

Hitched 1121

Chapter 1121

No one was behind her!

But the photo she had just received was taken right there, behind her.

Elysia felt a chill run down her spine!

"Ding-"

Her phone chimed again with another message.

Elysia quickly grabbed her phone to check, and her eyes widened at the sight of 'Ely'!

She was filled with terror!

In the whole world, only that creepy guy called her that!

Her parents always called her 'Irene'.

Tarquin called her 'Elysia', 'honey'.

Blossom and Winona just went with 'Elysia'.

Others either referred to her as 'Ms. Thorne' or used her full name.

And the Thorne family... well, they weren't exactly kind with their words.

But it was that man, the one who had always been watching her, the one who had egged her on to kill Tarquin, who called her that!

But that couldn't be right. Didn't he supposedly die in a plane crash after his last attempt to kidnap Baby?

Why was he back now?

Elysia, mustering all her courage and with trembling hands, typed a reply,

"Who are you? What do you want from me?"

Message failed to send.

Elysia frowned and waited a bit longer, but there was no response.

The chat only showed a photo and a simple message:

'Ely, long time no see.'

Knowing the danger this person posed, Elysia didn't waste any time and sent a screenshot to Tarquin.

Tarquin was in a squad car when he received the message, his eyebrows knitting together, his expression darkening.

He knew it was him!

He was back?

Tarquin first called to calm Elysia down,

"Don't worry, just stay safe in the hospital, I'll come find you as soon as I'm done here with the police."

While comforting Elysia, he also sent

the screenshot to a private group

chat with his sons, Elliot and Elijah. It was just the three of them in there.

Elliot replied instantly: "The mysterious guy's back?"

"Not sure, can you guys check the hospital's security footage for any suspicious characters? I'm tied up at the moment, we'll talk more later."

After making arrangements, Tarquin spent a little more time assuring Elysia before hanging up, his gaze fixed on the screenshot for a few seconds longer.

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In the hospital, Elysia tried to calm her nerves before entering the room.

She didn't mention the mysterious person to Blossom and Evan Emmett, not wanting to worry them.

The moment Emmett saw her, he rushed into her arms, "Mommy!"

Elysia set aside her concerns about the mysterious person for the moment and bent down to pick up Emmett,

"Emmett, don't be scared. We'll always be together, no one can separate us."

Emmett clung to Elysia's neck, as if afraid she'd disappear if he let go even for a moment.

He didn't know how important blood ties were; all he knew was he loved his mommy, and his mommy loved him!

Being with mommy made him happy; he never wanted to be apart from her.

As for that auntie...

"Mommy, the lady who was crying earlier, is she the one who gave birth to me?"

"... Yes, she is your birth mother."

"Why am I not with her then?"

"... You were lost as a child, and mommy found you and has been taking care of you ever since."

Calling it an accident was to soothe Emmett.

Given Cecil's character, it was likely not as simple as just being lost!

After a few seconds of silence, Emmett suddenly asked,

"Mommy, can I go see her?"

Elysia was taken aback, "..."

So was Blossom, "..."

They hadn't expected Emmett to want to see Claire.

Just as Blossom was about to advise Emmett against it, Elysia said, "Yes."

Chapter 1122

Although she really didn't want to interact with Claire, nor did she want Emmett to have anything to do with her, Emmett had the right to meet his birth mother.

She wasn't in favor of Emmett going to see her, but if Emmett brought it up, she wouldn't refuse.

A moment later, Elysia took Emmett to the front of Maria's hospital room.

Blossom and Evan came along as well.

When Claire saw them, she was equally stunned, especially at the sight of Emmett!

She never imagined Emmett would come to find her on his own.

Tears welled up in Claire's eyes, her voice choked up, "Emmett."

She thought Emmett was coming to acknowledge their relationship and reached out to embrace him.

Emmett quickly clung to Elysia's neck, looking at her anxiously.

Claire's eyes filled with tears, "Emmett, I'm your mom, honey."

Emmett looked uneasy, "..."

Claire, heartbroken, continued, "Emmett, I'm the one who gave birth to you, I'm your mom, I..."

"Mommy." A weak voice came from inside the room.

Claire quickly wiped away her tears, "Emmett, go see your sister first, this is your biological sister."

Emmett glanced into the room.

Elysia carried Emmett closer to the bedside, where Emmett stood curiously looking at Maria.

Evan was also curious; although he wasn't fond of Emmett's dad and mom, he felt no aversion towards Emmett's sister.

He treated Emmett like a real brother, so Emmett's sister was his sister too!

The little girl looked back at them curiously, her eyes bright despite her frail body.

Claire quickly introduced them, "Maria, this is your brother, your real brother, he's come back."

Maria looked at Emmett with surprise in her eyes, "Brother?"

Facing Maria, Emmett wasn't as nervous, more joyful, "Sister."

Maria was thrilled, holding an old teddy bear by her bed, one of her few toys.

She struggled to lift her hand, offering the teddy bear to Emmett, "For you."

Emmett quickly accepted it, "Thank you, sister."

He rummaged through his small backpack for a while, unable to find a suitable gift

in return, a bit embarrassed,

"I... I'll bring you a gift tomorrow, sister."

Maria smiled, "Okay."

Emmett also smiled back, "..."

The world of children isn't as complicated as that of adults;

there's only the surprise and net

of

siblings meeting for the first time.

Suddenly, Claire turned and left the room.

Standing outside the door, she covered her mouth and began to sob.

It had been a long time since her daughter had smiled.

Warm moments had been rare in her life lately.

When Emmett came out of the room and saw Claire crying, he handed her a tissue.

Claire was incredibly touched, "Emmett..."

From his backpack, Emmett took out a card and handed it to her, his voice soft and childish,

"My mommy says we should be

grateful. Thank you for giving birth to me you've worked hard. This is all

my allowance, I'm giving it to you."

Emmett's manner was polite yet distant.

Blossom and Elysia stood at the doorway, only now understanding why Emmett had taken the initiative to find Claire.

He was acknowledging the debt of birth.

The debt of birth cannot be measured in money, but Emmett didn't understand

that.

His thinking wasn't as mature as Elliot, Evan, or Elijah; he was still a child at heart.

In his eyes, Elysia was his mommy.

Yet, Emmett was kind-hearted and felt gratitude towards his birth mother.

Unsure of how else to repay this

debt, and

knowing his

needed money, he decided

all he had.

This was his way of thanking her for the gift of life.

Chapter 1123

Blossom knew the value of the card and frowned, feeling a pang of regret.

Calling it pocket money was an understatement; the amount was colossal!

Let's not even start with how much Tarquin had already contributed. Just the other day, Clayton Hawkins and the Patel family had given a substantial sum!

All told, it was over a million!

But Elysia wasn't worried, not because she was now wealthy and had lost her obsession with money.

She believed Emmett's actions were justified.

Putting aside the rights and wrongs, it was indeed Claire who had gone through

ten months of pregnancy to bring him into this world.

His life was a gift from Claire.

His way of repaying Claire for the gift of life, that was an act of filial piety.

Her Emmett, he was doing the right thing.

Claire stared at Emmett, speechless, "Emmett..."

Emmett stood in front of her, cautiously begging,

"Could you... could you please not fight with mommy over me? Mommy can't live without me, and I don't want to be away from mommy."

Elysia and Claire were taken aback!

Such innocent words, yet no one expected Emmett to say this to Claire.

Elysia was moved, her eyes filling with tears.

But Claire couldn't hold back anymore and burst into tears.

Her own son saying such things was like a knife to her heart.

She cried as if her heart was being torn apart, and Emmett panicked, his little face twisted, not knowing what to do, "I... I..."

He knew he had made her cry.

He wanted to apologize, but he didn't want to take back his words.

The little guy looked nervously at Elysia, "Mommy..."

Elysia, not wanting Claire to upset him further, quickly lifted Emmett into her arms,

"Emmett, why don't you go and chat with your sister for a bit? Mommy needs to talk to her."

Elysia gave Blossom a look, and she quickly took Emmett back to the room.

Elysia collected herself and looked down at Claire.

She was sitting against the wall, her hands covering her face, crying her heart out.

Elysia paused for a moment and then softly said,

"The card Emmett has is registered under name, but the money in it

to you later." Content it all s to Emmett. I'll transfet

"This money, it's enough for you and Maria to start a new life."

"There's an old saying, 'Take advice, and you'll have food to eat.' Listen to me, Cecil is neither a good husband

no father. Staying with him

only brings suffering!"

"Whether he gambles or abuses, you know best. Even if not for yourself, think about Maria."

"I don't doubt your love for your daughter, but the love you're giving her is too painful."

"If you're staying with Cecil out of fear, we can help ensure he never bothers you or Maria again."

"If it's an emotional attachment, I happen to know a bit about psychology. You can talk to me, and I can help."

People subjected to long-term manipulation can develop a twisted perception, losing the ability to discern right from wrong.

They might become dependent or fearful of someone.

Elysia didn't want to bother with her anymore, but she spoke out for Emmett's sake.

He was her biological mother, and Emmett hoped she would be okay.

Of course, Elysia hoped Emmett's wish would come true.

But, that was all she could say. If Claire still wouldn't listen, then she was beyond

help.

"No one can save someone determined to self-destruct!"

"Think it over. If you need me, I'm here."

Elysia turned and went back to the

room, where Evan and Maria were chatting amicably with Emmett, the three of them getting along well.

Blossom whispered, "Are you really going to give all of Emmett's money to her?"

"I respect Emmett's wishes."

"What a shame."

Elysia felt the loss, too. That was a lot of money, after all!

Chapter 1124

But looking at Emmett, she felt a wave of relief wash over her.

"As long as Emmett chooses me, I'm willing to give her anything in compensation. Plus, with this money, Emmett won't feel guilty about not coming back to her. Besides, looking at it from another angle, our Emmett being grateful is a good thing."

"That's true. Our Emmett is the most understanding."

...

As noon approached, Tarquin returned.

Elysia took Evan and Emmett back to Blossom's hospital room.

She handed the child over to Blossom and pulled Tarquin into the hallway.

"How did it go?"

"I've got no issues on my end. Cecil has no evidence to claim Emmett was kidnapped by us, but he's still being interrogated at the police station."

Elysia let out a sigh of relief. "Can we get him jailed?"

Getting Cecil jailed would be a win, not just for Emmett, but for Claire and Maria, too!

Tarquin didn't nod or shake his head, responding pragmatically,

"There's no surveillance at the gambling spot. If our witness changes their testimony, we can't prove the gambling charges, and as for the domestic abuse... it depends on what Claire says."

Elysia frowned, then hurriedly asked,

"What about that mysterious person? Didn't you say he died in a plane crash?!" Mentioning the mysterious person, a harsh glint passed through Tarquin's eyes. On the way back from the police station, he had already discussed it with Elliot and Elijah.

The fact that the mysterious person suddenly messaged Elysia, especially with useless information, was likely a warning and provocation.

Elysia's number was supposed to be protected, so unsolicited messages should have been intercepted by Elliot and the others.

Even if they couldn't block it, Elliot and Elijah should have been aware of it and seen the content through their electronic devices.

But the photo and message sent by the mysterious person to Elysia were unknown to Elliot and Elijah.

They guessed that the mysterious person was sending them a signal:

They couldn't control him, and he could emerge at any time to harm Elysia!

However, what Tarquin couldn't figure out was the mysterious person's actual motive for orbiting around him!

If his parents were involved in the

underground lab work in Karl Town and took something from there to

handover to the gove

After his parents died, the mysterious person might suspect that item was with

him, constantly watching him to find it.

But then, why would the mysterious person want to kill him?

The mysterious person had been inciting Elysia to kill him, and when Baby was kidnapped, the mysterious Pruly intended to put him to death!

If he died, how would the mysterious person find the item through him?

Tarquin sighed inwardly, telling Elysia,

"He's lucky, survived the crash, but don't worry. The photo today was taken with remote surveillance equipment."

"I've arranged a bodyguard for you.

He won't get close to you. Just live your life without worry, and if he sends you another message, tell me immediately, just like today,

Elysia's brows knitted together,

"What's with this guy? What grudge does he have with you?"

"It's probably some old scores left by my parents. Once we settle Emmett's

matter, I'll go back and thoroughly investigate him."

Elysia quickly asked, "Any leads?"

"Yes!"

The illegitimate son of Verity Bradford was still in his grasp.

This illegitimate son, having returned from Karl Town, surely knew a lot.

Even if he disclosed nothing, Tarquin had other ways to investigate.

Thinking about his identity... Tarquin's brow furrowed, and a cold light flickered in his eyes.

He hoped he was wrong, he hoped not!

Chapter 1125

"This guy's definitely not your average Joe. Do you think he'll get involved in Emmett's situation?"

Elysia asked, her brow furrowed with concern.

If it were just them, she felt somewhat confident she could keep Emmett close.

After all, Cecil and Claire's home life was hardly ideal for raising Emmett.

She was just worried someone might use Emmett to get at Tarquin, especially since custody technically remained with Cecil, putting them at a disadvantage. Tarquin let out a deep sigh, banishing a familiar face from his thoughts.

He reached out, affectionately ruffling Elysia's hair, his voice soft and comforting as if soothing a child,

"With me here, there's nothing to worry about. Even if someone backs Cecil, you shouldn't stress, Elysia."

Seeing his confident and handsome face, Elysia felt much more at ease.

"By the way, Emmett visited Claire today, gave her all his allowance as a thank you for bringing him into this world."

Tarquin nodded in approval, "Good for Emmett!"

He shared Elysia's view; regardless of the rights and wrongs, the bond between Claire and Emmett was undeniable.

As for the money, if Elysia was okay with it, he certainly didn't mind.

If Emmett asked for more, even millions more, he wouldn't hesitate.

In his eyes, Emmett was his son too!

He was just as much a part of the family as Elliot, Evan, Elijah, and Baby!

Whether it was safeguarding his growth or preparing him for the future, all the children were treated equally!

Good and evil exist in this world, as do kind and wicked people.

That afternoon, Elysia received two bombshell pieces of news!

First, Cecil was released from jail!

The witnesses Tarquin had found suddenly recanted their statements.

Claire had also made a trip to the station, claiming that Cecil had been home with her and their daughter all of last night.

She testified that Cecil hadn't been to the casino, nor had he ever been abusive towards her.

Second, she and Tarquin were trending again, this time splashed across social media!

After his release, Cecil went straight to the local press, unleashing a torrent of tears on camera.

He portrayed himself as a tragic figure, twisting the narrative!

He tearfully claimed a wealthy couple from out of town had stolen his son five years ago and were now preventing a father-son reunion.

When he tried to take his son back they used their power and wealth to falsely accuse him of gambling and domestic abuse, landing him in jail.

As a poor, powerless man, he stood no chance against the rich and influential.

Feeling helpless, he turned to the online community, hoping they would help him reclaim his son and restore his familial ties.

He disclosed his full identity, along with a paternity test proving his relationship with Emmett.

He also shared details about Maria's illness and her frail condition in the hospital, seeking to garner sympathy and attract attention.

Claire even made a video supporting him, publicly stating that Cecil was decent honest man, free from gambling and domestic

This effectively vindicated Cecil's story, framing him as a victim of Elysia and Tarquin's false accusations!

Once the video hit the internet, it exploded in popularity!

It was a classic tale of a common man battling wealthy individuals over a child.

Although Cecil didn't know Elysia and Tarquin's full identities, he managed to share blurry photos of them.

People quickly identified the couple as the power players: Irene Hawkins (Elysia), the newly recognized heiress of

and Tarquin, the tycoon at the pinnacle of Jindale City's economic sphere!

Chapter 1126

Oh boy, the drama just hit the fan!

Tarquin and Elysia, living the high life with their wealth and influence. Picture- perfect power couple, right? But now, they're caught in a scandal that's lighting up the internet like a Fourth of July fireworks show. Kidnapping accusations? Preventing a kid from reuniting with his real family and using their clout to throw the dad in jail? Talk about being the villain in someone's story!

The internet's outrage meter is off the charts. While some folks are too scared of Tarquin and Elysia's status to speak up, preferring to silently scroll through their phones for updates, the keyboard warriors are having none of it. They're on a digital crusade, blasting Tarquin and Elysia left and right.

And let's not forget Clayton and the Patel brothers getting caught in the crossfire, along with those media sharks smelling blood in the water, eager to bring down the Hawkins dynasty.

Elysia, scrolling through the trending topics, can't believe her eyes. Furious

doesn't even begin to cover it. Claire, going as far as to make a false testimony at the police station and blasting videos to frame Cecil? After all the heart-to-heart talks, it's like talking to a brick wall.

And Claire? Despite having the means for a fresh start, she's dragging Cecil back into the mess. Some people just can't help but court disaster, dragging their kids through the mud with them. Unbelievable!

But what's really getting Elysia's blood boiling is Cecil putting little Emmett's photo all over the Now the whole world's got his picture on their screens, with some netizens even turning their venom on a five-year-old. Accusing him of being a gold-digger in the making, raised in a world where money trumps family bonds. Poor Emmett, caught in the crossfire for just being a kid.

This is shaping up to be the scandal of the year, folks.

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Meanwhile, back at the hotel, everyone's seething except for Emmett, Baby, and Pamela, blissfully unaware of the storm outside. Tarquin's on the phone non-stop, fielding calls from Clayton, the Patel brothers, Keaton Huber, and a few heavyweight "uncles" from their circle.

Elysia's shaking with anger, the kids are all fists and fury, and there's a tough-as-nails big shot brooding on the balcony, eyeing Evan with a mix of frustration and concern. His solution? Make an example out of Cecil, medieval style - but he can't make a move without Evan's say-so, and Evan's giving him the cold shoulder.

Even White, usually clueless, can tell something's up, ready to jump into the fray with the rest of them.

This isn't just a family drama; it's a war. And the internet's front row and center, popcorn in hand.

Chapter 1127

In the hospital, Blossom, fuming with anger, stormed right up to Claire's room, pointing at her and launched into a tirade.

"In all my years, I've seen all types of women - the two-faced, the saints, the sirens, the whole spectrum. But you, my dear, are a breed of your own!"

"Did your mother forget your brain in her belly when she had you?!"

"How have Elysia and Emmett treated you? How has Mr. Bradford treated your entire family?"

"Your daughter's been in the ER twice, racking up bills in the tens of thousands. Who do you think footed those bills?!"

"You were asked to expose Cecil, that scumbag, for who he truly is. And for whose benefit, huh?!"

"They saved your son's life, raised him with love and care for over five years, treating him as their own. They've been nothing but angels to your family!"

"And how do you repay them? By biting the hand that feeds. How can you be so vile?!"

"You're worse than the 'farmer and the viper' in that fable!"

"And even putting all that aside, what about Emmett? Emmett is your own flesh and blood!"

"Open your eyes wide and look at what the internet is saying about Elysia and Emmett!"

"You two are the scum of the earth, dreaming of taking Emmett back? If the heavens allow it, then they must be blind!"

Blossom was shaking all over, her face red, breathing hard, her chest heaving.

She could barely stand, needing Hollis to support her.

Seeing the online attacks on Elysia and Emmett pushed her over the edge!

Claire saw the news too.

She slumped against the wall, covering her face as she sobbed loudly.

Cecil, through gritted teeth, threatened Blossom,

"Dare you to say that again, I'll end you!"

"Oh, I just did. What are you gonna do, huh? After all the disgusting things you've done, you're afraid of a few harsh words?!"

"Honestly, I wouldn't bother wasting my breath on you if you didn't respond. I'd rather not insult animals by comparing them to you!"

"You're lower than scum! Less than animals! You don't even deserve my words!"

"Damn it!"

Cecil, livid, tried to hit Blossom.

But his punch missed and hit Claire instead.

Claire got up to stop Cecil, taking a hit meant for Blossom.

Ignoring her headache, she pleaded, pulling at Cecil's arm,

"Cecil, please, don't. It's our fault, let Ms. Blythe vent a little."

"Shut up!"

Cecil roared, shoving her away.

Claire fell, crying even harder, her sobs filling the room.

Cecil, devoid of any concern, didn't even glance at her, let alone care if she was hurt.

Glaring at Blossom, he warned, "You'll regret this!"

Blossom, red-eyed with rage, threw her phone at Cecil, hitting him on the forehead.

my you've

"I'm not waiting. You mess with best friend, with my godson,

Blinded by anger, she charged at him, ready to fight, regardless of the odds.

Hollis couldn't hold her back, and it took the timely arrival of hospital security to drag her away.

Cecil, nursing a lump on his head from the phone, was left fuming, with no outlet for his rage. He locked the door of the room and turned on Claire, hitting her where it wouldn't show.

All this unfolded in front of Maria.

Maria, in tears, begged, "Daddy, please... don't hurt mommy..."

Cecil yelled, "Shut it!"

Maria, terrified, clamped her shut,

fearful eyes, barely daring to breathe.

Chapter 1128

Claire clutched at the hem of Cecil's jeans, her eyes brimming with tears.

"Cecil, let's just leave Ms. Thorne and her family alone, okay? Emmett has already given us a whole lot of cash. We should stop pestering them, please..."

Cecil scoffed, a coldness in his voice. Gone were the days when a million dollars seemed like a fortune to him. Ever since he found out about Tarquin and Elysia's real status, that money felt like mere pocket change.

"That kid has my blood running through his veins. His miserable life is only possible because of me. You think this little amount of money is gonna cut it? No way! I'm gonna be on his case for life. He owes me big time!"

What he wanted wasn't just a million dollars. He was after a lifetime of luxury and prestige.

"Cecil, Emmett is still so young, he..."

Cecil's face darkened, silencing her with a glare.

Then, his gaze landed on a set of design sketches by Maria's bedside, sparking his curiosity.

"Who drew these?"

Claire, fearing he might destroy them, quickly intervened.

"Emmett did. It's a gift for his sister."

Emmett had received a teddy bear from Maria and wanted to give something back. So, he designed two outfits for her. Before leaving the hospital, he handed over the sketches as a present, hoping to turn them into real dresses if she liked them.

Cecil, a man far from refined tastes or any understanding of art, failed to recognize the sketches' value. Squinting, he took a closer look, then snapped photos and uploaded them online alongside a picture of Maria with tears in her eyes.

The caption read: "Seeing the outfits her brother designed for her only makes her miss him more. When will the heavens allow these siblings to reunite?"

He aimed to garner sympathy, stirring up more online hatred against Elysia and Tarquin.

However, the focus shifted to Emmett's designs instead. Fashion design experts began praising the sketches, astounded that a child could create such wonders. Industry giants proclaimed that if these were truly the work of a five-year-old, the kid was a prodigy destined to revolutionize the fashion world.

Soon, the world's top luxury brands were sharing Emmett's designs, lavishing

praise and predicting he'd become a superstar.

The commotion caught the attention of a distinguished elder. His hair was silver, his skin impeccably cared for, exuding an air of fashionable

artistry right down to the trendy beads and a neat braid he wore.

Seated at his desk, he scrutinized Emmett's sketches intently before turning to his assistant.

"Are you sure these were designed by a child?"

"Absolutely, sir. And look, there's a resemblance to you in his younger days."

The elder peered at Emmett's photo, nodding in acknowledgment.

"He does remind me of my younger self."

Revisiting the sketches, he mused, "A rare talent indeed. Let's make a trip to Silver City."

The assistant was taken aback. "You're going personally?"

"Yes, this child deserves my personal attention. Arrange the private jet. We leave today. Avoid the media, we'll go discreetly."

"Understood."

Chapter 1129

At that moment, Cecil was in total shock!

The media had gotten in touch with him for confirmation, and upon learning that the designs were indeed his son's work, their tone shifted dramatically, showering him with congratulations and telling him he had struck gold!

Even talent agencies were reaching out, hoping to sign Emmett early.

And studios were inquiring if Emmett had more designs to sell, willing to pay top dollar for them.

Cecil could hardly believe it. Just two drawings had caused such a sensation!

"Good Lord, this is like hitting the jackpot!" he thought. "No wonder they don't want to give back our son; they've seen the golden opportunity!"

Damn it, I must get Emmett back, make him draw day and night to fill my pockets!"

Claire too saw the news online.

She was over the moon about her son's success and was quite excited.

"Cecil, they're saying our son could be a huge star! We can't ruin his future; we should let him stay with Ms. Thorne and let them nurture his talent."

Cecil frowned,

"What do you know? This talent is our son's own, nothing to do with them! He can make it big without any external grooming! It's all thanks to my genes!"

Claire shrank back, whispering,

"Ms. Thorne and Mr. Bradford aren't bad people, we... we shouldn't burn bridges with them. For Emmett's sake, they won't leave us in the lurch, we..."

"Nonsense! Only by taking a stand can we demand a hefty sum with dignity!"

"But if we make a scene, I... I'm afraid our son might end up hating us..."

"He owes his life to me; dare he hate us? If he dares, that's ingratitude! I could disown him!"

Cecil scoffed arrogantly, his phone suddenly ringing. He glanced at the caller ID, a smirk playing at the corner of his mouth.

He turned to Claire and barked,

"I'm stepping out. You stay put in the ward and don't go spreading rumors!"

"Get this straight, if I'm living well, that's when you and your son can live well too."

"Don't count on anyone but me. We are family, got it?"

Claire nodded meekly, fear evident in her eyes.

Cecil, satisfied, huffed and left with his phone.

Not burn bridges? Ha!

Without pushing them, how much could he possibly squeeze out of them?

Only by playing hardball could he demand a king's ransom!

As long as he had Emmett, the little goldmine, they wouldn't dare not pay up. Could they really stand to see Emmett living in poverty under his care?

After all, Emmett was a cash cow!

No matter what, he had to get him back!

If his drawings could earn money,

then he should be drawing everet

single day. Dare not to, and he'd feel back of my hand!

Cecil stepped out to take the call, which was from one of his gambling buddies.

Right off the bat, his friend was laying it on thick, envious of Cecil's newfound fortune and his suddenly valuable son.

"Cecil, everyone's heard about your

stroke of luck. We're all waiting.

congratulate you. Come on

bring some of that good foo

Cecil was on cloud nine, never in his thirty years had he felt so glorious!

Elated, he headed straight for the casino.

But little did he know, banking solely on that blood relation and custody rights, he thought he could do as he pleased!

He thought he could manipulate Elysia and Tarquin.

He had no idea just how out of his depth he really was!

As soon as Cecil arrived at the casino, Tarquin got wind of it.

"Tarquin, he took the bait."

Tarquin's eyes gleamed ominously,

"Record everything, keep it for later. And don't leave him a dime; win back all of

Emmett's money and donate it!"

Chapter 1130

It was Emmett's money, and donating it was like banking some good karma for Emmett himself.

Giving it to him, though? Total waste!

After all, Emmett had done his duty. If they couldn't hold onto that cash, that was on them.

...

The underground casino was buzzing with life.

Today, Cecil was the man of the hour, strutting around like he owned the place!

Overnight, he went from being a nobody to the big dog!

Normally, people at the casino looked at him like he was a broke stray.

But today, everyone was calling him 'Cecil' left and right. He was so puffed up with pride, he barely recognized himself.

But his high didn't last long.

Because today, he gambled big, blowing through the million-plus Emmett gave to Claire in less than two hours!

Cecil, fuming, stormed out of the casino, shouting,

"A million plus is peanuts! I don't give a damn! That was just pocket change my son gave me out of respect. My son's worth billions! His money is mine, all mine!" After leaving, Cecil was steamed.

A million plus, gone just like that, and he was back to being broke.

Cecil, mulling it over, snorted in disdain.

He contacted the media and took a cab to the hotel where Elysia and Tarquin were staying.

He had to figure out a way to bring his son back home!

His son's paintings made money. If he brought his son home and had him crank out a hundred or so paintings, the cash would roll in, right?!

As for Tarquin and Elysia, they were like walking, talking gold mines. Best to keep them around for a slow bleed.

Stepping out of the cab, Cecil dropped to his knees at the hotel entrance, putting on a tearful show,

"Ms. Thorne, Mr. Bradford, please, beg you, give me back my son. My daughter's seriously ill, and she's fainting from missing her brother!"

"I'm afraid she won't make it if she doesn't see him again! She's already got a congenital illness! She can't handle this kind of stress!"

"Please, have a heart, let the siblings reunite! My daughter's days are numbered, oh... please... please..."

Cecil was using Maria to play the sympathy card, crying and sniveling at the hotel entrance.

He was bowing and scraping, painting himself as the pitiable underdog.

Soon, a crowd of media gathered, cameras flashing non-stop.

There were also plenty of live streams happening on the spot.

The internet was in an uproar again, with folks taking up Cecil's cause:

#So sad, how can they bully someone like this, won't anyone step in?#

#Calling out Silver City PD, Silver City government, Silver City Child Protection, if you don't do

9, we're taking this t

top!#

#Even if that's not his biological son, considering the sick little girl, they should at least let the siblings see each other!#

#Does having money mean you can do whatever you want? Hogging someone's child like that is just cruel!#

The trolls online were having a field day, and the onlookers on-site were riled up,

"Let the kid see his sister already, it's heartbreaking!"

"Not letting them meet, how cold-hearted can you be!"

"And this Emmett, his sister's on her deathbed and he's not rushing to her side? So young and already so heartless?"

"Exactly, if were him, I'd be crying and making a scene to see my sister. If they stopped me, I'd

threaten to do something

see if they'd stop me then!

"Talk all you want, but there's something off with that kid, too. All about appearances, he is."

A few hot-headed youths were shouting,

"Come on, send the kid out to see his sister already, or we're coming in to take

him! This is just too much!"