

My Baby's Daddy Chapter 661

Chapter 661

Chapter 661

Anastasia was reading on the grassy lawn right outside the living room while Jared was playing with the cat. When she saw Elliot walking up to her with his silhouette outlined by the twilight glow, she set her book down and ran to meet him in the middle,

She had missed him dearly after not seeing him for the whole day,

Upon seeing her running his way, Elliot opened his arms and caught her just as she threw herself into his embrace like a child. He lifted her up by the waist and twirled her once, then set her back down. "Missed me?" he asked teasingly. There was a warm and gentle gleam in his eyes as he kissed her forehead indulgently.

She nodded, smiling as she said, "I did."

"Daddy, I want a kiss too," Jared demanded as he approached the loving couple with the kitten in his arms.

Elliot let go of Anastasia and bent to pick up the little guy, then kissed him on the cheek lovingly. "Did you have fun at school today, Jared?"

"You bet!" Jared replied with a firm nod.

The kitten looked decidedly unhappy when it saw that everyone else had received Elliot's affection. "Meow!"

Having considered the feline to be part of the family, Elliot reached out to pat its soft, furry head and asked, "You're not angling for a kiss too, are you?"

The kitten meowed once more as if to answer in the affirmative.

Amusement seized Elliot as he continued scratching the cat behind its ears to placate it. There was a serenity in the way the family of three and their cat hung out with each other under the evening sky. For a while, it was as if the world was at peace.

Meanwhile, Lorelai was on her way home when she called her mother and told her what happened with Anastasia. Upon hearing the details, Kendra said on the other line, "You did the right thing, Lorelai. That way, Anastasia won't be suspicious of you or see you as a threat."

Lorelai had deliberately dropped by Anastasia's house during the late afternoon and left before dinner time just so the latter wouldn't think she was trying to butt into her family affairs. The clever planning would help Lorelai make a good impression on Anastasia, who would then put her guard down.

Presently, there was an ambitious glimmer in Lorelai's eyes as she said, "By the way. Mom, I've already sent in my resume to Presgrave Group."

"That's a little too soon, Lorelai. My father said not to rush the plan, remember? After all, Elliot is still in his honeymoon phase with Anastasia. *You* ought to wait until she's got a second kid on the way before you make a move."

"Mom, don't worry, I'm only doing this to gauge Elliot's feelings for me, that's all" Lorelai

My Baby's Daddy Chapter 662

My Baby's Daddy

Chapter 662

"I want to take charge of Bourgeois," Anastasia said as she looked up at Elliot. Francis initially wanted her to continue managing Tillman Constructions, but she had no interest whatsoever in building materials, so he decided that he would hand the business over to Elliot after retirement.

"Alright, then. You'll be the commander-in-chief for Bourgeois from tomorrow onward." Elliot said. He couldn't care less about profit margins and operating costs as long as his wife could amuse herself. He would always be there as a safety net for her.

Warmth surged through Anastasia when she heard this, but before she could thank him, he added, "Go and do whatever you like. Don't you worry about a thing, because I'm always going to be here to catch you when you fall, okay?"

In that quiet room, Elliot's tender love and indulgence for Anastasia seemed audible in his words. He sounded firm and assuring, making her heart skip a beat. Upon hearing the solemn promise underlying his bold statement, she felt like she was in the safest harbor, protected by some great, universal force.

She could do whatever she liked, and if she messed things up, he would always be there to help her get through it. She did not need to worry about a thing, because he was the fort that would keep her shielded from the brutal consequences of failure.

That said. Anastasia knew taking over Bourgeois was not just a game she decided to play on a whim. Now that she had voiced out her desire to run it, she would have to make her words count and show him she was not just doing it out of fun.

She had a duty to be a belter version of herself, because how else would she live up to the name of being Elliot's wife?

Meanwhile, in Arthur's villa, Sophia was having a hard time falling asleep after binge-watching several episodes of a new hit drama through the night. She got out of bed and padded out of her room to get a glass of water, hoping that sleep would come after that.

She opened the door softly. She was staying on the third floor while Arthur and Emily were resting on the second. While heading downstairs, she kept her footfalls as quiet as possible, so much so that she was practically tiptoeing.

Much like a wary kitten, she made her way to the first floor and hurried into the kitchen, following the low hum of the refrigerator. She thought a cold drink was suitable in light of the rising temperatures as they welcomed the beginning of summer.

Just then, a cold and crisp voice spoke up behind her. "What are you doing up in the middle of the night?"

Sophia gasped and turned around, but she did so too quickly and ended up bumping her head against the door of the freezer compartment. The loud thud resonated throughout the kitchen like an ominous drum beat.

"Could you not creep up on me like that? For heaven's sake, you had me half-scared to death!" she snapped, rubbing the sore spot on her head as she shot Arthur a resentful look.

Arthur came up to her. He was a head taller than her, and he was here to get a drink as well. The refrigerator light cast a warm glow on both of their silhouettes as they stood there facing each other.

At that moment, Sophia noticed the carton of milk on the top row of the refrigerator and reached up to grab it. However, her fingertips could barely brush it. She was just about to give up when a large hand easily grabbed it and handed it to her. As she looked over the milk, she looked up at the man to thank him, only to be caught off guard.

He seemed to have slept before coming downstairs. His ink-colored hair was currently tousled over his forehead, unlike during the day. He was peering into the fridge for something to drink as well, revealing his side profile, which was all sharp jawline and delicately-chiseled features.

He looked breathtaking.

Presently, Arthur sensed Sophia staring at him, and he looked down with narrowed eyes as he demanded, "What are you looking at?"

"Huh? Oh, uh, nothing," Sophia muttered lamely, breaking eye contact. Her

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My Baby's Daddy Chapter 663

My Baby's Daddy

Chapter 663

Arthur, however, ignored Sophia and proceeded to clean up her wounds with a sterilized Q-tip. When he went on to apply the antiseptic, she hissed in pain and gasped softly. "Ow, that hurts!"

The way she yelped was so suggestive that Arthur stopped and shot her a freezing look, as though angry that his testosterone decided to react to her voice.

At present, neither of them noticed the fuming figure that stood on the second-floor landing with her hand on the banister. Emily had been awakened by the ruckus downstairs, so she came out of her room and Sophia's soft moans of pain sounded. She then decided to head downstairs only to see Arthur helping the girl clean her bleeding shins.

One could call it first-aid, but to Emily, who was so blinded by jealousy she could hardly think straight, Sophia was a cunning vixen who had resorted to such cheap acts to win over Arthur's attention.

"What happened, Arthur?" Emily asked aloud, pretending as if she had been woken up by the commotion as she continued her way down the rest of the steps.

Sophia hurriedly rolled down the legs of her pajama pants and apologized, "Did we wake you, Miss Jennings? I'm terribly sorry for that."

"Did something happen to you?" Emily asked, meeting the other girl's gaze confrontationally.

"I fell and scraped my knees earlier, so Mr. Weiss helped me stop the bleeding," Sophia answered frankly.

"Well, if you're not bleeding anymore, then go back to your room," Emily bit out grimly.

Arthur went to keep the first-aid kit while Sophia hurried up the stairs, but when she passed Emily, the latter grabbed her by the wrist and warned through gritted teeth, "Stay away from my man if you don't want to end up in the sorriest circumstances known to man."

Emily had said this so quietly that Sophia was the only one who could hear it, but the icy warning in her tone was not lost.

It was only after Sophia was released from her grip that she hurried up the stairs, baffled by how much untoward hatred Emily had for her. She wanted to tell her that she was a natural klutz and had no intention whatsoever of seducing Arthur.

Letting out an angry huff, Emily met Arthur at the bottom of the staircase and said, "I don't think I can go back to sleep now. Stay up for a chat, Artie."

"I'm tired," Arthur said, handing her the bottle of milk he had taken from the fridge earlier. "Here, you can have this."

He hadn't actually been thirsty at all when he grabbed the milk. He had gone out of his bedroom when he heard footsteps coming down from the third floor, and as for the milk, it was nothing but chilled subterfuge.

Emily was furious. So, Artie would rather rendezvous with the maid than stay up and talk to me. Is that it? Looks like I've severely underestimated how much Sophia means to him.

The next morning, Anastasia woke up as the weak sunlight spilled into the room and over the side of the bed. Elliot had already called Larry, the vice president of Bourgeois, and asked him to drop by the house with a compilation of all the relevant company information. Over the phone, Elliot added that Anastasia would be in charge of running the business starting from today.

Elliot had left for work after that, leaving Anastasia to wait for Larry's arrival at home. When the clock struck 10, Larry and his assistant were escorted into the living room by the maid.

Larry glanced at the woman on the couch. She's blossomed into a whole new person now, one that must not be overlooked under any circumstances, he thought.

He still remembered the days when she had started out in Bourgeois. Elliot had asked him to persuade her to accept the gift of top-quality real estate and made him bring her the information on the property as well. However, completely unfazed by the otherwise-tempting gift, Anastasia turned him down.

From that moment onward, Larry had a feeling that she could very well become his superior. As it turned out, his gut had been right.

Unlike the first few times they met, Anastasia looked wiser and more focused now, with a confidence that seemed to shine through, polished by years of experience.

"Vice President Young, it's been a while," she greeted with a smile.

"Mrs. Presgrave, I hope you've been well," Larry replied affably, acknowledging the difference in their positions now.

"You can always call me Anastasia, you know."

“Oh. no. I couldn’t. I think Madam President has a nice ring to it, or maybe President Tillman,” he said humorously.

She did not try to dissuade him from addressing her as such. “Could you give me a run-down of the business strategies for Bourgeois and the execution plans for them? I’ve only just taken over, and I’d really appreciate it if you could be my stalwart guide in company matters.”

Larry was more than happy to do so. After all, Anastasia was married to Elliot now, and under her leadership, Bourgeois was sure to reach new heights in the industry.

Anastasia listened to what Larry had to say attentively. He was practically a veteran and a treasure trove of work experience, and she heartily approved of the strategies he had come up with for the business.

“We’ll be holding a press conference for a new product launch soon, Madam President. You must make an appearance; it’ll give the media a field day.”

My Baby’s Daddy Chapter 664

Chapter 664

“When is the press conference?” Anastasia asked.

“Next Saturday,” Larry replied dutifully.

“I’ll be there,” she promised with a nod.

He beamed as he added, “I’m sure the Bourgeois team will be happy to have you at the helm of the business.”

She smiled. “Well, in that case, I look forward to hearing more of your business strategies and having you show me the ropes, Vice President Young.”

While this was happening, Elliot was in his office at Presgrave Group, sifting through the documents piled up on his desk when he came across a resume. He opened the folder and frowned slightly. It was Lorelai’s resume, and she was applying not for an important position, but for an analyst job advertised by the finance department in one of his subsidiaries in the country.

However, as it was against the rules to employ members of the Presgraves’ extended family, Elliot had no choice but to reject her job application. He decided that he would personally recommend her to some other company instead.

Seeing the number she had written at the very top of her resume, he grabbed his phone and called her

“Hello?” Lorelai greeted on the other line.

“Hey, Lorelai, it’s Elliot here. I just saw your resume and I believe an analyst job is far beneath your capabilities,” he said in a gravelly tone.

Lorelai said earnestly, “Elliot, if you’ve read my resume, you would know that I don’t care about the job as much as I do about getting into your company.”

“I can recommend you to another company that happens to be hiring, and I think you’d be a good fit for the job,” Elliot said firmly.

She paused for a few seconds before pressing, “I’m actually in the area right now. Is it okay if I head to your office for a quick chat, Elliot? I don’t think I’ve ever seen it in person before.”

Prepared to talk her into taking up the job at the other company, he replied, “Alright then. Come on over.” They were family, after all, and he figured there was no harm in letting her up to his office for a brief, friendly conversation.

Meanwhile, Lorelai was checking her reflection in the restroom mirror in one of the nearby cafes, she evaluated her face from all angles underneath the white light. When she was satisfied with the way she looked alongside her delicately-applied make-up, she straightened her white blouse and her tight-fitting skirt, then flipped her long hair over her shoulders. For a finishing touch, she gave herself a light spritz of perfume and finally walked out.

Subsequently, she pulled up outside the main entrance of Presgrave Group. She was more than familiar with the company since her father had a friend who worked here as well. When she called the receptionist earlier, she made no mention of Elliot whatsoever.

She went into the elevator, and the receptionist who escorted her left as soon as they reached the designated floor. Seeing this, Lorelai hurried into another available elevator and made her way up to the presidential office.

Rey was already waiting for her. and when she arrived, he said, “This way please, Miss Presgrave.”

Lorelai nodded and followed him into the spacious office, which she thought was only charming because of its owner.

“Elliot,” she greeted warmly when she saw the man on the couch.

Oh, good, you're here. Have a seat," Elliot said, gesturing toward the matching couch across from him.

"This place is humungous, and that view outside is absolutely stunning!" She was never one to hold back on compliments, and the words flowed smoothly off her tongue as she flashed him a smile.

Elliot handed her a docket of information and said, "That's the financial

company I was telling you about, the president happens to be a friend of mine. I already put in a word for you, and he said you could start working immediately without having to go through an interview."

"You pulled strings for me? Wow, I'm honored!" she exclaimed. Taking the docket, she leafed through the company profile and the position they were offering her. then looked up with bright eyes as she asked, "They're going to make me supervisor?"

He nodded. "You're qualified for it."

"That's so nice of you to say," Lorelai said with a sweet smile, admiration glittering in her eyes.

Elliot's gaze fell upon the document on the coffee table as he said, "You can start work next Monday."

My Baby's Daddy Chapter 665

My Baby's Daddy

Chapter 665

"Seeing that you've done me such a huge favor. I don't see how I can turn down the offer Elliot. It's so nice of you to put in a good word for me. Shall I buy you lunch as thanks for the recommendation?" Lorelai asked, sliding the lunch invitation in as naturally as she could. ' 8

Elliot wasted no time in rejecting her politely. "No. thank you. I have something else planned for noon. Maybe next time

"Well, when exactly is next time?" she was not going to give up on spending time alone with him.

'll depends." he answered vaguely. He had no plans on accepting her gratitude. "I'll let you know when I have the time."

"Really? Ill hold you to that." she said cheerily, flirting subtly as she backed off. She knew that pressing him further would only irritate him. or worse, make him suspicious of her. Nevertheless, she did not leave the office after that and merely fanned herself so that the faint fragrance of her perfume would waft over in his direction. By the way, I'm a little parched from rushing over here. Could I have a cup of tea. please?"

Realizing this, he turned to address Rcy, "Go fetch two cups of tea."

When the assistant left the office, Lorelai rose from the couch and walked insouciantly over to the glass wall, basking herself in the afternoon sunlight that spilled generously into the office. She knew her years of toning her figure in the gym had rendered her completely irresistible to men. especially her cinched waist and her subtle curves which inspired most of their scandalous thoughts.

If Elliot was looking at her, or even daring a glimpse, it would be more than enough for her.

However, when she glanced into the reflection on the sparkling glass wall, she saw that he wasn't even looking in her direction. In fact, he had his head down as he flipped through work documents.

The only thing that she saw on that glass was her own disappointment. She spun and returned to the couch, then picked up her cup of tea. Taking a sip.

she asked. "I'm not bothering you. am I, Elliot?"

"No," he replied distractedly as he glanced up at her, then signed the document with a flourish. "I'll be taking my tea in a bit."

He was just about to reach for his cup when his phone rang. He took a look at the caller ID and smiled warmly. Knowing immediately who was on the other line. Lorelai pointed out hastily. Is that Anastasia? Don't let her know I'm here; I don't want her getting the wrong idea."

Elliot chuckled. "Anastasia is better than that." Naturally, he did not plan on telling his wife about Lorelai's visit either. He picked up his phone and greeted in a voice like velvet. "Hey. sweetheart."

"So. I just had an informal meeting with Larry, and I told him to get an office ready for me. Guess we ll be going to work together from now on. honey."

His eyes positively glimmered when he heard this, and he chortled as he said. "You know what, I'll get him to set up an office right on my floor so that we can see each other all the time!"

Unfortunately, his suggestion was rejected by his wife, who countered, "No. I don't want to be on the same stuffy floor as you. I want to have my own space on the same floor as Bourgeois."

He was admittedly hurl, but he brushed it off and gave an exasperated laugh. "Alright, we'll do it your way."

Across from him, Lorelai held her teacup to her lips and glanced at the man who was standing by the glass wall. She took in the sharp lines of his silhouette longingly, and her heart twisted with bitter jealousy when she heard the gentle way he spoke to Anastasia.

She had not seen him for close to a dozen years, but his figure was imprinted in the back of her mind, and she never forgot him even though her father had forced her to stay abroad for years. If it weren't for her father, she would have returned to Elliot's side years ago.

Alas, fate had a cruel sense of humor, for her existence got in the way of her father stealing the Presgrave family fortune. She never even got the chance to tell Elliot of her feelings for him, and all this while, she remembered him

as the boy-next-door who had sent her heart racing since they were children.

She could still remember how they used to run around the Presgrave Residence gardens together, and how he would take her hand to help her to her feet whenever she fell; he would comfort her when she cried, and stand up for her when she broke a vase or two. He was the only religion she ever knew as a child, the one person she wanted to devote herself to on a daily basis.

But the universe clearly hated her, because by the time she saw him again after all her years abroad, he was already married with a kid. and he had become devastatingly handsome, more so than she remembered.

"Yes. I promise to take a break when I need to and that I won't be a workaholic," Elliot murmured into the phone with a lovesick grin on his face. He then went on to ask about her morning, and after reminding her to keep warm during her time of the month as well as exchanging sweet nonsense with her, he hung up reluctantly. He turned around, and he seemed surprised to see that Lorelai was still there. Following, he walked over to the couch and took his seat.

"So, it was Anastasia after all. You're so lucky to have found a wife like her. She's wonderful," Lorelai praised with a smile.

There was a bright gleam in Elliot's eyes as well as he said, "She's the best. I'm telling you, I don't know what I did to deserve someone like her."

My Baby's Daddy Chapter 666

My Baby's Daddy

Chapter 666

The childhood memories flitted through Lorclai's mind like scenes from some old movie, emboldening her. Hence, she couldn't help bringing them up as she asked, "Elliot, do you still remember the time when I broke the vase in your family home? I think I was about eight at the time, and I was so scared I couldn't stop shaking. You were the one who took the blame for me, and I managed to get off without punishment!"

Elliot was a little taken aback by this as he asked, "I did that? Huh. I totally forgot about it."

Her lips curled up in a smile. "Well, I still remember, because those are the happiest moments of my childhood. They say that a happy childhood is a soothing balm to (he pains of growing up, you know. So, I guess I should thank you for giving me some of the best childhood memories." She looked up at him after finishing her sentence and her gaze lingered on the features that she so adored.

Hearing what she said, Elliot gave her a perfunctory smile. "Did you have a good time abroad?"

"I suppose I did, though I was a little lonely," she admitted with a sigh.

"If I ever come across someone suitable, I'd be sure to send them your way."

She feigned embarrassment as she mumbled, "You don't even know my type."

"Oh, that's right," he said. "Come on, tell me." He wanted to know what he should look out for if he wanted to set her up with someone.

She narrowed her eyes as if in thought. A sweet smile broke over her face as she gazed at him and said, "I'm not asking for much. I want someone as handsome and capable as you."

Elliot's instincts were sharp to begin with, and he could sense that the admiration she had for him was beyond platonic the moment he saw the smoldering gleam in her eyes. If he were any other man, he might find her love for him a triumph, something to gloat

about to his peers. But he was not such a man, and her unsolicited affections only served to push him

away.

He eyed her sullenly as he said, "Lorelai, I do not wish to hear such things again. Anastasia is the only woman for me, and nothing will ever change."

He ended his sentence calmly, but there was no hiding the dangerous warning that belied his words.

At once, Lorelai bristled and quickly explained, "I think you're getting the wrong idea here, Elliot. I'm not trying to come between you and your wife."

"You're like a baby sister to me: always have been, always will be," he continued while his gaze darkened. At some point, it was like staring into the icy depths of some pitch-black abyss.

A chill ran down her spine when she heard this. More than anything, she was surprised to be rejected by him. "I'm sorry if I cracked a joke and it went too far, Elliot. I guess I thought it was okay for me to say something like that because of how much we used to hang out as children," she apologized lamely, attempting to salvage the situation.

However, Elliot did not bother letting her continue with her explanation, be it true or false. "I have a meeting to get to, so you should go."

With that, he picked up the documents he had signed earlier and walked back to his desk.

Lorelai, on the other hand, rose in a daze and said slowly, "I'll get going now then. Goodbye, Elliot." When she was out of the office, she clutched the front of her shin and stared into space helplessly. She never imagined him to be so loyal to his marriage, much less so protective over his wife.

This could become a hurdle to her father's plans, but she figured this hiccup was only due to the fact that Elliot was newly married. At some point, he would grow weary of Anastasia and begin to resent her for chaining him to a miserable marriage. If Kendra's advice was anything to go by, he would start feeling that way around the time Anastasia fell pregnant again, and that would be Lorelai's window of opportunity.

Meanwhile, a fleet of cars was passing through the fields in the countryside, cruising down the road that led into the woods in the distance. Sophia was in the backseat of the second car in the fleet, and after taking a short nap,

she woke up only to find that she was surrounded by acres and acres of farmland. As such, she rested her arms on the edge of the car window and peered out of the glass at the idyllic scenery.

Arthur was going to evaluate a place that was famed for its serenity, and he had brought along with him a renowned medium.

It was around noon when they arrived at a restaurant that looked heavily outback-inspired, the four cars of the fleet pulled into the parking lot after Arthur decided that they were going to have to settle for lunch here. They had driven close to fifty miles out of the city, and as things were, it was impossible for them to find a decent restaurant in that area, much less high-end dining establishments.

When the second car rolled to a stop. Sophia happily got down from the vehicle. She was just about to stretch to loosen her joints when suddenly, a large and aggressive dog came rushing out of the doghouse on the premises and began barking ferociously at them.

Being the closest one to the dog. Sophia visibly blanched, and fear made her seek out the person most likely to protect her. Without a word, she instinctively latched herself onto said person and clung to him for dear life.