

Hitched 1651

Chapter 1651

The room fell silent in an instant, and all eyes snapped to Winona. Huh? Winona suppressed a smirk, playing the part of the wide-eyed ingenue. "Now, Ms. Sutton, you can't go around accusing innocent people. When did I ever lay a hand on you? Or kidnap you?" Beatrix's jaw tightened as she spat out the words, "Today! It was today! You're the one who tied me up and brought me here!" Winona chuckled. "Oh, that? Yes, Keaton Huber and I brought you here, but we did it to give you a surprise." "If we really wanted to kidnap you, why would you end up at a marriage proposal?" Beatrix's professor and classmates started speaking up for Winona. "Beatrix, you've really got it wrong. She was just helping. She's the one who helped decorate for the proposal." "Yeah, Ms. Newsom has been running around all day, spending her own money and everything." Winona's admirers, who had come to help, weren't happy and started muttering under their breath. "Even the white suit the groom-to-be is wearing and the flowers in his hand were paid for by Ms. Newsom." "Totally, and Ms. Newsom even arranged the car to pick them up." Beatrix became agitated. "She's trying to ruin me! She wants me dead! I don't even know her, she has no reason to help me!" The crowd was confused. "Huh?" Winona explained with a smile, "It's understandable that Ms. Sutton is mistaken. We're not close, it's true. She's a friend of a friend." "But Ms. Sutton, if I really wanted to kidnap you, there's no way you'd be here right now." "Alright, alright, Ms. Sutton, don't just stand there frozen. Your boyfriend is still on one knee. Say yes, marry him!" Hearing this, the others started cheering again, "Marry him! Marry him!" Tate Joubert looked at Beatrix, his face full of adoration. "Beatrix, marry me! I promise I'll be good to you!" Beatrix didn't even spare Tate Joubert a glance, hissing at Winona through gritted teeth, "He's not my boyfriend!" Everyone froze. "Huh?" Winona laughed. "I know, I know. He's not exactly your boyfriend anymore. He's been promoted—he's your baby daddy!" What???!! Baby daddy? The crowd was completely baffled. "?" Beatrix's breath hitched. "!!!" Elysia Thorne, Tarquin Bradford, Keaton, Janelle, Richard Huber, and the entire Sutton family were all stunned! All their heads whipped towards Winona. "?" Winona beamed, looking at Beatrix. "The baby in your belly is going to be a genius. You're a top student, and Mr. Joubert is too. Those are some powerful genes." "And the little one is so lucky, getting to witness their father's classic proposal in person." The room was dead silent... Keaton looked down at Winona. Only now did he realize what a huge drama Winona had orchestrated. No wonder she was willing to set the stage for Beatrix, arranging this whole proposal scene! It was all just to expose Beatrix in front of everyone... Well, things just got interesting! Whether she accepted this proposal or not, there was no way the Huber family would have her now! Without raising her voice or a hand, Winona, all smiles, had completely shattered Beatrix's dream of marrying into the Huber family. What's more, Winona could let the Sutton family do her dirty work for her! Beatrix was pregnant, so Winona couldn't touch her, but the Suttons wouldn't be so gentle. After tonight, the Suttons would be furious. They would definitely teach Beatrix a harsh lesson. This really was a great show. The only question was, how did she know the baby in Beatrix's womb belonged to Tate Joubert?

Chapter 1652

The room was quiet for a long moment before one of Beatrix's classmates asked, "Beatrix is pregnant?" Winona nodded. "Yep! About two or three months along!" Beatrix's professor asked, "Is that true?" Winona nodded earnestly. "Of course it's true. I wouldn't joke about something like that." The professor immediately looked at Beatrix. "My dear, why didn't you say you were pregnant? If I had known, I wouldn't have given you such a demanding research workload." Her classmates chimed in, "Yeah, if we'd known you were pregnant, we would have looked out for you more. We wouldn't have let you do any heavy lifting." Tate Joubert was ecstatic. "Beatrix, you're pregnant? Really? Are you really pregnant?" Beatrix's breath came in ragged hitches, her heart hammering against her ribs like a trapped bird. Just as she was about to deny it, Winona cut in, "Yes, yes, it's true. If you don't believe it, you can get a paternity test later. The baby is yours." Tate Joubert was so moved he started to cry. "I believe you! I believe you! Beatrix is a good girl, she's only been with me... Beatrix, I'll take such good care of you. I'll take care of our baby. Trust me, I'll work hard and earn money, and I'll make you both happy!" The professor and classmates were incredibly touched and started cheering again. "Marry him, Beatrix!" "Beatrix, you should say yes! Don't leave him kneeling there. The baby might not like you torturing his daddy." The crowd laughed good-naturedly, but Beatrix was panicking, completely at a loss. She was backed into a corner with no way out. If she refused, she'd expose herself as a user who had been taking advantage of Tate Joubert, and her professor and classmates would despise her. If she didn't refuse, her chance with Keaton..... "Beatrix!" Sophus Sutton's voice thundered through the room. Only then did Beatrix see him, and her fear intensified. "Dad..." Sophus stormed over and, in front of everyone, demanded, "Whose baby is that in your belly?" Beatrix bit her lip, not daring to speak. "...". She knew in her heart that if Winona was bold enough to say it, she must have proof. If she tried to lie and say it was Keaton's, Winona would immediately shut her down with evidence. Sophie had also walked over, fuming. "Tell us, is it his, or...?" With tears in her eyes, Beatrix lowered her head and remained silent. "...". Sophus already knew the answer, and he looked like he was about to collapse. They didn't know Tate Joubert, but they knew one thing for sure: he wasn't from a wealthy family. He was so poor that someone else had to buy his suit and the bouquet for the proposal! Her son-in-law was supposed to be the wealthy heir Keaton, and instead, he turned out to be some broke guy? The contrast was too much. They couldn't accept it, absolutely couldn't accept it! Consumed by rage, Sophus raised his hand and slapped Beatrix across the face. "You shameless bitch!" Seeing this, Tate Joubert rushed to block Sophus and dropped to his knees before him. "Sir, please, give us your blessing. I know my background isn't good enough, I know you look down on me for being poor, but please give me a chance. I truly love Beatrix!" "Please don't try to break us up anymore, we have a child together! I'm begging you!" Look down on him for being poor? Break them up? This just made the Suttons look like a bunch of gold-diggers! Sophus got even angrier, kicking Tate Joubert aside. "Get away from me!" Sophie confronted him publicly. "Who said we looked down on your background? Who tried to break you up? We don't even know you, so stop slandering the Sutton family!" Winona interjected, "So what you're saying, Mrs. Sutton, is that you don't look down on him? You approve of this marriage?" Sophie froze for a second before quickly adding, "I didn't say I approve! I mean we don't know him at all! So there's no question of us looking down on him or trying to break them up!"

Chapter 1653

Winona turned to Tate Joubert. "Mr. Joubert, look at you. You want to marry their daughter, but you're lying about them. They never said they looked down on you for being poor." Tate Joubert was stunned.

"But... Beatrix said... she said..." Winona's eyes narrowed. "Ms. Sutton said that? She said the Sutton family looked down on you for being poor and wanted to break you up?" Tate Joubert didn't answer, just stared blankly at Beatrix. Beatrix sat on the hospital bed, her face ashen. "... " Winona said, "Ms. Sutton, even if you are pregnant and expect us all to walk on eggshells around you, I still have to say something. Why would you lie?" "You lied to Mr. Joubert, telling him the Suttons looked down on him. Can you imagine the pressure he was under?" "And by saying that, you made the Suttons look like they only care about money!" "Anyone who didn't know the truth would get the wrong idea about your parents! You're just asking for people to bad-mouth the Sutton family, aren't you?" "You have two older sisters who aren't married yet. If the Sutton reputation is trashed, no prominent family will want anything to do with us!" Sophus and Sophie were already furious, and Winona just added fuel to the fire. The couple grew even angrier, glaring daggers at Beatrix. Beatrix's two sisters panicked as well, turning on her furiously. "You bitch! You damn bitch! Are you trying to ruin our family?" Beatrix knew Winona was destroying her. Her eyes were red as she glared at Winona, wishing she could tear her apart right then and there. Unfazed, Winona looked at her and said, "Ms. Sutton, don't tell me you were the one who looked down on Tate Joubert for being poor, but you couldn't say it outright, so you blamed it on your parents?" "But if you don't like him, why didn't you just reject him? And why would you get pregnant with his child?" Janelle immediately spoke up. "Because she wanted to use him! She told us the baby was a Huber and tried to force our Keaton to marry her!" Beatrix paled. "!" Tate Joubert's jaw dropped. "!" Beatrix's professor and classmates gasped. "!" Winona feigned surprise. "Ms. Sutton, how could you dare tell a lie like that? Weren't you afraid the Huber family would find out the truth eventually?" Janelle added, "Of course she wasn't afraid. She never planned on having this baby! She was probably thinking that after she married into the Huber family, she'd just get rid of it!" Winona let out a sharp, mocking gasp. "My goodness, I knew you were ambitious, Beatrix, but this? This is a whole new level of twisted." She then turned to the Suttons. "The Suttons have such a good reputation. How could you raise a daughter like this?" The Suttons were now incandescent with rage, looking like they wanted to kill Beatrix on the spot. Seeing that the Suttons were about to explode, Winona turned her attention to Tate Joubert. "Mr. Joubert, you've really become her backup plan. She used your love for her, even weaponizing your own child." "No, that's not right. You're not even a backup plan. She never even considered you. Her heart was set on marrying into a rich family; she never once thought about marrying you." Tate Joubert's eyes were bloodshot. He stared straight at Beatrix. "Is what they're saying true?" Beatrix gripped the bedsheets, her lips pressed into a thin line. "... " Tate Joubert didn't say another word. He threw the bouquet on the floor, stood up, and walked out of the room. Beatrix's professor and classmates frowned, looking at her with disgust. "You really can't judge a book by its cover! That's just awful!" They scoffed, then turned and went after Tate Joubert.

Chapter 1654

Janelle said unhappily to Sophus and Sophie, "Your daughter is really something else, scheming against our Huber family!" Richard's face was cold as he announced, "The Huber family is severing all business ties with the Suttons, effective immediately. The Hubers will pay any penalty fees for breach of contract in full. As of today, our families will no longer be in business together, ever!" Sophus was horrified. "!!!" The businessmen who had come with Sophus all had mixed expressions. Seeing that the Suttons had not only failed to cozy up to the Hubers but had actually offended them, they started making sarcastic remarks. "The Suttons sure know how to raise a daughter! Good thing this all came out, or the Hubers

would have been really screwed over." "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree!" Sophus's face was beet red with fury and embarrassment. He slapped Beatrix across the face a few more times, roaring, "We're going home!" Beatrix bit her lip and got off the bed, following the Suttons out with her head down. Keaton was standing in the hallway, his brow furrowed. When Beatrix saw him, she stopped, her face filled with resentment. "Are you satisfied? Is this what you meant when you promised to take care of me?" Keaton was silent. "...". Winona followed them out, looking from Beatrix to Keaton. "?" Beatrix glared venomously at Winona, squeezing the words out through her teeth. "You're going to rot for this! I'll see you in hell, Winona! Mark my words!" With that final venomous threat, she threw one last look at Keaton and said to Winona with a cold smirk, "If you dare to kill me, he'll make you pay for what you've done to me! But if I'm the one who ends you? He wouldn't have the heart to touch a hair on my head." Beatrix walked away with a cold smirk, looking like she'd won. Winona's brow furrowed tightly. "...". She instinctively glanced at Keaton. He was frowning, watching Beatrix leave, clearly in a bad mood. Winona had a faint feeling that he wasn't in a bad mood because Beatrix had cursed and threatened her. It was because Beatrix had been hurt... Soon, everyone else had left. Janelle pulled Winona back into the adjacent hospital room. "Winona, how did you know the baby in Beatrix's belly was that Tate Joubert's?" Winona, who had been watching Keaton's expression, took a moment to respond. "I know one of the seniors from Beatrix's research program." "When I asked her about Beatrix, I found out about Tate Joubert." "So I did some digging on Tate Joubert and found out he'd been inquiring about in-vitro fertilization. That's when I started to suspect the baby was his, but I wasn't sure." "This morning, after Dr. Benjamin took the fetal sample, I got a copy and had someone run a paternity test between Tate Joubert and the fetus. I didn't expect them to actually be father and son." Janelle was confused. "In-vitro fertilization?" Winona explained, "She used IVF to manipulate the timeline of the pregnancy." "She had the embryo implanted on the same day she slept with Keaton, so the Huber family would be more convinced the baby was his." "Beatrix is smart. Before she set Keaton up for 'raping' her last time, she had already made preparations at a clinic." "If Keaton had married her after they slept together, she would have quietly terminated the pregnancy." "If Keaton still refused to marry her, she would use this baby to keep pressuring him. Once they had been legally married, she would have an abortion immediately." "Her only goal was to marry Keaton and become Mrs. Huber!" Janelle frowned. "That girl is unbelievable. Whoever marries her is in for a world of trouble! What a waste of a good education!" Richard said, "A degree doesn't determine someone's character. There are plenty of C-students with solid values, and tons of geniuses who are morally corrupt." Winona added, "Tate Joubert is a true genius, a good and brilliant person. He's won several international awards, but his family is very poor." "I arranged for him to propose publicly tonight, first, to take Beatrix down a peg, and second, to let him see her true colors." "Only by completely breaking his heart could he finally give up on Beatrix and rise from the ashes." "It would be a shame for such a talented person to be ruined by love." Richard and Janelle nodded in agreement. "You saved that kid, in a way." Winona snuck another peek at Keaton... Keaton stood leaning against the wall, hands in his pockets, staring at the floor with a frown, his mood sour.

Chapter 1655

Something unreadable flickered in Winona's gaze, but she quickly masked it to reassure Janelle.

"You won't have to worry about Beatrix bothering you anymore. After tonight, she won't have the nerve to show her face in front of you again." Richard and Janelle showered Winona with praise. "... It was getting late. After chatting a bit more, Winona persuaded the older couple to go home and get some rest. Just as the older Hubers left, Keaton said to Tarquin, "Let's go out for a smoke." Tarquin glanced at Elysia, then nodded. "Alright." The two of them left, one after the other. Keaton didn't glance at Winona once the entire time. Winona watched Keaton's back as he left, a heavy feeling tightening in her chest. She had dealt with Beatrix, and even though he hadn't said anything, he was obviously unhappy. Fine, let him be unhappy! Anyway, it's not like I killed Beatrix or had her thrown in jail! Beatrix had Alicia hurt her before, and this time she scared Janelle into fainting. If I didn't deal with her harshly, she'd definitely cause more trouble in the future! Winona didn't think she had gone too far. People like her bring it on themselves. Beatrix had no one to blame but herself for ending up in this mess. She deserved it! But even with that thought, Winona still felt depressed, her chest tight. She leaned her head on Elysia's shoulder, sulking. "Elysia, do you think what happened to Beatrix today was brutal?" Elysia told her the truth. "Brutal is an understatement. It was devastating. You basically ripped off her mask and exposed her true self for everyone to see." "Now, in the eyes of her professor and classmates, she's a cruel, manipulative user. It's going to be tough for her in the research team from now on." "Tate Joubert could never love her again; he probably hates her guts now." "And the Suttons, who already disliked her, will probably beat her half to death after this." "Most importantly, once word of this gets out, her reputation will be completely ruined. Forget the Huber family, who would ever marry her now?" "Her life is basically over. It'll be almost impossible for her to make a comeback." Winona asked again, "So... does that make me just like her? Cold, calculating, and cruel?" "Huh?" Elysia looked at her, confused. "What are you talking about? How could you be like her? It's not wrong to be calculating. You didn't go after her unprovoked! This was just fighting back!" Winona let out a heavy breath. "Be honest, Elysia. Was I a monster tonight?" "Of course not! Who said you went too far?" Winona pouted. From the look on Keaton's face, he definitely thought she'd gone too far. Winona didn't reply, so Elysia continued, "In this world, showing mercy to people like her only leaves you vulnerable. It was eat or be eaten. You did nothing wrong, and you didn't go too far. Don't overthink it." Winona sighed again. "... Elysia sensed something was off and asked her, "Are you in a bad mood?" Winona muttered, "Keaton is definitely blaming me." Elysia said, "...How do you know?" Winona replied, "Didn't you see the look on his face? He's been unhappy ever since Tate Joubert proposed to Beatrix. He's been frowning and scowling this whole time, and he's still upset." Elysia was speechless. "... Winona complained, "What does he have to be unhappy about? He's the one who said it was fine as long as I didn't kill Beatrix or put her in jail." "I made Beatrix's life miserable, sure, but I didn't kill her! I didn't send her to prison! What right does he have to be dissatisfied?" "Besides, I wasn't the one who started it with Beatrix. She came after me first, remember?" "And he knew all along that I was going to deal with Beatrix, and he didn't stop me. And now that it's done, he's throwing a fit!" "If he didn't want me to touch her, he should have just said so before I did anything!" "He doesn't stop me, he doesn't say anything beforehand, and then he gets upset after the fact! What kind of person is he?" Elysia listened to Winona's rant, then slowly said, "Winona, are you starting to fall for Keaton?" "Huh?" Winona froze. "Of course not!" Elysia looked at her seriously. "Then why are you always watching his moods? And why do you care so much about how he feels?" Winona was speechless. "..."

After a moment of thought, Winona explained, "I care because he's my friend. It has nothing to do with being in love."

"You really don't have feelings for him?" Elysia pressed.

Winona shook her head. "Not even one! God, I'm just so frustrated. If he didn't want me to deal with Beatrix, he should have just said so beforehand. Not say a word, and then give me the cold shoulder afterward."

Elysia offered a fair assessment. "I don't think he's giving you the cold shoulder. He's just in a bad mood."

"You know the history between him and Beatrix. It's understandable he'd be upset that she got hurt."

Simply put, Keaton was unhappy tonight because of Beatrix, not because of Winona.

For some reason, Winona felt a pang of discomfort. She furrowed her brow and mumbled, "I just don't get what the deal is between him and Beatrix."

Elysia was curious about that too, but right now, she was more concerned about something else.

"Winona, be honest with me. In the last month, have you been with any other men besides Keaton?"

Winona paused, then shook her head. "No. Not just in the last month, for the last two years!"

Elysia fell silent.

Then the baby in her belly was one hundred percent Keaton's.

Elysia was worried. Winona didn't love Keaton, yet she was carrying his child...

"What's wrong, Elysia? Why are you suddenly asking me this?"

Elysia's brow furrowed slightly. She got up, walked to the door, and peeked outside. Seeing no one, she returned to Winona's side and gently took Winona's hand, looking her dead in the eye with a physician's intensity.

Winona looked at her, confused. "?"

Looking straight at her, Elysia spoke slowly, "I managed to take a look at the labs they ran on you earlier. Winona, you're pregnant."

Winona thought she had misheard. "Huh?"

Elysia repeated, "Winona, you're pregnant."

Winona's eyes shot wide open. "!"

She looked at Elysia, then down at her own stomach, then back up at Elysia.

"I'm... pregnant?"

Elysia nodded very seriously. "About twenty days."

Winona was in disbelief. "I'm pregnant with Keaton's baby?"

"If you haven't been with any other man," Elysia said, "then it has to be Keaton's."

Winona was speechless. "—"

Elysia squeezed Winona's hand, offering her strength and warmth She couldn't decide the fate of this child mer could she offer advice on What to do. She could only state the facts.

"Right now, you and the baby are perfectly fine. If you want to have it, then we'll take good care of you."

"If... if you don't want to have it, I

suggest you decide soon. The

further along you are the harder it

will be on your body."

Winona's breathing grew rapid and shallow. She gasped and asked again, "Elysia, am I really pregnant?"

"Yes."

"I....." Winona touched her flat stomach in amazement. "There's a little baby in here?"

"Yes."

"I..." Winona still couldn't believe it. "But I only spent one night with Keaton!"

"It's not unheard of," Elysia explained. "Tarquin and I conceived on our first time, too."

Winona's expression twisted. "But... we drank so much that night. Could it affect the baby's health?"

Elysia answered practically, "So far,

everything seems fine, but we'll need

to wait until you're further along to

do a proper check up with an OB-GYN to be sure. Don't worry about that for now. The real

question is... do you want to keep it?"

"I..." Winona hesitated.

Suddenly pregnant. It was something she had never imagined.

She never, ever thought that sleeping with Keaton just once would lead to this.

Chapter 1657

Having a baby...

It was a topic she hadn't thought about for a very, very long time.

Back when she and Zane Livingston first got together, she had been so in love with him. She used to fantasize about having a baby with him, a little symbol of their love.

After they got married, she brought it up more than once.

But every time, Zane would act all concerned for her, telling her there was no rush, that she should chase her dreams first and they could have kids later.

Later on, Zane started managing the Newsom family business with her father, and she threw herself into the entertainment industry, working hard for her dream.

She hadn't thought about having a baby in years.

It wasn't that she was against it; she actually liked kids. But... this was too sudden. Too unexpected.

She and Keaton had no feelings for each other, and neither of them had a romantic bone in their bodies, let alone any interest in marriage.

Two people who didn't believe in marriage, with no emotional connection, suddenly having a baby... this was...

Elysia's voice was soft. "You don't have to force yourself to decide right now. You can take your time to think."

"Don't put too much pressure on yourself. The baby is here, and we have to accept it."

"If you want to keep it, you can take a break from work. You can always make a comeback after the baby is born."

"If you want to tell Keaton, then tell him straight up. Whether he wants to be involved

or not is his problem. It's not like you can't raise a child on your own."

"And if you want to keep it from him, that's fine too. Worst case, you move somewhere else."

"Of course, if you don't want to keep it, that's also an option. Right now, only you and I know about this. Not even Tarquin knows."

Winona was silent.

Elysia continued, "Ultimately, the decision is in your hands. And whether you decide to have it or not, I'll support you. I'll be with you every step of the way."

Winona reached out and hugged Elysia. "...I want to go home for a bit."

"To your parents' place, or Blossom's?" Elysia asked. "Or you can come to my place."

The Riverside Manor was no longer safe; Winona couldn't go back there without being harassed.

Winona shook her head. "I think I'll get a hotel by the beach."

Elysia understood. She needed to be alone. Pregnancy was a huge deal, and she needed time to think.

"A hotel is fine, but you have to stay in touch. I'll worry about you."

"I will."

Winona pulled out her phone, booked a room, and stood up. "I'm going to head out then."

Elysia stood up with her. "Let me drive you."

"It's okay, I can get a ride myself. Elysia, please keep the pregnancy a secret for now."

"Don't worry, I will. You know your condition now, so take care of yourself, okay?"

"I will."

Winona gave Elysia another hug and left.

Keaton and Tarquin were standing

at the end of the hall, smoking. When they saw Winona leave, they stubbed out their cigarettes and walked back.

"Where's she going?" Keaton asked.

"She left," Elysia said.

Keaton looked surprised. "Left? Where to?"

"The situation with Beatrix is

handled, so she went to take care of

her own business," Elysia said

coolly. "Did you need her for

something else?"

Keaton shook his head. "No."

Elysia looked at him and couldn't help but ask, "You weren't blaming Winona for tonight, were you?"

Keaton looked taken aback. "Why would I blame her?"

"Winona really put Beatrix through the wringer today," Elysia said, "and you

3med to be in a pretty bad,

Chapter 1658

Keaton's brow furrowed slightly. "Beatrix brought this on herself. My mood has nothing to do with Winona."

Elysia reminded him, "You should be well aware that Winona went after Beatrix for two reasons. One was revenge. The other was because of you, Janelle, and Mr. Huber."

She couldn't do anything about Keaton being upset over Beatrix. But if he was going to blame Winona for what happened tonight, she had to speak up for her friend.

What right did he have to blame Winona? A huge part of the reason Winona sought revenge on Beatrix was because of the Huber family!

Keaton sensed something was off. "Did Winona misunderstand something?"

Elysia shook her head. "No."

"...I'm not an ungrateful person," Keaton said quietly.

"Good. How are you feeling now? Still nauseous?"

"Much better."

"Then the prescription is working. Keep taking it tomorrow, just once a day." Elysia

then looked at Tarquin. "I'm heading home, too."

With Winona gone, there was no reason for her to stay.

Keaton caught the shift in the air and knew it was his cue to leave. He said to

Tarquin, "You should go with Elysia. My nausea is gone. I'll get a good night's sleep,

and if I'm still feeling this way tomorrow, I'll just check myself out."

Tarquin nodded. "Call me if you need anything."

"Will do."

At midnight, Elysia and Tarquin left the hospital.

In the car, Elysia asked Tarquin, "What did Keaton say to you?"

"Nothing."

Elysia was surprised. "Nothing at all?"

"Nope, really. He was just agitated and chain-smoking, so I kept him company."

Elysia frowned. "He didn't say anything to you about Beatrix?"

Tarquin shook his head. "No."

Elysia was baffled. "What is the deal between him and Beatrix?"

"One minute, Beatrix is accusing him of rape, the next she's using someone else's baby to force him to marry her. And through all that, he doesn't get angry. Instead, he sees her miserable downfall and gets upset!"

"If you say he has feelings for her, that can't be it. He refuses to marry her, so he clearly doesn't like her."

"Could she have some kind of fatal leverage on him?"

Tarquin shook his head. "That's definitely not possible."

"Then..... did she save his life or something?" Elysia guessed.

Tarquin didn't know either. "Keaton didn't say, and I didn't push him. But no matter

what, Keaton would never let Winona suffer because of Beatrix. He knows right from wrong."

Elysia's brows knitted together. "..."

Beatrix and Keaton's relationship was a tangled mess, and now

Winona was pregnant with Keaton's child. She was worried that if Beatrix found out, she would use Keaton's Winona and the

indulgence to hurt V

baby.

the

Elysia looked at Tarquin with a serious expression. "I don't care what's going on between Beatrix and Keaton, but if Beatrix ever dares to hurt Winona, I will make her regret it."

Tarquin met her gaze, his eyes narrowing slightly. "Did something happen to Winona?"

Elysia shot back, "Why would you think that?"

"You had me go buy her a pair of flats today..." Tarquin said slowly. "Is she pregnant?"

Elysia froze. "!"

Her eyes widened in shock as she

stared at Tarquin. All she'd done was ask him to buy a pair of shoes, and Keaton had been right there. Keaton hadn't noticed a thing, but he had managed to figure it out!

Chapter 1659

Elysia stared at Tarquin for a long moment, then frowned and lied, "Don't be ridiculous! Of course not!"

She couldn't tell Tarquin; this was Winona's private matter. And since Tarquin was Keaton's best friend, she was afraid he would spill the beans. Keaton couldn't know, not until Winona made a decision. Even when the time came for Keaton to know, it should be Winona who told him.

Tarquin calmly watched Elysia. "..."

When he bought the shoes that afternoon, he had only been suspicious. Now, he was certain.

Winona was really pregnant.

Elysia was even keeping it from him, which meant the baby was definitely Keaton's.

Tarquin's mind was racing. Winona was pregnant with Keaton's child! For the Huber family, this was monumental news. If Janelle and Richard found out, they would be ecstatic. They would treat Winona like an absolute queen!

But for Keaton, it was hard to say whether this would be a pleasant surprise or a complete shock. After all, Keaton had made it clear he didn't like Winona, was strongly against marriage, and had never wanted kids.

And now, a child was on the way...

"Don't you dare say a word to Keaton!" Elysia glared at him, warning him again.

Seeing that Elysia didn't want him to know, Tarquin decided to play along and pretend he was clueless. "I wouldn't say anything without proof. I was just asking. Don't worry about it."

He pulled Elysia into his arms. "Relax. If Beatrix ever dares to hurt Winona, I'll help you take care of her. Keaton won't be able to protect her even if he wants to."

His words brought Elysia a great deal of comfort. "..."

That night, sleep would elude more than one person.

After Beatrix was taken back to the

Sutton estate, Sophus and Sophie

beat her half to death. As the family's black sheep and a child born out of wedlock, she had always been treated like dirt. Now that she had caused such a massive scandal Sophus and Sophie were so furious they looked like they wanted to kill her.

If not for the fear of the trouble a dead body would cause, they might have actually beaten her to death.

After the assault, Beatrix was tossed back into her room like a piece of unwanted trash. The lights were off. In the small, dark room, she lay on the cold floor, licking her wounds alone. No one came to check on her, no one called a doctor... In the Sutton family, no one cared if she lived or died.

She tried to crawl back to her bed, but any movement sent waves of pain through her body. Sophus had whipped her with a belt, leaving deep, bloody gashes. When his arms grew weary Sophie took her turn wielding a clothes hanger like a whip, striking her over and over on the open wounds until several hangers had broken.

Her body was a map of bruises and weeping welts. None were fatal, but the pain was excruciating. It hurt to lie on her back, it hurt to lie on her stomach... Her body ached, but her heart ached even more.

Thinking of the Suttons, she was filled with hate.

Thinking of Keaton, she was filled with resentment.

Thinking of Winona, she gritted her teeth, wishing she could kill her right then and there.

Winona had ruined her. Completely ruined her. Her professors and classmates must despise her now. No one would ever like her again. And she would never have another chance to marry into the tuber family. As a result, her standing in the Sutton family was nonexistent. Her future would be a tightrope walk over a pit of fire.

It was all Winona's fault! She never should have let Winona live this long. Zane was useless, too. She had told him to get rid of Winona ages ago, and he still hadn't done anything!

The more Beatrix thought, the more her hatred grew. She clenched her jaw, her face

a dark mask in the moonlight filtering through the window.

A moment later, she painfully pulled out her phone and, ignoring the agony in her body, sent a text to Keaton.

【I need money

Chapter 1660

In the hospital, Keaton lay quietly on the bed. He stared at the ceiling, his mood heavy and oppressive.

Before Beatrix left, her words in the hallway echoed relentlessly in his mind: 'Are you satisfied now? Is this your idea of taking care of me?'

Her words left a suffocating weight on his chest, making every breath a struggle.

He knew very well that Beatrix was a problem and that what happened tonight was her own doing. But he still couldn't shake the feelings of self-blame and guilt.....

When he suddenly received Beatrix's text, Keaton sat up and replied, 【How much?】

Beatrix: 【Fifty million dollars.】

Without a second thought, Keaton opened his banking app to transfer the money. But then he thought of Winona and added a question. 【What do you need that much money for?】

Beatrix frowned on her end. 【You never used to ask. Why are you asking now?】 Keaton was silent. "..."

Before he could reply, Beatrix called him. The first thing she asked was, "Is it because of Winona? Are you afraid I'll use the money to get revenge on her?"

Keaton's brow furrowed. "Stay away from her. Don't provoke her."

Beatrix let out a cold laugh. "She's ruined me like this, and you're still protecting her?"

"This wasn't her doing," Keaton said flatly. "You did this to yourself."

"Ha!" Beatrix sneered. "If she didn't do it, then you did! If it weren't for you, would my life be like this?"

Keaton had no reply. "..."

Beatrix sniffled hard, demanding, "If she killed me, would you still take her side?"

Keaton's brow tightened. "She won't kill you. She might always get her revenge, but she's fair in her own way. If you don't provoke her, she won't bother you."

"Then how do we settle the score for tonight?" Beatrix asked.

"Consider it even for you sending Alicia to hurt her."

Beatrix was furious. "All I did was give her a few stitches, but she practically took my life! How is that fair?"

"It is fair!" Keaton retorted. "You hurt her first!"

Beatrix laughed coldly. "You're so protective of her. If I die at her hands one day, will you avenge me?"

"I told you, she won't kill you," Keaton stressed.

"I said IF!" Beatrix yelled.

"There is no 'if'!"

"...What if I kill her one day?" Beatrix challenged. "Will you kill me to avenge her?"

Keaton's brow furrowed deeply. "No

matter who you kill, you'll pay the price. I have money and power, but don't have the right to decide someone's fate. It's not just you if

If

even kissed someone, the law would judge me."

Beatrix was silent for a moment. "Keaton, marry me, and we'll call it even. How about it?"

"No."

She fell silent again for a few seconds, then took a deep breath and pleaded, "Not even a courthouse wedding? I just want the legal title, a way to survive in the Sutton family!"

"I won't interfere with your flings or your womanizing!"

"I won't get in the way of your private life at all!"

"I don't even have to live with you! I can live on my own!"

Keaton's refusal was unwavering. "No."

Beatrix said nothing. "..."

They both went quiet. Beatrix didn't hang up, and neither did Keaton. He leaned back against the headboard, the tip of his cigarette glowing in the dark as he smoked in heavy silence.

After what felt like an eternity, Beatrix spoke again. "Then I want the fifty million. The Suttons nearly beat me to death I need to see a doctor and recover. Once I'm better, I'm leaving the country."

"Where will you go?" Keaton asked.

"I haven't decided yet. But after Winona did this to me, I can't stay here anymore."

Keaton frowned. "What about the baby in your belly?"

Beatrix was blunt. "It was just a tool anyway. I'm going to the clinic tomorrow to get rid of it."

Keaton's brow tightened, and he took a hard drag from his cigarette. "..."

"What?" Beatrix asked. "Do you feel bad for it?"

Keaton watched the ash fall, his expression unreadable. "Not my circus, not my monkeys."