

Too Far 481

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"It almost went deep into the bone, but luckily it didn't," Benedict remarked as he took a look at the medical scanner.

"Who did this to you?" Anastasia clenched her teeth in rage. First, Aliona kidnapped her son and then, she hurt Elliot. If Aliona was in front of her, Anastasia would kill her on the spot.

"It's fine. I just need to get some rest." Elliot reached out and took Anastasia's hand in his, his eyes filled with consolation.

He is the one who got hurt.

"Don't worry, Miss Tillman. President Presgrave is not as fragile as you think. He is someone who has traveled into the hinterland of the rainforest and returned alive." Benedict quickly chimed in. Then, he added, "It seems that the electronic chip that was implanted in your body is truly top-notch, as it remained intact after so many years."

Anastasia's heart tightened at that moment. Elliot has been implanted with an electronic chip?

When she turned to look at him, Elliot rolled up his sleeve and showed her the practically invisible scar on his forearm. "When Richard, Arthur, and I parted ten years ago, we all had a chip inserted. The other two will not stand by while one individual is in peril," he explained.

After he finished speaking, Elliot said helplessly, "Rey made a big deal out of it. Actually, there was no need to get them here."

In contrast, Anastasia felt that if Rey hadn't called for help, she would have been the first to collapse at that moment.

"I might not be able to see you now if it weren't for them." She was really grateful to Elliot's two buddies.

"So, you were extremely worried about me this time?" Elliot's eyes were filled with an affectionate smile, as if he had finally tested her feelings for him.

"Don't let me worry so much in the future, or I'll leave you directly, so I don't have to be on tenterhooks," Anastasia warned him gently.

This time was because he tried to save her son, so she forgave him.

"Okay." After that, Elliot bowed his head and looked at Benedict, who was still securing the gauze. Why isn't he done yet?

At this point, even Benedict was eager to finish the treatment, as he had had enough of the couple being lovey-dovey. Finally, he got up after securing the gauze and instructed, "Elliot, I'm leaving now. I'll return in three days to replace the dressing. Don't let the wound come into contact with water, and rest for a week. As for the next ten days... it's better to avoid any vigorous activity."

After saying so, Benedict cast a thoughtful glance towards Anastasia and the following second, he received a displeased warning from Elliot. "For the previous research funding, I think you should shoulder it by yourself," Elliot threatened.

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However, Benedict did not shy away from Elliot's threat. "This is what a doctor should do," he retorted. "If you still want your leg to function, take my advice."

After that, Benedict picked up his medicine box and left.

Anastasia pursed her lips, attempting to suppress a smile.

All right! Elliot is not allowed to mess around with me for the next ten days, which is fine by me.

Although Elliot could not really move his leg, his hands could. When he noticed Anastasia was giggling, he stretched out his long arm and in the next second, she was in his embrace. As she raised her head,

Elliot held her chin with one hand and wrapped his arms around her waist. Then, he bowed his head and kissed her.

Anastasia's cheek turned fiery red in response to Elliot's abrupt domineering moves.

His kiss was not overpowering, yet there was an aggressiveness between his lips and tongue that made her heart flutter.

If it wasn't for the injury, she felt that he would surely gobble her up.

Therefore, Dr. Palmer's warning actually served as a form of protection for me!

"When will you marry me?" Elliot's kiss fell on the corner of her mouth as he asked in a low and hoarse voice.

"At the very least, you must wait till your leg gets better. Could it be that you want to get married in a wheelchair?" Anastasia replied as she raised her brows.

"Then we will get engaged first." Elliot didn't want her to change her mind in the spur of the moment.

He wanted to let the whole world know that she belonged to him, and then wisely choose a good day to marry her.

Anastasia was stunned for a few seconds. "Do we need to get engaged in such a hurry?" she asked in confusion.

At that moment, Elliot bowed his head and gazed at her. Her petite face was gentle and charming under the light, and there was an inexplicable magical power that moved his heart, which made him want to declare ownership immediately.

"Yes," he answered with a deep and firm voice.

Suddenly, Anastasia had the feeling that she was under Elliot's control and could no longer escape.

"Okay. But we'll still have to wait until your leg gets better," she said.

"I'll let someone set up the venue first, and we will get engaged in two weeks. During this period, you can choose whatever clothes and jewelry you like." Elliot knew that women liked to arrange these things.

"Sure." Anastasia hummed in agreement. Elliot is a good choice. I don't think there is any need to be fussy anymore.

As Dad said, it is already a blessing for me to be able to marry although I have a child. If it's a good man, I should just go ahead and get married.

Elliot finally exhaled a sigh of relief after seeing how quickly she accepted his proposal, and he felt the joy of finally having caught his prey.

Therefore, he reckoned that the injury to his leg was worth it in exchange for a wife.

When Rey came in to report a work matter, Anastasia left the room and headed to Jared's room. "When will Mr. Presgrave's leg get better, Mommy?" Jared ran to her and asked when she entered the room.

"The doctor said it will heal in ten days. Don't worry," she consoled.

Suddenly, Jared wrapped his arms around Anastasia's neck. "Mommy, can Mr. Presgrave be my Daddy?" he asked pleadingly in her ear.

Anastasia felt pity for Jared as she listened to his plea, but she also felt like grinning. "Why?" she inquired.

"I really like him, Mommy. I feel like he is my Daddy," the child exclaimed.

Anastasia's heart sank when she heard that. But Elliot can never be Jared's biological father.

"Alright. Your mommy has decided to marry him. We will live together in the future, and he will be your Daddy, okay?" she promised him.

"Really? Yay! I have a father now!" Jared jumped up and down happily.

Anastasia's fearful emotions from last night slowly eased away and her mood lifted as she looked at her child's cheerful appearance.

Meanwhile, in Elliot's master bedroom, Rey was reporting on the handling of Aliona and her accomplice. "President Presgrave, Aliona's real name is Aliona Presgrave, and she was adopted by Riley Presgrave when she was young. Riley controlled Lucas' son abroad, and that's why Lucas has been helping him to hide Aliona's identity, allowing her to approach you."

As for Aliona's purpose for approaching him, Elliot was well aware that she wanted his heir to become Riley's puppet to control the Presgrave Group in the future.

"Let the lawyers do their jobs properly. I want these people to pay a heavy price." He clenched his fists, and his joints gave a crack.

"Yes. They have collected all the information and will never let them escape any charge," Rey responded.

“Get me a wedding planner tomorrow. I’m going to arrange an engagement dinner,” Elliot ordered in a low voice.

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Rey’s expression lit up instantly. “Congratulations, President Presgrave, on Miss Tillman’s and your engagement!”

President Presgrave has been pursuing Miss Tillman for more than half a year, and it is finally paying off. And to think I used to get so anxious about their relationship!

“Rey, if you meet the right person, tell me. Don’t delay your marriage because of work.” Elliot felt the happiness of having a lover, and he wanted to arrange a good marriage for Rey as well.

Rey immediately thanked the boss for his consideration, but he shook his head and said, “Thank you for caring about my marriage, President Presgrave. But I don’t have a partner yet.”

“After the first half of the year, I will give you a long vacation in the second half,” Elliot said.

“Thank you, President Presgrave.” Rey was grateful to have met such a good boss.

In the evening, Jared accompanied Elliot, and they played with the Rubik’s cube. Finally, Elliot had time to spend with Jared and he was very patient.

The main reason Anastasia would fall in love with Elliot was that she saw his love and concern for Jared. Only a man who loved her son could unlock her heart.

When she thought about getting engaged to Elliot after Christmas, she still felt a little nervous. I should talk to Dad in the next two days.

In the evening, Jared went to bed early. Anastasia had been staying up late, so she wanted to sleep immediately after putting her son to bed.

At this very moment, Anastasia received a text message on her cell phone. Reaching for her phone and glancing at it, she noticed that it was from Elliot, who was currently in the master bedroom.

‘Come to my room.’

When she strode toward his room and pushed open the door, Elliot was leaning against the headboard. “Sleep with me tonight,” he said as he patted the empty space next to him.

Anastasia pursed her lips and shook her head with a smile. “No,” she refused.

His eyes narrowed after hearing her refusal, and there was a warning look coming from them. “I can’t sleep without you by my side,” he continued.

She really didn’t know what to do with him. Just because he is hurt, doesn’t mean he can use it against me.

Alright, alright. He is allowed to do so tonight. Dr. Palmer already said that he can’t mess around anyway.

With that in mind, Anastasia walked to the other end of the bed, thereafter lifting the quilt and lying down.

At that instant, Elliot began to loathe his huge bed after seeing Anastasia sleep so far away from him. His leg was already making it difficult for him to move around, yet she still slept so far away on purpose.

"Come here," he demanded in a deep voice.

She turned sideways and looked at him with her beautiful black and bright eyes. "I'm sleeping on your bed. What more do you want?" she asked with a slightly coquettish tone.

Elliot could feel that she did it on purpose. When he was about to move his injured leg, however, she immediately stopped him. "Don't move."

He complied, but then he raised his head and ordered, "Come here then. Otherwise, I'll move to your side."

Without a choice, Anastasia could only move to his side a little more and stop a few inches away from him. However, it wasn't close enough for Elliot, so he stretched out his long arms and drew her closer as he murmured, "Sleep next to me."

In the end, she slept next to him. She shifted on her side and Elliot tugged her arm to wrap around his waist so she could hug him and sleep on the side of his uninjured leg.

"I'm so sleepy." Anastasia's sleepiness deepened when she felt his body temperature.

"Sleep, then." Elliot patted her shoulder as if he was coaxing a child. In truth, she did feel coaxed.

Before long, she closed her eyes and fell asleep in his arms, as did Elliot.

The night air was wet with heavy dew, but both their hearts were filled with warmth by being close together.

On the same night, Erica took the initiative to go over Alex's house. When Alex saw her coming to his door and offering herself readily, he was unreserved and slept with her. But, once finished, he made up an excuse and left. In fact, Heyley had summoned him to accompany her.

Despite the fact that Hayley was aware Erica was staying at Alex's house for the night, the former tried to prove her charm and snatch him from her side.

Moreover, Alex also preferred to stay with Haley. She had an Anastasia-like face and was willing to swallow her pride in front of him. In contrast, Erica would periodically throw tantrums like a child, which irritated him.

It was Christmas Eve the next day. Elliot met with the vice president of a wedding planner, and the company took over the engagement dinner extremely seriously and did not dare to be inattentive with the arrangements.

At around 3 PM, both parties finally reached an agreement, and the details would be carried out after Christmas.

As Anastasia stood in front of the floor-to-ceiling windows on the second floor watching the personnel from the wedding company leave, she took a deep breath and took out her phone to contact her father.

Before she said anything, Francis asked her, "Hello, Anastasia. Will you bring Jared home for Christmas tomorrow?"

On this day of reunion, every parent looked forward to their children returning home to be with them.

"Dad, I'll spend Christmas with Elliot's family tomorrow. Also, I have something to inform you," she said.

"What's the matter?" Francis inquired.

"Me and Elliot are getting engaged two weeks after Christmas," she stated.

Francis was seemingly surprised at the other end. "Really? You are getting engaged? Well, that's great!" he bubbled.

"Dad, when the time comes, could you please notify our relatives?" she requested.

"Sure, I will inform them, but I won't invite too many people. We are not too close with distant relatives, so I will only invite some close relatives to attend," Francis said excitedly.

"Sounds good," Anastasia agreed.

When Naomi went upstairs to the study after Francis hung up the phone, he couldn't help but announce, "There is one piece of good news, Naomi. Anastasia is getting engaged!"

"What? Who is she engaged to?" For a moment, Naomi did not know how to react.

"Who else could it be? Of course it's Elliot! They will be engaged two weeks after Christmas, and my daughter will finally marry." Francis' happiness was uncontrollable, especially now that he had such a wonderful son-in-law. His company would certainly expand further when it was handed over to Anastasia in the future.

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A trace of jealousy flashed in Naomi's eyes, but she couldn't show it on the surface. So, she smiled pretentiously and said, "Really? That's great! Anastasia is so lucky."

"I think so too." Francis nodded in agreement.

What he didn't realize was that when his wife turned around, her face turned frosty and anger flashed in her eyes. Francis loves Anastasia even more now because he can count on her for anything.

In his eyes, there is no Erica and me anymore!

Since Naomi and Francis got married, they had never been at one with each other. His heart was dedicated to home, and she only cared about herself and her daughter.

When Naomi went downstairs and headed out for a stroll, she couldn't help but call her daughter. At that time, Erica was out shopping with Hayley.

Erica had no idea that the person who had kept her alone at Alex's place the night before was her bestie currently standing next to her. Aside from that, the card that Hayley was holding in her hand was under Alex's name.

Unknowingly, Erica had shared a man with Hayley, yet she was still showing off how much Alex loved her and how generous he was to her in front of Hayley.

On the other hand, Hayley only smiled and said nothing. Erica didn't know that she was acting like a clown in front of her.

Upon hearing her phone ring, Erica took out her phone and picked up the call. "Hello, Mom. What's the matter?" she asked.

"Erica, Anastasia is getting engaged to Elliot," Naomi disclosed.

"What?" Erica's eyes widened in shock. "Anastasia is getting engaged? With Elliot?" she asked in disbelief.

Although it was only a matter of time, hearing this news still drove Erica insane with jealousy.

On the other hand, Hayley tightened her grip around the coffee cup as she stared at Erica. Those words were like a knife piercing through her heart.

After all, Anastasia is becoming Elliot's wife. It is as if God has given her the best of everything, and it is so unfair.

"Mom, are you sure?" Erica asked again.

"Anastasia was the one who called and told your father. How can I not be certain? I'm hoping it's a scam as well!" Naomi replied angrily at the other end.

After Erica hung up the call, she turned and noticed Hayley's ghastly expression. "Are you alright, Hayley? Anastasia is getting engaged to Elliot!"

"It's okay. She knew how to use tricks and schemes to seduce Elliot, but I'm not capable of any of that," Hayley said.

"What exactly did she mean last time? Why would she say that you are being swept out by the Presgrave Family—" However, Erica couldn't finish the sentence.

An icy look flashed across Hayley's gaze. "Anastasia framed me. She convinced everyone that I was planning to murder Old Madam Presgrave and everyone believed it, so I was misjudged by Elliot. Anastasia has taken everything that the Presgraves have given me. I hate her and I wish she was dead!" Hayley elaborated.

After hearing her side of the story, Erica was shocked and resentful. "What? Anastasia set you up that way? She really will go to any lengths to get Elliot, huh?" she chastised.

In Erica's heart, Anastasia was a vicious person, so she bought Hayley's story straight away.

"Therefore, you and your mother should be careful. Don't let her plot against you two," Hayley advised.

"Don't even mention that. Anastasia took over my father's company as her own and even drafted his will. My mother and I have no share of the company at all. The company solely belongs to her!" Erica sneered as she gritted her teeth in anger.

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"Anastasia is truly showing no mercy to you and your mother. She is not even giving a fraction of the company's property," Hayley stated, feigning sympathy for Erica.

At that point, Erica became angrier. "She can't wait to kill my mother and I!"

Upon hearing that, Hayley began to instil terror in the other woman. "Erica, she is Mrs. Presgrave now. If she finds an opportunity in the future, she will not let us go."

As expected, Hayley's comments had frightened Erica and the latter's expression shifted. As such, she turned to look at Hayley and asked, "What should we do? Are we going to be trampled under her feet for the rest of our lives?"

A scheming expression flashed across Hayley's eyes as she said, "It's best to keep Anastasia and Elliot from getting engaged."

"What idea do you have, Hayley?" Erica's mind was blank at the moment.

After having lost all her money, Hayley did not have much means left, but she couldn't just watch Anastasia and Elliot getting engaged either.

"Erica, let's head home first. Let me think of a way," Hayley stated.

"Okay, as long as you think of a way, I will definitely help you," Erica said innocently without knowing she was going to be taken advantage of by Hayley.

Hayley patted her in response and remarked, "Erica, Anastasia is our common enemy and we will deal with her together."

"Sure." Erica nodded vigorously.

Hayley's cell phone rang at that moment, and she stretched out with her hand to take a look at her phone. "Let me take this call," she said.

After that, she walked to the side and picked up the call. "Hello."

"Where are you? Let's have dinner together. I have reserved a restaurant for tonight." Alex's voice sounded from the other end of the line.

"Okay. Give me the address and I'll come over," she agreed readily.

"Who are you with?" he asked.

"With friends," she replied.

"Are you with Erica?" Alex sounded a little anxious at that.

Hayley comforted him, "Don't worry, she won't find out about our relationship."

"Don't tell her about us, Hayley. I have mentioned that she is the one who can assist me in claiming Tillman Constructions," Alex reminded her calmly.

"I understand." Hayley hummed in response. She realized that as long as she firmly held Alex's heart, she would also be able to enjoy the future equity of the Tillman Constructions that he would hold.

This could also be regarded as an indirect revenge against Anastasia.

"Your boyfriend?" Erica asked curiously as she looked at Hayley, who just hung up the phone.

"Just a friend," Hayley replied vaguely. "Let's go! Let's do more shopping!"

He was hosting two honored guests, Richard and Arthur that night in Elliot's villa.

The two of them arrived with some toys for Jared. Knowing that they were Elliot's good friends, Jared adored the duo very much.

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When Arthur and Richard glanced at Jared, they couldn't decide whether or not to tell Elliot because they were afraid he would be unhappy if they addressed it.

If they didn't say it aloud, they would feel uncomfortable suppressing it.

Jared is surely Elliot's biological son! The two of them had met Elliot when he was eight years old and had stayed together as friends and trained with him until he was sixteen. Elliot's childhood appearance was therefore vividly imprinted in their minds. That was why when they saw Jared, they felt as if they were looking at Elliot as a child.

Both of them look exactly the same!

However, on their way home, Arthur and Richard had learned that Anastasia's son had nothing to do with Elliot. Hence, it could only be said that the father and son were predestined to look alike.

"Jared, will you pay a visit to my house in the future?" Arthur asked with a smile.

"What do you do for a living, Mr. Weiss and Mr. Lloyd?" Jared inquired curiously as the two of them gave completely different feelings to him.

"I'm an idler. Him, on the other hand..." Arthur pointed at Richard and continued, "If anyone bullies you in the future, you can look for Mr. Lloyd. He likes punishing bad people the most."

Richard nodded seriously and concurred, "Yes, I can beat up bad guys."

"Okay. In the future, if there are bad guys that Mr. Presgrave can't deal with, I'll ask for your help," Jared said with a nod.

Arthur and Richard exchange a joyful glance after they heard Jared. It feels great to know that I am needed.

As soon as Jared left, Arthur immediately turned to face Richard. "Do they look alike?" he asked.

"Almost identical." Richard nodded in agreement.

Following their brief conversation, the two of them chased after Jared from behind as their affections for him grew even stronger.

"I'm wondering whether our child will be as handsome as Jared if and when the two of us have children in the future," Arthur pondered as he crossed his arms.

"That will be a few years later and I won't necessarily want to have children," Richard replied with certainty.

Arthur curled his lips and smiled. "Alright, then. Let's see who gets married later," he suggested.

"Are there any rewards?" Richard was showing interest.

"Yes. Whoever gets married late will give the other one million," Arthur responded.

"But I don't have any money!" Richard stated stingily.

Arthur was rendered speechless. The man who had the best equipment in the world had the nerve to constantly complain about being poor. It was obvious that he had finances that could never run out all his life, and yet Richard refused to buy him even one meal last night.

"Fine," he finally said. "Ten thousand. That is the lowest I can go."

"Deal."

The two adult men sat on the sofa as they made their very childish bet.

Elliot went downstairs in casual wear after a while. In order to make his walking easier, Benedict had gotten him a crutch out of nowhere. Elliot was extremely reluctant to use it at first, but he had no choice but to use it for the time being.

"Elliot, we have decided to leave only after your engagement party," Arthur declared.

Elliot sat down beside them. "None of you are allowed to leave until the engagement party is over."

Upon hearing that, Arthur asked with a curious expression on his face, "Elliot, how exactly does it feel like to fall in love with a woman? Why is it that I have met so many of them, but none seemed to have ever made my heart throb?"

"It is hard to put into words. You will know when you meet the one." Elliot wasn't good at explaining something like this as well.

All he knew was that there was no escaping when fate finally came. He himself was a prime example of it. He used to be repulsed when his grandmother tried to arrange his marriage for him, but now,

marrying the person he had pursued with all his heart felt like a wonderful dream.

Arthur noticed how Richard was sitting with his back as straight as a soldier, so he reached out and gave the man a pat on the back. "You can be at ease with us."

"It's a habit," Richard threw out before he leaned into the sofa.

After seeing him relax, Arthur turned to Elliot and told him, "Richard and I made a bet earlier. The one who gets married first will have to give the other person ten thousand."

"Do you have a limited budget? How about I sponsor ten million dollars?" Elliot thought that their gamble was too small for someone of their status.

"It is alright. It is only a small gamble!" Arthur said. "It is mainly because Richard is used to living so frugally that I am afraid he won't be able to take it."

"His money is usually spent on his swords and knives."

Arthur was slightly worried for his stoic friend then. "I wonder what is going to happen when he finds a woman he likes but continues to be such a stingy guy. The lady might not be able to take it."

Despite being teased, Richard remained calm and only peered at Arthur as he simply uttered, "I wouldn't want to trouble you to worry about me."

The trio seemed to have returned to the old days. Somewhere deep in their memories, they would never forget the time when they supported and took care of each other as they navigated their way through the dangerous rainforest. Those experiences were enough to make them appreciate the value of true friendship.

As Arthur and Richard left Elliot's villa around 9 PM, Arthur was suddenly in a good mood and he decided to take his friend to a place he had in mind. He proceeded to make the arrangements on the way.

"Richard!" he called out solemnly. "There is a place I want you to come with me. I need your help with something."

The stoic man didn't even need to think a second longer. "Okay," Richard said.

He wouldn't sit idly by when it was matters concerning his good friend.

Arthur then told his bodyguard to drive to the place where he stayed last night. He wasn't specific with his words, but the bodyguard immediately understood and began to drive in the direction of Starryfield, the bustling part of the city center. It was a place where the air even smelled like it had been perfumed.

This was the city that never slept. It was a place where all the high-end bars from around the world were located.

When Richard got out of the car and looked up to see that they had stopped at a bar, he frowned. "Why did you bring me here?"

"Someone bullied me while I was here yesterday, so I made an appointment for a fight with them. I planned to bring you here to even the score," Arthur obediently answered him.

Richard only looked at him with suspicious eyes. Arthur had always been the prankster and idealist among them ever since they were children.

"Look, are you going to help me or not?" Arthur lightly slapped him. "Are we not brothers?"

At last, Richard nodded and he chose to believe Arthur. Him standing so straight made him look out of place as they stood under the red and green lights of the bar.

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The two of them then walked into the lively hall of the bar. They could see that the nightlife had already started. The lighting in the bar gave the place an oddly sensual atmosphere now that it was around 10.30 PM. There were many girls dressed in fashionable clothes as they chatted amongst themselves in the dim room. The instant they noticed the two men walking in, their eyes glinted greedily like they were hunters looking at their prey.

The men weren't just any prey. They were quality, high-level ones. From the cold, complex aura they exuded, they were definitely at the top of the food chain.

"Hey sexy! That's my booth over there. Do you want to go over and have a seat?" A girl came over and boldly invited them.

When she wrapped her snake-like hand around Richard's arm, he immediately threw a cold and warning look at her, making her shrink back and shiver involuntarily.

The man had a terrifying glare.

Arthur couldn't help but tug at Richard when he saw that. "Don't be like that. You will scare them off."

"Hurry up and finish what you came here for. We are leaving after that." Richard felt very uncomfortable being in a place with an ambience he didn't like at all.

"Okay, fine. Let's go, then!"

After he finished his words, Arthur took him to the VIP room on the second floor. He then pointed to the private room at the end of the corridor and said, "The person who bullied me is in there. Hurry up and settle it for me."

Without saying a word, Richard took long strides in the direction Arthur had told him. He would only need a few minutes for him to win a fight against less than ten people.

He had just stepped into the private room when he saw a row of people sitting on the sofa.

However, instead of fighters, they were a bunch of scantily-clad women.

It took him less than a second to realize that he had been fooled again.

The door behind him was closed from the outside right at this moment. He heard Arthur's voice coming from the other side of the door the second it was closed. "Have fun, Richard! You don't have to thank me."

"Arthur Weiss, you better open the d*mn door!" Richard's distressed voice rang out.

Richard was the one who had arranged for the ten exquisitely beautiful women to come.

Their eyes widened in shock when they saw Richard standing there. What a handsome and stylish man!

The women couldn't help but be deeply attracted to the rugged, abstinent man. He was the type that they had never encountered before.

"Hey sexy!" One of them started sticking closer to him. "How about the few of us have a drink with you?"

"Don't come any closer!" Richard warned in a low voice. The air thick with perfume was already making him uncomfortable as it was. The women just had to wear clothes that had him instinctively look away from.

Richard's head was now filled with the sole purpose of catching Arthur and letting him have his fill of Richard's fists.

Arthur actually locked him in even though he knew how much Richard hated places like this.

Richard went and checked the doorknob, only to realize that it was a sturdy one. It might be difficult to get out if the door wasn't opened from the outside. He then noticed a big window facing the hall that was open. It looked like the perfect place to watch the performances outside.

"Baby boy, are you not satisfied with us?" A woman sweetly asked.

It had been a blow to their confidence when the man had not taken a good look at them ever since he came into the room.

Not only that, he looked like he couldn't wait to run out of the place as he glanced around the room and examined the doorknob.

"Don't be shy, handsome. We have received money to provide you with our service. You can do whatever you want to us!"

"That's right! We won't disappoint you."

Richard was currently standing beside the window. He couldn't hear a word the women behind him were chattering about when he was focused on finding out how he could escape from the window.

The distance from the window to the first floor was approximately three meters. It wouldn't be a problem for him if he were to jump out just like that, but he didn't want to injure other patrons of the bar. He could hang on to the wall lamp to slow down his descent.

Arthur was sitting at a booth in the hall when he lifted his gaze to find Richard's silhouette by the window on the second floor. His heart immediately thumped in fright. What is wrong with him?! Is he really going to jump?

Just as his thought drifted through Arthur's head, Richard tossed himself out the window and it only took him a few seconds before he smoothly landed on the first floor.

Someone had seen Richard's little stunt, but they couldn't get it past their head that there was someone who had really jumped from the window. All they saw then was a young man dressed in black from head to toe dusting off his palms before he walked away, his demeanor nonchalance.

Arthur was truly speechless as he looked on. He quickly stood up and called out to his friend, who was ready to leave any second now.

“Are you going to waste the 100 thousand I spent on this?” He let out a disapproving noise.

Richard turned to Arthur and rolled his eyes at him before he gave a grave warning, “Don’t play a joke like this anymore.”

Arthur no longer felt playful when his friend said that. All he wanted to do was make life more fun for his friend. He hadn’t at all expected Richard to be as unbreakable and stubborn as an iceberg.

“I am only doing this for your own good. You should appreciate my effort. You are a 27-year-old man who has never even held a woman’s hand! I am just worried about you. Look at Elliot. He is already engaged.” Arthur had a concerned expression on his face as he lectured Richard, who then suddenly grabbed him by his hand.

“You’d better leave with me. Stop hanging around places like this every day. There is nothing you can get out of doing this.”

Just like that, Arthur was then dragged away by Richard. A few women behind them let out a motherly smile at that instant. So all the high-quality men have boyfriends! And not only that, the boyfriend is the domineering, possessive type! The women began to muse at the sudden revelation.

Arthur would probably have broken down right there and then if he had known the thoughts running through the women’s heads when he was pulled away by Richard.

After they got to the carpark, Richard said to Arthur’s bodyguards, “Watch your young master properly from now on. Try not to come with him to places like his.”

“Understood, Young Master Lloyd,” they respectfully answered him.

Arthur dumbly blinked his eyes at that. It seemed like it was Richard’s turn to nag him this time around.

Richard’s subordinates soon drove a black SUV to pick him up, and after the vehicle speedily left, Arthur pursed his thin lips before he instructed his bodyguards, “Let’s head back to the hotel.”

His car was parked in front of the bar entrance. Right after his bodyguards had safely escorted him into the car, a woman with heavy makeup suddenly sprinted out of the bar and frantically looked left and right. Her eyes finally landed on the car whose door had just been opened and like a startled rabbit, she hopped right into the vehicle.

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The bodyguards couldn’t even react when the woman abruptly squeezed herself between Arthur’s thighs. He had just sat down then. The woman proceeded to hug his thigh and plead, “Sir, sir, I need your help. Can you please let me hide in your car for a short while? Someone is trying to kill me!”

Out of duty to take care of Arthur, the bodyguard completely disregarded the fact that he was going to manhandle a woman as he reached out his long arm and grabbed her by the front of her shirt. He started to drag her out, but the woman, refusing to leave, instantly wrapped her arms around Arthur’s neck.

“Just let me hide here for two minutes! I beg of you, I will only take a while.”

Not only was his neck forcefully clung onto, the arms that were around his neck were as thin as they were powerful. It almost felt like she was trying to murder him instead of ask for his help. Arthur then started pushing her away from him too.

However, the woman seemed to have the strength of a lioness as she grabbed onto him even tighter. She even started yelling at this point. “I will only hide for a little while! Please! I beg of you!”

Seeing her nearly choking Arthur, the bodyguard immediately let go of his hold on her. “Who the hell are you? You better get out right this instant,” he growled in a threatening tone.

Arthur wasn’t breathing smoothly because of the woman’s hold on him, but it only got worse when he accidentally breathed in her thick perfume.

He couldn’t help but wonder just what kind of taste the woman had to be wearing such a cheap-smelling perfume.

However, he couldn’t tell what her face looked like underneath all that makeup. All he knew was how dramatic a person she was.

The woman took a peek outside, and when she saw a few men running past the car, she finally heaved a sigh of relief as she let go of Arthur. She even looked apologetic as she sputtered, “I am sorry! I am so, so sorry! Are you alright, sir?!”

Instead of replying to her, the man only harshly told her off. He didn’t want to see her a second longer if he could.

She was frozen for a few seconds upon hearing his voice. As she looked at him under the dim lights, she caught sight of the cold yet extremely beautiful face of the man. He looked like an artwork that had come to life.

She was in the middle of her daydreaming when the strong grip of the bodyguard held her by the back of the neck. “Ah!” she yelped as she landed heavily on the ground after she was thrown out of the car.

The woman felt as though something was ripping her hair out. It was so painful that it wouldn’t surprise her if her scalp had torn apart and started bleeding at some point. Arthur’s bodyguard then took the chance to drive the sedan away.

“Ouch! It hurts,” she mumbled to herself as she rubbed at the sore spot. She brushed her fingers through her thick and wavy hair, and when she reached out to see what was in her hand, she noticed something dangling by the end of her hair that had been fixed in place by an insane amount of hairspray.

She could tell that it was a round gemstone under the dim light. The stone, which was as long as the little finger, had a bundle of golden thread shaped into a dragon embedded around it. It looked like it had been meticulously handcrafted.

“Hey! You dropped something! Hey—” She immediately got back on her feet and chased after the black sedan that was getting further by the second. However, despite her running after the vehicle for about 100 meters, the sedan still got away and it showed no signs of stopping.

The woman panted, her long hair a mess. "D*mn it! Why are they so fast?"

Right at this moment, six men came from behind and surrounded her. Her eyelids were thick with eyeshadow, but her pair of eyes that were as clear as water showed a hint of resignation.

She was finally caught again.

"Young Miss, the Old Master said that he will freeze all your credit cards if you were to spend money here at the bar again."

"I got it, Uncle G," she muttered as she bit her lip. She was holding herself back from saying more.

"It is dangerous for you to come out alone, Young Miss."

Upon hearing that, she started to complain, "I can't even experience life for a moment?"

Her driver didn't reply to her tantrum, and he only continued nagging, "The Old Master also wanted you to get ready for your engagement to Young Master York. The engagement cannot be dragged on any longer."

The girl puffed out her cheeks. At the instant, a sudden gust of wind blew and her long locks started waving in the direction the wind was blowing in. Even though she had heavy makeup on, it was impossible to hide the delicate features on her small face.

A black limousine then came to a stop in front of her. As she got in the car, she could still feel the pain in the back of her neck. She turned on the dome light above her head and carefully looked at the round gemstone in her hand. Upon closer inspection, she realized that it was a big and rare diamond. She couldn't help but think that the natural and perfectly round diamond probably had a staggering price.

Hmm... How am I supposed to give it back to that man? She propped her chin in her hand as she had an internal debate.

She suddenly received a text message on her phone at this moment. 'Young Miss, all your documents have been taken out. Go to the cafe at the airport. Your flight is at 12 AM. You have to hurry to the airport!'

The corners of the woman's red lips curled upward after she read the message. She then said to the driver sitting in front. "Uncle G, can you go with me to the airport to pick up a friend?"

"Young Miss... Stop it with your tricks."

"I am not playing any tricks. I really do have a friend who is waiting for me to pick her up at the airport. I am begging you, Uncle G. She is here to attend my engagement party," the woman pleaded sweetly.

The middle-aged man driving the car let out a long sigh as he conceded and asked the bodyguard to drive to the airport.

On the other hand, Arthur, who had just returned to his hotel room, had a haunting feeling like something was missing from his neck. When he reached out to fiddle the necklace around his neck, he could feel that the usual heavy necklace had suddenly strangely become lighter. He pulled at the collar of his top, and it was only when he looked down that he realized his family heirloom was gone.

His bright eyes narrowed, and the girl hanging onto his neck in the car suddenly popped into his mind. He then came to the conclusion that she was not running away from anyone at all.

She was a thief!

Blast!

She is just digging her own hole by stealing something of mine, he fumed.

The six bodyguards standing in front of Arthur were also shocked when they looked at the necklace their young master had removed from his neck.

Did the Young Master lose his priceless family heirloom? they all wondered at the same time.

People wouldn't usually wear their family heirloom, but Arthur was no typical young master.

Not only was Arthur angry for losing his family heirloom, he was also hit by deep shame at the moment. It would be such an embarrassment if word were to get that the woman had stolen his thing under his nose.

"Find her!" he growled through gritted teeth.

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From the way his rage seemed to overflow from his gaze, it was easy to imagine just what kind of tragic ending awaited the thief.

The bodyguards responded immediately, "Understood. We will go right this instant."

A woman carrying a bag had made her escape from scrutinizing eyes using another door of the airport cafe, which was why her bodyguards guarding at the entrance didn't notice her disappearance. Ten minutes later, the girl arrived at the plane she was going to board, and she sat in a first class seat. After she took a deep breath, she sent a text message on her phone. 'Dad, I don't want to get engaged. I am leaving now. Please forgive me for being unfilial.'

She turned off her phone after she sent the message, and the whole world seemed to fall silent then. Her face under the light was a beautiful one, as she did not have any heavy makeup on. The woman who looked like she was in her twenties had skin so fair and tender that it looked like it might bruise at the slightest touch.

The plane had taken off into the night sky after it went down the runway. Unbeknownst to the woman, she had in her hand another man's family heirloom.

As much as she wanted to give it back to him, she couldn't make the time to find him as she was in a rush to go abroad. She could only hope they would someday meet again.

In an apartment in the city center, Hayley was sitting on the sofa waiting for Alex to come back. Her head was filled with thoughts about Anastasia's marriage to Elliot.

She kept thinking of a way to stop their engagement. Their engagement was a crucial benchmark in their relationship. It would be near impossible to prevent it from happening, not unless something big were to happen.

Hayley suddenly thought of Francis. She doubted Anastasia and Elliot would proceed with the engagement if Francis were to get into an accident.

But what could she do to create an 'accident'? Naomi and Erica would definitely not do it. After all, Francis was their cash cow. It seemed like Alex was the only one who could do it.

Hayley also knew that Alex was anxious. Francis had been training Anastasia to take over Tillman Constructions and as soon as she learned to manage the company, it was only a matter of time before the company ultimately belonged to her.

Now that Anastasia and Elliot were getting engaged, and she had Elliot the business genius to back her up, Alex served no purpose being by Anastasia's side.

There was still half a month before the engagement, which meant there was enough time for Hayley to arrange what she needed to. As she thought about this, a cruel glint appeared in her eyes.

Alex was slightly tired when he finally came back during the wee hours. As there were some problems with the company's financial inventory, he had to stay behind until the issue was resolved before he could leave.

"Alex, you're home." Hayley immediately went over and hugged him. She then stood on her tiptoes to kiss him. "I have warmed up some noodles for you. Come have some."

Instead, the man went to sit on the sofa. "Bring me a glass of beer," he told her.

And so, Hayley immediately went and opened a can of beer for him. She then sat next to him and looked at him. "Alex, are you tired from work?" she asked with a worried expression on her face. "Erica told me that Anastasia is getting engaged to Elliot. I reckon Anastasia might be able to take over her father's company at any time."

Alex abruptly raised his head in shock. "When was this?"

"On Christmas Eve."

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He started to feel anxious then. The current situation was becoming more and more unfavorable for his plans against Tillman Constructions.

"Alex, Elliot will be Francis' son-in-law if he were to get engaged to Anastasia. There is a possibility that Francis may hand the company over to Elliot. Do you think you can continue to keep your position as the financial manager when the time comes?" Hayley was instilling fear into Alex at that point.

Alex knew full well how much Elliot hated him because of how he used to cling to Anastasia without knowing his place. This could be the sole reason Elliot would sack him from the company if Tillman Constructions ever fell into Elliot's hands.

Hayley then continued rather agitatedly, "It is about time I got in contact with Naomi for her to start with the plan."

Confused, Alex lifted his chin to look at her. "What do you mean?" he asked.

“We have to stop Anastasia and Elliot from getting engaged, and the only way to do that is for Francis to get into an accident serious enough to prevent him from attending the engagement party. Anastasia would surely be too disheartened to carry on with the engagement. When that happens, you can alter Francis’ will and split Tillman Constructions into two. Anastasia can have half of the ownership, but Naomi and her daughter must have the other half. They will have to rely on you when they want to secure half of the shareholders’ rights. You can negotiate with them and tell them that you want one-third, or more, of the shares.” Hayley’s gaze was laser-focused as she explained the plan she had carefully thought out.

Alas, her ultimate goal was to stop the engagement between Elliot and Anastasia from happening.

This was Hayley’s revenge toward Anastasia. There was no way she would allow Anastasia to have peaceful days.

Hayley knew just how she could use Erica and Naomi to complete her plan. She would only have to give them a light push, and the mother-daughter duo would automatically come up with their way to deal with Francis.

Sure enough, Hayley’s words planted a seed in Alex’s heart, and he was fueled by greed to seize part of the Tillman Constructions’ equity.

If something were to happen to Francis, and Naomi revised the will so that she and her daughter had half of the company’s shares, they surely would know nothing about the handling of the company. And when that happened, they would definitely entrust Alex to take care of what they had in hand. He would be able to make a proper request to have a part of it when the time came.

Just one-third of the mother-daughter’s equity would be worth more than 100 million. It was a sum that he could never earn, no matter how hard he worked his whole life.

“Alex, I will support you. I will support you no matter what you do. I don’t want anything else. I just want to stay by your side,” Hayley exclaimed, effectively melting his heart with her tenderness.

Upon hearing that, Alex put his arms around her. “You are so clever, Hayley. You came up with such a good solution.”

“Everything I do is for us.” She looked at him with endearing eyes as she murmured, “It is all because I love you.” Alex immediately felt deeply satisfied at that.

After they spent the whole night being tangled in each other’s arms under the sheets, Hayley was sure that her plan had been acknowledged by Alex, and it would soon be carried out.