Ruling 251

Chapter 251

Eric was slightly entranced while staring at his phone. He had a feeling that things were starting to get rough recently…

In the West Mansion, Jackson and his mother, Summer, sat facing the Norienes. Annie and her parents did not look happy.

Jackson did not speak; it was Summer who spoke up. “Mr. and Mrs. Noriene, I casually agreed when you both had the intention to chuck together Jackson and Annie previously. I hadn’t asked my child’s opinion, and that’s my fault. I’ve asked him now and Jackson prefers his freedom. I shouldn’t be interrupting with that. This is my mistake. I’ll surrender 1% profit in our last partnering project as an apology.”

Annie was tearful when she heard this. “I don’t want to! Isn’t this taking advantage of me? I adore Jackson! Is this measurable by money? Why didn’t he say so earlier if he doesn’t like me? How could you tell the truth only when I encountered what I did? That’s horrible! You’ve wasted at least two years of my time. Do you see me as a fool?”

Summer maintained the poise and grace of a wealthy wife. “Oh Annie, it’s been two years, but hasn’t it been only half a year since you got back from studying abroad? It’s Jackson’s loss that he doesn’t like you.”

Mr. Noriene spoke with a grim face. “Enough, what are you weeping about? Mrs. West, breaking off the engagement is a wise decision. Others may not know it, but I’ve heard rumors that Jackson lives a promiscuous private life. I knew that he wasn’t a good man, I just hadn’t gotten foolproof evidence yet. It’s good that Annie realized it now instead of later, after they got married. Otherwise, her life would be ruined!”

Jackson's lax body froze as he looked colder. "My private life doesn't need an outsider's comment. Your daughter isn't a saint either. If those things on the internet don't disappear before tomorrow, we'll still have to discuss this. Besides… isn't my engagement with Annie a verbal agreement? There's nothing tangible. How you've passed her to me is how I've passed her back to you. I haven't even touched her finger. There's no need to make things ugly for both parties."

Anne was shaking from anger. "You're still siding with that woman! Didn't I agree last night? I've asked for what I posted to be removed. Didn't you have people manage the public relations?"

Jackson frowned. Annie's expression did not look like she was lying, but why was the scandal still all over the internet? He had spent a sum on the public relations, so the effect should have been instant. Why was it developing to the stage of Tiffany being targeted in real life?

After the Norienes left, Jackson was discontent. "Mom, are you really agreeing to their request for an additional 2%? Isn't that too much?"

Summer sighed. "We're the ones at fault. Let 2% be it. I actually suggested 1% in order to bargain with them. Jackson, if you like that girl, Tiffany, I'm not against it. Be smart and crisp in what you do in the future, and don't let others catch something to hold against you."

Finding it to be too much effort to explain, Jackson got up and left.

He looked like he had a harmonious mother-son relationship with Summer, but in truth, it felt tense. They were distant. To Jackson, Summer West was his only family. However, she lacked mother's love, so she was also a stranger whom he was the most familiar with.

After three days of Tiffany being trapped at home, Jackson finally couldn't take it anymore and personally beat up those people outside of her house. He became the trending one this time; news of the West family's young master beating people up on the streets made headlines. It also helped take Tiffany off of everyone's hot topic.

Chapter 252

Thinking that things had come to an end, they managed to find out that someone had been behind this at this juncture of time. While Jackson had employed public relations to handle Tiffany's case, someone went against him in secret, which was why nothing seemed to work. Jackson asked for the matter to be investigated and received news that it was actually Aery.

Everyone was bewildered when they discovered the culprit, but Arianne knew why. She asked Henry to send her to the Kinseys' without hesitation. She had not gone in a cab because she was afraid of looking weak. She was there to settle the accounts!

Helen was eager to curry favor with her, so she certainly wouldn't stop her at the door. Arianne took off her high heels once she entered the door lest they get in the way when she moved later. "Where's Aery?"

Helen looked at her lovingly. "Your sister isn't up yet."

Arianne chuckled icily. "She mustn't have slept well from doing too many bad things at night huh? Where's her room? I have things to tell her."

Noticing that something was not right, Helen did not dare allow Arianne to go to Aery alone. "Let me take you there."

When they were going upstairs, Arianne told her, “I’m thirsty. Please pour me a glass of water.”

Helen turned back around to do what she said without hesitating, pouring her a full glass of warm water. Arianne brought the glass of water into Aery’s room. The completely pink princess-like décor of the room disgusted her despite also rousing a bit of her jealousy. Arianne had never owned anything like this, not that she yearned for it anymore.

She poured the glass of water on Aery’s face, the latter springing up in shock and screaming, “Who is it? Are you crazy?”

Helen was stunned. When Aery saw that it was Arianne, there was a wash of a guilty conscience in her eyes. “How did you come in?”

With a humorless chuckle, Arianne answered, “Of course, our mom opened the door for me. Come at me if you’re upset. You’re the crazy one to go for my friend when you have nothing against me. If there’s a next time, it won’t end simply with a glass of water. Say, if I had splashed hot water instead, would your face be mutilated?”

Aery covered her face in terror. “Mom!”

Helen broke out of her daze and felt a lingering fear. Luckily, she had not poured her a glass of hot water just now. “Arianne… What did your sister do that made you get so angry? Sit down and talk about it. It’s your first time here, right? Will you stay for a meal?”

Arianne turned to look at Helen. “No need. The dishes in your house reek of vanity. I won’t be able to stomach them. It repulses me. It’s my first time and last time here. Final warning, don’t provoke me!”

After that, Arianne turned to leave with an icy expression, Aery’s wails piercing her ears from behind.

By the time Jean came out of the study from the noise, Arianne had already left. Taking in how Aery looked, he could not help grumbling, “Helen, look at what your daughter’s done. Uneducated swine! Her mom taught her nothing after birthing her.”

Helen was dumbstruck. “Jean Kinsey, are you cursing me? My daughter, that’s right, Arianne is my daughter. Why did her mom teach her nothing, you say? It’s all because of you! If it weren’t for you and your daughter, Arianne would still be my baby! What I regret the most in this life is leaving Zachary and marrying you. You’re a useless piece of trash!”

Furious, Jean slapped Helen. “Shut up!”

The air fell into dead silence. Aery dared not fuss about herself anymore. In her memory, Jean had never hit anyone at home. She did not expect things to turn out this way. She was the fuse to spark all this ultimately, so she dared not make a sound from how guilty she felt.

Helen poked the inside of her throbbing cheek with the tip of her tongue and suddenly laughed. “Good work, Jean. You’ve just slapped away all my hopes for you. Let’s divorce.”

She was exceptionally calm when she said the word “divorce”. Nothing flickered in her eyes, which only meant that this was an outcome of gradual accumulation, not an impulsive decision.

Chapter 253

Jean was still burning with rage. “Fine. Divorce, it is!”

…

A week after Tiffany’s incident, Mark finally came back to the Tremont Estate. He had returned on a weekend morning. Arianne had just woken up and was having breakfast in the dining hall. She hadn’t seen him for only a week, but he seemed to be a lot more haggard. Although he was still in his suit and kempt hair, the stubble on his chin added some sense of jadedness to him compared to before, brewing a different taste of maturity.

Arianne had never asked about his work, having long gotten used to turning a blind eye. She had not planned to ask him now, but Mary gave her a nudge from behind, almost causing her to choke. She understood what the woman meant. Mark was already at the staircase when she collected herself and asked, “Is the company doing alright? Why are you only back now after so long?”

Mark looked sideways slightly without halting his steps. “You won’t understand even if I tell you. I’m going to the office again later. Go shop around after breakfast, use the card I’ve given you. Don’t stay cooped up at home, or you’ll get sick from it.”

Mary urged softly, “Finish up your meal quickly and head upstairs to check on sir. You should be more concerned about him as his wife. He’s already so exhausted, yet he’s leaving again later. By then, you won’t get the chance anymore.”

Arianne finished up breakfast helplessly and went up the stairs, dragging her feet. Mark was showering. She waited for him in boredom for a moment before he came out with the tip of his hair still dripping with water. As if he had no time to talk to her, Mark took out a small suitcase and began packing.

“You’re going on a business trip?” asked Arianne.

Without looking up, he answered, “Mm. I’m quite busy recently. Inform Henry or Mary if you have anything up. Don’t do what you shouldn’t be doing.”

What did he mean by things she shouldn’t be doing? Was he afraid of her being reckless once he left? Did going to the Kinseys’ and splashing Aery with water count? She sniffed and hummed an agreement before stepping forward to help him pack.

Mark did not refuse her help, going into the wardrobe after blow drying his hair. He came out briefly after being properly dressed. Arianne was already done packing by then and stood up to look at him. Mark had not sat down for a breather since he entered the house. He was probably leaving immediately. She did not mind sending him off; Mary would nag at her if she did not do it anyway.

Mark looked at her and paused for a few seconds. Then, he pulled her into his embrace. Arianne’s soft and small frame gave him a momentary lapse of ease. “Be good at home. I’ll come back after I’m done with the company issues.”

Not quite used to his gentleness, Arianne’s face heated up. “Okay…”

Mark checked his watch, a bit of hesitation flashing across his eyes. He let her go in the end. “It’s about time. I’ll be leaving now.”

Arianne nodded vehemently and walked out before him. Mark had a small frown, displeased. “Are you hoping that I’ll leave faster?”

Not daring to turn back and look at him in case he caught her blushing, Arianne replied, “No… I’ll send you off.”

When she did not hear footsteps after her, she curiously turned back to check. Mark stared at her in amusement, standing at the staircase. Not understanding what he meant and too bashful to meet gazes with him, Arianne asked, “What? Let’s go…”

Mark did not say anything, but he pushed his suitcase aside. Even more confused, Arianne subconsciously walked back to him. When she was in front of him, he suddenly yanked her back to the bedroom and right onto the bed.

Chapter 254

After a whirlwind dance between the sheets, Arianne returned into the embrace of the bed that she had just left not too long ago. She shivered as she watched Mark’s every action. It wasn’t a good idea to do it so early in the morning… Right?

There wasn’t much foreplay. Or rather, he didn’t have much time for it, so foreplay was cut out of the picture. She wanted to reject him but was too afraid to do so. Her entire body remained in a frigid state.

Her burry gaze noticed how the top half of his clothes remained seemingly pristine. From her angle, the most she could see was his chin, his perfect silhouette, and the fresh, energizing scent of his aftershave. His no longer sober and calm vision now stared down at her, sending a shockwave of palpitations throughout her body...

Half an hour later, he left the Tremont Estate like a gust of wind. She still hadn't regained her senses, even after the sound of his car faded off into the distance. She remained nestled in their messy bed, refusing to move.

She couldn't make out the strange noises she had made during that hazy, blurry half an hour. It was inevitable that someone would have overheard her, as it was early in the day. The thought of Mary's profound smirk gave her the urge to find a hole and bury herself into it.

Her phone suddenly rang in the midst of her drowsy stupor. She snapped back into her senses, got up, and answered the phone. "Hello?"

"Ari, I've got news from that private investigator. Mr. Sloane is in a high class convalescence home in the capital! I've even managed to get the correct address. Seeing as we're free today, wanna go see Mr. Sloane?" Tiffany's excited voice spoke through the receiver.

Arianne was more excited than she was, "Yes! Let me get showered. You take a cab to my place and we'll take a car from Mark's garage. It'll be more convenient for us to have a vehicle of our own."

She rushed straight into the bathroom once the call had ended, her hands shaking with excitement. She had initially thought that it would take some more time before she would find Mr. Sloane, or perhaps they wouldn't find him at all. She was surprised at how skilled the private investigator was.

Tiffany had already arrived at the Tremont estate by the time she was ready. She asked Henry for a set of car keys. Tiffany showcased a myriad of expressions when she walked into the garage. “Why does your man have so many cars? If I were you, I’d drive a different car every day. They’re all first class luxury cars, and some are even limited edition. F*cking awesome!”

Arianne wasn’t particularly interested in these things. “Alright. I don’t know which car’s keys we’ve gotten. Just press the key and we’ll find out.”

After they had driven the car out of the garage, they found Mary standing outside the main door. “Where are you going, Ari? Will you be coming back for lunch?” she asked.

Arianne paused thoughtfully. “I’m going out to run some errands. I don’t think I’ll be back by noon. I’ll give you a call.”

Mary frowned as she watched the car disappear into the distance. She went to the rear garden to look for Henry, who was trimming the bushes. “Henry, Ari’s just gone out, right after Mr. Tremont left. Do you think he’d kick up a fuss again if he found out?”

Henry put all of his attention into his current task, which created a stern look on his face. The docile and obedient Rice Ball at his feet created a stark contrast to his expression. “Why are you worrying about that? Mrs. Tremont is human, not an object. Mr. Tremont may not necessarily be too concerned about where she goes now. Mr. Tremont’s vision is clear. If he were really worried, he’d have gone off with Mrs. Tremont by now. Stop worrying blindly.”

Mary suddenly flashed a deeply profound smirk. “I think… that a little one will be joining the Tremont family very soon. Ari’s relationship with Mr. Tremont has improved. This morning, they even…”

Chapter 255

Before she could finish the last part of her sentence, Henry made his way towards the flowering shrubs on the other side. Her grin widened. “Hey, old fogey! You’re old enough to know what that is, right? You’re just playing dumb! Come one, Rice Ball. Let’s go get something to eat…”

…

Tiffany drove along the road like a hurricane. Arianne was extremely worried that she wouldn't be able to stop in time for a tailgater. “Can you go a little slower? You’re scaring me to death!”

Tiffany took no notice of her. “That convalescent home is pretty secluded, and there are no cameras along this road. What are you afraid of? This is a sports car, what’s the use if we don’t drive it fast? Don’t worry. My driving skills are passable.”

Arianne was feeling uncertain. If the person that they had found really was Mr. Sloane, they might not necessarily be able to get any information out of him. Even if he did provide that information, could they even be sure if he’d comply and provide them with evidence? Words alone were of no use. This convalescent home was located on a hillside in the suburbs. The air was fresh. Furthermore, since it was a high class convalescent home, it was suitable for long-term stay for seriously ill patients. Of course, the fees did not come cheap either. She knew that despite her father’s impressive salary during his job as the Tremonts’ personal chief pilot, he would never have been able to afford staying in this convalescent home. So just who was this Mr. Sloane?

She arrived at the convalescent home with a mind full of misgivings. Tiffany had already put everything in order for her. To prevent any unwanted information leaks or any avoidance on Mr. Sloane’s part to meet with them, Tiffany had paid the private investigator to get an employee from the convalescent home to lead the way.

Arianne grew increasingly suspicious when she discovered that Mr. Sloane was given the best of the best in the convalescent home. Based on Mr. Sloane's mailing address, he should be living an average lifestyle.

Before the employee led them into Mr. Sloane's private room, he motioned for them to move quietly. Tiffany grinned and made a shushing gesture. The employee smiled then turned around and left.

Arianne took a deep breath as she stared at the door in front of her. She gathered her courage and knocked on the door, but no one answered. Just as she was considering whether to continue knocking or not, Tiffany pushed the door open. "Has dawdling ever solved anything? Do you think that this is a hospital?"

Arianne did not stop Tiffany. She walked into the room and found furnishings that were comparable to those in a high class condominium. In the large bed, in the center of the room, there was a thin, white-haired old man who had his eyes closed, fast asleep.

Arianne had already mentally prepared herself to face a seriously ill patient, but the sight of him still shocked her anyway. Mr. Sloane was clearly unwell.

She decided not to disturb him and to wait for Mr. Sloane to wake up instead. She ended up waiting until lunch time when a nurse arrived, pushing a dining car with a nutritious meal and his prescribed medication. The nurse thought that Arianne and Tiffany were Mr. Sloane's family members when she saw them, so she left the food and medicine, and promptly left.

Tiffany was shocked at the sight of the meal. “This person can’t be Mr. Slone, right? Look at the name on the food and medicine! Why is his surname Levin?”

Only then did Arianne realize this. She quickly looked at the patient’s information hanging at the head of the bed. Indeed, the old man’s surname wasn’t Sloane, but Levin.

Tiffany called the private investigator to verify this. According to the private investigator, while this old man’s surname wasn’t Sloane, he was most definitely the person who had moved out of the mailing address on the letter three years ago. Previously, the old man lived alone at the address on the letter for many years. So even if his name wasn’t Sloane, he could have simply written the letter under a different name and could even be the person that they had been searching for.

Chapter 256

Arianne couldn’t wait any longer. She carefully woke the old man up. He opened his eyes and thought she was one of the nurses. “Where’s Pauline? Why’d they change nurses today?”

Arianne placed the food in front of him. “Finish your meal first.”

The old man slowly picked up his knife and fork, but his eyes sized them up carefully. “You’re not nurses, why are you here?”

Tiffany pulled out the letter from Arianne’s bag. “Did you write this?”

The old man glanced at it and said, “I don’t know what you’re talking about. I’ve never written any letter. It’s been three years since I’ve stepped out of this place. My eyesight is poor and my hands tremble. How could I write a letter?”

Arianne was flustered now. “Aren’t you Mr. Sloane? Then why is the address of your previous home on this letter? The person who sent this is very important to me. Please tell me the truth! If you aren’t Mr. Sloane, you must know of him at least.”

The old man put down his cutlery and lay down. “I don’t. Please leave. You’re disturbing me.”

Arianne was highly unsatisfied at being expelled like this. “This involves clearing my father’s reputation and the next half of my life. I cannot let my father’s death be unjustified. Please, I’m begging you… If you know anything, please tell me.”

The old man was unmoved. Tiffany couldn’t bear to watch anymore. “Sir, saying a few words won’t kill you, you know.”

The old man kept his eyes shut and said nothing. Arianne got up and left, her eyes reddening. She could no longer endure this continuous slew of blows. It suffocated her.

Tiffany purposefully noted down the old man’s name, then quickly ran after her. “Don’t give up yet, Ari. I’ve memorized it, that old man’s name is George Levin. I’ll send someone to investigate this. He must know something if he’s been staying in that address all this time. It doesn’t matter if he’s Mr. Sloane or not. It’s been so many years, of course it’d be difficult to launch an investigation. Let’s stay calm. It’s only a matter of time. We can wait!”

Arianne sniffed, unsure of what to say. Tiffany, unable to bear seeing her like this, said, “How about this, I’ll go to the address and question a few neighbors. Something will definitely come up. Based on my observations, aside from this George Levin having a different name from Mr. Sloane, everything else matches up. We can’t be sure if it’s him, but hadn’t Mr. Sloane previously tried to avoid us? Perhaps he’s doing this on purpose. Let’s visit him a few more times when I’m back.”

Arianne felt slightly apologetic after seeing how much Tiffany was trying to console her. “The time frame will be pretty tight if you go now. How are you going to go to work tomorrow? How about I go on my own?”

Tiffany shrugged nonchalantly. “Keeping my living expenses is a whole other issue. Don’t worry about me. You’re so timid, do you think you can go asking around on your own? I’d better go with you. Just pay for my transportation fees. Alright, it’s decided then.”

As they walked down to the unique garden, Arianne turned back towards the direction of George’s living quarters. Tiffany pulled her behind the flower terrace and made her squat down. “Shh…”

Arianne was confused. Then, she followed Tiffany’s gaze and suddenly understood. What was Ethan doing here? Tiffany was usually quite bold, but at this moment, she was actually too afraid to greet her ex-boyfriend.

Ethan was carrying nutritious supplements, fruits, and similar items in his hands. It looked like he was here to visit someone. His figure quietly disappeared through an entrance. Only then did Tiffany pat the dust off herself and stand up. “Let’s go, Ari.”

Arianne grabbed her hand. “Tiffie, it’s all in the past. There’s no need to feel sad about it. Why are you hiding? It’s not like you should feel guilty.”

Tiffany laughed. “I’m just embarrassed. You said that he was never really interested in me when we were together, and the thought of this vexes me… Look at him, putting on airs like that. I’m positive that life’s been pretty good to him. My life is full of ups and downs now, so how am I supposed to face him? Just wait until I’m successful again, then I’ll look him in the eye.”

Knowing that Tiffany was upset, Arianne didn’t say anything more.

Chapter 257

Tiffany went to Mr. Sloane’s mailing address that afternoon. Arianne waited back at home. She had initially intended on going with her, but when she remembered Mark’s reaction to the letter, she decided to retreat. Before everything was settled, this would only cause more trouble. Even though it seemed like Mark wasn’t restricting her from going anywhere, it did not mean that he wasn’t aware of wherever she went.

The next morning, Tiffany sent a message to inform her that she had arrived home. They agreed to meet up after work and talk face to face.

Naturally, Tiffany had rushed back early in the morning to go to work. Before Jackson suddenly decided to fire her, she had to go to work as usual so that she would have one extra day of wages, even if he did fire her all of a sudden.

She arrived an hour late due to some delays along the way. As she arrived in a rush at the office, she noticed that there seemed to be very little people in the elevator. This provided her with some semblance of convenience—at least, she wouldn’t have to crowd with others or slow down.

By the time the elevator doors slowly opened, she was shocked. She thought that there wouldn't be anyone in the elevator, but she was wrong. However, that wasn't all… She had come face to face with the one person that she had wanted to avoid the most—Jackson West.

He had obviously come up from the basement parking lot, as he was still holding his car keys in his hand. Just as she was hesitating over whether to get in or not, Jackson took the initiative to step aside, giving her space.

She hardened her heart and walked in, pretending as if nothing had happened. The pair remained completely silent. All she could do was stare at the numbers on the elevator panel, praying that the elevator wouldn't stop halfway…

"Sorry about that thing," Jackson suddenly spoke up.

Tiffany gulped nervously, "It… It's alright… You've helped me out a lot. That was nothing. Consider it my way of repaying you. I've heard that things have fallen through between you and your fiancée. Even though I'm not the catalyst, I do feel sorry about it. After all, I was there…"

Jackson smiled indifferently. For some reason, the uninhibited glint in his eyes was replaced by an obscure emotion. "There's nothing to be sorry about. It was bound to happen, sooner or later. You're late today."

'You're acting like you don't know me all of a sudden!' Tiffany mumbled internally to herself. Of course, she wouldn't dare say it out loud. "I… I had an emergency and was delayed. According to company policy, salary deduction…"

Jackson did not say a word. Just then, the elevator had arrived at the level of their office. Tiffany zoomed away, escaping from him. She couldn't read Jackson at all. Based on their conversation, she felt that it was highly unlikely that he would fire her. Hence, she heaved a sigh of relief.

She was the first to pack up and prepare to leave at the end of work, as she had a meeting with Arianne.

Just then, Jackson happened to walk out of his office and pass by the office cubicles. He slowed down when he saw the hasty look on her face. The pair had run into each other at the elevator, once again.

"You're in a rush to leave. Where are you going for your second job?" he asked, seemingly in an off-hand manner.

She did not dare look at him. "It's not that. I'm meeting Ari for dinner."

He shook his car keys. "I'll drive you."

"No… There's no need. I can just take a cab," she replied, feeling suspicious.

He didn't give her any opportunity for a proper rejection. He immediately pressed the button to the lower ground when he entered the elevator and then occupied the entire space by the elevator buttons, preventing her from doing anything about it.

Chapter 258

The “forcefulness” in Jackson’s display put Tiffany at her wits’ end. She couldn’t understand what he was trying to do. How could he act as if nothing had happened after something so embarrassing? Shouldn’t he be avoiding suspicion?

When they arrived at the lower ground floor, she dawdled around, refusing to step out of the elevator. “Mr. West, don’t you think that we should be avoiding suspicion? The matter from a few days ago caused quite a scandal. You’re not married and neither am I. It would be detrimental to our reputations and developments in the future. You should go first. I’ll get a cab.”

Jackson couldn’t be bothered to listen to her going on and on. He reached out his arm, circled it around her neck, and dragged her to the car. “Mr. West? You never used to call me that. I’ve told you, it’s fine. I’m not afraid, so why should you? Get in the car.”

Her mind was distracted by the faint smell of his cologne. He wasn’t just throwing suspicion out into the open, but he was also taking everything that she had been worried about and wiping the floor with it. Did that incident really not affect him at all?

She kept her eyes outside the window in the car. She kept the window open, allowing the cold air to rush in. This way, the heat on her face wouldn’t seem too obvious. She believed that she wasn’t one of those delicate and dainty girls, so she wouldn’t blush so easily. However, it was different when she was faced with someone with a thicker face than hers—she conceded…

Just as they were about to arrive at the restaurant, she hurriedly cried out, “Stop the car here! It’ll be hard for you to stop outside the restaurant. Thanks!”

Jackson actually stopped the car compliantly. Tiffany scrambled down from the car with her bag in hand as fast as she could then ran towards the sidewalk. The wind beat against her ankle-length white skirt and her soft, long tresses. Jackson’s gaze grew more profound. There was clearly nothing special about

the white sneakers on her feet, and she was dressed in such simple and neat clothes that no one would pay attention to her. Yet he, on the other hand, found the sight to be very comforting and neat.

“Who drove you, Tiffie?” Arianne’s soul-torturing interrogation greeted Tiffany just as she sat down in the restaurant.

“How’d you know that someone drove me here? Your seat doesn’t give you a view of where I got off…” Tiffany was confused. She took off her coat and put it aside then folded up her lace sleeves.

“I just got here too. I saw someone drop you off at the side of the road when I was at the intersection. That car isn’t cheap. I may not know much about cars, but Mark has a similar one in his garage,” Arianne grinned, digging in for more information.

Tiffany pouted, opting to be frank and open. “I can’t keep anything from you. It was Jackson. I’ve rejected him so many times, but he insisted. I don’t know what he’s trying to do. Don’t you think that we should avoid each other now that we’re kind of in an awkward position? I’m mostly worried about catching my mother’s eye. My mom’s been going crazy trying to find a rich boyfriend for me. She misses the past a little too much—when we didn’t need to worry about food or clothes, when all we needed to do was buy them.”

Arianne had already guessed that it was Jackson behind the wheel. After everything that had happened with Ethan, she was mostly worried about Tiffany getting her feelings disappointed again. “Tiffie, you’re old enough. You should take it easy and not fall in head first again.”

Tiffany was taken aback. She lowered her eyelids to conceal her sorrow. “I’m not that stupid anymore. I won’t surrender to my own feelings again. I’m more interested in money at this point, not dating. Besides, I’ve never really thought of Jackson in that way. He is handsome but definitely not my type. I’m not his type either. We are not compatible in any way. Don’t worry, I know what to do.”

Chapter 259

Arianne relaxed after hearing her answer. They ordered their meal before Tiffany began her report on her findings at the mailing address. “By the way, I’ve asked a lot of neighbors around that address. According to their physical descriptions, the man who’s always lived at that exact address was George Levin. However, they don’t know his full name because they didn’t talk a lot. They’ve heard a young man call him ‘Uncle Sloane’ before, but they couldn’t be sure. Perhaps he was calling him ‘Uncle Levin’ too.”

“Someone took this George Levin away three years ago, and he never returned. I suspect that he may have changed his name. He lied to us. He is Mr. Sloane! If we take a step back and say he isn’t Mr. Sloane, then that Mr. Sloane in that letter can’t possibly be unrelated to him. Who’d use George Levin’s address to send a letter for no apparent reason? Either George Levin is Mr. Sloane, or he’s acquainted with Mr. Sloane. I’ve asked my private investigator to investigate this. Let’s eliminate the possibility of whether George Levin’s changed his name or not.”

Arianne felt a little more at peace when she heard this. “How about this, if it’s still early after dinner, we can go to the convalescent home again? This thing has been prodding at me like a thorn. I can’t eat or sleep in peace until it’s settled.”

Tiffany nodded. At this time, their meals were served. She was already hungry. She grabbed her cutlery and chomped it all down. She hadn’t had a good meal since her investigation at the mailing address yesterday.

Arianne’s heart ached at the sight of her like this. “Take it easy. There’s a lot of food on your plate. We can always go to the convalescent home tomorrow after work if it’s too late. You’ll get indigestion if you keep eating like that.”

Why would Tiffany care? She'd been feeling like a gyroscope ever since her family ran into trouble, spinning and spinning non-stop—working on one end, then taking care of Lillian on the other. Survival was most important to her at this point; she had disregarded everything else long ago.

After the meal, they took a cab to the convalescent home. It was almost eight at this point, and everything at the home was silent, with the exception of a few employees. The patients slept earlier.

They found their way to George's ward with ease. They could see through the small window on the door that George was still awake. He was quietly sitting in front of the window, staring blankly at the world outside. They heaved a sigh of relief. If George was asleep, their trip would have been a waste.

Arianne knocked on the door. George shifted a little when he heard the door. "Come in…"

Tiffany pushed the door in. "Hey Mr. Sloane, still awake? Have you eaten?" She called him "Mr. Sloane" straightaway to see if George would react to the name.

George stared at them but did not seem surprised. He stayed in his chair. "My surname isn't Sloane. I know that you're looking for Mr. Sloane. Yes, I know him, but he's dead. He had cancer and died long ago. Please don't come again."

Tiffany walked towards the window and absent-mindedly said, "A dead man can't write letters. Don't you agree?"

George looked at her. "He wrote that letter long ago and asked me to send it out for him. I've only just managed to remember this matter. I've heard from my neighbors that you went looking for Mr. Sloane at my old home. I used Mr. Sloane's name in the letter so that you would stop looking for me. You can't

find a dead man. You can forget about finding out anything from me. Mr. Sloane never told me anything. I just want to live my days out here. I'm sick and won't live much longer. Please don't disturb my peace again."

Chapter 260

Arianne noticed the fruits and nutritional supplements at the head of the bed, which looked very similar to the ones Ethan had brought along with him yesterday. However, she direasonsdn't think too much of it. Many of these items could be bought around the convalescent home, which meant that as long as someone bought these items nearby, they would be pretty much the same. She didn't quite believe in George's story. "Mr. Levin, that wasn't what you said when we were here yesterday. Do you have any underlying reasons preventing you from talking about this?"

George closed his turbid eyes, his breathing growing slightly rapid. "No underlying reasons. I just don't want to bring trouble onto myself. Please don't visit me anymore. Mr. Sloane's affairs have nothing to do with me. All I want is to wait for my death in peace."

The thought of her tedious trip to the mailing address made this difficult for Tiffany to accept. However, George had put a dead end to her conversation. George had admitted to knowing Mr. Sloane straightaway, which eliminated the possibility of him actually turning out to be Mr. Sloane. Furthermore, he had immediately made it clear that Mr. Sloane was dead. This cut off Arianne's backup route.

After the previous setback, Arianne had become even more determined. She did not fall apart again. "It's late. You should rest early, Mr. Levin. We'll come back another day."

George snorted, got up, and lay down on his bed without another word.

Arianne dragged Tiffany away and waited until they were out of the room before saying, "Let's wait for the results from the private investigator. If Mr. Sloane didn't change his name, we'll just come back

another time and visit George to talk about Mr. Sloane's past. That's all we can do to try our best in searching for evidence and the truth. It's been so many years so we can't expect to discover everything all at once."

Tiffany was in awe. "I thought that you'd end up suffering another blow. I'm glad that you're alright. I've got to get home. You should go home and get an early night's rest too."

…

When she arrived back at Tremont Estate, Arianne thought of another possibility—Mr. Sloane knew her father and had insider information. Would asking anyone in the Tremont Estate help? If Mr. Sloane was once at the Tremont Estate, it might help to ask Mary or Henry.

Thoughts of giving it a try filled her mind when she thought of this. She called out to Mary, "Mary, do you remember if my father knew anyone by the name of Sloane? I'm pretty sure it's a man."

Mary paused thoughtfully. "It's been many years. I don't remember too well. Let me think… Your father was pretty popular at the time. Master and Madam were very good to him—you should be aware of this too. Your father knew a lot of people, but anyone named Sloane in the Tremont Estate's circle… Erm… My memory isn't serving me too well. Let me ask Henry for you."

Arianne quickly said, "Mary, you must keep this a secret. Don't let Mark find out that I've been asking about this. Understand?"

Mary did not ask why she wanted to keep it a secret. She nodded and went to look for Henry. Soon after, she returned. "Ari, I've just asked him. The Master's chauffeur's name was Sloane. He wasn't on

the plane when that incident happened. After the accident, sir's temper became explosive, so many Tremont Estate staff members were dismissed. This chauffeur used to be the Master's personal driver. Sir must have felt particularly uncomfortable at the sight of him, so he dismissed him."

Arianne felt a thump in her heart. "That chauffeur named Sloane, what was his full name?"