

Hitched 301

Chapter 301

"Turn down Elijah, don't agree to be his mom. Name your terms - a house, a car, cash, whatever."

Elysia blinked in surprise. "What do you mean?"

Tarquin scowled at her. "I don't like you, you know that, right?"

Elysia paused, then retorted, "Funny, I'm not exactly fond of you either!"

"Well, in that case, make it clear to Elijah. We're not happening, so you can't play mom."

Elysia was confused. "What does being Elijah's mom have to do with us being together?"

Of course, it mattered. If they weren't together, his son would end up leaving him! But that was not something Tarquin would admit. He was wary Elysia would use that against him.

"Just do as you're told, no need to ask why," Tarquin said coldly.

Elysia fired back, "And who are you to order me around? What right do you have?"

She stood her ground, chin up, defiant like a rebellious teenager.

"I hired you to look after Elijah. I pay your wages, so you listen to me!" Tarquin tried to keep his cool.

Elysia muttered defiantly, "That may be true, but I have rights too. And given my current relationship with Elijah, I deserve to know why you're against me being his mom."

Tarquin lost his patience and snapped, "Do you want money or a reason?"

Elysia choked.

"If you reject Elijah, I'll write off the money you owe me and throw in another \$500,000. Want a house and a car? I'll add those, too."

"You're bankrupt. Where's all this money coming from?"

"That's none of your concern!"

The mention of money suddenly changed Elysia's demeanor. She murmured, "Too late, I already promised Elijah. I'm going to be his mommy, and he'll be my son."

Tarquin glared, furious. "You decided to be my son's mother without my consent?"

"I'm not stealing your son! Why are you freaking out?"

"Elysia! You're absolutely... I've never met a woman as unreasonable as you!"

Elysia paused, offended. "And I've never met a man as neurotic as you! I promised Elijah to make him happy. Is that so wrong? Why are you making such a big deal out of it?"

"Is it really for his sake or for your own desires? If Elijah becomes your son, I have to be your husband. You say you don't like me, yet here you are, playing games behind my back, saying one thing and doing another, constantly lying!"

Elysia glared, truly angry now. "Are you insane? What kind of twisted logic is that? How does my relationship with Elijah concern you? And this nonsense about if he's my son, you have to be my husband! Dream on!"

Tarquin was livid. "You're just...!"

"Unreasonable, right? Who's being unreasonable here? Let's have the readers decide! I've never seen such a dad. Someone's genuinely trying to do good for your son, and instead of being grateful, you attack them. Worse than a dog!"

"Elysia!"

"Don't you dare yell at me!"

Tarquin was speechless, furious to the point of disarray, glaring at her as if wishing she'd lose her voice.

Elysia, too, was fuming, cheeks flushed, teeth clenched, looking like she was ready to throw down, wishing she could smack him right then and there.

Chapter 302

Eyes locked, the air crackled as if sworn enemies had met on the battlefield, their mutual disdain palpable.

One was thrown into utter disarray by his son's words. The other, clueless about the specifics, couldn't fathom the other's logic, looking at him as if he were a fool.

Naturally, a heated argument ensued. But clearly, Mr. Bradford, yet again, found himself outmatched by his formidable wife.

The room fell silent for a long while before Tarquin finally spoke up, "I'm Elijah's dad, his legal guardian. Anything concerning him is my business! If I say he can't be your son, then he can't be your son!"

Elysia retorted through clenched teeth, "Let me make this clear: my decision to be Elijah's mother is solely for his benefit, and it has nothing to do with you!"

Elijah is suffering from psychological issues stemming from his mother. Now that we've found a way to divert his attention, you, as his father, should be grateful, supportive! If you want Elijah to recover quickly and are against me being his temporary mom, then I suggest you find a way to bring back Elijah's biological mother!"

Tarquin clenched his jaw, fury written all over his face.

Elysia stood her ground. "If you can't bring her back, then shut it!"

With those words, she stormed off.

Meanwhile, Elijah had already received a message from Elliot: [The DNA test results are in; you and Mommy are biologically related!]

Elijah bolted upright in bed, his eyes immediately welling up as he stared at the message from Elliot. Though he had been almost certain the night before, now there was no room for doubt.

Elysia was indeed the mother he had longed for! He was Elysia's biological son!

Elliot sent another message: [Elijah, can you talk now?]

Quickly wiping away his tears, Elijah eagerly called Elliot.

"Elijah, I'm so glad you're our real brother! It's not just the three of us anymore; we're now a band of four brothers!"

Hearing this, Elijah became even more emotional, struggling to speak through the lump in his throat.

Elliot continued, "Evan and Emmett already know, and they're thrilled, too. Let's meet up this afternoon."

"Yeah!"

"We're currently at preschool, but we're planning to sneak off to the amusement park later. Find a way to get Mommy to take you, and we'll meet there."

"Yeah!"

After hanging up, Elijah took several deep breaths, still unable to calm his racing heart. The joy of having a mother and brothers was overwhelming! He now had four family members who, unlike the Bradfords, didn't wish ill on him but loved and cherished him!

Brimming with excitement, Elijah eventually went to seek out Elysia and Tarquin.

Both adults were delighted at the idea of visiting the amusement park. For a child grappling with mental health issues, expressing a desire to go out was a significant step forward!

Elysia was still peeved at Tarquin for his earlier remarks and would have preferred not to have him tag along.

But after all, Tarquin was Elijah's biological father and rightful guardian, so she had no grounds to exclude him.

Thus, the trio set off in their modest family car, a symbol of their simple yet content life.

On the other end, Elliot and Evan had already made their stealthy escape from preschool.

Emmett stayed behind for logistics; he needed to cover for Elliot and Evan, ready with the excuse that they were just off to the restroom if any teacher asked.

Chapter 303

Half an hour later, Tarquin and Elysia arrived at the amusement park with Elijah in tow.

For safety's sake, Tarquin had rented out the entire park. At that moment, aside from the staff, they were the only visitors in the park.

Gazing at the towering cartoon characters and the brightly colored castles, Elysia asked Elijah, "Are you having fun?"

Elijah countered, "Are you having fun?"

"Yeah, lots of fun!"

"Then I'm having fun, too."

Tarquin was left wondering. Did that mean if Elysia wasn't having fun, Elijah wouldn't be either? And what if his daddy wasn't having fun?

Out of nowhere, Tarquin felt a twinge of jealousy and admitted, "I'm not really having fun."

Elysia and Elijah both turned to him.

Elysia looked confused and slightly annoyed, but Elijah calmly suggested, "If you're not happy, you don't have to stick around with us. Go have some alone time."

Tarquin was speechless.

Hearing this, Elysia turned to Elijah. "Hey Elijah, how about we go on the roller coaster?"

Elijah nodded eagerly. "Yeah, let's go!"

Hand in hand, the mother and son excitedly ran towards the roller coaster, leaving Tarquin feeling disheveled in the breeze. He watched their retreating figures with a complex expression, feeling as if his son had been snatched away. Elijah used to depend on and adore him the most, but now it seemed he adored Elysia more. When he expressed his unhappiness, his son didn't offer a word of concern; just suggested he go be by himself.

Can love really shift its feet and move on?

For the first time in his life, Tarquin felt the sting of jealousy, and it was sour!

The roller coaster was up ahead, thrilling enough for both adults and children, promising a much wilder ride than the kiddie attractions.

Elysia once again asked Elijah, "Elijah, do you dare to take it?"

Elijah bounced the question back to her, "Do you dare to?"

Elysia hesitated. "I haven't been on many, but if you want to go, I'll go with you."

"Let's do it together."

Elysia nodded, her enthusiasm undimmed. "Alright, let's."

But her enthusiasm didn't last long. She was naturally timid, and the roller coaster's breakneck speed terrified her, making her scream uncontrollably. Tarquin, hearing the commotion, looked over with a scowl.

As the roller coaster plunged from its peak, Elysia's hair was a mess from the wind, and she screamed like a banshee.

Tarquin pursed his lips tightly, thoroughly exasperated. How could Elijah love such a foolish, clumsy, and frantic woman? Yet Elijah not only loved her, but he was utterly smitten!

Sitting beside Elysia, Elijah held her hand tightly, comforting her, "Don't be scared; I'm here!"

Next to Elysia, he transformed from a cool young kid to a tender-hearted boy.

Soon after, Elliot and Evan also arrived. Both wore masks and walked along the park's perimeter fence towards the entrance.

But before they reached it, they noticed something odd.

Evan curiously asked, "Why are there no visitors inside? The weather's great today, isn't it? Isn't anyone out playing?"

Elliot guessed accurately, "Tarquin must have rented out the place, worried about Elijah's safety."

"Rented out? How do we get in then?"

"Let's wait and see."

Just as Elliot finished speaking, Evan sharply turned his head towards a corner; his brows furrowed, eyes filled with suspicion. Elliot quickly asked, "What's wrong?"

"We're being followed."

Elliot tensed up as well. "Are you sure they're following us?"

"Yeah, sneaking around, definitely up to no good! Bro, you go find Elijah. I'll catch up with you guys later. Let me deal with this stalker." "Alright, just be careful."

"Don't worry, no one can hurt me."

With that, Evan turned and dashed towards the corner.

Chapter 304

Elliot was well aware of Evan's capabilities, so he wasn't the least bit worried about him getting into trouble. As Evan's figure disappeared, Elliot continued his walk towards the entrance of the amusement park.

Upon reaching the entrance, a security guard informed him that the park was reserved for a private event, and he couldn't enter.

Elliot was just brainstorming a workaround when he spotted Lowell stepping out of a car and making his way towards him.

Narrowing his eyes slightly, Elliot pulled down his face mask.

Lowell seemed surprised to see him, quickly covering the distance between them. "Elijah, what are you doing outside the park?"

Elliot responded, "Got out through a side exit, can't get back in now."

Lowell scooped him up in his arms, exchanged a few words with the security guard, and carried Elliot inside.

Using the excuse of needing the bathroom, Elliot managed to slip away from Lowell. He then studied the park's map for a bit, found a secluded corner, and texted Elijah.

Elliot: [Elijah, I'm here. Try to slip away from Daddy and Mommy. Let's meet at the bathroom in section B, stall number 2. It's the most hidden one.] Once Elijah got the message, his eyes whirled twice in their sockets before he said to Tarquin, "Daddy, I want to eat."

Tarquin paused for a moment, pointing towards a vendor. "That one?"

"Yes, get one for my mommy too, something pretty."

Tarquin was reluctant but went to make the purchase anyway.

After sending Tarquin off, Elijah turned to Elysia. "Mommy, I need to use the bathroom."

Elysia softly asked, "Do you want Mommy to come with you?"

"No need, I can go by myself. You can just wait here."

Given that Tarquin had reserved the park, Elysia felt quite safe letting Elijah go to the bathroom on his own.

Elliot was already waiting inside the bathroom. Seeing Elijah, he was thrilled. "Elijah!"

Elijah clenched his fists tightly, even more nervous than Elliot, his lips moving without making a sound.

Elliot stepped forward and gave him a hug. "Lucky us! To be real brothers!"

Elijah, being reserved and not much for words, awkwardly nodded. "Yeah!"

Seeing his nervousness, Elliot smiled gently. "Since you're the latest addition to the family, you'll be the youngest if that's okay with you. You can call me Elliot, or like Evan and Emmett, you can also call me 'bro'."

Elijah's lips quivered. "Bro."

Elliot hugged him again, thrilled at gaining such a big brother out of the blue.

Elijah inquired, "Where are Evan and Emmett?"

Elliot replied, "Emmett's still in preschool. He's covering for me and Evan. You'll meet him next time. Evan came with me but got held up with something outside. He'll reach out once he's done."

Elijah quickly asked, "What happened? Do I need to help?"

"No need. Evan's got it under control. Don't worry about him. Oh, and they asked me to tell you they're really glad you're our brother! Welcome to the family! We're truly a family now, bound by love, never to be separated again!"

Brothers, a family, bound by love and never to be separated!

Elijah felt a surge of emotion, his nostrils tingling, eyes reddening, on the verge of tears.

For years, aside from his dad's love, his relatives had wished ill upon him.

The Bradfords, despite their vast estate and numerous family members, lacked genuine affection towards him. He often felt lonely, unsure of what true kinship meant.

Now, he was no longer alone. He had brothers, a mom, and besides his dad, a family that truly cared for him.

Chapter 305

Elijah fought to control himself, struggling not to let tears escape his eyes. He had to stay strong in front of his big brother; he couldn't let him think he was just a crybaby!

"I-I'm also really happy to be your brother, to be part of your big family!"

Elijah's eyes reddened, and Elliot warmly hugged him again, comforting, "We're so sorry for leaving you all alone these years. But you've got to believe in Mommy, don't ever resent her, okay? She truly didn't know about you, or else she would have done everything to keep you safe. Our silly mommy isn't the sharpest tool in the shed sometimes, but she's truly an amazing mommy! She went through so much to bring us into this world. She loves us more than anything; if she had known about you, she would have never let you go."

Elijah choked up. "I know. I don't blame Mommy; I like her."

"Good, you just wait. I will get to the bottom of this! We'll find out who took you from Mommy, making you two miss out on so many years together. I'll make sure they pay!"

"Yeah!" Elijah nodded, sniffing, "Daddy said I was found on the doorstep by Nola Slater."

"It wasn't her. I checked today; Nola wasn't the one who took you from Mommy. If anything, Nola stumbling upon you was a stroke of luck."

"But if not Nola, then who? After saving me, the entire Slater family's fortunes soared! From being nobodies, they shot straight to the top, all because Nola saved me!"

Elliot frowned slightly. "We still need to investigate the specifics, but Nola isn't our main focus. Even if it hadn't been Nola, someone else would have found you and brought you to Tarquin. Someone wanted you to end up with Tarquin; it didn't matter who found you, so we shouldn't dwell too much on Nola."

Elijah's expression turned serious. "You mean, someone's been pulling the strings behind the scenes?"

"Exactly. Mommy was on her way home from work, about to give birth to us when she passed out. She woke up deep in the woods. That means someone found her, helped her through childbirth, and then abandoned her in the wilderness. But when Mommy woke up, it was just us three with her, no sign of you. So, you must have been taken. And they must have known Tarquin was your biological father, which is why they left you at his doorstep."

Elijah frowned. "It does sound like someone's manipulating things. But why send you into the woods? It's hardly a place to live. Did they want you to fend for yourselves?"

Elliot shook his head. "I've thought about this too. The wilderness is no place for a newborn, but if they wanted us dead, they could have just let Mommy die in childbirth. No, sending us to the wilderness gave us a sliver of hope."

Elijah asked, "Right after Mommy gave birth, how did you guys survive out there?"

Without hesitation, Elliot replied, "We were saved by a kind-hearted hermit living in the mountains."

Elijah was taken aback. "A hermit? What are the odds? Could they be the mastermind?"

Elliot immediately shook his head. "No way, they were good people, the best you could find. You'll understand once you meet them. Without their help, we wouldn't have learned the skills to protect mom."

Elliot then cautioned, "By the way, we promised our benefactors we wouldn't speak of this to outsiders. I'm only telling you because you're family, so keep it to yourself."

Elijah felt a wave of gratitude. "Don't worry, I'll keep it a secret!"

Thinking of their mountain benefactors, Elliot suddenly wondered, "Elijah, I learned my skills from the hermits. What about you? I know Tarquin is good at making money, but not so much with computers or the inte, so he couldn't have taught you. And you haven't had much contact with the outside world, so I'm curious."

Chapter 306

Elijah didn't beat around the bush when he shared his story.

"I learned from a guy I met online. I've always missed Mommy a lot and kept to myself, not really into talking with others. Daddy was worried I was getting too isolated, so he got me a computer, hoping I'd make some friends online.

That's when I met my mentor. He was on a quest, just like me, searching for someone he lost a long time ago. We bonded over our shared struggles and became fast friends in the digital world.

He told me I had a knack for it, reminded him of himself when he was younger. He said I needed to hone my skills to achieve my dreams faster. So, to find Mommy sooner, I took his offer to teach me."

Elliot was curious. "Who's this mentor of yours?"

Elijah shook his head. "I'm not exactly sure who he is, just that he's brilliant. And he's still searching for the person he lost."

This made Elijah a bit melancholy. He wished his mentor could find his lost one soon. Otherwise, the search would continue to pain him.

"Who's he looking for?" Elliot asked.

"I don't know, a woman very important to him."

Elliot wondered, what kind of woman could be so hard to find, even for someone as capable as his mentor?

After a brief silence, Elliot said, "A mentor for a day can be a father for a lifetime. He's taught you so much and guided you; he's a benefactor to our family. If we ever get the chance, Mommy and I would definitely need to thank him properly."

"Yeah!"

Then, Elliot steered the conversation back. "By the way, do you know why Daddy won't divorce Mommy?"

"Huh? Daddy won't divorce Mommy?"

"Yeah, he clearly doesn't like her. He was the one who initially pushed for the divorce, but it never happened! Mommy came back to Jindale City to finalize their divorce. Sadly, she's tried to reach him multiple times without success. I can't figure out what he's thinking."

Elijah furrowed his brows in thought before replying, "He must be trying to ward off Nola."

"Huh?"

"Nola's got her sights set on Daddy and has been wanting to marry him. Since she helped me out once, Daddy's been reluctant to outright reject her, using his married status as an excuse."

Elijah's insight hit the nail on the head.

Elliot had an epiphany. "That makes sense!" He had been puzzled by this for a while, but Elijah's explanation cleared it up.

"If that's the case, it's easily solved. They were secretly married, so they just need to divorce quietly without letting Nola know."

That way, he wouldn't need to trade that thing with Tarquin. The treasure he'd acquired from Gideon Bradford was something he cherished.

Elliot asked cautiously, "Elijah, if you had to choose between Daddy and Mommy, who would it be?"

Elijah bit his lip, not wanting to answer; he wanted both!

Elliot reframed his question, "Would you be willing to leave Tarquin and go with Mommy?"

Elijah shook his head. "Daddy's been really good to me. I don't want to leave him. If I did, he'd be distraught. Without me, his world would be just darkness, no light. Daddy... he's got it rough."

Elijah wasn't usually one for many words, but he was sharp and understood the situation well.

Tarquin had been both a father and a mother to him, fighting tooth and nail. Living with the Bradfords, surrounded by cutthroat competition, felt like being a lone lion on a dark mountain, surrounded by beasts eager to tear him apart.

To Tarquin, Elijah was like a ray of sunshine, bringing light to his shadowed world.

Leaving with Elysia would extinguish that light, plunging Tarquin's world into utter darkness.

They say it's lonely at the top, and Tarquin was standing at the pinnacle, utterly alone.

Elijah felt for him, loved him too much to abandon him.

Chapter 307

Elliot's feelings for Tarquin couldn't hold a candle to those Elijah had. In a gentle whisper, he said, "Mommy won't stay here for long, buddy. If you wanna stick with Daddy, you can't always be by Mommy's side."

"Can't Mommy just... not leave?"

"I'm afraid that's not an option. What happened back then hurt her too deeply. She just can't bear to stay."

"What if Daddy realizes his mistakes, apologizes, and even falls for Mommy again?"

Elliot paused for a moment before speaking, "That would depend on Mommy. If she forgives him and falls for him, too, she might stay. But that's a long shot. He hurt Mommy too deeply! And as it stands, he doesn't have feelings for Mommy, making an apology seem unlikely."

Elijah quickly said, "That's because Daddy doesn't know Mommy is the one he's been searching for all along. If he knew, he'd change his attitude towards Mommy right away."

Elliot's face softened, "We can't tell them the truth just yet. If they knew, Tarquin would surely go all out to win Mommy over. But his doing so might not stem from genuine love but rather guilt and remorse over the past.

Moreover, his all-out pursuit might scare Mommy off. She might not only decide against staying, but she might also take us and leave immediately. There's also a chance that Mommy, thinking of you and wanting to give us a complete family, might settle for Tarquin out of desperation. That's not what we want, and it's certainly not what you want, right? We all hope Mommy can be happy and joyful, not sacrificing her happiness for us." Elijah nodded vigorously. "I want Mommy to be happy and joyful, too."

"So the best case scenario is for them to fall for each other without knowing the full truth. The kind of love that's genuine, without any other factors involved. Tarquin wouldn't need to feel guilty or obligated to make up for the past by taking responsibility for Mommy! And Mommy wouldn't have to compromise her happiness to be with him for our sake!

If they fall in love with each other genuinely, without any external factors, that's when Mommy can truly be happy, and Tarquin too. Do you understand, Elijah?"

Elijah nodded again, more vigorously. "I get it, I do."

"So, we keep what we know to ourselves for now, got it?"

"Yeah!"

Noticing Elijah looked a bit sad, Elliot comforted him, "I know you're eager to tell Tarquin the truth, but the timing isn't right yet. Even though Evan and I aren't exactly fond of Tarquin, given how deeply he hurt Mommy back then, if Mommy truly falls for him, we'd definitely forgive him.

For your sake, I'll try to delay Mommy's departure from Jindale City, giving her and Tarquin more time to bond. Let's see if any feelings can develop. If they do, it's a win-win. If not, I hope you won't have any regrets. After all, love can't be forced."

"Yeah! I'll work on getting Daddy to fall for Mommy quickly, and then I'll make Daddy try even harder to win Mommy over!"

"That's the spirit! Let's stick to that plan for now. Keep it under wraps and stay by Tarquin's side. If anything urgent comes up, we'll call each other." "Yeah, yeah."

"Ring, ring..."

Elliot's smartwatch suddenly rang. It was Evan calling.

Elliot answered, "Hey, you done?"

"Bro, bro, bro, I'm in trouble!" Evan's voice came through, frantic and hurried.

Chapter 308

Elliott's brow furrowed. "What's going on?"

"I just got caught by that jerk Tarquin!"

"What? Slow down, tell me everything!"

"I had just shaken off that stalker, sneaking into the amusement park to meet up with you guys, and just my luck, I ran smack into Tarquin! Bumped right into him and couldn't get away!"

Elliott's voice was laced with anxiety, "Where are you right now?"

"I'm hiding out in the bathroom, and Tarquin is camping out right by the door."

"You were wearing a mask, right? How did he recognize you?"

"Yeah, I had my mask on, but today he had rented the whole park. There was only one kid around, Elijah, so when he suddenly saw a kid, he just assumed it was Elijah! And when he took off my mask, he was even more convinced I'm Elijah."

They were the spitting image of each other!

"So, you mean he only thinks you're Elijah and hasn't figured out anything else?"

"Exactly!"

Elliott let out a sigh of relief. "Well, that's something at least!"

Bad luck, sure, but at least their true identities were still a secret.

Elliott steadied his thoughts and asked, "Aren't you and Elijah wearing different clothes today? Didn't he find that suspicious?"

"He did ask. I told him the suit was too uncomfortable to play in, so I changed into something else and that I had brought the extra clothes with me. Then, I bolted into the bathroom. What do I do now?"

Elliott pondered for a moment. "And he's still outside?"

"Yeah, hasn't moved an inch, standing guard like some sort of bathroom guardian angel. Plus, this bathroom doesn't even have a window. I'm trapped!"

"Where's Mommy?"

"I don't know. I ran into Tarquin before I could see her."

"If she hasn't seen you, that's good. Tarquin might think Elijah has a split personality at worst, but Mommy's different. She'd recognize you in an instant. After all, she bought you those clothes and shoes you're wearing. You can't let her see you!"

"Uh, so what should I do?"

After thinking for a bit longer, Elliott said, "Just walk out and tell Tarquin you want to go home, you're done for the day. Head straight home! If he wants to go looking for Mom, don't let him. Insist you can't stay a second longer and leave immediately."

"Wait, you want me to just go home with Tarquin all by myself?"

"Yeah, it's the best option we have right now."

"But, but..... just thinking about him annoys me; seeing him lights a fire inside me. If I'm alone with him, I'm afraid I... I might not be able to control myself. What if I hit him?"

Elliott let out a silent groan. Evan was known for being straightforward and impulsive, quick to anger and quicker to throw a punch. Considering his intense dislike for Tarquin, a solo encounter could indeed end in violence... and it might be quite a spectacle!

Elliott could only advise, "Try to keep it together. He is your daddy, after all."

Evan grumbled, "Are you sure the paternity test wasn't messed up? His family is supposed to have one son per generation. How did they end up with four all of a sudden?"

"You don't need to doubt that. You and he are father and son. Just go home with him for now, and I'll think of something else. Whatever happens, we can't let him find out about us."

Reluctantly, Evan agreed, "Fine, I'll try to keep my hands to myself."

After hanging up, Elliott sighed deeply, knowing Tarquin was in for a rough night.

With Evan involved, Tarquin was surely in for a world of trouble.

Chapter 309

Elijah was visibly worried as he overheard the plan, "Evan pretending to be me and going home with Dad, will that work?"

It seemed like a stretch, but there didn't appear to be a better option available.

Elliot, not wanting Elijah to stress further, reassured him, "It'll work out, don't worry. But since Evan's already gone with Tarquin, you'll have to come back to preschool with me. Can you handle that?"

Given Elijah's anxiety issues and his limited interactions with strangers, Elliot was understandably concerned.

Elijah furrowed his brow, a determined look on his face, "Yeah! I won't hold you back."

Elliot's eyes softened with affection, "I've got your back, little bro. Once we get to preschool, if you don't feel like talking, just keep quiet. I'll cover for you. Plus, it'll be a good chance for you to get a glimpse into the life we lead. Let's sneak out before Mom notices and head back."

"Okay! But, what about Mom if we both leave?" Elijah asked, concern lacing his voice.

"Don't worry about her. Mom's a grown-up; she'll find her way home," Elliot reassured. With a nod of agreement, Elijah followed Elliot, feeling a mix of anxiety and excitement. This was his first time venturing out without Dad, stepping into a world of strangers. Yet, the anticipation of getting to know his brothers and Mom's everyday life was thrilling! Soon enough, Elliot and Elijah made their way out of the playground and back to preschool.

As they approached their classroom, they were greeted by their teacher who looked concerned, "Elliot, Evan, why were you guys in the restroom for so long? Are you feeling okay?"

Elijah tensed up, his small brow furrowed as he looked at the teacher with a mix of wariness and distance.

Elliot nudged him gently, signaling not to worry, and addressed the teacher, "Just a bit of a stomach bug, but we're fine now."

"Stomach trouble, huh? Did you eat something bad?"

"Yeah, had some spicy chips," Elliot confessed.

The teacher immediately responded, "See, I've told you time and again. Spicy chips are junk food. They'll upset your stomach. Do you believe me now? No more eating them, okay?"

"Okay."

Then, the teacher's gaze shifted to Elijah, "Wait a minute, I don't recall Evan wearing those clothes earlier?"

Elijah's heart skipped a beat, his anxiety spiking!

However, Elliot remained cool, "He had an accident, so we changed him into spare clothes."

It was common practice for kids to carry a change of clothes in their backpacks to preschool, considering how easily they could get dirty or have accidents.

The teacher, assuming Elijah's nervousness was due to embarrassment, smiled reassuringly, "It's okay to have accidents at your age. Just be more careful next time. You should head back to class now; snack time is almost over, and then it's time to go home. And next time, you don't need to go far for the restroom; we have one right in our classroom."

Most preschool classrooms are equipped with their own restrooms.

Elliot remarked, "The classroom restroom doesn't have a proper door, and I'd rather not use it."

This was true; Elliot had never used the classroom restroom since starting preschool, always preferring the ones outside.

The teacher, thinking nothing of it, laughed, "Elliot, already so modest at your age. Alright, off you go back to class." "Bye, teacher."

After successfully sidestepping the teacher's suspicions, Elliot led Elijah back to the classroom.

Elijah took a deep breath, trying to calm his nerves. This was his first time interacting so closely with someone he didn't know. He was grateful for his brother's support, unsure how he would've managed on his own.

Chapter 310

Elijah sneaked a peek at Elliot, his eyes brimming with admiration.

He always felt inferior, so seeing Elliot effortlessly chatting with their teacher made him think Elliot was nothing short of a rockstar!

No wonder he was his big bro!

Big bro was his hero, someone he aspired to be!

"Evan!" A roar suddenly echoed in his ears.

Elijah had just reached the classroom door when his heart skipped a beat.

A little girl with a ponytail was glaring at him, her eyes red and puffy, as if she had just been crying.

Elijah immediately furrowed his brows!

He looked at the little girl warily, then at Elliot, "Who's she?"

Elliot shook his head with a sigh, "Evan's little sister."

Elijah blinked, surprised, "We have a sister?!"

"Evan adopted her, sort of a sister by choice."

Elijah ".

"1

The little girl's eyes got even redder when he didn't respond,

"Evan is a big liar, you said I was your only sister, why are Olivia and Emma also claiming to be your sisters?"

Olivia, her eyes also welling up, said, "Evan, talk to us, am I really your sister or not?"

Emma was sobbing, "Evan, Olivia called me a liar, said I'm not your sister, waaah, tell her I didn't lie!"

Elijah had never seen such a scene before, his brows knitted tightly as he frowned, not managing to utter a word.

His gloomy demeanor was a spitting image of Tarquin in miniature, his aura so chilly it made the little girls burst into tears, filling the classroom with wails.

Elijah clenched his fists, his face growing colder by the second.

The sobs of the little girls got louder.

Left with no choice, Elijah turned to Elliot for help again.

"Don't worry, I got this."

Elliot whispered, then led Elijah back to his seat, addressing the sobbing girls,

"Stop crying, girls. Evan's just having a bad day. Let him have some space."

The moment they heard this, the tears stopped, replaced with concern, "What's wrong with him?"

"He wet his pants."

"Whaaat?!" The girls were shocked.

Normally, any other student caught wetting their pants would be the butt of jokes, but not Evan. Instead of ridicule, he received sympathy.

Because he was that sunny, handsome, cheerful boy everyone adored.

Suddenly, the girls weren't crying anymore but rushing over to comfort him,

"Evan, don't be sad. My mommy says all kids wet their pants at some point. Our teacher and my parents did it when they were little too."

"Yeah, my parents even pooped their pants!"

"My parents even drank pee!"

"My dad played with poop when he was little!"

"My dad's the champ, he even ate poop!"

In their eagerness to console Evan, the kids overshared, and the conversation took a wild turn...

Each trying to outdo the other in devotion, they 'honored' their parents in a peculiar way!

(The parents, if you're listening, thank you. Having you is my blessing!)

" "....."

Elijah listened to their stories, his expression a mix of shock and confusion.

It wasn't until Elliot managed to disperse the group of girls that he couldn't help but ask,

"They all really like Evan?"

"Yeah, Evan's their little prince. He makes them happy, stands up for them, and even gives them presents." ".....Does Evan like hanging out with little girls?"

"Evan always wanted a little sister, but since we don't have one, he turned the girls in class into his sisters." Elijah pursed his lips, "....."

Elliot, curious, "So, you don't like little girls?"

"Not a fan!"

"Why's that?"

Elijah's little face turned dark, his brows furrowed just like his dad's,

"Too much hassle!"

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