

Hitched 1631

Chapter 1631

"Dude, who made this video? Please, have mercy on Sky City! Our 'official mascot snake' is cringey enough as it is."

"Man, Sky City is a disaster zone now! I'm begging you, please fund a remake." After the fans from Sky City had their cry, it was Texas's turn.

"Bro, come rescue our 'man-eating snake'!"

Then came the pleas from Chicago.

"You gotta help us first! Ours has been eating way too much deep-dish pizza. My heart is breaking."

After them, the folks from Florida chimed in.

"Guys, I'm literally sobbing on the floor right now. Save us! Our mascot snake is too painful to watch."

Some even came specifically to beg him to support a young actor named Dexter and clean up the entertainment industry.

It really proved the saying was true:

He might not be in showbiz, but his influence over it was absolutely unshakable.

Keaton Huber ignored all the comments. Sulking like a petulant child, he lay on the bed and glared at Winona Newsom.

Winona paid him no mind, not even sparing him a glance.

She was curled up on the sofa, munching on an apple while scrolling through the comments for a bit, before her thoughts turned to Beatrix Sutton.

At ten in the morning, Beatrix suddenly called Keaton.

Keaton quickly waved Winona over. "Winona, it's Beatrix!"

Winona paused, quickly swallowed the apple in her mouth, and rushed to Keaton's side.

"Put it on speaker."

Keaton obeyed her, putting the call on speaker before answering. "Hello."

Beatrix got straight to the point. "City Hall. Half an hour."

Keaton and Winona: "?!"

Keaton frowned. "You're back already?"

"...I've been in Jindale City the whole time. I'm on my way to City Hall now. I'll be there in twenty minutes. I'll wait for you."

Keaton was displeased. "Didn't we agree to meet at the hospital?"

"Let's just go straight to City Hall. We have to go there sooner or later anyway. We

can go to the hospital after we get the marriage license.”

Keaton: "..."

Seeing that he was silent, Beatrix asked, "Is there a problem on your end?"

Winona shook her head at Keaton, who replied, "No."

“Good. See you at City Hall, then. Just bring your ID."

"...Okay."

As soon as the call ended, Keaton complained, "She really wants to marry me!"

Winona frowned. "Let's go. I'll go with you!"

"...Are we really going?"

"Yes, why wouldn't we?"

"What if she uses the baby to force me to marry her on the spot at City Hall?"

"I'll be there," Winona said. "It won't happen!"

Keaton was still wavering. Winona shot him a look of pure exasperation.

"You're a grown man acting like such a wimp. Aren't you ashamed of yourself?" Keaton: "..."

On the way to City Hall, Keaton suddenly remembered her black belt

elbet

and asked "Are you really a black

bea

taekwondo?"

"Yeah. My dad was worried I'd get bullied when I grew up, so he had me start training early."

Seeing his skeptical look, Winona asked, "You want to test me?"

Keaton quickly shook his head. In his current sickly state, he definitely wouldn't stand a chance against her.

He reminded her, "Don't be impulsive when we see her. Beatrix is pregnant, she's not like Shifra."

Winona was annoyed. "What? You think I'm going to hit her?"

Keaton rolled his eyes. "I'm worried you'll get in trouble because of her. I'm worried about *you*."

"No matter what tricks Beatrix pulls,

she's still a pregnant woman. A celebrity physically assaulting a pregnant woman? That headline. would get you crucified online in seconds."

Winona felt a bit awkward but retorted stubbornly, "I'm not an idiot! I don't need you

to tell me that!"

Keaton mumbled, "Such an ungrateful brat, I was just...."

Winona shot him a glare. "Shut up! Not another word!"

Keaton pursed his lips, about to argue back but after a few seconds of eye contact with Winona, his bravado withered under her steady gaze he muttered to himself Fine if you don't want me to talk, wont Big deal.*

Chapter 1632

Winona shot him a glare. While driving, she called Elysia Thorne.

"Elysia, have you made it to the hospital yet?"

"Almost there. Are you starving?"

"I am, but Keaton and I had to step out for something. If you don't have anything else going on, could you just wait for us in the room for a bit?"

Elysia was curious. "You went out?"

"Yeah. We probably won't be back for about forty minutes."

"Alright, I'll wait for you in the room then."

"Okay, thanks."

As she hung up, Keaton couldn't help but speak again. "Will we really be back in forty minutes?"

"Yes."

Keaton glanced at the GPS. "It's another ten minutes to City Hall, and half an hour from there back to the hospital. Are you not planning to spend any time talking to Beatrix?"

Winona replied, "Meeting her won't take long."

Just as Keaton was about to say more, Winona's phone rang. It was her agent.

Her agent was speechless about her secretly running back to Jindale City and launched into a tirade.

Winona put on a placating smile. "Allen, you're the best. I knew you could handle it. Mwah."

Allen was fuming. "You are going to be the death of me! My little nightmare! You could have at least told me before you left!"

"You personally agreed yesterday to have dinner with the brand partner today. Their young master flew back from abroad just to meet you, and you just disappeared!"

"For heaven's sake, you just stood up the son of a major sponsor!"

Winona blinked, finally remembering. "...I'm so sorry, Allen, I completely forgot about the dinner! Something urgent came up in Jindale City, and I left in too much of a hurry. Please, cover for me. Tell him I'll make it up to him personally next time we have a chance to meet."

Allen sighed dramatically. "What could possibly be so urgent that you had to rush back overnight?"

Just as Winona was about to invent an excuse, Keaton suddenly spoke up.

"I suddenly felt sick, so she came back to see me. Stop giving her a hard time. I'll handle the fallout. Just bill it to me."

Winona's eyes widened. "!"

Her agent was stunned for a long moment before regaining her composure. "Is this... Mr. Huber?"

Keaton gave a light chuckle. "It's me, Allen. Nice to meet you."

The agent scrambled to respond. "Hello, hello, Mr. Huber! What happened? I saw online that you were hospitalized."

Keaton said, "Just a small thing. Lost my appetite lately, that's all."

Agent: "Oh..."

Even for a top agent known for her quick thinking, this was baffling.

Winona sneaking back to Jindale City for Keaton was shocking enough! If he had some

life-threatening illness, her rushing back out of friendship would be

understandable.

But he just lost his

appetite?

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What kind of relationship was this? She secretly rushes back to see him because he lost his appetite?!

Winona knew exactly what her agent

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was thinking and felt a headache coming on. She cut in, "I mainly came back to see Janelle. Allen, please just handle things with the sponsor's son. I have something to deal with here so I'll talk to you later, okay?"

"Wait a minute," Keaton interjected again. "Why don't you give me the sponsor's son's contact

el:

I'll call him personally

to apologize on Winona's behalf.

Agent: "?"

Why did that sound so menacing?

And so... possessive!

Her instincts screamed at her not to let him get involved.

The agent quickly said, "No, no, that's not necessary! I can explain things on my end. Please rest well, Mr. Huber. I wish you a speedy recovery."

Keaton chuckled. "From now on, if she has any issues, you can just come to me. Oh, and by the way, Winona isn't your nightmare. She's mine."

Agent: "Huh?"

Keaton emphasized, "Winona is **my** nightmare. Mine."

Agent: "..."

After hanging up, the agent immediately texted Winona.

[My dear girl, what is the DEAL with you and Mr. Huber?]

[Hold on, wait. You're **his** nightmare now. I guess I can't call you my nightmare anymore!]

[No, that's not right. He said you're **his** nightmare, not mine. So I'm not allowed to call you that!]

Chapter 1633

[Oh my god, are you two actually together?]

Winona's head was buzzing. She didn't reply to the texts. Instead, she turned and glared at Keaton.

"Are you insane?! Did I come back for you? I came back for Janelle and Richard! And besides..."

Keaton cut her off. "Coming back for my parents is the same as coming back for me, isn't it? It's all related to me!"

"How is that the same?!"

"It's exactly the same!"

Winona gritted her teeth. If she weren't driving, she would have kicked him!

If she said she came back for Janelle and Richard Huber, her agent wouldn't think twice. Allen knew how close she was with Janelle.

But saying she came back for *him* made it easy for people to get the wrong idea.

And to top it off, he said he just lost his appetite. Her secretly rushing back for such a minor issue was something only couples did!

And probably only couples in the honeymoon phase!

And he actually told someone else that she was his nightmare! And forbade others from calling her that!

What were people supposed to think?

They would definitely assume they were together!

Winona didn't know if Keaton was genuinely clueless or just playing dumb, but she scowled at him.

Keaton flashed her a cheeky grin. "I know I'm handsome and nice to look at, but you're driving. Eyes on the road, please."

Winona: "..."

Before she could lose her temper, Keaton added, "I was genuinely touched that you came back. I spoke to your agent, first, to have your back so she wouldn't chew you out. Second, if there were any real damages, I wanted to take responsibility."

Winona shot back irritably, "That doesn't mean you should say I came back for you! And you definitely shouldn't say I'm your nightmare! You even stressed that I'm **your** nightmare, not hers..."

Keaton interrupted her again. "I didn't like hearing her call you her nightmare. I don't want to share a nightmare with her. You're **my** nightmare, so you can't be anyone else's."

Winona: "..."

He was talking absolute nonsense, but for some reason, she couldn't formulate a comeback.

After a long, frustrated moment, she grumbled, "From now on, when I'm on the phone, you are not allowed to interrupt!"

Keaton was very agreeable. "Fine, no problem."

Winona took a deep breath and looked ahead. They had arrived at City Hall.

She pulled the car over to the side of the road and said to Keaton "Call Beatrix and see if she's here if she her to come over to you."

Keaton asked, "You're going to talk to her in the car?"

Winona neither confirmed nor denied. "Just make the call."

Keaton did as he was told. The moment he dialed, Beatrix answered immediately,

her voice tinged with anticipation. "Are you here?"

"Yeah, I'm at the entrance. Where are you?"

Beatrix emerged from the building, phone in hand. "I'm at the entrance too. Do you see me?"

Keaton spotted her and frowned. "I see you. My car is parked on the side of the road. Come over here for a second."

Beatrix glanced in their direction but didn't move. "I'm in line, I don't want to lose my my spot. "You should just get out and come over Conte

Keaton: "..."

He hung up and told Winona, "She won't come over."

Winona pursed her lips. She's cautious. A smart cookie.

"Get out of the car and go pretend to throw up by the side of the road. Right there, at

that spot."

Keaton: "I don't feel like throwing up right now."

"Just pretend. Go on."

Though he didn't know what she was planning, Keaton obeyed.

walked a few steps toward the

entrance of City Hall and bent over, dry-heaving by the roadside content

Seeing this, Beatrix hesitated for a few seconds before hurrying over. "What's wrong?"

Winona's lips curled into a cold smirk. She put on her sunglasses and a mask, then pushed open the car door.

With her hands tucked into the pockets of her trench coat, she strode toward Beatrix on her high heels.

Beatrix was so focused on Keaton that she didn't notice Winona approaching from behind until she was right there.

Beatrix frowned, about to speak, when a sharp pain exploded at the back of her neck.

She crumpled, unconscious, right into Winona's arms.

Keaton was horrified. "What—what did you just do?"

Chapter 1634

Winona ignored him, supporting Beatrix as she guided her back to the car. She instructed him, "You sit in the back and look after her. I'll drive."

Keaton obediently sat next to Beatrix, his brows furrowed. "What on earth are you planning to do?!"

Winona started the car again, glancing at him in the rearview mirror. Seeing his worried expression, she said, "Don't worry, she's just unconscious. She's not hurt." Keaton blurted out, "Do you think I'm worried about *her*? I'm worried about *you*! I told you, she's pregnant and you're a celebrity. You can't touch her!"

Winona's lips tightened. "I know. That's why I made sure we were out of range of the security cameras."

Keaton: "... So that's why she had him pretend to be sick by the road-to lure her away from the cameras before she struck.

"But Beatrix knows you! When she wakes up, she's going to cause a scene!"

Winona was unconcerned. "If she wants to cause a scene, she'll have to see if I give her the chance! What grounds does she have? What proof does she have that I knocked her out?"

"She just fainted on her own. I was just being a good Samaritan and taking her to the hospital. You're my witness."

Keaton: "..."

He was quiet for a long moment before asking again, "Why did you knock her out?"

"To get a paternity test! First, we find out if that baby is even yours."

As she spoke, Winona made a U-turn at the intersection and muttered, "This would have been so much easier if we'd just met at the hospital. Now we've wasted a trip."

Keaton stared at her, dumbfounded. "... You had me lure her out just so you could knock her out for a paternity test?"

"Of course. We have to confirm whether the baby is yours before we can figure out a solution."

Confirming the child's paternity was the first and most critical step. The test had to be done.

Since Beatrix stubbornly refused to

do it beforehand, there was no pot

in arguing. If she

wouldn't do the

easy way, they'd do it the hard way.

Keaton frowned. "...A paternity test requires the consent of both parties."

Winona scoffed. "Listening to you, one might almost think you're a good person."

Keaton pursed his lips. "I am a good person."

Winona said, "Then have you ever heard

their own medicine? She's not

PAC giving someone a taste of

"Using a baby to force a marriage isn't unheard of, but who refuses a paternity test and goes straight to coercion?"

"She's exploiting the fact that Janelle and Richard are desperate for a grandchild and too soft-hearted to push back!"

"And then there's you! She knows that no matter what she does, you won't do anything to her!"

When Keaton didn't respond,

Winona glanced at him in the

"I know

rearview mirror agawor

two have a history. Dont worry won't kill her, and I won't get her thrown in jail."

She had asked about his history with Beatrix before, but Keaton had never said anything.

However, he had made one thing clear: if she wanted to settle the score with Beatrix, she couldn't kill her or send her to prison.

Keaton looked up at her. "Beatrix and I... When this is all over, I'll tell you everything."

Winona: "...Okay."

There was definitely something complicated between them. Otherwise, Keaton

would have easily found a way to handle the pregnancy situation.

If it had been Shifra or any other woman trying to force a marriage with a pregnancy

report, things would have been different.

She refuses a paternity test? Keaton had plenty of ways to force her.

But when it came to Beatrix, he was powerless. He was completely flustered, with no solution in sight.

Chapter 1635

He even brought up the need for consent after Winona knocked her out to force a paternity test.

It was proof enough that, deep down, he had no intention of hurting Beatrix and still respected her.

Winona was actually quite curious. What was the real story between him and Beatrix?

After hearing about the situation last night, she had someone look into Beatrix's background but found no connection between her and Keaton.

What kind of secret was hiding between those two?

The car fell silent. As Winona drove, she glanced at Keaton in the rearview mirror again.

He was staring out the window, his brow slightly furrowed, looking weighed down by his thoughts.

Winona opened her mouth but no sound came out. For a moment, she didn't know what to say to him.

She drove on in silence, sending a quick text to a friend along the way.

About ten minutes later, the car pulled over.

Keaton finally broke from his thoughts and asked, "Why are we stopping?"

Winona replied, "I'm picking up a friend."

Spotting a handsome young man standing on the sidewalk, Winona rolled down the

window and called out, "Hey! Over here!"

The boy saw her and jogged over. "Ms. Newsom."

"Get in," Winona said.

The young man opened the door and slid into the passenger seat.

Noticing Keaton and Beatrix in the back, he quickly took off his mask and greeted, "Mr. Huber."

The boy was around twenty, sunny and handsome, with clear, sharp features.

Keaton's brow twitched slightly. He ignored the greeting and asked Winona, "Who's this?"

"A friend of mine," Winona said.

"What for?" Keaton pressed.

Winona started the car and continued toward the hospital. "He's here to help me with something."

Keaton's face darkened. "What kind of help requires outside muscle? Couldn't I have done it?"

"You're not up to it," Winona stated flatly.

Keaton was even more displeased. "What do you mean, I'm not up to it?!"

Sensing the edge in his tone, Winona glanced at him in the rearview mirror again and explained patiently "You're the patient here. You're the one who needs looking after."

Keaton: "..."

The young man, sensing Keaton's hostility, quickly pulled his hat down low and pretended to be invisible, sitting quietly in the passenger seat too afraid to speak content belongs to FindNovel.net

He was in the entertainment industry too. If he offended Keaton, his career would be over before it even started.

Once they reached the hospital, Winona called for a nurse to help move Beatrix into

a room.

Seeing the look in Keaton's eyes, the young man didn't dare follow. "Ms. Newsom, I'll just wait for you

downstairs. Call me when you're

done."

Winona knew what he was thinking. She shot a glare at Keaton, then said to the boy, "Alright, wait for my call."

"Okay."

As soon as the boy was out of sight, Keaton asked, "Is that your type now? Pretty boys?"

Winona couldn't be bothered with him right now. "No one will think you're a mute if you just keep your mouth shut!"

...

Beatrix was taken to the room next to Keaton's, the same one Janelle had stayed in the night before.

Elysia and Tarquin Bradford, hearing the commotion, came over and were surprised to see an unconscious Beatrix.

Elysia stepped forward and asked, "What happened to her?"

Winona told them the truth. "I knocked her out and brought her here. We're doing a paternity test first."

Tarquin immediately understood Winona's plan and called Benjamin Lawson to

come over.

Elysia went to Beatrix's side and checked her pulse. "...She's definitely pregnant. Single fetus, and both mother and baby are healthy."

Winona wasn't surprised; she'd never doubted that Beatrix was pregnant.

She was only curious about one thing: was the baby in Beatrix's belly really Keaton's?

Chapter 1636

It wasn't long before Dr. Benjamin arrived to collect samples from Keaton and the fetus.

"Dr. Benjamin," Winona said, "please take several samples and send them to different labs for testing, just in case."

Benjamin understood. "Got it!"

Winona asked again, "Is there a way to keep her unconscious without harming the fetus? At least until the test results are back."

She knew Beatrix would cause a scene the moment she woke up. It was better to just let her sleep.

Once the results were in, then they could have it out.

"I have a way," Elysia said.

After Benjamin finished collecting the samples and left, Elysia used acupuncture to put Beatrix into a deep, peaceful sleep.

Winona followed Benjamin out of the room and asked him for one of the fetal samples.

She personally took the sample downstairs and found the boy.

"Give this to your sister. She'll know what to do. Hold onto it tightly and don't mess this up. It's very important to me."

The boy nodded repeatedly. "Don't worry, Ms. Newsom. I promise I'll get it done perfectly."

Winona smiled. "Go on, then."

The boy couldn't help but ask one more question. "Ms. Newsom, are you and Mr. Huber together?"

Winona froze. "No, we're not."

"Then... does Mr. Huber have a thing for you?" the boy pressed.

Winona didn't know whether to laugh or cry. "What makes you think he likes me?"

"He was so hostile towards me," the boy said. "It was obvious he sees me as a rival."

Winona shook her head. "You've misunderstood. Today's situation is... complicated. He doesn't want outsiders to know what's going on."

After all, it involved Beatrix and a potential baby. It was an intensely private matter for both Keaton and the entire Huber family. Winona figured Keaton's glare was just about keeping secrets, not jealousy.

I know I can trust the boy, but Keaton doesn't, she thought.

"Really?" the boy asked, only half-convinced.

"Yes," Winona confirmed. "Now, stop letting your imagination run wild and get going."

"I'll take you and your sister out to dinner sometime to thank you."

The boy smiled. "Okay! I'm off then. Bye, Ms. Newsom."

After he left, Winona let out a long sigh.

Keaton? Likes me? Hahahahaha...

As if!

Winona pursed her lips, shook her head, and turned back toward the elevators.

Now, all they could do was wait for the results. Even with a rush order, it would take several hours.

And once those results were in, she was going to deal with Beatrix.

Upstairs in the hospital room, Elysia had just finished checking Keaton's pulse, confirming that there was nothing physically wrong with him. Other than being a bit weak from not eating, he was perfectly fine. She

could only suspect his vomiting was psychosomatic.

Seeing Winona return, Elysia dragged her down to the hospital's coffee shop.

As they sat facing each other,

Winona offered a placating smile. "Let me get something to eat first, please. I was supposed to have snack at ten, and it's already past eleven. I'm starving."

Elysia nodded, gesturing for her to eat.

Winona took a bite of cake. "Oh, this is delicious! You have to try some, Elysia."

Elysia declined. "You have it. I'm not hungry."

Winona took several more bites before asking, "Are you sure Keaton isn't pregnant?"

Elysia gave her a weary look. "I'm sure!"

"Then it has to be sympathetic morning sickness," Winona declared. "The baby in Beatrix's belly is his. I'd bet my life on it."

Elysia was more concerned about her friend. "What's really going on between you and Keaton?"

Winona looked embarrassed. "We were drinking that night... things just got out of hand."

Elysia was stunned. Tarquin had actually been right.

"Did Keaton force himself on you?"

"Actually... I jumped him first," Winona said honestly.

Elysia was speechless. "..."

Winona gave a sheepish grin. "That night, I just started thinking about everything with Zane Livingston, and I was feeling really down. After a few drinks just wanted to let loose.. Keaton just happened to be there,

I slept with him."

"...And were you hurt? Did he take advantage of you?" Elysia asked softly.

Chapter 1637

Winona immediately shook her head. "Not at all. If anything, he's the one who got the short end of the stick, since I was the one who pounced on him. Don't worry about me. It's not like I lost anything by sleeping with him. He's handsome, he's got a great body, and he's not bad in bed, either."

Elysia rolled her eyes, then let out a long sigh of relief. As long as her friend hadn't been hurt, that was all that mattered.

"So what now? What are you thinking?"

"We're both adults," Winona said frankly. "There's no need to be dramatic about it. It was just a one-night stand, mutually willing. The world isn't ending. Anyway, I don't like him, and he doesn't like me. If we can still be friends, great. If not, so be it. Oh, and please, don't tell Jess. I don't want Janelle or Richard to find out, either."

Elysia nodded. "I won't say a word. It looks like you two are still able to act normal around each other."

Winona shrugged helplessly. "We're both pretending," she admitted. "He's walking on eggshells around me, and I feel a little awkward around him, too. Once this whole mess with Beatrix is settled, I'll try to see him as little as possible."

Elysia's face was full of concern. "Well, what's done is done. As long as you can move past it, that's what's important. Whatever happens, don't let yourself get hurt."

She continued fiercely, "Whether it's Keaton or any other man, if anyone dares to mess with you, you tell me. I'll make them pay!" Their Winona had been hurt deeply enough by Zane. For the rest of her life, no one was allowed to hurt her again. Elysia would fight anyone who tried, just as Winona had once fought so fiercely to protect her.

Winona was touched, her voice softening. "You're the best, Elysia."

"Honestly," Elysia said, speaking from the heart, "you're still so young. I really hope you can find love again. And Keaton... he's not a bad guy. His values are in the right place, he's got a lot going for him, and his parents are an absolute delight, which is a huge bonus. If he wasn't such a player, I'd honestly try to set you two up. But he... ugh, he's just so unreliable when it comes to relationships."

Winona shrugged again. "You can't force love. And besides, there's definitely no chance for us."

"Why are you so sure?" Elysia asked.

Winona took a huge bite of cake

before answering. "We're both against marriage, we have no feelings for each other, and because of Janelle and Richard, we can't just have a casual fling. So, we can be friends, but a relationship is out of the question."

Elysia sighed. "Well, as long as you're happy. Just do whatever makes you happy."

Winona smiled at her. "I will. Actually..." She glanced around, saw no one was listening, and lowered her voice. "Even though, for a lot of reasons, I probably

shouldn't have slept with Keaton... it wasn't without its benefits!"

"Because of that bastard Zane, I've been celibate for two years! I was starting to think I'd lost my sex drive completely. I mean, I'm young, I'm beautiful... isn't it a problem if I have zero interest in a sex life? After sleeping with Keaton, I feel normal again. The interest is back."

Elysia's face turned bright red as she stared at her friend, utterly speechless. "....."

"Having no libido is a kind of sickness, you know," Winona declared. "He was the spark I needed."

Elysia sighed again. "..."

It seemed she didn't need to worry too much. If Winona had the energy to joke like this, she was fine. Embarrassed by the topic, and seeing Winona was nearly finished with the pastries, Elysia said Give me

your wrist. Let me check your pulse. Your appetite has been a little too good lately. I want to see if there's anything unusual."

Elysia wasn't thinking about pregnancy; she was just curious why her friend had suddenly become such a voracious eater.

"I'm sure there's nothing wrong," Winona said. "I would've noticed if there was." While finishing her pastry, she casually extended her wrist to Elysia.

Chapter 1638

Before Elysia could even touch Winona's wrist, her phone, lying on the table, rang.

It was Winona's agent. Winona hadn't replied to her texts, and her agent was calling, desperate to know what was going on between her and Keaton.

Winona sighed. "Elysia, hold on a sec, I have to take this."

"..." Just as Winona hung up, Tarquin called Elysia to let her know that Janelle and Richard had arrived with lunch.

Forgetting all about the pulse check, the two friends headed back to the hospital room together.

On the way, Elysia mused, "You know, in this whole Beatrix pregnancy mess, Richard and Janelle are the real victims. No matter if the baby is Keaton's or not, they're not going to be happy."

Because of Keaton's playboy reputation, a daughter-in-law was a luxury they never expected, let alone a grandchild. If the baby was Keaton's, the Huber family would have an heir, but their son's happiness would be gone. If the baby wasn't Keaton's, their son would be free, but they would lose their first grandchild. No matter the outcome, they would face disappointment and regret.

Just thinking about it reminded Winona of her promise: *I will definitely make sure they get to hold their grandbaby!* But if Beatrix's baby really was Keaton's, she would have to do everything in her power to make sure Beatrix carried it to term. The real problem was, what if the baby wasn't his? Where was she supposed to find a grandchild for Janelle and Richard? She wasn't even willing to entertain the idea of love again, let alone having a baby herself.

Ugh... impulse is the devil. How could I say something like that?

"Elysia... from a medical standpoint, do you absolutely need two people to have a baby?"

Elysia didn't understand. "What are you trying to ask?"

Winona didn't know how to phrase it, her expression twisting. "It's... like, if you don't want to be pregnant, but you still want a child of your own, what can you do? For example, let's say Keaton doesn't want to have kids, but he wants to fulfill Janelle and Richard's wish. What are his options?"

Elysia replied, "He's a man, he doesn't have to carry the baby. If the child in Beatrix's womb is really his, couldn't he just bite the bullet and marry her?"

"What if this happened to a woman?" Winona pressed.

"Then there's no easy answer," Elysia said. "Surrogacy is an option in some places, but it's illegal elsewhere and ethically complicated."

"Surrogacy..." Winona murmured.

Elysia turned to look at her. "Is a friend of yours dealing with this?"

Before Winona could explain it was for herself, Elysia continued, "I would strongly advise against surrogacy. Besides the legal and ethical issues, it truly risks turning women into reproductive tools. More importantly... a child is a symbol and continuation of love. If you're not ever willing to carry the child

yourself why have one at all? for mother, the nine months of pregnancy, as difficult as they can be, are also an experience of love. That journey makes the first

meeting between mother and child complete."

Winona nodded seriously. "You're right!"

*Please let the baby in Beatrix's belly be Keaton's! That way, she wouldn't have to worry. She would just have to figure out how to make Beatrix cooperate and have the baby. As for Keaton, well, he could just suck it up. Her life motto was simple ife is short, better to inconvenience others than to inconvenience yourself.

As she was thinking, Winona added, "By the way, to calm Janelle and Richard down, I told them Keaton and I have been secretly dating. When you see them, don't blow my cover."

Chapter 1639

"I understand why you did it," Elysia said, "but one lie always leads to another."

"I'll come clean once they're in a better mood," Winona replied.

"Okay."

When they returned to the room, Keaton was leaning over the side of the bed, dry- heaving. Janelle stood beside him, gently patting his back, her face etched with worry. "You can't even stand the smell of it? This reaction is way too strong."

Elysia walked over, greeted Janelle, and checked Keaton's pulse again. Still nothing abnormal.

"I'll write him a prescription for something to help with this later."

Janelle pointed to a bowl of dark liquid on the nightstand. "I went home this morning and got this remedy from a specialist, but he hasn't even taken a sip. Just smelling it makes him sick."

Elysia picked up the bowl and sniffed the bitter brew. "This is indeed for nausea. This will work for now. You need to just grit your teeth and drink it."

Keaton refused. "The smell alone makes me want to puke. If I drink it, it'll just come right back up! I'm not drinking it!"

"Even if you throw it up, some of the medicinal properties will remain in your system. It will help ease your symptoms," Elysia insisted.

Keaton scrunched his handsome face and shook his head. "No, no, I really don't want to."

Winona pursed her lips. "Do you want us to hold you down and force-feed it to you? Like you're a three-year-old?"

Keaton's eyes shot to Winona, a look of pure grievance on his face. "..."

Winona took the bowl from Elysia. "Elysia, step aside. We'll pour it down his throat. Janelle, you pinch his nose. Richard and Mr. Bradford, you hold down his arms and legs."

Keaton's eyes widened. "I'll drink it! Fine, I'll drink it!"

Winona held the bowl out to him. "Here."

Keaton stared at the black, murky liquid, wanting to burst into tears. What had he done to deserve this? He wasn't even sick, yet he had to endure this torture every day now he was being forced to drink

these foul tonics.

He chugged it in one go and immediately rinsed his mouth out. Before the nausea

could hit, Winona handed him two slices of fresh lemon. "Suck on these."

The intense sourness of the lemon overpowered the bitter aftertaste of the medicine.

Seeing that he wasn't going to

vomit, Janelle let out a sigh of relief.

"He's been afraid of medicine since he was little. We always had to crush up the pills and mix them with water just to pour it into him."

Keaton lay on the bed, chewing the lemon slices with a look of utter despair.

Elysia stood beside him and asked, "Bitter medicine or endless vomiting? Pick one."

"...Is there a not-so-bitter option?" Keaton pleaded.

Elysia shook her head. "If you want it to be effective, it has to be bitter. If you're

willing to drink it, I'll send a formula to Dr. Benjamin."

Before Keaton could answer, Winona said, "He'll drink the bitter medicine. It's better

than throwing up all the time. You'll get too weak if you keep this up."

"Yes, make him drink the bitter medicine!" Janelle and Richard chimed in.

Elysia nodded and sent a prescription to Benjamin, asking him to have the pharmacy prepare the decoction for that evening.

With Keaton sorted, everyone sat down for lunch. Janelle had cooked herself, and the spread was

impressive. Even though Winonan

had just eaten several pastries, she was now eating with gusto, plying Janelle with compliments as she ate "This is so delierous! amazing! Janelle, you're such a fantastic cook!"

Janelle beamed, unable to hide her delight. "If you like it, eat more. If you want, I

can cook for you again tonight. Here, try this, and this too."

While Winona happily devoured the delicious food, Keaton lay miserable in bed, miserably chewing on a lemon.

Chapter 1640

After lunch, they all chatted in the room until a little after three in the afternoon.

Janelle and Richard had to leave to prepare dinner. Before they left, Janelle asked, "When will the paternity test results be ready?"

They didn't know that Winona had knocked Beatrix out and brought her here; they thought Beatrix had fainted on her own and been admitted to the hospital.

"Benjamin said this evening at the earliest," Tarquin replied. "You and Janelle should go home and rest. We'll have Keaton call you as soon as there's news."

Richard and Janelle nodded together. "Alright."

It was obvious how nervous they both were. Elysia and Winona exchanged a look, their hearts aching for them.

After Janelle and Richard left, Tarquin sat by the bed, talking with Keaton. Winona and Elysia settled on the sofa to watch a show together.

As they were watching, Winona's head tilted to the side, and she fell asleep on Elysia's shoulder.

"Winona?" Elysia said, surprised.

Winona was already breathing deeply, completely unresponsive.

Elysia was speechless. "..."

Tarquin turned his head. "She's asleep?"

Elysia nodded, whispering, "She used to be such a light sleeper. Now she just conks out instantly."

Tarquin walked over. "There's a bed in the other room."

Keaton's VIP suite had an adjoining room with a cot for visitors.

Elysia carefully supported Winona's head as she gently stood up. "It's fine, let her sleep on the sofa for a bit. We have to go pick up the kids soon anyway. If she's out here, Keaton can keep an eye on her."

Keaton glanced at the time. It was already past three o'clock. The kindergarten let out around four, and the hospital was some distance away. It was time for them to go.

"You guys go get the kids," Keaton said. "Don't worry about her. I'll watch her."

Elysia helped take off Winona's shoes, letting her lie down properly. She then had Tarquin get a pillow and blanket from the inner room. Through all the fussing, Winona didn't even stir.

Elysia tucked the blanket around her, watching her sleep so soundly. She couldn't help but remark, "Winona really can eat and sleep these days."

Tarquin held Elysia's coat for her. "Eating well and sleeping well is a blessing. Should we come back tonight?"

"We'll see how things go."

"You don't need to," Keaton said. "Stay home and take care of the little ones. I'll call you when the results are in. And don't worry about Winona, If Beatrix wakes up and

tries to cause trouble, I'll protect

her."

Elysia turned to look at him.

Even though Winona had insisted she wasn't the wronged party in their hookup, Elysia couldn't stop herself from saying, "Beatrix won't be

evening at least. Keaton, you know how badly Zane hurt Winona. Whether it's for my sake, for Janelle and Richard's sake, or just out of sympathy for her, please don't mess with her. She's not like the other girls you've been with. She's a person who feels things deeply. She's

waking up for a while. Not, not

already been through one

heartbreak. She can't handle a

second one."

Keaton looked startled. "?!"

It took him a moment to realize that Winona must have told her about that night. She

was warning him, terrified that Winona would get hurt again.

His expression turned serious. "Don't worry. I know she's different from the other girls. I won't mess with her, and I won't hurt her. I've always seen her as a friend That right was just an accident."

"Good. I believe you."

Elysia turned to Tarquin. "Let's go."

Tarquin's eyes narrowed. He had already pieced together what had happened, but

he didn't ask any questions. He just nodded. "Let's go."

Suddenly, Winona rolled over, kicking the blanket. Elysia smiled helplessly. "She's still like a little kid."

She bent down to pull the blanket back over Winona and grabbed her wrist, intending to tuck her hand back inside.

But in the next second, her breath caught. Her expression changed dramatically.

Elysia froze for a long moment, then, frowning, she carefully and deliberately took Winona's pulse. Her eyes went wide with utter shock.