

## **Bound love 1351**

Chapter 1351:

Seth faltered, stunned by his daughter's uncharacteristic outburst. His anger sputtered, and though his scowl remained, he didn't press further.

After much coaxing and whispered reassurances, Debora managed to usher her father out of the office, his fury simmering but contained. She turned back to Jayden, cheeks flushed with embarrassment. "I'm so sorry. This is all my fault."

Jayden crossed his arms. "So I see. No wonder you were so reluctant for your parents to meet me. You knew they'd never come to me for help."

Debora's shoulders slumped, as if the weight of the world had just doubled. Her voice came out weary, tinged with defeat. "You're right. They wouldn't. But I know you're the only one who can save Owen Group."

Her chest tightened as tears of frustration pricked at her eyes. She drew in a shaky breath. "Jayden, I'm not like you. I can't just walk away and start over. Owen Group is everything to me. If it collapses... I'll be nothing. Call me shallow. Call me whatever you want. But I can't face living an ordinary life."

Jayden's lips curled into a faint, humorless smile. "Well, at least you're honest."

Debora bit back the retort burning on her tongue. What else was there to say? She had laid herself bare, and his response had been cold.

Without warning, Jayden reached out and gave her shoulder a light pat. "Keep up the good work," he said, turning on his heel.

For a moment, Debora couldn't move. She watched him go, her mind struggling to process what had just happened.

His casual dismissal hit her like a punch to the gut. Was that it? Was Jayden really going to ignore the decline of Owen Group?

When Seth and Greg finally returned to the office, Jayden was already gone.

Greg strode in, practically bouncing with energy. “So,” he asked eagerly, “did Jayden agree to help?”

Seth scoffed, his voice dripping with scorn. “That traitor. If he doesn’t step in to save the company, he’s heartless. He doesn’t deserve the name Owen!”

Debora clenched her fists, the endless accusations scraping against her mind like nails. She’d endured this blame game for days now—everyone pointing fingers at Jayden, demanding he shoulder the burden they couldn’t carry. But why should he? He’d left the family behind and cut ties with them. What right did they have to demand his help?

“Enough!” she snapped, clutching her head. “Just stop it! You’re not helping! If you can’t do anything useful, then at least stop making things worse!”

In truth, she was done with them all. If she were Jayden, she wouldn’t have helped either.

Elyse joined Chloe on a brisk walk to the broadcasting and TV station for her scheduled work assignment. The agenda for the day was straightforward yet exhilarating: get acquainted with the cozy confines of the studio, slip on the sleek headphones, and dive into a live exchange with the charming host. Listeners had the golden opportunity to tune in and even engage directly with Elyse.

Chapter 1352:

Elyse nestled into her chair, fine-tuned the headphones to just the right fit, and plunged into the heart of the session. Once the initial pleasantries were squared away, the floor opened to audience calls.

The host adeptly managed several calls, with Elyse weaving through each conversation with aplomb. She even serenaded a fan with a spontaneous melody, much to their delight.

As the show edged towards its finale, the host welcomed the final caller.

“Hello, how would you prefer we address you today?” the host inquired, his voice a warm blanket of welcome.

“Just Mr. S,” the caller answered tersely.

The host, a flicker of confusion crossing his features, pressed on. “Very well, Mr. S, what’s on your mind for Elyse?”

A brief hush fell before the caller ventured, “I’m curious, Elyse, do you still harbor love for your ex-husband?” Elyse’s smile faltered into a frown.

The host, caught off guard, intervened swiftly. “Let’s keep the questions light, shall we? Perhaps something less personal?”

The caller hesitated, then offered, “Fair point. So, Elyse, had our paths crossed first, might you have fancied me?”

The host’s brows knitted in displeasure. “We’re veering off course with these questions. One more like this, and we’ll need to move on.”

Elyse, hearing the caller’s voice, felt a wave of vague recognition wash over her. It sounded so familiar yet so elusive.

Clearly, Mr. S had some connection to her. Was it possibly Theo?

But the voice didn’t carry Theo’s usual tones.

With cautious curiosity, Elyse inquired, “Are we acquainted?”

“Yes, we are,” the caller replied, his voice a gentle murmur.

“And are we friends?” she probed further.

“Yes,” he affirmed softly.

After a contemplative pause, Elyse asked, “Then why question whether I’d have liked you first?”

“Because I’ve found myself quite taken with you,” the man confessed, his tone steady but layered with unspoken emotions. “There’s always someone shielding you, keeping me at bay. It’s a thorn in my side, truly.”

Elyse remained silent, pondering his words. As the host considered cutting the call short, she finally spoke up. “It’s tricky to say whether I would have favored you over Jayden had we met first. Such a scenario is purely speculative. My affection for my ex-husband didn’t blossom overnight; it grew steadily, nurtured by time and deepening bonds of love.”

The caller probed, “So, if it had been me instead, you would have shown any interest too, correct?”

Chapter 1353:

Elyse paused, choosing her words carefully. “To affirm that would only serve to give you false hopes, weaving a tale far from the truth.”

The caller persisted, his voice tinged with a mix of hope and desperation. “Given all that’s been said, could you not reunite with your ex? Remember, I am here, still waiting.”

A trace of concern etched Elyse’s features as she pondered how the man had such intimate knowledge of her life.

The host eyed the ticking clock and announced, “Our time has flown by; we need to wrap this up. We’re saying goodbye now, Mr. S.”

“Just one last thing, please!” the caller pleaded.

Elyse gave a gentle nod. “Go ahead.”

His voice, earnest and filled with emotion, broke through. “I love you, Elyse, with a depth you might not fully grasp!”

The host intervened firmly. “We appreciate your call, Mr. S, but that’s all the time we have. We’re disconnecting now.”

Once the line went silent, the host turned to Elyse, his tone light yet curious. “Well, Elyse, it seems Mr. S is quite the ardent admirer, declaring he’ll wait for you. Do you have any inkling who he could be?”

Elyse offered a strained smile, her mind racing. “I’m as baffled as you are. If it were up to me, I’d wish he’d channel his passion toward someone who could return it. I doubt I’m the right person for him.”

The host pondered aloud, “Strange are the ways of the heart. It’s not uncommon for one to fall for another, logic aside.”

After a brief exchange with the host, their engaging session drew to a close.

In the solitude of the dressing room, Chloe approached, her eyes alight with curiosity. “You truly have no clue about the last caller’s identity?”

Elyse laughed softly, her laughter tinged with frustration. “Not a clue. He seems familiar with me, even claims we’re friends. Despite racking my brain, his identity eludes me.”

Chloe offered a speculative thought. “Perhaps he’s someone so unassuming that he’s simply escaped your notice.”

Elyse hesitated, then offered a thoughtful observation. “Perhaps this mysterious person knows both Jayden and me. He finds courage only behind the anonymity of the radio waves.”

Chloe agreed with a slow nod. “Exactly, and that makes him a coward. He tosses hints about his feelings to catch your attention, yet he cowers behind a pseudonym, never daring to reveal his true self. The epitome of cowardice.”

Dismissing the topic with a wave of her hand, Elyse said, “There’s no point in pondering his motives. My work here is done. Let’s head home.”

They wrapped up and left the dimly lit corridors of the building. As they stepped into the cool evening air, they found Jayden waiting by the entrance, his back against the cold stone wall.

Chapter 1354:

With a cigarette dangling from the corner of his mouth, his silhouette cut a striking figure against the setting sun, his rugged charm momentarily mesmerizing. Elyse found herself briefly lost in the sight.

Chloe, quick to notice, nudged Elyse's arm playfully. "Quit daydreaming and go talk to him."

Annoyed by the interruption, Elyse snapped back. "Chloe, enough with the teasing!"

With a chuckle, Chloe moved toward Jayden, announcing in a clear, firm tone, "Mr. Owen, I'll leave you to it. Enjoy your evening." She then swiftly made her exit.

Jayden, extinguishing his cigarette in a nearby bin, opened his arms wide for Elyse.

She approached with hesitant steps, her heart fluttering as she nestled into his embrace. She whispered, "You're back from Owen Group? Everything okay there? No one gave you a hard time?"

Chuckling softly, Jayden assured her, "Who would dare? Now that I've cut ties with the Owen family, they can't touch me."

Looking up into his eyes, Elyse inquired, "So, any plans to swoop in and save Owen Group?"

"I'm a businessman first and foremost, with a family to think about," Jayden responded pragmatically. "I make decisions based on what's best for my future, not based on family obligations."

"Moves only when there's something in it for me." Elyse, focusing on his pragmatic side, pressed further. "So, you would consider helping them if the terms were right?"

"Equal exchange, fair enough, wouldn't you say?" Jayden replied, his tone even.

“That does make sense,” Elyse conceded, nodding slowly. When Enzo went against Jayden, the other Owens stood by, offering no support. Jayden thought about their cold indifference, branding them as ungrateful egoists polished to a deceptive sheen.

Given this backdrop, Elyse could hardly blame Jayden for his guarded stance.

Their journey home was abruptly interrupted by the stark ring of Jayden’s phone—a call from the hospital that sliced through the silence of the car like a sharp intake of breath.

After a terse conversation, Jayden ended the call, his complexion ghostly, his brow creased with lines of worry.

“What happened? Who was that?” Elyse asked, noticing his pallor.

“It was the hospital. Shaun’s awake,” Jayden replied, his voice a blend of relief and apprehension.

“That’s fantastic news! Shaun waking up is a miracle!” Elyse beamed, her eyes sparkling with optimism.

“Yes, but it’s complicated.” Jayden sighed, his tone heavy. “The doctor says there’s a problem with Shaun. We need to go there right now.”

Elyse’s heart sank as she pondered the possibilities. Had Lowell and Dolores visited Shaun, further complicating matters?

Chapter 1355:

Upon their arrival at the hospital, they made their way to Shaun’s ward, where a flurry of medical activity surrounded his bed. Doctors and nurses moved with urgent precision, their faces masks of professional concern. After a tense wait, Shaun’s doctor approached them, his features etched with gravity.

“Shaun has indeed woken up. He’s physically able to move about freely, which is a positive sign. However, we are facing a serious issue...” He hesitated, as if the next words weighed heavily on him.

“He has lost his memory.”

Elyse, taken aback, asked, “What?”

The doctor continued, “The trauma from the accident has damaged his brain. He doesn’t remember anyone, not even himself. He’s in a state of complete amnesia.”

The weight of such a profound loss of identity left Elyse speechless, her mind wrestling with the implications as they stood enveloped in heavy silence, each lost in their thoughts.

Elyse stood outside the ward, her gaze fixed on Shaun, who sat quietly on the hospital bed. His head was lowered, and he was surrounded by a cluster of doctors, looking lost and vulnerable. The sight of him like this tugged at her heart.

With a worried expression, Elyse turned to the doctor. “Is there really nothing he remembers? Has he forgotten everything?”

The doctor’s brows furrowed, his tone heavy. “We can’t confirm he’s forgotten everything, but it seems that way. Some memories might resurface with specific triggers, but others could be gone forever.”

Elyse sighed deeply, her heart aching. “That’s so cruel...” She glanced at Shaun again.

Jayden, standing beside her, looked equally troubled. This was uncharted territory for him. If Shaun hadn’t lost his memory, Jayden could manage things as he always did. But now, every step required extra caution.

“I’ll contact his family,” Jayden finally said. He knew this was bigger than him.

Elyse nodded in agreement. As Jayden stepped out to make the call, she walked into the ward, her footsteps soft. The doctors and nurses had left, leaving only her and Shaun in the room.



Sensing her presence, Shaun lifted his head. His clear, innocent eyes met hers, filled with curiosity and confusion. Elyse moved closer, bending slightly to get a better look at him.

This version of Shaun was entirely different. His amnesia had stripped away his sharp, enigmatic aura, leaving behind a man as pure and unguarded as a child.

Her chest tightened as she tried to adjust to this unfamiliar side of him.

Shaun, meanwhile, studied her intently. After a brief pause, he hesitantly asked, “Are you my girlfriend?”

Elyse froze, startled by the question, and quickly stepped back. “No, I’m not. Don’t jump to conclusions.”

Chapter 1356:

A flicker of disappointment crossed Shaun’s face. “But you’re so beautiful. Why aren’t you my girlfriend?”

Elyse blinked, at a loss for words. “So, any beautiful woman must be your girlfriend?”

Shaun pouted like a child caught in mischief. “The doctor said my brain injury has caused memory confusion. I’ve forgotten a lot of things and people. But... wouldn’t my girlfriend come to see me now that I’m so pitiful?”

Elyse caught onto his words and probed further. “Why do you think you have a girlfriend? Do you remember who she is?”

Shaun shook his head. “I don’t remember. It’s just... I feel like there’s someone in my heart. She must be my girlfriend.”

Elyse frowned slightly. “You don’t remember anything, yet you think there’s someone in your heart? Why do you think she’s your girlfriend?”

Shaun looked down, confused. “I don’t know. It’s just a feeling. Do you know me? Are we friends? Do you know if I have a girlfriend? If I do, can you bring her to see me?”

Elyse hesitated, her expression softening. After a moment, she quietly said, “You did have a girlfriend, but you broke up with her.”

Shaun’s brows furrowed deeply. “We broke up? Why? Was it my fault or hers?”

Elyse gave a faint smile, her tone light but pointed. “From my perspective, it was mostly your fault.”

Shaun stared at her, his gaze growing more focused. Suddenly, he said, “You’re my girlfriend, aren’t you? You’re angry about my past mistakes, so you won’t admit it now.”

Elyse’s jaw dropped. She couldn’t believe how absurd he was being.

She replied, taking a deep breath to steady herself. “No, I’m not your girlfriend. Your ex-girlfriend was my friend.”

Shaun’s eyes lit up with sudden excitement. “Really? Then bring her to me! Whatever the problems were, we can work them out.”

Elyse found his words absurd. She couldn’t decide if it was the amnesia or something deeper that had him acting this way.

A sense of pity welled up within her. After a brief pause, she said gently, “I can’t bring her to you because she’s dead.”

The words hit Shaun like a thunderbolt. He froze, his entire body going rigid.

Elyse watched in alarm as his expression twisted. His hands flew to his head, and he cried out in pain. “My head! It hurts so much!”

Elyse took a step closer, panicked. “Are you reacting to—”

“Tracy... Tracy...” Shaun repeated the name like a mantra. Though he didn’t remember who Tracy was, the name stirred something deep inside him—both pain and a faint sense of comfort.

“Who is Tracy?” he asked, his voice trembling with desperation.

Elyse realized she had struck a sensitive chord, triggering an intense reaction.

Chapter 1357:

“Tracy... Tracy...” Shaun continued to murmur, as if trying to claw his way to the answer.

But the effort only made his pain worse.

Elyse quickly pressed the call button to summon the doctor, her heart pounding with fear.

After arriving, the doctor administered a sedative to Shaun, which soothed him and allowed for a restful sleep. Upon finishing his call, Jayden entered to find the doctor preparing to leave.

He walked over to Elyse and asked, “What happened? What’s going on with Shaun?”

Elyse lowered her head in apology and responded, “I mentioned something I shouldn’t have, and it upset him.”

Jayden raised an eyebrow. “It’s unusual for someone with amnesia to react so strongly. What exactly did you say?”

Elyse responded with discomfort, saying, “I brought up... Tracy.”

Silence hung in the air for a moment before Jayden said, “Even with his memory gone, he still fancies himself a love-struck fool, doesn’t he?”

Elyse smiled at his words.

She then changed the subject to something more pressing. “Have you heard from his family?”

“They are arriving from Cambape tomorrow to take Shaun back home,” Jayden explained. “Shaun’s family depends entirely on him. His amnesia could really disrupt their business for a while.”

Elyse nodded in understanding.

As they spoke, two unexpected figures appeared at the door of the ward.

Tears streaming, Dolores gazed at Shaun on the bed and murmured, “Shaun, I’ve come to visit you.”

Elyse’s patience wore thin. “Miss Ruiz, Shaun is alright. Please, there’s no need for such drama.”

In Elyse’s eyes, Dolores appeared to be lacking sincerity.

Dolores looked fiercely at Elyse, then turned to Jayden, saying, “How long will you keep Shaun here? He is not your prisoner. By what right do you stop us from seeing him?”

Jayden calmly responded, “Until we identify the culprit, you remain under suspicion.”

Dolores snapped back, “And who are you to suspect me?”

His eyes slowly shifting to Lowell, Jayden replied with a slight smile, “Shouldn’t I be suspicious of you two?”

Lowell’s frown deepened, his displeasure evident. “You’re implying something serious. Without proof, I could take legal action.”

With a chuckle, Jayden teased, “I’ve made no accusations. Why so defensive?”

Lowell pressed his lips together, choosing to remain silent.

Chapter 1358:

Elyse said firmly, “Shaun will make his own choice about staying or leaving once he’s awake. You can’t simply take him away.”

Dolores replied passionately, “I’m the person closest to Shaun. I intend to take him home to care for him. Don’t imply that I would cause him harm.”

Elyse shrugged dismissively. “The decision isn’t yours to make. I don’t trust your motives.”

Dolores clenched her teeth, her gaze fixed on Elyse, filled with anger and resentment.

Lowell, looking towards Shaun, suggested, “You’ll return once Shaun is conscious.”

Jayden gestured toward the exit. “I’d appreciate it if you would leave now.”

Lowell and a visibly upset Dolores exited.

In the car, Dolores vented her frustration. “How can Jayden and Elyse act so arrogantly? Preventing us from taking Shaun is outrageous!”

Lowell was silent, gazing out the window, deep in thought. As Dolores continued to express her displeasure, she paused upon noticing Lowell’s detachment and asked, “What’s the matter with you? Aren’t you listening?”

“I’m thinking,” Lowell replied, his face exhausted. “Let’s head home. I need to return to the office to finish some pending tasks.”

Dolores said softly, “But I’m still upset and want to talk.”

“Another time. My schedule is really tight today,” Lowell insisted, urging Dolores to buckle up before driving her home.

After leaving her, Lowell drove not to his office but toward the riverside in Cambape.

The spring air was cool, carrying the fragrance of blossoms. Lowell stood by the water's edge, his gaze distant and thoughtful.

As darkness surrounded the area, the crowd thinned until Lowell was alone, the time now past ten.

"Lowell..."

Startled by the sudden call, Lowell turned around to see a woman standing about ten meters away. She was dressed in a flowing dress, her features hidden in the dim light.

"Who are you?" Lowell asked, his voice tinged with uncertainty.

"It's me. Don't you recognize me?" the woman answered, her voice sweet.

Lowell paused to think for a moment, but when he couldn't make out her face, he chose to move closer for a clearer view.

However, as he neared, the woman turned and ran away. Confused, Lowell called out, "Why are you running? I'm not going to harm you."

The woman let out a soft, amused giggle at Lowell's words but refused to halt her playful escape, darting forward with an air of mischief.

Lowell's curiosity sparked like a match to kindling. Who was this enigmatic woman? He felt an irresistible pull to uncover the truth.

Chapter 1359:

Without hesitation, he took off after her.

Yet, the woman seemed intent on keeping her identity veiled, quickening her pace before vanishing around a corner.

When Lowell reached the corner, his eyes searched the empty space, finding nothing but silence.

He muttered under his breath, “Where on earth did she vanish to?”

“Looking for me?” came a playful voice from behind. Before Lowell could spin around, he felt slender arms wrap around his waist, her figure pressing firmly against him, her teasing hands exploring with audacity.

Lowell, a man known for his self-control and a heart as unyielding as stone, felt a crack in his resolve. The woman stirred desires he had long kept dormant.

He swiftly caught her wandering hands, his tone both commanding and curious. “Who are you?”

Her voice, as sultry as the lingering heat of summer, replied, “Does it truly matter? If I mean so much to you, why don’t you take a guess?”

Lowell stood silent, her enigmatic tone throwing him into deep thought.

Seeing his hesitation, she remained unfazed. Slowly, her hands glided upward, covering his eyes with a playful firmness.

Robbed of his sight, Lowell tensed like a tightly coiled spring. “What are you doing?” he asked, his voice carrying a thin edge of wariness.

She laughed lightly, a sound as breezy as leaves rustling in the wind. “If you can guess who I am, you’ll get a reward. But since you can’t...” She paused, her voice dipping. “You must face a punishment.”

Lowell’s brow furrowed. “What punishment?”

Her lips curled into a sly smile as she gently tugged him...

Driven by curiosity, he leaned closer, and then it happened. Her warm breath caressed his face, and before he could react, her lips captured his.

The kiss struck Lowell like lightning splitting the sky. His entire body froze, caught off guard by the intimate ambush. But the woman wasn't satisfied with a fleeting moment. She deepened the kiss, her passion burning like a flame that refused to be extinguished.

For a spell, Lowell let himself be swept away by her fervor. When reality reclaimed him, he realized she had stolen something precious—his very first kiss.

Indeed, that kiss was sacred to him. Lowell had lived a life untouched by romantic entanglements, his heart and lips unclaimed until this very moment.

The realization struck him like a bolt from the blue. She had taken what no one else ever had.

Desperate to unmask her, Lowell reached for her hands to uncover her identity, but she held him firmly.

"I warned you. This is your punishment for failing my little riddle," she teased, her voice a playful whisper in the dimness.

Chapter 1360:

Lowell's voice softened, betraying his newfound vulnerability. "When will I see you again?"

She laughed, a sound like tinkling bells in the night. "Why rush? I'll give you another chance—when you know the answer."

Before he could respond, she gave him a sudden push.

Caught off guard, Lowell stumbled. When he regained his balance, she was gone, leaving only the ghost of her laughter behind.

Under the dim glow of the streetlight, Lowell's fingers grazed his lips, tracing the lingering warmth of the kiss. He had never shared such intimacy with anyone before. The unexpected entanglement had not only startled him but also left him feeling an unfamiliar, soothing ease—one he hadn't realized he could enjoy.



That kiss was no ordinary brush of lips; it had awakened a delicate flutter in his heart, as though a caged bird had finally taken flight.

Yet, the woman's identity remained an enigma, veiled behind her playful charm. Try as he might, Lowell could not piece together the puzzle of who she was.

That night, something began to stir deep within him—a symphony of emotions he could neither name nor fully comprehend. He chose not to suppress them, allowing them to bloom in the quiet corners of his soul, untamed and free.

Elsewhere, the woman climbed into her car, shedding the long wig that had masked her true identity.

Tracy ran her fingers through her hair, setting the wig aside with a satisfied smile. Humming softly, she leaned toward the mirror to reapply her lipstick.

The lipstick, once pristine, had been entirely consumed by Lowell during their passionate kiss.

Though he was uninitiated in the realm of romance, Lowell had responded instinctively, meeting her fervor with an eagerness that now amused Tracy.

As she dabbed the final touch of color onto her lips, her smile deepened at the thought of his unguarded passion. Fastening her seatbelt, Tracy steered her car toward the hospital.

She had heard that Shaun had lost his memory. As his ex, she felt a peculiar sense of obligation to visit. A bouquet of flowers and some fresh fruit seemed a fitting gesture.

Donning a baseball cap to avoid the ever-watchful cameras, Tracy entered the hospital and made her way toward Shaun's ward.

Tracy stood silently at the ward door, peering through the glass window at Shaun.

He was awake, but the sedatives had left him lying still on the bed, his eyes fixed blankly on the ceiling. After observing him for a moment, Tracy turned the doorknob and entered. She approached the bed cautiously, her steps soft.

“Shaun, have you lost your memory?” she whispered, her voice low and tentative.

Shaun didn’t respond. His eyes remained glued to the ceiling, utterly indifferent to her presence.