

Room for you 11

Chapter 11 “Get out of my face! I’m tired of looking at your face!” Anastasia pointed at the door and yelled at Hayley. “What’s wrong? The man didn’t please you well because he wasn’t strong and fit enough? You’d better treat me with some manners before everyone in the company knows about your dark secret. If word about it gets out, I wonder how you’re going to move on in your career.” Soon, Anastasia dialed the intercom and spoke to Grace. “Please come here.” As soon as her assistant arrived, Anastasia pointed at Hayley, who was sitting on the couch, and coldly said, “She is not my guest. Please see her out of this building.” “Who says I’m not? I came here because I wanted to engage your service in jewelry designing.” Hayley folded her arms, acting haughtily. However, little did she know that the necklace she was wearing was beginning to catch Anastasia’s attention as the latter squinted and looked closer. *How come Hayley is wearing my masterpiece? Is the necklace really custom-made, or is it just a counterfeit that looks like a real one?* “You’d better get out of my face before you piss me off.” Anastasia stood up, speaking impolitely to Hayley. However, Hayley reacted with a darkened look on her face and gritted her teeth while opening the door. “I’m going to speak to your manager about your attitude and make sure you’re fired from the office.” Meanwhile, Grace was stunned when she saw that, initially thinking Hayley was indeed a guest, only to realize she was here to mess with Anastasia. As soon as Grace stepped out of the office, Grace anxiously urged her superior to do something. “She mustn’t complain about you, Miss Tillman. Please stop her!” On the verge of losing her temper, Anastasia opened her office door just before she was greeted by the sight of Hayley growling in the open workspace. “Tell your boss to see me. I want to complain about your designer, Anastasia! I engage her as a client, but she rudely turns me down and tells me to get out of her face.” At that moment, everyone else in the office only watched the lady’s madness in silence, as if they were enjoying a show. Soon, Anastasia took a deep breath and walked closer to Hayley. “What do you want?” “What do I want? I want you out of this company!” Hayley clenched her jaw and revealed her sinister nature. Already consumed by her anger about the incident that happened five years ago, Anastasia eventually succumbed to her emotions. Her impulse prompted her to teach Hayley a lesson, even though that might cost her job. Before Hayley could react, Anastasia raised her hand up high in the air and swung it across the former’s face, giving her a big slap on the cheek. “Ah...” Hayley shouted in pain, collapsing onto the ground. “I’m your client, Anastasia.” At that instant, every bystander in the office took a deep breath in a worrying manner when they saw how Anastasia slapped her client. *Has she lost her mind or something? Where did she get the guts to slap her client like that? Does her family own this company or something?* On the other hand, Anastasia fixed her gaze on the necklace around Hayley’s neck, finding it somewhat an eyesore. Therefore, she spared no thought about the necklace’s genuineness and went on to ruin Hayley’s fake acting by forcefully tearing it off her neck as soon as she crouched down. “Ah!” Hayley screamed in fear. When Anastasia tried to pull the necklace away from her, Hayley, who was piqued by her outburst, quickly got a hold of her hand and refused to let her destroy it. *This is my favorite necklace! It’s worth a few million, so no one can destroy it!* While the two ladies were fighting each other over the necklace, a man’s deep voice was heard in the elevator. “Stop, Anastasia!” Anastasia looked up just when Hayley also heard the familiar voice. With her hand on her cheek, Hayley looked up in disbelief before she was stunned by who she saw. *How come Elliot is here?* Seeing Anastasia’s firm grip on Hayley’s necklace, Elliot immediately grasped her wrist and pulled her up with a frown on his face that clearly suggested he was angry. “Are you done messing around here?” As soon as Elliot finished his sentence, he walked closer to Hayley, who froze in fear because she didn’t expect him to show up there and had no idea that he knew Anastasia. *Oh dear, I’m so screwed!* Just when she

thought her secret was going to be exposed, the man suddenly crouched down and asked with a tender voice, "Are you alright, Hayley?" "Elliot, it hurts..." Hayley immediately put on a show, tears gushing out of her eyes like a waterfall in that instant. Then, she weakly leaned into Elliot's arms and pretended to cough, covering her neck with her palm like she had just been suffocated painfully. In that instant, Anastasia was left with her eyes wide open, unable to believe that Hayley and Elliot knew each other. *Why is Elliot treating her so gently? Who are they to each other?* Unknown to Anastasia, every other bystander couldn't help but feel scared for her, thinking it would be the end of her career for slapping the boss' lover. On the other hand, Hayley was observing Anastasia and Elliot's interaction under the guise of her tearful face, but as she continued to watch closely, she began to feel happier because she was sure that Anastasia had no idea she had spent the night with Elliot. Therefore, she came to the conclusion that neither of them was aware that they had slept with each other that night, feeling grateful that luck was on her side. "Carry me, Elliot..." Hayley placed her arm around Elliot's shoulders, pitifully begging him. When the man noticed Hayley's sorry state and her swollen cheek, he carried her in his arms and walked toward the elevator. As soon as the elevator door closed, Anastasia was still caught in a trance. *So, I can't believe Hayley is able to become Elliot's girlfriend after just five years.* "What are you waiting for, Anastasia? Pack your stuff and get out of here! I can't believe you just got on the wrong side of President Presgrave's lover, as if offending a client wasn't bad enough. That's pretty gutsy of you!" Alice came closer and mocked Anastasia, thinking the reward was hers to claim. Meanwhile, Anastasia took a deep breath and decided to take some time to process the news, finding it too strange to believe that Hayley had become Elliot's lover. *I don't see how Hayley is attractive to an outstanding man like Elliot. The only explanation is that this man has gone blind. That must be the only answer to it. After all, he deserves someone else better than a wicked lady like Hayley.* Anastasia returned to her office with puzzlement as she closed the door and disconnected herself from the rumors outside her office. In the meantime, Elliot was sitting on the couch in his office while Hayley was wiping her tears with tissue paper and whining about what happened earlier that day. "Anastasia was my.... classmate. She and I have a bitter history, but I didn't think she'd turn me down when I engaged her, let alone humiliate me. When I threatened to complain, she came at me and went physical, even strangling me with my necklace. Look at my neck. It's all red now." Noticing the red mark around Hayley's neck, Elliot could tell how hard Anastasia went physical with her and began to reframe the way he perceived Anastasia's character. "I sympathized with the loss of her mother at a young age and also understood that her father neglected her for most of the time during her childhood, but I didn't know she would go so far as to hit me." Hayley covered her face, shedding tears in silence. "I'll take care of this matter." Elliot comforted the lady. "I'll get someone to take you home." "How are you going to take care of this matter, Elliot? Are you going to lay her off?" Hayley looked at Elliot with her tearful face, trying to play on the man's sympathy by showing her vulnerable side. Soon, Elliot dialed the intercom and told his assistant to take Hayley back home. When she stood up from her seat, she seized Elliot's sleeve and urged him to take action against Anastasia. "Elliot, you mustn't go easy on that lady. Someone with no manners like her is unfit to be your employee."

Chapter 12 "Be a good girl, okay?" Elliot gently caressed Hayley's head. In that instant, Hayley was over the moon, feeling satisfied that she had gained Elliot's favor. Unlike Anastasia, Hayley was flattered by the sudden entitlement that came to her life. However, she quickly decided to stop pressing on due to her fear of the repercussions that might follow her greed. Furthermore, she was hoping to win Elliot's heart with her meek character. She tried to be as gentle as possible since she didn't have good looks that could make an impression on any man. Thinking she had won the battle, she believed Anastasia was

going to be laid off soon and put her mind to ease. As soon as Hayley got out of sight, Elliot reached for the phone and dialed the intercom. "Hello." Anastasia's voice was heard. "Come to my office at once," the man responded with a voice that sounded angry. At the same time, Anastasia took a deep breath in her office, thinking her fate was sealed while preparing for the worst. *Well, I'll just quit and leave Bourgeois if worse comes to worst.* Then, she took the elevator to the 8th floor and made her way to the president's office, whereupon she knocked on the door and entered the room. In the meantime, Elliot was sitting in his chair, giving off an intimidating aura that filled the atmosphere around his room. "Explain yourself." The man questioned Anastasia about her violent outburst earlier as a boss. Anastasia squinted, thinking there was no point for her to explain anyway since she reckoned Elliot would believe everything his girlfriend, Hayley, said without question. "Who is Hayley to you?" Anastasia knitted her eyebrows and asked. "Have you forgotten your place, Anastasia? You're my employee, and since you're in the wrong now, you should be the one answering my questions," Elliot replied. Knowing what the man was trying to say, Anastasia curled her lips upward. "You saw what happened. I gave her a slap in the face, so what kind of explanation do you want to hear from me?" "Why did you want to hit her? Was it because she wanted to complain about you?" "It was personal, which was the same reason she came to see me today. I know it was my fault to get physical with her, but she deserved it." Anastasia stood her ground firmly, refusing to back down. Elliot stared at Anastasia with a complicated look, wondering whether the reason behind her unreasonable nature was really because of her mother's death and her father's questionable parenting method. "If you're willing to admit your mistake, I promise I'll let you off this time, Anastasia." "Admit my mistake? You mean apologize to Hayley?" Anastasia sniggered sarcastically and clenched her jaw. "There is no way I will ever do that." "Anastasia, this is an office, not someplace for you to settle your personal scores." Elliot angrily lectured Anastasia, finding himself at the end of the rope while trying to reason with his life saver's daughter. Moreover, Hayley was the lady he thought he had been missing and searching for the last five years. "In that case, I'll resign." Anastasia hardened her heart and made up her mind, thinking she should just walk away and leave all the problems behind her. *Fine, I'll quit.* "Stay right there, Anastasia," the man shouted out to her. Anastasia stopped in her tracks without looking back because she didn't want to look at Elliot's face anymore. Now that she realized he was Hayley's boyfriend, she couldn't help but feel annoyed to even look at Elliot. *What a waste, Elliot! You're such a handsome man, but sadly, you're blind.* "I'm not going to terminate you. You can stay, but I want you to promise me that there is no next time. Do you hear me?" Elliot tried his best to keep Anastasia in his company, as he was bound by his grandmother's wish to look after him. Needless to say, Anastasia couldn't bear to leave her current position either because of her keen passion for designing. Moreover, she also loved her job at Bourgeois after having worked there for three years. Soon, she looked back and fixed her eyes on the man who propped himself with his arms on the table, warning him to be careful about Hayley. "Hayley is not as kind-hearted as you think she is. I'm sure you don't want to fall for one of her tricks one day, so keep your eyes open when you're around her." "Well, you were the one who resorted to violence today," Elliot squinted and replied. Unknown to Elliot, Anastasia wanted to do more than just beat Hayley up. Deep down, she wished she could just kill Hayley but decided to keep the thought to herself, considering how much Elliot was concerned about Hayley. Soon, she returned to the office, while Felicia didn't receive any notice about terminating her, which surprised everyone else in the company. After all, they were all wondering how Anastasia got away with it upon hitting their president's girlfriend. Grace came over with a cup of coffee, comforting her superior. "Miss Tillman, are you sure you're alright?" "I'm fine." Anastasia was so mad that she almost lost all of her inspiration. Thus, she put down the pencil and rubbed her forehead. "What are the people

gossiping about out there?" "Miss Tillman, you should just ignore their gossip," Grace said. "Tell me what they're talking about." "They're saying that you're backed by someone so powerful that even President Presgrave can't terminate you. Some of them even say you're his mistress, which is why that lady confronted you after finding out about your relationship with him," Grace answered while observing Anastasia's facial expression. Upon hearing that, Anastasia felt amused as she nearly burst into laughter, disgusted with the idea of being with Hayley's boyfriend, no matter how dumb she was. Not long after that, Felicia summoned her to her office and lectured her about the proper manners of handling clients. Otherwise, she would be sure to kick Anastasia out of the company, regardless of Elliot's decision. As speechless as Anastasia felt, she didn't feel like explaining the whole story because there was simply too much to talk about between her and Hayley. Furthermore, she was too ashamed to mention what happened five years ago to anyone. In spite of all the upsetting events, her mood took a turn for the better when her phone rang the moment she returned to her office. "Hello." "Why do you sound so tired?" A man's voice was heard. "Well, I'm tired indeed. When are you coming back?" "A few more days, I guess. Anyway, I have some good news for you. There is a high-end jewelry fair coming up soon, and I'm going to add your name to my invitation list. By then, you'll have a good chance to explore the fair all you want because I bet your favorite jewelry will probably be there." "Really? That's awesome! When is it?" Anastasia felt a rush of excitement all over her body. "It'll be held this Saturday at 7 PM. It'll probably take two hours and end around nine. Is there anyone else who can look after Jared for you?" the man asked in concern. "Yes, there is. I could tell my assistant or my dad to look after him." Anastasia didn't want to miss the golden opportunity to explore the jewelry fair, where she could witness some quality masterpieces from some of the top-notch designers. "Sure. Have fun. When I get back, I'll treat you to a nice meal." "No problem. I'll be waiting!" Anastasia hung up the call just when an attractive figure flashed across her mind. It turned out that the caller was her good friend, Nigel Manson. While the man was raised in a wealthy family, both of them came to know each other before Anastasia returned to the country. Thinking everyone would encounter someone who would help them at some point in their life, she believed hers was Nigel. *Saturday night? That's two nights from now, isn't it?* Anastasia began to look forward to the occasion. On the other hand, Hayley was rubbing her swollen cheek with some ice in the luxurious mansion. Deep down, she couldn't suppress her grudge against Anastasia, whom she blamed for causing her a swollen cheek. *My face is what matters the most to me, yet Anastasia went for it straight. Damn her!* "I'll never let this slide so easily, Anastasia!" Hayley then reached for her iPad and started browsing through the news just when she saw a female celebrity flashing her invitation card at a high-class jewelry fair. At that instant, Hayley became tempted to attend the function, believing it could help heighten her status since she had been trying hard to fit in amidst the upper class of the society. Although she knew an event like that was no place for someone like her, she wondered whether she could use the Presgrave Family as her ticket to attend the function.

Chapter 13 At the thought of that, Hayley reached for her phone and dialed Elliot's number. "Hello, does it still hurt?" "Elliot, I want to attend a jewelry fair. Can you take me there?" Hayley implored. "What jewelry fair?" "Let me show you a video." Hayley hung up the call and forwarded the video to Elliot shortly before she received a text message that briefly read, 'Alright, I'll take you there.' Hayley exclaimed in excitement but accidentally hurt her swollen cheek in the process. As she hissed in pain, she began to curse Anastasia once again. "You're a b*tch, Anastasia! You're a jewelry designer, yet you can't even attend a high-class jewelry fair like this one." On the other hand, Anastasia stumbled across the same video about the jewelry fair in her office and learned from the others who were invited that there were formal dress codes required for the occasion; otherwise, access would be denied. Due to

that, she became worried, not knowing what she should do because she couldn't afford to rent a decent-looking banquet dress. Just when Anastasia was worrying about her dress code for the jewelry fair, her train of thought was suddenly interrupted by a phone call, which turned out to be an unidentified number. Nonetheless, she answered the phone and asked, "Hello." "Hello, may I speak to Miss Tillman? I'm calling from FH Clothing Store to inform you that our customer has just reserved a banquet dress for you. Would you be free to drop by and try it later in the afternoon?" "A banquet dress for me?" Anastasia was stunned but quickly knew that it was Nigel who did it for her. "Sure, I'll drop by later." *How thoughtful of that guy!* Anastasia reached for her phone and sent the man a text message with a grateful emoji. "Thank you so much, Nigel." "Don't mention it. I hope you love it!" Nigel replied with a big smiley emoji. Soon, Anastasia applied for a one-hour leave later that afternoon because she realized the clothing store was just a stone's throw away from her office. Since FH Clothing Store was an international brand, its outlet often became the place where many socialites visited and shopped. As soon as Anastasia entered the shop, she was greeted by the shop owner herself. "Please come with me, Miss Tillman." After that, Anastasia was taken to the VIP room on the second floor, where she came face to face with the dress on the mannequin, as if it was silently waiting for her arrival. *Oh my gosh! This is gorgeous!* Anastasia complimented the dress just when the shop owner pointed at the dress on the mannequin. "This is the gown that Mr. Manson prepared for you, Miss Tillman. Do you like it?" Anastasia widened her eyes a little, wondering how rich Nigel actually was. *Is he a billionaire or something? I can't believe he prepared such an expensive banquet dress for me.* Soon, she heard the shop owner explaining more about the dress with a smile. "This banquet dress is a masterpiece from our top designers. The fabric was sewn with approximately eight thousand diamond beads, and the dress is sold for eight million in our store." Anastasia's heart skipped a beat when she heard what the shop owner said. *Is Nigel trying to give me a heart attack or something? This dress is certainly not cheap at all! A few diamond beads are more than enough to make me go bankrupt, so just imagine if I lose them by accident.* "Is there any other dress that you could recommend, perhaps?" Anastasia reckoned the dress was too expensive for her. "But Mr. Manson has already paid for the dress on your behalf, Miss Tillman. Furthermore, I think it suits you pretty well." The shop owner showed her approval by praising Anastasia's beauty despite her current ordinary outfit. Meanwhile, Anastasia was deeply in love with the dress as she loved everything about it besides the price. "Alright then, I'll try it on." She decided to stop being coy, thinking she could repay Nigel by treating him to some fancy meals throughout the year. After all, she didn't want to miss the opportunity to attend the upcoming jewelry fair. Thus, Anastasia went ahead and tried on the banquet dress, realizing how fitting it was for her. Soon, she was told to come to the clothing store again the next day around 4 PM as the make-up artists and hairdressers would be there to help her dress up with the jewelry. Later that night, she told Jared that she would be attending a jewelry fair and asked him whether he preferred Francis or Grace to look after him. While the boy wanted his grandfather to come over, she called Francis and arranged the plan with him. Needless to say, Francis agreed to take care of Jared while Anastasia was away, telling her that he would take the child with him for some fancy meal and spend the night together with him. It was only after the arrangement was made that Anastasia could finally put her mind to ease about her son. When Saturday rolled around, Anastasia took her son to the shopping mall early in the morning to buy some vegetables and snacks for him. Then, she went back home to continue her design work while Jared played with his Lego. At the same time, they were accompanied by the windy breeze that wafted through the window as the white curtains billowed with it. The peaceful and tranquil vibe lasted until it was 3.30 PM when Francis swung by with some fruits and milk. Then, Anastasia left her son with her father and went out

right away while Francis sat on the couch and looked at Jared lovingly. *Oh gosh! I'm going to love this cute little boy so much!* Not long after that, Anastasia hurriedly arrived at the clothing store where the shop owner had prepared everything for her. Then, one of the make-up artists sized her up and commented on her appearance in a surprised manner. "Miss Tillman, you have perfect skin, like there are no pores on it at all. How do you maintain such good health for your skin? What kind of premium skincare products do you use?" "Oh, it's just the moisturizer that I usually apply on my son's skin." Anastasia pursed her lips and smiled while the two make-up artists instantly understood that she was born with such a perfect skin tone. *Oh dear, how I wish I could have her skin.* Soon, Anastasia closed her eyes just as the make-up artists started to apply some foundation to her face. After that, they kept her naturally thick eyebrows and proceeded to draw her eyeliner. Then, they went on to put the lipstick on her lips just as her beauty instantly stunned them like a glaring diamond. Upon lifting Anastasia's hair, the artists permed the hair that hung around her ears and helped her put on a pair of diamond earrings to match the necklace she was wearing. "Let us help you change your banquet dress, Miss Tillman." Anastasia nodded in response, changing into the white luna dress as she saw how gorgeous the dress made her look in the mirror. "Miss Tillman, we have also arranged a driver to take you to where you need to be. Your ride awaits at the exit." "Thank you." Anastasia smiled gratefully. "Enjoy your evening." The shop owner saw Anastasia out of the clothing store while the latter looked at the Benz in front of her in a ponderous manner. *I guess I didn't really know Nigel as well as I thought I did. He told me his family was running a hotel business when we met each other abroad.* On the other hand, Hayley was also working hard on making herself look as pretty as possible. For that, she hired a crew of professional make-up artists who had served some celebrities before, determined to cover her ordinary looks with the make-up so that she would look like a socialite. At that moment, a mysterious black Rolls-Royce pulled up outside the mansion, whereupon Elliot opened the car door and stepped out of the vehicle. As the setting sun shone on him, his manly aura made him seem especially charming and attractive. In the meantime, Hayley stood in the parlor while fixing her eyes on the man who was walking closer to her, her heart pounding rapidly like a jackhammer. *Oh my gosh! He is so handsome.* "How do I look, Elliot?" Hayley bashfully blinked, wanting to hear his compliment. "You look great!" Elliot nodded, although he reckoned his feelings for Hayley were more than just about her good looks. After all, he was under the impression that she sacrificed her own virginity for him five years ago and suffered from a trauma that would follow her forever. Therefore, he told himself that he would do his best to make it up to Hayley. "Let's go then!" Hayley seized Elliot's arm, looking forward to the jewelry fair later that night. At the same time, she was glad to have Elliot by her side, thinking she would be the lady whom every other woman envied wherever they went.

>Chapter 14 While the jewelry fair was held in a private exhibition hall with tight security, the alleys and streets around the place were sealed with security guards carefully verifying every guest who was invited to the event. Meanwhile, Anastasia heaved a sigh of relief as soon as she went through the security check with her pearl-beaded purse. After that, she was ready to enjoy the privilege a VIP guest should have in the event, as she was ushered by a female concierge to the banquet hall. Soon, Anastasia found herself in a grand-looking hall where she could see rows of glass cabinets, but since the event hadn't begun, the guests were invited to enjoy a buffet before they went on to take their seats. It turned out that Anastasia's seat was in the sixth row, which was a place that everyone wished they had. However, little did they know Anastasia considered herself lucky because her seat was initially meant for Nigel. While the other guests slowly filled the empty seats, Anastasia found herself seated next to a man who seemed to be in his thirties. With his shiny hair and branded outfit, it would suggest that he was no

ordinary man. At that moment, he fixed his eyes on Anastasia, finding her different from the others, even though there were many other pretty ladies around. "Nice to meet you, lady. My name is John Curtis. Here is my name card." John gave Anastasia his name card that read, 'president from Deluxe Incorporated'. "Hi, I'm Anastasia Tillman." Anastasia introduced herself with a polite smile. Meanwhile, there were two guests who arrived late at the exhibition hall. Noticing two silhouettes of a man and a lady entering the place with their hands held together, Anastasia couldn't help but wonder who came late, but when she looked up, she was instantly stunned to find out that they were Elliot and Hayley. *Oh, boy! We're living in such a small world.* Anastasia stared at Hayley, who was dressed like an angel, tightening her grip around her waist as she could barely hide her hatred for the latter. On the other hand, Elliot was wearing an expensive black suit and a pair of delicate slacks, which accentuated his strong and intimidating aura. At the same time, every other lady, who had their eyes on the man, was all stunned to see the president from Presgrave Corporation, but when they noticed the lady who was accompanying him, they began to frown at her ordinary appearance and wondered whether she was his girlfriend. Nonetheless, they couldn't help but feel jealous of Hayley, wishing they could be in her place instead. Anastasia pretended as if she wasn't aware of their presence and raised her glass, sipping the red wine in it. Nonetheless, Hayley observantly noticed Anastasia's presence, instantly feeling stunned because she didn't expect that she would show up at such a high-class event. *Who is she to attend this jewelry fair? Is she even qualified enough to be here?* Not long after that, Elliot also noticed Anastasia's presence and was coincidentally arranged to be seated opposite her. Thus, Anastasia had no choice but to reluctantly face him, no matter how much she didn't want to. The moment she looked up, she met a pair of charming eyes in the illuminating candlelight just when the man's chiseled face and good looks came into view. With his thick and natural eyebrows, his attractive gaze and high nose bridge became even more noticeable, making him look even hotter. *Oh god! How can someone ever be so handsome like him?* Anastasia blinked and stared at the man who was also looking back at her at the same time while they locked eyes with each other for a few seconds. Soon, she sensed a pair of hateful eyes looking at her shortly before she realized Hayley was glaring at her. "Let's have a toast, Miss Tillman." John tried to strike up a conversation with Anastasia. Anastasia raised her glass and toasted John, smiling at him as she would rather look at John than Elliot. *Hmph! Since Hayley is my enemy, that makes her boyfriend my enemy as well.* "Miss Tillman, you have to try this. Trust me. You're going to love the taste." John was able to sense Anastasia's enthusiasm, having a good feeling that he could win the lady's heart over. "Thank you." Anastasia picked up the pastry the man gave her and took a bite of it while revealing a sweet smile. In the meantime, Hayley seized Elliot's arm and coyly pointed at the desserts far away from her. "Elliot, I want that one." The man then stretched out his long arm and brought the pastry to her, whereupon she proceeded to enjoy it. At the same time, she occasionally gawked at Anastasia with glee to gloat at the latter. Meanwhile, Anastasia rolled her eyes upward at Hayley, wondering how she managed to win Elliot's heart while making sure he obeyed her every wish. *What's wrong with Elliot? I can't believe he is treating that lady like the apple of his eye.* "Excuse me. I'd like to use the washroom." Anastasia felt an urge to answer nature's call as she stood up and revealed her glimmering dress that accentuated her slim waist, which would take any man's breath away. On the other hand, John had his eyes glued to Anastasia, who was walking away, just when Elliot raised his glass and happened to notice the lady's presence. *Oh my, it is indeed a surprise to see her here.* "Elliot, I'll be right back. I need to use the washroom." Hayley rose from her seat as well and followed right behind Anastasia. While Anastasia was washing her hands alone in the magnificent-looking restroom, Hayley soon walked in and approached her. "Don't tell me you got in here with the help of some man you're

dating.” Hayley looked at Anastasia in the mirror and taunted her. “That’s none of your concern!” Anastasia shot a cold gaze back at the hostile lady’s reflection in the mirror. “I heard they were strict with the selection of their guests tonight. After all, no ordinary person stood a chance to be here, and you’re one of them, so how come you’re here?” “What about you? You’re not much better than I am, after all.” Anastasia mocked Hayley. “I’m Elliot’s girlfriend, and that puts me ahead of you,” Hayley replied complacently. Anastasia grunted and said, “Would you believe if I said I could make myself his wife with just a word? What would that make you?” “What do you mean?” Hayley’s face changed. *Does she remember what happened that night?*

Chapter 15 Anastasia smiled glacially. “Do you really want to know? I’ll tell you then. The person that my mom saved back then was actually Elliot.” Hayley was stunned and overwhelmed by horror, wondering whether it was truly Anastasia’s mother who saved Elliot. *No way! That was too much of a coincidence! If it was true, Anastasia could probably make the Presgrave Family repay her even though she wasn’t aware of what happened that night.* “Therefore, I’m warning you not to piss me off; otherwise, I’m going to be the one who’ll end up as the young mistress of the Presgrave Family,” Anastasia warned Hayley. Hayley shivered in horror at that moment, clenching her fists as her fear took over her rational mind. “Anastasia, I’m sorry for what happened back then. Would you please forgive me?” Hayley guiltily begged for forgiveness. “You want my forgiveness?” Anastasia sprinkled the water droplets at Hayley on her hands by flickering with her fingers. “You wish!” Although Hayley blocked the sprinkle with her hand, her face still ended up getting inevitably wet. Having her eyes glued to Anastasia as she walked away, she was taken over by the rage and grudge. While Anastasia’s appearance was especially eye-catching to many men in the fair, Hayley was reminded of her popular good looks during their childhood. *Anastasia, I will never let you marry Elliot! He is mine and only mine!* Hayley clenched her fists at the thought of that. When Anastasia returned to the table, she sexily flickered her hair around her ear. Then, she looked up once again, only to meet the man’s eyes once more when the illuminating candlelight shone on them and made them look like black obsidians. On the other hand, it seemed to Elliot that the lady was like a shining pearl that glowed in the dark as her beauty and elegance drew the attention of every other man who laid eyes on her. However, little did Anastasia know that she was one of the most beautiful socialites attending the jewelry fair. Not long after that, Hayley returned from the washroom as well, pretending to look sympathetic as she made her way to her seat next to Elliot. Unlike her insolent and haughty attitude in the washroom earlier, she now appeared to be an innocent lady who needed a man to protect her, which disgusted Anastasia and killed her appetite. Thus, she quickly grabbed herself a glass of water to keep herself together. “Miss Tillman, this is the beef steak with truffle that has just been served. Would you like to taste one?” John got her a glass of water. “Thanks.” Anastasia smiled gratefully in response. When they were done with dinner, the ensuing session was used to introduce the banquet’s theme. However, Anastasia made her way to the balcony alone with her glass of red wine, probably because she was the only person without company that night. Glancing at the city view that looked like a golden paddy field that shone in the night, she couldn’t help but feel sad about the fact that people tended to lose themselves in the process of pursuing wealth in modern society. “Why are you here?” A deep voice from a man was heard. Without even looking back, Anastasia knew who was talking and sluggishly sniggered. “What’s wrong? I had to report to you before I attended this jewelry fair?” “Who is Nigel Manson to you?” Anastasia turned around in surprise, gazing at the attractive man who was holding a glass of red wine in his hand with a frown. “You know Nigel?” “Yes, I do.” Elliot calmly answered, to which Anastasia wasn’t surprised at all. After all, she believed the reason Nigel was invited to a jewelry fair like this one was probably because of his wealthy and influential

family. For that, she didn't think it was surprising for both men, who were a part of the upper-class society, to know each other. "You haven't answered my question. Who is Nigel to you?" The man behind Anastasia refused to give up asking his question. Anastasia sipped her red wine. "Why should I tell you?" She then walked away without bothering to wait for a response from him, feeling disgusted about his position as Hayley's boyfriend. While the lady was walking away, Elliot was left behind, squinting with a darkened expression on his face. Meanwhile, Hayley was chatting with a socialite among the crowd when she noticed Anastasia leaving the balcony. Knowing that Elliot was also there, she couldn't help but feel jealous of the lady. *Was Anastasia trying to seduce Elliot?* Then, she caught a glimpse of Elliot leaving the balcony as well, just when an idea sprang to her mind and prompted her to approach Anastasia with her glass of wine in her hand.

Chapter 16

At that moment, Anastasia was busy toasting with the other men who were approaching shortly before she bumped into Hayley the moment she turned around.

"Let's have a toast, Anastasia. I'd like to apologize for what I did to you in the office back then." Hayley apologized, but in response, Anastasia chuckled coldly, knowing clearly that Hayley was putting on a show under the guise of her hypocrisy. Therefore, she decided to ignore her and walk away, but Hayley suddenly seized her hand, which was holding the glass of red wine, and poured it all over her own dress before Anastasia could react.

"Ah!" Hayley screamed in horror.

As Elliot quickly came closer to investigate the commotion, Hayley took two steps back and fell into his embrace. "How could you do this to me, Anastasia?" she

questioned Anastasia and blamed her for ruining her banquet dress with the red wine.

On the other hand, Anastasia was left standing in a trance while watching Hayley feign innocence. This b*tch really deserves an Oscar award for her acting.

"Anastasia, I know it's my fault that I wanted to complain about you, but you can't do this to me either..." Hayley tearfully and bitterly said, trying to make herself look as pitiful as possible. At the same time, every other socialite from the upper-class society in the banquet instantly looked at Hayley with sympathy before they gave Anastasia a contemptuous look for her despicable actions.

"Apologize, Miss Tillman." Elliot's voice was cold, and his glacial look suggested that he was exasperated.

Anastasia gawked at Elliot unhappily, thinking he was jumping to conclusions without understanding what the situation was. After all, it was Hayley who caught her hand and made her pour the red wine on her dress. Therefore, Anastasia found it unacceptable for her to apologize when she didn't do anything wrong. "Why should I apologize?" She jutted her chin stubbornly, looking at the man with her firm gaze.

"It's alright, Elliot. I'm fine. I can just get changed." Hayley shook her head, seemingly trying to endure her bitterness while pretending to take the moral high ground. "Till forgive her."

Anastasia clenched her fists. "I don't need your forgiveness."

“Anastasia, apologize to her at once!” Elliot spoke angrily, his eyes filled with coldness as his forehead was covered in veins.

Anastasia gazed at Elliot with her beautiful eyes and chuckled coldly. “I could apologize, but only if she is willing to hear it on her knees.”

On the other hand, Hayley felt especially gleeful on the inside that her plan had successfully worked, thanks to her understanding of Anastasia’s character ever since they were in primary school. Knowing that Anastasia was headstrong and unyielding, Hayley was trying to piss her off in front of Elliot, in order to make her look like someone who was unreasonable.

“You...” Elliot’s eyes were filled with rage when they fell upon Anastasia.

“Please don’t blame her, Elliot. It was my fault. I was just too clumsy, so don’t worry about me. I’ll be fine. Please don’t come down hard on Anastasia.” Hayley bit her lip, seizing Elliot’s sleeve while acting like she was swallowing her grievance.

Upon hearing what Hayley said, Anastasia felt a strong urge to raise her hand to the former. Soon, the female manager came closer and said, “Miss Seymour, we have prepared a new dress for you. Please come with me.” Hayley nodded and followed behind the manager.

Meanwhile, Anastasia was able to sense the unpleasant attention around her but decided to bite her lip and put up with it. After all, she still hadn’t gotten to see her favorite jewelry and had no plans to leave the place yet.

“Come with me.” The next second, Anastasia felt her wrist clamped by Elliot’s firm grip, whereupon she was forcefully taken to a private lounge.

“Let me go, Elliot.” Anastasia wanted to free herself but was no match for the man’s superior physical strength.

As soon as they entered the lounge room, Elliot immediately let go of Anastasia, who folded her arms and glared at him. “What’re you doing?!”

Nonetheless, Anastasia only glared at the man angrily, standing her ground firmly without showing any signs of backing down. “What’re you going to do if I don’t apologize?” Thinking Hayley was Elliot’s girlfriend, Anastasia believed he would do everything he must to protect her. Thus, she reckoned it was pointless for her to explain herself.

“Anastasia, I know your mom passed away when you were young, but can’t you just behave yourself and treat people nicely? Why must you always be so mean and

unreasonable?” Elliot was somehow annoyed, wondering why Anastasia couldn’t just stay away from trouble.

Chapter 17

Anastasia stared at the man that was worried about her. “Does my character matter to you that much, Elliot? I’m not married to you, so it shouldn’t matter to you even if I screw myself up.”

Then, she turned around and wanted to leave, but her arms were grabbed by the man before he pushed her against the wall within the next second while his handsome face met hers in proximity.

There was anger in the man's eyes as he sneered, "Looks like I've overestimated your capability, Anastasia."

"Let go of me, Elliot. You a*shole!" Besides what happened that night five years ago, Anastasia had never been in such close proximity to a man.

She moved away in disgust when the man's scent entered her nose. No matter how handsome Elliot was, Anastasia was disgusted by any men who had ever touched Hayley

On the other hand, Elliot was stunned for a few seconds when he got closer to Anastasia as her scent reminded him of that night five years ago.

It was the similar faint floral scent that seduced him, and he couldn't help but imagine how soft Anastasia's red and full lips would feel if he kissed her.

When Elliot realized what he was thinking about, he quickly let go of Anastasia, while her arms were already red due to his forceful grip.

"Stay away from me, Elliot," Anastasia warned as she was about to leave after opening the door.

After she came out, Hayley had already changed into her gown and was receiving consolations from other young ladies.

At the same time, everyone entered the exhibition in the hall when it was time for the exhibition to start. As Anastasia entered along with the crowd, she started observing the pieces of jewelry as if she was a jewelry master.

"I heard that girl managed to come in using the name of the young master of the Manson Family. You really run into all sorts of people here, huh?"

"I bet she used some sort of dirty tricks! If you know, you know."

"She is merely an insignificant designer! I bet she can't even afford a small piece of diamond here!"

Anastasia could hear the conversation between the two young ladies behind her that was obviously taunting her.

As Elliot's partner, all of the young ladies would definitely befriend Hayley, so all of them knew about Anastasia being a nameless jewelry designer.

Nevertheless, she couldn't be bothered by them as she leaned down to observe one of her works before a soft woman's voice rang out behind her. "Elliot, I heard that we can purchase the pieces of jewelry that are exhibited tonight, and I really like this jewelry, so can you get it for me? It's just that it's a little expensive as it costs around 10 million!" Hayley pointed at that jewelry that cost around eight digits and asked while holding onto Elliot's arm.

"Sure. I'll talk to the manager about it later," Elliot replied in a deep voice.

"Alright. Thank you, Elliot!" Hayley held Elliot's arm tighter before she gave Anastasia a taunting look.

Still, Anastasia acted as if she didn't hear Hayley and continued moving forward. She had initially come to enjoy the exhibition, but the other young ladies were making her feel uncomfortable, so she was planning to leave after she was done looking at the pieces of jewelry.

At the same time, Elliot's gaze landed on the figure who was standing in front of the jewelry counter. Under the light's illumination, Anastasia's beautiful facial features and quiet demeanor made her look as beautiful as the diamond that was being exhibited.

"Miss Tillman, why don't we move on from the bad experience just now? Do you have your eyes on anything currently?" John walked over to Anastasia with a glass of wine in his hand before asking.

He was unable to stop thinking about Anastasia's beauty, and her untamed stubbornness really mesmerized him. I bet she would behave the same in bed.

After John overheard from the other young ladies that Anastasia was just a small jewelry designer, he figured it would be easier to get her, considering her ordinary status.

"I'm just here to enjoy the exhibition." Anastasia pursed her lips and smiled.

"It's alright. I can buy it for you if you like it." John generously promised the young lady.

Nevertheless, Anastasia knew that she shouldn't accept his offer, so she shook her head. "I'm fine, thank you. I'm just looking around."

However, John continued following Anastasia and trailed after her wherever she went. He wasn't paying attention to any of the jewelry pieces, as he was only focused on Anastasia.

Upon seeing that, Elliot felt somewhat annoyed.

As a man, he could definitely tell that John had a hidden motive for being nice to Anastasia, and he couldn't help but feel angry when Anastasia interacted with John without any sense of danger.

Can't she tell what John is thinking about? This woman seriously doesn't know how to protect herself.

Chapter 18

When Anastasia checked the time and noticed that it was already 9.00PM, she realized that she needed to leave to return her gown, so she turned toward John and said, "Excuse me. I'll be leaving now."

"Let me take you home."

"It's fine." Anastasia turned to reject him before she ran into a young lady by surprise. Angered, the young lady reached out to push her. "Are you blind?"

Anastasia staggered backward before she looked up to see the socialite's arrogant face and apologized, saying, "I'm sorry."

"Do you really think that saying sorry solves everything? You better start kneeling down and cleaning my shoes after you step on my feet!" The young lady obviously wasn't going to let Anastasia off the hook and even wanted to humiliate her.

Right then, Anastasia pursed her lips. "I did not step on your feet."

"How dare you deny stepping on my feet when my feet are already hurting?!" the young lady snapped in anger.

When Anastasia came to the realization that the young lady purposely stood in front of her so that she would run into her, she decided not to bother anymore. "Excuse me, please move away. I need to leave now."

"Do you think that you can leave just like that?" Then, the young lady reached out to pull on Anastasia's gown before the sound of something tearing rang out. The satin fabric on Anastasia's gown was torn, and one side of her shoulder was revealed. Immediately, she reached out to cover her bare shoulder.

While John wanted to remove his blazer for Anastasia, someone else was faster than him as they quickly placed their blazer on her shoulder to cover her chest.

At this moment, Anastasia turned around gratefully to realize that the person who helped her out was Elliot.

Immediately, she swallowed her thanks. In fact, she didn't even want the man's blazer.

"Take your blazer away." Although Anastasia knew that she was going to attract other people's attention, she really didn't want to accept Elliot's kindness.

"Stop messing around," Elliot instructed. Why is she still stubborn in a situation like this?

On the other hand, Hayley, who was standing at the side, glared at Anastasia because she witnessed how quickly Elliot removed his blazer to cover Anastasia up,

"Hayley, I'll pick you up later," Elliot said before he pulled Anastasia out of the hall while Anastasia struggled against his forceful grip.

"Elliot..." Hayley felt like she was about to go mad from jealousy. How dare he leave me here to send Anastasia back?!

Meanwhile, Anastasia finally managed to remove Elliot's blazer. In that instance, her maroon bra was revealed from the torn gown. The sight of Anastasia right then was enough to make any man lust over her.

At this moment, Elliot's gaze darkened before he looked at her stubborn expressions and asked in annoyance, "Are you seriously leaving like that?"

"So what if I do? Even if I were to run outside naked, it would be none of your business." Anastasia didn't know why, but she really wanted to argue against Elliot and piss him off.

"You're a mother to a son, and you should really think about him." Elliot had never met a woman that could easily piss him off with just a few words, and it seemed like this woman was really capable of achieving that.

“Stop messing around, Anastasia. Can’t you just listen for once?” Elliot pleaded before he placed his blazer around her shoulders again when he noticed that the elevator had stopped.

There were a few foreign men in a discussion outside of the elevator, and Anastasia quickly headed to the entrance without removing Elliot’s blazer this time.

When she noticed a cab dropping off its passengers at the side of the road, she quickly headed to the cab while wearing Elliot’s blazer, and Elliot could only watch as she closed the car door and left.

Right then, Anastasia’s mind was a mess.

I’ve really managed to destroy a gown that costs seven digits! How am I supposed to pay for this?! Sh*t!

Chapter 19

After Anastasia returned to the shop and explained everything that had happened, the owner of the shop glanced at the torn gown before consoling her with a smile. “It’s alright, Miss Tillman. I’ve already bought insurance for this dress, and they’ll settle it for me.”

“I’m sorry. I’m really sorry.” Anastasia felt even more guilty.

“It’s alright as long as you had fun,” the owner of the shop assured.

Although Anastasia still felt guilty when she took the cab to go back home, she was extremely tired as well. All she wanted to do right now was to go home and hug her son until she fell asleep.

Anastasia finally reached home around 10.00PM. When she saw that Francis was still playing with Jared, she said, “Dad, I’m back. You can have some rest now.”

“Anastasia, Jared is a really bright kid, and I can’t even tell that he’s just four years old! You really did a great job educating him,” Francis exclaimed.

Upon hearing that, Anastasia couldn’t help but smile wryly as Jared learned everything by himself without needing her to educate him, and all she did was accompany him. After Francis went back to his room, she showered before hugging Jared tiredly and planting a kiss on his face. “Let’s sleep now, Jared.”

Since Jared had been playing for the entire day and was tired as well, he fell asleep in the blink of an eye. Nevertheless, Anastasia couldn’t fall asleep as she lowered her head to look at Jared before getting shocked.

Why are Jared’s facial features starting to resemble Elliot’s? I guess that’s probably because he’s good-looking, and every good-looking person looks similar to each other. This proves that Jared is going to be very handsome when he grows up. Although Elliot is a terrible person, it is undeniable that he’s handsome.

The next day, Anastasia told Nigel everything that happened during the jewelry exhibition while Nigel kept asking if she was injured.

“I’m returning to the country within a few days, and I’ll protect you,” Nigel said earnestly.

“I shall treat you to a meal when you return.”

“Sure. I miss Jared too, by the way,” Nigel laughed before replying.

“He misses you, too.” Anastasia laughed as well.

On Monday, she headed to the laundromat early in the morning to collect Elliot’s blazer so that she could return it to him at the company.

After finishing a cup of coffee and replying to all her work emails, Anastasia glanced at the time before calling Elliot’s landline.

“Hello?” A magnetic voice rang out.

“It’s Anastasia. I’m coming up now to return your blazer.” Then, Anastasia hung up before Elliot could say anything.

When she reached the entrance of Elliot’s office, she knocked before entering the office while the man sitting in the office gave her a sharp look.

After placing the blazer that was in a garment bag on the couch, she remarked, “I sent your blazer to the laundromat to have it cleaned already.”

“Are you really not going to thank me?” Elliot narrowed his eyes as he raised his chin to look at Anastasia.

“Thank you,” Anastasia replied hastily before leaving.

While staring at the woman who left as soon as she came, Elliot’s gaze darkened slightly. Is this really the woman Grandma wants me to marry?

On the other hand, when Anastasia returned to her office, Grace suddenly entered along with a person before she reported, “Miss Tillman, you have a guest.”

When Anastasia looked up, she was taken aback. Isn’t this John from yesterday?

“Miss Tillman, you’re really here!” John was surprised that he had come to the right place. After returning home from the exhibition yesterday, all he could think about was Anastasia, and he decided that he wouldn’t give up pursuing her until he won her heart.

“President Curtis... Why are you here?” Anastasia greeted merrily as he was a guest, after all.

At the same time, John was shocked when he saw Anastasia. While Anastasia looked like a goddess when she was in her gown, she looked extremely charismatic in her

office wear. A white blouse and a pencil skirt were enough to make her look sexy.

Chapter 20

“Miss Tillman, I’m here to customize jewelry for my mother’s birthday next month, and I was thinking of ordering a set of jewelry for her.” John wasn’t in need of money, and he wanted more excitement, so he didn’t mind forking money out for Anastasia.

Anastasia naturally wouldn't reject a business opportunity given to her, so she instructed, "Grace, please get us coffee and a fruit platter."

After Grace left, John's gaze quickly landed on Anastasia again.

"President Curtis, may I know if your mother has any particular interest in the shape or color of the jewelry? Does she prefer jade or crystal other than a diamond?"

"Diamonds will do. It's better if it's bigger and more expensive," John answered in a straightforward manner while Anastasia pursed her lips and smiled. "Sure. I'll come up with a draft for your design and send it over to your mother's house three days later. What do you think about that?"

"Since this is a present from me for my mother, it's better to keep things secretive. Why don't you come to me after you're done with the draft?" A cunning look flashed past John's eyes while Anastasia was checking a document with her head lowered. "Sure, President Curtis. I'll contact you once I'm done."

"Sure. I'm fine with that. Are you free later at noon? Why don't we go have lunch together?"

Nevertheless, Anastasia wasn't a fool and knew that John was trying to hit on her. Still, there was no way that she'd reject a business opportunity, so she nodded and uttered, "Sure. I know a nice restaurant just in front of my company. I shall make a reservation for two."

John nodded in satisfaction. "Miss Tillman, I'll be waiting for your break, then!"

"Why don't you wait in the lounge? It's much quieter there." Anastasia gave the man a suggestion before sending him off.

After dealing with John, she made a report to Felicia while Felicia made sure to tell Anastasia to secure the deal with John, seeing how they'd profit a lot from the set of

When Anastasia went to get lunch with John during the afternoon, John took the opportunity to brag about his finance and assets as well as his company, while

Anastasia acted as if she was shocked and awed.

After the meal, she made an excuse, saying that she had a meeting and wanted to leave, cutting John short and leaving him with no choice but to send her back to Bourgeois.

When Anastasia went back, she sighed in relief before returning to her office to continue working

On the other hand, Elliot took his phone and contacted someone in his president's office.

"Hey, Elliot! Why are you contacting me?" A man's chirpy voice rang out.

"Do you know Anastasia Tillman?" Elliot went straight to the point.

"How do you know?" Nigel asked in a surprised manner.

"She's an employee at my company. I ran into her yesterday at the jewelry exhibition and noticed that she came in using your name."

“Oh! Looks like you’ve really acquired QR Jewelry Group! Anyway, it’s true that Anastasia and I are close friends with each other.” Nigel admitted truthfully before he chuckled and asked, “How was she? She’s really pretty, isn’t she?”

“Are you trying to pursue her?”

“She’s not an easy one to pursue, though. I’ve been trying to go after her for three years already, but I still haven’t succeeded, so I can only remain as her close friend!” Nigel answered helplessly.

Despite that, Elliot’s facial expression was still dark. “How did you get to know her?”

“Remember the accident when my car flipped three years ago? She was the person who saved me. If she hadn’t dragged me out of my car, I would have died along with the car explosion.”

Of course, Elliot could still remember the terrifying car accident that Nigel had back then. Nigel had brushed path with the grim reaper briefly as the car that he was in exploded right after he left.

Nevertheless, Elliot didn’t expect Anastasia to be the person that saved Nigel back then. Is this fated? This would mean that the Presgraves owe the Tillmans a favor.

“Elliot, I’ll be returning soon. By that time, I’ll work at Bourgeois as well so that I can accompany her.”

“Stop messing around. You’re coming back to inherit your family’s business, not to pursue after girls,” Elliot reprimanded.

“Well, you’ll have to help me out to take care of her in the company, then.” Nigel could only reply to him this way.

When Elliot placed his phone down, he had a conflicted look on his handsome face. Looks like Nigel, Grandma’s favorite grandson, is pursuing Anastasia too.

Three days later, Anastasia’s draft was given the green light by Felicia, and it was ready to be given to John.

“Good day, President Curtis. I’ve come out with a draft already. May I know when you’ll be free so that I can deliver them to you?” Anastasia asked John.

“Hey! I’m sorry, but I’m still rushing back from my business trip right now, and I’ll only reach around 7.00PM. What about this? Why don’t you send the draft over to my place around 8.00PM at night?”

“Um ... At night?” Anastasia immediately got alerted.