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Chapter 361

In the ward, Mark didn't close his eyes for even a moment throughout the long, silent night.

The next morning, Arianne slowly opened her eyes. The anaesthetic had worn off and her face was pale from the pain. Even her forehead was beaded with cold sweat.

She was startled the moment she saw Mark. "My babies…"

He parted his thin lips slightly. "It's alright, let's not have babies anymore. I'm glad you are safe."

Arianne exhaled slowly. She already knew that she would lose her babies last night during the dinner, she just didn't expect it to happen so suddenly. Just when she thought she could wait for her two babies to arrive in peace, things still turned out this way...

"Why? How could that happen? Wasn't I doing fine before? I didn't eat or do anything that I shouldn't…" she mumbled to herself. Her eyes turned glassy, making her look like a pitiful rag doll that had lost its soul.

"It's your physical condition that doesn't allow you to get pregnant again. It's negligence on my part. I shouldn't have gotten you pregnant again, knowing that the first miscarriage damaged…" He trailed off, not wanting to mention Aery's name in front of her.

Arianne turned her face away and tears slid off her cheek. “What have I done to make Aery Kinsey do this to me? Am I never going to be able to have my own baby for the rest of my life? I’ve done… nothing to deserve this.”

Yes, since the very beginning, she had never done anything to Aery. It had never been her fault.

Mark got up and poured her a glass of warm water. “Have some water.”

She didn’t move. “Were they girls? Did you see them? Do they look more like you or me?” She then thought of something. “You… should take the opportunity to do a DNA paternity test to at least confirm that the children are yours.”

Mark felt his eyes watering up, perhaps because he didn’t catch a wink the night before. “I saw them… They were… very beautiful, just like you. Don’t say that, there’s no need for any DNA testing. The children are mine, so don’t…”

Arianne suddenly smiled. “Then what do you want from me? Why won’t you and Aery just leave me alone? Even if I did owe you, I owe Aery Kinsey nothing! What else do you want from me!” Yes, she was deliberately trying to anger Mark. Aery did this to her, yet Mark still carried on his ambiguous relationship with Aery. Not only that, he even defended Aery and helped the Kinsey family, although she was the perpetrator behind her first miscarriage. Theoretically, this would make Mark an accomplice since he condoned her actions!

Mark kept quiet while still offering the glass of water to her.

A moment later, Arianne wiped away her tears and spoke coldly, “Leave. I don’t want to see you.”

Mark obediently turned around to leave, then called Mary on the phone, “Come take care of her at the hospital and don’t let anyone near her... except for Tiffany Lane.”

Instead of returning to the Tremont Estate, Mark headed straight to the company. He drove himself instead of letting Brian drive him. Even if he didn’t catch a wink of sleep last night, he was still able to concentrate on driving. However, his gloominess was clearly reflected in his eyes.

As soon as he arrived at the Tremont Tower and got out of the car, he was ambushed by Jean and Aery. The two seemed to have been waiting here for a very long time. “Mr. Tremont, why did you withdraw your funding? My company won’t be able to continue if you do that now!”

Mark smiled, then gently pushed the father and daughter away with his hand like a gentleman. “What has that got anything to do with me?”

Aery’s face turned ashen. “Mark dear…” She didn’t know what else to say aside from calling his name. Even if he had stopped talking to her, he never mentioned anything about withdrawing his funding. Hence, she wasn’t mentally prepared for his sudden decision.

Mark’s eyes turned frosty. “Don’t call me that. Arianne doesn’t have a younger sister like you. I’m still busy, so please leave.” After saying that, he walked past them, entered the building, and motioned to the security guards at the door to stop them from following him.

Jean slumped to the ground, feeling as though his world had crumbled. “Aery… call your mother! Hurry it up!”

Aery hurriedly took out her phone and called Helen. “Mom, Mark suddenly decided to withdraw his funding out of the blue! Our company won’t be able to continue operating now! You need to think of something!”

Helen’s indifferent voice came from the other end of the line, “Aery Kinsey, do not order me around. I owe the Kinsey family nothing. I know nothing about Mark’s decision in withdrawing the funding and I don’t care. The business belongs to the Kinsey family, so both of you should learn how to solve your own problems. I’ll be hanging up now if you have nothing else to tell me.”

Aery growled angrily. “Helen Cameran! How can you be this cruel? I’m your daughter! You may not care about dad, but shouldn’t you care about me too?”

“Both of you only think about yourselves. You two will only think about me when something happens. I’ve lived half of my life for both of you, but now it’s time for me to live my own life.” As soon as Helen hung up on her, Aery smashed her phone on the ground. “She doesn’t care about us! Why do I have a mother like her? It must be Arianne Wynn! Arianne must have told Mark dear something! Why else would he suddenly make a decision like that? I’ll go settle the score with her, then take back the money and house that Helen gave her! Those belong to our Kinsey family! She has no right to take them away!”

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Jean got up from the ground with a glimmer of hope in his eyes. “That’s right... Arianne still has the money and house in her hand. Those add up to about three million dollars, which will be enough to last us for a while! Let’s go find her!”

After doing some investigating, Aery learned that Arianne had been hospitalized since last night. She stormed to the hospital, only to be stopped by the bodyguards at the door. By now, she no longer cared about keeping up her image as a lady from a wealthy family. “Let me in! Let me find that bitch!”

Mary heard the commotion outside the ward. Her face sank as soon as she went out. “Why are you here?”

Aery tried her best to stand on her toes to catch a glimpse inside the ward. “Arianne is in there, right? Let me in! I have an urgent matter!”

Aery looked more like she was here to kill instead of looking for someone. Naturally, Mary wouldn’t allow her to pass. “Miss Kinsey, our madam isn’t well enough to receive guests. Please leave or I’ll have to take action against you if you continue making a commotion here.”

Aery flung her hand at Mary’s face, instantly leaving bloody claw marks on her face. “Scram! You’re just a dog for the Tremont family!” Aery shouted at her like a madwoman.

Mary covered her cheek with one hand and trembled with anger. “Get this woman out of here! I’ll call sir.”

At Mary’s order, the two bodyguards immediately took Aery away and kicked her out of the hospital.

Mary wasn’t going to take this lying down. She called Mark and cried to him, “Sir, Aery Kinsey just came to the hospital and caused a commotion! She even scratched my face like a madwoman! How could madam rest with all this noises? Although I’ve sent her away already, I’m not sure if she’s coming back again.”

Mark was in a meeting at the moment. He maintained the gentle smile on his face in front of his subordinates, but his eyes had turned frosty. “Alright, I’ll take care of it. Don’t worry. Just look after her well.” People who didn’t know better would think that he had just answered an ordinary phone call.

By the time he came out of the meeting, the smile on his face had been replaced by a cold look. “Invite Aery Kinsey over,” he instructed his secretary, Ellie, who was behind him.

Half an hour later, Aery showed up at the Tremont Tower looking all dressed up. Although it was Mark’s secretary who contacted her, she was still overjoyed. After all, the fact that Mark was willing to meet her was already a good sign. She took her time to dress up because she knew that appearance was the key to a man’s heart.

When she entered Mark’s office, she even deliberately swayed her hips. “Mark dear, I’m here.”

Mark stood in front of the transparent glass wall, overlooking the magnificent scenery outside. Half of the cigarette between his fingers had burned out. “Why did you go looking for her? I only withdrew the funding and didn’t plan on doing anything to you. Are you not satisfied yet?”

Aery was stunned. She didn’t understand what he meant by saying that but also noticed that something was off. Her expression even contorted out of fear under her delicate makeup. “W-What?”

Mark turned around and snubbed out the cigarette butt in the ashtray. He looked at her and the air around him turned cold too. “Aery Kinsey, why do you think I was with you before? I wanted to make her feel uncomfortable because you are her half-sister. I concealed the fact that you were the one who caused her miscarriage and even helped the Kinsey family only because I wanted to anger her. To put it plainly, I was only using you. But you’re no longer needed now and I’ve already grown tired of you. You aren’t that naive to think that I really liked you, are you?

“I’m warning you now, I’m capable of doing worse things if you insist on finding trouble with her again. She was admitted into the hospital for her second miscarriage. Due to the damage caused by her first miscarriage, she will never be able to have her own child. This is all thanks to you, and it’s also the reason why I have withdrawn the funding. I’m only sparing you because you are her younger sister. You should know your limits.”

Aery took two steps back involuntarily. “Mark dear… this isn’t true, right? You’re just lying to me… You clearly told me that you liked me. Besides... I only went looking for her to take back the money and house. The assets that my mom got after the divorce belong to the Kinsey family. She has no right to keep them. I was only going to take them back. I never planned on doing anything to her… Her first miscarriage was an accident. I was only going to teach her a lesson out of anger because I saw her with Will Sivan. I felt bad for you! I didn’t even know she was pregnant! You can’t blame that on me!”

Irritated by the noise, Mark lit another cigarette in annoyance. “Don’t use me as an excuse. You did that only because you wanted to. The assets that your mother received after the divorce no longer belong to the Kinsey family. Are you still a kid? You can’t even understand that? Since she gave them to Arianne, then they belong to Arianne now. Alright, I’ve said enough. You better not go looking for her again.”

Mark obviously didn’t want to say more than that. Aery was a little unsteady on her feet while she was drowning in the sea of emotions. Soon after that, she growled, “So… you were really only using me? Is that why you never wanted to touch me? I see now… You can easily crush the Kinsey family with just a lift of your finger. I’m not willing to accept that I’m just a pawn to you. Why did that bitch get everything? I’ve lost everything now, but I’m not afraid anymore. I’ll never let her off the hook!”

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Mark frowned at her use of profanity then walked up to her and grabbed her chin. With a pleasantly deep yet dangerously low voice, he said “You are challenging my limits.”

Aery was so scared that she burst into tears and her body trembled like a leaf. “W-What… are you going to do?”

He pushed her away suddenly. “I don’t have the habit of laying a finger on women. But if you continue to be ignorant, then I don’t mind letting my bodyguard do it in my stead.”

Aery fell to the ground on her butt. The heels that she had carefully selected to wear for their meeting turned into quite the nuisances right now. She got up strenuously and limped her way out, only to be stopped by a bodyguard who had suddenly appeared out of nowhere. In her panic, she couldn’t even spit at him like she did earlier. Only now did she finally realize that Mark’s gentleness was only a facade. His smile could turn the world into a spring wonderland, but his anger could conjure a winter blizzard.

“I won’t go to Arianne again… Please let me go…” She compromised and hid her hatred deep in her eyes. She knew that if she didn’t agree, she would never be able to leave here.

Mark waved his hand and the bodyguard stepped aside. “I’ll believe you this one time. Do not betray my trust,” he warned.

In the hospital, the first thing Arianne asked when she opened her eyes was if someone had been here. She faintly heard some noises in her sleep, but she was too tired to wake up and find out what happened.

Mary huffed angrily, “It was Aery Kinsey. I didn't let her in and asked the bodyguards to throw her out because she obviously came with ill intention. Don't worry, I called sir after that. She wouldn’t dare to come again.”

Arianne frowned and didn't speak. She propped herself up into a sitting position. The pain she felt in her lower abdomen caused her to draw in a sharp breath. It took her a while to recover from it. “Mary… I’m in pain. Can you ask the doctor for some painkiller?”

Mary called for the doctor without a delay since Mark had made it clear that Arianne could request for anything she needed, and there was no need to report to him.

Arianne was hospitalized for more than a week and Mark didn’t show up again until he personally came to pick her up when she was discharged from the hospital. It was Brian who drove, but Arianne chose to sit in the passenger seat instead of sharing the backseat with Mark. “Well then… I’ll be in the backseat, sir?” Mary asked awkwardly.

Mark nodded then looked out of the car window. The calmness in his eyes revealed no emotions.

When they had to get out of the car, Mary draped the coat that she had prepared from earlier over Arianne. “You can’t be standing in the wind in your current state. Take care of your body, lest you get sick.”

Mary’s advice inevitably reminded Arianne of her two babies and she could feel her nose tingling. She quickly went inside and directly entered the guest room. It had been more than a month since Mark and her slept in separate rooms.

Mary felt a little helpless. “Sir… Madam is feeling upset. As a man, you should take care of her more.”

Mark didn’t get angry. He just nodded and followed Arianne, only to find that she had locked the door from inside to deny his access. He stood at the door for a while then left. Since she had no desire to see him, then he should leave her alone.

At the West’s Bright Incorporated…

Tiffany was shocked when she received Arianne's message. If Arianne hadn't taken the initiative to inform her, she wouldn’t even know about her hospitalization.

Even if it was still working hours, she packed up her stuff and left without even bothering to ask for a leave.

She rushed to the Tremont Estate and was greeted by Mary. “You’re here, Tiffany! Come in quickly and spend some time with Ari. She must be really depressed. Poor thing didn’t even speak much during her stay in the hospital for more than a week and wouldn’t meet sir. She must have called you because she wanted to find someone to talk to.”

Tiffany was heart broken to find out that Arianne had another miscarriage. Just recently, she had accompanied Arianne to shop for baby clothes. She didn’t expect that there wouldn’t be a need for those clothes anymore.

She rushed in front of Mark’s bedroom and was about to knock on the door when Mary grabbed her. “Ari is staying in a separate room. She’s in the guest room next to this bedroom.”

Tiffany rolled her eyes and was angry at Mark in her heart. To think that Arianne suffered so much in the most envied Tremont family.

When Arianne saw Tiffany, she could no longer hold back her tears. “Tiffie…”

Tiffany pulled Arianne into her arms and comforted her gently, “There, there, it's all over now. Nothing else matters as long as you’re safe. I was nearly scared to death. What happened? Everything was going so well, but then the babies were just suddenly gone.”

Arianne briefly recounted the situation, every word cutting her heart like sharp knives. After listening to her, Tiffany had a ball of rage burning at the pit of her stomach that she couldn’t vent. After all, Arianne needed her comfort and not her ranting. “If you can’t bear a child then don’t bother about having a child. Look at those ladies who went out of shape from giving birth and getting trapped by their kids. I don’t think it’s something to be envious of. It’s alright, you still have me. I’ll be by your side! If I get married one day, then I’ll just be a DINK couple with my husband. We won’t be having a child!”

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Tiffany had been by her side through the good times and the bad times, and now she was even talking about not having a child. She had indeed done everything a friend could do.

Arianne's cold heart turned warm again. “Tiffie… Thank you. I'm fine now, just feeling a little sad. I felt so much better after talking to you. I want to divorce, but what can I do if Mark isn’t willing?”

Arianne truly wanted a divorce. She had given it a good thought when she was hospitalized and realized that she just couldn’t let go of the past. Besides, she couldn’t bear children anymore. This meant that there would be no successor in the Tremont family. There was no way Mark wouldn’t think of wanting a child at some point in his life. An heir was necessary for the Tremont family, given the huge business they run. Arianne would rather end things now than have to worry about those troubles in the future. Besides, she never planned on staying in the Tremont family for the rest of her life. To her, the Tremont Estate was just a lavish prison for her.

Tiffany wasn't surprised at all. She thought for a moment before saying, "You should talk to Mark about it first. If he isn't willing, then you can go through the legal procedures and force a divorce. What do you want out of the divorce?"

Arianne shook her head. "I don't want anything. I just want to leave this marriage with nothing. I was adopted by him in the first place, so I've already owed him a lot. I don't want to take away anything from the Tremont family. Are legal procedures my only option? I just feel like… that's not going to work with him. Never mind, I'll just talk to him first."

Tiffany couldn't quite understand her thinking. "Why do you think it won't work? He cheated with Aery Kinsey. That was nasty of him. You can't have a baby anymore thanks to her, and he's also partly to be blamed. If it wasn't for him, would Aery resent you this much? I'm not trying to drive a wedge between the both of you, but I just think that you've suffered enough. If you can provide evidence of his infidelity in this marriage, the chances of going through legal proceedings are still quite high. But his reputation will definitely take a big hit."

Arianne didn't approve of this approach. "That's actually the last thing I want to go through. I don't want to look for the evidence of his infidelity and make it publicly known either. I just want to get a divorce on good terms without tarnishing his reputation. I don't want to file a divorce out of hate or anything like that, I just want to… be free. Do you get what I mean?"

Tiffany nodded like she was a chicken pecking at rice. "I do. Something like 'there's no greater sorrow than a heartbreak', right? You've reached the point where you want nothing but to leave, even if it means you will be alone and have to cast away everything. Both hatred and love no longer matters to you, am I right?"

Instead of admitting or denying that, Arianne just sighed softly.

Tiffany stayed for lunch. Although she was dissatisfied with Mark because of Arianne, she didn't show it on her face since they were all adults. This was their personal problem, and as Arianne's best friend, Tiffany could only talk to her privately about it instead of starting a fight and making everyone feel awkward. Hence, the lunch was still pretty harmonious on the dining table.

The sudden ringing of her phone nearly made Tiffany jump. She instantly panicked upon discovering that the call was from Jackson. She had forgotten to ask for leave when she came out, so now her boss was personally calling to check up on her. She picked up her phone and went away to answer it, "Sorry, I'm visiting Ari at Tremont Estate and have forgotten to apply for leave. Just consider it as absent from work and dock my pay."

On the other end of the line, Jackson stood at her empty desk with an exquisite lunch box that was going to be wasted in his hand. "Just remember to apply for leave next time, or your pay will be docked. I'll let it slide this time." He immediately hung up after saying that and returned to his office with the lunch box.

Tiffany breathed a sigh of relief and returned to the dining room. "What happened?" Arianne asked.

Tiffany grinned at her. "Nothing, I just forgot to apply for a leave when I came over just now. Jackson called to check up on me."

Mark looked at the two women and said nothing.

Arianne didn't want to take up Tiffany's time, so she let her go back to work after lunch. After seeing her off, Arianne knocked on Mark's bedroom door and only entered when she got his permission. "I need to talk to you."

Mark was reading a book in a chair in front of the French window. When he heard Arianne's voice, he turned to look at her in surprise. "Alright… Come in."

She took a deep breath and summoned her courage. "Let's get a divorce."

He instantly tightened his grip on the book. "Why?"

Since she had started the conversation, there was no reason to hold back anymore. No matter how nervous she was, she still had to carry on. "I'll skip the things that I've said before. The current situation is that I am no longer able to bear any children and the Tremont family needs an heir. A divorce will be beneficial to both of us. Also, I would like to live freely and peacefully. Only by leaving the Tremont Estate will I feel alive."

Mark put the book in his hand down and pondered over her words carefully. After a while, he spoke. "If you can't bear a child, then we can just adopt one. As for the freedom you want, I can let you go for a year. But a divorce is out of the question, that's my bottom line."

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She clenched the hem of her blouse nervously and tried her best to remain calm on the surface. "No, I insist on getting a divorce. I've once tried to convince myself to continue living like this. When I got pregnant this time, I looked forward to the birth of my children and believed that things would get better. Yet, fate told me that I should leave. Thank you for telling me that you've loved me, but I'm sorry, I'll never be able to fall in love with you. When I'm with you, I always tremble, walk on eggshells, and feel burdened by guilt. How can we carry on living together without love? Aren't you tired of it?"

Mark stood up abruptly and loosened his tie. He wanted to smash things but was worried that it would frighten her. “You don't need to fall in love with me. I won't agree to a divorce. Do whatever you want! I’m going out since I still have something to attend to. Find Mary if you need anything.”

He took his coat and left the Tremont Estate. In the car, Brian asked him “Where do you want to go, sir?”

Mark didn’t have anything to do. He actually took the day off just to spend time with Arianne, but he didn’t expect that she would ask for a divorce. When he came out, he even felt as though he was fleeing from the scene. Not knowing where to go, he pondered for a moment before saying, “To the company.”

The talk didn’t go well, just as Arianne had expected. The only surprise to her was the fact that Mark didn’t lose his temper or say anything hurtful.

He just told her to do whatever she wanted, which meant there was absolutely no way he would agree to a divorce. Arianne was a little tired. Looking at the huge Tremont Estate suddenly made her feel so lost.

After thinking about it, she decided to move out. Just like last time, she brought Rice Ball with her and all her belongings. If she wasn’t mistaken, a couple could appeal for a divorce after two years of separation. If there weren’t any other ways, this would be the last resort.

When Arianne came out with her luggage and Rice Ball, the Tremont family’s bodyguards, Mary, and Butler Henry were all standing in a row, blocking the front door. “Mary, Uncle Henry, what are you all doing?”

Mary wiped her tears. “Ari, are you going to just leave like this? I heard about you asking for a divorce but sir didn’t agree to it. You can’t just leave like this. If you did, how are we going to report this to sir? Besides, you’re in poor health. How can you take care of yourself out there? I’m worried… that you’ll be out there all alone.”

Mary’s words brought sadness to Arianne. “I’ll be fine Mary. I can take good care of myself.”

Seeing that the servants had no intention of moving out of her way, Arianne could only lie, “I’m just going out to relax and have some time to myself for a while. It’s not as serious as what you all imagined. In any case, I can’t divorce with him without going through the procedures so you all don’t have to be like this…”

Not only did Mary stand in her way, but she even spread her arms wide to block her way. “I don’t believe you. If you’re only going out to relax then why do you have to bring Rice Ball with you? Leave it here and give me your luggage, I’ll help you pick out the summer clothes. Just another two thin jackets will do.”

Judging from the situation, Arianne knew that she wouldn’t be able to leave. It suddenly occurred to her that Mark had mentioned that if she really wanted freedom, he could let her leave for about a year. Although two years would be ideal, she needed to be able to leave first. For now, she could only leave if Mark personally gave her the permission.

Arianne set Rice Ball and her luggage down, then sent a message to Mark. ‘Are you going to keep your promise? I want to go out and live for a period of time. Ask Mary and the rest to let me go.’

Mark was vexed when he received the message. In his foul mood, he swept all the documents on his desk to the ground. Ellie came into his office and silently helped him to tidy up the mess. “Do women really hate me that much?”

Ellie was a little surprised. “N-Not at all. What makes you ask that, Mr. Tremont?”

Mark didn’t answer her. He held his phone for a long time before sending out a reply. ‘You may move out, but not out of the country. And you must inform me of your new address. I’ll be paying frequent visits. You aren’t allowed to refuse that. Otherwise, you can perish the thought.’

Upon reading Mark’s reply, Arianne immediately gave up on her plan to move out since that would defeat her purpose of moving out. She wanted freedom and peace for the sake of getting a divorce after two years, not because she really wanted some peace and quiet for herself.

At night, she tried inviting Tiffany out over the phone. Unfortunately, she was busy so Arianne could only give up on the thought.

What could Tiffany possibly be busy with, other than being dragged by Jackson to ‘put on an act’ at the West family’s residence? After all, she was getting paid for doing that.

Mark deliberately stayed out until midnight. The thought of Arianne asking him for a divorce was giving him a headache. He could only try to avoid her for as long as he could. This was actually his first time using this method to solve a problem. Honestly, it made him feel extremely unpleasant.

After his shower, Mark went to the guest room. He hesitated at the door for a moment, before gently pushing it open. In the darkness, he saw a sleeping figure on the bed. Since he had no intention of going

in, he carefully closed the door again. All of a sudden, Butler Henry's voice rang out behind him. "Sir, I'd suggest that you take some time off soon and bring madam out to relax."

Mark was slightly surprised, but he pretended to be calm. "I know… That'll have to wait until I settle the matters I have on my hands." Yes, he still had some important matters to settle.

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At the West family residence.

Tiffany was having a nice chat with Summer. They seemed just like a pair of mother and daughter at first glance. Their relationship was so good that Jackson appeared rather out of place even though he was Summer's son. He sat there, hugging Summer's poodle in his arms. It was a rather adorable sight; a tall man in a suit carrying a fluffy puppy. Even Tiffany could not help but glance at him a couple more times.

Summer seemed to have recalled something when she suddenly said, "Tiffie, it's the second time you've been here, right? Don't leave tonight. It's so late now, just stay the night and accompany me. It's also been a while since Jackson had stayed here with me."

Tiffany's expression gradually turned tense. She said, "I don't think it's appropriate. Mrs. West. My mom will definitely give me an earful if I stay the night. She won't let me spend the night outside, not even in my boyfriend's house. She's strict about things like that."

Summer was slightly disappointed. "Is that so? It's good that your family is concerned about things like this, but I really want you to stay. How about this? Why don't you give me your mom's contact number? I'll call her. In fact, I've overlooked this. I should've visited your mom. We'll be in-laws soon. I should take the initiative to do so."

‘Call Lilian?’ Tiffany became so nervous that her palms were sweating. If Lilian knew that she was at the West family residence, she would directly come here to visit Summer. For this reason, she would never let Lillian know that she was impersonating Jackson’s girlfriend. “Aunt, there’s no need for that. My mom always turns in early. She’s most probably sleeping by now. Moreover, she always claims that she needs her beauty sleep. She also switches off her phone while she’s sleeping.” She felt rather guilty lying to Summer. At this moment, Lillian was probably playing mahjong outside.

Summer replied, “Then, I’ll pay her a visit tomorrow. I’ll explain everything on your behalf. Jackson is a good man. I’m sure your mom will like him. She’ll definitely approve of your relationship with him. I’ll give her an explanation for you. She definitely won’t be angry. It’s decided then. You can spend the night with Jackson in his room. I’ve asked someone to clean it up. I’m going to sleep now. Goodnight.” After that, she yawned and took the poodle from Jackson.

Tiffany was extremely shocked. After Summer went away, she scolded Jackson in a soft voice, “Jackson, are you a dumb?”

Jackson waved his hands. “You were chatting with each other earlier. How would I know what you were talking about? Didn’t you reject her? It seems like there was no need for me to interject. By the way, you can just dissuade my mother again...”

Jackson’s reaction infuriated her. She threw herself at him, attempting to scratch his face. “Did you do it on purpose? What are we going to do about tonight?”

He protected his face from her, but he was rather amused. He broke into laughter. “The bed in my room is rather large. It’s true. In fact, it’s not like we’ve never slept in the same bed before. We’ll stick to the old rule. Just sleeping. We’re not going to do anything else. Is that okay? Don’t scratch my face. You need to be responsible for it if you ruin my face…”

She blushed and moved away from him. “No way. I’m sleeping on the bed, and you’re going to sleep on the floor. I agreed to put on a show with you in front of your mother. I didn’t agree to sleep with you… You’ll need to pay me more. No, actually, I won’t be doing that even if you pay me more.” She had it hard. She had agreed to his unreasonable request until he canceled his engagement. She would never agree to that kind of thing again.

Jackson did not force her. “Fine. It’s rather late now. You should go to sleep. I’ll look for some clothes for you. There’s a bathroom in the bedroom.”

Tiffany had no choice but to compromise. She strolled around the room when Jackson was looking for some clothes for her. It seemed like Jackson did not have any particular hobby. The room was sparkling clean and tidy, and it looked rather empty. There were some photographs of him from high school on the bedside cupboard. He looked rather young and naive at that time, even his smile seemed quite genuine and simple.

Jackson was still nowhere to be seen even after she had taken a look around. She was left with no choice but to take a bath first. When she was halfway through her bath, someone knocked on the door of the bathroom. She took a towel from the side and wrapped it around her body. Then, she opened the door slightly. Jackson handed her the pajamas. She became nervous when she saw what was handed to her. ‘Is this pajamas? Why is it a silk slip dress? It’s black lace too…’

She had never worn such sexy clothes, especially one with such deep V-collar. Suspicion began to well in her heart. ‘It certainly doesn’t belong to his mother. Then, whose pajamas is this? Did some other young girl come here before? But Summer told me I’m the first woman Jackson brought home…’

She finished her bath and reluctantly put on the slip dress. She even wrapped the towel around herself. “Whose dress is this? Did you want me to wear this and sleep in the same room with you?”

Jackson glanced at her without commenting on her body. “It belongs to my mom.”

As if she would believe something like that. “Don’t lie to me. How could this be your mom’s? Why would your mom wear this black lace slip dress? Are you joking?”

He broke into laughter. “I don’t normally live here. My mom can wear whatever she wants without worrying about it. Moreover, she said it’s a gift from her best friend, and she has never worn it before. I’m sleeping on the floor, and you’re sleeping on the bed. I won’t be able to see anything even if you’re sleeping naked. That’s enough for now. I’m going to take a bath. Let’s sleep early. I still have a meeting to attend to tomorrow.”

Chapter 367

As soon as Jackson entered the bathroom, Tiffany took the towel off and got into bed. The scent on the pillow smelled just like him. The scent was fragrant. She was suddenly reminded of the first time she had met him. She had been dazzled when she saw his face. One’s heart would definitely flutter when one saw his face. However, it was not like that for her since she was still with Ethan at that time.

Although her mind was filled with messy thoughts, she soon fell into a deep sleep. The cozy giant bed, fluffy pillow, and comfortable blanket contributed to her good sleep. It had been a while since she had felt so at ease.

It was unknown how much time had passed, but she woke up, feeling uncomfortable. It seemed like she had drunk too much water while she chatted with Summer after dinner. She was still in a groggy state as she flipped the blanket aside. At this moment, there was only a single thought in her mind; she needed to go to the bathroom. In just a blink of an eye, she stumbled as soon she got out of bed. She heard Jackson whimpered in pain. She could feel her stomach crushing his face.

In just a flash, she was forcefully thrown off him. She hit the bed hard. The wooden bed hurt her back, and she could not help but whine, “What are you doing? Why are you sleeping beside the bed? I’m...hurt…”

Jackson switched the light on. He appeared shocked and scared. “Where should I sleep if not there? I’m already sleeping on the floor… Just how heavy are you? I’m in so much pain. I almost got a concussion.” Despite his words, he instantly went over to help her up when he saw her sitting on the floor with her hands on her back. She did not get up. “Are you okay? It was reflexive. Where did I hurt you?”

Tiffany needed to pee so badly that she could not answer his question. She waved his hands away and rushed to the washroom. After she was done, she saw him sitting on the edge of the bed silently. It seemed like she had wronged him. She could not help but burst into laughter. After that, she crawled into bed and covered herself with the blanket. She sneered as she said, “I think I only stepped on your hand, right? Moreover, it was just for a moment. It’s not like I stepped on your head. Go to sleep. If I wake up again, I’ll remember to get off from the other side of the bed. I won’t step on you again. Didn’t you throw me off earlier? My back is still aching.”

He stared at her gloomily. “If you were in my shoes, you’ll be upset too. Why don’t we change our sleeping arrangements? It’s late at night now. Why don’t you take the floor instead?”

She grabbed the blanket immediately and shook her head. “I don’t want to. It’s so comfortable sleeping on the bed. I don’t want to sleep on the floor. What kind of brand are your bed and mattress? I’ll certainly change my bed if I get rich in the future. Your bed is just so comfortable!”

He switched off the light and climbed into bed next to her. “It doesn’t matter if you don’t want to sleep on the floor, but I’m sleeping on the bed.”

Although she could not see his face at this moment, she could imagine the wicked smile on his face at this moment. She would not let him have it so easy. She used her leg and tried to kick him off the bed. “I don’t want to share the bed. Definitely not!”

He grabbed her thin legs with his large hand easily. Then, he held her waist with another hand. “Don’t mess around…”

At this moment, she realized one of her legs was on top of his body. She wanted to withdraw it, but he suddenly tightened his hold on it. She felt her heart race in the dark. She could clearly feel his hot palm on her thighs. If he moved his hand up a couple of inches… Finally, she could no longer endure it, he was much stronger than her after all. She said, “Let… go of my leg. I’ll get off the bed now.’

“Let’s just sleep like this. It’s uncomfortable sleeping on the floor. I’m so sleepy.” He moved his hand away from her leg, but he did not push her leg off.

It seemed like he was truly sleepy, and he showed no signs of having any other cunning thoughts. Feeling reassured, she moved her body slightly away from him. After all, she really liked his bed, and she was not willing to sleep on the floor. For this reason, she decided to compromise.

…

The next day, the summer morning’s sunlight poured into the room through the window.

The blindingly bright light woke Tiffany up from her dream. She turned around and found herself face to face with Jackson’s handsome and perfect face. At this moment, she had to admit that her heart skipped a beat. However, outwardly, she remained calm. She studied his face. His fluffy hair was slightly messy.

His eyes were attractive. Moreover, his nose was straight, and his lips that were a tinge of pink looked soft. All of a sudden, she was hit by a feeling that she had acted recklessly. How could she share a bed with a man whom she had no relationship with?

She felt slightly uneasy when she thought about this. However, she had always been a carefree person so that uneasy feeling passed in just a moment. She decided to treat him like a good buddy. She definitely had no intention of starting a romantic relationship with him at all. With this in mind, she smiled and patted his face. “Rise and shine! The sun is up!”

Jackson was, naturally, woken up by her actions. He frowned, grabbing the phone on the bedside cupboard and glanced at it. Then, he closed his eyes again. “It’s only seven in the morning. Usually, the sun rises early during summer. Let me have ten more minutes. You can get up first.”

She did not want to bother with him. Her clothes from the previous night had been cleaned and dried by the servants in the West family. She changed into her clothes and descended the stairs happily. She heard Summer talking on the phone, and her expression changed when she heard Summer addressing the person on the line as Mrs. Lane.

Chapter 368

Tiffany slowed her pace immediately. Her heart thumped wildly, hoping it was just a coincidence.

When Summer ended her phone call, she saw Tiffany standing at the bottom of the staircase unsure of herself. She summoned Tiffany over. “Let’s have breakfast, Tiffie. I just spoke to your mother on the phone. She’s delighted when she heard you’re dating Jackson. I even asked her out for a high tea today.”

It was true. The thing she worried about the most had happened...

“Mrs. West, how did you obtain my mother’s number?” Tiffany could not even force a smile on her face.

“Well, about that… I have my ways of obtaining her number. You don’t have to be so shocked. What’s wrong? Why do you seem unhappy? Are you blaming me for calling your mother without informing you first? I don’t think it’s not improper for me to do such a thing.” When Summer noticed the changes in Tiffany’s expression, the atmosphere, naturally, became slightly tense.

Since it had happened, Tiffany could only accept it. “Mrs. West, I’m not upset. It’s just that… Let’s forget about it. It’s not a big deal. We should have breakfast now. I still need to go to work.” She did not want to tell Summer about how wicked her mother was. It was too much, and she could not bring herself to mention it. Moreover, she was only putting on a show with Jackson, it was unnecessary to talk about her mother with Summer.

Jackson finally showed up halfway through their breakfast, looking energetic. When he sat down, he used his left hand to eat. Surprisingly, it did not seem awkward for him to use his left hand. In fact, he had used it smoothly.

Surprised, Tiffany asked, “Are you left-handed? But I always see you eating with your right hand…”

Jackson complained. “I can’t use my right hand now. It was crushed by a pig’s foot last night.”

Tiffany’s face flushed, speechless. She did not think she had hurt him that much.

Summer did not pity her son. She only smiled broadly.

Summer's poodle ran over, begging for food. She lifted the poodle up and fed it an egg tart. She cooed, "Little Bean, I'll bring you out for a walk when you finish your food. You better be good."

…

In the Tremont Estate.

Arianne and Mark sat quietly at the dining table. It happened so often that nobody thought it was strange.

Mark was distracted during his meal as well. He was busy texting on his phone all the time. After a while, he put the cutleries down and said to her, "I'm leaving now."

Arianne nodded in reply. She lowered her head and ate her bowl of millet gruel. She did not even look at him.

When Mark was in the car, he made a phone call. "Is it done?"

The person on the other end of the line replied in a hoarse voice, "Yes."

Upon hearing this, Mark finally relaxed. He put his phone aside and closed his eyes to rest for a moment. He kept his phone with him no matter if he was attending a meeting or meeting clients. At last, he got the call he was waiting for at around two o'clock in the afternoon. He intentionally waited for a short while before he answered the phone. After that, he remained quiet. The caller did the same too.

The silence lasted for around half a minute. The caller spoke at last, "Finally you're fighting back. Do you think that I'll be defeated just because of those abandoned buildings and unfinished projects? Mark, you really underestimate me. What I want is to make you and your family pay for what you owe me and my mother in the past."

Mark sneered. "Do you really think you're able to do so? What you've done didn't affect me much. I've foreseen that there would come a day like this when I chose to let you go that year. Let me see how many tricks you have up your sleeve, Ethan."

The person on the other end of the line remained silent. After that, he hung up.

Mark narrowed his eyes slightly. He appeared quite fierce at this moment. In fact, he had discovered the truth a long time ago. Ethan was his younger half brother. They had different mothers. He was the illegitimate son.

In the past, Ethan's name was Martin Tremont. After the air disaster, both he and his mother went missing. Mark did not look for them. It was because his father had a long chat with him the night before the air disaster. It was then he found out that he had a half brother. His father had asked him to let them go given how pitiful they were. However, he neither agreed nor rejected his father's request. Nonetheless, he let them go in the end. Currently, it was Ethan who refused to let things go.

Mark began to feel something was amiss when Arianne was hurt by a madman with a knife while she was still university. However, he did not investigate that incident. He knew he would not be able to

forgive the perpetrator if he discovered the truth. The long chat with his father that night was also the last words his father had left him before he passed away.

Now, everything was as clear as crystal. Ethan was the one behind the photographs of Arianne and Will in bed. The scene where they were caught red-handed was plotted by Ethan too. Recently, Ethan also put pressure on Mark, making Mark feel that Ethan was indeed a true Tremont. He could do anything just for the sake of revenge.

Before that, Mark had made a final confirmation. He had asked Jackson to intentionally approach Ethan during the party. Jackson got strands of Ethan's hair, and Mark used it for a DNA test. After that, everything was made clear. They were unable to investigate the incident of the bed scene that happened three years ago. It was because Ethan was Tiffany's boyfriend at that time, and they, naturally, did not suspect him. However, everything made perfect sense now.

Bright Incorporated of the West family.

Jackson looked at the data on the computer screen. A solemn expression was etched on his face.

Chapter 369

The loss of certain jewelry materials was what led to the Lane family's bankruptcy. Jackson could not imagine how Tiffany would react if she discovered Ethan was the main cause of her family's bankruptcy. In fact, Ethan enjoyed his fame today because he used to rely on the Lane family by purchasing unfinished buildings and setting up a few companies with the cash he got from the sale of the jewelry's raw materials. Although Mark made a monetary loss, the Lane family was completely ruined.

Suddenly, Tiffany burst through the office door in a hurry. "Our moms are having afternoon tea together. Your mom just texted me that they're going shopping now!"

Jackson closed his notebook expressionlessly and said in a calm manner, “Why are you panicking? Just let them be.”

Frustrated, Tiffany explained, “We’re just acting, and I have no intention of telling my mom about it. How can you not be worried? What will we do if they discover the truth? I want you to know my mom wouldn’t tolerate us breaking up once she finds out we’re in a relationship. To be frank, she’s deeply attached to the luxurious life we used to live. Therefore, she can’t wait for me to marry a rich man. It doesn’t even matter if the man is divorced as long as he has money. In other words, she’s a gold digger. Do you understand now? This is a deal between us. I don’t want to lose my pride and dignity over this!” When she reached the end of her sentence, it could be seen she had fallen into despair and helplessness.

Upon seeing this, Jackson realized he had neglected her feelings. He said, “It’s not as serious as you think. I’m the only son in the family, and my mom doesn’t care how much I spend on you and your family. How or why would you lose your dignity? I think this is a good idea. We both have peace by satisfying our mothers. All right, don’t worry. Just leave it to me and go get busy.”

Tiffany felt he was not taking her seriously. “Yup speak as though we’re truly in a relationship. Aren’t we just pretending to be a couple? Even if we’re truly a couple, I still don’t feel comfortable with you spending money on me. I’m out. I no longer want to play this game. I’m going to tell your mom we’ve broken up. I’m not going to continue this act any further!”

Jackson could not understand her thoughts. “What are you thinking? What’s the issue? Don’t you think this is a perfect plan? I’m paying you just to act. It’s advantageous for you, right? What does it have to do with dignity? It’s not like you tricked me. I was the one who suggested this so I’ll bear the consequences. I don’t really care how much money my mother spends on your family. So, please relax.”

Tiffany struggled to agree with him. She said, “Do you think you can do whatever you want just because you’re rich? I don’t want to be a liar and leech money off you. I understand that one should not be rewarded without putting in any work. You’re right. You have a clear business mind. However, you’re discussing love and feelings, even if it’s fake, with your business mind. Let me tell you this; this should only be between both of us. I don’t want to involve our families. I’m going to work. That’s it!” After her tirade, she turned and left with an emotionless expression after ranting about canceling their deal. She was exhausted, especially when Lillian was involved.

Jackson was slightly frustrated. They would argue occasionally, but it was always trivial. It had never been so serious. He often made judgments according to the interaction between him and others. Therefore, he thought they got along quite well until the moment she exploded.

Tiffany hired a cab to see Arianne at the Tremont Estate right after work. The two women could not stop talking when they were together since Mark was not around. Tiffany expressed her anger and frustrations, however, the more vented the more she felt like beating him.

Arianne remained silent until Tiffany finished ranting. “You’re right, Tiffie. It’s best not to involve family members. Jackson took the initiative to involve his family, but you shouldn’t involve your mother. Otherwise, things will get difficult for you. However, it would be fine if you’re genuinely a couple. Unfortunately, you’re not.”

Tiffany could not contain her frustration anymore and squashed Arianne’s bunny plushie as though it was Jackson, “That jerk just doesn’t take this seriously, and he doesn’t care about my feelings at all. I’m a human, and I have my own thoughts. How can he not ask if I’m happy or not? We should make things clear if it’s just a business deal, right? The clearer it is, the better. The reason he had used to get me to pretend to be his girlfriend is that he didn’t want to get married. In that case, how can we be in a genuine relationship? Frankly, I don’t have any plans on getting into a relationship, especially with my financial situation now.”

Arianne was glad Rice Ball was not in the room with them, otherwise, Tiffany might vent her frustration on it. “Enough, Tiffie. Cheer up. Let it go. You’ve already told Jackson you want to end the deal anyway.

How about this? Let me treat you to a meal. How about White Water Bay Cafe? A good feast will help you forget about your problems. Oh, right, Jackson won't be there since it's not the weekend."

Chapter 370

Tiffany was craving for the food in White Water Bay Cafe, but she was also concerned about Arianne's health. "Are you sure you are fit to go out? We can go another day…"

In fact, Arianne was bored, "No, I'm fine, let's go! I'm afraid the White Water Bay Cafe is full now. Let me call Jackson first to get a table. Don't worry, I'm not going to mention you."

Both of them left the Tremont Estate after Jackson reserved a table for them. Naturally, the bodyguards and Mary saw Arianne heading out. However, they did not stop her since she was not carrying her luggage.

Arianne found this amusing. After all, if she really wanted to escape, she did not need to bring her luggage. However, the people from the Tremont Estate would eventually find her. She would rather not go through the hassle.

Tiffany ordered a few of her favorite dishes when they arrived at the White Water Bay Cafe. Her mood seemed to have gotten better.

Arianne reminded her gently, "You can order more since Jackson said that the bill is on him. Just order a few more. You know that he's doing Mark a favor since such an opportunity is rare."

Tiffany smirked and placed her order again. “All right! Look, you have to take good care of me since I’m so poor to the extent that I can only get food through your connection.”

Arianne smiled silently. She would willingly give everything to Tiffany when she was still Mrs. Tremont. However, things had changed once she had lost that title. One could only enjoy the benefits when one had Mark’s favor.

Tiffany suddenly received a message, and her expression changed almost instantly. She said, “Ari, Ethan is here, and he wants to spend some time with me.”

Arianne furtively looked around but did not see Ethan. He was probably inside one of the rooms in the cafe. Tiffany and Arianne were sitting in the main hall today. She said, “Go ahead. Although both of you have broken up, it’s good not to make enemies out of each other. I’m sure you wouldn’t have told me about it if you truly didn’t want to see him. You would’ve just ignored his message.”

Initially, Tiffany was afraid that Arianne would be mad at her. Upon hearing Arianne’s words, she felt relieved. “Alright, I’ll be right back. I won’t let you eat alone.”

Arianne nodded. She lowered her head and scrolled through her phone. She randomly saw a piece of news about the development of a high-potential unfinished building that was put to a stop due to a conflict with its land title. The news would not have attracted her attention if it was not mentioned that the person who purchased the buildings was Ethan Connor.

She wondered why Ethan would purchase an unfinished building without verifying the land title. Logically, he should have known about it and took it into consideration...

Inside the room.

Tiffany felt uneasy. She regretted coming. More than half of the diners in the room were women. Some looked like they were in their 30s and some looked younger. Most importantly, they were all dressed luxuriously. She was only clad in a simple attire today like a fresh graduate. She looked like a fish out of water in here.

Unknowingly, the ladies began their silent comparison and competition. Indeed, she had nothing to compete with any of the women. She was defeated in an embarrassing manner especially in front of her ex-boyfriend.

Ethan pulled her down and sat her down on the empty seat beside him. “Stop making fun of me. This is my girlfriend, Tiffany. Have a seat, Tiffie.”

Tiffany had no idea what Ethan was playing at. After a while, she discovered most of the men in the room had brought their female companions along. However, there were still more females than males. Ethan’s friends must have mocked him for not bringing a companion. That was probably the reason he had asked over, using her as a shield.

Tiffany was, naturally, very upset, but she did not express it. She drew closer to Ethan and whispered when the others were distracted, “I’m not working for free. I want 10,000 dollars.”

Ethan’s expression was blank as he turned to look at Tiffany, her lips accidentally touching his cheeks. She could not avoid it in time.

Ethan said with an ambiguous smile, “Deal.”

After sitting for about 20 minutes, Tiffany who was still upset rose to her feet and said, “Hey, I’ll make a move first since I came with my friend. Call me if you need anything, Ethan.” She would be a professional actress since she was going to be paid.

Ethan did not stop her but agreed. “Alright, let’s go back together after dinner.”

Tiffany did not take Ethan’s words seriously. She heaved a sigh of relief when she left the room. If she knew this would happen, she would have dressed up. At least, she would be able to compete with the women there.

“How was it?” Arianne asked as soon as Tiffany returned to her seat.

She answered in a clearly displeased tone, “He just used me to protect his ego. Anyway, I didn’t waste my time in vain. I earned 10,000 dollars.”

Arianne smiled and forwarded the news she read earlier to Tiffany. “Ethan has a problem, but I think it’s not a big deal to him. I have no idea how wealthy he is, but I assume that it is not a big loss since he purchased the unfinished buildings at a very low price back then.”

Tiffany did not seem to be bothered after reading the news and said, “It has nothing to do with me. Honestly, I wish he would lose everything. That will certainly make me feel better. I’m not noble nor kind so I won’t wish him the best.”

Arianne remained silent since she knew Tiffany did not mean the words she said. She knew Tiffany would be saddened as well if Ethan was faced with difficulties.

All of a sudden, Tiffany spat out the drinks in her mouth during the dinner. “Jackson is coming over with his mom and my mother!” Tiffany screamed before Arianne managed to respond.