

Hitched 341

Chapter 341

"Absolutely brilliant idea, let's do it!"

"What?!"

Keaton said, "I'm going to call Elysia now, get her to pick him up. A little bit of drunken mischief, like turning uncooked rice into a done deal."

"What?!" Lowell was instantly sobered by the idea.

Seeing Keaton actually pulling out his phone, he hurriedly stopped him, "We can't mess around like that. Tarquin will have our heads when he sobers up."

"He'd have to catch us first!"

"But he will, we can't beat him in a fight."

Keaton looked at Lowell with disdain, "Are you thinking with mashed potatoes up there? Who said anything about fighting? If he swings, we run. Plus, his drunken antics aren't our fault, right?"

"...I guess you have a point, but won't this screw over Ms. Thorne? She's a good person; I don't want to trick her." "She's sober. If she doesn't want to, Tarquin won't stand a chance! We're just giving them an opportunity, get it?"

"Got it! But there's one issue. Ms. Thorne isn't into Tarquin like that. If you call her to pick him up, she won't come." "True... let's just deliver him to her then."

"What?!"

"If she won't come to pick him up, we'll bring the party to her, surprise her."

The two, half-drunk themselves, decided to ship Tarquin off.

So, half an hour later, Elysia received a life-sized package.

No surprise, just shock!

At that hour, Blossom and the kids were all asleep. Only Elysia was up, battling insomnia. Hearing the knock, she quickly got up, threw on a robe, and walked out of her bedroom. "Who's there?!"

It was late, and she didn't dare open the door right away, instead peeking through the peephole. A ride-share driver called out, "Ms. Thorne? Your husband got plastered. I've brought him home." Elysia was baffled, "My husband? I don't have a husband! You must have the wrong door." "No, ma'am, I've checked the address several times. You are Elysia, right?"

"That's me."

"Then there's no mistake. Tarquin isn't your husband?"

Tarquin?

Elijah's dad?!

The driver, worried she wouldn't believe him, helped the drunken Tarquin stand so she could see him through the peephole.

Elysia almost had a heart attack at the sight!

Not wanting to wake the kids, she quickly stepped outside, closed the door behind her, and spoke to the driver, "I know him, but he's not my husband, and he doesn't live here."

"But this was the address I was given!"

Thinking it was a case of a wife mad at her drunk husband, the driver left Tarquin with Elysia and quickly departed.

Elysia couldn't stop him!

Stuck with such a "large package" in the middle of the night, Elysia was on the verge of madness!

Tarquin, completely out of it, leaned on her, reeking of alcohol.

Elysia pushed him away!

With a 'thud,' Tarquin fell to the ground like a sack of potatoes.

Clearly out cold, he didn't even open his eyes from the fall, continuing to snore away on the cold floor.

Elysia couldn't care less and turned to go back inside.

But soon, she was back out again.

If he stayed there, sleeping on the floor, how would she explain it to the neighbors tomorrow morning?

And with the kids needing to go to school, what if they bumped into their father just as he woke up? She couldn't let him sleep out here!

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"Hey! Get up!"

Elysia was desperate to get him to leave and head back to his own place!

But no matter how much she moved her mouth, swung her arms, or kicked her legs, like a little tornado trying to whisper, shout, and kick all at once, she couldn't wake him up.

It was a true spectacle of chaos meets calm.

She was all over the place, and he was as peaceful as a sleeping kitten.

She did her thing, and he did his - which was sleeping, undisturbed!

Tarquin's biggest reaction was a slight frown, and then... nothing.

Not even an eyelid twitch.

Realizing waking him up and sending him on his way was a lost cause, Elysia dialed Lowell and Keaton, hoping they could come and take him away!

But alas, it was exactly those two who had 'conspired' to send him over in the first place. No chance they'd pick up her call!

Lowell and Keaton were effectively playing possum.

As the saying goes, never expect a reply from someone playing dead. So, no luck reaching Lowell or Keaton.

And since she didn't have contact info for any of Tarquin's other friends, she was out of options there.

It was late; she couldn't possibly call Elijah, could she?

Elijah was just a kid, how would he come to pick someone up?

After some thought, Elysia opened an app on her phone, hoping to book a delivery service to haul him away.

But, to her astonishment, she waited over an hour with no takers!

It was baffling and utterly frustrating!

Waiting around wasn't solving anything. After some deliberation, Elysia bit the bullet and decided to take matters into her own hands.

She dashed home to change into sportswear and tied her long hair into a ponytail.

Coming back, she rolled up her sleeves, grabbed Tarquin by a leg, and tried dragging him to the elevator.

But no dice!

Abandoning the drag, she then tried hoisting him up by wrapping his arm around her neck, attempting to lift him that way.

Predictably, that didn't work either!

Despite her best efforts, she couldn't budge him an inch.

Tarquin might look lean, but he was no lightweight. A fitness enthusiast with a passion for sports, his physique was deceptively muscular and toned!

And at nearly six foot three, moving him was no small feat for Elysia. She just didn't have the muscle for it!

After sweating through the ordeal without success, she resigned to seek help from the condominium's security. Why struggle when you can ask for help?

The guards knew Elysia and the kids, and upon seeing Tarquin, immediately joked,

"Ms. Thorne, where are you off to with the kids' dad at this hour?!"

Elysia quickly retorted, "He's not the kids' dad! They just look alike."

"Oh? Not him, huh? But the resemblance! Who is he then?"

"A total sleazebag!"

"What?"

"Just someone not worth mentioning. Could you help me get him to the front gate? He's drunk, and I need to get him home."

Seeing Elysia reluctant to share more, the guards, knowing better than to pry, helped Tarquin up.

"Man, this guy might look slim, but he's heavy."

Elysia sneered, "Looks can be deceiving. He's like a wolf in sheep's clothing but weighs like a pig!"

All bark and no bite, but heavy as a hog!

With the security guards' help, she managed to stuff Tarquin into a cab.

She intended to sit in the passenger seat, but the driver suggested otherwise,

"Miss, you might want to sit in the back with him. He's wasted, and it wouldn't be safe for him to be alone back there. Plus, if he needs to throw up or something, you can keep an eye on him."

Reluctantly, Elysia followed the driver's advice and sat in the back.

No sooner had the car started moving than Tarquin collapsed onto her.

Reacting instinctively, Elysia shoved him away - hard!

"Thud-"

Tarquin's head hit the car window.

The driver jumped, "Miss... is he alright?"

Elysia, unfazed, assured, "Don't worry, he won't die! Just focus on driving."

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The driver suddenly realized that having her sit in the back seat with a drunk person might not be the safest option.

On the bumpy ride, every turn or brake made Tarquin lean uncontrollably towards Elysia. Each time, she would harshly shove him away, showing no "mercy" at all! Tarquin's head kept hitting either the window or the back of the front seat. The driver winced in sympathy, but Elysia remained indifferent.

Forget about what happened six years ago; just dealing with him tonight was infuriating enough. Feeling sorry for him? She thought it was generous enough not to punch him for all the trouble he caused!

Upon arriving at the Sunshine Community, Elysia gave the driver an extra tip to help get Tarquin upstairs. The place was filled with Tarquin's bodyguards, lurking in the shadows. They watched Elysia's fierce demeanor with a mix of awe and fear, particularly concerned for their drunken boss.

"Is the boss going to be okay? Why does Ms. Thorne seem especially terrifying tonight?"

"Should we check on him?"

"Who's going to do that? Not me! I'd sooner sneak into the Bradford family mansion and confront Gideon than mess with Ms. Thorne tonight."

The cab driver shared their sentiment and quickly left after dropping Tarquin at his doorstep.

Why do they say hell hath no fury like a woman scorned? Because when a woman gets mad, men better stay out of her way! Tonight, Elysia was the embodiment of that fury, radiating anger from every inch of her, even her hair seemed to bristle with indignation!

No sooner had the driver left than Elysia was ready to make her exit. She dumped Tarquin in the foyer and was about to leave. She had done her part by getting him home, but she wasn't going to stick around to care for him.

But just as she was heading out, Elijah suddenly appeared from the bedroom, "Mommy?!"

Elysia paused, instantly softening, "Elijah, why are you up? Did we wake you?"

He shook his head, his concern evident as he glanced at Tarquin sprawled on the floor.

Elysia explained, "He's alright, just drunk. Were you not asleep because of the noise, or have you been up all this time?"

Elijah didn't respond directly, but his worried look said it all. He had been upset and worried after hearing that his "silly dad" had made his mom cry tonight. He was concerned that his dad wouldn't be able to cheer his mom up, and that she would remain sad, causing him to lose sleep.

Elysia quickly stepped over Tarquin and knelt beside Elijah, asking softly, "Why aren't you sleeping? Something on your mind?"

Elijah frowned, "I heard Dad made you cry tonight."

"How did you know? Did Elliot tell you?"

"Yes."

"And that's why you couldn't sleep?"

He nodded.

Elysia's heart melted, and she pulled Elijah into a hug. Even though Elijah wasn't her biological child, their bond was real and deep. She cared for him, and he for her.

"Elijah, thank you for worrying about me. But I'm okay now, alright? Your dad and I have sorted things out, so don't worry."

"Are you... still upset?"

Elysia smiled, "Not anymore. With you guys caring for me, I'm actually quite happy."

Seeing her genuine smile, Elijah finally felt relieved and solemnly said, "If he ever bullies you again, come to me. I'll stand up for you!"

Elysia was deeply moved, hugging him tightly, "Elijah, you're so good to me. I'm so lucky to know you."

Caught off guard by Elysia's sudden expression of affection, Elijah hesitated for a moment before gently patting her back, like a young man reassuring his beloved, "I'll always be here to make things better for you."

In that moment, the bond between Elysia and Elijah was a beautiful scene of mutual care and affection, while Tarquin was left dealing with the aftermath of his indulgence, his stomach churning with regret.

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"Cough cough!" Tarquin coughed twice, frowning and rubbing his chest, looking quite uncomfortable.

Elijah, seeing this, quickly ran over. "Dad?"

He squatted down, rubbing Tarquin's chest. "What's wrong, Dad? Are you feeling bad?"

Although Elijah was mad at him for making Elysia sad, and a bit frustrated at his cluelessness for not realizing Elysia was his true love and repeatedly causing drama, his love for Tarquin was genuine.

Elijah wasn't much for words, but he knew well who treated him kindly. Seeing Tarquin in discomfort, he was worried.

Elysia really didn't want to deal with this jerk, but if she didn't, it would only upset Elijah more. And seeing how anxious Elijah was, she felt sympathy too.

"Drinking too much is bound to make him feel sick, but don't worry, it's a normal reaction. He'll feel better once he's sobered up."

No sooner had Elysia finished speaking than Tarquin made a vomiting gesture, startling her. She quickly came forward, pulling him up. "Don't just throw up here! Get to the bathroom!"

Tarquin's eyes were still closed, clearly not awake yet, but he must have heard Elysia, as he staggered up, letting her guide him to the bathroom. As soon as the toilet lid was lifted, he began to throw up violently.

Elysia was disgusted, but she didn't leave him alone. She stood by his side, gently patting his back, hoping to help him sober up a bit more smoothly. Elijah, feeling very sorry for his dad, quickly ran to the kitchen to fetch a glass of warm water.

Elysia asked, "Do we have any hangover remedy at home?"

"I don't know, should I go buy some?"

"The pharmacy's closed by now, never mind, it's okay not to have the hangover remedy. He'll be fine after sleeping it off."

Elijah frowned, "Why did he drink so much?"

Elysia shook her head, "I don't know."

"Did he drink with you?"

"No, he was brought to my place drunk, and then I brought him back here. Does he often get drunk?"

"No. He's a heavy smoker, but not much of a drinker. He only drinks heavily when he's really upset. This is the first time he's gotten drunk in front of me."

The first time? Elysia was somewhat surprised, giving Tarquin another glance. Judging by Elijah alone, he was a decent dad.

Nowadays, there are plenty of dads out there drowning in alcohol, completely disregarding their children's mental and physical health, getting drunk in front of them as if it's nothing. Alcohol is no good

thing, and people tend to lose control when drunk, their behavior becoming unseemly, which is not beneficial for a child's upbringing at all!

The fact that Tarquin refrained from getting drunk in front of Elijah showed his awareness of this. It also proved that he was a decent dad, at least in front of Elijah!

Even if he was nothing in front of Elliot Evan, in front of Elijah, he did quite well!

"He's upset tonight," Elijah suddenly said with a hint of sadness.

"Hmm?"

"Something must have happened to upset him, otherwise he wouldn't have drunk so much. I know him."

Elysia thought for a moment, recalling their conversation in the gazebo before they parted, and she had an epiphany!

His sadness must be because of Elijah's mother! He must be missing her! What right did he have to miss her?

Elysia pursed her lips, but then, thinking from another angle, he did seem quite devoted!

Seeing Elijah with a worried expression, Elysia said, "Everyone has their moments of sadness; it's not possible to be happy all the time. Don't worry about him. Getting drunk is just his way of venting his emotions. He'll stop feeling sad once he's sober."

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Elysia was always tiptoeing around the topic of Elijah's mother, fearing that bringing her up might reopen old wounds for both of them.

But one day, Elijah looked at her with those deep, meaningful eyes and said, "He's probably missing my mom."

"Um..." was all Elysia could muster.

Elijah pressed on, "If you were in my mom's shoes, would you forgive him?"

Elysia had never really pondered this question; forgiving him was not something she had ever considered. But she couldn't just say that to Elijah, who had always dreamed of his parents getting back together. Admitting she wouldn't forgive would just hurt him.

She explained, "Everyone sees things from their own perspective, thinks their own thoughts. So, I can't really speak for your mom."

Elijah was persistent, "I want to know what you think, not as my mom, just as you."

Elysia hesitated before responding, "Elijah, do you know what your dad did to your mom?"

"Yeah!"

"So, if it were me, I'd definitely be mad, probably ignore him for a while, but... life is full of uncertainties. Who knows? Maybe after a grand gesture of pursuit, your dad could win her over again. Sometimes, all it takes is a softened heart for forgiveness to follow."

Elijah's nerves turned into excitement, and in a burst of joy, he playfully kicked his own dad!

He couldn't voice his thoughts in front of Elysia, so instead, he gave his dad secretive looks.

Did you hear that? You better start wooing her back, make Mom feel special again!

There's still hope!

He had completely forgotten his dad was still suffering from the effects of too much drinking, and seeing no response, he sneakily kicked him a couple more times!

Tarquin had just managed to catch his breath when his son's kicks sent him into another round of nausea.

Elysia immediately stopped chatting with Elijah to help Tarquin, patting his back vigorously.

Once he was done throwing up, she quickly got him water to rinse his mouth and then struggled to help him back to the bedroom.

Elijah, coming back to his senses, rushed in with a wet washcloth, wanting to wipe his dad's face.

Elysia glanced at the clock; it was already 3 a.m.

She took the washcloth from Elijah, "It's way too late, Elijah. You need to go to bed."

Kids need their sleep to grow strong, and staying up late is a big no-no!

Elijah looked worriedly at Tarquin, passed out on the bed, but Elysia reassured him, "Don't worry about your dad. He'll feel better now that he's sobered up. I'll take care of him. You go get some sleep."

Elijah blinked, a bit happy that Elysia offered to take care of his dad. He really wished his parents would get back together.

But still...

"Don't you need to rest too?"

"I'll sort him out and then head to the study to sleep. Don't worry about us, just be a good boy and go to sleep, okay?"

Elijah hesitated for a moment but then nodded and went back to his room.

He was worried about his dad and felt bad for Elysia, but he also wanted to give them some space.

After Elijah left, Elysia turned to face the person sprawled on the bed, her irritation flaring.

"I must have owed you something fierce in a past life! After all the bullying I've endured from you, here I am, taking care of you! If it wasn't for Elijah, I'd have tossed you outside to freeze into a popsicle! Then we'd see how tough you are! Hmph!"

Muttering under her breath, she approached with the washcloth, her actions gentle despite her grumbling-a perfect picture of a tough exterior masking a tender heart.

But as her washcloth gently wiped across his brow, his hand suddenly shot out, grabbing her wrist...

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Elysia's heart skipped a beat, "!"

She dared not make any sudden moves, eyeing him warily.

But she saw he just grabbed her wrist and frowned, without waking up.

Elysia carefully reached for the towel with her other hand, trying once again to wipe his face.

As expected, before she could even touch his face, he swatted her hand away!

And yet, he still didn't open his eyes, just furrowed his brows tighter than before, clearly annoyed.

Elysia glared at him...

Was he subconsciously refusing to let her touch him?

Ha! Did she even want to touch him?! If it weren't for Elijah, she wouldn't bother with him!

Feeling wronged and humiliated, she had been trying to clean his face, and he was not appreciating it!

Well, if he didn't appreciate it, let him stay dirty!

Elysia wasn't going to indulge him. If he didn't want her help, fine by her. She didn't want to do it anyway!

She shrugged off his hand and took the towel to the bathroom...

After washing and hanging the towel, she spotted Elijah's tiny socks in the laundry basket, bent down, and washed them too.

Before she could finish, a sudden 'bang' made her jump, and she quickly turned around.

Tarquin, reeking of alcohol, leaned against the door frame, his eyes closed and brows furrowed, struggling with his tie, seemingly trying to yank it off.

But after a couple of tries that only loosened it, he didn't manage to take it off.

Clearly growing impatient, he suddenly pulled harder, ripping off the top two buttons of his shirt.

'Pop, pop.' The black buttons hit the floor, making a crisp sound.

Before Elysia could react, he staggered into the room in a sloppy manner.

This was the first time Elysia had seen him so unkempt!

He was always so aristocratically unapproachable, his suit always crisp without a wrinkle, the top two buttons of his shirt always fastened tightly, always wearing a tie when outside...

Even at home in casual wear, you'd never see a hint of sloppiness or laziness on him.

Today's disheveled look was truly rare!

His tie hung loosely around his neck, his shirt torn, wrinkles visible on his jacket.

Even his usually well-groomed hair was a mess today.

Although it didn't affect his handsomeness, it definitely added a rogue charm!

Watching him sway over, Elysia instinctively stepped aside.

Tarquin seemed not to notice her...

He stood in front of the sink, fumbling for the toothbrush cup, trying to turn on the tap.

But he operated it all wrong!

Up was on, down was off. With the tap in the off position, he should have lifted it to get water. Instead, he pressed down hard.

After a futile effort and no water, his annoyance was palpable, his brows deeply furrowed, his expression dark!

Thinking he wanted to brush his teeth, Elysia was about to kindly remind him when he suddenly scooped up half a cup of water from the sink.

Lifting it, he gulped it down.

"?!?!?!!" Elysia was utterly shocked!

That was the dirty water she used for washing socks!

He... he actually drank it!

He drank the water she used for washing stinky socks...

"Ew!" Elysia barely stopped herself from vomiting.

"Who?!" Tarquin seemed to only then realize there was someone else in the bathroom.

He looked at Elysia with a deep, suspicious gaze.

Elysia, frightened, quickly covered her mouth, afraid of being discovered now, given his terrifying look.

He had just drunk sock-washing water, which was kind of a big secret, right? Enough to get her silenced, right?!

Drunk as he was, Tarquin couldn't make out Elysia standing right in front of him.

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Glancing in Elysia's direction for a moment, he diverted his gaze. He casually tossed his cup into the sink, then strolled over to the bathroom to relieve himself. Elysia, catching a glimpse of him unbuckling his belt, instantly flushed a deep shade of crimson, her embarrassment palpable! She was utterly flustered! Elijah's little socks slipped from her grasp, landing softly on the floor! Overwhelmed, Elysia couldn't even think about the socks, hurrying out of the bathroom.

"Who's there?!" A thud echoed from behind, likely Tarquin hearing the commotion and attempting to follow her, only to take a tumble. Elijah reappeared, standing at his bedroom door, inquiring, "What's up, Mom?" Elysia, cheeks ablaze, stammered, "Your dad's... um, using the bathroom." "Did he fall?" Elijah, concerned, headed toward the bathroom.

Indeed, Tarquin had fallen. He was so drunk, his body limp as if boneless. Elijah rushed to his aid, "Dad!" Tarquin, touching Elijah's face, recognized him, "Ah, Elijah." "It's me. You're drunk and you fell!" "Fell? Oh, no worries, son. Dad's here to protect you!" Struggling to his feet, Tarquin aimed to prove his strength to Elijah, despite his inebriation.

Elysia, fearing for Elijah's safety, quickly lent her support. Tarquin, however, shrugged her off, "And you are?" Elijah quickly clarified, "That's Mom!" Tarquin's expression shifted, "Impossible! I've yet to find her!" Before Elijah could explain, Elysia snapped, "I'm Elysia! You specifically sought me out to look after Elijah."

"Elysia? Oh, the idiot!" What? Biting her lip, Elysia fought the urge to slap him senseless. Who's the idiot here? "You must've been raised on sheer nerve and stupidity! Dumb and ugly!" Tarquin added insult to injury. Elysia gave him a lethal glare, restraining herself only for Elijah's sake.

Elijah, caught in an awkward spot, first kicked his foolish father, then turned to Elysia, "Mom, he's drunk. Let it slide." But before Elysia could respond, Tarquin interjected, "Of course, I won't stoop to argue with an idiot. That would only lower my IQ!" Elysia and Elijah were left speechless.

Before they could react, Tarquin sighed deeply, squatting down to address Elijah in a drunken stupor, "Elijah, are you giving up on your dad?" "...I'm not." "Do you like Elysia that much? Her son said it was your idea to be her son. Do you like her more than your dad?" "..."

"Elijah, I can't find your mom. She might be so mad at me she doesn't want me anymore. What if you don't want me either? What am I supposed to do?" His vulnerability was a stark contrast to his usual

fierceness, resembling more a child than the adult he was. Sober, he was a tyrant; drunk, he was a child, confiding in Elijah as if he were a little boy seeking comfort from an older brother. His words were laced with jealousy and hurt. Elijah, furrowing his brows, assured him, "I do like her, and yes, I chose to be her son. But I never thought of abandoning you. I'll always be by your side, no matter what." Elysia, catching Elijah's words, felt an unexpected surge of emotion, a mix of warmth and constraint.

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Tarquin was over the moon, giddy as a kid in a candy store after being handed a piece of Blossom's finest sweets. He gazed at Elijah with drunken adoration, his laugh ringing clear and pure, bursting with sunshine. That laugh, it was the real deal - sheer joy!

Elysia watched him with a mix of emotions. This unkempt, carefree version of him was a first for her, his eyes sparkling with childlike innocence she'd never seen before. For a moment, the roles seemed reversed – Elijah stood as the parental figure while he regressed to a childlike state.

They say every grown man harbors a child within, a spirit often cowered by life's relentless pressures, rarely daring to surface. It takes certain people or moments for a man to truly let go, for that inner child to bubble up, turning the man back into a boy. He'd shed his armor, reveal his vulnerabilities, perhaps even act coy, seek affection, and share those thoughts usually buried deep within.

Sure enough, Tarquin soon asked Elijah, tentatively, "Elijah, are you holding a grudge against me because of what happened with your mom?"

Elijah frowned. Yes, he was upset! Upset about what Tarquin had done to his mom years ago, causing such pain that now, despite having found her, he hesitated to reconnect. Fearing that the truth might drive her away for good. But he understood. Given the circumstances back then, from Tarquin's viewpoint, it was a move of desperation...

Elijah made sure Elysia heard him, "I am upset with you, but I get it. I know what kind of person you are; you wouldn't have done it if there had been any other way."

Tarquin's eyes welled up, "I still owe her an apology."

"Everyone makes mistakes, but the real fear is in not owning up to them, not trying to make amends, right, mom?"

Elysia, suddenly the center of attention, scrambled for words, "Uh, yes, to acknowledge one's fault and strive to correct it is commendable. True courage lies in facing the consequences of one's actions."

Elijah quickly turned to Tarquin, "Dad, did you hear that? Mom says acknowledging and correcting one's mistake is commendable. It takes a real man to own up and face the consequences! You're that man! You've got to make things right for what happened back then!"

Tarquin murmured, speaking from the heart, "If I could only find her, I'd give her my life if she asked!"

Elysia frowned, "..."

Why did it feel like they were talking about her?! Did her situation mirror that of Elijah's mother? She didn't know how Elijah's mother would have felt about all this, but she herself had harbored resentment! Yet, because of the kids, she'd let go of her grudges. She didn't seek vengeance or explanations; she just wanted to stay far away from him, leading a quiet life with her children.

But, seeing it from another perspective, Elijah had a point. Given the dire circumstances back then, it was an act of desperation, somewhat understandable. Still, she would never reunite with him! If she were Elijah's mother, she'd plan to take Elijah away, wanting nothing to do with him. Now, her world revolved around her children and her financial independence. Men, in her eyes, meant nothing!

"Elijah, step outside," Tarquin suddenly said, staggering to his feet. Elysia realized he needed the restroom and quickly assisted him, ushering Elijah out first.

Elijah looked concerned, "Can dad manage on his own?"

Elysia's lips twitched in a half-smile, "He has to. Who else can do this for him?"

Glancing at the clock, she noted it was nearly half-past three.

Chapter 349

"Elijah, can't seem to shut your eyes, huh?"

Looking at his alertness, it was clear he hadn't been sleeping but had dashed out of his bedroom fully awake.

Elijah didn't nod or shake his head, silently acknowledging it.

A lot had gone down today. He had just reunited with his mom when his clueless dad managed to upset her. Just when mom had been cheered up, his dad drowned his sorrows in booze...

His heart ached for his mom and then fretted over his dad. It was a lot for him to worry about.

Elysia's eyes were full of concern for Elijah. She led him back to the bedroom, had him lie down, and administered a shot to force him into sleep.

He was at the age where growing kids need their rest, and staying up late was definitely off the table!

Right before falling asleep, Elijah said, "Mom, dad's a pitiful guy."

"Hmm?"

"People who love him are few, yet there are many who wish him harm. All these years, he's had no one to share his true feelings with. Through all seasons, he's been on his own."

Elysia didn't know how to respond, finding it hard to muster sympathy at the moment.

"He really misses mom."

Seeing the kid's cautious yet sincere gaze, Elysia was torn and confused. Why was he telling her all this?

Was he mistaking her for his biological mother?!

Elysia paused, even more unsure of how to proceed.

Elijah added, "He might seem tough, but he's not bad at all. He's really a good guy. He's tough because he's surrounded by bad people! If he's not tough, the bad guys will hurt him! He only acts tough so the bad guys will fear him!"

"...Yeah."

Elijah urgently asked, "Mom, dad was wrong about things in the past, but... can you give him another chance to make things right?"

Past issues?!

Elysia's eyes widened in shock!

She was about to ask Elijah how he knew, but then it hit her: Elijah wasn't talking about something that happened six years ago, but rather things that occurred since they had come into each other's lives.

After all this time, that jerk had hardly shown her any kindness.

Elysia said straightforwardly, "The past is the past. I haven't dwelled on it much, and I don't need him to make it up to me. But you, you're still young, you shouldn't worry about adult matters. If you really love your dad and me, you should take good care of yourself. When you're okay, that's when we'll be okay, understand?"

Elijah nodded, wanting to say more but his mind was gradually fogging over.

Elysia held his little hand, soothing him to sleep, "Sleep tight, Elijah. I'll look after your dad for you. Just get some good rest..."

Soon, Elijah was out like a light.

Elysia sighed softly.

She touched Elijah's cheek, tucking him in snugly.

She wished Elijah's mom could forgive that jerk, for Elijah's sake, to give him a whole family! The kid was too pitiful!

Just moments ago, she was thinking she only cared for kids and money, not men.

But looking at Elijah now, she found herself reconsidering.

If it were up to her, she might actually compromise, for Elijah's sake, and stay with that jerk!

"Bang! Thud-"

Noise came from outside the door again, surely Tarquin stumbling out of the bathroom.

Predictably, he must've fallen again.

Elysia pressed her lips together, a thousand and one reasons not to care, but for little Elijah's sake, she got up to check anyway. The living room was pitch black!

Elysia puzzled, "Why the heck did you turn off the lights?!"

She reached for the light switch, but before her fingers could touch it, a tall shadow loomed, engulfing her in darkness!

Chapter 350

Elysia's heart pounded wildly in her chest. If it weren't for the strong smell of alcohol confirming it was him and not a ghost, she would have been even more frightened!

"What are you doing?!" she exclaimed, instinctively giving him a little shove.

With a "thud," Tarquin hit the floor.

Elysia was bewildered. "What?! He fell over from just a tiny push?" She had only used one finger! If she didn't know her own strength, she might have thought she was some kind of martial arts master. This guy must be trying to pull a fast one on her!

Elysia quickly turned on the light and was relieved to see he wasn't hurt. If he had seriously injured himself, she would be in big trouble. If he ended up paralyzed or something, she'd be held responsible!

"Hey, get up, go sleep it off in bed!" she said, noticing he was still semi-conscious. Elysia hastily helped him up and stumbled towards the bedroom. Once he was completely out, she wouldn't be able to move him at all.

They had barely taken a few steps when he misstepped and fell again. Elysia tried to catch him but couldn't. "Whoa, whoa, whoa..." she cried as they both tumbled to the ground.

Luckily, Elysia landed on top of him, which cushioned her fall.

"Why do you have to drink so much? It's so annoying! So annoying!" she muttered, struggling to her feet and dragging him towards the bed. The short distance from the living room to the bedroom felt like miles, leaving Elysia drenched in sweat. Now she totally understood why women hated it when their men got drunk; they became dead weight, leaving the women to pick up the pieces!

Seriously, what's the point of men? Kids and money seem like better options!

Elysia finally managed to heave him onto the bed. Tarquin lay there, a frown creasing his forehead as he rubbed his temples, clearly in discomfort. She muttered like a nagging wife, "Feeling bad, huh? Serves you right! Let's see if you'll drink this much next time!"

Noticing his suit jacket was dirty, she couldn't help but want to take it off for him. Him sleeping all crumpled up like that just looked uncomfortable. Elysia wasn't shy about it; she reached out to undo his suit buttons.

Tarquin glowered, swatting her hand away.

Elysia rolled her eyes, "Relax! I'm just trying to help you out of your clothes, not take advantage of you!"

He snapped, "Don't touch me!"

Elysia was flabbergasted. Now he's acting all prissy like a maiden aunt. When he bullied her six years ago, where was this prudishness?

If she were as lecherous as him, she'd have devoured him whole by now! Forget about clothes; she'd leave him with not a bone intact!

"You think I want to touch you? You could be naked and I wouldn't care! I..."

Elysia's words trailed off as she swallowed hard.

Tarquin, eyes closed and eyebrows furrowed, lay quietly on the bed as he began to undo his own suit buttons. His fingers were long and clean, as if they were made to play the piano, absolutely mesmerizing. Maybe it was because of his handsome hands, but the way he undressed seemed incredibly elegant. Just watching him take off his clothes was a sight for sore eyes.

As he unbuttoned his shirt, the muscles hidden underneath slowly came into view... first the chest, then the abs, with every line and curve sharply defined. When he sat up to remove his shirt, the definition in his arms was unmistakable the kind that could easily do hundreds of push-ups, indicating incredible

strength. His muscles were well-developed but not in the way a professional bodybuilder's would be. His physique struck the perfect balance between strength and aesthetics, appealing to the general public's sense of beauty.

In him, you could see both power and artistry, a combination that was infinitely charming. Elysia, though more greedy than lustful, couldn't help but stare... Beauty was universal, irresistible to anyone who beheld it.

If Blossom were here, she'd probably be drooling by now, maybe even lunging at him, unable to restrain herself. Elysia wasn't as voracious, but she found herself swallowing hard nonetheless.