Ruling 341

Chapter 341

Helen took her purse and left immediately after that. She had not been planning to eat anyway. Her leaving of the Kinseys was not that recent. Jean and Aery had barely looked for her. Now that they suddenly invited her back, it probably wasn't just an innocent lunch. She had expected as much.

Aery slapped the table in rage. "Arianne Wynn! I won't let you get away with this!"

Jean was shocked. Was this still his daughter who only knew how to act cute and nice? Why was her gaze so menacing…?

…

In the West Mansion, Summer sat by Jackson's bed to help him peel an apple while grumbling, "Look at you, what should we do if you're incapacitated the next time you're beaten up? The West needs an heir. You can't keep me yearning like this. When are you getting married?"

Jackson felt a huge headache. "Mom… Can you not? My life goal is to build the West up. Before I'm happy with it, I won't get married."

Summer mocked him, "The Wests aren't like the Tremonts but it's not bad. In fact, it's one of the best in the capital. So what if you overtake the Tremonts? You'll be toiling for nothing when you have no heir to take over the business. Quit joking with me. You build a family then a career, understand? I think you'll be off the bed and scampering in a few days. I'll give you a month. No future daughter-in-law, no coming back. I'll remove your CEO position in the company as well. It's decided."

Summer had always kept her words, Jackson knew as much. Other than sighing, he could do nothing,

The housekeeper came to the door and said in a whisper, “Madam, someone named Helen Cameran is here to see young sir.”

Summer was puzzled. “Helen Cameran who? Sounds like a woman… Jackson, is she your lover?”

Jackson blanched. “Mom! Quit your nonsense! That’s Mark’s mother-in-law! Invite her in first, I can’t get off the bed…”

Realizing her blunder, Summer quickly covered her mouth. “Alright, alright, just lie down. It’s a shame to meet a guest like this but it’s not like we can do anything about it…”

Shortly, Helen was invited in. She was surprised when she saw the state that Jackson was in. “You’re…”

Jackson chuckled awkwardly. “It’s fine. Uh… is something the matter?” He could not figure out why Helen would come to him. If anything, she should be looking for Mark instead…

Helen took out a stack of documents from her purse directly. “Mark’s pretty busy recently. I’m unable to find him, so I can only come to you. You guys are friends, I believe that you’re aware of the recent happenings and want to help him as well. This is what I’ve gathered from asking people to investigate. I hope it’s helpful to him.”

When Jackson heard that it was related to Mark, he sat up from the bed swiftly and took the information to carefully go through them. “Thank you, they should be useful. I’ll have Mark scrutinize them. Oh yeah, you could have gone to Arianne instead. Why did you look for me all the way round? Even if she… doesn’t really want to see you, she probably won’t be so cruel when it concerns Mark?”

Helen smiled deprecatingly. “I thought about that but I still think that it’s better to see you. Arianne’s pregnant. I don’t want her to worry. It’s better for you men to tackle the business side. I’ve left the Kinseys now, this is as much that I can help Mark with. I’ll be leaving now if there’s nothing else.”

Jackson called for the housekeeper to send his guest off. When Helen left, Summer slipped into his room again. “What’s that?”

Not liking Summer poking her nose into everything, Jackson replied, “Hey… Can you go have fun on your own?”

Summer rolled her eyes at him. “I’m warning ya, one month. Don’t think about coming home if you don’t bring a woman back. I’ll cut ties with you as mother and son, chase you out from the West, and cancel your card. I’ll see what you can do!”

Unable to stand her, Jackson got up and changed to head out. He was going to Mark’s office. The information at hand could not be put on hold. It was better for the matter to be resolved as soon as possible.

He could not do anything vigorous now and even walking felt like a chore. It was suffering to Jackson. When he arrived at the Tremont Tower, the front desk girl told him that Mark had gone out. He could only wait in Mark's office and text him to come back once he was done.

When Mark received Jackson's text, he was in a tender meeting. Hesitating for a moment, he decided to leave halfway through the event.

When he got up to leave, he did not notice someone following him from the corner.

Retrieving his car, he called Jackson as he drove. "Is the information useful?"

Spending his days in recovery recently, Jackson was uncertain about Mark's affairs. "I don't know. You'll know when you come back and take a look. I can't make it clear in the call either."

Hanging up, Mark saw a black car tailing him. If he remembered correctly, that car had been tailing him since he left the tender. The tender wasn't in the city center so he would have to drive through a deserted route to go back to his office. Mark could not help accelerating to keep his "tail" off as far as possible.

Chapter 342

He had driven himself today, as Brian had some matters to attend to and took the day off. This meant that he had to face everything on his own.

When his car reached a more remote part of the highway, the black sedan behind him began speeding up. He hit the accelerator, and the black sedan did not fall behind. Both cars enacted a chase scene, straight out from a movie.

Suddenly, the only silver sedan in front of him turned on its indicator and suddenly slowed down. Mark's car was moving too fast. In a fit of panic, he hit the brakes and turned the steering wheel. Only then had he realized that someone had tampered with his brakes! He knew very well that his brakes were completely normal when he first arrived. The only opportunity anyone had to tamper with the brakes, was during the tender.

His car spun into a median strip in the middle of the road. The car flipped into the air, then crashed onto the ground!

Blood trickled down his forehead and into his eyes. The world seemed tinted with a bloody red shade. His consciousness slowly left him as well.

The faint sound of footsteps slowly approached him. He fought to stay awake. A pair of black, custom-made, expensive leather shoes appeared within his view. He couldn't move, and his position prevented him from getting a good look at the man's face. However, there was one thing he knew — this man owned the black sedan that had been chasing him.

"Mark Tremont, your day has finally come. It's high time someone else had a turn with your glorious life."

…

Arianne was greeted with a strangely sombre atmosphere when she returned home from work. She grew slightly suspicious, because everyone in the Tremont household took great care of her mental state. No one would allow her to be affected by the depressing atmosphere. Mary didn't cheerfully call her to the dining table, as she usually would. Instead, she seemed particularly preoccupied. "Wash your hands, Ari. It's almost time for dinner…"

She could tell that something wasn't right. "What's wrong, Mary? She asked, "Why do you and Henry seem so preoccupied?"

Mary twisted her apron nervously, "Some… Something's happened to Mr. Tremont. He got into an accident after attending a tender. The car was completely totaled."

An accident? Arianne was flabbergasted. She stared into space, in a complete loss. It was as if she had lost her voice. She couldn't speak. Her emotions were in disarray.

Mary saw the pale, ghostlike expression on her face and hurriedly soothed her, "Mr. Tremont is an extremely fortunate man. He'll be fine. Accidents happen every day but not everyone dies each time. It'll be alright. Don't worry. You must be tired from work today. Eat your dinner and get some rest tonight. I'll go with you to the hospital tomorrow."

Her hands and feet were ice-cold. Then, she felt weak and completely lost her appetite, "I don't feel like eating. Mary… Come with me to the hospital, right now. Come with me, okay?"

Mary was helpless against her. She frowned for a moment before replying, "It's not that I don't want you to go. It's no use for you to be there now. Mr. Tremont is still in the operating theatre! I'll take you there once we receive news from the hospital. If Mr. Tremont knew about this, he wouldn't let you go either. Be good, okay? Brian is watching over Mr. Tremont. It will be okay…"

Arianne's vision went blurry. She felt as if her head was spinning. Her body swayed and she nearly lost balance. Mary swiftly caught her. "Ari, don't scare me. You're carrying two children. Why won't you listen? Stay calm. Mr. Tremont will be fine. Don't worry. I shouldn't have told you…"

Mary refused to let her go, and even half-forcefully locked her in her room. She knew that Mark's accident was extremely serious. Otherwise, Mary wouldn't have treated her this way.

The thought that Mark might die… That fickle, cold and distant man disappearing from the face of the earth, made her feel very empty. It was as if she had suddenly lost something. She used to dream of many ways to restore her freedom, but none of them included hoping for his death. Never!

She couldn't sleep the entire night. Sometimes, her body would surrender and she would close her eyes for a moment. Then, her subconscious would worry about news from the hospital, and she would awaken very quickly. That was how she spent her night, in a muddle-headed stupor. The next day, Tiffany came to see her, "Ari… Jackson has asked me to take you to the hospital. He says that if you want to go, you'll have to go with me."

This was the moment that Arianne had been waiting for. She jumped off the bed. "I want to go! How is Mark?"

Tiffany's mouth gaped as she tried to speak then stopped herself. After a short pause, she replied, "He's still unconscious. I was afraid that you'd be worried, so I wanted to ask if you wanted to go to the hospital and see him. Why do you look so terrible? Go wash up and get dressed before we go. Otherwise, you might end up getting mistaken for a patient."

They arrived at the hospital. Jackson and Eric were both there. However, Mark was not placed in a normal ward, so they had to look at him from afar through the glass window of the intensive care unit.

Arianne teared up. She covered her mouth with her hand with all of her might to force the tears back. He was perfectly fine when he left the house, but now… Look at him. His body was attached to all sorts of machinery. She could see the bloodstains on his thick bandages. He looked deathly still. Even his breath was shallow, as if he would stop breathing at any moment!

Chapter 343

“What happened?” After a long pause, she finally steadied her emotions and found her voice again.

“I’m not sure either. Your mother came to my house at around two in the afternoon yesterday, and gave me a piece of information. It was about Mark’s company issues. I went to Mark’s office to wait for him, because he was completing some work outside. He got into an accident on the way back. I don’t know what happened during this period of time. I’ve found a witness, but they said that Mark himself went past the speed limit, then suddenly lost control and crashed into the median strip,” Jackson explained in a grim voice.

Past the speed limit? Arianne knew Mark very well. He was always calm and steady in everything he did. How could he possibly have gone past the speed limit?

She instinctively pushed the blame onto Helen. “What useful information could she possibly have? She’s left the Kinseys. She’s nothing now. How could she possibly help Mark? Why, of all times, did she have to do it at that very moment? Do you really think that it’s possible for Mark to speed and go past the speed limit under normal circumstances? Would any of you believe that? You’re friends. You should know him very well. Something must have happened at the time and forced him to do it!”

Jackson was helpless. “Calm down. I’ve looked through that information. Your mother had someone launch an investigation. She really wanted to help Mark. Don’t be so negative. As for Mark’s accident, I’ve thought of everything you’ve said. I don’t believe that he ran past the speed limit simply because he

was in a rush to get back to the office. Something urgent must have happened. I will investigate this. If not, wait for Mark to wake up and everything will be clear. Mark is still in intensive care at the moment. I've asked you to come so that you'd worry a little less. Go home. Your health is most important."

Then, he gave Tiffany a meaningful look. Tiffany squeezed Arianne's hand. "Ari, I'll take you home. We'll call you the minute Mark wakes up. It's inadvisable for you to be here in your current situation. Leave it to us."

Arianne didn't reply. Tears swirled in her eyes as she stared at Mark through the glass window. It took Tiffany a huge amount of effort before she could drag her away from the hospital.

Once they stepped out from the hospital, the clear weather was suddenly covered by gloomy clouds. Large droplets of rain began pouring down with increasing speed. In a few short minutes, it grew into a heavy rain. As if the sky were letting out its long suppressed emotions.

Today, Tiffany had secretly driven the Audi, while Lillian was still asleep. It was a good thing that she did. Otherwise, they would both end up drenched.

When she got into the car, Arianne suddenly said, "I don't want to go home. Take me to see Helen."

Tiffany hesitated. "Ari… That's not really a good idea, is it? I can tell that you have feelings for Mark, deep feelings too. Otherwise you wouldn't want to confront Helen just because something's happened to Mark. He's much more important to you than your own mother. But… let's judge the matter where it stands. It's not appropriate for us to see your mother right now. What if she really was just trying to help Mark? How could there possibly be so many conspiracy theories?"

Arianne fell momentarily silent. She was right, Mark was more important to her than Helen. One was the mother who abandoned her, and the other was the man who raised her. It was evidently clear to see which one was more important. Her suspicions towards Helen didn't come from losing control of her anger and emotions but it was because she didn't think that Helen could be that kind.

She never forgot what Helen had done in the past.

She never forgot how she tried to persuade her into leaving Mark and giving him to Aery along with how she used cancer as a means to trick her. How could a woman like that possibly do anything that would bring her zero benefits? She suddenly emerged with some information, and Mark ends up in an accident. She had to see Helen and question her thoroughly!

She took a deep breath and said, "You don't know Helen. You're right, Mark is more important to me than her. Helen is nothing but a passerby who gave birth to me. Mark… I wouldn't be here if it weren't for him. Do you have any idea what would become of a woman wracked with sin, if she never had his powerful protection? I'm too afraid to even think of it. If I'd have been an orphan if I hadn't joined the Tremont household while living in dark, gloomy corners as my backbone poked at and abused me as I grew older. I don't care how much Mark hates me. I won't let anyone hurt him, just like how he's protected me!"

Her emotions influenced Tiffany, and she threw caution to the wind. "Okay, I'll take you to see her. However, shouldn't you call her and set up a place to meet? I know where the Kinsey home is, but she's no longer staying there… You must also promise me not to act rashly. Have an amicable discussion. Understand the situation first before drawing a conclusion."

Arianne pulled out her phone and removed Helen's number from her blacklist. Back when she put her in the blacklist, she never thought that she'd take the initiative to remove her from it. "Where are you?" She asked in an icy tone once the call was connected, "I need to see you."

Helen, on the other hand, was shocked. Her voice filled with excitement at the same time, “You want to see me? Right now? It’s raining heavily now. Isn’t it inconvenient for you? How about I come to you? Where are you?”

Arianne looked around and settled her gaze on the signboard of a coffee shop. “I’ll wait for you at Violet Café.”

Chapter 344

Tiffany let out a sigh of relief once the call had ended. “That’s a good idea, let her come to us. Saves us the trouble of running around. It doesn’t feel appropriate to make wild accusations in someone else’s territory. Remember what I’ve told you. Don’t be rash.”

Arianne nodded in agreement. The car drove across the road and stopped in an empty space in front of Violet Café.

Helen didn’t make them wait for too long. She arrived at the coffee shop door in less than twenty minutes.

She had rushed all the way over, and did not bring an umbrella. By the time she had finished parking her car and had entered the coffee shop, her white business attire was soaked from the rain. Her neatened hair was in slight disarray. She may look slightly wretched, but when she saw Arianne, she smiled happily. “I never thought that you’d take the initiative to call me.”

The trio sat across from each other. Arianne stared at Helen with a deadpan expression on her face. She was trying to detect anything peculiar from her face, even the slightest bit would be enough. However, she couldn’t find anything.

Helen was growing uneasy from the way Arianne was staring at her. “What is it? Is there something you wanted to tell me?”

Arianne gritted her teeth. “Whose place was it, yours or Aery’s? Or was it a collaborative effort?”

Helen was taken aback. The smile on her face gradually disappeared. “Has something happened? I don’t understand what you’re saying. Arianne, there’s absolutely no need for us to speak to each other like that. If you don’t mind, could you speak plainly?”

Arianne had lost control of her emotions and was growing violent before she could even speak. She looked very much on edge. Seeing this, Tiffany spoke up for her instead, “You paid Jackson a visit, right? And gave him some information? I think it was about Mark’s company. Jackson went to see Mark at his office. Mark wasn’t there at the time. He was on his way when he had an accident. He’s now in the intensive care unit in the hospital across the road. What’s going to happen to Arianne and her two children if he doesn’t wake up?”

Helen took a moment to digest this piece of information before she could grasp the subtle meaning behind her words. “So you think that I’ve plotted to hurt Mark, Arianne? You think that the appearance of that information and that accident was too much of a coincidence?”

Arianne did not respond. Her bright almond-shaped eyes were now bloodshot. Her thin body was trembling, as if she were trying to hold something back.

Then, Helen smiled. This smile was different from the one she wore when she first entered the coffee shop. It had a hint of sadness. “When I received your call, I thought that the information I gave had some use, that it helped Mark in some way and that you wanted to thank me. That way, our relationship would soften a little. Did you know how happy I was? I did not think… that this was what you thought of

me. I don't know how Mark got into that accident, but that information was definitely from me. I really wanted to help him, and do you know why? It was for you."

Arianne smiled as well. It was a smile filled with sarcasm. "For me? You really are hilarious. When you told me to leave him and let Aery have him, was it all for me too? Coming up with a lie and claiming to have cancer, just to fool me, was that for me too? You knew that Aery crashed her car against mine on purpose, and caused my miscarriage, yet you still protected her. I already detest you, what else did you expect me to think? I won't ever trust you again."

The tip of Helen's nose wrinkled, "Yes, I was wrong in the past. At the time, I hadn't given up on Jean Kinsey. I've only just realized how disgusting I've been in the past. I know that it's too late for regrets, and I would never hope to have your forgiveness. However, I was really unaware of Mark's accident. Since it's happened, I hope that he'll be alright. After all… He's the only one you have. I'm not fit to be on equal terms with him in your heart."

"That's right, you aren't worthy." Arianne got up, left some money for her coffee and left without any sign of hesitation.

Tiffany followed closely behind. This time, she did not intend on persuading her. Based on the content of Arianne and Helen's conversation, Helen's actions were unforgivable. Some of them even made one's hair stand on edge. There were some things that she had only just found out, and she couldn't help feeling sad for Arianne.

Two days later, the hospital finally called with news. Mark had been moved from intensive care to a normal ward. He had woken up once during this time, but fell unconscious again. However, he was generally quite stable now.

Arianne rushed to the hospital at once when she received the news. This time, she wouldn't need to look at Mark through a glass window. However, the sight of him with his eyes closed still made her feel as if he were very far away. He was clearly right in front of her, but she was too afraid to touch him.

Suddenly, a doctor walked in, "Are you Mrs. Tremont?"

Arianne nodded. "I am. How is he? Why is he still unconscious? Isn't he in the normal ward now? He should be fine by now…"

The doctor paused. "Mr. Tremont's head has suffered some trauma. This is completely normal. He'll be fine after a few days of observation. He will get better. There is one more thing. Mr. Tremont only stayed awake for fifteen minutes, but he's asked me to help draft… A posthumous letter. Of course, this was his personal request. He said that this is just in case he doesn't wake up again. Since you're here, I'll give it to you."

Chapter 345

She lost her wits when she heard the words — posthumous letter. "He's not dead. Why would he need anything like that? There's no need to give it to me. Throw it away!"

Henry, Jackson, Eric and Tiffany were all here. This situation felt too serious and too sombre to her, as if Mark was really going to die.

"Mrs. Tremont, please calm down. There's a high chance that the posthumous letter won't be of any use at all." The doctor explained, "I'm the doctor in charge of Mr. Tremont. I understand the situation very clearly. Mr. Tremont is in pretty good condition. So I'm just giving the posthumous letter to you."

Then, the doctor pulled out a piece of paper from his lab coat. It was a pretty urgent situation at the time, so he didn't have very many good options. So he wrote the posthumous letter down on a prescription sheet. It looked a little ugly and hurried.

Arianne's hands were shaking. The light piece of paper felt as if it weighed 600 kilograms. Tears streamed down her face from the moment she read the first line.

"If I die, entrust Jackson West with liquidating all assets under my control into cash — to be given to my wife, Arianne Wynn."

Wife. So she had always been his wife, in his eyes. Not a toy or a criminal that he wanted to imprison for the rest of her life. No one would leave everything he had to his most hated enemy, right?

Jackson knew that Mark's condition was now stable, so he wasn't too worried. He felt more relaxed, so he couldn't help feeling a little playful. He snatched the letter from Arianne. "Let me have a look at what posthumous letter Mark Tremont would write…"

He only needed a few short seconds to read that one liner. The expression on Jackson's face, however, gradually changed from relaxed to grim. Finally, he chuckled helplessly. "Honestly, he won't even let me off when he's dead. He wants me to liquidate all of the assets under his name? I'm afraid that might keep me busy for a long time. Thank goodness he's alright. Otherwise I'd have to spend extra time working for him — for free!"

Eric shifted forward and smiled as well. "What a load of crap. Don't worry, Arianne. Mark will be fine."

Arianne was initially quite upset, but after all of their teasing, she blushed furiously.

Henry cleared his throat and said, “Mr. Nathaniel, Mr. West, now that Mr. Tremont’s condition has stabilized, you can go home for now. I’ll have bodyguards watching over him in shifts, 24/7. Brian will be close by as well.”

Eric and Jackson nodded, then left the hospital.

Arianne knew that Henry was afraid that they would disturb Mark’s rest. She paused for a moment and said, “Then I’ll be leaving too. I’ll leave everything up to you, Henry. If he wakes up… Call me.”

Henry nodded and shot Brian a look. Brian hurried forward and said, “I’ll take you back to the Tremont Estate, Madam.”

Bright Designs Incorporated.

Tiffany had turned into a caring and considered “girlfriend” at all times during the past two days. She would dutifully watch over her phone, twenty four hours a day because Arianne would call her whenever she felt emotional. She was exhausted and was so on edge that once her phone rang, she would check her message or answer the call immediately, regardless of whether she was fast asleep or not.

She couldn’t stop yawning during work. She finally managed to hold on until lunch hour. She did not intend on eating lunch, and simply wanted to have a good afternoon nap. Otherwise, she wouldn’t be able to do her work properly in the late afternoon.

She had just lay down on the office table and was preparing to fall asleep, when someone knocked on her desk. She pouted irritably and said, “What are you doing? I’m on my break. Can’t I take a nap?”

“Were you breaking into someone’s house last night?” Jackson asked with a forced smile.

Her temper promptly dissipated when she heard Jackson’s voice, “No… Ari’s been in a bad state over the past few days, hasn’t she? Sometimes, she’d wake up in the dead of the night and call me or send me a message. Of course I’d have to keep an eye out every second of the day. She’s pregnant. Do you have any idea how upsetting it is to have no one to talk to? Is there something you need? If you have work for me, put it on my desk. I’ll do it in the afternoon.”

Jackson paused thoughtfully, then said, “It’s not about work… Well… I’ve been pretty busy lately, and I haven’t been able to bring lunch for you. How about I take you out for a meal? You can have half the day off this afternoon, so you can get a good rest. I’ll introduce you to a second job tonight. However, it may be last minute but could be long term. Salary paid in cash, great wages… Wanna think about it?”

Tiffany couldn’t help suspecting him of having an ulterior motive. “What kind of second job is that, that I’d have to do it at night? You can’t possibly… Introduce me to some kind of shady activity, right? I’ve been a drinking companion in a clubhouse, but I don’t do that stuff anymore. Anything more than that is definitely impossible. Don’t even think about it!”

Jackson chuckled awkwardly. “It’s not that. Keep your head out of the gutter. It’s up to you if you want to do it or not. You’ll even get a free half day off and an exquisite lunch. Think about it.”

She was extremely sleepy at this point, and very hungry. Of all things, Jackson happened to catch onto her current most urgent needs. He was even introducing a moonlighting gig which could rake in a considerable amount of money — for free. This felt quite worthwhile to her, yet she was afraid of falling

into his trap. “I don’t mind agreeing to it, however… How much money will I get? Give me a rough figure. You have to explain everything to me beforehand, then I can consider if I want to do it or not. What kind of moonlighting gig is this?”

Chapter 346

Jackson paused in thought and said, “If it’s one-off, you’ll get ten thousand once. If it turns into a long term gig, it’ll be easier to negotiate the price. The general explanation is… I have a friend whose mother is hounding him to bring a girlfriend home, but he doesn’t want to get married so he can’t do that. So he’s asked me to help him find someone suitable to act as his girlfriend. It’s just an act. Body contact is a must, but it won’t reach any overtly intimate stages. You don’t have to worry about that. If his family doesn’t approve, then you’re done after one gig. If they approve, then the gig will continue. If you think the price isn’t good enough, you can negotiate as well.”

Getting paid ten thousand dollars just for acting like his girlfriend once? Tiffany agreed without a second thought, “The price is good enough. However, I’m going to make this clear, bodily contact has its limits. I’ll come after you if he crosses the line.”

The pair immediately became good friends. Tiffany happily enjoyed her meal, then went home to catch up on some sleep.

At five thirty in the evening, Jackson promptly gave her a call and even sent her a dress. It looked like a simple white shirt with stockings and a black mini skirt. The label was still on it, and the price made her heart pound for a long time. It had been a while since she had ever laid her hands on something so extravagant.

She put on the clothes and realized that they fit her very well, especially on her waist and chest. The fit seemed to be tailored to the shape of her body. The effect it had on the top half of her body was really good. She liked it very much. However, she would have to return these clothes, so she didn’t dare cut off the tag.

Jackson scanned her from top to toe when she arrived downstairs. His eyes seemed to shimmer like starlight. He was clearly very pleased. “Get in the car.”

She casually slid into the co-driver’s seat. “Why are you picking me up? Are you coming with me to your friend’s house? Wouldn’t that be awkward? Give me some information on your friend. I’ll be exposed if I go there and end up not knowing his name. Do I need a fake background? For example my family background and so on? It’s got to be fictional and we have to agree on it beforehand. It’d be best if this could become a long-term gig, so I can earn more money.”

Jackson cleared his throat and replied her with a serious look on his face, “No need to fabricate your origins. Everyone knows about you. As for my friend… You have all the necessary information on him.”

Everything? Tiffany was confused. “Have I met your friend? Stop being so secretive then, just tell me who it is.”

“There’s no friend. Actually, it’s me.” Jackson had decided on telling the truth. He was going to have to lay his cards on the table sooner or later.

“Stop the car!” Tiffany jumped with fright.

Jackson immediately hit the brakes, but he locked the car doors. “I’m not keeping it from you on purpose, I was just afraid that you wouldn’t agree. Now that you know, you’ve already agreed to it, you can’t turn back. So you’re going to have to go, whether you want to or not.”

He was going to drive her crazy. Every time she thought of his mother, Summer West, she'd become extremely nervous. She was still traumatized by how Mrs. West had threatened her into taking care of Jackson in the hospital for half a month, let alone going to his house and pretending to be his girlfriend. She would never go, even if she had to down a hundred bottles of liquid courage. "Jackson West, you're sending me into the mouth of a tiger. I'm scared of your mother. I'm not going! Unlock the car, this instant! I'll change my clothes right now and give them back to you!"

Jackson stared at her innocently. "I won't. You can beat me to death but I won't do it. I've already told my mom that you'd be coming to the house for dinner tonight. My mom would kill me if you don't show up. If I die, you'll lose your job. Think about that. Don't think that I'm exaggerating. A son who can't keep the family line going is useless in my mother's eyes. How about this, I'll double your salary. If that's not enough, I can give you five times or ten times more too."

Tiffany was at a complete loss. Five to ten times more of her salary was too much. She couldn't do it. However, she really didn't want to go.

Suddenly, Jackson pulled out the tag that she had hidden in her collar, "These clothes are pretty expensive. They're yours now. If you won't do it, I'll take it out from your pay."

She angrily punched him in the chest. "Jackson West, are you that eager to die?"

Jackson's expression changed instantly. He pressed against his chest and leaned on the steering wheel, looking as if he was in extreme agony. TIffany remembered that he had just been discharged not too long ago and broke into cold sweat in fright. "I'm sorry, I'm sorry! I've forgotten that you've just been discharged. Are you alright? Does it hurt? Do you want to go to the hospital and get it checked out? I'm not trying to offend you, but must you always stoop so low? You know that I can't pay for these clothes, why did you tear off the label… Fine. I promise you that I'll go with you, okay? Let's get to the hospital first and see if you're alright. If you die from my punch, my life is over. I don't want to live the next half of my life in a jail cell…"

“You said it yourself. I’m fine. Come on, let’s go to my house and see my mom,” Jackson straightened his back and continued driving, looking completely fine, as if nothing had happened at all. Tiffany was shocked when she saw this. Indeed, experience counts. She had fallen for his tricks again…

She made a decision then and there. She could not allow for this business deal to carry on for the long term. It had to be a one-off deal. She had initially planned on relying on his extra source of income, but Jackson had to trick her. She would try her best to win Mrs. West’s disapproval!

Chapter 347

Her breath was mildly taken away when they arrived at the West family residence. The house certainly wasn’t considered cheap in the capital. Every detail of it displayed traces of history. These were the kinds of things that were considered priceless. She couldn’t help pausing and admiring the hundred year old tree in the garden. The tree alone would cost a hefty price.

“You can come back as often as you like,” Jackson joked teasingly.

“Pfft… Yeah, right.” Tiffany rolled her eyes at him and stomped right in with her high heeled shoes, as if she wasn’t ladylike at all. This was her plan — the more Mrs. West disliked her, the better.

Summer West was sitting in the living room, drinking tea when they entered. She was carrying a light grey poodle in her arms. When she saw Tiffany, she said with a half-smile, “She certainly has an attitude. It’s better than pretending to be a delicate little flower.”

Tiffany’s entire head was filled with black lines. With her IQ, she couldn’t tell if Mrs. West was making an ironic remark or if she was being sincere.

She walked to the sofa across from Mrs. West and sat right down. “What a beautiful dog, Mrs. West. You must have spent a lot of effort in its maintenance.”

Summer West rolled her eyes at Jackson. “That’s right. I have no grandchildren to play with and I’m bored. So I have no choice but to have a dog. How long have you and Jackson been together?”

“It hasn’t been that long.” Tiffany replied, “We’re still getting to know each other. We don’t know each other intimately yet.”

Jackson realized that Tiffany was trying to mess with him, so he helplessly went upstairs, “Mom, I need to deal with some things in the company. You talk to Tiffie.”

Tiffie? This was the first time Tiffany had ever heard him call her by that name. She still felt goose pimples all over her body, despite knowing that this was only an act.

Once Jackson had left, Mrs. West put the dog down and sat next to Tiffany. “You’ve mentioned that you were just getting to know each other and don’t know each other intimately yet, are you saying that you haven’t done ‘it’ yet?”

“It’? Tiffany felt as if a bolt of lightning had appeared in the sky. It was true that she was a modern woman, and could talk about sex whenever she wanted, but she was currently speaking to an elder. She couldn’t possibly be expected to talk about that? It was better to be more reserved. “‘It’? What is ‘it’?”

Mrs. West clicked her tongue. “Stop pretending. I believe that you are the first girl that Jackson’s ever brought home. You’re going to have to get married by the end of the year at the very latest. I’m eager for grandchildren.”

When Tiffany heard this, she began to think that she prioritized boys instead of girls, since she talked about having grandchildren so much. If she were to say that she couldn’t have kids, her impression of her would certainly sour. When she thought of this, she apologetically replied, “Mrs. Tremont, I won’t lie to you, seeing as you’re so eager to have grandkids… It might be best to have Jackson find a new girlfriend. I was informed last year that I can’t conceive and that I’ll never be able to have kids. I’m sorry.”

Pfft!

Jackson spat out his tea. He had just arrived at the head of the staircase, carrying a tea cup. He nearly tumbled down the staircase in surprise. He stared at Tiffany with a complicated look on his face. Was it this woman’s goal to mess things up for him?

Mrs. West shot him a look. In order to avoid getting caught in this mess, he chose to retreat. “Ah.. I haven’t finished with work yet. I was just here to check on you. Please, continue…” He disappeared into the study in a puff of smoke and sent Tiffany a message: Are you trying to die? Can’t you talk nicely? What do you mean by ‘unable to conceive’? Are you really content with earning a one-off payment?

Tiffany heard her phone ring, but did not check it. She knew that it was a message from Jackson. She refused to look at it!

Mrs. West wore a complicated look on her face when she knew that she was “barren”. She paused for a long time before sighing, “If you’re born barren, we can’t do very much about that. We can just find a

surrogate mother when the time comes. Don't worry. Us Wests have our limits. We won't allow Jackson to have any bodily contact with the surrogate mother. Artificial insemination will do just fine."

This time, it was Tiffany's turn to become frantic. "That's not it… Mrs. West, you really don't mind? Didn't you mention how eager you were to have grandchildren? How could you possibly tolerate my inability to conceive?"

Mrs. West stared at her seriously. "What can you do about that? Am I supposed to make Jackson abandon you? That's not good. There are many ways for me to have grandchildren. I like how you're so straightforward and candid. Our Jackson is very considerate. You'll complement each other. You're quite compatible. Alright, time to eat. Go and call Jackson. I've heard that you've been working at Jackson's company. You should leave once you've eaten. I won't take up too much of your time. Young people should work hard."

Tiffany entered the study, her mind overflowing with questions, "Jackson, your mother said that it's fine. That it doesn't matter if I can't have kids. Was she being ironic? She must be. She's even told us to leave as soon as we've eaten. She must not approve of me and is too shy to spell it out. She wants to chase me away. That must be it!"

Jackson stared at her begrudgingly. "Aren't you trying to spoil things? Let me tell you this, that your actions are in line with my mother's tastes. She wasn't being ironic, and she would never be too shy to spell it out. She'd scold you immediately if she didn't like you. She's not asking us to leave as soon as we've finished because she's unhappy with you and wants to chase you away. It's because… She wants us to spend more time together. Regardless, she's pretty happy with you. Come one more time for dinner."

Tiffany was not discouraged. This wasn't over yet. She was going to make Mrs. West hate her.

Chapter 348

At the dining table, she lifted one leg up and purposefully put it on her chair. She smacked her lips as she ate, and every time she tried to take a portion from a dish, she would purposefully inch closer to Mrs. West, or she would stand up and reach out to do it. She committed every single dining table faux pas that elite families hated. She even pulled a silly smile out of pretence, and observed Mrs. West's face.

Ten minutes later, Mrs. West's entire face turned black. She slammed her cutlery onto the dining table. Tiffany jumped in fright and became too afraid to do anything more. She obediently slid her leg back down.

"Jackson West, you're not dead. In fact, you're still breathing. Can't you help Tiffie get a portion of the dishes? Has your height gone to waste? Can't you see that she isn't tall enough to reach?"

Tiffany was dumbfounded.

"Yes, I'll remember that." Jackson replied, "You can concentrate on your meal, and I'll take care of her. Will that do?"

This satisfied Mrs. West, who picked up her cutlery and continued eating her meal. When she noticed that Tiffany had put her leg down again at some point, she lifted her hand. "No need to restrain yourself. Put your leg back up the chair. Eat in your most comfortable position. There aren't any outsiders anyway. This feels more like home. If everyone were to pay so much attention to detail, then it'd be no different than sitting at a table surrounded by strangers. One should be able to do as they pleased in their homes. Home is where you relax. Of course, you'd have to be more scrupulous when you're outside."

Tiffany had completely come apart. Mrs. West's unconventional methods made her surrender, and she was in no mood to continue with her charade. She obediently ate her dinner, displaying her true self.

She was a very casual person, but she was raised in a wealthy family and had cultivated all mannerisms that were expected of a well-bred young lady from an elite family. Her attitude and habits were naturally graceful.

A smile appeared in the depths of Mrs. West's eyes. She had been alive for such a long time and had seen all sorts of people. She had seen through Tiffany's little trick long ago.

After they had left the West family residence, Tiffany stretched out her hand towards Jackson. "My fee, please."

Jackson raised his brow and said, "Must we be so realistic? I'm still your boss, you know. Would I really owe you that money?"

The thought of receiving money brought Tiffany a lot of joy. "It's good to be realistic. We've both got what we wanted. These clothes, too. I can take them off and give them back to you. I don't have the money to buy these clothes anyway. You're the one who tore off the label. That's not my fault."

"Take them off? Here? Really?" Jackson flashed a profoundly wicked smile.

"Get lost! Why are you so cocky? I really never thought that you'd turn out to be that kind of a person!" Tiffany blushed from his teasing.

"Alright, alright. I won't tease you. I bought these clothes for you. The women around me certainly don't have a waist as thick as yours. They won't wear it, and they're tailored to your measurements. Keep it and wear it," Jackson got into the car after saying his piece.

Tiffany was completely flustered by him. Was her waist that thick? It was extremely slender! Have all the women around him gone through costectomy? Or are they all monsters? Wait a minute, how did he know her measurements?

She hesitated for a long time along the way before she spoke, “Has… Anything happened between us? I mean… When we slept together. How did you know my measurements?” And it wasn’t just her waist, her chestal area measurements were to the tee.

Jackson stared straight ahead and replied in a seemingly careless manner, “I’ve been through many women. I’d know their measurements once I’ve touched them. Does this answer satisfy you?”

The corners of her lips twitched. She ignored him. This guy was just like her once you knew him better. He spoke without much filter.

…

The Tremont Estate, next day in the afternoon.

Henry had returned from the hospital along with Brian.

Arianne was surprised, “Henry, Brian. Aren’t you supposed to be watching over Mark at the hospital? Why are you back?”

Brian stepped forward and replied, “Mr. Tremont is awake, Madam. He’s told us that there’s no need to keep watch over him, and to just arrange a few bodyguards to prevent any strangers from coming near him. Would you like to go to the hospital? Shall I drive you there?”

She was internally overjoyed when she heard that he was awake. However, she was hesitant over going to the hospital. “I’m glad that he’s awake. I… I’ll find some time to visit him.”

Brain was confused by her reaction. “Shouldn’t you be happy that Mr. Tremont is awake? Why won’t you see him?”

She had wanted to stay by his side until he had woken up, back when he was still unconscious. However, now that he was awake, she wasn’t sure of how to face him. The mix of intimacy and distance had already been very weird between them. She certainly couldn’t bring herself to adapt to the situation in a place like the hospital, “I never said that I wouldn't go, I just don’t want to go immediately. You two should get some rest. I’ll come along with you during your next trip to the hospital.”

Brian was completely confused, but he didn’t ask too many questions.

At night, Brian went to the hospital to visit Mark on his own. He did not ask Arianne to come along as it was too late in the night. After all, pregnant women needed more rest.

Arianne jolted away when she heard the sound of the car leaving. She jogged downstairs and asked Henry, “Where has Brian gone off to?”

She nearly gave Henry a heart attack. “Madam, please be more careful… Walk carefully wherever you go and don’t run. Brian has gone to the hospital to check on Mr. Tremont. He was afraid that the people left in charge would not be able to care for him well enough. He did not ask you to come along as it’s very late. If you want, I can take you there tomorrow.”

Chapter 349

Arianne grunted out a reply, turned around, and went back to her room. However, she ended up tossing and turning around, unable to fall asleep.

Three hours later, Brian’s car had returned to the Tremont Estate. She checked the calendar — it was Friday. Tiffany didn’t need to go to work tomorrow. She sent her a message: I’ve heard from Brian and Henry that he’s awake. Would it be convenient for you to drive me there? I’m sorry for inconveniencing you at such a late hour.

Her reply returned very quickly: Why are you being so modest with me? I’m coming now. Wait right there.

Arianne replied to her with a smiley emoji, then got up and changed her clothes. She didn’t want Brian or Henry to take her because she acted as if she didn’t care when she heard that Mark was awake. It didn’t seem appropriate to ask Henry or Brian to drive her all the way there in the dead of the night. Her subconscious refused to admit how much she really wanted to go to the hospital.

She was a contrary figure at the moment. Most importantly, she wanted to see Mark but didn’t want to choose a time frame when he was most likely to be awake as she felt that it would feel awkward between them. At least she could relax while he was asleep, especially after that posthumous letter that he had left behind, which made her feel strangely heavy…

Tiffany soon arrived. She purposefully asked her not to stop her car at the main gate of the Tremont Estate, and to park it further away.

After she had gotten into the car, Tiffany asked, “Why do you want to go to the hospital in the middle of the night? I’ve never seen a pregnant lady as energetic as you. Running all the way to the hospital instead of sleeping. If I were your man, I’d faint from shock.”

Arianne pulled at her skirt and replied, “Don’t talk too loudly when we’re at the hospital. He likes peace and quiet.”

Tiffany seemed to have detected something unbelievable. “Arianne, be honest, have you fallen for Mark?”

Arianne instinctively retaliated. “Nonsense! I have not! He’s like family to me, a very important family member, and my only family.”

Tiffany reflected on her words. “That’s true… You’ve known Mark for so long, yet you’ve managed to fall for Will. Chances of you falling for Mark are pretty slim, and you’re not the kind of person who’d surrender just because you’re pregnant with his child.”

When they arrived at the hospital and saw the four bodyguards standing guard outside Mark’s ward, Arianne approached them and asked, “Has he fallen asleep?”

The bodyguards were all big and brawny, and she was more petite, so no one could really hear her. One bodyguard lowered his head and softly asked, “What did you say, Madam?”

She repeated herself, “Is he asleep or awake?”

The bodyguard finally heard her question. He glanced inside through the small opening on the door. “He’s asleep. Do you want to go in and see him, Madam?”

Arianne heaved a sigh of relief. “Mm.”

Tiffany waved her hand, “You go on in. I’ll stay here and wait for you outside.”

She nodded, pushed open the door and tiptoed inside. There was only one small light in the ward, and it was pretty dim. However, she could see that Mark had his eyes closed and that he was breathing steadily.

Realizing that the air conditioner’s temperature was a little low, she picked up the remote and adjusted it. Then, she moved closer to him and carefully observed him. He looked much better compared to his stint in the intensive care unit. He was usually pristine, but now he looked a little messy, and was even shielding his eyes. She reached out to move his hand away, until his large hand suddenly grabbed her wrist.

“You’re… Awake? Did I wake you?” Her hand stiffened, feeling mildly afraid.

Mark opened his eyes and stared at her. His intense gaze showed no signs of tiredness. He didn't look like he had just fallen asleep. "I've slept too much in the day. I couldn't sleep. What are you doing so late in the night? You sent you here? Didn't I tell Brian not to let you come to the hospital?"

She could feel the iciness in his hand around her wrist. She struggled away and put his hand back under the covers, "I just wanted to see you. I'll leave very soon. Tiffie drove me here. It had nothing to do with Brian. Is the air conditioning temperature okay? Would you like a higher temperature? Don't catch a cold."

He didn't answer and simply stared at her quietly. She thought that he had gotten angry and lowered her head, "I'll leave right now, I won't come again. Have a good rest…" She said in a soft voice. Then, she turned around to leave, until he grabbed her wrist again, "You're here anyway. Stay with me…"

His voice was a little hoarse, with a fragile sense of weakness. There was no icy edge in it, which gave her the courage to stay with him.

She was too afraid to sit on the bed, afraid that any small movement would aggravate his wound. So she sat on the chair next to him instead.

The pair faced each other in silence. The awkwardness which she had feared had happened. She never liked the silence and insecurity that came with her interactions with him.

After a while, he suddenly spoke up, "I've heard that you cried when I got into that accident, from Jackson and the rest."

Chapter 350

Arianne immediately panicked and denied tooth and nail. “I did not! I was just… Scared. You were in the intensive care unit at the time and you looked like you were dead… I’ve never seen such a thing before. I was so scared…”

He smirked. “Oh… Got it.”

She wanted to relax, so she found a topic and asked, “How did you get into that accident?”

He did not plan on going into the specifics with her, and it was no use telling her anyway. It would only burden her even more. He never liked being superfluous anyway. “Don’t ask. There’s no use if you found out anyway.” Then, he continued, “The information from Helen was useful. She really wanted to help me. It’s not what you think. My accident had nothing to do with her. Perhaps everything she had done in the past stemmed from her wholehearted devotion to the Kinseys. However, she’s only doing it for you now. After all, hurting me won’t do her any good.”

Arianne didn’t want to say too much when it came to Helen. “Mm.”

“Nothing ever happened between Aery and I,” he suddenly changed the topic.

Arianne was taken aback. Discussing these sorts of topics still made her feel very awkward. “You… Don’t have to explain. I don’t want to hear it either.”

He was rather compliant with her on the subject. “Alright.”

Silence followed again, as if it would never end. Then, Arianne began to gradually relax, and didn't feel too bored. She did not need to avoid his gaze under such a dusky light. Sitting quietly together like this was good enough.

After more than twenty minutes, Mark stopped moving and had seemingly fallen asleep. His current state was still a far cry from the average man. Their small talk had taken up all of his energy, so much so that he didn't have time to tell her that he was falling asleep.

She tucked him in and softly walked away. Tiffany had nearly fallen asleep from waiting outside.
"Alright, my dear, can we leave now?"

Arianne nodded. "I'm sorry. He woke up all of a sudden. We chatted for a while."

Tiffany did not blame her. "That's good. Wouldn't your trip have been a waste if he didn't wake up? Can you stop worrying now? I'll take you home. Get an early night's rest. I get anxious every time I look at your belly. If I had two buns in my oven, I'd lie on the bed for ten months and never get out of it!"

When the pair arrived at the hospital entrance, Tiffany suddenly realized that someone was blocking her car — a red sports car had parked itself right in front of her car, blocking her way out!

That explosive temper of hers would not allow her to swallow this. She rushed forward and yelled, "Are you blind?! Can't you find another parking spot? Blocking my car like that… You wanna die?!"

The car door to the red sports car opened, and Aery got down from the car. "You're the one who's in my way."

Tiffany laughed in spite of her rage, “And here I was, wondering who it is. So it’s you. Have you come all the way here just to wait out here?! Can’t get into the ward, can you?! How unfortunate. We just came from the ward.”

Aery continued smiling, but the resentment and jealousy in her heart continued to rise, “It’s not that I can’t get inside, but I’m being considerate of my darling Mark. Now that he’s been in an accident, the media has found out. There are many journalists hiding out here, and I’m afraid of causing trouble for him. It’s not good to start gossip.”

Arianne was in no mood to waste time on her. “So you’re aware that your status does not allow you to be openly photographed and gossiped about? Then you can stay here. Tiffie, let’s go.”

“I’m not moving, you can’t leave.” Aery smirked.

Arianne shot her an icy glare. “What do you want?”

Aery bit her lip and asked, “Is Mark… Alright?”

“Heh… So you’re not even aware of his condition? Looks like you’re really worried about him. Is this true love? And I thought that you were only in love with his money. He’s very well. He woke up when I came to see him. We talked for a while. Can you move aside now?” Arianne replied with a forced smile.

Aery could not swallow this offense. She never thought that she'd end up having to ask Arianne about Mark's condition, but she couldn't contact Mark and wasn't allowed in the ward. So she had no choice but to wait here, and she ended up waiting for a good few hours. The more complacent Arianne was, the more jealousy she felt. Jealousy was like a demon that could swallow the hearts of men. She dearly wished that Arianne would die!

Finally, she moved her car. Since she was now aware that Mark was awake and alright, there was no need to continue waiting here. She had plenty of time. There was no need to exact her revenge immediately.

Arianne watched Aery's car drive off into the distance. Then she leisurely got into the car. "Tiffie, you'd better watch out. I don't want Aery to turn the car around again…" She was traumatized from her last accident. Previously, Aery had rammed into her car like a mad woman. She couldn't be sure if she would do it again.

Tiffany scanned her surroundings, confirmed that it was safe, then drove off. "It's alright. I'll take the opposite direction. I'll make sure that you get home safe. Hey… Ari, I have a question to ask you…"

Arianne rubbed the space between her brows, feeling a little tired. "Ask away. Is there anything that we don't talk about?"

Tiffany drove along and carefully asked, "Didn't both Mark and Helen protect Aery, during your first miscarriage?"