

## **Bound love 531**

Chapter 531:

After some hesitation, Mabel summoned the courage to message Kaelyn and share her problems.

Once the message was sent, Mabel refrained from checking her phone, apprehensive of Kaelyn's potential disapproval for reaching out.

She powered off the phone screen, closed her eyes, and settled back into the sofa, anxiously awaiting Kaelyn's reply. A few minutes later, Mabel felt her phone vibrate multiple times, indicating messages from Kaelyn.

With cautious curiosity, Mabel retrieved her phone and perused Kaelyn's messages. To her surprise, instead of criticism, Kaelyn expressed genuine concern for her.

Kaelyn conveyed her astonishment at her circumstances and conveyed deep concern for her welfare. Kaelyn even mentioned her readiness to assist in locating a lawyer for Lanny.

Moved by Kaelyn's sincere care, Mabel dialed Kaelyn's number and conveyed her heartfelt appreciation for her willingness to provide support.

Kaelyn responded to Mabel's call with a soothing tone, conveying her concern. "Are you alright? I received your message and sensed your distressing situation."

Upon hearing Kaelyn's empathetic words, Mabel couldn't suppress her tears any longer. "I'm completely lost.

My mother has been imprisoned by Elyse and Jayden, and my father is facing jail time for causing someone's death. My future seems bleak. Kaelyn, what should I do?"

Kaelyn reassured her, “Don’t worry. Your father instructed you to give a document to the lawyer, right? Go find out what’s in the document, and then we can discuss further after I find a suitable lawyer.”

Mabel’s voice quivered with tears as she said, “Kaelyn, you’ve shown me such kindness. But that woman, Elyse, she’s truly repugnant. Despite all the years she spent under our roof, she still carried out such a despicable act. Do you think she’s ungrateful? If I were in her shoes, I’d be too ashamed to face anyone.”

Upon hearing this, Kaelyn poured herself a glass of wine with a sense of satisfaction. “You harbor such strong resentment toward Elyse. I believe there will be an opportunity for you to seek revenge in the future.”

“Where would I even find the chance? Look at me, I’m in this state now. I feel like a failure, about to lose my parents. What other recourse do I have for revenge against Elyse?” Mabel asked sadly with red eyes.

Sipping her red wine, Kaelyn nodded contemplatively before responding, “If you’re willing, I’ll do everything in my power to assist you. Indeed, Elyse’s actions are inexcusable. Despite being your elder sister, she’s disregarded your bond and torn your family apart. I find it unbearable.”

Kaelyn’s words resonated deeply with Mabel, echoing her sentiments exactly. Kaelyn seemed to grasp her emotions better than anyone else.

Filled with hope, Mabel inquired, “Kaelyn, will you truly help me? Aren’t you afraid of retaliation from Elyse’s husband?”

Kaelyn smiled reassuringly and replied, “I fear no authority. Don’t worry, I’m by your side. I’ll handle it for you.”

Moved beyond words, Mabel expressed her desire to be Kaelyn’s sister. With a soft chuckle, Kaelyn gently redirected her, “Silly girl, let’s first focus on resolving your father’s situation.”

Tears streaming down her face, Mabel nodded earnestly. “Sure, I trust you! From now on, in my heart, you are my sister. I disown Elyse as my sister.”

Upon hearing Mabel's resolve, Kaelyn nodded with satisfaction and ended the call. Empowered by Kaelyn's support, Mabel felt a newfound confidence wash over her. She wiped away her tears and made her way to the master bedroom.

Approaching the bedside table, she opened the drawer and discovered the document nestled inside. As she retrieved it, her eyes widened in astonishment. She hadn't anticipated that Lanny would have taken such precautions.

Mabel snapped a photo and swiftly sent it to Kaelyn. Kaelyn, taken aback by the document's contents, replied promptly, "With this document, navigating the situation becomes considerably easier. I'll inform you once I've secured a lawyer."

Mabel found it hard to believe that things could take a positive turn so swiftly and effortlessly. She gazed at the document in her hand, a sense of satisfaction spreading across her face. "With this in hand, my father will definitely be released."

Chapter 532:

Elyse felt a pang of embarrassment as she shook her head. Lanny and Glenda had skirted around any mention of her parents, leaving her in the dark about their character.

Curiosity sparked within Elyse, prompting her to inquire further, "Did you share a close bond with my mom? What was she like?"

Her words tapered off as she noticed the cautious expression on Morgan's face, causing a chuckle to escape from Morgan involuntarily. With a gentle pat on Elyse's head, Morgan suggested, "Let's head back to the ward first. It's too chilly here for a conversation."

As they began walking, Morgan's gaze followed the car as it slowly departed for the funeral home. She wrapped her arm around Elyse's shoulder, adopting a tender, nurturing tone like a caring elder. "After we've had our chat, I'll go and keep my mother company."

Feeling a tinge of embarrassment, Elyse responded, "I can wait a few days. There's no rush."

With a warm smile, Morgan added, “But I’m eager to share stories about your parents with you.”

Returning to the ward, Jayden was diligently working at his desk. As they entered, he lifted his gaze, remarking, “I anticipated you’d be accompanying your mother tonight.”

Morgan shook her head. “I’ll join her later. Anyway, you’ve arranged everything well, haven’t you?”

Jayden silently acknowledged, glancing at them before refocusing on his task. Elyse anxiously toyed with her clothes, sensing tension mounting within her. She yearned to uncover the truth about her parents.

Morgan, pouring Elyse a glass of water, began to reveal the essence of Elyse’s mother. “Jasmine Lloyd, your mother, possesses exceptional qualities—gentleness, courage, candor, and sincerity. Your father frequently compared her to early spring, portraying her as a delicate green sprout emerging after a harsh winter.”

Upon hearing Morgan’s description, Jayden interjected, “Like yourself.”

Taken aback by Jayden’s observation, Elyse felt a rush of fluster and swiftly averted her gaze. Regaining composure, she inquired, “Is there more you can tell me about my mom?”

Morgan continued, “Your mother hailed from a family that favored boys over girls. Despite her academic prowess, she had to abandon her studies to financially support her less capable brother.”

Elyse was taken aback and remarked, “Lanny asserted that he had provided for my mother.”

“You should never trust him. His words lack veracity. He embodies deceit, hypocrisy, and cunning, shrouded in deception.” Morgan’s anger intensified at the mere mention of Lanny.

Regaining composure, Morgan gently recounted, "One day, your mother encountered Rickey, your father. Their connection was immediate, love at first sight. However, your mother, apprehensive of love, fled, leaving your father enraged."

As Morgan reminisced about Rickey, a genuine smile illuminated her face. It was evident she was lost in fond memories. Observing Morgan's demeanor, a faint suspicion crept into Elyse's heart. Did Morgan harbor feelings for Rickey?

After reminiscing about the past, Morgan disclosed, "Your mother never experienced genuine love during her upbringing, never received it in the manner she deserved, so she chose to avoid love altogether. She became timid, self-deprecating, burdened by a profound sense of inferiority."

Elyse was startled, her hand instinctively covering her chest as she lapsed into silence. She differed from her mother in this aspect.

Morgan proceeded, "Fortunately, your father, Rickey, possesses immense patience, though it's exclusively directed towards winning over your mother. Otherwise, he's as fleeting as the wind, attracted only to intriguing matters. Once his interest diminishes, he'd promptly move on to the next fascination."

She paused momentarily before adding, "In that aspect, he truly resembles a child, don't you think?"

Upon hearing Morgan's inquiry, Elyse appeared briefly lost in contemplation before replying, "He does exhibit childish behavior. Do you harbor animosity towards my father?"

Morgan promptly responded, "Yes."

"What?" Elyse was caught off guard. The response was unexpected. She had presumed that Morgan would hold a fondness for her father.

Morgan sighed, massaging the area between her eyebrows. "Your father has been a troublemaker since youth. My mother, his nanny, indulges him. I fear he may veer off course, hence I've been stringent with him. However, ultimately, I'm the one tasked with rectifying his missteps."

## Chapter 533:

Elyse glanced at Morgan's angry expression and asked hesitantly, "Do you really despise my Dad?"

"I loathe him!" Morgan clenched her fist, likely dredging up memories of old wounds, and gritted her teeth, clearly itching to tear Rickey apart.

After her fury ebbed, Morgan sighed and smiled bitterly. "Even though I can't stand him, I have to admit he has some redeeming qualities, and I'm oddly grateful to him."

Turning to face Elyse, Morgan gently caressed her cheek, her voice softening. "Your dad is much stronger than I am. When I was at my lowest, he pulled me out of the darkness with his strength. Despite my hatred, I can't ignore the gratitude I feel."

Elyse gazed at Morgan intently, sensing a deeper affection for her father lurking beneath the surface.

Morgan's words said she hated Rickey, but the nostalgia in her voice and the expressions on her face suggested otherwise.

Elyse tucked this observation away and smiled. "I think my dad must trust you a lot. That's why he always relies on you."

Morgan raised an eyebrow but didn't deny it. "Let's leave it at that for today. I'll tell you more about your parents another time."

Seeing Morgan prepare to leave, Elyse quickly grabbed her arm, her eyes pleading. "Do you have any photos of my parents together? I really want at least one picture of them."

Morgan frowned, shaking her head. She had no photos herself, but she recalled a place that might. However, she wasn't certain it still existed.

After a moment's thought, she said, "I'll need to look for it. If I find it, I'll give it to you."

Elyse beamed, "Thank you!"

"From now on, call me Morgan," she said, her eyes warm. "I prefer Morgan over Janet."

"Okay, Morgan!" Elyse nodded enthusiastically.

Morgan grinned at Jayden and said, "I'm off to keep my mom company now. Give me a call if you need anything."

Jayden rose to his feet and offered, "I'll walk you out."

Morgan's eyes flicked to Jayden's abdomen, her expression turning serious. "No need. Remember, you're hurt too. Take it easy and don't give Elyse more reasons to worry."

Jayden's face registered surprise as he glanced at Elyse. Elyse, not anticipating Morgan's bluntness, turned her face away in discomfort. She'd been treating Jayden with a frosty demeanor lately, avoiding any sign of warmth. Now that her secret was out, she felt acutely uneasy.

Morgan, finding the couple's interaction quite entertaining, chuckled and added, "Alright, I'm off. You two sort yourselves out."

Elyse's embarrassment only deepened at Morgan's playful comment.

Trying to blend into the background, she avoided any interaction with Jayden. After a moment's silence, she guessed Jayden had likely returned to his work.

Stealing a glance at him, she was suddenly enveloped in a tight hug. She gasped, feeling a rush of embarrassment as if she'd been caught red-handed. Pushing Jayden away with all her might, she exclaimed in a panic, "Don't touch me!"

Jayden nestled his head in the crook of her neck, inhaling deeply, and murmured, “How long are you going to stay mad at me?”

Elyse responded with a hint of annoyance, “I’m still upset. Do you have a problem with that?”

“Not at all. I just want us to be close again.” Jayden’s arms tightened around her.

Elyse pinched his waist in irritation. “We stay in the same ward every single day. We’re quite close.”

Jayden winced, releasing her reluctantly. “I want things to go back to the way they were.”

Elyse stepped back, putting some distance between them, and said with disdain, “I’m still mad. Don’t think you can just act all pitiful and say sorry and it’ll all blow over.”

Jayden stroked his chin, realizing this time it was truly difficult to placate her. He thought he had been doing everything right, yet Elyse remained unforgiving. How on earth could he win her forgiveness? After a moment of contemplation, Jayden decided to seek advice from Peyton later, hoping he might have some tricks up his sleeve for pacifying a mad wife.

Elyse pointed to the desk and ordered, “Why are you standing there? Get back to work. You’re not a part of the Owen family anymore, so you need to work hard to support me and the baby!”

Jayden considered mentioning that even without working, he could still support them, but seeing Elyse’s determined stance, he swallowed his words and returned to his desk. Elyse watched him resume his work. She picked up the grapes Driscoll had prepared earlier and started eating them nonchalantly.

Jayden, feeling her gaze, looked up at her. Elyse snapped, “My baby wants to eat, not me!”

Jayden replied, “I didn’t even say anything!”



## Chapter 534:

The phone on the table suddenly rang, and Jayden picked it up, his eyes immediately drawn to the familiar name on the screen: Tobin.

“Mr. Owen, I heard there’s a gathering at your grandpa’s place tomorrow night. Rumor has it that he might officially sever ties with you.”

Jayden stared at the message, his mind racing. He turned to Elyse, who was idly plucking grapes and popping them into her mouth. “Do you really not mind if I cut the cord with the Owens?”

Elyse shrugged nonchalantly, unfazed. “It doesn’t ruffle my feathers, why should it bother me?” she replied, the corners of her mouth quirking up ever so slightly.

Jayden felt a weight lift from his shoulders. He typed out a casual “Whatever” in response to Tobin, setting the phone down with a sense of finality.

His mind drifted to the countless unpleasant gatherings held by his grandpa in the past—a veritable minefield of strained smiles and passive-aggressive jabs. Cutting ties could just be the clean break he needed, a chance to turn the page and leave those scheming people behind.

Elyse, oblivious to Jayden’s introspection, finished her grapes and headed to the bathroom to freshen up. She then slipped into bed, her eyelids already growing heavy.

After wrapping up his work, Jayden looked over at his sleeping wife. He got up and sat beside her, watching her intently with his arms crossed. He longed to join her, to feel her warmth beside him, but the single hospital bed made that impossible.

Jayden thought about it for a moment but then decided to drop the idea. He didn’t want to return to his ward, so he lay on another bed and messaged Peyton, asking him to teach him some tricks about how to placate a mad wife.

The next morning, after catching some good sleep, Corrie drove over to the beauty salon, dead set on looking flawless from head to toe for the gathering tonight.

By the afternoon, she'd wrapped up her beauty treatments and dialed Brook's number as she headed to the makeup room.

Brook, buried in paperwork at his desk, hesitated to pick up the call at first. But with the dinner looming in his mind, he begrudgingly answered.

Corrie, admiring her freshly done nails, lazily asked, "What time are you getting out of the office? I've lined up a makeup session for you too. Just make sure you show up at the room I booked."

Brook, caught off guard by the makeup suggestion, impatiently retorted, "Why on earth would I need makeup? I'm a guy, for crying out loud! Are you serious right now?"

Corrie's temper flared instantly. "Your grandpa invited me to tonight's dinner. If it weren't for you being my boyfriend, you wouldn't even be on the invite list."

"What's that supposed to mean?" Brook shot back, his irritation rising.

Corrie snapped, "Can't you understand? If you mess this up and embarrass me, don't even think about showing your face at your grandpa's gatherings with my blessing!"

Brook, feeling unfairly attacked, clenched his fists. "Corrie, you're pushing it! I'm part of the Owen family. How dare you talk to me like that?"

"You're part of the family, fine. But why do you need me to hold your hand to attend dinner?" Corrie scoffed, her disdain evident. "Well, if I recall correctly, only Jayden used to grace these dinners among the younger lot. You're not even worth one of his pinkies, so why the entitlement?"

Corrie checked her watch, her tone final. "I don't care what you're up to! You better be at the makeup room in half an hour. No show, no entry. I'm going solo!"

With that ultimatum, she hung up before Brook could reply, slid on her shades, and enjoyed the scenery outside the car window.

“Freaking Corrie! That’s it! I’m done with you!” Brook exploded, slamming his fist on the desk, his chest heaving.

Outside, his assistant heard the racket and cautiously entered the room, finding Brook’s eyes ablaze. “Is everything okay? Do you need me to fetch a doctor?” the assistant inquired, concerned.

Brook loosened his tie and gestured to the documents, “I’ve tackled the urgent stuff. Signed, sealed, delivered. The rest is on me tonight. I’m out of here.”

The assistant nodded, grabbing the papers, and Brook stormed out of the office, heading for the parking lot.

As he waited for the elevator, he bumped into Debora. Seeing him ready to bolt, Debora questioned, “Aren’t you sticking around for the meeting later? You’re expected to be there, aren’t you?”

“It’s nothing crucial. You handle it,” Brook dismissed her, eager to avoid further conversation. As the elevator doors slid open, he stepped inside, his expression resolute.

Chapter 535:

Brook left the office building and drove to the dressing room Corrie had reserved.

Following a staff member’s instructions, he strode into the dressing room.

The room was small, but various cosmetics were on display. Brook was coming to such a place for the first time, and after suspiciously sweeping his eyes around the room, he sat down in the empty chair next to Corrie.

Corrie had already been there for half an hour and had just finalized her look with the makeup artist.

Hearing the commotion, she peeled her eyes open and saw Brook sitting next to her, curiously eyeing the cosmetics in front of him.

Corrie rolled her eyes and remarked irritably, “I thought you had a stronger spine when you said you were unwilling to join me for your grandpa’s gathering, yet here you are.”

Brook’s eyes flashed with resentment.

He didn’t have a choice but to come. His grandpa’s gathering was not something just anyone could attend.

Only those acknowledged by Enzo were given the honor of attending this dinner.

Every young Owen was competing to attend it, and among them, Jayden was the only regular guest.

It was easy to infer that if Jayden hadn’t become disabled, he would be the future leader of the Owen Group.

But destiny had other plans for him.

Jayden now stood no chance anymore.

Brook fantasized about seizing this opportunity. He wanted to surpass Jayden, so he needed to attend this dinner.

Brook ignored Corrie’s sarcasm and replied coolly, “There is no way Grandpa would have noticed you without me around, right?”

Corrie scoffed and crossed her legs, refusing to continue talking to him.

Her intention to marry Brook was solely to access the Owen family’s resources and connections. Once she found a way to independently work for Enzo, she could sever her ties with Brook.

Corrie's spirits lifted when she thought of this. She couldn't let him bring her down and affect tonight's dinner.

Their makeup took two hours, after which they headed to Enzo's place.

When they arrived, they found the parking lot lined with luxury cars worth several million dollars each.

Corrie even spotted numerous antique cars that had never been on the market.

Antique cars cost astronomical amounts of money, but she saw several here.

Corrie was once again astonished by the Owen family's connections and wealth. It only strengthened her resolve to cling to them.

Corrie and Brook strode into the house arm in arm.

Corrie didn't know anyone there, but Brook did.

Brook was incredibly excited at seeing all the powerful members of his clan sauntering around. He wanted to go up to each one, greet them, and give them his business card to ensure they remembered him.

But he knew better than to do that. It would make him appear too crass.

So, he stood in one corner with Corrie, not having the nerve to make a move.

After a few minutes, Enzo slowly strolled over with the help of a cane. His hair had already turned silver, but his face shone with vigor, and his eyes still glinted sharply.

He swept his eyes over the people present. Only twelve people had been invited.

But these twelve people formed the core of the Owen clan and ensured its everlasting prosperity.

Enzo was quite pleased with this group of people. They were loyal and capable members he had handpicked.

He cleared his throat softly and said, “Everyone, I have organized our gathering today for only one reason: I haven’t seen you all in a while and wanted to gather everyone to enjoy a meal with me while I’m still here.”

Some people’s faces fell when they heard this. “Enzo, why are you saying something so ominous? It’s upsetting.”

“Exactly, you’re still hale and hearty. You have many more years ahead of you!”

A displeased expression crossed Enzo’s face at this. He shook his head and replied, “I’m old. My body isn’t as strong as it used to be. I’m aware of that.”

After a brief pause, he added, “Besides enjoying a meal together, I also want to discuss Jayden’s matter.”

Chapter 536:

The members of the Owen clan glanced around and noticed Jayden was nowhere to be found. A curious member asked, “Where is Jayden? Didn’t he attend the dinner today?”

A man who disliked Jayden said with a frown, “A cripple like him should not lead the Owen clan. His absence is for the best.”

Those who admired Jayden bristled at the comment. “Don’t be so harsh. Jayden is still one of us. At least, he wouldn’t mock his own relatives as you do.”

Corrie, standing aside, rolled her eyes at their conversation. He was really something, she must admit. He had been feigning a limp for a year, successfully deceiving all his relatives.

She felt fortunate for accidentally discovering Jayden's secret, which had allowed her to bask in Enzo's reflected glory.

Thinking of this, she was in high spirits.

Enzo, seated and observing their conversation, remained silent as they argued about Jayden.

He had to acknowledge Jayden's evident brilliance. However, he knew he had to put an end to such conflicts.

With a strike of his cane against the floor, Enzo hushed the crowd. Every gaze turned toward him, awaiting his speech.

In a tone that demanded authority, Enzo spoke to the gathering, "I recognize Jayden is a polarizing presence. From this moment onward, all arguments concerning him are resolved."

The crowd exchanged looks, pondering Enzo's implication. Did he imply that Jayden would become the next leader of the Owen clan?

After a momentary pause, Enzo proceeded, "Henceforth, Jayden will no longer be part of our Owen clan. We sever all connections with him. His destiny outside the family is his alone to face."

"What? Are you serious?"

"Sever all connections? Why such an extreme measure? Just because Jayden is disabled?"

"No wonder Jayden didn't attend. He is no longer part of us, but if he's disowned, who will lead us after Enzo? Who else among the younger generation can assume the role?"

Gasps and whispers spread throughout the room.

Brook, shocked by the revelation, struggled to understand why Jayden had been expelled.

“Silence!” Enzo commanded, his eyes fixed on Corrie in the corner. He summoned her, and she eagerly advanced, only to be blocked by Brook.

Knowing Enzo’s trust in her, Corrie could barely contain her excitement. Confronting Brook, she asked, “What’s your motive? Step aside!”

Brook, originally defensive, observed Corrie’s urgency and inquired, “Why did my grandpa call your name? Are you part of this?”

“This doesn’t concern you. Get out of my way!” Corrie shoved past Brook, advancing toward Enzo.

Enzo directed her, “You will now explain to everyone why Jayden was expelled.”

“It’s my privilege,” Corrie responded, pivoting towards the assembly with an arrogant demeanor. “Jayden deceived us entirely. His car accident a year ago? A ruse. He feigned incapacity.”

“What? He feigned incapacity? But why?”

“He’s been feigning for a year? How do you know?”

“Is his pretense of disability the reason for Enzo’s desire to disown him?”

Corrie savored the focus, theatrically halting before disclosing, “It’s not solely the deceit, but the concealed truths he holds.” She persisted, her voice resounding, “He didn’t want to be part of the Owen Group. Instead, he founded Bayzee Group, draining the Owen Group’s resources and alliances, sabotaging your benefits.”

A tense quiet engulfed the crowd as they digested this disclosure.



Enzo concurred with a nod, “I extended him opportunities, engaged in numerous discussions, longing for his return to the Owen Group, but it was futile.”

Chapter 537:

Although Enzo’s words were cut short, everyone understood what he was trying to say.

He had never denied Jayden a single opportunity. Rather, Jayden had chosen to leave the company of his own volition, to satisfy his own interests and ambitions.

Given the volatile dynamics that had always existed within the Owen clan, it was no surprise that they took Jayden’s betrayal to heart.

And so, shortly after Corrie finished her speech, the conversation turned into a whole other session of rebuke and castigation aimed solely at Jayden.

“You’ve done well,” Enzo remarked as he watched his plan unfold. “I will reward you later.”

“Thank you!” Corrie beamed. Now that she had secured his approval, she walked toward Brook in high spirits.

Brook did not share her enthusiasm, however. He looked quite sullen.

His sour expression immediately doused her good mood.

“What are you making that face for?”

“Come here.” Brook pulled her over to a quiet, secluded spot. “How the hell did you find out about Jayden’s secret?”

“That’s none of your business,” Corrie retorted. “Look, stay out of my affairs and just remember that you wouldn’t even be here if it weren’t for me.”

Brook scoffed, his upper lip curling in disdain. "I can't believe an outsider like you is acting more like an Owen than me." His tone was low and menacing when he added, "You are a vile and cunning snake. The most repulsive kind of person there is."

But Corrie only rolled her eyes. "Please. You don't have what it takes to rise among the ranks. I am so much more capable than you can ever hope to be. You can call me repulsive all you want, at least I'm not useless and pathetic like you."

Brook pressed his lips into a thin line and tried to swallow his rage. "Enough nonsense! Is it true that Jayden wants to cut ties with the Owen clan?"

Corrie's eyes flickered for a second, but she maintained her composure. "Why are you asking me this? Do you think I'm lying?"

"I wouldn't put it past you. After all, anyone would have no qualms about lying through their teeth as long as it gets them what they want, right?"

Not wanting to continue the discussion, Corrie pushed past him and snapped, "Why don't you go and ask Jayden, then? Why waste your time questioning me?"

Brook glared at her back in open hostility.

Despite her bravado, Corrie felt a chill down her spine. She squared her shoulders and scoffed one last time before scurrying away.

She darted back into the hall and happened to run into a member of the Owen clan.

The man wore glasses and looked to be gentle and almost scholarly. Even so, Corrie found herself shifting in unease as his eyes fell on her.

He didn't appear to be particularly aggressive or intimidating, but there was something formidable about his aura, something that made the air around him heavy and a little oppressive.

"Are you Brook's girlfriend?" the man asked by way of greeting.

Corrie nodded. “Yes, that’s right. My name is Corrie Bates.”

The man took a bite of the hors d’oeuvre and continued in a casual tone, “You’re quite something, aren’t you? Jayden used to be the only one in his generation who could draw Enzo’s attention to this extent. Things seem to have changed, apparently.”

“I am actually Jayden’s ex-girlfriend,” Corrie replied without missing a beat. “I used to tell him not to be too selfish, but he never listened to my warnings. We eventually broke up, and now... Well, he is reaping the consequences of his ambition, isn’t he?”

The man paused upon hearing this, his eyes narrowing slightly. He scrutinized Corrie for a brief moment, and when he spoke, his tone carried a hint of pity.

“If you hadn’t broken up with Jayden, the two of you would have been the apple of Enzo’s eye. But now, you are involved with Brook, whose talents are mediocre at best. Enzo has never even considered him as a potential successor.”

His words struck Corrie.

Did that mean that Brook was already out of the picture? If so, then she had no reason to keep Brook by her side.

It looked like she needed to change her boyfriend into someone who had a firmer foothold within the Owen clan, someone who was definitely in the running to be the heir to all the family fortune and businesses.

The man cocked his head to the side and shrugged his shoulders. “I suppose this is God’s will.”

Corrie’s head jerked up. She stared at the man before her, more determined than ever.

More than anything else, she wanted to marry the heir and future head of the Owen clan. Meanwhile, Brook had intended to leave after their confrontation outside. But out of respect and courtesy, he went back in to see if Corrie was coming with him.

“Are you leaving or not?” he asked as he sidled up next to her with a furious expression.

Corrie turned to him with a scowl. “I’m staying right here. If you want to leave, then feel free to go on your own. I’m staying until the event is over.”

“Are you seriously thinking that you’re part of us now? Just how shameless can you be? It disgusts me to see how desperately you’re trying to claw your way up the social ladder.”

“So what?” Corrie challenged. “I’m making my way up the social ladder because I can! I’m not like some worthless fool who can’t even pick themselves up from the rut they’re currently in.”

Chapter 538:

Corrie’s words struck a nerve with Brook, wounding his pride deeply. With a sharp glare, Brook confronted her. “So, you’ve won Grandpa’s favor, huh? Thinking of cutting ties with me?”

Corrie, unashamed and bold, retorted, “Exactly. You’ve become a burden to me. You offer me nothing, and you certainly don’t fulfill me. Why should I marry you?”

“Fine, fine!” Brook muttered angrily. In his rage, he almost raised his hand to strike her, but he halted mid-motion.

Corrie stood unflinching, empowered by her newfound favoritism with Enzo. She knew that if Brook laid a hand on her, she could easily turn Enzo against him.

She provocatively tilted her head, daring him to act.

Taken aback by her audacity, Brook burst out laughing instead.

Lowering his hand, he conceded, “Clearly, I’m no match for you now. Well, I hope you get what you want.”

Smug with victory, Corrie watched Brook retreat, his figure shrinking with defeat. She reveled in her dominance, the thrill of power coursing through her.

Later that evening, as the dinner wound down and everyone left, Corrie headed to the parking lot. It dawned on her that she had arrived in Brook's car, not her own.

Internally, she scolded Brook again for his ineptitude. At such a crucial social event, he had withdrawn too soon, and she regretted relying on him for transportation to the dinner.

Wrapped in her coat, Corrie shivered against the cold. She was torn between asking the butler for a car or just staying the night.

Suddenly, Peyton's words echoed in her mind, stirring her curiosity about Jayden's guilty feelings towards Louis.

Determined to find out the truth, she dismissed the idea of seeking the butler's help, slipped off her shoes, and quietly walked for miles in the darkness before finally calling Jayden.

At the hospital, Elyse was battling severe morning sickness. It was midnight when she got up and hunched over the toilet, retching painfully.

The commotion woke Jayden, who rushed to her side, squatting next to her and patting her back gently, offering what comfort he could.

Elyse continued to heave, but soon, nothing came out. Her face grew pale from the ordeal.

Watching her struggle, Jayden couldn't help but comment, "This little one is putting you through so much already. Seems like we're in for a handful."

Elyse shot him a sharp look. "The baby hasn't been born yet, and you are already speaking ill of it."

Her stern gaze quelled any further remarks from Jayden.

After a few moments, Elyse's nausea subsided, and the episode ended. Jayden carefully helped her back to bed, his concern evident.

"I'll get Driscoll to bring you more fruit," Jayden suggested kindly. "It might help ease your morning sickness."

Elyse nodded in agreement and took a sip of water as she sat on the edge of the bed.

Suddenly, Jayden's phone erupted with a ring. Without checking the caller ID, he answered it.

As it happened, Jayden stood in front of Elyse, allowing her to hear the voice on the other end clearly.

Corrie's voice broke through, thick with sobs. "Jayden, Brook left me stranded on the street. Can you come get me? It's dark and there are only trees around. I'm really scared."

Elyse's eyes widened upon hearing Corrie, and she quickly glanced at Jayden.

Jayden furrowed his brow. "Brook left you and you're calling me? Why not call him back?"

Corrie's voice trembled again. "He won't answer my calls. I'm terrified a wild animal might show up. Please, can you help me? I know it's a lot to ask, but you're the only friend I can turn to."

Jayden replied with clear impatience, "Why not call your driver? Am I now your personal driver?"

There was a brief silence before Corrie responded in a desperate tone, "I thought you were still upset with me for breaking things off. I regret leaving you, but I had no choice."

Remember Louis? You promised him you'd look out for me. Are you really going to break that promise and leave me here all alone? I'm so cold I could die out here.

If I do, it'll be Louis who's hurt that his best friend let me die after breaking his word."

Chapter 539:

Elyse's frown deepened as she listened to Corrie, her instincts telling her that Corrie was using Jayden's friendship with Louis as a weapon.

At the mention of Louis' name, Jayden tensed visibly.

Louis was a wound in his heart, a source of immense pain, yet Corrie talked of him carelessly, as if to torment him further. The thought of silencing her even crossed his mind.

Through her tears, Corrie cried out, "Louis will never forgive you if I die. I'll make sure he haunts you forever."

Jayden silently repeated Louis' name, trying to quell his rising irritation, but it only mingled with his guilt, slowly overpowering his rational thoughts.

Elyse had expected him to decline, yet Jayden turned to Corrie and said, "Send me your location."

Elyse's eyes widened in shock as she reached out to stop him, "Are you seriously going after her? Corrie Bates is manipulating you!"

Jayden massaged his forehead, "I'm sorry, but I need to go."

Ignoring Elyse's pleading look, he pulled away from her grasp and headed for the door.

Elyse followed him and asked, "What's the reason? Tell me. What made you have to go? I'll let you go if you tell me."

Jayden seemed lost in thought, his mind suddenly thrown back to the day of the car crash. He saw his best friend, Louis, sprawled in a pool of blood, his life fading from his eyes. The memory pierced Jayden's heart like daggers.

With a shuddering breath, Jayden shut his eyes to mask his anguish. He responded tersely, "This doesn't concern you, Elyse. It's my issue. Stay in the ward and wait for me."

Ignoring her protests, Jayden grabbed his coat and strode out of the ward swiftly.

Elyse tried to follow, but she couldn't keep pace. Jayden swung the door closed behind him, leaving her confined inside the ward. He departed so abruptly that he never glanced back.

Rooted to the spot, Elyse was overcome with a crestfallen look.

Tears welled up in her eyes but didn't fall. She appeared truly pitiful. Confusion swirled within her. Jayden knew Corrie was scheming, yet he still felt compelled to leave. But why?

When would Jayden ever fully trust her? Elyse stood still for a moment, then a wave of dizziness washed over her. She stumbled to the bed, leaning heavily on its edge for support.

In that moment, it dawned on her what Jayden truly thought. In his eyes, they were two distinct beings, not a unified pair considering each other's perspectives.

Thus, Jayden felt no need to involve her deeply in his affairs. With this realization, Elyse scoffed to herself, "Jayden still doesn't see me as his confidant, does he?"

She perceived that Jayden viewed her, his wife, more as a possession than a best friend to share life's ups and downs with.

They could share interests, but their emotional connection was clearly mismatched.



Elyse's mood lifted slightly as she pieced these thoughts together. While cradling her belly, she wiped away her tears, murmuring to herself, "I'm not truly family to him after all. It's not his fault; I've just been expecting too much, been too eager."

Gradually, Elyse collected herself and steadied her emotions. Just then, there were gentle knocks at the door of her hospital ward. Peyton peered in hesitantly and said, "Jayden sent me to keep you company, Elyse."

Noticing his discomfort, Elyse smiled and replied warmly, "Thank you, Peyton. I appreciate it."

"Sure thing, glad to help." Peyton scrutinized Elyse's face, expecting signs of distress, but she appeared calm now. He reflected on Jayden's actions, deeming them rash, and wondered how Elyse would take the news.

Peyton approached her cautiously. "Are you alright? I heard about what happened. I'll have a word with Jayden when he gets back."

Elyse shook her head, dismissing his concern. "I'm okay. Don't bother scolding him. He probably had his reasons. I'm fine."

Peyton found himself at a loss for words, her bright smile not quite reaching her eyes.

He sensed that this matter had affected her more deeply than before—that maybe she was truly done with Jayden this time.

In one last attempt to bridge the gap, Peyton offered, "I've figured out why Jayden agreed to fetch Corrie Bates. Let me clarify it for you."

"That's thoughtful of you, but no need for that. I'm just too tired. I need some sleep." Elyse stretched out on her bed, pulled the blanket up to her chin, and let out a yawn.

Peyton, still relentless, continued, "Jayden did it not out of lingering feelings for Corrie Bates. It was guilt over Louis. After all these years, he still can't shake it off."

As Elyse lay on the bed, her eyelids grew heavy, and she drifted off to sleep.

From her dismissive demeanor, Peyton realized that no matter the reality, Elyse was beyond caring.

Her indifference was deeper than any outward drama; it was resignation.

Peyton even suspected that Elyse had written Jayden off for good.

He pondered for a moment, considering probing Elyse's thoughts. But hesitation held him back. In the end, he opted to wait for Jayden's return, hoping he would untangle the mess himself.

Chapter 540:

Jayden was behind the wheel on the dark night, the threat of rain looming overhead. He pressed the accelerator, making his way toward Corrie's location.

Upon receiving her location, a brief flicker of surprise had crossed his face, quickly replaced by realization. Today was the day of his grandpa's gathering.

Jayden instantly grasped that Corrie had seized the opportunity to betray him and curry favor with Enzo.

The sudden death of the bodyguard monitoring Corrie solidified his suspicions: his grandpa had to be behind it.

Jayden's expression chilled as he pondered Corrie's deeper motives. He had always known she was ambitious, a woman striving to rise at every opportunity, but her audacity to align with his grandpa shocked him. Enzo was far from benevolent.

A throbbing pain in his abdomen jolted Jayden back to reality, and he accelerated even more.

Meanwhile, Corrie had been walking alone on the serpentine road for what seemed like an eternity. Just as rain threatened to fall, she heard the sound of a car horn. Looking up, she saw Jayden's car approaching.

A flicker of smug satisfaction crossed her face as she hurried to the car and swung the door open.

Before she could even buckle her seatbelt, Jayden floored the accelerator, eager to leave. Corrie, unaware that Jayden had pieced together her connection with Enzo, feigned indignation. "Brook Owen is no gentleman.

To think he abandoned me on the way home without a second thought for my safety. You've always been the considerate one."

Jayden, however, ignored her complaints and kept his focus on the road ahead.

Realizing Jayden wasn't feigning his disability today, Corrie asked pointedly, "Why did you stop pretending to be disabled? I thought you could keep up the act for a bit longer.

Even if you're concerned about me, you didn't have to expose yourself to danger."

As Jayden watched Corrie's unconvincing performance, he snorted with disdain. "Stop the act. Do you think you can manipulate me as you please just because I came to pick you up?"

Corrie offered a forced smile. "Why would you think that? That's not what I meant."

Jayden didn't react. Instead, he stepped on the gas pedal and steered them toward a different destination.

Unbeknownst to Corrie, her next move would stir the pot further. She pulled out her phone, snapped a few selfies, and slyly captured part of Jayden in the photos.

She then uploaded them to her Facebook with a caption: "So happy to have a friend who's just a call away."

Peyton, who was in the hospital, saw her post first.

He immediately understood that Corrie was deliberately causing trouble.

Since Peyton and Corrie shared many mutual friends, speculation began swirling about the identity of “the friend” mentioned in her post. Scrolling through the comments, Peyton’s heart sank as someone identified Jayden.

Fearing the consequences, Peyton couldn’t help but worry about the fallout if Elyse saw the post.

He stealthily stole a glance at Elyse. To his relief, she was sleeping soundly.

Seizing the opportunity, he quickly captured a screenshot of Corrie’s post and sent it to Jayden, confident that Jayden had the means to handle situations beyond his control.

Meanwhile, Corrie was idly scrolling through her phone in the passenger seat. Time seemed to drag on, and she glanced out the window, expecting to see the familiar cityscape as they headed back downtown.

Instead, she was startled to find they were ascending a hill.

With a puzzled expression, Corrie blurted out, “Where are you taking me?”

Jayden’s face remained stoic, giving nothing away.

Tension gripped Corrie as she attempted to open the car door, only to realize Jayden had locked it from the inside.

Visibly anxious, Corrie demanded, “Jayden Owen, what on earth are you planning? I haven’t crossed you. I just called, and you chose to pick me up. Take me back to downtown now, and let’s forget this.”

Jayden remained silent but pressed the accelerator harder. A few tense minutes later, they reached their mysterious destination.

Corrie sat in the car, peering through the window at the surrounding tombstones, a wave of anxiety washing over her.

Jayden unbuckled his seatbelt and stepped out of the car. He looked back at Corrie and commanded, “Get out!”

“I won’t! Take me downtown instead!” Corrie scanned her surroundings, her fear mounting. The eerie silence of the place convinced her that a ghost might leap out at any moment.

Jayden’s patience snapped. He strode over to the passenger side, yanked the door open, and unbuckled Corrie’s seatbelt before pulling her from the car.

“Aagh—Help! Jayden’s trying to kill me!” Corrie’s screams echoed through the cemetery. Disheveled and terrified, she was coerced by Jayden deeper into the cemetery.

Finally, Jayden dragged Corrie to a secluded spot, pushed her to the ground, and demanded, “Now, kneel. Beg Louis for forgiveness, and then I might forgive you just this once.”