

Bound love 451

Chapter 451:

Upon hearing this, Jayden narrowed his eyes, a threatening glint apparent. “My secret? What secret?”

Corrie stood frozen, scanning the crowd of onlookers. In a panicked voice, she repeated, “I don’t know. I don’t know what your secret is. I don’t know!”

Jayden gave her a meaningful look before he turned and rolled away in his wheelchair. Corrie watched him leave the building before she finally stamped her feet in anger. The men in the Owen family were no good. They were all selfish. Were it not for the resources of the Owen family, she would never be subjected to such treatment.

Losing any concern for her image, she shouted a few more times, gripping the front desk as she gasped for breath. The receptionists kept their distance, wary of her potential outburst.

“Damn it! Jayden, I will definitely make things difficult for you,” she muttered under her breath, her gaze suddenly shifting to the elevator.

The person she most wanted to see, Enzo, was upstairs. If she revealed Jayden’s secret to him, he couldn’t pretend to be a cripple anymore. But her parents were still under Jayden’s control. What if revealing the secret led to Jayden harming her parents? Once again, she found herself caught in a dilemma.

In the studio, after Elyse had been practicing for two hours, Forrest tugged at the hem of her clothing and announced loudly, “Elyse, time’s up. You should stop practicing. Get some rest now.”

Startled, Elyse looked out the window to see it was already dusk. Forrest led her to sit down and suggested, “Have a rest. I’ll take you out for dinner.”

Confused, she asked, “Why are you taking me out to dinner?”

Gazing at her flat belly, Forrest explained seriously, "Because you need nutrition." After all, she was carrying five babies.

With a confused look on her face, Elyse was about to refuse the offer of dinner. However, considering the new life growing within her, she nodded in agreement. "You're right. I really should supplement my nutrition."

Forrest breathed a sigh of relief and then asked, "What do you want to eat? It's my treat."

Elyse found this amusing. "Do you have money to buy me dinner?"

Forrest nodded. "Mr. Tucker gave me money. Every time he went out, he would leave me money to take care of my meals."

Elyse was surprised. "You ate alone outside when Mr. Tucker was away?"

With a sense of righteousness, Forrest replied, "Where else can I eat? The school cafeterias are closed during holidays, so I have to eat out." Then, he began to pack his schoolbag. "Let's go. I'll take you to dinner."

Elyse, impressed by Forrest's independence, suddenly felt a surge of motherly love. She touched his head gently and offered, "Why don't you come to my house for dinner? My chef cooks really well."

Forrest hesitated. "Do you want to take me to your house for dinner?"

Elyse smiled and nodded, "Yes. Would you like to join me?"

"If you insist, I'll respect your invitation and grudgingly accept your offer to go to your house for dinner," Forrest replied, shyly fiddling with his hands behind his back.

Charmed by Forrest's adorable demeanor, Elyse hugged him and kissed his cheek. "You are so cute, I just had to kiss you."

Forrest blushed deeply.

After packing up, Elyse led Forrest out of the studio, and they got into the car to head to her home.

Jayden had been waiting at home for a long time. When he saw her return with the little boy, he asked in surprise, "Where did you pick up this boy?"

"This is Forrest Greene, another apprentice of Mr. Tucker," Elyse explained with a smile.

After a long stare at Jayden, Forrest pointed at his nose and declared, "Jerk!"

Chapter 452:

"You jerk!" Forrest repeated, glaring daggers at Jayden.

Elyse, bewildered, darted her gaze between them. "What's wrong, Forrest? Why are you calling him that?"

Forrest clenched his jaw, his eyes burning into Jayden. He was the man who had gotten Elyse pregnant with quintuplets!

Jayden raised an eyebrow. "Where'd you find this stupid little tyke?"

Elyse blinked. "He's sort of my senior, not some stupid tyke."

Jayden scoffed. "Seriously? He's barely out of diapers." With a disdainful gesture, he beckoned Forrest closer. "Come here, kiddo."

Forrest marched up to Jayden and sank his teeth into the man's thigh.

The surprise was absolute.

Jayden was in pain, his body instinctively tensing. But remembering his disguise, he forced himself to relax. He gritted his teeth to stifle a scream. Forrest's bite was fierce, drawing blood.

Jayden fought the urge to kick the boy away. "Elyse, what are you waiting for? Get him off me!"

Elyse, momentarily stunned, finally reacted. She rushed to pry Forrest away, who continued to shout even after she did. "You jerk! You ruined Elyse's life! I'll get you next time!"

Elyse, noticing Jayden's grimace, hurriedly clamped a hand over Forrest's mouth. "He's usually well-behaved," she explained with a strained smile. "He must be having an off day."

Then, she called Driscoll to take Forrest to wash his hands.

After Forrest left with Driscoll, Elyse approached Jayden with concern. "Does it hurt? Should I call a doctor?"

Jayden glared at her. "Why'd you bring a kid home?"

Elyse, taken aback by his question, countered carefully, "Is there a reason I can't?"

Jayden frowned, disgust coloring his features. "I can't stand kids. If he's staying the night, keep him out of my sight."

Elyse tried to project a sense of composure. "What did you see in the bathroom, Forrest?"

"Pregnancy test boxes," Forrest answered honestly. "Are you having babies, Elyse? I'll protect you and make sure you deliver them safely."

Elyse's jaw dropped. How could she have forgotten to dispose of those boxes?

Thinking fast, she stammered nervously, “Forrest, can you keep this a secret?”

Forrest’s brow furrowed. “Why? Everyone should know so they can protect you.”

“Because...” Elyse trailed off, her hand hovering over her stomach, a well of helplessness in her eyes. Because Jayden hated children.

After a thoughtful pause, she offered a different explanation. “Because I may not keep...”

Forrest’s confusion deepened. The concept of losing the babies was foreign to him. “Don’t you want them?” he persisted. “Don’t you want them to stay with you?”

Elyse stared into his innocent eyes, a wave of helplessness washing over her. The question hung heavy in the air, unanswered. Did she truly want the babies? Should she consider an abortion?

Tears welled up in her eyes, a tangle of emotions swirling within her. This was her first pregnancy, and no one had prepared her for the overwhelming choices she now faced, especially not within the complex dynamics of the Owen family.

Chapter 453:

Elyse was unable to respond to Forrest’s question. She paused, smiled warmly, and said, “I can’t answer you.”

“Then I’ll keep your secret,” Forrest responded, scratching his head.

“Thank you,” Elyse said, touching Forrest’s head affectionately. “You are my guardian angel. You’ve really looked out for me today.”

Flattered by the praise, Forrest blushed and looked away shyly. “Don’t praise me. It’s just what I should do,” he muttered.

“Hey, little guy, want some cake?” Driscoll called out with a smile from a distance.

Forrest's eyes sparkled. He dashed over and eagerly accepted the cake from Driscoll.

Elyse couldn't help but smile as she watched Forrest devour the cake joyfully. She approached Driscoll and whispered, "Why doesn't Jayden like kids?"

"I don't think he dislikes them. He just finds it hard to get along with children," Driscoll responded candidly, caught off guard by the question.

"Why does he feel that way?" Elyse asked, puzzled.

"As a child, he was often neglected, and his needs were unmet." Driscoll managed a wry smile. "Growing up, he distanced himself from children who showed a strong dependence."

With a resigned sigh, he added, "If he never received care as a child, how can he offer it to another kid now that he's grown?"

Elyse fell silent, realizing she didn't know Jayden as well as she thought. He had yet to open his heart to her fully.

"But you're here now, and maybe you can bring about a change," Driscoll said, offering a comforting smile as he observed the troubled look on Elyse's face. "If he becomes a father, I think he'd be great at it."

Elyse hesitated, unsure whether to share her secret with Driscoll.

"Would Jayden be happy if I were pregnant?" she asked cautiously.

Driscoll's smile widened upon hearing this. "He might not show it, but all the servants certainly would be," he responded warmly.

Now that she knew Jayden's aversion to children, Elyse felt conflicted. Perhaps she should seek confirmation at the hospital. Could all five pregnancy tests be incorrect? She struggled to accept the reality of her situation.

As dinner time approached, Elyse joined Jayden at the table. His expression was unreadable and distant. She broached the topic again, tentatively. "Jayden, would you be happy if we had a baby?"

"No, I wouldn't," Jayden responded bluntly.

At this, Forrest, who had been quietly eating, looked up sharply, his voice tinged with reproach. "What's wrong with you? Can't you be kind to Elyse?"

Jayden clenched his fists, holding back his anger. He reminded himself that Forrest would be gone in an hour.

Elyse felt a profound sense of disappointment. Jayden's curt rejection left her with no room to navigate.

After a while, Jayden glanced at Elyse and asked, "Why have you been talking about kids so much today? Are you thinking about adopting him?"

He was referring to Forrest.

Forrest's reaction was immediate and fiery. "I wouldn't want a bad man like you for a father!" he exclaimed.

Elyse quickly shook her head. "No, I never thought about that. I was just making conversation," she clarified.

Jayden didn't pursue the matter further and continued eating.

Elyse, however, lost her appetite. She nibbled at her food and then retreated to the living room.

Jayden noticed Elyse's unusual behavior but couldn't pinpoint the cause. He assumed she was just in a bad mood.

In the living room, Elyse clutched a pillow and browsed her phone for a hospital where she could take a pregnancy test. She thought she could go to any except where Peyton worked. After a few minutes, she found a hospital and decided to visit the next morning.

Despite the positive pregnancy tests, she remained unsure about her condition.

Meanwhile, Jayden brought out a plate of roasted meat and approached Elyse. “You didn’t eat much at dinner. Try some of this barbecue made especially for you,” he said, offering the plate to her.

As Elyse looked at the food, she suddenly felt nauseous. She covered her mouth and retched several times.

“What’s wrong?” Jayden asked, puzzled and concerned.

“An upset stomach, I need to go to the bathroom!” Elyse managed to reply before rushing off.

Jayden’s confusion grew as he observed her flee in panic. If she had an upset stomach, why the sudden nausea? Wasn’t it expected to be diarrhea instead?

Chapter 454:

After a long bout of retching, Elyse finally felt a bit better. She emerged from the bathroom, too shaken to face Jayden, and asked Driscoll to send Forrest home before she hurried upstairs to sleep.

Jayden, having finished his work, had hoped to spend some quality time with her, but found her already sleeping peacefully. He quietly lay down beside her.

In the early morning light, Elyse woke up feeling dizzy and slightly feverish. Remembering the five pregnancy tests, she felt a surge of frustration. It seemed she was in the early stages of pregnancy.

With mixed feelings, she looked at Jayden, who was still sleeping soundly, and tenderly touched his face. “If only you didn’t dislike kids so much, I wouldn’t be so scared to tell you directly.”

Although she felt a bit sleepy, she had an appointment at the hospital in the morning and a violin practice session at the studio later that day. Pushing herself up with sheer willpower, she declined the driver’s offer and took a taxi to the hospital for her scheduled examination.

Half an hour later, she received the results.

The obstetrician smiled as she handed back the examination report. “Congratulations, you’ve been pregnant for two months.”

Elyse froze, unsure of her next steps.

The doctor reviewed the report again. “Your baby is very healthy, and so are you. We don’t foresee any major issues later, but you should continue with regular check-ups.”

After a brief silence, Elyse took the report, mustered a smile, and responded, “Thank you. I will.” She then rushed out of the doctor’s office.

Sitting alone, she stared at the ultrasound printout in her hands. She was overwhelmed by the reality of her situation. “I’m really pregnant. Two months along.”

Her fingers traced the outline on the ultrasound image, the basic shape of a baby. Though it lacked hands and feet, it was a healthy, growing baby.

Elyse found herself engulfed in a whirlwind of emotions, feeling the weight of adulthood settle upon her shoulders. Should she keep the baby? She found herself lost in thought once again.

“Elyse, why are you here?” Corrie approached, arms crossed, wearing a contrived smile.

Elyse quickly hid the report and retorted coldly, “Why are you here? Are you pregnant with Brook’s child?”

Corrie rolled her eyes. “I would never have a baby with him.” She then smoothed her hair and added with a smile, “I’m just here for a routine check-up.”

“I see,” Elyse replied, and she turned to leave but was stopped by Corrie.

With a curious smile, Corrie then asked, “Are you here for a routine check-up too? Could you show me your results?”

Startled, Elyse asked, “Why would I show you? Are we that close?”

Confused by Elyse’s reaction, Corrie pressed further, “Why do you seem different? Are you hiding some illness? Have you been unfaithful to Jayden?”

Pulling away from Corrie’s grasp, Elyse replied, “Is that why you’re here? To make sure you’re healthy? You should mind your own business.” With that, she quickly grabbed her purse and hurried away.

Watching her leave, Corrie felt increasingly perplexed by her behavior. It seemed likely that Elyse was either there for a routine exam or possibly pregnant. Was she really expecting?

After leaving the hospital, Elyse caught a taxi to her studio. Upon arrival, she found Irving and the others already there.

Sitting on the sofa with a coffee in hand, Gavin asked, “Would you like some coffee?”

After quickly checking her phone to see if it was safe for pregnant women, Elyse found her answer and declined, “No, thanks.”

Gavin didn’t press the issue.

Irving, putting down his music sheets, pulled out a cigarette. Just as he was about to light it, Elyse rushed over and covered his mouth.

Surprised, Irving inquired, "What's going on?"

"Could you not smoke around me? The smell makes me feel sick," Elyse explained, her tone apologetic yet firm.

Frowning, Irving muttered, "You're being quite troublesome." He then stood up and left the studio to smoke outside.

Chapter 455:

Gavin regarded Elyse with a look of concern and inquired, "You seem quite fatigued today. Is it lack of sleep or perhaps stress?"

Surprised, Elyse touched her face and responded, "Do I really appear tired?"

"Yes, it's quite evident," confirmed Gavin.

Trying to smile through the awkwardness, she explained, "It's probably due to a poor night's sleep."

As Fiona, carrying her violin, settled on the sofa and began munching on snacks, she offered Elyse a bag of dried shredded squid. "Want some?"

The sight of the shredded squid made Elyse feel nauseous, though she tried to conceal it. "No, thank you, I'll pass."

Fiona, undeterred, held out a bag of chips. "How about these? You usually can't get enough of them."

"I've been off those lately," Elyse declined again.

Puzzled, Fiona asked, "What's with you today, not eating anything?"

Gavin looked at Elyse with eyes full of concern. "The final is coming up. Is the pressure making you lose your appetite?"

Elyse managed a strained smile. "Yeah, the anxiety is really getting to me. It's my first time heading into the final ranked first."

Gavin tried to lighten the mood. "Don't worry too much. Ten of you guys are competing for eight spots. You and Fiona are sure to get through."

Nodding in agreement, Elyse picked up her violin to practice. However, she could only manage half an hour before feeling overwhelmed by an intense wave of fatigue and hunger. The urge to sleep and eat was overpowering. Realizing how irrational she felt, she scratched her ears and cheeks, confused about what to do next.

Just then, Forrest entered, his schoolbag on his back, ready to tackle his homework and then violin practice.

Upon noticing Forrest, Gavin inquired, "I heard you registered for the children's violin competition?"

Forrest nodded affirmatively. "I'm going to gain some experience."

While talking, he noticed Elyse standing to the side. Recalling his promise to her, he approached her carefully and asked with concern, "Are you all right?"

Elyse held her stomach and replied with frustration, "I'm hungry, but I don't feel like eating. I want to sleep, but if I do, I can't practice my violin. It's really difficult."

Forrest was taken aback by her distress. He offered anxiously, "I have some bread with me. Would you like to eat it?"

Elyse shook her head. "I can't eat anything right now. But I'm really hungry."

At a loss for words, Forrest wondered silently if pregnancy was always this challenging.

Noticing Elyse had not been practicing her violin for a while, Gavin approached her with concern. "Are you okay? Is there a problem?"

As Elyse looked up, he noticed she was crying. Unsure of what to do, he asked, "What's wrong? Why are you crying?"

Wiping her tears, Elyse was unsure why she was crying. She felt an overwhelming hunger but couldn't bring herself to eat anything. Additionally, she needed to persist in her violin practice despite her exhaustion. This situation left her feeling deeply aggrieved. Her feelings of injustice washed over her like a raging storm, consuming her heart. "I'm hungry, but I don't know what to eat. I'm so sad."

Gavin tried to be helpful. "What do you want to eat? I'll get it for you."

After a moment's thought, Elyse expressed her craving, "I want to eat fresh cherries."

Gavin's expression shifted slightly. "Don't be unreasonable. It's not the season for cherries. Choose something else."

Elyse burst out, more upset, "I just want cherries, the fresh kind, not canned!"

Chapter 456:

Gavin stood still, puzzled by Elyse's reaction and completely stunned. Nearby, Forrest understood why she was so emotional but didn't know what to do, sharing a confused glance with Gavin.

Fiona, noticing the commotion, walked over and asked with concern, "What's going on? Why is Elyse crying?"

Elyse knew she was being overly emotional and tried to compose herself, but tears continued to fall.

Fiona grew more puzzled. “Did they say something to upset you?”

Shaking her head, Elyse replied, “No, I just really want to eat fresh cherries.”

Since cherries were out of season, Gavin suggested, “Maybe your husband can find some for you, right?”

Surprisingly, this calmed Elyse down a bit. “What if he can’t find any either?”

Gavin pulled out his phone and dialed Jayden’s number. After a brief conversation, he said, “Hello, your wife is crying because she wants cherries. Can you manage to find some?”

There was a pause before Jayden responded, “Hand the phone to Elyse.”

Gavin passed the phone to her. “He wants to talk to you.”

Sniffing, Elyse took the phone, “Hello?”

Jayden reassured her, “I’ll find someone to get you cherries and send them over. They’re just cherries. Why cry over them?”

Elyse nodded, wiping her tears. “Okay, I’ll wait for them,” she said quietly.

“All right. Bye,” Jayden then hung up.

Gavin retrieved his phone, teasing her gently, “No more tears now? Your husband is getting you those cherries, right?”

Elyse, embarrassed by her earlier outburst, scratched her head. She knew her behavior might have seemed childish, but she couldn’t help it. Her craving for cherries was intense. If she couldn’t satisfy it, she felt deeply upset.

Suddenly, a thought struck her. Was this intense craving a sign of pregnancy? And if it was, how would she manage to compete in her upcoming competition? She was uneasy, but she had to pick up her violin and continue playing.

Meanwhile, Jayden hung up the phone and stared at it. He had noticed that Elyse had been acting unusually recently. Just yesterday, she had repeatedly brought up the topic of kids. Could she really be considering adopting the boy named Forrest?

Jayden arrived at a café near the hospital. Shortly after, Peyton walked in, holding his coat, and noticed Jayden's grave expression. Pulling out a chair, he asked casually, "What's on your mind? You look troubled."

Jayden hesitated before posing his question, "Why does Elyse keep bringing up kids?"

Peyton, taken aback, responded, "Kids? Are you sure?"

Jayden nodded. "Does she want to have a baby with me?"

As Peyton browsed the menu, planning to order his coffee, he remarked, "Don't you want a child with her? You two are so in love. Honestly, I'm quite envious!"

Jayden tapped his fingers on the table, not immediately responding to Peyton's comment. The increasing speed of his tapping revealed his inner turmoil. After a moment, he admitted, "It would be wonderful to have a child with her, but the timing isn't right."

Peyton, setting down the menu, inquired, "Why isn't it the right time? Is it because your family found out about the company you started?"

Jayden replied, "It's not just that. I haven't yet uncovered who is lurking in the shadows."

Peyton, after calling over the waiter and ordering his coffee, suggested, "Didn't you suspect it might be your grandpa?"

Jayden, frowning, said, "But I haven't found any direct evidence yet."

Peyton sighed. “Honestly, I don’t agree with your suspicions. How can you believe your family would harm you?”

Jayden shook his head. “In an ordinary family, a grandfather wouldn’t harm his grandchildren. But in my family, where interests prevail, even a child can be sacrificed.”

His voice grew heavier as he continued, “I hope it’s someone else behind this. If it turns out to be my grandpa, I might hesitate to let Elyse have our child.”

Stunned by Jayden’s intensity, Peyton exclaimed after a pause, “That’s too extreme! Even if your family members are ruthless, it shouldn’t stop you from starting a family. You might be worrying too much. To give up on having a child without being sure of the facts seems like a hasty decision.”

Chapter 457:

Jayden took a sip of his water and casually inquired, “So, you wouldn’t mind marrying Debora?”

A flicker of annoyance crossed Peyton’s face. “Don’t be ridiculous. Marrying an Owen is out of the question. It’s a disaster zone.”

Jayden shot Peyton a sidelong glance. “You can’t stand my family members either. Let’s be honest, the Owens are a mess—dysfunctional and perpetually depressed.”

Peyton slammed his fist on the table, his anger rising. “Then have your child with Elyse and build your own damn family! Leave the Owens in the dust.”

“But our child would be a target,” Jayden countered.

Peyton couldn’t take it anymore. Jayden was being too stubborn. As always, Jayden couldn’t tolerate anything outside his meticulously crafted control.

Peyton took a calming sip of coffee offered by the waiter before returning to the topic. “Enough with the hypotheticals, Jayden. Is Elyse pregnant? Are you pressuring her to terminate?”

Jayden shook his head. “No, she’s not pregnant.”

“Then why all this talk if there’s no baby on the way? Are you losing it?” Peyton’s anger bubbled up again.

But a thought struck Peyton. Normally, Elyse wouldn’t bring up a baby out of the blue. Did something happen to trigger the conversation?

With a doctor’s intuition, Peyton probed, “Could Elyse be expecting?”

Jayden’s usually composed facade crumbled for a rare moment. After a long, tense silence, he finally spoke. “No, she’s not pregnant. But she brought a child home yesterday.”

Peyton nodded slowly. “Ah, I see. Elyse wants a baby with you. Bringing a child home is her way of testing the waters, gauging your reaction.”

Another long silence descended upon them. Finally, Jayden spoke, his voice laced with uncertainty, “Does she want a baby with me?”

Peyton threw his hands up in exasperation. “What else would it be? Obviously, she loves you and wants to have children with you.”

Jayden covered his mouth, a flicker of fear crossing his features. The thought of Elyse loving him so deeply, so much so that she desired a child, was a terrifying revelation. Their busy schedules barely allowed for intimacy, let alone raising a child.

He grappled with the unexpected truth. “But I only want sex, not a baby.”

“Jerk!” Peyton exploded. “Don’t you dare ask me out for coffee ever again, or I can’t guarantee I won’t slug you myself!” His fists clenched, his anger a potent mix of concern for Elyse and frustration with Jayden’s self-centeredness.

Unfazed, Jayden continued, "I told you, it's not the right time for a baby. I have no problem with it... eventually."

Peyton downed the rest of his coffee in one angry gulp. "I've had enough of you. Let's get back to the company." He shoved his chair back, grabbed the wheelchair handles, and wheeled Jayden towards the exit.

The café bustled with activity, the street outside a blur of speeding vehicles visible through the large French windows.

Just as Peyton reached the window, a car careened out of control, barreling straight toward Jayden.

Reacting instinctively, Peyton shoved the wheelchair with all his might, sending Jayden out of harm's way. The car slammed into Peyton, the impact throwing him aside.

Jayden, shaken but unharmed, knew this was no accident. He'd been the target of three assassination attempts recently. The assassins wouldn't stop until he was eliminated. And he couldn't risk bringing a child into this dangerous world, a child he couldn't guarantee he could protect.

He wanted to stand up, but the lingering threat of unseen eyes held him back. He fumbled for his phone and dialed a number.

Luckily, the hospital where Peyton worked was nearby. Soon, an ambulance arrived to transport Peyton for treatment.

As dusk settled, Elyse received a frantic call from Jayden. Hearing about Peyton's accident, worry gnawed at her. "I'm on my way to the hospital," she promised.

After informing Gavin and the others, Elyse rushed to the hospital. In the sterile ward, she found Peyton lying in bed, still under the effects of anesthesia.

"How could this have happened?" she asked, disbelief coloring her voice.

Chapter 458:

Jayden's expression darkened as he sat, "Let's drop this discussion. All you need to understand is that being near me isn't safe at the moment. Be more careful."

Elyse bit her lip. Jayden was doing this to her again! Sadness overwhelmed her, making it hard to even breathe. She took a deep breath to steady herself, then asked, "Is Peyton badly hurt?"

"His right calf is broken, and he is covered in bruises," Jayden replied. "He has to stay in the hospital for now."

"Okay, I understand." Elyse nodded and walked out of the room, fearing that if she lingered any longer, her tears might begin to run down her cheeks.

She stepped into the stairwell, leaned against the wall, and wiped away the tears from her eyes. Jayden truly didn't want to share anything with her, nor did he ever ask anything of her. He always opted to handle issues on his own. The only thing she felt she could offer Jayden was to fulfill his sexual needs.

Elyse constantly reminded herself that their marriage hadn't been easy and that she shouldn't overthink things. Since Jayden didn't love her, she resolved that she could decide not to love him either. She repeated to herself that she didn't love him, thinking perhaps it would shield her from the pain.

However, the more she said it, the deeper her sorrow and bitterness grew because she realized she truly did love him—so deeply that she couldn't even lie to herself.

As she thought about this, her grief deepened. She wiped away her tears, gently touched her stomach, and murmured sorrowfully, "Baby, what should I do? Should I tell him about the pregnancy? If he finds out, he'll probably not want me to keep you."

But the thought of not keeping the baby was unbearable to her. She wanted to keep her child. She longed to have a baby of her own. It would be her family.

"Why are you crying here?" Pearce walked down the stairs with a mild smile on his face.

Elyse looked up at Pearce in surprise, quickly wiped her tears away, and asked, “Why are you here?”

Pearce’s smile broadened, “I was about to ask you the same thing. Are you hurt?”

“No, it’s my friend who was in a car accident and got hurt. I’m here to visit him,” Elyse explained, shaking her head.

Pearce nodded and approached her slowly. He bent down to look into her eyes and asked, “Then why are you crying?”

“I’m not crying,” Elyse replied embarrassedly as she placed her hands over her face.

“It’s not good to lie,” Pearce said as he plucked a hair out of her head.

Elyse felt a sharp pain and rubbed her scalp, frowning. “Why did you pull my hair? That was painful!”

“Sorry, didn’t mean to hurt you,” Pearce apologized. “I’m here to visit a friend too. I need to go get some medicine for him, so I’ll be on my way now.”

Pearce left immediately after he said that.

Still rubbing her sore scalp, Elyse thought Pearce’s behavior was odd. But then she remembered the ICU was upstairs. Was he really getting medicine for a friend in the ICU?

Once Pearce walked away, he examined the hair in his hand with a hopeful glint in his eyes. He had been looking into Elyse’s parents lately, but it was as if they had vanished without a trace. The more he found nothing, the more suspicious he grew of Elyse. She bore such a striking resemblance to someone he had longed to see again.

Pearce thought for some time. He decided he needed to conduct a paternity test to uncover the truth.

Meanwhile, Elyse returned to the ward, still rubbing her scalp. She found Jayden sitting in a wheelchair, with his gaze fixed on Peyton. She couldn't grasp what Peyton meant to Jayden, but Jayden's expression was undeniably sad. She thought Jayden might be blaming himself at that moment.

The idea briefly crossed her mind, but she immediately dismissed it. How could she feel sympathy for a man like him? She resolved never to feel sorry for men again!

As Elyse was caught up in her thoughts, Peyton stirred awake. His eyes opened groggily, and upon seeing Jayden's stern expression, he pointed at Jayden and blurted out, "I don't like this escort! I want another one!"

Chapter 459:

Elyse stared at Peyton as he babbled incomprehensibly. She approached the bedside and asked, "What's wrong with him? Why is he talking nonsense?"

Before Jayden could answer, Peyton pointed at Elyse and giggled. "Like this one! She will drink with me!"

Jayden smacked Peyton's cheek, leaving him blacked out again.

With a stern look, Jayden reassured, "Don't worry about him. It's just the anesthetic."

Elyse's expression grew complicated. Did Peyton often invite escorts to drink with him at nightclubs?

After waiting a bit, Peyton fell back asleep. Jayden exhaled deeply, relieved.

He then turned to Elyse and suggested, "You can go home first. I'll head home after Peyton wakes up."

Biting her lip, Elyse replied, "I want to go back with you."

In a serious tone, Jayden warned, "Don't stay with me recently. The killers might come back. I'm afraid you'll get hurt because of me."

"You're afraid I'll get hurt, so you want to keep your distance? If you're so capable, why can't you catch them? I can't even go home with you now," Elyse said, feeling hurt.

Jayden massaged his forehead, struggling to explain the extent of the enemy's knowledge about him. He had even suspected that the enemy could be someone close to him.

"Just go home first. I'll have Driscoll pick you up," Jayden finally said, choosing not to explain further. He pulled out his phone and called Driscoll.

He didn't feel the need to elaborate to Elyse; it would only make her worry more. Despite her concerns, she would be powerless to change the situation. Thus, Jayden believed he didn't have to explain to her.

Seeing that Elyse was visibly upset, Jayden looked at her intently for a long while and eventually relented. "Or you can wait with me and we'll go home together."

Elyse sensed Jayden's concession. She wasn't sure if he genuinely wanted her company or if it was merely a compromise. But at least, for now, she felt less inclined to cry.

The two waited for over two hours until Peyton finally awoke.

Peyton yawned and inquired, "That was a good sleep. What time is it now?"

"It's nine o'clock in the evening. You had surgery for two hours. You had a bone fracture in your shin," Jayden replied.

Reflecting on this, Peyton remarked, "So I'll have a holiday? That's amazing!"

Elyse, surprised by his reaction, asked, "Don't you like your job?"

Peyton responded, "Actually, I wanted to be a scientist when I was a kid, not a doctor. If you don't believe me, ask Jayden."

Elyse turned to Jayden.

Jayden responded with a hint of exasperation, "How would I know what your dream was? The only thing I'm aware of is that you desired an attractive escort to drink with you while you were unconscious."

Looking down at his shin, Peyton expressed his regret. "What a pity! I should be at a club drinking right now if it weren't for this."

Jayden had enough. "No clubs. Stay here."

Peyton turned his face away, defiantly stating, "You can't stop me."

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"That's enough," Jayden declared. He deftly maneuvered his wheelchair and exited the ward.

The ward door closed with a soft click, and Peyton turned to Elyse, his smile tinged with sadness. "He's blaming himself, though he might not look it."

"I should thank you as well. You saved his life," Elyse said, her smile warm and appreciative.

Peyton stretched leisurely, clasping his hands behind his head. "Don't just thank me with words. I saved his life!"

"Of course, Mr. Savior," Elyse responded with a light chuckle. Their conversation continued until Jayden returned with a doctor.

The doctor conducted a quick examination and then left the room.

Peyton waved dismissively at the couple, “You can go now. You’re interrupting.”

“Interrupting what?” Elyse asked, curiosity piqued.

“My nightly solo adventures,” Peyton replied, his grin enigmatic.

Elyse instinctively stepped back, maintaining a cautious distance.

Peyton eyed Jayden, one eyebrow arched. “But feel free to stay. I don’t mind sharing my evening.”

“Let’s head home,” Jayden said to Elyse curtly, turning to leave without a second glance.

Elyse quickly followed him out.

Peyton called after them, “Bring some good food.”

Once outside the ward, Elyse noted the relief in Jayden’s expression as they approached the elevator.

When the elevator doors opened, Pearce was there waiting.

“Did you get the medicine for your friend?” Elyse asked casually.

Without responding, Pearce stepped forward and wrapped Elyse in a tight embrace.

Elyse stood shocked, her body rigid, hands hovering in the air.

“I’ve finally found you!” Pearce exclaimed, his voice barely concealing his tremor.

Angered, Jayden grabbed Pearce’s wrist, twisting forcefully.

Quick to react, Pearce countered, freeing his wrist and gently pushing Elyse aside.

The tension between Jayden and Pearce escalated as they faced each other, equally determined.

Confused and concerned, Elyse could not grasp why Pearce had hugged her so suddenly or why the atmosphere had soured so quickly.

Pearce's gaze grew icy as he slowly looked Jayden up and down.

The paternity test had confirmed his relationship to Elyse; she was the daughter of his uncle Rickey Owen Benson, who had disappeared years ago.

With the recent suspicion of his uncle's death, Pearce understood his responsibility to protect Rickey's only daughter.

This was the first moment Pearce truly considered Jayden, whom he had previously dismissed. After observing him closely, Pearce was convinced more than ever that Jayden was not the right match for his cousin.

Pearce raised his eyes slowly. "Let me go."

Jayden responded with a cold, menacing smile. "You hugged my wife. I'm not about to let that slide."

Anger surged through Jayden.

The thought of anyone getting close to Elyse was unbearable. He had underestimated Pearce. Perhaps Pearce had targeted Elyse from the start!

His eyes darkened, a stormy, dangerous look taking over.

Pearce watched Jayden with a sneer. Clearly, he thought, Jayden was unfit to be his cousin's partner. He was acting like a complete lunatic.

Unable to bear the escalating tension, Elyse darted forward and positioned herself between them, “This is all a misunderstanding,” she said, her voice tinged with desperation. “You should go.”

Her words were directed at Pearce.

Pearce paused, at a loss for words. He had intended to whisk Elyse away, but clearly, this was not the moment. He realized he would need to explain everything to Elyse, but not with Jayden around.

His expression softened, his eyes filled with affection as he looked at her.

“Okay, see you next time.” With those words, Pearce stepped into the elevator and departed.