nose against hers.

"Do we need to say thank you between us?" he stated.

As Anastasia had turned her face to the side in an attempt to shake her head, Elliot's lips fell on her cheek. In return, she quickly cupped his face and kissed his cheek, as if to comfort this man who could only limit himself to kissing her.

"Well, it's time for me to cook now," she remarked.

She got up and left, and Elliot sighed as he lay on the bed. The heat and desire that had spread through his slender and sturdy body had no way to be unleashed.

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Chapter 449

At Tillman Residence, Erica was the only one that was paying for their expenditure after Hayley accompanied Erica shopping around. Since Erica wasn't a generous person, Hayley could feel that the woman was a little upset.

On the way home, Erica turned her head and asked tentatively, "Hayley, I'm going to meet my boyfriend tonight. Do you want to go home now?"

Hayley curved a smile and replied, "Sure. Just drop me off here. I'll get a taxi later."

"I'm sorry. Next time I'll treat you to dinner," Erica apologized. She had spent over ten thousand and even paid for the bag that Hayley chose today.

"It's okay. See you later." For the time being, Hayley didn't want to lose Erica as her friend.

As she watched Erica's car leave, Hayley's eyes flashed with mockery. If Erica knew that Hayley had lost everything, the former would not have been so patient with her.

The mockery in her eyes turned sinister, and Hayley took out her phone and dialed Alex's number.

"Hello? Miss Seymour?" Alex was a little surprised when he received her call.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Hunter. Have I disturbed you?" she asked innocently.

"Oh—not at all. Is something wrong?" he replied.

"Thing is, I have an interview tomorrow at a company and I would like to ask you for some professional advice about accounting," Hayley explained.

"Really? I can help you with this. Do you want to talk on the phone?" Alex asked.

"I'm free. I'll get you a coffee while we talk about it." Hayley took the initiative to ask Alex out.

"Alright. Where are you? I'll be right over!" Alex agreed without a second thought.

After Hayley sent her location to Alex, her eyes flashed with a smug expression. See that? Erica's man bites the bait easily. All thanks to my current face.

Then, Hayley spun around and walked into the shopping mall behind her. She found a cosmetics store and sat in front of the mirror, putting makeup on with a trial set. She used to learn how to do makeup, so it was easy to imitate a makeup look that was Anastasia-like.

After Hayley finished putting on the makeup, she looked at herself in the mirror. Her eyes resembled that of a predator, and Alex would be her prey tonight.

In the meantime, Erica called Alex when she was on the way home. She wanted to spend the night at his house tonight, but he declined, saying that he was working overtime and would not be home until late.

Hearing that, Erica could only believe him. What she did not know was that Alex was on his way to meet Hayley.

Half an hour later, Hayley, who had been waiting in the cafe for a while, saw Alex strolling in through the door. He was roughly 1.8 meters tall and dressed in a black down jacket. Although he is not as gorgeous as Elliot, he is nevertheless regarded as good-looking.

Alex's heartbeat quickened as he gazed at Hayley in the faint light. Her face alluded to Anastasia's beauty. It wasn't as bright and moving as Anastasia's, but it was somewhat alluring.

For him, Hayley's face was enough to make his heart flutter. However, he was always looking for Anastasia's traits in the woman currently before him.

"Miss Seymour, it's nice to see you again." Since Alex sat down in the chair, he couldn't take his eyes off her.

As expected, Hayley knew that he had a crush on her, so she propped her chin and inquired, "Won't Erica be jealous if I meet you, Mr. Hunter?"

"Of course not." Alex shook his head. "What were the questions that you wanted to ask me?" he continued.

"There's no rush. The night is still very long, and I'd like you to accompany me for a bit. Is that all right?" she queried.

"No problem!" He didn't mind spending time with Hayley.

After a long chat, Alex felt more pity for Hayley as he observed her delicate appearance.

Finally, it was getting late. At 10.30 PM, Hayley got up and claimed she was leaving, so Alex naturally decided to send her home.

As soon as they stepped out, the cold breeze blew on Hayley's face. Immediately, she yawned as her body shivered, and she leaned against Alex's body. In an instant, he removed his jacket and draped it over her body, then reached out his arms. Almost automatically, Hayley fell into his embrace.

"Mr. Hunter, you are such a gentleman," she praised him.

Alex's heart had been moved long before, without the need for her praise. He looked at the Anastasia-like face in his arms, picturing how lovely it would be if the woman in his arms was truly Anastasia.

"Let's get in the car." He then led Hayley to his car.

With the heater on in the car, Hayley took the opportunity to take off her jacket, revealing the sensual and low-cut lace dress underneath.

"Mr. Hunter, can I stay at your place for the night? I don't want to go home by myself. I'm afraid of being alone," Hayley asked as she looked at Alex with watery eyes, directly conveying her intentions.

His eyes lit up in surprise as he responded, "Okay. As long as you don't mind my bed, I'll take you home."

The two hit it off. At Alex's house, Hayley took the initiative and he did not refuse her. He muted his phone, which was on the couch, and the screen displayed Erica's incoming call. Unfortunately, the phone's owner was enjoying an intimate time with another woman.

On the other hand, Erica had been waiting at home for Alex to finish his work, but she couldn't get through to him, which made her a little distressed.

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Chapter 450

It was early in the morning and the weather was very pleasant. For the atelier, the annual celebration would be their most relaxing night of the year.

They had invited a few well-known singers and artists, as well as arranged a lottery session, all in order to make the event a grand one.

The current spokesperson of Bourgeois Jewelry Atelier was Cecilia Acre, who had several popular works. She had good endorsement ability and would be attending the event that night.

When Cecilia had just arrived at the studio to apply her makeup, her agent suddenly appeared and pulled her up to her feet. "Change your dress for tonight," the agent suggested.

"Didn't we already choose one? Why should we change it?" she asked in confusion.

"I just got the news that the big boss of the atelier, Young Master Elliot, will attend the event. Your evening gown is not grand enough, so I got you a high-end dress. Try it on right now."

"Oh!" Instantly, Cecilia's eyes lit up and she stomped her feet excitedly. "What? Will President Presgrave be present? Oh my god! It's so sudden, didn't President Presgrave say he won't be coming?" she inquired.

"I don't know why he suddenly changed his mind. In short, this is your chance, you can't miss it." Cecilia's agent gave her a wink. In the entertainment industry, if she could form a connection with a big shot like Elliot, it would lead her to a bright and promising future ahead.

"Hurry up and take me to choose the evening gown. Quickly now!" Cecilia couldn't wait to attend the event, and she wanted to present her most beautiful side to Elliot.

On the other hand, everyone in the atelier was slacking off now because they were all waiting for tonight's event.

Meanwhile, Aliona was also looking forward to meeting Elliot. Since the attempt to drug Elliot had failed, she had not had the courage to show up by Elliot's side. But after learning that he would attend the event, how could she possibly miss it?

Although she really wanted to perform her father's task, she couldn't do anything before she slept with Elliot and became pregnant with the heir of the Presgrave Family.

As a result, Aliona was looking for an opportunity to re-approach Elliot, and tonight's annual celebration was the perfect chance for her.

At about 10 AM, Elliot brought Anastasia and Jared back to the Presgrave Residence for lunch. Harriet, who had been discharged from the hospital and returned home, regained her spirits. To avoid irritating his grandmother, Elliot asked Jodie to keep Hayley's movements from the old madam.

Jodie even listed Hayley as a person who was forbidden to enter the house. Wherever Harriet went, Hayley would not be allowed to be there.

Harriet was ecstatic today since she had received a phone call from Elliot the night before. The Bourgeois Jewelry Atelier was holding its annual celebration that day. Elliot needed to accompany Anastasia to the event, so he would send Jared here for a day so that the old madam could look after Jared.

When Harriet thought of Jared, she thought of her own grandson, and she adored Jared with all her heart.

The main reason was that Jared looked almost identical to Elliot when he was a child. In short, he was adorable and charming.

Sitting in the hall, Jared looked left and right and he realized everyone was affectionately glancing at him, which made him feel less fearful and more secure now.

"Jared, come here to your great-grandma. I haven't seen you for some time, and I missed you dearly," Harriet said as she beckoned to him.

Encouraged by Anastasia, Jared walked cheerfully to Harriet's side. Just then, she took out a prepared gift and handed it to him. "Do you like it?" she asked.

When Jared realized that it was a remote control airplane, he nodded happily and responded, "I like it!"

After checking the time, Elliot looked at Harriet and said, "Grandma, I'll leave with Anastasia now, as we have to stop by at a boutique shop."

"Alright. Just go." She nodded as she said, "Leave Jared to me."

Without a doubt, Anastasia felt safe keeping her son here. After she advised Jared on a few things, she left with Elliot.

For some reason, Anastasia felt strangely pleased while sitting in the passenger seat, as if she was covertly dating Elliot behind Jared's back.

As soon as Elliot got in the car, Anastasia looked at her clothes and stated, "This is the attire I'm wearing to the event tonight. There is no need to change into an evening gown."

Elliot glanced at her with confusion after hearing what she said. "Do you not know that the dress code for tonight is formal?"

She was taken by surprise and replied, "Really? But Felicia didn't inform me!"

However, when she looked into Elliot's eyes, it didn't feel like he was lying. So, is everyone going to wear formal dress tonight?