Ruling 1391

Chapter 1391

Helen had left on the eve of the festive season. That year, Arianne was unable to even try and get into the mood since she was overwhelmed by the amount of incidents that had happened.

When the holidays were almost over, Alejandro suddenly looked for Arianne and made a very harsh suggestion. “It’s already been so long; I believe Mark isn’t going to return. You should transfer the company to your name now.”

Arianne remained silent for a while after hearing what Alejandro said. “That would mean that I’m admitting to the public that Mark’s dead… I don’t want to.”

Alejandro said in a deep voice, “You need to face the reality. It’s bound to happen sooner or later. Plus, the earlier the company is transferred to you, the earlier you can be at ease since it’d be easier to handle the matters in the office. You’ve seen how bad of a situation Tremont Enterprises is in; the company’s finished the moment its partners cancel their respective contracts with it. Further, every shareholder in the company would come looking for you. Seaton’s never going to let you off the hook—he’s never going to let Tremont Enterprises slip through his fingertips.”

Arianne’s already pale face looked even more helpless. “I don’t think I’ll be able to protect the company anymore, I don’t think I’m capable of doing it. Previously, I asked you to take over matters in the company just to test you. Now, I’m starting to waver. I feel that I’m no match for you in terms of business management. Of course, the company might be in deep sh*t at the moment, but at least, there’s still hope if you’re the one watching over it. I’m getting very tired, I have no idea how I’m supposed to go on…”

Alejandro frowned as he saw how depressed Arianne had become. “Is Mark Tremont’s woman so easily defeated? You aren’t even able to withstand such trials? Relax, Tremont Enterprises will never fall—you

have me supporting your back. Listen to me, you should transfer the company to your name while Mark still has the majority of the shares compared to other shareholders. I'm afraid that if you continue to delay it, someone else might be able to grab those shares and claim the company for themselves. When that happens, you would truly have lost all hope of making a comeback."

Arianne nodded her head. "I understand, I'll think about it."

Alejandro did not stay for long and left Arianne. She headed upstairs and found Mark's safe. She did not know what the password to the safe was since Mark had never mentioned it, so she could only try the passwords that he normally used. Thankfully, she was able to get it right.

Arianne retrieved the documents on Tremont Enterprises from the safe. She opened the file and felt very sad when she saw Mark's name on the document. She did not want to remove his name from the company and make it hers. This was because she would inevitably have to show Mark's death certificate as proof of the transfer, and this would be the same as forcefully peeling off the band aid that was holding her together.

As the holidays ended, Arianne had also made her decision. She would follow what Alejandro had advised and claim ownership of Tremont Enterprises as soon as possible. Based on the current situation, there was a chance that she might not even be able to try and claim the company if she continued to delay.

When Arianne returned to the office on the first day, she brought along the document with her. She wanted to resolve some other tasks at hand first before coming around to this.

The moment she entered the office, Davy knocked on the door and spoke to Arianne before the latter was even able to sit down. "Madam, Mr. Moran is here. He says he has some urgent matters that need your attention."

Mr. Moran? Arianne was slightly curious. “Who’s he?”

Davy proceeded to explain, “Charles Moran. I believe you do know him, don’t you?”

Of course, Arianne knew who Charles Moran was. The mention of his name made her think of Nina Moran, the feisty girl. “I do know him, please let him in.”

Chapter 1392

Davy acknowledged her and brought Charles into the office not long after he had left. Charles immediately spoke without even greeting Arianne. “Have you transferred the company to your name?”

Arianne did not think that he would ask such a question out of the blue. “Not yet. Is something the matter?”

Charles reached out for his handkerchief in his jacket pocket and wiped off the sweat on his forehead. “You should get it done now. Someone’s acquiring the company’s shares from other smaller shareholders. The moment those shares fall into that person’s hands, you will lose all claim to the company. Someone came to see me and intended to buy off the 2% I have, but I refused. However, looking at the situation the company is currently at, I believe most of the others would opt to sell.”

Arianne’s heart fell. “Mr. Moran, thank you for coming to tell me about this. I had already intended to start working on this today. I should be able to get it resolved soon enough.”

Charles continued to wipe off his sweat. Arianne was slightly suspicious of his behaviour. “Are you hot, Mr. Moran? But… isn’t it still snowing outside?”

Charles waved his hand. “I’m just nervous. I probably won’t be able to live for long if someone else found out that I came to see you today. I know Mark’s character very well; if you really had intended to harm him, he would never be foolish enough to keep you by his side. Therefore, it could only be that someone murdered him and made you their scapegoat with the intention of claiming Tremont Enterprises as their own. This is the most that I can do for you. You’ll need to carry on yourself. Remember, you need to claim ownership of the company as soon as possible. Be careful.”

Arianne felt a warmth within her. “Mr. Moran… Thank you for believing in me and helping me even though you understand the risks involved. You should leave now before someone realizes that you’ve been here to see me.”

Charles nodded his head. He suddenly reached for his jacket and took out a piece of folded document as though he had thought of something. “This is the certificate of my share in the company—I’ll entrust it to you in case someone forces me to sell it off. We are at a very critical stage and at the moment, every share counts, no matter how little it is. It’ll do us both good if Tremont Enterprises is able to survive this ordeal. Even if… the company falls, it doesn’t matter to me since I’m only holding 2% of the share. I’ll admit that I’m doing this because of the relationship I have with the Tremonts.”

Arianne instructed Davy to send Charles off personally. After that, she took out the document that showed the distribution of the shares and realized something very crucial. The Tremonts currently owned 70% of the share, making Arianne relax a little. Even if someone deliberately tried to accumulate the company’s shares, they would only be able to accumulate 30% at most, minus Charles's 2%, making it total to 28%. Arianne still had a good chance of winning.

The Tremonts had always been smart people; they broke down the remaining 30% shares into very small portions. There was not one person who had more than 10%, the most being 5%, which was only one person—Sonya Scheidte.

The mention of Sonya's name made Arianne think of Beau. Scheidte was not a common family name in the country. Beau seemed to be on good terms with Seaton, and that would mean that if Sonya was anyhow related to Beau…

In order to confirm her suspicions, Arianne called Jackson to ask about it. Jackson confirmed that Sonya was Beau's mother, so Arianne was right; they were related to each other. Arianne intended to contact Beau to test him since that would mean Beau was in ownership of 5% of the company's shares. However, Jackson warned her that Beau was very close to Seaton, and she should be extra careful while talking to him. It was uncertain if Beau was friend or foe.

Of course, Arianne understood his concerns. She could only contact Beau via phone call since the latter was not in the country. This would increase the difficulty of her trying to test Beau since she would not be able to see his reaction face to face.

Chapter 1393

The moment the call connected, Beau's voice was heard and he spoke in his native language. "Good day, who's this?"

Arianne did not intend to converse in his language and said, "My name is Arianne. I'm Mark Tremont's wife."

Beau immediately switched to English. "I see. Hello, I was not expecting for you to call. Is something the matter?"

Arianne found it strange. Wasn't Beau close with Mark and Jackson? Why was Beau's first reaction not about Mark's accident, but a very simple approach instead? Either he was not aware of the incident, or he knows about it, but was siding with Seaton.

She calmed herself and said, "I was just going through Tremont Enterprise's shareholders list, and I found that your mother owns 5%. Are you planning to sell? If you are, could you consider selling it to me first?"

Beau's paused for a moment before replying, "Why would I want to sell those shares? Those are my mother's business; I have no right to interfere. Hold on… Has something happened in the company? Or… Is it simply to reclaim all the shares?"

Arianne began to think that Beau did not even know about Mark's incident. She sighed in relief and said, "Mark's been in an accident, don't you know? Someone's out there gathering Tremont Enterprise's shares for themselves, so I need to protect the company."

Beau was shocked. "What? Mark's in trouble? How could that be? Why haven't I heard about it? I'm really sorry, my wife's expecting very soon and I've been back in my country to be by her side. I was completely unaware of what had happened to your family. I didn't even see any news related to this. What actually happened?"

Based on Beau's reactions, Arianne gave a sigh of relief again since she thought he was truly unaware. "Mark ran into an accident on a ship while out at sea. The ship sank and the life rafts on it were sabotaged deliberately. The culprit is definitely after Tremont Enterprises. It's quite difficult to tell you the details over the phone… Have you been in touch with Seaton recently? He knows about this and has asked me to sell off the company. I believe he would've told you, seeing how close the two of you are."

Beau begrudgingly said, “That old fox, how could he not have told me such an important matter. I’ve been in contact with him all along, but I’m not sure why he has never brought up this topic before.”

Arianne confirmed her suspicions and decided that Beau was completely oblivious of the situation and was not in cahoots with Seaton. She confessed everything to Beau, “Beau, actually… it was Seaton who had murdered Mark. I’m sorry, I wasn’t sure if you were in on it with Seaton before. Anyway, the situation has become very complicated and I have no intention of dragging you down into this mess. However, I do hope that you would sell your mother’s share to me. Tremont Enterprises is the only thing that Mark has left to me, so it’s really important to me.”

Beau was shocked once again. “What? How could it be him? Are you sure you’re not mistaken?”

Arianne choked as she said, “I’m sure that it’s him. I’m unable to put him in court due to the lack of evidence. Hence, the best I could do now is to protect the company. Everyone on the ship drowned, along with all the items on board. Alejandro was the only survivor, so it’s harder to investigate the matter. Before the ship sailed, it was deemed to be fit for travel. Therefore, it’s very likely that someone sabotaged the life rafts after the ship sailed and then drowned along with the ship to cut off all loose ends. I’m only here to ask you for the shares. If you don’t agree with Seaton’s methods as well, just ignore it and don’t mention a word about it to him. Seaton isn’t aware that I’m suspecting him—no, it’s not just a suspicion, I’m very sure that it’s him.”

Beau gave a long sigh. “I understand, I am unable to move away at the moment due to circumstances. However, I’ll discuss the matter with my mother. Even if I don’t sell it to you, I would definitely refuse to sell it to him as well. The two of us do not walk the same path. I’ll come back to you the moment I have an answer. Wait for me until then.”

Chapter 1394

After hanging up the phone, Arianne gave a long sigh in relief. Thankfully, Beau was not in cahoots with Seaton.

Due to the urgency of the situation, Arianne did not have time to hesitate and quickly proceeded to claim ownership of the company. The entire process took approximately half a month.

Beau got back to Arianne as well. Someone had actually looked for his mother. The person had even said that Tremont Enterprises was in peril and it would be wise to get rid of their shares. Sonya did not reply to him immediately but checked up on the latest situation with the company continuously. Beau had looked for her right after that and his mother agreed to sell their shares to Arianne.

At that point, Arianne was racing against time. Although she had claimed the company, she was still afraid of the opposing side claiming partial ownership of the company the moment they accumulated enough shares. Therefore, the more shares she had on hand, the more advantageous it would be for her. That way, she could avoid being forced up to a brick wall later on. During the process, she needed to have a huge sum of cash on hand. Unfortunately, most of the expenses involved would very likely cause the company to have negative cash flow.

Arianne pondered for two days and decided she should sell off the Wynn Mansion to bolster some of the expenses incurred. The moment the mansion was sold off, there was literally no hope of reacquiring it later since the person who bought the mansion would be buying it for its sentimental value and would not be strapped for cash. Arianne would do whatever it took to protect Tremont Enterprises!

Thankfully, her dessert shop had already resumed operation and was slowly breaking even. Although the amount of money earned in the shop was nothing compared to Tremont Enterprises, it was still better than her having to spend extra money to maintain the shop.

Arianne had sold off some extra properties and cars within the Tremonts in order to improve the company's cash flow. It was at that moment that she realized how cash was king.

As she was busying herself with the matters, Seaton was also busy on his own. Arianne had 77% of the company shares in her hands now while the remaining 23% was held by a man called Aerse, who was undoubtedly a tool being used by Seaton.

Seaton had a good reputation within the industry that would not lose out to Mark's. Such reputable figures would naturally do their best to avoid letting others find out anything malicious about them by letting others take the fall when things went south.

The moment Aerse had completely accumulated the shares, he had begun to stir up trouble by requesting to revoke all equity shares due to the position the company was in.

After calculating the amount of money required, Arianne realized that the actual figure had grossly exceeded her expectations. Arianne was still short of a huge sum of money to meet the required sum. It was at that moment that she realized how valuable the shares in Tremont Enterprises were.

Her plan to maintain the company naturally fell since she was not able to fork out so much money. It was at that moment that Seaton appeared and played the good guy role.

When the two of them met at Mark's office, Arianne calmly said, "Mr. Bart, you really are a prophet, showing up just when Tremont Enterprises is facing its toughest moments. No wonder you had asked me to sell off the company previously."

Chapter 1395

Seaton had a humble look on his face. "When you've been in the business for as long as I have, you learn to predict the future. At the moment, Aerse has 23% of the company's shares and has requested to revoke his equity. I believe it would best for you to sell off Tremont Enterprise since you aren't able to accumulate that much money."

Arianne tonelessly laughed. “Even if I do agree to sell, not everyone is able to buy it.”

Seaton cut straight to the point and said, “If you believe in me, you could sell the company to me. Based on Mark’s relationship with me, I will most definitely cherish the company as if it were my own. Further, you would be able to escape the perilous situation you’re in right now.”

Arianne lightly snorted without giving away any emotions on her face. “Mr. Bart, have you finally gone straight to the point after beating around the bush for so long?”

Seaton squinted his eyes. “What do you mean… by that?”

Arianne put away her smile and gritted her teeth. “Mark trusted you, treated you as his friend, yet you wanted him dead! Do you think I’m unaware of your shenanigans? I wouldn’t have suspected you at all if you hadn’t come to me previously, but you just couldn’t hold your breath. Although Aerse has quite a reputable history, he would most definitely not be able to accumulate so much money to purchase the shares. You’ve been the one who’s been siphoning money to him, haven’t you? If I had actually sold the company to you, I’d be falling right into your trap! I shall tell you my answer now, im-pos-si-ble!”

Seaton was slightly taken aback, but it was only just a flash. He immediately had a look of admiration for Arianne. “I suppose that much is to be expected of Mark’s woman. You may be smart, but it’s no use. Tremont enterprise wouldn’t be able to operate unless you sell it off to me. This was always my plan the moment I had gotten close to Mark—I wanted Tremont enterprise for my own. I’ve spent so long planning for this day, and you’re most definitely not worthy enough to thwart my plans. Mark Tremont is dead, so why would a mere woman like you try and fight, and support the company, which would all be in vain. Why don’t you be a good girl and sell off the company to me? You would then be able to spend the rest of your life happily with your son, wouldn’t that be great? No one’s going to be able to help you now. If Jackson spent everything he had to help you, then Tremont enterprise might live. However, West enterprise is finished for sure.”

Arianne coldly said, “You’ve probably forgotten, but I still have Ayashe’s West enterprise.”

Arianne was confident that Alejandro would most definitely help her. Alejandro owed his life to her and she was sure that he would repay the deed.

Seaton slightly frowned. “I don’t think Alejandro would come and help you. Even if he is the Tremonts’ illegitimate son, his relationship with Mark would not be great. Plus, Mark’s already dead, so why would he help a foolish woman like you? Further, wouldn’t the downfall of Tremont enterprise be just the thing he wants to see? If the Tremonts meant something to him, why would he wander around and end up becoming Alejandro Smith instead? Although he did manage to slither through the police’s DNA test, I’d immediately expose him to them the moment he dares to try and help you. When that happens, he’d be too busy trying to protect himself; how do you expect him to help you? The moment it’s verified that he isn’t Alejandro Smith, the Smith enterprise would cease to be his as well.”

Suddenly, someone had pushed the office doors open with great force. Melanie walked into the office with Melissa in her arms. “It’s not just the Smiths, the Larks will help her as well! As for who runs the Smiths, that’s none of your business! Don Smith had already known that he wasn’t the real Alejandro Smith a long time ago, yet he still handed Smith enterprise to him. Therefore, does his true identity really matter? I still have some shares in Smith Enterprise under my name, so you wouldn’t be able to threaten Alejandro. The Smiths and the Larks are undoubtedly behind the Tremonts!”

Arianne had not expected for Melanie to appear so suddenly. It was probably because she had heard Seaton’s words that made her so angry.

Seaton finally had a stern look on his face. “It seems that the situation is tougher than I had anticipated. However, it’s no matter. I’ll continue to play along with you. I might not be able to compete against Mark, but you are most definitely no match for me, Arianne.”

When he was done, Seaton tidied up his shirt and walked out of the office.

As Arianne watched Seaton leave, she had a desperate urge to rip him alive. The person who had murdered Mark was right within her reach, yet she could not do anything about it. Every time she thought of how Mark was dead, it was as though she was continuously being stabbed by a sharp knife in the heart. The pain had been accompanying her for many nights now.

Chapter 1396

She had underestimated how evil people could be. Some people would stop at nothing to gain profit, disregarding the livelihood of others and ignoring all consequences.

Once Seaton was far away, Melanie strode forward and consoled her. “Don’t worry, Alex and I will help you through this. As long as Seaton is behind this, we’ll find proof.”

“Thank you, Melanie,” Arianne smiled. “It’s hard, shouldering the Tremont fortune… So, Seaton really was behind it. He has just admitted to it. I will make him pay!” Defeating Seaton wouldn’t be easy, but she refused to give up. Once Tremont Enterprises was stable, she would find evidence to prove Seaton’s involvement in Mark’s murder!

Since Seaton underestimated her, she was determined to change his mind. She knew that Seaton was on the same level as Mark and she was nowhere near either. However, she refused to give up.

That night, Arianne dragged her tired body back to the Tremont Estate. Mary kindly left her some supper. “Have something to eat, then go to bed. You’ve lost so much weight. Tiffany has taken the two kids to bed. Thanks to her, Smore rarely ever cries for you and Mr. Tremont…”

Arianne walked to the dining table and sat down. She couldn't even open her eyes at this point, but she was hungry. She ate her food drowsily.

"By the way, Henry brought a luggage bag back today," Mary softly said. "He says that it was… from the sunken yacht, washed up on the nearest beach. He says that Mr. Tremont brought it along with him on the boat."

Arianne immediately woke up. She put down her knife and fork, got up, and asked, "Where is it?"

Mary pointed toward the store room. "It's soaked and all dirty. I've put it in the storeroom. No one has opened it. The stuff should still be inside."

She quickly ran to the store room, and upon seeing the luggage bag, she crumpled to her knees and opened it with tears in her eyes. The insides were filled with water; it was a mess. But most of the things were in their original places. Only one space was filled to the brim with clothes and was not messed up at all. Mark's laptop was inside too, now useless from being submerged in the sea. Of course, there was also the scarf that she had prepared for him…

She picked up his favorite shirt and held it against her chest, refusing to let go. Unfortunately, it no longer contained his scent, only the salty smell of seawater. Its original white color was stained beyond comprehension.

"Ari, stop looking," Mary whispered as she stayed very still. "I'll have someone wash all the clothes inside so that you can have them as keepsakes. But I'm not sure if we can clean them thoroughly. They've been soaked in seawater for so long…"

Arianne sobbed, refusing to move away. As the smell of seawater hit her nose, she could imagine how desperate Mark must've been, moments before his death, sinking by the second into the depths of the icy sea, falling deep into a bottomless darkness, slowly losing his connection to the surface of the ocean and everything in this world and gradually slipping away from the land of the living… leaving her and Aristotle…

Chapter 1397

Suddenly, a clap of thunder boomed from the skies. Arianne covered her ears, painfully. She hated the rain. The sound of thunder scared her…

Mary quickly ran to shut every door and window in the Tremont Estate to block out the sound of the storm. "Ari, the noise is gone. Go to bed. Stop tormenting yourself. The Tremont household needs you…"

Arianne reluctantly put down Mark's shirt. "Mary, try to clean up everything in there. It's alright if you can't wash off the stains, but keep them for me. Don't throw any of it away." She couldn't shake this feeling that Mark was coming back. However, so many months had passed and everyone was urging her to face reality.

She despondently walked upstairs and went to the nursery to see Aristotle. Tiffany was sleeping in the nursery with both babies, one on her left and one on her right, with her arms wrapped around them. Aristotle was fast asleep, so she couldn't bear disturbing him. She quietly slipped away.

Tiffany had been helping her take care of Aristotle for a very long time. Jackson had been unable to sleep over every night, as he had work to do. Arianne felt guilty for separating husband and wife. However, she was already shortchanging Aristotle. It would be cruel of her to refuse Tiffany's offer to take care of him.

The next morning, during breakfast, she made a suggestion. “Tiffie, tell Jackson to move here. It’s not a good idea for you two to be separated for so long.”

Tiffany shook her head. “Aw… It’s fine. You’re brave enough to face your troubles. What’s so bad about living apart for a while? He comes over for dinner after work, doesn’t he? It’s not like we don’t see each other. It’s okay. You don’t think that sex is the only thing on our minds, do you? We’re not like that. We’ll all be fine once your situation improves.”

Arianne smiled. “That’s not what I mean. Jackson has to come over every night, then go home. What’s the point in that? You’re staying here anyway, so just tell him to move in and stay with you. I don’t want my predicament affecting your normal lives. It’ll spare him from having to run around all the time too.”

Tiffany was slightly convinced. “Actually… He was worried that you’d be uncomfortable with us being all lovey-dovey all the time. How could we do that in front of you, at a time like this? That’s just rubbing salt on a wound. You’ll definitely be reminded of Mark when you see me and Jackson together.”

Arianne took a breath. “Alright. You don’t have to consider my feelings. Tell him to move in. I only come home at night anyway, so I won’t see your conjugal love. One more thing, Seaton is using his shares to threaten me into selling Tremont Enterprises. I want to fight him. Please discuss with Jackson and decide if you can loan me some money. My only condition is that it shouldn’t affect you.”

“Yeah, I’ve heard,” Tiffany replied through gritted teeth. “Melanie mentioned this. Don’t worry, I’ll give Jackson a call later and tell him to withdraw all the money he can and loan it to you. I don’t believe that the company will be dragged to its grave by Seaton’s teeny tiny shares! Ask Alejandro for some money too. He would have been dead by now if it weren’t for Mark. He’s obligated to help out! His conscience would never let him live it down if Tremont Enterprises crumbles!”

“Don’t be so quick to judge him, Tiffie,” Arianne said, smiling bitterly. “Saving him was Mark’s choice. It has nothing to do with him. His and Melanie’s stance in this matter is clear. They’ll definitely help me. I’ll ask him to come over to the office later and talk about a loan. It should be fine, with all of your help.”

Aristotle played with baby Plato when Arianne left and did not say goodbye to her. Arianne’s heart ached. Aristotle had lost all of his clinginess towards her over the past few months. It was good news for their livelihood, but bad news for their familial bond. She couldn’t care for Aristotle at all.

She called Alejandro on the way to the office and they agreed to meet at her office.

Alejandro was already waiting for her when she arrived at her office.

Chapter 1398

Alejandro pulled out a cheque before she could speak. “These are the funds that I can spare. Let me know how much more you need and I’ll pull more funds together.”

Arianne looked at the number on the cheque and made a rough calculation. “I think it’s almost too much. Thank you.”

Alejandro pursed his lips. “Why are you thanking me? I can’t accept your gratitude. I’ll ask Melanie to get some money from her family too. That’s the best I can do.”

Arianne personally made him a cup of tea. “Black tea. Your brother’s favorite.”

A desolate light flashed across Alejandro's eyes. He picked up the cup and took a sip. "How's the company doing? Aside from the shares."

Arianne sighed. "A lot of our partners are trying to end their partnership with us. Most of it is probably instigated. Actually, continuing the partnership won't affect them too much as long as Tremont Enterprises still stands. I've managed to convince some of them against it, but those who've been instigated by Seaton won't budge so I let them go. This year's profits definitely won't be the same, but we'll still manage. It'll get better. After his last visit, Seaton's sure to try and steal Tremont Enterprises' business, but his businesses are mostly overseas, so it won't affect Tremont Enterprises too much. I've thought it over. In general, it won't be a huge problem. As long as we can solve the shares crisis, we can rest for a while."

Alejandro nodded. "Okay, as long as everything's fine. I've got to go. I'm going back to Ayashe with Melanie. She's not the decision-maker in the Lark household, so we'll have to put in some effort to get the money. I'll keep you updated."

Arianne plunged into work after sending Alejandro off. Summer only came into the office three days a week after the holidays. She attended meetings, but Arianne had told her that she no longer needed to get involved in anything else. Summer had mentored Arianne for months, and she no longer wanted to trouble her.

Alejandro went back to Ayashe with Melanie. The entire trip only took three days. They received the money, and the process was considerably smooth.

After Arianne had finished collecting the money, the shares crisis was naturally over. She let out a sigh of relief. However, things were completely different on Seaton's end.

At Seaton's Mansion, he glared gloomily at Aerse. "That woman solved it? So easily? I told you to ask Charles Moran and Sonya Scheidte. What happened to their 7% shares?"

"W-well… Charles Moran has adamantly refused to hand over his shares. I've heard that he's given them to Arianne. As for Sonya Scheidte… I'd clearly convinced her. She said that she'd contact me once she had reached a decision. I didn't think that she'd sell her shares off to Arianne without another word. Apparently, Sonya went to see her. Isn't Sonya a friend of yours? Why don't you ask her yourself? It'd be much more effective than if it's me…"

Seaton rubbed his brows. The rage in his heart burned continuously, refusing to leave. He would have talked to Sonya himself if he could, but he knew that Sonya would never ally with him so he never considered it. He hadn't thought that Arianne would meet Sonya before he could. Sonya was probably aware of what he's done now and was no longer his friend.

Chapter 1399

The shares were supposed to be Tremont Enterprises' biggest hurdle. Now, Arianne had managed to get through it. He hated the Smiths, Larks, and Wests for helping Arianne out. Now, he had to wait for Tremont Enterprises to be at its weakest before dealing a final blow. Otherwise, all of his efforts would go to waste if he waited for Tremont Enterprises to recover under Arianne's management.

Seeing the gloomy look in his eyes, Aerse summoned his courage and asked, "Mr. Bart, is our previous agreement still valid? I've done everything you've asked. The final result has nothing to do with me."

Seaton stared at Aerse and icily said, "What agreement? 10% of Tremont Enterprises? Open your eyes, who's controlling Tremont Enterprises now? Is it me? Where am I supposed to wrangle that 10% for you? Yes, we did have an agreement—that I would give you shares once I'd obtained Tremont Enterprises. However, I don't have it, and you still have the nerve to ask?"

Aerse immediately understood. He was blindly turned into a tool for Seaton. He had received nothing from their agreement and lost Tremont Enterprises' shares. If it weren't for Seaton's instigation, who would have been stupid enough to liquidate Tremont Enterprises' shares? Even 1% would bring profits to yearly dividends.

A dispute in benefits was the easiest way to change a person's tune. "Are you playing me?" Aerse yelled. "After all that I've done for you? Yes, Tremont Enterprises doesn't belong to you now, but you should stick to the agreement and pay me the amount worth the 10% shares from Tremont Enterprises. If you don't have the shares, money is fine too! I used to think that you were some formidable figure, Seaton S. Bart. Now I know that it's all just for show. How could you have failed to anticipate that even the Smiths and Larks from Ayashe would help Tremont Enterprises? If it weren't for their setback, aid from the Wests alone would've been useless! This was your mistake. I shouldn't have to pay for it!"

Seaton lifted his gaze and looked at Aerse. His eyes filled with disdain. "Our collaboration was always a gamble. If we won, we'd both win. If we lost, then we should have been mentally prepared for that. Besides, I only gave an oral promise. Do you have any proof to show that I have to give you all of that? We're adults. Next time, don't forget to leave things in black and white before putting your trust in someone. Don't be like a stupid idiot, played like a fool by other people. Please leave, Mr. Haett."

No matter how angry Aerse was, he couldn't do anything to Seaton. He was a small fry compared to a big-shot businessman like Seaton. If he wanted to stay in the industry, he couldn't afford to offend people like Seaton. He had no choice but to swallow his anger and didn't try to save face.

Aerse spit into a roadside flower terrace when he left Seaton's mansion. "What the f*ck was that? He seemed so close to Mark Tremont, but the moment something happens to Mark, he tries to take over Tremont Enterprises. He's bad news. It's all well and good for him to play a small fry like me, but let's wait and see if he toys with a formidable big shot. Someone will teach you a lesson then!"

…

That weekend, Arianne invited Jackson, Alejandro, and Melanie to the Tremont Estate to have a meal together.

This was Arianne's first free weekend since Mark's incident. It was a rare moment for them to have a meal together.

Once everyone had arrived, Arianne took out three documents and divided them between Jackson, Alejandro, and Melanie. "Have a look at these, and if you have no questions, sign on the dotted line."

Jackson glanced through the document and was surprised. "You can pay us back any time. You don't have to give us shares."

Alejandro knew what the document contained when he heard Jackson's statement so he couldn't be bothered to look at it. "Yes, there's no need to give us shares. Just pay us back when you can… I don't need my share. But… I can't speak for the Larks. I didn't mention this before because I was worried that you might not agree, but the Larks made it very clear that the money they loaned should be paid back in shares."

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The corners of Arianne's lips carried an easy-going smile. "It's fine. This is how it should be. There's 23% shares in total there. I've divided it according to the money that your family has given. Have a look and sign if everything looks alright to you. That way, only Charles has 2% of shares. Everything else belongs to us. Thank you for banding together and helping me when I needed it most. Tremont Enterprises would have been finished if it weren't for you. I'd feel uneasy if you don't agree to this. You deserve it. I'll take good care of Tremont Enterprises. Thank you."

Jackson and Alejandro remained hesitant about signing the document. Only Melanie signed it first. “I can’t help it. I have to sign. You two think about it.”

Alejandro looked at Jackson and said, “You sign. It doesn’t matter if you do. I can’t sign. If Mark finds out that part of Tremont Enterprises’ shares belong to me, he’ll haunt my dreams and kill me. I’ve said that I no longer want any part of Tremont Enterprises, and I mean it.”

Jackson shot him an irritable look. “What do you mean ‘it doesn’t matter’? Are you the only noble one here? Everyone else is opportunistic?”

“That’s not what I’m saying,” Alejandro calmly replied. “You’re making assumptions. I’m well aware of your opinions towards me, Jackson West. There’s no need to make subtle jabs at me every chance you get.”

“Just think about it, okay? Let’s eat. Stop fighting,” Arianne quickly interceded, realizing that the pair was going to quarrel again.

Tiffany felt very uneasy at the dinner table. She always felt uneasy whenever Alejandro and Jackson were together. Alejandro was very calm. He concentrated on his food and didn’t even look at her.

As Arianne put a piece of grilled meat in Aristotle’s bowl, Aristotle looked at her and said, “Thank-oo.”

Arianne stiffened. It was good for a child to have good manners, but she clearly noticed the distance in Aristotle’s face towards her. He wasn’t as close to her as he used to be.

It’s true, children don’t have good memories. Over her prolonged stint of leaving the house early and coming home late, Aristotle rarely saw her. Slowly, he grew closer to Tiffany. Although Aristotle continued calling her “mama”, he had stopped clinging to her.

No one noticed her disappointment. Tiffany chuckled and praised Aristotle too. “What a polite little gentleman you are, Smore. You’ve even learned how to say ‘thank you’.”

Arianne could only smile accordingly. “That’s right. He should be going to kindergarten next year. Time sure flies.”

Mary was eating with them too. Arianne didn’t see Henry, so she asked, “Mary, where’s Henry? Why isn’t he eating with us?”

“Oh, him? He took the day off, saying that he had some business to deal with,” Mary replied. “He didn’t give any details. It’s fine. I know everything he knows. His absence won’t affect anything. He kept saying that he had business around Christmas Eve. It’s not his first time being absent from work.”