

Bound love 941

Chapter 941:

Steadying her breaths, Kaelyn replied smoothly, “I’m actually alone; I don’t know the shop you’re talking about. Maybe someone else might know?”

After a hesitant pause, Mabel asked, “Should I try calling Hyde directly?” Her voice betrayed the flutter of a heart in love.

Kaelyn knew Mabel was grasping at a pretext to connect with Hyde. A smirk played on her lips. “Yes, that might be quicker.”

As soon as the call ended, Kaelyn’s controlled moans began to fill the space around them.

Hyde chuckled lowly, his voice a blend of amusement and provocation. “Exciting, isn’t it? Part of you wanted her to find out.”

Unwavering, Kaelyn locked eyes with him, her voice resolute. “Keep going, or don’t ever come back.”

Hyde was still parsing her challenge when his phone buzzed again—it was Mabel calling back. He cast a bewildered look at Kaelyn. With a seductive tilt of her head, she whispered fiercely, “Don’t stop.”

Hyde instantly grasped her intent. His movements became relentless, like machinery in motion, driving Kaelyn toward the brink while he answered the phone. “Hey, Mabel. Do you need anything?”

Mabel’s voice fluttered with embarrassment as she replied, “Hyde, you mentioned wanting some chocolate, right? I went to buy it for you, but I can’t seem to find the shop. Could you give me the address?”

Hyde's lips curled into a smirk, amused by her earnestness. She actually went to buy it just because he asked. To him, Mabel was delightfully compliant, ready to bend to his whims.

The call stretched for eight minutes. If not for Kaelyn nearing her peak once more, Hyde might have prolonged the conversation. As he hung up, Kaelyn's control shattered, her scream echoing through the room. The two lay naked, wrapped in each other, relishing the afterglow of their shared ecstasy.

Kaelyn's voice was calm, yet her eyes sparkled with cunning as she revealed her plans. "I've figured out how to deal with Elyse. I've crafted the perfect scenario for her—a spectacle that will ensure she's the center of attention."

Intrigued, Hyde asked, "You won't let her off easily, will you?"

"Of course not," Kaelyn replied, her voice soft but filled with venom. "I've orchestrated everything up to this point to ensure her downfall, to strip her of everything."

Later that night, Mabel, having finally secured the chocolate, hesitated at Hyde's doorstep. It was late, and doubt crept in. Would he welcome her at this hour?

After a moment's hesitation, she rang the doorbell. Hyde answered shortly after, dressed only in a black robe. His gaze was warm yet tinged with a stormy darkness.

Mabel noted the cloud over his mood as she handed him the chocolate, her voice gentle. "Hyde, you seem a bit off. Is everything okay?"

Chapter 942:

Hyde met Mabel's gaze, his expression unreadable for a moment before he managed a weak smile. "How could you tell? Don't worry, I'm fine," he assured her, though his grip on the chocolate tightened, betraying his true feelings.

"Thank you, Mabel," he murmured, the corners of his mouth lifting in a sad, wistful smile.

Seeing him so guarded, Mabel's concern deepened. She reached out, clasping his hand firmly. "I'm more than just your girlfriend; I'm your partner. Whatever's weighing on you, you don't have to carry it alone," she insisted, her voice filled with urgency.

A flicker of warmth touched Hyde's eyes, but it vanished as quickly as it appeared. His smile twisted slightly. "Forget it. I'll be better after tonight. Just don't worry about me. Tomorrow, I'll be the man you need me to be—your rock."

Mabel shook her head, her reply quick and sincere. "I don't need you to be my rock or any version of yourself you think I want. I love you, all of you, flaws included. So please, just talk to me. Whatever it is, we'll face it together."

The cold wind swept through, making the night even chillier. Hyde ran his tongue over his upper lip, a sly look in his eyes, though Mabel couldn't see it. "You really don't need to go out of your way for me," he said smoothly. "As my girlfriend, I just want you to be happy. That's all I need—just having you by my side."

Mabel shook her head stubbornly. "No way! I'm not just a friend; I'm your girlfriend. If something involves you, I'm the one who should be helping."

Feeling that Hyde was being too distant, she brushed past him and stepped into his house.

The heating was on, but the floor felt cold against her bare feet. Mabel glanced around, taking in the space. His house lacked warmth, as if it didn't belong to anyone. Hyde closed the door behind them, silently watching her. The prey had walked right into his trap, and he couldn't help but feel pleased. He knew he wouldn't be bored for a while.

After scanning the room to ensure there were no traces of other women, Mabel turned toward Hyde, who stood in the shadows. "Why is your place so empty?" she asked, her tone tinged with concern. "Tomorrow, we're going shopping. Even if you live alone, you should take better care of yourself."

Hyde's response came quickly. "Why should I?"

"Because you're not alone anymore," Mabel said confidently. "You've got me."

The words had barely left her lips when she realized the commitment she was making. She sighed, softening. "Forget it. I'll just take care of you. I'll be coming by more often."

Hyde's eyes flickered, revealing a hint of reluctance. He clearly wasn't thrilled with the idea.

Chapter 943:

Seeing his resistance, Mabel placed her hands on her hips and marched up to him. "Whether you like it or not, you're stuck with me now. I'm your girlfriend, and I'm not going to hurt you."

Hyde turned his head slightly, avoiding her gaze. "Someone like me doesn't deserve your care. You should stay away. People like me are meant to be alone."

Mabel frowned. "Stop talking like that. I don't think any less of you, so don't put yourself down. What do you even mean by 'people like you'? Explain it to me." But Hyde remained silent, refusing to answer.

Frustrated by his attitude, Mabel clenched her fists but reminded herself of all the effort she'd put into winning over such a difficult man. Swallowing her frustration, she said firmly, "It's decided. Tomorrow, we're buying the essentials."

Suddenly, an idea crossed her mind. She yawned dramatically and stretched. "Where's your guest room? It's late. I'm staying here tonight."

Hyde could see through her act and chuckled to himself. It wasn't surprising that Kaelyn didn't take Mabel seriously. She was easy to manipulate, and he had no doubt he could handle her without much effort.

The next day, Elyse brought some treats to the rehearsal for her friends.

Edward accepted the jelly she handed him, feeling a bit annoyed. Once again, Jayden had brought her along. Lately, Jayden had been hovering around her, leaving Edward no chance to be alone with her.

After passing out the snacks, Elyse smiled and turned to Geraldine. “I couldn’t find that snack you mentioned last time, so I got something else instead.”

Geraldine lifted her chin, a touch of pride in her voice. “Just because you couldn’t find it doesn’t mean I can’t. After rehearsal, I’ll take you to the store myself.”

Elyse nodded, still smiling. “Sure. Thanks.”

Edward, overhearing the conversation, slipped closer. “Are you two going shopping? I’m coming along. You’re not leaving me behind.”

Elyse glanced at him, confused. How had he heard them when they were speaking so quietly?

Darren joined in, grinning as he approached Elyse. “Where are you going? I’m in. Vicky went home, so I’ve got no one to hang out with, and I’m bored out of my mind.”

In the end, Elyse and Geraldine’s quiet shopping trip turned into a full-blown group outing. Everyone was chatting, excitedly planning where to go next.

Suddenly, Geraldine, mid-sip from her water bottle, choked a little and stared at the door. “Is she here?”

Chapter 944:

Fiona stood at the entrance to the rehearsal hall, scanning the room. Geraldine’s eyes widened in shock. “How did she get in? Wasn’t she behind bars?”

Edward leaned against the wall, arms crossed. “They let her go. There wasn’t enough evidence to hold her.”

“So, you’re saying she didn’t do it?” Geraldine asked, still stunned.

“Lack of evidence doesn’t mean she’s innocent,” Edward replied, his voice low. He had been present during Fiona’s interrogation. They knew someone was helping her, but they hadn’t figured out who yet. Until then, the police had no choice but to release her.

When Fiona spotted Elyse, her eyes sparkled. Without hesitation, she stepped into the room.

Elyse’s expression darkened at the sight of Fiona. Wrinkling her brow, she snapped, “Why aren’t you staying at the hotel? Why are you here?”

Fiona rattled the food container she held. “You’ve been putting in long hours at rehearsals. I was worried you might be running low on energy, so I brought you some snacks.” She pulled out the snacks and offered a sheepish smile. “Would you like to try one?”

Elyse regarded Fiona with suspicion. As Fiona extended the snacks, Elyse’s instincts screamed caution. She quickly declined, “No. I don’t want any. I’m not hungry.”

Fiona’s face fell, and she glanced around at the others, looking forlorn. She began again, “Elyse, can’t you forgive me? I’m truly sorry.”

She hesitated, then added with a hint of frustration, “I just hoped to lift your spirits with some of your favorite snacks. I’m trying to patch things up between us.”

Elyse had had enough of Fiona’s act. How could Fiona possibly confess to her wrongdoings? If she were truly remorseful, she wouldn’t have behaved the way she did the previous day. It was obvious she had ulterior motives.

Yet Elyse couldn’t decipher Fiona’s scheme. All she could do was maintain her distance to protect herself.

Lost in thought, Elyse didn’t notice one of the contestants observing the exchange. Seeing Fiona’s apparent distress, he felt a pang of sympathy. He criticized Elyse, saying, “I don’t know what your issue is with her, but she’s gone to the trouble of bringing snacks to win your forgiveness. Why are you so unforgiving, refusing to let her make amends?”

Elyse turned to face him. His name was Quinn Wright, a contestant who generally kept to himself, tied for third place. While others chatted during breaks, Quinn usually absorbed himself in his phone. It was unexpected when he spoke in Fiona's defense.

Chapter 945:

With someone backing her, Fiona sensed a victory. Before Elyse could respond, she quickly interjected, "You don't need to say that. It's my fault. If she doesn't want to forgive or accept me, I deserve it."

Quinn frowned, his displeasure evident. "Give her some leeway, Elyse. You and Fiona were friends. Why be so indifferent and cruel? Or do you believe that since you've climbed to the top, you no longer need friends?"

Elyse, amused by his accusation, retorted, "You label me as indifferent and cruel? Are you aware of how she has treated me? Do you even grasp the grudge between us?"

Quinn found himself speechless, yet Fiona's visible sorrow seemed to validate his stance. "Regardless of the conflict's magnitude, I believe any dispute can be settled if you're willing to sit and discuss it."

Geraldine couldn't contain herself any longer and asked, "May I inquire about your relationship with Fiona Evans? Your defense of her was so strong, I almost believed she was your girlfriend."

Quinn appeared irritated. "I'm not acquainted with her, nor do I understand her. I simply perceive her as pitiful. Despite her efforts for Elyse, she refused to grant her a chance. She truly is cold-hearted."

Elyse snorted in response. "If you pity her and think I'm cold and cruel, that's your concern. But please, just leave me alone."

With that, Elyse ended the conversation and turned to leave.

Geraldine glared at Quinn and quickly followed Elyse. Darren and Edward exchanged puzzled looks, trying to make sense of the unfolding drama.

Geraldine caught up with Elyse and linked arms with her, trying to calm her. “Relax. Quinn has always had trouble distinguishing right from wrong, which is probably why he’s friendless.”

Elyse shook her head. “I’m not upset with him.”

It was understandable that an outsider like Quinn was oblivious to Fiona’s true nature, having been swayed by her act. Yet, what truly infuriated Elyse was not just Fiona’s deception but the insidious intent behind her gestures.

Elyse knew Fiona was determined to stay but couldn’t manage it alone, so Fiona feigned kindness toward her. Quinn, unfamiliar with Fiona, was easily deceived by her seemingly pitiful demeanor.

However, other performers were present in the room. Elyse pondered whether Fiona’s pitiful appearance might sway them as well. Could this shift in perception recast Fiona as the victim and herself as the antagonist? The more Elyse mulled it over, the more convinced she became that Fiona was concocting a scheme.

Elyse couldn’t shake off her suspicions about Fiona’s intentions in staying. Was Fiona plotting to usurp her position?

While Elyse was lost in thought, an instructor for the tour entered and commenced the day’s training. Elyse pushed her concerns aside, picked up her violin, and positioned herself in front of the instructor. Noticing Fiona skulking in a corner, the instructor raised an eyebrow and inquired, “Who are you?”

Chapter 946:

Feeling the weight of everyone’s stares, Fiona stepped forward and answered, “Sir, I’m a contestant here to observe your rehearsal for the tour.”

The instructor pointed toward the exit and stated firmly, “Non-essential personnel, please leave. Do not disturb our training.”

Looking flustered, Fiona turned to Elyse and exclaimed, “Elyse, help me out here. I’m just standing here watching. I won’t cause any disturbance.”

The instructor’s gaze then fixed on Elyse, his tone tinged with displeasure as he asked, “Is she your friend?” Elyse noticed a brief flash of delight in Fiona’s eyes.

Darren, standing next to Elyse, cast her a worried glance. He knew the instructor was strict and intolerant of distractions. Any failure to pacify him might jeopardize Elyse’s performance.

“Why aren’t you speaking? If she’s a stranger, how does she know your name?” The instructor’s voice was tinged with irritation, the tension in the room mounting. Everyone held their breath, sensing that the instructor might soon ask Elyse to exit the rehearsal space.

“I know her, but she’s no friend of mine,” Elyse replied quietly, her tone laden with resignation. “She’s a former senior of mine. She didn’t fare well in this competition and seems unable to accept her defeat. That’s why she’s been shadowing me, hoping to watch our rehearsal.”

The instructor’s frown deepened. “A former senior? And who might your mentor be?”

Elyse responded honestly, “I study under Cody Tucker. She was once Cody’s student as well, but not anymore.” Elyse then looked directly at Fiona.

Fiona clearly hadn’t anticipated Elyse revealing their connection. As the room filled with inquisitive stares, Fiona’s embarrassment grew.

The instructor, knowing Cody well, doubted his willingness to dismiss a student casually. He probed further, asking, “Why was she dismissed? I know Cody; he doesn’t dismiss students lightly.”

Fiona gazed at Elyse, her face etched with dread. She absolutely couldn’t allow Elyse to expose her secrets. If the truth came out, Fiona feared her carefully crafted image would shatter.

Just as Elyse was poised to speak, Fiona cut in sharply. “Elyse, I think my being here is disruptive. I’ll step out now, and we can catch up after your rehearsal.”

Elyse observed Fiona’s hasty retreat, her lips curling into a subtle sneer. Fiona had aimed to create discord, but she had underestimated her.

And Elyse had no plans to let Fiona off the hook so easily. “Actually, Fiona was expelled because she...” Elyse didn’t hold back. Over the next ten minutes, she laid bare all of Fiona’s prior missteps, including the suspicions surrounding her during the competition.

Chapter 947:

Elyse’s detailed account effectively solidified Fiona’s negative image in everyone’s minds, deepening the instructor’s disdain for her.

After rehearsal, with her violin case in hand, Elyse deliberately avoided Fiona. She and Geraldine quietly exited the music hall, planning a leisurely shopping excursion. After informing Jayden of their itinerary, Elyse made her way to the mall with Geraldine, arms linked.

Unexpectedly, as they ambled past an ice cream shop, Elyse’s eyes fell on Mabel, whom she hadn’t encountered in a long while. Mabel was intertwined with a man Elyse didn’t recognize, the two sharing an ice cream cone.

Elyse blinked, startled, and took a second look to ensure she wasn’t seeing things. It was during these repeated glances that she caught Mabel’s eye.

Upon encountering Mabel, Elyse’s mind was immediately flooded with memories of betrayal and danger. She vividly recalled Lanny and Glenda’s deceitful acts, along with the malicious glares they had given her, hinting at deadly intentions.

Holding her breath, Elyse stared intently at Mabel. Meanwhile, Mabel stood serene and unreadable, seemingly unaffected by Elyse’s presence. Even before Elyse had arrived in Manfek, Mabel had been well-informed about her, discreetly monitoring her movements, confident that their paths would eventually cross.

However, one detail had escaped her calculations: Mabel hadn't anticipated that Hyde would encounter Elyse. Worried that Elyse might charm her boyfriend, Mabel subconsciously tightened her grip on Hyde's arm.

Hyde, familiar with Elyse through Kaelyn's stories and photographs, remained composed, casually enjoying his ice cream as he observed the unfolding scene.

"What are you looking at? He's not your man. Stop staring at him, or I'll gouge out your eyes!" Mabel burst out angrily when she caught Elyse eyeing Hyde.

Unaware of Mabel's identity, Geraldine perceived her as a madwoman. She cautiously pulled Elyse back, advising, "Let's steer clear of her. She seems unstable and could be dangerous."

Elyse redirected her conflicted gaze to Mabel and said slowly, "She's my cousin."

"Your cousin? You mean, related by blood?" Geraldine asked, taken aback. She scrutinized Mabel briefly before inquiring, "But if you are related, why is she so hostile toward you? Did something happen between you two?"

"It's more than just a simple quarrel. It's much deeper than that," Elyse replied, her lips sealed tight, clearly unwilling to delve into details.

The resentment between them was profound, a bitter conflict with no foreseeable resolution. They were doomed to continue hurting each other with cruel words until one succumbed.

Chapter 948:

Taking a deep breath to compose herself, Elyse looked at Hyde and offered a wry smile. "Congratulations! You're involved with quite a character."

Mabel's resentment deepened at Elyse's words, feeling threatened by her presence. She sneered, "Keep your congratulations. You make me sick. I can't even stand the sight of you."

Refusing to back down, Elyse shot back, “The feeling is mutual. I have no desire to see you either.”

“Who is she? You don’t like her?” Hyde asked, piecing together the situation. “She resembles you somewhat. What’s the connection?”

Mabel hadn’t anticipated Hyde’s inquiry, especially since he had shown such disinterest earlier. Yet, when he took the initiative, she interpreted it as a promising sign that he might actually care about her. With some hesitation, Mabel explained, “She’s my cousin.” Although Hyde heard her, he seemed unfazed.

Mabel emphasized, “We don’t get along well, so please, Hyde, keep your distance. I don’t like her.”

Despite her warnings, Hyde disregarded her words and turned to Elyse with a friendly smile. “Since you’re Mabel’s cousin, would you like to join us for afternoon tea?”

Mabel’s eyes widened in disbelief, perplexed by Hyde’s invitation. Elyse felt equally confused, questioning how Mabel’s new boyfriend could ignore the evident tension between them.

Firmly grasping Geraldine’s hand, Elyse responded, “There’s no need. I have other matters to tend to. I don’t have time for small talk. Please, go on and enjoy your date without me.”

Mabel quickly agreed, “Yes, that’s right. Attend to your own affairs. Don’t disrupt our date.”

As Elyse turned to leave, Hyde, eager for amusement, wasn’t ready to let her go so quickly. He asked Mabel with a teasing tone, “Is it that disgraceful to be associated with me that your cousin refuses even a simple chat? I’m dating you, and I seek your family’s approval.”

Sweat beaded on Mabel’s forehead as she forced a smile. “It’s not about not accepting you. She genuinely has commitments. You saw for yourself—Elyse and her friend have already left.”

Hyde's expression fell, his eyes reflecting a mix of hurt and confusion. "I knew it. You aren't sincere with me. I'm a disaster, a hopeless case. It seems even you can't fully embrace me."

Mabel couldn't bear the sight of Hyde's hurt look, nor could she endure the sound of his disheartening words. Gently cradling his face, she showered him with kisses, like an angel bestowing mercy on her beloved.

Chapter 949:

"Stop talking like that, honey," implored Mabel. "You're the man I cherish the most. Regardless of your past or who you are now, you're still my choice."

Mabel was sure her words had touched Hyde's heart. After all, who could resist such fervent and exclusive affection? She was convinced that her declarations would move him, blissfully unaware of his true disposition.

In contrast, Hyde felt unmoved by Mabel's affirmations. His past experiences with similar declarations from former girlfriends had left him jaded. He didn't require such reassurances; he found these self-important women overly engrossed in their emotions.

He managed a touched expression and whispered, "Do you truly believe that? Is your love solely for me?"

Mabel nodded gravely. "Absolutely. My feelings for you are deeper than you can imagine."

Hyde then embraced Mabel tightly. For a brief moment, she believed she had discovered true love, envisioning a future where they could marry and start a family without delay.

After releasing her from his embrace, Hyde expressed a wish, saying, "Since your love for me is so deep, I have a request. Will you grant it?"

Mabel nodded willingly. "Of course. I'm your girlfriend; I'd do anything for you."

Hyde's smile widened. "Then, please invite Elyse to join us for coffee."

His suggestion struck Mabel, chilling her smile. She questioned, somewhat vacantly, "Are you interested in her?"

Dismissing her concern with a pinch to her cheek and a smile, Hyde reassured her. "Nonsense. How could I fall for another when I have you?"

Mabel felt slighted. "Then why this insistence on seeing her? Are you trying to cheat on me? We've barely been together a day."

"You misunderstand," Hyde explained, clasping her hand gently. "My past is troubled. Not everyone can be as accepting as you. But I still want to earn the approval of your family, and I can start with your cousin."

Relieved by his explanation, Mabel protested softly, "We don't need Elyse's approval to be together. She means nothing to me. Shouldn't we just focus on us?"

Hyde's expression clouded. "It's important to me. I've always wanted to feel accepted by your family."

Mabel opened her mouth to object, but no words came. Resigned, she nodded stiffly, her frustration evident. "Alright, I'll fulfill your wish."

Hyde pointed to a nearby café. "I'll wait there. Bring Elyse."

Mabel was startled. "Now? Not next time?"

Hyde looked puzzled. "Why wait? We're all here in the mall. Why not meet now?"

Mabel considered asking to delay their meeting, but Hyde's expectant gaze silenced her protests. She nodded, defeated. "Fine. You go ahead to the café, and I'll find her."

Chapter 950:

Hyde nodded in agreement, his mind swirling with thoughts of what to do next. In stark contrast, Mabel's mood had soured. The task of fetching Elyse felt like an imposition, almost as if she were being asked to prostrate herself before her. The very idea of sitting down for coffee with Elyse seemed absurd.

She wandered the mall aimlessly, clinging to a faint hope of luck. Mabel had no idea what had brought Elyse to the mall, so her search was haphazard, driven by the slim chance of a fortuitous encounter. Internally, she hoped she would not run into Elyse, planning to return to Hyde after half an hour with news of her unsuccessful attempt.

Surprisingly, she did bump into Elyse. With a frown creasing her forehead, Mabel blocked Elyse's path. Elyse, clutching a bag of snacks and pulling Geraldine along, halted and asked with a hint of wariness, "What do you want?"

Elevating her chin with a blend of defiance and resolve, Mabel responded, "Come with me. I'll buy you a coffee."

Elyse paused briefly, suspecting she had misunderstood. Mabel had indeed suggested coffee. Momentarily perplexed, Elyse quickly regained her composure, suspecting Mabel was plotting something deceitful. She responded with a dismissive snort, "Do you really think I want your coffee? Thanks, but no thanks. Please leave."

Ignoring Mabel, Elyse grabbed Geraldine's arm and started to walk past her. Mabel, who had no real interest in having coffee with Elyse but was driven by thoughts of Hyde, swallowed her pride to intercept her. "Stop! You can't just leave." Mabel stepped in front of Elyse, blocking her way.

Elyse, puzzled, confronted Mabel. "What do you want? We should stay out of each other's business. Why can't you just leave me alone?"

Mabel, clenching her teeth in frustration, retorted, "You think I enjoy this? I wouldn't bother if my boyfriend didn't want to meet you."

Elyse, taken aback, replied, "What does your relationship have to do with me? Don't expect any favors from me."

Mabel glared at her sharply and pleaded, "Please, just meet him once. That's all I'm asking."

Surprise registered on Elyse's face. Mabel, long considering her an arch-enemy, was now making a plea for the sake of a man? Conflicted emotions surfaced as Elyse observed Mabel's dejected expression and inquired, "Is he really that important to you? You never seemed so desperate when you chased after Theo."

"Hyde is nothing like Theo. Don't insult my boyfriend," Mabel snapped back, visibly upset.