

Bound love 371

Chapter 371:

Elyse shrugged. “Mabel was arrested for breaking the law. What does that have to do with me? Should I be blamed just because she messed up?”

Kaelyn clenched her teeth. “That’s not what I’m saying.”

Elyse said, “Then what are you getting at? Where do you think I belong right now? What should have happened to me?”

Kaelyn looked at Elyse, her expression turning stern, and found herself lost for words.

“That’s enough,” Theo couldn’t take it any longer and shot Kaelyn a warning glance. He then faced Elyse, his stern look melting away, and said, “As long as you’re safe, that’s all that matters to me.”

Elyse chewed on her lollipop, silently observing Theo, curious about how he managed to say such cheesy words. Theo exhaled deeply, then turned his gaze to Jayden. “Look after her. If she comes to any harm, I’ll hold you responsible.”

Jayden sneered. “If you’re out of your mind, seek help. Don’t bring your chaos here.”

Ignoring Jayden’s words, Theo looked intently at Elyse and then walked away. Kaelyn gave Elyse a nasty stare and hurried after Theo. When they left, Jayden shifted his gaze towards Elyse, his face stern. “Why is he still obsessed with you? Didn’t you break up with him ages ago?”

Elyse scowled, clearly upset. “I did break it off with him. I never reached out to him. He showed up on his own. What could I do?”

“You don’t know what to do. You believe you are innocent, don’t you?” Jayden scoffed and then wheeled his chair away.

Elyse's eyes widened as she watched Jayden's retreating figure in confusion. "What did he mean? Did I claim to be innocent?"

Driscoll sighed and explained, "He is just feeling jealous."

Elyse was momentarily stunned. After a pause, she slowly understood. "Is he jealous because of my ex-boyfriend?"

The realization seemed like an epiphany to Elyse, sparking her curiosity. Noticing Elyse's unusual reaction, Driscoll felt compelled to advise her. "Yes, you should try to calm him. He can be quite harsh when he's upset."

Elyse nodded and responded, "Alright, I'll try to soothe him."

Meanwhile, Theo opened the car door and climbed inside. Kaelyn followed suit, opening the back door, and was about to climb in when Theo sharply told her, "Get out."

Kaelyn turned ghostly white and replied cautiously, "I won't bother you. Just give me a lift."

Theo spun around, giving her a frosty stare. "Why would you lie to me, making me worry about Elyse? What's your game?"

Kaelyn felt super hurt. She bit her lip, tears pouring down her face, as she said, "I swear I didn't lie. It's Elyse's sister, Mabel. I know her, and she told me a few days ago that she owed eighty million and planned to sell her sister for money."

Theo scowled and asked, "Are you saying Mabel planned to kidnap Elyse?"

Kaelyn nodded and explained, "Initially, I thought Mabel was just kidding around, but when I couldn't find Elyse and heard Mabel got arrested, I really believed Elyse had been kidnapped."

Kaelyn wept and said, "Everything I told you is true, but I had no idea Elyse was safe. I don't have any grudges with Elyse, so why would I lie about her being kidnapped?"

Theo observed Kaelyn, who was sobbing miserably. Gradually, he felt inclined to believe her. He asked, "Is this the truth?"

"Yes, absolutely," Kaelyn confirmed earnestly. "If you're skeptical, you can verify with Mabel."

Theo considered Mabel and felt indifferent. He viewed her as utterly self-absorbed and manipulative, nothing compared to Elyse. Kaelyn added, "Mabel is in custody, and her court date is coming soon. I'm not sure if her getting arrested is connected to Elyse."

Theo thought hard for a while, looking serious. Finally, he decided not to kick Kaelyn out of the car. Instead, he put on his seatbelt and stepped on the gas.

Seeing this, Kaelyn's lips curled into a slight smirk. Her earlier distressed expression quickly shifted to one of victory. She wiped the tears from her cheeks, confident that Theo would not actually kick her from the car. She then said to Theo, who was driving, "If you really want Elyse, I can help you get her back. It'll be the last favor I do for you."

Theo listened but remained silent, neither rejecting nor accepting her offer.

Chapter 372:

Elyse stormed back into the living room to confront Jayden, only to discover his wheelchair deliberately positioned just out of her reach. Doubtful of his motives, Elyse quickened her steps, yet Jayden moved away just as quickly, keeping a firm distance between them. Her teeth gritted in frustration, Elyse chased after Jayden who effortlessly avoided her, never letting her close enough to touch him.

"Jayden, stop this or I'll get really mad," Elyse exclaimed, placing her hands on her hips and glaring at him. Her warning seemed to go unheard as Jayden gave her only a brief dismissive look and continued to avoid engagement. Elyse was taken aback by his unwavering stubbornness.

Jayden paid her no mind and continued wheeling himself back to his room. Driscoll, witnessing this, felt compelled to comment. "Keep in mind, calming him down when he's upset is quite the challenge. It requires a lot of time, effort, and patience."

Elyse's face darkened. She paused, took a deep breath, and quickly made her way upstairs. Driscoll watched them go, shaking his head. "One moment they're all sweet, and the next, they're at each other's throats."

When Elyse entered the room, she found Jayden already in his pajamas, absorbed in reading on the edge of the bed. "How did you manage to change and get into bed from your wheelchair so quickly, considering your condition?" Elyse asked, her voice tinged with skepticism.

Jayden didn't respond, his attention unwavering from his book, ignoring her question as he turned another page. Elyse was shocked by his cold disregard. This level of icy silence was new to them, and the sensation of being completely ignored was awful.

She stepped in front of Jayden and gently nudged his arm, her voice filled with uncertainty. "Are you really ignoring me now?"

Jayden subtly moved, positioning himself in a way that blocked further interaction. Feeling the sudden weight of sadness, tears started to well up in Elyse's eyes. "Please don't be mad at me," she pleaded.

But Jayden stayed silent, his face giving nothing away. Tears started to fall down Elyse's cheeks, each snuffle a desperate plea for his attention. Yet Jayden kept his focus on the book. Elyse felt a chill of fear, her heart racing. Was it possible that Jayden would never forgive her?

In a desperate attempt to get his attention, she climbed onto the bed and straddled his lap. "Stop reading and look at me," she insisted.

Discover endless adventures on [g alno vels](#) ; con

Jayden reluctantly raised his head, his irritation clear in his eyes. "Get off," he muttered sharply.

Elyse steadied herself with her hands on her hips, giving herself a mental pep talk. “It’s not my fault Theo’s out of control. I’m devoted to you, and you have no reason to be upset. You’re the only one who has my heart.”

Jayden snapped his book shut, crossed his arms, and said coldly, “Really? Exclusively mine? Prove it.”

Elyse panicked internally. How was she supposed to prove such a thing? Rip her heart out and hand it to him? Jayden stayed quiet, his intense stare fixed on her. Elyse grew more confused. What kind of proof did he want?

Jayden scoffed. “Can’t prove it, can you? That means you’re lying to me.”

Elyse’s eyes widened. Was he intentionally trying to start a fight? Jayden kept accusing her, claiming she didn’t love him. Initially, Elyse was taken aback, thinking he was truly furious. But as the confrontation dragged on, her shock turned to frustration.

Suddenly, she grabbed his chin and kissed him forcefully. Her kiss was wild, filled with a mix of anger and passion. She bit at his lips fiercely. At first, Jayden was surprised by Elyse’s aggressive approach. He let her kiss him momentarily, but then he realized how bad a kisser she was. Unable to take it anymore, he grabbed the back of her head with one hand and wrapped his other arm tightly around her waist. Pulling her close, he returned her kiss with equal passion, consuming her breath.

Now Jayden was the one in control, kissing Elyse passionately and leaving her breathless. Eventually, she collapsed against him, drained. Elyse’s eyes were moist as she caught her breath, resting against Jayden’s chest. After a moment, she whispered, “Does this show how much I love you?” Jayden raised an eyebrow skeptically. “Not even close.”

At that moment, Elyse understood the challenge reflected in Jayden’s guarded look. A wave of anxiety washed over her as she slowly unbuttoned her coat and slipped out of her dress. Before long, she was in nothing but tiny bits of cloth.

Jayden stared at Elyse’s body. Her beauty was undeniable, enhanced by the way her body responded to his touch. “Is this how you choose to show your love?” Jayden asked deliberately.

A deep blush spread across Elyse's cheeks. She hesitated, her fingers lingering on the clasp of her bra. Jayden took a step back, his tone firm. "If you're not sure, get dressed. Don't behave as if I'm pressuring you."

Elyse paused, her lips parting slightly. With shaky hands, she finally unhooked her bra. Her breasts were gently freed from the confines of the fabric, and as they came into view, Jayden's gaze intensified, his eyes turning a deep shade of passion as he reached out to her.

Chapter 373:

Jayden squeezed Elyse's breasts so hard that she cried out in pain. "Ouch! It hurts!" Tears filled Elyse's eyes from the pain.

Seeing this, Jayden released his grip and lovingly wiped away the tears from the corners of her eyes. "Good girl, take your underwear off," he coaxed gently.

Elyse froze. Suddenly, she realized what he wanted to do. "Is this the proof you want? You just want to sleep with me. I don't want this. I have to visit Cody's studio tomorrow. Go away. I'm going to sleep."

Elyse got off him, covered her breasts, and reached for her pajamas. Jayden frowned. "You're not going to appease me? I'm done. I won't do that anymore," she snorted.

Jayden's face darkened. "How could she seduce him and then abruptly stop?" Jayden reached out and pulled her back, forcing her to return to his arms.

"What do you want?" Elyse said fiercely. "I'm telling you, I don't want to do it. Since you don't want to talk to me, let's stop talking and live our own lives."

Jayden clenched his teeth and muttered, "You are quite bold, aren't you?" With her head held high, Elyse countered, "Of course I am. Is this the first day you've known me?" As she attempted to turn away, Jayden firmly pressed her down, his teeth sinking into her nipple, his supple tongue swirling and teasing, eliciting a stream of unceasing moans.

Slowly, Jayden's hand trailed down, grazing her underwear. With a gentle tug, it slipped down to her knees. Pinned to the bed, Elyse struggled against Jayden's hold, her legs writhing, her underwear slipping down, pooling at her feet.

"It's you who refuses to speak to me first. If you don't want to talk, then don't. I won't either. Just stay away from me. You're hurting me with your bite," Elyse seethed with anger, unable to dislodge the man fervently sucking on her nipple.

Jayden quietly maneuvered into a position where Elyse lay beneath him, her head swimming so fiercely that she failed to register their altered stance. Surveying the dazed girl beneath him, Jayden's mood lifted. He playfully pinched her soft cheek, relishing her ensuing irritation. Nibbling her ear, he murmured, "Behave. Spread your legs."

Initially resistant, Elyse found her legs forced apart as Jayden peremptorily initiated intercourse. Tonight, sleep would evade Elyse.

The following morning, Elyse entered the living room with a somber expression, arms crossed, trailing behind her. Jayden appeared embarrassed. As they approached the table, Jayden attempted to grasp Elyse's hand, but she deftly evaded, maintaining a distance. Wordlessly, Jayden withdrew his hand. Observing this, Driscoll shook his head and sighed. Yesterday's scenario had repeated itself, only this time it was Elyse who seethed with anger.

Furious at Jayden's behavior, Elyse felt a sense of injustice. He had rejected her touch before, yet he had slept with her in the end. It rankled deeply. Bearing this in mind, Elyse shot a glare at Jayden, who met her gaze impassively. In a timely manner, Driscoll interjected, "Mrs. Owen, I've provided the driver with the address of your new workplace. He'll ensure you arrive on time."

"Thank you," Elyse replied, picking up a sandwich to eat. After breakfast, her anger had mostly faded. She stood and walked out of the villa. When she noticed Jayden following her, she felt uneasy. "Why are you following me?"

"I'll accompany you to work," he replied calmly.

"I don't need it. It's only a short journey," she said, unable to hide her frustration. Jayden frowned. "Driscoll mentioned that you'd join the other three male apprentices of Cody."

Elyse nodded, then paused. “Did he care that she would get along with other men?” She quickly dismissed the thought. “He wasn’t the jealous type.”

After getting into the car, Elyse stared out the window in good spirits while Jayden watched her. Unable to resist, he took her hand. She seemed lost in thought and didn’t notice. He held her hand the entire drive. When they arrived, Jayden said, “Practice your violin and try to avoid unnecessary socializing.”

Elyse rolled her eyes. “There are only a few people at the studio. If I don’t socialize, who will have lunch with me?”

“I’ll ask Driscoll to join you for lunch every day,” Jayden suggested, his concern apparent.

“No way,” Elyse snapped. “I want to build strong relationships with other members. Stay out of my social life.”

Chapter 374:

Waving her fist as a warning, Elyse said goodbye to Jayden before heading into the Blue Sea Music Studio. The studio required a combination lock, but she had received the code from Cody yesterday, so she opened the door effortlessly.

Inside the studio was spacious and empty, echoing softly with each step she took. She glanced around awkwardly, realizing she was alone. Was she too early? Pulling out her phone, she checked the time. Just past nine. She found a chair and sat down, waiting for others to arrive.

She waited until well past ten and became drowsy. The sound of the doorbell startled her awake. She blinked groggily and saw a well-built man in a light blue shirt approaching her slowly. “Are you the new apprentice of Mr. Tucker?” His voice was gentle. A small mole near his eye, framed by long eyelashes, held Elyse’s attention.

Elyse found the handsome man utterly captivating, losing herself in his gaze. “Sorry to keep you waiting. I’m Gavin Cramer, another apprentice of Mr. Tucker,” Gavin smiled warmly, offering her his hand.

After a brief pause, Elyse snapped to attention, jumped up from her chair, and shook his hand respectfully. “Hello, I’m Elyse Lloyd. Nice to meet you.”

“Nice to meet you too,” Gavin replied. Noticing the violin she had brought, he asked with curiosity, “How did Mr. Tucker find you?”

Elyse scratched her head sheepishly. “A friend of mine showed him a video of me playing the violin. He thought I had potential.”

Gavin nodded thoughtfully. “I was discovered by him at an international competition.”

Curious, Elyse asked Gavin which competition it was. Rubbing his chin, Gavin reminisced, “The Rainbow Cup. I was 17, competing in the youth category.”

Elyse asked cautiously, “Did you win first place?” Gavin was taken aback. “How did you know? Have you seen it?”

Elyse wore a complex expression. “I actually watched that competition, but I never expected that I would get to know the first-place winner today.”

“Fate is incredible, isn’t it?” Gavin remarked with a smile. Elyse nodded, agreeing with him. Gavin headed to the kitchen to make coffee. As he brewed, he said, “If you used to watch a lot of competition videos, then you’ll be most impressed with Irving, another apprentice of Mr. Tucker.”

Elyse looked intrigued. “Why?”

“Because he is a star. He’s won countless competitions, large and small. Nobody rivals him in his field,” Gavin explained.

Elyse was stunned. This Irving sounded a lot like Vicky—competitive to the core. “Who’s been badmouthing me while I was gone?” Elyse turned to see a man in a brown leather jacket with sunglasses perched on his head walking toward them with a swagger.

Pointing at the man, Gavin said, "This is Irving Dunn. If you want to compete, he's your go-to. He's got tons of experience."

Elyse nodded respectfully, then turned to Irving. "Hello, I'm Elyse Lloyd. Nice to meet you." She eyed Irving cautiously. It wasn't her fault for feeling timid. With his fierce demeanor and mafia boss attitude, Irving didn't seem like someone to mess with.

He looked her up and down before saying, "Average." Elyse blinked, confused. Seeing Elyse's confused expression, Gavin shot a look at Irving and said, "Don't give her a hard time. She might just be a little confused."

Irving laughed and mockingly blew air at Elyse. "He called you clueless. Can a simpleton like you really play the violin well?" Elyse defiantly insisted, "Of course I can." She opened her violin case and started playing.

Gavin listened intently to her performance. The tone was clear and crisp. She played with both technical skill and heartfelt emotion, the two weaving together beautifully. Gavin glanced over at Irving, who despite his usual sarcasm, remained silent and listened closely to the melody.

As Gavin watched Elyse play, he appeared deep in thought. He began to understand why Cody had chosen her as his final apprentice.

Chapter 375:

Elyse lingered in the dreamy soundscape long after the final notes of her violin faded. Blinking, she slowly reconnected with the room, then lifted her chin and met Irving's gaze. "Don't call me average," she declared.

Irving, caught off guard by the fiery retort from her, chuckled beneath his breath. Lowering his head, he plucked the violin from her grasp. With a casual tilt of his head, he coaxed the first note from the instrument, sending a shiver down Elyse's spine. Irving was playing "Winter," a piece notorious for its intricate tricks. Each note painted a scene. Elyse stood frozen in a desolate landscape, the biting wind and icy snow threatening to consume her. Irving's fingers danced across the strings, a relentless storm brewing in his music. The final note hung in the air before Irving opened his eyes, his gaze lingering on the mesmerized Elyse. Perhaps unfazed by her reaction, he tossed the

violin back to her and sauntered away, muttering under his breath, “Just average. Utterly average.”

Elyse’s brow furrowed in confusion. Gavin, sensing her turmoil, offered a placating pat on the shoulder. “Don’t take it personally. That’s just Irving. Sharp tongue, maybe not the warmest soul, but an undeniable violin prodigy.”

Elyse frowned again. Was Gavin implying Irving was a one-trick pony? Just good at the violin and nothing else. Speaking of late, a voice interrupted their exchange. A lady with a gentle smile, dressed in jeans and a sweater, breezed into the room, her long hair trailing behind her. As she approached, a soft fragrance tickled Elyse’s nose.

“I’m Fiona Evans. Apologies for my tardiness. Here’s the bread I brought for everyone. I got held up while making it.” She produced a steaming loaf from her bag and handed it to Gavin, sticking out her tongue playfully. “For the love of bread, Gavin, don’t tell Mr. Tucker I’m late, alright?”

Gavin feigned helplessness, reaching out to touch the warm bread. “Alright, alright. Sealed with the sacred pact of bread. Your secret’s safe with me.”

Elyse, still confused, patted Fiona’s head and asked, “What time is considered late?”

“Half past nine,” Gavin replied.

Elyse’s eyes widened. “Then aren’t you all...”

Gavin’s hand shot up, covering her mouth. “Let’s just grab a bite before Mr. Tucker arrives,” he interjected. Elyse, speechless, watched as Gavin effectively shut down her inquiry.

As they started to enjoy the bread, even the ever-solitary Irving joined them. Fiona, curious, took a bite of the bread and asked, “I heard you were once the concertmaster of the Celestial Sounds Symphony. Why the switch? Did you leave to focus on learning from Mr. Tucker?”

After a thoughtful pause, Elyse explained her reason for leaving. Gavin's face creased in surprise. "They kicked out a talented composer like you? Sounds like the Celestial Sounds Symphony is on a downward spiral. Rotten leadership from the top, I bet."

Taking a sip of coffee, Irving said calmly, "Word on the street is there's a power struggle within that orchestra. Your incident suggests that the assistant director might be gaining the upper hand."

Fiona, realizing she'd touched a nerve, reached out to comfort Elyse. "Don't fret. Here, your talent will flourish, not be stifled."

Elyse nodded in agreement. "Honestly, while I was initially sad about leaving, now I'm grateful. It feels like here, I can truly focus on my music."

"Free music," Fiona chimed in, "a world away from the rigid constraints of an orchestra." Elyse's eyes sparkled with excitement.

As they finished the bread, Irving cast a curious glance toward the door. "What's keeping Mr. Tucker? Is he not interested in taking you on as an apprentice?"

Panic flickered across Elyse's face as she looked helplessly at the others. Gavin shot Irving a warning glare. "Watch your words, Irving. Don't scare her. Mr. Tucker must be busy. No need to worry."

Irving snorted and returned to his coffee. The clock ticked closer to lunchtime when the studio door swung open, revealing Cody holding the hand of a small boy. The eight-year-old wore a backpack and possessed a delicate face that, despite his age, held a serious expression.

Cody offered Elyse an apologetic smile. "Apologies for the delay. Had to pick up Forrest."

Elyse hurriedly reassured him. "It's alright, Mr. Tucker. I've been getting along well with Gavin, Irving, and Fiona. Don't worry."

Cody then turned to Forrest. "Forrest Greene, say hello to Elyse and introduce yourself."

Forrest looked up, his voice sweet as honey. "Hello, Elyse. Heard about you from Mr. Tucker. I'm Forrest Greene, sort of your senior in the studio. Feel free to ask me anything."

Elyse was taken aback by Forrest's words.

Chapter 376:

Forrest lifted his head with confidence, reaching out his hand towards the taller figure of Elyse. Striving to exude maturity, Forrest declared, "Elyse, I promise to care for you diligently from this moment forward. You can rely on me."

After a brief pause, Elyse managed a gentle smile and accepted Forrest's hand. "Forrest, I appreciate that," she replied softly. "Don't fret. I have a knack for looking after others," Forrest boasted, trying to maintain an air of grown-up confidence.

With a warm smile, Fiona took Forrest's hand and suggested, "I've baked some bread. Shall we go and enjoy it together?"

Perplexed, Elyse inquired, "Can an eight-year-old child be my senior here?"

Gavin grinned in response and explained, "Forrest became Mr. Tucker's apprentice before you did, so he holds seniority. However, he's just beginning his violin journey. He might need your guidance."

Approaching with a loaf of bread, Cody provided further context. "Forrest is the son of my late friend. I've taken him under my wing, and he's shown a keen interest in learning the violin. Hence, I've become his mentor." Elyse nodded understandingly.

"Come here, Fiona," Cody beckoned. After savoring the bread, Cody retrieved a document from his bag. Fiona hastened over, asking, "What's the matter, Mr. Tucker?"

"These are the registration forms for the Champions Cup. Once completed, hand them to Irving, and he'll handle the signup process for you two," Cody explained. Cody handed two registration forms to Elyse and Fiona, then turned to Gavin with

instructions. “Make sure to attend the show this afternoon. Punctuality is key. I have some pressing matters to address, so I trust you to take care of everyone in my absence.”

Gavin nodded earnestly. “Understood. You can count on me.” With that, Cody entrusted Irving with the registration process and hurriedly left.

Irving approached with pens in hand, urging, “Quickly now, fill out the forms, and I’ll submit them for you.” Fiona eagerly grabbed a pen and swiftly scanned the form before filling it out with enthusiasm.

Meanwhile, Elyse took her time perusing the form. Sensing Irving’s impatience, she looked up and met his stern gaze. Arms crossed, Irving remarked disapprovingly, “It’s just a registration form. What’s taking so long?”

“This is my first time participating in such a grand competition,” Elyse replied, her excitement shining through.

Irving was surprised and puzzled. “The Champions Cup isn’t a major event. It’s only for the top eight in the country. But making it to that level gets you into the world-level competition.” Elyse’s face lit up with longing when she heard this.

Sensing her eagerness, Irving handed her another pen and urged, “Come on, fill out the registration form quickly.” Taking the pen, Elyse diligently completed the form.

Meanwhile, Gavin approached and asked, “Elyse, could you come with me to the TV station to record a show?”

Perplexed, Elyse replied, “I’m not sure how much I can contribute there.”

Gavin shook his head, explaining, “I’d feel quite lonely going solo. I could really use someone to cheer me on. Besides, I’d love for you to join in on the show and make an appearance.”

Glancing between Gavin and Elyse, Irving interjected, “Are you planning to introduce Elyse as one of our own?”

Gavin nodded. "She's now an apprentice of Mr. Tucker. There's no need to hide it." Pointing at Elyse, Irving advised, "Make sure to behave appropriately this afternoon. And do avoid anything that could embarrass us."

Elyse nodded solemnly. "Understood." Fifteen minutes later, Gavin and Elyse hopped into the car and set off for the TV station.

Sitting beside Forrest, Elyse's curiosity bubbled up like a spring eager to quench its thirst. "Forrest, why is it just Fiona and me diving into the competition? Aren't you joining us?"

Gavin's eyes remained fixed on the winding road ahead as he replied with casual confidence, "Irving and I don't need to participate in competitions to prove ourselves. I had a solo concert just last year, and Irving is gearing up for one at the dawn of the new year."

Elyse sat in stunned silence, her lips slightly parted in disbelief. So Gavin and Irving were already at the level where they could hold solo concerts. As Elyse contemplated her journey, she couldn't help but measure herself against the standards set by her two accomplished seniors. It dawned on her that she still had a path to tread before she could confidently take center stage for her solo concert.

As they lingered by the elevator at the TV station, Elyse unexpectedly crossed paths with Kaelyn, who, it turned out, was there for her own professional endeavors. Upon seeing Elyse accompanied by an unfamiliar gentleman, Kaelyn couldn't resist teasing. "Elyse, who's this mystery man? Have you found yourself a new beau? Does Jayden know?"

Chapter 377:

Elyse's brows furrowed deeply. "Why is it automatically assumed that any man seen with me must be romantically involved with me?" Her retort crackled with a blend of incredulity and disgust. "It seems like you're the one with a twisted imagination."

Kaelyn felt a surge of frustration at Elyse's newfound boldness. In the past, Elyse had been a pushover, easily swayed and eager to please. Kaelyn could have played her like a fiddle, but now it seemed Elyse had grown a backbone.

Gavin, intrigued by the tension, set his phone aside and chimed in. “Do you two have some sort of history?”

“No, she’s more like my nemesis,” Elyse retorted impatiently.

Gavin, oblivious to their past, glanced between them and offered a pragmatic reminder. “Stay focused on what’s important. Don’t waste energy on insignificant people.”

Elyse nodded in agreement. “Got it, noted.”

With her arms crossed, Kaelyn shot them a cold glare as they entered the elevator. Suddenly struck by inspiration, Kaelyn swiftly dialed Theo’s number. As Kaelyn heard the busy tone, she wasn’t surprised in the slightest. Theo must have blacklisted her, she reasoned. Casting a quick glance at a nearby staff member, she extended her hand. “Could you lend me your phone? I need to make a call,” she requested.

The staff member, sensing the urgency in her demeanor, handed over his device without hesitation. With deft fingers, Kaelyn dialed Theo’s number once more, her heart skipping a beat as the call connected without rejection.

“Theo, you’ll never guess where I just spotted Elyse,” she began, her tone laced with a mix of excitement and mischief.

However, Theo, still immersed in his work and nursing residual irritation from their past encounters, responded with guarded skepticism. His patience snapped, irritation oozing from every word. “Can you please stop bothering me? I won’t entertain any of your claims,” he snapped, his tone tinged with frustration.

“I’m telling you it’s true. Elyse is definitely with another man at the TV station. Who is he? And why is Elyse acting so cute towards him?” Kaelyn persisted, her tone growing more insistent by the second.

Theo’s response was laced with exasperation, his anger simmering beneath the surface. “Are you kidding me? Do you honestly expect me to believe this nonsense? Elyse barely acknowledges my existence these days. How on earth could she have a new flame out of the blue? If you bug me with this again, you’ll regret it, believe me.”

Kaelyn quickly changed her tack, adopting a softer tone. “Hey, that’s not what I meant. I just thought you might want to reconnect with Elyse. If that’s the case, I can set up a meeting for you two,” she offered, attempting to diffuse the tension.

But Theo wasn’t having any of it, his tone firm and resolute. “Enough, Kaelyn. Spare me the drama. I’m not interested in wasting my time on your wild theories. Just steer clear of me from now on, okay?”

Confusion tinged Kaelyn’s voice as she questioned, “But didn’t I offer to help you patch things up with Elyse? Why the sudden change in attitude?” Her words carried a note of hurt, her disappointment palpable.

Theo’s words cut through the air like icy blades. “So what? I’m simply concerned that you might end up hurting her. She’s nothing like you. She’s gentle, kind. She’s just better than you at everything,” he declared, his tone chillingly indifferent.

Frustration bubbled within Kaelyn, her desire to argue further warring with Theo’s abrupt end to the conversation. With a surge of anger, she hurled the phone to the floor.

“No! That’s my new phone!” The staff member’s anxious exclamation came as he scrambled to retrieve and check the fallen device for any damage.

Kaelyn responded with a dismissive wave, barely glancing at him. “It’s just a phone. I can replace it for you later,” she said coolly, her mind clearly preoccupied with more important matters.

Her anger still simmering from the earlier incident involving Elyse, Kaelyn turned sharply towards the staff member, her tone both firm and enticing as she made an offer. “I’ll triple your payment for a favor I need.”

The staff member, wary yet intrigued by the proposition, replied cautiously, “What do you need me to do?”

Upon entering the dressing room, the makeup artist quickly guided Elyse to a seat in front of a large mirror. Elyse, visibly tense, caught her reflection looking back at her with a nervous expression. Sensing her unease, Gavin offered a comforting reassurance.

“Don’t worry, I’ve already spoken to the host, and I’ve made it clear that we’ll avoid any topics that might make you uncomfortable.”

“Thank you,” Elyse responded with a relieved nod.

As the makeup artist worked their magic, they made their way to the set where Elyse, though still a new apprentice, was greeted with a special segment crafted just for her to introduce her to the audience.

After the filming concluded, Elyse’s part was done, and she retreated to the lounge to wait for Gavin. She took this quiet moment to send Jayden a message, keeping him updated on how her day was unfolding. As she typed away on her phone, a staff member entered the room carrying a glass of water, deliberately avoiding eye contact.

“Ms. Lloyd, you must be thirsty. Have some water,” the staff member murmured softly, placing the glass carefully on a nearby table.

Chapter 378:

Elyse, oblivious, her thumbs flying across the phone screen, didn’t register the staff member’s hesitant approach or the flicker of alarm in his eyes. “Thanks,” Elyse muttered absentmindedly.

The staff member hesitated, a warning catching in his throat. But the specter of Kaelyn’s wrath loomed large, and losing his job over a whim wasn’t a risk he was willing to take. With a heavy sigh, he retreated, leaving Elyse alone with the water.

Parched, Elyse reached for the glass instinctively, downing the water in a single gulp. It wasn’t long before a strange sensation bloomed in her body. Her breath hitched, and a burning ember ignited in her lower abdomen, radiating outward in heat waves.

Panic clawed at Elyse’s throat. The water was drugged. It couldn’t be anything else. The man wouldn’t have dared. Who else at the TV station harbored such malice? A single face flashed in Elyse’s mind. Kaelyn’s motive was clear.

Yet even with suspicion gnawing at her, confrontation was a luxury Elyse couldn’t afford. A feverish heat pulsed through her veins, her body a vessel yearning for comfort.

With trembling fingers, she fumbled for her phone, managing to send a desperate plea “help me” to Jayden before it slipped from her grasp.

Vulnerability gnawed at her. She stumbled to her feet, her vision blurring, and secured the lock on the lounge door. Every movement felt like wading through mud. Exhaustion claimed her, and she crumpled to the floor, her strength utterly depleted.

Images of her passionate encounter with Jayden flooded her mind. A feverish yearning for him consumed her. In this state, she craved his touch, his presence. No protest would escape her lips, not even if he demanded intimacy under the harsh glare of midday in his car.

Tears streamed down her flushed cheeks as she parted her lips, her breath ragged. Her body, a vessel of longing, craved the embrace she imagined was Jayden’s.

Floored in the first-floor hall, Kaelyn listened to the staff member’s feedback, a satisfied smirk playing on her lips. Confirmation of the task’s completion was met with a swift transfer of fifty thousand dollars, a reward for a job well done.

“You’ve done an exceptional job. That’s your bonus,” Kaelyn praised.

The guilt that had gnawed at the staff member earlier vanished in the face of the hefty sum. Tears welled in his eyes, not of remorse, but of pure joy and anticipation. “I’ll work my fingers to the bone to make sure everyone knows your name,” he pledged fervently.

Kaelyn offered a lazy smile. In truth, she had little interest in her entertainment career; it was merely a means to comply with her back’s orders. With a nonchalant sip of her coffee, she promised, “If the fame follows as predicted, I’ll ensure a raise and a share in the spoils.”

The staff member practically vibrated with excitement, eager to bask in Kaelyn’s favor. Her control over him was a source of twisted amusement, a testament to her power.

But her moment of triumph was shattered by the sight of Theo entering the building. Unaware of Kaelyn’s presence, he made a quick phone call, his expression grim.

A knot of unease tightened in Kaelyn's stomach. Why was Theo here? Was he after her? The staff member, familiar with both Kaelyn and Theo, blurted out, "Isn't that Mr. Ward? Looks like he's here to see you."

Kaelyn cursed under her breath, a pit forming in her gut. Had she revealed too much? After a tense moment, she squared her shoulders and asked, "Is there anything else I need to do here today?"

The staff member shook his head. "Everything's squared away. Your new gig starts in another city the day after tomorrow, so you're free to relax tomorrow."

Kaelyn made a snap decision. "I'm leaving tonight."

The staff member's eyes widened. "Tonight?"

Before he could say anything more, he caught sight of the steely glint in Kaelyn's eyes. Fear choked his voice, and he stammered, "O-okay. I'll get your tickets sorted."

A cruel smile played on Kaelyn's lips. The aphrodisiac wasn't a mere love potion. It was a silent killer, a time bomb ticking away in Elyse's body.

Even if Elyse wasn't violated, she would still meet her demise. During the autopsy, the drug wouldn't be detected, and her death would appear natural.

A glance at her watch confirmed her morbid anticipation. Ten minutes. Ten minutes until she witnessed Elyse's demise.

Chapter 379:

Theo's inquiry with his TV station contact revealed Elyse's location in a specific lounge. He approached the door and knocked, but was met with silence from within. Perplexed, he knocked several times more, but the door remained shut with no sign of anyone coming to open it. Theo tried the doorknob, but it refused to budge as it was locked from the inside. "Elyse, are you in there? Can you open the door for me?" he called out.

As Elyse lay on the floor, her ears perked up at the sound of Theo's voice outside the door. Her heart sank, filled with a tinge of disappointment. She had been waiting for Jayden, not Theo. She didn't want to be seen in this state by anyone but Jayden, but her worsening discomfort left her no other choice. Her unease wasn't due to her burning desires, but rather the sudden pounding rhythm of her heart. She had an ominous feeling that the peril she faced now was far more menacing than any she had encountered in the past, and it sent a chill down her spine.

Theo received only silence in response. Frustrated and worried, he ran out of options and resorted to force, kicking the door with all his might. His loud kicks on the door attracted a crowd of TV crews who came to see what the commotion was all about. After dozens of kicks, the door finally swung open. Theo rushed in and found Elyse lying weakly on the floor. "Elyse!" he yelled. "Are you fine?"

With a worrying rosy glow on her face, Elyse's lips parted with effort, her voice faint and labored. "I've been drugged. Please, get me to the hospital. I feel like I'm slipping away."

Theo was shocked into silence. No sooner had Elyse uttered those words than her body went limp, her eyes closing as she fell into a deep, unresponsive coma. Unbeknownst to her, the drug's effects would kick in within thirty minutes after consumption.

"Ambulance! Call the ambulance!" Without wasting any time, he scooped up her limp body, pushed through the throng of people, and sprinted towards the ambulance on standby. As the ambulance rushed to the hospital, Theo called someone to check on the empty glass from the lounge, hoping to identify the drug that harmed Elyse.

No sooner had Theo whisked her away in the ambulance than Jayden arrived at the TV station, having recklessly run four red lights in his haste to get there as quickly as possible. His driver's eyes welled up, fearing his driving days were over after getting four tickets at once.

Jayden arrived at the TV station, but Elyse was already gone by then. He inquired about her whereabouts, trying to determine which hospital she had been taken to. Meanwhile, he collected her personal belongings—her phone and purse—which she had left behind.

Storming into the lounge, he found a man holding Elyse's phone. Suddenly, it clicked that she had mentioned coming to the TV station with Gavin to record a show. Jayden's eyes locked onto the man, his voice firm and direct as he asked, "Are you Gavin?"

Gavin hesitated, phone in hand, and turned to Jayden with a curious expression. “Who are you?”

“I’m Elyse’s husband,” Jayden explained, his voice firm and urgent. “She texted me for help, and I came as fast as I could. But when I arrived, she was already gone. Someone had taken her away.”

Gavin’s expression barely flickered in surprise before he pointed to the empty glass on the table, his tone turning serious. “Elyse drank from that glass, but no one knows where the water came from. The TV station is reviewing the surveillance footage to identify who brought it to her.”

Jayden’s gaze fell on the empty glass, his brow furrowing in concern and suspicion. He took a deep breath and forced himself to remain calm, his voice steady as he asked, “Do you know which hospital she was taken to? I need to find her.”

Gavin’s expression turned sympathetic, and he apologized. “I’m so sorry. I had no idea anything had happened to Elyse until after the filming. I’ve been trying to find out more information myself, but so—” At that moment, Theo had already taken her.

Elyse was rushed to the hospital. Peyton was taking a sip of water when a nurse called him to the emergency room. He quickly set the water down and rushed to the ER, only to be met with a shocking sight: Elyse lay on the hospital bed in need of resuscitation. Peyton rushed to her side, shouting, “What’s going on?”

The nurse quickly explained, “She has ingested an unknown substance and is experiencing heart failure. We’ve administered initial treatment in the ambulance, but her heart rate is still dropping. We need to act fast.” Peyton ordered, “Get the defibrillator ready and find out what she took.”

After waiting at the TV station for what felt like an eternity, Jayden finally decided to head to the hospital where Peyton worked, hoping to find some answers. Just as he was about to leave, his phone rang. It was from the hospital. He couldn’t help but feel a surge of relief upon learning that Peyton was treating Elyse. However, his relief was short-lived as he soon discovered that the mysterious liquid had caused her heart failure. Without hesitation, he called for an analysis of the water from that glass, determined to uncover the truth behind Elyse’s sudden illness. The staff at the inspection agency informed him that the analysis would take around 12 hours to complete. Hearing that,

his expression turned fierce, his calm facade shattering. He clenched his fists, his anger nearly boiling over as he growled, “I don’t care how many people or resources it takes. We need those test results tonight. Whatever it takes, you’re analyzing those medicinal ingredients now.”

Gavin’s expression turned worried as he beheld Jayden’s intensity. “What’s going on? Is Elyse’s condition worse than we thought? Can I help with anything?” Jayden’s expression turned grim, his lips compressing into a thin line. “Whoever did this showed no mercy,” he said, his voice cold and detached. “They meant to kill Elyse.”

“What? Kill Elyse? Who could this enemy be?” Gavin’s face remained neutral, but his mind raced back to the afternoon’s events. He recalled the tense encounter between Elyse and a woman. “I think I saw something relevant today. Elyse had a spat with a woman. She mentioned that this woman was her nemesis,” he said hesitantly.

A nod from Davey prompted the servant to place the glass on a nearby surface. Once the servant had placed the glass down, Raegan directed, “Refill it, please.” The servant refilled Raegan’s glass, and she raised it toward Davey, saying, “Here’s to you, Mr. Glyn.” As if showcasing the safety of the drink, she downed it in one gulp. As she finished, Raegan’s heart raced. The wine had been laced with a substance inducing sleep for hours. Having preemptively taken an antidote, she could prove they shared the same bottle, a ploy to lower Davey’s guard.

Dealing with someone as shrewd as Davey, mere conversation posed risks; rendering him immobile was the safest recourse. Yet even after Raegan emptied her glass, Davey showed no inclination to sip from his. Raegan motioned for a refill, subtly hinting, “Another toast, Mr. Glyn.” Both being from Ambrosia, Davey would grasp the significance of a double toast as the pinnacle of respect. Davey, as an elder, couldn’t outright decline a toast without repercussions, since refusal would tarnish his reputation. Slowly, he raised his glass, a smile barely reaching his eyes.

Just as Davey was poised to drink, he abruptly set the glass down, remarking, “I just recalled I’ve taken medication as prescribed by my doctor, rendering me unable to consume alcohol or anything else for three hours.” With firm resolve, he placed the glass down on the table. Though infuriated, Raegan found his excuse plausible, leaving her no grounds for objection. So, plan A had failed conspicuously. It was time for Plan B.

As Davey prepared to depart, Raegan hastily interjected, “Mr. Glyn, I’ve heard of your expertise in cross-border trade, and as you’re aware, my family delves into international

shipping. I have a few pertinent inquiries if you'd spare a moment." Davey paused, nodding gently. "Please proceed," he said. Raegan delved into a series of intricate inquiries regarding international trade, steering clear of the elementary queries that might raise eyebrows and ensuring her questions didn't betray her intentions.

Davey remained patient, responding with impeccable logic. Upon addressing her queries, he made to leave once more. With no other recourse, Raegan accidentally spilled her wine onto him. "Oh! Apologizing profusely, Raegan feigned distress. "I'm terribly sorry, Mr. Glyn. Your suit. It's entirely my fault." She retrieved a handkerchief to dab at the stain, but Davey visibly recoiled from physical contact, taking a step back to evade her touch.

Flushed with embarrassment, Raegan withdrew her hand, continuing, "Mr. Glyn, allow me to rectify this. Our fashion designer prepared additional suits for this occasion. I'll arrange for you to select one that suits you." Her reasoning was sound. Davey couldn't refuse given the strong scent of wine and the discomfort of the sticky residue. Despite his displeasure, he had no alternative, having not brought a spare suit. Reluctantly, he nodded his assent.

Raegan gestured, summoning a servant. She instructed, "Escort Mr. Glyn to the guest room for a change." The servant complied, addressing Davey, "This way, Mr. Glyn, please." Davey followed the servant's lead. Observing Davey's departing form, Raegan murmured discreetly into her headset, "Erick, he's on his way."

Chapter 380:

Jayden narrowed his eyes. "That person must be Kaelyn. After all, Kaelyn was a celebrity too, increasing the odds she'd be at the TV station." He couldn't imagine anyone else harboring such animosity towards Elyse.

With renewed purpose, Jayden dialed a number and said to the phone, "Find Kaelyn Bennett. Bring her in no matter what." Gavin, witnessing the scene, offered a hopeful thought. "At least we can track down the culprit."

Jayden's face hardened. "I completely missed that woman. It was my bad." Gavin attempted to soothe him. "I can tell how much you care about Elyse. She's lucky to have you."

Jayden remained silent for a moment before inquiring about Elyse's condition in the studio. "Elyse is set to compete in the Champions Cup," Gavin replied sincerely. "With the first round just days away, I hope she recovers quickly and achieves her dream."

Jayden respected Gavin's concern. Reaching the hospital, Jayden spotted Theo by the operating room doors. To his utter surprise, it was Theo who had saved Elyse. A dark cloud descended upon Jayden's face. Thinking that his wife was rescued by the man who clearly desired her, a cocktail of emotions swirled within him.

Theo, equally stunned by Jayden's presence, had his own agenda. He'd hoped saving Elyse would guarantee her unwavering attention upon waking. Jayden's appearance threw a wrench in his plans. Theo sneered at Jayden's wheelchair. "You're so useless. You wouldn't have been able to save her."

Jayden clenched his fists but kept silent. This time, Theo was the hero, leaving Jayden in his debt. His voice laced with ice, Jayden responded. "If you need anything in the future, come to me. Now leave. My wife doesn't need you around."

Just as Jayden was about to retort, his phone buzzed. After listening intently, he spoke with chilling indifference. "Perhaps you should settle this with Kaelyn." Theo's blood ran cold. Could Kaelyn be involved?

"I just received word," Jayden continued. "Kaelyn boarded a plane and left. Do you believe it's a coincidence? You can ask her yourself." Theo grasped the implication. "Are you saying Kaelyn poisoned Elyse?" "Precisely," Jayden confirmed. "Kaelyn wants Elyse dead."

"Impossible. Kaelyn wouldn't go that far, no matter how much she dislikes Elyse," Theo vehemently denied the accusation. "If you don't believe me, there's nothing more to say," Jayden stated coolly. "Leave. I'll handle this."

Sensing Theo's defiance, Jayden countered. "When Elyse wakes up, she'll want to see me, not you. Spare yourself the embarrassment and leave." Unable to bear the tension any longer, Gavin stepped in.

"Sir," Gavin interjected, "why not investigate this Kaelyn woman and see if she truly intended to harm Elyse?" Confused and troubled by Kaelyn's potential motive, Theo opted to leave for answers. He needed to confront Kaelyn and get some clarity.

With Theo gone, Gavin sighed as he looked at the still-lit operating room sign. “Why does Elyse have such rotten luck? I just brought her here for a show filming. Who could have predicted this?” A worried crease appeared on Jayden’s forehead. “She’s like a delicate flower who needs my protection. She can’t be alone. Anyone could hurt her.”

Inside the operating room, Peyton worked tirelessly to stabilize Elyse’s erratic heartbeat. Despite his efforts, she remained unconscious. “Keep monitoring her vitals,” Peyton instructed his team. “I’ll have a word with the family.”

Exiting the room, Peyton approached Jayden with a grim expression. “Do you know what Elyse ingested? Has it been analyzed? Knowing the toxin is crucial for treatment.” Jayden shook his head. “Samples are already at the testing agency. They’re working around the clock to get results.”