

She Got A Better Man

Chapter

6

The phone rang, and Elvira picked up to Olivia's excited congratulations. "Elvira, you lucky duck: Though, between us, I never pegged Calvin as your Mr. Right. But hey, love conquers all, right?"

"Brace yoursell, Olivia. You're not gonna believe this, Elvira knew she had to come clean with her bestie.

"What could possibly top the I married Calvin disaster? Olivia woffed, her disdain for Calvin no secret.

"Well, plot twist. I didn't marry Calvin, Elvira revealed calmly.

Hell yes! Wait, then who is the unlucky fellar Olivia's brain, already fried from a marathon shift, nearly short-circuited.

It's a long story. Let's grab dinner and I'll spill the beans, Elvira proposed, seizing the opportunity as she glanced around her nearly settled home.

They agreed on a spot and made their way there.

Olivia was a doctor. She often missed meals due to her busy schedule, which was why she hadn't seen Elvira's social media updates.

Over dinner, Elvira unpacked the story, with Olivia cursing Calvin to the seven hells, relieved she could finally vent her true feelings

"Who did you marry, and why aren't we getting him annulled tomorrow? Worse comes to worst, well embrace the single life together!" Olivia was both worried and scared Elvira might have made another hasty decision. Elvira assured her Zach was not a mistake, but Olivia remained skeptical until she could meet him.

Left with no choice, Elvira rang Zach amid his busy schedule. His initial annoyance at the disturbance softened when he learned why she called. He valued his privacy and wasn't keen on needless interruptions, especially not from someone he was still getting to know. "What's up?" Zach's voice was cool.

"Sorry to bother you, but my bestie's freaking out about our shotgun wedding. She wants to meet you. Totally cool if you're swamped, Elvira said lightly, aware she was pushing her luck. "Send me the address. I can't promise I'll be there soon, but I'll make an effort.

Zach, ever the pragmatist, figured helping Elvira manage her social circle was part of the deal. "Thanks a bunch" Elvira texted him the details and then reassured Olivia. "He's swamped but will do his best to swing by. Let's

rat for now.

"Best he can do? Seriously? He is your husband, not some distant cousin. Screw this, we're getting you out of this tomorrow" Olivia was fuming.

"Chill, Olivia. I kinda sprung, this on him last minute. He is actually pretty decent, Elvira defended Zach, hoping to temper Olivia's outrage

"How'decent' can a guy you impulsively marry be?" Olivia wasn't buying it, convinced Elvira was just putting on a brave face, all while preaching the gospel of singledom. Post-dinner, with Zach MIA, Olivia was all set to launch Operation: Annulment.

That's when Zach strolled in, exuding an air of regal charm that could silence a room.

Olivia, mouth agape, was about to nudge Elvira when she noticed her already beaming and rising to greet him.

Zach arrived at their table, apologizing softly. "Sorry for the delay, traffic was a nightmare. Have you both finished eating!"

"It's fine, we're done. Want anything? Elvira scooted over, making room as Zach slid into her spot.

Back on the road, Elvira's phone blew up with messages from Olivia

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Olivia: Elvira, women need to tie the knot!]

Olivia: [Elvira, I'm all for your marriage. Mr. Gilbert is your ticket to happiness!]

Olivia: [Elvira, did you two seal the deal yet? Time is ticking. Snag him before it's too late!]

Olivia: [Elvira, ditch the modesty. When you spot a gem. go for it!]

Blushing at the audacity, Elvira tilted her phone away to text back. [Thought we were on the spinster track?]

Olivia: [Scratch that. Every woman needs a sprinkle of man in her life.]

Elvira: [But you said all men are trash. One meet and he is gold?]

Olivia: [Mr. Gilbert is the real deal. I stake my life on it.]

Internally rolling her eyes, Elvira thought, What a flip-flopper!

"Always this intense with your friend?" Zach peered over as Elvira hastily hid her phone.

Elvira was puzzled.

Noticing her look, Zach hinted. "Window reflection. It's all there."

Elvira's face went crimson as she quickly locked her phone, mortified. 'Crap, did he catch Olivia's rant

Feeling like she hit peak embarrassment, Elvira stammered, "You've got it wrong. She wasn't serious,"

"She didn't mean 'seal the deal' serious?" Zach couldn't resist.

Elvira, at a loss for words, stuttered, "Of course not. Just kidding.

Seeing Zach's silent judgment, Elvira insisted, "For real!"

Zach gave her a cool look and nonchalantly acknowledged with an "Oh."

Back at the apartment. Elvira, dying of embarrassment, immediately retreated to her room to scold Olivia.

Unnoticed by Elvira, Zach paused, struck by the transformation of their apartment into a cozy, stylish haven, a first in years for him.

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Elvira's flair had made their place not just a house, but a home, something Zach hadn't known for too long.

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Zach returned to his room to find it transformed with tasteful touches: three new paintings, a few potted plants, and curtains in an elegant shade.

It all brought him a deep sense of satisfaction, especially knowing Elvira hadn't broken the bank to do it. It hit him then, all he ever craved was the warmth of a simple, cozy home.

A flash of anger crossed Zach's eyes as memories surfaced. He closed his eyes, reopening them to a depth unreadable, shielding his emotions from the world.

As for Elvira, Zach felt he needed more time to figure her out, especially since nothing turned him off more than vanity.

found out she cozied up to Tracy just because of the Gilbert family, Elvira would never hear the end of it.

If Zach ever f

Embarrassed beyond belief, Elvira didn't venture out of her room after the day's fiasco. Drained from the day, she crashed after a quick shower.

The next morning. Elvira was up early, planning to whip up breakfast just for herself. Remembering Zach's help, she decided to make an extra portion for him.

Zach strolled in from his morning run to find Elvira bustling in the kitchen, looking effortlessly beautiful in a casual white outfit and a lilac apron, her hair tied back in a practical ponytail. Her profile in the morning light was simply breathtaking. Hearing him, Elvira turned and cheerfully suggested, "Back already? Go freshen up, and I'll have breakfast ready. Bet you didn't know I could cook"

Zach headed off without a word.

Dressed in clean clothes, Zach sat down to the noodles Elvira had prepared. They ate in silence, the delicious meal speaking: volumes.

The noodles were so good. Zach was silently impressed, comparing them to something one would find in a high-end restaurant. These could give a luxury hotel a run for its money, he thought.

Halfway through the meal, Elvira's phone rang. She picked up instantly, her tone laced with anxiety. "Hey, Marsh, what's the drama this time?"

Marsh's feeble voice came through. "My stomach is killing me. Get over here and take me to the hospital, will you!"

"What happened? Calm down, I'm on my way!" Elvira dropped her fork in a panic and bolted, smacking her leg against the chair and wincing.

Noticing her distress, Zach inquired, "What's the big emergency?"

"It's my brother; he is in pain. I need to rush him to the hospital," she blurted out, barely containing her panic.

"Don't the Willis family have a driver?" Zach reminded her.

"Yes, but my stepmother dislikes us. She might let my brother suffer more." Elvira didn't pause to delve into the messy family dynamics, just grabbed her bag and dashed. Seeing her desperation, Zach stood and casually offered, "I'm heading out anyway. I'll drop you."

Grateful yet frantic, Elvira didn't bother with formalities and took Zach's offer.

Arriving at the Willis mansion, Elvira hastily thanked Zach before bolting inside.

Zach didn't leave, figuring he might come in handy if shit hit the fan.

Once inside, Elvira spotted the Willises chilling in the living room. Marsh was gaming on the couch, looking anything but sick.

Judy's eyes followed Elvira as she stepped out of a pretty basic car, a smug smile crossing her face, thinking Elvira did marry

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some loser.

Called away for work, Zach eyed the Willis mansion one more time before calling Elvira. "Do you need me to rush your brother to the hospital?"

"He is fine. Go ahead to work," she replied, ending the call and snatching the phone from Marsh's hands.

Marsh exploded. "Give me my damn phone! Why the hell are you always on my case? No one else gives a crap about my gaming!"

Elvira, fuming, shot back, "I'm trying to help you, for heaven's sake!"

"Yeah, right, help me! I don't need it. I can't stand you!" Marsh retorted, reclaiming his phone and storming off. "Marsh!" Elvira shook with anger, thinking to herself, 'Marsh is a piece of work. Thirteen and he has got no sense, scheming with the Willis family against me Vincent pointed at her accusingly. "Who the hell did you marry, anyway?"

Furious, Elvira snapped, "Nice parenting! You make your own kid lie just to trick me back here?"

"Elvira, don't speak to your father like that. He means well," Amber said disapprovingly.

"What's it to you? Were you behind this whole lie? What's your game?" Elvira glared at Amber.

Ever since their parents split, when Elvira was twelve and Marsh barely a year old, life had been rough. Amber took over raising Marsh, and Elvira realized too late that her goal was to spoil him rotten.

Their relationship dwindled when Elvira was sent to a boarding school. By the time she noticed, Marsh was addicted to mobile games and sweets. Now at twelve, he weighed 165 pounds, bottomed in his studies, and was prone to fighting, showing a terrible temperament. Elvira's efforts to straighten Marsh out only caused fights. Amber kept stirring the pot, making him hate Elvira even more. 'Great, Amber plays the doting stepmom, turning Marsh against me. Elvira seethed internally,

"I swear, I treat Marsh better than if he were my own, Amber protested, feigning innocence.

"Are you that blind, Elvira? Forget your brother; your marriage is the real joke here. What kind of future can a guy with a cheap car offer? Get a divorce, now! Vincent derided.

"I might not be rich, but at least I'm no mistress. I married fair and square, unlike some," Elvira retorted.

"Elvira, I'm not a homewrecker. Vincent and I are in love. I even said I would leave Calvin for you," Judy said, trying to look pitia

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Elvira sneered. "Calvin and I are the real deal. Not that I need your blessing. But sure, enjoy my hand-me-downs. I've no interest in recycling garbage. With each return to this charade, her disdain only deepened. As Calvin and his parents walked in, they caught Elvira's biting comment. Calvin's face instantly soured.

Roxanne Kennedy stormed over, hand raised to strike, bellowing, "Who the hell do you think you are, calling my son garbage?"

Elvira grabbed Roxanne's wrist, halting her mid-strike, and shoved her away. Freed from any obligation to the Kennedys, Elvira wasn't about to endure Roxanne's barbs any longer.

Roxanne, shocked by Elvira's boldness, stumbled and nearly fell, only saved by Calvin's quick action, though she still twisted

her ankle.

Pointing at Elvira in pain, Roxanne exclaimed. "You dare push me! You've crossed the line!"

"You were about to hit me, and I can't push back? Have you lost your mind?" Elvira snapped, no longer willing to play the pacifier now that any future with Calvin was out of the question, ""Elvira Calvin shouted in anger.

"Mrs. Kennedy, please, take a seat. Kay, fetch some ice for her." Judy intervened, all sweetness and worry.

"Elvira, apologize to Mrs. Kennedy, now!" Vincent demanded coldly.

"Dad, you might want to distance yourself from the Kennedys. You're spouting utter nonsense. Expecting me to apologize to someone who tried to hit me? If anything, my restraint shows class, Elvira countered, pitying Vincent's blindness. Silence enveloped the room.

"Elvira, Mrs. Kennedy is the elder. How could you raise your hand to her?" Judy chided, feigning disapproval.

"Well, let me just say this: Any 'elder' who tries to hit me will get as good as they give. So, for everyone's sake, keep your hands to yourselves, Elvira declared, setting her boundaries clear.

The room fell silent again.

Amber, having initially intended to use the gathering as an opportunity to call off the engagement due to other matters, remained quiet.

'I won't let my daughter carry the label of a homewrecker, Amber silently vowed.

"Elvira, since you're married now, it's time to end things with Calvin, Amber urged, switching to a softer tone.

"Absolutely. We couldn't possibly take in a daughter-in-law who assaults her elders, Roxanne said with distaste as if Elvira was something vile.

"You don't have to bother, I'm already on it. If there's nothing else, I won't keep you from celebrating the engagement of a cheater and his mistress, Elvira retorted before turning to leave, her parting shot leaving everyone visibly unsettled. "Stop right there! Who said you could leave, you ungrateful brat?" Vincent exploded with fury.

Elvira didn't even look back, just kept walking away.

Judy, feigning concern, said, "Dad, we must get to talk her into divorcing. The guy she picked up can't be worth much. Only driving a car worth 20 thousand dollars definitely

hints at a less-than-stellar background. We can't have her settling for less." "Judy, you're too good-hearted. Despite how Elvira treats you, you're always looking out for her," Roxanne remarked, her tone icy.

"But she is my sister. How can I not care? I think we should find her someone suitable, or I won't be able to move for Calvin with a clear conscience, Judy insisted.

forward with

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"I've got someone in mind actually. The owner of Walenburg Steel. Rich, but with a divorce behind him. Sounds like a match for Elvira, Amber chimed in.

"That settles it then. Elvira's remarriage will save us face. Can't have people knowing she married some nobody," Vincent said, eager to marry Elvira off again, worried about the family's reputation.

"Alright, I'll set it up, Amber replied, her voice laced with triumph, knowing full well the match was anything but suitable. The man was nearly forty and known for his violent temper. Elvira was in for a rough ride.

To Amber, Elvira's misery was her joy.

"Calvin, it seems Elvira isn't keen on divorcing, but really, the guy she is with is a loser. How can a cheap car bring her any joy?" Judy said, latching onto Calvin's arm, her voice dripping with concern.

"Don't waste your sympathy on someone who doesn't value themselves. I'll talk to her. She can't possibly be thinking of jeopardizing her happiness just to spite me." Calvin was convinced Elvira had made a hasty marriage decision out of spite. "Enough about her. We're here to plan for you and Judy. Let's pick a date. Mrs. Karen will be thrilled to throw the party," Roxanne suggested, all smiles, as she grasped Judy's hand.

engagement

Meanwhile, Zach, the target of their disdain for his supposed modest vehicle, was sealing deals worth millions from the comfort of a luxury car that contradicted their assumptions entirely.

After exiting the Willis mansion, Elvira connected with Tracy for a day out, ready to shower her with gifts and company. Their day was interrupted by Zach's arrival and Tracy's sudden "headache," leaving the pair to lunch alone.

Zach knew Tracy's intent to set them up and watched her act coolly.

Elvira, worried, asked, "Is Mrs. Gilbert okay? The last time she collapsed on the street, she mentioned her heart was acting up. Is surgery a sure fix?"

"Surgery is a definite fix, which is why I agreed to our quickie wedding, under the condition she gets it done. Zach had been upfront about his reasons for marrying Elvira, which made their whirlwind wedding possible.

"Don't sweat it. Once Mrs. Gilbert is on the mend, I'm on board with sorting out our divorce. Elvira reassured him, her tone understanding.

Zach watched her, her casual demeanor stirring doubts. Could she really be clueless about grandma's and my real deal? Maybe I got her all wrong?"

But Zach wasn't one to gamble. He mentally penciled in a generous payout for Elvira if she stayed the course and didn't cross any lines until their split.

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After their meal, Elvira and Zach left the restaurant. Just as they reached the door, a reckless guy barreled into Elvira, sending her stumbling into Zach's arms, who instinctively caught her to prevent her fall.

In the chaos, Elvira's hands found their way around Zach's neck as she tried to regain balance, inadvertently brushing her lips against his chin.

Elvira was speechless for a moment.

Zach looked down at Elvira in his arms. He felt the fleeting touch on his chin and his heart skipped. "You alright?" he murmured.

"I'm okay, thanks." Elvira quickly stepped back, her cheeks aflame. She nearly touched her lips reflexively but stopped, feeling it might seem too forward. After all, with Calvin, it had never gone beyond a hug, this was essentially her first kiss. "Sorry, totally didn't see you there!" The one at fault, a young guy, was quick to apologize.

"Watch it next time, Zach said coolly, then started to lead the way out.

Elvira trailed behind him

"Where to? I can drop you off," Zach said, opening the car door for her.

"No, it's fine, I'll cab it. You probably have work to get to. Elvira demurred, her cheeks still burning from their unintended closeness.

"Okay, just be careful then. Hit me up if anything comes up Zach, swamped with work, didn't press her. Only Tracy could make him ditch work like this.

Elvira watched his car pull away, her heart sinking as she thought about Marsh

That evening. Tracy called Elvira over for dinner, a much-needed distraction from Marsh's unresolved issues. Elvira, still mulling over her family woes, picked up some food and headed to Tracy's place for some company.

When Zach called to check on her, Elvira said, "I'm at Mrs. Gilbert's, keeping her company. You should swing by"

Instantly, Zach's mood darkened. 'Grandma said she would keep our secret. Damn, she spilled. Elvira must have known all along about us, he thought. The Gilbert mansion was in Jersten's most exclusive area, yet Elvira seemed unfazed. Clearly, she was in the know. Fuming, he sped to the family mansion, resolved to end things with Elvira, thinking, I can't be tied to such a manipulator."

"Who was on the phone, Elvira?" Tracy asked.

"It was Mr. Gilbert, checking on me. I told him I'm here with you. He's coming over," Elvira answered.

"Oh, really?" Tracy pondered.

"What's up, Mrs. Gilbert?" Elvira inquired, sensing something was off.

"It's nothing, dear. Just need to sort something out." Tracy excused herself and hurried off to send Zach a pinpoint location, with a terse text that said, [Get over here!]

En route, Zach checked the message and frowned, puzzled. "What's this place? Despite his confusion, he redirected toward the coordinates Tracy had sent.

Upon arriving, Zach was escorted upstairs by a servant and only then realized the situation.

Tracy, like Zach, had cleverly chosen a humble apartment to masquerade as their home.

Inside, Elvira was in the kitchen, busily cooking. Hearing his entrance, she briefly looked over her shoulder, greeted Zach, and turned her focus back to her culinary task. Tracy observed Zach's puzzled look and clarified, "I haven't spilled the beans about our family wealth to Elvira, you know."

Zach realized he had misunderstood Elvira again. His gaze unconsciously fell on her bustling in the kitchen. She was dressed in a simple cream outfit with an apron, her hair pulled back in a ponytail, radiating youthful vibrance, seemingly younger than her twenty-four years.

Tracy playfully scolded Zach. "This is all your doing, insisting we keep our wealth a secret and making Elvira cook. She wouldn't let me help, worrying it would tire me. Now, go lend her a hand!"

Feeling somewhat guilty and still processing his hasty misjudgment of Elvira, Zach offered his assistance in the kitchen. "Can I help with anything?" he asked.

"Almost done, just my hair keeps getting in the way, Elvira said, as a few strands fell over her forehead, hindering her. Gloves on for hygiene, she struggled to manage it.

"I'll fix it," Zach said, stepping closer. Elvira turned, allowing him to gently tuck her stray hair behind her ear, the brief touch sending a tingle through both of them. "Thanks, Elvira said, focusing back on her cooking.

Zach found himself momentarily captivated by her beautiful complexion. Tracy witnessed this tender moment with glee, confident that Elvira's charm and kindness would win Zach over.

Elvira prepared four dishes and a soup, and when everything was served, the three sat down to eat. Zach noted the smaller living space and dining area, a stark contrast to his usual spacious settings.

"The proximity during the meal was unfamiliar to Zach. He was accustomed to long dining tables where their hands would accidentally touch."

Elvira's meal was a hit, drawing praise from Tracy and Zach alike, a welcome change from the lack of appreciation she had experienced in the past. I was such a fool back then, she thought, reflecting on her unrequited efforts for Calvin.

After dinner, Elvira moved to clean up, but Zach, wanting to ease her burden, took on the task despite his inexperience. Elvira took on drying the utensils, their seamless teamwork in the kitchen leaving Tracy beaming, envisioning a future filled with family warmth.

When Zach hinted at leaving, Tracy suddenly clutched her chest, feigning a grimace of pain. "Oh, don't fuss over me. Isn't my surgery right around the corner? Just a bit of tightness here. Why don't you both stay over? That way, if something happens, we can dash to the hospital. Alone at night, I'm just a sitting duck, Tracy wheedled, gripping their hands, making it clear leaving wasn't an option.

Elvira, genuinely concerned for Tracy, readily agreed to stay.

Zach quickly realized Tracy's motive, understanding the strategic choice of a two-bedroom setup. 'No wonder grandma went through the trouble of finding this place!' he thought, somewhat resigned yet amused by her matchmaking effort.

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Chapter

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It seems Tracy's grand plan had indeed put them in quite the bind, considering she had never owned anything less than a sprawling residence for her little schernes.

Zach watched Tracy's plot unfold before him. Despite his initial resistance, he found himself unable to say no to her, ultimately agreeing to stay.

Elvira suggested she should share a room with Tracy for the night, to be on hand if needed.

However, Tracy insisted she sleep alone, claiming she was a light sleeper and wouldn't rest well with someone else nearby.

Seeing Tracy's point, Elvira didn't push further. It was only after stepping out that she realized they had a serious logistics issue - there were only two bedrooms in the place.

This meant if Tracy took one room, Elvira and Zach would inevitably end up sharing the other.

Zach, noticing Elvira frozen in place, figured she had just pieced together the awkward situation ahead.

"I can crash on the couch," Elvira suggested, masking her discomfort with a strained smile.

Zach shot her a skeptical look. The couch is a tight fit for a kid, let alone us. How's that gonna work?" His tone mixed annoyance with a hint of humor. It was clear neither of them would fit. "So, what's the plan?" Elvira's voice was laced with concern, seeking a solution.

"Guess I'll hit the floor. You get ready for bed, Zach said, fetching his pajamas.

Returning to their makeshift bedroom, the cramped space and the barely sufficient bedding made Elvira feel a pang of guilt for the luxuries Tracy had lavished on her.

"She lives in this shoebox, yet she spoils me rotten with clothes, Elvira thought remorsefully.

After their baths, Elvira had already made the bed on the floor. Dressed only in her bathrobe, with her hair cascading down her shoulders, she looked different, softer somehow.

"Why aren't you changing into pajamas?" Zach asked, eyeing her bathrobe curiously.

"I'm good with the robe," she replied, not wanting to wear her day clothes again due to the lingering food smell.

Upon discovering why Elvira was hesitant to change into pajamas, Zach was momentarily taken aback by the revealing styles in the wardrobe.

Before she could stop him, Zach's face flushed at the sight of the sleepwear. He then quickly offered her one of his shirts as a makeshift nightgown, saying, "Here, make do with this for the night."

The vast difference in their sizes turned Zach's shirt into a perfect nightgown for Elvira.

Grateful, Elvira changed into the shirt and returned, ready for the night.

Just as Zach was about to call it a night, Elvira in his shirt stopped him dead in his tracks.

Tall and slender, she wore his white shirt, which barely reached her knees, revealing her fair legs. The unbuttoned top revealed her graceful collarbones and her innocent yet seductive face made Zach feel hotter.

After turning off the light and getting into bed, Elvira didn't notice Zach's agitation. Lying down, she suggested, "Mr. Gilbert, how about we hire a full-time nurse for Tracy? Living alone at her age, especially with her health, isn't safe." Zach, who knew the house was already staffed to the brim, couldn't help but marvel at Tracy's elaborate setup to get them closer.

Mistaking his silence for concern over expenses, Elvira quickly added, "Look, don't worry about the costs. I've got savings, and we can handle this together. It's what families do, right?"

Zach was taken aback by her offer to share the financial burden. "You really mean that? Joining forces to care for her! Her

surgery might cost us a fortune, and my savings won't cover it all. I have to borrow some. You're okay with this burden?" Before, his mention of financial strain would've sent anyone running. Yet, Elvira's response was heartwarmingly different. "Of course," Elvira said earnestly. "Even though our marriage started unconventional, we're legally married. I've got some money saved up, and we can always figure something out. Isn't sticking together through tough times what families do?" In the darkness, Zach could barely make out Elvira's silhouette but her words struck deep, making him reassess his earlier doubts about her intentions.

"I can try borrowing from a friend, too, Elvira added, wanting to ease any pressure on him.

"Let's just sleep," Zach finally said, turning away, trying to mask the turmoil of emotions her proposal had stirred within him. Thinking he was overwhelmed, Elvira lay there planning to ask Olivia for a loan, prioritizing the urgent need over all else. As Elvira drifted to sleep, Zach lay awake, her proximity and the faint scent of her making it impossible for him to find rest.

A sudden jolt woke them both, leading to an unintended, intimate collision. With Elvira falling onto Zach, their lips met in the dim light.

The room fell silent, charged with an unspoken tension.

In the chaos of the night, Zach had shed his shirt, and Elvira, only half-dressed, found the buttons of her shirt undone, bringing them dangerously close, skin to skin. The impracticality of Tracy's lingerie options had left Elvira more exposed than she preferred.

As their lips parted, Elvira's instinct was to scream. But Zach quickly covered her mouth with his hand and wrapped his other arm around her waist, whispering hoarsely, "Don't scream.

"Don't scream? How the hell am I not supposed to?" Elvira said to herself, acutely aware of their compromising embrace.

Elvira scrambled to distance herself, her fingers fumbling with the buttons in a frantic attempt to reclaim some dignity. But Zach's burning gaze only heightened her embarrassment.

"Stop staring!" she snapped, her faux ferocity more adorable than intimidating.

Her beauty was undeniable, even in disarray - half a shoulder bared, her curls in a wild cascade, and her legs, a testament to

her allure.

Zach, instead of averting his gaze, chuckled. "I'm a man. It's impossible not to look in a situation like this."

It was a natural pull, a moment that recalled a previous, equally vulnerable encounter.

Caught off-guard by her glance towards his noticeable arousal, Elvira blushed deeper and accused, "That's vile!"

Yet, Zach didn't feel ashamed. After all, it was a natural reaction, particularly after their close encounter earlier. This unusual stir of desire was a departure from his usual self-restraint, a testament to the unexpected effect Elvira had on him. Without holding back, Zach pulled her to him again, her surprise evident as she questioned, "What are you doing?"

"You're my wife, and I want to capturing her lips with his. kiss you, Zach said before pen

As Elvira was enveloped by his proximity, feeling the heat of his breath and the strength of his embrace, her world narrowed

to the moment

Their kiss marked a point of no return in their tangled relationship.