

Bound love 1251

Chapter 1251:

The truth hit her hard, leaving a hollow ache in her chest. Did she love him? Was that really what had been tugging at her heart all this time?

After half an hour, the alarm went off, rousing Jayden from sleep.

Noticing her wide awake eyes, he asked, "Why didn't you try to get some more rest?"

She hesitated before replying, "You never made me wash up last night. I feel all sticky."

Jayden's brow furrowed, but he nodded and stood immediately. "I must have gotten too comfortable with you in my arms."

Elyse pouted, her voice laced with a bit of mock demand, "Then help me clean up, will you?"

Sensing something beneath her words, Jayden gave her a curious look, but didn't question her, instead gently picking her up and carrying her to the bathroom.

As he carefully washed her, Elyse's mind raced, thoughts spinning and tumbling until, out of nowhere, she blurted out, "What if I get pregnant?"

"You're pregnant?" Jayden exclaimed, his voice laced with both awe and tenderness as his hand rested over Elyse's belly.

But his spark of joy quickly flickered out as Elyse clarified, her voice a tether to reality. "No, Jayden. I meant... what if I was pregnant but decided not to get back together with you?"

Jayden's expression darkened and he stood up, his voice firm. "If you're carrying my child and you want to stay single, you better get ready. I won't let you go that easily." Elyse crossed her arms, mirroring Louise's defiant posture. "And what if I refuse to get back together with you? What then?" "I'll come home tonight and keep fucking you until you get pregnant." His voice was a low

growl. “You wanted to know what I’d do? When that day comes, I’ll make sure you know exactly what you’re up against. “Elyse swallowed her retort, choosing silence over adding fuel to the fire.

Jayden took a step back, his expression softening as he cleared the room around them, then led her outside. As they approached the rehearsal room, he glanced in her direction. “Don’t push yourself too hard today, okay? You were... well, a little tired last night. ” As Elyse stepped out of the car, his words echoed and a blush crept up her cheeks. In a flash of irritation, she spun around and raised her hand in an instinctive slap.

Jayden stood still, his face unwavering, as if to allow her this moment to vent her frustration.

When her anger subsided, he spoke in a calm tone. “I’ll be in meetings all day. The driver will pick you up, so please don’t wander off.”

She dismissed him with a sigh of irritation. “Fine. Now.

He nodded and signaled to the driver before heading off to his own duties.

Chapter 1252:

Halfway to his meeting, his phone buzzed and a familiar name lit up the screen – Peyton. Without hesitation, he diverted to a nearby diner where his girlfriend was waiting for him. Peyton had breakfast spread out and gestured to a seat across from him. “Sit down, we haven’t got all day. My flight is soon.”

As they ate their breakfast, Jayden casually asked, “Leaving already?”

Peyton shook her head with a soft chuckle. “I thought I’d do some sightseeing, maybe a little soul-searching.”

Jayden nodded. “Sounds refreshing. But isn’t your hospital in a bit of a mess right now? Doesn’t it need your attention?”

Peyton took a slow sip of tea, savoring the question. “Let them play their games for now. The longer they grow comfortable, the better. I’ll set things straight when I’m back.”

Jayden decided to change the topic. “The performance is in two days. Want to join?”

Peyton waved him off. “Not my scene. Go on your own.”

Without pressing further, they finished their breakfast and parted ways. Jayden went on to the Moon Palace to handle a full day of meetings.

When night finally settled in, Elyse was winding down in her room, the quiet hum of sleep beginning to beckon, when a knock at the door disturbed her. She opened it to find Jayden, his face lined with the exhaustion of a long day. She raised an eyebrow, skepticism lacing her words. “What brings you here?”

He brushed past her and slumped into a chair. “Back-to-back meetings all day,” he muttered, rubbing his temples. “My head feels like it’s splitting.”

Elyse raised a curious brow. “An all-day meeting? About what?”

“A lot of issues,” he sighed, the weight of the day settling in his voice, “but mainly about succession to the throne.”

She tilted her head, intrigued. “Succession? What did they say?”

He let out a slow exhale, the topic still pressing on him. “They added a new candidate. Louise is now in the race. I can’t wrap my head around how that happened.”

Elyse’s eyes sparkled with a touch of pride. “Well, Louise is brilliant. It’s no surprise.”

Jayden frowned, his gaze distant. “It was Garret’s reaction that caught me off guard. There was something... off about it.”

“Oh?” she asked, curiosity edging into her voice. “What do you mean?”

Jayden hesitated, as if trying to untangle his own thoughts. “He kept stealing glances at her during the meeting, and when it ended, he practically whisked her out of the room. They looked more like a couple than siblings.”

Chapter 1253:

Elyse chuckled, a note of disbelief in her voice. “Oh please. They’re siblings.”

He nodded, though doubt lingered in his gaze. “True... but still...”

Knowing more than she cared to admit, Elyse decided to steer him away from this line of thought.

“You should leave now. I’d like to sleep,” she said.

His face softened, and his eyes took on a pleading look. “Just let me rest here.”

She raised an exasperated eyebrow. “You want to sleep here again?”

A sigh escaped him, weariness heavy in his voice. “I haven’t slept since Louise arrived. I toss and turn all night. If you don’t let me stay, I might lose my sleep again.”

Elyse rolled her eyes, a faint smile tugging at her lips despite herself. “Oh, stop being dramatic.”

He lowered his voice, vulnerability seeping through. “It is. The only peace I find is when I’m by your side.”

This was the first time Elyse had witnessed such a side of Jayden. She found herself unable to deny him.

As Elyse paused, uncertain about allowing Jayden to stay, he rose and declared, “If you remain silent, I’ll assume you consent. I’m off to freshen up.”

Elyse clenched her jaw. She saw him as unpredictable. She consented to his stay but imposed one firm condition: he must not get handsy.

Jayden sulked, visibly unhappy, but he yielded to her commanding gaze.

Elyse's thoughts were consumed with her upcoming performance. She had to visit the site the following day, and anxiety weighed heavily on her. She wasn't in the mood for anything else, especially not with Jayden.

Exhaustion overtook her quickly, and she soon fell into a deep sleep.

Jayden observed her for some time before finally succumbing to sleep as well.

The next day, during their site visit, salacious rumors about Elyse began to spread online. However, with the performance looming and the accusations baseless, the gossip failed to garner much attention. Everyone was focused on the rehearsal.

Finally, the day of the performance arrived.

It was a momentous occasion, not just for the celebration of the war's end, but also for the declaration of the next successor to the throne. Chesney, Louise, and Garret each stood before the crowd, potential future rulers of the nation.

Below them, Elyse watched as the elegant and poised Louise greeted the audience from the elevated stage. Her heart warmed. This young princess was undoubtedly destined to ascend.

As each candidate presented their speech, it came time for Louise to address the gathering. She spoke briefly, her eyes searching the crowd until they found Elyse.

Chapter 1254:

"During today's musical performance, there is a woman in the orchestra who is very dear to me," she began. "Lately, she has been the subject of rumors, claiming she was inappropriately involved with several men. I must clarify that these allegations are entirely false. She was with me the entire time she was reportedly missing."

“I mention this because I am aware that many women face unjust stigmas and malicious gossip. While I can defend my friend, many women do not have that support. Who will advocate for them?”

Right after Louise concluded her remarks, the audience erupted into applause, with the women’s cheers being especially loud and passionate.

Louise continued, “As a woman, I know the damage that such gossip can cause. As a princess, I am committed to acting responsibly to protect millions of women. I ask for your support in this endeavor and for the opportunity to realize my goals.”

After her deep bow, Louise was met with a rousing response from the crowd.

Being the last speaker, Chesney found himself in a difficult position. He was next in line, but his planned speech seemed inadequate in comparison to Louise’s impactful words. He wished he had been the first to speak.

As Chesney spoke, Darren leaned in to whisper to Elyse, “Were you actually with Louise when you were away?”

Elyse nodded, confirming, “Yes, I was.” In fact, both Garret and Jayden had been there as well.

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Darren looked at Elyse, a hint of admiration in his tone. “Louise did a great job defending you. I’m almost inclined to vote for her.”

Elyse smiled and responded, “Louise truly is commendable. Despite her youth, she is very capable. She’d govern the country well.”

Darren rubbed his chin thoughtfully. “True, but all three are in contention for the throne. It’s still unclear who will prevail.”

At this, a wave of concern washed over Elyse. What if Chesney and Garret employed deceitful strategies against Louise in their quest for power?

Elyse was seized by a wave of panic.

After the event concluded, the orchestra members made their way back to the mansion. Since Elyse was acquainted with Louise, everyone crowded around her, eager to learn how their friendship had formed.

It was then that Fiona made her entrance.

Her hair disheveled and eyes red with strain, Fiona scanned the crowd before her gaze settled on Elyse.

She yelled furiously, “How come you’re friends with the princess, and she even defends your honor? Elyse, why does all the luck come your way?”

Chapter 1255:

A hush fell over the crowd. No one understood what had driven Fiona to this point. She seemed completely unhinged, perhaps even deranged.

Elyse regarded her, quickly grasping the reason for her outburst.

She stepped forward from the group and faced Fiona unflinchingly.

“Do you really think that scandalous headlines and sensational journalism can ruin a woman’s life? You’re mistaken. That’s only your perception. I’ve never believed that such news could shatter my world. I won’t deny that these rumors disturb me, but they don’t hinder my abilities, nor will they defeat me. But you, resorting to such methods to harm someone else— I truly feel sorry for you. It’s shameful that, as a woman, you would inflict such pain on another. Fiona, I believe you are fundamentally flawed.”

Elyse hesitated briefly, then fixed her gaze on Fiona and said, “Honestly, I have no desire to speak with you anymore. You’re too ignorant. By showing up now, aren’t you just admitting that you’re the one who spread those rumors about me?”

She cocked her head and offered a cold smile. “What exactly emboldens you to confront and challenge me? Is it your little intellect or your narrow perspective?”

Still unable to grasp the situation, Fiona blurted loudly, “Are you actually denying that you’ve been sexually assaulted or mistreated by anyone?”

Elyse looked at her with sorrow. “Fiona, you are truly lost. I don’t even want to bother explaining where you’re mistaken.”

Fiona laughed harshly. “You’re clearly at a loss for words because I’ve struck a chord.”

At that moment, Quinn intervened, unable to stand by any longer. He reminded Fiona, saying, “Princess Louise already confirmed that Elyse was with her the entire time. If you claim Elyse was mistreated, does that mean the princess was too?”

Quinn, who had previously dated Fiona, felt compelled to push further. “You should leave now. You’re not welcome here. Don’t come back to cause more trouble.”

Fiona shot him a scornful look. “I wasn’t speaking to you. Why are you interfering?”

Quinn was so infuriated that he decided to ignore Fiona from that point on.

Just then, Louise arrived with a team of bodyguards.

She looked disdainfully at Fiona and declared, “So, you’re the one spreading false allegations about my friend. You’ve even tried to smear me. You’ve violated our nation’s laws. Now, explain your actions to the police. Take her away!”

Fiona stood frozen, stunned by the turn of events. As the bodyguards escorted her away, she resisted, crying out, “It’s not true! It’s all because of Elyse! Princess Louise, please investigate thoroughly!”

Louise, unwilling to engage further with Fiona, maintained a stoic expression.

Chapter 1256:

Louise performed an elegant bow to the crowd and said, “Your performance today deeply touched me. I hope you will continue to develop your musical talents and gift us with more heartfelt performances in the future.” Everyone felt uplifted.

By her appreciation, the recognition from the princess clearly pleased the group, seeing their hard work and dedication acknowledged.

Louise added a few more remarks before pausing, exchanging a knowing look with Elyse, who then joined her as they exited together.

In a quiet corridor, Louise spun around with a flourish and asked, “Do you find me attractive?”

Elyse immediately responded with compliments, “Absolutely, and your speech was just as striking. You truly outshone Garret and Chesney. After your speech, Chesney’s words couldn’t hold my attention.”

Louise hummed with pride, replying, “Indeed, I’m in a different league compared to Chesney. He really can’t measure up to me.”

Elyse grinned, agreeing, “I concur.”

“Going forward, my schedule will be packed, so it’ll be hard for us to meet. What are your plans after the performance?” Louise asked, her curiosity piqued.

Elyse gave a slight shake of her head. “I’m not sure. Perhaps I’ll return to my home country?”

Louise asked again, “Do you plan to sort things out with Jayden?”

Elyse nodded. “Yes, something like that. We really need to have a detailed discussion.”

Louise advised, “Well, make sure to respond to my texts once you’re back. And let me know how things go with him.”

Elyse laughed softly, “Of course, my love coach. I’ll be sure to keep you informed.”

Immediately after Elyse spoke, Louise embraced her warmly.

With a mix of annoyance and affection, she remarked, "It's quite frustrating. I never thought we'd end up as friends. It's really sad thinking about parting ways."

Elyse was briefly taken aback but then smiled and returned the embrace. "I'll miss you too when we separate."

Louise let go of Elyse and brushed away a tear. "How melodramatic of me. I was just saying that. I won't actually feel lonely."

Elyse gently patted Louise on the head. "I mean it. You've become my second best friend."

Louise looked puzzled. "And who was the first?"

Elyse's thoughts turned to Tracy, and tears welled up in her eyes. "She... she's gone through something, and now I can't see her anymore."

Chapter 1257:

Immediately understanding, Louise comforted Elyse. "You need to keep moving forward. She wouldn't want you to dwell on the past."

With a gesture, Louise added, "I must be going now. I have my own matters to attend to, and you should handle yours as well."

Elyse nodded and smiled. "Alright, just go ahead."

After taking a few steps, Louise stopped, turned back, and suggested, "There's a dinner tonight. Why not come, and you can leave afterward?"

Without hesitation, Elyse responded, "Sure, I'll make sure to eat well before leaving."

With a bright smile, Louise hurried off.

Returning to where Darren was waiting, Elyse sighed. With a sly expression, Darren asked, “What did the charming princess say to you?”

Elyse showed her displeasure and explained, “We’re returning to our homeland after today. Who knows when I’ll meet her again?”

Understanding the situation, Darren said, “You two were saying your farewells, having a private moment.”

Gently sighing, Elyse replied, “Thinking about parting with a friend really hurts.”

Trying to comfort her, Darren said, “Don’t be sad. She came to see you because she understands your feelings. She cares about you too.”

Acknowledging his words, Elyse nodded. “I know,” she said, still feeling sad.

That afternoon, the temporary orchestra disbanded as there were no more performances for them. Deep bonds had been formed, and parting was difficult for everyone.

After saying goodbye to Geraldine, Quinn, and the others with hugs, Elyse and Darren returned to the hotel.

Learning that Elyse planned to attend the dinner, Darren collapsed onto the bed, exhausted. “You have so much energy. I lost all mine as soon as the performance ended. Now I just want to sleep, yet you’re ready to go to dinner.”

Elyse replied, “I have to go. Jayden even asked me to wear a gown and is coming to pick me up.”

Darren yawned and said, “Then you should go. I’m going to rest.”

Elyse nodded and went back to her room to rest. The bed was so comfortable that she quickly started to feel sleepy. Remembering the dinner, she suddenly woke up, sat up, and began getting ready.

As she finished, Jayden arrived in his car.

He knocked on the door and called, "Are you ready?" Elyse grabbed her purse, swung the door open, and handed her coat to Jayden, asking, "When do we return to our country?"

Chapter 1258:

"If an early departure suits you, we can secure the first flight out," Jayden responded.

After a brief pause, Elyse said, "Book that earliest flight, please. I'm eager to return."

Jayden agreed without protest. "Alright. Since you wish to return, we'll arrange to leave sooner." He then drew her close and murmured, "Now, let's head to the dinner."

Elyse nodded, and they walked together.

When they arrived, Elyse's attention was immediately drawn, not to the stunning Moon Palace, but to the sheer number of bodyguards surrounding them.

Looking at the armed guards, she leaned towards Jayden and whispered, "This gathering is heavily secured, isn't it?"

"Given the attendance of notable political figures and royalty, high security is necessary," Jayden said, gesturing to a sniper atop a nearby building. "Snipers are stationed there to handle any threats."

Elyse moved closer to him, silently processing the information.

They entered the banquet hall, and Elyse was stunned by its luxurious interior.

Noticing her amazement, Jayden smiled softly and reassured her, "Feeling hungry? The food here is said to be top-notch. Shall we try some?"

Realizing her hunger, Elyse touched her stomach and spoke in a low tone, “Is it really okay to start eating right away? Shouldn’t we socialize first?”

With a gentle laugh, Jayden replied, “Who among these politicians do we know? Besides Garret, Edward, and Louise—and they haven’t even arrived yet.”

This persuaded Elyse, and she agreed. “Okay, let’s start with the food. I’m curious about the quality of the dishes here.”

Together, they made their way to the buffet area, aligned in their simple desire to enjoy the meal.

Jayden’s intent at the dinner was straightforward—enjoy a meal with Elyse and cherish the moment.

During the meal, Edward arrived.

Noticing the change in Elyse’s demeanor, he asked, “How do you find the food? Is it to your liking?”

Elyse nodded thoughtfully, her eyes gleaming. “It’s extraordinary. Would you like a taste?”

Edward accepted eagerly, picking a few morsels with the satisfaction of a man who’d gone without for days. “I’m starving. I was trapped with people who babbled on endlessly about trivialities. It was enough to drive a saint to madness.”

“And how, pray tell, did you escape?” Elyse asked with an amused smile.

Chapter 1259:

Edward’s lips curled into a mischievous grin. “As if they could cage me.” Elyse laughed softly.

When they’d finished eating, Edward guided them over to Louise and Garret, who were engaged in conversation with Chesney. Nearby, another figure was deep in discussion, her back turned, giving only the hint of a tall, statuesque woman silhouetted in elegance.

“Who is that?” Elyse whispered to Jayden, her curiosity piqued.

Jayden narrowed his eyes, his brow knitting in thought. “She looks familiar. I believe I saw her at the morning celebration.”

Edward caught their quiet exchange and leaned in with a faint smile. “That’s Rebecca, queen of the neighboring kingdom.”

The sound of her name reached Rebecca’s ears, and she turned, her gaze meeting Elyse’s with a deliberate, almost feline grace.

She wore a flowing gown of deep purple, her hair swept into an updo so flawless it seemed sculpted. Her eyes, bright and piercing, held a quiet strength, softened only by the elegance that surrounded her like an aura.

For a moment, surprise flickered across Rebecca’s face as her gaze settled on Elyse. Then, her lips curved into a smile, both knowing and warm. “Edward,” she intoned, her voice smooth yet commanding, “and who might these two be?”

Edward stepped forward, every inch the gracious host. “Allow me to introduce Jayden Owen, a cornerstone in the peace accords. And this is Elyse Lloyd, the victor of the Swan Cup.”

Rebecca inclined her head, her gaze never wavering. “Ah, so you’re the young violinist who played this morning. Your music was exquisite, truly unforgettable.”

Elyse blinked, caught off guard, her surprise quickly blossoming into delight. “Your words are too kind. I’ll strive to live up to such praise.”

Rebecca’s smile lingered, her eyes still on Elyse. Warm, yet so sharp that they seemed to see through her.

Sensing an almost imperceptible tension in Rebecca’s gaze, Elyse shifted slightly, as if to ease the invisible weight pressing on her.

Catching Elyse’s subtle movement, Rebecca turned back to her conversation with Louise and the others, her graceful retreat no less imposing.

Edward steered Elyse and Jayden toward a secluded lounge.

“I’ll need to pay a brief visit to Rebecca,” Edward explained. “You two can make yourselves comfortable here. I’ll return shortly.”

As soon as Edward departed, Elyse exhaled a breath she hadn’t realized she was holding, her shoulders visibly relaxing.

Jayden observed her, tilting his head with curiosity. “Are you all right? Something seems off.”

Elyse nodded slowly. “Yes... well, no. It’s hard to explain.” There was something about Rebecca’s gaze that felt unnerving.

Chapter 1260:

They sat in silence, the air thick with Elyse’s unspoken thoughts, until Louise and Edward returned.

Louise’s gaze softened when it landed on Elyse, a glimmer of warmth shining through. “You seem a bit out of place, my dear. You must come to more of my banquets. Soon enough, you’ll feel like you’ve always belonged.”

Elyse chuckled, the last remnants of her unease fading. “Alright, I’ll make an effort to attend.”

Louise then turned to Jayden, her voice tinged with intrigue. “Did you intend to speak with Garret? You may need to wait; he’s still in talks with Rebecca.”

Jayden shook his head. “No, I’m only here for Elyse tonight. I’ve no interest in discussing business.”

Louise raised an eyebrow, a playful challenge in her gaze. “But if the conversation were with me? I’ve had my eye on your ventures, and they’re quite intriguing.”

Jayden’s eyes widened, caught off guard. “You’re interested in a partnership? There are deals Garret wouldn’t touch with a ten-foot pole.”

“That’s Garret, not me,” Louise said, her voice cool but resolute. “I forge my own path. I’ve worked with you before, Jayden, and with Elyse’s involvement, I’d be happy to explore a partnership.”

Jayden mulled over her offer, still taken aback by her interest.

Edward, witnessing the exchange, shook his head with a half-sigh. “Louise, your ambitions are so transparent. Don’t you see how frosty Chesney has been since the king announced your candidacy?”

Louise shrugged nonchalantly. “His coldness is only natural. I’ve gone from being his tool to his rival. It’s no wonder he wants nothing to do with me now.”

Elyse’s curiosity was piqued. “But what about you? Do you feel the same way? After all, you’re still siblings.”

Louise’s gaze turned steely. “The moment I decided to challenge him for the throne, family ties ceased to matter. And it’s not like he ever cared much for me. I was just a piece to be played in his game of alliances.”

Elyse fell silent, her heart touched with a pang of empathy. Despite her youthful appearance, Louise possessed a maturity born of hard truths, with a clear-eyed understanding of her place in the world.

After a beat of thoughtful silence, Jayden spoke up. “Very well, I’m open to a partnership. But we should discuss the finer points of our alliance.”

Louise nodded in agreement. “Indeed, I concur. Let’s extend our best wishes for a mutually beneficial partnership.”

She extended her hand, and Jayden shook it with a nod. For the next half-hour, the two leaned close, voices hushed as they sketched the early details of a pact, agreeing to meet again soon to continue.