Ruling 1381

Chapter 1381

To Arianne, a question as direct as that was like a sharp knife stabbing through her heart. She took a deep breath and answered, “Yes, it’s a fact that the boat sank. However, it’s still too early to say if he’s actually in trouble or not. At least, there’s no… body... “

The policewoman raised an eyebrow. “It’s pretty much confirmed that he’s in trouble given the circumstances. How much do you know about this incident?”

Arianne, not liking how the policewoman was being so direct with her words, began to feel angry. She tonelessly said, “Only one person who was with Mark returned safely from the ship—the CEO of Smith Enterprises, Alejandro Smith. Alejandro said that the ship sank due to the storm. He found that all the life rafts had been destroyed deliberately when he was trying to flee.”

The policewoman continued to question her. “So, it was no mere accident that the ship sank? What do you think about the news reports that have been going around on the internet?”

Arianne answered without hesitation. “I think it’s all ridiculous. The people posting those news on the net seem to know things that even I haven’t heard of. There was a post on the airplane incident that took the lives of so many, including Mark’s family and my own father, who was the pilot at the time. Wasn’t this case deemed as an accident a long time ago?”

The policewoman’s eyes turned hawk-like. “Are you saying that the incident was solely due to your father’s mistake while piloting and there is nothing else to it?”

Arianne replied without hesitation again. “That’s right, that’s what everyone says and I agree with them. I’m very grateful that Mark had kindly accepted me into his family when I was orphaned. I’m also very lucky to have been able to be married to him and be his wife.”

Arianne knew she could not hope to clear off her father’s accusations at that time since it would undoubtedly make her seem as though she was admitting to murdering Mark. She had long given up clearing her father’s name. Since she had chosen to forgive him, the truth no longer mattered to her.

The policewoman asked about Alejandro again, “According to the news, it seems that Alejandro Smith is an illegitimate son of the Tremonts? What do you think about this? If it’s true, could he have taken part in this incident? After all, he’s the only survivor from the incident.”

Arianne did not know whether she should deny it or not, as everything would come out to light the moment Alejandro was asked to take a DNA test to confirm his identity. Arianne had to tread very carefully at that moment.

After pondering for a moment, she said, “It’s just an absurd story that appeared out of nowhere. Would the police believe such ungrounded rumors on the internet? I have no knowledge of whether or not Alejandro is the Tremonts’ illegitimate son. All I know is that Smith Enterprises has a partnership with Tremont Enterprises on something related to transportation. This was the reason why Alejandro had invited Mark for a ride on his ship. I have never participated in anything related to the trip; this is everything I know. As to who’s responsible for sabotaging their trip, I believe that’s a job for the police to investigate, is it not? I’m waiting for you to give me an explanation on this case. Of course, it would be best if you managed to catch the culprit.”

The policewoman was unsatisfied with Arianne’s attitude from the beginning. “Your husband is most likely dead, yet why are you able to be so calm? I’m getting a feeling that you’re only describing someone else’s problem.”

A hint of loneliness flashed through Arianne's eyes. "What would you have me do? Cry my eyeballs out at home everyday? What about Tremont Enterprises, which he had left behind? What about our son…? I haven't got time to be sad and be a crybaby like an idiot. Mark has never allowed me to be so weak…"

Chapter 1382

The policewoman did not know what she was thinking prior. She gave a sigh and said, "The police will arrange for Alejandro to go through a DNA test with regards to the rumors going on around the internet. If he is actually an illegitimate son of the Tremonts… things would become complicated, which I'm sure you are already well aware of."

Arianne did not say anything. Alejandro's involvement would definitely complicate matters. However, aside from his true identity, the police would not be able to secure any other evidence, hence they would not be able to judge Alejandro, in the end. The fact was, Mark had gone out to sea with Alejandro and only the Smith's ship had sunk. What was obvious was that the ship had not sunk by natural means, which was evident because of the sabotaged life raft that ultimately caused the demise of the passengers on the ship. The revelation of Alejandro's identity would make her become the prime suspect. However, other than having to face the pressure from public discussion, there was nothing that could pin her to being related to the crime. There was no way that the airplane incident could ever be brought up for a reinvestigation. Therefore, as long as she did not admit to anything, she would not have any motive for wanting to get her revenge.

However, she was afraid that the truth of Alejandro being Ethan would be revealed to the public. If so, all his crimes would be brought up for trial and he would most definitely be sent to prison. If that happened, Arianne would definitely be dragged into it since she was involved too. Therefore, she had no choice but to deny all knowledge that Alejandro was Ethan because things would undoubtedly become complicated beyond imagination. Of course, all of this wouldn't be a concern as long as Alejandro's true identity was never revealed.

After the interrogation, Arianne was told that she could leave but was reminded not to leave the country so that the police could call her back at any time.

As Arianne arrived at the corridor, she noticed that Alejandro's interrogation room door was still tightly shut, obviously meaning that he was still being interrogated. Arianne did not leave the police station immediately. She still had some things she wanted to tell Alejandro personally. They needed to protect themselves from complicating the matter even further. Otherwise, they would just be falling into the real culprit's trap.

Alejandro finally left the interrogation room after approximately half an hour, two policemen following right behind him. It seemed like he was being sent to get his DNA tested.

Arianne did not get the chance to talk to him privately. Instead, she walked up to him and said with a sad expression, "Mr. Smith, you must tell them everything you know without missing a single detail so that the police can find the real culprit. I find that rumor to be very strange; it's obviously a conspiracy to make us seem like we're involved in the incident. It's very likely that the real culprit is behind all this. How could you possibly be the Tremonts' illegitimate son? You must cooperate with the police! I refuse to believe that you had anything to do with the accident, so you must prove your innocence!"

Arianne did not know if Alejandro would be able to pick up on the hidden meaning behind her words. He looked at her calmly, his eyes showing that he was slightly confused. However, he nodded his head slightly and then walked off with the policemen.

When Arianne returned to the Tremont Estate, the reporters were still near her house. The reporters rushed up to her the moment she got out of the car. Arianne was at the brink of losing her patience; Smore did not dare to go out and play for the past few days thanks to them. Arianne calmly entered her house under the bodyguard's protection. "I want all of them removed immediately. If anyone tries to stay behind or hide away nearby, you're free to do anything you like, so long as it isn't illegal."

Brian understood what she meant and nodded his head before walking off to pass on her instructions to the bodyguard. There were many people on the scene and it was inevitable that some violence would be involved. Arianne did not bother with what was happening outside. Smore and Tremont Enterprises were the only pillars of support that were stopping her from breaking down.

At night, Jackson and Tiffany arrived at the Tremont Estate. Tiffany had not only brought a luggage bag with her, but Plato was also with her. Evidently, the couple was planning to stay with Arianne temporarily, taking care of Smore while they were at it.

Arianne laid on the sofa and bit her lip, her eyes slightly teared up. “You guys really don’t have to do this, I’m fine.”

TIffany choked as she said, “How could you possibly be fine? Stop putting up a strong front with me. Is there a point in doing that? I’ll be staying here for a few days and help you take care of Smore while I’m at it. Look at you, how could you have become so thin in the past few days?”

Chapter 1383

Jackson found it a bit hard to bring the words to his mouth. “Cheer up, Arianne. We haven’t received any news about Mark’s death, so wouldn’t it be likely that he’s still alive? Also, I heard that you were taken to the police station along with Alejandro for questioning. How was it? Did they mistreat you? The person who posted the news was very careful, so I’m unable to pick up any useful information on him at the moment. I’ve even ruled out all the suspects, but I haven’t got any leads at the moment. The truth that Alejandro is Ethan must never be revealed now. It didn’t matter when it was revealed in the past, but now’s definitely not the time. It would be very troublesome and you will definitely be dragged into it. The whole world now thinks that you and the Tremonts’ illegitimate son are the ones who have killed Mark.”

Arianne said in a daze, “Alejandro’s been taken by the police to get his DNA tested. I did not wait around for his results to be released.”

Tiffany was shocked. “How has he already been taken away to do the test so soon? Oh no, things will get serious the moment his true identity is revealed!”

Jackson calmly said, “Not exactly. Alejandro’s no fool. Do you think he would let others know about his true identity? I trust that he wouldn’t be so stupid as to sentence himself to death. Besides, Mark and myself weren’t able to expose his true identity no matter how hard we tried in the past. I think he’s still got some tricks up his sleeve, so let’s wait for the results. It’s the only thing we can do now. Oh, and we noticed that there were still some reporters hiding in a corner hoping to get a scoop. Their numbers have dwindled greatly, but that should’ve been done long ago. It must be frustrating for you to be monitored everyday.”

Arianne did not have the energy to be bothered with such trivial matters. “Let them do as they please. Humans have always been like that: adding fuel to the fire. This isn’t the first time people have made the situation worse than it actually is.”

Suddenly, Mary walked towards them in a hurry. “Madam, there is a couple outside saying they would like to meet you, I think their names are Sylvain and Robin.”

Sylvain and Robin? Arianne helplessly said, “Let them in then.” Arianne did not want to be consoled anymore; she felt as though her wounds were being opened up each time she was comforted. She did not want anyone to talk about Mark’s accident, and she did not want to admit that he was dead.

Very soon, Sylvain and Robin arrived at the living room. Before they could even speak, Arianne immediately said, “I know what you’re going to say, but you don’t have to console me because I’m still holding up fine. On the other hand, what’s going on with the two of you? How is it that both of you are here together?”

Robin stole a glance at Sylvain and said, “We met up together on the way here, so we came to see you together.”

Sylvain did not deny and said, “When I saw you handling some office work at Mr. Tremont’s office, I had thought it was just temporary. I didn’t know that such a thing had happened…I don’t know what else to say since you’ve said not to console you…”

Arianne had a headache and began massaging it. “I understand your intention, and I’m grateful for it, but you don’t have to say anything. Come, sit. Mary, could you please make some tea for our guests?”

Tiffany walked to Arianne’s side and helped her massage her head. “Are you getting a headache?”

Arianne was exhausted and could not muster up any strength. “Yes. It hurts quite a bit, and I’m not sure why.”

Sylvain and Robin sat on the sofa as Sylvain continued to speak, “Things may seem to be complicated and very unbearable now, but it’ll be fine as time passes.”

Arianne remained silent. Sylvain was right; she was having a hard time at that moment. Arianne suddenly had so many responsibilities to shoulder the moment Mark got into an accident, and she was so pressured she found it hard to catch a breath. Arianne had not expected for Mark to be so important in her life. It was at that moment when Mark was not by her side that she realized how much she had underestimated the importance of his existence to her.

Chapter 1384

Tragedies and accidents are so common, they are happening at any moment and anywhere in the world. It’s easy to gloat and laugh at others when such incidents do not happen to oneself. However, when it does, the amount of despair and helplessness they have to suffer is very tortuous.

Jackson, Sylvain, and Robin left together after staying until midnight, leaving Tiffany and Plato to accompany Arianne at the Tremont estate.

The next day, Arianne had gone to the office. She could clearly feel the strange gazes the employees of the office gave her thanks to the news report, some even gazes of disgust. Given the chance, the latter ones would probably want to criticize and hit her badly, wouldn't they? Humans are sometimes very foolish beings, choosing to believe such ungrounded rumors. There is a saying that some people just like to watch the world burn.

Arianne ignored everything around her and headed towards Mark's office directly, shutting herself in solitude.

Summer had arrived at the office earlier than her and was using the same office as her. She even prepared breakfast for Arianne. "I'm sure you haven't been able to have breakfast at home this morning, have you?"

Arianne's lips twitched, wanting to smile but unable to. "Thank you, Summer."

Arianne had actually skipped her breakfast since she was not in the mood to eat. She had been suffering from insomnia every night. Even if she was able to fall asleep, she would be haunted by nightmares and would wake up in the middle of the night, unable to fall asleep again. As such, Arianne would fumble around in bed every night and be forced to get out of bed to be at the office in the morning. Hence, she would be in no mood to even have breakfast before going to the office.

Summer looked at her and felt heartbroken. She said, "What's there to thank? We're a family; of course, we'll be here to get through this together with you. Don't worry, you're not alone."

It was true that time will show people's true colors. Since the incident, Jackson's family had done everything they could to help Arianne and she did not know how to repay them. She would sound like a stranger if she were to say those words of gratitude to them.

When it was almost 10am, Alejandro suddenly sent her a text message, using an anonymous number. 'Don't worry, I've settled the DNA test results.'

Arianne gave a long sigh of relief after reading the text message. Thank goodness Alejandro had understood what she meant. She immediately deleted the text message to avoid it becoming a piece of evidence against her in the future. Arianne knew she should avoid coming in contact with Alejandro for the time being to avoid any further rumors.

There was a meeting in the afternoon, which Summer accompanied Arianne to attend. Two hours before the meeting, Arianne busily prepared herself for the meeting. However, during the meeting itself, Arianne was astonished. Every employee in the meeting was completely accustomed to Mark's meeting style, going through each slide swiftly as they explained their points at the same rate. Arianne was not able to catch up to them and had trouble understanding what she was hearing. By the time she had just understood what the first person said, a few other items have already been

Was this Mark's working method? It was too different from anything Arianne was used to. Her mind was unable to cope with the amount of information being transferred to her. Arianne had prepared for the worst when she learned that she had to take over his company, but who knew it would be so many levels higher than her expectations.

Arianne suffered another migraine attack halfway through the meeting. She had been suffering from migraine attacks once every few days in the past, but it had now worsened and would attack her every day for a few hours.

Summer held Arianne's hand when she saw the latter pounding on her head with a tight frown. Summer whispered, "Are they going through their agenda too quickly? I'll ask them to slow down. It's really difficult for you to go through with this when you're so new to it."

Chapter 1385

Arianne clenched her fist and shook her head. "It's fine, please brief me everything later since you're able to understand. I'm having a bad… headache."

Summer nodded her head and looked at the screen, turning her focus to the meeting. However, Summer herself was having a hard time coping with the meeting as well, since she had not followed Mark's management style previously. Further, Summer was too aged to be able to get used to such modern working styles. Summer was mentally exhausted from listening to the agendas of the meeting. Evidently, it was not only Arianne who was having a hard time, but Summer as well. Throughout the meeting, Summer only half understood everything that was discussed and needed to estimate what the employees had presented.

Back at the office, both women went through each other's notes of the meeting and managed to understand the majority of what had happened in the meeting.

At night, Summer followed Arianne back to the Tremont Estate because she wanted to see her grandson. When they entered the house, Mary welcomed them and said, "Madam, your mother's here."

Arianne was startled. Helen? Did she not leave the country? Helen said she would never return… Could it be because of Arianne's incident?

Arianne suppressed the emotions from flooding out of her and expressionlessly acknowledged Mary. Arianne entered her home and saw Helen chatting with Tiffany, though Tiffany was doing most of the talking. Helen was not the type to be able to mingle well with others, and some might even say she was being arrogant.

Helen got up when she saw that Arianne was home. “Arianne.”

Arianne nodded her head. “It’s been a while.”

Summer proceeded to see her grandson after greeting Helen. Helen was a smart woman; she knew that consoling Arianne at that moment of time would only have an adverse effect, so she did not even mention the accident. “I had some errands back in the country and came here to visit you while I was at it. You look so thin now, unlike the healthy person I saw before I left. You should take better care of yourself.”

Arianne was very comfortable with Helen’s approach at striking a conversation with her. “Ok, I understand. How’s Aery? Is she still making you worry about her constantly?”

Helen replied, “She’s alright. She’s doing rather well these days. I don’t need to worry about her too much.”

At that moment, Smore ran over towards them. Helen held him up and smiled as she said, “Look how Smore has grown. He’s even able to run and jump around. He’s so lovable.”

Arianne’s nose twitched when she looked at Smore, who looked so similar to Mark. She had wanted to provide Smore with a perfect family, but everything crumbled because of one incident. The saving grace

was that Smore was still young and did not understand what death meant, hence he would not feel sad over it. Arianne had been so busy recently that she was not able to accompany Smore much. She did not even know if Smore had been asking for his dad or not.

Speaking of the devil, Smore immediately freed himself from Helen's arms and ran towards her. He grabbed onto the edge of her shirt and mumbled, "Dada, dada, dada no home…"

No matter how hard Arianne tried, her tears still flowed out uncontrollably. Tiffany hurriedly carried Smore away and said, "You really are a troublemaker, my dear boy. Come on, let's go get something to eat. You can eat with your good buddy."

Helen quietly watched as Arianne's tears fell. After a moment, Helen grabbed some tissues and handed it to Arianne. "It'll all be fine after a while, Arianne, just bear with it. There's nothing that you can't overcome. I believe in you, Arianne."

Arianne choked as she said, "Everyone's telling me that it'll all be fine and I just need to bear with it. But no one told me… how to bear with it. I just can't seem to find a way to bear with it. I refuse to even believe that he's never going to come back. I watched him leave the house that day and I even helped him put on the scarf that I bought for him. Mark always returned home on time no matter where he went in the past. Why can't he just come back this time…?"

Chapter 1386

Helen was good at hiding her emotions, just like Arianne. No matter how sad she was, she would be perfectly capable of acting as if nothing had happened. Arianne had already sobbed herself into a puddle of tears. If Helen were to burst into tears now, it would only make the situation even sadder. Helen could only play the part of a listener and consoler.

This time, Helen did not leave so soon after her return. She decided to stay in Tremont Estate for a while. Arianne needed her now.

Life has a cruel way of making people face reality. In the third month after the shipwreck, Arianne was still in pain over Mark's death. She now completely believed that he was not coming home anymore. He couldn't bear making her and Aristotle wait for so long, if he were still alive…

On a day when it wasn't snowing, a moderately sunny afternoon, she locked everything related to Mark into a lonely room. She needed to move on from this trauma with Aristotle and face the future. For example, if she didn't have Aristotle, perhaps she wouldn't need to be so exhausted, or stay strong…

Due to the fact that Alejandro was the only survivor from that shipwreck, the police had no way of finding out who destroyed the lifeboats. All related information had to come from Alejandro. That limited piece of information was equivalent to having no clue, aside from the fact that someone had done it.

Arianne had that article deleted. She initially thought that the scandal would gradually die down in time, but someone kept stirring the pot. She would not have any peace as long as there was no conclusion.

Alejandro and Jackson continued investigating the culprit in secret. There was no news at the moment.

Arianne gradually got used to Mark's living habits. She woke up at the same time he used to wake up, went to the office, finished work, then came home, showered, and rested. She seemed perfectly fine on the surface, but only she knew that she hadn't been sleeping well lately and had frequent migraines.

Not only did she not have time to go anywhere else aside from her house and the office, but she was also too afraid to do so, for there would always be someone pointing and cursing at her on the street. The police did not issue their conclusion, but there were still people who believed in internet comments and thought that she had killed Mark and taken over Tremont Enterprises.

Soon, the Christmas holidays arrived.

She didn't rest, despite her time off from the office. She continued working at home. She had to complete all of the plans for the new year beforehand.

Seaton suddenly arrived for a visit. Arianne knew that Seaton was Mark's old friend and had once met him at his mansion. She had no reason to turn down his visit.

After inviting him into the house, she asked Mary to prepare a cup of coffee. She stared at Seaton's distinctly foreign features and naturally had a feeling that he did not like tea.

Seaton's first words to her were of consolation. "I'm so sorry about what happened to Mark. I was out of the country at the time so I couldn't visit you at once."

Arianne smiled politely. "It's alright. Time heals all wounds. I'm fine. Thank you for your concern."

Seaton changed the topic. "I've heard that you've been taking care of Tremont Enterprises since Mark's death? You only had experience as a fashion designer. Is it tiring to run such a large business?"

Arianne, of course, showed him an exasperated expression. “Of course, it is. I’m not as steadfast as Mark. However, I’ve been working hard over this period of time so I guess I’ve somehow managed to pull through. Besides, I’ve had some help. It’s not too hard.”

Chapter 1387

Seaton nodded. “That’s good… I thought that a lonely little woman like yourself would be helpless. You’ve really impressed me. I’ve read the comments about you on the internet. Don’t mind them. Just don’t look at them. What you don’t see won’t hurt you.”

“I know, I can’t be bothered to read them,” Arianne replied courteously. “It’s all just slander with different names. Not enough to make me hit the ceiling.”

“Those rumors on the internet… They’re fake, aren’t they?” Seaton suddenly asked in a careful tone.

Arianne stared at Seaton for a few seconds. “You can’t possibly think that they’re real, could you?”

Seaton smiled. “Why would I? I’m just asking. I’d never believe that you’d do such a thing. I’m just suspicious of Alejandro’s identity. The Alejandro I knew was a cripple. The current Alejandro has a good pair of legs. Is he really not the Tremonts’ b*stard? I’m merely curious. Mark and I used to talk about everything, but he hadn’t been able to update me on much, due to our distance.”

Arianne wasn’t the kind of person who would be candid about everything just because someone had asked her. Even though Mark was close to Seaton, she had only met him once. This was their second meeting. She didn’t need to divulge certain things in detail. Hence, she changed the subject. “How long do you plan on staying here, Mr. Bart? I used to hear from Mark that you’re always out of the country.”

Seaton fell momentarily silent. “Not too long. I’ve only come back to visit you. Mark mentioned that plane crash to me before, but I don’t think you’d actually exact revenge on him because of it. After all, you’re married with a kid.”

Arianne wasn’t in the mood to talk about these things. Her answer was half-hearted. “Of course not.”

Seaton continued pursuing the topic. “I’m curious. Your father died, just like that. Don’t you hate Mark?”

Arianne smiled. “What did he tell you when he told you about this matter?”

Seaton went silent again, then said, “That your father probably wasn’t behind the plane crash…”

“And?” Arianne asked.

Seaton pursed his lips. “That Mark did it.”

Arianne smiled and skipped the subject. She took Aristotle and held him in front of her. “Say hello to Uncle Seaton.”

Aristotle had never met a face with Fawkethysian features before and seemed curious about Seaton. He refused to call him “Uncle Seaton.” Arianne began educating her kid in front of Seaton until Aristotle lost patience and ran off. Then, she surrendered.

Seaton felt a little uncomfortable. “It’s alright, he’s just a kid.”

Arianne and Seaton really didn’t have much to talk about to each other, and she didn’t like it when people brought up sensitive subjects from the past. Just as she had decided on coming up with a reason to escape from him, Seaton suddenly spoke up. “Tremont Enterprises’ business is more complicated than you can imagine. The tiring part isn’t just the beginning. You’ll burn out later on. Mark is dead now, and you’re a woman. You don’t need to be so strong. If you sell Tremont Enterprises, it would be enough for you and your baby to live carefree lives. The money would still be enough to last a few generations, even if your son doesn’t work in the future.”

“Sell it?” Arianne exclaimed in astonishment.

Chapter 1388

Seaton nodded. “That’s right, sell it. It would be much easier on you. You looked so much better back when we met at the party. I’m just concerned that you’d end up breaking down. If you want to sell Tremont Enterprises, I can help you.”

“No need,” Arianne promptly refused. “Thank you for your kind offer, but I won’t sell Tremont Enterprises. Mark left it behind. I’ll take good care of it.”

Seaton paused then got up. “Alright then. I’ve gotta go. Goodbye.”

Arianne got up and walked him to the door. She waited until he was long gone before reaching up and putting her hand over her chest. Her heart was beating wildly!

She shakily called Alejandro and Jackson, asking them to come over immediately. Tiffany happened to be carrying Plato downstairs and found her clutching her phone strangely. “What are you doing?” she asked apprehensively.

“I know who killed Mark!” Arianne replied in a trembling voice.

Tiffany widened her eyes. “Who?”

Arianne didn’t answer. She was trembling all over, unable to stand properly. She finally revealed her theory when Alejandro and Jackson arrived. “Seaton was just here to visit me. I think he killed Mark!”

Alejandro and Jackson were both shocked. “Why him?”

Alejandro found it strange while Jackson dismissed the possibility. “Bartie, Mark, and I have known each other for years. We’ve always been close. How could it be him?”

“I thought that he was only here to visit me, at first, and to offer me his condolences. Then, he kept asking if Alejandro was really a Tremont ba*tard and about the plane crash,” Arianne explained shakily. “I didn’t dare say the wrong thing, as I was afraid that he might have a recording device on him. He said that Mark mentioned that plane crash to him, but Seaton’s been living out of the country and rarely comes here. Mark wouldn’t mention these things to a long-distance friend, would he? Mark would never mention the plane crash to just anyone. None of his other friends know the truth behind that plane crash, except you, Jackson. Seaton shouldn’t know either. I asked him what Mark said, and he said that Mark was behind the plane crash. That’s suspicious enough!”

Jackson's expression sank. Seaton really did seem suspicious because Mark's mother was the real culprit behind the plane crash. Why would Mark mention this to Seaton? Wasn't this equivalent to dragging out his own mother's sins? The plane crash was a traumatic experience for Mark during his youth. He greatly valued his mother's reputation and would never mention it to an outsider. If he did, it would have been a half-veiled lie. The only explanation was that Seaton had found a way to investigate this.

It's true that Seaton was a long-time friend, but he wasn't the kind of friend that Mark would talk to about everything. They were only close in a business sense. Based on his knowledge, Mark never mentioned the plane crash to Seaton.

Arianne calmed herself and continued. "One more thing, I believe that Seaton's main objective for visiting me was to persuade me into selling off Tremont Enterprises. On the surface, he seemed to be worried about me, so he said that if I do plan on selling, he could help out. It just… sounds fishy to me. And another important detail, Seaton was aware that Mark followed Alejandro out to sea. I remember that when Mark told me about the trip, he mentioned that it was Seaton who persuaded him into going out to sea, saying that he could inspect the market price on-site. It makes sense now, doesn't it?"

Alejandro's face was enveloped with a frosty air. "There's no doubt about it. It's him!"

Jackson still had misgivings. "Then how did he find out about you being a Tremont b*stard? Mark would never mention this to him. You know how much he hates your existence. If it is him, he must have something to do with that internet report."

Alejandro shook his head. "Mark never mentioned it to him. He found that out himself and didn't get much detail to boot. This explains why there was so little information on the internet about me being a b*stard. Remember that party? Melanie accidentally blurted out the word "bro" to Mark in front of Seaton and called Arianne, "Ari". Seaton made a remark about how close Mark and I were back then. I jokingly made up an excuse, saying that we called each other 'bro' due to our long-term partnership.

However, a scheming man like Seaton wouldn't believe it completely. He must have noticed a flaw and launched an investigation!"

Chapter 1389

The more they speculated, the more their hearts filled with fear. If this was true, Seaton was a terrifying man. Mark, of all people, had actually made a wrong judgement of character!

Jackson wiped his face. "I really never thought that it'd turn out this way… My trust and Mark's trust in him… gone to waste! Seaton's always wanted to establish a steady foundation in this country, but he has failed before. Our partnerships with him have always been multinational. I never would have thought that he'd turned his focus on Tremont Enterprises and come up with such a way to buy the company! Tremont Enterprises has a strong foundation. Seaton wouldn't fail as long as he takes over. This means that he killed Mark, just to achieve that… He went back to Fawkethyse when Mark went out to sea. Logically speaking, he would have shown up immediately when he found out about Mark, no matter how busy he was. But he waited until this very moment. He was probably observing Tremont Enterprises. He hoped that Tremont Enterprises would gradually weaken, following Mark's demise. Then, it would be a great opportunity for him to swoop in and buy it off at a low price. However, he did not expect that you, Arianne, would manage to hold Tremont Enterprises together. So he couldn't sit still any longer. That's why he came back to see you. You've refused to sell Tremont Enterprises, haven't you, Arianne? If my guess is right, he'll launch a plan very soon to break you and force you to sell off Tremont Enterprises!"

Arianne felt helpless. "What should we do? I'm exhausted enough from managing Tremont Enterprises. I can't handle any more mishaps. We have to find proof of his involvement in Mark's death. There's no use in a one-sided statement. We need evidence. Everyone on that boat is dead. Alejandro's the only survivor. Seaton didn't leave any clues. Where are we going to get evidence?"

"Why would we need proof? We know it's him," Alejandro grimly said. "I can't wait for the judge to sentence him, and I can't be bothered to dance around with. Leave it to me."

Arianne stared at him in shock. “Wh-what are you going to do? Don’t do anything illegal. You might end up getting sucked in too. Stay calm, let’s discuss this slowly.”

Jackson was a very rational man, but surprisingly, he was on Alejandro’s side this time. “Let him do what he wants. Mark sacrificed his life for him. He’s supposed to be the dead one here. What the hell was Mark thinking…” His words were peppered with his displeasure towards Alejandro.

Alejandro didn’t care. It was the truth. “Don’t worry. I will make him pay with his life, even if I get dragged into it too! I’ve got nothing against him, but he tried to do me in anyway, releasing that report. He wanted to drag both our names as Tremont Enterprises heirs through the mud. He’s pretty calculative, setting his trap on Mark while he was on my boat, which I happened to be on as well. He’d kill two birds with one stone. He didn’t expect that I’d survive. Of course, he’s going to live in hell, since I’ve come back alive.”

Arianne sternly put an end to his ideas. “No! If you get dragged in, you’ll only put Mark’s sacrifice to waste! Since Jackson’s certain that Seaton will attack Tremont Enterprises to break me, you two can watch him until we find evidence. Do not do anything rash.”

Tiffany had stayed upstairs, as Alejandro was around. She listened in from the staircase. Her jaw nearly dropped when she discovered the truth. She had met Seaton at the party too. You really can’t judge a book by its cover.

She waited for Alejandro to leave before going downstairs to the living room. “Oh my god, I’ve heard everything. It’s so scary… Mark’s death is so wrong, tricked by a trusted friend! I’d love to rip that Seaton S. Bart to pieces!”

Jackson wasn’t sure if he should laugh or cry when he saw how indignant she was. “Heck, would you really rip him to pieces if I brought him to you right now? One more thing, why did you stay upstairs?

Did you have to wait for Alejandro to leave before coming down? Are you avoiding him? Scared that he'll eat you?"

Tiffany rolled her eyes at him. "Try 'worried that you'd get uncomfortable if I meet him'. I'm being considerate, and you're being ungrateful!" Then, she looked at Arianne. "Ari, I don't understand it either; why did Mark save Alejandro from that shipwreck? Shouldn't he be resenting Alejandro? Mark would still be alive if he hadn't done that…"

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Arianne closed her eyes and did not give an immediate reply. This wasn't her first time wondering the same question. After much consideration, there was only one possibility. In that desperate hour, Mark gave into his late father's requests in the end, and fulfilled his duty as an older brother. Otherwise, why would Mark do such a thing? Based on Alejandro's self-blame, it was probably true.

Mark was disgusted by and hated everything that his father had done, but his father once held a high place in his heart too. He used to respect him. This had always influenced Mark, till the very end.

Regardless, it already happened, so she had no choice but to accept the facts.

Noticing Arianne's silence, Jackson thought that Tiffany had put her foot in her mouth. "You're such a blabbermouth," he gently chastised. "Are two babies not enough to keep you busy? Go and check on them. Smore has disappeared."

Tiffany grunted in reply and went off to find Aristotle.

Arianne saw through Jackson's caution and smiled. "It's fine. Tiffie hasn't asked any uncomfortable questions. I'm sorry for making you come all the way here. I'm worried that Alejandro might be too impulsive, 'cos he's a victim and might not listen to me. So please watch him. I know that it's difficult for you. After all, he and Tiffie… But in these circumstances, set the past aside for now."

Jackson nodded. "I know. I would've done it anyway, even if you hadn't mentioned it. Mark is more important than my personal grudge against Alejandro. I will make Mark's murder pay!"

Arianne had complete confidence in Jackson's way of handling things. Her emotions were a mess at the moment. She was determined not to descend into chaos again.

However, Arianne's greatest fear still came into play. Although she had taken over Tremont Enterprises at once, the company was still affected by Mark's demise, once news of it got out. Especially that article that had framed her as an inhumane woman. Even though the public believed that Mark was behind Ariann's father's death, most people felt that Mark had raised Arianne to pay for his sins, so they were even. Arianne's "revenge" against Mark was subject to public denouncement.

Soon, many of Tremont Enterprises' long-term partners were influenced as well. No doubt it also involved some instigation on Seaton's end.

During Christmas time, some even used 'Christmas visits' as an excuse to discuss cancelling their contract. Of course, they wouldn't outright admit to cancelling their contracts because of Arianne. Instead, they tactfully claimed that Tremont Enterprises was no longer how it used to be, and everyone should make new choices.

Arianne's only option was to deliberately drag it out and say that they would discuss this after the holidays. Soon, she opted to refuse any Christmas visitations.