Ruling 1481

Chapter 1481

Ursula gritted her teeth as she stared at Arianne; she was so angry that she could not even say anything. As she walked to the door, Ursula stopped in her tracks again and said, “I refuse to believe that I can’t bring my own son with me!”

Arianne coldly laughed inside her heart. “Of course, you can take him away quite easily, but first, why don’t you just pay up? If you aren’t even willing to pay up, how do you expect for things to go your way so easily?”

Arianne was still around when Mark returned from his meeting. He saw that Ursula had already left and asked, “Is it done? What did she say?”

Arianne angrily said, “What else could she have said? The discussion headed in a bad direction regardless, and it was easier to just retaliate against her. Ursula gets more bold the more I try to show her courtesy. Sylvain didn’t want to leave, so I told him to use the penalty from the breach of our contract as an excuse. Also, I told him to say that he had to sign the employment contract with Tremont Enterprise under the condition that the penalty for the breach of contract would be ridiculously high. That way, his mom wouldn’t be able to fork out the money to compensate us and Sylvain wouldn’t be able to leave. His mom knew that it was going to be tough to take him away and took a step back. However, who would’ve thought that she would have another trick up her sleeve? She actually knelt down before me. I was so shocked.”

Mark’s face immediately darkened. “Why did you ask him to say that? If word goes out, people might think that Tremont Enterprises specialises in blackmailing people to stay. Do you realise that you’re tarnishing my reputation? Sylvain would be able to pay for the penalty by himself so there was no need for you to think of that method. You would really throw your man under the bus in order to help Sylvain.”

Arianne felt guilty. “Are you angry…? Wasn’t I out of choices at the time? That’s why I had to come up with this plan. I don’t think such a small matter could greatly damage your reputation, could it? Haven’t I also managed to retain a valuable employee for you? Sylvain has so much potential, it would be damaging to the company if someone were to take him away from us. Plus, if Sylvain had actually gone off with his mom, his life would be miserable, for sure. Not only would he have to be controlled by them, but he would even have to work for them for free, and that’s really pitiful. Also, think of Robin—the two of them have already registered their marriage; what’s going to happen to Robin then? Sylvain definitely can’t go.”

Mark sighed. “You really are quite something. The milk’s already spilled, so what’s the use in me scolding you? However, you really should come to me from now on and discuss before you take any action instead of making the wrong move.”

Arianne blew her cheek and walked towards Mark. Her fingers ran across his neck tie as she put on a pitiful face. “Alright, I know I was wrong. Is that enough? Please don’t be angry anymore. I’ll make you something nice to eat when we get home tonight.”

Mark looked at her cajoling face and felt like he was on cloud 9. He could not keep his frown any longer and just wanted to pull her into his arms and hug her. However, before he could do so, Arianne ran off. “I’ll go and work now. See you later. We’re in the office; it wouldn’t be good if someone were to see us.”

Mark was speechless—the girl had actually completely guessed what was going on in his head. If she wanted to make him reduce his anger, she should be putting in maximum effort. Could she not put in just a little more effort? Was it so hard for Mark to get something out of the situation?

When it was time to head home, Mark sat in the passenger’s seat and closed his eyes to rest; it was as though some issues were troubling him.

Arianne sat beside him and did not dare to even breathe loudly. She had no problems teasing him if it was personal. However, it was probably best for her not to interfere with his business matters. Arianne was still feeling guilty because of Sylvain's matter, not unlike a child getting scolded after making a mistake.

Brian's phone constantly rang, but he did not answer and switched his phone to silent mode instead. However, the phone continued to vibrate, and it was rather annoying.

Mark frowned and asked, "Why aren't you answering your phone? It's very annoying. Could it be your ex again?"

Brian was slightly embarrassed. "No, it's my mom. She wants to arrange another blind date for me. How could I possibly dare to go for another one? I can't even go back to my hometown now. I'll switch off my phone if you think it's annoying. I've already told my mom that I'm already married and have gotten registered, but she refuses to believe me since there wasn't a wedding ceremony. She even wants me to bring my wife home for her to meet, so how could I possibly dare to simply bring her home with me at this point? I'm most definitely going to receive an earful from my parents."

Chapter 1482

Arianne's ears shot up. "What? You're actually married? You're joking, right? How did things escalate so quickly?"

Brian was embarrassed. "Well… it's true. I met a girl and we both saw eye-to-eye and got married without any objections. She doesn't want anything except for a diamond ring. We're living together quite well. She even has her own job and still helps do the chores at home after she gets home from work. This is exactly the kind of life I want to have, helping her out while she makes dinner. Everything seems to be going well at the moment. If I knew this would happen, I would never have gone for the blind date in the first place. In that case, I would be able to avoid causing such a huge mess. In the end, it was merely because my fated one had not arrived yet. Now, I feel great because I don't have to worry about my marriage anymore."

Arianne admired Brian from the bottom of her heart. “Not bad, I’m glad to see that you’re doing well. I was actually worried that your ex-girlfriend would not be able to leave you alone, not that she would be able to do anything to you, now that you’re married. You should hurry home to your wife everyday after work.”

Brian was so happy, he could almost sing to himself during the whole journey. The saying was true that a person’s mood really depended on who they mingled around with.

Back at the Tremont Estate, Smore was doodling at home. His hands were dirtied by the different coloured crayons he was using, yet he was so happy, he did not seem to care.

Arianne grabbed him and took him to wash his hands when he suddenly put on a serious expression and said, “Mama, I want go school.”

Arianne was startled. “How do you know about school? You’re still too young and can’t even go to the toilet on your own, so wouldn’t you just be a hindrance to the teachers in school? Let’s get you to school next year, alright? You’ll be just the right age for kindergarten when you’re three-years-old. By that time, you’ll have plenty of friends to play around with everyday. You really are a good little boy, thinking of going to school at such a young age. Let’s talk about it when you’re done with your milk.”

Smore unhappily pouted his lips. “I don’t want milk. I want go school. Ok, mama?”

Arianne pinched his face. “I said next year, stop arguing.”

After washing his hands, Smore continued to pester his mom and mumble that he wanted to go to school. Arianne was very annoyed by him and shouted, “Mark, your son’s being very annoying! Are you going to do something about it? He’s just so little, yet he wants to go to school. Is this a joke?”

Mark had just finished his shower. He wiped his hair as he walked down the stairs and said, “If he wants to go, then let him be. Some kids who are even younger than him have already started attending kindergarten. Let’s take him someplace similar to a nursery; they should be able to teach him something there.”

Arianne disagreed. “The parents of those kids normally don’t have the time to take care of them, which is really why they’re there. Plus, it’s not like Smore hasn’t got someone to take care of him. In my opinion, he should at least learn how to eat and go to the toilet by himself before he starts going to school. I think three-years-old is just the right age, since he would be off milk by then. It’s no good if he’s too young. Furthermore, there’s no need for him to go if he’s too young, since Mary has been teaching him how to read and draw, etc.”

Mark thought differently. “When I was his age, I knew a lot more things than he does now.”

Arianne pouted her lips. “I know you were a genius child, but I don’t want my son to be the same as you were. All I want is for him to be safe and healthy. Life’s so short, why live in such a hectic situation? He wants to go to school now because he doesn’t know about the hardships involved. It’s very likely that he’ll whine about going to school once he does. Just you wait, he isn’t even in his rebellious phase yet.”

Mark bent over and held Smore in his arms before saying with confidence, “No child of mine will ever have a rebellious phase.”

Chapter 1483

Arianne suddenly went speechless as she recalled her personal experience. How could she possibly dare to rebel when she was in her teens? However, seeing as to how Smore was being showered with love by Mark, the latter probably wouldn't treat his son the same as how he treated Arianne in her teens, would he?

The next day, Mark immediately summoned Sylvain to his office the moment he arrived.

Obviously, Arianne had told Sylvain everything that had happened the day before and knew that he was surely going to be scolded pretty badly. Mark was always very strict when it came to business-related matters.

Sylvain knew what was coming and steeled himself. He did not dare to sit even after Mark had told him to but stood upright and said, "Mr. Tremont, I know I've caused you trouble because of what my mom did. I'm sorry."

Mark picked up his cup of tea, which Davy made for him, and took a sip. "Relax, I didn't call you in here to scold you. I just want to know what you think. Have you ever thought of leaving Tremont Enterprise? If you have, then you should consider it properly because I won't hold onto someone. If it's otherwise, know that no one can ever hope to take you away from me no matter what."

Sylvain remained silent for two seconds and very firmly said, "I have never wavered. I will never leave Tremont Enterprise. I'm only able to survive today because of you. Furthermore, I think this company suits me quite well and I should be able to develop myself further here. I have a job that I'm passionate about here, and this city has the person whom I am deeply in love with, so I will not leave."

Mark nodded his head. "Very well. It's usually a bad thing for a person to be soft-hearted, but you should know what to do with your mother now. Before you're able to resolve your issues, you don't have to come back to the office, since it isn't healthy for you to bring your emotions into your work. I'll

let you take a vacation to resolve your matters. Tremont Enterprise is more humane than your mom; we don't just think of profits.

Sylvain did not disagree. He gave a wry smile as he said, "I understand. Thank you, Mr. Tremont. I'll be leaving now. I'll be back as soon as I resolve my issues."

Mark waved his hands, and Sylvain left the office.

Arianne, who was waiting by the elevator, whispered to Sylvain when she saw him come out, "How was it? Judging by your sad expression, have you been scolded? He's that kind of person; his words are harsh, but he means well, so please don't hold a grudge against him."

Sylvain shot Arianne a smile. "Mr. Tremont didn't scold me. He isn't as terrifying as you think he is. He's letting me take a vacation so that I can have plenty of time to resolve my matters. He's right though; it isn't a good thing to be soft-hearted. Hence, it's time for me to settle this. I'll be off now—I'll buy you a meal when this is all done."

Arianne sighed with relief but was slightly startled. Mark was definitely angry yesterday, yet he did not scold him today.

When he left the office, Sylvain made a call to Ursula's phone. When the phone call was connected, Sylvain said in a very peaceful tone. "Are you available now? Let's meet up."

Of course, Ursula agreed to meet him in a heartbeat. She could not ask for anything more other than for Sylvain to take the initiative and contact her.

Both of them met at Sylvain's favourite cafe. Ursula still had her saintly expression on her face and did not even mention a word about what she had done at Tremont Enterprise. "This is quite a nice cafe, Syl. I never expected for the coffee in this country to be this good. As expected of my son; he has very good tastes."

Chapter 1484

Sylvain frowned. "In your eyes, do you really think that your own country can't compare to the country you're married to? I truly don't find the overseas to be all that great."

Ursula laughed. "I didn't mean it like that. Are you trying to say that I'm disloyal to my own country? It's merely because I've grown accustomed to the overseas lifestyle. Syl, have you called me out to tell me that you've changed your mind? Will you be leaving with me?"

Sylvain pursed his lips and mustered up the courage to say, "I'm sorry, mom, but I really can't go with you. I like it here, and I have a job that I'm passionate about and a person whom I want to spend the rest of my life with. Could you please consider my situation once in a while? I won't blame you anymore for abandoning me and marrying someone else without even contacting me all these years, since that was your choice. All I ask is that you don't use me as one of your leverages in your marriage. Whether or not you're able to maintain your marriage has got nothing to do with me, it's all on you. We're all adults and we need to be responsible for ourselves. I've never asked you to do anything for me, so you shouldn't be projecting your wishes onto me either. You should stop wasting more time and just leave."

Ursula could not smile any longer. She could not continue to force him to do as she wished thanks to his peaceful attitude. Ursula smacked her dry lips and did not say anything for a moment. She did not put on any makeup on purpose so that she could look a little more tired than usual. However, her little tactics did not seem to be able to make Sylvain show any sympathy for her.

After a while, she half-heartedly asked, “Will it not bother you even if your mom wouldn’t be able to live on because of this? Syl, are you sure that you’re fine with this?”

Sylvain unbearably looked out at the road through the window. “I can’t comment if you aren’t able to live on because of your divorce. We’ve never stopped to think about how the other would feel because of our actions, have we? We aren’t as selfless as we think. The more you think that your family is important to you, the more cruel it is to me since your family has absolutely nothing to do with me. I never thought that you would kneel down and beg in front of Mr. Tremont while offering such ridiculous conditions. I’m really disappointed in you.”

Ursula was slightly agitated by Sylvain’s words. “Didn’t I do that because I had no other choice? What difference does their employment contract have compared to a brothel? Isn’t it too much to ask for such a high compensation in order to breach the contract? You’ve said it before, you’ll be able to leave with me as long as I can pay the penalty. In that case, it’s not that you aren’t willing to leave with me, but that Tremont Enterprise’s contract is holding you down! Imagine the effect if the public knew that Tremont Enterprise had such a terrifying contract? You’re being forced to do this, aren’t you? You’re being forced by Mark Tremont to be this way, or otherwise, you’d never talk to me like this!”

Sylvain gritted his teeth and gently released himself from his mom’s grip. “Mom! It’s nothing like that! There was never such a high penalty to begin with—that was just a ploy I used to lie to you because I knew that you’d never be able to fork out that much money! Now do you see? I never intended to leave with you in the first place! Also, you should stop using that disgusting tone with me and calling me Syl. You lost the right to be my mom the moment you came to find me for your own benefit. That nickname was only for you to call when you were still with me when I was a child. If there’s nothing else, I’ll be leaving now. Don’t ever find me again. Everything that I had hoped to happen all these years amounted to nothing.”

When he was done, Sylvain got up and left the cafe without even looking back.

Ursula held her chest and stifled her tears. At that moment, she realized that she had not only lost her family, but she had lost her son as well.

That night, Arianne did not go home with Mark but went to a restaurant that Sylvain had made reservations for. Sylvain was a man of his words and had asked her out for a meal, so there was no reason for her not to.

When she arrived, she realized that Robin was there along with Sylvain.

Just as Arianne sat down, Robin gleefully said, “We’re married, Arianne.”

Arianne was glad when she saw how happy Robin looked. “Finally. Congratulations.”

Chapter 1485

Robin shyly glanced at Sylvain. “I still dare not tell my parents about our marriage. I suppose I’ll need to face the music anyhow tonight. However, I won’t be as timid as I was previously and will bravely face it. I was the one who made this decision, and this is my life. Therefore, the result is all my problem. It doesn’t matter if my mom is unhappy about this; it’s already decided.”

Arianne nodded her head in agreement. “That’s true, it would have been better if you thought so earlier. Are you going to obey your mom’s wishes and stay in accounting? Have you ever thought of coming back to Tremont Enterprise and working together with Sylvain as a designer again? You’ve already chosen the man you love; you should be choosing the job you’re passionate about as well.”

Robin hesitated slightly. “Tremont Enterprise has such high standards that I can’t hope to reach, so I should just remain as an accountant. However, I do want to be together with Sylvain. I could just work in another department at Tremont Enterprise. It’s enough if he’s able to fulfill my dreams in my place. I

could never hope to be better than him in this life. You really should help to offer me another alternative, Arianne."

Of course, Arianne was more than willing to offer Robin another alternative. "No problem, you're already buying me a meal. What else would it take for me to give you another offer? I'll ask around and see if there's a vacancy in any department that would be suitable for you tomorrow; I'll let you know when I have something. Don't worry, you won't have to suffer as long as me and Sylvain are in the company."

Sylvain suddenly sighed. "I was planning to ask Mr. Tremont to join us for dinner, but I shot down the idea when I thought about how his stern face would affect the atmosphere. Please thank him on my behalf, Arianne."

Arianne could not stifle her laughter. "Do you really have to go that far? He's actually not as stern as he looks. How could he be terrifying when I'm sitting here enjoying a meal while he's taking care of his son at home? You really wouldn't think that way once you saw him taking care of his son. I'll convey your gratitude to him, don't worry."

Arianne returned home after dinner and conveyed Sylvain's message first thing when she entered the house. Mark did not give a huge reaction. "What's there to thank? It's nothing worth mentioning. You're back just in time. I've got something that I need to attend to now, so could you please take care of that rascal? I'm about to be annoyed to death by him."

Arianne was curious; something was very wrong from the way Mark suddenly called Smore. What did Smore do to annoy him so much?

When Mark went upstairs, Arianne looked for Mary and asked, "What has Smore done? How has he angered Mark so much? Mark actually called his own son a rascal."

Mary sighed and said, “Sir was busy in his study, but Smore insisted on following him. In the end, Smore made a big mess of sir’s files. I think sir was angry because he needed those files tomorrow. There’s nothing I can do. Smore refuses to let me take care of him the moment either of you are home.”

Arianne was shocked. She carried Smore upstairs for a shower. “How could you do that? You’re very lucky that your dad didn’t beat you. If I were to dare make a mess of his files, he’d definitely kill me. Your dad holds his job even dearer than his own life, so you must never do that again.”

Smore boldly said, “He didn’t want to play with me, so I drew.”

Arianne batted her eyelids a few times. Smore was definitely going to be beaten quite a lot when he grew up. She was worried for his future…

After Smore had showered and put on his clothes, Arianne realized that he had not only messed up Mark’s files, but he even doodled on Mark’s white shirt. The crayons were made of materials that couldn’t be washed off!

Panicking, Arianne grabbed Smore and lectured him. “You ungrateful little boy, do you know how expensive this shirt is? Why couldn’t you draw somewhere else? Didn’t I ask your Granny to buy you a whole stack of drawing paper? Do you think those papers aren’t worthy enough for you to draw on? I didn’t want to beat you because I thought that you were still young, but you’re a very naughty boy now! I’m so angry with you!”

Smore was very calm. “Dada is rich, don’t be angry.”

Chapter 1486

Arianne was speechless.

Arianne helped cover Aristotle's tracks by disposing of the shirt before Mark was finished with work so Mark would not yell at him when he saw it. Mark was already in a bad mood after his documents were destroyed, it would not take much for him to lose his temper. Mark had a lot of clothes so he probably would not notice.

It was soon proven that Arianne had been too optimistic. Aristotle had access to the shirt he had doodled on because Mark had laid it on the bed beforehand because he was planning to wear it tomorrow.

As soon as Mark returned to the room, the first thing he asked was about his shirt. "Where's my shirt? I plan to wear it tomorrow."

Arianne wanted to insist that she had not seen it but chickened out in the end. She mustered up her courage and said, "Smore doodled all over it. We couldn't get the stains out so we threw it away. He's your son, don't be angry. You have money, we can always get a new one."

Mark rubbed his brows. "I… honestly give up. Smore is asleep now, isn't he? I'm exhausted. I'm going to bed. Find a suitable shirt for me. I have a wedding to attend tomorrow. You don't have to go, I have to go back to the office in the afternoon."

Arianne did not like those kinds of events anyway so she was fine. However, she, naturally, would not allow him to bring another woman. "I won't go. But... no one else is tagging along with you, right?"

Mark did not know if he should laugh or cry. He reached out and tapped her nose. His eyes were brimming with indulgence. “What are you thinking? Since you’re not going, who else am I gonna take with me? I’m going alone. I’m going to go to bed now.”

Meanwhile, on the other side of the city.

It was late at night when Sylvain dropped Robin off on the ground floor of her condominium. He asked uneasily, “You really don’t want me to come with you?”

The thought of revealing the marriage to her mother filled Robin with turmoil. She was terrified but bringing Sylvain along would only make the situation even worse. She replied, trying to relax, “No need, really. My mom won’t eat me alive. You can go home now. Drive safe.”

Sylvain planted a kiss on her forehead before he reluctantly left. “Okay. Call me if you need anything. Update me on everything that happens, I’d worry less that way.”

Robin nodded. She watched as Sylvain’s car disappeared into the night. She heaved a sigh of relief before she went home.

She had just arrived at the door and taken out her keys when the door swung open, revealing Mrs. Cox’s sullen face, staring down at her. “Where have you been? Your curfew is 11 PM. Look at the time! I saw it from upstairs, Sylvain sent you home. Are you really that determined to be with him for the rest of your life? You’re still young, you only see things from one perspective…”

Robin pulled out her marriage certificate before Mrs. Cox could finish speaking. “We’ve registered our marriage. It doesn’t matter what you say, it’s no use.”

Mrs. Cox stared at the white piece of paper. Her eyes widened. The expression on her face gradually morphed from shock to rage. “Robin Cox! Are you seeking death? I didn’t give you my blessing. How can you do this to me?”

Chapter 1487

Robin raised her hands and covered her ears. She could not stand her mother’s shrewish shrieks.

She was not the only one, the neighbors could not stand it either. Their neighbors opened the doors, curious and angry from being started awake by the commotion. “What the heck is going on? Can’t you let us sleep? It’s the middle of the night!”

Mrs. Cox was an educated woman so she had a good grasp of basic decorum. She immediately apologized and pulled Robin into the house. “Are you out of your mind? Are you? How can you be so reckless with something like this? You’ll regret this one day!”

“Mom, I found him on my own. This decision was mine to make,” Robin said resolutely, “I don’t care if we get along in the future or not. You’re not the one to blame here. I’ll accept the consequences, if any. I love him, mom. Just accept him. Put your prejudice aside for now. We have plenty of days ahead of us, he’ll prove it to you and so will I.”

Mrs. Cox was clearly at the peak of her rage. She refused to listen to a single word Robin said. She went back to the room and dragged Mr. Cox out of bed. “Look at what your daughter has done. She got married without our consent, and you’re still in the mood to sleep? How can you sleep at a time like this? I’ve never liked Sylvain. What else does he have except money? Oh, I’m going to have a stroke!”

Mr. Cox looked perplexed as he stood at the bedroom door. His eyes were half-closed, his mind was a blur. “Perhaps, you should avoid kicking up a fuss in the dead of the night and discuss this tomorrow instead? I have a class tomorrow, and I need my sleep. Can’t you show me some consideration from time to time? Our daughter is old enough, there’s no need to make every single decision for her.”

Mrs. Cox smacked Mr. Cox on the head. “What are you saying? How can you be so calm at a time like this? You’re acting like it’s completely normal!”

Robin stood at the side, too afraid to even breathe loudly. That smack looked painful. Mr. Cox was smacked awake. His drowsiness vanished immediately. He was clearly grumpy from being forced to wake up but was too afraid to speak up. “What do you want me to do then? She’s already signed the papers. Even if you want them to annul it, you’d have to wait until tomorrow when the civil affairs office is open, right? Do you know what time is it? Will you stop? It’s not that I don’t care, I just don’t see a point in kicking up a fuss. Must you be so superfluous? You too, Robin. You should have, at least, discussed this with us. That’s enough, everyone, go to bed. We’ll talk tomorrow.”

Robin quickly dashed into her bedroom before Mrs. Cox could say another word and locked the door behind her. Soon, she received a message from Mr. Cox. ‘Whatever you do, do not tell your mother that I gave you my blessing, she’ll beat me to death. I did that for you so you should be considerate to me too.’

A smile bloomed on Robin’s face. It was true. Her father knew she was going to get married and gave his blessings. She had told him about it a while back. Her father had always been more understanding of her plight and opinions. He had been living under her mother’s thumb and had been too afraid to speak up. This time, both father and daughter had taken a big step.

The next morning, Mrs. Cox refused to make breakfast for the first time ever. She sat in the living room, watching television first thing in the morning. The dark circles around her eyes were an indication of her sleepless night.

Robin could not help but feel guilty at the sight of her mother. “I’m sorry… Mom… I should’ve discussed this with you. I was afraid that you wouldn’t approve. Don’t… you have class today? Aren’t you going to work?”

Mrs. Cox refused to look at her. She said, miffed, “Your matters are none of my business so you needn’t trouble yourself over my business. You can do whatever you want from now on. You’re married, what are you still doing in this house? Hurry up and move out. At least I won’t be annoyed by the sight of you.”

Chapter 1488

Robin’s heart ached upon hearing her mother’s words. It was certainly a good time for her to move out now. If she did, it was likely that she would never be able to come home again. “Mom! I will not leave until you put aside your prejudice. I have to go to work. You have a good rest at home, we’ll talk when I come home.”

Mrs. Cox turned her head to the side and looked at the door when she heard it close. Tears brimmed in her eyes.

Robin had updated Sylvain on what had happened at home. Now, they had to take things slow and steady or they would drive everyone up the wall.

Sylvain felt extremely worried over this matter. He was a promising young man in every single aspect, why was it so difficult to obtain Mrs. Cox’s approval? He only had that huge scandal with Jessica to

blame. Mrs. Cox had been honest her entire life and placed the utmost importance on reputation. That was a great obstacle to overcome.

Arianne had heard Sylvain sighing more than ten times in less than an hour since work started. She would be startled every time he sighed. In the end, she could no longer bear it so she asked, “What are you doing?”

Sylvain stared at her innocently. “It’s not like I want to sigh, I can’t help it. Things didn’t go well when Robin went home last night. It’s probably going to be a long battle. Her mom didn’t sleep at all last night and didn’t even go to work today. Robin says that her mother would always be busy preparing for classes, even during the holidays. This is pretty serious.”

After some thought, Arianne said, “Your attitude is especially important at this time. You can’t let Robin face this alone. You have to do it with her, no matter how scary it seems. You should take the initiative and visit Robin’s mom. Talk to her. Her mom’s perception of you is certainly going to deteriorate if you continue to hide and leave Robin to take care of this.”

Sylvain was slightly apprehensive. “Really? You’re not lying to me, are you? I’m not good with interpersonal relationships, and it’s not easy to figure out a woman’s mind. You’d better not give me bad advice at a time like this. Robin wouldn’t let me go with her. What if I show up and make things even worse? That would be bad.”

Arianne rolled her eyes at him. “You wouldn’t be this way if she were easy to deal with. Parents might not be able to remain unyielding to their kids forever, but this long battle is enough to drag you to the end of your patience. You’re married, and you can’t even see your wife. Wouldn’t that drive you mad?”

Sylvain realized that Arianne had a point. “You’re right. It’s going to be hard for Robin to see me now. I can’t just sit by and resign myself to fate. Mr. Tremont isn’t in the office today, I think, so I’m going to

ask you for leave. Robin won't be home this afternoon so it's a good time for her mother and me to have a private conversation. Should I bring a gift?"

Arianne stared at him as if she were looking at an idiot. "Do you even have to ask? Did you plan on showing up empty-handed and getting beaten alive? No one could hit a smiling face. Don't you know that? Her mom is at home, isn't she? Bring a present and talk to her. Show restraint no matter how unbearable her words are. You cannot blow your top at her. Her pure, virginal daughter, whom she's raised for more than twenty years has been whisked away by a pig like you. Do you have any idea how pissed she is? By the way, don't choose a useless gift. No need to get anything too expensive, just give her something pragmatic, something that's suitable for her age. Maybe some sort of health supplement. A good bottle of wine for your father-in-law will do."

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Sylvain made an 'okay' sign. "I understand. You're much better at this than I am. I've gotten so used to being alone for so many years, having a family now is a drastic change for me. Honestly, it's kind of a headache dealing with elders."

Arianne's ears were at peace once Sylvain left. She no longer had to put up with being startled by his sighs anymore. Just as she laid her head on her desk to take a nap at 1 PM, she suddenly felt someone sit down next to her. She asked without lifting her head, assuming Sylvain had come back early, "How was it? Were you beaten out of the house?"

"Are you talking in your sleep?" Mark's voice rang from the side.

She immediately straightened up. "What are you doing here? I thought you were Sylvain. He's gone to see his in-laws. I thought you had a wedding to attend? What are you doing back so soon?"

Mark seemed to be in a bad mood. A conflicted expression could be seen on his face.

Arianne asked tentatively, “What’s wrong? You don’t look so good. Did that wedding annoy you in some way? Who’d have the gall to do such a thing?”

Mark fell momentarily silent before he said, “I think I saw Seaton.”

Arianne gaped. She wanted to say that it was impossible but suddenly remembered that nothing was absolute in the world. She did not know what to say. It was no wonder Mark had such a strange expression on his face. If Seaton really was back in the country…

She held Mark’s hand. “Are you sure? Is it really him?”

He shook his head slowly. “I only caught a glimpse before he disappeared. I can’t confirm it, but we have to be on guard. I didn’t plan on letting Seaton walk out of prison alive when I put him in there. Logically speaking, he should be dead by now, you know what I mean? If he really escaped and came all the way here, he’s definitely here to seek revenge from me. No, I have to talk to Alejandro. If it’s really Seaton, then, he’s a target too.”

Arianne frowned and did not say a word. She relaxed her grip on his hand.

Mark noticed this and squeezed her hand. “I had no choice. A lot of people lost their lives in that shipwreck, but there are no death penalties in Seaton’s country. Even if we let him serve his sentence in prison and leave, he’d still come after me. Knowing him, it’d be a fight to the death if he finds me. I had to act first. Please don’t look at me like I’m so… terrifying, okay?”

Arianne forced a smile on her face. “I… I understand where you’re coming from…” But she always had this strange feeling deep inside of her. She did not like this cruel side of him. She preferred it when he walked in the light.

Mark was disheartened at the sight of her forced smile. “What kind of a man am I to you? I would have lost my life many times over if I didn’t resort to these methods! Forget it. You won’t understand anyway. I’m going back to the office.”

Arianne wanted to stop him as she watched him walk away. However, just as the words reached her lips, she swallowed them. She simply did not like it when he acted this way.

Mark called Alejandro after he entered the office. “I think I saw Seaton. I’m going to investigate the prison to see if he actually died.”

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Alejandro casually took a puff of his cigarette from the other end. “Seaton S. Bart? Are you seeing things in your old age? Didn’t we verify this? He’s dead. Are you implying that he somehow managed to escape?”

Mark was annoyed. “I’m double-checking, just in case. It’d be great if it wasn’t him, but if it is, we have to find him as soon as possible. If it doesn’t matter to you, then, let’s pretend I didn’t call you. If someone kills you, don’t blame me for not warning you.” He ended the call immediately after that.

Alejandro put down his phone, let out a puff of smoke, and summoned Jett. “I asked you to keep tabs on Seaton in prison. Did you manage to get a confirmation? Is Seaton still alive?”

“He’s dead,” Jett replied confidently, “A man like him wouldn’t be able to survive more than a few days in prison with those hardened criminals. How could a businessman possibly use business tactics on those kinds of people? In prison, people communicate with their fists. Besides, we’ve even given a bribe. Why? Is he still alive? That’s not possible though…”

Alejandro put out his cigarette. His eyes filled with cynicism. “Who knows? Maybe a businessman like him is so good at bartering that he managed to save his own life. His company might have been sold, but no one knows how many hidden assets he has. Maybe someone in his family helped him with a bribe. Mark suspects that he’s still alive. So check again. That way, we’ll all sleep better. If he’s really alive and is in the capital, we have a huge problem. He’s a newly-escaped convict. He only has two options now; either he hides away in the darkness and lives out his ignoble existence like an insect, never to show his face in public again or he’ll risk everything for revenge for the sake of wiping away his humiliation. Based on my knowledge of him, he’ll never be content with living the rest of his life like an insect.”

Jett was slightly convinced. Was it possible? Did Seaton really manage to escape from prison? He calmed himself and said, “I’ll check again and give you an update as soon as possible.”

…

That afternoon, after work, Mark waited for Arianne at the parking lot as usual.

Their small altercation at noon made Arianne slightly uneasy. She did not initiate a conversation with him when she got into the car. The pair did not speak at all.

Brian sensed that something was amiss so he stayed silent and cautious as he drove the car back to Tremont Estate.

Mark wore a sullen expression on his face, and Arianne could not be bothered to look at his stupid face. She determinedly kept her eyes outside the window. Unbeknownst to her, the continuous silence made Mark's expression turn even more sullen.

Finally, at a traffic light, he could not help but say, "What do you want? It's not like it's a big deal, why are you sulking? If I don't kill him, he'll kill me. I had to do it!"

"I'm not, you're the one who's sulking," Arianne calmly replied. Actually, she knew that Seaton deserved his punishment. After all, Mark nearly died by his hand. She did not particularly mind his methods. If only one of the two men were allowed to live, she would choose Seaton's death without any hesitation. Her reaction back then was simply because she was not used to it. He had overreacted.

The thought of that shipwreck still traumatized her to this day. She had nearly lost him. She would wake up in the dead of the night countless times, to check if he was with her. Nothing mattered as long as he was alive. She understood his impatience, bad temper, and harshness when he discovered the possibility of Seaton's survival. She only wanted to avoid quarreling. She did not want to fight with him over that matter. Some fights could be avoided after all.

Mark ducked into the study straight away when they returned to Tremont Estate, looking as if he wanted to ignore the rest of the world.