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"Nigel?" Anastasia couldn't help but stare at him dumbfoundedly. Nigel gave her a boyish smile as he held the passenger's door open before pulling out a bouquet of roses and handing it to her. "Here. It's for you."

"Why are you giving me these flowers?" she asked in a rather clueless voice while she took the bouquet from him.

"Do you like them?" He gazed at her longingly. "Let's have dinner tonight!"

"Tonight? Um... Okay!" Right after Anastasia finished her words, she intentionally turned to glance at the luxury car with its oppressive presence. Nigel turned and pretended that he had only just noticed the car. He smirked before walking over to greet the person inside.

The car window went down, and Elliot turned to meet gazes with the other man.

"Are you done with work, Elliot?" Nigel greeted him before changing the topic intentionally. "I'm here to pick Anastasia up for dinner. We'll leave now." With that said, Nigel walked back to Anastasia before he put an arm over her shoulder in a practiced manner. He opened the passenger's door, and his body leaned close to hers as he helped her into the car.

Anastasia sat in his passenger seat with the bouquet of flowers still in her hand. Once Nigel got in, he stepped on the accelerator and sped off. Nigel's plan had been to drop by to snatch the woman away from Elliot, and he was surprised that his plan had actually worked.

Elliot's black car slowly made its way out of its parking spot. The tinted glasses made it impossible for anyone to look through the windows, so no one knew the expression that Elliot wore on his face as he drove off. However, after the black Rolls-Royce drove for a while more, it sped up and weaved between cars on the road as if the driver was raging.

Meanwhile, Anastasia felt an odd sense of relief as she sat in Nigel's car. Now that Elliot knows I'm having dinner with Nigel, I'll have a reason not to buy him dinner. She pulled her phone out to drop the man a text. 'I don't have time to buy you dinner tonight. You can eat on your own!'

"How have you been?" Nigel asked.

"Not too bad!" she uttered while rubbing her brow.

"I've decided to rent an office building near your workplace, Anastasia. I'll be moving my office over, so we'll be really close to each other in the future," he

said.

"Are you renting an entire office just to be closer to me? Do you have too much money to spare?" Anastasia let out an amused laugh.

"That's not the whole story. I don't like my father's office—it's a little too old-fashioned for me. So, I figured I'd renovate a whole new space for myself. Then, for the sake of being able to have lunch with you, I decided that I would pick a place nearer to you!" Nigel had made up his mind to give it his all in chasing after Anastasia.

"A regular woman like me can never understand what rich people like you think," she muttered flatly.

"Come on. Let's pick Jared up before we go for dinner." Nigel had already been driving in the direction of the kindergarten. While Anastasia went down to pick the little kid up, Nigel waited at the front gates. Soon enough, all three of them went to a restaurant nearby for dinner.

Anastasia stole a look at her phone to see that Elliot hadn't responded to her—she wasn't even sure if he had seen her text. After dinner, Nigel brought Jared to shop for presents as usual. Anastasia knew better than to stop Nigel from doing such things. As Nigel held Jared in his hand, it seemed like Nigel was an uncle who was bringing his nephew around. Nigel was a little too young to seem like he was a father.

After they were done at the mall, Nigel sent them to the entrance of their residential area. When he recalled how Anastasia and Elliot had brought groceries back home earlier that day, he decided that he wanted to visit Anastasia's house too.

"Can I go to your place for a while? I need some water," he said.

"There's a convenience store just there," she replied while pointing in a direction. Nigel couldn't care less about the convenience store. "I want to drink it in your house."

She smiled. "Okay! Let's go, then!" It was Nigel's first time in Anastasia's new house, and he looked all over the place as if he were searching for some sort of clue or evidence.

"What are you looking for?" Anastasia asked as she handed him a glass of water. "This is just a reminder, Anastasia, but you shouldn't bring random men back to your place! You're a girl, so you need to ensure that others don't take advantage of you," he said.

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Anastasia's smile stiffened for a few seconds before she let out a light cough. "Of course I know that."

"Anyway, you shouldn't trust any other guys apart from me." Nigel was tempted to just state Elliot's name explicitly

"I got it." Anastasia nodded. Right then, Jared accidentally knocked into her bag on the couch, and a bunch of things fell out. Among the items were her keys, her lipstick, and an invitation card.

Nigel's sharp eyes immediately caught sight of it, and he picked it up. "Did you receive my grandmother's invitation as well? My grandmother's the one who is hosting this charity dinner."

"Oh! Yeah." Anastasia pressed her lips together into a smile. She didn't want to mention that her mom had once saved Elliot. Nigel was elated to hear this, and he quickly gave her a reminder. "You have to come! I'll be there too, and I can introduce you to my mom and dad."

"Okay!" Anastasia nodded thoughtfully. She had already told Harriet that she would be there, so she had to attend the dinner. "Oh, by the way, I'll prepare an evening gown for you," he offered.

"It's fine." Anastasia immediately rejected him. But Nigel didn't want to be rejected, so he continued insisting on his wishes. "I'll show you how good my taste is! Trust me. I'm leaving now." Anastasia sent him to the elevator. "Drive safe," she uttered.

He turned around to give her another stern reminder. "Promise me that you won't bring other men home, okay, Anastasia?" For the sake of reassuring him, she gave him a firm nod. "Okay, okay. I know you care for me. I'll take note of what you said."

Once he got into the elevator, she heaved a sigh of relief before returning home to give Jared a bath. She read a book with him before she went to shower. When she came out of the shower, she heard her phone ringing, and she rushed over to see Elliot's name on her screen.

"Hello?" She picked up the call.

"Are you home?" The man's voice was deep and thick, which made Anastasia's ear tingle. She knew that it was wrong for her to have stood him up, but she didn't have much of a choice. It's not my fault that Nigel showed up all of a

sudden, right?

"It's nearly 10.00PM. Of course I'm at home," she replied.

"What's going on between you and Nigel?" The man's voice carried a hint of distaste as he questioned her. "We're more than good friends," she replied.

"I told you not to fool around with his feelings. If you don't want to get married to him, then you shouldn't give him hope." The man gave her a stern warning. Anastasia felt like he was too much of a busybody, so she rolled her eyes. "What's wrong with us being friends? Furthermore, you are in no position to warn me about my relationship with Nigel. What are you going to do if I fall for him and decide to marry him?"

"Do you want me to tell him about how you forcefully kissed me twice?" The man's voice

sounded extremely sinister all of a sudden. She was taken aback by his words, and she immediately let out a cry. "Don't talk nonsense, Elliot!"

"What? Does he know about how the lines are blurred between us?" he asked.

"There are no blurred lines between us. Things are clear between you and I- there's nothing going on between us at all," she replied with a determined look in her eyes.

"You owe me dinner. You have to make up for this in the future." The man scoffed before ending the call. Anastasia held onto her phone and gritted her teeth in anger. How can there be a man as annoying as him? He's really sticking his nose into all aspects of my life.

Anastasia lay on her bed for a while, but she couldn't seem to fall asleep as she knew that the prizes would be revealed the next day. Furthermore, there was going to be an award ceremony at 3.00PM. If she won a prize, she wouldn't just get the trophy; she would also win a cash prize of 1 million. Anastasia needed the money, so she naturally hoped to be the lucky winner. Such thoughts made it hard for her to fall asleep.

Meanwhile, Hayley was also losing sleep in her luxurious villa. Ever since she took up her fake identity of being Anastasia, she had been enjoying her life as a rich girl. However, she still felt empty with just materialistic pleasures-she didn't have the relationships she desired. She desperately wanted her relationship with Elliot to blossom. Ideally, she'd be able to get physical with him.

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If Hayley got another child, she would be able to better secure her position as Mrs. Presgrave. But how am I supposed to get Elliot into bed with me? Even though he's nice to me, he has never given me the chance to get close to him. If I didn't initiate hugs with him the past few times, he would have never been the first to hug me. Ultimately, Anastasia's the only one he approaches willingly. Ever since they slept together five years ago, he has been searching for her. It's obvious that he fell for her the first time their bodies touched. I have to find a way to get Elliot drunk so that I can get my chance. Maybe I should bribe one of the people around him to help me with this. But would any of them listen to my orders?

A cold look flashed in her gaze. She had done all sorts of things in the past, and she had dated a few men, so she was far from being a pure, chaste woman. Elliot had a male assistant, Daniel, who had delivered items to her in the past. This male assistant was an educated man who had good looks and a well-built figure—he was much more qualified to be her boyfriend than all her previous boyfriends. Hayley's ultimate goal wasn't just to conquer Elliot's heart, but also to own the entire Presgrave Corporation. So, she was willing to take all sorts of risks just to achieve this. After taking a glance at the time, she gave Daniel a call.

"Hello, Miss Seymour." Daniel sounded rather surprised to receive her call.

"Are you free to come over, Mr. Lancaster? There's a huge rat in my house, and I'm a little scared," she lied.

"What? Okay. I'll come over right now." It was Daniel's duty to fulfill all of Elliot's orders, and taking care of Hayley was one of his jobs. He arrived at her house 30 minutes later, and Hayley already had a sexy nightgown on under her shirt. When Daniel saw how Hayley looked, he twisted his expression into one of panic.

Hayley told him to check the master bedroom, and he walked in obediently while Hayley stepped aside to get him a glass of water.

Daniel gulped down the whole glass as he was thirsty from all the nervousness that he felt. After he was finished with the water, he felt like his whole body was on fire. When Hayley leaned forward to hug him, he was afraid for a few seconds, but he allowed her to take over him just moments later. They had a heated session in Hayley's master bedroom.

It was about 5.00AM by the time Daniel held his head in his hands and sat by the edge of the bed. He was filled with regret and self-criticism. Right then, a soft arm wrapped itself around his waist. "I belong to you now, Daniel. You have to take responsibility for me!"

"I'm sorry, Miss Seymour. I made a huge mistake." He pushed her aside hastily.

Her gaze darkened as her voice turned cold. "Do you think Elliot will forgive you if he finds out that you slept with me, Daniel?"

He stared at her with a look of pure helplessness in his eyes, so she softened her voice a little as she continued speaking. "Daniel, the two of us are the only ones who know about this. However, from now on, I want you to obey me. You will do whatever I tell you to do, okay?"

"I won't do anything illegal," he uttered.

"I don't need you to do anything illegal. I just want you to tell me all about Elliot's daily schedule and the women he interacts with," she ordered. Daniel didn't want his life to be ruined, and he

was fine with whatever Hayley wanted him to do. "Okay. I'll tell you exactly whatever President Presgrave does every day."

"Well, tell me-have there been any important things that Elliot has been up to lately?" Hayley lay down on the bed like she was a queen, glaring at the man as she questioned him.

"I can't tell you about his work-related stuff, but he will be attending the family's charity dinner this Friday. You will be able to see him," he replied.

"What? This Friday? It's already Wednesday-why haven't I received an invitation?" Hayley frowned.

"I heard that all the invitations have been sent out. Didn't you receive anything?" he asked.

"No! Who's hosting it?" she cried.

"It's a charity dinner hosted by Old Madam Presgrave. You should have received an invitation!" he replied. A resentful look flashed in Hayley's eyes. It seems like Old Madam Presgrave values Anastasia more than she values me. I can't believe she didn't invite me to such an important event. I bet she invited Anastasia, didn't she?

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Does she think I won't go just because she didn't invite me to it? Well, that makes me want to go even more. "Great. From now on, I want you to tell me everything about Elliot. Also, I want you to keep an eye on Anastasia. If she has any intimate interactions with Elliot, I need you to tell me immediately."

Daniel held a relatively important position in the company, although he wasn't as powerful as Elliot's head assistant, Timothy. Regardless, Daniel still had access to

most of Elliot's daily schedules. After Daniel left, Hayley still felt too furious to go to bed. What does Old Madam Presgrave mean by this? Is she looking down on me? Does she want me to stay away from Elliot? Hayley was especially furious because of the unfair treatment .

The next morning, Anastasia rushed to her office after sending Jared to school. Today was a day she had been looking forward to. When she arrived at the office, Grace opened the door and came over to give Anastasia some words of comfort. "Don't mind all the nonsense that they say about you, Anastasia. I trust that you and President Presgrave are innocent." Anastasia could no longer be bothered by these things-she felt that there was no point in clarifying such matters, and that she shouldn't be living her life based on others' comments.

It was about 10.00AM when Anastasia's landline rang. "Hello?" She picked the call up.

"You need to come for a meeting, Anastasia. I have the list of winners with me." Felicia's voice came from the other end. Anastasia felt her heart skipping a beat. Is it out already? I thought it'd only be out by the afternoon. She headed to the meeting room with a mixture of fear and excitement coursing through her veins. The rest of the staff members from the design department were already there, but Felicia had yet to arrive. Alice shot Anastasia a cold glare as Anastasia sat down opposite her. Anastasia merely cast her an uninterested glance.

"I wonder if it's Alice or Anastasia who won the prize! I'm so excited! That's 1 million worth of cash right there." One of the junior designers made the atmosphere tenser on purpose.

"We'll find out once the director arrives," another person replied. Right then, Felicia walked into the room and glanced at the two competitors before taking a seat at the table. "The sponsored meal that you guys have been waiting for has been approved. Would you guys like to eat together tonight?"

"Of course! We'd love a feast, Director Evans," someone cried. Both Alice and Anastasia exchanged glances. Judging by the look on Felicia's face, they could tell that someone in the company must have won a prize. The winner had to be one of them.

A look of jealousy flashed in Alice's gaze. It's obvious. It has to be Anastasia.

"Alright! Let's organize dinner for tonight! Well, I'm going to proceed with announcing the winners and the prizes that they will receive. Firstly, I'd like to congratulate the champion of this jewelry design competition

-Anastasia! You've won a total of 1 million!"

Anastasia heard a loud ringing sound in her ears before Felicia even finished her

sentence. Me? Am I the winner? Does the 1 million belong to me? Her heart was filled with joy at that moment-she had finally gotten the money she needed for her son.

Felicia turned to Alice before she continued speaking. "The company decided to also provide some rewards to those who were selected, so Alice gets 20,000 as a consolation prize." Alice curled her lips up into a sarcastic smile. A consolation prize, huh? What a joke.

Right then, the room erupted into applause as Anastasia found herself drowned by a bunch of wishes. She hastily thanked the people who congratulated her before turning to thank Felicia. "Thank you for your encouragement and support, Director Evans."

"You got this because of your own skills, Anastasia. Continue to work hard, okay? Alright, the meeting's over. You guys can decide on a place to have dinner tonight."

Felicia stepped out of the room, and Anastasia was just about to leave when Alice crossed her arms and let out a scoff. "Don't you feel any shame for taking this 1 million, Anastasia?"

"Why should I feel ashamed?" Anastasia asked in return. She was confident about her own work.

"I don't think you should thank Director Evans. Maybe you should thank President Presgrave instead-I bet you only got this prize because he put in a good word for you. He was the one who gave you this 1 million. I wouldn't have the nerve to take this money if I were you!"

Alice let out a scoff and walked out after finishing her sentence. Anastasia was the only one left in the meeting room after that, and her mind went blank for a few seconds.

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Could there have been a hidden reason I got this prize? Did Elliot help me win this? Did I not win this with my own skills? The cash prize had been increased from 10,000 to 1 million-outsiders might see this as the company's generosity, but it doesn't seem that simple to me now. The more I think about it, the more this seems to be one of Elliot's acts. He intentionally raised the cash prize, and he intentionally gave me the chance to win this. He's indirectly trying to repay me.

Anastasia felt her face turning hot as a mixture of shame and anger filled her insides. She grabbed her phone from the table before leaving the meeting room. On the way out, a bunch of people congratulated her. Anastasia often got things her way in the company, and she was close to the boss, so none of the staff members had the guts to trigger her. Instead, all of them tried to suck up to her. Once Anastasia walked into the elevator, she pressed for the eighth floor without any hesitation. That was the level Elliot's office was on. She bumped into Rey right after the elevator doors opened, and she immediately questioned him. "Is Elliot inside?"

"President Presgrave is..." Rey was about to ask for a reason Anastasia wanted to meet him, but she had already pushed the door open.

A handsome man was seated on the couch, and he shifted his gaze up to see a woman walking while panting. With a calm, unfazed expression, he looked into her eyes. "Is anything the matter?" he asked.

"Tell me-did you have anything to do with the International Jewelry Design Competition?" she asked in an interrogative tone. Behind her, Rey shot Elliot a nervous look. However, Rey turned and shut the door behind him after exchanging glances with Elliot.

"Felicia told me that you won first place in it. Congratulations." Elliot narrowed his eyes for a moment before speaking. There was only one thing Anastasia wanted to know then. Did I win first place with my own skills? If this guy arranged for me to win it, then I wouldn't feel accomplished at all. There would be no meaning to this title.

"Don't you have any confidence in yourself at all?" He curled his lips into an icy smirk.

"Of course I have confidence in myself... But-" Anastasia fixed her mesmerizing eyes on him. The man cut her off before she could finish her sentence. "Do you think I have nothing better to do, Anastasia? Do you think I would mess around with such tiny competitions? If you don't want the money, the company can always save it instead of handing it to you." He spoke in a domineering and arrogant tone that allowed him to take full control of the situation in the room. Anastasia felt herself losing the courage she had earlier after he threatened to withdraw the cash prize. She desperately needed the money-she didn't want her father to worry, and she wanted Jared to go to a better school. "Elliot, you'd better give me the cash prize if you're sure that you didn't meddle with the results." Anastasia turned to leave right after finishing her words.

The man curled his lips into a thoughtful smile after she left. Once Anastasia got

back to her office, Felicia walked over to congratulate her. Felicia got Anastasia to attend the award ceremony and told her to place the trophy among the rest of the showcased items in the company.

Anastasia nodded obediently. At 3.00PM sharp, she brought her assistant, Grace, to collect the trophy before setting it at the most conspicuous spot on the shelf. There was even a picture of Anastasia on the trophy which made it more eye-catching than ever.

That evening, the staff members discussed and agreed on a location to have dinner together. Alice was the only one who didn't attend the dinner, while Anastasia was the main highlight of the night. The dinner was mainly organized to celebrate her win, after all,

Anastasia requested for Felicia to take some money out from her cash reward to pay for the dinner, but Felicia rejected this idea immediately. Before the dinner celebration, Anastasia had phoned her father and asked if he had the time to pick Jared up. "I have a dinner that I have to attend," she explained. It had been a while since Francis saw his grandson, so he gladly agreed to pick Jared up. Perhaps it was due to his age, he was increasingly appreciative of having a grandson to care for.

The company dinner was hosted at a restaurant nearby their office. More than 10 of the staff members gathered at a long table, and the restaurant served all sorts of dishes that filled the table. None of them had to worry about the price of the food they ordered since it was all paid for by the company.

Anastasia sat beside Felicia, and they talked about the competition that had just passed. There had always been great competition among the jewelry companies in their local industry, yet none of the more established businesses managed to win any prizes this time. All of the designers were furious when they heard that Anastasia was the one who won the prize!