

## Bound love 1231

Chapter 1231:

Geraldine inhaled deeply. “When the roof caved in during the concert, Fiona’s arm was struck by falling debris. The doctors say she might never play the violin again.”

Elyse asked softly, “Is it really that bad?”

“Yes, it was quite a shock to hear,” Geraldine sighed. “She is a violinist. It’s a huge blow for her.”

Elyse was silent for a moment, absorbing the news. “Where is she now? Is she still in the hospital?”

“She’s there, waiting for surgery,” Geraldine answered. “The outcome will determine if she can ever play again.”

There was a brief silence before Geraldine added cautiously, “Do you want to go see her?”

Elyse hesitated and then said, “She probably doesn’t want to see me right now.”

Since Fiona couldn’t play the violin, Elyse hesitated even more. She worried that if she visited Fiona, the latter might think she was just trying to show off.

Geraldine replied sympathetically, “That could be true. I’ve heard she’s been quite aggressive lately, snapping at everyone around her.”

“I’ll stay away then,” Elyse said. “I don’t want to upset her further.”

Elyse finished her chat with Geraldine, hung up, and was about to lie down to rest when a knock at the door interrupted her.

Surprised, she opened it to find Louise standing there, visibly frustrated, with a small suitcase in hand. “Louise?” Elyse said, confused. “How did you know I was here?”

“As a princess, finding your location is just a few clicks away,” Louise replied, rolling her eyes. She set her suitcase on the floor before gracefully seating herself in a nearby chair. Crossing her legs and folding her arms, she maintained her poise, even in her annoyance.

Elyse blinked, handed her a bottle of water, and asked curiously, “Did Garret make you angry?”

Louise scoffed, “Please. One man doesn’t have the power to make me angry.”

Elyse raised an eyebrow. “Oh? If one man isn’t enough, maybe two? What about Edward? Did he make you angry too?”

Louise’s expression darkened. “No… actually, three, including my hot-headed brother, Chesney.”

Elyse pulled up a chair and sat beside her. “All three ganging up on you? That’s too much. Forget them—hang out with me instead.”

Louise sighed. “They’re all lunatics. I live with them every day. It’s only a matter of time before I go crazy too.”

Elyse scratched her nose, unsure how to offer comfort. Louise took a sip of water, then looked at Elyse thoughtfully. “So, how are things between you and Jayden?”

Chapter 1232:

Elyse’s face clouded as she thought carefully before answering. “Honestly, I’m a bit lost. I used to focus so much on getting his answer, asking constantly, waiting for him to say something. Now, I feel like I already know the answer. And I don’t know what to do with myself.”

Louise held up a hand, cutting her off. “Wait. Did Jayden give you that answer himself?”

Elyse froze, shaking her head. She’d overheard Enzo and Jayden talking—that had been her answer.

Louise spoke with quiet conviction. “Then don’t jump to conclusions. You have to hear it from him directly. That’s the only answer that matters.”

Elyse sighed, sounding defeated. “But is that really necessary?”

Louise shook her head. “A relationship is between two people. Letting others step in only clouds things. And maybe it’s not that you’ve lost your goal. Perhaps you’re uncertain about your own feelings. Do you really love Jayden, or don’t you?”

Elyse hadn’t expected Louise to get to the heart of the issue so clearly.

She lowered her head, feeling defeated. “You’re right. I don’t know if I love him. Sometimes I think I do, but other times... I’m not sure I want to be with him at all.”

With surprising wisdom about love, Louise replied, “It’s natural to be uncertain. We all go through that. You’ll see the truth when you find clarity in all the confusion.”

Elyse looked at her, half in disbelief. “How did you know? You’re younger than me.”

Louise lifted her chin with a proud smile. “I am a princess. What can’t I learn?”

Elyse smiled faintly. “So, what do I do while I figure things out? I feel drained. Tired of all of it.”

Louise gave her a puzzled look. “Then rest. Take a break if you’re exhausted.”

Elyse blinked. “It’s really that simple?”

Louise nodded. “Yes. Sometimes, the answer really is that simple. Just follow your heart.”

Elyse sat quietly, letting the advice sink in. Then, she climbed into bed, her expression weary. “I think you’re right. I really do need a break. Goodnight.”

Louise smiled, closed the curtains, and quietly left the room.

Louise had sought refuge in Elyse’s room, eager to escape the chaos of dealing with those three men and find a moment of peace.

With a sigh, Louise headed out to unwind and found herself at a nearby bar. Surprisingly, she spotted Jayden sitting alone, nursing a drink in silence.

She watched as a woman with long hair and a tight outfit approached him, clearly flirting.

But to her greatest surprise, Jayden immediately shoved the woman away.

He snapped angrily, his voice sharp, “Get lost!”

Chapter 1233:

The woman glared at Jayden, her face flushed with anger. “You’re impossible!” she hissed, spinning on her heel and storming off, her heels clicking sharply against the polished floor.

Louise had been watching the entire exchange from her seat at the bar.

Her gaze lingered on Jayden, taking in his disheveled appearance—loose tie, slightly slouched shoulders. She knew that look. He was clearly drinking his troubles away.

The bartender set a glass before her, and Louise took a slow, deliberate sip. Her mind swirled with possibilities.

As Elyse’s love mentor, what if she extended her expertise to Jayden as well? A thrill shot through her at the thought. She could be a matchmaker in every sense, maybe even provide the nudge they both needed.

Resolved, Louise stood, gathering her confidence like a cloak, and strode over to Jayden.

“We haven’t met before, have we?” Her voice was casual but charged. “I’m Louise, a friend of Elyse’s.” She extended her hand, her movements smooth, carrying an air of superiority.

Jayden’s gaze lifted, meeting her eyes with a mix of recognition and disdain. Without hesitation, he swatted her hand away.

The smile she wore almost faltered.

"I know who you are," Jayden muttered, his voice carrying a sharp edge. "But what are you doing here? Shouldn't you be at some meeting? Isn't your brother making a fuss about who you should marry?"

His words hung in the air, cold and piercing. Louise's confidence wavered, but she didn't back down. Instead, she narrowed her eyes, her expression darkening. "Mind your own business, Jayden. You've got enough of your own problems to worry about."

Jayden picked up his empty glass, twirling it in his fingers. "My problems?" He gave a hollow laugh. "Everything's perfectly fine with me."

Louise scoffed, casting him a sideways glance. "Not concerned about Elyse's situation, then?"

Jayden's hand froze, the glass nearly slipping from his grip.

He swallowed hard, his Adam's apple bobbing visibly. When he spoke, there was a faint tremor in his voice, a note of pain barely held at bay. "She told me not to get involved anymore. She wants to keep her distance. What am I supposed to do with that?"

Louise exhaled a sigh, settling down beside Jayden with a calm poise that made her seem older, wiser. She spoke softly, yet her words carried a firmness. "You feel hurt now, but when you were the one hurting Elyse, did her feelings even cross your mind?" She glanced at him, her expression steady. "Didn't she feel wronged too?"

Jayden clenched his jaw, his voice low. "I had my reasons."

Chapter 1234:

Louise gave a faint, knowing smile. "Well, now that Elyse is pulling away, maybe she has her reasons too."

Jayden's brow furrowed, frustration flashing in his eyes. "What exactly are you trying to tell me?"

She leaned back slightly, her gaze unwavering. “Just half an hour ago, I spoke to Elyse. I told her she should talk to you—honestly, openly. And when she does, I hope you’ll have the courage to do the same. Even about the feelings you’d rather ignore.”

Jayden studied her with suspicion, his brows knitting together. “And why should I do that? What’s in it for her if I bare my soul like that?”

Louise gave him a look that seemed to see right through his defenses. “I understand that right now, you might not fully get it. But trust me, Jayden. Just do as I say.” Her voice softened, a glimmer of compassion breaking through. “You don’t really want Elyse to walk away from you, do you?”

Her words settled over him, loosening something within. Jayden sank into silence, his thoughts drifting.

Louise took a measured sip of her cocktail, letting the silence stretch, savoring the ambiance as she waited for him to process her words.

Finally, he spoke, his voice barely above a murmur. “If I follow your advice, will I have a chance to get her back?”

Louise nodded gently. “Of course. I know Elyse. And I know her feelings for you. Trust me on this. You won’t regret it.”

Jayden hesitated, a flicker of uncertainty in his eyes, but eventually, he relented. “Alright,” he said, his voice resigned but hopeful. “I’ll trust you this time.”

Without another word, he rose from his seat and left, disappearing into the night.

Louise watched him go, then turned back to her drink, a wistful smile touching her lips. “If only solving national issues were as straightforward as untangling human hearts,” she mused.

Perhaps then, the endless bickering of the three men could finally quiet down.

She was finishing her cocktail when Edward arrived, flanked by two bodyguards.

He sighed upon seeing her in such high spirits. “Let’s return to the Moon Palace, Louise. If you’ve got complaints, say them, but don’t disappear on your own like this.”

Louise turned her head, her gaze drifting to Edward.

He was exactly as he’d always been—watching over her with that gentle, almost brotherly care, fussing over every small detail.

There was a time when she had reveled in his attentiveness, in the way he looked after her with such quiet devotion. But now, it felt stifling.

Chapter 1235:

A small smile tugged at her lips, bittersweet. “Edward,” she began, her voice soft but carrying a hint of exasperation, “you always treat me like a child. It’s frustrating. Can’t you look at me differently?”

Edward blinked, taken aback, his expression clouding with surprise. “Differently? How exactly do you want me to treat you?”

Her eyes sparkled mischievously as she leaned in, her voice almost a whisper. “Treat me like a woman.”

A hint of a smile played on her lips, tinged with a childlike charm that seemed to contradict her words.

Edward paused, his eyes narrowing slightly as he took in her flushed cheeks and playful smile. Realization dawned—she was drunk.

Edward grabbed Louise’s collar, his tone laced with frustration. “Stop being so headstrong. We’re talking about something important here.”

Louise jerked away from his grasp, her words thick with frustration. “Is that what you believe? Do you all think you can just dictate the terms of my marriage on a whim?”

A crease formed on Edward's forehead. "Then what's your plan? As a princess, there are sacrifices you have to accept."

Pain flickered across Louise's face but was quickly concealed. She remained silent for a moment before speaking softly. "Help me."

With a resigned breath, Edward shook his head. "I'm stuck here, same as you. I can't change a thing."

"But if you assist me, I might be able to do the same for you."

Louise's fingers clenched around Edward's collar, jerking him closer. Her gaze was sharp, unwavering.

In a hushed, calculating tone, she said, "If I take the throne, we could both be freed from these arranged marriages."

Edward's eyes widened in shock. "You?"

Louise had always been the youngest of the three, forever in the shadows of Chesney and Garret. She was lively, undeniably attractive, sometimes to the point of seeming a bit conceited. Yet, beneath it all, her intentions were as pure as gold.

But here she stood, the usually compliant Louise, boldly staking her claim to the throne.

Edward was taken aback, too stunned to respond.

Undeterred, Louise pressed on, "Elyse made me see that I'm as wise as Garret, more courageous than Chesney, and my skills are on par with yours. You're celebrated for your violin skills, while I excel at the harp. If you can support Garret and Chesney, why not me?"

Chapter 1236:

Edward glanced at her, casting a doubtful look. "But a queen ruling as king... that's unheard of in our history."



Louise met his gaze with determination. “Then I shall be the one to set a new standard. I will be the first woman to rule as queen in our history.”

She softened her tone, her gaze earnest. “Edward, once I am queen, I promise to honor you, allowing you to marry the woman you cherish.”

Stunned, Edward fell into a heavy silence, then abruptly changed the course of their conversation. “Has Elyse planted these thoughts in your mind? I need to speak with her. Why does she keep instilling such radical ideas in you?”

Edward began to walk away, but Louise grabbed his arm, halting him.

“Elyse is right,” she declared firmly. “I deserve more than just being a pawn in Chesney’s schemes for control.” Then there was Garret, who preferred the safety of his chair to the risks of revealing their secret liaison. In the end, she had been nothing more than a tool in the games of both Chesney and Garret.

Locking eyes with Edward, Louise’s lips curled into a sly grin. “You suggest I go back to the meeting, but haven’t you felt a bit of bitterness yourself? After all, Chesney will probably want you to marry me, seeing as you’re his trusted man.”

Edward looked down. “If that’s his wish, I’ll comply and promise to treat you right.”

Louise raised her eyebrows in astonishment. “Just like that? You surrender so easily? I thought you’d resist more.”

Edward’s laughter was hollow, filled with resignation. “Resist for what? There’s no point. I’ve already accepted that Elyse is out of reach. Fighting for the freedom to marry someone I truly love seems even more hopeless. So, what is there left to fight for?”

Louise scoffed, her tone dripping with disdain. “Such grand words, yet you’ve never really tried. Don’t kid yourself, Edward. We’ve known each other since childhood, and quitting has always been your specialty. You claimed to have pursued Elyse with such fervor, but it’s clear your heart barely participated in the chase. Your mind was elsewhere, tangled in distractions.”

Edward bristled and retorted sharply, “And what insight do you have into my heart’s affairs?”

With a casual flick of her wrist, Louise dismissed his irritation. “Delving into the past isn’t why I’m here. My time is just as precious. But mark my words—if you turn away from helping me now, and I rise to power alone, be prepared to find yourself bound in marriage to the very woman you loathe most.”

A grimace flickered across Edward’s face, a mix of confusion and dismay. “Why unleash such venom? How have I earned such scorn?”

Chapter 1237:

Louise’s gaze was frosty, her eyes narrowing slightly as she pierced him with her look. “You’d do well to hope for Chesney or Garret to claim the throne.”

Stung and puzzled, Edward hastened after her, his questions tumbling out in a rapid flurry. “Wait! How can you be so certain of your victory? Spell out your plans, your chances of success. It’s madness to expect my help when your prospects are so uncertain. Louise! We need to discuss this thoroughly!”

They eventually settled into a secluded corner, where their conversation deepened, unraveling layers of strategy until the clock struck 1 a.m.

After nearly five exhausting hours, Edward leaned back, a newfound respect forming as he realized the relentless ambition that drove Louise.

Later, as Louise searched for Elyse, she inadvertently stirred her from sleep.

“I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to disturb your rest. I just needed to feel your embrace,” Louise whispered, her voice heavy with exhaustion.

Elyse, still groggy from sleep, pulled Louise into a comforting hold. “Where have you been all this time? You look utterly spent.”

Louise wrapped her arms around Elyse, seeking comfort in her warmth. “I’ve secured my first supporter,” she murmured. “I’ve told him I’m vying for the throne. I shared my vision of leading our nation with strategy and diplomacy.”

She paused, then added with a trace of vulnerability, “But honestly, I’m unsure. What will people think of me if I fail? How will they see me?”

Elyse’s voice was calm and soothing as she reassured her, “Ambition isn’t a flaw, Louise. And if you falter, the people will still see you as a princess of great courage.”

Louise felt the warmth of Elyse’s words fill her. Nestled in her embrace, she whispered, “So, you’re supporting me, too?”

Elyse nodded with certainty. “Of course! Chesney and Garret don’t stand a chance. The throne belongs to you.”

Louise fell silent for a moment, her thoughts heavy. “But what if I fail to revive the economy or defend against foreign threats? What if I can’t protect my people?”

Elyse responded with unwavering confidence, “The economy thrives under your leadership and the support of your people, guided by the wisdom of local governments. As for foreign threats, that requires strong military and strategic alliances. Protecting your people will come naturally once you take the throne.”

Louise nodded thoughtfully. “I suppose I should aim for that.”

Elyse gave her a reassuring pat. “I’m with you every step of the way. Don’t fear the future, Louise. It holds so much promise.”

Elyse’s words wrapped around Louise like a warm blanket, easing her worries and filling her with a sense of security.

Morning arrived, and Elyse woke to find Louise still fast asleep. She dressed quietly and headed to breakfast. As she opened her door, she saw Jayden standing in the hallway. Feeling ready to face him, thanks to Louise’s mediation the day before, she smiled.

Chapter 1238:

“Were you waiting for me?” she asked.

Jayden, surprised by her cheerful mood, nodded quickly. “Yes, I’d love to have breakfast with you.”

This time, Elyse didn’t hesitate. “Okay, but I’d love some coffee.”

Jayden couldn’t hide his smile as they walked together. “Coffee it is.”

As they sat down to eat, they ran into Darren, who was also looking for breakfast.

Seeing them together, Darren immediately assumed they had patched things up and sat down at their table.

“Jayden, could you spare a bite? I’m completely broke.” Elyse raised an eyebrow, surprised. “I thought you were doing well. What happened to your money?”

Darren’s expression faltered. “I spent it all on unnecessary things at the market.”

“No worries. I’ll cover your food and lodging,” Jayden replied with a grin.

Darren was overcome with emotion. “That’s incredible! Our orchestra was about to disband, but now we’ve been given five more days.”

He sighed, resting his chin on his hand. “Even if I make it through this week, I doubt I can afford to go home.”

Jayden said calmly, “I’ll buy your plane ticket, but it has to be first class. You’re used to it, right?”

Darren was so moved that his eyes welled up again. “I’ll never forget this kindness!”

Jayden nodded, amused by Darren's emotional outburst. Elyse turned to Darren, confused. "Delay? I thought we already disbanded?"

Darren glanced up from the menu, looking puzzled. "Really? You didn't get the memo?"

Elyse's confusion deepened. "Where's my phone?" she asked Jayden.

Jayden paused before answering. "I'm not sure. Didn't you take it when we left the base?"

Elyse frowned, trying to recall. "I think I left it behind. I can't remember where."

"I'll have someone look for it. If it's lost, I'll get you a new one," Jayden assured her.

Darren suddenly said, "I heard the king's throwing a party for Garret. They say he prevented a civil war. And guess what? Our orchestra's been selected to perform."

Elyse's eyes widened in disbelief. "No way!"

Darren quickly pulled out his phone and showed her the memo. "We're to rehearse this afternoon, and the big performance is in six days. We leave the day after."

Elyse's excitement was evident as she read the memo. "A bigger stage for us!"

Darren grinned broadly. "Our tour was cut short, but this is an even bigger opportunity."

Chapter 1239:

Jayden turned to Elyse. "I'll find you something nice to wear. We've got time."

Darren suddenly waved his hand. "Wait, Jayden! I need a new outfit too. I'm performing, remember?"

Jayden shot Darren a sideways glance, a hint of annoyance in his eyes. "Fine, I'll get you one too."

Darren couldn't contain his amusement. "Jayden is so nice," he whispered to Elyse. "Why not just make up with him?"

Elyse's response was swift and silent—her heel grinding into Darren's foot.

While Darren masked his pain with a smile, Elyse's frustration simmered beneath the surface.

Jayden gracefully ignored Darren's contorted expression and turned to Elyse with genuine concern. "Surely that's not enough. Shall we order something else?"

After a moment's consideration, Elyse's finger traced across the menu. "I'd like to try these pancakes." Without hesitation, Jayden summoned the waiter and ordered their selections.

Following their meal, Jayden whisked Elyse and Darren away to an exclusive boutique, having reserved the entire establishment for their use.

With their newly chosen attire secured, they settled into the car and set course for the training venue.

En route, Darren gestured toward a passing hospital. "That's where Fiona's staying. She nearly lost her chance at surgery due to unpaid bills, but someone mysteriously covered the costs, allowing her to reschedule."

Elyse's eyes widened. "I had no idea this happened."

"There's worse," Darren continued, a shadow crossing his face. "Quinn and I tried visiting her once. She hurled insults at us—even called me a 'bastard' before throwing us out."

"The accident must be a big blow for her," Elyse murmured sympathetically.

Darren sighed heavily. His mind wandered to memories of Fiona in her prime—a vision in white silk, commanding the stage. The contrast with her present state was stark.

"What could have driven her to such extremes?" Darren wondered aloud.

Elyse's questioning gaze shifted to Jayden, remembering Fiona's infatuation with him.

Catching her look, Jayden rolled his eyes. "Simple greed. She covets everything, especially things that were never meant to be hers."

"That explains a lot," Elyse mused thoughtfully.

Darren nodded, feigning comprehension.

Chapter 1240:

Upon reaching the venue, Jayden left to purchase a new phone for Elyse while she and Darren began their practice session.

The familiar faces and rhythmic movements filled Elyse with joy. This world of artistic expression felt infinitely more fulfilling than one dominated by violence. As the group assembled, their coach began the instructions.

During a brief respite, Elyse encountered an unexpected presence—Fiona.

Fiona stood motionless in the shadows, her right arm encased in plaster and bandages. Her features were twisted with bitterness as she observed the others.

Elyse approached, but Fiona remained lost in her thoughts.

"What brings you here?" Elyse asked cautiously.

Fiona's head turned slowly, her eyes blazing with venom and envy. "Weren't you the one who vanished?" she spat. "Kidnapped, wasn't it? How is it you're standing here, perfectly fine?"

Elyse deflected, unwilling to reveal the truth. "I managed to escape. Is that so hard to believe?"

"How fortunate for you," Fiona sneered.

“You’re fortunate too,” Elyse countered. “You survived the incident with your mobility intact.”

Fiona gestured bitterly at her injured arm. “You call this fortune? If luck were truly on my side, I’d be unscathed. Why my right arm? I wish it were my legs that were hurt instead.”

“Don’t say such things,” Elyse cautioned. “You wouldn’t feel that way if your legs were actually injured.”

“Enough of your preaching!” Fiona snapped, her eyes blazing with fury. Her gaze shifted, turning into a malevolent smile that sent a chill down Elyse’s spine.

“Elyse,” Fiona purred, her voice dripping with malice, “kidnapped and gone for so long... who knows what happened to you?”

Her gaze dropped deliberately to Elyse’s midsection. “A defiled woman like you should have stayed gone.”

Elyse caught the sharp edge of Fiona’s words, sensing the insult hidden beneath them. Suppressing a surge of anger, Elyse responded irritably, “You weren’t there with me. How can you be so certain?”

Fiona smirked, her voice cold. “Then tell me, where were you for over twenty days? And who were you with?”

Elyse’s patience wore thin. She glared back, her voice tight with irritation. “What does it matter to you? Why should I explain anything?”

Fiona retorted with a harsh, almost wicked laugh, “Oh, can’t say, can you? Well, let’s see how things unfold.”