

Bound love 511

Chapter 511:

Biting her lip, Elyse asked with concern, “Did Mr. Tucker get angry when he found out I was pregnant?”

“Why would he be angry with you? You’re his favorite. He’s worried about you,” Irving replied quickly, hoping to ease her mind. “He bought you a gift to celebrate your first-place win. He’s been supportive all along.”

Confused, Elyse pressed, “He isn’t really angry? But won’t I embarrass him if I compete while pregnant?”

Irving scowled. “There’s no shame in it. You’re bringing a new life into the world. Who would dare mock that?”

Elyse nodded, attempting to quell her anxieties.

Feeling overlooked, Jayden maneuvered his wheelchair over to fetch some drinking water, which he offered to Elyse. “You’ve been talking a lot. Thirsty?”

She accepted the glass, her thirst affirmed, and sipped slowly. After a moment, Jayden offered, “I’m here to support you in any competition you choose.”

Irving raised an eyebrow. “Are you sure you can handle that?”

With confidence, Jayden affirmed, “It’s no trouble for me.”

Irving scrutinized him before conceding, “Alright, I’ll take your word for it this time.”

Jayden nodded again, his gaze lingering on Elyse. She met his eyes briefly before looking away, uninterested in engaging further.

Just then, Gavin entered. He stood in the doorway, wearing a brown overcoat and looking weary. Upon noticing Elyse seated on the bed, he stepped inside, his emotions tangled. "This is so sudden. Why didn't you tell anyone you were pregnant? Was your emotional breakdown in the studio the other day related to this?"

Elyse nodded, avoiding Gavin's gaze. Gavin had been deeply invested in her competitions, insisting on training her in the early stages to secure a top ranking. Now, with her pregnancy, she couldn't help but feel she had disappointed him.

Overcome with emotion, Elyse silently wiped away tears. Noticing her distress, Gavin pulled a tissue from his pocket and offered it to her with a mix of helplessness and mild rebuke. "Why are you crying? I haven't even said anything."

She shook her head, accepted the tissue, and dabbed at her tears quietly.

Jayden caught Gavin's steady stare and realized it was time to address the tension. "Should we talk?"

Gavin nodded earnestly. "Yes, could you step outside for a moment?"

Elyse felt a pang of confusion. Why did Gavin want to speak with Jayden and not her?

"Gavin?" She spoke up, but Jayden halted her.

"It's not about you," Jayden sighed, attempting to reassure her. "Remember what the doctor said? Try not to get worked up."

With that, he and Gavin left the room, seeking a more private place to converse.

Elyse turned to Irving, her expression fraught. "What do you think Gavin will say to Jayden? Is he going to hurt him?"

Irving tried to offer some comfort, saying softly, "Your husband deserves a good beating, doesn't he? But don't worry. Gavin is very controlled. Even if he were to lose his temper, he wouldn't cause serious harm. He knows when to stop."

Elyse's expression turned complex, finding little reassurance in Irving's words.

Irving sat back in his chair, reflecting on the previous night's conversation. He had intended to confront Jayden himself, but Gavin had insisted that as their senior, it was more appropriate for him to handle it. Since Gavin was willing, Irving chose not to dispute it.

Yet, Irving had always known Gavin as a man of excellent temperament, never once seeing him angry. He had heard that those who were usually calm could be the most formidable when enraged. Curious, Irving was tempted to sneak a peek at their confrontation.

Half an hour later, Gavin and Jayden returned, looking as if nothing unusual had transpired. They appeared to have come to some understanding, yet the air between them felt oddly tense.

Gavin seemed aware of Elyse's unease but chose not to address it. He checked his phone and casually mentioned, "Fiona will be here soon."

Irving's brow furrowed. "Coming soon? I should get going then."

Chapter 512:

Seeing that Irving was about to leave, Gavin stopped him, his voice heavy with weariness. "Haven't you thought about fixing your relationship with Fiona? Do you really want to be at odds with her at all times?"

Irving shrugged off Gavin's hand and nudged him aside with his shoulder. "I can tolerate many things, Gavin, but I can't stand those who give up without a fight."

Gavin opened his mouth to respond, but Irving cut him off, his tone icy. "Can you tolerate it? You love playing the violin so much. Can you really endure Fiona's behavior?"

Gavin fell silent as he thought about what to say next. After what felt like an eternity, he sighed, defeated. "But Fiona is part of the studio."

Irving snorted. "If it weren't for that, I would have kicked her out of my life. There's room in my world for many people, but not for those who desecrate and disrespect music."

With that, Irving stormed out of the ward without as much as a backward glance.

Gavin watched him go, a deep sigh escaping his lips. Why did his three juniors trouble him so much recently?

Elyse, who had been quietly observing, raised her hand and asked curiously, "Gavin, what happened between Fiona and Irving? Did they have a fight? When did all this start, and why?"

Jayden looked puzzled. "You don't know what they've been fighting about?"

Elyse shook her head. "I have no idea. Ever since Fiona departed without joining the extra round of competition, I haven't crossed paths with her at all."

Hearing this, Gavin sighed. "They quarreled because of that. After Fiona left the competition site yesterday, Irving and I spent the whole day looking for her. When we finally found her, she said she just didn't want to participate and didn't want to be Mr. Tucker's apprentice either."

Elyse was shocked. "What? Why would she say that? Was she acting on impulse?"

"Maybe," Gavin replied. "I talked to her for a long time yesterday, and she finally agreed to change her mind." He pinched the bridge of his nose, looking weary.

However, just after he had persuaded Fiona, he received another piece of news from Irving—that Elyse was pregnant. And that hit him like a thunderbolt. For the first time, Gavin felt the true weight of being their senior.

As they continued their conversation, Fiona walked into the ward with some gifts.

Fiona exclaimed in astonishment, “Elyse, this is a VIP private ward! It must be costly! Is your husband very rich?”

As she spoke, she noticed a stranger in the room and glanced at him curiously.

Jayden, who was making a phone call by the window, noticed the new arrival. He quickly ended his call and turned around.

Then there was a thud. The gifts in Fiona’s hands slipped to the floor. She stared at Jayden in disbelief.

Sensing that something was wrong, Elyse asked with concern, “Fiona, what’s wrong? Fiona? Fiona?”

Jayden also sensed Fiona’s abnormality. He put his phone away and wheeled himself closer to Elyse.

Elyse introduced them, “This is Fiona Evans, my senior.”

Jayden nodded politely, though his tone remained indifferent. “Hello, I’m Jayden Owen, Elyse’s husband.”

Fiona’s mind went blank as he introduced himself. Who did he say he was? Elyse’s husband? So, the reason she had met Jayden near the studio the other night was that he was waiting for Elyse?

Fiona felt her thoughts over the past days were laughable. She had imagined a romantic encounter with Jayden, who in reality was married to Elyse.

Fiona felt like a clown.

She wanted to laugh at herself, to let the bitterness out, but she couldn’t. She had to maintain her dignity and pretend nothing had happened.

Fiona pulled out a chair and sat next to Gavin in silence.

Noticing Fiona's strange behavior, Elyse asked, "Fiona, are you okay? Are you still upset about the competition?"

Gavin, reminded of the competition, turned to Fiona. "I told Mr. Tucker that you missed the competition. He said he would let you participate in the Swan Cup in another way."

He looked at her seriously. "The Swan Cup is an international competition, Fiona. You can't afford to be willful this time. It's not just about you. It reflects on Mr. Tucker as well."

Chapter 513:

Fiona lowered her head and murmured, "I understand, Gavin. There's no need to say more."

It was one thing for Gavin to speak in front of Elyse, but in front of Jayden too? Would Jayden think less of her for lacking competitive spirit, considering she had withdrawn from the contest? What if this changed his opinion of her?

These thoughts weighed heavily on Fiona as she glanced up to gauge Jayden's reaction. Yet, Jayden's attention remained steadfastly on Elyse, not sparing Fiona a single glance. To him, it seemed she didn't exist.

A wave of defeat mixed with jealousy washed over Fiona. How did Elyse manage such a fortunate life, married to a man both handsome and devoted? Why hadn't fate granted her the same? Envy deepened Fiona's thoughts.

Gavin seized the moment to engage them in conversation about the Swan Cup, sharing his experiences given his familiarity with the event. Meanwhile, Jayden excused himself to answer a call from work, stepping out of the ward.

Fiona lingered for a few minutes before standing. "Gavin, I need to use the restroom. I'll be right back."

Fiona quickly exited the room.

Elyse pointed to the private bathroom within the ward and said, “You don’t need to go outside. We have one right here.”

Gavin shrugged. “Let her go. Maybe she prefers the restroom outside.”

But Fiona’s intentions strayed far from visiting any restroom. She was looking for Jayden.

She scanned the area and spotted Jayden in the small garden. Smiling, she walked toward him.

“Jayden!” As Fiona neared him with a bright smile, her demeanor changed to one of shyness when he turned to meet her gaze.

Jayden ended his call abruptly and eyed her with a measure of distance. “You’re Elyse’s studio fellow, right? What’s on your mind?”

Fiona hesitated before speaking, “Do you remember intervening in an assault a few nights ago?”

Jayden looked puzzled. “When was this?”

“Near the Blue Sea Music Studio, you were masked,” Fiona added, her cheeks growing warmer with each word.

She smiled softly. “If not for you that night, I might not have been able to thank you today. I recognized you immediately. I really appreciate your help.”

Jayden regarded her thoughtfully before replying with a polite smile. “I’m sorry, Miss, but you’re mistaken. I wasn’t there.”

Fiona pressed, “How can you deny it? I knew it was you as soon as I saw you. Why won’t you admit it?”

He shook his head. "I'm not denying anything; it just wasn't me. You need to find the right person."

Doubt crept into Fiona's certainty. Could it really not be Jayden, despite the resemblance? Their silhouettes were so alike. Could it truly not be Jayden?

Silence fell, heavy with her disappointment.

Jayden rose, his tone final. "I'm sorry. I have to get back to work. Please, return to Elyse's ward."

Chapter 514:

Fiona's last glimmer of hope was crushed. She stood frozen, watching Jayden disappear into the night, his figure fading away. He claimed he wasn't her savior, but why did he look so much like that man?

No matter how hard Fiona tried, she couldn't come up with an answer until Gavin's call interrupted her thoughts. She picked up the phone.

"Where did you go? Get back here," Gavin demanded angrily on the other end.

Fiona retorted instantly, "Do you need to know even when I go to the bathroom? I'm on my way back."

Annoyed, she ended the call and headed toward the elevator. Upon returning to the ward, Fiona noticed Elyse chatting joyfully with Gavin and felt a surge of jealousy.

She was jealous of Elyse's success in the competition and her happy marriage. In her view, Jayden was a truly thoughtful and family-focused husband. She couldn't help but wonder: had she met Jayden before Elyse did, could she have been the one married to him?

The more Fiona dwelled on this, the more irritated she became. She felt an urge to tell Elyse that Jayden had once saved her in a manner so romantic.

Noticing Fiona standing absentmindedly, Elyse paused and gestured to the empty chair next to her, saying, "Fiona, why are you standing over there? Come and sit."

"Okay." Fiona regained her composure, sat down, and then, interrupting Elyse and Gavin's conversation, she said, "Give me your husband's contact details."

Elyse was stunned. "What?"

Fiona smoothed her hair and asked calmly, "Aren't you pregnant? I'm just concerned something might happen to you, and I wouldn't be able to reach your husband."

Before Elyse could reply, Gavin's expression darkened. "Why would you suggest something might happen to Elyse? Can't you say something more positive?"

Fiona, feeling cornered, snapped back, "I'm just concerned for her safety, and you think I'm cursing her? Gavin, do you hate me?"

Weren't you the one targeting Elyse first?" Irving, standing at the doorway with a bag of snacks, fixed his gaze on Fiona, his face stern.

Upon spotting Irving, Fiona's heart raced. She involuntarily stepped back and responded weakly, "Elyse and I are friends. How could I ever wish her harm?"

Irving scoffed, "I'm Elyse's senior. If anything happens to her, I'll be the one to contact her husband. Just focus on yourself and leave her be."

Fiona sensed an underlying message in Irving's words, as if he was implying something more. Perhaps due to her own guilt, even Irving's casual remarks seemed suspect to her.

Fiona hesitated to say anything further, worried that more explanation might expose her true motives.

Observing Fiona's sudden reticence, Gavin turned to Irving and asked, "What's with all the snacks?"

Irving shook the bag of snacks. "They're specifically for Elyse. These are healthy snacks, perfect for pregnant women."

Fiona's eyes widened in surprise. The typically aloof and assertive Irving was actually looking after someone, and that someone was Elyse.

How did Elyse manage to garner such care and attention? Everyone seemed eager to support her. If only Irving would show her the same concern, Fiona felt a pang of envy as both Gavin and Irving seemed to prioritize Elyse, making her feel excluded. Did they only view Elyse as their true friend?

After a while, Fiona felt too uneasy to remain seated and stood up, saying, "I have something to do. I need to leave now."

Elyse looked at Fiona with concern, sensing something was off with her. She wondered if Fiona was still upset about the outcome of yesterday's competition.

With this thought, Elyse grabbed Fiona's hand and said with a comforting smile, "Fiona, once I'm done resting, we should play the violin together."

Charmed by Elyse's warm smile, Fiona replied hesitantly, "Okay, I'll wait for you."

Gavin then stood up and said, "Since you're heading out, I'll come with you."

Confused, Fiona asked, "Gavin, where are you going?"

Gavin looked at her intently. "I'll take you to lunch and we can work on a training plan for you. It's time to improve your skills."

Fiona bit her lip and responded somberly, "Fine."

Chapter 515:

Gavin and Fiona left, leaving Elyse alone with Irving. Elyse turned to Irving, who was eating some fruit. "Aren't you in charge of Fiona's practice plan, Irving?" she asked.

Irving continued eating calmly. "Gavin is in charge of Fiona, and I'm responsible for your practice plan."

Elyse was silent for a moment before asking, "When do you plan to start?"

"In a couple of days," Irving replied. "Once you're better, I'll come over and give you a targeted practice plan." He quickly finished the fruit, discarded the toothpick, and clapped his hands. She couldn't really tell what to make of his mood.

Irving hadn't mentioned that he had seen Fiona talking to Jayden while he was sunbathing in the hospital's little garden. He couldn't hear them from where he was sitting, but it was quite obvious that it was Fiona who started off the conversation.

As far as he knew, it was the first time the two of them had met, and given Fiona's typically reserved nature, it seemed weird to him that she would take the initiative.

But the fact that she did take the initiative got him thinking that there might be something more between them. Jayden did seem like the kind of man she would go the extra step for.

The whole thing looked odd to Irving. He knew it wasn't a good sign.

After that, Irving deliberately lingered behind Fiona and returned to Elyse's ward just in time to hear Fiona talking to Elyse. His intuition somehow told him that she might be asking Elyse for Jayden's phone number for other motives.

Irving pondered for a moment, then said to Elyse, "Next time Fiona asks anything about Jayden, don't tell her."

Elyse, flipping through the music sheets, casually asked, "Why?"

Irving looked at Elyse, wondering if she really had no idea about what was going on. Was she not worried that Fiona might have eyes on her man? But then again, who would suspect their friend of being interested in their husband?

Fiona was the one with issues, thought Irving.

He casually made up an excuse, "I can't stand Fiona. I just don't want to see her get anything she wants."

"How long are you going to keep up this fight with Fiona?" Elyse looked at Irving, puzzled. She didn't want to entertain whatever childish reasons he had for not liking Fiona.

"Are you not going to listen to me?" Irving didn't want to stretch this too much and directly sent a glare her way, his tone harsh.

"Alright, I'll do as you say," sighed Elyse. She knew she shouldn't cross him, given the fact that he was in charge of her practice plan.

Irving nodded in satisfaction, stood up, and said, "I'll leave now. Your butler will bring you lunch, right?"

Elyse nodded. "Yes, he should be here soon."

Irving nodded and turned to leave the ward.

About 15 minutes later, Jayden, done with his work, returned to the ward. Elyse stared at him as he walked upright.

Seeing the look on her face, Jayden asked, "Is there something you want to say to me?"

Elyse stared at him a moment longer before saying, "It's still hard to believe you can walk like a normal person."

Jayden was momentarily stunned, then responded, "I told you I can explain this."

Elyse shook her head. “There’s no need. I don’t want to hear it.”

She turned away, quietly reading her book.

Jayden stared at her. He knew their relationship was now fragile. There was an invisible barrier between them, one that Elyse had once wanted to break down, but he had always stopped her.

Slowly, Elyse stopped trying. But now, it seemed he was the one who wanted to break through the barrier.

Jayden, thinking of this, slowly walked over to Elyse and sat down in front of her. He looked at her for a while and asked, “When do you want to talk? I’m always here.”

Elyse shook her head. “I don’t know what we would talk about. I’m very tired right now and I don’t feel like talking to you. Just go and finish your work. Don’t hover around me.”

Why was she doing this? Would they live their lives on opposite sides of this barrier forever? Jayden felt a sudden fear. If he could never push through the barrier between them, was this what their relationship would look like?

He felt like a trapped animal, desperate to break free but unable to find a way.

Chapter 516:

Mabel finally stepped out of her loneliness and imprisonment after a long time. She opened the door, took a few steps away from her room, and entered the living room. Sincerely, she wasn’t used to that kind of space.

That wasn’t the case in the previous house. She had to walk down a corridor and a flight of stairs to get to the living room from her room. This apartment that was thought to be spacious was unbearably small.

On getting to the living room, she looked around, yet there was no sign of Glenda. That was when she turned to Lanny, who recently seemed downcast as though something was eating him up.

She walked to the refrigerator, took out a bottle of water, and casually asked, “Dad, where did Mom go? When is she coming back?”

Lanny opened his eyes, glanced at her, and closed them back. “She’ll come back when she wants to.”

His words got Mabel confused. “What do you mean by that? Where did she go to? Did she travel to a far place?”

Lanny didn’t explain further.

Mabel thought something was off about him, but she couldn’t place her finger on what it was. She threw another question at him, “When will the rebuilding of our villa be completed? I don’t want to live here anymore.”

She quickly shut her mouth and nervously looked at Lanny to see his reaction when she realized that her words were inappropriate.

Lanny surprisingly didn’t react at all to what she had said. He was completely indifferent.

This attitude of his was extremely odd, she thought. She awkwardly returned to her room in silence with a bottle of water in her hand.

She messaged Kaelyn when she got to her room, complaining about Lanny’s sudden strange behavior to her.

After a while, Kaelyn replied, “Are you not aware? Weren’t you informed by your dad?”

Mabel laid on the bed and typed, “Nope. He didn’t say anything to me.”

Kaelyn's reply came in immediately. "That's strange. He ought to have told you that your mom had been held hostage by Jayden."

Mabel stared at her phone screen for a while in shock, trying to understand her words. "You mean my mom was imprisoned? Why? Why would my dad hold back something so important from me?"

"I don't know why, but you can ask him yourself if you don't believe me, though I doubt he'll tell you the truth. You should go directly to Jayden."

Mabel tightly gripped her phone for some time in shock. Then she slowly left her room to meet Lanny, who was seated on the sofa. "Dad, I would like you to be precise. Where did Mom go?"

After a moment of silence, he answered, "She went out to have fun. She'll be back before you know it."

Mabel dialed Glenda's number right there, but her phone was switched off.

She couldn't help but tremble. "Dad, her phone is turned off. Why would she turn it off if she was out having fun?"

Lanny calmly made up another excuse. "She was probably having so much fun that she forgot to charge her phone. You can try again later."

Mabel could no longer bear it. She flared up, "Dad! Why don't you tell me the truth? Where is she? Is she being held hostage by Jayden? I demand an answer!"

Lanny froze for a second, after which he glared at her and demanded harshly, "Where did you get that information from?"

"It doesn't matter. What matters now is that I know. So tell me if Mom is really held hostage by Jayden. Tell me this instant!" Mabel screamed at the top of her voice.

She felt tormented more by his silence and indifferent demeanor. She hysterically shouted, “Dad! Mom was captured and you just sit still? Are you going to leave her there and do nothing? Did you even love her?”

“Shut your mouth! This has nothing to do with you. Stay out of it! Get back to your room and don’t leave there until I say so!” he thundered, pointing to the door.

Mabel thought Lanny was utterly ridiculous. She couldn’t believe any of it. His wife was imprisoned, and he did nothing, yet he had the guts to command authority over her?

Unfiltered hatred for him could be seen in her eyes. “Mom practically spent her whole life by your side. She never imagined her husband to be such a coward, did she? It’s been days already, and you show no concern, yet you tell me to stay out of it.”

With a scoff, she added, “I won’t be a coward like you.”

Chapter 517:

Lanny’s scowl deepened. “What are you going to do?” he snapped. “This isn’t a game, Mabel. Stay out of it!”

Mabel’s retort was laced with venom. “Coward! You only care about leeching off Jayden. A little comfort is worth more to you than my mom’s life! I don’t give a damn about his money; I’m going to save my mom!”

Her bloodshot eyes blazed. After a withering glare at Lanny, she bolted out the door.

Lanny jolted upright, unease prickling his skin. He was on his feet in a flash, chasing after her.

Noon found Driscoll pushing open the ward door, laden with lunch for Jayden and Elyse. The oppressive atmosphere hit him like a physical blow.

A quick glance at Elyse revealed nothing amiss. Composed as ever, she seemed untouched.

Jayden, however, was a different story. He sat hunched over a desk, supposedly working, but his eyes betrayed him, glazed and unfocused.

Driscoll cleared his throat pointedly. Jayden flinched, yanked back to reality, and managed a tired, “I’m here.”

Driscoll nodded curtly. “Lunchtime. The chef poured his heart into this to ensure a smooth recovery for you two. Don’t insult his efforts with a lack of appetite.”

The thinly veiled jab hung in the air. Jayden refused to meet Driscoll’s gaze.

Driscoll set up Elyse’s lunch first, then moved on to Jayden’s.

Unlike Jayden, Elyse had come to terms with the situation. She knew she had to eat well for the sake of her baby. But Jayden felt like a puppet on Elyse’s strings. His emotions, once his own, now danced to her every whim. Even the slightest shift in her mood sent him spiraling.

The food, once appealing, now looked like a chore. Under Driscoll’s watchful eye, Jayden forced down bites, his gaze drawn irresistibly to Elyse.

Elyse, in stark contrast, devoured her meal with gusto, a hint of a smile playing on her lips. Jayden couldn’t help but wonder if her lunch tasted better.

“Excuse me, I’m here to see Elyse.” Morgan’s voice broke the silence. She stood at the doorway, clutching a vibrant bouquet and peeking inside cautiously.

Elyse’s eyes widened in surprise. “Morgan? What a lovely surprise! Come in!”

Morgan entered, juggling her gifts, with Driscoll stepping forward to offer assistance.

As she reached Elyse, a smile bloomed on her face. “I heard that whole Tracy fiasco. Filming kept me away, but I contacted her yesterday. She mentioned you’re pregnant and on bed rest.”

A sudden realization dawned on Elyse. She gestured to an empty chair. "Please, sit."

As Morgan settled in, Driscoll presented her with a glass of water. "Have you had lunch, Miss? If not, I can prepare something for you."

Morgan waved him off dismissively. "I'm all set, thanks for thinking of me."

Driscoll bowed slightly and retreated to Jayden's side. Morgan's gaze then landed on the mountain of paperwork cluttering Jayden's desk. "Wow, your husband is a real workaholic! All that effort, just for you and your baby, right?"

Elyse shot Jayden a sidelong glance, her voice laced with annoyance. "He'd be working hard regardless."

Morgan's eyes flickered between the seemingly unconcerned Elyse and the brooding Jayden. "Fighting, are we?" she inquired thoughtfully.

Jayden finally lifted his head, his gaze settling on the indifferent Elyse. "How can I fight with her?" he countered, his voice dripping with melodrama. "She's giving me the silent treatment."

Elyse bristled. "Are you serious? Making things up again?"

Chapter 518:

Morgan took a sip of water, her eyes flitting between Elyse and Jayden. She laughed softly. "It's clear you both care deeply for each other. If there's a misunderstanding, it's best to discuss it openly. It could hurt your relationship otherwise."

Elyse slowly turned her gaze to Jayden, her voice steady. "There's nothing misunderstood between us, is there?"

Jayden remained silent, fearful that any further words might upset Elyse, risking harm to the baby she was carrying.

Scratching her head, Morgan sensed tension brewing between them. Feeling awkward about intervening without their invitation, she decided to steer the conversation away from their issues.

Moments later, a nurse walked in and addressed Jayden, “The old lady Ms. Dorothy Conner in Ward 1102 is awake. You’re welcome to visit her now.”

Elyse’s face lit up with excitement. “She’s awake? I need to see her.”

After delivering the message, the nurse exited the room.

Driscoll, who had been tidying up the table, was ready to suggest he could accompany Elyse to see Dorothy later. However, his eyes inadvertently met Jayden’s. Jayden, silent as ever, gripped the armrests of his wheelchair, clearly eager to go as well but too shy to express it.

Driscoll sighed silently, convinced that Jayden deserved the frosty reception he was getting. He had attempted several times to show Jayden how his actions could damage his relationship with Elyse. Lies were never kind. Once Elyse discovered the deception, their marriage would surely face a crisis. Trust, after all, was the foundation of any solid partnership.

Having watched Jayden grow up, Driscoll felt a duty to intervene. He couldn’t just stand by and watch Jayden risk losing his wife.

Therefore, with a grave tone, Driscoll told Elyse, “I need to clean the table and can’t accompany you right now. Would it be alright if Mr. Owen goes with you instead?”

Elyse, tilting her head, gave Jayden a silent glance. She then pulled back her blanket and slowly rose from the bed. Taking Morgan’s hand, she headed toward the door of the ward.

Jayden saw the reluctance in Elyse’s demeanor, a flicker of disappointment crossing his eyes. Driscoll noticed Jayden wasn’t moving and grew anxious. “Sir, why are you still sitting there? Hurry up and follow her!”

Jayden muttered, "She didn't ask me to accompany her."

Elyse had already disappeared from view. Driscoll snapped, frustration lacing his words, "Her silence is consent! If you keep acting like this, I fear you won't be able to keep her by your side."

Jayden's expression darkened at Driscoll's words. He couldn't grasp how a woman's quiet agreement could be seen as genuine consent. The idea struck him as absurd. It reminded him of a phrase Peyton and his friends often tossed around: "Women are complicated and unpredictable."

With a click of his tongue, Jayden resigned himself to the fact that women were indeed a puzzle too intricate to solve easily. Determined, he strode faster to catch up with Elyse, and just as he reached her, the elevator doors slid open. He stepped inside alongside Elyse and Morgan.

Morgan, sandwiched between the pair, sensed the tension hanging thick in the air. Looking to lighten the mood, she chimed in, "Who's Dorothy Conner? You seem really concerned about her. Is she your grandma?"

Elyse shook her head and replied, "No, she's just an old lady I know."

Her thoughts drifted to a recent conversation with Dorothy, who had urged them to look for someone named "Janet." Time had passed, and still, there had been no word of Janet.

As the elevator reached their floor, they exited and made their way to Ward 1102.

Elyse led the way, pushing the door open. Upon seeing Dorothy up and about, she exclaimed in surprise, "Why did you sit up?"

Dorothy remained silent, her gaze unblinking as she stared through Elyse. Feeling unnerved by the intensity of Dorothy's stare, Elyse hesitated, caught between moving forward and stepping back.

Upon closer inspection, she realized that Dorothy was not actually looking at her, but at someone behind her.

“What’s going on? Why are you just standing there? Let’s get inside!” Morgan’s voice interrupted her thoughts from behind. She placed her hands on Elyse’s shoulders and nudged her gently forward before stepping aside to see Dorothy herself.

Upon seeing the elderly woman, Morgan felt an inexplicable tightness in her chest. Though she didn’t recognize Dorothy, there was something painfully familiar about her that tugged at her heartstrings, almost bringing her to tears.

Meanwhile, Elyse, fixated on Dorothy, didn’t catch Morgan’s emotional turmoil. She did, however, notice a subtle shift in Dorothy’s expression as her cloudy eyes met Morgan’s.

A mixture of recognition and confusion swirled within them, emotions that seemed both foreign and familiar to Elyse.

After a moment of contemplation, a thought struck Elyse with clarity. “A mother, driven to the brink by the loss of her child, finds sanity once more upon their return,” she mused, the words becoming distinct in her mind.

Chapter 519:

Following the surgery, Dorothy had been in a state of unconsciousness. Before regaining consciousness, Dorothy felt as if the most precious treasure of her life had been restored to her. As if summoned by destiny itself, she awakened.

Now, she looked intently at Morgan and whispered, “You are finally back, Janet.”

Elyse and Jayden were stunned; they had not anticipated that Janet Lawrence, the woman they had been fervently searching for, was actually Morgan.

Morgan stared at Dorothy, her lips slightly parted, wanting to clarify something. “I’m sorry, ma’am, but you’ve mistaken me for someone else. I don’t know you at all. I’m Morgan Welch.” Yet, the words refused to leave her throat.

She observed Dorothy intently, trying to understand why this stranger evoked such a profound sense of familiarity. The wrinkles on Dorothy's face, each a testament to the passage of time, and her aged visage stirred a sudden urge in Morgan to weep.

Instead of correcting her, Morgan asked softly, "Why have you aged so much?"

Dorothy remained unexpectedly serene, her gaze fixed on Morgan, whose tears had now streaked down her cheeks. She offered a tender, maternal smile. "You've aged as well, Janet."

Morgan puzzled over why Dorothy's words moved her to tears, or more precisely, why she felt so unsettled upon seeing Dorothy.

Morgan wept and explained, "I'm not Janet. My name is Morgan Welch. You're confusing me with someone else. I have no family. Perhaps I'm crying because your kindness overwhelms me."

Dorothy softly repeated the name "Morgan" while gazing intently at her. "Janet, you are my daughter. Of that, I have no doubt. I am very old and could die at any moment. Yet, I've clung to life because I have a mission to complete."

Confused, Morgan asked, "A mission?"

Dorothy looked at her with grave seriousness. "Your arrival marks the completion of my mission. Even though you've forgotten your name, you have your own mission to fulfill. The truth about Rickey's death lies with you."

Rickey? Morgan was left wondering who he was. As the name echoed within her, it unlocked fragmented memories. Morgan remembered a boy from her school days—they had once stayed up all night to go hiking and watch the sunrise together. Floods of memories from their childhood and adulthood surged through her mind. Suddenly, her thoughts halted and dissipated as if swept away, leaving her mind blank.

In the midst of a dazzling white light, a dark silhouette emerged. A tall, erect figure approached her, halting just three feet in front of her.

Although Morgan couldn't discern his face, shrouded in darkness, she felt an inexplicable sense of safety rather than fear. She could sense he was smiling at her.

"Who—who are you?" Morgan asked, her voice tinged with fear.

The man sighed, a note of tender exasperation in his voice. "Jane, when will you remember me? You know I need you badly."

With these words, the man slowly advanced toward Morgan.

"No, stay back! Don't come any closer!" Morgan cried out, panic rising in her voice. In a defensive reflex, she stretched out her hands to halt his advance.

Yet, the man moved effortlessly through her extended arms. With a surreal grace, he opened his arms and seemed to blend into her very being.

In that bewildering moment, Morgan experienced a profound sensation—it was as though the man was enveloping her in an embrace. He was no more than a spectral shadow, yet his intent was palpable—as if he longed to hold her.

Rickey? Rickey Benson!

In that instant, his identity became unmistakably clear in Morgan's mind.

"Argh!" Morgan suddenly clutched her head, screaming in pain.

Alarmed, Elyse quickly approached her, concern etched across her face. "What's wrong, Morgan? Are you feeling unwell?"

Panic flashed across Morgan's features as she slowly turned her eyes towards Elyse. "That man, he accuses me of forgetting him. I don't know who he is... I forgot him... I forgot him."

Morgan repeated the words, lost in her torment. Despite Elyse's attempts to reach her, calling out her name repeatedly, Morgan seemed trapped in her own distant world. Abruptly, she collapsed into unconsciousness.

Elyse moved to support Morgan, but her strength faltered. Just as she feared Morgan would crumple to the ground, Jayden stepped forward, steadying Morgan and preventing her fall.

"Call the doctor. Tell them she's fainted from the shock," Jayden said firmly.

Elyse nodded, urgency propelling her as she hurried out of the room to seek medical help.

Chapter 520:

After Elyse left, Jayden assisted Morgan to her feet while looking at Dorothy, who remained silent.

He inquired, "If Morgan is your daughter, how did you end up separated? How did she lose her memories?"

Dorothy looked at Jayden for a long while but chose not to address his question directly. Instead, she said, "You're a kind young man. I sense emptiness in your heart, unlike Rickey, whose heart was always full."

Jayden frowned. "What do you mean?"

Dorothy was lost in her memories. "Rickey was quite mischievous and always causing trouble. Yet, everyone was fond of him." She added, "Jane was no exception."

Jayden glanced down at Morgan in silence.

Dorothy continued, "Janet was nothing like Rickey. She was shy, quiet, and kept to herself. But Rickey always included her in his plans. Though Janet was reserved, she was fiercely protective of him. She was always the one to handle the consequences of his actions."

She paused before adding, “Janet mentioned that Rickey blamed her for forgetting about him. That’s likely, considering they grew up together. It must have hurt him deeply that his closest friend had forgotten him.”

Jayden listened intently. “What did you mean by ‘the mission’?” he questioned.

Dorothy fixed her gaze on him. “A mission is something you cling to, even at life-or-death moments, until it’s completed.”

She continued, “For over 20 years, I’ve endured mistreatment and oppression from that thankless couple. Every day, I thought about ending my life. But then I’d remember that Elyse was still waiting for me, and Janet hadn’t come back. How could I give up?”

A smile of relief spread across Dorothy’s face. “Thankfully, I never gave up on my mission. I’ve finally been reunited with Elyse and Janet. My mission is complete.” She felt she could now rest peacefully.

Just as Jayden was about to ask more questions, Elyse returned with a doctor and several nurses. After conducting a basic examination, they placed Morgan on a bed and wheeled her away.

“Come over here, Elyse,” Dorothy called out, then gestured for Jayden to join. “You too, Elyse’s husband.”

Elyse and Jayden shared a look before approaching her together. Once in front of her, Elyse asked with curiosity, “Why did you call us both over?”

Dorothy observed them and then turned her gaze to Jayden, a contented smile on her face. “As an elder, I should have given you a wedding gift. Sadly, I don’t have anything.”

Elyse quickly interjected, “We appreciate your thought, but you don’t need to give us anything. Your presence is the greatest gift to me.” She was grateful to Dorothy for helping her gradually uncover her background. Without Dorothy, she would have remained deceived by Glenda and Lanny.

Dorothy shook her head. “That’s not enough, Elyse. You’re like a daughter to me, and you’re someone I’ve always cared deeply for.” She looked at Jayden and added, “Boy, can you promise me you’ll take good care of Elyse and try your best to be someone she can rely on?”

Jayden replied confidently, “I’ve been that reliable person for her for a long time now.”

Dorothy shook her head and replied solemnly, “No, you’re not quite there yet. You do love Elyse genuinely, but you haven’t reached the strength she truly needs.”

Jayden’s expression soured. “You don’t know me well enough.”

Dorothy retorted, “I’m 64 and have seen all kinds of people. You’re still in that wheelchair and haven’t risen to your feet yet.”

Jayden looked down at his legs. “My legs are fine. I’ve just been pretending to be a cripple.”