

# A Ruling Passion – Chapter 0071

Arianne got up and went upstairs, but stopped again when she was in front of Mark's room.

While Arianne was hesitating, Butler Henry pushed open the door, leaving no room for her to mentally prepare herself.

She reflexively averted her gaze from the room. How would she react if she saw something she shouldn't?

“Sir, madam isn't in good health, so she needs to rest now. Please send the insignificant person to the guest room.” Butler Henry's tone was humble, yet carried the weight of authority.

Mark was smoking a cigarette on the chair before the French window. He merely cast a silent glance at Arianne.

“Who are you calling insignificant?” Aery was quick to retort. “Mark dear is still smoking. If you don't feel well, then why don't you sleep in the guest room, big sis?”

Arianne said nothing. She only looked at Mark.

Butler Henry gently nudged her into the room.

It was his silent push that reminded Arianne that she shouldn't continue being a coward. "You're not fit to sleep in this room unless I divorce him. Please get out."

Aery immediately pouted her lips and ran to Mark. She circled her arms around his neck and started whining. "Mark dear, I'm just telling big sis for her own good. Look at how she talks to me..."

Mark snuffed his cigarette out, then spoke softly. "Go to the guest room."

A smug look immediately appeared on Aery's face. "Did you hear that? Mark dear is telling you to go to the guest room."

Butler Henry never really liked to meddle in anyone's affairs, but even he was getting a little angry now. Just as she was about to say something, he was interrupted by Mark. "I'm talking about you."

The expression on Aery's face immediately turned stiff before she became teary-eyed. "No, I don't want to!" she whined. "It's scary to sleep alone, so I want to be with you..."

Mark pushed her hands away coldly and stood up. His lip then curled into what seemed like an amused smile. "Are you still a three years old?"

Aery visibly deflated like a balloon, then left reluctantly. She even deliberately bumped into Arianne when she walked past her by the door.

Butler Henry shut the door and left. Arianne choked on the smell of smoke that lingered in the room as soon as she went in. She opened the window to ventilate the room. Just when she finally stopped coughing, she was seized by another coughing fit.

Mark suddenly spoke up from behind her. "Is it so hard to forget about your first man?"

Her long hair tousled in the wind that came from the window and chilled the forbidden part of her heart.

He wasn't really expecting an answer from her. He took out his suitcase and shoved his clothes inside.

Arianne went over and silently helped him pack, but he responded by kicking the suitcase away.

It was at that moment that tears welled up in her eyes. It felt as though a grain of sand had gotten into her eyes. “Mary isn’t around. Let me help you...”

Mark’s eyes were filled with rage. “Did you think I’d let you go and find Will Sivan? Don’t worry, you don’t have to find him. I’ll make him come back!”

She lifted her eyes to look at him, feeling flustered for some reason. How would he make Will come back...?

## **A Ruling Passion – Chapter 0072**

Mark mistook her confusion for hope. The anger in his eyes burned even more intensely. He clenched his hands into fists before silently unclenching them again. In the end, he left and slammed the door behind him.

As his car drove away from Tremont Estate, Arianne sat on the cold floor with her back against the bedside. She hugged her legs and buried her face in her knees. Maybe that would take some of her loneliness away...

Mary came back three days later. “Ari, why did sir choose to go on a business trip during New Years Eve? Didn’t you try persuading him to set aside work for a bit? You must be feeling lonely now that you’re left all alone.”

Arianne sat on the sofa and didn't reply to her. All of a sudden, her phone rang. It was a greeting message from Eric, and a holiday bonus sum attached along with it.

Arianne didn't accept the money. She only replied to him with a smiley face emoticon and attached her letter of resignation. She turned her gaze back to the magazine in her hands. There was going to be an art exhibition at Ayashe city tomorrow. She wanted to go and already made up her mind. After all, one should experience an impromptu travel at least once in their life.

When Arianne left, she only informed Mary that she was going on a trip for a few days. Mary just told her to enjoy her trip and said nothing else.

Arianne didn't have many clothes; only two sets. Just one suitcase was more than enough to fit in all her stuff. With that, she left with nearly all of her belongings.

When she got into the car, she turned off her phone. This was the first time she traveled alone as she pleased. All she wanted was to experience the freedom of pursuing the things she liked, so she didn't want to be disturbed by anyone. Besides, Mark wouldn't find her anyway...

By the time she reached Ayashe, it was nearly eight o'clock in the evening. Arianne checked in at a hotel and got some sleep. When she woke up again, it was already three o'clock in the morning. She took out the magazine that had the art exhibition's details, and started making a rough plan; the works of her favourite artists would be there. Her resignation was a sudden decision because she wanted to start doing what she enjoyed. After all, life was short and she didn't want it to end with regret.

After daybreak, Arianne went directly to the art exhibition and spent the entire day there. Her passion toward painting was reignited once again, burning intensely.

Ayashe wasn't like the capital. The weather was nicer during the winter and the streets were very lively at night too. By the time Arianne returned to the hotel after shopping, it was almost eleven o'clock.

As Arianne closed the hotel room's door, fatigue almost instantly swept over her.

Despite her exhaustion, she still took a shower out of years of habit. As soon as she laid down on the bed, there was a sudden knock on the door. It would be more accurate to say it sounded like someone was ramming against the door rather than knocking.

Arianne was a little scared as she approached the door. "Who's there?" she asked softly.

There was no movement on the other side of the door.

She took out her cell phone and turned it on in case she needed to call the cops at any time. Countless notifications of missed calls from Mark immediately sprung up on her screen.

Arianne hadn't expected him to come looking for her at all. She returned the call in a fluster, but a ringtone she couldn't be more familiar with rang on the other side of the door. It was the ringtone that Mark used.

Arianne steeled herself to meet the storm before opening the door. Instead of a storm, Mark's tall figure loomed over her. She was pulled into his tight embrace. In his arms, she could clearly feel the heat and weakness of his body...

"Did you... think that I wouldn't be able to find you?" He asked in a feeble tone that was devoid of his usual authority.

"What's wrong with you?" Arianne struggled to hear his weight and nearly lost her footing.

Mark didn't respond to her, but his arms gradually slid off her.

Arianne panicked. She clenched her teeth as she helped him to the bed. Her legs shook with every step. When they almost reached the bed, she finally lost her footing and fell onto the bed with him.

# A Ruling Passion – Chapter 0073

Before she could regain her senses, Mark pounced forward and pressed against her lips. “I won’t allow it. You cannot leave! You are not allowed to leave my sight!” he whispered hoarsely, brushing his lip against hers.

Arianne wanted to explain that she was merely heading out to relax and enjoy the art exhibition, but he didn’t give her the chance. She could tell that Mark was sick, and it was pretty severe too.

His mind was slightly muddled. With him holding her down, she lost all means of resistance. Then, just as she was about to suffocate, he finally moved his lips down to her neck.

She gasped, her breathing growing unstable. “Mark... You’re sick, let’s go to the hospital... Stop it...”

He ignored her as if he didn’t hear her at all.

Arianne’s mind was in a blur. In the end, he did not let her get away... Would he be disgusted by her filth when he returned to sobriety?

He finally collapsed into sleep when the storm ended, still lying on top of her...

She found it very hard to breathe, as if her body was going to collapse from exhaustion.

She waited for some of her strength to return before carefully pushing him off her and adjusting him into a comfortable sleeping position.

Mark's fever had not subsided. Arianne took out an unfinished pack of flu pills from her luggage and looked at him. His face was still a little hot. She fed him the medication via mouth-to-mouth and gave him some water using the same method.

After ascertaining that he had swallowed it, she dragged her extremely feeble body and tidied up the room. When she saw a red patch on the bed sheet, her mind buzzed. It was true, three years ago on that night with Will Sivan, she did not feel anything when she woke up. The difference was so distinct compared to whatever happened today. Did that mean that nothing had happened between her and Will? That they were young at the time and were amateurs, so they didn't know anything...?

She couldn't describe her feelings.

Knowing that he was a germaphobe, Arianne cleaned the bloodstain off the bed. She waited for it to air dry, then lay down to rest.

The very next day, she woke up to find Mark smoking in a chair, not too far away. The room was already fogged up by a thin layer of smoke. The ashtray was also half full.

“You caught a cold,” she said perceptively. “You were sick last night, and your throat was hoarse. If you’re going to smoke...”

It seemed that they would both catch a cold every year during winter. She wasn’t surprised at all. However, his cold was worse than usual, probably because he was worn out from being constantly on the move.

Mark ignored her, aiming his line of sight downwards. It was hard to discern the emotions on his face from the side, but there was a hint of sternness on the corners of his lips.

She lowered her eyelids and did not say anything more. She shifted her body and felt a wave of soreness. Her face began to burn up again when she remembered whatever happened last night... That was their first time devoting themselves to each other.

“Time to go,” Mark said in a commanding tone after finishing his cigarette.

## **A Ruling Passion – Chapter 0074**

Arianne got off the bed, enduring the discomfort she felt. She grabbed her clothes and headed to the bathroom to change. By the time she got out, Mark had already finished packing and was waiting at the door.

His gaze sunk when he noticed her slightly unusual walk. His expression turned cold as well, and his thoughts were unfathomable.

Arianne kept dozing off on the plane but was afraid of touching Mark if she fell asleep. She could tell he was in a bad mood. He had not confronted her over her unapproved trip to Ayashe.

Upon his return to the Tremont Estate, Mark immediately went back to his bathroom to take a shower.

“When did he arrive home?” Arianne softly asked Mary.

Mary stared blankly at her. “Sir never came back at all. He just arrived today.”

Arianne was feeling slightly annoyed. She shouldn’t have told Eric about her intentions for resignation. He must have leaked that piece of information. She hadn’t thought of this at the time. She thought, knowing her current relationship with Mark, he would never abandon his work to go look for her, even if she did leave.

“Change all of the bedroom sheets,” she said, remembering Mark’s bad cold. “Sun dry the quilts a little longer, and make sure to prepare lighter meals for now.”

Marry nodded. "Alright, Ari. You look a little pale. Has sir troubled you again?"

Arianne shook her head as her ice-cold hands touched her cheeks. Realizing that her cheeks were scalding, she ran upstairs. Mary was an experienced woman, when she saw the way Arianne walked, she knew what had happened. She grinned.

Back at the bedroom, Arianne felt awkward when she heard the pattering sounds of water in the bathroom. The snowy afternoon made her feel a little sleepy too. She picked up a few books on painting, headed downstairs, and curled up on the sofa. Before she could finish reading a few pages, she fell fast asleep.

By the time she got up, it was about seven at night. The light above her was slightly dim and from a single glance, she saw that the Tremont Estate was rather dark. It looked like Mark had gone out again.

She got up and stretched her back. Mary stepped forward and asked, "Are you hungry? Would you like to eat something? Sir has gone out, and I'm not sure if he'll be back tonight. I think I'd better be the one to tell you this, he left after receiving a call from a woman..."

Arianne's body stiffened, and she was temporarily at a loss for words. "It's alright, I'll just have whatever's available. Leave him."

Mary was more anxious than her. "Ari, do you really have no feelings for Mr. Tremont? You'll be sorry if he actually gets seduced by another woman!"

She paused in silence, then replied, “Why keep someone who hates you to his very bones? It’s not that I don’t want to, Mary. I can’t. To be more precise, I’ve never hoped that he would love me. Rather than falling in love with me, I’d much rather hope for him to let me go...”

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January 7th, Mark Tremont finally returned to the Tremont Estate a few days later.

Arianne had turned an empty room upstairs into an art studio and had been spending her time there over the past few days.

When she heard him coming upstairs, her hand stiffened in the midst of her painting, nearly making a mistake. Now that she was ill-at-ease, there was no need for her to continue painting. So, she stopped.

The atelier door was suddenly pushed open. “Ari,” Mary called out in a lowered voice, “Sir wants to see you. He’s in the bedroom.”

Arianne looked at her hands and clothes, which were dirtied from her paint. “Just a moment, I’ll go clean up.”

## A Ruling Passion – Chapter 0075

She took off her jacket and washed her hands before going back to the bedroom. She even sniffed herself to check if there was any leftover stench on her, afraid that he would hate her for it.

Her carefulness had been established since she was eight years old.

The faint smell of tobacco greeted her when she opened the door. “What is it?” she asked with a frown.

Mark was standing in front of the French windows, looking out at the snow. His light grey tailored suit set off his tall, straight figure very well. Even his back seemed attractive. “My company will be organizing a fashion show at six tonight. Your designs will be there. You can go if you like.”

Her designs? The only decent work she’s done were the wedding dress designs that he had criticized, right? Finished products were certainly released very quickly. “I’m going,” Arianne replied gleefully.

He didn't have much to say. He lifted his hand, put it to his lips and coughed twice. "Are you still sick?" she asked after a pause. "Remember to take your medicine."

Mark turned around and looked at her, his eyes holding a hint of mockery. "Don't think that you can act that way just because I've slept with you. It was only once. No one can be certain if you're actually pregnant."

Arianne's gaze flashed with hurt. However, she replied, "Even if I am pregnant, no one knows that you want the baby. You and I have both been consuming a lot of flu pills lately. That could easily deform the baby."

The mockery in his eyes deepened. "Looks like for the sake of pregnancy, you've done your homework."

She didn't explain, nor did she want to. She looked at the time and said, "I'm going to get ready. I shouldn't be late."

Arianne heaved a sigh of relief when she turned around. She couldn't explain it, but she was getting increasingly afraid of the look in his eyes when he stared at her, regardless of whether he was mocking her or being apathetic.

She stood in front of him one hour later. "Are we ready to go now?"

Mark gave her a once-over and showed no signs of criticism. Her style was never extravagant. She wore a light blue, tight-fitting pair of jeans that hugged her long, slender legs, paired with a cream-colored high neck sweater, a coat, and cream-colored boots. She let down her long, waist length hair, and her light makeup gave her already breathtaking features an extra sparkle.

Her cherry-colored lip gloss made her lips all the more enticing, and her overall look was simple but radiant. She looked like a naive young girl. However, that's exactly what she was.

The pair did not interact at all in the car. When they arrived at the fashion show venue, Mark made long strides with his long legs, and she had to jog in order to keep up with him. By the time she found a seat, Arianne was gasping for air. Her pretty, plump, and tender lips drew a sidelong glance from him. When his gaze began to darken, Aery's voice suddenly called out to him, "Mark, darling! You agreed that I could sit next to you..."

He turned away. "Arianne, sit at the back," he said with a grim voice.

Arianne's breathing stagnated. She lowered her eyelids, refusing to look at Aery. She then got up, searched for the furthest seat away, and sat down. It was the type of seat that completely blocked her view of them, even if she were to accidentally look at them from the corner of her eye. She just wanted to focus completely on the fashion show now.

Aery was dressed in a black leather skirt with garters. She had a short light grey fur coat and black thigh high boots. This ensemble showed off her sublime figure in great detail.

Her makeup was a stark contrast to Arianne's simple elegance. She nuzzled into Mark's shoulder like a cat and purred, "You're so wonderful, Mark. Aren't you afraid of Arianne's wrath?"

Mark frowned and gently pushed her head away with his slender fingers. "Watch yourself."

Aery stuck out her pink tongue. "I know. If someone took a picture... You're scared of compromising your reputation. I can understand that..."

About fifteen minutes later, the fashion show began.

The first showcase was a trendy spring wear lineup. The models' tall, slim bodies showed off the unique features of the lineup perfectly. Arianne was considered to be a professional, so she could tell that the quality of today's fashion show was much higher. After all, this was a fashion show by Mark Tremont's company. This standard was no surprise.

When Mark turned around to look at her, his gaze darkened and he felt mildly annoyed. She was actually paying full attention to the fashion show...