

## **Bound love 1551**

Chapter 1551:

Louise, smiling, said to Edward, “Elyse’s talent is undeniable, wouldn’t you agree?”

She looked at Edward with a hint of mischief in her eyes. “Your thoughts?”

Edward kept his focus on Elyse on the stage for a moment before responding, “Her brilliance is undeniable.”

Indeed, Elyse’s performance was mesmerizing, capturing the attention of all present.

Louise asked further, “Do you miss being on stage with your violin?”

“The negotiating table is my stage as well,” Edward responded, his gaze steady and sharp. “And I put everything I have into whatever stage I’m on.”

Louise pondered this, touching her chin. “We’ve all evolved quite a bit, haven’t we?”

After completing her two scheduled pieces flawlessly, Elyse made a swift exit from the stage.

As soon as she was backstage, the rush of her performance dissipated, leaving her exhausted. She collapsed on a nearby bench, breathing deeply to regain her composure.

She had achieved it; she had performed on an international stage! A wave of euphoria washed over her. She glanced around, her eyes sparkling with excitement, eager to share the joy of her achievement.

Nick came over with a radiant smile. “Well done on your performance! Now you can just sit back and enjoy.”

Elyse greeted him with a high-five. “I pulled it off, and you will too! You’ve got what it takes, Nick! We’re on the same level!”

Drawing in a deep breath, Nick responded confidently, “Absolutely! I’ve been trained by Ms. Griffin, so I expect nothing less than excellence from myself. I’m set to ace it!”

His journey in the Swan Cup had been prematurely cut short due to Fiona’s interference. But now, a fresh chance had emerged for him to present his talents globally, filling him with a vibrant sense of anticipation.

“Knock them dead!” Elyse cheered him on. “This is your moment to shine!”

Nick laughed at her enthusiasm. They continued their conversation until he was summoned.

This was it; Nick’s time had come.

Facing Elyse, he announced, “It’s time for the performance.” With a supportive smile, Elyse watched him head toward the backstage. His segment was up next.

Nick was part of a four-person ensemble, but he had a solo. He understood this was his moment to shine, to show what he was capable of. And he was prepared.

Elyse truly hoped for his success, feeling let down when his talents weren’t fully displayed at the Swan Cup. She believed he was capable of much more.

And indeed, Nick delivered an exceptional performance.

His solo enchanted the crowd, each note pulling them deeper into the experience. At the close, applause filled the auditorium, resounding and heartfelt.

Nick returned to Elyse, his face alight with joy.

Chapter 1552:

Elyse quickly offered him a bottle of water. “How’s it feeling?”

“I’m over the moon!” Nick burst out, his eyes glistening with emotion.

“I never imagined performing for such a large audience!”

“You did even more than that,” Elyse gently said. “You reached audiences worldwide!”

She could relate to his emotions; her own success at the Swan Cup had overwhelmed her similarly.

“You really showed them, Nick,” she added warmly. “You’re even more talented than you realize.”

Overcome with emotion, Nick dabbed at his eyes. “I’m so thankful for my violin. I’m thrilled I kept at it. I adore it, and I’m eagerly anticipating my next chance to perform!”

Fresh from their stage performance, Nick and Elyse slipped away from the bustling finale. The grand closing number featured a full ensemble cast, leaving them free to change in the dressing room before joining the audience to watch the remainder of the performances.

Settling into his seat, Nick’s eyes sparkled with excitement. “I can’t believe how big the stage felt! So many people were watching me. Did I keep my cool?”

Elyse half-listened to his enthusiastic chatter while tapping out a message to Jayden on her phone.

Her face brightened as Jayden’s reply confirmed he’d landed and was already en route.

The event still had a good portion left to run, so despite missing her performance, Jayden would be able to catch the remaining performances with her.

Within thirty minutes, Jayden materialized in the audience section.

Nick had regained his composure by then, though Jayden’s appearance caught him off guard. Quickly recovering, he offered a casual greeting. “Hey, are you here to catch the performances?”

Jayden acknowledged with a nod, his gaze drifting to Elyse. “I came here mainly for her performance, but I missed it, so I’ll just watch the rest with her.”

“There’s a recording. It doesn’t matter,” Elyse said.

The trio fell into comfortable silence as they watched the remainder of the performances. As the final curtain drew near, they prepared to leave.

Just then, Elyse’s phone lit up with a message from Louise.

Jayden glanced at her screen and said, “Looks like Louise wants to invite you to dinner.”

Elyse gave her phone a playful shake and corrected, “She also invited you. You can come with me.”

Nick excused himself, having already made plans with Celeste. When Elyse and Jayden located Louise’s designated meeting spot, Elyse was taken aback to find Edward waiting instead.

His stern gaze fixed on Jayden as he stated, “The upcoming event is quite formal. To avoid you from offending others, I’ll lead the way.”

Confusion flickered across Elyse’s face. What she thought was a simple dinner with Louise seemed to be evolving into something else entirely.

Chapter 1553:

Following Edward’s lead, she slid into the car. The twenty-minute drive brought them to an unexpected destination—the National Concert Hall.

The sheer grandeur of the hall left Elyse frozen in place, barely daring to breathe.

Edward caught her rigid posture, and a hint of amusement crossed his features. “Are you really that nervous? Your expression has changed.”

“Shouldn’t I be nervous?” Elyse shot back, whirling toward Jayden. “Aren’t you nervous?”

Jayden, utterly relaxed, had his legs crossed and eyes closed. Hearing Elyse's question, he casually asked, "What's there to be anxious about?"

Elyse was skeptical. "You're kidding, right? This is the National Concert Hall. The people here are all big shots!"

She anxiously asked, "I'm not going to have to perform the violin for these big shots, am I?"

Edward waved his hand dismissively. "You're reading too much into this. It's merely a dinner with the big shots you mentioned."

The room spun slightly as Elyse wondered how she'd ended up dining with such distinguished company.

Desperately, she asked, "Is there any way I could be excused?"

Edward chuckled. "Not a chance."

Elyse was helpless.

In her momentary haze, a glimmer of hope sparked as Elyse remembered Louise might yet spare her from this situation. Her fingers flew across her phone screen, only to have Louise dash her last hopes of escape.

Reading the anxiety etched across Elyse's features, Jayden leaned in with gentle reassurance. "It's nothing more than a dinner. These people don't know your story. Just grace them with your natural charm."

"I've never been somewhere this grand," Elyse murmured, shoulders hunched. "Everything about this makes me nervous."

Jayden's arm settled protectively around her. "Don't worry, I'll be right beside you the whole time."

Edward caught their intimate gesture, his heart clenching as his eyes darkened slightly. Feigning indifference, he rested his chin on his hand and gazed out the window.

His heartache was his alone to bear, requiring no voice or witness. He carried the weight in silence.

They stepped from the car into the National Concert Hall.

Inside, dignitaries from both nations mingled, surrounded by watchful bodyguards and staff.

Elyse clung to Jayden's arm, feeling desperately out of place as her eyes darted around the grand space.

Jayden caught her nervous movements and smirked. "Why the shifty expression? Not very dignified at all."

Elyse playfully hit Jayden and retorted angrily, "I'm absolutely dignified!"

Chapter 1554:

Their banter was interrupted by an approaching bodyguard. "Ms. Lloyd and Mr. Owen?"

They straightened, nodding in unison. "Yes, that's us."

"Princess Louise is waiting for you inside. Please follow me," the bodyguard replied with measured courtesy.

Louise's invitation arrived like a lifeline to Elyse.

"Let's go then," she exclaimed, her voice bubbling with anticipation. "We shouldn't keep Louise waiting."

Jayden, ever the perceptive one, saw through her feigned enthusiasm and reached out to tousle her hair affectionately before falling into step behind her.

As they approached the inner room, a sudden wave of unease prickled Elyse's skin. Four towering guards stood sentry at the entrance, exuding an air of unspoken authority, making it clear they were not the sort to be trifled with.

Overcome with a sense of intimidation, Elyse instinctively drew closer to Jayden, who responded by wrapping a protective arm around her shoulders.

One of the guards knocked firmly on the door, and it swung open with a deliberate creak. "Please enter," he said in a voice that left little room for argument.

Elyse and Jayden stepped across the threshold.

The room inside was lavish, its decor exuding a grandiosity that almost bordered on opulence. A plush sofa and elegant table stood at the center, and there, perched with quiet grace, was Louise, flanked by none other than Garret, whom Elyse hadn't seen in ages. But it was the third figure present that took Elyse by surprise—Rebecca.

Rebecca rose as they entered, her face lighting up with recognition. "Elyse! It's been ages! How have you been?"

Elyse, still processing the situation, offered a small, uncertain nod. "I've been well."

Louise arched an eyebrow with an almost teasing smile. "Rebecca," she said with a playful note in her voice, "I had no idea you two were so close."

Rebecca chuckled softly, her hand fluttering to her mouth in mock surprise. "Well, of course, my relationship with Elyse isn't as deep as yours, Louise. We just ran into each other the other day while shopping and ended up chatting for a while. We really hit it off."

Hit it off? How come she didn't know about this?

But Louise, never one to dwell on such things, waved it off with a breezy smile. "Well, don't just stand there," she urged, her tone warm. "Come sit down. Let's skip the formalities; we're all friends here."

"Exactly," Rebecca agreed, beaming. "Think of it as a casual afternoon tea."

Noticing Elyse's lingering confusion, Jayden gently nudged her forward, guiding her to the sofa.

Rebecca, her eyes narrowing slightly as she observed their closeness, raised an eyebrow. "Is this your fiancé? Are you two planning a wedding soon?"

"Yes," Jayden responded with quiet confidence, "we are."

Rebecca's expression brightened, her eyes sparkling. "Really? Oh, you simply must let me be there!"

Chapter 1555:

Elyse, her mind still a whirl of questions, couldn't summon a smile. Why did everyone seem so eager to be part of her wedding? What was so special about it?

Louise, too, appeared taken aback by Jayden's sudden admission. "A wedding?" she asked, her gaze flicking to Elyse. "Does Elyse even know about this?"

Jayden's gaze softened as he looked at Elyse, who still seemed lost in thought. "If she's willing," he said gently, "we can have it anytime." At that, the room fell silent, every eye turning to Elyse. She looked from one expectant face to the next before blurting out, "Well, if we can have it anytime, can you all attend anytime?"

Louise coughed lightly, a hint of amusement in her voice. "That's a fair question. Just give me a heads-up on the date, and I'll clear my schedule."

Jayden's expression grew serious. "So, what's the real reason you invited us here?"

He knew all too well this wasn't the kind of place for idle chatter. There had to be something more behind the invitation.

"You're sharp," Louise acknowledged with a nod. "Rebecca would like to invite Elyse to perform at a peace concert in her home country."

Elyse blinked, caught off guard. “A peace concert?”

“Yes,” Louise said, her voice tinged with a touch of excitement. “It’s for the 20th anniversary of the ceasefire between Virelia and Manfek. Virelia is hosting it.” She shrugged nonchalantly. “I know it’s a bit out of the blue, and you’re absolutely free to decline.”

Elyse was stunned. She turned to Rebecca, her confusion mounting. “Why me? I’m not from either Virelia or Manfek.”

Rebecca smiled warmly, her eyes gleaming with an almost secret understanding. “There’s a reason why it has to be you. Besides, doesn’t your not belonging to either country make you an even more perfect symbol for peace?”

Elyse was taken aback. This was unlike any invitation she’d ever received. But rather than feeling flattered, a strange unease settled over her.

Louise, sensing her hesitation, leaned in with a reassuring smile. “It’s alright, take your time. There’s no rush. Let us know when you’ve made up your mind.”

“I invited you,” Rebecca added softly, “because I truly love your music. It carries a depth that’s hard to put into words. I thought it would be the perfect fit for such a meaningful event.”

Rebecca wrung her hands nervously, a slight frown creasing her brow. “I hope I’m not stressing you.”

“Not at all,” Elyse quickly assured her, offering a faint but genuine smile. “I understand your intentions.”

Elyse’s words brought a smile to Rebecca’s face.

Elyse graciously accepted the coffee Jayden handed her, sipped it gently, and briefly changed the topic.

However, Rebecca quickly steered the conversation back. “Elyse, should you choose to perform, feel free to bring your friends along,” she said in a light, easygoing tone.

Elyse, slightly puzzled, asked, “My friends?”

“It might be daunting to attend such an event alone,” Rebecca explained. “Perhaps some friends could join you on stage? It could make the experience more enjoyable for you.”

Chapter 1556:

Rebecca’s smile was perfect, her eyes twinkling with kindness and authenticity.

Despite Rebecca’s pleasant approach, Elyse experienced an unsettling feeling. Rebecca’s presence always seemed to exert an invisible pressure, an overwhelming sensation that left her feeling cornered and exposed.

As Elyse hesitated with her reply, Jayden chimed in, “It’s possible her friends are busy. She might be too. Their availability will determine if they can attend.”

A brief look of disappointment crossed Rebecca’s face. “That’s unfortunate. Please let me know as soon as you can if you’re available. It would be wonderful to have you there.”

Elyse managed a faint smile and nodded dumbly.

Louise checked her watch, then looked at Garret. “Is it time to go?” Garret confirmed with a glance at his watch, “Yes, it’s time. Everyone is waiting.”

Louise cleared her throat. “We’ve prepared a delightful meal for our guests. Let’s head there.”

The group stood up and followed Louise and Garret out.

At dinner, to Elyse’s comfort, she and Rebecca were seated at separate tables.

Jayden, noticing her discomfort, leaned closer and inquired, “You’ve seemed off since we got here. Is everything okay?”

Elyse shook her head, her tone weary. “I’ll explain later at the hotel.” Though she had felt little appetite earlier, the enticing smell and sight of the meal rekindled her hunger.

Jayden smiled softly. “Looks like you were hungrier than you thought.”

Trying to stay poised, Elyse replied, “Yes, I really am.”

While the dinner gave others a chance to socialize, Elyse and Jayden chose to quietly exit.

Spotting a burger restaurant during their ride back to the hotel, Elyse said, “I’m still hungry—I need a burger.”

Without hesitation, Jayden steered the car towards the restaurant.

Returning to the hotel, they ran into Nick and Celeste, who were finishing their walk.

Elyse offered a polite greeting.

After a quick evaluation, Celeste said, “Actually, your performance today was quite impressive.”

Surprised and flattered by the compliment, Elyse watched Celeste depart.

Suppressing a chuckle, Nick commented, “Don’t read too much into her aloofness. She really is quite personable once you get to know her.”

Having spent the last few days with Celeste, Elyse was beginning to agree.

“What were you and Louise discussing earlier?” Nick asked.

“Ms. Rebecca Dyson from Virelia has invited me to a peace concert,” Elyse explained. “I’m still deciding whether to go.”

She added, “She suggested I bring friends. Would you come if I invited you?”

Nick pondered for a moment. "I'll have to check with Ms. Griffin before I can confirm."

Chapter 1557:

"That's fine," Elyse assured him. "I haven't decided yet myself. We can take our time."

After exchanging nods, Nick headed towards the elevator.

Elyse and Jayden decided to wait for the next one. Once back in their room, Elyse quickly unwrapped her burger and started eating.

Jayden yawned. "I'm off to shower and then to bed."

"Okay," Elyse mumbled, her mouth still full of burger.

By 11 p.m., Elyse slipped under the covers beside Jayden, quickly falling asleep.

Yet her sleep was anything but restful.

A man's voice, full of pain and warning, echoed in her dream, saying, "She's a liar. Don't trust her. Stay away from her. Stay away from the liar!"

Confused and lost in the dark, Elyse called out, "Who are you? Who's the liar? Who should I avoid? Tell me!"

No answer came. Alone in the oppressive dark of her dream, a figure slowly began to emerge...

Elyse's eyes grew wide as she watched the figure slowly come to life before her, eventually towering over her with an imposing, humanoid shape.

This figure shimmered like a beacon, a radiant mass of white light. Despite squinting, Elyse could only make out a manlike shape.

She stared at the luminous presence for what seemed like an eternity, until it struck her—she should have bolted right off the bat. Yet, she wasn't afraid. Instead, a strange impulse nudged her closer.

With a puzzled tilt of her head, she stepped forward, her hand reaching out as if drawn by a magnet, to caress the figure's face.

Surprisingly, the figure stooped, indulging her touch.

But as her fingers met the figure, there was no solid contact, just a pleasant warmth that spread through her fingertips.

Driven by curiosity, Elyse ventured, "Who are you? Do we know each other?"

The figure remained silent for a moment, then stood tall and declared, "That woman is a liar. Keep your distance. Get out of here and find a safe place."

"And who might you be talking about?" Elyse pressed.

"It's her. She hurt me. Make sure she doesn't get away..." These final words hung in the air as the figure faded away.

With the disappearance of the figure, the warmth vanished too, and darkness wrapped around Elyse once again.

As she realized she was in a dream and began to look for a way out, the scene morphed around her.

Now, Elyse found herself amidst buildings and decor that were both grand and stunning, reminiscent of the National Concert Hall but uniquely different.

Standing there, bewildered, she spotted a little girl in a fancy gown. Despite appearing only seven or eight years old, the girl's eyes bore a maturity far beyond her years.

Elyse touched her nose, intrigued. It was odd—though she couldn't see anyone clearly, she could feel the weight of their gaze. What a bizarre dream.

## Chapter 1558:

In this dream, the little girl was the only other person. Elyse decided to tag along. They turned corners and walked a considerable distance before finally arriving at a heavily guarded room. Upon seeing the little girl, the guards bowed deeply and opened the door.

Following the girl inside, Elyse found herself in a room furnished simply with a bed, a table, and a plain chair.

As Elyse looked around curiously, the little girl spoke in a tone both childlike and authoritative, leaving no room for doubt. "Get up! Stop playing dead."

Was there someone else in this room?

Elyse followed the voice and was taken aback to find a man sprawled on the bed, where just moments before, no one had been.

The man lay flat, his hand obscuring his face.

At the girl's assertive command, he revealed a sly smirk. "Am I not allowed to lie down?"

The girl tilted her chin up defiantly. "You can lie down if I allow it. If I don't, then you can't. Such is the privilege of a princess."

The man let out a derisive scoff. "A princess, you say? What grand power you wield. I'm merely a prisoner here, and yet the princess feels compelled to visit daily."

The princess paused briefly before responding, "I can offer you a chance to leave. Don't you want it?"

This prompted the man to bite his lip, visibly struggling to contain his anger. "You've taken everything from me, confined me here, and now you dangle freedom like a cruel joke? How vile!"

The girl's expression turned cold and calculating, belying her tender years. "This is mere strategy. Your dreams are insignificant to me. You've utterly failed. In my eyes, you're nothing but a disposable pawn. Leave now. My realm has no place for failures."

Overwhelmed with frustration, the man bellowed, his roar echoing violently around the room.

Elyse clapped her hands over her ears as the very fabric of her surroundings seemed to crack under the intensity of his outburst. Overcome by the cacophony, she huddled on the floor.

Just when the dream threatened to engulf her completely, a clear voice pierced the turmoil. "Wake up, Elyse!"

Her eyes snapped open, and she found herself gazing into Jayden's worried face. It took her a moment to collect herself and return to reality.

She murmured, still dazed, "What happened to me?"

"You were caught in a nightmare, crying out, 'I'm so scared,'" Jayden explained, his voice tinged with relief. "I was really worried about you."

Jayden carefully dabbed the beads of sweat from Elyse's forehead with a tissue.

When Elyse had settled somewhat, she murmured, "I had a dream about a man. I didn't recognize him exactly, but it felt like I knew him. He pulled me into one of his memories."

Jayden's curiosity was piqued. "What did you see?"

"He was being held captive," Elyse began hesitantly, "by a little girl, maybe seven or eight years old. He said she had ruined him, called himself a complete failure. He claimed that once she got what she wanted, she discarded him."

Chapter 1559:

Jayden blinked in disbelief. "You're saying a grown man was held captive by a little girl? That sounds impossible!"

Elyse scratched her head, her expression clouded. “It felt entirely plausible in the dream. The girl seemed to be a princess, exuding power, while the man was just a commoner.”

“A princess?” Jayden echoed, his mind spinning with the implications.

Elyse sighed, throwing off the covers. “I need a shower,” she said with an air of resignation. “I’m drenched.”

Jayden sat back, lost in thought. Elyse’s dream clung to his mind like a shadow that refused to be shaken. How could a mere little girl subdue a man? What kind of twisted kid was she?

When Elyse reappeared from the shower, her hair damp and skin flushed, she found Jayden still deep in thought.

“It was just a dream,” she said, trying to dismiss it. “Let it go.”

They left their room and descended to the hotel restaurant for breakfast. There, they ran into Celeste, whose warm smile quickly beckoned them over.

“Come sit with me,” Celeste said, gesturing to an empty spot at her table.

Elyse and Jayden didn’t hesitate, settling in across from her.

Celeste wasted no time. “I heard from Nick last night that you invited him to some kind of performance. What’s this about? What kind of event is it, and how big is it?”

Elyse relayed Rebecca’s explanation, her words calm and measured. But the moment Celeste heard it, her reaction was as sharp as a thunderclap.

“Absolutely not!” Celeste snapped. “Neither of you is going to that!”

Elyse blinked, stunned by the sudden outburst. “Why not? Isn’t it for a good cause?”

Celeste's expression darkened, her anger palpable. After a long pause, she asked, "Did Cody ever tell you about your father?"

Elyse felt a jolt of confusion. What did her father have to do with any of this?

"Didn't he ever explain why things fell apart between us?" Celeste pressed, her tone as cold as winter frost.

Elyse shook her head, completely at a loss. Neither she nor Gavin had ever heard a whisper of tension between Cody and Celeste. Cody had never uttered a single word about it.

Celeste sighed heavily, as if the weight of the past bore down on her. "I understand why Cody wouldn't want to bring it up. It hurt too much. But trust me, attending that performance will only lead to pain."

Elyse's curiosity burned brighter, but Celeste shut the door to further explanation, refusing to say more. She simply repeated her firm refusal, insisting that they were not to attend.

After breakfast, Celeste left abruptly, leaving Elyse sitting at the table, lost in a storm of unanswered questions.

"Want me to dig around and see what I can find?" Jayden offered gently.

Elyse nodded. "Please. I need to know."

Chapter 1560:

Jayden wasted no time and set someone to work. But by late morning, his efforts bore no fruit. Every potential lead seemed to have vanished into thin air.

"It's strange," Jayden admitted as he relayed the news. "I scoured the news archives going back twenty years. There's nothing—absolutely nothing—about your father."

"That's bizarre," Elyse murmured, her shock evident.

“Not really,” Jayden replied, his tone measured, though his eyes gleamed with suspicion. “If someone buried the information deliberately, it makes sense. But the fact there’s nothing at all? That reeks of guilt. Whoever’s behind this has skeletons in their closet, and they’re not ready for anyone to see them.”

“But what are they hiding?” Elyse wondered aloud, her voice barely above a whisper. “And what does it have to do with Mr. Tucker and my father?”

Jayden sat in silence for a moment, deep in thought. “Celeste knows something, but she won’t talk. That leaves Mr. Tucker. He was there—he’d know the truth.”

Elyse nodded slowly, as if the pieces of a vast puzzle were starting to fit together. “You’re right. I need to talk to him.”

An idea sparked in Elyse’s mind like a match catching flame. Without hesitation, she threw some essentials into a bag, got Cody’s address from Gavin, and dragged Jayden along for the ride.

As the plane soared through the clouds, she stared out of the window, her thoughts wandering. That dream haunted her still—vivid, unshakable.

Who was that man? Why hadn’t she felt fear in his presence? And why did his tortured cries stir a deep, unexplainable sorrow in her chest?

Her heart ached for answers.

Jayden, having finished reviewing some documents, glanced at her, noticing the storm of confusion brewing in her eyes. He reached out and pulled her close, his voice gentle. “What’s eating you?”

“It’s that dream again,” Elyse murmured, leaning her head against his shoulder. “I just realized something... my dreams, they’re like... breadcrumbs. They’ve always led me to things I didn’t know I needed to find.”

She hesitated, her voice dropping to a soft murmur. “Take this, for example. If it weren’t for that dream, I probably would’ve brushed it all off—just said no without a second thought. Asking Mr. Tucker about the past wouldn’t have even crossed my mind.”

Jayden mulled this over. “Maybe it’s not just a dream. Maybe it’s... fate nudging you toward a truth you’re meant to uncover.”

Elyse nodded slowly, the curiosity in her gaze burning brighter. “I just hope it’s a story worth the chase.”

After four long hours in the air, Elyse and Jayden finally touched down. With nightfall settling over the city, they decided to call it a day and rest up before looking for Cody in the morning.

But sleep wasn’t kind to Elyse. The dream returned, even sharper this time—the man’s agony felt like a tangible weight pressing on her chest, his anguish raw enough to bleed into her own soul.

She awoke feeling stiff and sore, her body heavy with unrest. Jayden’s worried face hovered above her, his concern etched into every line. A faint, slow smile curved Elyse’s lips as she murmured, “That nightmare came back again.”