

# She Got A Better Man

## C 1

Outside Jersten's city hall, Elvira Willis glanced at her watch, an hour past the time she and Calvin Kennedy had planned to tie the knot. She had called him over a dozen times with no luck.

Worried sick, Elvira wondered if Calvin got into an accident rushing over or if his granddad Haz Kennedy had taken ill.

When Calvin finally picked up, Elvira blurted out, "Calvin, you're there! Something wrong?"

"Sorry, Elvira I can't do it today. Let's push the registration, I'll fill you in later" Calvin sounded beat.

Then, a faint cry whimpered in the background. "Calvin, it hurts" Elvira then heard Calvin cooing in the background. "Easy, can't you see she's hurting!"

Elvira's heart stopped. Their big day, and Calvin was with Judy Willis.

"Elvira, something urgent came up, I'll call you back!" Calvin hurriedly said, preparing to hang up.

"Hold up, Calvin, you're with Judy? You know I fucking hate her Elvira's voice was sharp with fury

"Look, Elvira, Judy is in an accident. Can't leave her to sign papers with you. Your folks splitting has zip to do with her. She has never dissed you What's up with you now? Judy has been on my case to make it official with you. But hell, any day for paperwork, let's aim for tomorrow." Calvin sighed, obviously fed up, hanging up before Elvira could snap back. He saw Elvira as spiteful and unreasonable, while Judy was all angelic understanding,

Elvira clutched her phone, feeling a boulder in her chest, breaths short, head splitting.

Her parents divorced when Elvira was twelve. Her father, Vincent Willis, started a new life with Judy and her mother, Amber Willis, exposing his secretive double dealings. Elvira and her brother, Marsh Willis, ended up under Vincent's custody, enduring a living nightmare within the Willis family, largely due to Judy's scheming.

Calvin, their neighbor, had been Elvira's consolation after the divorce, initially despising Judy. Yet, over time, he warmed up to Judy.

Elvira had pushed for marriage, fearing losing Calvin to Judy. Now, it seemed she had lost him after all. 'I just didn't want to face reality, Elvira thought, aching inside.

From a car not too far away, a fashionably dressed elderly lady intently watched Elvira, observing every nuance of her demeanor. She quickly grabbed her phone and called her grandson, Zach Gilbert. "Zach, my heart is acting up. Hurry over, or you might miss saying goodbye to your dearest grandma. I'm right outside city hall!"

Upon receiving his grandma Tracy Gilbert's call, Zach felt an all-too-familiar headache brewing. Tracy often feigned illness to coax him into blind dates.

'Now she is escalated to city hall? She can't possibly expect me to marry some random person, can she? Zach mused, skeptical yet moved by concern for his grandmother, and promptly redirected his car toward city hall

Despite being tricked numerous times before, Zach couldn't take chances with Tracy's health.

Elvira was

determined. She dialed Calvin one last time, only to hear an unfamiliar voice.

never

"Elvira, why don't you get

tit Calvin has moved on. He is with me now. Oh, and your birthday? He spent it with me. In fact, whenever I call, he nev hesitates to ditch you for me. Thought you should know, I've already slept with him" Judy's voice rang with glee and a touch of smugness, Hearing Judy's words, Elvira felt her world collapsing around her, her complexion paled, and she trembled uncontrollably. She knew Judy was telling the truth, the evidence was unmistakable.

It was my desperation to hold onto Calvin that made me overlook the reality. Now, it is time to wake up. What is not mine will never be, no matter how hard I try, Elvira thought, letting tears fall as she closed her eyes.

Watching couples emerge from city y hall, radiating

g happiness, Elvira turned to leave, emotionally numb.

"Ms. Willis, look who it is!" "Tracy approached with a beaming smalle, grabbing Elvira's hand with warmth

"Mrs Gilbert,

rt, is that you? How are you feeling!" Elvira, recognizing the elderly lady she had rescued days before, was jolted back to reality.

"Tin much beiter, dear. Are you here to register with your boyfriend? Where is he?" Tracy inquired with a knowing sinile. After Elva a saved her. Tracy took a liking to her and even looked into her background. The thought that Elvira might soon belong to someone else had troubled Tracy all

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day. Upon noticing Elvira's fiance was nowhere to be seen, Tracy had sent Zach in hopes of playing matchmaker.

"He is not coming. Elvira replied, her voice hollow, her heart aching.

Your boyfriend doesn't know what he is missing. Don't worry, dear. Let me introduce you to a suitable match. My grandson. He is a catch: healthy, successful. How about giving marriage with him a shot Tracy blurted, almost surprising herself with the proposal, but she genuinely adored Elvira and couldn't bear the thought of losing her as a potential granddaughter-in-law.

Just as Elvira was about to refuse, Zach arrived. In his last-minute switch to a modest car, he didn't even have time to ditch his regular threads. His custom-tailored suit and commanding height made him stand out, turning heads.

"Here is my grandson, Zach Tracy beamed, clutching Elvira's hand. "Elvira, trust me, marrying this dude? You will hit the jackpot

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Chapter

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"Hey, I'm Zach. I manage stuff at a company and have a car but no house. So, are we doing this marriage thing or what?" Zach's eyes were cool, almost detached, as he laid it all out for Elvira. Tracy had filled him in on Elvira's deal and made him an offer he couldn't refuse: tie the knot with Elvira, and Tracy would finally get the surgery.

Elvira was battled.

"Trust me, Elvira. If you marry my grandson, he'll be dead loyal to you. No ifs, ands, or buts" Tracy said, all smiles.

Facing a guy leagues hotter than Calvin and considering her own mess of a situation, Elvira went for it. "Okay, let's do it"

"Given Calvin's backstabbing, what is left to expect from love! Marrying any Jor is marrying, so why not this hottie?" she thought to herself. somewhat bitterly.

Minutes later, they were stepping out with their marriage certificate. Elvira alongside Calvin, felt a whirlwind of emotions,

Tracy couldn't stop smiling if she tried, thrilled at the sight of the marriage certificate.

"I've got things to do, so I'm off. Remember what you promised, Grandma. Pull any stunts, and I'm filing for divorce. Zach threw over his shoulder

as he left.

Tracy shot a glare at Zach's retreating figure, then turned to Elvira with a mix of guilt and hope. "He doesn't get you yet, Elvira. But give it time, and hell be head over heels." Elvira just smiled. Zach had clued her in on the deal. Figuring her marriage could save Tracy made the whole thing easier to swallow,

Elvira, genuinely fond of Tracy, suggested.

"Hey, Mrs. Gilbert, how about we celebrate my big day? My treat for dinner," "Absolutely! Tonight, we dine like queens, no holding back, Tracy declared, all set for a girls' night out During di

dinner, Elvira shared a photo of her marriage certificate and the feast on WhatsApp with the caption, [Just married!]

Elvira and Tracy chatted away, ignoring the bitter edge of the evening. Elvira drowned her sorrows in wine, Tracy letting her, understanding the weight on her shoulders Eventually, Elvira

was a drunken mess at the table, prompting a concerned Tracy to call Zach. "Get over here and take Elvira home, I'm scheduling the surgery for this week"

Zach, though hesitant, couldn't say no to that

Arriving at the scene, Zach found Elvira alone and wasted, Tracy conspicuously absent.

He usually disliked close

se contact w

with strangers but had no choice. "Wake up," he coaxed gently.

"Mmm, leave

me alone. Just wanna sleep, Elvira slurred, too lost in her misery to care.

Lifting her, Zach caught her as she nearly fell, battling the urge to push her away. But remembering Tracy's words, he cautiously embraced her.

Looking down, Zach felt an unexpected warmth. He had never planned on marriage, yet here he was, oddly married to a stranger who seemed to stir something in him. Her beauty, visible even in her drunken state, somehow made the whole scenario less daunting. Cradling her, Zach thought, "Maybe this marriage won't be so bad after all:

But what if she's after the Gilbert fortune? A nagging doubt lingered.

After watching Zach carry Elvira away. Tracy finally stepped out, satisfied.

h and Ms. Willis are a match made in heaven"

Polly Barnett, who had watched Zach grow up, chimed in, "Mrs. Gilbert, you gotta admit, Mr. Zach "Absolutely. Fin always right. She is

"Right, i

the new M

is the new Mrs. Gilbert Tracy replied, puffing up with pride.

new Mrs. Chilbert!" Polly echoed, already dreaming about the next generation.

Tracy rolled her eyes. "Can you believe that kid? Trying to look poor in front of Elvira, as if I'd ever steer him wrong. I wanted to pamper my new granblughter-in-law, but no, Zach had to act like Elvira was gold digging. It's maddening!"

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Zach settled Elvira into a small apartment he owned, the least of his properties, hastily furnished by his assistant.

Elvira's quiet drunken sleep impressed Zach; he couldn't stand those who went nuts with booze.

After tucking her in, he rushed off to other commitments.

Elvira woke around 10 p.m.. confused by her surroundings. The events of the day slowly came back to her, and she noticed several missed calls on her phone.

Ignoring the calls, she dialed Tracy first.

"Elvira, you up! How is the head? Tracy asked, wishing she could be there.

"Mrs. Gilbert, I'm okay, but where am I?" Elvira asked.

"That's your new place. You were out cold, so Zach took you. He is probably at work again, the workaholic. I'll give him a piece of my mind, make him come take care of you, Tracy fumed.

"Mrs. Gilbert, no worries! I'm good. Just need a see, Elvira cut in, hanging up and cursing her stupidity for getting plastered.

God, I didn't make a fool of myself, did I?' Eleira fretted, swearing off getting wasted ever again.

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Elvira woke up in the middle of the night, unable to fall back asleep, so she decided to explore her new home.

It was a spacious three-bedroom apartment with a practical layout, including two sunlit bedrooms and a smaller one. The place, however, felt barely lived in, with just a few pieces of basic furniture and no curtains to speak of After a walk around, she realized she didn't have Zach's number. The irony that they, supposed to be the world's closest people, didn't even have each other's numbers didn't escape her.

Sounds like a joke, doesn't it? He'll be back, though. I'll snag his number then: She mused with a resigned chuckle.

Her phone, littered with missed calls from family and friends, remained unanswered. Her social media was ablaze with congratulations supposed marriage to Calvin, with no one suspecting she'd married someone che,

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To set the record straight, she posted. [FYI My husband is Zach, not Calvin. Appreciate the love, though.]

Switching off her phone in annoyance, Elvira barely got a moment's peace before Calvin's call came through. He dived straight into a rant about her alleged lies and disappointment

"Really, Calvin You think I'm nothing without you?" Elvira countered, his silence confirming his ego. With finality, she stated, "Well, tough luck. I'm married now. And it sure as hell isn't to you. We're finished. She then cut the call. Meanwhile, Judy was trying to pacify a visibly upset Calvin. "Could you check on Elvira, please! Don't let me be the reason she's upset," she urged. "No need. She is just being a brat," Calvin coldly responded, pocketing his phone. Judy, I know you love your sister, but you're too selfless. You're always there for her, and she just takes advantage, Amber said, her worry evident. "Mom, stop. She is my sister. I'll always have her back, Judy countered, clearly not agreeing. it you," Amber started, only to be cut off by Judy.

"Mom, just drop it! This is my mess, not Elvira's. I can't mess up her up her life with Calvin, I will hate myself" Judy said firmly.

"Judy, this is insane! Calvin has to know," Amber argued, her voice filled with conflict

"Mom, if you tell, you'll break Elvira's heart. Then you're no mother of mine Judy declared, her determination

unwavering

"What the hell is going on?" Calvin demanded, noticing the tension.

"If you're disowning me, I still have to say it Judy is pregnant with your kid!" Amber blurted out, defiance in her voice.

Calvin froze, and Judy rushed to deny it. "Calvin, she is lying! I'm not pregnant!"

Judy, I know you want to protect Elvira, but how will you handle this? You're a r public figure, and you can't hide your pregnancy forever," Amber

said, her eyes tear-stained.

"I'll claim the baby is mine alone. It's nobody's business, Judy said, her eyes red but her voice strong.

"Judy, are you fucking kidding me! I'll make things right with Elvira. I love you. I can't lie to myself anymore, I have to own up to my feelings. Calvin declared, deeply moved, and hugged her.

A victorious glint flashed between Judy and Amber as their plan seemed to work, Judy, crying into Calvin's chest, murmured, "Calvin, I never meant to fall for you. I thought about ending the pregnancy to not come between you and Elvira, but it's our baby. I couldn't do it. I thought I would raise it alone, without destroying your relationship with her

"Stop the bullshit! We're getting engaged. You're not facing g this alone, Calvin stated firmly, determined.

Initially, Calvin wanted to do right by Elvira, but Judy's apparent fragility and the thought of their child inflated his ego. He fancied Judy's so-called softness over Elvira's sharpness.

t, his mind made up.

After all this time with Elvira, I'm exhausted. I refuse to settle fo

for less or deny my true feelings any longer, Calvin thought, Judy and Amber locked eyes, sharing a silent, triumphant chuckle over their manipulation

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returned, he was carrying a thermos of hangover soup, a thoughtful gift from Tracy intended for Elvira.

"Mr. Gilbert, you're back." E

Elvira said, a bit awkwardly. "I'm really sorry about getting drink. Didn't cause you any trouble, did I?"

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Having never been drunk before, Elvira was genuinely unsure about her behavior under the influence. She had witnessed many, like her friend Olivia Santos, become utterly unrecognizable when drunk, with a repertoire of crying, fussing, singing, and dancing that could exhaust anyone.

Zach was about to tell her she was fine but, seeing her so sheepish, decided to have a bit of fun. "If you don't count throwing up on me and serenading me all the way home as trouble, then no, no trouble at all," he teased. Elvira was mortified. Her r

reyes went wide, her cheeks turned scarlet, and she stuttered out an apology. "I'm so sorry! Let me clean your clothes!"

Zach hadn't expected her to take his words seriously. He diverted the topic seeing her flustered. "Drink this hangover soup; it'll help."



Embarrassed to even look at him, Elvira quickly took the soup Zach offered. "I'm sorry for any trouble. My first time getting this drunk. Have you eaten? I can order us some food if you like."

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Zach had skipped dinner, buried in work at his company. When Elvira asked if he wanted to eat, he saw an opportunity to clear the air. "Yeah, let's sort some stuff out

"Awesome, ordering now, Got any no-gos?" Elvira inquired.

"I'm not fond of strong flavors. Anything else goes." Zach replied before heading to the bedroom

Once the door closed, Elvira breathed a sigh of relief, slightly

slightly embarrassed about the trouble she had caused while drunk.

She went for some light, home-cooked cuisine from a place she adored and often visited.

Sitting across from each other at the dinner table, they silently ate their takeout

Elvira couldn't help but notice Zach's graceful eating habits, a refreshing sight compared to the sloppy, uncouth guys she'd encountered. Did I strike gold or what she thought, secretly thrilled.

Zach, on his part, took note of Elvira's unpretentious, appealing manner. Sick of the artificiality of the high society dames, he found her genuineness a breath of fresh air.

Till now, Elvira hadn't hit any of his sore spots. Zach thought if this makeshift marriage could benefit Tracy, he was all for enduring it a while longer.

Breaking the silence. Zach spoke up. "Ms. Willis, thanks for saving my grandma and for agreeing to this shotgun wedding."

Elvira was blunt. "Wasn't just for Tracy. This shotgun wedding's got perks for me too, so I'm counting on your support down the line," she confessed hinting at the spontaneous decision driven by a mix of motives.

Zach, surprised by her frankness and lack of brown-nosing, assured her. "Sure. We're in this together now."

and support you as needed," Elvin added

"If you get any deal-breakers or need my backing, just spell it out. I'll avoid stepping on your toes and

"All I ask for is privacy: I'll respect yours too. Other than that, we're good. Grandma wanted you to move in here, so your old place? Time to say goodbye, Zach explained.

"Deal" Elvira agreed warmly. "I've looked it up, the rent here is 24 thousand dollars a year. Let's go halves. I'll shoot over 12 thousand dollars after we swap WhatsApp into, And I plan to deck out the place too, so hit me up if you need anything specific. Oh, and I'm all for whipping up meals at home cool with you?"

Once they agreed on their cohabitation terms, Elvira asked for Zach's digits to add him on WhatsApp.

Zach accepted her friend request and stored her number.

Then, Elvira firmly wired 12 thousand dollars his way, despite Zach's initial reluctance

Suddenly, the doorbell rang, puzzling both Elvira and Zach. After all, Zach had just moved in, and only Tracy knew his address.

Answering the door, Zach found two delivery personnel with clothes sent! Tracy, "Mr. Gilbers, these are from Mrs. Tracy, they said.

Elvira's phone rang at that moment it was Tracy, explaining she had sent some clothes over to save Elvira a trip home, advising her to rest after the day's ordeal.

Moved by Tracy's thoughtfulness and feeling somewhat unwell, Elvira thanked her, contemplating a return gift for later.

Zach let the staff in. They brought a rack filled with an array of clothes from jackets and skirts to pajamas and lingerie, setting it up inside.

Seeing the sexy lingerie and pajamas, Elvira felt shy and awkward, thinking. That's a lot she had expected only a simple set for emergencies, not knowing Tracy had almost emptied the most fashionable parts of the store for her.

in the master bedroom, instructed Zach.

"Oh, no, I'll stay in the guest room said Elvira, still seeing herself as just a visitor, "I can manage, thank you" She then told the departing staff. Elvira, now alone and finding it awkward to handle the intimate garments in front of Zach, quickly wheeled the rack into the master bedroom and

closed the door.

Zach stopped her, insisting "The master has its own bathroom, more convenient for you. And since you've paid, no need to feel awkward: Rat Elvira, caper to end t

the conversations and avoid further embarrassment, simply wheeled the rack into the master bedroom and shut the door. leaving Zach with a slight, amused smirk on his face

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After arranging the clothes, Elvira stepped out to say goodnight to Zach, only to run into him fresh from the shower, wrapped only in a towel. His well-defined physique under the dim light made her face turn red again, her eyes inadvertently admiring his muscular form a little longer than

necessary.

Need something?" Zach inquired, dropping his towel to look at her.

"Uh, just wanted to say good night. Plus, you're looking pretty fit, blurted out Elvira before quickly turning and dashing back into her room.

Zach stood frozen, bemused. Was that flirting?' he wondered, shaking his head in disbelief.

Returning to his room, Zach called Tracy, sternly warning her to stop showing off their wealth, threatening that he would divorce Elvira if Tracy went overboard again.

Tracy, on the other end, rolled her eyes, thinking. This boy is going to regret this one day."

After her nightly routine, Elvira chose a relatively conservative nightgown and lay in bed, but sleep eluded her. She painfully acknowledged to herself, I knew Calvin had changed. It was all obvious; I was just lying to myself.

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After oversleeping due to a long nap the day before, Elvira woke up past 10 am. Disheveled and groggy, she found breakfast waiting, courtesy of Zach, who had already headed to work.

Without hesitation, she dove into the meal. Given she had taken a few days off work for her ill-fated marriage plans with Calvin, she relished the day's calm, planning to fully

outfit her new home. En route to the home goods market, Elvira's phone buzzed with a call from Vincent, who b

Launched into a tirade the moment she answered. "Elvira You think you're tough now, huh? Your sister was in a car accident yesterday and all you can think about is dragging Calvin to the altar! What kind of cold-hearted daughter did I raise?" she dead? If so, I'll send a wreath Happy""

Though accustomed to Vincent's harsh words, Elvira felt her temper rise. Is she

"You're heartless! Judy is always defending you, and you repay her with insults and curses! You're beyond cold Vincent's rage soared.

"Her defense makes you hate me more? Well, thanks for nothing. Tell her to save it Elvira retorted, her voice icy Inside, she sneered. Seems men can't tell sincerity from manipulation Goes for my father and Calvin alike.

"That attitude is why Calvin prefers Judy! Just come home and end this farce of a marriage," Vincent argued, partly upset yes understanding Calvin's preference, firmly believing no man could want a woman like Elvira. hung up, thinking. If not for Marsh, I would write

"No need. I'm already married. As for who Calvin marries, I couldn't care less." With that. Elvira hung of that family for good.

Vincent was left speechless, while a tearful Judy worried, "Calvin, Dad, surely Elvira didn't just marry some random guy? If that is the case, I can't with Calvin. He should be with her.

Calvin, with a dash of disgust, remarked. "If Elvira has sunk that low, she is dead to me. Drop it: Im marrying you and that's final

"Vincent, call her back. We can't take this lightly: Amber feigned concern, secretly thrilled at the prospect of strengthening ties with the ascending Kennedy family through Judy's marriage. Before Vincent could dial, Elvira sent him their marriage certificate with a message that said, It's official. Don't bother calling. Check online if you doubt mel

Only then did Vincent believe Elvira was truly n

was truly married, and his fury knew no bounds. He tried calling back for details, but she wouldn't pick up. Judy, feigning concern, tried reaching out to Elvira, who immediately blocked her.

"Dad, Calvin, we need to do something. Elvira must be heartbroken to make such a rash decision. If he is bad news. I'll go talk some sense into her. even if it means giving up Calvin." Judy fretted, her act collapsing as she fell back into her seat. "Judy, don't be

ridiculous. You're carrying my child, I won't let you down. I'll sort things with Elvira, she's just trying to guilt-trip me. Calvin said, holding Judy close.

Elvira, and I'll make amends for the rest of

"Let's be selfish this once, Judy. For your baby's sake, let's not talk of splitting with Calvin, okay? I owe Elvin my life, Amber pled, her tears strategically placed.

haste. Let's finalize Judy and Calvin's engagement quickly and discuss it with the Kennedy

"Enough crying. Elvira made her bed by marrying in haste family" Vincent declared, storming off in anger.

Elvira couldn't care less about what the Willis family thought. At the home goods market, she relished picking out decor for her room and even considered Zach's preferences for the common areas and his room fcurtains for his opinion, catching him in the middle of a meeting with

with company executives.

She sent Zach pictures of

Normally, Zach wouldn't even glance at his phone in such moments, let alone engage.

Yes, today, he broke his rule, responding to each of her messages, leaving his executives in shock. It sparked speculation among the executives about his uncharacteristic behavior,

Alter finalizing their choiers, Elvira felt a tad guilty, sending him a test. [Am

[Am I bugging you!]

Zach, glancing at an executive mid-report, replied nonchalantly (Nope, all good here

Although their mange was arranged, Zach found Elvira's company quite enjoyable. With Trasy's healths on the end, he saw no harm in confirmung dicir mariul farade, even enjoying their growing rapport.

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[Heading to pick up some kitchen essentials next. I'll just go ahead and decide on those, cool?] Elvira sent another message.

[Yeah, sure] Zach replied without hesitation, transferring 6,000 dollars for the decor expenses with a simple, [For the decor.]

Elvira hesitated but ultimately accepted the money, replying with a "Thanks, boss" meme.

The exaggeratedly respectful meme coaxed a rare smile from Zach, astonishing the executives who mused, "Our CEO smiling? Must be a sign of the apocalypse! Could he be seeing someone! But he is the eternal bachelor, and rumors were he's not into women. After her supermarket run and a spree of greenery shopping, all of Elvira's purchases were delivered by noon.

She busied herself with setting up her new treasures, watching as the empty house gradually filled up and warmed with life. This transformation gave her an immense sense of fulfillment.