**Ruling 831**

Chapter 831

Arianne burst into tears in the end. “I want to know, why did my grandmother forgive you after you told her about the plane crash? How could the grudge of killing her son be written off, just like that? Not even I have been able to let go of my hatred for you completely, even after living with you for so many years… Granny said that she knew everything that I know about the plane crash and some things that I don’t. What don’t I know? Are you still refusing to be honest with me, even at this point?”

Mark stiffened instinctively. He lifted his hand and wiped her tears away. “I chose to be honest with granny because I wanted to make things clear with her. Perhaps she did hate me, but she’s also aware that I will be the source of your reliance for the rest of your life. You were pregnant, so she wanted us to live peacefully as a family. She said that the dead can never come back, but the living must continue living their lives. She couldn’t hate me, and I’m very grateful to her. I don’t feel like elaborating any further. Let’s just pretend that you’re already aware, okay?

“When I chased your aunt and uncle away, I warned them not to tell you about your grandmother’s death for the time being. Your uncle used this as a means to blackmail me. I thought that I could satisfy him by giving him what he wanted; however, time and time again… That’s why I chose to teach him a lesson. The letter he’s sent is rife with his revenge. However, he’s managed to squander all of the money that I’ve given him. How did he manage to vanish without a trace and avoid my discovery? It’s perplexing. They haven’t had the nerve to confront me directly, so I suspect… that someone’s been manipulating them behind the scenes. I’m investigating this. Trust me just this once, okay?”

Actually, Arianne had already begun to trust Mark when she received Tabitha’s will and deed. If everything that Mr. Harris had said in the letter was true, why would Tabitha give Mark her will and deed? A will and final possessions were every individual’s final wishes. One would only give them to people they trusted.

Arianne choked with sobs. “I-I’m s-sorry… I just… can’t hold it in. I’ve just found out that Granny’s dead… Granny is the only blood relative I had left, aside from Helen. It’s all my fault. I couldn’t control my emotions and caused our baby to have a premature birth. It’s all my fault…”

“It’s alright…” Mark consoled her as gently as he possibly could. “It’s my fault. I hurt you in the past and lost your trust in me. I’ll spend the rest of my life protecting our relationship. Don’t cry, it’s bad for your eyes. I’ll take you to see Granny at her grave after a while. You and your grandmother may have lost out on twenty years together, but she loved you. This is a bond that can never be replaced.”

Arianne calmed herself before asking, “Who do you think is behind all of this? On the surface, it may look like my uncle is trying to have his revenge on you, but knowing him, he wouldn’t dare stoop to such levels with you. Plus, their entire family’s disappeared after sending this letter. It’s really suspicious. I’m pretty sure that your hunch is right, but who would do such a thing? They knew that I was pregnant and that I was in the final trimester, the most risky stage. If anything happened, both of us would die… It’s too scary…”

After a bout of hesitation, Mark decided not to keep it from her. “I believe it’s Ethan.”

“Ethan?” Arianne exclaimed in shock.

He nodded heavily. “I thought he was already dead because after he escaped from the country, I… had no intention of letting him off. However, we couldn’t find his body. That means that he’s probably still alive. Besides, I can’t think of anyone who’d hate me this much.”

Suddenly, they heard the sound of something falling onto the ground outside the ward. Arianne turned to look and found Tiffany and Mary standing at the door. Tiffany’s face was deathly pale; the item that had dropped was her handbag.

Realizing that Tiffany had overheard their conversation, Arianne grew worried. “Tiffie… I’m sorry…”

Chapter 832

Tiffany calmed herself and bent down to pick up her handbag. “Er… It’s fine… I’m fine. Uhm… I’ve promised Jackson that I’d have dinner with him. I’ll be on my way now. I’ll see you tomorrow.” Then, she turned around and left hurriedly, as if scared out of her wits. Ethan — it had been a while since she last heard that name. She was still traumatized. She once loved and hated this man deeply. This man had personally pushed her straight into hell… Had he returned?

Arianne and Mark looked at each other, feeling heavy-hearted. They did not continue discussing the topic. Mary was blissfully ignorant of the situation, so she pulled out a strange-looking thing from the plastic bag in her hand. “Ari, the doctor says that you have to pump your milk as soon as possible. Are your breasts swelling up now?”

Arianne glanced at Mark, her face beginning to heat up. “N-no… It’s fine… I don’t think I need to do that for now… The baby isn’t with me right now, anyway. I can’t feed him.”

“Are you shy?” Mary asked with a smile. “I watched you grow, and I raised you too. Mr. Tremont is your husband; what’s there to be embarrassed about? Come on, it’ll hurt in the beginning, but you have to endure it. It will hurt whenever you feed the baby in the future. You’ll just have to get used to it.”

Mary stepped forward to help Arianne pull up her clothes, but she quickly stopped her. “Later… It’s no rush… I want to sleep now!”

Mark let out a dry cough. “Uh… I’m going to check on the baby. You go ahead.”

He then got up and left the ward. The girl was still so bashful despite their many years of marriage… It looked like he would have to train her from now on.

Arianne reluctantly complied with Mary after Mark had left. The strange-looking item that Mary had brought was a breast pump… Initially, she was still pretty embarrassed about it, but when she remembered that the baby would grow healthier with his mother's milk, she ignored her feelings. The process… hurt, and it was an excruciating pain to boot. Further, she would have to do this every single day!

Meanwhile, Tiffany went straight back to the condo after the hospital. Actually, Jackson hadn't called her at all. She was simply using it as an excuse to hide herself away. She wanted to be alone right now and had no way of controlling herself from over imagination. If Ethan had returned, would it affect her? She had never felt so complicated before.

By the time Jackson called in the afternoon, she drowsily rejected his invitation to have dinner, saying that she wanted to sleep. She ignored Jackson's reaction after giving her answer and ended the call. She was practically half-asleep at this point and couldn't seem to keep her eyes open.

After a certain amount of time, she heard a frantic knock on the door. She wanted to get up and open the door, but her body refused to comply. Her eyes simply refused to open. Her body seemed to be glued to the bed.

Chapter 833

Then, it seemed like someone had unlocked the door with a key. She heard Tanya and Jackson's voices before she was lifted into someone's arms. She didn't know what happened next.

By the time she woke up again, she was in the hospital — the same hospital as Arianne. However, Arianne was in the department of gynaecology while she was sent to the hospital due to a fever.

Jackson and Tanya were watching over her in the ward. Jackson began nagging her when he saw that she had woken up. “You were perfectly fine this morning; how did you end up with a fever? You’re already not smart enough. You’d have turned into a complete idiot if I hadn’t realized it sooner.”

“It’s not like I wanted this,” she argued weakly. “I was perfectly fine this morning. I don’t know how I ended up this way either… This sucks.”

Tanya stepped forward and said, “I’m glad you’re alright. I’m going back then.” She might not show it, but deep down, she was a little annoyed. She had planned on having lunch at Eric’s then persuading him into going shopping with her in the afternoon. Unfortunately, Jackson called and asked her to go home and open the door, foiling her plan. Her dislike towards Tiffany festered even more. What right did Tiffany have to make everyone revolve around her, just because she had a fever?

Tiffany nodded. “Okay, you should go home. Jackson can take it from here.”

Jackson lifted his hand and gently tapped on her forehead, acting sulky. “Oh, now you think of me? I knocked on the door for nearly half a day and you didn’t answer. I knew that something wasn’t right, so I kicked the door down.”

The sight of this felt like an eyesore to Tanya for some reason. Would she ever find a man with this much devotion? She turned around and left, putting extra resolve into her plan. She was going to elevate her societal status, no matter the cost. She no longer wanted to roll in the quagmire, watching other people’s enjoyment!

TIffany’s condition wasn’t considered severe. She was allowed to be discharged after her fever had gone down and she had finished her IV drip. There was no need to stay in the hospital for observation. By the time she was done with the IV drip, it was past seven at night. Jackson was just about to take her home when someone entered the room, holding a bouquet of flowers. “Are you Tiffany Lane? Miss Lane?”

“That’s me. What’s up?” Tiffany asked suspiciously.

The visitor stuffed the flowers into her hands. “Someone’s sent you flowers; get well soon. Here, just sign here.”

Jackson’s face blackened. His long fingers picked up the card in the bouquet and glanced at it. As expected, it was from Alejandro. Did the guy have eyes on Tiffany? If he wanted to give her carnations, he should’ve given a full bouquet. What was the deal with the stalks of red roses in the middle?

Tiffany noticed the annoyance on Jackson’s face after signing her name. “What’s wrong? Who sent this? I have no idea. Don’t come up with blind conclusions.”

He hatefully put the card in front of her. “Who sent this? Can’t you guess? Alejandro is interested in you. You’ve only just been admitted into the hospital, yet he’s already found out. You seem pretty close.”

Tiffany smiled as she heard the jealousy in his voice. “Are you jealous?” she asked. “You’re my ex; you shouldn’t be. He’s sent carnations. Why are you so worked up?”

Jackson forced a smile on his handsome face. “That’s right. If he wanted to give you carnations, he should’ve given a full bouquet. However, he’s added stalks of red roses in the middle. How garish.”

Chapter 834

Tiffany was speechless.

Jackson scowled the entire way home, simply because Tiffany had refused to throw the bouquet away, claiming that she owed Alejandro a favour and couldn't bear to waste someone else's efforts. However, he couldn't throw it away for her either, so had no choice but to crudely throw the bouquet into the back of his car.

When they arrived at the ground floor of her condo, Tiffany held her temper as she tried to coax him. "Okay, I'm home. I'm going in. Thank you for today. I'll buy you a meal tomorrow."

Jackson's expression softened a little. "Get a good rest when you get home. Let me take the flowers. My place is cold and empty. It'll be great for livening up the place."

Tiffany was speechless. "S-sure. As long as you don't throw it away. It'll be quite a shame. Take it home and put it up then."

When Tiffany entered her home, she saw Tanya watching television on the couch and eating the fruit that Summer had brought. Tiffany did not nitpick on her over this. "Thank you for opening the door today. I was in such a blur at the time; that fever really knocked me out. I couldn't get up."

Tanya didn't even look at her. "You really are lucky to have someone worry about you when you're sick. Jackson was going stir-crazy. He's such a good man. You should appreciate what you have."

Tiffany stepped forward and sat down next to Tanya, then wrapped her arms around her shoulders. "Oh, come on. I'd be worried too if you got sick. We're all very lucky."

Tanya lifted the corners of her lips, but her eyes showed no signs of a smile. “I’m not as lucky as you. I was born in misery. A fever like that would be gone after a nap. It’s always been that way for me, even from a young age. I’m used to it. Have you eaten? Want me to make some ramen for you?”

Her words sounded strange to Tiffany. She probably would have thoroughly analyzed it if it weren’t for the concern in the last part of her sentence. “I haven’t. Make some for me then. Thanks! I’m still feeling a little weak. I should be fine after some sleep.”

Tanya walked into the kitchen and made the raman with an expressionless look on her face. She watched the slowly bubbling water in the pot, which mirrored how she currently felt. Sometimes, she would feel conflicted. If she hadn’t met Tiffany and Arianne, perhaps she would still be struggling to make ends meet in that obscure little city. Therefore, she shouldn’t be feeling this way. However, there were many times when she found herself losing control, hating how her life was different from Tiffany’s.

For example, the time when she had kindly bought Tiffany a medicinal patch, only to be met with her disgust. This was the first true wound. Usually, Tiffany had the most expensive skin care products, facial masks, and make up in steady supply. She lived a refined life. Tanya wanted to have that kind of life too, but her monthly salary only allowed her to afford average-priced skin care products. Tiffany would give her a few masks from time to time, and she instinctively felt like a charity case. Not only had she stopped feeling grateful, she felt belittled, as if her dignity had suffered a blow…

That’s just how humans are like. They will always yearn for light when shrouded in darkness, and their hearts will be full of light too. They will only be grateful towards kindness from others. However, once they escape from the darkness, step into the light, and run into an experience similar to the darkness they had once suffered, they will instinctively feel like a charity case. They try to avoid it, simply to prove that they are now different from before.

Suddenly, a knock on the door was heard. Tiffany got up and opened the door — it was a takeout delivery boy, carrying a paper bag from an expensive restaurant. Her first reaction was that it was a wrong delivery. “I didn’t order take out. I think you’ve got the wrong address.”

The delivery boy read the address aloud. “This is the correct address, isn’t it? Maybe a friend ordered it for you. This is the right place.”

Tiffany accepted the takeout suspiciously. She called Jackson for extra confirmation. “Did you order takeout for me?”

Chapter 835

“That’s right,” Jackson answered from the other end. “It’s so late and you haven’t eaten. It’d be too late by the time I cooked for you, so I ordered food for you on the way back. Did you receive the delivery? Go to bed after you’ve eaten.”

She felt warm and fuzzy on the inside. She was surprised at his attentiveness. “Thank you… I’ll eat this now then.”

She remembered that Tanya was making ramen noodles for her after ending the call, so she quickly called out to her in the kitchen. “Tan, you don’t have to cook. Jackson’s bought takeout for me. It looks like a large portion. Have you eaten? Would you like to share?”

Tanya turned off the fire. The half-cooked noodles and bubbling water gradually steadied. “I’ve already eaten. You enjoy it.”

She did not even look at Tiffany when she walked past the living room. Tiffany felt very guilty. “Tan, have some with me? I wasn’t aware that Jackson had ordered takeout for me. I’m sorry…”

Tanya turned around and forced a small smile on her face. “I’m not hungry. You eat it.”

The next morning, Tiffany saw the half-cooked noodles in the pot when she got up to make breakfast. The noodles were now soaked into paste. She might be a carefree person, but she had moments of meticulousness too. She felt like she had let Tanya down. Her friend had kindly made ramen for her, yet she had gone off to have takeout instead.

Feeling apologetic, she made two helpings of delicious-smelling breakfast. When Tanya woke up, she pulled out a new lipstick that she had previously bought during a shopping trip. “Here, for you.”

Tanya naturally accepted the lipstick and answered calmly, “Thanks. I like this color.”

During breakfast, Tiffany said, “I feel like going shopping. Wanna come? I’d like to buy some clothes for Ari’s baby. I haven’t given the little guy a thing since his birth.”

“No thanks,” Tanya declined. “I’d rather stay home and binge watch. It’s the weekend and I finally get to rest. I’d prefer to rest so that I can continue working hard tomorrow. Unlike you, my design didn’t make it into the top hundred. I’m not top hundred worthy.”

Tiffany immediately tried to egg Tanya on. “Oh, come on. You’re his Aunt Tanya. Let’s shop together.”

Tanya couldn't resist her and was forced to agree. She just didn't like shopping with Tiffany. Tiffany would always buy anything that tickled her fancy, regardless of the price. She, on the other hand, had her hands tied. Price was her first priority. The disparity made her feel very uncomfortable.

Tiffany had told Jackson about her plan to shop for the baby, and Jackson, surprisingly, asked to come along, saying that he wanted to get a gift for the baby's first month celebration. When Tanya heard that Jackson was coming along, she carefully asked, "How about asking Ricky to come along too? He'd want to buy a gift for the baby too, right?"

Tiffany caught her hint. "Are you finally moving things along with Eric?"

Chapter 836

Tanya lowered her head shyly. "Stop it…"

Tiffany was enlightened when she saw the look on her face. "Sure, of course. I understand. This is great news. Don't worry, I'll do everything I can to make it happen between you two. We should always keep the goodies in the family. It's first come, first serve. I'll invite him for you."

The group agreed to meet up at the shopping mall. Tanya had happily dressed up too. Eric was the last to arrive… And he wasn't alone. He had brought a woman.

The woman standing next to Eric seemed like a good match for him. She was shining and beautiful, and absolutely dazzling… Tanya's face turned ashen, unsure of how to react.

Tiffany had no idea that Eric had a girlfriend. She felt very awkward when she saw the peculiar look on Tanya's face. "Eric, what's going on? Who is this? Won't you introduce us?"

Eric confidently put his arm around the woman's shoulders. "This is my girlfriend, Vicky Nathanial. This is her first time meeting all of you. We've been talking for half a year, and we got together when she returned to the states. We plan on moving in together."

Vicky wasn't exactly dressed in a grandiose style. She wore a white mid-length knitted coat with a white t-shirt on the inside, a pair of light grey jeans, and ankle boots. Her tall and slender figure served as an asset in showing off the outfit to its highest potential. Her simple elegance carried an absolutely attractive air. She wore minimal make up on her face, so it was clear that she had gorgeous features. Her palm-sized, delicate, oval-shaped face and long, straight black hair was simply stunning. She seemed meek and polite too. "Hello, everyone. I've just arrived back in the country, and I've been eager to meet you. Would you like to join us for dinner tonight? My treat."

At this point, Tiffany truly couldn't bring herself to crack a smile. One could tell that Vicky was from a wealthy, well-bred family at a single glance. Her body was comparable to a supermodel's and she was extremely beautiful. Her aura alone was enough to flatten Tanya; there was no comparison, an absolute defeat. Therefore, the situation had now turned completely awkward. She tried her best to lift Tanya's spirits and avoided standing next to Jackson, choosing to hook her arm around her best friend's arm. "We'll see… We might have something going on tonight. It's hard to say."

Vicky cast Tiffany and Tanya a measuring gaze, a glint shooting across her eyes. "Oh… I see. Sure. Let's have dinner if you have no other plans. If you happen to have any last minute plans, we can eat together another day. Would that be okay?"

Tiffany summoned her nerves and nodded. "Let's start shopping! Stop standing around."

Vicky suddenly appeared next to Tanya and hooked her arm around Tanya's other arm, like a close friend. "We girls should walk together. Those two men can stick together. You're Tan, right? Ricky talks about you all the time. I heard that you stayed at his place for a while. He says that you're a very nice girl

and that you even went to his place yesterday to clean up his garbage pile, right? I'm sorry for the trouble. That's just how he is. He's careless when he's living alone."

As it turned out, she wasn't the only one to call him "Ricky" anymore… Tanya felt embarrassed and forced a smile. "It's fine, Eric has been very helpful to me. I wouldn't have had anywhere else to stay if he hadn't taken me in. I wasn't aware that you were dating. I wouldn't have stayed at his place if I did… Please don't overthink it…"

Vicky smiled innocently. "Of course, not. Why would I? Ricky's always been very kind. He's even saved a wounded stray dog once. Of course, he'd help a friend like you."

Tanya lost all her willpower to fake a smile when she heard this. Tiffany's heart sank as well. Looks like Vicky wasn't as meek as she seemed. No woman would be fine with having a member of the opposite sex staying with her boyfriend. Furthermore, Tanya had been cleaning up after him, even after she had moved out.

Jackson and Eric were walking behind the three women and chatting about business, blissfully unaware of the rising turmoil in front.

Chapter 837

Tiffany's head swam. She had a pitifully low emotional quotient and didn't know what to do. Left with no choice, she turned to Eric for help. "Ah… Eric, your girlfriend has just returned to the country; you should spend more time with her. Stop being such an insensitive man."

Vicky pranced happily back to Eric's side before he could say another word then hugged his arm as she buried her head into his shoulder in an adorable manner. "My Ricky is only an 'insensitive man' to other women. He's really considerate towards me! Didn't you want to buy presents for your friend's baby? Let's go. Ricky's aesthetic sense isn't as good as mine. I'll choose on his behalf!"

When they arrived at the second floor of the mall, Tanya finally couldn't resist making an excuse to go to the bathroom. Tiffany hurriedly ran after her. Tanya silently stood in front of the bathroom sink, with a sunken look on her face. Tiffany carefully apologized, "I wasn't aware that Eric already had a girlfriend. I was wondering why nothing happened between you two after living together for so long. He's already got a girlfriend, so that explains it… It's alright, there are many good men out there. Let's just find another one."

Tanya took a deep breath and forced herself to calm down. "It's fine, it was only a small surprise and an embarrassment… Besides, Vicky is certainly better looking than I am. Her figure is better than mine too. The handbag she has costs a grand. I'm not worthy."

"You're not so bad yourself," Tiffany immediately objected. "You just haven't found the right one. What do you mean, 'not worthy'? Stop imagining things. Maybe you should go home if you're uncomfortable. It's my fault for dragging you out here."

Tanya turned her face to the side and stared at Tiffany. That's right, she was the odd one out here. She should leave. However, she refused. Why should she run off with her tail between her legs? She smiled. "It's fine. Let's pretend I never thought of it at all."

Tiffany secretly heaved a sigh of relief when she saw her smile. "I'm glad that you're alright. I thought that you'd received a huge blow. Let's continue shopping."

They met up with Jackson, Eric, and Vicky again. Vicky was assisting in selecting the presents. Designer baby clothes, toys, and luxury baby items were, of course, at the top of the list. Vicky shopped around gleefully and soon found an intricately carved baby rattle made of pure gold. "Ricky, isn't this nice? Look at the carved design on this rattle; it's gorgeous. A lot of youngsters these days find gold tacky and prefer platinum gold or diamonds. I disagree. First of all, gold has an everlasting guarantee against devaluation. Secondly, anything that's gold and shiny looks pretty. Haha…"

Eric stroked Vicky's long hair indulgently. "You're right. We'll buy this one, then."

Jackson's gaze landed on a pretty baby mobile made with crystals. Vicky noticed this and immediately said, "The baby's too small for that; it won't suit him. Buy something made with gold. It's worth much more."

Tiffany frowned. At first glance, Vicky looked like an extremely gorgeous girl that was probably around her age. She seemed vivacious and amiable. Now, it seemed that she was easy-going with everyone and was overly self-centered. Vicky may be Eric's little princess, but she wasn't about to indulge her. What gave her the right to criticize her ex-boyfriend?

"Since you like gold so much, why are you wearing platinum gold?" Jackson asked with a smile before she could speak up. "Those diamonds on your necklace are so shiny…"

The smile on Vicky's face stiffened. However, she reverted back to normal very swiftly. "Ricky bought it for me. I love all of his presents. I want to wear them all the time."

"I have no intention of buying these small trinkets for the baby," Jackson said with a deadpan look on his face. "I plan on buying a villa for him. After all, Mark is my best friend. I'd never neglect his son. Wouldn't you agree, Tiffie?"

Tiffany smiled, delighting in this calamity. Jackson was always good at being flawlessly two-faced. "You're absolutely right," she agreed.

Eric didn’t seem to realize that something was off. He even smiled at Jackson and asked, “Which villa will you be buying? That newly-launched neighbourhood of villas by your family looks pretty good. I think those would be a good idea. A hard-worn entrepreneur like myself doesn’t have as much money as you do. How about giving my future kid a villa too?”

Chapter 838

Jackson nodded generously. “No problem. You and Mark are equally important to me. I’m definitely going to give you both the same gifts. You’d better make the most of it.”

Tiffany dragged Tanya along to visit Arianne after the shopping trip. Jackson didn’t tag along; he was summoned away by a phone call from Summer.

When Eric and Vicky were left alone, Vicky pulled a wounded expression on her face. “Ricky… Do your friends… not like me?”

Eric’s mind was filled with question marks. “Which friends?”

Vicky tugged on his arm in a cutesy manner and stomped her foot. “All of them! It’s my first time meeting them, and they won’t even have a meal with me. Not even when I offered to pay. Jackson even tried to one-up me. Can’t you tell?”

Eric shook his head honestly. “I really don’t see it. You’re imagining things. They’re not like that. Arianne just had a baby, and it was a premature delivery too. Let’s just leave our relationship be. Cheer up. I’ll take you out on a nice meal. Let’s go.”

The West Residence.

Summer was trimming the hedges in her garden when Jackson arrived. Her leg seemed completely healed. He did not plan on going inside. “You’re in a good mood.”

Summer glanced at him. “It’s so difficult to get you to come home. I was just wishing that we’d have only one house, like any other average family with an average income. Then our family could stay together and I wouldn’t have to hope for your return every day.”

He could tell that Summer had something to discuss, so he ignored her grumbling and said, “Be frank about it. Why did you summon me home? I was shopping with Tiffie when you called. Your phone call was such a distraction…”

Summer put her head shears down then turned around to go back into the house and have tea. “Come in, your father isn’t home.”

Jackson paused for two seconds then followed her. “What’s going on?”

Summer stared at him begrudgingly. “Has Tiffie gotten close to a man named Alejandro Smith?”

Jackson’s expression sank. “Mom… Who told you that? There’s nothing going on between them. Alejandro’s the one approaching her. They’ve only had a few meals together.”

Summer frowned. “I did not plan on confronting you about this at first, but I can’t help worrying every time I think of this. I don’t care who’s approaching whom. Why on earth would you be inferior to a

cripple? The Smiths are rich, but our family isn't too shabby either. If Alejandro manages to snatch Tiffie away, it'll be your problem. Tiffie has been spending quite a few nights away from home lately, hasn't she? I'm sure you're aware of this? Alejandro's been showering her with gifts too. Why don't you take a leaf out of his book?"

Chapter 839

This was Summer's first time meddling in his personal affairs. It didn't actually annoy Jackson, but he instinctively tried to solidify Tiffany's image in Summer's mind. "She hasn't been going home at night because she's been sleeping at mine. What are you thinking? I'm aware of everything you've said. Don't worry. You haven't answered my question; who told you? You couldn't have sent someone to investigate, could you? Are you really that bored?"

"Oh, she's really been sleeping over at your place?" Summer questioned. "There's still hope for you two then? Tiffie's housemate told me… You know, that girl named Tanya. She seemed like an honest girl, so I don't think she'd be lying to me. Besides, she's Tiffie's friend. I certainly wouldn't send an investigator. I'm not that bored!"

Tanya told her? Something didn't feel right to Jackson. Wasn't Tanya aware of Tiffany's sleepovers at his place? Or perhaps… Had Tiffany been sleeping over in someone else's home, aside from his? The more he thought of it, the more upset he became. "If there's nothing else, I've got to go, mom. It's not what you think, so stop worrying."

He had just taken two steps when Summer reminded him, "If you plan on accepting whatever happened, you must accept it thoroughly. Don't burden the girl. Life isn't smooth-sailing. You'll always run into the unexpected, but it doesn't mean that you don't deserve happiness in the next part of your life. I can tell that you're truly in love with her, which is why I'm putting in so much effort."

Obviously, Jackson could detect the underlying meaning in Summer's reminder. He couldn't help feeling moved despite his mess of complicated feelings. "I know… Mom, thank you for understanding. I'm coming home for dinner tonight. See you."

He went back into the car. After a bout of hesitation, he sent a message to Tanya: ‘Has Tiffie slept over anywhere else, aside from my place?’

Suspicion was a common bane among humans. He was insecure at this point.

In the hospital, Tanya peered at Tiffany and Arianne carefully upon receiving the message then stepped aside to send her reply: ‘No… Stop overthinking.’

She deliberately added ellipses in her message to make it seem like she was hiding something in her message and to highlight the uncertainty in her reply.

To Jackson, this was, without a doubt, a confirmation. How could he not overthink? He didn’t reply, wanting to calm down.

After making sure that he would not reply, Tanya put her phone back into her handbag and walked back to the bed, acting as if nothing had happened. “Ari, you’re looking much better. You’ll be discharged in a few days. How wonderful!”

Arianne smiled. “Unfortunately, the baby won’t be discharged along with me. I still haven’t been able to hold him… Besides, I’m not allowed to go home after my discharge. Mark insisted on sending me off to a confinement center to get proper bedrest. Apparently, women should have adequate bedrest after giving birth. As if he’s the expert.”

Her casual remark was seen as “showing off”. Tiffany clicked her tongue. “Oh my, are you showing off your husband’s love to us? We’re all very much aware. Mark may seem cold and unfeeling on the outside, but he can be very attentive sometimes. That confinement center that he’s chosen costs at least 15 grand. Wealthy people are certainly willful.”

Spending six figures and above, just for bedrest? This went beyond Tanya’s imagination. She had no way of joining the conversation either. She felt out of place again, and could only stand aside and smile along.

Chapter 840

Mary, realizing that it was time for her to step out, said, “I’m going home to pick up Ari’s food. You girls stay and chat. Please take care of her for me while you’re at it. I’ll be back very soon.”

Tiffany nodded. “Go ahead. Tan and I will stay here.”

After Mary had left, the conversation between the three friends relaxed. Tiffany put her hand on Arianne’s breast. “Wow! So giving birth does come with its own benefits. This second puberty is wild!”

Arianne was speechless. “You have no idea… Just wait until you’ve had a baby. It only looks big, but it hurts like hell when it’s engorged.”

Tiffany was seized by a fit of giggles. She pulled out the tiny baby clothes that she had just bought. “Don’t be so modest. I bought these for the baby to wear after he turns one month old. It should fit by then. Since it’s a boy, I chose light blue. Isn’t it cute? I thought that babies’ clothes would be cheap, at first. But it’s actually expensive! Babies grow out of their clothes really fast, so I bought a few more. Tan bought a set too. We chose these together. We’re not as rich as Jackson. He says that he’ll be giving the little guy a villa. I’m so jealous. He’s already ahead in life from birth. He doesn’t lack a thing. If I could reincarnate right now, I’d make my way into your belly! By the way, Eric’s in a relationship. He brought his girlfriend along on our shopping trip. She’s not very nice and isn’t like us. I can’t tell at all.”

Arianne was shocked. “Are you serious? Well, he’s old enough; it’s about time. What happened? How did you end up in a confrontation on your first meeting?”

Tiffany pouted. “That woman’s name is Vicky Nathanial. Aside from having a similar surname to Eric’s, she’s his polar opposite. She’s overly familiar with everyone. She monopolized everything when we were shopping for your son’s presents. It’s not our place to criticize her for ordering Eric around, but she was bossing Jackson around too. We’ve only met once; are we really that close? Wanna know the most frustrating part? She was being so weird to Tan. Didn’t Tan stay with Eric for a while? Tan tried to assure her, but guess what she said? She said that she didn’t mind and that her Ricky was a kind man and would save an injured stray. So, of course, he’d help a friend like Tan. I would have taught her a lesson if it weren’t for Eric. She was smiling the whole time like some innocent little dumb blonde, seemingly harmless. I just couldn’t do it.”

Tanya felt embarrassed. She was already upset over the unbearable incident, yet Tiffany had to bring it up again, completely disregarding her feelings.

Arianne sensed Tanya’s embarrassment and changed the subject. “It’s alright. Just avoid interacting with her too much if you can’t get along with her. After all, she’s Eric’s girlfriend. We shouldn’t kick up a huge fuss. You must be very busy at work. I’ll be discharged by next weekend, so you don’t have to visit me so often. I’ll treat both of you to a meal after my confinement.”

Tanya took a deep breath and forced a smile. “Okay. I’ll let Tiffany keep you company. I’ve got to go. I didn’t sleep well last night, so I’m going home to catch up on some sleep.”

Arianne nodded. “Go ahead. Take care.”

Arianne waited for Tanya to leave before turning to Tiffany and saying, “You really should be more sensitive to other people’s feelings whenever you speak. Tan was really upset.”

Tiffany’s immediate reaction was to reply, “Was she? Aren’t we all best friends? What can’t we talk about? I was roasting Vicky’s attitude when I mentioned her to you. Isn’t that standing up for Tan too? Why would she be upset? We wouldn’t be upset if we were in her shoes and talked about it…”