

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 231[627 words]

The phone suddenly rang, a call from Lowell.

Tarquin picked up and walked back to his room. Stepping out onto the balcony, he lit a cigarette.

Lowell sounded like he was trying to keep a lid on his anger, “Tarquin, got news from the old family estate. Next month, on the fifth, there’s a memorial service for our ancestors. They’ve even roped Elijah into it, saying now that he’s turned five, it’s time he followed the Bradford family tradition. The poor kid’s supposed to light candle, bow his head in respect to our forefathers, all on his own. And they want Elijah to prepare a speech, officially marking him as the next heir to the Bradford family, addressing the entire family.”

Tarquin’s brows furrowed deeply as he took a harsh drag from his cigarette.

Lowell was seething, “Gideon’s doing this on purpose! He knows damn well that Elijah’s struggling with his mental health, and yet he’s pushing for this whole ceremony, not to mention having Elijah speak in front of the whole Bradford family. It’s like he wants to make a mockery out of Elijah!”

Elijah, with his autism, finds it hard enough interfacing with strangers, let alone climbing up to some memorial service or delivering a speech!

Last year’s service was a nightmare. They dragged Elijah up there, and everyone was giving him these sideways glances, whispering behind his back.

Elijah couldn’t stand it. He got so upset he tried to leave, but ended up tumbling down the hillside.

It was a close call!

Aside from Tarquin and Lowell, no one else seemed to care. If anything, there was mockery.

And when they learned Elijah had only passed out, not perished, you could sense their disappointment.

Lowell could still picture their sneering faces! It made him grind his teeth in fury!

“Tarquin! We can’t gamble with Elijah’s life. As for the Bradford ancestors, we can skip paying respect this year. Let’s just refuse to attend. Let them deal with it!”

After another drag, Tarquin's expression was dark and stormy. "Tell them Elijah will attend the memorial service but won't perform the rites. No speech!"

Gideon caught wind of this soon after and scoffed.

His confidant remarked, "I thought Mr. Tarquin would refuse to let Elijah participate this year, given his worsening condition. Surprising they've agreed."

Gideon responded icily, "Elijah is the sole heir to the Bradford family. He must attend the service! If he skips this, he might as well be disowned. Besides, Tarquin has always respected his father. It's not just about honoring our ancestors; it's about his father too. He wouldn't miss it for the world!"

"So, shall I pass this along?"

"No, tell Tarquin that rules are rules. I was five when I recognized my ancestors, so was his father, his grandfather, and all our forebears. It can't stop with Elijah. If he struggles, he can be given guidance, but even if it's just a few words, he must speak. It's part of our tradition!"

stop

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Tarquin and Gideon were like gods at war, with a host of spectators eager for drama.

However, this time, the spectacle wasn't Gideon's to enjoy but Tarquin's.

The entire Bradford family, distant relatives included, anyone with even a drop of Bradford blood, was itching to see Tarquin and Elijah falter.

Elijah's condition was well known. But to openly revel in Tarquin and Elijah's misfortune? That opportunity only came once a year! After all, it was the only time they got to see Elijah.

As Gideon said, no matter how formidable Tarquin might be, his son remained his Achilles' heel.

Incapable of even delivering a few words of speech was utterly humiliating!

The Bradfords were all eagerly awaiting the fifth of next month, ready for the show.

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 232[483 words]

Tarquin's mood plummeted as he read Gideon's reply. It was clear as day that Gideon was using the ceremony as leverage against him and Elijah.

"Let's not respond for now," he decided, ending the call and lighting up a cigarette to calm his nerves.

The current state of affairs made it impossible for Elijah to participate in the speech and acknowledgment ceremony. It would only serve to turn him into the butt of their jokes. And if the stress triggered another episode...

Suddenly, a crash from the living room cut his thoughts short. Tarquin quickly snuffed out his cigarette and rushed to investigate.

Elijah stood at the kitchen doorway, surrounded by the remnants of a shattered ceramic spoon.

"Are you okay, Elijah? Did you hurt yourself?" Tarquin asked, rushing over.

Elijah shook his head.

"Why were you trying to get a spoon by yourself? What did you need it for?" Tarquin inquired,

"I wanted to eat," Elijah replied calmly.

"Do you remember what I told you just now?" Tarquin prodded after a pause.

Elijah frowned slightly, taking a moment before responding, "I want to meet her, but only if there's nothing between you two."

Tarquin's heart skipped a beat. Was Elijah considering accepting Elysia?

He couldn't help but let out a chuckle, the tension from before dissipating entirely, leaving only joy.

Elijah's willingness to meet Elysia was a significant step forward, something Tarquin hadn't dared to hope

for.

Elysia's cooking must have really won him over, he thought with a sense of pride.

"I wouldn't lie about something like this. You can see for yourself if there's anything to worry about. Eat now, and I'll contact her to arrange a meeting," Tarquin assured Elijah, who then nodded in agreement.

After setting Elijah up with a fresh plate at the dining table and laying out the array of dishes Elysia had prepared, Tarquin couldn't help but watch Elijah eat with a sense of fatherly contentment. It was a simple joy to see his child eat heartily,

Once Elijah finished, Tarquin asked, "When do you want to see her?"

"Whenever suits her," Elijah responded indifferently.

With that, Tarquin set about cleaning up, his mood significantly brighter. However, when he tried to reach out to Elysia, he realized he had blocked her number in a moment of pique.

Embarrassed but determined, he unblocked her and attempted to make contact, only to be met with rejection and eventually blocked in return.

In a fit of frustration, Tarquin reached out via WhatsApp, trying to salvage some dignity by claiming it was Lowell's idea.

But his attempts at contact were ignored, and Lowell's subsequent call only added insult to injury,

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revealing Tarquin's plea had been in vain.

Frustrated and with nowhere left to turn, Tarquin demanded, "Lowell, pick me up, we're going to see Elysia!"

His pride was the least of his concerns now; his son's well-being took precedence.

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 233[550 words]

When Tarquin came looking for Elysia, she had just hung up the phone with Callum.

After worrying about Elijah, her concerns had shifted to Winona.

Communicating with Callum about Winona was her only option. First, Callum's family was well-off and had the means to dig up more information. Second, Winona was his high school sweetheart, and her well-being was of utmost importance to him.

She hadn't yet shared the news about Winona's situation with Blossom. Knowing Blossom would only fret alongside Elysia, unable to offer any real help.

Zane was also in the dark. Elysia had a nagging suspicion about him and feared that mentioning anything might tip him off.

The doorbell rang, and Elysia, clad in casual loungewear, emerged from her bedroom. “Who’s there?”

Silence greeted her question.

Outside, Tarquin stood with a scowl, glaring at Lowell, “Speak up!”

Lowell was puzzled. Why was he expected to talk when it was Tarquin who wanted to see Elysia?

Outmatched, Lowell cleared his throat and replied cheerfully, “Ms. Thorne, it’s me, Lowell.”

Elysia had a good impression of Lowell and dropped her guard, opening the door, “Lowell, what brings you here?”

Her expression soured instantly upon spotting Tarin behind Lowell. Her brows knitted together, and her demeanor turned frosty. “What are you doing here?”

The stark contrast between her warm greeting for Lowell and her icy reception for Tarquin didn’t sit well with Tarquin. His lips thinned, barely containing his irritation.

It had been a while since anyone dared to give him such attitude!

Quick to smooth things over, Lowell intervened, “We just wanted to thank you for the meal you prepared for Elijah today and talk a bit about him.”

Knowing they were coming, Lowell had made a detour to the mansion to pick up a few gifts.

He brought a prized Alaskan king crab and a rare Brittany lobster, both freshly airlifted in luxurious gift packages.

With gifts in hand, implying a wish to be welcomed inside, and considering Elijah was involved, Elysia reluctantly let them in.

No sooner had they entered, Lowell’s phone rang. “Ms. Thorne, I’ll leave you with Tarin for a moment. Need to take this call downstairs.”

Left alone with Tarquin, Elysia poured him a glass of water with such vigor it seemed more like she intended to splash it in his face than offer a drink.

“I’m not thirsty!” Tarquin declared, on guard..

Elysia slammed the half-poured glass on the table and said, “Whatever.”

Tarquin remained silent.

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Sitting opposite him, Elysia's simple yet conservative loungewear, adorned with dainty chrysanthemums and white lace, complemented her demure charm. She appeared gentle and docile, a picture-perfect

belle.

Yet, the moment she spoke, she transformed from a belle into a fiery dame, her gentle demeanor replaced by a fierce resolve.

"Spit it out! What do you want?"

Tarquin, struggling to keep his cool, managed, "Thanks for looking out for Elijah."

"No thanks needed. My concern for Elijah has nothing to do with you!"

Her care was purely out of empathy for Elijah's resemblance to Elliot and Evan, and nothing more.

Tarquin insisted, "I'm his father!"

Elysia shot back, "That's irrelevant to me! In my eyes, Elijah is his own person. My concern is for Elijah alone. If that's all you came for, you can leave. You're not welc

[537 words]

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Tarquin felt like he was about to erupt, the frustration boiling inside him was nearly uncontrollable.

"Can't we just have a normal conversation? I didn't come here to fight."

Elysia, on the other hand, wasn't even trying to keep her cool.

"Who's fighting with you? Do I know you that well that I need to argue? Get over yourself!"

"You... I come here to say thanks, ant! this is how you treat me?"

"Who thanks someone with that attitude? You look like you're here to pick a fight! If you didn't want to come, you shouldn't have bothered!"

*Elysia!"

Jerk!

His voice was loud, but Elysia's was even louder!

He called her by her name, but she called him a jerk!

Bring it on!

Tarquin's breathing became erratic with anger, "What did you call me? You are just...

He tried to speak but was cut off by Elysia again, "Completely unreasonable, right? That's me, unreasonable. What are you gonna do about it?"

"Elysia!"

"Don't shout my name! If you can't handle it, then leave! Now! Stop annoying me!"

Tarquin was so furious that he was lost for words.

Oh my god!

Sharp-tongued Elysia, victorious!

The usually commanding, assertive, and dignified Mr. Bradford, lost an argument!

Tarquin had never felt this humiliated in his life. Even those in the Bradford family, who spent their days plotting against him, had never dared to be this brazen in his presence!

His pride couldn't take it, and he thought about just walking away and never dealing with this infuriating woman again!

But the thought of his son made him bite his lip hard, clench his jaw, and glare at her!

Glaring fiercely!

For the sake of his son, he endured!

Through gritted teeth, Tarquin said, "You think, if it wasn't for Elijah asking me to come, I would have bothered?"

Never in a million years!

Elysia completely redefined his understanding of women. He had seen all types of women, but never one

10:02

like her! Belligerent, illogical, unreasonable!

Hearing this, Elysia's demeanor softened a bit. "Elijah asked you to come?"

Tarquin scowled. "Elijah wants to see you!"

"What? Say that again?"

"I said Elijah wants to see you."

Elysia's eyes widened in disbelief, blinking rapidly as she asked, "Elijah wants to see me?"

"Yeah!"

"Why would he suddenly want to see me? I thought he was annoyed by me."

Before Tarquin could respond, the sounds of little footsteps approached from outside, "Mommy will be so happy to see us back early, wonder what she's up to?"

"Shh, keep it down, let's surprise her."

The door unlocked and swung open.

Elysia leaped from the sofa, panic-stricken! Without thinking, she grabbed his arm and dragged him into the nearest bedroom.

Before they could even shut the bedroom door, the little ones burst in, "Mommy! We are back early! Surprise or what?"

Surprise? More like a total shock

She was on the verge of a heart attack!

In a frenzy, Elysia pulled open a closet door and shoved him inside! It wasn't until the closet door was closed that she realized she was in there with him.

By the time she thought about leaving, it was too late; Evan had already run into the room.

"Mommy!"

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resisted.

Unable to control his physical reaction yet disliking it, he forcibly pried her hands off, "Elysia..."

"Mommy!"

His voice overlapped with that of Evan."

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Evan, sharp as ever, questioned, "Hm? Did I just hear a man's voice?"

Elysia's heart thundered against her chest, like a drumroll in overdrive.

Though Tarquin's vision was obscured by her hands, he could hear the rapid beat of her heart.

He couldn't fathom her panic. Yet, she pressed even closer to him.

Suddenly, Elysia pressed against his evident arousal!

Tarquin felt as if struck by lightning, his body tingling, a suppressed groan escaping him.

Elysia, panicked, tiptoed to seal his lips with hers.

Tarquin's body shuddered again, desire peaking uncontrollably.

Without a second thought, as soon as her lips touched his, he grabbed the back of her head to prevent her escape. One hand secured her head, the other pressed against her lower back, pulling her fiercely into his embrace.

The force as if he wished to meld her into him.

Elysia was stunned, never anticipating such a reaction from him. Caught off-guard, she was overtaken, his breath filling her mouth...

He was like a predator, claiming his territory.

Or a parched land greeting a long-awaited rain, desperately absorbing.

Elysia was terrified by his intensity or body heating up, her chest heaving. Her lips sealed by his, she was deprived of even the space to breathe.

Tension, thrill, madness, chaos, shame...

She was on the verge of suffocating.

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 236[638 words]

Elysia tried to push Tarquin away, but couldn't. She wanted to struggle, but knowing Evan was just outside, she dared not make a sound.

Outside the closet, her three little munchkins were wondering where their mommy had vanished to, while inside, Elysia was wrapped tightly in Tarquin's arms, his lips demanding the sweet taste of hers.

"Huh? Where did everyone go? Elliot, Evan, Emmett, come see what I brought you!"

Blossom had just returned from picking up a delivery.

At her words, the kids scampered off.

Elysia snapped back to reality, managing to push Tarquin away with a stumble that nearly brought her to

her knees.

Tarquin pulled her back into his embrace to prevent her from falling.

Elysia raised her hand to slap him, but Tarquin caught her wrist, his brows furrowed, looking down at her intensely.

Her face was flushed red, lips bitten, holding his gaze defiantly. She wanted to yell at him, but the fear of alarming Blossom and the kids kept her silent.

Time seemed to stand still as they stared at each other, one with a complex expression, the other angry and embarrassed with tears rimming her eyes.

Until the kids' voices echoed again outside, "Mommy's jacket and shoes are here, but she's nowhere to be seen. Where could she be?"

Elysia quickly glanced outside, forcefully shrugged off Tarquin, and rushed to the door, slamming it shut and locking it from the inside.

The noise caught the kids' attention, who ran to the door,

“Mommy, you’re in there! Where were you hiding just now?”

Elysia, panting, replied, “I... I was changing my clothes. You kids go play; I’ll join you in a bit.”

“Okay!”

The kids ran off, and Elysia leaned against the door, catching her breath.

Tarquin emerged from the closet, his forehead sweaty, his suit wrinkled. He looked at Elysia, leaning against the door, with a complex expression.

Her cheeks had a hint of crimson, like a budding red rose, tempting and alluring..

Now, she seemed less innocent, and more seductive, as if she had transformed from a girl to a woman... all because of his kiss.

“...”

“Don’t talk!”

He barely started, and Elysia cut him off.

She bit her lip, walked over to the bed, and texted Blossom.

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Soon, Blossom’s voice was heard outside, shepherding the kids back to their rooms along with the sound of doors closing.

Elysia peeked outside first to ensure the kids had returned to their room, then she glared at Tarquin, teeth clenched.

“Get out!”

Tarquin didn’t move, so she took action. She dragged him out the door and into the elevator, her face flushed as she coldly warned, “Don’t you dare come to my place again! If you have something to say, call!” Tarquin was left speechless.

Downstairs, Lowell, having just ended a call, saw Tarquin descending and greeted him.

Tarquin, with a dark expression, ignored him.

Noticing his mood, Lowell paused and asked, “What happened? Something wrong?”

“Back to the office!” Tarquin spat out cold

got in the car, and started smoking.

He didn’t utter another word the whole ride, just smoked.

Lowell, concerned, ventured, “You didn’t have another fight with Ms. Thorne, did you?”

Tarquin’s face was stormy as he said, “From now on, you handle communications with her. Unless absolutely necessary, I don’t want to see her!”

With that, he locked himself in his office.

Lowell was left dumbfounded, then received a text from Elysia.

[Lowell, please tell Elijah I’m available to meet anytime. Just set up a time and let me know. Also, from now on, please direct all matters concerning Elijah to me directly, and keep his father out of sight. I don’t want to see him ever again!]

Lowell was more confused than ever as he thought, “What did I miss? What in the world had happened?”

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 237[642 words]

“What on earth is going on?” Blossom was equally baffled.

Elysia, putting her phone down, was too embarrassed to mention the kiss with that man, so she simply said,

“He came to talk to me about Elijah, and then you guys almost walked in on us.”

Blossom’s eyes widened. “No wonder you were so flustered! The daycare had a sudden closure today, and I forgot to tell you before I came back! And these gifts, they’re from him?”

“Yeah.”

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“King crab from Alaska, a giant lobster from Maine, and such a huge sea cucumber... My God, didn't you say he was bankrupt? Where did he get the money to buy these expensive gifts? They must've cost a fortune!”

Elysia was taken aback as she asked, “Are they that expensive?”

“Yeah!”

“He must be really worried I'd stop looking after Elijah, so he went all out!”

“Are you still planning to take care of Elijah? Aren't you afraid of retaliation?”

“I am, but I can't just abandon him. We'll take it one step at a time, starting with getting him the medical care he needs.”

Elysia, looking at the seafood, took a deep breath and rolled up her sleeves.

“Seafood feast tonight!”

Normally, she would've hesitated to accept such lavish gifts, but today was different. She was upset! After all he did, why not enjoy some seafood on him?

It's only right!

Not to enjoy it would be a loss!

Both the king crab and the giant lobster were fresh, a sight neither Elysia nor Blossom had ever seen before.

The kids were thrilled, playing and searching for recipes online.

One wanted it cooked this way, another that

often required the simplest cooking method

Steam it!

way, but they all agreed that the most expensive ingredients

The seafood was delicious, and the cooking process was filled with joy.

After the meal, Elysia suggested a trip to the mall.

First, to make the most of the kids' day off and take them out for some fun.

Second, she wanted to buy some gifts for Elijah. It was their first official meeting, and she didn't want to show up empty-handed.

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Plus, she hoped the gifts would help her learn more about Elijah's preferences.

At the mall, Elysia let the kids pick out their favorite toys.

With each child having different tastes and personalities, she decided to buy an extra set of whatever they chose. The extra set was for Elijah, allowing him to choose and thus revealing his preferences and

character.

If he chose the toy Elliot liked, it might mean he shared similar traits with Elliot.

Should he prefer Evan or Emmett's toys, it would suggest he had more in common with them.

While the kids were busy picking toys, Blossom suddenly exclaimed, "Sarah?"

Elysia followed her gaze and indeed spotted a familiar face!

Zane's cousin.

Blossom whispered, "Didn't you say Sarah had a miscarriage? Then who is she buying all those baby clothes and socks for?"

Watching her pick out baby clothes with such care and kindness, Elysia frowned slightly.

"She seems a bit off."

Right after Elysia spoke, Sarah looked up and saw her

Their eyes met, and Sarah's

instantly changed from gentle to fierce.

It was as if she was looking at her worst enemy! Overwhelmed with emotion, she started gasping for air, struggling to breathe, which alarmed...e store clerk who quickly offered to call a doctor.

"Mommy, can I get this?" Evan, having chosen his toy, ran over to ask Elysia.

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Sarah's gaze immediately shifted from Elysia to Evan. That fierce look, it was like something out of a thriller!

Elysia instinctively pulled Evan close and watched Sarah warily.

After a few tense seconds, Sarah, still frowning, shot Elysia a venomous look and left. Elysia's heart was racing. She entrusted the kids to Blossom and hurried after Sarah.

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 238[602 words]

Elysia was convinced that Sarah had gotten the wrong end of the stick about her! And it seemed like Sarah was also privy to some dirt on Winona.

As Sarah was about to step out of the mall, Elysia called out, "Sarah!"

Sarah turned around, her face a mask of fury as she spat out, "Murderer!"

The people at the mall entrance stared, a mix of shock and curiosity in their eyes as they turned towards Elysia.

Frowning, Elysia realized she couldn't let Sarah leave just like that. She quickly approached Sarah and grabbed her wrist. "Hold on, explain yourself. Who did I kill?"

Sarah's face twisted in anger, her facial muscles twitching uncontrollably. "You killed my son, and mark my words, I'll get back at you by taking your son! Just you wait!"

Her unwavering gaze and expression sent a chill down Elysia's spine.

"How could I possibly have killed your son, I..."

"Looking for Winona, are you? You'll never find her! Search all you want, but it'll be in vain," she cackled menacingly, like something out of a horror movie.

Elysia shivered, releasing her grip.

Seizing the moment, Sarah pushed Elysia away with a shove, sending her stumbling backward.

"Elysia!" Fortunately, Zane was there

catch her in time.

"Are you alright?" Zane asked, concern written all over his face.

Elysia didn't look at him, her gaze fixed on Sarah.

When Zane turned to face Sarah, his expression immediately darkened, his brows furrowed in anger as he shouted, "What do you think you're doing?"

Sarah seemed intimidated by him, shrinking back without a word.

"Take her away!"

At Zane's command, two middle-aged women hurried over to escort Sarah away.

Turning back to Elysia, Zane asked, "Are you okay? Do you need to go to the hospital?"

Catching her breath, Elysia looked at Zane and asked, "Where's Winona? Who killed Sarah's child?"

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Zane paused, then explained, "Don't mind her. She's been dealing with severe depression, spouting nonsense. To her, everyone's responsible for her child's death, even the doctors and nurses are not spared. As for Winona, we should hear from her soon. I've gotten in touch with her agent, who's figuring out a way for Winona to reach out."

Elysia stared at Zane. He met her gaze, calm and concerned.

Elysia looked away.

His words suggested Winona was alright.

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But hadn't Callum said Winona's agent had vanished? How had Zane managed to get in touch?

Coincidentally, Tarquin drove past the mall just in time to see Zane and Elysia together, appearing quite

intimate.

From his perspective, Elysia looked like a damsel in distress, nestled in Zane's arms, while Zane was all concern, showering her with attention.

Something inside Tarquin snapped. Angrily adjusting his tie, he commanded, "Tell them they're working overtime tonight!"

Lowell, focused on driving, was taken aback. "Tarquin, we just gave them the day off. Who knows what they're up to now? I thought we were meeting Keaton Huber."

“Back to the office! Notify the board and senior management, we’re having a meeting!”

Lowell was at a loss.

Was this about making those below suffer, and now those above?

What exactly had set him off today?

After a while, Tarquin added, “Did you find anything linking Zane to Gage Slater’s case?” Lowell replied uncertainly, “Nothing so far that connects him to the case.”

Tarquin’s brow furrowed deeper, remaining silent.

“Also, Elijah has invited Ms. Thorne to dinner. Are you sure you don’t want to show up?”

Lowell didn’t dare mention the message from Elysia, expressing her reluctance to meet again.

Tarquin’s frown deepened, yet he stayed silent, lost in thought.

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 239[716 words]

At the mall entrance, Elysia steadied her emotions and turned to Zane, saying, "Please, let us know the moment you hear anything about Winona. And remember, depression isn't something to take lightly. Keep an eye on Sarah, and it's probably best not to let her wander off alone."

"Of course! The second I get any news about Winona, you'll be the first to know. As for Sarah, we're keeping a close watch. Her sneaking out today was an unexpected slip; we'll be more vigilant moving forward."

"Alright." Elysia chatted casually with Zane for a few more moments before bidding him goodbye and walking away.

The moment she was out of Zane's sight, her expression shifted, and she quickly called Callum, "Hey, could you possibly check on Zane's cousin Sarah for me? I have a hunch she might know something about Winona. Also, Zane mentioned he got in touch with Winona's agent."

Callum was taken aback. "He got in touch with Winona's agent?"

"Yes."

"How is that possible? I've been trying to reach her for days with no luck."

"I'm not sure of the details; that's just what Zane told me."

"Alright, I'll keep you posted."

"And... try to keep it on the down-low, okay? We don't want to startle anyone."

"Got it."

Elysia was distracted for the rest of the afternoon, her thoughts consumed by Winona's situation.

As evening approached, signaling dinner time, she finally shifted her focus to Elijah.

Elijah had agreed to meet her for dinner. It was their first official meeting, and she couldn't afford to be careless. She wanted to make a good impression on Elijah to facilitate future interactions and provide him with psychological counseling.

Elysia prepared a feast and brought along many gifts, feeling confident about her effort.

However, the meeting didn't go as well as she had hoped. Elijah, although not overtly upset, was cold and unresponsive. He ignored her attempts at conversation as if he were mute.

When she offered him to choose from the gifts she brought, he merely glanced at them indifferently, selecting none.

After dinner, he retreated to his room, and when Elysia tried to follow, she found his bedroom door locked.

For three days, Elysia racked her brain trying to get Elijah to speak to her, all in vain.

Elijah was just as aloof and prideful as his father, keeping her at arm's length.

Feeling slightly defeated after three days of efforts, Elysia didn't give up. Before attempting to meet Elijah again on the fourth day, she first sought out Evan.

"Evan, I have something to discuss with you."

"What is it, mommy?"

"I was wondering if I could borrow White for a day."

Evan's eyes widened, and his face showed alarm. "You're not planning to get rid of it, are you? Trust me, Mommy, it doesn't bite unless provoked." Elysia chuckled, "I know, which is why I want to borrow it to keep a little friend company for the day."

"Are you talking about Elijah? I heard about him from my brother."

"Yes, Elijah. He's been feeling down, and I thought it might cheer him up."

"Then how about taking me to see him? I'm a real mood booster, much more than White!"

"That's not possible!" Elysia immediately refused.

Considering how much Elijah meant to Tarin, even a mosquito buzzing around Elijah would not go unnoticed.

If Evan were to cheer Elijah up, Tarin would definitely catch wind of it. And Evan's presence would be revealed!

Even though she hadn't seen Tarin in the past few days, she was aware that the house was under surveillance, and every move she and Elijah made was being monitored.

Under no circumstances could she allow Evan to visit Elijah.

Seeing Elysia's firm stance, Evan didn't press further. Although he had his grievances with Tarquin, he knew Elijah wasn't to blame.

Evan readily handed over White, instructing the little critter not to bite Elijah and to listen to Elysia before entrusting him to Elysia. "Here, take it."

Elysia was delighted, giving Evan a kiss on the cheek. "Thank you, my darling!"

White was Evan's prized possession, not something just anyone could borrow!

With a hearty breakfast and White in tow, Elysia made her way to Sunshine Community. Elijah's attitude towards her remained unchanged, effectively ignoring her presence.

Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem (Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 240[726 words]

It wasn't until Elysia pulled out White, that a flicker of emotion crossed Elijah's face.

Seizing the moment, Elysia quickly said, "Its name is White."

Elijah lifted his eyelids, a hint of curiosity in his gaze.

Elysia chuckled, "You must be wondering, why is it all black and yet named White, right?"

Elijah, furrowing his little brows, didn't reply. Elysia took it upon herself to answer, "Because it can perform magic! It's naturally black, but when it meets someone it likes or when something makes it happy, it turns completely white."

Elijah clearly didn't buy it, finally speaking his first words to Elysia, "Why is it black right now? Does it not like you?"

Elysia, thrilled that Elijah was talking to her, pinched herself discreetly to calm down, worried about scaring Elijah with her excitement. "It's not too fond of me. It's my son's pet. Initially, I was afraid it might hurt my son, and I didn't want my son to keep it. I guess it might hold a bit of a grudge against me."

White seemed to understand her words. It glanced at her, then turned away with a snooty air, the epitome of aloofness.

Elijah's interest in White deepened. He stared at White for a while, then placed his little hand on the table, palm up, coaxing White to crawl onto it. White was a small black snake, about the length of a pencil, with a sharply pointed head and potent venom. That's why Elysia initially refused to let Evan keep it when they found it in the forest.

But Evan and this little creature had a special connection. Despite releasing it several times, White always found its way back to Evan.

Unable to part with it, Evan secretly took it in, and it took half a year before Elysia found out. She was terrified until she realized White never bit Evan and obeyed him well. Evan had told it not to bite, and it never attacked anyone. Moreover, White would fiercely protect Evan if it ever sensed danger. Only then did Elysia fully trust it.

Before coming over, Evan had instructed White not to attack Elijah, so it slowly, somewhat reluctantly, crawled onto Elijah's hand and coiled around his wrist.

A dark ring appeared on Elijah's fair wrist, as if he was wearing a black bracelet.

Seeing that White didn't change color, Elysia explained further, "It's not familiar with you, so it didn't change. Maybe someday, I can have Evan show you. I'm not lying, it really does turn white."

Despite White remaining black, Elijah seemed genuinely interested, his eyes fixed on it.

"What makes it happy?" he asked.

Elysia thought for a moment, "Going out for a frolic."

Elijah looked puzzled.

Elysia explained seriously, "It spends most of its time sleeping on Evan, but it gets really happy when it goes out to play. I've seen it turn white while frolicking in the meadow once. I guess, like children, it enjoys going out for fun."

After a moment of hesitation, Elijah turned and walked towards the door.

Elysia quickly stood up. "Elijah, where are you going?"

Without a word, Elijah sat down on the bench by the entrance to change his shoes.

Elysia was astonished. "Do you want to go outside?"

Still silent, Elijah's actions made his intentions clear - he wanted to go out.

Elysia hadn't expected Elijah to take the initiative to go outside. In her eyes, it was a remarkable occurrence!

Elijah, struggling with psychological issues, was not only prone to aggression but also reclusive, often locking himself in his own little world, allowing no one in.

His acceptance of her presence, engaging in conversation with her, and now taking the initiative to step out of the house were all unexpected surprises!

Seeing him push open the door, Elysia snapped back to reality and said, "Elijah, wait up."

She rushed to the entrance, grabbed Elijah's coat, and helped him put it on. Then she picked up a scarf, knelt down to wrap it around his neck, and even fetched a hat for him. "It's cold outside."

Elijah, frowning, looked at her. His eyes, not as innocent and pure as those of younger children, resembled more his father's - deep, unfathomable, and enigmatic.

After giving Elysia a deep look, he went downstairs.

Stunned for a moment, Elysia hurried after him.