

Bound love 381

Chapter 381:

The weight of Elyse's critical condition in the operating room pressed down on Peyton. His voice was laced with urgency as he declared, "We need to identify the cause of her heart failure immediately. Treatment hinges on a diagnosis." Jayden's face clouded over, a grim silence speaking volumes. He wasn't a researcher, and the perpetrator had fled. He'd done all he could; now all he could do was wait. Exhaustion etched lines on Peyton's face as he rubbed his temples. Rescuing his friend's wife had heightened his cautious nature; he couldn't afford a single misstep.

"I've filled you in on the situation," Peyton said firmly. "I need to get back. The moment the analysis is done, contact me at once." Jayden offered a curt nod, his expression resolute. Meanwhile, Gavin received a call from Irving. Realizing it was late and they hadn't returned home, Irving called to check on the situation. "Excuse me," Gavin mumbled, stepping away to update Irving on the tense situation.

Alone by the operating room doors, Jayden's fingers clenched and unclenched in a silent display of turmoil. Though his face remained a mask of composure, his body language betrayed the tempest within. Regret gnawed at his gut. He berated himself for failing to act sooner against Kaelyn, for letting the opportunity to stop her and prevent this tragedy slip through his fingers. If only he'd dealt with her from the beginning, Elyse wouldn't be fighting for her life. The more Jayden dwelled on it, the more his anger simmered, a primal urge to strangle Kaelyn with his bare hands.

At dawn, Jayden received the analysis report. Relief washed over him as he handed it to Peyton. Peyton reviewed the findings and swiftly administered the necessary medication. Slowly, Elyse's erratic heartbeat steadied. Emerging from the operating room after a grueling night, Peyton's eyes were bloodshot, his voice raspy. "If her heart stays stable for the next 24 hours, we can move her out of intensive care." Gratitude welled in Jayden's chest. "Thank you," he rasped. "Get some rest."

With a tired nod, Peyton retreated. Almost immediately, Jayden's phone buzzed with a call from Tobin. Tobin had located Kaelyn and asked about what to do next. A steely glint hardened Jayden's eyes. His reply was swift and brutal. "Eliminate her." Tobin shivered at the coldness in Jayden's voice. Ending the call, he faced Kaelyn, his gaze filled with loathing. "I'm truly sorry," he said, his voice heavy. "But I can't help you."

Kaelyn's face contorted in confusion. How could Jayden, the man she thought was an useless cripple, command such great influence? "You can kill me," she spat, defiance flickering in her eyes, "but Elyse will die too!" The captured male staff, however, erupted in panicked pleas. "Murder is wrong! Please let us go home!" Ignoring their cries, Tobin turned back to Kaelyn, his voice dripping with disdain. "You'll be disappointed. Mrs. Owen is alive and well. Now you face the consequences."

With a curt nod, Tobin signaled to two hulking figures who approached Kaelyn, blades glinting in the harsh light. Terror drained the color from Kaelyn's face. Despite her elaborate schemes, why did Elyse always seem to survive? Gritting her teeth, Kaelyn refused to accept her fate. Just then, the screech of tires shattered the tense silence. Theo's car skidded to a halt, and he emerged, his eyes fixated on Kaelyn. Hope flared in her eyes. "Theo! Save me!" she cried, desperation raw in her voice. "Help!"

Theo's gaze flickered to Tobin, a silent question hanging in the air. Tobin, aware of Theo's past feelings for Elyse, felt a surge of dislike. "Are you obstructing justice, Mr. Ward?" Tobin challenged. Theo frowned. "Shouldn't we at least understand the motive? What if there's a misunderstanding?" Tobin shook his head curtly. "There's no misunderstanding. Kaelyn is guilty of attempted murder. If you still care for Mrs. Owen, I suggest you step aside."

Kaelyn wept bitterly, imploring Theo. "Please believe me, Theo! I would never take anyone's life! I'm truly innocent!" Theo's expression darkened, weighing the sincerity of her words.

Chapter 382:

After a moment of contemplation, Theo posed a poignant question, "Why did you drug Elyse? Are you aware of the grave danger you placed her in?" Kaelyn anxiously bit her lip, recognizing that her response could determine her fate. If she faltered now, Theo might not intervene. Her voice quivering, she confessed, "I did indeed drug Elyse, but my intention was never to harm her. I merely sought to embarrass her with an aphrodisiac. I never intended for any harm to come to her. It wasn't until I discovered that my assistant had mistakenly administered an excessive dose that I realized the severity of the situation." Tears streamed down Kaelyn's face as she continued, "I was terrified, so I fled. I know I made a grave mistake, but I don't deserve to die. Moreover, Elyse didn't perish because of my actions."

The room fell silent, disbelief etched on the face of that male assistant. Disregarding her identity, he quickly interjected, "No! That's not how it happened at all. You coerced me

into adding the entire dose of the aphrodisiac. You threatened my career and future; otherwise, I would never have complied.” Kaelyn gazed at Theo with tear-filled eyes, pleading, “Whose side are you on? Do you believe him or me?”

Theo furrowed his brow, lost in thought. Finally, he turned to Tobin and declared, “I cannot condone senseless violence.” An expression of displeasure crossed Tobin’s face. “You dare defy me? Subdue him!” Theo, accompanied by his men, also took action. Tensions quickly escalated, leading to a clash between the two opposing sides. Amidst the chaos, Theo seized the opportunity to swiftly escort Kaelyn to safety, guiding her to the waiting car while leaving Kaelyn’s assistant behind.

Chapter 383:

Tobin, consumed by anger, wasted no time in contacting Jayden. Upon learning of Theo’s actions, Jayden scoffed, “Self-righteous fool. He’s blinded by his own sense of justice.” Anxiously, Tobin inquired, “Kaelyn has been taken away. What should I do now?” Jayden replied calmly, “Gather your men and track down their whereabouts. Kaelyn must be eliminated. She cannot be allowed to live.” Upon receiving the order, Tobin promptly set out to execute it.

At dawn, Elyse slowly regained consciousness in the ICU. Alerted by her awakening, the nurse promptly summoned the doctor. Peyton, awakened by the commotion, rushed to the ICU upon hearing the news of Elyse’s awakening. After a battery of tests, all of Elyse’s vital signs had stabilized. Peyton consented to her transfer out of the ICU.

Upon reaching the general ward, Elyse weakly raised her hand. Jayden gently grasped it and inquired, “How are you feeling?” Elyse murmured, “I’m thirsty and a bit hungry.” Jayden reassured her, “You can have some water first. Driscoll is on his way, and the chef has prepared some nutritious food specifically for you.” Elyse nodded weakly and managed to prop herself up slightly.

Jayden retrieved the water from the bedside table and offered it to her. Observing her sip it slowly, he felt an inexplicable sense of relief wash over him. Finally seeing her safe and sound gave him some peace of mind. After handing the glass back to Jayden, Elyse inquired, “Who drugged me? I felt so unwell.” Jayden answered truthfully, “It was Kaelyn who drugged you. The substance wasn’t just a typical aphrodisiac; it was laced with a compound that induces heart failure. The dosage was dangerously high, nearly fatal.” To Elyse’s astonishment, it was Kaelyn once again. “Where is Kaelyn?” Jayden rotated his ring thoughtfully before responding, “Theo intervened and rescued her. Apparently, Kaelyn tearfully pleaded with Theo to save her, and he, being

compassionate, took her away.” Then Jayden added with significance, “It appears that Kaelyn still holds a significant place in his affections. In moments of crisis, his true allegiance becomes evident.” Elyse kept her head bowed, her eyes betraying a calm demeanor devoid of any discernible expression. In a measured tone, she said slowly, “This doesn’t come as a surprise. Theo’s affection runs shallow. Ultimately, he holds himself in higher regard than anyone else.”

Jayden’s smile widened, “Your response caught me off guard.” Elyse raised her eyes, giving him a reproachful look, “You always assume I still harbor feelings for Theo. I really don’t get it.” “Is that my fault?” Jayden teased. Noticing Jayden’s fatigued appearance, Elyse’s heart went out to him, “You should rest,” she said softly, “I’m feeling less discomfort now, just a bit weak.” Having watched over Elyse all night, Jayden felt a wave of relief seeing her engage in conversation. He instructed, “Later, call Gavin. He stayed at the hospital until the early hours. He plans to visit you at noon. Make sure to inform him of your wellbeing beforehand.” Elyse nodded obediently, settling in for more conversation with Jayden.

At that moment, Tess barged in sporting a joyful smile, “I heard Elyse was poisoned and on her deathbed,” she exclaimed, “Take a look at this! I’ve found a new prospect from a wealthy family. Since Elyse is out of the picture, you should consider pursuing someone else.”

Find Him A New Wife “Elyse is jinxed. You should find a fortunate girl from a wealthy, influential family to marry instead.” As Tess spoke cheerfully, she noticed Elyse sitting on the bed, looking frighteningly pale. “Damn! Is that a ghost?” Tess stepped back in fear, her expression one of sheer terror.

Jayden, clearly disgusted, asked impatiently, “Where did you hear that Elyse was dead?” Pointing at Elyse, Tess asked sharply, “Aren’t you supposed to be dead? You were in the ICU. How come you’re still alive?” Elyse’s mouth twitched into a mocking smile, “It seems that you really wanted me dead. Unfortunately, I’m tougher than that. The medical team saved me.” Tess was taken aback. Her face contorted into a grimace. She was convinced Elyse was dead and had already picked out a few ladies for Jayden. Now she was shocked to find that Elyse was still alive. With Elyse still in the picture, how could she use Jayden’s marriage for her own gains?

Bryce was struggling within the Owen Group, and no suitable women from influential families were interested in him. Tess had hoped to use Jayden’s marriage to gain some support. As Tess contemplated this, her expression darkened. “Why couldn’t Elyse have just died?” Elyse caught a glint of animosity in Tess’s eyes and said, “It seems you really don’t care for me and are just waiting for me to pass away so your son can marry

someone else.” Hearing this, Jayden frowned and clarified, “You are the only wife for me. No one can take your place.” Tess couldn’t stand hearing such words from Jayden. If Jayden didn’t want anyone but Elyse, how could Tess introduce a new wife to him?

Chapter 384:

Also, who told you Elyse was dying?” Jayden pursued the matter further, his expression turning cold. Caught off by the question, Tess snapped back, “Why does it matter to you who told me?” After a brief pause, Jayden asked, “Was it Corrie who told you?” Tess was shocked, “How did you know?” Jayden said with a sneer, “Just a guess.” Frustrated, Tess tried to figure out how she had inadvertently revealed too much, but she wasn’t as cunning as Jayden. After thinking about it for a moment, she became irritated. “I wasn’t pushing for you to divorce Elyse. I just assumed she was gone, so I thought I’d find someone new to look after you,” Tess argued.

Jayden responded with impatience, “Should I thank you for your thoughtfulness?” Just as Tess was about to respond, Jayden decisively said to her, “Mom, since Elyse is still alive, I think it’s best you leave now.” “You’re just ungrateful. All my efforts raising you were in vain,” Tess glared at Elyse, “When the day comes that Elyse resents you for being a cripple, you’ll realize the only person who truly cares for you is me.” With those words, Tess stormed out. Jayden said in a weary tone, “Sorry my mother upset you again.”

Elyse shook her head, “It’s fine. I’m used to it.” Noticing the exhaustion on Jayden’s face, Elyse suggested, “You should get some sleep. If you don’t get some rest, I’ll really get upset.” Jayden managed a smile, crossed his arms, and dozed off in his wheelchair. Jayden had stayed up all night watching over Elyse worriedly, which left him particularly drained. Feeling reassured that Elyse was okay, Jayden was hit by a wave of exhaustion, and he fell asleep quickly. Elyse watched him sleep, a smile of relief on her face. There was nothing that pleased her more than waking up to find Jayden by her side.

About fifteen minutes later, Driscoll arrived at the hospital with a lunch box. Upon entering, he noticed Jayden sleeping peacefully. He quietly approached Elyse and set up a small table for her. “Please enjoy your meal. The chef prepared a lot for you,” Driscoll whispered as he laid out the food on the table. Elyse nodded and began eating. After Theo had taken Kaelyn to one of his residences, he reviewed the situation with her one more time. Then, with a grave expression, he instructed Kaelyn, “You need to turn yourself in.”

Anxiously, Kaelyn responded, "Didn't you take me here because you trust me? Why are you telling me to turn myself in? I already told you it was an accident." Theo exclaimed, "But your actions nearly killed Elyse. I took Elyse to the hospital for rescue. I know you almost killed her." Kaelyn, her eyes filled with sorrow, bit her lip, "I thought you were trying to help me. I never imagined it was all for Elyse. Why can't you just move on?" Theo's expression darkened, "I can't let go of Elyse. You almost took her life, and I must avenge her." With tears streaming down her face, Kaelyn pleaded, "But you rescued me from Jayden. You still care about me, right?" Her anxiety overwhelmed her, and she fell to Theo's feet, kneeling as she sobbed, "Please tell me you did care for me. You didn't want to see me hurt. It wasn't all for Elyse, was it? Tell me." Shrugging off her hold, Theo retorted, "What are you talking about? My heart belongs to Elyse. I saved you because it was right, not just for you. You endangered Elyse, and you need to face justice."

Stunned, Kaelyn looked up, disbelief written across her face, "What did you just say?" Theo, his voice icy, didn't soften, "You've made grave mistakes. Thinking of killing you would be merciful, allowing you to escape the guilt. However, facing your actions in prison will let you truly make amends." Indifference clouded Theo's eyes as he continued.

"This is for the best. It's the only way you'll learn from your mistakes," Theo said firmly. Eyes wide, Kaelyn struggled with his words. "You want me to make amends? You saved me just because you wanted to prolong my sufferings?" Theo nodded firmly. "There's no other reason. Your actions hurt Elyse deeply, and I despise what you did more than Jayden ever could. How could you harm her?" With that, Theo pushed her aside and dialed the police.

As she lay on the ground, Kaelyn heard the distant sound of Theo speaking with the police, and the hope in her eyes faded. Pushing herself up, she stared at Theo. After he hung up, Theo fixed her with a stern gaze. "Is there anything else you want to say?" Quietly, Kaelyn faced him and asked, "After everything I've done for you, did you ever love me?" Theo's reply was resolute. "No. Never." Kaelyn pressed, her voice tight, "Never," he said, his tone devoid of hesitation.

At his words, a hollow laugh escaped Kaelyn, soon turning into uncontrollable laughter though tears streamed down her cheeks. She brushed away the tears, her voice trembling, "I love you so much. How can you just ignore that?" Her smile vanished, leaving her gaze empty as she stared at Theo. "I won't forgive you." Theo, his brow furrowed, shot back, "Are you out of your mind?" Kaelyn didn't respond, merely sitting in silence on the cold ground, waiting for the inevitable arrival of the police. Twenty minutes later, they did, escorting Kaelyn away.

Theo exhaled deeply, a weight lifting from his shoulders. Eager to be reunited with Elyse, he hurried back to Watscar, his heart light with anticipation. In the hospital ward, Elyse, having finished her breakfast, texted Gavin to reassure him of her safety before settling down for a rest. Upon waking, she was surprised not to find Jayden, but instead saw Irving and Fiona. "Why are you here?" Elyse asked, her surprise evident.

"We heard what happened yesterday," Fiona explained, her tone laced with concern. "It's terrible that someone would poison you." Irving, arms crossed, added coolly, "Can you still attend the first round of competition tomorrow? There will be no special favors at Blue Sea Music Studio. You'll have to manage on your own." Elyse managed a reassuring smile. "I'm a bit weak, but it won't hold me back tomorrow. I plan to handle the discharge paperwork this afternoon," she said, her voice steady despite her condition. Fiona's worry was palpable. "Are you sure? Don't overdo it, Elyse."

Chapter 385:

Elyse shook her head, explaining, "I won't overdo it. My heart failure was due to a reaction to medication. Once it's treated, it won't happen again. I just feel a little weak now." Fiona, reassured by Elyse's clarification, turned to Irving and said, "Even if Elyse is physically weak, surely she can still pass the first round, right?" After thinking it over, Irving agreed, "You're right. If she can't even pass the first round, maybe she shouldn't have joined our studio from the start. She needs the right talent to be here."

Elyse refused to be belittled by Irving. She insisted on leaving the hospital as soon as they left. Initially hesitant, Jayden finally agreed after insisting that Peyton check Elyse thoroughly first. After finishing Elyse's physical checkup, Peyton said to her, "You're generally healthy. You just have a bit of low blood sugar. Make sure to eat well once you get home to avoid getting dizzy." Elyse acknowledged with a nod, took her health examination report, and headed home with Driscoll.

Once home, Elyse wasted no time and started practicing the violin. Watching her, Driscoll felt compelled to advise, "Oh my, you should take it easy. You've only just recovered." Elyse, however, was determined and focused on an upcoming competition. She said, "I'm under Cody's mentorship. Failing the first round isn't an option for me." Driscoll looked at her with worried eyes, concerned that Elyse was neglecting her health. He decided he would need to speak to Jayden about this when he returned.

After leaving backing from the Celestial Sounds Symphony, Elyse knew she couldn't let any chance to chase her dreams slip through her fingers. She was committed to working hard and seizing every opportunity.

After a restful morning, Jayden went to his office at Bayzee Group, which had been busier with new projects requiring his presence more often. With Tobin away in another city, Eva stepped in to handle his document deliveries. After finishing her task, Eva hesitated to leave, noticing Jayden's empty coffee cup. She suggested, "Mr. Owen, would you like me to make you some coffee?" Jayden agreed with a nod, and Eva left smiling.

Just as the door shut, Jayden's phone started ringing. He picked up without looking to see who it was. "Jayden, are you free at the moment? Could we possibly meet soon?" It was Enzo on the line. Jayden's eyebrows knitted together as he said, "I'll be there shortly." Enzo continued, "It's quite a long way from Bayzee Group to my house. Don't rush; focus on your work. It seems like your company's stock is doing well, so you must be busy," Enzo said calmly, carrying a soft chuckle in his voice.

As Jayden absorbed these words, his initial shock gave way to a sense of calm. He was well aware that his family would eventually discover his role at the Bayzee Group. He had hidden this secret for a considerable time. With his secret now out, there seemed little point in maintaining such privacy. "I'll be there soon. I won't make you wait," Jayden responded calmly.

After ending the call, Jayden stepped into his exclusive elevator. Meanwhile, Eva came back with the coffee, a look of expectancy on her face. However, she was met with an empty office, and her smile quickly disappeared. She set the coffee down on the desk and decided to wait a bit, thinking Jayden might return shortly. She planned to stay until Jayden came back, hoping to find out if he liked the coffee.

After waiting for over ten minutes, she got a call from Mia, the chief secretary. With a sigh, Eva left the office, knowing Mia was not happy about her extended absence. Jayden arrived at Enzo's place soon. He walked towards the garden where Enzo was calmly enjoying his tea. "Ah, there you are," Enzo said, motioning towards a chair across from him. "It's been a year since we've had a proper conversation."

Jayden gestured to his legs and answered, "I'll sit next to you. This chair isn't convenient for me." Noticing Jayden's legs, Enzo asked, "Has the doctor given any hope of recovery for your legs?" "Thanks for asking, but recovery seems unlikely," Jayden replied, slightly puzzled by Enzo's focus on his legs. It felt odd that Enzo was so attentive to it.

Enzo poured Jayden a cup of tea and continued, “Your company’s been quite successful lately, hasn’t it?”

Chapter 386:

Jayden accepted the tea from Enzo, taking a delicate sip. His demeanor remained composed as he remarked, “The company’s progress remains steady, as does the profit.” Enzo savored the aroma of his tea before speaking, “Your intelligence is undeniable. Even with your physical challenge, you manage the company with finesse.” Jayden maintained his silence, his mind drifting back to the car accident and the unanswered questions surrounding it.

Following the incident, Jayden suspected that his remarkable abilities had made him a target. Consequently, he enlisted Peyton’s help to fabricate a certificate indicating his impaired legs. To avoid arousing suspicion, only his most trusted confidants were privy to his deception, and even the household staff were carefully vetted by Jayden himself.

When Jayden relinquished control of the Owen Group and delved into the Bayzee Group, Enzo had visited him in the hospital for a private conversation. During their discussion, Enzo reassured Jayden that his physical limitations did not impede his ability to effectively lead the Owen Group.

In the face of numerous challenges and pressures, Jayden firmly rejected Enzo’s proposition. He explained that his near-death experience had profoundly changed him, leading to a shift in his priorities and a diminished drive to manage the company. Following a tense silence that stretched for ten minutes, Enzo quietly exited the ward.

The following day, Enzo delivered a public announcement within the company, officially declaring Jayden unfit to inherit the Owen Group due to his physical impairment. Consequently, Jayden’s status as his successor was revoked.

Enzo poured himself another cup of tea and addressed Jayden with measured words, “I respected your decisions and was prepared to support your pursuit of a peaceful life. However, I never anticipated that you would establish your own company after leaving the Owen Group and lay claim to its resources and projects.”

Anticipating Enzo’s line of inquiry, Jayden replied with composure, “In the realm of business, as a company expands, competition for resources is unavoidable. It’s a

business battlefield where only the strongest prevail. Grandpa, didn't you acquire numerous resources from others to build the Owen Group's success?"

Enzo listened to Jayden's words as he sipped his tea, his demeanor tense. With a sharp crash, he forcefully set down his cup, fixing a stern gaze on Jayden. "You're appropriating the Owen Group's resources," Enzo stated coldly, asserting his dominance as the head of the family.

Unfazed by Enzo's stern demeanor, Jayden maintained his calm composure as he remarked, "In the arena of competition, everyone except yourself is considered an adversary. There's no room for leniency toward your foes. You taught me that lesson." Locking eyes with Enzo, Jayden asserted confidently, "I've achieved success. Shouldn't you acknowledge and praise that?"

Enzo's silence spoke volumes, his eyes betraying a mix of anger and dissatisfaction. Jayden was unperturbed by Enzo's demeanor. Back then, he had chosen to abstain from the power struggles within the Owen family and instead forged his path toward building his business empire. He held firm to his belief that his actions were justified and avoided entangling himself in family conflicts. Therefore, despite appropriating resources from the Owen Group, he perceived no ethical dilemma.

Following a prolonged silence, Enzo narrowed his gaze and addressed Jayden with a pointed remark, "Jayden, you disappointed me once before when you declined the arranged marriage. Are you intending to repeat that disappointment?" The mention of the forced marriage stirred a surge of irritation within Jayden.

"Had it not been for Enzo's insistence on arranging a marriage with a stranger, Jayden wouldn't have resorted to using his relationship with Corrie as an excuse. Fortunately, the car accident resulting in his broken legs led Enzo to call off the marriage."

Perplexed, Jayden replied, "I've already elucidated my reasons for rejecting the marriage. I don't rely on a woman to uphold the family's honor in business. I am fully capable of preserving our legacy independently. If you harbor concerns about the Owen Group's decline due to a lack of marital connections, it's due to an overly pessimistic outlook."

Enzo chuckled, "You remain as stubborn as ever. I've offered guidance to lead you on the right path, yet you stubbornly refuse to heed it. Do you doubt my wisdom?" Jayden

shook his head, "I've never doubted that. I recognize that you act in my best interests and for the future of our family. However, I also have my own ambitions."

Enzo's tone turned stern, "You know you must heed my counsel, Jayden. Are you challenging my authority?" Jayden carefully placed his teacup on the table, signaling the end of the discussion. He addressed his grandfather, "I harbor no ambition to vie for leadership within the Owen family. My goal is to establish my business empire. As I mentioned, I've never doubted your judgment. However, I won't be joining you for dinner tonight. It appears that my presence would only add to your distress."

With that, Jayden pivoted his wheelchair and departed without hesitation.

Chapter 387:

Enzo watched as Jayden left. The elderly butler, who had been standing quietly in the corner, stepped forward and respectfully said, "Jayden really does stand on his own. His sharp intelligence and strategic mind are pivotal for the future success of the Owen Group." Enzo chose not to reply. He was more aware than anyone of Jayden's natural flair for business. Yet Jayden was not someone he could easily influence. Looking at his untouched tea, Enzo mused, "His brilliance is undeniable, but his restless mind might hinder his achievements." The old butler bowed his head, choosing to keep his thoughts to himself. Playing with his teacup, Enzo asked, "It's been about a year since Jayden's car accident, hasn't it?" The butler paused before replying, "One year and four months, sir." Enzo's face grew stern. "More than a year has passed, and he still hasn't learned from his experiences or reconsidered his choices. I find that quite disappointing." The butler nodded in agreement. "His pride might be his undoing unless he confronts challenges and learns from them, even if it means standing up to you." Enzo gave a dismissive snort but remained silent. He recognized the necessity to give Jayden a firm lesson, seeing how bold his defiance had become.

After leaving Enzo's house, Jayden didn't return to his office but instead went directly home. As he entered, he was welcomed by the soothing sounds of a violin. Although he wasn't well-versed in classical music, he found comfort in its melodies. Jayden made his way into the living room. There, he was greeted by Elyse's warm smile. "Why are you home so early today?" she asked. Jayden stroked his chin thoughtfully. Now that his role in founding the company was no longer a secret to Enzo, he saw no reason to hide it from Elyse. "I had a talk with my grandfather today," he explained simply. Elyse looked surprised. "What did he want with you? Was he trying to make things difficult?" Jayden kept his calm. "My company has been taking away some of Owen Group's projects, and he's not happy about it." Elyse wondered how to comfort Jayden. A realization suddenly hit her hard that Jayden had unexpectedly revealed his closely

guarded secret to her. She had always suspected Jayden was involved in such secretive dealings, but he had never confirmed anything despite her questions. Now hearing it straight from him was unexpected.

Seeing the complexity in her reaction, Jayden reassured her. "I didn't mean to hide it from you. I just knew that for everything to work out, not everyone should be aware of it." Elyse looked at him with mixed feelings and asked, "Have you accomplished what you set out to do?" "Not quite," Jayden admitted. "My grandpa has discovered my actions. So I don't have to keep it a secret now." Elyse opened her mouth to respond but found herself speechless. It occurred to Elyse that she should support Jayden regardless of how his plan turned out. Still, she felt a sting from not being more involved in Jayden's secretive plans. His hesitation to share details with her in the past made her feel that he was keeping his guard up even around her. Despite her internal conflict, Elyse forced a smile. After a brief pause, Jayden attempted to lighten the mood by suggesting, "Even though it's a bit late, would you like to come see my company?" Caught off guard, Elyse responded, "What?" Jayden clarified, "Since you're my wife, you should see where I work." Jayden expected Elyse to jump at the opportunity, but instead, she hesitated. Looking down, Elyse answered, "I have an important competition tomorrow. Can we talk about this later?" Without another word, Elyse went upstairs, her expression unreadable as she carried her violin with her. Left alone and confused, Jayden turned to Driscoll for clarity. "Is she upset again? What's troubling her now? I've explained why I kept things from her. Why is she still unhappy?" Driscoll gave Jayden a knowing look. "It's understandable that she's upset. As your wife, she probably expects full disclosure from you, trusting she wouldn't betray your trust. But your secrecy might make her feel you don't trust her completely." Jayden frowned. "I've dropped hints about my true identity to her before. She's just not picking up on it." Driscoll's face showed a mix of amusement and concern. "Deception is the biggest test in any marriage. How would you feel if she were hiding something from you?" Jayden acknowledged he wouldn't like it. Driscoll's concern deepened. What Jayden was really concealing from Elyse wasn't just about his business but also that his legs were fine and he could walk. Driscoll feared the day the truth would inevitably come out. Elyse would definitely be furious.

Chapter 388:

At dinner time, Jayden knocked on Elyse's door to invite her to eat. With a blank expression, she stepped out of her room, briefly caught his eye, and subtly shifted her dress to sidestep him. Jayden, a mix of annoyance and amusement in his tone, followed her and challenged, "Why are you avoiding me like that? You don't even want your dress to touch me." Elyse remained silent, too overwhelmed by sadness to engage in an argument. They reached the dining table set with Elyse's favorite dishes, which Jayden found unappealing. Irritated, he turned to Driscoll and demanded, "I don't like any of

this. Make it again.” Driscoll, his face tense, glanced at Elyse and then nodded. Elyse ignored him and focused on her meal.

“Mr. Owen, please give us a moment. I’ll have it prepared again,” Driscoll said. Jayden’s mood softened slightly at this. Leaning back, he observed Elyse casually, then looked away, pretending to be disinterested. Soon after, the maid brought in new dishes with Driscoll following anxiously. “Sir, your favorite dishes are served,” the maid announced. Seeing his preferred meal, Jayden’s spirits lifted, and he began to eat. Between bites, he casually asked, “When are you coming to see my company?” Confused, Elyse looked up. “Am I supposed to? You’ve never really involved me in your business. I didn’t think that was something you’d keep from me.” She put down her fork, stood up, and stated firmly, “I’m done here. I’m going to rest in my room.” Without another glance, she left.

Jayden, puzzled and annoyed, muttered to himself, “Why is she so angry? I’ve been nothing but good to her. Can’t she see that?” Driscoll attempted to intervene, but Jayden dismissed him. “Stop. I’ve done nothing wrong,” Jayden said, and Driscoll remained silent, recognizing that understanding love was not Jayden’s strength.

Elyse went to bed early to rest up for the competition the next day. In the early morning, she quietly left the room, resisting the urge to disturb the sleeping Jayden. Descending the stairs, she was greeted by Driscoll’s surprised voice. “You’re up early. Breakfast isn’t ready yet.” “It’s okay,” Elyse replied, a determined look in her eyes. “I need to get to the competition venue early.” Relieved, Driscoll wished her good luck. With a grateful smile, Elyse quickly exited with her violin case in hand.

Upon entering the car, she coordinated with Gavin to finalize a few details before they arrived at Atcupic University. The driver halted at the gate, explaining, “It’s too crowded inside, so I’ll drop you here.” “Alright, I’m off,” Elyse acknowledged, releasing her seatbelt and grasping her violin case as she spotted Gavin. “Good luck,” the driver called out. Waving back, Elyse met up with Gavin, who was dressed in a padded jacket and a peaked cap. “You look fine. I was worried I’d lose you,” he said, relief evident in his voice. Blushing, Elyse apologized. “Sorry for the worry.” Gavin sighed. “I was really concerned that you won’t pass the first round.” Elyse frowned slightly. “I’m prepared. I’ll pass without trouble.” “Just be careful not to slip up in the first piece,” he advised.

Irving, munching on bread, joined them with Fiona trailing behind, her violin case also in hand. Seeing Elyse, Fiona beamed and waved enthusiastically. She rushed over to Elyse, leaving Irving behind. “Let’s get our numbers. I hope we’re not in the same group. I don’t want us to compete in the first round,” Fiona said. Elyse nodded in

agreement. "I'd rather not face you right off the bat either." Irving overheard and scoffed. "You should be eager to compete. It shows strength." Unconvinced, Elyse challenged him. "What if you had to compete against Gavin?" Irving glanced at Gavin, who appeared gentle and unassuming, and joked, "I'd be delighted."

Chapter 389:

Gavin stroked his chin and smiled, asking, "Do you really want to compete with me? I'd hate to damage the relationship that we have." Irving crossed his arms, looking unimpressed, and retorted, "Can you drop the act? What kind of relationship do you think we even have?" Gavin remained silent, his smile unchanging, but Irving's heart raced. Every time Gavin looked at him, Irving felt an unsettling intensity. Could Gavin be interested in men? Irving wondered, immediately putting some space between them. He was sure that he was a straight guy.

Elyse, observing the odd interaction between the two, linked Fiona's arm and headed to a room to pick up their numbers. "I'm No. 13 in Group A," Elyse showed her number to Fiona, curious, and asked, "What's yours?" Fiona clasped her hands together and revealed her number with a devout gesture, then let out a sigh of relief. "Thank goodness. I'm No. 2 in Group D." Elyse also sighed in relief. "That's good, we won't be up against each other."

From nearby, Gavin chimed in, "Even though you're not competing directly, the competition locations are different." He turned to Fiona and said, "Group D will be competing in the gym. I'll escort you there immediately. Your turn is one of the early ones, so we can't be late." Fiona nodded and said to Elyse, "Do your best and aim to top your group. Then we'll both make it to the next round." Elyse nodded, feeling very excited.

After Fiona and Gavin hurried off to the venue, Elyse looked around and caught Irving's eye. Noticing her stunned look, Irving raised his eyebrows and teased, "What's the matter? Got stage fright?" Elyse shook her head. "I just wish I was the first to perform so I wouldn't have to wait." Irving rolled his eyes and scoffed, "You're overthinking it. You might just mess up right from the start. Don't get too cocky. I've seen too many falter who thought like you." Elyse pouted slightly.

"Elyse, what are you doing here?" Hearing her name, Elyse turned instinctively and saw Vicky standing there, clutching a violin case, dressed in a black coat, looking sleek and poised. Vicky gave Elyse a scrutinizing look, her tone unexpectedly firm, saying, "You're competing in the Champions Cup too? How did you manage to enter? The

Champions Cup doesn't allow individual participants." Elyse replied coldly, her expression uninterested, "Why do you care about my entry status? Just worry about yourself." Vicky laughed softly, her arms crossed, and added, "Sure, I'll mind my own business. I hope you do the same and avoid causing any disturbances during the competition." Elyse scoffed, no longer interested in continuing the conversation with Vicky. She grabbed Irving's wrist and said with annoyance, "Let's go. I don't want to talk to her."

This time, Darren chose not to respond to her. Instead, he was taken aback by Elyse's presence at the event. He quickly took out his phone to check his registration while calling Elyse. Elyse, already at the venue for Group A, answered in surprise, "Why are you calling?" Darren glanced at his number and asked, "What group are you in?" Elyse paused, then answered, "Group A." Darren let out a breath of relief. "I'm in Group B." Both of them sighed with relief upon hearing this.

Chapter 390:

Irving overheard Elyse and Darren's conversation and scoffed, "You don't want to compete against friends? That's naive. You don't understand the harshness and allure of competition." Elyse ended her call and asked, "Why do you say so?" He raised an eyebrow. "I've competed for years and I've learned a lot. You all are just too young and naive." Rolling her eyes, Elyse added, "I still don't want to compete against friends so soon." Irving stayed silent, considering her innocence.

In Group A, contestants began their performances one by one. Elyse managed to stay calm backstage at first, but her anxiety mounted as her turn approached. Irving noticed her nervousness and quipped, "Didn't you say you wouldn't be nervous? Seems that wasn't true." Elyse glared at him, her palms sweating as he continued to taunt her. "Don't tell me you're going to fail this time," Irving jeered. "You'll be Mr. Tucker's most useless apprentice." Elyse clenched her teeth. She wasn't useless; she would prove herself. With her breaths steady, it was soon her turn to go onstage. She took a deep breath, heard her name called, and confidently stepped forward, standing before the judges. Elyse announced the title of her performance, closed her eyes, and lost herself in her own world.

Backstage, Irving listened closely, eventually closing his eyes to focus on her music. When the piece ended, he opened them again. "Maybe she's not as bad as I thought." Elyse set down her violin and glanced at the judges, noticing something odd in their expressions. The host said, "Alright, you can step down now." Momentarily stunned, Elyse bowed quickly and hurried offstage. Watching her blush, Irving chuckled and said, "Blushing now? I didn't expect you were this shy."

Elyse shot him a fierce glare, retorting, "I'm just hot. I'm not actually shy." Irving remained unconvinced, replying dismissively, "Fine, whatever you say." Awkward and self-conscious, Elyse hesitated before asking nervously, "What did you think of my performance? Do you think I can pass?" Irving opened his mouth wide, exaggerating, "Weren't you aiming for first place in your group?" Elyse glanced at the people nearby and quickly covered his mouth. "Irving, please cut me some slack."

Being around him always made her feel embarrassed, but Irving held back this time and didn't push her further. Elyse left the competition venue, covering her face with her hands. "Fiona should be done with her performance. Let's find them and meet up," she suggested. Irving nodded. "They reserved a cafe nearby. They're already there drinking coffee. We'll wait for the results before heading over." Elyse nodded obediently, not wanting Irving to tease her again. She remained silent and didn't initiate further conversation.

Nearby, she overheard two girls chatting. "Hey, did you hear about the girl in Group E who cheated? She played the wrong notes, but the judges still praised her." "Oh. Do you think they were trying to console her?" "Heh, naive. Just wait until the results come out. We'll see if she really cheated." The conversation between the two nearby girls drifted to Elyse's ears, and she glanced back with curiosity. Who could the girl they were talking about be?