

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 221[557 words]

Elysia splashed her face with cold water and trudged back into the living room.

Zane caught one look at her and knew something was off, “What’s going on? You look bit under the weather!”

Elysia shot him a complex look, trying to maintain composure. “It’s nothing, just a bit of a cold, I’m not feeling my best.”

Zane’s concern was evident in his voice. “Have you seen a doctor? With the flu and all that going around, you should get checked out. Blood tests, meds, the whole package.”

*I saw sonicone yesterday, it’s nothing serious.” Elysia waved Zane over to sit down and smoothly changed the subject to Winona, “Heard anything about Winona lately?”

“Nothing yet”

“Have you reached out to her agent?”

“I’ve been trying, but it’s like they’ve vanished into thin air. Even got a friend to check with her agent’s family, and they’re clueless about her whereabouts too.”

Zane spoke with an openness, his expression not giving away anything out of the ordinary.

Elysia frowned. “If it comes down to it, we might have to notify the authorities.”

“Huh?” Zane blinked in surprise.

Blossom was equally taken aback. “Notify the authorities? Why?”

“Winona’s been missing for a while now, and I’m getting worried,” Elysia explained.

“But she’s a high-profile celebrity. Wouldn’t involving the police tarnish her reputation?”

Blossom looked worried, but Zane, with a furrowed brow, agreed, “Elysia might be onto something. If we can’t get a hold of Winona soon, we might have no other choice.”

Elysia eyed Zane. His agreement to involve the police made her wonder if he truly was unaware of Winona's situation.

In the bedroom, Elliot and Evan huddled over their computer with a secret to discuss, sending Emmett out to keep Elysia company.

"Any luck yet?" Evan was anxious.

Elliot had been digging into the mysterious figure behind the mask since last night, but to no avail. Given his reputation in the hacking world, the inability to find any leads on this person only proved their cunning and secrecy.

The more elusive and formidable their adversary, the greater the threat they posed.

With the police's visit earlier that day, Elliot pieced together some troubling thoughts.

The masked man must have known about their plan to retrieve the item!

By placing Allegra in direct contact with it, they aimed to capture Elliot or Evan's fingerprints – framing them for a crime.

But why? What could be their motive?

Had they actually committed a murder that night, would this person leverage the evidence to blackmail them? Or was there another agenda at play?

Considering their secluded upbringing and their mother's unassuming nature, it was unlikely they had crossed paths with such a formidable enemy.

Their connection to Tarquin seemed the most plausible explanation. Being Tarquin's sons, they were perfect pawns against him.

However, one question lingered – how did the masked man know they were Tarquin's sons?

Without concrete information, it was difficult to determine if this masked figure was their enemy or Tarquin's.

Eager for answers, Elliot's thoughts were abruptly interrupted by a message from Gideon's confidant.

[Mr. E, did you manage to retrieve the item?]

Elliot frowned. Given Allegra's incident, Gideon's inquiry hinted at suspicion,

Elliot responded affirmatively, despite the circumstances.

[As long as you had the item, that was all that mattered, especially after the previous night's chaos.]

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 222[553 words]

Elliot had pulled a fast one on him, declaring he'd already retrieved the items during the day.

Without waiting for Gideon's response, he sent another message.

[The person you're looking into? I've got a lead. I'll hand over what I've found about him in a couple of days.]

[Much appreciated.]

Gideon's confidant responded politely before turning to Gideon, "Sir, it seems we were mistaken. This Mr. E isn't the assailant from last night. He had already taken what was needed during daylight."

Gideon frowned, puzzled. "But the spot where Allegra was found is exactly where we stored the items. It's too coincidental."

"Well, it's understandable. Mr. E chose that spot for its seclusion, and naturally, the attacker would seek a similar setting to target Allegra."

After a moment of contemplation, Gideon nodded. "Alright, let's set this matter aside for now. We've got a lead on Mr. E. Make sure our assets are in order, ready to collaborate with him at a moment's notice."

"Understood! Oh, and Sir, the annual Bradford family ancestral tribute is coming up next month. Traditionally, the entire Bradford family ventures into the woods for the ceremony. Given Elijah's condition last year... it nearly ended in disaster. Should we still inform him about it this year?"

Gideon's voice was stern, "He is the sole heir to the Bradford legacy. He's our future. Skipping such a crucial family tradition is out of the question. Let him face ridicule or disdain; I don't care. As long as

he's breathing, that's all that matters. It's also a perfect chance to knock Tarquin down a peg. What does his competence matter if his son is naught but a frail shadow of a man?"

In the following days, Jindale City was besieged by relentless rain, as if the heavens themselves mourned for someone.

Elysia had fallen ill again, collapsing soon after Zane's departure. The combination of fear, stress, and being caught in the rain had left her feverish for days.

Meanwhile, Tarquin's life had reverted to its previous routine. It was a simple existence, oscillating between caring for Elijah at home and burying himself in work at the office.

After his argument with Elysia, Tarquin had been in a foul mood. Elijah's refusal to eat properly, even shunning the meals he prepared, only worsened his temper.

His mood affected everyone around him.

Tarquin was a workaholic by nature, channeling his anger into his work rather than away from it. Normally, the office would empty at half-past five, following Tarquin's departure. Lately, his extended hours kept everyone on edge, afraid to leave before him.

Under his command, paperwork flew and projects progressed at breakneck speed. His team struggled to keep up, barely managing bathroom breaks without their laptops in tow.

Typically, Tarquin's bad moods never lasted more than three days, meaning the staff could see an end to their suffering. But this time, a week had passed with no end in sight.

Desperate, they turned to Lowell for relief, "Lowell, what's gotten into the boss? Who's upset him this time? If this keeps up, we're all going to collapse."

Lowell was equally concerned, empathizing with both the staff and Tarquin. He prepared Tarquin's favorite coffee himself and braced himself to knock on the boss's office door.

Upon entering, Lowell ventured, "Tarquin, are we working late again tonight?"

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 223[561 words]

Tarquin was buried in paperwork, not even bothering to lift his head. "Mhm."

Lowell's lips twitched slightly. "You know, you haven't spent the evening with Elijah in ages."

"Is there anything wrong with Elijah?" Tarquin finally looked up, his expression serious.

Lowell hurriedly said, "Nothing's wrong with Elijah. I just meant... don't you think he might be getting a bit upset, you not being home and all?"

Tarquin went back to his documents. “He won’t be

Lowell rubbed his temple. “Tarquin, let’s just take a break, yeah? You keep pushing like this, I’m worried you’ll run yourself into the ground”

Tarquin looked up at Lowell, clearly annoyed. “Whoever can’t hack it can take a hike! No one’s forcing them to work overtime! Everyone, out! But I want these reports on my desk before work tomorrow. I need to review them.”

Lowell left the CEO’s office looking defeated and was immediately swarmed by his colleagues.

“Is he still at it tonight?”

Lowell just shrugged. “Yep.”

There were groans all around.

Someone asked mournfully, “What’s gotten into the boss? Did someone tick him off? Can’t we just... I don’t know, try to cheer him up somehow?”

Another chimed in, “If anyone can get the boss to crack a smile, I swear I’d give him my paycheck!”

Lowell sighed. “Sometimes, it takes more than just good intentions.”

Tarquin was upset because of Elysia. But Elysia’s hostility towards Tarquin was so palpable, she saw him as nothing short of a plague.

So, there was no way Elysia would reach out to him. Not to mention trying to cheer him up!

As for Tarquin making the first move? With the way he was, prideful and aloof, that was out of the question. After reaching out only to get rebuffed harshly by Elysia multiple times, there was no way he’d do it again.

Both of them too stubborn for their own good meant the problem remained

Meanwhile, the kids were too worried about Elysia to even think about school.

Emmett was on a mission to cook Elysia’s favorite comfort foods around the

Evan tried every trick in the book to bring a smile to her face.

Elliot, the quiet one, simply stayed by her side, offering silent support. Elysia could always count on waking up to see him there.

Elysia felt a mix of heartache and reassurance. “Elliot, what time is it?”

“It’s four in the afternoon. Thirsty, Mom?”

She nodded, and Elliot helped her sit up, propping a pillow behind her.

“Where are Evan and Emmett?”

Elliot handed her a glass of water. “We ran out of groceries. Blossom took them to the supermarket.”

After taking a few sips and setting the glass aside, Elysia looked at Elliot. “Don’t worry, sweetheart. I’m feeling much better today.”

Elliot was wise beyond his years. “It’s the heartache that needs healing for you to truly recover.”

“Hmm?”

“I can tell, you have got a lot on your mind. You always say a person’s heart can only hold so much. If it’s too full, it hurts, and can even make you sick. So, why do you keep everything bottled up inside?”

Elysia was speechless.

Elliot might not have been the most talkative kid, but when he spoke, it was always with insight. Despite being only five, he carried himself like the man of the house, the pillar of their little family.

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 224[561 words]

Elysia paused for a moment, then nodded in agreement.

“You’re right. I’ve been carrying a lot of worries lately, but I didn’t want to trouble you kids with them.*

“Well rather be involved than worried sick. Besides, haven’t you always said two heads are better than one? You should share what’s on your mind. Together, we might just figure it out” said Elliot

Elysia sighed deeply, hesitant to bring up Winona’s situation.

After all Winona’s troubles might be linked to a criminal investigation, and she didn’t want her children getting involved.

She then mentioned Elijah, “Lately, I’ve been trying to help this kid, the one I told you about before, who’s struggling with mental health

issues.”

“Elijah?”

Elliot was aware of Elijah’s existence but didn’t know he was his own brother. He had always thought Elijah was the child of Tarquin and

another woman.

“Yes, exactly! But now, there’s a complicated issue. Some people seem to not want Elijah to get better, so they’re against me treating

him.”

Elliot knew Elysia was talking about Allegra. He pretended to be clueless. “Did they threaten you?”

Yes.

“And what about Elijah’s dad? Didn’t he step in to say something, to warn those people off?”

I’m not entirely sure. He did say that no one would treat me like that again.”

Elliot frowned slightly, realizing that Tarquin’s handling of Allegra had been kept from Elysia.

Why isn’t he speaking up?

Elysia, not fully understanding their family dynamics, would naturally still be afraid.

“So, you want to keep helping Elijah but are afraid of getting hurt, right?”

Elysia quickly nodded. It was one thing if it was just her, but now Elliot and Evan were involved too. She couldn’t just think about Elijah without considering her sons.

Elliot thought for a moment and then said, “Actually, this problem isn’t too hard to solve.”

“Really? Do you have an idea?”

“Yes. Think about it, Mom. Those people’s goal is to stop you from treating Elijah. If you stop treating him, they wouldn’t care about you seeing him anymore.”

Elysia was puzzled, “But I’m seeing Elijah to treat him.”

“You can still treat him, just without letting anyone know.”

*Secretly?”

“Yes!”

“No, that’s too risky. If those people find out, it would be even more dangerous.”

Then make sure they don’t find out.”

“How can I possibly do that?”

Elliot said, “Make them lose interest, and they’ll give up on snooping.”

Elysia was getting more confused. “Elliot, can you please clarify? Don’t beat around the bush; I’m not followin

Elliot smiled indulgently, “Just publicly announce that Elijah is already better.”

Elysia was taken aback when Elliot continued to explain, “If everyone believes Elijah is already cured, who would bother keeping an eye on him? Even if you’re with Elijah every day, no one would care anymore. Why are they threatening you now? Because they think you can cure Elijah. But if Elijah is already ‘cured’, you become irrelevant to them.”

This time, Elysia understood completely.

“Right! That could work! Pretend Elijah is already better, then I can get close to him and treat him in secret. But wait, those people won’t easily believe Elijah is cured. We need a way to convince them, but with Elijah’s mental health issues, I can’t just make him act cured.”

Elliot sighed inwardly, thinking, Oh, dear Mom.

“That part is even

simpler.”

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 225[716 words]

Elliot leaned in close to Elysia and whispered something into her ear.

Elysia’s eyes initially sparkled with excitement, but then her brows furrowed in concern.

The idea was brilliant!

But for her, it was just too risky!

Seeing her troubled expression, Elliot asked, "Don't you think it's a good idea, Mom?"

Elysia neither nodded nor shook her head. "I... need to think about it."

She really had to mull over whether to go through with it or not!

Understanding his mom's hesitation, Elliot didn't press further but offered some reassurance, "Take your time, Mom. Whenever you're ready, just let me know, and I'll handle it personally. I won't involve Evan. You can trust me to take care of it."

Elysia nodded seriously. She did trust Elliot's judgment. Every plan Elliot had executed had gone off without a hitch.

Changing the subject, Elliot asked, "Did you get everything sorted out in Jindale City that you needed to?"

"Eh?" Elysia was momentarily taken aback before she realized Elliot was referring to her divorce from Tarquin.

Lately, her mind had been preoccupied with Elijah and Winona, almost forgetting about the divorce matter.

When she first returned, her thoughts were dominated by the divorce, but now, with Elijah and Winona on her mind, she felt less urgent

about it.

Elysia shook her head. "Not yet, but there's no rush."

Elliot slightly narrowed his eyes. He had been ready to use a certain leverage to negotiate with Tarquin if Elysia was in a hurry. Tarquin had already reached out, eager to get his hands on that leverage, willing to meet any of Elliot's demands.

But seeing Elysia's lack of urgency, Elliot decided to wait. They would cross that bridge when they came to it.

"You don't need to worry about my issues. You and your brothers have been home for a few days now. Tomorrow, why don't you all go to school? It's a great opportunity you shouldn't miss. Understand?" Elysia suddenly chimed in.

The mention of going to kindergarten made Elliot grimace, his mind flooded with images of little girls chattering incessantly around

him.

Seeing his frown, Elysia asked, "Don't you want to go?"

"Mm, I'm worried about you, Mom. I just want to be with you."

Elysia smiled gently, "I'm fine now, no need to worry. And while we're a family, we're also individuals. We can't be glued together 24/7. You boys are at the age to go to school, and you can't skip that."

"...Okay, I'll listen to you, Mom. We'll go tomorrow."

The next day, Elysia felt a bit more spirited. After sending off her little ones to school, she used the excuse of needing a check-up to see Benjamin.

ꠘꠘ`

Benjamin was surprised to see her. "Ms. Thorne, what a nice surprise!"

Walking into the clinic somewhat awkwardly, Elysia said, "Dr. Benjamin, I came to get some medicine."

"Oh? Are you sick?"

"Yeah, I had a fever a few days ago. It's gone now, but I've run out of medicine."

Benjamin promptly asked her to sit and take her temperature, followed by

a

basic examination.

"You're not feverish anymore. Your throat's a bit swollen, though. I'll prescribe some anti-inflammatory medication. Make sure to drink plenty of water and rest."

"Okay."

She knew her condition well. Having studied medicine for years, her skills were not to be underestimated.

Her visit to Benjamin was actually a pretext. She wanted to inquire about Elijah's condition.

For some reason, she couldn't let go of Elijah even though she was almost hit by a car because of him. Even though Elijah didn't seem to reciprocate her feelings, she couldn't help but feel a deep,

inexplicable connection to him.

While Benjamin was busy preparing the medicine, Elysia took the opportunity to ask, "Has Elijah been discharged?"

“Yes, he left the hospital a few days ago. He dislikes staying in hospitals, and with his psychological condition, there wasn’t much point

09:39

in him staying?

How has he been lately? Any improvement?”

Benjamin sighed softly, shaking his head. He’s not even eating now*

Why not?

After a moment’s hesitation. Benjamin explained, “He’s just like his father, stubborn. Once he sets his mind on something, that’s it. Lately. Figah only wants to eat food you’ve made. If anyone else makes it, he won’t touch it.

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 226[650 words]

Just like Tarquin had eyes only for Elijah’s moin, swearing he’d spend his life with her and no other woman would do,

Elysia frowned, her concern wasn’t his devotion, her heart was set on Elijah!

“It’s been days, can he really go without eating?”

“He’s not completely fasting, just nibbling here and there, barely enough to keep going. I heard he’s lost a few pounds in just a matter of days.*

Elysia was shocked. “Lost a few pounds?”

“Yeah, Elijah’s always had a lot on his mind, and lately, he’s been alck on and off. When he was eating well, he could at least maintain his weight, but now, he’s shedding it fast.”

Elysia’s frown deepened, her heart ached with worry and quilt! The thought of Elijah, pale and thin, plunged her into a sea of self-reproach.

It was all her fault! If only she had made the effort to cook delicious meals for him every day, he wouldn’t be wasting away.

“I don’t know them. Just two guys in suits, pretty intimidating.”

2 2 2 2 3

Not sure if they were Tarin’s men, Elysia replied, “Bring the food back then. I’ll still pay you.”

The delivery guy sounded almost in tears, “But they won’t let me leave without an explanation.”

Feeling cornered, he blurted out Elysia’s name to the bodyguards.

Upon hearing Elysia’s name, the bodyguards lit up and immediately contacted Lowell, “Lowell, you won’t believe it! Ms. Thorne arranged for food to be delivered to Elijah!”

Lowell was astounded, “Really?”

“Yes! The delivery guy’s right here. Ms. Thorne didn’t come herself, sent it through a courier. There are three thermal boxes full of

delicious food.”

“Keep him there; I’ll confirm and get back.”

Trying to contain his excitement, Lowell quickly reached out to Elysia.

Once confirmed, he dashed out of his office towards the CEO’s suite.

Seeing his excitement, a colleague stopped him, “Lowell, something good?”

09:39

Lowell, unable to contain his joy, announced, “Get ready to celebrate; no work today! And definitely no overtime!”

Everyone was over the moon. “For real?”

“Just wait for the news!”

Bursting with confidence. Lowell barged into the CEO’s office, too thrilled to even knock,

“Tarquin, it’s a day for celebration!”

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 227[595 words]

Tarquin was buried in paperwork, the air in the office thick and warm. He had shrugged off his blazer, now just in a dark shirt with sleeves rolled up to his elbows, revealing muscled forearms and an expensive wristwatch.

Hunched over his desk, his brow was furrowed, back ramrod straight.

His attractive hands clenched a pen, signing his name with a flourish at the bottom of the document before looking up, annoyance evident in his tone. "What's got your feathers all ruffled now?"

"Ms. Thome..."

Before Lowell could finish, Tarquin snapped, "Didn't I make myself clear? Don't bring her up in my presence!"

"But, Ms. Thome, she..."

Out!

"Tarquin..."

"Get out!"

Tarquin's fury seemed to shake the very foundations of the room, sending Lowell scampering out in a hurry.

The others crowded around him. "Lowell, any luck? Can we get the day off?"

Lowell shook his head in defeat. "Back to the grind, folks."

Groans filled the room, "For the love of God, is there no one who can save us?"

Lowell just sighed. Ms. Thome could have been their savior... if only.

Lowell knew Elysia meant well for Elijah, but without Tarquin's word, he dared not let the meals be delivered to Elijah.

So, he had to make a call, "Cancel the delivery, no hard feelings. Just return the meal as it was, and yeah, the delivery fee's covered."

Soon, the delivery guy was back with the untouched meal.

Elysia was beyond surprised when she found out, immediately calling Lowell, “Why was the meal returned? Why can’t Elijah have it?” Lowell was at a loss for words, stammering, “Elijah’s meals... need his father’s approval. And he’s... busy right now.”

Elysia got the message loud and clear. It was him blocking the meals!

Fuming, Elysia tried calling him, only to be hung up on.

And again.

And then blocked.

Seething, she called Lowell back, “Please, just get him to answer. It’s urgent, about Elijah.”

Lowell, knowing better than to linger, placed the phone on Tarquin’s desk with the speaker on, “Ms. Thorne for you.” Then dashed off without looking back.

“Hey! Tarin, you listening?” Elysia’s voice filled the room.

Tarquin’s frown deepened.

Elysia was livid as she shouted, “Say something! Don’t play dead! If you’re a man, you’d talk!”

Tarquin’s expression darkened as he said, “Stay out of my business! Don’t harass me!”

Before he could hang up, Elysia was already unleashing her fury, “Harassing you? Dream on! If it wasn’t for Elijah, do you think I’d bother contacting you? And you dare hang up on me, block me? You spineless, selfish jerk!”

“You...”

“What about me? I risked my life to bring Elijah food, and you, his father, can’t even care for him because of your petty feelings! Are you even a man? A father? You won’t let Elijah have the food I sent over. Have you ever thought about it from his perspective? He’s been starving these past few days! Even if you despise me, think about Elijah for once! Your actions are just...”

“What did you say? You sent food for Elijah?”

Elysia stopped in her tracks, her anger unabated. “Don’t act like you didn’t know! You had it sent back to me!”

Tarquin frowned as he yelled, “Lowell!”

Lowell, who had been eavesdropping, quickly entered. “Yes?”

Tarquin glared at him and asked, “She sent food for Elijah?”

“Yeah.”

شاره ه

And why didn't you tell me?

I was trying to, but you wouldn't listen and

and just kicked me out ”

Tarquin sighed, exasperated. Couldn't you have just gotten to the point?-

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 228[622 words]

Lowell felt utterly wronged “You didn't even give me a chance.”

“And you... you think you're in the right now?”

Lowell remained silent. Justice lies in the heart of the beholder. Right now, he might be feeling wronged, but he won't say it out loud. On the other end of the phone, Elysia was all ears. She knew he didn't know about the food.

So, her little rant earlier... wasn't unjustified after all!

And it was him who didn't give a proper ear to the matter. Not letting Lowell finish his piece, that's on him!

“You...”

They both started at the same time.

Elysia pouted, “You go first.”

Tarquin explained, “I didn't know you made Elijah food.”

“Oh.” The response was cold.

Tarquin was silent, the tension thick in the air.

Lowell, ever the peacemaker, chimed in, “Ms. Thorne, is the food still up for grabs? If so, Tarin and I can swing by and pick it up. We're free.”

Elysia retorted, "You come alone. I don't want to see him."

Lowell was taken aback. "Ah?"

Elysia added, "Seeing him annoys me!"

Tarquin clenched his teeth in silence, seething.

Lowell, with a brave face, said, "Alright, alright, I'll head over now. I'll call you when I'm there."

*Okay. Elysia hung up.

Lowell quickly grabbed his phone, safeguarding it from Tarquin's wrath. Given Tarquin's current mood, dark and stormy, it was best to play it safe.

"Regardless, it's good news that Ms. Thorne decided to whip up something for Elijah. He hasn't been eating well these days, and today he can finally have a proper meal."

go."

Thinking of Elijah, Tarquin's expression softened noticeably, He shut down his computer, stood up, and donned his jacket. "Let's

Seizing the moment, Lowell suggested, "Today's been a good day. How about we take a break? The team's been through the wringer lately."

be day

Tarquin, while adjusting his tie, agreed, "Give them two days off. Pay triple salary for this month."

"Right on."

The news spread like wildfire among the staff, sparking excitement.

"Lowell, was it that phone call that sweet-talked Mr. Bradford into a good mood?"

"I heard a woman's voice! Was it, Lowell?"

Lowell squinted. "Eavesdropping on the boss's calls now, are we? Looking for trouble?"

"No way, I just happened to overhear by chance. So... it was that lady on the phone who cheered him up?"

With Lowell's tacit acknowledgment, excitement burgeoned.

"Wow, Mr. Bradford is finally smitten, huh?"

“Who’s the lucky lady that caught his eye? She must be a real gem!”

“No wonder Mr. Bradford has been so moody lately. Turns out he’s in love. They say men in love can be so childish, flying off the handle at the slightest thing...”

The office door suddenly opened, and Tarquin stepped out.

The chattering crowd instantly fell silent, quickly returning to their desks as if nothing had happened.

Tarquin, stone-faced, strode to the elevator without a word.

09:40

Lowell hurried after him.

As the elevator doors closed, Tarquin asked, “Who’s in love?”

Lowell’s heart skipped a beat, managing a nervous chuckle, “You heard that, huh? Just a misunderstanding.”

Tarquin coldly said, “Fizone is always looking for volunteers.”

Lowell pleaded, “I’m sorry. Tarquin. I won’t gossip about you again. Rather than sending me to Fizone to mine rocks, you might as well just end me.”

Tarquin replied icily, “If you don’t fancy mining, then quit daydreaming. Elysia and I are never happening!”

“Well, you never know about the future, right?”

“If I ever end up with her, you can have my CEO spot, and I’ll call you ‘boss’.”

After those chilling words, Tarquin stormed out of the elevator.

Lowell was left pondering...

Should Lowell hold out some hope? Could this be his chance to rise?

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 229[620 words]

The rain in Jindale City had finally let up, leaving a vibrant rainbow painting the sky.

People on the streets couldn't resist the urge to capture the moment, with their smartphones out, exclaiming, "Look, look, a rainbow! So pretty."

Lowell couldn't help but remark, "Ever since Ms. Thorne took Elijah under her wing, it's like even the heavens stopped crying and threw a rainbow into the mix to celebrate. Seems like there's some real chemistry between Ms. Thorne and Elijah. Even the universe is taking notes."

Tarquin glanced up at the rainbow but didn't join in the conversation. He wasn't sure about Elysia and Elijah's chemistry; he was just happy that the gloomy days were behind them, replaced by clear skies.

He also snapped a photo with his phone, planning to show it to Elijah later.

When they reached Blossom's apartment complex, Lowell parked the car and called Elysia.

Soon enough, she appeared.

She was wearing a cream-colored down jacket and snow boots, her face bare of makeup, her hair unstyled and blowing in the wind, covering her eyes. She brushed her hair behind her ear, revealing ears reddened by the cold. Not just her ears, her nose was red too.

Maybe it was Tarquin's imagination, or perhaps it was the contrast, but he thought she looked paler than before.

Lowell got out of the car, and Elysia waved at him, indicating where she was.

Tarquin stayed inside, lighting a cigarette. He couldn't hear their conversation, but they seemed to be having a good time.

She smiled at Lowell, her white teeth and dimples showing. It was, a sweet sight, like that of a gentle

woman.

She could smile at Lowell, Benjamin, Zane, and Callum.

But never at him!

Hmph!

Tarquin didn't know where this irritation came from, but he took a deep drag of his cigarette.

Soon, Lowell returned to the car, cheerfully announcing, "Ms. Thorne has prepared a feast today. Elijah's in for a treat."

Tarquin kept a straight face, not responding.

As Lowell got in and closed the door, he turned and said, "Guess what Ms. Thorne told me?"

"Not interested."

"Aren't you a bit curious?"

"What could she possibly say? It's not like something good will come out of her mouth about me. It's all just trash talk."

Lowell paused and then said, "You're wrong. She didn't mention you at all."

10:55

Embarrassment opened the door, and humiliation walked right in. That was even worse than trash talk!

"Why didn't she mention me?"

"No idea. Not a word about you."

Asking more just made things more awkward.

Sensing Tarquin's mood, Lowell quickly changed the subject, "Ms. Thorne said she hadn't been cooking for Elijah because she was sick. She asked us to tell Elijah that she's more than happy to cook for him as long as he wants."

Tarquin looked away, peering out the window, noticing Elysia was no longer in sight.

As Lowell started the car and buckled up, he added, "Ms. Thorne is genuinely nice. I thought she stopped cooking for Elijah because she was scared after the Allegra incident. Turns out, she was ill. She looks much more worn out lately, very pale."

Tarquin thought, "No wonder she looked paler than before. It must be the paleness of illness, drained of vitality."

"Send her some health supplements from home, and have Heath prepare some soup to send over as well." Lowell was pleased to hear that. "That's the spirit! Why can't you always be nice to her? If you're nicer, maybe she'll warm up to you, right?"

"Who said I was being nice to her?"

"Then why send health supplements and soup? What's that about?"

Tarquin frowned. "I don't want to owe her anything!"

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 230[552 words]

Tarquin wanted to give Elysia the health supplements to repay her kindness with his own thoughtful gesture, ensuring they were even–seven.

As he walked in, Heath made a quick exit, mentioning something about heading over to the villa to whip up a comforting soup for Elysia.

Elijah, who had been gazing out the window, seemed to sense Tarquin’s arrival, turning his head at the sound. The sight of the food container in Tarquin’s hands subtly shifted his expression, a flicker of eagerness passing through his eyes.

Without a word, Tarquin set the container on the dining table and proceeded to open it. Elijah, catching the cue, washed his hands and took his seat at the table, clearly looking forward to the meal.

However, Tarquin didn’t immediately serve the food. Instead, he sat down across from Elijah, his gaze

serious and intent.

“A few days ago, she was under the weather, which is why she couldn’t cook for you,” Tarquin began, referring to Elysia. “She wanted me to tell you that if you enjoy her cooking, she’s more than happy to make you meals.”

Elijah remained silent, prompting Tarquin to continue.

“But here’s the thing, Elijah. The person cooking for you is a woman, a young and attractive one at that. You’ve met her before, remember? The one who showed up out of the blue.”

Elijah’s brow furrowed slightly at the mention of Elysia, clearly recalling their encounter.

“First off, I want to make it crystal clear: there’s nothing between her and me. We’re just friends, and if it weren’t for you, our paths would rarely cross. She’s cooking for you because she cares, and as a man, if you can’t accept her kindness or even stand to be around her, then you shouldn’t accept her generosity. It’s only fair. No one should be expected to offer their kindness without some level of acceptance in

return.”

Elijah looked displeased, but Tarquin held his gaze, unflinching.

“I want you to understand that love and care should be mutual. And more than that, I’m hoping Elysia can do more than just cook for you. Maybe, just maybe, she can help heal some of the pain you’re carrying, much like Corbin found his way back to happiness.”

Elijah remained quiet, prompting Tarquin to add, “If you can’t accept her, then I won’t let you enjoy her meals, no matter how much you might want to. It wouldn’t be right, not if you can’t offer her the same sincerity in return. And if she decides to leave because of that, adapting to someone else’s cooking will be tough, as you’ve experienced these past few days.”

With that, Tarquin slid the food container closer to himself, distancing it from Elijah as a symbolic gesture. He was trying to teach a hard lesson, one steeped in love and long-term thinking, knowing all too well that Elysia, an independent spirit, might not always be around.

Elijah’s frown deepened, clearly upset by the turn of events.

Tarquin hated to see him distressed but felt these truths needed to be aired. Elijah wasn’t oblivious; he understood the message, even with his struggles.

10:55

After a tense moment, Elijah stood and retreated to his room, leaving Tarquin staring at the closed door, wondering if his son would rather go hungry than accept Elysia’s kindness.