

Hitched 1191

Chapter 1191

Zane took a series of deep breaths, trying to calm himself down, struggling to suppress the anger bubbling inside him.

Despite his own pain, he comforted Winona, "Don't worry, sweetheart, I've got you. No one can hurt you while I'm here."

Winona snuggled into Zane's arms like a content kitten, murmuring her agreement, "Mmmhmm." It was hard to believe this was the same woman who had been a fierce warrior just moments earlier!

After ushering the doctor and nurses out of the room, Zane spent some time soothing Winona's nerves. Once she seemed calm enough, he hobbled over to the door, his leg still bleeding profusely.

"My wound's opened up. I need it re-bandaged, stat!" he called out.

The doctor suggested taking him to a treatment room, but Zane shook his head, "No, do it here. My wife can't be left alone right now. She might panic if I'm not around."

The doctor advised, "Her emotions are volatile. It might not be wise to stay in the same room with her."

Zane furrowed his brow, "I'll manage."

"Alright, hold still then. We'll take care of your leg first."

"Got it."

Winona lay quietly on the hospital bed, listening to the conversation and the sound of Zane gritting his teeth through the pain. Her expression remained calm, but her eyes held a storm.

Did it hurt? This was just the beginning. The real pain was yet to come.

Meanwhile, at Number One Mansion, Elliot and Evan peered over Elijah's shoulder at his computer screen with a grin. "Winona's quite the actress. She's giving that dirtbag exactly what he deserves!"

"Let's stir things up a bit ourselves, give Winona a little boost!" Elijah suggested.

"Yeah!"

The trio huddled together, their whispers filled with mischief.

Back at the hospital, after getting his leg wrapped up, Zane returned to the room and splashed his face with water in the bathroom, trying to cool down.

He turned on the faucet, bent down, and-

Whoa, the water was scalding hot!

Zane yelped in pain and fell backward onto the bathroom floor. Before he could gather his wits, his hand landed on something soft and squishy.

Looking down, he saw a sleek, black snake coiled beside him, its forked tongue flicking menacingly. It was clearly venomous, the kind that could end a life with a single bite!

"Ahhh—" Zane screamed, scrambling out of the bathroom.

He stumbled into the room, only to catch sight of a ghastly figure outside the window, scarred beyond recognition, staring at him with eyes like a devil's.

His heart leapt into his throat! This was the eighteenth floor-how on earth could anyone be out there?!

But in the blink of an eye, the figure was gone.

Did he just imagine it?

Zane approached the window cautiously to investigate. No sooner had he leaned in than the horrifying face reappeared, just inches away, separated only by the glass.

"Ahhh—" Zane shrieked again, stumbling backward so quickly he fell painfully onto the floor, his tailbone protesting loudly.

"Darling?" Winona asked, puzzled as she watched Zane.

She was sure she hadn't done anything just now. What on earth was happening to him?

Zane, pale as a ghost and visibly shaking, stammered, "There's a ghost! Winona, there's a ghost!"

Winona just sighed. She had no idea what was going on with him, but she couldn't deny the satisfaction she felt.

Back at Number One Mansion, Elysia tossed and turned in bed, unable to sleep. She was worried about Winona being alone with Zane. He wasn't just a jerk; he was downright dangerous!

Tarquin, trying to put her mind at ease, showed her the hospital's surveillance footage. Watching Zane being tormented lifted her spirits considerably.

The next morning, Elysia woke up early, made some breakfast, and headed to the hospital to see Winona. The kids were still asleep, so Tarquin accompanied her.

Chapter 1192

Elysia was in a pretty good mood, but as soon as she stepped into the hospital, her nerves tightened up again.

Zane approached her, saying, "Elysia, I'm planning to take Winona home today."

Elysia was taken aback. "Home? You mean she's getting discharged?"

"Yeah, the doctor said she's physically fine, it's more of a psychological issue now. They also mentioned that the hustle and bustle of the hospital might not be beneficial for her recovery. It's better for her to rest at home."

Last night had been a nightmare for Zane, and he was not keen on spending another night at the hospital. If Winona didn't lose her mind, he felt he just might.

Elysia frowned. The hospital room had surveillance, and Tarquin's security team was always around. Despite that, she still felt uneasy. Letting Zane take Winona home alone made her even more anxious. That was Zane's territory; if the surveillance wasn't adequate or the protection failed, and Winona got hurt again, it would be too late to regret it.

No way, she couldn't let him take Winona home!

Elysia didn't agree but couldn't find the words to argue at the moment. She used the excuse of consulting the doctor about Winona's condition to leave the room with Tarquin.

As soon as they were out of Zane's sight, Elysia quickly said, "What do we do? Zane wants to take Winona home. I can't let her leave with him! I want to bring Winona to our place."

"Then maybe it's time to expose his infidelity," Tarquin suggested.

"But Winona doesn't seem ready to confront him yet, and we don't have any solid proof of his cheating, do we?" Elysia pointed out.

Tarquin pondered for a moment. "If there's no evidence, we'll just have to create some. You go back and stay with Winona. I'll take care of this. Just be ready to bring her home."

Elysia hesitantly asked, "How are you going to create evidence?"

"Don't worry about it. Go keep Winona company."

Elysia was too pure-hearted for schemes like this. But Keaton? He was another story. This was right up his alley.

Once Elysia was out of the way, Tarquin immediately called Keaton.

"Need a favor."

"Nope, not happening! I'm catching up on sleep!" Keaton was a typical night owl, sluggish during the day and lively at night. He had just hit the hay.

Tarquin wasn't fazed, his voice calm and collected. "Okay, then I'll call Jess and tell her Elysia needed your help, and you refused."

"Come on! Using my sister against me? That's low!" Keaton grumbled. His sister adored Elysia, and if she found out Keaton didn't lend a hand, she'd be there with a metaphorical sword to take him down!

Reluctantly, Keaton agreed, "Can't you deal with this yourself? It's your wife who needs help."

"It's actually Winona who needs it."

Keaton sighed heavily. "Not her again! She better set me up with ten dates, or she's not off the hook!"

Back in the hospital room, Zane and Winona were having breakfast. Elysia had only prepared a meal for Winona, but Zane was helping himself to it too. Elysia wasn't thrilled but didn't say anything.

Seeing her return, Zane quickly asked, "Did you talk to the doctor?"

"Yeah, they said the same thing you heard. Discharge would be better for Winona."

Zane breathed a sigh of relief. "Once we finish the discharge paperwork, I'll take Winona home. You can visit her anytime you want."

"Okay."

After breakfast, Zane, feeling quite pleased, made a call home to arrange for Winona's discharge. As soon as he hung up, his phone rang again. It was an unknown number. As he listened to whoever was on the other end, his expression changed dramatically, becoming dark and menacing.

Chapter 1193

An hour later, Zane's mother, Priscilla, arrived.

Zane had discreetly texted her, asking her to come and keep an eye on Winona. He had some urgent business to attend to and didn't feel comfortable leaving Winona alone with Elysia, so he had called in reinforcements.

As Priscilla entered, Elysia couldn't help but frown slightly. Meanwhile, Winona watched her with innocent curiosity, her eyes free of any hostility.

Zane made the introductions. "Winona, this is my mom, Priscilla. She's your mother-in-law."

"Mother-in-law?" Winona feigned ignorance.

Zane's voice was gentle. "Yeah, you two have always gotten along like real mother and daughter."

Priscilla hurried over, taking Winona's hand and pretending to cry, though her eyes were dry. "Oh, Winona, you scared me half to death! Ever since I heard about your accident, I haven't eaten or slept well. If something happened to you, I don't know what I'd do! Boo hoo..."

Winona thought to herself, "Ugh, how nauseating!"

Elysia thought, "I might just throw up!"

Winona played along, "Don't cry, I'm fine now. I'm back safe and sound." Priscilla nodded enthusiastically, "Yes, yes, as long as you're back, I won't cry." The scene was a picture of motherly love and daughter-in-law devotion.

Zane felt reassured and turned to Elysia. "I have to step out for a bit, something urgent came up. You guys wait here at the hospital, and I'll sort out Winona's discharge papers when I get back."

Elysia, remembering Tarquin's plans, asked, "What's up? Need any help?"

Zane interpreted her question as concern and smiled warmly. "No need, I can handle it myself. Just hang tight here."

"Alright then."

Once Zane left, Elysia stood at the doorway, quickly texting Tarquin.

[Zane said he had urgent business, did you set this up?]

Tarquin replied instantly, [Not me, it was Keaton. Don't worry about it, just enjoy the show.]

Elysia exhaled in relief. Keaton was a close friend of Tarquin's and Jess's younger brother. Though he had a reputation as a bit of a playboy, he certainly had skills, especially in handling tricky situations.

When it came to Winona's troubles, Keaton had been a hero-from offering up a fortune in gemstones to rescuing her from danger, and now stepping in today.

Once Winona recovered, she'd definitely owe him a huge thank you.

[Tell him Winona is someone who knows how to repay kindness. She won't forget what he's done.]

Tarquin replied, [No need for formalities. If Winona needs anything, just let him know.]

Keaton: ...

Really, Tarquin? Your wife's for pampering, and your friends are for sacrificing?

Elysia sighed with relief, feeling a bit more at ease. [Where are you? Headed out yet?]

Tarquin was still downstairs. He waited until Zane left the hospital before starting his car.

[Just about to leave.]

[Alright, you go do your thing. I'll stay here with Winona.]

[Sure thing, call me if you need anything.]

Tarquin sent a head-patting emoji.

Elysia felt her heart bloom as she gazed at the screen, grinning as she typed back: [Love you.]

Tarquin replied, [If you love me, you'll show it. Let's meet up tonight.]

Elysia knew exactly what he meant, and her cheeks flushed red.

"Who are you texting that's got you all smiles?"

Priscilla suddenly appeared, reaching for Elysia's phone with a mocking tone.

Elysia dodged. "What are you doing?"

"Hand over your phone. I want to see who you're chatting with."

Elysia frowned. "What's it to you?"

Priscilla's expression darkened, her voice full of self-righteousness. "It has everything to do with me if it involves my son!"

Chapter 1194

Elysia stuffed her phone into her pocket, her voice icy. "Don't talk to me, I don't want to deal with you!"

As Elysia was about to enter the hospital room, Priscilla grabbed her arm.

"Elysia! What's with the attitude? Is that any way to talk to someone older than you?"

Elysia turned back, eyes blazing. "Older? Who do you think you are? In my eyes, you're just an old witch!"

"You... you dare speak to me like that? I'm Zane's mother!"

Elysia was involved with her son, wasn't she? If she wanted to marry him, she should be trying to win her over. But instead, this little upstart was acting all high and mighty.

Elysia rolled her eyes, shaking off Priscilla. "I'm warning you, I've been holding back. I can slap your son, and I can slap you too, so don't push it!"

"You..." Priscilla's eyes nearly popped out of her head with rage.

Her son had countless flings, and Elysia, a woman with a child, really had no leverage. Why was she acting so smug? Her son might spoil her, but Priscilla certainly wouldn't.

In the past, circumstances forced her to accept Winona into the Livingston family. But now that her son had made something of himself, she didn't need to put up with anyone's nonsense.

If she didn't approve, no one was getting through the Livingston family's door.

Priscilla followed Elysia into the room, "You dare to warn me? I'm warning you, Elysia. A woman with a kid isn't worth much. Treat me like this and forget about joining the Livingston family. I-ah..."

Before Priscilla could finish, Winona suddenly leaped from the hospital bed!

She straddled Priscilla, raising her hand to slap her!

Slap, slap, slap-

Priscilla was shocked and dazed. "Winona, what's wrong with you? I'm your mother-in-law! Stop, Winona, stop! Ah-"

Winona kept hitting and yelling, "Old witch, you're trying to ruin me! I'll beat you first, let's see how you ruin me then! I'll beat you to death..."

Priscilla tried to fight back, but she was like a beached whale-it was hard enough getting up, let alone with Winona pinning her down!

All she could do was lie there and take the beating.

Soon, Priscilla was crying from the pain, no longer pretending, and started to curse, "Winona, how dare you hit me, you little tramp! I'll have my son divorce you! Boo hoo..."

A flash of cold anger crossed Winona's eyes. Divorce her? Ha!

It should be Winona who kicked them out of the house!

Without Winona, they were nothing!

Even the house they lived in was bought with money from the Newsom family!

Thinking of the kindness she once showed Priscilla, compared to the cruelty she received in return, Winona only hit harder!

Slapping dozens of times until her hand hurt, she switched to pinching and scratching!

It wasn't until doctors and nurses heard the commotion and rushed in that they were finally separated.

Priscilla lay on the floor, battered and bruised, crying and screaming, "I can't go on, just let me die! Oh, the misery, that the Livingston family should have such a disrespectful daughter-in-law trying to kill me! Boo hoo..."

"I'll have my son divorce you! The Livingston family doesn't want you! You wretch! You wretch, boo hoo..."

Winona gave a cold laugh in her heart. Crying? Who couldn't cry?

If Priscilla could cry, so could Winona.

Winona curled up in the corner of the room, calling out for Zane in a voice trembling with fear, "Honey, save me! Boo hoo, honey, save me..."

Chapter 1195

The hospital room was in chaos, but Elysia didn't sweat it. She knew Winona was faking it.

Doctors and nurses were in a frenzy, quickly reaching out to Zane.

"Are you Winona's family? You need to get to the hospital right away. Winona and your mother have gotten into a fight, and things aren't looking good."

Before the doctor could finish, Winona snatched the phone.

"Honey, come back quick! There's an old witch here trying to ruin me, saying you should divorce me. I'm so scared, please come back!"

Priscilla couldn't believe Winona had the nerve to blame her after hitting her. She shouted into the phone,

"Son, come back! Winona's trying to beat me to death! My dear boy!"

Zane was driving, his head pounding with frustration. If he wasn't stressed before, he sure was now!

He ended the call and rang Elysia,

"Elysia, what's going on? How did Winona end up fighting with my mom? Everything was fine when I left."

Elysia, clearly irritated, replied,

"After you left, your mom went on some kind of rampage, demanding to see my phone messages!"

"I told her no, and she got all upset, yelling at me."

"Winona's already on edge, and when your mom started shouting, Winona lost it, thinking she was in danger!"

"If you don't believe me, check the hospital cameras. I'm still mad, Zane. What's up with your mom?!"

"I barely know her, and she thinks she can just demand to see my phone?"

"And what's all that nonsense about women who've had kids being worthless?"

"She even said I couldn't step foot in the Livingston family home. When did I ever say I wanted to?"

Zane felt like his head was about to explode-not at Elysia, but at his own mom! Trying to keep his cool, he reassured Elysia,

"Calm down, don't worry about her. I'll handle this when I get back!"

"I don't need you to handle anything for me! Just get your mom in check! I've

never met anyone like her before!"

After Elysia's outburst, she hung up.

Soon, Priscilla's phone rang again.

Seeing it was her son, she answered, brimming with indignation,

"My dear son..."

Zane cut her off, "What on earth are you doing?! I told you Winona's not well, she's paranoid! Why would you provoke her? And why are you going through Elysia's phone? Are you out of your mind?!"

Zane's voice was so loud it was practically shaking the phone.

Priscilla felt wronged,

"I didn't provoke anyone! You can't just listen to them and scold your mom!

They're practically killing me here, and you don't even care?"

"I raised you from a baby, you can't forget your mother now that you have a wife, my dear boy!"

"You... just stay put in the room until I get there!" Zane hung up.

Priscilla's cries were heart-wrenching.

The phone's volume was so high, everyone in the room heard it.

The doctors and nurses exchanged bewildered glances.

Winona and Elysia shared a secretive look, giving each other a wink.

Neither of them thought much of Priscilla and Zane. Let them fight it out!

A little while later, Elysia's phone rang again. It was Zane.

Elysia pursed her lips and ignored it.

Zane kept calling, but she didn't pick up.

He texted her, but she didn't reply.

Chapter 1196

Winona was a sharp one, and she couldn't help but notice how strange Zane was acting towards Elysia.

When Winona and Priscilla got into a fight, Zane seemed only concerned about Elysia's feelings.

Elysia didn't plan on keeping anything from Winona; she just felt a little sorry for her.

Winona had genuinely liked Zane once.

Elysia gave Winona a look that said, "I'll fill you in later."

Meanwhile, Zane was fuming, his fists pounding against the steering wheel in frustration.

He had sent his mom to the hospital to keep an eye on Winona, never expecting her to mess things up like this!

If he'd known she was this unreliable, he wouldn't have let her go in the first place!

Zane's mind was a chaotic mess. He wanted to rush back to the hospital and smooth things over with Elysia, but he had bigger fish to fry.

Someone had uncovered his affair, and now they were blackmailing him!

He had to clean up this mess, and quick!

If he couldn't handle this properly, his carefully crafted image of the "perfect husband" would crumble to dust.

And knowing Elysia's personality, getting her to fall in love with him was a long shot at best.

This situation needed to be dealt with, and fast.

Zane yanked on his tie, trying to calm his nerves.

Impulsiveness would only make things worse.

He parked his car in front of a secluded luxury hotel and made a call.

"I'm here. Where are you?"

The person on the other end gave him a room number, and Zane, after donning a mask, got out and headed inside.

He had thought it over: as long as the demands weren't over the top, he'd meet them. If they wanted money, he'd pay up.

But if they pushed too far, he wasn't above taking drastic measures.

Zane found the room, knocked on the door, and waited.

After a moment, the door swung open.

To his surprise, a young and beautiful woman stood there, wrapped in a bathrobe,

her hair still wet from a shower, looking every bit the seductress.

Zane blinked in confusion, double-checking the room number to make sure he was in the right place.

Before he could ask any questions, the woman hooked a finger around his tie and yanked him forward.

Off balance, Zane stumbled into her, and she used the momentum to pull him in for a kiss, her hands wandering to his waist.

The door clicked shut behind him.

Zane was completely taken aback, Realizing something was off, he

shoved the woman away, his violet

cold and demanding, "What do you think you're doing?!"

The woman landed on the floor, looking up at him with a pout, "Isn't this why you called me? To do this? What else were you planning to do, discuss philosophy? This is my job!"

Zane's brow furrowed. He was here for negotiations, not a rendezvous with a call girl!

This woman wasn't someone he had called!

Frustrated, he pulled out his phone to call the number again, but it was no use- the line was dead.

Every attempt he made was met with a message saying the number was no longer in service.

Realizing he was being played, Zane shot a glare at the woman and quickly left the hotel.

Back in his car, he sat in silence, piecing it all together.

Someone had drawn him out under the pretense of blackmail but hadn't shown up themselves. Instead, they set him up with a woman, yet hadn't forced him into any compromising situation.

What was their game?

Zane brooded over this for a while, but nothing added up.

The hotel remained quiet, and after a moment's pause, he started the engine and drove off.

A sense of unease gnawed at him, as though something bad was looming just over the horizon.

He needed to get Winona back home, pronto!

As long as Winona was under his roof, whatever storm brewed, he'd have the upper hand.

Winona was his leverage.

Chapter 1197

Zane rushed back to the hospital, his mind racing.

Winona was lying in the hospital bed, sobbing uncontrollably, while Elysia sat beside her, trying to comfort her. Priscilla sat on a chair nearby, arms crossed, her face bruised and expressionless.

As Zane entered the room, he called out, "Elysia, Winona."

Elysia whipped her head around, eyes blazing, and without a second thought, she stormed over and slapped him across the face.

"Zane, you absolute jerk!"

Zane was stunned. "I... what did I do?"

"Winona has been nothing but good to you, and you dare to betray her! You're a cheat! A scoundrel!"

Zane was taken aback, "What??"

Elysia was furious. "No wonder Winona and your mom got into a fight, and you didn't rush back. You were off with your mistress!"

"You don't love Winona anymore, do you? And yet you pretend to be this loving partner?"

"I thought you were a decent guy. Turns out you're just a fraud! Zane, I really misjudged you!"

Zane's heart twisted painfully at Elysia's words, as if she'd driven a dagger right through it.

"Elysia, what are you talking about? Betrayal? Mistress? Explain!"

"Explain? You know exactly what you've done!" Elysia shot back.

Zane frowned deeply, "I honestly don't know! I'm asking you to tell me. If I'm going down, at least let me know why."

Priscilla got up, her eyes dark with anger as she glared at Elysia. She turned to Zane and said, "Son, check the news online."

Zane fumbled for his phone, his stomach sinking as he skimmed the headlines.

There it was—a series of photos making the rounds online.

They showed him stepping out of his car, entering a hotel, and then leaning against a wall in the hallway, kissing a woman in a bathrobe. The images were crystal clear, his face unmistakable. There was no denying it.

Zane finally realized he'd been set up. Someone had lured him with a bogus tip about a cheating scandal, only to trap him in this very scandal!

Who was behind this? Was it Winona's fans, or some media vultures chasing a sensational story?

He couldn't quite pin down the culprit yet, but he turned to Elysia, desperate to explain, "Elysia, this isn't what it looks like. I was tricked!"

Elysia knew the truth, that it was Keaton's plot, meant to create a reason for Zane not to bring home.

Winona

home. But the fact t

Zane had indeed cheated before.

She seized the opportunity, "Not what it looks like? Are you telling me these photos are fake? Experts online have confirmed they're not doctored, Zane. They're real!"

Zane, flustered, insisted, "I know the photos are real. What I'm saying is, I don't know this woman. I didn't cheat with her!"

"Then why were you at the hotel with her? Why kiss her? Why act all cozy?"

"I... I was there for a business meeting. I had no idea there would be a woman in that room."

"What kind of business meeting takes place in a hotel?"

Zane fell silent. He couldn't answer that.

All he could do was plead, "Elysia, please believe me. I was set up. I don't even know this woman!"

Elysia gave him a cold, disbelieving look, "I don't believe you!"

Zane was at a loss.

Priscilla couldn't take it anymore.

stop

She shouted at Elysia, "Fine, don't believe him! As if we care! wasting your breath on her. Look at her attitude! She's walking all over you!"

I'm telling you, it's because you've been too soft with her!

A woman shouldn't be this brazen in front of a man! She's asking for it!

Either you put her in her place or dump her! In my opinion, you should just leave her and—

Chapter 1198

"Smack—"

Elysia's hand landed sharply across Priscilla's cheek.

Priscilla's eyes widened in shock. "?!"

Zane was just as stunned. "!"

Elysia stared coldly at Priscilla. "You spread one more lie about me, and I'll mess up your pretty face!"

Then she turned her fierce gaze on Zane, "You tell me, should I have slapped her or not? Isn't she spreading rumors? Do I have anything to do with you?!"

Zane was speechless. "..."

Elysia added fuel to the fire, "Let me tell you, if it wasn't for your mom, I wouldn't have known you've already fallen for Winona! Thanks to her, I can see your true colors now!"

Priscilla was taken aback, confused by the accusation. Was Elysia trying to stir up trouble?

"Son, I wasn't making things up, I—"

"Shut up!" Zane roared, cutting her off.

Priscilla was left fuming silently. "

"

"Sniff, sniff..." Winona's sobs grew louder.

Elysia quickly moved to Winona's side, getting down to business. Keaton had orchestrated this whole drama to bring Winona back to the Number One Mansion!

The plan only involved a kissing scene today to accommodate Winona's future plans. This incident alone wouldn't completely sever ties between Winona and Zane. If Winona wanted to continue her act in front of Zane later, she could.

"Winona, don't be upset. A jerk like him isn't worth it. Come on, I'm taking you with me."

Zane's brow furrowed with concern, and he hurriedly asked, "Where are you taking Winona?"

"To my place!"

"No way!" Zane refused outright. Winona was his leverage! What if she went to Elysia's and suddenly remembered everything?

"Elysia, I swear on my mother's life, there's nothing between me and that woman! I'll take Winona home, make sure she's okay, and then I'll investigate to clear my name."

Elysia gritted her teeth, "Go home with you?! You don't love Winona anymore, and your mom hates her. Why should I let Winona go back and suffer?"

Zane frowned, "If you're really worried, you can come with Winona to my place, but you can't take her away."

Just as Elysia was about to snap, Tarquin and Keaton arrived.

"Have my wife move into your house? Are you out of your mind?!"

Tarquin's expression was dark and displeased.

Zane was taken aback. "!"

Elysia saw her savior and her eyes welled up with tears. "Honey, he's cheating on her and won't let me take Winona!"

Tarquin stood beside Elysia, glaring at Zane with a tone that brooked no argument, "We're taking Winona with us today. If you have objections, keep them to yourself!"

Zane gritted his teeth, "Winona is my wife. She should come with me!"

"Hah!" Keaton, dressed sharply in a white suit, chuckled, hands casually in his pockets, "Now you remember wife? Where was that thought when you were cheating?"

Zane turned to glare at Keaton! They didn't have much interaction, but he knew Keaton was not someone to mess with. Suppressing his anger, Zane said, "I didn't cheat! I don't even know that woman!"

Keaton narrowed his eyes, his voice calm and mocking, "Do you have proof you didn't cheat? Just

because you say so doesn't make it true. Those photos are real. If were

you, wouldn't stop her. What's wrong with her staying at a friend's for a few days? Once you prove your innocence, you can bring her back. Your nervousness makes you look guilty. Besides, if Tarquin says he's taking her, do you really think you can stop him? I know I couldn't. I don't have that kind of power."

Zane was left speechless. "..."

Keaton's words were a clear jab, drenched in sarcasm. Did Zane have the power

to stop them?

He didn't.

In front of Tarquin, he was nothing.

Chapter 1199

Winona had just been picked up by Elysia.

As soon as they left, Zane hurled his newly purchased flip phone against the wall, his face twisted with rage.

Was it just about Winona? No!

He cared even more about Elysia!

Her simple words, "I was wrong about you," cut him deeper than anything else.

Yet, here he was, forced to swallow his pride under the pressure from Tarquin.

He couldn't compete with Elysia's current husband; it hurt him more than if someone had just put him out of his misery.

He'd been in love with Elysia for a whole decade.

Ten years!

From the very first moment he laid eyes on her, he was completely captivated. Elysia was everything he ever dreamed of in a future wife.

She was beautiful and sweet, kind-hearted and independent, always treating others with warmth and maintaining a positive outlook on life, no matter how tough things got.

If it hadn't been for the fact that both of them were struggling financially back then,

he would never have hidden his feelings for her to go after Winona.

He knew two people with empty pockets would face a tough road ahead.

So, he planned to leverage Winona to take over the Newsom family, paving the way for a bright future with Elysia.

The moment he started dating Winona, his plan was set in motion.

First, he'd take over the Newsom family, and then orchestrate a scenario where Winona appeared unfaithful, making himself look like the unfortunate victim.

This would make Elysia despise Winona and pity him, drawing her into his arms step by step.

He'd spent years crafting his image as the 'good guy,' all to win Elysia over. He truly loved her!

If he couldn't have her in this lifetime, he'd be forever regretful!

He'd plotted and sacrificed so much for this love; if fate didn't favor him, then fate was unjust!

No matter what happened in the first half of his life, the latter half of Elysia's life had to belong to him!

Only with him, would Elysia find true happiness!

As for Tarquin...

Zane gritted his teeth in hatred; Tarquin didn't deserve Elysia!

All the hardships she endured were because of him!

Tarquin needed to go; he had to go!

"Son... are you okay?"

Priscilla, Zane's mother, watched him with fear in her eyes, as if he'd turned into a block of ice.

Zane closed his eyes, taking a good ten minutes to regain his composure.

He inhaled deeply and exhaled slowly, turning to face Priscilla with a cold expression.

"I don't care what you think, but if you want Lan to have a comfortable retirement, you better treat Elysia well!"

"If she neither will

tolerate you, then

!! I can send you back

the countryside anytime to live out your days alone!"

Priscilla was stunned, then burst into tears, "Son, you can't forget your

mother

for a wife. Your father. passed away early; it was me who raised you single-handedly..."

Zane ignored her, leaving the hospital ward without another word.

Once in his car, he pulled out a spare phone and made a call, "Ten thousand men for one life, deal or no deal?"

Whatever the response was, it made Zane's voice turn icy, "I want Tarquin dead!"

His eyes were as fierce as a

serpent's, contradicting the refined

features of his face, twisting his

entire demeanor into someth

demonic.

The person on the other end of the line said something else, but Zane simply hung up without replying.

He started the car and drove away from the hospital.

Instead of rushing to the hotel to clear his name, he went to find Ridley.

Meanwhile, Elysia and Winona sat in the car, holding each other and crying.

The two friends had been apart for years, and neither had expected their reunion to be under such circumstances!

Chapter 1200

After crying for what felt like an eternity, Winona finally spoke up.

"Ever since you disappeared, Blossom and I have been searching for you. Then, out of the blue, the Thorne family reached out and said they had news about you. They asked if I wanted to know more."

"They demanded ten grand for the information. I didn't hesitate - I agreed right away."

"But who would have thought? When we met, Blake suddenly knocked me out and tied me up. When I finally came to, I was in the Thorne family basement."

"I screamed for you with all my might, but when you didn't answer, I knew I had been duped by the Thorne family!"

"Then Sarah showed up, mocking and tormenting me, bragging about her and Zane's escapades..."

"I was held in that godforsaken basement for over a month, then transferred to a new location, where I remained for more than a year."

"In that new place, I ran into Lyra. Ha! She was so smug! Just like Sarah!"

Winona took a deep breath, her fists clenched, and her eyes burned with seething hatred.

For over a year, the torment from those two vile women had been her constant companion.

"I was angry, mostly at myself! Angry for not seeing through Zane's true nature sooner!"

"If only I had realized it earlier, Lyra and Sarah would never have had the chance to bully me!"

"This past year has been a mix of fury and despair."

"Five hundred days and nights wasted away in a corner, convinced I'd never make it out."

"Then suddenly, they showed me photos and videos of Zane, and Lyra seemed particularly agitated. That's when I sensed a change."

"It had to be Zane testing me. But why now? Something must have triggered it!"

"So, I played dumb, showing no hatred towards Zane, pleading with him to rescue me."

"Eventually, they even brought in a psychologist to see if I remembered anything from before."

"I thought Zane would come and save me, but instead..."

Winona glanced at Keaton, "It was Mr. Huber who saved me."

Keaton and Tarquin were sitting in the back seat, and Keaton chimed in,

"Tarquin

errand

bet

But if you want to thank

2 may 2it all up. I was just the

introduce me to some

nice ladies. I'm single these days."

As soon as Keaton spoke, the air in the car lightened.

The tension eased a bit.

Winona sniffed, "I owe Mr. Huber a great debt, one I'll repay someday."

Keaton grinned like a peacock showing off its feathers.

"No rush, no rush. Just remember it."

Winona: "..."

Elysia asked,

"The Thorne family kidnapped you on Zane's orders. Why did Zane suddenly target you? Did something happen?"

Winona gritted her teeth,

"Because found out about him and Sarah and asked for a divorce! He was

andified of losing everything

and ruining his good guy image. He wanted to kill me to keep me quiet!"

"Zane is a wolf in sheep's clothing. He not only wanted me dead but also aimed to steal my family's assets!"

"I was blind, letting a wolf into our home, nearly causing my own and my family's downfall!"

Elysia frowned, "It's not your fault. Zane was just a master of deception!"

Honestly, if you asked all their friends

Sam and classmates, not a

one would have had a bad

about Zane!

In everyone's eyes, apart from his humble beginnings, Zane seemed perfect!

After all, you can't see into someone's heart just by looking at them.

Thinking about Zane's intentions, Elysia frowned, speaking candidly, "Winona, Zane, he had his eyes on me too..."