Ruling 1441

Chapter 1441

Mark held Arianne by her slender waist and said with a tone brimming jealousy, “If you ever dare talk to another man behind my back again, I’ll make you move from your current desk and sit in my office.”

Arianne wrapped her arms around his neck and smiled provocatively. “You were the one who asked me to learn as much as I can from Sylvain, how am I supposed to learn if I don’t talk to him? Eye contact? When that happened, you think I was seducing him. Relax, Robin’s the one he loves. He was even forced to meet her parents last night. Why did you call me into your office? Could it be… that you’re looking for a good time in your office?”

Mark lowered his head and kissed her lips. “What are you even thinking? You may have the thought in your head, but I haven’t got the time. There’s a parcel that just came for you, I think it’s from your mom. I heard that she came to visit you while I wasn’t around.”

Arianne released her hold on him and walked toward the desk to find a parcel on top of the table. She picked up the pocket knife in a stationery box and opened the parcel. After removing the layers of packaging, she saw an eerie-looking doll in the box. The doll had a very fierce expression on its face like the ones one would see in a horror film. Arianne’s name was sewn on its chest as well. Worst of all, there was a knife that stabbed into the doll’s chest, past her name! She was thoroughly shocked by the doll. “Shit!”

Mark immediately swept the parcel onto the ground. “What the heck is this?!”

Arianne hid behind Mark and shivered in fear. “Helen definitely didn’t send me this, she would never play this kind of prank on me!”

Mark studied the doll with a frown on his face. After properly examining the details on the parcel, he found that the parcel was sent from within the country instead of overseas with Helen's name as the sender. Who would pretend to be Helen and play that sort of lame prank? From the looks of it, it seemed like a child's prank. However, there was no harm in assuming the worst. It could be seen as a death threat.

The first suspect that came to Arianne's mind was Zoey and her husband. "Could Zoey and her husband be seeking revenge from me because I refuse to lend them money? If I had brought the parcel home and opened it there, imagine how shocked Smore would be if he sees it. This is unacceptable!"

Initially, Mark had also thought that it could be Zoey and her husband's doing, but he dismissed the thought after thinking about it. No matter how bold they were, it did not make sense for them to do such a thing unless they no longer cared about their son's future. "It's not them because Harvey's still under my employment... Unless they no longer cared if he loses his job."

Arianne calmed down and thought about it again. "You're probably right, but who else could it be? I haven't offended anyone."

Mark silently thought about it for a moment and said, "You should ask your mom, she might know something."

Arianne took out her cell phone and called Helen. The call had connected very quickly and she was greeted with Helen's soft voice. "Hello, Arianne, is something the matter?"

Arianne licked her dry lips. "I just received a parcel that stated you as the sender, but I found a very malicious-looking doll when I opened it. Do you know who could have done it?"

Helen remained silent for a long while that Arianne had thought that her phone signal was weak. Arianne called out to Helen a few times before Helen suddenly said, “I heard… I think… it’s Jean. He’s released from prison early.”

A sense of unease washed over Arianne immediately. “If that’s true, then, this just became even more mysterious. Why would he seek revenge on me as soon as he’s released from prison? Does he intend to go back in again? Is he trying to ruin the rest of his life? What’s going on in his mind?”

Helen sighed. “He could be coming for you because he can’t find me and Aery. I knew from the start that he wouldn’t stay quiet after being released from prison, hence why I chose to leave the country. However, I didn’t think he would do this. I’m so sorry for causing you trouble. I’ll make the arrangements to return to the country and resolve this.”

Chapter 1442

Arianne took a deep breath. “Why are you apologizing? He’s your ex-husband, and his actions aren’t related to you at all. Therefore, there’s no need for you to apologize nor return to the country to resolve this. Since I’ve discovered the culprit, I’ll be able to deal with it accordingly. You should remain hidden. Wouldn’t you be walking right into his trap if you show up?”

Helen disagreed. “Arianne, things aren’t as simple as you think. He has been driven up to a corner and has nothing to lose. He’s like a rabid dog now. There’s nothing he wouldn’t do. You should never underestimate a man who has got nothing to lose, you wouldn’t be able to come out of it unscathed. Regardless, I’m the one who started this so I should be the one to end it.”

How could Arianne allow Helen to put herself at risk after learning about that? “You mustn’t return. It’s not up for discussion. I’ll ask my men to look for him. Let’s see what’s the worst he could do to me!”

After hanging up, Arianne said through gritted teeth, “It’s Jean. He has been released from prison early!”

Mark massaged his glabella. “Has he worked so hard to be released early just to have his revenge? He must be out of his mind. You should be extra careful over the next few days. I’ll instruct Henry to send some men to look for Jean.”

Based on Arianne’s understanding of Helen, she knew that the latter would still return. This made her feel anxious. “I’m worried that Helen will return to look for him. Since she’s already in hiding, she shouldn’t come back. We need to take care of this as soon as possible. It’s just one man so it shouldn’t be difficult.”

Mark shook his head. “You’re wrong. It’s exactly because the person we’re dealing with is Jean that it’s much more difficult. Don’t forget, your mom had chosen to abandon your father to be with Jean. Moreover, Jean is Aery’s biological father. Helen might not have any connection to him or listen to him, but Aery might.”

Arianne lowered her eyes and fiddled her hair. “Then, do we have no choice but to let Helen resolve this matter?”

Mark nodded. “It’s better for the doer to undo it. Isn’t that how the saying goes? Things would be much easier if Aery weren’t in the picture. Aery’s the only thing that links Helen and Jean together. Moreover, that link can’t be broken.”

Arianne found it difficult to comprehend his words. “Then, why was Helen able to cut off all ties with my dad even though they had me? Is there anything that can’t be cut if one puts one’s mind to it?”

Mark did not reply. There were some things that could never be explained if they did not have the same understanding. The discussion might even backfire on him.

Arianne was in a foul mood the entire day thanks to that parcel.

After work, when the couple returned to Tremont Estate, the car was stopped at the main gates.

It was Brian's ex-girlfriend.

Arianne alighted from the car and told Mark to head to the garage first. A woman was needed to deal with another woman.

"What are you doing here again?" Arianne's tone was slightly harsher due to the foul mood she was in.

The girl's attitude was much humbler compared to before. "Mrs. Tremont, can you please help me contact Brian? I would like to see him."

Arianne refused and said, "The both of you have already broken up, why do you want to look for him again? Do you want to be sent to the police station again?"

The girl pleaded tearfully. “I beg you. I just want to see him one more time, just this once! I have something I need to tell him. It’s very important!”

Chapter 1443

Arianne’s tone did not change as she said, “Brian hasn’t been coming to work for a while now. I don’t even know where he is. Even if I did, I wouldn’t help you contact him. You should forget about him. He has already said that he doesn’t wish to see you ever again. Was he not clear enough? It’s pointless for you to stubbornly persist. If you really have something to tell him, you can tell me, and I’ll pass on the message.”

The girl broke down in tears. “Please, just let me see him once. I didn’t agree to break up. Shouldn’t this thing be discussed face to face? It can’t be one-sided. Please, I need to see him one last time. If you won’t let me, I’ll die right here!”

Arianne was shocked. A person going through a breakup was capable of doing foolish things. Things could get difficult if the girl decided to kill herself or injure herself there. She suppressed her fury from being threatened and said, “Fine. I’ll give Brian a call, but it’s up to him whether he wants to come or not. If he doesn’t want to see you, you’re to leave this place immediately!”

The phone call connected immediately. When Brian found out his ex-girlfriend was causing a scene again, he rushed over immediately.

In fact, Arianne would rather he refused to come. Things would probably get even more complicated as soon as Brian and his ex-girlfriend met.

During the time that Brian had been absent from work, he did not even dare to return to his house and had been hiding from the world like a mouse. It was time for him to settle things once and for all.

The moment Brian arrived, the girl broke into tears again. She cried so hard as though the entire world had wronged her. “Brian, can we please not break up? I won’t ask for so much anymore. Let’s talk things through, alright? I don’t want to end things like this. You’ve been so nice to me, and yet, I’ve been so harsh to you. I’m sorry, can you please forgive me?”

Arianne grew slightly anxious as she watched the entire scene played out while she stood by the main gates. She was afraid that Brian would fall for the girl’s schemes and things would return to the way they were.

However, Brian was very determined. “Why didn’t you think about this before? In a relationship, both parties should put in equal effort to make the relationship work. I treated you well, and you know it. It wasn’t until the end that I realized I was the only one putting in the effort while you stood there and enjoyed my love for you. I really don’t see how we can continue… Now that I think about it, I can’t think of a single merit that you have. I can no longer be with you. Please don’t ever come here and cause a scene again. It’s really irritating and frustrating.”

When the girl saw how determined Brian was, a disgusted expression appeared on her face. “So there’s no turning back, is there? I want you to tell me, are you sure there’s no turning back for us?!”

Brian nodded resolutely. “Yes.”

The girl coldly laughed and said, “Do you know what the people in my hometown are saying about me? I’ve been living with you only to be discarded after a few months. Is my reputation not of importance? My parents would not leave things as it is. If I can’t talk sense to you, my parents will go and look for yours.”

Brian reined in his anger. “You’re the one who tarnished your own reputation. You’ve always been good at talking your way out of things. I have never touched you, not even once.”

The girl looked at him with her mouth agape. “They won’t believe me even if I try to explain. It’s a known fact that I’ve been spending the past few months with you. Can you please stop being angry? My parents are actually quite fond of you. Truth be told, I do think you’re a good person. Let’s get married. We can discuss the conditions. As long as there’s a house and a car, we can discuss everything else.”

Brian frowned. “Do you not get it? I won’t marry you, and I don’t want to marry you. Isn’t breakups normal? What? Must all relationships end in marriages? Is there no such thing as a breakup? Initially, I had already intended to marry you, but you’ve gone and screw it up. This is it. I have nothing left to say to you. Don’t look for me anymore. I’m going to get married soon.”

Chapter 1444

The girl jumped up in anger the moment she heard Brian say he was getting married. “Married? You’re getting married right after you broke up with me? You must have been seeing someone while we were dating! You’re really something, Brian Pearce, you’re a womanizer! Is she better than me? Did she not ask for anything from you and offered to give you everything instead? What else could it be? Are you lying to me about getting married? Let me make this clear; either you marry me or you compensate me for ruining my reputation. Saying that, it’d be much better if you choose to marry me and gain a wife. Otherwise, you’d only lose your money and gain nothing in return. Your call!”

Brian could no longer be bothered to waste his time with her. “I will neither pay you nor marry you. I’m telling you the truth when I say I’m going to get married soon. It doesn’t matter what you say or what you think.”

Mark did not enter the house after the car had been parked, he walked to the main gates instead.

When the girl saw Mark, she grabbed Brian's arms. She knew Mark was not one to be trifled with so she tamped down her anger and said, "Let's go, Brian, we should continue our discussion somewhere else."

Brian flung her hand away. "There's nothing for us to discuss. I've made myself very clear. Go now before you're sent to the police station again. It's up to you."

The girl did not want to leave, but she did not dare to continue arguing since Mark was present. She gritted her teeth and scowled before she spun around and left.

Brian wore a gloomy expression on his face as he said, "I didn't expect relationships to be so troublesome."

Mark asked tonelessly, "When are you planning to come back and work? Are you planning to hide as long as she's after you? I've got some things I want you to look into. Come in."

Brian regained his composure and followed Mark into the house.

Mark told Brian to find out where Jean was living after being released from prison. He also specifically told Brian to act discreetly and to only monitor Jean to see what Jean was up to. He knew he could not be too harsh. After all, he was still Helen's ex-husband and Aery's father.

Brian seemed to be invigorated after he received his task. He was no longer gloomy.

A few days later, Helen returned to the country and contacted Arianne immediately. When Helen arrived at Tremont Estate, Arianne discovered that Helen had brought Aery along as well.

Helen said, explaining her actions, “I’m worried Jean would look for Aery. It’s not safe for her to be out of the country alone.”

Aery was being quite obedient.

Arianne did not object to Aery’s presence. “Fine. I’ve asked some people to look for Jean but to no avail. It seems like he has found a way to hide. We can’t even say for sure that he’s in the capital. Even if he is, the capital’s way too big for us to find him. How are you planning to do it?”

Helen frowned and said, “Aren’t Aery and I his targets? I believe he’ll show up now that I’m here. I’ll be living in a hotel temporarily, and Aery will be with me the entire time. I refuse to hand my daughter over to that scum. He’s trying to get his hands on Aery just to control me.”

Arianne felt sad all of a sudden. Helen did not consider when Helen left her father in the past. However, Helen seemed considerate of Aery. Both of them were Helen’s daughter, why was the difference in treatment so great?

Chapter 1445

Aery suddenly asked, “Where’s Mark? Isn’t he home?”

Arianne’s expression turned cold. “Why are you looking for him?”

Aerie quickly realized her mistake. “I-it’s… It’s nothing. It’s just a random question. Please don’t be mad, big sis…”

Helen glanced at Aery unhappily. “You should be careful, and take care of yourself for the time being, Arianne. If there’s nothing else, I’ll head back to the hotel with Aery now. Call me if you need me.”

Arianne nodded and did not say anything since she was still in a foul mood.

When Helen and Aery left, Mark came downstairs. “They’ve left? I think… it’s not safe for them to stay in the hotel, is it? If Jean manages to find them and does something unimaginable, the outcome could be quite disastrous. Jean has just left prison, it’d be difficult for him to survive. There’s nothing he wouldn’t do now since he’s driven to a corner.”

Arianne knew what Mark meant. “I did think of asking them to stay here, but the words just wouldn’t leave my mouth. I keep thinking about Aery has been with you in the past. Moreover, Aery had put TIffany in harm’s way, and I’ll never forgive her for that. I’ve already been very merciful by letting her live out her life peacefully. There’s no need to be worried. I’m sure Helen wouldn’t be so foolish as to put herself in danger.” Despite her words, she was rather worried. It would be fine if Jean could talk things out properly with Helen. She was only afraid Jean was not willing to have a proper discussion and only wanted to make everyone’s lives miserable.

Mark did not continue to speak when he noticed that there was something wrong with Arianne’s expression. He was only putting on a show with Aery and did not have an actual relationship with Aery. In any case, there was no way he could argue with Arianne over the matter.

It was dark when Helen and Aery returned to the hotel. The receptionist at the front desk handed a parcel that had been delivered to Helen. There were no details in the sender’s column, but it was

obvious that it was Jean's doing. The parcel contained a dead mouse. Helen was still frightened even though she had prepared herself before she opened the box. Her face turned pale as soon as she saw the dead mouse.

That night, the pair of mother and daughter had a sleepless night. They constantly woke up to check if the door and windows were locked.

Aery was terrified that she began to cry. "I'm scared, mom. What does dad want anyway?"

Helen could not break down in front of her daughter so she forced herself to stay calm. "It's just a meaningless prank. He can't accept that he has lost everything. I've been prepared for this a long time ago so don't be afraid. He's free to play all the tricks he wants. He'll show up sooner or later.

When Helen went to the bathroom, Aery seized the chance and texted Arianne. 'Big sis, someone sent us a dead mouse. Mom's terrified. Neither of us is able to sleep."

Arianne was still awake when she received the text message. Due to the message, she could not sleep as well. She would not act unless Helen personally asked for help. However, she still could not help worrying. As time passed, she grew even more anxious.

Mark was woken up by Arianne's tossing and turning. He reached out and embraced her as he asked, "What's the matter?"

Arianne said in a hushed tone, "There's an incident at the hotel. Someone sent Helen a dead mouse. It seems like they can't sleep because of that. There really is something wrong with Jean's brain. What's the point of tormenting Helen now that she has returned? Shouldn't he just tell her what he wants?"

Mark analyzed the situation and said, “It’s possible that all he wants is money. Maybe he just wants her to break down so it’d be easier for him to extort money from her. When people are terrified, they’re more likely to give in to demands so they can end everything as soon as possible. Your mom lived with Jean for so many years, they both know each other very well. I’m sure Jean is aware your mom won’t give in easily and hand him the money he wants. Now that Jean has lost everything, your mom would never marry him again. The only thing he can do now is to find a way to guarantee that he would be able to live leisurely for the rest of his life.”

Chapter 1446

Arianne fell momentarily silent before she finally said, “Fine. Bring them here. It’s safer here. I don’t care if Aery lives or dies. I’m doing this because of Helen. After all, she gave birth to me.”

Mark saw Arianne relax a little and said, “I’ll ask Henry to pick them up. You rest easy and go to bed.”

How could Arianne possibly rest easy? She tugged Mark’s ear and said, “Promise me, don’t spare Aery an extra glance. Every time you look at her, I feel disgusted! Also, if Aery makes me uncomfortable, I’ll have her thrown out!”

This was Mark’s first time having his ear pulled. He swatted her hand away. “Do what you want. I’m just giving you a suggestion, you make the decision. There’s nothing going on between Aery and me. I dated her to irritate you. I’ve never even touched her. Why should you feel sick? I was wrong, okay? Alright, that’s enough. Go to bed.”

Arianne did not respond. No matter how hard she tried, she could not sleep. When Henry brought them to the house, she walked downstairs, dressed in her nightgown. She stared at Aery and said, “You and Helen will share a room. You will not act as you please here. If you upset me in any way at all, I’ll have you thrown out.”

Aery lowered her head. “I won’t do anything to upset you, sis. It’s just that… I’m used to sleeping alone. Can I… can I have my own room?”

“No way.” Arianne refused her without any hesitation. “You’re welcome to return to the hotel if you’re unhappy. I’ll have someone drive you there.” After all, Helen and Aery shared a room, at least, Helen would be able to keep an eye on Aery. Helen would not allow Aery to misbehave.

Aery, naturally, did not want to return to the hotel. “Fine… I don’t want to go back to the hotel. I’m scared.”

Helen calmly said, “It’s late now. I’m sorry for the trouble, Arianne. Go to sleep. We’ll take care of the rest ourselves. We’ll try to avoid causing you any trouble during this time. We’ll leave once we’re done with Jean’s matter.”

Arianne nodded, turned around, and went back to her room.

The next morning, Arianne woke up late since she did not have much sleep. Nature forced her out of bed ten minutes later. She was still extremely drowsy. All of a sudden, she heard Mark’s voice and the sound of Aristotle playing downstairs. She did not bother to wash up and hurried to the staircase to see what was happening.

Arianne discovered Aery playing with Aristotle and teaching him to call her ‘Aunt Aery’. Mark stood on the side, watching Aristotle. She felt uncomfortable whenever Mark was with Aery. She felt angry for some reason. Moreover, she had woken up on the wrong side of the bed. She turned on heel and went back into the room, slamming the door shut.

Mark knew that Arianne was awake when he heard the commotion upstairs. He went up to check on her. “You’re awake? I knew you didn’t sleep well last night so I didn’t wake you. I’m going to the office now. You rest at home and keep your mother company.”

Chapter 1447

Arianne sat on the side of the bed with a sullen expression on her face. “I think I made myself unhappy by inviting Aery into our home.”

Mark did not know what to say. Now that he and Aery were living in the same house, there was bound to be some interaction. At the very least, they had to share the same table during meals. He truly regretted his past idiocy at that moment. Although he had never really dated Aery, Arianne would never forgive Aery for what she had done to Tiffany. He had to pay extra attention to his behavior now that Helen and Aery were living in Tremont Estate. One wrong move, and he might set off an explosion. He was the one having the most difficult time.

Noticing his silence, Arianne suddenly got up and pulled his tie. She stood on tiptoes and gave him a hickey on his neck. “Get to work.”

He touched his slightly sore neck. He was not used to this. He had sensitive skin after all. “Er… How am I supposed to see anyone with this? Must you do this? I was only looking at Smore, I didn’t talk to Aery at all. You’ve never been this jealous before.”

Arianne glanced at him sulkily. “Because I wasn’t in love with you back then. Women are petty creatures to begin with. If you’re unhappy, fight me.”

Naturally, Mark no longer dared to object. He only smiled and said, “Okay, okay. I’m not unhappy. You can bite the other side if you want. Will that do?”

He was only joking, but Arianne took it seriously.

When he finally went downstairs, his neck still feeling comfortable, Aery walked up to him and asked, “Mark, what’s wrong with your neck?”

Mark’s expression was indifferent as he removed his hand from his neck. “Nothing. I’m going to the office. Talk to your sister if you need anything.”

Aery saw the hickey on Mark’s neck, and her expression darkened. “Okay… Goodbye.” She continued to look at Mark as he left.

At that moment, Helen walked up and said, “Have you forgotten what I told you before we came here? This is Arianne’s home, and Mark is her husband. You’re not allowed to look at him or talk to him. If you don’t want to listen to me, you’re more than welcome to leave. I only agreed to come here because I don’t know what your insane father is going to do. He’s driving me insane, are you going to do the same as well? One day, I’ll really lose it and cut off all ties with both of you!”

Aery could see that Helen was on the verge of a breakdown so she did not dare to argue. “Mom, I’m not going to try anything, and I’m not scheming anything either. I was just saying hi to Mark. You don’t have to be so anxious. I know that your nerves are tense now and you’re feeling sensitive so I won’t quarrel with you. I’m going back to the room to read.”

Helen crumpled on the couch like a deflated balloon. Perhaps, she was being too sensitive, but she would not and could not let her guard down.

Arianne finally came downstairs when it was time for lunch.

Aery politely served Arianne with a bowl of soup. “It’s been so long since I had fun in my own country, sis. Do you want to go shopping with me?”

“How can you possibly even think of shopping at a time like this?” Arianne replied calmly, “Do you want your father to find you? Stay home. I won’t have your father kidnap you and use you as a threat.”

Aery was disappointed. “Then, does this mean we’ll only be home over the next few days? It’s going to be so boring…”

Chapter 1448

“We’re not here on vacation,” Helen said snappily, “Can’t you be more sensible?”

Aery kept quiet. She lowered her head and pushed her food around, looking very pitiful.

Arianne did not give in. After she finished eating, she took Aristotle to the courtyard for playtime.

Aery tagged along as well. “Hey, sis, my old friend asked me out to have some fun. Wanna come? I’m only going for a short while. Nothing’s going to happen with my friends around. It’ll be fine even if my dad finds me. We’ll go to high traffic places. I won’t leave with him.”

Arianne knew that making Aery stay put in Tremont Estate was unrealistic. All she could do was pray that Aery would not cause any trouble. “Think this through. I won’t be responsible for anything that happens to you. You’d better ask your mom as well. I can’t decide, and you don’t have to ask for my approval.”

Aery held Arianne’s hand and acted in a cute manner as she said, “You know mom won’t allow me out, sis. I have no choice but to come to you. I’ll only be out for a while. Cover for me if mom finds out. I’ll be back soon…”

The thought of Aery displaying this cutesy act in front of Mark in the past filled Arianne with disgust. “I understand. Go. Stop bugging me.”

Aery did not mind Arianne’s attitude. She slipped away after her coquettish act.

Helen noticed Aery’s absence ten minutes later and asked Arianne, “Where’s she? She snuck out, didn’t she?”

Arianne nodded. “Mm. I couldn’t stop her. Leave her be.”

“Seriously?” Helen grumbled. “She’s old enough, and she’s still acting like a kid. How could she possibly think of having fun at a time like this? I give up on her.”

Arianne's ears seemed to pick up hints of indulgence toward Aery in Helen's tone. "Are childish people more likely to receive affection?"

Helen was taken aback. "What?"

"It's nothing," Arianne replied with a bitter smile, "I just think that I matured when I was young. My dad was a thousand times better than that jerk, Jean Kinsey, so you left without any hesitation. Now, you can't seem to let Aery go. Knowing how heartless you can be, shouldn't you have already thrown Aery to Jean and let both of them destroy each other? Or maybe you should have just ignored Jean and let him do whatever he wants. Why did you give in and return to look for Jean? For Aery. We're both your daughters. Why is there such a huge contrast in your attitude toward us?"

Helen stared at Arianne with her mouth agape, unsure of how to explain herself.

Arianne took a deep breath and feigned indifference. "It's fine, I'm used to it anyway. I'm not jealous of Aery, and I see no value in everything you've given her. I don't need anything from you. I just want to know, if my dad wasn't such a stand-up guy and was a jerk like Jean, would you have abandoned me anyway?"

"No, I wouldn't have," Helen replied quickly, without any hesitation, "I left without worries because I knew he would be good to you. Arianne, can't we leave the past in the past? I know that it's a thorn in your side. I've done my best to spare you from hurt, but every time Aery appears, things get even worse. I'll take her far, far away when this is over."

Was that even possible? The hurt in Arianne's heart was close to overflowing. "I hope the Kinseys stay far, far away, but not you. Don't you get it? Every word you say is telling me that if I don't like Aery, you'd take her away and leave me behind! Your action is saying that if I want to have any relationship with you, I have to accept Aery as well!" She would rather take Aery and stay far away from her than to stay by her side.

Chapter 1449

Helen's eyes brimmed with tears. "Arianne… I've already lost you, I don't want to lose another daughter. I can't live a life full of regrets. I want to grab onto my last chance. I won't be able to live if Aery leaves. Her life will be destroyed if she ends up with Jean. I've already let you down, I can't do the same to Aery. I don't have a choice."

Arianne bit her lips. She remained silent for a long time before she finally, "How indecisive. It's not like you at all."

"Maybe I should be heartless as you said." Helen sobbed. "But I've always been afraid of history repeating itself and that I would regret it. Instead of saying that I can't let Aery go, perhaps, you should say that I see her as another version of you. I can't abandon her, just like how I abandoned you in the past. She's really much better than before, she doesn't infuriate me all the time anymore. She's a good girl, like how you used to be when you were little…"

Arianne could not bear listening to any more of that. "Enough. Stop talking. I'm taking Smore for his afternoon nap. Make yourself comfortable."

When Arianne returned to the nursery, she silently wept as she put Aristotle to sleep. She was not as indifferent as she would have liked. Helen could still easily send her into an emotional breakdown.

Aristotle lifted his small hand and wiped away her tears. "Don't cwy mommy. Bad gwamma."

Arianne felt slightly comforted. “Smore, you can’t say that grandma is a bad person. Grandma’s been nice to you. She likes you. She disappointed mommy, but she hasn’t let you down.”

Aristotle blinked, only half understanding the situation. “I hate Aunt Aewy. I don wan’em in our house.”

‘Why do you hate Aunt Aery?” Arianne asked. Aery was nice to Aristotle. At least, she seemed nice on the surface.

Aristotle cocked his head to the side and said with a pout, “She said… She said that the big bad wolf will bite me. I’m scarwed.”

Arianne frowned. Seriously, Aery. How could she scare a toddler like that? She was annoyed, but she could still hold it in. She considered it a part of Aery’s childishness. She could not pick a fight over this. It was irrational.

Aery had only gone out for more than two hours. When she returned to Tremont Estate, she went to her room to continue reading and did not wander around.

When Mark returned home that night, Aery simply stared at him and did not approach him. However, it was because Arianne was around so she was too afraid to do it.

Mark summoned Arianne to the room. He shut the door without any further discussion, took her into his arms, and nibbled on her neck. “Do you have any idea what you’ve done? Everyone was staring at my neck during the meeting today.”

Arianne felt slightly smug. “It’s the only way to tell everyone to whom you belong. Is that so bad?”

He was inches away from her face. He placed his thumb on her lips and gently brushed it. His eyes were bright. “Since I let you have your way, shouldn’t you return the favor with some sweetness?”

She did not struggle. She pulled off his tie and deftly undid his buttons before she took the initiative to kiss him.

All of a sudden, a knock on the door sounded. Aery called out from outside, “Sis, Mark, dinner time!”

Mark was annoyed from being interrupted. He held onto Arianne, reluctant to let go.

Arianne helplessly straightened out his collar. “Let’s have dinner first. We have time tonight. There are guests in the house. It’s not nice to make them wait too long.”

Mark had other things on his mind earlier so he did not immediately notice her red and swollen eyes earlier. Now that he noticed them, he asked softly, “Have you been crying? What happened?”

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“It’s nothing. I didn’t sleep well. It’s normal for my eyes to be a little swollen. I wasn’t crying,” Arianne replied uneasily. She quickly went downstairs as soon as she finished speaking. Mark did not even have a chance to continue the conversation.

During the dinner, Henry suddenly rushed into the dining room. “Sir, someone sent a birthday cake over…”

Mark stared apprehensively at the cake in Henry’s hands and asked, “It isn’t anyone’s birthday. Who sent this?”

Henry shook his head. “A delivery man sent this over. I asked who made the order, but he didn’t know.”

Helen’s face turned white. “Throw it out! It must be from Jean!”

Arianne was surprised. Was it Helen’s birthday today?

Aery revealed everything immediately. “Mom, wasn’t it your birthday not too long ago? It must be for you…”

“I refuse to believe he’s that nice,” Helen said nervously, “Besides, my birthday has passed. Who knows what he’s scheming with this pretentious show of sending a cake?”

Aery mustered up her courage and inspected the cake. She found a piece of paper in the packaging. “Mom, there’s a note. Look.” She handed the note over to Helen.

Helen trembled in fear when she finished reading the note. “He’s crazy… He’s gone crazy…”

Mark wondered what was on the note that frightened Helen to such a degree. He snatched it away. The note read, ‘We agreed to live the rest of our lives together. If I die, I’m taking you with me. We have a long life ahead of us so let’s play. It doesn’t matter if you hide. If I can’t find you, I’ll look for Arianne instead. Her son is adorable. I don’t want anything, and I don’t want to make everyone uncomfortable. However, I’ve lost everything. I’m not afraid of anything now. Marry me again.’

Now that Arianne and Aristotle were threatened, Mark lost his temper. “Henry, send some men out to search for him. Dig deep and find Jean Kinsey! I want him found. It doesn’t matter if you have to turn the entire capital upside down!”

Henry grunted in reply and left quickly.

Helen buried her face in her hands in dismay. “What does he want? I’m back, he should just come for me. Why does he have to frighten me over and over again? I’ll never marry him again. Never!”

Aery patted Helen’s back soothingly. “Mom, don’t be like this. Calm down. I don’t think he’d do anything too scary. He’s just trying to frighten you. He’s still my dad at the end of the day. You’ve been together for so many years. He’s not going to do anything to you.”

Helen suddenly pushed Aery away. “If he really has any regard for our past sentiment, he wouldn’t do this to me! It’s all your fault! This wouldn’t have happened to me if you didn’t exist! You and your father

are both horrible things! This is all happening to me because of you. My greatest regret is marrying your father and having you!”

Aristotle was so frightened that he shrunk into Arianne’s arms, too afraid to make a sound.

Tears brimmed in Aery’s eyes. She looked very pitiful and filled with grief.

Arianne understood this feeling. Aery was probably feeling the same way that she used to feel, as if her existence was unnecessary. It was a horrible feeling. Despite herself, a wave of sympathy rose in her heart. “Don’t do this. How could a scary doll, a dead mouse, and a cake frighten you into this state? What else can he possibly do apart from resorting to these petty tactics? I understand how you feel, but you shouldn't take it out on Aery. Besides, she didn’t choose to be born. Didn’t you willingly deliver her? No one forced you to be with Jean Kinsey. You did it to yourself so you have to accept it. Finish your food if you can stomach it. If not, go back to your room and get some rest.”