Ruling 1221

Chapter 1221

After some time, Davy mustered up the courage to help Mark tidy up his office. Mark had always had the habit of cleaning his own office so that he knew where he left his stuff. If someone else cleaned it for him and misplaced his stuff, he would definitely be very mad at them.

The atmosphere had been very heavy the entire morning. Davy had done his own work diligently without making a sound. It was a good thing that he had gone in late, or otherwise, he would have an even harder time.

Suddenly, Mark asked, “Have you ever been in a relationship?”

Davy was startled and couldn’t react momentarily. “W-what… what?”

Mark had a serious look on his face. “I’m asking if you’ve ever been in a relationship before.”

Davy gulped. “Is this… part of the company’s assessment criteria? Is there a need for such a personal question?”

Mark grew impatient. “It’s a personal question, and I’m asking you personally, but not as your boss, so just tell me.”

Davy sighed in relief. “Of course, I have. How could I not have ever been in a relationship at my age? Those who haven’t had the experience yet must either be sterile or mentally insane.”

Mark went deep in thought. “Do you think that women are actually very hard to deal with? I find it quite tiring. If a man said something hurtful in the heat of the moment, how should he make amends for his mistake? The kind of apology to avoid any future arguments.”

After considering for a while, Davy said, “Are you referring to your wife? I suppose it depends on the woman’s character since every woman is different; hence, the method to resolve the situation would differ accordingly. What kind of a woman is Mrs. Tremont? Why don’t you try telling me, as I may be able to give you some ideas.”

Mark said without hesitation, “Another me.”

Davy twitched his lips. “In that case, I believe you should handle it yourself. I can’t even handle you myself, so I certainly wouldn’t be able to handle a female version of you. If you’ve really run out of ideas, you could try looking at it from another angle. Imagine yourself being the woman. What would it take for you to calm your anger? Didn’t you say Mrs. Tremont is another you? That method might just work.”

It was exactly because Mark had run out of ideas that he had asked Davy for one. However, Davy had literally not answered him at all. Mark sighed and said, “Forget I asked anything. By the way, pour away this cup of tea and get me a cup of coffee instead.”

Davy saw the cup of tea that had already cooled down through the corner of his eyes and was curious. “Who was it that made you a cup of tea today? It most definitely wasn’t me.”

Mark did not reply, as he had already drifted away in his thoughts long ago. Davy did not dare to ask him again and immediately changed the cup of tea with a fresh cup of coffee.

It was just before 4 pm when Mark's afternoon meeting had ended. He left his office in his car and had driven to Arianne's office without realizing. He took out his phone and checked his recent call history. He was about to call Arianne but hesitated. Was she still angry at him? He had not returned home the night before, yet she did not ask him about it. Was she really not worried about him at all?

Mark waited at Arianne's office until they were done for the day and the company's employees began to leave the office. Most of the people had already left the company, yet Arianne was still nowhere to be seen. Mark kept looking at the time and realised that everyone had already left. Could it be that Arianne had not gone to work that day?

Robin noticed Mark's car as she left the office. She had seen Mark picking up Arianne countless times so she had his car burned into her memory. Arianne had already left in the morning, so what was Mark doing there? Out of curiosity, she walked up and knocked on his car window. Mark lowered his window and asked with a raised eyebrow, "Where's Arianne?"

Chapter 1222

Arianne had a startled look on her face. "Didn't Arianne leave this morning? Don't you know about it?"

Mark suddenly felt empty inside. He pursed his lips and said, "I do now. Thanks Robin, I'll be off now."

Just as he was about to leave, Robin muttered, "He's not as cold and bitter as Arianne had said. He doesn't look old either… Quite well-mannered, in fact…"

Mark heard every word that Robin had said and had mixed feelings. Was he that kind of man in Arianne's eyes? A bitter and cold... old man?

Back at the Tremont estate, he heard Arianne and Smore happily playing together as he stepped into the house. He walked up to Arianne with his face sunken and asked, "You weren't at the office today. Where have you been?"

Arianne replied without looking back at him, "What's wrong? Do I have to report to you about my whereabouts now?"

Mark choked at her words. He had just realized that he had been controlling her all along, wanting to know her each and every move. The moment Arianne left his sights, he would become so frustrated and anxious that he would unknowingly speak to her in an interrogative tone.

Things were different now. Arianne was no longer an eight-year-old girl. She had her own independent mind and temper. She would now argue with him.

Mark took a deep breath and calmed himself. With a gentle voice, he said, "I didn't mean it like that. I had gone to pick you up at your office and waited there for two hours. It was that lady friend of yours who told me that you had left in the morning. I just wanted to know where you've been. That's not asking for too much, is it?"

Arianne shot a glance at him. "It's not too much, but I don't feel that there's a need to tell you. I'm not your bird that has been locked in a cage. I have wings, and I would like to fly freely. You don't have to pick me up anymore. I'll be able to find my way back home on my own. Plus, it wouldn't cost much to catch a taxi anyways, so there's no need to bother you."

Mark held in his anger and suppressed his raging emotions. “Do you really have to talk to me like that? Let’s just say it was my fault yesterday, alright? Let’s stop arguing about it.”

Arianne coldly laughed. “Just say it was your fault? Let’s stop arguing about it? Are you saying that I’m the one arguing with you about it? I’m sorry, you’re mistaken. I have zero intention of arguing with you. Didn’t you already say that this is the life I want to live? I feel very satisfied coming home and taking care of my son after work. Plus, I’m able to cover both of our living expenses with my salary, so I feel quite comfortable with this. It doesn’t matter what others say; I haven’t got any obligation to mind their words. Plus, I’ve always hated living under someone else’s control.

Mark’s expression grew cold. He headed upstairs without saying another word. Before he returned home, he had been fully prepared not to argue with her any longer, but he ended up being angered by her.

Arianne carried Smore to the dining room as if nothing had happened. “You should be hungry from all that playing, shouldn’t you? Let’s eat.”

Smore suddenly uttered two syllables from his little mouth. “Mama”

Arianne was startled for a moment but immediately smiled as she said, “My little boy’s all grown up now. He’s able to walk and even call me mama now. Could it be that… you feel that I haven’t been spending a lot of time with you? I promise you that I’ll spend more of my time after work with you, ok?”

Smore kissed her and pointed at the bowl on the table, asking for food. Mary walked up to them and said, “I’ll feed him while you eat yours, Arianne.”

Arianne shook her head. “It’s alright, I’ll do it myself. I’ve grown tired of hearing someone saying that I haven’t been taking care of my son.”

Mary helplessly sighed. “Arianne, Mark has also gotten used to you listening to everything he says and arranges. Him allowing you to go out and work was already a big step for him. Do you not understand his character yet? He has always been very firm and stubborn, yet he has already taken the initiative to admit his mistakes. I believe you should just forgive him. Although he may look calm and cool on the outside, he’s actually very frustrated on the inside. He might not even be able to eat and sleep properly because of it.”

Chapter 1223

Arianne said tonelessly, “I’m not living inside his head, soo how would I know if he’s really as you have said? I think that not only can he eat, but he can probably eat a few more extra portions. Otherwise, where would he find the energy to argue with me?”

After a while, Mary asked again after seeing that Mark hadn’t returned downstairs to eat, “Arianne, should I call Mark to come downstairs and eat?”

Arianne pursed her lips. “Doesn’t he know what time dinner will be ready? Hasn’t he always been preaching about discipline? Won’t he feel hungry when it’s time to eat? What’s the point of calling him if he doesn’t want to come downstairs? This is Tremont's territory; is there anyone who can control when he eats or sleeps?”

Mary was startled speechless and sat at her place quietly. Although she had been taking care of Arianne since she was a child, Arianne’s temper had only just emerged gradually and Mary could not figure out what she was thinking.

After dinner, Arianne was in the living room happily chatting with Tiffany via video call. It was as though only Mark was affected by their argument. Mark heard the commotion downstairs and felt enraged, but he could only contain it within himself, since he was unable to release his anger. Although the weather was still cold, Mark felt his blood boiling and he was so frustrated, he took off his clothes.

It was already 11 pm when Arianne returned to her room. Smore had also fallen asleep.

She gently placed Smore in his baby tram and got into bed herself, completely ignoring Mark, who was sitting by the window. It was as though Mark was invisible to her.

How could Mark accept this sort of treatment? He immediately jumped out of his chair and walked to the bedside. “Have you had enough fun?”

Arianne only breathed lightly without saying a word. Why did every word that came out of his mouth sound like she was being stubborn and childish? Janice coming to their home to hand over some documents was just the fuse that started the fire. The real problem laid between themselves.

After standing frozen for a moment, Mark got into bed and laid by her side. He reached out his hand to hold her into his embrace. Arianne’s first reaction was to struggle, but she helplessly gave up after realising the difference in strength between them.

Mark sighed in relief when he noticed that Arianne had given in. It was only at that moment that Arianne could listen to him seriously and calmly. “I don’t wish for things to be like this between us. I promise I will try my best to not control your actions and thoughts. Everything that I said to make you uncomfortable wasn’t true. Can you forget about all the bad things I’ve done to you?”

Arianne's voice was muffled as she said, “Fine, go to sleep.”

He couldn’t figure out if she had let go of her anger or if she just couldn’t be bothered. A strong sense of uneasiness enshrouded him. He suppressed his negative emotions and pulled Arianne to himself.

Arianne raised an eyebrow and placed both hands on his chest. “What are you doing? I don’t want… I’m tired, and I want to sleep.”

Mark hesitated for a moment and continued. He couldn’t stop himself, or otherwise, the uneasiness would swallow him into a dark abyss. “I’ll be quick.”

Chapter 1224

Arianne looked away and closed her eyes. She seemed to imply that he could do whatever he wanted.

Arianne was not in the mood for that initially. However, after Mark teased her a little, her body could not resist the wave of emotions, especially when he began to rush at her passionately. Arianne slowly lost her thoughts in a pool of pleasure.

The next morning, Mark reminisced about last night’s events and grinned. He even carried Smore and played with him before leaving the house.

When he saw that Arianne was ready to leave, Mark passed Smore to Mary and said to Arianne, “Let’s go. I’ll drive you to work.”

Arianne did not sleep well last night thanks to Mark and said in a daze, “It’s fine, I’ll catch a taxi to work myself, so you don’t have to bother.”

Mary thought that Arianne was still mad at Mark and nudged Arianne’s elbow. Arianne looked at Mark and yawned. “You really don’t have to drive me there. I don’t have to be at the office all the time; so long as I submit a high quality design, my manager wouldn’t even care if I laid in bed the whole day. I was sitting at a cafe just outside of the office for the entire afternoon yesterday. You should head out first, as you probably have a lot of work to do at the office.”

Mark gladly accepted her explanation and said, “Alright then, I’ll leave it to you to arrange. I’ll be off now. We’ll be going to Jackson’s for dinner tonight. I’ll come home and pick you up around 5 pm, so you’ll be fine if you get ready before then. If there are any changes, just let me know any time.”

Arianne nodded her head. Mark kissed Smore goodbye before slowly walking out the door.

While driving, Mark let loose a long sigh of relief. He recalled every little detail that had happened just now and deduced that there should be no problems with Arianne anymore. He was still finding it hard to communicate with Arianne in that manner, but he knew it was something that he had to get used to because it was the right thing to do. He realized he should not have treated Arianne like a child since long ago. Instead, he should be treating her as his wife.

Arianne did not intend to loiter around outside since she did not get a good night’s sleep last night and thought of going to the office first for a nap. When she arrived at her office, Robin could not wait to tell her everything that had happened last night when Mark was waiting downstairs to pick her up. Arianne had already known about it, so she did not give any large reaction and said, “I know.”

Robin teasingly said, “You told me he was a bitter and cold old man. Is that how you portray your own husband? In fact, he’s the complete opposite from how you described him. He’s obviously handsome, rich, and kind to others. He looks to be around our age, which isn’t old at all. All in all, he could literally be the Capital’s ideal man. Anyone would bow down in awe at him. Even though the two of you argued, he still came to pick you up from work, yet when he realised you weren’t here, he left without a hint of frustration, which shows that he really does have you high up in his priority list. Many people have said that the wealthier a man is, the less they cherish their women since they could have their pick of the litter, yet Mark doesn’t seem like that.”

Arianne grew annoyed at Robin’s nagging. “This is exactly why I said that you’re naive. How are you able to judge his character when you barely even know him? In fact, he’s totally different from how you described him. Let me emphasize that he’s ten years older than me, so there’s no way he looks about my age. I will admit that he’s handsome, so handsome that he could make other women fall heads over heels for him; plus, he’s super rich. But what about it? The fact is, he has a very bad temper and I’ve had enough of him. I’ve been patiently living with him for the past ten years, but how will I be able to live with him for the rest of my life without the two of us finding a way to live together peacefully? Although we’ve lived together under the same roof in the past, Mark wasn’t at home most of the time, which meant that I could avoid having confrontations with him. Hence, we seldom had the chance to work things out between us. We’ve just officially started to sort things out between us, so I’ll let time do its thing.”

Robin’s expression changed. “Am I… really that easy to be cheated?”

Arianne realized that she had misspoken and hurriedly explained. “Don’t take it the wrong way, I didn’t mean it like that. I don’t think that you’re easy to cheat, but that you’re just a little innocent due to your inexperience in relationships. Although I haven’t had that many experiences either, I am… more cautious. I’m not implying that Sylvain has cheated your feelings. It’s not cheating if you’ve felt happiness throughout your relationship with him instead of only feeling sad. Now that I mention it, have you contacted Sylvain recently?”

Robin nodded her head. “Yes, I have, but just as friends. We sometimes discuss design related topics. Sylvain really is a talented man. I’ve realized that I’m able to learn a lot by talking to him. I think… that Jessica twisted and corrupted his personality. It’s hard for a person to find their muse, but when they find their muse and it turns out to be evil, they will be dragged into a deep and dark abyss, committing mistake after mistake. Truthfully, I don’t think Sylvain’s a bad man.”

Chapter 1225

Arianne did not deny. “You’re right, Sylvain might actually not be a bad person. You should decide if you would still like to maintain contact with him. Let me know if you need to talk.”

Robin suddenly frowned. “Can I ask you something Arianne? It’s just… Does Jessica really have such a large influence on Sylvain? I can’t shake the feeling that he’s really going through a very rough time at the moment. Could it greatly affect his future?”

As she saw Robin’s hopeful eyes, Arianne could not bear to tell her the truth but forced herself to anyways. “Robin, you already have the answer to that question, don’t you? Sylvain’s reputation is so ruined that no well-established companies would dare to hire him whilst smaller companies would only offer him peanuts to take advantage of him and humiliate him. I’m afraid he would only be a laughingstock for the people who had to literally beg him to be their personal designer.”

Sylvain’s future was out of the question unless some kind of miracle happened. Otherwise, regardless of how much time passed, people would continue to remember what had happened between him and Jessica at the mention of his name. As the saying goes, the higher they are, the harder they fall. Sylvain was once a highly regarded designer, but now that his reputation was jeopardized, there was no telling how badly things would end up for him.

Robin’s face was gradually filled with disappointment. “I understand. That means he would have a hard time trying to secure a new source of income. Plus, he wouldn’t allow himself to be humiliated by those smaller companies just to survive because of his ego. So long as the name Sylvain still exists, so long as

his dark past is remembered, he'll continue to be isolated by society. That's just too cruel. He used to be able to earn huge amounts of money by casually designing something for someone, but now that his reputation is completely in tatters, how is he going to survive?"

Arianne stared at her for a moment. "You seem to be concerned for his future. Can I assume that your relationship isn't as simple as it seems?"

Robin's cheeks blushed. "Stop teasing me, Arianne. My mum has taught me to be kind to the people close to us so that the relationship can be maintained. Therefore, regardless of whatever has happened in the past, the fact remains that Sylvain and I have been together.

Arianne clicked her tongue and said, "Your mum was right, but I don't think she mentioned anything about being kind to your ex, did she? There is no need to maintain a relationship with your ex. To be honest, all hope is not yet lost for Sylvain. He's still able to find a way to survive. Even if he doesn't go to those small companies, he could still design for others and let them claim it for themselves. He should be able to accept that method, albeit the paycheck would be far less than what it used to be. Sylvain is a talented and capable man; there's no way he wouldn't survive as long as he lowers his ego. Stop being worried for him."

Robin sighed in relief. "At least, all the doors haven't closed on him. I was afraid that he wouldn't be able to survive on his own. However, he definitely wouldn't be able to accept such a huge drop in his lifestyle for the time being. Arianne, are you free tonight? Let me buy you dinner."

Arianne recalled Mark saying that he would be taking her to Jackson's for dinner before he left that morning. "I don't think I can make it today. I've got some matters to attend to. Let's do it next time instead, my treat. You should keep your salary for yourself. It doesn't matter which of us treats the other. Enough talk, let's get back to work before Mr. Yaleman nags you again."

That afternoon, Arianne had gotten off work earlier and arrived home before 5 pm. She then texted Mark that she was waiting for him at home.

Mark replied to her almost instantly, using an emoji. Arianne never thought he was capable of this. All along, Mark had always texted her only with words and was straight to the point, yet his sudden emoji reply got her feeling weird. It was as if someone else had been using Mark's cell phone to reply.

After approximately half an hour, Mark entered the house. "Are you ready? We'll leave once you're done. You can bring Smore along."

Arianne had never intended to leave Smore alone at the house. "I'm ready, let's get going. Are we going to White Water Bay Villa? I can imagine Jackson almost going mad taking care of Tiffany alone. If not there, he wouldn't have time to entertain us since he would be busy these few days.

Mark smiled and did not reply. She would find out if they were heading there in a moment.

Chapter 1226

When they arrived at White Water Bay Villa, Mark took the initiative and got down from the car to pick up Aristotle. Their son was almost one-years-old now, so carrying him meant carrying extra weight. Arianne's slender arms seemed strained while holding him.

When they entered, Summer gave Mark and Arianne a pair of slippers. "You're both quite early. Jackson is cooking now."

Arianne saw that the house was empty and was curious. “Mrs. West, are you both taking care of Tiffie? You didn’t hire a nanny?”

Summer was the kind of person who enjoyed making other people happy. She was so happy with finally having a grandson that she rarely stopped talking. “My Jackson isn’t comfortable with having strangers in the house. How could we possibly hire anyone? Besides, I’m not comfortable having a stranger take care of Tiffie and the baby. Jackson cooks while I help with the baby. Isn’t that great? Jackson goes to the office from time to time to deal with emergencies, but otherwise, he’s usually at home. It’ll be fine after this month. We’ll wait for Jackson to get back to work, then find a housekeeper to cook. The housekeeper can leave at night so Jackson won’t feel too uncomfortable.”

Arianne felt grateful for Tiffany’s sake once again. She had such a good man and a good mother-in-law too. She was truly blessed.

Tiffany scampered down when she heard noises downstairs. “Ari! I’ve missed you so much. You’re finally here to see me, and you’ve brought Smore too… But my little pig is still asleep. Otherwise, we could have the two brothers get acquainted with each other.”

Summer’s face drained of color in shock. “Tiffie, slow down! You had a Cesarean. It’s been less than a month. You can’t run around like that. What if your wound splits open? The very sight of it scares me! Be more careful, don’t give me a heart attack!”

Tiffany took smaller footsteps, feeling embarrassed. She forced herself to act as if she were a patient that was fresh out of surgery and carefully sat down on the couch. “Ari, Mark, come. Sit down.”

Arianne tried her best to hold back her laughter. “You’ve been very well off over the past month. You have two people who won’t do anything but wait on you hand and foot.”

Tiffany smiled at Summer and smugly replied, “Not bad, my mother-in-law is better than anyone else’s and my husband is the best too. Hehe…”

She delivered her flattery very well. Summer was very pleased when she heard it. “You keep talking. I’ll make some tea.”

Mark couldn’t bring himself to sit with two women. He put Aristotle down, got up, and went to see Jackson in the kitchen.

Now that they were all alone, Tiffany secretly asked, “Ari, how long did you wait to have sex with Mark after giving birth?”

The corners of Arianne’s lips twitched. “It’s only been a few days. Is that the only thing on your mind? I can’t remember, so don’t ask me. I don’t want to answer that. My ears refuse to listen, my mouth won’t answer, and my brain is also refusing to think of it! I’ve seen men grow desperately horny, but I’ve never met a woman like that before. I am absolutely speechless with you!”

Chapter 1227

Tiffany laughed shamelessly. “Haha, it’s us. What’s there to be modest about? You have no idea. Jackson hasn’t touched me ever since I got pregnant. I’m only human. I need sex too. Every time I see Jackson, my eyes glow with a green light. I’m so horny. We’re not like you and Mark, who are practically nuns. It’s like you’re wrapped in holy light or something. I doubt you have any desires. I’m curious, is it fun for you? Doesn’t that equate to a cold sex life? Look at how old you are, and this is the state of your relationship? Will you end up staring at the moon and the stars and talking about life when you’re much older? Is that it? Aren’t you afraid that you’ll run out of things to say? It’s so dull to think about it too. Sex is an essential glue that holds a husband and wife together. Just because I want it, doesn’t make me dirty. It’s because I love him.”

Arianne couldn't be bothered to object. Things between her and Mark weren't as cold as she had described. They didn't have sex too often, but it wasn't actually scarce. The frequency of their intimate moments were well within normal standards. Most importantly, they were usually very tired and they had to take care of Aristotle at night. Sometimes, they were too tired to do anything else.

However, Tiffany had a point. Conjugal relations were an essential ingredient in holding a marriage together. Desiring sex didn't make you dirty.

Suddenly, Tiffany changed the subject. "By the way, Melanie Lark somehow got a hold of my contact details and has been chatting with me every day, lately. Of course, we talk about pregnancy stuff. Looks like she's just as anxious as I was when I was pregnant."

Arianne's heart sank. She feared that Melanie wasn't contacting Tiffany just to ask pregnancy questions. Even if Alejandro had sent Melanie back to Ayashe, they must be paying close attention over here, right? "Has Melanie asked you anything else, aside from pregnancy questions?" she asked with a straight face.

Tiffany gave it some thought and replied, "Yes, she has asked if Alejandro has contacted me as of late. She says that she's in Ayashe and that Alejandro has been very busy, having no time to contact her. I wanted to tell her that Alejandro sent me flowers when I was discharged, but I didn't. What if she overthinks it?"

Arianne heaved a sigh of relief. "Thank goodness you're not a complete idiot. It would have been a surprise if she didn't overanalyze it after you told her. You've stopped contacting Alejandro, so you should avoid talking to Melanie too. If she asks you a question, just answer. But don't initiate any conversation with her. She's not the kind of person whom you can turn into your best friend."

Tiffany promised her while glancing towards the kitchen. “Jackson is so petty. I don’t have any other guy friends aside from your Mark. How have I not noticed this? Does this mean that he loves me?”

“Yes, he loves you. He loves you very, very much,” Arianne rose to the occasion and answered at once. Only Tiffany was unaware of just how much he loved her. Jackson had suffered a lot for her sake.

During their meal, Tiffany was upset again because she was given a special portion from every meal. Her food contained little to no seasoning, aside from a meager amount of oil and salt. An array of fragrant dishes surrounded her, all designated for other people. She couldn’t help drooling. “I… I’d like a taste of your dishes. My taste buds are so bland that I might as well be a fish.”

Jackson handed her a bowl of soup. “Just hold on a little longer. You need to watch your diet during your recovery. Would you like me to take you upstairs? At least, you won’t be tempted by the sight of our food.”

Tiffany pouted, surrendered, and ate her food. However, she would still glance at the other dishes from time to time. Arianne wasn’t sure if she should laugh or cry. “Stop that. Smore is eating the same things as you. He’s limited to bland food too.”

Arianne took Aristotle and followed Tiffany to the bedroom after their meal to see the baby. The less-than-a-month-old infant was absolutely tiny compared to Aristotle, who was very curious about the little one. He waddled forward and stared at him, unable to turn away. Everything seemed harmonious in the beginning, until the little one’s hand accidentally hit Aristotle’s face, just as he was waving them. Aristotle was instantly rattled and slapped the little baby’s thigh.

Even though the one-year-old Aristotle didn’t have much strength in him, it frightened Arianne so much that she broke out into cold sweat. “Oh my god. How could you hit your younger brother like that? He

wasn’t doing it on purpose. He doesn’t know anything else right now, except eating, drinking, and sleeping. You’re his older brother. You should give way to your younger brother.”

Tiffany waved her hand in a callous, inhumane, and unsympathetic manner. "Pssh, it's totally fine! Mah boy can handle a punch or two. Hell, these two are gonna fight each other a few more times in the future, and my son's gonna get wrecked again and again. Eh, better let him get used to it at an early age, amirite?"

Arianne was rendered speechless. What kind of a mother was she?

Chapter 1228

They stayed on until it was nearly 10PM. Mark finally finished his conversation with Jackson by then. It was clear that this was more than a simple dinner party; Jackson had something to discuss with Mark.

Aristotle fell asleep in the car on the way home. “Did Jackson have something to discuss with you?” Arianne asked.

“Just work things,” Mark answered. “We lost track of time and talked late into the night. Take a nap if you’re tired. We’ll be home soon.”

Arianne turned to the side and looked out the window. “I’m not tired, I was just asking. I thought that it was something important.”

Mark paused in momentary silence, then asked, “Am I really a sharp, unkind, and haughty old man to you?”

Arianne nearly choked on her own saliva. She was too guilty to look at him. How did he find out? How did he find out about her private conversation with Robin? Was he just well-informed or had he installed a hearing device on her? Had he resorted to that?

He laughed. “Don’t need to be so nervous, I just want to know what you really think. Tell me the truth.”

Arianne pursed her lips. “No… I just said it in the heat of the moment. How did you find out about what I said? I’ve only said this to Robin. Did she tell you?”

He raised a brow and replied, “She was whispering it under her breath, and I happened to overhear it. I am curious, what do you really think of me? How many strange adjectives can you use to describe me?”

Arianne smiled awkwardly, “No, there really aren’t any more.”

Mark suddenly turned serious. “Do you love me?”

Arianne was taken aback. “Why are you suddenly asking me this question? We’re an old married couple now, why ask such a question? It’s too embarrassing for me to even discuss it.”

He reached out and held her hand while manning the steering wheel with the other. “I want to know because I’ve never caught you showing your love for me. I’m feeling insecure.”

Insecure? How could that word possibly have come from his lips? She instinctively squeezed his hand. “From the moment I set foot into the Tremont household, I’ve never been able to escape. Why should you feel insecure? Even if I don’t love you, you’re not going to let me go. We’re the same. We didn’t grow up in a happy family, so I want to give Smore the best childhood and life. If I didn’t love you, I wouldn’t have given birth to Smore just because it was my final chance to be a mother and also followed you back to the Tremont Estate, pregnant.”

Mark was relieved. “That’s right, I won’t let you go. Don’t even think of leaving me, ever. I’ve never had a serious relationship, so I’ve never put in serious effort for any other woman. Maybe I’m not good enough. If you’re not happy, just let me know. I’ll change. I’ll become your most ideal man. I’ll leave you to teach me for the rest of my life.”

Chapter 1229

Arianne was greatly moved, yet felt something amiss. This didn’t seem like something Mark, a block of ice personified, would say. She let go of his hand. “Eyes on the road. I know that Jackson taught you those words.”

The corners of Mark’s eyes twitched. She saw through that? Was it that obvious? However… these words came from his heart too. Jackson had taught him the right tactics.

Arianne settled Aristotle when they returned to the Tremont Estate. Then, she massaged her arms, which had grown sore after carrying Aristotle for too long and said, “You can use the shower first. I need a short break. It’s pretty exhausting to go out with a kid.”

Mark gazed at Aristotle, who was sleeping to his heart's content, and huskily suggested, "Let's shower together. It saves time. It's already so late; by the time I'm done with the shower and you go in, you won't be able to wake up the next morning."

A few PG-13 scenes flashed across Arianne's mind in an instant. "No no no, you can shower on your own. I've been holding Smore for a long time in the car. My arms are tired. I'm going to take a break."

He pulled her towards him, lowered his head, and touched her forehead against his. His eyes sparkled. "If you're tired, I can wash you. It's not like I haven't seen you. Why should you feel embarrassed?"

The look in his eyes made her knees turn into jelly. "I'm not embarrassed… I'm just not used to showering with someone else."

He mercilessly saw right through her. "You used to shower with Tiffany when you stayed with her. Why won't you do it with me?"

Arianne was stunned. How did he know about that too? She panicked. "Did you install some sort of listening device on me?"

Mark reached out and lifted her chin with a half smile on her face. "Who do you think I am? It's not like I can't find out these things through other sources. What makes you think I'd resort to such measures? You've misunderstood me. As compensation, you have to take a shower with me."

He carried her into the bathroom before she could react. This time, he couldn't be bothered to put on an act. He immediately showed his true colors. He didn't even turn on the water. Her breathing turned

into urgent gasps as she stared at his handsome face, inches away. She was suddenly reminded of Tiffany's words: 'Sex is an essential glue that holds a husband and wife together'.

That was undeniable…

…

Soon, the day arrived when Tiffany made a full recovery. She happily took a shower and excitedly put on makeup, her hands shaking. She invited Arianne for a shopping trip and a delicious lunch. She had been dreaming of this for a month, as if she had just completed a prison sentence.

Having endured for an entire month, she had been waiting for this day. Summer wanted her to get some fresh air too, so she volunteered to take care of the baby. Jackson would officially go back to work that day. This was probably a form of release for him too. After all, facilitating Tiffany's recovery period was both tiring and not a lot of fun.

Chapter 1230

By the time she met up at the agreed meeting spot, Arianne and Robin had been waiting for a very long time. Arianne could spot the thickly made-up Tiffany at first glance. She clicked her tongue. "What is going on? Have you been completely set free? Your eyeliner is crooked."

Tiffany giggled. "Stop trying to bring me down. Do you know why I chose to meet up here? This street is known for its great food. Today, I'm going to eat every single meal that I've missed over the past month!"

“Aren’t you breastfeeding?” Robin asked honestly. “There are a lot of things you have to avoid, especially street food. What if it’s unhygienic?”

Tiffany felt her set back. “Did you have to remind me? It wouldn’t kill you to keep your mouth shut. I’ve been holding it all in for a month, and you've poured cold water all over me. Come on.”

Robin chuckled. “Fine, fine. I’ll keep quiet. Even if I keep my mouth shut, Arianne will remind you too.”

Arianne shrugged. “Nope, I’m not going to. I’m not worried about her at all. Someone will take care of her baby for her, even if she has eaten a poisonous fungus. She doesn’t need to feed her baby on her own. Her mother-in-law has already promised to take care of her baby, before her pregnancy. She’s won the lottery of a lifetime. How could she be constrained to a diet? Eat, eat. Want some old discarded cooking oil? That’s available too.”

Tiffany complacently walked around with an air about her. She bumped into a taco food truck along the street. “Let’s have something to eat to whet our appetites. Then, we’ll walk around and go to a buffet. I’m craving for a buffet right now. Nothing else seems too appealing to me at the moment. Then, we’ll go shopping after that. I haven’t shopped for clothes in such a long time. When we’re tired, we can chill at a café and chat. Life is just too perfect right now. I’ve been feeling like a cow, waiting to be milked for the past month…”

Arianne and Robin made a silent agreement to feign ignorance and look all around. They dearly wished that they could act as if they didn’t know Tiffany at all. She actually had the balls to say whatever she wanted in public. Especially Robin, who was still unmarried. She blushed in embarrassment.

After a tedious day with Tiffany, the trio found a café and sat down, heaving a long sigh of relief at the same time. Robin wasn’t prepared for this, having worn high heels when she left the house today. She

was relieved when they finally took a break. Arianne knew that this would happen, so she wore sneakers and a casual outfit instead.

Tiffany still showed her breast milk some consideration by not ordering coffee. She ordered fruit juice and dessert instead. “Ari, how’s work going for you? Is everything okay? Mark’s actually been able to tolerate you working for someone else’s company. I’ve gotta give it to him. I thought that he’d lose it really quickly and drag you back home.”

Arianne sipped on her coffee. “Do you really think he’s been able to tolerate this? We’ve fought about this, but he does compromise. He knows how much I don’t like pandering to his preferences. If he respects me, I’ll respect him too. Otherwise, our entire household will plunge into turmoil. He loves his peace and quiet too much. How could he possibly tolerate that?”

Tiffany gave her a thumbs-up sign. “Awesome. Only you can tame someone like him. This would have backfired if it were anyone else.”

Noticing Robin’s silence and her determined stare in a certain direction, Arianne curiously followed her line of sight and immediately understood. She didn’t expect to see Sylvain here, and he was with a woman too. The pair may be sitting across the table from one another, but they did not seem intimate. However, based on the obviously flirty smile on the woman’s face, they were enjoying their conversation.

Arianne gently cleared her throat and spoke up, contrary to her own convictions. “They don’t look close at all. They’re probably just friends. That woman looks like she’s in her thirties. Robin, you’re not jealous, are you?” Realistically speaking, that woman wasn’t young, but it was obvious that she was very wealthy. Her bag alone was a limited edition piece from a luxury brand and cost at least five figures. Her looks weren’t so bad either.

Robin snapped back to her senses and lowered her head in panic. “I’m not… I just think that it’s a coincidence. I didn’t expect to bump into him here either. I’m not looking at that woman. I don’t care about their relationship…”