Ruling 1231

Chapter 1231

Despite her words, she couldn't help but peek at Sylvain.

Tiffany, being the curious lady, got up and loitered around the couple for a while before returning and saying to them, "I heard the woman say something about promising to treat him better than Jessica ever did, but the handsome man didn't seem to take it too well."

Robin's face turned pale. Suddenly, Sylvain got up and walked towards the washroom, and the lady had an unhappy look on her face. The lady then stood up and left the cafe whilst swaying her rather large waist.

Arianne called out to Robin and said, "Robin, you should go and have a look and see what happened.

Robin hesitated. "Should I? It doesn't seem appropriate though."

Arianne laughed at her and said, "Aren't you friends? Is it weird for friends to look out for one another? Just treat it as if you had coincidentally bumped into him and went over to say hi to him. It's not illegal to do that. Do you still need me to give you another reason?"

After hearing Arianne's words of encouragement, Robin took a deep breath and got up to walk towards Sylvain.

She waited outside for a moment before Sylvain walked out, his face still damp. It was evident that he was very angry just now and needed to calm himself down by washing his face.

Sylvain seemed unhappy and slightly apologetic when he saw Robin. “What are you doing here?”

Robin mustered up the courage and said, “I was here with Arianne and I coincidentally saw you with… a woman. I know that the woman mentioned something about Jessica, and the two of you seemed to… leave on bad terms. Has something happened? Did she ask you to do something absurd for her?”

Robin was unaware that her question was so direct; she had uncovered his humiliating incident. Sylvain’s expression turned cold. “That’s right. I thought she was going to ask me to design her a dress, but it turns out that she had intended to ask me to be her sugar baby since I seemed like her type. These women don’t see me for my talents in designing; all they see are my looks and my body. Are you happy now that I’ve told you everything? Excuse me for letting you see such a despicable side of me. Wipe that look off your face. I don’t need your pity or your sympathy!”

As he finished, he walked away and left the cafe with a cold expression on his face.

Robin stood there frozen. She did not know what she had done to anger him. She was merely being worried for him…

When she returned to her seat, Arianne noticed that something was wrong and asked, “What’s wrong? Why has Sylvain left? Did your conversation turn awry?

Robin's eyes grew red with tears. "I was just asking if that woman had asked him to do something absurd for her and he got mad. He said that I was pitying and sympathizing with him and he didn't need it."

Chapter 1232

Arianne helplessly shook her head. "You're really silly. Couldn't you ask a little more indirectly? He's in one of his most helpless moments, so naturally, he would be feeling weak and vulnerable. Plus, he'd just been insulted by another person. You should've gone at it indirectly, greeting him and saying that it was such a coincidence that you met him, asking him how he was doing while you were at it. If he was willing to tell you, he would. Otherwise, just leave it be and stop pursuing the matter. Try to do your best to console him instead of asking him directly like you just did. Anyways, I'll be sure to tell you in more detail next time. For now, you should go after him and apologise since I'm certain you're not in the mood to go shopping with us now. I'm sure he won't stay mad at you for too long."

Robin shrank. "I can't muster up the courage to do it. I've never seen him so angry before, and I'm really afraid of messing it up again. I know that I'm silly and don't know what words to say at what time. Worse, I'll probably make him even angrier if I try to talk to him again, since I don't know how to console him. I should probably just let him calm down by himself first."

Tiffany was just like an audience member, licking on a piece of butter whilst enjoying the show. "Some relationships can be saved by letting each other cool down for a moment due to their intimate relationship with each other. Some, however, will just die out the moment both parties stop talking to each other. It's much easier for a woman to woo a man than the other way around; hence, you should just buck up and use your actions to show that you care for him instead of using your words. How do you grow up if you don't try and fail a few times? I can tell that you like him just by looking at your eyes. Therefore, there is no way you would be able to leave it at that, not after how angrily he stormed off."

This time, Robin did not argue back. It was true that she still liked Sylvain, and her heart was in a mess after how he had reacted towards her. After struggling with herself for a moment, she decided to listen to Tiffany and own up to her mistakes. She understood that some words are meant to be said immediately, or otherwise, the opportunity would disappear right before their eyes.

Robin walked out of the cafe and dialled Sylvain's number, but the phone call got cut off after the dial tone rang twice. It turned off after she called again a second time. She was about to return to her usual self and retreat but very quickly dropped the idea and steeled herself again. She hated how she wasn't able to do anything correctly, including her people skills. She decided to wait for Sylvain at his home since he would most definitely return home at some point. All she wanted to do was apologize to him.

It wasn't until 1am that Sylvain's car entered the house. However, instead of Sylvain, a chauffeur got out of the driver's seat, and when he saw her, he asked, "Do you know who the owner of the car is? He's completely drunk and is unconscious now. Could you kindly help him pay my fee? I'd be more than happy to leave him under your care."

Robin had already begun to doze off but forcefully woke herself up and walked towards the car to look inside. Sylvain had fallen asleep in the back seat. She paid the chauffeur and rummaged Sylvain for his house keys. When she found it, she opened the door and helped him into his home.

Robin wiped down Sylvain's face and helped him sleep as comfortably as possible. How bad of a mood was he in to be able to make himself so drunk? Robin felt even more frustrated at her own silliness. Arianne was right to lecture her; she was an adult, yet not only did she not have people skills, but she did not have a way with words either.

After Robin was done tidying up, she looked for a piece of pen and paper to leave Sylvain a note before leaving. She thought it would be better to leave a note of apology since there was no way they would be able to talk, not with Sylvain completely passed out. Also, Robin's mum would be very upset with her for returning home so late.

As Robin focused on writing her note on the coffee table, Sylvain, who was lying on the sofa, opened his eyes. He was slightly awake after taking a nap.

When he saw Robin, he asked, “Why are you at my place?”

Robin was so shocked, she jumped up and the pen she was holding dropped under the coffee table. Robin clumsily bent over to pick up the pen in a panic. She hit her head as she got up, most likely against the edge of the table, but it wasn’t as painful as she had expected it to be. She curiously looked up and found Sylvain’s face just inches away while his hand was under the edge of the table. So, she had hit his palm when she got up just now.

Her heart skipped a beat and she did not dare to look at him. “S-Sorry… I really didn’t mean what I said this afternoon. I don’t have a way with words, so I may have said something wrong. However, I was just worried about you and did not have any other motives. I apologize if I’ve offended you in any other way. I was waiting for you outside when the chauffeur drove you back home, so I brought you in. But I am just about to leave. I’m glad that you’re awake now… I’ll get going then!”

Just as she was about to get up and leave, Sylvain grabbed onto her wrist and said, “I should be the one apologizing for lashing out at you this afternoon while I was in a bad mood. I know you didn’t mean it.”

Chapter 1233

Robin nervously held onto the edge of her shirt. “Well… as long as you’re not mad at me. Anyway, it’s late. I should go back now and you should get some rest. You’ll feel terrible after drinking so much alcohol. You really shouldn’t drink so much next time, as it’s bad for your health.”

Sylvain let go of her wrist, his face slightly disappointed. “Could you stay with me for a while?”

At that moment, Robin could not find a reason to refuse and sat by his side. “Alright.”

After a moment of silence, Sylvain asked, “How long were you waiting for me? Don’t tell me you’ve been here since this afternoon?”

Robin nodded her head. “I tried to call you when you left the cafe, but you’d turned off your phone, so I could only come here. I did not expect to wait till midnight, but it was a good thing that you came home, or otherwise I would’ve waited for nothing.”

Sylvain raised his eyebrow and said, “Are you an idiot? Why didn’t you just leave me alone if I didn’t answer your phone? Why did you have to wait here for so long? We’re completely unrelated to each other, so why do you care if I’m angry or not? Why are you so worried about me?”

‘Completely unrelated?’ Robin was slightly disappointed. Regardless of the fact that they had dated in the past, were they not even friends? She bit her lip and argued, “That’s just who I am. I’m kind to everyone around me; hence, I do hope that you would talk to me if you’re in a bad mood. You’ll feel better if you do. Plus, you don’t have to feel ashamed of telling me anything because I won’t mock you or laugh at you. Also, I know that you don’t like to be pitied by others, but I really wasn’t trying to…”

Sylvain suddenly laughed and slightly scoffed as he said, “I wouldn’t want to taint you with those corrupting things. You’re too innocent for that. Plus, you wouldn’t want to listen to it either.”

Robin raised her eyes and looked at him. “That’s not true, I do want to listen.”

The couple looked into each other’s eyes. There seemed to be an invisible current running in between their gazes. Either it was because of the atmosphere at that moment or due to the alcohol in Sylvain’s

body, but he began to lean towards her. He was about to kiss her without a doubt. However, just as their lips were about to touch, Robin turned her face and looked away. She stuttered as she said, “I-I… I’m sorry, I should go home now!”

Sylvain paused for a second before holding onto the back of Robin’s head and going in for the kiss.

Robin’s heart began to race so fast, she felt as though her heart was about to rush out of her throat. Her eyes opened wide and she did not know what to do. She had only intended to apologise to Sylvain, but who knew things would escalate so quickly. How could they be doing this when they were not even lovers?

When she came back to her senses, she struggled to push him away. “Stop it…”

Sylvain did as she asked and let go of her, their faces still inches away from each other. Sylvain’s eyes were like a deep well—inside them were links of emotions intertwined with each other, appearing yet disappearing at the same time. It was obvious that Sylvain was trying his best to suppress all the negative emotions within him.

At that moment, Robin’s heart softened. She was facing a man whom she loved, yet at his weakest moments, her each and every action seemed to be very harsh. She slowly closed her eyes, and her eyebrows twitched slightly to show how nervous she was at the time.

Chapter 1234

Sylvain did not hesitate any longer as he pushed her against the sofa…

After they were done and she was in his embrace, Robin's eyes were red with shame. By the time she decided to talk to him, he had already fallen asleep.

A hint of disappointment flashed through her eyes. Although Sylvain had been intoxicated by alcohol, he was clearly aware of his actions and she knew it. She was probably disappointed that there was no small talk after sex…

When Robin arrived home, she was shocked to see a figure suddenly appearing in front of her as she turned on the lights. She almost shrieked in fear, but when she realised it was just her mom, she gave a long sigh of relief. "What are you doing standing there in the middle of the night for, mom? You scared me."

Her mom's face was dark. "I don't suppose you're going to tell me that you've been at Arianne's place again, are you? If that's the case, why didn't you just stay there for the night? You reek of alcohol and tobacco, which usually only men smell like, right? I've suspected it for a long time already, but have you gotten a boyfriend? What's there to hide about having one? Are you trying to humiliate me by going to his house when you barely know him? Arianne is involved in hiding the fact from me, isn't she? I'm sure you weren't staying at hers the other night. Not all wealthy people are good people; look at you, they've already begun to corrupt you! I want you to resign tomorrow, and I'll find you a new job! From now onward, you are not to leave this house!"

If it were in the past, Robin would not even dare argue with her mom while her face was filled with so much anger and would just face the music like a good girl. But this time, Robin thought that her mom was wrong about her and she fought back. "Mom, it's not how you think it is. This has nothing to do with Arianne, so stop accusing her! I'm an adult now, how could I not know the difference between right and wrong? Why do you always think that everything I've done wrong is because of someone else? I'm only human. I can't be perfect, and I have my flaws as well. I know you've been trying your best to raise me into the most perfect person so that you could show off in front of our relatives and friends. Well, I'm sorry to disappoint you, but I wish that you wouldn't interfere with everything I do, alright? I don't want to be controlled by you any longer!"

Her mom was so angry that her body trembled. “Control? I’ve spent so much money to raise you, yet this is how you describe me, your own mother? Haven’t I done all of this for your own good? What’s the difference between you and those prostitutes if you don’t even know how to protect yourself!”

Prostitute?

Robin was shocked. Her mom had always been controlling her so strictly, she couldn’t breath. Robin had always been an obedient girl and did not even go through the rebellious phase. However, this time, she was not willing to comply with her mom any longer. She even thought that the woman in front of her, the woman who had controlled her every movement for the past twenty years, was an unreasonable woman.

“I love him, mom! I’m dating this man of my own will. I haven’t been accepting any random men, so don’t use such disgusting words to describe me. You’ve controlled me for long enough; can’t you stop it already? I’m not some foolish and naive girl anymore. I know what I’m doing very clearly! If you can’t stand the look of me, you should just look away!”

After Robin was done shouting, she turned and rushed out. All she wanted to do at that moment was to leave the place that was suffocating her, leave the grasp of the woman who was choking her!

When she left her house, she was completely lost and did not know where she should go. All she wanted to do at that moment, her weakest moment, was to look for someone to pour out her emotions.

The whole world seemed to be dark and silent at that hour, and only Robin was left walking around. Robin felt even more upset as she saw the scenery around her.

She had always treated Arianne as the sister whom she could talk to whenever she was down, despite only having an age difference of one year. Robin tried to send Arianne a text message. ‘Arianne, I’ve had a falling out with my mom, and I’m currently alone outside. Is it so wrong to love someone? Why does my mum think that I’m filthy and have no self love? I can’t reject Sylvain. I enjoy the time I’ve spent when I’m with him, and I hate how my mom insists on controlling all my affairs and making arrangements for every single thing in my life. I’m so tired.’

Chapter 1235

Arianne was only lightly asleep so she got up when she heard her phone ringing. When she saw that it was a text message from Robin, she got up and walked to the bathroom to reply. “Where are you now? Didn’t you go look for Sylvain when you left the cafe? Did you get into an argument with your mom because of this? I’ll come and meet you now. I’m worried about you being alone outside.”

Once she knew where Robin was, Arianne immediately got changed. She planned to catch a taxi instead of waking up Mark since he was tired from working all day. This was not something that she felt was worth bothering him.

Just as she opened up the bedroom door and was about to head downstairs, Mark’s voice suddenly came. “Who have you been contacting in secret in the middle of the night? Furthermore, you’re even planning to go out alone at this hour.”

She turned around and saw Mark lazily standing beside the baby cot looking at her. He had even helped cover a blanket over Smore while he was at it. It seemed like Mark had already been awake when he heard the text message, and Arianne seemed slightly sorry about that. “Have I disturbed your sleep? I’ll leave my phone further away next time. You should go back to sleep.”

Mark snorted. “Don’t change the subject. I’m asking you where you’re going and who contacted you.” There was no anger in his voice, only sleepiness.

Arianne replied honestly. “It’s Robin. She’s alone outside at the moment, and I’m worried for her, which is why I’m going out to accompany her. You should go back to sleep. I’ll catch a taxi there.”

Mark got up and walked towards the closet. “How’re you expecting to catch a taxi at this hour? I’ll drive you there.”

Arianne opened her mouth with the intent to reject his offer, but she knew there was no point in rejecting him since there was no changing Mark’s mind the moment he decided to do something.

Mark occasionally yawned during the journey to look for Robin. Arianne was afraid that she would distract him, so she remained quiet.

Robin was at the park near her house. When they arrived there, Mark stayed in the car as Arianne got off to invite her into the car with them. Robin did not dare to cry out or tell Arianne how she was feeling because Mark was there. Robin could only lower her head and sniffle sadly as she said, “I’m sorry for bothering both of you so late at night, Arianne.”

Arianne held onto Robin’s icy cold hands and rubbed them. “It’s fine, let’s go back to my place first. Your mom has always been looking out for your own good, as with most parents. It’s just that she had gotten around it the wrong way, so stop being sad. Instead of going to the office tomorrow morning, you should stay in and have a good rest. You’ll be just fine after you wake up.”

Back at the Tremont estate, Mark went up to continue sleeping while the women sat in the living room and chatted. Based on the condition Robin was in, it was very likely she wouldn't be able to sleep unless she cleared off everything from her chest.

After understanding the entire situation, Arianne consoled her. "Your mom has a more conservative mentality. You've always been listening to every word she says and have almost zero interactions with any other male. Plus, you've never rebelled against her in the past. Now that you've suddenly met Sylvain and love him, you sometimes don't go home on time. I believe your mom was more worried about you when she was scolding you. We're in an era where it's normal to have sex before marriage; however, it's not wrong to be more conservative as a way of being responsible for your own well being. I suggest that you first understand clearly what Sylvain thinks of you. If he loves you the same way you do him, then you'll be fine continuing your relationship with him.

Chapter 1236

"I know your mom thinks I'm a bad influence, but I'm not angry. She still thinks you're an impressionable little kid so if you ever do anything that's out of her expectations, she automatically blames it on the people around you. It's really normal. It's the kind of thing many parents do. I understand that, and I don't care what people say about me," she said. "Most importantly, I'm sure both of you know how committed you are to each other, right? So, cheer up. Don't feel bad. Rest easy… I've prepared the guest room for you."

This midnight debacle, as it turned out, cost Arianne her sleeping hours. When morning arrived, she was hardly awake. Mark was with her as well the night before, but he appeared to be in much better shape compared to her. If he put on his suit, he would look even more spirited. It was as though what happened last night did not affect him at all.

Arianne was rushing to the company that morning because she needed to personally oversee something. Otherwise, she would have continued to sleep. She was too tired to hail a cab so she accepted a ride from Mark.

After watching her giving a jaw-breaking yawn, Mark freed a hand and rubbed her cheek. “Hey, are you still not awake? Is Robin currently dating Sylvain?”

Arianne puffed her cheeks and nodded. “Yea, or at least, it seems like it. Robin likes Sylvain. The two have been together before, and now, they're back together. They’ve done almost everything a typical couple would do. The only thing is a lack of confirmation from Sylvain so their relationship is still in an ambiguous state. Honestly, no one is able to read Sylvain’s mind… However, he better not play with Robin’s feelings for his own good! Otherwise, he’s nothing but a douchebag who deserves being destroyed by Jessica.”

Mark mulled over her words for a moment before he remarked, “To be honest, this Trudeau is brimming with raw talent. I might not have a firm grip on his character, but my gut feeling says he’s not that big of a douchebag at all. If he proves himself by treating Robin right, then, I might consider hiring him. It would be just the thing to clear the mud that tarnishes his name.”

Arianne was shocked. “Every company out there is treating Sylvain like he’s Slenderman or something. They think his presence alone will tarnish their names, but you’re going to hire him? Talent aside, are you sure you can change everyone’s opinion about him?”

Seeing how awake she had become, a pleased smile shadowed his lips. “I’ve always done things my way, Ari. If I have my eyes on someone, no one can say anything about it. Therefore, if Sylvain proves himself worthy, I’ll be happy to keep him. Besides, it’s pretty cool to have this whole Jessica business to officially end with Sylvain’s employment. Why do you think this decision will ruin me? Babe, you still have a lot to learn about me. You shouldn’t underestimate me too much.”

Arianne was so stunned by Mark’s idea that she had missed her husband’s subtle change in addressing her. “This is insane, right? Could it be that you’re way more skilled than I’d thought?’

Mark was brimming with confidence. “Ha! Just wait and see. You won’t believe if it’s all just talk. Anyway, are you awake yet? Your company’s up ahead. Wake up.”

Robin went straight to the company after she woke up, but it was near the afternoon by then.

Arianne decided not to tell Robin about what Mark had said. Instead, she decided to slowly draw out information about them. “Sylvain must have sobered up by now, right? Has he called you yet? I mean, something like that happened between both of you last night… He must call you to give you an explanation or something when he wakes up.”

Robin had yet to get out of the state of despondent she was in since yesterday. She slumped on her desk, looking defeated, as she said, “No. He probably hasn’t woken up. I mean, he slept late last night while I… I… Well, I lost all desire to sleep. Honestly, I’m not completely awake right now.” After a pause, she asked, “But, um, Arianne… I was being so childish yesterday, does Mr. Tremont think ill of me now?”

Arianne flashed her a reassuring smile. “You’re worried about that? No! He was the one who insisted on driving me to see you. Originally, I planned to grab an Uber over. He didn’t say anything. Moreover, he’s usually a taciturn person,” she replied, “You know, I’m genuinely invested in this love story between you and Sylvain. So, is there a Season 2 of it? You can speak to me, alright? Treat me like an outlet that you vent your feelings to. You can trust me, and I’m all ears. Whether it’s good or bad news, it doesn't matter. I don’t want you to shoulder any of it alone.”

Chapter 1237

A smile bloomed on Robin’s face. “Thank you, Arianne.”

As some folks would attest to, life would sometimes give one lemons and lemonades at the same time. That was the situation Robin was in. Although her love life was in a mess, career-wise, things seemed to be looking up. Mr. Yaleman who was known for being unnecessarily uptight and miserly summoned her to his office just to praise her work.

It seemed like Mr. Yaleman was pleased with Robin's improvement and diligence. He even told her if there was an opening for a promotion, the company's first choice would be her. Although part of Mr. Yaleman's gushing compliments probably had something to do with him trying to ingratiate himself to Arianne, there was no doubt he was also amazed by Robin's hard work and dedication.

Robin left his office with budding joy. In the past, the only reason Mr. Yaleman would summon her was to shout at her. Little did she know there would come a day where he would praise her. It was such a strange twist that she wondered if Arianne had anything to do with it. She asked, "Arianne! Mr. Yaleman just summoned me to his office to praise me! Did you, maybe, say something to him to, you know, lift my mood?" she asked.

Arianne shrugged. "No, it has nothing to do with me. I'll never do something like that. Moreover, there are only two things that can truly lift your mood, right? One is your mother's approval, and the other is being able to formally date Sylvain. Am I right?"

Robin looked positively bashful. "Huh. That's… that's really direct of you, Arianne."

Arianne laughed and waved her hand dismissively. "Oh, well. Alright, back to work. Oh, I might not be in the office in the afternoon. If you need anything, just call."

She was trying to get inspiration by going to her favorite spot. It was a seat next to a window in a café where she could watch people bustling down the street. That gave her the most inspiration. Her quiet

corner's tranquility versus the chaotic and bustling world out on the street always created an impactful discordant that was perfect for a creative mind.

She left the office in the afternoon and made her way to a café situated on the busiest street in the city center. It was a high-end café, boasting sophisticated patrons who observed the need to be quiet and discreet with their voices.

She picked a spot close to the window and ordered coffee and desserts. Then, she put on her earbuds and pulled out her sketchbook.

She looked outside the window. The street was bustling with a diversity of pedestrians. Every day, men, women, old, and young with different shapes, sizes, colors, styles, and bearings walk on the same scratch of road.

With the soothing background music playing in her ears, the world felt calm.

After a while, the waiter served her orders.

Arianne looked up, flashed him a smile before she thanked him. Then, she continued to look outside the window again.

A few moments later, someone suddenly took the seat across her. A frown appeared on her face immediately. She hated sharing a table with strangers when she was in the mood to chase inspirations. Strangers who came without an invitation would only distract and disrupt her thoughts. She was about to say something when she realized that the stranger was Sylvain. She quickly removed her earbuds and said, “You came here for inspiration as well?”

Indeed, Sylvain had the same idea as Arianne. He was casually dressed today.

Arianne watched as he fished out a pencil and sketchbook from his bag. “Great minds think alike… and they usually don’t mind sharing a table, right? After all, sharing a table allows us to share our ideas.”

If it had been anyone else, Arianne would have declined without any hesitation. However, Sylvain was not just anyone. He was a veteran in the fashion industry and was hailed as a fashion designer extraordinaire. She would gladly take the chance to share and discuss ideas with someone like him. “I don’t mind at all. Help yourself. Did you come here as soon as you woke up? It’s amazing you can leap straight into working mode after drinking so much last night.”

Chapter 1238

Sylvain shot her a questioning look. “Wait, how did you know?”

“Robin had a row with her mom after she went home,” Arianne said, “She ran out of the house and stayed in the park alone in the middle of the night. I was the one who found her. Did you call her after you woke up?”

Sylvain shook his head. “No. I mean, what am I supposed to say if I call her? It was my fault for being rash last night… Well, I bet she told you what happened between us, too. Heavens, my head’s a mess.”

Sylvain’s words made it seem like he was not planning to develop his relationship with Robin. However, Arianne kept her cool. She only wanted a clear answer from him. “Yes, I heard. But why are you

confused? If you've got the guts to do it, then, you have to have the guts to deal with the consequences. What? Are you planning to shirk the responsibility that comes after?"

Sylvain appeared quite agitated by his confusion. "It's not what you think at all, okay? I don't know what to do because I'm well aware the current me can't give anything more than sweet nothings. I know how she was raised. She was a prim and proper little girl raised in a conservative family. All she knew growing up was living in accordance with the rules. For this reason, she hasn't encountered the dark side of the world. She doesn't know how black a man's heart can be. When I look at her, I feel… inferior. I'm aware of that, but I can't stop my stupid self from wanting to be with her. I don't think there's a chance for me to turn over a new leaf," he vented, "The old Sylvain is dead. The one who replaced him, the current me, just wants to grow out of his rotting corpse. But, God help me, it's a struggle to stay afloat in the storm. It's f**king killing me."

"You feel inferior? You're one of the biggest hotshots in the fashion industry, and you feel inferior to a rookie?" Arianne wondered aloud with a pensive expression on her face. Then, she continued to say, "Sylvain, do you know why someone feels inferior even though there doesn't seem to be a logical reason behind it? It's because he genuinely likes her. You're right. The old Sylvain is dead; the guy who was so entwined with Jessica that he could not extricate himself, the one whom everyone thinks has succeeded only because he latched onto a powerful woman. That Sylvain died. But you? You're not him, you're you. The current you is the one Robin likes! Maybe if you can just summon the courage to chase after what your heart desires, if you can just bravely take one step forward, you might just find yourself stepping out of that mud pit. Don't you know? Fortune favors the bold and earnest."

Sylvain laughed. "Huh, since when did you become a motivator? Look, I get what you're saying, that's the perk of being older than you, but how would you know how I feel without being in my shoes? You think people inadvertently feel inferior when they're with the object of their affection... This means you think I like Robin. That's a bold assumption considering I don't even know how I feel about her. All I know is that I really want to be around her. She's got this magnetic pull… Hey, can I be direct and ask you something? Do you and Mark Tremont ever feel inferior in front of each other?"

Arianne nodded candidly. "I don't know about him, but I've certainly felt inferior before. Either way, you really should call Robin, okay? She's feeling really down after her big fight with her family. She must be feeling awful now, and you're the best person to cheer her up."

Sylvain remained silent for a moment before he said, “Yeah, right. If her family knows about me being her life, things would only get even more difficult for her. No, the best way I can help is to stay away from her. If… If I manage to free myself from the quagmire and become a better man, maybe at that time, I’ll deserve to be in her life.”

At this point, Arianne felt a little helpless. She was being really obvious with her hints. If Sylvain would just step up and take Robin’s hands, things would fall into place. However, he was still vacillating. She did not blame him for that. After all, everyone knew about Sylvain and Jessica’s unspeakable relationship. If Robin’s parents discovered Robin was dating that man in that scandal, they would blow a gasket. The challenge Mr. and Mrs. Cox posed to the young couple would be almost insurmountable. She pondered on their conversation for a moment before she finally decided to stop chucking hints at him. Instead, she gave him her opinion. “Hey, I’m not trying to sway your decision in any direction, but please reflect on what I’ve just said. People don’t always stay and wait for the other person to muster up their courage. Sometimes they leave without looking back. At that time, you’ll lose the chance to be with them forever. Think about it: if you love someone that much, why let anything stop you? What’s so scary about the tidal waves in life if you’re facing them with someone you love?”

In the end, Arianne put her sketchbook away and said before she left, “Anyway, it seems like I won’t be getting any inspiration today, and you seem to be in a similar boat. I have to go.”

Sylvain remained in his seat and heaved a long sigh. He held his phone hesitantly before he put them down again.

He was still stuck in the quagmire.

Chapter 1239

Robin called Arianne when the night fell. During the conversation, the young girl told her that Sylvain did not call her. Through her voice alone, Arianne could feel her moroseness.

Arianne was quiet, inwardly debating if she should tell Robin that she had met Sylvain earlier. However, she was hesitant because she was not certain if Sylvain's explanation about his reluctance was a white lie. Was he lying about not liking Robin or was he telling the truth? In the end, she decided to let it remain a secret. She seamlessly changed the topic. "Say, are you at home now? Are things better with your mom?"

The young girl sighed. "No, I told my dad I'm not coming home for a while. I'm going to be staying with my aunt for two days or so. I mean, just thinking about my mom makes my stomach churn. I mean, I don't hate her, but I feel suffocated whenever I look at her. This feeling has accompanied me as I grew up," Robin muttered. "Well, since I've made up my mind to escape her claws, I might as well soldier on and not look back. If I relent, I'll just be forced to return to my old cage… It's fine, Arianne. Sorry to have worried you… and troubled you. See ya tomorrow."

Arianne let out the breath she had been holding after the call ended. Robin's despair was so infectious that she felt as glum as her. The girl might not have told her much about her family, but based on what she saw, Robin's mother seemed like the type to control her child's every thought and behavior and the type who thought she alone knew what was best for her child. Being a 'good child' was never a walk in the park.

At that moment, Mark suddenly approached her quietly before asking, "Um, I, er, am going out this evening. It's Jackson. We haven't hung out in a while so I guess he misses it."

"Okay, go on then," Arianne replied offhandedly, "Why even bother to report? All you have to do is tell me if you're coming home tonight."

Mark fidgeted with his tie uneasily. “Of course! Jackson’s gotta go home too, right? Er, I’m going now. You and Smore can rest first.”

It was only after Mark left the house that Arianne registered his strange behavior. He would usually go out without dawdling, and he would not speak to her in a manner as though he was asking for her permission. Why was he acting so strange today? However, she did not dwell on it. As long as her husband came home at the end of the night, she was fine with it.

Meanwhile, with behavior not dissimilar to a thief, Mark drove to a bar. He even told the valet to park his car in a secluded spot.

He had not come to a place like that for a long time now and for good reasons too. A married man who went to a bar without his wife was sending out signals that he was looking for a one night stand. If it were not for Jackson, he would not enter an establishment like this even if if a gun were pointed at his head.

Mark found Jackson’s spot quickly enough and frowned. “The hell are you thinking, inviting me to a place like this at night instead of going home where your wife and child are! Don’t tell me your old habit is kicking in again!”

Jackson laughed. “Pfft, come on, man. Look around! I ain’t got no girls around me right now, right? Where’s this baseless accusation coming from? Heh. I just wanna relax with a couple of beers, and I don’t know who else to invite other than you since Eric betrayed us and kicked the bucket way earlier than he was supposed to. Can’t believe he left us to go through all the sh*t in this world without him.”

Chapter 1240

Mark took a seat and poured himself a glass. “Alright, spill it. What happened between you and Tiffany that she allowed you to come to a place like this alone?”

Jackson sank back into the couch and sighed. “Goddamnit. In the end, I’m right about the benefits of staying unmarried! Now, now, before you call me an a**hole for thinking like that, hear me out. I’m so done with that new kid at home! Seriously, that kid never! Stops! Yapping! All day, all night. It doesn’t matter, he yaps until no one gets to sleep. I swear, I’m gonna die out from extreme exhaustion if this keeps up,” he ranted, “You know what’s worse? Tiffany’s extremely patient with the little rascal. However, all her bad mood is vented on me! She exhausted all her patience with the kid and has none left for me! As if I have anything to do with it! Seriously, Mark, have you ever been so frustrated when you first started this whole being-a-father business?”

Mark thought for a second before he replied, “Uh, actually, I’m okay. My son isn’t the tantrum-throwing type. As he grows older, he has become even easier to care for. Honestly, I have no better advice than to tell you to be a bit more patient. Your kid should get better after a few months.” He paused briefly before he continued to say, “Hmm… It’s only natural that you’re taking this so badly. You’re used to having freedom… Freedom that you gave up for Tiffany. You think you signed up for a life of two… then, all of a sudden, a child appeared. It’s normal that you can’t find your bearing. It’s all very reasonable. Hey, if you can’t take it, why don’t you ask your mom to care for Plato? I thought she’d be beyond elated given the chance.”

Jackson became noticeably glum. “You really think that I haven’t thought about that? Here’s the thing. My house used to be a place for only me and Tiffany. Now, in addition to that little rascal, my mom is staying with us as well! Holy sh*t, I’ve never lived in a family of four before, and it’s really creeping me out. Every day I come home and think about how crazy the entire place has become,” he moaned. “You know, I tried to suggest having mom bring that little rascal back to Tiffany, but every time I mentioned it, Tiffany could have deafened me with her yelling alone. She’s vehemently against that idea. She wants the kid to be around her all. The. Damn. Time! I’m going insane, man. I only managed to escape here by lying about working overtime.”

Watching Jackson consecutively downing one after another glass made Mark cocked his eyebrow. “Hey, man, you’re setting yourself up for a fight if you return home with the breath of an alcoholic. You lied about working overtime, but you didn’t say you are… entertaining clients, did you? That flimsy lie isn’t

gonna hold water. Are you so desperate for this momentary release that you don't even care anymore? Or did you hit your head and lost some brain cells this morning?"

Jackson shot Mark a wistful look. "Hey, what if you hide me in your house tonight? That would be lovely. Sweet, sweet tranquillity, even if it's just one night! Or I can tell her that you're the one who insisted on drinking with me. Pick one of the options, bro. There are only two."

Mark sneered. "Yeah, right. I'm not your scapegoat, pal. Jokes aside, I think you should discuss your problem with Tiffany, 'cause bottling it up like this is a recipe for future troubles. You should have known this is how your life would be when you decided to marry her. You should have prepared yourself for what's to come. So yeah, this is technically your fault," he remarked before adding, "Speaking of, did you hear anything from Alejandro's side?"

"I didn't." Jackson shook his head. "But word is that their old patriarch is still managing the Smiths' business. The old man had picked up the rein ever since Alejandro got into that car accident, but after all this time, he still hasn't returned that power to Alejandro. Don probably wants to use this as a show of power or something to keep Alejandro in check. Moreover, Alejandro's injuries aren't completely healed. In any case, I'm quite sure that that s.o.b isn't gonna stir up any storm for now."

Then, Jackson continued to say, "Moreover, isn't his wife, Melanie Lark, currently pregnant? Maybe Don will only return that power to Alejandro after their kid's birth. At that time, Alejandro would be fully recovered as well. That means that old geezer wouldn't be able to control Alejandro even if he tries. But hey, Tiffany's happily stuck at home, taking care of the kid, and she hasn't brought up the topic about going back to work. Tiffany at home with the kid and my mom means not a lot of contact with Alejandro, right? That kind of eases my mind. In any case, we can only try our damndest to protect that secret one step at a time. What else can we do otherwise?"

At that moment, a young woman in a bunny costume walked into the room with a new bottle on a tray and said in a sultry voice, "Your drink, sirs."

Out of old habit, Jackson sized the young lady up and smirked when he saw her curvaceous body.

Mark, however, frowned before he said, “You sure take up quite interesting odd jobs during your downtime, Janice Bell.”

The bunny girl froze a little. “M-Mr. Tremont?” She was wearing a masquerade ball mask as part of her costume. It only covered her eyes, but she still should not be so easily recognizable, especially with the establishment’s dim lighting. After being discovered by Mark, she could only keep her head lowered and pretended to inspect the expensive bottle of wine on the tray. She felt embarrassed.

Jackson thought the name sounded familiar. He racked his brain for a few moments before realization dawned on him. He exclaimed, “Oh, you’re the girl we met at the party the last time? I hired you to be my partner that night. Aren’t you an employee in Mark’s company? Wow, you’re working hard even after work, aren’t you? Either way, you’re an acquaintance so come and have a seat. Have a drink with us before you go.”