

Bound love 1121

Chapter 1121:

With that, she stormed off to her room, seething. Although Jayden faced her wrath, he was relieved that she remained unaware of their activities.

Had she discovered that he and Edward ventured out at night to steal that violin, she certainly would have unleashed her fury upon them.

Jayden found George's actions peculiar. It was quite late, yet the older man remained wide awake, sitting in silence.

Jayden pondered what thoughts occupied George's mind as he sat there alone. After quickly freshening up, Jayden lay back down and fell into a deep slumber.

Early the next morning, as dawn broke, Elyse didn't call anyone but went directly to Anthony's. When Anthony awoke and saw Elyse standing in the yard, he was startled and quickly asked, "How long have you been here?"

"Just a little while," Elyse replied, outlining her intentions. "I want to speak with your dad. I don't want to miss the opportunity to acquire that violin."

Anthony felt touched by her earnestness. He glanced at his father's room and said, "I'll assist you, but my dad is still asleep. He must have stayed up late last night."

Elyse appeared puzzled. "Staying up late?"

"Yes, whenever he is in a foul mood, he spends a long time in the warehouse. I estimate he went to bed around three or four in the morning."

Elyse nodded in understanding. "In that case, I'll wait for him to wake up before returning."

Anthony replied, "Sure. I'll message you as soon as he's up. You can come right over."

Elyse agreed and turned to leave. Anthony sighed, contemplating that he had no intention of opening the shop that day. He wished to have an earnest conversation with his dad regarding the situation.

Elyse then made her way to the ranch. The ranch owner noticed Elyse alone and asked curiously, "Where's your boyfriend? Why didn't he come with you?"

Elyse shook her head, responding, "I prefer some time alone. I'm not really inclined to bring him along."

The ranch owner nodded, smiling as she said, "I understand. When a couple is too close, it leaves no room to breathe. Even in a good relationship, there should be moments for separation."

Elyse scratched her head, reluctant to explain her circumstances with Jayden to the owner, so she allowed the misunderstanding to persist.

Noticing Elyse's apparent unhappiness, the ranch owner offered her some bread and milk, asking with concern, "You don't seem happy. Did something occur?"

Elyse nodded. "You could say I've encountered a bit of a roadblock. There's a violin maker near your ranch who possesses a violin I desperately want to purchase, but he refuses to sell it to me."

Chapter 1122:

The ranch owner quickly understood. "You're referring to George. I know him well; he's my neighbor. The violin you mentioned was crafted for Benson, right?"

Elyse's expression clouded with uncertainty as she muttered, "Benson?"

The woman who owned the ranch reminisced, "That's correct. George handcrafted a violin that was meant for Benson. Unfortunately, the process took longer than expected, and Benson had to leave. He couldn't wait around.

So, they made a plan: Benson would return to pick it up once it was done."

She hesitated, her smile tinged with sadness. “But Benson never came back. Nearly three decades have passed, and George has waited all that time. No one knows what became of him.”

Elyse kept quiet, unsure of how to respond.

The ranch owner sighed, her mind drifting back in time. “Honestly, I expected George to sell the violin long ago. But he never gave up hope. It’s been almost thirty years. If nothing had happened, why wouldn’t Benson have returned by now?”

Intrigued, Elyse tilted her head. “Did Benson leave a contact number? Did you try calling him?”

The owner pondered for a moment, then replied, “He did give us a number, and at first, we were able to reach him. But one day, the line went dead. We had no other way to track him down.”

Elyse sighed. “It’s such a shame. If only there had been a way to find him.”

The owner folded her arms, nodding in agreement. “I remember seeing Benson when I was a child. He didn’t look well when he came here. He always seemed so downhearted, rarely smiling.”

Elyse took a sip of her warm drink, curious. “What happened next?”

The owner smiled fondly. “Benson and George hit it off right away. Benson could play, and George was a violin maker. They found common ground. That’s when George began to think of Benson as more than just a passing guest.”

After a pause, Elyse asked, “Was Benson any good at playing the violin?”

The owner replied earnestly, “He was incredibly talented. Every time he played, it felt like the most moving sound in the world.

I used to beg him to perform for me, and he was kind enough to do it often.”

Elyse continued, “Do you remember what Benson liked to play most?”

The owner frowned, trying to recall. “I’m not sure what his favorite was, but there’s one piece I’ll never forget.”

Elyse leaned in. “Which one?”

“Valse Sentimentale.” The owner’s face grew somber as she spoke. “He was in tears while playing it. He seemed heartbroken.”

Chapter 1123:

Suddenly, the owner seemed to recall something. “George was there with Benson when he played it, keeping him company.”

Elyse nodded thoughtfully, her mind churning with ideas.

As she sat in the wooden chair, Elyse slowly sipped her sweet milk. Suddenly, a smile crossed her face as she asked, “Your husband should be back, right?”

The owner laughed, her mood lifting. “He’s out tending the cattle. When he returns, I’ll make sure he meets you.”

Elyse smiled and said, “Great! Once I collect my violin, I’ll play a few pieces for you both.”

The owner looked pleasantly surprised. “Are you sure? It’s no trouble?”

Shaking her head, Elyse smiled as the breeze played with her hair. “I’d love to. You and your husband can pick the songs, and I’ll perform them.”

The owner’s eyes twinkled. “That sounds amazing. I’ll let him know.”

Elyse tilted her head back, letting the soft sunlight kiss her face. After a few moments, she breathed deeply. “No wonder I’m so fond of this place. The sunlight, the fresh air, the milk—it’s all perfect. And the cows! I really love it here.”

The ranch owner gave her a playful wink. “Well, if you’re that fond of it, why don’t you stay a while longer? I feel like we could become quite close.”

As the sun climbed to its zenith, Elyse’s phone buzzed with a call from Anthony. His voice crackled through the speaker, laden with uncertainty. “My dad’s not keen on talking with you,” he explained, “but he’s willing to hear you out. Can you work with that?”

Elyse’s response was swift and positive. “Absolutely. Even if he just listens, that’s enough for me.”

Anthony exhaled audibly, relief coloring his words. “Thank goodness. I was worried you’d balk. My dad can be... well, difficult.”

After ending the call, Elyse shrugged on her coat. As she reached for the door, she nearly collided with the ranch owner.

The woman’s eyes lit up with surprise. “Heading out? But lunch is almost ready—my husband’s firing up the grill.”

Elyse flashed a warm smile. “I’ve got to try and win George over. If I succeed, I’ll rush back to celebrate with you.”

Laughter bubbled from the ranch owner as she called out, “Come back either way! I’ll set some barbecue aside for you.”

With a grateful nod, Elyse hurried off to Anthony’s place.

She arrived to find Anthony pacing the yard, anxiety etched across his features.

Chapter 1124:

Elyse approached him, her voice gentle. “What’s got you so wound up?”

He whirled to face her, pinching the bridge of his nose. "You made it. One minute my dad agrees to see you, the next he's shutting everyone out. He won't even listen now."

Frustration simmered beneath Anthony's words, his father's mercurial moods clearly taking their toll.

Elyse placed a reassuring hand on his arm. "Deep breaths. I might still be able to reach him."

She paused, an idea forming. "Any chance I could borrow a violin?"

Anthony nodded, disappearing into the house. He returned moments later, cradling a pristine instrument. "It's new, though. You'll need to tune it yourself."

"Not a problem," Elyse replied, accepting the violin with reverent hands.

She crouched down, fingers dancing across the strings as she coaxed it into perfect pitch.

Anthony watched, increasingly convinced of Elyse's prowess. Perhaps entrusting her with that violin wasn't such a gamble after all.

Rising to her feet, Elyse positioned herself in the yard's center. With a deep breath, she lifted the violin and began to play. The haunting strains of "Valse Sentimentale" filled the air, weaving a spell around them both.

As the music washed over him, Anthony's expression went blank. A nagging sense of familiarity tugged at his mind, as if some long-buried memory struggled to surface.

Just as Anthony grasped at the elusive recollection, a creak cut through the melody. The warehouse door swung open, revealing George. Silver-haired and weathered, he stood half-bathed in sunlight, his eyes shrouded in shadow.

Anthony gaped, shocked to see his father voluntarily emerge.

Elyse, lost in the music, played on with her eyes closed. As the final note faded, she looked up, meeting George's inscrutable gaze.

A heavy silence stretched between them before George's gruff voice broke it. "What's your name?"

"I'm Elyse Lloyd. Nice to meet you," she replied, seizing the moment. "I know this violin means a great deal to you, but I hope we can discuss its purchase."

A derisive snort escaped George. "Presumptuous and foolhardy, aren't you?"

Elyse's lips curved into a gentle smile. "I had to get your attention somehow."

Chapter 1125:

George's piercing stare bore into her. "Why that piece? What do you know about it?"

Instead of answering, Elyse countered with her own question. "Since you're here, how about I play something else for you?"

George's brow furrowed. "What are you playing at?"

Elyse's smile never wavered as she announced, "Violin Concerto in E Minor."

As the first notes soared, George's eyes widened in shock.

Anthony looked on, bewildered by his father's intense reaction to the admittedly beautiful piece.

The crunch of tires heralded new arrivals. Jayden and Edward pulled up, the music drawing them in.

"See? I knew she'd be here," Jayden remarked, a hint of smugness in his tone.

Edward's face hardened. "Fine, you were right," he ground out.

Jayden exited the car with fluid grace. "It's not about being right. I simply understand her."

His casual confidence grated on Edward, whose irritation simmered just below the surface.

As they entered the yard, both men stopped short. George stood before them, tears streaming down his weathered cheeks.

Their jaws dropped; they were unable to understand why the old man was crying.

Elyse lowered her bow, surprise etched across her features. She had hoped to move George, but the depth of his emotion caught her off guard.

George's uncontrolled sobbing sent a shock of panic through Elyse. In a desperate tone, she turned to Anthony and said, "Get your dad some tissues, please!"

Startled, Anthony quickly returned to the moment and rushed inside the house to grab some tissues.

George seemed lost in his thoughts. After a short while, he looked at Elyse and said, "I'm so sorry. I need to rest now. Can we continue this conversation tomorrow?"

Realizing that George was too overwhelmed to talk further, Elyse nodded in agreement. "We'll talk tomorrow, then."

Elyse passed the violin back to Anthony and watched as he helped George make his way back to the cabin.

Elyse hesitated, touching her head and wondering whether her approach to the situation had been helpful or if it had made things worse.

Chapter 1126:

Turning to see Jayden and Edward, she asked, "What were you two up to last night? You both slept until noon."

Jayden looked at Edward, who was clearly embarrassed, and defensively blurted out, “Why are you staring at me? I don’t know what went on yesterday. I was in my room, just resting!”

Elyse gave Edward a brief look but chose not to press further. “I’m going to the ranch,” she said. “The owner invited me to a barbecue.”

“Thanks,” Elyse said, quickly walking to the car.

As they left, Anthony, watching from the window, turned to George and informed him, “Dad, they’re gone.”

George, lost in sorrow, continued to cry. Unable to watch his father suffer, Anthony approached and sat down opposite him. “Dad, what’s bothering you?” he asked with concern. “Is there something you can’t tell me?”

George wiped his tears and leaned back on the sofa, looking tired. After a long pause, he said, “Let that young lady come and talk to me tomorrow. There are some things I need to confirm with her.”

Anthony looked puzzled. “What do you need to confirm with her?”

George stared blankly into space, his thoughts drifting. “She can play ‘Valse Sentimentale’ and ‘Violin Concerto in E Minor,’” he said distantly.

Anthony grew more confused. “Just because she can play those pieces?”

George closed his eyes, beginning to rest.

Anthony continued talking. “I found out that Elyse won first prize at the recent Swan Cup. She’s a rising star in the music scene. She has a broad repertoire. What does knowing those two pieces prove?”

When Anthony mentioned the “Swan Cup,” George’s eyes briefly flickered open before closing again.

Anthony crossed his arms and laughed lightly. “Her instructor is Cody Tucker. You really like Cody, right? Why don’t we take this opportunity to get closer to Elyse? Maybe we’ll even meet the real Cody someday.”

“Cody?” George exclaimed, suddenly enthusiastic. “You mean her instructor is Cody Tucker? You’re not making this up, are you?”

Anthony’s expression twisted with confusion. “Why would I lie about something like this? It’s been all over the news. Do you think I’d make up such a thing?”

“Could it really be possible that...”

George stood up, his initial shock slowly turning into deep thought. He headed to his room and began digging through a stack of boxes.

Chapter 1127:

Anthony held his head, feeling a sharp headache coming on. Overwhelmed with confusion, he asked, “Dad, what’s going on? One moment, you won’t sell the violin, and the next, you’re turning the house upside down. What’s bothering you?”

George didn’t respond to Anthony’s questions.

Realizing his father’s reluctance to discuss it, Anthony gave up on getting an explanation. “Fine, have it your way. I’m closing the shop down for the day, so I might as well stick around and deal with your craziness.”

In the car, Elyse kept glancing back occasionally. Eventually, she couldn’t take it anymore. “Stop looking at me like that,” she said. “You make me feel like a cruel villain who’s abandoned a helpless animal.”

“You’re a villain, a really mean villain! Why won’t you ride in the back with me?” Edward sulked, moaning as though he had been greatly wronged.

Elyse smirked. She had long figured out Edward’s tricks. “So, how should I make it up to you?” she asked calmly.

“Grill me some steak,” Edward asked without hesitation.

Jayden laughed even louder this time while Elyse kept her cool.

“Alright, but I’ve never grilled anything before. Don’t blame me if it’s a disaster.”

Edward’s face lit up with delight. “I love everything you cook. I’ll eat as much as you make,” he said joyfully.

Jayden teased him further, “Just don’t explode from eating too much.”

Edward’s laughter rang out, tinged with bitterness. “You’re just jealous because you can’t have it. If I were you, I’d zip it and fall in line. Remember, Elyse didn’t promise to whip up a barbecue feast for you.”

Jayden’s lips curled into a cold smirk. Who said he couldn’t have it? Even if denied, he’d find a way. How could he possibly miss out on the food his wife cooked?

As they pulled into the ranch, the owner and her husband stood waiting in the parking lot.

“Sweetie, come here! I’ve got a treat ready for you,” the ranch owner called out, waving enthusiastically from afar.

Elyse bounded out of the car, rushing toward her with a spring in her step.

After embracing Elyse warmly, the ranch owner gestured to her husband. “This is my better half. Just call him Ken.”

Elyse cocked her head, eyes twinkling with curiosity. “You haven’t told me your name yet.”

“Linda! I’m the ever-cheerful Linda,” she giggled, playfully ducking into Ken’s arms.

Ken enveloped Linda in a tender embrace, his eyes brimming with adoration. Their happiness was palpable.

Chapter 1128:

A twinge of envy pricked at Elyse's heart, despite the joy she witnessed in their relationship. For reasons she couldn't quite pinpoint, it stung a little.

Instinctively, Elyse glanced back to see Jayden approaching, his face a mask of indifference.

She pouted inwardly, thinking Jayden would probably never learn to dote on her the way Ken did with Linda.

As Jayden drew near, his brow furrowed in confusion. "Why are you staring at me?"

"Who said I was looking at you? Don't flatter yourself," Elyse huffed, unaware of the irritation creeping into her voice.

Jayden arched an eyebrow. Noticing Edward was preoccupied with greeting Linda and Ken, he leaned in close, his breath tickling Elyse's ear.

"You were totally eyeing me. Bet you wish I'd hold you like Ken does Linda." With that, Jayden mischievously blew a soft puff of air into Elyse's ear, light as gossamer.

Elyse shivered involuntarily, her hand flying to cover her ear as her face flushed crimson.

She darted away, scolding, "Don't treat me like that."

Jayden didn't miss the telltale redness blooming on her cheeks. He straightened up, his tone suddenly serious. "Alright, I'll do as you say."

Elyse knew Jayden was deliberately teasing her, but she chose to ignore him. She linked arms with Linda and strode ahead briskly.

Linda, perplexed by their pace, asked, “What’s the rush? Are you that hungry?”

Elyse nodded emphatically. “Famished. Let’s go feast on some barbecue.”

“Hold on! We can’t handle all the grilling ourselves. We’ve got three strapping men here. Let them cook!” Linda exclaimed, then spun around, calling out to the men, “Whoever grills the best meat gets a special reward!”

Ken sprang into action, dashing ahead.

Jayden followed hot on Ken’s heels.

Edward stood rooted to the spot, bewildered. He hadn’t quite caught Linda’s words, so he hurried to catch up with Elyse, curiosity evident in his voice. “What did Linda just say? Why did they bolt like that?”

Elyse felt a twinge of awkwardness, but before she could respond, Linda interjected seriously, “Don’t fret about it. You can stroll with us.”

Edward’s face split into a grin. “Fine by me.”

As he spoke, his gaze surreptitiously drifted toward Elyse.

With Jayden out of earshot, Edward saw his golden opportunity.

But before Edward could formulate his plan to charm Elyse, they arrived at the barbecue area.

Chapter 1129:

Ken and Jayden had already donned aprons and were firing up the grill.

Edward sauntered to Jayden, his voice dripping with arrogance. “You sprinted off like you were about to perform miracles, but here you are, just grilling meat. You’d better make it exceptional. If it’s subpar, don’t blame me for being harsh.”

Jayden glanced at the smirking Edward, his eyes brimming with a mixture of pity and amusement. He plastered on a fake smile and replied, "Rest assured, I'll make the barbecue so delectable, you'll be more than satisfied."

Edward reveled in what he perceived as Jayden's subservient tone. He nodded approvingly, speaking with an air of self-importance. "Don't say I'm being too hard on you. If the food disappoints and Elyse is unhappy, she'll be furious. I'm only looking out for your best interests."

Jayden responded coolly, "I understand completely. Don't worry."

Elyse, observing Jayden's playful manipulation of Edward, felt a twinge of sympathy for the oblivious man. However, she decided it was best not to interfere and let the scene unfold naturally.

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Elyse felt a twinge of awkwardness, but before she could respond, Linda interjected, “Don’t fret about it. You can stroll with us.”

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