Ruling 1241

Chapter 1241

Janice looked at Mark and noticed his silence so she sat next to him. “I do part-time jobs because I don’t have anything else to do after work anyway. I get paid very well in these places. I’m paid by day so I don’t think it’s too bad…”

“Are you short of money?” Mark asked casually. He believed that her family must be in dire straits since she used to receive financial aid from him. She had to work part-time, likely because she lacked funds.

Janice lowered her head. “I’m fine. I’m not particularly short on cash. I’m out in society now so it’s different from when I was a student. I spend a lot more now so I have to work a little harder. That way, I can live with a little more dignity and won’t need to feel so out of place among the people around me.”

Jackson was slightly tipsy so he had grown chatty. “That’s a good idea. You have to earn money through legal means, regardless. There’s nothing shameful about it. You’re not feeling this way because you met your boss, are you? Don’t worry. It’s after working hours. It’s not his business what you do after hours.”

Mark picked up his glass of liquor and took a sip.

Janice noticed that he had finished more than half of his glass and quickly refilled his glass. “Mr. Tremont, will I tarnish the company’s name by doing this? I’m worried about bumping into colleagues here that’s why…” She wanted to explain her uniform and her mask.

Mark glanced at her. “It’s fine. You can do whatever you want after working hours. It’s not any of my business.”

His consistently aloof demeanor made Janice very uncomfortable. She did not know what she had done to garner his dislike. She had always tried to get close to him in a cautious manner and to leave a good impression on him. Unfortunately, she constantly received the opposite of her desired result.

After a while, seeing as it was getting late, Jackson rose to his feet. “I’ve got to go. I’ve called for a designated driver. You can drive home, Mark. You haven’t had much to drink.”

Mark nodded. “Drop me a message when you get home. I won’t be taking you in if Tiffany throws you out of the house. Get a hotel room.”

Jackson chuckled and left, stumbling slightly.

Mark was about to leave as well when Janice suddenly asked, “Mr. Tremont, do you hate me?”

He frowned. “No. You’re overthinking.”

Janice bit her lips and carefully observed him. Her gaze was extremely pitiful, the kind that would fill men with the urge to protect her. “But I feel like your attitude toward me has changed compared to the past. It’s like I’ve done something wrong. If I’ve done something wrong, you can just tell me. I’ll change.”

Mark stared at her with a half-smile on his face. “My attitude has changed compared to the past? How was it like in the past?”

Janice paused and replied, “In the beginning, when I used to take care of Smore when you brought him to the office. I thought we got along well. You provided me with financial aid before so I just wanted to repay you. Perhaps, I might have been too eager, but I don’t mean anything by it. Then, it seems like you’re deliberately avoiding me for some reason.”

Chapter 1242

Mark rose to his feet and straightened out his clothes before he bluntly replied, “You should avoid fanciful thoughts and just do your job. It doesn’t matter if I’m distancing myself from you, I’m your boss. That’s our only connection. I’ve provided financial aid for a lot of people. I’ve never considered asking for repayment.”

Then, he left the bar at once. He lifted his hand to sniff his collar when he entered the car. He made sure the smell of alcohol on him was not too strong before he relaxed. He could sense that Arianne disliked him drinking. The thought of her pulling a long face gave him a headache. He was truly helpless whenever that woman was involved.

As expected, Tiffany burst into anger the moment Jackson arrived home reeking of alcohol. “Aren’t you supposed to be working overtime? So you went drinking instead?” Her chest was heaving heavily from her anger.

Jackson felt his scalp tingle. “My mom says that breastfeeding mothers shouldn’t get angry, it’ll spoil the milk…”

Tiffany laughed despite her rage. “Your mom also says you shouldn’t go out and fool around. Why didn’t you listen to her? Why did you lie to me? Who have you been drinking with? You have no need to lie if it was with Mark. So… Was it someone else? A woman? I was wondering why you haven’t touched me at all. Have you gotten sick of me?”

Jackson took a deep breath and wiped his face to sober himself up. “I swear, I really was with Mark. You can call him if you don’t believe me. The bar is a little further away from his house, he’s probably still on the way home. I was just feeling frustrated so I wanted to relax. It’s late, let’s discuss this tomorrow. Bed first.”

Tiffany was perceptive enough to pick up on the words ‘frustrated’ and ‘relax’. Most importantly, he had lied to her and gone drinking behind her back! Was he frustrated with her? Was that why he needed to relax? Ever since they had gotten back together, he had not had sex with her. Her insecurity was at its peak. Had that one thing that always plagued her mind finally happened? Had he gone back to his womanizing way? She felt her hands and feet grow cold. “Unless you explain yourself, you’re not sleeping tonight, Jackson. You could’ve told me if you’re frustrated or if you need to relax, I could’ve gone with you. It could be a bar or anywhere else. Why did you have to lie to me?”

Jackson fell silent. He just wanted to escape from life, just for a short moment. That was why he had gone out on his own. Unfortunately, he was too afraid to tell her. He finally understood why Mark was so taciturn. Sometimes, overexplaining and talking too much would only bring more problems. With silence, one could avoid many problems.

Summer heard the commotion and came downstairs. “Jackson, you’re home? You drank? Why did you go drinking instead of taking care of your wife and baby?”

Jackson’s frustrations magnified upon hearing Summer’s nagging. “Mom, go back to bed. Don’t get involved.”

Summer noticed Tiffany’s indignant expression and how she was close to tears. Her heart ached. “You don’t want me to get involved? If I don’t, you’ll give her a stroke. Don’t ever do this again. If you want to have fun, either take Tiffie along or behave yourself. What do you think this looks like? Things aren’t the same now. You’re not single, you have a family and a baby. What are you doing? You have to be

responsible, as a man. Forget it. It's much too late, stop fighting. Go to sleep. I can watch the baby. You two can have a discussion, but no more fighting. Talk to each other calmly. Go."

Tiffany did not want to lose her composure in front of Summer so she turned around and stormed upstairs. The stomping noises underlined how angry she was.

Jackson surrendered and followed her upstairs. Once they closed the door, Tiffany hurled punches on his chest. "What the hell are you doing? Here I am, taking care of our baby at home, and you're running around drinking and sleeping around!"

Chapter 1243

Jackson grabbed her wrists. His eyes were filled with exhaustion. "I only went drinking with Mark. I didn't do anything else, that's the truth. Forget it, I'll be honest with you. This isn't the life I want. I only planned on having you in my life, not my mother living with us or a kid. I can't accept having two additional people in the house all of a sudden. It's so noisy every day. It doesn't feel merry to me, it's uncomfortable. It's torture. Every time the baby cries at night, I'll wake up and can't go back to sleep. I'm close to dying from exhaustion."

Tiffany stared at him, taken aback. "If you love me, you should love everything else about me. That's our baby, not some ba*tard I had with someone else. You're his biological father! One more thing, that's your mother. Why are you so uncomfortable? It's not like you didn't agree to have the baby. What are you talking about?"

Bolstered by liquid courage, Jackson took a deep breath and gave voice to his feelings. "Yes, I didn't disagree. But I've never had a kid. I had no idea that the house would become so noisy. Consider it my fault. I've suggested having my mom take care of the baby, but you vehemently disagreed. When he's older, we can take care of him. You've never seriously discussed this issue with me, either. I've been living on my own for many years, and I don't like having too many people in my home. Can you understand that? Can't you be considerate of me from time to time?"

Tiffany fell silent. It was true. She had always known Jackson disliked having strange people in the house, but she had never considered their son and his mother to be strangers. She did not think the issue would persist for so long either. She was ignorantly wrapped in the bliss of motherhood, and Jackson was on the verge of a nervous breakdown, unable to have a good night's sleep. And yet, she did not notice it.

The rage in her heart dissipated. She felt guilty. He had never been inclined to marriage in the past, he had made himself very clear. She should not have assumed he would accept everything just because he was not opposed to living with her. After a long pause, she wrapped her arms around him. "I'm sorry. I've neglected your feelings. I… agree, okay? We'll leave the baby with your mom. We'll have dinner there every day to see him and replenish his milk supply. It's best to give him breast milk until he's at least 6 months old. Okay? This is the best compromise I can come up with for now. I won't force you to compromise with me, but I really can't leave the baby with your mom and just ignore him."

Jackson heaved a long sigh. "Do you think that my heart is made of stone? I'm not asking you to abandon the baby. I just can't stand living with him. You're not good with babies so my mom can help out. I'm really having trouble adapting. I'm too used to having my freedom. I can do it for you but not for anyone else. I just can't do it." As long as Tiffany was willing to compromise, there was nothing else to fight about.

Tiffany was reluctant to part with the baby, but she did not want her relationship with Jackson to fall apart because of this. Everyone had different experiences and habits. Jackson had changed a lot for her. She could not expect the world to revolve around her all the time.

Once the flames of rage had dissipated, and the night set in, Tiffany helped him unbutton his shirt. "Are you still feeling frustrated? Wanna… let loose?"

Jackson grabbed her delicate and soft hands. "Don't play with fire. I've gotten used to abstinence, and I've been holding back for too long. You've just had surgery. Let's wait."

She could not understand. “It’s been a month. Do you not want to touch me, or are you really concerned for me?”

Chapter 1244

Jackson was helpless. “I don’t think you’ve read the doctor’s recommendation after you’ve been discharged. You need to wait for two months. Just give me a moment, I’ll come to bed after my shower. Go to bed first, it’s late. You won’t have any milk if you stay up too late. You don’t have much to begin with.

Tiffany watched him walk into the shower skeptically. She thought she would be fine in a month. However, the breast milk production issue was strange. Arianne was so frail, and yet, she was able to feed Aristotle. She was much healthier than Arianne, but she had to supplement her baby with milk formula. Regardless of the nutrients she had taken, it was futile.

The next day, Tiffany brought the subject up to Summer while Jackson had gone to the office. “Mom, you can bring the baby home with you. I’d like to go back to work. I’m getting bored. We’ll have dinner at your place after work to visit the baby before coming home. We’ll take the baby out for some fun during the weekend.”

Summer stared at her for two seconds. “Don’t put everything on yourself. You’re not pushing the baby away because you want to work, it’s Jackson’s problem, isn’t it? Don’t you think I understand him? He’s prepared to spend the rest of his life with you, but he’s not prepared to become a father. He’s used to staying alone, and now, there’s a bawling baby so he can’t stand it. That’s why I suggested taking care of the baby after he was born. It’s fine, I’ll ask Atticus to pick me up. I’ll return with the baby today. Both of you just enjoy your lives together, and I’ll take care of the baby.”

Tiffany chuckled. “You know him best, mom. I never noticed until he told me last night. Now I understand how much stress he’s been under these past few days. He’s too good at enduring and keeping things to himself. He’s been taking such good care of me during the first month of my recovery and the baby. He didn’t seem unhappy at all. I’ll leave the baby with you then. I’ll worry a lot less if he’s with you. We’ll take care of him once he’s older. Thank you.”

Summer looked at her with a smile. “What are you saying? It’s nothing. This is my grandson. I cherish him dearly. Besides, I don’t have much to do. I’ll take good care of the baby. Besides, we have a housekeeper. By the way, I’ll have Little Bean settled in the garden. I’ve already built a small house for it. I’m worried its fur might bring bad bacteria for the baby. It’ll be fine when the baby is older.”

Tiffany would have forgotten about the dog at the West Residence if Summer did not bring it up. That was Summer’s favorite pet. Summer had moved Little Bean to the garden just for the baby. She felt guilty. “It’s fine, mom, really. You keep Little Bean so clean all the time, and it’s so well-behaved. You can’t just throw your pet aside for our baby. I don’t mind. You can take care of him as usual. Just don’t let Little Bean get too close to Plato when he’s too young.”

Summer shook her head. “It’s fine. It’s not a problem. The dog house is pretty big, and it has plenty of space to run around in the garden. We’re still living under the same roof, it’s not like we’re sending it away. It’s really not a problem so don’t you worry. Just take care of your relationship with Jackson. I’m fine as long as you and Jackson are alright. It’s no problem.”

Tiffany hugged Summer. “You’re the best, mom!”

Summer patted her back. “Alright, I’m going to check on Plato. It’s time for a diaper change. You have some breakfast. Enjoy your day, I’ll take the baby home later.”

Chapter 1245

Tiffany nodded and released Summer. Actually, she really could not bear to part with Plato. The thought of it made her anxious. Most women would put their babies at the center of their universe after having a baby. However, she could not ignore Jackson who was clearly distressed.

Two hours later, Atticus arrived in a car. Tiffany watched her son taken away from her with tears streaming down her face. As the saying went, 'Nothing ventured, nothing gained.' This was probably the case.

Her home suddenly felt empty. She could not stay at home any longer and called Arianne. She found out Arianne was sketching outside and immediately drove over to meet her. She needed to rant and would die if she continued to hold it in.

She arrived at a park with a lake where Arianne was. Her eyes brimmed with tears when they met up. "Ari, Jackson's mom is raising my baby."

Arianne took out her earphones and asked, "What's going on? This is so sudden. I thought you were going to personally take care of him."

"It's Jackson," Tiffany replied, aggrieved, "He can't stand the baby's cries and isn't used to having his mom living with us. He's used to staying alone and is fine with me being there. However, that's his limit. Is this some sort of character flaw? I don't think I can change his mind. This is better for everyone."

Arianne gazed at the crowd in the distance. "It's alright. It's not like he's going to be far away. You can see him every day. It's normal to feel reluctant at first, you'll get used to it. In Jackson's case, you'll just have to accept it. That's the best choice. By the way, Mark went drinking with Jackson last night. Jackson wasn't at home last night, was he?"

Tiffany sniffed. “Yes, they went drinking together. I thought Jackson was lying to me. So it’s true then. By the way, am I really supposed to wait two months after C-section before having sex?”

The corners of Arianne’s lips twitched. “You were sobbing one second ago, and now, you’re asking me about stuff like that? Who are you trying to kill? I can’t stand you. This is an obvious question. Does your brain work at all? Is there really a need to ask such an obvious question?”

Tiffany heaved a sigh of relief. Her spirits lifted immediately. “I thought he’d lost interest in me. Looks like I was wrong. I got 5kg heavier after my pregnancy, and I haven’t lost my pregnancy weight. The baby needs milk so I can’t go on a diet yet. It’s not too obvious is it?”

Arianne studied her before replying. “You’re fine. It doesn’t really show. This means the extra weight is well distributed. It didn’t gather specifically around your tummy. Your figure is fine.”

Tiffany giggled as she wrapped her arms around Arianne’s waist. “You’re the one with extra weight! My extra weight comes from increased motherly love!”

Arianne was ticklish and tried to avoid her. The pair exploded into giggles.

From a distance, in a black Bentley, Alejandro watched the scene before him, lost in thought.

Jett, who was in the driver’s seat, spoke up. “Sir, we can’t stay too long. Don Smith will be angry.”

Alejandro scoffed. Who knew if this was a show of his disdain toward Don Smith or something else?

Chapter 1246

Seeing this, Jett turned the car around.

After a while, Alejandro said, “Send the picture to Arianne and Tiffany.”

Jett nodded. “By the way, Don Smith has asked you to visit Mrs. Smith in Ayashe soon. When do you plan on going? I’ll book your flight tickets.”

Alejandro furrowed his brows. “If Melanie wants to see me, she can personally come and see me. Didn’t she return to Ayashe because she thinks I’m an eyesore? Ignore that old bat. Let him do whatever he wants. If he’s so eager to maintain relations between our families, he should do it himself.”

Meanwhile, Arianne and Tiffany had gone to a restaurant.

Tiffany’s phone rang just as they placed their orders. She happily checked her phone, thinking that it was from Jackson. To her surprise, it was a picture from an anonymous number. The picture showed a booth in a bar with romantic and dim lighting. A woman dressed in a bunny costume sat next to Jackson. The pair could be seen sitting together, smiling, and drinking. Upon seeing this, she felt as though all her blood had drained from her body. She momentarily forgot how to breathe. She finally gasped as Arianne called out to her, snapping her out of her daze. Then, she held the phone with trembling hands and showed Arianne the picture, unsure of what to say.

Arianne fell deep into her thoughts as she looked at the picture. Although the picture only showed Jackson and the woman in the bunny costume, it was obvious they were not the only people in the booth. Another person's hand could be seen on the side, holding a glass of liquor. It was Mark's hand!

Mark's hands were very unique. They were long, slender, with distinctive bone structures. The way he held glasses was different from the average person as well. Three fingers would always overlap since his fingers were too long. This was especially true for his pinky.

The smell of alcohol on Mark was not strong when he came home the night before. Furthermore, he had taken a shower so Arianne could not really smell it as well. When she found out he had gone for a drink with Jackson, she did not think too much about it. However, based on the picture, it seemed like the pair would cover each other's backs even if one of them had committed a mistake. A myriad of thoughts appeared in her mind at this moment. She was slightly angry.

However, from Tiffany's point of view, Arianne seemed unaffected by the picture. An expression of panic appeared on her face as she cried out anxiously, "Ari! Why aren't you saying anything? Jackson is back to his old ways! He's seeing another woman behind my back!"

Arianne pointed at Mark's hand. "Calm down. Isn't that Mark's hand? Who sent you the picture?"

Tiffany was close to tears. "I don't know. It's an anonymous number. But the picture can't be faked. It doesn't look photoshopped. Look at that woman in the bunny costume! She has such an alluring body and long legs. When Jackson used to fool around, she's exactly his type!"

Arianne knew she had to remain calm. Otherwise, Tiffany would insist on storming into Jackson's office and ripping him into shreds. She said soothingly, "Tiffie, calm down. One picture doesn't tell the entire story. Maybe they're old friends. It's not like this picture was taken on a bed. Don't jump to conclusions based on one picture. Just speak to Jackson when he comes home tonight. You speak to Jackson, and I'll

speak to Mark. If they're lying, regardless of how well constructed their statements are, they're bound to slip up."

Tiffany was impatient. She could not wait until tonight. She had been so excited and happy earlier, ordering a table full of dishes. However, she had completely lost her appetite now. "I can't wait until tonight. I need to ask him now! I won't have any peace until I find out what's going on."

Arianne sighed helplessly. "Fine, fine. Eat your food first. I'll go with you when we're done. I'm not going to Mark's office to confront him now. You better stay calm when you're in Jackson's office. There are too many people around. Spare him his dignity. Ask him what happened and watch his expressions. At that time, you'll know if he's guilty."

Chapter 1247

Tiffany took a few deep breaths before she finally regained her composure. "Alright, we'll go after this. As it happened, I came in my car today. You can help me observe his expressions since I'm not too good at it. Help me out if you see him panicking or getting defensive!"

Arianne broke out in sweat. She could not imagine what would happen if they seriously got into a fight. It was highly likely they would not be able to deal with Jackson if he decided to fight them.

After they finished eating, Tiffany hurriedly took Arianne to Jackson's company and ran straight to his office.

Arianne grabbed Tiffany and made her sit down. She insisted that Tiffany remain calm and emphasized how Tiffany should not jump to conclusions just because of one picture. However, it seemed like her words had fallen on deaf ears.

While they waited, Arianne took her phone out. Her phone had been on silent earlier and she had her headphones on while she was working so she did not notice that an anonymous number had also sent her the same photo. Based on this, it seemed like the sender wanted her to know about this as well. It seemed like the sender had intentionally included Mark's hand in the picture. Was it possible that the sender had anticipated that she would recognize Mark's hand?

After half an hour, Arianne was still trying to figure out an answer while Jackson finally returned. He was clearly startled when he saw the two ladies. "Why are both of you here? I just finished lunch. Why didn't you call me? Tiffany, mom says you had asked her to take care of our son? Shall we go there for dinner tonight then?"

Tiffany was smiling, but she was probably cursing him inwardly. "I was just passing, and I didn't want to disturb you when I found out you're having lunch. By the way, when you went out for a drink last night, was it really just you and Mark? No one else was there?"

After being a womanizer for so many years, Jackson was still highly alert. He did not dare to hesitate and honestly said, "In the beginning, it was just me and Mark. However, we met a girl in the bar who works for Mark. I believe her name is Janice. You probably know about this, but she's working part-time in the bar so she sat down and chatted with us for a while."

Arianne and Tiffany were taken aback by Jackson's honesty.

Arianne did not have it in her to make Jackson's life difficult after looking at his pale face.

However, Tiffany was not satisfied with what she had heard. "How was the bunny costume? Did she look good in it? Did you get a hard-on from looking at her?"

Alarm bells began to ring in Jackson's mind. "How do you know what she was wearing? In any case, she has to wear that since it's part of her job. What she wears has nothing to do with me. I'm just curious about how you found out about all this..."

Arianne opened up the message and showed the photo to Jackson. "An anonymous number sent it to us. It's most likely deliberately taken."

Jackson's eyes darkened as he said, "I see what this is about. If you don't believe me, you can request to see their surveillance tapes. We have a good relationship with the owner of the bar so he'll let you have a look at them. Mark and I didn't leave our seats at all except when we had to go to the washroom. Janice didn't stick around for long either. I went home since it was getting late, and I'm sure Mark left soon after I did. If you're still not satisfied, you can speak to Janice and verify that she's working there part-time."

Arianne said tonelessly, "I believe you, there's no need to check. However, something's strange about Mark. He's not the type to socialize with his staff if he's not close to them. Why would he even have drinks with her? Also, why does it have to be Janice? Why can't it be someone else?"

Jackson grew nervous. After all, he was the one who invited Janice to have a seat and drink. He did not expect Mark would get dragged into that mess.

He was about to speak up in defense of Mark when Arianne interjected, "You don't have to defend him. Janice has been a nuisance to me for a long time now."

Tiffany could not gather her thoughts for a moment. They intended to have a go at Jackson, right? Why did their target suddenly change?

Chapter 1248

When Arianne rose to her feet and walked away, Tiffany followed suit. “Jackson West, you better watch yourself. If I catch you drinking outside again, I’ll rip your head off! Come home earlier for dinner tonight. I’ll be there as soon as I’m done with this!”

Jackson broke out in cold sweat. He nodded vehemently in response. After the two ladies left, he did not waste any time and took out his phone to inform Mark about the matter.

Compared to Tiffany, Arianne was in a different league when she was angry. Tiffany would only whine and throw a few light punches. Moreover, it was easy to coax her. Arianne was completely different.

When the call connected, Jackson revealed everything to Mark. “Arianne found out we had drinks with Janice last night. I’m pretty sure she’s on her way to you now. You better take care of yourself. This is all I can do to help you now. I’m not sure who sent both of them the picture of us at the bar, but I’ll find out. Tread carefully!”

On the other end of the phone call, Mark frowned. “Weren’t you the one who invited Janice to take a seat and have drinks with us? What does it have to do with me? Did you sell me out again? Your habit of throwing your friends under the bus is truly despicable.”

Jackson laughed and said, “Nonsense! Your woman didn’t even give me a chance to explain. I have no intention of throwing you under the bus this time around. I did try to explain, but she wouldn’t let me. You can’t blame me for this! Take care now!”

After the phone call was disconnected, Mark inhaled deeply before he called out, “Davy! Tell Brian to prepare a car. We’re going to meet Mr. Oliver or whatever his name is over dinner tonight.”

Davy pushed the door open and entered Mark’s office with a curious expression on his face. “Didn’t you say there’s no need to meet with him? You said it’s just a small business proposal… You’ve never taken proposals of such a scale so seriously. What changed your mind?”

Mark did not wish to explain himself. “Just do as you’re told. Why are you asking so many questions? Hurry up and arrange a meeting with that man. Now!”

Davy was baffled. Mark clearly had a lot more important tasks to attend to. He could just send one of his subordinates to handle such a minor business deal. Did something change his mind? Not only was he taking an interest in the deal, but he also wanted to have a meeting over dinner!

By the time Arianne and Tiffany arrived at Tremont Tower, they found out Mark had left the office for a business meeting.

Arianne knew very well that Jackson had alerted Mark about what happened. It was obvious that Mark was avoiding her. Without a hint of anger or anxiousness on her face, Arianne took Tiffany on a tour of the company. Previously, when Mark offered to fire Janice, she did not think there was a need for it. However, now, she thought there was an urgent need for that before she could feel at ease.

Arianne was no fool. Not only did Mark get Janice as his partner during the previous event, but he even coincidentally ran into her at a bar where she was working part-time. Mark had always insisted that he had nothing to do with Janice as well. Either he had been lying to her all along or there was something fishy going on with Janice.

Arianne easily spotted Janice among the sea of staff. Janice's appearance was quite decent, and she sported a slender figure. For those reasons, Janice stood out among the staff. How could anyone not fall for such a pretty young thing?

Tiffany grew nervous. "Ari, you should calm down…"

Arianne smiled wryly. "I am calm. Mark has already said he would fire her before this. Now, I'm just helping him to execute his order. I don't think there's anything wrong with that, right? If he gets angry over this, it just means there's something fishy going on."

Chapter 1249

Arianne walked toward Janice's desk and rapped her knuckles on the table. "You're dismissed."

Janice lifted her head and looked at Arianne in confusion. "Excuse me? What did you say, Mrs. Tremont?"

Arianne repeated herself. "I said, you're dismissed. You're fired so there's no need for you to return."

Janice's face paled immediately as a hint of confusion flashed in her eyes. "Why?!"

Arianne cocked an eyebrow and said, “Are you sure you want me to reveal the reason in front of so many people? I suggest you leave without asking too many questions to preserve your dignity. I’m telling you this as a courtesy since we’re both women.”

Janice gritted her teeth. “I refuse to leave. You don’t even work here so you have no right to fire me even if you’re the CEO’s wife. You don’t have to hold back, you can just tell me the reason you’re firing me. I’ve done nothing to be ashamed of.”

No right to fire her? Janice’s words thoroughly angered Arianne. “Is that so? You think I have no right to fire you? Well, I guess there’s truly no need to hold back. What do you take the Tremont Group for? A place where you can work and earn honest money during the day while you work in a bar part-time in a bunny costume, prancing around and seducing all kinds of men? The Tremont Enterprise has no need for employees like you. Since I can’t control what my employees do after work, then, I can only fire you. You don’t have to bother asking on what grounds am I firing you for. All you have to do is leave. If you’re dissatisfied, I can call Mark now and put him on speaker so you can hear for yourself if he has any objection to you leaving.”

Janice’s body trembled. How could Arianne know about her part-time job at the bar? Arianne even knew the type of costume she wore. Was it possible that Mark had told Arianne about it?

The other staff began to whisper among themselves.

“I didn’t expect Janice to be such a person. She’s being paid quite well in the company. Is she that desperate for money? Is she trying to fish for a wealthy man by working at that kind of place part-time in that kind of costume? Or does she just enjoy the thrill of it?”

Janice could not bear to listen to the disdainful words and slammed her hands on the table before she rose to her feet. “Enough! I have no intention of seducing some rich guy or seeking thrills. What’s so

wrong with me working as a waitress in a bar? What's wrong with earning money that way? It's not illegal. You've crossed a line, Mrs. Tremont. Mr. Tremont knew I'm working there part-time and had no problem with it. He even said he has no say in what his employees do after work. Don't you think you're being too harsh regarding this matter? You're working in another company, but you think you can just waltz in here and fire anyone who displeases you. I won't acknowledge your authority here. You might not have endured many hardships since you grew up with the Tremonts since young, but I'm different. You can never imagine the life I had growing up. I even had to receive financial aid from Mr. Tremont just to further my studies. I'm afraid of returning to that life so I'm trying to earn as much money as I can to secure my future. I haven't done anything to betray my conscience so there's no reason for you to humiliate me in such a manner. Do you think you can look down on others just because you're Mrs. Tremont?"

Tiffany felt something was amiss when Arianne did not immediately reply. Did Arianne meet her match? Did Janice's words hit Arianne so hard that Arianne could not even find a retort?

The onlookers had fallen silent as well. Naturally, they did not dare to offend their boss' wife by siding with Janice, but they felt Janice's words made sense.

Everyone was under the assumption that Arianne had no comeback when her expression turned frosty as she said, "Are you trying to gain sympathy from the others? Mark has never sponsored useless people. Since you have to rely on a part-time job to live like an ordinary human, it's safe to say Mark's money had been spent in vain. Also, my working in another company is my business and mine alone. Mark has no say in my business, let alone someone like you. So long as I'm Mrs. Tremont, my word in this company is final. If you're dissatisfied, I'll just make you submit to your fate." After she finished speaking, she instantly took out her phone and dialed Mark's number in front of everyone. She knew Mark would not dare to ignore her call.

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The call finally connected after it rang for about ten seconds. Mark's voice rang from the other end of the line. "I'm busy at the moment, Ari. I'll call you back when I'm done."

Arianne said tonelessly, “No need, I only have one question for you. I’m currently in your company, and I’m about to fire Janice. She’s dissatisfied and says I have no right to do so. I need your opinion on this.”

After a moment of silence, Mark replied, “There’s no need for me to interfere with such trivial matters. You’re free to make decisions in the company.”

After the call was disconnected, a wide grin appeared on Arianne’s face. She watched as anger and despair flitted across Janice’s pale face. She did not feel any sympathy for Janice at all. Janice was not a simple girl, and she was well aware of that. The earlier she could get rid of Janice, the easier she would sleep. She hated how Smore liked to be around Janice and hated how Janice continuously interfered with Mark and her life, coincidentally or not.

Janice stood there frozen for a long time before she began to pack up her personal effects. Most people were looking at Janice sympathetically and thought Arianne had gone too far after listening to Janice’s words. They had no issue with her working part-time in a bar after working hours.

Arianne paid no heed to how others viewed her, she did not care about that at all. She was not the kind to bully others, but Janice was the one who made her feel as though something was wrong with her little actions.

When Janice received her payment from the finance department, Arianne and Tiffany followed her into the elevator. There was no need for them to wait for Mark to return to the office since the matter had been resolved.

There was no one else in the elevator except for the three women who had just fought. The atmosphere in the elevator was tense and heavy.

Arianne stared ahead expressionlessly as she waited for the elevator to arrive on the first floor.

Tiffany nervously glanced around herself. She was afraid Janice would raise her hands at them.

After a moment, Janice suddenly asked, “I’m really curious, Mrs. Tremont, why are you so hostile to me? It’s not just because of my part-time job, is it?”

Arianne glanced at her and said, “It’s exactly because of your part-time job, nothing more. I might’ve even looked the other way if you were embezzling money since that’s slightly more honorable. You may not care about your reputation, but if people found out an employee of Tremont Enterprise works in a bar, scantily clad, it’ll tarnish the company’s reputation. You’re right that a company has no say in what their employees do after working hours, but those are other companies. Not Tremont Enterprise. Mark might not mind it, but I do. After all, reputation is extremely important, don’t you agree? If someone spread the news about an employee of Tremont Enterprise doing that kind of job after working hours, who do you think would have to deal with it? Wouldn’t it be Mark and me?”

Janice did not have the energy to beat around the bush any longer. “You obviously have something against me, but you don’t dare to admit.”

Arianne smiled slightly as she turned to look at Janice. She enunciated each word clearly as she said, “You’re right, I do have something against you. What about it? You make me uncomfortable.”

Janice was terrified when she looked into Arianne’s eyes. She was shocked to discover that Arianne was not the gentle and quiet type that she had expected. After a while, she thought that it made sense. There was no way a gentle little bunny would survive being near Mark Tremont without some tricks up her sleeve.