

Hitched 801

Chapter 801

Elysia Thorne and Tarquin Bradford were leaving the island in three days, rounding off a week-long escape from the hustle and bustle of their lives. Just as they stepped into the hospital, Tarquin's phone buzzed with a call from Axel. Whatever Axel said, it cast a shadow over Tarquin's face, his expression darkening in an instant.

"...I got it. We'll talk face to face in a bit," Tarquin muttered before hanging up. He paused, furrowing his brows in thought before composing himself and returning to the hospital room.

Elysia was surrounded by their children, cherishing the reunion after a week apart. Elliot lay on the hospital bed, a gentle smile on his face. Elijah sat beside him, stoic yet with eyes sparkling as he looked at Elysia. Emmett was nestled in Elysia's arms, being his charming self. Evan stood beside her, animatedly sharing the week's adventures, his hands flying as he spoke.

Tarquin approached, feigning nonchalance, "Kids, stick with mom; I've got to swing by the office."

Elysia looked up, concerned, "Something wrong at work?"

"Just need to sort out some work stuff; it's nothing to worry about. I'll be back soon."

Elysia didn't press further, "Alright, just call if you're not back for dinner."

"Will do."

With a quick peck on Elysia's forehead and a ruffle of Emmett's hair, Tarquin was out the door, his demeanor shifting the moment he stepped out of the room.

Axel was waiting downstairs. As soon as Tarquin got into the car, he asked, "When did it happen?"

"Yesterday afternoon," Axel started the car, steering it out of the hospital parking lot.

"Why didn't you call me?" Tarquin's brow was furrowed with concern.

"You know it wouldn't have made a difference. The guy was already dead," Axel stated flatly, knowing too well how Tarquin had finally found a slice of happiness he didn't want to disrupt.

Tarquin leaned back, lighting a cigarette and taking a deep drag. Axel glanced at him through the rearview mirror, understanding the turmoil his friend must be feeling but choosing to focus on the facts.

"I did some digging around. While you were at the police station, Jindale City witnessed a brutal murder. A young heir was found dismembered in the woods, his limbs neatly placed beside his torso, just like Declan."

Declan, the bodyguard who had once betrayed Tarquin under duress, was found dead in a similar manner.

"The forensic team says the killer is both cruel and meticulous, likely someone accustomed to a refined lifestyle," Axel continued.

"Any leads on who it might be?" Tarquin pressed, his voice tight.

"Keith."

Tarquin's expression darkened at the mention of the name. Axel explained, "Declan left a voice message before he died, mentioning Keith."

He played the message. Declan's voice filled the car, urgent and breathless, "Boss, tell Tarquin I stumbled upon Keith's secret. Keith, he's got a girl-"

The message cut off abruptly. Axel sighed, "Declan wanted to make amends, went after Keith alone to uncover his secrets. It's unclear if he meant a girlfriend or a daughter, but if it's the latter, Keith could very well be our prime suspect."

Chapter 802

The mysterious man had confided in Tarquin himself that he had a daughter out there somewhere! Gideon Bradford had also confirmed it; the mysterious man indeed had a daughter!

How could it be such a coincidence that this mysterious man had a daughter, and so did Keith?

There was a high chance they were talking about the same person!

And that daughter, she must be Tarquin and Elysia's!

Tarquin furrowed his brows, took a deep drag of his cigarette, and asked, "... Is there any proof that Keith is the killer?"

"No, ever since you torched his cabin, he's been holed up at home. I've had people watch him around the clock, and there's no sign of him stepping out. But that doesn't rule out the possibility of him being the mastermind. If he is the mysterious man, he's bound to have a few tricks up his sleeve." "... How did Declan stumble upon his secret?"

"That's still unclear. We don't know how Declan found out, but I believe his information is credible."

Tarquin's face darkened, and he resumed his silent brooding over a cigarette.

Axel glanced at him through the rearview mirror, wondering what was on his mind but chose not to press further.

Upon arriving at the funeral home, Tarquin personally went to the morgue to see Declan.

Axel had already taken care of Declan's body, making it look presentable.

Tarquin looked at Declan for a long while, bowed deeply three times, covered him with a white sheet, and walked out.

Standing at the entrance of the funeral home, he lit another cigarette,

"Does Declan's girlfriend and kid know yet?"

"I haven't told them yet."

"Make arrangements. See what they plan to do next. If they want to go abroad, arrange it. If they prefer to stay, let them stay. Give them an initial sum of one million dollars, and then a monthly payment triple Declan's salary. And tell them, if they ever run into trouble, we're here to help. Also, consult them about Declan's funeral arrangements. I'll cover the expenses."

"...Got it. What about Keith? Should we investigate further?"

Tarquin's scowl deepened at the mention of that name, and after a heavy drag of his cigarette, he said, "Hold off for now. Don't spook him. I'll decide our next move."

When Tarquin returned to the hospital, it was already past ten at night.

The kids were all asleep, and Elysia was by Elliot's bedside.

Seeing him return, she quickly got up,

"You're back so late? Have you been busy all this time?"

Tarquin set down the box he was carrying and embraced her, "Just need a hug."

Elysia, sensing his low spirits, asked with concern, "Feeling down?"

He sighed, "A friend passed away. It's a tough loss."

"Oh? How did it happen?"

"...An accidental death."

Elysia frowned, gently patting his back to comfort him,

"Everyone has their time, try to take comfort."

After hugging Elysia for a while, Tarquin didn't want to dampen her spirits and changed the subject,

"I'm fine. What did you guys have for dinner?"

"Soup and a salad. I can whip up some pasta for you; there's some in the fridge."

Tarquin shook his head, lying, "I've already eaten."

He hadn't had the appetite to eat all day.

Elysia sighed softly to herself and gently patted his back, "Then you should get washed up." "Alright."

After hugging her once more and checking on the kids, Tarquin finally went to freshen up.

Elysia turned towards the kitchen.

Tying her apron and washing her hands, she decided to prepare some late-night comfort food for him.

Lowell once said, despite his cool exterior, Tarquin was all about loyalty and deep feelings.

His friend's death had hit him hard; how could he possibly feel like eating?

He definitely skipped dinner, and must be hungry by now.

After all, you can't fight on an empty stomach!

If he won't eat, she'd worry.

Chapter 803

Tarquin, freshly showered, immediately noticed the bustling figure in the kitchen.

Hair tied in a casual, low ponytail, an apron wrapped around her waist, and slippers on her feet, she gently stirred a pot with a wooden spoon, embodying the essence of a tender-hearted spouse.

A wave of warmth flooded Tarquin's heart. Drying his hair, he draped the towel around his neck and strode into the kitchen with his long legs. Wrapping his arms around Elysia from behind, resting his chin on her shoulder, he asked, "What's got you cooking at this hour?"

Elysia turned to peck his cheek, playfully teasing, "Whipping up something special for my hubby. Hope he's willing to give it a taste?" Overjoyed, Tarquin hugged her tighter and returned the kiss, "If it's made by my wife, of course, I'll have it."

With a giggle, Elysia served up the dish.

Concerned she might burn herself, Tarquin took the plate and headed to the dining room.

Sitting opposite each other, one savored the meal while the other watched.

Leaning on one hand, Elysia initiated conversation, "What's in that box you brought back?"

Tarquin had returned with a large box earlier.

Glancing at it, a fleeting shadow crossed his eyes. Without mentioning Keith's name, he said, "Just some personal collectibles. You know psychology; I thought maybe you could help figure out the collector's interests and habits."

"I'll take a look." Elysia stood and opened the box.

Picking up a painting, she glanced at it and said, "This person is hopeful about the future."

Tarquin frowned, "Hopeful about the future?"

Could Keith, with his dark psyche, really harbor hope for the future?

Elysia confidently nodded, "Look at this painting, endless fields of wheat, symbolizing hope. Whoever owns this painting must be filled with hope for the future."

Tarquin, deep in thought with a stern face, remained silent.

Unaware these items belonged to Keith, Elysia didn't dwell on it and set the painting aside, picking up an hourglass next,

"An hourglass, a device to measure the passage of time, symbolizing its fleeting nature. It's typically cherished by those nostalgic for the past. I guess its owner is someone with a story."

Tarquin just listened.

After placing the hourglass aside, Elysia picked up a sketch,

"A work in progress, capturing only the figure and long hair, with incomplete facial features... The subject must be a beautiful woman, yet the eyes are left undrawn, indicating he misses her yet can't face her."

Tarquin, having finished his meal, wiped his mouth with a napkin and approached, "What do you mean?"

Elysia pondered, "There's definitely a woman on his mind, but for some reason, he's avoiding her. Perhaps he feels guilty for something, or maybe she wronged him, causing anger or sorrow. Either way, he longs for her but also deliberately avoids facing her."

Tarquin questioned, "A woman, not a daughter?"

Elysia paused, "Hard to say without knowing the artist's age."

"If he's about our age?"

"Then it's definitely a woman, not his daughter. Look at the figure; it's not a child's. Someone our age couldn't have a daughter that grown." Tarquin pondered, "So, what's her relation to him?"

Elysia countered, "Do we know if these items belong to a man or a woman?"

Chapter 804

"Male."

"Well, that opens up a whole can of worms. This lady could be his girlfriend or wife, maybe his secret crush, or even what his mom looked like when she was younger."

Tarquin: "..."

"Hey, now that you mention it, he might actually have a daughter."

Tarquin's heart skipped a beat, "How can you tell?"

"Look at this watercolor painting. It's a countryside scene, there's a pink bunny over here, a pink backpack there, and over here, pink flowers and pink balloons.

Pink is a color most little girls adore. Pink bunnies, pink backpacks, pink flowers, and pink balloons, they all hint at a little girl. So, the person who painted this must have a daughter.

And he must really love her. Look at how tenderly he painted these pink objects, every stroke is precise, careful, and beautiful. It shows he's thinking of his little girl with love, joy, and fondness."

Tarquin's frown deepened!

He hadn't studied these details closely due to time constraints.

Then, after one thing led to another, he hadn't gotten around to it.

But now, hearing Elysia's analysis and piecing it together with the voice message Declan sent before he died, Tarquin was more convinced than ever that Keith had a daughter!

And it couldn't be his, or else there'd be no need for secrecy!

Was Keith the mysterious figure?

Was Keith raising his and Elysia's daughter?

Did he and Elysia truly have a daughter out there somewhere?

What did Keith want with his daughter?

Was Keith trying to use the girl to threaten him?

But if he wanted to threaten him, why would Keith grow fond of her?

And why hadn't Keith played this trump card to crush him?

What was Keith's endgame?!

As these heavy questions flooded his mind, Tarquin's breathing grew heavier.

"What's wrong?" Elysia, noticing something was off, asked with concern.

Tarquin looked at her with a complex expression. She was oblivious, her face filled only with curiosity, no sign of anxiety.

If she knew now, she'd probably go insane!

After the initial shock, she'd desperately want to find their daughter. If they couldn't, she'd be anxious, worried, nervous.

She'd lose her appetite and suffer from insomnia.

So, telling her now would do more harm than good.

Tarquin calmed himself, deciding to keep it from her for the time being, "I'm fine. Can you tell where his daughter might be?"

Elysia shook her head, "It looks like a beautiful countryside, but I can't pinpoint which one. Why? What's your connection to them?" "...Just look at something else."

Elysia didn't press further and continued examining the other items.

After more than an hour, she concluded: "This collector is burdened with heavy thoughts, probably has a dark past, but he's hopeful about the future!

And he's holding two people in his heart, a beautiful woman, and a little girl!"

Right now, Tarquin didn't care who the beautiful woman was; he was focused on the little girl!

He still didn't fully understand his feud with Keith, but he knew they were heading for a showdown!

Before the battle, he had to figure out the situation with his daughter!

Now, with Declan and Elysia's discoveries, it was almost certain that Keith had a daughter!

Later that night, after tucking Elysia into bed, Tarquin immediately grabbed his phone and called Axel,

"Start a wide search around Keith for a little girl Elijah's age! Focus on beautiful countryside areas, and start tonight..."

Chapter 805

Tarquin had just given an order and was about to light up a cigarette when Elliot and Elijah suddenly appeared behind him.

The brothers furrowed their brows in unison, their expressions grave as they stared at him, blurting out together, "We have a sister?!"

Tarquin paused, putting away his lighter and cigarette, "Why are you two still up?"

The boys tilted their heads up to him, waiting for an answer.

Elliot and Elijah, always attentive to details, knew something was up. Tarquin and Elysia had just returned from their island getaway, and ideally, it was a time for the family of six to finally come together. Especially since at the party, Tarquin and Elysia had left abruptly, essentially confirming their marital status without a proper family reunion afterward.

And then, Tarquin hurried off, claiming business matters.

If it had truly been about work, he would have postponed it or at least waited until after the family dinner. This had the brothers worried and restless, unable to sleep.

When Tarquin returned around ten past midnight, the boys were still awake, pretending to be asleep.

They overheard Tarquin's conversation with Elysia and the command he gave to Axel.

After a few seconds of silence on the balcony, Tarquin finally spoke, "It's not certain yet, but there's a strong possibility."

The brothers' eyes widened in shock, their expressions visibly changing.

"Let's go inside and talk."

The night was chilly, and Tarquin was concerned about Elliot's recovery since he hadn't fully healed yet.

He ushered the stunned boys inside, making sure Elliot was comfortable in bed and Elijah seated properly.

After checking on Elysia in the guest room and seeing she was fast asleep, Tarquin pulled up a chair next to Elliot's bed and began to explain. "Last year, you guys used Nola Slater as bait to lure out this mysterious figure at the Marriott Hotel. After Elliot and Evan had left, I confronted him. He tried to use his daughter as leverage, telling me I had a daughter out there somewhere!

I had people looking into it extensively, but we found nothing.

Then, at the New Year's dinner, when Elijah was poisoned, Gideon mentioned this mysterious figure having a daughter again.

I've been having people on it, but with so little to go on about this mysterious figure, we hit a dead end. Uncle Axel even thought it might be a false lead.

But recently, one of your uncles risked everything to uncover a secret from Keith, and I had your mom look through some things Keith had collected. It all points to Keith valuing two people: a beautiful woman and a young girl.

Putting all the pieces together, it seems very likely that Keith is the mysterious figure, and the young girl he's been looking after could very well be your sister!"

Elliot and Elijah gasped, their breathing quickening.

A sister...

They had a sister?

Their minds conjured up images of a cute, cartoon hair-clipped, pink dress-wearing, big-eyed, long-lashed little girl resembling their mother... The brothers' hearts nearly melted!

They fantasized about her tugging at their clothes, calling them 'brother' in the sweetest voice, their hearts trembling with excitement!

Though they weren't as outspoken as Evan about wanting a sister, they cherished the thought deeply.

A sister, after all, is a brother's treasure.

Just the thought filled them with immense affection!

Even the usually composed brothers couldn't hide their excitement,

"Where is she?"

"Where's our sister?"

Tarquin replied, "I've set people on it, following Keith's trail."

Before, not even knowing who the mysterious figure was, let alone his daughter, was like searching for a needle in a haystack.

Chapter 806

But now, with a lead on Keith, there's finally a direction to investigate.

Elliot, furrowing his brow impatiently, said, "Let's use that thing I have! It'll be faster!"

Tarquin, catching on immediately, frowned and asked, "The one you got from Gideon?"

"Yeah!"

Back when they first returned to Jindale City, because of Elysia, Elliot and Tarquin had a 'battle', hacking into the Bradford Group's security system. Gideon had no clue about Elliot's true identity, but recognizing his skills, he wanted to use him to find Alpha Thorne to counter Tarquin.

Eventually, Gideon traded that item with Elliot for three favors.

One of those was to help find a way to contact Alpha.

Just how rare and sought after was this item?

Money couldn't buy it, power couldn't trade for it; luck was the only way to get it!

Even Tarquin didn't have it!

Previously, Tarquin had tried to make a deal with Elliot to exchange it, hoping to use it to find Elysia's whereabouts.

How Gideon got his hands on it remains a mystery to this day.

The item, plain as it looked, was backed by a powerful entity, the identity of which remained unknown.

But owning it meant its master could help you achieve anything you desired!

Elliot had initially thought of using it to retrieve Elizabeth Gonzalez's ashes as a birthday gift for Tarquin.

But then he found another way to get the ashes and didn't use it.

Now, it could be used to find his sister's location!

He was so eager to find his sister, wishing he could see her right now!

Understanding Elliot's feelings, Tarquin, with a thoughtful frown, shook his head,

"We don't yet know if Keith is the mysterious person, nor if the girl he's caring for is your sister. Using it now would be premature. Let's wait until we're sure."

Using it to find someone was efficient, fast, convenient, and foolproof.

But what if Keith wasn't the mysterious figure, and the girl wasn't who they were looking for?

It would be a waste of something so precious and rare!

Elijah nodded in agreement,

"Dad's right. It's not the right time yet. We should first confirm whether we really have a sister out there. Is Keith the mysterious person? Is the girl he's caring for actually our sister?"

These questions were urgent!

Seeing both kids with their brows furrowed, Tarquin comforted them,

"Don't worry, with Dad here, I promise, if you really have a sister out there, I'll do everything in my power to find her and bring her back to our family circle as soon as possible!"

The room fell silent for a moment before Elliot asked,

"Did you tell Mom about our sister?"

Tarquin shook his head, "Things are still uncertain. I'm worried she'll start worrying unnecessarily."

"Let's not tell Mom yet!" Elliot and Elijah said in unison.

The father and sons were on the same page!

Elysia was a worrier, especially when it came to children.

Telling her about a daughter lost out there would drive her crazy with worry!

And they couldn't tell Evan either. Evan was impulsive and obsessed with the idea of having a sister.

He'd been dreaming of having a sister. Knowing he might have one under Keith's care would make him turn the house upside down!

Not to mention, alarming Keith was one thing; Evan himself would become like an ant on a hot pan, frantically anxious.

And Emmett was out of the question. He was a little crybaby. Not knowing his sister's whereabouts would break his heart, possibly even leading to real tears.

So, the trio decided to keep it a secret for as long as possible, discussing any progress among themselves.

If push came to shove, they'd use that item!

Nothing in the world was more important than finding their sister, no matter how precious the item was!

Chapter 807

The next morning, as Elysia stirred awake, the kids were still deep in their dreams, while Tarquin, adorned with an apron, was bustling in the kitchen making breakfast.

Elliot and Elijah had only managed to fall asleep in the wee hours and were yet to wake up.

Having been plagued by insomnia all night, Tarquin had found solace in the kitchen as dawn broke, preparing a loving meal for his wife and children. This gesture deeply moved Elysia, who snuck up behind him in the kitchen, wrapping her arms around him.

"Why are you up so early?"

Tarquin chuckled, "I wanted my wife to wake up to a breakfast made with love by her husband."

They had decided to keep their daughter's situation from Elysia, not wanting her to sense anything amiss.

After explaining, Tarquin turned around to wrap his arms around Elysia, planting a kiss before asking, "And you? Why are you up with the birds?"

"I went to bed early last night. What's on your agenda today?"

"Do you have plans?"

Elysia replied, "I was thinking of visiting Blossom. If you're not busy, you could stay at the hospital with the kids. If you are, we could have a nurse come over."

"Blossom Blythe? What happened?"

"She got frightened by you."

"Really?"

Elysia laughed, "She didn't know who you were before, nor that you're my husband. Now that she does, she's terrified. She thinks you're going to tear her apart for scolding you. She's even scared to come to the hospital. I need to have a chat with her."

Tarquin was at a loss for words, "Doesn't she realize she should be thrilled? Knowing my identity should be a boost for her. Her best friend snagged me. That elevates her status. She could practically strut through Jindale City now."

Elysia playfully hit him, "Blossom's not a crab, why would she strut? Listen here, I have only two best friends in this lifetime - Blossom and Winona. They're not just friends; they're like sisters to me. They've supported me through thick and thin. If you truly love me, you can't act all high and mighty around them."

With his wife laying down the law, Tarquin quickly agreed, "I wouldn't dare. They have my wife as their backbone. I can't afford to mess with them." Elysia beamed, planting a kiss on his cheek, "Then I'm off to freshen up before I see her."

Tarquin pulled her close, not letting go, "Don't go to her place. Why don't you girls hit the mall instead? Use my card. It's stuffy staying at home." He was wary of Elysia visiting Blossom's home since Keith lived right across from her.

"Alright! Then I'll make it my mission to max out your card!"

"It would be my honor. Spend away."

Elysia was delighted, rewarding him with another kiss.

Tarquin returned her kiss passionately, then remembered, "Oh, mention to Blossom about the kids changing schools and her job offer. If she's interested, she can move to the new school with the kids. I'll arrange it."

It was only polite to inform Blossom, who had arranged their current school. As a token of appreciation, he could also transfer her job.

The top private kindergarten in Jindale City, with the best salary and conditions for teachers, would be a dream come true for her. Moreover, with Blossom looking after them at the kindergarten, Tarquin would have peace of mind.

Elysia nodded, "I'll let her know."

This was a plan they had devised while on their island getaway, intending to transfer the kids upon their return.

Though Elysia and Tarquin's relationship hadn't been made public, the elite circles were aware.

For safety, Tarquin wanted to move them to a private kindergarten.

And once Elliot was discharged, they would no longer reside in Future Community but move in with Tarquin.

After breakfast, lovingly served by Tarquin, Elysia was ready to leave.

She refused his offer to accompany her, "Stay with the kids. They'll feel lost waking up to find neither of us here."

"Alright, I'll arrange for the driver," Tarquin conceded, also secretly ensuring several undercover bodyguards followed for her safety.

Chapter 808

Gone were the days of anonymity, Elysia had become the bona fide Mrs. Bradford, a title that came with its own set of perks and perils in the elite social circles they navigated. With her new status, Elysia wasn't just draped in luxury; she was also wrapped up in potential danger. From then on, stepping outside meant being flanked by a team of six bodyguards to protect her and the kids.

In the days that followed, Tarquin was a man on a mission. While he kept a vigilant eye on his daughter's well-being, he was also busy planning a wedding. He knew Elysia didn't care much for the pomp, but it mattered to him. Every woman harbors a dream of a fairytale wedding, with a stunning dress and a memorable ceremony. Tarquin was determined to spare no expense or effort to make sure Elysia had the wedding of her dreams. He refused to let her feel even a hint of regret.

What other women had, Elysia must have and what they didn't, she'd have too. So, he set about organizing the wedding of the century, planning to surprise Elysia with the details once everything was set in stone. In his quest for perfection, he even enlisted the world's most renowned bridal gown designer, sparing no cost to have a custom dress made just for her.

During this period, Tarquin also made sure their family was officially recognized, changing their family records from a duo to a full house of six, with himself at the helm. Moreover, he took steps to ensure Elliot, Evan, and Emmett were enrolled in a prestigious school, while Elijah, battling his own demons, also signed up to join his brothers in kindergarten.

Tarquin's next move was nothing short of dramatic. He gutted the Bradford Group's finances, watching as the company's fortunes plummeted from the pinnacle of success to the depths of despair. The Bradford family was in turmoil, fully aware that Tarquin's actions were retribution for their schemes against Elysia and the children.

Now, with the company on the brink, the only way out was to sell their shares back to Tarquin, fulfilling his grim prophecy from a previous gathering: henceforth, they'd be left with nothing. On the other hand, holding onto their shares meant facing insurmountable debts and possible legal repercussions.

The Bradford family was in disarray, with accusations and grievances flying. "Is Tarquin trying to ruin us? Does he have no family loyalty left?" they lamented. The blame was laid at many doors, from the Thorne family's machinations to the patriarch's misjudgments. The family's unity was shattered, and Gideon, caught in the crossfire, was left so stressed that he ended up in the hospital.

Having dealt with the Bradfords, Tarquin turned his attention to rewarding those who had stood by them, especially the families of Blossom and Winona Newsom, Elysia's closest friends. He generously funded Blossom's parents' research projects and provided the Newsoms with lucrative business opportunities, expressing his gratitude for their unwavering support of Elysia.

By mid-May, life was looking up. Elysia's spirits were higher than ever, and the family was basking in happiness. On May 15th, with Elliot discharged from the hospital, they moved into Tarquin's lavish estate, the Number One Mansion, marking the start of a new chapter.

However, amidst these celebrations, an unforeseen event threatened to disrupt their newfound peace.

Chapter 809

On May 15th in the afternoon, law enforcement officials cracked down on a significant child trafficking operation that shocked the nation as soon as the news broke.

The case involved several criminals and numerous innocent children victimized by this heinous crime. The youngest was only a month old, and the oldest around twelve or thirteen, with the majority being around four or five years old. Some of these little angels were tragically lost forever, others left with disabilities, and some even with missing organs...

Each child represented a devastated family. The heart-wrenching scenes of parents clutching their children, tears streaming down their faces, broke everyone's heart.

Just moments before, online communities were abuzz with complaints about retirement age; but as soon as the police bulletin was released, the public's attention swiftly shifted. The traffickers were vilified online, with many expressing a fervent wish to take justice into their own hands.

Some extreme voices even called into question the effectiveness of the law, believing such criminals deserved death, prompting a broader call for legal reforms to ensure the harshest penalties for child traffickers.

Elysia, scrolling through the news, felt a heavy weight upon her. Her brows furrowed, her breathing shallow, her body trembling with emotion. As a mother, she found these stories unbearable, feeling a deep empathy for the parents and an overwhelming sorrow for the children.

"They're so young, they should be growing up happy, not facing these demons!" she lamented.

Tarquin, sitting next to her on the couch, tried to offer some solace, "The law doesn't hand out the death penalty to traffickers not to give them a chance but to save the children. If traffickers knew they'd face the death penalty regardless, it might lead to more harm than good."

Elysia replied, "I know, and I respect the law, but it's just so infuriating! These children... they've lost the light in their eyes. Who knows what horrors they've faced to end up like this? And who knows how much love and time it will take to heal their wounds?"

"Those who prey on women and children won't have an easy time in prison either. There's a sort of code among inmates, and traffickers are at the bottom of the pecking order. As for the children, all we can do is hope they recover slowly," Tarquin consoled.

Elysia, fighting back tears, leaned into him, "We have to make sure nothing like this ever happens to Elliot and our kids. We have to protect them at all costs."

Tarquin wasn't worried about their children's safety, given the measures he'd taken, but he understood Elysia's fear. Yet, he couldn't help but worry about how she would react if she knew they had a daughter out there somewhere.

Elysia's sensitivity, especially when it came to children, was something he deeply cherished, yet it also made him anxious. Holding her close, he dared not bring up any topic that could upset her further.

Meanwhile, in Future Community, Keith sat on his couch, scrolling through the news with a hollow look in his eyes, the life seemingly drained from him.

Chapter 810

For months, it had been a cat-and-mouse game, with Keith always lurking in the shadows, provoking Tarquin from the safety of anonymity. But when Tarquin finally struck back, he hit Keith where it hurt, almost costing him everything.

Keith had been in a dark place for days on end.

It wasn't until the latest news broke that he felt a surge of energy - not excitement, but pure rage.

His disdain for those who harm children had grown exponentially.

The case in question involved a five-year-old girl, snatched from her grandmother at a bustling farmer's market.

Taken in perfect health, she was found with her corneas removed. So young, and now condemned to a world without light.

Videos of the girl, pre and post-tragedy, surfaced online. In the before clips, she's seen laughing, playfully grabbing at her father's glasses, sweetly calling him "daddy".

Now, with her father right in front of her, she doesn't recognize him. Not because she doesn't remember, but because she can't see...

Tentatively, she reaches out with her chubby little hands, touching her father's face, and whispers, "Is that you, Daddy?"

Choking back tears, her father responds, "Yes, baby, it's Daddy."

Head tilted in confusion, she asks in innocent curiosity, "Did Daddy become invisible? I can't see Daddy anymore. When will I be able to see you again?"

Her father breaks down, unable to respond.

The girl's heart shattered for the father-daughter duo. Permanently blind, with no hope for recovery, as confirmed by doctors.

Outrage and sympathy poured in fromizens, cursing the traffickers, wishing them the most painful of fates.

Keith, eyes ablaze with fury, clenched his jaw and licked his lips in a strange mix of anger and determination, making a cryptic phone call. Shutting off his computer, he changed into a set of black athletic wear.

Twenty minutes later, a 'delivery guy' rang the doorbell, handing over a package before Keith donned the delivery uniform and left the house.

With a mask and baseball cap concealing his identity, even his own bodyguards weren't sure if it was Keith or just another delivery guy leaving the premises.

Split between following the suspect and staying back to keep watch, they were unaware of Keith's awareness of their surveillance, courtesy of Tarquin.

After a day spent delivering food in a mundane disguise, Keith shed his delivery attire by evening, evading his tail and heading straight to the detention center...

The next day, the inte erupted once more.

The traffickers, just recently the target of public outrage, were found dead overnight.

Insider claims surfaced online, detailing how a vigilante infiltrated the detention center, overpowered the guards, and executed the traffickers. The message was clear: harm children, face death.

While the police remained silent, the lack of denial fueled public excitement and speculation. The consensus was clear: no sympathy for the traffickers, with many openly thanking the mysterious avenger.

When Tarquin caught wind of the news, his initial shock quickly turned to concern.

He too despised the traffickers and had even made calls to ensure they'd receive a 'warm welcome' in custody. Yet, he hadn't expected them to be dead by morning.

And the vigilante? It was Keith.