Ruling 1161

Chapter 1161

She was still in a daze when Mark poured Helen another glass of wine and said, “Merry Christmas, mom.”

Everyone around the dining table fell silent.

Henry and Mary silently turned to look at Arianne.

Arianne hastily raised her glass to disperse the awkward atmosphere and said, “Merry Christmas, everyone. Let’s drink.”

Everyone knew she was trying her best to not be awkward so they went along with her.

Arianne had never addressed as mom before, Mark knew very clearly that she had not gotten over the obstacle in her heart.

Helen, being the oldest among everyone present, deftly changed the topic. She asked Mark, “How’s the company doing this year, Mark?”

Mark replied, “It’s doing well. We’re getting by.”

Both of them continued talking about business. Since Arianne was not particularly knowledgeable about this, she sat back and took care of Smore.

After dinner, the family went to the balcony on the second floor to look at the fireworks being released in the distance. At that moment, snow began to fall as well.

Smore looked at the sky and opened his mouth, happily enjoying himself.

It was almost eleven in the night when the gathering came to an end. Helen had started her car and was about to leave at Tremont estate when Mark said to Arianne, “Your mom’s leaving.”

Arianne knew that Mark meant Helen was leaving the city and was never coming back. Helen had to do so to avoid Jean who was a scumbag.

Such were the hardships that humans had to face in life. However, there was no need for one to waste time on scums and jerks. Arianne knew Helen was making the right decision. She had long thought about this so she did not feel particularly emotional. In the end, she only said, “I know.”

Meanwhile, in the West family residence.

Lillian had joined Tiffany for dinner. Both families interacted harmoniously. The Christmas celebration that year was even merrier with Tiffany’s pregnancy.

Jackson had hidden in his study to smoke a cigarette while everyone was busy chatting away. Alas, he was still caught red-handed by Tiffany. He hurriedly put out his cigarettes and said, “I was just… enjoying a puff or two. You shouldn’t be here. The smoke is harmful to the child.”

He had expected Tiffany to get angry. However, she only swept off the ash that had fallen on his sleeve. “You should smoke less. I know you’re tired and anxious, but you really should quit smoking since it’s harmful to your body. Why don’t you come and look at the fireworks with me? It’s really merry this year.”

Jackson laughed and affectionately hugged her as they made their way to the courtyard. He wrapped a scarf around her to keep her warm. “It’s snowing so let’s not stay out for too long. We should go to bed early. Let’s stay at my mom’s tonight.”

Tiffany nodded. All of sudden, her phone in her pocket began to ring. Expecting it to be a celebratory message from Arianne, she took out her phone without a second thought to check it. Unexpectedly, she discovered it was Alejandro.

Jackson glanced at Tiffany’s screen as she frantically put it back into her pocket. “The snow is getting on my phone. It’s a new phone, I really don’t want to break it so soon. It’s too cold out here, I think I’ll pass on watching the fireworks. Let’s go in.”

Jackson became suspicious of the sudden change in her behavior, but he remained silent.

After they went back in, Tiffany walked to a corner and took her phone out when no one was watching. Alejandro had only sent her a celebratory text message, nothing more. She had to be extra careful so Jackson would not overthink the situation. After replying to the message, she quickly deleted the entire conversation from her phone.

Chapter 1162

Alejandro received Tiffany's reply and looked at the fireworks in the distance as he sat in his wheelchair. Tiffany and him must be looking at the same scenery since they were in the same city, the same world…

Melanie suddenly opened the door and entered the bedroom.

Alejandro instinctively placed his phone with its face down on the small table.

Melanie noticed his actions but pretended not to care. "Grandpa has given me some money as a gift, and I've got your share with me. Grandpa has even prepared one for the baby."

Alejandro was unfazed. "You can keep it for good luck. I'm tired so I'm going to bed first."

Melanie walked up and helped him onto the bed and removed his shoes for him. "Alright, then. You go ahead and sleep. I'll head back down and talk to grandpa for a little longer." Before she left, she could not help but glance at his phone on the table. Was he texting Tiffany before she came in? She was not a fool. Some of his words to her were contrary to his actions.

Life was such where not everyone was treated equally. On that night, not every family would have a harmonious or fun time together.

Both Tanya and Jett did not have many relatives. They only had each other as they celebrated the New Year in their empty rental house.

A man like Jett did not think Christmas was anything special since he had been a bachelor for so many years now.

However, Tanya did not feel the same way. After all, she used to celebrate Christmas with her grandfather in the past. This year, she had Jett and the child in her belly. She had gone out of her way to prepare a feast for that night and bought some alcohol for Jett. She reflected on the past as she looked at the fireworks going off in the distance. “I’ve been too busy to enjoy the beautiful sceneries the world has to offer. I just realized how beautiful fireworks are.”

Jett stood next to her by the window. “What’s so nice about fireworks?”

She laughed at him for his insensitivity. “Men are all the same. You won’t like all these whimsical things.”

Jett seemed to have thought of something all of a sudden and went into his room. When he returned, he brought out a land title and handed it to Tanya. “I’ve bought a house. It’ll be ready for us to move in at the beginning of next year so there’s no need to continue renting this place.”

Tanya was shocked. “When did you buy it?”

He paused for a moment before he replied, “A while ago. Things are different now that I have a family. The house should fit the setting. Moreover, I’m worried about you being at home alone so I’ll hire a

nanny to look after your needs. You're approaching the last trimester of your pregnancy. The previous incident is too dangerous."

Tanya bit her lip and asked the question that had been stewing inside her for a while, "Can we stay like this forever? Would you leave me once you are able to leave Alejandro's grasp?"

Jett looked at her for a moment before he averted his gaze. "I'm not sure. I can't predict what's going to happen in the future. That's why I don't like having expectations for the future."

Tanya was slightly disappointed. "I see… I guess you're right. The higher the expectation, the bigger the disappointment when things fail to meet your expectations. If you don't have any expectations, you won't be disappointed." She had been looking forward to the future so she was disappointed when she heard Jett's answer.

It was not until when Jett had returned to his room to sleep that Tanya opened up the land title to look at it. She was curious about the content of the land title. When she saw her name on the title, she was shocked. Jett had actually made her an owner of the house.

A house was quite expensive around their area, and yet, Jett had generously invested such a large sum of money under her name without discussing it with her. Why would he make preparation for her future if he said he did not have any expectations for the future?

Tanya had always known their marriage was an empty husk that only happened due to her pregnancy. Although Jett had always treated her well and fulfilled his role as a husband, they were never really intimate. They did not even share a room like a real husband and wife would. Despite all these things, in the depth of her heart, she had acknowledged him as her husband. At that moment, she desperately wanted to know how he truly felt. She wanted a firm answer from him.

Chapter 1163

She plucked up her courage and walked to the door of his room before gently knocking on it. “Jett, are you asleep?”

There was no reply. However, soon enough, the door swung open, revealing Jett’s figure. He looked at her and asked, “What’s up?”

She squirmed, feeling shy. She found it difficult to put her thoughts into words. After a moment, she mustered up her courage and said, “I feel… we can try it out. If you feel we aren’t suitable, we can split, and I swear I won’t bother you again. I just feel since we’re going to have a child together, being together might not be a bad idea. What if everything works out? At that time, our child would have the ideal family.”

Jett remained silent.

With every second he remained silent, the more Tanya felt her heart sank. In the end, she did not even dare to meet his eyes. She was beginning to slightly regret being so rash to express her feelings. What if he did not have the same thoughts as her? What if she was not his type? Was she only binding her to him with the child?

While Tanya was still panicking over her actions, Jett finally said tonelessly, “It’s late. Get some rest.”

Tanya remained silent and did not move an inch. So, did this mean Jett did not feel the same way she did? Was that why he had evaded her question? After a moment, she took a deep breath and looked at him with a smile on her face. “Forget I said anything. Good night.”

Just as she was about to leave, Jett said, “Remember to turn on the radiator before you sleep. Also, remember to turn on the humidifier so that it doesn’t get too dry in your room. What would you like for breakfast tomorrow?”

Tanya stopped in her tracks. “Honestly, you don’t have to treat me so kindly. There’s no need for you to put my name on the land title as well. There’s no need for you to feel responsible for the child since it’s my decision to bring the child into the world.”

“I’m tired,” Jett said before he closed the door.

Tanya took a deep breath. She could not figure out his thoughts. He clearly did not like her, but why was he treating her so kindly?

That night, Tanya could not sleep well. Since she was in her final trimester, her body ached all over. Her condition caused her to wake up in the middle of the night. It was even harder to fall asleep with all the thoughts that were racing through her mind. For that reason, she found it difficult to keep her eyes open during the day.

After rolling around in bed for a while, she got up to go to the bathroom. She saw the screen of her phone lit up when she returned to her room. She had the habit of putting her phone on silent mode before she slept to avoid those annoying sales or spam messages from ruining her sleep.

She picked up her phone and discovered that Jett had sent her a message. She found it strange. Why would he send her a message when they were only separated by a wall? She opened up the text message to read its contents. “You can’t sleep?”

Tanya thought she had made too much noise during her trip to the bathroom and had woken him up. She replied to his text message. “It’s nothing. I’m sorry for disturbing you.”

Jett did not reply to her text message after that. The world seemed to grow even quieter and the night became darker.

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On the third day of Christmas, Mark received a phone call. There was a problem in the company at the overseas branch, and he had no choice but to rush over there.

Chapter 1164

Arianne was disgruntled that Mark had to go on a business trip during the holiday season. However, she knew he had no choice based on his reaction. It seemed like the problem was quite serious.

After Mark left, Arianne was bored at home. With nothing better to do, she decided to visit White Water Bay Villa with Smore in tow.

Tiffany had turned into a couch potato at that point. She lived at home cozily, waiting to be served her food and drinks without a care in the world.

Jackson had everything arranged. Summer was to take care of Tiffany on his behalf when he had to return to work. He would continue taking care of her once he returned from work. Initially, he had

wanted to hire two nannies but Summer rejected his idea. Summer had said she was not inclined to having outsiders take care of Tiffany and offered to help instead since she had time.

Tiffany's place was like heaven to Smore because of the variety of food she had in her house. Before long, Smore was so full that he kept burping.

Arianne said helplessly, "I shouldn't have brought him here. How greedy is he? He wants to eat all the food he sees."

Tiffany laughed and said, "Being able to eat is a good thing. Look at our little boy here, look at how handsome he is. Moreover, he eats so well. He can eat anything without upsetting his tummy. Can you not be so harsh on him? When my daughter grows up, I'll let her eat anything she wants. I won't stop her from eating if she likes it. It doesn't matter if she's chubby when she's little. She'll, naturally, know and want to maintain her figure when she gets older so what's the point of restricting her when she's a child?" After a brief pause, she asked, "Anyway, why did Mark suddenly go on a business trip during the holidays? Are you so happy to see him go off?"

Arianne said helplessly, "What would you have me do? There's no use for him to stay at home anyway. He would only complain in disgust if I asked him to change Smore's diapers. Let's not talk about this. By the way, the more I look at your belly, the more it reminds me of how similar it is to mine when I was pregnant. I have a feeling you're going to have a son."

Tiffany glared at her resentfully. "You, zip it! We've already agreed to be in-laws in the future. What's going to happen if I have a son?" After a while, she said, "Well, actually it doesn't matter if I have a son this time. I can always try until I get a daughter."

Jackson's expression darkened when he heard Tiffany's words. "One child's enough for me. If I have any more, it'd be the death of me."

Tiffany picked up a pistachio and threw it at Jackson. “What are you complaining about? I’m not the one who forced you to get me pregnant. You’re the one who couldn’t rein in your urges… Thanks to you, I’m being forced to become a mother at such a young age. Even then, I’m not complaining. You, on the other hand, have been bitching and moaning for days.

Jackson caught the flying pistachio beautifully and shoved it into his mouth after cracking the shell open. “To be honest, it was an accident. I didn’t expect you to get pregnant.”

Jackson’s words were akin to poking the hornet’s nest. Tiffany pinched his arm. “Then, you should’ve controlled yourself and not misfired your shots!”

Arianne’s face blushed as the lovers bickered in front of her. She covered Smore’s ears and said, “There’s a child here!”

Tiffany laughed before she said, “Look at how serious you are! How can he possibly understand what we’re talking about? Anyway, I’m quite terrified now that my due date’s drawing closer. My stomach aches every time I think about how your child was born. Tell me the truth, Ari, is it better to have C-section or to go with natural birth? Which one is less painful?”

Arianne did not want to scare Tiffany, but she truly did not know how to lie. “You have no choice but to give birth now that your belly is so big. How can you try to hide from this? I haven’t experienced natural birth so I can’t speak about it. However, from what I heard, it’s better to go with natural birth if you can. Apparently, the recovery period is quite fast. C-section, on the other hand, well, you won’t feel a thing during the operation, but the pain will hit you after. You’ll probably be traumatized and terrified whenever you think about it in the future.”

Tiffany mulled over Arianne's words before she finally said, "Then, I guess I better go with natural birth."

Arianne had intended to say that they would not get to choose which method of giving birth in the end. However, she swallowed her words since she did not want to scare Tiffany. She had a feeling Tiffany would have a tough time during labor based on the way Tiffany had been eating. Surely the size of her child's head must be rather big!

…

When Arianne returned to Tremont Estate in the afternoon, Henry handed her a parcel delivered by the Wynns. If it was from the Wynns, it could only be from Zoey's family.

Arianne opened the parcel and took a look at the contents. It was all local specialties from Zoey's hometown with Harvey's name on the sender's column. It seemed like the rascal still had some conscience left in him for remembering her, unlike Zoey and her husband.

Chapter 1165

Although it was the festive season, delivery services were not disrupted. Hence, Arianne bought some nuts and had them delivered to him in exchange for his gift. She had used an alias in the sender's column so Zoey and her husband would not find out that she had sent it.

The holiday week had already ended by the time Mark returned. He looked exhausted, it was clear he had been very busy.

Instead of complaining, Arianne only asked how everything went in the company.

Mark did not go into detail, “It’s fine, I can handle so don’t worry about it. Have you started work?”

Arianne shook her head and said, “Our company treats us rather well. We’re only resuming work tomorrow.”

After not seeing Smore for over ten days, Mark did not rest and carried Smore to play with him. However, it seemed like Smore did not like to be carried around anymore. He preferred to crawl now. Therefore, when Mark carried him, he flailed his limbs around. Mark laughed and said, “My boy’s really strong.”

Arianne looked at Smore and made a gesture before she said, “I’m thinking if I should tie a rope to him so it won’t be so tiring for me to chase after him. Moreover, he crawls to somewhere he shouldn’t, I can just grab the rope and pull him back.”

Mark did not hesitate and rejected her immediately. “Rope? Sounds just like a leash? Why are you thinking of tying him up? He’s not a dog.”

Arianne raised an eyebrow. “I’m only joking. Do I look like I’ll tie my son with a rope? He’s beginning to annoy everyone as soon as he wakes up. I’m really afraid of Mary being tortured by him to no end.”

Mark did not seem bothered. “What’s the worst that could happen? Plus, he should be moving around more often now that he’s growing up. Regular exercise is good for his growth.”

During dinner, Mark was yawning nonstop.

Arianne did not let Smore pester his father and asked Mark to go to bed after dinner. She felt sorry for him. Being constantly overworked at such a young age would not be good for him.

Smore kept clinging to his father that night, whining to follow after his father. This was probably because he had not seen his father for a long time.

Arianne wanted to carry Smore back to his room and coax him to sleep. However, the little guy refused to let her carry him and hid under the blanket as soon as Mark lay in bed. Initially, he was quite obedient and stayed quiet as he looked around his surroundings.

Mark had just begun to relax when the little one suddenly went on a rampage, climbing on top of him and trying to ride him like a horse and other naughty acts.

In the end, there was nothing Arianne could do but forcibly carry Smore away despite how hard he cried and struggled. “You should get some sleep while I take him downstairs. You won’t be able to sleep if he’s here bothering you.”

Mark was so exhausted that he had a hard time keeping his eyes open. “Alright… Go ahead.”

Smore continued to cry and whine for another half an hour before he gradually stopped. It was clear he was beginning to feel sleepy and tired due to his incessant crying.

Arianne grabbed the chance and carried him in her arms, and gently coaxed him to sleep. She brought him to his room when he finally fell asleep.

And thus, another day had ended. Arianne took the opportunity to wash her face and apply her facial products before heading to bed. She had crept into bed, careful not to disturb Mark who was so exhausted that he was even softly snoring.

This was the first time in his life he had snored. He had always been very disciplined and lived a very healthy lifestyle. He was very picky with his lifestyle choices, even more so than a woman.

When Arianne was adjusting her body to find a comfortable position, Mark suddenly rolled over and cozied up to her. He pulled her into his arms with smooth movements. She felt his approach was warm and comforting. She was beginning to feel and enjoy their intimacy.

“You haven’t cajoled me today…”

Arianne’s body froze. Was he not asleep? How could he have woken up despite her light movements when getting into bed? She whispered, “You should get some sleep. You’re already exhausted, and yet, you’re still thinking of tormenting me?”

He buried his face in the nape of her neck, taking a whiff of her scent. “Even if I’m exhausted, there are still some things that need to be done... You smell really nice…”

Her heart raced. She had not once honored her bet of cajoling him once every day. She thought he had forgotten all about it. She shyly refused him. “Stop fooling around and go to sleep.”

Chapter 1166

Mark held her even tighter. “Come on.”

“I don’t know how,” she replied, playing dumb.

He blew softly into her ears. “Say, ‘Good night, honey’. Come on.”

Arianne could hear her heart thumping wildly. She parted her lips and tentatively said, “Good night… honey?”

Her voice was not coaxing, cute, or girly so Mark was dissatisfied. “Your voice must be sweeter when you’re acting cute, understand? Perhaps… I should teach you?” As soon as he finished speaking, his hand began to roam mischievously on her body.

She felt her breath caught her throat. “Give me one night to think it over. We’ll talk tomorrow.”

Mark no longer persisted. Perhaps, he was too exhausted. His breath gradually evened out, and he stopped moving around.

The next morning, Arianne woke up in a daze. As soon as her eyes opened, she met Mark’s intense gaze.

Based on how bright-eyed and fresh he looked, he had probably woken up for a while now. He propped his head on his hand and stared at her unflinchingly, causing her to snap out of the bleariness from her sleep. He was probably awake for a long time, based on the bright and bushy look in his eyes. “Wh-what are you doing?”

“You…” he said with a smirk as he cocked an eyebrow.

“Pervert!” She pushed him away shyly.

He smiled and pulled her into his arms, afraid that they might wake Aristotle up. He lowered his voice that only made it even more magnetic. “What man isn’t?”

“You never used to be like this.” She objected. “You were very serious!”

He buried his head into the nape of her neck. “I was only pretending back then. I was afraid of scaring you away, now I’m not.”

Arianne felt tricked. She struggled, trying to wiggle away from his grasp. “I have to go to the office today. Don’t make me late. I need to get up and wash up.”

He tightened his grip around her. “It’s still early, you won’t be late. If you stop struggling, you won’t waste any more time. We haven’t seen each other for half a month. Don’t you miss me?”

Did she? Of course, she did. However, she would not admit to it. She could not bring herself to say such cheesy words. “Anyway, you’re back now. What’s there to miss… Y-you can’t possibly want to do… that in the morning, right? Forget about it!”

A storm seemed to be brewing in his eyes. “Do I look like I’m joking? We agreed last night. Act cute with me.”

She knew she could not avoid this forever. After considering it, she buried her face in his chest and said, “Honey… I’m going to be late for work. Let’s leave it for now… Love you…”

Mark’s breath caught in his throat for a moment. He had no way of resisting her. He helplessly suppressed his desire and released her from his arms. “Fine, I’ll let you off the hook for now. We’ll talk tonight. I’m going to lie in for a while longer. You get up first. Stop hanging around me or I will lose control.”

Arianne immediately got up and bolted toward the door as though she was just granted amnesty. This was her first time acting coquettish. She wondered if she did it right? He should be satisfied, right?

Chapter 1167

After arriving in the office, Arianne had just sat down when Robin greeted her. “How was your Christmas, Arianne? I’m glad to see you on the first day back at work.

Arianne had prepared a small gift for her. “Here, this is for you. Consider it a belated Christmas gift.”

Robin accepted the gift. An expression of delight and shyness could be seen on her face. “Thank you. I haven’t gotten you a present… By the way, I heard that a really talented fashion designer is joining the company. He’s extremely handsome. However, he hasn’t arrived yet. It seems like he’s late on his first day. Honestly, favored employees have nothing to fear.”

Based on Robin’s description, it seemed like this designer was more experienced than her. For that reason, Arianne was curious. “How talented is he? Is he more talented than me?”

“Oh, I’m just saying,” Robin replied with a smile. “You’re the most talented designer to me. No one can ever live up to you. I only overheard it from the people in the office so I repeated the words I heard to you.”

Arianne smiled. “Fine, stop gossiping. Aren’t you a permanent employee now? Get back to work.”

Robin’s so-called genius fashion designer sauntered into the office at 10 AM. He was 2 hours late. He was, indeed, handsome, but in a metrosexual way. He was tall and exuded charisma. He embodied every woman’s ideal aesthetic, but that did not include Arianne. Perhaps, she was weird or maybe because Robin had already told her about how handsome he was, but she did not feel anything when she met him in person.

Based on what she had found out, this man was, indeed, more talented than her. He had been working in the fashion design industry for nearly ten years and had been featured in plenty of high fashion magazines. He was probably the ‘top class’ designer that Jessica had previously mentioned, the kind that would charge a considerable fee for one design. His name was Sylvain Trudeau.

Sylvain went straight to Mr. Yaleman’s office when he arrived and stayed there until noon. During lunch hour, he finally emerged from the office with Mr. Yaleman. It seemed like they were going to have lunch together.

The women in the company could not tear their eyes away from him. Usually, the office would be empty during lunch hour, but it was different today. All of them looked as though they could not wait to swallow Sylvain whole.

Just as Arianne was getting ready to leave for lunch with Robin, Mr. Yaleman approached her with Sylvain in tow. “Arianne, would you like to have lunch with us? You can get to know Sylvain as well. This is great, our company has two pillars now. I feel a lot more confident.”

Sylvain extended his hand before Arianne could reply and said, “Hello, pleased to meet you. My name is Sylvain Trudeau. I’ve seen your designs in magazines before. Not bad, they’ve left quite an impression on me. Seeing is certainly believing. You’re much lovelier in person than described in the rumors, Miss Wynn.”

The corners of Arianne’s lips twitched. This man had a strange and stiff way of speaking. What rumors? She felt as though he was describing a mythical creature. She smiled awkwardly as she shook his hand. “Hello, you flatter me. I joined the fashion design world a little late. I don’t have much experience so I can’t compare to a senior like you.”

Sylvain did not let go of her hand immediately. Instead, he lowered his head and studied the ring on her finger. “This is a very nice ring, design and material-wise.”

Arianne was beginning to feel very awkward. This strange man’s temperature was like fire, burning so hot. It made her feel unsettled. She removed her hand from his grip expressionlessly before she said, “My husband gave it to me. He designed it himself. I think it’s beautiful too. Aren’t we having lunch? Let’s go. By the way, can Robin join us as well? The more the merrier, right?”

Chapter 1168

Naturally, Mr. Yaleman did not object to bringing Robin along on account of Arianne. He was a stingy man by nature and rarely took his employees or clients out for meals. However, today, he brought them to an expensive restaurant. It seemed like he did not care about the money he had to spend as he cheerfully laughed. It was not surprising. After all, with a designer like Sylvain onboard, wealthy clients would be flocking to the company and earn him money. Those wealthy clients would earn him more money than working with some companies. He was being generous because he knew he would receive great returns.

When they arrived at the restaurant, Robin tactfully poured water for everyone. She knew she was little more than a prop here. The least she could do was be useful.

Mr. Yaleman looked at Sylvain and Arianne. The more he looked at them, the happier he felt. “With both of you around, my humble company will surely rise to great heights.”

Sylvain pursed his lips and smiled. He did not reply, gracefully sipping on his glass of water instead.

Arianne did not have much to say either.

However, despite the lack of conversation, Mr. Yaleman did not feel like anything was amiss. He continued to chatter on and on. He only got a reaction from Arianne when he mentioned that Sylvain would be seated next to her.

Arianne frowned. She was used to having the entire desk to herself and would feel uncomfortable with another person next to her. However, Sylvain was more experienced than her. If he did not object to it, she would seem arrogant if she voiced her objection.

When the dishes were served, Sylvain suddenly took Arianne's bowl and scooped a helping of soup for her. "It's cold. Drinking soup before your meal should warm your belly."

Arianne thanked him politely but left the bowl of soup untouched.

Sylvain noticed this and asked half-jokingly, "What's wrong? Are you afraid I poisoned it? Or are you worried that your husband might get jealous?"

Arianne faintly smiled. "The latter. My husband is a jealous man."

Sylvain laughed. He said meaningfully, "Well, with your looks, it's no surprise that he gets jealous."

Arianne, naturally, did not think much of the compliments. She knew what she looked like. Was there any rich debutante who had never met a man like Sylvain before? His glib tongue was probably earned from his many years of womanizing. However, he still paled in comparison to a true lady killer like Jackson. No. It was not just ladies, for Jackson could even charm men.

…

After they returned to the office, Sylvain sat at his desk and fiddled with his phone. It seemed like he had no intention of working.

With another person next to her, Arianne found that she had lost her inspiration. She could not come up with any ideas at all.

Sylvain noticed her restlessness and teasingly asked, “You’ve got a creative block? What a coincidence. Me too! I like going on hikes and strolling when my inspiration runs dry. Would you like to take a stroll with me this weekend?”

“No.” Arianne immediately rejected him. “I don’t have that habit. My inspiration comes and goes. It can hit at any time. It can even come to me in the next second.”

Sylvain stared at her for a good amount of time before he suddenly put his phone away and wheeled his chair closer to her. “Why do I feel like you won’t meet my eyes? You don’t look at me when you speak to me as well.”

Being in close proximity to a strange man made Arianne feel uncomfortable. Every cell in her body was protesting. “It’s… a habit. I have mild social anxiety. I’m usually at home so it’s normal. I have work to do. You can return to what you’re doing as well.”

Chapter 1169

Sylvain raised an eyebrow. His lips curved into a small smile. “I thought that you’re just… shy. I’ve only met two types of women; those who can’t tear their eyes away from me and those who avoid looking at me. However, all of them share a similarity—I make their hearts race…”

His bold display of confidence was shocking to Arianne. It seemed like he was quite the narcissist. She admitted that he was very handsome. He had style, looks, and money. If he were her type, it would have been fine. Maybe she would spare him a few extra glances. However, he was not. Why was he talking so much? They had just met, and they were not close. She coughed awkwardly before she cleared her

throat and said, “My heart isn’t racing. I’m just not used to having people so close to me and hitting on me. In any case, Mr. Yaleman won’t mind. You can take a hike now to search for inspiration if you like…”

Sylvain was taken aback. He wheeled himself away on the chair. “I was just teasing you. You’re no fun.”

Arianne heaved a sigh of relief. All she wanted to do was go home after work to see Mark so she could clean her eyes. She did not want to warp her aesthetic sense because of that man sitting next to her. Mark was infinitely more pleasing to her eyes. She could stare at Mark for more than ten years without getting bored of his face.

Nearing the end of the workday, she received a call from Mark. He informed her that he had urgent business to attend to and would not be able to pick her up from work. He said he might be coming home late as well. She assured him that she would find her own way home. She knew how busy he was. After all, he even had to go on a business trip during the Christmas season.

Just as she was packing up her bag, Sylvain waved his car keys. “Your husband isn’t picking you up, right? I’ll drive you home. I don’t have anything else to do anyway, and we can discuss work along the way. Let’s see if you can spark some inspiration in me.”

Arianne knew that if Mark found out about this, he would definitely sulk. After a moment of hesitation, she rejected his offer. “No need, I can get a cab.”

Sylvain grabbed her handbag. “Mrs. Tremont, you’re used to sitting in luxury cars. How can you possibly take a cab? Consider me a gentleman. We’re colleagues. Don’t be so mean. Let’s go.”

Large question marks appeared in Arianne's mind. Seeing as Sylvain had already walked off, she was left with no choice but to console herself. Maybe he was just strange and treated everyone in such a friendly manner? There was no need to overthink it. Since she was now working, she had to get used to interacting with her colleagues. Everyone should have a small circle of friends. Mark had previously prohibited her from interacting with members of the opposite sex because she was not working. However, she was an adult who was capable of making her own decisions now. She knew how to differentiate between black and white and exercise self-control.

As expected, Sylvain was confident enough to drive her home because he had a luxury car that was worth at least $100,000. His immense wealth made Arianne very suspicious. "A designer of your caliber should have a steady stream of wealthy clients throwing money at you. Why did you choose to work in a mid-tier company like ours? I'm wondering how much Mr. Yaleman offered you to join our company."

Sylvain paused for a moment before he glibly answered, "Isn't one's salary private? You can't just ask me about it. However, to be frank, the company isn't paying me much. It's not even enough to cover my personal expenses. I have my conditions. The company can't stop me from accepting freelance work, and I can come into work whenever I want. I need freedom. What do you think? Do you feel less suspicious now?"

Arianne mulled over his words. Well, with those conditions, it seemed like it won't affect his income at all. In fact, he would earn a little more with the pay from the company. It seemed like Mr. Yaleman had staked everything he had and pushed himself toward the edge of a cliff just to hire a big shot like Sylvain. Mr. Yaleman was only a step away from selling his soul.

Chapter 1170

At the end of the day, Sylvain was a leading fashion designer. They had small talks during the journey that inspired Arianne. In the end, she felt that Sylvain sending her home was not such a bad idea.

Sylvain waved at her when they arrived outside the entrance to Tremont Estate. "See you tomorrow."

She thanked him and quickly exited the vehicle.

Mary had seen all of this and strode forward with Aristotle in her arms. “Ari, who sent you home? That isn’t Mr. Tremont’s car.”

“A colleague,” Arianne replied casually.

Mary grew increasingly apprehensive. “A colleague? A male? I may not have much experience, but after working for the Tremonts for so many years, I can tell how expensive that car is. What colleague of yours could possibly drive such an expensive car? One look at that color, and you can just tell how unreliable he is. You should avoid him as much as possible. Why is a grown man driving a red car? Mr. Tremont won’t be happy if he finds out about this.”

Only after Mary’s nagging did Arianne realize that Mark did not seem to own any red cars in his garage. Was that the reason why Mary said men who drove red cars were unreliable? She could not help but laugh. “Mary, did you forget that Jackson drives a red car? Is Jackson a bad person?”

Mary curled her lips. “Let’s call a spade a spade. Jackson used to be unreliable too. He was a big flirt. However, he’s much better now. It seems like he has principles now.”

Arianne replied helplessly, “That’s enough, Mary. Can you please stop judging people by the color of their cars? This is his first time sending me home. Moreover, it’s not like I asked him to, he insisted. Everyone knows I’m Mrs. Tremont and that I’m married with a baby. Who has such bad taste to try anything with me? Don’t worry. I’m used to Mark’s looks. No one else can even compare to him.”

Mary was very confident in Mark's appearance. "That's good. Hold Smore for a while, I need to check on the kitchen and see what they've made. Mr. Tremont said he won't be coming home for dinner tonight, and you don't have a big appetite. I don't want them to overcook. It'd be a waste then. The Tremonts may have a lot of money to spare, but wasting food makes me feel very uncomfortable."

Arianne took Aristotle and heaved a sigh of relief. Mary might be the Tremonts' housekeeper, but she worried like a mother. She and Mark shared a good relationship ever since he was young. She had poured her heart and soul into the family. Arianne felt more assured with her around as well.

Knowing that Mark would not be home for dinner, Arianne thought they would only make one to two dishes. However, she was wrong. When Mary said, "I don't want them to cook too much", she meant the portion, not the type or number of dishes. There were seven to eight dishes, including soup. The portions were simply reduced to one serving. There was also Aristotle's special baby food.

Mark finally arrived home at 10 PM.

Arianne had put Aristotle to bed and sat in the living room, working on a sketch as she waited for him to come home. The Tremont Estate was very quiet, and no one would bother her in the living room.