

Hitched 1031

Chapter 1031

Outside the Hawkins residence, the scene was nothing short of chaotic!

A flock of reporters, armed with their cameras and microphones, camped outside, eagerly awaiting Helen.

Just as Helen reached her doorstep, her phone buzzed with a call from the Murphy family. Bobby Murphy was fuming on the other end, "The Murphy family's house is swarmed with reporters, and our stocks are plummeting. When will you clear up the mess online?!"

Helen felt unjustly put upon. Wasn't she also a victim in this debacle?

Her father offered no words of comfort, only complaints and pressure!

But she couldn't rely on Carl. She needed the support of her family to maintain her status among the elite, meaning she couldn't afford to burn bridges with the Murphy family.

With a submissive tone, she replied,

"I'm handling it as we speak. Just wait, the news about the Murphy family will soon be overshadowed."

What was happening with the Murphy family couldn't hold a candle to Pamela's situation!

Pamela was a ma for controversy on her own.

Her predicament would pull in Clayton and, by extension, Hawkins Sea-freight.

It would even drag the Patel family into the spotlight, given their secretive nature that always sparked public curiosity. Any minor ripple from the Patel family could trend online.

Whether it was Clayton or the Patel family, either could overshadow the Murphy family's current news.

Especially since it involved child abuse, a topic bound to ignite public outrage.

Who would care about the Murphy family's news then?

After hanging up, Helen sat in her car, taking a moment to compose herself before putting on an act.

She exited the car in a flurry, head bowed, and hurried towards the Hawkins family home.

As soon as the reporters spotted her, they swarmed around her.

"Helen, is it true that you're obsessed with eating cat litter?!" one of them shouted.

Helen scowled, "That's ridiculous!"

"But how do you explain the photos? You seemed quite satisfied eating cat litter!"

Mentioning that photo made Helen furious-Evan really had a knack for capturing the worst moments!

"The Hawkins family is dealing with a major issue today. I'm in a rush to get back, please make way and don't waste my time!"

Sensing a bigger story, the reporters pressed on,

"What's the major issue with the Hawkins family? Can you tell us more?"

Helen remained silent, escorted by her bodyguard towards the Hawkins Mansion.

Her maid gave the gatekeeper a look, and he, understanding the cue, pretended to block the reporters while subtly letting them in. Led by Helen, the reporters swarmed into the Hawkins Mansion.

Helen made a beeline for the main building!

At that moment, Elysia was pushing Pamela in her wheelchair, basking in the sun in the garden.

Pamela kept calling her Irene, and Elysia responded with tenderness.

Witnessing this motherly affection, Clayton was deeply moved.

How he wished Elysia was his Irene!

If only, he thought.

Suddenly, his assistant rushed over,

"Boss, Helen has arrived with a bunch of reporters."

Clayton frowned, "The Murphy family is in trouble, and she brings reporters to our main house? Why?"

"Just heard her say that the Hawkins family is facing a major incident today."

"What incident?" Clayton asked.

The assistant shook his head, "No idea."

Clayton's expression darkened. Reporters shouldn't be able to just waltz into a private estate like this—it had to be Helen's doing!

"She's up to no good again! Stop her from coming here! Don't let her scare Pamela and Ms. Thorne."

"It's too late..."

Before the assistant could finish, Helen came running over, "Big sister, woe is me..."

Clayton and Elysia were both puzzled.

Elliot was also in the garden, his eyes narrowed, ready for the drama.

Helen, limping with a group of reporters in tow, made her way towards Pamela.

Clayton and his assistant stopped her a few meters away, "What are you doing?!"

Through tears, Helen lamented,

"As soon as I heard Pamela was in trouble, I rushed back. Clayton, please don't blame her. Pamela, she must have been out of her mind to do such a heinous act. It's cruel, but there's a reason behind it!"

Clayton, unaware of Helen's malicious scheme, was taken aback and angered by her words, coldly retorted,

"What nonsense are you spouting now?!"

Chapter 1032

His ignorance seemed like complicity in Helen's eyes!

Fuming, Helen just knew he'd take Pamela's side!

Here she was, having brought the reporters herself, and he was still covering for Pamela, utterly clueless!

What on earth did that loony Pamela have that made him so fond of her!

Helen glared at the oblivious Pamela before putting on a tearful act, saying,

"Clayton, our laws clearly state that insanity exempts one from murder charges, so you don't need to worry about Pamela getting into trouble once this blows up. But you, covering up something like this, that's a crime, you know!"

Clayton, utterly confused and dark-faced, demanded,

"Who killed someone? What are you even talking about?!"

Helen ignored him, turning to Elysia, who was fiercely protective of Pamela,

"Ms. Thorne, seeing how you've just lost a son yet can sunbathe as if nothing's happened, I truly admire your strength. People should indeed move on like that."

Elysia frowned, her teeth clenched,

"Your son died! Your whole family is dead! My son is alive and well!"

In her heart, Helen scoffed, seeing Elysia as heartless for not grieving her son's death and still shielding a murderer!

What a world, full of unimaginable things!

Pretending to be moved, Helen continued,

"Ms. Thorne, to peacefully coexist with Pamela after she brutally killed your young son, you must truly understand her. That touches me." Everyone was baffled.

Elysia: Accusing her of murdering her son? What kind of nonsense is this!

Clayton: Had this malicious woman lost her mind? Daring to spread rumors about Pamela in front of him and the reporters!

The reporters: Pamela murdered a child?

God, what a scoop!

The reporters got even more excited, snapping photos left and right.

Of Pamela! Of Clayton! Of Elysia! Of Helen!

Just as Helen wanted, the focus shifted instantly to the 'Pamela Child Murder' scandal.

Questions came flying,

"Mr. Hawkins, did Mrs. Hawkins really kill someone?"

"Mr. Hawkins, Mrs. Hawkins has always had a good reputation. Why would she kill today? Was she provoked?"

"Mr. Hawkins, where is the body of the child Mrs. Hawkins allegedly murdered? How did you handle it?"

Some even asked Helen,

"Helen, you mentioned brutal murder? Can you tell us how it happened?"

Wiping away fake tears, Helen said she couldn't reveal details, yet she spilled everything!

She claimed Pamela had slashed Evan's body with a knife hundreds of times, cut off his tongue and nose, and even gouged out his eyes to play with as balls!

She even said Pamela chopped off Evan's legs and feet, a brutality beyond imagination!

With some reporters live streaming, the news exploded online, dominating the trending topics.

"Ridiculous!" Clayton exploded, silencing everyone with a shout.

Visibly enraged, Clayton glared at Helen,

"On what grounds do you accuse Pamela of murder? Where's your evidence?!"

Helen, feigning threat and fear, stammered, "Clayton..."

"Your evidence!" Clayton roared in anger.

Elysia, too, was seething,

"Spouting lies with no consequence? Accusing my son of dying and Mrs. Hawkins of murder, we could sue you for this!"

Helen internally seethed, all conspiring to protect Pamela, huh!

Fine, let's see how you protect her now!

"Ms. Thorne has three sons, right? Why do we only see two now? Where's Evan?"

To prove Pamela's innocence, they'd have to produce Evan, alive and kicking.

But Evan was dead as a doornail, huh!

She was sure of her victory.

Smirking internally, Helen was brimming with confidence.

Yet, the next moment, a young, innocent voice suddenly rang out from behind the crowd, "Wow, why are there so many people here? I heard my name; is someone looking for me?"

Chapter 1033

Huh?!

Helen frowned and turned around.

But as soon as she did, she whipped back around!

Good Lord, what had she just seen?

Did she really just see Evan, that little troublemaker?

Wasn't he supposed to be dead and gone? Why was she seeing him?!

Impossible! This can't be happening!

She must be seeing things!

It had to be the way she turned around!

Helen steadied herself and turned once more...

And there was Evan, standing right behind her, with a grin that could light up the room, "Were you looking for me?"

"Ahh-" Helen screamed, falling back onto the ground!

"Are—are you a ghost or something?!"

Evan looked genuinely puzzled, "What? Of course, I'm alive. Why would I be a ghost?!"

"But, weren't you dead?!"

"Huh?!" Evan's voice pitched up, "Who told you I was dead? That's a baseless rumor!"

Helen stared, out of breath, "..."

Evan gave her a weird look and bounced back to where Elysia and Pamela were standing.

Elysia wasn't worried about Evan one bit.

She didn't know about the big shot protecting Evan, but she knew Tarquin had arranged bodyguards for them.

Evan was alive, and the rumor was squashed!

The reporters buzzed among themselves,

"This kid looks fine to me, why would Helen start such a rumor?"

"And she described it so vividly, as if it was true!"

"That's not just spreading rumors, she must've thought Mrs. Hawkins was actually harming children and tried to expose her, the intentions behind this are questionable."

Helen's heart was racing, her plans crumbling before her eyes!

She quickly composed herself and said,

"I'm glad he's alive, I always knew Pamela was too kind to harm a child! It was all a misunderstanding, let's just forget this happened and move on." Helen tried to disperse the crowd and leave.

But as she turned to go, Clayton spoke up, his voice cold and deliberate,

"Where did you hear Pamela killed Evan?"

Helen's heart pounded as she tried to deflect,

"I can't quite remember, but now that it's clear it was all a misunderstanding, I'll just get these reporters out of here."

"You're not going anywhere until you explain yourself!" Clayton threatened publicly.

Helen: "!"

Before she could think of an exit strategy, the bodyguards suddenly brought forward two thugs,

"Sir, these two were sneaking around the Hawkins estate, our men caught them and they confessed someone paid them to come here to kill someone."

Upon seeing them, Helen's accomplice nearly screamed out loud!

Helen was so shocked her eyes nearly popped out of her head!

Evan, standing next to Elysia and Pamela, narrowed his eyes, making the thugs shiver in fear!

Following Evan's earlier instructions, the thugs pointed directly at Helen and her accomplice,

"It was them! They paid us \$200,000 to harm a kid named Evan! They wanted it done brutally, demanded we cut off his tongue and nose, gouge out his eyes, oh, and chop off the kid's legs and arms!"

Everyone: "?!!!" Helen had hired killers?!

Helen's accomplice fell to the ground with a thud, crying out,

"We would never harm that child, we have no grievances with him, how could we possibly order such a thing?!"

Helen, pale as a ghost, struggled to stand her ground, retorting,

"Who are you to accuse me? Do you want to face a lawsuit?!"

Chapter 1034

Helen's gaze was as terrifying as a blade, and under normal circumstances, the two hitmen wouldn't dare to cross her! But now, compared to Helen, they were far more afraid of Evan and the scar-faced boss!

Next to them, Helen was nothing!

The two hitmen immediately blurted out, "We have evidence! We have transaction records, we..."

Helen cut them off, "Transaction records can be faked. They don't count as evidence!"

"We also have a recording!"

Without hesitation, the hitmen pulled out their smartphones and played the recording for everyone to hear.

"The job's done. When's the final payment coming?"

"Are you sure the kid is dead?"

"One hundred percent."

"Was it torture?"

"Yeah... Eyes gouged out, nose cut off, both hands and legs chopped off, all as you requested. Now pay up..."

"The money will be sent to you. Make sure to keep your mouths shut!"

As the recording ended, the room erupted in shock!

This recording was made by Evan, using someone else's phone, while the hitmen were forced to call Helen's maid.

It was Elliot's idea, all to gather evidence!

Irrefutable evidence, leaving no room for their defense, firmly pinning the crime on them!

The hitmen pleaded, "We just wanted to scam some money, we'd never dare to kill someone. Please, Mr. Hawkins, spare us!"

The maid, trembling all over with fear, looked at Helen in horror, "Madam, madam..."

With gritted teeth, Helen raised her hand and slapped the maid!

"You've got some nerve, doing such things behind my back. How could you be so cruel?!"

"I... I... Madam, I..."

"Don't call me madam. You conspired to murder a child and framed Pamela. It's utterly lawless and unforgivable! From today, our relationship as master and servant is over!"

With that, Helen, in front of everyone, began to cry,

"She's the one who told me Evan was tortured to death by Pamela, that's why I believed it! She's been by my side for over a decade, and I never realized she could be so vile. I was blind, so blind..."

In just a few words, Helen cleared herself of any involvement.

Elliot watched her performance with narrowed eyes, neither surprised nor angry.

Helen had stayed out of it all along, and even if her maid had publicly accused her of being the mastermind, there was no evidence! Moreover, the maid wouldn't dare!

But the maid couldn't escape legal punishment now!

Taking down her personal maid was like cutting off one of Helen's arms, losing a loyal minion, and she would surely feel the pain!

Evan, however, was somewhat unsatisfied, making such a big fuss but not being able to send the old witch to prison was frustrating!

Evan mocked her openly,

"Why the tears? She was your maid, which makes you very suspicious! You brought the reporters in here, just trying to get Pamela exposed, didn't you? Wicked woman!"

Helen glared, "You..."

Elysia stepped in front of Evan and threw a few words at her, "Utterly vile!"

The reporters once again started buzzing with speculation,

"The kid's not wrong. It's hard to say who the real mastermind is."

"The rumors are true, Helen's jealous, vile, and ruthless..."

With such harsh words ringing in her ears, Helen felt as if her brain was lacking oxygen, dizzy and lightheaded.

Clayton commanded,

"Call the police! Take everyone in the west wing to the station to assist in thoroughly investigating this matter!"

Helen's mind buzzed, and she fainted on the spot!

Elliot coldly watched her, fainting after just an arm was cut off?

She fainted too soon; the real drama was just beginning!

Chapter 1035

Elliot couldn't help but notice, amidst the uproar about "the grandma who abused children," there was one person whose gaze was fixed on Mom the entire time!

He glanced back and forth between Grandma and Mom, his expression frantic.

That person was Larry!

Elliot knew exactly why he was panicking; he must've noticed the bandages on Grandma's hands!

Mom had just rewrapped Grandma's wounds not too long ago.

And she did it with such expertise, anyone with a medical background could tell at a glance. And if you knew anything about medicine, you'd realize Grandma's injuries were anything but normal!

That was precisely what terrified Larry!

He must've figured out that their mistreatment of Grandma had been discovered by Mom!

And that had him scared out of his wits!

If Grandpa ever found out, they'd be dead meat!

Elliot sneered inwardly, thinking of Larry as nothing but a traitor and one of Helen's cronies, actively participating in the abuse!

Every time Grandma was injured, he would tamper with her medicine during treatment.

He never used anything that would help her wounds heal; instead, his choices would only worsen them, leading to infection!

Only when Grandma couldn't take it anymore would he actually treat her properly!

Such ungratefulness, such betrayal, was utterly despicable!

He was next on Elliot's list!

Over the years, anyone who had hurt Grandma and Grandpa wouldn't get away with it!

The crowd soon dispersed, Helen and her crew were carted off to the police station, and the reporters were sent packing.

Clayton squatted beside Evan, concern etched on his face,

"Evan, you alright there? Didn't get scared, did you?"

Evan laughed it off,

"Grandpa, don't worry about me. I'm fine. Didn't even know someone was out to get me."

"That's my boy. Ah, if anything had happened to you, I'd never forgive myself."

Seeing Larry attempting to leave, Clayton called out to him,

"Larry, why don't you come over and check on Evan? I'd feel better."

Caught off guard, Larry shuddered at the call-out!

He turned around, his eyes instinctively darting towards Elysia.

Elysia stood next to Pamela, glaring at him with loathing in her eyes!

He was one of the abusers, having used medicine on his mother that only aggravated her condition!

Guilty as charged, Larry avoided Elysia's gaze, unable to meet her eyes.

He approached Evan with feigned bravery, but before he could kneel, Elysia coldly interjected,

"Mr. Chen's help isn't needed. I'm quite versed in medical arts myself; I can examine my own child."

Larry's back was slick with sweat. "Ms. Thorne is a doctor?"

Elliot narrowed his eyes, "My mom's a miracle worker when it comes to medicine. She's pretty amazing."

Larry breathed heavily, "I see... perhaps we could exchange notes sometime."

Elysia's tone was firm, "Indeed!"

She had intentionally tied a butterfly knot when rewrapping her mother's wounds today, just so Larry would notice! Whether he sought her out or not, she was determined to confront him!

Not exposing him now had its purpose!

But not exposing didn't mean forgiving!

As Larry faced Elysia's unfriendly gaze, he swallowed hard, pretending nothing was amiss as he turned to Clayton,

"Mr. Hawkins, since Ms. Thorne is also skilled in medicine, I'll be on my way then."

"Right, I forgot Ms. Thorne knew her way around medical treatments. Off you go."

Larry, feigning respect, nodded quickly and made his escape.

Once out of everyone's sight, his expression darkened...

Clayton looked at Elysia, his eyes full of apology,

"I'm so sorry, you just got to the Hawkins family and had to face this mess. It's my fault for not providing a warmer welcome."

Elysia shifted her gaze from Larry,

"Helen's no saint. She came after Mrs. Hawkins today, aiming to tarnish her reputation!"

"I'm aware. Helen has always been hostile towards Pamela. I'll have this thoroughly investigated. If we find even the slightest clue, I won't let her off easy!"

Chapter 1036

As Clayton finished speaking, his phone buzzed with a new message, prompting a frown from him.

The phone rang the next second.

Clayton didn't answer it; instead, he pocketed his phone and turned to Elysia, asking, "Ms. Thorne, I heard from Evan you're visiting from out of town?"

Elysia fibbed, "Yes."

Clayton hastily added, "If you don't mind, Ms. Thorne, you could cancel your hotel reservation and stay at the Hawkins residence. Bring your husband along, too. You can both stay here.

My wife mistook you for our daughter, and seeing you made her happy. I'd like her to enjoy that feeling a bit longer."

Before Elysia could reply, Clayton hurriedly assured, "Don't worry, I'll ensure your safety at the Hawkins residence, and it won't interfere with your plans. You're free to come and go as you please."

Elysia had no intention of leaving anyway. If her father hadn't brought it up, she would have.

But seeing her father's humble plea, she felt a pang of heartache.

"It just so happens my husband is tied up with work these next few days and can't take us out. I feel a connection with Mrs. Hawkins; I'd like to stay and keep her company."

Clayton, visibly moved, his eyes brimming with tears, said, "Thank you, thank you."

Pamela clutched Elysia's hand tightly, "We won't leave, Irene won't go, Irene won't leave Mom."

Elysia, with tears in her eyes, soothed her, "Yes, I won't leave. I'll stay by your side."

Pamela, childlike once again, burst into a radiant smile, innocence written all over her face.

Elysia felt a deep sympathy: Despite being falsely accused of such heinous acts, she remained oblivious to the slander and abuse.

Thankfully, they had returned. The hard days for her mother were over; happiness was all that awaited.

Clayton, with a heavy heart, thought, "If only Elysia really were Irene, how wonderful that would be!"

Sighing, Clayton told Elysia, "Ms. Thorne, I've got an emergency at the company to deal with. Please, take care of Pamela for me. If you need anything, just ask the staff!"

"Of course, go attend to your business."

After giving his instructions, Clayton left the mansion.

The news that Irene held a 15% share in Hawkins Sea-freight had spread among the board members.

They all knew his daughter couldn't return, and at the upcoming shareholders' meeting, he was set to lose.

So, they had already started making their moves!

He had explicitly forbidden the smuggling of contraband on the Hawkins family ships!

Yet, today, they had gone behind his back, loading the contraband onto the ships, planning to smuggle it overseas!

They were blatantly disregarding his authority as the current CEO!

No sooner had Clayton left than Larry received the news.

Larry was discussing Elysia's situation with the old doctor.

"No matter why she didn't expose us today, this woman must be dealt with, she can't stay!"

The old doctor, who had been through thick and thin with Clayton, furrowed his brows and said, "She must go, but Clayton surely has arranged for her and the child's protection. It's not easy to act now!"

"Clayton will protect her, but he surely won't extend that protection to her husband."

"What do you mean?"

"Helen did some digging on them. They're from humble beginnings, nothing notable. We can start by dealing with her husband at the hotel, then lure her there under his name!"

"And then take her out?"

"Exactly."

"That's a solid plan, but is her husband going to be easy to handle?"

Larry scoffed, "Her husband's just a deadbeat, a complete pushover. What's not easy about dealing with him? It'll be a piece of cake!"

The old doctor nodded, "Then it's settled."

Larry pulled out his phone to make arrangements, "We must finish this before Clayton returns. Let's ensure their family meets their end in Oceanopolis today! I'll have someone take care of her worthless husband first!"

Tarquin: Me, a deadbeat?!

Chapter 1037

Mr. Bradford, better known on the docks as Tarquin, was aboard a supply ship, rummaging through contraband freshly smuggled off a vessel owned by the Hawkins family, when his phone buzzed with a call from Lowell.

"Tarquin, that ingrate Larry Hawkins has sent assassins after you," Lowell's voice came through, light and almost amused.

"What?" Tarquin couldn't believe his ears.

"Yeah, that Larry kid. Sent some goons to take you out," Lowell repeated, chuckling as if the idea of Larry trying to kill Tarquin was as absurd as a mouse taking on a lion. There was no threat, only comedy in the notion.

Tarquin pursed his lips, "Why the hell would he come after me? I haven't even been near Hawkins territory."

"It's about your wife. She stumbled upon some dark family secrets about Mrs. Hawkins being mistreated. Larry's looking to silence her, and you, being her husband, are also on his hit list."

Being Elysia's husband... well, that was a title Tarquin wore with pride.

"Where are they now?" Tarquin inquired, his tone getting serious.

"Still lurking around the hotel. Our guys are keeping an eye on them. Should we nab them or what?"

"Grab them. And make sure they can't contact Larry. Cut them off completely."

After ending the call with Lowell, Tarquin dialed Elliot to check on Elysia.

Elliot was upfront, "Mum's safe, don't worry. But she's not doing great. Grandma's been through a lot, and Mum's heartbroken over it."

Tarquin's brow furrowed with concern. Elysia was hurting because of Pamela's suffering, and that, in turn, hurt him. It was all the fault of those who had wronged Pamela.

"Stay close to Mum. I'll be there as soon as I sort things out here."

"Got it!"

Tarquin then briefed Elliot about Larry's assassination attempt and exchanged any new information they had uncovered before hanging up. Axel emerged from the ship's hold, "Looks like these contraband items are linked to that mystery man."

A cold light flashed in Tarquin's eyes. If it was him, things were starting to make sense.

Recently, he had learned about a large shipment of contraband aboard a Hawkins family vessel, destined for overseas. It seemed off to him then. Transporting contraband now seemed like an attempt to smear Clayton's name. But smearing Clayton also meant smearing Hawkins Sea-freight. Yet, the Hawkins family seemed confident that they would take over Hawkins Sea-freight in three days. They wouldn't tarnish their own name.

So, why rush the smuggling operation?

Now, it seemed clear that the mystery man knew of Tarquin and Elysia's return to Oceanopolis and the upcoming board meeting where Clayton was sure to win. Once Clayton's enemies were ousted, exploiting Hawkins Sea-freight would become harder.

Best to move the goods amidst the current chaos, especially while the other shareholders were oblivious to the upheaval, already discounting Clayton as a threat.

Knowing Elysia's connection to Clayton, the mystery man wouldn't expose it. He still needed these pawns.

Tarquin's disdain crystallized into action, "Contact the National Security Agency. Hand over the goods in Mr. Hawkins' name."

Want to rush things? Let's see how you like being held up.

Axel nodded, "Should we plant someone on board?"

"No need. Let's not spook them. I'll deal with Mr. Hawkins personally later."

There was no rush. The cargo ship had just left, needing at least a fortnight to reach its destination.

Meanwhile, Clayton had just arrived at his office, learning that the cargo ship had set sail an hour ago. He immediately ordered the vessel to turn back and return to port.

Chapter 1038

Several ships refused to obey orders and continued sailing.

They were all under the command of the second in command at the company, who now seemed to disregard Clayton as a leader!

Fuming, Clayton stormed into the second in command's office and landed a punch on him right away!

The second in command wiped the blood from his nose, didn't fight back, and with a grim face said,

"Consider that punch a repayment for all the years you've mentored me!"

Clayton was so angry he was practically gasping for breath and tried to go at him again, but his assistant held him back, "Boss, take it easy." Clayton, seething with rage, pointed at the second in command and yelled,

"You backstabbing jerk, I trusted you, gave you all this power, and you dare betray me! You had the audacity to break the rules I set, smuggling contraband!"

The second in command was someone Clayton had personally promoted, someone he had trusted to manage the company's affairs. That's why the contraband could be shipped out without Clayton's knowledge!

"People die for wealth as birds die for food, we're not wrong, you're just too stubborn," the second in command coldly responded. "You're going to ruin Hawkins Sea-freight! Order those ships to turn back now! Otherwise, I..."

Clayton was cut off by his ringing phone.

He glanced at the caller ID and stepped out with the phone.

"Hello, Lloyd, I..."

"Can you talk right now?" the caller interrupted.

"Yeah, go ahead."

The caller was excited,

"Man, you've done a great deed again. Among the contraband you turned in, there was a portion of national secrets. Lucky you caught it in time, it could've threatened national security! The higher-ups specifically asked me to give you a call, to extend their thanks."

Clayton was bewildered, "When did I turn in contraband?"

"Today."

Clayton: "..."

The caller was an old comrade, so Clayton didn't keep him in the dark and told him everything.

After hearing it, the caller was just as stunned,

"It was indeed contacted in your name to the National Security Agency. The contraband was swapped out with regular supplies from one of the Hawkins family's cargo ships.

We knew about the trouble brewing under your command and thought you discovered it and swapped it quietly, not to tarnish Hawkins Sea-freight's reputation."

Clayton quickly asked for the ship's number, which was indeed one of the ships he was trying to intercept!

Clayton was both excited and shocked, wondering who could be so capable?

Secretly swapping out the contraband to turn over to the nation, not only saving Hawkins Sea-freight's reputation but also adhering to maritime laws and conscience, was brilliantly executed!

If it were up to him, he would have done the same!

Clayton felt like he had found a kindred spirit, excitedly saying,

"I didn't do this, can we find out who did?"

This was a clever and talented individual!

"It wasn't you, then was it the Patel family? I heard the Patels went back to Oceanopolis today, probably hearing about your recent troubles and going back to support you."

Clayton deeply respected the Patel siblings; they were good to Pamela and kind to him as well.

"It couldn't be them; they would've informed me beforehand."

"...Then I'll have our friends at national security check who contacted them."

"Alright, make sure to let me know once you find out!"

After hanging up, Clayton felt his anger subside significantly!

The contraband hadn't made it out, and he felt relieved.

Moreover, discovering a like-minded and talented ally excited him!

It was like a lone wolf finding an ally out of the blue!

Chapter 1040

Before meeting up, Elysia had been itching for a confrontation, ready to unleash a tirade on him for all the wrongs he'd done. But standing there now, she realized it was pointless. The kind of man who'd stoop so low, who was rotten to the core, wouldn't see reason no matter what she said.

"And what about Dr. White? Dr. White and Mr. Hawkins have been through thick and thin for decades, facing life and death together. Why would he betray Mr. Hawkins?"

Larry didn't answer her question. Instead, he countered, "How much hush money do you want? Just name your price."

Larry had it all figured out. If she asked for a small amount, he'd pull her into their scheme. She was too beautiful to waste, could make for an intriguing affair. If she demanded an unreasonable sum, he'd silence her for the day and deal with her permanently later.

Before Elysia could respond, Larry added with a sinister undertone, "You've stumbled upon our secret but didn't go straight to Clayton. You're obviously angling for a payoff, which I get. It's human nature, and I support that.

After all, Clayton's days of glory are numbered!

Just you wait and see. The day after tomorrow, he'll be disgraced, tumbling from his pedestal into the mire, never to rise again! Choosing to side with us now not only secures you a handsome sum of hush money but promises further benefits down the line." Elysia couldn't wrap her head around it.

"Mr. Hawkins has been nothing but good to you, your benefactor. What will you do if he falls from grace?"

Larry laughed, "Once he's down, I'm up! I won't have to play butler to Pamela, that lunatic, anymore. I can openly court Miss Murphy from the Murphy family! No longer will I be Clayton's lapdog. I, Larry, will have my own empire!"

Elysia frowned, "Aren't you afraid that in three days, at the shareholders' meeting, Mr. Hawkins might pull through?"

"Him, win? Ha! There's no chance, not unless his daughter returns. But she's long gone."

"Why? I thought she was just missing. How can you be so sure she's dead?"

"Because back then..." Larry paused, then decided, "You don't need to know. Just believe me, she's dead."

"And if she isn't?"

Larry was adamant, "Impossible!"

Elysia glared at him, lips pressed tight. His certainty hinted at a dark secret.

Seeing he wouldn't divulge more, she shifted the topic, "So, the Hawkins Mansion is under your control now?"

"Almost entirely," was Larry's vague admission.

"And they all listen to Helen?"

Larry didn't deny it. "Trust me, siding with Helen is far better than sticking with Clayton and Pamela, that madwoman.

And let me tell you, tormenting that lunatic is quite the stress reliever!

No matter how you treat her, she won't complain. She just asks, sobbing, 'Where's my Irene? Have you seen my Irene? Where did my Irene go? Why can't I find her?' Hah..."

Elysia's breathing quickened in disgust, "You're... you're inhuman!"

Just as Larry was about to retort, he noticed a light from Elysia's pocket.

His expression turned grave, "You... you're recording this?!"

Elysia pulled out her phone, her voice low, "Mr. Hawkins, you've heard everything. Helen has been abusing Mrs. Hawkins for over twenty years, with Larry and Dr. White as her accomplices. The household staff are all in on it too!"

Clayton's roar of fury came through the phone, "Scoundrels!!!"

Larry, panic-stricken, realized the gig was up. But rather than retreat, his anger turned towards Elysia, "You deceitful witch! You'll pay for this!" He lunged at her, intent on violence.

But before he could reach Elysia, Evan kicked him hard, sending him flying. "You're the one who's done for!"

Elysia quickly shield her son, calling out to the bodyguards she had arranged beforehand, "Seize him! Don't let him escape! And round up Dr. White and the servants too. Not one of them gets away!"

She couldn't wait any longer. Vengeance had to be served tonight.