Ruling 911

Chapter 911

None of it was her fault, yet she had to take the blame. And for what? There was nothing fair about shouldering guilts that were not of her doing! And why the hell must Summer bring up these sealed painful memories back to the fore?!

When reason finally reclaimed her, Tanya released her clutch from Summer's neck in terror, crying, "Oh my God… Oh, my God! I'm sorry! I'm sorry, I didn't mean to. I'm sorry! Please don't scream at me for this… Please stop tormenting me with those words…"

Summer's hands quickly wrapped around her own neck before shoving the woman away from her. "Cough.. You were trying to kill me! Cough, cough… You… You're mad!" she shrieked between sputters.

Tanya's tears broke out as she shook her head, over and over again. "N-No! I didn't! I didn't… I didn't; I didn't, I didn't want to kill you... I'm sorry, I.."

The extreme flip-flop in Tanya's demeanor mortified Summer to the core. What was that, a window into Tanya's split personality? Frightened, the older woman turned and bolted out of the apartment. She was not going to stay a second longer, lest something even more terrifying happen!

Tanya noticed the money Summer left behind, so she quickly pulled out a bag, stuffed them into it, and raced after her. "Aunt Summer! Your money! I don't want it! Take it away!"

Summer did not dare look back. Instead, she clambered into her car and yelled at the driver, "Go go go! Back home!"

Tanya was fast, however. She caught up to the car and yanked the door open forcefully, pushing the bag inside. “I don’t want your money! A-And it was all my fault just now. Please, forgive me!”

Summer said nothing. It was only when the car hit the asphalt road that she finally let out a long, drawn-out breath.

She really thought she was about to die by Tanya’s hands back in the apartment. Just thinking back on it chilled her to the bones!

The first thing Summer did after reaching home was to take a quick hot shower before lying down on her bed as bleariness seized her. She had come down with a sickness, she realized. Older people were not known for their resistance to shock and scare, Summer remembered, which meant she was officially one of the senior citizens now.

Atticus watched her with worry in his eyes. “What’s the matter, dear? What happened to you? Should we send you to the hospital?”

“I’m fine,” Summer replied, shaking her head. “I’m just… so shocked! Oh my God, Atticus, that Tanya suddenly went rabid and wrapped her fingers around my neck. She was trying to kill me, Atticus! I’m never going back to see her again, and Jackson isn’t going to, either! I don’t know what kind of horrors that woman could put him through. I’m terrified for the only son I have! That woman is mentally ill! Quick… Call your son!”

Atticus worried that any more extreme emotions from her could worsen her sickness, so he opted to obey Summer. “Fine, fine. I’ll call him right now, okay? Just calm yourself down and lie comfortably, alright? If you’re feeling really, really bad, I’ll take you to the hospital.”

Atticus briefly recounted everything to Jackson as soon as the call connected, to the latter’s growing lividity. “She did what to my mom now?!”

Atticus was worried that his son would do something in the heat of the moment, so he quickly moved in to defuse his rage. “Your mom, Jackson, is alright. Please, don’t imagine it to be something ludicrous. In fact, your mom explicitly said that you should never go look for Tanya ever again because she doesn’t want anything bad to happen to you. Oh, God, give me strength. This whole ordeal is a tangled mess! Jesus…”

Of course, Jackson had tuned all of his father’s advice out of his head — it had happened the moment he was told his mother’s life was at stake. There was no way Jackson could act as though nothing had happened.

Immediately, he put down all of his work and drove to Tanya’s apartment.

Chapter 912

The rappings on the door prompted a listless Tanya to roll out of her bed before heading toward it. She was too tired to wonder who her visitor might be.

She yanked the door open to a furious Jackson and froze, entirely at a loss of how to react.

The man who so desperately wanted to avoid her had come looking for her.

“If you really want to beat the sh*t out of someone, you come to me! Leave my mom alone!” Jackson fumed, his hands balled into fists. It was not in his nature to hit women, so even at his angriest, he stopped himself from acting on his impulse.

Tanya reeled back in understanding. The memory of what happened earlier caused her to lower her head in shame.

“I didn’t mean to do it,” she whispered. “I know, it doesn’t matter what hurtful things your mom said. I shouldn’t have lost control of my emotions and lashed out… I’m sorry. If she requires medical assistance or anything, I’ll pay. All I’m asking is that you people stop it, please. Stop forcing me into desperation.”

Jackson had lost his ability to sympathize with Tanya. “Quit that irritating façade of being ashamed, for f**k’s sake. What’s done cannot be undone! Hell, if it weren’t for the fact that you are pregnant, I wouldn’t have stopped my knuckles!”

Suddenly, Tanya looked up to meet his gaze, tears trickling down her cheeks. “I didn’t mean to hurt her, I swear. I’m just fed up with being hated as ‘a murderer’s daughter’ all my life! I want to live like everyone else too! But why... Why does it seem like I’ll never belong anywhere? All I dream of is living happier and better than my stupid past. All I ever wanted was to leave these stupid shadows behind me, all these unfair, traumatic shadows! I want to be free from them! Why does the world keep making it seem like I’m wrong? I… I didn’t want it to have happened, Jackson. I was just so overwhelmed by my emotions…”

Jackson was stunned. A “murderer’s daughter”? It was the sort of phrase that managed to stir him more than any amount of tears Tanya could squeeze out of her eyes. Jackson had not a mote of interest in the woman’s past, but he had to admit that it caused him quite a shock. Now, he found himself wondering what exactly Summer said to have caused them to fight.

“What did my mom say to you?” he asked stiffly.

“She doesn’t know anything about my past, so when we were quarreling, she… She called me an uneducated spawn. It brought back painful memories of my childhood, and, uh, I lost it. But it doesn’t matter who’s right or wrong in other matters, does it? In this one, I alone did wrong. I apologize,” Tanya answered, tucking a lock of hair behind her ear. Her tone was that of resignation. “If you’re here for payback, then go for it. Do whatever you think is fair. An eye for an eye. I won’t blame you if you hit me back.”

Jackson, naturally, would not do any of that. Instead, he answered her placidly, “My mom doesn’t know your background. That’s why she said what she said. So I guess this evens things out, then. Also, if you’re adamant about keeping that baby, then I guess our negotiation is going nowhere and I’m not gonna waste anyone’s time trying to bring it up again. Do whatever the f**k you want. I don’t give a damn. Your life is a mess, and now you’re infecting my life to be just as bleak and a clusterf**k. If that makes you happy, then power to you. I don’t care anymore.”

He was so unemotive when he spoke that one could tell he had given up fixing the fiascos in his life. To Tanya, in particular, his lethargy made her heart sink. Did losing Tiffany truly mean so much to him?

Just as he spun on his heels and readied to leave, Tanya suddenly called out, “No, wait! Please, if you can… Please come inside and have a chat with me?”

Jackson paused in mid-track. His back remained facing Tanya when he glanced at his wristwatch impatiently. “Five minutes. Make it short.”

Tanya bit her lips. “Please, just come in and chat with me for a bit. Yes, you hate me, I know that. But just this once, okay?”

Jackson turned around and glowered at her in disgust. “What, another scheme brewing in your head again? What else is there for us to chat about? Maybe I would have said yes before that night, since you are my woman’s friend. But now? Whenever I look at you, all I see is scum.”

His words stung Tanya into a fluster. “There’s no scheme, alright? Please, stop… Stop seeing me like this. I beg you.”

Jackson hesitated for a moment before entering the room and taking a seat on a rather messy couch, though the snappish impatience in his mien didn’t fade. Part of him wondered why Tanya, known for her cleanliness, made such a mess of her home. But most of him thought the question trivial and utterly undeserving of his concern.

Chapter 913

Tanya shut the door and began to recount her past without any prompt. “I was a young girl, about four years old, I think, when people started saying that my dad killed a man.

“From then on, dad disappeared from my life. Mom left me. I had no one else but my grandpa. The people around me were always so eager and happy to remind me that I’m a murderer’s daughter whenever they saw me. They told their kids to never play with me, and then, for countless times… they beat me. They treated me like… like sh*t. Grandpa was scared that all of it was going to ruin me, so he sacrificed all of the money he had saved and took me out of the town I was born in and rented a house in the city.

“I was eight by then, but the trauma of being seen as nothing but a murderer’s daughter haunts me. I can’t break free. I tried to be good. I follow my grandpa’s advice. I smile at everyone and treat everyone right because grandpa told me that no matter how bad my life started out to be, anyone who smiles will

always be rewarded with decent luck. He said God would eventually smile back at me, too… I've always been the type who could do manual labor, the type who doesn't mind back-breaking jobs that most people would shy from. I've been tagging along grandpa for so many odd jobs—sweeping the streets, menial labor, everything. And every day, I wish and dream that one day, just one day, I'll be freed from the quagmire whence I came—"

At this point, Jackson could not stop himself from interrupting at the spot. "Did you just force me to sit on your couch just so you could have an audience for your sob story? Well, I'm not interested at all. People like you don't deserve any pity or sympathy. And all the crap you've been through? Not our problem."

Tanya took in a deep breath and mustered a pained smile. "Yes, I know that very, very well now. You won't ever accept me, nor will you love the baby. I lost. I lost completely. But if I could start all over and erase this entire fiasco, would you… Would you go back to treating me kindly again? Would you be able to consider it as a stupid mistake?" she said. "Once, I thought all I wanted was money and to occupy a spot higher than most. But now, I know. When you and Tiffany debuted in my life, you were the stars that shined the brightest. I'm so sorry for loving you, Jackson. So sorry that I love you so much that I ruined the kindness all of you had shown me. I'm so scared of being alone, and I regret it now…"

Jackson's suspicion flared up a bit. How could any of this be "erased"? Unless, of course, the child was not him, and nothing had come to pass that night, to begin with. Honestly, Jackson was so drunk that he had lost all recollection of the night after the blackout.

Naturally, that would also mean that Jackson was utterly incapable of doing anything to Tanya. But how else was he supposed to explain that blood on his bed? That splot was the real reason why Jackson had no confidence in claiming anything.

After a long moment of silence, Jackson finally spoke. "Tell me the truth. Did anything happen that night? Is that baby inside of you really mine?"

Just when Tanya was about to answer him, her phone suddenly rang.

She glanced at the screen, and her expression shifted a little. “I… I need to take this,” she stammered, before rushing into her bedroom and locking herself inside.

A steely male voice came through from the other side. “Jackson is at your place right now, isn’t he? What are you two chatting about, hmm? Your resolve isn’t wavering now, is it”

Tanya hesitated. “I… I honestly think that I’ve done too much. So what if I wanted to live the life of the rich and privileged? I haven’t even begun to get any of that, and already I’m losing too much. I lost two of my only friends. The person I care about and love will never look at me if he could help it. Jackson simply won’t accept me. In that case, doubling down on this is meaningless. I should just resign to reality and come clean, you know. Tell him nothing had happened. Tell him he isn’t the father—"

The man on the other side sneered. “Those who easily falter are doomed to never achieve what they want—you’re undoubtedly one of these schnooks. You’ve sacrificed so much for this, advancing down this path, that you’ve long passed the point of no return, Tanya. What does you naivety believe would happen if you ‘come clean’? Do you really think Arianne and Tiffany would go back to being your friends? Don’t be daft. You’ll always be the ugly duckling who will never belong. If I were you, my plan from now on would be to birth the baby just as planned; I’d be focusing on nurturing that fetus right now. Don’t worry… I’ll transfer the funds you need very soon.”

Before Tanya could say anything, the call ended.

She gripped her phone hard as she debated with herself. Should she tell the truth? Would it bring Tiffany and Arianne back to her?

Would Jackson go back to treating her with kindness again?

Chapter 914

Tanya walked out of her room and found out that Jackson had left her already. Dejected, she sank onto the couch like a puppet with broken strings.

A few moments passed. Finally, she sent a text message to the man who had called her earlier: ‘I want to see you.’

The man appeared by her doorstep exactly by three in the afternoon. He stood tall and straight as he showcased his handsome features. Jackson West may inspire more women to fantasize being with him, but this man boasted quite a presence, too.

Tanya had only seen him a few times; three of them were for the sex that eventually led to the conception of the fetus inside her now. Other times were during Tiffany’s meals with Alejandro Smith.

Indeed, the man was none other than Jett.

Tanya was visibly embarrassed when talking to him. After all, he was the real father of the child, despite being someone she did not know all that well.

“Look, can I abort this kid, and then come clean to Jackson? I’m done doing this. He’s never going to receive me with warm, open arms. I give up,” she began.

Jett regarded her with a poker face. “If you’re disinterested in continuing, then I guess I can’t force you otherwise. But I hope you have considered your options and results. We had a deal right from the beginning—we supposedly share the goal of bringing victories to both parties. Backing out now is no different from making things hard for me. It also means you’re renouncing everything we have promised to give you.”

Tanya nodded firmly. “And I don’t need any. I’m content with shouldering the consequences myself. Alejandro stands a pretty good chance of getting Tiffany, but I’ll never ever mean anything in Jackson’s heart. Never. So, I don’t want to continue down this doomed road until I turn into a scum that disgusts even myself.”

Jett furrowed his eyebrows. “Well, if you’ve made up your mind, then I guess this is it.”

He suddenly yanked out the recording wire Alejandro had made him wear and broke its cords before exclaiming, “Are you nuts, woman? Do you have any idea that you’re putting your life in jeopardy with this? My God! I’ve never met a woman that’s dafter than you. This is the sort of thing that you either choose not to do right from the start or see through it to its bitter end!”

Tanya was confused. “What… What’s the matter? Did you just say I’m staking my life? Look, Jett, I just don’t want to continue with this drama anymore. Doesn’t mean I’m going to rat any of you out.”

Jett paused for a beat before casting her a question. “Excuse you! You think Alejandro is going to trust you with your words? You’re trippin’; you don’t know jack about him. To prevent future threats coming from you, he will make sure you’re silenced forever! I’m the fetus’ biological father, so he won’t ask me to finish you. In other words, you watch your own back. I can’t help you now.”

With that, Jett turned away and left Tanya alone.

Tanya's face turned as white as a sheet after fear drained all of the color from her. Beads of sweat began precipitating on her forehead.

Back then, Alejandro had come to her with a stratagem, outlining his desire to possess Tiffany and asking for Tanya's cooperation. He knew she was smitten with Jackson, and he intended to use it.

Alejandro's only goal was to make sure Tiffany and Jackson would never be together. From there, it took only a little more persuasion to appeal to the green-eyed monster residing in Tanya's mind until, in the heat of the moment, she gave in and agreed to the pact.

Chapter 915

Tanya had slipped in a drug into Jackson's drink that night. That was the real reason why he had been so thoroughly knocked-out, and why it was impossible to have him do anything, let alone sex. The blood on the sheet? Tanya staged it.

Per Alejandro's scheme, she had sex with Jett three times. The best-case scenario was to make Tanya pregnant and to make the conception seem as realistically tied to the hoax as possible. Even if she did not manage to get impregnated on time, Tanya was supposed to fake it until she made it. Even the worst-case scenario—if Tanya just could not get pregnant—had contingency plans.

She had been overjoyed and relieved when she succeeded in her pregnancy. But now, looking back, all she had achieved was shackling herself with a self-made burden.

For her pregnancy, and also because she was too ashamed to continue working for Eric, Tanya had been subsisting on Alejandro's allowance after she quit her job. It was Alejandro who paid for her livelihood,

which was why his cruelty shocked the woman so much. She had not expected the man to go straight after her life the moment she started to rue her choice. She underestimated how desperate he was to save his skin, how mortified he was at the prospect of Tiffany knowing the truth!

Jett might have warned her about her fate, but Tanya was still terrified of it. Amidst her fear, the only person she thought she could seek help from was Jackson.

Tanya must tell him everything before asking for protection from him.

Before she could make this critical call, however, she heard a knock on her door, which came sudden enough to send shivers down her body. Gingerly, she crept behind the door and looked through the spyhole.

To her relief, it was just Jett. She yanked the door open, completely forgetting the fact that he was also Alejandro's right hand man. Two large, muscular men in black suits, stylistically similar to Jett's, barged into the room immediately and grabbed hold of poor Tanya. Before she could let out a scream, one of them clamped his hand over her mouth, muffling her.

Jett stared ahead with faint sympathy flickering in his eyes, his hand holding onto his phone that was live-feeding the incident to Alejandro.

It was the man's test for Jett. Alejandro knew he was an underling of Don Smith, the elderly family head of the Smiths, so the former never truly trusted the latter's pledge of loyalty. That was why, shortly after Jett descended the stairs of the apartment, he found himself face-to-face with the two burly men Alejandro had sent to collect Tanya's life. To protect himself, Jett ultimately chose to abandon Tanya's welfare and led the men into her home.

Tears glistening in Tanya's eyes magnified her desperate plea when she cast them at Jett.

Three men in the house, and Jett was the only person Tanya could trust. He was the father of her child and the man who had warned her just a few minutes earlier. He was her only hope!

Jett clenched his jaw so hard, the hand holding his phone shook slightly. Then, he averted his gaze and shut the main door.

The last light of hope in Tanya's heart died along with his action.

The men effortlessly carried her to the window in her bedroom and placed her in position. A little push, and Tanya would fall out of the window and become a splattering mess of flesh and bones—two lives, gone in one fell swoop.

Suddenly, Jett took off his blazer and shouted, "J-Jackson West!" before hurtling his phone onto the floor, smashing it into pieces and cutting off his connection with Alejandro. In a flash, he swiped a wooden stick from the corner of a wall and swung it hard toward the back of the men's heads.

These men had partnered with Jett for a good few years, so they did not anticipate his abrupt heel-face turn. They blacked out before they could react to the commotion.

Tanya's eyes scanned her surroundings, reeling from the thrills of the sudden turn of the event before breaking down into happy tears. She lived. Jett saved her.

Panting, Jett handed the stick to her. “Hit me.”

“Why?” she cried, baffled. The “stick” was originally the handle of an old broken mop she had kept in the hopes that it could be useful for something someday. In retrospect, it seemed almost prescient.

Jett shoved the stick into Tanya’s hand. “Because this is the only way to protect both you and me, dum-dum! Do you know why I shouted Jackson West’s name? That’s because Jackson is the only guy with the skills to beat up three grown-a** men by himself! That makes him our perfect scapegoat. If we don’t use him like that, Alejandro isn’t gonna believe my account at all!” he cried. “So grab this goddamn stick and whoop my a** already! Then go and look for Jackson and tell him every f**king thing about this and do whatever the f**k you want to do. This is as far as I could go to help you, alright? And one last thing. The child inside you? Abort it! Keeping it will only bring you troubles!”

Tanya had never done anything close to this before. All of the strength she could muster was only enough to hold the stick upright as she shivered and murmured, “I… I can’t do it…”

“Do you want these goons to wake up and throw you out of the window?” Jett urged. “Come on, do it already!”

Chapter 916

Tanya gritted her teeth and smacked the rod against Jett’s shoulder. “Are you trying to scratch my back?” Jett growled. “Do you really think that a fight with Jackson would be that easy? Break my bones. I didn’t save you for nothing! Do it!”

Tanya knew that if they failed to keep this from Alejandro, Jett would die. Broken bones were nothing compared to death. She hardened her resolve and whacked Jett with all of her might. She deliberately avoided his head. “Will that do? Does it hurt?” She gasped, holding her slightly hurting abdomen after the beating.

Jett did not answer. He grabbed the small piggy bank on her bedside table and smashed it into his head, shattering the porcelain into pieces. Jett's forehead immediately began to bleed. Tanya widened her eyes in shock, covering her mouth.

"Go!"

Tanya shivered from Jett's roar. She stumbled her way to the door, her legs feeling like cotton. "A-are… you alright? I'm leaving…"

Jett waved his hand then leaned against the wall and lit a cigarette.

Tanya steadied her senses, then left the condo, as if she were running for her life.

Jett looked at the two men next to him and puffed on his cigarette. He had lied to Tanya. The two men had clearly seen him. It would be impossible to keep this from Alejandro, and he couldn't silence them by killing them because Jackson would never kill. If he silenced them, it would be equivalent to exposing himself. He wasn't going to get away with this, no matter what.

Tanya arrived downstairs, hailed a cab, and gave Jackson's office address. Only then was she able to calm down. Humans were naturally afraid of death, and she had nearly lost her life!

She contacted Jackson before arriving at his office, insisting that she absolutely had to see him, immediately. She knew that Jackson would agree to see her again, on account of the fact that nothing had happened that night.

She had just gotten out of the cab when she arrived at the office and Jackson pulled her to an obscure corner. “What the hell do you want? Tell me, now!”

She had just had a near death experience, so she looked rather wretched. Her clothes were a mess and she looked very haggard. “Nothing happened that night! I put something in your drink, and I put the blood on the sheets too. The baby in my womb isn’t yours either!”

Jackson was shocked. “Is that true? Then who’s the father? Did someone make you do this?”

Tanya suddenly remembered Jett and hesitated, before replying, “No one made me do it. I did it willingly. It doesn’t matter who the baby’s father is. You now have an explanation for Tiffany. I know that I don’t deserve your forgiveness after everything that’s happened. That’s all… Goodbye.”

Chapter 917

Jackson didn’t stop her. Justice was restored. It didn’t matter where Tanya was going. He only asked her if someone had forced her into this because he felt that it would be difficult for her to execute this flawlessly on her own. Since she had refused to reveal the father’s identity, he couldn’t be bothered to ask. He suddenly felt relieved…

Tanya was too afraid to go home. She loitered outside for a long time before making a decision — she was going to take the initiative and see Alejandro herself. She knew that neither she nor Jett would survive if she did not confront him. That was why she did not expose Alejandro to Jackson. She had to leave herself with a single thread for survival, or death would be certain.

Her hands were trembling as she called Alejandro. His cold, demonic voice answered her. “Heh, what a surprise. You’ve actually contacted me on your own.”

“Where are you?” she asked, summoning her courage. “I need to see you.”

“Stay where you are and don’t move,” Alejandro said calmly. “I’m sending someone to pick you up.”

Tanya squatted onto the ground, trembling once the call had ended. She continued encouraging herself internally. She had gone through many horrible experiences since childhood anyway. This was nothing. At most, she would die. Since she had chosen to take this step, there was no turning back.

Soon, a black Bentley arrived on the road in front of her. After a bout of hesitation, she got into the car. The driver was silent and simply drove her to Smith Manor.

Neon lights flashed across the streets outside the car window. Everything seemed so peaceful, but she wasn’t in the mood to enjoy it. This bustling city was none of her business. She hated herself for wallowing in the quagmire, unbelievably filthy, dismal, and malicious.

When she arrived at the manor, the tall chauffeur watched her as she got down from the car, as if afraid that she would try to escape. It was a scorching summer day, but she felt cold all over. She couldn’t help hugging herself as she carefully walked ahead.

She walked past a large antechamber. The driver led her to a secret door and knocked three times rhythmically before the door opened. The stench of blood immediately assailed Tanya's senses, and she was forced to support herself against the door as she retched.

She stared at the scene behind the secret door, her legs trembling violently. She crumpled onto the ground, unable to move. The tall, brawny driver pulled her to her feet and flung her inside. Only then was she able to get a full view of the scene behind the secret door. The room was furnished like a karaoke compartment, dark and dim. An expensive bottle of red wine was placed on top of the half-transparent coffee table. Alejandro sat on the wine-red couch, sipping on wine.

Jett had his hands tied behind his back, slumped on the ground with his body drenched in blood. He looked as if he was close to death. The two men who had tried to push her out the window were holding baseball bats, standing on either side of Jett. There was blood splattered all over the ground, as if Jett had just experienced an inhumane beating.

Alejandro looked at her calmly. "Your courage is commendable, coming all the way here on your own like this. I'm guessing that you're going to tell me that you didn't reveal anything taboo to Jackson West."

Tanya fell onto her knees next to Jett, looking very pale in the face. "Yes… I didn't say a thing. I did not mention you. Tiffany will never find out that you were behind all of this. Please, spare me! Spare Jett! This has nothing to do with him. I won't say a word!"

Alejandro chuckled and got up from the couch.

Chapter 918

Tanya widened her eyes in shock. Wasn't the lower half of his body supposed to be crippled? So, it was all fake!

Alejandro's tall figure seemed to make everything in the room even dimmer. He walked towards Jett and squatted. "See that? A weak little girl has come to me, all for your sake. How does it feel? You can't tell me that you've both developed feelings for each other, right? You've only done it three times. It took three years for me to fall for Tiffany."

Jett exhaled, releasing the smell of blood too. "I was wrong… Sir…"

Alejandro patted Jett's blood-stained face. "It's good to repent once you've realized your mistakes. Don't worry. The old man planted you on me to be his eyes. It'd make things very difficult for me if I kill you. He'd never let himself go blind. This lesson should be enough to carve this deep into your memories. Speak, what do you want from me? Why should I believe that you'd keep your mouths shut? It'd be troublesome if Tiffany discovered any of this…"

Tanya stroked her flat stomach and carefully said, "I swear, I'll never say a word. Not even in death! I'll deliver this baby, if that would ease your mind. Okay? Please… I won't say anything."

Alejandro curled his lips into a cold, cruel smile. "That's right. This is Jett's baby. Jett, do you agree with her? Do you want her to deliver this baby? Seeing as you're both so in love and you're not married, why don't you be together? She was a virgin too when you had sex with her. It's no loss on your end."

Jett looked at Tanya, fell momentarily silent for a few seconds, then said, "I have no objections…"

Alejandro rose to his feet, accepted a glass of red wine from one of his lackeys, and downed it. "Hehe. Now, that sounds right. That way, you'll belong to me, and so will Tanya. You two getting married and having a baby will be a great assurance to me. That way, everyone wins." Then, he lifted his hand. His men understood and untied the rope around Jett.

Tanya dashed forward and helped Jett to his feet. He no longer had the strength to stand at this point. He crawled to Alejandro's feet and declared earnestly, "From now on, I'll follow your every order, sir. Thank you for your generosity!"

Alejandro nodded. "My kindness requires loyalty in exchange. Get well soon. It would be inappropriate to have a lavish wedding for you. Just a registration will do. I believe that you'll keep everything taboo about me under wraps from this day onwards, and you won't be ratting me out to the old man either. I'm tired. You are all dismissed."

…

The Tremont Estate.

Arianne carried her son as she read the message from Mark, smiling with relief.

Mark had told her that he would be back late today, as he was going out for dinner with Jackson and Eric. He did not forget to relay a piece of good news as well, about Jackson and Tanya. She was relieved now that she knew that nothing had happened between them.

She eagerly told Tiffany the good news. Tiffany's reaction seemed very muted though. "Are you expecting me to jump from joy? I'm actually very calm about it. I feel as if it doesn't matter anymore, regardless of what happened. I just want to focus on my career and do my job as assistant director. Could you not discuss feelings with me when I'm focused on my career? I'd have to drive a few hours to see you; such a long journey. I'm completely unaffected. I'm not hurting or excited."

Chapter 919

Arianne refused to believe that Tiffany wasn't feeling happy at all. "Didn't someone say that she wanted to make up with Jackson? It was destroyed when Tanya pulled that trick on us. Now, you've found out that nothing happened in the first place, so why aren't you taking the chance? Are you going to wait for some other woman to swoop in on him again? I've already got a son, but there's still no news on your end. I'm hoping for you to hurry it up and have a daughter with Jackson, so that we can be in-laws."

Tiffany smiled and replied, "Give it a rest. You Tremonts are highly influential. Are you implying that I should social climb? No one can guarantee this. Tell your son that he'll have to wait! I was being rash and impulsive at the time. I'm a lot more rational now. When did I ever say that I wanted to get back together with Jackson? I have to be more reserved. I'm a lady, after all! Alright, I can't chat with you for too long. The director is finally giving me a job to do today. I have to do overtime. I don't have time to yak. We'll talk later."

Once the call had ended, Arianne stared at Aristotle and mumbled, "We'll just wait then. We're men, we can wait. We can even wait ten years and it'd still be fine, right? Your Aunt Tiffie and Uncle Jackson are both very good looking, so I'm sure that their daughter will be very pretty too. We'll just be patient then."

Aristotle was blissfully naive, sucking on his tiny hands too. Arianne was left speechless. "Serious, you're still such a baby. You have no worries. Your daddy's abandoned us and gone off to have a nice meal. Wait for him to come home and let him carry you. Stop tiring me out, okay?"

Henry rushed in and saw Arianne on the living room couch. His expression changed. "Has Mr. Tremont gone out?"

Arianne nodded. "Yes, he's gone out for dinner. You should give him a call if you need anything."

“Mm,” Henry replied and rushed off like a gust of wind. Arianne was surprised. Henry wasn’t all that young anymore but was still quite nimble. Wasn’t he afraid of hurting his back?

Mary watched Henry leave and smiled, mesmerized. “Still pushing himself at that age. His back must be made of iron…”

Arianne giggled. “You certainly have a special kind of focus.”

Mary looked suspiciously bashful. “What are you saying? You shouldn’t make such jokes. Look at how old I am. My dignity still matters, you know.”

Arianne and Mary had long grown close enough to talk about personal matters. “Oh… Why are you so shy with me? My skin’s gotten thicker already, and you’re still acting bashful in front of me. If memory serves, neither you or Henry have partners. You’ve been working together for so many years too. Maybe you should keep each other company? You know each other well, and understand each other. I heartily approve.”

Mary couldn’t take it any longer. “Nonsense! Take the baby to bed. I’m sure that Mr. Tremont will be home late, so there’s no need to wait up for him. Aristotle won’t sleep in his own room these days, so I’m going to change and wash everything in there.”

Arianne did not pursue the topic, seeing as Mary was feeling embarrassed. She carried Aristotle into the bedroom. The little one had been sleeping on the same bed with her and Mark for a few nights. He could go on the entire night without his night feed, as long as he slept with them. He would sleep for a good number of hours too. This really surprised her.

Mark finally dragged himself back home at past 11PM, smelling of alcohol. Arianne was drowsy from her sleep. She felt someone kiss her on the cheek and opened one eye to confirm that it was Mark, then asked, “Back so late?”

Mark’s tall figure slipped into the bathroom in the darkness. “Mm, it’s only once in a while.”

Chapter 920

The sounds of water splashing in the shower prevented Arianne from going back to sleep. She sat up and began fiddling with her phone. Aristotle, who was next to her, was fast asleep. He had a set of imaginative sleeping positions, which was why the little one took up so much space on the bed.

Mark emerged from the shower and found her sitting on the bed. “What’s wrong? Can’t sleep?” he asked in surprise.

She looked at him and continued playing with her phone. “Mm, I’ll go back to bed again later. Aristotle and I slept much earlier, so I’m not that tired at the moment. I think it’s about time to feed Smore soon. He won’t be able to sleep through the night if he sleeps too early. By the way, what happened between Tanya and Jackson? How did Tanya manage to do it so flawlessly? And she actually managed to get pregnant too. Who’s the father?”

Mark shook his head. “I’m not sure. Jackson asked, but Tanya refused to say. It doesn’t matter whose baby it is, as long as it’s not Jackson’s. Tanya drugged Jackson that night, so nothing happened. You can relax now, and stop worrying about it.”

She remembered that Henry had suddenly burst through the doors, looking for Mark, and said, “Henry was looking for you when he arrived home just now, but you were out having dinner. He left after I told him that you’d gone out. Why was he looking for you? He seemed to be in a hurry. I was so worried that he’d throw off his back.”

Mark paused as he dried his hair. “Well… We’ve found your aunt and uncle. They left the country and went on a long vacation, probably spent all the money, and were forced to come home. My staff found them once they returned. I’m too busy to concern myself with them today, so I told Henry to put them in a hotel. I’ll see them tomorrow.”

Arianne looked straight up at him. “You’ve found them? No, I have to see them too! I want to ask them why they’d do such a thing. They nearly killed me and our baby! They killed my grandmother! My grandmother raised Zoey, despite the fact that she wasn’t her biological daughter. They cleaned out my grandmother’s money, and still had the nerve to do such a thing. I’d love to hear their excuses!”

Mark stared helplessly at Aristotle, who was slowly roused from his sleep. “Keep your voice down. You’ve woken the baby. Fine. You can see them tomorrow. Come with me in the morning. I’ll go to the office after the interrogation. I know that you’re worried that I might hurt them. Don’t worry. I won’t do a thing to them without your consent.”

Arianne felt uncomfortable, as he had seen right through her. She was worried. Knowing everything he’d done, she wouldn’t peg him for a kind and harmless lamb. She quietly picked Aristotle up and fed him to conceal the slightly tensed situation.

Mark noticed this and stroked her hair in a nonchalant manner, then lowered his head to tease his son. “Enjoy your meal. Go to sleep once you’re done. Be a good boy tonight, okay?”

During the night, Aristotle wasn’t as lively as he was in the daytime. He fell asleep after he had his fill. Arianne carefully placed him back on the bed and covered him with his blanket. Mark wrapped his arm around her waist in the next second.

Her body went limp. “Go to bed. It’s late…” she whispered.

He pressed his body against hers and breathed into her ear, releasing the smell of alcohol. “Aren’t you having trouble sleeping? Come here, I want you…”

Arianne hesitated. “Smore is here. Stop it. You’ve had a lot to drink…” She would always feel anxious whenever he drank.

Mark’s hand slid eagerly into her pajamas. “He’s asleep. Besides, he’s a baby. What would he know? I didn’t drink that much, and I’ll be gentle. We won’t wake him. Am I supposed to restrain myself every time he sleeps here? I’d rather make him sleep in his own room then. Let him bawl the night away.”