

Bound love 331

Chapter 331:

Elyse likely understood why Abram disliked her. It was all about Vicky taking the spotlight.

Despite understanding, Elyse felt wronged. Tears in her eyes, Elyse exclaimed, "If Abram can't stand me, he can push me aside, but why fire me? Playing the violin is my dream."

Jayden, stroking his chin thoughtfully, responded, "I doubt that orchestra is where your dreams are realized. There are other ways to pursue your dreams."

Elyse, lifting her face from her hands tearfully asked, "What other way is there?"

"I'll set up a solo performance for you," Jayden offered.

Frustrated, Elyse retorted, "I'm not well-known. How am I supposed to qualify for a solo performance?"

Handing her a tissue, Jayden reassured her, "Look, I have the means to support whatever you want to pursue. Don't limit your future to just that orchestra."

Trying to smile through her tears, Elyse replied, "Playing the violin is all I know. If I have no chance to play, I'm lost."

Jayden, distractedly nodding, ladled some soup and gently urged Elyse to eat. "Don't sell yourself short. You can be good in bed," he said absentmindedly.

Elyse glared at Jayden. "Can you take this seriously just once?"

Jayden, thinking he was being serious, carefully spooned soup into her mouth and then reassured her, "Don't worry about this matter. You should just focus on getting better."

Elyse listened, but her gaze was distant, unfocused. Jayden gently took her chin in his hand, forcing her to look at him. “Hey, are you even hearing me?”

Tears welled up in Elyse’s eyes as she reached out her hand. “I need a new phone. I lost mine.”

“I’ve already got one for you. It’s with Driscoll,” Jayden said, letting go of her chin and massaging his temples. “Look, I’ve got something to attend to. Please don’t bother me when I’m in the study.”

“Humph, I won’t,” Elyse snorted disdainfully and strode toward the bathroom.

Such a temper. It’s my fault for spoiling her. Watching her walk away, Jayden sighed, feeling utterly helpless.

After Elyse finished washing up, she descended the stairs to find Driscoll, who appeared uneasy and immediately offered a solemn apology to her. This situation wasn’t Driscoll’s fault, yet Elyse took the time to clarify that Abram considered her a nuisance.

Upon discovering the reason behind her dismissal, Driscoll exclaimed, his voice laced with frustration, “They’re worse off without you. Don’t dwell on it. You’re bound to find success elsewhere.”

Elyse offered a smile, uncertain of her future but considering Jayden’s advice to take some time off and recover at home. She smiled again and extended her hand towards Driscoll. “Driscoll, I’ve lost my phone. Could I get a new one?”

Returning her smile, Driscoll replied, “Just a moment. I’ll fetch one for you.”

Elyse nodded and settled onto the sofa to wait. Shortly, Driscoll returned with a brand-new phone and some refreshments. As Elyse enjoyed her new phone along with the refreshments, her spirits began to lift.

Just then, an unexpected visitor arrived. Driscoll’s expression hardened. “Mrs. Owen, Lanny, and Glenda are here. Would you like to meet with them?”

Hearing their names caused Elyse to flinch, and her phone slipped through her fingers and crashed to the floor. She hadn’t anticipated their arrival so soon and felt utterly unprepared.

Seeing Elyse's reluctance, Driscoll proposed, "If you prefer not to meet with them, I can ask them to leave."

Elyse retrieved her phone from the floor, her expression a mix of emotions, and questioned, "Why do they want to see me now?"

Driscoll looked uncomfortable as he replied, "It seems they're here about Mabel's situation."

Turning her head, Elyse asked in bewilderment, "What's wrong with her? Didn't she leave a long time ago?"

After a brief pause, Driscoll explained, "She is currently confined in the basement. Without Mr. Owen's permission, she can't be freed. Her parents likely believe you can persuade him."

Elyse remained still on the sofa. They were just here for Mabel. She had initially thought their visit was motivated by guilt, perhaps an attempt to reconcile. It became clear she had been naive to think so.

Raising her head, Elyse inquired, "I just fooled myself into thinking they were here for me. Silly, isn't it?"

Chapter 332:

Driscoll felt a pang of empathy for Elyse, sensing parallels between her and Jayden's past. Her longing for parental love mirrored Jayden's own childhood yearnings. With a gentle squat, he took out a piece of chocolate, extending it to the bewildered Elyse. "You're a good person. It's not your fault to have terrible parents. You're allowed to feel pain," he reassured her with a warm smile.

Staring at the chocolate, bitterness swelled within Elyse. After a moment's pause, she inquired, "How did Jayden handle the situation?"

Driscoll replied honestly, "He treated Mabel harshly, but he didn't resort to torture."

“In that case, I’ll leave it be. I’ve just returned home not in the best state. I don’t want to be involved. I trust Jayden’s ways of handling this matter,” she declared, sinking back into the sofa to indulge in the dessert.

As Driscoll prepared to depart, she curled up on the sofa, her mind adrift. The memory of Glenda’s indifferent gaze haunted her, a stark reminder of where she stood in their eyes. No amount of sweetness could mask the bitterness she felt.

Debora perched on the sofa in the office, her gaze fixed on the sunset beyond the French window. Her assistant nudged the door open, inquiring, “The car’s ready. Are you really heading to see the chairman?”

With a mischievous glint, she snatched up the document beside her, remarking, “I’ve got no choice. I just can’t fathom what Jayden’s up to. I need to meet my grandpa and dissect it.”

Rising with a victorious grin, she declared, “Let’s go. We might just make it in time for my grandpa’s dinner if we hurry.”

A smug smile played on her lips. Since taking charge of most of the company’s affairs, she’d found the head of Bayzee Group to be shrouded in mystery, rarely making public appearances. Despite rumors of his attendance at various events, he remained elusive like a phantom. The more enigmatic he seemed, the more intrigued Debora became.

She had unearthed some leads, albeit ones leading back to her cousin Jayden, who’d been absent for a year. She couldn’t help but wonder how her grandfather would react upon learning Jayden was the mastermind behind Bayzee Group. The anticipation alone sent shivers down her spine.

Jayden sat in his study, grappling with a mountain of paperwork accumulated over the days. A message from Troy diverted his attention. Upon digesting Troy’s report, his expression darkened, prompting him to dial Troy’s number without hesitation. “Is your investigation accurate?”

Troy dared not deceive him. “I’ve reviewed the surveillance footage near the sites of your two accidents multiple times. For the second car accident, I spotted your grandpa’s old butler at a roadside coffee shop. He left the coffee shop after the happening of your car accident.”

Jayden’s fists clenched, his knuckles paling with tension. Years of fruitless investigation suddenly made sense. The architect of his misfortune had lurked beside him all along, silently plotting his demise.

Troy interjected, "I'm attempting to breach the chairman's confidential files. Once I succeed, we'll know for certain if he's behind this."

After the call ended, Jayden slumped into his chair, overcome with a surge of laughter. "Is it you, Grandpa? Are you aiming to end me outright or merely render me disabled?"

Chapter 333:

Seated in the living room, Elyse was startled by Jayden's sudden laughter. Perplexed, she hesitated briefly before rising and making her way to the study door. A gentle knock followed her query, "Jayden, everything alright in there?"

Jayden's silence lingered, but Elyse didn't think much of it. Turning to leave, she was taken aback as Jayden swung open the door, fixing her with an intense gaze. Elyse took a step back, questioning, "What's the matter? Why are you looking at me like that?"

Jayden sidestepped her inquiry, redirecting the conversation. "Would you like to see your sister?"

Confusion clouded Elyse's thoughts. Jayden's demeanor seemed unsettling, as though he teetered on the edge of control. Without a word, she approached him, enveloping him in a comforting embrace, his face nestled against her chest. Jayden offered no protest, allowing her embrace to anchor him. After a while, he questioned, "What are you doing?"

In a hushed tone, Elyse murmured, "You left me for two hours earlier. I missed you, needed to hold you close."

A flicker of amusement danced in Jayden's eyes. He didn't resist the embrace, instead drawing her closer, finding solace in her warmth. It was peculiar. Moments ago, he had felt his world spinning out of control, his breath hitching. Now, in her arms, a sense of tranquility washed over him. He found himself oddly comforted by the embrace.

After a moment's contemplation, Elyse broached the subject. "Mabel is locked in the basement. Will she resent me if I visit her?"

At her words, Jayden scoffed. “You’re worried she’ll resent you? She already does; you just refused to see it.”

Elyse sighed. “I know. I’ll go see her.”

With determination, Jayden guided her out of the villa towards the basement.

Arriving at the basement, Elyse wrinkled her nose at the foul odor. “Where’s that stench coming from?”

Jayden shrugged. “Your sister had a panic attack and soiled herself on the first day. My staff refused to clean up, and I couldn’t force them. So she’s been left to endure it.”

Elyse’s expression turned complex. “How foul and neglected must this basement be if it hadn’t been cleaned for days?”

As a bodyguard opened the door, the overpowering stench hit Elyse full force. The odor nearly overwhelmed her senses, but after a moment’s recovery, she entered, pinching her nose tightly.

Inside, the harsh light revealed Mabel in a desolate state, huddled in a corner, silent and disheveled.

“Mabel?” Elyse’s voice quivered with uncertainty.

Startled, Mabel lifted her head, resentment flickering in her eyes at the sight of Elyse. With a sudden surge, she lunged towards her, only to be restrained by the chain shackling her leg, limiting her movement.

Spewing curses, she shouted, “You wretch! This is all your doing! Let me out of here! If it weren’t for you, I wouldn’t be in this mess!”

Elyse’s expression shifted slightly. Despite enduring days of confinement, Mabel’s temperament remained unchanged.

“Did I disappoint you by surviving?” Elyse asked, a hint of sarcasm in her tone.

Casting a disdainful glance at Mabel's restrained leg, she added, "If I were you, I'd be more humble and beg for forgiveness instead of wallowing in my own filth."

Mabel snapped back, "Let me out! I'll make you pay! It should be you locked up here, not me!"

Chapter 334:

Elyse observed Mabel's fierce and menacing demeanor, an unsettling feeling creeping over her. Suddenly, a disturbing notion crossed her mind—was this person truly her sister? The sorrow in her heart ebbed away, replaced by a cold numbness. "You orchestrated my abduction. Did you ever consider the consequences?" she asked, her voice devoid of emotion.

Mabel's response was chillingly indifferent. "Consequences? Why would I care? You've never been of any help to me. You're nothing but useless trash."

Elyse closed her eyes slowly, a chill settling in her heart. She had cared for Mabel since childhood, yet here she was, regarded as worthless. The absurdity of it all struck her deeply. Fixing her gaze upon Mabel, Elyse uttered calmly, "If you have no use for me, then I have nothing more to say. Your fate is no concern of mine."

Mabel was momentarily stunned. While she despised Elyse and wished her gone, a part of her yearned for her help. The putrid stench of the basement only fueled her desperation to escape. Fearful of Elyse's departure, she crawled towards her, threatening, "You wretch! If you don't rescue me, I'll tell our parents and have them cripple you, locking you away like Jayden Owen did to me."

As Mabel reached for Elyse's ankle, Elyse silently stepped back, eluding her grasp. "Elyse Lloyd!" Mabel cried out in frustration, locking eyes with Elyse, whose expression was as lifeless as her own emotions. "Let me out, Elyse!"

Her fists pounded the ground in a frenzy, resembling a raging beast, her hysterical cries filling the air. Watching Mabel, Elyse's memories stirred. In their childhood, Mabel often resorted to such antics to manipulate her into yielding. Over time, Elyse grew accustomed to surrendering to Mabel's demands, always considering her sister's welfare. But this time, she refused to succumb to Mabel's tantrum. Her voice icy, she stated, "Consider yourself fortunate to be confined here. Your actions could have landed you in jail."

Mabel seethed. "You think this hellhole is better? I'd rather rot in jail."

Unmoved, Elyse replied, “Then I have nothing more to say.” With a final glance at Mabel, she turned on her heel and departed the basement.

Jayden, lounging lazily, fixed his gaze on Mabel. “Would you prefer jail?” he queried with a meaningful look.

Disrespectful of Jayden’s disability, Mabel scoffed, “Is being locked in your filthy basement any better? Your personality matches the place.”

Jayden remained unfazed by her retort. Smiling gently, he turned and left the basement. Unaware of Jayden’s true nature, Mabel interpreted his smile as confirmation of his ineffectiveness. In the darkness, she harbored no remorse for her actions, instead blaming her misfortunes on the two individuals she deemed failures.

Elyse hurriedly exited the basement, the moon casting a bright glow overhead. She appeared distressed, taking a quiet deep breath. Jayden emerged slowly, joining her side. “Are you upset?” he inquired softly.

Elyse shook her head. “There’s no reason to be upset. I should have realized sooner. That’s how they’ve always treated me.” Her eyes dimmed with resignation. She should have recognized their mistreatment long ago, but her reluctance to acknowledge it kept her clinging to the facade of familial affection.

Wheeling closer in his chair, Jayden reassured her, “Don’t despair. I’ll ensure justice is served.”

Elyse nodded in gratitude, walking alongside Jayden. As they proceeded, Driscoll rushed towards them. “Mr. and Mrs. Owen, Lanny, and Glenda are back,” he informed them urgently. “They’re threatening to drink pesticides if they’re denied access to Mabel.”

Elyse’s disbelief was evident. “Drink pesticides? It would kill them.”

Driscoll nodded gravely. “Yes. What if they follow through?”

Jayden remained impassive. “If they do, call an ambulance. Let them not meet their end at my doorstep.”

Chapter 335:

Driscoll regarded Elyse with a contemplative gaze, pondering the inappropriateness of Jayden's detached response, particularly in her presence, given that Lanny and Glenda were her parents.

Elyse's stoic demeanor, tinged with a hint of grimness, belied her inability to remain indifferent. Sensing her inner turmoil, Jayden probed, "Are you worried they might go through with it and feel compelled to intervene?"

Elyse attempted to assert her indifference with a deep breath, but she couldn't fool herself. Reluctantly, she admitted, "I can't ignore their well-being. I'm sorry."

Driscoll nodded understandingly, acknowledging, "It's understandable. They're your parents, after all."

Jayden nonchalantly shrugged, gently squeezing Elyse's hand. "If you're concerned, I'll go with you," he offered.

Grateful for his support, Elyse replied, "Thank you for being here."

"Let's not waste time," Jayden urged, leading her towards the villa gate, their hands tightly clasped.

As they approached, the anguished cries of Lanny and Glenda pierced the air, echoing outside. Glenda's distressed voice reverberated with urgency. Elyse furrowed her brow at the cacophony, grateful for the seclusion of the villa area. She couldn't help but shudder at the thought of the chaos that would ensue if they were downtown, attracting a crowd of onlookers.

Reaching the gate, she gestured to the security guard, prompting him to open it. Outside, clutching a bottle of pesticide, Lanny beseeched, "Elyse, please open the gate and allow us to see Mabel. We're family. Please." As Lanny's plea rang out, he caught sight of Elyse approaching, her countenance a tumult of emotions, while Jayden looked stoical beside her.

Avoiding Jayden's gaze, Lanny addressed Elyse, "We understand that our actions have deeply wounded you, but you can't punish your sister for our mistakes. If you're angry with us, we can

make amends.” Brandishing the pesticide bottle, he declared, “I’m prepared to drink this pesticide as a gesture of repentance.”

Shocked by Lanny’s determination, Glenda embraced him, her tears flowing freely. “Lanny, what will I do without you? I can’t bear the thought of losing you.”

Lanny’s expression reflected his resolve. “I have no other recourse. I must face the consequences of my actions. I’m ready to accept responsibility.”

Overwhelmed with distress, Glenda directed her anguish towards Elyse. “Do you truly want to witness your father’s death? How can you be so heartless? We raised you, yet you show us no mercy.”

With a steely gaze, Elyse recognized their attempt to manipulate her emotions as unjust. They had only acknowledged her as their daughter when it suited their agenda. It seemed they always positioned themselves as righteous, casting her as the perpetual scapegoat blamed for every misfortune. She scrutinized Lanny, her tone measured. “Why do you fail to shed tears for your own sorrow? Is it because your grief isn’t genuine enough?”

A fleeting flicker of embarrassment crossed Lanny’s features before he composed himself.

In a fit of rage, Glenda exclaimed, “Elyse, how can you be so ruthless? Do you really want to reduce your father to tears? I’m warning you, release my daughter, or I’ll expose your actions online. There’s no escaping the consequences.”

Lanny frantically attempted to silence Glenda, bewildered by her sudden outburst and unsure why she would make such harsh threats in front of Jayden.

Frustrated, Glenda pushed his hand away, voicing her discontent. “I must speak my mind. Perhaps I shouldn’t have raised her at all.”

Finding Glenda’s words ironic, Elyse tilted her head inquisitively. “Didn’t you abandon me long ago? Didn’t you choose Mabel over me? I thought you ended our mother-daughter relationship. Do you still consider me your daughter?”

Her pointed question left Glenda feeling embarrassed. She exchanged a glance with Lanny before reluctantly conceding. “Even though we didn’t rescue you back then, we’re still your parents.”

Suppressing the urge to laugh bitterly, Elyse pondered their audacity. They had never considered the peril she faced in the hands of her abductors. Now they expected her to care for them. The hypocrisy was palpable. What kind of familial bond was this?

Disgusted, she chose to withhold further commentary, refusing to entertain their pleas.

Sensing the tension, Jayden interjected with a hint of amusement. "So you simply wish to take Mabel home. That's straightforward enough."

Chapter 337:

With no work obligations weighing her down, Elyse woke up naturally and descended to the kitchen for breakfast. Afterward, she ventured into the garden to indulge in some violin practice. Pausing to quench her thirst with a sip of water, she turned and was surprised to spot Taylor Norris.

Rubbing her eyes in disbelief, she exclaimed, "Taylor! When did you get here?"

Approaching Taylor with a look of surprise, Elyse reminisced about their last meetings. She hadn't laid eyes on him in months. After exchanging pleasantries, she noticed the sly grin on his face as he leaned against the table. "I've recently returned, and I've heard about your violin skills. Today, I finally get to hear them," he remarked.

Returning his smile, Elyse couldn't help but ask, "So what brings you here?"

Taylor said mysteriously, "I'm here to collect a debt from your husband."

Taken aback, Elyse hesitated before probing further, "How much does he owe you? Is it a big amount?"

With a playful tone, Taylor quipped, "Yeah, quite a lot. I doubt you could cover the amount."

Elyse coughed lightly, feeling a hint of embarrassment creeping in. She couldn't help but wonder about the extent of Jayden's debt to Taylor. Were they facing financial strain from now on? The notion of potential hardship gnawed at her, and she bit her lip, contemplating the implications. She

mused silently and concluded that she might need to return to work, her expression shifting with the weight of her thoughts.

Observing her turmoil, Taylor found a flicker of amusement in her transparent demeanor. Elyse remained as openhearted and unassuming as ever. Her innocence had been preserved, shielded by Jayden's care. Sensing Elyse's growing concern, Taylor offered reassurance with a smile. "Even though he owes me money, it's not like he can't afford it. Don't fret too much."

Relieved, Elyse responded awkwardly, "Really? That's a relief."

Taylor glanced at his watch, breaking the silence. "It's about time. Can you escort me to Jayden's?"

After a moment's pause, Elyse carefully stored her violin and replied with a smile, "Of course. He's in the study. Follow me."

When Jayden's eyes met with Taylor's, assuming a stern demeanor, Jayden demanded, "What brings you here? Leave."

With a sly grin, Taylor retorted, "Who do you think you are ordering me around?"

Jayden sneered, "I own this house."

Tension crackled in the air between them. Caught in the middle, Elyse felt uneasy. Both men held noble status, making their confrontation perplexing to her.

Just as she debated leaving to avoid the conflict, Driscoll intervened. "Mrs. Owen, your friend is here."

Elyse seized the opportunity, slipping past Taylor and exiting the study with relief.

Once Elyse had left, Jayden rose from his seat and shut the study door. Annoyance etched on his face, he questioned, "What do you want? Didn't I compensate you for the cruise?"

Taylor produced a check and tossed it onto the table. "I don't need your money. I'm not strapped for cash."

Arms crossed and expression cold, Jayden met Taylor's gaze with indifference. Observing Jayden closely, Taylor sighed. "How long will you keep up this charade with your wife? Does she even know you can walk? Will you continue to deceive her, or has she never suspected?"

With a scoff, Jayden retorted, "That's none of your business. Tell me, what do you want?"

The cruise ship Baxter boarded was linked to Taylor's family. Had Jayden not uncovered this connection, he wouldn't have devised a plan to thwart Baxter and his associates. To his surprise, Taylor had declined his offer of compensation after Baxter sabotaged the cruise ship by blowing up its hull.

Chapter 338:

Taylor's refusal of money hinted at an ulterior motive. Jayden, familiar with him since childhood, remembered their past as neighbors. While Taylor often played pranks on other kids, Jayden remained unscathed. Despite this, Taylor's attempts to outwit him persisted to no avail. When Taylor's family relocated due to business expansion, Taylor's antics ceased.

Now, Taylor stood before Jayden, a glint of mischievousness in his eyes. "I want to be your exclusive business partner in Bayzee Group's new international trade venture," he declared, oozing sly confidence.

Jayden, masking his emotions, scrutinized Taylor intently. Taylor produced a flash drive from his pocket, gesturing with it. "I come bearing sincerity. Shall we discuss?"

Jayden's smile concealed his thoughts as he replied, "Certainly. Let's talk."

Meanwhile, in the living room, Elyse's surprise turned to joy upon seeing Tracy and Morgan arrive together. Rushing to embrace Tracy, she exclaimed, "I've missed you! You've finally come to visit." Her tone carried a hint of longing and affection. Before Tracy's arrival, Jayden had briefed her on Elyse's recent hardships, sparking her ire toward Elyse's ruthless parents and sympathy for her job loss.

Embracing Elyse tightly, Tracy reassured her, "You're not alone. I'm here for you."

After exchanging a few words with Tracy, Elyse turned her attention to Morgan, feeling a pang of guilt for her earlier lapse in manners. “I apologize for my gaffe earlier. Please forgive me.”

Morgan shook her head, offering a smile. “No need to apologize. I practically begged Tracy to bring me along.”

Elyse felt a twinge of confusion, prompting Tracy to explain, “Morgan admires you and often speaks highly of you on set. When she learned I was visiting you today, she insisted on joining to ensure you’re okay.”

Elyse was taken aback. Did Morgan hold such a favorable impression of her?

Embarrassed, Morgan admitted, “I just feel a connection with you. Talking to you lifts my spirits.”

Proudly, Tracy patted Morgan’s shoulder. “Elyse has always been adored by others. It’s no surprise you’re drawn to her.”

Driscoll interjected with a smile, announcing, “Desserts are ready in the garden, ladies. Shall we move there for some refreshments and conversation?”

Elyse agreed, urging them, “Let’s go. The chef’s cake is divine. You must try it.”

At the mention of cake, Tracy’s eyes lit up, but she quickly added, “Is it low-sugar? I’ll indulge if it is. I’m still filming, and my agent would kill me if she caught me eating cake.”

Elyse chuckled, reassuring her. “Don’t worry. It’s low-sugar. I can even arrange for a fitness coach to help you shed those pounds.”

Tracy feigned indignation, gritting her teeth. “You know just how to wound me.”

Watching the playful banter between the two, Morgan couldn’t help but laugh. She admired the camaraderie between these two young women.

Upon reaching the garden, Tracy's attention was immediately ensnared by the spread of delectable food on the table. Having been confined to the set for so long where her diet consisted mainly of salads and water, the sight of cakes and beverages made her mouth water. She was ready to indulge.

Meanwhile, Morgan was captivated by the garden's serene beauty. Spotting a violin resting nearby, she found herself drawn to it. In a moment of impulse, she reached out her fingers, brushing against the strings, eliciting a sound.

Startled, confused, and yet oddly familiar, Morgan clutched her chest, her emotions in turmoil.

Despite lacking proficiency in playing the violin, she felt an inexplicable connection to the instrument.

Concerned, Elyse approached her. "What's the matter?" she inquired gently.

Chapter 339:

Morgan tenderly touched the violin strings, her eyes reflecting a trace of nostalgia. She queried, "Do you know how to play the violin? May I have the honor to hear you play it for me?"

Immediately, Elyse agreed with a nod, grasping the violin. "What piece would you like? I'm happy to play whatever you choose."

A title quickly surfaced in Morgan's mind. "Could you play 'Nocturnes'?"

"Of course," Elyse replied, settling into position and beginning to play the violin.

While Tracy was indulging in her cake, a gentle breeze whisked past, carrying the notes of the music. She shut her eyes briefly as the breeze brushed by, and when she opened them again, she was surprised to find tears rolling down Morgan's cheeks.

Once the music concluded, Elyse noticed Morgan's tearstained face and swiftly grabbed a napkin to gently wipe her tears away. Worried, she inquired, "What's wrong? Why the tears?"

Embarrassed, Morgan accepted the napkin, turned her head away, and patted her eyes dry. "I'm sorry for breaking down. I don't know why, but the music moved me profoundly."

"Nocturnes can be quite stirring," Elyse remarked, nodding in understanding.

Morgan quickly pulled herself together and, smiling at Elyse, complimented her. "Your performance was spectacular. Do let me know if you plan any concerts. I'd certainly attend."

Elyse fidgeted, looking uncomfortable. "I've actually been let go from the orchestra. Organizing a concert might be hopeless."

Morgan comforted her. "That's their loss. Even for someone like me who isn't musically inclined, your music is comforting. I'll put even more effort into organizing a solo concert then," Elyse responded, visibly encouraged by Morgan's words.

"Stop talking and come here to eat some cake. I can't finish it by myself," Tracy called out, nearly done with her slice.

Elyse set the violin down and joined Tracy, selecting a slice of chocolate cake and pairing it with a cup of black tea.

Meanwhile, Morgan remained still, pressing her hands against her temples, looking visibly uneasy. She couldn't quite articulate to Elyse what she had experienced. Watching Elyse play, Morgan thought she saw a man standing next to her. His face was unclear, but his outline was distinct, mirroring Elyse's posture with a violin in hand. As the music peaked, their movements synchronized.

Morgan couldn't recognize the man yet felt an eerie familiarity as if he was of great significance to her.

A sudden throb in her head made Morgan wince, her heart pounding as if ready to burst. She squatted down, grimacing, as an inexplicable voice echoed in her mind.

"Have you been arguing with your mom again? I'm not sure how to help. Should I play 'Nocturnes' for you? The music might make you cry."

“People often hide their emotions, finding it difficult to openly express joy or sadness. As a violinist, my role is to understand these hidden emotions and provide music that resonates deeply.”

“Jane, I’ve decided that I want to spend my life with her. We imagine a future filled with an adorable child. Maybe we need you to babysit our kid. And they will call you Aunt Jane.”

“Jane, can you check if this area is a good place to live? I’m considering buying a house here.”

“Jane, do you know the location of that restaurant?”

“Jane, Jane, Jane...”

As conversations replayed in her mind, she felt suffocated. Her name wasn’t Jane, and she wouldn’t be their babysitter.

Morgan suddenly struggled to breathe. Was a lost memory resurfacing? Did she recognize the man who kept calling her Jane? Had she been his helper in the past?

Flooded with thoughts of the man, Morgan found herself wanting to punch him in the face. Yet under the veneer of anger, there was a profound sadness that made it difficult for her to catch her breath.

“Morgan, are you okay?” Seeing Morgan’s evident distress, Elyse stood and walked over to her.

Morgan raised her eyes to meet Elyse’s. Elyse, her face etched with concern in the soft light, noticed Morgan’s bewildered expression and asked again, “Are you okay? Should I call a doctor for you?”

In Elyse’s concerned gaze, Morgan saw that man again, his expression filled with worry as he asked, “Are you alright?”

Morgan whispered back, “I’m fine. Don’t worry about me.”

Chapter 340:

As Elyse learned that Morgan was alright, a lingering worry still clung to her. Gently, she brushed her hand against Morgan's forehead, finding no trace of fever.

Standing upright, concern etched in her voice, she suggested, "Perhaps we should call a doctor."

"No need. It's an old affliction from a fall into a river some time back, and I've been struggling with my health since," Morgan rose slowly, steadying herself with hands on her knees. "I'm feeling better now. Let's go. I also want to eat cake."

Reluctantly, Elyse conceded, guiding Morgan towards the table of refreshments.

In a sudden burst of shock and excitement, Tracy exclaimed, "Oh my! Look! Your sister has been arrested! What on earth is happening? It's quite shocking!"

Elyse, barely settled in her chair, nearly toppled over at the news. With a heavy heart, she inquired, "Is this true?"

"Yes," Tracy affirmed eagerly, thrusting the phone towards Elyse. "The police have issued a statement with numerous charges, primarily related to drug use."

After uttering those words, Tracy seemed to snap back to reality and inquired with suspicion, "Have you or your parents noticed any unusual behavior from her lately?"

Elyse took the phone, scanning its contents meticulously. "I'm not sure," she replied after absorbing the details. Once she finished reading, she handed the phone back to Tracy.

Elyse's mind raced, recalling her last encounter with Mabel in the basement. How long had she been in police custody? Then a memory of Jayden's cryptic words flickered in Elyse's mind, stirring a suspicion that perhaps he had orchestrated this.

Though her curiosity regarding Mabel's arrest tugged at Elyse, an unexpected concern for Jayden surfaced. Would his involvement bring danger upon him from the Owen family? Or worse, could Lanny and Glenda resort to extreme measures to harm Jayden once they become aware of it?

Taylor's presence in the study at that moment deterred Elyse from rushing to see Jayden, despite her burning curiosity about whether it might spell trouble for him. She reluctantly suppressed her eagerness.

In a sudden realization, Tracy asked, "By the way, do your parents know that Mabel has been detained by the police?"

Taking a deep breath, Elyse shook her head faintly. "I don't know either."

At the police station, Mabel stood clad in the stark uniform of the detained, her countenance a turbulent mix of fury and bitterness. She traced her fingers along the cold metal frame of her bed, her voice trembling with sorrow. "Why am I arrested? Do you know who I am? I'm from the Lloyd family, and I'm Jayden Owen's sister. Are you not afraid of upsetting him?"

For over an hour, Mabel's cries reverberated through the station, her frustration reaching a boiling point. Unable to tolerate it any longer, the policeman lashed out at her, saying, "How could Mr. Owen have such a relative as you? Don't flatter yourself."

Mabel's complexion drained of color, her voice trembling with urgency as she vehemently asserted her connection to Jayden. "I am Jayden Owen's sister-in-law. His wife is my elder sister. Release me this instant! Or prepare to face the consequences."

Deeming her assertions as delusional, the policeman shut the door, unwilling to entertain her further. Seeing this, Mabel's panic surged. She clutched at the iron bars and yelled, "Don't leave me here! Bring back the phone! I'll call my sister. She will help me."

Despite her relentless cries, Mabel's pleas echoed unanswered, intensifying her panic with each passing moment. She retreated to her iron bed, sinking onto its unforgiving surface. Seeking solace in a familiar habit, she nervously bit her nails, a futile attempt to quell the rising tide of fear and uncertainty.

Confusion clouded her mind as she struggled to make sense of her situation. Recollections flooded her thoughts – falling asleep in the basement only to awaken to the presence of Glenda and Lanny by her side. Glenda had enveloped her in a comforting embrace, tears streaming down her cheeks, while Lanny's eyes betrayed the turmoil within, their redness speaking volumes of unspoken concern.

Caught in the surreal haze of the moment, Mabel could hardly distinguish reality from a dream. Yet she had found solace in confiding her recent tribulations to Glenda, imploring her parents to seek vengeance on her behalf. Drained by the ordeal, she had succumbed to exhaustion, slipping into slumber. Time had eluded Mabel in her sleep until abruptly interrupted by the arrival of the police at her doorstep. Before she could fully comprehend the situation, she had found herself shackled, her senses reeling from the sudden turn of events.

Fear gripped Mabel as confusion clouded her mind, unable to fathom the reason behind her arrest. Mabel resorted to biting her nails until they broke, the pain dulled by the overwhelming fear gripping her. Tears welled in her eyes as she whispered, "Mom, help me. I don't belong here. I just want to go home."

Meanwhile, in the hall of the police station, Glenda sat with tears streaming down her cheeks, her voice choked with desperation. "Lanny, Mabel is your daughter. You must save her. If we don't act now, her future will be ruined."

Lanny paced the floor with a heavy heart. "You've coddled her too much. With the police uncovering all these wrongdoings, saving her now seems impossible, even if I wished to."

Collecting herself, Glenda brushed away her tears. "You should seek help from Elyse. Her husband holds sway. He'll surely find a solution."

Lanny halted his pacing, a bitter smile playing on his lips. "Begging Jayden? You're truly naive. Haven't you realized Jayden orchestrated everything in secrecy? He sent our daughter back, only for the police to swoop in shortly after. He's avoiding getting his hands dirty."

Glenda's eyes widened in disbelief. "Jayden? It's impossible. He couldn't possibly do such a thing."