Ruling 1511

Chapter 1511

Seaton coldly snorted. “Well then, we shall see how valuable you are when the time comes. You may not be valuable to her, but your relationship is. I’m sure Helen will force Arianne to save you.”

The next day, Arianne was absent from work, too busy accompanying Helen at home as usual. Helen was completely shaken and there was no way Arianne could leave her be.

Helen was even more attentive than Arianne of incoming calls. It did not matter who it was, for as long as Arianne’s phone rang, Helen would jump and think that it was Seaton. However, a whole day passed without a word from Seaton.

It was torturous, just blindly waiting around. Helen had not been able to have either a proper meal or a good night’s sleep.

When it was past 9PM, a phone call finally arrived from Aery’s number.

Helen grabbed the phone from Arianne’s hands before the latter could answer. “Hello? Is this Seaton? Release my daughter immediately! What have you done to her? You can come for me instead. Are you doing this for money? I’ll give it to you, I’ll give you anything you want, but just leave her alone!”

Arianne remained silent, unhappy with how insane Helen looked. Would Helen react the same way if she was the one who was kidnapped instead?

There was no reply from the other end of the phone call and the silence was menacing.

Helen kept calling out on the phone for a long time before Seaton's voice finally came. "If you want to save Aery, bring Arianne in exchange. You have one night to consider. If I don't receive a reply by the morning, I'll chop off Aery's hands. If I don't hear a favourable answer from you, I'll make sure Aery disappears from this world."

The phone call was immediately cut off after Seaton finished speaking. They tried to redial the number, but the phone had been turned off.

Helen broke down in tears and cried profusely. "What now? What am I going to do now…? Aery's going to die…"

Arianne and Mark looked at each other for a moment and both remained silent. They had clearly heard Seaton's demand—a life for a life. Obviously, no one was willing to comply, There was no way Arianne would die for Aery. Furthermore, Mark would never allow such a thing to happen.

However, Seaton had the higher ground at that moment and wanted nothing other than Mark and Arianne's lives. There was no room for negotiation.

Smore was constantly whining that he wanted to sleep, so Arianne helplessly carried him upstairs to put him in bed. Just as she was about to walk to the stairs, Helen suddenly roared. "Arianne, are you really able to leave things as it is? You're the reason this is happening. Aery has got nothing to do with this. She's been kidnapped and is in grave danger because of you. Do neither of you have anything to say for yourselves? How are you able to sleep without a worry at this moment? Aery's going to die come sunrise!"

Chapter 1512

Arianne immediately stopped in her tracks. “What would you have me do? Run amok like you are now and let an innocent child suffer as well? Aery was the one who sealed her fate by coming back here. This would never have happened if she did not return here with malicious intentions. What would you have me do now? Exchange myself for her? Why should I? What right do you have to make such a request? I can understand that you’re panicking and are worried, but don’t you dare vent your frustration on me. You have no right to!”

After saying that, Arianne carried Smore and sprinted to her room, slamming the door behind her.

Arianne had thought that she had put the past behind her and forgiven Helen. It was not until this incident that Arianne realized that Helen neither needed to be forgiven, nor did she deserved to. In the end, Arianne was just a child she had abandoned for so many years. The relationship they had could never be compared to the one Helen had with Aery, who had been raised by her since birth. Such was the reality of things.

Helen was bound to make such unreasonable requests when she had completely lost her rationality thanks to Seaton. How could she not be panicking at the thought of Aery’s impending doom?

Helen sat by the stairs and cried, but Arianne ignored her and coaxed Smore to sleep as if nothing had happened.

Smore was being a good boy and rested in her arms. He hugged her tightly and said, “Mama, mama good, gwamma bad.”

Arianne almost broke into tears herself after she tried so hard to stifle them. There was nothing she could do to reverse the situation, but she felt so angry and helpless, to the point that it was eating her up alive.

Mark was annoyed by Helen's incessant crying. "Stop crying. Crying won't solve the problem."

Helen had completely lost her composure, as she grabbed onto her chest. "What would you have me do then? Can you save Aery? Could you please save her? Seaton's obviously coming for you, and Aery's just a victim in all this. You can't just sit around when she's about to die. Even if she did come back to her own death, she did it because of you! If you had not seduced her in the beginning, would she be like this? Mark Tremont, you're partially responsible for this…"

Mark suppressed his emotions and shut his eyes. "Frankly, I was not the one who seduced her—it was the other way around; it was all supposed to just be a show. Do you even know what you're saying at the moment? If you don't view Arianne as your daughter, you shouldn't show up in front of her. Are you really able to live with yourself after how you've been treating her time and time again? I had actually thought that you sincerely regretted your actions and wanted to make amends, but it would seem that I was gravely mistaken. How do you expect us to save Aery? A life for a life? Impossible!"

Helen suddenly stood up. "I'll go and meet Seaton and use my life in exchange for hers! That should be fine, right?"

Mark immediately stopped Helen. "Are you crazy? You're sealing your own fate. Not only would Seaton not release Aery, but he would gain another bargaining chip instead! Are you trying to use your own life to threaten Arianne? Could you just consider Arianne's feelings for once? You've been so selfish since the beginning that Arianne doesn't owe you anything!"

Helen used everything she had to release herself from Mark's grip. "Not only will you not save her, but you're not letting me save her either. Are you guys any better? I don't mean to have Arianne sacrifice her life for Aery, but there must be some solution. However, both of you are giving me the impression that neither of you are willing to save Aery at all! The two of you seem to be living on as though nothing has happened! If it was Arianne who had been kidnapped, I would still react the same way. Blood runs thicker than water—both of them are my daughters and this is a mother's natural reaction. I could never be as heartless as the two of you!

"Mark Tremont, is this all there is to you? You're willing to retreat at Seaton's threats without even attempting to look for him? Are you going to sit here and wait for everything to end? Seaton's merely a human as well; how could you not be able to come up with any kind of plan against him? Haven't both of you been wishing that Aery was dead? She may have committed a lot of sins against the two of you, but she's doing her best to change. I will definitely scrutinize her for her behaviour since she's still young and foolish, but I most definitely won't let her die!"

Chapter 1513

Mark rubbed his glabella to stop the headache he had. "Can you please calm down? I have not asked my men to retreat. Alejandro and I have arranged for a new batch of people to look for her, since Seaton has long but had me running around his fingertips. Do you honestly think that I haven't already thought of everything that you have? Time is of the essence now; I'm already annoyed to no end, so please stop making it even worse. None of this would've happened if Aery had not caused trouble. Also, how is she young and foolish? Is she still a child? It's no wonder that Aery turned out to be how she is today when she's been pampered by you. It's a good thing that Arianne was not raised by you!"

When he was done, Mark walked upstairs and ordered the guards not to let Helen leave the house. Things would only become even more serious if Helen did anything foolish.

They only had 10 hours left before sunrise, and these 10 hours were the most critical. Mark changed into a fresh set of clothes before he drove out. It was most definitely going to be a very busy night for them.

Before he left, he took Arianne's cell phone with him. Seaton had constantly been contacting Arianne through her phone; he needed to be sure that Seaton would not contact Arianne while he was away. Arianne was in a complete mess at that moment, so she probably would not be able to withstand the pressure and might do something foolish as well.

After coaxing Smore to sleep, Arianne returned to her room to lie down, unable to fall asleep no matter how much she tried, as Aery's terrified face would appear in her mind whenever she closed her eyes. Why was she being blamed when she had nothing to do with it? She hated the feeling of being blamed for something she did not do.

Suddenly, the bedroom door creaked open. Mary softly whispered. "Arianne, are you asleep?"

Arianne replied. "No, I can't sleep."

Mary sighed as she walked towards her and sat by her bedside. "I understand that you're in a bad mood and would definitely have a hard time trying to sleep. Sir's not at home as well, so let me accompany you."

Arianne sat up and placed a pillow behind her back. "Mary, do you think that I'm at fault here?"

Mary shook her head. "How could you be at fault? Aery had only called you after arriving at the capital, and you had no obligation to meddle in her affairs. We all know what her intentions were. If it were me, I wouldn't let her into the house either. She's only pretending to be well-behaved on the surface, but she is no different from who she was in the past. It's hard for a leopard to change its spots. Didn't you already inform Helen the moment you found out that Aery was back? Helen did not ask for you to keep her safe either, did she? She could blame Aery or even Seaton, but she most definitely cannot blame you."

Arianne lowered her eyes, feeling down. “But… Why do I still feel guilty? I shouldn’t be so narrow-minded when a human’s life is at stake. None of this would probably have happened if I had brought Aery back and waited for Helen to take her away. However, now that things have developed to this stage, Helen would not think the same way as all of you do. This may not have had anything to do with me, but Helen disagrees. You’ve heard it yourself—Helen will definitely hold a grudge against me forever if Aery dies.

Mary grabbed onto her hands and consoled her. “You shouldn’t think that way. So what if she hates you? The two of you have been estranged for so long now and you won’t be living the rest of your life with her either. She was just downstairs running amok, and sir even argued with her for a moment. Sir supports you all the way, so you don’t have to think about anything else. Look at you; how could you look so frail? Hurry up and get some rest. There shouldn’t be anything that’s preventing you from resting. Aery’s life is all up to fate now. Sir and Alejandro have done their best. He has even personally gone to look for Aery himself. He did bring some men with him for support, so you should rest easy.”

Chapter 1514

Meanwhile, Alejandro, along with his men, had found the village, which was located in a rural area. There were no headlights along the way and the roads were bumpy, so the men had to continue the rest of the journey on foot instead. If Seaton was really there, the sound of their car would most definitely expose their presence.

The entire village was enshrouded in darkness even under the moonlight, and there was not a single house that had its lights on; it was as though it was a haunted village. Other than the sound of the stray dogs barking, there were no other noises coming from the village, so their footsteps sounded very loud as they walked into the village.

Alejandro instructed all of his men to move separately to avoid the sound of their footsteps from being accumulated together. That way, they would be able to move more discreetly. According to Alejandro’s men, Seaton had actually been to the village, but it was not known whether he was still there. However, time was running out and they needed to act swiftly to ensure that no time was wasted.

Alejandro had sent Mark a text message beforehand to warn him not to drive his car into the village when he arrived. He also mentioned that Mark needed to tread lightly while he was in the village due to the eerily quiet environment. Seaton was a very alert person; it would not be ideal to let him run away by being careless.

Alejandro travelled deep into the village through a shortcut alone, using only the weak light from his phone to light up his path. Suddenly, Alejandro seemed to have stepped onto something soft, possibly a living thing. He immediately jumped away while simultaneously pulling out his gun and pointing it towards the ground. After identifying what it was, he realized that it was an unconscious drunkard. The drunkard only moved slightly after being stepped on and seemed to mutter something. It seemed like they were heavily intoxicated.

Alejandro frowned and kicked the drunkard again before continuing his journey. Suddenly, the dude mumbled, “So many mosquitoes… but I can’t go home. Fuck… so little money, it’s not enough to gloriously…”

Alejandro stopped in his tracks and walked back to the drunkard. He squatted before slapping the guy on the face. The drunkard squinted his eyes open and laughed as he asked, “Do you want… to rent my house…? If you pay me more, I’ll let you have it. The other guy… was… such… a prick… I’m the only one left in the village. Only my house… has water and electricity. Unless you rent my house… there’s nowhere else…”

Alejandro looked at his surroundings—who would actually come here and rent a place? It was in the rural area and the environment was bad. There weren’t any production plants within the vicinity so it looked completely like an abandoned area instead. The tenant that the drunkard was referring to was quite likely to be Seaton!

Alejandro fished out a stack of cash from his money clip and threw it at the drunkard. “Tell me, what did the tenant look like?”

The drunkard's eyes glimmered at the sight of cash. He seemed to be a lot less intoxicated now. "I-I… don't know. I couldn't see properly. He was wearing a hat and a mask, quite tall and well built."

The description seemed to be quite similar to Seaton. Alejandro quickly asked, "Where's your house? Has that man left? Take me there now!"

The drunkard swayed around as he tried to stand up. He mumbled something again, which was barely audible. "I-it's… front… He's still here. When I tried to go back and take a nap… kicked out. H-he… refused to pay more. I have no money to go out and have fun. When he came… he was alone. However, I saw a woman just now, quite pretty. Hey, don't you think he should pay extra for two people? He was being unreasonable and wanted to hit me. What a douchebag…"

Chapter 1515

Based on the details given by the drunkard, it was definitely Seaton.

Alejandro grew annoyed when he noticed that the drunkard would not stop mumbling, and he urged him to show the way. Alejandro was in no mood to waste his time talking to the drunkard.

The drunkard noticed the gun in Alejandro's hands and swayed even more due to fear.

Both of them walked together along the narrow street, which was filled with holes. Alejandro had his guard up at all times. He realized that something was wrong after walking for a few minutes. The village was not that big, yet the drunkard seemed to be unable to remember where his house was and was going around in circles.

Just as he was about to interrogate him, the drunkard suddenly slammed into a nearby house that had a rotten door and disappeared into the darkness.

When Alejandro realized that the drunkard was escaping, he spat out a swear and turned the light on his phone to the maximum brightness before following the drunkard in a hurry.

The drunkard was a local here, and compared to Alejandro, he was much familiar with the village's geography. If Alejandro had not followed the drunkard with his hearing, he would most definitely have lost him.

The chase lasted for no more than five minutes before Alejandro caught the drunkard. The village was currently filled with Alejandro's men, so it would not be easy for the drunkard to escape.

Alejandro wiped off the bead of sweat on his forehead and kicked the drunkard. "Go on, you f*cker. Why aren't you running anymore? I asked you to show me the way, yet you dared to fool me? Are you that eager to die? Tell me, where is he!"

The drunkard no longer had the drunken face he had before. Aside from the stench of alcohol that lingered around him, his words were no longer mumbled. "P-p-please… don't kill me. That man asked me to do this. He was also the one who taught me what to say and told me to take you round in circles. I'm quite sure he has already fled by now. It won't be worthwhile for you to waste your time on me anymore, won't it? Your target is that man. If you hurry now, you might still be able to catch up to him…"

Alejandro was filled with rage. He definitely had Seaton within his grasps, yet thanks to the drunkard, Seaton managed to slip through his fingers. Strictly speaking, he had been played by Seaton. Seaton knew that he would rush over to the village and had made plans to stall him, hence his anger and frustration. There was no way that Alejandro would have been strung along had the drunkard not revealed that much information to him. Seaton was definitely a very intelligent man.

The more Alejandro laid his eyes on the drunkard, the angrier he became. He raised his gun and disengaged its safety. “I’ll f*cking end you!”

The drunkard was so shocked, he wrapped his arms around his head and begged for mercy. Suddenly, the sound of footsteps grew closer, and Alejandro shone his light towards the sound of the footsteps. It was Mark.

Mark was able to guess most of what had happened based on what he saw at the moment. “Ignore the man, and let’s go catch Seaton. The faster we find him now, the better. We’re racing against time for Aery’s life, and time is running out.”

Alejandro grit his teeth and kicked the drunkard a few more times. “If you don’t want to die, show us the way. Where did he run off to?”

The drunkard trembled as he said, “Your men have surrounded the entire village, and he most definitely wouldn’t try and run into them. I believe he would be running off through the back of the village. There’s a big mountain behind the village, and it has yet to be developed. I’m familiar with the area, so I could show you the way… Just… don’t hit me anymore, alright? I can’t take it no more.”

Alejandro wanted to kick him again, but Mark stopped him. “We need to find the hostage first. Let him show the way.”

Meanwhile, at the undeveloped mountain behind the village.

Chapter 1516

Seaton dragged Aery along as he ran. It was a race against time in order to survive. That unreliable bachelor wouldn't be able to buy them a lot of time. He had calculated it all. However, he didn't think that Alejandro would arrive so quickly. He had arrived before he could change to a different hideout.

Aery had never suffered this kind of torture. She hadn't slept or eaten well since her kidnapping, so she really couldn't keep up. She began faltering before running too far and allowed Seaton to drag her along with a rope around her wrists. However, now she couldn't run any longer and fell onto the ground. "I can't. I can't run anymore. If you want to run for your life, go ahead. Survival is most important now. Stop using me as a threat…"

Seaton forcefully dragged her to her feet and icily snapped, "Do you honestly think I'm enjoying cutting and running like this? You're my hostage. I can't let them take you home unscathed; I'd be humiliated. I'm giving you two choices now—either you come with me, or die!"

Aery gulped. "I-I c-can still run…" she replied in a fearful, trembling voice.

Seaton didn't respond. He yanked her rope as he continued running ahead. The ground beneath his feet was uneven and Aery's previously broken ankle hadn't completely healed, so she accidentally slipped and fell. Now, she really couldn't move any more.

"My ankle was broken before, and I just twisted it. I can't run anymore. Let me go, please," She begged painfully. "I haven't done anything wrong to you, so why won't you let me go? Since you hate Mark and Arianne, just make them pay. This has nothing to do with me!"

She didn’t seem to be faking it. Seaton stared at her for two seconds. Then, he surveyed his surroundings. He saw traces of shadows in the distance. Alejandro and Mark’s men were closing in…

He noticed a deep ditch and pushed Aery into it.

Aery’s screams attracted Alejandro and Mark’s attention. They paused and shared a look, then quickly ran towards the sound of her screams.

When they arrived at the ditch, they only saw one shoe, Aery’s shoe. It didn’t matter if Seaton had left it on purpose or if it was an accident—it meant that Aery had been pushed into the ditch.

“Mark, take your men and look for Aery. She has probably been pushed in,” Alejandro said decisively. “I’ll continue running after Seaton. We’re not letting him get away this time. I’ve had enough!”

Mark nodded, then led his men into fumbling their way down the ditch. There was a riverbed beneath the ditch. The ground was very wet and rocky. There were also shallow puddles. If she had fallen from such a high ground, she was either dead or crippled.

After carefully feeling his way through, he finally found Aery. Half of her body was lodged in water, and the other half was on the moist, rocky ground. The water beneath her was dyed red from her blood.

A gentle breeze passed, releasing the smell of blood mixed with mud and water, bringing a sombre tone into one’s heart.

By the time Aery arrived at the hospital, it was day time. Arianne accompanied Helen to the hospital. Arianne's heart ached at the sight of the tired and haggard-looking Mark. His hair was a mess, as he had been sweating quite a lot. She could only imagine how intense last night's manhunt was, making him look so wretched.

"How's Aery?" Helen asked, holding back her tears. "What has that ba*tard Seaton done to her?"

Mark let out a small sigh. "By the time I arrived, Seaton had already run away with her. Seaton probably felt that she was dragging him down during the chase and couldn't bring himself to give her back to us in one piece, so he pushed her into a ditch. There was a riverbed under the ditch with a lot of rocks. A fall from such a height… isn't a good sign. You'd better be prepared."

Chapter 1517

Helen supported herself against the walls of the hallway and sat down. Her face was deathly pale. "How could this happen? Her ankle isn't fully recovered. How much has she suffered? She has nothing to do with this mess… Why did she have to suffer all of this?"

Arianne couldn't listen to any more of this. She turned around and walked to the nearest chair, sitting down. Was Helen implying that Aery shouldn't have suffered, and she should have instead? She could understand how Helen felt, but she couldn't understand her selfishness. Who was she to Helen, after all this time?

After an unknown amount of time, the door to the operating theatre opened. Helen immediately pounced. "Doctor, how is my daughter? Is she alright?"

“After having a fall from such a considerable height, how could she be alright?” the doctor replied sternly. “Her head has suffered severe trauma, and her body has sustained a lot of broken bones. We’re not sure if she’ll regain consciousness. It’s highly likely… that she will be paralyzed. The operation was considered a success, but it’s all on her now. Honestly, under these circumstances, if she survives, she will suffer and live out her days in a vegetative state. Both she and the people around her will suffer. After all, chances of recovering from her brain trauma are slim.”

Helen lost control. She grabbed the doctor’s collar. “What are you saying? Are these the words of a doctor? She’s my daughter! My daughter! I won’t give up on her! As long as she’s alive—as long as she’s alive—I will never give up! Are all the doctors in your hospital as cold-blooded as you? Do you all pray for the deaths of your patients? What kind of hospital is this? I want a transfer. A transfer!”

Mark shot the doctor a look. The doctor didn’t quarrel with Helen. He took a deep breath, then turned around and left.

Once the doctor had left, Mark spoke up. “This is the best hospital in the capital. Where else would you like to transfer to? Aery has just had surgery, so it’s inadvisable to move her around. The doctor is right; he’s simply making an objective analysis. Aery will have to be placed in the ICU for observation. You cannot stay with her. Go home.”

Helen wiped away her tears. “I won’t. I’ll wait for her right here. If you want to leave, go ahead.”

The sight of Helen, who had lost her grip on rationality, made Arianne feel both helpless and sad. Regardless of how much Helen protested, she was helpless. She couldn’t let Mark suffer along with her too, so she pulled him aside. “Go home and get some rest. You’ve been up all night, so you must be exhausted. You still have company matters to take care of too. Have a good rest.”

Mark nodded. He was just about to leave when Helen chimed in in a queer tune. “That’s right, no need to worry yourself over an outsider’s issues. So sorry for standing in the way of your sleep.”

Arianne gritted her teeth, forcing herself to hold her temper to avoid saying anything hurtful. Mark simply frowned then left the hospital.

Helen acted as if she were possessed. She kept vigil outside the ICU, refusing water or food. She wouldn’t even speak. She was like a marionette.

Arianne stayed by her side. If she was numb from sitting next to her and felt like moving, she would draw an extreme reaction from Helen. She would eerily tell her that she should leave if she couldn’t stand it any longer. Arianne had been putting up with her because Helen had been kind to her before. She was holding onto that kindness, thinking that Helen was only acting out because of what happened to Aery, that it was only temporary. Once Helen’s mind was clear, she wouldn’t act this way any more…

Chapter 1518

At around noon, Arianne carefully asked, “Would you like something to eat? Or a drink? I’ll get some for you.”

Helen looked at her with a cold and distant stare and said, “I’m not that cold-blooded. I can’t eat or drink.”

Arianne’s last nerve was close to snapping. “Can you stop being so prickly all the time? It’s Seaton’s fault that Aery’s turned out this way, not mine or Mark’s. If you have something to say to us, just say it!”

Helen grew riled up. “I should just say it, should I? Okay, I’ll just say it then. How could Mark and Alejandro have allowed Aery to get hurt during their search for Seaton? There were so many people, yet Seaton still found the chance to hurt Aery. They clearly didn’t do a very good job. Aery had absolutely nothing to do with this; Seaton’s objective was you. Aery has suffered a blow for you, and even if you don’t feel any guilt, you shouldn’t act so cold and distant; you’re blood relatives! I saw it, your heart ached when you saw how Mark was up all night last night. But did you feel anything for your sister? Yes, Mark Tremont has raised you for many years, and I haven’t done my duty as your mother, but he’s still an outsider. Aery, whom you hate so much, has my blood flowing in her veins, same as you. You’re family. Look at what’s happened to your sister! Don’t you feel anything at all?”

Yes, Seaton had done all of this because of them. Arianne couldn’t deny it. But Aery served herself up to him on a silver platter. She didn’t want this. Helen’s standpoint made her very uncomfortable.

Her silence filled Helen with even more wrath. “Don’t have anything else to say? That proves that it’s exactly what you think. I thought that you’d let go of the past as long as I did enough for you. I never asked you to be nice to me, but this is someone’s life, your sister’s life! Arianne, you disappoint me. You’ve become a cold-blooded human after growing up with another cold-blooded human.”

Anyone could say whatever they wanted about Arianne, but they could not drag Mark into this!

“Are you quite finished?” Arianne icily said. “Fine, we’re cold and unfeeling. We deserve to die. Aery and everyone else had nothing to do with this. Okay? You can say whatever you want about me, but you have no right to snap at Mark. I was taken in and raised as an orphan. The funny thing was, my biological mother was still alive! What right do you have to say that about the man who’s raised your daughter? You could have chosen to abort me if you didn’t want me, but why did you give birth to me and then abandon me? You went after your dreams, you pursued the man you love. What about me? What about my dad? Did we deserve to be abandoned by you? So, all of those things you did before, was it all just for show so that you’d feel a little less guilty? Just when I finally managed to let go of our difficult past, you’ve overthrown everything. You haven’t changed. You and Aery deserve each other. You shouldn’t have wreaked havoc on other people in the first place!”

Helen stared at her with tears in her eyes. Despite her silence, her eyes were like daggers, piercing into Arianne's heart, one by one. What kind of a look was that? It held hatred, distance, disappointment, and hints of complexity…

Arianne couldn't take any more of this. She got up and left, then walked out of the hospital. She took a breath of fresh air and felt slightly more revived.

Chapter 1519

What had she done wrong? What had Mark done wrong?

She wanted to leave, but her heart softened. She couldn't leave Helen alone, so she stayed with her in the hospital the entire day and only left late at night. She even left Helen with something to eat and drink, despite the fact that Helen had refused to even look at her. She was this close to throwing it all away in front of her.

She was exhausted, but she had done her best.

She dragged her tired body back to Tremont Estate. Mark was still awake and was talking to Alejandro on the phone about Seaton. Alejandro had been chasing after Seaton since last night. They still hadn't managed to catch him, but they did not dare lower their defenses. He was right under their noses now. If they gave up, their efforts would go to waste.

Mark and Arianne weren't the only ones feeling exhausted. Alejandro hadn't slept at all. He hadn't stopped for a single moment.

Everyone was trying their best, working so hard, just to get rid of Seaton. The harder they worked, the more disappointing Helen's attitude was to Arianne. Aery was the only thing on Helen's mind. As long as Aery remained in ICU, Helen would release all of her wrath onto everyone else.

After the call, Mark lazily leaned against his chair and took a few puffs of a cigarette. It was a rare moment for him to relax. The cigarette box on the study table was brand new, freshly opened. He would not have touched them again if he weren't truly frustrated.

When Arianne walked in, he instinctively reached out to hide the cigarette box away. He didn't have time to deal with the cigarette in his hand.

Arianne smiled. "It's alright, go ahead and smoke. Just don't do too much of it. Your lungs aren't as healthy as they used to be. I certainly don't want to hear you coughing every day. It's late, why aren't you asleep? The company needs you. I haven't gone to the office over the past few days. I'll watch over Helen and Aery, so don't you worry. Just take care of the company. When you catch Seaton… Don't let him get away."

Mark gasped in frustration. "I know, I just have a lot on my mind. Can't sleep. You go to bed. You've been dealing with your mom, so you must be more exhausted than I am."

He was right. Helen was probably going to drive Arianne up the wall soon.

The next day, Arianne went to the hospital very early. Helen had been waiting outside the ICU the entire time. This woman, who valued her image and dignity, had actually slept on the bench outside the ward. This scene made her feel very emotional.

She hadn't touched the food and drink that she had left for her last night. She had only had a small sip of the drink. In just a few short days, Helen seemed to have lost a lot of weight.

Arianne walked towards her and placed a warm breakfast in front of her. "You have to eat something. What if you collapse when Aery wakes up?"

Helen refused to look at her and coldly turned her face away.

She did not lose her temper. She put down the breakfast and began eating her own share as if nothing had happened. "If you collapse and Aery's condition improves and needs someone to care for her, I won't bother. Can you bear seeing her lie pitifully in bed, unable to move with no one to care for her? I've heard that patients who lie in bed for too long without proper care can develop bedsores."

Helen finally reacted, but she only frowned. She did not touch her food.

Chapter 1520

Arianne deliberately ate with gusto. The fragrance from the food was enough to attract a woman with a growling stomach. Soon, Helen gave in and began eating.

Arianne let out a sigh of relief, which was engulfed with helplessness at the same time.

On the third day, Alejandro sent an update—they had caught Seaton S. Bart.

Arianne did not make a personal trip. Mark did not show up either, as he had an emergency at the office. He asked Henry to deal with it. As for Seaton's fate, it would certainly be much worse than Aery's. Once a man with zero importance disappears, no one would notice.

Aery was facing a long battle ahead. In the beginning, Helen managed to hold on and stay in the hospital every waking hour, but as time went on, she couldn't hold on any longer. Most importantly, washing up was inconvenient and she refused to show up with a messy appearance. However, she did not continue staying at Tremont Estate but chose a hotel near the hospital.

This action was clearly done to make a clearly distinguished boundary between her and Arianne. Helen still carried a sense of hatred towards Arianne.

Arianne did not object. Every day, she would arrive at the hospital on time and watch over Aery with Helen. At night, she would go home to take care of Aristotle. She couldn't be concerned with work. She had no idea why she had to stand watch with Helen; it certainly wasn't out of guilt. Perhaps it was because Helen had accused her of being cold-blooded. She instinctively wanted to prove that she wasn't all that cold-blooded at all. She hated Aery, but she really didn't want Aery to die.

Half a month later, Aery's condition finally stabilized. Just as the doctor had surmised, she had turned into a human vegetable. The hospital had been releasing notices of critical illness a few times during this period of time, but Aery would survive every time. It was a good thing, for if Aery didn't survive, Helen would have probably died on the spot.

The medical fees over this half a month were steep. Helen did not lament over going broke, but Arianne had noticed that her finances were in a predicament through a few small details.

Aery had to continue staying in the hospital until her wounds were nearly healed. Arianne had a discussion with Mark and decided to give back all of the money that Helen had given to her. This way, neither party would owe the other anymore.

Helen naturally accepted the money. With Aery in this state, their finances would enter a bottomless pit from now on. She was hoping for the day when Aery would finally regain consciousness.

Arianne stopped going to the hospital in early autumn. Every time she thought of Helen's cold and distant face along the way to the hospital, her mind would protest. As Aery gradually recovered, Helen would take Aery and leave, sooner or later.

She didn't want to feel hurt, or face separation. Some things couldn't be given up, despite how undeserving they were.

On her first day back in the office, Tiffany came over and dropped off a bottle of almonds. "You've been so busy lately that we haven't been able to spend time together. How's Aery? Is she awake?"

Arianne sat on her office chair, munching on the almonds and swiveling her chair around. "I don't know if she'll ever wake up. She's bedridden anyway. I've heard that she fell from a really high ditch, and the ground was full of rocks. It's a miracle that she's still alive. I haven't been able to catch my breath. We'll have lunch or something when I'm more settled. Your tummy's growing every day. Do you know if it's a boy or girl?"

Tiffany whispered into her ear and said, "I've had a peek this time. It's a girl, don't worry. I've been so happy over the past few days that I haven't been able to sleep. I've always wanted a girl."

The corners of Arianne's lips curved into a smile. "I'm glad that it's a girl. You can dress her up! You can't really play dress up with boys. Isn't your husband worried about you hanging around outside on your own like this?"