

Hitched 401

Chapter 401

Elysia let out a sigh, "Yeah!"

Blossom, bubbling with excitement, said, "Seriously, Elijah's dad is a total stud! I mean, he doesn't even seem like he belongs on this pl - he's that ridiculously handsome!"

"So, you're saying he's not even human."

"Exactly! He's a god among men!"

Elysia pursed her lips, "Aren't you into younger guys, though?"

Blossom explained, "Sure, I like them young, but my tastes aren't limited to just that! Some people might go for the boy-next-door type, but Elijah's dad, he's universally adored! He's versatile - can pull off being the mysterious bad boy or the sweet, caring guy. But trying to get a young hottie to exude that bad boy vibe? Tough!"

Him? The sweet, caring type?

Ha!

Elysia got goosebumps, "He could never pull off being the sweet guy. He's more of a fierce creature - a wolf in disguise!"

Blossom said mischievously, "But there's something about a bad boy that's just irresistible! Hey, haven't you ever thought about being with him? A fling with no strings attached doesn't sound like a bad deal."

Elysia bit her lip, "Never thought about it! Don't want to!"

Suddenly, she felt a pang of sadness, "But Elijah, he really wishes for it."

"Huh? Elijah wants you and his dad to be together?"

"Yeah! He begged me to not leave yet, to give his dad a chance to woo me."

"What?! That's news to me! Did he say that today?"

"Yeah, and I kinda get it. Elijah's dad is really good to him, and Elijah doesn't want to lose that... Ah, I feel so selfish wanting to take Elijah away from him. It's selfish both emotionally and financially. But I can't help it, I just can't let go of Elijah! And I can't force myself to fall for his dad!"

She truly couldn't bear the thought of leaving Elijah behind, just taking Elliot, Evan, and Emmett with her. Nor could she force her heart to feel something it didn't.

Blossom comforted her, "I might not have kids, so I can't fully relate, but I understand you. Love can't be forced. After what he did to you, seeing him as anything but a monster is asking too much! Which girl could just forgive and fall for the man who hurt her so deeply? Yeah, right! And as a mother, if you can't truly love him, being together isn't the best for the kids. So, you wanting to take Elijah away is not wrong!

Besides, being selfish is human nature. Why sacrifice your happiness for others? Life is too short not to put yourself first. Making yourself happy should always come before pleasing others! Plus, you're not forcing the kids to choose. It's entirely up to them. And financially, sure, Elijah's dad might be richer, but can he provide the emotional safety Elijah needs? From a wellbeing standpoint, Elijah is better off with you. So, stop beating yourself up. You're not in the wrong."

Elysia looked at Blossom, moved, put down her knife and potato, and hugged her, "Blossom, you're the best."

"Of course, you should take a leaf out of my book. 'I do no wrong.' That's the way to live a carefree and happy life. Follow your heart, that's the right path!"

"Right!"

Just as Blossom had cheered her up, Elysia's phone suddenly went off with a new message alert. She let go of Blossom, wiped her hands on her apron, and pulled out her phone to check it.

After one glance, Elysia screamed in shock, "Ah!"

The phone dropped to the floor like it was burning hot.

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Blossom rushed to Elysia's side, perplexed and concerned. "What's wrong, Elysia?"

Their four kids, startled by the scream, dashed out to see what was happening. "Mommy!" they chorused, gathering around Elysia. Elysia was ghostly pale, her breaths coming in short, sharp gasps as she stared at the phone on the ground.

Elliot noticed the alarm and quickly picked up the phone to see what had caused such a reaction.

A message from a stranger had arrived for Elysia: "Enjoying your day, Elysia? Glad to hear it. How did you find the cake?"

Frowning, Elliot scrolled through the chat history, absorbing the entire conversation between this mysterious person and Elysia.

His expression darkened, a chilling intensity in his eyes.

"What's going on?" Elijah asked, eyebrows knitted in concern as he moved closer.

Elliot handed Elysia's phone to him and then turned to Elysia, his voice softening despite the tension. "Mom, looks like we've got a creep on our hands. Don't worry, I've got you."

Blossom was shocked. "A creep? What kind of creep?!"

Elysia was gasping for air, her complexion terrible. As realization dawned, her heart pounded even faster. That cake... It had been from him! How did he know she was happy today? Was he watching her?

The more Elysia thought about it, the more terrified she became, her breathing growing even more erratic.

Elliot gripped her hand tightly. "Mom, look at me. Don't be afraid. Your son is here to protect you."

After a long moment of eye contact with Elliot, Elysia managed to calm her racing heart, her eyes brimming with tears.

"Elliot..."

"I'm here, Mom. Come, let's sit down and talk this through."

Elliot led Elysia to the living room couch, and Emmett rushed to get her a glass of water.

After Elijah and Evan had read the messages, Evan clenched his fists, visibly angry. But before he could explode, Elijah shot him a look, signaling to hold off until they heard Elysia out.

Gathered around the coffee table, Elliot gently asked Elysia, "Mom, do you know who this person is?"

Elysia took several sips of water, trying to compose herself. She hesitated, not wanting to involve her children any further, but with the messages already seen, she had no choice but to shake her head in denial. "I don't know who he really is, but he's dangerous. He knows about you kids and even your identities. After your father met with you three that night, this man contacted me, claiming he knew my secret and even sent me a paternity test report. He's been trying to persuade me to harm your father..."

Elliot's brow furrowed in concern, his mind racing back to that mysterious figure in the park who had tried to incite him and Evan against Allegra. Despite his efforts, Elliot hadn't been able to unearth any information on the man.

"It's likely this person's not just after Mom. He might have a vendetta against our dad. From his messages, it seems he's not immediately out to harm Mom, so there's no need to worry on that front. If he contacts Mom again, just ignore him. And don't fret about him exposing our identities to Dad. We're with Mom, no matter what. Our identity doesn't change that. Even if it comes out, we'll never leave Mom. Not in this lifetime."

Evan and Emmett nodded in agreement, their young voices firm. "Exactly! Mom's all we need. Not even the highest power can make us leave her!" "Yeah, we'll never leave Mom's side!" affirmed Emmett.

Elijah, though young, tried to offer his own reassurance. "Elijah will never leave Mom either. Don't worry about Dad's influence. With me here, I won't let him use it against Mom."

Hearing her children's united front, Elysia was moved to tears. She pulled them into an embrace, her voice choked with emotion.

Chapter 403

"Truth is, it's not that you kids can't live without Mom, it's that Mom can't live without you... Without you, Mom wouldn't know how to go on..." Life had been a rollercoaster, and her children were the beacon of hope that kept her fighting! Without her children, her life would simply have no meaning!

All four kids quickly chimed in to correct her,

"Mom, you're wrong. It's not just you who can't live without us - we can't live without you either. We won't let anyone separate us from you! We're sticking with you forever!"

"Yep!" Elysia nodded vigorously, "Forever!"

Elliot, with tears in his eyes, reassured Elysia,

"So, Mom, no need to worry. Even if Dad finds out about us, we won't be separated."

Elysia felt a wave of comfort wash over her, glancing at her cell phone, "This person..."

Elliot said, "Mom, you can ignore him. Think of him as a loon. But if he contacts you again, you have to tell us. Don't be afraid on your own. We might be young, but we can still come up with plans to protect you."

"Right!"

After comforting Elysia for a while, the kids immediately went back to their bedroom.

Door closed, it was time for a strategy meeting!

Elliot said, "This guy must be the same one Evan and I saw in the park, constantly egging us and Mom on to commit crimes! What does he gain from us committing a crime?"

Evan, bristling with anger, said, "Bro, have we not found out who he is yet?"

Elliot shook his head, "We've met our match. This guy is either a hacker himself or is protected by a top-tier hacker. His identity is well shielded."

Elijah piped up, "Give me the info you have on him. I'll try to dig deeper. Also, you mentioned that Mom fainted five years ago just before giving birth to us, and when she woke up, she and you guys were already in the deep woods... It's possible that this mystery man knew about our identities and Mom's situation. Could it be that he was the one who took Mom while she was unconscious, took me, and left Mom and you guys in the deep woods?"

Elliot frowned deeply, "It's possible."

Evan, puzzled, said, "But if it was him, what's his endgame? Why leave us and Mom in the deep woods? If he wanted to save us, why wasn't he worried about us dying there? If he wanted to kill us, why not just do it in the hospital? It would have been more believable to say Mom died from childbirth complications!"

After Evan's words, the room fell silent.

After a while, Elliot said,

"What we know is, after Mom fainted, we were deliberately separated, and the three of us along with Mom ended up in the deep woods, while Elijah was taken back to Dad. This clearly indicates someone's pulling the strings, playing a long game! As for his motives? We're in the dark! Is he the mystery man we're talking about? We don't know! But we need to be clear about our objective - to protect Mom and stick together!"

Evan immediately nodded,

"Exactly! No matter who's plotting in the shadows, they can't hurt Mom. Bro, what's our next move?"

Elliot slightly narrowed his eyes, "We bait him!"

Evan and Emmett were puzzled, "Bait him?"

Elijah asked, "You mean, use Mom to lure this mystery guy out?"

"Yeah! This guy makes me uneasy. For our safety and to uncover the truth about the past, we need to flush him out soon! Since we can't find him online, we'll draw him out in the real world!"

The kids nodded in agreement, "Makes sense! So how do we bait him?"

Chapter 404

Elliot pondered for a moment, "There is a way, but... it's not perfect. Let me think it over. Once I have a solid plan, I'll fill you in."

The kids nodded in agreement, "Yeah!"

Elijah raised an eyebrow, "Are we sure this mysterious person isn't the same one who saved you in the woods? I mean, he seems like the most likely candidate."

Yet Elliot was as sure as ever, "It's definitely not them. They're good people. You'll see if you ever get the chance to meet them."

Evan chimed in, "All they cared about was helping others. They'd never encourage us to hurt anyone. They even warned me not to get into fights when we left."

Emmett nodded vigorously, "They're as kind-hearted as Mom."

Seeing the conviction in Elliot, Evan, and Emmett's words, Elijah let go of his suspicions but still looked troubled, "This mysterious person is probably targeting Dad. I think they've got a major vendetta against him!"

Elliot agreed, "Do you have any suspects in mind?"

"Nope," sighed Elijah. "There haven't been many rooting for Dad's success over the years, but plenty who'd rather see him gone. Trying to investigate from Dad's side is like looking for a needle in a haystack."

Suddenly, Elijah looked at Elliot, Evan, and Emmett, his tone shifting, "I know you have issues with Dad, but you have to admit, life hasn't been easy for him. He's been surrounded by schemes and malice, struggling every single day."

Evan had the biggest beef with Tarquin and just pouted, not joining the conversation.

Elliot spoke softly, "With great power comes great danger, that's always been the case. But don't worry too much about him; he can handle it." Elijah said with a heavy heart, "It's not worry, it's sympathy. Dad's been good to me, and I know he loves me. And I love him too, and it hurts to see him so isolated and cold, even when he seems to have everything."

Elliot patted Elijah on the shoulder, offering comfort, then asked, "I've done some digging on the Bradford family. With Dad's capabilities, he could easily crush Gideon and his cronies, yet he's held back. Any idea why?"

Elijah explained, "Dad seems to be investigating something within the Bradford clan, but I'm not exactly sure what. His hesitation probably has to do with whatever he's looking into. And, we should keep a low profile around the Bradfords. They're ruthless, and even I'm barely tolerated. If they find out about you guys, they'd go berserk trying to eliminate you. They'd do anything for their interests."

Evan perked up, clearly annoyed, "Let them try! I'd like to see them even try to touch a hair on my head. I've been itching for a good fight!"

Elliot intervened, "Elijah's right. For now, we need to stay under the radar, not out of fear, but for Mom and our plans. The Bradfords are manageable, but why waste our energy on them if we don't have to? By the way, Elijah, I heard that the Bradford legacy is passed down to only one heir?"

Chapter 405

"Ah, I'm on top of that. A quick dive into the Bradford family tree should clear things up. So, whether it's the Bradfords or Dad, they've always thought I'm the sole heir. Never crossed their minds there could be anyone else."

"Then, Mom having us all at once was a total surprise."

"Exactly, which is why if the Bradfords ever find out about you guys, they'll lose their minds."

Elliot said, "Let's keep it under wraps for now. We'll handle our own business first. While Mom's agreed to give Tarquin a chance, let's dig into what really happened back then, and also look into that mysterious person!"

\ "Right!\ "

"... \ "

Despite the 'mysterious person sending a cake' incident, overall, everyone had a blast today.

They all gathered for a hearty family dinner.

Elysia was in exceptionally high spirits, even sharing a couple of bottles of red wine with Blossom.

At eight in the evening, Tarquin arrived to pick someone up.

The joyous atmosphere suddenly turned bittersweet.

Blossom had had a bit too much to drink, and Elysia was taking care of her in the bedroom, while the little ones said their goodbyes in the living room.

The bond between the siblings was deep, and their farewell was filled with reluctance, with Emmett even shedding tears.

Elijah's eyes were also moist as he personally wiped away Emmett's tears, \ "Don't cry, we'll see each other again.\ " Evan, standing aside, sneakily pulled White out from his sleeve,

\ "White, you're with Mom for the next few days, protect her! And keep that jerk Tarquin away from her, you hear?\ "

White was still half-asleep, barely opening his eyes.

Evan flicked White's head to get his attention,

\ "Wake up! I'm talking serious business here! \"

White, peeved at being flicked, gave Evan a disgruntled look.

Evan said, \ "I can't be around to protect Mom all the time, so I'm counting on you. Do a good job and there'll be a reward! \"

White hissed softly, as if to ask what the reward would be.

Evan, a bit annoyed, \ "Come on, we're brothers. My mom is practically your mom. And you're still asking for a reward for protecting your own mom? You ungrateful kid! \"

Evan grumbled but leaned closer to White, whispering something only they could understand. White's demeanor suddenly perked up.

His body, previously black, turned white!

He seemed thrilled!

Evan, proud, \ "Just listen and I'll make sure to keep my promise! \"

White nuzzled his hand, as if sealing the deal!

Evan was now completely at ease, confident that with White protecting Mom, she would be safe.

But...

\ "Remember, you're just there to protect Mom, nothing else. Be careful not to cause any trouble. Mom always says, 'Life is precious, and we should aim to be good citizens in a civilized society.' We can't harm others!\ "

White hissed again and slithered away.

...

After Elysia came out from the bedroom, she gave the kids some instructions before heading down with Elijah.

Tarquin was waiting for them downstairs.

He had met up with Keaton today, but didn't drink. His mind was preoccupied with figuring out how to obtain Elysia's sample for a paternity test. This issue was gnawing at him, making him anxious!

As the two approached, he could smell the alcohol on Elysia.

This woman, she's been drinking?

Tarquin slightly squinted his eyes, a glint flashing through them.

Chapter 406

But Tarquin didn't ask any questions. Instead, he turned to Elijah and asked, "Having fun today?"

"Yeah! So much fun! I wanna come hang out with them more often."

"Sure thing."

Elijah's eyes sparkled with excitement. "Really?"

Tarquin chuckled and affectionately ruffled his hair. "Of course, buddy. Daddy's all for you making new friends."

"Then I'm coming back tomorrow!"

"...Alright."

Elysia caught the quick agreement with a hint of surprise. Was he in a particularly good mood today?

Once in the car, Elysia yawned.

It had been a long day, filled with much excitement and a bit too much wine, making her sleepy.

Elijah was considerate. "Mommy, if you're sleepy, you should take a nap. I'm here for you."

What he meant was, don't worry about daddy sneaking up on you.

Elysia, touched by his thoughtfulness, pinched Elijah's cheek, "Then mommy will take a short nap. Wake me up if you need anything." "Okay."

Elysia leaned back and fell asleep. Elijah made sure Lowell turned up the heat in the car and then took Tarquin's coat to cover Elysia. Tarquin watched his son's caring actions, about to say something when the little guy motioned for silence, "Mommy's sleeping. Be quiet." Tarquin "..."

He felt a mix of sourness and pride.

Sour because Elijah was so good to Elysia, it made him, the biological dad, a tad jealous.

Pride because Elijah seemed more like a normal kid each day, his psychological issues rapidly healing.

Heeding his son's gesture, Tarquin stayed silent.

He stole a glance at Elysia, plotting silently.

As they arrived at their complex, Elysia was still asleep. Tarquin offered, "Let her sleep. I'll carry her up."

Elijah, unaware of his dad's ulterior motives, nodded approvingly, "Daddy's finally getting it. You should always be nice to mommy." Tarquin, eyes slightly narrowed, didn't respond.

Suddenly, Lowell brought the car to a halt. "Tarquin, Ms. Slater."

Both father and son looked out the window, mirroring each other's frowning expressions.

Nola ran up to the car, knocking loudly on the window, "Tarquin!"

The noise startled Elysia awake. She didn't open her eyes but frowned, half-awake.

Elijah quickly said, "Daddy, she's disturbing mommy. You go talk to her outside!"

Tarquin grunted and got out, his face darkening.

The cool air and the sound of the closing door fully woke Elysia.

"Are we home?" she mumbled, rubbing her eyes.

"Yeah, just got here."

Elysia noticed Tarquin and Nola outside.

They were a bit distant, and while Elysia couldn't make out Nola's face, she felt a strange familiarity.

"Mommy, don't get it wrong. Daddy doesn't like her," Elijah suddenly explained.

Elysia quickly averted her gaze. Whether he liked her or not was none of her concern.

Elysia smiled at Elijah, "Let's not worry about them. Let's go home."

Who knew how long they'd be talking? They couldn't just sit in the car and wait!

Nodding, Elijah and Elysia got out of the car.

Elysia couldn't help but glance back, though without much thought, and carried her little guy towards their building. Tarquin and Nola noticed her.

Seeing her awake, Tarquin's mood darkened further.

He had hoped to carry her up while she was asleep, maybe pluck a few hairs for a spell, but now that plan was ruined.

Nola's eyes reddened even more, "Tarquin, are you ignoring me because of her? Are you bewitched by her?"

Tarquin, annoyed, asked, "What do you want?"

Nola, crying, said, "You don't answer my calls, you don't reply to my texts. I'm so upset! If I don't reach out to you, will you just forget about me? Tell me, is it her? Is she the reason you're ignoring me?"

Chapter 407

The accusatory tone in her voice irked Tarquin, who coldly retorted, "Do you seriously have no clue why I've been avoiding you?!" "I... I know it's because of that stunt Oriana Sutton pulled with the kidnapping, but come on, it's been ages. Aren't you over it yet?!" "And after all this time, have you even acknowledged your mistake?!"

Nola bit her lip, defiant in her belief that she had done nothing wrong. She was smitten with Tarquin, and if any other woman dared to set her sights on him, Nola felt justified in taking her down a notch. That Elysia was still breathing was sheer luck on her part! Just you wait, Nola thought, I'll get rid of her sooner or later!

Despite her inner thoughts, recalling her mother's advice, Nola spoke insincerely, "I came to apologize because I realized I was wrong. Because of that incident, you even refused to do business with the Slater family, and my dad was so mad he nearly lost it! Tarquin, can't you let bygones be bygones? Remember how I saved Elijah back in the day. Can't you forgive me just this once?"

She reached out, tugging at Tarquin's sleeve, her voice coy.

Tarquin's expression turned icy as he glared at her hand, "Want to lose that hand?!"

Startled, Nola quickly withdrew her hand.

Suppressing his disgust, Tarquin spoke, "You saved Elijah, and for that, I'll repay you. But you better wake up and stop pining over what you can't have. Go be a star, make your money, and stop wasting your time on me! And another thing, I've warned you before, Elysia is under my protection. Stay away from her if you know what's good for you. Now leave, I'll ensure the Bradford Group and the Slater family resume their business dealings."

With that, Tarquin snuffed out his cigarette and walked away without sparing Nola another glance. It was clear to him that Nola hadn't acknowledged her wrongdoing, still harboring the same spiteful intentions after all this time. She was beyond redemption. Thus, he saw no point in preaching morals to her; she wasn't his responsibility. Whatever twisted path she chose was her family's affair, not his. He owed her nothing more than financial gratitude for saving Elijah.

As Tarquin entered the building, Nola screamed, attempting to follow, but Lowell blocked her path.

"Ms. Slater, please, don't upset Tarquin further. It won't end well for you if he gets angry."

Slap!

Furious, Nola slapped Lowell across the face, "Who are you to talk to me like that?!"

A handprint appeared on Lowell's handsome face, but he merely looked at Nola coldly.

Nola shivered, "Wha... what are you going to do? Hit me? If you dare, Tarquin will have your head!"

Lowell rolled his eyes, his tone frosty, "For Elijah's sake, I'll let this slide. Please leave."

He signaled to two men, who promptly escorted Nola away. Cursing, Nola seemed ready to tear Lowell apart. Glaring up at the building, she gritted her teeth, "Elysia, you bitch, just you wait!"

Once the commotion subsided, a bodyguard whispered to Lowell, "She hit you, and you didn't hit back. Why let her get away with it?"

Lowell shrugged, "Why bother with a lunatic? Besides, she did save Elijah. Taking a slap for that is nothing."

The bodyguard muttered, "It's baffling how someone like her ended up being Elijah's savior. Ms. Thorne is a far better person. By the way, is Ms. Thorne really the one Tarquin's been searching for?"

"We'll probably find out tonight."

"Oh? Does Tarquin have plans tonight?"

Lowell cast a meaningful glance upward, remaining silent. He knew Tarquin well enough to guess that there was indeed something planned for the evening.

Chapter 408

Upstairs, the family of three didn't discuss Nola's affair.

Elysia chatted with Elijah for quite a while, and after tucking the little guy into bed, she finally went to freshen up in the bathroom. Tarquin, lounging on the living room couch with his long legs crossed, squinted in the direction of the bathroom with a look that was...

like a big bad wolf eyeing a little lamb, like a junkyard dog watching a bone, or like a hunter spotting his prey.

Today, during his catch-up with Keaton, there were a few remarks he found himself agreeing with wholeheartedly.

Keaton had said, "Elysia, that girl, you can tell she's not the brightest bulb in the box. Not bright, and stubborn to boot! With her like that, if she didn't have a strong backing, you could have her wrapped around your finger in no time. After all, she can't outmuscle you, and no matter how stubborn, she won't flip the script on you! But here's the rub - she's got a safety! Elijah is so fond of her, she just has to wail, and Elijah would be at your throat! Besides, you're currently suspecting she's the one you've been looking for, you surely can't bear to upset her. So, the best strategy now is to coax her! Don't go head-to-head with her. You're just after a few strands of her hair for a paternity test, not making her go bald. Just put your mind to it, and you'll succeed easily. With her intelligence, can she outplay you? Let's not even talk about tricking her into bed, snagging a few hairs should be a piece of cake, right?"

Tricking her into bed was out of the question for him; he just wanted a few strands of her hair.

Thus, he decided to follow Keaton's advice and coax her!

Inside the bathroom, after Elysia had finished freshening up and dried her hair to about 80% dryness, she even made sure to collect all the hair she shed before leaving the bathroom.

Upon exiting, she saw someone sitting on the living room couch.

He had shed his suit and dress shirt, now donning a navy blue round-neck loungewear.

The change of clothes seemed to soften his edges, making him appear much more approachable and gentle.

"Come here," he suddenly said.

Elysia, in her modest cotton pajamas, her long hair cascading down, looked around uncertainly, "Are you talking to me?"

Tarquin pursed his lips, barely holding back a chuckle at her clueless demeanor, "In this room, it's just you and me. Who else would I be talking to, a ghost?!"

Elysia's lips twitched in annoyance, "Don't talk about scary stuff in the middle of the night. What do you want? Just say it."

Tarquin glanced at the wine and glasses on the table, gesturing for her to join him for a drink.

Elysia, puzzled and wary, asked, "Why?"

"To drink."

"I know that! I mean, why suddenly invite me to drink?!"

Tarquin said, "To apologize for how I've treated you before, and also to thank you for what you've done for Elijah."

Elysia stood her ground, "Let's not dwell on the past. As long as you don't bother me, I won't bother you. As for my efforts for Elijah... I did it willingly, no thanks needed."

"Alright, then let's toast to us getting along from here on out."

Tarquin's sincerity made Elysia blink, thinking if they could truly get along, nothing would be better!

She tentatively asked, "So, you don't suspect me anymore?"

Tarquin countered, "Do you?"

Elysia quickly replied, "Of course not!"

Tarquin narrowed his eyes, pausing for a beat before saying, "I believe you."

Elysia was surprised, "You do?"

"Yeah, I believe you."

"You believe I'm not the person you're looking for?"

Chapter 409

"Uh-huh."

"So, you're not going for that paternity test anymore?"

"Uh-huh."

Elysia was puzzled, "Why? You suddenly believe me? Just this afternoon you were all about getting that test done." Tarquin said, "I've looked into your eyes and seen the honesty there. You don't strike me as someone who'd lie."

Elysia was speechless... Was he implying she usually wasn't honest or pure?!

"Stop zoning out, come have a drink."

Elysia pouted, "Drink by yourself. I'm heading to bed."

Like she'd want to share a drink with him. They weren't exactly chums, were they?

"You're sleeping in my room tonight," Tarquin suddenly declared.

Elysia was taken aback, turning to him with suspicion in her eyes, "What do you mean?!"

Tarquin was all nobility, "I'll take the study, you can have the bedroom. You're a lady; you shouldn't be uncomfortable."

Elysia was dubious, "Are you... caring about me now?"

"Suppose so."

Elysia couldn't grasp it, "Didn't you say you stopped suspecting me?"

Why be nice if he wasn't suspicious?

Tarquin clarified, "Like I said earlier, it's about treating each other with respect. I'm a man; it's only right to be considerate towards you."

Blinking a few times, Elysia murmured an agreement. She certainly didn't fancy the couch!

"Thanks, then."

Without further ado, she headed towards Tarquin's bedroom.

Tarquin called after her, "Are you still mad? Not ready to make peace?"

"Huh?"

"If you're not angry anymore, then come have a drink. It's a special peace offering." A peace offering?

Elysia's eyes rolled in thought before she finally approached.

Taking the glass Tarquin offered, she declared, "Mutual respect, let's stick to that!"

And with that, she downed it in one go.

Fresh out of the shower, she was like a blooming daisy, simple and beautiful.

The mix of her body wash and shampoo's fragrance filled the air, captivating Tarquin.

Watching her, he was momentarily lost.

She had a bit of wine at dinner and now a full glass, her fair skin blushed like a blooming rose or like cherries in spring.

If she truly was the one he had been searching for, fortune truly smiled upon him!

The desire for beauty is universal, and he felt blessed by the heavens!

After finishing her drink, Elysia grumbled,

"A true man keeps his word. Let's live in harmony! No bullying, no provoking each other!"

Tarquin snapped back to reality, seeing her empty glass, he poured another.

Elysia protested, "I've already had one!"

Tarquin gently said, "That was for mutual respect, this one's for living in harmony."

Though reluctant, the thought of harmony made her accept the glass and drink. Then...

"This one's for Elijah's speedy recovery."

"This one's for your child to grow up healthy, happy, and carefree."

"This one's for your bestie Blossom to have a life full of peace and joy."

"This one's for the health and well-being of everyone you care about."

One drink led to another, and after five or six glasses, Elysia burped,

"No more, no more, I'm stuffed! I'm not drinking another drop!"

But Tarquin filled her glass once more, "This one's for your swift road to wealth, to becoming a wealthy woman." Wealth?

Becoming a wealthy woman?

Alright, alright, she had to drink to that!

Chapter 410

Elysia tilted her head back and chugged another pint.

After finishing, she plopped down onto the couch, her gaze blurry, not just full but dizzy too.

Tarquin squinted his attractive eyes and asked her, "Can you handle more?"

"Of course, I can! I'm the champ at this, you think you can get me drunk? No way! I... I can handle two more! No, three! Try me, go on, fetch more drinks!"

After her declaration, her head drooped forward.

Her forehead knocked against the coffee table, jolting her awake.

She rubbed her forehead, whining like a toddler, "Ouch..."

Tarquin felt a pang of sympathy, but her dazed expression just made him roll his eyes.

Just as he was about to speak, she suddenly turned, raised her hand, and slapped him, "Why'd you hit me?"

Tarquin was speechless. Who's hitting whom?

"I didn't hit you!"

Elysia snapped back, "If you didn't hit me, why would it hurt?"

"So, it hurts because I hit you?"

"There's only us here, who else could've hit me?"

"Couldn't you have bumped into something?"

"That's impossible! I'm not dumb. It must've been you!"

Tarquin was dumbfounded. Was this what they call 'playing the victim'?

"I..."

"Just so you know, I may look easy to push around, but I can get fierce!"

She finished with a menacing grin, as if showing off how sharp her teeth were. Tarquin rolled his eyes again, "..."

Elysia smirked, "Scared, huh? I've got these two canines, sharpest you'll see!"

Tarquin glanced at her small canines, reminded of the bite marks on his shoulder, and his expression softened a bit.

"Elysia, I want to ask you something."

"Yeah, shoot!"

"Are you really Elijah's mother?"

"Yep." She replied without hesitation, almost proudly.

Tarquin's heartbeat quickened, "Then why won't you admit it?"

"I did admit it, didn't you just ask me? And I admitted it."

"When you're sober, you always deny it."

"Sober? I'm perfectly sober now. Oh, I get it, you mean why won't I admit it in front of Elijah's dad, right?"

"Exactly!"

"Because..." Elysia looked around and gestured for Tarquin to come closer, "Lean in, I'll tell you, but let's not let him hear. If he finds out, he'll throw a fit, he's got quite the temper!"

Tarquin's lips twitched as he moved closer.

Elysia whispered in his ear, conspiratorially low, "Because he's a dog."

Tarquin darkened, "What do you mean?"

"Just that, he's a dog, so I can't admit it!"

Tarquin was puzzled, "What does admitting it have to do with being a dog?"

"Of course, it's related! Since he's a dog, I can't admit it!"

Tarquin frowned and stared at her, suppressing his annoyance and asked again, only to get the same answer.

Eventually, she even seemed annoyed with him,

"Can't you understand plain English? I've told you several times, Elijah's dad is a dog..."

She went on a rant, using every bit of slander she had learned over the years on him.

Tarquin, trying to hide his frustration, noted this wasn't going as planned. He hadn't extracted any useful information, only ending up being verbally bashed.

"I just want a few strands of your hair, okay?" Tarquin interrupted her.

Elysia immediately hugged her head, "No way!"

"Why not?"

"Because Elijah's dad is a dog!"

"I..." Tarquin was at a loss, "Even if he is a dog, what's that got to do with your hair?"

"Because he's a dog, I can't give you my hair!"

Tarquin's face turned a shade of steel, "Elysia, do you even hear yourself right now?"