

A Ruling Passion – Chapter 0066

Arianne didn't respond and simply tightened her grip on the towel around her. She shut her eyes, refusing to look at him. Perhaps she wouldn't feel so afraid if she avoided looking at him...

Mark's gaze landed on the scar on her shoulder. She was left with this scar because of him... But now, he saw it as a mockery. "You disgust me!"

Mark left and didn't do anything else to her. This was different from his usual way of dealing with things.

The bedroom door slammed shut. Arianne sat stiffly on the bedside like a soulless puppet.

She stayed up the entire night, and no one called her to collect a dead-drunk Mark Tremont. He wouldn't turn into a completely different person in his drunken state and paw at her neck like a cat, either.

At eight in the morning, Mary knocked on the door. "Ari, are you up? Would you like something to eat? What happened between you and Mr. Tremont?"

Arianne huddled further under the covers. "I'm not eating. And it's nothing."

Mary sighed and didn't ask any more questions.

Her phone rang. Arianne didn't feel like answering it but, at the same time, was irritated by its noisy ringtone. She picked up her phone weakly, answered the call, and listened to Tiffany's voice through the receiver. "Ari, are you okay? Ethan's explained it to me. I never doubted you... Did Mark do anything to you last night?"

Arianne paused, then said, "No, I'm fine."

The tone of her voice sounded off. Tiffany noticed this and became worried. "Why is your voice so hoarse? Are you sick?"

Arianne sniffed. She had lost her sense of smell and now couldn't smell a thing. "A little. I'm fine. I gotta go..."

Her body was now completely weak after being doused with cold water last night. She felt dizzy too and drifted back into sleep after ending the call. By the time she woke up again, she was in the hospital.

The smell of disinfectant was as distinctive as ever. It seemed to carry a strange infectiousness that felt very reassuring.

Seeing that Arianne was awake, Mary heaved a sigh of relief. “You’re finally awake. Ari, you have no idea, you nearly scared me to death!”

Arianne’s eyes stared emptily up at the ceiling. “What happened to me...?” Her voice was still hoarse, and it hurt to speak.

Mary furrowed her brow. “You fainted from a fever. You were scorching when I found out. You’ve really scared me to death!”

That reminded her of something. “Forget it. It’s not like we can meddle in the affairs between you and Mr. Tremont. Things have really blown up this time. Who knows how Mr. Tremont is going to solve this now.”

Blown up? What did that mean? Arianne grew anxious, afraid that Mark had done something again. “Mary, what’s happened? What did Mark do?!”

“It’s not him...” Mary quickly said, “Focus on getting better, then look at the news.”

Arianne couldn’t wait. She grabbed her phone and swiped through it. News of Mark dragging her out of a hotel had been leaked, and there were pictures too. The caption read: “Looks like Mrs. Tremont has been caught having an affair with her best friend’s boyfriend. Mark Tremont angrily drags her away!”

She did not expect for one misunderstanding to explode into such a state. This was no longer an issue between a few people.

The contents of the news made her unnerved. Her chest rose and fell rapidly. She felt as if she was being strangled.

Mary quickly snatched her phone away. “Stop reading that, Ari! Focus on getting well. It will be alright as long as Mr. Tremont believes in you, understand?”

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Arianne didn't reply. How could Mark Tremont possibly trust her? He's never trusted her...

Mary's heart ached at the sight of her looking like this, however, she was powerless too.

That night, at Arianne's insistence, Mary went home to rest. There was no need to stay with her at the hospital, she'd simply caught a cold and could take care of herself. At most, she would have to stay in the hospital for one day under observation. She would be discharged the very next day.

She couldn't seem to fall asleep, probably because she had too much sleep in the day. She shut her eyes and lay on the hospital bed, a myriad of thoughts plaguing her mind.

“What are you doing?!” someone outside the ward cried out all of a sudden.

Arianne jumped in fright. She opened her eyes to catch a quick glimpse of a man’s face disappearing from the small window above the door. Who was spying on her in the dead of the night?!

She was too frightened to stay any longer. She packed up her things and left the hospital in her hospital gown. She didn’t even fill out her discharge papers.

Everything was deathly silent when she returned to Tremont Estate, save for the bright flickering lights of the street lamps at the main gate and the garden. Mark was not home.

She went back to her room and snuggled under the blanket. Her heart gradually felt more at peace. It’s true Home had a special kind of magic that couldn’t be found anywhere else.

The hospital.

A tall figure slowly approached Arianne’s former ward. His long, slender fingers grabbed the doorknob and slowly pushed the door open. When he saw the empty hospital bed, he stiffened, turned around, and walked quickly to the nurse station. “Where is she?! Where is the patient in hospital bed number twenty three?!”

The nurse jumped in fright at the sight of the man's grim face and rushed to check. "I... I don't know..."

"Check the surveillance cameras!" the man snapped.

Four hours later, Mark Tremont dragged his exhausted body back to Tremont Estate. It was around six in the morning and Mary was preparing breakfast for Arianne. When she saw him, she asked, "Sir? You've just returned?"

"Mmm," was Mark's nonchalant reply. He quickly headed upstairs. When he saw that familiar figure sleeping soundly on the bed, his tensed nerves finally relaxed. He was about to turn around and leave when the girl in the bed opened her eyes, "You're back...?"

He paused in his footsteps when he heard her hoarse voice, but in the end, he didn't stop.

Downstairs, Mary was questioning Brian, who had arrived with Mark "Why has Mr. Tremont returned home at this time of the day? Has something happened?"

Brian Pearce lowered his voice and said, "Mr. Tremont went to the hospital last night and found out that madam wasn't in her ward. He spent four hours checking the hospital's surveillance footage..."

At this point, Brian noticed a figure descending from the stairs and immediately shut his mouth.

Mary caught on and stepped forward to ask, "Would you like some breakfast, sir?"

It was difficult to pinpoint the emotions on Mark's face.

"No. " Then, he promptly left Tremont Estate, not staying a moment longer.

When Arianne woke up, Mary served her breakfast at the dining room with a grin. "Ari, why did you leave the hospital without telling anyone? You didn't even call me to pick you up. Mr. Tremont went to see you at the hospital but discovered that you weren't there and spent four hours searching for you. Next time, don't do anything like that.. "

Arianne was shocked but soon regained her composure.

"Mm... Mary, could you go to the hospital and manage my discharge papers when you have the time later? Tomorrow is New Year's Eve and I just don't want to drag my wretched body around. It's alright..."

Mary paused, then said, “Ari... Why don’t you ask Mr. Tremont to come home? Tomorrow is New Year’s Eve, after all. You are both unfortunate children and should be together at a time like this. Otherwise, this big estate will feel cold and empty.”

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Arianne gently stirred a bowl of steaming porridge with a spoon, she didn’t respond to Mary’s suggestion.

Did Mark go looking for her for so long last night because he felt responsible? She never felt that she could influence his behavior. If Mark wasn’t willing to come home, then he would only feel disgusted even if she got on her knees and begged him.

The news continued brewing on the Internet, but Mark never directly responded to it. He even donated to an elementary school on New Year’s Eve.

Arianne accidentally discovered the latest article while she was flipping through the news. It was a photo that was taken secretly when she was in the hospital. She was lying on the bed, looking pale and lifeless. The content of the article was questioning whether she had been hospitalized due to domestic violence and if Mark Tremont’s gentle nature was nothing more than a façade. Now that she thought about it, the person outside the hospital ward must’ve been the one who snuck a shot of her.

She subconsciously refuted these claims in the comment section, but her comment was very quickly swallowed among the comments from other netizens.

Perhaps Mark had never been publicly criticized in the past, so the comments were very mixed. Most of the criticisms were quite salty though, spoken out of jealousy.

One of the usernames caught her attention. It was tirelessly flaming the ones who were talking shit in the comment section. Compared to those haters, this person was a lot cuter even though he or she was swearing too.

If Arianne wasn't mistaken, this was the username that Tiffany usually used. Although she hadn't contacted her since the news broke, her action spoke for itself.

Arianne's mind wandered while she helped Mary with the decorations at the main door. Mary took the decoration from her and said, "Here, let me do it. You're still sick. Go rest up and don't catch another cold. Give sir a call if you have the time."

Arianne didn't say anything. She didn't really know how to communicate with Mark. Their age gap of ten years was like a wide ditch that separated them.

She went back to her room, took out her phone, and called him. To her surprise, her call was immediately received. She calmed herself down and asked, "Are you coming back tomorrow?"

Mark sounded like he was mumbling in his sleep on the other end of the call, "Hmmm."

Then, just like that, the call ended.

During dinnertime, Mary said, "I have to go home tomorrow. Old Henry will still be around, along with the kitchen helpers. If sir comes back tomorrow, you must find a way to make him stay, got it?"

Arianne nodded. "He told me he's coming back, but he could change his mind at the last minute."

Mary consoled her. "Don't worry. Sir will surely come back since he has promised you."

The next day, the decorations outside the main entrance were particularly eye-catching. The atmosphere was brimming with the joy of another year.

Mary had gone back to her hometown, and Butler Henry, as usual, didn't talk much. He would only inform Arianne to take her meals when she got up and remind her to take her medicine on time.

She had no idea what time Mark was coming back so she sent a greeting to Tiffany and chatted with her for a while. She felt a little sleepy after taking her medicine, so she got some shut-eye on the sofa.

By night time, it was still very quiet in the Tremont Estate and she was bored to death. Other houses were brightly lit, celebrating the joyous occasion. She hadn't experienced that for so many years now.

By seven o'clock in the evening, Butler Henry came to her and said, "Madam, do you want to make another call to sir?"

Before Arianne could even reply, Aery Kinsey's cutesy voice came from the door. "Mark dear, won't my sister be upset if I spend New Year's Eve here?"

Arianne caught her breath. It was New Year's Eve today and Mark Tremont actually brought Aery Kinsey here?

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"You wouldn't have come if you were truly worried," Mark's voice was cold.

Aery pouted at him. "Aww, come on."

Butler Henry looked at Arianne but swallowed back his words. He went up and greeted Mark, "Sir..."

Mark acknowledged him then asked, "Have you taken care of everything at home?"

"Yes, they have been rewarded accordingly," Butler Henry replied.

Mark took out a card and handed it over to Butler Henry. "This is yours, thanks for all your hard work this year."

Mark did this every year; he was very generous to his servants. Butler Henry didn't refuse it. "It's my job."

Food was quickly served on the table. Mark sat down at the table with Aery. Arianne involuntarily lowered her head and tried not to look at them. They just had to sit so closely just across from her. It was as though she was an outsider.

"My parents have gone on a vacation abroad. I was bored out of my mind alone so I came with Mark dear. Hope you don't mind, big sis!" Aery deliberately showed off the huge diamond ring on her finger. In her overly sweet smile was a touch of smugness.

"Do what you want." Arianne continued eating without giving her even the slightest glance.

Aery wasn't satisfied, as Arianne hadn't given her the reaction she wanted. "You don't seem happy..."

Happy? Hmph...

Arianne took a deep breath then suddenly lifted her eyes to look at Aery with a very generous smile on her face. "Of course not. I am very happy. The house has been very empty these past few years. At least this year, it's different."

The smile on Aery's face stiffened. She didn't believe Arianne was truly this indifferent. Just when she was about to pick another fight with her, Mark suddenly stood up. "I've lost my appetite. I'll be at my study room," he announced coldly.

Aery nodded obediently, "Alright."

The expression on her face changed as soon as Mark left. "Arianne, you sure are very tolerant. Or is that you don't even care about Mark dear? You're still thinking about Will Sivan, who is abroad, aren't you? You'd probably even swim across the ocean just to meet him. Since that's the case, you might as well divorce Mark dear and get out of our way."

Arianne sneered coldly and scooped some food into Aery's bowl. "Here, try this."

Aery immediately flew into a rage. “What are you trying? You obviously don’t even care about Mark dear!”

Arianne didn’t say anything else until she was done eating. “I’m done. Take your time to enjoy the meal.”

Aery was so angry that she didn’t even touch her food at all. She stormed upstairs and barged into the study room. “Mark dear! I think big sis doesn’t even love you. I was so worried that she would be angry if I showed up today... But not only did she not get angry, but she even happily offered me food. People always say that first love is the most unforgettable. Since her first man was Will Sivan, I think he will probably stay in her heart forever. Mark dear, you might as well give them your blessings.”

Mark’s perfect face instantly turned frosty when he heard the words ‘first man’. He lit a cigarette. “Blessings? That word is not in my dictionary.”

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Aery’s heart sank. She rarely saw Mark looking this serious and terrifying.

She just couldn’t understand why Arianne wouldn’t leave Mark even though she didn’t love him. Nor could she understand why Mark didn’t want to give them his blessings even though he didn’t seem to care about her.

Was this all because of his pride as a man? If this continued, she would forever be Mark's secret lover.

She, more than anything, wished to be Mrs. Tremont. Arianne got this so effortlessly, yet she didn't value it at all. Aery couldn't help but be incensed at the thought of it.

While Mark was working in the study room, Aery strutted into his room to take a shower. She then picked out one of Arianne's silk pajamas and put them on. Looking as though she was the mistress of the house, she walked into the living room and haughtily commanded Butler Henry, "Go get the guest room ready."

Butler Henry remained standing still and directed his gaze to Arianne.

Arianne was nonchalantly reading a magazine on the sofa. "Go ahead, Uncle Henry."

Only then did Butler Henry instruct the servants to prepare the room. Aery shot a glare at Butler Henry. "Even a dog knows how to read its mistress' mood after being fed for so long. It's too bad that he's not smart enough. No one knows for sure yet who will be mistress here in the future."

Arianne frowned at her. "Aery, please mind your language."

“Did I say something wrong?” Aery retorted angrily.

“What can you do about it? Mark dear chose to bring me home on New Year’s Eve. Haven’t you realized yet that the guest room is for you?”

Arianne slightly tightened her grip, causing the magazine in her hands to wrinkle up a little. “Sure. I don’t have any objection if you want to spend the night here with Mark. But please restrain yourself a little before you become the mistress here. Let me warn you that Mark dislikes people who show off, especially those that flaunt their status.”

Aery was triggered. “I know Mark dear more than you! Don’t go thinking that you understand him enough just because you stayed with him longer. You are nothing but the daughter of a sinner. Your father killed his parents. He’s only keeping you by his side to torment you.”

Arianne didn’t say anything. It felt unpleasant to be jabbed where it hurt most, but she didn’t want to show any emotions to an outsider.

Aery turned around and went upstairs smugly after turning the tables on Arianne. Not long after she went inside Mark’s room, Arianne heard the sounds of glass shattering.

She bit her lip but didn’t bother to check it out. Aery naturally wouldn’t smash Mark’s belongings. She probably just ruined her skin care products.

By the time Arianne finished reading the magazine in her hands, her eyelids felt heavy. Mark had yet to come out of his study room. She didn't seem to have any options other than sitting around on the sofa. There was no way she would go to the guest room on her own accord.

She took out the latest magazine and flipped to the first page. To her surprise, it was the wedding dress design sketch she made. It looked so amazing after being post processed that even she was stunned. The design would be specially featured in the next exhibition, and her name was indicated as the designer.

To be honest, she only liked drawing and not designing. At the time, she rushed into the design industry so that she could make money to support herself as soon as possible.

Just when she was getting drowsy, Mark finally walked out of the study room. He went straight into his bedroom without coming downstairs.

For the next two hours, Arianne was gradually roused up by the occasional laughter and Aery's cutesy voice coming from upstairs.

This continued until the wee hours of morning before it finally became quiet upstairs. Butler Henry sighed. "Madam, aren't you going up to rest?"

Arianne smiled wryly. "Should I use the guest room?"

Butler Henry paused briefly then said, "You are the mistress of this house, Mark Tremont's wife!"

"But I'm not worthy," Arianne said in a daze.

Butler Henry's voice was firm. "You're the one he married, so that means you are worthy of the title. No matter what happened in the past, as long as you wish to be Mrs. Tremont, no one can take that away from you."

Arianne asked herself if this was what she wanted. However, she couldn't find the answer to it. She wanted it now, but only because she was provoked by Aery, right?