

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 11[768 words]

Chapter 11

It was obvious to anyone watching that Tarquin had completely misinterpreted Elysia's actions. He thought she was shamelessly flirting with him in front of everyone.

"Outrageous! Unreasonable!" he exclaimed.

Elysia's eyes widened in shock as she realized the misunderstanding. She quickly tried to explain, "You've got it all wrong. I just wanted to check..." if there were bite marks on his shoulder.

Years ago, during a moment of intense pain, she had lapsed into unconsciousness, then woken with such agony that she had bitten down on his shoulder and refused to let go.

Such a fierce bite would surely leave a scar on any normal person.

If there were bite marks on his shoulder, it would prove he was the man from that wild encounter!

But before she could finish her sentence, Tarquin's phone suddenly rang. He snatched it up and barked, "Talk to me!"

Whatever was said on the other end, his expression went through a whirlwind of emotions.

"I'll be right there," he said abruptly.

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He hu p the phone and rushed out, no longer the picture of calm. filled with a restless anxiety.

Lowell, seeing his demeanor, knew something had to be wrong with the young master. The only things that could rattle the stoic Tarquin were issues concerning his young son and the woman from six years ago.

His son was, of course, his flesh and blood. That woman was the elusive mother of his child! Lowell's expression changed as well. He hurried after Tarquin, "What about that lady?"

Without looking back, Tarquin dismissed the concern, "Leave her to the police!"

Elysia panicked, realizing she couldn't afford to be detained while trying to verify his identity. She rushed after him, "You can't hand me over to the cops, I have three kids at home, and they're fatherless. If I get taken away, there's no one to look after them.

I admit it was wrong for my kids to scratch your car, and I'm sorry! But they're only five years old; they really can't be without their mom."

Tarquin turned to look at Elysia, and for a moment, he understood all too well the plight of children without their mother. His own son Elijah knew that pain.

Tarquin felt a pang of compassion, but he wasn't ready to let her off the hook just yet.

"Lock her up here for now. We'll decide what to do with her later," he ordered.

Elysia panicked, "You can't lock me up here. My kids are waiting for me at the motel. I..." But her words were cut off as the door slammed shut and was locked from the outside.

With her eyes brimming with tears, Elysia realized she didn't even have her phone. Her kids were alone in the motel, vulnerable to any danger.

"Let me out! This is unlawful imprisonment! Let me out..."

No matter how much she yelled, no one paid her any attention.

In Jindale City's most prestigious estate, Number One Mansion, Tarquin stormed in, not bothering to shed his coat or shoes as he made a beeline for the second-floor nursery.

The butler, Heath, followed close behind in a flurry.

“What in the world happened?!” Tarquin demanded, his voice laced with urgency.

“The young master was fine earlier, but then Ms. Nola Slater showed up out of the blue,” Heath reported quickly. “She brought gifts and went upstairs to see him. Whatever she said to him, it set him off. He even hurt Ms. Slater.”

A shadow passed over Tarquin’s eyes, his steps quickening with worry, “Did he hurt himself?”

lear, he won’t let any of us near.”

“It’s

Bang! Thud! Crash!

As Tarquin reached his son’s door, the sound of objects being thrown around could be heard.

His anxiety increased a notch as he pushed open the door,

“Eli...”

A vase flew straight at him, and he dodged just in time. The vase whizzed past his ear and out of the room, tumbling over the banister to shatter on the first-floor tiles.

Heath’s face paled out of fear, and he was frozen in the doorway.

But Tarquin, accustomed to such outbursts, stepped into the room, his patience evident as he approached his furious son, “Elijah, what’s got you so upset again?”

Elijah Bradford clenched his fists, his young brow furrowed tightly, his chest heaving with emotion. His face was stormy with anger, an image of fury so like Tarquin’s that their resemblance was unmistakable.

Clearly, the apple didn’t fall far from the tree.

Tarquin moved closer, reaching out to embrace his son, but Elijah rejected the offer, standing far away and eyeing him warily.

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 12[608 words]

Chapter 12

“You’re getting married?”

Tarquin froze. “Who told you that?” he asked.

Elijah didn’t speak, just stared him down.

It hit Tarquin then, “Nola let it slip?”

Elijah’s brow furrowed ever so slightly as he stayed silent.

Understanding dawned on Tarquin, and his face darkened as he explained, “Don’t listen to her tall tales! Daddy’s not looking to bring you a stepmom. You know I’ve never stopped looking for your birth mother.”

“Not marrying her?”

“Not in a million years!”

“Sure?”

“Positive!”

Elijah’s expression eased a bit, “I don’t like her.”

“Neither do I,” Tarquin said.

Elijah

s quivered, “Any news about my mom?”

“Not yet, but rest assured, the second there’s a word, Daddy will tell you.”

Tarquin was torn about that woman! She had been his saving grace who indirectly saved his life, and for that, he was grateful. And he was old-school about love – a one-woman man for life. Since they had been together, then it had to be her and no one else in his heart. He longed to find her, to marry her, to spend a blissful life side by side.

But when Elijah showed up out of the blue, Tarquin’s feelings became a tangle of love and resentment. She was the only one he’d ever been with; Elijah was surely hers and their fruit of love. So, how could she just abandon their son?

If Nola hadn’t stumbled upon Elijah, he would’ve died on their doorstep! Not only did she abandon him, but also their kid! How cruel she must be!

While Tarquin fumed internally, he saw Elijah calm down. He knelt beside him to caress his cheek.

“Elijah, Daddy’s just as eager to find her. I wish she could appear before us right now, but... some things can’t be forced. Our wanting her doesn’t guarantee she’ll be here.” He said. softly.

It was a bitter pill to swallow that the highest-valued men in the world were both lonely and pitiful since they were abandoned by the same woman.

Elijah’s brow was knotted tight. “Why doesn’t Mommy want you, or me? Did you not do enough, or am I not good enough?”

Tarquin shook his head, “She left when you were just born so how could you be not good enough? You’re a great kid, Elijah.”

“So it’s you who’s not good enough. Did you upset her? Is that why she left?”

“I...” Tarquin began to defend himself but felt a twinge of guilt. He had his reasons then. He didn’t have a chance to make it to the hospital under the circumstances, and without her, he would’ve died. But she had struggled and resisted. Yes, he had wronged her.

He didn’t know if she left secretly because of that. He was at fault, and he knew it. So he genuinely wanted to make amends and to spend a sincere and loving life with her.

“Elijah, your mom and I... we had our troubles. But believe me, I promised her she'd be the happiest and most honored woman in the world. Still, she vanished... I miss her just like you do.

Elijah looked at Tarquin a moment longer, then, in a huff, turned away to sit by the window, gazing out towards the gate. He often sat there alone, hoping that one day he'd be the first to spot her if she ever returned.

Tarquin watched his son's lonely silhouette and felt upset. He couldn't help but curse inwardly at times like this.

Where the hell did that damn woman go?

Their son was sick with longing, and still, she didn't come back.

Didn't her heart ache at all by leaving them behind?

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 13[632 words]

Chapter 13

“Please, just go. I need some alone time.”

Tarquin sighed, knowing he had no choice but to step out for the moment.

As he closed the door behind him, his expression shifted dramatically. He was about to call out for Nola when she suddenly appeared at the foot of the stairs, her eyes red with

emotion.

Seeing him emerge from Elijah's room, Nola hurried toward him, her concern etched across her face, “Tarquin, how is Elijah doing now?”

Despite his icy demeanor, Tarquin refrained from lashing out. After all, Nola was the one who had saved Elijah's life. It was Nola who had stumbled upon Elijah, who was abandoned at their doorstep, that gave him a second chance at life

At first, Tarquin had his suspicions.

Was it really just a coincidence that Nola found Elijah? Had she hidden Elijah's birth mother to get closer to him and orchestrated the whole rescue to win his gratitude?

It was a common plot straight out of a TV drama

But after a thorough investigation, it was clear that Nola's discovery was indeed a stroke of luck, and she had nothing to do with the disappearance of Elijah's mother

So, pite his lack of fondness for Nola, Tarquin always treated her with courtesy. He even allowed her to visit Elijah regularly to fill the void of maternal affection, causing rumors to swirl that he had feelings for

her. Some even whispered that Nola might be Elijah's birth mother.

But the truth was known only to those closest to him.

Tarquin's heart belonged to Elijah's birth mother, and he never led Nola to believe there chance for them together.

Just as he had told his son, he didn't like her.

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Tarquin descended the stairs with a stoic face, noticing the white bandage wrapped around Nola's arm. "I'm sorry about Elijah hurting you," he said.

Nola quickly reassured him, "It's nothing, really. I'm just worried about Elijah. He threw a tantrum when he saw me today. Is it because I've been away shooting for too long that he became distant from me?"

She pretended to care deeply for Elijah and feigned innocence.

Tarquin glared at her, knowing full well that Elijah's episode was triggered by her telling him that they would marry. With a cold voice, he said, "No, he's missing his birth mother."

Upon hearing this, Nola clenched her fists in secret. Both Tarquin and Elijah longed for the same woman, and it gnawed at her with jealousy.

After her bewildered rescue of Elijah, she was exhilarated, thinking that she finally had a ticket into Tarquin's life.

When Tarquin expressed his desire to repay her, she had suggested that a child should not grow up in a single-parent home and offered to marry him- even if only in name.

But Tarquin had bluntly informed her that he was still legally married. To marry again would be bigamy.

Compensation, yes, but marriage, no.

That rejection had infuriated her! Unable to win his heart or the title, her frustration and anger knew no bounds.

The three people she despised most were Elijah's birth mother, Tarquin's wife in name, and Elijah himself! She fantasized daily about getting rid of all three.

While resentment churned inside her, Nola's face was a mask of self-reproach, "It's all my fault. I haven't provided enough motherly love for Elijah. That's why he pines for his birth

'her and has fallen ill."

"It's not your fault. It's natural for a child to miss his own mother. You're not his birth mother, and all your efforts can't give him the maternal love he seeks."

Tarquin never minced his words, and with that, Nola's heart shattered once more.

She could never be Elijah's birth mother- an unchangeable truth that would haunt her for life.

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 14[675 words]

Chapter 14

Nola was about to say something when Tarquin added, “Elijah is in a bad state right now, so you should not come to my house without an emergency in the future. And if you must, call me ahead of time.”

Nola’s eyes widened in disbelief. So Tarquin’s house became off-limits to her just because Elijah made a scene? How was she supposed to differentiate herself from the swarm of women buzzing around Tarquin?

No, this just wouldn’t do.

“Tarquin, I-” she continued.

“Elijah comes first, end of the discussion,” Tarquin cut in; his tone was icy and final, effectively showing her the door. It was a clear punishment for her reckless banter in front of

his son.

He had made it crystal clear that marriage was off the table for them, and yet she dared to rattle Elijah with her wild claims! Besides, he’d never been too keen on having Nola over in the first place.

With a heart full of frustration, Nola knew better than to defy Tarquin when he was this riled. up. In that case, she could just leave for now.

Tarquin turned to his butler and issued a new directive, “From now on, if she shows up, don’t let her in before you call me.”

“Understood, sir.”

Before long, Benjamin Lawson arrived in a flurry of urgency.

Benjamin, Tarquin's friend and a doctor, had come to discuss Elijah's troubling condition.

After hearing Tarquin out, Benjamin also suggested keeping Nola at a distance from Elijah for the time being, "Considering how Elijah reacted today, his bipolar disorder seems to be worsening. It's not looking good."

"But he's been on his medication consistently."

"It's not about the meds. Elijah's biggest issue is psychological. The kid's fixation on his mother runs too deep. If we could somehow bring her back to stay with him, it might just solve the problem."

Tarquin lit a cigarette, his frustration palpable.

If it were as simple as finding the woman, he wouldn't be in this mess. He had even gone so far as to bring a stand-in to play the part of Elijah's mother, but the boy was too sharp. He saw right through the facade and threw a massive fit.

Benjamin, empathetic yet helpless, sighed, "If all else fails, hire a child psychologist, someone who can double as a nanny and stay with Elijah long-term. As long as Elijah warms up to her and she can communicate with him, she might reach into his world and help heal his trauma. And even if full recovery isn't possible, she'll be there to prevent his condition from deteriorating and stop an incident like today from recurring. At the very least, she'll be there when he needs someone."

Tarquin nodded, "Do you have anyone in mind?"

"Not off the top of my head, but if you're okay with a stranger in your house every day, I can start looking."

"I'm just fine. Focus on Elijah."

Tarquin would move mountains for his son, let alone deal with a bit of discomfort.

"Alright, I'll get on it when I get back."

Just then, Tarquin's phone buzzed with urgency, "Sir, it's bad news. That lady has bolted!"

“Bolted?!”

“Yes, sir. The fire alarm system went off in the building, everyone panicked and rushed out in the choos, and that lady took her chance to escape.”

Tarquin’s bad emotion aggravated as he heard that, so he just started calling names, “Can’t even keep track of a woman, huh? You useless things!”

He tugged at his tie and said with a grave tone, “Why did the alarm go off? What triggered it?” “Someone set off a smoke bomb in the basement and triggered the alarm. But we can’t identify who did it. The... the security cameras have been tampered with.

A cold glint passed through Tarquin’s eyes. A smoke bomb as a diversion, security footage destroyed– that woman clearly had backup.

He had let his guard down, thinking she wasn’t a threat today.

A mistake, evidently.

“Track her down and bring her back!

“Right away, sir!”

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 15[703 words]

Chapter 15

At the same time, Elysia had been whisked back to her new home by her three little heroes.

Just a short while ago, after the boys had finished their evening routine, they noticed she was missing and that the front door was ajar, which worried them sick.

Elliot checked the security cameras and discovered she had been abducted. Without wasting a second, he set out on a rescue mission.

Elysia was still unaware that it was her three sons who had rescued her, and her heart was still racing from the ordeal.

When the alarm sounded, she had dashed to the door. To her surprise, it swung open, and taking the chance, she bolted downstairs, only to be greeted by the sight of her boys.

The family of four quickly hailed a cab and headed home.

Once settled, Elysia took a deep breath and asked them, “How on earth did you three just happen to show up there?”

Elliot spoke up, “We realized you weren’t back and the landlady downstairs mentioned you’d been taken. We tracked your location and just as we got there, you came downstairs. What exactly happened, Mom?”

Elys... didn’t dwell on it and turned to Evan with a furrowed brow, “Evan, tell me the truth. Why did you scratch someone’s car?”

Evan blinked innocently, “Was it that jerk and his girlfriend who kidnapped you?”

“What jerk and girlfriend?” Elysia asked.

Evan fumed, “If I knew they’d pull some other stunt after what happened, I wouldn’t have let them off the train station so easy! They’re just asking for a beating! Mom, don’t worry about this, I’ll handle it!”

With that, Evan clenched his little fists and was ready to storm out.

Elysia grabbed him and pushed him down into a chair, her face stern, “What happened at the train station?”

With a pout, Evan realized he couldn’t keep it a secret any longer and spilled the beans about the entire incident.

Elysia was shaken to the core. She hadn’t known about any of this! She pulled Emmett into her arms to check for injuries.

Seeing the bruises that hadn't faded yet, Elysia's heart ached unbearably. Choking back tears, she asked Emmett, "Does it hurt a lot?"

Emmett, ever so sweet, tried to console her, "It doesn't hurt, really. It stopped hurting a while ago, Mom. Don't be sad. Look, I can jump around and everything."

To prove his point, Emmett hopped out of her embrace and did a couple of spins to show he was fine.

Watching her sensible little boy, Elysia couldn't hold back her tears. She pulled Emmett back into a tight hug, her heart broke when she gently stroked the back of his head.

Out of her three children, Emmett held a special place in her heart due to his unique needs; besides the boundless love she had for all her sons, she felt an extra pang of tenderness for

him.

"I'm so sorry, Emmett. I should have taken better care of you. I let you down." She said.

Emmett shook his head, "That's not true. The lady downstairs said I look well-fed; it's clear you take great care of me."

Holding Emmett close, Elysia comforted him for a long time before she rummaged through her suitcase and applied some home-made ointment to the bruises.

She then turned to Evan for a teachable moment, offering praise where it was due and

criticism where it was necessary.

For example, she told him that a real man surely doesn't cause trouble, but he shouldn't be afraid of it either. While it was commendable to stand up for his brother, taking matters into his ow

nds and damaging property without telling her was not acceptable.

She also put on a stern look while highlighting the dangers of playing with fireworks and telling Evan never to mess with them again.

Little did she know, it wasn't fireworks at all, but a small bomb Evan had concocted himself.

To avoid upsetting his mother, Evan nodded repeatedly and showed the picture of obedience.

As for the reason behind the change of residence, Elliot concocted a plausible story which Elysia believed without question.

Later, Elliot inquired, “Did they give you a hard time, Mom?”

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 16[663 words]

Chapter 16

Elysia’s brow furrowed as she thought of the fifty million hanging over her head. She didn’t want her three kids to worry, so she fibbed,

‘No, sweethearts, it’s all water under the bridge now. You kids keep playing, mommy’s just going to pop to the restroom.’”

After she’d excused herself, the trio huddled in the bedroom for a clandestine meeting.

Elliot spoke up, “It’s not as simple as Mom’s making it out to be. Something’s still up, or they wouldn’t have locked her up.”

Evan clenched his little fists, his face a picture of determination, “They think it’s over? Well, I beg to differ! Are we just going to let those bullies push our beloved Mommy around? No. way! You and Emmett keep her company, and I’m going to sort them out. They need to learn there are consequences for messing with our mom!”

Evan was all set to take action, but Elliot stepped in front of him, “Not this time. I’ll handle it.”

“You? But they’ve got bodyguards, and I’m worried you can’t take them on.” Evan said.

Elliot squinted his eyes and put on a serious look on his young face as he stared at his little; tablet, “Mom said we live in a society ruled by laws. We need to play by the rules and find a legal way to make them pay.”

While the trio were discussing, Elysia was oblivious to the kids’ plotting revenge on Tarquin. That night, she lay awake, haunted by the fifty million albatross around her neck.

She couldn’t cough up that kind of cash even if they took her life! And the man’s face kept coming back to her, which made her blood boil- he bore such a striking resemblance to Elliot and Evan. That meant it’s highly possible that he was the mysterious man from that fateful day. The thought filled her with such rage she could strangle him! But without absolute certainty, she was at a loss for what to do.

After a sleepless night, Elysia finally came up with a plan by dawn. She couldn’t pay the fifty million, not now. And with the risk of that wild man snatching her kids, she decided to expedite the divorce from Tarquin and get out of Dodge.

So, Elysia got up, freshened up, left a note instructing the kids to stay indoors, and left the house.

She hailed a cab straight to Tarquin’s place to confront him and demand a divorce.

At the same time, Tarquin’s world was in disarray. He received startling news early in the

morning.

The prime real estate he’d been eyeing had been bought out overnight by an anonymous high bidder, the parcels of land he coveted had been snatched up while he wasn’t looking....

18:50

And the lucrative deals he was about to close? They were all intercepted by an unseen competitor. Preliminary estimates put the Bradford Group’s losses in the billions.

But Tarquin wasn’t fazed by the loss of money; what irked him was the clear indication that someone was targeting him! He’d been a titan of industry for years,

a name that echoed with authority. No one would dare to raise his voice in front of him, not to mention provocation. Bud now...

And to make matters worse, even his top-notch hackers couldn't trace the culprit. Enraged and without an outlet, Tarquin's bad mood cast a dark cloud over the entire Bradford Group.

Lowell was run ragged, his phone ringing off the hook.

Just as they were grappling with the chaos, the Bradford Group's computers crashed, leaving employees idle and confused.

"Are the tech guys good for nothing?!" Tarquin roared in frustration.

Lowell, sweating bullets, prodded the tech department relentlessly.

The tech team was on the brink of tears; they were competent, but today they had met their match.

"Okay, okay, power-on!" After much ado, the computers finally booted up, and the techs breathed a h of relief.

But as the screens flickered on, everyone's jaws dropped.

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 17[665 words]

Chapter 17

On the computer screen, bold letters suddenly appeared, screaming for attention,

"Consider this a warning. If you dare to mistreat the lady again, I'll be back for you! Watch your back, Mr. Bradford."

The staff at the Bradford Group had their eyes glued to the monitors. Then, as if forgetting that they were in a working place, the office erupted into a frenzy of speculation and gossip.

“Holy smokes, this isn’t just some glitch—it’s a deliberate hack! Who on earth could crack the Bradford Group’s firewall?”

“And they had the nerve to call out Mr. Bradford directly!”

“He said... he also said Mr. Bradford was bullying some young lady!”

Inside the CEO’s office, Tarquin’s icy gaze fixed on his own screen. His lips were a thin line, his complexion dark as a storm cloud.

Lowell felt the tension in the room like a ticking time bomb. Gathering his courage, Lowell attempted to defuse the situation, “Sir, please, calm down. This accusation about bullying a young lady got to be groundless! Everyone knows your character. You...”

“Who is that woman from yesterday?!” Tarquin’s voice was a cold blade.

Lowell, momentarily confused, realized he was referring to Elysia. He replied hastily, “We... we haven’t located her yet.”

“You rubbish!” Tarquin’s roar was ground shaking.

Lowell was sweating bullets and trembling like a leaf.

The saying ‘uneasy lies the head that wears the crown’ had never felt more apt.

Tarquin’s eyes never left the screen. He was determined to find Elysia because he was convinced that the young lady mentioned was her.

He knew he was no saint, but he was not one to bully people, especially not women. The only woman he ever truly cared for was Elijah’s birth mother. Beyond that, his interactions with the opposite sex were minimal.

But yesterday, he had not only crossed paths with that woman but also detained her.

His team of elite hackers, some of the best in the business, rarely failed him. Yet they had failed twice in the span of one day.

The rival who was stealing his business deals remained in the shadows. And the woman named Elysia was also nowhere to be found.

He couldn't shake the feeling that these were connected, that someone was targeting him.

19:50

Gritting his teeth, Tarquin commanded with an icy tone, "Find her no matter what it takes!"

"Yes, sir." Lowell couldn't exit the CEO's office fast enough. He really didn't want to be the bearer of bad news, but as soon as he'd relayed Tarquin's orders, a new crisis emerged.

His phone rang with the news that Tarquin's estranged wife had returned and was currently at the gates of Royal Community, demanding a divorce.

Royal Community was the upscale neighborhood where Tarquin's grandfather had set up a home for his wife before he passed away. It was their marital residence.

Lowell was taken aback, "Are you sure it's her?"

"Yeah, who else would dare show up and tell such a lie to the boss's face? It's her, no mistake."

Lowell pondered the situation briefly before braving a return to the lion's den—Tarquin's office.

"Sir, Mrs. Bradford has returned. She's waiting at Royal Community right now."

"Who?"

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...Your wife, sir. The one you're married to in name."

It t

Tarquin a moment to remember he had a wife he'd never met, "What does she want?" "She's asking for a divorce.

Tarquin was silent. That wayward woman hadn't made contact in six years, and now she suddenly wanted a divorce?

He had no fond feelings for her, but if he divorced her, what excuse would he have to fend off Nola?

“Tell her I’m on a business trip. I can’t divorce her now. If she wants a divorce, she’ll have to wait until I return. As for when that will be, it’s undecided.”

If she had been a decent woman, he might have felt a twinge of guilt using her. But she wasn’t. Tarquin felt no remorse at all by utilizing her.

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 18[718 words]

Chapter 18

Lowell had been riding shotgun with Tarquin for years and had a pretty good bead on the guy. He knew the score about Tarquin’s reluctance to sign the divorce papers.

So, when Tarquin brushed off the suggestion of a video call with his estranged wife, Lowell didn’t bat an eyelid. Instead, he just threw out a casual suggestion, “Maybe a video call would convince her more? I’m not sure that Mrs. Bradford will believe the words sent.”

“No need,” Tarquin barked back with a scoff.

Why to waste his breath on someone who’s nothing but a footnote?

So that was Tarquin’s outright refusal.

After all, he was oblivious to the fact that the woman was the very one he’d been searching for high and low.

“And another thing, stop calling her ‘Mrs. Bradford’. There’s only one lady who deserves that title. Anyone else doesn’t even come close.” Tarquin added.

Lowell bit his tongue. He knew the “lady Tarquin was talking about was none other than Elijah’s biological mother.

“Got

e replied.

Meanwhile, Elysia was gobsmacked at Tarquin's response. Not knowing when he'd return meant not knowing when she could get a divorce..

How was she supposed to move on with her kids in tow?

Elysia was far from throwing in the towel, though. She tried reaching out to Tarquin a few more times, but to no avail. Dejected, she left the Royal Community with a heavy heart, her spirit so low.

Without being able to cut ties, she couldn't sort out the kids' school registration, and without that, their education was as stuck as a truck in mud.

Plus, no divorce meant no stable job for her, and her bank account was running on fumes.

And then there was that Elliot and Evan's lookalike and the mountain of debt he'd saddled her with...

The more Elysia stewed on her problems, the more her head spun. Seeking a moment of solace, she plopped down under a canopy of trees, not wanting to bring her cloud of gloom home to her kids.

As she sat there, wrestling with her next move, a tot, no more than four or five, bolted across the street like a bat out of hell and whizzed straight into oncoming traffic.

Hell broke loose as cars screeched, horns blared, and the air was filled with a cacophony of

shouts and screams.

The kid's parents dashed into the fray, trying to scoop up their wild offspring, who was having none of it. The little tyke was throwing a fit and howling at onlookers and passersby. While he was howling, he was also taking swings at a nearby sedan.

After giving the car a piece of his mind, he turned on himself, smacking his own face and scratching like he was trying to claw away invisible ants.

His dad finally managed to wrangle him up, but the kid was all fists and teeth and growling like an animal.

Elysia watched this and didn't feel right. She darted over.

The kid had wrenched away from his father, who was so angry and furious. The father's face flushed red with rage and he raised his palm to smack the son.

"Cool it, guys. Don't do something you'll regret." Elysia said as she looked toward the boy. She squatted down to eye level with the boy and opened her arms in a gesture of peace, "Hey there, champ. No need to be scared. Come to me. I'll keep you safe."

The boy eyed her warily.

ot gonna hurt you, kiddo. Come on over," Elysia coaxed with a smile.

After a tense stare-down, the boy suddenly stooped, scooped up a rock, and hurled it at her.

Elysia failed to dodge. The rock struck her forehead and sent a sharp jolt of pain through her. The boy's mother was guilty at the scene. Her tears were welling up as she rushed over, "I'm so sorry, ma'am. My boy has bipolar disorder, and he's having an episode. We're at our wit's end..."

"It's okay. What's his name?" Elysia asked, brushing off the hurt.

"Corbin Denton. Just call him Corbin."

Elysia nodded, "You're scaring him more. Give me some space. I'll calm him down."

The Dentons gazed at Elysia as if they were stunned, and eventually, they stepped back, worn out and desperate for a miracle.

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 19[627 words]

Chapter 19

They were not sure what Elysia whispered to the little boy, but minutes later, he toddled over to her. He wrapped his arms tight around her neck and buried his tear-stained face into her shoulder.

Elysia scooped up the child and walked over to the nearby park, finding a spot on the green

lawn to sit and chat.

Half an hour later, the kid had literally dozed off in her arms.

The Denton family, witnessing the scene, approached in utter astonishment, “When he has his fits, we usually have to quiet him down with sedatives. We never thought it could be done without drugs.”

Elysia explained, “Bipolar disorder is a mixture of maniac and depression, which is a mental issue. Medication can help, but it’s still crucial to talk to him and to enter his world. Yelling at him when he’s distressed is the worst thing you can do it only makes him more agitated.”

As she spoke, Elysia rummaged through her bag, pulling out a pen and paper, and jotted down a few herbal remedies, “If you trust me, try brewing these herbs for him, sweeten it with some stevia, and coax him to drink it. It might help.”

“Are you a doctor?” the child’s parents asked eagerly.

Elysia shook her head with an embarrassed smile, “No, I don’t have a medical degree but just picked up a few things from family. But you can trust this recipe, it’s safe.”

After handing the child back to his parents, she waved goodbye and left.

From a short distance away, Benjamin had been watching everything. He had been driving by when he spotted Corbin’s episode and had quickly parked to rush over, only to be a step behind Elysia.

His friend Tarquin’s son Elijah suffered from the same condition as Corbin. If Elysia could, soothe Corbin, surely she could do the same for Elijah.

She was a pretty lady with a warm and sweet smile—she had a healer’s aura. Maybe Elijah would accept her!

Excited by the thought, Benjamin approached the Dentons to

exchange a few words before. taking a glance at the herbal list Elysia had provided. It was full of natural sedatives, much gentler than pharmaceuticals!

Realizing she knew a thing or two about alternative medicine, his excitement grew. This knowledge could be more of a godsend for Elijah.

He quickly turned to follow Elysia but found she had walked some distance away. Quickening his

pace to catch up, he was suddenly stopped in his tracks-

A black sedan pulled up beside Elysia, and several figures jumped out, yanking her into the

pter

car before speeding off.

“Damn! Damn it!” Benjamin cursed, a departure from his usual decorum. He watched helplessly as the sedan disappeared and quickly dialed Tarquin.

“Tarquin, you’ve got to hurry. I just found a woman who might be perfect for taking care of Elijah, but she’s just been kidnapped by a bunch of thugs right off the street.

What kind of world do we live in where people can still be snatched in broad daylight? You need to find her, she might be our only hope for Elijah!”

“What does she look like?” Tarquin inquired.

“Beautiful, gentle, slender, fair, long hair, with dimples when she smiles, and... the woman radiates warmth.”

“Get to the point!”

“The point is, she’s a strikingly beautiful woman!”

Tarquin pursed his lips, “...Give me the location. I’ll check the surveillance.”

“Mid Road!”

“I’earby.”

“You are? Great! Where exactly? Send me your location; I’ll come to you right away. And when we find that girl, we need to give those thugs a piece of our minds. They were snatching an innocent woman in broad daylight, and that’s just criminal...”

As Benjamin rambled on, Tarquin’s car window was tapped on.

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 20[621 words]

Chapter 20

“Boss, we got her!”

Tarquin glanced at Elysia through the car window.

Then he took a second look and frowned.

Benjamin had just mentioned a woman being snatched off the streets.

Could it be her?

No way!

Because she didn’t look gentle at all. She looked fumed, and right now, she was hopping mad.

He quickly sent Benjamin a location, rolled down the window, and glared at Elysia.

Elysia, surprised to see him, exclaimed, “What the-?!”

Just the sight of his face made her blood boil. She was already livid about not being able to smoothly divorce Tarquin, and now she was even more enraged.

“Why is it always you? What on earth do you want? Let me go! I warn you that I haven’t even reported you for locking me up yesterday. Do you believe I’ll call 911 right now? Let go! Release me....

Elysia ranted fiercely, her little face flushing red with anger.

Tarquin didn’t understand why she was so bold; other women were either afraid or shy around him. But she was just aggressive!

He instructed Lowell to look for the gentle woman Benjamin had described and then, with a furrowed brow, ordered his men to stuff Elysia into the car.

As soon as Elysia got a chance, she tried to push open the car door, wanting to get out. Finding it locked, she became irritated and began tugging forcefully at the door handle.

As she nearly broke the handle, Tarquin said coldly, “Without my permission, you’re not going anywhere!”

Elysia quickly glared back and gritted her teeth.

He looked too much like Elliot and Evan, making it hard not to associate him with that man from six years ago.

They say an adult’s emotional breakdown could just happen in an instant.

And in that moment, Elysia’s solid mental defenses collapsed.

Thinking about the hardships of those years and the frustrations of the past couple of days,” her anger overwhelmed her, and she lost all reason. She felt he was the barbarian who had

ruined her life.

18:52

Without another word, she lunged at him, ready to fight. All the suffering she’d endured and the injustices she’d swallowed were all linked to this man.

Tarquin caught her wrist and glared at her in astonishment, “You also want to hit me?”

“I do! I want to beat you to a pulp!”

“You...” Was this woman raised by wolves?!

Forget his current power and influence; even back in the day, no one dared to openly threaten his life.

Still in disbelief, Tarquin suddenly felt a sharp pain in his wrist.

Unable to break free, Elysia bit down hard on his wrist, drawing blood.

Tarquin pushed her away with a dark face, “What are you, a rabid dog?”

Elysia didn’t answer and, without giving him a chance to react, lunged again. She was so livid today, and she just wanted to throw down.

Tarquin, face darkening again, restrained her, “Have you lost your mind or do you have a

death wish?!”

“I have lost it! If I’m crazy all

beca

of you...”

because of you. You might as well kill me! It’s all your fault... all

Tarquin couldn’t make heads or tails of what she was saying. Seeing his threats had no effect, he switched tactics, “If you don’t stop this madness, you won’t owe me just fifty

million anymore, I can make the court fine you five hundred million Owe me just fifty

At the mention of money, Elysia froze.

Money, besides her three sons, was her greatest love.

It was also her Achilles’ heel.

Having experienced life without money, she knew all too well how hard those days were, how tough it was to earn money, and just how important it was.

