

Bound love 1461

Chapter 1461:

With this thought, Greg bit back his words, his face red with suppressed fury, unable to speak.

Jayden, seeing Greg's flustered state, quickly lost interest in the conversation. "Enough standing around looking foolish. You're just killing the mood. Leave already."

Greg shot Jayden a venomous look before storming off, resolved to inform Debora about everything that had happened.

After everyone had departed, Brook let out a relieved sigh. "This significant overhaul will finally cleanse the company of its dead weight."

"It was long overdue," Jayden said, his voice laden with gravity. "The current state of Owen Group is all Enzo's doing. He claimed his decisions were for the good of the company, yet he let these leeches thrive. I can't make sense of his logic."

Brook nodded, understanding Jayden's frustration. "Now that you've cleared them out, running the company should be much smoother for you."

Jayden gave Brook a significant look and responded, "Brook, even though I'm the chairman now, I have no plans to take over the daily operations of the company."

Brook blinked, momentarily caught off guard by the bluntness of Jayden's words. After a brief pause, his brows knitted together, and he asked, "What's that supposed to mean? If you're not steering the ship, then who will?"

"You, of course," Jayden said with a casual shrug. "I agreed to pull Owen Group out of the fire to become its largest shareholder. Playing chairman was never part of the deal."

Brook let out a dry laugh, equal parts disbelief and irritation. The pieces were finally falling into place. Jayden had no intention of sticking around to do the grunt work—he was planning to play the phantom boss, leaving all the heavy lifting to him.

“So, you’re really bailing on Owen Group?” Brook pressed, his tone laced with exasperation.

“I’ve got enough chaos in my personal life without adding Owen Group’s headaches to the mix.” Jayden leaned back, his calm demeanor unshaken.

Besides, Elyse was currently focused on her work in Cambape, and Jayden had no intention of leaving her side to deal with Owen Group’s affairs in Watscar.

He couldn’t find a single compelling reason to remain in Watscar and work for the Owen Group.

“My reputation with the Owen family is already in the gutter,” he continued. “Honestly, keeping my distance might actually be for the best. You’ve always been the loyal one, Brook—the guy who genuinely cares about the company’s future. You’re far better suited to take the reins.”

Brook’s eyes narrowed as he folded his arms. “So, that’s your excuse for dumping all the responsibility on me?”

Jayden smirked, his tone light with a hint of teasing. “Call it what you want, but the fact remains—I’m the chairman. And that means you’re stuck doing as I say.”

Brook was so furious he could barely form a reply. His jaw worked as if searching for words, but none came fast enough to match his anger. Before the tension could boil over, Jayden pivoted, steering the conversation into uncharted territory. “By the way, something about Casper doesn’t sit right with me.”

Brook, grateful for the distraction, reached for his glass of water. “What makes you say that?”

Jayden tapped his fingers rhythmically on the table, his expression thoughtful. “It’s the Happer family. They’re way too clued in on Owen Group’s internal affairs—stuff that should be locked down tighter than Fort Knox. Even if there were leaks, it would raise enough red flags to trigger an investigation. But somehow, the Happers always seem to get their hands on the precise intel that’s allowed them to rally the other shareholders so quickly. If you ask me, something stinks, and it’s not last week’s leftovers.”

Chapter 1462:

“I see your point... it makes sense.” Brook frowned, deep in thought. “But who could be leaking information to the Happer family?”

“Whoever it might be, it’s your job to figure it out,” Jayden said firmly.

Brook let out an exaggerated sigh, rolling his eyes. “So, you’re just going to sit back and leave me to pick up the slack, huh?”

Jayden shrugged, his tone nonchalant. “I’ve given you a nudge in the right direction. The rest is on you. I can’t carry the whole load, can I?”

Brook snorted, the frustration evident on his face as a dark shadow clouded his features. He decided it wasn’t worth arguing and bit back any further retorts.

A sharp knock on the office door broke the tense silence. “Come in,” Jayden called out.

The door creaked open, revealing Debora. She stepped inside, her expression a cocktail of hesitation and determination as she glanced between the two men.

Lowering her gaze slightly, she spoke softly. “Brook, can I talk to Jayden alone for a moment?”

Brook shot a questioning look at Jayden. Seeing no objection, he gave a curt nod and left the room, shutting the door behind him.

Jayden leaned back in his chair, studying Debora’s uneasy demeanor. He arched an eyebrow. “Alright, Debora. What’s on your mind?”

Fidgeting with the hem of her blouse, Debora hesitated before finally speaking. “Jayden, you didn’t just walk away from Owen Group—you saved it. Why didn’t you tell me?”

Jayden rubbed his chin thoughtfully, already guessing the real reason behind her question. “Before I decided to work with Brook, you were the first person I considered.”

Debora's eyes widened in surprise, disbelief flickering across her face. "When you came to Watscar looking for me, I didn't spell it out, but I noticed your effort," Jayden continued. "Afterward, I reached out to your father to discuss a partnership, but he wasn't interested. That was the end of it."

Debora stared at him, processing his words for what felt like an eternity.

Finally, a bitter smile tugged at her lips. "You could've come directly to me. You didn't need my father's permission."

"Are you the one calling the shots in your family?" Jayden asked.

Debora parted her lips, words teetering on the edge of escape, but none found their way out. In the end, all she managed was a bitter smile. "I never thought you'd team up with Brook, not after the... history you two shared," she finally said, her tone tinged with disbelief.

"Brook mended his ways long ago," Jayden replied, his voice calm, almost casual.

Debora's eyes widened, and her head snapped up like a spring. "When? Why wasn't I told?"

Jayden met her gaze with a cryptic smile, giving nothing away. That look was all it took for Debora to realize she'd hit a wall. No answers would be coming.

She sighed, letting the tension seep out with her breath. "Do I still have a place here at the company?"

"If you want it, you can keep your old job," Jayden said with an easy nod.

"Thank you, I'll get back to work now," Debora said quietly, her voice carrying a trace of renewed determination. Without another word, she turned and left the office, her steps brisk.

Chapter 1463:

Once the door clicked shut, Jayden leaned back in his chair, his fingers already typing away as he searched for tickets back to Watscar. He had no reason to linger in Cambape anymore—running the company from afar suited him just fine.

Jayden was reviewing tickets when his assistant approached quietly, informing him, “Mr. Owen, your mother is here at the company, causing a disturbance in the lounge. She insists on seeing you.”

Raising an eyebrow, Jayden pondered Tess’s sudden arrival and decided not to rush to meet her. He remained seated, silent in contemplation.

His assistant, puzzled by Jayden’s lack of reaction, inquired, “When would you like to meet her?”

“No rush. I have some work to handle. Could you ask Brook to join me for a private chat?” Jayden responded.

The assistant nodded and went to fetch Brook.

Upon entering, Brook, amused and slightly smug, commented, “I heard your mother is making quite a scene in the lounge. She’s asserting her status as the chairman’s mother, demanding special treatment.”

“Let her do as she pleases. If she wants to embarrass herself, so be it,” Jayden dismissed the matter nonchalantly.

He then drew a deck of cards from a drawer and tossed them onto the table in front of Brook. “It’s been a while since we played cards.”

Brook sighed, frustration evident. “I’m swamped with work. My desk is a mountain of files, and you want to play cards?”

“What’s the harm? You’ll get through your work eventually,” Jayden assured him with a chuckle.

Taking a deep breath to manage his irritation, Brook sat down across from Jayden. “How do you want to play?”

“Any game is fine with me. The point is to kill time,” Jayden stated calmly as he began dealing the cards.

“Aren’t you going to see your mother?” Brook inquired after a moment.

Jayden answered nonchalantly, “Do you remember what she did when I severed ties with the Owen clan?”

Brook’s expression remained neutral. “I do. Your parents disowned you, labeled you the black sheep, and vowed never to acknowledge you.”

“So, what could she possibly want from me now?” Jayden asked with a slight smile, implying a deeper understanding of his parents’ motivations.

“They can be quite troublesome. Despite your estrangement, now that you’re back in power, they won’t just leave you be,” Brook observed.

Unperturbed, Jayden replied, “That’s fine. Let them make a fuss. It’s never bothered me before.”

The two continued their card game for nearly an hour. Meanwhile, Tess grew increasingly agitated in the lounge. Eventually, she couldn’t contain her frustration and sharply asked Jayden’s assistant, “Where is Jayden? Why hasn’t he come to see me yet?”

The assistant responded respectfully, “He is currently in his office discussing work with Mr. Brook Owen. Please be patient.”

Dissatisfied, Tess slammed the table. “I’ve been waiting for almost an hour. Are you lying to me?”

“I wouldn’t dare deceive you,” the assistant replied, bowing his head.

Chapter 1464:

As time passed, Tess’s frustration only grew. After a moment of reflection, she stood up decisively. “Take me to his office. I’ll wait for him there.”

The assistant looked uneasy. “I’m sorry, but that’s not possible.”

“How can it not be? You’re the one causing trouble,” Tess retorted, brushing past the assistant. “I’m Jayden’s mother. How dare you stop me?”

Tess marched confidently toward the elevator. The assistant quickly messaged Jayden before rushing to follow her.

Upon arriving at Jayden’s office and seeing the “Chairman” sign on the door, Tess felt a surge of joy, realizing the vast extent of her son’s influence.

Trying to mask her excitement, she knocked on the door and then pushed it open without waiting for an answer.

Inside, Brook turned, noticed Tess, and stood up. “Long time no see, Aunt Tess. Are you here for Jayden?”

With a pleasant smile, Tess replied, “No worries. Continue with your work. I’ll just wait here.”

Brook chuckled lightly. “It’s alright. Some company matters aren’t suitable for you to overhear. I’ll step out and give you both some space.”

Tess’s smile wavered at Brook’s words. Trying to maintain her composure, she saw Brook out and then turned to Jayden with a warm smile. “My dear son, it’s been so long. How have you been?”

Jayden looked at Tess’s overly cheerful expression and snorted dismissively. “Don’t think for a second that I need your concern.”

Tess struggled to keep her composure, forcing a warm smile as she tried to win Jayden over. “How can you say you don’t need my concern? You’ve always been on my mind,” she said, her tone soothing, but her words laced with desperation. She beamed and added cheerily, “Why don’t I treat you to dinner tonight? You’ve been working so hard; a good meal will do wonders to recharge your batteries.”

Jayden tilted his head, his expression unreadable. “What’s my favorite food?” he asked, his voice calm but deliberate.

Caught off guard, Tess hesitated, then replied with a faint tremor in her voice, “You love steak and foie gras. Isn’t that right?”

Jayden’s eyes hardened. “No, that’s not my favorite. That’s Bryce’s favorite.”

Tess’s expression faltered, but she quickly masked it with defiance. “Nonsense! That’s not Bryce’s taste—it’s yours,” she shot back, her voice rising in pitch as if volume could overpower doubt.

Jayden shook his head, his tone icy. “You should leave. Stop forcing your presence into my life.”

Tess’s anger flared, but she tamped it down, reminding herself why she was here. “How dare you speak to me like this? Do you have any idea what I endured to bring you into this world? And this is the thanks I get?”

Jayden’s gaze didn’t waver. “I was raised by the nannies, while Bryce was the one who grew up under your care.”

Tess opened her mouth to protest, but Jayden silenced her with a raised hand. “From as far back as I can remember, the first faces I saw every day were the nannies’, not yours. They were the ones who read bedtime stories, ate meals with me, and tucked me in at night. Enzo didn’t want me to form attachments, so the nannies were swapped out like clockwork every three months. By the time I turned twelve, I’d lost count of how many came and went. So tell me, Mom—where were you through all of that?”

Chapter 1465:

Tess’s face crumpled, her voice a mixture of heartbreak and indignation. “Why do you cling so tightly to those memories? Did I never do anything good for you? Have you forgotten all my kindness?”

Jayden’s voice carried a bitter edge as he asked, “Kindness? Is that what you call it? I remember coming home as a child, eager to see you. But you were already expecting Bryce. You and Dad were completely absorbed in him, counting down the days to his birth, barely noticing I was even there. All I wanted was a hug, but you recoiled, treating me like I was a bad omen that might somehow...”

Tess struggled to find the right words, her emotions rising as Jayden's anger continued to burn. "You pushed me away, and Dad slapped me so hard I hit the floor. He called me a jinx and said I should never have come back. And you? You just stood there smiling, like none of it mattered."

He paused, allowing the weight of his words to settle in the space between them. "Didn't you realize, after that day, I stopped wanting to come home altogether?"

Tess furrowed her brows, struggling to piece together the distant memory. The details eluded her, perhaps because she had never thought them worth remembering.

She placed a hand over her chest, her voice rising in indignation. "Bryce is your younger brother, Jayden! How can you hold onto such petty grievances?"

Jayden's eyes darkened, his voice as cold as winter's frost. "Petty grievances, you say? Is that really all you see?" His expression turned hollow, like a dying ember extinguishing in the night.

"Of course, it's petty!" Tess snapped, her frustration bubbling over. "You've been stubborn and small-minded since you were a child. Bryce has always been the forgiving one, the peacemaker. He agrees with whatever we say without complaint. You could stand to learn a thing or two from him."

Jayden sat silently for a moment, the stillness suffocating. When he spoke again, his voice was soft but unyielding. "I never wanted to be your son. From the moment I severed all ties with the Owen clan, you ceased to be my mother."

Tess's face paled as she tried to comprehend his resolute tone. Desperation seeped into her voice as she pleaded, "How can you be so ungrateful? Everything your father and I did was for your own good! Do you think we didn't feel the pain of sending you away to Enzo? It broke our hearts!"

Jayden's gaze didn't waver, his voice cutting like a blade. "If it hurt so much, why didn't you ever come to see me? Aside from the occasional obligatory family gatherings, you never showed up. Let's not kid ourselves. I've always wondered why you can't just admit it—you and Dad never loved me."

Tess's voice softened, tinged with desperation. "How could you even question that? We have always loved you. We thought, with time, you'd come to understand our good intentions. But instead, you see us as if we're strangers—or worse, enemies."

Jayden let out a mirthless chuckle, shaking his head. “Enemies? No, you’re not my enemies. To call you that would be giving you too much credit. Enemies are equals—worthy of a fight. But you? You’re not even that to me.”

Tess’s composure snapped. She stormed to the desk, slamming her hands down with a thunderous crack. Her voice was sharp, almost feral. “I am your mother! Do you—”

Tess’s voice grew louder, filled with frustration as she tried to make Jayden understand. “Do you even understand what that means? I carried you, bore you into this world! You should be grateful I gave you life and didn’t cast you aside when you were born. I gave you everything—over twenty years of stability, food, shelter. And how do you repay me? By daring to say I treated you poorly? No matter how I’ve ignored, scolded, or criticized you, I am your mother, and you owe me. Your duty is to care for me until the day I die.”

Chapter 1466:

Jayden sat there, unmoving, his face devoid of emotion. Whatever embers of hurt or anger had once burned within him had now cooled into an icy silence.

After a long pause, he spoke, his voice calm, almost eerily so. “Do you love me?”

Jayden spoke with a calm, emotionless tone, as if he had already anticipated the conversation.

Tess, on the other hand, seemed determined to make her son understand, hoping to finally make him comply.

“I do love you,” she insisted. “Every parent loves their child. My love for you runs deeper than you could ever understand.”

“Do you remember my birthday?” Jayden asked, testing her.

Tess’s face showed a flicker of discomfort as she hesitated, her memory failing her. “It’s in November, right? The 4th?”

A sardonic smile appeared on Jayden’s face. “You can’t even recall my birthday. How is that love?”

Embarrassed, Tess continued, "It slipped my mind. It wasn't intentional. As I get older, my memory isn't as sharp."

"Do you think being my mother excuses everything?" Jayden pressed.

Tess's frustration grew. "What do you expect from me? I've declared my love for you! Isn't that enough? So what if I forgot your birthday? Is it really that big of a deal?"

"I sometimes question the point of having parents at all," Jayden remarked softly.

"Can't you appreciate anything?" Tess exploded. "Without your father and me, you wouldn't have the privileged life of an Owen heir! We've given you everything, yet you remain ungrateful. You're simply heartless!"

At her wits' end, Tess shouted, "Appoint your brother as vice chairman now! Immediately!"

Jayden leaned back, his tone cold. "So, we come to the heart of the matter. I suspected you would maintain this 'caring mother' facade until it made me sick."

Tess laughed coldly. "I am your mother. You will follow my commands. If I said you must die, you would have to obey!"

"Why should I?" Jayden asked simply.

Tess cried out, "If you defy me, you are heartless! I will expose the real you to everyone, show them how ungrateful you are!"

"Proceed," Jayden said calmly.

Tess was startled. "What?"

"Go ahead and try to expose me," Jayden repeated firmly. "I will not bend to your will. Bryce's tenure is over."

Overwhelmed by Jayden's calm detachment, Tess lost her composure, exclaiming, "What are you doing? Bryce is your brother. How could you treat him like this?"

While Tess erupted in anger, Jayden remained composed, his expression unreadable. "Did he ever treat me like an older brother?"

With her pride shattered, Tess exploded in a fierce outburst, pointing at Jayden with a trembling hand and unleashing a flood of curses, even wishing death upon him.

The assistant, who had been alert outside, quickly opened the door, only to be met with Tess's harsh words. He was shocked. How could a mother direct such bitter words at her own son? The notion was beyond belief.

In stark contrast to the assistant's shock and helplessness, Jayden stayed utterly calm, as though he had anticipated this moment and remained unaffected.

Chapter 1467:

The assistant hesitated in the doorway, hoping Tess's tirade would subside, but her anger seemed boundless, continuing without pause.

Jayden glanced at his watch and calmly commanded, "Call security. Have her escorted out."

Desperate to leave the tense situation, the assistant quickly followed the order.

"Are you expelling me from the company?" Tess cried out, disbelief coloring her voice. "I'm your mother!"

"Before I became chairman here, you scarcely noticed me. Now that I wield some influence, you suddenly remember that I'm your son," Jayden remarked, his tone icy with calm. "It's almost amusing. You've truly mastered the skills of manipulation and self-interest."

Tess continued to scream, oblivious to Jayden. "I'm your mother!" She repeated the words over and over, as if hoping that mere repetition would break through Jayden's indifference and provoke guilt.

But she was mistaken. Guilt no longer played a part in Jayden's emotions.

Enzo had made sure that guilt was a vulnerability too dangerous to harbor.

Jayden no longer felt guilt toward any member of the Owen clan.

As security escorted Tess out, her verbal assault didn't cease, her bitter words echoing throughout the office.

Brook walked back into Jayden's office upon hearing the news. Noticing Jayden packing his laptop, Brook inquired, "Are you leaving?"

With a calm demeanor, Jayden responded, "All issues at the company are resolved, so it's time for me to head home."

"But what about the future? There are no pressing issues, but your leadership is still needed for our strategic goals," Brook pressed.

"If you're uncertain about what to do next, just refer to the plan I left you," Jayden advised. "And don't worry about the freeloaders. There aren't any left in the company."

After a brief silence, Brook questioned, "Do you truly intend to leave both Owen Group and the clan?"

Standing, Jayden answered serenely, "As it's evident, I no longer feel tied to Owen Group or our clan. My heart belongs to Cambape now."

Surprised, Brook responded, "Cambape? Are you talking about Elyse?"

Jayden confirmed with a nod, gazing out the window. "Enzo always said money was the world's most crucial asset because it solves most problems. I wholeheartedly agreed."

Jayden continued, "However, since meeting Elyse, I've realized what truly matters in my life, and there are things that can't be bought with money."

Brook teased, "Grandpa would argue that you just haven't spent enough money. He believed you should keep at it until you win their heart."

"That's exactly what he would have said," Jayden agreed with a soft chuckle, then sighed. "But Elyse isn't swayed by my wealth. It's love that truly reaches her, a feeling I've never really known."

"So, do you know how to love someone now?" Brook asked.

"I might be beginning to grasp it somewhat," Jayden mused, stroking his chin. "Love has never been part of my experience. It's something I must discover on my own."

Brook stayed quiet, at a loss for words. In the rigid structure of the Owen clan, love was even rarer. Jayden had neither seen love nor experienced it personally.

Chapter 1468:

"If you've found love, I'm genuinely envious," Brook admitted.

Jayden crossed his arms and closed his eyes, deeply introspective.

After a pause, he reflected, "Love is quite extraordinary. Earning money left me feeling empty and alone, uncertain of my purpose. But as I grow closer to understanding love, I find peace in my heart and a new drive to succeed. It's an alien sensation to me, but it's absolutely wonderful."

Brook, moved by the conversation, sighed wistfully. "To feel love like that would be incredible. I wish I could know that wonder too."

Jayden offered a supportive gesture, patting Brook's shoulder. "I'll assist you in finding Jennie," he promised.

Brook replied, "I don't love her."

“How would you recognize love if you saw it? You don’t even understand what it is,” Jayden retorted. After giving Brook a pointed look, Jayden picked up his briefcase and exited.

Rooted to his spot, Brook remained dazed for a moment before managing to open the door and depart.

Jayden arrived in Watscar past midnight after his flight. He stored his laptop in the study before silently proceeding to the bedroom.

Unexpectedly, Elyse was awake, nestled on the sofa with a book. Upon hearing Jayden’s approach, Elyse looked up and inquired, “Was your day at Owen Group smooth?”

Jayden joined her on the sofa, resting his weight against her. Feeling the pressure, Elyse objected, “Why do you lean so heavily on me? Please, get up!”

Laying his head on her shoulder, Jayden murmured tiredly, “I enjoy leaning on you. You should allow it.”

Elyse, annoyed, attempted to push him away without success, commenting, “It’s such a strange way to enjoy yourself.”

“Why are you awake at this hour?” Jayden questioned.

“I just returned and sat down myself. I was also out late,” Elyse explained.

“And how was the charity gala?” Jayden continued.

“It was fine, though I didn’t win what I was hoping for,” Elyse responded sincerely.

“Didn’t I give you a card to purchase anything you wished?” Jayden queried, sitting upright quickly.

Elyse rubbed her head. “I forgot to bring it.”

“You could have used my name. Just charge it to my account next time,” he suggested.

Jayden exhaled in resignation. "It's fine. It was your first auction. Next time, I will accompany you. What's the use of my earnings if you don't benefit from them?"

Elyse laughed lightly. "It's okay. But this time I met Freda, and surprisingly, she's taken an interest in Gavin."

Elyse closed her book with a decisive snap, stood up, and stretched. "Alright," she said, her voice warm yet firm. "I'm calling it a night. You should head to your room and wind down too."

Jayden tilted his head, a mischievous glint in his eye. "But I want to chat with you after my shower."

Elyse's gaze softened as she noticed Jayden's hopeful expression. After a beat of silence, she relented, her tone laced with gentle humor. "Fine, but don't take forever. Sleep's already calling my name."

Chapter 1469:

Jayden grinned, nodding as he headed toward the bathroom, leaving Elyse to half-recline on the bed, her book still open and her thoughts lingering.

When Jayden returned, the two of them settled under the covers, a quiet intimacy filling the space. Jayden began to speak, his voice carrying the weight of untold stories.

For the first time, he peeled back the layers of his guarded past, revealing a life marked by loneliness and suffocating hardship that stretched far into his twenties.

As he unraveled his tale, he paused, his eyes locking onto hers. "You know, meeting you feels like fate was pulling the strings. We've lived such different lives, yet somehow, we crossed paths exactly when we needed to."

Elyse's lips curled into a soft smile as she murmured, "Hmm, maybe that's what they call destiny. Two roads meant to meet."

Encouraged by her response, Jayden continued, his words flowing like a river finally freed from its dam. He spoke of the burdens and heartbreak he had carried, his tone tinged with relief, unburdening his soul to someone who truly cared.

He wasn't afraid of exposing the scars of his past to her; he knew, deep down, that her love for him ran too deep to be shaken. Trusting her felt as natural as breathing.

Mid-sentence, his voice faltered. He stopped, shifted closer, and wrapped his arms around her tightly. His head nestled into her shoulder, and a cool dampness seeped through her collar.

Elyse froze momentarily before realization dawned, and her heart clenched.

She held him close, her embrace firm and comforting. "Don't worry, I'll protect you. Always."

In that tender moment, Jayden understood something profound—Elyse had accepted him entirely.

The good, the bad, and even the shadows he had tried so hard to keep hidden.

Their hearts seemed to beat in unison, the walls between them crumbling into nothingness. That night, they became more than two people in love; they became two souls perfectly aligned.

Neither of them closed their eyes until dawn painted the sky with its first blush of light.

The next afternoon, Elyse stirred awake, blinking against the sunlight streaming through the curtains. She turned her head to find Jayden's peaceful face, his features softened by sleep.

For a long moment, she simply watched him, a faint smile tugging at her lips. Reluctantly, she slipped out of bed, her stomach rumbling for something to eat.

As she shuffled downstairs, still rubbing sleep from her eyes, Driscoll, the butler, greeted her with his usual composure. "You have a guest who's been waiting in the living room for quite some time."

Elyse frowned, scratching her head. "A guest? I wasn't expecting anyone. Who is it?"

Before Driscoll could respond, a familiar voice rang out. “It’s me. How can you sleep until the afternoon? Aren’t you worried I might spill your lazy schedule to Gavin?” Freda strolled in from the living room, her tone teasing but her smile faintly smug.

Elyse blinked at her in disbelief, as if she were seeing an apparition. She rubbed her eyes dramatically. “What on earth are you doing here?”

Freda scoffed, crossing her arms with an air of faux impatience. “I need a favor.”

Elyse’s brow arched. She and Freda were far from close, and their relationship often felt more like a simmering rivalry. Without missing a beat, Elyse turned toward the dining room, dismissing her. “I don’t think I can help. You should try someone else.”

Chapter 1470:

Freda’s confident demeanor faltered slightly, but she quickly recovered, chasing after Elyse. “No, seriously. I really need your help. There’s no one else I can turn to!”

Elyse didn’t even break her stride. “Still a no,” she replied flatly. “I’m starving. Let me eat in peace.”

But Freda was nothing if not persistent. She followed Elyse like a shadow, her tone growing increasingly insistent. “I’m not leaving until you promise to help me!”

Elyse sighed deeply, sitting down to eat as Freda hovered nearby, her eyes practically boring into her.

Once she finished her meal, Elyse stood and headed toward the stairs, intent on retreating to her room. But Freda, true to her word, trailed after her like a stubborn shadow.

Elyse stopped mid-step, exasperation clear on her face, and turned to face Freda. “Let me guess—you’re trying to pursue Gavin, aren’t you? If that’s the case, figure it out yourself. What on earth could I possibly do to help you with that?”

Freda’s eyes sparkled with determination as she blurted out, “If you could just say something nice about me to him, he’d come around faster.”

Elyse raised a skeptical brow and shook her head firmly. “No way. I barely know you, let alone your virtues. If you want him to notice you, you’ll have to do it on your own.”

Freda, not one to give up easily, grabbed Elyse’s arm with a dramatic sigh. “But if you don’t help me, how will I ever become his wife? I promise, if I do, I’ll make sure to treat you well in the future.”

Elyse stared at her, utterly dumbfounded. The sheer audacity of Freda’s words left her momentarily speechless. Was she seriously planning to marry Gavin?

With a weary sigh, Elyse rubbed her temples, feeling a headache starting to creep in. Finally, she plopped down on the sofa, her expression a mix of exasperation and curiosity. Crossing her arms, she looked at Freda and asked, “Alright, spill. What’s going on between you and Gavin? Why the sudden infatuation? Last I checked, you were head over heels for Theo. What changed?”

Freda’s face initially lit up, her smile spreading warmth across her features. Yet, the moment Theo’s name was mentioned, that warmth twisted into a grimace, almost wild in its intensity.

“Let’s not even go there with Theo Ward,” she grumbled, shaking her head. “I can’t fathom what I saw in him.”

Elyse, thoroughly puzzled, asked, “What’s the story? Did someone push you into saying yes to him? I’m lost.”

“No, it was all me.” Freda sighed, a hint of frustration in her voice. “I tricked myself into thinking it was right. I had this epiphany that I actually despised him and wasn’t bound to stick with him. Honestly, I reckon I could’ve convinced myself to marry any guy they lined up for me.”

Elyse raised her eyebrows, slowly processing Freda’s words. “So, what’s the deal with Gavin then?”

A blush tinged Freda’s cheeks. “Do we really have to dig into Gavin? It’s a bit mortifying.”

“If it’s too much, you’re free to leave,” Elyse offered, her tone soothing.

“No, I’ll spill it,” Freda burst out, the words tumbling out in haste. “A couple of months ago, on a business trip overseas, I met Gavin at a swanky cocktail party. He was this beacon of charisma, drawing in a crowd of admiring older women.”

Elyse, skillfully ignoring the strain in Freda’s voice, responded evenly, “Gavin tends to draw a crowd. He’s got that charm. Looks like you’ll have to deal with it.”