

A Ruling Passion – Chapter 0086

Tiffany grabbed her wrist. “Come, let’s get away from this place!”

Arianne couldn’t understand this. “You have to explain this to me... I can’t leave. Mark would get upset if I leave n...”

“He doesn’t even care if you live or die. Why should you care if he gets angry? I can practically see through him. He doesn’t love you, he’s torturing you! He wants to take your life!” Tiffany was close to losing it. Her expression was a horrific sight.

Arianne was at a loss from her reaction. “Tiffie... What are you saying?”

Tiffany was now flustered and exasperated. “Do you know whose engagement party this is? Will Sivan’s! I didn’t want to tell you. I found out about it when I spoke to Will yesterday. How could Mark possibly not know this? He knowingly brought you here. Does he want to see you in pain? Or to provoke Will? I don’t know if you love Will or not, but Will loves you. He’s agreed to this arranged marriage by his family, just so that he could come back to the country and be a little closer to you, to see you. He didn’t even know what the bride looks like until today. These were Mark’s conditions. His engagement is his only ticket back into the country. Do you understand?”

Arianne was in shock She stared at Mark, who was laughing cheerfully with the people around him, standing amongst the crowd. She had difficulty believing this... How could he stoop to this level? How could he do this...

Tiffany had long anticipated her reaction. “Let’s go, Ari. I’ll take you away from this place. I’ll bear all of the consequences that may follow.”

“What are you going to bear? It’s just an engagement party. There’s no need to exaggerate.” Jackson West and Eric Nathaniel approached them, holding glasses of champagne in their hands.

Tiffany felt slightly embarrassed when she saw Jackson. She did not forget how the man had forced her into calling him “daddy” at the carpark. “Get lost. This is none of your business.”

Jackson looked at Arianne. “Your affairs are none of my business, but her... I have to address her as ‘sister-in-law’. Stop struggling, it’s useless.”

That’s right, it was useless. This was all part of Mark Tremont’s plan.

Arianne suddenly laughed. “It’s fine, Tiffie. Doesn’t he want to see how I react? It’s alright...”

She wanted to know if Mark had ever wrestled with the notion when he asked her to come. However, she found this laughable at the same time. He’s never shown her any kindness, had he?

Suddenly, Jackson noticed Aery heading towards them. With a deadpan face, he stepped forward to stop her. "You don't know them very well, do you?"

Aery had yet to release her evil mien. She frowned and said, "And you're close to them? Don't worry, Arianne is my older sister. I won't do anything to her. But I'll take care of the woman next to her!"

Jackson pointed at Mark, who was standing further away. "Go ahead if you want. What do you think Mark will think if he sees you? I'm afraid stirring up trouble at Will Sivan's happy occasion wouldn't be a good look on you, Miss Kinsey of the proud Kinsey family."

Aery scoffed then turned around and walked toward Mark.

It was twelve in the afternoon. Arianne did not hear a single word of the priest's profound speech. Those comforting and sweet lyrics only served to annoy her.

A fine-looking couple emerged hand-in-hand as the chapel doors slowly opened. Arianne felt a sourness surge up in her nose when she saw Will. This man had suffered so much because of her. The once elegant young man had changed so much in just three short years. He looked calmer, but his smile was not as warm as it used to be. Instead, it held hints of bitterness.

Tiffany squeezed her ice-cold hand. "Don't cry... Ari... Don't let anyone see," she whispered.

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Not only did Arianne manage to hold back her tears, she even managed a smile. She was afraid that her tears might bring bad luck to Will's engagement party. Hence, she tried her best to smile...

At least his fiancée was very pretty. She was an appropriate match for the Sivan family. She hoped that he would live a happy life.

As if drawn by some sort of invisible force, Will's gaze landed on Arianne. His smile instantly faded. The starry sparkle in his eyes was immediately awash with sadness.

They locked eyes for two seconds before Arianne hurriedly looked elsewhere. She didn't have the courage to look him in the eye.

"Ari," Tiffany gritted her teeth angrily, "Unless I'm mistaken, the bridal gown on Will's fiancée is one of your designs. Mark Tremont is just... too cruel!"

Arianne finally noticed this once she pointed it out. It was true. She had initially thought that Mark had purely brought her to the fashion show because her design would be on display. Incidentally, he brought her to have dinner at White Water Bay Café. She was even naive enough to think that it was simply because it was their anniversary. Now it seemed... That he wanted her to remember her wedding dress design, and that dinner was simply out of convenience.

It was just like Mark Tremont... His tactics were as brilliant as ever-making her design a wedding dress for Will Sivan's fiancée and forcing her to see it with her own eyes.

Unbeknownst to her, Mark's plan didn't stop there. Everyone was well-informed of her affair with Will that year, even Will's fiancée was not kept in the dark. Not only did she not reject the wedding dress, but she even "generously" invited her, the wedding dress designer, up on stage to give a speech to the happy couple.

Tiffany was close to exploding. "Don't do it, Ari... Let's leave right now!"

Arienne lowered her head and took a deep breath. When she lifted her head again, a flawless smile was plastered on her face.

She had put on her most hypocritical mask in the face of the crowd that was anticipating a good show.

She leisurely stepped forward and accepted the microphone from Wendy Galena, Will's fiancée. She did not look at Will. "I'm honored to have seen my design here. Will, as your old friend, I wish you happiness."

Will suddenly pulled her into his arms, condensing too many of his sentiments into this one hug. "I wish you happiness too..."

Wendy was very closeby and had the clearest view of the agony in Will's eyes. How could she not feel tortured by this?

That hug lasted a mere five seconds and was as ordinary as any other hug. Arianne handed the microphone to the priest, then walked back into the crowd without hesitation.

Mark's eyes followed her the entire time. He pursed his lips and stayed completely silent.

Jackson, who was next to him, said in a half joking manner, "Mark, I've come to realize that Arianne has suddenly become a lot like you, a skilled actor, unfathomable."

Mark didn't respond and walked straight to Arianne.

Jackson was a little worried, so he followed him with Eric in tow.

Tiffany noticed the trio heading towards them. Her expression promptly turned into a horrible shade. She immediately stood in front of Arianne, shielding her. "Are you quite done, Mark Tremont? You've gotten what you wanted. I was wondering why Ari had to suffer so much in school with a 'brother' like you... And now I know, your gentleness will only be given to every object in the world, but her. You're not fit to be her 'brother' and certainly not fit to be her husband!"

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Mark was unexpectedly calm, but Jackson was flustered instead. He pulled Tiffany away. “You better shut up, little girl. This doesn’t concern you. Let’s go!”

No matter how much Tiffany struggled, Jackson still dragged her away by force. The price he had to pay for doing this was getting bitten on his wrist so hard that blood was drawn.

He was both angry and amused at the same time. “What are you? A dog?”

Tiffany glared at him. “I’m not a dog, but I don’t mind being one whenever I see you. You are a bastard like Mark Tremont!”

Jackson felt wronged but couldn’t defend himself anyway. “Alright, alright. You can think however you want as long it makes you happy.”

Arianne showed neither dissatisfaction nor anger toward Mark and grabbed his arm on her own accord. “I want to go home now. Should we leave together? Or maybe I can go first while you stay here with Aery?”

Mark looked into her eyes. For the first time, he was unable to read her emotions. “Let’s go.”

Arianne put some distance between them as soon as they got back into the car. The expression on her face was just as cold as his. Brian Pearce peeked at the two icebergs sitting in the backseat from the rearview mirror and trembled fearfully. "Sir... Madam... Are we going back?"

Arianne didn't speak and Mark merely hummed in response.

No one spoke in the car. When they were back at Tremont Estate, Arianne took a shower and changed into a pair of comfortable slippers and loungewear before diving into her studio. She locked the door behind her and finally allowed her tears to fall freely.

She once thought that hatred could fade with time, but now she knew that it would only grow stronger with time. Mark Tremont had never let go of his hatred for her, and her hatred toward him was bubbling up uncontrollably. It was never something she could put a lid over by being careful around him. She shouldn't have indulged in her delusions in the first place!

Mark's car left the Tremont Estate that night.

Mary knocked on the studio's door. "Ari, it's time for dinner. Sir has gone on a business trip. He'll probably only return after a few days."

Arianne set her paintbrush down upon hearing Mark's absence. She got up and went downstairs.

Mary saw her somewhat red and puffy eyes and showed concern. “Ari, what’s going on?”

Arianne just shrugged it off. “Nothing, just a bit tired from painting so long.”

Mary didn’t think too much of it and put a big scoop of food into her bowl. “You’re still too thin. You need more nutrients. Look, I had the kitchen make you soup tonight. It’s good for your health, so you should drink more.”

Arianne stared at the bowl of white soup and felt no desire to drink it. It was then that her cell phone rang. She gave Mary a smile and excused herself to answer the call.

She heaved a sigh of relief when she saw Mary going back to her work in the kitchen. The soup had a strong smell she didn’t fancy, but she didn’t want to upset Mary and could only try her best to escape from it.

On the other end of the call was Tiffany’s sobbing voice.

“Ari... can you come out and accompany me? I feel extremely upset right now...”

Tiffany had always swept the unpleasant things under the rug. For her to be calling Arianne over a bad mood meant something big must have happened. She couldn't help but worry. "What's wrong, Tiffie?"

Tiffany was silent for a while but didn't tell her the reason in the end. "I don't really want to talk about it. Can you not ask me? It's okay if you can't come out..."

"Where are you? I'm coming over now," Arianne immediately replied.

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Tiffany gave Arianne an address, and she quickly changed her clothes upstairs. Just when she was about to leave, Butler Henry stood in her way. "Madam, sir has instructed that you are not to go anywhere until he comes back."

Arianne bit her lip and held her ground stubbornly. She was Mark Tremont's wife, not some canary in a cage. She had the right to go and meet whoever she pleased. No one shall deny her freedom!

"Uncle Henry, I'm only going out to meet a female friend. I'll be back soon, don't tell Mark. Even if he finds out, I shall bear the consequences myself," she said with a pleading tone.

Uncle Henry wavered slightly. He had watched over Arianne and Mark since they were children. Sometimes, it was better for him to be less strict on her. “Then... Come back as soon as you can. Sir may call to inquire later and I’ll be put in a difficult position.”

Arianne was slightly moved. “Thank you, Uncle Henry...”

Butler Henry had served the Tremont family for his entire life. It was usually impossible for him to go against Mark Tremont’s wishes. Now that he was willing to help her out, Arianne didn’t know what else to say except for words of gratitude.

When she arrived at the address given by Tiffany, she found out that it was a bar. She never liked this kind of place. The blaring music made her feel uncomfortable and she didn’t dare look directly at the swaying bodies on the dance floor. Everything here just seemed so over the top to her.

It was so dim in the bar, she couldn’t locate Tiffany and had no choice but to call her on the phone. It took her a few tries before the call was finally picked up. “I’m at booth number twelve...”

Tiffany sounded tipsy.

Arianne Wynn quickly located the booth and found Tiffany sitting alone, looking like a mess with a wine bottle in hand.

She snatched the bottle away. “Tiffie, why are you drinking like this? Tell me what’s the matter. You’ll be the one who’ll suffer if you ruin your body!”

Tiffany looked at her with glassy eyes and grinned stupidly. “You really speak like my dad. You don’t sound like a young lady in her twenties... You sound like a real mom...”

Arianne couldn’t really bear to see Tiffany’s foolishness. “Stop drinking, I’ll take you home.”

Tiffany opened another bottle of wine. “Don’t try to stop me. Let me drink. It’s too difficult to continue living... I’m about to lose it all...”

Lose it all? Arianne didn’t quite understand what she meant. “What do you mean by ‘lose it all’? Did you have another fight with Ethan?”

Tiffany covered up her mouth. “ Ooops... that was a slip of tongue. It’s okay... I’m fine...”

No matter how hard Arianne persuaded her, Tiffany kept going until she finished the last drop of the wine she ordered. By then she had turned into a drunken mess and kept mumbling to herself.

Arianne had no choice but to leave the place with Tiffany on her back. It was already past eleven o'clock at night, and it seemed like she wouldn't be able to keep her promise of returning home early.

"Ari... We found the person who stole the jewelry materials. He's dead though... The jewelry is gone... It's over for my family... My dad immediately got admitted to the hospital... The debt will never be paid off in a lifetime."

Arianne paused in her footsteps as tears welled up in her eyes. "It's okay, Tiffie... I will talk to Mark Everything will be fine..."

Tiffany suddenly got worked up. "I don't want you to talk to him! No... Don't beg him! I'm not the kind of person who betrays my friends! Why are you begging him when he treats you that way? I don't want you to ever bow your head to him even if I'm dead!"

Arianne complied to her out of fear that she would do something crazy in her drunkenness. "Alright, I won't talk to him about it Come, let's go home."

By the time she sent Tiffany home, it was nearly midnight. She returned to Tremont Estate exhausted and noticed that the house was brightly lit from the gate. Mark Tremont was back...

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Arianne guessed that Mark had rushed home because she had rebelled by sneaking out of the house until late night. She straightened her clothes and stepped in, prepared to take the storm head on.

When she entered, none of the servants in Tremont Estate were resting. Butler Henry, Mary, and the other servants were all standing in one line in the living room. Butler Henry looked at Arianne, then sighed and said nothing.

She took a deep breath and said, “It’s alright, I’ll explain it to him.”

“Sir isn’t in a good mood after drinking. You better take it easy...” Mary warned her.

Arianne smiled and went upstairs. The bedroom door was ajar. Mark Tremont sat on the chair in front of the French window with a cigarette lit between his fingers.

Smoke veiled the room, and his figure looked slightly hazy. He was still in his suit, which meant he had just come back not long ago.

Arianne approached him and offered him a cup of tea to sober him up. “Tiffie was in a bad mood and drunk. I came back straightaway after sending her home.”

Mark ignored her explanation. He took a drag on his cigarette and asked coldly, "Didn't Uncle Henry tell you that you're not allowed to go out?"

"He did, but he is only a butler. He can't control where I want to go. This has nothing to do with him," she responded calmly.

He snuffed his cigarette out. "You're always so forgetful. Butler Henry is getting old, maybe it's time for him to retire and go home."

Arianne was stunned, she didn't expect Butler Henry to be implicated as a result. "I said it has nothing to do with Uncle Henry."

Mark didn't speak. His expression was terrifyingly cold and there was a hint of fatigue in his eyes. Arianne knew there was no more room for negotiation but she wasn't willing to accept it. "What will it take for you to allow Butler Henry to stay?"

Mark didn't answer her. He leaned back into his chair and closed his eyes with a slight frown.

Arianne knew that she must tread carefully. Mark hated noise when he was tired, so she spoke softly. "You're tired too. Rest early, we'll talk tomorrow."

After saying that, she carefully retreated from the room. Arianne let Mary, Butler Henry, and the other servants rest, then laid down on the sofa in the living room. This way she would be able to wake up in time when Mark went out the next day. Since she wasn't sure what time he would leave and when he would come back next time, she couldn't afford to miss him.

Arianne didn't manage to get a good night's sleep.

When she woke up, it was only around six o'clock in the morning. She was clearly exhausted but couldn't even get a wink of sleep, so she ended up with a sore body.

Mary couldn't sleep last night either. With a tired face, she cooked some millet porridge for Arianne. "Ari, why did you sleep on the sofa? Sir didn't let you stay in the bedroom?"

Arianne shook her head. "No, I'm just afraid of disturbing him."

Mary looked like she was hesitating to speak. "Say what you want," Arianne told her.

It was only then that Mary finally told her. "Sir came back last night with a sour face. He blamed Old Henry for not taking good care of you and fired him... So he's actually packing up as we speak. Can you persuade sir to change his mind? Maybe he only said that out of impulse because he cares too much about you and worries that something will happen to you when you go out at night... Can you talk to him?"

Arianne Wynn had a slight headache. She looked at the steaming bowl of millet porridge in her hands, then got up and went upstairs.

She thought Mark would still be asleep, but it turned out that he didn't even sleep at all. After taking a shower, he sat in front of the French window all night in his bathrobes. It was obvious that no one slept on the bed last night because the blankets were still neatly folded on the bed.