

## Read Billionaire Baby Daddy online free by Claire Adams

### Chapter Eight

Andrew

Although I sometimes appreciated the convenience of working from home, I really preferred being in the office, right in the thick of things. But that morning, Renée and I had woken up late, and it had seemed pointless to go into the office for a few hours just to turn around and go back home. Anyway, it was a Saturday, and Renée was always telling me that I needed to relax more on the weekends.

It was funny, coming from her, seeing as she was at the gym at the moment for her tri-weekly fitness class, which would be followed by a smoothie date with her friends, which would be followed by drinks with different friends. She didn't know the first thing about relaxing on the weekends. It was one of the things I appreciated about her.

I checked through my messages and emails, slogging through a myriad of inanities, while I munched on the lunch that Janice, my maid, had brought me. It was nothing fancy, just a small salad alongside leftovers from the previous night. But her meals were definitely tasty. I'd started eating at home a lot more since Renée and I had started getting serious, and I never failed to appreciate the woman's creativity and depth of cooking skills.

"Is everything okay with your lunch?" Janice asked as she began mopping the kitchen floor.

“It’s great,” I said around a mouthful. “Just a shame that Renée couldn’t be here to enjoy it as well.” I’d tried to convince her to blow off her class to stay for just a little longer, promising her a workout to rival the one she’d get at the gym, only far more pleasurable. But she’d laughed and untangled herself from my arms and gone to shower, locking the bathroom door behind her in case I got any ideas.

Janice snorted, bringing me back to our present conversation. “If you say so, sir.”

I grinned at her, knowing full well that Janice didn’t share my love for my current girlfriend. “You think I should break up with her.”

“I never said that,” she said, pretending to focus on her mopping, even though I knew the woman liked to gossip.

“I know she can be haughty,” I mused as I continued to click through messages. “She rubs a lot of people the wrong way. But she and I get along well.”

“I can see that,” was all Janice said. “I’m glad she makes you happy.”

“She must be wonderful if I’ve been able to date her for a few months!” I said, chuckling. “That’s a new record for me, you realize.” I frowned at one of the emails that I’d received. “Of course, it hasn’t escaped Katherine’s notice that it’s a record for me either, and she’s gone and invited us for a double-date on Friday night.”

“That could be fun,” Janice said.

I laughed. “In what universe would going on a double-date with one’s younger sister and her husband-to-be, be considered ‘fun’?” I asked. “It’ll be torture. I love Katherine, but I just know she’s going to go on

and on about her wedding preparations, making subtle hints to me the whole time. And then she'll probably ask Renée to be one of her bridesmaids, meaning that I can't break up with the woman until after Katherine's wedding, which won't be for months, putting undue pressure on what is still very much a fledgling relationship."

Janice failed to hide her grin. "Well, if you're enjoying yourself with Renée, does it matter that your relationship is still young?" she asked. "It's about time you settled down anyway. You're at a good age for it."

"I'm still in my prime," I argued.

"And it's not like you need to continue to work yourself so hard. You have plenty of money saved up to last you for the rest of your life. You don't need to grow your savings anymore."

I burst out laughing at that. "Janice, do you honestly think that the only reason I go to work day in and day out is because I want to earn more money?" I asked. "I enjoy the work that I do. Anyway, things would fall apart if I weren't there to make sure everything was on track."

"Then you need to delegate more," Janice said simply.

The doorbell rang, startling both of us. I didn't have a fence around the property because I didn't like the aesthetic of it. All the same, everyone knew I, Andrew Goldwright, lived there, and no one seemed to want to bother me. I wasn't expecting anyone, and I didn't have any friends who would pop over unannounced. They would never know if I was home or not.

I remembered Lexi's long-ago comments about security and grinned a little. She'd been worried about me being robbed, but I hardly ever even got solicitors.

I nodded at Janice. “Would you get that for me, please?”

She put down her mopping and went to answer the door. I turned back to Katherine’s email, trying to think of some way to respond to it. There was just no good way to say ‘hell no’ politely.

I clicked out of the message, resolving to come back to it later, and got back to my work emails, wondering absently why Katherine had sent a personal email to my work email anyway. Probably she thought I was more likely to check that one. Maybe she was hoping my secretary would see the thing and schedule the dinner for me, without telling me about it until it was too late to cancel.

Janice came back into the kitchen, looking uncertain.

“Who was it?” I asked. “Let me guess: it’s a critical election year, and they want to have accurate polls of the area to pass on to my representative. Or else, I will absolutely die if I don’t buy the latest in drone technology, or potato-peeling technology, or whatever the latest ‘inventor’ has thought up.”

“Actually, you may want to answer this one,” Janice said, looking and sounding almost as though she’d seen a ghost.

I frowned and closed my laptop, giving her my full attention. “Is something wrong? What have the neighbors done now?”

“It’s not the neighbors,” Janice said, shaking her head. “You’d really better answer this one for yourself.”

“I’m in my sweatpants,” I pointed out. “I’m not even wearing a shirt yet.”

“I’ll get you a shirt,” Janice said. “I just folded a load of laundry, but I was waiting until after I mopped the floors to bring it upstairs so that then I could get to work on dusting the upper floor.”

“Okay, okay,” I said, holding up my hands and wondering why she was so insistent about it. I wondered if whoever it was had given her lip when she’d tried to shoo them away. If they had, I was going to have to have a serious word with them. Janice might only be my maid, but I looked out for my loyal workers.

I grabbed a shirt off the aforementioned stack on top of the dryer and pulled it over my head, running a hand through my hair to get it back to some semblance of normal. Then, I went out to the front hall.

Standing there in the doorway was none other than Lexi. It had been a few years since I’d last seen her, and there were a few wrinkles around her eyes which hadn’t been there before. She was thinner, too. Almost gaunt, even. But she looked just as beautiful as ever, despite the fact that she was dressed in paint-stained jeans and an oversized sweater, with her dark hair pulled up in a messy ponytail.

It was honestly strange that I still remembered her name and was able to recognize her. I must have slept with a hundred other women in the intervening years, and yet, she was the one that I couldn’t seem able to get out of my mind. Not that I’d ever admit that to anyone, and especially not to her.

I cocked my head to the side, wondering what she was doing there. In Hollywood movies, you always saw those one-night stands coming back years later to confess their undying love or other ludicrous things like that. But Lexi hadn’t struck me as the kind of woman prone to displays like that. The other thing Hollywood had taught me that she might come

looking for was money. She'd threaten to blackmail me or something like that. But what was she going to do? She didn't have anything on me.

Maybe she wanted me to get her a job with Orinoco. The company was still surging further and further ahead of its co

mpetitors. We had to be doing better than whatever company she was working for.

I tried to remember what company it had been that she was working for when we had met, but the name escaped me. It had been too many years and too many other takeovers since then, and one company tended to blend into another.

I didn't dwell on how strange it was that I remembered her name and couldn't remember the name of the company that we'd almost bought.

Whatever she was doing there, I wasn't about to help her. I wasn't running a charity business. If she wanted a position with Orinoco, she would have to apply, the same as anyone else. I wasn't about to give her preferential treatment just because we'd spent one night, albeit a great night, together. Nepotism was no way to run a business.

"What are you doing here?" I asked, but even as I was asking it, my eyes fell on the small girl at her side.

The girl was young, maybe two or three, and she was clinging to Lexi's hand, her eyes wide and worried. As my gaze fixed on her, she bit her lower lip, and I could tell that she wanted to duck behind her mother's legs. But she was a brave little thing, and she didn't move except to shuffle her feet a little.

Was this Lexi's daughter? Was that why she had suddenly turned up on my doorstep, because she wanted to blackmail me into helping out with

this kid? She must be really desperate, to turn to a one-night stand for help.

But the kid didn't look very much like Lexi. In fact, if I had to point to someone that she looked like, the girl looked very much like Katherine had at her age. If someone had taken a picture of the kid and put it up on my mantle next to the similar pictures of Katherine and I around that young age, I wouldn't have even noticed anything out of place.

My eyes darted back to Lexi's, even though I already knew what she was about to say. Lexi scooped up the girl, holding her in her arms, and I could see that the young mom's eyes were brimming with tears.

"Andrew?" she asked, her voice hoarse. "This is Emma. She's your daughter. Our daughter."

With all the women that I'd slept with over the years, I had known, somewhere, that I must have gotten at least one of those women pregnant, statistically speaking. But to find out that I had a young daughter? That was another thing entirely. I stared at the pair of them, absolutely stunned.

Then, I gathered my wits and took a step back, holding the door open. "I think you'd better come inside."