Ruling 1031

Chapter 1031

Tiffany made no mention of anything she assumed Alejandro had not told Melanie about, for she felt that his reservation was likely due to personal reasons. Hence, she could not betray his secret against his consent. “Uh, yeah. It’s a pity. I mean, he’s a good guy with pretty handsome features whose only flaw is, well, his disability. It’s alright, though, I mean—you agreed to marry him, so I know you don’t mind it.”

Melanie felt a little more confident. “No, of course not. I love him,” she replied. “Anyway, I shouldn’t keep both of you any longer. I’ll be off.”

It was then that Jackson came out of the kitchen with glasses of fresh orange juice in his hands. Melanie eyed the juice and added implicatively, “Oh, I guess I’ll have to skip the juice. You can enjoy mine, Miss Lane. It’s your favorite drink, isn’t it?”

Before Tiffany could ask Melanie about how she knew that, the woman was already gone. So, instead, she took the juice from Jackson’s hand and drained half of the glass in one gulp.

“How did she know what I like? Weird.”

“Please. Anything Alejandro knows, she knows. What’s so ‘weird’ about it?” Jackson muttered.

She shot him a glare. “Don’t you start a fire with this, honey. You know damn well that the last thing you should do is to anger a pregnant woman!… Besides, aren’t all these developments really good for all of us? We’re all tied down, so let’s move away from all these unnecessary things of the past, alright? It’ll be troubling if some kind of misunderstandings come out of it,” she admonished. Then, she added,

“Anyway, Ari and I went to eat this really spicy Korean fried chicken earlier, and I thought it wasn’t hot enough, but Ari’s cheeks were burning all red! And then she told me that some folks thought that if a pregnant woman likes it sour, she’s going to have a boy, and if she likes it hot, she’s going to have a girl. She said I must be expecting a girl… Well, I guess your mom’s dream of holding a grandson isn’t coming true.”

Jackson ruffled her hair. “Come on, Tiffie. My mom doesn’t really care about the gender of her grandchild. Also, you really shouldn’t be having too much hot, spicy food nowadays; it’s no good for your stomach lining. I get it if you crave it, but at least, keep it to a more moderate level.”

The two pulled out other conversational topics they could think of before returning to Alejandro again. Tentatively, Tiffany said, “Hey, can I, like, send Alejandro a thank-you text for his wife’s well-wishes? I’ll text him right now while you watch so that I don’t feel so guilty about this.”

Jackson nodded and sat on the couch. “Eh, fine by me. I’m not interested in reading it, honestly. I mean, he can’t molest you through the screen, so I’m cool.”

Tiffany chuckled. “Urgh, you and that mouth of yours! —Ooh, sent.”

In the Smith Private Estate, Alejandro’s eyes widened as soon as he read Tiffany’s message. “Jett!”

Jett quickly leaned forward. “What is it?”

Alejandro’s hand, still holding his phone, was quaking. “Melanie… Melanie had gone to see Tiffany!”

Jett frowned. “Oh, apologies. My mistake for this slip-up. It’s been a hectic day. I took Tanya for a medical check-up, so I hadn’t been able to focus on Miss Lane’s side.”

Alejandro closed his eyes and massaged his forehead. “I don’t want this to happen again, you got that? When Melanie returns, tell her to see me in the bedroom. I’ll be waiting for her.”

Chapter 1032

It took Melanie almost two hours to find her way back to the Smith Estate.

The trip inspired quite a rant about the estate’s unnecessarily inaccessible location and how it made a simple visit to Tiffany’s an exercise that consumed hours.

She had not even finished complaining to herself when Jett suddenly approached her with his unemotive, mechanical tone. “Madam, Mr. Smith would like to speak to you in the bedroom. He’s waiting for you.”

Melanie’s heart skipped a beat, the implication behind Alejandro’s invitation dawning onto her. Her husband would usually do everything he could to avoid her, but this was the first time he was proactively seeking her. She gave Jett a hum to show that she understood before starting toward the stairs.

Jett abruptly stepped forward again and advised her. “Madam, please don’t do anything that could get on his bad side. Be careful with your words.”

Melanie was so close to countering him with a ‘seriously?’. He made Alejandro sound like a man-eating ogre! Besides, she had no reason to act as though her status was lower than his. At the same time, the fact that Jett was wearing such a dour, no-nonsense expression when he told her his concerns made her confidence wane.

Melanie entered their bedroom and realized that none of the lights were on, which literally threw her in the dark. She was about to search for the light switch when she heard Alejandro’s voice behind her. “Why did you visit her?”

His voice shocked her, propelling her hand to guard her chest before turning on her heels. In the dark, Alejandro’s silhouette seemed far more towering and larger than usual. Even in her heels, Melanie’s forehead only narrowly reached his chin.

The uneasy air radiating from him steadily engulfed her, and her nerves began to flare. “I… I was only there to give her some health products. I mean, the two of you are good friends, and any friend of yours is automatically a friend of mine, right? Plus, she gave us a wedding gift—a painting is not at all cheap. Besides that, I thought it would be good to befriend someone who could someday teach me things when I become an expecting mother in the future. After all, she’s one step ahead of me in motherhood by being pregnant now—”

Alejandro clutched her chin abruptly without moderating his force. “You think I have no idea what’s going on inside that head of yours, do you? You touched my wallet while I was asleep and saw that picture inside it, hmm? Let me spell it out: we will not be having children of our own. Ever!”

Melanie’s eyes widened. “What are you talking about? I didn’t plan to bring out any skeletons in the closet, but this… Are you coming clean to me?”

Don Smith's warning suddenly blared in Alejandro's mind. In a split second, he realized it was not yet time to abandon Melanie, nor act without restraints. He allowed himself a pause before softening his tone. "Look, I just don't like kids, okay? They are so… rowdy. As for the photo, well, I can explain—"

Before he could finish his sentence, Melanie pushed her hand forward and covered his mouth. "No, no need, because I believe in you! I believe that both of you had nothing going on with one another. A-And I don't mind not having any kids if you don't want them. It's fine. I mean, the seniors in our families will probably give us a hard time over it, but we can always keep dragging and dodging and eluding that issue. The bottom line is that I'll always defer to you."

Frankly, Alejandro could not come up with any convincing excuses for the photo either, so the stance Melanie took was a godsend to him. He flicked the switches on, and light returned to their room once more.

He took out the photo in his wallet and balled his fist around it tightly. Then, he relaxed his hand and threw it into the wastebasket. "It's true that we never had anything between us," he said. "We've always been 'just friends'. So please, you don't need to go looking for her. Our relationship was not close enough for you to disrupt her life like that. And yes, she's getting married soon. I'll leave the wedding gift part to you."

Alejandro's action blindsided Melanie, but that surprise quickly gave way to a fortified faith in him. Of course, she knew that no man would put a photo of a "friend" of the opposite sex in his wallet and carry it in person. However, she had also just witnessed her husband cast that photo away, so she latched onto that act and rationalized it as a reason to believe him. Let his bygones be bygones, she reasoned, and look ahead.

Melanie stepped forward and hooked her arm around his waist. "Okay. You can count on me for that one. Also… You're free tonight, I hope? I… I miss your touch."

Alejandro was not a man without desires. When a beauty threw herself into his lap, his human, carnal need took over, and in a flash, he caged her with his arms and pushed her down onto the bed.

He did not love her, so there was no genuine emotion in their act but the need to sate his desire. Naturally, Alejandro would make sure that she would never be pregnant with his seed, too.

When the sounds within their bedroom walls escaped outside, Jett walked away quietly, sighing with relief. He had been mortified at the prospect of Alejandro and Melanie getting into a devastating altercation, as that could expose Alejandro's true identity.

If that man ever got into trouble, Jett himself would not be spared.

Chapter 1033

Passion came and passed. Melanie rested on Alejandro's chest.

"Hey, why don't you let Jett take a few days off? He has his wife and kid to attend to too, you know. Let him have the chance to be with them…. And let me fill his shoes for a few days. I want to know you better," she breathed tenderly. "You know, I've been thinking about how things turned out, and it still amazes me. I'd only seen you a few days before our marriage! And still, I've fallen deeply in love with you. Could this be love at first sight? Regrettably, I don't know you enough yet—but I want to. I want to be the one who knows you the most."

Alejandro remained nonchalant. "'Love at first sight?' Hmph. I'm more inclined to believe it's lust, or maybe you loved how we f**ked."

The darker he sounded, the more entranced Melanie was. “Aww, don’t be so crass! It could be lust, for all I care, but I love you. I love to f**k you, Alex. You’re not escaping me. I want to be with you forever, till death.”

Alejandro espied the wastebasket at the corner of the room and felt a quiet sense of restlessness and turbulence gnawing at him. He immediately stood up and put on a sleeping robe, saying, “Fine, Jett gets a few days’ breaks. But you better be hyper-cautious while tending to me. Don’t forget that I’m ‘disabled.’”

Melanie was ecstatic. “Yes! Oh, God, yes! I’ll be at my most cautious and do my very best! You won’t even have to worry! Oh, that reminds me. Grandpa says he’s coming to see us a few days from now. He would be so glad to see how happy and loving we are together!”

Nothing good could come from that old man’s presence. Alejandro lit up a cigarette and leaned into the window sill, his eyes wandering silently around the dusky sky. He had enough of the Smiths’ life. As long as that old man was still alive, Alejandro would never have the freedom of doing anything he wanted. He would be bound forever.

However, his identity as “Alejandro Smith” was the best protection he ever had right now. In other words, he was in a catch-22 that he could not escape.

Two days before marriage, Tiffany moved back to her mother’s house and stayed there.

At first, she was relatively composed. Then the day drew nearer, and suddenly, she panicked every time she was reminded of its arrival. She was no stranger to all kinds of promises and impassioned words of love, but none of them could compare to the very real weight of marriage and the license that proved it.

The snowy-white bridal gown currently standing by in her closet caused her so much excitement that she, much like the night before her engagement, could not sleep.

Jackson West would be hers and hers alone after the wedding. The man who used to tout his anti-marriage philosophy proudly and the lady-killer who balked at the notion of being tied down to a woman would now gladly be bound to her and only her.

Tiffany could not help but giggle giddily by herself at that thought, surprising her mother. Lilian pushed a bowl of warm, nutritious broth into her hands and said, “Okay, Tiffany, you should sleep as early as possible. The day after tomorrow, the people from the West family will come to receive you, and then suddenly, poof! I’m all who’s left behind. Suddenly, this house seems a little too big and empty for a woman living alone, huh?”

Tiffany turned quiet and stared into the broth, her high spirits quickly deflated by Lilian’s observation. Tiffany was never the type to spend her time with mommy dearest, so now, hearing her say something like this imprinted a bitter taste in her mind.

It took Tiffany a while to finally squeeze out a grin. “C’mon Mom, what are you sayin’? It’s not like I’m being sent off to a land far, far away! I’ll always come back to see you from time to time,” she comforted. “Besides, if you ever feel really lonely, you should go take a shot at finding a life partner again, Mom. But you shouldn’t forget to keep your eyes peeled and really, really look at your candidate. Don’t shut off your brain and get duped like the last time, alright?”

Ever since the Grant Jackson debacle, Lilian had lost all desire to look for a spouse. “Uh, I’ll pass. I would rather live alone, even if that means I might feel lonely from time to time. But hey, there is peace and freedom in being alone, you know? You can do whatever you want. Anyway, drink that broth and go to sleep. You need to get your marriage license with Jackson from the civil affairs office tomorrow, so don’t be late for that… Huh. Is it just me, or is the process of marriage actually a bit bothersome?”

Tiffany nodded and finished the broth with a few large gulps. Lilian took the emptied bowl and left her room after saying, “I don’t want to nag you, so go to sleep.”

Tiffany gave a hum and closed the door before lying down on her back on the bed. She stared at the pristine-white ceiling above her but found sleep impossible and gave in to the impulse to video-call Jackson.

Chapter 1034

The first thing that leaped into Tiffany’s sight was the very dastardly-handsome face that haunted her dreams, and immediately, a wide grin crept onto her face. “A-ha! So you haven’t slept, have you? Look at you, lying down on your bed with that sad-puppy look. Are you tired, or did you just realize that life turns meaningless because I’m not beside you for these two days, huh?”

Jackson considered her features through his phone and replied, “Hmm, maybe both. I mean, you’d requested leave for our wedding, but I haven’t done that myself, so I still need to work on the day… By the by, tomorrow’s the day we get our license. Thrilled yet?”

“Hmm, not really,” Tiffany fibbed, belying her true feelings. “I think I’m more thrilled to see you. You know what they say—absence makes the heart grow fonder.”

It was likely out of genuine tiredness that Jackson’s eyes closed. “Ditto on that. Natch, I wanna see you too, as soon as possible. Oh, but I still need to inspect our wedding venue after we receive our license tomorrow, and—God, there are just so many things to be done. It’s a pain in the neck, but it also … hypes me so damn much.”

Tiffany pitied him. She worried that the mountain of work on his shoulders would exhaust him. “Hey, then take a good rest, babe. You don’t have to pick me up tomorrow. I can drive on my own… and use that time in the morning to rest. Then, after we get our thing, I’ll go home straight away so you can finish whatever it is that you’re supposed to do and rest early,” she suggested. “You need to be at your best-est form on the day after tomorrow, babe. No slip-ups shall be tolerated! After all, it isn’t just any other day. It’s the most important day of our lives.”

Jackson was so worn-out that he could not even open his eyes. “Mm, uh, yeah. I’ll see you… tomorrow… I love you, babe.”

Tiffany ended the video call with her heart swelling with warm fuzzies. She closed her eyes, and her mind drifted into her forthcoming days; first her wedding, then their subsequent beautiful, happy family life. To be able to lace your fingers with someone you love with all your heart—who also loves you back in equal splendors—and step into a new realm of matrimony, is to be bestowed one of the rarest and most precious gifts in life.

Tiffany was so lucky to be one such person.

However, in the Smith Family Private Estate, Alejandro was downing glass after glass of wine as though he was trying to shut down his mind and black out.

Tiffany was going to be Jackson West’s legal wife tomorrow—tomorrow! Yet, he could not do a thing to sabotage this, simply because that cursed geezer, Don Smith, had chosen to stay over these few days to keep an unblinking eye on him!

Lynn was currently standing nearby with her head hung low, like a child who had just done something wrong.

Suddenly, Alejandro beckoned her to come forward. Lynn took a few tentative steps before he suddenly grabbed her by the nape of her neck and shoved her onto the table.

“Why the hell do you keep f**king up the things I’ve f**king delegated to you? Tomorrow, Lynn! They are going to the civil affairs office f**king tomorrow and then have their goddamned wedding on the day after that! Everything—every sh*tty little thing is coming true! And what have you done to stop it? Has even a modicum of what I’d told you to do ever been done?!”

The nipping surface of the table bit Lynn’s pressured cheek. His action hurt, but the woman gritted her teeth to stifle a pained yowl from escaping. “I tried to see Jackson, but he wouldn’t see me no matter what! I had no chance to contact him! And it’s undeniable—the only queen in his heart is Tiffany Lane. Every other woman in the world doesn’t stand a chance! And you know what? Tiffany only has him in her heart, too! Your chances are virtually nonexistent!”

A shudder ran across Alejandro’s body. He grabbed a fistful of Lynn’s hair and yanked her so close to his face that their noses were almost touching.

“What. The. F**k. Did you just say?!” he snarled. “There’s no such thing as an impenetrable relationship, Lynn. There is no such thing as absolute fidelity in love! Don’t you want Jackson? You feel bitter about all of this too; I know you do! But here’s the difference between us: unlike you, I don’t bend to the whims of life and its stupid constraints. No, I’ll always defy them!”

Lynn held her breath, too scared to even let out a sigh. “But I… I don’t know what to do anymore about it all. It’s over, all set in stone. F**k, Jackson regarded me with so much unadulterated disgust that he even deemed throwing a single glance at me as below him!"

Chapter 1035

Alejandro, in a state of intoxication, yanked open Lynn's clothes and peered at the snow white skin underneath. "No man can resist a woman's body," he gibed. "And yet, despite what you have, you cower. I now see, I've given you far more chances than you deserve."

Lynn dared not struggle, nor did she cover herself. And so she stood, naked, vulnerable and trembling in fear. She could not tell what would happen to her given Alejandro's current drunken, testy state.

That was when the door opened, and Melanie strode into the bedroom.

An unreadable expression shadowed her mien as soon as her eyes fell onto them. "Alex, what… what are you doing?"

Alejandro released his grip from Lynn's hand, and the latter instantly took a step back and tidied herself up. "I'll take my leave."

Melanie shot her a snide sidelong glance before marching toward Alejandro, her voice raising several bars higher. "I said—what are you doing!?"

Alejandro finished the wine in his glass and leaned back onto his chair, closing his eyes. "You saw what happened, didn't you? So why ask something so redundant? And don't use that tone when you talk to me; I'm in a bad mood."

Melanie had to summon her might to force down the burning flames in her mind. “I know why you’re down in the dumps—it’s because Tiffany Lane is getting married, isn’t it? I know you still love her, Alex! You threw that photo in front of me and picked it back up after I left, didn’t you? You could never let her go even though she’s just an ugly duckling from a fallen household—nothing compared to me! I try not to bring these skeletons up, but you… You keep forcing me! Why?!”

Alejandro’s eyes suddenly snapped open and focused on Melanie. “You have no right to denigrate her! No right to defame her! Shut the f**k up!”

Melanie was a little daunted, but it was no match for the flames of rage blazing within her. Regardless, she tried to give the man the benefit of the doubt on the account that he was drunk—only a fool would argue with a man wasted out of his wits and expect results.

“Fine, I’ll keep my mouth shut while you rest early,” she relented. “As for Tiffany’s wedding gift—I’ve already prepared it, and yes, I plan to be there. I know you won’t go, so I’ll snap her most beautiful moments and show them all to you, and then you can finally see for yourself just how happy she is to marry a man she loves! A man who, woe to you, isn’t you! So stop dreaming!”

With that, she gritted her teeth and spun on her heels, determined to leave. Before she could reach the door, however, she felt a force seizing her from behind—and her body was slammed onto the edge of the table. Alejandro had pressed her head down in swift submission.

“What are you doing?!” she shouted, her voice cracking out of intense fear. All her life growing up, she was always treated like a princess. Never had she ever experienced such violence before. It was so terrifying, she almost burst into tears right there and then.

Nevertheless, Melanie still clung to the belief that her husband was only doing what he did under the influence and that he would return to her with a gentle smile when the alcohol subsided. No, Melanie did not regret becoming his wife, and she was not about to start.

As she was lost in her mental gymnastics, the pain flaring in her body failed to reach her. She let Alejandro lock her into place and said, “Forget it, Alex. Forget her. I’ll make you love me back.”

Control seemed to have returned in Alejandro, who stepped back from her without hesitance. “No, I don’t think I will. But I’ll give you the title of Mrs. Smith along with the rightful treatment that comes along,” he said stoically. “You can still back out if you regret all of this.”

Melanie stood and rubbed her sore left wrist, a mirthless smile on her lips. “Everyone thinks I’m a braindead bimbo and an easy pawn. But I have my own unique set of qualities. You see, once I decide on something, I’ll do everything to ensure that I leave no regrets. I’ll make you forget her, Alex. My funny little superpower is that I’m very, very determined.”

Alejandro said nothing. This was the first time he ever properly considered the woman standing before him. She looked so lanky, so slight; it gave him the impression of a frail, defenseless woman whom he could do whatever he wanted to without restraint. He might not have remembered the details of what transpired earlier—already it had turned into a foggy memory—but he knew one thing for sure. Alejandro could not control his force when he manhandled her.

Yet, despite that, she had not made even a peep.

Chapter 1036

As soon as Melanie left the room, she ended up face to face with the Smith family butler. She lowered her head and concealed her feelings. She held her right hand firmly over her left to cover it more. “What is it?”

“Don Smith is waiting for you,” the butler replied in a professional manner.

She nodded and followed him to the courtyard. Don Smith did not seem to plan on going to sleep. It was already so late, yet he was still drinking tea. The type of tea he drank helps keep people awake, so it certainly does not help with sleep, especially for old people at his age.

“Grandfather,” she greeted dutifully.

The old man waved his hand, beckoning for her to sit down. There were only street lamps in the courtyard, so it wasn’t that bright. Hence, she didn’t need to conceal her wounded left hand.

The old man looked far into the night sky for a very long time, then suddenly spoke up, “Do you have any questions for me? You’ve just joined the family not too long ago. You must feel apprehensive. The Smiths are much more complicated than the Larks.”

Melanie lowered her gaze and paused thoughtfully, then asked, “Have you heard of Tiffany Lane?”

Don Smith turned to the side and looked at her. “I expected a completely different question from you. Are you that concerned about Ale? It makes sense, you’re a young girl who is passionately in love. How did you find out about that woman?”

She felt a twinge of bitterness in her heart. “I saw her picture in Alex’s wallet. I know that Alex doesn’t love me, but that woman is getting married. Why won’t he let her go? When you love someone, you should let them be happy and let them enjoy their blessings. Isn’t that right? He’s getting drunk tonight, and I’m pretty sure that he’s been doing that a lot lately. It would be fine if Tiffany were in love with him too; in that case, I wouldn’t care, but she’s not. She’s in love with Jackson West.”

Don Smith’s face was shielded by the cover of night. She couldn’t see his face too clearly, but his old, withered hand gripped the armrest of his chair. “Melanie, Ale is still young. Who hasn’t been in love in their youth? You’re married now. Everything will get better as time goes on. Don’t mind him. I will always be on your side. You don’t need to tell your parents about this either…”

Melanie nodded. “I know. I won’t. I’m sure that I can make Alex fall in love with me. I will!” Her tone wavered after she was filled with confidence. “Sometimes, I wish that Tiffany Lane would just disappear from this world. Is that wicked of me?”

Don Smith smiled. “Hehe, no. Humans can be inclined towards wicked thoughts. It’s a part of human nature. Most people would only think it, but some would also act upon it. Would you like to be like most people, or ‘some’ people?”

Melanie was startled. “No no no! I was just being whiny. I’ve never thought of doing anything to Tiffany. Besides, Alex would hate me if I did. He’d already fly into a rage whenever I mention anything bad about her. It’s fine. Things will get better.”

Chapter 1037

Don Smith praised her generously, “Looks like I’ve made the right choice. You just need to be a good wife and take good care of Ale. Leave the rest to me. Go back and take care of him. He’s had a lot to drink. He’ll need someone to care for him.”

Melanie got up. “Okay. Please excuse me. You should get a good night’s sleep too, grandfather.”

By the time Melanie arrived back at the room, she suddenly realized. Was Don Smith implying something? What did he mean when he said that she didn’t need to worry and to leave it to him? He wasn’t going to do anything to Tiffany, was he?

She had never experienced these kinds of things before, and didn’t dare overthink it. However, she still felt very uneasy.

The next morning, Jackson drove to the civil affairs office straight away. He saw that Tiffany’s car hadn’t arrived, and wanted to call to hasten her. However, he was worried about her bad driving skills and thought that a call might distract her, so he had no choice but to wait for her patiently.

Unbeknownst to him, Tiffany had slept very late last night and had difficulty waking up this morning. She would still be asleep if Lillian hadn’t dragged her out of bed.

Tiffany’s heart raced with anxiety as she rushed to the civil affairs office. Jackson was probably there by now. He wouldn’t be angry if she arrived late for this kind of thing, would he? She checked all the important documents while waiting for a traffic light to turn green, ensuring that there were no mistakes, and let out a sigh of relief.

She did not notice an old van, parked at the fork of the road in front of her. The man in the front seat was eyeing her car. He had scars riddled all over his face, it was a ghastly sight.

She started her car again and continued her drive when the light turned green. Suddenly, an old woman pushing a baby's stroller appeared on the side of the road! She turned her steering wheel in panic and stopped the car at the side of the road.

Before she could relax, the scarred man hit the accelerator on the van and drove towards her lane, against traffic. Due to the sudden appearance of the old woman with the baby stroller, the van lost control and rammed into the curb in the middle of the road!

Tiffany was gaping with shock. She had been grumbling at the old woman for pushing the baby stroller across the middle of the road when there was clearly a sidewalk. Now, she realized that if it were not for the old woman, the van would have run into her by now! The old woman had also snapped to her senses, but she simply screamed and remained standing in the middle of the road.

Tiffany was worried for the old woman and baby's safety, so she got down from the car and tried to help them. Just then, the van started up again, reversed and charged towards her again.

Seeing this, the old woman finally moved and flew to the side of the road with the stroller. Tiffany widened her eyes as she stared at the van driving towards her. It was happening so fast, she simply couldn't get away, She saw the man in the car, whose scarred face was terrifying! She had a feeling that this man was targeting her!

Suddenly, a black Bentley appeared from nowhere, and rammed into the fast-driving van. The van flew and rolled into a great distance. The Bentley wasn't doing too well either. It lost control and smashed into a tree trunk. The car was badly damaged, horribly sunken in!

Tiffany recognized that black Bentley—it was Alejandro's car!

She dashed forward to look. It was Alejandro, in the driver's seat. He was all alone in the car, and his entire face was drenched in blood. The lower half of his body was heavily wedged into the front of the car. His legs were a mess of flesh and blood!

She hurriedly called 911, reported the situation, ended the call, and screamed at Alejandro in a trembling voice, "Alejandro! Are you alright? Can you hear me? Alejandro!"

Chapter 1038

Alejandro opened his eyes and looked at her, probably because he had heard her voice. Then, he passed out again.

Tiffany followed the ambulance taking him to the hospital. Alejandro and the van driver were pushed into the emergency room. Only then did Tiffany return to her senses and call Jackson. "You should go home for now. I can't come. Something happened while I was on the way!"

Jackson did not expect this to happen. He sounded dismayed. "What happened? Where are you? You're not only late for such an important thing, you're not coming at all…"

Tiffany did not plan on telling him about Alejandro's involvement in the accident, but she was afraid of inciting antagonism by keeping it from him, so she decided to be honest about the accident.

"I'm coming to the hospital to get you. You're coming home with me at once!" Jackson ordered after hearing her explanation, to her surprise.

She hesitated. “But Alejandro’s family members aren’t here yet. I can’t leave. You should go. I’ll be fine. I can get home on my own later. We can get the marriage certificate in the afternoon.”

Jackson refused to give her any room for argument. Instead, he rushed straight to the hospital.

As expected, Don Smith and Melanie arrived before Jackson. Tiffany was just about to explain the situation to Don Smith when he shot her a glare, passed by her, and headed to the emergency room. She was speechless. Why did he have to be so hostile? Although it seemed like Alejandro had ended up wounded in order to save her, she had called an ambulance and sent him to the hospital.

Melanie did not seem hostile to her. She even smiled at her. That made her feel better.

Seeing as they had snubbed her, she couldn’t be bothered to explain. The doctor can do the explanations instead.

When she arrived at the hospital entrance, Jackson had arrived as well. She walked up to him apologetically and hugged him. “I’m sorry, I nearly got into an accident along the way here. Alejandro suddenly drove his car into the other driver’s car and saved me. Otherwise, the baby and I would both be in danger. I couldn’t just leave him there, so I called an ambulance and sent him to the hospital. But the Smiths are here now, so let’s go. It’s not too late to get registered still.”

She hadn’t noticed how Jackson’s face had drained of color from panic. His body was shaking too. He hugged her back in a tight grip and answered in a hoarse voice, “I shouldn’t have left you alone. I’m sorry… I should have picked you up…”

She was confused. “Why? It was only an accident. It’s fine. Maybe this means that I’ll have good luck, now that I’ve survived a disaster. Maybe it’s a test from God. Otherwise, why would an accident happen on the day of our marriage registration, of all days?”

He marched her back into the car with his arms around her. “Tell me exactly what happened. Spare no details.”

Tiffany reiterated the events from the accident in further detail, leaving nothing out. After all, she couldn’t give a clear account on the phone. She patted her chest traumatically after giving her account of the story. “I was grumbling at the old woman for risking her life by pushing the stroller in the middle of the road at the time too. But I think that van would have probably ran into me if it weren’t for them.”

“Don’t you think that it’s a little too strange?” Jackson asked through gritted teeth.

She looked confused. “What do you mean? There’s nothing strange, except for how Don Smith shot me a glare at the hospital. It’s all just a coincidence. I never thought that Alejandro would just come out from nowhere.”

Chapter 1039

He shook his head. “If my guess is right, someone is deliberately targeting you, and Alejandro knows. That’s why he appeared to help you. It’s not a coincidence or an accident.”

Tiffany was shocked. She remembered the scar-faced man in the van and shivered. “Actually, I was wondering… Because the van driver looked like he was driving right at me, his eyes were like a hawk’s, and the scars on his face were so scary. He’s in the emergency room right now. If what you’re saying is

right, who's trying to hurt me? I haven't offended anyone. Why would they want to hurt me? And how would Alejandro know?"

Jackson paused. "I don't know either. How about this, I'll take you home and I'll tell Mark about this, and ask him to investigate the matter. The man with the scars is in the hospital, isn't he? I'll pay him a visit after dropping you home. We'll do the registration another day. I don't want any more accidents before our wedding tomorrow. You, be good and don't go out alone. If you must, be careful. No, you have to ask me to come with you. Understand?"

She nodded compliantly. "I understand. I won't go out on my own anymore, and I won't leave the house unless you're around. Take me home then. Be careful during your investigation. It's too scary."

The hospital.

After a while, Alejandro and the scar-faced man were transferred to a normal ward. The scar-faced man had sustained worse injuries than Alejandro. He was bandaged from head to toe like a mummy. Once the anesthesia had worn off, he woke up from the pain.

The scar-faced man saw Don Smith standing in front of his bed from the moment he woke up. He widened his eyes fearfully but to no avail, hematoma prevented him from opening his eyes completely, as he could only widen them into slits. Bloodstains clouded his vision. Don Smith's image seemed blurry.

"Calm down. You're badly hurt. I always treat my employees fairly. I've paid for all of your medical bills, and I will be giving you compensation fees too. Just one thing… Why have you failed to complete the job I've given you, and ended up hurting my grandson instead?" Don Smith asked with an expressionless face.

“N-no… Mr. Smith… Rushed out to me on his own. He dr-drove the car and rammed into me. Otherwise, Tiffany Lane would be dead by now! It’s not my fault, gi-give me one more chance!” The scar-faced man was like a trembling lamb in front of Don Smith.

“Are you saying… My Ale, drove a car on his own, and banged into you? He’s crippled. He can’t walk. How can he drive?” Don Smith’s harsh voice seemed to be suppressing something, the tone seemed heavy.

“I’m not lying, Mr. Smith isn’t a cripple! I saw it very clearly. He was all alone in the car. He was driving it!” The scar-faced man struggled to defend himself.

Don Smith’s gaze sunk. He waved at the butler, who was standing at the doorway. The butler closed the door immediately. Then, he lowered his voice and said, “You may have failed to complete the job, but you’ve suffered a lot of injuries. You’ll never be able to provide for yourself again. How about we just end it here? You know… too much… I will transfer the money to your woman; consider it compensation and a form of consolation for her. You can rest in peace.”

The scar-faced man tried to speak again, but Don Smith had already turned around and left. The Smith family butler stepped forward with a syringe in hand and injected some transparent liquid into the IV bag. The scar-faced man could only watch it all happen…

Soon, the butler caught up to Don Smith. “Sir, it’s done. I left once he stopped breathing.”

Don Smith nodded. “Let’s go. Come with me, I’m going to see Ale.”

They arrived at Alejandro's ward to find Melanie giving Alejandro a drink of water. Don Smith stepped forward and said, "Melanie, would you please go home and have the servants make some food? I'll take care of things here."

Chapter 1040

"Okay…" Melanie replied, too afraid to look Don Smith in the eye.

Alejandro waited for Melanie to leave before asking, "What did you want to talk about?"

Don Smith carried a calm look on his face. "You're not my Ale. Where is Ale?"

Alejandro smirked. "What if I told you that you Smiths have lost your one and only heir? Would you die from a heart attack right now? He died at that hospital in Nafaeth. You should know, I was there too. He died next to me… He asked me to live for him, in his place. To do everything that he would never be able to do."

"Enough!" Don Smith suddenly growled. "It's all my fault! I should have shown him more concern. I shouldn't have fought with him and sent him all the way to Nafaeth. I shouldn't have given anyone the chance to hurt him… It's all my fault…"

Alejandro ignored the old man and minded his own business by looking out the window. Don Smith suddenly calmed down again. "Regardless of the situation, we can't change anything now. There will never be a second Alejandro in this world, except you. You are the only Smith heir."

Alejandro frowned. The depths of his eyes flashed with astonishment. Don Smith knows that he's not Alejandro, yet he's decided against killing him? And he wants him to continue masquerading as Alejandro?

He was undergoing treatment at that hospital at Nafaeth at the time. Coincidentally, Alejandro was there as well. There was a sudden riot, a riot caused by the Smiths.

The hospital had caught a fearsome fire and the entire building descended into chaos. He ran into a medical equipment room in a bid to stay alive. Unexpectedly, the injured Alejandro had been brought in there to hide as well.

There were three people in that room. They might have been able to escape from the chaos, but they could not escape from the raging flames. Alejandro's subordinate was about to run off and leave Alejandro alone, but he was shot to death by a hidden sniper. Alejandro was a cripple, so couldn't move at all. He seemed to have reached acceptance and sat on the ground, waiting for death.

He, Ethan Connor, on the other hand, did not want to die! It hadn't been easy for him to escape from Mark's clutches alive. He wanted to survive!

At the very last moment, the real Alejandro asked him, "What are you doing here?"

"Escaping for my life," he replied casually. "I want to live. I'll try to save you, I'll take you with me." He was doing it out of pity for Alejandro. They were comrades in suffering, after all.

Alejandro shook his head with a smile. "It's fine. My time is up. I should have died long ago. If you don't mind, perhaps you could take my place. That way, you could have everything you want, a never-ending

supply of money. Everything that belongs to me, will belong to you too. I'll give it all to you, simply because you've tried to save me. You won't have to run for your life anyway. Unfortunately, you'll have to pretend to be a cripple."

Ethan didn't answer. He carried Alejandro on his back, enduring the scorching temperature and leaped from the window. During this process, he had sustained burn wounds, but Alejandro's wounds were more severe than his. Having endured an assasination attempt and such vicious circumstances, Alejandro succumbed to his injuries two days later. He was initially hesitant, but when he found out that Alejandro was really the heir to the most powerful family in Ayashe, the Smiths, he was convinced. At that moment, he decided to change his identity.