

Bound love 951

Chapter 951:

Geraldine tugged at Elyse's sleeve, looking unsure. "Is your cousin completely smitten or what?"

Elyse hesitated before admitting reluctantly, "It's starting to seem that way."

Geraldine laughed lightly and suggested, "Then shouldn't you meet this boyfriend of hers to see for yourself?"

Before Elyse could respond, Mabel interjected, "Right! As my cousin, it's only fair you check on him for me."

Elyse felt no inclination to assist Mabel. Normally, if siblings talked about vetting a partner, it implied mutual care. However, the strongest connection between her and Mabel was their mutual disdain.

Struggling to articulate their complicated history to Geraldine, Elyse grimly consented. "Alright, I'll meet him."

Mabel, visibly elated by Elyse's acquiescence, believed her actions would please Hyde. She was convinced that he would appreciate her efforts. Worried Elyse might retract her agreement, Mabel hurriedly led her toward the café, Geraldine tagging along.

Upon reaching the designated private room and finding Hyde absent, Mabel's face fell.

Elyse looked around dismissively and scoffed, "Where is he? Has he left already? Are you even sure he's into you?"

"Don't test my patience, Elyse!" Mabel retorted, reaching for her phone to message Hyde.

Just then, Hyde approached them, beaming and holding some bread. “What’s keeping you all at the door? Why didn’t you come in?”

Mabel let out a relieved sigh upon seeing Hyde and playfully asked, “Honey, where did you disappear to? I couldn’t find you.”

Hyde approached with a smile. “I got a bit hungry waiting for you and decided to buy some bread. Let’s all enjoy a snack together.”

Mabel eyed the bread Hyde was holding and said to Elyse with a hint of jealousy, “You’re really fortunate. On your first meeting with my boyfriend, you get to enjoy the bread he specifically picked out.”

Elyse folded her arms, her expression turning pensive. She realized then how deeply Mabel had fallen for this man. Over just a few loaves of bread, Mabel’s jealousy had surfaced. Considering the opulence Elyse had known, it puzzled her how Mabel could now seem so shallow.

Hyde responded with a resigned tone, “It’s only bread. What’s so fortunate about that? From here on out, I’ll get you whatever you want. Don’t be petty; show some kindness to your cousin.”

Mabel silently scoffed, thinking Elyse didn’t warrant such kindness. She frowned and urged, “Don’t just stand there like fools. Come in. My boyfriend’s hosting, so don’t feel out of place.”

Chapter 952:

Elyse noted Mabel’s pettiness, a trait seemingly sharpened by her struggles since losing the support of the Lloyd family, grounding her more in reality. After they entered, Elyse chose a seat and settled down. Hyde then inquired, noticing her distance, “Elyse, is there something wrong? Why are you sitting so far?”

Elyse’s mind swirled with confusion. What on earth was Hyde rambling about? He wasn’t her boyfriend, so why the fuss about sitting closer? Ignoring Hyde’s wounded look, Elyse replied icily, “You’re Mabel’s boyfriend, not mine. Naturally, I should keep my distance. Or is that a problem for you?”

Hyde's expression grew even more pained as he asked, "But Mabel's your family. I'll be family soon, won't I? Shouldn't we sit a little closer, then?"

Elyse sensed something wasn't quite right. Why was Hyde being so clingy, so desperate for her to sit by him? Her instincts kicked in, and she shot a glance at Mabel, who was glaring at her with unmistakable hatred.

A realization hit Elyse like a cold splash of water—she never should have accepted this invitation. Mabel and her boyfriend, one unhinged man and one equally deranged woman, had set their sights on her, and she had walked right into their trap.

Growing more irritated, Elyse snapped, "It's just a seat! Why are you making such a big deal? Or is it that you've already taken a liking to me after meeting once?"

Before Hyde could stammer out a response, Mabel erupted like a volcano. She slammed her hand on the table and shot to her feet. "Elyse, what the hell are you talking about? Hyde is my boyfriend! How dare you suggest he has feelings for you? The only person he loves is me!"

Elyse gave a casual shrug, her voice laced with sarcasm. "Oh, really? If he's so in love with you, maybe you should tell him to act like it. Why is he flirting with me then?" She glanced at Hyde again. He was, objectively speaking, good-looking. With broad shoulders and a narrow waist, his appeal wasn't hard to see.

But for some reason, Elyse couldn't stand him. Something about him just felt... off.

With her eyes still on him, Elyse smirked and quipped, "So, why are you so eager for me to sit next to you? Do you enjoy having women around you? How many have you already hooked up with before Mabel?"

She didn't actually care about the answer—she just wanted to unsettle him. She barely knew him and was only out to get under his skin.

But her words hit Hyde harder than expected. His face grew tense as he fell silent, lost in thought. How did Elyse know about his past? Did someone tip her off, or was there a traitor in their circle?

Mabel, seeing Hyde's reaction, immediately thought Elyse had crossed a line. Hyde's discomfort was clear, and to Mabel, Elyse's jabs felt cruel, like she was deliberately twisting the knife. Mabel's face contorted in fury.

Chapter 953:

"Elyse, what the hell is wrong with you? We invited you here for a friendly chat, and now you're humiliating my boyfriend! Can't you just be nice for once? Don't you realize how unbearable you are?" Mabel snapped, her voice dripping with fury.

Seeing Hyde frown, Mabel could hardly contain herself; she was itching to tear into Elyse just to make him happy again. But Elyse wasn't fazed by Mabel's angry outburst. From her perspective, Hyde had more red flags than a bullfighting arena. He didn't act like a guy who wanted to be a good boyfriend.

It was unfortunate that Mabel was too blinded by love to see the truth. Elyse considered saying something, maybe snapping Mabel out of her lovesick daze. She thought that if she pointed out how unreliable Hyde was, Mabel might see sense. But looking at her now, it seemed Mabel didn't even need her warning. Mabel was already ready to jump into the fire—trap or no trap.

Love-struck fools were just too entertaining.

Turning her gaze to Hyde, Elyse smirked and asked, "Come on, Hyde. In situations like this, you can't seriously let your girlfriend fight your battles while you hide behind her like some coward, can you?"

Hyde snapped out of his thoughts, his easy smile sliding back into place. "You're right. I shouldn't let her fight for me. I'll explain myself." His tone was smooth, confidence returning.

Mabel's heart clenched as she watched him. The fact that Hyde felt the need to explain anything to Elyse filled her with pity. Hyde then faced Elyse, speaking with calm authority. "Let me formally introduce myself. I'm Hyde Clifford, a glass designer. My life revolves around creating intricate works of art. If you ever come across beautiful, colorful glass pieces, there's a chance I crafted them."

Elyse blinked, momentarily taken aback. Mabel, who had always chased wealth and status, was now dating a man who designed glass? Elyse couldn't wrap her head around it. Could Hyde really be Mabel's one true love?

Hyde glanced at Mabel, a soft smile playing on his lips. "I've had a rough past. My childhood was far from easy, and adulthood hasn't treated me much better. But then, God brought Mabel into my life. For the first time, I feel what real happiness is."

Tears welled up in Mabel's eyes as she clung to Hyde's arm, her voice trembling with emotion. "It's the same for me. I never knew what true happiness felt like until I met you. My life was nothing but misery before you."

Elyse looked at Mabel, utterly baffled.

Chapter 954:

Had Mabel ever truly struggled? No. From a young age, she always got her way. Glenda cherished her like a precious gem, and even Lanny, who was fixated on wealth, never considered exploiting Mabel to increase his fortunes.

Mabel's devotion to love seemed so deep that she could speak such sweet words effortlessly. If Glenda could hear her now, she might turn in her grave.

Mabel and Hyde were locked in an embrace, acting as if they were the only two people in existence, while Elyse and Geraldine appeared to be mere spectators in their drama.

Watching them cling to each other, Elyse grew weary of the spectacle and shifted her attention to Geraldine. Geraldine's expression mirrored her discomfort. At her limit, Elyse tapped on the table and said helplessly, "This room isn't reserved just for you two. Please behave yourselves."

Hyde let go of Mabel and responded gracefully, "My apologies; I got a bit carried away. I hope you can forgive us."

Mabel, meanwhile, looked bashful and delighted, clearly savoring the recent embrace. Elyse offered her a forced smile.

Now it was clear to her: Mabel was truly smitten and had brought her over just to flaunt her romance. Elyse realized she hadn't given Mabel enough credit for her ability to create drama.

"Have you said everything you wanted to? We have other plans, so we're going to head out now," Elyse stated, taking Geraldine by the hand as they moved toward the door.

Hyde, his cheeks tinged with red, stood up to block their path. "Hold on, don't leave just yet. We should talk more. I'd like you to get to know me better."

Elyse was taken aback. "Why do I need to get to know you? You two should be getting to know each other, shouldn't you?"

Mabel interjected, "He just wants your blessing. Can't you be a bit nicer? He hasn't wronged you. Could you try to be more friendly?"

Elyse was at a loss for words. She brushed past Hyde and said dismissively, "Fine. I give you my blessing. From now on, I admit he's your Mr. Right. I won't acknowledge anyone else."

With that, Elyse swiftly grabbed Geraldine, and they darted out of the private room as nimbly as eels, worried Hyde might try to stop them again.

Once outside the café, Elyse exhaled a deep breath of relief. "Honestly, that whole romantic scene was revolting. I hope I never have to see them again."

Geraldine held her stomach, bursting into laughter.

Chapter 955:

"Your cousin is quite the character. She's genuinely smitten with him. I hope they can be together forever." Thinking about their affectionate display, Elyse shivered, rubbing her arms as her skin prickled. "What a crazy couple. I hope they never break up."

Still, Elyse felt uneasy about Hyde. There was something odd and hard to pinpoint about him.

“But Hyde works as a glass designer. It’s quite a specialized field. He’s the first person I’ve met who does that.”

Geraldine suddenly thought of something. “But why is his skin so delicate and pale? Working with glass involves high temperatures. As a designer with his own workshop, he should be getting plenty of exposure to heat, which would normally tan someone’s skin.”

Elyse added, “Yet he’s not tanned at all. He looks eerily pale, and his skin is so smooth.”

Geraldine clutched Elyse’s arm and continued, “Now that you mention it, that is certainly very strange. Could he be sick?”

Elyse pondered for a moment and suggested, “Maybe he isn’t really a glass designer and lied about his job?”

Geraldine gasped, covering her mouth in surprise. “That might be true. The way he charmed Mabel seemed way too practiced, like he’s done this many times before.”

Then, as if a thought struck her, Geraldine said, “Your cousin isn’t being fooled by him, is she? Could he be a professional at seduction? Should we warn her to be cautious?”

Elyse responded helplessly, “Have you seen how she acts? If I tell her, she might think I’m just jealous of her.”

At that moment, Elyse felt overwhelmed with frustration. She and Mabel were virtually at odds now. Why should she bother? If Mabel were to be deceived by a scoundrel and then abandoned, it wouldn’t be her problem.

Meanwhile, Mabel trailed Hyde back to his residence. She noticed that ever since Hyde had encountered Elyse, he had grown remarkably silent and contemplative, as though a burden rested on his thoughts.

She clasped his hand and said apprehensively, “Elyse has such an irritating disposition. She’s not a virtuous individual. Don’t start questioning yourself because of her. In my view, you’re the best.”

Hyde swiveled his head to gaze at the earnest look on Mabel’s face. He mused over how naive she was, seemingly ready to humble herself, fearing he might dump her at any moment.

It was clear why Kaelyn took pleasure in manipulating Mabel. Mabel was gullible enough for it. Given that she was so willing to please him, why not take the chance and find pleasure in it?

Chapter 956:

Hyde narrowed his eyes, a crafty grin spreading across his face. “Do you genuinely believe I am that commendable? Can you prove it to me?”

Mabel, uncertain how to respond, thought about how to please him and timidly agreed, “If it brings you joy, I’ll do whatever it takes.”

Hyde’s grin broadened, a glint of malevolence shining in his gaze.

The following day, as Elyse arrived at the music hall, she was surprised to find Fiona already there, having arrived before her.

Momentarily taken aback, Elyse inquired, “Why are you here again?”

Fiona smirked, pushing her hair back defiantly. “What’s the issue with me being here? This isn’t your property. I can visit anytime I like.”

Elyse thought about how shameless Fiona had become, but before she could respond, Fiona's expression shifted to one of excitement as she noticed something. She hurried past Elyse, running with enthusiasm.

Elyse turned to see Fiona leap into Quinn's arms, her heart sinking in astonishment. Were they a couple now?

Quinn hoisted Fiona and twirled her before setting her down. "Didn't I ask you to arrive a bit later? It's still chilly. Be careful not to catch a cold."

With her cheeks tinted red, Fiona replied softly, "I missed you. I made some bread. Please try it."

Quinn touched his nose awkwardly, chuckling. "Well, I suppose I can't decline. I haven't eaten breakfast yet."

Fiona beamed as she led Quinn to enjoy the breakfast she had prepared. Elyse stood on the sidelines, feeling utterly perplexed. Fiona, who had been infatuated with Jayden, was now with Quinn? Hadn't they just met yesterday? How could they be a couple in a single day?

Elyse watched them incredulously, her gaze fixed on the two as if trying to decipher their connection.

Yet there they were, acting like love-struck doves, sharing bread and completely engrossed in their new affection for each other.

As others began to filter into the rehearsal space, they too struggled to make sense of the scene before them. Edward approached Elyse with curiosity, asking, "When did those two become an item?"

"I'm not sure. Why don't you ask them yourself?" Elyse replied calmly as she unpacked her violin case.

Around ten minutes later, Elyse came to terms with the situation. Regardless of why Fiona was with Quinn, it was irrelevant to her.

Chapter 957:

In fact, Elyse found herself hoping that Fiona and Quinn were indeed an item. It made Fiona appear more like a stable person, which was a welcome change.

Elyse started her rehearsal, fully immersed in the music. During a break, she visited the restroom, and while washing her hands, she noticed Fiona enter.

Playing with a lock of her hair, Fiona flashed a flirty smile and asked, “How do you think Jayden will react when he learns I’m in a relationship with someone else?”

Elyse considered the question odd but responded truthfully, “If he’s in a good mood, he’ll probably wish you happiness.”

Fiona’s face registered a hint of disappointment, but she quickly composed herself and probed further, “Don’t you wonder why I’m with Quinn?”

Elyse dried her hands, replying with disinterest, “It doesn’t concern me, as long as it doesn’t disrupt our practice.”

Fiona’s smile faded, replaced by irritation. “Elyse, I really despise your condescending attitude. I can’t fathom what Jayden finds appealing about you.”

Elyse met Fiona’s glare coolly, responding sharply, “If you’re involved with someone, you shouldn’t keep mentioning other men. It casts doubt on your intentions.”

With that, Elyse turned away and exited the restroom, eager to avoid another moment with Fiona. Just a few paces away, her phone chimed.

She glanced at her screen and saw a message from Jayden. Recently, he had been leaving early and returning late, often out of sight. Elyse had grown accustomed to his absence, but this message caught her off guard. It read: “From today onwards, Edward will protect you.”

Elyse was taken aback. What did Jayden mean by that? Why would he suddenly assign Edward to keep an eye on her?

Hurrying back to the rehearsal space, she found Edward seated in a corner, absorbed in his phone. She approached him quickly and asked, "Edward, did you receive a message from Jayden as well?"

Edward looked up and displayed his conversation with Jayden. "I understand. From this point forward, I'll be the one guarding you. Whether Jayden manages to stay safe is another matter."

A surge of worry flooded Elyse as she questioned urgently, "What's going on with Jayden? Who is after him? Does he have many adversaries?"

Edward rose to his feet, trying to soothe her. In a steady voice, he stated, "Don't worry. I'm merely suggesting it's a possibility. He's likely to pull through."

After a brief pause, he added cautiously, "Moreover, if he doesn't make it, wouldn't that be beneficial for you? He wouldn't be around to trouble you anymore, causing you all that distress."

Chapter 958:

Elyse stood still, her eyes clouded with confusion.

Edward continued, "Have you forgotten your passion for music? If Jayden survives, with his controlling demeanor, how will you ever get the opportunity to explore the world or reach your peak?"

Elyse opened her mouth to refute Edward's words but found herself speechless.

If Jayden were not to survive, she should feel relieved. After all, the man who had been bothering, harassing, and coercing her would no longer be a problem. She would regain her freedom and be able to pursue her desires without restraint.

Yet, confronted with this prospect, Elyse realized she wasn't as relieved as she had anticipated. In fact, a subtle ache began to form in her heart.

Edward observed her reaction, uncertain of her thoughts. He pressed on, "Don't linger on it. Jayden is a hindrance, a constraint. Without him, perhaps your life would be simpler."

Elyse responded sulkily, "I'm overwhelmed right now. Please stop talking."

Realizing that pushing too hard could backfire, Edward saw a chance to distance Elyse from Jayden. "Don't overthink it. Focus on your rehearsals. Don't let some irrelevant man ruin your future." He offered Elyse a reassuring pat on the shoulder.

Elyse nodded, attempting to quell her worries. By the afternoon, rehearsals concluded, and everyone began packing up to leave.

As Elyse gathered her belongings and made her way toward the exit, Edward halted her.

Noticing her puzzled look, he shrugged resignedly and explained, "My car is parked in the lot behind the music hall. Let's head out."

Elyse shifted uneasily. "I think I'll book a hotel room for myself. I'm not sure how long I'll be around, and I'd hate to freeload at your place."

Edward furrowed his brows, a hint of frustration creeping into his voice. "I understand you feel awkward, but the circumstances are exceptional right now. You might not sense the danger, but for us, the quieter it appears, the more perilous it truly is."

He paused before continuing, "If it were really safe, Jayden wouldn't have disappeared to confront the danger alone."

Elyse stood frozen for a moment, then exhaled deeply and conceded, "You're right. I was being naive."

Edward immediately smiled, reassuring her, "It's fine. I know you don't want to be a burden, but I understand. Let's go. My driver is already waiting."

Chapter 959:

Elyse nodded and accompanied Edward toward the back exit of the music hall.

Meanwhile, Quinn had finished packing his things and went to find Fiona, but she was nowhere to be seen. After searching around the music hall, he eventually located her in the restroom.

Standing outside the women's restroom, Quinn eyed the sign with concern. He asked anxiously, "Are you alright? Why are you crying? What happened? Tell me."

Fiona continued to cry without responding.

Quinn hesitated, torn about whether to enter. Ultimately, with few people around, he decided to go in, thinking he wouldn't be noticed.

Inside, he found Fiona by the sink, dabbing at her tears. Scratching his head nervously, he inquired, "Why are you crying? Did I upset you?"

Fiona shook her head, looking miserable. "It's not you. It's something else."

Quinn appeared confused. "Don't say that. What's the matter? Tell me, and I'll help you."

Fiona lifted her gaze, her eyes red and puffy, and wept. "It's Elyse. She said something hurtful about me."

Quinn's brow furrowed as he urged, "What did she say?"

Fiona cried a bit more, then continued woefully, "She said I'm a failure, that I shouldn't even be playing the violin. She told me to leave the music hall and stop being a pain in the ass."

“Just because she ranked first, does she think she can scorn everyone?” Quinn felt a surge of anger in his chest. He struggled to believe that Elyse could be so cruel.

Meanwhile, Elyse entered Edward’s car and immediately sensed something was off. This strange feeling lingered until they disembarked. Standing in front of the imposing building in the town center, her discomfort intensified. She gazed at the structure. Each time she returned to her hotel, she could see this edifice. Gavin had once told her it was the governor’s residence and also served as an office building—a central hub for the city’s activities known as the Moon Palace.

After exiting the car, Edward straightened his clothes and said, “We’ll switch to another car to proceed.”

Elyse turned back slowly and asked, “Why do we need to change cars?”

“The seats in this one are uncomfortable. The next one will be more luxurious.”

Edward neglected to mention that this car lacked whiskey, but the next one would be stocked.

Pointing at the Moon Palace, Elyse voiced her concern, “Are you taking me inside there?”

“Yes, but the garden is somewhat small. If it’s not to your liking, I can take you to the suburbs where the garden is larger,” Edward replied with a grin.

Elyse’s expression grew complex as she questioned, “The Moon Palace isn’t a place just anyone can access, is it?”

“I understand, but considering our relationship, we’re almost like friends, right?” Edward answered, his expression brightening with happiness.

Chapter 960:

At that moment, a more opulent car than the previous one arrived. Edward ushered Elyse into the vehicle and then adeptly poured her a glass of whiskey. "Today is a day to celebrate. Have a drink."

Elyse accepted the glass but asked with a puzzled look, "Who are you really?"

"I'm your closest friend. If you wish, I could also be your boyfriend." Edward leaned in closer, smirking playfully. "So, what do you think? Should I be your boyfriend?"

Ignoring him, Elyse pulled out her phone and began searching for information. If Edward was not going to disclose anything, she decided to find out on her own.

Noticing her deep in investigation, Edward didn't rush her. He casually swirled the whiskey in his glass, occasionally glancing at her phone to gauge her progress.

Once Elyse completed her search, Edward gestured toward his face with a teasing smile. "So, what do you think? Having me as your boyfriend isn't such a bad idea, is it? With someone like me, you ought to be excited."

Elyse, looking confused, inquired, "You're the governor's son? Why haven't you mentioned this before?"

Edward touched his nose and replied, "What was there to tell? If I had told you sooner, do you think you would have won first place on your own?" He tilted her chin up with a playful smile. "Elyse, now that you know who I am, do you see the great opportunity you have next to you?"

Elyse shifted back, creating some space between them. "What 'great opportunity'? I don't understand. If you prefer I didn't stay at your place, I can find a hotel."

He had to admit she was remarkably steadfast, giving him no chance to sway her. He internally cursed, marveling at how someone like Elyse could resist his charm. By staying with him, she had the opportunity to become the hostess of the Moon Palace, yet she seemed entirely uninterested.

Elyse redirected her focus, paying little attention to Edward. While the fact that he was the governor's son surprised her, it did not sway her feelings. What truly mattered to her was...

Holding back the slight pain in her heart, Elyse kept her composure.

Edward found Elyse's lack of interest intolerable. Given his esteemed background, he expected her to gravitate toward him, or at least show some curiosity. However, all he received was indifference.

Now, being the governor's son seemed to offer Edward no leverage; it felt as though he was merely boasting, met only with apathy.