Ruling 781

Chapter 781

As expected, Arianne enjoyed Jackson's cooking. Most of her appetite had returned this month, and every meal Jackson delivered would be pretty much cleaned out. Her complexion had improved too.

Jackson packed up the lunch box once he saw that she was pretty much done with her meal. "I'll be on my way then. I'll come again tomorrow."

Arianne nodded and carefully asked, "Have you contacted Tiffie lately?"

Jackson was taken aback. Then, he curled his lips into a frivolous smile. "No. It's not like you don't know what she's like. It's not worth contacting her."

He hadn't contacted her since that day and had not concocted new ways to run into her… Besides, he had already tried to set his ego aside. All he received was her rejection.

Mark helped Arianne down to a lying position after Jackson had left. "Are you tired? You should go to sleep if you are."

Arianne shook her head. "I don't feel like sleeping. I'm always sleeping, and I'm really not that tired. Jackson looked strange when I mentioned Tiffie. I've heard from Tiffie that they've been running into each other and not just once…"

Mark couldn't be bothered with anything else at the moment. "That's between them. Let them solve it themselves. Jackson isn't the only one who can determine if they can get back together or not. I have some work to do at the office. Mary will keep you company. I'll come over once I'm done."

Arianne nodded obediently. "It'll be pretty late by the time you're done. Come over tomorrow, get an early night's rest. Don't worry about me."

He smiled and planted a kiss on her forehead. "Alright."

He received a message from Henry upon his arrival at the office: 'It's done, sir. I sent someone to teach him a lesson. He's sworn never to ask you for money again. If it ever happens again, I'll deal with him for you.'

He smirked and put his phone aside. He had to resort to ruthlessness in the end. Three strikes, and you're out. He would only show leniency twice.

9PM, the hospital.

Mary was afraid of disturbing Arianne's sleep in the ward, so she walked out and hung around the hallway for a while. As her belly grew, having a lack of sleep was normal for Arianne. Everywhere hurt. Her heart ached at the sight of it.

Suddenly, she noticed a figure at the end of the hallway, pacing back and forth. Suspicious, she took a closer look — it was Helen…

She probably wanted to see Arianne but was too afraid to do so.

After some consideration, Mary approached her. “Ari is still awake. Would you like to see her, since you’re here?”

Helen hesitated. “N-no… I don’t think that’s a good idea. I’m afraid she won’t be happy to see me.”

Mary couldn’t bear it. “I think it’s fine. In times like this, Ari needs her loved ones by her side, most of all. You’re her mother, after all. What’s wrong with seeing her? How would you know if she’d be upset if you don’t see her?”

Chapter 782

Helen finally nodded, thanks to Mary’s advice. “Okay… I’ll go and see her. I’ll leave straight away if I upset her.”

Mary closed the door when Helen walked in, giving the mother and daughter some privacy.

Arianne was still awake. She sat up when she saw Helen. “What are you doing here at this hour?”

Helen approached her and propped up a pillow on her back. “I… I happened to have some business nearby, so I thought I’d drop by and see you. Have I disturbed your sleep? You don’t have to get up; you can lie down…”

Although Arianne didn't seem too amiable, she wasn't scowling at her either. "It's fine. I can't sleep anyway, so I might as well get up and sit."

The pair didn't have much to say to each other, so the atmosphere cooled.

Helen stood for a while then pulled out two sparkling and translucent boxes of sour plums from her bag. "I don't know if you like sour food, so I'll just leave these here. You can have one or two from time to time. The Tremont household has everything, so I wasn't sure what to bring…"

Arianne opened one box and popped one sour plum into her mouth. "Not bad, I previously had a craving for both sour and spicy food, but now I seem to prefer sour food instead."

Helen smiled. "Then it must be a boy. Although this isn't a scientific theory, there is some truth in certain old wives' tales. Are you and Mark looking forward to a boy or a girl?"

Arianne stroked her belly, and the little one inside immediately kicked energetically. She couldn't help but smile. "I'll only ever have one child in this life anyway. Boy or girl, like it or not, we won't have a choice. Mark says that he'll love it, regardless of whether it's a boy or girl. I agree. But I am curious. I want to know the baby's gender, but the doctor has been pretty mysterious about it, and I'm too shy to ask…"

"Where is your last medical report?" Helen asked. "Show me. Maybe I can help."

Arianne was skeptical. She pointed at a drawer on the side of her bed. “It’s all in there.”

Hellen pulled out the previous medical report and looked through it in detail. “There are many signs that indicate a high chance… that it really might be a boy. One of my friends is a doctor, so he’s mentioned these things before. Back when I was pregnant with you, I was suddenly seized with a liking for spicy food, even though I never enjoyed spicy cuisine in my life. It’s still the same now, too… However, you weren’t very difficult to deal with at the time; you behaved very well in my belly. You didn’t like to move too much, much like how you are now, calm and quiet.”

Arianne really didn’t feel like talking about her birth, so she stayed silent. Helen realized that she had chosen the wrong topic and bit her lip. “Uh… I’ve got to go. It’s pretty late. You should get an early night’s rest.”

Arianne remained silent. When Helen walked towards the door, she suddenly asked, “If you never loved my dad, why did you have me? Why did you give birth to me, when you weren’t certain if you wanted to stay? That was irresponsible…”

Helen immediately stopped. Her shoulders were trembling. “Your dad… He was very good to me. He truly loved me. If I could turn back time, I would not abandon him again. I was only blinded by a false image of love. Actually… Perhaps I never really understood what love truly means. I would always think of him, every night after that fateful day. Even when I was with the man I thought I loved, I would think of him… In the end, the love I chose thoroughly disappointed me, and I slowly understood that your father was always in my heart. But it was too late. How could any woman give birth to a man’s child if she didn’t love him at one point? I did it willingly, but I still left in the end. I’m sorry…”

Arianne was saddened. If her father could hear what Helen had said, would it bring him some consolation in heaven?

Saturday, the very next day.

Tiffany and Tanya went to visit Arianne at the hospital, first thing in the morning. It was all for the sake of the fashion design competition, which was held once every three years. This was every fashion designer's dream. Not only would the company receive lucrative benefits if they won, but the winner would rise to fame as well. Eric may not be interested in this matter, but the girls certainly were. Everyone in the fashion design department was eager to give it a try, full of fighting spirit.

Chapter 783

Arianne truly had a talent in fashion design. Despite quitting the industry, her passion for it never diminished. When she saw the main theme for the competition — summer wear — she felt that it was an easy task. "Just do something trendy and you'll stand a chance to win. Try to think out of the box. Check out a few physical stores; you can even check out a few trending textiles online. But don't follow the crowd, and you must seem more avant garde than whatever's in the market."

Tiffany was completely confused after receiving Arianne's advice. "I know that fashion design requires innovation, but my brain… You know what it's like. That's why I've come to you. You're not in the industry anymore any way. Could I maybe use your hand in bestowing some 'glory' upon myself? Please, bestie… I have a draft. Can't you just tweak it a little for me? The sketch you fixed for me that one time at the office was amazing. Really!"

Arianne surrendered. She stretched out her hand. "Let me see."

Tiffany hurriedly showed her her sketch. "Here, have a look."

One look and Arianne showed her disapproval. “No. There’s nothing special about this one. I’ve been going through fashion magazines during my ample free time in the hospital, so I’ve noticed a few current trends. Haven’t you noticed how people are getting more interested in vintage wear? It has to be distinct and not too grand. Some people like to exude luxury, while some prefer to look elegant and ethereal. This sketch of yours… I think it’s best to throw it away.”

Tanya carefully placed her sketch forward. “What about mine? Could you have a look at mine too, Ari?”

Arianne evaluated Tanya’s sketch and reached a conclusion — Tanya’s imagination was clearly restricted. Her sketch was too ordinary, so naturally, there was nothing special about it. She pulled out her favorite fashion magazine and showed it to them. “Look, there’s only one outfit in this magazine with vintage elements, but from what I’ve found out, it’s been selling pretty well. It holds a pretty high value in our social circle. This fashion designer is pretty famous too. This is the only outfit in this magazine that’s managed to pique my interest. I’m pretty confident with my intuition. You can borrow this magazine and have a look. Come to me again when you’re done with your new sketches.”

Tiffany was a girl who would only get stronger after every setback. “Sure. I’ll take this magazine and examine it thoroughly. I won’t do anything else this weekend. I can mull it over during working hours too. This time, our entries will be representing the company, so Eric shouldn’t be too fussy if I work on this during working hours.”

Upon returning home, Tiffany put all of her efforts into researching the latest trends, just like Arianne had suggested. The objective was to focus on vintage styles.

At that point, Tanya thought of one person — Hush. It had been more than twenty days since they last spoke, and she didn’t want to disturb him. However, when she remembered the competition deadline, which was less than a month away, she hesitated again.

Logically speaking, she had just joined the industry, so she shouldn't put too much hope into this competition. However, shouldn't she put in some serious effort into her entry? Eric had put a lot of effort into bringing her into the industry, so she would be letting Eric down if she didn't give it her all. Her goal wasn't to win the competition, but to prove that she had the right to be there and that she could do it.

Tiffany rarely ever put in so much effort into anything. After a few days of hard work, she managed to come up with a sketch and went to visit Arianne at the hospital after work to discuss it.

Arianne took a look at her sketch, tweaked a few things for her with a pencil, then sketched out a few modifications. "Your brain does have its moments. It's not bad. Just a few tweaks and it should be fine. Tiffie, I'll be honest; in my opinion, you've always been someone whose only priority is having fun. It's so rare to see you put in so much effort. I've got a whole new level of respect for you now."

Tiffany now had dark and puffy eyes, but her gaze was bursting with energy. "Really? Then I can relax. I'll just make some rough changes over the simple parts and show it to you again. I'll fix the more complicated ones when I get back and do overtime. Then, I'll come back tomorrow and show it to you. You have no idea how many nights I've stayed up. I think I'm feeling sick. But I feel like I have some invisible force supporting me and pushing me forward. I'm going to be somebody. I won't rely on my parents or a man. I'll do it all on my own!"

Chapter 784

Arianne swelled with admiration when she saw how dedicated Tiffany was.

Suddenly, the room door was pushed open, and Arianne realized that Jackson had arrived with her food delivery…

Tiffany thought that Mark had arrived and did not react. She didn't even lift her head until Mary spoke up, "You're here, Jackson! Thank you so much."

Her entire body stiffened. She immediately put her sketch away. "I've got to go, Ari. I'll see you tomorrow."

Arianne glanced at the blank expression on Jackson's face. "Alright… Take care."

Tiffany let out a long sigh of relief once she entered the elevator. She was vexed. Why was she so afraid? That wasn't her style at all…

Her mind inadvertently remembered the question that Jackson had asked her, back in her condominium kitchen — "What if I told you that I never betrayed you? Would things go back to how they used to be?". He had stopped looking for her ever since she gave him her definitive answer. They hadn't seen each other in a long time, and when they suddenly ran into each other in the ward, she panicked…

Jackson was seemingly unperturbed on the surface. "Mark hasn't arrived yet?"

Arianne nodded. "Mm. He's probably busy. He dropped by in the afternoon. I can't drag him down and prevent him from doing his work, just because I'm in the hospital, can I? By the way, the fashion design contest, which takes place once every three years, is coming soon, isn't it? Will your company be joining as well? Tiffie's been working very hard. She's been visiting me after work lately, asking for my advice."

She was subtly giving a reminder to Jackson, that Tiffany would come again, and that this would not be their first run-in. She hoped that things wouldn't be so awkward between them if they ran into each other again. They didn't say a word to each other; they didn't even look at each other. It was as if they

were treating each other as strangers. In her point of view, she hoped that Jackson and Tiffany could still be friends.

Jackson smirked. “With that brain of hers? It’s going to be the same, no matter how hard she tries. If she gets first place… Ah, no… Top ten. First place would be too extreme for her. If she gets into the top ten, I’ll take back my impression of her.”

“Do you know why Tiffie and I have managed to get so close?” Arianne asked. “Any two people, who’ve been able to stick together, would certainly share some similarities. Our similarity is probably the fact that we’re always reluctant to admit defeat. We never look back until there’s a dead end, and even if there was a dead end, we might not necessarily turn back. You’re underestimating her. I have a feeling that even if Tiffie doesn’t get into the top ten, she’ll be in the top twenty. After all, a lot of sketches will be eliminated in the first round, and she’s received my approval. You shouldn’t question my standards.”

Jackson was getting suspicious. “Are you serious? If it’s coming from you… Then I’ll just wait and see. Besides, Tremont Enterprises is always placed first. All of the most talented fashion designers are in his grasp. It’d really be a surprise if she got into the top ten…”

Chapter 785

Ever since her run-in with Jackson at the hospital, Tiffany had deliberately staggered her visits. She would only visit Arianne after 8PM and leave at around 9:30PM. Jackson usually left after Arianne had finished eating, so they usually wouldn’t run into each other.

A few days later, Arianne finally asked her, “Why are you avoiding Jackson? He’s not avoiding you. He comes by at his usual hour. There’s no need to go through such lengths, is there?”

“Why do I feel as if it’s hard for you to speak out against other people who’ve done a few favors for you? He’s only made a few meals for you, and you’re already favoring him, an outsider! I just don’t want to see him…”

“Your reaction doesn’t indicate that you ‘don’t want to see him’ but that you’re too afraid to. You’re avoiding him. When did you become such a scaredy cat?” Arianne pointed out candidly. “This isn’t like you. If you’re really over him, you’d treat him like a stranger and you wouldn’t care. Why are you hiding? There’s absolutely no need for that, unless you’re still in love with him.”

Tiffany lowered her gaze and looked at the sketch in her hands. “Yes, how can anyone get over someone they’ve once loved so deeply? He used to find opportunities to run into me and get close to me, and give me a tongue lashing. One day, when he came to my place to cook for you, he suddenly asked me this strange question — ‘What if I told you that I never betrayed you? Would things go back to how they used to be?’ At that moment, I panicked and remembered that he had a new flame. I felt that he was being unfair. He clearly wasn’t loyal to me and just putting on an act, as if he had always been loyal to me. So I said no. From that day onwards, we haven’t spoken nor crossed paths. Every time I see him, I instinctively avoid him. I don’t know why either… It’s probably because I don’t want to give myself any opportunity to fantasize. I’m the one who asked for the break up…”

A tear landed on her sketch at the end of her speech. Only then did she return to her senses and grab a tissue to wipe it off. Unfortunately, she could not wipe the marking off and ended up turning it into a huge smudge to boot.

She was feeling vexed. She had worked very hard on this sketch. At that moment, she was in despair.

Arianne saw her sketch and suddenly changed the topic. “Your sketch is pretty much done. Just add a cape to it, and it should be fine. It would be best to use chiffon textiles. Good luck in the competition. I’m sure you’ll nail it.”

Tiffany was still confused. She stared at the smudge on her sketch for a long time before coming to a realization and immediately being hit with inspiration. “You’re right! I was just saying that something was missing. That’s right! I love you, Ari. I’m going back to finish this sketch right now. I’m going to get a good night’s sleep from now on. No more pulling all nighters for me!”

Arianne mirrored her smile and cried willfully like a child. It was as if nothing sad could ever bring her down for too long. The lightness of her being was a trait that many lacked.

Soon, the deadline for sketch submissions had arrived. Only a hundred among countless fashion designers had managed to stand out. The entries from the final round would be showcased on a runway by models. The top ten entries in the fashion design competition would be featured on national fashion magazines. This would be a dream come true for many fashion designers because that meant that their reputation would soar and pave the way for a bright future.

In the three days of waiting for results, Tiffany had been stuffing herself with good food. In her own words — she needed strength to cry if she didn’t get into the top hundred entries. Hence, she had to nourish herself in advance.

On the day of the results, most bosses of participating companies were in attendance. After all, this wasn’t a small event. Apparently, Mark and Jackson would be there as well. Eric wasn’t interested in these events, so he sent Tiffany and Tanya instead. He knew that Tiffany had been itching to go. After all, he had seen her hard work and efforts.

Chapter 786

Tiffany was nervous. However, she dressed up early in the morning, putting on her most expensive clothes — last year’s spring formal wear. She curled her long hair into soft waves, making her look like one of the elites from the industry. It was a completely different feel from her usual look. She put on a pair of high stilettos, which made her legs look even longer and slimmer. Even Tanya was in awe. “I’ve never seen you dress like this before. You actually look good! You look capable and well-experienced. No one would suspect you of being a bimbo as long as you keep your mouth shut.”

Tiffany rolled her eyes at her. “Don’t praise and insult me at the same time. The whole world knows how much of a bimbo I am. I’m going to join in the fun, whether I get in or not. If I don’t succeed this time, I’ll try again next time. The competition comes once every three years anyway. I’m going to work for it.”

Tanya didn’t seem too confident in her entry. “I’ll just be there to keep you company. You have to be confident. I’m sure you can do it. I… will just be a participant. Besides, I just joined the industry. I’m too new. This is a good start for me. It’s getting late. Let’s go.”

For the sake of convenience, Tiffany had asked Lillian for the car one day ahead. When she arrived at the venue, she felt that her little Audi stuck out like a sore thumb, because they were surrounded by luxury cars. It would seem that many elites were here today. This made her even more nervous.

Her phone suddenly received a message. She opened it to find that it was from Alejandro: ‘Good luck.’

She replied: ‘I’m going into the venue. I’ll buy you a meal if I get in.’

She silenced her phone after sending the message. Alejandro would contact her every now and then. He never really seemed to display any motives, so she gradually lowered her defenses and treated him like a friend whom she could talk to. At least, he didn’t make her feel repulsed or think that the situation was inappropriate, for now.

Once she and Tanya had entered the venue, they discovered that it was a full house. The pair sat down in the back row but couldn’t sit together because there were far too little seats. She spotted Mark and Jackson in the first row. As expected, the higher one’s position was, the better the seats. Luckily, Jackson was unaware of her presence, since there were so many people.

The lights in the venue soon went off. The screen on the centerstage of the room lit up with the words “15th Contemporary Fashion Arts Competition”. Once the host had declared the official start to the event, the screen began to display the sketches that had made the cut, including the company names and names of the designers.

These were all chosen and filtered by a team of judges. There was no doubt that the chosen entries were all of the best quality. Tiffany was too afraid to breathe too heavily. She focused her attention entirely on the large screen, hoping that she would make the cut every time, and feeling disappointed every time as well.

The people around her began to whisper, discussing the chosen entries, most of them praising them. Finally, the screen was at its end of the show. It suddenly stopped at entry number ninety nine. The last entry was delayed.

It was expected that Tanya wouldn’t make the cut, but Tiffany was greatly disappointed. “Looks like I’ve been eliminated again… Forget it. At least I’ve participated. Why aren’t they showing the last entry? Is something wrong?”

Chapter 787

Tanya shook her head, unsure of the situation herself. “I don’t know either. Let’s just wait and see…”

A few minutes later, the emcee suddenly spoke into the microphone. “As you all know, plagiarism in this industry is not tolerated. While it has happened before, we thought that nothing like this would ever happen again, drawing examples from our predecessors. Unfortunately, it has happened again this time, and in such a bold manner too. We have two designs that are almost alike.”

The entire venue gasped when they heard this. Mark and Jackson, who were sitting in the first row, showed no reaction, as they were pretty certain that it wouldn't involve them.

Tiffany narrowed her eyes as if lost in thought. "I've heard that plagiarizers will be blacklisted and will never be able to work in this industry again. The company will be implicated and prohibited from joining the competition for five seasons, which means that they won't be able to join the competition for fifteen years. I wonder who'd be so unfortunate."

Tanya had never experienced this type of competition before and was a little speechless. "These people are just too much. Why'd they have to plagiarize? They'd do more harm to themselves and others. There's no benefit from that. Their entire future will be ruined…"

Before Tanya could finish, the emcee projected two sketches, exactly alike, on the big screen. It was Tiffany's design!

Tiffany was stupefied. Her name and the company that she was representing was now on full display. The other sketch that was exactly like hers was from Jackson's company! Her mind was numb and she went into a daze, much like a wooden puppet.

Jackson's calm and self-assured exterior now turned into shock, then suspicion. He saw the words "Tiffany Lane" very clearly. Mark frowned. This was going to be a huge scandal.

Unlike Tiffany, he did not allow himself to be consumed with shock. Now, he had to find a way to solve this. He could always investigate the truth later. If he admitted to plagiarizing, his company would be banned from the competition. This would be a huge blow to his company's reputation. However, if he did not admit to it, the consequences for Tiffany… would be far worse!

Tiffany finally returned to her senses after half a minute. She stumbled as she rose to her feet and asked for a microphone from one of the staff members. The spotlight was on her.

She was just about to deny her plagiarism, when she suddenly saw Jackson, who was standing up as well. He was in the first row, and she was in the last row. She couldn't make out the expression on his face, but she knew the consequences Jackson would face if she denied her plagiarism...

Most of the criticisms were directed at her now, because she didn't have many achievements in the design world and was still considered a newcomer. Jackson, on the other hand, had many experienced designers under his belt who had once churned out outstanding pieces. No matter how anyone saw it, she would be the plagiarizer. If she admitted to plagiarizing and taking the blame, it wouldn't affect a mid-sized company like Eric's too much. Eric was never into these types of contests, so it wouldn't affect him if he were banned from the competition or not. However, it was different for Jackson. The Wests were one of the most affluent families in the capital. There were so many eyes on him!

"Could both company representatives please provide us with an explanation?" the emcee asked unfeelingly. "Who plagiarized whom? The original entry will be placed into the top 100 qualifying entries and stand a chance to enter the top 10 finals to become the most trending design for the summer this year."

Tiffany bit her lips and smiled easily. "It was…"

Before she could finish, Jackson spoke up. "It was me. I plagiarized. Miss Lane's is the original."

She was in shock. No matter how she looked at it, Jackson was digging his own grave. She wanted to release him, but he had the same idea and he did it first!

Chapter 788

Journalists immediately swarmed Jackson, talking over each other as they asked, “Were you aware of your designer’s plagiarism?”

“If you knew, why didn’t you stop them? Was it just wishful thinking?”

“Your company, Bright Incorporated, is now facing a ban from joining the competition for five seasons. What are your thoughts?”

“Could you give us an accurate answer? If you were unaware of this, why did you admit to plagiarizing before investigating the matter?”

“There were other qualified entries from your company. Don’t you think it’s a shame to be banned from the competition, just like that?”

Jackson only had one answer for the barrage of hungry journalists, “Because I know Tiffany Lane. She’s not that kind of a person. As for everything else, no comment.”

Tiffany had mixed feelings. She wasn’t overjoyed by the prospect of entering the qualifying round. She had achieved her long-hoped for objective, but she wasn’t happy about it at all.

At the end of the event, she drove her car to the intersection and stopped Jackson's car. This incident renewed her courage to face him. She was going to clarify the situation, no matter what. Only Arianne and Tanya had seen her sketch. How did it end up in the hands of one of Jackson's designers?

Realizing that Jackson had no intentions of getting down from the car, she got down from her vehicle and walked towards his car. She waited for him to wind down the window, then asked with frown, "What the hell is going on? Why did you admit that it was your company designer who plagiarized? This is going to have a big impact on you. Do you even have a plan? I'm like a strong cockroach. I'll survive even if I leave the industry. Eric's company isn't that big; it won't affect him that much. Are you insane?"

Jackson smiled nonchalantly and answered half-jokingly, "Didn't I tell you? I'm pretty nice to my exes. Do you have any more questions?"

She was slightly annoyed. "What is wrong with you? I know that it's all set in stone… But what on earth is going on? Ari and I fixed that sketch together. I've never shown it to anyone else. This matter will have to be investigated sooner or later. You should at least provide the media with an explanation. If it's only a coincidental similarity, will you be able to explain this to the organizers?"

He rubbed the space between his brows. "Can't you… use your brain a little? Coincidence is impossible. Both sketches are exactly alike. How could it possibly be a coincidence? I trust you more than the fashion designers in my company. That's all. That's why I admitted to it publicly. There's nothing inappropriate. Are you trying to find a way out for me?"

She lowered her head. "You could just, not admit it… If you insist that your designers never plagiarized, everyone would think that it was me. You won't lose anything, I never planned on letting you confess…"

He stared at her quietly. He remembered that she was about to speak up at the venue, and he could pretty much guess what she was about to say. That's why he admitted to plagiarizing first. It… was enough. At least they did not end up hurting each other at a time like this and had tried to be considerate of each other. After a short pause, he said, "I'll investigate the matter thoroughly and update you on the results. You're a victim, so you have the right to know. If there's nothing else, I've got to go."

Tiffany watched him as he drove off. Her eyes brimmed with tears. She wished that he could have been a little more selfish. Otherwise, her heart wouldn't be in such turmoil now…

Chapter 789

Tanya pulled out two pieces of tissue paper when she climbed back into the car. "Don't cry… You didn't plagiarize; there's no need to feel guilty. But I think that Jackson's been really nice to you. He knows his exact losses under these circumstances, yet he's confessed without any hesitation. Between profit and an ex, most men would probably choose profit."

Tiffany sniffed. "If Mrs. West finds out about whatever's happened to his company, she'd be pissed. I have to visit the West Residence. I'll drop you home first."

After dropping Tanya off at the condo, she immediately made her way to the West Residence.

Summer was still recuperating at home. The cast on her leg had been taken off and she could walk on her own now. However, she was still limping. When she saw that Tiffany had come for a visit, Summer quickly asked the housekeeper to prepare some food and drinks. "Tiffie, what are you doing here? I hear that you joined that fashion competition. How was it? The results came out today. Did you qualify?"

She did not expect for Summer to hit the nail on its head. Tiffany bit her lips and replied, "I barely made it… But… there was a slight hiccup. If I tell you, you can't get angry."

Summer was in a pretty good mood. She smiled as she munched on some fruit. “Go right ahead.”

Tiffany steeled herself as she revealed everything that had happened. Summer’s face changed dramatically. “What? How could this happen? I trust you, but… how could a fashion designer under Jackson’s wing have possibly plagiarized your design? You say that you’ve only shown your sketch to Arianne and Tanya; that’s already fishy… They don’t have any connections to anyone in Jackson’s company, do they? It’s definitely not a coincidence if the designs are exactly alike. There’s something fishy about this… Oh god, oh god… Banned from the competition… For five seasons! This is a big loss for our company. If I find that plagiarizing weasel, I will make him pay! This is too wicked. They’re well aware of the consequences, but they’ve done it anyway!”

Tiffany felt guilty. “Calm down, Mrs. West… I never expected for Jackson to make such a public confession. I was going to take the blame myself… If only he hadn’t confessed, there’d still be a way out. Now, everyone knows about the plagiarizer in his company.”

Summer scooped Little Bean up in her anxiety and stroked its fur. “Seriously. I’d be lying if I said I wasn’t angry. But it’s not your fault. It’s that plagiarizing jerk! I’ll call Jackson and ask if he’s found anything…”

Tiffany instinctively rose to her feet when she heard that Summer was going to give Jackson a call. “Maybe I should leave? I was just worried that you might get angry once you found out about this. Please stay calm. I’m sure that we’ll find the plagiarizer very soon. We’ll settle it all by then.”

Summer looked at her. “Okay… You should go home and get some rest. You’re in shock too. Don’t worry yourself too much.”

Chapter 790

Tiffany heaved a long sigh of relief after emerging from the West Residence. She suddenly realized that this was a “you win some, you lose some” situation. She had actually achieved her first big goal, but… Jackson was now in an abyss. As she remembered her post-event conversation with him, she felt a distance from him that made her very anxious and utterly despondent.

Bright Incorporated, the West Family’s company.

Jackson was raging at a fashion designer at the office. “Speak. How did you manage to get that sketch? Don’t you have any idea of what would happen to plagiarizers?”

The copycat designer of Tiffany’s sketch was a gentle and scholarly-looking man. He was even wearing a pair of glasses and didn’t seem like a villain at all. The man adjusted his glasses and calmly said, “I have no idea of what you’re talking about. I’ve never plagiarized.”

Jackson angrily swept the pencil holder on his desk to the floor. “Beckett Hushman! Are you still arguing with me? I’ve already made a public confession. Are you aware of what you’re about to face? You’ll never work in this industry again, and you’ve dragged the company down with you. We’re banned from the competition for five seasons, fifteen whole years! All of our other entries have been disqualified too!”

Beckett furrowed his brows as he stared back at Jackson, showing no signs of remorse. “I know that you’re best friends with Eric Nathaniel, but there’s no need for you to take the blame for one of his designers, is there? What right did you have to publicly admit to my plagiarism? From what I’ve heard, his company designer, Tiffany Lane, is a nameless newbie in the industry. She used to work for our company. It seemed like there was a touch of nepotism in your relationship. Was that why you took the blame? You didn’t just hurt yourself, you’ve hurt me too. I maintain my stance — I did not plagiarize. Tiffany Lane is the plagiarizer. You’d better make this clear to the media. Hopefully, it’s not too late.”

Jackson laughed in spite of his rage, “Hehe, since you’re accusing her of plagiarizing you, how did Tiffany manage to get a hold of your sketch? Hm? I don’t think she was all that close to you, was she? From what I know, you don’t have any personal connections to her either.”

“As long as you’re willing to solve this issue, I can always have a ‘personal connection’ to her. But it would largely depend on which is more important to you — the company, or your little stain of nepotism?” Beckett calmly said.

There was clearly something amiss with Beckett’s attitude. If he was telling the truth, he would have answered Jackson with “How could I have plagiarized Tiffany’s sketch if I haven’t seen it before?” instead of finding a way out for the company and himself. Jackson wasn’t a fool. “The truth is more important to me,” he replied determinedly.

Beckett smirked. “Is your brain in order? Even if I plagiarized, you could have kept it to yourself. Why did you have to push yourself into a dead end? I’ve always thought that you were a good boss, Jackson, that you had brains. Now it seems that I was mistaken. You’re a fool! The world would certainly believe in an experienced fashion designer like me instead of Tiffany Lane! You didn’t just destroy yourself, you’ve destroyed me too!”

The situation was now gradually clearing up. “So, you’re finally telling the truth,” Jackson grimly said. “How did you manage to see her sketch? You’d better be honest, or you’ll be finished once I’ve found out.”

Certain that Jackson would never be on his side, Beckett dropped all pretence. “Yes, I plagiarized. I won’t be the only one going down, for you’ll be coming with me too. Everyone loses. An online friend of mine from the same industry sent her sketch to me and asked for my opinion. I thought it was good, so I used it. I just thought that that online friend of mine was a fresh face in the fashion design industry too, and Tiffany isn’t all that superior to her. I didn’t think too much of it. Who would have thought that you’d end up digging your own grave? It’s just a sketch, but you’re insisting on destroying my future!”