

Bound love 1021

Chapter 1021:

“Good. I’ll send the instructions soon. Just follow my lead,” Kaelyn instructed before ending the call.

Mabel stared at the dead phone, then lifted her eyes nervously to Theo, who sat across from her. “I’ve done everything you asked. When will you let me go?” she asked, trembling.

“Let you go? Did you think you had a choice here?” Theo leaned back, a cigar poised between his fingers, and crossed his legs.

“Tonight, you’re staying put to handle Kaelyn. If not, you might lose one of your legs.” Under Theo’s mocking gaze, Mabel shrank back and nodded submissively. She wouldn’t dare defy him. She had to do whatever he demanded.

“By the way, Elyse mentioned you have a lousy boyfriend. Care to tell me more about him?” Theo, clearly enjoying himself, continued to probe.

At the mention of Hyde, Mabel’s heart ached. “I don’t want to talk about him,” she said softly, turning her head away.

“Come on, tell me. Maybe I can help you,” Theo suggested.

Mabel glanced at Theo warily. “Help me? Are you really that kind?”

“If you help me catch Kaelyn, I’d be more than willing to help you in return. Don’t you want that jerk to get what he deserves?” Theo responded, raising an eyebrow.

Memories of happier times with Hyde flashed through Mabel’s mind, bringing tears to her eyes. “He really isn’t a good person, but I’m still undecided,” she admitted, sniffing.

“You haven’t fallen for him, have you?” Theo looked surprised. “That doesn’t sound like you. Do you even know what love is?”

“Of course, I know what love is,” Mabel snapped back angrily. “It’s wanting to be with someone forever. But he broke his promise.”

“That’s not an issue,” Theo responded smoothly. “I can help you get rid of him. Or, if you prefer, I can bring him back so you can end things on your terms.”

Mabel was bewildered by Theo’s offer. Why was he being so generous? What was he planning? Could this be a trap? Her mind swirled with suspicion, which didn’t escape Theo’s notice. However, he was indifferent to her dilemma. His primary interest wasn’t to help Mabel but to use her to eliminate a potential threat.

As this thought crossed his mind, he felt a surge of satisfaction. He stood up, took Mabel’s phone, and locked her in the room before leaving.

The line was noisy at first, as if Elyse was in a bustling place. After a moment, the background noise quieted down.

“Sorry, I’m at a celebration banquet. It was too loud inside, so I stepped out to talk,” Elyse said apologetically.

Chapter 1022:

“No worries. I have something important to tell you,” Theo responded. “Tonight, we’re luring the mastermind out. Kaelyn is coming personally to catch you.”

“Kaelyn is that desperate? Just for my eight-million-dollar bounty?” Elyse sounded surprised. “Is she really that strapped for cash?”

“It’s not just about the money,” Theo explained. “If something happens to you, she stands to benefit in other ways too.”

After a pause, he added, “I’ll come to pick you up later. Letting Kaelyn get to you is part of the plan, but I can’t risk anything happening to you.”

Elyse thought for a moment, then nodded. “Alright, I’ll message you once the banquet ends.”

Elyse ended the call and walked back into the restaurant. No sooner had she entered than someone with a vodka bottle approached her, inviting her to drink. She grabbed an empty glass, poured vodka halfway, toasted with a friend, took a swig, and resumed her seat.

Nearby sat Darren, whose cheeks were already glowing as he scooted over, glass in hand.

“Who picked this place? This vodka’s strong. I owe them thanks. I doubt I’ll even manage the trip back to the hotel tonight,” he said, burping loudly at the end.

Elyse laughed. “Who knows? This stuff hits fast, so maybe cut back on the drinks.”

Fueled by his drink, Darren, with a flush on his cheeks, voiced a question he had been pondering. “The tour kicked off today, yet I didn’t see Jayden. He promised he wouldn’t miss it last time I checked.”

As Elyse gripped her glass, she recalled the unanswered messages and unreturned calls from Jayden. Every night, she wrestled with fear and worry. Masking her inner bitterness with another sip, Elyse answered, “I don’t know why he didn’t show up.”

Darren scratched his head, taken aback by her reaction. After a pause, he suggested, “Aren’t you two going to fix things? It doesn’t seem like the love’s gone. Why not sit down and sort it out?”

Elyse gave a small smile and chuckled lightly. “That’s a good one. Maybe you should ask Jayden that for me.”

Darren clicked his tongue. “Me? I don’t even have his number. How am I supposed to help?”

Elyse exhaled deeply. “Exactly, it’s our issue. You can’t intervene. We need to deal with it ourselves.” Realizing he had dampened Elyse’s mood with his comment, Darren hastily added, “Don’t take it to heart. I was just making conversation. Didn’t mean to make you upset.”

He then gestured towards Quinn. “Look at that guy. We’re supposed to be celebrating, yet he’s moping alone in the corner. Total loner.”

Elyse looked over at Quinn and remarked, “Let him be. He just ended a relationship today. Maybe a bit of drinking will help him move on.”

Chapter 1023:

“He broke up with Fiona? They were together what, ten days? And they’ve split already?” Darren expressed his shock before his expression softened. He grabbed his glass and walked over to Quinn.

Quinn was nearly drunk by the time Darren approached; he squinted at him, uncertain. “Who are you? What do you want?”

“Just don’t drink by yourself. Let me join you,” Darren said, his voice ringing with compassion. Elyse returned her focus to her meal and beverage when suddenly Edward approached her.

In contrast to Darren and Quinn, Edward was accustomed to drinking heavily and mingling at lively social events. Clutching a glass, his cheeks rosy from laughter, Edward approached with a teasing grin. “Do you have any plans tonight? Let’s go out. We haven’t really dated yet.”

Elyse gave him a quick look and responded with a teasing tone, “I’ve already made plans. I’m catching up with an old friend tonight, so I can’t go out with you.”

A look of disappointment crossed Edward’s face as he pouted. “I finally got a break from my dad’s official duties because of the celebration, and now you’re busy.”

Frustration was evident on Edward’s face. Laughing, Elyse suggested, “Why don’t you come along and meet my friend?”

Edward coughed softly, his grin returning. “If you’re inviting me, I’d be happy to join.”

Elyse warned, “Just so you know, I’m not particularly fond of this friend. I can’t predict how things will go.”

Edward burst out laughing. “Don’t worry. I can handle any situation. I’ll be fine with your friends.”

Elyse kept to herself that this “old friend” was actually a former romantic rival and now an adversary. Noticing her mischievous smile, Edward couldn’t resist asking, “What’s with that sly smile? This friend isn’t a man, right? Not another ex-boyfriend? How many exes do you have? I’ve dealt with you being married before, but another ex would be too much.”

Elyse laughed, “What are you talking about? Do you really think my love life is that complicated? She’s a woman, okay? A woman!”

Relieved, Edward exhaled. “Oh, good. I was worried for a moment there. I have enough rivals in love without adding another.”

“I didn’t ask you to chase after me. Now, please leave me alone and let me enjoy my drink,” Elyse said sharply, dismissing him.

Edward’s grin widened with a mischievous glint. “I’m not going anywhere. No matter how many exes you’ve got, I’m still going to win your heart, and I’ll make sure I’m your boyfriend someday.”

Chapter 1024:

Elyse frowned, ready to turn him down, but Edward, as if reading her mind, gently pressed a finger to her lips, silencing her.

Caught off guard, Elyse found herself staring at Edward, wondering what curveball he was about to throw her way. In a soft, almost tender voice, Edward whispered, “My dear, once was enough for the hurtful words. There’s no need to repeat them.”

Elyse brushed his hand away, sighing as she said, “Then go on, be a good boy, and enjoy the evening with your friends. I just want a moment to myself.”

Edward’s shoulders rose and fell in a shrug. “Alright, but you have to promise that when you meet your friend, you’ll take me along.”

“Fine, I promise,” Elyse replied, waving him off wearily.

Pleased as punch with her agreement, Edward finally sauntered off to join the others for a drink. With her hovering shadow gone, Elyse breathed a sigh of relief. She knocked back her drink in one swift gulp, then reached for the bottle to pour another round.

“Jayden, why haven’t you come to see me yet? Do you know how well the performance went today?” Her gaze drifted into the distance before she fished out her phone, pulling up Jayden’s chat once more. The conversation was a one-sided affair, filled to the brim with her messages.

Thumb-scrolling upwards, she muttered under her breath, “Are you ignoring me on purpose? Trying to make me worry like this—it’s childish. If this is your way, at least tell me you’re safe. I’m genuinely concerned about you.” The pressure of the tour had forced Elyse to bottle up her feelings.

But now, with the first performance in the rearview mirror and some liquid courage in her system, those buried emotions were bubbling to the surface. Try as she might, she couldn’t keep a lid on them any longer.

An hour ticked by, and the banquet was winding down. The conductor’s voice rang out, “Great work, everyone! Tomorrow’s a rest day. We’ll meet again at the hall the day after to prepare for the next performance.” A chorus of cheers erupted from the group, and slowly but surely, people began to file out.

Edward made his way to the exit and spotted Elyse standing there, seemingly waiting. He bounded over excitedly, asking, “Did you wait long? I was stuck in line for the restroom. It took forever.”

Elyse shook her head. “No, I wasn’t waiting for you. I’m waiting for Theo’s car.”

Edward’s face fell faster than a lead balloon. “Theo? What’s your ex doing here? Is he tagging along to meet your friend too? Can’t you stop being so indecisive? Isn’t having me enough?”

Elyse rolled her eyes in exasperation.

A few minutes later, Theo’s car rolled up. He clocked Edward, and surprise flickered across his face, but unlike Edward, he kept his cards close to his chest. “I’m here to pick you up,” Theo said evenly. “Is he coming along too? Let’s all go together.”

Chapter 1025:

Edward's presence seemed to roll off Theo like water off a duck's back.

"Thank you," Elyse said as she got into the car.

Edward, though clearly not thrilled, followed suit.

Once inside, Edward, still green with envy, probed, "So, this woman you're going to see—she's a mutual friend of yours and Theo's?"

Elyse pondered for a moment, then nodded. "You could say that, but there's more to it."

"What do you mean?" Edward asked, sulking.

"She's closer to Theo," Elyse explained. "They've got a much stranger connection."

Suddenly, the penny dropped for Edward, and his jaw hit the floor. "Hold up, Theo, this woman isn't your ex-girlfriend, is she?"

Theo's face darkened like a storm cloud. He was itching to boot Edward out of the car.

Elyse hadn't expected Edward to hit the nail on the head so quickly. She chuckled. "You're sharp, aren't you? You figured it out right away. Thought I was being subtle."

Edward puffed up like a peacock, seizing the chance to needle Theo. He cocked an eyebrow at him, his eyes practically screaming, "See that? I'm getting gold stars from Elyse, while you're just part of her past."

Theo caught the smugness radiating off Edward and saw red. If Elyse hadn't been there, Theo might have been tempted to introduce Edward's face to his fist.

After a beat, Elyse, recalling something, asked curiously, "What about Mabel? Did you let her go?"

“Let her go?” Theo’s voice was calm, almost cold. “If she can’t lead us to Kaelyn, she’ll never walk free. She’s waiting at the agreed location,” he added with a casual shrug.

Elyse was taken aback. “She’s cooperating that easily?”

Theo’s lips curved into a wry smile. “With a bomb on her? Even if she wanted to escape, she wouldn’t get very far.”

The trio drove up to their destination, where Elyse quickly noticed Mabel, guarded closely by a circle of bodyguards.

Mabel stood in the center, appearing quite pitiful. After spending just a day with Theo, Mabel had become notably more subdued. If Elyse had realized earlier how much Mabel feared Theo, she would have had him intervene sooner.

Elyse sighed quietly, hands in her pockets, as she slowly approached. Mabel caught sight of Elyse, and a spark of hope lit up her eyes. She attempted to move towards Elyse, but the bodyguards blocked her way.

Chapter 1026:

“Elyse! Elyse! I’m here! Did you come to rescue me?” Mabel called out, brimming with excitement.

Elyse looked at the overly excited Mabel and commented playfully, “Mabel, since when were you so thrilled to see me? Just one day apart, and you’ve already changed your attitude towards me?”

Mabel shot a nervous glance at Theo, who had come along, and her expression softened. “Please help me. Theo is going to kill me.”

Elyse looked at Theo, her smile widening. “I can’t help you. You’d better plead with him instead.”

Mabel would never beg Theo; she was absolutely terrified of him and wanted nothing but to get away from him. Theo flashed a grin and asked, “What? Do you have a request for me? Let’s hear it.”

Mabel shook her head, quickly adopting a flattering smile. Elyse was momentarily taken aback by the swift change in Mabel's expression. Was Mabel only ever bold when she was around her?

Theo glanced at his watch and stated, "It's almost time. You better put on a good show. You wouldn't want to end up chopped into pieces, would you? Just behave yourself, alright?"

Theo placed a firm hand on Mabel's shoulder, causing her to lower her head even more. Elyse intervened, "Alright, stop frightening her. What if she messes up in front of Kaelyn?"

Theo smiled. "You're right. Let's get going." Elyse gestured towards a small bar in the distance. "Shall we stick to the plan?"

Mabel nodded and dutifully followed Elyse. Once they were seated, Mabel eagerly said, "You have to help me, Elyse."

"You can't just stand by and watch me die." Elyse raised an eyebrow. As soon as Theo was out of sight, Mabel's true colors emerged.

Elyse laughed lightly. "Mabel, stop fighting it. I'm not going to help you."

Mabel's look became hostile. Elyse ordered a drink, and while waiting for their meal, she said gravely, "Honestly, if you really want to survive, the person you should be pleading with is Theo, not me."

Mabel clenched her teeth. This woman was fully aware that Theo would never let her off the hook, yet she still advised her to beg him. How detached and unfeeling Elyse was!

Once the server delivered her drink, Elyse concentrated on it, choosing not to engage further with Mabel. They waited for about twenty minutes before their target, Kaelyn, finally made her appearance.

Chapter 1027:

Looking through the bar's glass window, Kaelyn caught sight of Elyse. A sense of anticipation lifted her spirits at the prospect of soon having eight million dollars. Mabel also noticed Kaelyn, placing her cup down and frowning as she observed Kaelyn making her way to them.

Kaelyn entered briskly, her enthusiasm clear. "It's been quite some time! I saw you on TV today, Elyse. You're still as remarkable as ever."

Elyse gave a mocking smile. "Oh, so you do keep up with television."

Kaelyn sat down, gently patted Mabel's hand, and smiled warmly. "You've done well. Once we close this deal, I'll arrange a nice, long vacation for you. You'll be able to enjoy some quality time with Hyde."

Perhaps I should even purchase some plane tickets for the two of you and send you off on a romantic getaway."

Kaelyn continued to jest, seemingly unaware of the change in Mabel's expression. Particularly when Kaelyn brought up Hyde, Mabel's expression was quite something to see.

Elyse replied, "You're so generous, buying plane tickets and planning vacations for them. I'm genuinely touched."

Kaelyn looked at Elyse and, with a sweet tone, said, "You're not me, so you can't understand the joy of looking after your friend. I really cherish it." At that, Elyse burst into laughter.

Did Kaelyn actually find pleasure in sending her man to another woman's bed? Elyse couldn't fathom how Kaelyn took delight in such actions.

Kaelyn checked her watch. "The folks from the black market will arrive shortly. Let's all stay composed." Then, turning back to Elyse with a smile, Kaelyn suggested, "It's been quite some time since we last saw each other. How about I treat you to a drink?"

Elyse picked up her drink. "No need. I've already had enough to drink tonight. I don't want any more alcohol."

Kaelyn sighed. "What a pity. This could have been your last drink."

Elyse raised an eyebrow. “Really? Why don’t you get one for yourself?”

Kaelyn rested her chin on her hand and smiled. “I have plenty of opportunities to drink. But your time is running out.”

Elyse looked at Mabel, who sat silently with her head down, and asked playfully, “Does she even grasp what she’s saying? Do you think she should have her last drink?”

After a brief silence, Mabel whispered, “Yes.”

Mabel’s voice was so faint that Kaelyn didn’t hear it. Just as Kaelyn was about to question why Mabel was acting so peculiar tonight, a discreet black BMW pulled up in front of the bar.

Chapter 1028:

When Kaelyn saw the car, her face brightened with anticipation, and she hurried outside. Through the bar’s window, Elyse could clearly see Kaelyn talking with two men.

They occasionally looked towards Elyse, making her feel distinctly like a piece of merchandise. But who was truly the prey? That was yet to be determined.

Just as the two men were about to enter the bar following Kaelyn, they were suddenly shot in the head. Blood splattered onto Kaelyn, who was closest to them. She raised a hand to wipe the blood from her face and looked down at the lifeless bodies of the two men.

For the first time, her face showed panic. She wasn’t certain if the assassin had targeted the men or her.

She hurried back into the bar, planning to have Mabel call for help, but as she entered, she realized something was amiss. At some point, the bar had emptied of all other patrons. Only Elyse and Mabel were still seated.

When Kaelyn’s eyes met Elyse’s, she saw that Elyse had remained calm throughout, as if she were fully aware of what was unfolding. This composure suggested that Elyse was in on something.

Kaelyn then turned to Mabel, who had been attempting to blend into the background. Without a second thought, Kaelyn slapped Mabel across the face, furiously accusing, “You wretched traitor! Did you disclose my plans to her?”

Mabel hadn’t anticipated Kaelyn striking her. Kaelyn had always portrayed herself as gentle and understanding around her. Mabel had never expected to see Kaelyn transform into the furious figure she now confronted.

Shocked by Kaelyn’s sudden outburst, Mabel was momentarily paralyzed. Seeing Mabel’s stunned look, Kaelyn grew even more irate, her teeth clenched. “Stop pretending. Did you leak everything to Elyse?”

Mabel held her cheek and responded, “Do you really think I would betray you?”

Despite Mabel having actually betrayed Kaelyn, she felt compelled to deny it. If it hadn’t been for Theo’s threats, she might have remained silent about the deal with the black market but would not have actively worked against Kaelyn.

Now, Kaelyn had to kiss goodbye to eight million dollars, and two black market individuals had been killed during their meet-up. The black market would undoubtedly be wary of her for a long time.

Kaelyn was in no position to consider whether Mabel might betray her. In her mind, Mabel was the only one who could have informed Elyse about the deal. She couldn’t think of anyone else.

As Kaelyn and Mabel argued, Elyse sent a message to Theo, asking him to come and detain Kaelyn before she had a chance to escape. A few minutes later, Kaelyn was shocked when Theo entered the bar.

Chapter 1029:

Kaelyn asked, “Theo, how did you find me here?”

Theo gave a slight smile as he approached Mabel. He reached out and gently patted Mabel on the head, saying, “Well, my dear friend here told me about it.”

Feeling intimidated by Theo's presence, Mabel was too overwhelmed to speak and merely nodded in agreement.

It was at this moment that Kaelyn realized the full extent of the betrayal. Mabel had completely exposed her plans. Kaelyn glared at Mabel for a long while before finally gritting her teeth and asking, "How could you do this to me? Wasn't I good to you?"

Struggling to accept the betrayal, Kaelyn continued, "When Elyse was giving you trouble, when your parents were ruined by her, and when debt collectors were chasing you, I was the one who sheltered you.

You swore lifelong loyalty to me. But now, you've turned on me, just for Theo?"

As Kaelyn spoke, tears started to stream down her cheeks. Choking back her emotions, she sobbed, "I cared for you as if you were my own little sister. Is this how you repay my kindness?"

Kaelyn cried out in indignation, "Is this how you repay someone who's always had your back?"

Mabel, her patience worn thin, fired back, "Are you out of your mind? All you ever scream about is betrayal—open your eyes! Theo had me cornered!"

She added, "And you're one to talk! You tried to take Theo out yourself. It could've saved us all if you'd actually finished the job. Why didn't you follow through? Now I'm stuck in this mess!"

Hearing this, Elyse couldn't help but burst into laughter. This drama was pure entertainment for her. Both women—one hopelessly self-absorbed and the other shamelessly selfish—were cut from the same cloth.

When their goals aligned, Mabel and Kaelyn were like two peas in a pod. But the moment their interests clashed, they turned on each other, blaming the other for stepping on their toes.

Elyse smirked, adding dryly, "What's the point of this bickering? In the end, you're both going down together." Theo's eyes locked onto Kaelyn with a sinister grin. "Well, well, well, my first love. It's been a while. Seeing you still so full of life—I have to say, it warms my heart."

Kaelyn froze, a chill of unease creeping down her spine. Sure, she had influence, but personal strength? Not so much. Her organization ran like clockwork, thanks to her loyal subordinates, not her own muscle.

Desperate, she thought of sending out a distress signal to her men. If she didn't, who knew what Theo had in store for her once she was at his mercy?

Chapter 1030:

As Kaelyn discreetly slipped her hand toward her pocket, Theo, ever sharp-eyed, snatched it before she could act. He laughed darkly. "Still pulling your little tricks, even with death breathing down your neck? What's the point?"

Turning to Mabel, he gently tapped her face, his voice dripping with mockery. "Look at your friend here. At least she knows how to keep quiet. Who would've thought—despite everything in the past, Mabel and I are friends now."

Completely broken down, Mabel lowered her head in silence, trembling like a leaf. Seeing Mabel reduced to this spineless wreck filled Kaelyn with frustration. If only Mabel hadn't botched her mission, she wouldn't have walked straight into Theo's trap.

Meanwhile, Edward, who had been observing the scene in silence, finally pieced things together. The fierce woman standing before him wasn't just any rival; she was Elyse's "old friend" and Theo's former lover.

Scratching his head in disbelief, Edward turned to Elyse. "I thought tonight would be a cozy little reunion. Turned out I was utterly wrong."

Elyse chuckled at his remark. "You were the one who insisted on coming."

Edward grinned, a little sheepish. "I figured it'd be fun. Plus, now I'm getting a front-row seat to this chapter of your past."

Elyse's gaze drifted to Kaelyn, whose defiant face betrayed a sense of desperation. With a mocking smile, Elyse teased, "Need me to order you a drink, Kaelyn? This might be your last chance for one, now that you're at Theo's mercy."

Unwilling to let Elyse get the upper hand, Kaelyn spat out curses, but when her words didn't land, she shifted her expression. A wicked grin formed as she sneered, "Elyse, I bet you haven't heard from Jayden in a while, have you?"

The mention of Jayden's name made Elyse's face go rigid, her amusement instantly replaced by cold suspicion. "What are you getting at?" Elyse demanded, her voice hard.

Kaelyn's grin widened, her eyes gleaming with malice. "Aren't you curious why he's been silent? Why he's gone off the grid?"

Elyse didn't respond, waiting for Kaelyn to finish.

With a cruel laugh, Kaelyn delivered her blow. "Jayden has not been in touch because he's dead. He was killed in a military skirmish. Bet you didn't see that coming, did you? He's gone, Elyse, for good."

Elyse's first reaction was pure disbelief. There was no way Jayden could be dead. Kaelyn had to be lying, trying to get under her skin with one last cruel jab before she was taken away.

But Kaelyn, with a malicious glint in her eye, seemed to sense Elyse's doubts. "You think I'm just spinning tales, don't you? That I'd make up something this twisted about Jayden just to hurt you?"

Elyse's fists clenched, her voice steady but cold. "Kaelyn, you're the one with a death sentence hanging over you, and yet you're still spitting venom. Maybe you should focus on your own fate instead of cursing others."