

Bound love 1721

Chapter 1721:

Jayden frowned, the weight of her words sinking in. “But what happens after she gets her revenge? If the Ruiz family is destroyed, will she lose her will to live then?”

Elyse paused, taking a deep breath before she nodded slowly, the gravity of her words settling between them. “Exactly. Once it’s over, she’ll have nothing left. I’m not sure she’ll survive that kind of emptiness.”

Lowell burst through the hotel’s revolving doors, his polished shoes squeaking against the marble floor. The scene before him was pure chaos.

Like sharks scenting blood, reporters descended upon him in an instant. Their cameras flashed like lightning, microphones thrust toward his face like accusing fingers.

“Mr. Ruiz, what’s your take on your sister Dolores’ scandal? Are you here to intervene or participate in her game?” One reporter’s voice cut through the cacophony.

“Is this sort of behavior common in your family? Do you share similar... proclivities?”

“Mr. Ruiz, how does your family respond to her actions?”

With a sharp gesture, Lowell signaled his two assistants, who moved in perfect sync to create a human barrier between him and the press vultures. He had no time for their tabloid fodder.

The elevator ride felt endless as Lowell watched the floor numbers tick upward. When the doors finally parted, he strode down the hallway, his footsteps muffled by the plush carpet.

His heart dropped when he reached the room—the door stood slightly ajar, and Dolores’s breathy moans drifted through the gap.

Shaun had already left.

Rage bubbled in Lowell's chest as he contemplated his sister's foolishness. In her attempt to lay a trap, she had become ensnared in her own web, transforming herself into the city's latest scandal.

Unable to contain his fury any longer, he kicked the door with enough force to make it slam against the wall. "Dolores, enough of this spectacle! Get dressed and out here this instant!"

"I can't..." Dolores's voice came out as barely a whisper. "The drug... I need time for it to wear off."

"Your shamelessness knows no bounds!" Lowell spat, disgust dripping from every word. "Do you expect me to swallow that pathetic excuse?"

Dolores rushed to explain, "It's the truth! The wine—I spiked it for Shaun with triple the usual dose. If I leave now... I could die."

Lowell felt a migraine building behind his eyes. He couldn't bear another second of her sickening voice. Stepping into the hallway, he pulled out a cigarette, his hands shaking slightly as he lit it.

While Dolores's scandal could potentially be buried, Shaun might still follow through with his threats to spread the scandal far and wide.

Lowell knew his company's stock would take a nosedive, and their carefully cultivated public image would crumble like a house of cards.

The timing couldn't be worse—he had just sealed a major partnership deal. This scandal threatened to unravel everything he'd worked for.

As these thoughts swirled in his mind, his thoughts drifted to Tracy.

Chapter 1722:

A bitter laugh nearly escaped his lips. The woman he'd loved for three months—the one who had seemed so perfect—was actually Tracy, harboring a deep-seated vendetta against him. The revelation felt like a scene ripped from a horror movie.

And the true twist of the knife? Tracy was pregnant.

His mind spun with the implications of the child growing within her. The more he dwelled on it, the clearer it became—Tracy's pregnancy was far more complex than Dolores's scandal. The latter he could contain, like a lid on a boiling pot.

As for Tracy, he didn't know how to deal with her.

Lost in this labyrinth of thoughts, two hours slipped away before Lowell suddenly remembered Dolores. Time to check on her again.

Upon returning to the room, he found Dolores sprawled across the bed, sleeping peacefully beneath the covers.

A thick, acrid scent hung in the air like a cloud. His eyes fell on the trash can, where several used condoms lay discarded. His expression darkened to thunder.

Yet Dolores seemed utterly at peace, a contented smile playing on her lips.

The sight was too much. Lowell strode over and shook her roughly awake. Her eyes fluttered open groggily. Upon seeing him, she snapped, "Are you trying to kill me? I'm exhausted. Let me sleep!"

"Get up," Lowell commanded, his voice arctic. "You're going to the hospital for an examination. You spent hours with multiple men, and there are only five or six condoms in that trash. Aren't you concerned about diseases?"

Still half-asleep, Dolores mumbled, "Did some guys do it without protection? That explained why it felt so good."

Lowell's face turned to stone, darkness seeping into his features.

Fighting to contain his rage, he spoke in a voice like arctic wind. “Dolores, I’m telling you to get dressed and come with me to the hospital. Now.”

Dolores scratched her head with irritation. “Fine, fine. I’ll get up. Just give me some privacy, will you?”

Lowell pinned her with a steely gaze before stepping outside to wait.

Almost an hour crawled by before Dolores emerged, looking fresh as morning dew. Sliding into Lowell’s car, she caught sight of his thunderous expression and frowned. “What’s with the attitude? I just had a little fun. I promise I won’t do it again, okay?”

Lowell turned to her, his eyes piercing. “Everyone must face the consequences of their actions. You’re no different. When Dad arrives tomorrow, you’ll explain yourself to him.”

Dolores waved her hand dismissively. “I was just letting loose, blowing off steam. Don’t make such a big deal out of it. Besides, as long as you keep quiet about me being with several guys, Mom and Dad won’t know a thing. Don’t rat me out.”

A cold laugh escaped Lowell’s lips. “I can’t control other people’s tongues.”

After dealing with Dolores, Shaun walked into Jayden’s house with a relaxed air, as if there was nothing to worry about.

Jayden and Elyse had just finished freshening up when Driscoll informed them that Shaun had arrived.

Elyse paused for a moment, a flicker of confusion crossing her face. “Did you tell him Tracy’s staying with us?”

Jayden shook his head, his expression unreadable. “I didn’t. You know he doesn’t get his information from me.”

Chapter 1723:

Elyse frowned, annoyance creeping into her tone. “Then how did he find out? Let’s go find out.”

The two of them made their way into the living room, where Shaun quickly approached them, his expression tense with urgency. “Is Tracy here with you?”

Elyse looked at Shaun, confusion written all over her face. “How do you know? We never told you.”

Shaun answered, his voice slightly guarded. “Someone tipped me off. After I dealt with Dolores, I came straight here.”

Without missing a beat, he started to head upstairs. “Tracy’s on the second floor, right? I need to see her. Take me to her.”

Elyse quickly stepped in front of him, grabbing his arm to stop him. “She just fell asleep. If you go up there now, you’ll wake her up!”

Shaun hesitated, then reluctantly nodded. “You’re right.”

He turned to Jayden, a glint of determination in his eyes. “Get me a room. I’ll stay here.”

Jayden chuckled, his tone light but tinged with amusement. “Are you serious? Did I say you could stay in my house?”

Shaun crossed his arms. “You took so much from my dad, and now you can’t even offer me a room?”

Elyse cut in, her voice careful. “It’s not that we don’t want to, but Tracy’s been really unstable lately. I’m worried that seeing you might set her off.”

Shaun’s frustration was clear. “I’ve been with her the last couple of days. She won’t be as upset with me as you think.”

Elyse shook her head, skepticism in her eyes. “I don’t buy it.”

Shaun hesitated for a moment, but then his words tumbled out. “It’s true! These past few days—when she was angry, she hit me. I was the one she took it out on.”

Elyse froze, her eyes flicking toward Jayden. “He’s Tracy’s emotional outlet. How about we let him stay?”

Jayden raised an eyebrow, his tone dry. “So, you’re saying we let him be Tracy’s punching bag?”

Elyse rolled her eyes. “Isn’t he basically asking for it?”

After a beat, she sighed. “Fine, you can stay. But no matter what, I won’t let you see Tracy without her permission.”

Shaun’s frustration bubbled up. “I need to see her. It’s important.”

Elyse waved him off, her voice steady. “Then there’s nothing more to talk about.”

Seeing that Elyse wasn’t budging, Shaun had no choice but to accept her terms. Once Shaun’s accommodations were settled, Elyse and Jayden retreated to their room.

When they came out, Tracy was still asleep. As they made their way downstairs, they found Shaun sprawled on the couch, his attention fixed on the news.

Elyse stretched, stifling a yawn. “What’s so interesting on the news?”

“Celebrity gossip. Looks like the Ruiz family’s about to take a hit,” Shaun said, his eyes glued to the screen.

At the mention of the Ruiz family, Elyse turned to the TV, her eyes widening as she saw the scandal involving Dolores.

Jayden raised an eyebrow, clearly intrigued. “Last night was that crazy? You really know how to stir things up with Dolores. Aren’t you worried her family will come after you?”

Chapter 1724:

Shaun's smirk was almost dark. "You don't get Dolores. At her core, she's someone who craves chaos—rules don't mean a thing to her. Do you think I made her like this? I gave her the chance to walk away. But once the drug hit and she saw all those men in the room, she couldn't fight it."

Elyse's disbelief was evident. "I can't believe she'd sink that low!"

For once, Jayden was at a loss for words. He knew their world was full of wealthy people with a penchant for excess, but women like Dolores—bold and reckless—were rare in their circle.

Jayden found himself seeing Dolores in an entirely new light.

As the story spread, Dolores quickly became a trending topic, with the public relentless in their chatter.

With the mounting outrage, the Ruiz Group's stock began to take a sharp dive. Meanwhile, Dolores had no clue that her impulsive actions were about to send the company into a tailspin.

Even Lowell's new project felt the ripple effects.

When Leon and Lucille caught wind of the situation, they stormed into Dolores's apartment without warning.

The noise jolted Dolores awake, still groggy from sleep. Annoyed, she shot up in bed. "I was finally sleeping! What are you doing here so early? Why don't you mind your own business for once?"

Leon's anger was uncontrollable. "How could you bring such shame on our family?" Without warning, he slapped Dolores across the face.

The sting snapped Dolores into full consciousness. She pressed her hand to her cheek, her eyes wide with disbelief. "Dad, why'd you hit me? Don't you think that hurt?"

Leon's voice shook with fury, his chest rising and falling as he clutched it. "Look at what you've done! You've practically brought the Ruiz Group to its knees!"

Dolores blinked at him, utterly baffled. “What are you talking about? Dad, don’t throw baseless accusations at me.”

Lucille shifted uncomfortably before she spoke. “Dolores… you made a mistake. A serious one. You need to take responsibility.”

Dolores frowned, still lost. “For what? Can someone please tell me what’s going on?”

Lucille exhaled sharply, her shoulders sagging. “Don’t you remember last night? You… you were with a group of men. How could you?”

For a moment, Dolores said nothing. Then, with a slight tilt of her head, she murmured, “Oh, that? I remember now. I was with them, sure. But that’s my personal life, isn’t it? Why are you interrogating me over this?”

Lucille’s patience snapped. “Don’t you realize the media caught everything? Have you completely lost your mind?”

“The media?” Dolores echoed, her gaze drifting as memories of the previous night flickered through her mind. She had relished every moment—blissful, intoxicating.

Then, like a bolt of clarity, it hit her. This hadn’t been an accident. She had orchestrated it. She had wanted to expose her relationship with Shaun. She had arranged for the media to be there, had even ensured they had access. “I did invite the press,” she admitted slowly, almost as if testing the words. “But I don’t recall them actually taking pictures.”

Lucille let out a weary, humorless laugh. “They took a bunch of pictures. And now, they’re plastered all over the internet. Do you have any idea what you’ve done to the Ruiz Group? Do you know how hard your brother has been working to contain this disaster?”

Chapter 1725:

Dolores met her gaze with startling indifference. If she had truly grasped the consequences, she wouldn’t have gone through with it in the first place.

Leon was going crazy. “The Ruiz Group’s reputation is in ruins. Your brother’s latest project is now on the verge of collapse. And you?” His glare bore into her. “Your own name is in the dirt.”

“So?” Dolores shrugged. “If Lowell’s handling it, then let him. What’s the big deal?”

Leon’s eyes darkened with something colder than anger—disgust. “The big deal, Dolores, is that the entire elite circle now knows exactly what kind of woman you are. Your reputation is in shreds. Forget about Shaun—no respectable man will ever want you now.”

At the mention of marriage, Dolores’s composure finally cracked. She had spent years sculpting herself into the perfect wife material, poised to marry into a family much more esteemed than hers.

Confidence had always been her armor—she believed she could secure a prize husband. And she nearly had. Shaun wasn’t her only prospect; other distinguished men had considered her a match.

But now? This scandal had obliterated everything. Not just Shaun—all of them. Gone. Vanished like smoke in the wind.

Even the idea of marrying into a family of equal standing to hers now felt like a pipe dream.

The full weight of her downfall slammed into her chest.

“But... I-I don’t remember any reporters being in my room,” she stammered.

Lucille let out a weary sigh. “The doctor said you took too many aphrodisiacs. You were so... consumed by the effects that you didn’t even notice them.”

Dolores’s knees buckled. She crumpled to the floor, her hands trembling. “It’s over,” she whispered, a hollow emptiness creeping into her tone. “My life is over. I was photographed. How will I ever find a husband now?”

Leon’s gut twisted at the sight of his daughter’s despair, but rage overpowered sympathy. His voice thundered through the room. “Disgraceful! You’ve shamed our family! Look at your brother—he doesn’t need us to clean up his messes. And you? You’ve thrown your future away!”

Lucille stepped in gently, attempting to soothe her. “It’s alright, Dolores. Even if marriage doesn’t happen, we’ll take care of you. You’ll always have a home with us.”

“NO!” Dolores shrieked, scrambling to her feet as if the words had physically struck her. “I will get married! I’ll go on dates, I’ll find a husband! I refuse to waste away at home like some unwanted burden!”

“You’re insane! Completely insane!” Leon slapped her hard across the face. “Marry? Who would marry you now? If you were so eager to get married, why did you do such a thing?”

Dolores staggered back, clutching her burning cheek, tears streaming down her face. “That’s the second time you’ve hit me... How could you? How could you do this to me?”

“Consider yourself fortunate that I didn’t go further!” Leon yelled, his anger palpable. “For the next few days, stay put and don’t even think about leaving this house.”

He turned to Lucille, his expression hardening. “And as for you—if you continue to indulge her like this, I’ll cut ties with both of you!”

Lucille, taken aback, opened her mouth to speak but couldn’t muster the courage. His words were too harsh for her to challenge.

Chapter 1726:

Dolores, however, wasn’t backing down. “Dad, you’re locking me in here like a prisoner! Have you even considered how I feel? So what if I’ve been a little wild? I didn’t do anything that can’t be forgiven.”

Leon snapped, his voice full of disgust. “Look at the disaster you’ve caused! You’ve destroyed your future and dragged our family into your scandal!” With a sharp wince, he clutched his chest, his face contorting with pain.

Lucille, her expression instantly shifting to worry, hurried to his side. “Honey, are you okay? You need to calm down. This anger is bad for your health.”

Leon waved her off with a frustrated gesture. "Let's go. Leave her here to stew in her own mess," he muttered. He leaned heavily on Lucille, who helped him navigate out of the apartment.

Dolores remained frozen in place, a mixture of disbelief and seething rage tightening her chest.

Grabbing her phone, she began searching for news about herself, her fingers trembling.

Most of the articles had already been wiped from the internet, a move she was sure Lowell had orchestrated. Still, gossip about her and the Ruiz Group lingered in the digital corners, impossible to erase.

After scanning through the online comments, Dolores flung her phone across the room in a fit of rage. "They're all out of their minds!" she spat. "Bitter, jealous nobodies. I'm privileged. Why shouldn't I live how I want? They're just envious."

Her fury boiled over, but even after venting, she refused to back down. Determined, she grabbed her phone again and dialed Lowell's number.

No answer.

Her frustration skyrocketed. She dialed again and again until, finally, Lowell picked up. His voice was sharp and laced with irritation. "What now? Don't you know I'm busy?"

Dolores didn't hold back, her temper flaring once more. "How busy could you possibly be that you can't even take my call?"

Lowell's laugh was sharp and humorless. "Thanks to you, I've been running around since dawn, trying to clean up your mess. The company's reputation is in tatters, and now our partners are reconsidering their deals with us."

Dolores seethed, biting back her rage. "It's just a little scandal, for God's sake. That's nothing that can't be fixed. Don't pin your incompetence on me."

Lowell's voice grew colder. "Dolores, we've spoiled you for far too long. This is what happens when you think the world revolves around you."

A chill ran down Dolores's spine. Her tone sharpened. "I'm your older sister. You owe me an apology and need to fix this mess. And get those comments removed—I still need to go on blind dates, you know."

Lowell's reply was blunt. "I'm not cleaning up after you. You should leave the country and stay quiet for a while."

Dolores froze, her mind reeling. "What did you just say? Are you actually kicking me out?"

Lowell didn't answer. He hung up, his silence more cutting than any words. His grim expression didn't waver as he got back to his work.

Dolores sat on her bed, her mind reeling. Lowell's words echoed in her head like a thunderclap. He had always been her protector, the one who took care of everything. Yet now, he had turned his back on her. She couldn't accept it. For an entire hour, she sat motionless, her thoughts swirling in frustration. But instead of introspection, she busied herself finding someone else to blame. Her mind eventually settled on Shaun. He should've done something, she thought bitterly. He should've stopped the reporters from getting too close.

Sure, she had been the one to orchestrate the media frenzy, but that didn't excuse Shaun from standing by and watching it all unfold. He should've been more proactive, more protective of her.

Chapter 1727:

Dolores's frustration reached its peak as she realized the full extent of what had gone wrong.

With a sharp breath, she picked up her phone and dialed Shaun's number, her anger simmering under her skin.

Shaun answered almost immediately, as if he had been waiting for her call. "We grew up together. You knew those reporters were there, but why the hell didn't you stop them?" Dolores' voice was laced with fury.

Shaun's response came with a quiet chuckle, a hint of amusement in his tone. "Out of your mind, aren't you? No one forced you to take those drugs. That was your choice. The second you saw those

men, you couldn't resist. And now, you refuse to own up to the fact that you're nothing more than a slut."

The insult cut through her like a knife, but Dolores snapped back, her voice trembling with rage. "Why didn't you do anything to stop them? Now look at me! I'm the laughing stock of everyone. Are you proud of yourself?"

Shaun's voice remained glacially calm as he responded, "What does your problem have to do with me? If you made a mistake, you should take responsibility for it yourself. You can't control yourself, yet you expect me to clean up your mess? That's funny."

Dolores's voice exploded through the speaker, raw with unbridled fury. When her initial outburst subsided, she hissed with venom dripping from every word, "Damn you, Shaun Kennedy. You must help me now. You owe me."

"Ridiculous. Go cry to someone else for help," Shaun retorted, ending the call with a decisive tap.

Across the polished mahogany table, Elyse lifted her gaze, surprise flickering across her features. "Dolores is giving you trouble again?"

"Never mind her," Shaun replied with a dismissive wave. "She's just having a meltdown."

Though Elyse had already seen the news about the Ruiz Group's precarious situation online, she couldn't help but feel a twinge of surprise at Dolores's audacity.

Shaun raised his coffee cup to his lips, his eyes drifting toward the second-floor window. A soft sigh escaped him, almost unconsciously.

"You're gazing at Tracy's room again," Elyse observed. "You've been doing that quite often today."

"I've been longing to see her," Shaun admitted, his voice carrying a weight of unspoken emotions.

"She hasn't woken up yet. You'll have to be patient," Elyse replied, concern threading through her words.

The mere mention of Tracy sent a ripple of unease through Elyse's heart. Her mind churned with thoughts of how to comfort Tracy, how to ease even a fraction of her pain.

Shaun's voice softened with quiet conviction. "I've already made my decision. As long as Tracy can abandon her quest for revenge, even if she chooses to keep Lowell's child, I'm willing to raise the baby as my own."

The milk Elyse had been sipping went down the wrong way, sending her into a violent coughing fit.

When she finally caught her breath, she stared at him with wide-eyed disbelief. "You're actually willing to raise Tracy's child? Even though Lowell is the father?"

A gentle chuckle escaped Shaun's lips. "Truth be told, before reuniting with Tracy, I was haunted by regret for everything I'd done to her. I came to understand something profound—as long as she's willing to return to me, I don't care what path she's walked or how life has changed her."

Chapter 1728:

Elyse sat there, jaw slack with amazement. After several heartbeats, she managed to ask, "So you'll raise her child?"

Shaun nodded, his expression resolute. "Though Lowell may be the biological father, I'll gladly raise this child as my own."

For the first time, Elyse realized how narrow her own perspective had been. Shaun had evolved quietly, growing into someone capable of being Tracy's shelter against life's tempests.

"Please," Shaun's voice held a note of earnest pleading. "Help me speak with Tracy. Convince her to let go of revenge. I'll take her away from all this, and we'll raise her child together."

Elyse scratched her head, uncertainty clouding her features. "Well... I'll try."

"Can you give me a definite answer?" Shaun pressed, his eyes searching her face.

After a long moment of contemplation, she replied hesitantly, “What if Tracy refuses? I can’t force her hand in this.”

Genuine surprise flickered across Shaun’s features. “Haven’t you noticed? She only truly listens to you now. She holds you in a kind of reverent fear—she’s not even this way with Jayden.”

Elyse blinked in surprise. “I hadn’t noticed that she’s intimidated by me.”

“Think back to her last encounter with you,” Shaun said, leaning forward slightly. “She fled the scene. While she claimed it was because her plan had failed and she didn’t want you interfering, I believe the truth is simpler—she was too frightened to face you and hear your words.”

A small laugh escaped Elyse. “She ran so fast, I couldn’t even hope to catch her.”

“Indeed,” Shaun agreed, his voice tinged with gentle amusement. “She moved so quickly that she almost lost her baby. I ended up going out that night to fetch her medication.” The words ended in a soft sigh. His admission left Elyse momentarily at a loss for words.

After gathering her thoughts, she spoke carefully. “I’ll try to speak with her. But when it comes to the baby, we must honor whatever she decides.”

Their conversation was interrupted by Driscoll’s hurried approach. “Tracy is awake,” he announced. “She’s having breakfast in the dining room.”

The news galvanized Shaun into action—he rose from his seat, already turning toward the door.

“Wait! Stop right there!” Elyse’s commanding voice rang out. “You promised me you wouldn’t approach Tracy impulsively!”

Shaun froze mid-step, cast a glance at Elyse, and gave a reluctant nod of acquiescence.

With that settled, Elyse stood and followed Driscoll’s lead to the dining room.

Inside, she found Tracy delicately sipping milk, taking small, measured drinks. Before her lay a carefully curated breakfast, specially prepared by the chef with a pregnant woman’s needs in mind.

Tracy's gaze flickered nervously at Elyse's entrance, her eyes darting away to avoid direct contact.

Noting Tracy's discomfort, Elyse settled into the chair beside her. "How's the chef's breakfast?" she asked, her voice gentle as morning sunlight. "Does it suit your taste?"

Tracy gave a small nod before quickly shifting the conversation. "Why are you here?" she asked, her words carrying a hint of defensive wariness. "Is there something specific you want to discuss?"

Chapter 1729:

"When I first learned you were alive," Elyse began thoughtfully, "I had so many things I wanted to say. But now, I realize words aren't what you need. I just want to be here for you. Whenever you're ready to talk, I'll be here to listen."

Tracy's eyes widened in surprise, a flash of vulnerability crossing her face. "You don't blame me?"

"Blame you for what?" Elyse countered softly.

Setting down her glass with deliberate care, Tracy's lips curved into a smile that didn't reach her eyes. "For getting myself into this mess."

Elyse smiled softly, her voice a steady balm as she said, "How could I ever blame you for that? Back then, you had no choice. Moreover, it was the Ruiz family that tore your world apart. If you hadn't found something to hold onto and keep yourself going, I'm not sure we'd be standing here today."

Tracy bit down on her lower lip, her breath hitching as if struggling to keep a dam of emotions from breaking.

Noticing her turmoil, Elyse comforted her, saying, "If you need to cry, let it out. There is no need to hold back with me."

The moment the words left Elyse's lips, Tracy's tears began to fall in torrents. Her sobs wracked her body as if she were trying to release the weight of every sorrow she had carried for so long.

Elyse stayed by her side, offering quiet comfort until Tracy's tears finally subsided.

Lifting her head, Tracy looked at Elyse and murmured, "I really missed you. When I was drifting at sea, the person I wanted to see the most was you. Even after I was rescued and recovering in the hospital, all I could think about was meeting you."

Elyse's throat tightened, her eyes turning misty. "I missed you too. Every day since you left, I prayed I would see you again—even if only in my dreams."

Now that she had finally calmed down, Tracy couldn't hold back any longer. She threw herself into Elyse's arms, tears streaming down her face again. The two women clung to each other, tears flowing for what felt like an eternity until the sobs finally subsided.

Elyse gently wiped the tears from Tracy's cheeks and reassured her, "It's all right now. You're safe. You don't need anything else to help you move forward."

Tracy gazed at Elyse for a while before she finally nodded. "Maybe you are right."

For a long moment, they remained close, leaning against each other. Eventually, Tracy whispered, "Crying has made me hungry."

Elyse smiled and said, "Then let's eat. I'll have the chef warm something up for you."

Tracy nodded but suddenly remembered her phone was still in the other room. She got to her feet and said, "I'll go get my phone."

But as soon as she stepped into the hallway, she walked smack into Shaun's chest.

She winced, rubbing her sore nose, her expression sour. "What are you doing here again?"

Shaun fumbled for words, clearly flustered. "I heard you were crying, and I wanted to check on you, but I didn't want to disturb you."

Tracy let out an exasperated sigh, rolling her eyes. “Forget it. There’s no way I can explain this to you. Just don’t stand in my way.”

With a huff, she pushed past him, her steps quick and purposeful as she headed upstairs.

Shaun awkwardly rubbed his nose, then turned to Elyse with a sheepish smile. “See? She isn’t as resistant to me as you think. I told you—she accepts me in her heart.”

Chapter 1730:

Elyse propped her chin on one hand, her eyes dancing with amusement. “She might not resist you, but that doesn’t mean she exactly treats you like you’re someone important, either.”

Shaun let out a small cough, shifting his weight. “I know I messed up before and hurt her feelings. But I’m really trying to make things right this time.”

Elyse sighed, “Well, good luck with that.”

When Tracy returned downstairs, she found Shaun standing there, looking at her expectantly.

No longer moved by such gestures, she paid him no mind and headed straight into the dining room, shutting the door behind her without a second glance. Shaun stood there, feeling a bit awkward. After a moment of hesitation, he quietly pushed the door open and slipped inside.

Tracy’s head snapped up the moment she saw him enter. “What do you think you’re doing here?”

Shaun cleared his throat and replied, “Just checking on you.”

Tracy’s temper flared even hotter. “Get out! Just your presence is enough to annoy me.”

Elyse scratched her head, looking overwhelmed by the scene unfolding. Refusing to give up so easily, Shaun asked, “Can I at least leave the door open a little?”

Tracy’s brows shot up, disbelief flashing across her face. “Why do you need the door open?”

Shaun's voice softened, tinged with honesty. "I just want to make sure you're okay."

Tracy, running out of patience, pointed firmly at the door. "I said, get out. Now."

Meanwhile, Jayden had just wrapped up a meeting at the company when Brook came in.

He turned, casting Brook a sidelong glance. "What brings you here? Shouldn't you be off enjoying a happy life with ladies? How do you even find time to come talk to me?"

Brook replied, "Come on, Jayden. You know Jennie is my one and only. Camille is like a little sister to me, and she's been staying home, burying herself in her studies so she can get into a better college next year."

Jayden raised an eyebrow and asked, "So, what's all this about?"

"It's Jennie. Lately, her mood has been off, and she's been acting strangely secretive. I get the sense she's hiding something from me," Brook replied in a low voice.

Jayden's gaze sharpened, his expression unreadable. "Are you implying Jennie's been meeting with Corrie? Maybe talking about something that doesn't sit right?"

Brook nodded. "I can't see any other reason for it."

Jayden nodded in understanding. "Got it. If that's the case, we need to deal with Corrie. The company's on the rise, and we can't afford to let her hang around the company any longer."

Jennie curled up on the sofa, anxiously biting her nails as she mindlessly scrolled through her phone.

A sudden buzz made her jump, her heart skipping a beat as she snatched it up. Corrie's name flashed across the screen—a message requesting to meet that night.

The sight of it drained all the energy from Jennie's body. Her phone slipped from her grasp as she drew her knees to her chest, making herself as small as possible in the corner of the sofa.

