

Hitched 1151

Chapter 1152

He didn't keep anything from her. "Keaton said Callum's been out of touch for over a month."

Elysia looked genuinely surprised.

"No way, just the other day he was texting me."

Yeah...

Tarquin thought for a moment before handing his phone to Elysia.

"Give Callum a call, pretend you're asking about Winona."

"Alright!"

Elysia dialed the number. Callum's phone was ringing, but no one picked up. However, just like last time, Callum quickly texted back:

[Bad timing, I'm busy again. Is it urgent?]

Tarquin frowned and coached Elysia to reply, [Yes, it's urgent.]

Callum: [Then text me. I can't talk right now, but I can message back.]

Tarquin's frown deepened. As they exchanged messages, it became clear: the person texting wasn't Callum!

Tarquin's expression darkened. Who was pretending to be Callum, and why only reach out to Elysia?

Callum and Elysia...

Suddenly, a thought struck Tarquin. Winona! The only connection between Callum and Elysia was Winona. All their conversations revolved around her.

Tarquin was gripped by a sense of foreboding.

He looked at Elysia, his expression complex and unreadable.

Elysia sensed something was off and asked, furrowing her brow, "What's going on?"

Before Tarquin could respond, Keaton's call came through.

"I'll take this," Tarquin said, stepping out onto the balcony with his phone.

As soon as the call connected, Keaton was quick to ask, "What did Elysia say?"

"Someone's using Callum's identity to contact her, talking about Winona."

Keaton responded immediately,

"That fits! Callum's disappearance is definitely linked to Winona! I just got some crucial news: Winona's manager died ages ago, and Callum was investigating her before he went missing!"

Tarquin was silent for a moment.

Keaton elaborated, "After Mr. Leblanc called, I started digging into Callum's situation."

"Two months ago, a woman's body was found overseas. Online rumors suggested it might be Winona's manager."

"But no one could reach Winona's

manager to confirm, because a year ago, they announced they were off filming in secret and haven't been

seen since."

"Without confirmation, Callum decided to investigate, worried about Winona's whereabouts."

"Callum's concern for Winona drove him to identify that body."

Tarquin's brow was tightly furrowed. "Are we sure the body was Winona's manager?"

Keaton was firm, "One hundred percent sure!"

Tarquin remained silent.

Keaton continued, "I discreetly contacted Winona's film crew. They confirmed they

were filming in secret, but Winona wasn't the lead actress."

"The crew said they had just arrived in the mountains and hadn't started filming yet when Winona's manager canceled her contract, paying a hefty penalty."

"The reason given was Winona had personal issues, mental health struggles, and couldn't continue."

"The manager asked the crew not to announce the cancellation, so Winona could take time to recover."

"So, the public still thinks she's filming in secret."

Tarquin's expression was grave. The manager had quietly handled Winona's contract termination. But the manager's body was found overseas.

So where on earth was Winona now?

Chapter 1153

Callum had gone missing while investigating Winona's manager.

The killer must have wanted to prevent Callum from discovering the truth about Winona through the manager.

Pretending to be Callum to contact Elysia was likely a way to deter Elysia from pursuing Winona's case.

This cover-up only confirmed one thing-something bad had happened to Winona!

Tarquin exhaled deeply, turning his gaze to Elysia.

He wasn't particularly concerned about Winona, but Elysia was a different story.

Winona was Elysia's best friend, almost like another sister, much like Blossom was. They were as close as family.

Elysia was eagerly hoping Winona would be back home for the holidays.

And if something had indeed happened to Winona, Tarquin dreaded to think how Elysia would cope.

Furrowing his brow, Tarquin turned to Keaton and said, "I need you to dig into Winona's husband's romantic history."

Keaton raised an eyebrow, "You think her husband might've done something to her?"

"He's a prime suspect."

"Alright, I'm on it."

If there was anyone who could uncover secrets of the heart, it was Keaton.

...

Elysia was on edge, sensing something wasn't right.

When she saw Tarquin hang up the phone, she rushed over, anxiety written all over her face.

"What happened to Callum?"

Tarquin's expression softened with empathy.

He couldn't let Elysia continue reaching out to Callum without any defenses in place.

He decided to be honest, "Something might have happened to Winona."

Elysia's mind went blank, the words hitting her like a freight train.

"What... what did you say?!"

Tarquin quickly pulled her into his arms, trying to comfort her.

"Don't worry. Winona is your best friend. I'll leave no stone unturned in finding out what's going on."

Elysia pushed away from him, her face a mix of anger and sorrow, her eyes red-rimmed, lips trembling.

"Who... who told you something happened to Winona?"

Tarquin's heart ached, but there was no turning back now. He had to confront the reality with her.

He explained about Callum's disappearance and the bits of information Keaton had uncovered, emphasizing, "I said something might have happened."

Though, deep down, he was certain. He just couldn't bear to break her heart even more.

Elysia's eyes filled with tears.

"Winona's manager quietly terminated her contract?"

"Yeah."

"And Winona's manager is dead?"

"...Yes."

"Then... then where is Winona now? Where's our Winona?"

Elysia's tears flowed freely, and she was shaking like a leaf, her voice hoarse.

"They said she was on a film shoot, Zane Livingston said so, Blossom too. They said she signed a confidentiality agreement, so she couldn't reach out to us... she... she..."

Tarquin couldn't take it anymore and enveloped her in another hug, holding her tightly.

He knew the depth of Elysia's bond with Winona and understood there was little he could say to ease her pain.

With her best friend's fate unknown, of course, she was devastated.

To her, Winona and Blossom were as precious as her own children.

"Let it out, cry if you need to..."

Elysia let out a heart-wrenching sob, "Tell me you're lying! Tell me Keaton is wrong! Please, tell me nothing happened to Winona, that she's fine, that she'll be home for Christmas, please..."

"Please, don't scare me, I'm so afraid..."

Tarquin held her, his own eyes misty.

He was torn between his love for Elysia and the burning anger at whoever dared to harm Winona.

Whoever they were, they had a death wish messing with Elysia's best friend.

"I'll find her for you, I promise. Whether she's alive or... whatever the case may be,

I..."

Chapter 1154

Tarquin was mid-sentence when Elysia suddenly went silent.

His heart skipped a beat, panic setting in. "Elysia—"

...

In the hospital room, Elysia lay quietly in bed, an IV drip attached to her arm.

She was okay physically-just fainted from being too emotionally overwhelmed.

Pamela and a group of little ones were gathered around her bed, sobbing uncontrollably.

Tarquin stood nearby, eyes red and brows furrowed with concern.

After a while, Tarquin called Lowell over to take Pamela and Baby Emmett home.

They didn't want to leave, but Tarquin gently reasoned, "Elysia will wake up soon, and she's going to be hungry. If we're all here, who'll prepare her some delicious food? Go home, whip up something tasty, and bring it back later."

The three nodded and left with Lowell, heading back to prepare a comforting meal for Elysia.

Once they were gone, Elliot wiped away his tears and asked, "What happened? Mom's always been healthy. How did she just collapse like that?"

Tarquin frowned and explained the situation with Winona.

The three little ones were shocked. "Winona's in trouble?!"

"Yes, her fate is uncertain at the moment."

The room fell silent for a moment before Elliot asked, "Do we have any suspects?"

"Winona's husband seems suspicious."

"Mr. Zane?"

"Yes."

The kids frowned. They knew of Zane. When he first appeared around Elysia, they were worried he might pose a threat to their mom and had even done some investigating.

But they hadn't found anything bad on him.

"Blossom said Mr. Zane and Winona were very much in love. Why would he harm her?" Evan asked.

Before Tarquin could respond, Elliot interjected, "Mr. Zane's a rags-to-riches story. He came from a poor background and only hit it big after marrying into the Newsom family."

"He might want to take over the family's assets, and that could drive him to hurt Winona."

Evan struggled to understand, "But they're family. Winona's money is his money too, right? Just like Dad's is Mom's."

Elijah chimed in, "It's different. Not every couple is as loving and unified as our parents. For those who aren't as close, what's in their own hands is what truly belongs to them."

Evan's little brow furrowed with determination, "Whoever scared our mom and hurt our Blossom, we can't let them get away with it!"

Elliot and Elijah nodded in agreement, turning to Tarquin for direction.

Tarquin laid out the plan: "Let's start with Zane. He's not in Jindale City right now; your mom mentioned he went to see Winona."

"But he could be lying. Elijah, I need you to track Zane's location and check Callum's phone signal."

"Elliot, you're on Zane's financials. Dig up everything you can."

Both Elliot and Elijah responded in unison, "Got it!"

Evan piped up eagerly, "What about me?"

Tarquin replied, "You've got an important task. You and White will help me get a

message to Winona's father, arranging to meet him tonight."

If Zane's involved in Winona's troubles, it's likely Ridley Newsom's

communications are under surveillance.

To avoid tipping anyone off, Tarquin couldn't just go to Ridley directly.

But a meeting was crucial.

So sending White and Evan to convey the message was the best course of action.

Just as Tarquin finished briefing the kids, his phone rang. It was Keaton.

"Tarquin, I've got explosive news. You won't believe it!"

Chapter 1155

Keaton burst into the room like he had just discovered a new planet.

"Zane's definitely up to something. If you want to get to the bottom of what's going on with Winona, you need to keep an eye on Zane. Trust me on this!"

Tarquin frowned, "Get to the point!"

Keaton leaned in closer, "I've done some digging. Turns out, Zane's got a thing for your wife."

Tarquin's expression darkened immediately, "..."

Keaton continued, unwavering, "Zane's been crushing on Elysia since college, but

it was a secret crush. She didn't have a clue."

"But then he got involved with Winona. I suspect it was all about money."

"Back in college, Winona was loaded, but Elysia? She was just scraping by."

"Zane's kept his feelings for Elysia buried deep, but I picked up on it."

"You remember what happened with Gage Slater, right? That was Zane's doing." Tarquin's face grew even darker. Of course, he remembered Gage.

Gage was Nola Slater's uncle, and he'd tried to assault Elysia. Someone had taken him out of commission after that.

"You're sure it was because of Elysia that Gage got what was coming to him?"

"Definitely. Zane and Gage didn't have any beef. It was all about Elysia."

Tarquin's expression turned stormy.

After Gage's incident, the Slater family had poured a fortune into tracking down the culprit, even posting a bounty on the dark web.

Plenty of hackers and hitmen had tried to crack the case, but no one found the perpetrator.

Even Lowell had come up empty-handed.

Who would have guessed it was Zane!

Just considering the Gage incident, Zane was no ordinary guy. He'd managed to

stay under the radar when so many others had failed!

How could someone from a simple background have such skills?

Before Tarquin could fully process this, Keaton added,

"And there's something else. Zane's got this cousin named Sarah. He's always looked out for her."

"For a while, Sarah lived in the villa with Winona and Zane, posing as his cousin."

"Then out of nowhere, Sarah got pregnant and took a break from school. Coincidentally, as soon as Elysia came back, Sarah's pregnancy hit a snag."

"Here's the kicker: Sarah's been calling Elysia a murderer!"

"Elysia wouldn't harm anyone, but she might be the catalyst."

"Like, maybe Zane saw Elysia back in town and ditched Sarah and the baby on

the spot. Sarah's bitter because of Elysia, maybe?"

"After all, Elysia's always been Zane's dream girl!"

No wonder Zane had been hanging around Elysia so much when she first returned to Jindale City!

Tarquin's face turned even grimmer.

"Isn't Sarah supposed to be Zane's cousin? How could she be pregnant with his kid?"

"Sarah's actually adopted from Zane's aunt's family. No blood relation."

Tarquin was left speechless.

...

When Elysia woke up, the only person in the hospital room was Tarquin.

The kids were off busy with something else, so Tarquin had stayed behind to keep her company.

Seeing her awake, he leaned in, speaking gently, "How are you feeling now? Any better?"

Elysia had just finished her IV drip, so she was feeling a bit better, though still worn out.

She moved her lips, her voice raspy, "Winona..."

"I'm already looking for her," Tarquin reassured her.

Elysia closed her eyes, tears slipping down her cheeks.

Tarquin felt a pang of heartache, gently wiping them away with his thumb.

"Don't scare yourself. You've faced tough times before and pulled through. Winona will too."

Elysia lay there quietly for a moment, then suddenly opened her eyes and threw off the covers, attempting to get out of bed.

Chapter 1156

Tarquin quickly asked, "Are you heading to the ladies' room?"

Elysia gritted her teeth. "I'm going to find Sarah."

"Sarah?"

"Yeah! She must know where Winona is! When I first got back to Jindale City, she was acting all weird, and she mentioned Winona!"

At the time, she kept saying she was a murderer, and later she said Winona was never coming back!

I was suspicious back then. I asked Blossom and Zane and even reached out to Callum to see if he had heard anything about Winona.

But since nothing seemed wrong with Winona at the time, I thought Sarah was just being spiteful because she didn't get along with Winona.

Now I see that's not it. Sarah definitely knows something.

Tarquin was worried about Elysia's condition and didn't want her going out.

Elysia insisted, "I have to find her! I need to go right now!"

Tarquin couldn't argue with her and decided to go along.

On the way, Tarquin didn't mention Zane's crush on her, but he did tell her about

Sarah and Zane's connection.

Elysia was taken aback, looking incredulous. "Are you sure?"

"Yeah! Keaton looked into it. It's solid info."

Elysia pressed her lips together, her eyes turning red, tears welling up.

She was furious and also pained for Winona!

Zane, that dirtbag, cheating like that!

Before Tarquin could offer comfort, Elysia sniffled hard, wiped her tears, and said in a choked voice,

"If anything's happened to Winona because of those two, I swear I'll make them pay!"

"Right! You've got me and the kids as your backup. Just point us in the right direction!"

At a psychiatric hospital on the outskirts of Jindale City.

Elysia found Sarah, who seemed not quite in her right mind.

She was hugging a pillow, sitting in the courtyard soaking up the sun.

"Isn't it a lovely day? So nice to sit in the sun, right? Baby's warm and cozy, and so is Mommy."

Sarah had been depressed ever since her miscarriage.

Her depression worsened, leading to her being admitted to the psychiatric facility.

Sensing someone watching her, Sarah looked up.

She blinked at Elysia, rubbed her eyes, and stared for a moment before suddenly losing it,

"Murderer! Ah-"

She threw the pillow and lunged at Elysia, screaming.

The hospital staff quickly restrained her.

Sarah struggled fiercely, her eyes wild with anger,

"Witch! Witch! Give me back my

murd kill you! Get her, she's the

! She killed my babyet

Waaa... She killed my baby

One of the staff members picked up the pillow from the ground and handed it back to her,

"No one killed your baby, your baby's right here."

Sarah hurriedly grabbed the pillow, clutching it tightly,

"Sorry, baby, did Mommy scare you? Mommy was wrong, thought someone hurt you."

After speaking, she cast a wary glance at Elysia, clutching the pillow protectively.

Elysia clenched her fists, glaring at her,

affair with Zane boiling her blood!

aought of Sarah's

But seeing Sarah in this state, Elysia forced herself to stay calm.

She tried to suppress her anger and asked Sarah,

"Sarah, where's Winona?"

Mentioning Winona, Sarah turned to Elysia and started laughing,

"Winona, Winona, you mean? My cousin-in-law, haha, Winona's cousin-in-law, a big star,

a nuisance!"

Sarah's laughter abruptly faded.

Elysia frowned and asked again, "Do you know where she is?"

"Where is she? Oh, I know!"

Chapter 1157

Elysia's heart skipped a beat. "!"

Before she could ask, Sarah burst into laughter.

"I know, but I'm not telling you! Haha..."

"You're gonna be so mad! I'm never telling you! You'll never find her! You're just like her, both of you are awful! You both deserve to rot!"

Elysia took a deep breath, trying to keep her anger in check as she asked, "Is Winona... is she still alive?"

Sarah shook her head, clearly enjoying herself.

"Not telling, not telling, haha, I'm not telling you."

Tarquin spoke up, his voice cold and steady.

"Sometimes death is a mercy compared to suffering. If Winona has passed, maybe it's a blessing."

Sarah, not realizing he was trying to get information, turned to him angrily.

"Who said she's dead?! She's not dead! She doesn't deserve to die! She needs to be alive to suffer!"

Tarquin and Elysia exchanged a glance. Well, at least she wasn't dead.

Tarquin gave Elysia a reassuring look and continued to press for information. "How do you know she's not dead? You can't even see her."

"Who says I can't see her! Of course I can! She's chained up with big, heavy chains! Beaten every day! I've even hit her myself!"

"I've whipped her! Kicked her! Twisted her arm! If she dares to curse at me, I slap her hard!"

"Haha, she's like a dog on a chain, can't do a thing to me, just cries like a baby. A big, pathetic waste!"

"Oh, and she keeps calling for you, Elysia, crying for you to save her!"

""Elysia, Elysia, save me! Elysia..." Haha, she can scream all she wants, no one's coming to save her, no one can."

Sarah suddenly turned her attention to Elysia, asking,

"You're Elysia, aren't you?"

Elysia glared at Sarah, trembling with rage, her eyes burning with unshed tears.

Sarah's words were like daggers, each one stabbing deeper into her heart.

Seeing Elysia so upset, Sarah seemed even more delighted.

"You know why she only calls for you, and not anyone else? Haha, not telling you! It's a big secret!"

Tarquin frowned, deep in thought. That was indeed a curious point.

When Winona got into trouble, Elysia was still

mer life in the

mountains. They hadn't: They hadn't seen each

r in years.

Why didn't Winona call for Ridley or Caroline? Or even Blossom?

Why was it always Elysia?

Tarquin decided to shelve this mystery for the moment and asked,

"Was it you and Zane who locked Winona up?"

The mention of Zane's name caused Sarah's demeanor to change instantly.

Her bravado vanished, replaced by fear. She clutched the pillow in her arms tightly.

"I don't know! I don't know anything!"

It was clear she was terrified of Zane.

Tarquin's frown deepened. "Is the baby you're carrying Zane's?"

"Ah-"

Sarah screamed.

She glared at Elysia furiously,

"You just wait, you witch! I'm going to lock you up too! We've got a place all picked out for you, and when you're locked up, I'm gonna beat you every day! Beat you to death!"

With that, Sarah stormed out, clutching the pillow.

Tarquin watched her leave, his expression darkening.

Elysia was seething with rage. Winona considered her a cousin, but Sarah saw Winona as a rival.

How could there be such a shameless, malicious woman in the world?! Tarquin tried to console Elysia,

"Don't with her

her. We'll deal

. When

comes back, she'll handle it

Elysia gritted her teeth. "Winona won't let her get away with this!"

"Yeah, try not to be too upset. At least we know she's alive. That's something."

Elysia's eyes filled with tears again. "Yeah, at least she's still alive."

Chapter 1158

Winona... she's still alive!

...

Leaving the psychiatric hospital, the two of them headed straight home.

Elijah had tampered with the hospital's surveillance system to keep an eye on Sarah. So, they didn't have to worry about alerting anyone by visiting her today. At most, Zane would only know they went to see Sarah, but not the reason behind it.

If Zane were to ask, they could simply say they visited Sarah because they couldn't reach him or Winona, and wanted to check with his cousin.

Number One Mansion.

As soon as Elysia walked through the door, Pamela and Baby hurried to greet her.

"Irene!"

"Mommy!"

While they spent time with Elysia, Tarquin headed upstairs to the study for a quick meeting with Elliot and Elijah.

Elliot inquired, "Do you think what Sarah said is credible? Is Winona really alive?"

Tarquin nodded, "Even though her mind is a bit clouded, I believe she's telling the truth."

The brothers let out a collective sigh of relief.

"That's good. As long as Winona is alive, Mom won't lose hope."

"Yeah, how are things progressing on your end?" Tarquin asked.

Elliot replied, "We're getting somewhere. Zane is highly suspicious, and I wouldn't be surprised if he's behind it all!"

"Over the years, he's exploited the Newsom family's resources for his own gain. Just from what I've uncovered, there are three companies closely tied to him."

"And those factories run by his relatives, all built with the Newsom family's money."

"Yet, the profits from those factories don't benefit the Newsom family at all!"

"They're all assets of the Livingston family!"

"And that rising star, Central Pharmaceuticals, it's likely his too. I'm still digging into the specifics."

Hearing about Central

Pharmaceuticals, Tarquin frowned. This new pharmaceutical company had been making waves and was set to go public by the end of the year. Investors were eagerly awaiting the opportunity to pour money into it. The company's prospects looked promising. Even he had taken notice, but he hadn't imagined it was Zane's!

Zane, the classic self-made man, was truly despicable, but undeniably clever.

Elliot continued, "I also looked into

that heft

penalty fee paid to the film

crew! It was wired from an offshore

encrypted account, and so far, I can't link it back to Zane."

Tarquin wasn't surprised. Zane was a sly fox; he'd make sure to cover his tracks.

After Elliot finished, Elijah chimed in, "I've tracked Callum's phone signal; it's overseas."

"But I can't find Zane. His last known location was near the border, and then he vanished."

Tarquin studied the spot Elijah had highlighted on the map. Nearby was a vast, uninhabited area. It made sense if Zane had gone there to find Winona. But whether he actually went searching for her remained a mystery. If not, what had he been doing during his disappearance?

After pondering for a moment, Tarquin pulled out his phone and made a call, arranging for someone to locate Callum and another team to investigate where Zane had been.

Elijah added, "According to Sarah and Winona's last known appearances, Winona should still be somewhere in the country!"

Sarah hadn't left the country, so if she could torment Winona, it meant Winona was still here. Plus, there were no records of her leaving the country.

But where could Winona be? She must be kept in an extremely secretive place.

When Winona was in trouble, she was constantly calling out for Elysia to save her...

Tarquin suddenly realized something, and his brow furrowed!

Chapter 1159

"Where Winona's being held might have something to do with your mom!" Tarquin announced, his brow furrowed in thought.

"Huh?" Elliot and Elijah exchanged puzzled glances.

Tarquin leaned forward, explaining further, "Sarah mentioned that when Winona was in trouble, she kept calling out for your mom to save her. Only your mom. That means Winona is familiar with the place."

"And she knows calling anyone else wouldn't help; only your mom might show up there."

Elliot and Elijah nodded in agreement. It made sense. But what place could it be?

The three of them pondered for a bit, unable to figure it out. They decided to consult Elysia.

If this place was connected to her, and Winona knew about it, then Elysia would certainly know best.

When Tarquin shared his theory, Elysia looked puzzled. "Places Winona knows about include the school, the Thorne family, and a few shops where I used to work part-time. But none of those are secretive."

Elliot's expression shifted suddenly. "The Thorne family!"

The others raised their eyebrows, "Hmm?"

Elliot turned serious. "Remember when Dad and Mom went to the island for a getaway, and Blake Thorne kidnapped Evan?"

"During the kidnapping, Baby happened to be there and even got her bodyguards

to give Blake a good thrashing," Elijah recalled, nodding.

"I remember that," he said. "Back then, Evan didn't even know Baby was our

sister. That was Baby's first day in Jindale City!"

"Exactly! That very day!" Elliot's excitement was palpable. "After Evan told me about it, I was puzzled. How did Blake Thorne get out of jail? Dad had the Thorne family locked up."

"He was charged with extortion, serious stuff. No one in their right mind would help him. It'd be like going against Dad."

"Unless they had a compelling reason to do so!"

"Now, I suspect the one who got the Thorne family out of jail is Zane!"

Elysia and Elijah's eyes widened in shock.

Elliot added, "Why would Zane have any dealings with the Thorne family? It's got to be connected to Winona!"

"And since Mom grew up with the Thorne family, if Winona was taken there, her

first instinct would be to call for Mom," Elijah reasoned.

Tarquin's frown deepened, considering the logic in their

analysis. Zane was indeed craft

and had the means to spring the Thorne family from jail.

Elysia looked astonished, her eyes wide as she asked, "You think Winona is being held by the Thorne family?!"

"The Thorne family is definitely suspicious! Mom, does the Thorne family have a cellar or something?"

"No," Elysia replied, "but Winona does have a history with the Thorne family. She clashed with them because of me, so they must hold a grudge."

"These grudges aren't common knowledge. Even if someone realized Winona was in trouble, they wouldn't suspect the Thorne family."

"The Thorne family could be the perfect place to hide Blossom!" Elysia's breath quickened. "We need to check it out!"

She stood

up ready to rush out, but Tarquin stopped her. "Let's send a few skilled people to scout first. We need to gather some intel before taking action, to avoid tipping them off and putting Winona in more danger."

Chapter 1160

"Yes, yes, yes, Winona's safety is the top priority!"

Tarquin wasted no time and immediately started making calls.

First, he arranged for someone to check out the Thorne family residence.

Then, he had another person go to the police station to try and glean some

information from anyone connected to the Thorne family.

Besides following the trail leading to the Thorne family, he also instructed his team to dig into Sarah and Zane's whereabouts over the past year.

Sarah had been to the place where Winona was being held.

Perhaps their movements could reveal some suspicious locations.

Just as he finished setting things up, a ping from Evan lit up his phone.

"Dad, White and I have completed the mission successfully! Mr. Newsom will be at the meeting tonight as planned!"

Tarquin's eyes narrowed slightly as he texted back, "Evan and White, you two are the best!"

Elysia, sensing something was up, asked, "What's going on?"

Tarquin pocketed his phone, "Nothing to worry about. Rest assured, as long as Winona is alive, I will find a way to bring her back!"

In addition to investigating the Thorne family and Sarah and Zane, he was already thinking of another plan.

...

At eight o'clock that night, at Blissful Uncle's Bar.

Tarquin and Ridley both arrived at the exclusive private room.

This was a secluded spot at the very top of the bar, right next to Keaton's office, and not open to the public.

As soon as Ridley saw Tarquin, he anxiously asked, "Mr. Bradford, what's going on? You even had a kid deliver your message?"

Ordinarily, Ridley and Tarquin wouldn't cross paths; they ran in completely different circles.

But because of Winona and Elysia's connection, Tarquin had been looking out for the Newsom family in recent months.

He'd given them quite a few substantial projects, and the Newsom family's profits had skyrocketed.

The Newsom family was riding high, with everything going splendidly!

Ridley, who had just turned fifty, was no fool.

When Evan suddenly showed up, Ridley was first surprised, then alarmed.

Using a child to deliver messages clearly meant the matter was confidential.

Ridley couldn't shake a sense of unease.

Tarquin's face was grave as he said, "Something's happened to Winona." Ridley's eyes widened, "What—what do you mean?!" Tarquin got straight to the point:

"Winona

The

just arrived at the locatiet

term 't go to the film shoot

and

agent paid a huge penalty to

terminate her contract."

"The reason given was that Winona was too ill to continue filming."

"But her agent has been found dead overseas."

Ridley shot up from the couch, his

Tarquin as he stared at in horror, "Winona, sheel

she..."

"Please, try to stay calm. Winona likely still alive. She's been held captive, and Zane is the suspect."

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Ridley gasped for breath, his chest rising and falling dramatically.

Tarquin didn't know how to console him, so he chose silence, giving Ridley time to process the shock.

His daughter was in trouble!

And the suspect was his son-in-law!

It was a double whammy, and a heavy blow at that!

Tarquin knew the Newsom family well, thanks to Elysia.

Ridley had only one daughter, Winona, and he was fiercely protective, a real daddy bear.

Anyone who dared to mess with his daughter risked facing his wrath!

And ever since Winona got together with Zane, Ridley had treated him like a son.

In the Newsom Group, Ridley was number one, and Zane was clearly number two!

Everyone could see that Ridley had been grooming Zane for bigger things.

And now, it seemed he'd been nurturing a traitor!