

# Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem ( Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 281[ 632 words ]

Tarquin was frozen, "Yes, we did."

"We did?"

"Yeah, you went too. You were with me, don't you remember?"

Elijah frowned, "...I only remember being asleep the whole time."

Tarquin's brow furrowed in surprise, looking at Elijah incredulously.

Elijah pressed on, "Besides you and Ms. Thorne, who else has been to my room?"

"No one else, what's up?"

Elijah eyed him suspiciously, then turned and left without another word.

Tarquin was visibly anxious. He watched the direction of the door for a moment, then grabbed his phone to call Elysia.

At that moment, Elysia was chatting with Evan about White, "Evan, can you tell if White is a boy or a girl?"

"Of course, it's just like me, a bright and handsome boy."

"Is it time to find a girlfriend then?"

Evan's cheeks flushed with shyness, "Mommy, I'm still a little kid. Didn't you say kids have to grow up before they can have girlfriends?"

Elysia laughed helplessly, "I was talking about White, not you."

"Oh, White can't have a girlfriend yet. It's still too little. Besides, its kind are deep in the forests, if we were to find it a girlfriend, we'd need to go back to the forest. Didn't you say we're not going back anytime soon?"

"That's true, we're not going back..." Elysia sounded a bit dejected.

White was too young for a girlfriend. To find its kind, they'd need to venture into the deep forests.

Well, she couldn't make that money after all!

Just as she was feeling regretful, her phone suddenly rang. She glanced at the caller ID with a puzzled frown.

What's he calling for so late?

Elysia moved aside to answer. Before she could speak, Tarquin's anxious voice burst through, "Something's happened to Elijah; come over quick!"

Elysia was stunned, "What happened to Elijah?"

"Come over and I'll tell you!"

Tarquin hung up abruptly, leaving Elysia panicking.

She didn't dare to waste any time, quickly changing her clothes, and instructing Blossom to keep an eye on the kids while she rushed out the door. "What's happened? Mommy looked really worried." Evan was curious.

Elliot pondered for a few seconds, "It's about Elijah, probably something to do with today's family gathering. Evan, come with me to check it out. Emmett, you cover for us at home. If Blossom comes in, just say we're in the bathroom."

"Got it."

The kids had their roles clearly defined. One stayed behind to decoy Blossom, and two sneaked out following Elysia to Sunshine Community.

...

Half an hour later.

As soon as Elysia saw Tarquin, she urgently asked, "What exactly happened to Elijah?"

"Let's talk in the study." Tarquin closed the door and led her into the study.

Benjamin Lawson was there too. They greeted each other with grave expressions.

Tarquin's brow was furrowed, "Elijah has no recollection of today's family gathering. He says all he remembers is being asleep."

Elysia caught her breath, "You, you brought up the family gathering again?"

"He came to me about it."

Elysia was terrified, her heart racing.

Was this going to blow their cover?

As she was at a loss for words, Tarquin suddenly said, "I suspect he has dissociative identity disorder."

Elysia's eyelids twitched and blinked rapidly in confusion.

Benjamin frowned, "That's a possibility! Dissociative identity disorder is a psychological condition. When a person's inner turmoil reaches a certain threshold, another personality may emerge, with the primary personality stepping back. This alternate persona can take over, altering preferences and behaviors so much that to outsiders, it seems like they've become a completely different person."

Tarquin's expression was solemn, "I noticed it today during the gathering. One moment he was poised and articulate, the next he was exuberant and impulsive, and then he became aloof upon returning. He might have three distinct personalities!"

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"Three kinds?"

"Yeah."

Benjamin's expression grew serious, "The more personalities someone has, the bigger the impact is on their core self. And usually, these shifts between personalities happen under intense stress. Elijah shifting through three personalities in one day suggests he's in a really bad spot right now." Tarquin lit a cigarette, taking a harsh drag, his face etched with frustration.

As they went back and forth, Elysia stood by, too scared to utter a word. She didn't know that Evan had also visited the cemetery yesterday, but she was sure of one thing - Elijah wasn't suffering from dissociative identity disorder.

The reason Tarquin felt that way was simply because Elliot had been masquerading as Elijah!

She knew it, but she was too afraid to speak up.

How could she explain Elijah's abrupt change in behavior without revealing the truth? Tarquin would relentlessly dig for answers!

But staying silent and letting Benjamin and Tarquin worry felt wrong too.

Torn and anxious, Elysia couldn't bear it anymore. "I'll, uh, I need to use the bathroom." she said, quickly leaving the study to find some solace.

Benjamin and Tarquin didn't notice her distress. Benjamin continued, "Don't panic. Just tell me everything that happened today. Once I have a better understanding of his personalities, I'll go check on him."

Meanwhile, Elliot and Evan had just climbed up the drainpipe.

Thinking Elijah was asleep due to the darkness and silence in his room, they gently pushed open the window and crawled inside.

But-

No sooner had they steadied themselves than Elijah abruptly sat up!

Bathed in moonlight, the three stared at each other, shocked.

Especially Elijah, who was seeing his identical-looking brothers, Elliot and Evan, for the first time, unaware of their existence until now.

The shock was indescribable.

It was as if he had seen ghosts, or nearly so.

Elliot and Evan, already aware of Elijah, were shocked because they thought he was asleep, whereas he was actually not. They hadn't come to reveal themselves to Elijah; they were there out of concern for their mom. Never had they ever want Elijah to know about their existence.

So the three were equally bewildered at this moment.

The room fell silent. The kids were locked in a standoff, none daring to make a move.

'Click-'

The light flicked on as Elijah reached for his bedside lamp.

Now, with a clearer view, Elijah's breathing grew more rapid, his small eyebrows furrowed in shock and fear.

Just as he seemed about to scream, Elliot quickly placed a finger to his lips, signaling for silence, and whispered, "Don't be scared, Elijah. We're not ghosts. We're Elysia's sons. I'm Elliot, and this is my brother Evan."

Evan chimed in eagerly, "Yeah, yeah, and look, it's White. It's been playing with you these past few days."

Evan showed his wrist where White, now a white snake, was sleeping.

Evan tapped its head lightly, "White, wake up. Say hi to Elijah."

White opened its eyes reluctantly, as if to say, "Really? Waking me up? Have you no shame?"

But Evan, shamelessly, urged it on, "Come on, hurry up."

Feeling hard done by, White lifted its head, flicked its tongue at Elijah in greeting, then promptly curled back up on Evan's wrist to continue its slumber.

Elijah couldn't have known Elliot and Evan, but he recognized White. Even with its changed color, he could tell it was the same creature.

Realizing they weren't ghosts or threats, Elijah's tense nerves slightly relaxed. While still shocked at White's ability to change color, he grew curious about why Elliot and Evan looked exactly like him.

Elliot, seeing Elijah calm down, gently asked, "Are you wondering why we look so much like you?"

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Elijah frowned, his eyes darting around with a mix of suspicion and caution. "What?!"

Elliot said, "If everything goes as expected, we should be brothers."

Evan chimed in, "Same dad and different moms, to be precise."

Elijah's eyes widened in shock. "No way!"

Elliot's voice was soothing. "I heard about you from Mom. She's always been there for you. It looks like we're all Tarquin's kids, hence the resemblance."

Elijah gasped, "My dad always said he has only been with my mom!"

Elliot's lips twitched. His mom and Tarquin were the official couple; so, no matter how much Elijah's mom and Tarquin loved each other, she was still the other woman.

That meant Elijah was, in fact, born out of wedlock.

Elliot felt that their relationship was a bit delicate, but since his mom always wanted the best for Elijah, he hoped for the same.

So, he tried not to upset Elijah, "Let's not get into what the adults did. We came here because Mom rushed over after getting a frantic call from your dad late at night. We were worried about her. Since you've found us, I might as well lay it all out. I was the one who stood in for you at the family ceremony today..."

Elliot laid out the whole story, then added, "My mom is a good person, and she cares about you a lot. She was worried about backlash, so we came up with this plan. It was actually my idea.

Don't worry, me standing in for you at the family ceremony was purely for you and my mom's sake. We're not going back to the Bradford family to fight over anything."

After a long silence, Elijah asked, "So, you were the one who messed with my computer?"

When it came to this, Elliot had his own questions. He nodded, "Yes, I was trying to look something up and didn't realize your computer had a password lock. Do you... play a lot on your computer?"

Elijah didn't respond, implicitly agreeing.

Their eyes met with an unspoken understanding between them—they both were savvy with the inte.

Curiosity satisfied, Elijah steered the conversation back to Tarquin and Elysia, "What's the real deal with my dad and your mom? My dad clearly told me he had nothing to do with your mom! If you won't tell me, I'll find out myself."

Elliot hesitated before choosing his words carefully, "They were married before, but it was loveless. They even hadn't met each other. Then, your dad came back from abroad and had a one-night stand with my mom, resulting in us. Ironically, they didn't recognize each other during their encounter, so your dad thought my mom cheated on him in their marriage, leading to a divorce and leaving my mom with nothing. When he said he had nothing to do with my mom, he wasn't lying; he genuinely didn't know her."

Elijah was stunned.

Evan quickly asked Elijah, "What's the story between your mom and that jerk Tarquin?"

Elijah frowned, "I don't know. Dad never mentioned it, only that my mom was the love of his life and the only woman he ever touched."

Evan snorted, "Liar. If he never touched my mom, how would my brother and I exist? Plus, if he truly loved your mom, why didn't he marry her?" Elijah's face darkened. He went silent, unable to respond.

Evan continued, "Liking your mom but not giving her a home shows a lack of capability. Not liking my mom but still getting involved with her is just scummy. So, in summary, Tarquin is no good."

"Ah-choo!" Tarquin, in the study, sneezed loudly.

Benjamin asked with concern, "Caught a cold?"

## **Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem ( Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 284[ 569 words ]**

"No worries."

Benjamin said, "I'm pretty sure Elijah's got a serious case of dissociative identity disorder. But don't freak out just yet. I'll go have a chat with him and see what's up."

Benjamin left the study to look for Elijah. But just as he reached the door, he heard Elijah saying, "He's not a jerk; he's a good guy!"

"How is he not a jerk? Everything he does screams 'jerk'! You say he's a good dad and treats you well; sure, I'll buy that. But saying he's not a jerk? No way, I don't buy it."

"He... he didn't hurt your mom, he just didn't like her."

"Didn't hurt her? He fathered us! My brother found out everything. He thought my mom cheated during their marriage, kicked her out with nothing, and trashed her reputation! That's like the pot calling the kettle black. He does the dirty and blames someone else! And I should thank him for not liking my mom? As if! He doesn't deserve her. My mom's the best there is!"

"My... my mom's the best!"

"I'm not saying your mom isn't great, just that my mom's the top."

Outside the room, Benjamin was about to lose his mind. What on earth was he hearing?

He didn't dare barge in, but rushed back to the study and reported, "Tarquin, it's worse with Elijah than we thought! He's talking to himself, like multiple personalities having a conversation!"

Tarquin was taken aback, "What do you mean?!"

Benjamin anxiously explained, "It means his other personalities have taken over. They're popping out and speaking through Elijah's body as if he's chatting with someone else. But in reality, he's talking to himself, and the personalities even disagree with each other.

One personality thinks you're a jerk, another disagrees. They're arguing over the past, about you accusing your wife of being unfaithful and kicking her out!

And these personalities, they don't even think they have the same mom. Each one believes their mom is the best in the world! It's like Elijah's fighting with himself, a clear sign he's in a bad way, maybe even heading for a breakdown!"

Tarquin, scared out of his wits, jumped up and paced towards the door.

Elysia just came out of the bathroom. She saw Tarquin's panicked face and asked, "What's wrong?"

Without answering her, Tarquin pushed open Elijah's door.

Elijah was standing by the bed, looking wary and slightly tense at Tarquin.

Elliot had just hidden under the bed, almost seen...

Tarquin breathed heavily and called out, "...Elijah."

Elijah swallowed hard, trying to appear calm, "What's up?"

Tarquin tried to steady his own emotions, "What are you doing by the bed?"

"Got thirsty, came down for some water."

"Were you talking to someone just now?"

"No!"

"But your Uncle Benjamin said he heard you chatting, even arguing with someone."

Elijah glanced at Benjamin, "Uncle Benjamin must've heard wrong."

Benjamin said, "Elijah, your dad mentioned you forgot about today's family remembrance."

"I didn't forget."

Benjamin was more than puzzled.

Tarquin was also taken aback, "But you said you forgot, that you've been sleeping all day."

"Forgot earlier, remembering now."

Tarquin clearly didn't quite believe him. His expression was complex.

To convince Tarquin, Elijah relayed some of the key points Elliot had shared with him earlier.

Now it was Elysia's turn to be shocked!

Elliot was the one who had gone, how did Elijah know the details?!

## **Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem ( Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 285[ 573 words ]**

"I'm going to bed, everyone out!" Before they could utter another word, Elijah shooed them all out of the room. He shut the door firmly behind them and turned the lock.

After a moment of silence, ensuring the trio outside had departed, Elijah whispered, "Come out now."

Elliot and Evan crawled out from under the bed.

Evan immediately burst out, "Well, in my heart, my mom's the best mom in the whole wide world! Unmatched!"

Elijah scowled, "My mom is the best!"

Elliot, trying to keep the peace, quickly interjected, "Guys, cut it out. Everyone loves their own mom the most, and that's fine. No need to get all worked up over this."

Elijah and Evan frowned but fell silent. In their hearts, their own moms were the best.

Elliot turned to Elijah, his voice soft, "Elijah, you know my mom really loves you, right?"

"Yeah."

"As long as you know. So, for my mom's sake, please keep our meeting a secret. Don't let her know you're aware of us, and definitely don't bring up the stuff about her and your dad."

Elijah looked puzzled, his brow furrowed, "Why?"

Elliot explained gently, "My mom doesn't want us to worry about her past with your dad. Let's just pretend we don't know, to keep her from stressing." "Okay."

Seeing Elijah agree, Elliot's lips curled into a smile, "Let's exchange numbers then. We might not be brothers by blood, but looking this alike must mean something. If you ever need anything, give me or Evan a call. We can be friends."

Friends? Elijah had never really had friends before. The word was something of a rarity to him.

Evan chimed in, "Even though we had a little spat earlier, you recognizing my mom's a good person shows you're not bad yourself. If you ever feel down, just hit me up, Elliot and I can cheer you up!"

Kids are simple like that, quick to argue and quick to make up.

Elijah felt a swell of excitement, but not being one for words, he just nodded earnestly and took out his phone to exchange contacts with Elliot and Evan.

Elliot then said, "Just to be safe, we should head out now. Mom would worry if she came home and didn't find us."

"Okay."

Elliot and Evan slipped away through the pipeline.

Elijah stood by the window, watching until they were out of sight, then hurried back to his computer. He booted it up to search for the past of Tarquin and Elysia.

Meanwhile, in the study, Elysia was grilling Tarquin, "How did Elijah find out about the ceremony today?"

Tarquin retorted, "He was there today, shouldn't he know?"

Elysia was taken aback, "...But you said earlier he didn't know."

"Didn't you hear Elijah's explanation? He said he'd forgotten, and now he remembered."

Elysia, frustrated, "But did you discuss what happened with him?"

"No."

"Then how could he possibly..."

Elysia was on the brink of madness. If Tarquin hadn't discussed it with Elijah, how on earth did Elijah find out?! Could it be... Elliot told him? Had Elliot gone behind her back to contact Elijah?

Just before, Benjamin mentioned hearing voices from Elijah's room. Could it have been Elliot?

Panic seized Elysia's heart! She left the study, not daring to knock on Elijah's door to ask. Instead, she hid in the bathroom to call Elliot.

Here, she couldn't risk a video call, so she dialed his number.

## **Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem ( Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 286[ 538 words ]**

Just as Elliot and Evan had made it out of the neighborhood, Elliot said, "Mom called again, must be Elijah spilling the beans about the ceremony," Elliot whispered, a hint of mischief in his eyes.

"What now? If she finds out we met Elijah, she'll freak out even more!" came the worried reply.

"Just keep it under wraps. Mom's easy to fool."

Elliot found a quiet corner to take the call, his voice calm and collected, "I'm just hanging out at home."

Elysia's voice trembled with anxiety, "You're home, huh? But Elijah, he..."

"What about Elijah?"

Elysia lowered her voice, "His dad didn't talk to him about the details, but somehow Elijah knows everything that happened. Did you tell him?"

Elliot remained cool as a cucumber, "Not me. But you know, with all the people involved, someone else might have. Like Mr. Lowell, he was always around me and Elijah's dad, knew all the details, and he's on good terms with Elijah. Maybe he mentioned something."

Elysia paused, considering, "Right, I forgot about Lowell. He was there today, knew all about it."

Feeling somewhat reassured, she added, "Alright, you and your brother head to bed, sweetie. Mom will be home soon."

"Sure thing."

After hanging up, Evan asked, "What if Mom checks with Mr. Lowell?"

Elliot, ever the confident one, smirked, "She won't. Lowell's out of town. And even if he wasn't, Mom wouldn't make it so obvious. She's not going to risk looking suspicious."

"And what if Mom calls Blossom to check if we're really at home?"

Elliot's smile didn't waver, "Doesn't matter. Blossom's as gullible as Mom. Easy to fool."

...

After Elijah had 'gone to bed,' Elysia and Benjamin left the Sunshine Community.

Tarquin was alone in his study, smoking furiously!

Elijah's sudden worsening condition, even showing signs of dissociative identity disorder, had him both worried and heartbroken. And Benjamin's words earlier only added to his agitation.

How did Elijah find out about the accusations he had made against his wife years ago, driving her out? Could Elijah believe that the wife Tarquin never met was actually his mom?

With a grim expression, Tarquin crushed his cigarette in the ashtray and stood up to find Elijah.

He needed answers.

Meanwhile, Elijah was glued to his computer screen, uncovering the past.

Everything was exactly as Elliot described. He now understood the depth of Evan's resentment towards Tarquin.

Reading the online vitriol directed at Elysia, he was furious too! All this chaos was Tarquin's doing.

Whatever the circumstances, it was his words that had dragged Elysia through the mud and into a pit of despair.

Suddenly, there was a knock on Elijah's door.

Tarquin's voice came from outside, "Elijah, are you asleep? If not, I need to talk. There's something important I have to say."

Elijah frowned, hesitated, then shut down his computer and opened the door.

Tarquin entered, a complex mix of emotions on his face, "May I come in?"

Elijah moved back to his room, sitting by the window, clearly allowing the conversation.

As Tarquin took a seat opposite him, the air was charged with tension.

After a moment, Tarquin broke the silence, "Elijah, have you heard about my divorce, about what happened back then?"

# Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem ( Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 287[ 669 words ]

Elijah furrowed his brows, staring at Tarquin as if he'd just declared the sky was falling.

Tarquin's face was etched with concern, "Who told you this?"

"That's not the point."

But for Tarquin, it was the crux of the matter! Only a handful knew about the past events, and they certainly wouldn't have shared them with Elijah. He was dying to know who had spilled the beans to Elijah. And what was their angle in telling Elijah?

But Elijah wasn't spilling. Tarquin knew he couldn't force it out of him. After a moment of silence, Tarquin prodded again, "What exactly do you know?" "I want to hear it from you," Elijah said.

They locked eyes. After a long pause, Tarquin began, "Considering you're still young, I wasn't planning on dragging the Bradford family saga into this. But since you asked, I'll lay it out for you. Back in the day, your grandma and grandpa got together against your great-grandpa's wishes. He did a number on your grandma because of it. Eventually, they left for abroad, and that's where I was born. I was essentially the Bradford family's secret child. But as fate would have it, I turned out to be the only heir of my generation in the Bradford family. Your great-grandpa had no choice but to acknowledge me. But nobody in the Bradford family took a liking to me, including your great-grandpa. He treated me just like he treats you, seeing us as mere pawns in his grand scheme. Later on, to curb my influence, the Bradford family arranged a marriage for me. It was all smiles and well-wishes on the surface, but my bride and I were like oil and water, not to mention she was said to bring bad luck to her husband. I wasn't thrilled about the marriage, nor was I interested in the woman. But I didn't make her life difficult. I never showed my face, but I made sure she was well taken care of during our marriage. Once I gained significant control, I sought a divorce upon returning. I planned to offer her a generous settlement, but then I discovered she was nothing short of scandalous, so I left her with nothing."

Elijah listened quietly. Despite his psychological struggles, he wasn't naive. His episodes didn't cloud his intellect; he simply preferred silence. So, he was somewhat familiar with the Bradford family affairs. It was just that he hadn't delved deep into his father's marriage history before.

Elijah was uninterested in the Bradford family drama.

He asked, pinching his brow, "So, you were married for two years and never once met your wife?"

"Yep, never! Wasn't interested, didn't bother to check on her."

"And how did you conclude she was scandalous?"

"Lowell mentioned it."

"How did Mr. Lowell come to know about it?"

"He caught wind of some things."

"Just hearsay? Did he even verify these claims?"

"Not sure."

Elijah was getting heated, "So, based on rumors, without any solid investigation, you labeled her unfaithful, a disgrace. Did it ever cross your mind that you might be wronging her?"

Tarquin was taken aback, noting Elijah's intense reaction, he asked, "Are you imagining her as your mother?"

Elijah didn't answer his question but countered, "Is she my mother?"

"Of course not. I've never even met her, let alone touched her."

Elijah's brows knitted tighter, each word deliberate, "Are you sure, you never touched her?"

"Positive!" Tarquin affirmed with certainty.

Elijah's lips pressed into a thin line. Untouched, then how did Elliot and Evan come into the picture?

It seemed Elliot was right; Tarquin truly had no clue that Elysia was his wife! He was also oblivious that the woman he encountered at the airport was none other than Elysia!

Elijah didn't bring Elysia into the conversation directly but shifted the focus to his mom, "What about my mom? How did you meet her? And how did I come into the picture? I want the truth, no more fictional stories you've concocted to deceive me!"

## **Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem ( Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 288[ 574 words ]**

Seeing his son's serious face, Tarquin pressed his lips together in silence for a moment before deciding to come clean.

"I did lie to you before, and I don't actually know your mom. I have no idea who she is. She and I... we had a one-night stand, and that's how you came into existence."

Elijah's breath hitched, and his eyes widened in disbelief! He looked incredulously at Tarquin, "What?"

Tarquin continued, "When I returned to the country to take over the Bradford Group, I upset some powerful interests. They sent someone after me, and I was drugged. In the urgency of the moment, going to the hospital wasn't an option, so that's how I ended up with your mom. It was dark, and I couldn't make out her face. By the time the danger was over and I went to look for her, she had vanished. So for the past six years, I've been searching for her, but to no avail. I don't even know what she looks like."

Elijah paused, stunned. This sounded just like Elliot and Evan's mother's story.

"You, you were at the airport when it happened?"

"Yeah."

Elijah shot up from his chair, holding his breath before asking, "On the day you returned?"

"That's right."

Elijah was dumbfounded.

Elliot had said Tarquin met their mommy on the day he returned to the country, at the airport!

Now, Tarquin was saying he met Elijah's own mommy under the same circumstances!

What did this mean?

Elijah's breathing became rapid, "How many women did you... encounter that day?"

Seeing his son so worked up, Tarquin grew anxious, fearing for his well-being, he stood up as well, "Elijah, you need to calm down. Getting upset could make you sick, you..."

"Just answer me!" Elijah nearly roared, his face turning beet red.

Tarquin, looking earnest, said, "That day, it was only your mom... She's the only one I've ever been with!"

Elijah held his breath, staring straight at Tarquin!

He had only been with her...

So, Elysia was his mom!

Elijah trembled all over, even his lips quivered.

"Hah!" Suddenly, Elijah laughed, and the next second, he burst into tears.

Tarquin was taken aback and quickly pulled his son into his arms, "Elijah..."

He was both shocked and confused. He had just said he had only been with Elijah's mom, why was he crying? Elijah had never cried like this before!

In the past, Elijah's tears were during his episodes, amid extreme agitation and discomfort.

Today, he seemed not to be having an episode but crying like any other child would when their emotions peak. His cries were filled with grievance, joy, and something indescribable.

Tarquin, unable to understand, tried to soothe his son, "Elijah, you can talk to Daddy about anything on your mind. Whatever you say, I will listen carefully, and I'll answer any question you have. I won't lie to you anymore. Can you try to calm down?"

"Elysia! Elysia..." Elijah sobbed uncontrollably.

Tarquin hurriedly asked, "Do you miss Elysia?"

Elijah nodded frantically, "Yes! I miss her so much."

"Then I'll call her over to be with you right now!"

Elijah shook his head just as frantically, "It's dark, the roads are slippery!"

"You're worried about her safety coming over now? How about I take you to her, would that be alright?"

"Yes! Find her!" Elijah buried himself in Tarquin's embrace, crying fiercely. In his heart, he called out, Mom, Mom...

## **Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem ( Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 289[ 591 words ]**

Tarquin was a bundle of nerves as he held Elijah tight. He was at a total loss, clueless about what got into his little boy to make him this upset. Without wasting a moment, he quickly slipped a down jacket on Elijah, hugged him close, grabbed the car keys, and dashed out of the house. His only thought was to get to Elysia as quickly as possible, hoping she could calm their son down.

In his frantic state, Tarquin forgot to put on his own coat. There he was, out in the biting cold of December, dressed in nothing but a thin shirt, and yet, he broke out in a sweat!

Elijah was his heart, his everything. This was Tarquin's first rodeo as a dad, and although unsure about many things, he was determined to do his absolute best.

The chilly wind prompted him to pull the hood of Elijah's jacket over his head, protecting him from the cold. He strode quickly to the car, opened the back door, and gently placed his little guy inside, making sure the seat belt was securely fastened.

Tears and snot marred Elijah's usually spotless face, a testament to his distress. Knowing his son's penchant for cleanliness, Tarquin realized just how upset Elijah must be to disregard his messy face. It broke Tarquin's heart.

He tenderly wiped away his son's tears and runny nose with a tissue.

"Don't cry, buddy. Daddy's going to take you to her right now," he soothed.

With a nod, Elijah tried to stifle his sobs.

Tarquin, moved by his son's plight, caressed his cheek before closing the car door and starting the vehicle to leave the neighborhood.

"Achoo!"

Back at home, Elysia sneezed loudly the moment she walked through the door.

"Are you okay? Did you catch a cold?" Blossom asked with concern.

Elysia rubbed her nose, "I'm fine. Where are the boys?"

"They're asleep in their room."

"I'll go check on them." Elysia tiptoed into the kids' room, trying not to wake them.

Elliot and Evan had only been home for a short while and were pretending to be asleep. Elliot, in particular, was torn. He wanted to reassure his mom after the evening's events but didn't want to disturb her rest either. After a moment's hesitation, he sat up.

"Mom?"

Elysia, who had just reached his bed, paused, "Did I wake you?"

"No, I wasn't asleep yet. I heard you sneeze. Are you feeling okay?"

"I'm fine, honey. Just a tickle in my nose. Why are you still up?"

"I was worried after talking to you on the phone. How's Elijah?"

Mentioning Elijah made Elysia sigh softly and sit on the bed, "You and Elijah are so different. Today, you took Elijah's place at the family gathering, and his dad thought Elijah had a split personality, so he rushed to get me."

"Don't worry, Mom. In a few days, when Elijah's dad sees everything is normal with Elijah, he'll stop worrying. At least he only thinks it's a split personality and not that someone replaced Elijah."

Elysia was relieved, "Right, your analysis makes sense!"

If he had suspected an impersonation, she would have been terrified.

Elliot continued, "Anyway, after today, those who wanted to harm Elijah will think he's completely fine. No one will bother you anymore, so our plan worked, right?"

Elysia finally felt her worry ease. The plan was risky but ultimately successful. She affectionately ruffled Elliot's hair, "You're my little hero, Elliot. Always looking out for me like a cozy sweater on a cold day."

## **Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem ( Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 290 [ 536 words ]**

Eavesdropping from their cozy nest of blankets, Evan and Emmett couldn't help but pop their heads out, their eyes sparkling with curiosity.

"What about me? Aren't I Mommy's little hero?" they chimed in unison, gazing up at Elysia with big, doe eyes.

Elysia paused, surprised, "You're both awake too?"

She gently pinched Evan's cheek, then did the same to Emmett's, "Of course, you both are indeed my little heroes! My warm cuddles! It's because of you two that my heart feels warm and toasty every single day."

Evan, ever the easy one to please, beamed at her words.

"They say emotions are contagious. If Mommy's happy, then we can be happy too. You've got to be cheerful every day, okay?" He proudly added, "Elliot knows how to cheer you up, so do we, right?"

Elysia smiled tenderly, nodding in agreement, "Yes, yes, indeed."

Not to be outdone, Emmett, though not as eloquent or as clever as his brothers, was all about action. Slipping out of his pajamas, he bent down, cupped Elysia's face in his small hands, and planted a loud, smacking kiss on her cheek.

"I can make Mommy happy too."

Elysia's face radiated happiness, which she could barely contain. She pulled Emmett into a hug, tickling his belly gently as he giggled uncontrollably, drawing Blossom into the fold.

"Leaving me out of the fun, how unfair! I'm so upset now. Looks like I'll have to eat all the late-night snacks I ordered by myself. Oh, look, I even got fried chicken bites," Blossom teased.

The mention of fried chicken bites lit up the kids' eyes - a rare treat Elysia seldom allowed.

"Blossom is the best; I love Blossom."

"Me too, I love Blossom. I'll find a hundred boyfriends for Blossom!"

"I'll find a thousand!"

The small room buzzed with laughter and cheerful banter.

However, amid the joy, Elysia suddenly felt a pang of sadness. She couldn't help but muse inwardly, the inexplicable wave of sorrow had crept up on her again.

During these moments of utmost happiness with her children, a shadow of sadness always seemed to loom, as if reminding her of something... The lone figure of Elijah, his brows furrowed in solitude, flashed through her mind, causing Elysia to frown.

How wonderful it would be to have Elijah join their little family. Evan was right; emotions are contagious. Elijah, surrounded by their love and warmth, would surely find happiness too.

Yet, the resemblance between Elijah, Evan, and Elliot was uncanny. If they were to meet... Elysia was at a loss for words.

Sighing inwardly, she pondered on Elijah's mother's whereabouts. Did she ever plan to return? Did Elijah still have a chance to reunite with his mother?

Suddenly, a rumble of thunder rolled outside, and rain began to pour down without warning.

Blossom, munching on chicken bites, turned towards the window, surprised, "Wow, it's raining out of nowhere. Looks like the heavens are crying for someone again."

Elysia walked over to the window, her heart aching even more at the sight. Her phone rang. It was Elijah's dad calling!

Elysia answered, puzzled, "Hello?"

"Come downstairs. Elijah's looking for you."

Elysia paused, "You're downstairs?"

"Yeah."

Surprised, Elysia replied, "I'll be right there!"

## **Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem ( Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 291[ 700 words ]**

Blossom and the boys were still in the living room, munching on snacks, when Elysia dashed to the foyer, hurriedly slipping into her shoes while explaining, "Elijah's downstairs. I'm gonna check it out. You guys eat. Elliot, Evan, Emmett, hurry up and get ready for bed once you're done."

Before she left, she threw Blossom a look, silently asking her to keep an eye on the trio and make sure they didn't wander downstairs. Blossom responded with a reassuring glance.

When Elysia reached the bottom of the stairs, the sight of Elijah and Tarquin standing in the rain caught her off guard! She'd rushed out so quickly she'd forgotten to grab an umbrella.

Darting into the rain, she quickly ushered Elijah into the entryway. Without a towel handy, she used her own shirt to wipe his face and hair dry. Once his face was clean, she noticed Elijah was crying.

Elysia was taken aback. "Elijah, what's wrong?"

Tears blurred Elijah's vision as he looked at her, his lips trembling violently. He wanted to call out 'Mommy' but was too nervous to utter a word. Though his lips moved, no sound came out! He stomped his feet in frustration, repeatedly calling out for his mommy in his heart.

This was his mommy!

The one he missed every single moment of every day!

His beautiful, silly, gentle, adorable, soft mommy!

He had searched for her so long, thought of her so much, hoped for so long, yearned so deeply!

And now he had finally found her!

Words couldn't express the depth of his emotions, all bottled up inside. Elijah could only let his tears flow. He cried so hard that he became a little rainstorm himself.

Both shocked and heartbroken, Elysia wrapped Elijah tightly in her arms, her brow furrowed as she looked towards Tarquin.

Tarquin, with a furrowed brow himself, had no answers to give. He was just as clueless!

He had no idea what had gotten into Elijah!

All Elysia could do was patiently lift Elijah into her arms, soothing him as any mother would soothe her child, walking back and forth, murmuring, "Let it all out, sweetheart. Crying is okay. I'm here..."

Elijah clung to her neck, crying so pitifully. He had missed her so much, for so many years, through so many days and nights!

He had finally found his mommy! He finally had a mommy!

Elysia's heart ached. As Elijah cried, she felt tears stinging her own eyes.

In that moment, she felt an overwhelming desire to take Elijah away from Tarquin. She wanted to be his mommy! She wanted to care for him just as she did for Elliot, Evan, and Emmett!

She couldn't explain where this surge of emotion came from, but she simply adored Elijah, felt for him deeply, and couldn't bear to let him go! Unable to hold back, Elysia hugged Elijah tightly and began to cry as well.

Seeing the two of them crying together, Tarquin stood aside with a deeply complex expression, his eyebrows knitted tightly. He desperately wanted to know what was going on with his son!

Though Elijah liked Elysia, this was beyond normal!

What was his son feeling so wronged about? What was he sad about? And... what was he so thrilled about?

After what seemed like an eternity, when he saw his son finally close his eyes and quiet down, he hurriedly asked, "What's wrong with Elijah?" "Shh, don't worry, he must have cried himself to sleep."

"Cried himself to sleep?"

"Yeah, probably overwhelmed with emotions."

Tarquin was speechless.

Elysia, still holding Elijah, quietly asked him, "What exactly happened to Elijah?"

"I don't know. He suddenly said he missed you and wanted to find you."

"But there has to be some reason, right?"

"I'm not sure."

Elysia gave him a meaningful glance. Not daring to take Elijah back with her, Elysia suggested, "Let's get him home first. His clothes are soaking wet; he needs to change."

"Yeah." Tarquin hesitated for a moment before adding, "Come with us, please. I'm worried he might wake up again and fuss about wanting to see you."

"Alright!" Elysia, holding Elijah, walked towards the car, while Tarquin held the umbrella over them.

## **Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem ( Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 292[ 637 words ]**

Tarquin huddled Elysia and Elijah under the umbrella, soaking himself in the rain.

Reaching the car, he ushered Elysia and Elijah inside, shut the door for them, then folded the umbrella and climbed into the driver's seat.

The car soon left the neighborhood.

In a gloomy corner, beneath the shelter of a black umbrella, a shadowy figure emerged, watching the direction Tarquin and Elysia had gone, his gaze dark and brooding...

In the car, Elysia texted Blossom,

[Elijah's acting off tonight, I'm taking him home. Can you please look after the boys for me?]

Blossom quickly replied.

[Got it, take care of Elijah. Don't worry about the boys, I've got them.]

Feeling reassured, Elysia sent Blossom a grateful emoji and put away her phone.

Elijah lay in her arms with his eyes closed, sobbing all the way home, crying even harder whenever he was awake.

Once home, Tarquin tried to take Elijah from Elysia's arms.

The building had no elevator, and they needed to climb to the sixth floor. He worried Elysia couldn't manage the climb.

Elijah was barely out of Elysia's embrace when he suddenly opened his eyes.

Panicked, he clung tightly to Elysia's neck and burst into tears, "Mommy hug! Don't go, Mommy!"

Elysia and Tarquin were stunned. He called her Mommy?

Elijah clutched Elysia's clothes tightly, as if fearing she'd throw him away, his eyes filled with vulnerability and desperation,

"I will be good. Don't go, Mommy!"

Elysia's heart broke for him, thinking Elijah was just missing his mom and mistook her for his own.

Not wanting to contradict him, she went along with it, "Mommy's here! I won't leave. You're the best, Elijah. Go to sleep, Mommy's holding you." Only then did Elijah stop crying, curling up in her arms, quietly sobbing.

As Elysia comforted Elijah, walking towards their apartment, she soothed him, "It's okay, Elijah, sleep now. Mommy's here, I won't leave..." Tarquin watched her back, his expression a mix of emotions.

Back home, Elysia laid Elijah on the bed, intending to fetch some warm water to clean him up and change him into fresh clothes.

But as soon as she moved, Elijah cried, pleading, "Don't go, Mommy!"

Helpless, Elysia had no choice but to lay beside Elijah on the bed, directing Tarquin to fetch the water.

After finally getting Elijah to sleep, Elysia huffed and confronted Tarquin. "Did you upset him?"

Tarquin sat on the living room couch, "No."

"Then why is he so distressed?"

"I don't know."

"You're his father, how can you not know what's wrong?" Elysia was angry. She knew he was a good father, but she couldn't help but accuse him. Elijah's mood was so out of the ordinary tonight; something must have happened. How could he, as a father, be clueless?

Tarquin, faced with the accusation, looked visibly upset but didn't lash out at Elysia. He, too, was deeply self-reproaching. Yes, how could he be so unaware as a father? His son was this troubled, and he had no clue!

Elysia pressed on, "Elijah doesn't hate me, but tonight, he's been too dependent on me, even more so than on you, his own father! You ran through the rain to my place; there has to be a reason. You can't say you know nothing; I won't believe it!"

Tarquin furrowed his brows, staring at her.

Elysia clenched her fists, furrowing her brows, "If you want my help with Elijah, you can't keep me in the dark! I can only help him if I know what happened!"

Tarquin stared at her for a few more seconds, then lowered his head to light a cigarette.

After a few puffs, he seemed to make a significant decision and finally opened up, "After you left, I went to talk to him, discussed some... past issues." Elysia immediately asked, "What issues?"

## **Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem ( Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 293[ 528 words ]**

Tarquin furrowed his brows, a tension in his voice. "It's about Elijah's mom."

"Elijah's mom?"

"Yeah."

"What about her?"

"Well, we talked about... how he came into the world."

"And then?"

"I think he's pretty mad at me now."

Elysia was growing impatient, watching Tarquin struggle to articulate his thoughts. Finally, she burst out, "Can you just spit it out already? What did you talk to him about? Why is he mad at you?"

Tarquin's expression darkened, and after a few moments of silence, he began, "I didn't know Elijah's mom before the incident. Back then, something happened, and that's how Elijah came to be."

Elysia blinked in confusion. "Didn't know her? Something happened?"

"I, uh, was drugged at a party. Couldn't control myself."

Elysia's face went through a whirlwind of emotions. "You mean, you forced yourself on Elijah's mom...?"

"Yeah."

Elysia held her breath, stunned! He forced himself on her, resulting in Elliot, Evan and Emmett.

And he did the same to Elijah's mom, leading to Elijah?

Was this his habit with women, using force?

No matter the circumstances, forcing oneself on a woman was utterly despicable. He was the epitome of a jerk!

Elysia clenched her fists, her voice laced with anger, "You did that to his mom, no wonder he's furious. Elijah loves his mom, but you hurt her! Even if he cares about you, he's bound to be angry. I can't help you with this. You need to sort this out yourself!"

With that, Elysia stormed back to Elijah's room, not sparing Tarquin another glance.

She had hoped to understand more about Elijah's unusual behavior but was shocked by what she learned. She had unconsciously grouped herself with Elijah's mom, seeing both as victims.

This realization only fueled her anger towards that man.

One incident might be a mistake, but twice? And who knows how many more times?

His actions towards her, Elijah's mom, and potentially others painted him as a true scoundrel!

"Mummy..." Elijah suddenly murmured in his sleep, pulling Elysia's thoughts back.

Elysia's heart ached for him. She gently stroked his cheek, whispering, "Mummy's here, Elijah. Sleep well, I'm right here."

Feeling her touch, Elijah shifted closer, wrapping her arm in a tight embrace.

Looking at his face, so similar to Elliot and Evan's, Elysia felt a surge of protectiveness.

She had thought Elijah's mom left due to a typical lovers' quarrel, like many couples who part ways. But to learn that Tarquin had forced himself on her, resulting in Elijah, was horrifying.

How could anyone be happy or willing under those circumstances? Clearly not!

No wonder Elijah's mom had left. Just like Elysia wouldn't stay with someone who had violated her, married or not.

Elijah's mom's departure was his father's doing. And now, the longing and sadness Elijah felt were also his doing. He had wronged Elijah's mom and Elijah himself.

Elysia's disdain for Tarquin deepened. He hadn't just ruined her; he had ruined Elijah's mom's life too. He was a complete and utter jerk!

Muttering curses under her breath, Elysia tried to gently withdraw her arm, but the moment she moved, Elijah clung tighter, enveloping her in a sleepy embrace.

## **Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem ( Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 294[ 560 words ]**

"Mommy, don't go."

Elysia was taken aback by the sudden plea. Not wanting to disturb his sleep, she whispered a few soothing words and then curled up beside Elijah's bed for the night.

The next morning.

When she awoke, Elijah was staring at her with his big, bright eyes, a mix of surprise and joy lighting up his face, tinged with a shy blush.

"What's up?" Elysia was intrigued.

Elijah was usually more reserved, and she had never seen this kind of childlike shyness on his face before.

Elysia sat up, "Elijah?"

He sat up too, his voice soft and childlike, "Yeah."

They looked at each other for a few seconds, and just as Elysia was about to speak, Elijah suddenly threw off the covers and got out of bed. He rummaged around the room, gathering a pile of items for her.

There were collectible toy models, little trinkets from his desk, his favorite vintage wind chime, and various rare gadgets Tarquin had given him.

"For me?" Elysia was curious.

Elijah nodded eagerly.

Elysia was surprised, "Wow!"

It was a gesture of trying to please her, and Elijah was clearly making an effort.

But why?

They had known each other for more than just a few days, and although Elijah didn't hate her, he had never gone out of his way to please her before. Seeing Elysia's surprised face and getting no immediate response, Elijah became visibly nervous, cautiously saying, "These are all I have now. If you don't like them, I can get you something else. Just tell me what you like, okay?"

Blinking in astonishment, Elysia reassured him, "I love whatever you give me, Elijah. Thank you. I'll gladly accept them."

A flash of joy crossed Elijah's face as he nodded vigorously.

Recalling the previous night, Elysia ventured, "Were you missing Mommy again last night?"

Elijah's brows furrowed slightly as he looked at her, "I've always missed Mommy."

His pitiful look made Elysia's heart ache. She set aside the gifts he had given her and hugged him close, "They say there's a special bond between mother and child. If you're missing your mommy, she's probably missing you too. If there's a chance, she'd surely come back to see you."

Elijah's heart raced. He wanted to hug Elysia back but was too shy. He thought, Mommy is already here. You are my mommy!

But he dared not say it outright, fearing it might scare her away. He wasn't the healthiest child, and his past behavior hadn't been the best. He feared that if he acknowledged their relationship directly, she might disappear again because she didn't like him.

Elysia, oblivious to his inner turmoil, was just glad to see Elijah's mood stabilized, not as agitated as the night before.

Today, he seemed less distant and more cautious and anxious.

Without dwelling on it, Elysia asked, "Feeling better today?"

"Yeah!"

"That's great. Children should always be happy. Since you're up, go freshen up, and I'll make breakfast. We can leave these gifts here, and I'll take them when I leave."

"Okay!"

Elysia smiled and headed out, with Elijah immediately on her heels. She went to the bathroom to freshen up, and Elijah followed to brush his teeth and wash his face.

When Elysia moved to the kitchen to start breakfast, Elijah was right there with her, sticking to her like glue.

## **Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem ( Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 295[ 603 words ]**

Elysia noticed Elijah's eagerness and asked with a smile, "Hey Elijah, want to help me make breakfast?"

Elijah nodded eagerly. Truth be told, he just wanted to be with her. As long as they were together, anything they did was fine by him.

Elysia thought for a moment, "How about you help me crack some eggs? We can make scrambled eggs."

"Okay!"

Elysia rolled up the little guy's sleeves, helped him wash his hands, and then moved a step stool over for him to stand on.

She fetched some eggs from the fridge, cracked them into a bowl, and showed Elijah how to mix the eggs.

Elijah followed intently, earning him praise from Elysia, "Well done!"

The little guy's cheeks flushed with pride, making him even more eager.

Meanwhile, Elysia cleaned some chives and carrots.

Tarquin, hearing the commotion, came out to see the duo busy in the kitchen, each doing their part.

Elysia kept smiling gently, talking softly to Elijah. Every now and then, Elijah would glance at her, his eyes sparkling.

The scene was so harmonious that Tarquin's first thought was how perfect it would be if Elysia were Elijah's biological mother!

But as soon as the thought crossed his mind, he was startled by it and turned away, heading to the bathroom.

Staring at his reflection, Tarquin wondered if he would let Elysia be Elijah's mother if the boy was okay with it. Could he really let go of Elijah's birth mother to be with Elysia?

His reflection darkened; the answer was clear. No matter what, he couldn't let go of Elijah's birth mother. He had promised to make her the happiest and most honored woman in the world!

He had chosen her, and only she would do!

With a steadied resolve, Tarquin returned to the kitchen.

Elysia gave him a cold look, which he met with a frown, choosing not to talk to her. Instead, he stood by Elijah, asking softly, "Need daddy's help?" Elijah shrugged noncommittally.

But when Elijah showed the mixed eggs to Elysia, his demeanor softened, "Did I do it right?"

"Yes, you did great, Elijah! Now let's mix in the veggies."

Elysia added the chopped chives and carrots, while Elijah took care of the mixing, their teamwork seamless.

Tarquin felt like an outsider, unnoticed and unappreciated. Suddenly, he felt like Elysia was Elijah's real mom, and he was just some stepdad!

Once everything was ready for the pan, Elysia told Elijah, "I'll handle this part; you go wait outside."

Worried about the hot pan and oil, she wanted to keep Elijah safe.

Elijah didn't want to leave, but he knew to listen to his mommy, so he nodded obediently and left.

Tarquin quickly followed, "Elijah, can we talk?"

Elijah didn't object, and the father and son headed to the study.

Tarquin apologized sincerely, "About your mommy, I'm sorry. Even though it was a desperate situation, and I only approached her to survive, I ended up wronging her."

Tarquin thought Elijah's recent behavior was because of his mother, hence the apology.

Elijah frowned slightly. Although it was the discovery of his mom that had him emotional, he was indeed upset about the situation, just like his siblings, Elliot and Evan. He didn't have the same level of animosity as Elliot and Evan, but he was definitely upset with Tarquin.

No matter the reasons, Tarquin had wronged his mom, turning her life upside down. His mom had to leave everything behind because of him, facing ridicule and even working hard during her pregnancy. Thinking of the hardships and injustices his mom endured made his heart ache unbearably!

## **Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem ( Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 296[ 563 words ]**

Elijah was fuming on behalf of Elysia, and it only made him angrier at Tarquin!

"Trust me, if I could get another chance to see her, I'd make it up to her in every way I can. I'd devote myself to making her the happiest woman in the world!" Tarquin promised his son earnestly, with all sincerity.

Elijah furrowed his brows, wanting to say that Elysia was indeed his mom but worried she might not be ready to accept him yet.

After much thought, Elijah said, "Just be nicer to Elysia, okay?"

Tarquin paused, baffled. They were talking about his mom, and suddenly it shifted to Elysia?

"You really like Elysia, huh?"

"Yeah."

"How much?"

"I really, really like her. I want to be with her forever, never apart."

Tarquin was shocked, "...And you're not worried about your mom anymore? Weren't you concerned about what would happen to Elysia once your mom came back?"

"She is my mom!"

Tarquin was stunned.

Realizing he had let the cat out of the bag, Elijah quickly corrected himself, "I want her to be my mom! If you truly care about me, you'd treat her better!"

After saying his piece, Elijah left, leaving Tarquin in a daze.

Exiting the study, Elijah watched Elysia retreating back with joy before finally heading to his room.

He texted Elliot.

[Let's meet today, I've got something important to say.]

Elliot replied after a while.

[We are going to preschool today, might be hard to get away. What's up? Does it have to be in person?]

Hesitating for a moment, Elijah texted back.

[Your mom is my mom.]

Elliot called the next second.

Elijah checked to make sure Tarquin and Elysia weren't around before answering.

"What did you mean by what you said?" Elliot asked urgently.

"I'm certain now, your mom is my mom. We're not half-brothers; we're full brothers!" Elijah whispered.

Elliot was speechless from shock.

Elijah explained, "My dad confessed everything last night. He said it was a one-night stand with my mom that led to me, and it happened the day he returned to the country, at the airport! Just like what happened between him and your mom, same time, same place! And my dad also said she's the only woman he's ever been with. He was very sure, not lying. So, your mom is my mom!"

Elliot calmed down before asking, "Have you done a DNA test?"

"Not yet."

"I'll send someone to collect samples from you and Mom under the guise of delivering a package. Make sure you get the samples ready in advance." "Alright!"

Elliot added, "I've done a DNA test with your dad, and the results are in. Your dad is indeed my dad! If my mom is also your mom, then we're really full brothers!"

Elijah was thrilled at the thought of finally having a brother, no longer alone.

"Have you told your dad or my mom about this?" Elliot asked.

"Not yet. I was afraid to spill the secret."

"You did right. Let's not say anything until the DNA results are in."

If they truly were full brothers, it would raise many questions. Firstly, if their mom knew about Elijah, she wouldn't have abandoned him. It meant someone took Elijah without her knowing.

Who was it?

What was their motive?

And why did they take Elijah but leave Elliot, Evan, and Emmett behind?

## **Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem ( Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 297[ 639 words ]**

Why did they take Elijah only to secretly hand him over to Tarquin instead of raising him themselves? There definitely was a scheme in play, perhaps even a conspiracy!

Whoever was stirring the pot, whatever their nefarious plans, they better not mess with his mom. Otherwise...

A fierce glint flashed in Elliot's eyes!

Turning back to Elijah, he said, "Once we get the sample, I'll have it fast-tracked for analysis. We should have the results by this afternoon. If everything goes as expected, we'll find a way to meet up later today."

"Alright, I'll be waiting!"

After hanging up, Elijah hurried to gather the samples. Elysia had stayed at their place before, so finding samples was easy. To be extra careful, he didn't just collect some of Elysia's hair but also her toothbrush.

Not long after, the doorbell rang.

Elijah, having received a heads-up from Elliot, rushed to the door first. Seizing the opportunity while picking up a delivery, he handed over the prepared samples to the delivery person.

No sooner had the delivery person left, Elysia received a call from Elliot. He mentioned he was worried she wouldn't have time to cook that day and had ordered breakfast for her and Elijah.

After hanging up, Elysia walked towards the door.

Elijah handed her the delivery. "The delivery person just dropped this off; it's for you."

Elysia was puzzled. "Elliot just called me about this. He knows I get up to make breakfast, yet he went ahead and ordered food. What was he thinking?"

Covering up deeper motives, Elijah replied, "He probably just wanted to spare you the effort, worried you might skip breakfast."

Elysia chuckled. "That Elliot, always so thoughtful."

Watching Elysia's eyes light up with pride at the mention of Elliot, Elijah silently vowed to make her proud, just like Elliot did!

Elysia, blessedly naive, took her sons' words at face value, unaware of the underlying subterfuge.

"Breakfast is ready; I'll go serve up the oatmeal. Could you call your dad to the table?"

"Sure." Elijah nodded obediently and then headed to the study.

Tarquin was still reeling from Elijah's earlier words, thoroughly shell-shocked.

"Dad, breakfast is ready."

Tarquin snapped back to reality. Closing the study door, he asked Elijah with a serious expression, "Do you understand what you just said?" "What do you mean?"

"You said you want Elysia to be your mom."

"Yes, that's what I said. No need to doubt your ears; you heard right."

Tarquin was stunned again. "Can you explain what you're thinking?"

Elijah, with a serious little face, stated, "I just like her. I want to be her son. If you have any objections, keep them to yourself!"

Tarquin's expression turned complex. "If you become her son, what does that make me?"

Elijah mumbled, "Maybe you could try to woo her, see if you can become her husband."

Tarquin's eyes widened, staring blankly at his son, more shocked than ever! Overwhelmed by surprise, his attempt at maintaining a composed expression failed miserably.

"Elijah, are you joking with me?"

"No, I'm serious." Elijah looked earnestly at him, his tone serious, his expression sincere.

Despite his challenges, Elijah had a moment of clarity. Now that he'd found his mom, he was overjoyed. But to maximize happiness, the best strategy was to offer up his dad.

Currently, his mom and dad had no romantic connection. Even if she found out he was her son, she'd likely think about taking him away from his dad rather than staying together.

Leaving with his mom and leaving his dad behind, or staying with his dad and not acknowledging his mom, neither option was what he wanted.

He wasn't like his brothers, Elliot, Evan, and Emmett, who had always been with their mom and only had her in their hearts.

He wanted both his mom and his dad.

## **Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem ( Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 298[ 672 words ]**

He wanted a real family!

That was the dream!

But achieving this dream seemed almost impossible for him alone. If only his dad could step up, make his mom fall for him, then maybe, just maybe, the dream could come true.

Tarquin looked at Elijah, utterly baffled. "Do you not want your mom anymore?"

Elijah frowned. It was not the right time to share the truth with his dad. Thus, all he could say was, "From now on, Elysia is going to be my mom! Whether you want to be her husband or not, I'm going to be her son!"

"And if she leaves?" Tarquin questioned.

Elijah, trying to scare him a bit, declared, "Then I'll leave with her."

Tarquin gasped, his breath hitching, almost choking on the sudden surge of emotion.

"What about me then? If you leave with her, what happens to me?"

"You either come with us or get ready to be a lonely old man."

Tarquin was speechless, his mind racing.

Elijah continued, earnestly, "I'm serious about having her as my mom. Nothing's going to change my mind about being her son! If you still want a son, you better start making her happy, woo her, try to win a chance to be her husband."

Tarquin was at a loss for words.

"You're my father, after all, don't say I didn't warn you. If you don't seize every opportunity to make her fall for you now, you'll regret it later." Tarquin was flabbergasted, unable to grasp the sudden turn of events.

Elijah didn't wait to see his reaction and turned to leave. His dad only ever had eyes for one woman-his mother, meaning Elysia! She was his dad's first love!

If his dad didn't act now, he'd be in tears when the truth hit him hard. He had said his piece and offered his warning. If his dad chose to remain cold towards his mom...

Well, he'd be signing up for a funeral pyre of love, beyond anyone's help!

Outside the study, Elysia was setting the table, noticing only Elijah coming out. Curiously, she asked, "Where's your dad? Isn't he eating?"

"He'll eat later. He's lost in thought," Elijah replied.

"What's so important he can't think after breakfast?"

"He's pondering over the big questions in life!"

Just then, Elysia's phone buzzed. A message from Tarquin: [Come to my study now. Immediately. Right now!]

Elysia glanced towards the study, puzzled.

What was this about?

They were just a door apart, why the need for texts?

Shrugging, she told Elijah, "Go wash up for breakfast. I'll check on your dad."

As Elysia walked to the study, Elijah watched her go, a small frown creasing his brow.

What did his dad want with her now?

The moment Elysia stepped into the study, she knew something was off. Tarquin was glaring at her, his face a storm cloud. "What are you staring at me for?" Elysia asked, not pleased.

"What did you say to Elijah?" Tarquin shot back.

"What did I say? I told him to call you for breakfast."

Tarquin's lips were a thin line, his patience fraying. "Did you tell him to be your son, and me, your husband?"

Elysia was taken aback. "What are you talking about?"

This talk of sons and husbands was confusing to her.

Tarquin didn't believe her. "Don't lie to me. I've got a short fuse, and even I'm scared of it when it blows!"

His gaze was intimidating, and for a moment, Elysia felt a flicker of fear. But what had she done to provoke him?

Elysia stood her ground. "Explain yourself clearly!"

Tarquin glared harder, each word heavy. "Elijah said he wants to be your son, wants you to be his mom, and even suggested I be your husband!

If you hadn't put the idea in his head, why would he suddenly say such things? He adores his own mom and rejects other women, so why would he abandon his mom for you?"

Elysia was stunned. "Elijah wants me to be his mom?"

## **Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem ( Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 299[ 600 words ]**

Tarquin glared at her. "Yes!"

Elysia was baffled. "How could that even be? I never discussed anything like this with him."

"You expect me to believe that load of crap?"

"You... Just think about it: with Elijah's personality, do you really think I could coach him? Even if I wanted to and told him all those things, would he listen to me? Could I really make it happen?"

Tarquin furrowed his brows, sensing some truth in Elysia's words.

"Besides, you know how much Elijah adores his mom. How could he ever abandon her? Maybe you got it wrong; maybe he wants to see me as his godmother?"

Tarquin was doubtful. If Elijah just wanted Elysia to be his godmother, he wouldn't have asked her to marry him.

Last night, Elijah was emotionally charged and went to look for Elysia, crying uncontrollably in her arms...

He thought they were talking about Elijah's mother, thinking maybe Elijah felt sorry for his mom, and that was why he sought out Elysia. But now, it didn't seem like that at all!

Perhaps from last night, Elijah had already seen Elysia as his mom! That was why he was so desperate and emotional when he found Elysia. Elijah choosing Elysia over his mom suggested one thing: Elysia was his mom!

But DNA tests proved Elysia and Elijah had no biological relation! They were not mother and son!

Why then would Elijah suddenly say such a thing? There must be a reason!

Tarquin couldn't think of another reason. Although he found some logic in Elysia's rebuttal, he still suspected her.

After all, whether it's Elijah seeing her as a mother or him marrying her, she stood to gain the most.

"I warned you when you started taking care of Elijah, no funny business! And stop eyeing me and Elijah, we both have our loved ones, you..."

"Shut up!" Elysia cut him off. "If it really was me who influenced Elijah, say what you want, but I didn't say or do anything. What gives you the right to accuse me?"

You warned me, well, I warned you, too. Don't think you're a hot commodity, loved by everyone, blooming wherever you go! You're nothing to me; I don't like you one bit! Forget eyeing you; I'd be thankful if you didn't eye me!

And let me make this clear, if Elijah wants me as his mom, I'm all for it. You as my husband? Not happening! Go cool off somewhere else!" With that, Elysia stormed off, leaving Tarquin seething.

Elijah had been watching the study's door intently. Seeing Elysia come out upset, he rushed over to ask, "What happened?"

"Nothing."

"Did Dad upset you?"

Elysia couldn't help but retort, "He's nuts!"

Elijah clenched his little fists. "I'm going to settle this with him!"

Elysia quickly grabbed him. "It's okay, I didn't lose out."

Thinking back to Tarquin's words, Elysia sat Elijah down on the living room couch. "Elijah, your dad said you want me to be your mom."

The little guy got instantly nervous, carefully looking at Elysia, his lips moving but no sound coming out.

Elysia smiled warmly. "I'm glad you feel that way. You wanting me as your mom shows you like me, and I like you too. Even though we're not related by blood, we're meant to be a family. If you're okay with it, from now on, we are family."

Elijah blinked cautiously a few times. "Can I... can I call you Mommy?"

"Of course, you can. If that's what you want."

Elijah's eyes instantly teared up, and he dove into Elysia's arms. "Mommy!"

## **Hitched & Hitched Again: A Comedy of Marital Mayhem ( Elysia and Tarquin) - Chapter 300 [ 574 words ]**

"Mommy's here," said Elysia.

Elijah started to sob softly. Even though his mom wasn't aware of their biological connection yet, calling her 'mommy' felt incredibly special!

"Since you've called me mommy, that means we're family now. You can always share your thoughts with me; don't keep everything bottled up inside." Elijah, through his tears, nodded. "Okay!"

The little guy cried so hard that Elysia herself almost started crying while trying to soothe him.

Emotions are contagious, and so are tears.

Elijah wept in her arms, tugging at her heartstrings as if a long-lost son had finally found his way home.

Elysia held Elijah tightly, letting him cry out all his emotions. As their breakfast began to cool down, she gently wiped his tears away and looked at him tenderly, saying, "Let's not cry anymore. Today is a happy day; we should be smiling, right?"

Elijah, with red-rimmed eyes, nodded. He wanted to smile for his mom, but somehow, he couldn't quite manage it.

Elysia couldn't help but laugh at his twisted little expression. "Alright, no more crying or forced smiles. But I need to make something clear: feelings can't be forced. I love you, but I don't have those feelings for your daddy. And your daddy doesn't have them for me, either, so I won't make him be my husband."

Elijah, frowning slightly, asked tentatively, "What if my daddy does like you?"

"He doesn't. He only loves your mommy. Just that fact alone shows he's a loyal man."

Elijah quickly asked, "You don't like loyal men?"

Elysia chuckled. "That's not what I mean. What I'm trying to say is, regardless of your daddy's nature, the fact that he loves your mommy proves his loyalty, which is a good thing. But there really is no chance for him and me."

Elijah looked a bit downhearted, but Elysia noticed and comforted him, "Even if I'm not with your daddy, it doesn't affect our relationship. I will always love you, very much so."

Elijah's eyes sparkled as he said, "I will always love you too, very much."

Blushing after his statement, it felt like his first confession to a girl.

Elysia smiled warmly, feeling her spirits lift. "Let's go have breakfast."

"Okay." Elijah nodded eagerly, following Elysia to the dining area.

As for his dad...

Take it or leave it!

He must have upset his mom earlier, which was why she stormed out of the study. After making her upset, how could he have the nerve to eat the breakfast she made?

Let him be hungry!

The following days saw a household divided.

Elysia and Elijah enjoyed their breakfast together, then cheerfully cleaned up the kitchen and tidied the house, their laughter filling the air with a warm and harmonious atmosphere.

Meanwhile, in the study, Tarquin was left alone, brooding and smoking in solitude, almost in a state of isolation.

A few words from his son had cornered him.

Now that his son was determined to have Elysia as his mommy, if he didn't agree, he might lose his son. But if he did agree, what about Elijah's biological mother?

A man's word is his bond, unrecallable and irrevocable! No matter what, he couldn't give up on finding her, nor could he be with another woman!

But how to break this deadlock?

Tarquin pondered and realized that the key lay with Elysia!

So, taking advantage of Elijah's nap time, he called Elysia into his study once more.