

Bound love 341

Chapter 341:

Lanny gave a wry smile and sarcastically asked, "Why would it be impossible?"

Glenda was taken aback, unsure of her disbelief. "Free at 0700."

Heaving a deep sigh, Lanny spoke in a low tone. "Jayden must be harboring a grudge because we chose not to save Elyse. He's been bottling up his anger all this time." After a pause, he added, "I think he wants to punish Mabel himself. But after we confronted him yesterday, he promised to send her back. Yet he didn't want Mabel to have an easy life, so he had her arrested at the police station."

Glenda was furious. "He is insane! We're supposed to be family. How could he do this to us? And Elyse too! Can't she see that Mabel has admitted her mistakes and shown regret?"

Lanny scoffed. "Forget it. I believe the charges against Mabel are fabricated. She'll be released in a few days. Are those accusations even believable? It's absurd."

Glenda turned away, her face shadowed, falling into silence. She appeared composed, but inside, she was anything but calm. She alone knew the charges were accurate. Mabel had indeed been involved with drugs and other criminal activities. She believed that Lanny, who was unaware of the truth, wouldn't take the situation with Mabel seriously. Now she could only rely on herself to secure Mabel's release.

Reflecting on this, Glenda felt a deep sadness. Mabel had only her to rely on. Lanny had planned to visit Mabel with Glenda, warning Mabel that she should stay calm in the police station and not stir any trouble, as she would be released soon. However, their visit was denied by the police that day. Disheartened, Lanny sighed deeply and said, "Let's go home. She'll be out when it's time."

Glenda, not daring to argue, silently followed him, clutching her purse.

Just then, a woman clad in elegant attire entered the police station. Removing her sunglasses, she approached a passing officer and inquired, "Is Mabel Lloyd detained here?"

“Yes, who are you?” the officer turned and asked.

“I’m Mabel’s agent, Aylin Watts.” Pulling several documents from her purse, she explained, “Mabel owes our agency eighty million. We lost contact with her previously. I’ve come to collect the debt now that I’ve learned she’s here.”

The mention of eighty million left the officer stunned. He halted Lanny and Glenda, who were just about to leave, and said with a complex look, “There’s someone here for your daughter. You are Mabel’s parents; you should be informed.”

Before Lanny could grasp the situation, Aylin approached, handing him the contracts. “Hello, I’m Aylin, Mabel’s agent. She breached her contract and owes our company, along with several others, a total of eighty million in damages,” she explained courteously.

Lanny’s expression twitched. Ever since he heard eighty million, he hadn’t thought of Aylin’s approach as polite. He saw her more as a bandit coming to strip him of his fortune. “Eighty million? There must be some mistake!” he exclaimed, brushing her hand aside and refusing to look at the contracts.

Aylin smiled. “I’m a professional agent. I assure you there’s no error. I understand eighty million is a lot. As Mabel’s parents, it’s natural for you to digest the news.”

Lanny was clearly upset. “I don’t owe you eighty million. Go find whoever does!”

With a patient smile, Aylin explained, “Mabel has owed this money for quite some time and has even blocked my number. If you’re unwilling to settle her debt, I’ll have no choice but to sue her.”

Lanny scoffed. “Go ahead and sue her then. I’m not paying you anything. I don’t have the money anyway.” With those final words, he turned and walked away.

Aylin wasn’t shocked. Not everyone could muster eighty million. She sighed quietly to herself, contemplating her next steps. Suing Mabel seemed inevitable, but that raised a question: when would she actually see the money?

While Lanny had departed, Glenda lingered, her voice tinged with embarrassment. “Aylin, if I manage to pay the eighty million, would you refrain from suing Mabel?”

Aylin nodded. “Of course. Our company is reasonable. If the penalty is paid, we won’t pursue the matter further.”

Glenda wrung her hands nervously. “Could you give me some time? I will find a way to pay the money.”

Aylin assessed her with a critical eye. To her, Glenda appeared to be just an ordinary housewife. If Mabel’s wealthy father wouldn’t pay, what chance was there that Glenda could?

Despite her doubts, Aylin maintained her professional demeanor and replied with a smile, “Okay, Mrs. Lloyd. I’ll give you that opportunity.”

Chapter 342:

After spending the entire day with Elyse, Morgan and Tracy were getting ready to leave. Elyse escorted them to the door, her tone wistful as she said, “Feel free to come by anytime when you’re free.”

Tracy responded with a playful twinkle in her eye, “The food here is too good. If I end up gaining weight and can’t act anymore, I’ll just move in and have you provide for me.”

Elyse laughed, “Alright, come live with me then. We’ll have delicious meals every day.”

Tracy smiled, satisfied, “I won’t worry about not landing roles anymore. If I ever run out of money, I’ll just come live with you.”

While they were chatting, Jayden and Taylor joined them. Elyse was surprised to learn of Taylor’s departure. “Are you leaving too? I was hoping you’d stay for dinner.”

Taylor gave a smile and a look towards Jayden. “No, I better not. Staying for dinner might just upset someone.”

Elyse, giving Jayden a meaningful glance, insisted, “Ignore him. You should stay and join us. Driscoll mentioned there’s something special cooking in the kitchen today.”

However, Taylor declined politely, “Thanks, but I’m swamped with work today. I’ll make sure to join you for dinner next time.”

Jayden’s face darkened as he noticed his wife’s disappointment at another man’s departure. “He shouldn’t be staying for dinner. Just let him go.”

Taylor remained calm, his smile broadening at Jayden. He then turned to Elyse, waving as he said, “I really have to go now. See you next time.”

As he started to walk away, a thought struck Taylor, and he turned to Tracy. Gesturing with a crooked finger, he suggested, “Come with me.”

Tracy hesitated, not recognizing Taylor at first. After a closer inspection, her expression shifted to shock as she pointed at him, seemingly remembering who he was. “But why does Taylor want her to come along? Did he have something important to discuss with her?”

Tracy was wary of Taylor. She knew him to be cunning, a stark contrast to Elyse’s favorable view of him. Worried about being tricked, she politely declined, “I don’t think it’s necessary.”

Yet, Taylor ignored her refusal, grabbed her collar, and led her away.

Watching this, Morgan asked, “Are they an item?”

Elyse shook her head, “No, they’re just friends.”

Morgan nodded towards Elyse and said, “Thank you, Elyse. Next time, I’d love to hear you play the violin.”

“You can come to me whenever you feel like it,” Elyse responded with a warm smile, pulling out her phone.

Morgan responded with a sincere smile and turned to Jayden, expressing her gratitude. “Thank you for your hospitality today.”

Jayden remained quiet, offering only a vague nod in response.

Once Morgan had left, Elyse finally voiced the question that had been troubling her. “Why did Taylor come? Did you really owe him money?”

Jayden’s brow creased as he asked, “Is that what he told you?”

“Yes, how much do you owe? Can we manage to pay it off?”

“It’s not a large amount. Just for a cruise,” Jayden replied casually, though Elyse was too shocked to react immediately.

After a moment to collect herself, she asked, “How much does a cruise cost? Ten million dollars? Twenty million?”

Jayden shrugged, trying to dismiss her concerns. “Don’t worry about it too much. I’ve taken care of it. You don’t need to be concerned.”

Elyse was still puzzled. “How did you handle it?”

Leaning back and resting his chin on his hand, Jayden said in a low tone, “Want to know? You can try guessing.”

Elyse playfully punched Jayden’s arm, exclaiming, “No!”

Tracy quietly followed Taylor out of the villa and got into his car, both sitting in silence during the drive. Upon arriving at her destination, Tracy thanked him, her curiosity piqued. “What was it you wanted to talk about?”

Taylor raised an eyebrow and replied, “Oh, I almost forgot. I just wanted to warn you that that asshole might decide to pay you a visit soon.”

Tracy’s face turned pale at the thought. “That’s impossible. He won’t come looking for me. I have nothing to do with him.”

Taylor's face remained expressionless. "He probably doesn't see it that way. Men can be more possessive than you might think."

Chapter 343:

Upon returning to the living room, Jayden felt a pang of hunger. Engrossed in discussions about cooperation with Taylor, he had forgotten all about lunch. Glancing over at Elyse, who was absorbed in a jigsaw puzzle, Jayden turned to Driscoll and requested, "Could you prepare something to eat, please?"

With a nod, Driscoll headed to the kitchen to make arrangements. Turning his attention back to Elyse, Jayden gently prodded, "Join me for a bite."

"I'm quite full, actually. Not in the mood for anything until dinner," Elyse replied without missing a beat.

Jayden noticed Elyse's slightly rounded belly and reached out to touch it. "Your belly looks different today, not as flat as usual."

Elyse swatted away Jayden's hand, retorting, "My belly's not big. Mind your words."

Perplexed, Jayden wondered when he had implied she was overweight. He merely thought her rounded belly was endearing, akin to a cute balloon. Attempting to clarify, Jayden said, "I didn't mean you're fat. Just noticed your belly's a bit round."

Elyse grew even more frustrated. "Was he seriously calling her fat? Who gave him the right?"

"You're so aggravating. I don't want to talk to you anymore," Elyse snapped, making a move to leave for upstairs.

Though confused by Elyse's reaction, Jayden gently pulled her back, urging her to continue the puzzle. Just then, Driscoll arrived with the food, his mood lifting at the sight of the couple engaged in playful banter.

Jayden settled at the table, dining while thoughts of Elyse lingered. Despite her declaration of annoyance at him, he couldn't shake the feeling that it was just a facade. Contemplating this, Jayden

couldn't resist poking Elyse's shoulder while she was in deep concentration on the jigsaw puzzle. She shrugged her shoulder in response, clearly indicating her resistance.

Jayden swiftly polished off the soup in one gulp before devouring the rest of his meal in just a few bites. With a subtle gesture, he indicated to Driscoll to clear away the empty bowl. Driscoll could discern from the discontent etched on Jayden's face that his anger had resurfaced once more.

Driscoll shook his head in amusement, unable to help but wonder when the couple would outgrow their childish antics. Sitting beside Elyse, Jayden observed her with quiet patience as she worked on the jigsaw puzzle. A single piece lay forgotten at her elbow, unnoticed by her.

Jayden deftly retrieved the piece, concealing it within his palm. The puzzle, sent by Tracy, featured a modest picture with straightforward content. Elyse deftly assembled it, her hands moving swiftly until she reached the final moments, only to realize one piece was absent.

Despite her diligent search, the missing piece eluded her grasp. Frustration crept into her features, and she couldn't help but turn to Jayden. "Have you seen my puzzle piece?"

Jayden met her gaze with an innocent expression, gesturing towards the almost completed puzzle on the table. Elyse's finger pointed to the vacant spot. "I'm referring to the one that's missing."

Jayden shook his head with practiced innocence. "I haven't seen it. But if you beg me, I might help you look for it."

Suspicion flickered in Elyse's eyes as she sensed Jayden's evasiveness. She narrowed her gaze, confronting him. "You took it, didn't you? Give it back to me."

Jayden shook his head. "No, I swear I didn't."

Sensing that the puzzle piece might indeed be with Jayden, Elyse swiftly moved to search for it, propelled by sudden determination. Upon closer inspection, she noticed that Jayden had kept his left hand tightly closed. Without hesitation, she seized his hand, her fingers working to pry it open.

Despite her persistent efforts, Jayden's grasp remained steadfast until eventually, Elyse found herself enveloped in his embrace. Jayden held her gently but firmly, drawing her close as he spoke with tender sincerity. "You want the puzzle piece, and I understand. But know this, my dear: its

return hinges upon the sweet confession of your affection for me and the vow that you cannot fathom a future without my presence beside you.”

Elyse’s response was immediate and resolute, escaping her lips with unwavering clarity. “No.”

Jayden gritted his teeth. “Elyse, do you truly stand by what you’ve just spoken? If that’s your stance, you’ll regret your decision.”

Elyse’s emotions were a complex interplay of surprise and uncertainty. She couldn’t help but wonder whether Jayden cared about a seemingly casual remark she had made. As Jayden’s frustration seemed to mount with Elyse’s prolonged silence, he teetered on the brink of anger. Just as he was poised to express his discontent, Elyse’s sudden action caught him off guard. With a swift movement, she seized his collar, drew him close, and silenced his impending words with a passionate kiss.

Chapter 344:

Jayden hadn’t anticipated Elyse’s boldness. They kissed deeply, their breaths mingling, and the air around them grew warm. Elyse pulled away abruptly and jumped off his lap, raising her chin.

“Are you clueless? Can’t you tell if it’s real or not?” she challenged.

Jayden studied her for a moment before curling his finger towards her. “Come here.”

She stepped back defiantly. “No way. I’m not listening to you.”

The moment she said it, she could see Jayden’s expression darken. Fighting back panic, she plotted her escape. She didn’t believe she couldn’t outrun a man in a wheelchair.

Jayden licked his lips, savoring her lingering taste, and eyed her with renewed determination. Sensing trouble, Elyse noticed the phone screen glowing on the coffee table. She quickly pointed at it and said, “Someone’s calling you. Pick up.”

Jayden glanced at the screen, recognizing a call from the nursing home, and answered it. Elyse let out a breath of relief, glad for her reprieve, but couldn’t help wondering who was on the other end of the line.

After ending the call, Jayden frowned. "It's from the nursing home. That old lady isn't doing well and has been transferred to the hospital."

Elyse's smile disappeared, replaced by concern. "What happened to her? I thought you said her physical was fine."

Jayden shook his head, refraining from sharing details about the old woman's past. "Let's head to the hospital."

Elyse nodded, grabbed her coat from the sofa, and went with him. Once at the hospital, Elyse learned the old lady had fallen into a coma. Her examination was complete, and they were waiting for the results.

Sitting in a chair outside the ward, Elyse sighed heavily. She had mixed feelings about that lady, whose words were always perplexing, making Elyse consider her mentally unstable. Yet something inside urged Elyse to believe the woman had been speaking the truth. Lowering her head, she tried to organize her scattered thoughts.

"Here you are, Elyse."

Hearing Glenda's voice, Elyse thought she'd misheard. But when she looked up, she saw Glenda charging toward her. Startled, Elyse eyed her warily. "Why are you here at the hospital?"

Glenda's cheerful expression crumbled as her eyes welled up with tears. In a sorrowful tone, she said, "Your sister was mentally unstable at the police station and tried to kill herself by banging her head against the wall. Now she was rushed to the hospital." After a brief pause, she continued, clearly distressed, "The doctor said she was determined to end her life. She doesn't even care how I'll manage if anything happens to her. I don't want to go on living either."

When Elyse learned that Mabel had attempted suicide, she remained calm. Everything that had happened before had completely shattered her sense of sisterhood with Mabel. To Elyse, Mabel was just another person now. Her fate, good or bad, didn't concern Elyse.

Glenda wiped away her tears, clasped Elyse's hand, and begged, "Save your sister, please. If she doesn't make it, our family will fall apart." Between sobs, she added, "I know your husband Jayden can help her. I'm begging you, just please help Mabel." She was on the verge of kneeling.

Elyse reached out to stop Glenda but couldn't. Her expression darkened with pain and inner turmoil. Seeing Glenda cry so bitterly, she understood that Glenda was genuinely grieving. But Elyse couldn't help but think, if she were the one in trouble, would Glenda still kneel and plead for her?

"After the kidnappers took Mabel and me, why did you abandon me so quickly?" Elyse asked in a low voice after a while. This question had haunted her for a long time, making it hard for her to breathe. That day remained burned into her memory. Whenever she slept, Elyse wondered why Glenda hadn't chosen to save her and what made her less worthy than Mabel. Even though Glenda had always favored Mabel, shouldn't a mother at least hesitate? Instead, after choosing Mabel, Glenda had fled the scene without looking back. Elyse needed an answer or she'd be forever tormented by this question.

For a moment, an unnatural expression crossed Glenda's face. She raised her voice in desperation and said, "Elyse, you have to save your sister. You can't just stand there and do nothing." Elyse's eyes turned red as she stared at her. Glenda couldn't answer and didn't want to; she wanted to change the topic.

Elyse wiped her tears and turned away, her voice trembling with disappointment. "So I'm not worth much. Honey, she's awake. Come and see," Jayden wheeled out of the ward slowly. With a calm glance at Glenda, he said, "Let's handle what's important first. Your sister's problem isn't a priority."

Chapter 345:

Elyse's heart sank as she silently entered the ward, her expression tense. Jayden didn't follow but stood back, watching Glenda with curiosity. He hadn't expected her to be so persuasive. His gaze made Glenda feel uneasy, silencing her tears. She trembled and looked down, guilt etched on her face. After eyeing her for a moment, he asked, "Are you scared of me?"

Glenda forced a smile, her tone ingratiating. "No, no. You're my son-in-law. Why would I be afraid of you?"

Jayden glanced at her knees. "So you're still kneeling so people will think I'm disrespectful?"

"No, that's not what I meant," she stammered, clutching the wall to stand. "I thought you were kneeling to pressure my wife into helping you," Jayden said, a hint of mockery in his voice.

Embarrassment washed over Glenda, and she was momentarily lost for words. But she refused to give up; she wanted Elyse to save Mabel. "I'll go see Elyse," she quickly slipped into the ward, smiling.

Inside, Elyse exchanged a few words with the old woman. The woman tried to sit up, so Elyse propped her up and adjusted a pillow for her. As the old woman glanced up, she noticed Glenda entering, her clouded eyes lighting up with recognition. She suddenly grew highly emotional and shouted at Glenda, "Why are you here? Are you trying to steal my Elyse?"

Glenda locked eyes with her. Surprise flickered across Glenda's face, but there was also a fierce, killing intent and fear. Her gaze hardened. "What are you doing here?"

Elyse noticed Glenda's grim expression and was taken aback. "Mom, what was that look on your face?"

Realizing she failed to mask her reaction, Glenda quickly changed her expression. But the old woman grew even more agitated. She pointed a trembling finger at Glenda, her voice rising angrily. "How can you recognize her as your mother? She isn't your mother. She's a thief and a killer. She's the worst person in the world."

Elyse stood in shock, unable to believe what she was hearing. She felt frozen, unsure of what to do. Glenda's heart raced as she listened, a cold fear washing over her. How could this madwoman, who had long been broken down by suffering, be speaking this way now?

The panic and murderous intent in Glenda's heart grew stronger, but she pretended to be distraught. "Elyse, who is she? Why would she say these things to you? You're my daughter, I swear it."

"Bah! You shameless woman!" The old woman trembled, her eyes wide. She shouted, "You're not her mother! You are not! Elyse has her own mother. That woman is definitely not you, you vicious woman!"

The old woman was so agitated that tears filled her eyes. Gripping Elyse's hand, she said in a trembling voice, "Don't worry. As long as I'm here, I'll protect you, Elyse. I won't let anyone hurt you."

Elyse opened her mouth to respond, but the old woman suddenly clutched her chest and fainted.

“Ma’am!” Elyse called out urgently and quickly rang the bell.

The doctor and a nurse soon arrived. After a preliminary examination, they found the old woman’s heartbeat was weakening. She needed immediate resuscitation in the operating room.

Hearing that the old woman would be resuscitated, Glenda let out a sigh of relief. She had feared the old woman might say something incriminating, which she wouldn’t be able to justify.

As the old woman was wheeled away, Glenda quietly spat, hoping she’d pass away soon. Elyse, worried, followed the medical staff to the operating room.

Not wanting Elyse to dwell on that woman, Glenda said, “Don’t be upset. She’s just a confused old woman. Don’t torture yourself over an outsider.”

Elyse glanced at her but said nothing. She pulled her hand away from Glenda’s grasp and quickly followed the doctors.

It was the first time Elyse had treated Glenda like this, and it infuriated her. Glenda was about to lose her temper but then noticed Jayden’s gaze on her. Her heart began to race again, and she forced a smile. “Jayden, why are you looking at me?”

Resting his chin on his hand, Jayden said, “The first time I met you and your husband, I couldn’t help but notice that Elyse doesn’t resemble either of you.”

The smile nearly faded from Glenda’s face. “Don’t joke, Jayden. Elyse is my daughter.”

Jayden said nothing more and gave Glenda a long look before heading to the operating room.

Sensing trouble, Glenda quickly texted Lanny while following Jayden.

Chapter 346:

Perched on the bench outside the operating room, Elyse's gaze fixed on the empty bench across from her, seemingly oblivious to her surroundings. Beside her, Glenda, eager to engage, found herself repeatedly silenced by Elyse's apparent detachment.

Breaking the silence, Jayden approached Elyse, asking, "What are your thoughts?" Elyse, her fingers nervously clutching her dress, struggled to articulate her response; the elderly woman's words had stirred chaos within her. After a moment, she shook her head in dejection.

Unable to restrain herself any longer, Glenda interjected into the conversation, "Are you truly going to lend credence to the ramblings of that eccentric woman? She's lying. I am your mother." Elyse frowned, feeling an instinctual aversion towards Glenda's forceful demeanor rising within her.

Jayden stroked his chin thoughtfully before suggesting, "If that's the case, why don't you two consider undergoing a maternity test?" Both Elyse and Glenda were startled by the unexpected suggestion. "A maternity test?" Elyse's uncertainty was palpable. "Is that really necessary?"

Glenda's jaw clenched, her glare directed at Jayden, her frustration simmering beneath the surface. With a determined nod, Jayden responded firmly, "Undoubtedly, it's imperative. Should the results affirm your biological relationship, it will unequivocally debunk that lady's accusations as mere ramblings. You can then dismiss her words without hesitation."

Jayden's gaze briefly shifted towards Glenda, its intensity a silent inquiry. "What are your thoughts on my suggestion?" Within Glenda, a tumultuous desire to silence Jayden simmered, yet she suppressed her anger, forcing a smile as she reluctantly agreed to his proposal.

Jayden's scrutiny remained fixed on Glenda's face, observing every subtle nuance of emotion that crossed her features. Since Glenda's arrival at the ward, Jayden had harbored an uneasy suspicion that something was awry. He was convinced of a connection between Glenda and the elderly woman—they exchanged unspoken cues upon their first encounter, as evidenced by Glenda's initial words, "What are you doing here?" This, coupled with Jayden's lingering doubts about Glenda's relationship with Elyse, presented an opportune moment to initiate the maternity test.

Jayden summoned Peyton, entrusting him with overseeing the process. After providing Peyton with a thorough briefing, Jayden was met with astonishment at Peyton's question, "If this test disproves your connection, where are your biological parents?"

As Elyse handed the nurse a sample of her hair, Peyton's question lingered in the air, her eyes clouded with bewilderment.

It was a notion that had never crossed her mind before: If Lanny and Glenda weren't her parents, then who were the individuals who had brought her into this world?

Jayden's eyes rolled at Peyton's inquiry. "Let's hold off on those questions until we have the results. Now, back to your duties."

Peyton's lips tightened slightly in dissatisfaction as he made his way to Glenda's side. Glenda fiercely resisted Peyton's attempts to obtain a hair sample. Despite the intervention of two nurses, they couldn't extract a single strand from Glenda's obstinate head. Yet Peyton, with skillful precision, reached out and plucked a hair.

Glenda stomped her feet in frustration, threatening to report Peyton's bold action. Unperturbed by her threat, Peyton shrugged indifferently. This hospital belonged to his family. What did he have to fear from a mere complaint?

Filled with apprehension, Glenda felt her body tense, unable to find stillness. She comprehended the inevitable truth awaiting Elyse once the maternity test results were disclosed. She was consumed by fear, dreading the moment when Elyse would receive the report and confront her about her true parentage. How could she possibly respond?

Glenda's grip on her handbag tightened as panic surged through her, urging her to flee. Accepting the hot water Jayden offered, Elyse warmed her cold hands and took a cautious sip. Suddenly, she remembered Glenda's likely thirst. Hastily lifting her head, she scanned the room. To her dismay, Glenda was nowhere to be seen. Elyse hastily rose and searched the area, but there was no sign of Glenda on that floor.

"Looks like she got cold feet," Jayden remarked casually as he approached her.

Elyse shook her head almost involuntarily, still grappling to fully comprehend the notion that Glenda might not be her mother. "Perhaps she just went to the restroom," Elyse suggested tentatively.

Jayden's conviction remained steadfast. "I have my doubts she'll return," he asserted. "If you're hesitant to trust my judgment, simply stay put."

Elyse's emotions swirled as she trailed Jayden back to the operating room's entrance. As Glenda exited the hospital, she headed straight home to reunite with Lanny.

Jayden had leveled their opulent villa, leaving only a single-level dwelling intact. Faced with no alternative, Lanny and Glenda released their household staff and temporarily relocated to the remaining residence.

Upon stepping inside, Glenda discovered Lanny lounging on the sofa, casually sipping a glass of wine. Anger surged through her as she approached, abruptly silencing the music. "Why didn't you respond to my calls?" she demanded, her voice tinged with indignation. "Do you realize who I encountered at the hospital?"

Chapter 347:

Initially, Lanny basked in contentment, savoring wine and reveling in the melodies that filled the air. But the tranquility shattered as soon as Glenda returned home, unleashing a storm of confrontation upon him. Impatiently, he inquired, "Are you out of your mind? It's none of my concern whom you encounter at the hospital."

Glenda's countenance darkened, her words slicing through the air with icy precision. "I crossed paths with that madwoman."

Impatiently, Lanny interjected, "Which madwoman exactly?" After a brief lapse, he snapped back to attention, straightening his posture with newfound seriousness. "Who did you say you encountered?"

"Dorothy Conner, the very woman you've been searching for," Glenda replied with a disdainful sneer. "Dorothy has divulged to Elyse that I'm not her mother. Your worst fear is materializing."

Undeterred, Lanny maintained his composure, chin held high. "She is simply not in her right mind. Does Elyse truly believe her words?"

"Jayden has requested a maternity test," Glenda revealed.

Lanny's eyelids twitched, apprehension evident in his voice. "Did you agree to it?"

Glenda nodded resignedly. "Refusal wasn't an option. They've compelled me. I had no choice but to return to you."

Unable to find solace in his wine, Lanny placed the glass down, raking his hand through his hair in agitation. Suddenly, a memory resurfaced. "Where is Dorothy?"

Observing Lanny's restlessness, Glenda took her time replenishing her glass with red wine. "She's under care in the emergency room. Originally on her deathbed, but we were careless and allowed her to flee."

Lanny pondered silently. "Under care... If only she were no longer among the living, but her continued existence... She must be eliminated."

With a swift gulp of wine, Glenda regarded Lanny with chilling resolve. "Aren't you concerned that her continued presence could spell trouble?"

Indeed, Lanny harbored no desire for Dorothy to further disrupt their lives by revealing their secrets. Pouring herself another glass, Glenda continued, "I've contemplated it. Even if the maternity test disproves my parenthood, Elyse need not know the truth of her lineage."

Lanny nodded in agreement. "You're correct. Our priority is to deceive Elyse, ensuring she doesn't dwell on this matter. Then and only then can we be secure."

Glenda and Lanny collaborated, pondering their next steps for hours. Three hours later, Peyton arrived at the hospital with the maternity test report in hand

Elyse and Jayden were in a private room, keeping watch over the old lady, Dorothy.

Despite being transported out of the operating room, Dorothy's condition deteriorated, necessitating the use of a ventilator as her body struggled to cope. She now resembled a yellow leaf clinging to a branch in autumn, devoid of vitality, on the verge of drifting away to decay upon the earth.

Elyse lifted her gaze as Peyton approached, her eyes filled with anticipation. "Has the report been released?" she inquired.

Peyton solemnly nodded, passing the test report to Elyse.

With bated breath, Elyse scanned the document, her heart racing as she reached the final verdict. It read: "After careful consideration, it is concluded that Glenda Lloyd and Elyse Lloyd are not biologically related."

A wave of realization washed over Elyse, leaving her feeling adrift in a sea of uncertainty. "She's not my mother," she murmured, her voice barely above a whisper.

Peyton was overcome with a twinge of sorrow. The revelation left him utterly astonished; what he had casually mentioned while pulling Glenda's hair had been nothing more than a jest. He never fathomed it would turn out to be true.

The news struck Elyse like a heavy blow, her eyes rimmed with red from tears shed. She felt as lost as a solitary deer wandering through the forest, suddenly devoid of the maternal bond she had always known, uncertain of her path forward.

Elyse's eyes, simultaneously clear and confused, stirred a sense of guilt within Peyton. "In light of the current report, this appears to be the case," Peyton said reluctantly, bracing himself for the response.

Receiving an affirmative reply, Elyse's vulnerability deepened. Seeking solace, she reached for Jayden's hand.

With a reassuring grip, Jayden comforted her. "Compose yourself first. We'll meet with the couple later and seek clarification."

Lost in her tumultuous emotions, Elyse remained oblivious to everything else. Only Peyton discerned the chilling undertone in Jayden's words.

Silently shaking his head, Peyton realized the impending ordeal awaiting the Lloyd couple. "I need to use the restroom," Elyse announced abruptly, rising from her seat and striding out of the ward towards the restroom.

Peyton was taken aback. Gesturing towards the bathroom within the ward, he queried, "Isn't there a bathroom here? Why did she opt for the one outside?"

Jayden was momentarily at a loss for words. “She’s seeking a moment of respite outdoors, not just a restroom break.”

Chapter 348:

Elyse never really wanted to use the restroom. She rushed out of the ward and took the elevator straight to the small hospital garden. Upon arriving, she paused, unsure of her next move. Just then, she heard Mabel’s voice.

Turning around, she saw Mabel at a first-floor window of the ward, shouting with a fierce expression, “Elyse, what are you still standing there for? Hurry up and come get me out of here! Do you hear me?”

Elyse hesitated briefly, recalling that Glenda had told her Mabel was hospitalized after a suicide attempt. With a stern face, she approached the first-floor window, stopping at the edge of the lawn. “Can’t you just be a little quiet?” she said coldly.

“Cut your crap and help me out,” Mabel responded, pointing to the bandage on her forehead. Despite her pale face marked by a trace of viciousness, she challenged Elyse, “Are you really my sister? Why are you so cold and heartless? If you don’t help me here, forget about me being your sister.”

Elyse pursed her lips. Her confusion cleared, replaced by cold clarity. She glanced at Mabel and replied slowly, “I’m not your sister. Since you don’t like me so much, there’s no need for us to save our relationship.”

Mabel was perplexed by her words. “Not my sister? You just don’t want to help me out, so you said that? Fine, I accept you as my sister. Help me as soon as possible!” Her tone grew impatient as she finished speaking.

She waited for a response, but Elyse merely stared back at her, quietly unaffected by her prodding. After a moment, she asked, “I have done so many things for you and helped you countless times. Have you ever appreciated my kindness?”

Mabel’s patience snapped. “Your kindness? That’s what you’re supposed to do. You’re my elder sister. Shouldn’t you do that for me?”

Elyse's gaze remained calm, her heart void of emotion. "That's not what I'm supposed to do. I'm not your sister," she replied.

Confusion clouded Mabel's thoughts. It seemed strange to her that Elyse kept denying their sisterhood. "Are you really not my sister? Are you kidding me?" she asked, curiosity tinged with desperation.

Elyse, no longer wanting to engage, turned and walked away. Watching her leave, Mabel felt a sinking feeling. Was what Elyse said true? Was she really not her sister? Then where was her real sister? Or was she an only child?

As the realization dawned on her, panic set in. If Elyse wasn't her sister and refused to help, she would be trapped forever. "No! No way, Elyse, you are my sister! You can't leave! You have to save me!" she cried out, clinging to the window and catching the attention of several passersby.

But Elyse had already walked too far away to hear her cries. After taking a deep breath of fresh air, Elyse returned to the ward, where only Jayden was present; Peyton was absent.

Jayden patted the empty seat beside him and invited, "Come and sit here, Elyse." Without a word, Elyse obediently took her seat next to him.

"Have you made up your mind?" Jayden inquired. "If you are mentally prepared, I will ask someone to bring them here."

Elyse paused for a moment, took a deep breath, and nodded. "I'm ready." She was still reeling from the shock that Lanny and Glenda were not her biological parents, yet her curiosity about her real parents lingered.

Jayden gently touched her head and spoke in a rare soft tone, "Don't be afraid. I'm here for you."

Looking up at Jayden, Elyse felt a mix of sadness and comfort. She whispered softly, "Okay. Now Jayden was the only person she could truly trust."

After receiving the instruction, Jayden's men soon arrived at the home of Lanny and Glenda to pick them up. Although the couple had braced themselves, the uncertainty still left them uneasy and worried about what lay ahead as they sat in the car.

Chapter 349:

Lanny and Glenda arrived at the hospital, making their way through the inpatient wing. Suddenly, Mabel's voice caught their attention. Glenda instinctively clutched her head, realizing she had forgotten about Mabel amidst everything.

Mabel, gripped by fear and crying uncontrollably, sat alone by a window, her distress drawing the attention of passersby. Tears streaming down her face, Glenda rushed to the window and took Mabel's hand. "Honey, don't cry. I'll find a way to get you out."

Seeing Glenda unexpectedly, Mabel cried louder. "Mom, the food is terrible and my body hurts. Elyse refused to help me, claiming she isn't my sister anymore."

Glenda's expression shifted from sadness to rigid disbelief. The comforting words she intended to say were stuck in her throat. "Mom, is it true what she said? Is she really not my sister? Then where is my real sister? Can she save me?" Mabel's voice was laden with sadness, shattered by the belief that her elder sister would rescue her.

Embarrassed, Glenda released Mabel's hand. "I'll tell you later. Your father and I have something else to handle right now."

Mabel was shocked, her tears subsiding momentarily. "Mom, what could be more important than me right now? Aren't you going to try to get me out? Are you still my mother?"

Lanny remained silent, his gaze fixed on the impatient bodyguards. "Stop talking. We need to get down to business and go," he scolded, grabbing Glenda's arm.

Glenda hesitated, her eyes on Mabel. She didn't want to leave, but she felt she had no choice. Mabel was devastated; it felt like a bolt of lightning. Did her parents no longer want her? Overwhelmed by despair, she cried louder, her sobs drawing even more attention.

In the VIP single ward, Elyse sat in a daze when the door swung open, and two bodyguards ushered in Lanny and Glenda. Glenda tried to appeal emotionally, tears in her eyes as she exclaimed, "Honey, what's wrong with you? You look so pale."

“I look pale because I now know you’re not my biological parents,” Elyse replied, her voice devoid of emotion. The warmth that once filled her eyes had vanished, replaced by indifference and detachment.

Glenda felt the distance growing between them, realizing any attempt to bridge it would only be met with Elyse’s coldness, which stung anew each time. Holding back tears, Glenda managed an awkward smile, unconsciously rubbing her hands. “Even if the report says we’re not mother and daughter, haven’t I raised you all these years? I am like a mother to you in any case.”

Instead of responding, Elyse turned her gaze to Lanny, who had remained silent throughout. She offered him a smile, but it was distant, highlighting the gulf between them. “Do you think she has ever been like a mother to me?” Elyse asked.

Caught off guard by her question, Lanny opened his mouth to respond but found himself at a loss for words. They had raised her to adulthood, yet they had never truly acted as caring parents. In fact, the benefits they derived from her far outweighed their efforts on her behalf. Previously, Lanny hadn’t anticipated Elyse discovering they weren’t biologically related. He had used her and caused her pain. Now, with the truth revealed, he regretted not being a better father to her, fearing recent events had disheartened her to the point where she might no longer recognize them as her parents.

Tears welled up in his eyes as he faced this harsh reality. “I didn’t expect you to find out. We are indeed monsters. We’ve never really been kind to you.”

“I knew I wasn’t your biological child, so you hurt me and took advantage of me. I can understand that,” Elyse said coldly. “But where are my biological parents?”

Glenda and Lanny exchanged a worried glance. The question they had feared most had finally arisen.

Chapter 350:

After discovering that Glenda and Lanny weren’t her biological parents, Elyse found that many pieces of the puzzle finally clicked into place. The new revelation explained their years of neglect and the constant preference for Mabel. In comparison to her queries about her biological parents, Elyse was less interested in questioning Lanny and Glenda. All she truly desired was to uncover the truth about her own roots. With a firm voice, she asked, “Where can I find information about my birth parents?”

Lanny stole a glance at Glenda, a silent conversation passing between them. He cleared his throat. "They... they passed away," he mumbled, the words heavy on his tongue.

Glenda nodded in agreement. "We adopted you after they died," she added, her voice devoid of warmth.

The news slammed into Elyse. Her breath hitched, the air suddenly thick with a weight she couldn't quite place. Jayden, ever the skeptic, wasn't buying it. He narrowed his eyes at the couple. "Both of them? But how? What's the connection between you and them?"

Jayden's questions caught Lanny off guard. Cold sweat beaded on Lanny's forehead. He crumbled under Jayden's scrutiny, pinching his thigh in a desperate attempt at composure. Lanny stammered, "Car... car accident. Shortly after Elyse was born. Elyse's mother is my younger sister. I felt responsible, so I adopted her."

Lanny, fearing doubt, raised a hand. "Swear on it. Every word. God as my witness."

"Your younger sister? So you're my uncle," Elyse struggled to accept the information, clenching her teeth to conceal her vulnerability and helplessness.

"Yes," Lanny confirmed. "We were close. I raised her."

Taking a shaky breath, Elyse's eyes welled up. "Their names," she choked out.

Glenda, about to answer, was cut off by Lanny's hurried reply. "Jazmine Lloyd is your mother. And Rickey Owen, your father... well, he wasn't a good-for-nothing."

A frown etched itself on Glenda's face. She shot Lanny a confused look but remained silent.

Jayden stroked his chin thoughtfully. "So there really was a Rickey Owen, but dead. Explains why his searches yielded nothing."

Elyse's face remained an impassive mask. Lanny squirmed under her scrutiny, unable to decipher her thoughts. An idea sparked in his eyes. "Your mother," he added hastily, "hated your father. He never gave her a decent life."

Elyse held up a hand, silencing him. “Where are they buried?” she demanded, her voice laced with steely resolve.

Lanny blinked, momentarily stumped. “Where had those ashes gone?”

Noticing his hesitation, Glenda’s anxiety spiked. “They hadn’t bothered with graves. The ashes sat forgotten in the storage room.”

Jayden picked up on their discomfort, his brow furrowing. “You threw them away?”

“No,” Glenda blurted, panic lacing her voice. “The storage room. Our house.”

Lanny, lost in his own jumbled thoughts, could only stare at her. Elyse’s gaze turned steely. “You put their ashes in the storage room?”

Flustered, Glenda stammered, “Your mother didn’t want to be buried with your dad. We were so overwhelmed that we forgot about burying their ashes. Forgotten for over two decades.” Elyse didn’t believe a word of it, but it didn’t matter. “If Lanny had truly loved his sister, he would have loved her too, regardless.”

Fatigue weighed heavily on Elyse. She could barely lift a finger. “I want their ashes.”

Lanny’s eyes widened. “They’re gone, child. What must you get their ashes? Besides, your mother loathes your dad.”

Elyse dug her nails into her palms, the pain a dull echo compared to the anger burning within her. Her eyes blazed. “They’re my parents. It doesn’t matter how they felt about each other.”

This was the first time Elyse had defied him. Lanny, irritated and flushed crimson, swallowed his anger. Jayden, his voice firm, issued an ultimatum. “Two days to deliver the ashes here. Or you won’t like the consequences.”