Ruling 821

Chapter 821

His hand still trembled slightly after hanging up the phone. If anything happened to Arianne, he would definitely make Mr. and Mrs. Harris pay for it.

Soon, they took Arianne's baby out through the delivery operation. The child was only seven months old, and he needed to be put in the incubator temporarily. Mark did not even bother to glance at the child. He learned about the child's gender from the nurse; it was a boy. Arianne was still in the surgical room. He was too anxious to step away. Other than signing the surgical consent form, he asked Mary to deal with the rest of the hospitalization procedures.

No one knew how much he suffered through those two hours that he waited outside of the surgical room. He was tense and did not relax for even a single moment. Besides, he did not dare to imagine any kind of terrible accidents that might befall Arianne.

Luckily, the surgery was performed smoothly without any accident. Two hours later, Arianne was pushed out of the surgical room in a stretcher by the nurse. Seeing that she was fast asleep, he rushed forward and asked nervously, "How is she? Did she faint? I thought you only applied anesthesia for the lower part of her body during a C-section. Isn't that right?"

The nurse smiled and explained, "Pregnant ladies are usually exhausted and lethargic at a time like this. She might have even fallen asleep because of the effects of anesthesia. She's fine. The surgery was a success. If nothing goes wrong, she can be discharged from the hospital after around a week. The baby is born prematurely, so we need to keep a close observation on him for a longer period of time. When his vital signs and body condition resemble those of the babies who are born naturally, he can be discharged too. Don't worry about it. You need to take good care of the mother's nutrition and diet. You also need to provide her with enough nutrition so that her surgical wound could heal better. By the way, Mrs. Tremont's womb was badly injured before. You need to be extremely careful with her. She might suffer from heavy internal bleeding after the labor. Moreover, it won't be easy for her to get pregnant again."

He certainly would not let her become pregnant again. That first child almost killed both the mother and the son. He breathed out a long sigh of relief. “Thank you…”

After he returned to the ward, he stayed by Arianne’s side without any intention of leaving. He would touch her forehead from time to time for fear that she might be feeling hot or cold. His palms had sweat heavily while he was waiting outside of the surgical room anxiously.

For the first time, he learned that a woman could be as pale as a sheet after labor. She was extremely pale; if she wasn’t breathing evenly and slowly, she would have appeared to be… dead. He’d never suffered such excruciating pain before, having a roller coaster of emotions. For the rest of his life, he would only want that child; no more, nor less. He would never make her suffer through that again. It had indeed endangered her life.

Arianne was asleep for more than four hours. When she slowly regained her consciousness, she opened her eyes and found Mark looking at her. He was filled with such immense gentleness and tenderness for her, but she was neither moved nor touched. When he was about to touch her cheek with his palm, she turned away and avoided his palm. His hand was left in midair. Then, he retreated his hand. “Ari, it’s nothing like you’ve pictured it to be.”

She seemed to not heed him. She then said at her own will, “My grandma passed away long ago. Why didn’t you tell me about it? Besides, did you banish my aunt and uncle out of the capital? You even beat my uncle up… Answer me.”

Mark took a deep breath. “You were pregnant. I was afraid that something might happen to you, so I hid your grandma’s death from you. I decided that I’d tell you about it after you gave birth to the baby. You know how anxious I was when you insisted on keeping the child. I had run out of options… I did indeed banish your aunt and uncle out of the capital, but that is because your grandma’s death is somehow related to them. I was afraid that they might come to you, looking for troubles. I can’t stay by your side

forever, protecting you. I asked someone to give your uncle a hard lesson because he tried to blackmail me several times. He claimed that he wanted to tell you about your grandma's death. I gave him almost $1.5 million. Money is not the problem, but he has no right to take it. That's why I used such a tactic.

"The reason he wrote that letter must be because he wanted to take revenge on me. He was angry that I refused to give him any more money. He wanted revenge on me for asking somebody to beat him up. He even twisted the entire fact and told you a complete lie, causing you to give birth to the child prematurely. If they truly cherish you, they certainly wouldn't expose the truth to you when you were at the most dangerous and critical period of your pregnancy. I have asked somebody to find them now. I want them to do me right, for I never did that! I'll tell you about the rest when you're feeling better. Don't think too much about it now."

Arianne made no reply for a long while. She did not know who she should believe now. Her exhaustion and lethargy made her too weak to dwell on it for long. After trying to calm herself down for a short while, she asked, "How about the child? Is the child fine?"

Chapter 822

He nodded. "Yes, he's fine. He's now in the incubator. They need to observe his condition closely because of the premature birth. I heard his crying, and it was extremely soft. He might be quite small… Promise me that you'll take care of your health. I just want you and the child to be healthy."

He received no reply from her. When he looked at her again, he realized that she had fallen fast asleep again.

The only thing that he could do at the moment was ask Jackson to prepare a nutritious meal specially for her after the labor, before she was sent for lying-in, postpartum confinement. It was a critical period, and he needed to strengthen her body again, improving her health. He was greatly frightened when he saw her extremely pale face.

After receiving the news about the labor, Tiffany, Tanya and Eric rushed to the hospital before they clocked out of work. Arianne was still too weak. She fell asleep from time to time. After the effects of the anesthesia subsided, her surgical wound throbbed with pain. She could not even move around freely. Tiffany had prepared herself for pregnancy before, but she had yet to have a chance to give birth to a baby. However, she was deeply frightened after she saw Arianne's condition in bed.

After a while, Jackson sent her the nutritious meal. When almost everyone was there, Arianne forced herself to stay awake. "Tiffie, please help me go and take a look at my child. Snap a few photographs of him for me…"

Tiffany nodded solemnly. "Don't worry. I'll certainly snap it beautifully. Although a premature birth is not good, you need to think positively. Aren't you feeling better and relieved after you gave birth to your child? You don't have to stress yourself further. Luckily, you and your son are safe. I'll go now. Please eat something first."

Arianne nodded. She had no appetite, however, when looking at the food that Jackson prepared for her. She felt like she was in a terribly miserable state, and she had no appetite at all. She would feel excruciating pain around her wound whenever she moved slightly. She sweat vigorously because of the deep pain too.

Mark could not bear to take another glance at her. He got up and went to the doctor's office. "Doctor, is there any way to alleviate her pain?"

The doctor paused for a while. "We have used the necessary means and medicine to alleviate her pain. It isn't possible for her to not feel even a tinge of pain. Normally, the pain lasts only a few days. She just has to endure it. Besides, everyone's body condition is different. Mrs. Tremont's body might be incompatible with the medicine, so she might feel a lot of pain. It's not suitable to use morphine either.

By the way, be careful of her suffering any bleeding. If there's heavy bleeding, please contact me immediately."

After he returned to the ward, he took Mary aside and told her about the doctor's advice since he was a man himself. Besides, there were others in the ward. It might be inappropriate for him to inquire about that there and then.

Mary was slightly worried about what happened previously. She asked softly, "Did madam have a fight with you? What happened? Why would she give birth prematurely when she was healthy at that time? I'm worried sick…"

Mark frowned. He was slightly annoyed. "She's too weak to argue with me now. She might not let it go when she feels better after resting for two more days. I'll not come often these two days for fear that she might be annoyed by my presence. If you find it hard to cater to her, just bring along two more servants with you. Take good care of her, and you must take note of her emotion. I'll go and look at the child before I leave. If she asks about me, just hand her a phone and ask her to call me."

Chapter 823

Mary nodded. Mark took another look at Arianne, who was lying in the hospital bed, before he turned away and left.

When he reached the pediatric monitoring room, he saw Tiffany snapping pictures at the incubator, which the nurse had rolled over near the window. A premature child certainly did not look well. His arms and legs were small, and his entire body was flushed red. At that moment, he was sleeping soundly in the incubator. Mark smiled when he looked at that child. He was his son. He was his and Arianne's son. Being a father for the first time was quite a wonderful and peculiar feeling.

Tiffany could not help but give some comments after she finished taking the baby's photographs. "Mark, this child is as ugly as one you see in the ultrasound picture…"

Mark was speechless. “Watch your mouth. He’ll certainly look better after we take good care of him.”

Tiffany rolled her eyes at him. “Yes. Your own son is undeniably charming. If he resembles you or Arianne slightly, he won’t be that ugly. It might be because of the premature birth. Just take good care of him. Little boy, you must grow up healthily. Your mom is still waiting for you. She can’t even come and take a look at you yet…”

After that, Mark left the hospital directly. Tiffany returned to the ward with the photographs. She then showed them to Arianne. “See, he’s rather cute.”

Arianne knew that Tiffany was consoling her. She stared at the photograph for a long time. He was indeed rather ugly, but she did not mind. He was her son… He had once lived inside her belly, growing gradually. They were connected by blood.

Both Jackson and Eric stepped forward and looked at the photograph. They gave their comments too. “It’s not that bad. His eyebrows and eyes resemble Mark’s quite a bit. Besides, his chin resembles Arianne’s. He’ll certainly grow up to be a handsome little boy in the future.”

Tanya stood beside them without any intention of approaching them. She watched them talk about the baby happily. She felt like she was being ignored. Unknowingly, she started to feel that she was out of place whenever she was with them. In fact, she might have had that feeling right from the start, but it was not a very strong feeling back then.

When Eric mentioned that he was about to leave, Tanya felt like her chance had come. She said immediately, “Then I’ll leave first. Ricky, please give me a ride.” If she stayed, she might be very upset and uneasy.

After they left, Arianne asked, “Tiffie, what’s wrong with Tanya? She seemed so quiet after she came. Now, she’s left all of a sudden. Did you have a fight with her?”

Tiffany was about to say something, but she noticed that Jackson, who was standing beside them, was trying to eavesdrop on their conversation secretly. She pouted her lips. “We’re chatting among ourselves. What are you standing here for? Do you have nothing better to do? Go and do your stuff. I’ll return the warm tumbler to you later after Ari finishes eating. Remember to send meals for her tomorrow too.”

Jackson raised his eyebrows. “Sure, I won’t listen to your conversation. I’ll leave you to your little chat. By the way, Arianne, do have some soup if you have no appetite. It can help to recover your strength.”

Arianne smiled. “Sure, thank you. I’m sorry for the inconvenience.”

Jackson waved his hand and left.

Mary stepped forward and served the soup to Arianne. She fed her a few sips before Arianne frowned and said, “That’s enough. I don’t want to drink the soup anymore. I have no appetite. Let me chat with Tiffie.”

Chapter 824

Mary sighed. “Fine, I’ll leave it here. If you feel like eating, just tell me. By the way, let me take a look at the cushion you’re sitting on. Before Sir left, he asked me to check on it for fear that you might suffer a heavy bleeding…”

Arianne felt slightly awkward. Under such circumstances, she could not afford to be shy or ashamed. She needed to allow the others the privileges to look at her most intimate part given that she could do nothing on her own. A person who had never given birth to a baby would never understand that. After giving birth to the baby, she was put in a state at others’ will. She could not even afford to argue with Mark. Her mental health was not good either.

After taking a look at it, Mary breathed a sigh of relief. “It’s fine and normal. Not bad. Ari, just relax your mind so that you’ll recover sooner. If you’re feeling unhappy about anything, wait till you’re discharged from the hospital before you deal with it. Don’t trouble yourself much and worsen your health. Just chat with Tiffany first. I’ll go and buy something for the baby and see if there’s anything lacking.”

After Mary left, Tiffany asked curiously, “What’s there to be upset about? Don’t tell me that you’re having a fight with Mark again at this critical period.”

Arianne shook her head. “It’s not a big deal. Let’s pick up where we leave off just now. What’s wrong with Tan?”

Tiffany shrugged. “How would I know? She rarely speaks to me now. When we go to work in the morning, our working desks are right next to each other, but she doesn’t even talk to me much. After we go home, she locks herself in the room. Jackson came and cooked us dinner, but she did not want to eat with us. We didn’t even fight with each other. Maybe she hasn’t recovered from the plagiarism incident, and that’s why she’s feeling down and upset. She might feel better after a while.”

Arianne noted the important thing. “Did Jackson go to your place and cook for you? Are you on friendly terms with him now? Who was the one who wanted so badly to break up with him after she found out that she was being cheated on? What kind of a relationship do you have with him now?”

Tiffany seemed to be in a dilemma. “I don’t know either… He explained things to me, claiming that he never betrayed me. He doesn’t even care if I believe it or not. But I don’t want to get back together with him. However, he always comes looking for me, and he prohibits me from getting in touch with other men. We slept with each other once after the break up… I couldn’t bring myself to reject him. But I’m unhappy when I’m with him. Let’s forget about it. I don’t want to bother about it anymore. I want to focus my entire attention on my work. If my design manages to get into the top ten, I’ll finally achieve something.”

Arianne saw through her immediately. “Actually, you want to exert yourself so that you could be on par with him. You want to rely on yourself. I understand that. You have low self-esteem whenever you face him. Besides, you were traumatized before, and you couldn’t seem to let it go. A slight argument could be the reason you break up with him. Maybe now that you broke up with him, you could allow yourself some time to recover your senses and improve yourself. When the two of you become more mature, then you’ll be able to get back together again. That’s much better.”

Tiffany did not want to discuss that, so she changed the topic. “Why did Mark leave? Why didn’t he stay by your side after you gave birth to the baby? He stayed by your side the whole time before you gave birth to the baby. But now, when the baby has been born, he’s gone missing. If you weren’t the one who insisted on keeping the baby, I would have thought that he was the one who yearns for a child. He cannot be bothered about you anymore now that you’ve given birth to the baby.”

Thinking about Mark, Arianne lowered her eyes. “I’m uneasy whenever I see him. Of course, he doesn’t dare to stay. It’s better this way. I won’t be annoyed by him.”

Tiffany laughed like a maniac. “I see. That’s true. You suffered terribly because of him. If it weren’t for him, you wouldn’t have gotten pregnant either. It’s understandable to see you be annoyed by him. Now that I think about it, I’m quite lucky that I didn’t get to prepare for the pregnancy successfully.

Otherwise, I'd have to go through the surgery after a few more months. Look at you; I'm deeply frightened. I'm even beginning to become afraid of getting married now."

Arinnae felt sleepy. She closed her eyes. "Tiffe… I'm sleepy. Let me sleep for a while. If Mary returns, you can leave then. Don't worry about me."

Tiffany helped tuck her in. "Fine. Sleep then."

Back at the Tremont Estate, Butler Henry was reporting the result of the search for Mr. and Mrs. Harris to Mark in the study. "Sir, it seems like Mr. and Mrs. Harris have gone missing. The people who went in search of them did not find a single clue. I tried to look for their son, who is currently studying in college, but I found that their son has not been to college for the past few days. He is missing too. They must have foreseen what would happen, so they took such a drastic step by having a vigorous struggle with you."

Chapter 825

Mark was so angry that he smashed the glass in his hand. The expensive carpet became stained. "Keep looking for them. You need to find them no matter the means. Knowing them, they wouldn't be so daring as to carry out such a plot against us just for the sake of taking revenge. The money I gave them before must have been used up by now. How could they manage to run away? Look into it and see who's the one behind them, giving them orders. Dig deeper! Also, send two bodyguards to the hospital. Don't let any stranger approach Ari."

Butler Henry looked down. He seemed hesitant. In the end, he said nothing before he turned and left the study.

After she left the hospital, it was 9 p.m. Tiffany ate something casually at a hawker stall by the road. Then, she went home without any haste. When she was about to open the door, she found that she had

forgotten to bring her key. She knocked on the door for a short while, but nobody answered her. She then called Tanya, but no one picked up the phone either.

Tanya usually had no other place to go beside the company and their home. She became suspicious. Hence, she hailed a taxi and went to Jackson's place. When she had nowhere else to go, Jackson's place was certainly not a bad choice. It could act as her temporary shelter.

When Jackson heard the knock, he looked out through the peephole. He was slightly surprised to see Tiffany there. He then opened the door and teased her, "Oh! Have you come here to offer yourself to me? Let me give you a key. You don't have to return it to me. In fact, you can come whenever you want."

Tiffany entered and laid down on the sofa. She seemed to be thinking about something as she looked at the key he handed her. "I bought this keychain for you before. Why didn't you throw it away? Did you keep it as a remembrance of me? I didn't realize that you're such a loyal and passionate man."

Jackson felt annoyed and said, "I didn't know where you put it before. It was the cleaning lady who found it when she was cleaning the house. If not, I would've thrown it away long ago. Just try and see if there's anything that belongs to you here."

Tiffany was deeply annoyed too. "If you're so sure of that, why don't you throw me out too?"

Jackson was forced to bow down. He patted his mouth softly. "I should watch my mouth. It was a lie. Besides, you left nothing when you left back then, not even a strand of your hair. I couldn't even throw away any of your belongings. By the way, why did you come all of a sudden without telling me beforehand? Did you come to see if I was cheating on you, or for something else? I bet it isn't simply because you missed me."

Tiffany sighed. “I forgot to bring my key, and Tan seemed not to be at home. No one opened the door for me. I was exhausted and sleepy, so I came. I’m sure your bed sheet is clean and dry now. Go and make a bed for me.”

‘Make a bed? It’s not happening!’ Jackson smiled wickedly. “Isn’t it nice to sleep beside me? What if you’re not here often? The bedroom prepared for you would be dusty by then. Now that you’ve already come and we’ve slept with each other before, you better not trouble yourself much. It’s fine even if we sleep on the same bed. Go and take a bath immediately.”

It was indeed true. Tiffany yawned and went upstairs. Unfortunately, she didn’t have a good memory, so she never truly learned her lesson. Once again, she found that she had no clothes to change into after her bath. This time around, Jackson did not give her his clothes but handed her a nightgown. As she held it in her hand, she blushed deeply. ‘Are these pajamas… just two pieces of cloth?’

It was made of black silk. Further, it was a backless sling nightgown. Its length barely covered one-third of her thigh. Her chest was exposed until her belly button.

If she weren’t out of options, she would have never worn such a thing. In the end, she wore it nevertheless. The first thing she did after she left the bathroom was to beat Jackson up. “What a peculiar taste you have! Which woman wore this before? How bold of you to let me wear this!”

Jackson pretended that he could not move, being pressed onto the bed by her. “No… It’s new. I bought it specially for you. I realized that your body figure is quite charming. I swear… nobody has ever worn it before…”

Chapter 826

Although she seemed valiant and full of spirit, it was all just an act. She felt incredibly awkward in clothes like these. “Get me a shirt. I’d rather wear your clothes than this. I’m afraid of you losing control. I’m on the losing end here. Hurry up!”

Just as Jackson shifted from having her on top of him and got up, she ended up straddling him. She instinctively threw her arms around his neck to avoid toppling over. The pair was now inches away from each other. Blushes and racing hearts were unavoidable.

“Tiffie… You…”

She expected Jackson to come up with some charming yet lewd statement; after all, he had just praised her for having a good figure. Unfortunately, the next part of his sentence was — ”You’re kind of heavy. Could you get off me?”

Tiffany released herself from his embrace and kicked him. “Get lost!”

Jackson heaved a long sigh of relief when he walked to the closet. Heaven knows how he managed to restrain himself. Purchasing that nightie was completely on impulse. He did not expect for her to look so sexy in it. Two very different ideas were deadlocked in a struggle in his mind; one was to pounce on her, the other was to leave her untouched… He was beginning to regret promising not to touch her…

The atmosphere seemed to revert back to normal after her change of clothes. Tiffany buried herself under the fragrant covers, looking like a naive little girl as she hummed a little tune, swaying her legs as part of her bedtime ritual. Jackson suddenly bent down and planted a kiss on her lips. She wanted to wiggle away but realized that he had a firm grip on the portion of the blanket by her side. She couldn’t move at all, and only her head was peeking out!

She glared at him. “What are you doing? My goodnight kisses aren’t for just anyone. Since I’m here, try to get a good night’s sleep. I have principles. I’m certainly not going to come over every day. Carpe diem, that’s my advice.”

Jackson slowly shifted and climbed on top of her, separated by the covers. “I can’t seem to shake this feeling that you have a weird way with words. You don’t seem highly educated, yet it’s like you understand what you’re saying… What do you mean ‘carpe diem’? Are you hinting at something to me?”

One would easily get lost in a reverie in this position. Tiffany gulped as she stared at his handsome mug, inches away from her face. “Nothing, good night,” she replied, acting completely normal.

Jackson raised his brow and climbed off her. Instead, he pulled up the covers and lay down next to her. However, he then took off his shirt. She did not ask him why he was stripping in front of her. After all, she had a pretty good idea. Let’s see who’d lose control first.

Saturday, the next day.

Summer took the chauffeur, bought a mountain of items, and arrived at Tiffany’s apartment. Of course, Tiffany wasn’t at home. It was Tanya who opened the door. “Mrs. West, you’re very early today,” Tanya remarked with a sleepy look on her face.

Summer glanced at Tanya’s room. The covers were a little messy. It was clear that she had just woken up. She was feeling apologetic. “Is Tiffie around? I guess I’m a little too early. I must have disturbed your sleep. It’s fine. Go back to bed. I’ll leave these things here and be on my way. I’ll close the door for you on my way out.”

A hint of jealousy rose from within Tanya's heart as she eyed the bags of items that Summer had brought. "It's alright, Mrs. West. I'm usually awake at this hour anyway. I'll help you pack up. Tiffany… I don't think she came home at all last night. I don't know where she's been. She's been doing that a lot lately, but maybe I shouldn't be telling you these things… After all, it's not a good habit for girls to stay out all night, but you've found out, and I…" She purposefully stumbled over her words, observing the expressions on Summer's face from time to time.

Chapter 827

Summer was taken aback. "Uh… Girls these days do like having fun. It's alright as long as she stays safe. You're a pretty good girl too, Tanya. There aren't many well-behaved girls like you nowadays. By the way, you can have some of the things that I've brought for Tiffany. You're so close, and you live together too. You should take care of each other."

Tanya smiled and efficiently helped sort out the items. "Then I'll bask in Tiffany's glory too. Will you be taking care of Tiffany this often from now on, Mrs. West? Even if she and Jackson never get back together again… will you continue to do the same?"

Summer narrowed her eyes and cast her a measuring stare as she detected the underlying meaning in her words. "If you have something to say, just say it. It's only the two of us here, so there's no need to hide. It's fine."

Tanya paused. "There's been a man asking Tiffany out lately; it's been pretty often too. Jackson's aware of this. His name is Alejandro Smith. He's pretty rich. Apparently, he pretty much rules over Ayashe. His legs are crippled, but he's still rich… Jackson's not too bad too. I'm just worried that Tiffany might get blinded by the elegant and insincere words of another man during her downward spiral from her break up. I've been encouraging her to make up with Jackson, but she's been in contact with Alejandro while involved with Jackson. I don't agree with this, but she's refused my input… I'm only telling you this so that you'd stop wasting your efforts. What if Tiffany really does… fall in love with someone else? Your efforts would go to waste. Perhaps she's too embarrassed to tell you. Alejandro even gave her two bottles of red wine a few days ago too; they look pretty expensive. A potted plant too, which she's asked me to take care of for her."

Summer showed no signs of emotion. “Oh really? I had no idea. But it’s alright. I’m not being nice to Tiffie just because I want her to get back together with Jackson. Showing concern with an ulterior motive would be insincere. Tiffie is like a daughter to me. It’s fine, I think it has been pretty much sorted out now. I’ll put these in the fridge. You can go back to whatever you need to do. I’ll be leaving in a bit.”

Tanya gritted her teeth as she watched Summer leave. Why was everyone so nice to Tiffany Lane? Suddenly, her hand was pricked by the durian on the table. She then threw it angrily onto the ground. The durian landed with a dull thud and split into two.

She felt rather vexed by the time she had calmed down. She had noticed the changes in her demeanor. She bit her lip as she picked up the durian. The smell of it was strange, but it wasn’t cheap. She used to wonder why people enjoyed it. She couldn’t even bear spending money on it. Overcome by curiosity, she picked out a part of its flesh and took a bite. Its sweet, sticky flavor gave her mixed feelings. Suddenly, she felt that everything she now owned was obtained from the charity of others. She was still just as pitiful as ever; nothing had changed. She didn’t want to live like this anymore!

Back at White Water Bay Villa, Tiffany had just woken up from sleep. She opened her eyes and found a naked Jackson putting on his clothes. She lifted her hands and covered her eyes. “Hey, exhibitionist, have some integrity. It’s my day off, so I’m going to visit Ari. Will you be visiting her too? If you are, let’s go together. Just take me home first so that I can change.”

Jackson checked the time on his watch. “I have something to attend to this morning. I might not make it to the hospital today. However, I can send you home. Get up and be ready in ten minutes. Hurry.”

Tiffany flapped her body around like a carp as she climbed out of bed to wash up. “I’m very fast. Just wait a moment. By the way, do you know what Ari might need after the birth? It’s probably not a good idea to keep visiting her empty handed.”

“How should I know? I’ve never had a kid,” Jackson grumbled as he put on his tie. “The Tremonts want for nothing. There’s no point haggling over trivial matters like this. Brush your teeth. I’m going downstairs.”

Tiffany gave Tanya a call before leaving in order to avoid getting locked out again. She relaxed after confirming that Tanya was at home.

They arrived at the condominium lobby. Before Tiffany got down from the car, Jackson suddenly asked, “Do you have… any other plans for today? If not, would you like to have dinner tonight?”

Chapter 828

Tiffany hesitated upon receiving such a formal invitation. “This isn’t… a date, right?”

Jackson laughed helplessly. “Would you lose some skin if it were? I’m taking you to try something new. It’s settled then? I’ll call you when I’m done.”

Tiffany let out a curse after he had driven his car far away. It was sinful. They had already broken up, but this was no different from how things used to be between them. They slept together, drove out in his car, and… had dates?

She realized that the door was slightly ajar when she arrived home; Tanya must have opened the door for her in advance. She pushed the door open and caught the sharp scent of durian. “Wow, Tan. You bought durian?”

Tanya walked out of her bedroom. “No, Mrs. West brought it for you this morning. She’s brought a ton of other things too. Mostly food.”

Tiffany was used to Summer’s way of doing things. “Oh, got it. I’m going to change. I’ll be visiting Ari at the hospital. You coming?”

Tanya pursed her lips. “No. Ricky is on his day off today too. I’m going to clean his house for him. He lives alone so his house is a mess. I may not be staying there anymore, but he’s helped me a lot. I still feel bad about it.”

Tiffany remembered being locked out last night, so she asked, “What time did you get home last night? I forgot my keys last night so I couldn’t open the door when I got back from the hospital. I called you, but you didn’t answer. I had no choice but to sleep over at Jackson’s.”

Tanya felt guilty. She had been home last night and heard the knock on the door. She had also heard Tiffany’s call. She ignored it all on purpose. “I came home pretty late… And I didn’t notice the phone. You found somewhere else to go anyway, so I don’t have to worry.”

Tiffany seemed unsuspicious. She changed her clothes, carelessly grabbed a bite to eat, and got ready to head out when Tanya suddenly spoke up with her bag in hand, “You have a car, don’t you? Drop me off at Ricky’s so I can save on cab fare.”

Eric’s house was completely out of the way from the hospital, but Tiffany agreed without hesitation. “Sure, I’ll drop you off then go to the hospital. Ari sure looked scary after her surgery. She’s most afraid of snakes. I’m sure that she’d stay perfectly still if I threw a snake at her. She was so weak that her breathing was extremely shallow. I hope she’s feeling better today.”

Tanya didn't answer. She truly wasn't interested in anything involving Arianne at the moment. A poverty-stricken girl like her couldn't be bothered with concerning herself with a wealthy man's wife such as her — this was her current state of mind.

Tanya waved at Tiffany when she arrived at Eric's house. "Drive carefully; don't be so clumsy all the time. Safety is important."

Chapter 829

Tiffany casually turned the car around. "Got it. I'll be fine."

Passersby around the neighborhood stared at Tiffany's car critically and discussed how expensive it must be. They also looked at Tanya, who had stepped out of the car, with envious gazes. This made Tanya feel proud and smug. So, this was how it felt to be seen as a rich woman…

She lowered her head and took a deep breath. Her goal today wasn't just to clean Eric's house, but to get closer to him and do what she should have done from the very beginning. If she had only realized this sooner, she would be Eric's girlfriend by now. That way, she would no longer be inferior to them.

…

The hospital.

Arianne was looking much more energetic today and not as depressed as she was yesterday. She had also developed a better appetite.

Once Tiffany arrived, Arianne sent her to check on the baby. She couldn't move so she had to send other people to check on him.

Of course, Tiffany was happy to help. She had also noticed two bodyguards outside the ward. She began grumbling internally — Ari had only just given birth; did Mark have to be so paranoid?

After returning from checking on the baby, she asked Arianne, "What's with the bodyguards? Is Mark afraid that someone might kidnap you or something?"

"Mr. Tremont is just concerned for Ari," Mary couldn't help interrupting. "He means well…"

This explanation felt forced to Tiffany. "No… Does he really have to put two bodyguards, just out of concern? Why doesn't he do it himself? Even if he's afraid of Ari getting annoyed with him, he really doesn't have to go through all of this trouble, does he?"

Mary was unable to give a rebuttal. She made some good points, but she had no right to control Mark's decisions.

Arianne changed the subject. "It's fine. It's good that he's not here. Help me to the toilet. The doctor's asked me to start getting off the bed and move around. I shouldn't be lying down all day."

Tiffany gulped nervously. "No… You've just had a deep incision on your belly. Do you really think you can start walking around now?"

“This is to prevent intestinal adhesions. I have to walk for an appropriate amount of time. The wound will stay closed as long as I don’t do any extreme sports,” Arianne explained helplessly. “It hurt a lot when I had my IV drip this morning. The contractions hurt like hell. I’m glad you’re here. It has really cheered me up.”

Tiffany carefully helped her off the bed. Arianne’s face drained of color from pain before her feet touched the ground. “Ow… Be gentle… Take it slow…”

Mary rushed forward to lend a hand. “Ari, be gentle. Take it slow, there’s no rush. I know how much you want to start walking so that you can see your baby. The baby is in an incubator at the moment, so you can’t touch him anyway. Don’t rush, just focus on getting better.”

Chapter 830

Everything that Mary had said broke Tiffany’s heart for Arianne. “Ari, Mary’s right. Don’t rush to see the baby. You can’t touch him for now anyway. Instead, why don’t you tell me what you would like to eat today? I’ll ask Jackson to whip something up for you. Eat more and you’ll regain your strength. That way, you’ll recover faster. Or maybe you should call Mark and have him come over? You’ve suffered a great hardship to give him his child. You should let him see your frail and fragile state or he won’t feel bad for you.”

Arianne felt more energized. Thanks to Mary and Tiffany’s help, she managed to slowly straighten up and take a few steps. The pain made her too afraid to breathe too heavily. She never thought that her first time getting off the bed after surgery would hurt this much. A long time passed before she managed to gasp, “N-no need… t-to trouble Jackson. Ma-Mary… Call… Mark. T-tell him… to come…” Of course, he had to come. A certain issue between them was still unsettled. She knew him well enough to know that he was avoiding her.

Mary nodded as she waited for Arianne to finish up in the toilet before calling Mark. “Sir, Mrs. Tremont has asked you to come over.”

On the other end of the call, Mark agreed as he headed to the closet for a change of clothes. He surmised that Arianne was going to pick a fight with him again. That letter from Zoey's husband had really cost him now. It wasn't easy for them to enjoy some peace and tranquility. A single letter had toppled everything over.

He stopped to mull things over after changing his clothes. He decided to go to the office first and pick up Tabitha's last will and testament, the one she wrote before she passed on, and the house deed. Perhaps these would ease the process for him… He was too afraid to cross a woman who'd just delivered a baby. He simply couldn't afford to cross her anyway!

He arrived at the hospital and sensed the strange vibes from the moment he set foot into the ward. Tiffany grumbled at him vexingly, "Your poor wife has just delivered your child and is lying in bed. What have you been doing, avoiding her?"

He looked at Arianne and remained silent, letting Tiffany continue her complaints.

Arianne seemed perfectly pleased at the spectacle before her. Since he was deliberately avoiding taking care of her, she wanted him to be yelled at. The sight of him getting scolded soothed her.

Mary knew that Arianne and Mark had to speak in private, so she dragged Tiffany away to buy some postpartum necessities. The baby couldn't be fed breast milk directly from his mother just yet, so they needed a breast pump to avoid breast engorgement or mastitis.

Mark waited for Mary and Tiffany to leave before pulling out Tabitha's will. "This is granny's will; she wrote this before she passed away. And this here is the deed to the Wynn family home. Your aunt and uncle are not aware of this, probably because granny was afraid that they might try to take the deed away. It's always been with me, so now I'm giving it to you. I've sent people out to find them, but

they're gone. That burdensome family has disappeared. I don't think I need to elaborate on the reason, do I? It's true that I was there during granny's death, but I did not cause it. You might say that she died from her illness."

Arianne accepted the will and deed, and scrutinized them. Her eyes welled up with tears. Her grandmother's signature was crooked. She could only imagine what it was like for her dying grandmother at the time…

Old people tend to be conservative. Regardless of how much the Wynn family had fallen, they would keep their home in the end. This was the only valuable thing that her grandmother had, and she had left it to the only blood heir of the Wynn family.

"How did my grandmother die?" she asked in a trembling voice. "Stop hiding it from me. Tell me everything."

Mark held her hand soothingly. "You know that your grandmother was admitted into the hospital at the time. It was your uncle; he wanted to make your grandmother sick, so that it'd be easier for him to ask you for money. Hence, he deliberately snuck into granny's room every night and opened the window. The chilly winter winds are enough to make a half a century old woman fall sick and contract acute pneumonia. When your grandmother found out about your uncle's plan, she deliberately dragged out her illness. She thought… that her death would prevent you from being dragged into this. By the time she was sent to the hospital, she was admitted into Intensive Care. Granny had a talk with me when I arrived and then asked the doctor to write down her will. Then… I knew that it would be difficult for you to accept this. I kept it from you because I was afraid of upsetting you.

"After thoroughly investigating the matter, your uncle demanded for me to compensate them for taking care of granny over the past few years. I agreed, but your aunt refused the money. It's true that I exiled them from the capital, and your aunt left willingly. Your uncle was the difficult one. Your aunt isn't completely rotten yet, so there was no need for me to be so cruel."