

Bound love 651

Chapter 651:

Jayden stood up, retrieved his phone, and gave Tobin some instructions before he and Elyse headed to find Shaun.

Upon entering Shaun's villa, Elyse immediately sensed a heavy atmosphere. She approached the butler, who looked quite somber, and inquired, "Where is Shaun? I need to see him."

The butler glanced towards the staircase leading to the second floor and hesitated before responding, "He might not be available right now."

Elyse quickly stepped closer to the butler and pressed, "He answered my call earlier. Why can't I see him now? Does he not want to meet me?"

The butler shook his head, repeatedly opening his mouth to speak but stopping himself each time, clearly hesitant. This made Elyse even more worried. She stamped her foot and demanded, "What happened to him? Tell me quickly."

Realizing he couldn't avoid the issue, the butler exhaled deeply and said, "I'll take you to him."

Elyse looked at Jayden, and they followed the butler to the second floor. The butler knocked on the door of a room but received no answer. He then cautiously opened the door.

As the door swung open, a pungent smell of alcohol wafted out, causing Elyse to reel back and cover her nose, exclaiming, "It reeks."

The butler awkwardly waved his hand in an attempt to clear the air and explained, "I apologize. He made it clear that we can't enter or disturb him without his permission."

Peering into the room, Elyse saw only darkness; the room was completely unlit. The light from the hallway failed to illuminate the interior, and she couldn't make out Shaun's figure.

She half-joked, half-asked, "What is Shaun doing in there? Drinking?"

The butler said helplessly, "This isn't his room. It's Tracy's room. Since the accident, he has been secluding himself in here, refusing to leave."

Elyse's brow creased, her thoughts deepening. The butler cast a worried glance toward the inner room and continued, "It's been nearly half a month. He has been holed up in Tracy's room, lost in alcohol. We've tried to get him out, but he refuses."

Upon hearing this, Elyse's frustration grew. She responded coolly, "Alright, I'll take care of this. You can go now."

The butler hesitated. "Well, perhaps I should stay and assist you."

"There's no need. Leave. I'll call you if necessary," Elyse replied sharply, dismissing him.

After a brief pause, the butler decided to trust Elyse, recalling that she was a close friend of Tracy's. He hoped Elyse could coax Shaun out of his despair. The butler then left and headed downstairs.

Without further hesitation, Elyse stepped into the room. She reached for the light switches on the wall and flipped them on without a second thought.

The room was instantly illuminated, revealing Shaun's whereabouts. Shaun was curled up on the bed, the same one Tracy had used. He lay there clutching her pillow, deeply asleep.

As Elyse approached the bed, she accidentally kicked an empty wine bottle. Looking down, she saw the floor strewn with empty bottles. The butler's description of Shaun drowning in alcohol was evidently accurate.

Elyse cleared the bottles away and approached the bedside. She opened the window to let in fresh air and clear the stale alcohol fumes.

Jayden came over, looked at Shaun's condition, and remarked sarcastically, "He's completely broken down."

Elyse observed Shaun closely and agreed. His beard was unkempt, his complexion pallid, and dark circles marred his eyes. If not for his snoring, she might have thought he was lifeless.

She was about to rouse Shaun herself but hesitated upon seeing dried stains of unknown substances on his clothing. She shut her eyes and instructed, "Jayden, wake him up."

Though Jayden was repulsed by Shaun's state, he followed her command. Jayden nudged Shaun roughly with his foot, knocking him off the bed.

Shaun woke with a start, groaning in pain. Disoriented from excessive drinking, he was unable to discern the time. He covered his face and propped himself up, clinging to the bed for support.

Shaun looked worried. Recognizing the visitor, he lowered his head and said listlessly, "Why are you here? I don't want you here. Leave."

Jayden retorted, "Why are we here? To mock you, obviously. Seeing you like this is somehow satisfying."

"Fuck off. I despise you the most," Shaun responded with a hollow laugh. Without even looking up, he gestured towards the door, signaling them to depart.

Elyse, witnessing Shaun's pitiful display, grew impatient. "Who are you performing this sad act for? None of us pity you. The one who truly cared about you is already gone."

Chapter 652:

Hearing Elyse's words, Shaun covered his face, freezing in place.

Elyse observed him intently and pressed, “What really happened between you and Tracy? Why did she end up dead in the sea in Liverton? Did you look into it?”

Slowly, Shaun raised his head, his eyes—usually shrewd and detached—now brimming with vulnerability. Despite his attempts to drown his memories in alcohol, the mere mention of Tracy’s name rendered them useless.

With bloodshot eyes, he began, “About two weeks ago, she suddenly came to me, insisting we have a serious conversation. We spent hours discussing our past, our fears, our vulnerabilities, and the things and people that mattered most to us.

That day, it felt like our hearts were more aligned than ever before. I sensed she had changed her opinions about me. I asked her if we could give it another shot, promising I’d do better this time. She agreed, and we arranged to meet the next day.”

Shaun’s expression then turned to one of guilt and confusion, like a child caught in a misdeed. “But when I showed up at her place the following day, she wasn’t there.

Thinking she might have fled again, I had her searched for. By evening, I was informed that she had been found in the sea.”

Elyse tilted her head, perplexed, and queried, “Why would Tracy go to Liverton? Any idea?”

Shaun shook his head vigorously, his gaze lowered, indicating he had no clue why Tracy would be there.

Elyse glanced towards Jayden, uncertainty written across her face.

After a brief pause, Jayden intervened. “Who exactly informed you that Tracy had fallen into the sea? Your people were searching in Watsar, right?”

Shaun responded, “Lowell was the one who told me. He said he found Tracy’s ID card and a pair of shoes by the shore.”

Upon hearing this, Elyse instantly refuted, “That’s not possible. Tracy would never kill herself by jumping into the sea. She was always so full of life and even considered giving you a second chance. How could she possibly jump into the sea?”

Shaun let out a hollow laugh and said, “Maybe she was trying to escape me by faking her death. Doesn’t that make more sense?”

Elyse shook her head. “That’s not possible. Tracy still had feelings for you. She had truly moved on; if she no longer loved you, she wouldn’t have mourned your mistreatment. Her love for you was too deep, and that’s why—”

Shaun looked up, his eyes wide with disbelief. “Is that true? Does she still care for me?”

“If Tracy had really stopped caring about you,” Elyse said, “why would she cry over you? Her tears and pain were because she still loved you and couldn’t let go, which only made her suffer more.”

Elyse sighed deeply. Because Tracy truly cared for and loved Shaun, she had endured so much.

“You don’t understand love, Shaun. How could you recognize true love when it’s right in front of you?”

Shaun was taken aback, sitting there with his eyes brimming with loneliness and confusion. It seemed that in his previous life, he had never grasped the concept of love or its meaning.

For him, love remained an ephemeral, elusive concept—something he could never hold in his hand. It could slip through his fingers like sand. Could love truly hold any value?

Surely, nothing could be more precious than money, could it?

But in that moment, Shaun would have given all his wealth just to have Tracy return. Shaun hoped Tracy could help him understand what it means to love and be loved.

He covered his mouth, fighting hard to control his body, desperately trying not to emit any sounds of sorrow. Despite his torment and restraint, Elyse felt a deep wave of empathy wash over her for him.

Jayden, too, noticed Shaun's breakdown and gestured to Elyse. Together, they silently walked towards the door. As they departed, Elyse cast a gentle look back at Shaun, who remained in the room. She murmured, "Tracy once told me, 'When you feel like crying, cry.

When laughter bubbles up, let it flow.' That's how you should love yourself. We'll be leaving now. Hope you find a way to truly love yourself in your solitude."

The moment the door clicked shut, silence enveloped the room. Elyse could no longer hear Shaun's suppressed sobs.

Descending towards the first floor, Elyse spoke with conviction. "Tracy would never choose to end her life by jumping into the sea."

Chapter 653:

Jayden looked at Elyse, his expression one of confusion. "How can you be so certain?"

Elyse paused, her voice earnest. "I had a dream that someone pushed Tracy into the sea. She would never have taken her own life."

Jayden's eyebrow arched. "So, you're suggesting she didn't head to Liverton by choice? Someone forced her?"

Elyse nodded firmly. "It seems likely. She was ready to turn a new leaf with Shaun and had plans to see him the very next day. There's no way she was contemplating suicide."

Jayden considered this for a moment. "You're saying Tracy had no intention of ending her life, certainly not in Liverton. If she was desperate, she could have found a way in Watscar."

“So, someone must have brought Tracy to Liverton and then pushed her into the sea, staging it as a suicide,” Elyse concluded with a serious tone.

Jayden’s eyebrow lifted again. “If we follow that theory, then the most probable person who would have taken her to Liverton is—”

Their eyes met and together they declared, “Lowell Ruiz.”

Elyse began to piece it together. “Lowell is a major suspect. Remember, he even followed Dolores to Watscar recently to confront Shaun.”

Jayden nodded. “Lowell’s mental state has been the talk of Liverton. Otherwise, he wouldn’t have harassed Tracy for Dolores’ sake.”

Elyse nodded in agreement. “We’ll have to wait for Shaun to emerge before we can hear the full story.”

Two hours later, Shaun entered the living room, refreshed and clean. He looked at Elyse and Jayden. “You two are still here? What’s on your mind?”

“We need to discuss something about Lowell,” Elyse laid out her analysis for Shaun, who listened intently, remaining quiet for a full ten minutes.

Finally, Shaun broke the silence. “Initially, Dolores visited Watscar to propose a marriage between us. The Ruiz family had hit a rough patch and needed a solid ally to stabilize their finances. They sought my help.”

Elyse, curious, interjected, “Did you agree to the marriage?”

Shaun shook his head, his expression solemn.

“I didn’t agree, but offered financial support to the Ruiz family during their difficult period. My only condition was that they leave me and Tracy out of their troubles. They accepted the terms and soon returned to Liverton with Lowell.”

“So, you’re saying your parting with Dolores was on good terms, and they agreed not to harass Tracy further. You believe Lowell had nothing to do with Tracy’s death and that he genuinely found her first after she took her own life?” Elyse summarized, seeking confirmation.

Shaun remained silent, his doubts about Lowell and Dolores’ involvement in Tracy’s tragedy evident on his face.

Observing Elyse’s distress, Jayden chimed in, trying to offer some closure. “If you trust Lowell and Dolores that much, maybe it’s best to stop digging into Tracy’s death. Perhaps it’s easier to accept that she didn’t love you anymore and chose to end her life in the sea.”

Shaun, caught off guard by Jayden’s suggestion, faltered. “Will you stop the investigation?”

Jayden arched an eyebrow, puzzled. “When I learned of Tracy’s death in the sea, my immediate response was to organize a search for her body. To this day, that search is ongoing. If Tracy really died, there should be some evidence—a body.”

Shaun’s discomfort became apparent. “You haven’t actually searched for her body, have you? You’re more concerned about her than I am, and I’m barely her friend.”

“Shut up!” Shaun snapped, irked by the comment that struck a nerve.

Elyse let out a weary sigh. “You’re convinced Lowell and Dolores did no harm to Tracy, yet we’re certain she wouldn’t commit suicide. If Tracy is indeed gone, we must uncover the real reason behind her death.”

With those words, Elyse grabbed her purse, ready to depart.

“Wait,” Shaun’s voice halted her.

Turning, Elyse faced him, her expression puzzled.

After a tense pause, Shaun declared, “I’m coming with you.”

Surprised, Elyse nodded her agreement. Driven by urgency, Shaun couldn't bear to delay and promptly began their journey.

As they flew on Shaun's private plane, Elyse rested her chin on her hand, staring out the window. A sudden recollection made her exclaim, "I just remembered Tracy had been alone with Lowell once."

Chapter 654:

Elyse sat upright in anxiety. "Lowell met with Tracy when Dolores came to Watscar to see you. He was the one who sent her to me."

Shaking his head, Shaun said, "That can't be. Lowell is self-serving and looks down on Tracy. Why would he send her to you? That sounds impossible."

"You don't really know him," Elyse retorted. "I believe Lowell is involved in Tracy's death. If you don't believe me, trust the Ruiz siblings instead."

Feeling chastised, Shaun turned to look at Jayden. Jayden glanced at him. "Why are you looking at me?"

Touching his nose lightly, Shaun remarked, "Your wife is quite the fierce woman."

Jayden turned his head with indifference. "That doesn't concern me. She's being fierce to you, not me."

Shaun felt a growing frustration with the couple. Jayden closed his eyes to get some rest. However, he didn't forget to give a final reminder to Shaun. "If Lowell really killed Tracy, he might have planned to get close to her in advance."

Elyse snorted coldly. "Shaun has a bias towards the Ruiz siblings. Tracy can't compare to them. After all, Dolores was his first love."

An angry expression formed on Shaun's face. "This isn't about favoritism. I simply don't want to be carelessly pointing fingers."

Elyse's anger flared. "Oh, sure, Lowell is a good person and Dolores is a good person. Tracy is the bad one for taking things so hard that she ended her life in the sea. Is that what you want to hear?"

Shaun felt his blood boiling with rage at Elyse's words. "Don't be like that. All I want is for us to be fair and seek justice, right?"

Elyse rolled her eyes. "You're saying you want fairness and justice for those two, right? It must be Tracy's fault for falling for you."

An exasperated sigh escaped her lips. "Now she's gone, with her body nowhere to be found. Pity her."

Shaun suddenly stood up and took a few steps forward, only to be stopped by Jayden.

Jayden stared at Shaun, his voice icy. "Your tongue can be sharp, but if you lay a hand on her, you'll regret it."

Shaun took a deep breath, struggling to control his anger. "Tracy is dead, and I'm very sad. Why are you provoking me like this?"

The corners of Elyse's mouth twitched into a scowl. "You!" Shaun was red with fury.

Tracy's death had left him in a daze these past few days; he barely knew how he managed to get through. No one could understand his feelings after hearing that there was a high probability that Tracy was murdered.

The closer he got to the truth, the more afraid he became. He feared that Tracy was indeed murdered and thrown into the sea.

Elyse had no idea what he was feeling.

Shaun had the urge to hit her, but as he raised his hand, Jayden stopped him.

Jayden raised an eyebrow. “You can protect your own woman. Don’t blame others for pointing out your mistakes. Didn’t you let Tracy die unjustly?”

Shaun’s heart ached. He took a deep breath, said nothing more, and returned to his seat, putting on a blindfold to block out the world.

Seeing this, Jayden turned to Elyse, hoping she would show Shaun some respect. It was clear to him that Shaun was not feeling well.

Just as Jayden was about to speak, Elyse shot him a fierce look, silencing him instantly.

Elyse glared at Jayden before closing her eyes to rest. She felt utterly exhausted. The news of her friend’s death felt surreal. It wasn’t until she boarded the plane to Liverton that she truly realized Tracy might be gone.

Elyse tightly gripped the hem of her clothes. Her instinct was telling her that Lowell and Dolores were behind this. She would make sure they paid once she found evidence.

An hour and a half later, they got off the plane and went to the hotel for a quick stop before heading to the agreed meeting place.

Upon entering, they noticed Dolores was the only one who showed up. Elegantly dressed and wearing high heels with red soles, she greeted them with a glance before fixing her eyes intently on Shaun.

Supporting her chin with her hands, Dolores looked at Shaun affectionately, her ruby lips slightly parted. “Aren’t you busy in Watscar? What brings you to Liverton today? Did you finally remember me?”

Shaun stared at Dolores, his eyes devoid of emotion, and asked calmly, “Where’s your brother? Didn’t Lowell come?”

Chapter 655:

Dolores pouted, her expression clouded with satisfaction. “I personally attended this meeting. Why aren’t you satisfied? Is my brother more appealing than I am?”

Elyse crossed her arms, her distaste for Dolores palpable. Watching Dolores attempt to charm and flirt only intensified her scorn.

Catching the sneer on Elyse’s face, Dolores shifted her gaze towards her, a flicker of recognition passing through her eyes, though she couldn’t quite place where she had seen Elyse before. However, her focus quickly returned to Shaun.

With a feigned innocence, Dolores blinked and inquired, “Is this your friend? She seems rather uncouth. Why associate with someone like her?”

Shaun glanced at Elyse, doubting she even considered him a friend. To him, her rudeness was understandable. He was relieved that Elyse hadn’t resorted to having Jayden tie them up and toss them into the sea.

Turning his attention back to Dolores, Shaun said sternly, “First, answer my question. Where is Lowell? Why isn’t he here?”

Dolores swirled her wine, her smile undisturbed. “Since our family’s business hit a rough patch, my brother has taken the reins. He’s swamped, leaving early and returning late. He’s still at the office.”

Shaun’s brow furrowed with concern. “It’s important that he’s here. I have questions that need his attention.”

Dolores, intrigued, leaned in closer. “What do you need from him? Perhaps I can assist you with your inquiries.”

Shaun spoke with grave seriousness. “He mentioned that Tracy was dead in the sea. How did he come by that information? And who first stumbled upon the body?”

For a fleeting moment, Dolores' expression wavered, but she quickly composed herself, continuing to smile. "My brother shared that with you? I had no idea. Inquire about it after we eat."

Elyse's brow furrowed, her voice firm. "No, don't wait until after the meal. Ask him now." As she spoke, Elyse rose from her chair, her eyes piercingly cold as they locked on Dolores.

Maintaining her poised smile, Dolores responded, "Right now? Didn't we gather here to share a meal? Can't this wait until after we've eaten?"

She looked towards Shaun, confusion etched across her face.

Shaun stayed silent, his inaction serving as tacit support for Elyse. Their primary reason for visiting Liverton wasn't a casual meal with Dolores, but to unearth the facts surrounding Tracy's death.

Dolores pressed further, her voice tinged with concern. "What's the matter? Is your friend upset with me? It seems like she holds a grudge."

Elyse's expression was frosty. "It's not that I'm upset with you—I utterly despise you. Want to know why? Because I was Tracy's best friend. You may not recognize me, but you certainly knew Tracy, didn't you?"

Dolores offered a tight smile. "Ah, so you were Tracy's best friend. I apologize, I don't recognize you."

Jayden, who had remained quiet up until now, rose to his feet and led Elyse to the door of the private room upon hearing her directive.

Shaun let out a heavy sigh, stood, and began to follow them.

Noticing his movement, Dolores quickly caught his wrist, trying to preserve her calm and understanding demeanor.

“They’re off to find Lowell. Are you going as well? Didn’t you invite me here to spend time together? I’m here now. Let’s have dinner. It’s been a long time since we last saw each other.”

Shaun looked at Dolores for a long moment before he slowly responded, “The last time you visited Watscar, I told you clearly that I have never loved you. So, when you were unfaithful, I didn’t expose you because it didn’t matter.”

Dolores’ face lost color as she weakly attempted to defend herself. “Back then, I was too young and couldn’t resist the temptation. You were always so distant. It was bound to happen. But I’ve grown up now. I know who I truly love. Can’t you give me another chance?”

Shaun carefully removed Dolores’ hand, emphasizing each word. “I’ve never loved you. How could I possibly give you another chance? You should move on. You’re not lacking admirers, after all.”

With those final words, Shaun turned and left the room with a determined stride, not hearing the quiet words Dolores murmured after him. “Damn! Even that bitch’s death won’t change your mind.”

Shaun missed her words. He caught up with Elyse and Jayden quickly, and soon after, they were in the car, speeding towards Lowell’s company.

As it turned out, perhaps due to a tip-off from Dolores, Lowell himself was waiting to greet them as they arrived.

Chapter 656:

Lowell turned to Shaun, his smile revealing a hint of amusement. “Shaun, my sister mentioned you needed to speak with me. What do you want to know?”

Shaun gave a firm nod. “This isn’t the right spot. Let’s find a more private place.”

“Sure, we can head to my office.” Lowell looked over at Jayden and Elyse. “You two should come along as well.”

Without any objections, Elyse and Jayden accompanied Lowell to the elevator.

When they arrived at Lowell's office, he gestured toward the heaps of paperwork on his desk. "Apologies, I've just taken over the company, and as you can see, there's quite a backlog."

Elyse wandered around the office before settling on the sofa. She got straight to the point. "Mr. Ruiz, back in Watscar, you met Tracy by yourself, didn't you? You even went out of your way to drop her off at my place."

Surprised by her directness, Lowell took a moment, his expression cycling through various emotions before nodding in affirmation. "Yes, that's correct. I did meet Tracy and helped her out."

Elyse's smile widened as she leaned forward. "And during this help, did you ask her for anything in return? It's well-known that you're not a fan of Tracy, even pushing her out of the marriage by challenging her to a car race."

Lowell paused, reflecting for a few seconds, then conceded, "Yes, I wasn't fond of her."

Elyse pressed on, "So, what was your price for helping?"

Lowell's face darkened. "Are you treating me like a criminal? I only helped Tracy once, and now you're grilling me like this?"

Elyse, noticing Lowell's rising anger, replied with a faint smile. "Considering your and your sister's reputations, it's hard to think of you as good people, isn't it?"

Lowell's expression chilled further as he retorted sharply, "I'm not sure what I've done to offend you, but you're not the police. You have no right to interrogate me."

Unfazed, Elyse pressed on. "If you're avoiding such a simple question, let me ask you directly. Did you make up the story about Tracy's suicide at sea? Or are you the killer?"

Lowell's demeanor grew even more forbidding. If Jayden hadn't been there to hold him back, he might have lunged at Elyse in his fury.

Watching Lowell's restraint, Elyse realized something. A truly innocent person wouldn't remain silent under false accusations. Lowell's reluctance to answer spoke volumes. He couldn't come up with a believable alibi.

Despite her growing conviction that Lowell and Dolores were behind Tracy's death, Elyse knew she couldn't get them arrested. Nearly two weeks had passed since Tracy's alleged suicide. Any missed evidence would have been long erased.

She understood now that her journey to Liverton was about uncovering the truth behind Tracy's death and pinpointing the culprits.

With her suspicions confirmed, lingering in Liverton seemed pointless.

Shaun furrowed his brow and said, "Even if you have doubts about Lowell, it's not right to confront him in this manner. You're treating him as if he's already guilty."

Elyse didn't even glance at Shaun. Her voice was steady, not just suspicious. "I'm convinced that Lowell and Dolores are behind the murder. However..."

She paused, then addressed Lowell directly. "There's no remaining evidence, is there? With all the time that's gone by, any proof that you took Tracy to Liverton and ended her life would have been erased by now, wouldn't it?"

Lowell said nothing, his gaze fixed on Elyse without wavering.

Chapter 657:

Elyse, unfazed by Lowell's intense stare, scoffed and shot a look at Shaun. "You're the only one naive enough to think there might be evidence left. In your time of desperation, they would've obliterated it all. What could possibly be left for you to find?"

Shaun was taken aback. "How can you be so certain?"

“My intuition,” Elyse said coldly, sparing no further explanation for Shaun. She then walked out of the room.

Jayden flashed a wry smile at Lowell. “Mr. Ruiz, let’s hope you truly didn’t leave any traces. Otherwise…”

He left his sentence hanging, giving Lowell’s imagination room to ponder the consequences.

Shaun stood in disbelief, turning his gaze back to Lowell. “Is Elyse right? Are you the killer? What really happened between you and Tracy?”

Lowell shook his head resolutely. “No, nothing happened between Tracy and me.”

Elyse left Lowell’s office and slipped into the car. Gazing out the window, she broke the silence after a few moments. “Do you know where Tracy was supposed to end her life?”

Jayden, who had just shut the car door, paused before nodding. “I do. Do you want to go there?”

“Yes, I need to see it,” Elyse replied, her face serene as she leaned back and closed her eyes, weariness etched across her features.

Jayden remained silent, instructing the driver to head to their new destination just as Shaun caught up with them.

Shaun quickly opened the back door and asked, “Where are you guys heading? I’ll come along.”

Jayden glanced at Elyse, who remained silent, and answered, “We’re going to the cliff where Tracy fell. Do you have the courage to face it?”

Shaun was taken aback, pain flickering in his eyes. He still struggled to accept Tracy’s death and feared confronting the place where she had gone missing.

After a long pause, Shaun said hesitantly, "Let's go. I need to see it myself."

Elyse spoke softly. "If you can't handle it, you don't have to come."

Shaun, his face clouded with sorrow, replied, "No, I have to."

Elyse didn't respond further, tightly closing her eyes and retreating into silence.

Liverton was a sprawling place. Once they left downtown, it took another hour to reach the cliff.

Elyse stepped out of the car, immediately greeted by a fierce gust of wind. She tightened her coat, but the wind still whipped her long hair into a frenzy.

Scanning her surroundings with a stern expression, she walked over to Jayden and declared firmly, "This isn't a good spot for a cliff jump."

Jayden raised an eyebrow. "And why not?"

"The wind here is too strong," Elyse explained. "If I were to take my life, I'd choose a serene, calm place to end it."

Shaun, shutting the car door with a sigh, said, "Are you just making excuses because you can't handle Tracy's death?"

Elyse snapped back. "I'm saying she didn't jump off the cliff voluntarily. She was forced, maybe pushed, just like being thrown into the sea."

Shaun sighed again. "Are you still suspecting Lowell and Dolores? There's no evidence to back that up."

Elyse glared at Shaun, her voice sharp with anger. "You're biased towards them, so I never expected you to understand. But I'm certain those two are behind this. Tracy would never commit suicide by jumping off a cliff."

Chapter 658:

Shaun shot a helpless look at Jayden as if to say, “Your wife has lost her marbles, blaming everyone.”

But Jayden ignored Shaun. Instead, he walked over to Elyse and gently wrapped a scarf around her neck. “The wind here is brutal. I don’t want you catching a cold,” he said with concern.

Elyse disregarded Jayden, pouring all her attention into Shaun.

Shaun felt self-conscious under Elyse’s scrutiny, yet he remained steadfast in his belief that accusing others without evidence was not something he could condone.

Elyse felt a wave of disgust seeing Shaun’s pathetic demeanor. To her, a man who couldn’t protect his woman was worthless.

With a surge of anger, she shoved Jayden away and snapped, “Stay away from me.”

Jayden stumbled backward.

Watching Elyse storm toward the cliff, Jayden fumed at Shaun. “Why am I the one getting blamed for your blunder?”

Shaun was left speechless, crossing his arms and retorting sarcastically, “As if you haven’t messed up before.”

A flicker of realization hit Jayden. Yes, he had made mistakes, but they were for Elyse’s sake.

With a resigned sigh, Jayden trailed behind Elyse, keeping a respectful three-meter distance, silently watching over her.

Elyse stood at the cliff’s edge, peering down with a whirlwind of emotions.

Yes, this place matched the scene from her dream perfectly. It was at this very edge of the cliff that Tracy had plummeted to her death.

Elyse vividly recalled Tracy's terrified expression from the dream. It wasn't the look of someone about to take their own life.

Elyse lingered on the cliff for a long time, feeling the chill seep into her bones. Finally, she turned to leave.

But as she did, she locked eyes with Jayden's intense gaze.

After a brief moment of silence, she asked, "If Tracy fell from here, would there be any chance she survived?"

Jayden, caught off guard, hesitated before shaking his head.

There were treacherous whirlpools in these waters. Anyone who fell stood little chance against them. His team had been scouring the area for any sign of Tracy but had come up empty-handed.

Elyse got the message and, with a heavy heart, nodded. "Alright, I get it."

Upon returning from Liverton, Elyse was struck with a high fever that lingered for two days before finally abating.

Feeling drained and listless, Elyse sat on her bed, too weak even to touch her beloved violin. During her recovery, she often found herself gazing blankly at the instrument.

Driscoll relayed the news to Jayden, who, after some contemplation, decided to allow visitors. That very afternoon, Cody dropped by to see Elyse.

Elyse, taken aback by Cody's visit, attempted to rise, but Cody gestured for her to stay put.

Seated by her bedside, Cody studied her face. “You don’t look so good.”

Elyse was momentarily startled, then managed a smile. “I’m sick, so it’s no surprise I look worn out.”

Cody shook his head. “Your heart seems troubled.”

Elyse froze.

Chapter 659:

“Your eyes have lost their sparkle,” Cody added. “I remember when I first met you, you were brimming with energy and happiness, free from worry. Now, your eyes are filled with burdens.”

After a moment’s thought, Elyse replied, “I still have a passion for the violin.”

“But you’re exhausted, aren’t you?” Cody sighed. “When Pearce mentioned it, I was skeptical. But seeing you now, I realize you’ve truly lost your zest.”

Elyse forced another smile. “Mr. Tucker, there’s no need to worry about me. I lack nothing. I have everything I could possibly want. What could I be dissatisfied with?”

Cody smiled knowingly. “Do you really care about material stuff, like big houses and flashy cars? Is your deepest desire to fill your wardrobe with designer clothes or preorder the latest luxury bags?”

Elyse was in shock. She shook her head slowly, lost in thought. She had never chased after those things. Her heart had always yearned for something else.

Her eyes drifted to the violin almost unconsciously.

Seeing Elyse’s vacant expression, Cody was reminded of her father. Rickey had faced similar confusion, but ultimately, he had chosen the violin.

Elyse murmured, “I have everything I need. Even a husband who adores me. Do I have to leave him to chase my dreams? Won’t that be ungrateful?”

Cody gently replied, “Whether you decide to love yourself or your husband, I’m here for you. As your instructor, I will always have your back.”

Elyse’s eyes clouded with uncertainty. She had considered leaving, but every time she saw Jayden’s face, she was torn.

Her love for Jayden was undeniable, yet she also longed to love herself. Why did these desires clash? Why was it causing her such heartache?

Cody recalled Pearce’s words. He pulled a phone from his bag and handed it to Elyse. “Your cousin wanted you to have this. He said when you’re ready, use this phone to reach out to him, and he’ll take care of everything.”

Elyse accepted the phone and tucked it under her pillow.

Cody decided to steer clear of that subject and instead shifted the conversation to the competition in two months.

About half an hour later, Jayden returned.

With a grin, he greeted Cody and asked, “What are you two chatting about? Mind if I join?”

Elyse found Jayden’s behavior quite irritating. It was barely past three in the afternoon, and he had returned so early, obviously to keep tabs on her.

She turned her head slightly, choosing to confront Jayden with her silence.

Jayden didn’t pay much mind to Elyse’s subtle defiance.

Cody chimed in for Elyse. “We were just discussing the upcoming competition. She’s got some intense practices ahead.”

Jayden, rubbing his fingers and probing cautiously, asked, “Does she really need to go through such rigorous practices?”

Cody, a bit perplexed, replied, “Her skills are still shaky. She needs to master more techniques if she wants a fighting chance in the competition.”

Jayden remarked, “In my eyes, her well-being outweighs the competition.”

Chapter 660:

Elyse’s face drained of color instantly. She gazed at Jayden with confusion and asked nervously, “You don’t want me to compete, do you?”

Seeing her anxious expression, Jayden paused before offering a reassuring smile. “How could I stop you from competing? Isn’t this what you’ve always dreamed of?”

Elyse bit her lip. Jayden had just implied she should stay home and skip the competition.

Tears welled up in Elyse’s eyes. “Jayden, you understand the violin has always been my passion and dream. No matter how frail I feel, I have to compete.”

Jayden realized his error and corrected himself, saying, “I understand, so I won’t hinder your pursuit of your dream. Please stay calm.”

Elyse, with eyes glistening, gazed at him, speechless.

Eventually, she turned to Cody, saying with a defeated tone, “Mr. Tucker, I feel unwell and might not be able to converse.”

Cody looked at her with concern. “Are you okay? Do you need medical attention?”

“No, I just need to rest,” Elyse replied, shaking her head before collapsing onto the bed, drained.

Cody turned to Jayden, noting his anxious expression, and sighed quietly. “Would you mind walking me to the door?”

Jayden hesitated, casting a few glances at Elyse before agreeing and escorting Cody downstairs.

As they walked, Cody inquired, “You like Elyse, don’t you?”

Jayden nodded affirmatively. “Yes, I do.”

“But do you love her?” Cody pressed further.

Jayden seemed confused. “Is there a distinction between liking and loving?”

Cody smiled and shook his head. “You have much to learn.”

Jayden was perplexed. “Learn what? I’ve given her everything.”

Cody chuckled. “Learn the true essence of love. Many never grasp it throughout their lives. Do you wish to be one of them?”

Jayden found Cody’s words confusing. However, knowing Cody was Elyse’s mentor, Jayden treated him with utmost respect.

In her room, once she sensed Jayden and Cody had left, Elyse retrieved the phone from beneath her pillow. She considered messaging Pearce, the sole contact saved.

Elyse drafted the message but hesitated to send it.

Leaving Jayden would cause inner conflict, but staying with him, as he confined her and barred her from competing, would lead to greater misery. Faced with an inescapable dilemma, she knew a decision was necessary.

Ten minutes later, Jayden quietly entered the bedroom. Seeing Elyse resting on the bed, he approached gently.

Unexpectedly, as soon as she sensed his presence, Elyse opened her eyes.

Realizing she was awake, Jayden sat on the bed's edge, tenderly caressing her cheek. He softly asked, "Can't sleep?"

Elyse pulled away from Jayden's hand, expressing her displeasure. "You didn't want me to compete just now, did you?"

Jayden countered with, "Why do you think that?"