Ruling 701

Chapter 701

It took her half a minute before she could return to her senses. In disbelief, she said, “Did… Mr. Smith help me get rid of Grant Jackson?” That was absurd. She didn’t know this Mr. Smith from Adam. Not only had he given her a bottle of liquor at the bar, but he was involving himself in her personal affairs. How did he find out about this? She felt as though she were being watched…

The young man did not deny it. “This is Mr. Smith’s name card.”

She accepted the name card. “Please thank him for me, and… Why did he help me? I don’t think we know each other.”

The man simply smiled, got into his car, and left.

She found it very strange. She stared at the namecard, feeling puzzled. Alejandro Smith, Executive President of Smith Enterprises. She had never heard of him before. However, the most important matter at hand was to console Lillian. She did not call to thank him immediately. Instead, she stuffed the name card into her bag.

Lillian refused to open the door when Tiffany knocked on the door. She was too humiliated to see anyone. She had completely lost her dignity. Tiffany, on the other hand, felt happy and amused, dearly wishing that she could cut open her mother’s brain to see what was really inside. Suddenly, she received a call from Jackson. “I’m downstairs. Come down,” he said.

She kicked the door in front of her. “Sure, I’ll be right down.”

She was in a particularly happy mood when she climbed into the car. She hummed a small melody, despite not sleeping the entire night. It had been quite a few days since Jackson had seen her in such a good mood. “What’s up?” he asked. “Did something good happen? You seem to be in a great mood.”

“Nothing much, just solved a minor annoyance,” she replied as she shifted into a comfortable position and adjusted the car seat into a lounge. “Didn’t I tell you not to pick me up? Now we’re both late. You can’t possibly cut my pay. Anyway, I’m going to close my eyes for a while. Wake me up when we’ve arrived at the office.”

“Sure. You get some sleep,” Jackson replied, smiling at her indulgently.

Jackson woke her when they arrived at the intersection near the office. “We’re here, you can go down now.”

Tiffany rubbed her eyes as she woke up. She pulled out her watch from her bag, which she had forgotten to put on, and checked the time. She slapped herself in the face to wake herself up even more. “Twenty minutes late! How exciting. I’ll wait for you at the elevator. Hurry.”

When she got down from the car, Jackson noticed a white name card in a corner of the car — it had fallen out of her bag. He picked it up, read it, and frowned. How did she manage to get Alejandro Smith’s name card? Alejandro was considered a big shot in the business world, a figure of supremacy in Ayashe. He had recently moved to the capital for some reason. The Smith family’s main industry was very different from the West family’s; they were in finance. Not even he knew anyone there, so why would Tiffany have his name card?

He put the card away and decided to ask her about it when he had the chance. They had a busy morning, so he did not bring the matter up when he met up with Tiffany at the elevator. He felt suspicious when he saw the tired look on her face. “What’s wrong? Didn’t sleep well last night?”

Tiffany yawned, looking sluggish. “It’s not just that. I didn’t sleep at all, and I think I might have the flu. It’s fine, I can nap during lunch hour. I’ll be able to hold on until the end of the day. I don’t think I can do overtime though. Don’t worry about me; I can’t keep taking the day off. It’ll look suspicious if I receive the same amount of salary at the end of the month. I’d like to avoid public indignation in the office.”

The elevator arrived on their floor. He stroked her head. “Tell me if it’s too much for you. Don’t force yourself. If you’re really too exhausted, come to my office and take a short nap. No one would dare say anything about it.”

Tiffany thought that he was joking. She pinched his chest and giggled. “Stop it. If I take a nap in your office, people might gossip about you and accuse you of cheating on your fianceé. I’ll go in first; you take your time. Don’t let anyone see us together.” Then, she quickened her pace and sat down at her desk. She fluttered her lashes at Jackson flirtatiously when he walked past. Jackson cast her a sidelong glance with a deadpan look on his face then slipped into his office.

Chapter 702

The Tremont Estate.

Mark carefully helped Arianne into the car. He had to take her to the hospital for her prenatal check up today. As time passed, Arianne’s tummy gradually grew bigger, and he became increasingly worried.

Brian, who was in the driver's seat, started the car once they had both gotten in. "Are we going straight to the hospital, sir?"

Mark nodded. "Mm."

Brian paused then said, "But… You have an important meeting this morning, it starts at 10:30AM. Perhaps I should take Mrs. Tremont instead?"

"That's fine too," Arianne chimed in considerately. "Since you have a meeting, Brian can accompany me. You should go to work."

"No need," Mark replied without hesitation. "The meeting can be delayed. I do not want to miss a single one of your prenatal check-ups. This is my responsibility." His face displayed a gravity and solemnity that destroyed Arianne's final point of defense against him. Perhaps his kindness towards her was never faked at all.

Her heart softened. "Alright, then we'll try our best to hurry up. I hope we won't delay you too much."

The results of the check up from the hospital were normal, but it was past 10AM by the time they were done. Mark kept glancing at his wristwatch. Arianne knew that he was anxious. "Won't you be passing by Jackson's office along the way to your office? You could just drop me off there, and I'll go and visit Tiffie. No need to drop me off at home; just pick me up when you're done. I'd like to have lunch outside during noon. Let's have lunch together, if it's convenient for you."

Mark hesitated. She inadvertently added a hint of coquettish charm in her tone. "Just this once… I can still walk around now, I won't be able to do it soon. I'd die of boredom if you don't let me go."

She rarely ever showed this side of her, so he undoubtedly surrendered. “Fine, you can do what you like, but you have to let me take you there and personally hand you over into Tiffany’s care. It doesn’t matter if I’m a little late to the meeting.”

The pair clicked. Mark personally delivered Arianne to Tiffany, as agreed. Before he left, he couldn’t help nagging worriedly, “Call me immediately if you’re not feeling well. Don’t eat anything at will. Don’t walk all over the place, and don’t walk too fast when you’re walking. No cold beverages.”

Tiffany couldn’t help rolling her eyes. “She’s not a three year old. Stop bullsh*tting, and go back to work. She’s with me; why are you still worried?”

Mark finally stopped nagging. “Then… I’m leaving now. I’ll pick you up after my meeting.”

“Take care,” Arianne said, waving her hand.

Just as she left, Tiffany sourly clicked her tongue. “Tsk tsk tsk, when you two are at odds, you’re like murderous enemies, ready to stab each other to death with a knife. But when everything’s fine, you send goosebumps crawling all over everyone’s skin. I really can’t deal with you! He’s indulging you as if you were his daughter. Seriously! He acts up more than Jackson! Wait here, I’ll get a chair for you from Jackson’s office. Can’t let a pregnant lady stand around.”

Arianne giggled. “Will I be in the way of your work?”

Chapter 703

Tiffany yawned again. “Don’t even mention it. I haven’t slept the whole night. I can’t bring myself to do any serious work. Your visit has lifted my spirits.”

Arianne sat down when the chair had been pulled up. “Where were you last night?” she asked. “Why didn’t you sleep?”

Tiffany glanced around and lowered her voice as she answered, “I’ll tell you later. It’s inconvenient here.”

Arianne didn’t ask any more questions. When she saw Tiffany scratching her head in front of her computer, she moved forward and said, “Let me help you. Hopefully, I haven’t forgotten the things I’ve learned. I think my basics might be stronger than yours.”

Tiffany shielded her computer like a mother shielding her baby. “No way! If Mark found out, he’d think that I was abusing you. Even the idea of you walking around seems to tire you out in his opinion. How could I possibly let you help me in my work? I’d like to stay alive for a few more years!”

Arianne shot her a weak glare. “Please! You know I can do it. I’m not that delicate. He’s just overly protective. I’m only helping you out a little; it won’t tire me out at all. I have nothing to do while sitting next to you anyway.”

After two seconds of hesitation, Tiffany compromised. “Fine, go right ahead, since you’re so eager. I’ve been stuck on this draft for two days. I don’t feel inspired at all.”

Arianne had just started when Aye butted in. “Were you in fashion design too, Mrs. Tremont?”

Arianne nodded. “Yes, I used to be a fashion designer too, but it’s been a while since then.”

Aye’s eyes filled with envy. “That’s true. You’re Mrs. Tremont, and pregnant too. Mr. Tremont must really be indulging you now. Why would he let you work at all? Unlike us, toiling our lives away.”

Arianne smiled silently. She really didn’t know how to react to flattery. Her position as Mrs. Tremont was never an achievement to her.

Tiffany was sitting on the sides, feeling extremely bored. She remembered Alejandro Smith’s name card and felt that she should at least send him a message to thank him. She wondered why he was paying her so much attention, even having helped her with her problem too. After all, one who is unaccountably solicitous is undoubtedly hiding evil intentions. However, she had no intentions of asking. After all, she did not intend on keeping in touch. She wasn’t comfortable with having any male friends, aside from Jackson and his best friends.

As she searched for the name card, she realized that it had gone missing. She couldn’t seem to recall where she had put it. She was already absent-minded from her lack of sleep. She ended up depleting most of her brain cells in trying to figure this out, so she had no choice but to drop the idea.

In less than an hour, Arianne had completed a rough outline of her two-day draft. Aye was in shock. “This looks much better than Tiffie’s. You’re amazing!”

Not only did Tiffany not feel degraded, but she was proud. “Of course, take a look at who Ari is. I was still fooling around when she started out in this industry. She used to do sketches for the Tremont Enterprise and was featured in magazines too. She’s amazing. She would have become a famous fashion designer by now if she hadn’t quit the industry.”

Arianne explained the details then stood up. “You can do the rest yourself. I’ve already explained it to you. I need to take a walk. My legs are sore from sitting around for too long.”

All of this excitement gave Tiffany bursting inspiration. “Sure. If you’re really bored, you can always go into ‘Mr. West’s’ office and have a chat with him. He probably has more free time than I do.”

Arianne smiled but did not visit Jackson in his office. She and Jackson wouldn’t have anything to say to each other.

Chapter 704

Mark rushed over near 12PM and brought a few desserts to boot. “Are you okay? Do you feel uncomfortable in any way? Are you hungry? I’ve brought you something to eat. You can have a small bite first. I’ll take you for lunch at Jackson’s restaurant in awhile.”

Arianne began to lose it. “Could you… not be so careful? I’m not going to get hungry at every turn, and I’m not going to be uncomfortable over every little thing. Relax.”

Tiffany casually opened the box of desserts and munched on a large dessert, then gave one to Aye as well. “Your Ari might not be hungry, but her friends are. Based on how you’ve been feeding her, she’ll weigh 120 kilograms by the time the baby’s born. You’ll regret it.”

“Don’t worry, I’ll love her even if she weighs 180 kilograms. But Jackson might not agree with me. You might want to consider eating a little less,” Mark teased in a rare moment of banter with Tiffany.

Tiffany nearly choked. “Seriously… You know, I’ve realized that you’re either silent, or you say something venomous enough to give someone a stroke. Take your precious little treasure for lunch already. It’s almost lunch time, and I need to take a nap. Thanks for your desserts. This will be my lunch.”

Arianne giggled. “That’s enough, you two. I’m leaving, Tiffie. Make sure to visit me this weekend.”

Once they left Jackson’s office, Mark carefully opened the car door for her. “I might have to go on a business trip tomorrow. I’ll probably be away for three days.”

“Go ahead,” she replied without skipping a beat.

He felt a little disappointed. “I can stay at home with you if you don’t want me to go.”

She lifted her eyes and looked at him, slightly bewildered. “Why wouldn’t I want you to go?”

He was completely speechless. Everyone said that women are usually very demanding during pregnancy and would kick up a fuss or sulk for no good reason, torturing their husbands to death. However, she was pretty laid-back. She didn’t grumble at him for leaving her for a business trip.

A few seconds later, Arianne responded, “I’m fine. It’s only for three days. Just come home when you’re done with work. Now that we’re talking about this, I need to say something. You don’t have to worry about me so much. Mary and Henry are at home with me. You don’t have to come home so early to keep me company. It’s distracting you from work. Pregnancy isn’t a one to two day thing. We’ve still got a long way to go. It’s going to affect you.”

Mark sat properly next to her. “I’m not anxious to keep you company, just because of your pregnancy,” he mumbled. “It’s because it’s such a rare chance for me to be with you. I’m trying to cultivate our relationship, understand? Or are you saying… that you don’t like being with me?”

At that very moment, Arianne felt as if he were the pregnant one instead of her. He had become very childlike all of a sudden and would get emotional for no good reason. “Aw, come on… It’s not that I don’t like having you with me, but I just don’t think you need to keep watching over me like that. I get very anxious when you get anxious, and I’m already worried about bringing the baby safely into the world…”

Mark turned his head away and looked outside the car window. He did not say another word, as if he was sulking.

Ariane stared pleadingly at Brian, but he feigned ignorance. He was truly powerless in this matter…

When they arrived at White Water Bay Café, Arianne tugged on Mark’s arm, trying to get back into his good graces. Of course, he couldn’t bear to swat her away and simply held her hand with his other hand.

Mark had purposefully booked a private room, afraid that the restaurant might be too noisy. Once they sat down, he looked at Arianne and seriously said, “Why can’t you be more cutesy, like other women? Even a little bit would be great. You make it seem like you don’t care about me at all. Do you have any idea how long it’s been since you’ve last called me on your own initiative? How long has it been since

you've initiated a conversation with me? I'm usually the one starting the conversation, then you continue it. This situation is no different from back when you were a child. The only difference is that you're not scared of me anymore now. You won't even call me when I'm working late at the office; you wouldn't say a word if I didn't come home."

Chapter 705

Arianne's view completely differed from his. "I thought men preferred thoughtful women, especially men like you. If you like showy displays and whiny affectionate women, isn't Aery Kinsey the poster child?"

Mark's expression sank once she mentioned the past. Arianne was unperturbed. "Am I wrong?"

"Okay, stop talking. Time to order." Mark took a deep breath, feeling extremely dejected. She was still capable of choking him to death with just a few words.

…

Tiffany buried herself under the covers when they arrived home that night, completely ignoring dinner. She soon fell fast asleep. Jackson swallowed his advice for her to finish her dinner first before going to sleep when he saw her in that manner. Of course, he couldn't ask her about the name card now.

The next day, Tiffany woke up an hour earlier than usual. Jackson was still fast asleep. She was in a great mood after getting a good night's rest last night. She planted a soft kiss on Jackson's face and quietly climbed out of bed.

She noticed the name card in the laundry basket as she was washing up. Despite being completely unaware of how Alejandro's name had ended up in the laundry basket, she picked it up and looked at the number on it. She then hesitatingly sent him a message: 'Thank you. You probably know who I am. I don't know why you've helped me, and I don't want to know. However, I owe you one. I'll pay you back when I can.'

She put her phone aside after sending the message. She knew that she was probably spewing gibberish. What did she mean by "I owe you one. I'll pay you back when I can"? She wouldn't ever get the chance to do it. She had no intentions of getting to know this man. Besides, a small fry like her couldn't possibly do anything for a man like Alejandro. This was only a form of courtesy. This man had helped her for no good reason. Who knows what he was thinking. She could control her curiosity. After all, curiosity killed the cat.

Suddenly, the doorbell rang. She went to open the door with the toothbrush still in her mouth. She was stunned when she saw the disheveled-looking Lillian. "Mom? What are you doing here, so early in the morning?"

Lillian pulled her into her arms with tears in her eyes. "I've thought it through. It was my fault. I shouldn't make you worry all the time. Every mother is constantly worried for their own daughter, but it's the complete opposite for us. I shouldn't have treated you like that for that liar, Grant's, sake. Let's transfer the deed for the house now, okay? Otherwise, I'm going to be racked with guilt."

"Forget it," Tiffany replied helplessly. "Where are we going to do the transfer, so early in the morning? Who are you trying to scare with that bad hair day of yours? Hurry home and get some sleep. I've got to get to work soon. Next time, rub your eyes a few times when getting to know someone, and don't be such a silly goose anymore."

Lillian released her, looking very pitiful. "You're really not angry anymore?"

She shrugged and replied, “Nope. What could I possibly hope to achieve by staying angry at you? Jackson is still asleep, so don’t wake him. Since you’re here, I’m going to make breakfast. Come and eat with us. Go home and get some rest after you’ve eaten. A good night’s sleep will get rid of all your worries. The company is pretty busy at the end of the year; I won’t have time to deal with you.”

Lillian looked all around and found the kitchen. She walked right in and said, “I’ll make breakfast. You go get ready.”

Tiffany was taken aback. She did not object. This was the first time Lillian had ever offered to make breakfast for her; she didn’t know what to feel.

Once breakfast was ready, she went upstairs to wake Jackson. “My mom is here. She’s made breakfast for us. Get up, wash up, and eat. It’s getting late. You should get up.”

Jackson turned over, lifted his hand, and glanced at the watch on his wrist. “Fifteen minutes early… I’m so sleepy… I’ll get up right now. Is your mom in that much of a good mood?”

Tiffany was just as clueless. “Don’t know, probably an intermittent thing. Let’s just try to get used to it.”

Chapter 706

Jackson soon arrived downstairs after washing up. He had put on some clothes first before coming downstairs, as Lillian was around. “Good morning, Mrs. Lane,” he said.

Lillian curled her lips. “Tiffany calls your parents mom and dad, and you call me ‘Mrs. Lane’. How amusing.”

Jackson immediately tensed. “Mom… It was only a slip of the tongue, just a slip of the tongue. I hope you don’t mind. What are you doing so early in the day?”

Lillian was too embarrassed to reveal her rotten affair. “Nothing, just an impulse decision. Aren’t you busy? Hurry up and eat, then get to work. I’ll be going home soon.”

Jackson wasn’t used to having one more person in the house. He finished his breakfast hesitantly, then threw the plates into the sink. “I’ll wash these when I get home. It’s almost time to go. Tiffie, you’d better hurry up and change.”

Tiffany quickly ran upstairs. “Okay, I’ll be done in five minutes!”

Lillian suddenly carried the airs of a housewife. She walked into the kitchen and washed the dishes. “How can these be left in the sink until you come home? I’ll clean up, you go ahead. I’ll lock the door when I leave.”

Jackson felt a little apologetic. “Then… I’m sorry for the trouble, mom. This is how life’s been for Tiffie and I, living alone together. We’re usually very casual…”

He heaved a long sigh of relief once he got into the car. “What’s with you?” Tiffany asked with a smile.

He paused, then said, “Could you maybe tell your mother not to come over so early in the day? My own mother hasn’t done anything like that, I’m not really used to it…”

Tiffany rolled her eyes at him. “My mom isn’t a stranger. Shouldn’t you be happy that your mother-in-law has come for a visit? It’s not like this happens every day. Just once in a while. Besides, she’s even made breakfast for you. It doesn’t taste like much, but it’s the thought that counts. You’re too ungrateful. You don’t know a good thing once you’ve had it.”

Jackson didn’t explain himself. He just wasn’t used to having other people in the house. Summer was well aware of this, so she rarely came to visit him. In fact, he was completely uncomfortable with Lillian’s visit. He couldn’t say a word about it, considering Tiffany’s opinion. He just valued his personal space more than others.

He suddenly remembered Alejandro’s card and changed the topic. “By the way, what are you doing with Alejandro Smith’s name card?”

Tiffany was taken aback. “I was wondering where that name card had disappeared to. Did you take it? He had someone give it to me. I don’t even know what he looks like. I don’t know him at all. He just gave me a bottle of liquor when I was drinking in his bar… I used to frequent that bar, so he’s probably seen me before.” She did not mention Alejandro’s part in sending Grant away to him.

Jackson furrowed his brow. “He used to be based in Ayashe and has only just moved to the capital. When did he start a bar here?”

Tiffany wasn’t too sure herself. “Maybe he bought it after moving here? I don’t know either. I used to like going to nightclubs, but I never really paid attention to their bosses. Why? Do you know him?”

Jackson shook his head. “No. I’ve only heard of him. The Smith family is the most affluent family in Ayashe. I don’t know Alejandro at all. Apparently, he had a car accident many years ago, lost the use of his legs, and was confined to a wheelchair. He’s handicapped and two years younger than me. He never married. However, that isn’t a barrier to his knack in business. He’s very shrewd. You can’t deal with someone like him, and I certainly don’t want another man in my woman’s life, not even if he’s a cripple. You are not allowed to contact him.”

Chapter 707

Tiffany stretched her hand out and pinched his cheek. “Are you jealous? You do know that he’s disabled. You’re a rich young man from the West family. Why would you be uncertain of yourself in front of a disabled person? I’m not blind. Certainly, I know that you’re the most handsome, considerate, and gentlest man ever. Why would I fall for another man and abandon you? Mr. Smith is nobody to me. Even if he’s extremely handsome, he’s still a disabled person. Besides, he only gave me a business card. What kind of nonsense are you talking about now?”

Jackson remained quiet. He was thinking about the reason why Alejandro gave Tiffany his business card. Why would a person like him want to befriend Tiffany? Did he do that just to approach Jackson? It seemed quite ridiculous. If Alejandro wanted to expand his business, it would be easier for him to meet Jackson directly. Why did Alejandro have his mind on a woman instead?

When they reached the company, they carried out their respective responsibilities.

Tiffany received a message as soon as she sat down at her working desk. It was a reply message from Alejandro. “You don’t have to return me the favor. Just treat me to a meal.”

‘Treat him to a meal?’ Tiffany felt that it was plausible, but she did realize that it would be better if Jackson was unaware of it. Otherwise, he would never agree to let her go. After considering it for a

while, she replied to his message. “I’m not free tomorrow and during the weekends. I’m not available at night too. How about this afternoon? You may pick a restaurant that you like.”

After that, she heaved a soft sigh of relief. She felt that it was better if she returned him the favor. If not, she would feel quite indebted to him.

She soon received a reply from him. “Fine. I’ll send the address to you later at noon.”

She did not give him any reply after that. She then put away the phone and resumed her work.

At noon, Alejandro sent her the address. She then told Jackson that she would be heading out for lunch by herself. After gaining his permission, she became relieved and went for the appointment.

The place that Alejandro had chosen was quite far. She realized that it was a private manor house after she reached that place. The Smiths were indeed a wealthy family. It was not a surprise that Jackson knew who Alejandro was. The guard at the door opened the door for her. A middle-aged woman who appeared to be a housekeeper led her into the manor. There was nobody in the large dining room. Alejandro was nowhere to be seen. The housekeeper said without any facial expression, “Miss Lane, please wait here for a while. Mr. Smith will be here soon.”

She nodded and sat down before the dining table. She held the glass in front of her tightly, as she was rather tense. In fact, she was used to different kinds of occasions, but she was just slightly uncomfortable with the cold and listless atmosphere here.

After around five minutes, she heard the sound of a horn outside of the manor house. She turned and looked outside. Two bodyguards were seen getting out of the car, and they took the wheelchair from

the hood. They then arrange it nicely for Alejandro before helping him take his seat. Jackson was right. Alejandro was indeed disabled.

From her angle, she could not see Alejandro's face at all. She could only observe other things roughly. He seemed to be quite tall. If he was not disabled, his body figure might be good too.

When he entered the dining room, she maintained her manners and stood up. "Mr…" Before she could utter anything else, she became tongue-tied. More specifically, she was stunned. Alejandro's entire face was bandaged and only his eyes and mouth were visible to her. Almost his entire nose was covered too. A thought emerged in her mind all of a sudden. 'Is he recovering from plastic surgery?'

Alejandro did not appear to be surprised by her reaction. "I met with an accident more than half a year ago. My face was injured. So recently, I've been undergoing surgeries to heal the injuries. Miss Lane, did I scare you?"

She tried to recover herself. "No. Not at all! I was just thinking about whether you've undergone any plastic surgery. It seems that I've made the right guess. Your voice… Did something happen to your voice too?" By the way, Alejandro sounded rather deep and harsh. It was strange, and it was indeed frightening.

Chapter 708

Alejandro did not deny it. "It's something like that. Please take your seat. Feel free to order anything you like to eat."

She glanced around. "I promised to treat you to a meal. Why does this place seem like your manor house? Are you treating me to a meal instead?"

Alejandro gave her a meaningful glance with his deep-set eyes. “It doesn’t matter much as to who’s paying for this meal. I just want to have a meal with you. Now that I’ve gained what I want, it doesn’t matter much.”

What he said made her slightly uncomfortable, especially the way he looked at her. She became nervous for an unknown reason. Why did he stare at her? To ease the tension, she took the initiative to start chatting with him. “Mr. Smith, may I have the liberty to ask why you helped me? We’re not from the same world. It seems unlikely that we’ll ever belong to the same world. You gained nothing by lending me a hand. Besides, you’re a businessman. Certainly, you wouldn’t do anything disadvantageous to you.”

Alejandro looked at her nonchalantly and asked, “Didn’t you claim that you’re not curious about that?”

She became tongue-tied by his retort. After gulping down half a glass of water, she managed to reply, “I came here after all. I’m just simply asking…”

He drummed his slender fingers on the table rhythmically and softly. He said casually, “It was because I wanted to. I think this reason should be fine. I always act according to my wishes.”

The first thought that came to Tiffany was the possibility that Alejandro had fallen in love with her. Although she didn’t have an extremely charming appearance or a wealthy family background, he was not so good either. He was disabled, which was a big disadvantage on his side, so it might be plausible for him to fall for her. But why her out of all people? She did not want to cheat on Jackson.

When she thought of that, she said seriously, “I’m so grateful to you for helping to resolve that difficulty. But my fiancé doesn’t like to see any other men around me… so…” She intentionally emphasized the word ‘fiancé’ in the hopes that he would understand her underlying meaning.

Suddenly, Alejandro laughed. “Miss Lane, do you think that I have any other thoughts toward you? I was just curious when I met you at the bar last time. I wondered how a woman could be so good at drinking. I heard from Jett that you were still conscious when you left the bar. You even asked him to call a designated driver for you. I became very curious. The wine I gifted you has high alcohol content. If there’s a chance, let’s invite your fiancé over. I’m curious as to how good you’re at drinking.”

She understood the entire incident now. Although the thing that piqued his interest was rather strange, it was fine as long as he was not interested in her. She breathed a sigh of relief subconsciously. “I see… We’ll see how it goes. I’m indeed good at drinking. It seems like both of us enjoy drinking.”

Alejandro remained quiet. He gestured to the servants to ask them to serve the dishes. As the servants put them on the dining table one by one, Tiffany wondered whether she was overthinking, for she noticed that almost all of the dishes that were served were her favorites. She wondered how much Alejandro knew about her. Or was it just a coincidence?

She looked up at him, realizing that he remained calm. She then picked up the fork and spoon. “It seems like we have the same tastes too. These are my usual favorites.”

It appeared as if Alejandro did not intend to eat anything. He just fixed his eyes on her. “Just enjoy it as much as you like.”

After the meal, Tiffany took a stroll with Alejandro in the manor house. Jett was there too. He helped push Alejandro’s wheelchair. They chatted with each other from time to time, but they did not seem to find a topic that they were mutually interested in. Besides, Alejandro was not a talkative person.

Consequently, Tiffany felt slightly stressed and awkward. She wanted to excuse herself. Suddenly, she noticed a familiar figure from not afar. ‘Isn’t that Lynn pruning the flower branches over there?’

Chapter 709

She stopped walking and looked toward where Lynn was. At the same time, Lynn walked toward her too. The last time she met Lynn was at the dessert shop. She didn't even know where she had gone. Surprisingly, she met Lynn here.

Lynn threw her a glance calmly before continuing her work. Alejandro asked, “Are you acquainted with each other?”

Tiffany nodded. “Yes. We were colleagues once. I still need to get to work in the afternoon. I need to excuse myself now. Thank you for your hospitality.”

Alejandro did not try to detain her. “Alright. See you around. Let Lynn see you off to the door since you know each other.” Then, he addressed Lynn. “Lynnie, see the guest out.”

Lynn stopped her work and walked toward Tiffany, who did not linger there for long. She then walked toward the entrance of the manor house directly.

When they were alone, she asked Lynn, “Are you working as a bodyguard for Alejandro?”

Lynn said without any facial expression, “What? Are you such a busybody?”

Tiffany could feel Lynn's hostility. She was slightly helpless. "I mean you no harm. I'm just asking… It's a surprise for me to meet you here. Actually… what happened between you and Jackson is none of my business. You don't have to be like this since I've treated you as my friend before."

Lynn sneered. "Is that so? I never treated you as my friend. No one would treat their love rivals as friends. Don't try to be generous here. You're such a hypocrite."

It had now come to a state where Tiffany felt that it was unnecessary to try to be nice to her. "Forget it. It's just my wishful thinking. I'll leave now. You don't have to see me off."

When she got into the car, Lynn said all of a sudden, "You're not as innocent as you appear. If not, why would you go behind Jackson's back and come to meet Alejandro here? I'm sure Jackson knows nothing about this. Am I right? You gain the one thing that the other values tremendously, but you cannot even behave yourself. Disgusting!"

Tiffany frowned. "Firstly, this is my business, and it's nothing like you pictured it to be. I don't even want to explain myself to you. Secondly, Jackson is indeed unaware of it, but I just don't want him to have any misunderstandings. It's none of your business too. This is the first and last time I came here. You don't have to worry about it."

After that, she pressed the gas pedal and drove away directly.

She was late by thirty minutes when she reached the office. She expected it because the manor house was rather far. When she took her seat at the working desk, Jackson went toward her and said with a gloomy face, "Tiffany, come to my office now."

She was stunned all of a sudden. Did he know about that?

She got up, followed closely behind him, and entered his office. Jackson reminded her to close the door, so she did so obediently. She waited for his interrogation, but he remained calm. The way he looked at her was rather complicated too.

She could not hold herself back anymore. She revealed the truth. “I didn’t want to hide the truth from you intentionally. I just wanted to return him the favor. My mom got a boyfriend who is a liar. I hired someone to look into him and found out the truth. However, my mom didn’t believe it. It was so frustrating. I even angered you because of this before. It was Alejandro who helped me to tackle that liar. He asked me to treat him to a meal, and that’s why I went there… I didn’t ask him for his help. He was the one who took the initiative to lend me a hand. Besides, I don’t even know how he got to know about that incident. I’m confused about that too…”

Jackson took a deep breath as if he was trying to hold something back. “You need to know that it’s certainly not that simple if a man acts nice to a woman. You even dared to go for the appointment without my knowledge… Tiffany, why didn’t you tell me about your mom? Did you think that I couldn’t handle it? Why did you ask a mere nobody to help you? Do you see me as a useless person?”

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Tiffany became slightly anxious now. “No… I just felt that it was quite embarrassing. That’s why I didn’t tell you about it. I thought that I would be able to resolve it by myself, but it never occurred to me that Alejandro would help me… I didn’t even have any contact with him; he only gave me the business card after he resolved that issue for me. I certainly had to take the business card from him under such circumstances. I wasn’t thinking about what his intention was. I just wanted to return him the favor and be done with it. We won’t have any contact with each other from now on, so…” When she said those things, she asked him, “Did Lynn contact you? She’s working for Alejandro now. I ran into her there…”

Jackson walked toward the window and turned away from her. He sounded cold. “So you’re allowed to have a meal with another man, but I’m prohibited from receiving a call from another woman?”

She felt like she was being treated unfairly. “Didn’t you claim that you’re no longer keeping in touch with each other?”

He seemed to be acting out of spite; his attitudes remained unchanged. “I didn’t take the initiative to contact her. She called me first. Is there a problem with that? You yourself can do it, so why am I prohibited from doing so?”

She did not argue with him. She then bit her lips and said, “If there’s nothing else, I’ll leave and resume my work now.”

When she turned around, Jackson glanced at the big stacks of documents on her working desk. “You’re late!”

She did not turn around. “I know. According to the rules here, I’ve lost my attendance bonus. It doesn’t matter!”

They had indeed reached an impasse. After Tiffany got off work, she drove to the Tremont Estate directly. At that moment, she did not want to bother about Jackson, whether he was working overtime and how late it would be, or whether he was eating his dinner and with whom he would eat his dinner. She just wanted to be with Arianne. Only when she was with her could she relax entirely without any stress.

When she reached the Tremont Estate, it was just the right time for dinner. Mary greeted her enthusiastically. “Tiffany, you’re just in time for dinner. Let me prepare the fork and spoon for you.”

She nodded and entered the dining room in a bad mood. She then sat down beside Arianne. “I’m right on time for dinner.”

Arianne noticed immediately that Tiffany was troubled by something. She did not bring it up in front of Mark at the dining table. “I thought that you were coming tomorrow. Later, help me look at the financial report that Naya sent me after dinner.”

Mark helped to serve Arianne some food. “Don’t talk while you’re eating. You can chat with each other any way you want after dinner.”

Tiffany felt even more strongly about being wronged when she saw the peaceful relationship between Mark and Arianne. “You guys are making me jealous. I haven’t even started eating yet, but I’m already feeling almost full. There’s something I’m curious about; do men think that it’s fine to keep in touch with their exes or women whom they have had a relationship with?”

Mark glanced at Arianne. “Jackson is different from me. Don’t try to make a general statement here. I think that you’ve asked the wrong person.”

Tiffany could not help but roll her eyes at that. “You’re smart. You guessed the whole story even before I said anything else. How would Ari react if you were still keeping in touch with your exes? I wonder…”

Arianne thought about it seriously. “I might not be happy about it. It’s how women usually feel.”

Her reply was out of his expectation. He was filled with a tinge of gentleness. His mood became better too, so he was now in the mood to discuss it with Tiffany. “Which of the exes did Jackson contact this time around? Tell me. If I know about her, I’ll reveal everything I know.”