

Hitched 911

Chapter 911

Elysia asked Tarquin, "How did you know I wanted to pursue a career in child psychology?"

"It was just a guess."

Elysia narrowed her eyes, "Did the kids tell you about our time in the wilderness?"

Tarquin's eyes sparkled with curiosity every time the wilderness was mentioned.

Although Elliot, Evan, and Emmett were naturally gifted, without a mentor, it was unlikely they'd be so skilled at such a young age!

And then there was Elysia, not the sharpest tool in the shed, and even a bit... clueless!

Yet, her knowledge of holistic medicine surpassed that of Benjamin Lawson, a specialist. The only logical explanation was that her teacher was no ordinary individual!

Great teachers produce great students!

Moreover, the situation Elysia and the kids were in back then, if not for encountering a big shot, they wouldn't have survived!

And Evan's pet, White, clearly wasn't a breed you'd find in a regular pet store, both formidable and sentient, a rare find indeed! But each time the wilderness was brought up, Elysia and the kids would deliberately steer the conversation elsewhere. Leaving him still in the dark about what kind of place they referred to as the deep woods and what kind of people lived there?

Silent, Elysia began to panic, "Did the kids really tell you?"

Tarquin didn't want to scare her, "No."

Elysia sighed in relief, "Good."

Tarquin felt slightly wronged, "Am I not worthy to know?"

Elysia shook her head,

"When we left the wilderness, I promised them I wouldn't just talk about our experiences and those we met there. Keeping one's word is important, right?"

Tarquin sighed softly to himself and pinched her cheek,

"Right, if you can't talk about it, then don't. It's okay, hubby's not mad."

Touched, Elysia quickly glanced around, seeing no one was watching, she tiptoed and gave him a quick kiss.

Then she whispered something in his ear, a voice so soft only they could hear.

Tarquin's eyes narrowed, immediately pulling her close, pressing her against him,

"Seriously?"

Elysia's face was flushed, avoiding his gaze, "Mhm."

A fire lit in Tarquin's eyes!

His curiosity about the wilderness faded as he sealed Elysia's lips with a kiss.

Elysia tried to escape, embarrassed, but he was relentless, giving her a deep kiss right there on the street.

It wasn't until Elysia pinched his waist hard that he finally let her go.

Releasing her lips but not her body, he held her close, his chin resting in her shoulder nook, panting,

"Elysia, how about we head home now?"

Elysia was startled and pinched him again,

"We promised the kids a Children's Day celebration, quit it!"

Tarquin murmured, "I'm only thinking about our world right now."

Elysia knew what he was implying, her face turning even redder.

Noticing people on the street glancing over, she quickly pushed Tarquin away, straightening her clothes, "We'll talk tonight."

Seeing her bashful look, Tarquin couldn't help but tease her,

"Talk about what tonight?"

Elysia glared at him, kicking him playfully before pointing at a storefront to change the subject,

"How did you really know I wanted to start a studio?"

Tarquin laughed, "I honestly guessed. You're always buried in child psychology books whenever you have a moment. It wasn't hard to guess, not everyone is as oblivious as you!"

He said while affectionately pinching Elysia's cheek, "Silly."

Elysia: "..."

Tarquin wrapped his arm around her shoulder, gazing at the storefront together, "Happy?"

"Yeah!"

Very happy, incredibly so.

He didn't expect her to just stay at home, instead supporting her pursuit of a career and dreams. She was happy and moved.

Chapter 912

"This was the happiest Children's Day I've ever had in my life."

Tarquin turned to look at her, "From now on, I'll make every year happier than the last for you."

The two shared a smile, surrounded by pink bubbles of joy.

After making sure the grown-up was happy, Tarquin returned to the candy store to delight the younger one.

Baby was playing with four little stuffed animals and a bunny doll, giggling with joy.

Elysia couldn't help but ask Tarquin, "Are you sure Baby can stay with us tonight?"

"Absolutely! Don't worry!"

Reassured, Elysia joined the children in their fun, playing along with them.

They played until late afternoon when Tarquin finally said, "Baby, shall we go home and see your Children's Day present?"

Baby was surprised, "There's another present?"

"Of course, the flowers this morning were just the start. The real present is at home, and I promise, Baby, you're going to love it!"

The little girl's face was flushed with excitement, her big eyes wide with surprise.

Tarquin asked, "Shall we go home now?"

"Yes, yes!"

So, the group set off for Number One Mansion.

Keith had been keeping an eye on the situation!

Hearing that Tarquin was taking Baby back to Number One Mansion, he immediately became alert and quickly called Elysia, "It's getting late, when will Baby be coming back? If you're too busy, I can come to pick her up right now."

"You... wait, talk to Baby."

Elysia handed the phone to Baby, who obediently called out, "Daddy?"

Keith, suppressing his anxiousness, spoke softly, "Yes, it's Daddy. It's time to come home, Baby."

"Can I wait a bit longer, please? Mr. Handsome has prepared a present for me, and I haven't seen it yet."

Keith was puzzled, "Didn't he give you a present this morning?"

"That was just the beginning. The real present is at Mr. Handsome's house. I want to open the present before I leave, is that okay, Daddy?" After a few seconds of silence, Keith relented, "Alright, but call me as soon as you've seen the present."

"Okay, okay."

After hanging up, Baby handed the phone back to Elysia.

Elysia frowned slightly, her gaze shifting uneasily to Tarquin. She knew Keith wouldn't agree to let Baby stay the night.

But Tarquin seemed unfazed, offering her a reassuring look.

Still, Elysia couldn't shake her unease, curious about how Tarquin planned to convince Keith to let Baby stay.

Meanwhile, Keith had already grabbed his car keys and left the house.

He felt uneasy, suspecting Tarquin was up to something!

He decided to go to Number One Mansion and wait. As soon as Baby saw her present, he'd take her home!

Upon reaching Number One Mansion, Tarquin carried Baby to her room, with Elysia and the stuffed animals following.

At Baby's room door, Tarquin said, "Close your eyes, Baby. I'll count to three, and then you can open them."

"Okay." Baby obediently closed her eyes, full of anticipation.

Elysia was curious, "What on earth did you prepare for Baby?"

Tarquin winked at her, "It's a secret!"

Elysia rolled her eyes.

Entering Baby's room and seeing Tarquin's present made everyone gasp in amazement.

"Wow!" exclaimed the stuffed animals in unison.

Elysia's eyes widened in surprise.

Baby was getting impatient, "What is it? Did you see it?"

Tarquin asked, "Are you ready, Baby?"

"Yes, I'm ready!"

Tarquin counted, "One, two, three... open your eyes!"

Chapter 913

Baby could barely contain her excitement, her eyes popping open at the first chance!

When she laid eyes on the adorable little bunny in front of her, her face lit up in surprise, "A bunny?!"

Tarquin, holding Baby gently, squatted down,

"I knew how much Baby loves bunnies, so I went out of my way to find the prettiest and most gentle one just for her. Do you like it, Baby?"

"I love it, love it! Can I keep him forever?"

"Of course! He's going to be your new friend. You can give him a name."

Baby was thrilled, "Can I... can I hold him?"

"Absolutely."

Baby reached out her tiny hand tentatively, and the bunny sniffed her fingers before giving them a gentle lick.

She carefully picked him up. He didn't bite or struggle, just let Baby hold him, as sweet as could be.

Emmett, curious, asked, "This bunny is so well-behaved. What breed is it?"

Tarquin answered, "An Angora rabbit. They're known for being clingy and very gentle."

Baby, tilting her head, said, "Angora rabbit? Then can I call him Lan, is that okay?"

Tarquin and Elysia were suddenly reminded of Keith's full name, Quinlan Inkster.

Seeing them silent, Baby asked, "Can't I call him Lan?"

Tarquin paused, then said, "Of course! You can call him whatever you like, as long as Baby is happy."

"Alright, his name is Lan then. Hello, Lan, I'm Baby."

Evan and Emmett also hurried to introduce themselves,

"Hello, Lan, I'm Evan."

"Hello, Lan, I'm Emmett."

The five kids were all enamored with this fluffy little bundle, constantly hovering around him.

Especially Baby, who was over the moon with her new friend.

To the little girl, this living, breathing bunny was far more precious than any treasure.

Tarquin's gift for Children's Day had truly won Baby's heart.

The kids bombarded Elysia with questions about how to take care of the bunny.

Since Elysia had never cared for a bunny before, she looked up information online and shared her findings on how to properly feed and care for it with the kids.

As the mother and children gathered around the bunny, Tarquin pulled Evan aside and whispered,

"Where's White?"

"On me, what's up?"

"Need White's help with something. Once it's done, I'll cover its food for a year."

Evan asked, "What's the task?"

Tarquin lowered his voice further and shared the details.

Evan was initially taken aback but then nodded, "Don't worry, leave it to me and White! We'll make sure it's done perfectly!"

Tarquin smiled, affectionately ruffling his second son's hair.

Evan looked a bit uncomfortable but just pursed his lips without complaining.

After all, the AZ pass he got today had made his day!

Half an hour later, Elysia's phone rang again.

Seeing it was Keith calling, her face fell, and she turned to look at Tarquin.

Tarquin remained calm, "Answer it."

Elysia nervously picked up, "Hello?"

Keith said, "I've come to pick up Baby. Can you bring her out? I'm waiting at the crossroads."

He couldn't go further without Tarquin's permission, as it was the protected area of the Number One Mansion.

Elysia reluctantly suggested,

"Can Baby stay for dinner before she goes?"

"No, I need to take her home for Children's Day."

Elysia felt deflated.

Tarquin took her phone and told Keith, "I've informed the guards. Just drive in."

Then he hung up.

Elysia quickly grabbed Tarquin as they left the room,

"Why did you let him in? I thought Baby could stay the night."

Tarquin pinched her cheek, "Don't panic. Just wait and see."

Soon, Keith arrived, and upon seeing Baby, he immediately scooped her into his arms as if afraid Tarquin wouldn't let him take her.

While the adults had their complexities, the kids were blissfully unaware of such tensions.

Baby, ecstatic, exclaimed, "Daddy, look at Lan! Mr. Handsome gave him to me as a gift!"

Keith finally noticed the bunny in Baby's arms, "You named him what?"

"Lan."

Keith frowned, "Who decided on that name?"

Seeing Keith's displeasure, Baby said softly,

"I did. Mr. Handsome told me he's an Angora rabbit, so I called him Lan. Don't you like the name, Daddy?"

Chapter 914

Keith: "No, Daddy already loves it."

"Yeah, and if Daddy has to go away for work or something, Lan can keep me company."

Hearing this, Keith felt an unexpected pang of discomfort in his chest, for reasons he couldn't quite pinpoint.

He frowned at the stuffed bunny, his dislike evident.

He didn't care for this bunny, nor the name it was given, all because it was a gift from Tarquin.

But he didn't want to upset Baby, so he just nodded along.

Baby was petting the bunny's head, saying,

"Lan, remember this, okay? This is Daddy, just like Mommy, my brothers, and Mr. Handsome, you're part of our family too."

Keith felt a twinge in his heart. Baby already considered Tarquin family?

Keith was irked, his sense of rivalry at its peak!

Trying to keep his cool, he told Baby, "Say goodbye to Mommy and your brothers, we need to head home."

Baby seemed reluctant, but obediently waved goodbye,

"Mommy, brothers, Mr. Handsome, see you later."

Elysia's heart felt heavy, her eyes welling up with tears!

Tarquin remained calm, wrapping an arm around Elysia, waving at Baby, "See you, Baby."

Keith shot Tarquin a glare before quickly picking up Baby to leave.

But just as they reached the door, something unexpected happened!

The bunny in Baby's arms started to squirm and fuss!

It burrowed into Baby's embrace, even making little squeaking noises.

"What's wrong, Lan?" Baby was worried.

Keith noticed the bunny's distress, worried it might jump out and scare Baby, he quickly crouched down.

Lan leaped from Baby's arms, hopping back into the house.

Baby hurried after it, picking up the little fellow, and took a while to calm it down.

But as Keith and Baby tried to leave again, the bunny showed signs of distress once more.

Just reaching the doorway, it started to panic!

After a few repeats, Keith realized the problem.

This bunny seemed to not want to leave the house, showing fear at the doorstep but calming down once back inside.

Evan suggested to Baby, "Seems like Lan is homesick, doesn't want to leave. Baby, why don't you stay here to keep Lan company?" Baby turned to Keith,

"Daddy, can I stay over at Mommy's tonight? I want to stay with Lan."

Elysia was thrilled, "!"

Tarquin kept his cool, "....."

Keith panicked, "?!"

He suspected there was a trick to this, but after examining the bunny closely, he found nothing unusual!

It was just an ordinarily cute bunny.

He even checked outside the door carefully, finding nothing amiss.

Keith, with a grim face, wondered, "What's scaring this bunny?"

Was it haunted?!

Lurking in the shadows, White thought: You've stumbled upon me!

"Daddy, how about you and I go home tonight, and let Lan stay? You can come visit tomorrow, okay?" Baby's voice quivered, tears the size of peas began to fall, a picture of utter dejection.

The sight of the little one crying tugged at everyone's heartstrings!

Elysia quickly took Baby into her arms, facing Keith, "What's the harm in letting her stay for the night? Why upset the child? She's so young, with no other concerns, she just cares for the bunny."

Keith's lips moved, but harsh words wouldn't come.

Finally, with resolve, he said, "Baby, don't cry. Daddy agrees, I'll come to pick you up tomorrow."

Keith waited until Baby stopped crying before leaving, casting Tarquin a fierce glare on his way out.

He couldn't understand how Tarquin managed this situation tonight?!

Clearly, things were moving beyond his control!

Baby loved him, true, but she was also fond of Tarquin!

If things kept going this way, would Baby eventually choose Tarquin over him?

Keith was fraught with anxiety, his foot pressing hard on the accelerator, not heading home but towards Crescent District!

Soon, Tarquin received the news,

"Tarquin, Keith's headed to Crescent District. The bait's panicking, making moves."

A dim light flickered in Tarquin's eyes, "Good, let them move. It'll be easier to close the!"

His target wasn't Keith!

He was eager to see who this mystery person really was!

Chapter 915

After plotting for over two decades, perhaps even longer, what was the ultimate goal?

Was it simply to see the Bradford family in ruins?

What kind of grudge, deep-seated hatred, or compelling connection could drive someone to orchestrate such an elaborate plan?

If the aim was to ruin the Bradford family, why wait so long to act?

Was it a lack of capability back then, or were there other reasons?

Moreover...

It had been confirmed that the strange messages Elysia had been receiving, some from Keith and others from a mysterious sender, were indeed part of this plot.

Keith's interest in Elysia was understandable; he was motivated by Baby, wanting to bring Elysia back home.

But what about the mysterious sender?

He seemed intent on using Elysia to harm him, leading her to kill him, yet he didn't use the child to forcibly threaten Elysia into compliance.

He appeared rather lenient towards Elysia.

He even affectionately called her "Little Elysia," as an elder might address a younger family member.

But if he had a connection to Elysia, why did he watch her suffer through pregnancy and hardship without intervening?

Even when Keith sent them off to a secluded cabin in the woods, he did nothing.

This was not how an elder shows love!

His intentions towards Elysia were perplexing.

Tarquin furrowed his brows, regardless of the speculation, the mysterious figure was a definite threat!

They needed to uncover him soon for the family to get back on track.

"Notify our informants to keep an eye on Farmjoy Estate, pull back before reaching the foothills to avoid alerting them! Contact me with any developments!"

After hanging up, Tarquin placed his phone on the desk, reaching for a packet of cigarettes and a lighter.

But then he thought of Elysia and the kids, and obediently put them down.

Elysia and the children were keeping him in check about quitting smoking, and he had to listen to his wife and kids.

Rubbing his temples, he stood up and left the study.

Outside, the backyard was a picture of tranquility.

Elysia was playing with the kids and a rabbit, thrilled because Baby was staying over for the night.

Tarquin's heart fluttered, recalling what Elysia whispered to him in front of the store today. He coughed lightly to steady himself, hands in pockets as he descended the stairs.

After spending some time with the kids in the yard, Tarquin headed to the kitchen to cook dinner himself.

Elysia, curious, followed him in and asked,

"Didn't Heath already arrange for dinner? Why are you cooking?"

Tarquin replied, "It's Children's Day, and as a husband and father, I've got to show off a bit in front of my wife and kids."

Elysia's face lit up with a blissful smile,

"You don't need to show off; you're already doing more than enough."

"Far from it, I'll show you tonight."

He said, eyes narrowing playfully, "Remember what you said today?"

"Um? Which part?"

Tarquin leaned in, whispering in her ear.

Elysia's cheeks flushed instantly, turning to flee in embarrassment, but Tarquin caught her waist, pulling her into his embrace, "Trying to back out?"

Elysia quickly looked towards the door, fearing they might be seen.

But as if on cue, Heath walked in with freshly picked mushrooms, "I just..."

He paused, spotting the couple in an embrace, and quickly backed out,

"Oh dear, must be my old age, didn't see a thing."

Elysia's embarrassment spread to her neck, "Tar..."

Tarquin kissed her once!

"You..."

He kissed her again!

"I..."

And a third time!

Every time Elysia tried to speak, he'd kiss her.

Elysia clamped her mouth shut, daring not to speak, glaring at him.

Glaring hard!

She glared, and he laughed, a laugh both infuriatingly handsome and teasing.

Chapter 916

The standoff between them lasted for a moment before Elysia, catching Tarquin off guard, stomped hard on his foot with all her might! Tarquin hissed in pain, "My toe's broken."

Elysia seized the opportunity to break away from his embrace, snorting coldly, "Serves you right! Shameless!"

With that, she stormed out of the kitchen.

Tarquin, donning an apron and standing in front of the kitchen counter, watched her leave with a handsome smile, "Not gonna help me out here?"

"No way! Humph!"

Elysia left the kitchen to join the kids playing in the yard.

Tarquin looked towards the kitchen door, still grinning foolishly.

When Heath walked in, he found Tarquin still smiling.

Heath couldn't help but chuckle along, "These are some fresh mushrooms I just picked, perfect for a soup.

Tarquin turned his gaze away, "Heath, I'm really happy right now."

Heath was taken aback for a second; then his eyes welled up as he nodded vigorously, "I know, I know."

Heath knew everything; he had witnessed Tarquin's growth - from his toddler years to childhood, and then adolescence to young adulthood.

He had seen all the hardships Tarquin had endured and all the wounds he had suffered.

When Tarquin was taken in by the Bradfords, he was just a few years old.

For the following decade and more, every single day and night, he lived on the edge of life and death.

During those countless nights, at least half were spent curled up in a corner, sleeping with his knees hugged to his chest!

Growing up, he was always on high alert, never daring to let his guard down!

After all, living in a den of wolves, one careless move could mean death.

Eventually, when he gained the ability to protect himself, he then endured the agony of Elijah's mental illness!

Everyone said Keith had a tragic life, pitiable.

But in Heath's eyes, Tarquin was the most tragic, the most pitiable!

After Keith's relatives died tragically, he suffered mentally, but at least his path was secured by a mysterious benefactor.

But Tarquin, after his parents were tragically killed, had to endure not just mental torment but also the constant threat of financial predators and malicious competitors!

Tarquin had grown up step by step, walking on the edge of a knife.

Heath felt sorry for him, even often lamenting the unfairness of fate. If he was brought into this world, why not let him live a good life? Why torment him so?

Fortunately, Tarquin finally saw the light at the end of the tunnel.

He deserved happiness, and if there was any justice in the world, he should continue to be happy!

At eight in the evening, Elysia planned to take the kids out for a walk.

But before they could leave, Baby had already dozed off on Tarquin's shoulder.

The other four little ones were also yawning non-stop.

They had played so hard today and skipped their nap at noon, so they were all tired by this time.

"Mommy, you guys go ahead, I'm not going," Evan turned back to his room.

Elliot, Emmett, and Elijah also bid goodnight and returned to their rooms.

Not wanting to wake the little girl, Elysia let Tarquin carry her back to the bedroom.

"I want to cuddle with Baby tonight, let her sleep in our room."

Tarquin, as if he didn't hear her, quickly carried Baby back to her own room.

He walked so fast, Elysia couldn't even catch up!

Elysia could only follow him into the children's room, whispering, "Can't you hear me?"

Tarquin gestured for her to be quiet, "Shh."

He carefully placed his daughter on her princess bed, tucked her in, and kissed her forehead.

Taking Elysia's hand, they quietly left the children's room.

Once outside, he quickened his pace.

As soon as they returned to their bedroom, he pinned Elysia against the door, raising her wrists above her head, and kissed her passionately.

Chapter 917

It had been a while since Tarquin and Elysia shared an intimate moment.

Ever since they found out about Baby's existence, Elysia was out of sorts, and Tarquin wasn't in the best of moods either.

But today, with Elysia in high spirits, Tarquin felt his desire burning through him, threatening to consume him if not quenched soon.

Elysia had an inkling that tonight would be the night, but she hadn't anticipated his urgency.

She wasn't fully prepared!

"Hey, wait a minute, uh..."

Tarquin lowered his head and nipped at her neck, a punishment for her lack of focus in their kiss. Elysia let out a muffled moan, and in the next second, her lips were sealed with his once more. He intensified his efforts, more passionate than before, as if he wanted to devour her whole!

He was the predator, and Elysia, his prey.

One dominant and assertive, the other vulnerable and yielding!

His approach was fierce, leaving Elysia with flushed cheeks, her body weakening, legs trembling.

If not for him holding her close, she would have slid down the door.

This kiss from Tarquin was more dominant, more ferocious than any before!

Perhaps it was the long hiatus that made him so pent-up, now releasing like a dam broken, unstoppable.

Just when Elysia felt she might faint from the intensity, he suddenly let go of her hands, grabbed her by the hips, and with a swift pull, lifted her up!

Instinctively, Elysia wrapped her arms around his neck, her legs around his waist, clinging to him!

Tarquin carried her, kissing all the way, quickening his steps toward the bathroom door.

Elysia knew what he intended, her heart racing with nerves.

She suddenly regretted her promise made earlier in the day, wanting to back out,

"I... Can we talk this over?"

Tarquin bit her lip hard, "No, discussion!"

With that, he kicked open the bathroom door and rushed in.

He swiftly turned on the water, adjusting the temperature, and continued their embrace amidst the steam.

The bathroom filled with a misty haze.

The pinnacle of intimacy.

The pinnacle of heart-racing moments.

The pinnacle of entanglement.

Tarquin in the throes of passion was a stark contrast to the Tarquin who stood in the kitchen, apron tied, cooking with tender care.

In the kitchen, he was the epitome of a domesticated man.

In moments of passion, he was anything but!

Elysia was carried out of the bathroom by him, unsure how much time had passed.

He was refreshed, visibly satisfied.

Elysia, on the other hand, was utterly spent, barely able to keep her eyes open.

He laid her on the bed, checked the time, and saw it was already the wee hours.

"Honey, are you hungry? Want some late-night snack?"

Elysia, curling up like a kitten in his arms, was too tired to speak.

Yet, Tarquin was relentless,

"If you want, I can cook something for you right now, don't worry about bothering me."

"How about I get you some water? Are you thirsty?"

"Don't stay quiet, love. Are you alright? Does it hurt anywhere?"

"Did I hurt you?"

"Let me check."

Finally opening her eyes, Elysia glared as if she wanted to devour him,

"I'm not hungry, not thirsty, not in pain! I just want to sleep, and if you disturb me again, I'll kill you!"

Her fierceness was palpable, and Tarquin wore a bitter smile, "I was just trying to be caring..."

Before he could finish, Elysia's glare made him backtrack, "Okay, okay, I'll stop, let's sleep."

He held Elysia, soothing her to sleep while not stopping with his serenades.

"...Looking into your eyes, saying 'I do,' handing you my heart, hoping you'll cherish it... because happiness brings tears, promise me from this day forward to be my wife, never to part..."

Elysia was beyond exhausted. He had been insatiable today, demanding her again and again, to the point where she feared for his well-being!

Chapter 918

He really went the extra mile, didn't he? Still had the energy to whip up a midnight snack and serenade her with love songs!

Sing away, sing all you want, as long as you're not tired, keep going. It's pleasant to the ear anyway, and she's about to hit the sack.

Elysia drifted off to the tunes of Tarquin's love songs.

Once she was deep in sleep, Tarquin adoringly gazed at her for a while, then tenderly kissed her forehead before carefully sliding his arm from underneath her head and got up.

He was too wired to sleep tonight.

He wandered into their baby's room, gently touched his daughter's face, checked her temperature, then adjusted the room's thermostat and humidity, sitting beside her crib to watch her sleep.

The baby was the spitting image of Elysia, still so young but undoubtedly going to grow up looking just like her mother.

"Why don't you look like daddy, huh?"

"It's alright, your mommy is beautiful. You're going to be just as beautiful when you grow up."

"Looking like mommy, having a personality like mommy, everything about mommy is wonderful, so you're wonderful too, baby."

Tarquin stroked his daughter's cheek, mumbling softly, his adoration growing by the second.

This is my daughter, he thought, I wouldn't hand her over to Keith even if it meant the end of the world!

"Just give daddy a bit more time. Once daddy takes care of the bad guys, our family of seven will never be apart again."

After spending a good while in the baby's room, he checked on the other four little ones.

After ensuring everyone was fine, he returned to the master bedroom.

Elysia was still sound asleep, oblivious to his absence.

Looking at his sleeping beauty, Tarquin couldn't help but smile.

Wife, children, a cozy home - this indescribable sense of happiness was beyond words.

He was about to crawl into bed and cuddle with Elysia when his phone suddenly rang.

He quickly silenced it.

The call was from Axel, and Tarquin frowned slightly; a call at this ungodly hour surely meant trouble.

He carefully left the bedroom and took the phone call in his study.

"What's going on?"

"Keith's in trouble."

Tarquin's brow furrowed, "What happened?"

"Farmjoy Estate caught fire out of the blue, and the owner is dead. Someone tipped off the police, pointing fingers at Keith. He's been arrested." "Keith, involved in arson and murder?"

According to our source, he's been framed."

"Framed?"

"Yeah."

Tarquin's expression turned grim, "Then who's the real culprit?"

"That's still unclear, but it's definitely not Keith."

"So, the entire Farmjoy Estate was burned down?"

"Yeah, the police took advantage of the situation to search the place, but came up empty. No drugs were found. It seems more like someone wanted to destroy evidence. Farmjoy Estate must've known the cops were onto them and set the fire on purpose. It's just baffling why they would pin it on Keith."

Tarquin's brow was knitted tightly as he lit up a cigarette.

Keith wouldn't give up on the baby, he'd surely set aside their feud temporarily to join forces with the mysterious enemy against me.

Keith's visit to Farmjoy Estate must have been to meet this mysterious person.

But now, he's been framed!

What was this mysterious person trying to do?

"Is the mysterious person giving up on Keith?" Axel asked.

"Impossible!"

Tarquin flicked ash from his cigarette,

"He's invested too much time in Keith to discard him now. Besides, with the ongoing tension between Keith and me, Keith is still of use. He wouldn't just destroy Keith like that."

Axel was puzzled, "Then why frame Keith? What's his motive?"

Tarquin didn't answer, his face darkened as he took a deep drag of his cigarette.

Chapter 919

"Every action has its consequence!"

It's highly unlikely that the mysterious figure was just trying to spook Keith, let alone play games with him.

Tarquin inquired, "What's the word from the police?"

"The coroner preliminarily concluded that the owner of Farmjoy Estate was beaten to death. There's both eyewitness and physical evidence suggesting Keith had a violent physical altercation with the owner. Things aren't looking good for Keith."

"And how's Keith handling it?"

"Cool as a cucumber. He's not angry, not annoyed, and he's not making any effort to defend himself. Just keeps to himself, silent as the grave."

Tarquin was puzzled. Not angry or defending himself after being accused?

Was he in cahoots with the mysterious figure?

Something clicked, and Tarquin furrowed his brows, ending the call with Axel to directly contact the lead investigator of the Farmjoy Estate case.

He suggested they keep their eyes peeled and continue their surveillance on Farmjoy Estate.

Farmjoy Estate was a ho's nest!

Most of the drugs in Jindale City and the surrounding areas were traced back there.

Recently, the police had tightened their grip, and not a single drug shipment had slipped through.

Tarquin suspected the mysterious figure knew Farmjoy Estate was under watch and wanted to divert police attention, making it look like Keith and he were playing games.

They must have set everything up in advance, then deliberately started a fire to draw in the police. Once the search turned up nothing, the police would likely let their guard down around Farmjoy Estate.

Then, by diverting his and the police's attention away from Keith, Farmjoy Estate would slip under the radar!

It was a well-thought-out plan, indicating the mysterious figure had a vested interest in Farmjoy Estate!

Either the place was loaded with drugs, or it contained something or someone very important to the mysterious figure!

After contemplating all possibilities and discussing with the police, Tarquin called Axel back,

"Get some people to assist the police in keeping a tight watch on Farmjoy Estate. I want a report on everyone going in and out!"

The more the mysterious figure cared, the closer Tarquin wanted to keep an eye on him!

He was determined to block any chance of smuggling, turning the tables after being manipulated in the shadows for so long! Regardless of what was hidden inside Farmjoy Estate, it was better to shut it down first and ask questions later. However...

Thinking of Keith, Tarquin felt a tightness in his chest.

Keith's involvement suggested he couldn't shake off his ties with the drug trade.

Both his mother and the Blackwood family had high hopes for Keith, yet he seemed to be heading down a path of no return.

...

The next morning, as Tarquin was preparing a hearty breakfast for his wife and kids, he received the news of Keith's release.

Not entirely surprised, he had guessed the duo was playing a game, and it was only a matter of time before Keith would be released. But he hadn't expected it to happen so quickly!

As he flipped a pancake, Tarquin asked,

"How'd he get out?"

Axel explained, "Someone anonymously provided the police with a video recorded on a smartphone. It showed Keith did have a confrontation with the owner, but it was the estate's chef who killed him, over unpaid wages."

Placing the cooked pancake on a plate, Tarquin mused,

"Track down the source of that video. If there's a lead, pursue it. If not, no big deal. He won't be able to stay calm for long, and soon he'll expose himself."

With both him and the police keeping a close eye on Farmjoy Estate, nothing could be smuggled out, which would surely make the mysterious figure desperate.

Plus, with Keith's urging, their years of planning would likely be expedited.

It was only a matter of days before they made their move.

He wasn't afraid of their actions; inactivity was the real concern.

Once they made their move, it would propel the situation forward, allowing for a quicker resolution.

Tarquin was ready for them to act, aiming to catch them all in one fell swoop!

At 7:30 AM, as the kids gathered at the breakfast table, there was still no sign of Elysia.

Curiously, the youngest piped up, "Where's mommy?"

Chapter 920

Emmett said, "Mom usually wakes up pretty early. What's up today? She's not sick, is she?"

Evan, worried, immediately got up, "I'll go check on her."

Tarquin stopped him,

"No need to worry, guys. I already checked on her. She's fine, just went to bed late last night and is catching some extra z's this morning. Let her sleep in; no need to disturb her."

That's all he could say to the kids. He was too embarrassed to admit that he had been a little too rough with her last night!

The kids didn't think too much into it and comfortably continued their breakfast.

Tarquin joined them for the meal.

Baby was being good, not picky at all, happily eating whatever was put in front of her, her face getting all messy.

Tarquin pulled out a wet wipe to clean the little girl's face and couldn't help asking,

"Do you like the breakfast Daddy made?"

He expected some praise from his daughter, but Baby said,

"Daddy isn't the best at cooking, not as good as Mr. Handsome, but Daddy is really good at cutting fruits. He can make them look like flowers and even cut them into little bunny shapes."

Tarquin was taken aback, "?"

Realizing what she meant, his face turned bittersweet.

He forgot that in Baby's heart, Keith was her daddy.

Baby asked him, "Did daddy call you?"

"No, why?"

"Daddy said he would come to pick me up, I wonder when he will come? I miss Daddy. Daddy also loves Mr. Handsome's pancakes. If he knew there were so many, he'd be so happy."

Tarquin: "...If he comes to get Baby, would you go with him?"

"Yes."

"...But what about Mommy then?"

"Don't worry. Mommy can come over during the day, and at night, my brothers will keep her company. But Daddy only has me, so I need to go home and be with Daddy."

Tarquin felt a pang of sadness.

Elysia had her four boys, Keith had Baby, and it felt like he was all alone!

Elijah and Elliot, seeing their dad's melancholic expression, sighed internally.

Baby grew up under Keith's care and love; it was well known that she adored Keith the most.

And here he was, asking for it, wasn't he?

Silly Dad!

Elijah and Elliot quietly offered their dad some food, showing their silent support.

Emmett, seeing this, handed Tarquin a slice of apple, "Dad, have this."

Evan hesitated a moment then pushed his glass of milk towards Tarquin, saying generously,

"A real man doesn't sweat the small stuff. Don't mind that I've already had a sip, go ahead."

Baby, puzzled by why her brothers were feeding Mr. Handsome, pulled out a candy from her pocket,

"This is my favorite candy, I'll give it to Mr. Handsome."

Tarquin felt a whirlwind of emotions; just a second ago, he was feeling sorry for himself, and now, he was overwhelmed by their love.

In front of his wife and kids, he always felt so valued.

A little love was all it took!

Right after breakfast, Keith arrived to pick up Baby.

The cheerful atmosphere in the house instantly turned tense!

Evan thought about using yesterday's tactic to keep Baby, but Tarquin stopped him.

Though Tarquin was reluctant to let her go, he bravely said to Baby,

"In a few days, Mom and I will come to get you again."

"Okay, okay. When Mom wakes up, remind her to video call me."

"Will do."

Tarquin tenderly stroked Baby's chubby cheek, handing her over to Keith with reluctance.

If only he knew what was about to unfold, he would never have let Keith take Baby away that day.

Looking back on it in the years to come, he couldn't help but feel a deep sense of guilt.