

Hitched 951

Chapter 951

If those ashes really belonged to Grandma Elizabeth...

Elliot's anger surged within him, burning hotter and fiercer!

He furrowed his brow, taking a moment to simmer down before turning to ask Evan,

"Evan, are you afraid of the off-limits area? If you are, I can find someone else to go."

Evan, catching on late, said, "What do you mean, Grandma's ashes are there?"

"Not sure if they're Grandma's, but today, those ashes were indeed taken to the off-limits area."

Evan's eyes widened in shock,

"Gideon Bradford, that old coot, how dare he... how dare he... alright, alright, alright, he's done it now!"

Evan gasped for air in his fury, while Elliot said, "Let's stay calm and deal with this. We'll settle the score later!"

Retrieving Elizabeth Gonzalez's ashes would be when they confront Gideon!

Evan gritted his teeth, "I'm not scared of that place, I'll go with White tonight!"

Elliot nodded, "Alright! Let's keep the ashes a secret from Dad for now, until we've brought them back."

They knew how furious this would make them, let alone Tarquin Bradford?

Tarquin had been searching for Elizabeth's ashes for years, putting in so much effort, searching countless places.

He even endured Gideon's nonsense for years because of Elizabeth's ashes!

He loved Elizabeth, just as they all deeply loved Elysia Thorne!

Who could stand to see their departed mother treated this way?

The uproar on the inte about that nanny arson case in some city, and those well pictures posted online caused a huge commotion! Especially with terms like "suppressing spirits" and "soul-locking" popping up, the whole inte community couldn't hold back, rising up in attack! Keyboards were almost smashed, and yet, it didn't fully vent their anger!

If theizens were that angry over a stranger's death, imagine how Tarquin and Elizabeth must feel as mother and son?

If Tarquin found out, how furious, how heartbroken would he be?!

That was his Dad Elliot didn't want to see him hurt!

Now, all he wanted was to avenge them!

Evan and Elijah understood, nodding with furrowed brows, "Mm!"

That evening, Tarquin hadn't returned for dinner.

Elysia, unaware of what he was doing and worried about him, called him to check in.

Tarquin said he was working late at the office and would be back later, telling her not to worry.

Elysia didn't think much of it, asking Elliot about the ashes.

Elliot lied, saying, "That man is working on it. We don't need to worry; he'll let us know if there's any update. We just wait." Elysia believed Elliot's words, but still felt uneasy.

...

After dinner, Elliot, Evan, and Elijah immediately went to the small study.

Elliot placed a carefully prepared porcelain urn into Evan's backpack, instructing,

"Just like before, safety first, mission second. If something doesn't feel right, pull out immediately."

Evan nodded firmly,

"Don't worry, bro. White and I haven't seen a ghost yet, so we're going in to take a look. If there really is one, we'll catch them all and dump them at Gideon's place! Let the vengeful spirits tear him apart!"

White, coiled on Evan's shoulder, lifted its head, flicking its red tongue as if to say: Right! Catch and tear him apart!

"Bring back the ashes as soon as you find them, and be careful."

"Got it, understood."

Evan bid farewell to Elliot and Elijah, taking White out of the villa.

The bodyguard, seeing him leave, didn't think much of it; anyone allowed near the villa was considered friendly.

They all knew well of the young master's capabilities, so they weren't worried.

However, noticing Evan straying from the villa's safe zone, they immediately tried to stop him and have him return home.

But they couldn't stop him!

Evan dropped a line: "Don't stop me from catching ghosts!"

And then, he ran off.

The bodyguard was confused, wondering where in the world he would find ghosts to catch.

Worried about Evan, they contacted Tarquin.

Chapter 952

At this moment, Tarquin was with the police chief, feeling a mix of exhaustion and victory. He hadn't slept all night, following leads left by Keith Garcia, and with the help of the police, they had managed to dismantle over twenty hideouts of a mysterious syndicate. They also arrested a dozen high-ranking officials involved in the scandal. It was a significant blow to the syndicate's operations domestically, severing their limbs, so to speak. The mysterious group would no longer have an easy time conducting their nefarious activities on home soil. For Tarquin, it felt like a personal vindication, and his mood was considerably lighter.

He was puzzled to hear that Evan had gone out late at night on a ghost-hunting expedition. "He said that?" Tarquin asked, incredulous.

"Yeah, straight from Evan's mouth."

"...Where's he going ghost hunting?"

"He didn't say. You know Evan, always the athlete; we couldn't stop him or keep up. We've lost track of him now."

Tarquin fell silent for a few seconds, then said, "I understand."

After hanging up, he tried calling Evan, but got no response. So, he called Elliot instead. Elliot didn't mention anything about ashes; he just told Tarquin to focus on his tasks and not to worry about Evan, suggesting that Evan just needed to blow off some steam.

But Tarquin couldn't shake off the feeling that something was amiss. Evan was overly protective of his sister, Baby. Would he really leave her at home just because he was bored? And what ghosts could he possibly be after at this hour? Ghosts don't exist, after all.

Concerned for Evan's safety, Tarquin had Axel trace Evan's whereabouts, which led them to Thundara Mountain. Further digging unveiled the Sage Hall on the mountain's summit and its forbidden areas. They even stumbled upon legends surrounding Thundara Mountain and Sage Hall.

Although Tarquin was unclear about Evan's intentions, it was obvious that the kids were up to something secretive. Determined to ensure his son's safety, Tarquin excused himself from the police chief and drove toward Thundara Mountain.

Sage Hall was perched at the peak of Thundara Mountain. During the day, a cable car made the ascent and descent easy, but at night, when the mountain was closed off and the cable car service halted, the only way up was on foot.

Evan, having grown up in the wilderness, felt an affinity for such environments. Climbing the trees and leaping from one to another with White, his trusted companion, he moved with the ease and agility of a squirrel through the dense forest until they reached a tree overlooking Sage Hall's courtyard.

From his perch, Evan could see the entire courtyard. The clock had long struck nine, and the monks had retired for the night, leaving only the on-duty monks to kneel in front of the various temples, silently

chanting their prayers. The only sources of light were the scattered street lamps and the candles inside the temples, leaving the complex mostly in darkness.

"Do you think there are really gods in this world?" Evan asked White, who flicked his red tongue out, unsure how to respond.

Evan murmured, "Mommy used to say, whether you believe or not, you should always keep a respectful fear of the gods. We should listen to Mommy. If there really are gods, they won't get mad at us for coming in uninvited. We're here to find Grandma, not to cause trouble. If anyone should be angry,

it should be at Gideon! For daring to do such vile things right under their noses, he's the one who should be thrown into hell."

Thinking of Tarquin, Evan furrowed his brow, "If it's really Grandma's ashes in the forbidden area, Dad would be devastated, wouldn't he? Just thinking about Mommy getting older makes me miserable, let alone...

I used to be quite critical of him. No matter the reason, he ended up hurting Mommy! But now, the thought of him being in pain makes me feel sorry for him. I don't want him to be upset."

Chapter 953

White nudged him with its little head, sensing his gloom, trying to offer comfort.

Evan said, "White, you don't want him to be sad, do you?"

White flicked its forked tongue out at him in response.

Evan chuckled, "Good boy, White! Let's head back, and I'll treat you to a feast! We've got to nail this mission to keep him from being down in the dumps. Let's go, off to find Grandma!"

Finding Grandma's ashes without him knowing was the plan. If he didn't know where they were, it wouldn't break his heart.

Evan leaped gracefully to the top of the garden wall and then jumped down into the yard.

Following the route he had scoped out earlier, he quietly moved several hundred meters forward until he reached the forbidden area's gate.

The red-brown wooden gate was securely locked. No getting through that.

Evan decided to scale the wall to get inside.

The forbidden area was pitch-black, not a single light, and unguarded.

The night breeze rustled through the leaves, creating a spine-chilling atmosphere.

But Evan wasn't scared. Turning on his flashlight, he ventured deeper.

White jumped off his shoulder, leading the way.

They passed through an archway into a courtyard.

At each of the courtyard's four corners stood a temple, each housing a fierce, wide-eyed statue brandishing weapons, as if guarding the interior.

In the middle of the courtyard was a well, its mouth wide, covered with a large stone slab secured by a chain.

The well cover and the stone were engraved with cryptic runes that were indecipherable.

White circled the well, returning to Evan's side, flicking his red tongue.

Evan squinted, "A dried-up well? This has got to be the place!"

Just then, Elliot's voice came through the earpiece,

"The ashes are right beneath your feet!"

Evan responded, "We've found a dried-up well in the forbidden area. It's definitely in there, but the well cover is chained. Can I just break the lock?" "No, we can't be 100% sure the ashes are Grandma's. We've got to be sneaky; we can't alert Gideon."

The plan was for Evan to stealthily retrieve the ashes for Tarquin to identify.

When they first learned that Gideon had Grandma's ashes, Tarquin assured them he could identify his mother's remains. He had his ways.

Elliot thought, if Tarquin could confirm it, then it was all the reason needed to give Gideon a hard time.

But if they weren't Grandma's ashes, then he'd continue to deceive Gideon as 'Alpha Thorne' until they found the real ashes.

Therefore, the retrieval had to be done quietly, without Gideon finding out.

They also didn't tell Tarquin because...

If it was a mistake, he'd be disappointed.

If it wasn't, he'd be heartbroken.

After all, knowing your mother's ashes were kept in such a place would enrage and sadden anyone.

Evan stared at the heavy chain, lost in thought, "Can't break the lock, gotta think..."

Elliot suggested, "If you can't find a better way, try the abbot's assistant. He's got authority, likely has the key to the well.

It'd be best to steal the key, but if you can't, just confront him. And after you've threatened him, knock him out to ensure he can't alert Gideon." "Alright! I'll think of something."

Just as Evan finished speaking, a sudden noise from behind made him whip around, only to face a looming shadow!

Chapter 954

The figure looming over Evan was massive, towering above him like a giant oak compared to a sapling.

Evan had to tilt his head back just to meet the guy's gaze, a testament to the stranger's impressive stealth skills. Clearly, this wasn't someone who had skipped his share of workouts.

The beam from Evan's headlamp, an adventurer's faithful companion for nocturnal escapades, illuminated the stranger's face, revealing a patchwork of scars that crisscrossed his skin like a work of sinister, writhing snakes. Evan's heart skipped a beat.

The man seemed to despise the light, his brow furrowing deeply as he swatted at Evan, though it was unclear whether he aimed to strike Evan or simply knock the lamp from his head. His strike cut through the air with the precision of a razor, catching Evan off guard.

This was no amateur; his skills were top-notch.

Evan instinctively stepped back, dodging the blow with a frown. White, sensing Evan's peril, sprang into action with a whoosh, ready to strike.

But Evan was quicker, snagging White by the tail and stuffing him back into his pocket. The identity of the stranger was still a mystery, and White's involvement could only escalate the situation. White had a knack for turning a tense moment into a lethal one.

"Before we go throwing punches, let's get some answers," Evan thought to himself.

Elliot's voice crackled through the earpiece, laced with concern. "Evan, what's going on?!"

"It's nothing, bro, don't sweat it," Evan reassured him, keeping his eyes on the mysterious figure who now stood a few meters away, his expression unreadable.

White peeked out from Evan's pocket, hissing softly, its eyes wide and cautious. The stranger spelled trouble, and White was on high alert.

The man stood by an old well, eyeing Evan. "What do you want?"

His voice was rough, like gravel being ground underfoot, jarring to the ears.

"I was hoping to check out this well," Evan admitted. "Heard some ghost stories about it and thought I'd see if there's any truth to them. Maybe catch myself a ghost."

"Aren't you scared?"

"Not a bit."

A brief silence fell before the man continued, "Was that you making all that noise in the woods earlier?"

"Yeah, startled some birds and a few critters on my way up the mountain."

"You're pretty skilled for your age. Who taught you?"

"That's a secret."

The man scrutinized Evan for a few seconds before suddenly lashing out, closing the distance between them with alarming speed.

White tensed, ready to leap into action, but Evan gave no command, holding White back to avoid derailing his plans.

The exchange was brief but telling. Evan noticed the man's punches, though powerful and precise, were not intended to kill. It was more like he was probing, testing Evan. And their techniques were nearly identical.

Realization dawned on the stranger as well, and he ceased his attack, panting with a mix of excitement and agitation. "You're his disciple?!"

Evan's brow furrowed, neither confirming nor denying.

The stranger laughed maniacally, as if the heavens had delivered Evan into his hands. "Where is he?"

Evan knew instantly he was referring to his master, and it was clear there was bad blood between them.

Before Evan could respond, the man tilted his head menacingly. "If you don't tell me, I'll make you wish you had. I'll find him, one way or another."

Evan, undeterred, pressed, "What's your beef with my master, anyway?"

"Kid, some feuds are too deep for you to understand."

Evan was about to reply when...

Chapter 955

Evan was mid-sentence when the shadow lunged at him again, attacking and demanding in the same breath,

"Where is he? Where is he? Where the hell is he?!"

Evan struggled against his opponent, constantly being forced to retreat.

White, his loyal snake, hissed anxiously, its forked tongue flickering in and out, eyes locked on Evan, waiting for a command to strike. But Evan remained silent, refusing to let White join the fray despite being at a disadvantage.

The shadow pressed on, and Evan shot back questions of his own,

"What's your deal with my master? What do you want with him? Why are your moves so similar to his? Did you train under the same mentor? Are you...?"

Suddenly, the shadow's grasp tightened around Evan's throat, lifting him off the ground as effortlessly as an eagle snatches a chick.

White tensed, ready to strike, but Evan gently pushed its head back into his pocket.

Perhaps it was the knowledge that he had White as his ace, or maybe it was the connection to his master that made him believe this assailant wouldn't truly harm him.

So, Evan wasn't scared.

Even with hands around his neck, he didn't panic; instead, he furrowed his brows and glared defiantly at the shadow towering over him.

The shadow peered down at Evan with an inscrutable expression, leaving Evan guessing his thoughts.

After a moment, the grip on Evan's throat was released.

"Tell me where he is, and I'll let you take a look down the well, deal?"

Evan coughed, rubbing his neck,

"I was gonna check it out regardless! If you wanna know about my master, answer my questions first. Who are you? What's your connection to my master? Got beef with him? Why were you at Sage Hall? And what do you want with my master?"

"Talkative! Just like him when he was young. Enough! I'll just tie you up and send out a message. He won't be able to hide then!"

Just as the shadow moved to act, a familiar figure suddenly stood in front of Evan, catching the shadow's fist!

Evan gasped, "Dad?!"

Tarquin said coldly, "Step aside!"

After his command, he engaged the shadow in combat.

However, upon seeing Tarquin, the shadow hesitated for a moment, and then vanished into the night.

Tarquin attempted to follow but lost him.

Tarquin was puzzled, "?"

Evan was equally baffled. Why did he leave suddenly? Did he not want to confront my dad? Did he know him?

"Dad, do you know him?"

Tarquin hadn't seen his face clearly, "I don't recognize him. Who is he?"

Evan frowned, "I'm not sure, but he knows my master. It seemed like he was always searching for him! He wanted to capture me, use me to force my master to show. But the moment you arrived, he left... It's like he knows you and didn't want to fight."

Tarquin realized that too, his brow furrowing slightly.

Indeed, the stranger had left not out of fear but because he chose not to confront him.

"Did you come here because of him?"

Evan shook his head, "No, I hadn't seen him before, nor did I know of his existence. It was a chance encounter."

"Not because of him, then why are you here at this hour?"

"I was..." Evan started, then suddenly clamped his mouth shut, struck by a thought.

Blinking at Tarquin, he was at a loss for words.

Explaining he was here to search for his grandmother's ashes, which might be under the control of a dried-up well, seemed far too upsetting.

He didn't want to distress his father...

Evan countered, "What about you? Why are you here?"

"I came looking for you. But you, what are you doing here?"

"I... I..."

Just then, a new noise came from beyond the courtyard wall.

Chapter 956

Tarquin's quick reflexes saved the day as he grabbed Evan and ducked into hiding.

With a creak, the gate to the restricted area swung open.

A group of monks strode through the archway, entering the courtyard.

Carrying lanterns, they approached the dry well to inspect it. One of them remarked,

"It's just as I left it when I locked up, untouched."

The leader nodded, "Alright, let's get ready and start."

Another, driven by curiosity, asked,

"What kind of grudge must someone hold to want to scatter ashes down there? That well is cursed with countless restless spirits, trapped in eternal torment! Even the strongest of ghosts would be torn to shreds."

The head monk scolded,

"Don't pry into matters that don't concern you. Mind your own business or you'll bring trouble upon yourself!"

The monk hastily nodded in agreement, "Yes!"

They sat in a circle around the well, beginning their chants.

They weren't blessing the site; they were sealing it.

Today, the ashes had been removed and now were to be returned. Gideon, fearing disturbances, had specifically instructed them to perform the ritual tonight.

Tarquin and Evan, hidden behind a statue, tensed up at the mention of 'ashes.'

Tarquin looked down at Evan beside him.

Evan's brows were furrowed, his teeth clenched in anger as he watched the group in the courtyard.

The talk of restless spirits and their rage stoked the fires of Evan's fury.

Feeling Tarquin's gaze, Evan looked up, their eyes meeting. His lips moved, but no sound came out.

Tarquin's eyes asked: Are you here for the ashes?

Evan remained silent.

Tarquin pressed on: Your grandma's ashes?

Evan swallowed hard, his expression uneasy.

Tarquin's breathing quickened: Your grandma's ashes are in the well? Among those cursed spirits?

Evan was anxious and worried. Before he could speak, Tarquin had already charged out!

"Who's there?! Who-Ah!"

Screams echoed from the courtyard!

Evan quickly tapped his earpiece,

"Bro! Bro! Did you hear that? Dad's here, and he knows about the ashes!"

Elliot responded, "I'm listening. Plans change, but it's out now. Hurry and find the ashes for dad to identify!"

"Okay!" Evan rushed out just as Tarquin had subdued the monks.

He was about to break the chain when Evan stopped him, "Dad, wait!"

To prevent anyone from alerting Gideon, Evan collected their communication devices first.

"Where's the key to the well?" he demanded.

The leader, bold enough to question them,

"Who are you? How did you get in? What do you want? This is sacred ground, before the Enlightened Sage, how dare you..."

"Wham!" Evan landed a punch, knocking out two of the man's teeth, silencing him.

Daring to mention the Enlightened Sage!

If the Enlightened Sage could see, he'd be the first they'd strike down!

Evan scrutinized the man, recognizing him as the assistant abbot, and without another word, landed a few more punches until the man was subdued, then demanded,

"The key?!"

The man, now battered and bruised, sobbingly produced the key, "Here... take it..."

Violence might not solve the problem, but it sure deals with those who create them!

Simple and efficient!

Evan took the key, unlocked the chain, and with Tarquin, they moved the stone aside and lifted the well cover.

"White, go down and check."

White shot down in a flash.

Two minutes later, White resurfaced, flicking its tongue at Evan.

"The well is safe."

Evan was about to descend when Tarquin stopped him, "I'll go!"

Evan couldn't quite make out his expression in the dim light, but he could feel Tarquin's hands trembling.

The possibility that his mother's ashes were down there had his heart aching.

Evan didn't want him to go down, fearing the sight of whatever curse had been laid to trap his grandmother would be too much for him. "I should go, I..."

Chapter 957

Tarquin had already let go of his wrist, descending the stone steps with the aid of the railings.

"Dad..."

"Don't worry about me, stay up here. If anything happens, just call out for me."

Evan's lips quivered slightly, realizing he couldn't persuade his father otherwise. Reluctantly, he handed over the backpack.

"My brother said, once you find the ashes, put this inside with them. He has other plans."

Tarquin took the backpack and descended into the well.

Evan was forced to stay above, to prevent any mishap that might trap both him and his father down there.

Chilled by the cool breeze at the edge of the well, Evan felt an uneasy depth below him.

His brow furrowed in worry, torn between hope and dread. He hoped that what they were looking for his grandmother's ashes-was down there, yet part of him wished it wasn't.

He felt a deep pang of sympathy for Tarquin...

Suddenly, a gust of eerie wind stirred the courtyard, whipping the leaves into a swirling dance.

Evan frowned, his thoughts drifting back to the scarred man he had seen earlier.

He looked around but saw no sign of movement. Turning to a few monks nearby, he asked,

"Have you seen a man with scars all over his face around here?"

The monks shook their heads in unison, all but the abbot's assistant, whose expression flickered with unease.

Evan crouched in front of him, his tone firm,

"Spill the beans, or it's gonna get ugly. We found this place, which means Gideon's days are numbered. He can't even save himself, how's he gonna protect you?"

The assistant's eyes widened in shock.

"A word to the wise is sufficient."

Evan barely raised his hand when the assistant hurriedly covered his head,

"I'll talk! I know of the man, but I don't know who he is. All I know is he's one of Gideon's. He lives in the restricted area, just to guard the ashes in the well."

Evan was surprised. How could someone so skilled be under Gideon's thumb?

Impossible!

"I'm not lying, I swear!" The assistant pleaded, fearing Evan wouldn't believe him.

Evan's frown deepened. If the scarred man was indeed one of Gideon's, then his sudden departure had to be connected.

Would he inform Gideon about their presence?

Evan quickly tapped his earpiece, "Bro, about earlier..."

"I heard everything. Don't worry about Gideon's side. And that scarred man, he's definitely related to our great-grandfather. We'll talk more when you get back.

For now, stay alert and keep you and Dad safe."

"Got it!"

"Once Dad confirms the ashes, let me know."

"Will do. White, go check things out."

After instructing White, Evan set aside the matter of the scarred man and asked the assistant,

"Do you know whose ashes are in the well?"

The assistant shook his head frantically,

"I don't know! I swear I didn't know they were connected to Gideon when they arrived over twenty years ago. Gideon never visited! I found out later he was behind my appointment to secure my position here, all to keep an eye on those ashes.

That skilled scarred man came to live in the restricted area because of them too.

As for whose ashes they are, I have no clue!

But I guess they must've been a huge enemy of Gideon's. Otherwise, why would he go to such lengths, not even sparing their ashes?

Over the years, whenever Gideon got angry, he would take it out on those ashes!

He sought out every possible curse to torment a soul, regardless of its effectiveness, and applied it all to those ashes!

If there are souls in this world, then the one in the well must be tormented beyond belief, driven mad from the cruelty!

The methods Gideon employed are more brutal than being torn apart by horses, than death by a thousand cuts, than being turned into a human swine!"

Evan clenched his teeth in anger.

Gideon was using his grandmother's ashes to stab at his father's heart!

If the ashes in the well really belonged to his grandmother...

Gideon, you just wait, I'm coming for you!

White returned, hissing something to Evan.

Evan's heart tightened, his brow furrowing in concern, "What?!"

Chapter 958

White's report was in, and it was grim: the ashes at the bottom of the well were indeed Elizabeth's!

But the situation was far from simple, Tarquin's condition was dire.

Evan was in a state of panic, torn between descending into the well to check and guarding the entrance against anyone looking to cause trouble.

All he could do was stay above, reaching out to Elliot first.

"Bro, the ashes in the well... they're Grandma's!"

Elliot and Elijah were in the family's cozy home office when they heard the news, their brows furrowing in concern. "Are you sure?"

"Yeah."

"How's Dad? Is he okay?"

"Dad's still down there, hasn't come up. White said he's in bad shape. He must be furious, devastated."

The three brothers fell into a heavy silence.

They felt for Tarquin, their hearts aching for him.

After a moment, Elliot spoke up, "Finding Grandma's ashes is a relief, at least. As for Dad... we need to get him out of there first. That place is just full of sorrow; he shouldn't stay there any longer."

"Yeah! And what about Gideon? Now that we've found Grandma's ashes, we don't have to hold back anymore, right?"

Elliot's frown deepened, his expression darkening. "No, we don't. I'll take the first step."

"Good! But leave him breathing for me; I have to pay him a visit myself!"

"Will do!"

After finishing their conversation, Elliot turned to Elijah, who was visibly struggling with his emotions, his fists clenched tight and eyes red.

Elliot understood his pain and tried to comfort him, "Dad's been through worse; he's heartbroken, but he'll pull through."

Elijah clenched his teeth, "We can't let Gideon off easy. We just can't!"

"No, we can't!"

After comforting Elijah, Elliot, with a steely face, logged into his 'Alpha' account and sent Gideon a pre-prepared email.

Meanwhile, Gideon was anxiously awaiting news from Alpha.

Since their meeting that morning, there had been no contact, leaving Gideon fretting over the possibility of their cooperation falling through.

He was unaware of the situation at Sage Hall, his mind solely focused on the partnership with Alpha.

Upon receiving the message, Gideon hurried to read it.

"A supplementary agreement? Does Mr. Thorne not understand whether the ashes are real or fake?"

His confidant nodded, "Yeah, it says here, to be cautious, if the ashes turn out to be fake, all contracts will be voided, and we'll owe him ten times the compensation. Clearly, he's unsure about the authenticity of the ashes."

Gideon frowned, lost in thought before asking, "Is everything okay at Sage Hall?"

"All good. If nothing unexpected happens, they should be performing the ritual to trap Elizabeth at the bottom of the well, ensuring she can never escape."

Gideon's eyes gleamed with malice. Tarquin had shown him disrespect, so he'd target Elizabeth.

Tarquin loved Elizabeth, didn't he?

Then he'd find a way to torment her, making sure even in death, she wouldn't find peace.

He wanted her spirit tormented by malevolent ghosts, ensuring she and her descendants could never leave that accursed place.

Once Tarquin was out of the picture, he planned to take him to Sage Hall to witness firsthand how Elizabeth suffered even after death.

He would make an example out of them, showing those who disrespected him the consequences.

The thought of Tarquin's anguish and his enemies' fear excited him.

By then, who would dare to oppose him?

He would stand at the pinnacle of power, worshipped by all.

Family, friendship, all those were inconsequential compared to power, the most beautiful thing in the world to him.

Everything else was trivial in his eyes.

Seeing Gideon silent, his confidant added, "Don't worry, sir. No one knows about that place. If there's any disturbance, our people there will inform us immediately.

Besides, with that madman guarding the site, even if Tarquin knew, he couldn't descend into the well or discover the ashes."

Chapter 959

Mention of the old madman softened Gideon's expression.

He knew all too well the capabilities of that lunatic. If Tarquin were to seek him out, forget about snatching any ashes, he'd be signing his own death warrant!

"Sir, are you worried that Alpha's addendum might be a trap?" his confidant inquired further.

Gideon sighed,

"It's a bit surprising, but understandable. The addendum looks intimidating, but as long as the ashes are fine, it poses no threat to us."

"So, we sign it?"

"Sign it! Call him up!"

"Right, once the contract is signed, our crisis will be averted. When Master Tarquin finds out, his jaw will drop, hahaha."

Gideon also let out a sinister laugh, his face gleaming with schadenfreude.

Elliot didn't hesitate for a second after getting the call, and immediately signed the electronic contract with them.

Once the contract was signed, a cold glint flashed in Elliot's eyes.

The prey was cleaned and laid bare on the table, ready for the skinning and deboning!

Now, it was time for the slaughter!

"Knock, knock, knock." The sound of knocking came.

Elysia stood outside the door, asking, "Elliot, Evan, Elijah, are you guys in the study?"

She had been feeling uneasy all day, and by nightfall, her anxiety had doubled.

She didn't know what was going on. After putting Baby and Emmett to sleep, she went looking for Elliot.

Finding Elliot and Elijah absent from their rooms, she headed to the study.

Elliot and Elijah exchanged a glance, an unspoken understanding between them.

Elliot closed his laptop, "I'll get the door."

Elijah nodded solemnly, "Hmm."

The study door swung open, and Elysia asked,

"Why are you still not in your rooms at this hour? What are you doing in the study?"

Elysia stepped into the study, "Hmm? Where's Evan?"

"...Evan went out, he's with Dad right now."

Elysia's eyes widened, "When did he go out? How come he's with you guys' Dad?"

"He left a while ago, Mom, don't worry, they're safe, it's just..."

Elliot hesitated, and Elysia frowned, "Just what?"

Seeing the boys looking troubled, Elysia panicked,

"Elliot, Elijah, tell Mom the truth, is something wrong? I've been feeling uneasy all day, like something big has happened. The more you hide, the more anxious I get!"

The brothers, taking turns, revealed,

"Dad found Grandma's ashes."

"Dad's really upset."

They didn't keep it from Elysia because they knew, at a time like this, only Mom could comfort him!

He needed Mom!

Elysia was shocked,

"Grandma's ashes were found? But that doesn't sound right, finding the ashes should have made your Dad happy, right?"

Elijah clenched his teeth, "Gideon placed Grandma's ashes in a haunted nest to suppress her spirit. All these years, he's been scheming to torment her soul."

Elliot ground his teeth, "He's taking his anger out on Grandma's ashes, tormenting her to provoke Dad!"

Elysia was dumbfounded, incredulous!

Not even sparing the ashes, did Gideon have no heart?

Indeed, if he had any heart, how could he commit such atrocities against Kelsey Blackwood and Phineas Inkster?

If he had any heart, how could he harm his own descendants?

He was heartless!

He insulted the Inkster family, harmed his descendants, and tormented Elizabeth's ashes!

All these deeds, one after another, proved he was not human!

Hell is empty, and all the devils are here!

Elysia's breathing became erratic, angry at Gideon, yet heartbroken for Tarquin.

"Where's your Dad now?"

"He'll be back soon."

Elysia's brows furrowed tightly, anxiously awaiting his return.

Chapter 960

After a long time, Tarquin returned.

His car had barely rolled into the driveway of the mansion when Elysia came running out of the main house, her feet barely touching the ground.

As Tarquin pushed open the car door and stepped out, his eyes immediately met Elysia's.

For a moment, his expression softened, and his eyes reddened.

He took a deep breath before beginning, choosing to share joy over sorrow,

"Elysia, I've got some good news," he started, his voice cracking with emotion. "I've found my mother's ashes. After so many years... I finally found them. I... Elysia... I..."

His words trailed off as his eyes welled up even more.

Seeing him like this, Elysia's heart broke. She rushed to him, wrapping her arms around him tightly,

"I know, I know everything," she whispered, her own voice trembling. "Finding your mother's ashes... it's a blessing. Let's not be sad. We... we..." But she couldn't finish her sentence before tears started streaming down her face.

She knew how much Tarquin loved Elizabeth!

Ever since they got together, Tarquin had shared countless stories about Elizabeth. Whenever he spoke of her, his face lit up with a smile, radiating happiness.

Every expression, every word, was drenched in his love for Elizabeth.

He loved her so much; the pain he must be feeling now was unimaginable!

Elysia felt his pain, profoundly and acutely.

"Tarquin, it's okay to cry," she said through sobs, tiptoeing to be a bit taller, trying to offer her shoulder for him to lean on. "Crying in front of your wife isn't shameful. I won't laugh at you. I... I..."

That was when Tarquin's defenses completely shattered...

He held Elysia tighter, bending down to bury his face in the crook of her shoulder, letting his silent tears fall.

He hadn't cried when he learned his mother's ashes were buried deep in a well.

He hadn't cried when he discovered those ashes, placed on an altar underground, were indeed his mother's.

He hadn't cried in front of Evan either.

But seeing Elysia, he couldn't hold it in any longer.

He didn't understand why, but in front of Elysia, all his sorrows became unbearable...

The pain was too much to bear!

For the past thirty years, more than twenty of those years were filled with suffering. Only the few years with his parents were filled with happiness. Elizabeth's love for him was like Elysia's deep love for their children.

And his love for Elizabeth mirrored the children's adoration for Elysia.

They held Elysia in the palms of their hands, close to their hearts.

He felt the same about Elizabeth.

He had searched for Elizabeth tirelessly, enduring so much pain.

He had investigated every place associated with Gideon, causing a stir at the slightest hint of a lead, sparing no expense, and leaving no stone unturned.

Elizabeth had once said that only in burial does one find peace.

He wanted to find her, to give her that peace, so desperately...

But despite years of searching, he never found her!

He thought of all the places: the Bradford family estate, Gideon's private villas, in the mountains, at sea, underground...

He had considered every conceivable place, except he never imagined it would be in a church!

Nor could he have anticipated the cruelty Gideon would show to her ashes!

Do ghosts exist?

Does one enter another world after death?

He didn't know.

But he couldn't bear the thought of his deceased mother being treated so harshly!

He was furious!

Furious at Gideon, and furious at himself!

How had he failed to protect her?

In life, he couldn't protect her.

In death, he couldn't protect her ashes!

Beyond anger, he felt pain!

She was someone who feared pain deeply. Gideon's actions must have hurt her terribly...