

## Bound love 361

### Chapter 361:

Elyse murmured softly, "It's not as serious as you make it sound." Seeing Elyse's careless attitude, Jayden sighed in resignation. The elevator doors opened, and they exited, getting into their car. Upon arriving home, Jayden quickly sent Pearce's name to Tobin, requesting an investigation. Jayden expected the search to take a while, but to his surprise, the report arrived in just ten minutes. After downloading the document, Jayden skimmed through Pearce's background. Finishing his read, Jayden looked puzzled. "It's odd. Why would the heir of the Benson family come to our city?"

While sitting next to Jayden and watching TV, Elyse overheard his words. She asked subconsciously, "What's going on with Pearce?" Jayden didn't respond to Elyse's question. Instead, he went into his study and called Clive. Clive was surprised to hear from Jayden. "Aren't you supposed to be spending time with your wife these days? Why are you calling me?" Jayden inquired, "What do you know about the famous Benson family in Cambape?"

Clive sounded confused. "I know a bit. Why do you ask?" Jayden, staring at the report, said, "Isn't it strange that Pearce and Elyse have become friends? He approached her claiming to be a fan." Clive remembered seeing Pearce after Elyse's performance had ended. He had initially thought he was mistaken, but now it made sense. "We haven't heard much from the Benson family recently. They primarily operate in the new energy sector and don't currently have any partnerships in our city."

Jayden tapped his fingers on the desk and questioned, "Are you suggesting Pearce came here just to go sightseeing?" Clive was silent. He took a long time to research a piece of relevant information from his memory. Clive then said, "When I was young, my parents told me that the Bensons had lost a son and had been searching for him for years." Jayden choked on Clive's words and didn't know what to say for a moment. After pondering for a while, Jayden finally asked earnestly, "Do you think Pearce could be the lost son the Bensons have been looking for?"

Clive replied, "No, I just recalled that story and thought I'd share it with you." Jayden sighed. "I'll temporarily assume that Pearce genuinely enjoyed how Elyse played the violin and became a fan." While on the topic of the violin, Clive added, "There's something else you should know. The Bensons despise the violin and have never attended a violin recital."

Jayden was puzzled. "What does that mean?" Clive explained, "I'm not sure of the details. It's just something that's commonly said in Cambape. I only know that their dislike for the violin is tied to that missing boy." Jayden stroked his chin, feeling increasingly convinced that Pearce was simply

someone who enjoyed violin music. Pearce likely kept his hobby a secret from his family in Cambape, which could explain why he traveled to Watscar. It all made sense.

After ending the call, Jayden felt more at ease. He left the study and saw Elyse practicing the violin, following along with a video on her phone. Noticing Jayden's improved mood, Elyse asked cautiously, "You're not angry anymore?" "Sort of," Jayden replied. He then shifted the conversation, asking directly, "Why didn't you ask me to go with you to the cemetery?"

Elyse explained, "It was a spontaneous decision. Pearce was there, and since you were busy, I accepted his offer to accompany me." Jayden's anger eased, but he still felt a bit upset. Noticing his discomfort, Elyse soothed him gently. "I promise not to do it again. Please don't be upset. If you're upset, it upsets me too." She stood with her hands on her hips and asked, "I'm already upset. Do you want to make me even more upset because of you?"

Jayden's lips twitched. Was he really the problem here? Lanny and Glenda returned home and took a while to remember where they had casually stored the urns. After searching the ruins for a day and a night, they finally located the basement door. Once they figured out how to open it, they entered the basement and discovered two urns covered in dust. Lanny grabbed the urns and tossed them to Glenda, saying, "Clean these up and take them over tomorrow."

Glenda caught the urns and began dusting them off. As she did, a bitter thought crossed her mind, and she said, "Do you think I can bring these urns to Jayden and persuade him to let our daughter go?"

## Chapter 362:

Tears gathered in Glenda's eyes as thoughts of her daughter Mabel overwhelmed her. "I heard she is struggling terribly. She seems to be in a deep depression. If we leave her to fend for herself, I fear the worst," she confided.

Lanny exhaled a heavy sigh, his voice tinged with helplessness. "I'm not sure if Jayden can forgive us. All we can do is wait until tomorrow."

Later, Glenda returned home, clutching two urns tightly against her chest. These urns, intimately tied to her daughter's well-being, required her utmost care and protection. Unable to find sleep, consumed by worry and anticipation, Glenda spent the night awake. As the first light of dawn crept across the sky, she gently roused Lanny. Quickly freshening up, they made their way to Jayden's, carrying the urns.

Upon seeing the urns, Driscoll recognized their significance and promptly allowed Glenda and Lanny entry. Upon entering, Glenda clutched the two urns even closer, knowing they were her only leverage in the negotiations that lay ahead. Driscoll had offered to assist Glenda with the delicate items, but she declined, determined to maintain control over them herself.

The couple didn't have to wait long. Shortly after their arrival, Elyse and Jayden emerged from the elevator. Elyse's eyes immediately caught sight of the two aged urns in Glenda's arms, the surfaces marked by the passage of time. A visceral reaction surged through her, an instinctual desire to reach out for them. But Glenda, sensing her intent, quickly turned away, shielding the urns.

"What is the meaning of this?" Elyse asked, her voice a mixture of confusion and concern.

Facing Jayden, who appeared slightly sleepy, Glenda stated her intentions plainly. "I want to make a deal with you," she declared.

Jayden leaned slightly, resting his chin on the back of his hand. His question carried a casual air. "Think you've got enough bargaining power to swing a deal with me?"

Glenda's response was immediate and dramatic. She lifted the urns slightly, her voice steady. "These are my bargaining chips." She then raised them higher, her movements brash as she feigned an intent to smash them on the floor. "If you don't agree to my request—"

"No! Don't!" Elyse screamed, panic flooding her voice as she witnessed the potential destruction of something so precious.

Jayden's reaction was a mixture of mockery and contempt, a smirk curling at the edge of his lips. "Alright, then, lay it on me. What's your price?"

Glenda's voice cracked with urgency. "Get my daughter out of the police station. That's my demand."

Jayden's eyes flicked to Elyse, noting her distressed state, then back to Glenda, nodding slowly. "Fine. I'll see what I can do, but only once the trial is over. That's when I can step in."

Glenda, unyielding, snapped back. "That's not soon enough! I need her out today. No delays."

Jayden shook his head dismissively. "I can't do it. Go ahead, smash them if you will."

Glenda was taken aback. Could he only get Mabel out after the trial? In her shock, her grip faltered, and the urns nearly slipped from her hands. Luckily, Lanny reacted swiftly, catching them just before they hit the floor.

"Don't you dare," Lanny admonished her quietly, his brow furrowed in disapproval. "You really think it's that easy?"

Regaining her composure, Glenda clutched the urns close to her chest, her panic subsiding as she realized she had almost lost her only leverage.

Jayden, unfazed by the near catastrophe, turned to Driscoll. "Bring the urns to me," he instructed calmly.

Driscoll approached Glenda carefully, his actions deliberate to avoid any sudden moves that might prompt her to attempt another dramatic gesture. He took the urns from her and walked a safe distance away, ensuring they were out of harm's reach.

"Thank you for your help, Mr. Owen," Lanny said, managing a strained smile.

Jayden responded without warmth. "You can go now. I will arrange for you to see Mabel after the trial is over."

Lanny's relief was palpable, and he bowed deeply, expressing his gratitude. "Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Owen."

Before departing, Lanny paused and turned to Elyse, a hint of sheepishness in his demeanor. "Elyse, I've been your father for so many years. I know I've wronged you. But I hope we can still be family, and you can call me uncle."

Elyse, her face shadowed and unreadable, remained silent. Lanny's request wasn't just about family ties; it was a clear attempt to maintain some connection to the influential Owen family.

After Lanny and Glenda left, Jayden's gaze lingered on the still and silent Elyse. Sensing the need for support, he gave Driscoll a meaningful look. Driscoll immediately understood and approached Elyse, carrying the urns with a solemn reverence.

As he stood beside her, the weight of what he held and the moment's gravity filled him with a somber silence. He had intended to offer words of comfort, yet found himself speechless.

Together, they stood in silence, a shared mourning for what Elyse had lost. Finally, Elyse broke the quiet, her voice barely above a whisper. "These are my biological parents."

#### Chapter 363:

Raising her hand, Elyse gently traced her fingers over the urns slowly and deliberately, as if trying to connect with her parents' presence. Tears soon welled up in her eyes and started to stream down her face. Driscoll's heart ached at the sight, and his eyes reddened.

After gazing at the urns for some time, Elyse managed a smile and said to Jayden, "They didn't even put names on these. I can't tell which is my mom's and which is my dad's." Seeing the strained smile on her face, Jayden softly advised, "Don't force yourself to smile if you don't feel like it."

The smile on Elyse's face stiffened, then slowly faded away, giving way to visible pain and sadness. She wrapped her arms around herself and crouched down, her mouth open as if she was crying out, but no sound came out, only her tears spoke of her deep despair. Unable to bear her silent agony, Jayden stood up subconsciously, then realized his mistake and sat back down quickly. He looked at her with guilt, relieved that she was too engrossed in her grief to notice his abrupt movement.

Elyse, oblivious to his reaction, held the urns tightly and slowly squatted down, her tears falling onto them. Jayden maneuvered his wheelchair to her side and reached out a hand, hesitating to touch her. Suddenly, he felt how inadequate his attempts to comfort her were. Jayden became distracted, silently withdrawing his hand and simply stayed beside her, offering his presence as solace. Even the household staff were tucked away in a corner, watching Elyse with concern.

After a long while of crying, Elyse fainted. Yet instinctively, she continued to grip the urns tightly. She thought she would hit the floor, but instead, she found something soft beneath her. Tears filled her eyes again when she saw it was Jayden looking at her with concern. She tried to speak, but initially, no sound came out. After several attempts, she finally said in a raspy voice, "I just remembered something. Lanny never gave me any photos of my mother."

Jayden gently squeezed her shoulder and assured her, "I will get them for you." Elyse nodded and looked into Jayden's eyes for a long moment. Then, she whispered softly, "I'm so happy to be your wife."

With that, she closed her eyes gently and fell asleep with the urns in her arms. Seeing this, Driscoll carefully removed the urns from her hands and asked with concern, "Sir, should I carry her upstairs?" Receiving no reply, Driscoll asked again, "Sir?"

Jayden snapped out of his thoughts and replied, "Yes." Driscoll looked puzzled, "Should I take her upstairs to rest?" "No, I'll do it," Jayden replied. He lifted Elyse effortlessly and ascended the stairs. A few steps later, he remembered something and instructed Driscoll, "Please prepare a guest room and place the urns there." Driscoll nodded and promptly directed the servants to tidy up a room.

Back in the bedroom, Jayden gently placed Elyse on the bed and tucked her in. He lingered by her side for a moment, watching her sleep. After some time, he left the bedroom and headed to the study on the ground floor.

He settled into the chair and called Peyton's number. Peyton, who had just finished a night shift, was still sleepy. Answering the phone, he inquired irritably, "Why did you call me?" Just now, Elyse mentioned..." He paused before continuing, "She's happy to be my wife." After a brief silence of three seconds, Peyton asked, "And? What else?"

Jayden repeated, "She said she's happy." Peyton realized Jayden was displaying their affection. He retorted, "You don't need to call me just to tell me that. I'm not interested." Jayden responded, "But she said she's happy." Peyton snapped back sarcastically, "Then why don't you divorce her and marry me? I'd love to share that happiness." Jayden ended the call. Peyton rolled his eyes and chuckled.

Chapter 364:

Noon had already crested the sky by the time Elyse stirred awake. She shuffled out of bed and made her way downstairs. Driscoll, noticing her descent, was quick to address her. "Are you hungry? Would you like some lunch?"

Elyse scanned the room, her brow furrowed slightly. "Where's Jayden?" she inquired, not spotting him anywhere.

“He left in the morning and will be back later this afternoon,” Driscoll informed her, his eyes darting around, wary of her potential reaction.

“That’s fine. I’m actually quite hungry,” Elyse replied, dismissing her initial concern with a gentle smile. “Lunch will be ready soon.”

As Driscoll moved away, a thought struck him, and he turned back. “By the way, Mrs. Owen, your parents’ urns are staying in a room on the third floor. It has a wonderful view. Feel free to visit them whenever you like.”

“Thank you, Driscoll,” Elyse acknowledged with a nod and a smile. With lunch still in the works, she grabbed her phone and dialed Cody’s number.

Despite being let go from the Celestial Sounds Symphony, Elyse wasn’t ready to abandon her dreams. She was uncertain if Cody would take her on as his apprentice, but she was determined to explore every option.

The call connected, and Cody’s voice came through. “What can I do for you?”

Elyse clutched her shirt, her voice tinged with nervous hope. “Mr. Tucker, could we meet this afternoon? I need to speak with you.”

“Sure. I’ll text you the address. See you then,” Cody replied, not turning her down.

After the call, Elyse exhaled a deep breath of relief. Amidst the recent slew of challenges, this felt like a beacon of hope. She shared her plans with Driscoll over lunch, her spirits visibly lifted.

Driscoll’s eyes misted when he learned Elyse planned to visit Cody. He’d always felt partly responsible for her dismissal from the Celestial Sounds Symphony, even though the truth was that a higher-up had been eager to let her go. Driscoll still couldn’t shake the guilt, believing he had given them the excuse they needed.

With Elyse heading to see Cody, Driscoll felt some relief. “Would you mind if I tagged along this afternoon?” he asked, a bit sheepish.

“Of course,” Elyse replied, her brow creased with curiosity but still agreeing. “My wife’s a huge Cody fan. If I meet him and get an autograph, maybe she’ll complain less when I come home,” he explained.

Elyse chuckled. “Then I definitely have to bring you along.”

After lunch, they set out together, following the address to an old factory in the industrial zone that had been converted into a studio. The sign read Blue Sea Music Studio.

Driscoll adjusted his hat and marveled at the place, remarking, “This studio is gorgeous. It really feels like Cody Tucker.”

“Let’s head in. Mr. Tucker is expecting us,” Elyse couldn’t hide her excitement as she led Driscoll inside.

Cody soon descended the stairs to welcome them with a smile. “I saw you two from the window. I just made coffee. Let’s have a seat.”

“Thank you, Mr. Tucker,” Elyse said, her voice brimming with enthusiasm.

Cody prepared three cups of coffee and guided them into a lounge. “Try the coffee. I hope it’s to your liking.”

Chapter 365:

Elyse picked up the coffee cup and took a sip, savoring the strong aroma that left a fragrant taste in her mouth. Driscoll savored a sip from his cup, then remarked deliberately, “Ah, Jamaican Blue Mountain coffee. The water temperature was spot on, enhancing its full-bodied flavor.”

Cody raised an eyebrow in surprise. “You can tell just from the taste?”

“I traveled there when I was younger; after tasting it once, I couldn’t forget,” Driscoll smiled warmly.

Cody turned to Elyse. “Weren’t you supposed to be rehearsing at the Celestial Sounds Symphony today?”

Elyse felt a twinge of embarrassment as she admitted she had been fired.

Cody frowned, puzzled. “How did you miss your chance to get reinstated?”

She fell silent, unable to find the right words to explain. Driscoll had come prepared to explain everything and take the blame, but Elyse shook her head, stopping him. She took a breath and said, “I was kidnapped.”

After listening to the whole story, Cody was stunned. “You were kidnapped? And your sister orchestrated this?”

Elyse nodded with a bitter smile. “But why would she set a trap for you? You’re family.”

Elyse shook her head again. She still didn’t understand why Mabel had plotted against her and hadn’t heard a single apology. Staring down at her coffee, she said quietly, “We aren’t biological sisters. Maybe that’s why she doesn’t like me.”

Cody looked even more confused. “You’re not biological sisters?”

Elyse clenched her cup nervously. “My parents died years ago. My mother is actually Lanny’s sister.”

Cody’s expression became curious. He looked at Elyse thoughtfully, his eyes searching for answers.

Elyse quickly cut off the topic, forcing a smile. “This conversation is too heavy. I’d rather skip it. Mr. Tucker, is that all right?”

“Of course,” Cody replied with a nod. “Well, I’d like to ask, what other opportunities do I have if I want to continue on this musical path?” Elyse composed herself, finally voicing the question she had been longing to ask.

Cody rubbed his chin thoughtfully. “Why are you asking?”

Elyse blinked, confused. “What do you mean?”

Cody leaned forward and spoke earnestly. “You’re my apprentice. I’ve been guiding you this whole time.”

Elyse stood frozen, unable to respond. She was too surprised to find any words. Driscoll, equally stunned, asked, “You’re his apprentice? Why didn’t you tell us?”

Elyse stammered, “I...I didn’t know. When did I become his apprentice?”

Cody pressed on, “If you weren’t, why would I have taught you violin techniques and taken the time to comfort and encourage you?”

That question stumped Elyse, leaving her unable to answer. Cody continued, “You’ve been my apprentice for a long time, but you’re too dense to realize it.”

Elyse stood there utterly stunned. When had she become Cody’s apprentice? Was he right about her dullness? After pondering for a while, she finally gave up trying to figure it out. No matter what, she was Cody’s apprentice now. Once she came to terms with this, she flashed a sweet smile at Cody.

He smiled back. “I have another four apprentices. I’ll introduce them to you another day. Since you’ve left the Celestial Sounds Symphony, come practice with me daily.”

“Okay, that’s wonderful,” Elyse turned to Driscoll, who nodded his encouragement.

Cody glanced at his wristwatch and said, “Head back and practice hard. You haven’t been keeping up with your violin lately, have you? Other apprentices of mine will be here tomorrow to hear you play.”

Elyse’s smile vanished. She realized she hadn’t been practicing diligently, and her days had been slipping by in a haze. Noticing her expression, Cody sensed she was falling behind. “All right, go home and practice your violin.”

With a sheepish grin, Elyse began to leave. Driscoll shyly pulled a notebook from his bag. "Could I trouble you for an autograph before I leave?"

Cody took the notebook, picked up a pen, and smiled. "Of course."

Driscoll explained, "My wife is a huge fan. Whenever you went on tour, she'd grab tickets to see you play live."

Cody's eyes lit up. "That's wonderful to hear. It brings back fond memories."

Driscoll added, "She also adored your partner. She always thought the two of you made the best partners when you played together."

Chapter 366:

Cody paused in his signing, a momentary reflection gracing his features before he swiftly resumed. With a hint of wistfulness in his gaze, he passed the notebook to Driscoll, remarking, "I never expected someone to remember him."

Driscoll smiled warmly. "My wife has vivid memories of him. She often spoke of the performance that propelled you two to fame."

Cody found himself fully submerged in his memories as those words reached him. That particular performance held an unparalleled significance in his life. Without it, he realized he wouldn't be the person he had become.

"Who is he? Another violinist?" Elyse inquired, her curiosity piqued.

Cody snapped back to the present, nodding thoughtfully as he reached for his coffee. "We once learned from the same instructor. He was someone I both admired and hated."

"Admired and hated?" Elyse echoed, puzzled.

Cody affirmed with a nod. "I hated his carefree nature despite his remarkable talent. He found joy in playing on the street for anyone who would listen."

Pausing, he softened his tone, a hint of nostalgia coloring his words. "But what I admired most was his philosophy."

"What philosophy?" Elyse pressed, intrigued.

"He believed music should be accessible to all, capable of touching every soul," Cody explained. "Back then, I prioritized technical prowess. I believed music belonged solely to concert halls, not the streets."

"And what happened next?" Elyse's surprise was palpable.

"Subsequently, I lost my way. It was he who guided me back." Reflecting on that period, Cody couldn't suppress a smile.

Elyse had never imagined Cody's past to be so intricate. After a momentary silence, Cody turned to her. "You and he share a resemblance, not just in appearance but in your approach to music. The difference lies in your ambitions. He was content to play anywhere, while you strive for the stage."

"But I'm not him. I have my own dreams to pursue," Elyse admitted, with a bashful scratch of her head.

Cody nodded knowingly. "It'd be wonderful if he were still around. I'm sure he'd hold you in high regard." A soft smile played on Elyse's lips.

Standing up, Cody remarked, "Well, it's time for me to attend to my other guests. I won't keep you any longer. Be punctual tomorrow."

"I will. See you tomorrow," Elyse bid farewell before departing with Driscoll.

Exiting the studio, Driscoll's face lit up with relief as he turned to Elyse. "From this day forward, Cody Tucker shall be your mentor. Let's celebrate tonight."

Elyse's smile glimmered with a hint of disbelief. "It all feels so surreal."

Before long, their chauffeur arrived to pick them up. Unbeknownst to them, Jayden sat in a quaint cafe on the second floor nearby. Finishing his conversation with Clive, his gaze inadvertently drifted to the window where he caught sight of Elyse and Driscoll.

Clive took a sip of his coffee, noticing Jayden's distraction. Following his gaze, he found nothing of significance and inquired, "What's caught your attention?"

Jayden tore his gaze away, replying vaguely, "Just spotted someone unexpected."

"Who was it?" Clive pressed.

Rather than answering directly, Jayden redirected the conversation. "What are your thoughts on Owen Group's sudden move against Bayzee Group?"

Clive frowned. "Seems like a straightforward bid for market dominance to me."

With a furrowed brow, Jayden added, "But doesn't it strike you as odd? I can't shake the feeling they're targeting me."

Clive's frown deepened. "You think they've found your role at the Bayzee Group?"

Jayden reclined against the chair with a casual air. "Hard to say. But Bryce mentioned something intriguing. After my grandpa's private meeting with Debora, she was swiftly entrusted with a significant responsibility. Do you reckon she's being groomed as his successor?"

After a moment's reflection, Clive replied, "It's uncertain. Yet Enzo once envisioned you as his heir."

Jayden's expression soured slightly at the reminder. "Well, I won't be fulfilling that vision. He has likely already abandoned hope in me."

"They could uncover your connection to Bayzee Group. If that happens, they might target you when the time comes," Clive remarked with a nonchalant shrug.

Chapter 367:

Elyse had spent the entire afternoon playing her violin, only stopping when dinner was ready. By the time she returned to the living room, Jayden had already arrived home. He set his phone down and raised an eyebrow at her. “Why are you practicing so much today?”

Lifting her chin proudly, she replied, “Cody accepted me as his apprentice. I’ll start at his studio tomorrow, joining four others under his tutelage.”

Jayden seemed a bit taken aback. “You’re sure Cody accepted you as his apprentice? Maybe you misunderstood.”

Frustrated at his disbelief, Elyse quickly asked Driscoll to confirm. “Tell him I’ve been accepted by Cody.”

Driscoll nodded, a grin spreading across his face. “Yep, I accompanied her. Mr. Tucker really sees potential in her musical abilities.”

With this, Jayden’s tone softened. “Well, he’s good, and he clearly has an eye for talent.”

Elyse couldn’t help but snort at Jayden. “I’ll be learning from him now, and I’ll improve so much.”

With excitement bubbling up inside, she hurried upstairs with her violin case. Jayden watched her with a helpless smile before turning to Driscoll. “She’s quite lucky, isn’t she?”

Driscoll shook his head. “No, I don’t think so. She is genuinely talented.”

Jayden smiled warmly.

In her room, Elyse messaged her friends from the Celestial Sounds Symphony, but with a performance around the corner, they were too busy with rehearsals to respond. So she sent messages to Richie and Tracy instead.

She didn’t expect either to reply immediately, but Richie called her right away. Answering quickly, she asked, “Aren’t you busy?”

“I’m done. I’ve got time now,” Richie replied. After a brief pause, he asked, “So you just found out you’re his apprentice?”

His question left her confused. “What do you mean? You already knew.”

“Yeah, he came back from abroad for you. He knew from the beginning you’d be his apprentice.”

Elyse was stunned, finding it hard to believe. “But I’ve never met him. Why would he come here for me?”

Richie explained, “I showed him a video of your performance in the park, and he was intrigued. When you later competed for concertmaster of the Celestial Sounds Symphony and word got out that he was looking for an apprentice, I was confused because you were already the one he’d chosen.”

Elyse felt overwhelmed. “So I’ve been his apprentice this whole time? Why didn’t anyone tell me?”

Richie seemed a little embarrassed. “At first, Uncle Cody told me not to say anything. Then I got wrapped up in my own work and forgot. I assumed you knew.”

“Why do you call him uncle?” she asked.

“Because he is my uncle,” he replied, clearly proud of the connection.

Elyse was taken aback and struggled to process it. “Wow, I guess I missed that completely.”

Richie chuckled before adding, “When you visit my uncle’s studio tomorrow, you’ll meet his other apprentices. They’re not easy to deal with, they’re stuck-up and hard to please.”

The description made Elyse nervous. “Really? Are they difficult to get along with?”

He said with certainty, “I can’t handle them, so I rarely visit the studio.”

Elyse bit her lip, her emotions swirling. After Richie hung up, she sat on the sofa feeling uneasy. When he mentioned how stuck-up they were, she thought of Vicky. Would four Vickys be waiting for her at the studio?

Meanwhile, in his office, Theo stared blankly at a photo on his phone. An assistant approached, saying, "Elyse isn't on the list for the Celestial Sounds Symphony's performance this time. I'm looking into it."

Theo raised his head, surprised. "Wasn't she the concertmaster last time? Why isn't she on the list now?"

The assistant replied respectfully, "I'm investigating the situation. I'll get back to you once it's done."

Theo frowned, concerned. Was Elyse sick? He hadn't heard any recent updates about her.

Chapter 368:

The assistant felt his phone vibrate in his pocket. He checked it, his eyebrows lifting as he read the message: "Elyse has been dismissed." Theo's frown deepened. He'd only been away on business for a few days. How did Elyse end up getting dismissed? Dismissed? What happened? He drummed his fingers on the desk.

The assistant hesitated before explaining, "Apparently, she was targeted. Her talent rubbed some people the wrong way, so the orchestra higher-ups found a reason to dismiss her." He paused, then continued, "But something must have happened to her. My source says she didn't report to the orchestra on time, giving them a reason to push her out."

"Didn't report on time? That's not like her," Theo mulled it over. "Keep digging," he leaned forward, adding, "If you can't get anything directly on her, investigate the people around her. There's got to be a clue."

The assistant nodded and left the office, closing the door softly behind him.

Just as Theo returned to his work, the receptionist called. He answered with an edge to his voice, "What is it?"

Sounding uneasy, she replied, “Mr. Ward, Kaelyn Bennett is here again. She insists on seeing you.”

His annoyance grew. “What do you mean, again? She’s been coming every day.”

“You were away on your trip, sir, but yes, she shows up around this time daily. Today, she heard you were in and said she needs to speak with you.”

“Tell her to leave,” Theo snapped and hung up. He hoped that would put an end to it, focusing on his work until around 10 pm.

When he finally wrapped up and headed to the parking garage, he opened the car door, only for a figure to dart out and block him from closing it.

“Theo, I’ve finally caught up with you,” Kaelyn’s face lit up with joy and a hint of something more intense.

“You’ve lost your mind! Let go!” Theo called out to Kaelyn several times, but she wouldn’t budge. She gripped the door tightly, determined to keep him from leaving.

Exhausted from a long day at work, Theo grew more impatient with every passing second. His frustration crept into his voice, “I’ve told you not to show up in front of me. Unless you can make Elyse divorce her husband, stay out of my sight.”

Kaelyn’s affectionate gaze faltered when she heard Elyse’s name, her expression darkening. “Do you really miss her that much? What’s so special about Elyse that you can’t let her go?”

Theo felt his irritation boiling over. He hadn’t realized just how relentless Kaelyn could be; she seemed almost unhinged. “How many times do I have to tell you before you understand? Elyse is my one and only. You can’t even compare.”

He took a deep breath, exhaling with a weary sigh. “Can you stop coming around? I don’t want Elyse to get the wrong idea and think there’s anything between us. It’ll just hurt her.”

Kaelyn's eyes welled with tears as she saw how protective he was of Elyse and how much he valued her feelings. "But why did you respond to me, help me, and make me think you still cared? You were so good to me before. I don't believe your loyalty is that fragile."

Theo rubbed his temples in frustration. He knew he'd made mistakes in the past, confused about what he wanted and needed. He refused to acknowledge that he had once been naive, which made him feel foolish for failing to recognize his own emotions.

Seeing no answer that she wanted to hear, Kaelyn pushed further. "Admit it. Say you still have feelings for me. You wouldn't have been so good to me otherwise."

Theo shoved her back. "No, I only care about Elyse. There's nothing left between us. Don't come near me again. I don't want to see you."

She stumbled and fell to the ground, clutching her hip in pain as tears streamed down her face.

"You want to be with Elyse? Then think carefully. You may never see her again!" she suddenly screamed.

Theo hesitated with his hand on the car door, his brow furrowing. "What do you mean by that?"

Kaelyn's laughter echoed through the parking garage, wild and mocking.

Chapter 369:

Theo despised the sound of Kaelyn's laughter; it always triggered a sense of panic within him, as if something beyond his control had occurred. His eyes darkened with concern. "What did you do? Is Elyse okay? Tell me straight."

Kaelyn arched her eyebrows, unable to hide the smugness dancing in her eyes. "If you're so curious about her, why don't you swing by her place and see if she's still kicking around?"

Theo's heart skipped a beat. He swung open the door and stepped out of the car, seizing Kaelyn by the collar. "What did you do? Did you hurt her?"

Kaelyn's eyes gleamed with a hint of madness. She grinned maniacally and taunted, "If you're dying to know, why not check if Elyse is still chilling at home?"

Theo seethed, his fury threatening to consume him. Even with Theo's grip tightening around her neck, Kaelyn remained unfazed. She smirked defiantly, her demeanor bordering on madness.

Theo took a deep breath, attempting to rein in his anger. Releasing Kaelyn, he yanked open the back door and shoved her inside. After a fit of coughing, Kaelyn raised an eyebrow. "So you're banishing me to the back because you're saving the front seat for Elyse?"

Theo's expression remained stoic as he buckled his seatbelt. "You catch on quick."

Kaelyn choked back a retort, her face betraying a fleeting sense of defeat before morphing into resentment.

She loathed Elyse. After all her scheming and plotting, Elyse had chosen someone else. But she couldn't understand why Theo still hung up on Elyse. Focused on the road ahead, Theo paid no mind to Kaelyn's complex emotions.

Upon arriving at Jayden's villa, Theo swiftly unbuckled his seatbelt, dashed out of the car, and incessantly rang the doorbell. The guard at the gate didn't recognize Theo, and Theo's erratic behavior prompted him to alert Driscoll.

Reviewing the surveillance footage, Driscoll immediately recognized Theo. Puzzled by Theo's unexpected visit, Driscoll informed Jayden. Meanwhile, Jayden was engrossed in a TV series featuring Tracy. Jayden's eyelids grew heavy as he watched the screen, but upon hearing Driscoll's news about Theo, he snapped to attention.

"Elyse's expression soured. "What's he doing here? He's not welcome."

Jayden popped a grape into his mouth, a mischievous grin playing on his lips. "True, he's not. But since he's here, might as well see what he wants." Glancing at Elyse, he inquired, "Don't you want to talk to him?"

Nibbling on a pear, Elyse mumbled, "I'll think about it."

Jayden didn't press the issue, turning instead to Driscoll. "Let's go see what's up."

Driscoll nodded, accompanying Jayden. At the villa's gate, Jayden found Theo with bloodshot eyes, looking unhinged. Theo, seemingly irked by the delay, began pounding on the gate, his frustration palpable. Standing behind him, Kaelyn smirked, exuding sarcasm and disdain.

Spotting Jayden, Kaelyn's smirk widened with a sense of triumph, as if she had predicted the absence of Elyse. She looked particularly smug. Jayden was baffled by Kaelyn's audacity in showing up uninvited.

Ever since rescuing Elyse, he had been probing for clues about Kaelyn's backer, but she remained elusive. Twirling a ring on his thumb, Jayden looked down and kept his emotions concealed.

Theo's voice boomed through the gate. "Jayden, you're despicable. Let me in. I need to see Elyse."

Jayden's response was nonchalant. "Why should I let you in? This isn't a public place."

Unwilling to entertain Jayden's rebuttal, Theo demanded, "Open up! I want to see Elyse."

Jayden scoffed at Theo's demand. "You think you can just waltz in and see my wife? Was Elyse someone this ex-boyfriend of hers could demand to see whenever he pleased?"

Chapter 370:

Theo hadn't seen Elyse for a while. His concern grew, fueled by Jayden's evasive responses. The color drained from Theo's face as he pressed, "What's happened to Elyse, Jayden? I've warned you before. If you can't look after her properly, just let her come back to me."

Jayden's expression soured. "What makes you think I'm not taking care of her? Are you blind?"

Jayden felt he had been attentive to Elyse, who frequently reacted with tantrums and appeared particularly rebellious. Nonetheless, he maintained his patience, consistently soothing her with care. The experience was new to him.

Despite his efforts, Theo still doubted him. “This man must be insane.” As these thoughts darkened his mood, Jayden’s expression grew even more severe. Theo’s gaze hardened. “Then where is she? If she doesn’t appear soon, it means you’ve lost her.”

“You’re being unreasonable,” Jayden snapped, his frustration evident. “Are you here just to stir up trouble?”

Kaelyn had been observing quietly from the sidelines. Finally, she stepped in, placing her hand on Theo’s shoulder. He shrugged it off immediately, not in the mood for consolation. Blushing with embarrassment, Kaelyn withdrew her hand, the warmth in her gaze vanished. She turned her cool gaze on Jayden and demanded, “You can’t bring Elyse out, can you? Is Elyse really inside? You can’t blame us for reacting this way.”

Theo fixed his stare on Jayden, awaiting an answer. Jayden’s gaze filled with disdain as he looked at Kaelyn. Her boldness seemed to suggest she knew more than she let on. Was she truly arrogant or simply acting foolish? Jayden didn’t know her well enough to decide. Firmly, he told her, “I can’t give you any details. Whatever you think is happening, you’re mistaken.”

Theo’s patience wore thin. “If anything happens to Elyse because of you, mark my words. I won’t let you off the hook, even if it costs me my own life.” Jayden just laughed, clearly not taking Theo’s threat to heart.

Elyse wandered over slowly, sucking on a lollipop, oblivious to the tension in the air. As she approached, she caught the tail end of Theo’s dramatic declaration and widened her eyes in surprise. “Theo, are you talking about dying for love or what?”

Jayden pressed his forehead, wondering why he had chosen such a naive partner. Seeing Elyse appeared unharmed, Theo sighed with relief. His face lit up as he saw her safe. “Thank goodness you’re okay, Elyse. I don’t know what I’d do if something happened to you.”

Elyse puzzledly replied, “Theo, we barely know each other. Please, this isn’t appropriate, especially with my husband right here.” She then scurried over to Jayden with a coy smile, which Jayden met with a stern look that made her giggle nervously.

Seeing Elyse so compliant with Jayden made Theo’s heart sink. He remembered a time when she had looked at him that way. When Elyse looked up and saw Kaelyn staring at her full of disbelief, her face broke into a self-satisfied smirk. Elyse had learned from Jayden that Kaelyn was the mastermind behind the recent kidnapping plot, making Kaelyn not just a familiar face, but an enemy.

Kaelyn gasped, “Why are you here? Aren’t you already...?” Her voice trailed off as she clamped her mouth shut, her eyes wide with a mix of emotions.

With a roll of her eyes, Elyse retorted sharply, “If I’m not here, where should I be? Did you expect me somewhere else?” Seeing Elyse unharmed, Theo realized Kaelyn had deceived him. He glared at Kaelyn, his voice icy. “You said Elyse was in trouble. She looks fine to me. How do you explain this?”

Kaelyn flustered under Theo’s scrutiny, stammering, “I heard your sister got detained by the police. Why are you here instead?” Elyse watched the exchange with amusement. Despite Kaelyn’s apparent distress and guilt, she knew revealing any details about the kidnapping would only implicate her further.