

## Bound love 971

Chapter 971:

He pressed his lips together, wanting to speak but realizing he was just repeating himself. No matter how honest he tried to be, Elyse likely saw his words as nothing but lies.

Reflecting on this, Jayden acknowledged that he might indeed be to blame. His throat felt tight, and he struggled to articulate his feelings. After a lengthy silence, he managed to say in a raspy voice, "Get some rest. I'll sort things out soon and come for you."

Elyse, frustrated, yelled back, "Leave me alone! Who needs you to come for me? Just go back by yourself!" With that, she hung up the phone sharply.

Jayden was left in silence, a bitter smile forming on his face.

Tobin approached him, concern etched on his features. "Mr. Owen, it's quite windy here. We should head inside." Jayden, with a cigarette dangling from his lips and chewing on the filter, gazed at the distant buildings. The Moon Palace, illuminated by lights and secured by guards, loomed in the distance, shaped like a crescent moon.

Jayden shook his head. "No, thanks. I'm fine. Standing here feels like I'm protecting her."

Tobin, filled with confusion after witnessing Jayden's profound affection, asked directly, "Mr. Owen, you've always protected Elyse secretly and loved her deeply. Why not tell her directly? Your rejection saddens her."

A cold wind swept through, ruffling Jayden's hair and veiling the intense emotions in his eyes. "I can't tell her directly," Jayden said softly. "She and I are from different worlds. If I tell her, she might leave me."

"But I don't believe she's that type of person," Tobin replied, remembering the past. "She loves you deeply. Even when you pretended to be disabled, she cared for you and never left."

Jayden frowned, and after a long pause, nodded. "That's why I'm waiting until everything is resolved before telling her, at least when no one can threaten her life."

Tobin sensed Jayden's stubbornness on this matter. As a witness to their relationship, all Tobin could do was hope that all the threats would be eliminated soon.

Suddenly, Tobin remembered something and asked curiously, "But, Mr. Owen, why did you entrust Elyse to Edward? Why not have Gavin come back and take care of her?"

"Gavin is indeed capable, but this is Manfek; Edward has influence in this country," Jayden explained, shaking his head. "Only by entrusting Elyse to him can I feel at ease."

"But it seems like Edward has feelings for her," Tobin hesitated, unsure of how Jayden would react.

"He's also a gentleman. I trust he will take good care of her," Jayden said, his gaze fixed on the direction of the Moon Palace, his tone resolute.

Chapter 972:

At the Moon Palace, the office lights flickered against the evening sky, casting long shadows in the hallways. Edward emerged from the conference room, rubbing his aching temples in frustration. The remnants of Charlie's gang had resurfaced, attempting terrorist attacks to disrupt the peace and stability of the city.

With Jayden's help, Edward had finally dealt with Charlie and most of his men, a longstanding nuisance. He had looked forward to a peaceful life, but now it seemed chaos was returning.

Deeply irritated, he muttered wearily, "Get me some food. I'm starving. Those old men hold endless meetings and never get anything done. The first thing I'll do when I take power is fire them all."

The butler replied, "Please head to the dining room. Your meal has been prepared."

Edward nodded and made his way to the dining room. As he took a few bites, a thought struck him. “Has Elyse eaten yet? She isn’t skipping meals because of Louise, is she?”

“Elyse has eaten. It was Louise who didn’t want to eat. Elyse comforted her and convinced her to eat as well,” the butler replied. After a moment, he added cautiously, “Sir, perhaps you should check on Louise later. She seems genuinely upset.”

After finishing his meal, Edward hesitated briefly, then nodded and headed upstairs.

Louise was lying on her bed, engrossed in a book. Hearing the knock, she frowned and asked impatiently, “Who is it?”

Edward cleared his throat and replied, “It’s me.”

“Edward!” Louise’s excitement was palpable. She put down her book, jumped out of bed, and ran barefoot to open the door. Upon seeing Edward, she immediately embraced him tightly.

Edward, exasperated, pulled her off. “What’s wrong with you? You’re not a child anymore. Stop being so clingy.”

Hating the distance his words created, Louise retorted, “I don’t care! You’re my Edward, and I will be with you forever.”

She was determined to marry him and wouldn’t allow him to keep his distance. Louise pouted, prompting Edward to say helplessly, “I’ve been really busy lately. I have to practice the violin for the tour and handle political matters. I can’t always look after you. Can you take care of yourself?”

Louise frowned, crossing her arms defiantly. “So, you’re busy for me but free for Elyse?”

Edward stroked his chin, realizing that Louise was quite perceptive.

Seeing Edward remain silent, Louise's smug smile returned. "See? I knew it. You treat us differently. I'm your childhood friend, yet you favor her over me. You're such a jerk!"

Chapter 973:

Feeling a pang of guilt from Louise's words, Edward knew he wasn't in the wrong; he understood who he truly cared for. Suddenly, a thought crossed his mind, and he said, "I've been swamped lately. I need a favor from you."

Louise lifted her chin proudly at the mention of Edward needing her help. "What do you need?"

Edward replied earnestly, "I'm overwhelmed and can't always look after Elyse. Since you have some free time, could you help take care of her when I'm not available?"

Fuming and feeling wronged, Louise struck Edward's arm. "Have you lost your mind? You know how I feel about Elyse, and yet here you are, asking me to look after her. That's really pushing it, Edward!"

Keeping his cool, Edward cheekily suggested, "If it bothers you to see me with Elyse, perhaps you should take over. That way, I'm spared the effort."

"Leave now! I can't stand to look at you!" Louise shouted, pushing Edward away and slamming the door behind him, cutting off any chance for him to respond.

Standing just outside, Edward touched his nose, embarrassed by the ordeal.

At that moment, Elyse, alerted by the noise, cautiously opened her door and peered out, locking eyes with Edward.

Seeing her, Edward's mood lifted. He moved closer and asked, "Still up? Is your bed uncomfortable? Should I have the sheets changed?"

Elyse shook her head. "There's no need. I just haven't managed to fall asleep yet."

Edward confessed, "I owe you an apology. I had plans to entertain you at my place, but I've been swamped."

Understanding as ever, Elyse assured him, "It's alright. I don't need any explanations. Just being here under your care is enough for me."

Her acceptance stirred a sadness within Edward. He had envisioned fun outings, like a trip to the amusement park, to gradually win her affections and help her move on from Jayden, but circumstances had complicated everything.

Holding his chest theatrically, Edward implored, "Let's not keep each other at arm's length. We could grow closer."

However, Elyse abruptly closed the door on him, creating an uncomfortable silence between them.

Edward felt a strange sensation wash over him and spun around, catching Louise sneakily peering through a tiny opening in her door, observing him with wide, inquisitive eyes. Irritated, he snapped, "What are you staring at? Go away!"

With a defiant snort, Louise quickly slammed her door shut.

Overwhelmed by frustration, Edward felt tormented by the constant disturbances from both women.

Chapter 974:

After securing her door, Elyse settled back onto her bed, clutching her pillow tightly. She continuously reassured herself that her primary focus should be on the upcoming tour, not on Jayden. Repeating this mantra helped calm her thoughts, and soon, Elyse drifted off to sleep.

The following morning, she accompanied Edward to the concert hall. As the tour dates drew near, their practice sessions intensified.

During one particularly intense noon training session, Quinn unexpectedly lost his temper, loudly calling out Elyse's name. Most had left for lunch, leaving only a few behind in the rehearsal hall who turned towards Quinn, bewildered by his outburst.

Elyse, caught off guard, couldn't understand why Quinn, who typically kept his distance, was now openly hostile toward her. Edward, noticing the tension, looked toward Quinn with a furrowed brow.

Perplexed, Elyse questioned, "Is there some grudge you hold against me?"

Quinn sneered, "There's no issue between us. But your problem is with Fiona, isn't it?" Remembering their past conflicts at the mention of Fiona, Elyse asked, "We have several issues. Which are you referring to?"

Quinn, incensed, shot back, "Can you really be so bold as to ask that? Aren't you aware that Fiona is my girlfriend? How could you treat her so poorly? She was ousted from Cody's studio by him, and it's due to your manipulations, right?"

Elyse stood there, taken aback by Quinn's blunt accusations. Maintaining her composure, she replied coolly, "Regarding Fiona's departure, she was the architect of her own misfortune. And yes, I'm aware she's your girlfriend, but how is that relevant to me?"

Quinn retorted, "Still refusing to confess? Your envy of Fiona's talent drove you to undermine her secretly." Elyse dismissed him, saying, "Is that the story Fiona has concocted?"

Quinn pressed on, "Ever since Fiona and I became an item, she has frequented the concert hall, waiting for me daily. But you couldn't bear having her around, could you? You drove her away relentlessly."

Growing more agitated, Quinn challenged, "Do you lack any compassion? The concert hall is just as much Fiona's dream as anyone's. Why expel her? Why not be a bit more gracious and allow her to stay? She's here because of me!"

It dawned on Elyse that Quinn was ardently defending Fiona. This realization explained Fiona's recent quietude; she had found herself a champion in Quinn.

## Chapter 975:

Edward had reached his limit and was about to confront Quinn when Elyse intervened, raising a hand. “This is a trivial issue. I can manage on my own. There’s no need for you to intervene.” With a comforting glance at Edward, she strode confidently toward Quinn.

Elyse stood bravely before him, unfazed by his hostile stare. “You’ve come to advocate for Fiona, haven’t you? Let me ask you, do you base your judgment solely on her account? Is her side of the story enough to convince you that I’ve mistreated her?”

Quinn responded, “Fiona is benevolent and soft-spoken. I trust everything she tells me. She wouldn’t deceive me.” Elyse scoffed. “She wouldn’t lie? That’s the most absurd thing I’ve ever heard.”

Recently, Fiona had completely indoctrinated Quinn, persuading him that Elyse was inherently malicious. To him, Elyse’s amiable front was merely an act—a hypocrite’s disguise. He was resolved to unveil Elyse’s duplicity publicly, aiming to reveal her true character to all. In his view, he was engaged in a noble fight, like a valiant knight protecting the woman he adored.

Elyse observed the extent of Quinn’s delusion under Fiona’s influence. A typically reserved and introspective man had become belligerent due to his affection for Fiona. Their love was something Elyse found difficult to confront.

Taking out her phone, Elyse declared, “You doubt that Fiona was expelled from Mr. Tucker’s studio due to her own misconduct? Very well, I’ll dial Cody this instant and let him clarify it for you. If my words don’t convince you, perhaps you’ll trust what my teacher has to say.”

Quinn paused, unsure. “You’re not planning to have someone pretend to be Cody, are you?”

Elyse grinned confidently. “I’ll place the call now. You can speak to him directly and see for yourself.”

Quinn, still wary, feared that Elyse, cunning as she seemed, might be plotting some deceit. However, just as she was about to make the call, Fiona burst in from outside, unable to hold back any longer.

“Stop it, Elyse! How much longer will you continue to blame me? Do you enjoy this?” Fiona exclaimed, her voice charged with emotion, suggesting that Elyse had committed some heinous act.

Yet Elyse felt no guilt. With a smirk of insight, she retorted, “Fiona, you’re only intervening because you’re scared that Cody will reveal all your misdeeds once I call him, right?”

Chapter 976:

Quinn scowled, turning to Fiona in bewilderment. “What is she talking about?”

Fiona pressed her lips together, appearing sorrowful yet stubborn. Internally, she was furiously denouncing Elyse. How dare she call Cody so casually? Fiona envied her audacity. After her departure from Cody’s studio, she had severed all connections with him. There had been moments when she needed a job or an opportunity and considered asking for assistance, but the shame of how she had left held her back.

As a result, Fiona encountered numerous obstacles and endured much hardship. Her participation in the Swan Cup was possible only through a connection Kaelyn had introduced; otherwise, she wouldn’t have had a chance.

Observing how effortlessly Elyse could contact Cody over such a minor issue made it evident that their bond was still strong. The ease with which Elyse could seek Cody’s assistance filled Fiona with envy.

Elyse, noting Fiona’s reticence, taunted her further. “What’s the matter? Have I struck a chord? Are you too embarrassed to speak now?”

Fiona responded with a scornful laugh. “I’m just puzzled why, even though I’ve left the studio, you seize every opportunity to degrade me. Why target me alone?”



Elyse appeared utterly baffled by the accusation. “Really? Weren’t you the one harassing me? Have you forgotten your actions towards me? Do you want me to jog your memory?”

With eyes full of sadness, Fiona asked, “Elyse, remember I was once your senior. Don’t you recall how I looked after you? Didn’t you always enjoy the snacks and coffee I prepared for you?”

Suddenly, Quinn interrupted, glaring fiercely at Elyse, his expression that of a wild animal poised to attack at any moment. Elyse flinched as Quinn approached, her eyes narrowing in anger. “What do you want?” she snapped, her voice shaking slightly. Surely, he wouldn’t hit her just to defend Fiona, would he?

Despite her hope, Elyse didn’t realize that Quinn was more than willing to do just that. Suddenly, Quinn’s fist flew toward her. She froze, her body stiff with fear as a scream echoed in her mind.

“You bastard!” Edward’s voice cut through the tension as he stepped between them, his hand catching Quinn’s fist mid-swing. In one swift motion, Edward flipped Quinn over his shoulder, sending him crashing to the floor.

Quinn groaned, his face contorted in pain as he lay on the ground.

Chapter 977:

It all happened so fast that Elyse stood in stunned silence. When she finally regained her senses, she realized that, for now, she was safe.

Edward flexed his arm, a dangerous glint flashing in his eyes before he quickly concealed it. He stood firmly in front of Elyse, his posture unyielding. “Is this how you handle things now? Throwing fits like a child?” His voice was cold, cutting through the air.

Geraldine, standing close by, stepped up beside Elyse, her gaze sharp as she turned to Quinn. “You really think Elyse framed Fiona and got her kicked out of the studio? Do you have any idea who Cody Tucker is? Do you honestly believe someone like him would be manipulated by his student?” She cast a searing glance at Fiona, who was

cowering in the background. “You owe us both an apology. And trust me, this won’t end until we get it.”

Quinn lay on the floor, dazed and humiliated. He had put all his strength into that punch, yet Edward had blocked it with ease. Slowly, he scrambled to his feet, his face flushed with embarrassment, but his resolve remained unshaken. In his eyes, Elyse had always been a schemer. How many times had she set Fiona up? No one seemed to believe Fiona anymore; everyone had fallen under Elyse’s spell. But not him. Fiona had him now, and if he couldn’t defend her, who would?

He wouldn’t let her down—he couldn’t. His eyes hardened as bitterness swelled within him, directed not just at Elyse but at Geraldine and Edward too. They were all part of the problem, blind to Elyse’s manipulations.

“You’ve all been brainwashed,” Quinn spat, his voice dripping with contempt. “And you think we’re going to apologize to her? You’re out of your minds.”

Elyse watched Fiona closely, catching a fleeting look of satisfaction on her face when she thought Elyse would be hit. Now that Quinn’s attempt had failed, disappointment clouded Fiona’s expression.

“Your boyfriend charged in for you and ended up on the floor. Yet, you just stand there, watching?” Elyse’s voice dripped with scorn. “Don’t you feel a bit sorry for him? Maybe give him a hug?”

Fiona faltered, caught off guard by Elyse’s questions. Aware of the eyes fixed on her, she quickly took Quinn’s hand and murmured, “Let it go. They’re all on Elyse’s side. They won’t believe us, no matter what.”

Quinn’s gaze softened as he noticed the tears brimming in Fiona’s eyes. He squeezed her hand, his voice firm. “Don’t worry. No matter how they judge you, I’ll stand by you. I’ll always believe in you.”

Fiona looked up, her eyes gleaming with a mix of resolve and vulnerability. Quinn felt a surge of strength coursing through him.

Geraldine, standing a distance away, frowned at their hushed conversation. “What are they, mice? Why are they whispering?”

Edward chuckled beside her. “They’re best at skulking about; whispering comes naturally.”

Chapter 978:

Stepping forward, Elyse addressed the crowd with confidence. “Since Fiona accuses me of scheming to get her expelled by Mr. Tucker and stripped of her apprenticeship, I propose we bring him here to shed light on the matter.”

Fiona’s complexion turned ashen. Would Elyse really escalate this to involve Cody over such a petty dispute? Elyse was indifferent to Fiona’s apprehension. If Fiona was bold enough to slander her, Elyse was prepared to defend her reputation by summoning Cody to testify.

The onlookers nodded in agreement with Elyse’s proposal, eager for a resolution. If Cody himself clarifies the situation, they would know the truth.

Elyse turned to Fiona, who was now silent, and pressed, “What do you think?”

Fiona bit her lip, refusing to respond.

Quinn, quicker to react, snapped, “No way! You’ve probably already briefed Cody. If you’re planning to frame Fiona, just admit it.”

Elyse smiled thinly. “You accuse me of conspiring with Mr. Tucker, yet you reject the clear solution to prove my innocence. What must I do for you to trust I’m not guilty?” She paused, her eyes sweeping over the crowd. “Or do you only trust Fiona’s word, regardless of the truth? If Fiona twisted facts, would you still believe her blindly?”

Quinn shot back instinctively, “Why do you think Fiona is twisting the truth?”

Elyse didn’t miss a beat, her tone sharp. “And why are you so sure Fiona’s telling the truth? Were you there? Did you actually see everything with your own eyes?”

His words faltered, and Quinn hesitated. “No... I wasn’t there.”

Elyse crossed her arms, raising an eyebrow at Fiona as she pressed on, “Then isn’t your blind trust a bit absurd? Are you really that confident she hasn’t lied to you?”

Her words began to chip away at his certainty. Slowly, Quinn turned his head toward Fiona, searching her face. Fiona’s eyes welled with tears, and she shook her head, her voice trembling. “It’s not like that! You don’t believe me anymore?”

Quinn’s chest tightened at the sight of her crying. He stumbled, panic rising in his chest.

Elyse, unbothered, interjected, calling out Fiona’s name sharply. “If you still think I’m the one framing you, how about we settle this? The three of us can go to Mr. Tucker. Let him be the witness. He knows what really happened, doesn’t he?”

Quinn shifted uneasily; what Elyse was suggesting made sense. His eyes darted toward Fiona again, uncertainty creeping in.

Sensing his doubt, Fiona’s expression crumbled further. “So, what? You’re on her side now?” Her voice broke. “You’re going to stop trusting me?”

His face flushed, and Quinn stammered. “No, that’s not what I meant. I didn’t—”

“Then what do you mean?” Fiona snapped, pushing him hard enough that he stumbled back. “You think I’m a liar, don’t you?”

Chapter 979:

Before he could respond, Fiona spun around and ran off, tears streaming down her cheeks. Quinn stood frozen for a moment, then chased after her, his heart pounding.

Elyse watched them go, her lips curling into a bitter smile. “Running away from the truth... just like I thought.” The tension seemed to fade once they left, but it didn’t last long. Later that afternoon, Elyse was summoned to the instructor’s office. When she walked in, she wasn’t surprised to see Quinn already there, his face dark with frustration.

Sighing, she stepped forward. “Why did you call me in?”

The instructor took a slow sip from his cup before speaking. “Quinn claims you’ve been acting arrogant and disrespectful in your group. Is there any truth to that?”

Elyse glanced at Quinn, her eyes narrowing. So, he ran to the instructor now? He was truly set on defending Fiona. She shook her head. “No, it’s not true. He thinks I’m arrogant, but I’ve barely said a word to him.”

She spoke with calm confidence, knowing she had witnesses to back her up.

Quinn’s face tightened with anger. “She manipulates people. She makes friends with the powerful and walks all over anyone who isn’t strong enough to stand up to her.”

Elyse raised her eyebrows at his accusation. “So, you’re saying I bully you because you’re weaker? Tell me then, how exactly did I bully you? Did I hit you? Yell at you? Or is this just because I’m not buying Fiona’s lies and you’re offended?”

Her words were sharp, cutting through his flimsy argument. Elyse knew Quinn wouldn’t be able to outargue her—everything Fiona had told him was twisted. No matter how hard Quinn tried to defend her, it was pointless; her story was riddled with inconsistencies. If he could just step away from his emotions for a moment, he’d see the lies glaring back at him.

But that wasn’t Elyse’s concern. She wasn’t about to shoulder the burden of showing him the truth. Fiona’s deception wasn’t her responsibility. The truth always hit harder when it came unexpectedly.

Quinn stood there, utterly speechless. Elyse’s words had left him frozen in place, unable to respond. The instructor sighed heavily, placing his cup down. “The tour starts in just a few days, and instead of focusing on your training, you’re caught up in personal drama. It’s embarrassing.”

Quinn lowered his head, shame coloring his cheeks.

Elyse, however, remained composed. She had been focused on training; it was Quinn who had stirred things up with his misplaced loyalty.

“Alright,” the instructor continued. “This is a misunderstanding. Resolve it yourselves. I’m not your babysitter. You’re adults now, so act like it.”

Elyse nodded firmly. “Understood. I’m sorry for the inconvenience.”

With that, she left the office, stepping out into the hallway. Quinn followed her, shutting the door behind him. His gaze fixed on Elyse, his eyes still burning with resentment.

Chapter 980:

She turned to him, her voice quiet yet piercing. “Do you really hate me that much?”

Quinn’s jaw tightened as he spat out, “You bullied my girlfriend.”

Elyse’s lips curved into a knowing smile. “I don’t like Fiona, that’s true. But do you even know why?”

Noticing the puzzled look on Quinn’s face, Elyse realized that Fiona had not been honest with him. She approached him, leaned in, and whispered in his ear.

Quinn’s expression shifted to one of disbelief, his eyes flickering with doubt.

Elyse shrugged, her smile broadening. “You don’t believe me? Well, we just have to wait and see.”

Uncertainty clouded Quinn’s eyes. “Do you even know what you’re talking about?”

“Yes. My worry is that the truth might be too much for you, and you could react badly, possibly hurting someone,” Elyse replied, still smiling.

Quinn shook his head. “That won’t happen. I need to know who’s lying.”

At that point, Quinn seemed to regain his composure. After a chaotic day, he began to sense that something wasn't right.

Elyse and Quinn walked back to the rehearsal room, facing the curious glances of their peers, but both remained silent.

Once the rehearsal concluded, Elyse grabbed her instrument case but couldn't find Edward.

Geraldine approached with a curious look and asked, "What are you looking for?"

Elyse responded, puzzled. "Where's Edward? Why isn't he here?"

"He left about an hour ago, claiming he had a stomachache and needed to go to the hospital," Geraldine explained with a shrug. "His acting was unconvincing, though. Only the instructor fell for it and let him go. I think he just wanted an excuse to leave early."

Elyse nodded in understanding. As the governor's son, Edward might have had an urgent matter to attend to. However, she was concerned about being allowed back into the Moon Palace alone. Worry was evident on her face.

Exiting the music hall, she made her way to the entrance, where she encountered Louise. Dressed impeccably in a tailored suit, a black cloak, and a hat adorned with lace and silk flowers, Louise stood in high-heeled black shoes, looking down at Elyse with a haughty expression.

Taken aback, Elyse asked, "What are you doing here?"

Louise tilted her chin up, adopting a patronizing tone. "Edward sent me to fetch you. He was called away on a sudden assignment and had to leave by helicopter. He didn't have time to say goodbye, so he sent me to look after you."