

Hitched 891

Chapter 891

In the quaint Hill Village, everyone buzzed about three major events.

First was the adoption. Ms. Gonzalez decided to adopt Aiden, and her boyfriend, who had come to town, was in on the decision too.

Second was movie night. Ms. Gonzalez's boyfriend had brought a projector to the village and screened a film for everyone. This was a big deal since it was the first time many in the village had seen a movie. Their homes didn't have TVs, and the experience was both novel and exciting. Third was the thunderstorm. On the day Ms. Gonzalez planned to take Aiden away, a torrential downpour nearly washed away the village. It was terrifying.

The villagers were already familiar with the adoption and the storm, but the movie night stood out in their memories.

They mentioned that Kendrick's friend was the one who brought the film. He was about Kendrick's age, obviously a city boy with his clean, stylish look.

He spent his nights entralling the villagers with movies and his days capturing their smiles in photographs, weaving through them with his camera, preserving memories.

Back then, Elizabeth and Kendrick were boarding at the local school, and so did the city boy.

The villagers liked him; he had a good vibe, always joking around with Kendrick. They seemed close, like true friends.

While discussing the adoption with Aiden's prospective parents, Kendrick often included him, even asking him to record the conversations as a precautionary measure.

This was crucial information!

The city boy, with his camera and close ties to Kendrick, was staying at the school.

This was a lead they couldn't ignore!

The trio quickly dug up everything about him. His name was Lucian, a friend Kendrick made while studying abroad, into law and passionate about photography.

He lived in Jindale City, just a half-hour drive from the Number One Mansion!

Evan was thrilled, "Let's go find him! Right now!"

Elliot nodded. Lucian was a breakthrough, guaranteed to reveal new insights.

But before setting off, Elliot made a call to Tarquin.

No answer, so he left a voicemail detailing their plans.

With the stakes raised by a recent discovery at a local farm, Elliot was even more cautious. Though Evan's presence meant safety wasn't a concern, it was still important to keep Tarquin in the loop to prevent unnecessary worry.

...

Half an hour later, the Bradford family chauffeur dropped the trio at Lucian's complex.

Before they could even get out, Elliot noticed something off.

Two police cars and an ambulance were parked outside Lucian's building, surrounded by a crowd whispering and speculating - clearly, something major had happened.

A sinking feeling gripped Elliot...

Just as he was about to step out for a closer look, two police officers hurried out of the building, followed by medics carrying a stretcher.

On it was Lucian, gravely injured, covered in blood, unconscious.

Elliot and Elijah exchanged worried glances. Had someone else found Lucian first, attempting to silence him?

"Keith!" Evan suddenly shouted.

Before Elliot and Elijah could react, Evan had already flung open the car door and dashed towards the crowd.

Keith, disguised with a mask and a cap, frowned upon spotting Evan. He quickly ducked into the adjacent building.

Evan followed without hesitation.

Catching up, Elliot and Elijah jumped out of the car and chased after them.

Chapter 892

Tarquin had arranged undercover bodyguards around the trio, and seeing the situation unfold, they quickly followed suit.

Evan chased Keith all the way to the rooftop, his face dark with anger, shouting, "Keith, I've recognized you, stop running! Wherever you go, I'll follow, even into your own house! Do you really want me to confront you in front of our darling?"

Keith remained silent.

Elliot and Elijah caught up and were surprised to see Keith frowning, not expecting him at this place.

Today, Keith had just brought their darling back home. Given Keith's affection for their darling, they had expected him to stay indoors, devotedly keeping their darling company.

"Did you hurt Lucian?" Evan demanded.

Keith didn't respond but glanced at the bodyguards behind the trio and said, "I don't want to get into a fight with you guys, so don't push me."

Evan grew angrier. "What are you thinking? Lucian was also at Hill Village back in the day; he must know a lot. You..."

"Lucian was saved by you, right?" Elliot suddenly interrupted Evan.

Evan glared. "What?!"

Keith remained silent.

Elliot continued, "Lucian is just an ordinary guy. If Keith wanted to harm him, he'd be dead by now, not barely hanging on."

It must have been someone trying to silence Lucian for good, and Keith happened to stumble upon it, saving Lucian in the process.

Before Keith could speak, Elliot added, "Since Keith managed to find Lucian, he must be after the same thing as us, trying to uncover the truth about Hill Village, right? Did you find anything, Keith?"

Keith frowned, "This is adult business; kids shouldn't get involved. It's not good for you. Our darling cares a lot about you guys; I hope you stay safe." Elliot said, "Our darling cares a lot about Keith too, hoping Keith stays safe. Keith should protect himself from the bad guys."

Keith remained silent.

Elliot went on, "Regardless of whether you found out anything from Lucian, the fact that someone tried to assassinate him proves there's something fishy about that night. If it was really Kendrick who took you up the mountain that night, there'd be no need to target Lucian. Killing Lucian is just to prevent you from learning the truth about that night. Why? The answer is obvious; someone wants you to keep misunderstanding Kendrick, to keep hating my dad."

Keith's brows were tightly knit, and he stayed silent, contemplating.

Elliot concluded, "Keith, seeing is not always believing. What you saw that night might not have been Kendrick at all. The incident with Lucian says it all."

If it was indeed Kendrick's doing, there'd be no need to silence Lucian.

The attempt on Lucian's life was clearly because he could prove Kendrick wasn't on the mountain that night.

Keith stared at Elliot for a long while, his lips moving slightly, but no sound came out.

Without a word, he turned and walked towards the safety door.

Evan wanted to stop him, but Elliot held him back, "Let Keith go. It couldn't have been him. Keith's smart; he'll figure something out from this." Though it seemed he was speaking to Evan, his words were meant for Keith.

Keith, fully aware, glanced at Elliot but continued walking without a word.

Evan was frustrated. Although Elliot was guiding Keith towards a conclusion, they still lacked hard evidence. With Lucian's incident, their leads had hit a dead end. So frustrating!

Suddenly, the rooftop safety door swung open.

Tarquin, dressed in a sharp dark suit, appeared before them, blocking Keith's way.

Chapter 893

Keith furrowed his brows, his voice tinged with a cold indifference, "Move!"

Tarquin gave him a complex look, ignoring his demand and walked straight towards the trio,

"Are you all okay? Any injuries?"

Elliot and Elijah shook their heads in unison.

Evan, unable to hide his anxiety, blurted out,

"We were too late. Lucian got knocked out by someone else. I don't know if he can wake up! If he doesn't, we lose this lead!"

Tarquin, with a face full of compassion, gently patted Evan's head, "It's okay."

He then turned to Keith, his brows knitting together, his expression turning frosty, "Before you go, listen to this recording. It's about your foster parents."

Keith stopped in his tracks, surprised, and turned to Tarquin, "What?"

Tarquin pulled out a recorder, pressing play in front of Keith.

On the rooftop, the voices of Keith's foster parents filled the air, charged with emotion,

"

We had no clue what got into him that day. He had been so eager to go with Ms. Gonzalez.

When Ms. Gonzalez said she wanted to adopt him, he was over the moon, practically bouncing off the walls with joy!

Because he was so happy, his old man gave him a beating, calling him an ungrateful wretch!

Usually, he'd just clench his teeth and bear it, not even letting a whimper escape him when he cried. But that day, even after the beating, he was still grinning like an idiot!

Can you imagine how happy he must have been? He really wanted to go with Ms. Gonzalez.

But when Ms. Gonzalez and her boyfriend came to pick him up, he suddenly lashed out, even bit Ms. Gonzalez's boyfriend. We had no idea what got into him!

It rained cats and dogs that night. We noticed he had run out and went looking for him.

In that downpour, if something happened to him, and we had already taken the money, Ms. Gonzalez would surely want it back.

So we had to find him, to ensure nothing happened to him on our watch!

We braved the storm searching through the village, and then we saw Ms. Gonzalez's boyfriend, dragging him by the leg towards the old mill. Honestly, the scene was quite terrifying!

We wanted to rush over and ask what was going on, but we had already taken the money. Aiden wasn't our kid anymore, and we didn't have the right to intervene, did we?

We guessed Ms. Gonzalez's boyfriend probably didn't want to adopt Aiden after all. He was just pretending in front of Ms. Gonzalez during the day. Taking Aiden to the mill late at night, he must have been up to no good, even murder was a possibility!

We didn't care for the kid, nor his well-being, but we were worried about having to face Ms. Gonzalez the next day. So, we went to the school to inform Ms. Gonzalez!

But when we got to the school, it was bizarre!

Ms. Gonzalez's boyfriend was there!

He was there, comforting Ms. Gonzalez about the Aiden situation.

We were utterly shocked. We had clearly seen him in a black raincoat taking Aiden to the old mill, how could he be at the school?

And his hair was dry, his clothes and shoes too, didn't look like he had been out at all!

The person who had been showing us the film at school was also there, saying that depending on the situation, if Ms. Gonzalez's boyfriend couldn't handle it, he would talk to Aiden, see what he really wanted.

Although curious about how Ms. Gonzalez's boyfriend managed to be at the mill and then at the school in such a short span, we didn't dare to ask

more.

After eavesdropping for a bit, we just headed home, baffled.

The next day, Aiden was gone!

When Ms. Gonzalez and her boyfriend came looking, we didn't dare tell the truth. Aiden must have been harmed by Ms. Gonzalez's boyfriend, and if we spoke up, what if he came after us?

So, we pretended to know nothing, lying that Aiden had gone to see Ms. Gonzalez the previous night and hadn't returned.

Chapter 894

After searching the village for two days, there was still no sign of Aiden.

The locals all speculated that Aiden was deliberately hiding because he didn't want to leave with them.

During those two days, Ms. Gonzalez was beside herself with worry, not eating or drinking, searching everywhere for Aiden. They even ventured to the wooded hills behind the village, but found not a trace of him, dead or alive!

At one point, while searching for Aiden, Ms. Gonzalez suddenly fainted. Her boyfriend, panicked, scooped her up and ran to the clinic.

When the clinic couldn't help, he rushed Ms. Gonzalez to the city hospital and they never returned to Hill Village after that.

Back then, we had the money and didn't think to keep searching for Aiden, so we just left Hill Village..."

Today, when Elliot called, Tarquin was discussing the Farmjoy Estate case with the police.

Their conversation turned to Keith and then to Hill Village.

The police mentioned they had just arrested a couple from Hill Village for child trafficking.

Tarquin dug a bit deeper and was shocked to discover that this couple was Aiden's adoptive parents.

Years ago, when Elizabeth and Kendrick wanted to adopt Aiden, they had given the couple a substantial amount of money. After spending all that money, the couple resorted back to their criminal ways.

The police had finally caught up with them!

After reading Elliot's message, Tarquin immediately questioned him about that night and even recorded the conversation.

Anyone with a sharp ear could tell there was something off.

Kendrick couldn't be in two places at once. The person who took Aiden to the hills wasn't Kendrick himself!

After playing the recording, Tarquin turned to Keith and said,

"That night, Lucian was with my parents, he's a witness too. If he wakes up, you could ask him for more details. Even if he doesn't, you surely understand the truth by now.

Your anger is misplaced. You should be furious at Gideon and the Bradford family, at the person who pretended to be Kendrick and took you to the hills, not Kendrick himself!

He might not love you like my mother does, but he did what he could to help you. He never intended to hurt you; he always hoped for your well- being!"

With that, Tarquin left with his entourage, leaving Keith standing alone on the quiet rooftop.

Tears welled in Keith's eyes, his chest tight with emotion he couldn't express, overwhelmed by the revelations.

He remembered the first day he met Kendrick, the day they were supposed to leave Hill Village together.

Kendrick, dressed in an expensive tailored suit, stood beside Elizabeth, looking dashing and gentlemanly.

Keith remembered Kendrick's welcoming smile and hearty greeting, "Aiden!"

He also remembered biting Kendrick's arm hard in defiance, causing Kendrick to wince in pain, yet Kendrick was still trying to calm his adoptive parents and the neighbors,

"Take it easy, don't shout, don't scare the kid!"

Keith recalled the letters Kendrick wrote to Elizabeth before going to Hill Village, filled with blessings for him and eagerness to meet him...

Over the years, whenever he thought of Elizabeth, images of Kendrick would also surface. But despite these memories, Keith had never felt anything but disdain for Kendrick, seeing him as nothing but a hypocrite and a monster.

He had once eagerly anticipated becoming a family with Kendrick, fueled by the stories Elizabeth told him. But all those hopes shattered on a stormy night on the hills.

Chapter 895

What happened on that mountain that night?

They were nearly as close as father and son, so why did he grow to hate Kendrick with such intensity?

There's always a reason for hatred; nobody despises another without cause.

Fragments of memories flashed through Keith's mind...

He began to shiver, anxiety creeping in, breaths becoming short as if an invisible hand gripped his throat tightly, just like that fateful night.

Suddenly, the scenery before his eyes shifted, and he was back to that horrifying night.

The night was pitch black, the rain pouring down heavily.

Because Kendrick bore a striking resemblance to Gideon, seeing Kendrick during the day brought back all those memories of the scenes in the studio.

He was scared and filled with hatred, spending the day in fear until he finally decided to muster the courage to seek out Elizabeth.

He was young, powerless to seek revenge, but he couldn't just ignore Elizabeth.

He needed to share his own experiences with her, to warn her away from the demon.

However, on his way, he ran into Kendrick.

Kendrick, wearing a black raincoat with a wide-brimmed hat, appeared suddenly in front of him, blocking his path.

His eyes were cast down, silent, but his gaze was intensely sinister.

As the rain thundered down, Kendrick grabbed Keith by the leg and dragged him towards the back of the mountain.

Keith was terrified. He resisted but to no avail, his cries for help drowned out by the pouring rain.

The back mountain wasn't just one mountain; it was a whole range backing onto Hill Village.

Mountains connected to mountains, all undeveloped wilderness, the terrain steep and difficult, with wild animals roaming.

By the time Kendrick stopped, Keith was already battered and bruised.

Then, three unforgettable events happened.

First, Kendrick left him there alone and walked away.

Soon after, a stranger appeared by his side.

The stranger didn't recognize him and was shocked to find him on the mountain late at night.

Before Keith could respond, the stranger hurriedly urged him to get up, warning of dangerous animals nearby and that they needed to run or be eaten.

Hearing the howls of wolves mixed with other wild animals, Keith was petrified. Without a moment's hesitation, he mustered all his strength to get up and started running with the stranger.

They ran ahead with wolves and wild animals chasing behind them.

It felt like a scene from a horror movie, a deadly game, but this was no game; it was a real hunt.

How scared was he? Imagine someone who's terrified of snakes being thrown into a dark pit full of them.

But the worst was yet to come.

As they ran, a wild wolf suddenly leaped out, biting the stranger's neck, blood splattering everywhere, blinding Keith.

When he managed to open his eyes again, the stranger was being devoured by the pack.

The dim moonlight revealed a sight so gruesome, he would never forget it.

The second event was after the stranger's death, Keith found himself in a cellar.

To his shock, he saw his sister, his own sister!

But there was no joy in their reunion, only panic.

His sister was being assaulted by a man, echoing the scene of his mother being abused by Gideon.

Seeing him, his sister's initial surprise turned into frantic desperation.

She shook her head wildly, crying, looking outside, begging him to leave!

He was so shocked he momentarily forgot the bloody scene before, desperate to save his sister!

However, another man held him down by the neck, pinning him to the ground.

He couldn't scream or move; he could only watch helplessly as his sister was assaulted to death!

The anger and despair were indescribable, much like when Phineas had to watch Kelsey being bullied to death.

As he stared at his sister's lifeless body, not even allowing him to go mad, the third event unfolded.

Chapter 896

The devil's grip tightened around him...

In that moment of being torn apart, he suddenly found himself engulfed in darkness, his body plummeting rapidly.

Below him was a bottomless abyss, a veritable inferno of the mortal realm!

At the bottom of the abyss, it seemed as though countless demons were fixating their gaze on him, their red eyes gleaming, their sinister laughter echoing as they brandished their claws in welcome, as if to say:

Welcome to hell, my friend!

At that moment, he was overwhelmed with sorrow and fear, yet he still struggled, resisted, fought back with all his might!

Because Elizabeth had once told him:

"In this life, no matter how you live, it's all the same life. A life under the sun is a life, and a life in the gutter is a life too. But if you want to live freely and comfortably, you must not be a villain. You have to be good.

Only good people can live with their hearts at ease and be truly free.

Villains live with constant fear, burdened for a lifetime, leading a life full of exhaustion. So, for your own happiness, don't choose to be a villain!" So, he didn't want to be a demon; he wanted to be a good, upright person!

He wanted to cry out for help, but no sound would escape his lips.

In his heart, he called out over and over again to those he cared about, longing for salvation.

He called out to his mother, his father, his brother and sister, he called out to Elizabeth!

But the result of his calls was:

He saw his mother being tortured to death by Gideon, and his father died with a heart full of resentment.

He witnessed the tragic deaths of his two brothers and sister, their eyes wide open in death.

He saw Elizabeth, arm in arm with Kendrick, appearing before him, telling him that Kendrick was a good man...

His parents and siblings were gone, unable to save him anymore.

Elizabeth had also fallen for the demon and could no longer save him.

He was utterly defeated...

There's no greater sorrow than a dead heart; he stopped resisting, stopped struggling.

He closed his eyes, letting himself fall into the abyss, into the 'embrace' of the demons.

In that moment, he felt his mother's pain, understanding why she had stopped resisting; her heart was dead.

If the tragedy in the painting studio was a fatal blow,

Then everything that happened on the mountain was a double blow!

The pain in the studio was seen with the eyes.

The pain on the mountain was experienced firsthand!

Seeing with the eyes is naturally not as direct or as painful as experiencing it firsthand!

Everything was over, there was no more Quinlan, no more Aiden, only the demon Keith!

So, how could he not hate Kendrick?

He was filled with hatred!

Kendrick had killed his sister!

He made him experience firsthand his brothers' fear, his father's despair, and his mother's grief!

Kendrick also stole the only light that could have saved him (Elizabeth).

Kendrick hurt him in such a brutal way, yet didn't kill him directly, like a cat playing with a mouse.

He trampled on him from a position of power!

If Gideon destroyed his happiness, then Kendrick directly pushed him into the abyss, turning him into a complete demon!

So he hated, hated Kendrick, hated Gideon, hated the entire Bradford family!

If it weren't for the hatred sustaining him, he would have died long ago!

Over the years, in his quest for vengeance, he did many bad things, but among Gideon and the Bradford family, he hated Kendrick the most! First, because Gideon and the Bradford family were inconsequential. Though ruthless, they were fools, easily dealt with, posing no challenge. He let them live, not wishing their deaths to come too quickly. Like a cat with a mouse, he wanted to crush them completely for satisfaction! Second, because Kendrick was dead!

He had actually died, leaving no chance for him to be tormented by him!

To him, this was an immense regret!

With nowhere to vent his fury, he transferred his hatred to Tarquin!

Chapter 897

But Keith didn't want to just kill Tarquin. Not because he doubted his capability to do so, but because the thought of directly ending his life never crossed his mind.

He wanted to torment Tarquin slowly, just like Kendrick had tormented him, playing a cruel game of cat and mouse until Tarquin was broken!

He stole Tarquin's child, manipulated Gideon to drive Elijah into severe mental illness, all to make Tarquin suffer!

He wanted to use Elysia to inflict pain on Tarquin!

To use everything precious to Tarquin as a weapon against him!

As long as it made Tarquin suffer, Keith was willing to do anything!

And then, the cruel twist of fate - he had been hating the wrong person all along.

He was told that the person who had led him astray, who had turned him into a monster, wasn't Kendrick but an imposter!

He was told he had been seeking revenge on the wrong person, repaying kindness with enmity!

He was told his real enemy was still out there, probably watching and laughing at him from the shadows.

Keith let out a bitter laugh, which soon turned into sobs.

Standing alone on the rooftop, his vision blurred by tears, his body shaking violently.

He cried like a helpless child, his cries loud and heart-wrenching!

Crying until he was gasping for air, crying until he felt like he was suffocating!

Why? Why did he have to suffer like this?

What had he done in his past life to deserve such punishment in this one?

He couldn't understand, he truly couldn't make sense of it!

He had had a happy family, only for it to be destroyed overnight!

He had found redemption, had started to hope again for the future, only for it to be crushed once more!

He was naturally kind-hearted, without a trace of malice, yet he was being turned into a monster!

Who could tell him why?

Suddenly, Phineas's voice echoed in his ears,

"Dad hoped Quinlan would grow up to be a soldier, standing tall for his country, bringing peace and stability to his home!"

Kelsey made a face,

"So why did you become an artist instead of a soldier? It's each person's life, their own choice. Whether Quinlan becomes a soldier isn't the point; having a patriotic heart is what matters. What's important is that our Quinlan lives a peaceful, happy life."

The eldest brother said, "I'm going to join the army, to protect our country and provide the safest, happiest life possible for Quinlan!"

The second brother added, "Me too, the responsibility to protect our country is on us brothers, let Quinlan grow up however he wishes. He can become an artist like dad or a teacher like mom, whatever he wants."

Their sister said, "Quinlan, as your eldest sister, I'll always love you. Don't worry, whatever happens, you'll always have my love. Surrounded by love, Quinlan is sure to grow up into a kind-hearted person."

Then Elizabeth's voice filled his ears,

"He's tall, handsome, and morally upright, my favorite man, the only one I'd entrust my life to! I love him!"

"I'm confident that Aiden will like him too, because he's outstanding, and because Aiden loves me. Loving me, Aiden will inevitably love him too!"

"When we leave Hill Village, we'll settle abroad together, get married, and have a little brother or sister for Aiden, so Aiden can be a big brother."

"Aiden, do you want a little brother or a sister? Either way, you'll surely love them, right?"

"Aiden, see that brightest star in the sky? Beautiful, isn't it? I hope your life will also shine brightly, unparalleled."

"

"

Suddenly, the sky opened up, pouring down heavy rain.

Chapter 898

Keith lay sprawled on the rooftop, arms wide open as he gazed up at the sky, letting the rain wash over him. His tears had long since blurred his vision, mixing with the rain that slid down his cheeks.

He wasn't sure if it was exhaustion from crying or the weariness of his heart, but suddenly, he yearned for rest. Slowly, he closed his eyes, and in that moment of darkness, he questioned the heavens,

"God, are you satisfied seeing me in so much pain?!"

"God, what did I do in my past life to deserve this agony?!"

Time passed indistinctly until Keith's phone began to ring.

It rang incessantly, but Keith ignored it.

Only when the unique ringtone of his darling child echoed did he slowly open his eyes and took a deep breath before sitting up.

Brushing the rain from his face, he pulled out his phone and answered, "Hello?"

His voice was hoarse, trembling, like a child who had been wronged receiving a call from their parents.

In a sweet, childlike voice, his baby asked,

"Daddy, it's raining, isn't it? A big, big rain. Did you remember to bring an umbrella?"

A glimmer of warmth seeped into Keith's chilled heart, perhaps the only person in this world who still cared and loved him.

Those who had cared for him, who had loved him, had all left him behind!

Keith didn't know whether to feel sad or fortunate that there was still someone in this world who loved him.

He sniffled, responding tenderly to this love, his voice almost a whisper, "Daddy isn't afraid of getting wet."

"But baby is scared, getting wet can make you sick, and the doctor will have to give Daddy a shot and make him take very, very bitter medicine. So Daddy, don't get wet, you have to be good!"

Keith chuckled, tears welling up again, "Okay, Daddy won't get wet."

He got up and obediently walked inside the building.

Baby said not to get wet.

Baby said to be good.

Yes, he had to be good, to listen to his child, to cherish this last bit of love.

Again, in that sweet, childlike voice, his baby asked,

"Daddy, when will you come back? I want to have dinner with you. Tamsin made lots of yummy food, and even your favorite dish." "...Daddy will be home soon."

"Mhm, baby will wait at home for Daddy, kiss kiss." The little girl blew Keith a kiss through the screen, a gesture he cherished deeply.

He pocketed his phone, wiped away his tears, and sat alone in the building's corridor.

Reflecting on the years, his expression shifted from pain to guilt, and then to fierce determination!

He had thought that the time Kendrick had left him to be chased by wild beasts, witnessing a stranger being devoured by wolves, seeing his sister humiliated to death, and feeling torn apart himself...

Experiencing his brothers' fear, his father's despair, his mother's pain, was just a twisted way to torment him.

But now, it seemed he had misunderstood.

The culprit, perhaps seeing him redeemed by Elizabeth, feared he might forget his hatred and needed to remind him.

To ensure he remembered his hatred, and even deepen it!

Someone had targeted him, deliberately pushing him into the abyss, turning him into a complete monster.

"Heh-"

Keith let out a cold laugh, mocking either himself or those responsible.

He truly was... pitifully miserable and foolishly so!

Completely exploited by others!

The next moment, Keith's brow furrowed, his gaze turning viciously sharp!

After a while, he managed to compose himself, glanced at the pouring rain outside, and muttered, "Every debt has its debtor."

With that, he stood up and left.

Chapter 899

In May, the skies over Jindale City darkened with an unseasonal storm, as if the heavens themselves were ready to devour the city whole.

The windshield wipers battled furiously against the deluge, but visibility remained a challenge.

The driver, cautious, slowed to a crawl, which meant Tarquin and his three sons were yet to reach home.

Within the car, the atmosphere was thick with tension as the family of four, brows furrowed, stared out at the rain-soaked world beyond the glass, each lost in a sea of heavy thoughts.

The air inside the car felt oppressively heavy.

Evan, the youngest, twisting his face in discomfort, finally broke the silence, turning to his brother Elliot with a troubled expression,

"Bro, I'm upset."

Elliot, who had been ruminating over Keith's situation, glanced at him, concern evident in his tone,

"What's up? Is it about Keith?"

"Yeah. After hearing what Keith's foster parents said, I'm furious. They're despicable, aren't they? If Mom found out someone was dragging us up a hill, she'd go ballistic! Keith's foster parents only care about cash. They're scum; better off dead!"

Elliot frowned, adding,

"Evil lurks in the shadows, but justice always prevails. They're caught now, doomed to spend their lives behind bars. They don't deserve any less." Whether it was one's own parents or foster ones, such vile individuals didn't merit a peaceful end.

"Do

you think Keith will see the truth this time?"

"Keith's no fool. He'll see right through it."

The whole debacle with Lucian at this crucial juncture just screamed that something was amiss in Hill Village.

Coupled with the recordings of Keith's foster parents, anyone with half a brain could piece together the truth.

Evan, still perplexed, questioned,

"Bro, what do you think was going through the mind of the person pulling the strings? Keith was just a kid back then, hardly of any use. Why spend so much effort on him? To target Grandpa using Keith, they'd have to wait till he was grown. Seems like a high time cost!"

As Evan finished, silence once again enveloped the car.

Tarquin and Elliot, too, pondered this enigma.

Targeting Kendrick to harm Keith was clearly a move to breed animosity.

But Keith was so young back then; leveraging him against the Bradford family and Kendrick indeed seemed a long-winded strategy!

The effort and energy spent on Keith could have been directly used against the Bradford family!

Something just didn't add up.

"We're in the dark because we know nothing about this mystery man's identity. Once we drag him into the light, everything will become clear," Elliot broke the silence with a reasoned tone.

At the mention, Evan's frustration flared,

"Just when we thought we had a lead, it turned out to be a decoy! Now, all our hopes are pinned on Keith, who's merely a pawn in this game! Damn it! It's like dealing with a cockroach that just won't die, utterly infuriating and elusive!"

Evan vented, "He's always lurking in the shadows. How do we drag him out without a single clue?"

"We do have a clue. Keith is our direction," Elliot analyzed confidently.

"We're clueless about this mystery man, but Keith must know something. Now that the feud between Keith and Grandpa is clear, Keith's focus should shift to this mystery man. We can use Keith to draw him out."

With a sudden thought, Elliot turned to Tarquin,

"Dad, could Keith be in danger?"

Elliot voiced his concern that once Keith's focus shifted, the mystery man might attempt to silence Keith permanently.

Tarquin's brow furrowed slightly, his expression turning grave.

The children weren't wrong, but they viewed the situation from a limited perspective.

Indeed, the animosity between Keith and Kendrick had been dissolved, and Keith would naturally harbor resentment towards the mystery man, redirecting his grievances.

Chapter 900

But this didn't mean Keith was suddenly on their side, ready to join the ranks and fight the good fight together.

Because of Baby.

Baby was Tarquin's flesh and blood, his only daughter. There was no way he'd let Keith have her!

And Keith wasn't about to step aside either. After more than five years of daily interactions, he had formed a deep bond with Baby.

That was the irreconcilable difference between him and Keith!

As long as there was friction between Keith and him, there was a chance Keith would continue to collaborate with the shadowy figure to take him down.

Because if something happened to him, no one would compete with Keith for Baby.

The shadowy figure surely realized this too, so for now, he wouldn't touch Keith, just wait and see.

It all depended on Keith's next move.

Tarquin didn't delve into the details with the kids, simply saying,

"Don't worry about Keith's safety. The shadowy figure has invested too many years in him to simply eliminate him now."

After a pause, he added,

"I'll keep an eye on Keith and the shadowy figure. Don't rush things. Keith is bound to make a big move soon. Trust me, it won't be long before we uncover the shadowy figure.

Focus on your mom for now. Baby was just taken away by Keith again, and she must be upset. Spend time with her, try to cheer her up."

The three little ones nodded obediently.

After all, their mom was more important than any shadowy figure!

When Tarquin and his sons got home, Elysia and Emmett were video chatting with Baby.

Emmett was talking about Baby's favorite dish, steak, and the siblings were having a lively chat. Elysia sat quietly by, her gaze fixed on the screen, filled with love and longing for Baby.

Though she was smiling, there was an unmistakable sadness in her eyes.

She had just gotten her daughter back, yet they couldn't be together all the time, and it pained her.

Seeing her like this, Tarquin and his sons felt deeply sympathetic.

Elysia's mood wouldn't improve until Baby was fully back with them.

The three boys tried to lighten the mood, greeting Elysia and Baby with a cheerful, "Hey, Mom, hey, Baby!"

Tarquin also tried to put on a happy face and joined in.

He affectionately ruffled Elysia's hair before greeting Baby on the screen.

Baby was thrilled to see them, her face lighting up with joy.

Elysia stepped aside to give the kids space to talk to Baby.

She asked Tarquin, "With the rain pouring like this, where did you take them?"

Seeing her tired look, Tarquin tenderly tucked a stray hair behind her ear,

"Just out for a bit. When did you wake up?"

"Just before I called you."

Elysia had woken to find heavy rain outside and noticed that Tarquin and the kids weren't home, which worried her, prompting her to call Tarquin.

By that time, Tarquin and the boys were almost home.

Looking out at the rain, Elysia's face was filled with sorrow,

"I wonder if it'll rain all night?"

Tarquin knew she was worried about Baby and reassured her,

"Don't worry, Tamsin's with her. Tamsin will stay with Baby tonight."

Elysia's eyes brimmed with tears, as if she might start crying at any moment.

Holding her tight, Tarquin comforted her with a gentle embrace, his voice soothing,

"Elysia, just a little longer. Trust me, Baby will be back with us very soon!"

Elysia quickly asked, "Have you thought of a plan?"

"Yeah, don't worry. I've got it covered."