

Hitched 711

Chapter 711

Keith was decked out in his workout gear, a fitness tracker wrapped around his wrist, dripping with sweat as if he'd just finished a marathon. This was the first time they had seen each other since that brawl.

Keith had healed up and was currently riding the unemployment wave, without the urgency to dive into a new job.

His days were filled with painting and his nights with excursions to the local gym for some fitness routines, swimming, or hitting the basketball court. Life was surprisingly stress-free, devoid of the typical job-hunting anxiety, and he hadn't sought out Elysia either.

He even became something of a local hero in Jindale City for saving a kid from drowning during one of his swim sessions, earning him the 'Good Samaritan' title.

This was the scoop Tarquin got after doing some digging around.

Their gazes clashed in the air, electric and explosive, with an undercurrent of tension thick enough to cut through.

Yet, no punches were thrown!

Keith, spotting Tarquin, was taken aback, squinting slightly before stepping out of the elevator.

Tarquin, brows furrowed, shot him a glare before entering the elevator.

Neither acknowledged the other.

But just as the elevator doors were about to close, Keith's hand shot in, forcing them open again.

Standing at the elevator entrance, Keith threw out, "Happy break-up in advance."

Tarquin's brows knitted tighter, his temper flaring up instantly!

He had his suspicions about Keith, and this comment all but confirmed them.

The recent incidents around him were clearly orchestrated to instill fear in Elysia, pushing her to deem a relationship with him too perilous and call it quits!

What infuriated him the most wasn't the underhanded tactics but the audacity to use Elysia as a pawn!

Recalling Elysia's terror-stricken face, he was seething with rage!

Tarquin grabbed Keith by the collar and yanked him into the elevator, slamming him against the wall,

"Did you orchestrate the recent drama?"

Keith, wincing from the impact, glared back at Tarquin, his expression transitioning from anger to disdain in a matter of seconds,

"Which drama are you referring to?"

Tarquin, struggling to keep his anger in check, prodded, "Playing dumb now?"

Keith, far from angered, smoothly adjusted his disheveled shirt, meeting Tarquin's gaze with a defiant smirk,

"If you've got evidence, lay it out. Otherwise, save your breath. Better yet, spend this time figuring out your next move post-breakup with Elysia. What's it gonna be, end it all or take a vow of solitude?"

Tarquin glowered at him,

"If you're man enough, come at me directly. Don't target Elysia!"

Keith scoffed, "If you're man enough, you'd protect her. Can't even safeguard your own woman; what kind of man does that make you?"

Tarquin felt his blood boil over, unable to contain it any longer!

Just as he was about to retaliate, the elevator dinged open, and Blossom appeared at the entrance.

Upon seeing them, Blossom gasped, her eyes wide, "You guys..."

Keith immediately switched to a more pleasant demeanor, greeting her, "Ms. Blythe."

Blossom, slightly taken aback, nodded and turned her concern to Tarquin, "Are you alright?"

Wanting to spare Elysia any worry, Tarquin had no choice but to suppress his anger.

A fight with Keith in front of Blossom would inevitably reach Elysia, stirring unnecessary concern.

Tarquin shot Keith a final glare before parting ways with Blossom.

Stepping into the elevator, Blossom curiously inquired, "What brought you two together?"

Keith sighed,

"Just my luck, can't seem to avoid him. Ran into him at the elevator, and he was in a foul mood over something, pinning it on me. Had you not shown up, I'd probably be nursing another beating. Just my luck, always the victim, and worse, can't seem to hold my ground against him."

After a brief pause, Keith added with a hint of grievance,

"I can't fathom what Ms. Thorne sees in him. Such a temper, is that really what she wants in a life partner?"

Blossom suggested, "He's really good to Elysia, and she adores him. There must be some misunderstanding between you two."

Chapter 712

Blossom was in the dark about a lot of things, always believing that Tarquin's grudge against Keith stemmed from that one 'test' incident.

In her eyes, Keith had shown no romantic interest in Elysia whatsoever.

Since Elysia and Tarquin became an item, Keith hadn't seen Elysia alone, and he seemed to be leading a pretty stable life, showing no signs of a broken heart.

Blossom added, "Misunderstandings always clear up eventually. Just give it some more time."

Keith sighed in resignation, "It's like Mercury is in retrograde for me this year. He's still on my case, even after losing his job."

Blossom was taken aback, "Your resignation was because of him?"

"Yeah, he pressured the school board, and they got cold feet about keeping me on."

Blossom was speechless.

As they exited the elevator, Keith mentioned, "Oh, and when you see Ms. Thorne, could you tell her I don't know what's been going on with them recently, but it's got nothing to do with me. Ask her to talk to her boyfriend; he needs to stop obsessing over me."

Blossom nodded awkwardly.

Elysia was in the kitchen preparing dinner when she saw Blossom come in and greeted her, "Finally home, huh? Go wash up; dinner's almost ready." Blossom changed into her slippers and walked into the kitchen, "How are the kids?"

"They're in their room."

She whispered, "They haven't noticed anything, right?"

Elysia shook her head, whispering back, "I'm in good spirits, no injuries; they really think I've been out having fun."

Blossom chuckled, "Kids are so easy to fool."

She then relayed to Elysia what she had seen in the elevator and what Keith had said.

Elysia frowned and spoke about Tarquin, "He wouldn't go after Keith without a good reason. There must be something off with Keith. You should keep your distance from him too."

Blossom was surprised, "I thought you'd think your man was being unreasonable."

Elysia scoffed, "My man is never unreasonable."

Blossom laughed, "Are you blinded by love?"

"Not at all! I might not know Keith well, but I know my man. If he says Keith is bad news, then Keith is bad news!"

Blossom teased, "I'm full already, full of lovey-dovey stuff."

Elysia playfully slapped her, telling her to keep an eye on the soup while she went to the bedroom to call Tarquin. Tarquin had just arrived at his mansion when he saw Elysia's call, a softness flashing in his eyes, "Hello?"

Elysia queried, "You almost got into a fight with Keith?"

Tarquin frowned, "He talked to you?"

"No, Blossom told me..."

After Elysia repeated Blossom's words, Tarquin explained, "I did mess up his job, and yeah, we almost came to blows today, but I..."

"You're hurt?" Elysia cut him off before he could finish.

Tarquin paused before answering, "No."

"That's good. Are you coming home for dinner?"

"...No."

"Oh, then we won't wait up. We're going to eat."

"Alright."

As Elysia was about to hang up, Tarquin asked, "You're not going to grill me?"

"Why would I?"

"My run-in with Keith..."

Elysia understood, "Grill you for what? I was just worried you might be hurt and wanted to know if you were coming home for dinner."

She mumbled, "You're my boyfriend; he's nothing to me. If anyone's giving you trouble, I'd stand up for you."

Her mindset had certainly become more pragmatic. Now that she and Tarquin were together, she was decidedly in his corner.

If Keith decided to stir trouble by exposing their family secrets, so be it. She was ready to face the music!

Chapter 713

Tarquin's face bloomed into a smile, so wide and joyful it was practically worthless in its abundance.

He felt as if he'd swallowed a spoonful of honey, his inner gloom swept away, leaving him in a fantastic mood.

Previously, whenever he and Keith had a spat, Elysia, though not exactly taking Keith's side, would chide him. But this time, she was entirely on his side!

If only she were here right now, he'd pull her into a tight hug and shower her with kisses, marveling at how her sweet words could make him feel so alive!

"Once a word is spoken, it's like water poured out; from now on, if I'm treated unfairly out there, you've got to stand up for me!" Elysia declared with a swagger.

"Absolutely," Tarquin replied, his smile growing even wider. He kept Elysia on the phone, cooing sweet nothings for several minutes before finally hanging up.

Lighting a cigarette, he lounged on the living room couch, pondering, "How did I get so lucky?"

When Heath saw him return, he brewed a cup of tea and brought it over, chuckling at Tarquin's self-satisfied grin, "Something good happen today, sir?"

Tarquin, with a hint of smugness, replied, "Elysia's fallen head over heels for me, haha!"

Heath just shook his head, amused. Seeing Tarquin so happy made him happy too. He remarked, "Reminds me of when the master and the mistress were courting. The master would come back with that same silly grin."

The master and mistress he referred to were Tarquin's parents.

Mentioning them made Tarquin's expression turn a bit solemn. Kendrick once told him that in life, it's incredibly fortunate to find true love.

Not everyone experiences love, and not all love stories are beautiful.

So when you do find that beautiful love, you must hold on tight and never let go!

Or else, you'll regret it for the rest of your life!

He felt lucky, lucky to have met Elysia, and luckier still that she could love someone like him.

He was determined to hold onto this rare love tightly, never letting go!

Anyone who dared to mess with it would have to answer to him!

Thinking of Keith, Tarquin's gaze hardened. He was almost certain Keith was behind the recent troubles!

Biting down on his back teeth, Tarquin grabbed his phone to call Axel, "I'm home. Bring Declan over."

...

Meanwhile, in the Future Community, Keith had just finished showering and was sitting in the living room reading.

He glanced at the clock from time to time.

From seven until nine in the evening, still no message from Elysia. No texts, no calls.

Keith knew he wouldn't hear from her.

Frowning, he closed his book and brewed himself a cup of coffee, sipping it by the window.

Today's chat with Blossom was meant for Elysia's ears.

She must know now why he had to resign, and that Tarquin had nearly come to blows with him again today.

Given Elysia's character, she would feel guilty and reach out.

Her silence meant she didn't feel guilty.

It also meant she wasn't worried about him spilling her secrets anymore.

In short, she had fallen completely for Tarquin.

Standing by the window with his coffee, a cold light twinkled in Keith's eyes...

Ding-

His phone chimed with a new message, not from Elysia, but from someone he cared about even more.

He smiled, a smile that reached his eyes, put down his coffee, and replied,

"I'm close, just give me a bit more time. I'm preparing a huge surprise for you. You're going to love it."

After sending the message, he paused, then made a call,

"Move up to plan B. We act tomorrow!"

The next day.

Early morning, Elysia was up making breakfast for the kids.

Today, the kindergarten had organized a field trip. Teachers would lead the group, so parents weren't required to go, but they did need to prepare snacks and water for their children.

Chapter 714

When Elysia woke up, the first thing she saw was a text from Tarquin:

"Ely, just woke up, missing you."

Elysia felt a warm flutter in her heart and texted back, "Missing you too."

No sooner had she sent the message than Tarquin was calling her.

Elysia, phone in hand, headed to the bathroom to freshen up while answering, "That was quick. Have you been glued to your phone?" Tarquin said, "I've set a special alert for your messages. My phone buzzes the second you text. Why are you up so early today?"

"Got to prep a picnic for the kids today. Want to come over for breakfast?"

"I'll pass, got things to do."

"Work stuff?"

"...Yeah."

Elysia didn't pry further, "Well, you're missing out on a delicious opportunity. I'm planning to whip up some real treats."

Tarquin chuckled, "Save me some."

"Can't do. They won't taste good cold."

"Can you make a fresh batch when I get back?"

"No way!"

She was planning to bake scones, which wasn't something you could just whip up on a whim. The dough had been fermenting since last night. Tarquin, sounding like a kid, grumbled, "You only have true love for the kids."

Elysia rolled her eyes, "Jealous much? Even jealous of the kids!"

Tarquin, true to his jealous form, asked, "If the kids and I were drowning, who would you save first?"

Elysia was speechless, "Are you serious? If you all ended up in the water, it would only be for a swim. No need for rescuing! Alright, I've got to go. Busy day. Focus on work, okay? And remember to eat breakfast. Oh, and cut down on the smokes."

After hanging up, Elysia got ready and headed to the kitchen with her phone in hand.

Tarquin texted again, "I love you more than you love me."

Elysia couldn't help but smile at his silliness.

She didn't text back, knowing it would lead to an endless conversation.

Initially, she thought he wasn't much of a talker, preferring to communicate with looks rather than words.

Now, it's like he can't stop talking!

An hour later, Blossom and the little ones woke up, excited for their picnic. Elliot, Evan, Emmett were up earlier than usual, buzzing with excitement. Elijah, though not going, was also thrilled and woke up with his siblings.

They all had breakfast together, and Elysia packed the freshly baked scones into their little backpacks.

At 8 AM, Blossom took them out for the day, leaving just Elijah and Elysia at home.

Elysia coaxed Elijah, "How about we go on our own little picnic next week? Just the family?"

She knew Elijah wanted to join the picnic but was a bit introverted and not too keen on mingling with strangers.

Elijah asked, "Will daddy be there too?"

"Of course, he'll be our driver and bodyguard."

Elijah beamed, "Okay!"

Elysia ruffled Elijah's hair, "It's a beautiful day. How about we do a big clean-up at home? You can help mommy."

Elijah was even more excited, "Yes!"

Elysia's life was a peaceful bliss, oblivious to the brewing storm outside.

At 9 AM, Keith received an unexpected call.

Still in bed, he sat upright with a scowl upon hearing the news, "When did this happen?"

"Just now. Tarquin led the charge himself. They didn't stand a chance. Took the mother and son and rounded up our guys too.

I only escaped because I was out getting breakfast. They were well-prepared, knew exactly what they were doing. And... he left a message for you."

Keith clenched his jaw, "What did he say?"

"He didn't speak. Just tore up a painting on camera."

Keith's eyes narrowed, "Send me the footage!"

"Will do."

Chapter 715

Keith's heart clenched as he fast-forwarded the video to the end, only to find Tarquin alone in the room. Squinting his eyes at the camera, Tarquin pulled a piece of paper from his pocket and held it up to the lens. With a crisp tearing sound, he ripped it in half.

It felt to Keith as though it wasn't just the paper being torn, but his heart as well.

Tarquin's provocative gaze never left the camera as he continued to tear the paper into shreds, scattering them in front of the lens before leaving a warning look and walking away. The pieces fluttered down to the floor...

Breathing heavily, Keith felt as if the torn paper mirrored his shattered heart.

Everyone has something they cherish deeply, and Keith was no different.

He had moved to Jindale City, leaving behind his beloved sanctuary. That cabin, nestled away, held countless treasures of his heart.

It was his refuge, his secret hideout, the place he valued above all others.

And that paper came from there.

The fact that Tarquin had it meant he'd discovered Keith's sanctuary. How did he find it? Who told him?

Keith dared not think of what had become of the place now...

In his urgency, Keith stumbled out of bed, barely pausing to throw on some clothes before he headed for the door. Just then, his phone buzzed with a video from an unknown number.

It showed a cozy cabin in the woods, engulfed in flames. The crackling fire consumed the wood, the cabin collapsing into ashes before his eyes. "No, no, no, this can't be happening!"

Tears reddened Keith's eyes as he trembled with rage and shock.

He dialed Tarquin, his voice laced with venom. "What have you done?!"

Tarquin's response was chillingly calm. "Just lit a fire. Burnt down a cabin."

"You bastard! You bloody bastard!"

Tarquin wasn't bothered by the insults. If anything, Keith's desperation fueled his satisfaction. Keith had dared to mess with what Tarquin held dear, so it was only fair for Tarquin to strike at the heart of what Keith cherished.

Luckily, during his investigation of Keith, Tarquin had stumbled upon the cabin. He didn't know its significance to Keith, but he knew it meant everything.

"Oh, Keith, just wait. I'll make you regret this," Keith threatened before angrily ending the call and smashing a decorative crystal nearby. Rushing to the site, Keith found nothing but ashes where the cabin once stood. He spread his jacket on the ground, carefully collecting the ashes, tears falling freely.

After gathering as much as he could, Keith headed to the lake nearby, diving in to let the water consume him.

When a threat approached, Keith took it as an outlet for his fury. He wrestled a crocodile in the water, his punches lethal.

A young, massive crocodile fell victim to his wrath. Even after it stopped moving, Keith continued his assault, dragging it ashore to land more punches.

Blood stained his face, but he showed no sign of stopping, a terrifying sight more fearsome than any monster.

Chapter 716

The crocodile's skin was thick, but the blood splattered on his face was his own!

He nearly wrecked his hands before he stopped!

Gasping for air, he lay back on the grass, staring up at the azure sky, his heart trembling.

After what seemed like an eternity, his phone rang.

He answered with his left hand, "Speak!"

"Plan B is in motion, successful."

Keith let out a cold laugh, "Got it. Send me the hospital's location."

After hanging up, Keith stared at the sky, his laughter starting softly before swelling into a booming cackle.

His sinister laughter sent the birds in the forest into a frantic flurry.

At that moment, Elysia was rushing to the hospital.

She had just received a call from Blossom, saying Elliot had been badly injured in an attack while they were hiking in the mountains. The school had already contacted the police, and Elliot had been taken to a nearby hospital.

The news nearly knocked Elysia off her feet!

She was now pale as a ghost in the back of a taxi, her body trembling, not quite sobbing, but tears streaming down her face non-stop. Elijah was heartbroken but felt helpless, knowing there was no consoling Mom at this moment.

All he could do was sit by her, furrowing his little brows in worry for Mom and Elliot.

Suddenly, the phone rang. It was Tarquin. Elysia acted as if she hadn't heard.

Elijah picked up, "Hello, Dad."

Tarquin's voice was filled with urgency, "Where's your mom?"

"She's with me. We're on our way to the hospital."

"I'm on my way too. Tell your mom not to worry. Elliot's going to be fine. I've already contacted Benjamin to bring a team of pediatric specialists over..."

"Okay."

When Elysia arrived at the hospital, Tarquin was waiting at the entrance.

Seeing Elysia's ashen face, Tarquin's heart ached, "Elysia!"

He rushed to her side, but Elysia only gave him a bewildered look before staggering toward the emergency room. Tarquin's heart tightened at that look...

He sensed something was off, his mind racing with worry but not daring to dwell on it. He quickly followed with Elijah. Blossom and Evan Emmett were waiting outside the emergency room, bursting into tears as they saw Elysia.

"Mommy, Elliot... he's... he's bleeding so much, sob..."

"I'm sorry, Mommy. I couldn't protect Elliot, sob..."

Elysia felt as if her heart was being torn apart. Just as she was about to speak, the emergency room doors swung open.

A nurse rushed out, "The patient urgently needs a blood transfusion, but he has a rare Rh-negative type. We don't have enough in our supply, and it might be too late to get more from another hospital. Does anyone here have Rh-negative blood? We can do an on-site draw."

Too late?!

Elysia lost control and ran toward the emergency room, but the nurse stopped her,

"Ma'am, please calm down. You can't go in there."

Elysia pleaded through tears, "It's my son who's hurt. I know medical procedures. Please, let me see him... Please let me in..."

Benjamin emerged upon hearing the commotion,

"Ms. Thorne, don't panic. Elliot's injuries aren't fatal. The only thing we're short on is blood. As long as we have enough, I guarantee Elliot will be safe! Please stay calm; we've got this."

Benjamin then turned to Tarquin,

"Tarquin, you're Rh-negative! Elliot's blood type matches yours. Hurry to the blood draw room!"

Tarquin suddenly remembered his blood type and reassured Elysia,

"Right! Elliot and I have the same blood type. Don't worry, blood is the solution!"

As he turned to leave, Elysia, struck by a sudden thought, glared at him,

"Stop right there!"

Chapter 717

Tarquin halted in his tracks, "What's up?"

Elysia was frowning deeply, her breath coming in short gasps. He was Elliot's biological father, a direct relative!

Transfusions between close family members could easily lead to a graft-versus-host disease, a potentially fatal reaction to blood transfusion.

That's why hospitals generally advise against blood donations from close kin. Too risky!

"Does someone need O-negative blood? I'm O-negative!"

Keith suddenly appeared, rushing over breathlessly. After saying that, he turned to Elysia as if surprised,

"What are you guys doing here? Who's in trouble?"

Elysia, overwhelmed with emotion, didn't even care about their past grievances and hurriedly asked in a hoarse voice,

"Keith, you're O-negative?"

"Yeah, I'm O-negative. Came in for some minor cuts, and when the nurse mentioned the emergency room needed O-negative blood urgently, I just ran over. Didn't expect to run into you guys. What happened? Who's hurt?"

Elysia's eyes were red with tears,

"Elliot! The doctor said he urgently needs blood, but the blood bank's running low."

"Don't worry, I'm O-negative and healthy, fit for donation!"

After saying that, Keith turned to the nurse, "Where do I go? How do we do this?"

The nurse quickly responded, "Follow me, please."

"You're not alone," Keith reassured Elysia, then hurried after the nurse.

Tarquin's temper flared, pushing Keith away, "Back off! We don't need your help!"

He was well aware that Elliot's accident had something to do with Keith. If it weren't for the urgency of the situation, he would've already thrown a punch at Keith's face!

To think he'd hurt a child and now shows up pretending to care, he had no good intentions!

Tarquin glared at Keith with a warning, "I've got no time for you now. You'd better keep your distance and think about what's coming to you!"

After saying that, Tarquin moved to donate blood himself, but Keith, fists clenched and indignant, retorted,

"Are you seriously picking a fight with me at a time like this? Elliot's still in there lying down! Even if you don't care about him as much, at least put on a show! Save the grievances for later, let's save a life first!"

He then hastened his steps to follow the nurse, rolling up his sleeve as he ran,

"I've got plenty of blood; take as much as Elliot needs!"

Tarquin, veins throbbing with anger, decided to ignore Keith for now; Elliot was the priority!

He turned to Benjamin, "You take my blood. Use mine!"

"We're not using yours!" Elysia suddenly exclaimed, still visibly agitated.

Tarquin insisted, "I'm O-negative too."

Elysia bit her lip, "Still, not yours. We'll use Keith's!"

Tarquin was baffled, "What?!"

A female doctor rushed out from the emergency room,

"Did you find a blood donor? The patient's condition is getting worse!"

Hearing this, Elysia's body shook, and she dashed into the emergency room. The doctor tried to stop her, but Benjamin let her go.

Elysia's figure vanished into the emergency room, leaving Tarquin standing outside the door, his expression grim.

Benjamin knew about the risks of close relatives donating blood!

But he had no idea Elliot was Tarquin's biological son!

After all, with the Bradford family tradition of one heir per generation, and Tarquin already having Elijah, it seemed unlikely there'd be another son! So, he hadn't considered this possibility and couldn't understand why Elysia was against using Tarquin's blood.

He even wondered if they were having a serious disagreement.

Benjamin couldn't make heads or tails of it, but he could see the disappointment and frustration in Tarquin's eyes. All he could offer was,

"Whoever's blood it is doesn't matter as long as the blood type matches. I'll keep an eye on Keith, make sure he doesn't mess around with the blood type. Don't worry."

Chapter 718

Benjamin rushed into the emergency room, his determination palpable in the tense atmosphere.

Blossom, her brows furrowed in concern, glanced at Tarquin. Despite his pitiful state, she couldn't help but offer some comfort, "You've got to believe that Elysia loves you. Whatever decision she makes, she has her reasons. She's just wrapped up with worry for Elliot right now, so she doesn't have the time to explain things to you. Once Elliot's condition is stable, I'm sure she'll sit down with you."

She was privy to the reason behind Elysia's refusal to allow the blood transfusion, but this wasn't her secret to share. It was something Elysia needed to explain to him in her own time.

Tarquin, his brows knitted tightly, glanced at her and the kids before turning to stride down the hallway. Craving a cigarette, he needed a moment to himself.

A few hours later, Elliot's condition finally stabilized, and he was moved from the emergency room to a regular ward. Still under the influence of the anesthesia, Elliot was deep in sleep, his face still painted with the makeup he'd worn for the field trip earlier that day.

Lately, with Tarquin and Elysia's blossoming romance, the chances of bumping into them had skyrocketed. Elliot, ever cautious, had figured that dealing with his kindergarten mates and teachers was far simpler than risking Tarquin catching on to their secret.

Gathered around the hospital bed, everyone looked on with heavy hearts. Even though the critical phase was over, seeing Elliot's pale face was heart-wrenching.

The three little ones, Emmett, Evan, and Elijah, huddled close, gently touching Elliot's arm and hand, their sobs filling the room. Emmett and Evan's cries were loud, while Elijah, trying to be strong, let silent tears roll down his cheeks.

Elysia, sitting beside the bed, looked particularly stricken, her eyes red and swollen, the very picture of distress.

Blossom, her eyes also teary, stood next to her, offering a comforting embrace, "Our Elliot's just facing a tough time, but he'll get through this. After this ordeal, life's bound to be smoother and safer."

Elysia sniffled, her vision blurring before she could respond.

Tarquin watched from the side, his heart aching for her.

Suddenly, the door swung open, and Keith walked in. Tarquin's mood soured instantly, but Elijah quickly tugged at his sleeve, urging him to keep his cool.

After all, it was Keith's timely intervention and blood donation that had saved Elliot. And given Elysia's apparent displeasure with Tarquin today, it wasn't the time to stir up more trouble.

"Keith," Blossom greeted, breaking the tense silence.

Keith nodded, his gaze shifting from Elliot to Elysia. Seeing her in such a state reminded him of someone dear to him, and he couldn't help but feel a pang of empathy.

Trying to offer some comfort, he said, "Take care of yourself. Elliot wouldn't want to see you like this when he wakes up."

Elysia, steadying herself, nodded gratefully, "Thank you for today, Keith. We owe you a great debt. Once Elliot's better, we'll make sure to properly thank you."

From a mother's perspective, Keith's role in saving Elliot was undeniable, warranting her deepest gratitude.

Keith, however, waved off the formalities, "No need for all that. I was just lending a hand. If you ever need anything, just let me know."

He then frowned slightly, adding, "I ran into a colleague from the nursery on my way here. They mentioned Elliot got hurt during today's field trip. How could something like this happen, especially with so many kids around, and only Elliot getting hurt? Could someone be targeting him? Have you upset anyone lately?"

Tarquin's anger flared at Keith's insinuations, seeing them as nothing short of provocation, as if Keith was deliberately trying to stir up trouble and sow discord within their family. It seemed to Tarquin that hurting Elliot was part of Keith's plan all along.

Chapter 719

"Daddy!" As Tarquin spiraled out of control, Elijah quickly called out to him.

Blossom shivered at the sight of Tarquin's expression, cautiously reminding, "Let's all just calm down, Elliot's still resting."

Tarquin, unable to contain his fury, had the urge to grab Keith by the collar and drag him outside for a 'private chat'. However, before he could act, Elysia's stern gaze pinned him down.

Elysia didn't utter a word, just fixed him with a steady stare.

Tarquin's impulsiveness, impossible to suppress, gradually receded under her gaze.

After a few seconds, Elysia turned to Keith, "The police have been notified. They'll get to the bottom of this."

Keith nodded, "If there's anything I can do to help, just say the word. No need for formalities. I've got other matters to attend to, so I'll be off now."

Elysia got up to see him out, but Keith refused, "No need, stay with Elliot."

Keith's departure was graceful, leaving no doubt in anyone's mind that he saw Elysia purely as a friend.

Blossom chimed in, "I'll walk him out. Elysia, you stay with Elliot."

As Blossom escorted Keith out, she signaled the kids to follow, leaving just Tarquin, Elysia, and the unconscious Elliot in the room.

Elysia gazed at Elliot, while Tarquin observed her.

The room was eerily quiet, unsettlingly so.

Tarquin felt claustrophobic, the silence suffocating him.

A vague sense of dread loomed over him, his heart racing with the fear of impending doom.

Normally, Elysia would have already thrown herself into his arms, weeping to release her pent-up emotions.

But she didn't.

She sat quietly, motionless, not even sparing him a glance.

Tarquin's anxiety peaked, "Elysia, are you mad at me?"

Elysia remained silent, not meeting his gaze.

Tarquin's panic grew, "Please, if something's on your mind, just spill it. Don't bottle it up."

Still, Elysia said nothing.

"Look, if you're upset, just hit me! Let it all out!" Tarquin pleaded.

Silence persisted.

Fear gripping his heart, Tarquin's eyes welled up, his voice choked, "Elysia, please don't ignore me. I'm scared."

Tears suddenly streamed down Elysia's face!

Head bowed, her shoulders shook violently as she sobbed.

Tarquin quickly enveloped her in his arms, "Please, tell me what you're thinking. Ignoring me... I'm terrified, feels like you're about to leave me behind."

Unable to hold back any longer, Elysia burst into tears, wailing into his chest.

The pain was unbearable!

Learning of Elliot's accident had terrified her!

Finding out Elliot urgently needed blood had thrown her into panic!

But when she rushed into the emergency room, seeing her son with his eyes shut, lying on the operating table, his small, clean belly cut open, blood everywhere, his insides visible...

Her heart shattered!

Elliot was only five, so young, so innocent... How could he endure such agony?

The thought of her child in pain was excruciating!

How could fate be so cruel...

She would have rather taken the pain herself, suffered in his place, than let her child go through this.

But she was helpless, powerless, forced to watch him suffer...

The agony was killing her!

Tarquin, holding her tight, wished he could merge her into his being.

His heart ached for Elliot, for her, and he was scared, terribly scared!

The moment Elliot was in danger, his sense of crisis surged.

Chapter 720

Keith was clearly gunning for him!

"Elysia, believe me, this is the last time! I won't let anyone hurt our kids again!"

Elysia didn't reply, just cried and cried until she finally stopped.

Pulling away from Tarquin's embrace, she wiped her tears with a raspy voice,

"Could you leave for a bit? I need some alone time with Elliot."

Tarquin's eyes narrowed, "Elysia..."

"I just need some quiet, some time alone with Elliot," Elysia insisted.

Tarquin felt a pang of pain but nodded, "I'll be just outside. Call for me, and I'll hear you."

Elysia shook her head, "Go get some rest."

"I don't want to leave."

Elysia didn't say more, just hummed in response.

Reluctantly, Tarquin stepped out of the room, gently opening and then closing the door behind him.

He stood in the hallway, looking through the glass window at Elysia's frail figure, his heart aching.

They were in a regular hospital, nowhere near as equipped as the Lawson family's private facilities. Elliot's room was a single, with just a bed and a bathroom.

No room for overnight stays, no kitchen.

Tarquin had suggested moving Elliot, but Benjamin advised against it, saying rest was crucial after surgery. Any transfer should wait until Elliot woke up.

Suppressing his emotions, Tarquin called Lowell to arrange for an overnight bed.

Elysia was bound to stay the night; he wanted to ensure she had a place to rest.

Neither had touched their lunch. Come dinner, Tarquin ordered all of Elysia's favorites, trying to get her to eat even a bite, but she refused.

With her not eating, Tarquin lost his appetite too.

Worried about her, he had Lowell check on the kids back at Future Community and asked Blossom to come.

"She won't eat or talk much. Maybe you can cheer her up?"

Blossom was surprised, "You haven't talked with Elysia?"

"She doesn't want to."

Blossom was silent for a moment, thinking Elysia would have opened up about the children's situation after the blood test.

"Maybe you're the only one she can open up to now. Keep her company," Tarquin suggested.

Blossom quickly nodded, "Okay, I will."

Entering the room, Elysia didn't even turn her head, sitting silently by Elliot's bed like a statue.

"Elysia," Blossom greeted, approaching her.

Elysia looked up, "Why are you here?"

"Just checking on you. Evan, Emmett, and Elijah are asleep. Lowell's watching them, so don't worry."

"Okay."

Blossom glanced at Elliot, then took a seat beside Elysia, whispering, "Were you silent earlier because you thought it was Elijah's dad coming in?" "...Yeah."

"Are you guys... upset with each other?"

Elysia shook her head, "No."

"Then why are you ignoring him? You've been off with him since this morning. Do you have any issues with him?"

Before Elysia could answer, tears rolled down her cheeks.

Startled, Blossom quickly handed her a tissue, "Don't cry. If you don't want to talk about it, that's fine. We won't discuss him anymore."

Elysia shook her head, pulling up a message on her phone and handing it to Blossom.

Blossom's eyes widened in shock and fear, "Who sent this to you?!"