

Hitched 641

Chapter 641

After Keith left the Blossom household following lunch, the kids immediately convened their little council.

Elijah was the first to voice his opinion, "I don't buy his excuse that disrespecting Mom was just a test for Dad. If it was really a test, Dad would've seen right through it!"

Evan and Emmett were on the fence, both turning their gazes towards Elliot for guidance.

"If he's telling the truth," Elliot began, furrowing his brow in thought, "then we've all misjudged Keith. But if he lied..."

Elliot paused, the concern evident on his young face, "Then it proves he's cunning and not to be underestimated. No matter how you look at it, he's got an excuse ready to clear his name."

Evan, growing anxious, asked, "So, is Keith a good guy or a bad guy?"

Elliot pondered for a moment before replying, "Hard to say for now. Let's stick to our plan-act like we don't know anything and keep an eye on him." Evan and Emmett nodded in agreement, while Elijah's expression darkened. He was firmly on Dad's side, convinced that Dad was truthful and that Keith was up to no good!

However, he didn't resent Elliot, Evan, and Emmett for their skepticism. He understood it.

After all, Keith...

Elliot had shared earlier that day about a time in preschool when Emmett fell from the top of a climbing frame. Keith had rushed over without a second thought, injuring his knees and arms in the process, but Emmett came out unscathed.

Afterwards, Keith had brushed it off as no big deal, stating that it's a teacher's duty to protect their students, insisting they not tell their parents to avoid worry.

Then there was the time Nola locked them up at the preschool, and Keith, concerned for their wellbeing, clashed with Nola's bodyguards. Although he didn't manage to free them, Keith was hurt and nearly lost his job over the incident.

And they had only learned about these acts of bravery from other teachers afterwards, which moved them and made them grateful to Keith.

Keith wasn't just a hero to them; he was like this with all the kids at the preschool.

He was like an unsung hero, doing good deeds and helping many without seeking recognition or praise.

In everyone's eyes, Keith was cheerful, optimistic, gentle, and humble-a true helper in need.

This made Elliot, Evan, and Emmett, as well as Blossom, fond of him.

And there was another crucial point-Keith had been working at the Sunshine Daycare for two years!

Meaning, when Keith started his job there, Elliot, Evan, Emmett, and their mom were still in the remote countryside.

If Keith had targeted them from the beginning, how could he have known they would end up in Jindale City and that the boys would attend Sunshine Daycare?

If Keith had set his sights on them only after their arrival, then maybe it was their mom he was interested in-after all, she was incredibly beautiful! Yet, Dad claimed Keith wasn't interested in Mom, and Keith himself had shown no signs of affection towards her.

So, considering everything, Elliot, Evan, and Emmett were still only skeptical about Keith, not fully siding with Dad, which was understandable. In the kitchen, Elysia was washing dishes alone.

Blossom had dashed off to "compare notes" with Keith, as the preschool was about to start and she hadn't finished the workload assigned to the teachers. Keith had mentioned during lunch that he had completed his tasks and could help Blossom out.

So, right after lunch, Blossom had hurried off to see Keith.

As Elysia scrubbed the dishes, she pondered how to broach the subject of Keith with Blossom.

Chapter 642

If Blossom had any inkling of the reservations she'd feel today, she certainly wouldn't have extended such a warm invitation to Keith to come over to her place.

But having worked alongside Keith for two years, his good qualities were practically etched into her mind. The sudden suggestion that Keith might be problematic was hard for her to swallow.

After all, there wasn't a shred of evidence to suggest anything was amiss with Keith!

Elysia was still mulling over how to broach the subject when her phone suddenly rang. It was him.

Her heart raced as she steadied herself before answering, "Hello?"

"Come down!"

"Excuse me?"

"I'm waiting for you downstairs!"

Tarquin hung up immediately after his brief command.

Elysia was puzzled by his tone, wondering what she could have possibly done to upset him this time.

After a moment's hesitation, she untied her apron and stepped outside.

Tarquin's car was parked right in front of the building. Elysia saw it the moment she exited the lobby.

She wrapped her coat tighter around herself and briskly walked over, about to knock on the window when the back door swung open.

The blast of warm air was welcoming.

Tarquin, looking effortlessly cool in a thin black shirt with his legs casually crossed, gave her a look that said, "Get in!"

His appearance was undeniably attractive, causing Elysia's heart to skip a beat.

Lately, she found herself increasingly drawn to his looks and physique.

Caught up in her crush yet irked by his commanding tone, she retorted, "Spit it out. I've got dishes to wash back home!"

Tarquin watched her with a tight-lipped smile, his presence dominating, "Get in!"

"I won't! I'm not your secretary to be summoned at will. If there's nothing important, I'm leaving!"

"Do you want to be my secretary?" Tarquin shot back, half-joking.

Elysia rolled her eyes, "Who'd want to be your secretary? And besides, do you think you're some kind of CEO?"

Ignoring her dig, Tarquin teased, "So, you want me to come down and carry you in?"

"I"

Before she could protest, Tarquin made a move to exit the car.

Seeing this, Elysia quickly got in, fearing he might actually follow through with his threat.

No sooner had the door closed than she found herself pulled into a strong embrace, his crisp, fresh scent enveloping her.

The kiss came out of nowhere, taking her completely by surprise.

Elysia's heart raced as she instinctively pushed back, but her efforts were futile against his firm hold.

When her resistance grew, he bit her tongue as a form of punishment.

Once she calmed down, his kisses became even more intense, as if he hadn't kissed her in ages, more domineering and wild than before.

It was as if he wanted to devour her whole!

Elysia found herself without the strength to fight back, her mind going blank and her body going limp.

The kiss lasted so long that Elysia's tongue began to numb, and she nearly passed out before he finally let her go, reluctant to break the connection. Now, Elysia lay in his arms, weak and docile like a tame lamb.

Tarquin finally felt the knot in his throat ease.

Ever since he found out Keith had lunch with Elysia and the kids, he'd been bothered.

A lump had been stuck in his throat, neither coming up nor going down.

Now, at last, it had cleared.

Tarquin didn't speak immediately, allowing her a moment to rest. He wrapped one arm around her, picking up his phone with the other to answer a call.

His phone had been ringing off the hook, Lowell had been calling non-stop.

Chapter 643

The phone connected, and Lowell was on the verge of tears.

"Tarquin, where have you been?! The meeting's only halfway through!"

At the company, a crucial executive meeting was in session when Tarquin suddenly stood up and left.

Lowell and the other executives thought he had just gone to the restroom or perhaps stepped out to make an urgent call.

But forty-odd minutes had passed, and he hadn't returned!

Everyone was panicking, one after another pressuring Lowell to track him down. Lowell was at his wit's end!

Little did they know, Tarquin had left to find Elysia.

"Let them wait, I'll be back in an hour," Tarquin said, his voice cold.

"An hour? Where are you... beep beep..."

The call had been cut off. Lowell, speechless and helpless, didn't dare to call back. He braced himself and returned to the boardroom.

The executives immediately bombarded him, "Did you get hold of him? Where's Mr. Bradford?"

Lowell tried to explain, "I'm not entirely sure. I heard Tarquin's voice, he was panting, a bit hoarse, like he was... exercising!"

Everyone: "Exercising?!"

"Yeah, like he was out for a run."

The last executive to present was terrified.

"Good heavens, when Mr. Bradford left, I noticed he looked really upset. He wasn't mad at me, was he? Mad enough to go for a run to cool off but not wanting to fire me because I've been here so long?"

Lowell twitched awkwardly,

"Don't jump to conclusions; it surely wasn't about you."

You're not that influential to send Tarquin off on a run. If he was angry with you, he'd have told you straight.

Meanwhile, at Future Community.

It took Elysia a moment to come back to her senses. She slowly opened her eyes, only to meet Tarquin's intense and dangerous gaze.

Elysia bolted from his embrace, pressing herself against the car door, her breathing short, her face flushed,

"You... you jerk!"

Tarquin squinted,

"Calling me a jerk, yet you still don't listen. Seems I've been too soft on you."

"Soft my foot!" Elysia cursed, beyond frustrated.

Her tongue was still numb, her lips felt nothing. Where was his so-called gentleness?

Tarquin rarely heard her swear. Instead of getting angry, he actually laughed,

"Not teaching you a lesson, you'd never learn. I warned you this morning to stay away from Keith, and by lunch, you're dining together! Did you take my words for the wind, or did you think I was just scaring you?"

Elysia paused, then argued,

"It wasn't me who invited him! We had just finished cooking lunch when Keith suddenly showed up with a cake, and Blossom invited him in..." Elysia huffed, trying to prove her innocence.

But Tarquin already knew. Elijah had reported to him, and he was aware of what Keith had said to the kids.

Tarquin asked her, "Did you tell Blossom about Keith?"

"Not yet, I haven't figured out how to say it, especially since you don't have proof that Keith is trouble. For all we know, Blossom might think you're just trying to smear Keith."

"Then don't say anything yet."

He'd find a chance to talk to her. He'd been wanting to meet her anyway.

As for the mystery person, Blossom was a prime suspect!

Elysia mumbled, "Then if Blossom is the reason I have to interact with Keith, you can't blame me! And you can't blame Blossom!"

Tarquin said, "If you can't avoid him and have to interact, you need to tell me in advance."

Elysia was not pleased at all.

Chapter 644

Elysia pressed her lips tightly together, tilting her chin up defiantly, ready to challenge him. But as soon as she locked eyes with his intense gaze, her courage faltered.

She was utterly intimidated by his kiss!

Annoyed, Elysia quickly changed the subject. "How did you know Keith joined us for lunch?"

Tarquin flipped through his phone to show her a photo.

Keith had posted on Twitter an hour ago, with three photos and a caption.

The photos included one of his arm in a cast, the lunch they had shared, and a blooming flower.

The caption read: "Life has its ups and downs. Face it with a calm mind and a positive outlook, and like a flower turning towards the sun, you will flourish."

Elysia was puzzled. "But he didn't mention having lunch with us."

Tarquin pinched her cheek gently, "Silly! I knew right away that the meal in his post was made by you, plus there were four kids' meal sets on the table."

Light dawned on Elysia, "No wonder... I thought the kids told you!"

Speaking of the four little "traitors," Tarquin felt a headache coming on. Such a big event and not one of them had mentioned it, not even Elijah until after the meal was over.

If they had thrown a tantrum, refusing to let Keith join them for lunch, would Keith have succeeded?

They were just kids, after all; making a fuss was their right!

Even if it was embarrassing, couldn't they make that small sacrifice for him?

He loved those kids so much, and yet, traitors!

Tarquin decided to shelve his thoughts on the little traitors for the moment and asked Elysia, "What do you make of Keith's tweet?"

Elysia countered, "What about it?"

Tarquin pursed his lips, realizing she hadn't noticed anything amiss.

Keith's tweet was clearly a calculated move, meant to provoke him and sow discord.

Keith must have known that Tarquin was watching him closely and that he would see the tweet.

By continuing to get close to Elysia and the kids despite the warnings, it was a challenge.

And knowing that Tarquin would be jealous and angry after finding out he had lunch with Elysia, possibly causing a rift between them, was an attempt to drive a wedge.

Keaton was right; the guy was a wolf in sheep's clothing.

"Do you see anything off about it?" Elysia asked him back.

Tarquin said bluntly, "It screams 'wolf in sheep's clothing' to me."

Elysia was speechless.

Tarquin, with an open and honest tone, added, "I'd say it to his face, too. I'm not wronging him!"

Elysia handed him back his phone, "No matter what you say about Keith, it doesn't involve me. But blaming me without asking for the reason, especially when I wasn't the one who invited him for lunch, is unfair!"

Tarquin smiled affectionately, "I'm not blaming you. I knew before you came down that it was Blossom who invited him."

"Then why did you..."

"I just wanted to kiss you."

The air in the car suddenly became still.

Elysia's eyes widened in shock as she stared at him, completely taken aback!

Tarquin was also momentarily stunned, his honest feelings slipping out faster than he intended.

As they looked at each other, their expressions varied, their thoughts swirling.

The temperature in the car seemed to spike, the atmosphere growing increasingly tense.

In the heat of the moment, both seemed on the verge of losing their reason.

Elysia wanted to ask outright: "Do you like me?"

Tarquin wanted to confess: "Elysia, I like you."

After what felt like an eternity, they both spoke at the same time.

Elysia: "You..."

Tarquin: "I..."

Their words overlapped, silencing them for a brief second before they both urged, in unison, "You go first."

The car fell silent once more, "..."

Tarquin, looking at Elysia's flushed cheeks, swallowed hard, "Go ahead, I'm listening."

Chapter 645

Elysia's palms were sweaty, her heart lodged in her throat as if it might leap out at any moment. Her lips moved without sound for an agonizing moment, and she found herself growing frustrated—frustrated with herself! She was always so bold in private, but when push came to shove, she'd fall apart. Just seeing him made her weak in the knees!

Remembering those sleepless nights, tossing and turning in frustration, Elysia gritted her teeth, lifted her chin, and stared him down, demanding, "Do you like me or not?!"

Tarquin was taken aback, clearly not expecting such a direct question. Looking at her furrowed brow, he couldn't tell if she was trying to save face or genuinely upset and questioning him. His heart was all over the place, hesitant to respond too quickly.

He'd noticed a change in Elysia's behavior towards him lately, as clear as day. She seemed to blush more around him, becoming more obedient, more trusting. When he said Keith was no good, she believed him without question. Even if she resisted kisses, her anger afterwards seemed more flustered than truly mad. This wasn't like her at all. He wasn't sure when the shift began, but there was no doubt in his mind that she had feelings for him.

But how deep those feelings ran, he couldn't be sure. So, he hesitated, too afraid to make his feelings known. Falling too deep made him cautious, afraid to speak his heart. But now she'd asked, and he couldn't lie and say he didn't like her!

After a moment's hesitation, Tarquin began, "I..."

His confession was cut short as Blossom suddenly appeared. Blossom instantly recognized his car and, curious, started heading their way. The fragile moment between them shattered. Elysia, already a bundle of nerves for having spoken up, felt even more unsettled by his silence.

Seeing Blossom approach, she said nothing more, flung open the car door, and practically ran to Blossom's side, saying, "Blossom."

Blossom remarked, "I thought you might be in the car. I couldn't find you at home just now; thought you might have gone out to throw out the trash. Why didn't Tarquin come up looking for you? What were you two chatting about down here?"

Tarquin couldn't catch Elysia's explanation, only hearing something about a last-minute school meeting. Then they parted ways, Elysia heading into the building, Blossom walking towards the south gate of the community. Elysia left in such a hurry, not once looking back at him, as if she was running away.

Tarquin swallowed hard, not following after her. He adjusted his tie and lit a cigarette. He didn't pursue her, unsure of Elysia's true feelings. What if her affection for him hadn't fully developed? Would confessing now scare her off?

And if he were to confess, it couldn't be rushed... This was Elysia, the woman Tarquin cared for. He couldn't afford to be hasty. He wanted to leave no room for regrets. A grand gesture was necessary!

Keaton always said, every woman longed to be loved, cherished through romance and grand gestures. Love was an intangible thing, but romantic gestures were a perfect way to express it. He might not have been experienced in love or romance, but he was willing to learn. Once he was sure of her feelings, he'd prepare meticulously, ensuring a memorable and meaningful confession.

Chapter 646

Tarquin was still basking in the glow of his daydream about confessing his feelings when his phone buzzed again. It was Lowell-again! Tarquin's good mood evaporated instantly. Nobody likes getting calls about work, not even CEOs! He picked up the phone and snapped, "If I end up single forever, it's on you!"

Lowell was taken aback, muttering to himself, "Good Lord! Did I just cross some divine line?"

After hanging up, Tarquin didn't call his driver back. Instead, he slid into the driver's seat and started the car, heading towards the south gate.

Blossom's car was off-limits today due to city restrictions, so she was planning to catch a cab to school. Tarquin pulled up beside her and rolled down his window, "Let me give you a lift."

Blossom was surprised, "Oh?"

"I'd like to talk," Tarquin admitted.

Blossom quickly nodded and hesitated for a few seconds before getting into the passenger seat. She was worried sitting in the back might give him the wrong idea, as if she was treating him like a chauffeur.

Tarquin, usually sporting a chilly demeanor except around Elysia and a few kids, revealing a gentler side, was intimidating to most. Blossom, fearing him, didn't dare refuse his offer. She buckled up, sitting straight and proper, more so than she ever had in school.

Tarquin reached into the glove compartment and handed her a sealed bottle of water, "Don't be nervous. You're Elysia's best friend; I wouldn't dare upset you. She'd have my head."

Blossom took the bottle, slightly dazed by his words. She unscrewed the cap and took a few gulps to calm her nerves. It was only after drinking that she noticed the brand of the water-Iluliaq, a premium brand priced at over \$40 a bottle, touted as the most eco-friendly water in the world with a very limited annual production. A luxury few could afford.

She glanced at Tarquin, thinking the luxurious water seemed out of place with the car but matched his aura perfectly. But wasn't he supposed to be bankrupt, as Elysia mentioned? A bankrupt man, driving an ordinary car, drinking \$40 water? It had to be a facade!

Blossom decided not to call him out, just as she was pondering over his words, he suddenly said, "Elysia asked me if I liked her."

Blossom, surprised, "Elysia asked you?!"

"Yeah. Does she like me?"

Despite her fear, Blossom didn't answer outright, concerned about her friend's privacy and happiness. After a moment of hesitation, she probed, "Do you like Elysia?"

"I do."

Her eyes lit up, "Really? You really like her?"

"A lot. Have for a long time."

"Then why haven't you told her?"

"I thought about it. But back then, she said she'd avoid me if I did. So, I never dared to say anything. Today, when she asked, I couldn't answer directly. I wanted to know how she felt first."

Tarquin glanced at Blossom, "You must know how she feels better than I do."

Blossom asked, "Can't you tell at all what she's thinking?"

"I think she likes me too. But I'm not sure how deep her feelings are. If I confess out of the blue, could it scare her off?"

Chapter 647

Blossom was all tied up in knots, debating whether to spill the beans to him or not, especially since Elysia hadn't figured out her own feelings for the future.

Lately, Elysia had been wrestling with the big question: did she actually have feelings for him, or was it just a fleeting crush? And if it turned out she did have feelings, what then?

Their history was a tangled web that stretched back six years, involving both past grievances and a child, making Blossom cautious about egging Elysia on but hesitant to speak out of turn in front of Tarquin, for fear of complicating things further for Elysia.

Tarquin, sensing her dilemma, spoke honestly:

"The reason I came to you is because I believe you truly want her to be happy. I've already laid my cards on the table, and now I'm trying to gauge her feelings—not just for my sake, but for hers too. If she feels the same way, I'm ready to make my move, to love her right, and build a happy future together. But if she doesn't, or if her feelings aren't as deep, I'm willing to wait, to hold onto my feelings until the timing feels right. Yet, the thought of her possibly feeling the same way and me not expressing it, that's torture for both me and her."

Blossom frowned, knowing full well the toll it was taking on Elysia, who'd been restless at night and distracted by day, clearly not her usual happy self. After a moment, Blossom said, "I can say for sure, she's fallen for you!"

Tarquin slammed on the brakes, bringing the car to a halt in the middle of the road!

He turned to Blossom, breathing hard, "For real?"

Blossom, startled by the sudden stop and thankful for her seatbelt, implored, "Can you, maybe, pull over first?"

Discussing this while driving seemed a tad risky!

As if he hadn't heard her, Tarquin repeated, "She really likes me?"

Blossom nodded vigorously, "Truly!"

"Wow!" Tarquin laughed, the atmosphere around him shifting, as if he'd suddenly perked up.

He then pulled the car over, eager to know, "Did she tell you she likes me?"

Blossom explained, "She's too shy to say it outright, but I know her well enough to see it. She's definitely smitten. If she knew you felt the same, she'd be over the moon—it's a typical, sweet crush. But, I'm not sure what happens after the initial happiness. Does her affection for you run deep enough to overcome all her reservations?"

Tarquin's heart sank, "What do you mean?"

Blossom's expression turned complex, as she pondered, "Even though Elysia claims to have moved past what happened years ago, the scars remain. If they decide to part ways now, it's like turning a new leaf. But if they get together, those old wounds might reopen, leading to more hurt. In moments of vulnerability, Elysia might dwell on the past, potentially deepening her resentment and their conflicts. Most couples might call it quits after a brief romance, but with their complicated history and a child involved, a breakup would likely be messy and painful. After all, they have a past filled with both good and bad, and now there's a child in the mix. A split would hurt both parties, especially Elysia, who might end up the most vulnerable. If it comes to a separation, she might even risk losing her child... So yes, Elysia's feelings are genuine, but to take the leap into a relationship with him requires immense courage! I'm not sure if Elysia has that courage, or if her love for him is strong enough to overcome all doubts."

This revised version maintains the integrity of the original Chinese text's emotion, style, and plot while making it more suitable for an English-speaking audience.

Chapter 648

Tarquin was completely in the dark about all of this. Seeing her silence, he prodded again, "What's holding her back?"

Blossom certainly wasn't going to spill the beans. "That's Elysia's personal business. If you want to know, you'll have to ask her yourself."

Tarquin didn't press her further, instead, he shifted the topic. "Do you know anything about the father of Elliot, Evan, and Emmett?"

He suspected that Elysia's reservations might have something to do with the kids' dad. After all, getting involved with her would mean stepping into the role of stepdad for the boys.

At his question, Blossom felt a pang of anxiety, "No, I don't know him!"

Tarquin was skeptical. "But you're her best friend. How do you not know anything about her husband?"

Blossom was confused. Her husband? Wasn't he asking about Elliot, Evan, and Emmett's father? Did he actually think those boys were Elysia's husband's kids? Was he out of his mind?

But then she remembered Elijah had mentioned something about a paternity test proving he wasn't the father of Elysia's kids. So, Tarquin had stopped suspecting Elysia, which meant he wouldn't suspect anything about Elliot, Evan, and Emmett either.

Eager not to say the wrong thing, Blossom advised him, "If you want to know about Elysia's husband, you really should be asking her, not me. It's her private business."

Tarquin eyed her silently for a moment before changing tack, "Then tell me about some of her past, the bits you can share."

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Meanwhile, Elysia had locked herself in her room, her mind racing with his words: "I just want to kiss you..."

Her heart was pounding uncontrollably, those flirtatious words throwing her into a tizzy. After stewing under her covers for a while, she finally calmed down enough to ponder his reaction. His surprise was understandable, given the abruptness of her question.

But why didn't he answer? Was he torn between liking her and not, unsure of what to say? Just like her- if he asked whether she liked him right now, she wouldn't know what to say either.

Not like? Clearly not the case. But like? She wasn't entirely sure either. So, it boiled down to her having a bit of a crush on him.

At that thought, Elysia's heart rate picked up again, her thoughts growing more abundant. One moment she thought being together would be better for the kids. The next, she worried about their secrets and how a potential breakup could turn messy, especially with the kids caught in the middle. What would she do then?

Elysia was fraught with worry, feeling utterly insecure until Elliot knocked on her door, snapping her back to reality. Standing up, she opened the door, trying to appear normal, "Elliot, did you need something from mom?"

Elliot mentioned, "The kitchen's still a mess. Are you feeling okay?"

Normally, Elysia would have tidied up before resting. Elysia fibbed, "No, I just felt suddenly tired and took a nap. I'll clean it up now."

"It's okay, I've already cleaned up."

Observing his mom's demeanor closely, Elliot inquired, "Do you have something on your mind?"

After a pause, Elysia replied, "Where are your brothers?"

"They're taking their nap."

"Alright, come in. I need to talk to you about something."

Once her son was inside the room, Elysia hesitated before asking, "Elliot, what do you think about your dad?"

Elliot instantly knew what she was getting at. Mom's starting to ask about him, which means she must like our soon-to-be stepdad a bit. Looks like our bargain-bin dad is about to become priceless!

Chapter 649

Elliot, with his usual straightforwardness, said, "He's got a lot going for him, but he's not without his flaws."

"Oh? Do tell."

Elliot elaborated, "His biggest strengths are his integrity and solid moral compass, not to mention he's quite capable, takes responsibility, and has a sense of duty. Plus, he's not just a breadwinner; he also knows how to look after the home front. And he's easy on the eyes too—definitely a catch. The downside? He's a bit cold, straightforward to a fault, can come off as abrasive, and has a bit of a commanding presence. Plus, he's not exactly the type to sweep a girl off her feet with sweet nothings. If Mom decides to give it a go with him, she might have to whip him into shape a bit."

Elysia's cheeks flushed, "I-I didn't say I was going to be with him."

"I mean in the future. I get the feeling Mom's got a bit of a soft spot for him. There might be something there down the line."

Elysia was taken aback at Elliot's observation. Could it be that even her child noticed her feelings? Was it that obvious?

Elysia cautiously asked Elliot, "Hypothetically speaking, if—and I stress if—Mom were to start a relationship with him, would you and your brothers be opposed?"

Elliot chuckled, "Of course not. As long as Mom's happy, we're happy."

"But I've noticed you three don't seem too fond of him, especially Evan."

"Well, he hurt Mom before, so of course, we weren't fans. But if he makes Mom happy in the future, we'll definitely come around, Evan included. Evan's already starting to see him in a new light."

All because he stood up to Keith! Evan had given him a solid ten-point boost! Evan had made it clear: anyone who disrespected his favorite girl would have to answer to him, no exceptions. So, in this case,

Dad's intervention was spot-on, earning his full support! And just like that, Tarquin scored an extra ten points in their book!

Elliot added, "Mom, just go for it. Follow your heart without worrying about us or the future. If you like him, dive in. If not, we'll steer clear. Either way, we're with you, come what may. Even if things with Dad go south, we're sticking with you."

Elliot was dispelling Elysia's concerns. He wanted his mom to experience love like any young woman should, boldly pursuing happiness and love rather than always putting her children first. Mom deserved her own life! After everything Mom had been through, she deserved all the happiness in the world, including a beautiful love story.

Elysia was moved to tears, holding her son tightly, speechless with gratitude. How lucky was she, Elysia, to have such wonderful children! She must have done something extraordinary in a past life to be blessed with them as her children.

Comforted by her son's words, Elysia felt a weight lift from her shoulders. Her children's unwavering support was all the reassurance she needed! Elysia's worries faded, and her thoughts simplified. If there was mutual attraction, why run from it? Letting things flow naturally was the best course. As for whether it would lead somewhere, only time would tell.

That afternoon, Elysia took a well-deserved nap, waking up refreshed. Checking her phone, she saw it was already past five-time to start dinner. Blossom had texted, saying she'd be out for a work dinner and wouldn't be home. Just as Elysia replied with an "OK" emoji, a rapid knock at the door startled her.

"Ms. Thorne, Ms. Blythe, are you home? It's the caretaker from across the hall, Keith's aide."

Chapter 650

Keith's caregiver?

When Elysia heard the urgency in her voice, she quickly got out of bed to see what was happening. "What's wrong?"

Several kids, hearing the commotion, ran out and stood by Elysia, eyeing Keith's caregiver warily.

The caregiver was frantic, "I came to borrow a first aid kit. Keith fell, and he's bleeding. I told him to go to the hospital, but he refused. He asked me to just patch him up at home, but he doesn't have a first aid kit."

Elysia frowned. "I'll go check on him."

She had medical knowledge; she couldn't just stand by and do nothing.

Grabbing a jacket and the first aid kit, Elysia was about to head to Keith's when Tarquin blocked her path!

Holding a bouquet of roses in one hand and a bag full of groceries in the other, he stood in front of her!

Today was the first day he knew Elysia liked him back. He was thrilled and wanted to celebrate.

And who better to celebrate with than Elysia?

So, he came with roses and groceries, only to find her rushing to Keith's place.

"What are you doing?" Tarquin asked, displeased.

Elysia was taken aback; she hadn't expected such timing, on her way to see Keith and then he appears.

Before she could answer, she was captivated by the bright red roses in his hand.

Their vibrant beauty took her breath away, making her heart race.

Were these for her?

Seeing her silent, Tarquin turned to Keith's caregiver.

The caregiver shivered with fear and quickly explained, "Keith fell down. I came to borrow a first aid kit. Ms. Thorne said she'd go check on him." Tarquin glanced toward Keith's house, his brows furrowed, his expression dark.

Was this another one of his tricks?

Without another word, Tarquin took the first aid kit from Elysia and handed it to the caregiver, "Tell him, the kit is a gift. He doesn't need to return it!" After saying that, he grabbed Elysia's hand and pulled her back to the house.

The kids quickly followed them inside.

Once inside, they dashed back to their room, wisely choosing not to intrude.

Tarquin immediately asked, "Did you really think I wouldn't find out?"

Elysia quickly explained, "The caregiver said Keith fell, and since I have medical knowledge, I thought I should check on him."

She quickly added, "I haven't seen him yet!"

So, you can't be mad!

Tarquin, with a meaningful look, let out a slight chuckle at her naive reaction and teased, "Silly!"

Before she could retort, he continued, "From now on, stay out of his business. A fall is not the end of the world. Even if he did die, it wouldn't be your concern! Clearly, it's another ploy to get your attention!"

Elysia was speechless.

Changing the subject, Tarquin placed the roses in front of Elysia, "For you."

Seeing the vibrant bouquet of roses made her heart skip a beat.

Though gifting roses might seem cliché, they symbolized love.

Elysia didn't probe why he suddenly brought roses, instead, she took them, remarking, "Waste of money."

Tarquin, pleased she accepted, replied, "Not a waste if you like them."

He then asked, looking deeply into her eyes, "Do you like them?"

Yes.

Elysia answered silently in her heart, but aloud she only asked, "How much did they cost?"

"They were free."

"Free? Why were they free?"