

Bound love 741

Chapter 741:

Jayden saw Elyse's expression twist into one of disgust. He gently caressed her hair. "I'll... find a different time to come over."

Elyse reacted sharply and violently. "You must be crazy!" she said and shoved Jayden back forcefully. She leaned against the wall, her breathing uneven and shallow.

Overcome with emotion, Elyse burst into deep sobs.

"Bastard! Why must you torment me? Do you see me as some throwaway plaything?"

Elyse hid her face in her hands, weeping. Gradually, her legs gave way, and she crumpled to the floor, crying without restraint.

Just then, a patron approached the restroom and paused upon hearing Elyse's distressed cry.

Initially, the patron thought Elyse would calm down after a while and decided to wait. After ten minutes, however, Elyse was still crying just as hard.

With no alternative, the patron summoned the staff.

David hurried over to assess the situation and instantly recognized the person curled up on the floor. "Elyse!" he cried out, reaching out to her. "My dear friend, what has upset you so?"

Hearing a known voice, Elyse raised her head. Her gaze locked with David's as he stood over her. "Why are you here?" she stammered.

"I work here," David explained, squatting beside her. "Whenever I'm not off duty, you're likely to find me around if you come by." Noticing her swollen, tearstained eyes, he pulled out a handkerchief from his pocket and handed it to her.

“A patron just told me there has been a lady weeping near the restroom for quite some time,” David said with his eyes wide. “She said the restroom might flood with tears, so she asked me to help sort it out.”

Elyse’s expression stiffened and tears welled up in her eyes again. At that moment, she felt torn between releasing her emotions and holding them back.

David couldn’t help but chuckle as he watched Elyse bravely try to stop her tears. “Perhaps we could take our little weeping session elsewhere? That lady really needs to use the restroom.”

A mix of embarrassment and distress washed over Elyse as she bent her head. She slowly got up and leaned on the nearby wall for support.

David noticed her stiff legs and teased, “Legs gone numb?”

Elyse nodded as tears still ran down her cheeks.

David’s laughter grew louder.

Following David, she settled down by the window. He kindly brought her a complimentary hot chocolate and asked with sincere interest, “What made you cry?”

Sniffing, Elyse shared the details of her run-in with Jayden.

As she spoke, a wave of empathy washed over David. “Your ex-husband is an absolute cad. He has no respect for you and treats you like you’re just an object to him.”

Elyse nodded vigorously, feeling a sting from his words as they touched a tender spot.

“Don’t put men on a pedestal,” David advised with sincerity. “There’s no perfect man out there, myself included. I have my flaws too.”

He paused for a moment then continued, “But you’re different. You’re like an angel, spreading hope and happiness. Don’t let any man take away your beautiful smile.”

His words struck a chord with Elyse. She wiped away her tears, but her voice still carried a trace of sadness.

Chapter 742:

“I can’t seem to find happiness anymore. I’m worried I’ll fail in the competition.”

“Absolutely not! You have the strength to rise and find your joy again. Your happiness will shine through and inspire everyone around you!” David’s eyes gleamed with hope as he looked at Elyse.

Unsettled by his intense gaze, Elyse muttered, “I’ll try.”

David smiled reassuringly. “I’ll be there to support you on the day of the competition. Just make sure some guy doesn’t ruin your shot at a bright future.”

Elyse took in David’s words of encouragement. She drew a deep breath to calm her stormy emotions. Her future shone brightly, and no one would hinder her pursuit of a music career.

“Group B contestants, get ready.”

Backstage, Elyse carried herself confidently, holding her violin. She was dressed in a scarlet ballet dress that flowed elegantly around her. A crimson ribbon held her hair up, which draped gracefully down her back and gave her an ethereal presence.

Her eyes locked on the stage and her heart pounded as she watched the performers before her.

When her moment came, she took a deep breath and walked onto the stage with determined steps.

Her unique attire drew whispers of curiosity from the audience, who seemed to think she might have stepped straight out of a ballet performance.

Elyse was undeterred by the murmurs from the audience. Instead, they made her even more determined and confident.

“Please enjoy ‘Csardas.’”

Edward, who was crouched backstage watching Elyse’s performance, froze in place before bursting into helpless laughter. “Did my song choice inspire you?” he murmured to himself.

Elyse, deviating from her usual performance style, danced to the rhythm of the music. Though she wore a dress similar to ballet attire, she didn’t know how to dance ballet, and her movements were awkward and uncoordinated.

Despite this, her joyful self-amusement resonated with some in the audience.

Happiness, after all, didn’t have to be tied to love; one person’s joy could be a celebration of life itself.

Elyse avoided the theme of romance, instead expressing the theme of happiness through her current outlook on life.

Her performance was vibrant and energetic, though it didn’t overshadow the quality of her music. The judges watched her spirited display with warm smiles.

Sometimes, breaking from convention could create a lasting impression.

Elyse was the contestant who truly stood out, making everyone’s eyes light up.

After the performance, Elyse took a deep breath, steadied herself, and bowed to both the audience and the judges.

As the applause filled the room, she let out a quiet sigh of relief. With a bright smile, she waved to the crowd and gracefully walked off the stage.

Backstage, completely exhausted, Elyse sank to her knees and raised a hand to her sweaty forehead.

Edward walked over with a grin and asked, "Did my song choice help?"

Elyse nodded sincerely. "Yes, thank you. It was very helpful."

"Screw you!" Edward pulled Elyse up and said with a smirk, "As good as you are with the violin, your dancing was tough to watch. Be glad this is a violin competition."

Just as Elyse was about to retort, she suddenly felt a cramp in her calf and collapsed to the floor. "Wait, I think I have a cramp."

Chapter 743:

Edward was taken aback. "Seriously? How stiff is your body? You just danced around a bit and got a cramp."

He quickly laid her down and began to help her stretch, but Elyse was in so much pain that she kept squirming away.

Exasperated, Edward grabbed her ankle and pulled hard, making her cry out in pain.

At that moment, a flash of light startled them both. They turned to see Fiona standing there, emotionless, phone in hand.

When Edward saw the camera in Fiona's hand, his expression changed drastically. He immediately asked, "Are you taking a secret photo of us? What the fuck do you think you're doing?"

Fiona responded casually, "I'm not taking secret photos; I'm openly photographing you two."

With that, Fiona raised her phone, displaying it to Elyse with a smirk. “I knew you were a fickle woman. Look, this is proof. If I show these photos of you with another man to your husband, do you think he’ll still love you?”

Elyse, still suffering from the cramp, glared at Fiona from the floor.

She shot back, “You haven’t changed a bit.”

“Neither have you,” Fiona sneered. “Elyse, I’m going to expose your true colors. Everyone will see you for the hypocrite you are.”

Elyse smirked. “Do whatever you want. You’ve got a mouth, don’t you?”

Fiona raised an eyebrow. “What, are you giving up? Aren’t you afraid of your reputation being ruined?”

Elyse mocked, “I believe people are smart enough to see through your despicable lies.”

“You arrogant little bitch! Let’s see how long you can keep this up,” Fiona said, leaving in a huff.

Edward, watching Fiona leave, glanced at her phone and mused, “Aren’t you worried she might really twist the story?”

Elyse shook her head. “What’s there to be afraid of? It’s just a cramp.”

After a moment of silence, Edward sighed. “I’m worried. I care more about my reputation than you might think.”

Elyse raised an eyebrow. “You have a reputation? I thought you had thick skin.”

After leaving backstage, Fiona made her way directly to the audience. She had noticed earlier that Jayden was in attendance, and the thought stirred a pang of jealousy. She

knew Jayden was there to watch Elyse, but she was also hopeful that Jayden might see her performance and be impressed.

She loved him so much that she was willing to do anything to get his attention.

The concert hall had two premium VIP boxes. Fiona climbed the stairs and reached the edge of one. Through the glass door, she spotted Jayden's back, and her heart raced with excitement.

Without waiting for an invitation, she knocked on the glass door and walked right inside.

Jayden turned at the sound and, upon seeing Fiona, frowned. "What are you doing here? Get out."

"No! Don't be so quick to throw me out," Fiona said, her gaze lingering on Jayden, clearly smitten.

Worried that Jayden might actually throw her out, she swiftly retrieved her phone and presented it to him with a sense of urgency.

"Look," Fiona said, her voice dripping with insinuation, "Elyse is cheating on you with another man. She's fickle and unreliable. How could someone like you be with her? You deserve so much better."

Jayden looked at the photos on Fiona's phone, a smirk slowly forming on his lips. "And what kind of woman do you think deserves a man like me?"

Without missing a beat, Fiona declared, "It should be me. I love you so much. Only I am truly worthy of you."

Chapter 744:

As soon as she finished speaking, she covered her mouth, taken aback by her own audacity.

Jayden tilted his head and sneered, "I wouldn't look twice at cheap trash like you."

Fiona's face went pale, and she was speechless for a moment.

Jayden tossed the phone back to her and began to leave.

Fiona tried to follow, but when Jayden turned and glared at her, she froze in fear.

Jayden flexed his wrist menacingly. "If you dare follow me, I'll throw you off this box."

Fiona's face drained of color as she forced a nervous smile. "You're joking, right? You wouldn't really do that."

Jayden chuckled darkly. "Aren't I the good man you were just talking about? Why are you so scared now?"

Fiona wanted to protest, but the cold, serious look in Jayden's eyes silenced her.

He wasn't joking. The threat was real, and the man before her could indeed throw her off the box without as much as a second thought.

Terror-stricken, Fiona's legs gave way, and she collapsed onto the floor.

Jayden stared at her, unyielding. "So you don't believe me?"

He rolled up his sleeves, making a move as if to pick her up and hurl her into the audience.

"No! No! I believe you. I believe you'd do it," Fiona shouted, now thoroughly terrified. She could have never imagined this dark, dangerous side of Jayden.

And she couldn't accept this side of him. She backed away, her voice trembling. "Don't come near me. Don't touch me."

Seeing her crawl away from him, Jayden turned around without a second glance. To him, her self-destructive behavior was less interesting compared to dealing with Elyse.

Elyse had returned to her lounge and was sitting on the sofa, messaging Irving and Gavin. Neither had expected Elyse to play the violin while dancing, but both assured her that her performance was impressive and far from the worst.

Relieved by their feedback, Elyse felt a bit more at ease.

Suddenly, someone knocked on the door. Assuming it was a staff member, Elyse got up to open it without hesitation.

When she saw Jayden standing in the doorway, she had no time to react before he pushed past her and entered.

Elyse tried to push him out, but he remained firm and locked the door behind him.

Sensing the tension in his mood, Elyse instinctively backed away, wary. "What are you doing here? What do you want?"

"Just came to see a certain disobedient woman," Jayden said, flexing his fingers. "I warned you last time. Don't get too close to other men."

With slow, measured steps, Jayden approached Elyse. In a cold voice, he said, "You didn't listen to me at all. Not only did you get close to other men, but you let a man touch your foot on top of it."

Bewildered, Elyse didn't understand what he was going on about. Then it hit her. She remembered Fiona taking a photo, so there was the possibility she could've tipped Jayden off.

Elyse started seeing red. "What do you think gave you the right to say that to me? You said we got close, but the fact is that we've always been just platonic. What about you, then? You divorced me, and now you have a girlfriend. How can you possibly think you have any right to act like this to me?"

Chapter 745:

The mere thought of Aarya set Elyse off, leaving her further irritated. She pushed Jayden out of disgust. “Get out! I’m not shameless like you. I won’t be meeting with a man who has a girlfriend.”

The aversion in Elyse’s eyes didn’t go unnoticed by Jayden. A slight pang clenched his heart. He inched toward her, forcing her back onto the sofa.

Elyse fell onto the seat as panic struck her. With a shaky voice, she asked, “What are you doing?”

Jayden looked down at her.

She was still wearing her outfit from the competition, a dress akin to a ballerina’s that cinched at her slender waist.

He reached out, almost in awe, as if marveling at how his hand could easily span her delicate waist.

Elyse sensed something was terribly wrong. Jayden’s demeanor was becoming too aggressive.

With their current positions, he had a clear advantage. It would be easier for him to do something unwanted while looming over her.

The more Elyse thought about it, the more fear crept in. She needed to get out of there immediately.

Jayden saw through her intentions. As she tried to escape, he leaned in and pinned her down. She failed to get away and was now firmly held by him.

Overwhelmed with shame and anger, she pounded on his back, panicking. “Let me go. Do you really think I won’t call someone and ruin your reputation?”

Jayden seemed amused by Elyse's threat. He said with a smirk, "That would be fine. Everyone would know I had you pinned down and that you're mine. No man would dare come near you again."

The fury Elyse held for Jayden intensified at his words. "You asshole. Get up. You already have a girlfriend. Don't you dare lay a finger on me anymore. I refuse to be the other woman."

Jayden grabbed Elyse's chin, silencing her tirade, and kissed her.

She was terrified by his actions. How could he kiss her again? She felt violated.

This time, he kissed her slowly, with a patience that unnerved her. He knew every sensitive spot, having kissed her countless times before.

He kissed her until she felt dizzy and weak, unable to resist his advances. His hands began to explore her body.

As he cupped her bosom, he squeezed it hard, his tone mocking. "I told you, you've gained weight. Your breasts are bigger now."

Ashamed and furious, Elyse bit her lip to stifle any sounds.

Seeing her reaction, Jayden became even more excited, as if he had discovered a new toy. He wanted to make this "toy" respond.

He buried his head against her softness and began nibbling on her nipple, feeling her body tremble slightly. He chuckled softly.

Elyse was now like a frightened bird. Any movement from Jayden made her tense up. "What are you laughing at?"

"Your breasts are responding to my touch." Jayden was beyond satisfied with her physical response. This was his woman, the rose he had cultivated himself.

In a hoarse voice, he said, “Elyse, you belong to me. Your body has long been marked by me.”

Elyse felt a surge of embarrassment but refused to show weakness. “I am not yours. If you’re feeling desperate, go find your girlfriend. Leave me alone.”

“I already am. Don’t argue. Let me enjoy this for a while,” Jayden muttered softly and continued his actions more insistently.

Chapter 746:

Elyse tingled from his touch. Pinned down, she felt like a puppet under his control.

Still, Elyse refused to give in. “I am not yours. You’re not allowed to touch me.”

Annoyed by her resistance, Jayden pressed his hand between her legs. He felt the wetness and a smug smile appeared on his face. “Elyse, your body is more honest than your words.”

Elyse’s mind went blank.

She couldn’t grasp how the situation had escalated to this point.

Jayden was unaware and indifferent to what she was thinking. He raised her skirt, effortlessly ripped her white pantyhose, and deftly slid his finger inside.

Elyse was shocked, her body tensed, and her legs instinctively clenched together, but she was no match for Jayden’s strength.

Jayden nonchalantly and boldly pushed his finger into Elyse’s vagina.

Though she tried to remain silent, moans slipped through her gritted teeth.

After a few indifferent thrusts, her lower body was overwhelmed. Pleased, Jayden pulled his hand back, observed the dampness on his finger, and then forced her to see it too.

He said, "Sweetheart, look how truthful your body is."

Elyse's cheeks flushed deep red. Watching Jayden lick the moisture from his finger, she felt more helpless.

With a trace of a sob, she said sadly, "Jayden, what am I to you in your heart? Why do you repeatedly crush my dignity?"

At that moment, he hadn't noticed her emotional turmoil. He was still reveling in her physical response to him.

Pleased, he said, "In my heart, you are my woman, a woman who belongs only to me. Elyse, no one can take you away. Do you understand?"

Elyse covered her face with her hands, refusing to speak further. She suppressed the moans and resolved not to make a sound.

Jayden continued to manipulate her body freely. Just as he was about to take her right there, he suddenly saw tears streaming down her face.

Was she crying? Jayden paused and lifted her hands, revealing her flushed yet profoundly sad face.

Her body still craved Jayden, but her mind couldn't accept being with a man who was already in a relationship.

Although she still harbored feelings for him, her principles wouldn't allow her to engage in such a shameful act.

Realizing the significance of what Elyse had highlighted earlier, Jayden finally grasped what mattered to her.

He sighed softly, then gently helped her get dressed, though the torn white pantyhose remained irreparable.

Jayden took out his phone and texted his assistant to bring a new pair of pantyhose for her.

After sending the text, Jayden lifted Elyse onto his lap and comforted her patiently, “Don’t cry. This is my fault. I’m such a jerk.”

Elyse quietly dabbed at her tears, choosing to remain silent.

Seeing this, Jayden admitted, “You know, I’m not a decent man, particularly in intimate moments. I really can be a jerk, but only towards you.”

Elyse bit her lip, her voice hoarse. “Stop saying things like that. You have a girlfriend now. I hope you’ll be responsible to her and not come to me anymore, giving her a sense of security.”

Jayden let out a soft laugh at her statement.

Chapter 747:

Elyse, annoyed, questioned, “What are you laughing at?”

“I’m laughing at your innocence and naivety.” He caressed her cheek, gently wiping away her tears. “You don’t really think Aarya is virtuous, do you?”

Elyse shifted away impatiently. “Even if she isn’t virtuous, she’s still your girlfriend. Don’t you realize what it means to maintain distance from other women when you’re committed to someone?”

Elyse recoiled at the sight of Jayden and pushed him away, quickly rising to adjust her clothes.

Jayden sprawled on the couch, watching Elyse as she straightened her attire. "Next time I'm free, I'll come over to sleep with you," he said slowly, his tone unhurried and relaxed.

Elyse's face registered shock, her eyes widening in disbelief. "Are you crazy?" she exclaimed.

Jayden laughed, amused by her reaction.

"Is this your first time meeting me?" he queried. "You should know by now whether I'm crazy or not." Jayden folded his arms and tilted his head, maintaining steady eye contact with Elyse.

Struggling for words, Elyse took a moment to compose herself, striving to stay calm. "You might be insane, but I am not," she stated slowly. "Can you please just leave me alone? I want nothing to do with you."

Jayden leaned in closer, touching her ear and pinching the lobe gently. "It's not your decision, darling," he murmured. "You're with me until I decide otherwise."

Elyse recognized the pointlessness of arguing with him. Pointing at the door, she demanded sharply, "Leave now! I don't want to see you!"

Jayden's carefree demeanor shifted subtly. He examined her reddened face, tempted to dismiss her anger as trivial and not at all intimidating. Yet, he chose to soothe her instead.

Glancing at his phone, he read a message from his assistant and assured Elyse, "Don't worry, my assistant has delivered the pantyhose. Wait for me to change them for you before I go."

When Jayden brought up the pantyhose, Elyse felt both embarrassed and irritated, yet she felt powerless against him. Nonetheless, she strongly opposed such a destiny. She did not wish to be the other woman in a relationship.

Jayden kept his eyes on Elyse, catching the fleeting changes in her expressions. He understood well what was troubling her mind, but he didn't see the need to address it. Regarding what she wished to know, he remained unwilling to share.

Elyse located a chair and positioned herself at a safe distance from Jayden.

Jayden watched her somewhat juvenile behavior with a hint of amusement, letting her act freely. Elyse's company always had a calming effect on him, and soon a profound tiredness overtook him. He stifled a yawn, feeling his eyelids grow heavy.

Fifteen minutes later, his assistant returned with a new pair of pantyhose.

Elyse quickly took them from the assistant's hands and turned to Jayden, her tone cold and dismissive. "You can leave now."

However, Jayden stayed where he was, his expression firm. Instead of leaving, he grasped Elyse and abruptly pulled her onto the sofa. Elyse gasped in surprise as he forcefully removed her pantyhose, leaving her skin exposed to the chilly air.

Elyse instinctively retracted her legs, but before she could voice her objection, Jayden had started to remove her shoes.

Elyse felt her determination waver. She was haunted by the fear that Jayden might overstep and take advantage of her then and there.

Chapter 748:

Gripping his hand, her eyes shimmered with a blend of shame and fear, and her voice shook as she declared, "Don't you dare do anything. I won't let you."

Realizing Elyse had misunderstood his actions, Jayden light-heartedly patted her on the backside, teasing, "I'm just helping you with your new pantyhose. What mischievous thoughts have you been fostering in that head of yours?"

He moved closer, a playful sparkle in his eyes. "Or maybe you're secretly hoping I'd fuck you right here. I wouldn't mind at all." Elyse's face turned a deep shade of red as

she realized her misunderstanding. She pressed against his stomach. "I can manage on my own. I don't need your help."

"No way. Since I tore your pantyhose, it's only right that I help you with the new ones." Jayden insisted on this point.

With careful attention, he placed the new pantyhose on Elyse and then helped her with her shoes. His manner was now one of focused care.

However, Elyse found herself questioning his sudden attentiveness. She knew such care was more rightfully owed to Aarya, his current girlfriend, not to her, his former wife.

Elyse regarded Jayden with conflicting feelings. "Are you going to let things keep going like this between us, Jayden?" she inquired. "Have you considered how this might hurt your girlfriend?"

Jayden responded, "So, what do you suggest I do? Should I rush to Aarya and do everything I do with her?"

Elyse nodded slowly, "As her boyfriend, that's your duty. Jayden, don't act childishly. Value the one who you truly care for."

Jayden looked into Elyse's eyes. "I understand," he said gently. "I will value the one who I truly care for."

Elyse felt a strange aura from Jayden. However, when he promised to cherish the people he cared about, she believed he had finally thought things through.

"You should go. Staying here with me won't help." She knew she should have parted ways with Jayden long ago.

Jayden glanced at the time. "Time's almost up. I need to go now. Remember what I said."

With those words, he quickly left.

After Jayden was gone, Elyse let all her strength fade away. She sank onto the sofa and cried quietly.

“Elyse, I need to tell you something. I’m definitely going to be at the top of my group this time. If you also make it to the top, we might end up as rivals in the next match.” Edward burst through the door, excitement on his face.

Yet when he saw Elyse crying on the sofa, he stopped.

Edward couldn’t help frowning at the sight of her being helpless. “Why are you crying so easily? You know a woman’s tears are precious. You shouldn’t waste them like this.”

Elyse asked quietly, “What’s the big deal about it?”

Edward walked over, a hint of concern in his voice. “Of course, it is. If you cry too much, you’ll become ugly.”

Elyse sighed. “Do you seriously think I care about being pretty or ugly right now?”

“You’re hopeless. If you don’t even care about your own looks, what else is there?” Edward’s voice grew louder. “What made you cry? Just tell me, and I’ll take care of it.”

Elyse felt embarrassed. She turned her head to hide her tears.

Seeing her avoidance, Edward crossed his arms. “Elyse, are you crying over a guy?”

He hit the bull’s eye.

Chapter 749:

Caught off guard, Elyse nodded, her heart heavy with despair. “Yes, I’m crying over a man. So what?”

Edward looked shocked. "Is it your ex-husband?" he asked, his voice filled with disgust.

"Yes." Elyse nodded.

"Do you really care about him that much?" Edward asked, genuinely puzzled.

Elyse shot back, "What is there to care about? He's arrogant and self-centered, always hurting me. He does whatever he wants without respecting anyone. He's the worst. What could I possibly see in him?"

Edward looked at her calmly. "You care about him because he's arrogant, self-centered, and he hurts you and doesn't respect you."

Elyse's frustration boiled over. "Are you out of your mind? How could I care for such a man? I'm not some pathetic person."

"No, I'm not saying you're pathetic. I'm saying you love him. Loving someone means accepting them, even with their worst flaws." Edward smirked. "You love him, knowing he's a terrible person, yet here you are, still crying over him."

Elyse was stunned for a moment before regaining her composure. "How can you say something so deep? Are you still the Edward I know?"

"Don't change the subject." Edward rolled his eyes. "Seriously, if you love him, go after him. I'd much rather see you out there, chasing your love in a flashy sports car, than sitting here, hiding and crying."

Elyse felt embarrassed by his words. She reached for a tissue to wipe her tears. "I can't do that. He already has a girlfriend."

Edward raised an eyebrow. He couldn't help blurting out, "Girlfriend? Are you referring to Aarya?"

Elyse nodded, her head bowed, deep in thought.

Edward groaned. "That's even more reason to get him back. Aarya isn't exactly an angel. She's been married four times."

Elyse looked up, shocked. "What the hell? Married four times?"

Edward shook his head. "You really don't know much about her. Forget the sports car idea. Aarya's people would probably make mincemeat out of you."

Elyse managed a small, awkward smile through her tears.

Edward thought for a moment. "But honestly, your ex doesn't seem like a great guy either. If he's with Aarya, their interests must be really tangled up."

Elyse stared at Edward for a long time. "How can you say their interests are intertwined? Do you know something that I don't?"

Edward flashed a huge grin, showing his teeth. "Do you want to find out? Then go on a date with me."

Elyse's sadness turned into confusion. She shook her head. "No, I don't want to date you."

Feeling embarrassed by her blunt rejection, Edward shot back, "I don't like you that way either. I only asked you out because I pity you."

Elyse saw his flushed face and couldn't help but laugh.

Her laughter only made Edward more annoyed.

"I felt sorry for you, and you took it seriously. I won't comfort you again," he said, turning to leave.

Both amused and helpless, Elyse quickly pulled him back. "I'm sorry. I shouldn't have said that. Can you forgive me?"

“Treat me to five meals, and you have a deal,” Edward countered while holding up five fingers.

Elyse sighed helplessly. “Five meals it is, then.”

Dropping his wounded expression, Edward continued, “Five meals. Not one less.”

Chapter 750:

Elyse nodded. “Alright, five meals. I promise.”

“What’s this about five meals? Sounds interesting. Can I join in?” Darren barged in, pushing open the door with a proud smile.

When Elyse saw Darren, her eyes lit up with joy. “Hey! Missed you at the last performance.”

Darren waved. “It was a mess. Vicky and I ranked last, then some jerks wrecked our violins. We were scrambling to find new ones and didn’t have time to meet you.”

Elyse nodded, curiosity in her eyes. “Where’s Vicky now?”

Darren answered while smiling lightly, “I’m finished with my performance. It isn’t her turn yet, so she’s waiting backstage.”

“I finished ages ago,” Elyse said, letting out a yawn.

Darren glanced at Edward, a peculiar glint sparking in his eyes.

He had a strong impression of Edward. Before coming to Manfek, Merlin had told him all about Edward.

Edward was a violin prodigy, displaying incredible talent from a young age and maintaining an undefeated record. He was undoubtedly a top contender for first place in this competition.

Darren didn't want to face him unless it was the finals.

After a moment of thought, Darren asked, "How about we have a gathering after the competition?"

Feeling sleepy, Elyse perked up at the mention of a gathering. "Not my treat, right?" she asked, raising an eyebrow.

Edward smirked. "And why not?"

Darren scratched his head. "I've spent a lot on gifts to send home. How about you treat me this time?"

Elyse's lips twitched as she resigned herself. "Fine, I'll treat. Invite Vicky. Do you think she'll come?"

Darren shrugged. "Maybe. Her temper has improved a lot. I think she's starting to realize her social skills need work and is trying to change."

Elyse thought it would be good if Vicky truly softened her attitude. In that case, Vicky wouldn't look down on everyone anymore.

After the competition, Elyse bid Gavin and the others farewell, then headed to a restaurant with Edward and Darren.

As soon as they sat down, Darren checked his phone.

"Vicky said she'll come after she changes clothes."

Elyse nodded. "No rush. She can take her time."

Edward looked at Darren curiously. “What rank did you get in your group?”

Darren answered honestly, “First in my group. I got lucky and didn’t face any strong opponents.”

Elyse pouted. “Don’t remind me. I came in second, just 0.3 points behind the first.”

“That’s a close call,” Edward remarked. Then he added, “This round is over. Next is the semifinals. We might be up against each other. Friends now, rivals later?”

Elyse handed Edward a beer, jokingly. “I never saw you as a friend. You’ve always been my rival.”

Edward raised an eyebrow. “If we meet in the finals and battle for first place, it will get me pumped up.”

Elyse grinned. “Same here. I’ll give everything I’ve got to beat you.”