

Bound love 141

Chapter 143:

Elyse's voice trembled as she uttered her final sentence, her emotions threatening to overwhelm her. Richie, sensing her distress, offered her a box of tissues in a gesture of kindness. But Elyse, determined to keep up her facade, gently pushed the tissues away. "I'm not crying. I'm fine."

Despite her attempt to appear composed, Richie could tell Elyse seethed with frustration, her heart heavy with unspoken emotions. Why did she refuse to acknowledge her own feelings? And why reject the comfort offered to her?

Richie exchanged a glance with Jayden, silently conveying his concern for Elyse's well-being. Had her husband noticed her distress?

Meanwhile, Jayden furrowed his brow deep in thought. He could confirm that Elyse's recent behavior was fueled by jealousy towards Judy. But what could have triggered such envy? He racked his brain for answers, perplexed by her sudden change in demeanor.

Growing increasingly impatient, Jayden tapped his fingers rhythmically on the table, urging them to eat. "Let's dig in. You must be starving after a long day," he said.

Elyse's anger simmered as she retorted coldly, "I'm not hungry."

Jayden rolled his eyes in exasperation, firmly grasping her hand as he led her outside. "Fine, if you don't want to eat, then let's go home," he declared, his tone tinged with irritation.

Despite her desperate struggles, Elyse couldn't break free from Jayden's grasp, her frustration boiling over as she cried out, "I'm not going back with you. You can go alone!"

"Come home with me," Jayden insisted through gritted teeth, his resolve unwavering as he dragged her along.

Meanwhile, Richie watched the scene unfold with confusion. "Are they really leaving like that? I can't finish all of this by myself," he thought to himself as he carried on eating silently.

Back at home, Jayden forcefully escorted Elyse inside despite her protests. Driscoll, witnessing their arrival, felt a pang of concern. “Mr. Owen, perhaps you should be more considerate,” he suggested gently, attempting to diffuse the tension.

But Jayden’s frustration only intensified at Elyse’s stubbornness. “I’ve been nothing but good to her, and yet she dares to be angry with me.”

“How good were you to me?” Elyse retorted sharply, her voice laced with bitterness. “You mean ordering me around coldly while showing kindness to other women?”

“When have I shown kindness to other women?” Jayden countered with a sneer, his tone icy.

“It’s been like that for the past few days. Do you need me to remind you?” She leaned in closer to Jayden, her voice piercing.

Jayden scratched his ear, a sinister smile creeping onto his face. “You’ve gone too far, Elyse,” he declared ominously.

Trembling with fear, Elyse found herself being forcibly pulled towards the elevator by Jayden. Desperate, she called out to Driscoll for help. “Driscoll, please help me,” she pleaded, her voice tinged with panic.

Driscoll hesitated, his expression fraught with concern, but ultimately he dared not defy Jayden’s orders. “Mr. Owen, please don’t go too far,” he implored helplessly, his words falling on deaf ears.

Jayden ignored Driscoll’s protests and pressed the elevator button repeatedly, signaling his determination to proceed despite objections. As Elyse continued to struggle, Jayden persisted, pushing her down onto the bed in a prone position.

Despite her efforts to rise, Jayden swiftly climbed onto the bed and sat just above her buttocks. Elyse was angry and tried to turn her head, but Jayden pressed her head into the pillow. With one hand steadying her, Jayden swiftly removed his tie with the other. He then tied it around her eyes as a blindfold, covering her vision.

“Get off of me! I don’t want to sleep in the same room as you,” Elyse protested.

Jayden gritted his teeth and delivered a loud spank to her buttocks. The shock coursed through her body, and the moment she came to her senses, she was furious. "Jayden, you're being disrespectful!"

"Is this disrespectful to you?" Jayden's smile took on a mischievous edge as he flicked his tongue across his lips briefly. His eyes sparkled with intense desire.

Jayden deftly unbuckled his belt with one hand and used it to tie her hands together, his movements both quick and skillful.

At that instant, Elyse sensed that something was amiss. Her usual confidence wavered slightly, yet she summoned her courage and firmly declared, "Don't you dare."

Jayden gently turned her over, observing her disheveled clothes. He touched her body with his warm, rough palm, causing her to tremble slightly. Feeling his touch, her initial arrogance faded further, leaving her more vulnerable.

Her voice quivered as she spoke, "Don't even try. We are still in the middle of an argument. I'm not in the mood for this."

"What argument? I don't think there's anything to argue about," Jayden retorted, eyeing every inch of her naked body as he undressed her. He groped her breasts and squeezed hard, his voice becoming hoarse with desire. "How dare you refuse to have dinner with me because of some irrelevant woman."

Elyse's reaction intensified, her body shaking more violently as she struggled to contain her emotions. She felt a surge of frustration; how could she discuss her recent experiences with Jayden when he seemed so distant from her reality?

Elyse's expression hardened into one of defiance, her gaze unwavering and resolute. Jayden could see the stubborn streak on her face.

Jayden remained composed, his confidence unshaken. He believed firmly in his ability to sway her, confident that with time and patience, he could change her mind. He removed her panties and gently slid his fingers inside. As he withdrew them, his fingers were damp. Subsequently, he inserted two fingers deeply into her vagina. "You provoked me first."

Chapter 144:

Jayden's movements left Elyse's mind blank. Initially, she stubbornly refused to talk to him. Now, however, she found herself begging amidst pitiful moans. Blindfolded, tears streamed down her cheeks.

Reflecting on Elyse's distant behavior over the past days, Jayden felt enraged. As a successful businessman for years, his pride was intact even though he now sat in a wheelchair. The challenge from a young woman was more than he could bear. This thought drove him to seize Elyse's lips as his actions grew more intense.

Elyse's whimpers escalated, mingling pain with pleasure—a great temptation for any man. “Elyse, you still dare to treat me coldly, huh?” Jayden wanted to say no, but his forceful movements stifled her words. She struggled to form a complete sentence; after several attempts, she managed to make her promise.

Her words seemed to dissipate Jayden's anger. Observing the kiss marks and bruises on Elyse's body, he felt a twisted satisfaction. Finally, he ceased his aggressions and allowed her to curl up in his arms, her body still trembling.

Jayden whispered in her ear with a bite, “Be a good girl, and I'll treat you well.” It took a long rest for Elyse to regain her composure, both physically and mentally. Her voice raspy, she pleaded, “Release me. I'm not feeling well.”

“You're not behaving well enough. I can't release you,” Jayden retorted sharply.

Elyse pressed her lips together, feeling wronged once again. Suddenly, her stomach growled loudly, surprising Jayden.

As her stomach rumbled, Elyse's sense of grievance deepened. This morning, he had forced himself on her, and she hadn't eaten all day. And moments ago, they did it again. Tears welled up as she bit her lower lip and sobbed, “Ever since I married you, you've kept me starved.”

Jayden found himself at a loss for words. Witnessing Elyse's tears, Jayden sighed deeply. He sat up, shifted into his wheelchair, and proceeded to untie her. Now free, Elyse could see clearly. She pushed herself up on the bed and noticed bruises encircling her wrists. Her sobbing intensified.

“Stop crying. Let’s get you something to eat,” Jayden massaged his forehead, lifted Elyse, and seated her on his lap.

Small and fragile, she continued to sob in his arms. He carried her down to the dining room on the ground floor, gave her a gentle pat on the back, and suggested, “All the servants are likely asleep by now. Check the fridge and see if there’s anything you can eat.”

Elyse nodded. As she attempted to stand, her legs gave out, but Jayden quickly supported her to prevent a fall. Looking at her unsteady legs, Jayden couldn’t help feeling a perverse sense of pride. He teased her, “Maybe I should have been tougher. You’re not used to it.”

Elyse avoided his eyes by looking down. “Stop talking. This is all your doing.”

Flushing with anger, Elyse glared back at Jayden. She gripped the edge of the dining table for support and made her way to the refrigerator. Finding some mashed potato, she exclaimed with a hint of relief, “Looks like they’ve left us a midnight snack. They probably thought you might starve.”

Jayden remarked, resting his chin on his hand as he watched her clumsily move toward the microwave to warm up the food, amused by her awkwardness.

Elyse watched the microwave eagerly. Once the food was warm, she set the bowl down and began to eat in silence.

Jayden observed her, thinking she resembled a squirrel nibbling at food. He raised his hand to stroke her hair, but she quickly moved away.

With a menacing grin, Jayden challenged, “What’s that supposed to mean? Need another lesson?”

Elyse kept her eyes averted. “Don’t touch me.”

Jayden tapped his fingers on the table impatiently. “Give me a reason,” he demanded sharply.

Elyse glared at him fiercely. “Why don’t you go stroke Judy Foster’s hair? She loves your touch. I certainly do not.”

Jayden, sensing her jealousy, couldn’t help but feel a twinge of satisfaction. Yet he feigned confusion. “Why are you so bothered by Judy? I’ve already told you I don’t care about her,” Elyse responded, turning her gaze away.

Jayden gently guided her face back toward him and gave her a quick kiss. With a slight smile, he inquired, “Have you seen Judy since you got back?”

Elyse fell silent for a moment. She hadn’t encountered Judy at all since her return. In the past, Judy would have certainly made her presence felt, likely saying something to provoke her.

Elyse’s voice carried a hint of doubt. “Where is she? Isn’t she supposed to be here?”

Observing her perplexed expression, Jayden’s lips twitched. He sighed, a mix of frustration and affection coloring his tone, “My little fool, how can you still be so naive after all these days with me?”

Chapter 145:

Judy had been trapped in the dark room for what felt like forever. Her throat was dry from calling out, yet no one came to free her. She found it difficult to accept. Didn’t Jayden care about her anymore? Why did he do this to her? Where did she go wrong?

Resigned, she slumped against the door and curled up on the floor, the picture of despair, forsaken by the world and the man whose love she thought she had. As tears traced her cheeks, she clung to the hope that Jayden would come to her rescue.

Miraculously, two hours later, the door creaked open. At the sound, Judy leapt up, her face lighting up with hope, but it wasn’t Jayden who stood there. It was two muscular men.

Eyeing them with suspicion, she questioned, “Who are you two? Did Jayden send you to get me?”

The men exchanged a knowing look and simply cracked a smile.

“You need to come with us,” they stated bluntly. With that, they hoisted her up with an authority that allowed no argument. She was hauled out of Jayden’s house and into a car, the men sitting on either side of her in silence.

“Where are you taking me? Jayden should know where I am. What if he can’t find me?” Judy demanded, a sense of dread washing over her.

The two bodyguards paid no attention to her. Judy’s unease grew with their silence.

Later, Judy found herself at the back entrance of a house where a stern-looking middle-aged woman waited, her gaze piercing and unwelcoming.

They dragged Judy from the car. Staring at the house, a wave of fear washed over her.

“Have you ever heard of my name? I’m Judy Foster. Who are you, and what do you want from me?”

The woman sneered and spat, “I don’t give a damn about who you are. As a maid, you should know your place. And we’re short a maid.”

“But I work for Jayden Owen and no one else! How can you treat me this way?” Judy protested in shock.

The woman, holding a contract, scrutinized it intently. “According to this contract, you’re now with the Owen family. Bring her inside.”

“I serve Jayden, not the entire Owen family. This isn’t right. I need to see Jayden,” Judy insisted.

But the woman dismissed her with a single word, “Noisy.” Then she seized Judy’s hair, her voice seething with anger. “It’s clear to me now. You’re someone trying to lure him in. No wonder he’s rid of you.”

Judy should have been livid at the insult, yet news of Jayden's rejection left her reeling in shock. Tears sprang to her eyes as she protested, "That can't be! Why would Jayden send me away? He's been nothing but kind recently, even more so than to Elyse."

The woman cackled mockingly. "Mr. Owen adores his wife. I've witnessed it myself."

Evaluating Judy from head to toe with contempt, she snorted, "You seem unable to accept seeing them happy. Perhaps it's all in your head. Lost your senses, have you?"

"You're mistaken. He's been kind to me. I've been in his room, and he didn't object," Judy countered, her belief unshaken.

The woman's laughter grew louder. "If he was really fond of you, why would he send you here?"

Stopping for a moment, her smile twisted. "Jayden has confided in me, calling you an inept maid. You're bound by contract to the Owen family. You will listen to what I say from now on."

Hope flickered in Judy's eyes. "I'll work hard. Will Jayden take me back?"

"His house has plenty of maids." With a flick of her hand, the woman signaled the guards. "Bring her inside. I shall fulfill Mr. Owen's orders meticulously."

Chapter 146:

After parting ways with Elyse, Theo decided to drown his sorrows at the local bar. With each sip, he felt the weight of the evening slipping away until he stumbled out, more than a little tipsy. As Theo attempted to navigate the road home, his vision blurred and his reflexes slowed by the alcohol. Before he knew it, he veered into the guardrail, and the car lurched, triggering the airbag to inflate with a loud pop, knocking him out cold.

Thankfully, a good Samaritan driving by noticed the wreck and immediately called for an ambulance, which rushed Theo to the hospital. Zandra, upon receiving the distressing news of her son's accident, abandoned her overtime duties at the office and rushed to the hospital.

When she arrived, her heart clenched at the sight of him pale and unconscious on the hospital bed. With trembling hands and tear-filled eyes, she checked him over, fearing the worst.

The doctor strode into the ward with a calm yet reassuring demeanor. "Please try to stay calm," he began, his voice steady. "Your son is going to be just fine. He's still feeling the effects of the alcohol, but the car accident wasn't as serious as it may have seemed. We've thoroughly examined him, and I'm happy to report that he has no internal injuries. Just a few scrapes and bruises on the outside."

Upon hearing the doctor's reassuring words, Zandra couldn't help but let out a long, relieved sigh. She reached up to smooth down the strands of hair that had fallen across her forehead in her worry, and with a deep breath, she straightened her posture, returning to her usual image of strength and resilience. "Thank you, doctor."

After the doctor finished explaining the precautions and left the ward, Zandra took a seat beside the bed, her gaze fixed on her son. A feeling of annoyance crept over her as she looked at him lying there. She turned her head away and closed her eyes, trying to push aside her frustration.

A few hours later, Theo stirred awake, blinking at the unfamiliar sight of the white hospital ceiling. Realizing he wasn't in his own room, he sat up, wincing as the movement tugged at his wounds. His sharp gasp roused Zandra from her sleep, and she swiftly reached for the call button to summon the doctor.

Shortly after the doctor and nurse arrived, conducting a thorough checkup on Theo before reassuring them both and departing. As Theo rubbed his throbbing head, Zandra's expression turned frosty. "What? Have you forgotten how you ended up in the hospital?" she asked sharply.

Theo's memory was hazy. The strong liquor from the night before had blurred his recollection soon after leaving the bar. "I... I don't remember," Theo admitted, confusion clouding his features. "Mom, why am I here?"

Zandra's disappointment simmered into anger as she pinched his ear, her voice laced with frustration. "You drove drunk, Theo. Do you even realize the danger you put yourself in? Are you so reckless that you're willing to risk your life?"

Theo's bewilderment only deepened. "I drove drunk?"

"I don't care if you want to die or not. You must give me a grandchild before you die!" Zandra's anger blazed. She hugged herself tightly, barely holding onto her composure.

Theo winced as he covered his aching ear, his usual talkative demeanor replaced by silence. Taking a seat, Zandra's voice was tinged with disappointment and concern. "What happened to you? Why did you go drinking like that? Didn't I tell you to take care of yourself?"

Sulking, Theo mumbled, "I was just in a bad mood. It's nothing."

Pressing for answers, Zandra persisted. "Why were you in a bad mood?"

Theo hesitated, struggling to articulate his emotions. "Mom, Elyse told me I'm not as good as Jayden Owen."

Zandra's confusion deepened. "What do you mean?"

"In her eyes, I'm inferior to someone with a disability," Theo spat angrily, meeting Zandra's surprised gaze.

Shocked, Zandra asked, "But you broke up with Elyse ages ago. Why are you still in contact with her?" It hadn't occurred to her that Elyse might be the root cause of her son's distress, let alone his dangerous behavior.

Theo fell silent once more, unable to bring himself to admit to his mother that he still missed Elyse. Consumed by thoughts of Elyse, he had resolved to reach out to her himself.

Suppressing her anger, Zandra spoke with controlled frustration. "From the time you were a child, I've invested in giving you an elite education. I've always taught you that if you reach the top, you can have your pick of any woman. Yet here you are, fixated on Elyse, a woman you walked away from in the first place."

To Zandra, education and success were paramount. Relationships held no value if they didn't bring tangible benefits. She couldn't understand why Theo couldn't move on from someone she deemed insignificant.

Suddenly, Zandra's own question hit her, and she narrowed her eyes. "Do you love Elyse?"

Theo's brow furrowed. "Mom, what are you saying?"

“I can see it, Theo. You’re still hung up on Elyse. Even though she’s married now,” Zandra said sternly, staring at her son.

Theo’s expression turned incredulous. “How could you even think that?”

Zandra searched his face for any sign of a lie but found none. Then Zandra let out a sigh of relief. “I think you’re not over her because she praises someone else while belittling you. It must be intentional. Women like her often play hard to get.”

Theo echoed her words softly. “Playing hard to get... She must be doing it intentionally.”

Chapter 147:

Zandra peered out the window, noticing the break of day. She stood up and said, “You’re going to spend a few days here in the hospital. The doctor says you might have a concussion. Just rest up and forget about work for now.”

Theo gave a grateful nod. “Thanks, Mom.”

Zandra gave his shoulder a reassuring squeeze. “Don’t worry about it. You’re young, and life’s got a lot more for you to see. You’ll learn that stuff like this won’t bother you after a while.”

Theo started to speak, hesitated, but then agreed. “Alright.”

Once Zandra had left, Theo settled back onto his pillow. Sleep eluded him; her words echoed in his mind. Was it love he felt for Elyse?

He laid a hand over his heart, a pang hitting him as Elyse’s image surfaced in his thoughts. Love was a relatively new terrain for him. Before Elyse came into the picture, there was Kaelyn.

Falling for Kaelyn was a simple decision; she was the darling of the campus, and to him, only someone like her matched a man of his status.

Their romance was sweet at first. But when he discovered Kaelyn had been selling his gifts and seeing other wealthy men, he couldn't stand it. He broke things off with her.

Several months after their breakup, he bumped into Elyse at the school's secluded garden. She was practicing her violin in the cool shade of a tree. At that time, the school was gearing up for a big gala, so Elyse was there every day honing her skills under that tree.

Later on, Theo caught her performance at the event. After she left the stage, he approached her to pour out his heart, and she didn't turn him away. The look of surprise mingled with a blush on Elyse's face when he declared his feelings stayed with him.

Yet, the affection that either girl showed him didn't seem to stir true feelings in him. He clasped his chest and furrowed his brow slightly. But if he didn't truly care for Elyse, why did the thought of her now cause such a pang in his heart?

Come morning, when Mabel woke up, she rolled over and reached for the phone on her pillow. Glancing through her messages, she spotted one from the private detective she'd hired.

"Theo had a car accident last night and is in the hospital. He's resting in a VIP Ward Room 006."

The news jolted Mabel to full alertness. She quickly texted back, asking for details about the crash. When she found out Theo had been driving under the influence, a wave of worry washed over her.

"Please, Theo, hang in there. If anything were to happen to you, I'd be devastated," Mabel murmured softly.

The sorrow in Mabel's eyes quickly gave way to a spark of hope as she saw her chance to grow closer to Theo. She thought that if she cared for him in the hospital, he might start to see her in a different light. And if that happened, maybe she could become his wife.

Lost in thought for a moment, Mabel got up, changed into clean clothes, and headed downstairs to the kitchen to ask for some food to take to a sick friend. Seeing Mabel all dressed up, Glenda couldn't help but ask, "Going somewhere special? You're all dolled up."

Finishing up her makeup, Mabel glanced over with a confident air and said, "No need to fuss. I'll tell you all about it when I get back, and you'll be proud."

Upon hearing this, Glenda assumed that Mabel was planning to record a song at the studio. Following the accident last time, Mabel ceased going to work and remained at home for a while. She also believed it was the right moment for Mabel to come back to the entertainment scene once the public had moved past that incident.

Chewing on a piece of fruit, Glenda replied, “Well, I can’t wait to hear all about it.”

Mabel, her determination shining through, seemed poised to accomplish her mission. She was a beautiful girl, after all, and she believed that once Theo saw her true charm, he’d inevitably fall for her.

Mabel accepted the lunch box from the servant with a smile and happily boarded her car. She then dialed Elyse’s number to boast.

“Why did you call me?” Elyse, sounding as if she had just woken from a dream, asked groggily over the phone.

Mabel said complacently, “I’m about to make a big move, Elyse. I’ll go after what you don’t value about Theo. You’ll regret it.”

Elyse couldn’t fully comprehend Mabel’s meaning and responded, “What do you mean?”

Not in the mood to explain to Elyse, Mabel hung up the phone decisively and went to the hospital with expectation. She searched in the inpatient department for a while and found Theo’s ward. When she found that there was no guard outside, she was happy and knocked on the door.

Theo’s voice came from inside the ward, “Come in.”

With a flushed face, Mabel pushed the door open and entered. She said shyly, “Theo, I heard you were hospitalized, so I came to visit.”

Chapter 148:

Theo was surprised to see Mabel enter. He fixed his gaze on her and asked, “Who told you I was here?”

Mabel looked up, her expression blank, not realizing her mistake.

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Theo continued, his voice hardening, “It’s a big scandal for my family that I had a car accident under the influence. They managed to keep it under wraps so well last night that not even the reporters knew I was in the hospital. How did you find out and how did you know which ward I’m in?” He clenched his jaw and demanded, “Explain yourself.”

Mabel was taken aback. This was not how she had envisioned their conversation starting. She had planned to give Theo the lunch box first, hoping it would touch his heart. Now her lips quivered as she hesitated to admit that she had hired a private detective to follow him, knowing full well the consequences. Standing there, she trembled with fear.

“If you’re too scared to tell me, that’s fine. Did you have something else you wanted to say by coming here?” Theo asked, his interest waning. He figured if he really wanted to know, he could just ask his assistant to find out. He decided that involving Mabel’s family would be the most direct way to address the issue with her. She could only blame herself for the bad timing.

Seeing Theo’s casual demeanor, Mabel’s spirits lifted. She interpreted his relaxed attitude as a sign of tolerance and mistakenly thought he held no resentment towards her. She placed the food in front of him, lowered her head shyly, and whispered, “I just wanted to make sure you’re okay. I made this food for you.”

Looking at her shy demeanor, Theo asked pointedly, “Do you really like me?”

Mabel lowered her head, her shyness evident, and replied, “I’ve liked you for a long time. In the past, because you were in a relationship with my sister, I’ve kept my feelings to myself. Now, I just want to take care of you.”

Theo glanced at the lunch box and opened it. Inside, he found beautifully prepared food but doubted Mabel had made it herself.

“What do you like about me? When did you start having feelings for me?” he inquired, closing the lunch box.

Mabel was startled by the question. After a brief pause, she crafted her answer. “It was love at first sight.”

Theo, growing impatient, pressed further, “Tell me, what exactly do you like about me?”

Inside, Mabel bitterly thought of his influential family and wealth, yet she didn’t voice these thoughts. Instead, she answered earnestly, “I fell in love with you for no particular reason. When you dislike someone, reasons matter. But when you genuinely love someone like I do, they seem perfect to you.”

Theo sensed her dishonesty. Patience wearing thin, he massaged his temples and said briskly, “Well, you can go now.”

Mabel, who had arrived with hopes of deepening their connection, was not prepared to leave so abruptly. “Theo, I really care about you. Please let me stay and look after you. If you agree, I’m willing to do whatever you ask,” she pleaded.

With gentle eyes, she slowly unbuttoned the top of her blouse, revealing her collarbone. As Theo watched her, he became more convinced that Mabel couldn’t compare to Elyse. He found himself puzzled over how she could be so unappealing when she shared the same mother as Elyse.

“Are you willing to do anything?” he asked, propping his chin on one hand while a mischievous smile played on his lips.

Mabel nodded shyly, believing she had already committed herself to Theo. In her view, he had full authority over her actions. Her cheeks flushed with embarrassment.

“Then call Elyse and ask her to bring some fruit when she visits,” Theo suggested casually.

Mabel’s gentle facade broke and she exclaimed, “Elyse is married! Why do you always think of her?”

With a sneer, Theo retorted, “If you’re not willing, you can leave.”

Biting her lip, Mabel was determined not to leave. She had come to demonstrate her affection for Theo and was not about to give up. She tried to reason with him, “I know you’re fixated on my sister, but it’s not love. Even if I were to call her and ask her to come, she wouldn’t return your feelings.”

Theo just smiled and answered, “I don’t need Elyse to return my love. I just need her to bring me a basket of fruit. She owes me that.”

Mabel hesitated before asking uncertainly, “Do you really just want her to buy you some fruit?”

Theo confirmed, “Tell her she owes me that, and she must come and deliver it herself.”

Chapter 149:

Elyse was roused from her sleep by the insistent blare of her ringtone. Blinking the sleep from her eyes, she answered the phone groggily.

“Elyse, I need you to get a basket of fruit over to the hospital,” Mabel’s arrogant tone cut through the line.

Realizing it was Mabel again, Elyse was annoyed. What got into Mabel to be so full of life this early? Rubbing her eyes, Elyse retorted with a hint of irritation, “Why am I the one to bring fruit to the hospital? Can’t you handle that?”

Mabel shot back, indignant, “How could you be so heartless? Are you aware that Theo’s in the hospital because of you?”

Bewildered, Elyse forced her eyes wide open and queried, “What’s it got to do with me that he’s in the hospital? And why is it any of your business? Aren’t you embarrassed chasing after him like that?”

Mabel harbored plans to wed Theo and had recklessly offered her virginity. Elyse couldn’t fathom what was running through her sister’s mind to commit such folly.

“You’re just envious because I stay in touch with him. You can’t stand seeing us getting along,” Mabel shouted, her voice tinged with hysteria.

By now, Elyse was fully alert. She sneered, propped herself up against the pillow, and said lazily, “Yeah, you are right. I’m jealous of you. If you two are so tight, why don’t you take the fruit yourself?”

Mabel’s desperation was palpable. Theo had made it clear he wanted Elyse to visit him at the hospital; otherwise, he would have her escorted out. Mabel clenched her jaw, refusing to leave. She believed that if she succeeded, Theo would see her in a new light.

“You need to deliver it yourself. You’re in Theo’s debt,” Mabel declared haughtily.

Elyse was taken aback, half-convinced it was a prank. How could she possibly be indebted to Theo? Then it clicked.

Before her marriage, under great pressure, Theo had signed a deal with an overseas firm. This move garnered him the entire firm’s backing and newfound esteem. He also managed to wrest most of the reins of the company from Zandra, and not a soul contested his rise. It was a testament to his capability.

Back then, Elyse had playfully suggested to Theo that she’d craft a love basket brimming with strawberries to celebrate his triumph at the company. Theo, however, had barred her from setting foot in the company, thus rejecting her gift as well.

Remembering this, Elyse’s irritation grew. Theo had spurned her gesture once; why did he expect her to make amends now?

“Inform him I don’t have any obligations towards him, and he should stop trying,” Elyse stated firmly.

Just as she was about to end the call, Mabel interjected with dissatisfaction, “Why do you treat Theo so coldly? Did you ever truly love him?”

Elyse couldn’t help but smile at the question. Had she loved Theo? Absolutely. Yet she’d never truly felt loved by him, which caused her affection to fade away over time.

“It doesn’t really matter now. I’m Jayden’s wife. Theo should keep that in mind,” Elyse stated coldly.

Upon hearing Elyse’s words, Mabel retorted with displeasure, “Do you honestly believe Theo still cares for you? You’re not worth his time.”

Elyse, losing patience with Mabel, shot back, “Remember, you’re a Lloyd, not a Ward. You don’t need to grovel. It’s beneath our family.”

Mabel exclaimed, “You have no right to—”

Elyse ended the call before Mabel could say more, leaving her fuming alone. Mabel, interpreting Elyse’s dismissal, realized she would not send any goodwill gesture to Theo. Anxious, she pondered Theo’s reaction, knowing her mistake could cost her dearly. Clutching her phone, Mabel tiptoed towards the ward, hoping Theo would be forgiving.

Elsewhere, Elyse, energized from the confrontation, cast her phone aside, feeling a mix of emotions. The morning’s unpleasantness with Mabel had soured her entire day. As Elyse was deep in thought, Jayden entered the room. He furrowed his brow and inquired, “You’ve been in bed all morning. Aren’t you hungry?”

Elyse, patting her stomach, responded, “Not particularly.”

“Get dressed and come out to the garden for lunch. You need to eat,” Jayden insisted.

Chapter 150:

Elyse stood up, changed her outfit, and went out to the garden for lunch. As she entered the living room, she saw Driscoll walking in. Upon seeing her, Driscoll’s face lit up with a smile.

“Did you have a nice rest?” he asked.

Despite the nagging pain in her legs and her weak knees, Elyse managed a smile and said somewhat reluctantly, “Yes, I rested well.”

Driscoll nodded and gave a knowing smile, saying, “Please go to the garden. There’s a surprise for you there.”

Elyse was puzzled. “What’s that?”

“You’ll see when you get there,” Driscoll replied, then turned and headed for the kitchen.

Feeling a mix of curiosity and confusion, Elyse made her way to the garden and was struck by its beauty. It was filled with blooming flowers, decorated with pink and white ribbons woven through them, and small trees adorned with red ribbon bows. Overwhelmed by the beautiful scene, Elyse continued toward the lawn.

There, she found a long table laden with an array of delicious foods. The table was encircled by pink balloons, adding a charming touch. Jayden was sitting in a wheelchair, resting his chin on his hand, watching Elyse’s astonished expression.

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He asked with a grin, “Do you like this little surprise I arranged for you?”

Elyse responded, “I didn’t even realize when you managed to set all this up.”

Jayden chuckled and explained, “Of course you didn’t know. You were still asleep when I had the servants decorate the garden. I tried waking you several times this morning, but you wouldn’t budge.”

Elyse gave an embarrassed laugh and diverted her attention to her surroundings. In fact, she was deeply moved. When she was young, despite her accomplishments, she often felt overshadowed. Her parents always seemed to favor Mabel over her. Even during her relationship with Theo, she felt overlooked, always second to Kaelyn. She had always felt like she was never the primary choice for anyone, and this was one of the few times she felt genuinely cherished.

Jayden, noticing the tears in Elyse’s eyes, gently suggested, “Take a look at the table.”

With a confused look on her face, Elyse walked to the table and soon noticed the tableware on it. To her surprise, her cartoon image was printed on the plates and bowls. Thinking she might be seeing things, Elyse couldn't resist picking up a plate to inspect it closely several times.

"Is this cartoon supposed to be me?" Elyse asked, unsure.

Jayden looked at her as if she were missing something obvious. "Just look at the silly girl on it. Who else would it be but you?"

Tears welled up in Elyse's eyes as she was moved by the gesture. She looked at Jayden and asked, "Did you organize all this?"

Jayden leaned back, propping his chin on his hand, and responded casually, "Isn't a custom piece like this truly unique? Just buying something off the shelf wouldn't be special enough for you."

Elyse bit her lip and sniffled. "How did you know this would mean so much to me?"

"Well, I spent a day or two finding someone to design it. I had it brought here this morning. I had planned for you to see it at breakfast, but you slept in, so..." Jayden looked around, speaking slowly and with a smile that brightened his face. "I want you to know how important you are to me. I also want the staff to see that it's you I really love."

Elyse's mouth dropped open in surprise. "Did you overhear what the staff were saying?"

Rubbing his chin, Jayden remarked, "Yeah. At first, I dismissed their comments, but then I thought about how persistent your misunderstandings are. If you keep misjudging my intentions, you'll feel wronged and leave the house daily without coming back."

Annoyed by Jayden's comments, Elyse turned her head away, refusing to look at him. With a mix of defiance and grievance in her voice, she asked, "If you know I'd feel hurt, why do you keep Judy around? If you genuinely hate Joanna, why don't you show disdain for Judy, Joanna's cousin?"

Jayden couldn't help but laugh and responded, "Who says I don't show my disdain? Haven't you noticed Judy hasn't appeared today? Normally, she'd confront you by now."

Shocked, Elyse looked around and realized she hadn't seen Judy that day. "Where is she?" Elyse asked, puzzled.

Jayden played with the ring on his finger and said with a smile, "I sent her to a more appropriate place. I wanted to uncover her reasons for coming here, but since she was upsetting you, I decided she should go."

Elyse was confused and inquired, "Where did you send her?"

Jayden explained, "She's happy to serve my family, isn't she? Just yesterday, a maid at my grandpa's mansion quit, so I arranged for her to take over."

Elyse's jaw dropped in disbelief, and she said, "Isn't Judy from the Foster family? How can you just do that?"

Jayden shrugged nonchalantly. "She agreed to the contract willingly. I didn't force her."