

Chapter 5 You Can Stand

"Didn't I make it clear? I'm married. We're over. This is my husband," Elyse said as she quickly moved to Jayden's side, gripping his arm.

Theo stared at Jayden, failing to recognize him. With a sneer, he said, "To get back at me, you married a disabled man?" He then extended his hand, commanding in a domineering tone, "Elyse, come here! I'll make it up to you when we get back."

But Elyse looked at him as if he were a stranger.

"Did you hear me? Come here!" Theo grew frustrated.

Elyse reflected on how she would have responded in the past —she would definitely walk over to his side.

She had loved him deeply for three years. Her feelings had been genuine. Yet, the depth of her affection made the betrayal harder to bear.

On her first birthday after they got together, she wanted to celebrate it by the sea. To make her happy, Theo bought a camera, promising to capture beautiful photos of her. As they were about to board the plane for their trip to the seaside, Kaelyn was injured on a film set and called Theo. Without any hesitation, Theo left her stranded at the airport. It was the most disappointing birthday Elyse had ever experienced.

Theo had once vowed to attend her debut performance with her orchestra, yet she ended up not seeing him there. She lingered in the hall all night, only to learn the next day that he had missed the performance because Kaelyn had become drunk at a dinner party while trying to land a role. He stayed because he was worried she might be taken advantage of.

For three years, he had been Kaelyn's protector, but he had never offered Elyse the same safeguard.

This accumulation of disappointments came to a head at the wedding. She knew she deserved love and respect, not neglect.

"I am Jayden's wife now. I owe my loyalty to him," declared Elyse with a chill in her voice.

"Elyse Lloyd!" Theo roared, enraged. He thought Elyse was merely being spiteful and fabricating things due to the day's incidents.

As he tried to seize her hand, Jayden intervened, blocking him swiftly.

Theo struggled to free his hand, but was unable to. He couldn't overpower a disabled man? The realization pissed him off.

"Release me!" Theo exploded with anger.

"She has no desire to leave with you. Can't you understand?" Jayden pressed slowly, his force causing Theo's features to twist in distress.

Jayden held on until Theo cried out in pain before releasing him.

"Remember this day, Elyse. You'll regret it in the future!" With a hint of embarrassment, Theo glared at Elyse and stormed off after his declaration.

Watching him leave, Elyse felt a bitter smile form within her. She knew Theo would not easily let go of being humiliated, but there was no turning back for them now.

"Let's go home, Elyse."

"Okay."

After helping Jayden into the car, they both sat silently, gazing out the window and avoiding any mention of Theo.

"How did you know I was out here?" Elyse asked, her curiosity piqued.

Without turning to face her, Jayden replied, "Driscoll mentioned

it wasn't safe for you to be alone at this hour, so I came to pick you up."

In truth, he had suspected she was up to something secretive, but it turned out she was merely meeting her ex. This revelation left him slightly disappointed.

"Since you've married me, you should sever ties with your ex. My family members are strict, and I can't cover for you if they find out you're still seeing another man."

"I won't see him again. I met him just to return a ring," Elyse responded, nodding.

Jayden said nothing more. As long as Elyse respected his boundaries, she was free to make her own choices.

When they arrived home, Elyse noticed Jayden heading straight for the study again. Curious, she asked Driscoll, "Why is he always in the study?"

"The study is not only his workplace, but it has also become a sanctuary for his soul," Driscoll explained.

"And why doesn't he return to his room?"

"He does sometimes, but we rarely know when. He prefers that we don't fuss over him too much."

With that, Driscoll departed. After freshening up in her room, Elyse was preparing for bed, but her thoughts lingered on the day's events with Jayden. She realized that despite his reserved nature, he was genuinely concerned for her safety.

Feeling grateful and wanting to express her thanks, she left her room and walked towards the study. As she approached, she noticed the door was slightly ajar, casting a sliver of light into the hallway.

Elyse pushed the door open and to her surprise, saw Jayden standing. She gasped and asked, "Jayden, you can stand?"