Ruling 1501

Chapter 1501

Although both of them had very similar identities, with Alejandro being Mark's younger brother from another mother and Aery being her younger sister from another father, how was it that they were being treated so differently? It was probably because some people knew when to admit their mistakes and change while others refused to.

Humans are never perfect and will make mistakes, but some are worthy of being forgiven while others aren't.

The harm that Aery had inflicted on Tiffany was irreversible and that incident had long but been a thorn in Arianne's heart. Although Alejandro was involved in that matter, Aery bore a much larger responsibility because Alejandro had never intended to harm Tiffany in the first place.

Furthermore, Alejandro's actions may have been quite extreme, but it was all for a good reason. There was no way for him to avoid any conflict with Mark due to his identity as the Tremonts' illegitimate son. However, Aery was able to prevent all misunderstandings with Arianne. Even if Mark did not provoke Aery in the past, it did not mean that the same thing would not happen in the future. There were some things that were bound to happen anyhow; there was no way of preventing it from happening.

When she arrived at the hospital ward, Arianne placed the basket of fruits on the counter. "How do you feel, Henry? How's your injury? Is it serious?"

Henry had always seemed to be so energetic in the past, but this fall had thoroughly transformed him into an old man. Henry laid on the bed and looked very frail—he was even on drips connected to the back of his hand. "It's nothing serious, I won't die from it. I just feel much weaker than usual."

Mark paused for a moment before opening up his mouth and saying, “Why don’t you retire, Henry? You’re at the age where you should be enjoying yourself for the rest of your life.”

Arianne was slightly curious about what Mark had in mind when he suddenly made that suggestion. Was it really a good thing for Henry?

True enough, Henry thought that he had made a grave mistake and struggled to sit up straight. “Sir, this is my fault. I was away coincidentally when Seaton came. I will never make that mistake again!”

Mark hurriedly went up to help him. “I didn’t mean it like that, Henry. In fact, I don’t blame you at all. I merely think that you must be tired from serving the Tremonts, serving me for so many years, and it’s time for you to rest. I’ll arrange a house for your retirement. Tell me anything else that you require. It wasn’t that Seaton had gone to the Tremont Estate while you were away coincidentally, but that he knew that you wouldn’t be there, which was why he had gone. This incident has got nothing to do with you.”

Henry sighed in relief. “I’ll be fine, I can still work for a few more years. I think I’m still in rather good shape, and it’d really be a waste of my life if I were to stop all of a sudden. I’ve been working at Tremont Estate for so many years now and have grown accustomed to it. I’ll go into retirement the day that I can’t move anymore.”

Mark was slightly frustrated, but Arianne managed to console him just in time. “Why don’t you let him do as he wishes, Mark? We’ve lived together for so many years now; we wouldn’t be able to get used to it if he left, let alone him.”

Mark dropped the idea. “Alright then. If it pleases you, Henry, you should treat Tremont Estate as your retirement home. That way, you wouldn’t have to leave. When you’re dead, I’ll be the first to send you off.”

Chapter 1502

Instead of being the stern man who had little words to say, Henry suddenly laughed out loud and was filled with emotions. Even his eyes seemed to sparkle with something that seemed like tears. “You little rascal, are you trying to curse me dead? There’s no need for you to send me off. I’m just an employee for the Tremonts, not your senior. I’ll have my own way of going off when the time comes.”

Mark pulled up Henry’s blanket and kept him warm. “You’re already my senior in my eyes. I am the man I am today because of you. Therefore, you’re even more fatherly than my real father ever was.”

Henry sighed. “Anyhow, he’s still your father, so you should leave the past behind and move on, since it already happened such a long time ago. You should head home soon. I’ll be fine here and will be able to discharge in two days. My men are doing their best to find Seaton’s whereabouts; I’ll get it resolved properly for your sake. I promise that such an incident will never occur again.”

Mark shot a glance at Arianne, but she feigned ignorance and took out an orange from the fruit basket, peeling it. “Have an orange, Henry. It should be quite sweet. We’ll be staying in the Smith Manor for the time being, as we’d rather not go back to the Tremont Estate until it’s resolved.”

Arianne knew in her heart that everyone within the Tremonts were all the same. Mark was not born with such a strategic mind naturally but had been influenced by the people and environment around him. On top of that, Henry was one of the people who had influenced Mark, having single-handedly raised him. Therefore, it was impossible for Arianne to understand and mix around with them, and she could only be a bystander who feigned ignorance.

As they returned from the hospital, Mark remained silent whilst driving, without saying what was on his mind.

Arianne, thinking that the atmosphere was getting slightly heavy, took the initiative to strike up a conversation. “Why do you think that Seaton’s always personally handling things? Couldn’t he hire someone to do his bidding if he had the money? It doesn’t seem to be a smart move for him to take such a high risk, and he might even be caught by us if he’s not careful.

Mark turned his head to look at her. “Think of it from a different angle. Wouldn’t it be easier for us to trace things back to him if he were to hire people to do his dirty work? Since he’s doing everything on his own, we haven’t got a clue as to where to start investigating. Frankly, he’s the only person whom I will acknowledge to be my rival after so many years. Seaton’s smart and is very good at strategizing, which I believe you would think as well since he’s been able to sneak into Tremont Estate and leave there unharmed. Furthermore, he has a wide variety of hobbies and interests, so it’s really difficult to discover something that he can’t do, be it in his business or in his own personal life.”

Arianne pondered for a moment. “You’re right… He has studied medicine and is proficient in both creating and dismantling explosives, not to mention his strong observation skills. He’s been able to show up in front of us and cause trouble before disappearing so easily without a trace. He’s a rather terrifying person; he would be able to earn a fortune by doing some illegal work instead of being an honest businessman. Plus, it’s more thrilling for him. However… How did he lose to us so easily in the past? Don’t you think it was too easy? Additionally, he even allowed me to realize that he was the one who had harmed you. Finally, he even allowed Jeffrey, the person who had testified against him, into his home. He even allowed Jeffrey to find a photo of himself…”

Mark frowned. “Based on what you said… I find it strange as well; something doesn’t seem right.”

The couple failed to come to a conclusion by the time they arrived at the Smith Manor. Mark called Alejandro to the patio and explained all the suspicions he had. Alejandro lit up a cigarette and handed the box to him. “Do you smoke?”

Mark shook his head. “What do you think about it?”

Alejandro casually said, “What’s there to suspect? Seaton’s a human after all, so he’s bound to slip up eventually. You shouldn’t overcomplicate things. He allowed Arianne to realize his intentions due to his arrogance; he probably thought that your woman was an idiot. As for Jeffrey, Seaton had already planned for him to be his scapegoat and die on the ship, not knowing that Jeffrey still had a trick up his sleeve. Jeffrey did not dare to return home, not only to hide from us, but from Seaton as well, out of fear of being murdered.”

Chapter 1503

Mark gently sighed in relief when he was satisfied with what he had just heard.

Alejandro took a puff on his cigarette before continuing. “Actually, besides being an ambitious man, Seaton has his eyes on Tremont Estate because of his wife’s intention to divorce him. However, this is as far as my understanding goes. Seaton’s been dragging on with his divorce despite the amount of time that has passed. On the other hand, Seaton’s wife owns a portion of his company’s shares and he would most definitely be in a lot of trouble the moment they divorced and his wife gained another portion of his shares, hence why he’s got his eyes fixed on Tremont Enterprise. He wouldn’t have to worry about going bankrupt if he manages to acquire your company. Seaton’s company was affected when he was in trouble; his wife even sold us her shares without hesitation when we acquired the company. Women are said to be very vengeful beings the moment they’ve been thoroughly hurt. Judging by Seaton’s inhumanity, I’d say he deserves what he’s going through today, since he was even foolish enough to allow his woman to be involved in his business. What an idiot.”

Mark glared at Alejandro, his intentions clear despite his silence. Alejandro realized what had happened and said, “I wasn’t saying that you’re an idiot. Although your company may be owned by Arianne, it’s not a big issue, since she’s been with you for so many years; there shouldn’t be any mishaps. I haven’t got the slightest intention to comment about your matters.”

Alejandro had slightly paled as he explained himself. Mark turned around and walked into the house with a darkened face, ignoring Alejandro altogether.

…

Despite his greatest efforts, Summer and Atticus still found out about the truth. Tiffany was partly to be blamed, thanks to her inability to act—she could not maintain her composure in front of Summer. In addition to Jackson's absence, Tiffany could not help but reveal everything the moment Summer had asked her.

Summer and Atticus rushed to the hospital the moment they found out about Jackson's whereabouts. On the other hand, Jackson seemed to have healed and would be able to be discharged very soon. He felt helpless when he saw his parents, with Tiffany holding up both her hands as she stood behind them to indicate that she had no choice. Instead of being mopey and sad, which Jackson had anticipated, Summer actually said, "What kind of self defense have you been learning all this time? How could you be knocked out so easily? Tiffany hasn't been eating well because of how much you've fed her with your cooking."

Jackson was confused. He slowly put a suspicious look on his face and, after a moment, asked, "Tell me the truth, mom. Am I adopted, or am I actually your flesh and blood?"

Summer raised an eyebrow and said, "Of course, you're my own flesh and blood. I carried you for 10 months, so there's no doubt about that."

Jackson's lips twitched. Why did he still find it hard to believe?

Atticus remained silent and walked out of the ward after no more than two minutes. Jackson noticed his actions and muttered, “What’s he doing here? Was he merely passing by to visit a sick patient?”

Summer raised her hand and tidied up Jackson’s messy hair. “He’s probably afraid that you’d despise him and grew nervous, so he chose not to be a hindrance to you. He’s your dad anyhow; you should treat him better. However, he really shouldn’t be keeping silent, without even saying a word. Why is it that he still has to be so careful with his choice of words in front of his own son…”

Jackson did not reply. Tiffany realized that the situation was turning awkward and hurriedly asked, “Have you had your breakfast, Jackson?”

Jackson looked at the time on his wristwatch. “It’s almost 10AM, what do you think? I’ll be fine here, but you guys should do what you have to do instead of standing here. Although I’ll be out of here soon, I could take the opportunity and get some rest during this time.”

Chapter 1504

Summer sighed. “Based on your current situation, I think you’ll be fine, but you’ve really given me a shock. Why did you ask Tiffany to hide the truth from us? Wasn’t it merely just a light stab? You didn’t actually injure any vitals, yet here I was, thinking that it was much worse, since you tried to hide it. My heart really can’t take such pressure anymore.”

Merely just a light stab…?

Jackson immediately grew even more suspicious of his real identity. Was this something a mom would actually say to her son? If he did not know Summer’s attitude any better, he would have actually gone for a DNA test!

Summer left the hospital with Tiffany after Jackson insisted that they leave. The pair met up with Atticus, who was just about to return to the ward as they were leaving, and Summer begrudgingly asked, “Where have you been? Is this how you visit a patient in the hospital? How could you leave after just two minutes? Jackson was really unhappy about it.”

Atticus was startled. “It’s not like that… I had just gone to meet the doctor to see how Jackson was doing. The doctor said that his injuries aren’t serious and he will be able to be discharged in a few days. Can’t you see that I was just about to return to the ward? Are you guys leaving already? Shouldn’t we stay for a little longer?”

Tiffany smiled. “He’s been pestering for us to leave and not disturb his rest. There’s no need for us to be worried for him, since he’s under the hospital’s care. Don’t worry, dad; let’s go home.”

Atticus looked at the ward’s door and nodded his head. It would seem as though he wanted to see Jackson before he left, but the gap between them was so large, thanks to the rough relationship they had over the years, that it was no easy feat to mend that gap. There was nothing more they could wish for, aside from being able to live together peacefully.

Jackson was discharged during the weekend, which so happened to be at the same time as Henry.

The repair works on Tremont Estate had been completed. Mark did not intend to live at Alejandro’s any longer and took the opportunity to move back to Tremont Estate after he picked up Henry from the hospital.

Seaton had been quiet for the past few days. It could also be said that he did not have the opportunity to do anything.

Henry's doctor had asked him to recuperate in the hospital for a few more days due to his age, but Henry insisted on leaving. A large part was due to Seaton's incident—Henry was afraid that it would happen again. This time, Henry was the only one injured, but they might not be as lucky the next time.

Back at Tremont Estate, Mark headed into another room, which was his new bedroom. He must have felt slightly traumatized from the incident, as he did not wish to stay in the same bedroom as before. Plus, his house had just been repaired and was not in the most appropriate condition to be living in.

Just as they had managed to settle down, Arianne suddenly received another phone call from an unknown number. She did not intend to answer, as she feared that it was one of Seaton's provocations again. However, Aery's voice came out of the speaker when she picked up the phone call. There was a lot of background noise from the other end of the phone call, but Arianne managed to make out what Aery was saying—she had returned to the country again; secretly, in fact. Aery had approached Arianne to seek sanctuary!

Arianne refused without hesitation. "I will never allow you to enter my home again, nor do I have the obligation to do so. I'll inform Helen that you've secretly returned again."

After saying that, Arianne hung up the phone. However, she then began to have second thoughts. What if something happened to her? Seaton was desperately plotting to have his revenge against her and Mark. Based on his tactics, Seaton was most likely well aware of everything that was happening around her, including Aery's existence…

Chapter 1505

Despite that, Arianne did not have the slightest intention of letting Aery back into her life, since the latter was undoubtedly clinging onto her to get close to Mark. Smore was also at risk of being put in danger if she was not careful enough. After weighing the pros and cons, Arianne decided to ignore Aery. Seaton would not make a move on Aery if he knew of the bitter relationship she had with Arianne. She was glad that she was not a soft-hearted person and was able to ignore Aery without feeling guilty. Arianne was not as saintly as others might think.

Arianne informed Helen about Aery's return and was shocked to find out that Helen had no knowledge about it. Aery had run away when she saw that Helen was buried beneath work. Helen was unable to pick Aery up due to her work as well.

Arianne clearly explained to Helen about Seaton's matter and declared that she could not be held responsible if anything were to happen to Aery.

Helen promised that she would pick Aery up as soon as she could before hanging up the phone. Arianne gave a long sigh of relief. Aery should not have brought her more trouble at a time like this!

Arianne's phone suddenly rang again in the middle of the night. The phone call broke the silence and served to wake her up. She reached out her hand to hang it up.

Mark had been disturbed by the phone call as well and was still in a daze. He hugged her and asked, "Who was it?"

Arianne definitely did not know who it was, since she did not even open up her eyes. "I don't know… I refuse to answer any phone calls when it's so late. How annoying."

A minute barely passed when a text message arrived. Arianne grabbed her phone in frustration to see who it was and immediately woke up when she read the message. The text message was from the unknown number that Aery used that morning, but this time, she was not the one who had sent the message—Seaton was!

'Arianne, your sister is in my hands. If you want her to remain alive, we should meet and come up with a win-win solution.'

Arianne immediately sat upright. She grew even more fearful the more she imagined what might happen. Why did Aery have to invite herself to her own funeral?!

Mark got up and asked, "What's wrong?"

Arianne calmed herself before she said, "Aery called me this afternoon to tell me that she's back in the country and wanted to see me, but I declined. I told Helen about Aery's return and she promised that she would pick Aery up in the next two days. I never expected for Seaton to take advantage of the situation… What should I do now? Seaton's a madman; there's nothing he wouldn't stop at!"

Mark silently thought to himself for a moment before saying, "Are you sure it's Seaton? Or could this be one of Aery's pranks? You said that you called Helen to tell her everything, so it could be possible that Helen had also contacted Aery. What are the chances that Aery's just using Seaton's name to force you into submission? Give me your phone. I'll find out if it's actually Seaton.

Chapter 1506

Arianne was beside herself with panic. She handed the phone over to Mark.

Mark called the number, but the person on the other end hung up on him. Soon, the number sent a message: 'I know you're all looking for me, give me a break. It's pretty exhausting, hiding from all of you. If your men continue searching for me tomorrow, I'll cut off Aery Kinsey's hands. Such a pretty young girl, it'd be a shame for her to lose her hands. Give me some peace and quiet for two days while you prepare yourselves to do business with me. Wait for me to contact you. I will contact you on my own.'

In order to confirm the truth for them, Seaton sent a picture of Aery Kinsey tied up in a dark room. Aery's mouth was taped shut, her eyes were wide and filled with fear. It didn't look like an act. It was very difficult to feign that degree of terror.

After receiving confirmation that Seaton had kidnapped Aery, Arianne grabbed her hair in frustration. "Is something wrong with her brain? She's pretty much served herself up to death on a silver platter!"

Mark soothingly pulled her into his arms. "Don't panic. Seaton wants me. He doesn't need to do anything to Aery until he has achieved his objective. I think we should tell your mother about this. She has the right to know. After all, Aery is her daughter. Go to bed, and try not to think about these things. We'll solve this tomorrow after a good night's sleep. For now, I'll tell them to stop searching for Seaton immediately, or if I don't, Aery's hands will be chopped off."

Helen rushed back to the country after she was informed of Aery's kidnapping. Mark went to the office while Arianne stayed at home to wait for Helen.

Helen stormed into the house with a face filled with anxiety. "What's going on? She just arrived home yesterday. How did she end up kidnapped? Does Seaton S. Bart have magical powers?"

Arianne was extremely frustrated, so her tone was no better. "She did this to herself! I'm already in terrible shape, yet she still wanted to mess things up even more! Now, she's done it—Seaton has an

advantage now. Seaton wants Mark's life, but do you really think I'd let Mark exchange himself for Aery? No way!"

Helen's face turned white. "Arianne Wynn… She's your sister! Why did you ignore her when she came to you yesterday? You knew that she, too, would be in danger in this situation. Why didn't you prioritise her safety? I know how unhappy you are over how I'm treating her, but she's your sister. How could you watch her die? When it comes to a person's life, shouldn't you consider their safety, no matter how much you resent them? I thought that you were grown up enough, that you were more sensible…"

Arianne could hear the sting of Helen's reproach in her words. Yes, she had ignored Aery yesterday, and she regretted it terribly now. Because not only had Aery walked straight into a trap, but she had worsened a situation that was already horrible to begin with. However, wasn't it entirely Aery's fault?

"Let me ask you this, when have I ever acknowledged Aery as my sister?" She frowned as she asked Helen in an icy tone, "When has her safety become my responsibility? If I let her in, it's out of affection—but it's also well within my rights to refuse her entry. And as you know, there's no affection between us to speak of! To me, she's only messing things up for me. You have ignored everything else and stormed in, scolding me for ignoring her safety. Why should I? Should I let her in the house so that she can take my child and fall down the stairs with him, again? Or should I let her come up with ten thousand different ways to climb into my husband's bed? I've had enough of you, both of you!"

Helen immediately felt guilty. She calmed down a little. "Arianne… That's not what I meant. All I'm saying is that if you hadn't ignored her yesterday, this wouldn't have happened. Not only would she not have fallen into a trap, but your situation wouldn't have worsened either. Isn't that right? We shouldn't be fighting now, but trying to find a solution. I apologize for the things I've said. I was just… overcome with worry. Think nothing of it."

Were the words "think nothing of it" enough for someone to start over? That wasn't the case for Arianne. She felt as if countless icicles had pierced through her heart when Helen railed at her over Aery. She had never experienced such limitless protectiveness, such unconditional love. That's right, she was

the abandoned daughter. Helen's kindness to her simply stemmed from guilt, and she was trying to make up for it. She was nothing compared to Aery in Helen's heart.

Chapter 1507

Not matter how many sins Aery committed, Helen would always stand by her side, tolerating her as much as she could. However, Arianne never did anything wrong but was abandoned in the end. People say that children who cry are greatly beloved. So… Was this true?

Arianne remained silent, and Helen began sobbing. "I'm sorry… I didn't mean it. Please, help me, okay? Save Aery."

"How would you like me to help you?" Arianne asked with a deadpan look on her face. "Exchange a life for a life? Seaton's cut off all communications with me, and we can only wait for him to initiate contact with us to ask what he wants. But the answer… It's probably going to be a life for a life. Nothing else matters to him. Seaton is supposed to be dead by now, he's blacklisted. He can never start again. He just wants to drag a few fall guys along with him before he goes to hell. Do you understand me? Regardless of the outcome, I'm not to blame. I've done my due diligence for you and Aery."

Helen slumped into the couch, as if the air had been completely knocked out of her. She knew that things wouldn't end well now that Aery had fallen into Seaton's grasp.

"Mommie! Mommie! I want water!"

Aristotle and Mary walked into the house from the courtyard. The lines on Arianne's face softened when she heard Aristotle's voice. She displayed a warm expression on her face. "Okay, mommy will pour you some water. Be a good boy and wash your hands with Mary, okay? Your hands are dirty from playing in the garden and have bacteria all over. Your tummy will hurt."

Aristotle obediently nodded and followed Mary into the washroom.

The little guy finally noticed Helen when he emerged and had his water. “Gwamma!”

Helen couldn't muster a smile in the slightest. Her emotions were a spectacular mess from the moment Aristotle walked in. Arianne was now a mother, so it was probably even more difficult than ever for her to understand her past cruelty. How cold-blooded could a mother possibly be to abandon her own child, ignoring her completely? She wasn’t forced into a dead end at the time—she was only being selfish, intent on chasing after everything she wanted.

She had given Arianne far too little. What right did she have to ask anything from her?

That night, Mark sensed something amiss when he arrived home. It was obvious that Helen and Arianne had a fight.

He knew the exact reason and didn’t ask too many questions. When he finished his shower and went downstairs for dinner, Helen had clearly lost her appetite. She sat at the table, refusing to touch her knife and fork. “Mark, is there any hope for Aery’s survival?”

No one knew the answer to that. Mark took a breath. “I don’t know. I’m not Seaton. I can’t guess his moves. It’d be best to avoid overthinking before we have a conclusion.”

Helen’s lips quivered. “You don’t have to console me. I know that Aery won’t be coming home this time.”

Mark didn’t know what to say. Everyone knew, but no one wanted to put it out in the open. Helen’s immediate breach forced everyone’s hidden worries into the open.

Arianne quietly ate her food. She waited for Aristotle to finish eating, then took the toddler upstairs.

She may insist that Aery’s kidnapping had nothing to do with her, but Aery had called her before her kidnapping. She couldn’t help feeling regret. If she had settled Aery at the time, this wouldn’t have happened. If Aery really did die by Seaton’s hand, she wouldn’t be entirely absolved from responsibility. At least, Helen would resent her for it and blame it on her for the rest of her life.

Chapter 1508

Aristotle sensed her emotions and asked innocently, “Mommie, are you sad ‘cos of Gwamma?”

Arianne pursed her lips into a smile. “Not really. You have no idea how many problems I have. It’s much better to stay at your age; you don’t have to worry about a thing. Grown-ups have way too many problems…”

Aristotle tried to touch her head, imitating Mark. He wasn’t tall enough, so Arianne had to help him out and squat down.

His actions warmed Arianne’s heart. “Smore, I’m happy as long as I have you; there’s nothing I can’t overcome. I have confidence again.”

Suddenly, Mark pushed open the door and entered the room. “Did you have a big fight with your mom? Aery’s been kidnapped, so she must be worried sick. Don’t mind her.”

Arianne bit her lips. “She blames me for ignoring Aery. Do I have to take the blame? Why should I care about her? She’s not a three-year-old!”

Mark stepped forward and stroked her head. “Alright, it’s not your fault.”

His actions were exactly like Aristotle’s. Or rather, Aristotle’s actions mirrored his. Aristotle’s imitation skills were perfection itself. Arianne weakly shot him a look. “Stop touching my head in front of the kid. He imitates you. You should be more careful, or he’ll pick up bad habits… Honestly… I’ve been feeling wretched too. When I received Aery’s call before she got kidnapped, I could have settled her elsewhere, even if I didn’t want to let her stay in Tremont Estate. I could have had someone watch over her and wait for Helen to pick her up. That way, this wouldn’t have happened. I didn’t think things through. I don’t know what I was thinking at the time either… Now that it’s come to this, I don’t know what to do…”

Mark walked to the side of the bed and sat down. He reached out and pulled her towards him. “You don’t have to feel too bad about it. If I were you, I might have ignored her too. She’s an adult after all. Seaton’s the main culprit. It’s not your fault. You’re feeling guilty because your mom might think that you didn’t handle it well enough. You value her opinion—I know. At this point, it would seem that Aery is safe for now. Keep your cellphone on, in case Seaton tries to contact you again and the line gets choppy.”

Aristotle disliked being neglected. He put all of his efforts into climbing up Mark’s leg. “Daddie, caewwy!”

Mark picked Aristotle up and held him with one arm while wrapping the other arm around Arianne's waist. "Are you happy now?"

This moment of peace allowed a momentary relief from the stress they faced, but it was not enough for them to feel completely at ease.

…

In a small house in a secluded part of the outskirts, Seaton sat at an old, scratched-up table, eating fast food. There was a half-finished can of beer next to him.

There was a musky, mouldy smell in the air and bugs of various sizes circled around the light bulb over his head. The hot, humid air was barely kept at bay by a small, slow-moving fan. The effect was barely noticeable.

Aery sat in a corner, her hands and feet still bound. The tape on her mouth remained. She had been frightened out of her wits during the initial moments of her kidnapping. One day and one night had passed, yet Seaton hadn't done anything to her, so her fear gradually decreased. Her stomach had been growling for quite a while after suffering under these circumstances for so long. The smell of fast food was making her drool uncontrollably.

Chapter 1509

Once he was almost done with his meal, Seaton looked at her and placed his extra purchase of fast food in front of her on the ground. "I will remove the tape from your mouth and release your hands for the time being so that you can eat and drink. If you step out of line, I will kill you. Understand?"

Aery nodded profusely. All she wanted to do now was have a good meal.

Seaton wasn't worried that she would suddenly scream aloud. There were so few inhabitants around that it was like an abandoned little village. He had gone through a lot of effort to find this place. This house originally belonged to a bachelor. The bachelor was so poor that the house had nothing but care walls. Aside from a wooden bed, there was an uneven chair and a rotten table. He only bought the fan because he could no longer stand the heat.

He had given the bachelor some money as rent for a few days and told the bachelor to fool around for the next few days. He usually moved from place to place every three days in order to avoid Mark and Alejandro's men.

Once Aery's hands were released, she hungrily wolfed down her meal. "Can… Can I have some water? Beer is fine too, I'm too thirsty!"

Seaton had no intentions of letting her die of thirst, so he agreed to her request and gave her a can of beer.

Aery carefully accepted it and thanked him. Her expression of gratitude piqued Seaton's interest. "Thanking your kidnapper? Isn't that funny?"

Aery carefully looked at him. "Why… did you kidnap me? I'm not a rich heiress, and my family is only considered comfortably well-off… It's not worth it to kidnap me. You were fiddling with my phone; were you asking my mom for ransom money?"

Seaton narrowed his eyes and flashed a strange smile from the corners of his lips. “I do want ‘ransom money,’ but not from your mother. I want it from Mark and Arianne. Besides, the ransom I want isn’t money, but their lives!”

Aery immediately found it difficult to swallow the food in her mouth. “Who… Who are you? If you wanted to threaten them, shouldn’t you have kidnapped their son instead? Arianne and I are embroiled in an abyss of suffering. She’s hoping for my death. You want to use me to threaten her? What a joke! Arianne and I may be half-sisters, but if you set our blood relations aside, we’re enemies! Don’t you think you’ve caught the wrong person? By the way, even if you can’t kidnap their son, you can kidnap Tiffany Lane instead. Tiffany is way more important to Arianne than I am, and she’s Mark’s best friend, Jackson’s, wife. They’re more valuable than I am! I can’t give you their lives in exchange!”

Seaton found her very noisy, so he irritably replied, “Are you going to eat or not? If not, I’m going to tape your mouth shut again.”

Aery immediately stopped talking and continued eating her food.

She was previously too afraid to look at Seaton’s face. Now, after a few glances, he seemed more and more familiar to her. That shipwreck caused a lot of buzz, so she wasn’t completely in the dark about this. Once she compared the kidnapper to Seaton’s features, her heart began to race.

She didn’t answer Helen’s call back then. If she had, she wouldn’t have been ignorant of her kidnapper’s identity. She simply wondered how Seaton had managed to escape from prison and infiltrated the capital. Despite her curiosity, she did not dare ask. Since Seaton S. Bart was the kidnapper, he wasn’t going to let her go so easily. A desperate criminal would go to any lengths.

Once she had finished her meal, Seaton took the rope and began to tie her up again. She struggled. “Uh… Can I use the toilet? I need to pee. I’m not lying. I know I can’t get away, so I won’t.”

Seaton eyed her for a few seconds like an eagle, then tied her hands up anyway. However, he did not tie them behind her back this time, but in front. Then, he untied the rope on her legs. “I’m coming with you. I’ll hold the rope on the other end. The toilet’s outside.”

Chapter 1510

Aery was afraid. “You’re coming with me? That sounds inconvenient, doesn’t it?”

Seaton didn’t have that much patience. “You can choose not to go, then urinate all over yourself once you lose control.”

Of course, Aery didn’t want to soil herself, so she had no choice but to steel herself into letting Seaton lead her into the toilet in the garden with a rope. The toilet was a latrine, really old and rife with a horrible stench. She had to hold her nose and retch before she entered it.

“Don’t you worry, you’ll smell just like this toilet after a few days in this kind of environment,” Seaton said mockingly when he saw the look on her face. “There’s no use getting disgusted. Just get used to it.”

Aery was extremely reluctant to go inside, but she couldn’t hold it in any longer. She gritted her teeth, summoned her courage, and forced herself to slip into the narrow toilet.

Seaton held the rope on the other end and lit a cigarette with his back against the toilet. The smell of cigarettes could somewhat mask the putrid stink. His wretched state was all thanks to Mark, Arianne, and Alejandro. He would make them all pay, one by one!

“Uh… Do you have toilet paper?”

Aery’s nitpicking annoyed Seaton. “No!”

Aery didn’t make another sound and quickly stepped out of the toilet.

Seaton tossed away his half-finished cigarette and quickly strode into the house, dragging Aery along with him as if he were pulling a mule along with him.

Aery felt completely humiliated, but she had no choice. Her heart was now filled with hatred towards Arianne. She had been kidnapped because of her. Seaton had no grudges against her but wanted to kill Arianne and the rest. It was all Arianne’s fault for ignoring her!

They returned to the house. Seaton blocked out most of the light when he stood underneath the lightbulb. The ceiling wasn’t high enough, so Seaton’s height and build were a grievance in this situation. It gave Aery an extra layer of pressure too. If Seaton really wanted to kill her, she would have no way of retaliating.

She wouldn’t hope for Arianne to come and save her, as she knew how much she hated her. As Seaton inched closer to her to tie up her legs, she deliberately spoke to him in a honeyed tone, “You really won’t get much value out of me. I know who you are, and I know what you’re trying to do. Let me go. I can’t guarantee the rest, but Arianne… I can bring her to you. Tremont Enterprises would be yours if it weren’t for her, and this wouldn’t have happened to you. Am I correct? As long as you can catch her, you can hack her to pieces if you like.”

Seaton glanced indifferently at her. “Are you teaching me now? Listen here, little girl, I would never leave anyone else to do jobs that I’m perfectly well-equipped to accomplish. It’ll only spoil my plans. Stop coming up with plots. I am not letting you go.”

Aery panicked. “Can’t you differentiate between good and bad? You want Arianne dead, and so do I. If you consider all of that, aren’t we both on the same track? You may have kidnapped me, but Arianne won’t save me. You’ll only end up squatting here until they find you. Do you understand me? You think you’re so smart, don’t you? But you look really stupid to me!”