

## Hitched 981

### Chapter 981

"Man, it would be a relief if we could! Did you talk to the cops? When are we going to pick up Keith's body?"

"It's taken care of already."

"Taken care of?!" Elysia was startled.

"Yeah, the police called me this morning. I went down to the station, identified the body, and then came back."

"So, where is he now?"

"He's already been laid to rest at the cemetery."

Elysia's eyes widened further,

"Why didn't you call me?! I wanted to be there for his final journey. No matter what beef we had with him before, he died saving Baby. I'm grateful for that."

"I know, but it wasn't the right time to go. We'll visit together later."

Elysia sighed softly, a hint of regret in her voice but didn't pry further.

Tarquin must have had his reasons for arranging things this way.

"Is it that cemetery we looked at before?"

"Yeah."

"Well, let bygones be bygones. That cemetery is a beautiful place. I hope he finds peace there."

Tarquin said, "He will find peace."

With enemies getting their due and loved ones treated kindly, he surely will find peace.

Elysia took a deep breath and then asked, "Has Verity's son come back yet?"

At the mention of Verity, a flash of fierceness crossed Tarquin's eyes.

She was linked to his parents' deaths, a sinner, an enemy of his!

Tarquin hid his fierce look and calmly replied,

"Not yet. You don't need to worry about him. And, if Verity tries to contact you again, it's best to stay away. That woman is trouble." Apart from his parents' death, he had a feeling that Verity was somehow connected to the mystery man!

She was a dangerous woman, and interacting with her would do no good.

Elysia nodded obediently, "Yeah! I've always felt there was something off about her."

After they finished eating, Tarquin spent a little while chatting with Elysia before heading upstairs.

He made straight for the study.

No need to ask; Elliot and Elijah would definitely be there.

Seeing Tarquin enter, the brothers frowned, their expressions serious.

Tarquin guessed something was up and asked, "What's going on?"

Elliot said, "Verity's illegitimate son is a piece of work. His biological father is unknown, his relationship with his grandmother is unclear, and the publishing house he's involved with has murky connections."

Tarquin frowned, "And none of this can be traced?"

"Yep, Elijah and I both hit dead ends."

Tarquin's frown deepened, "So, what have we found?"

"We found his adoptive parents. His adoptive father is the town's sheriff, and his adoptive mother is a high-ranking official. Both have shady backgrounds and deep ties to local arms dealers."

Arms dealers?

Keith's files had mentioned that the mystery man was also involved in arms smuggling.

"Are his adoptive parents linked to the mystery man?"

Elliot didn't nod or shake his head, looking helpless, "We can't confirm anything yet."

"And the illegitimate son? Does he have connections to the mystery man?"

Elliot sighed, "Even less clear."

Elijah added, "But what's clear is that this illegitimate son is no simpleton! With his adoptive parents mixed up with arms dealers, he's not clean. With that kind of power backing him, if he comes looking for trouble, it won't be easy to handle."

Tarquin wasn't too worried about that. What he was most concerned about was finding the mystery man, eager to bring him to light!

If Verity's illegitimate son was complicated, Verity was even more so!

He had a hunch that Verity was tied to the mystery man, but what exactly was the connection?

Chapter 982

Tarquin quizzed, "So, that publishing house is a tough nut to crack, huh?"

The two kids shook their heads in unison.

"You wouldn't believe it, but their security system is even more sophisticated than the Bradford Group's. We tried several times and failed miserably. Couldn't breach it!"

"A publishing house, for crying out loud, not some kind of top-secret government facility, and they've got this high-end security? That's fishy!" "And get this – their annual profits don't even come close to what the Bradford Group makes in a month. Where on earth are they getting the money to afford such a top-notch security system? Something's off with that publisher!"

The brothers were clearly agitated, their frustration evident.

After all, when two top hackers team up and still can't break in, you know the publishing house's security is no joke!

Tarquin frowned, "Did you check out the owner listed on their website?"

"Yep, just a figurehead, a regular Joe. Nothing juicy about him."

Elijah chimed in, "Dad, could the publishing house be the mystery man's hideout?"

Tarquin neither confirmed nor denied, "Can't say for sure yet."

But it was clear as day - there was something big brewing with that publishing house!

Karl Town was also under suspicion!

Given that Verity's son lived in Karl Town and worked at that very publishing house, it was no mere coincidence!

There had to be a connection between her, her son, and the mystery man!

"Anything suspicious about Verity's relationship with her son's adoptive parents?"

The kids looked downcast, "All above board. No links between them that we could find, nor any clue about the kid's biological father. Came up empty."

The duo was clearly disheartened today!

Tarquin let out a sigh, trying to reassure them, "If my hunch is right, Karl Town is the mystery man's headquarters. It's normal you couldn't dig up anything on them.

If he's been masterminding illegal deals for years without getting caught, he's no ordinary criminal. He won't be easily found.

Don't be discouraged. We'll catch him eventually!

Look, even if we can't find anything, clues will come to us. After all, he's the one after us, not the other way around. He'll keep making moves. And Verity and her son have already made themselves known."

The kids eagerly asked, "So, Verity and her son are really connected to the mystery man?"

Tarquin's phone buzzed with a new message before he could respond.

Then, Lowell's call came through.

"Tarquin, I've sent the evidence Gideon provided to your phone. Got it?"

Tarquin glanced at the message, "Yeah, keep a close eye on Verity."

"Will do."

After hanging up, Tarquin told the kids, "Don't just hang around in the study all day. Go play with your siblings, take a break."

They nodded, but once Tarquin left, they didn't head downstairs.

Still feeling defiant, they tried once more to crack the publishing house's security system - and failed again.

Elijah slumped, frustrated!

Elliot was equally peeved, trying to console himself, "There's always a bigger fish. No worries, we're still young. When we grow up, we'll outsmart them!"

Elijah's face darkened, "I'll ask the teacher!"

Logging into his account, he messaged his mentor, "You around, teacher? Got an urgent problem."

The reply came swiftly, "Yes! What's up, Elijah?"

"I'm trying to breach a publishing house's security system but can't get through. Got a minute to help me out?"

Chapter 983

Elijah had just finished typing when Elliot blocked his path, "Can we really trust this professor? What if he spills the beans?"

Elijah was brimming with confidence, "He's like the wise old mentor from your hometown, hidden away in the mountains. Do you think your mentor would do anything to harm you?"

"Absolutely not!"

"Then trust me, my professor wouldn't either," Elijah assured.

With that, Elliot relaxed his grip, and Elijah hit 'send'.

The reply came swiftly, "Which publishing house?"

Elijah quickly sent over the publishing house's details, only to receive an immediate response, "I can't help you with this one."

Elijah's brow furrowed, "Why not?"

The answer was straightforward, "I designed their entire security system myself, sold it to them for a pretty penny. Breaking through it now would go against my professional ethics."

Elijah and Elliot were speechless, their silence filled with revelation.

So that's why they hadn't been able to breach the security - it was their professor's handiwork!

Elliot, with a puzzled expression, asked Elijah, "Your professor is involved with them?"

Elijah replied, "He's somewhat of a freelancer, makes his living off projects like these."

"Why suddenly take an interest in breaching their security system? Are you investigating them?" the professor inquired.

"Yeah, I'm digging into some of their internal affairs for my dad," Elijah confessed.

The professor paused before responding, "I can't help you break into their system. But I'll tell you this - they're wolves in sheep's clothing. Officially a publishing house, but they've been conducting research, the nature of which I'm not entirely sure. But it's backed by some serious power. I'd advise you to steer clear."

The boys exchanged worried glances, Elijah typing back, "Understood, professor."

Concerned, Elijah asked, "How have you been, anyway?"

"Good, except I'm still searching for someone I haven't been able to find," the professor replied.

Elijah's brow creased in empathy, "Still no word from her?"

A sigh emoji was all he got in return, "She's been missing too long. Finding her is becoming increasingly difficult."

Elijah struggled to find comforting words, knowing all too well the pain of searching for a lost person.

After all, it was their shared experiences of loss that had deepened their bond. Elijah had been tirelessly searching for his mom, while his professor had been on a long quest to find a woman dear to him.

But now, while Elijah had been reunited with his mom, his professor's search remained fruitless.

"I've got to go offline for a bit, Elijah. Leave a message if you need anything, and I'll get back to you," the professor wrote.

Elijah quickly replied, "I managed to find my mom in this vast world, professor. I believe you'll find her too."

"Thanks for the kind words, Elijah! And a friendly word of advice - tell your dad to keep away from that publishing house." Elijah and Elliot exchanged a look.

So, the publishing house might be even more deeply entangled with the mysterious figure than they thought!

Not only could they not afford to stay away, but they also had to dig deeper.

After all, as long as this mysterious person remained a threat to their family, they could never rest easy.

Meanwhile, Tarquin returned to his study, booted up his computer, and began reviewing the evidence Gideon had provided. The more he read, the darker his expression became.

After finishing, he took a deep breath, clenched his jaw, and adjusted his tie in frustration.

Staring at the computer screen, he made a decision, grabbed his phone, and left the study with a determined stride.

## Chapter 984

When Tarquin showed up unannounced, Verity was in the middle of making chicken soup in her cozy kitchen.

The sight of him nearly made her drop the ladle!

It took her a moment to compose herself, before she managed a smile and asked, "Tarquin, what brings you here?"

Before Tarquin could even respond, she turned to her nanny with a frown, "You didn't think to inform me Tarquin was coming? What kind of manners is that? You're responsible for this oversight!"

The nanny, clearly flustered, replied, "Master Tarquin... I didn't have the chance to tell you."

Tarquin had barged in, and the nanny couldn't stop him or alert Verity in time.

Verity shot the nanny a dark look, prompting her to find an excuse to tidy up the yard, leaving them alone.

Quickly, Verity invited Tarquin to sit down and offered to make him some tea.

"No need, let's just talk," Tarquin said with a cold tone, settling himself on the living room couch.

Verity, her heart racing, poured two cups of chamomile tea.

She handed one to Tarquin and took a seat opposite him.

"I was just about to go see Elysia this afternoon. I even made her and the kids some soup, I..."

Tarquin cut her off with a grimace, "Stop acting, Verity. It's a waste of time for both of us. You're responsible for the death of my parents, and I will never let that go. As for your son... is there even anything to discuss?"

Verity's breath hitched, and her eyes widened in shock.

Tarquin's blunt accusation took her by surprise!

It took her a few seconds to gather her wits, and she quickly retorted, "Tarquin, you can't just say things like that. You probably don't know, but I was the closest to your parents out of the entire Bradford family. I was the only one who supported their relationship."

Tarquin clenched his teeth, "That just means you were the only one close enough to them to do it, the only one who could have orchestrated their deaths!"

Some people are openly malicious, while others are sneakily treacherous!

Verity belonged to the latter category!

Friendly to your face but ready to stab you in the back, the most despicable kind!

Verity tried to defend herself, but Tarquin wasn't interested in listening to her excuses. He laid out the evidence before her!

After seeing the evidence, Verity's breathing became rapid.

The evidence was irrefutable; she couldn't deny it!

She collapsed onto the couch, gasping, "How... how did you find all this? Impossible! You were so young... No, no, it couldn't have been you. It must have been... your grandfather gave this to you?"

Talking to herself, she concluded, "It had to be your grandfather! He's the only one who would investigate what happened back then. Nobody else cared. And only he had the resources to uncover the truth!

Yes, that's it. Your grandfather had an accident last night, and then suddenly flew out of the country on a private jet this morning. You arranged for him to leave! You made a deal with him; you get him out of the country, and he gives you the evidence?"

Tarquin looked at her with a cold expression, silently confirming her speculation.

Verity, trembling with anger, exclaimed, "They say even a tiger wouldn't eat its cubs, but he's heartless! He threw me under the bus just to save himself, completely disregarding our father-daughter relationship!"

"Don't compare him to me. You're cut from the same cloth!" Tarquin shot back.

Gideon acted out of self-interest, regardless of his daughter's life or death.

And Verity? Wasn't she doing the same? For her own gain, she cruelly murdered her own kin!

With tears brimming in her eyes, Verity suddenly exploded, "How dare you compare me to him?! Everything I've done was for my son! No matter what, I would never harm him. I'd even die for my son!

Do you think I wanted to kill Kendrick? When he was a kid, he was always clinging to me, always calling out 'Auntie, Auntie' and following me around! Even when he grew up, he was closest to me, sharing every bit of good news with me first! Even about your mother, I was the first in the Bradford family to know!

I did it because of my son. If Kendrick hadn't died, my son wouldn't have survived...

I couldn't just abandon my son!

He wasn't with me since he was young; I never fulfilled my duties as a mother. How could I not save him, I..."

Chapter 985

Verity's tears suddenly broke through the dam of her composure as she spoke.

Tarquin looked at her with icy disdain, "Don't paint yourself as some innocent victim. You hid him away, only you know the true extent of your own selfish desires.

You orchestrated that car accident that killed my parents. How much of that was for your son, and how much was for your own gain? You know the truth.

So, spare me the act of playing the saint. I have no sympathy for you!"

Verity glared back at him with eyes red from crying, "You have a much nastier tongue than your father ever did!"

"Because he never saw through you, but I have."

Verity forcefully sniffed, suddenly stopping her tears. She faced him squarely and said, "You're right, I was selfish! I kept my son hidden to ensure he'd grow up safely, in case you didn't die first and the Bradfords decided to come after him. I wanted him to inherit the Bradford empire!

And yes, I had a hand in your father's death because of the Bradford Group. As long as he lived, your grandfather would hold all the power. Only with him gone could there be chaos within the Bradfords, and my chances would be better!"

After finishing, Verity frowned and added, "You hold all the evidence against me, denying it won't help. I admit it, I did it, and it was all me, no one else is involved. Do with me what you will."

Tarquin's lips were a thin line, his complexion turning stormy from rage, veins on his neck standing out prominently.

He had lost his grandmother early on, Allegra was arrogant and distant, and his father saw Verity as a sister, a mother figure!

He had been close to Verity since childhood, maintaining contact even after moving abroad.

And to think he met his end because of her!

He would have never suspected Verity, considering every possible Bradford but never her.

The Bradfords, each more venomous and ruthless than the last!

Tarquin struggled to contain his towering fury, grinding out, "You're definitely going to pay, but your son's fate is still undecided."

Verity panicked, "What does my son have to do with any of this? Are you planning on harming him too? He was just a child when your parents died!" "His fate depends on your cooperation."

"You... what do you want?"

Tarquin's gaze hardened, seeing her concern for her son proved there was still love.

Love made negotiations easier.

"What exactly is your relationship with that man?"

"Who are you talking about?"

"You know."

Verity frowned, "..."

Tarquin's threat was clear, "I came here today because I'm tired of playing games. I know you're involved with him. If you won't speak up, I'll start with your son."

Don't think he's safe just because he's abroad. If I want him dead, there's nowhere he can hide!"

Verity's breathing quickened, her eyebrows furrowed tighter, "..."

Tarquin continued, "You suddenly showing up around Elysia, risking exposure of your son to get close to her, must have been a desperate move. He's panicking, and you're forced to panic with him."

"You... what do you know?!"

Tarquin's gaze sharpened, "I've taken down all his operations domestically. He must be desperate now, especially with Keith gone. He needs a new pawn close to me, which is why he pushed you to show yourself."

Verity's eyes widened in shock, "You..."

"How did I know, right? I might not know who he is, but that doesn't mean I'm clueless about his moves! If I'm not mistaken, he's been threatening you with your son, hasn't he?"

Hearing this, Verity's eyes welled up even more, her lips trembling violently, "..."

"1

Tarquin, seeing his guess was accurate, felt his mood darken further, "I need to know, what exactly he's been trying to do by getting close to me, and who he really is. Answer me truthfully, and I'll ensure your son's safety."

Chapter 986

Verity's eyes were brimming with tears, her voice shaky and filled with panic,

"How can you guarantee that? You don't even know who he is, and my son's in his clutches! How can you possibly assure me?!"

Tarquin replied with an icy tone, "If I say I can keep him alive, then I can. It just depends on whether I want to or not."

He had extensive holdings in Alerasia, with a well-connected work. Karl Town was under Alerasia's jurisdiction, and even if it was the mysterious man's stronghold, ensuring someone's safety wasn't a challenge for him.

He could easily manipulate things through the local authorities!

Verity clearly didn't believe him, and Tarquin couldn't be bothered to explain further, instead issuing a stark warning,

"If you don't cooperate, I can't guarantee he'll make it through the week."

Verity's eyes widened in fear, and after a moment of stunned silence, she ventured,

"Can you really ensure his safety?"

Tarquin gave her a piercing look and remained silent, which was as good as a confirmation.

Swallowing hard, Verity frowned and said,

"If you promise to keep my son and me safe, I'll tell you everything I know."

Tarquin's expression darkened, his gaze sharp,

"You don't deserve to live! You killed my parents, you have to die!"

Verity gasped, shocked.

Tarquin continued, emphasizing each word,

"We don't even have to discuss terms. My parents' vengeance must be served! At best, I can promise you a quick death. Otherwise, I'll make you wish you were dead."

Tears streamed down Verity's face,

"Tarquin, do you have to be so heartless? Can't you just let me go? I admit, I was involved in that accident, but I wasn't the mastermind!"

"Then who was?" he pressed.

"It was... it was..."

"It was him, wasn't it?"

Verity knew exactly who Tarquin was referring to. She glanced at him with tear-filled eyes, neither nodding in agreement nor shaking her head in denial.

Tarquin understood, his expression growing even more somber,

"Everything he's done, it all started because of my father, didn't it?"

"What was the feud between him and my parents?"

That this person would conspire with Verity, orchestrating an accident to kill his parents!

And that he'd been meticulously planning for years, investing so much effort into targeting him!

Verity shook her head, "I don't know. All I know is he's been searching for... for..."

She hesitated, stopping mid-sentence.

"What has he been searching for?" Tarquin pressed.

Just then, Verity's phone rang.

Wiping her tears, she tried to compose herself before answering.

Whatever the caller said made her burst into tears, her body shaking violently.

Realizing something was amiss, Tarquin snatched the phone from her.

But the caller had already hung up.

"Who was that?" Tarquin demanded, his face darkening.

Verity, stubborn and distressed, pushed him away,

"Just go! You'll never forgive me for your parents' death anyway. Just leave, we're done here... Go!"

Suddenly, a swarm of police officers burst in!

They had a warrant for Verity's arrest.

Leading them was Josiah, who knew Tarquin and was surprised to see him there.

Tarquin pulled Josiah aside to ask, "What's going on?"

Josiah looked puzzled, "Weren't you the one who tipped us off?"

"Tipped you off about what?"

"Somebody anonymously called the police, accusing Verity of murder and provided solid evidence."

Tarquin frowned, puzzled. It wasn't his doing, nor Gideon's. Who else knew Verity was the culprit? Could it be him?

Did he know Tarquin was coming for Verity and, fearing she'd reveal secrets, decided to act first? Had he decided to sacrifice Verity, a pawn in his game?

Chapter 987

Tarquin's brow furrowed deeply as he glanced towards Verity. Had that phone call been from him?

What had he said to Verity? Had he threatened her?

Noticing his gaze, Verity looked at him through tear-soaked eyes before lowering her head again, softly sobbing.

With too many prying eyes around, Tarquin couldn't afford a private conversation with Verity just yet. He had no choice but to let the police take her away for now.

"Keep someone on her. Let me know immediately if anything comes up."

Josiah nodded, "Understood!"

Just as Verity was taken away, Tarquin's phone rang. It was Elliot.

"Dad, when are you coming home?" The little guy sounded serious.

"What's up?"

"Elijah and I stumbled upon something big!"

"What is it?"

"...Let's talk when you get back."

Tarquin was suspicious. What kind of secret had they uncovered?

"Alright, I'll be home in forty minutes."

After hanging up, Tarquin started his car and headed home, his mind not really on Elliot's words but filled with thoughts about Verity.

He couldn't shake off the feeling that there was something off about Verity's expression when she was taken away by the cops.

What was she afraid of?

Before Tarquin could reach home, he got his answer!

The police car transporting Verity had collided with a van on the road, resulting in a severe accident.

Verity and a police officer were declared dead at the scene, along with the van driver. Three dead, one injured!

What was Verity afraid of? Death!

The call before the police arrived must have let her know she was going to die. That's why she was scared. Josiah sent over a video of the accident scene. Tarquin grimaced, turned on his indicator, and pulled over to watch it.

The crash was gruesome. Verity lay in a pool of blood, her organs crushed out, head grotesquely misshapen.

Just minutes ago, she had been talking to him, and now she was nothing more than a horrific corpse...

The chaos around was palpable - screams, screeching brakes, mixed with roars and cries...

It instantly took Tarquin back to the day Elizabeth and Kendrick died, surrounded by a similar pandemonium.

His mother, lying in a pool of blood, resembled a snow lotus stained red...

Lighting a cigarette, Tarquin leaned back in his seat and took a drag in silence.

His eyes reddened, not for Verity, but for his parents.

The thought of their death always left him with a lump in his throat, a bitter taste in his mouth.

After composing himself in the car for a while, Tarquin finally adjusted his state of mind and called Josiah.

He instructed him to follow up on the accident and report any irregularities.

Restarting the car, he hurried home.

Elliot and Elijah were waiting for him!

To put it harshly, Tarquin wasn't satisfied with Verity's death!

Firstly, he felt Verity got off too lightly.

Secondly, Verity was only one of the culprits; the mastermind was still out there!

If he wanted to avenge his parents, he needed to expose this mysterious figure!

The mysterious person acted against Verity so swiftly, which was unexpected for Tarquin.

Had he known, he would never have let the police take Verity away.

Though Verity was a murderer and deserved no sympathy, the innocent police officer's death was a tragic loss!

Moreover, Tarquin hadn't even had the chance to ask his questions, and now the lead was gone!

The mysterious person gave up on Verity, probably because they knew she had been exposed and were afraid she'd spill secrets, hence the silencing.

Perhaps even the mysterious person hadn't expected Gideon to have evidence of Verity killing Tarquin's parents!

But still...

This person was still trying to hide their identity. Why wouldn't they face him directly?

What were they considering, or fearing?

What did they want from him, and why not just come forward and ask?

Chapter 988

It was clear as day now; he had a bone to pick with his own folks!

After all these years plotting against him, what was he really after?

And there was more: a heart-shaped birthmark on his chest, his stronghold in Karl Town, those times he'd seen him before, even calling Elysia "little Elysia"...

He knew him!

And he knew Elysia too?

With a head full of question marks, Tarquin made his way home, only to find Elysia missing.

Evan, Emmett, and Baby were nowhere to be seen either.

Pushing his doubts aside for the moment, Tarquin headed to the small study to ask Elliot Elijah,

"Where's mom and the little ones?"

"Jessamine called, invited mom over to her place for a bit."

"Jessamine Huber?"

"Yeah, they just opened this huge amusement park, today's the soft opening. They invited us over, but Elijah and I weren't feeling it, so mom took Evan, Emmett, and Baby along."

Jessamine was the one person Keaton Huber feared the most, his very own sister!

Family ties could be overwhelmingly strong; Keaton, who feared nothing on heaven or earth, only feared her!

Her son, Corbin Denton, had been grappling with severe psychological issues, and it was thanks to Elysia's intervention that he didn't spiral further. After Corbin started getting better, Elysia suggested Jessamine take some time off to travel with him, hoping it would do him good.

Thus, Jessamine planned a family trip, and they had only recently returned.

Knowing Jessamine, Tarquin felt at ease about Elysia being in her company.

Tarquin then asked the boys, "What did you call me back for?"

Elliot hurriedly handed over a missing person flyer,

"Dad, look! We stumbled upon this while digging into that publishing house in Karl Town!"

Elijah chimed in excitedly,

"It's a missing person flyer published over twenty years ago by the publishing house. Dad, doesn't the photo look exactly like Baby? We suspect they were looking for mom!"

"And there's more, this flyer was first published by a newspaper in Karl Town. If they were indeed looking for mom, does that mean she has some connection to that mysterious guy?"

"

Meanwhile, at the Denton family's amusement park in the elite business district.

The moment Elysia showed up with the kids, she turned heads left and right.

Ever since the Bradford family's gala, where her marriage certificate with Tarquin was publicly unveiled, everyone knew about her and Tarquin's union.

The looks Elysia received were mixed.

Some were envious, some jealous, and some disdainful.

The disdain wasn't aimed at Mrs. Bradford's title but at Elysia's background.

The amusement park wasn't officially open yet; today was just a soft opening, attended mostly by friends and acquaintances of the Denton family, as well as business connections.

Given the Denton family's status, it was no surprise that their guests were also from the upper crust, all too aware of Elysia and Tarquin's situation. Jessamine, caught up in greeting a few influential ladies with kids, immediately brightened upon seeing Elysia and approached her with a smile, "Elysia!"

Elysia returned the smile.

"I'm so glad you could make it. I was actually planning to have you over tomorrow for a chat, but then I thought about all the fun stuff here!

The kids will absolutely love it, so I gave you a call on a whim. I hope it wasn't too inconvenient?"

"Not at all, we were just kicking a ball around in the yard when you called, and the kids were thrilled at the mention of the amusement park. They couldn't be happier."

She'd been reluctant to go out at first, but the kids were eager, and she hadn't seen Corbin in a while, so it seemed like a good opportunity to catch up.

Jessamine glanced towards Evan, Emmett, and Baby, "Missing a couple, I see?"

Chapter 989

Elysia grinned, "Those two are probably cooking up some mischief at home, didn't want to come out and play."

"Then we'll make plans next time. Let's see, this one's Emmett, and this is... Evan!"

Evan blinked his big, curious eyes.

"How did you know it was me?"

Jessamine laughed, "Elliot and Elijah are always dressed in little suits, but you're the one who loves wearing sporty gear."

Evan puffed out his chest, "I'm the coolest in our family!"

Jessamine's laugh brightened, and she affectionately pinched Evan's cheek,

"Evan is cool and handsome, the coolest kid on the block."

She didn't forget to praise Emmett, "I know Emmett is quite the little fashion guru, incredibly impressive."

Emmett immediately pulled out a small bottle of perfume from his backpack, "For you."

"Aw, thanks, Emmett."

Jessamine quickly accepted it, then looked towards Baby, a glint of affection in her eyes, before cheerfully greeting,

"This must be Baby, so adorable and cuddly."

Baby politely greeted, "Hello."

"Hello, Baby. Today's my treat, all you can eat, play, and happiness, sound good?"

"Yep, thank you."

Baby followed Evan and Emmett to the claw machine, trying to grab some toys.

Jessamine whispered to Elysia,

"I've heard quite a bit about Baby and Keith from Keaton, it's been a roller coaster... But thankfully, it's a happy ending now."

Elysia sighed with relief as she watched Baby, "Yes, thankfully, it ended well."

"Congratulations, Elysia, a complete family now."

Elysia smiled, "Now that Corbin is stable, you might consider having another one."

Jessamine smiled and leaned in, whispering to Elysia,

"Just between us, I already am."

Elysia's eyes lit up, instinctively glancing at Jessamine's stomach, whispering, "How many months?"

"Just two months. This little one's a survivor, been through so much with Corbin traveling, even almost got stuck abroad, but we made it." "It's fate!"

Jessamine beamed with happiness,

"Yes, all about fate, we're meant to be a family. Let's take the kids inside, there's a playroom, full of stuff kids love, Corbin's in there." Elysia nodded, calling Evan, Emmett, and Baby to follow Jessamine inside.

The two chatted and laughed, as close as sisters.

A few high-society ladies pursed their lips, dripping with envy,

"Jessamine really lacks foresight, mingling with anyone, not considering how long Mrs. Bradford, Elysia Thorne, will last in her position!" "She'll last, I heard Mr. Bradford is quite smitten with her."

"Ha, what's love got to do with it? Every couple's in love at the start. Love fades, and love alone won't secure a spot in high society!" "Traditionally, a woman needs her family's backing to hold her place in high society, without that, let's see how long she lasts!" Mention of her family energized the group,

"I heard Ms. Thorne's family is from some backwater, utterly destitute, barely making ends meet, but who knows for sure."

"Being poor is still better than having no family. I heard her parents died early, the Thornes took her in."

"So, she's an orphan? That's even worse, orphans struggle to find their footing in high society. Today she's Mrs. Bradford, tomorrow she might be discarded."

"One should be careful with their words as they are with their diet!" a cold voice cut through their gossip.

Chapter 990

The ladies of high society furrowed their brows, searching for the source of the voice.

A young woman, dressed simply with black-rimmed glasses, looked at them coldly.

"Jealousy breeds malice. Uplifting oneself by demeaning others is no virtue. Perhaps you should ponder how to improve yourselves and find your own happiness," she said coldly, adjusting her glasses before turning to leave.

The socialites glared at her, biting their lips in silent fury.

Elysia and Jessamine had been eavesdropping from behind a pillar, catching every word of mockery from the women and the young lady's sharp retort.

Corbin was away from their small private room, and as they came out looking for him, they happened upon the gossiping group.

Jessamine had been ready to confront them but was held back by Elysia.

After all, it was their first day of business trial, and it wouldn't look good to start a conflict, especially since she was the owner.

They hadn't expected someone to stand up for them, especially not a young lady.

Elysia, watching the girl leave, asked Jessamine, "Who was that girl? Do you know her?"

"Yeah, she's my brother's fiancée, chosen by my parents, Beatrix Sutton from the affluent Sutton family."

Elysia now understood why the socialites held their tongues.

The Huber family was well-respected, and with Corbin being close friends with Tarquin, no one dared to cross him or his future wife. "Elysia, about those ladies gossiping earlier, I'll blacklist them later! Don't take their nonsense to heart. They'll end up as divorced socialites, and you won't. Tarquin is devoted; once he's made his choice, it's for life. And if you're willing, the Huber family would be honored to stand in as your family. My parents adore you, praising your strength, independence, and optimism. They've wanted to formally acknowledge you as family for a while now." Elysia felt grateful, "Don't worry about me. Business is business, and I appreciate your parents' affection. I'll visit them when they have the time." "They'd make time any day for you," Jessamine chuckled.

They moved on, not dwelling on the incident, and went to find Corbin. Before leaving, Elysia gave Beatrix another look, appreciative of her support, even without knowing her well.

That evening, returning home around nine after dinner with Jessamine, Elysia ushered her kids to bed. Once in her bedroom, she couldn't resist asking Tarquin, "Is there something you want to tell me?"

Tarquin had been looking at her strangely since she walked in.

"I heard from Corbin that some women were gossiping about you today?"

Elysia was surprised, "How did he know? Oh right, Beatrix must've told him! Some women were bad-mouthing me today, and Beatrix stood up for

me."

"I've heard. Jessamine has warned those women already. Don't let them affect your mood."

Tarquin wasn't concerned about Beatrix. Little did anyone know, she would later cause quite a stir.

Elysia smiled in response, "I won't let their words bother me. I've been through worse and can handle much more than petty gossip."