Ruling 901

Chapter 901

She gritted her teeth and took two steps back. “Please, don’t cause a scene on my front porch. Your affairs with Jackson are none of my business. You wanted it, didn’t you? You climbed into bed with him willingly. You got pregnant with his baby willingly. He doesn’t want you to have the baby? That’s between you and him. Why are you asking me for help? Do you think that I can make him marry you, to make him agree to letting you have this baby? I’m not that generous. I can’t help you. Please leave!”

Tanya tugged on her skirt, refusing to let go. “Please, Tiffany… I have no family or relatives. I don’t know anyone here. I’m all alone, and I don’t know what to do. It’s all my fault, I was wrong to you. Hit me, if that will make you feel better. I just want you to talk to Jackson, make him agree to letting me have this child. If I abort this baby, I’ll never be able to conceive again. Please…”

Tiffany wasn’t a fool. She didn’t want to be a part of this mess. Her only worry was to prevent Lillian from overhearing the commotion. She couldn’t let Lillian find out about this, or she would have another quarrel with her again. “Get up. I wouldn’t dare hit you, since you’re pregnant. It’d be inhumane of me to. I can’t help you. Let me say this again, I cannot help you! You can do whatever you like, but first, please leave my home!”

“Are you going to watch me die, just like that?” Tanya sobbed. “Yes, I screwed you over. Yes, I deserve to die. But the baby in my womb is innocent…”

Tiffany bit her lip, refusing to speak. She knew how difficult it would be for a woman to carry a baby into full term. It would only become even more difficult once the baby was born. Tanya was all alone with no family. Now that she was pregnant, she couldn’t get a job. Once the baby was born, it would be even more difficult to get a job. Raising a child isn’t cheap. Delivering this baby seemed like an illogical plan, no matter how she looked at it. Unless, Tanya was banking on the child’s birth to live a financially worry-free life…

They were all adults. Taking care of a baby wasn't as easy as taking care of a pet. They couldn't possibly ignore the consequences. Tanya was playing her like a fool, treating her like a stepping stone.

"Who's out there? Tiffie, are you home?"

Lillian's voice suddenly called out.

Tiffany dragged Tanya up from the ground. "Stop this, right now! If my mom finds out about this, I'm going to teach you a lesson!"

Tanya saw right through her fear and deliberately refused to leave. "So, will you promise me to do it?"

"Fat chance. Do I look like an idiot to you?" Tiffany smirked. "Did you think that giving birth is as easy as laying an egg? Or as easy as having a kitten or a puppy? You want me to persuade Jackson into letting you have this baby, then pay for both you and the baby for the rest of your lives, regardless of whether he marries you or not, right? The words 'giving birth' holds so much meaning. If you refuse to abort this baby, what could he possibly do to you? You've come to me because he's ignoring you, right? I've seen right through you, Tanya. Please don't ever show your face in front of me again. You're not going to fool me again!"

Tanya suddenly laughed. She wiped off her tears and completely changed the expression on her face. "And I thought that you and Arianne were two extremes, one extremely smart, the other extremely dumb. Looks like you're not a complete bimbo after all. It's fine if you won't do it. At least, I won't feel any more guilt toward you. Don't you worry, I'm going to have this baby. That way, Jackson will always be connected to me, whether he marries me or not. You can forget about having anything that I can't have! He's asked to sign a contract with me, to relieve himself from all responsibilities after the baby is born. It's only a piece of paper. The baby is his. Can he really ignore it? The laws won't allow that."

Tiffany was thoroughly disgusted. “Honestly, Tanya, meeting you has finally opened my eyes to true shamelessness. You’ve really broadened my horizons. You’re disgusting. Go ahead, keep pushing my buttons and I might actually get back together with Jackson. Do you think he’ll refuse me, if I say the word? I can always pretend that you and that piece of meat in your belly don’t exist. If not, we can always take custody of the child once it’s born. If you want to be assured of the baby’s future, I’d be generous enough to raise it for you!”

Tanya’s expression changed. “You won’t do that. You’ve never been able to turn a blind eye…”

Tiffany grabbed her by the front of her top. “I would. If you ever come looking for me again, I’ll do it. Don’t believe me? Try me.”

Tanya shot her a vicious glare, pulled her hand away, then turned around and left.

Chapter 902

Tiffany let out a long sigh of relief. She collapsed against the wall, looking very pale in the face. She waited until she had calmed down before digging out her keys and heading into the house. “Were you talking to someone outside?” Lillian asked, puzzled. “I heard the commotion, but I didn’t feel like going out to look. Who were you talking to?”

“Met an old colleague in the hallway. We had a few words. I’m going to make dinner,” she explained half-heartedly.

The Tremont Estate.

By the time Arianne had arrived home, Mark and Aristotle were already home. The pair were fresh from their bath. She looked like the more idle parent now. Mark could make money and take care of the baby. It made her feel inferior.

She dashed forward, unable to restrain her emotions. “Come here, Smore. Let mommy hold you.”

Mark evaded her in disgust. “Take a shower. We’ve just had ours. It’s so hot and you’ve been sweating all day…”

It had been a while since he had snubbed her. She was hurt. “Are you snubbing me?”

He stared at her calmly. “Why? Can’t I? I thought you would have gotten used to it by now. I used to do it very often.”

“Hmph!” She scoffed, then turned around and went upstairs to get showered. He was right. He used to snub her from a young age. He snubbed her all the time. Didn’t he stop after a while? He had been papering her ceaselessly but was now snubbing her again, all of a sudden. Of course, she couldn’t accept that.

She had just entered the bathroom and taken off her clothes when Mark carried Aristotle outside the bathroom door and swayed him around. “Shame, shame! Mommy’s taking a shower now…”

She snatched up the towel and covered herself. “What are you doing? Can’t we change the bathroom door to a non-transparent one? Are you a pervert? I’ve always known that you were a pervert!”

The corners of his lips twitched. “How can you say that? What’s wrong with putting a transparent door in my own bathroom? How am I a pervert? Your son hasn’t seen you all day, so he wants to see you now. What’s wrong with that?”

She restrained herself from the urge to push them both out. “Alright, alright. I don’t think he’s the one who wants to see me. It’s you! My showers are usually very fast, so stop swaying about. Get out!”

Mark reluctantly carried the baby out of the room, and Arianne finally relaxed. She put the towel away and started washing herself. Her mind was filled with Tanya’s pregnancy. She wasn’t sure if Tiffany was aware of this now.

Just as she was lost in her thoughts, someone suddenly opened the bathroom door. She jumped with fright. When she saw that it was Mark, her face turned into the shade of beetroot. “What are you doing? I’m not used to having you here…” Her body was covered in foamy bath soap, and she didn’t have a towel to cover herself up. She could only shield her private areas with two hands.

Chapter 903

Mark had no intentions of leaving. He took off his shirt, reached out and gently massaged her smooth, naked back. “I’ll help you out… Aristotle is getting impatient. It’ll be faster with my help.”

There were a few extra ripples in the humid bathroom. She lowered her head, too afraid to look at him. She hadn’t gotten used to standing in front of him, completely naked, especially since she had just given birth not too long ago. Her body wasn’t as firm as it used to be, especially her tummy area. “No need, I’m very fast. You should go out. I’m really not used to this…”

He reached out and lifted up her chin, forcing her to turn around and look at him. “What do you mean? You’re going to have to get used to it. I’m your husband. Why can’t I look at you?”

His intense gaze locked onto Arianne's eyes. She felt as if she had been pulled into a deep vortex. His thin, tender lips looked very sexy and were even more attractive in the misty bathroom. The clean outlines of his muscles were on full display in front of her, which dulled her mind for half a beat, as if she was incapable of using it for the moment.

By the time she returned to her senses, the soft sensation on her lips nearly drove her out of her mind. She pushed him away. "Aren't you here to help me in the shower? Weren't you annoyed by my slow pace? What are you doing?"

Mark laughed at her three successive questions. It looked as if he had stars in his eyes. They seemed to shine like a galaxy of stars. "I can't help it… You can't possibly have thought that I came here, just to help you with your shower? I've been taking care of Smore the entire day. Shouldn't you show me some appreciation tonight?"

Arianne gulped. Her mind was losing its ability to think! What was going on?

Of course, Mark took the dazed look on her face as silent consent. He slowly trailed his long fingers down, along the bath soap and onto the scar on her shoulder—the one she had gained after taking a knife for him. Then, he slid onto her breast. Suddenly, Arianne slapped his hand away. "Ow! Get out!"

His hand immediately stiffened. "I only just touched it, why does it hurt? Do I have thorns on my hand?"

Arianne glared at him, very red in the face. "I haven't breastfed today…" She was too shy to speak frankly. She couldn't; she was too bashful. It was such a sin!

Mark paused in thought then suddenly came to a realization. “Then I won’t touch it.”

This time, Arianne refused to give him a chance. She pushed him out. “Behave yourself. I have to feed Smore after my shower, or it’ll hurt too much. Stop it.”

Mark put on his pajamas in a lackluster manner then headed downstairs. Aristotle was kicking around in Mary’s arms. He stepped forward and scooped him into his arms. “I think you’d better sleep in your own bed tonight. You’re a little man, so you’re going to have to learn to be independent. Your mommy belongs to me. Understand?”

Suddenly, Aristotle stopped moving. Mark felt a warm sensation on his body. Mary hurriedly said, “I was just getting ready to change Aristotle’s diaper… I never expected him to pee on you so quickly. You should get changed.”

Aristotle was completely energetic after peeing. He babbled and gurgled ceaselessly. This was Mark’s first time getting peed on by Aristotle, and he was thoroughly annoyed. He frowned as he stormed upstairs and walked into the bathroom again. Arianne was bewildered until she saw the stain on his clothes. She burst into laughter. “A baby’s pee isn’t dirty. Look at that disgusted look on your face. That’s your son. Cheer up.”

He really wasn’t in the mood to joke around with her. He pulled off his clothes and stood under the shower with her. He was taller than her, so the water would splash on his body, then on hers. Water got into her eyes, and she couldn’t seem to open them. She took a step back, reaching out to grab a towel but accidentally slipped and nearly fell. Mark caught her by the waist, just in time, practically moulding their bodies together. At that moment, sparks flew.

Chapter 904

He pressed his lips on Arianne's before she could react, then made his way down onto her neck. She couldn't open her eyes and didn't dare react too much. The irony of it all was that he had gotten exactly what he wanted. She was beginning to suspect that he had gotten himself peed on by Aristotle on purpose…

Heavy pants and sighs began to rise amidst the pattering sounds of water. It went on for half an hour before gradually turning back to normal.

Arianne blushed as she put on her clothes, too shy to look back at Mark in the eye.

"The weather is hot. It's very humid in the bathroom, so don't stay in the shower for too long," Mary reminded her. "You'll get heatstroke. Aren't your breasts engorged from not breastfeeding all day? It's time to feed Aristotle. You should take him and feed him. I'm going to check on dinner."

Arianne nodded and carried Aristotle to the baby's room to feed him. They were previously engorged, so engorged that they hurt whenever they were touched. However, they weren't so engorged now…

Soon, Mark strolled into the baby's room, neatly dressed. He teased Aristotle as if nothing had happened, completely different from his wild romp in the shower just a while ago.

Aristotle seemed to view Mark as a rival for his food. He stuck out his tiny leg and kicked with all of his might. Mark caught his tiny foot, raised his brow and said, "What are you being so smug about? The milk you have is what I've left you with."

Arianne couldn't believe that such words had come from such a stern man. She felt riled up. The blush on her face still remained. She inadvertently glanced at Mark's slightly open collar and trailed her gaze

down along his sexy throat. His collar bones were in full view. Reminded of everything that had happened in the shower, her heart raced…

Mark reached out and touched her forehead when he saw the blush on her face. “What’s wrong? Why is your face so red? You can’t possibly be reluctant to give milk, can you? Are you blushing because of that?”

Arianne hung her head and mumbled. “Heck no. I’m just feeling a little hot from the shower. Stop standing around here. Go downstairs and have dinner. Smore won’t be able to have his meal if you keep standing there.”

Mark gently patted Aristotle on the buttocks. “Fine, I’ll go downstairs. Hurry up. Give him to Mary once you’re done.”

Arianne received Tiffany’s message during dinner: ‘Tanya is pregnant. She claims that it’s Jackson’s baby.’

Arianne immediately lost her appetite when she saw that message. She didn’t expect for Tiffany to find out about this so fast. She looked at Mark, then got up and gave Tiffany a call. “Actually, I already know. I saw a few pregnancy test kits in the trash can in the toilet while you were busy with moving the fridge. I was trying to come up with a way to tell you. How did you find out?”

“Tanya came over to my house,” Tiffany replied with a bitter smile. “She says that Jackson doesn’t want her to have the baby, and apparently, the doctor says that her body is frail. So she won’t be able to conceive again if she has an abortion. She actually begged me to convince Jackson. Do I look like an idiot to her? After I refused to help her, she put that pitiful look on her face away and said that it was fine if I won’t help her. That way, she wouldn’t feel any more guilt towards me. That really made me laugh. How did I end up meeting someone like her?”

Chapter 905

Arianne sighed. “Forget it. Just feign ignorance. It’s up to Jackson to solve it. Try to avoid talking to Tanya from now on. Regardless of the outcome, she brought this on herself. It has nothing to do with us.”

There was a slight change in Tiffany’s voice. “You’re right. It’s fine. I don’t want to think of anything else. Jackson’s mom is calling me now. I’m going to their company in South Park to report for duty tomorrow. It’ll be far away, but that means that I don’t have to see any of my frustrations. It’ll relieve me. Tanya’s too scared to see you, but if she does, ignore her. I’m pretty sure that she’s lying about her bad health or inability to conceive after the abortion. She’s as strong as an ox! I’m exhausted. Going to bed now. I’ll call you when I arrive and settle in. I’ll come back during the weekend to hang out with you.”

Arianne ended the call. Mark could tell that she was feeling upset, so he asked, “What’s wrong? You’re not eating.”

Arianne shook her head. “Forget it. Thinking about it will only frustrate me even more. I don’t feel like eating anymore. Since you’ve been taking care of the baby all day, you should put him to bed too. That way, you’ll finish the job completely. I’m going to bed.”

Mark checked the time on his watch. It was still really early, yet she was going to bed? Either she was tired from shopping all day, or something was really bothering her. He remembered how difficult Aristotle had been, having caused her a lack of sleep and loss in appetite. Hence, he let her go.

Aristotle started bawling again at night, like a machine in perpetual motion. Mark was left with no choice but to abandon his plan in training Aristotle to sleep independently. The little one would only stop crying if he slept with him and Arianne.

Tiffany drove off the next day before daybreak.

By the time she had found a hotel near the subsidiary company in South Park and settled herself in, it was already 10AM. She had initially planned on reporting for duty according to office working hours to leave a good impression among her colleagues, but the journey wouldn't allow it. She had arrived, and there was no excuse for her to be idle. She freshened up and headed to the office straight away.

This office wasn't as imposing as the West's headquarters, but it wasn't bad either. It was situated on the highest floor of the office building.

After reporting for duty at the human resource department, the human resource manager personally escorted her into the director's office. The director was a thirty year old woman. She was tall and slim. Her name was Amy Velasquez, but everyone in the office called her Amy. She exuded a fashionable air from top to toe, probably due to her line of work. Her short, neat bob, which was cut to her ears, was dyed wine-red. Her overstated hoop earrings matched perfectly with her black office wear. The stilettos on her feet were fresh off this year's Summer runway from a prominent luxury brand. She had a stern and severe look about her. This was Tiffany's first impression of her.

Once the human resource manager had left, Amy gave Tiffany a once-over. "I didn't expect you to come in at this hour. Any later and it'd be time for lunch."

Tiffany felt embarrassed. "It was a little far… I drove right over before daybreak. I'm sorry. Don't worry. I'll never be late again."

Amy took out a fashion magazine and flipped it to Tiffany's feature page. "Tiffany Lane, top ten among this year's Contemporary Fashion Arts Competition. Your results aren't bad, but based on your current style, I simply can't put you with the fashion designers."

Tiffany was already cursing internally. She thought that everything would be smooth-sailing for her here. After all, Summer had already left word about her. Unfortunately, she ended up getting taunted by Amy from the moment she entered their doors. She was dressed in regular office wear, conformed to societal norms. However, she did not dye her hair to such an extreme color like Amy and wasn't wearing such flamboyant earrings. Furthermore, she wasn't wearing expensive heels. Did she have to? Everyone wore office wear. Did she have to single herself out like that? She was only a supervisor. It's not like she would be a threat to Amy's position as director!

Chapter 906

Amy stopped criticizing her, probably because it was late enough. "Just get used to the working environment for today. You'll be working with me. Your office desk is ready. It's at the back, from your left."

Tiffany turned her head to the side to look. She was surprised, why would a supervisor be given an office of her own? And it was right across the room from Amy's office too. Her office desk was directly opposite Amy's and had the same interior. Did supervisors hold a high position in the subsidiary company?

"You're not here as supervisor, you're assistant director," Amy explained, as if she had seen through her confusion. "I'm aware of your lack of experience, so I will guide you, as your mentor. Mrs. West has made that very clear."

Assistant director? Wasn't she supposed to be a supervisor? Tiffany panicked. If Jackson found out that she had become assistant director in his subsidiary company, he'd probably go mad! She knew she wasn't good enough for the job. Now, it seemed that Summer had arranged this and passed it off as a supervisor's position to her, afraid that she would refuse to come. In reality, it was a position as assistant director.

'It'll be fine. Amy looks perfectly capable.' She should be able to gradually handle the job with Amy leading the way. However… had Amy mocked her because she was afraid of her taking her position?

Amy was probably feeling threatened by her, right? She was suddenly promoted to assistant director out of nowhere. This was blatant nepotism…

She forced a smile and thanked her then headed to her desk and sat down, feeling uneasy. “Amy… Oh, sorry. Miss Velasquez, how often does Jackson West pay a visit to this office?”

Amy glanced at her. “He doesn’t. Things are pretty hectic in the main headquarters. How could Mr. West possibly find the time to visit so often? Wouldn’t we have nothing else to do if he had to take care of everything?”

Tiffany heaved a sigh of relief. “That’s good.”

She didn’t do a thing on her first day, except for sitting at her desk and staring into space and circling around the office. Amy had no plans of giving her any work.

She returned to her hotel room after work, laid down on her bed, and called Summer. “Mrs. West, I thought we agreed that I’d only be a supervisor? Why did you promote me to assistant director? It’s not like you’re not aware of my abilities… I think we’d better just call it quits?”

Summer wasn’t worried about her at all. “Oh, don’t you worry. You have Amy to help you out. Why are you so worried? Just do your best and leave everything else to other people. Isn’t it good to work in peace and get paid for it? You get the same amount of salary as Amy. I’m nice to you, aren’t I? Don’t overthink. Just stay there and do your job.”

Tiffany sometimes felt that Summer was even kinder to her than her own mother. That’s why she felt so apologetic. “Thank you, Mrs. West…”

Summer fell momentarily silent for two seconds, then changed the subject. “Tiffie, I’ve heard of that thing between Tanya and Jackson. A woman like her will never enter our West family’s threshold. Even if I approved of her, Jackson would never agree to it anyway. I’m sure that you’ve suffered the most in this. Tanya has no family and sought shelter from you and Arianne in the capital, then finally set her sights on her best friend’s man. Who does she think she is? I will never let her deliver that piece of flesh in her womb to the world.”

Chapter 907

Tiffany stared up at the ceiling and calmly replied, “I’m sorry for disappointing you. It’s my fault that this happened… It’s not Jackson’s fault at all.” If only she had gone to see Jackson sooner, Tanya wouldn’t have had the chance to do anything at all. She had internally cursed herself countless times before. Unfortunately, it’d already happened. What could she possibly do now?

Summer was the kind of person who never pushed things too far. She had brought up the subject because she knew that Tiffany was already aware of it. She couldn’t bring herself to feign ignorance, as she didn’t want to feel estranged. “Alright, let’s drop the subject. You have a good rest and do your best at work. Call me if you run into any problems. You’ve always been like a daughter to me. If I had to slap either you or Jackson, I’d slap Jackson. Good night.”

Tiffany sent a message to Arianne after the call to tell her that she had arrived safely. She was extremely exhausted, probably because she had to drive out early in the morning. She couldn’t be bothered with dinner and fell fast asleep.

The Tremont Estate.

Arianne relaxed when she saw Tiffany’s message. The thick-skinned and insensitive Tiffany whom she knew was finally spreading her wings. Humans were bound to grow up someday. The process may involve a lot of heartache, but it was necessary.

She turned around and gazed at her son, feeling helpless. For as long as this little one remained a little one, she would never have the freedom to pursue her dreams. She suddenly felt jealous of Tiffany. At least, Tiffany had her freedom.

Tanya received a contract from the Wests the next day, in the afternoon.

She read every, cold and harsh word on the contract and felt as if she had been shoved into an ice box.

The details in the contract were very clear, just like what Summer and Jackson had said. If she aborted the child, she would receive appropriate compensation. If she refused the abortion, they would not force her into it, but would never give her any money for raising the child. The conditions in the contract emphasized repeatedly that if she insisted on doing it her way and delivering this accidental child, she would lose all rights to any compensation fees. She knew what it meant once she signed the contract.

She stared at the lawyer who had brought the contract and asked, “Can a contract like this be put into effect? Jackson will have to be responsible for this baby, as long as the DNA results say that it belongs to him. What could they possibly do if I signed this contract?”

The lawyer rubbed his eyes behind his glasses and replied in a professional manner, “Miss Anderson, let me explain, my client has no memory of how this child was conceived. From his point of view, it was an accident. Of course, that does not eliminate the possibility that you may have resorted to some unscrupulous methods. Mr. West has requested for you to abort the baby to avoid any further disputes. He will do his best to fulfill your demands for compensation. However, if you insist on delivering the baby, as its father, Mr. West will not approve of it. The law may be on your side and we have no right to force you into an abortion; however, aren’t you having this baby for the sake of child care expenses? I’m rather suspicious of your actions.”

“Since he’s refused to marry me or acknowledge my baby, I’m giving birth to it for child care expenses. What’s wrong with that?” she asked through gritted teeth.

Chapter 908

The lawyer smiled. “You have a rather special technique in extortion, quite feisty. It looks like you won’t be signing this contract, then. Allow me to inform you on the follow-up procedure for child care expenses. First, you’ll have to prove that Mr. West is indeed the father of your baby. Then, you’ll have to submit an appeal for child care expenses. If Mr. West refuses, this procedure will be lengthened. You’re a girl, all alone, and without any income. Can you go through this pregnancy? Think about it, carefully. I’ll take my leave.”

Tanya angrily swept the cup on the coffee table onto the ground as she watched the lawyer walk away. She was determined to give birth to this baby, even if she received nothing from it in the end. She may be alone, but she had nothing to worry about. As long as this child existed… As long as she insisted that it belonged to Jackson West, it would always be a thorn in Tiffany Lane’s side. If she couldn’t have him, Tiffany would never have him either! Her survival was of no one’s concern!

Besides… As long as she had this baby, Jackson might come to his senses one day and accept her and the baby willingly…

The lawyer called Jackson to inform him of Tanya’s refusal to sign the contract. Jackson, in his frustration, called Summer. “Mom, Tanya won’t sign. This baby cannot be born. If that happens, we’ll never have a day of peace! I have absolutely no recollection from that night. It was definitely an accident…”

Summer scoffed. “What ‘accident’? Don’t be so naive. There are plenty of girls like Tanya, thinking that if they can get pregnant by any means possible, they’ll be able to elevate their status. You’ve been played, and you’re still under the impression that it was an accident. Women know women the best. Don’t be concerned with this nonsense. Take care of the company. I’m going to pay Tanya a visit.”

Summer ended the call immediately after that, then told the chauffeur to get the car ready to see Tanya.

Atticus, worried that she would cause an even bigger scene, advised her. “You’d better keep that temper of yours in check. Try to settle this as peacefully as possible.”

Summer rolled her eyes at him. “Settle it peacefully? I know that, obviously. Am I supposed to slap her? Does she really think that we’d surrender to her, just because she’s come up with a few casual tricks? How dare she? Is our family that gullible? Even if I compromise and Jackson marries her, I’ll feel disgusted at the very sight of her and that baby every day and night from that moment on! I can’t let that happen. Never!”

Atticus was still feeling hesitant. “Darling… Isn’t that girl Tanya an orphan? She has no family. It won’t reflect well on us if we continue doing this to her. We’ll look like bullies, taking advantage of a lonely child.”

Summer’s eyes flashed dangerously. “What the hell are you talking about? Are we supposed to take her home, let her carry her pregnancy into full term, and let her deliver this baby in peace, then let her continue hurting our entire family? I’m not that hard-hearted. I’m not as cruel as you think I am. She was cruel to us first. What else can I do? As long as she aborts the baby, I’ll give her all the money she wants. I would not be treating her this way if this was really Jackson’s mistake. But it’s obviously not. It’s all part of her plan! Unfortunately, Tiffie even saw her as a friend. Did she really deserve that? That’s why I’m so disgusted with her!”

Atticus was rendered speechless. He finally spoke again after a while. “Fine, fine, fine. Deal with it however you like. I won’t meddle. This is a matter between women, so it’s better for you to deal with it amongst yourselves. I won’t get involved. Whatever it is, mind your temper and don’t make things worse. It’ll be bad for our reputation.”

Summer kept quiet—a silent form of agreement.

Chapter 909

Summer arrived at the condo. Of course, she wasn't going to put on a calm facade. She knocked on the door until Tanya opened it, then pulled out $30,000 in cash straight away. "$30,000. Count the money yourself. It'll be enough to cover the abortion and all the nutrition you'll need after that."

Tanya stared at the pile of cash on the table and felt as if her dignity had suffered the greatest blow. "Rich people certainly have a fondness for using money as an insult to others, don't you think? I may be poor, but I still have my dignity."

"Oh, really?" Summer smirked. "Where is your dignity? Why can't I see it? A girl with true dignity would never visit a man's house in the dead of the night. She would never take advantage of others, and she certainly wouldn't blackmail others for child care expenses after getting pregnant with a bastard. If I were you, this matter would only ever be an accident, and I would abort the baby without hesitation. That's what it means to leave with dignity! Your dignity means absolutely nothing to you. How can you expect any respect from anyone else?"

"How are you so certain that it was an accident?" Tanya argued righteously. "How dare you accuse me of taking advantage? No one can ever confirm what really happened that night!"

Summer stared at her disdainfully. "Alright, we won't discuss it, since there's no confirmation. Let's say that it was Jackson's fault. You want a statement? I'll give you a statement. We'll never accept this child. If this amount of money isn't enough for you, I'm open for further discussion."

Tanya turned very pale in the face. "You're just a bully!" she cried, trembling all over.

Summer was amused. “How am I bullying you? Let’s pretend that it was an accident. You have feelings for Jackson, but he does not have feelings for you. Our family does not plan on accepting you. The birth of this child doesn’t just concern you, but our entire family as well. Of course, we’ll have to discuss the most suitable course of action. How is this intimidating to you? If money is what you want, just say it. If it’s not, and you’re simply in love with Jackson, why won’t you sign the contract? If you signed it, it would prove that you really did it out of love and not money. Yet, you’ve refused to sign it. Isn’t that clear enough? Since you’re doing this for money and we don’t want the baby, we can solve this with money.”

Tanya remained silent, her eyes glistened with tears. She didn’t know what she wanted anymore. Did she want money? She stared at the pile of cash in front of her and felt nothing. Did she want him? Jackson was never going to give her a second look…

However, she did not want to compromise. She felt as if the world was against her, that everyone was pushing her around. She refused to surrender!

Summer’s heart softened when she saw the look on her face. This girl had no one. She couldn’t bring herself to be that cruel. She softened her tone and said, “Tanya, think about it. What good will giving birth to this child do to you? Let’s discuss this peacefully and come up with a solution for everyone’s benefit. Nothing good ever comes from force. You know that Jackson doesn’t love you.”

Tanya wiped away her tears and replied in a cold voice, “Did you know? Every time I watched you shower Tiffany with care, I’d always feel so jealous. That’s not all, Jackson’s wholly devoted to her too. Even her friends are outstanding. She has Mrs. Tremont, Arianne, as her best friend. And me? I have nothing. I am like an ugly duckling covered in dirt next to her. I thought we could be friends, at first. But I later realized that I could never be her friend—we were from completely different worlds. I was jealous, but I really do have feelings for Jackson. What’s wrong with that? Is falling in love with your friend’s ex-boyfriend such a grievous sin? It happened, I’m pregnant. You’re all hell-bent on making me get rid of this baby, treating me like an ugly demon. How do you think that feels? I won’t give you what you want. I will deliver this baby, no matter how hard it will be. I’m gambling on the fact that you’ll never be able to fully ignore it!”

Summer was both angry and helpless. “You’re in the middle of a struggle between life and death. You’re determined to drag everyone down to hell with you, for as long as you’re not happy! You’re completely twisted! You’ve seen right through every single one of us; you understand us completely. That’s why you have the guts to insist on delivering this baby. Yes, our conscience will prickle if we ignore this baby. However, everything you’re doing will only serve to harden our hearts. You’re certainly welcome to try. We won’t care, no matter how tragic your life becomes! I’m going to ask you this, one more time—will you get rid of the baby?”

Chapter 910

“No, I won’t!” Tanya was just as resolute as ever. “Go ahead, make me get rid of it. I dare you!”

Summer pointed her finger at her and snapped angrily, “It’s a shame that Tiffie and Jackson were so kind to you. They pitied you because you had no one. How is this any different from leading a wolf into the house? People like you are destined to live out a miserable life! You’ve brought this on yourself! Tiffie’s family now isn’t considered suitable for the Wests either. Tiffie received my approval because she’s different from you. There’s a difference between material poverty and mental poverty. Do you understand me?”

Was this her fate? Summer’s words seemed to have struck a chord in Tanya. She rose to her feet and smacked Summer’s hand away. “You don’t get to decide how my life turns out!”

“How dare you put your hand on me?” Summer was shocked by Tanya’s retaliation.

“Out! Get out!” Tanya screamed in heavy gasps. “Get out of my house! I’ll never sign that contract! I will give birth to this baby. I will make sure that this baby’s existence will be on everyone’s minds. You're right. I’m hell bent on dragging you all down with me, as long as I’m not happy! Tiffany can never turn a blind eye to this. Any chance of a relationship between her and Jackson is destroyed! You love Tiffany Lane, don’t you? You want her to be your daughter-in-law, don’t you? Unfortunately, that’s never going to happen! Since you’re all insisting on treating me like this, I won’t tolerate it any longer!”

Summer had lost it. She threw a slap across Tanya's face. "You uneducated spawn! I'll teach you a lesson in your parents' place!"

Tanya cradled her flaming cheek with tears in her eyes. Angry flames were now spilling out from the depths of her heart. She lunged at Summer and pushed her onto the ground. Whispers of idle gossip and abuse from her childhood began to echo in her ears.

"Your father is a murderer. Your mom has run away. No one wants you."

"You're a bast*rd. Nothing good can ever come from a murderer's daughter."

"Like father, like daughter. The daughter of a murder will grow up and become a murderer one day… Stay away from her…"

That's right, she had been keeping a huge secret—her parents were alive. Her grandfather wasn't her only relative. Her father was thrown in prison and had not been released. He was sentenced to prison for life…

She was only four years old when her father went to prison and her mother ran away. She had long forgotten what they looked like. Her grandfather had been the only person in her life since her childhood. No one else but her grandfather had ever shown her any kindness. In her neighbors' eyes, she was nothing more than the daughter of a murderer…