

# **Bound by love: Marrying my Disabled Husband**

## **#Chapter 61 – 70**

### **Read Bound by love: Marrying my Disabled Husband Chapter 61**

#### **Chapter 61:**

Jayden had an exceptional talent for silencing people. Theo was possessive; even though Elyse had left him, a part of him would always consider her his. He would always desire her to some extent. The only reason he hadn't acted on those desires was his belief that Jayden was incapacitated, meaning he could never fulfill his spousal duties with Elyse. Elyse might be married to someone else now, but in Theo's mind, her body would always belong to him. At least, that's what Theo thought.

Being a man himself, Jayden could easily decipher Theo's deepest thoughts. However, he had no intention of sharing this information with Elyse. Why would he? Elyse was his wife, his and his alone.

"I heard your mother is searching for your future wife," Jayden remarked. "I must admit, I am quite curious about the type of woman you believe deserves such a title."

Theo's hands clenched into fists at his sides. He couldn't understand why, but he always seemed to fly into a rage whenever he faced Jayden. He despised feeling this way, like he was on the verge of losing control.

"One thing I can say for sure is that she will come from a superior background compared to Elyse," Theo retorted before storming off.

Elyse remained silent, but there was a touch of sadness in her quietness this time. Jayden gently took her hand. "Everything Theo said is nonsense. Don't let his words affect you. Just trust me, okay?"

Elyse looked at him, seeing him as a prince from a fairy tale come to rescue her. "I have faith in you."

They left soon after and returned home. Upon entering the villa, Jayden noticed Vinny Bailey standing quietly in the living room. They exchanged a brief glance before Vinny disappeared into the study.

"Head upstairs and change," Jayden instructed Elyse. "I'll be in the study for a while."

Unsuspecting, Elyse nodded. "Okay, I'll go to my room then."

Jayden watched her ascend the stairs before entering the study. "Mr. Owen," Vinny greeted him sheepishly, passing a hand over his bald head. "It's the first time I've seen your wife. She is quite remarkable."

Jayden disregarded formalities and locked the door behind him. "Just say what you have to say."

"We caught Joanna and brought her back," Vinny began. "Initially, we took her to her family as you ordered, but they refused to take her in. They said she's now a member of your family and we should deal with her ourselves."

"Where is she now?"

"In the villa's storage room. She really gave us a hard time. Someone must have helped her hide."

"I know someone helped her leave in the first place," Jayden said, clearing his throat. "The thing is, we haven't found her accomplice yet."

"It's fine. I'll give you two names. I need you to look into them and report back as soon as possible. Rickey Owen and Janet Lawrence."

Vinny looked puzzled. "Why the change in targets? I've never heard those names before. Who could they be?"

Jayden nodded. "Understood. Are you going to see Joanna? She keeps shouting for you. I had to gag her mouth with a rag."

After considering for a moment, Jayden nodded again. "All right, I'll go and have a look."

They left the study and walked to the storage room at the back of the villa. Two bodyguards stood watch on either side of the door, giving Jayden a respectful bow as he approached.

Upon opening the door, a foul odor emanated from inside. They found Joanna slumped in a dark corner, her appearance disheveled and dirty. She seemed afraid, holding up her hands as if to defend herself.

"I want to talk to her," Jayden said.

Vinny removed the rag from Joanna's mouth, which he had found in the room. Joanna immediately begged for mercy, apologizing and pleading to be Jayden's wife. Her voice grated on Vinny's ears, and he kicked her in the stomach to quiet her.

"I told you to keep your voice down," Vinny scolded. "What if Mrs. Owen finds out you're here?"

Joanna grimaced and doubled over, feeling the impact of Vinny's kick.

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Jayden gestured with his finger, prompting Vinny to move behind him. "I understand why you did what you did, Miss Foster," Jayden began. "One would have to be either a fool or a martyr to willingly marry a cripple like me. So, I do understand why you ran away."

Vinny was taken aback by Jayden's words. Was he hallucinating? Jayden wasn't instructing him to punish this woman by cutting off her hands or feet. Instead, he expressed empathy and understanding.

It appeared that his once cold and ruthless boss had softened since getting married.

Meanwhile, Joanna was equally shocked. She never expected Jayden to react this way. "Do you... Do you really mean it? Are you going to let me go?"

"Of course. I just need you to tell me how you managed to escape on our wedding day despite the heavy surveillance dispatched to the venue," Jayden replied calmly.

Joanna paled, contemplating Jayden's condition. After a moment of silence, she trembled and spoke, "Someone did help me escape, but I don't know who they are. We communicated online, and they also helped me hide and evade my pursuers. Then, they disappeared without a trace, and I couldn't contact them anymore. I'm telling the truth, I promise. Please, you have to believe me."

Jayden tapped his finger on the wheelchair's armrest, showing no emotion. He found Joanna's explanation suspicious. "You don't have to prove your claims, but you know what will happen if we find out you're lying," Vinny interjected sternly.

Joanna shrank back in fear, realizing the consequences of her words. Jayden ordered her to be gagged again before leaving the storage room, leaving Joanna uncertain of whether he believed her or not.

Vinny sneered at Joanna. "Looks like this small room will be your home for now. What a pity. You almost became the hostess of the whole villa."

“Why would I want to be a cripple’s wife?” Joanna retorted, her face twisted in disdain. “I bet there’s something wrong with his current wife. I really feel sorry for her. She will enjoy a sexless life forever. Ha!”

Ignoring her taunts, Vinny picked up the rag from before and stuffed it back inside her mouth. “Well then, have a good rest.”

Joanna tried to scream and struggle, but to no avail. If she had known that she would be captured, she would have fled abroad as soon as she escaped on her wedding day. Now that things had turned out like this, she had no way of knowing what kind of future was waiting for her.

Vinny checked the ropes around her wrists and ankles, only leaving once he was satisfied that she would not be able to escape. “Everything has been taken care of, Mr. Owen.”

Jayden nodded and led the way back to the main villa. “Be vigilant. I don’t want Elyse to know that another woman is in my place, much less my former fiancée.”

“Please rest assured, I will personally keep an eye on Joanna and make sure she doesn’t catch your wife’s notice.” A moment passed, and Vinny asked, “Do you believe that woman, Mr. Owen? Getting aid from her accomplice through online correspondence doesn’t sound very convincing to me.”

“I think there is some truth to her words, but none of that matters now. She is bound to contact that person again. She will be detained for a few days and then released. Have your men tail her and see where she goes.”

Vinny’s face lit up in understanding. “I see. Don’t worry, I know what to do.” Instead of returning with Jayden, Vinny rounded a corner and slipped through the back door.

When Jayden reached the living room, he found Elyse tuning her violin. “What’s this? Are you going to treat us to one of your performances?”

Elyse turned to look at him. “Well, if I pass tomorrow’s competition, I would get the chance to be on the tour. If I make it to the end, I might even be the concertmaster.”

Driscoll, who was standing to the side, happily clapped his hands. “Congratulations! You’re a step closer to your dreams.”

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Thanks, Driscoll. I'm sure I'll nail the selection tomorrow. You all better be there for my debut," Elyse beamed with pride.

Jayden folded his arms, surprised by her confidence. "You're really into playing the violin."

"Yeah, I love it. It's like a part of me. When I was a kid, my folks wanted me to pick up another instrument, but I refused. They even tried starving me for two days, but I stood my ground."

"Seriously? They attempted to starve you simply because you wanted to play the violin against their wishes?" Jayden asked, incredulous.

Elyse nodded, feeling a bit weird recalling it. She even suspected that Lanny and Glenda were fearful of recalling someone from their past while she played the violin. This seemed to be the genuine reason for their opposition. She decided not to look into it any more since she believed her conclusions were too bizarre.

After tuning her violin, Elyse stood up, striking a professional pose. "Let the future concertmaster give you a taste of her skills."

Driscoll and the maids showered her with praise. Though Jayden didn't show much, he didn't stop her either. He had never seen her perform, and despite knowing music was her passion, he was curious.

The song was "He's a Pirate." The moment Elyse began, there was a shift in her aura. The soft girl transformed into a fierce woman with steely eyes, exuding bravery and determination. It was as real as it could get. Elyse looked and sounded like a true pirate as she played the song, breaking the waves for the Treasure Island ahead.

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Through the music, Jayden glimpsed countless facets of Elyse. At that moment, he found her incredibly captivating. As her performance ended, Elyse still wore that determined look. Applause erupted. She glanced at Jayden and saw him clapping for her.

"Good performance," Jayden remarked.

Elyse blushed, not used to praise from Jayden. "You played amazingly well. We were all spellbound," said Driscoll.

"You're destined for greatness tomorrow. We all believe in you," applauded a maid.

Driscoll and the maids praised Elyse, boosting her confidence and ambition.

"I'm off to practice some more in my room." With her violin in hand, Elyse headed upstairs, her face still flushed.

Driscoll turned to Jayden. "She's got some serious talent. It's like she's born for music."

"Yeah, her talent caught me off guard," Jayden mused. He thought that if Elyse's parents had supported her, she could've been famous by now, not stuck in a small orchestra struggling for gigs.

Thinking of Elyse's performance, Jayden felt an inexplicable fondness for her. He reckoned having a wife who could play the violin wouldn't be too bad. At least he could enjoy her music when he was bored. He startled himself with his thoughts. He appeared to be increasingly embracing Elyse's presence.

In her room, Elyse practiced relentlessly, the melody for tomorrow's audition already memorized. But she feared making a mistake or forgetting at the crucial moment, so she practiced, strengthening her skills.

Just as she was immersed in her practice, her phone rang. Seeing it was Lanny, she realized she hadn't updated him. She answered, greeted by his rant. "Why haven't you updated me? Have you not even visited Theo? Aren't you worried about Mabel?"

Elyse held the phone away from her ear at Lanny's tirade, then asked, "What happened with Mabel? I was only gone for an afternoon, not years."

"She tried to off herself at home, claiming she'll marry no one but Theo. Did he agree?" Lanny was frantic, his tone revealing his favoritism towards Mabel. Even if Theo raped her, she was certain Lanny would've sold her off for a fortune. She couldn't fathom her parents' favoritism.

"I asked him. He claims Mabel offered herself to him. If she wants marriage, she has to pay back the money he lent her. About four and a half million." Money was all Lanny seemed to understand.

"Four and a half million? Is Theo blackmailing her? Are you sure?"

"Ask Mabel if you doubt it. She's not being straight with us. She's clearly hiding something."

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Upon learning that Mabel had been withholding information, Lanny hung up and stormed to meet her with a frown.

At that moment, Mabel looked like a shadow, staring at nothing in particular. Glenda was beside her, wailing with tears streaming down her face.

“How could you have acted so stupid, Mabel? What’s there to like about Theo? If only you could be open-minded for a moment, you’d see just how mistaken you are about him,” Lanny scolded, his face dark.

Mabel, still with a faint mark on her neck, had done everything to get her parents’ support to marry Theo. Clearing her throat weakly, she pleaded, “Mom, you’ve got to understand that my heart is with Theo. There’s no way for me to be happy without him.”

Just then, Lanny entered the room, his face stern. Approaching Mabel, he asked coldly, “Tell me exactly what happened between you and Theo before you got into bed with him.”

Stunned, Mabel swallowed hard, nervousness spreading across her face. Her father had asked a question she hadn’t expected. “Nothing happened, Dad. Besides, you shouldn’t be asking me such questions when I’m feeling quite sad right now,” she replied feebly.

Scoffing, Lanny retorted sarcastically, “You’re quite sad right now? Why on earth would you be sad after you got what you wanted? Hey, are you really on the hook for millions to compensate for some red wine?”

Shocked that the truth was on the verge of being uncovered, Mabel cringed and looked visibly distressed. Glenda stopped crying momentarily, her face showing confusion. “Who do you owe millions to? How is that even possible?”

Feeling that her charade was up, Mabel narrated everything that had happened to her parents. Seeking to deepen her relationship with Theo, she had contacted him and arranged to meet. After meeting up, she had convinced Theo to take her to a bar by pretending she had never been to one. However, upon arrival, she accidentally knocked over several expensive wine bottles, creating a dilemma.

To save her from this, Theo had paid for the damaged wine without asking her to return the money. Believing he had acted out of goodness, she thought he was the ideal lover she had always wanted. Therefore, she had offered to repay him by sleeping with him, and since he didn’t refuse, they ended up having sex.

Afterward, Mabel realized she hadn’t achieved what she wanted, feeling the pain of the loss she had incurred.

Trembling, Mabel asked Lanny, "You can't possibly tell me that you're unaffected by the fact that the person I lost my virginity to isn't my husband, right? Come on, Dad, I want nothing more than to be Theo's wife. Besides, just imagine all the benefits that I will bring upon my family by marrying Theo, a son of the Ward family, which is one of the most influential and richest families in the city."

Hearing this, Lanny couldn't help but shake his head in disgust. Mabel, spoiled as she was, had acted in such a misguided way without even sparing a moment to consider what she was getting into. What's more, she was still dreaming of becoming Theo's wife.

Despite how cunning and greedy Lanny was, he knew that it was going to be near impossible for Mabel to marry into the Ward family. When Elyse and Theo had been on the verge of getting married, the Ward family resisted without an iota of shame. If Mabel, who was arrogant and less appealing than Elyse, knocked on their door, they would boot her away without hesitation.

"But then, even if Mabel successfully got Theo to marry her, she would suffer a fate worse than Elyse," fumed Lanny. "Just who the hell do you think you are? How can you get so delusional to the point that you've convinced yourself that Theo is willing to marry you? Shouldn't you have figured out by now that if he planned to take you seriously, he wouldn't have slept with you, his ex-fiance's sister? For him to treat Elyse so poorly despite having a bit of love for her, how do you think he's going to treat you, a girl he doesn't even have an iota of feeling for?"

After a brief pause, he added, "Yet here you are, trying to use the fact that he took your virginity to blackmail him. Do you think he attaches any importance to getting a woman in bed with him? He's well aware that there are a lot of women who would sleep with him without blinking an eye. Do you think he takes you as any different from those loose women?"

Hearing this, Mabel bit her lip and clenched her teeth in anger. In all but words, her dad had just called her a loose woman.

"Why are you saying all these hurtful words to me instead of supporting me, Dad? Have you forgotten that I'm your daughter? I need—" Without allowing her to finish her words, Lanny interrupted firmly, "It's because you're my daughter that I'm refusing to sugarcoat how stupid you've been. Wake up to reality and know that Theo doesn't love you in the slightest."

Glenda placed a hand on Lanny's shoulder and tried to calm him down, saying, "Go gentle on our daughter, Honey. She deserves a break."

"Go gentle on her? You do know that you're the root cause of this. This girl wouldn't have acted the way she did if only you had brought her up to not become a spoiled and entitled individual," Lanny retorted, shaking his head in anger. Pointing an index finger



at Mabel's nose, he continued, "Have you any idea what Theo said? He informed us that we have to pay him what he used to cover your debt before he can agree to talk to us. The only reason he slept with you was because of the millions that he had spent. To him, you were just another woman that graced his bed."

Refusing to accept this as the truth, Mabel said through gritted teeth, "Then just do what he wants. Pay him the money, and then I can start to discuss marriage with him."

"You make it sound so easy. Can you pay back the several million dollars?" Lanny asked with a sneer.

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Mabel exclaimed, "Dad, you're not going to help me out with this money mess?"

"Why should I bail you out of it? If you have debts to settle, handle them yourself," Lanny retorted, his tone showing he was on the edge. If Mabel weren't his daughter, he'd have shown her the door.

Glenda embraced the stubborn Mabel, her eyes welling up. "Mabel, you've made a huge blunder. Forget about Theo. He doesn't give a damn about you. Let's just move on."

Mabel remained silent, her expression saying she couldn't come to terms with it just yet. Her hopes of marrying Theo came crashing down at that moment.

"Take her to her room and let her rest. I'll give Theo a call," Lanny instructed, observing that Mabel had grasped the harsh truth. He sighed, feeling sorry for her.

Glenda nodded and guided Mabel back to her room. After settling Mabel in, Glenda sat on the edge of the bed and spoke softly. "Mabel, stop dwelling on it. Theo is heartless. Nobody can change that. Look at your sister; you know he's no good."

Mabel didn't respond, slowly closing her eyes.

Glenda continued, "Get some sleep. I'll handle this mess. Once it's sorted, I'll find a good man for you. You're beautiful; there'll be plenty of suitors."

Mabel remained silent, leaving Glenda at a loss for words. Glenda kissed her daughter's cheek and left the room.

As soon as the door closed, Mabel's eyes snapped open, filled with anger and humiliation. Had she given away her innocence for nothing? Was there no chance at all? She refused to believe it and was determined to confirm it for herself.

After a long violin practice session, Elyse was exhausted. Leaning against the window, she gazed outside. Suddenly, she noticed Driscoll leaving the villa with a tray of food. Who was he taking food to?

Curiosity piqued, she headed downstairs. Not finding any servants on the ground floor, she ventured outside and followed Driscoll. Before she could get close, she heard an angry female voice.

"Where's Jayden? I want to see Jayden Owen! How dare he imprison me? Why should I be locked up? Who does he think he is? Isn't he afraid of my Foster family's wrath?" The woman's voice was full of fury and curses directed at Jayden.

"The Foster family... Joanna Foster," Elyse covered her mouth in shock. Didn't Joanna run away from the wedding? Why was she back? Had Jayden found and confined Joanna here?

Elyse had often heard from the servants that with Jayden's temperament, Joanna wouldn't have a good fate, but witnessing it firsthand was different. She felt she had stumbled onto something dreadful, so she quietly retreated, fearing being discovered.

Back in the garden, Elyse sank onto a wooden bench, her mind in turmoil.

What would happen to Joanna now that she had returned? Would Jayden stick with the marriage? Would he divorce her? She couldn't stop worrying, even regretting why she had snooped around. Anxiety gnawed at her.

"Why are you sitting here?" Jayden wheeled himself over to her, raising an eyebrow. "Did practice get frustrating?"

It never crossed Elyse's mind that Jayden would show up. She pursed her lips, unhappy. "What about you? Can't you stay holed up in the study?"

"You have a sharp tongue," Jayden remarked. "But I asked you first. What's up?"

Elyse remained silent, unwilling to speak. Seeing her preoccupied, Jayden frowned. "What's bothering you? Are you going to divorce me?" Elyse blurted out.

Jayden was taken aback, regarding her as if she'd lost her mind. "What on earth are you thinking? When did I ever say I wanted a divorce?"

“What if someone like your parents asks you to divorce me?” Jayden shook his head. “You’re worrying over nothing. You’ve been married to me for a while now. Have you ever even met my family?”

“No,” Elyse admitted, surprised. “You’ve never met them, which means they couldn’t care less about us. And I’m content with you. Why would I want a divorce?”

It was the first time Jayden had expressed satisfaction with her. Frowning, Jayden asked, “I still don’t get where all this worry is coming from. Did someone say something to you?”

Elyse couldn’t admit she’d heard Joanna’s outburst. “Theo told me the other day that you were engaged to Miss Foster. He said the marriage would benefit your family, and I’d be out sooner or later.”

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Jayden’s face contorted into a sneer. “He would say that, wouldn’t he? How else could he sway you, you gullible girl?” Elyse shot back, visibly upset. “I am not gullible.” “Then why not?” Jayden retorted, giving her a skeptical look. “Are the Fosters really that influential? Does my family actually need to depend on them? The Foster family is in decline. They need my family more than mine needs them.” He gently pinched her cheek, saying, “I won’t divorce you. You’re decent enough, and I think you are great.” Elyse’s face flushed under his scrutiny.

Jayden saw her cheeks redden and mused over her simplicity, how a few words could make her blush. “Go on, entertain yourself. I need to return to studying.” Earlier, he had come out of the study to console her after spotting her sitting in the garden looking distressed. Now he had to go back.

On his way, thoughts of Theo stirred a tightness in his jaw. He had previously disregarded Theo. Now he realized Theo harbored ill intentions and even attempted to stir discord between him and Elyse. It seemed necessary to keep him occupied.

Elyse received the news that she was reinstated into the orchestra. The next morning, she left home to compete for the tour. Upon arrival, she sensed a palpable tension in the air. This atmosphere influenced her as well. After slipping into her training attire, she took out her violin and started practicing.

“You’re so lucky, Elyse. You were nearly ousted, yet here you are able to compete in the selection. Your luck astounds me,” Rebekah approached with her violin, her tone dripping with sarcasm. “But having been at home for so long, can you really pass the selection?”

“Can’t I practice at home?” Elyse countered. Rebekah scoffed, “You think practicing at home compares to our daily sessions here? Imagine the embarrassment if you fail.” Elyse fired back, “And what if you fail, Rebekah? After all your daily practice, that would be truly embarrassing, wouldn’t it?”

Rebekah, puffing up with pride, declared, “I’m at my peak today. I’m certain I’ll pass the selection. But you...” Her expression said it all. Elyse, wanting to end the conversation, responded confidently, “I’m also in good shape. Don’t worry, I’ll pass the selection.”

Seeing Elyse’s confidence, Rebekah felt a surge of resentment. She was acutely aware of Elyse’s talent, which was why she viewed her as a threat from the moment she joined the orchestra. Elyse’s presence could potentially hinder her future success. Turning her head, Rebekah noticed a tumbler in Elyse’s bag, a crafty gleam flickering in her eyes as an idea formed.

Elyse sat waiting for the selection process to begin, positioned among her friends in the middle of the group, her anxiety palpable. To keep her fingers nimble, she continuously moved them. After an hour, it was finally their turn, and the tension among the candidates spiked.

A girl offered Elyse a glass of water, asking, “Would you like some water, Elyse?” Remembering last year’s incident where a peer missed their selection due to tampered water, Elyse had since become vigilant. She only consumed what she brought herself. “No thanks, I have my own,” she declined, standing to retrieve her tumbler from her bag. She took a small sip to soothe her throat. From a distance, Rebekah watched this unfold with smug satisfaction.

Just as Elyse set down her tumbler, they were called to a hall. She joined the group, but halfway there, a sharp pain struck her stomach. Clutching her abdomen, her expression grew grave. Could someone have drugged her water? Her performance was imminent. She bit her lip, reassuring herself that she hadn’t drunk much—just a small sip. It shouldn’t be too severe. She could push through it.

Rebekah, who had been hoping Elyse would withdraw from the competition, murmured to herself upon noticing that Elyse showed no signs of heading to the bathroom. Could the substance she slipped into Elyse’s tumbler have expired? She was puzzled but knew she couldn’t ask Elyse without revealing her actions. Frustration welled up inside her. “Damn it! Why wasn’t Elyse affected? Had the drug not worked?”

Her anxiety over whether her plan would fail caused her to lose focus on her own selection process.

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In the hall, Wanda, seated among the judges, announced, "It's your turn, Elyse." She observed Elyse striding to the front with seriousness, likely battling nerves. It was critical for her to perform flawlessly despite the pressure.

Elyse positioned herself in front of the judges, inhaled deeply, and introduced her piece, "The Untold." With the first stroke of her bow, she captivated the audience, holding their attention until the final note faded. Upon concluding, she looked towards the judges, who remained silent. Her eyes sought Wanda for any sign of approval. Wanda, with a gentle smile, gave a nod of approval. Elyse let out a sigh of relief and stiffly walked back to her place in line.

At this moment, Rebekah was barely noticeable among the others. Her head was lowered, her grip on the violin was tight, and her shoulders trembled subtly. She couldn't understand why Elyse wasn't affected. Rebekah agonized internally. She had tampered with Elyse's water, thinking a single sip would be enough to disrupt her performance with discomfort. Despite this, Elyse had executed her piece perfectly, showing no signs of the intended effects. What went wrong?

Rebekah was so distracted she didn't hear the judge initially calling her name. "Rebekah Bentley! Rebekah Bentley!" Here she finally responded. The judge, with a tone of displeasure, remarked, "If this were the actual performance, you would have ruined it."

"Sorry, I was just too nervous," Rebekah apologized and quickly assumed her position, ready to play "Flower Dance," a piece that demanded more technical skill than emotion. Yet as she started, she was preoccupied with thoughts about why Elyse hadn't reacted to the laxative. This distraction caused her to falter right from the first note.

Realizing her focus was off, Rebekah hurried to regain her composure and continued her performance. The judge, maintaining a stoic face, noted down her score and then called the next contestant to prepare.

Dejected, Rebekah walked back to her seat, unable to shake off her dismay at how poorly she had performed. Meanwhile, Elyse struggled to concentrate on the ongoing performances, fighting the urge to go to the restroom. She managed to hold off until the final performance concluded, then hurried to the restroom.

When she emerged, the crowd had thinned out. After their performances, many participants chose to leave unless they had reasons to stay. Feeling unwell and not wanting to delve into the cause of her diarrhea, she decided to head home. However, as she was gathering her things, a sharp pain struck her abdomen.

Freddy, passing by, noticed Elyse doubled over, clutching her stomach. He approached with concern. "What's wrong with you? Do you have a stomachache?"

"Yes, could you please help me get a taxi?" Elyse managed to say, her forehead glistening with sweat. Seeing her distress, Freddy quickly hailed a taxi and accompanied her to the hospital.

While Elyse was undergoing an examination, Jayden called her phone. At that moment, Freddy, holding her phone, worried he couldn't reach her family.

"Elyse, it's been 80 minutes. Isn't the selection process over yet?" Hearing Jayden's stern voice, Freddy was taken aback. "I'm not Elyse."

Jayden paused, recognizing the voice. It sounded like Freddy, whom Elyse had introduced at a class reunion. "Are you Freddy? Where is Elyse?"

"She's got a stomachache. I've taken her to the hospital. We're at the emergency department of Evergreen Hospital," Freddy explained.

"Okay, I'll be right there," Jayden quickly ended the call. Freddy inexplicably felt a sense of relief and thought to himself how commanding Jayden was, a true magnate in the business world.

Elyse slowly opened her eyes and met Jayden's steady gaze. Realizing she was in a hospital bed, she asked weakly, "What's wrong with me?"

"You had an acute gastrospasm. You're fine now. We can go home once your transfusion is done," Jayden explained, then pressed the call button.

Shortly, a doctor entered to ask a few questions and ensure she was okay before leaving the room. With a heavy sigh, Elyse revealed, "I was sabotaged. Someone spiked my water with laxative. Luckily, I only took a small sip. I can't even imagine what would have happened if I'd taken more."

"You would have been quite the sensation," Jayden quipped. "It's just a preliminary round. Who could dislike you enough to do that?"

"How should I know?" Elyse replied, but as she spoke, a face flashed through her mind: Rebekah Bentley.

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Elyse exclaimed, her fists punching the air in anger. “It has to be her! Why does she always have to resort to dirty tricks? Why can’t she just compete honestly?”

Jayden watched her transition from feeling down to being spirited in seconds, and he sighed, half amused by her resilience. “Perhaps your acute gastrospasm was caused by holding back too much. Will you do that again next time?”

“Next time, I’m not drinking any water,” Elyse responded firmly, her lips pressed together in frustration at being set up by Rebekah once more. However, her spirits were quickly buoyed by the memory of her flawless performance and the approving nod from Wanda.

At that moment, her phone chimed. Jayden noticed the caller ID—it was Lanny. As soon as Elyse picked up, Lanny’s voice, irritable and anxious, filled the space. “Elyse, could you try to arrange another meeting with Theo? I’d like to accompany you to discuss Mabel’s issue.”

Hearing this, Elyse couldn’t hide her exasperation. “Dad, Theo isn’t going to marry Mabel. Please accept it.”

“But Mabel wants to marry him. You need to support her as her sister,” Lanny insisted, calling his tactics shameless and unreasonable. To Elyse, this was typical of him.

Jayden cut off Elyse as she was about to speak, brought the phone to his lips, and spoke coldly. “Lanny, what do you think of my wife?”

“Mr. Owen, are you with Elyse right now?” Lanny stammered, losing his composure upon hearing Jayden’s voice.

Jayden ignored his hesitant query, his tone chilling further. “You know Elyse had a past with Theo before she became my wife. Yet you still pushed her to help your useless daughter. Are you hoping to leverage that past to influence Theo?”

“Mr. Owen, that wasn’t my intention. I just wanted to—” Lanny tried to explain, but Jayden cut him off with an icy rebuff.

“It’s just her virginity. If that’s so important to you, I can recommend a hospital. But if you keep dragging Elyse into this, I assure you, your daughter Mabel’s reputation will suffer.”



Sensing the threat in Jayden's words, Lanny quickly backpedaled. "I wouldn't dare trouble Elyse further. It's Mabel's mistake. I'll handle it appropriately."

After hanging up, Jayden turned to Elyse, who was looking at him admiringly. "You can't even handle a scoundrel."

Elyse shrugged. "Annoying as he is, he's still my father."

"I don't think you resemble his daughter at all," Jayden retorted irritably.

"Many have said that, but I can't help it. It's genetics," she replied, taking her phone back with a smile. "Anyway, I'm sure I'll make it through the first round and join the performance team. If I get through the final selection, I'll be the principal violinist."

Jayden chuckled. "If you become the concertmaster, I'll organize a solo concert for you."

"Hold you to that," Elyse beamed and squinted her eyes joyfully, a sight that gradually filled Jayden with happiness.

After ending the call, Lanny was in his study when Mabel rushed in. "Did Elyse agree? Will she take me to see Theo?" Her eyes shimmered with hope. She had considered reaching out to Theo herself. After all, they had been intimate. They were more than just acquaintances, right? The thought made her cheeks flush with a rosy tint.

Catching sight of her lovestruck expression, Lanny's temper flared, and he rebuked her sharply. "How can you even suggest that? Do you realize the trouble you've caused? Don't you understand your position? He doesn't care for you at all."

"Nonsense! Theo wouldn't treat me like that," Mabel retorted defiantly.

"Wouldn't he? He didn't even pick up when I called. He's blocked my number," Lanny exclaimed, slamming his hand on the table in frustration.

"You can't reach him, but Elyse can. If she calls Theo, he'll definitely answer," Mabel insisted.

"Enough! She's married to Jayden now. Stop bringing up Theo," Lanny retorted, shaking his head as if to clear it. He seemed resolute when he added, "Your mother and I will find someone suitable for you. Prepare yourself to get married and forget about Theo."

"No! I will marry Theo. I must!" Mabel countered, her voice escalating to a cry. She even began a hunger strike in protest. However, Lanny remained unmoved by her actions. The Lloyd household was engulfed in turmoil over the following days.

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## Chapter 69:

Upon returning home from the hospital, Elyse seemed slightly weakened. Driscoll approached her with a worried expression, asking, "Are you feeling okay?"

"I'm just a bit weak," she responded, patting her stomach gently and smiling.

Observing her, Jayden commented, "That's what happens when you act foolishly."

"I am not foolish," Elyse's smile faded, and she stood up abruptly, clearly upset.

Ignoring her discomfort, Jayden coldly added, "Had you been smarter, you wouldn't have landed in the hospital."

"Jayden!" Elyse exclaimed, feeling wronged. "You're so annoying!"

She stormed upstairs with a snort, and the sound of her slamming the door echoed down to the first floor.

Stunned for several seconds, Jayden finally grasped that Elyse had rebuked him. His face took on a bewildered expression as he mumbled, "How dare she call me annoying? Who was it that cared enough to bring her home? Haven't I cared for her enough?" His frustration mounted.

Noticing the tension, Driscoll stepped in to calm the situation. "Sir, she has only just recovered. She's understandably upset. You hurt her feelings."

"I hurt her feelings? I've done so much for her, and yet she calls me annoying," Jayden exclaimed, slapping the armrest of his wheelchair.

Elyse's words continued to haunt him. How could she say that about him? The more he thought about it, the angrier he became. Yet he couldn't understand why her words affected him so deeply.

Sensing Jayden's turmoil, Driscoll attempted to offer some advice. "Sir, your approach was rather harsh. Perhaps you should go upstairs and comfort her. She was just upset."

"I did nothing wrong. If she had been more cautious, none of this would have happened," Jayden retorted stubbornly.

Driscoll gave a resigned smile and tried to explain, "She is not you. She doesn't approach things with the same level of caution, and her life hasn't been fraught with danger like yours."

Jayden fell silent, considering Driscoll's words.

Driscoll continued, "I know you've done a lot for her in secret, but you've never told her. You shouldn't have spoken to her like that."

What did I say that was so wrong? It's true, she was foolish," Jayden muttered, still unconvinced.

"Consider this. She has never spoken ill of you. She's always been supportive," Driscoll reminded him.

"Nonsense," Jayden dismissed his advice, pressing the button on his wheelchair to veer off toward the garden.

Once there, despite the beautiful surroundings, Jayden's thoughts were consumed by Elyse. From a distance, Driscoll and the household staff watched him with concern. A maid whispered worriedly, "I hope they don't stay angry for long. They were just starting to build something together."

The gardener chimed in, "Driscoll, you need to step in. Mr. Owen has never been good with women; he doesn't know how to please them. If this keeps up..."

Another maid added anxiously, "And how will they ever have a baby if things continue this way? We need a little one around here."

Overhearing their conversation, Driscoll's frown deepened. He straightened his jacket and declared firmly, "I'm going to speak with him." He was determined to help them reconcile. "Don't forget to prepare some delicious food and garnish it with freshly picked roses. Everything must be perfect."

Just as Driscoll was setting his plans into motion, the gardener quietly noted, "Driscoll, Mr. Owen is heading back inside. Is he going to seclude himself in the study again?"

"Go do your jobs," Driscoll commanded, and everyone swiftly exited the living room.

Approaching Jayden, Driscoll said with a serious tone, "Sir, there's something important we need to discuss."

Jayden gave him an indifferent glance. "Is it about Elyse? I'm not interested."

"I still think you should talk to her. Just a few words, and I'm sure she'll forgive you," Driscoll insisted.

Jayden dismissed the suggestion and maneuvered his wheelchair into the elevator. Watching this, the servants lurking nearby were puzzled. "It's odd. Mr. Owen didn't head to the study this time. Could he be going back to his room?"

"You fool. Maybe he's going to see his wife. He might shy away from acknowledging it lest he lose face."

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## **Chapter 70:**

Elyse was sitting on the bed, hugging her knees and crying. She couldn't understand why Jayden always criticized her. It was Rebekah who had sabotaged her, leading to her illness, yet Jayden called her foolish. She felt victimized.

"Jayden, you jerk!" she cried out. "You've really upset me. I didn't do anything wrong. I don't want to talk to you anymore."

"Really? You don't want to talk to me anymore?" Startled, Elyse lifted her head from her knees to find Jayden sitting nearby. She wiped away a tear and asked, "How... how did you get in here? I locked the door."

Jayden jangled a set of keys in front of her and replied, "This house is my territory. There's no place I can't access."

Elyse's frustration grew. She felt her privacy was being violated. In a burst of anger, she threw a pillow at him.

"You jerk, get out! You are not allowed in my room!" The pillow struck Jayden's face and then dropped to his thighs. He rubbed his stinging face and tossed the pillow aside, a stern look flashing across his eyes. He maneuvered his wheelchair closer to her.

Feeling intimidated by Jayden's approach, Elyse remained seated on the bed, shaking. "Don't come any closer. I haven't forgiven you yet," she stated nervously.

Ignoring her words, Jayden reached out, grasped one of her ankles, and pulled sharply. Elyse gravitated towards him, and he cradled her legs, bringing her onto his lap.

"You... you are... you're becoming quite bold, Elyse. Have I been too lenient with you?" Jayden said through clenched teeth, surprised to encounter a woman who dared to order him away.

Intimidated by his demeanor, Elyse realized she had indeed grown bolder. "It's your fault. You called me foolish. I'm not foolish at all," she protested timidly.

"How are you not foolish? If you were smarter, you would realize that Rebekah isn't going to leave you alone," Jayden retorted.

"How was I supposed to know she would go to such lengths? I'm the victim here, yet you blame me," Elyse cried out, tears welling up again. "Jayden, you're a jerk. I hate you."

Annoyed by her sobbing, Jayden snapped, "Stop crying. You're hurting my ears."

But Elyse didn't stop. Instead, she continued to cry even louder. Jayden, feeling overwhelmed, impulsively grasped her chin and kissed her with force.

Elyse's eyes widened in shock at the boldness of his action, but as the kiss continued, she shut her eyes and submitted to it passively. The kiss was dominant, much like Jayden himself. After a moment, Jayden could feel Elyse's resistance fading. Releasing her, he watched as she slumped into his arms, breathing heavily. Feeling the warmth from her body, he placed a hand on her back and spoke in a cold, controlled tone.

"Still want to argue with me?" Jayden asked.

Elyse, feeling the aftereffects of the kiss, touched her lips, her tongue tingling slightly, saliva lingering at the corners of her mouth. She was fully conscious, as was Jayden when the kiss happened.

"You..." she began, her voice faltering as she tried to find the words, her cheeks flushing with embarrassment.

Jayden remained silent, watching her calmly, giving her space to continue.

"You kissed me," Elyse finally said, her face coloring deeper.

"You are my wife. Can't I kiss you?" Jayden responded evenly.

"I..." Elyse stammered, her cheeks reddening.

"Am I not your husband? Is it illegal for a husband to kiss his wife?" Jayden spoke with an air of sophistication, his chin propped by one hand.

In Elyse's view, however, he was nothing more than a pervert who had just overstepped his bounds. Suddenly, she felt something firm pressing against her thigh.

"What's this in your pocket? It's hard," she asked, a mix of curiosity and confusion in her voice.

Jayden's gaze deepened as he tightened his grip on her waist. "What do you think it is? Don't you know?" His tone was teasing, his eyes curious.

Elyse, unsettled by his intense look and the firm grasp on her waist that sent tingles through her skin, paused for a moment. Realization dawned on her, and she covered her face with her hands, leaning into him.

Seeing her bashful reaction, Jayden chuckled. "I told you that you're not sharp enough. Why would you even ask that?"

"Stop it!" Elyse burst out, her explanation tinged with embarrassment. "I didn't expect you could still be turned on."

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