

## Hitched 521

### Chapter 521

Elijah's place was suddenly under siege by a bunch of his distant relatives - and they brought an army of beefy bodyguards with them!

What on earth did they want? Were they here to start a brawl or kidnap someone?! They wouldn't just show up to fight without a reason, so... they must be here for Elijah.

But why? They've never shown any love for Elijah, so why bother taking him away now?

Elysia, in her simple and straightforward thinking, couldn't wrap her head around the complex schemes and power struggles that were common in elite families. She just couldn't figure out what the Bradfords were up to this time.

"Elysia, open up! We know you and Elijah are in there. Don't pretend like no one's home! If you don't open up, we're coming in!" The voice belonged to one of Gideon's henchmen, Ulysses.

Elysia frowned, "I barely know you guys. What do you want?"

"Just open the door when you're told to, will you? Keep this up, and we'll break it down!" Gideon shot Ulysses a glare.

"Keep it down, will you? You trying to give Elijah a heart attack?"

Gideon's plan was to take Elijah with them. He wanted to use Elijah as leverage to threaten Tarquin, who was on death row, into transferring all his shares and wealth into Gideon's name right away. In Gideon's eyes, Tarquin was as good as dead.

Ever since Gideon heard about Tarquin's plea for his son's care, he knew Tarquin was done for. But Gideon couldn't let Tarquin die just yet.

If Tarquin died, his fortune would automatically go to Elijah, making him the target of many. Tarquin's loyalists would surely stir up trouble. So, the best plan was to use Elijah to pressure Tarquin into transferring his shares before his death. Once the shares were transferred, no one could meddle. The Bradford Group would be securely in his grasp!

But everything hinged on Elijah being alive for the plan to work. That's why he snapped at Ulysses - to avoid frightening Elijah. After all, Elijah suffered from severe psychological issues; he could be scared to death quite literally. If Elijah died, Gideon would lose his leverage over Tarquin.

After scolding Ulysses, Gideon turned to Elysia.

"I'm Elijah's great-grandfather. We've met before. I'm just here to take Elijah home. He's the last of the Bradfords; we can't have him living outside the family."

Elysia recognized him and frowned at his words. They were indeed after Elijah! Definitely up to no good!

What to do? Call the cops? But what would she say to the police? If she didn't reveal her and Elijah's mother-son relationship, they might even accuse her of kidnapping Elijah! And with so many of them outside, they might break in before the police could arrive!

If she couldn't protect Elijah, and they discovered Elliot and Evan... It didn't bear thinking about!

The only option seemed to be... Elysia steadied herself, "Just give me a moment to change, and I'll open the door."

She decided to keep them waiting while she quickly texted Lowell for help. Then she rushed to the kids' room.

Emmett was in the middle of doing Elliot's makeup, not yet finished. Evan hadn't even started! If those people outside forced their way in, it would all come out in the open!

"What's wrong, Mommy?" The kids immediately sensed something was off with Elysia. In a hushed tone, Elysia explained, "Elijah's great-grandfather has shown up with a bunch of bodyguards. They want to take Elijah away!"

The kids were instantly alert.

Chapter 522

Elliot and Elijah both scrunched up their brows in worry.

Emmett felt a shiver of fear.

Evan was fuming, "Why should they take Elijah away? They don't even like him. Mom, don't worry, I've got this. I won't let them take Elijah. I'm going to chase them away right now!"

Elysia quickly grabbed Evan, "No way! Going out there would just blow your cover."

"I'll wear a mask."

"That's not going to cut it, either!"

What if the mask falls off? It's way too risky!

Elysia said, "Mom's going to handle this. Listen to me, I'm going to talk to them, and no matter what happens, none of you are stepping outside! Anyone who disobeys will really make mom mad. Like, really mad!"

Elliot was skeptical. With mom's... let's say 'unique' problem-solving skills, could she really come up with a good plan?

"Mom, at least give us a hint about your plan."

Before Elliot could finish, a loud, aggressive knocking sound came from the door.

Elysia frowned, "No time to explain now! Lock the door behind me, Emmett, keep working on your brother's disguise."

She then turned to Elijah, crouched to his level, "Don't be scared, Elijah. Mom will never hand you over to them!"

After planting a firm kiss on Elijah's forehead, she turned and left.

Make sure the kids lock the door!

She double-checked it to ensure it couldn't be opened from the outside before she could relax.

Cranking up the central heating to make the house cozy, she then hurried to the front door, "I'm coming, I'm coming."

Elysia opened the door, cautiously greeting Gideon, "Hello there."

She appeared completely non-threatening, almost timid and scared.

Gideon nodded, "Where's Elijah?"

"We were out shopping this morning, and Elijah was so worn out, he just went to sleep. Why don't you come in and sit for a spell, and I'll wake him in a bit."

Gideon eyed Elysia suspiciously for a few seconds before entering, leaning on his cane.

Considering Elijah's mental health, Gideon wasn't planning on starting with violence.

If persuasion worked, great. If not, they'd resort to force.

As Gideon stepped in, a whole entourage followed, filling the modest living space, making it feel as cramped and stuffy as a packed subway car during rush hour.

Ulysses, clearly disgusted by the small, humble abode, said, "Sir, while Elijah's asleep, we might as well just take him and skip the pleasantries!" Elysia replied, "If you try to move him, he'll wake up. He's got anxiety about strangers; seeing you all will only trigger him. It's really not safe for Elijah." Ulysses scowled, "Our sir his kin, how can he be a stranger! He's much closer to Elijah than some outsider like you!"

Elysia mentally rolled her eyes. Close, my foot!

But to buy more time, she patiently explained, "Elijah hasn't been around you much. He'll still be nervous and agitated."

Gideon interjected, "What are you suggesting?"

Elysia said, "I know you're Elijah's kin, and I believe you want what's best for him since you're family. Family is all about love and care, not harm. Anyone who thinks otherwise is bound to face karma, like being struck by lightning or meeting an untimely end."

The Bradfords: "...". Their faces soured faster than milk left out in the sun.

Who was she implicating?!

Share to your friends

Chapter 523

Before they could even get a word in, Elysia spoke up, "You know, if you really cared about Elijah, there'd be no need to take him away from my place. He's well looked after with me, and his dad felt comfortable enough to leave him in my care."

Gideon caught the undertone in her words and narrowed his eyes, "Don't try to scare us with him anymore. He's not coming back."

"That's not true. He was just here this morning. He even mentioned he'd bring Elijah to the family mansion tonight for dinner."

Gideon scoffed, "That's a lie. He's been convicted of murder and sentenced to death. It's just not public knowledge yet. Handing Elijah over to you was his way of ensuring his care."

Elysia gasped in disbelief, "That's impossible!"

Gideon let Ulysses play a recording, "...He knew the police had video evidence of the murder and that his execution was imminent. He asked Elysia to take care of Elijah, essentially making her his child's guardian. He even started transferring his assets..."

After the recording ended, Gideon said, "That's info straight from the police."

Elysia held her breath, stunned. How could this be? He had promised to join them for dinner tonight. He seemed so at ease; how could anything have gone wrong?

Gideon bluntly added, "I wouldn't be here claiming Elijah if I wasn't sure of his fate."

The implication was clear; they were emboldened by his impending death.

Elysia, her eyebrows knitted and breathing heavily, realized the gravity of the situation. If he was in no trouble, they wouldn't dare...

But then, were all their meetings and his cheerful demeanor just an act? And the bet they made if he couldn't make it, all his wealth would go to her. Was it just a way to ensure she'd take care of Elijah?

The more Elysia thought, the more panicked she felt. Tears welled up, and she became restless, suddenly fearing the worst. Despite his flaws, he wasn't a bad person, and he certainly wasn't guilty of murder. Why would they sentence him to death?

In her heart, Elysia felt a surge of injustice for him and wanted to confront the police, but she couldn't leave the kids behind. They needed her protection, especially Elijah. Without his father, he couldn't lose her too. The thought of Elijah being alone without her and Tarin broke her heart. And if they took Elijah today, she might never see him again. They wouldn't let Elijah see her, no matter how much he begged.

So, she couldn't let them take Elijah.

Seeing Elysia silent, Gideon continued, "I'm telling you this because without his support, taking Elijah will be easy for us. Even if you risk your life, you won't be able to stop us. It'd be easier if you just cooperated and saved yourself the trouble."

Elysia steadied her heart and told Gideon, "How about this? To reduce the chances of Elijah's condition worsening, I'll come with you. He relies on me a lot right now. As long as I'm there, he'll be fine wherever he goes. I can help take care of him."

Gideon, his eyes narrowing, contemplated the offer. With Elysia there, they wouldn't have to worry about Elijah's well-being.

"Alright, you can come with us," he finally agreed.

Chapter 524

"Alright, give me a moment to gather a few things, and I'll brew us some tea," Elysia said as she got up and headed for the kitchen, returning with several steaming cups of tea. She had cranked the heating up to max, making the room uncomfortably warm. As she brought over the tea, everyone grabbed a cup without hesitation and began sipping away.

"Drink up, I'll just pack a few clothes and then Elijah and I will leave with you," Elysia mentioned before retreating to her room.

In the kids' room, a couple of the little ones were keeping an eye on the situation through a living room security feed.

Evan asked, "What's going on? Did something really happen to Tarquin? Is Mom really going to take Elijah and leave with them?"

Elliot responded, "Tarquin's fine. I already sent him the evidence. The whole 'dying wish' thing was just a bluff. Mom's probably just stalling for time. I bet she spiked the tea."

"She wants to knock them all out?"

"Yep." Elliot frowned, clearly not thrilled with Elysia's plan. After all, not everyone drinks tea. Mom's plan was too naive.

Sure enough, as soon as Elliot finished speaking, chaos erupted in the living room. Those who drank the tea started to pass out, but Ulysses and Gideon remained unaffected. Ulysses didn't drink because he thought the tea leaves were too cheap, and Gideon, ever cautious, never accepts drinks prepared by others. They both dodged the bullet, exposing Elysia's plan.

Infuriated, Ulysses summoned all the guards inside, "This woman dared to drug us! Grab her! And find Elijah!"

With a loud bang, the guards kicked open Elysia's door. Realizing her plan had failed, Elysia rushed out, positioning herself in front of the kids' room door.

"You can't take Elijah away! Whatever beef you have with Tarquin, Elijah is innocent! He's just a kid; he knows nothing about-Ah!"

Before she could finish, Ulysses shoved her aside harshly. "Out of the way! How dare you drug us, you're asking for it!"



Elysia crashed into a TV stand, hitting her head on the corner of the coffee table, causing a gash that immediately started bleeding. Ignoring the pain and tears forming, she stubbornly got up, blocking the door to protect her children, only to be restrained by two guards.

Ulysses grabbed a shard of the broken vase, slashing Elysia's neck with a swift motion, "Try to stop us again, and I'll end you!" Though the cut wasn't deep, it started bleeding profusely. Elysia, ignoring the pain, glared with fiery eyes, "Lay a finger on my child, and I swear, I'll kill you all! None of you will leave this place alive!"

Inside, the children were furious, their eyes burning with rage.

How dare they push their mom, okay! How dare they cut her, okay! How dare they make her cry, okay! How dare they make her bleed, okay! This was unforgivable, absolutely unforgivable!

Fueled by rage, Evan was the first to reach the door. Not bothering to waste time turning the knob, he kicked the door open with all his might. Suddenly-

Outside, the guards' screams of agony filled the air, along with Gideon's shocked and trembling voice, "How did you get out?!"

Chapter 525

Elliot quickly grabbed Evan, preventing his feet from hitting the door.

"There's trouble!" Elliot urgently led them back to the desk to check the security feed.

And trouble was indeed brewing!

Tarquin was back!

Watching him through the cameras, Elliot felt a shiver down his spine.

Tarquin, at this moment, seemed like a figure straight out of hell, radiating a lethal aura!

He had one arm around the injured Elysia and was gripping Ulysses by the wrist, glaring daggers at Gideon.

His face was as cold as ice, his eyes brimming with deadly intent!

Several bodyguards lay on the ground, writhing in pain, not daring to make a sound. The living room fell into an eerie silence.

Then, with a 'snap,' Ulysses' wrist was broken, his screams of agony echoing through the entire floor.

Tarquin held Elysia's head against him, shielding her from the upcoming grisly scene.

Ceramic shards flew from his feet, slicing Ulysses' knees.

Ulysses collapsed with a 'thud,' kneeling at Tarquin's feet.

Tarquin ground his face against the ceramic shards, his gaze fixed on Gideon the whole time.

The shards cut through Ulysses' flesh, stirring inside his wounds.

Ulysses howled in pain, "Ah, ah, ah... sir, save me..."

Overwhelmed by the pain, Ulysses fainted.

His face was a bloody, unrecognizable mess.

Gideon, terrified, watched it all unfold, his complexion turning ghostly pale, his breathing heavy.

"Leave... Take your men and leave, don't force me to start a massacre!"

Gideon, frightened, swallowed hard several times, not daring to say another word. He quickly turned and hobbled out with his cane.

In his haste, he stumbled and fell with a 'thud.'

This time, he didn't wait for anyone's help, quickly getting up and continuing his escape, leaving his cane behind.

The room fell silent once again. Tarquin, with a furrowed brow, looked tenderly at Elysia.

Elysia was trembling in his arms, clearly terrified by the ordeal.

He then turned to look towards the nursery, puzzled why Elliot and Evan were home but allowed Elysia to get hurt.

Setting that thought aside for now, he said, "I'm taking her to the hospital to treat her wounds. You'll find people to clean up the living room; don't bother about us."

After giving his instructions, he carefully carried Elysia and walked out.

Inside the nursery, Elliot held back Evan and Emmett, preventing them from following.

"Mommy's already hurt, running out there won't help and will only expose us! If we get caught, it will break Mommy's heart!"

Emmett, crying so hard he could barely breathe, said, "But I... I want to be with Mommy. She's bleeding... she must be so scared..."

Evan also cried, "I won't let him see me! I'll follow secretly; I just want to be with Mommy."

Elliot's brow was furrowed with concern; he too was heartbroken for Mommy, but he knew what scared her more.

"Mommy's got Tarquin to protect her now; she won't get hurt again. We need to pull ourselves together quickly if we want to find Mommy soon. Emmett, go wash your face, calm down, and then continue with our makeup. Once we're done, we'll immediately go find Mommy."

Elliot then looked at Elijah, who was breathing heavily, his little face set with determination, his fists clenched so tight his body trembled.

It was clear he was either furious or heartbroken over Elysia. Clearly, his emotions were on the edge of breaking down.

Chapter 526

Elliot quickly let go of Evan and Emmett and wrapped Elijah in a tight embrace, offering comfort, "Elijah, buddy, calm down. It's all over now. If anything happened to you right now, Mom would be beside herself with worry. She'd rush back here in a heartbeat, neglecting her own injuries. If you want Mom to be at ease to get her cuts treated at the hospital, you've got to calm down, listen, and be a good boy..."

It was only then that Evan and Emmett realized Elijah wasn't in his right mind, and they quickly wiped away their tears to console him. "Elijah, don't think about those bad guys. Just think about Mom. Think about her smile, her wishes..."

Elijah had been battling with his mental health. Although he had been doing well recently, he hadn't fully recovered. A breakdown now would only make things worse.

Thankfully, Elijah inherited Tarquin's composure. He closed his eyes, leaning on Elliot's shoulder, forcing himself to calm down. Silent tears rolled down his cheeks, all for the love and concern he held for Elysia.

Meanwhile, Tarquin hurriedly carried Elysia downstairs. Lowell swiftly opened the car door for them, not bothering with any pretense and driving the luxury car straight to the hospital. Lowell cleverly raised the partition between the front and back seats, creating two private spaces, knowing Tarquin and Elysia needed privacy for their conversation.

Tarquin, sitting in the back with Elysia in his arms, wasn't sure how to comfort her. He had never been one to soothe a woman's fears, so he could only repeat, "Don't be afraid, I'm here now... I've dealt with the bad guys. They won't dare hurt you again. The kids are all safe, don't worry..." Elysia was trembling in his arms, her mind buzzing, unable to comprehend the word 'banquet' that Gideon had yelled out earlier.

It took her a while to gather her thoughts, her eyes red and puffy, her lips quivering as she looked up at Tarquin and asked, "Did you lie to me?"

"Huh? Lie about what?"

"Your grandfather said... he said you..."

Elysia's voice broke, overwhelmed with sorrow.

Tarquin couldn't help but wipe away her tears, gently assuring her, "You shouldn't believe a word he says, not even the punctuation!" "But he had a police recording. The police said there's evidence you committed murder, that you're going to be sentenced to death!" "So, you believed his nonsense, thinking I'd be sentenced to death?"

"Yes!"

"And that made you upset?"

"Yes!"

Tarquin looked at her, touched by her innocence. He held her a bit tighter and wiped her tears away again, his voice soft, "Why are you so naive? How many times have I told you I wouldn't be in trouble? Why would you believe him over me?"

Elysia, frustrated and flushed with anger, as if upset he didn't understand her point, huffed, "I told you, he had a police recording! And if you weren't in trouble, why would he dare to show up? He said you'd been sentenced to death, that you'd be executed soon! Really!"

Seeing her earnest, innocent expression, Tarquin patiently explained, "I do believe you, but look, I'm here now, not sentenced to death, which proves his words were false. There's nothing to fear."

Elysia blinked away her tears, looking at him, "You... you didn't escape from prison, did you?"

Tarquin: "...No."

"Then... are you going to be arrested again?"

"No, I won't."

Elysia remained half-convinced, "...".

Chapter 527

Tarquin felt cornered, but to put Elysia completely at ease, he pulled out his phone and dialed Josiah, keeping it brief, "Some folks are spinning yarns about me breaking out of the precinct on my own. Mind clearing the air, Josiah?"

As soon as Elysia heard it was a call from the police, she straightened up, "Hello, Josiah."

Josiah, ever the smooth operator, quickly caught on and reassured with a chuckle, "Ms. Thorne, no need to worry. We've wrapped up the investigation. The deceased jumped on his own; it wasn't your boyfriend who pushed him, nor did he coerce the jump. Your boyfriend's in the clear, and we'll be making a formal announcement shortly."

With every mention of 'your boyfriend,' Elysia seemed to grow accustomed to the reference, "Okay, thank you so much."

After hanging up, Tarquin asked, "Believe me now?"

Elysia nodded, "Yes."

Just as Tarquin was about to change the subject, Elysia suddenly burst into tears again.

Tarquin jumped, confused, "You believe me, so why the tears?"

Crying her eyes out, Elysia said, "When they showed up today, it nearly scared me to death. They said you were going to die, and they wanted to take Elijah away... They brought so many people, looking so menacing. I was terrified, sob sob sob..."

Unable to control herself, Elysia wept bitterly. She seemed like a girl who'd just survived a life-or-death ordeal, overwhelmed by fear and relief, yet also feeling wronged.

Only now did Tarquin understand the reason for her tears. Seeing her so distressed, he pulled her into his embrace, offering his shoulder and chest for her to lean on.

He thought she'd stop crying after a while, but she cried all the way to the hospital. The car had already pulled into the hospital parking lot, and she was still crying.

Tarquin remembered the saying, "Tears are more plentiful than wisdom." And another, "Women are made of water." Hesitating for a moment, he gently patted her head, trying to soothe her like one would a child, "Stop crying now."

Head pats were said to be universally comforting to girls. But this approach seemed ineffective on Elysia; she continued to cry.

Realizing the car had stopped, Tarquin, out of options, said, "Let's hold off on the tears. Think about the medical bills. Your injury might cost a pretty penny."

At the mention of money, Elysia quickly wiped her tears and sat up straight to ask, "Since they're the ones who hurt me, shouldn't they cover the medical bills?"

Tarquin rubbed his temple, realizing yet again that money was indeed a powerful motivator with her. "Yes."

"Then let's contact them! Make them pay up! But... you hurt some of them too. Could they turn this around on you?"

Tarquin pursed his lips, "Did your mom take something to stunt your intelligence while pregnant with you? How can you be so naive?!"

"You..."

"Give them a chance to blackmail me? They wouldn't dare. They attacked you, which is a crime. Me fighting back is self-defense, which is not against the law."

"Right! We shouldn't let them off easy. They must pay every last dime for the medical bills."

Elysia swung the car door open and strode towards the clinic. Her mind was solely focused on the medical bills, oblivious to the fact that she had been sitting on Tarquin's lap the entire ride, nor did she notice they had arrived in a luxury car.

For Tarquin, the difference was palpable. The moment she left, his arms felt instantly empty, transitioning from a comforting weight to a feather-light absence. The last time she was drunk, he carried her, noting how light she felt-almost as if he was neglecting her, not providing enough for her to eat.



But today, he felt her weight in his arms more profoundly than ever before.

After she left, it was as if his heart had emptied out too!

"Hey, hurry up!"

Elysia called out to him, standing a few yards away. She had walked a bit before realizing he hadn't gotten out of the car yet, so she waited there for him. Since he had carried her out, she wasn't wearing a coat, just a cream-colored hoodie. She paired it with black leggings and a pair of ubiquitous snow boots. Feeling a bit chilly, she rubbed her hands together and blew on them, her feet shuffling on the spot. Her hair, long enough to reach her waist, was now a bit disheveled, with traces of blood on her forehead and red-rimmed eyes from recent tears. At first glance, she looked like any girl from a modest background, distressed after an incident. Yet, she drew plenty of attention. Her face was strikingly beautiful, even without makeup, a rarity in an era obsessed with cosmetic enhancements.

"Tarquin, aren't you going to accompany Elysia into the hospital?" Lowell reminded him.

This time, Tarquin looked away, straightened his clothes briefly, and strode towards her with his long legs. As he approached, Elysia pouted, "What took you so long? The hospital's packed at this hour. We'll be waiting forever, and the kids are still at home." Tarquin didn't respond but draped his coat over her shoulders.

Elysia: "?"

Tarquin, with his usual aloof demeanor, explained, "If you catch a cold, Elijah will worry, and our New Year's will be ruined."

"Oh, but aren't you going to be cold? What if you get sick?"

"I won't. I'm not as delicate as you."

"Am I delicate?"

Tarquin's lips twitched, but he didn't reply.

Elysia glanced down at his coat, "It's such a high-quality piece. It'd be a shame to wear it just once and then get rid of it, right?"

"Why would we get rid of it?"

"Because you don't like me wearing your clothes. If I wear it, you won't want it back. Isn't that like throwing it away?"

"When did I ever say I didn't like you wearing my clothes?"

"That time you got drunk, I borrowed one of your turtleneck sweaters. You seemed really upset and said if I wore it, you wouldn't want it back. You found it disgusting."

Tarquin frowned, "...Did I say that?"

"You did! I remember clearly! That turtleneck is still at my place. I washed it but never dared to give it back to you."

Tarquin's frown deepened, "You misunderstood. It wasn't that I found it disgusting you wore my clothes. Remember to give it back to me." Elysia, puzzled, pressed on, "Then what did you mean? If you weren't disgusted by me wearing your clothes, what were you disgusted by?" "I've forgotten!"

Elysia pouted but didn't pursue the matter further, ready to dash into the clinic wrapped in his coat.

Tarquin caught her hand and led her in another direction.

Elysia, confused, asked, "Where are we going? Aren't we here to see a doctor?"

Tarquin replied, irritated, "I'm taking you through the back door!"

"The back door? Do you know a doctor here?"

"Benjamin!"

It then dawned on Elysia, "Oh, I completely forgot about Dr. Benjamin. I've been so preoccupied with you lately."

Her offhand remark struck a chord with Tarquin. Her words filtered through his mind, leaving behind a simple thought: She's been thinking of him. Upon further reflection, it condensed to an even simpler essence: She misses him.

Tarquin looked at Elysia meaningfully, wanting to say something, but then noticed the injury on her forehead and held back.

Chapter 529

Walking side by side toward the VIP entrance, Elysia suddenly realized Tarquin was still holding her hand.

No wonder it felt so warm.

She tried to pull away, but he tightened his grip unexpectedly.

Her heartbeat picked up, confusion and a hint of excitement mingling. "Hey, you... you're still holding my hand!"

Tarquin didn't even glance her way. "I know."

"You know? And you keep holding on? People don't just hold hands, they might get the wrong idea."

His lips twitched slightly as he responded, "Only someone with a guilty conscience would worry about that."

"I don't have anything to be guilty about!"

"Then stop complaining."

Elysia pouted, "I'm just not used to this. I can walk on my own; you can let go now."

Without looking at her, he simply said, "You're walking too slow. You can't keep up."

"Slow? How am I walking slow?"

"Short legs."

Short legs?

Elysia wanted to argue, her teeth clenched in frustration. But glancing down at her own legs and then at his long strides, she shut her mouth and continued walking, albeit with an air of defiance.

From a distance, Lowell watched the two, a goofy grin spreading across his face. Tarquin was clearly torn between his feelings for Elysia and his reluctance to let those feelings grow, all because of his past. Yet, right now, it seemed he was struggling to keep those emotions in check.

"From today on, he's going to be all over Elysia and not let go," Lowell thought, chuckling to himself. "That's my future sister-in-law!"

At Benjamin's clinic, Elysia decided to follow Tarquin's advice closely. After getting her wound dressed, she cooperated fully with Benjamin for a comprehensive check-up.

Before the results could even come back, her four boys rushed in. Elliot and Evan, having disguised themselves, now shared Emmett's appearance. Seeing Tarquin, all four boys frowned, clearly holding a grudge.

Tarquin, puzzled, greeted them warmly, "Don't worry, she's fine. The wound has been taken care of, and it's not serious. She's just getting a full check-up now."

"Not serious?" one of them retorted.

"My mom's forehead is cut open! And there's a scratch on her neck!"

"She was bleeding!"

"Open wound, bleeding, and you call that not serious? What does serious look like to you?"

Each boy added their piece, none too pleased with Tarquin.

He narrowed his eyes, silently questioning whether he had caused Elysia's injuries. He was sure he hadn't. So why were the kids blaming him? Instead of confronting this, Tarquin asked, "Why didn't you protect her at home? Afraid to reveal your abilities?"

"No way!"

"Then why?"

The kids adored Elysia, and it hurt them to see her injured on their watch. Tarquin was curious, yet the boys wouldn't admit they were trying to keep their appearance a secret from their mom to avoid frightening her.

Elliot fibbed, "We were all wearing headphones and didn't hear anything from outside until it was too late. But what about you? You had the evidence all along. Why did you only show up now? If you'd come earlier, mom wouldn't have been hurt!"

The other three chimed in, "Exactly!"

Tarquin realized then why they were upset with him. They were blaming him for not acting sooner.

Chapter 530

Tarquin was laying it out straight:

"I wanted to use this situation to weed out the snakes in the grass plotting against me. I didn't expect Gideon to come knocking; that's on me, I apologize. When Elysia comes out, I'll make it up to her too."

The kids pouted but didn't push the conversation further.

The check-up was over, and Elysia emerged.

Her four boys dashed over, "Mommy!"

Elysia had calmed down by then, though her mind was buzzing with thoughts about the medical bills.

Seeing her kids brought her joy,

"Elliot, Evan, Emmett, Elijah, what brings you guys here?"

"We were worried about you, Mom. How are you feeling? Are you okay?"

Elysia's face softened, "Mommy's fine, don't you worry, just a few scratches."

The little ones looked up at her with furrowed brows and identical expressions of concern.

Elysia laughed heartily,

"What did Mommy always tell you? If it doesn't affect your eating or sleeping, it's nothing to sweat over. Life's big deals are eating and sleeping. As long as those aren't affected, no worries, stay positive."

Tarquin stood aside, listening to her impart 'wisdom'.

He thought her logic was flawed, but upon reflection, couldn't find fault with it.

Eating and sleeping, the simplest yet most crucial activities. Anything affecting either could lead to serious consequences.

Not being able to eat or sleep usually means serious illness!

Watching her comfort the kids, Tarquin pondered for a moment before sincerely apologizing,

"Today's mess was my fault, I'm sorry."

Elysia quickly countered,

"It's not your fault. It's your crazy relatives who should be apologizing. And don't forget to ask them for the medical bills at dinner tonight! They shouldn't get off easy!"

"...Can you even make it tonight?"

"Of course, I can! And I will go there with my head held high! Let's go home and change into our battle gear!"

Blossom had said, if you're going to infiltrate the enemy, you've got to stand tall!

First off, she needed to let the Bradford clan, those women who badmouthed Elijah behind his back, know that Elijah now had a mommy to protect him!

Secondly, she had to show them that Elijah's mommy was no pushover.

Ordinary, yes, but not someone who shrinks back at the first sign of trouble, no easy target!

She had to let them know, a mother's love is fierce; for Elijah, she would fight to the end. Anyone who disagrees, bring it on!

Tarquin had no clue what Elysia meant by "battle gear," but he followed her home.

The house had been cleaned.

A new vase, filled with fresh flowers, was placed on the TV stand.

The sofa covers were also new, identical to the old ones.

It was hard to tell that a fight had taken place here not too long ago.

Elysia directed the kids, "It's getting late, let's change into new clothes now. You four will wear these today."

Thanks to some extra funds, Elysia had bought each child three new outfits.

One for today, another for New Year's Day, and the last for the mid-month celebration.

The kids, upon receiving their instructions, took their clothes and went to their rooms.



Elysia then pulled out Tarquin's outfit, "This is yours, change in the study or bathroom."

Tarquin asked, "What did you buy for me?"

"A good selection, both inner and outer wear. You'll see," she replied before retreating to her bedroom and closing the door.

Tarquin, carrying the clothes, headed to the study, eyebrows knitted in worry.