

## My Baby's Daddy Chapter 356

### Chapter 356 You Made the First Move

For the sake of her face, which had just gone through a major procedure, Hayley had no choice but to keep her rage and anguish in check. It was as if a thousand needles were piercing her heart right now as she clutched tightly onto the sheets under her, and she had to swallow to keep herself from shouting out in maniacal fury.

Meanwhile, in Aversa, Anastasia was having dinner with Elliot at a lavish French restaurant, the ambiance of which only accentuated the man's suave demeanor and romantic nature.

When it came time for her to go home after dinner, Elliot drove her back to the neighborhood entrance and parked the car. She grabbed her purse, but just as she opened the door to step down from the car, she heard a low and somewhat disgruntled man's voice asking, "Aren't you going to ask me to stay for a cup of tea?"

Anastasia said firmly, "No, it's getting late. Maybe next time."

"The weather's so cold tonight, though. How about we have a sleepover? You have a bed, and I'll warm it up for you," he offered proudly.

She held onto the door as she sputtered and doubled over with laughter.

Elliot did not wait for her to speak before he got out of the car, and without her registering what he was doing, he walked over to her, grabbed her hand, and led her toward her apartment.

"H-Hey, Elliot! No, don't do this," Anastasia cried frantically.

However, he had already guided her through the neighborhood entrance. Panic filled her as they drew near to the apartment building. Jared wasn't home tonight, which meant there was no buffer between her and Elliot; she was at a loss as to how she should act around him.

More importantly, she wasn't a little girl anymore, but she was still terrified of what would happen now that they were two grown-ups left to their own devices. She had only just agreed to be his girlfriend, but it looked like he already had plans to make himself at home in her apartment.

"Open the door," Elliot prompted now, his gaze darkening as he stared at her meaningfully.

"Can't you just go home?" Anastasia looked up at him pleadingly. "It's really, really late."

“It’s only 8.30PM, which I think is considerably early.”

“I have work tomorrow, though,” she countered insistently as her mind scrambled for more excuses.

“Not if I say you don’t,” he pointed out with a roguish smile. He was the president, after all, and he thought granting his employees days off fell well within his purview.

“No, it’s really late.” She bit down hard on her lower lip. If one didn’t know better, one would think the man was a restless beast that had been caged for far too long, and he would devour her the moment she opened the door.

Amusement flashed in his eyes as he asked, “Are you that afraid of me?”

“Yes, I am,” she admitted. “Can you please leave now?”

“I promise I won’t make a move on you if you let me in—unless, of course, you make the first move,” he said solemnly.

With unwavering confidence, she argued, “I’d never make the first move.”

“I’ll stay for just a cup of tea,” Elliot needled in his signature husky tone, sounding like he was cajoling her. “Please let me go in and stay for a while.”

Anastasia couldn’t bring herself to say no to him, not when he was looking at her with puppy eyes even though he was known to be dangerous and domineering. She softened and took her keys out from her purse, opening the door as she warned him one last time, “No funny business. Otherwise, I’ll kick you out.”

“Okay,” he promised with good cheer.

Having opened the front door, Anastasia turned on the lights, which cast a warm glow over the living room. She set her purse down and changed into slippers before taking out a men’s pair from the cabinet for Elliot as she said, “Put these on.”

“How considerate of you,” he observed with a coy smile.

“It’s supposed to be for my dad,” she said, not wanting him to get too pleased with himself.

“Say whatever you want,” he replied a little glumly.

He sat down on the couch while she picked up around the house for a bit. Then, she went into the kitchen and brought him a glass of water. “Here, finish the water and skedaddle home.”

Elliot looked at the water, and suddenly, there was a dark gleam in his eyes as he called out, "Hey, could you come over here and see if I've got something in my eye?"

Anastasia was standing on the other side of the coffee table and drinking from her own glass when she heard this. She walked over to him worriedly. "Let me take a look."

However, she had only just drawn near to him when triumph glimmered in his half-lidded eyes. The next second, he put out his foot and tripped her, making her lose balance. She gasped in shock as she toppled forward into his embrace.

She felt a strong arm snake around her waist in one swift movement, and when she tried to prop herself up, she found that she was pinned firmly against him.

"You—" She looked up at him in bewilderment, and when she saw the devilish smirk playing on his lips, she knew she had been tricked.

Nevermore did she feel like a damsel in distress who had just been cornered by a handsome and roguish knight. Before she could protest, he chuckled and murmured huskily, "You've made the first move, so don't mind me playing along." The next second, the room spun as he flipped her over.

Just like that, Anastasia was trapped between Elliot and the couch with her face mere inches away from his, and she was acutely aware of how their bodies were closely pressed together.

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### **Chapter 357 Deep-Seated Trauma**

Anastasia wanted to cry out in exasperation, for she should have known better than to trust this man.

"Elliot, I swear, if you think you can—"

However, before she could say the words 'get away with it', Elliot inched forward and kissed her.

He intended to get away with this, and it looked like he was succeeding. After all, he couldn't help himself when it came to Anastasia; it was as if she was his fatal attraction, her presence probing and enticing him like a siren's call.

Anastasia struggled against him for a few seconds, but it was all for show since she knew there was no escaping the man on top of her. In the end, she succumbed to his kisses, the hunger in her awakening with the way he nibbled and tugged on her lips.

However, there was a voice in the back of her head, albeit a muffled one, that nagged at her and made her keep her guard up. She wasn't so much worried about someone walking in on them as she was about losing herself to Elliot and his deadly charisma.

She still wasn't ready to bring their intimacy to the next level, and while the kiss was sweet and lingering, she couldn't help sensing the danger in it as well. The air that crackled around them as their tension built reminded her of a brewing storm, and any time now, a hurricane would hit them and wreak havoc.

However, with the direction this very intimate kiss was taking, she wasn't sure how she could keep the floodgates closed any longer, not when the water was already bursting to come through.

Everything about Elliot—his breath, his warmth, and his testosterone-driven urgency—was shrouding her like a veil. The voice of reason in her mind was being constantly drowned out by her own desire, and for a moment, it was like reality had melted away into the background.

She was on the verge of surrendering to nature and primal instincts at this point.

Just then, Elliot whispered huskily, "I want you, Anastasia..."

This sent an electric current through her veins, and she shuddered as she willed herself to push him away. "Elliot, no..."

The next second, however, he picked her up from the couch without warning and carried her over to the master bedroom.

She was so stunned that her mind drew a blank. The dimness of the bedroom became something like a dark space for Elliot to act on his heightened senses. He wanted nothing more than to lay her down and please her in ways she could never imagine.

Anastasia's thoughts were hazy, and her insides were coiled up with mixed feelings she couldn't quite decipher. When she tried to push Elliot away, he clasped her wrists and pinned her hands above her head, which prompted indescribable fear to course through her all of a sudden.

"No... Don't touch me... Go away!"

Panic seized her. It was as if her mind did not perceive the man kissing her to be Elliot, but that sc\*mbag from five years ago. His strong arms, his towering build, and his domineering, unforgiving air struck a heavy resemblance to the gigolo from Abyss Club.

"Anastasia, what's wrong?" Upon sensing that something was off with her, Elliot stopped and reached out to hold her.

Unexpectedly, she struggled violently to get away from him as she cried, "Go away! Don't touch me!"

It was like he had become the source of her fear. Bewildered, he quickly got off the bed, strode over to the door, and turned on the lights in the room.

When he saw the girl curled into a ball on the bed with her eyes tightly closed while her body trembled with insurmountable fear and hurt, he felt his heart drop to his stomach. He hated himself for having pushed her too far.

He suddenly remembered the horrific ordeal she had been through. Whatever they had been doing just now—or rather, whatever he had been doing to her—had clearly brought her deep-seated trauma to the surface.

"Anastasia, it's me," Elliot murmured as he perched on the edge of the bed, keeping a safe distance as he reached out to stroke her hair gently. It made it seem like he was coaxing a wounded animal.

It was only then that she opened her misty eyes, and she suddenly became aware of how she had overreacted. She flipped onto her side, looking flustered as she mumbled, "I'm sorry for scaring you."

There was no hiding the guilt in his voice as he said, "No, I should be the one to say sorry."

She sat up slowly and buried her face in her hands. "I... I think you should go home."

He couldn't possibly leave her alone in this state. He implored softly, "Let me stay here and take care of you for the night. I promise that's all I'll do."

"I don't need you to take care of me," she muttered weakly as she shook her head, though her face was devoid of color.

At the sight of how frightened she looked, he was seized with the urge to find out who was the b\*stard that dared hurt her five years ago. If he managed to track him down, he would make him pay in blood.

"Can you tell me more about what happened that night?" Elliot asked. He wanted to help her get through this, and he didn't want her to have to shoulder this alone while suppressing the trauma and letting it fester in her.

Anastasia gazed up at the man in front of the bed. The trauma and the bad memories had hollowed her out, and she felt like a shell of herself. When he let go of her, she nudged him like a scared kitten seeking comfort.

Elliot refrained from holding her too tightly, and he kept his movements slow as he leaned forward to kiss her on the top of her head. "It's okay if you don't want to talk about it."

She closed her eyes tiredly. At the end of the day, she couldn't bring herself to word out the horrific things she had been through.

Finally, she released his arm, and her gaze was calm once more as she said, "You can go home now. I'll be fine on my own."

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### **Chapter 358 Fear of Intimacy**

"Do you think I could leave you alone like this?" Elliot held onto Anastasia firmly, refusing to let her go.

The steel edge to her demeanor had returned, and when she spoke, it was in clear, unwavering tones. "I've survived for five years; I'm pretty sure I'll be fine on my own for a night."

Elliot pursed his lips and asked tentatively, "Is Jared really the child of that hooligan?"

Anastasia hated confronting the truth of Jared's birth every time it came up, but reality was cruel, and there was nothing she could do to deny Jared's father's identity. "Yes," she finally bit out through gritted teeth.

Elliot's chest tightened. He understood that this was a painful topic for her, so he let it drop.

In the end, he got up and left after she insisted that he did. When the door closed behind him, an icy gleam flashed in his eyes as he vowed to uncover the wretched man's identity even if Anastasia refused to speak of him. He needed to know what kind of a monster could bear to hurt her so badly.

Presently, Elliot waited at the door, but when he realized that Anastasia was not going to open it and invite him back into the house, he left.

The only way he could achieve a breakthrough in this case was to find out which clubhouse the incident had taken place in. Just because Anastasia was set on remaining tight-lipped about it, he was sure that others might have some idea as to what had happened on the night she was assaulted.

As he sat in the backseat of the car, he began to consider his options. Hayley knew about the details of that night, but he didn't want to ask her about it. He sifted through

the names in his mind, trying to pick the person most likely to give him some useful insight on the matter.

He settled on one person at last, and that was Erica, Anastasia's half-sister. Given how she had brought up Jared's birth the last time she threw a tantrum, there was a high chance that she knew about the incident. He was confident that she could provide him with some leads on this.

As he leaned into his seat, Elliot pulled out his phone and gave Rey a call. "I need you to arrange a meeting for me with someone."

"Who would that be, President Presgrave?" Rey asked courteously.

"Erica."

In the silence of the bedroom, Anastasia was holding a glass of water as she sat on the lounge listlessly. She felt guilty for having imagined Elliot as the man who had assaulted her five years ago while they were intimate. In truth, she was stunned as well that the trauma she thought she had buried deep inside her heart could be so easily brought to the surface with a single touch, triggering her fear of intimacy.

She suddenly felt that this was unfair to Elliot. If they really did work out as a couple and got married, she couldn't possibly reject him for the rest of their lives and chain him to involuntary celibacy.

The next morning, Erica was still tucked under the covers when she suddenly received a phone call that made her bolt upright in bed. "What? Does young Master Elliot want to see me at noon?"

"Yes, President Presgrave has something he needs your help with. Would you be free to meet with him?"

Erica was so stunned that she couldn't string words together, and she stammered, "O-Of course. I'd be free to meet with him."

"In that case, will 11.30AM today do for you?"

"Yes, of course. I'll be there," she replied as she nodded vehemently.

When the call ended and she received the address for the restaurant where the meeting would be, she was so elated she could pass out. Never in her wildest dreams did she think Elliot would invite her for lunch.

"My goodness, what should I wear?" She leaped down from the bed and threw open her closet doors, rummaging through her clothes with fervor. She had but one goal in her mind, which was to seduce Elliot and make him her man.

She didn't care that he was Anastasia's supposed boyfriend, nor was she bothered by his history with Hayley. She was still dead set on bagging him because he was worth it.

She didn't tell Naomi about the meeting. After picking out a figure-hugging dress, she put on a blazer over it, thinking that if Anastasia could win Elliot over while dressed in pantsuits, surely that meant he had a thing for professional career women.

Then, she sat down in front of the vanity and began to apply her make-up delicately, not allowing even the slightest flaw. She was determined to show her best self to Elliot.

Meanwhile, all the departments in Bourgeois were getting ready to move into their new company building. Since the offices in Presgrave Corporation were fully furnished with the most lavish of decorations, the only thing that the departments had to do was to pack up their files and equipment for the big move.

Anastasia was nestled in the quiet of her office when Aliona suddenly walked through the door.

"Is there something you need, Miss Dora?" Anastasia asked curtly.

"Your efficiency in snagging President Presgrave is indeed commendable, Miss Tillman," Aliona drawled sarcastically.

"I will only entertain conversations about work, Miss Dora," Anastasia pointed out coolly. "The company is no place for us to talk about her personal affairs."

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### **Chapter 359 Tell Me What You Know**

"I just want to let you know that I will never give up on my feelings for Elliot," Aliona said. She was here for no other reason than to try and get on Anastasia's nerves after her own bitter resentment overwhelmed her. "For the rest of your life, you'll have me as competition," she added confidently. "I'm sure it'll only be a matter of time before President Presgrave notices me and falls for me."

Anastasia, however, was neither impressed nor intimidated. "Your non-achievements do not interest me, so take your gloating elsewhere," she pointed out sarcastically.

Contempt flashed in Aliona's eyes as she snorted and said haughtily, "We'll see who the real winner will be!" Now that Father's already plotting her demise, Elliot will be mine sooner or later once we get rid of her!

Anastasia, on the other hand, was admittedly affected by what Aliona said even though the latter had already left. It seemed as if Elliot constantly had a barrage of women who would not hesitate to seize even the slightest of chances to get close to him.

When noon rolled around, Anastasia made up her mind to invite Elliot out for a meal as an apology for what happened last night. If it hadn't been for her overreaction, things might not have ended on such a tense note, and the night would have been perfectly wrapped up.

She picked up the phone on her desk and dialed Elliot's extension. When he did not pick up, the call was automatically transferred to his assistant's line.

"Hello, this is the president's office," the assistant greeted courteously.

"Hi, Lily. Is President Presgrave in at the moment?"

"Oh, Miss Tillman! It seems President Presgrave has already left for a lunch appointment."

"I see. Alright, thanks."

Anastasia hung up and sighed in frustration. Then, she asked Felicia to join her for lunch instead.

Meanwhile, Erica was on cloud nine as she made her way over to the restaurant. She checked herself in the mirror constantly just to make sure that she looked as flawless as she did when she left the house. In fact, the tiniest smudge of her make-up would set her off at this point.

She had to present her flawless side to Elliot today. She reckoned that something about her must have caught his eye, which explained why he would ask her out for lunch out of the blue. The thought of this gave her a rush. If things went well, she might even surpass Hayley and Anastasia to become Elliot's new object of affection.

In every woman, there was buried confidence that would not dim under any circumstance.

Presently, Rey was waiting outside the restaurant for Erica, and when he registered her arrival, he led her up the stairs to the main dining atrium.

She was brought to a private dining room in which Elliot was already seated and waiting for her. Erica swallowed and felt her palms grow sweaty. At the same time, she nervously flipped her hair over her shoulder as she appraised the man shyly. After taking her seat, she asked, "Young Master Elliot, may I know why you've asked to see me today?"

Rey left to give them some privacy, and as soon as the door fell shut, Elliot slid a bank card across the table and said to her, "Miss Erica, there's a million in this card. All you need to do is answer my questions, and the money's yours."

Erica was stunned as she gaped at the card in front of her. A million was a tempting offer, and she blinked to snap out of her reverie. “What do you want to know, Young Master Elliot?”

“You have to promise to answer all my questions honestly,” he said as he eyed her somberly.

Disappointment surged through her at that moment. Have I read too much into the lunch invitation? Did he not ask me to join him for a meal because he likes me? However, when she glanced at the bank card, the thought of having a million in her pocket comforted her. After all, it was enough to last her for a while. She nodded and said, “Fire away, Young Master Elliot.”

He gazed at her darkly and asked, “First question—do you know the name of the man who assaulted Anastasia five years ago?”

Erica’s heart leaped to her throat. As it turned out, Elliot was only here because he wanted to know about Anastasia’s past. In a snide tone, she countered, “Why don’t you ask my sister? I’m sure she knows more than anyone else the details of that particular night.”

“If you have no plans of giving me the answers I want, then I won’t waste your time anymore,” Elliot said, not wanting to stay here and listen to someone speak ill of Anastasia.

He reached out to take back the card, but that was when Erica panicked and cried out, “Okay, okay, I’ll tell you. I’ll tell you whatever you want to know, Young Master Elliot.”

He paused and took his hand off the card. Money was the key to getting someone as greedy as Erica to open up. “I want you to tell me everything you know about what happened that night,” he ordered. He knew that she would not give up on the bank card.

While Erica knew that the incident at Abyss Club had been planned and set up by Hayley, it didn’t change the fact that she was an accomplice. There was no way that she could deny her involvement in the whole thing, so after a moment of thought, she said, “On the night of the incident, Hayley and I were hanging out at the club, but that was when one of our male co-workers decided to make a move on her. She called my sister out of panic to have her pick us up, but we waited for long enough to think she wasn’t coming at all. Just as we were leaving, however, Anastasia suddenly ran out of the club with her clothes disheveled, and that was how we found out she had been assaulted.”

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Elliot's fists clenched where they rested atop his knees as he pressed, "What did that b\*stard look like? Do you know what he did for a living?"

"I don't know. Last I heard, he was a male escort. Besides, you know how clubs can get rowdy and chaotic, so it's not as if I would have paid attention to anyone's background," Erica said, but the way she blinked her eyes told Elliot that she was lying.

Seeing that she was being untruthful, he went on to demand, "Tell me the time and place of the incident."

"I don't really remember the time, but I know it took place at Abyss Club."

Upon hearing this, Elliot's heart dropped to his stomach. Abyss Club? That was where Hayley and I... He snapped out of his thoughts and urged, "You're sure it was Abyss Club?"

"I'm sure," she replied firmly. "As for what happened that night, I don't quite remember." She wasn't lying this time.

He went on to probe for more information, asking, "Do you recall what seasonal clothes you were wearing? You would remember that."

Erica thought hard and said, "I believe we were wearing our summer wardrobe. Do you have any more questions, President Presgrave?"

"Why didn't you call the police and file a complaint on Anastasia's behalf after she was assaulted that night? You're supposedly her family, aren't you?" He sounded like he was accusing her.

She quirked her lips and muttered, "It wasn't as if we were the ones who caused something like that to happen to her. Besides, she happened to run into us when she left the club, and she wasted no time in pinning the blame on us even though we were innocent!"

Her narrative aligned with Hayley's. They would never confess to having admitted to Anastasia, upon her confrontation with them five years ago, that they had been the ones to set her up.

Elliot, on the other hand, had a grim look on his face. Erica had given him a new lead that he had never come across before, which was Abyss Club. This was the same club where he and Hayley had had their encounter five years ago as well. He wondered if this was all a coincidence, and if that were the case, he wanted to know the timeline.

"Are those all the questions you have for me, Young Master Elliot?" Erica asked, pulling him out of his thoughts.

“Are you sure you know nothing about the male escort from that night five years ago?”

“I swear I haven’t the slightest clue about him,” she insisted. “Also, I’m willing to bet that my sister walked into the wrong room and got herself screwed over by him. Apparently, he was a maniac who nearly tortured my sister to death.” She was deliberately saying this. Much like Hayley, she wanted to carve a vile impression of Anastasia into Elliot’s mind.

Anger rose in Elliot when he heard this. If he found out who that sc\*mbag was, he would be sure to wipe him off the face of the earth. “That’s enough from you,” he bit out through gritted teeth. He didn’t want to sit here a moment longer and hear Erica’s scathing remarks about Anastasia. “You may leave now.”

Erica took the bank card, but her gaze flickered wistfully over the elegant man sitting across from her as she said shamelessly, “Young Master Elliot, I just want you to know that I like you a lot, and I would do anything you ask me to if that’s what you want.”

At that moment, he looked up at her with his razor-sharp gaze that threatened to slice through her. She was so intimidated by this that she flushed and quickly elaborated, “What I meant was that you could ask me any other question you might have, President Presgrave. I’d be more than happy to help.”

With that, she turned to leave the room like how one might flee from danger. Holy crap! If looks could kill, I would’ve been dead a hundred times over, she thought as a chill ran down her spine. More importantly, she had seen how lowly she looked in Elliot’s clear, obsidian eyes. He was high and mighty like he was born to be on a pedestal, and what she had told him just now basically rendered her worthless.

After Erica left, Elliot summoned Rey into the room and said, “Retrieve all the security footage from five years ago at Abyss Club.”

He was determined to find out who that sc\*mbag was, and when he did, he would make him pay without ever letting Anastasia find out about it.

Over at Bourgeois, Aliona got a call from Riley, who said on the other line, “I’m going to need you to lure Anastasia out. My men are ready to execute the plan.”

Aliona’s eyes flashed with anticipation as a sudden bright idea came into her head. Nodding, she replied, “I know what to do.”

She hung up the phone, rose from her seat, and headed into Felicia’s office. “Director Evans, I’m supposed to meet a client, but I’m afraid I have too much work to do at the moment. Could you get Anastasia to take the order instead?”

“She’s probably busy. Why don’t you look for somebody else?” Felicia suggested.

“There’s a higher chance of us bagging the deal if she were to take up the job, though. My client is a young lady from a really affluent family, and she only came to Bourgeois because she heard so many things about Anastasia.”

Felicia pondered on this for a beat or two. She then answered, “I’ll talk to Anastasia and see what she says.”