Ruling 611

Chapter 611

She sat quietly in bed for a long time before she began laughing at herself. Then, she got out of bed and washed up, as usual, to get ready to go to the shop.

While brushing her teeth, she noticed the water droplets on the bottom of her cup. Mark's toothbrush was slightly damp too. That meant that last night was not a dream. He was actually here, and… he had used her cup again!

Her mind went numb. She threw his toothbrush into the trash can. He left after taking advantage of her, without so much as a "goodbye". What was she to him? He had slept very well last night, hadn't he? No insomnia? She, on the other hand, did not have a good night's sleep and got up one hour late!

Just as she was brushing her teeth and grumbling to herself, she heard the sound of the door opening from outside. Her entire body stiffened. Then, Mark appeared at the bathroom door, holding her breakfast, "Are you up? Hurry up and get ready for breakfast. I'll drive you to the shop and go back to the capital. I'm sorry for coming over so late."

She grunted in reply, then stiffly continued brushing her teeth. Her mind was in a mess. He was still here and had simply gone out to buy breakfast. He had even said some words that simply did not match up to his usual character. When had he ever been so courteous to her? He even apologized for coming over so late, as if they weren't separated by 2,000 kilometers and were simply living right across each other. Wasn't it tedious for him?

She had initially thought that it was only eight to nine at night when he knocked on her door last night. She later discovered that it was close to 1am at the time. By the time he was done with humping her, it was almost 4am. If she hadn't slept early last night, she would never have been able to wake up this afternoon.

She turned around after brushing her teeth and found Mark, still standing at the bathroom door. She felt apprehensive. Following his line of sight, her eyes landed on the silent, pitiful and innocent-looking toothbrush in the bin. She lied awkwardly, “I… accidentally dropped it onto the ground when I picked up the cup. I guessed that you wouldn’t want it anymore, so I threw it away. It’s alright. Let’s eat. I got up late so I have to hurry!”

“Oh,” Mark replied profoundly, then carried the breakfast over to the dining table.

Arianne was feeling a little puzzled. She was instinctively afraid of touching on his sensitive nerve, afraid that he might flip out again and force her into going back to the capital. She wasn’t ready yet, “Er… You trust me, right?”

He lifted his gaze towards her, with a nonchalant expression on his face, “Why not? Is it about that toothbrush? I’ll just take your word for it. It’s a small matter. No need for me to expose you.”

The corners of her lips twitched. As expected, he didn’t believe her explanation at all. He may look like he did, but he knew that she was lying. She let out a dry cough and carefully tried to start a new conversation, “You flew all the way here on impulse, didn’t you? You’re going back today too. Aren’t you going to be tired?”

He paused, “Are you saying that I shouldn’t leave at all?”

She quickly waved her hand, “No no, I mean there’s no need for you to go back and forth so tediously. Just come over every once in a while. I’m being considerate over you too, right? You’re busy at work and you manage the Tremont family’s large business. This will be too distracting for you…” Most

importantly, she didn't want their relationship status to get muddled until she had made a decision! She had already been forced to cross the line again. She had completely lost count over the number of times she had had sex with him, ever since she had left the Tremont Estate… She was afraid that he would come to her place over and over again. She would break down.

"Did you throw my toothbrush away, thinking that I'd left without saying goodbye?" Mark suddenly changed the topic, his eyes gleaming with cheekiness.

Arianne was taken aback. It wasn't a nice feeling to be exposed like that. "No!" she flatly denied, "I dropped it on the ground, completely by accident! You have germaphobia. If I sneakily put it back, you would have torn me to pieces if you found out."

Mark chuckled, "Oh? Really? Knowing you, you would certainly put it back and act as if it was never on the ground, in secret. Stop arguing, I know that you threw it on purpose. I know that you want me to come over more often. Don't worry, I don't have that much time. I'll visit you from time to time over the next few months until you come back to the Tremont Estate. If I ever find out that you have a new man with you, I'll take you home earlier than the deadline."

Arianne heaved a sigh of relief. She managed to get through, somehow, "Alright. I'm going to get my bag."

At the shop entrance, Mark kissed her on the forehead and gazed at her lovingly. Then, he twirled a lock of her hair around his finger, "Behave while I'm away."

Arianne blushed and backed away awkwardly, "Got it. Go. You have a plane to catch!" This was the entrance to her shop! He really was bold enough to do anything.

She heaved a long sigh of relief as she watched Mark leave. Then, she walked into the shop. Naya and Tanya both wore weird expressions on their faces, “Oooo, you just got back and he’s followed you all the way here. Acting all lovey dovey like that in broad daylight… It looks like your relationship has recovered nicely.”

Arianne knew that she would be teased. She darted into the kitchen, “Get back to work. We’ve had a few days off. Business should be booming.”

Chapter 612

Tanya inched towards Naya’s ear and softly asked, “Naya, based on the way things have developed, do you think that the dessert shop will close down soon? Ari is still Mrs. Tremont, after all. She would have to go back to her life of luxury, sooner or later…”

Naya paused thoughtfully, then said, “Ari mentioned that she’s never considered leaving. It would be good news if she went back to the capital anyway. Don’t you want her to patch up her marriage? Regardless, we don’t have to consider too much, as long as the shop still stands. Even if the shop closes, my only concern would be that it’s a shame. However, we can always find a new job. Don’t overthink it.”

Tanya shook her head, “Of course, I want Ari to patch up her marriage. I’m not thinking too much of it. I’m just asking. My grandfather is gone now… I can survive on my own. I’ll just take every day as it comes, as long as I can get by. If Ari really does go back to the capital and close the shop, I’ll follow her here. I’d like to gain some experience. Otherwise, my life would be too boring. I couldn’t leave this place because of grandpa. Now that I’m alone, I can go anywhere I want…”

Naya patted Tanya on the shoulder consolingly, “Your grandfather felt bad for you, that’s why he decided to go to heaven. You’re still young, so it’s a great idea for you to go to the capital. Do it while you’re young and unmarried. You’re not bogged down by family, so go and make some new experiences. I support you.”

Suddenly, they heard a message notification during lunch. Arianne and Tanya pulled out their phones at the same time. Tanya awkwardly smiled, “Ari… It’s mine…”

A hint of disappointment flashed across Arianne’s eyes. She buried herself into her food, acting as if nothing had happened, “I know… I was just checking the time…”

Tanya put down her knife and fork, then swiftly tapped her phone keyboard. She looked up again after sending her reply, “It was a message from Ricky. I apologized to him; I shouldn’t have let him drink that night. Thank goodness he’s alright, or I’d feel really guilty.”

Arianne was surprised at how frequently Tanya and Eric had been in contact, “Do you talk to each other very often?”

Tanya shook her head, “It’s not that often… I think. We’d send a few short messages to each other. He’s a really nice guy; I noticed this when I was taking care of him at the hospital. I even told him about how lucky I’ve felt to have met all of you! He took my grandpa and I for a nice meal in the capital, and took us to the beach too. He helped me fulfill my grandpa’s long-standing wish. I owe him.”

Arianne knew Eric’s personality very well, “That’s right, Eric is a pretty nice guy. You’ll be fine if anything develops between you two. Besides, he’s left his family and started his own business. There shouldn’t be any obstacles between you if you want to be together…”

Before Arianne could finish speaking, Tanya was as red as cooked shrimp, “Ari! What are you saying? We’re just friends!”

Arianne saw nothing wrong with her explanation, “I’m only trying to give you a rough idea. What if something does develop between you two? I know both of you very well, so I should at least make things clear…”

Naya giggled, “That’s enough, Ari. Tan’s face is going to heat up even more if you continue. By the way, is your husband really going to let you stay here? You’re probably going back to the capital soon, right?”

The thought of it annoyed Arianne, “I don’t know. His mood changes as fast as the weather. Now I’m too afraid of offending him; I don’t want him to flip out again. However, don’t you worry. Someone will take care of the shop even if I do leave. You can both continue working here. I promise that I’ll take care of you.”

…

The capital, Bright Incorporated, the West family’s company headquarters.

It was considered the peak period for the fashion design industry, and the company was busier than ever. Overtime was a normality, especially after they had received a few large briefs from their partnership with Mark’s company. The fashion design department was so busy that the employees had to run to the toilet whenever they needed to relieve themselves.

Tiffany was close to collapsing. She had cursed Mark internally many times before. The entire department wouldn’t be this exhausted were it not for his briefs.

Suddenly, the department supervisor brought in a box of drinks and began distributing them, “Mr. West’s way of showing his appreciation to everyone. He’ll be giving you supper during overtime. Try to work your brains and be a little more imaginative; see if you can guess what an amazing meal it’ll be.”

The whole department buzzed. Everyone knew that Jackson was very generous, so this supper would certainly be a sumptuous meal!

When the beverage distribution arrived at Tiffany’s desk, the department supervisor gave her four bottles with a deadpan expression on her face. Tiffany was confused and looked at everyone else, “I thought we were all getting two each? Why am I getting four?”

The department supervisor glanced at her, “Just take it. Why are you asking so many questions? It’s because you’ve been very dedicated to your work lately. Besides, we have a lot of drinks left. You can always get more if it’s not enough.”

Once the department supervisor left, Aye, who sat next to her, drew herself closer to Tiffany, “Pretty little Tiffany, I would have suspected that the department supervisor had a crush on you if she weren’t a woman. She’s actually given you four bottles! No one else has received that kind of treatment…”

Chapter 613

Tiffany handed one bottle over to Aye, “Here. Now we’re even, right? Your boobs are small. You should drink more; maybe they’ll grow.”

Aye smacked her, feigning shyness, “Stop that! By the way, you’ve been doing pretty well these days. We have the same pay, but you’ve been pretty generous to yourself. You’re always wearing different clothes and carrying a different bag every day. That watch you’re wearing costs thousands too. You’re not exactly a wealthy woman, but you could be considered a yuppie.”

Tiffany did not answer. In her previous company, rumors circulated just because she was carrying a handbag worth tens of thousands. She was traumatized. Now, she took great pains to behave herself in Jackson's company. She dressed averagely and used the cheapest watch she had at home. Her bag was a $15 purchase from Amazon too. In the end, Aye still saw her as a well-off person. Was she supposed to dress up in dollar store clothes to be classified as poor? Was the quality of life for a fashion designer supposed to be that low?

Her silence did nothing to stop Aye's chattering little mouth, "By the way, I've heard that Mr. West is engaged. This news was so shocking. He had always been anti-marriage, but now it seems that he's found true love. It's not easy. We're all kind of sad, but we're sincerely happy for him. The Adonis finally receives his happy ending. He's even changed his female secretary to a man. That woman's influence on him is pretty obvious. I wonder who's the lucky girl."

Tiffany was secretly pleased with herself. She nearly patted herself on the chest and declared: "'Tis I, the great damsel who's slain that old ba*tard." Luckily, she managed to contain herself, "Go back to work. Stop gossiping. You're going to get reprimanded again if the department supervisor catches you."

Aye cast a look at the department supervisor then obediently went back to her set, "What do you think we'll have for supper tonight?"

"Huge crabs and huge lobsters," Tiffany replied without a single thought.

Aye was getting suspicious, "How do you know? You seem so sure."

Tiffany shot her a mysterious smile, "Because I have a craving."

By supper time, Aye saw that the company cafeteria tables were filled with huge crabs and lobsters. She gasped at Tiffany, who was like a god to her now, “You really are a god. You’ve even managed to figure out Mr. West’s treat for us. This is too sumptuous, and it’s unlimited. We can have as much as we want, and take away the leftovers. This is too extravagant. How much does this meal cost? There are so many of us working overtime today…”

Tiffany freely cracked open the crab legs, “Hehe, next time, tell me what you feel like having, and I’ll try and make an ‘accurate guess’.” In reality, she had already slipped some information over to Jackson. Overtime was tiring enough. Of course, she had to have whatever she felt like eating. Jackson had told her that she wouldn’t need to do overtime, but she did not want special treatment. After all, overtime meant extra pay. She couldn’t let her colleagues think that she was just pretending to be hardworking at work. She had to be sincerely hardworking; that way, no one would accuse her of relying on a man.

Suddenly, Jackson arrived with his dinner plate and sat down on the empty seat next to her, “Are you happy with supper?”

Aye had benefited from Tiffany’s good fortune. This was her first time sharing a table with Jackson for a meal. She answered proactively, “Yes, of course. You’re so generous, Mr. West! We’ll work extra hard now!”

Tiffany was afraid of getting exposed, so she buried her head into her food and ate quietly.

Jackson put on a pair of disposable gloves and peeled off a pile of crab meat and lobster meat. He ate a little bit then pushed the rest to Tiffany, “I’ve peeled too much. I don’t feel like eating. I’ve got to go. You should finish eating soon and get home. Everyone’s been working very hard.”

Aye watched as Jackson left, with a friendly look on her face to curry favor. She noticed that Tiffany was still focused on her food, so she asked, “Don’t you have any insight? You have zero skills in sucking up. What a waste for Mr. West to have given you so much of his peeled crab and lobster meat. You’re so lucky. Why didn’t he give any of that to me?”

Tiffany nearly choked. She coughed for a while before she could calm down, “Because we’ve known each other for a while. I’m closer to him, compared to you. That’s why he’s willing to give some to me. Besides, he’s only given me the food that he didn’t feel like eating. That’s no difference from leftovers. You can have some if you want.”

Aye really wasn’t modest about it at all. She pulled the dinner plate that Jackson had left toward her, “You said it yourself. Mr. West barely touched these after peeling them. How can you consider them as leftovers? You really are ungrateful. If you don’t want them, I’m eating them!”

Outside the cafeteria, Jackson had watched this scene unfold. He was close to having a stroke. He had put in a lot of effort to peel that meat for her, but she’s given them away to someone else. His fingers were still hurting, and there were cuts on his fingers from peeling crab shells…

After a satisfying meal, Tiffany slowly left the office and walked towards the intersection where she would usually meet him. She couldn’t see him anywhere, so she pulled out her phone, ready to call him. Unfortunately, Aye popped out from nowhere, “Waiting for a cab? Where are you staying? We can share a cab if it’s on the way. That way, we’d save on cab fare. Then we can write separate claims. We’ll profit!”

She was openly trying to cheat money off her man. The corners of Tiffany’s lips twitched, “It’s… probably not the same way… Look at you, trying to profit over that tiny bit of money. You can take the first cab. I’m not in any rush.”

Chapter 614

A wounded expression appeared on Aye's face, "I thought we're close. Are you afraid that I'd find out where you live? I was planning on inviting you on a shopping trip this weekend. This makes me sad. I treat you as a friend, but it seems like you only see me as a colleague!"

Tiffany looked around nervously, afraid that Jackson might suddenly appear. The entire office would find out about them if a big-mouth like Aye found out. Everyone would know she was their future lady boss. She scoffed, "What's there to be afraid of?" She wrote down her own house address.

Aye's eyes lit up, "We're really going the same way! My house is in the small neighborhood right across from yours. Your home is in a more expensive area than mine. I knew you were from a yuppie family!"

This was completely out of Tiffany's expectations. How could there be such a coincidence? She really wished that a few kidnappers would suddenly appear and drag Aye away. "Erm… I might not be going home tonight. I'm going over to a friend's place. I think you'll have to go home on your own today."

The more Tiffany hemmed and hawed, the more Aye latched onto her. "Why do I get the feeling that you don't really want to go home together with me? Why are you being so mysterious? I can always avoid topping up on my transportation claims…"

Suddenly, Tiffany spotted a Porsche that was heading toward them. She began to panic. "It's not that I don't want to go home with you. Let's go shopping this weekend. Okay? Okay. Damn it… Why aren't there any cab drivers… This should be a prime spot for hailing a cab…"

Aye had spotted Jackson's car as well. She boldly suggested, "Do you think Mr. West will give us a ride home if we ask him?"

Tiffany's mind was buzzing. Had she been found out?

Soon after, Jackson stopped his car in front of them. He rolled the window down and smiled. "Can't get a cab? I'll give you a lift. It's dangerous for two ladies to be out alone at night." He deliberately avoided looking at Tiffany when he spoke.

Aye did not notice anything out of the ordinary and smiled infatuatedly. "Yes, yes. You're the best, Mr. West!"

So she had not been found out? Tiffany heaved a long sigh of relief. Fortunately, her man was good at acting. She smiled shyly, playing along, as she said, "Wouldn't it be inconvenient?"

Jackson looked at Tiffany meaningfully and said, "Get in the car."

She climbed into the passenger seat out of habit before kicking off the heels that she had been wearing the entire day and folded her legs on the seat.

Aye who was sitting in the backseat was looking at Tiffany, her eyes seemed as though they were going to pop out of their sockets. No longer in the mood to admire Jackson's luxury car and afraid to speak directly, she asked in a joking manner, "Mr. West, would your… would your fiancée mind if another woman sat in the passenger seat?"

"Probably," Jackson replied as though the thought had also crossed his mind.

Aye smiled at Tiffany bitterly and said, “Tiffany, why don’t you sit in the back with me?”

Tiffany waved her hand flippantly and said, “No need, it’s fine.”

Aye was close breaking down. “Then, maybe you should put your shoes on?”

Tiffany was taken aback. “Do my feet smell? I don’t smell it, do you, Jackson?”

Jackson was close to bursting out into laughter, “No. It’s fine. Just do whatever feels comfortable.”

Aye no longer said another word. In her opinion, Tiffany was like a fool who had no sense of propriety. Not only did she unabashedly sit in the passenger’s seat, but she even took off her shoes and addressed the boss by his first name. There was no way she could save a clueless idiot like Tiffany. Even if Tiffany was acquainted with Jackson, was this not crossing the line? Tiffany was acting way too casual. Moreover, Jackson and Tiffany did not seem close in the office. In fact, they seemed unfamiliar with each other. Was Tiffany not playing with fire by acting in this manner?

They dropped Aye off at the entrance to her district and said goodbye.

Then, Tiffany heaved a sigh of relief. “I’m exhausted. I had to work overtime and act out a play. You’re pretty good at acting. Bravo!”

Jackson gazed at her indulgently. “You’re a bad actress. You were way too casual.”

Tiffany finally realized what he meant and groaned pitifully. “Everyone says that a car is like a second home. It’s only natural that I’d instinctively relax in my own home. My heels were killing me. I’d been wearing them the entire day. I’d probably lose use of them if I don’t take them off!”

As soon as she finished speaking, she received a message from Aye. “Have you lost your mind? You can’t just act casually because you’re acquainted with Mr. West. He’s attached now. It would have been fine if you just sat in the passenger seat, but you even took off your shoes. More importantly, you called him by his first name. It’d be bad if he makes things difficult for you. You really are an idiot!”

Tiffany burst into a fit of giggles after reading the message. “Aye is really kind. She’s afraid you’d make things difficult for me. But we both know you wouldn’t dare!”

Jackson did not reply to her. A grin could be seen on his face. To him, happiness was as simple as this. He was happy his beloved was by his side, and he could spoil her like a princess and let her do as she pleased.

Tiffany finally returned to her senses after a while. “Why aren’t you taking me home? My house is right across the road from Aye’s. It’s late. Do you still want me to go to your place? I’m exhausted, and you’ve been working overtime as well. Aren’t you tired? Let me off, okay?”

Chapter 615

“Don’t worry,” Jackson replied helplessly, “I’m not an animal. That’s not the only thing on my mind. Sleep is the only thing on my mind when I’m tired. I just want to cuddle and sleep.”

Tiffany refused to believe him. All men were liars. Previously, he would turn into a beast whenever they were alone. He would have his fill of her before letting her sleep.

When they arrived in White Water Bay Villa, she had a shower before going straight to bed. However, she was too afraid to fall asleep since she was certain Jackson was going to want to have sex with her. She had to wait for him to finish the deed before she could sleep.

To her surprise, Jackson did not touch her in that way at all. He simply cuddled her and went to bed. She thought that she could give him some happiness in that area. He had given her much more than she had given him so she usually would not reject him. She was moved seeing him so considerate that she felt herself falling in love with him just a little more…

When Tiffany opened her eyes the next morning, she was greeted with the sight of Jackson sleeping. Feeling mischievous, she traced his face with her fingers. She could not help but think to herself, 'Damn, my man is hot!'

It was autumn now. The temperature that was close to winter carried with it a cozy and lazy air. The cold made one feel like burrowing under the blanket to sleep a little longer.

After admiring Jackson's face, she greedily planted a kiss on his thin lips. After she was satisfied, she was about to get off the bed to wash up when the seemingly asleep Jackson suddenly flipped over and trapped her beneath him. He said, "I was planning on letting you sleep a little longer, but who knew you'd play with fire…"

Tiffany felt as though an electric current was running through her body, from her head to her toes. Her body felt limp. She protested weakly, "Don't… We're going to be late. We have less than half an hour. Gotta get up and get ready."

Jackson smiled wickedly before thrusting his waist down, getting straight to the point. “I’ll leave you with ten minutes to get ready, and you can have breakfast at the office. We have time.”

With the time they had, they would have to rush. Tiffany panicked and constantly reminded him to hurry up. She kept her eyes on the watch. True to his words, he kept their love-making to precisely twenty minutes. She ignored her weak knees when she got off the bed and rushed into the bathroom. “You should hurry as well. I’ll neuter you if we’re late!”

The pair were forced to squeeze into the bathroom since they were pressed for time. Tiffany had just sat down on the toilet when Jackson walked in. She panicked and held back her pee. “Can… Can you give me a moment? I can’t pee with you watching me...”

Jackson sniggered. “You told me to hurry. I’m gonna brush my teeth and wash my face, I’m not watching you. Hurry up.”

Although he turned his back to her after saying this and continued with his business, she was not used to having someone standing in front of her while she was on the toilet bowl. As time slowly passed, she was forced to surrender to reality and answered nature’s call in front of him… She felt strange and very embarrassed.

On the other hand, Jackson acted as though nothing happened. He said teasingly, “I think we’re a lot like a pair of husband and wife now. You should be able to move in now, right? It’s more convenient for us to go to work together anyway. Most importantly, I want to be with you every day.”

This was not his first time talking about cohabitating. It would not be good if she kept refusing him as well. After all, they had already gotten engaged. She had received a large sum of money from the West

family's patriarch and matriarch on her engagement day. Marriage was only a matter of time. "Okay… I'll go home and pack up tomorrow after work. There's no harm in moving in."

Due to time constraints, Jackson drove the car to the office building's entrance. After all, working hours were about to start, and there would not be too many people at the entrance.

However, they really did not expect to encounter Aye who was late as well. "Tiffany! Mr. West! Did both of you arrive at the same time?"

Tiffany's mood darkened. "We… ran into each other on the way here. I knew I was going to be late so I asked Mr. West for a ride."

Realization suddenly dawned on Aye. She looked at Jackson and rushed into the elevator without another word. Jackson's lips curved into a smile. He walked into the elevator and quietly said, "One minute late."

Aye was close to tears. "Don't… Tiffany's late too, right? Mr. West, pretend you didn't see me. If my pay gets docked because of my tardiness, the past few days from my overtime would be wasted. I'll pay you back ten times more, okay? I'll stay for another ten minutes during overtime today…"

"You're really bold for arriving late in front of me," Jackson said, acting stern, "Don't do it again."

Tiffany put on a fake smile and secretly pinched his arm. Would they be late if not for his morning wood? "Right. It won't happen again. We should not be forgiven if it happens again! We should review our conduct and be more aware."

He could hear the underlying meaning in Tiffany's words. A stiff smile could be seen on his face as he endured the pain. He said, "I was joking…"

Chapter 616

They entered the office and began another day of work.

Tiffany slapped her face lightly when she sat down. "Wake up!"

Aye patted her chest, still shocked. "I only wanted to say hi when I saw you and Mr. West. I completely forgot he's our boss. We were late in front of our boss. That gave me quite a fright…"

Tiffany looked completely nonchalant. She was not at fault for being late after all. "Stop patting your chest. It's flat enough as it is. You'll have nothing left if you keep doing that. By the way, I haven't had breakfast, have you?"

Aye stroked her tummy and bitterly replied, "I haven't either. Shall we order takeout? We can eat at the entrance later. We'll get scolded if we eat here."

Tiffany grumbled inwardly. Jackson had promised that she would be able to have breakfast in the office so why was he not doing anything? Was she supposed to order takeout for him as well? She was mulling over this when Summer appeared in her line of sight, walking elegantly toward her. As Summer walked past her, Summer naturally placed a lunchbox on her office desk.

Summer said, “I’ve brought some food for Jackson and brought your share as well since you’re here. Come over to the house when you have the time.”

Tiffany smiled and replied, “Mmm…” She finally understood why there was no movement on Jackson’s end. He must have known Summer would be coming over to feed him. Fortunately, Summer was aware that she wanted to keep her identity a secret so Summer did not expose her. However, she was slightly disconcerted with Summer’s invitation to the West’s residence. She lacked confidence and was afraid of a repeat of the previous incident.

Aye impatiently opened up Tiffany’s lunchbox after Summer entered Jackson’s office. “You’re so lucky. You were just talking about how hungry you are, and someone arrives with food for you. Moreover, it’s the boss’s mother who brought food for you! I’ll just take one or two bites from you. Can’t be bothered with takeout. Looks like you and the old woman have a pretty good relationship. She’s never tried to make you her daughter-in-law?”

The corners of Tiffany’s lips twitched. “Just eat. Not even food can stop your mouth from talking.”

Tiffany had pretty much finished eating when Summer came out.

Summer packed up the lunchbox and said, “I’m leaving. Do your best, don’t over exhaust yourself.”

Tiffany hurriedly got up and walked her to the elevator. “Thank you for breakfast, Mrs. West.”

Summer took Tiffany’s hand and gently patted the back of her hand. “You should be addressing me differently now, right? You and Jackson are almost married anyway. It’s not a bad idea to change the way you address me.”

Tiffany felt slightly abashed and awkward as she stammered, “M-mom…”

Summer’s eyes were smiling. “I’ve spoken to Jackson and told him to come over to the house with you for dinner every Saturday and Sunday. He’s very reluctant. I’m out of ideas. You have to help me, Tiffie, only you can deal with him. I really hope both of you will get married soon so that I can have grandchildren. I can help you take care of them. They won’t be any hindrance to your lives together. Then, you and Jackson can come home more often to see the baby. His father and I will be able to see him more often too. Work harder, Tiffie.”

Tiffany was surprised by Summer’s seemingly definite plans. Summer had even planned for the yet-to-be-born baby’s care. “I… I’ll talk to him. The elevator is here. You should go on ahead.”

Tiffany sighed in relief once Summer left. Then, she stroked her belly. It was not that they had not been trying, but they had not been able to conceive despite forgoing protection. Perhaps, there was something wrong with Jackson? Otherwise, why was she not pregnant after so many tries? Or perhaps, there was something wrong with her? It seemed like she would have to go for a checkup.

Ever since Summer had mentioned her desire for Tiffany to get pregnant, even her mother had joined in and rushed her to have a baby. Her mother had been dreaming of snakes and flowers. Apparently, it meant that someone close to her was pregnant.

Initially, she did not want to get pregnant so soon. However, due to both their mothers’ nagging, she surrendered. It took a month before she finally lost it and dragged Jackson to a hospital with her for a checkup. As long as there was nothing wrong with both of them, they could keep on trying.

The check up at the hospital took up the entire morning. Tiffany finally sighed in relief when the report came back. “Nothing’s wrong, but I haven’t been able to conceive. I’m pretty sure it’s because of your smoking and drinking. Your mom and mine are going to tear me apart if I don’t give them a child. By the way… It’s Saturday. How about we have lunch with your mother?”

Jackson showed signs of objection upon the mention of going home. “Forget it… I don’t want to. It’s rare that I get a day off. Can’t we just spend time together, just the two of us?”

Tiffany felt helpless. She still did not manage to persuade him to return to the West residence this month. She had to be cautious all the time, afraid of making him angry. She felt as though she was treading on eggshells. Finally, she tugged on his sleeve coquettishly and said, “But… your mom has asked me to take you home. You don’t want to make things difficult for me, do you? It’s just a meal. We’ll leave instantly after the meal. Okay?”

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Jackson was powerless when faced with Tiffany’s coquettish manner and spoilt tone. “Fine, fine, fine. We’ll go home. You’re in charge of dragging me back if I lose control. Using brute force is fine too. I don’t want any drama.”

Tiffany relaxed once he relented. “Alright, you better keep your promise. I’m going to call Ari. I haven’t spoken to her in days.”

She happily conveyed her decision to Arianne once the call was connected, “Ari, I’m preparing to have children. I’m sick of getting nagged at all the time. I’m going to go crazy if I don’t give birth to a child soon. Jackson and I just went for a checkup, and we’re both fine. For now, we’ll just have to try. We’ll probably have a child soon. Will you be our child’s godmother, Ari? I’m definitely going to cling onto your coattails…”

Arianne easily concealed her disappointment and lightly replied, “Sure. Plan your pregnancy! I’m waiting for your good news. I’ll definitely treat your child like my own.” After all, she would not be able to have children of her own.

Tiffany chattered on and on. “I want a daughter. My mom has been telling me about the weird dreams she’s been having. It’s something about snakes and flowers. The older folks say this is a sign that someone close to them is pregnant. Maybe I’ll get pregnant soon. You must be there when I give birth. I feel so insecure when you’re not around.”

Jackson who was standing next to Tiffany said in a sour tone, “Yes, yes, yes. I can’t give you security. Only Arianne can. You’re not even pregnant, and you’re talking about the birth of the baby.”

It was currently lunchtime. However, Arianne stared at the food in front of her, she seemed to have lost her appetite. She was exhausted from the seemingly endless work at the shop. “By the way, Tiffie, you should eat. I need to rest now. I have to work again after this.”

After Arianne ended the call, she cleared away the plate and cutleries.

Naya was surprised when she saw this. “Aren’t you eating? You barely had two bites. Are you over-exhausted?”

Arianne sighed gloomily. “Maybe. I haven’t had much appetite over the past few days. However, I’ve been sleeping very well. I fall asleep as soon as I get home. I sleep soundly through the night, only waking up in the morning. I can’t seem to drag myself out of bed as well. It’s good that I’m tired though. This means the business is doing well, and we’re making profits.”

At this moment, Mark suddenly sent a video. The video was short, it only lasted for fifteen seconds. The video featured him and an old lady shopping. The old lady might be advanced in age, but she clearly enjoyed shopping. Regardless of age, it seemed like most women enjoyed shopping. She replied to the message, “Don’t do it too often. Old people are like kids. You can’t indulge them too much.”

Mark’s reply to her was swift. “I’ll be free in the next two days. I’ll visit you.”

Arianne’s head began to throb at the mention of his visit. He had brought up visiting a couple of times, but she had managed to dissuade him from coming. This time, he was clearly determined. There was no dissuading him so she replied, “Okay.”

After a long day at work, Arianne finally arrived home. She was so tired she did not even feel like showering. All she wanted to do was lie on the bed and sleep. This had never happened before regardless of how tired she was. After a while, she realized it had been a while since the last time her period came. Could that be the reason for this?

A dangerous thought suddenly flashed in her mind. During Tiffany’s engagement party, after she returned to the Tremont Estate, it seemed like Mark did not use a condom during their love-making, right? She could not be pregnant, right? Her heart thumped wildly in her chest the more she thought about this.

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The next day, on the way to work, she bought two pregnancy test kits. She slipped into the toilet when traffic was a little slower in the shop to take the test. A buzzing noise appeared in her mind when she saw two lines gradually appearing. Her mind remained blank for a long time. After she calmed down, she took the second test. The result was the same. Apparently, she had hit the jackpot. To someone like her who could not afford to get pregnant, this was not good news.

She drifted through the day listlessly. After she got off work, she bought a few different pregnancy kits of different brands. Pregnancy tests were more accurate in the morning, she refused to believe she had gotten pregnant again.

The next morning, she did a series of pregnancy tests, one after another, from the moment she woke up. She broke down after using up all the pregnancy test kits. She sat down on the toilet bowl, completely at a loss. When she regained her senses, she discovered her cheeks were stained with tears. How could this happen? Was she not unable to give birth? Why did she have to go through this again?

At this time, she should be at the shop. However, at this moment, she did not feel like going anywhere. She called in to inform Naya of her absence before curling up on the couch. She stared blankly into space for the longest time. She did not even have the courage to go to the hospital. She was afraid the doctor might recommend her to have an abortion. She did not want to listen to those words anymore.

She knew she could not do this on her own. In the end, she knew she had to tell Mark. This involved him after all. She needed someone to rely on at this moment. With Mark around, she would feel less afraid and more assured.

Mark was suitably surprised when he received Arianne's call. He was, naturally, delighted since she rarely took the initiative to call him. "Why are you calling me? My plane leaves tomorrow. We'll see each other soon."

"Reschedule…" she said, choking back sobs, "Come today. Right now…"

Mark panicked when he heard her sobbing. "What is it? What happened?"

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She bit her lips, keeping quiet. Then, with great difficulty, she revealed the painful truth, “I… I’m pregnant… Y-you b*stard! You know I can’t have kids. Why do you have to do this to me? Do you know how much pain I’m in? Tiffie is aching to get pregnant… She should be the one going through this. Why me? I hate you!”

She ended the call immediately after wailing and shouting at him. After that, she rejected all his calls and did not reply to all his messages. She had completely broken down at this moment and needed some quiet time on her own.

Tremont Tower, the CEO’s office.

Mark smashed his phone angrily. His secretary, who was sitting outside, trembled in fear. He knocked on the door tentatively. “Mr. Tremont? Is everything alright?”

The intense and vicious aura around Mark was terrifying at this moment. He narrowed his eyes behind glasses. A mess of complicated emotions could be seen swirling in the depths of his eyes.

It was too late for regrets now. He was not in the best state when he climbed on top of Arianne that night, completely forgetting about protection. Later, when he regained his senses, he did not dwell on it too much since it was just one time. Moreover, he thought it was unlikely she would get pregnant. Who knew fate would play a trick on them? Their relationship was already on thin ice, if she ended losing another baby, she would never turn back again. He would lose her completely.

He called Davy into the office once he had calmed down. “Reschedule my plane tickets. Get me the earliest flight out today. One more thing, get me a new phone.”

Davy was unaware of what had happened. All he knew was his boss was capable of swallowing him whole at this moment. He quickly mumbled a reply before rushing out to complete the tasks that were given to him.

This was the first time Mark had ever felt so uncertain. Arianne refused to answer all his calls and reply to his messages. He really wished he could sprout a pair of wings so he could fly to her now. She must be petrified. He wanted to give her the best, but he always ended up shooting himself in his foot. He was always hurting her!

By the time he arrived in Arianne’s city, it was almost six in the evening. This was the earliest flight he managed to catch. He directly went to her condominium. When he knocked on the door, and the door was opened, it revealed a haggard-looking Arianne. The guilt in his heart intensified that he was rendered speechless.

Arianne did not speak as well. She turned around and lay back down on the couch. She had been curled up on the couch the entire day and had not eaten anything. She was exhausted and depressed. It was as though life had been sucked out of her.

Mark stepped forward. He hesitated for a moment before he asked, “Are you hungry? Would you like something to eat?”

She sniffled. She had finally managed to stop crying with great difficulty, but upon hearing him speak, she began to weep again. “You still have the appetite to eat? Don’t you feel upset at all? I don’t mind suffering… but… but this child will never be born. Can’t you at least pretend to be upset?”

He inhaled deeply before he said, “It’s not that I’m not upset… It’s just that… We have a problem to solve now. I’m sure you haven’t eaten at all. Have a meal, and we’ll think of something.” He wanted to tell her that he would do everything in his capability to ensure she could safely deliver the child. However, he was afraid of giving her too much hope. Hope was a very cruel thing. The worst thing one could do was snuff out a person’s last ray of hope.

Just as he was about to order takeout, Arianne stopped him, “I don’t want food from a restaurant. I’m not in the mood for that. There are some ingredients in the refrigerator. Just make a bowl of ramen for me. You can make one for yourself while you’re at it. Otherwise, you won’t have anything to eat tonight.”

Make ramen? Mark hesitated momentarily. He put down his phone and walked into the kitchen. When had he ever cooked? However, he had no choice but to fulfill her wish. He would do anything as long as he could make her happy.

He stared at the pots and pans in the kitchen and felt as though he was going to have a meltdown. He was someone who could not even differentiate between sugar and salt, this was not even an exaggeration. He was invincible in regard to business. Who knew he would feel defeated in a tiny kitchen one day?

After mulling it over for two seconds, he called Jackson for help. He deliberately closed the kitchen door so Arianne would not hear him. This was absolutely humiliating.

Jackson and Tiffany were on their way to the West residence. His voice sounded sullen on the phone when he answered the call. “Mark, what is it?”

“How do you cook ramen?” Mark asked in a hushed tone, “Like, the kind that looks good and tastes delicious…”

Not even in Jackson’s wildest dreams did he imagine Mark would ask him for help in regard to this kind of thing. He was in shock. Did Mark take the wrong medication today?

Tiffany who was next to him simply wanted to watch the world burn. “Is the sun rising from the west from wherever Mark is? Why are you trying to learn how to cook ramen? Don’t your servants know how to cook ramen?”

Mark was already embarrassed by his non-existence cooking skills, he did not dare to say a word against Tiffany. He could not afford to bicker now.

Jackson returned to his senses and said, “Listen carefully, I’ll teach you the steps. I know that you’ve never cooked in your life. First, fill a pot with water and heat it on the stove. Add a little more water so that the noodles won’t be too starchy later. Once the water is boiled, put the noodles into the pot. It should be cooked in five minutes. Within these five minutes, take a bowl, put salt and all available seasoning into the bowl. Once the noodles are cooked, transfer them into the pot and add the broth.”

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“As for the heat, go with your instincts. Not too big or too small. You won’t know what to do if the flames are too high anyway,” Jackson continued, “This is all I can do to help you. The most important is the amount of seasoning. I’m not sure how to explain this to you but don’t put in too much! Don’t fool yourself into thinking that it’s not enough. That would be a big mistake. This is especially true for salt! If you’re confident in your cooking skills, you can add an egg or some vegetables in the noodles. This will improve the color. After all, ramen alone would look too plain.”

Mark remembered every single step that Jackson had mentioned and got to work.

Tiffany and Jackson looked at each other when they heard the sound of clanging pots and pans in the background. Realization suddenly dawned on Jackson. “There’s no way Mark’s in the Tremont Estate. He’s with Ari. Did pigs learn to fly? He’s actually cooking…”

“What did you say?” Mark said snappily.

Jackson hurriedly ended the call in fright.

Tiffany gleefully sent Arianne a few messages, eager to watch the show unfold. “Hey, is your man trying to sell something in your kitchen? He actually asked Jackson for help, but I’m sure it’s not enough. I think you better check on him from time to time. Don’t let him blow up your kitchen.

Upon seeing the message, Arianne could not help but feel worried. In fact, she had sent him to the kitchen to cook because she was upset and wanted to make things difficult for him. She was not really in the mood anyway. It would be a huge deal if something happened to him.

After she put down her phone, she went to the kitchen to check on him. The water in the pot was already beginning to bubble from the bottom and would be boiling soon. Mark was holding the pot cover in front of him, eyeing the pot, as though he was afraid it was going to explode.

When Arianne saw this, she burst out laughing. “It’s not going to explode. It’s just water, not a bomb. Get out, I’ll do this.”

Mark felt slightly embarrassed. He put the cover aside. “It’s fine, I can do it. You rest. It’ll be done soon.”

Arianne did not really feel like moving since she had not eaten at all. For this reason, she did not insist. “Fine. The water is done once it starts boiling. Don’t put the noodles in just yet.”

Mark nodded seriously. He waited for Arianne to leave before taking the noodles out. The thin noodles seemed too little. Once the water was boiled, he readily raised the entire packet, ready to throw it all in.

Fortunately, Arianne came in at this moment and stopped him. “Are you insane? Are you a pig? Do you think you can finish an entire packet?”

“It’s so little. It won’t be enough, right?” he asked, puzzled.

Arianne placed her hand on her chest, feeling as though he was going to give her a heart attack. “Noodles will expand. One-third of this is enough.”

Mark did not argue and followed her exact instructions. He put one-third of the noodles into the pot. He stared at the noodles intently. Only when he personally witnessed it did he believe that noodles really could expand. At this moment, he remembered he had to prepare the seasoning. He quickly took out two bowls from the dish cabinet. With Jackson’s advice in mind, he refrained from adding too much seasoning.

Seeing this, Arianne relaxed and returned to the living room. It would be done soon so there should not be any more problems.

However, when he finally served the noodles, she was shocked. What were those two green vegetables doing on top of the bowls? That was right; two small raw green cabbages sat on top of the noodles. If there were no small cabbages, would he have used a large cabbage instead?

“Er… You could have plucked the leaves out... And, why didn’t you cook them in the pot? Can these be eaten raw?”

Mark was shocked. “Jackson said I can add an egg or some green vegetables. I didn’t think eggs could be cooked in a pot so I added some green vegetables instead. These can be eaten raw, right?”

Arianne could not be bothered to explain it to him. This was the first time she realized the man in front of her had shortcomings as well. He was a complete idiot in the kitchen.

After ensuring that he had switched off the gas in the kitchen, she sat down and quietly ate the noodles. She did not touch the vegetables or complain about how horrible it tasted. However, it had to be said that the food was so bland that it seemed like he did not use salt at all.

Seemingly determined to prove to her that the green vegetables could be consumed raw, Mark took off his glasses, picked up a fork, and poked the pitiful vegetable. Before he could put it in his mouth, Arianne stopped him. “Are you crazy? If you end up dying from poison in front of me, do you think I’d be able to escape? Not every vegetable can be eaten raw. When Jackson suggested adding vegetables and eggs, he meant for you to put them into the pot to cook them. You’re not supposed to just put them into the bowl. Throw the vegetable away. Eat the noodles.”

Mark obediently put the vegetable on the table and tried the ramen. He could not bring himself to finish it after having the first bite. “Erm… About the baby, I suggest coming back to the capital with me for a checkup. I have the best doctors there.”

Arianne's attitude turned cold when he mentioned the baby. "The best doctors? Can they ensure that my baby will be born?"

He felt a little uneasy. "If we can keep the baby, I'll do my best to keep it safe no matter the price. If not… I won't let anything happen to you. It's my fault. I'm sorry."

Chapter 620

Since he admitted to his mistake in such a straightforward manner, and his attitude was particularly good. Arianne could not bring herself to throw a tantrum. Instead, she calmly said, "There is no 'if'. The doctors have already explained it very clearly. There's no loophole here. You're always hurting me, Mark Tremont. I hate it."

Although she spoke calmly, her words were like needles that pierced his heart. This was not the first time she said she hated him. However, this time, it hurt much more compared to before. "I know it's my fault, but the matter isn't set in stone. Regardless, we should discuss it after the checkup."

Arianne lost the interest to continue the conversation once she thought about having to go to the hospital and everything she would have to face. However, there was no avoiding it.

She glanced at Mark's untouched ramen. She felt annoyed. She had eaten it without any complaints, and yet, he would not even eat the food he cooked?

"Eat the noodles."

Seeing that she was nearly done eating, Mark had no choice but brace himself and eat. It should not be that bad. He picked up his fork and continued eating. The result was the same. There was nothing strange, but it really did not taste good. It was too bland.

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The West residence.

Jackson was holding some snacks and playing with the dog, completely ignoring Atticus' existence.

Atticus did not seem to mind this. He sat on the couch, reading a magazine.

Summer had cut some fruits and served it on the table, "Tiffie, have some fruits. Dinner will be ready soon. Why didn't you come by yesterday?"

Feeling awkward, Tiffany said, "We woke up really early to get a medical checkup so we didn't really have much rest. I took a nap in the afternoon and overslept. Jackson didn't wake me up…"

Summer shot Jackson a look. She knew he had deliberately done that. However, she did not expose him. "It's alright as long as you're home now. You've been staying in White Water Bay, right? Jackson doesn't like having strangers in the house so he has never hired a housekeeper. He simply gets a helper to clean his house two to three times a week. It was fine when he was living on his own, but there's two of you now. Shouldn't you hire a housekeeper? It would be easier that way."

Tiffany felt that it was not necessary to hire a housekeeper so she quickly replied, “No need. There’s no need for that. We’re very busy at the office. There’s no need for us to have meals at home. A temporary helper is enough to keep the house clean. There’s no need for a housekeeper. We come home very late for dinner even when we’re not working overtime. It’s a small matter. Jackson and I can handle it. There’s no need to waste money on that. Housekeepers in the capital don’t come cheap.”

In a rare moment, Atticus chimed in, “There’s no need to worry about money. We just want your life to be easier. You’re living on your own after all. It’s not like we’re lacking this small amount of cash.”

Atticus seemed stern. He did not smile much either. For this reason, despite his words, he did not seem friendly or kind. On the contrary, it felt as though he was implying Tiffany’s family was poor, but the West did not lack money to hire a housekeeper.

Tiffany felt slightly discomfited by this. A sense of inferiority welled up in her heart. She had always been thrifty since she was poor before. It seemed like her behavior and Atticus’ words made her previous poverty even more obvious. She lowered her head, unsure of what to say.

Jackson sensed something was amiss and looked at Tiffany immediately. He shifted his gaze to Atticus and frowned, “If you’re not good at talking, you should just keep your mouth shut.”

Summer’s expression stiffened.

Atticus was at a loss. He did not know what he said that was so offensive.

The atmosphere turned tense immediately.

Only the dog, Little Bean, remained blissfully unaware of the suffocating tension in the room. Little Bean leaped and ran, chasing the snacks in Jackson's hand.

Tiffany did not expect Jackson would lose his temper because of her. She mustered up her courage and said, "It's fine, it's fine. Feed the dog, Jackson. I'm chatting with mom and dad. Why are you interrupting? They only want what's best for us, and they're being considerate. I just think there's no need to hire a housekeeper. It's just a difference in opinion…"

Tiffany had warned Jackson repeatedly before their arrival so he swallowed his anger and focused on playing with the dog. He did not say another word.

No one brought up the subject again.

Jackson still wore a glum expression on his face during dinner. As a result, Tiffany only managed to eat a small portion of her meal. The atmosphere was just too suffocating. No matter how reluctant she was to be in this kind of situation, she knew she had no choice. This was just the beginning. There would be many more occasions like this in the future.

Fortunately, that was the only hiccup during their visit to the West family's residence. There were no other mishaps.

After dinner, Tiffany dragged Jackson away. This time, she wanted to leave as soon as possible. Otherwise, she felt as though she would be suffocated to death. Traditional settings like this were a form of torture to a carefree person like her.

Tiffany gradually relaxed on the way home to White Water Villa.

At this moment, Jackson suddenly said, “He didn’t mean anything by it. He was just speaking literally.”