

Hitched 741

Chapter 741

Elysia let out a sigh, "Alright, pull yourself together. We've got to see the kids."

The mere thought of his children filled Tarquin with a blend of pride and joy. His incredibly smart and talented son was his own flesh and blood! Yet, he was also nervous, considering he had hurt their precious mom in the past.

After all, he had never truly fulfilled his duties as a father over the years.

Elliot, with his sharp intellect, must have figured out long ago that he was his father. Yet, their lack of initiative to acknowledge this bond clearly showed how much the kids harbored against him.

"Are you worried the kids won't like you?" Elysia saw right through him.

Tarquin fretted, "I'm not a qualified father."

Elysia cupped his face and planted a kiss,

"I can assure you they don't hate you. It was actually their idea for me to come clean to you today. If they despised you, they wouldn't want me to be with you, let alone encourage me to open up.

Don't dwell on their current attitude towards you. Kids are simple-minded; they gravitate towards those who treat them well. As long as you truly love them, they'll eventually reciprocate that love, just like how I love you."

Tarquin was moved. It was him who had erred and her who had been hurt, yet she was the one comforting him.

In her presence, he felt like a fragile soul.

Her warmth, optimism, tolerance, and her entire being were simply enchanting.

The kids were lucky to have her as a mother.

And he, Tarquin, was lucky to have crossed paths with her.

He gently brushed her hair behind her ear, looking deeply into her eyes,

"Elysia, meeting you is the blessing of my lifetime."

For the rest of my days, I shall cherish this serendipity!

You were, you are, and you will always be the one for me!

Only you!

My life, my heart, my all, belong to you, Elysia!

By the time they arrived at the hospital, it was already noon.

Blossom had brought lunch over and was keeping the kids company in the ward.

After greeting the kids, Elysia took Blossom outside, leaving Tarquin alone with them.

Outside the room, Blossom whispered, "I heard from Evan that you came clean today?"

"Yes!"

"Are you sure about this?"

Elysia nodded earnestly,

"Blossom, I love him. I don't want to lose him. Despite the risks of being together, I can't bear the thought of being apart."

Blossom, excited, responded,

"Girl, I support you! With how vast this world is and how rare true love can be, when you find the man you adore, you've got to hold on tight!"

Elysia chuckled, and Blossom hugged her tightly,

"Elysia, congratulations. After all the hardship, your family is finally complete. Once you and that deadbeat husband of yours are officially divorced, you should marry Tarquin right away. I'll be your bridesmaid!"

That deadbeat husband...

Elysia suddenly thought of Tarquin! She needed to hurry up and get a divorce from Tarquin...

Inside the ward.

Tarquin faced the little ones, and they stared right back.

Silence filled the air, a stark contrast to the tearful reunion between Elysia and Elijah.

In truth, Tarquin was thrilled and nervous, his back drenched in sweat and his heart pounding.

He had a whirlwind of thoughts he wanted to share with his children, having mentally prepared himself on the way over.

Yet, faced with his offspring, he was at a loss for words.

Suddenly having a bunch of sons was certainly a joyous occasion for him!

But he also felt guilty; he had hurt their beloved mom and failed as a father.

Compared to him, Elliot, Evan, and Emmett were much calmer since they had already known about their relationship to him.

They were neither surprised nor overly excited, maintaining a stoic demeanor.

It was almost as if they were assessing him like in-laws scrutinizing a prospective suitor...

As time ticked by, Elijah finally broke the silence.

"Dad, did you explain everything about the past to mom?"

Tarquin nodded, "Yes."

"And did she forgive you?"

"Yes!"

Chapter 742

Elijah glanced back at Elliot, Evan, and Emmett, knowing full well the questions he asked were intentional. He was acutely aware that Elliot, Evan, and Emmett's feelings towards Dad hinged on Mom's disposition.

Since Mom had forgiven Dad, it was unlikely the boys would hold any grudge against him. After all, Dad was now Mom's chosen one!

As expected, Elliot was the first to speak up, his calm demeanor unfazed,

"We've known you were our Dad for a while. The reason we didn't acknowledge you was because of Mom. We love our Mom deeply. Anyone who hurts her becomes our enemy, and anyone who treats her well earns our love. Now that Mom has decided to be with you, we're willing to give you a chance too."

Tarquin's eyes lit up, but then Evan added with a furrowed brow,

"Acceptance is temporary! As long as Mom loves you, we'll tolerate you. But if Mom decides she's done with you tomorrow, then so are we! The choice has to be Mom's. If you dare leave her tomorrow, then expect a fight from me! After all, my attitude towards you is directly influenced by how you treat my mom. Make her happy, and I'll make your life easy. Hurt her, and I'll be your worst nightmare!"

Tarquin: "...". He couldn't help but admire his eldest's straightforwardness, always ready for a brawl.

Emmett, with his baby voice, chimed in,

"Mom said she likes you, so I like you too. But you better not hurt Mom again. No making her cry. Mom's the best, and if she stops liking you, I'll stop too."

Tarquin looked down at Emmett, lifting him into his arms and onto his lap,

"Your mom is the best mom and woman in the world! I was wrong before, but I promise to love, cherish, and protect her twice as much from now on. I won't let anyone hurt her again!"

Then, turning to Elliot and Evan without expressing his deep paternal love, he simply said,

"I formally request to join your ranks, to love, cherish, and protect her together. Will you give me a chance?"

He knew the children's greatest concern was Elysia.

To love what they loved was the most straightforward way to show his love for them.

Elliot didn't immediately agree but looked towards Evan, whose displeasure with Tarquin was the most evident.

Evan pouted and said begrudgingly,

"...The club will tentatively accept you, but don't get cocky. We'll be watching you. Step out of line, and you're out!"

Tarquin smiled, "Fair enough, I sincerely accept the club's scrutiny!"

Evan pouted again, but extended a little hand,

"Since you're part of the crew now, let me introduce you to White, my brother and a member of the team protecting Mom. He's your brother too, now." Tarquin cleared his throat,

"... Your brother can't be my brother. He's more like a son to me."

After saying this, he glanced at the snake, White, wrapped around Evan's wrist, feeling reassured.

He knew about White; Elysia had lent it to Elijah before to cheer him up.

It was Evan's pet, his treasure.

Evan's willingness to introduce White showed that he was genuinely accepting Tarquin, at least for the moment.

"Cough, cough!" Elliot suddenly coughed.

Tarquin's attention immediately shifted to Elliot, concern written all over his face, "Are you okay?"

Elliot shook his head, "It's nothing."

Tarquin quickly fetched a glass of warm water for Elliot, helping him sip it through a straw.

Looking at his son's frail and pale face, Tarquin's brows knitted together in worry.

Even before he knew Elliot was his son, he felt a pang of sympathy for the boy. Now, the feeling was intensified.

Hurting Elliot was like hurting Elijah to him.

This vengeance was personal.

Tarquin, with a furrowed brow, asked, "Did you get a good look at the assailant when you were attacked?"

The subject shift to the assailant instantly changed the atmosphere in the room, turning it serious.

Chapter 743

After a brief silence, Elliot finally spoke up,

"The attack came out of nowhere. I didn't catch a good look at the attacker, but their aim was clear. It was premeditated, and the precision in their movements was that of a professional hitman!"

Evan was puzzled, "But if they were a professional, why did they botch the job?"

"They didn't botch anything," Elliot explained. "They likely never intended to kill me. A professional would know exactly how to miss vital spots, to injure without killing."

Tarquin felt a wave of guilt wash over him, his face the picture of remorse,

"This is on me. The attacker was targeting me, to scare you guys, to make mom freak out."

Elliot, half-reclining on the hospital bed, turned his head towards him and said frankly,

"It involves you, but it's not entirely about you. The real target seems to be to drive mom away from you. It's less about targeting you and more about getting to mom. I suspect the attacker is..."

"The mysterious stranger!"

"Keith!"

Father and son exclaimed in unison!

After locking eyes for a couple of seconds, Tarquin frowned and said,

"A lot has been going on. After you were injured and needed a blood transfusion, Keith suddenly showed up at the hospital. He's a major suspect." Elliot also frowned, adding, "The mysterious stranger once said outright that he wanted to snatch mom away. He wants to break up you and mom, which gives him a motive."

Elijah suddenly spoke up, "Is it possible that Keith is the mysterious stranger?"

Tarquin and Elliot turned to look at Elijah, their brows furrowed in unison, "... " Elijah explained with a serious face,

"Keith explicitly told dad that he would take mom away from him. That's exactly what the mysterious stranger said! Plus, Keith clearly doesn't like mom, yet he wants to take her away, which is just like the mysterious stranger. And Keith's identity is well-protected, mysterious and elusive just like the stranger!"

Lately, Elijah and Elliot had been trying hard to investigate Keith but came up with nothing!

It was the same situation they faced when looking into the mysterious stranger: despite trying everything, they ended up with zero useful information! Given their capabilities, failing to unearth anything about Keith only suggested that he was no ordinary man!

Moreover, Keith's sudden appearance in Future Community, stirring up trouble without any clear motive for disliking mom yet wanting to take her away, was utterly baffling.

The mysterious stranger had always given them a similar vibe!

There were too many similarities between Keith and the mysterious stranger!

Thus, Elijah suspected that they were one and the same!

The hospital room fell silent for a moment before Elliot said,

"Keith is definitely suspicious, but we have no evidence to prove he's the mysterious stranger. So, for now, let's not act against him or seek revenge on my behalf."

He was specifically addressing Tarquin.

With a heavy frown, Elliot continued,

"There will be time for revenge later. For now, we need to figure out if he really is the mysterious stranger. If he is..."

A fierce look flashed in Elliot's eyes,

"If he is, then we'll need to plan carefully how to settle scores with him, old and new!"

The debts of the past, poisoning Elijah, constantly threatening their mom, and now attacking him, all of it would be settled!

Tarquin's expression darkened. If Keith truly was the mysterious stranger, he couldn't afford to act rashly!

Setting aside the stranger's years-long scheming, there was the issue of 'the daughter' he couldn't ignore.

Since 'the daughter's' whereabouts were still unclear, and Elysia hadn't known whether she was expecting twins, that lead had to be followed up with the mysterious stranger!

If he and Elysia indeed had another daughter, she would surely be with the mysterious stranger now. That meant even more caution was needed, for his daughter's safety...

Chapter 744

Elliot was spot on; their priority should be to figure out if Keith was indeed the shadowy figure behind their troubles before even thinking about revenge!

"But how do we go about investigating him? He's got his information locked down tight!" Evan chimed in.

Tarquin said, "I stumbled upon one of Keith's hideouts a few days ago. Found a bunch of stuff there that could potentially uncover some of his secrets."

He had the foresight to document everything before setting the cabin ablaze.

Not only did he record the entire place, but he also took detailed photos and videos of the items inside.

And he didn't stop there; he took many of those items with him for safekeeping.

Elliot immediately suggested:

"Find a way to show this stuff to Mom. She's got a knack for psychology. If it's from Keith's hideout, it's bound to reveal his secrets. Let Mom analyze it!"

After a moment, Elliot added a caution,

"Just don't tell Mom it's Keith's stuff right off the bat. Let's see what she can find first."

Tarquin nodded, "Got it!"

The father and sons huddled close, discussing the matter of Keith and the mysterious figure at length, enjoying each other's company.

United, the family stood ready to face the outside world together!

Elysia, unaware of their detailed discussions, felt relieved seeing them get along so well.

She didn't harbor grand dreams of revenge. All she wished for was the wellbeing of her loved ones,

Hoping for a harmonious family life, filled with peace and happiness.

Right now, her focus was on getting a divorce from Tarquin as quickly as possible!

Once divorced, she'd finally be free, able to openly and guiltlessly be with the one she loved, living their modest dream life.

Just the thought brought her immense joy...

At noon, Keaton called Tarquin, inviting him out.

Tarquin's unexpected emergence with three grown sons had turned high society on its head, with their circle of friends feeling the biggest impact!

All of them, without exception, found themselves under pressure to marry and start families!

Unable to stand the heat at home, they sought refuge in a private club to 'cry' together.

They all blamed Tarquin for their predicament!

And they were genuinely curious how Tarquin managed to pull off having quadruplets!

"If you don't come see us, we might just collectively lose it!"

Tarquin retorted, "Whoever dies pays their own funeral expenses. I'll cover the costs."

"...Just come out for a bit! We'll keep it short!"

"No can do, I've got to spend time with the kids and their mom."

Keaton cursed, "You're totally prioritizing your love life over your friends!"

Tarquin replied with disdain, "Exactly, and I see nothing wrong with that."

After hanging up, he mused to himself, is there anything wrong with prioritizing love over friends? Not in the slightest!

In the afternoon, Tarquin arranged for Elliot to be transferred to a private hospital owned by the Benjamin family, securing the best suite available. As soon as they arrived, Elysia cautiously asked him,

"How much is this going to cost us a day?"

Tarquin, playing along, whispered back:

"Before I hit financial rock bottom, I did a favor for the Lawson family, and since Benjamin and I go way back, he's giving us a massive discount, only \$100 a day."

Tarquin conveniently left out a couple of zeros.

Elysia was astounded, "That cheap?"

"Yeah, quite the deal, right?"

"It's a steal! Goes to show, it pays to be kind. You never know when you'll need a helping hand. You boys see that? That's the benefit of helping others."

The four little ones nodded in unison, "Mom's right."

Tarquin joined in, "Elysia's right, whatever Elysia says, goes."

From now on, in their household, Elysia's word was law. Whatever she said was right, without question!

Chapter 745

As dusk settled in, Elysia busied herself with making a big batch of homemade pizza.

It was the first day of a heartfelt father-son reunion, and under normal circumstances, they would have celebrated with a lavish dinner out. However, Elliot wasn't feeling well enough to leave his hospital suite, so they decided to bring the celebration to him.

The suite they were in was top-notch, costing a pretty penny per day, akin to a presidential suite in a luxury hotel - spotless, fully equipped, and stocked with high-end brands.

The pizza-making turned into a family affair.

Elliot, propped up in his hospital bed, took on the role of supervisor, while the other five got their hands dirty, filling the room with laughter and chatter. After dinner, Tarquin needed to step out to meet a few influential figures.

Some of them were leaving Jindale City early the next morning, and tonight was his last chance to see them. Given the day's unexpected events, he had been preoccupied with Elysia and the kids and hadn't had a moment to meet these respected elders, who were like uncles to him. Out of both respect and affection, he felt it was important to see them.

Elysia, understanding as ever, only cautioned him, "Try to smoke and drink less. They're not good for your health."

This simple reminder warmed Tarquin's heart. Now, he too had someone to nag him about his health...

With a big kiss on Elysia's cheek and a light heart, he headed out, leaving her blushing and playfully cursing him as a "jerk!"

As he stood smiling goofily by the elevator, Elysia shot him a glare before turning back to the room.

Upon entering, she found all four kids staring at her, leading to an awkward and collective denial of having seen anything. Elysia's ears turned as red as her cheeks.

In her mind, she scolded Tarquin for his shamelessness, labeling him a cheeky rascal.

That night, weakened by his ailment, Elliot went to bed early, as did Evan, Emmett, and Elijah, retreating to their own rooms.

Once their door was shut, Evan hatched a plan, "Cover for me, I'm sneaking out with White."

"What for?" Elijah inquired.

"Can't sleep. Going to hang with the Bradfords," Evan replied with a mischievous tone. Earlier that day, the Bradfords had insulted not just him but also his mom, and Evan was not the type to let such slights slide.

Understanding his brother's need for retribution, Elijah didn't try to stop him. "We'll cover for you. Just be careful and call if anything happens."

Nodding eagerly, Evan slipped out the window, making his way down the building with a grin.

Meanwhile, the Bradford household was in turmoil, their moods as dark as a stormy night.

They had spent the entire day trying to disprove the connection between Tarquin, Elliot, and Evan, but to no avail. Every piece of evidence confirmed that Elysia's sons were indeed Tarquin's.

For the Bradfords, the emergence of Tarquin's sons was nothing short of a nightmare. They had been eagerly awaiting Elijah's demise, hoping for their own ascendancy. Instead, not only was Elijah still in the picture, but he also now had strong rivals in these newfound heirs.

Despair, frustration, and jealousy consumed the Bradfords, while at the same time, Gideon, facing the prospect of having several great-grandsons out of the blue, should have been thrilled. However, his desperation for power, having once gone as far as to poison Elijah to secure it, left him in utter despair.

Chapter 746

Now, even if Elijah couldn't take over the family business, there were Elliot, Evan, Emmett to consider!

He couldn't handle one Elijah, and now with three more popping up, it was way over his head!

Gideon spent a day irritated and without eating, his frustration only fueled further when his confidant added,

"Sir, no matter how you look at it, that 10% share was promised to young master Tarquin in advance. He can't just go back on his word. Maybe you should give him a call?"

Gideon smashed his coffee mug on the spot, fuming,

"Call for what? To be humiliated? Idiot!"

Now that it was confirmed Elysia's sons were of the Bradford bloodline, how could Tarquin possibly consider giving him shares or a place in the family genealogy?!

Thinking about that 10% share, it was like a punch to the gut, truly painful!

His confidant shivered, quickly adding,

"It's all Ms. Thorne's fault, not saying anything earlier and choosing today of all days! If only she had waited till tomorrow, those shares would have been in our pocket."

Gideon was furious too. If Elysia had spoken tomorrow, those shares would have been his, with no going back.

Even if Tarquin was mad, there was nothing he could do but swallow the bitter pill!

But now it had turned into a mess...

The more Gideon thought about it, the angrier he got, until a thought struck him, narrowing his eyes,

"I heard Tarquin hasn't even started divorce proceedings yet. Doesn't that make Elysia the other woman?"

His confidant quickly responded, "Yes! And doesn't that make Ms. Thorne's sons... illegitimate?"

Gideon, as if having an epiphany, smirked after a moment of thought,

"Children born out of wedlock by a mistress have no right to be in the Bradford family genealogy! Go, contact the Thorne family, bring Tarquin's wife back!"

Once the lawful wife was back, Elysia's status as the other woman would be exposed, her children naturally branded as illegitimates.

Being illegitimate was shameful, and the Bradford ancestors wouldn't acknowledge them!

If Tarquin still wanted them in the genealogy, he would have to stick to the original deal and give up the 10% shares!

Not only would the shares be secured, but it would also be a chance to spite Tarquin.

The mistress would be scorned by everyone, and with Elysia being labeled as such, Tarquin would definitely be distressed!

That was exactly what he wanted, to knock Tarquin down a peg or two!

Feeling suddenly better, Gideon organized for someone to fetch Daphne from the Thorne family that very night!

Gideon had never met Daphne, but he was well acquainted with her personal details.

He had orchestrated Tarquin and Daphne's marriage himself years ago to weaken Tarquin's influence. He had even consulted with a master to deliberately choose a woman whose horoscope was said to dominate her husband's, and who was astrologically incompatible with Tarquin - Daphne!

He had someone propose quietly, not revealing his identity, but he offered the Thorne family a hefty dowry, hence they agreed to the marriage.

Even though Tarquin had driven her away later, they were never officially divorced!

Daphne was still his lawful wife!

Lawful wife versus mistress was a universally accepted fight, and he was keen to see how Tarquin would handle this!

Soon, the news spread across the Bradford family, and the revelation of Elysia being the other woman, and her sons being illegitimate, turned their grief into excitement.

Everyone was buzzing again,

"Ah, the mistress, always a target, let's see how Tarquin protects her now!"

"A mistress' children are illegitimate. Our Bradford family cannot allow illegitimates in our genealogy, nor do they have any right to our estate!"

"Right! Illegitimates are like strays, a bunch of embarrassments unworthy of the Bradford name! Let's bring Tarquin's wife back and give Tarquin and Elysia a piece of our mind!"

Evan, overhearing this: "..."

Mistress? Illegitimates? Going after his mom?

Hmm

Chapter 747

Evan was in a foul mood, and the consequences were dire for the Bradford family. Their house was about to experience a night of tumultuous events. Allegra, was enjoying her sleep when a horrendous smell jolted her awake. Groggy and confused, she barely had her eyes open when she was met with a face full of... poop.

Yes, instead of the traditional birthday cake facial, Allegra got a fresh, steaming pile of excrement smeared all over her.

"What in the world is that smell?" Allegra's husband, awakened by the stench, turned to see a paper plate smeared on her face and reached to remove it.

"Ugh!" he couldn't hold back and ended up vomiting all over Allegra.

Seconds later, Allegra's scream nearly blew the roof off!

Then there was Verity, the family's second child, who had just dealt with a paternity scandal and had fainted from the shock. After being rushed to the hospital and narrowly saved, she woke up to more scandalous news about secret affairs and illegitimate children. She was just about to relish in the drama when she saw a head floating past her window.

"Ahh!" Verity screamed at the top of her lungs.

"What's wrong, madam?" her confidant asked.

"Ghosts! There are ghosts!" Verity screamed, pointing towards the window.

Her confidant saw nothing but tried to comfort her, suggesting it might have been her imagination. But as he spoke, a bloody, ghastly 'female ghost' appeared again, only to vanish before Verity could take a good look.

The 'ghost' reappeared, pressing its terrifying face against the window, giving Verity a ghastly grin.

"Ahh-" Verity screamed hysterically, fainting once more.

The hospital room descended into chaos again.

Outside, Evan perched in a tree, packed up his tools, and pouted, dissatisfied.

"Boring. She fainted too soon. Can't take a joke," he muttered, jumping down to find a new target.

That's when he decided on Gideon, who had been exiled from the family manor and was living in a villa by the hillside. Though not as grand as the Bradford family estate, it had its charms.

Evan pondered with White, his pet snake, about how to spice up Gideon's life.

"Given his age, he must be craving some excitement. Let's give him a thrill!" Evan decided, sneaking into Gideon's villa to tamper with his wheelchair. "All set! White, go fetch him for a fun ride," Evan said before making his escape through the window, leaving White to slither onto Gideon's bed.

Gideon, troubled by his thoughts, had just fallen asleep when he sensed something was off. Opening his eyes, he saw White, hissing with its red tongue, eyes glowing ominously.

"Ah!" Gideon yelled, "Someone help!"

His aide rushed in, "What's the matter, sir?"

"There's a snake!"

"A snake? Where?"

By then, White had vanished.

The aide searched to no avail, "Sir, perhaps you were dreaming? We've taken measures to keep snakes away from the villa."

But the night was far from over, and Evan's mischief had only just begun.

Chapter 748

Gideon's face was as pale as a sheet, his breathing rapid and shallow,

"I saw it clear as day, a little black snake, definitely venomous! We need to search, get everyone to search!" Gideon couldn't bring himself to sleep anymore, so he summoned a bunch of servants to hunt for the snake. Unsure if the snake was still lurking in his bed, he had his confidante help him into his wheelchair.

Then, the chaos ensued!

No sooner had he settled down than the room erupted with the sound of a DJ's rap, "Yo, yo, check this out..."

Everyone: "?!?"

The next second, Gideon's electric wheelchair seemed to take on a life of its own, moving rhythmically forward, backward, left, and right along with the beat of the music!

It was like it was dancing!

Gideon clung to the armrests, his pupils dilated,

"What's happening? Help me out of here!"

Just as people rushed to assist, the wheelchair began spinning in place at breakneck speed, making it impossible for anyone to intervene! After spinning wildly for a bit, it abruptly stopped, nearly catapulting Gideon out!

Now dizzy and disoriented, Gideon's attempt to get help was cut short as the wheelchair took off again, crashing into things inside the house! After a cacophony of crashes and bangs, the wheelchair, with Gideon still in it, burst out of the mansion!

It careened down the mountain road!

Gideon and his servants were terrified!

After all, Gideon was over seventy years old, a senior citizen speeding down a mountain road in a wheelchair late at night... Thrilling, but terrifying!

Gideon screamed as he hurtled down the mountain in the out-of-control wheelchair.

His servants chased after, yelling, "Sir, Sir..."

Evan, hidden in the shadows, was thrilled beyond belief. Turning to White, coiled around his wrist and looking up at him, he said,

"He's way more fun, isn't he? Far more than anyone else. Honestly, he should be thanking me. At his age, to experience such excitement? Only I could give him such a thrill!"

After his fun with Gideon, Evan racked his brain to remember who else had been loud or talkative that day...

But he couldn't quite decide. There were a few he recalled, but none he really knew.

So, in the spirit of fairness, he joyfully went after the Bradford family for a bit of fun.

He played until the wee hours before heading back to the hospital.

Coincidentally, Tarquin had just returned as well!

Elysia was in the bathroom, and after checking on Elliot, Tarquin pushed open the guest room door to check on Evan, Emmett, and Elijah. Just then, he saw Evan, who had just returned from his escapade, standing by the window, about to jump in.

Father and son locked eyes, a silent standoff.

"What's going on? Haven't they fallen asleep yet?" Elysia emerged from the bathroom, curious about Tarquin's stationary figure by the door. Hearing his mother's voice, Evan panicked, his heart racing, frozen in place.

He had snuck out, afraid of his mother's reaction.

As Elysia approached, Tarquin turned and said,

"No, just felt a bit thirsty."

"Thirsty? I'll get you a glass of water," Elysia said, not thinking much of it, and headed to the kitchen.

Tarquin then narrowed his eyes at Evan.

Evan climbed through the window, cautious under Tarquin's gaze.

After a few seconds of silent communication, Tarquin lowered his voice, "Go wash up and get to bed."

With that, he turned and left.

Evan: "?!"

What did he mean?

Why didn't he ask anything?

And he didn't snitch or expose him; he even covered for him!

Chapter 749

Evan felt a little tug at his heartstrings, though he never knew that his dad's silence was due to his eagerness to be by his mom's side.

Tarquin was a bit tipsy, having indulged in quite a few drinks that night. He wasn't drunk, just pleasantly buzzed.

All he could think about was Elysia.

Elysia was still in the kitchen getting water when Tarquin approached her from behind, wrapping his arms around her and resting his chin in the crook of her shoulder.

Even though they had been together for a while, this intimate gesture still made Elysia's heart race.

Pushing him away would only make her seem prudish, so she braced herself and asked, "Have you been drinking?"

Tarquin's warm breath tickled her ear as he replied,

"Yeah, had a get-together with a few uncles. Keaton and the guys cornered me, insisted I drink. Wouldn't let me leave otherwise."

"What could they possibly want, keeping you there so late?"

"Nothing really, they just knew I missed you and the kid. Used it to blackmail me into drinking. But I know my limits, I didn't get drunk. Just missed you a lot while I was out..."

As he whispered, his lips brushed against her earlobe, sending shivers down her spine.

Elysia, fearing he might lose control, quickly stepped out of his embrace and turned to face him, pushing a glass of water towards him, "Drink some water!"

Elliot was still in the hospital room, and she didn't want to get overly affectionate in front of their child.

Tarquin took a few sips from the glass she held, then placed it on the counter and pulled her into his arms again, "Elysia..."

Elysia squirmed a little, "Stop it, Elliot's still in the room."

"Just a hug," he murmured softly, his voice filled with tenderness.

Elysia stopped resisting.

"You must've had quite a bit to drink, feeling sick? I don't have any hangover soup here, but if you're not feeling well, I can order something for delivery."

"I'm not feeling bad. I just wanted to hold you, Elysia. I'm really happy today. Really happy. The uncles said I'm as lucky as my dad for finding a good woman. But I think I'm luckier than my dad. He only had one son, but I've got four!"

Elysia joked, "Four kids come with their own set of pressures! Are you hungry? I've got some dumplings left over from dinner in the freezer, or if you'd prefer, I could make you some pasta. There's some in the fridge."

Tarquin shook his head, then said, "It feels so good to be loved, cared for, and cherished."

Elysia paused, a frown crossing her face as her heart squeezed a little.

It was just routine care, and yet it moved him so deeply, clearly starved for affection.

Those sensitive to love often lacked it...

She had heard bits and pieces about his past from Elijah: losing both parents at a young age, taken in by the Bradfords but never truly loved, surrounded by wolves in sheep's clothing.

Feeling a surge of compassion, Elysia wrapped her arms around him, gently stroking his back to comfort him, "No matter what happens, I'll always be by your side, for life."

Tarquin looked up at her, his eyes brimming with emotion.

Overwhelmed with feelings of joy and gratitude, he sealed his emotions with a kiss on her lips.

Elysia was startled at first, instinctively checking on their child.

Seeing Elliot fast asleep, she gradually relaxed, though not completely, as if they were having a clandestine affair.

It was only when they were on the verge of losing control that Elysia stopped him, "Enough, I'm going to check on Elliot."

She pushed him away and hurried to the bedside, her cheeks flushed with color.

Tarquin watched her, swallowing hard several times before grabbing a bottle of water from the fridge, unscrewing the cap, and gulping down the entire bottle to calm his nerves. He then approached Elliot's side, checking on the little one before turning to Elysia,

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"Tonight, I'll stay up with Elliot. You head off to bed in the next room," Tarquin offered before Elysia could object.

"Let me spend some quality time with my son. Give me a chance to show what I'm capable of," he added.

Elysia hesitated, then agreed, "Alright, but call me if anything comes up. You should also try to get some rest. Usually, Elliot sleeps through the night without any issues."

"Okay."

Elysia got up and made her way to the adjacent room. Ever since Elliot fell ill, she hadn't had a proper night's sleep.

The room had an attached bathroom where she took a quick shower before lying down. Just as she settled in, Tarquin appeared at the doorway. Surprised, Elysia asked, "Aren't you staying with Elliot?"

"He's asleep. I thought I'd spend some time with you," Tarquin said as he climbed into bed beside her, pulling her close. "Elysia, why do you smell so amazing?" he murmured, his voice thick with desire.

Elysia's heart skipped a beat, then raced. She knew Tarquin had been wanting more from their relationship. Ever since they had opened up to each other, his desire had been palpable. And tonight, with the slight buzz of alcohol, his restraint seemed thinner.

They were both adults, and they had been intimate before. There shouldn't be anything to fuss over.

But Elysia felt uneasy. After all, she was still technically married.

She wanted to wait until after the divorce, to give herself to him without any guilt or strings attached.

Tarquin, however, was becoming restless, his kisses wandering, his hands starting to roam...

Elysia quickly caught his wrist, "I...I've told you, I want to wait until after the divorce."

Mention of the 'divorce' sobered Tarquin up a bit.

"Still unwilling to tell me who he is?" he asked after a pause.

Elysia stood her ground, "I'll handle it myself."

After all, this was Tarquin, the CEO of the Bradford Group. Engaging with him in any sort of conflict would only end badly for the average Joe. Revealing her soon-to-be ex-husband to Tarquin would mean dragging him into a battle he was bound to lose.

So, she preferred to keep Tarquin out of the divorce proceedings, fearing he might get hurt.

"What if he keeps stalling the divorce?" Tarquin pressed.

Elysia sighed, wondering why her estranged husband would drag things out. "I've got a plan to finalize the divorce. I'll reach out to him tomorrow. Please, let's not discuss this further."

Tarquin studied her for a moment, "What's this plan?"

Elysia remained firm, "Don't worry about it. Just give me a little more time. If I can't persuade him to agree to the divorce, I'll tell you everything, okay?"

Tarquin was visibly frustrated but knew he couldn't force her to disclose more. "One week," he conceded. "If he hasn't agreed to a peaceful divorce by then, you'll tell me, and I'll take care of it."

Elysia nodded, "Agreed."

Determined to not drag this out any longer, she resolved to have the divorce finalized within the month.

Sensing her distress, Tarquin kissed her forehead gently, "Let's try to get some sleep."

After Elysia fell asleep, Tarquin got up to check on Elliot, stopping by the kitchen to grab a bottle of ice-cold water.

The thought of Elysia's stubborn husband filled him with rage. The man who had thrown Elysia out, tarnishing her reputation, and now dragging his feet over the divorce.

Damn him. Sooner or later, Tarquin was determined to confront the man and settle the score once and for all.