

## Bound love 101

### Chapter 101:

Knowing Elyse was married, the girl nodded and said, “Alright, I’ll fill in Elyse once she’s back.” After hanging up, she replayed Jayden’s frosty voice and couldn’t help but shiver.

“Thanks a bunch, Mr. Reed. It’s a real honor for us to partner up with the TV station,” Kai said, blushing from the wine. He rose, holding his glass. “Hey, everybody, let’s raise a toast to Mr. Reed. Thank him for giving us this shot!”

The orchestra members raised their glasses in gratitude to Barnes Reed, a director at the TV station. A little tipsy, Barnes waved his hand. “I picked you because your guys are sharp and on the ball. I dig your attitude. Otherwise, why would I go for you instead of all the other orchestras out there?”

Kai was thrown off. Didn’t the TV station approach them? They had never taken the initiative to get this deal. Too sloshed to think straight, Kai forced a smile and kept drinking.

Suddenly, Barnes stood. “I’m feeling a bit woozy. I have to go now.”

“Sure thing,” Kai replied, not catching on. A few minutes later, the door opened, and four bouncers barged in.

“Elyse!” Jayden wheeled himself in and scanned the room anxiously, only to find Elyse not there. The orchestra members were baffled until the one who had received Jayden’s call on Elyse’s phone woke up with a jolt. She blurted out, “Elyse hasn’t come back from the bathroom!”

Jayden frowned. “How long has she been gone? Why hasn’t she returned?” It dawned on the girl that Elyse had been missing for quite some time.

A bodyguard approached Jayden, whispering in his ear. Jayden’s expression shifted, and he left the room. “Check the surveillance,” he ordered.

Soon, he had the footage. It showed two men carrying Elyse into the elevator, heading for room 1608. Her powerless appearance on the video was proof she’d been drugged.

The bodyguard added, “The video was tampered with, but we managed to salvage it.”

“Good. Keep digging,” Jayden commanded, nodding. The bodyguard handed over a master keycard he’d swiped from the hotel manager.

As Jayden ascended the stairs, Elyse fought for survival. Her phone was in the dining room; she couldn’t call for help. Sensing the rising temperature and numbness in her abdomen, she knew she was in trouble.

With her last ounce of strength, she crawled into the bathroom, turned on the cold water, and locked the door. She’d be damned if she let any man lay a finger on her.

Barnes reached the floor and heard the running water. He grinned eagerly. “Hey, pretty, waiting for me in there? You sure know how to play.” He moved towards the bathroom.

Hearing his sleazy laughter, Elyse bit her lip, her mind racing. Since Jayden had managed to survive a night like that, she believed she could make it too. Yet she hoped Jayden wouldn’t be too angry. If he called again and couldn’t reach her, he could think she was in danger.

Deep in thought, Elyse heard the footsteps approaching. She collapsed in the bathroom, terrified and tense. After flirting with her for a bit, Barnes noticed Elyse’s lack of response. Losing patience, he tried to open the door, but it was locked. Elyse had barricaded herself in.

Barnes resorted to kicking the door. He went again and again. The bathroom door was flimsy. Curled up in a corner, Elyse trembled, fearing it would give in. But the drug was overpowering her, and her consciousness was fading.

Finally, after several hard kicks, the door burst open. Elyse was utterly hopeless.

At the sight of her cowering, Barnes was ecstatic, about to make his move. “What the heck are you...” Barnes yelled suddenly. Next second, he was knocked to the floor.

Elyse was slipping into unconsciousness and didn’t hear the commotion outside. Soon, she was enveloped in a warm embrace. In a daze, she saw Jayden’s face.

“Jayden...”

Jayden lifted her face, realizing her condition was worse than he thought. Flushed and with affectionate eyes, she looked captivating. Her wet clothes clung to her, accentuating her figure.

Seeing Jayden, her last defense crumbled. She threw herself into his arms, seeking comfort.

Feeling her warmth and passion, Jayden was stirred. He glanced at the bodyguards by the bathroom door and ordered, “Out. Take that guy with you.”

The bodyguards complied, dragging the unconscious Barnes out and closing the door behind them.

“Hang in there, Elyse. I’ll get you to the hospital,” Jayden said, taking off his coat and draping it over her.

Elyse pushed it away weakly, moaning, “It’s too hot.”

Jayden hesitated, wanting to cover her up. He didn’t want anyone else to see her like this. But once again, he was drawn to her.

Chapter 102:

Embracing Jayden, Elyse voiced her distress with a hint of accusation. “I’m feeling so uncomfortable. Why can’t you help me?”

Feeling her soft body, Jayden took a deep breath and responded, “You’re not thinking clearly right now. Let’s discuss this when you are.”

“But I’m feeling terrible. I’m your wife, aren’t I? Why don’t you help me? Do you want other men to be with me?”

Jayden, unable to bear her words, grasped her face firmly and gritted his teeth. “How can you even suggest letting another man touch you?”

“Jayden, you are my husband. Help me,” Elyse implored, her voice desperate as she clung to him tightly, swaying slightly.

Taking another deep breath, Jayden questioned, “Are you serious about this?”

Without a word, Elyse pulled his face to hers and kissed him passionately, her technique noticeably improved. Though her body was still weak, her emotions were palpable.

Jayden, feeling turned on, scooped her into his arms and carried her steadily to the bedroom. As she lay on the bed, Elyse began to abandon herself, prompting a chuckle from Jayden.

He stood beside the bed, lifted her face gently, and peered into her eyes, blurred yet filled with longing. “Once we start this, there’s no going back. You will be mine forever after tonight.”

Lifting her chin, Elyse responded softly, “I’ve been yours for a long time already. Haven’t I married you and become your wife?”

“Not enough. I want more. I want your soul, your heart. Everything about you belongs to me,” Jayden declared, his voice hoarse as he gazed deeply into her eyes.

Confused yet compelled, Elyse took his hand and pressed it against her chest. “My heart resides here. It beats for you. It yearns for you,” she professed, her voice heavy with longing.

Already harboring feelings for her, Jayden, confronted with her confession and flirtation, could no longer suppress his desires. “From now on, you are truly my wife.”

“I always have been,” she whispered back.

Jayden began to unbutton her bra awkwardly, revealing her beneath him as his restraint faded away completely. Elyse, feeling a dizzying comfort with Jayden, relaxed fully, her body responding naturally to his touch. This comfort made her emit sounds that were uncharacteristic of her usual self.

Hearing this, Jayden let out a chuckle.

Breathlessly, Elyse inquired, “What are you laughing at?”

“At you, you little fool,” he teased gently.

In a playful yet defiant response, Elyse bit down on his shoulder hard. He winced at the pain but chose not to voice it, responding with a fervor that matched her boldness. Her moans filled the room for a long time.

At that moment, the bodyguards stationed outside the door received a call from Driscoll. “What’s going on? Why haven’t Mr. Owen and Ms. Lloyd returned yet?” Driscoll asked with concern.

One bodyguard peered towards room 1608 and whispered, “Driscoll, it seems your wishes are coming true.”

“What do you mean?” Driscoll’s voice was tinged with confusion.

“It looks like we might be expecting a baby soon,” the bodyguard hinted subtly.

Driscoll’s eyes widened in astonishment upon hearing this. After receiving confirmation, he rubbed his hands together in excitement. “Finally! They’re truly together now.”

The night had been wild. Elyse woke up with a dry mouth, gradually opening her eyes to find Jayden’s handsome face close to hers. She stared at him for a few minutes, puzzled. Weren’t they supposed to be sleeping in separate rooms? Why were they together now?

Startled, she lifted the covers, noticing hickeys scattered across her body and feeling soreness in her private parts. As she tried to piece together her thoughts, Jayden’s eyes fluttered open.

“It seems you’re struggling to accept what happened,” he observed.

“Did I sleep with you last night?” Elyse asked, her voice dull and disoriented.

“Who else would you like to have slept with?” Jayden responded icily.

That was when it hit Elyse. She had been drugged with philter. Struggling for words, she said, “I don’t clearly remember what happened.”

Jayden pulled out his phone and played a recording. His voice was clear. “Are you sure you want my help? You won’t regret this when you wake up, right?”

Then came Elyse’s voice, filled with longing. “You are my husband. I feel bad now. Why can’t you help me? Don’t you want me anymore?”

After stopping the recording, Jayden smiled slightly. “I was worried you might not remember, so I made a recording. Now we have proof.”

“I need some quiet time,” Elyse murmured, pulling the covers over her head, her cheeks burning with embarrassment.

## Chapter 103:

Shortly after Jayden ushered Elyse into the car, and they were on their way home, Elyse slumped in the back seat with her hands covering her face. Jayden assumed that her low spirits were due to her not wanting to sleep with him. The thought gave him an overwhelming sense of dread.

“If you don’t want me to touch you, then I won’t,” he said in the steadiest voice he could manage.

“It’s not that,” Elyse said, sounding both confused and exasperated. “I just have one question. Your legs. How—”

Ahem. The driver sounded like he had choked on air. The poor man was likely shocked by her words. He quickly pressed the button that drew the partition up. He knew when to make himself scarce and certainly had no intention of getting fired.

Jayden’s face darkened. He suddenly leaned over and grabbed her by the chin, forcing her to look at him. “If you really want to know, I’ll be more than happy to show you once we’re home.”

Realizing that she had said something she shouldn’t have, Elyse backed away and awkwardly hung her head. “Never mind. I’m not curious anymore.”

The rest of the drive was silent. When they reached home, they were greeted by a cheerful Driscoll. He was beaming and practically hopping on his feet.

Elyse still had to go to the studio, so she went straight to her room to take a shower and change. Jayden was planning to take a shower as well, but Driscoll stopped him before he could turn toward the stairs.

“Excuse me. There are a good number of empty rooms on the third floor. Why don’t we make the biggest one the nursery?” Driscoll’s voice was jovial as he prattled on. “Also, about that small open space in the garden. Should we turn it into a playground?”

What he said didn’t make any sense to Jayden. He frowned and asked, “Why would we need those things?”

“Why, for your and Elyse’s baby, of course,” Driscoll replied cheerfully.

Jayden opened his mouth to tell the butler he had lost his mind, but he suddenly remembered that he hadn’t worn any protection last night. His expression changed. What were the odds of a woman getting pregnant after having unprotected sex?

Driscoll seemed to know what he was thinking because the butler patted his shoulder and said, “Sometimes, once is all it takes.”

Jayden’s face darkened again. “If I may say so, it brings me great joy to see you happily settled down. And now you might be expecting the fruit of your love.”

Jayden had nothing to say to that. Driscoll was being too earnest for his own good. Besides, he and Elyse didn’t even love each other. At best, they were infatuated.

Let’s discuss those things later,” Jayden said, not wanting to dwell on the subject. He deftly maneuvered his wheelchair and went upstairs. The look of embarrassment on his face did not escape Driscoll’s notice, who only smiled wider.

After freshening up in a rush, Elyse left the villa and met up with the orchestra members. Everyone had already gathered and was chatting as they prepared for the rehearsal. It didn't look like anyone had noticed her disappearing yesterday.

Elyse meandered through the crowd and joined in their conversations as if it were the most natural thing to do. Just then, Wanda came up to her and said, "There will be a performance at the TV station. Those of you who want to participate, feel free to sign up. I was told that a surprise will be waiting at the event."

Hearing this, Rebekah was the first to raise her hand. "Count me in, Ms. Hopkins."

"Okay," Wanda nodded. "Anyone else, please come to my office later. I need to make a list of those who want to participate."

Wanda left, and Elyse was startled to find Rebekah already beside her. "Are you going to sign up too?" she asked Elyse.

Elyse had already figured out that Rebekah was the one who had drugged her water, but she made no indication of knowing this. "I don't know yet. The second round of selection will be held soon. There might be a conflict in my schedule."

"In that case, you'd better not join the performance," Rebekah said, not bothering to hide how pleased she was at the prospect of Elyse not performing at the TV station.

Elyse couldn't help but bring her down a peg. "Have you actually qualified for the second round? You should practice more, or you might make a fool of yourself by then."

That particular topic was one of Rebekah's sore spots, so Elyse definitely hit a nerve. "You think you're so good," Rebekah sneered. "Why don't you try to beat Vicky then? She is the most promising violinist candidate for this tour."

Her voice was so loud that the woman in question, Vicky Aston, turned in their direction. Elyse looked up and met her inquiring gaze.

"Sorry," Vicky said with a smile, "but I'm not really that popular. And I'm sure there are many violinists here who are much better than me."



“You’re too modest, Vicky,” Rebekah exclaimed. “My friend here is actually eyeing the position of concertmaster. She believes she is better than you.”

Elyse’s expression turned cold. “I am not your friend, Rebekah.”

“It doesn’t matter,” Vicky said with a nonchalant wave of her hand. “I’m sure we would all like to be the concertmaster. Having goals is great, but one has to be careful not to get conceited.”

Chapter 104:

Elyse sensed an underlying sarcasm in Vicky’s words. She arched an eyebrow and responded, “I never claimed to be the best, but I’d relish the chance to compete with you.”

Vicky tilted her chin up slightly, her voice dripping with pride. “I’m ready anytime.”

Ultimately, Elyse opted out of the television station’s event, choosing instead to concentrate on the next phase of the selection process. She suspected that the incident last night had been orchestrated by someone at the station.

Elyse pondered why Barnes Reed would target her. She had never interacted with him before.

Her confusion lingered until noon when the truth came to light.

Jayden made a phone call and explained, “I’ve got it. Barnes Reed claimed you volunteered to sleep with him, hoping to deepen the connection between the local TV station and the orchestra.”

Elyse’s anger flared. “How is that possible? I’ve never even met him or spoken to him. How could he fabricate such lies?”

“I suspected as much, so I had it investigated. It turns out the account impersonating you belongs to Kaelyn.”

“Kaelyn Bennett?” Elyse paused, stunned. “Why would Kaelyn engage in such absurd antics?”

“The bodyguards mentioned that paparazzi were stationed at the hotel entrance this morning. After questioning them, it was clear the photographers were hoping to snap shots of you and Barnes supposedly together,” Jayden continued calmly. “She’s trying to tarnish my reputation,” Elyse finally understood Kaelyn’s motive.

“I’ll fill you in on the rest after you’re done with work.”

With the call concluded, Elyse returned to the studio. Theo sat in his office, his gaze fixed on the beautiful woman lounging on the sofa, his expression sour.

“Kaelyn, haven’t I made it clear that you should not visit my company to see me? Don’t you understand?”

Removing her sunglasses, Kaelyn responded playfully, “It’s been so long since we’ve seen each other. I miss you.”

Theo massaged his forehead. “I’ve been wrapped up in work lately and haven’t had much time to spend with you. I’m sorry.”

“I know you’re busy, which is why I came to you.”

Kaelyn shed her coat, displaying her figure prominently. She had worn a delicate slip dress for the occasion, which looked as if it could tear at any moment.

“Just the other day, Elyse participated in the variety show I hosted.”

Theo stopped and looked up as Kaelyn moved closer. She added, “The director, Barnes Reed, at the station is a notorious playboy. Elyse hooked up with him to boost her opportunities.”

Clutching his pen, Theo demanded, “Do you have proof? You shouldn’t make such accusations without evidence.”

“If you doubt me, why not ask her yourself?” Kaelyn retorted.

A flash of anger crossed Kaelyn's eyes. Barnes hadn't shown up at the TV station today, and neither had the paparazzi delivered any incriminating photos of Elyse. Clearly, someone had shielded her.

Kaelyn had hoped to expose Elyse's infidelity and tarnish her reputation, but her plans had been thwarted. For the first time, Kaelyn realized that Elyse's fortunes had improved since her marriage to Jayden. Kaelyn no longer had the same control over her.

Yet, it didn't matter who Elyse had been with as long as Theo believed she had been with another man. Kaelyn was determined that Theo should not continue to hold affection for Elyse.

After a tense pause, Theo commanded coldly, "Get out."

Just as she began to unbutton her dress, Theo's harsh directive stopped her. Her composure wavered, and she asked anxiously, "Why are you sending me away? I can be here for you just like Elyse was."

Theo lifted his gaze and stated icily, "I've made it clear that you shouldn't visit me here at work. Even Elyse has never come to the company to see me."

Kaelyn's expression flickered before she softened her tone. "Theo, we need to talk seriously. Now that Elyse is married, perhaps we can pick up where we left off."

Theo's frown deepened. "Our story ended long ago. Do you think my kindness means I still have feelings for you? Remember how you treated me in the past. I merely pity you and try to ease the burden of someone who's suffering from depression."

Kaelyn shook her head, forcing a smile. "That can't be true. I must have upset you just now, and you said those things in the heat of the moment."

She feigned calm, took Theo's hand, and said soothingly, yet with a hint of desperation, "I'm going now. Please don't be upset."

Unable to meet his eyes, Kaelyn quickly realized how distant he had become. She grabbed her purse and hurried out. As the office door closed behind her, Theo replayed Kaelyn's words in his head. Elyse had slept with another man. Regardless of who it was, it had indeed happened.

## Chapter 105:

As the second round of the selection process drew near, Elyse dedicated herself to further practice before departing the studio, lingering an hour longer than her customary departure time. She gathered her belongings and exited the studio, patiently awaiting her driver's arrival by the roadside. Suddenly, a sleek Bentley came to a halt before her.

Furrowing her brow, Elyse stepped back with caution. As the window of the Bentley glided down, it unveiled Theo's frosty countenance, casting an aura of chill into the air. In a tone tinged with frost, Elyse inquired, "What brings you to this place?"

"Get in the car," Theo's words were succinct.

Elyse curled her lip in disdain. "Who the hell do you think you are, and why should I enter your car?"

Theo could discern Elyse's aversion toward him reflected in her gaze. For the first time, he keenly sensed her innate resistance towards him. He couldn't resist stepping out of the car and standing before her. Theo's towering presence exuded strength, adding weight to Elyse's demeanor.

Noticing the caution in Elyse's gaze, he suppressed a sigh and inquired icily, "Have you slept with someone else?"

Elyse was taken aback, puzzled by how Theo unearthed such a secret. Yet, having married Jayden long ago, intimacy was nothing out of the ordinary, was it? With a hint of resentment, Elyse replied, "My private matters are just that—private. I'm married. Please respect boundaries. Let me be. Cease these intrusive inquiries."

Her words spoken, Elyse sought to depart, baffled by Theo's sudden interest in her affairs. He had walked away from their wedding, yet now he interrogated her. He acted as though she had betrayed him. But their connection had long since faded, hadn't it?

With a furrowed brow, Elyse harbored an intense disdain for Theo, wishing to avoid any further encounters with him. "Answer me. Have you slept with someone else?" Theo demanded, his patience waning.

Exasperated, Elyse retorted, "Yes, I have. But it's not your concern."

“Not his concern,” Theo grappled with his own anger, bewildered by his visceral reaction to Elyse’s admission. He seized Elyse’s arm, pulling her towards the car. “Come with me.”

Startled, Elyse fought back, her bag becoming a weapon as she rebuked, “Are you out of your mind? Why should I go with you? My husband’s car is coming. Let go of me.”

At the mention of Elyse’s husband, Theo’s fury surged, tightening his grip. Witnessing Theo’s menacing glare, Elyse winced in pain and irritation.

Let go!” In a moment of panic, Elyse’s reaction was swift as she delivered a forceful kick to Theo’s groin, causing his face to drain of color as he instinctively covered himself with both hands.

“Theo...” His accusatory gaze bore into Elyse as if she were his sworn adversary.

Regaining her composure, Elyse stood her ground. “You hurt me first. I was just defending myself. Who gave you the right to forcefully take me away?”

Just then, her driver arrived. Spotting the car, Elyse wasted no time in making a beeline for it. But before she could climb in and escape, she cast one last glance back at Theo.

Theo remained rooted to the spot, his stare piercing and cold.

With a shaky breath, Elyse hurried into the car, urging the driver, “Quickly, let’s go home.”

“Sure,” the driver responded promptly, pulling away from the scene. It was only when Elyse was safely distanced from Theo that she allowed herself to exhale.

She couldn’t understand what was wrong with Theo, prying into her personal life like that, and how he even knew about her intimate encounter with Jayden. These questions gnawed at Elyse as she journeyed home, her mind a whirlwind of confusion.

Arriving back at the house, she was met with Jayden seated in his wheelchair, his gaze fixed on her. Her heart skipped a beat, wondering if Jayden had somehow learned of her meeting with Theo and was now upset.

To her surprise, Jayden cleared his throat and spoke. “Why wait? Let’s have dinner.”

Elyse nodded and followed Jayden to the dining room. Throughout the meal, a lingering unease hung in the air. Elyse was unable to shake the feeling that something was amiss with Jayden.

“What happened today? You seem different,” Elyse finally mustered the courage to ask, genuine concern etched in her voice.

Jayden looked up, a furrow of confusion marring his brow. “Different? I’m perfectly fine.”

Elyse couldn’t help but feel even more unsettled. Despite her lingering questions, she chose not to pursue them further. The day’s rigorous practice had left her utterly drained, longing for the comfort of her room and the solace of rest.

To her surprise, Jayden silently trailed behind her. Pausing at the door of her room, Elyse couldn’t help but inquire, her curiosity piqued, “Why have you followed me?”

Jayden’s response, though simple, carried a weight of intimacy that caught Elyse off guard. “Of course, I want to rest with you.”

Chapter 106:

Jayden remained composed and forthright. He gently pushed Elyse aside and wheeled himself into the room, leaving her feeling confused. A few moments later, Elyse gathered her thoughts and hurried after Jayden, questioning, “Aren’t we supposed to be sleeping in separate rooms? Why do you suddenly want to sleep in mine?”

Jayden looked up at her, his gaze piercing as he asked, “Don’t you want to sleep with me?”

“It’s not that I don’t want to. It’s just that I’m not yet comfortable with the idea,” Elyse admitted, finding it increasingly difficult to meet his eyes, her sense of guilt intensifying.

“I took your virginity, so it’s my responsibility to look after you,” Jayden stated matter-of-factly, scanning the room. “Besides, you are my wife. It’s only natural for us to sleep together.”

Elyse found herself speechless, unable to argue against his logic. Yet the thought nagged at her. Jayden was talking about responsibility just because he had taken her virginity. That wasn't the kind of caring she yearned for.

Concealing her disappointment, she cautiously ventured, "So, from tonight, we're to share a bed?"

Jayden nodded. "I've prepared myself mentally. You should come to terms with reality soon."

It explained why he seemed uneasy when she returned. After collecting herself, Elyse looked at Jayden thoughtfully. Then, in a low voice, she asked, "Should I help you with your shower later? Can you manage to take off your pants? I haven't done that before, and I'm worried I might not do it well."

"I don't need your help with the shower, nor with taking off my pants," Jayden responded abruptly, like a startled cat.

Embarrassed, Elyse touched her nose. She knew Jayden valued his independence and was sensitive about his disability. His legs were a subject he preferred to keep private, not wanting her to see him at his most vulnerable. "I'll go shower first, then," she announced.

She opened the wardrobe and grabbed her new pajamas. As she was about to undress, she paused and glanced back at Jayden.

Catching her look, Jayden asked, "Why aren't you undressing? Aren't you going to shower?"

Feeling awkward, Elyse replied, "Can you turn around, please?"

After a brief silence, Jayden asked bluntly, "I've already seen you naked. Why are you still shy, Elyse?"

Overwhelmed, Elyse grabbed a pillow and threw it at him. "Shame on you!"

Blushing deeply, she hurried into the bathroom with her pajamas. The pillow slid down, revealing Jayden's irritated expression. The thought crossed his mind: How dare she hit him with a pillow?

He was so angered that he almost stood from his wheelchair to confront her. But then, a scream from the bathroom halted him.

What happened? Jayden approached the bathroom door, his hand on the doorknob. He nearly burst in but managed to hold himself back.

“It’s okay. No worries,” Elyse called out, rubbing her waist where she had hurt herself after slipping in her frustration. She wasn’t about to tell him that, though.

Jayden sighed in relief upon hearing her voice, realizing only then how worried he had been.

It took Elyse nearly an hour to emerge from the bathroom, now dressed in her new pajamas. She found Jayden leaning against the bed, absorbed in a book, seemingly waiting for her.

“Why didn’t you take a shower?” Elyse asked, puzzled.

Jayden looked up at her with a hint of indifference. “You were in there for almost an hour. Did you expect me to wait for you? Isn’t there another bathroom in the house?”

Elyse’s cheeks flushed with embarrassment. “What are you waiting for? Come up here,” Jayden patted the empty space beside him and smirked. “Do you want me to pull you over here?”

The blush on her face deepened as she climbed onto the bed awkwardly and lay down next to him.

She stared at the ceiling briefly, feeling Jayden’s gaze on her. Her eyelashes fluttered as she cautiously turned to meet his eyes.

Jayden, usually so cold and reserved, seemed tonight to exude a more intense, almost magnetic allure. “Are you sure you’re clean?” he asked, pulling her close. Their body heat mingled, heightening the tension between them.

Elyse felt her nerves spike. She knew their relationship had shifted significantly since the previous night, and her feelings for him had deepened. Yet they were both completely aware now.

Her eyes darted around, her heart racing. In a soft, slightly annoyed tone, she answered, “Yes.”



“Let’s make sure,” Jayden said, his voice low and tinged with desire, his Adam’s apple moving visibly.

Flushing, Elyse gently pushed against Jayden’s firm chest and murmured, “Can we turn off the light? Let me see your face. I didn’t get a good look at you last night.”

Despite her reluctance, Jayden’s insistence overwhelmed her protests, reducing her responses to soft, resigned sighs.

## Chapter 107:

That evening, Theo sprawled on his living room sofa, a tableau of over ten wine bottles laid out before him. Drinking a glass made him momentarily clearer, yet his thoughts remained obsessively fixed on Elyse’s cold demeanor earlier in the day. It was a stark contrast to the passionate love she once showed him. Their breakup was still fresh. Had she moved on so quickly? Did she hold any affection for him anymore? Was their entire three-year relationship built on falsehoods, or had she never truly loved him at all?

These questions tormented him as if a fiery ball of frustration was wreaking havoc inside him, leaving turmoil wherever it touched. Unable to contain this internal chaos, Theo felt his irritability spike, accompanied by a growing anger without any particular cause.

He picked up his phone and keyed in Elyse’s number from memory, hesitating at the last moment on whether to make the call. Just then, his phone rang. It was Kaelyn.

His annoyance intensified, but he answered sharply, “Why are you calling me?”

Kaelyn felt a pang of worry. Theo hadn’t settled down all day, which was uncharacteristic of him. She spoke cautiously, “I’m invited to visit the Celestial Sounds Symphony’s practice tomorrow afternoon. Want to come with me?”

Didn’t Elyse work with the Celestial Sounds Symphony? Theo’s expression darkened as he queried, “Why are you asking me to visit them?”

Kaelyn anticipated this question and had readied her response. “You haven’t really spoken to Elyse since the breakup, right? I know she’s avoiding you, but now might be a good chance. Why not give it a try?”

gVlnove/scOm , the heart of fiction

Theo scoffed at the suggestion. Who did she think he was? He was Theo Ward, prideful scion of the Ward family. Humbling himself to chase after a chance to see Elyse was not his way. “No, I won’t go.”

Kaelyn wasn’t convinced he meant it. If he truly didn’t want to go, he would have ended the call already. Persisting, she said, “I’ll be at their studio at two o’clock tomorrow afternoon. I’ll wait for you.”

With that, she hung up. Theo stared at the phone where he had keyed in Elyse’s number. He looked at it repeatedly, deleted it, then reentered it several times before tossing the phone aside in frustration.

“Maybe I should go see her tomorrow. I have questions that need answers.”

When Elyse woke up that morning, supporting her body with her hands, she experienced a sharp pain in her lower body. As she looked down and noticed the marks on her skin, her cheeks blushed with embarrassment.

Memories from the previous night with Jayden, who had been persistent and forceful, suddenly came flooding back, prompting her to cover her face in a mix of emotions. Jayden, wheeling himself over in his wheelchair, appeared calm and relaxed, resembling a well-fed lion in his lazy state. “What are you doing?” he asked.

“Nothing,” Elyse replied, shaking her head. Observing the marks on her, Jayden felt a rush of inexplicable joy and satisfaction. “Get up and have breakfast. I need to head over to Peyton’s place later. You should stay here.”

While Elyse was getting dressed, she heard about Jayden’s afternoon plans. Concerned, she inquired, “Are you not feeling well?”

"I'm fine. I'm just meeting him," Jayden responded, pausing briefly. He then added, "If I finish my business early, I'll come to see you this afternoon."

Surprised by his words, Elyse's heart lifted. Uncertainly, she asked, "Really?"

"Of course. I've never lied to you," Jayden affirmed, glancing at his watch. "Go downstairs for breakfast. If you don't hurry, you'll be late."

After freshening up and changing, Elyse descended the stairs meekly. "Good morning," greeted Driscoll, who watched them with a warm smile. That morning, he had arranged their seats close together. Seeing them side by side, Driscoll felt a surge of excitement, hopeful that they might soon have a baby on the way.

Elyse quickly finished her breakfast and left. Jayden, on the other hand, was not in any rush. It was almost nine o'clock when he finally completed his meal. "Get the car ready. I'm going to see Peyton," he instructed as he rose from his wheelchair.

Driscoll, observing Jayden's determined expression, ventured a guess, "Are you planning something for your grandpa?"

"Do I look like someone who gets bullied without fighting back?" Jayden responded sharply.

Chapter 108:

A year after his car accident, Jayden, who had been pretending to be wheelchair-bound, had vanished from the business scene, slowly fading from memory. He maintained a low profile to gather strength and avoid his grandpa's manipulation, particularly after his grandpa exploited his marriage.

Driscoll nodded with respect. "I see. I'll get a car ready for you."

As Jayden fiddled with coins, he reflected on his ongoing investigation into the accident's cause. Unable to pinpoint the culprit, he cautiously continued his ruse of disability. He got in the car and drove to a coffee shop.

The waitress, noticing him, guided him courteously to a private room where Peyton and a man with gold-rimmed glasses awaited.

“Clive,” Jayden acknowledged the man in spectacles.

Clive Yates rose and extended a handshake. Peyton, watching their exchange, quipped, “We’re friends. Let’s not be so distant, okay? Handshaking. Was that really necessary?”

Clive maintained a smile but didn’t react to Peyton’s comment.

Jayden, bypassing Peyton’s interjection, got straight to the point. “My grandpa plans to use the Foster family’s land to create a new landmark.” He paused briefly before adding, “But I won’t let that happen. I intend to thwart his plans completely.”

Peyton chuckled and asked, “Are you part of the Owen family? Does your grandpa know you’re opposing him?”

“I’m just protecting myself from being forced into a marriage with someone I find repulsive,” Jayden responded. He then pointed to a map indicating a neglected parcel of land. “Peyton, this land belonging to your family was underdeveloped and unpopular. Your family paid a lot to acquire it, didn’t they?”

“Yes, that’s correct. It cost billions of dollars, and it seemed like a waste,” Peyton confirmed.

“What if we could integrate the Yates family’s hospital and Bayzee Plaza into this area? I’m also willing to invest in education, attracting prominent middle and high schools here,” Jayden proposed, his tone steady as he pointed out the locations on the map.

Peyton immediately turned serious, studied the map intently, and after a long moment, he inquired, “Bayzee Group was on the rise last year, focusing on business and entertainment. This parcel of land is fairly ordinary. How do you plan to attract them here?”

Clive chimed in, “Bayzee Group aims to establish the first business district in Watscar. Many are eager to collaborate with them. If we could secure a partnership, it would revitalize this parcel of land instantly.”

Peyton smiled slightly, intrigued. "I see your point. But who could persuade Bayzee Group to join forces with us?"

Calmly, Jayden replied, "The head of Bayzee Group will be at the charity event in three days. I suspect my grandpa will also send someone to gather information."

Exchanging knowing glances, Clive and Peyton seemed to reach a mutual understanding.

Meanwhile, Elyse rushed off to the studio for another round of tedious practice. In the afternoon, she was startled to learn that a team from the TV station would be visiting their rehearsal. The news brought Barnes to her mind unexpectedly. Could he be among the visitors?

Trying to keep her emotions under wraps, Elyse joined her orchestra members at the door to greet the TV station's team. Instead of Barnes, she saw Kaelyn and Theo.

Kaelyn, a well-known host at the station, was expected, but Theo's presence puzzled her. Were they here to flaunt their relationship?

With a subdued heart, Elyse maintained her composure and showed them around. Following the tour, a group of about seven or eight from the TV station took their seats in the front row of the auditorium, eagerly awaiting the performance.

Backstage while tuning her violin, Elyse overheard an orchestra member whispering excitedly, "Have you seen the man shadowing Kaelyn all the time? He's incredibly handsome. I heard he comes from a wealthy family."

Elyse knew exactly who was being discussed and managed a smile. "Do you know who he is?" she inquired.

"I don't know," her colleague admitted, clearly puzzled.

"That's Theo Ward, the only son of the famous Ward family," Elyse revealed.

The girl gasped, covering her mouth in shock. "Wasn't he the fiancé of Elyse?"

## Chapter 109:

When the girl thought about the complicated entanglement between Elyse and Theo, she felt really regretful. Why did she have to run her mouth and praise Theo in front of Elyse?

But Elyse just finished tuning her violin and smiled, “Don’t sweat it. It’s all in the past, and I’m doing much better now. You don’t have to beat yourself up over a trifle.”

But the girl thought Elyse was simply putting up a brave front. She quickly backtracked and proceeded to insult Theo. “Well, that Theo Ward is a good-for-nothing player anyway. You can tell at first glance. It’s a good thing you broke up with him. You definitely dodged a bullet. Just look at him and Kaelyn.” She looked around to make sure no one was listening, then added in a whisper, “If they didn’t know any better, people might think they are an item.”

The corners of Elyse’s mouth twitched. She had actually hit the nail on the head.

Soon enough, the musicians were walking to the stage and assuming their positions. They played their piece as planned.

Meanwhile, sitting in the audience, Theo’s eyes immediately singled out Elyse from the other musicians. She looked so serene and graceful as she focused on the conductor’s baton. It suddenly occurred to him that he had never seen her perform before. Whenever she invited him to one of her performances, something would always come up, and he would have no choice but to deal with it. By the time he wrapped things up, Elyse’s performance would be over.

Today would mark the very first time he would experience her music directly. It also struck him how passionate she was about her craft. It showed too. She stood out among her peers even in the distance.

Kaelyn turned to look at Theo, but his eyes were fixed on Elyse. And they were filled with a deep longing and affection.

Anger washed over her, and she clenched her hands into fists. The thing she feared the most had finally happened.

After the performance concluded, the team from the TV station stood up in unison and applauded the musicians. As the crowd dissolved into cheers and animated conversations, Theo noticed Elyse sneaking into the backstage.

He didn't think twice and followed her.

Due to the issue regarding Barnes, Elyse was wary around the media. She returned to the dressing room looking to drink some water and get some peace. She realized too late that Theo had followed her.

Considering the events that had transpired the day before, she was immediately on guard. "Why do you keep pestering me? We were over a long time ago. Just face the reality and move on with your life."

He stared at her for one long moment, and when he finally spoke, his words surprised her. "In our three years together, I don't think I've ever seen you play the violin."

Elyse's face turned stony. "So? What are you trying to say? I never took you seriously before, never showed up to any of your performances. Is that why you left me in the end?"

Elyse frowned at him. She didn't know why he was suddenly bringing up the past. No matter what flowery speech he spewed out now, it would be nothing more than hollow pretenses to her.

"Perhaps," Theo continued, "if I had set my heart on you and paid you more attention, would you have waited for me instead of marrying someone else?"

Elyse's lips curled into a disdainful smile. "Why would I wait for you?" she asked, her voice filled with disdain.

"Because you love me," Theo replied matter-of-factly. "You used to love me very much, didn't you? You sacrificed a lot for my sake."

She took a sharp breath and nodded. "I did love you. I wanted to marry you. But you failed me in the end, didn't you?"

Theo scowled at the memory of their botched wedding. “What happened that day was an accident. If you could have waited for me to settle things, I would have still married you after I returned.”

Elyse laughed at his audacity. “How dare you expect me to wait for you after everything? Did you think that if you acted all repentant now, I would be moved to forget how you wronged me?”

Her voice softened as she added, “You’re still the same as ever. You only care about yourself. Even now, you only see me as an accessory.”

Theo was astounded by her indifference. She had always pandered to him in the past. He didn’t know the Elyse that stood before him now. He reached for her but only managed to grab onto her clothes.

Still, he had used enough force to pull at her blouse that her collar slid down, exposing several hickeys on her collarbone.

Theo’s mind went blank. He didn’t even bother hiding his true emotions. His eyes flashed, and the veins on his temples bulged as he demanded, “Who the hell touched you?”

Elyse shoved his hand away and glared at him. “Who else can it be if not my husband, Jayden? That crippled bastard,” Theo gnashed his teeth together, his eyes wild and crazed.

He wasn’t even sure what he was so furious about. All he knew was that he absolutely loathed the sight of those hickeys.

Just then, Kaelyn also appeared on the scene. She hurried over to Theo and tried to coax him. “Come on, don’t get so worked up. She’s married to someone else now. She doesn’t have any feelings for you and probably never had to begin with.”

Chapter 110:

Kaelyn carried on ruthlessly. “If Elyse really loved you, why didn’t she give you a chance to fix things? It wasn’t as if you would never marry her.”



For some amazing reason, Theo found comfort in her words. Kaelyn was right – if Elyse had really loved him, how could she marry someone else? The truth was the opposite, after all. How dare she accuse him of not loving her enough when her own affections for him were all phony.

Elyse noted the shift in Theo's expression and laughed in Kaelyn's face. "I really underestimated you, huh? It was no accident that you were able to break us up. You really are something else."

gVInove/s.com, the heart of storytelling

Kaelyn sighed and acted worried. "You must have misunderstood me, Elyse. I really was having a depressive episode that time. I did beg Theo to help me, but I had no idea that it was supposed to be your wedding day. If I had known what would happen afterward, I would have preferred to endure in silence."

Sure enough, her little act worked on Theo, who instantly put an arm around Kaelyn's shoulders. "I already told you that it wasn't your fault. Why do you keep blaming yourself?"

Elyse rolled her eyes. She really couldn't stand this pathetic show these two hypocrites were putting on. She drank her water in one go, put the glass away, and made to leave.

When she passed by them, however, Theo's hand suddenly shot out and grabbed her arm. To Kaelyn's utter shock, he said to Elyse, "Divorce Jayden."

Kaelyn had never imagined ever hearing him say those words. She had done her best to stir up conflict between the two. Why couldn't Theo just give up on Elyse? She had already married someone else and even slept with that other man.

Elyse was just as shocked by this development, but her shock soon turned into disgust.

"Please, Jayden is a much better man than you. I will never divorce him."

"What is so good about that disabled man, huh?" Theo demanded. "How can he even make you happy?"

Theo had several undesirable qualities, but the one that Elyse hated most was his ego. He was always condescending to others and acted as if they ought to revere him in every way.

“He is a better man in all aspects. I would rather marry a disabled man than you.” With that, Elyse shook off Theo’s hand and strode away.

Stunned, Theo froze in place for what felt like hours.

Kaelyn walked up to him again and clasped his hands. “Are you okay?”

Theo looked at her, his face a mask of confusion. “How exactly am I not as good as Jayden? I’m so healthy. Why would Elyse think that he is the better man? Has she lost her mind?”

Before Kaelyn could reply, he continued, “Was she deliberately provoking me? I knew it. Elyse wants to take revenge and hurt me back for leaving her at the altar. Sleeping with that damn cripple is just another part of her plan. Right? Don’t you agree?”

Kaelyn choked on her words. She didn’t know what to say. Was it really that difficult for Theo to acknowledge the truth? Was he so deep in denial that he was turning delusional? She used to think that his feelings for Elyse were not genuine, but it appeared now that she had been sorely mistaken. He obviously cared for Elyse more than even he cared to admit. Things were progressing very differently from how Kaelyn hoped they would. But one thing was certain: Elyse was a ticking bomb to Theo. It was only a matter of time until he realized his true feelings for Elyse, and when that time came, Kaelyn would definitely be cast aside. Kaelyn couldn’t let that happen. She wanted to be Theo’s wife.

Meanwhile, Elyse returned to the other orchestra members and stayed with them. Not long after she emerged from backstage, so did Theo and Kaelyn. When the head of the TV station team saw them come out together, a knowing smile appeared on his face.

“My, my, Kaelyn,” he called out in a loud and teasing voice. “Are you getting married soon?”

Kaelyn’s eyes instinctively flew to Theo’s face. He had a blank expression. If anything, he looked cold and unapproachable. Her colleagues thought she was simply shy, so they didn’t pry any further.

Elyse stood a few feet away, watching Kaelyn demonstrate her acting skills. With just a few words, she was able to manipulate the media’s perspective and, therefore, the narrative. Only now did Elyse realize how pitiful she had been in the past. Why couldn’t she ever be the only one in her lover’s heart?

“I finally found you,” Elyse had almost thrown herself into a pit of sorrow when Jayden appeared behind her in his wheelchair. He took one look at her and immediately knew that she wasn’t in a good mood. He took her hand and said, “I brought afternoon tea for your peers just in case. Why don’t you tell them to go and take a break?”

Whatever sadness Elyse felt vanished in the blink of an eye. Jayden never failed to move her with his thoughtfulness. “I’m afraid we can’t leave. The people from the TV station are still here.”

“Then you can invite them as well,” Jayden replied without batting an eye. “There’s plenty enough for everyone.”