

Hitched 1071

Chapter 1071

At 8 a.m., Clayton made his rounds through the main house with a heavy heart.

Today, he would have to leave this place behind.

The Hawkins family had a rule that only the head of the family could reside in the main house.

After the shareholders' meeting, he would lose Hawkins Sea-freight and his status as the head of the Hawkins family. The main house would no longer be his!

All of it would become Carl's.

Carl would become the new head of the Hawkins family and move into the main house!

If it weren't for their sudden kidnapping of his mother, he would have donated Hawkins Sea-freight today!

The empire he had worked so hard to build, he would rather give it away for free than let those scoundrels have it!

But life is full of regrets, and now he was at his wit's end, unable to change the situation, powerless to do anything!

"Sigh-"

Clayton let out a long sigh, glancing upstairs towards Elysia and Tarquin's room.

He had wanted to have a chat with Tarquin, but thinking they were still resting, he didn't want to disturb them by going up.

Seeing Elliot and Elijah come downstairs, he said to the two boys,

"Something's happened at your granddad's today, and you won't be able to stay here anymore. When your parents wake up, let them know for me.

If they don't mind, they can move to the villa in the suburbs with your grandma.

But, the suburbs are quite far from all the attractions, and it's not very convenient, so if they don't want to stay there, they don't have to worry about your grandma and me. You guys came out to have fun, and that's what's most important."

Of course, he hoped Elysia and the kids would stay with them, but he couldn't insist.

Elliot, without revealing his true identity, replied,

"My mom says that after a storm comes a rainbow, and a person won't be down on their luck forever. Grandpa Clayton, I wish you the best." Elijah frowned and said, "We're not going anywhere. We'll be here waiting for you, waiting to have lunch with you."

Clayton's eyes reddened, touched and helpless.

He didn't want to move either, but he had no choice!

He had already arranged for someone to take Pamela to the villa in the suburbs in the morning.

As for lunch...

Clayton didn't want to dampen the kids' spirits and said,

"I'll try my best to come back for lunch with you guys. If I get too tied up and can't make it, you guys make sure to eat well." "You'll definitely make it back!" Elijah said with certainty.

Charles looked at Elijah and sighed deeply.

The teacher and student had met, but before they could recognize each other, they were already facing a farewell.

The shareholders' meeting was a battlefield, and what came after could be a massacre!

Whether they could make it back alive was uncertain.

Feeling Charles's gaze, Elijah turned to look at him.

He didn't know Charles was his teacher, but he could feel there was something different in Charles's look.

"And you, you have to come back for lunch with us."

Charles smiled warmly, affectionately ruffling Elijah's hair, "Sure."

...

When Clayton and the Patel brothers arrived at the company, it was still before the meeting time.

Since the Patel brothers weren't company employees, they had to wait outside for the time being.

"Call us immediately if anything happens, we'll rush in."

"Got it!" Clayton nodded and walked into the company.

Upon seeing him, his assistant Alden hurried over, looking panicked, "Boss!"

Clayton saw his bruised face and frowned, "What happened to your face?"

Alden's lips moved slightly, "They hit me."

Clayton's face darkened, "Who?!"

Before Alden could speak, the president's office door suddenly opened, and Clayton's second and third assistants came out carrying big boxes. Seeing Clayton, they froze for a moment, their expressions panicked.

But the next second, they calmed down and said,

"Mr. Hawkins, Philip asked us to pack up your things and move them out. We weren't sure what you wanted and what you didn't, so we just put everything in the storage room. If you need anything, you can find it in storage."

Chapter 1072

They used "you" instead of "sir".

Called him "Mr. Hawkins" instead of "boss".

It was a minor thing, but it spoke volumes.

Even the junior assistant dared to address him like this, showing what his current standing in the company was!

It was Alden they had roughed up, for he had stopped them from moving Clayton's stuff.

Clayton was livid,

"How dare you touch my things without my permission? Have you forgotten that I'm still your boss?!"

The two assistants froze, unsure of how to respond, and simply ignored him.

They carried the boxes towards the restroom.

The storage was right next to it.

Clayton's face darkened,

"Alden, notify HR, fire them both! If HR gives you any lip, fire them too!"

The assistants gasped, panic-stricken, standing there holding the boxes uneasily.

Suddenly, they saw a man walking out of the CEO's office, and they hurried to complain,

"Philip, we upset Mr. Hawkins by moving stuff, and he's going to fire us."

Philip was the company's second-in-command.

Philip, unfazed and smiling, said,

"Well, Mr. Hawkins is still the top dog for now. He can fire whoever he wants; I can't do anything about it."

The assistants' eyes widened, but Philip added,

"But don't worry, he won't be for long. I'll rehire you later with double the salary."

The assistants were overjoyed, "Thanks, Philip."

After speaking, they glared at Clayton and Alden beside him, carrying the boxes next to the restroom.

In front of Clayton, they dropped the boxes heavily on the ground.

Clayton, lips pursed in anger, thought of something and hurried towards the CEO's office.

But Philip blocked him,

"This is no longer your office. If you're looking for something, check the storage. Oh, I remember now, you're looking for this, aren't you?" Philip took out a picture frame, squinting at it.

It was the only family photo Clayton had on his desk, featuring him, his wife, and their child!

"Shame, really. Irene looked so pretty as a child. If she were alive today, she'd be stunning. Such a pity, gone completely, probably not even a trace left."

"You bastard!" Clayton roared, reaching for the picture frame.

Philip let go, and the frame fell to the ground, shattering.

Seeing the broken frame, Clayton's pupils dilated in shock.

Alden, knowing the significance of the family photo to Clayton, hurried to pick it up.

His hand barely touched the photo when a leather shoe stepped on it, grinding it down.

The glass shards cut through Alden's palm, making him hiss in pain as he looked up at Philip.

Philip glared at him, menacing,

"Foolish thing, turning down such a high offer from me, insisting on suffering with Clayton. You're sick!"

Clayton was furious, about to strike Philip!

But he was promptly restrained by his second and third assistants, who coldly said,

"Mr. Hawkins, there are cameras everywhere. If you hit him here, we'll have to call the cops!"

"Get lost!" Clayton shouted, throwing them off, but Alden stopped him,

"Boss, stay calm. We can't give them an excuse now."

Alden was worried they'd use any violence as a reason to throw Clayton into jail and torment him after the shareholders' meeting was over. "I'm fine, here's your photo."

Alden handed the family photo to Clayton, blood smudging its surface.

Chapter 1073

Clayton's eyes were bloodshot as he took the photograph from Alden, "I'm so sorry you've been dragged into this mess." Alden shook his head, "Don't worry about me, you've done so much for me. It's you who's been wronged here."

Before the board meeting had even started, Philip had already commandeered Clayton's office, pushing the limits of decency!

Seeing Alden forcibly sniffing to hold back emotions, Clayton thought to himself how, despite the harshness of the world, there were still good souls around.

He looked at the photo of his wife and daughter, feeling a bitter sting in his nostrils.

Philip snorted disdainfully, eyes full of contempt.

After giving Alden a sharp look, he ordered the office door locked and said to Clayton, "Better hurry up, the board meeting's about to start!"

With another huff, Philip headed towards the conference room.

Clayton pocketed the photograph, giving the office door one last look before steeling himself.

Together, Alden and he entered the meeting room.

The other board members were already there, their eyes narrowed in disdain and mockery as Clayton walked in.

Carl was among them, staring at his own brother without a hint of guilt.

Clayton clenched his jaw, seeing Philip arrogantly seated at the head of the table, a spot that should have been his. Ignoring the power play, Clayton chose a random seat.

Fighting over the seat now seemed pointless.

Just as he sat down, the door to the conference room opened, and two elderly men, leaning on canes, walked in.

Upon seeing them, Clayton shot up from his chair, surprised, "Albert, Florian, what brings you here?"

The two men gave him a cold glance and without a word, walked over and sat down opposite him.

Clayton was dumbfounded for a moment before his eyes widened in realization, "You... you guys..."

Philip smugly responded, "Mr. Watson and Mr. Miller are also shareholders in Hawkins Sea-freight, each holding a 2% stake. Of course, they had to come."

Clayton swayed, his mind buzzing.

He had been unaware that Albert and Florian held shares in Hawkins Sea-freight!

He knew there were anonymous shareholders, but he never imagined it would be them!

Together, they held 4%. If they had sided with him, he could have won the day!

But they had chosen to support Philip instead!

Clayton faced them, breathing heavily, "Just yesterday, you were telling me how my father saved your lives, that you'd do anything for me, and now... now..."

The two old men looked at him with disdain, "We were just playing on your emotions to get information."

"Get information?"

"Yes, there were too many unexpected events lately. We needed to make sure you had no ace up your sleeve. And to find out if Mr. Bradford was truly your trump card."

The realization hit Clayton hard.

He stared at them, utterly shocked.

The arrival of Albert and Florian was like a spark to Clayton's fury!

In front of everyone, he roared, "My father saved your lives! He did you a great service! I've treated you well too. Why? Why betray me?"

Their response was casual, "Philip promised us each a 10% stake if we supported him. Refusing him would have been foolish." "Everyone has their price."

Clayton trembled with rage, "So, 'Everyone has their price,' huh? What about gratitude? My father and I helped you reach where you are today! Ungrateful, treacherous, worse than animals! You'll get what's coming to you! Just you wait and see, you won't have a happy ending!" The room filled with cold, disdainful laughter.

Chapter 1074

Albert glanced at Philip with a mix of irritation and urgency, "Enough with the chit-chat, guys. It's go time!"

Clayton slumped in his chair, looking like a man who had just had his soul sucked out of him.

Betrayal from Philip and his crew was infuriating, sure.

Carl turning on him was downright hateful.

But betrayal from Albert and Florian? That was a knife to the heart.

In that moment, in the bustling conference room, only he and Alden were seething with a mix of anger and pain.

The rest? They were practically throwing a party.

After all, Clayton's fall from grace meant they could milk Hawkins Sea-freight for all it was worth.

And thanks to the contracts they'd cunningly signed in advance, Clayton's shares were about to be up for grabs. That spelled big bucks for everyone else.

The seasoned chairman took the floor, setting the stage for the vote that was about to unfold.

"...As per our rules, any shareholder not present has effectively forfeited their voting rights. So today, only 85% of the shares will be in play.

You may cast your vote for Mr. Hawkins or for Philip. Once the votes are counted, the one with the majority will be our new president... Let's begin."

Albert was the first to throw his hat in the ring, "I'm voting for Philip."

Florian was quick to follow suit, "Same here, Philip gets my vote."

Carl chimed in, "Philip for me as well."

And so it went, with "Philip" echoing through the room like a mantra.

Philip leaned back, smirking at Clayton with that smug look of triumph only a scoundrel could muster.

Clayton's lips were a tight line, his face an ashen hue of rage. He had seen this betrayal coming, but the sting was real nonetheless.

His own brother, his most respected uncle-turned against him. How could he not seethe with hatred?

As the meeting wrapped up, it was clear: Philip had swept the vote.

The chairman announced the results, "With 45% of the shares, Philip has won. Mr. Hawkins, with 40%."

Philip's smirk widened as he turned to Clayton, "Mr. Hawkins, congratulations. From this moment on, Hawkins Sea-freight is no longer your concern. Time to retire, perhaps?"

Clayton's response was nothing but a quivering lip; words failed him.

The chairman added, "According to our rules, Philip will now be the new president of Hawkins Sea-freight. Any objections?"

A chorus of "No objections" filled the room.

Suddenly, a clear, feminine voice cut through the noise, "I object!"

Heads turned in unison towards the door.

Elysia, clad in a sharp business suit and high heels, made her entrance, mask on face, authority in her stride. Tarquin, equally imposing in his attire, followed behind.

The room went from shocked to downright bewildered at the sight of them.

Elysia garnered a few glances, but it was Tarquin who captured the room's full attention. After all, Mr. Bradford of Jindale City was not a man to be taken lightly.

"What are you doing here? How did you get in?" the chairman demanded.

Philip stood, trying to mask his fear and irritation with a veneer of politeness, "Mr. Bradford, this is the Hawkins Group's shareholder meeting. Your presence is a bit out of place, don't you think?"

Tarquin, giving Philip not even a glance, strode confidently to Clayton's side and bowed deeply, "Dad."

The room gasped, Clayton nearly tumbled from his chair in shock, and the collective eyes of the assembly nearly popped out of their sockets. What on earth was happening?

Chapter 1075

If it had been anyone else, they'd surely be labeled a lunatic!

But the eccentric in question was Tarquin, and nobody dared call him mad. Instead, they wondered if their ears had betrayed them!

Tarquin calling Clayton 'Dad'?

Impossible, utterly impossible!

Even Clayton thought he'd misheard.

There was no blood relation, not even the slightest, between himself and Tarquin. How on earth could Tarquin call him Dad?!

He must have misheard, definitely!

Shakily, Clayton inquired, "Mr. Bradford, what... what did you just call me?"

"Dad!" Tarquin repeated earnestly.

His voice was firm, resonating with conviction.

Everyone in the conference room heard it loud and clear!

Their jaws dropped in disbelief!

Confirmed - their ears were fine. It was Tarquin who had lost it!

After his initial shock, Clayton furrowed his brows, concern washing over his face, "Mr. Bradford, are you alright?"

Tarquin calling him dad? Something had to be up with his head!

Understanding Clayton's astonishment, Tarquin turned slightly, "Let's have a father-in-law and son-in-law chat later, shall we? Now, look who's that?" Father-in-law and son-in-law?

Clayton was dumbfounded, "?!?"

So were the others, "?!?"

Suddenly realizing something, everyone tensed up and turned their heads towards Elysia!

There she stood, behind Tarquin, her eyes red and teary as she looked at Clayton.

At some point, she had removed her mask, revealing a face that was strikingly similar to a young Pamela!

The room was in shock: "!!!"

Elysia knelt before Clayton, her voice choked with emotion, "Dad!"

Clayton stared at her in disbelief, his breathing erratic, his chest heaving!

He was nervous, excited, and utterly confused!

His body trembled, his lips quivered, his eyes as bewildered as a child's!

He looked at Elysia, then at Tarquin, then at Carl and Philip, sweeping his gaze over every face in the room...

As if asking, is this a dream or reality?

He thought he saw his daughter!

He thought he heard his daughter calling him 'Dad'!

His Irene seemed to be right in front of him, within reach!

Was this a dream?

Why did it feel so real?

Clayton raised his trembling hand, cautiously, anxiously, slowly reaching towards Elysia...

This was Irene, his Irene!

He wanted to touch her, to hold her...

But before Clayton's hand could touch Elysia, he suddenly withdrew it.

"Slap!"

He struck himself hard across the face!

He feared it was a dream, afraid that if he reached out, he'd only grasp air, like in countless lonely dreams before!

Over the years, he'd dreamt of his daughter countless times. In those dreams, even though she seemed right in front of him, reaching out would make her vanish without a trace.

Each time, he would end up crouched on the ground, clutching his head, sobbing in despair.

So he was scared, scared that this moment was also a dream!

Scared that if he reached out, his daughter would disappear!

"Dad!" Elysia took his hand herself.

"I'm not dreaming! I'm not dreaming!"

Clayton looked at Elysia excitedly, his eyes instantly reddening, "You... you... you are..."

Elysia's tears streamed down her face, "Dad, I'm Irene, I'm your daughter Irene."

Clayton's mind buzzed, and he lunged forward,

"My Irene! This is really my Irene! My Irene has come back! Oh, Lord, I've finally found my Irene! Oh, Irene, Irene..."

Father and daughter embraced and wept together, their sobs heart-wrenchingly tender.

Tarquin's eyes welled up with tears.

Chapter 1076

Lowell and Alden were in tears, their emotions overflowing like a river after a storm.

Philip and the rest of the crowd were gobsmacked, their jaws practically hitting the floor at the scene unfolding before them. After a moment of stunned silence, chaos erupted.

"No way, no way! Irene's been gone for ages, she can't possibly be Irene! It has to be a hoax!"

"Yeah, yeah, you're right! This must be one of Clayton's tricks! He's staging this whole drama just to win!"

"And she didn't even look like this the other day. She must have had plastic surgery to impersonate Irene, trying to mimic Pamela's youthful appearance!"

They were in denial, refusing to believe that Irene was alive and had returned.

After all, if Irene came back with that 15% shareholding, they were doomed, completely and utterly defeated!

Tarquin, with a subtle twitch of his nose, helped the tearful father and daughter to their feet.

Then, casting a frosty glance over the crowd, he signaled Lowell.

Wiping away his tears, Lowell stepped forward with a stack of documents in hand.

"Here are the paternity tests between my wife and Mr. Hawkins, and here are the maternity tests between my wife and Mrs. Hawkins. Along with these documents, we can prove my wife's identity."

Philip and the others hurriedly examined the paternity tests!

To convince them, Tarquin had arranged for several paternity tests from different authoritative institutions.

There were tests from private hospitals and legal departments, all stamped with official seals for quick verification.

Elysia and Clayton were engulfed in their excitement, momentarily oblivious to the rest.

With Tarquin holding the fort, he pulled up a chair, sat down with an unreadable expression, and addressed the crowd.

"If anyone has doubts or questions, feel free to ask. I'll clarify them myself."

The crowd glanced at him, meeting his dark, prating gaze, and quickly looked away.

Their breathing was ragged, their bodies trembling, hands shaking as they held the documents.

Their faces were paler than a ghost!

They were savvy enough to know these documents were legitimate.

Their worst fear had materialized.

Clayton's daughter had returned!

Irene was indeed back!

Normally, they could twist facts and deny the truth if someone else presented the evidence. But with Tarquin personally delivering undeniable proof, who dared to object?

The situation had completely turned around.

Irene had returned with that crucial 15% shareholding, and Clayton had won!

They had lost, utterly and hopelessly, without a chance to recover.

It was all over for them.

Suddenly, Carl burst into tears, "Irene! It really is Irene! Our Irene is back, oh Lord, our Irene has returned, boo hoo hoo..."

Tarquin saw right through him, furrowing his brows and rolling his eyes in disgust.

Carl was clearly trying to switch sides now that he saw which way the wind was blowing.

Elysia, still wiping away her tears but momentarily putting aside the joy of their reunion, snapped, "Dad, let's talk about this later. Let's deal with the current issue first."

Clayton quickly agreed, nodding and wiping his own tears, "Yes, yes, yes."

Together, they turned their glare toward Carl.

Elysia indignantly said, "I am back! Sorry to disappoint you!"

Carl hurriedly responded, "Disappointed? How could I be? I'm genuinely thrilled you're back. Your parents and I have been searching for you so long, Irene!"

"You searching for me? Ha! Save your act; it makes me sick!"

Chapter 1077

Carl was on his knees in front of Clayton, eyes brimming with tears, "Bro!"

Clayton snapped, "Don't call me bro! You were the one who said you wanted to cut ties completely. We have nothing to do with each other anymore!"

"Bro, come on, we share the same mother, how can we just sever ties like that? I was wrong, bro, I was just blowing hot air. Don't take what I said seriously."

"Hmph, save your act, it makes me sick!"

"Bro..."

Tarquin handed Clayton a stack of papers, "Over the years, Carl has been involved in a myriad of illegal activities. This is all the evidence. If handed over to the cops, he'd be looking at at least ten years."

Clayton first gave his son-in-law a look of warm affection before taking the documents.

After reading, he clenched his teeth, "Call the cops! Someone like him doesn't deserve freedom!"

Hearing this, Carl was terrified, "Bro, I was wrong. I was led astray, you know I'm easily influenced. I really see my mistake now! Bro, please, give me another chance. I'll do anything you say from now on, I won't mess up again. Bro, I don't want to go to jail, please..."

Clayton was unyielding, "If you really know you're wrong, then serve your time and reflect on your actions! Alden, call the police!"

Carl collapsed, utterly terrified.

The others were shaking in their boots!

If Clayton could be this harsh with his own brother, what about them?

Philip was panicking. According to the agreement, if he lost, his shares would be confiscated!

He felt like a drowned rat, left with nothing!

Knowing Clayton wouldn't let him off the hook, Philip played his last card, attempting to use Betty as leverage, "Clayton, think about your mother!" Everyone echoed, "Yeah, think of Betty!"

Betty had become their lifeline.

Clayton, known for his filial piety, couldn't act rashly with Betty as leverage.

But before Clayton could explode, Tarquin calmly said, "Dad, don't worry. We've found grandma. She's safe at home now."

Tarquin played a video for everyone to see.

It showed Betty being rescued by bodyguards that morning, and now she was happily with Pamela.

Elysia added, "Dad, grandma was saved from the Watson family's basement. They're the kidnappers."

Clayton was shocked, then turned to Albert with rage, "You... it was you! Have you forgotten the kindness my parents showed you? You're truly despicable!"

Albert collapsed, coughing up blood, nearly meeting his end right there!

Tarquin continued, "The Watson family are kidnappers, and the Miller family are their accomplices. Everyone here had a hand in it; none are innocent or clean.

From what I've found, their crimes carry sentences of over five years each!

Philip is the worst offender, embezzling funds and smuggling contraband, posing a threat to national security. He's looking at life or even the death penalty. These are all the evidence."

Clayton, trembling with emotion, took the evidence.

These documents were like swords, allowing him to legally strike at his enemies and vent his anger.

"Hand them over to the police, let them deal with it, let them taste the consequences," Clayton declared.

Hearing this, Philip fainted, and the others collapsed, pale as ghosts.

Outside the company, the Patel brothers saw a squad of armed police rushing into the building, their expressions grave.

Unaware of the chaos inside and not having seen Tarquin and Elysia enter, they thought Clayton was in trouble and were ready to burst in to rescue him!

The security, on Philip's payroll, didn't recognize the Patel brothers but knew they were there to protect Clayton.

So, they blocked their way, throwing threats and insults with an air of superiority.

Chapter 1078

The Hawkins Sea-freight was under new management, now headed by Philip. Anyone looking for Clayton was told to wait outside or head to the police station, where the cops had just stormed in to apprehend him.

"Really, siding with Clayton even now? Are you out of your minds?"

The security guard's words were cut short by a solid punch to the face!

Robert, a military man with a short fuse, didn't bother with words and went straight for action.

The security team, bold as ever, called for backup, but before they could even make a move, the police emerged, escorting a group of individuals. The Patel brothers tensed, expecting to see Clayton, but to their surprise, it was Carl!

Carl, Philip, Albert, and Florian... a whole crowd, all of Clayton's enemies!

The Patel brothers were stunned, and so were the security guards.

Following behind the police and their detainees were Clayton and Tarquin, with the Patel brothers quickly approaching, "Clayton, what's going on?" Clayton, unable to contain his excitement, said, "It's a long story. Brothers, guess who this is?"

Elysia removed her mask, greeting them with tearful eyes, "Uncle."

The Patel brothers were dumbfounded, "Is... is that really Elysia?"

With a voice tinged with emotion, Elysia explained how she had known about her identity before coming to Oceanopolis. To catch the villains, she had concealed her identity, even going as far as to disguise herself, causing worry among her uncles.

The Patel brothers, visibly moved and barely able to contain their excitement, exclaimed, "It's good you're back! Safe and sound!"

Clayton, fighting back his emotions, suggested, "Let's go home and talk. The kids just called; they're waiting for us to have lunch together."

The security guards stood frozen, heads bowed, not daring to breathe too loudly.

As Clayton walked past them, he overheard their earlier comments and told Alden, "Since they're so fond of Philip, let them join him and his cronies in jail!"

With Philip behind bars, they could all keep each other company.

Ignoring the security guards' pleas for mercy, Clayton, hand in hand with Elysia, got into the car.

For years, Clayton had been away, and the company had seen better days. Now, it was time for a thorough cleanup.

But at that moment, Clayton's only concern was spending time with his daughter and wife. After over twenty years of searching, waiting, and hoping, the family was finally reunited.

Oceanopolis was lively under the clear skies, buzzing with news about the Hawkins family.

#Elysia Hawkins makes a triumphant return, securing Hawkins Sea-freight for Mr. Hawkins!

#Tarquin, Jindale City's billionaire, revealed to be Mr. Hawkins's son-in-law!

#Daughter of Oceanopolis's wealthiest, married to the nation's richest man - Elysia Hawkins's life of luxury!

#Springtime for Mr. Hawkins and Ms. Patel, as their daughter and her influential husband make a high-profile comeback#

#Philip caught embezzling and smuggling, sent to prison by Mr. Hawkins#

#Mr. Hawkins disowns Carl, sending him to jail#

#Son-in-law defends father-in-law, taking down a hundred top inte influencers#

#Good deeds bring rewards, evil deeds bring retribution - enemies of Mr. Hawkins, tremble in fear#

Lying in a hospital bed, Larry was astounded by the news flooding the inte. Frantically, he reached out to Alden,

"Please... tell Mr. Hawkins, I want to make amends! I know the secret behind Ms. Hawkins's disappearance all those years ago!"

Chapter 1079

Clayton had barely parked when his phone buzzed with a call from Alden. The mere mention of wanting to see Larry filled him with disgust. To him, Larry was the epitome of ingratitude, a real snake in the grass. However, the moment he heard Larry knew the secret behind his daughter's disappearance, his interest was piqued, and he agreed to the meeting.

"What's wrong, Dad?" Elysia noticed the change in Clayton's demeanor and expressed her concern lovingly.

Clayton gazed at his daughter with affection. He didn't want to sour the mood by bringing up Larry, so he brushed it off with, "It's nothing, sweetheart." Before they could continue, joyful cries from outside the car grabbed their attention. "Daddy, Mommy, Grandpa!"

Five little munchkins were sprinting towards the car. Clayton, already fond of these kids and now knowing they were his very own grandchildren, was over the moon with excitement. He couldn't wait to get out of the car and scoop them into his arms, showering them with affection and proudly proclaiming, "My good little ones, all of you are Grandpa's treasures!"

The Smith brothers, also quite taken with the children, joined in the greetings with equal enthusiasm. "Hey there, little champs!"

The kids warmly greeted them back, "Hello, Uncle Grandpa!"

Elysia and Tarquin, stepping out of the car, shared a warm, knowing smile, watching the heartwarming scene unfold before them.

Suddenly, Charles, unable to hide his excitement, lifted Elijah into the air. "Elijah, we finally meet! You found who you were looking for, and so did I. We're both lucky stars!"

Elijah, stunned, managed a surprised, "Teacher?!"

"Ha-ha, yes, it's me! Talk about fate!"

Elijah's eyes sparkled with surprise and delight.

Tarquin squinted, piecing everything together. No wonder Elliot and Elijah had a knack for hacking despite neither he nor Elysia having such skills-it was a gift from the Smith genes, a wonderful twist of fate!

Elysia, still trying to catch up, asked, "What teacher?"

Tarquin explained, "Elijah had been learning online from a mentor he'd never met in person. Turns out, his mystery teacher is his Uncle Grandpa!" "Wow, talk about serendipity!"

"Irene?!" A distant, frail voice called out.

Turning towards the sound, Elysia saw an elderly lady rushing over, her servants struggling to keep up. Without asking, she knew it was her grandmother.

Rushing to meet her, Elysia greeted, "Grandma!"

The old woman, tears streaming down her face, gasped, "My Irene, my little Irene! Bless the heavens, bless the heavens..."

Betty, choked with sobs, lamented, "I'm so sorry, my dear. It was all my fault, losing you... I'm so sorry, my Irene..."

On the drive back, Clayton had filled in Elysia about the day she went missing-the day her father returned from the sea. Concerned about the stormy weather, her mother and grandmother had taken her to the docks to wait for her father. It was during a brief moment, when her mother was away and her grandmother and a servant were watching her, that she disappeared. The guilt had haunted her grandmother ever since.

Elysia comforted Betty, wiping her tears, "It's not your fault, Grandma. It was a twist of fate, and now that it's resolved, I'm back."

Holding Elysia's hand, Betty's eyes were filled with tears of joy, "The important thing is you're back. We've missed you for over twenty years." Tarquin approached, respectfully greeting, "Grandma."

Betty quickly wiped her tears and took a moment to really look at Tarquin,

Chapter 1080

"Absolutely! Just looking at you, I can tell you're a responsible, dependable young man! Our Irene has been thriving, like she's been nourished by a pot of honey, and you've played no small part in that. Grandma thanks you, dear."

"Oh, Grandma, you're too kind. It's my honor that she's taken a liking to me. Of course, I'll spoil her rotten, don't you worry. I'll make sure she's happier with each passing day."

"Marvelous, marvelous!"

The maid wheeled Pamela over, and upon seeing Elysia, she froze in shock.

This was her first glimpse of Elysia's true face.

Elysia knelt down, "Mom."

Pamela lifted her bandaged hand, gently tracing Elysia's features.

"Irene looks just like her mom."

Pamela turned to Betty, "Mom, it's Irene, Irene has grown up."

Betty nodded, "I know, this is our Irene, our Irene has come back to us."

Pamela's smile was wide and childlike, clearly not all there,

"Yep, yep, Irene's back, Irene's back."

Tears streamed down Elysia's cheeks. If only she had known how much her family missed her, she would have dug into her origins much sooner. Clayton approached, glancing between his wife and daughter, then turned to Betty,

"Mom, I'm sorry you had to endure all this."

"I'm not the one who's suffered, my son and daughter-in-law have! Those vile scoundrels, how dare they... Let's not talk about them, it's disgusting! They've gotten their comeuppance! Today is a day for happiness, let's focus on that!"

"Absolutely!"

The family returned to the main house, enjoying a lively and joyous reunion lunch.

After lunch, Clayton made up an excuse to leave the family gathering, heading to the hospital to find Larry.

He needed to uncover the truth about how his daughter was lost all those years ago.

Evan, worried his grandpa might be bullied again, followed him quietly all the way to the hospital.

As Clayton entered the hospital, he bumped into the director who was being arrested.

This was the same man who had ordered Clayton not to step foot in the hospital just the day before!

After everything was settled today, Elijah and Elliot moved quickly, anonymously exposing a whole bunch of people online!

Their dark secrets and evidence were blasted across the internet for public judgment!

This included social media influencers with millions of followers, popular celebrities, and other well-known figures.

Big shots and small fries alike, whoever had mocked Clayton the loudest, suffered the worst fate!

This included the high-and-mighty director, now a pariah on the streets, facing harsh legal penalties. Seeing Clayton, he desperately pleaded,

"Clayton, help me, please. I know I was wrong to throw you out of the hospital yesterday. Clayton, help me, please..." As the police led him away, Clayton strode into the elevator, utterly indifferent to his pleas, not even sparing him a glance.

He wasn't a saint. For such people, he wished nothing but a swift descent into hell - the more miserable, the better! Larry was in a ninth-floor hospital room. The moment Clayton appeared, Larry became agitated, "Mr. Hawkins!" Clayton sat down with a cold expression, "Spit it out."

"Mr. Hawkins, I was wrong, sob, I really realize that now. I've failed your kindness, I'm guilty!"

"Cut the crap, get to the point."

Clayton's silence and lack of insults meant he had completely given up on him!

Such ingratitude was worse than that of animals!

Seeing Clayton's attitude, Larry knew he couldn't be forgiven, so he hurriedly said,

"I'll tell you the secret of Ms. Hawkins' disappearance. Can... can you just let me go, please?"

He wasn't seeking forgiveness anymore, just to be spared!

The fate of those who had wronged Clayton was too grim, and he was terrified!

Clayton glared at him, his voice icy,

"I'll decide if your 'secret' is worth anything first."