

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 1[733 words]

Chapter 1

“Trust me! I’ll take care of you and make you the happiest and most honored woman in the world!”

The man’s firm promise echoed in her ears as Elysia Thorne shook her head in panic.

“No, no... Ah...”

With a sudden surge of strength, the man pushed forward and Elysia let out a scream and fell unconscious out of pain.

When she came to, the room was empty, but the lingering scent of their intimate moment still hung in the air. Tissues strewn about and clothes in disarray told the tale of the madness that had just occurred.

She bit her lip and clutched the sheets, her vision gradually blurring with tears...

She was a married woman, and was here at the airport to pick up her husband. But she just lost her virtue just like that before she could even see him!

What did this mean?

Was this infidelity within her marriage?

How was she supposed to face the world now? How could she face her husband?

If she told him she came to the airport to pick him up, that there had been chaos, and in the confusion, a man had dragged her into a dark lounge where this unspeakable act

happened...

Would he believe her?

Would he still accept her?

Could their marriage continue?

Tears fell uncontrollably from Elysia's eyes. She didn't know what she had done wrong in a past life to deserve such a fate. She had grown up without the love of her parents, her life a complete mess. She had hoped to change her destiny through education and had finally made it into her dream college, but she was only to be forced by her foster parents to marry. It was her sister Daphne Thorne who was meant to enter this arranged marriage, but because

had forced Elysia to take her place.

the groom-to-be was disabled.

Her foster parents couldn't bear to see their biological daughter suffer, yet couldn't refuse the generous dowry, so they used years of obligation to coerce her into marrying in her sister's stead.

From dropping out of college to getting engaged and married, no one had asked for her opinion.

18:41

No one had asked if she was willing. They had decided for her and thus destroyed her education and future.

She had cried and bemoaned, but ultimately, she had capitulated to reality.

They said women would live a second life when she got married, and escaping that cold family was a good thing. Since she was married, she decided to be a good wife.

For two years, her husband Tarquin Bradford had been abroad for treatment of his leg, and she had lived in the house alone, never once straying. This marriage, which she had exchanged for her education and future, was her new life, and she treasured it.

But now, on the very day of Tarquin's return, this had happened. What was she to do? Her cell phone suddenly rang. It was the housekeeper from home.

"Mm, the master has asked for you to return."

Elysia's heart skipped a beat, her anxiety welling up.

“Is he back home already?”

“Yes, ma'am, the master came looking for you and left when he saw you weren't there. Before leaving, he asked you to come back to sign some papers. He... he's asking for a divorce.”

Elysia's mind went blank as if a bomb had gone off inside.

Tarquin wanted a divorce?

She knew Tarquin was unhappy with the marriage; he had been absent on their wedding day and had remained distant ever since. They had been married for two years without ever meeting face to face, without even knowing what the other looked like.

But in those two years, he hadn't treated her poorly. He had taken care of her every need, and when she was sick, he made sure the staff looked after her.

Despite being miles apart, she could feel his concern. She thought Tarquin just didn't like the idea of an arranged marriage, not that he didn't like her. If she could just be a good wife, they could live like any other loving couple, caring for each other through the rest of their lives.

But now...

“Ma'am, you needn't be too upset,” the housekeeper said excitedly. “The master has left you this villa, two luxury cars, and a whole lot of money.”

But how could Elysia not be upset?

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 2[635 words]

Chapter 2

She was on the brink of despair. Her godforsaken life couldn't get any worse.

But what right did she have to refuse a divorce now?

Her virtue was stolen, so she was no longer worthy of him.

Elysia sniffled, her voice hoarse, "I understand. I'll go home and sign the papers right away."

After hanging up, she fought through her physical discomfort, dressed, and stumbled out of the airport.

No sooner had she left than a fleet of sleek black limousines suddenly appeared outside the terminal. A troop of suited bodyguards exited the vehicles, encircling the airport.

The assistant respectfully opened the car door, and Tarquin stepped out.

Handcrafted leather shoes, an exorbitantly priced bespoke suit, and a limited-edition watch are the hallmarks of a successful man.

quin's superior stature and handsome features, coupled with an air of unattainable nobility, drew the gaze of onlookers, yet no one dared to approach him,

An aura of regal authority radiated from him, giving the impression that he was to be admired from a distance, but never approached.

Curious and beholding eyes followed him as he made his way through the terminal.

He had been chased by enemies the night before after a dodgy meal, and in a moment of desperation, he had compromised a young woman's innocence.

He had left in a hurry, fearing his enemies would follow him there and bring harm to the girl. He had returned only after eliminating the danger.

It had been her first night. He had promised the night before to take responsibility, to make her the happiest and most honored woman in the world!

Tarquin always kept his promises.

Before Tarquin reached the lounge, his assistant Lowell caught up to him, panting slightly,

“Tarquin, there’s been a call from home. The ma’am has returned, but... it seems she spent the night with another man. The marks on her body are quite telling. The housekeeper says she’s had many men over these past two years and often stayed out all night. And when she’s drunk, she’s been known to speak her mind. Once in a bar, she said that you’re crippled and unworthy of her, that by marrying her, you were...

—

“I was what?” Tarquin’s face darkened.

...like you are way out of her league.”

“Hmph!” Tarquin pursed his lips, his expression cold.

His wife had been imposed on him two years ago by his family to curb his influence. He had never met her, not even on their wedding day.

Now that the situation was stable and he wielded significant power, he was no longer bound. So, the first thing he did upon returning was to initiate a divorce.

It wasn’t callousness; there was simply no love between them. Divorce would be a relief for

her.

To compensate for her lost years, he had offered ample restitution – luxury homes, cars, and a check for a billion dollars.

But it turned out she was nothing but a promiscuous, haughty woman!

In that case, she did not deserve his compensation.

“The previous divorce settlement is void. Rewrite it! She’s been unfaithful and disgraced her role as a wife; she’ll leave with nothing!”

“, sir!”

Tarquin arrived at the lounge door, quelled his rage, and straightened his attire before pushing open the door. He would show that young woman his most gentlemanly and composed side. For better or worse, in sickness and in health, he was bound to her now.

But-

The room was empty.

She was gone?

After a thorough search of the airport, Tarquin's brows furrowed in frustration,

“Send out the word, she must be found no matter whatever means you use and how much it pays!”

He would find her and keep his promise – to make her the happiest, most honored woman in the world!

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 3[777 words]

Chapter 3

Six years later, at Jindale City's train station.

As Elysia stepped off the train with her three sons in tow, they immediately became an eye-catcher.-

Dressed in simple and cozy attire, Elysia's natural beauty was still breathtaking. Even without makeup, her expression seemed to captivate onlookers.

The kids were adorably cute, their large eyes peeking on the top of their masks, glistening and round. Their long eyelashes fluttered, instantly endearing them to anyone who glanced their way.

Looks like another case of cajoling people to have a kid of their own.

Elysia paid no mind to the stares. Standing at the exit of the train station, she gazed at the surroundings that were both familiar and strangely alien, her mind awash with emotions.

eve of a

Back then, Tarquin had accused her of infidelity and thus thrust her into the eye scandalous storm.

A month later, she discovered she was pregnant, which seemed to confirm Tarquin's accusations. The gossip and rumors nearly drowned her. Her foster parents, embarrassed by her and seeing no

further use for her, had cut ties and kicked her out of the house.

She knew the children was from that stranger. Abortion crossed her mind, but after much thought, she couldn't bring herself to do it.

That children were also her flesh and blood! The children had come to her, and that was fate. No matter how difficult, she was determined to bring the children into the world and

raise them.

Afraid her tarnished reputation might affect her children's future, she left Jindale City to live in the countryside.

Life as a pregnant woman alone was tough, and finding work was the first major hurdle. Many employers were hesitant to hire her because of her condition.

But she had to work. She needed money. She needed to eat, to pay for hospital bills, to prepare for baby formula, and to save for their schooling...

Eventually, she managed to find a job at a diner. Terrified of being fired, she worked harder. than anyone else, never taking a day off. This led to malnutrition and exhaustion.

In her ninth month of pregnancy, she fainted on her way home from work.

Strangely, when she came to, she found herself and her children deep in the mountains.

She still didn't know what had happened back then till this day.

Who had performed the cesarean section?

18:42

Who had taken her and her children to the mountains?

And why had they been left there?

Their rescuers had claimed to have found them by chance and, taking pity on them, had

taken them in.

That was the beginning of five years of an easy, happy, and carefree life.

But as the children grew, Elysia had to think about their education and future.

The mountains were peaceful, but besides their rescuers, they were isolated. Once their rescuers passed away, the children would be alone. She couldn't let her children wander through life without experiencing the world's richness and beauty.

After much deliberation, she bid farewell to their rescuers and descended the mountain with her children. She hadn't planned to return to Jindale City; the memories of her past ordeal there still haunted her.

But when she tried to get her children registered, she accidentally discovered she was still

ally married.

Confused, she remembered clearly signing the divorce papers!

Unable to comprehend the situation, she faced a new problem. As a married woman, Tarquin's name would automatically appear as the father on her children's register of birth.

The Bradfords were a prominent family, and Tarquin Bradford, having no fondness for her, would surely not welcome the role of father. So, before registering her children, she needed to finalize her divorce.

That's why she had come to Jindale City—to find Tarquin and dissolve their marriage.

She bore no grudge against Tarquin. She had wronged him first, and his accusations had not been entirely baseless.

If she harbored any resentment, it was towards the man who had taken advantage of her that fateful night.

Men's promises can be deceitful, and she had learned that the hard way.

She had been told she would become the happiest and most honored woman in the world, but look how that turned out!

Oh, the irony!

Thinking about her past grievances... she felt a surge of anger!

“Mommy, I gotta pee,” Emmett suddenly tugged at her clothes, his voice tinged with embarrassment.

Elysia snapped back to the present, her gaze falling on her three kids. Her heart was immediately filled with warmth.

The chaos of the past had indeed turned her life upside down, but it had given her these precious children, and for that, she was grateful.

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 4[729 words]

Chapter 4

She couldn't help but beam with pride when she thought of her three boys—they were her everything.

Elliot was the epitome of a little gentleman. He might not have been a chatterbox, but when he did speak, it was with the wisdom and emotional intelligence of

someone beyond his years. He carried himself with the air of a natural-born leader, wise and composed.-

On the flip side, Evan was the family firecracker-lively, energetic, and always up for mischief. His passions and dreams were simple: to get involved in a fight. And his wildest dream was that he'd be the undefeated champion of the world.

Emmett was the tenderheart of the trio. Though a bit shy and not quite as quick as his older brothers, he had a knack for warming hearts. At such a young age, he was already a whiz in the kitchen, whipping up the most scrumptious dishes that would put any diner to shame.

And talk about a flair for style-the cologne Elysia used was his own special concoction. Just hand him a few fruits or a bouquet of flowers, and he'd create a one-of-a-kind fragrance that was all natural, with no artificial scents, just the pure notes of blooms and fruits.

And let's not forget his creative genius. Emmett could sketch out designs for clothes and jewelry as easily as most kids would draw stick figures. Elysia often thought how lucky the person who ended up with her Emmett would be.

She looked at Emmett with a smile full of tenderness.

"Alright, sweetie, I'll take you there. Elliot, Evan, do you guys need to use the restroom before we go?"

Elliot and Evan shook their heads in unison, their voices overlapping, "Nope, we're good!"

"Then you two wait here for Mommy and your brother. Don't wander off; I'm going to take Emmett to the bathroom."

"Okay."

Elysia took Emmett's hand and they headed towards the facilities. At the door, she knelt down to remind him, "Emmett, you go to the boys' room, and I'll be in the ladies'. If you finish first, just wait right here for me."

"Okay," Emmett nodded obediently and scurried into the men's room.

Elysia watched him go with a smile, then turned to enter the women's restroom.

Soon enough, Emmett came out, standing exactly where he was told and waiting patiently for his mother.

Suddenly, a group of burly bodyguards approached, and they were surrounding a group of burly bodyguards approached, and they

glamorously dressed woman. She was hidden behind oversized sunglasses, her lips a bright slash of red, and she was clearly in a foul mood.

“I’m done with these low-budget gigs. Trekking out to the middle of nowhere to shoot, then, taking a train back because there’s no airport? Does that suit someone of my caliber? Look at the kind of people you find on trains—no class, no money, absolutely revolting!” Nola Slater’s voice carried and caused onlookers to frown.

Her agent was nodding frantically to soothe her, while the bodyguards roughly cleared a path, “Move it! Step aside!”

Poor Emmett, caught off guard, was shoved heavily aside and fell to the ground with a thud. He was hurt and on the verge of tears but too scared to make a sound.

“Whose kid is this? Get out of the way!” Nola barked.

Frozen with fear, Emmett sat on the floor and covered his mouth; his eyes, brimming with tears, were looking up at Nola Slater, and he was too terrified to move.

Nola’s gaze hardened when she saw Emmett, a bitter reminder of her own troubles. With a venomous tone, she snapped, “If you know you’re blocking the way, move it! How do your parents teach you? You are so mannerless!”

She then kicked Emmett with the tip of her high heel and strutted away.

Emmett burst into tears, crying out, “Mommy, brothers, it hurts...”

7

Elysia was still inside, but Elliot and Evan, hearing the commotion, rushed over. Seeing their little brother in distress, Evan was instantly enraged.

“What happened, Emmett? What’s wrong?”

Emmett cried harder as he saw his brothers. He was trembling and sobbing while stuttering, “That... that lady kicked me... it hurts...”

Evan's temper flared. No one messes with his little brother!

"Elliot, watch Emmett. I'm gonna make her pay!"

With that, Evan bolted off into the crowd, determined to find justice for Emmett.

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 5[729 words]

Chapter 5

Elliot couldn't intervene in time and could only rush over with a look of distress to help

Emmett up.

"Where does it hurt, buddy?" he asked, gently propping his little brother.

"Here... and here." Emmett sobbed, pointing to his backside and shin.

Elliot rolled up Emmett's jeans for a quick look and was shocked, "Holy smokes!"

A large bruise was blossoming on Emmett's pale leg, a deep purple mark that stood out starkly against his skin.

Elliot clenched his fists, fuming. He had wanted to keep his brother Evan from stirring up trouble, but now it seemed he wouldn't just stand by; he was also ready to let him off the leash.

Someone thought they could bully Emmett and get away with it? Emmett had his back!

"Right, Emmett. I'm here. Let me blow on it, and the pain will go away," Elliot consoled.

Emmett nodded in aggravation, "...Okay."

Meanwhile, Evan had chased Nola out of the train station.

Upon seeing her trying to get into her car, he dashed in front of her and puffed up like a little bulldog.

“Hey, witch, who gave you the nerve to pick on my little brother?”

Witch?

Nola’s finely arched eyebrows knitted in anger as she glared at Evan. She wanted to smack

him into next week!

But with Tarquin in the car, she needed to curry favor and show off her ‘affection’ for children. So she shot Evan several death glares and hissed, “Who are you calling a witch?!”

“You! You’re not only ugly but also old and mean! A wicked old hag beyond saving!” Evan retorted, then pulled out a pocketknife and started circling the luxury car, leaving a trail of scratches.

Nola’s eyes bulged as she saw the fresh marks on her sleek black car.

“Stop it, you little terror! Do you have any idea whose car this is when you did this? You’re playing with fire!” she yelled, rushing to stop him.

Evan dodged, leading Nola on a wild goose chase around the car like a circus act.

Tarquin had come to pick up Nola and was watching the scene unfold from the car seat. Frowning, he said to his assistant Lowell, “Go check it out.”

“Right.”

Lowell was about to step out when suddenly-

“Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!”

Four loud crashes followed by a heavy thud made the car lurch downward!

“Ahhhhh!” Nola screamed at the top of her lungs.

Tarquin's brow furrowed as he stepped out of the car. The sight before him locked his expression into a grimace.

All four tires had blown out, smoking and rolling away from the vehicle. The luxury car lay lifeless on the ground like a dead dog.

A little boy, no taller than Tarquin's waist and hiding behind a mask, stood in front of Nola and puffed from his chest, "I'm new in town today, so I won't get serious with you this time. But if you dare mess with my brother again, I won't be so nice! Ugly! Old! Wicked! Hmph!"

Tarquin was stunned. Who was this kid to talk big like that? And he still called it something unserious? Then what kind of havoc would he wreak if he got serious? Who did this little rascal belong to? Why he was such a wild little terror?

Unaware of who he had just crossed, the little guy turned on his heel to leave. Suddenly, someone grabbed the collar of his coat, and his feet left the ground.

"Who's this?! Let go of me, now!" Evan wriggled and squirmed, trying to break free.

Tarquin's face was stormy as he held Evan up to him.

'Are you ordering me around?' he asked, his voice cool but with an undercurrent of chill.

"I..." Evan, behind his mask, froze mid-sentence.

Oh boy, this man... he looked a lot like him and his big brother-like an adult version of them!

Was this their absentee, good-for-nothing dad?

But their mom had told them their dad had passed away young, taken by illness.

It must just be a resemblance!

Thinking this, Evan fluttered his long lashes a few times and said defiantly,

"I'll let you off this time since you look a bit like my dad. Now put me down, or else! I'm warning you, I can be scary when I'm mad!"

He even yelled and made a spooky face at Tarquin to punctuate his threat.

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 6[745 words]

Chapter 6

Tarquin's expression grew colder when Evan did it.

That small kid was so unscrupulous!

This little rascal's eyes peeking over the top of his mask bore an uncanny resemblance to his son Elijah's, which softened Tarquin's heart. If not so, he would have called the cops already.

"Do you have any idea that what you did today is against the law?" he asked.

"It was that ugly, old, nasty woman who started it!" The kid bit back.

Nola, suddenly the target, was appalled.

Ugly, old, and nasty? Who was he talking about? Nola screamed to herself.

Tarquin's voice was icy, "No matter the reason, what you did was wrong!"

Evan frowned, "What gives you the right to boss me around? You are not my dad. Who even are you?"

Tarquin was annoyed, "Where are your parents?"

He wasn't one to quarrel with children, but that didn't mean he would let their guardians off the hook. This car was brand new and worth fifty million dollars, but now it was wrecked on the very first day. He deserved an explanation.

And then there was...

The four smoking tires looked suspiciously like they'd been blown up with expertly-made

bomblets.

Could a kid really handle explosives?

Or was someone using this child in a plot against him?

For safety's sake, he had to get to the bottom of this.

Hearing that his parents were being brought into this, Evan panicked slightly.

All mischievous kids are the same – they all fear the dreaded call to their parents! Evan was no exception. He feared nothing in this world, a total dare-devil. But his mom? She scared him.

His mommy never laid a hand on him in punishment, which wasn't what he feared. What 'really got to him was the thought of making her sad or upset.

Evan's earlier bravado all but vanished as he pouted, "If you want to find someone, go find dad. My mommy's busy. She doesn't have time for you."

Tarquin withdrew his gaze. He wasn't too keen on dealing with women either.

"Where's your dad then?" he asked.

"Oh, my dad? He's in hell. You better hurry down there to find him."

Tarquin was speechless.

Nola seized her chance to interject, "This brat is beyond rude! Tarquin, he's cursing you to go to hell! Just look at the rags he's wearing; it's clear he's from a poor family. Bad seed from a bad crop, no manners at all!"

"Ha! And you think you've got manners? An old woman like you bullied a five-year-old kid? How did your mom teach you to behave?!" Evan retorted defiantly.

Old woman? Nola was fuming, "I'm only twenty-eight!"

"Really? Couldn't tell at all. I thought you were eighty-eight."

"You..."

“Shut it. If you keep on, I might just have to teach you a lesson on behalf of your parents.”

As Evan finished, his smartwatch rang. It was his lovely mommy calling.

She must be panicked as she didn't see him after coming out of the restroom.

Evan couldn't stand the thought of his beloved mommy worrying. He looked at Tarquin,

“I got things to do, gotta run. Can't play with you anymore, bye!”

With that, Evan kicked his little legs and waved his small hand. Thus, he wriggled out of his jacket and pulled off a swift escape.

“This jacket's a gift for you! You're welcome!” The little guy took off, quickly disappearing into the crowd.

Tarquin stared at the empty jacket in his hands, his face growing even darker, “Find out who that kid is and bring his parents to me! And find out what really happened to those tires!”

“Got it!” Lowell immediately signaled the bodyguards to head into the airport.

Tarquin turned to Nola, his displeasure evident, “Why did he say you were bullying his brother?”

Nola put on an innocent face and said, “How could I possibly bully a child? His brother thought I looked wealthy and tried to scam me. Ask my agent if you don't believe me.

The kid's a liar at such a young age, clearly a chip off the old block. Bad seed from a bad crop. The parents can't be much better if they raise a kid like that.

If you ask me, don't bother meeting with his parents. Just throw the whole lot of them in jail and give them life sentences. That'll show them!”

Tarquin gave her a cold look, his eyes filled with disdain, and turned away without a word.

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 7[660 words]

Chapter 7

Meanwhile, Evan had made amends with Elysia.

Elysia was clueless about the chaos at the airport, nor did she know about the hot water her little Evan had landed himself in. As she watched him dash back breathlessly, her face etched with concern.

“Evan, where on earth have you been? Mommy’s been searching high and low for you.”

Evan, reading his mom’s attitude, knew the big goof was still in the dark about the whole ordeal.

His eyes crinkled with mischief, and he grinned cheekily, “No worries, Mom. It’s my first time. here, and I got curious, so I went out for a peek. It’s so buzzing here!”

“Of course, it is! This is one of the biggest cities in the country! But with crowds come dangers, my boy. You can’t go running off like that again. What if some creepy kidnapper snatched you up? What would your brothers and I do then?”

Puffing his chest, Evan reassured her, “Chill, Mom. If a kidnapper ever bumped into me, they’d be the ones in trouble! Haven’t you seen who my mom is? How smart am? No way I’d get taken!”

“Oh, you and your tall tales,” Elysia scolded, but her face was devoid of any sternness. It was filled instead with sheer adoration.

Evan cajoled, “Alright, Mom, no more frétting. Look, I’m back safe and sound, right? Let’s go grab some dinner. I’m starving, and I bet Elliot and Emmett are too.”

Evan was concerned that the nasty woman from before might show up and upset his mom.

Elysia chuckled, "Okay, honey. I'll take you boys out for a treat right now."

"Yay!" The three little ones nodded in unison.

Elliot, seizing the opportunity, took the rolling suitcase from Elysia's hand, "Let me, Mom."

Evan quickly snatched her backpack, "A lady should just look pretty. Let us men handle the heavy lifting."

Emmett also reached out his little hand, "Mommy, I will hold your hand as you walk."

Elysia, treated like a cherished princess, wore a smile radiant with happiness as she took Emmett's tiny hand and led them out of the train station.

2

No one noticed that a pair of eyes were watching them intently from a distance.

The figure was smiling, yet the smile was as eerie and chilling as a specter's.

Dragging luggage around was impractical for dining out, so Elysia checked them into a small

motel near the station.

She hadn't started working, so her funds were tight, and a fancy hotel was out of the question.

Her plan was to finalize her divorce from Tarquin, get the kids settled, and then move away from Jindale City to a quaint town with good weather. There, she'd find work.

"Mom, are we staying here tonight?" Elliot inquired.

Knowing her boy's penchant for cleanliness, Elysia comforted him, "My funds are tight and we can't afford a nicer place right now, so it's a bit rough for you and

your brothers. But don't worry, I'll clean up, put on our own linens, and we won't be here long. Once I sort everything out, we'll move."

Elliot thought about the billions to his name with a hint of helplessness. His mom was wonderful in every way, just a tad naive.

Two years ago, when he brought his first big earnings to her, she was stunned by the \$100,000. She couldn't fathom a kid making that much so easily, figured it was a new scam by kidnappers, using the money as bait to lure children.

It cost her nights of sleep and worry, dimming her usual smile.

Then he earned his second fortune, a cool million! But he hesitated for ages before deciding not to tell Mom, afraid she'd jump to wild conclusions. As his earnings grew, the money just piled up in the bank, unused.

When they came down the mountain and saw Mom's empty pockets, he secretly had Evan give her \$5,000, claiming it was a lucky supermarket raffle win!.

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 8[645 words]

Chapter 8

Elliot gazed at his adorably clueless mom and let out a silent sigh before saying with an indulgent smile, "Mom, don't worry about it. I was just asking, I'm not bothered by this place. As long as I'm with you, I'm happy no matter where we live."

Elysia's lips curled into a smile, "Sweetie, rest assured, I'm going to work my socks off to make sure we can live the good life soon!"

"Yeah! Go mom!"

"You're the best, mom!"

Evan and Emmett cheered her on.

Elysia's smile grew wider, "Alright, let's get moving. We'll drop off our bags and then I'll take you guys out for a nice dinner."

"Sounds great!"

After a hearty dinner of burgers and fries, the little trio headed to the bathroom to brush their

h, while Elysia started changing the sheets outside.

Knock, knock, knock.

The sudden sound of someone at the door startled her.

Expecting a hotel staff member, Elysia opened the door, "Yes, may I hel-"

"Take her!"

Before she could finish, the leader of the two men in black lunged forward and seized her.

Panicked, Elysia cried out, "Who are you? What do you want? Let me go! You-mmph!"

Her mouth was covered and she was forcibly dragged away from the motel.

Before long, Elysia found herself in an office building.

And Tarquin was there. He was a typical workaholic who only ever seemed interested in his job and his son.

After dropping Nola off at home, he'd come straight here to scope out the building he was planning to acquire.

In his office reviewing documents, Tarquin was interrupted by Lowell knocking and entering,

"Tarquin, we've got it all figured out. Those car tires were blown out with a precision explosive, but that kid's background is pretty ordinary. They lost their father young and was raised by their mother in some backwoods town. They have

just arrived in Jindale City today. Nothing unusual about them. We've got the kid's mom here now in the conference room."

Tarquin's brow furrowed at the mention of explosives, setting aside his paperwork to head to the conference room.

Lowell followed him and knew Tarquin had his suspicions. Today the bomb only took out tires, not the car or its passengers. It was a sophisticated job of measuring the exact TNT quantity.

No kid could pull that off.

He knew that Tarquin suspected that there was someone behind the kid, someone with a grudge. Too many had tried to take Tarquin down over the years; he couldn't afford to be careless.

Inside the conference room, Elysia was still reeling, clueless about what was happening. Her heart was racing and thumping wildly in her chest.

"Who are you people? Why have you brought me here? What do you-" she yelled.

The doors to the conference room swung open with a creak.

the Tarquin marched in ahead of his men with an air of authority surrounding him. He stood out th his towering height of six-foot-three, and Elysia's eyes locked onto this king among men immediately.

Then, her beautiful eyes widened in shock. She held her breath, took another unbelievable look at him, and was completely stunned.

This man... he looked almost identical to her sons Elliot and Evan!

Was he their father? The same man who had destroyed her all those years ago?

The thought twisted her face into a frown, her fists clenching involuntarily. Her blood pressure skyrocketed, her breathing erratic.

The memories were too painful to revisit. That one night had ruined her entire life! The scandal of an unexpected pregnancy had left her disgraced, the target of scorn and vilification. Slut, tramp, whore- these labels had been her shadow.

As a mother, she cherished her three angelic babies and the happiness they brought.

But the bitterness of the past, the unspeakable hardships she endured, were all because of that man!

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 9[659 words]

Chapter 9

As Tarquin's gaze lingered on Elysia, there was a flicker of unplaceable light in his eyes.

It wasn't that she was excessively beautiful, but something about this woman stirred a sense of familiarity within him—a nagging feeling that he had seen her somewhere before. Yet, after scrutinizing her features, no recollection surfaced.

Maintaining a stoic expression, Tarquin strode over to the conference table and took his seat. He noticed Elysia staring him down with an intensity that bordered on hostility, and he furrowed his brow in response.

Her kid had wrecked his car, and here she was, not begging for forgiveness, but daring to look at him with such defiance.

The woman had guts just like her son, he'd give her that.

“Why did you let your kid trash my car?” Tarquin accused the moment he spoke, pinning the blame squarely on Elysia.

Elysia, fists clenched and shaking with emotion, frowned upon hearing his words. It seemed that he didn't recognize her.

Was it that he hadn't seen her clearly that night, or was he feigning ignorance?

Uncertain whether this man was the brute from before, Elysia held back from any action.

rash

Struggling to keep her emotions in check, she probed cautiously, “You... you don’t know who I

am?”

“Nope.”

55 2 2 5 ū

“Not at all?”

“Should I?”

Elysia was at a loss for words.

What was going on?

He bore a striking resemblance to Elliot and Evan—not identical, but to a large extent. Yet, he claimed not to know her, and he didn’t seem to be lying. Even his voice was different from the man that night.

Elysia studied Tarquin a moment longer, suppressing the urge to lash out. After all, in a world of people with a nose and a pair of eyes, similar faces were not uncommon.

She steadied her nerves and focused on the immediate issue at hand, “If you don’t know me, why did you drag me here? Kidnapping is a crime!”

Tarquin’s face darkened as Lowell chimed in, “The boss already told you—because your kid destroyed his car.”

“What?” Elysia couldn’t believe it. “Is there some mistake? We’ve just arrived in Jindale City from out of town today. How could my son have had the time to damage your car?”

*Just show her the surveillance footage,” Tarquin snapped impatiently.

And with that, the events that had unfolded at the train station began to play on the large screen in the conference room.

Although the boy in the video wore a mask, Elysia recognized him instantly. She couldn't explain how the tires had been destroyed, but the scratches on the car were indeed the work of her son, Evan.

“Um...I...I'm so sorry, I didn't know about this... The child in the mask is indeed my son, but he's a good kid. He wouldn't have scratched your car without a reason. There must be an explanation.”

Tarquin watched her reactions closely, sensing she wasn't lying. After a moment of silence, he asked, “Do you know that your kid plays with explosives?”

“Explosives? Impossible! He's too young to be messing with something so dangerous.”

out these tires were blown off by expertly-made explosives he used.”

Elysia's eyes widened in shock before she quickly furrowed her brow, rushing to explain, “I understand now! You've got it all wrong; it wasn't explosives, it was just small fireworks. My family makes them; it's a tradition. Evan loves helping his great-grandfather make fireworks, and he brought some with us to Jindale City as a gift from him. I apologize—I had no idea they could be so powerful. If I had known, I never would have let him bring them along.”

Elysia spoke with genuine candor, showing no signs of deceit.

Tarquin kept his eyes on Elysia for a long moment, and eventually, he believed her. Fireworks operated on the same principle as explosives, and it was true that in some rural areas, the older craftsmen had formidable skills.

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 10[619 words]

Chapter 10

Moreover, Lowell had checked them out; they were just an average family of four and were unlikely to pose any real threat to him.

It was all in his head.

Tarquin's guard came down, and with it, his interest in Elysia waned.

"Handle it, Lowell," he instructed, his attention shifting back to the texts on his phone and left

her aside.

Lowell produced the compensation agreement they had prepared earlier, "Miss, since you've admitted the kid is yours, and with the evidence we have, it's time to pay up."

Raising a kid alone is tough, but it's no excuse to get off scot-free.

Tarquin wasn't some kindhearted philanthropist who'd let a multimillion-dollar car get trashed without demanding restitution.

The parents should be responsible for kids' misdeeds, and that was the price she should pay as the mother of her undereducated kid.

Elysia's face tensed. She believed Evan wouldn't cause trouble for no reason, but wrecking someone's car was indeed his fault.

Elysia asked sheepishly, "How much does he want?"

"Fifty million."

"What?!!" Elysia's voice shot up several octaves, "Fifty million? Is he out of his mind?!"

Lowell was taken aback.

Tarquin, mid-text, just looked up, "If you don't want to settle this privately, we can always call the police." Tarquin was clearly getting irritated.

"No police!" Elysia blurted out quickly.

With the evidence stacked against them, Evan had no leg to stand on. If the police got involved, they'd surely take her in as the guardian, and if she went to jail, what would become of her kids?

"The car's worth fifty million?" she asked.

“Yes, that’s the current market value for that model.”

Elysia took the bill Lowell offered and glanced at it, her lips twitching.

“I... I’m not opposed to settling, and I can pay, but I don’t have that kind of money. Can we settle for less?”

Lowell didn’t dare decide alone and looked at Tarquin.

Tarquin eyed Elysia coldly, “How much can you pay?”

Elysia stammered, “5... 500, maybe?”

Tarquin and Lowell were both speechless.

From fifty million to five hundred, she had just dropped five zeros.

“Call the police! Let them handle it!” Tarquin stood up to leave, clearly not interested in wasting more time on Elysia.

Elysia panicked, “Wait!”

Tarquin didn’t stop or turn back.

Elysia bit her lip, steeled herself, and blurted out, “You want money? Fine, but take off your clothes first!”

Tarquin froze, confused, “What?”

“Take them off! Your jacket, your shirt, all of it, off!”

Tarquin and everyone else were stunned.

...ny had tried to seduce their CEO, but no one had ever been so blunt by demanding he strip on the

spot and in front of an audience!

This woman wasn’t just beautiful; she was bold!

Tarquin’s lips were a tight line, his face darkening with anger as he glared at Elysia, every word deliberate, “Do you even know what you’re saying?”

Intimidated by the murderous look in his eyes, Elysia swallowed hard but held her ground, “I said you can have your money, but take off your clothes first.”

She couldn't come up with fifty million if her life depended on it, and she wasn't about to go to jail, so she needed to confirm if he was the same man from that night years ago.

If he was, she'd use that one night as leverage to wipe the debt clean.

He had promised to make her the happiest and most honored woman in the world. She didn't need his happiness, just to settle this issue.

And about the kids....

He didn't know she had borne his children, so he wouldn't come after them, not yet.

Once she had divorced Tarquin, she'd take the kids and leave Lindala Mit