

## Bound love 271

Chapter 271:

Jayden intercepted Elyse as she tried to evade his touch, growing more adept as he slipped his fingers between her legs. Sensation surged through Elyse as Jayden's fingers deftly maneuvered, prompting an involuntary gasp from her. "No, don't..." she protested. With a firm grip on her quivering frame, Jayden leaned in and nibbled her earlobe. His warm breath cascaded over her sensitive skin, intensifying her tremors.

"Why didn't you come to me sooner?" Jayden's voice held a note of frustration. "Elyse, I'm upset." His words puzzled her. Wasn't she the one who had been upset lately? Finding fault with such a minor issue and seeking to punish her left Elyse conflicted. She bit her lip, struggling not to moan. "It's your fault too. You should apologize first."

Did she truly expect an apology from him? Jayden arched an eyebrow. No one had ever compelled him to concede before. Moreover, everything he did, he did for her well-being. Why should he apologize? Was Elyse being ungrateful? He had devoted himself to her, tending to her needs every day. Yet she harbored lingering resentment toward him over trivial matters.

Jayden withdrew his hand and thrust it forcefully into her vagina, his tone chastising. "I've spoiled you too much." Unable to articulate a clear response, she only emitted a moan. She desperately wanted to question when he had spoiled her. He had given everything for her. How could he claim such a thing? She felt herself growing increasingly irritated with Jayden.

Jayden nipped at her shoulder, continuing. "Do you know your mistake? Will you continue to ignore me in the future?" Elyse was losing herself to Jayden's thrusts but remained steadfast in not yielding. Observing her reaction, Jayden chuckled softly. "You've become more adept at avoiding admitting your mistakes."

Jayden didn't pursue his line of questioning or demand an apology. Instead, he expressed his disapproval through rough thrusts. Finally, she collapsed onto Jayden's lap, overwhelmed. Her body still spasmed from their sex. If Jayden had not supported her, she might have collapsed to the ground.

After fulfilling his desires, Jayden gently wiped away her tears with his thumb, his voice low and husky, imbued with tenderness. "I'll help you resolve this issue. Don't worry." Elyse leaned against

Jayden's shoulder, taking a moment to regain her composure. She offered a slight nod in acquiescence.

On the second day, as she settled into her chair and adjusted her violin at the orchestra rehearsal, she overheard other members gossiping as they entered the room. "Did you hear about Mabel Lloyd's album? It got pulled from release." "That's the thing. No one knows. Her agency hasn't said a word about it. Why they pulled the album is a mystery." "I'm not sure. The album was pretty good, so it's puzzling why they would delete it." "The music itself was fine. But the lyrics, not so much. I listened to the instrumental version a couple of days ago and had a good night's sleep."

Elyse was stunned for a moment, realizing Jayden must have been behind it. He had promised to help her solve the problem, but she hadn't expected him to act so swiftly. Just one night had passed.

After some contemplation, she decided to send Jayden a message. Meanwhile, Jayden, engrossed in a meeting at Bayzee Group building, maintained a cold frown as he listened to the quarterly report from a manager. His phone buzzed suddenly, breaking the monotony.

Jayden, feeling bored, picked it up to find a message from Elyse, simply stating, "Thank you." Suppressing any visible reaction, Jayden replied with a brief "You're welcome." Then, Jayden lifted his gaze, his expression softening as he regarded the manager.

The manager, already sweating profusely, grew even more anxious upon noticing the shift in Jayden's demeanor. An hour later, the meeting concluded, and the senior executives swiftly exited the room. Jayden sat down slowly, twirling a pen in his hand.

"Mr. Owen, you have a video conference with overseas partners in ten minutes. Please return to your office," a woman's voice chimed in, her tone carrying a hint of seduction.

Jayden raised his head, fixing his gaze on the new secretary before him. "You're the new assistant. What's your name?"

"My name is Eva Prescott," she replied with a captivating smile.

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Jayden turned his gaze away from Eva, seemingly ignoring her. Unbeknownst to him, Eva saw this as an opportunity. Having faced numerous trials at Bayzee Group, she was determined to make a good impression in her new role with Jayden.

“Mr. Owen, what coffee would you like for the meeting later? I’ll prepare it for you,” she offered, intentionally exposing her cleavage as she inquired. She radiated confidence and was sure of her power to captivate any man. She was resolute in her determination to win over Jayden.

Jayden saw through her intentions. He abruptly left the meeting room, with Eva following closely behind. In the elevator, Jayden asked, “Did you recently graduate from college?”

Proudly, Eva confirmed, “Yes, I graduated from Princeton.” Jayden’s expression shifted, indicating a sudden understanding. He proceeded to his office and commenced a video conference with individuals overseas. Two hours later, the conference concluded.

Once Tobin, Jayden’s assistant, had completed his tasks, he returned to Jayden’s office to provide him with a report. After Tobin finished his report, Jayden gestured towards Eva and asked, “Who authorized her to handle your tasks?”

Tobin glanced at Eva, who looked bewildered, and replied honestly, “She’s an intern secretary. She excelled during her internship, so HR personnel assigned her to my tasks.” Jayden nodded and said, “I didn’t witness her excelling. Extend her internship.”

Eva flushed with embarrassment, standing silently to the side. Tobin grasped the situation immediately. He knew Eva must have done something to irk Jayden. After that, Tobin led Eva out of the office. With a stern tone, he asked, “Did you overstep any boundaries?”

Avoiding his gaze, Eva denied, “No, I didn’t.” She had just attempted to seduce Jayden once. Why was he so upset? Did such a man truly exist, impervious to her allure?

Tobin, having worked with Jayden for years and encountered many individuals like Eva, warned, “Stop deluding yourself. Provoking Mr. Owen will only lead to dire consequences.”

Eva maintained her confident smile, convinced that Tobin was just trying to intimidate her. Spending the morning with Jayden had solidified her belief that he was the epitome of the perfect husband: wealthy, handsome, and charming. Dreams of marrying such a man filled her thoughts.

“Tobin, do you know what type of woman Mr. Owen prefers?” she asked. Tobin lost his patience and yelled, “Just go back to your desk!” Startled by Tobin’s sudden outburst, Eva meekly complied, lowering her head as she hurried into the elevator.

As the elevator doors closed, she regained her composure and grumbled to herself, “Why does Tobin act so high and mighty as Mr. Owen’s assistant? Once I finish my internship, I’ll take his place.” Determined to work harder and win Jayden’s affection, she vowed to oust Tobin from his position and exact revenge for today’s humiliation.

Meanwhile, Tobin resumed his work at his desk. Upon receiving some news, he promptly rose and made his way to Jayden’s office. Upon entering, Tobin delivered the update directly. “I’ve been informed that Mabel’s new album has been removed from all online platforms. The sound bites from the short video are also being scrubbed.”

Acknowledging the information, Jayden instructed, “Order them to blacklist Mabel. Any media or TV station that continues to associate with her will face consequences.” Tobin, concerned, ventured, “But Mabel is your wife’s sister. Won’t banning Mabel completely affect her?”

Jayden reclined in his chair, his tone casual as he remarked, “She’s my wife. She’ll follow my lead.” Tobin was left speechless. After a brief silence, he exited the room.

Left alone, Jayden retrieved his phone and stared blankly at Elyse’s messages. Tobin’s words lingered in his mind, but he remained convinced of the lack of family affection between Elyse and Lanny. He couldn’t fathom Elyse being the daughter of Lanny and Glenda. Mabel, undoubtedly the offspring of Lanny and Glenda, bore a striking resemblance to her parents.

Meanwhile, Mabel roused from her hotel bed, preparing to freshen up before heading to the TV station for a new variety show appearance. Her latest album had soared to success, catapulting her back into the limelight. With newfound popularity, her schedule was booked solid for the next three months. She applied a facial mask and ate a sandwich, reveling in her triumph.

However, her reverie was interrupted when her assistant rushed in, wearing a worried expression. “Something terrible has happened.”

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Mabel's brow furrowed as she picked up her phone, silenced the music, and snapped, "Why are you shouting so early? Don't you have anything better to do?" Her assistant shrank back, eyes wide with fear. Mabel grabbed her glass and demanded, "Get me some milk."

The assistant, flustered, dropped her purse, grabbed the milk box, and quickly filled the glass. She then handed it to Mabel with trembling hands. Mabel enjoyed keeping her assistant busy. After a sip of milk, her mood improved, and she inquired calmly, "What's the fuss about?"

The assistant blurted out, "Mabel, they've cut you from the variety show!"

"What? Why?" Mabel exclaimed, accidentally spilling milk everywhere. "I don't know," the assistant stammered. "I asked, but they wouldn't tell me."

Mabel sat stunned as a sense of dread washed over her. After a moment of silence, she sighed and said, "It's okay. Let them cancel it. We have other plans. We don't need this."

"Right, we don't need this," the assistant agreed, smiling. Just then, the assistant's phone chimed. It was Aylin calling. Once she said hello, Aylin's questioning voice came through.

"Who on earth has Mabel angered? Why has her new album been removed from the internet? We can't find it anywhere."

The assistant glanced at Mabel with a panicked expression, unsure of what to say. Mabel overheard Aylin's words and thought she was joking. She stood up, grabbed the assistant's phone, and said sternly, "My album can't be deleted from the internet."

Aylin, furious, laughed dryly. "Humph. Check for yourself. Can you find your album? I've contacted the distributor. He said you crossed someone you shouldn't have, and your album has to be banned."

Mabel still didn't believe it. She searched online and discovered her album was indeed gone. There wasn't any news about it anywhere else either.

Before Mabel could respond, Aylin added, "I just got word that several media outlets are canceling their cooperation with you."

Mabel finally sensed something was wrong. She asked in fear, “Aylin, what’s really going on?”

Aylin sighed. “I’ll ask around. For now, stay put in the hotel. Some paparazzi have caught wind of this and are waiting for you nearby.”

After hanging up, Mabel was filled with fear. Seeing Mabel’s reaction, the assistant became even more terrified. Mabel often took out her anger on her, the mere assistant. In this situation, would Mabel go so far as to harm her?

Ignoring her assistant, Mabel focused on what Aylin had said. Who could she have crossed? Mabel couldn’t make sense of it.

The next morning, Mabel received a message from Aylin stating that her deals and endorsements were being canceled one after another. By the afternoon, she had no work left.

Mabel was on the verge of a breakdown. Her new album had brought her great success in the entertainment industry, but now it had all vanished. Shortly after, Aylin sent another message to Mabel. “You’ve upset someone, and now you’re banned across the internet.”

Mabel fell apart completely. She called Aylin, and as soon as the call connected, she shouted, “I didn’t offend anyone! I didn’t! There has to be a misunderstanding. I’m nice to everyone and don’t act superior anymore!”

Aylin sighed and replied, “I don’t know who you might have offended, but I suspect it has something to do with your sister, Elyse.”

“Elyse? Why?” Mabel asked, puzzled. “Who would benefit from deleting your album?” Aylin speculated.

Mabel slowly started to regain her composure. “Who else but Jayden could have blocked her on the Internet? Did Jayden do this to placate Elyse?”

Upon realizing the truth, Mabel couldn’t bear it. She hurled her phone to the floor, smashing its screen.

“Ah, Elyse, you bitch! How dare you do this to me!” she screamed, her eyes blazing with anger. If Elyse were there, Mabel would have torn her apart.

The assistant stood to the side, terrified. Mabel looked unhinged. The assistant worried that if she drew the lunatic’s attention, she could get hurt.

Mabel tugged at her hair and paced the room. Finally, with her hair disheveled, she turned to her assistant, saying, “Call Aylin again. I can’t let Elyse ruin my career. I have to reclaim what’s mine.”

The assistant meekly nodded and dialed Aylin’s number.

#### Chapter 274:

These days, Elyse spent most of her time rehearsing with the orchestra. As the designated concertmaster for their upcoming performance, she dedicated herself to intense practice sessions. Today, just as she was about to finish practicing, she received a call from Glenda urging her to come home.

Having not spoken to her for a significant period and currently entangled in a disagreement with Mabel, Elyse felt even less inclined to visit. She massaged her forehead wearily and chose her words with care, replying, “I’ve been swamped with work and haven’t had the chance to come back. If it’s something important, we can discuss it over the phone.”

Upon hearing Elyse’s hesitation, Glenda’s voice cracked with emotion. “Since you got married, it’s been ages. I miss you terribly. Please come home for dinner.”

This caught Elyse off guard. It was the first instance of Glenda expressing her longing to see her. This rare display of maternal affection touched Elyse, softening her initial reluctance. After a brief pause, she made up her mind to go. Glenda provided an address and instructed her to come there.

After ending the call, Elyse checked the location, which turned out to be a hotel. She surmised that they would be dining at its restaurant and didn’t dwell on it further.

She got into her car, directed the driver to the hotel, and phoned Driscoll to inform him she wouldn’t be joining him for dinner tonight. The driver glanced at the address, puzzled about why Elyse was heading to a hotel, but he drove there regardless.

Upon arriving, Elyse entered the hotel and located the exclusive dining room. Inside, she found Glenda sitting alone. Elyse placed her purse down and took a seat, casually inquiring, "Where's Dad?"

With a warm smile, Glenda reached out to hold Elyse's hand, her tone affectionate. "He's busy. Let's not bother him. It's been a long time since just the two of us had a chance to chat and eat together. I'm not even sure how you've been doing lately."

This was a new side of Glenda, one brimming with warmth and passion. Elyse was pleasantly surprised by this display of kindness, though she maintained a bit of caution.

"Why this sudden niceness?" Elyse asked, a hint of suspicion in her voice. "Is something wrong?"

Historically, Glenda had shown little affection for Elyse, usually favoring Mabel, which made this change in demeanor unsettling.

Glenda's expression hardened as she replied, "Really? How badly do you think I've treated you before?" She then placed a piece of chicken onto Elyse's plate, adding, "Since you got married and moved out, I've realized I need to be nicer to you."

Elyse smiled politely at the chicken on her plate, choosing to eat quietly. As she chewed, a numbing spicy sensation overwhelmed her taste buds. She quickly grabbed the water in front of her and downed it in one gulp.

"Do you not like the pepper chicken?" Glenda inquired, noticing Elyse's reaction.

"Mabel likes this dish. I don't," Elyse said, her smile fading.

The smile faded from Glenda's face as she added fish to Elyse's plate. "It's my fault. I haven't been the best mother. This fish is mild. You'll probably like it."

Elyse didn't object and ate what Glenda served her. This time, Glenda carefully avoided any spicy options and chose only mild dishes for her plate.



After finishing her meal, Elyse wiped the emotion from her face and asked stoically, “Mom, if there’s something you need, just say it. I’ll help however I can.”

Glenda masked her guilt. “There’s nothing I need. You’re overthinking it. I just missed you and wanted to share a meal.”

Elyse’s mouth twitched, her eyes brimming with sarcasm. Most of the dishes on the table were Mabel’s favorites, and few were to her liking. Glenda hardly ate, focusing instead on serving her.

Elyse suspected there was more to this dinner than her mother admitted. After all, Glenda and Lanny had betrayed her trust before.

“If there’s nothing else, and since I’ve finished eating, I’ll be leaving now,” she stood, reaching for her purse. But Glenda halted her, checking the time before speaking in a flustered tone, “It’s still early. Stay a bit longer and chat with me before you go.”

Reluctantly, Elyse paused. Seeing no way out, Glenda pleaded, “Just ten more minutes. Talk with me a little longer.”

Hearing this, Elyse sat down, though with clear reluctance.

“I’m going to the bathroom. I’ll be back soon,” Glenda said, grabbing her purse and quickly exiting the private room.

Left alone, Elyse remained seated, her emotions churning inside her. She deeply wished that Glenda’s affections were genuine. Yet, knowing Glenda as well as she did, Elyse sensed her mother’s motives weren’t pure. But the desire for even a fragment of maternal love was something Elyse yearned for deeply. Such a small measure of affection could bring her some solace.

But... Elyse clasped her hand over her heart, her expression etched with sadness and grief. However, even this scant amount of motherly love wasn’t enough to fill the void in her heart.

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After waiting in the private room for what felt like ages, there was still no sign of Glenda. Elyse went out to look for her, making her way down the corridor. Suddenly, Glenda rounded the corner and rushed towards her. Confused, Elyse asked, “Where have you been? What took you so long?”

Glenda dodged Elyse’s inquisitive gaze and muttered, “Oh, er, nothing.” Without bothering to come up with a decent excuse for her absence, she suddenly grabbed Elyse’s hand and dragged her into the elevator.

Elyse felt that something was off, so she tried to shake off Glenda’s hand, but this only served to make Glenda tighten her grip. Frowning, Elyse questioned, “Where are you taking me?”

“Somewhere we can talk alone,” wearing a fake smile, Glenda led Elyse out of the elevator when they made it to the seventh floor. Glenda unlocked one of the rooms with her key card and beckoned Elyse to come in. Elyse glanced around the empty room in suspicion and asked warily, “Mom, did you book a room just to talk with me?”

Glenda nodded. “Yes, I didn’t want anyone to interrupt us. Here, have some water. You must be thirsty.” She shoved the glass of water at Elyse, who hesitated for a moment.

Knowing that Glenda was never this nice to her, Elyse felt extremely wary. However, after mulling over things for a while, she figured that Glenda likely just wanted to ask her for help with Mabel’s issue. If Glenda wanted her help, then she couldn’t hurt her, right?

So she accepted the glass of water and took a sip. The second her lips touched the glass, Glenda’s eyes triumphed. Wearing a smug smile, she made Elyse sit in a chair.

Glenda then tried to strike up a conversation with Elyse as though she was a normal, loving mother. “How’re things at work? Is everything going well?”

Elyse smiled to herself bitterly. She was trending online because of her recent violin performances and had even been interviewed by the local TV news station. If Glenda actually cared about her, then she would’ve known about these things. Even after all this time, Glenda still only paid attention to Mabel.

In the end, Elyse could only force a smile and say, “I’m good, Mom. Everything’s going really well.”

Glenda asked a few more questions, and Elyse answered them one by one until she started to feel a bit dizzy. She shook her head in an attempt to stay alert, but her brain gradually started to wind down. She touched her forehead and asked in a slurred voice, “Did I not get enough sleep last night? I feel so sleepy.”

Seeing that, Glenda couldn’t help but grin. She stood up and led Elyse to the bed, saying, “Here, take a nap. Anyway, I’ve already paid for the room.”

At that moment, it dawned on Elyse that something was terribly wrong. However, she was too sleepy to figure out what it was exactly. It was like her brain was shutting down way too quickly. But why was this happening?

Suddenly, she thought about the glass of water she just had. The water must’ve been laced with some kind of drug. Desperate to stay awake, Elyse bit down on her lower lip. But the sleepiness overwhelmed her. She tried to shout, but it came out as a whimper, “Mom, did you drug me?”

Elyse figured it out. Glenda had drugged her. Sure enough, Glenda said with a sneer, “You ruined my daughter’s career. You owe her. I had to do something.”

Elyse’s heart sank. Her own mother was willing to hurt her for the sake of her sister’s career. At that moment, she really wanted to ask Glenda whether she was her biological daughter or not. Why else did Glenda only love Mabel?

But Elyse didn’t have the chance to ask. She felt like she had cotton in her mouth, and her eyelids felt as heavy as lead. Before she knew it, she was fast asleep in bed.

Seeing that her work was done here, Glenda took out her phone and called Mabel. Mabel was very excited when she received Glenda’s phone call. She couldn’t wait to ask, “Mom, did you make it? Did you get Elyse to fall asleep?”

Wearing a complacent smile on her face, Glenda said proudly, “Yes, she is fast asleep. Now onto the next step of our plan.”

“Mam, you’re the best! I love you so much,” Mabel gushed excitedly.

“You can leave the room now. The guy I picked will be there soon.”

“Okay, I’ll be right out.” After hanging up the phone, Glenda turned around to take one last look at the sleeping Elyse before leaving. Her expression turned vicious. “I raised you for decades, yet you ruined my daughter’s career. You bitch!”

Glenda sneered at Elyse and then left the room without looking back. Elyse lay in bed unmoving, a stray tear falling from her eye.

Meanwhile, in Jayden’s house, when he got home from work, he found that Elyse was nowhere to be seen. He asked Driscoll, “Where is Elyse?”

“She hasn’t come home yet. The driver did report to me that her mother treated her to dinner at a hotel, so she’s likely still there,” Driscoll replied.

“Glenda took her out to dinner in a hotel?” Loosening his collar, Jayden immediately realized that something was wrong. After thinking for a few seconds, he asked, “Is the driver still with them?”

Driscoll nodded. “Yes, he’s in the parking garage, waiting for Mrs. Owen’s call.”

Jayden’s expression darkened. “Tell him to go and find Elyse right now. Make sure he sees her with his own eyes before reporting back to me.”

Driscoll arched his eyebrows in surprise. “Are you worried that her mother did something to her?”

Jayden nodded. Knowing Glenda, she’d never treat Elyse to dinner. Driscoll was a little confused. “But it’s normal for a mother to treat her daughter to dinner, right?”

Jayden didn’t answer. It was indeed normal for any mother and daughter to do so. But what if Glenda only had one daughter, Mabel?

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Jayden had long suspected that Glenda wasn’t Elyse’s biological mother. Otherwise, he couldn’t understand why Lanny and Glenda had always treated Elyse so poorly. Even his self-centered

mother, who only acted in ways that benefited herself, would occasionally show concern for him due to their familial bond, though her care disgusted him.

Jayden's frown deepened. He had a bad feeling about this. After all, Glenda clearly didn't love Elyse, so why would she suddenly invite her to meet up at a hotel?

Jayden ordered in a serious tone, "Have my car prepared. I'll go look for her myself."

Driscoll was confused, but he didn't dare to question his boss. Without hesitation, he pulled out his phone and contacted another driver. Soon, Jayden was in his car, speeding towards the hotel.

On the way, he was sick with worry, not daring to imagine what terrible things Glenda would do to Elyse. Jayden screeched to a halt in front of the hotel and rushed upstairs, only to find Elyse's driver in a fistfight with a fat, middle-aged man.

Now he knew that his hunch about Glenda was true. Teeth gritted, Jayden hurried into the room and discovered Elyse lying motionless in bed. Seeing her in that state triggered something in his mind, and all sense of rationality vanished.

Closing his eyes, Jayden loosened his collar and slowly strode towards the middle-aged man. The driver, though not as physically strong as him, put up a valiant fight. However, the middle-aged man managed to land a few more punches than him.

Retreating a step back, the driver spat out a mouthful of blood and called to Jayden, "Sir, it's him. Mrs. Owen's mother hired this man to rape Mrs. Owen."

The middle-aged man, who hadn't grasped the gravity of the situation, still raised his leg to kick the driver in the gut. But the next moment, he suddenly found himself sprawled on the floor because Jayden had kicked him first.

"Did you touch her?" Jayden asked in a bone-chilling voice. His bloodlust permeated the corridor. With a forceful step, his leather shoe pressed down on the man's leg, causing the latter to shriek in pain.

The man had no idea that he had offended someone he couldn't afford to offend. He roared through his tears, "Fuck you! Do you know who I am? I'm a manager at Universal Records! How dare you hit me! You're a dead man, asshole!"

“The manager of Universal Records, huh?” A cruel smile tugged at the corners of Jayden’s lips. Eyes narrowed, he exerted more strength on his foot.

“Argh, my leg!” The man’s screams echoed across the hotel corridor. After wailing for a few more seconds, he blacked out.

Having witnessed this cruel scene, the driver’s legs went limp, and he had to support himself against the wall to stay upright. Glancing at the middle-aged man’s mangled leg, he almost vomited on the spot. Jayden had practically shattered the man’s leg.

The driver had heard stories about Jayden’s ruthlessness, but he had never witnessed it firsthand. Now he knew that all those rumors surrounding his boss were true. The driver swallowed hard and spoke gingerly, reporting, “Sir, when I arrived, I happened to catch Mrs. Owen’s mother showing him into the room. She wanted that man to rape your wife and take some scandalous photos.”

Jayden didn’t reply. He propped the tip of his leather shoe under the man’s chin and raised his head, studying his face carefully. Then he returned to the room. Elyse was still fast asleep, thanks to the water laced with sleeping pills; she had no idea what Jayden had just done for her.

Jayden watched her sleeping figure for a long time. Finally, he scooped her up into his arms and carried her out of the hotel room. At the door, Jayden told the trembling driver, “I’ll send Tobin to deal with the aftermath. You can leave once he gets here.”

The driver nodded respectfully, though he couldn’t stop his body from shaking. Jayden carefully laid Elyse into the backseat of his car and then drove her back home, where Driscoll and the family doctor were waiting anxiously.

The doctor gave Elyse a general checkup and then announced, “She has overdosed on sleeping pills. While it’s not lethal, I’m afraid she won’t wake up until after tomorrow.”

Jayden refused to accept this. In an ice-cold voice, he ordered, “Try to get her to wake up sooner.”

Feeling the abrupt change in temperature, the family doctor broke into a cold sweat. He immediately did what he could to care for Elyse and then rushed out of the house.

Now alone with the sleeping Elyse, Jayden quietly tucked her in and made sure she was comfortable. Then he sent Tobin a text. Tobin, who had just finished cleaning up at the hotel, glanced at his phone and saw Jayden's text.

Once he was sure that no one knew that Jayden wasn't actually disabled, Tobin went straight to Lanny's residence. Lanny was excited but confused, wondering why Jayden's assistant suddenly showed up at his doorstep.

Lanny ushered Tobin into the living room and said respectfully, "Mr. Carman, it's a great honor to have you in my house. How may I help you?"

Tobin scanned the living room, but when he saw that the person he was looking for was absent, he redirected his gaze at Lanny and said, "Mr. Owen tasked me with delivering a message. He's the one responsible for banning Mabel Lloyd from show business and pulling out her new album. If your wife and Mabel are dissatisfied, they should address their concerns directly with him rather than taking action against Mrs. Owen."

Lanny was baffled. He had been so busy over the past few days that he had no idea what had happened. But before he could ask about what was going on, Tobin added, "Also, Mr. Owen's demanding an apology from your wife and daughter, Mabel."

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Tobin decisively left after conveying the messages. Lanny, bewildered and unsure of what had transpired, gleaned from Tobin's words that Glenda and Mabel were likely involved in something unsavory behind his back, and it had upset Jayden. He remembered that upon his return home, Glenda was nowhere to be seen. The butler informed him she had locked herself in her bedroom and was not responding to anyone.

With a scowl, he marched upstairs. Reaching the bedroom door, he found it locked from the inside. He knocked impatiently, calling out, "Open the door. Hurry!"

After a long hesitation, Glenda opened the door. As Lanny entered, he immediately felt something was off with her. His intense gaze made her uncomfortable. She avoided eye contact and questioned anxiously, "What's up? Who has just been here?"

Lanny stared unwaveringly and demanded, "Have you and Mabel been up to something?"

Glenda snapped back loudly, “What could we possibly do? Stop those baseless accusations!”

“Baseless? Fine, I’ll drop it,” Lanny retorted. “But take Mabel and apologize to Jayden Owen and Elyse. I want nothing to do with it. I won’t be joining you.” With those words, he snorted dismissively and turned to leave.

Glenda, gripped by panic, quickly stopped him. “Why would we need to apologize?” she asked urgently.

Lanny snorted again, his frustration evident. “How should I know? It’s not my problem. Whether you go or not is up to you.”

“No way! You must help us,” Glenda insisted, her composure slipping as she grappled with the swift unraveling of her plan.

Lanny shook off her hand and snapped, “What on earth did you and Mabel do? Out with it!”

After a moment’s hesitation, Glenda confessed the scheme Mabel had concocted. Lanny exploded upon hearing it. “Did you actually help Mabel set up Elyse?”

Glenda, now visibly embarrassed, merely grunted in response.

“You must be tired of living a peaceful life; you’re just asking for trouble, aren’t you?” Lanny shouted. “Do you realize that Elyse’s husband is Jayden Owen? Even though he’s disabled, he’s not someone you can afford to cross.”

After cooling down, Glenda understood the gravity of her mistake in aiding Mabel against Elyse. The potential repercussions of their plan succeeding terrified her. Trembling, she looked at Lanny and pleaded, “Honey, I was terribly wrong. I promise never to get involved in such things with Mabel again. What should we do now?”

Gritting his teeth in frustration, Lanny felt an urge to lash out. He roared, “What should you do? Take Mabel and go apologize to Elyse. Mabel didn’t come home with me. I don’t know where she is,” Glenda replied, her guilt deepening. She hadn’t seen Mabel since she accepted the sleeping pills from her. On her way home, she tried calling Mabel, but her calls went unanswered.



Seething, Lanny snapped, “She must be scared and ran off. How typical. She always causes us trouble.”

Glenda’s fear escalated, realizing the gravity of the situation now that Mabel had disappeared. Clutching Lanny’s hand, she asked, “Honey, what should we do? Is Mabel safe on her own?”

“Still worried about her? You should be more concerned about yourself,” Lanny retorted sharply. “She’s run off and left you to face the music. Do you think Jayden will just let this slide after you tried to set up Elyse?” He sneered, driving home the severity of their predicament.

It dawned on Glenda that she seemed to be the sole executor of their plan against Elyse while Mabel had done nothing on her own. Realizing she might have been manipulated by her own daughter, Glenda felt both upset and heartbroken.

Seeing her distress, Lanny mocked, “I always told you to stop spoiling her. Looks like you finally see I was right.”

Wounded but resolute, Glenda donned her jacket and followed Lanny out, heading towards Jayden’s house. As they approached the doorstep of Jayden’s villa, Driscoll spotted them and inquired, “Where is Mabel Lloyd?”

Lanny forced a flattering smile. “We don’t know where she’s gone and haven’t been able to contact her. Could you please inform Mr. Owen that we’re here to apologize on behalf of our daughter?”

Glenda nodded in agreement beside him. Driscoll gave them a piercing look before retreating back into the villa. He returned shortly after and conveyed, “Mr. Owen says you can apologize when his wife is awake. Furthermore, he insists that Mabel Lloyd must be present. Without her, he cannot assure that there won’t be complications with future projects involving your family.”

Lanny’s face paled at the mention of potential repercussions to his business interests, which he valued above almost everything else. Suddenly, his frustration boiled over, and he lashed out physically at Glenda, striking her across the face. “Call her now. Or I swear I’ll divorce you,” he barked furiously.

Chapter 278:

In the morning, Elyse awoke feeling dizzy and weak. “Are you alright?” Jayden asked, cradling her in his arms.

Confused, Elyse looked around. She recalled being in a hotel room the day before. Suddenly, the memories flooded back. She seized Jayden’s hand, pain evident in her eyes. “Was I...?” She remembered Glenda tricking her into a hotel room and drugging her, likely arranging for someone to assault her. Elyse had not informed Jayden of her plans to meet Glenda. Even if Jayden had intervened, she feared it might have been too late. Tears streamed down her face as she contemplated the events, her hatred for Glenda growing intense.

Jayden tenderly lifted her chin and kissed her forehead. “You’re fine,” he soothed. “I was right here with you. Nobody could harm you.”

Elyse broke down, sobbing uncontrollably. She thought he was merely saying it to comfort her. Jayden sighed deeply and wrapped her more tightly in his arms, trying to ease her distress. Elyse felt tainted and struggled fiercely, but Jayden’s presence grew steadier beside her. Once her tears subsided and exhaustion set in, she quieted down.

Jayden looked at her earnestly and stated in a serious tone, “You are my wife. Have I ever lied to you?”

“You are not lying,” Elyse, wiping her tears away, asked hesitantly, “Did you get there in time?”

Jayden nodded, his expression solemn as he recounted what had occurred after he arrived at the hotel. He omitted the part about breaking the man’s leg. After a brief pause, he said, “There’s something else you need to address.”

Elyse sniffled, regaining her composure, and asked, “What is it?”

“Your parents have been waiting outside the villa all night, hoping for your forgiveness,” Jayden mentioned offhandedly.

Elyse was puzzled. “They stood there all night? Why?” Before she could finish, Jayden interjected in a grave voice, “Glenda planned to send you to a man known for his promiscuity. He carries an STD. If he had succeeded, you might have been infected.”

“How could she?” Elyse murmured, her mind reeling. She was not naive. Before falling asleep, she had suspected Glenda’s scheme and possibly Mabel’s involvement. Yet, she had never imagined that her mother would be so malevolent as to want her not only assaulted but also exposed to a man carrying a sexually transmitted disease.

“Why? Weren’t she and Mabel both Glenda’s daughters?”

Her emotions surged again even though she had just found some calm. After lying in bed for a long time, she rose with a pale face, draped a coat over her shoulders, and walked out of the room. Jayden, observing her, recognized that she was forcing herself to appear strong. Together, they descended to the living room where Driscoll approached and announced, “Breakfast is ready.”

Elyse shook her head. “Please let my parents... I mean, let them both come in,” she requested. Driscoll nodded and went to fetch Lanny and Glenda. The two had spent the entire night outside the villa and were visibly exhausted. Upon hearing that Elyse was awake, they entered the living room wearily.

Upon seeing Elyse, Lanny feigned tears and exclaimed, “Sweetheart, are you okay? I’ve been so worried about you all night, terrified that something terrible might happen.”

Elyse regarded him with a mix of emotions. She then turned to Glenda, who seemed to be trying to make herself invisible. “Mom, don’t you have anything to say to me?” she asked softly, her voice carrying a weight of expectation and hurt. “Say it quickly,” Lanny urged, well aware of the stakes. If Elyse couldn’t forgive them, Jayden wouldn’t let them off easily.

Glenda guiltily met Elyse’s fragile gaze and stammered, “It’s my fault. C-can you forgive me?”

Elyse managed a strained smile and asked, “Mom, am I really your daughter?”

Glenda offered a placating smile. “Of course you are. I carried you in my womb for nine months. How could you not be my daughter?”

“Then why did you do this to me? You sent me to the bed of a man with an STD. What kind of mother does that to her own daughter?” Her voice was filled with pain and sorrow. “Sometimes I wonder if I’m really your daughter.”

“Don’t be silly. You are our daughter. My own flesh and blood,” Lanny interjected, his anxiety peaking. He scolded her sharply, “Your mother may have made a mistake, but you can’t doubt that we are your parents.”

Feeling the weight of Jayden’s scrutinizing gaze, Glenda felt the pressure mount and quickly added, “Your father is right. I made a mistake. But questioning our relationship as family is out of line.”

Elyse could barely stand steady. Was she not even allowed to doubt them? If these were truly her parents, why did she feel such a void where their love should be? The ache within her was unbearable.

Jayden embraced Elyse tenderly, offering her support against his chest. He cast a glance at Lanny and Glenda before confronting them. “So why’d you hurt my wife? Give me a good reason, or I’ll make your company go bankrupt.”

At Jayden’s words, Lanny shot a warning glare at Glenda, silently urging her to come clean. Knowing the consequences of deception, Glenda had no choice but to spill the truth. “Yesterday, Mabel came to me alleging that Elyse envied her success and requested Jayden to blacklist her in the industry, leading to the destruction of her career. Mabel sought my assistance in retaliating against Elyse.”

After a brief pause, she confessed further. “She outlined the plan meticulously. I was to take Elyse out to dinner, drug her, then arrange for her to be with another man. Mabel would have threatened Jayden with scandalous photos to lift the blacklist.”

Chapter 279:

Jayden sneered coldly after hearing Glenda’s full confession. As he stroked Elyse’s soft hair, his eyes gleamed with chilling intent. “If your plan had succeeded, do you think I would have lifted the ban or spared your lives?” he said icily.

Glenda shivered under the weight of Jayden’s formidable presence. Her legs trembled, and within seconds, her knees buckled, forcing her to sit on the floor. Lanny, too, was terrified, recognizing the seriousness in Jayden’s tone. In desperation, he fell to his knees and pleaded, “Mr. Owen, please spare us. The blame lies with Mabel. We... we had no part in this.”

The smile on Jayden's face widened, but his eyes remained harsh, filled with a palpable threat. He couldn't help but think back to the previous day, thankful for his suspicions that had prevented Glenda from hurting Elyse. The thought of what might have happened had haunted him all night. He was determined to shield Elyse from any harm.

"You want to live? I might allow that," Jayden said, his voice eerily calm as he forced a twisted smile. "Bring Mabel here to apologize in person, and then I might consider sparing your lives."

Elyse bit her lip, wanting to interject, but Jayden quickly covered her mouth. She looked up at him, her eyes blinking innocently and filled with confusion. He held her closer, surmising that in her naive way, she might have been about to plead for her family's mercy. But he couldn't stand the thought of it.

Unaware of his turmoil, Elyse would have defended her position had she known. Despite her naivety, she would never have pleaded for those who had sought to harm her, even if they were her family. What truly surprised her was the depth of Jayden's protectiveness. Though he seldom expressed his feelings openly, it was clear to her now that he cared deeply for her.

Upon hearing Jayden's conditional offer of mercy, Lanny immediately responded with relief. "Thank you, Mr. Owen. You are so generous. I promise to bring Mabel to you and have her apologize."

Glenda remained silent, her thoughts turbulent. She had never truly loved Elyse, and the idea that her own daughter, Mabel, might have to apologize to her was unsettling. She wasn't sure if Mabel would agree to such a thing; she herself found it difficult to stomach. But in their current predicament, she recognized they had little choice.

Jayden, resolute and authoritative, set the terms. "Tie her up and bring her to me within three days," he said firmly, having set a deadline.

Lanny agreed quickly, and with that, he hurried Glenda out of the villa. He feared that if they lingered, Jayden might change his mind and decide to end their lives right there. Once safely inside their car, both exhaled deeply, relieved to have escaped the intense atmosphere.

Glenda, looking uneasy, asked, "Do we really have to tie up Mabel and deliver her to Jayden? I don't think it will end well for her. Jayden is clearly not someone to be trifled with."

“Now you realize it’s foolish to mess with Jayden. I’ve been telling you not to provoke him, but you wouldn’t listen,” Lanny retorted sharply as he turned the steering wheel. “I didn’t have to be part of this mess. It’s all your fault. Mabel’s out of her right mind, and so are you,” he added angrily.

Feeling aggrieved, Glenda protested, “My daughter has been wronged. Shouldn’t I stand by her? You never care about her.”

“If you care so much, go deal with it yourself. I’m done,” Lanny snapped, his patience worn thin.

Glenda’s heart sank, fearing he might actually sit by and do nothing. The thought of facing Jayden alone terrified her. She had always heard about Jayden’s fiery temper, but she hadn’t expected him to be potentially lethal.

After escorting Lanny and Glenda off the premises, Driscoll returned to the villa. Noticing Elyse’s distressed demeanor, he offered words of reassurance. “Mrs. Owen, please don’t worry. Mr. Owen is here. He won’t let anything happen to you.”

After a prolonged silence, Elyse nodded and attempted a smile. “I’m hungry. I want to eat breakfast.”

Jayden noticed her forced smile and reached out, pinching her cheek, his tone uncharacteristically harsh. “If you don’t want to smile, then don’t. A forced smile looks terrible.”

“Don’t touch me if you think my smile is ugly,” Elyse retorted, brushing away his hand and pouting.

“You only act tough with me,” Jayden said, half annoyed, half amused. She only ever dared to show her defiant side to him. She was truly only assertive with those who cared about her deeply, while she tended to be too accommodating with everyone else.

In response, Jayden deliberately pinched both her cheeks this time. “Don’t touch me. I’m upset now,” Elyse protested, her voice tinged with unhappiness.

Seeing her on the verge of tears, Jayden softened and pulled her into his arms. “You’re upset again. I was defending you, wasn’t I? I’ll make those who upset you kneel and apologize,” he said, trying to console her.

## Chapter 280:

Elyse understood the source of her unhappiness: her parents didn't love her. They only agreed to apologize because of Jayden's insistence. Without Jayden, they wouldn't have cared. They could have even blamed her if she had been assaulted by that man. She lowered her gaze and rested her head on Jayden's chest, listening to the steady rhythm of his heartbeat. Could she really depend on Jayden?

Jayden wrapped her in a hug, but his concerns about her parents only grew stronger. Was Elyse truly their daughter? And if she wasn't their biological child, where were her real parents? Jayden couldn't shake thoughts of that elderly woman who seemed to hold many secrets. If only her memory wasn't gone.

In a suburban building, Mabel climbed out of bed and turned on her phone. Seeing over a hundred missed calls from Lanny and Glenda, she felt a surge of irritation. After reading Glenda's messages, she understood Jayden planned to seek justice for Elyse and demand an apology from her. Mabel scoffed in frustration. Her career was in shambles, she was blacklisted, and they expected her to apologize to that woman. Dream on. Elyse was the one who had to apologize to her.

Grabbing a backup phone, she dialed Kaelyn. Kaelyn picked up cheerfully. "Calling this early. Did the plan work?"

"Not at all," Mabel grumbled. "Elyse is still untouched, and they're forcing me to apologize to her."

Kaelyn's cheerful tone vanished. "Who's making you apologize?"

"Jayden Owen, obviously. Who else but him," Mabel muttered, her voice tinged with gloom. With a scoff, she added, "He's just a cripple." Disgust seeped through her tone.

Kaelyn pressed, "Does Jayden know everything? Did you really mess up the plan? I told you to ensure she was taken to a remote hotel, but you simply wouldn't listen."

"I didn't mess up the plan. I have no clue how Jayden found out," Mabel frowned, annoyed. "I brought the guy you hired to the hotel room then left. My phone was only on briefly, so why am I getting blamed?"

Kaelyn stayed silent, knowing how serious the situation was. She had been the one to hatch the entire plan, manipulating Mabel into taking indecent photos of Elyse and that creepy guy, hoping to blackmail Jayden.

The goal was to make Jayden so desperate to save face that he'd meet Mabel's demands and lift the ban. But Mabel hadn't realized Kaelyn's true motive was to ruin Elyse's reputation so thoroughly that Theo would ditch her, finally recognizing Kaelyn's value.

Kaelyn wanted to destroy Elyse, but she hadn't expected Mabel to bungle such a golden opportunity. Worse still, Jayden was now aware. But Kaelyn was relieved that Jayden still hadn't figured out her involvement, assuming Mabel was the mastermind behind the whole thing.

A sly glimmer crossed Kaelyn's eyes as she said, "Our plans failed, and the ban's still in place. You'll never make it as a singer now."

Mabel fumed, infuriated. She had seen the comments online with her fans demanding an explanation from the company about why such beautiful songs had been deleted. She felt frustrated that her company hadn't supported her and instead let the rumors spread unchecked.

"What am I supposed to do?" she said impatiently. "If Elyse doesn't step in, Jayden won't lift the ban, and it'll ruin my life."

Kaelyn smiled softly. "There's another option."

Mabel looked confused. "What is it?"

"You could post online that your original songs were removed by the agency because of Elyse," Kaelyn suggested gently. "Say that the agency chose to trust her over you and banned you, causing you to lose everything."

Mabel hesitated. She had already talked to Aylin about this, but Aylin had completely dismissed the idea.

"But my agent won't let me," she said uneasily.



Kaelyn rolled her eyes. “What are you so afraid of? Didn’t you say Elyse can’t find any evidence? If that’s the case, then why not go for it? Or are you willing to watch your career fall apart?”

Mabel gritted her teeth, unwilling to give up. She had already made her comeback in showbiz and was nearing her prime. But Elyse and Jayden had ruined her career. How much did Elyse hate seeing her succeed?