

## **Bound love 561**

Chapter 561:

Tracy turned away, her voice weary as she said, “I don’t know. Let’s talk about this some other time.”

Elyse nodded. At that moment, Driscoll approached with a polite tone, “Miss Bernard, your lunch is served. Please, come and enjoy it.”

Tracy acknowledged him with a nod and slowly rose to head towards the dining room.

Elyse contemplated accompanying Tracy, but a call from the hospital interrupted her plans, requesting her presence in a few days for a regular checkup.

Calculating the dates, Elyse realized it was indeed time. She decided to call Jayden, asking if he could accompany her the day after tomorrow.

Meanwhile, outside Crestwell Healthcare Center, Brook sat in his car, a cigarette dangling lazily from his lips. He exhaled clouds of smoke into the confined space.

Corrie approached, her steps echoing on the pavement. Dressed in a black coat and boots, she exuded an aura of authority as she opened the car door and slipped inside.

Once inside, Corrie couldn’t hide her irritation. “Such bad luck! Elyse has been discharged. It’s going to be much harder to reach her now that she’s back home.”

Brook remained silent, his focus unshaken as he continued to smoke.

Corrie’s frustration boiled over, and in a sudden outburst, she kicked him. Her heel left a stain on his black trousers.

Seeing the stain, Brook lost his composure and yelled, “Are you out of your mind? Get out of the car!”

Corrie raised her voice even louder, retorting, “You’re the one who’s lost it! If you can’t even follow your grandpa’s simple commands, then just disappear! Of all the men in the Owen clan, fate had to pair me with you. What sheer misfortune!”

With each word, Corrie’s anger surged.

This was their moment to ascend within the clan. Success would curry favor with Enzo, securing their positions in the clan as both elevated and steadfast.

Yet, Brook seemed utterly unmotivated. Today, she had been the one to drag him here.

Pointing a finger at Brook’s face, Corrie scolded him, saying, “You worthless piece of garbage! All you can do is work at your dead-end job. What has it gained you? Your grandfather still looks down on you!”

Brook gave a scornful chuckle and retorted, “Oh really? And what are you getting at? You think I don’t deserve you? If you’re so eager to switch partners, be my guest.

Remember, it was your parents who pleaded with my mom to set us up, not the other way around!”

He continued his tirade, “How could I ever value you, a woman even Jayden rejected? You’re far too full of yourself.”

She couldn’t fathom where Brook found the audacity to throw such accusations at her, especially when he was the useless one, now flipping the script on her.

Brook’s mood only darkened at the sight of Corrie, and not even a cigarette could quell his growing annoyance. He inhaled deeply from his cigarette before crushing it into the ashtray.

Corrie, struggling to contain her rage, reiterated, “I’ve learned that Elyse is coming to the hospital for a checkup in a few days. We need to seize this chance to take Elyse away and end her pregnancy.”

Brook questioned, "Do you really think that will work? Jayden isn't foolish. Do you believe he'd let us take her away?"

Frustrated, Corrie snapped, "We have to make it work, no matter how unlikely it seems. Your grandfather expects a swift resolution. Failure isn't an option."

Brook sneered, finding Corrie's loyalty to his grandpa laughable.

Chapter 562:

Glenda seethed at Lanny's harsh words. With hands on her hips, she retorted, "You couldn't care less about me, could you? Fine! It's over between us!"

Lanny's arrogance outdid even Glenda's anger. "Fine by me! Buy whatever you like with your money," he snorted disdainfully, "But don't expect a single penny from me!"

Glenda was left speechless by Lanny's dismissive attitude. Trying to calm herself, she grabbed a bowl of instant noodles and started eating.

There was a time when she had people at her beck and call, enjoying daily deliveries of the finest seafood and beef. Now, here she was, standing in her kitchen eating instant noodles, a hard reality for her to swallow.

Yet, she seemed to have wiped from her memory the not-too-distant days of financial peril, following Lanny into near bankruptcy, always worried about money. Luxury had spoiled Glenda for so long that she had forgotten those tough times.

She had come to view her privileged life as something she was inherently entitled to.

After his outburst, Lanny left the house in a huff, and the hours dragged on into the night. Darkness fell, and he still hadn't returned. Glenda sat on the couch, unconcerned about Lanny's whereabouts, instead nervously anticipating Mabel's arrival.

At eleven o'clock, the doorbell rang, piercing through the silence. Glenda opened the door to see Mabel there, looking pale and resentful.

When their eyes met, the hatred in Mabel's eyes dissolved into tears. She collapsed into Glenda's arms, her voice choked with sobs. "Mom, you're finally home."

Glenda held Mabel close, her touch uncovering the shocking thinness of her daughter. "What's happened to you? Why are you so thin? And these marks on your face? Has someone hurt you?"

Mabel flinched at Glenda's touch, covering her split lip with her hand. A bitter sneer crossed her face. "Where's Dad?" she demanded.

"He left some time ago. What's wrong?"

Glenda examined Mabel more closely, her eyes eventually noticing the numerous hickeys on her daughter's neck. She pulled back Mabel's collar sharply, her voice filled with distress. "What are all these?"

Overwhelmed, Mabel could no longer contain her anguish. "Mom! I've been ruined!" she cried out. "I feel so tainted! Dad sold me for a million dollars.

I can't stand it any longer! Do you have any idea of the horror I've been through these last three days?"

The recollection of what she had gone through plunged Mabel into deep agony.

"That man was no lawyer; he's the chief of police. He himself said he could have had Dad released. Dad sold me to him for money!"

Mabel cried out, tears streaming down her cheeks. "My future is ruined. I'll never be able to marry. This is all Dad's fault!"

"That bastard!" Glenda's anger was nearly uncontrollable. It was clear why Lanny hadn't mentioned anything about Mabel and had left hours before, afraid of her reaction.

“Mom, am I really Dad’s daughter?” Mabel cried helplessly, collapsing on the floor. “Why would he do this to me? I don’t understand!”

Glenda regained her composure and helped Mabel to her feet, guiding her to the bathroom. “My dear, take a long, relaxing shower. I’ll bring you some contraceptive pills.”

Mabel was beyond consolation. “That man was disgusting! The thought of being pregnant terrifies me!” she exclaimed in despair.

“Don’t worry, Mabel. I promise to find you a deserving husband. I will ensure he is a man of substantial means and character,” Glenda promised with sincerity.

But Mabel remained unconvinced. She couldn’t imagine how someone like her could ever attract a rich and desirable husband. Her life felt irreparably broken, and she blamed Lanny entirely. She never thought Lanny could betray her so grievously.

After her shower, Glenda dried Mabel’s hair and helped her into bed. Mabel, worn out by her emotional turmoil, quickly fell asleep.

Glenda went back to her own room, weighed down with sorrow. She pulled out a hidden handbag and removed a stack of cash—her secret savings, meant for a time she never expected would come so quickly, when Lanny might stop supporting her financially.

Chapter 563:

Clutching the cash, Glenda was en route to the nearby pharmacy to pick up contraceptive pills when she suddenly encountered the foul-smelling Lanny. His level of drunkenness was unclear, yet his wobbly walk and festive demeanor suggested he was deeply intoxicated.

Encountering Lanny, Glenda was overwhelmed with anger, bringing back painful memories of Mabel’s ordeal. She approached him swiftly and slapped him hard across the face.

The slap seemed to snap some sense into Lanny.

With a look of deadly seriousness, he stared at her and growled, "Have you lost your senses? What's come over you?"

Glenda, infuriated, shot back, "How could you trade our daughter away? Do you have any idea what she's gone through? How could you be so heartless?" Her anger was palpable as she continued, "She's your own flesh and blood!"

Lanny responded coldly, "For years, I've taken care of her, and now that I'm badly in need of money, it's time for her to repay me." He spoke with clear disdain, adding, "If that arrangement doesn't work for you, then we might as well end our marriage!"

Glenda's anger peaked as she retorted, "You cruel man! Don't forget how you got your wealth!"

Unbeknownst to her, her words would touch a nerve. A sinister smile slowly appeared on Lanny's face, sending a shiver through Glenda.

His piercing eyes bore into hers as he whispered threateningly, "I haven't forgotten, but have you?"

Fear washed over Glenda as the memories of their dark past echoed in her mind. Her expression revealed that she remembered their dreadful secret: they had murdered Elyse's parents.

Lanny, sensing her fear, threatened with venom in his voice, "If you still care about your daughter, you'll listen to me. If not, she'll be left alone forever."

Glenda's heart raced, her mind darting to Janet. She looked around nervously, her voice shaky with fear as she asked, "You can't be thinking of killing again, can you?"

"How can you sleep peacefully, aware that Janet is still alive?" Lanny shot back.

Throat tight with anxiety, Glenda had been tormented by that thought ever since Janet came back into their lives.

After a tense silence, she faced Lanny, her eyes burdened with the harsh reality ahead. In a hushed, resigned tone, she asked, “What will you do?”

“Obviously, we need to find a chance to kill her. I’ve already discovered where she lives,” Lanny replied, his gaze sharp with a dangerous purpose. “And once she’s gone, Elyse will follow.”

“She’s under Jayden’s protection. We don’t stand a chance of getting near her!” Glenda objected.

The coldness in Lanny’s words struck terror in Glenda’s heart. She understood he was not merely threatening. He was desperate enough to commit murder to secure his own safety, making him all the more fearsome.

A chilling smile crept over Lanny’s lips. “Lately, Elyse and Janet have been inseparable.

Do you really think she doesn’t know who murdered her parents? Her attitude toward us has completely changed. She has no respect for us anymore.”

Glenda stubbornly resisted the idea. “Perhaps she’s just in a bad mood,” she countered weakly.

Lanny announced firmly, “I’m taking action tomorrow. You should come with me.

If I fail, your daughter’s future will be ruined.” His voice was clear and determined.

Glenda felt a silent fury building inside her, a slow-burning rage that threatened to consume her. She had picked up the medication, her mind filled with chaos all the way home.

After waking Mabel and giving her the medication, Glenda sat numbly beside her daughter, lost in thought.

Her eyes eventually drifted to the small amount of hidden savings she had—barely enough to run away with Mabel. Yet, she dismissed the idea almost as soon as it came to mind.

She and Mabel were not used to difficulties, and a fugitive life promised nothing but hardship. Their safest option seemed to be to stick with Lanny and take a chance. There was a glimmer of hope that life could once again be good for her and Mabel.

As Mabel rested in her bed, her sleepy eyes noticed the distress on Glenda's face. "Mom, what's bothering you? Did Dad hurt you again?" she asked.

The compassion in her eyes deeply moved Glenda. With a heavy heart, she confessed, "It's me who has let you down. I haven't been strong enough to shield you or provide the life you deserve."

"Mom, we have to leave," Mabel insisted, her voice firm. "Dad is a monster, and happiness will never be ours as long as we're with him."

While Glenda desperately wanted to flee, her fear paralyzed her. The prospect of facing a tough life daunted her. Living with Lanny, despite its agonies, came with the security of their lavish home.

"Just be patient, my dear," Glenda whispered soothingly, her tone gentle yet reassuring, "I promise you a life free from fear and pain."

Mabel felt a wave of anxiety as she detected a desperate tone in Glenda's assurances, something that stirred unease within her. "What's going on, Mom? You shouldn't keep secrets from me," she pressed.

In response, Glenda remained quiet, merely stroking Mabel's hair soothingly. Her smile was a complex mix of affection and firm resolve, revealing more than her words could say.

Chapter 564:

Elyse awoke the next morning to an unexpected scene: two guests in her living room. She rubbed her sleepy eyes, sat down on the sofa, and glanced between Gavin and Freda, who sat next to him. The world suddenly felt surreal.



“Why is she here with you?” Elyse asked, her confusion evident.

Gavin exchanged a look with Freda, who sat demurely, and explained, “She wanted to apologize to you personally, so I brought her.”

Elyse blinked, trying to clear her foggy mind. “She wants to apologize?”

Freda looked at Elyse, her voice soft and sincere. “Yes, I do. I’ve been thinking a lot these past few days and realized I made a mistake. I broke the rules during that competition and hurt you.”

Freda’s eyes were earnest as she continued, “I’m sorry. I truly apologize for my actions.”

Elyse stared at her in disbelief.

After gathering her thoughts, she glanced at Gavin, who merely shrugged as if to say, “I’m as surprised as you are.” Elyse, unsure of Freda’s sincerity but recognizing the effort, decided there was no point in holding a grudge. “If you’ve thought it through, then that’s good.”

Freda nodded, her tone becoming more reflective. “I haven’t treated you well before. Because of Theo, I always saw you as a rival. But now that I’ve completely ended things with him, I realize it was my problem, not yours.”

Elyse’s eyebrows shot up in surprise. An apology for the competition could be seen as forced, probably in the name of etiquette or under pressure. But admitting fault over Theo was another matter entirely.

Seeing Freda tumbling out words, Gavin intervened, gently placing a hand over her mouth. “I need to discuss something important with Elyse. Business. Since you’ve apologized, that’s enough.”

Freda removed his hand, her temper flaring momentarily before she controlled it. “Fine! Fine! I’ll do whatever you say. I’ll listen!”

Elyse's jaw dropped as she glanced between Freda and Gavin. Something was definitely up between these two. Freda noticed Elyse's reaction and smirked, satisfied. Misleading Elyse was exactly what she wanted.

Gavin sighed, brushing off Freda's subtle provocations. He pulled out the registration form for an overseas competition. "Fill this out," he instructed Elyse. "I'll get Fiona to complete her part later."

Business mode activated, Elyse accepted the pen from the butler and began filling in the form meticulously. Freda, eyes gleaming with mischief, sidled up to Gavin.

"Mind if I tag along when you find Fiona? I'd feel guilty if I didn't do something to help."

Gavin gave her a half-amused look. "Got nothing better to do?"

Elyse's head jerked up at his tone, her eyes darting to Freda. Freda beamed.

"Yeah, I'm a bit free. You're swamped with all this. Why not let me pitch in?"

Elyse then turned her questioning gaze to Gavin, who rapped his knuckles on the table, directing his words to Elyse. "Focus on the form, Elyse. Don't get distracted."

Elyse's eyes dropped back to the paper, but her ears strained to catch every word. Gavin led Freda to the garden, leaving Elyse behind, curiosity burning in her chest.

Once they were outside, Gavin rubbed his temples in exasperation. "What do you want now, Freda? The apology's done. Elyse hasn't said anything about you. Why don't you just go home and mind your own business?"

Freda's eyes glistened with feigned innocence. "Why are you trying to get rid of me? I really want to make up for my mistakes. Driving me away feels like you're not willing to accept me."

Gavin's patience was wearing thin. He forced a smile. "Freda, are you playing some games with me? What's your real motive? Just say it."

Freda's gaze shifted, and she replied shyly, "I want your phone number. I really want to help you out with something. Can you give me a chance?"

Gavin's face darkened. "Don't be ridiculous."

Freda crossed her arms, her chin jutting out defiantly. "If you won't give me your number, it's obviously because you despise me and you never forgave me!"

Gavin let out a wry laugh. "Believe what you want."

Chapter 565:

As Elyse filled out the form, Gavin returned unexpectedly soon. She glanced up and asked casually, "Back already?"

"I have nothing to say to her," Gavin replied curtly.

As soon as he said that, his phone buzzed. It was Fiona on the line. He informed her he was at Elyse's place. To his surprise, Fiona said she would join him.

Upon hearing this exchange and learning of Fiona's imminent arrival, Elyse suggested, "Since Fiona is coming over, why don't we all have lunch together?"

Gavin checked his watch and shook his head. "I can't stay for lunch. Once you two fill out the forms, I'll sign you up and handle the rest of the process. Fiona can keep you company."

Elyse nodded in agreement, not disputing Gavin's plan.

Half an hour later, Fiona hurriedly arrived at the villa, clad in a crisp white overcoat. Upon entering, she swiftly shed the coat, revealing her curvaceous figure, and casually handed it to the waiting servant.

Glancing around, Fiona didn't see the person she wanted to see. Making her way briskly to the living room, she asked Elyse tentatively, "Elyse, where is your husband? Is he not here?"

Seated on the sofa, Elyse casually nibbled on vitamins and didn't bother lifting her gaze at Fiona's inquiry. "He went to work. What do you need him for?"

"Oh, no reason. Just curious. It's the weekend. I thought he would be here with you," Fiona replied, her eyes roving around the villa with keen interest.

As Fiona wandered through the villa, she couldn't help but be captivated by the priceless decorations and antique vases. A stirring feeling grew in her heart.

Could any woman really have access to these treasures simply by marrying Jayden?

The more she gazed at them, the stronger her desire became. She couldn't help but wander around the villa, eventually reaching the study door. Her hand poised to open it, but Driscoll intercepted her. "Miss Evans, I'm sorry. This is Mr. Owen's study. You can't go in."

"Jayden's study?" she echoed, surprised by the restriction.

"No one is allowed in."

She looked around and asked, "What about Elyse? Can she enter?"

Driscoll gave her a strange look. "She is Mr. Owen's wife. Of course, she can enter."

The implication was crystal clear: Fiona was just an outsider.

A smile flickered across Fiona's face, but inside, she cursed Driscoll countless times. "What a stupid butler! Maybe I could be part of Jayden's family someday." Fiona retorted inwardly.

Lingering at the door for a moment, she finally stepped back reluctantly under Driscoll's watchful eye.

Eventually, Fiona explored other areas on the villa's first floor. As she finished her tour, she couldn't help but marvel at Jayden's wealth and found herself curious about exploring Jayden and Elyse's private space.

Her curiosity led her to contemplate peeking into their bedroom.

With this plan in mind, Fiona glanced back, ensuring Driscoll and Elyse weren't paying her any attention. Taking advantage of the moment, she quietly made her way to the second floor.

The villa's second-floor corridor was spacious, adorned with massive vases every few meters and expensive paintings gracing the walls.

Walking forward cautiously, Fiona reached a corner when suddenly, a hand firmly grasped her shoulder. Startled, she turned around in astonishment.

Tracy's complexion was pale, but her eyes shone with intensity.

She narrowed her eyes slightly. She wasn't well-acquainted with Fiona; they had only crossed paths a few times through Elyse. All Tracy knew was that Fiona was Elyse's studio fellow.

With caution, Tracy asked, "What brings you to the second floor?"

Fiona's motives for ascending to the second floor were impure. When Tracy directly confronted her about it, her feeble defenses crumbled like a house of cards.

Fiona stuttered, "I just wanted to look around. I wasn't doing anything."

Tracy sensed Fiona's response was off, though she couldn't quite pinpoint why.

She continued, “You do realize you can’t just casually wander around someone’s home, right? Besides, the bedrooms are on this floor. Do you want to see the master bedroom?”

After receiving criticism from Tracy, Fiona grew visibly irritated and snapped, “I came up here just to look around. Why are you talking to me like this? Why are you being so rude?”

Flushed with anger, Fiona hurriedly descended to the first floor, unable to mask her guilt and shame after the confrontation.

This time, everyone witnessed Fiona hastily descending the staircase from the second floor.

When Driscoll saw this, he furrowed his brow and asked, “Miss Evans, why are you coming down from the second floor?”

Ignoring him, Fiona turned to Elyse and asked, “There is another woman upstairs in your house. Is she your friend? Is she staying with you?”

Elyse lifted her gaze to meet Fiona’s and said, “Indeed, the girl you noticed is a friend of mine. She is staying with us temporarily due to some recent issues.”

“Ah, I understand.” Upon hearing this, Fiona’s mind sparked with the idea that perhaps she could also stay in this house.

Chapter 566:

Elyse eyed Fiona suspiciously, sensing something off about her today. Fiona, typically mindful of boundaries, had unexpectedly ventured upstairs. Was it just a mistake?

Approaching Elyse with feigned concern, Fiona inquired, “Since your pregnancy, have you felt any discomfort or mood changes?”

After pondering briefly, Elyse responded, “The morning sickness has eased since last week. I’ve been able to eat without getting nauseous, and overall, I’m feeling quite upbeat.”

Fiona’s face fell slightly upon hearing this. She had hoped for a more troubling update. How could Elyse be adjusting so well?

Moments later, Elyse added offhandedly, “Though, I do need to visit the hospital tomorrow for a regular checkup.”

Fiona’s interest was piqued immediately. “Oh? You need to go to the hospital? May I come with you?”

“No need, Fiona. Jayden will be with me,” Elyse replied instinctively.

Unperturbed, Fiona grasped Elyse’s hand more firmly. “But I care about you too. Let me accompany you.”

Taken aback by Fiona’s sudden eagerness, Elyse hesitated. “It’s truly just a straightforward procedure. You live quite a distance away. There’s really no need for you to come and accompany me to the hospital.”

Spotting an opening, Fiona quickly suggested, “How about I stay over tonight, then? We can head to the hospital together in the morning. It won’t be any trouble at all.”

Elyse fell silent, unsure how to respond. Her prolonged silence filled Fiona with a growing sense of unease, prompting her to wonder if Elyse had become suspicious.

Finally, Elyse murmured softly, “Well, if you insist, you’re welcome to stay.”

Upon achieving her goal, Fiona was elated and asked, “Should we let your husband know?”

“I’ll call him later,” Elyse responded and carefully withdrew her hand from Fiona’s grip.

Fiona, growing impatient, pressed further, “Why wait? Call him now. Also, find out when he’ll be back. It’s nearly lunchtime; he might join us.”

Elyse had regained her composure and answered calmly, “No need, I already know his return time.”

Fiona felt a surge of anger at Elyse’s response. Was Elyse trying to assert her dominance as his wife?

So what if Elyse had met Jayden before she did? It was not a big deal!

Without Elyse’s assistance, she had encountered Jayden on her own; their meeting had been fraught with drama—seemingly fated.

Biting her lip, Fiona’s resolve to win Jayden over intensified.

Just then, Gavin entered, with Freda following behind.

Upon noticing Fiona, Gavin inquired, “Did you complete the form? I need to leave soon.”

Freda eyed Fiona critically, recognizing her instantly. With arms crossed and a scornful look, she remarked, “She didn’t even make the top eight. How is she qualified to fill out any form? The standards abroad are incredibly high.

Are we really considering letting a loser represent us?”

Elyse gasped sharply, taken aback by Freda’s brazenness.

Fiona’s expression darkened considerably. Rising to her feet, she demanded, “Gavin, why is she here? Did you invite her?”



Gavin avoided Fiona's inquiry and instead observed Freda's overbearing demeanor. He sighed deeply and remarked, "Fiona, you're quite talented. You only lost the competition because you let your emotions get the better of you."

Fiona clenched her jaw and shot back at Freda, "You're the reason I lost, you troublemaker!"

A mocking smile spread across Freda's face as she retorted scornfully, "Have you lost your mind? I only rigged the outcome for Elyse. The other contestants' scores were legitimate. You came in tenth; you didn't even make the top eight. How can you say I caused your failure?"

Rolling her eyes, Freda sneered, "If you can't own up to your own shortcomings, how skilled can you actually be?"

Fiona's anger reached a boiling point. She swept the papers and pen off the table, sending the registration form flying.

She shouted defiantly, "Fine, I admit I'm not as good as the others. I'm out of this ridiculous competition!"

"Fiona! Do you realize what you're saying?" Even Gavin, normally so composed, was annoyed by Fiona's stubbornness.

Elyse began gathering the strewn papers and carefully replaced them on the table. She implored, "Fiona, Gavin went out of his way to secure this spot for you. You can't just throw it away."

"Shut up! You are just a junior. You have no right to talk!" Fiona snapped at Elyse, showing no respect.

Chapter 567:

Fiona seethed with envy whenever she looked at Elyse.

Elyse's talent was undeniable, and both Gavin and Irving were vying to guide her.

Her popularity was unrivaled. Even young Forrest, who had previously favored Fiona, now spent more time with Elyse.

Even Cody, known for his aloofness, showed Elyse a rare kindness and care.

All the attention Elyse received felt like a knife twisting in Fiona's heart.

No matter how hard she tried, she always felt overshadowed by Elyse. The realization that she could never match Elyse's place in everyone's hearts gnawed at her.

Fiona had only one 'advantage' left—she was Elyse's senior in the studio. But lately, even that title felt meaningless. Elyse had even started lecturing her. Who was Elyse to talk down to her? What right did she have?

"Don't forget that I'm your senior, not the other way around! Who are you to say that to me? You just don't want to see me succeed."

Elyse's eyes widened in shock. "Fiona, how could you say that?"

Fiona's chest heaved with fury. "Even you tried to lecture me. Why can't I say this?"

A flash of hurt crossed Elyse's face. She sighed. "Maybe it's my fault. If you hate me so much, don't come to the hospital with me tomorrow. And you don't need to stay here tonight."

Fiona's expression hardened. "No, I'll be there tomorrow. And I'm not leaving today."

Gavin, watching the exchange, was puzzled by Fiona's sudden change in behavior.

He stepped in. "Fiona, do you know what you're saying? If you don't want to compete, I'll tell Mr. Tucker to withdraw you."

Silence hung heavy in the air. Fiona couldn't bring herself to say she wanted to quit.

“Then fill out the form,” Gavin ordered, his tone leaving no room for argument.

With tears brimming in her eyes, Fiona pointed at Freda. “She started it. Why aren’t you yelling at her?”

Freda remained calm, inspecting her new manicure, unbothered by Fiona’s outburst.

Gavin’s tone was firm. “That’s enough. Isn’t Freda right? You were given a chance to participate in that extra round and re-rank, and you failed to seize it. You simply forfeited.”

Fiona’s face went pale, a rush of disbelief and betrayal washing over her. Gavin’s words cut deep—accusing her for Freda’s sake was unimaginable.

Elyse, noticing Fiona’s distress, gently suggested, “Fiona, you’ve been under a lot of stress lately. Maybe you should take a break.”

Ignoring Elyse, Fiona snatched the registration form from the table and stormed out. Since Elyse had mentioned that she couldn’t stay overnight, there seemed to be no reason to be polite to Elyse.

Gavin sighed wearily, bid goodbye to Elyse, and hurried after Fiona.

Freda found the drama intriguing. She’d thought everyone at Blue Sea Music Studio got along, but it seemed even they had their share of internal conflicts.

Turning to Freda, Elyse couldn’t help but ask, “Miss Jimenez, why exactly did you come to my home today?”

Freda raised an eyebrow. “What are you implying?”

Elyse’s gaze was steady. “You said you’ve given up on Theo. Is that true?”

Freda’s smile faltered slightly. “Of course. Why do you ask?”

Elyse's tone grew serious. "Your animosity towards me has always puzzled me. I ended things with Theo a long time ago. Besides, I am now married and pregnant."

Freda glanced at Elyse's belly. She had assumed Jayden couldn't even have sex in his condition and hadn't expected him to father Elyse's child.

"Enough," Freda said firmly. "I've ended things with Theo. There's no animosity left towards you. Just rest assured."

Freda's target was Gavin now; dealing with Elyse would come after she gave birth.

With that, Freda left without hesitation.

Watching Freda go, Elyse let out a deep breath. Freda claimed she was done with Theo, but she still couldn't shake something off.

Meanwhile, in an ordinary car parked nearby, Jayden sat with Tobin. They had been waiting for hours, hoping to spot their target.

Their patience was rewarded when a figure in a black down jacket, hat, and mask walked into an old apartment complex. It was Lanny, and he was here to case Morgan's place!

Chapter 568:

When Tobin spotted Lanny, a flicker of surprise lit up his eyes. He turned to Jayden, excitement lacing his voice. "Mr. Owen, you were spot-on. You said Lanny wouldn't wait too long to make his move, and here he is."

Jayden, a cigarette dangling from his lips, nodded with a knowing smirk. "Of course. Morgan's memory is back. There's no way Lanny can stand that. He'll be desperate to silence her before she spills the beans."

Jayden sent a message to Morgan, alerting her that Lanny had taken the bait. “Time to roll,” he typed, eyes narrowing in concentration.

Morgan’s reply was swift. “Got it.” Moments later, she emerged from the building.

Lanny, in a restless search, spotted Morgan almost immediately. He lowered his head and began tailing her at a cautious distance.

Jayden, watching the scene unfold from a distance, said calmly, “Send our guys to shadow them. Once Morgan makes her move, we nab Lanny.”

Morgan continued according to plan, weaving through the city until she finally returned home an hour later.

Lanny, who had been near the apartment complex all day, understood that Morgan’s hour-long outing at this hour was his only opportunity to take action on another day.

Frustrated, he lingered until dusk before slinking away, defeated.

Jayden, confident in his arrangement, ensured Morgan had round-the-clock protection before heading back to the company.

Just as he stepped into his office, he was met by an unexpected visitor. To his surprise, it was a familiar face—an old partner who frequently collaborated with the Owen Group on various projects.

Jayden’s eyebrows shot up in surprise as he greeted the familiar face. The partner quickly explained his intention: he wanted to sever ties with the Owen Group and collaborate with Jayden’s company instead.

This news was a welcome surprise.

Since Jayden had cut ties with the Owens, his company had faced relentless pressure. The Owen Group had made it clear that any association with Jayden would be blacklisted.

Despite the Bayzee Group's meteoric rise, the Owen Group's century-old legacy remained unshakable. The warning from the high office was to be taken seriously.

Even investors who were optimistic about the Bayzee Group didn't dare to act rashly.

In the sleek reception room of Bayzee Group, Jayden leaned back in his chair, eyes glinting with curiosity. "The Owen Group has warned others not to partner with me. Aren't you worried they might retaliate if you choose to work with me?"

The man chuckled, a confident smile spreading across his face. "Money isn't my concern. My passion lies in investing in ventures I believe in.

Honestly, the Owen Group has seemed quite erratic lately. Their financial reports may show profits, but I sense a growing instability."

Jayden grinned and extended his hand. Their handshake sealed a silent agreement of mutual confidence.

Within the hour, news of this new deal reached the Owen Group: an investor, previously aligned with them, had approached Jayden for a partnership on new projects.

The project department quickly dispatched someone to investigate. They discovered the investor's reasoning—he believed Bayzee Group was a more sensible investment. For the Owen Group, the investor had no plans at the moment.

The news reached Enzo quickly.

Enzo sat in his study, cradling a cup of hot tea. He spoke to his butler with a calm resignation. "What I feared most is happening. Jayden, even after cutting ties with us, remains a formidable force. It's only natural that people are drawn to his capabilities."

The butler's face hardened. "You nurtured Jayden, and this is how he repays you? Such ingratitude! He seems to have forgotten all the good you've done for him."

Enzo waved a dismissive hand. "It's irrelevant now. Jayden made his choice. I have fulfilled my duties to the Owen clan."

The butler frowned deeply. "But sir, are you truly willing to let this go? Jayden has never shown the slightest respect or loyalty to the Owen clan."

Enzo nodded solemnly. "You're right. While I understand his sentiments, I cannot accept his betrayal of his roots."

After a moment of contemplation, Enzo addressed the butler. "Summon Brook and Corrie. Since Jayden has severed his ties with my clan, there's no need to preserve his progeny."

The butler squinted his eyes. "I've been coordinating with Corrie. They've been looking for the right moment."

"Send more men tomorrow," Enzo instructed, his voice devoid of emotion. "We must ensure the plan succeeds." His calm demeanor belied the gravity of his order: to kill Elyse's unborn child.

Understanding the weight of Enzo's words, the butler nodded. "I'll make sure they act swiftly. You won't have to wait long."

Chapter 569:

The following afternoon, Elyse and Jayden arrived at the hospital as planned. Upon entering the lobby, they were greeted by Fiona, who had already arrived and was waiting for them.

For the first time, Elyse refrained from initiating a greeting. Instead, she stood silently beside Jayden, her eyes fixed on Fiona.

Fiona's face showed her embarrassment. She had assumed Elyse would overlook yesterday's incident, but it was quite clear that was not the case. Nevertheless, Fiona understood the need to maintain a facade of concern to get what she wanted.

Approaching them, Fiona asked, "Elyse, are you feeling alright? I came here specifically to keep you company today."

Elyse turned away calmly. "I've already made it clear I don't need your company. My husband is here with me."

Jayden, who had been absorbed in his phone, looked up at Elyse's words. He glanced at her and asked softly, "Are you upset?"

Elyse responded quietly, "We had a spat yesterday."

Jayden nodded understandingly, not asking any more questions. He respected Elyse's privacy and didn't want to meddle in her affairs.

Fiona observed Jayden intently before attempting to insert herself between them, appearing as if she was close to Elyse. She interjected softly, "Please don't harbor any more anger. I know I was in the wrong. Let me accompany you."

Before Elyse could utter a word, Jayden stepped aside abruptly, his expression hardening as his eyes narrowed at Fiona. "Are you blind? There's ample space, yet you squeezed yourself in between us."

With that, he moved protectively around Elyse, his arm draped over her shoulders. "If anything happens to Elyse because of your action, I won't hesitate to ruin your life, regardless of who you think you are."

Fiona's initial shock at Jayden's harsh words quickly turned to wounded pride. It was evident to her that Jayden's focus was solely on Elyse.

Meanwhile, Elyse felt a knot of unease tightening in her chest, as if expecting something odd to happen.

Her discomfort did not escape Jayden's notice. He gently clasped her shoulders, his voice filled with concern. "What's troubling you, Elyse? Are you feeling unwell?"

Elyse shook her head slightly. "I just suddenly feel uneasy."



Jayden's gaze shifted to Fiona, his tone impatient. "She feels unwell the moment you show up. What a jinx!"

Fiona felt deeply wounded. She turned her gaze from Jayden to Elyse, a storm brewing inside her. Was Elyse pretending to be all vulnerable to have Jayden's attention on her?

Feeling hurt, she answered, "I did nothing. How could you accuse me like this?"

Jayden's words cut like a knife. "You shouldn't have come here. My wife wouldn't feel any discomfort if you hadn't."

Normally, Elyse would have intervened, but now she felt unusually indisposed and wanted to distance herself from Fiona.

She remained absolutely silent, which was quite uncharacteristic of her.

Seeing Elyse's lack of defense, Fiona's resentment intensified. Elyse appeared intent on driving her away to keep Jayden for herself. What a bitch!

Fiona weighed her options but couldn't bring herself to voice her anger. She did not want to lose her composure before Jayden.

After all, if he formed a negative impression of her, her chances of marrying him would be ruined.

Clutching her chest, Elyse whispered barely audibly, "Let's go for my checkup. I want to go home early."

Jayden nodded in agreement, ignoring Fiona. "Okay, whatever you want."

With that, he guided Elyse toward the elevators.

In those short steps, Jayden's attention was completely on Elyse. It was clear how devoted he was toward her.

Fiona's heart ached with envy as she watched Jayden tenderly care for Elyse. She couldn't understand why such a remarkable man had chosen Elyse, an ordinary woman.

Despite her searing jealousy, Fiona concealed any flicker of emotion. She dreaded exposing her true feelings, yet deep down, she longed for Jayden. In her mind, Fiona believed her love for Jayden burned as brightly as Elyse's, if not more so.

With a composed expression, Fiona followed them discreetly, hoping that staying nearby might create an opportunity for a private moment with Jayden.

Unaware of Fiona's presence, Elyse massaged her temples, feeling a creeping unease as if an unseen threat lurked nearby. She focused on completing her checkup, trying to calm her anxiety.

Once she was done, they headed towards the elevator, ready to meet her obstetrician. As they stepped inside, they were surprised to see Brook waiting for them.

Brook's face lit up with surprise as he greeted them, "Hey, what brings you two to the hospital?"

Chapter 570:

Brook held the registration slip and waved it a bit. "Did you catch a cold too?"

Elyse glanced at Jayden, who stayed silent, then explained, "No, I'm pregnant. Jayden is here for my checkup."

Surprise flashed across Brook's face before he regained his composure. He looked at Jayden. "Come here. We need to talk."

Jayden remained unresponsive, clearly not in the mood to talk to Brook.

The two never got along, so pretending to be cordial seemed pointless.

Brook sighed. "It's about our grandpa. Don't you want to hear it?"

Jayden furrowed his brow. "What could you possibly say about him that is deserving of my attention?"

Brook's expression turned serious. "You need to hear this."

Elyse tugged on Jayden's sleeve. "Maybe you should listen. It might be important."

Jayden glanced at her, concern evident. "I'm more worried about you. You don't look well."

Elyse touched her face, about to reassure him, when Fiona stepped in.

"Jayden, if you have something to attend to, go ahead. I'll stay with Elyse and take care of her," Fiona said enthusiastically, holding Elyse's arm.

Elyse tried to pull away, but Fiona held on tightly.

"I can handle it alone, Fiona. You don't need to stay."

Fiona insisted, "We are friends, aren't we? It's my duty to take care of you." She then led Elyse towards the obstetrician's office.

Jayden sighed and followed Brook to the end of the corridor.

At the end of the corridor, Brook leaned against the window and pulled out a cigarette, biting it but not lighting it.

Jayden noticed and asked, "Are you that anxious? Chewing on tobacco?"

Brook shot Jayden a hard look. "That's none of your business. This is your first child with Elyse, right? How does it feel to be anticipating the arrival of a little one?"

Jayden narrowed his eyes. "Aren't you going to tell me about our grandpa? Why bring this up?"

Brook chewed on the tobacco, saying, "I've never been married or had kids. I'm just curious."

Jayden paused, then admitted, "It feels amazing, almost unreal."

Brook's expression darkened. "Don't get too excited." He took a breath before continuing, "Honestly, I didn't expect Elyse to get pregnant. You know Grandpa never wanted you to marry her. Even after your wedding, he pressured me to push you towards Joanna."

Jayden's jaw tightened. "I know. I hate that you guys interfere in my marriage. You're too meddlesome."

Brook shrugged. "We're Owen clan members. Freedom isn't in the cards for us." His voice grew hoarse. "I met a woman I liked a while ago. I know we have no future, but I can't help wanting to be near her."

Jayden thought back to Jennie, the girl Brook had been close to.

Brook had even struck Corrie over Jennie.

But later, Jennie disappeared, and no one knew what happened to her.

Jayden looked at Brook, his voice steady. "Free marriages are a luxury we can't afford. Especially for someone like you, always looking to climb higher. You can never choose whom you marry."

Brook nodded. "Yeah, I get it. But the real tragedy is we're stuck as Owen clan members."

Jayden found Brook's behavior unusually strange today. He couldn't believe Brook was opening up about these things.

Brook had always been Enzo's loyal enforcer, strictly upholding the clan rules. Discussing these matters was out of character for him.

Jayden said, "I don't think you have anything important to say. I'm going back."

Brook stopped him, his voice laced with an unexpected vulnerability. "I used to envy you. I thought you had control over your life, that you married the woman you loved. But now I see you don't truly have control."

Jayden frowned, "What are you talking about?"

Brook's smile was twisted. "Do you really think you're free? You'll never beat Grandpa in Watscar. Just as you know him, he knows you well."

A scream echoed from the other end of the corridor.

Jayden recognized Elyse's voice and tried to rush to her, but Brook held him back.

"Let me go!" Jayden's eyes blazed with anger.

Brook's voice dropped to a pained whisper. "I'm sorry, Jayden. This is Grandpa's order. I have no choice. Just blame yourself for being an Owen."