

Bound love 991

Chapter 991:

Theo paused to gather his thoughts before advising, “I recommend you not go anywhere alone. You might already be under surveillance.”

Elyse shivered at his words, bowing her head as she glanced around warily. She hesitantly voiced her concern, “There aren’t any snipers, are there?”

“No, there won’t be any,” Theo reassured her. “The person who wants you insists on your safety. Those who might try to take you will only focus on capturing you, so don’t stress about that part.”

Elyse managed a half-smile, musing to herself that the client seemed unusually considerate for not wanting her harmed. Yet, she couldn’t shake the question of why they would want to abduct her in the first place.

Lost in her thoughts, Elyse remained seated, deep in contemplation.

Checking his watch, Theo said, “Sorry, I have another meeting soon, so I need to leave.”

Looking up, Elyse replied, “Alright, you should go.”

“Oh, by the way, have you seen Kaelyn around lately?” Theo added, as though something had just occurred to him.

Elyse shook her head. “I haven’t seen Kaelyn, but I bumped into Mabel recently. She’s completely smitten.” With a playful wink, she teased Theo, “Any opinions on Mabel’s romantic escapades?”

Theo quirked an eyebrow. “What’s there to say? I wish her all the best in her love life.”

Elyse dropped her teasing demeanor, waving him off. “Go on, then. Don’t be late.”

Theo turned and left quickly, mindful of his tight schedule.

As he departed the café and made his way to his next appointment, a sudden insight struck him. His investigation into Kaelyn had revealed a connection between her and Mabel. Had Mabel followed Kaelyn overseas? This thought sparked a new line of inquiry for Theo.

He had been trying to locate Kaelyn for some time but always ended up at dead ends. The more he delved into her background, the more enigmatic she became. His research had uncovered that much of her past was composed of fictitious details.

With these deceptive trails, Theo found it impossible to determine her origins or current whereabouts. She seemed to vanish like a ghost.

Yet, deep down, Theo was certain she was no ghost.

Chapter 992:

The inability to track down Kaelyn's history suggested that those behind her had enough influence to manufacture a false identity. Theo resolved to seek out Elyse after his meeting to discuss the link between Kaelyn and Mabel.

Meanwhile, Elyse, having finished her coffee, felt increasingly weary. She massaged her temples and remarked, "I just want to lie down. I'm utterly drained." Noticing Elyse's dispirited demeanor, Louise inquired, "What did you and Theo discuss? You look quite disturbed."

Elyse replied, "I've been targeted with a bounty." Louise paused, then asked, "Did he just inform you of this?"

Elyse nodded and released a heavy sigh. "Who could possibly be so idle as to place a bounty on me?" Louise felt somewhat disheartened. She had been trying to protect Elyse from this knowledge, but now the secret was out.

After purchasing a suitable dress at a high-end store, Elyse and Louise made their way back to Moon Palace. Elyse, anxious to see Edward, immediately inquired with the

butler about his location, only to be told that Edward would not return until later in the afternoon. A look of disappointment crossed Elyse's face.

Noticing Elyse's anxious and fearful state, Louise decided to seek out Chesney. He was at Moon Palace, attending to his duties. Upon noticing Louise approaching, he arched an eyebrow and questioned, "What brings you here?"

Louise queried, "Chesney, could you help determine who issued the bounty on Elyse?"

Chesney's brow furrowed. "Why are you meddling in her affairs? Shouldn't you be attending your classes?"

Louise sulked. "Can't you just assist me this once? It's not a major request. Can't you even manage this small favor?"

Amused by her plea, Chesney laughed and responded, "A small favor? Delving into the underworld isn't something I can simply interfere with. Even if I wished to, I currently lack the authority to intervene."

At this, Louise huffed and turned to walk away. "Wait!" Chesney called out, rising to his feet. "How are things progressing with Edward? I've advised you before to forge a genuine relationship with him, to become an actual couple. Why is Elyse causing complications?"

Louise, clearly irritated, answered, "You know very well that Edward has feelings for Elyse. What chance do I stand? He even calls me childish. He's not interested in me."

Chesney scowled. "You aren't trying hard enough. I've told you before that, for the sake of our political influence, even as a princess, you must make sacrifices."

Chapter 993:

Louise's face briefly flickered with emotion, but she quickly pulled herself together, bowing her head slightly. "I understand, Chesney," she replied, her voice low.

Chesney scowled, setting his pen down with a huff. “Elyse is unbearable these days. She’s become a thorn in my side. Edward dotes on her so much; she’s a hindrance.” He paused for a moment, his frown deepening.

“Sometimes, I wish she’d just vanish—like be kidnapped or something. Maybe then Edward would finally cut her loose.”

Louise held her tongue, her face an unreadable mask.

Irritated by her silence, Chesney waved his hand dismissively. “Alright, enough standing around. Go on! Handle what you need to.”

“Okay.” Louise turned and left without another word. But once in the privacy of her bedroom, she collapsed onto her bed, covering her face with her hand, her lips pressed into a thin line. An unsettling mix of emotions churned inside her—a quiet sense of frustration she couldn’t quite pinpoint.

Four hours later, Louise and Elyse arrived at the concert hall. Elyse, noticing the tightness in Louise’s face, asked softly, “Didn’t sleep well, did you?”

Louise glanced at her, catching the concern in Elyse’s eyes. She shook her head. “No, I’ve just got a lot on my mind.”

Elyse nodded, sensing there was more but choosing not to press further.

At the concert hall entrance, Elyse balanced her violin case in one hand and lugged a large bag of clothes in the other, while Louise followed beside her. Neither noticed Mabel standing by the roadside, waiting quietly.

Mabel, with a cigarette dangling between her slender fingers, lazily replied to a message on her phone before taking a deep drag. She had never been one for smoking, but ever since Elyse had torn her family apart, stress clung to her like a shadow.

Now, nicotine was her way of dulling the edges. Her mind drifted back to her high school days—when everyone around her was obsessed with clubbing, drinking, and smoking. Giving in to peer pressure, she had bought her first cigarette, intending to try it at home.

However, Elyse had discovered the cigarette, snatched it from Mabel's hand, and tossed it aside, scolding her fiercely and forbidding her from smoking ever again. Back then, Mabel had hated being told what to do.

Defiant, she bought another pack, only for Glenda to catch her this time. She had always suspected Elyse had ratted her out. Mabel took another puff, staring at the glowing tip of her cigarette, lost in the haze of memory.

Chapter 994:

"Funny," she muttered under her breath. "Why am I even thinking about all this?"

Mabel mused that falling in love had softened her, making her more sentimental than she'd ever been before. Elyse had strictly forbidden her from smoking, yet here she was, lighting up because of Elyse.

Elyse was a real menace, she had to admit! Just the thought of her made Mabel's blood boil. She took a deep drag from her cigarette and blew the smoke out forcefully, muttering bitterly, "Elyse, you cursed jinx. May winter swallow you whole."

She flicked the cigarette to the ground, grinding it under the heel of her black boots with a quick stomp. From her handbag, she pulled out a badge and looped it around her neck, striding confidently through the main entrance.

Inside, she sauntered her way toward Elyse. The concert was just two days away, and Elyse, clutching her violin, was waiting for the instructor to assign her spot on stage. Mabel leaned against the wall, arms folded, her gaze fixed on Elyse. The sight of Elyse's earnest dedication turned Mabel's stomach.

She stood there for an entire hour. Finally, when Elyse's positioning was done, she moved to the seating area below the stage for a break. Sensing her moment, Mabel started toward her.

But just as she was about to make her move, a firm hand clamped down on her shoulder.

Mabel stiffened and tilted her head to see who it was.

“Slacking off, are we? The concert’s days away, and you’re just lounging here? Have you finished cleaning? Moved everything? Which department are you even from? Want to lose your job?” barked a tall, middle-aged man, his eyes blazing with irritation.

Mabel turned to face him and, with as much sincerity as she could muster, replied, “I’m sorry, sir. My mistake. I’ll get right to it.”

The man snatched up Mabel’s badge for a closer look, making her heart race. “Maintenance, huh? You’re not paid to stand around.

Get back to work or you’re out.” Thankfully, the man didn’t seem to notice the badge was fake. Grabbing Mabel by the arm, he led her to the restroom.

“Clean this place up, and do it right. Or else,” he growled, standing by the door to supervise Mabel. Mabel’s eyebrow twitched. Was he seriously going to stand there and watch her scrub toilets?

Her anger simmered beneath the surface, but she kept it in check. She couldn’t afford to lose her cool—not with her task on the line. Trouble was the last thing she needed right now.

Chapter 995:

Reluctantly, Mabel grabbed the nearest cleaning tools and began to scrub, putting on a convincing show of diligence. After watching her for a few moments, the middle-aged man finally lost interest.

With the concert fast approaching, he had bigger things to worry about than keeping tabs on a maintenance worker.

Once Mabel was sure the man was gone, she dropped the cleaning tools like they were toxic.

“Mabel? What are you doing here?” Just as she thought she was in the clear, a familiar voice echoed from behind her.

Mabel spun around, and the sight of Theo’s curious gaze sent a chill racing through her. She had never imagined that she would encounter him there.

Mabel was disoriented at the sight of Theo, as if she were in a dream. Her silence was profound before her eyes turned icy. She snapped, “Why are you here?” Theo studied Mabel, then hesitated. “Are you an employee here?”

As he said this, he lifted her badge, scrutinized it, and placed it back down. A flicker of triumph passed through Mabel when Theo failed to recognize the badge was counterfeit. For all his acumen, Theo was not infallible.

She grabbed her badge back, rolling her eyes. “Is there a reason for your presence? If there’s none, I suggest you leave at once and stop interrupting my work,” she declared.

Theo considered her words, then offered, “We’re old friends. Perhaps we could catch up later?” This suggestion made Mabel furious.

“When did we ever become friends? Did you ever really see me as one? All you see is Elyse. I’m nothing to you. Just leave! You’re making me sick.”

Theo’s grin turned sinister, his eyes glinting with malice, sending a chill through Mabel. She was painfully aware of his malevolence, having endured his cruelty firsthand. After that, she resolved never to allow herself to feel anything for him again.

Yet, she felt a twinge of envy towards Elyse. Despite his mistreatment of Elyse, he never let his darkest side show around her. He always wore a mask. This made Mabel resent Elyse even more. Why did everyone seem to adore and protect Elyse? And why did it appear that no one was there to protect her? It hit her suddenly—she wasn’t completely alone.

Hyde was willing to stand by her. Warmth flooded through her at the thought of Hyde.

Seeing a shift in her demeanor, Theo quipped, “What’s your angle? You’re trying to drive a wedge between us, aren’t you?”

Theo's intentions were clear as he saw her anxiety increase. He taunted, "Honestly, I doubt someone like you could ever attract a worthy partner. I'm curious to see what sort of disaster you've entangled yourself with."

Chapter 996:

"You are so impossible! Get out! Unauthorized people are not allowed in the concert hall!" Mabel harbored an innate fear of Theo, one she could not readily acknowledge.

Theo calmly watched Mabel's growing emotional breakdown, a smirk on his face. "So, shall we set a time to meet again?"

Unable to bear it any longer, Mabel yelled with all her might, her face flushed with anger. "Leave me alone! Get out of here, you maniac!"

Theo watched her, a sense of satisfaction washing over him. His visit to the concert hall was with a genuine purpose, and he wasn't about to pressure Mabel into dinner since he clearly wasn't willing. There would always be other chances.

Once Theo departed, Mabel began to find her peace. It was in this calm moment that she understood the depth of her fear towards Theo. She gritted her teeth, frustrated by her perceived vulnerability.

Yet, dealing with him was a challenge she felt unprepared for, unlike the simpler interactions with Elyse. "Blast it! He has ruined my day. Now I can't concentrate on my task." Mabel made her way quickly to the concert hall's back exit.

At the same time, Theo entered the stage area and spotted Elyse. Elyse, seated and watching the rehearsal, was surprised to see Theo. She stood up quickly. "What brings you here?"

"We need to talk," Theo responded, scanning the crowd. "Is this a good time?"

Elyse declined gently. "I'm sorry. I can't leave right now. We'll have to talk after the rehearsal."

Accepting her terms, Theo sat beside her. “I’ll wait here then. Just don’t turn me away.”

Noticing her confused expression, he continued, “I won’t compel you to return to me, especially not here.” Elyse, intrigued, raised an eyebrow. “It seems you’ve changed. Has time helped you move on?”

Theo’s tone softened. “Actually, it was you who showed me how to truly respect someone I love. I didn’t understand that before, but now I do.”

Elyse opened her mouth to speak but said nothing, turning her attention back to the stage.

After Edward wrapped up his performance and stepped off the stage, his eyes scanned the hall until they landed on Elyse.

He found her sitting next to a guy—a good-looking one at that—but not quite as handsome as himself, at least in his own opinion.

Casually brushing a hand across his cheek, Edward strutted over to Elyse with a teasing grin. “Hey, where’s your water? Let me have a sip.”

Chapter 997:

Elyse shot him a glance, unimpressed. “It’s finished. Ask Darren if he’s got any left.”

Edward pouted like a child denied candy. “But I like drinking yours. It’s sweeter.”

She rolled her eyes, choosing to ignore him entirely. In her mind, he was up to his usual antics, and ignoring him was the easiest way to diffuse his attention-seeking. Unbeknownst to her, Theo, who sat on the other side, wasn’t as oblivious.

He picked up on the subtle challenge hidden beneath Edward’s seemingly lighthearted words. Leaning forward slightly, Theo locked eyes with Edward, an unspoken

provocation sparking between them. Edward's expression faltered for a moment, realizing Theo had caught on to his little display.

Theo leaned back into his seat, fingers absentmindedly twitching in silent annoyance. For a while, Theo had thought Jayden was his only competition for Elyse's heart. But now, here was Edward, clearly marking his territory in the most subtle yet obvious way.

Edward's playful words weren't meant to charm Elyse—they were meant to rattle Theo. He was making a point, subtly flaunting how close he and Elyse were, as if to show Theo just how much she cared for him. However, the move fell flat with Theo.

He made his move without hesitation, gently squeezing Elyse's hand as he leaned in and asked, "Remember when you told me about your dream of doing a world tour? I'll admit, I laughed it off.

I thought there's no way someone as 'ordinary' as you would pull that off."

Elyse's eyes sparkled with interest, a teasing smile playing on her lips. "And what do you think now?"

Theo sighed dramatically, leaning back. "Turns out, I'm the ordinary one. I've lost my job, and you're about to conquer the world stage." He paused, then chuckled, "If I could go back in time, I'd slap myself for not investing in you back then."

Elyse laughed, shaking her head. "You still can't resist talking business, can you? Always thinking about making an investment."

With a shrug, Theo replied, "Good thing I didn't. I didn't really know you back then. Even if I had backed you, I probably would've held you back instead of helping you shine."

Elyse raised an eyebrow, her tone playful but sharp. "Sometimes I wonder if you've been my bad luck all along. Maybe if I'd left you sooner, I would have succeeded faster."

Theo winced at her jab, shaking his head. "I may be a lot of things, but I'm not a curse on your life. Take that back before I really start believing it."

His playful banter had Elyse in stitches, her laughter bubbling up. She was clearly enjoying herself, while Edward, sitting next to her, was growing increasingly irritated.

He tried several times to insert himself into their conversation, but the flow between Elyse and Theo left him in the dust. He couldn't quite follow their inside jokes, and it only fueled his frustration.

Chapter 998:

But it didn't take long for him to realize what Theo was doing. He knew her ex-boyfriend was deliberately revisiting old memories, a subtle reminder that Edward had no place in Elyse's past.

Theo was flexing his history with her, rubbing it in that Edward couldn't rewrite what had already been shared between them.

Unable to keep quiet any longer, Edward blurted out, "Who is this guy? What's his deal? Are you two friends or something?"

Elyse responded calmly, without a hint of awkwardness, "This is my ex-boyfriend." Even as she said it, a small sigh escaped her. It amazed her how someone she once dreaded seeing now sat next to her, casually chatting about their shared past as if they were old friends.

It was a dynamic she never thought possible—yet here they were, laughing and reminiscing without the weight of bitterness. Time really did work wonders, she thought. Time could change everything.

Edward, on the other hand, was completely blindsided. Theo was her ex-boyfriend? He already had to deal with Jayden, Elyse's ex-husband, and now the ex-boyfriend had materialized! What was with all these exes hanging around?

Didn't they know that a good ex was supposed to stay in the past and out of sight? Or better yet, disappear entirely? It was bad enough that Jayden had come back to beg for a second chance.

And now Theo had crossed oceans to do... what exactly? Get back together with Elyse too?

Edward's mind raced with frustration. He wanted to curse them both—Jayden and Theo were shameless, stubborn men who clearly didn't know when to quit. After a moment of fuming, Edward decided to take the direct approach.

His tone was laced with challenge as he asked, "So, since he's an ex, can I ask why you two broke up?"

Elyse quirked an eyebrow and offered Theo a sardonic half-smile. "Theo, maybe you should tell him the reason." Theo shot a loaded glance at Edward, fully aware of the man's scheming presence, biding his time for such an opportunity.

With all eyes on him, Theo hesitated, then admitted, "It was all my fault. I behaved terribly." Standing before Elyse, Theo couldn't dodge the truth.

Any attempt to fabricate a story or minimize his actions would only reinforce her view of him as the same—a man who hadn't matured at all.

While he despised his former self and wished to distance himself from those days, Theo knew he couldn't lie to Elyse.

"You mean you cheated on her?" Edward's eyes gleamed with predatory excitement, as if he were a starved beast finally sensing prey. He then smirked, reassessing Theo's threat level.

Chapter 999:

With such a shameful past, Theo seemed less formidable than he had imagined. To Edward, it was clear why they became exes.

He saw Theo as no competition; he just needed to nudge Elyse's memories of the betrayal, stir her revulsion, and by highlighting Theo's failings, he could sway her easily to his side.

Theo disregarded Edward's presence and changed the subject. "When are you off today? I want to invite you out for dinner. We need to talk about something important."

Edward cut in sharply. "Forget it. It's too risky for you these days. You should go straight to the Moon Palace after your rehearsal. You'll be safe there. Nobody will bother you."

Elyse, overhearing the conversation, paused uncertainly. The mention of "Moon Palace" made Theo's gaze snap towards Edward. It seemed likely that someone connected to that place, and of the right age, would be the governor's son.

Theo let out a mocking laugh and suggested, "Maybe you can invite me to the Moon Palace too. I've never dined there."

Edward's face tensed up. "The Moon Palace isn't a place for someone of your standing. A commoner like you has no place there."

Undeterred, Theo retorted, "What do you mean by that? Aren't I a friend of Elyse's? Is this how you treat all her friends?"

Edward managed a forced smile and scoffed, "Friend? You're nothing but a scumbag ex."

Theo spread his hands wide, his tone dripping with sarcasm. "I have important matters to discuss with Elyse. How will she ever know about them if you keep interfering like this?"

Edward's gaze lingered on Elyse as she calmly remarked, "He probably has something urgent to tell me. I should listen to what he has to say."

After a long pause, Edward exhaled, clearly resigned. "Fine. I'll give in this time." He turned to Theo, glaring. "You scumbag! I'll allow you one chance to dine at home."

"Thanks," Theo responded, completely unbothered.

Once the rehearsal wrapped up, the three of them went to the Moon Palace by car. Inside, Louise was seated in the living room.

As she heard them enter, she set her teacup down and turned around, her eyes landing on the unfamiliar face. With curiosity, she asked, “And who’s this?”

“He’s a jerk. Just keep your distance from him,” Edward muttered with disdain, his face twisted in annoyance. He was about to say more when his phone buzzed.

Glancing at the screen, his demeanor shifted. He stepped closer to Louise and whispered something in her ear. Louise’s eyes briefly met his, and she gave a small nod. Satisfied, Edward walked away to attend a meeting in the Moon Palace.

Chapter 1000:

Elyse, just having set down her violin case, noticed Edward heading out. “Helping your dad with something again?” she inquired.

Edward nodded in agreement. “Exactly. Time to enforce some justice.”

Theo, curious, asked, “Have you kept up with what Edward’s been doing lately?”

“I’m somewhat aware,” Theo replied cautiously, staying detached from the situation. “I’m mainly here to observe, not get involved.”

Elyse, deep in thought, then turned to Louise, noticing her fixed gaze on Theo. Puzzled, she inquired, “What has you so captivated by him?”

Louise shook her head, her tone earnest. “I’ve just never encountered a real jerk before. This is actually my first time.”

Although it was Theo’s first encounter with Louise, he already felt the weight of her scorn. Reflecting on Edward’s earlier actions, Theo understood they were intentional. Edward aimed to ruin any remaining affection Elyse held for her ex-boyfriend.

With a forced smile, Theo remarked, “They say it’s a good quality for a man to realize his mistake.”

Louise responded gravely, “To me, a man who betrays me doesn’t deserve a place in this world.” She made it clear she was not joking.

Feeling the growing tension, Elyse quickly steered the conversation elsewhere. “I’m really hungry today. When are we going to eat?”

“The dinner will be ready soon. I’ll prepare a small snack for you,” the butler offered respectfully.

Elyse nodded and responded, “Alright, but before dinner, can we have a private conversation?” Theo agreed with a nod.

Elyse addressed the butler. “Could you find us a secluded place to talk? We won’t need the snack.” The butler agreed and led them to the study.

Once the study door was closed, Theo began, “I saw Mabel at the concert hall. She is employed there. Can you believe that?”

Elyse had just taken her seat. At Theo’s words, she looked up, visibly shocked. “How is it possible for her to work at the concert hall?”

Theo explained, “While looking into Kaelyn’s circumstances, I stumbled upon the fact that Mabel is quite close to Kaelyn. With Mabel being around you, do you suppose that —”

Theo paused, leaving his question hanging. Elyse caught on to what he was implying.

Elyse spoke with a tone of resignation. “I get why Mabel might hold a grudge against me, but I can’t see why Kaelyn would also oppose me. It’s baffling.”