

Too Far 461

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It was at this exact moment Elliot's phone started ringing. At that, he swiftly turned to Anastasia and said, "Go ahead and sleep."

Not wanting to bother him when he was on the phone, she went out of the room. She was already behind the door when she vaguely heard the man bark in a grave, furious tone, "Is this how you do your job?!"

Still in the presence of the gentle Elliot just seconds ago, Anastasia could feel her heart skip a beat at that.

It only got harder for her to fall asleep after she went back to her room. She couldn't help but wonder what new troubles he was facing this time.

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Christmas Eve had come at last.

Anastasia promised her father that she would bring Jared home only for dinner, not for lunch.

After the boy had woken up from his sleep, Anastasia first made breakfast for him before she prepared lunch for Elliot, who she thought would only wake up at noon.

It was already 11.30 AM in the blink of an eye.

Anastasia got to the door of the master bedroom with light steps to see if the man was still sleeping. As she stood there, she gently twisted the doorknob before walking in as quietly as she could.

Just like she had expected, he was still sound asleep in the king-sized bed covered in gray sheets. She was suddenly tempted to take a closer look at the man who rarely stayed in bed late.

With that in mind, she trod wearily to the side of the bed like a kitten before she lightly propped her arms on the bed and leaned over to look at the man. She first noticed how his thick eyelashes had cast graceful fan-like shadows under his eyes.

She couldn't help but acknowledge that there were men out there that didn't even need to lift a finger, and could make people have bad intentions with just their sleeping faces alone.

Anastasia had to swallow the drool that was threatening to spill as she looked at the man's sexy collarbones peeking out from the collar of his pajamas. Not only that, she could see the outline of his ripped muscles even though his slender, but sturdy body was hidden from plain sight by his pajamas.

Thank you for creating this masterpiece of yours, God!

Her head was filled with nonsensical thoughts when Elliot's eyelids suddenly shot open, and he stared straight into her eyes. She was so startled that her arms went soft and her whole body fell flat on his chest.

Anastasia started scampering to get up, but with a tug of his long arms wrapped around her waist, she had been moved onto the bed like a ragdoll.

I only wanted to admire your looks for a bit! Even though she was thinking that, she started coaxing him, "I won't disturb you. Go ahead and sleep a little longer."

Without saying a word, he buried his face in the crook of her neck and planted a kiss there.

A tingle darted through her body but when she regained the strength in her limbs, she pushed him. "I was wrong! I shouldn't have disturbed your sleep... Please, spare me!"

Despite her resistance, Elliot still proceeded to drag her under the blanket warm with his body heat. She felt as much comfort as she felt the danger of it.

This was what people meant when they said that men who had just woken up in the morning were dangerous.

Elliot was like a naughty child still foggy from sleep when he caught her in his arms, and he kissed her anywhere and everywhere he could.

"Elliot..." Anastasia whispered. She could feel how hot the man's body was against her as she pushed him away.

After a long time of not saying a word, he finally protested in a low voice, "It's just a quick hug."

Hearing that, she couldn't help but grumble to herself, Quick hug, my foot!

"You will be mine eventually anyway," he hummed as he pressed his lips to the crown of her head.

He wanted to own her before she was officially his woman.

However, Anastasia somehow managed to find a chance to get out of bed. Now that she was looking at the man who had sat up in bed, a lazy and seductive air surrounded him, and she thought it didn't seem like it would be a loss on her part if she were to jump him now.

She quickly said, "Uh... I made lunch. How about you get up and eat something?"

Rather than answering her, Elliot asked, "When are you and Jared going home?"

"We are going in the afternoon."

The man lightly stretched before he flipped open the blanket, and that was when Anastasia saw the sight that made her immediately turn around in embarrassment. Does he really see me as his wife or something already?! she gulped.

Seeing that, Elliot began teasing her in a thuggish way, "Why did you turn around? This thing here belongs to you."

Anastasia fled out the door the next second as she couldn't bear listening to him any longer.

As she ran out, she could hear his bright laughter echoing in the room.

He sounded like a hooligan then.

After she was done preparing his lunch, the man, dressed in a luxurious outfit, came sauntering down from the second floor like a noble king.

He then asked, "Where is Jared?"

"In the playroom on the third floor," Anastasia answered as she brought out the food she whipped up.

Elliot suddenly looked at her and said, "Give your dad a call later and ask him if he would be okay with adding one more place on the dining table tonight."

Upon hearing that, Anastasia narrowed her eyes ever so slightly. "You want to have dinner at my house?"

"I will go to your house for Christmas Eve, and you can come to my house on Christmas. Sounds good?" He was determined to go to her house tonight for the eve celebration.

She didn't oppose his idea, so she swiftly nodded and said, "Sure. I will inform my dad in a while."

As Francis had a busy job, he was still working overtime at his company on Christmas Eve.

Today, however, he was sitting here dealing with some personal affairs rather than the usual work matters. He was writing a will. Even though he wouldn't need it for the time being, he wanted to prepare himself in order to get certain things done, as he had had multiple health issues as of late.

Alex happened to be at the office to sign a document when he found out that Francis was still there as well. He then dropped by to greet his employer.

As the younger man opened the door, he saw Francis looking at some document and quickly covering it with another document when he saw Alex walk in.

"Oh—there you are, Alex!" Francis greeted him.

"It is Christmas Eve, President Tillman, and yet you are still working overtime." Alex then caringly added, "Please be mindful of your health."

"I understand. You can go ahead and leave! Come back to work after Christmas."

Alex was an unusually sensitive person, and he had already noticed Francis' frantic behavior just now. But before he could say anything about it, Francis' landline began to ring.

"Hello? Okay. I will be down in a minute." Francis stood up after finishing the call. "I will make a trip to the warehouse. You can go home now!"

"I'll go with you, president," Alex offered, only to be rejected right off the bat.

"There's no need for that. I am only going to check a few samples of the materials." Francis waited for Alex to leave his office with him, and he closed the door behind them.

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Alex then pretended as if he was walking toward the finance department. When he saw from the corner of his eye that Francis had entered the elevator, he turned around to see if he was alone before he prowled his way back to Francis' office.

Francis was not one to lock his office door during the day, which made it easy for Alex to enter. When the latter reached the desk, he saw the hidden document that looked a lot like a will. Instead of spending his time going through it word by word, he took out his phone to take a photo of it instead.

After he had finished taking photos of all three sheets of paper, he put the documents back to their original place and scurried away.

It was only after he returned to his car that he could be at ease to check the photos he took.

A cold smile appeared on the corners of his mouth when he finished reading the contents of the will. Sure enough, Naomi had been spot-on with her worries. It seemed that Francis had no intention to hand over the company to the mother-and-daughter duo—Anastasia was the only heiress of the company. Francis might have had it in his will to distribute the other assets to Naomi and her daughter, but none of those could compare to the company which had a net worth of more than one billion.

Alex was suddenly reminded of the trust the mother-and-daughter duo had in him. It seemed like he would have his share of Tillman Constructions as long as he could make Erica fall for him.

At the same time, Francis was chatting with the employees in the warehouse when his phone rang. He took a glance at it before he reached out to pick it up. "Hello, Anastasia! Are you home yet?"

"I haven't started my journey yet, Dad. I called you to inform you that Elliot will be coming over tonight for dinner."

"What?!" Francis' mood instantly lifted when he heard his daughter's words. It was his honor to have a guest such as Elliot. "That's great! I will tell Naomi to prepare a feast to properly welcome the Young Master!"

After Francis cut the call with Anastasia, he immediately called his wife to inform her that Elliot was coming to their house for dinner. Naomi, of course, was taken aback as well.

"What? Young Master Elliot is coming to our house for dinner? We have to prepare more food, then!"

"Prepare as much good food as you can. We can't afford to disrespect him," Francis requested.

As soon as the call ended, Naomi quickly instructed the servants to go to the supermarket again. Naomi had initially prepared some dishes that Anastasia didn't like after she knew that Anastasia was coming home. However, now that Elliot was coming over, she would not dare to offend the Young Master no matter how much she loathed Anastasia.

What was more, it was a once-in-a-blue-moon opportunity to meet a man whose net worth was hundreds of billions. She still had some other plan up her sleeves.

Naomi then quickly called Erica, who had gone shopping in the early morning. Erica was so excited after she picked up the call and learned that Elliot was coming over that she almost passed out.

"Mom, is it true? Is Elliot really coming to our home?" she squealed.

"That is what your Dad told me. It must be true, then."

“Mom, I can’t talk now,” Erica suddenly said. “I have to buy some clothes.” After she hung up the call, she dragged her friend along to ransack the boutique they were in for clothes.

She was determined to dress her best for Elliot tonight.

Even if all Elliot did was take a look at her a second longer, it would keep her happy for a very long time.

Elliot received a call from Harriet, in which she told him that she was at Brenda’s before she asked him if he would come over. Needless to say, she was caught by surprise when he told her that he was going to have dinner with Anastasia’s family.

Oh, how she hoped that Elliot would quickly make Anastasia his wife!

Around 3 PM, Anastasia dressed up her son like a fashionable and handsome child model.

Elliot, too, had changed into a gray casual suit, with a dark-colored shirt layered with a vest. He looked just like an awe-inspiring young master of a powerful family from TV shows.

Anastasia couldn’t turn her gaze away after she raised her head to look at him. He probably would look good in a rag too, she mused.

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“Let’s go!” Elliot held Jared by his hand as they went to the underground parking lot together. He chose one of his cars that had a child safety seat installed in it. Ever since he started bringing Jared along on drives, Elliot had thrown aside all his best sports cars.

They looked just like a family of three on their way back to their parents’ house.

Francis had returned to the Tillman Residence earlier than he usually would. The whole place had been cleaned thoroughly by the servants who had a feeling that someone of importance was coming tonight.

Erica had been in her room upstairs the whole time fixing her makeup in the mirror and trying on one outfit after another. She wanted to pick the one she looked best in before she went downstairs.

She finally heard the sound of a car engine coming from outside. As she peeked from the second floor, she saw an impressive-looking sedan driving into the compound, and that was when her heart started thumping heavily against her chest.

Elliot was finally here.

Naomi had seen Elliot at her husband’s company’s annual celebration before. He was such a brilliant man that she couldn’t help but hope that her own daughter would be blessed with the luck to marry him.

However, her jealousy started bubbling away when she went out with her husband to welcome their guests, only to see how much they looked like a family when Elliot carried Jared out of the car, while Anastasia got out from the other door.

Naomi could never understand how Anastasia managed to tie a man like Elliot down.

On top of that, they even brought along that b*stard child too!

"Welcome, Young Master Elliot!"

"Mr. Tillman," Elliot greeted with a smile.

The young boy he was holding, too, cheerfully called out, "Grandpa!"

Naomi had a fake smile plastered on her face as she stood beside Francis. "Young Master Elliot, we are glad that you have decided to pay us a visit. Please, come in."

Elliot then nodded and thanked her.

"Mom!" Anastasia greeted her as well. She didn't want to embarrass Naomi in front of her father.

"Anastasia, make sure you take good care of Young Master Elliot while he is here," Francis turned to Anastasia and said.

Erica was finally satisfied with her makeup and outfit right around this time. As she walked down from the stairs on the second floor, she looked at Elliot, who was walking in, and greeted him excitedly, "Young Master Elliot, you are here."

Elliot looked at her and gave a nod in acknowledgement. Anastasia then invited him to sit on the sofa, while she sat beside him and served him tea.

Francis, however, suddenly remembered that they didn't have milk at home. He insisted on bringing Jared with him to buy some immediately.

Anastasia felt slightly resigned at her father doting on her son.

Naomi was getting annoyed looking at her husband but she, too, could only watch on as her husband pampered Anastasia's son.

She secretly thought how nice it would be if her own daughter would hurry up and give birth to a son.

Naomi then threw a knowing glance at her daughter before she went into the kitchen. Erica caught sight of that, and she immediately understood what her mother was signaling her to do. Out of nowhere, she had a burst of courage to get Elliot's attention.

"I will do it for you, Anastasia!" Erica, who usually called her sister by her full name, suddenly offered to help. Erica didn't dare show disrespect toward Anastasia now that Elliot was there.

She needed to leave a good impression on him.

After Anastasia obediently gave the teapot to Erica, she sat beside him before she grabbed a handful of cherries and passed them to him. "Here."

Elliot then took one cherry out of her palm and popped it into his mouth. She, too, ate one as she looked at him. It was somewhat unbelievable to her just how elegant his movements were even when all he was doing was eating a cherry.

How can a man look so graceful in everything he does? she wondered.

He kept going until there wasn't a cherry left in her palm, so she went and grabbed another fistful for them to share. Erica was sitting across them making tea as she witnessed their soundless intimacy.

She could die from jealousy right there and then.

Elliot would only show this friendly side of his when he was with Anastasia.

If it were any other women, he would have immediately put an unapproachable front by being his usual cold self.

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"I bought the cherries! They are great, aren't they, Anastasia?" Erica asked abruptly. She wanted to remind them that she was there as well.

Hearing that, Anastasia casually replied, "It's alright." She stopped eating the cherries after that. Instead, she started peeling two oranges, and Elliot only ate what she peeled.

He acted as though fruits that had been in her hands tasted sweeter.

"Please have some tea." Erica served him a cup of tea. As soon as the cup was in his hand, he took a small sip of it before turning to Anastasia again.

"I want more oranges," he murmured

Anastasia swiftly took two more and began peeling one of them for him. Just as she was in the middle of it, the man suddenly put two peeled pieces of oranges into her mouth.

She was startled at first, but she soon began to enjoy the sweetness erupting across her taste buds. Erica could only continue to watch their lovey-dovey act.

"Is it good?" he asked in a serious voice, and she nodded.

At that, Anastasia hummed in reply. "It's delicious."

He then peeled another orange and brought it to her mouth again. With that, her mouth was full with that oh-so-sweet orange.

Erica was starting to feel upset as she watched the couple. Despite how much effort she put into dolling herself up, the man had not spared her even one glance.

As she felt weird about staying with them, she quickly stood up as she mumbled, "Uh... I will go to the kitchen for a bit."

Neither of them said anything to Erica in reply. Anastasia only proceeded to shove a whole orange she had just peeled into Elliot's mouth.

Knowing that she did it intentionally, he bit the orange in half before sending the other half to her mouth.

Anastasia instantly flushed as red as a tomato at that. She could never win every time she tried to tease him.

Still, the orange he fed her tasted extraordinarily sweet.

“Does the orange that has been in my mouth taste good?” he leaned in next to her ear and asked, making her blush.

Erica, who had gone into the kitchen, was visibly upset as she stood beside her mother, her lips pouting. Naomi could only look at her with sympathizing eyes.

It didn’t take long before Francis had returned with Jared. Not only did the young boy have milk with him, he was also carrying an expensive-looking toy robot.

As soon as Anastasia saw it, she sternly asked, “Jared, did you pester your Grandpa into buying you a toy?”

“No, I didn’t.” The boy’s cheeks puffed up. “Grandpa wanted to buy it for me.”

Francis hurriedly added to back his grandson up. “I bought it for Jared. He didn’t pester me or anything. It is only normal to buy presents for children during Christmas, yes?”

Elliot was still frivolously playing around with Anastasia just a second ago, but now, his back was as straight as a pole and a serious expression appeared on his face.

Francis then sat down and poured more tea into Elliot’s cup, and he warmly said to the younger man, “Have some tea, Young Master Elliot.”

“Mr. Tillman, you can just call me by my name,” Elliot replied with a smile.

“Alright, then. Elliot it is!” Francis called out rather naturally. Truth was, he had already thought of Elliot as his son-in-law.

As the men conversed, Anastasia brought Jared beside her for some fruit. It was then that Francis was surprised by the resemblance between Elliot and Jared. Elliot looked exactly like Jared’s biological father.

Francis had never directly asked Anastasia about the identity of her son’s real father. He never had the courage to do so either. He had always regretted the five years she went missing after he had misunderstood her.

The dinner was a feast. For someone as greedy for wealth and power as Naomi was, there was no way she would dare to underserve a man like Elliot.

“Mommy, I want some shrimp,” Jared said as he pointed to a shrimp dish.

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Hearing that, Anastasia washed her hand before she peeled some shrimps for her son. As she continued to get rid of the shell, Elliot suddenly brought his bowl over for Anastasia to place a peeled shrimp into his bowl. He started to happily munch into it right after.

Then, she continued to peel a few more for him. Naomi started to feel anxious as she looked at Anastasia seemingly assuming the role of Elliot’s wife. Anastasia has got a complete hold on Elliot, she thought. This can be dangerous for Erica and I.

As much as Erica was attracted to Elliot's gentle and handsome appearance, she loathed Anastasia for her deliberate show of affection.

It was already past 8.00PM by the time they finished dinner, which also meant that it was time for Elliot to take Anastasia and Jared back to their own home.

Francis went and saw them off at the door as he reminded them to drive slowly. Erica and Naomi had also come out to send their guests off.

After watching the impressive sedan leave, Francis said to the mother and daughter, "I will be back after a walk."

The instant he left, Erica finally exploded in irritation. "Mom! Just look at how smug Anastasia was. She clearly was showing off their relationship to us on purpose."

"Anastasia was giving us a warning." Naomi had held in a lot of rage as well. "She is trying to make us think that she isn't an easy opponent, now that she has Elliot backing her up."

Erica started to grind her teeth as she growled, "Mom, we cannot be afraid of her."

Her phone began to ring right at this moment. After taking a look at it, she angrily accepted the call. "Hey, Alex. Where have you been these 2 days? Why didn't you answer my call or reply to my messages?"

"I am sorry, Erica. I've been busy dealing with the company's inventory. I didn't mean to not reply. I called you to tell you something."

"What is it?" she asked.

"I saw your dad write a will. I will send it to you now, and you can have it sent to your mom. Don't ever let your dad find out that this photo was secretly taken. I will definitely lose my job otherwise."

When she heard that, Erica immediately urged him to send the photo over. She couldn't wait to know the contents of the will that her father was preparing.

"Alright, I will send it over now." Alex then hung up the phone.

It only took a few seconds before Erica received three photos of the will via message. She quickly dragged her mother back to the living room and said, "Mom, Alex secretly took photos of Dad's will. Come take a look."

They proceeded to read it word by word, and by the time they were done, their faces had turned pale from their anger.

Just like they had expected, Francis didn't leave even a small part of the company to them.

"F*ck you, Francis!" Naomi hissed under her breath.

Erica was starting to panic as well. "What are we going to do, Mom? Dad has no intentions to give us the company at all. It is all going to Anastasia."

“Calm down, Erica. I won’t let you live empty-handed. It seems like your Dad has never thought of people important to him, huh?” She scoffed. “I finally see his true colors.” All those years Naomi had been Francis’ wife suddenly seemed like nothing but a waste of time.

“What are we going to do, Mom?”

“Alex must be on our side since he is helping us. It is only a will. We can just change the contents.” A wicked look flashed across Naomi’s face.

Francis’ wealth and company were the only reasons why she was married to him in the first place. It would be a forever thorn in her heart if she ended up not getting anything at all.

Naomi had a secret that she could never tell anyone, and it was exactly because of how dangerous the secret was that she needed to get Francis’ property to make sure that she and her daughter were set for life.

Anastasia felt at ease on the way back to Elliot’s villa as they listened to songs while she enjoyed the bustling night view of the city outside the car window, whereas little Jared was quietly playing his Rubik’s Cube under the dim lights in the car. Wealth and power were the least of her priority—all she prayed for was peace and calm in her life.

The car drove straight into the compound of the villa when they reached home. As soon as they arrived at the parking lot, Anastasia caught sight of a truck parked there in the dark. She couldn’t tell what was in the back of the car.

A magical scene suddenly appeared at this exact moment. The second a light suddenly lit up behind the truck, she could see a huge glass case decorated with balloons and flowers, and in it was a white sports car quietly parked there. It was an utterly romantic and luxurious sight to behold.

Shocked, Anastasia couldn’t help covering her mouth. The young boy beside her had seen it as well, and he exclaimed in surprise, “Mommy, look!”

Elliot’s car had come to a stop beside the truck then. After he got out of the driver’s seat, he went and opened the door Anastasia was at. “Come on,” he said, prompting her to step out.

Still astonished, she asked, “Is this a gift from you?”

“This is the prize you won during the annual celebration!” He gazed at her with deep eyes and smiled. “Of course the boss has to make it come true.”

Upon hearing that, Anastasia went red in the face. She couldn’t even begin to describe her joy. She had to admit that the man had his way of pleasing women.

“Okay! I will gladly accept it, then.” She had stopped rejecting him out of courtesy because at some point, Anastasia was sure that Elliot was the one.

She could take a present from him without feeling like she needed to justify her actions.

"Mommy, Mr. Presgrave is so kind to you!" Jared also said something nice on Elliot's behalf in hopes that she would be so touched she immediately agreed to marry him that night.

Anastasia got out of the car, and after standing in front of the glass case to admire the new sports car, she got her phone and took a photo of it for commemorative purposes.

"It is late now. I will accompany you to test out the car tomorrow," Elliot suggested.

She quickly nodded and answered, "Sure!" The car was exactly the way she liked it, in terms of both appearance and color.

It was safe to say that she had fallen in love with it.

Meanwhile, Aliona was at Lucas' villa that night. She was slightly angered when she questioned him, "Did you go to Riley behind my back? Are you not afraid that Elliot will find out about our relationship?"

The man's face dimmed as he heard her accusatory tone. "Miss Dora, I suggest you finish your father's plan as soon as you can!"

"What did Father say?" she asked again.

"He told me that you can't get yourself out of this as long as you don't get done with it. We are all going to die because of you."

Aliona felt her heart quiver at that. She knew full well that Riley raised her for the sole purpose of carrying out his plan. Their 'father-daughter relationship' wouldn't mean a thing, and could never save her life if she didn't do as he planned.

Through gritted teeth, she told Lucas, "I am already planning it out. I won't let Father wait too long."

Her face was glum after she came out of Lucas' villa. She asked her subordinate who was sitting beside her, "How is the arrangement going?"

"We have done the necessary preparations. All we are doing now is wait for an opportunity to kidnap Anastasia's son."

"Plan it out carefully," she instructed with just a few words.

Her goal this time was to target Anastasia's son because a child was easier to kidnap. Plus, Aliona detested Anastasia. She knew that kidnapping Anastasia's son would tear the woman apart, and if Elliot loved her, he would definitely try to save her son no matter what.

Lucas' plan this time involved a lot of risky operations, but she had to do it to get Riley out of prison as soon as she could.

Back at Elliot's villa, Elliot received a call from the police right after he took a shower.

"Young Master Presgrave, please be informed that a close friend of your father's, Lucas Dora, has come to visit Riley Presgrave this afternoon."

His eyes showed a slight surprise after he heard the officer's words. Lucas and Riley grew up together, but Lucas cut off contact with him at a later time. Elliot had never expected that Lucas would drop by

Riley's.

Curious about what went on, Elliot asked, "How did their conversation go?"

"They were just like old friends. They only greeted each other without saying anything of importance in particular."

"Thank you." Elliot hung up the phone. He began to recall what happened at the last charity auction held by Lucas. He kept thinking about which drink it was that must have been laced with drugs. It took him a while to finally remember how the last drink he had was brought to him by Lucas himself.

That glass of alcohol was the true source of the problem.

Elliot didn't understand why Lucas would help his daughter do such a shameless thing. Lucas used to be a top dog in the business world, until the moment his son had wasted and lost all the family fortune. He had been getting by in recent years through investments and connections he had made.

Elliot truly hoped that Lucas wouldn't involve him in his plans.

But then again, was Lucas really only greeting an old friend when he went to Riley, or did he have some other ideas up his sleeve?

Elliot then immediately gave Rey a call. "Investigate Lucas' son who is abroad for me and also, find out the blood relation between Lucas and his illegitimate daughter, Aliona Dora."

"Understood, President Presgrave," Rey answered.

Announcing to the public that he had an illegitimate daughter after all these years of keeping a low profile didn't seem like something Lucas would do.

Elliot suddenly realized that everything he knew about Lucas was from the years when his father was still alive, and would respectfully call Lucas his senior. Other than that, Elliot knew nothing about what Lucas had been doing in the past ten years.

Anastasia had just taken a shower as she stood in front of the windows, which coincidentally granted her a view of the sports car downstairs. The white car carried a feeling of romance as the lights of the villa shone on it under the night sky,

At the same time at the Tillman Residence, Francis had fallen into a deep sleep after he had a little bit to drink. On the other hand, Naomi, who sat beside him, would have loved to strangle the man to death.

The chilling murderous intent in her eyes had long taken over her feelings for her husband.

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The air was filled with excitement for Christmas the day after Christmas Eve. Many children had started to come out to play and go shopping because this was a time when children could have fun and enjoy themselves.

After Anastasia had breakfast, Jared told her that he wanted to go to the museum. She, too, knew that she couldn't bore him at home all day. It was necessary to bring him out to see and get a touch with the real world.

Elliot could only apologetically say to them, "I am afraid I can't keep you company today. I have something important to attend to at the company."

She only let out a light-hearted chuckle, "Don't worry about it. You have spent a lot of your time with Jared. I will take him out today."

"I will have David and a few others go with you. They won't get in your way." He was still worried about them going out by themselves.

"Alright!" She gave a nod of acceptance. "We'll be careful."

The mother and son set off at about 9.00AM with four bodyguards in tow, whereas Elliot and his bodyguards drove toward the direction of the Presgrave Group.

The museum had a free entrance for a week. Anastasia held Jared by his hand as they walked in. There were a lot of people, and most of the visitors were children. The museum had also organized many fun events that children could take part in.

"Mommy, over there!" The boy swiftly pointed to the direction of the dinosaur museum.

Anastasia let out a smile and nodded as she followed after her son. The bodyguards behind them made sure to blend in within the crowd, their eyes intently watching the mother and son.

However, they failed to notice that there was also a group of people following them around. They were Aliona's goons who Riley had trained overseas. With their ruthlessness and professionalism, they were almost as skilled as trained assassins. They had finally found their chance to strike.

They had twice the manpower this time. There were more than a dozen of them, both female and male, who were mingling around in the crowd. Their strategy this time was to besiege Anastasia and Jared.

Anastasia was still clueless to the danger lurking all around them. The place was crowded with children and parents. She could easily lose her child if she had stopped paying attention for a second. And so, she had her focus solely on Jared.

A middle-aged woman who looked like a normal parent suddenly appeared and bumped into David. Just as David was about to walk past her, she suddenly stuck a needle into his waist before she injected a substance into him.

"You—" David had already passed out before he managed to inform his colleagues through his earpiece.

"Darling... Darling! What happened?!" The moment the woman acted like she was David's wife, two men rushed out and immediately brought him away from there.

Three bodyguards in a different location had also been attacked. It was hard for Elliot's men to fight back when Aliona's goons were extremely well-versed in what they were doing.

A couple suddenly appeared in front of Anastasia, blocking her view of her son.

“Excuse me.” She hurriedly pushed them away and looked at where her son was.

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All she could see now was the dinosaur egg showcase. Jared had disappeared from where he was at just a moment ago.

“Jared? Jared!” she directly yelled into the crowd, looking for him.

She went around the whole place once, but she still couldn’t find her son. What she didn’t know was that there was a man carrying a young boy who was covered in a coat somewhere not far away. The boy was none other than Jared.

Anastasia went to a staff member who was on patrol and anxiously blurted, “Have you seen my son? He has a blue down jacket on, and he is about this tall.”

“Miss, did your child go missing? Please calm down, there are a lot of children here today. We will find him for you.”

The lady comforted her.

Anastasia, however, remained terrified. It was far too sudden. In just a blink of an eye, Jared had vanished.

She turned around and saw that David and his men were no longer around. What happened? They’ve been following me all along!

Anxiously, she took her phone out and called Elliot.

“Hello?”

“Elliot, have David and his men returned yet? Jared has gone missing! He vanished before my eyes!” Anastasia was about to lose it and her voice was trembling nervously.

“Don’t panic, Anastasia. I’ll contact David now, alright?” Elliot tried to console her. “You look around first while I give him a call.”

After ending the call, Anastasia went to the broadcasting area with the staff. She called Jared’s name several times over the broadcast and asked him to approach the staff and return to her once he heard the broadcast.

At the same time, all staff were reminded to keep an eye out for any child dressed similarly to Jared.

While the broadcaster was still speaking, Anastasia’s phone rang. She picked it up right away when she saw it was Elliot who called. “Hello?”

“Something must have happened to Jared, Anastasia. I can’t contact David and his men at all. Jared might have been kidnapped. I’m rushing to the museum now.”

“What?!” Hearing that, Anastasia felt as though all her energy was drained and she almost dropped her phone to the floor. A staff member nearby immediately held her when he saw that. “Miss, are you okay?”

With reddened eyes, she begged the staff, "My son has been abducted! Please show me the surveillance video!"

In the meantime, Elliot was on his way to the museum as well. When his car came to a stop in front of a traffic light, he could hear his phone ring, and he answered it immediately as he assumed that the caller was Anastasia. "Hello?"

"Anastasia's son is in our hands, Elliot Presgrave. Don't you dare inform the police! Follow our instructions or otherwise, Anastasia will never get to see her son again." It was a male voice, clearly generated by a voice-changing device.

Elliot's car immediately braked, almost colliding with the car behind him. After a brief pause, he calmly responded, "What exactly do you want me to do? I can give you whatever you want as long as you don't harm the child."

Elliot knew fully well that this kidnapper, or the group of them, kidnapped Jared all because of him.

At the same time, a man approached his window and violently knocked on it. Elliot's earlier brake almost caused this man to collide with him.

After a few knocks, the man was met with Elliot's terrifying cold stare. That startled him, and he quickly took a few steps back and walked away after spewing some vulgarities.

Elliot had a gloomy yet ruthless expression as he heard the conditions on the other end of the phone call.

"First and foremost, Elliot Presgrave, you tell Anastasia not to notify the police. We can't guarantee this child's safety if we are being pursued by the police. We'll contact you after that."

And the person hung up the call right after he finished his words.

Elliot immediately dialed Anastasia's number. At the same time, she was watching the surveillance footage in the security room, where she witnessed Jared being carried away in a matter of seconds. The two men who had previously blocked her vision were the kidnapper's accomplices. She also saw how David and his men passed out before being carried away.

Such a large-scale kidnapping plot stunned the security guards as well. Anastasia, who was on the verge of collapsing, received a phone call at this precise moment. "Jared has indeed been kidnapped."

"Calm down, Anastasia. I've just received a phone call from the kidnapper. They are after me, not Jared. Don't call the police first. I'll bring Jared back safely." Elliot's calm voice resonated from the phone.

Anastasia's mind went blank for a few seconds before she asked, "What do they want from you?"

Chapter 469

"I've already instructed Rey to get you; follow him first. Don't worry. I'll do everything I can to protect Jared."

Anastasia felt her heart tighten when she heard Elliot's words. This group of kidnappers clearly had this incident well-planned. If Elliot went straight to them to save Jared, would Elliot be able to survive?

“Elliot...” She began to cry out in fear, and tears fell from her eyes. She wanted both Jared and Elliot to be safe.

“Be patient and wait for my updates.” He hung up the call right after that.

At the same time, a staff member approached her and asked if she wanted to notify the police. Trying hard to keep her emotions in check, Anastasia responded, “That’s not necessary. I know that person.”

Since that was the case, the staff did not ask further too, as they did not want to shoulder any unnecessary responsibilities.

Anastasia then quickly walked out from the office. When she reached downstairs, Rey was already waiting for her.

“Rey, do you know who is behind this kidnapping?” she asked anxiously the moment she got in the car.

Rey’s face was tense as well. “We are looking into it. We don’t know much about the kidnappers right now, but Riley is likely involved. The abductors did not appear to be locals.”

“What does Riley want? Elliot’s life?” Anastasia continued asking.

“Riley has always wanted to seize the Presgrave Group. Hence, even if they had President Presgrave with them, they would not harm him for the time being.” Rey tried to comfort Anastasia. After all, she had never encountered anything like this before.

But her fists remained tightly clenched and the fear in her heart never subsided. Where’s Jared now? Will they hurt him? Is he scared?

Meanwhile, Jared was on a yacht which had just sailed. His small figure sat in one corner of the room, with his limbs not tied as he had nowhere to escape to.

At this moment, a woman walked in. Aliona wasn’t afraid of exposing herself this time, as this was already her final step. Even if Elliot knew she was the mastermind, he would never be able to escape alive.

“How come Anastasia’s son resembles Elliot?” She snorted with resentment.

“Who are you? Why did you kidnap me? I’m not afraid of you at all!” Jared bravely stared at her.

“Aren’t you scared I’ll kill you, kiddo?” Ariona held his chin with her hand, her sharp fingernails slicing across his face.

That immediately caused blood to well on Jared’s face. Arrogantly, she laughed. “It’s painful, right?”

“Shame on you for bullying a child!” Jared yelled.

That made her sneer. “I would have thrown you into the sea to feed the sharks if I hadn’t needed you for Elliot to come.”

She was well aware that Anastasia would live a miserable life if Jared died.

Jared’s eyes showed some surprise when he heard that. Mr. Presgrave is coming to rescue me?

Aliona then entered the control room. All those who were here, and there were at least twenty of them, were her subordinates. They were all preoccupied with their tasks, preparing to deal with Elliot later.

"Miss Dora, Elliot's yacht has departed. We can exchange this child with him in three hours."

"All of you have to be extra careful. Elliot's security team isn't easy to deal with. Besides, I've heard that the Presgrave Group has ties to the aviation industry, and they have exceptional surveillance." In fact, Aliona had a deep admiration for Elliot because he was unquestionably the best of all men. If they hadn't been on opposing sides, she would have married him.

Meanwhile, Anastasia was in a hotel near the pier. She had just learned that the location requested by the kidnappers for the exchange of hostages was on the sea, but they had not specified which area.

She was already tensed to the point of going insane over any updates.

Rey found some help to track the kidnappers too. Anastasia was watching them as they worked in the hotel room using complicated devices, appearing to be locating Elliot's yacht while tracking the kidnapper's.

"President Presgrave only brought two bodyguards with him, and they were brought there only to take Jared away. He intends to face the kidnapers alone," Rey updated her.

That made Anastasia's legs wobble, forcing her to support herself by holding on to the table beside her. Does Elliot have any confidence to come back alive?

At this instant, one of the men in the room spoke. "We found the kidnappers' yacht!"

"Zero in and check the situation." Anastasia anxiously followed Rey as he approached the man.

Chapter 470

She noticed a camera zooming in on a specific location until an image of several kidnappers on guard on the deck appeared. The camera then shifted, but there was no sign of Jared. Suddenly, the camera focused on a woman sipping tea on the third level of the deck.

Despite the fact that the camera didn't show the image clearly, Anastasia recognised the woman on the screen right away. Shocked, she exclaimed, "Aliona? That is Aliona Dora!"

Rey, too, was taken aback. When the camera zoomed in, he recognised the woman as Aliona, who was sipping coffee. Two of her men approached her, apparently reporting something, but they couldn't hear what they said. They had only the images.

"The kidnappers were all under her?" Anastasia asked in disbelief. She could not believe that Aliona was the one behind all these.

She hates me, but why does she want to kidnap my son? And why does she want Elliot to go?

What is her ultimate motive?

One thing troubled Anastasia so much that she almost couldn't breathe. Since Aliona hated her, how would Aliona treat her son?

"Jared will definitely be abused by her!" She grabbed at her chest. Her heart was in excruciating pain.

While Rey, standing beside, could only console her, "Don't worry, Miss Tillman. She will not do anything to Jared before President Presgrave agrees to her requests."

"There are only 100 nautical miles from the international seas now. Perhaps the kidnappers want the exchange of hostages to be done on international seas."

Since Jared went missing, every second has felt like a torment for Anastasia.

"Rey, what do you think Aliona wants from Elliot?"

At this precise moment, Rey received a message, which he read immediately. After reading it, he finally understood everything.

"I have just received unofficial information that Aliona is not Lucas' illegitimate child; they are not related. Perhaps she was someone on Riley's side, and everything she is doing now is to seize the Presgrave Group for him. As to what they want from President Presgrave, perhaps they intend to have him sign some contracts in their favor."

"Just like how Riley wanted Elliot to sign the contract transferring half of Presgrave Group's shares previously? But Elliot is in their hands this time. Will they hurt him after he signs the contract?" The more Anastasia thought about it, the more afraid she became. Elliot was Harriet's only grandson. If anything happened to him, how would the entire Presgrave Family survive?

"Don't worry. President Presgrave has his way for sure."

Just as Rey finished his words, his phone rang. "It's from President Presgrave."

He then took Anastasia to another room to answer the call, which he turned on the speaker immediately. "President Presgrave!"

"Is Anastasia with you?"

"I'm here," she immediately responded.

"You all should know by now that Aliona is the one behind the kidnapping. If I'm not wrong, she is working for Riley. I will get Jared back safely."

"How about you? How are you coming back?" Anastasia asked, her voice choked with sobs.

"I'll be safe," Elliot calmly promised.

"We have located Aliona's yacht, President Presgrave. But we can't hear any sound. All we can see is some images. We will get you out as fast as possible."

"Good. However, do not act until Jared is safe. Follow the plan, and keep in mind that saving Jared is the top priority," Elliot stated authoritatively, as if Jared's life was more important than his.

Anastasia, on the other hand, could no longer contain her tears. She covered her lips and tried to conceal her crying, fearing that Elliot would be worried about her.

Rey felt sorry for her when he saw her in this manner. "President Presgrave, please hold on as long as you can. We will try our best to save you."

"Okay. Let me have a word with Anastasia."

Rey then left the room after passing the phone to her.

In the quiet room, Elliot could hear her sobbing. "Can you talk now? If you can't, we can talk after you calm down."

"I'm alright. You can talk now!" She sniffed, forcing herself to calm down, but her voice remained hoarse.