

Bound love 751

Chapter 751:

Just as Vicky reached the restaurant door, she saw Elyse and the others smiling through the glass window. She felt a sudden warmth wash over her.

Turning to Mariana, Vicky said, "Come on. Don't be shy."

Mariana caught sight of Edward and recoiled. "Edward kind of intimidates me. I'm not really keen on going in there."

Vicky was resolute. "We've come this far. Just pop in and say hi."

Finding no room to argue, Mariana reluctantly followed Vicky inside.

Upon their entrance, Elyse rose to greet them. Spotting Mariana behind Vicky, she paused, a look of recognition flashing across her face. "Aren't you one of the top eight contestants?" she blurted out, clearly surprised.

Mariana felt a surge of surprise that Elyse remembered her.

Elyse approached, taking Mariana's hand with eager warmth. "Have you and Vicky become friends?"

With a shy nod, Mariana stepped back, partially concealing herself behind Vicky.

Noticing the gesture, Elyse looked puzzled. "Are you scared of me?"

Vicky shook her head and sighed. "It's not you she's afraid of. It's Edward. She was eliminated today, and Edward's performance really rattled her."

At that, all eyes shifted towards Edward.

Caught off guard by the sudden attention, Edward scratched his head, looking uncomfortable. “I was just doing my usual thing out there. Nothing extraordinary.”

Mariana agreed quietly, “It’s true, but Edward, your stage presence is really intense. It completely overshadowed mine.”

Trying to lighten the mood, Edward replied, “Hey, let’s not make it sound so dramatic. I’m really just a cheerful, lively guy—not a monster or anything.”

Elyse gazed at Edward, a pensive look on her face, before stepping in to defuse the tension. “It’s all right. If you’re holding a grudge, now’s the time to let it out. We’re not on stage anymore. Go ahead, let him have it.”

Mariana blushed and hesitated, clearly too embarrassed to take such action.

Elyse then guided Mariana to a chair.

Over a round of drinks, Elyse, reminiscing about the former contenders, asked curiously, “How many of us from the top eight are still in the running?”

Mariana sighed heavily, “Just the three of you are left. My friend Cassidy was up against another unexpected contender and got knocked out.”

Elyse shared a knowing look with Darren and Vicky, acknowledging that only they remained.

Edward, caught off guard, inquired, “An unexpected contender? You mean Geraldine?”

Mariana nodded in response. “Yes, she’s incredibly strong. It was an overwhelming victory. Cassidy was in tears as soon as it was over.”

“Geraldine...” Elyse echoed the name under her breath. If her memory served her right, Geraldine Lawson would be her opponent in the semifinals.

Edward, catching on, gave Elyse a sympathetic glance. "I really hope you can get past Geraldine. If not, you won't be facing me for the championship in the finals."

Elyse retorted with a hint of bitterness, "Save your concern for someone else. I'm winning this."

Chapter 752:

Edward's response was a light chuckle, his eyes twinkling with a competitive glow.

Outside the lively restaurant, a car had been idling by the curb for some time.

Aarya, seated within the vehicle, peered through binoculars at Elyse. Noticing Elyse's cheerful demeanor, she inquired with a grin, "Did Jayden really show up to watch his ex-wife compete?"

Her black-suited bodyguard responded with due respect, "Indeed. My sources also mentioned that he vanished for an hour at the concert hall. He was later seen getting into his car and driving off."

A sly, almost predatory smile played on Aarya's lips. "Fascinating. Any idea what Jayden was up to during that missing hour?"

The bodyguard hesitated, then offered, "It's unclear, but it's unlikely he cheated on you."

Aarya's expression cooled. "And why would you say that?"

He elaborated, "Because his ex-wife seems untouched, and some people even went into her lounge during that hour."

A trace of shock flickered across Aarya's features. "That's unexpected. Still, the fact remains he attended his ex-wife's event."

The bodyguard speculated. “Perhaps he still harbors feelings for her. From what I’ve seen, he is a considerate and sophisticated man—concern for his ex wouldn’t be out of character, given his responsible nature.”

Aarya’s voice was firm. “I know that, but I can’t allow him any emotional ties to her.”

A sinister grin then spread across her face as a plan seemed to form in her mind. “Maybe I can help him ‘resolve’ this lingering attachment.”

After dining with her friends, Elyse headed back to her hotel room to unwind.

As she lay on the bed, thoughts of Edward’s words at dinner echoed in her mind, leaving her fraught with anxiety.

Could Geraldine indeed pose a serious hurdle to her ambitions?

After a lengthy bout of reflection yielded no clarity, Elyse resolved to inquire about Geraldine’s past from Gavin the following day.

Just then, her phone erupted with a ring.

Glancing at the screen and spotting an unknown number, Elyse promptly dismissed the call and burrowed under her covers, eager to forget the interruption and sleep. Yet, the phone insistently rang again.

This time, she eyed the number, wavered for a brief moment, and ultimately decided to answer.

With a trace of irritation, she demanded, “Who is this?”

“Hello, Elyse,” the familiar voice on the other end replied. It was Aarya.

The sound of Aarya’s voice triggered a rush of guilt in Elyse.

Composing herself, she pressed on, “How did you find my number? Have you been looking into me?”

“Getting your phone number was easy,” Aarya remarked casually. She then added abruptly, “By the way, I need to discuss something important with you.”

Elyse’s brow furrowed. “What’s up?”

Aarya’s voice carried a hint of trouble. “It’s nothing serious. I’m just here alone at a club, feeling a bit lonely. Could you come over and keep me company?”

Remembering Edward’s earlier caution, Elyse hesitated, then responded, “Sorry, it’s late, and I’d rather not go out. Maybe you should head home instead of staying out drinking.”

Chapter 753:

Aarya pouted, clearly unhappy. “If you won’t come out to drink with me, I might just come to you. One way or another, you’re going to have a drink with me tonight.”

Elyse’s eye twitched, sensing Aarya’s stubborn intent to see her tonight.

With a sigh, she relented. “Alright, I’ll come.”

Aarya’s mood brightened immediately. “Great, hurry up then. I’ll text you the address and the number of my private room.”

After ending the call, Elyse sat on her bed and took a deep breath, feeling uneasy about how the night might unfold.

She quickly changed her clothes and informed Edward of Aarya’s invitation.

He asked for the address and room number but offered no further comments.

Edward's aloof demeanor left Elyse feeling unsettled. Didn't he care about her well-being at all?

Determined not to drag Irving and Gavin into her conflict with Aarya, she departed from the hotel by herself.

When she reached the designated club, she paused at the door of the private room, taking a moment before she mustered the courage to enter.

Upon her arrival, Aarya greeted her with a cheerful wave. "You're here at last! We've been waiting for you," she exclaimed.

Elyse scanned the room and noticed two other women and a man along with Aarya. All were dressed in tight attire, giving off an untrustworthy vibe.

With a slight frown, Elyse turned to Aarya. "I thought you said you were here by yourself?"

Aarya responded with a nod, "I was alone when I called you, but these friends showed up after our conversation."

Realizing Aarya had deceived her, Elyse's first instinct was to leave, but the woman closest to the door rose, extended her leg across the doorway, and blocked her path.

"Leaving so soon? You've come all this way. Why not stay for a drink or two?" the woman said, popping her gum with a smug look.

"Don't be harsh with my new friend, Nancy. You're intimidating her," Aarya chided.

"Alright, alright, I'll back off," Nancy Larson retorted, casting a pointed glance at Elyse before sauntering back to her seat on the sofa.

Elyse could already feel something was off; Aarya had likely called her over with negative intentions.

Noticing Elyse still standing, Aarya said, “Come on, don’t just stand there. Sit down with us.”

Elyse looked at Aarya and said, “Your friends are here, so I’ll be heading back now.”

Nancy, lounging by the doorway of the private room, lifted her slender leg and placed it on the door frame, blocking Elyse’s path.

She shot Elyse a lazy look. “Why are you leaving already? Are you looking down on us? Can’t you even stay for a drink?”

Elyse stared at Nancy’s long leg, a cold glint flashing in her eyes. Her voice turned icy. “You think staying for a drink means I respect you, huh? You must have a pretty low opinion of yourself.”

Taken aback by Elyse’s sharp words, Nancy laughed scornfully. “We’re showing you respect by talking to you, and you still don’t appreciate it.”

Elyse wasn’t familiar with Nancy, but she figured anyone who hung out with Aarya couldn’t be good. So she retorted, “I don’t know you. Why should I stay and have a drink with you?”

Chapter 754:

Noticing the tension, Aarya stood up slowly, walked over to Elyse, and smiled. “If you don’t know each other, why not sit down and get acquainted?”

With that, Aarya grabbed Elyse’s arm firmly and pulled her onto the sofa.

Elyse had no intention of staying. As she struggled, she accidentally knocked over a lighter on the table. It fell to the floor and broke into two pieces.

In an instant, Elyse noticed the expressions on Aarya’s and Nancy’s faces shift. Their expressions revealed a mix of intrigue and smug satisfaction.

Elyse's heart sank. She knew the lighter was expensive. Picking it up, she said, "Whose lighter is this? I broke it. I'll pay for it."

The man in the room chuckled coldly, a mischievous smile on his face. "Are you serious about paying for it? Can you even afford it?"

Elyse replied, "I have money. Even if I can't afford it, I can borrow from friends."

The man raised his hand to shoulder level and swiftly gestured a figure eight.

Elyse frowned, doubting the lighter could be worth eight grand. Then the man clarified, "Eight hundred thousand dollars."

Elyse gasped. Could this lighter really be worth that much?

Aarya seemed to read Elyse's thoughts and explained with a smile, "This lighter originally sold for two hundred thousand dollars. But it's a unique item from thirty years ago. It's priceless now, and eight hundred thousand dollars is just the starting bid at an auction."

Turning to the man with a sly smile, Aarya offered, "Rico, Elyse is a friend. For my sake, let it go. I have plenty of collectibles at home. You can take your pick."

Elyse didn't feel relieved by Aarya's words. From the moment she stepped into the private room, nothing went as she had expected. She realized the lighter was likely meant for her to break.

There was no way she would let Aarya handle this for her. "I'm taking responsibility for what I did. I'll raise the eight hundred thousand dollars myself."

Aarya's eyes briefly flashed with malice.

Rico Ewing crossed his legs and asked, "Why are you resisting? Aarya offered to help, but you turned her down. Are you trying to prove something to us?"

Elyse shook her head. "I can't let Aarya take on my responsibility."

Aarya smiled warmly. "We're friends. It's only natural for me to help you."

Seeing that Elyse remained unmoved, Rico suddenly lost his temper. He smashed the glass in his hand and yelled, "I can't stand this woman. Poor yet so arrogant! Fine, I'll let you take responsibility yourself."

He pointed to the dozens of beer bottles on the table. "Finish all of these, and I'll give you a shot at raising the money."

Elyse stared at the bottles, the blood draining away from her face. She couldn't drink that much.

At that moment, Aarya stopped trying to mediate and gave Elyse a helpless look. "Rico's furious. There's nothing more I can do for you. You're on your own now."

Elyse cast another wary glance at the private room's door. Nancy remained planted there, evidently tasked with ensuring she couldn't slip away.

Chapter 755:

Turning her attention back to Aarya, Elyse grasped the lengths to which this woman had gone to orchestrate this confrontation.

Seeing Elyse's hesitation, Rico smirked. "Weren't you full of swagger just moments ago? What's wrong? Lost your nerve already?"

Elyse looked at the array of beer bottles, crossing her arms defiantly. "I can settle the debt, but I won't drink. It's not like I'm strapped for cash."

Aarya's eyes darkened as she replied slowly, "You're just a violinist. How do you plan to repay 800,000 dollars? You don't think you'll be able to hit up Jayden for that kind of cash, do you?"

Elyse shot back, “Do you think Jayden is the only person in my circle who could lend me 800,000 dollars?”

Aarya chuckled softly. “Perhaps you have other benefactors I don’t know about, but Rico here is fuming. I can’t shield you from his wrath.”

Elyse remained silent. Aarya had lured her into this trap, and now things were playing out just as she had schemed. It was clear Aarya wouldn’t lift a finger to help her.

Elyse turned to Rico. “I can repay the debt. I just refuse to drink.”

Rico raised an eyebrow. “What makes you think you can bargain with me? This is my place. If I tell you to crawl and kiss my shoes, you better comply. Otherwise...” He paused, his gaze drifting to Elyse’s hands, a sinister smile spreading across his face. “I hear you play the violin. What if I mess up those pretty hands of yours?”

Elyse’s face turned ghostly pale. In the end, she had no choice but to approach the table and crack open a beer bottle to drink.

When Aarya saw Elyse finish the first bottle, her face lit up with a victorious smile. She leaned in quietly and whispered in Elyse’s ear, “Don’t even think about asking Jayden for help. He’s got his hands full and won’t spare a thought for you right now.”

Elyse’s expression remained unchanged.

She had never intended to rely on Jayden for assistance. Instead, she hoped Edward would send someone to rescue her.

But Edward was just an ordinary guy. She couldn’t pin her hopes on him.

Elyse wasn’t much of a drinker. After two bottles, her head started to swim, her face flushed, and her once-clear eyes now showed signs of intoxication.

Rico, watching Elyse in this state, swallowed hard, his Adam’s apple bobbing, his eyes filled with longing and lust.

It was the first time Aarya had seen him look at someone like this.

Rico's family owned this club, so he'd been around women all his life. Not even 30 yet, he was already a seasoned player in the game of love.

Aarya had lost her virginity to him. They had been friends with benefits for over two years. But he had never gazed at her with such predatory intent.

She knew him intimately and could sense his infatuation with Elyse.

This peculiar feeling of jealousy caused Aarya to completely drop her pretense. She raised her hand and slapped Elyse hard across the face. "You tramp! Must you throw yourself at every man who crosses your path? Can't you survive without one?"

Elyse's head was ringing from the blow.

Mistaking Aarya's anger for jealousy over Jayden, Elyse snapped, her expression darkened, "You're the tramp! When have I ever tried to seduce a man?"

"I see you flirting with men everywhere." Aarya retorted sharply, recalling the sight of Elyse clinking glasses with several men at the restaurant.

She knew there were women at that gathering, but she didn't care. She trusted only what her eyes had seen.

Chapter 756:

She had summoned Elyse just to humiliate her.

With a decisive clap of her hands, the door to the private room swung open. Two waiters entered, pushing a large water tank before them.

The tank, though small, brimmed with water.

Elyse's gaze fixed on the tank, her vision clearing. "Are you trying to kill me?" she asked, a tremor in her voice.

Aarya's lips curled into a sneer. "'Kill you'? Oh, you've got it all wrong. I have no intention of that. My aim is purely to torment you."

Aarya sauntered over to the tank, her fingers gliding over its surface. "Relax. When you're on the brink of death, I'll haul you out. I won't let you die."

Elyse had no intention of sticking around. She dashed for the door, but Aarya was ready for her.

The moment Elyse reached the door, the bodyguards blocked her path and shoved her back inside.

Elyse struggled frantically, her efforts futile against the inevitable.

Aarya sneered as she gave the chilling command. "Throw her in."

"Let go of me!" Elyse's cries for help echoed in the room.

From the moment she stepped into this private room, she knew Aarya had no intention of letting her walk out alive.

Aarya had marked her for death from the very beginning.

Elyse was unceremoniously thrown into the water tank, the waiters swiftly securing the lid, leaving her with only a tiny pocket of air to cling to.

But with so little oxygen, she would start suffocating in mere minutes.

Watching Elyse struggle to maintain her composure and find a way to survive, Aarya felt a twisted sense of satisfaction.

Meanwhile, Rico's gaze was fixated on Elyse's body, his eyes filled with burning desire.

He had never thought Elyse had such a captivating figure. He fantasized about having her, even in death.

Underwater, Elyse's eyes remained tightly shut, blinding her to the devils standing just outside the tank.

She was like a sacrificial lamb at a demon's banquet, her impending death serving as their grotesque entertainment.

Elyse had no concept of time as she fought to hold on. Eventually, when the last bit of oxygen was depleted, her strength ebbed away, and she lay motionless in the tank.

"Bam!" A loud noise shattered the silence. It sounded like a gunshot.

Chaos erupted, with shouts and cries tearing through the air, creating a scene of utter pandemonium.

Just before succumbing to unconsciousness, Elyse heard these sounds. She wanted desperately to open her eyes and see what was happening, but her eyelids felt like lead, refusing to budge.

"Thank goodness. That was close..."

Whose voice was that? It sounded so familiar. Could someone have come to save her?

When Elyse finally opened her eyes, she felt dreadful. Her body was weak and limp.

Propping herself up, Elyse realized she was in a hotel room. Wait a minute, hadn't she been at a club last night?

Chapter 757:

As the memories of the previous evening flooded back, Elyse jolted awake, instantly on high alert. Scanning the room, she noticed her phone was nowhere to be found.

Climbing out of bed to search for it, she heard noises coming from the bathroom. Feeling suspicious, she cautiously approached and pushed the door open, only to see Edward shaving with a razor.

Her gaze traveled downwards, taking in the sight of Edward clad only in black underwear, his chest, abs, and muscular legs on full display.

Glancing down at herself, Elyse saw she was dressed in nothing but a black shirt. Unable to contain her panic, she hugged herself tightly and let out a piercing scream.

Startled, Edward stepped back repeatedly. "Why are you screaming?"

"You pervert! Get out of my room!" Elyse yelled, slamming the bathroom door shut and quickly retreating to the bed to put on more clothes.

After a while, Edward emerged from the bathroom, now wearing gray sweatpants. Seeing Elyse's wary expression, he pouted. "I helped you, and this is the thanks I get?"

"You helped me? What did you help me with?" Elyse's voice was filled with exasperation.

Edward scratched his head. "Yesterday, you texted me saying Aarya invited you to meet her. Do you have any idea how worried I was? Back then, I was on a train to the neighboring city. When I received your message, I hurried back. When I found you, you were in bad shape, lying in the hospital bed with an IV drip."

He sighed deeply, "By the time your IV finished, it was already dawn. I carried you back to the hotel. I haven't had a moment's rest. I just took a shower and shaved, yet when you wake up, you accuse me of being a pervert."

Feigning tears, Edward wiped his eyes and said, "I haven't slept all night. You saw my body, and yet you call me a pervert. I'm genuinely hurt."

Elyse, puzzled by his words, began to consider their truth. Finally, she pointed to her clothes and asked, “Who changed my clothes?”

“I have no idea. When I got there, you were already wearing that black shirt,” Edward replied, stroking his chin thoughtfully. “But judging by the style, that shirt is clearly men’s clothing.”

Elyse’s face went white. “Which man changed my clothes?”

Edward shook his head. “I don’t have a clue. When I got to the hospital, there was no one, save for the nurse. She told me you’d been knocked out for a bit because you’d been short on oxygen.”

Elyse tried to piece together the events of the previous night. Had something else happened after she lost consciousness?

Seeing Elyse lost in her thoughts, Edward frowned and sighed, “Could you focus on my issue for a moment?”

Snapping out of her reverie, Elyse asked, somewhat impatiently, “What’s bothering you?”

“You saw me naked,” Edward murmured, nervously fidgeting with his fingers and looking rather aggrieved.

Elyse nearly choked, bewildered by his declaration.

When Elyse didn’t respond immediately, Edward pressed on. “You saw my biceps, my chest, my abs, and my toned legs. You saw everything.”

Elyse shook her head in disbelief, “I barely saw anything. I was so nervous; I just took a glance.”

Edward persisted, “But you still saw it all.”

Elyse rubbed her forehead in frustration. “So, what are you trying to say?”

Chapter 758:

“You need to take responsibility for me,” Edward mumbled, blushing with embarrassment.

Elyse was speechless. How could Edward be saying she needed to take responsibility for seeing him naked?

Taking a deep breath, she replied, “The parts of you I saw aren’t exactly private. How can you expect me to take responsibility for that?”

Edward paused thoughtfully before saying, “When I carried you back, I also saw your thighs. How about this: you take responsibility for me, and I’ll take responsibility for you.”

Elyse hurled a pillow at him, which Edward caught effortlessly.

Grinding her teeth, she snapped, “Don’t be ridiculous. Why should I take responsibility for you? I didn’t sleep with you, so what’s the deal?”

Edward shot back, “If you had slept with me, would you take responsibility?”

He pondered for a moment, then added, “So, if I sleep with you, I can take responsibility for you too?”

Elyse’s face drained of color at his words. “Don’t even think about it. I’m not sleeping with you.”

Edward pointed to himself, a mix of confusion and annoyance in his expression. “Why wouldn’t you sleep with me? With my looks and physique, is it really such a bad deal?”

Elyse rolled her eyes, clearly frustrated. How could Edward's mind work this way?

All she wanted was some peace and quiet to mull over the events of the previous night. Why couldn't Edward just be silent for a moment?

Throwing up her hands in surrender, she asked, "Do you know where Aarya went? How did I end up in the hospital?"

Edward nodded. "Yeah, I know. I found out at the hospital yesterday. The police surrounded that club, and there was reportedly a shootout. Aarya's probably in jail."

Elyse was in shock. A shootout? Could the noise she had heard have been gunfire?

She leaned back against the bed, staring blankly at the ceiling, her thoughts a tangled mess.

Edward, meanwhile, was striking various muscle-showing poses beside Elyse, but she didn't even cast him a glance. Feeling embarrassed, he went to find his clothes and slipped them on.

"Even if Aarya is behind bars, she should be out soon, right?" Elyse asked suddenly.

Edward nodded. "Normally, yes, but this time, things are different."

Elyse turned her curious gaze toward him. "What's different?"

Edward crossed his arms and explained, "The governor wants to tighten his grip on power, wipe out the Hudson family as local despots, and improve state security. So the Hudsons can't spring Aarya out as easily this time."

Elyse continued to stare at Edward with curiosity. "How do you know all this?"

Edward froze for a moment, a flicker of panic in his eyes, before forcing a smile. "Is it odd to be in the know about such things?"

“Very odd,” Elyse said, her gaze steady. “Honestly, sometimes it feels like you’re not just a violinist. You seem like...”

Edward felt a chill run down his spine at Elyse’s words.

However, Elyse couldn’t quite put her finger on what Edward reminded her of, so she decided to brush it off.

Just then, the hotel room doorbell chimed.

Chapter 759:

Edward strolled over to open the door. Jayden stood there, his eyes brimming with animosity. “What are you doing here?”

With a sly grin, Edward stepped aside and said to Elyse, “Your ex-husband’s here. Want me to chase him away?”

Remembering yesterday, Elyse felt a shiver run down her spine, but she quickly pulled herself together.

She replied softly, “No need. Let him in.”

Edward turned and smirked, saying, “You’re in luck. Come on in.”

Jayden stared at Edward for a moment before saying, “You’re in the way. Get out.”

Edward immediately turned around, feigning tears, and said to Elyse, “Your ex-husband is kicking me out.”

Helpless, Elyse said gently, “Edward, please step outside. I need to talk to him alone.”

Edward’s face instantly fell when he heard this.

Jayden chuckled softly. "Sorry, but you need to leave."

Edward left with a sullen expression.

As soon as the door closed, Jayden rushed to Elyse's side. Grabbing her hand, he asked anxiously, "Are you alright? Is there anywhere you feel uncomfortable?"

Elyse pulled her hand back and turned her face away, unable to meet Jayden's eyes. "Why do you keep coming to see me? Don't you understand what I've been through?"

Jayden lowered his gaze, his voice heavy with melancholy. "I know."

"Then leave! Stop coming to see me. Your girlfriend will kill me if she finds out you came to see me." Elyse had already experienced Aarya's craziness firsthand yesterday.

Aarya had no regard for human life. To her, killing someone was a trivial matter.

Jayden, looking downcast, reached out to grab Elyse's hand, but she jerked it away.

"When I got there yesterday, you had just passed out," Jayden said, his voice heavy with regret. "I'm so sorry for putting you in danger."

Elyse buried her face into her hands, biting her lip, trying her best to hide her fear and terror.

She tried to put on a tough act. Despite that, she was still shaken as she faced what she thought would be her end.

Last night's close call with death had already become a haunting nightmare that lingered in her mind.

Jayden pulled her close, embracing her tightly. She resisted at first, tears welling up in her eyes.

“Don’t try to be tough. Let me hold you.” Jayden gently tightened his grip, and Elyse found herself in his arms.

Feeling her body tremble, Jayden softly patted her back.

“It’s okay. Don’t be afraid. I’m always here for you.”

As Elyse felt the warmth Jayden provided, the gloom in her eyes gradually lifted. She asked quietly, “Did you come to save me yesterday?”

“Yes,” Jayden replied, his voice thick with emotion.

Elyse closed her eyes in exhaustion. “How did you save me? Weren’t you scared of Aarya?”

Jayden answered, “I brought the police with me.”

Chapter 760:

Elyse was shocked. “How did you have the nerve to bring the police? Aren’t you scared of Aarya’s family?”

Jayden let out a soft chuckle. “You don’t need to worry about me. I know how to look after myself.”

Elyse felt something was wrong. She pushed Jayden away and stared intently at him. “Are you keeping something from me?”

Jayden smirked. “Why would you think that?”

Disappointment flashed in Elyse’s eyes. “You always hide things from me. Why would this time be any different?”

She slipped away from him and got out of bed.

Jayden stood up and grabbed her arm. “Where are you going?”

“Why should I tell you?” Elyse glared at him coldly. “You’re no one to me. Why should I share anything with you?”

Jayden looked at the black shirt she was wearing. “Fine, you don’t have to tell me. Just take off the shirt you’re wearing. It’s mine.”

Elyse was in disbelief as she froze in place. “Your shirt? Did you change my clothes?”

Jayden countered, “Who else do you think could have done it?”

Elyse hit Jayden repeatedly as rage fueled her. “Who do you think you are to do that? You’re such a jerk! You’re a pervert! You saw my naked body.”

Jayden endured the punches she’d been throwing at him. They barely hurt him anyway.

He caught her fists and caressed them gently. “I’ll take responsibility for seeing your naked body. How should I make it up to you? How about I marry you?”

“Bah! Dream on. I’ll never get married to you. Leave.” Elyse tried to force Jayden out, but he remained still.

At the sight of her panting from such a feat, he couldn’t help teasing her. “Is that all you’ve got? Maybe you should have some breakfast first before kicking me out.”

As her blood boiled from rage, Elyse almost collapsed.

Jayden quickly snatched her waist and caught her lips with his.

Jayden’s lips met Elyse’s in a fervent kiss; he held her so tightly that she almost swooned in his arms. Only when she seemed breathless did he reluctantly release her.

Noticing her dizziness, a genuine smile played across his face.

“Why do you look a bit silly?” he teased gently.

Exasperated by Jayden’s kiss, Elyse shut her eyes tight, refusing to meet his gaze.

Miffed by her silent treatment, Jayden’s fingers found her waist, giving it a playful poke.

“What do you want?” Elyse asked, impatience coloring her voice as she kept her eyes shut.

“I came to check on your recovery. Seeing that you’re feisty enough to hit and scold me, I’m relieved,” Jayden replied, his eyes brimming with uncharacteristic warmth.

Elyse’s brows knitted in suspicion; his words seemed peculiar. She seized his collar, pulling him close. “What are you hiding from me? Even after our divorce, you keep secrets.”

“I won’t tell you. Angry now?” Jayden replied, gently releasing his grip. His fingers combed through her tousled locks, smoothing them back into place.