

A Ruling Passion – Chapter 0081

Tiffany Lane was still a vulnerable girl despite her carefree attitude. Having no experience in such a thing, she panicked a little. With her shaky hand, she rang Ethan's number on her cell phone.

Ethan just had to keep his phone turned off at a moment like this. She redialed to John Lane, her father. Fortunately, the call went through. But before she could even speak, John quickly answered with "I'm in a meeting" and hung up.

She pounded on her steering wheel in anger when the call hung up. In a fleeting glimpse, she spotted the entrance to a basement parking lot and drove in without a second thought. It was dim inside so it was very difficult for people to drive around if they weren't familiar with the place.

Tiffany didn't dare to drive very fast in here. She was taking a gamble to see if she was lucky enough to find an elevator if she had to abandon her car.

As expected, the car behind her followed her into the parking lot. Up close now, she realized that it was a van. That meant there was probably more than one person in the car. Hence, she couldn't hope to be saved by someone in this parking lot unless she was lucky enough to run into a group of people.

When she made a turn at a corner, a black Bentley unexpectedly appeared. She couldn't evade it in time so she slammed on the brakes. She let loose a shrill scream as the two cars collided together. The van stopped behind her. Four or five big guys then

got out of the car, each holding a weapon in hand. It was obvious that they came with ill intentions.

Tiffany hurriedly got out of the car and climbed into the Bentley that she'd just hit. Ignoring the man in the driver's seat, she locked the car's window and door in a panic.

"Come out!" the big guys shouted outside the car.

She pretended that she didn't hear them. This wasn't a cheap car, so those guys were welcome to smash it if they had the balls to do so.

The man in the driver's seat looked at her in amusement. "What are you doing, little girl? You hit to my car, yet you still dare to get in?"

Tiffany's first impression was that this person had a strangely pleasant voice. When she finally saw the man's face, she gulped audibly. "I have no other choice. They'll kill me if I get out now! I don't even know them. We'll talk about the compensation later, but please get me out of here first. If I die, you won't be getting any money!"

The man seemed to be entertained. "Heh... I don't need your money. I only want you to get out of my car right now."

Instead of getting out of the car, Tiffany put on the seat belt in the front passenger seat. It was like she was making it clear that if she was going to die, she would die in his car. "I'm not getting out! Don't go thinking you will have your way just because you are rich. Despite the lousy car I'm driving now, I used to have a few cars like yours in my garage. All in different colors. And don't call me a little girl! I'll call you daddy if you are over thirty years old!"

The man looked like he was only two or three years older than her but still dared to call her little girl.

Tiffany had never begged anyone in her life. If it weren't for the desperate situation, she wouldn't have even climbed into this car!

The man waved his ID before her eyes with great interest. "Alright, you may call me daddy."

She looked at the birth date on his ID then huffed. "Jackson West... That's your name? I didn't expect you to be this old. You're like eight or nine years older than me. But you're still too young to be my dad. Bro, help me out here. These men are going to smash your car. That's your car we're talking about. I'm not gonna pay for what I didn't hit!"

Jackson looked at the men outside his car, not bothered in the slightest, and smiled at Tiffany. "Call me daddy and I'll help you out."

'Fuck!'

Tiffany thought to herself, but forced a smile back at him. “Daddy...” She had no choice but to lower her pride at this moment. As they said, while there’s life, there’s hope!

Jackson didn’t say anything else. He got out alone and left her in the car, but didn’t forget to lock his car with the key.

When the big guys saw someone getting out of the car, they rushed at him with their weapons to vent out the anger at the pit of their stomachs.

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Jackson West didn’t seem to panic at all. He took off his black trench coat, as it restricted his movement, revealing the well-tailored suit he was wearing underneath it. He raised one leg and, without a beat, sent the big guy nearest to him flying with a kick.

Tiffany was so anxious that her palm began to sweat. It was one up against so many people. Now that Jackson and her were in the same boat, both of them were done for if things went south. Although the guy had crazy long legs and seemed to be quite a fighter, she was still worried...

To her surprise, all the big guys were down on the ground in just less than five minutes. Jackson didn’t even have to use his fists. If it weren’t for the fact that she already had Ethan, she would have fallen head over heels for him.

After making sure that the big guys would no longer pose a threat to her, Tiffany tapped on the window and gestured for Jackson to unlock the door for her.

Jackson picked up his trench coat from the ground, then discarded it on the ground again in disgust as though he wasn't planning to take it back anymore.

Tiffany got out of the car and exclaimed in amazement, "Wow bro, you're an even better fighter than my dad's bodyguards! Have you taken lessons before?"

Jackson wasn't buying it. "Save your breath and pay me back seventy thousand bucks."

Tiffany was immediately taken aback. "Did I do something to you or molest you? That's highway robbery!"

Jackson sized her up in disgust for a moment, then said, "Even if you offered me a billion, I would consider it only reluctantly. Seventy thousand bucks for hitting my car and saving your life. Isn't that a sweet deal? Aren't you planning to ask them why they are chasing you?"

It was only then that Tiffany came back to her senses. She picked up a steel pipe and pointed it at one of the guys on the floor. "What's going on? Why were you guys following me?"

The guy had long lost his temper from getting beaten up. “We were only doing it for the money... You’ve offended someone. Think for yourself. It’s a woman. We didn’t see her, but her voice was so sickeningly sweet that I got goosebumps...”

Tiffany already had a person in mind because it was impossible to forget Aery Kinsey’s voice ever since she heard her speak for the first time. “Damn, that Aery Kinsey. You splashed coffee on me and dared to send a bunch of thugs after me?”

Jackson’s expression changed slightly, but he calmly returned to his car. “Move your car out of the way.”

Tiffany didn’t expect the sudden change on his face. “What? You don’t want your money anymore?”

The man closed his car door, but not before leaving her with one sentence. “I don’t need it.”

Although Tiffany was upset with him, he was still her savior. She slowly moved her car out of the way and watched his car drive away. She followed behind him not because she was stalking, but because she couldn’t find the exit. As soon as she got out of the parking lot, they drove away in opposite directions.

Tiffany headed straight to where Ethan was staying, as she had a fresh change of clothes there. The thought of her father hanging up her distressed phone call upsetted her. She’d been terrified to death at that moment.

Since she had the key to Ethan's home, she unlocked the front door herself and went in. Ethan was working on his laptop but slammed it shut when he heard the door opening.

Tiffany seemed to mind a little. "What? You have something you can't show me?"

Ethan opened his arms. "Nothing, just some mess in the company. What's that on your clothes?"

Tiffany didn't come forward to hug him. She changed her clothes and told him almost everything that had happened, leaving out the stuff about Jackson West. She just told him that she met a good person.

"I'm glad you are okay," Ethan mumbled absent-mindedly to her.

Tiffany felt a pang of disappointment in her heart; "That's all?"

"What else do you want me to say?" Ethan countered. "Of course, I'm glad you're fine."

She didn't say anything. She used to think that his lack of concern was only due to his personality. Over time, she couldn't help but start to think about other things, especially since he could react so indifferently to something like this. She suddenly began doubting their relationship, but didn't dare to question him. Whenever she brought it up

in the past, he would always give her an attitude and the confrontation would end with giving each other the cold shoulder.

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Just as Tiffany was about to leave, her gaze landed on Ethan as he nonchalantly turned on his computer again. He didn't even bother to look at her or send her to the door.

She took a deep breath after shutting the door. This was not the first time that she felt tired. This time, the feeling was much stronger than usual.

At the Tremont Estate, Arianne was completely unaware of whatever happened to Tiffany. She went straight back into the art studio after purchasing supplies. She only cleaned up and went downstairs when Mary called her down for dinner at night.

She realized that every time Mary called her "Madam", it meant that Mark was home.

As expected, she found Mark sitting on the sofa, flipping through a magazine when she arrived downstairs.

“Time for dinner,” Arianne reminded him.

Mark closed his magazine and walked to the dining room. He didn't show much of a reaction or look at her. This was strange to her. They were fine during their dinner at White Water Bay Café. Why was everything so tense today?

“What's wrong?” Arianne softly asked at the dinner table. “What have I done wrong this time?”

Her eyes shone with yearning for a more harmonious situation. Despite everything, the pair had been together for many years and she didn't want to live in a state of hostility every day.

Mark put down his cutlery and stared at her apathetically. “Will Sivan will be back on the first day of the next month.”

She was surprised. He had mentioned this before, but she never took it seriously, nor could she understand why he would let Will return all of a sudden. “Why?”

He narrowed his eyes and released a dangerous mien. “No reason...”

Arianne kept her mouth shut when she heard this. She never dared to mention anything about Will in front of him. Next month was only a week away...

Tiffany called her a few days later to tell her the news. She sounded absolutely excited on the phone. To her, the three of them had the most unshakeable friendship.

Arianne felt a strange kind of anguish. She didn't know what Will's return meant and was afraid of anticipating anything. "Tiffie, I've known about this for a while."

Tiffany was surprised. "How did you know? Will mentioned that you'd know about this sooner than me. But he's never contacted you. I just can't understand you two."

Arianne took a deep breath. "Mark told me about it a week ago."

Tiffany paused in silence, then said, "Ari, you're married. You should keep your distance from Will, regardless. With Mark around, you can't even be friends. However, I still wanted you to be aware of his return. I'm glad that you know."

After ending the call, she stared at the half-drawn picture on her sketch board, tore it off, and threw it into the rubbish bin. She had been working on this picture for two weeks but couldn't complete it in the end. She had lost her mood and couldn't continue drawing it.

Arianne lay on her bed, unable to fall asleep during the wee hours of the morning. She couldn't understand why she was suffering from insomnia. Mark wasn't around, but she had gotten used to this long ago. It was such a huge bed, she couldn't even occupy one third of it.

She suddenly heard the sound of a car outside. Then, someone pushed the door open. She could see his tall and slim figure very clearly in the dark. He stumbled with every step. He had been drinking and had quite a lot to drink to boot.

She pretended to be asleep, trying her best to steady her breathing. Perhaps this would give her a chance to get through the night peacefully...

Mark staggered into the bathroom. When he stepped out, he only had a towel wrapped around his waist. He didn't change into his pajamas but went straight to bed.

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Arianne's heart raced involuntarily. His scent overwhelmed her senses with every breath she took. It was faintly sweet with hints of his unique masculine essence, mixed with bits of boozy intoxication. This made her breathing quicken as well.

Mark drew his slightly damp body, fresh out from the shower, closer to her. Then, he stretched out his arm and wrapped it around her waist. Arianne's breathing went into disarray. Realizing that she wasn't asleep, he flipped over and climbed on top of her. Then, he accurately found her soft lips...

She remembered the pain from the other night, and the smell of alcohol on him further terrified her. She pressed her hands against his chest. "You're drunk...!"

He held her shoulders down and replied in a deep, husky voice. "Fulfill your wifely duties!"

She didn't say anything more. She was too afraid to close her eyes. As she watched the devastating figure on top of her, Arianne frowned from the discomfort. She gritted her teeth and endured it, until she suddenly felt a tearing pain in her lower abdomen. Knowing this sensation all too well, she quickly said, "My period is here!"

The person on top of her stiffened. She took advantage of this and pushed him away, allowing herself to escape. She rushed off the bed and headed to the toilet. The blush on her face had not dissipated. She finally relaxed when she heard the sound of the door outside.

The agony disappeared after a while. Her period didn't come as expected; it was supposed to arrive within these two days... She was vexed. She must have upset him, but in her fear, she disregarded everything else.

Mark's car had not left Tremont Estate. That meant that he hadn't left the house but had gone to another room, most likely the study room.

She remembered that Mary had taken the blankets in the study for a wash. After a bout of hesitation, she took the quilt from the bed and headed to the room.

The lights in the study were off and she had her hands full. She carefully walked in and waited for her eyes to adjust to the darkness before she could have a clear view of the figure lying on the sofa. Then, she carried the quilt to him and covered him with it. "I can sleep in the guest room, go back to the bedroom..."

"Out!"

In the past, she would have walked out without hesitation. However, she was gradually realizing that they had too many problems between them. She wasn't sure of what would happen in the future, but she wanted to at least get along for the time being. Besides, she realized that his temper had gotten worse after Will's return to the country. "I'm sorry... I really wasn't feeling well..."

A large hand suddenly grabbed her wrist. "And you're not unwell now?" Mark asked mockingly, his hoarse voice scornful.

"Hmm," she replied, summoning up her courage. Then, she was forcefully pulled down.

Arianne woke up in the bedroom the next day. She had no idea when she was brought back to the room, she couldn't endure half an hour on the couch.

She arrived downstairs to find Mark sipping on coffee in the living room. He was dressed in light grey house clothes. He was crossing his long, slim legs in a casual manner and looked rather peaceful.

Mary was engrossed with serving breakfast in the dining room. "Madam, breakfast is served."

She smiled. She would have been able to walk easily, if it weren't for the fact that her body was feeling uncomfortable. After all, she rarely ever felt this sore.

Last night's intimate festivities didn't exactly make Mark amiable to her, but he wasn't apathetic either. "Come along with me, we're going somewhere."

"Where are we going?" she asked cheerfully. "I mean... I have to dress appropriately for the occasion." She was going out with him, after all. She couldn't embarrass him.

Arianne felt mildly upset. "But I don't have anything formal..."

"Someone will send something over," he replied indifferently.

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She didn't say too much, knowing that he liked peace and quiet during meals. Extra conversations were mood killing noises to him.

At ten in the morning, Brian delivered her formal dress, heels, and jewellery. Arianne hurried upstairs to dress up. She tried styling her hair into an updo for the first time. This would make her look slightly more mature, her features always seemed young and puerile.

The formal dress fitted her surprisingly well. It was a tube dress, which she didn't like. It was white in color, although not garish. The dress' hemline covered precisely half of her heels.

Mark reminded her that it was an outdoor venue so that she would put on a thick coat as well. Despite the lack of snow over the past few days, it was still particularly cold. When she peered into the mirror, she realized that her neck displayed a string of hickeys. She blushed as she tried to hide them with a concealer but to no avail. Traces of them could still be seen.

At this time, Mark had returned to the room to change his clothes. She picked up her skirt, turned around to face him, and asked, "How do I look, is it alright?"

His eyes flashed with an indistinguishably complicated mix of emotions when he saw the anticipation in her eyes. "Hmm..."

Arianne relaxed after receiving his approval and put on her earrings. "I'm done."

He didn't answer and focused on changing his clothes. Just as he began taking his clothes off, she blushed and turned away.

Arianne hugged her coat tightly as they left. The wind still managed to pierce through the thin fabric of the dress. She shivered from the cold. Even the color on her face changed...

Mark suddenly paused. "You don't have to go..."

She shook her head. "It's fine, I'm not afraid of the cold. Let's go."

As she spoke, she climbed into the car first. Mark stood in his spot for a while before following her.

Arianne had a faint inkling that there was something on Mark's mind, but his eyes seemed to conceal a deep abyss. She couldn't see through them at all.

The venue was at a chapel in the suburbs. The event was held at an empty lawn outside the chapel, as there were too many people but limited space inside the chapel.

Apparently, the bride was against doing this in a hotel, saying that it would be much more romantic here.

The decorations at the venue were particularly glamorous at first glance. There were all sorts of luxury cars parked by the side of the road. To have Mark Tremont grace this venue meant that the host must be an acknowledged societal figure, and must be affiliated with the extremely wealthy.

Arianne spotted Tiffany among the crowd from the moment she got down from the car. Usually, Tiffany wouldn't dress up so extravagantly whenever she hung out with her. Today, she looked especially beautiful in her formal dress. Despite their many years of friendship, her eyes sparkled at the sight of her.

Mark seemed to have seen through her thoughts and said, "Go ahead."

Arianne smiled at him, picked up her skirt and headed towards Tiffany through the small winding path on the lawn. A glint of hesitation flashed in the depths of his eyes as he watched her leave, but it was soon replaced by nonchalance again.

"Tiffie!" Arianne patted Tiffany on the shoulder, excited to see the look of surprise on her face.

However, when Tiffany turned around, she looked more like she had jumped out of her skin. "Ari... What are you doing here?"

Arianne pointed at Mark, who was standing quite far away. "I came with him. What is it? I was afraid that I'd feel out of place at a place like this. I'm glad you're here."

Tiffany looked at Mark. Her expression sank. "Did you come here on your own, or did Mark invite you?"

"He asked me to come with him," Arianne replied, confused. "He even asked me if I wanted to come. I agreed to it. What's going on?"