

Bound love 811

Chapter 811:

Theo pondered for a moment, then extended the roses toward Elyse with a smile. “If you’re curious, accept these roses. Then I’ll tell you.”

It was just another one of his manipulative tactics.

Elyse clenched her teeth and took the roses, albeit reluctantly.

Noticing her reluctance, Theo shook his head. “You don’t seem too keen. You’ve annoyed me now, so I won’t share anything.”

Elyse’s anger surged, and she almost lashed out at Theo.

However, thinking of Jayden, she restrained herself. Swallowing her frustration, she asked, “What do you need from me to be satisfied?”

Theo checked his watch, then proposed, “Go on a date with me. I’ll make sure you’re back at your hotel by midnight. Does that work for you?”

Elyse checked the time, her mind wrestling with the decision for a few seconds before she agreed.

Theo was visibly pleased, having achieved his aim. He smiled and said, “Your time belongs to me now, so don’t even think about escaping.”

Elyse closed her eyes, took a deep breath, and then nodded.

Theo looked at her and added, “You should look happy as well. Don’t appear indifferent or hostile. Enjoy the time with me.”

Elyse frowned. “You’re asking too much.”

Theo replied earnestly, “If you’re not willing to play along, then there’s no point in me telling you anything.”

After hesitating several times, Elyse sighed and helplessly said, “I’ll be happy.”

Theo extended his arm, hinting with his eyes. Elyse stared blankly for a few seconds before catching on.

She took his arm, offered him a sweet smile, and said cheerfully, “Shall we go on that date then?”

Theo nodded contentedly. “I’ll buy you anything you want.”

Just as Elyse was about to object, she noticed Edward, holding a violin case, staring in shock at her arm linked with Theo’s.

Immediately, Edward looked suspiciously at Theo. “Who are you? Why are you holding Elyse’s arm?”

Marching ahead, Edward pulled Elyse to his side, his expression darkening with anger. “Is Elyse your girlfriend? What gives you the right to keep her here?”

Hearing this, Elyse realized that Edward had completely misread her situation with Theo. However, before she could correct him, Theo sneered, “As if she’s not!”

With a quick, firm motion, Theo dragged Elyse back to his side.

Next, he gripped her shoulders, his voice dripping with arrogance as he raised an eyebrow. “Tell him, are you leaving with me now, or staying with him?”

Chapter 812:

Elyse frowned, thinking Theo’s actions were over the top. Still, her curiosity about Jayden’s past made her go along with it.

After a pause, she sighed and said, “I’m so sorry, Edward. I have to go with him. But there’s no need for you to be worried about me, okay?”

Edward’s surprise was evident, his objection immediate. “But we planned to go on a date after the competition!”

Theo, like a proud peacock, paraded in front of Elyse, a self-satisfied grin declaring his dominance. “Sorry, she’s with me for the rest of the day.”

Clenching his fists, Edward turned his shocked gaze towards Elyse.

However, her face showed neither regret for Edward nor anger at Theo’s brazen behavior. Instead, her expression remained completely indifferent.

Smiling, Theo led Elyse away, but couldn’t resist looking back at Edward, a mocking wave accompanying his parting words. “Don’t bother us.”

Edward’s face was livid, his anger barely contained. In fact, he looked quite murderous.

As Elyse settled into Theo’s car, she rested her chin on one hand, staring out the window. “Even though I gave you a chance, don’t push it. I can always walk away,” she said with a hint of boredom.

Hearing this, Theo glanced at her, finally voicing the thought that had been nagging at him. “You’re so different now. It’s like you’re not the same Elyse I remember.”

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The comment intrigued Elyse, and she turned to him, raising an eyebrow and asking, “Tell me, what was I like in your memories?”

Pursing his lips, Theo recalled their wedding day, the most vivid image in his mind. Elyse had been stunning then, yet failing to spark any passion within him.

The Elyse he remembered had been too bland, lacking the allure that ignites desire. But now, she had become so captivating and a little aggressive.

Theo's eyes lingered on Elyse's face as he said slowly, "In my memories, you never made me feel desire. But now, just being near you lights an unquenchable fire in me."

"Well, in my mind, you've always been the same, unchanged," Elyse said with a faint smile.

Hearing this, Theo raised an eyebrow and asked, "Is that why you don't like me?"

A long silence stretched between them before Elyse spoke. "I did once, but that was a long time ago."

A trace of bitterness colored her voice as she looked at Theo and added firmly, "Just because I agreed to this date, don't think you can win me back with memories. Let's be clear, there's nothing worth remembering in our past, and I certainly don't have any lingering feelings for you."

Curling his lips into a wry smile, Theo said, "Do you really have to keep reminding me not to fall for you? You've always been special to me, haven't you?"

Elyse's eyes dropped to the roses in her hands, and a memory of their wedding day came unbidden. A touch of sarcasm crept into her voice as she said, "If you had truly cared for me, do you think you would have left me at the altar for Kaelyn?"

The mere mention of that day sparked anger in Theo, but when he looked into Elyse's scornful eyes, all he felt was a wave of guilt.

Chapter 813:

Elyse was right. If he had truly loved her, if he had genuinely been committed to her, he would never have abandoned her on their wedding day. Indeed, as he was the one who had hurt her, it was only fair that she resented him.

After a moment of silence, he said, “Sometimes I think about what happened at the wedding and wonder, if I hadn’t left you and had someone else look for Kaelyn, would things have been different between us?”

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His voice trailed off as he mused, “If we had gotten married as planned, we’d almost be celebrating our first anniversary now. You’d be off at competitions, and I’d be rushing to finish work to spend time with you. We could have been so happy.”

Elyse’s gaze dropped, loose strands of hair falling over her lowered eyes.

Lost in his thoughts, Theo didn’t notice that Elyse’s feelings for him had long since faded away.

It was a cruel irony when one person was still in love, while the other had already moved on. To love, but not be loved in return was nothing short of a terrible fate.

As Theo’s memories faded, a faint anxiety crept into him. He swiftly turned his gaze toward Elyse, and seeing her calmly observing him, he felt both reassured and slightly melancholic.

At that moment, Elyse’s captivating eyes were empty. In Theo’s recollections, they always sparkled with admiration and devotion, and whenever she looked at him, he always felt like the brightest star in the sky.

But now, as Elyse simply regarded him, he sensed that the glint in her eyes had dimmed. He felt no different from a common stone in a heap.

Theo slowly opened his mouth, hesitated for a while, then finally asked, “What do I need to do to make you love me again? Over the past year, I’ve come to understand a lot. I have finally realized that even though wealth is wonderful, it can’t buy everything. I...”

Suddenly, the car jerked to an abrupt stop, cutting off Theo’s words.

He was deeply frustrated at this. Just as he was finally opening up, his words were abruptly halted. Looking angry, he fumed, “What’s going on?!”

The driver, with a shaky voice, replied, “Apologies, Mr. Ward. The car skidded, and I had to brake suddenly to avoid a collision.”

Gritting his teeth, Theo tried to compose himself, saying with irritation, “Be more cautious while driving.”

With that, he then looked back at Elyse.

At that moment, Elyse’s head was lowered, and she was lightly touching the rose petals. Thinking she was upset, Theo tried to soothe her, saying, “Did the abrupt stop scare you? I’m sorry, okay? The snow is heavy, and the roads are slippery.”

Elyse lifted her head, gave a half-hearted smile, and replied, “I’m alright. You don’t need to worry about me.”

Her distant demeanor made Theo feel at a loss, unsure of how to win over the girl he admired.

Before reuniting with Elyse, he had envisioned countless scenarios of how their conversation might unfold. In fact, he had even prepared for her various reactions, planning out his responses, words, and actions.

But when he finally faced her, he realized all his preparations were useless. He couldn’t navigate her emotions as easily as he had imagined.

Chapter 814:

Clearly, he had overestimated his own capabilities.

Noticing that they were approaching the city center, Elyse inquired, “Is your plan to eat first or do something else?”

Theo snapped out of his thoughts and quickly replied, “Are you hungry? If so, I’ll take you somewhere to eat.”

Elyse hesitated briefly, then held her stomach and replied, “Let’s eat first.”

Hearing this, Theo exhaled in relief, a smile spreading across his face as he instructed the driver, “Take us to the restaurant I reserved.”

“Sure,” the driver replied. Through the rearview mirror, the driver stole a glance at Theo.

Why did it seem like Theo had lost some of his sharpness? So it was true that love can make a wise person turn into a fool...

Ten minutes later, Elyse and Theo stepped out of the car. After a quick glance at the restaurant, she said, “You really went out of your way to find such an adorable place.”

Theo caught the undertone in her voice and replied with a bit of embarrassment, “I know you like charming things, so I thought you might enjoy this spot.”

The restaurant was adorned with plush toys, creating a cute but somewhat childlike ambiance that attracted many young women to take pictures and dine.

Elyse did appreciate it. In fact, she liked it so much that she would pause just to admire the place, even if she wasn’t hungry. She could see herself always stopping here for a cup of coffee if she lived here.

Unexpectedly, Elyse was reminded of past memories. Smiling mockingly, she remarked, “You never used to bring me to places like this. You said they were too childish and didn’t fit your image. But later, I found out you do love to go to such places—just not with me.”

Theo felt a pang of panic when she said this. He desperately wanted to win back her favor but dreaded the possibility of revisiting old wounds.

They were simply too painful.

He couldn't fathom why he had treated the woman who loved him so poorly. It made him want to punch himself in the face.

Leaning closer, Theo softly pleaded, "I was wrong, Elyse. Please don't be upset. Trust me, I'll do all I can to make it up to you from now on."

Hearing this, Elyse glanced at Theo. His cautious approach didn't anger her; instead, she felt a hint of pity.

However, she chose to remain silent, unwilling to dredge up the past, and quickly ascended the steps.

Theo quietly exhaled in relief, then rushed to follow her, holding the glass door open.

Elyse looked at Theo without speaking and walked straight inside.

As they walked in, a waiter approached to guide them. Once they were seated at the restaurant's prime spot, Elyse looked up at the clear glass ceiling, which framed the falling snow outside.

Theo took the initiative to break the silence, asking, "Do you like the view here?"

Chapter 815:

Elyse withdrew her gaze and softly answered with a "yes."

Theo's face lit up. He had gone to great lengths to plan their date, striving to make it enjoyable and not something Elyse would find tedious or unpleasant.

In the past, she always seemed content and happy, smiling sweetly at him. But now, things had changed. He was more cautious, not wanting to treat her in a way that seemed insincere or casual.

“The wine here is excellent. Would you like to try some?” Theo asked cautiously. “Don’t worry, I’ll make sure you don’t get drunk or feel uncomfortable.”

Elyse touched her chin, pondered for a moment, then nodded. “Alright, I’ll try it.”

Seeing that his effort to impress her was successful, Theo’s smile grew even broader.

As he placed their order with the waiter, Elyse rested her chin on her hands, lost in thought.

After placing the order, Theo noticed her intense gaze and asked, “Why are you looking at me like that? Is there something on my face?”

Elyse shook her head and said, “It seems like since our breakup, we’ve never really sat down and talked seriously.”

Theo was taken aback, then nodded slowly, his voice low as he said, “You’re right, I’ve tried to talk to you before, but you always avoided spending time with me.”

With a hurt expression, he continued, “You kept insisting that since you were married, we should keep certain boundaries.”

Elyse nodded and said, “And I wasn’t wrong. We do need to maintain some boundaries.”

Theo massaged his tense face, fighting back his emotions, and countered defiantly, “What boundaries? I was your boyfriend. Why should there be boundaries between us? We’ve been together for three years.”

“But during those three years, you never loved me, did you? You never truly behaved like a boyfriend. How long have you been betraying me? Do you need me to remind you?” Elyse asked, her head tilted, a sarcastic smile on her lips.

Theo opened his mouth to respond, then offered a resigned smile. “I should have known. Sitting down for a serious conversation, there’s nothing pleasant for us to discuss.”

Elyse gave a soft laugh as the waiter delivered the wine. She took a sip, relishing the sweet flavor.

She continued, “So I don’t see why you’d want to talk. What is there to discuss about our past? It’s all just bad memories and disappointments.”

Theo’s eyes reddened, and he shook his head. “No, I still want to talk. I admit I was terrible. Shortly after we got together, I began flirting with other girls. After reconnecting with Kaelyn, I started spending time with her too.”

He confessed, “I was a real jerk. It wasn’t until I lost you that I realized what I truly needed from a relationship. I also realized the importance of the love I had lost. Back then, I was shortsighted, only seeing things from my limited point of view.”

After saying so much, Theo fell silent. He covered his face, the agony clearly etched across it.

Elyse could see that Theo’s pain was real at that moment, and he had truly come to understand himself. Since their separation, Theo had undergone significant changes, which had led him to recognize his true feelings.

Chapter 816:

She didn’t question his remorse or sincerity then, but they had parted ways almost a year earlier.

Elyse heard the sound of sobbing. She looked up to see Theo tightly covering his face, trying to mask his tears, his cheeks strained.

She didn’t know how to comfort him, sensing he was struggling to keep his composure and not wanting her to witness his tears.

Elyse picked up her wine glass, took a sip, and shifted the conversation. “Have you met anyone else this past year who has touched your heart? Why not release yourself from this past relationship and start anew with someone else?”

Theo bit his lip, shook his head vigorously, and then spoke, trying to hold back his emotions. “Once you’ve really loved, it’s difficult to feel the same way about someone else. I know that, despite my wealth, when it comes to love, I’m just an ordinary man. How could I find true love twice?”

Elyse was slightly amused by his remark. “How many relationships have you had that you think you understand true love?”

Theo wiped his face, clearing the moisture, and asserted firmly, “I do understand it. You might not realize it when you’re in true love, but once you’ve been through it, you start to understand and become aware.”

He gave a wry smile. “People often say you don’t appreciate what you have until it’s gone. But I didn’t even understand love. No one taught me what love truly meant. Because I’d never really felt love before, I underestimated it when someone loved me. Did I really not need that love? No, I needed it deeply. But by the time I realized, I had already lost it.”

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Theo looked up at Elyse, a trace of sadness in his eyes. “I can’t fault the person who loved me for walking away, because I know she did everything she could. If there’s anyone to blame, it’s me. It’s the part of me that’s still growing.”

Elyse was surprised to hear how deeply Theo had reflected. Her heart felt a tug.

Theo exhaled and chuckled. “I’m a wealthy man. Money and power usually put me above others. But in love, we’re all equal. The only real difference is whether you love or are loved.”

Theo’s smile vanished, leaving his face blank, with a faint trace of sorrow in his eyes.

He spoke in a flat tone, “I’m the one who wasn’t loved.”

Elyse simply gazed at him for a moment before she lifted her wine glass, taking a sip. The sweetness of the wine offset the bitterness on her tongue.

Something crossed her mind, prompting her to say, “But wasn’t Freda fond of you? I remember hearing that you turned her down, and the engagement was called off.”

With a wistful smile, Elyse added, “You’re not exactly starved for affection, are you?”

Theo, with a helpless grin, leaned back in his chair, arms crossed. “Freda? Yes, she liked me, but that was all. She didn’t truly love me.”

As Elyse picked up her fork and tasted her meal, she probed further, “How can you be so certain she didn’t love you? Isn’t that a bit presumptuous?”

Theo looked directly at Elyse, his eyes alight, and explained, “Because I’ve known real love. I’ve been graced by true affection, which lets me distinguish between mere liking and deep love.”

Chapter 817:

He then playfully chided her in a light-hearted manner, “If only you hadn’t been so genuine and devoted in our own affair, moving on and finding someone new wouldn’t have been so challenging.”

Elyse chuckled in response, retorting, “So, it’s my fault for being too sincere?”

Theo chuckled too, but he bowed his head to hide his red eyes as he fought back the wave of emotions surging within him.

He covered his face with his hand, a shield against his own vulnerability and helplessness, and continued to reproach her, “Had you been indifferent, treated me casually, and just used me, I surely would’ve fallen for Freda when I met her later. But...”

But Elyse was too exceptional.

Theo realized there indeed was a woman in this world capable of loving him with her entire heart and soul. With her, he didn't need to strategize, tally scores, or engage in any intense manipulations. With her, he could simply be Theo Ward—just a man, nothing more, nothing less.

After a brief pause, Elyse exhaled a weary sigh. "Please don't cry. I'm not good at consoling you anymore."

"I'll try to hold back," he replied, his voice laced with a bitter sadness.

To mask her discomfort, Elyse resumed eating in silence. The waiter had already brought out all their dishes.

Since she was famished after the competition, she concentrated solely on satisfying her hunger, barely noticing anything else.

Once Theo regained some control over his feelings, he looked up to see Elyse thoroughly enjoying her meal. His own appetite had vanished. He simply rested his chin on his hand and watched her intently.

Feeling his eyes on her, Elyse glanced up to find him staring. Surprised, she inquired, "Why are you just sitting there? Aren't you going to eat?"

Theo hesitated, about to confess his lack of appetite, but Elyse insisted warmly, "You are the one asking me out today; you might as well enjoy it and have a good meal. Got it?"

Pausing briefly, Theo nodded, then began to eat using his fork.

They continued their meal in silence for a time.

Approaching the meal's end, Theo let out a heartfelt sigh. "Ever since we split, I've wanted to share a meal like this with you. Only today have I managed to."

Elyse gave him a playful smile. “Were you that keen on treating me?”

“Yes, I suppose it’s because I didn’t do right by you when we were together. I’ve been trying to make amends ever since,” Theo confessed openly.

Elyse shook her head gently. “You’re overthinking it. I don’t need any compensation from you. Don’t burden yourself with that thought.”

Theo responded with a wistful smile, then bowed his head and continued eating.

After finishing the main course, Elyse indulged in her dessert and then posed a question. “So, when will you tell me about Jayden?”

Chapter 818:

Theo answered, “It’s still a bit early. I’ll fill you in later.”

Elyse cast a skeptical glance at Theo. “Do you truly know anything about him, or is this just your way of drawing me in?”

Theo chuckled, clearly frustrated. “I don’t need any excuses to get close to you. Trust me, I’ll keep my promise.”

Elyse was only somewhat reassured.

After finishing their meal, Elyse got up and left the restaurant with Theo. They headed to a nearby mall.

As they strolled past a jewelry store, Theo reached for Elyse’s hand, aiming to lead her inside. However, she pulled away.

“Don’t even think about giving me jewelry. I’m not accepting it,” Elyse declared firmly. Her smile was gentle, but her eyes were resolute, prompting Theo to drop the subject.

He exhaled deeply. “Actually, I wanted to give you a ring as a token of what I owed you from our planned wedding. It was my way of making amends,” he confessed.

Elyse looked towards the jewelry store and stated calmly, “Since the wedding never happened, you owe me nothing.”

Theo felt a wave of unease after Elyse spoke, worried she might be disappointed in him because of his plan.

Attempting to maintain his composure, he inquired, “If we’re not heading to the jewelry store, then where do you suggest we go?”

Elyse gave Theo a quick look. “Didn’t you mention you had everything figured out?”

Flushing with embarrassment, Theo admitted, “I initially planned to take you to pick out some jewelry, followed by a trip to a high-end store for handbags and clothes. But it seems you’re not interested in that sort of thing.”

Elyse couldn’t suppress a chuckle. “Was that your grand plan for our date?”

Theo’s awkwardness intensified. “I consulted several friends, and they all assured me you’d be thrilled with the idea. They claimed it was foolproof for impressing any woman.”

Elyse nodded in acknowledgment. “They might be onto something, but I’m just not feeling it today.”

Theo’s heart sank. Would nothing he planned today please her?

Resigned, he suggested, “Forget it. Let’s just find a quiet spot to sit and chat. You wanted to learn more about Jayden, right? I’ll fill you in on everything.”

Elyse looked surprised but didn’t object.

They settled into a cozy café. While Elyse savored the chocolate cake Theo had ordered, she probed, “So, what’s Jayden’s secret? What do you know?”

Theo, encouraged by her direct approach, didn’t hesitate and revealed, “Did you know he was brought up by Enzo?” Elyse continued to eat her cake, nodding in response.

Theo explained, “Jayden was quickly taken into Enzo’s care as soon as he began to recognize words. He was sent abroad in secrecy until he was ten, then disappeared for seven years before resurfacing in public.”

He then went on, “Shortly after Jayden came back, a series of violent episodes broke out. The victims were left nearly dead, beaten by Jayden, while the Owen family managed to keep it all under wraps.”

Elyse’s face registered complete bewilderment, unable to grasp the full implications.

Theo noticed her puzzled look, exhaled deeply, and said with gravity, “Jayden suffers from mania. That’s what the doctors determined after evaluating him post those incidents. You might find him calm and benign now, but it’s merely a facade.”

Elyse reacted with disbelief. “Mania? But he’s always been gentle with me.”

Theo questioned her, “Are you certain?”

“I…” Elyse faltered, her memory hazy as she tried to recall instances when Jayden had been violent, particularly during their heated arguments and intimate moments.

At times, Jayden seemed like an uncontrollable force, driven by primal desires, completely disregarding her boundaries.

Seeing her begin to recollect, Theo spoke with a tone of resignation. “You have to see, Jayden is a complete lunatic. It’s only because of Enzo’s intervention and forced treatment that he’s been somewhat stable.”

After a brief silence, Theo pressed on. “But how can you be sure he won’t turn violent towards you someday?”

Elyse sighed inwardly, realizing that Jayden's violent tendencies weren't just confined to his actions in bed; they were a part of him. He wasn't just blowing off steam but truly hadn't calmed down.

After a moment of reflection, she questioned, "What's Jayden been up to these past seven years? Have you uncovered anything?"

Theo shook his head, disappointment lining his features. "Nothing concrete. It's like those years have been wiped clean by the Owen family. It's a total blackout on any details. But, I've learned that the Owens are tightly knit with the Hudsons. Enzo and the Hudsons work closely together."

"The Hudsons are involved with Enzo?" Elyse asked, her disbelief clear.

"Yes, though I'm not privy to the details of their dealings. The Hudsons are even more enigmatic and tougher to pin down than Enzo himself," Theo confirmed.

Elyse mulled over the information. "That explains why Jayden's been so secretive."

Theo, observing Elyse's concern for Jayden, felt a twinge of envy. He couldn't help but speak ill of Jayden.

"Whatever it is that the Hudson and Owen families are cooking up, Jayden's part of it. Staying with him isn't safe. Why not consider someone safer? Like me, I'm just an ordinary guy."

His words broke through her thoughts. Elyse gave him a helpless smile and replied, "Theo, it seems you're still not ready to let go. I've moved on, but you're still living in the past."

Chapter 819:

Theo was caught between frustration and resignation.

He asked, "Even with Jayden's mental issues, do you refuse to part ways with him? Is your affection for him that profound? What if he becomes harmful in the future? What if he hits you? Have you thought about your own well-being at all?"

Elyse was taken aback and responded, "I hadn't considered that far ahead."

Theo suddenly became more emotional. "No. You cannot simply ignore this. You must think about it. You need to determine who is genuinely the best man for you, someone who can remain by your side forever."

Elyse replied, "I truly don't know if Jayden might turn violent or deteriorate mentally in the future. As of now, he hasn't behaved that way."

Theo sighed, exasperated. "So, you don't intend to leave him, right?"

Elyse was at a loss for words. She and Jayden had already ended their marriage, so leaving him wasn't really an issue anymore. Yet, she had no intention of informing Theo about her divorce from Jayden.

But why was Theo unaware of the divorce? Could it be because Jayden had not told him? Why hadn't Jayden mentioned it?

Elyse was uncertain about what Jayden was thinking. It seemed he held many thoughts but never chose to express his feelings.

Elyse had to depend on what others said about Jayden to gradually understand his world.

After a lengthy silence, Theo expressed helplessly, "I truly envy him."

Elyse looked confused. "You envy Jayden? For what do you envy him?"

Theo just smiled weakly and remained silent.

He envied that Jayden had the most loving woman in the world, who would stay by his side despite knowing his mental challenges.

And this deeply loving woman had almost been his own wife.

Theo kept his true feelings to himself, not daring to share them.

Elyse continued to enjoy her cake. Once she finished, she inquired, "What's next?"

Theo, feeling disheartened, responded, "Do you still want to spend time with me? I've told you everything about Jayden, you can choose to leave."

Elyse checked the time and remarked, "There's still some time left before the day is over."

Theo dismissed the idea with a wave of his hand. "All my plans today have lost their purpose. Let's cut the date short."

Elyse paused to think, then suggested, "What if I take you somewhere?"

Theo looked up, curious. "Where would you take me?"

"Let's go before it gets late." Elyse realized that after today, she might never spend time alone with Theo again. She decided it was best to cut off all ties today.

Elyse guided Theo out of the restaurant. After they left the mall, they walked together for more than ten minutes until they reached a plaza.

Chapter 820:

At the center of the plaza was a musical fountain that was still operational, probably due to scheduled performances.

Elyse pointed at the musical fountain and mentioned, “At midnight, there will be a performance here. Let’s wait and watch.”

Theo had no interest in such things. He found them tedious and a complete waste of time.

Elyse had always enjoyed these simple pleasures, which was why he had been reluctant to accompany her. It never seemed worth the effort.

Now, as they awaited the start of the musical fountain show, his lack of enthusiasm remained unchanged.

As the crowd grew, Theo became both depressed and perplexed. He wondered why so many people would come out to watch a musical fountain on such a chilly night instead of staying home to sleep.

When midnight arrived, the fountain started its display, but there was no music accompanying it.

“Why isn’t there any music? Could the equipment be frozen?”

“Oh! I specifically came to see this musical fountain, and it’s so cold out here. If I had known the music wouldn’t work, I wouldn’t have bothered.”

“Unfortunately, I’m feeling down today and was hoping the musical fountain would cheer me up.”

As people slowly started to leave, Theo stated in a calm tone, “The musical fountain isn’t working right. Let’s head back.”

Elyse shook her head and offered a smile. “Did you forget? Music is my specialty.”

Under Theo’s confused look, he watched as Elyse pulled out a violin and moved towards the fountain’s edge.

Elyse's unusual actions drew the attention of those nearby, and they paused to observe her.

As she began playing, the onlookers expressed their astonishment.

Elyse used her violin to enhance the atmosphere around the fountain. As she played, the fountain's lights suddenly illuminated, creating a captivating scene where Elyse performed her music under the lights.

"Wow! She's playing the violin beautifully. I'm really moved."

"She's so adorable."

"Isn't she a contestant in this year's Swan Cup? I've seen her performance; she's remarkably talented."

As the surrounding chatter filled the air, Theo watched Elyse perform near the fountain, feeling his heart soften with each note. There were indeed things in this world more moving than money.

His gaze was tender and filled with admiration. Though Elyse was only a few steps away, it seemed to him like a gaping chasm separated them—unreachable and vast.

When Elyse finished her piece, the music fountain quieted, and the lights dimmed. She lowered her violin and looked towards Theo. He caught her gaze, his smile genuine but tinged with melancholy.