**Ruling 1351**

Chapter 1351

When Tiffany arrived at the West family residence, she immediately alighted from the car and ran into the house. “Mum, is Plato awake?”

Summer walked toward her with Plato in her arms. “He’s awake. He’s used to seeing you here at this hour so he was waiting for you eagerly. His sleeping hours are completely mixed up. I was just about to carry him and wait for you by the door before you arrived. Is there no traffic today? You’re here early.”

Tiffany took Plato from Summer and held him in her arms. She looked at him affectionately. “What a good boy! The roads are pretty clear today, there’s not much traffic. Do you still have any milk powder, mom? Should I buy some more? We’ll buy Plato’s milk powder in the future, you’ve been so kind as to take care of Plato for us, we can’t possibly ask you to pay for his milk as well.”

Summer laughed as she said, “I’ve always been a kind person. Moreover, Plato’s my grandson. What’s wrong with buying him his milk? You’re seriously taking the fun out of things for me. How much could milk powder possibly cost? We’re family, is there a difference between who pays for Plato? Are you trying to distance yourself by being so calculative? I was bored to death before Plato was born, now, that I have finally found a purpose, I’m living a very fulfilling life. Moreover, I’m able to sleep soundly every night.”

Tiffany could not stop laughing as she pinched Sumer’s waist. “Not only have you been sleeping better, but your figure looks splendid. You look even more gorgeous now.”

Summer was always a very easy-going person who got along with her juniors. As time passed, Tiffany dropped the formalities around her. There were times where Tiffany might have crossed the line, but she had just brushed it off as if it was no big deal. “Really? Are you just saying that to make me happy? Jackson really isn’t your opponent at sweet-talking.”

Tiffany had an earnest expression on her face as she said, “I’ll be damned if I’m lying. It’s true, look at how small your waist is! I’m sure it’s because you’re carrying Plato around. It’s like a form of exercise.”

Summer blushed at Tiffany’s compliments. “I’ll be more than happy to continue if I’m able to obtain such results. Alright, that’s enough, you should go wash your hands and eat. Food’s ready. I’ll head upstairs and call your dad down.”

By the time Jackson entered the house after parking his car, Summer had already gone upstairs.

Tiffany handed Plato over to him and said, “You should carry your son more often. Who knows if he still recognizes his father?”

Jackson’s lips twitched. “Isn’t that a little over-the-top? How could he forget how I look like? He sees me everyday. Weren’t you complaining about how much you miss him? It’s not everyday that you can get off work early and see him. Are you sure you don’t want to carry him?”

Tiffany had been unhappy with how unbothered Jackson was with Plato. “I do miss him, and I want to carry him… However, aren’t you just using it as an excuse to shirk your duties as a father? Plato has been here for a long time, and he hasn’t been living with us, is it too much to ask you to take care of him now? You’re not allowed to put our son down until it’s dinner time! If I could give birth to him all by myself, why would I need you?”

Jackson’s ears were ringing. “Fine, I’ll carry him. Are you happy now? Can you stop yelling? My eardrums are about to burst.” In truth, he did not dislike Plato. After all, Plato was his flesh and blood. He just did not know how to express his affection for Plato. For this reason, he came off as cold. He did not think he

had to make an effort to take care of Plato since there were other people doing it. That aside, even his artist father who was usually lost in his own world could not keep his hands off Plato. Where would he get the chance to take care of Plato or show his love for Plato?

Very soon, Summer and Atticus both came downstairs.

Atticus was wiping water off his hands with a sheet of tissue. It was obvious that he was still painting just a moment ago. After that, he walked to Jackson and curiously asked, “Should we change Plato’s diapers now?”

Chapter 1352

Jackson knew very well that his father wanted to carry Plato so he instantly handed Plato over to his father and said, “Have a look and see.”

Atticus happily carried Plato in his arms and checked his diapers. Plato’s diapers had actually just been changed and were still as clean as a whistle.

Tiffany rolled her eyes when she saw that Jackson was no longer carrying Plato.

Jackson was almost in tears, he had no other choice but to hand Plato over to Atticus. What was he supposed to do about it?

During dinner, Plato was sipping on his milk in his baby carriage next to Summer. Summer would occasionally play with him.

Tiffany genuinely respected Summer, she had thought that Summer would only take care of Plato temporarily before she grew tired of it. However, it was clear that Summer enjoyed it and was doing a good job. For those reasons, she felt completely at ease with Summer taking care of Plato.

Suddenly, Summer turned to look at Tiffany and asked, “I’ve been so busy looking after Plato that I haven’t been able to meet your mom recently. Are you sure it’s okay leaving her alone for so long?”

Tiffany answered without a second thought, “What’s there to worry about? We’ve bought the best anti-theft system for the house so there’s nothing to worry about. Plus, I do visit her whenever I get the time.

Summer cleared her throat and said, “About that… Have you ever thought of finding another partner for your mom? I don’t think it’s a good idea to leave her alone, especially now that you’ve married into our family. It’s always better if she has a partner she can spend the rest of her life with. I know she’s still young and can live on her own now, but think of how lonely she is…” That was the first time she had spoken about that topic, hence, she did not know how to get about it. She was afraid that Tiffany might get offended.

When Tiffany finally registered Summer’s words, she said, “I see what you mean now… I’ve never thought about this before. My mom has tried looking, at one point, but she didn’t find the right person for her. She only found assholes or jerks. I’ve been too occupied to think about this recently. It’s my fault for not putting in more effort. Do you know someone who might be a match for my mom? If you do, maybe you can introduce them? I trust your judgment. My dad passed away a long time ago, I can understand if she looks for a partner. I’m more than happy to help my mom find another partner.”

Summer sighed in relief. “I’m glad you’re not offended. In fact, I do have a suitor. He’s a friend of Atticus who’s also an artist. He’s a nice guy, and he has a decent family background. He hasn’t got any major flaws apart from being a little obtuse. He’s almost like another Atticus in terms of personality. They’re about the same age, and he’s in good health. He’s got a son working overseas who doesn’t come home

most of the time, but I heard he's quite the filial son. Most importantly, he's a widower, and I think they would make a good couple.

Tiffany thought the man sounded decent based on Summer's description. "Alright, then. When should we get them to meet up? Why don't we arrange for it to fall on a weekend? I'd like to join in as well. Let's all grab some food, and we can leave them alone later. I'd be happy if they can get along with each other."

Summer agreed without any hesitation and said, "Sure, I'll arrange for it to fall on the weekend. We'll treat it as a family reunion. We'll meet up at Jackson's White Water Bay Cafe. The food there is good, and the atmosphere is splendid as well. Remember to reserve seats for us during the weekend, Jackson."

Finally, it was Jackson's turn to speak. He had felt alienated since he could not join in their conversation earlier. He said, "Have you finally found a use for me? Sure, no problem. I'll let the employees know beforehand."

Chapter 1353

Tiffany could not hold in her excitement and immediately informed Lillian about the arrangement the moment she left the West family residence. Lillian had a neutral reaction and had wanted to see the man before she decided. Once bitten, twice shy. Lillian wanted to find out everything she could about the man first.

During the weekend, Tiffany canceled her initial plans with Arianne to hang out over the weekend.

Arianne did not find it strange after she found out about Tiffany's intention to introduce a suitor to Lillian. Such were humans, it did not matter how old one was, they needed someone they belonged to. Humans had always been social creatures, there was no one who truly wanted to live alone.

When they arrived at the elegant room that was reserved for them in White Water Bay Cafe, Jackson had arranged for some delicacies to be prepared for their table. Everything was ready except the male main character was still nowhere to be seen.

Lillian's blush was obvious on her fair complexion as she said, "Have you met the man, Summer? Please don't laugh at me, but I'm actually a little nervous. I'm so sorry for having to trouble you to arrange all this on my behalf."

Summer laughed and said, "I've met him before. He's much more handsome than mine. Relax, he's a much more decent person compared to Atticus in both looks and personality."

Atticus sat quietly and did not dare retort. How was his friend better than him? Was he really as bad as Summer said?

The main character finally arrived after everyone had waited for about half an hour. His face might have wrinkles, but he still looked like he was in his prime. The saying, 'Birds of a feather flock together', seemed to be true. Atticus' friend was almost a spitting image of Atticus himself. If he were younger, he would have been very popular with the ladies just like Atticus was in the past. Despite his age, he was still an attractive middle-aged man.

"I'm so sorry for making you wait. I was stuck in traffic, and I was so worried because there was nothing I could do about it. Please allow me to pay for lunch today as a token of my apology to all of you."

Summer knew that Atticus had a poor choice of words so replied instead, "It's fine, Johnny, we're all friends here." While she spoke, she tapped Lillian's shoulder and continued to say, "This is my friend

whom I mentioned before. We're a family. That's my son and my daughter-in-law. It's a little strange to call her my daughter-in-law since she's more like my best friend. Jackson, please ask the waiters to serve the food. We'll talk as we eat."

Jackson nodded and got up to leave the room.

Tiffany quietly studied the man. She was rather satisfied with him. Moreover, based on Lillian's expression, she was certain that Lillian felt the same way. It all depended on what the man thought of Lillian now.

Lillian heard Summer referring to him as Johnny and said, "Johnny, are you currently working here?"

Johnny smiled modestly and replied, "I've been working here for the past few years now. I've begun to miss my hometown as I grow older. I find that my hometown is the most comfortable place for me to live in."

Tiffany was glad Johnny did not have plans to move overseas and join his son. She was actually worried that Lillian would have to follow Johnny overseas should they get together. After hearing Johnny's answer, Tiffany smiled and said, "That's wonderful. I heard that artists are usually very nostalgic people. I did try my hand at drawing in the past but was never any good at it. I admire people like you for your dedication to your art, unlike me who isn't good at anything."

Johnny was more of an introvert, he only smiled in reply since he did not know what to say.

Tiffany noticed that Lillian had kept quiet the entire conversation and kicked her feet under the table.

Lillian knew very well what Tiffany was trying to say, but she had choked and did not know what to say either. Moreover, they had just met so she did not know if they had any common interest.

Tiffany felt that Lillian was acting strangely. Normally, Lillian would have been more proactive if she met someone she liked. Why was Lillian being so reserved?

After a moment, Jackson finally returned to the room, and the food was slowly being served. With this, everyone seemed to escape the awkward atmosphere that hung over the room.

All of a sudden, Johnny suddenly got up and picked up some food for Lillian. “I’m not sure what you prefer to eat, but when my son came back from overseas one time, he opened a buffet restaurant. He had asked me to manage it before returning overseas. You should come and try the food when you have the time.”

Chapter 1354

Lillian blushed even harder. “Alright, s-sure… My daughter loves buffet spread. We’ll visit together someday.”

Tiffany stifled a laugh when she saw that things were beginning to kick off between them. Who knew Johnny would own a buffet restaurant that coincidentally suited her taste buds? Did that mean she could eat as much she wanted in the future?

It was a quiet lunch for everyone since Johnny was not a chatty person. When they left the cafe, Johnny looked at Lillian and asked, “Are you living alone at the moment?”

It was a strange question to ask someone whom he had just met. It sounded like he had some ulterior motive.

However, Tiffany could see there was no evil intent in Johnny's question and answered on Lillian's behalf, "My mom's living alone at the moment, but I visit her often since it's not too far from here."

Johnny nodded. "Well, I wanted to offer your mom a ride home since I'm the only one who would pass by her house. It'll save all of you the trouble then."

Johnny seemed to be bad with words, but he was a rather meticulous person. He had even thought about the best person to send Lillian home.

Tiffany smiled and said, "Alright, then. I'll leave my mom to your care, Johnny."

After watching Lillian and Johnny driving off into the distance, Summer asked Tiffany, "What do you think?"

Before Tiffany could answer, Jackson interrupted them and said, "It's not her blind date, why would you ask her that question? It doesn't matter what she thinks, what matters is what her mom thinks."

Summer rolled her eyes and said, "Well, what do you think about him then? It's important to know what others think. Otherwise, why would I arrange for all of us to have lunch? We could've just let them go out on their own if that's the case…"

Jackson thought for a moment before saying, “I think he seems nice and honest, but he’s really bad with words.”

Tiffany thought that Jackson’s comments did not do Johnny justice. “It’s fine if he’s bad with words. It means he won’t be able to coax other women with fancy words. I personally think he’s decent. It all comes down to the chemistry between them. I’ll call my mom and see what she thinks when we get back.”

Jackson caught the barb in Tiffany’s words. “Are you saying that those who are good with words would go out and coax other women with fancy words? Do you have something against such people? For example, me?”

Tiffany realized what he meant and slapped his ass. “I wasn’t implying that you’re that kind of person, stop being vain!” After that, she realized they were still standing at the entrance of the cafe.

Atticus and Summer were standing right beside Tiffany with Plato in Summer’s arms…

Tiffany felt so awkward and felt like jumping off a cliff. “Uhm… We’ll be off now. Bye, mom! Bye, dad!”

Summer pretended that she did not see what Tiffany did. “Alright, then. Two of you should head home and get some rest. We’ll be taking Plato home now. He’s beginning to fall asleep.”

In the car, Jackson reigned in his emotions and stared at Tiffany. He helplessly said, “Can you not embarrass me in public? It doesn’t matter how you torture me at home, but how could you have done that earlier? How am I supposed to face my parents? What goes on in your mind every day?”

Chapter 1355

Tiffany pouted. “Didn’t you provoke me first? How am I supposed to remember your parents were there? It was an honest mistake… I’m sorry, is that alright? I feel embarrassed as well because both your parents saw me. My heart’s still racing so fast it feels like it’s about to jump out. I’m the one who’s the most embarrassed, alright? Do you think they’ll think that I’m rude? I didn’t notice anyone else by the entrance. It was just us.”

Jackson was not actually angry because he knew that Tiffany was a simpleton and did not think before she acted. “Enough, there’s no need to explain any further. You’d only be digging a hole for yourself if you do. I’ve never been slapped in the… Forget it, it’s not like you haven’t been doing it at home anyway. My parents already know what you’re like from the beginning, and it’s engraved in their memory. Relax, that fact will never change.”

Tiffany curiously asked, “What sort of person am I to them?”

Jackson’s lips curved into a sly grin. “A hyperactive simpleton.” His answer, naturally, invited a round of beating from Tiffany.

Back in White Water Bay Villa, Tiffany looked at the time and thought that Lillian should have arrived home. She took out her cell phone and called Lillian. “Are you home, mom? How was it? Tell me about it.”

On the other end, Lillian was smiling so widely that wrinkles could be seen on her face. “I think he’s quite nice. He even prepared a present for me, but he didn’t give it to me during lunch since there were

so many people around. He gave it to me once we entered his car. It's one of his paintings. He told me that he's sincerely looking for a partner to spend the rest of his life with. We both know each other's history, and he's fine with it. He likes me quite a bit and asked me what I thought of him so I told him I liked him as well. He began to blush as soon as he heard that. I could see it even though it was dark. My only concern is we don't have anything in common. He's an artist, and I know nothing except for spending money."

Tiffany turned solemn as she said, "He's quite wealthy so there's no problem if you were to rely on him. Don't talk to him about art-related topics since you're not familiar with them. Unless, if you really want to, you can learn from him so you won't find it boring to spend time with him. So, does this mean both of you are together now? I hope everything goes smoothly. I'll be more at ease once your relationship stabilizes. That way, I won't have to worry every day if you're eating and sleeping properly."

Lillian laughed. Then, she cleared her throat before she said, "You unfilial daughter! When have you ever been worried about my daily life? Apart from Jackson and Plato, do I come to your mind? Jokes aside, now that my only daughter has been married and is living happily, I don't have to worry about you and can chase my desires without any worries."

Before hanging up the phone, Tiffany did not forget to remind Lillian to store Johnny's drawing in a safe place. Johnny was quite a famous artist. His art was probably worth quite a lot of money. It would be a waste if it was lost.

…

Smith Enterprise.

Alejandro looked at the report in his hands with a darkened expression.

Jett handed him a cup of coffee that he made and asked, “Alejandro, did you ask Mark to look for another transportation company? He hasn’t been splitting the orders in half as he promised, right? Based on the report, the orders from his company for the next season are completely different from the actual orders.”

Alejandro put the report away and said, “I know. I’ve got it under control. He may not trust me now, which is completely fine. One day, I’ll make him willingly sign the exclusive contract with us.”

Jett was slightly skeptical. “Are you really just planning to work with him? There’s nothing more to it?”

Alejandro cocked an eyebrow and said, “What more can there be? Apart from money, is there anything else that Mark and I can talk about?”

Chapter 1356

Jett gulped. “Uh… I was just asking.”

Alejandro checked the time, got up, and put on his coat. “I’ll drive myself home. You should go home as well.”

Jett grunted in reply as he opened the office door. The pair walked to the office entrance together before they went their separate ways. Despite having worked for Alejandro for a long time now, he still could not see through Alejandro’s thoughts. Alejandro was far more difficult to understand compared to Don Smith. A man was much more formidable when his mind was unreadable. It just showed how cunning and calculative he was.

Tanya was still awake when Jett arrived home. She took out his house slippers from the shoe cabinet before she went into the kitchen and skillfully made him a meal.

Jett felt strangely at ease as he looked at her busy figure. Life's greatest comfort was knowing there was someone at home to leave the light on for you and knowing there was a warm meal waiting for you, no matter how late it was.

He did not shower immediately as he usually did. Instead, he rolled up his sleeves and walked into the kitchen to help her with the meal. "Was the baby good today?"

Tanya nodded. "Very. Actually, I'm perfectly fine handling everything on my own. Maybe we don't need a housekeeper? It's extra expenses, and you work so hard. Let's try to save. You sit down. Go out and rest or something. You must be tired after a long day at work. Leave this to me."

Jett was forcibly pushed aside at her insistence and could not help at all. "We don't need to save. You'll tire yourself out handling chores and the baby. My job's pretty good, it's not that tiring. I'm usually quite free."

Tanya turned to the side and smiled at him. "That's good. Actually, Alejandro's been treating you quite well. At least, he's nice to you."

Jett did not usually discuss Alejandro behind his back, but he agreed with her. "Yes, he's not bad. It's just that we all have our own ways to deal with things. His methods are in line with the Smith family's usual tactics. I've worked for the Smiths for many years, I've gotten used to it long ago. Honestly, I've never felt this at ease when I worked for Don Smith. It's much better now. I'll stay and work for Alejandro as long as nothing happens."

Tanya rarely objected to his decisions. “Sure, as long as you think it’s the right choice.”

Tanya was very nimble. She finished cooking very quickly and sat on the side, watching Jett as he ate. Every subtle look and action from him told her exactly what he needed, and she would quickly act on it to suit his needs. She knew and understood his habits by heart, but the pair still seemed to be separated by a thin gauze. They still slept in separate rooms, and the baby would sleep with her. This was also a source of constant discomfort for her. She mustered up her courage and said, “The baby is sleeping with Hannah tonight. You can… come to my room if you want?”

Jett, who was enjoying a bowl of soup, choked upon hearing that. Her words had caught him by surprise. “Uh… maybe another day…”

Tanya was feeling bashful. However, since she had taken the initiative, she decided to see it through too. “Why do we have to wait for another day? I’ve already put my womanly pride aside and took the initiative. Why are you still embarrassed? Or… Is it because you don’t like me?”

Chapter 1357

Jett was not quite sure how to react. In the past, he had sold his soul to Don Smith and was constantly exhausted so he did not have time to think about dating. Later on, he started working for Alejandro and began to go to nightclubs. Although he had flings with women, there were no feelings involved. He had no experience in dating at all. He was as inexperienced as a little boy.

Tanya was disappointed by his silence. “What is it? I’ve been feeling very insecure. Didn’t we agree to live together like normal husbands and wives? But… you didn’t touch me at all, except for those three times in the beginning. What kind of a married couple are we? You’re a man. Don’t you have… needs?”

Jett recalled his first few times sleeping with her. He had done it at Alejandro's behest at that time and was focused on completing his task. His Adam's apple bobbed. "I'm…"

His actions seemed reluctant to Tanya as though she was forcing him. She bit her lips resentfully. "If it doesn't make you happy, I won't force you. You've been spending a lot of time with Alejandro anyway, and you must have a lot of women by your side. Rich men are like that. I can understand."

Jett's head was aching. "No, not at all. It's the truth. His legs have been injured for so long, how could he possibly find the time to fool around? I've been good for a very long time. I'm always with him so I certainly don't have time to go out on my own. I'm not… unhappy to do it. I just need some time to process this."

Tanya waited for him to put down cutleries before she quickly cleaned up. Then, she walked into the bedroom as she said, "You? Process this? Who knows how long that's going to take? Come in."

Jett mustered up his courage and followed her inside. "Shouldn't I take a shower first?"

"No need. Shower after." Tanya suddenly wrapped her arms around him and kissed him on the lips.

Jett's breath caught in his throat when he felt her soft lips. Then, he instinctively circled his arms around her waist.

Jett was a healthy, well-functioning man, and Tanya found him irresistible.

He stiffened when he heard her cries. “Does it hurt? Why are you crying?” His tone was mixed with hints of anxiety.

She shook her head and held him close. “It’s not that. I’m just… so happy. I’ve exhausted a lifetime’s worth of fortune when I met you.”

The harmonious union between Jett and Tanya was a stark contrast to Alejandro at this moment.

He found out that Melanie had been sleeping in the nursery and did not go back to her bedroom. The nursery was locked. He could not enter at all. He was not amused. Was she trying to avoid him?

The next morning, he found Melanie playing with Melissa in the living room when he went downstairs. “Why didn’t you sleep in the room last night?”

Melanie did not look at him. “Melissa fusses when she doesn’t see me at night. She was crying all night. It was too noisy.”

He strongly objected to it. “Can’t you leave her with the nanny?”

She paused for a moment before she replied, “I want to take care of her.”

“Sleep with her then. From now on, don’t sleep in the room.”

Chapter 1358

He stormed out angrily after that.

Melanie was perplexed. When did he need her to sleep with him? He never used to show any interest even if she did not come home, let alone not sleep in the room. However, it was true that she was avoiding him. Lately, she realized that he had been quite horny, but she had just had a baby and the wounds had not fully healed. She felt impeded. He was not the kind of man who would empathize with her.

Alejandro looked very sullen throughout the journey to the office. Jett, on the other hand, seemed to be in high spirits. He could not stand it so he sulkily said, “Did you hook up last night? Why are you so happy?”

“No, I’m just in a good mood,” Jett replied with a straight face, “Why do you seem to be in a bad mood this morning, sir?”

The very thought of Melanie enraged Alejandro. “Don’t ask. Don’t wanna talk about it. Leaving work early today to let loose.”

“I won’t be coming,” Jett quickly replied, “You go ahead. Tanya asked me to come home for dinner tonight.”

Alejandro noted the subtle implication in Jett's words. "Oh, in love, eh? You won't even go out and have fun? What's a big man like you doing, behaving so well? Are the brothels not good enough for you?"

"Those are just ways to pass time," Jett replied honestly, "It's no fun. It's easy to lose yourself in these kinds of places. I'm not going."

Alejandro did not force him. He thought of someone else; Mark Tremont. It would probably be more fun to go to these places with someone like Mark, right?

…

That night, Mark told Arianne that he would not be coming home for dinner since he had a meeting with a client.

Arianne did not probe too much. She had absolute trust in him. However, if she knew that Alejandro had invited him out to have fun, she would have flipped out.

Mark only found out how far Alejandro's 'fun' would go when he arrived at the venue. There was a group of women flashing a large portion of their thighs as they twirled their hair coquettishly under the seductive lights. Apart from Alejandro and the two bodyguards at the door, it was all women.

The private room was permeated with the smell of smoke, alcohol, and women's perfume. It was so pungent that it made one's head spin.

Mark frowned as he strode over to sit down. “Let’s get down to business. Don’t waste my time.”

Alejandro held two women in his arms and smiled. “Yes, of course, business. Playtime is business as well. Good things must be shared. These girls are the cream of the crop, all clean and just arrived. Choose two. Don’t tell me this isn’t your cup of tea. You’re only a few years older than me.” Then, he pointed at two delicate and nubile girls to serve Mark.

Alas, before the women could touch Mark, he rose to his feet angrily. “Don’t touch me! This isn’t my cup of tea. Enjoy your fun. I wouldn’t have come here if I had known that your invitation wasn’t about serious business.”

Alejandro released the girls in his arms, stepped forward, and pushed Mark back down on the couch. “You really aren’t joining the fun? Fine. Don’t be so serious. There is serious business to talk about. Have a drink with me, then, we’ll talk.”

It could be seen that Mark was being strangely tolerant. Usually, he would have stormed out. He was afraid that Alejandro might have spiked his drink so he did not drink at all.

Alejandro ignored Mark and drank to his heart’s content. “Do you know? I used to be so jealous of you when I was a kid. I’d already seen you before you even knew of my existence…”

Chapter 1359

Mark stared at him calmly. “Where did you see me? It certainly wasn’t at Tremont Estate. You wouldn’t have had the right to set foot in there with your identity.”

Alejandro did not mind the barb in Mark's words. He sent the women out, leaving both of them alone before he replied, "Yes, it wasn't at Tremont Estate. It was at the condo that my mom and I lived in, downstairs."

At a condo? Downstairs? Mark carefully racked his memories. He had followed his dad to the office for a meeting once and passed by a condo on the way back. His father had asked him to stay and wait in the car, saying that he was going to meet an old friend and would be done very soon. He was not suspicious at that time and did not think much of it. He had only waited for ten minutes. It was probably that time. It felt like a joke now. His father had gone to see his lover, and he had naively waited for his father. If he had known, perhaps, the following events would not have happened. Because of incidents like that, he was still angry at his long-dead father. Why did his father involve him in those things? Why did his father bring him to such a place? His father had treated him like an idiot!

"You probably remember now," Alejandro said, observing Mark's reaction, "I happened to be playing downstairs when my dad went upstairs. I was excited, at first, and followed him up as usual. However, I saw you. My legs felt like they had turned into lead at that moment. I was both curious and jealous of you. It was also my first time realizing the fact that I'm a ba*tard child. You sat in a luxury car, enjoying the best treatment, and I had no choice but to hide away with my mom. We've never gone out with dad publicly, not even once… Even when my mom was sick, dad sent someone to take us to the hospital. When did I start hating him? I don't even remember anymore. However, it was sudden. It gradually developed over time… I hated my mom as well for committing such immoral acts and giving birth to me, forcing me to live in darkness with her. She pretty much pushed herself to death. I guess she deserved it. She's pitiful yet hateful. She knew that it wouldn't amount to anything from the very beginning."

That had happened so many years ago, leaving Mark with enough time to think it through and differentiate between right and wrong. "That's right, father was hateful, and so was your mother. That mistake caused a tragedy. Everyone's to blame. The only win I have over you is that I was born the heir to the Tremont family, legally. You're only a b*stard."

Alejandro stared at the red wine in his glass and smiled. "That's right. It doesn't matter who I become, I'm still a b*stard. You have no idea how much I hate the Tremont blood flowing in my veins."

Mark no longer said anything. He once hated the blood in this man's veins too. He used to think about how nice it would be if he had no relations to this man.

After a while, Alejandro suddenly changed the subject. "I'm well aware that the cargo orders you've given are not evenly split with the other company, but it doesn't matter. I'll earn your trust. I'm not inferior to you when it comes to doing business."

"That's right, it's not split evenly," Mark admitted calmly, "Since you're so confident, we'll just wait and see. If there's nothing else, I must be on my way. I'm not comfortable in these kinds of places."

"Had your fun in these kinds of places hundreds of years ago, eh?" Alejandro teased Mark drunkenly. "You weren't uncomfortable then. You're just afraid of Arianne's wrath if she finds out, aren't you?"

"Stop spewing drunken nonsense," Mark snapped icily, "What makes you think that everyone's like you?" Then, he turned around and left.

Chapter 1360

Alejandro immediately lost interest after Mark left. He got up, straightened his collar, and left as well.

He returned to Smith Manor, reeking of alcohol. The silence in the manor was unsettling. He was drunk, and his mind was muddled from alcohol. He stumbled his way upstairs, calling out Melanie's name.

Melanie was startled awake. Afraid that the baby would wake up, she put on a robe and hurriedly got up to investigate. She found him at the staircase, drunk beyond comprehension. She was instantly annoyed. "Why did you drink so much? You're causing a huge ruckus in the middle of the night. Aren't you afraid

of waking the baby? Come on, I'll help you into the room. How could you possibly feel good after having this much to drink?"

As she reached out to grab his arm, he suddenly straightened up and pulled her into his arms. The strength in his grip was unprecedented. She stood on her tiptoes, astonished and unsure if she should push him away or let him hold her. He must have thought that she was someone else. Otherwise, why would he react so differently?

Just as she was wading through a puddle of messy thoughts, he murmured, "Are you going to leave me all of a sudden, and fall in love with someone else?"

She did not reply to him and forcefully pushed him away. "No. You've had too much to drink. Don't push it, it's late."

He refused to drop the matter. He lifted his hand and grabbed her chin, forcing her to face him. "Are you humoring me? I've done so many hateful things to you, have you ever thought of leaving me?"

She was too tired to deal with a drunk man so she decided to be frank. "I have. Okay? I'm waiting for you to make me give up on you completely before I take Melissa."

He fell silent. The sudden silence was unnerving.

Melanie stared at the grim expression on his face and began to regret her words. She should not have been so hasty with her words. "If you're going to continue spewing drunken words, I'm going to ignore you."

He immediately captured her lips. He carried her into the bedroom and locked the door. “Aren’t you trying to give up on me? I’ll help you. I’m not Alejandro Smith. I’m not the man you wanted to marry.”

Melanie turned her face away to avoid his kiss, frightened. “You’re the one who didn’t love me! Your heart still belongs to someone else, what gives you the right to do this to me?” She had discovered, since earlier, that there was more than the smell of alcohol on him. She could smell women’s perfume as well. It was not difficult to figure out where he went earlier.

In the end, she surrendered and stopped protesting. Tears of despair soaked the pillow under her as she felt her heart turn to ash. She suddenly began to understand how Tiffany managed to resolutely give up on a three-year relationship and fall in love with Jackson. Not only did he ruin Tiffany’s family, but Tiffany also had to work at maintaining their relationship. He never considered reaching the finishing line with her. Anyone would be exhausted by that. Now, she felt the same way.