

Bound love 1511

Chapter 1511:

“If that’s your concern, then hold on tight. I won’t go easy on you tonight,” he replied, matching her playful tone.

Tracy’s hearty laughter filled the room. “Okay, babe, make sure I’m too exhausted to move.”

Lowell’s thoughts instantly took a seductive turn. He gripped her waist firmly, resuming their passionate rhythm, each movement sending tremors through her.

As the night stretched on, neither kept track of time. After a while, she suggested a change of scenery to the company’s break room. Driven by impulse, he gave in to every whim. That night, wherever she led, he eagerly followed.

By the time they returned to Lowell’s office, Tracy was visibly exhausted.

Lowell, on the other hand, was still buzzing with energy, keeping her close.

The night had been wild, and Lowell, like most men, savored the rush of such heated encounters.

He wrapped Tracy in a gentle embrace upon noticing her fatigue. “When are you going to take off the mask?” he asked, his impatience clear. “I’m eager to see your face.”

Tracy offered him a weary smile, barely opening her eyes. “You want to see my face?” she murmured, snuggling deeper into his arms.

“Of course,” he responded, his voice tinged with frustration. “You’re my girlfriend. We’ve been together so long, yet I’ve never seen your face.”

He felt her beauty even without seeing her face. Why did she feel the need to hide?

"I'm a woman who cherishes special moments," Tracy said calmly. "I want to show you my face on a day that's more memorable."

"And when will that be?"

"When the time is right, you'll see," she assured him after a brief pause.

Lowell fell silent, mulling over her words.

After a moment, he confessed, "It's frustrating, being in a relationship yet feeling like you're still hiding from me."

"Why say that?" Tracy asked, half-smiling despite her exhaustion. "You were wonderful tonight."

"But still, you won't let me see your face," Lowell persisted, reaching out tentatively toward her mask.

"If you try to remove my mask," Tracy warned, her tone still gentle, "you'll never see me again."

Lowell instantly retracted his hand.

"Don't ruin our special moment," she said, noticing his displeasure. "Believe me, I'm looking forward to that day even more than you are."

Lowell sighed, choosing to let the matter rest. He held her close, occasionally caressing and kissing her as dawn neared.

"Help me get dressed, then drive me home," Tracy finally spoke, growing drowsy.

"You're letting me take you home?" Lowell asked, surprised.

"Yes, I need to test you, right? How else will I know if you truly love me?"

Lowell chuckled at her playful challenge before helping her dress. Once ready, Tracy acted spoiled, insisting he carry her to the car, which he gladly did.

As they settled into the car, she yawned. “Why don’t you just stay at my place and get some sleep?” she suggested.

“Of course, Lowell couldn’t refuse. He was eager to spend more time with her, so he happily accepted her invitation.”

Chapter 1512:

Fury surged through Dolores as she slammed the phone down. In her heated state, she exaggerated the events to her parents.

The news prompted her parents to rush to Cambape first thing the following morning, determined to confront Lowell at his workplace. However, their plans quickly hit a dead end.

With his phone set to silent, Lowell remained frustratingly unreachable. Left with no other option, his parents changed course and headed to the hospital to check on Dolores.

As dawn broke, Elyse’s phone lit up with an unexpected call from Freda.

The invitation caught her off guard. Freda was hosting a family gathering and wanted both Elyse and Jayden to join them for dinner. Elyse found herself rereading the message, convinced her eyes weren’t playing tricks on her.

“What game is she playing?” Elyse muttered aloud. “Involving me in her family affairs and romantic entanglements feels oddly suspicious.”

Beside her, a drowsy Jayden stirred. After carelessly tossing aside her phone, he wrapped his arms around her, his voice thick with sleep.

“No meetings, no office today. Let’s just stay wrapped in this moment together.”

Elyse observed him quietly, noting the transformation in him.

And what a transformation it was.

She studied him closely, realizing the shift—his usually stern, masculine facade had softened, revealing something more vulnerable.

She gave his shoulder a gentle squeeze. “That’s not possible. Your entire workforce relies on you. Their livelihoods depend on your leadership.”

A shadow passed over Jayden’s features. After lingering in their embrace for another ten minutes, he finally rose. As he adjusted his tie, he glanced at her.

“Have you decided about Freda’s gathering?”

Elyse slowly emerged from their cocoon of blankets, uncertainty clear in her voice. “I probably should make an appearance. Gavin might take it personally if I’m absent.”

“Do his feelings really warrant such consideration?” Jayden’s tone carried a hint of frost.

Elyse stroked her chin thoughtfully. “Anyway, I feel obligated to attend.”

Jayden nodded. “Alright, I’ll pick you up this evening. Get some proper rest until then.”

Elyse responded with a nod and a farewell wave.

As Driscoll watched Jayden depart, he noticed something unusual—Jayden was humming, a clear departure from his usual demeanor. It didn’t take much to deduce that he and Elyse had reconciled.

After sending Jayden off, Elyse retreated to her garden, letting the sound of her violin fill the morning air for two peaceful hours. Just as she finished her lunch, Driscoll rushed in, phone in hand, his steps urgent.

Driscoll’s voice was tight with concern. “It’s Shaun on the line. He claims he’s dying and demands your immediate presence.”

Confusion flickered across Elyse's face as she took the phone. The moment she pressed it to her ear, Shaun's panicked voice pierced through.

"Elyse! I'm dying! Someone's trying to kill me! Come quickly!" Shaun cried out, his composure completely shattered.

The words instantly brought one name to Elyse's mind—Tracy. Had Tracy finally let her hatred consume her, pushing her to take Shaun's life?

Chapter 1513:

Dread gripped Elyse's heart as she abandoned her half-eaten lunch. "Driscoll!" she called out sharply. "Get the car ready! We must reach Shaun at once!"

Sensing the gravity in her voice, Driscoll sprang into action without hesitation.

Yet when they arrived, the scene before them was surprisingly mundane—just a couple standing quietly at Shaun's doorstep. As Elyse approached, her eyes caught sight of a third figure—Dolores, seated in her wheelchair.

The moment Dolores spotted Elyse, rage twisted her features as she snarled, "What are you doing here?"

Dolores's parents gazed at Elyse with vacant expressions, no spark of recognition in their eyes. Time had blurred their memories of her to a single snapshot—Shaun and Tracy's wedding ceremony from a year ago.

Dismissing Dolores with cool indifference, Elyse addressed the couple directly. "What brings you to my house?"

"What do you mean 'your house'? This is obviously Shaun's place!" Dolores countered loudly.

A knowing smile ghosted across Elyse's lips. "Perhaps you should have investigated beyond simply tracking down Shaun's location. The deed might surprise you."

Without waiting to see the impact of her words on their bewildered faces, Elyse retrieved her phone and dialed Shaun.

“Enough hiding,” she commanded, her voice sharp with impatience. “I’m here now. Show yourself!”

Her words stirred movement within, and Shaun emerged grudgingly, shuffling toward the door.

The moment he appeared, Dolores transformed—her hostility dissolving into saccharine sweetness. “Shaun,” she purred, “you’ve finally joined us.”

Shaun’s eyes flickered over Dolores dismissively, his silence a deliberate wall between them.

Dolores, undeterred, persisted. “Shaun, since your hospital visit, you’ve been absent from my life. My thoughts are consumed by you daily. Tell me—do you feel the same ache of separation?”

Her words hung heavy in the air, met only by Shaun’s stony silence.

Though secondhand embarrassment colored her parents’ faces, Dolores remained blind to the awkwardness, continuing her desperate attempt to draw him into conversation.

Finally, Elyse’s patience snapped like a taut string. “Enough,” she cut through the theatrics, her voice as sharp as steel. “Stop this charade. Shaun’s memory is gone—you’re nothing but a stranger to him now. Your persistence is becoming insufferable.”

Dolores’s face twisted with unbridled rage. “How dare you interrupt my conversation with Shaun!”

Elyse met her outburst with a glacial stare. “Are you actually serious right now? This is my house, not your personal stage to throw tantrums. Take your drama elsewhere if you insist on behaving like a spoiled princess!”

Dolores whirled toward her parents. “Mom! Dad! Are you hearing how she’s talking to me?”

“Oh, perfect,” Elyse sneered. “Running to mommy and daddy instead of fighting your own battles? Fine then—let’s talk to your parents instead.”

She shifted her attention to the stone-faced couple, arching an eyebrow. “What exactly are your intentions with Shaun?”

Chapter 1514:

Shaun’s voice cracked with hysteria as he jabbed an accusatory finger at Dolores’s parents. “They’re trying to kidnap me! Call the police and arrest them!”

Disbelief painted Elyse’s features as she turned to Dolores. “So when you couldn’t have him, you resorted to kidnapping? Don’t you think that’s a bit extreme?”

“You’ve got it all wrong,” Dolores’s mother, Lucille Ruiz, snapped, her patience finally shattering. “We’re not here to kidnap anyone. We’re here to make him face his responsibilities.”

Confusion clouded Elyse’s face. “Responsibilities for what?”

Lucille’s eyes darted to Dolores, a flicker of uncertainty crossing her face before her expression hardened into steel. She declared, “He slept with my daughter. He needs to marry her.”

The revelation hit like a thunderbolt, leaving Elyse frozen in stunned silence.

Shaun stood equally paralyzed, mouth agape.

The silence stretched, heavy and thick. Lucille’s voice, sharp and cold, sliced through it. “What’s this supposed to mean? Don’t tell me you’re going to deny it?”

Elyse slowly gathered her wits, her gaze drifting to Shaun, who looked even more shell-shocked than she felt.

Finally, something in Shaun snapped. He thrust a trembling finger at Dolores, his face contorted with fury. “You absolute lunatic!” he roared. “When will this harassment end? I’m a taken man!”

“For God’s sake! Claiming we slept together? You’ve completely lost your mind!” With venomous contempt, he added, “You’re so repulsive, I wouldn’t spare you a second glance!”

A flash of raw pain crossed Dolores’s features, the kind that only comes from having one’s deepest insecurities exposed. In her sheltered world of privilege, such harsh words were foreign territory.

Elyse stepped in. “Mrs. Ruiz, you’re making serious accusations. Where’s your proof?”

“Proof?” Lucille’s voice rose with maternal fury. “My daughter’s virtue was taken! What more evidence do you need? Stop trying to intimidate us. Dolores is the victim in this nightmare!”

Elyse drew in a measured breath. Shaun, misreading her pause for uncertainty, clutched her arm desperately. “Don’t let them fool you! I wouldn’t touch her if my life depended on it! She’s just another desperate woman trying to trap a man into marriage!”

Turning to Dolores with surgical precision, Elyse pressed, “If what you’re claiming is true, there must be details. When did this happen? Where? A hotel receipt, security footage—anything concrete? He couldn’t have just seen you on the street and assaulted you right there, could he?”

“Are you out of your mind?” Dolores screeched. “He stole my virginity! Do you expect me to remember every little detail of my trauma?”

Elyse’s lips curled into a knowing smirk. “You can’t recall a single detail, yet you’re absolutely certain about his involvement? I’m beginning to suspect that car accident left more than just physical scars. Without a single piece of evidence, there’s only one rational explanation: You had an encounter with someone else, suffered head trauma in that accident, and now your scrambled mind has fixated on Shaun as the culprit!”

Elyse’s words were a masterpiece of subtle accusation, delicately suggesting that Dolores’s virtue had been given to someone else before she decided to entangle Shaun in her web of deceit.

But Dolores, wrapped in her cocoon of self-righteousness, missed the artful insinuation entirely. She latched onto the surface demand for evidence like a drowning woman clutching at straws.

Chapter 1515:

Raw fury blazed in her eyes. “Fine!” she snarled, trembling with rage. “I’ll bring you your precious proof! Don’t think you can weasel your way out of this!”

With that declaration hanging in the air, she stormed off, dragging her parents in her wake.

Only when they were safely ensconced in their car did Lucille dare voice her concern, her words barely above a whisper. “What proof could you possibly have? We both know Shaun never laid a finger on you.”

“Oh my God! If we don’t have proof,” she paused, her mind racing with possibilities, “why not fabricate it? After all, Shaun’s memory is already compromised!”

Her father, Leon Ruiz, spoke up. “Are you really that determined to marry Shaun? The world is full of eligible men who might actually want to build a life with you, not someone we’d have to trap with lies.”

“Marry someone else?” Dolores clenched her jaw, her eyes blazing with frustration. “Why would I ever think of that? Shaun belongs to a reputable family, he’s attractive, and I know everything about him. There’s no one else who compares.”

Leon silently agreed. The Kennedys had always been his preferred choice for forming a strategic bond, but Shaun’s memory loss had turned him into a mystery, making Leon second-guess his plans.

“Dad, you need to support me with this!” Dolores demanded.

Leon glanced at her before replying, “What about Lowell? Let him take care of it.”

Dolores rolled her eyes. “Lowell? Have you forgotten that he doesn’t even bother returning your calls?”

Leon’s expression darkened. “He’s probably just overloaded with work.”

“Oh, come on. He’s completely infatuated with some woman. He’s ignoring us, and he’s lost all focus on the business,” Dolores said, her tone laced with annoyance.

Lucille stepped in to defend Lowell. “You shouldn’t talk about him that way. He’s not like that at all.”

Dolores shook her head dismissively. “Mom! You don’t even understand your own son. I know him better than you. He’s out of control! He’s absolutely lost it. No one’s more reckless than him.”

Lucille frowned and exchanged a worried glance with Leon, clearly unsure of how to respond.

Dolores stared out the window, her voice firm with resolve. “Lowell doesn’t matter right now. The only thing that counts is marrying Shaun while he’s still lost in amnesia!”

After the Ruiz family left, Elyse exhaled deeply and turned to Shaun with a sly grin. “What are you, some kind of ultimate prize? Dolores seems completely obsessed with you.”

Shaun stiffened, picking up on the teasing tone in her remark. “What are you implying? I haven’t done a thing to lead her on. She’s the one chasing after me. I even insulted her, and she still wouldn’t back off!”

Elyse’s face carried a blend of amusement and a deeper, harder-to-read emotion. “Do you realize how much you used to prioritize her in the past?”

Shaun snapped, his tone sharp with irritation. “What could I have possibly done?”

Elyse’s words came out slowly, each one carrying a subtle, simmering intensity. “You humiliated your fiancée at your own wedding... all for Dolores. And after that, you even...”

Elyse let her voice fade into silence. She realized that saying more might overwhelm Shaun.

Chapter 1516:

Shaun’s brow furrowed, his frown deepening. “You’re making me sound like a terrible person. I’d never do something like that. Weddings are sacred. Why would I hurt my fiancée for someone else?”

“The disruption is over. Let’s continue,” a woman’s voice echoed in his mind.

“Continue? The wedding? Are you sure you still want to marry me?” His own voice flashed back.

Disjointed and unsettling memories flickered through Shaun’s mind like fragments of a broken mirror.

“Didn’t I agree to marry you? What are you doing?”

“You’ve agreed to marry me, yet you seem unsure. You’ve never even told me you love me.”

Shaun’s face darkened with confusion. He opened his mouth to speak, but the images in his mind blurred the reality before him. He couldn’t tell where the truth ended and the memories began.

He saw a stunning but unfamiliar woman in a white wedding gown, tears streaming down her cheeks.

Her eyes revealed a storm of conflicting emotions—bitterness, sorrow, anger, and a love he couldn’t grasp.

“Elyse, please, I need to get away.”

“I don’t care anymore. I need to leave!”

“I won’t marry him! You can marry Dolores. She suits you better, and your families can unite and grow stronger!”

“I don’t like you anymore. Go back to your ex! I don’t give a damn!”

Shaun shook uncontrollably before slowly raising his head, his gaze meeting Elyse’s wide, terrified eyes.

He seized her shoulders, his voice trembling with pain and fury. “You stole her from me! Why? Why did you take her away? She was mine!”

Elyse recoiled, her fear evident in the sudden panic that flashed across her face. “Who? Who are you even talking about?”

Shaun didn’t answer, his words repeating like a broken echo. “You took her from me! I never loved anyone else. You doubted me, and so did she! She was the only one I ever loved!”

Elyse’s eyebrows furrowed, her tone urgent and filled with worry. “Shaun, you’re not making sense. Stop it! I’m begging you, stop this!”

But it was too late. The barrier had broken, the memories unlocked, and an overwhelming tide of emotions surged through him, relentless and uncontrollable.

Shaun felt an aching need to remember more. He had to see her again—the woman who had loved him, the woman in the wedding gown, her face marked by heartbreak and despair.

Watching Shaun unravel before her eyes, Elyse’s voice grew frantic. “Driscoll! Call a doctor! Hurry! There’s something seriously wrong with him!”

Shock overwhelmed Shaun, and he lost consciousness before the doctor arrived.

Terrified, Elyse managed to bring him back home to wait for the doctor’s examination.

Three hours later, Shaun regained consciousness.

Elyse, relieved, asked him, “How are you feeling? Has it gotten any better?”

Shaun gave no response, only staring blankly upwards.

Chapter 1517:

Elyse observed his vacant stare, feeling deep fear and debating whether to rush him to the hospital.

Shaun then spoke weakly. “I don’t actually have a girlfriend, do I?”

At a loss for words, Elyse chose silence.

“I’ve always believed I had a girlfriend who would eventually come for me,” Shaun murmured, “but she never appeared, and it left me anxious, wondering why she hadn’t come.”

Elyse, unsure of what to do, scratched her head.

“Just now, I recalled something—I don’t have a girlfriend.” Shaun looked sorrowful as he added, “At the wedding, you took her away, didn’t you?”

After a pause, Elyse, shocked, replied, “Is that all you recall? That I took your girlfriend away? What about events before that? Can you remember anything earlier?”

Confusion clouded Shaun’s eyes. “Before that—”

“Why would I take her without reason? Something significant must have happened at the wedding.” Elyse spoke gravely. “I hesitate to discuss the past—it’s vastly different from the illusions you hold. Reality is much harsher, and I don’t want to distress you.”

After a prolonged silence, Shaun asked softly, “Was I cruel to her before?”

“You were terrible,” Elyse responded coldly. “Your love was less than you believed. You neglected her, demeaned her, making her feel utterly worthless.”

Shaun touched his face, realizing it was wet.

He was weeping.

Elyse observed Shaun’s tears, yet her heart remained untouched, her eyes radiating sympathy. I almost wish your memory wouldn’t return, considering the dreadful past deeds that might come with it.

“You were already feeling the weight of your actions before your memory faded, weren’t you?”

Shaun's eyes slowly filled with tears. "Was I really such a terrible person?"

Instead of responding directly, Elyse shifted the topic. "You might not have treated your fiancée well, but I'm confident you never got intimate with Dolores. You were flawed but maintained your standards. You looked down upon Dolores."

At Elyse's words, Shaun's Adam's apple moved noticeably. "That's comforting. Had I betrayed my girlfriend, I would be overwhelmed with self-disgust and wish for my own end."

Elyse began to speak but only managed a sigh. She stood up. "Alright, try to rest. The doctor will arrive shortly with your medication."

As Elyse was about to exit, Shaun called out to her, hesitantly parting his lips. "Has my girlfriend been here to see me?"

"Why do you ask?"

"I need to confirm something," he replied awkwardly.

Elyse remembered the security footage showing Tracy had indeed spent some time in Shaun's hospital room. She pondered whether to share this with him.

After a brief pause, Elyse decided. "Your relationship was troubled. Whether she visited or not, I cannot say for certain."

"I feel she was here," Shaun asserted.

"How can you be sure of that?"

Chapter 1518:

Shaun explained, "One night, while under the influence of sedation, I was too weak to open my eyes. I wasn't aware of much, but I sensed someone's presence in my room."

Elyse remembered that night Tracy had visited Shaun.

Shaun continued, "I felt a gentle touch on my face, the warmth of the fingers seemed to mend my spirit."

"And what happened next?" Elyse asked, her emotions mixed.

After a pause, he responded, "Then, I experienced sharp pain all over. She pinched me hard, even on my thighs."

Elyse responded neutrally, "You deserve it." Aware of Tracy's reasons, she thought it best to leave some matters unchallenged.

Shaun added, "She whispered to me afterward, claiming it was retribution for my past actions."

Shaun gazed at Elyse, his voice barely above a whisper. "So, I broke her heart, didn't I?"

Elyse braced herself against the doorframe as tears threatened to spill. "For her, you were nothing short of a hurricane that devastated everything in its path."

"Is that so? Then I truly wronged her. Her pinching me was justified."

A shadow of remorse crossed Shaun's features as his eyes drifted shut. The weight of the moment crushed Elyse's composure. She retreated hastily, the door clicking shut behind her as she fled to the living room. The sofa caught her falling form as she clutched a pillow to her chest, letting grief overtake her.

Her muffled sobs drew Driscoll's immediate attention. "What's wrong?"

Words failed Elyse as she shook her head, consumed by the storm of her emotions. Time stretched until her tears finally ebbed, leaving behind a hollow exhaustion.

Driscoll maintained his vigil, offering a tissue once her breathing steadied. "Are you crying because of Shaun?"

Elyse shook her head. “It’s what he said. It brought everything rushing back.”

“About your friend Tracy?” Driscoll’s voice carried the gentleness of falling snow.

“Yes.” The word emerged as fragile as spun glass. “I never truly understood until now,” she choked out. “The magnitude of cruelty Tracy endured. The way they tormented her!”

Fresh anguish claimed her as she buried her face in the sofa’s embrace. Tracy had only yearned for love. Why had fate dealt her such a merciless hand?

“If only Tracy hadn’t fallen for Shaun,” Elyse’s voice cracked with despair. “She could have found happiness with anyone else in this world.”

Tracy stirred in the darkness, drawn to a soft glow piercing the blackness beside her.

Turning, she found Lowell’s silhouette bathed in the blue light of his phone screen. She shifted closer, molding herself against his back.

“Back to the office?” she murmured.

“No, not work. Family.” Lowell’s words carried an unusual edge. Her fingers traced lazy patterns across his chest. “Catching up on some gossip? Let me see.”

“Not gossip,” he said carefully, “but it does concern you.”

She lunged forward. “Show me!”

His phone went dark as he pulled her into his embrace, his tone lightening. “Nope, not gonna show you. Just stay put.”

Chapter 1519:

She resisted, reaching for his phone, but he caught her hand swiftly. “Come on now, be a good girl,” he teased with gentle warmth.

Her eyebrow arched knowingly. His unusual secrecy could only mean this involved her.

Lowell captured her lips in a lingering kiss before moving to rise. “I should get to the office. I ordered you some food. It should arrive soon.”

Her fingertip traced his jawline. “Leaving already? I’ll miss you.”

“I can stay another half hour then,” he wavered.

A victorious smile curved her lips. “I knew you couldn’t stay away.”

Warmth bloomed in Lowell’s chest. He hoped he could preserve her happiness forever.

Thirty minutes later, dressed for work, he left her apartment.

Tracy lay bare in the dim light, her gaze fixed on nothing.

The doorbell’s chime eventually broke her reverie. She pulled on something quickly and opened the door to find Lowell’s promised order of food. Settling into the living room with her meal, her phone lit up with his call.

“Enjoying the food?” he asked.

“I love it. How did you know sushi was my favorite?” Tracy’s sweet voice belied her blank expression.

“Just a lucky guess,” Lowell smiled at his desk.

Tracy’s dry laugh preceded her shift in topic. “Are you at the office now? It’s pretty late. I bet you’ve got a mountain of work waiting. Aren’t your employees going to give you a piece of their mind?”

Lowell chuckled. "I'm the boss. Who dares? Besides," his voice softened, "you gave me such an amazing night last night. I'm too happy to care about anything else."

Tracy teased playfully, her voice dripping honey, "So you like that kind of fun, huh? Next time, I won't go easy on you. You'll have to keep up."

"I'll keep up," Lowell promised, satisfaction dancing across his features.

The elevator doors slid open, and his smile evaporated like morning dew. Leon's rage-twisted features and Lucille's distressed expression awaited him like executioners at dawn.

"I've got to go," he told Tracy softly. "I'm at the office now."

Only after her farewell did he pocket his phone and face the tempest before him. "Father, why are you here?"

Leon's palm found its mark, cracking across Lowell's cheek with the force of years of disappointment. "You're the boss of this company, and you dare saunter in at this hour? What woman were you with that made you forget all about your responsibilities?"

Lowell gently pressed his cheek, his bangs shielding the turmoil in his eyes.

Lucille moved closer, her voice low and urgent. "Too many eyes are watching. Let's not air dirty laundry here. We can talk in the office and keep things civilized."

"Keep things civilized? I'm past caring about that!" Leon exploded. "Had I known he'd drop the ball like this, I'd never have pegged him for leadership!"

Lowell kept his cool, hearing these accusations.

Meanwhile, Lucille's patience snapped, her glare filled with warning and resentment.

Chapter 1520:

Leon, consumed by his tirade, missed the weight of his words and Lucille's brewing storm.

Lowell watched his parents, the weight of his heritage feeling more like a curse.

Leon's life with his mistress was an open secret among his family, who all played along, not wanting to rock the boat.

Biting back her anger, Lucille insisted, "Let's take this inside. Making a spectacle only tarnishes our image."

This seemed to resonate with Leon, and he toned down his fury. As they stepped into the office, Lowell couldn't help but ask, "Did Dolores put you up to this?"

"Without your sister's tip-off, we'd still be in the dark about you playing hooky to woo some slut!" Leon's hand thudded on the table, his cheeks reddening.

Lucille's response was frosty. "Your personal life is your own, until it affects this family. End it with her before you're too tangled up to get free."

"So, just because Dolores chirps, you think I've got a girl?" Lowell countered.

"Is she lying?" Leon shot back, visibly seething.

Lowell gave a derisive snort. "I was up working till the early hours. Overslept and missed your call, and now I'm supposedly romancing someone?"

Leon was unconvinced. "You worked till four in the morning? Cut the excuses, break up with her, and maybe I'll keep this job open for you."

Fire flashed in Lowell's eyes. "I don't have a girlfriend! But you really should watch Dolores."

"What's her deal?" Leon shot back. "She's in the hospital. What could she possibly mess up?"

“You’re out of the loop,” Lowell snorted. “Yeah, Dolores is hospitalized, but she’s still stirring the pot. Even wheelchair-bound, she’s pestering Shaun. Recently, the Kennedys have been a thorn in our side, torpedoing deals we were about to lock down. We’ve already lost two million-dollar contracts!”

Leon’s grim face darkened even further. He clutched his chest and exclaimed, “You and your sister are a complete nightmare!”

With icy calm, Lowell countered, “Forget about my love life and focus on your daughter. If you don’t want the company to tank, keep her away from Shaun!”

He then settled at his desk, his features set in determination, and barked, “I need to work now. Leave, please.”

Lucille tried to smooth things over, gently pulling Leon away. “Lowell’s right. We shouldn’t bug him during work hours. Let’s let him concentrate.”

Despite wanting to argue, Leon allowed Lucille to guide him out.

Lowell, facing his computer, was far from distracted by his work. He hadn’t foreseen Dolores causing such a fuss. His parents ignored her antics, always coming down hard on him instead.

At that moment, his resentment towards Dolores peaked.

After exiting the company, Leon and Lucille decided to visit Dolores at the hospital.

In the car, Lucille voiced her worry. “Dolores wants us to fabricate a story and frame Shaun. Should we go along with it?”

Leon kept his eyes closed in thought.

After a pause, Lucille continued, “The Kennedy family wants to cut ties and sabotage our projects. They clearly want nothing to do with us.”

Leon slowly opened his eyes and observed, “In this world, there are no permanent foes. With enough incentive, even the Kennedys might come around.”