

## Bound love 391

### Chapter 391:

Elyse and Irving reached the cafe to find Fiona and Gavin already there, lounging comfortably. Gavin set his coffee down and looked up with a concerned expression. “How did your performance go? Any slipups?”

“None,” Elyse responded, her voice tinged with pride as she pulled out a chair to sit. Irving had been silent the entire trip. Seizing the moment, he said bluntly, “It’s only the first round. Failing that should be a cue to reconsider your career choice.” Elyse flashed a grin at Irving, who was known for his biting remarks.

“Elyse, you’re here!” Just then, Darren entered, carrying his violin case. Vicky was close behind. It seemed they also planned to wait for the results here. “Joining us?” Elyse called out, beckoning Darren over. Darren nodded, a smile spreading across his face. He glanced back at Vicky, who chose a separate seat, clearly preferring distance. Undeterred, Darren sat next to Elyse, his spirits high. “Running into you here was the last thing I expected,” he said, beaming at her. After a short exchange, she introduced him to the rest. “Everyone, this is Darren, a dear friend from my days at the Celestial Sounds Symphony. He was always there for me.”

Irving looked Darren over and remarked, “I recognize you. You’re the one who falters under pressure. I’ve seen your performances; you often struggle mentally.” Darren’s smile faded as he recognized Irving. His voice shaky, he asked, “You’re Irving Dunn, the one who always tops the charts?” Irving raised an eyebrow. “You know of me?”

“I always wished I could have your composure. You are kind of my idol,” Darren admitted earnestly. With a puzzled expression, Elyse chimed in, “I didn’t expect you are his fan.” Irving’s lips twitched slightly as he noticed the intensity in Darren’s eyes.

Gavin, stroking his chin, couldn’t help but tease, “Looks like you do have fans after all.” Irving shot back, “I’d prefer female admirers, not men.” Darren chose to ignore the jibe. Standing, he extended his hand to Irving. “I never miss your solos. You truly shine with the violin.” Despite his reservations, Gavin shook Darren’s hand. “Appreciate your support.”

Darren returned to his seat, his gaze drifting to Elyse. She shifted uncomfortably. “Why are you staring?” Darren’s voice was cool. “Both Gavin and Irving are under Cody’s guidance. How do you fit into that picture?” Elyse touched her nose, feeling oddly guilty. “They’re my seniors there.”

“Your seniors,” Darren echoed, puzzled by the simplicity yet complexity of it. After a pause, he continued, “So you’re Cody’s apprentice as well?” Elyse nodded. “Yes, I am.” Darren fell silent, piecing things together. “So the rumors were true. Cody picked his apprentice during our last competition, and it was you.”

“Why did you keep this from me?” Darren asked, a hint of hurt in his voice. Elyse felt trapped. She hadn’t known she was Cody’s pick until Richie explained it all. Darren sat back, digesting the news. “Let’s not tell Vicky just yet. She thinks Cody’s apprentice selection was a sham. She’d lose it if she knew.” Elyse glanced at Vicky, who seemed absorbed in her phone, oblivious to their conversation. Puzzled, Elyse asked, “She seems fine to me. Why do you think she would react strongly?” Darren shook his head. “Because of you, she felt threatened. She’s trying to prove herself by composing, but it’s not going well.”

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Elyse was speechless, her lips parting slightly in shock. Fiona, with a playful wink, nudged her arm. “I need to use the restroom. Come with me.” Nodding, Elyse linked arms with Fiona, and they headed towards the restroom.

Inside, Elyse paused to examine her reflection in the mirror rather than using the toilet. Sensing a presence behind her, she turned to find Vicky approaching, her eyes assessing, and her high heels clicking sharply on the floor. Elyse found her stare unsettling. Vicky rarely met anyone’s gaze directly, preferring a dismissive look.

With a cold expression, Elyse confronted her. “What do you want?” Vicky crossed her arms and said arrogantly, “Out with it. Which music group or association have you joined?” “Why do you need to know?” Elyse asked, her tone icy.

Laughing lightly, Vicky reached out and tapped Elyse’s forehead. “Simple. I plan to sabotage your future. Do you think you can rise to concertmaster after leaving Celestial Sounds Symphony?” She shrugged nonchalantly and added, “You won’t succeed. I’ll see to that. You’ll never surpass me.”

Understanding Vicky's intentions, Elyse smiled wryly. "So, your strategy is to use your influence to ensure no one dares to hire me. You want to isolate me from the industry." Vicky's gaze darkened. "You deserve nothing less from me."

Elyse shot back, unflinching. "It seems my talent intimidates you. That's why you're afraid." Vicky nodded, her voice firm. "Yes, I am afraid. But I'll always be a step ahead, and you'll never catch up."

As Elyse processed this encounter, she reflected on the changes in Vicky. Recently, she was out of touch with the orchestra's dynamics and the pressures her former fellows faced. She considered the possibility of internal conflicts among the orchestra's senior leaders influencing Vicky. For a moment, she saw in Vicky the same pettiness and malice that plagued Abram.

"There's no way she'll get ahead," Fiona stepped out of a stall, her demeanor colder, her tone sharper than before. Wrapping an arm around Elyse's shoulder, she faced Vicky with confidence. "Elyse's talent and character are beyond your reach. She'll always be out of your league."

Elyse, unaccustomed to such praise, blushed and looked down. Vicky, on the other hand, didn't recognize Fiona. Although Fiona was also an apprentice under Cody like Gavin and Irving, she had yet to make her mark among the many skilled violinists.

Vicky rolled her eyes, clearly uninterested in engaging with Fiona. She had just realized she didn't need to know which organization Elyse had joined; she could simply manipulate Elyse's grades to disqualify her. This thought somewhat pleased Vicky, as it would enhance her own chances in the upcoming Champions Cup.

"Who are you to say that? Do you think you can just bully your way through?" Fiona's words were biting, and she was visibly frustrated with Vicky's attitude. Elyse sighed. "Vicky has always been intense, but she's becoming unbearable."

Fiona glanced at her watch. "The results of the first round will be out soon. We should head back." "Okay," Elyse agreed, and they made their way back.

Half an hour later, the rankings for the five groups were announced. Leaning over to view Elyse's phone, Irving commented, "Elyse, you're first in Group A. That's quite the surprise." Elyse, equally astonished, replied, "I was hoping to make the top three, not lead the group."

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After bubbling with excitement, Elyse turned to Fiona, her voice agitated. “Fiona, what about you?” Fiona flashed her phone screen with a smile. “I clinched the first spot in Group D.” Darren cleared his throat and pulled out his phone. “I’m topping Group B this time, and I didn’t fumble this time.” Irving cut in bluntly, “If you flub the first round, you might as well hang up your violin. No need for more practice, just head home.” Darren’s smile faded gradually; Irving’s words hit hard.

Elyse noticed someone had posted the leaderboard for each group online. When she saw Vicky’s name, she remarked calmly, “Vicky’s in Group C, and she’s also sitting pretty in first place.” Despite Vicky’s nasty character, her talent was undeniable. Failing this round wasn’t an option for her. Elyse kept scrolling down the list. When she saw the name of the person topping Group E, she was taken aback. “Darren, is this person leading Group E who I think it is?” Darren looked puzzled and came over to check.

It was the first time Gavin had heard the name. Curious, he asked, “Who’s she?” Elyse’s expression was conflicted. She started to speak, but Darren cut her off, his tone sour. “Rebekah got kicked out of Celestial Sounds Symphony some time ago. She’s so mediocre. And now she’s claiming the top spot in her group.” “Maybe leaving Celestial Sounds Symphony made Rebekah stronger,” Elyse said uncertainly. Darren sneered, “You really believe that?”

Darren’s words caught Elyse off guard, leaving her speechless. Irving scratched his head irritably. “Whatever she did to get first place, it’s none of our business. The next round is in three days. If you want a shot at the international competition, focus on your practice.” They nodded and started to leave, grabbing their violin cases. After saying goodbye to Darren, Elyse headed back to Blue Sea Music Studio. Since Cody wasn’t there, Gavin called him, though he sounded busy.

Upon hearing the results, Cody said, “Good job, but this is just the beginning. Being my apprentice requires more than just making it through this stage.” Encouraged by Cody’s words, Elyse and Fiona threw themselves into practicing the violin. Irving watched them and asked Gavin, “How far do you think those two can go?” Gavin replied, “As far as they can. I’m not here to discuss philosophy with you.”

“Oh, well, forget it. It’s like talking to a brick wall,” Irving said, feeling that he and Gavin were just talking past each other. After a brief exchange, Irving grew impatient. By three in the afternoon, both Gavin and Irving had left for other commitments. Elyse

was drenched in sweat from practicing the violin. She didn't dare to let up. The group competition rankings made her realize that Fiona, Darren, and Vicky were her competitors.

Now Elyse finally understood why Irving called her naive. This was the battleground; there were no allies, only adversaries. As Elyse rested on a chair in the yard, a black car pulled up at the driveway. Taking a sip of water, Elyse glanced towards it. It was Theo who stepped out of the car. After the sip, Elyse twisted the cap back on, stood up, and approached him. "What are you doing here?" Theo, wearing a black overcoat with a neatly pressed black suit underneath, seemed to have lost weight. His jawline was sharper.

Elyse's stance, blocking his way, was clear. She obviously didn't want Theo to enter. Seeing Elyse's guarded expression, Theo swallowed and said softly, "You don't have to be wary of me. I'm not here to cause trouble." Elyse sneered. "Really?" Theo said, "I know you don't trust me, and I don't expect you to." He paused, his deep eyes filled with affection and pain fixed on Elyse. "I put Kaelyn behind bars. She deserves it," Theo confessed.

Elyse's expression turned cold. "What does that have to do with me? I'm the one she hurt." Theo said, "I want to take you to see Kaelyn. She has something to say to you." Elyse found his proposal amusing. "So you're here to take me to fulfill Kaelyn's wish?" Theo looked sad. "No, I promised her I'd come because I wanted to see you."

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Theo's smile held bitterness. "For you, it might sound unwelcome, but for me, it's a rare opportunity to see you." Elyse plucked at the violin strings, her tone casual. "So, should I grant Kaelyn's wish?" Theo turned his gaze toward Elyse. "Ultimately, the decision rests with you." Elyse felt a twinge of surprise. "I expected you to advocate for Kaelyn." Theo chuckled bitterly. "I won't pressure you. Sharing my feelings was about honesty, not making excuses or playing games. I want us to be open and genuine with each other."

The melody abruptly ceased. Elyse lifted her head. "Are you feigning delayed affection?" Theo's complexion paled. "This isn't an act. I'm sincere about you. I understand your doubts, but given a chance, I'll prove it to you in time." Her fingers traced the strings. "We can't be together. It's best to accept it." Theo smiled sadly. There was no way he would give up. He refused to surrender. He was determined to reclaim his true love, even if Elyse was wedded to another.

Unaware of Theo's unwavering resolve, Elyse found herself pondering over Kaelyn. She had little familiarity with Kaelyn, and Theo was their only link. Yet Elyse always believed that since she married Jayden, her ties with Theo would dissolve. Thus she couldn't fathom why Kaelyn would cause her harm. After mulling it over, Elyse spoke up. "I have a question for Kaelyn. I'm willing to meet her." Theo had anticipated Elyse's refusal, but her agreement caught him off guard.

"I need to inform Fiona." With the violin cradled in her grasp, Elyse pivoted and strode into the studio. Engrossed in her violin practice, Fiona suddenly noticed Elyse's approach. She halted playing, a smile gracing her lips as she inquired, "Had enough of practicing? Care for some black tea?" Elyse shook her head. "Sorry, I've got some things to attend to. I'll be back in two hours." Fiona was taken aback. She reached out, wiping the sweat from Elyse's brow, and spoke gently, "Handle your affairs first. You can head home afterward and practice your violin. No need to rush back." With a grateful glance at Fiona, Elyse murmured, "Please don't mention this to Irving. He won't let me off easy if he finds out." Fiona smiled knowingly. "Are you that afraid of him?"

Elyse nodded solemnly. "He's got quite the sharp tongue." Waving goodbye to Fiona, Elyse turned and departed. Elyse climbed into Theo's car. Disregarding his eager anticipation, she retrieved her phone, shooting a message to her driver requesting a pickup at the police station later. Theo cleared his throat. "Do you remember your college class monitor?" Elyse nodded. "Yeah. What about her?" Theo remarked, "I noticed her recent social media update. She's tying the knot soon, and her fiancé's got a bakery. Those pastries look tempting. Thought we might swing by and give it a try." Though his tone was casual, Theo had his own agenda. Elyse turned to him, her expression blank. "No, I lost touch with her after graduation. Besides, I'm interested in pastries, not..." Elyse's response was firm, shutting down any suggestion implied by Theo's words.

Their ability to casually plan outings, typical of friends, had long vanished, a reminder that they couldn't turn back time. Theo's face betrayed a mix of emotions. He recalled Elyse's consistent rejections since their breakup. He sensed her detachment and indifference. Could she truly move on from their past love so swiftly? Theo doubted it. He convinced himself that Elyse harbored feelings for him buried beneath her pain and denial. Continuing to persuade himself, Theo remained convinced of Elyse's lingering affection. "If it's inconvenient for you, forget I mentioned it. There'll be opportunities down the road," Theo said, conceding.

Elyse shook her head. "There's no hope, Theo. Can't you see what I'm saying? I refuse to bargain with you about our plans. Stop it. Can't you spare me some false hope? I've

deluded myself enough. Why do you persist in this?" Theo erupted abruptly. "Is rejection all you can offer? I've exhausted every effort to win you back. Give me something else to work with." Theo's eyes were red, his chest heaving with emotion. Elyse sensed he was on the verge of breaking down.

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Elyse instinctively wanted to apologize, but she knew Theo wouldn't want to hear it. Instead, she turned away to avoid him. After calming down, Theo realized he'd lost his cool. He cared about how Elyse saw him but couldn't find the words. They sat in uncomfortable silence.

Arriving at their destination, they got out and walked to the police station in silence. A policeman eventually came to escort Elyse to see Kaelyn. Kaelyn, in a prison uniform and handcuffs, sat quietly across the glass, her complexion pale, and her expression hardened. As Elyse approached, Theo's voice came from behind. "Don't worry, I'll be right here." Without replying, she stepped forward.

When Kaelyn saw her, a smile crept across her lips, sarcastic, mocking, and almost pitiful. Elyse met her gaze expressionlessly. "I just want to ask you one question." Kaelyn's smile was strained. "What is it?" "Why did you try to kill me so many times?" Elyse finally asked. "Do I need a reason to want you dead?" Kaelyn responded defiantly. "Don't you?" Elyse pressed. "You really came here just to ask me that? Don't you want to know any of Jayden's secrets?" Kaelyn countered. "No, I don't," Elyse replied without hesitation.

Surprised, Kaelyn's expression darkened. "Elyse, you know what? That's why I hate you so much. I'm jealous of you. Maybe the only thing that will calm my jealousy is your death." "If that's your reason for wanting me dead, then you're too unremarkable to hold my interest," Elyse said flatly. Kaelyn fixed her gaze on Elyse. "You've really changed. You dare to defy me now." Elyse had expected Kaelyn to confide in her, but the conversation felt disappointingly dull. She regretted coming.

As she stood up to leave, Kaelyn suddenly called her name. Elyse turned around. "See you next time, Elyse," Kaelyn said. But Elyse ignored her. She found Kaelyn to be paranoid, even a little unhinged. Stepping out of the room, Theo asked, "What did Kaelyn say to you?" "A bunch of bullshit," Elyse said flatly. Checking her phone, she saw that her driver had arrived. She hurried to meet him.

Seeing this, Theo called after her, "Let me drive you home." "No thanks. The driver is already here," Elyse replied, brushing off the offer. "Do you really have to do this?" Theo's smile was strained, his eyes filled with helplessness. Elyse paused and looked back at him. "It's better this way. Stop being stubborn. Let's move on."

Theo stood frozen, staring sadly at her retreating figure. He wanted to move on but couldn't bring himself to. They were going in different directions, yet his eyes remained locked on her, unable to focus on the path ahead, knowing she was the one he wanted to follow. Elyse quickly slipped into the car to avoid him.

Seated inside, she started to text Jayden, but a message from him suddenly popped up: "Pick me up at this address."

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In the afternoon, Jayden had planned to pick up Elyse when he received an unexpected call from Brook, urging him to meet at the Owen Group office for a discussion. After much deliberation, Jayden decided to honor Brook's request.

Upon arrival at the Owen Group's building, Jayden was escorted to Brook's office by his assistant. When the assistant opened the door, Jayden's gaze fell upon Debora and Corrie within the room. Given that Corrie's parents were under Jayden's control, she refrained from any impulsive actions. Upon catching sight of Jayden, Corrie averted her gaze, feigning unfamiliarity as she turned her face away from him. Meanwhile, Debora, leaning casually against the chair, bore a mischievous glint in her eyes.

Jayden glanced at the room's occupants before finally focusing on Brook. With a direct yet composed demeanor, he inquired, "Brook, what is it you require of me?" Seated comfortably on the sofa, Brook twirled a pen between his fingers, a peculiar expression playing across his features. His tone sharp, Brook retorted, "You're asking me? Aren't you aware of your actions?" Unperturbed, Jayden responded coldly, "I'm no mind reader. How could I discern your thoughts?"

Clutching his jaw tightly, Brook continued, "I presumed you were incapable of causing any disruption. I never anticipated that you would secretly form the Bayzee Group right under the Owen Group's nose." Corrie, listening from a distance, was stunned. Jayden, the founder of Bayzee Group? No wonder its chairman's identity remained shrouded in mystery, eluding public scrutiny. At that moment, Corrie regarded Jayden with emotions



swirling in her eyes, her expression betraying a complex mixture of curiosity and admiration.

Jayden was undeniably the most remarkable individual she'd encountered, perhaps even someone she could envision marrying. Tilting her head, Debora remarked, "You're quite the enigma, Jayden. Were it not for my thorough investigation, I wouldn't have uncovered your burgeoning business empire flourishing behind the scenes of the Owen Group. You've been keeping secrets from us for far too long."

Corrie couldn't suppress a subtle eyeroll. Not only had Jayden concealed his business endeavors, but also his physical condition. He was certainly not the cripple he'd portrayed himself to be. Unfortunately, she dared not divulge the truth lest her parents face dire consequences.

Jayden remained unfazed by the revelation of his company, though he hadn't anticipated Debora being the one to uncover it. Debora's intellect seemed to overshadow Brook's. Observing Jayden's absentmindedness and blatant disregard, Brook's anger surged like a storm. Rising from his seat, he stormed toward Jayden, his voice thundering, "Why keep the truth about Bayzee Group concealed? Are you planning to retaliate against me? You knew I was relying on that cooperation, yet you chose to collaborate elsewhere. I'm your family. Why didn't you choose me?"

Brook had invested substantial time and effort into securing cooperation with the Bayzee Group, only to be thwarted inexplicably. He hadn't encountered a single leader of the Bayzee Group, leaving him perplexed by his failure. A realization struck Brook like lightning. Jayden had played with him, sabotaging their potential collaboration.

As Jayden snapped back to reality, he countered, "Brook, you've misjudged. You guys left me no choice. Remember when you and Grandpa coerced me into marriage? Are you retaliating against me simply because I suggested you marry some girl? Do you even consider me your family?" Brook inquired.

Jayden's smirk held a hint of provocation as he retorted, "Do you take me as your family? The Owen family thrives on competition. When have we been taught to get along well with each other?" Debora nodded in agreement. "Indeed, Jayden is correct. Competing with one another is a longstanding tradition within our family."

Brook's fury reached a boiling point, attempting to tip Jayden and his wheelchair to the floor, but the wheelchair wouldn't budge. Irritated, Brook snapped, "Jayden, you

haven't shown me even an ounce of respect. Are you trying to garner favor in front of Grandpa by proving that I can't outmatch you despite your condition?"

Jayden's lips curled into a wry smile as he replied, "Don't overanalyze it, Brook. My founding of the Bayzee Group has nothing to do with you. I have no interest in the Owen Group's inheritance rights either. I simply want to pursue something I'm passionate about."

Debora interjected, "While your perspective may differ, Grandpa's does not. Brook's stance is logical. You seek no power struggle, but what you did is far more brutal." Jayden's smile persisted as he remarked, "Then that's your dilemma. As for me, I relinquish any claim to the inheritance. Can't you settle the victor by yourselves?"

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"I've had enough of your excuses," Brook thundered, his grip tightening around Jayden's collar as he tried to yank him from his wheelchair. But just as he had missed when attempting to kick the wheelchair, he couldn't move Jayden now. Brook's eyes blazed crimson with blind fury, and losing all control, he drew back his fist and aimed at Jayden's face.

The punch landed with a sickening thud, whipping Jayden's head to the side. He let out a muffled grunt and wiped his lips with his thumb, his gaze turning icy. But he remained silent, his motives unclear.

Corrie was gripped with fear as her thoughts raced, envisioning Jayden revealing his true colors and shedding the pretense of his disability. She imagined Brook, all show and no strength, left defenseless against Jayden's wrath. She had noticed that Jayden could have easily dodged Brook's punch. Her sharp eyes noticed a flicker of hesitation that allowed the blow to connect. She felt sure Jayden was planning something.

Brook's incandescent rage distorted his face, blinding him to Jayden's true identity as the formidable head of the Bayzee Group and the likely retaliation he faced. On the other side, Debora gasped softly. Seeing Jayden's bloodied lips, she felt a wave of sympathy. Still young, she remembered Jayden from the past when he stood tall and strong. Even in a simple black suit, he radiated an aura of royalty.

When Debora went abroad for her studies and heard that Jayden had been in a car accident, losing the use of his legs, she hadn't thought much about it. She assumed Jayden remained the same, with that noble aura that made him untouchable. However, seeing him take a punch without reacting shattered that illusion.

Back when Jayden was the supposed successor of their grandpa, Debora hadn't considered competing with him, believing the position rightfully his. But now, seeing the former golden boy confined in a wheelchair so vulnerably, she believed she still stood a chance, even though he was the founder of the Bayzee Group.

As Brook raged against Jayden, he suddenly pivoted toward Corrie, his bloodshot eyes fixed on her. Corrie had been a silent bystander, uninvolved, but now Brook advanced, his anger turning toward her. Startled, she backed away until her back hit the icy wall. With a placating smile, she tried to calm him. "What's gotten into you? I haven't done anything to offend you. Please don't take out your anger on me."

Brook lunged forward, grabbing Corrie by her hair as he pointed an accusing finger at Jayden. "Wasn't he your ex? Do you still have feelings for him now that you see him like this?"

Corrie was speechless. What was wrong with Brook? Biting her lip, she fervently denied it. "I don't, and I never did. He's nothing to me. I love you now."

Brook's icy stare remained locked on her, piercing through her defenses. Corrie felt her scalp tingle under his gaze as realization set in. Brook had spiraled into madness.

"How will you prove what you're saying is true?" Brook demanded.

Corrie was exasperated. "How am I supposed to prove it to you?"

"It's simple," Brook replied, pointing at Jayden's legs. "I heard he hurt his knees in that accident. Go on, kick him there."

Debora watched in frozen shock, unable to bear the sight. "Brook, this is too much. Jayden's already crippled, and you're still tormenting him."

Brook remained unmoved, his face void of emotion. “This is between Jayden and me. If you can’t handle it, leave and stop whining.”

Debora’s voice lowered, disappointment heavy in her tone. “You’ve lost your mind.”

Brook scoffed. “Lost my mind? You don’t know me at all. This is payback for his betrayal. He could’ve helped me but chose not to. Then he had the nerve to bring up our family rules. I knew he just wanted to humiliate me.”

Recognizing Brook’s instability, Debora sighed, deciding it was pointless to argue further.

Jayden sat hunched in his wheelchair, his expression blank. His fingers tapped softly on the armrest, and beneath his lowered lashes, a storm of danger and sarcasm brewed unnoticed.

Corrie knew she had to prove herself to Brook. She locked her gaze on Jayden, bracing herself. She had to strike him as Brook ordered. If Jayden sought revenge, he could take it up with Brook. Plus, she believed he wouldn’t resort to violence against women. Buoyed by this belief, Corrie lashed out at Jayden with two quick kicks, taking personal satisfaction.

Brook’s laughter rang out as he watched. In one swift move, he wrapped an arm around Corrie’s waist, gripped her chin, and planted a forceful kiss on her lips. The kiss caught Corrie off guard. She concealed her revulsion, suppressing the disgust churning inside.

But for Brook, the kiss wasn’t enough to humiliate Jayden. He grabbed Corrie’s breast and pinched it forcefully, drawing a cry of pain. With a sneer, Brook said, “Jayden, it must suck that your ex-girlfriend treats you like dirt. But now you’re crippled, and everything you had is mine.”

Debora shook her head at Brook, seeing how his self-esteem thrived on bullying Jayden. In her eyes, Brook was no match for her in competitions.

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Jayden remained expressionless throughout. Brook lost interest, his smile fading away. Debora tried to calm things down. "Stop it, Brook. Don't make a scene." Brook snorted and strode out of the office. Corrie, still stinging from the earlier humiliation, bit her lip, suppressing her resentment as she followed Brook.

After they left, Debora approached Jayden with a helpless expression. "Jayden, I'm the one who found out about your connection to the Bayzee Group and told Grandpa. If you have any complaints, take them up with me." She paused before continuing, "I do need to sell you out for resources. Once I'm head of the family and take over the Owen Group, I'll treat you well."

Jayden glanced up at her, noting her guilt. "If you're going to fight for power, don't feel guilty about it," he said coolly. "Do your best to deal with your enemies. A softhearted person can't lead the Owen family."

After Debora left, Jayden smirked viciously. He dusted off his shoulders, took out his phone, and sent a message to Elyse before settling back into his wheelchair to wait. The police station was close to the Owen Group's building, and Elyse would arrive in about ten minutes.

When she reached the office, she noticed Debora standing silently at the door with her arms crossed. Elyse rushed forward, her voice anxious. "Where is Jayden?"

Debora gave her a sideways glance, pointed inside the office, and said, "He's in there." Elyse immediately pushed open the door and found Jayden in his wheelchair. She hurried to his side to check on him, but he remained silent and in a poor mood.

Understanding Jayden's stubborn nature, she knew he'd never tell her what happened, so she turned to Debora behind her. Impatiently, she asked, "Miss Owen, could you tell me what happened?"

Debora hadn't expected Elyse to question her. After a few moments of silence, she reluctantly explained what had transpired. Realizing that Jayden had been humiliated, Elyse felt a pang of sympathy, her eyes reddening with tears.

Seeing this, Debora silently wondered if Elyse truly loved Jayden. Jayden knew that his plan was successful. Still, to maintain appearances, he stayed withdrawn and said coolly, "Alright, let's go home. I'm tired."

Suppressing her frustration with Brook and Corrie, Elyse wheeled Jayden out of the office. Watching them leave, Debora muttered to herself, “Are those two really in love?”

Back home, Jayden went into his room without saying anything to Elyse. Driscoll, puzzled, thought they must have argued again, but Jayden’s demeanor suggested otherwise. Finally, he asked, “What happened to Mr. Owen? He looks upset.”

Elyse’s expression was concerned. “He was bullied.”

“Wait, bullied?” Driscoll was even more confused. “Who dares bully him?” He wondered if she misunderstood something. Jayden was usually the one who pushed others around. “I’ll go check on him upstairs,” Elyse quickly made her way upstairs, worried about Jayden.

When she reached the bedroom, she saw Jayden heading for the bathroom. “Are you going to shower?” she asked. Jayden hadn’t expected her to follow him, and he was relieved he hadn’t stepped into the bathroom yet. “I was kicked,” he said, hinting that he felt unclean.

Feeling bad for him, Elyse said, “You’re the cleanest person I know.” Jayden stared at her, unsure of her intentions. He didn’t normally linger in his wheelchair for showers. Suddenly, Elyse made up her mind and said, “How about I help you shower?”

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After a moment’s pause, Jayden replied in a raspy voice, “I’m okay. Don’t worry about what Debora said.” Elyse’s fists clenched, and her voice faltered as she insisted, “I mean it. I can help you with a shower.” Jayden held her gaze for a long while before turning away. “I don’t need pity. Sure, Brook humiliated me, but I had it coming. I’d been messing with him on purpose. Brook’s guess was right. Back then, Brook was arrogant and even tried to manipulate Jayden’s marriage for his own gain. Jayden couldn’t just let that slide.”

“This isn’t about pity,” Elyse protested, her cheeks coloring. “I just want to help. Please don’t.” She had never seen Jayden so downcast; clearly, Brook’s actions had cut deep. All she wanted was to boost his spirits, to help him find his footing again. Sensing he

might lose such a good chance by rejecting her again, Jayden remained silent, quietly accepting her offer.

Elyse inhaled deeply and removed her coat, revealing a crisp white shirt underneath. “Is that my shirt?” Jayden asked, recognizing it immediately. Elyse’s face turned a deeper shade of red as she admitted, “I really like it. It’s so comfortable.” A slight smile broke through Jayden’s solemn expression. “I’m not surprised; it was quite expensive.”

Concerned about getting her jeans wet, Elyse slipped into her pajama bottoms adorned with bunny patterns. “Ready?” she asked shyly. “Sure,” Jayden agreed, his voice huskier, his gaze intensifying.

They entered the bathroom together. As Elyse adjusted the water temperature, she noticed Jayden hadn’t started to undress. “You should get undressed,” she prompted. Jayden just watched her, a calm expression on his face.

Seeing his hesitance, Elyse’s resolve melted. She turned off the tap and moved closer. “Never mind. I’ll help.” In that moment, Jayden understood there was more at play. He secretly relished Elyse’s care and concern, grateful for the repaired bond between them. Yet he knew he couldn’t remain passive in his wheelchair while she offered such intimate help. What if she found his secret? If she truly wished to assist him, he considered postponing it until a time when he no longer had to feign his disability.

However, Elyse was quick to act. She efficiently removed his shirt and hesitated momentarily before unbuttoning his belt. Suddenly, his body reacted unexpectedly, surprising them both. Any hesitation Jayden felt evaporated in that instant. He gazed at her intently, pondering the possibility of allowing things to continue this way.

As Elyse hurriedly removed his trousers, leaving him in his black boxers, she noticed a scar on his thigh she had never seen before. Her fingers reached out instinctively to touch it. Jayden caught her wrist firmly, offering her an out. “I don’t need your pity. Please leave.” Understanding his discomfort, Elyse quickly clarified, “That’s not about pity. I just want to be here for you.”

Jayden looked at her, his voice low. “Are you sure? Even to accompany me in the shower?” Her silence spoke volumes, but her flushed face gave away her inner turmoil. Jayden, misinterpreting her intentions, expressed his feelings. “I won’t be happy with your help. It feels like you’re humiliating me.”

“That’s not my intention,” Elyse responded quickly. Jayden, testing her, asked pointedly, “Do you want to make me happy?” She nodded earnestly. “Yes.” Jayden gestured toward his thing with a mischievous grin. “If you truly want to make me happy, then prove it.”

Elyse’s face registered shock at his bold words. “If you’re not up for it, then leave. I don’t need your pretense of kindness,” Jayden challenged her. However, Elyse interpreted his words differently. She believed Jayden was deliberately making it difficult for her to dissuade her from helping with his shower. “I’m sincere in my offer. I can handle it,” Elyse asserted. With resolve, she knelt between Jayden’s legs, her actions bold and determined.

Jayden was taken aback. His challenge had been a test to provoke a reaction, to see her embarrassment, not to compel her to act. He had not anticipated her taking him literally, nor had he expected her to proceed without hesitation.

#### Chapter 400:

Unsure of what to do, Elyse hesitated momentarily, and then Jayden’s voice floated down to her. “Forget it, this is too much for you.” Elyse bristled at such words; she was here by choice, after all. Who was he to say what she could handle? Spurred by his doubt, Elyse took a deep breath and attended to Jayden’s manhood. The effort made Jayden gasp, his stance tightening as if bracing himself.

Unaware of Jayden’s subtle reactions, Elyse focused solely on the task. Initially, it was unpalatable, even making her feel slightly queasy, but she gradually adapted, her mind fogging with concentration. In their past adventures, Jayden had always been the one in control. But now, the tables had turned. His breathing grew uneven under her influence, yet he was careful not to push her too far. This reversal intrigued Elyse, giving her a novel thrill and a sense of empowerment.

Observing Elyse’s tentative movements, Jayden’s forehead creased, his voice soothing yet insistent. “That’s it, just like that, like when you’re licking popsicles.” The memory flickered in Elyse’s mind, and she mimicked those actions, though her technique was far from perfect. Occasionally, her teeth would graze him, yet it seemed to spur Jayden on, fascinated by her earnest and inexperienced demeanor.

As time passed, Jayden found Elyse’s cautious pace insufficient. “Faster,” he coaxed, his tone edging towards urgency. “You can do it.” Elyse sped up, recalling the brisk



pace she employed with frozen treats, but it overwhelmed her senses, leaving her thoughts scrambled. Was it still not enough? As this thought flashed through her mind, Jayden's eyes snapped open, his hand guiding her firmly, intensifying their pace together. "Oh, that's it."

In this charged moment, Jayden, caught in a swirl of passion, still prioritized her comfort. With a sigh of restraint, he let his juices spill onto Elyse's lips; most of it found its way to the floor. Elyse managed to swallow a bit, but she choked on the rest and spit it out. Overwhelmed, Elyse caught her breath, her reactions mixed. Jayden, watching her closely, felt a surge of possessiveness.

Elyse was thrust repeatedly with her head held down, losing consciousness for long stretches at a time. Her only thought was to avoid being suffocated. Jayden looked at Elyse, who sat bewildered on the floor, traces lingering down her neck. He picked up the shower head and turned on the water. Since the hot water had already been set, it flowed immediately, scalding. Jayden unflinchingly sprayed the hot water over Elyse's body.

Elyse awoke fully with a sharp intake of breath as the hot water enveloped her, and then it stopped abruptly. She looked up at Jayden, her expression one of confusion and discomfort. Jayden had his reasons for this approach, driven by how compelling he found Elyse in her drenched state, wearing his shirt which clung to her form. He reached out, lifting her into his arms, then carefully positioned her on top of his erect cock.

The sudden contact made Elyse cry out, the discomfort clear in her voice. "It hurts, Jayden. Please stop. I don't want it." Jayden responded with firm resolve, his voice a mixture of desire and determination. "You're mine. Don't say no at this moment." He continued gently easing the tension as he went, ensuring she could accommodate him gradually. Tears filled Elyse's eyes from the intensity of the pain.

Jayden, sensing her threshold, applied careful pressure, and they reached a new depth in their connection, his movements deliberate. He asked softly, his voice tinged with both concern and possessiveness, "Good girl, do you want to be all mine?" Overwhelmed by the sensation and his commanding presence, Elyse nodded, her voice a discomforted whisper amidst her tears.

Jayden's eyes darkened with emotion. "I'm giving you all of me," he said with fervor. "You're mine forever."