

## **Unconscious 1011**

### Chapter 1011

The Chamberlain twins were naturally good-looking, especially their eyes and eyebrows which looked like they'd been sculpted by a master.

If they had shown these faces during the audition, they would've been selected sooner. Why they'd covered such features with layers of makeup was a mystery.

Feeling the room's attention, Woodrow, the younger of the two, seemed uncomfortable. He kept his gaze down, hoping to go unnoticed.

Ariana gave them a nod of appreciation. "You two are the Funny Time Duo from five years back, aren't you?"

The duo had become known for their comedic content. Five years ago, at nineteen, they'd looked even younger. Ariana remembered following their work.

Back in the day, they'd had a showdown with a major company. The online world wasn't kind to them afterward. Lacking the resources and backup to push back, the brothers had opted to disappear from the public eye.

When Ariana saw them perform recently, their distinct voices and dance styles jogged her memory. She realized who they were. The Chamberlain twins looked taken aback by Ariana's recognition.

They figured that half a decade was long enough for folks to forget them and hoped for a fresh start in the spotlight.

Those days weren't easy to think about.

They'd been dragged online with nasty comments and baseless gossip.

Many had critiqued their looks, saying they weren't masculine enough.

Wild rumors circulated about them undergoing surgeries, being financially supported by wealthy benefactors, and leading scandalous lives.

From then on, they'd hidden behind thick makeup. Ariana knew of the online harassment they'd faced. It made sense to her why they felt safer behind layers of cosmetics. Ariana noticed their unease with the cameras and spoke gently to them.

"That online mess was a plot by your competitors. Many of those internet bullies were just folks they paid to spread hate. They have a routine, mainly to attack anyone in their way with the same venom.

None of it was your doing. When the truth came out, all those tales about you were debunked. Folks see through such deceit. So, chin up and own your looks. They're a gift. Trust me, things are going to get better in the entertainment world for you." The Chamberlain twins seemed to take heart from Ariana's pep talk.

Their rigid faces eased up some.

She noticed their improved mood and nudged them towards getting ready for practice.

Chatting had left Ariana parched. She paused for a quick drink of water and caught sight of the clock. She was taken aback. Over thirty minutes had flown by and the production team's vocal coach was still a no-show.

Chapter 1012

Ariana's brow furrowed.

Something felt off. The vocal coach provided by the production team should have been here by now. Without the vocal coach, they couldn't move to the next stage.

Without delay, Ariana decided to step outside to find out what was going on.

She approached the person in charge and asked politely, "Excuse me, but where is the vocal coach for our team? They were supposed to be here by now."

The person in charge seemed nonchalant as he responded, "All the vocal coaches from the production team are already booked by other teams. You'll have to make your own arrangements."

"What?" Ariana was taken aback and her eyebrows slightly furrowed.

She pulled out the program's schedule and said, "But we had already booked Mr. Jacob Faustin, and the production team approved it. Why isn't he here?"

The person in charge glanced at the schedule and casually explained, "It's not the production team's fault. Mr. Faustin had a sudden change in his schedule, and he's fully booked now. Since he's unavailable, the production team can't help. You'll need to deal with it yourselves."

When the person finished talking and left, Ariana heard familiar voices near the entrance. She walked over and saw Jacob talking to a well-dressed male agent from another team. The male agent had a striking figure in his sharp, well-tailored suit.

He stood tall and lean, his hair was neatly slicked back, and he wore gold-rimmed glasses. The light caught his features just right, highlighting the contours of his side profile.

Ariana identified the man as a representative from Rollingrock Media, a company known for managing B-list and C-list artists. They were widely regarded as the top contender in the competition as they boasted abundant resources, strong qualifications, and stayed at the forefront of industry trends.

Also, during the live broadcast the previous day, some lesser-known artists had already shown up to support them, further solidifying their status.

Ariana overheard Jacob's words to the male agent, delivered with a friendly smile. "Okay, I understand. I'll be depending on your support from now on."

This left Ariana with an uneasy feeling, as she sensed that the male agent was trying to lure Jacob away from their team. Suppressing her dissatisfaction, she approached Jacob and asked politely, "Mr. Faustin, wasn't the production team supposed to assign you to our team? Why are you..?"

Jacob interrupted her, gave her a dismissive look, and said, "I requested to switch to the production team. You'll need to find a replacement."

Ariana's expression grew cold as she retorted, "You should know that the production team plans everything ahead. If you've changed teams, there won't be a ready replacement."

Jacob shrugged indifferently.

"That's not my business. I've switched, and you'll have to sort yourself out." Jacob said nonchalantly, not even bothering to give Ariana another glance.

Ariana's demeanor turned cold as she said, "Your actions aren't fair."

Changing teams last-minute without notice and leaving us to find a replacement isn't going to reflect well if it becomes public."

#### Chapter 1013

Jacob's reaction to her words was far from pleasant. He gave Ariana a disdainful once-over and impatiently replied, "Oh, it's you, isn't it? Your team doesn't belong on this stage. This is a talent show platform, not a place for a mix of various acts and comedy shows."

Besides, I'm an established musician and the musical director here.

It's beneath me to teach a bunch of people who can't even hit the right notes. It could harm my reputation. What if your team Loses?

That would tarnish the image I've built for so many years."

Jacob's tone and attitude toward Ariana were notably different from how he had talked to the male agent earlier. He was clearly choosing his behavior selectively.

Ariana's patience was running thin, and she retorted, "Apparently, being an established musician is all about skill and not ethics. You don't even have the basic integrity for contractual agreements."

"You folks from this smaller company have no idea how you managed to get on this channel. What gives you the audacity to question my integrity? If you can pull it off, then do so. Otherwise, withdraw from the competition early and save yourselves the stress," Jacob also grew impatient.

After a few back-and-forths, Ariana concluded that exchanging words with this unreasonable person was pointless. She turned on her heel and walked away.

As Jacob watched Ariana walking away, he rolled his eyes and made a sarcastic comment to the male agent beside him. "Look at her, she's got some looks, but who knows how she managed to gain entry."

Interestingly, the male agent beside him appeared contemplative as he watched Ariana's retreating form, as if he had seen that person somewhere before.

Although the morning had thrown her a curveball, Ariana wasn't one to crumble under pressure. She knew when she stepped into this contest there'd be hurdles, especially given her background.

So, she took a deep breath and steadied herself. Blowing a gasket now wouldn't help anyone. What the team needed was a vocal coach who could elevate their act.

Pulling out her phone, Ariana pondered her next move. She thought about dialing Sarah. But with Sarah caught up in her concert series, she'd be free long after the contest wrapped up.

As she mulled over her options, a fresh post on her social media feed caught her eye, sparking an idea.

Meanwhile, back in the practice room, the six members of Ariana's ensemble were running their lines when they realized she was MIA.

With nothing else to do, they just hung around waiting.

Morning rolled into noon and yet, no Ariana.

Impatience brewing, the group decided to touch base with the show's crew about where Ariana might be. Their responses? Evasive at best, leaving the team more irked than before.

Tension climbed as the hours ticked away. With the world watching and expecting them to stumble, every minute heightened their stress.

Feeling left in the lurch, their frustration mounted.

#### Chapter 1014

One of the guys in the group, a blond dude sporting a hip-hop getup but known for his rock vocals during tryouts, was especially antsy.

Having been overlooked by the big-shot agencies, he was under the wing of a lesser-known outfit. His spirits had taken a hit since the previous night. Restless, he began to pace, his patience thinning by the second.

"Where on earth is she? Reckon she's left us high and dry? If she's given up on us, she could at least have the decency to tell us!" he exclaimed.

Tom Rivas couldn't contain his exasperation any longer, slumping to the floor in defeat. He grumbled, "Joining her team was a mistake.

Even if I'd been kicked out during the auditions, it would have been better than this public embarrassment. The net's buzzing with ridicule about us. Why are we even still here?"

Brucie Armstrong, sitting nearby, flexed his muscular arms beneath his sleeveless shirt.

He wasn't as wound up as Tom, but his low spirits were palpable. He remarked, "Unless a miracle occurs, we're likely the first ones out.

Did you see the others at the auditions? How do we even stand a chance?" As the group's spirits dampened, Woodrow tried to interject some optimism.

"There might still be a stage meant just for us. We can't lose hope now. Better to try and fail than not try at all. Giving up now means we've truly lost everything."

Tom gave a derisive snort, looking at him with thinly veiled contempt. "Really? You two can barely face a camera, and now you're giving pep talks?"

Caught off-guard, Woodrow struggled to respond. Tom's disdain for the brothers was evident as he continued to mock, "Thinking of winning, are you? On what grounds? Your shrieking voices? Or those clumsy dance steps that look like a chicken's?"

"Have you even got a clue about comedy? Keep your ill-informed comments to yourself," Franklin defended, quickly escalating the exchange into a full-blown argument between him, Woodrow, and Tom.

In the midst of the heated debate, Brucie's voice cut through the noise, his irritation evident. "Enough with the shouting! What's the point? We shouldn't even be here. The blame is on whoever picked us." The tension in the room was palpable as Tom continued venting his frustrations.

Agitated, he exclaimed, "She dragged us here at the crack of dawn and then vanished. I could've spent my time better sleeping. And last night, I looked up her company, this 'Landon Media,' I've never heard of it! Probably just some dubious front using us as a facade."

From his perch on a nearby couch, a young man named Jim Woden, distinguishable by his weary eyes and single eyelids, had silently observed the escalating dispute. Finally, he couldn't hold back.

Offering a cold stare, he challenged, "You weren't griping when you secured your positions yesterday. What good does shouting do now? If you're so discontented, just leave."

Tom's ire was now directed at Jim. Hurling his script aside, he charged towards the exit, eyes blazing.

“You know what? | will!”

But as he reached for the door handle, it swung open from the other side.

A breathless Ariana entered, immediately apologizing.

“I'm so sorry for the delay. The vocal coach the program arranged had an emergency, so | had to find a suitable replacement.” Before she could elaborate further, a man stepped into the room behind her, leaving everyone in a state of shock.

Recognizing the newcomer, eyes widened in astonishment.

“Isn't that Julio Cugat, the esteemed vocal coach and composer from Melcorn?”

#### Chapter 1015

Julio was a dignified man in his early sixties, his white hair neatly styled and a pair of fine-rimmed glasses resting on his nose. Although years of composing at a desk had given him a slightly stooped posture, his aura was one of warmth and friendliness.

An authority in both classical and pop music, Julio was a towering figure in Melcorn's pop music industry. Over the years, he had garnered numerous international awards and even had the honor of composing for the royal family on several occasions. Referring to him as the “royal composer” was no overstatement.

Despite his storied career, Julio had scaled back his professional engagements in recent times, making his presence a coveted rarity at major international music events.

Ariana had not expected to find Julio in Eleymond. It was a serendipitous social media post, geotagged in the city, that hinted at his presence.

After verifying his location with a quick phone call, Ariana learned he was vacationing in the city and saw an opportunity.



Her relationship with Julio was anchored in a personal connection: his grandson, once diagnosed with autism, had been under Ariana's care. After numerous unsuccessful treatments elsewhere, it was at Jessie's children's psychological charity organization where the boy, as Ariana's patient, began to show marked improvement. Under her dedicated attention, he gradually returned to typical communication patterns.

Deeply appreciative of Ariana's relentless efforts and the transformative impact on his grandson, Julio cherished their bond.

So, when Ariana reached out about her current musical challenge, he was quick to extend his expertise. Considering he was vacationing with his grandson in Eylemond, he eagerly agreed to help once he grasped her situation.

Julio's sudden appearance silenced any previous grievances from the six members, their dismay replaced by a mix of astonishment and elation.

For them, Julio was a legend in the musical world. They were in awe, wondering how Ariana had orchestrated the involvement of such an esteemed figure in their training.

Tom, who was moments away from exiting, stood frozen, his eyes fixed on Julio. He appeared lost, his hands awkwardly hovering at his sides.

Jim, noting Tom's sudden shift in attitude, quipped with a hint of sarcasm, "Weren't you on your way out? What's with the sudden change of heart?"

Caught off guard by the remark, Tom turned, his voice hushed, and snapped back, "Keep your nose out of it. This isn't your concern."

"What are you two discussing?" Ariana's voice chimed in from behind them, catching Tom off guard.

Without missing a beat, Jim began, "He was just."

"Ah! | was just expressing to him how incredible Miss Edwards is.

It's given me some inspiration. In fact, I'm thinking of penning a special rap dedicated to you," Tom interjected swiftly, blocking Jim's path and offering Ariana a charmed grin.

Jim's eyes rolled in amusement at Tom's sudden sycophancy, but he chose not to expose him. Instead, he retreated to a quieter corner.

The events of the morning had been tumultuous, but now, formal rehearsals were finally underway. Ariana remained with them in the practice room, providing guidance and support.

As the rehearsal drew close to its conclusion, Ariana's phone began to buzz. The display showed an unknown number.

Stepping away, she accepted the call. The composed voice of a middle-aged man greeted her, "Hello, Dr. Edwards speaking? I represent Mr. Fredrick. We had earlier discussed a child psychology appointment with you."

With the day's whirlwind, Ariana had nearly forgotten about this consultation. She had been anticipating a call from the Fredrick family, wondering if they might retract their interest or cancel. But she hadn't expected the call right now.

#### Chapter 1016

"Yes, I recall. How may I assist you?" she replied. "Is it possible for you to visit Mr. Fredrick's residence for an initial face-to-face consultation tomorrow afternoon?" the man asked.

Taking a moment to ponder, Ariana realized that with the day's schedule settled, she wouldn't be needed directly for tomorrow's rehearsal. Seeing an opening in her schedule, she assented, requesting the address and specific time from the caller.

On the top floor of BRD Group's building, Shawn handed a document to Holden. "This document holds all the details about Miss Edwards." Holden nodded.

"Okay." He collected it and began flipping through the pages. He then motioned for Shawn to leave without lifting his gaze from the document.

However, Shawn hesitated, clearly wanting to say something. Sensing this, Holden looked up, encouraging him to speak.

After a moment of hesitation, Shawn inquired, “Mr. Fredrick, may I ask why you suddenly decided to investigate Miss Edwards? Is there an issue with the energy project?”

Holden averted his gaze, offering no reply. He merely slid his empty coffee cup toward Shawn, signaling that further questions were unwelcome.

Shawn understood the cue. He held his silence and promptly fetched a fresh cup of coffee.

Alone in his office, Holden delved into the extensive information on Ariana.

The Fredrick family had large information networks and connections.

It was a compiled comprehensive information about her, including her birthplace, education, and employment history. But upon closer examination, Holden noticed certain gaps.

Specifically, there was a missing information about Ariana’s life from her return from studying abroad in Eylemond to her departure for Melcorn over a year later.

Frowning, Holden suspected Shawn might have dropped some pages. But strangely, the page numbers were accurate.

Moreover, the document contained the names of Ariana’s friends from her social network, such as Sonia and Sarah, even though these people were her regular connections. The information appeared detailed, but Ariana’s husband was absent from the records.

Judging from Ariana’s behavior, Holden couldn’t believe she had reason to deceive him. He also believed that she genuinely loved the deceased, and Melon’s reaction seemed authentic.

They appeared sincere, leaving Holden to conclude that there was an issue with the data collection.

However, it couldn't be missing. His information network proved so advanced that it had successfully uncovered even the hidden safe's location. Furthermore, it had unearthed details about Ariana's late mother, who had passed away over a decade ago. It was inconceivable that it wouldn't find any information about her husband.

With a furrowed brow, Holden closed the file and fixed his gaze on the most recent photograph of Ariana.

The longer he stared at the image, the more a sense of familiarity washed over him. The smiling face in the photo felt as though it had etched itself vividly into his heart, yet he couldn't recall any prior encounter with it.

Holden could feel his heart racing, a sensation he'd never experienced before. It was as if a voice within him whispered to cherish this name.

Unconsciously, Holden's fingers reached out to touch the face in the photograph. He had never laid eyes on this person, yet a single glance moved him profoundly.

Initially, he had dismissed his attraction to her voice. However, now that he beheld her face, he realized that it wasn't just her voice that drew him in. It felt like fate's guiding hand as he felt an attraction both unbelievable and compelling.

Just then, Shawn entered the room, holding a cup of coffee. He placed it beside Holden and said, "Devin has arranged for a physical consultation with the child psychologist at the house tomorrow afternoon."

Holden nodded, securing the photos and documents in the drawer.

"Reschedule all my appointments for tomorrow afternoon. I'll be going with Adele to the consultation."

Chapter 1017

The following morning, Ariana meticulously planned her work schedule and left Melon in Sonia's care. As she prepared to visit the Fredrick estate, the thought of encountering Sadie and potentially stirring

up conflict crossed her mind. Though tempted to don a disguise, she wanted to remain inconspicuous. Choosing a more subtle approach, she opted for a hat and face mask, providing just enough anonymity.

Wearing the snug mask and hat was slightly suffocating, but Ariana took a deep breath, hoping she'd evade any unplanned run-ins with Sadie, who was known for her dramatics. Making final adjustments to her outfit, Ariana set off.

She took solace in the fact that she'd used an alias with the agency. An unexpected revelation of her presence would surely agitate Sadie.

Navigating by the provided directions, Ariana made her way to the renowned mansion district of Half-hill Villa, a locale synonymous with opulence.

At the district's entrance, she showed her credentials and journeyed through a lush, expansive park before the grand estates came into view. Strategically placed, the villas began at the perimeter and became increasingly grandiose as one moved inward, elevated by the ascending hillside.

Ariana had heard tales of Half-hill Villa. The outer-ring villas were within reach for the reasonably affluent. However, venturing inward, the prices skyrocketed, and land was measured not in acres but inches.

Beyond financial prowess, ownership within Half-hill Villa demanded an illustrious Lineage.

Surveying the lavish homes, even the well-traveled Ariana was momentarily taken aback. The area emanated an undeniable air of prestige, making even the outskirts seem almost suffocating. It was a challenging environment for nurturing young minds.

Presumably, the esteemed Fredrick family didn't dwell on the periphery.

Guided by a sleek, black lead car, Ariana ventured further into the enclave. After a prolonged drive that extended beyond her expectations, she grew restless. How much further could it be?

As the lead vehicle finally came to a halt, Ariana's gaze shifted forward, and she was left momentarily breathless. She was aware of the Fredrick family's affluence, but the reality surpassed her wildest imaginations.

An imposing iron gate stood before her, and through its grandeur, Ariana glimpsed the majestic manor. It wasn't merely a villa; it was an expansive estate resembling a castle. Positioned at the zenith of Half-hill Villa, it offered a commanding view of the entire neighborhood and the cityscape of Eleymond.

Still processing the spectacle, Ariana handed her invitation to the gatekeeper. In response, several vehicles approached to escort her up the extensive driveway. After a ten-minute journey, she reached the entrance of the magnificent abode.

As she parked, a distinguished man in his fifties approached her. "I'm the individual who reached out to you. Please, call me Devin," he greeted warmly.

"Hello," Ariana replied, offering her hand and presenting her credentials alongside the invitation.

After a brief inspection, Devin beckoned her inside and promptly offered tea and refreshments.

"Mr. Fredrick is currently on a conference call upstairs. He will join us momentarily. In the meantime, please make yourself comfortable."

Ariana nodded, a rush of anticipation filling her. She had heard of Holden Fredrick, and with Melon's insistence that he bore a resemblance to Theodore, her curiosity was piqued.

Observing Ariana's continued concealment, Devin remarked, "You're quite safe here. If you'd like, you can remove your hat and mask."

While she understood that retaining her disguise indoors might appear uncouth, Ariana hesitated, fearing an unwelcome reaction from Sadie.

The last thing she wanted was for any adult disagreements to compromise the child's therapy session.

Lost in thought and considering how best to convey her concerns to Devin, the unmistakable sound of Sadie's voice echoed from the stairway's summit.

"Quick, get all my things to the car. Be careful with them," Sadie urgently exclaimed as she dashed down the grand staircase of the Fredrick manor. Her heels echoed loudly against the polished marble floors as she hastened toward the front door, her singular focus on arriving at a photoshoot punctually.

Upon bursting through the towering front doors, Sadie's discerning eye caught sight of an immaculate almond-colored Bentley parked out front. It possessed a sleek silhouette, adorned with subtle modifications and decorative stickers, clearly a woman's car.

Her brow furrowed, and she turned her attention to the portly middle-aged servant laboring under the weight of her numerous bags. She inquired sharply, "Do we have a guest?"

The servant straightened up, offering a polite response, "A child psychologist has arrived, Miss Pierre. She was invited to work with Miss Adele."

Sadie's scowl deepened. Hadn't Holden mentioned that the psychologist would be a man? Why had it suddenly changed to a woman?

Annoyance surged within her. Sadie adamantly disliked any woman getting too close to Holden, having taken meticulous measures to prevent it. ALL staff around him had been replaced with men per her explicit request, and the remaining female servants had been sternly warned against being alone with Holden or engaging in casual conversation with him.

Sadie briefly contemplated abandoning the photoshoot to confront this unknown woman, but just then, her cellphone vibrated urgently. It was undoubtedly her agent, calling because she was already running late.

Gritting her teeth, Sadie acknowledged that there was no time to delay. Moreover, this advertising contract had been hard-won. She had pleaded and cajoled Holden tirelessly for months to secure the endorsement. She couldn't risk losing it over what was likely an overreaction.

With great reluctance, Sadie glanced back at the front door. No matter who this woman was, she wouldn't be a permanent resident here.

Surely, she posed no genuine threat. "Keep a close watch on that woman," Sadie sharply whispered to the servant.

"Ensure she doesn't get too close to Holden, do you understand? There are far too many audacious temptresses out there these days, seeking to take advantage of prosperous men."

"Of course, Miss Pierre. I will keep a vigilant eye on her," the servant assured, nodding quickly. Somewhat reassured, Sadie finally departed for the photoshoot.

Inside the grand foyer, Ariana breathed a quiet sigh of relief as she watched Sadie's car disappear down the long driveway. The palpable tension in the air noticeably dissipated. At that moment, Ariana heard light footsteps descending the staircase. She turned to witness Adele descending rapidly, paying no heed to anyone as she made a beeline for the garden doors.

Devin hurried over and gently halted the little girl's progress, leading her over to Ariana for introductions. "Adele, this is your new art teacher." Drawing from her limited previous interactions with Adele and the background information provided by the Fredrick family, Ariana

understood that art lessons would serve as a means to assess Adele's mental and emotional state.

In a conversation over the phone the previous day, she and Devin had concurred that it was best for Ariana to pose simply as Adele's teacher rather than a psychologist. While Adele rarely expressed herself openly, Holden believed she was cognizant enough to discern the difference between these two roles.

He hesitated to make Adele realize she needed constant psychological evaluation and supervision at such a tender age, fearing it could alienate her from normal children as she grew older. Thus, he preferred that all doctors and therapists interact with Adele under different pretenses, at least for the time being.

Ariana readily embraced this sensitive approach and was content to go along with the charade. With a warm smile, she crouched down to Adele's eye level and extended her hand gently in greeting. "Hello



Adele, I'm delighted to meet you. I'll be teaching you art lessons from now on. Doesn't that sound like fun?"

Adele simply stared back with wide, unblinking eyes, her stoic little face revealing no emotion.

Chapter 1019

Just as Ariana began to retract her hand, thinking the child would ignore the gesture entirely, Adele unexpectedly reached out and placed a small wrapped candy in Ariana's palm. Surprised, Ariana looked down at the candy in her hand, her heart melting.

Adele's bright eyes, gazing up at her, conveyed that the little girl had recognized and accepted her presence. Ariana longed to embrace Adele warmly, but she restrained herself, mindful of Devin's watchful presence.

Devin, too, appeared pleasantly shocked by Adele's swift and open response to Ariana. A swell of hope filled him, suggesting that this new psychologist could truly be a positive, nurturing influence on the reserved young Miss.

Noticing Ariana was perspiring lightly beneath her mask and hat, Devin freshly brewed some cooling chamomile tea and kindly offered it to her.

"Please, remove those stifling things, Miss Edwards. Here, have some chilled tea to refresh yourself." With Sadie now absent, Ariana gratefully removed her mask and hat, allowing her face to breathe freely.

As soon as Ariana's face came into view, Devin's composure faltered, and he stood there frozen, his normally steady demeanor shaken. His hand trembled slightly, almost causing him to spill the tea from his cup.

Ariana?! How had she returned to this city?

Devin was caught off guard by this unexpected turn of events. He vaguely recalled that the doctor's surname was Edwards, and he hadn't thought much of it at the time. After all, it was a direct arrangement from Holden, so he hadn't delved deeper into it. Little did he expect that Doctor Edwards would turn out to be Ariana herself.

Not only had she returned, but she had also appeared by Holden's side so swiftly.

Ariana noticed Devin's surprise and found it somewhat puzzling. As Holden's steward, he should have witnessed many grand occasions, so why was he so taken aback to see her?

She asked directly, "Is something amiss? Is there something on my face?" Devin was incredibly flustered and couldn't conceal his astonished expression.

However, seeing Ariana's puzzled look, he surmised that she might not have encountered Holden yet and probably remained unaware that Holden Fredrick was, in fact, Theodore Anderson from five years ago.

Otherwise, she wouldn't have arrived here so calmly.

Devin couldn't help but recall Aldus's dying wish.

Before his passing, what troubled Aldus the most was Theodore's memories. Aldus knew that Theodore had harbored deep love for Ariana, which was why he had entrusted Devin with the solemn request never to mention Ariana in front of Holden.

He didn't want Holden to be plagued by those painful memories should he ever recall them.

Therefore, Devin's immediate instinct was that Holden must not cross paths with Ariana.

He attempted to regain his composure and said, "No, it's nothing. I just remembered some personal matters. Miss Edwards, please don't concern yourself."

Devin casually handed the tea to Ariana and added, "Mr. Fredrick is likely to be occupied for a while. How about returning another time?"

Ariana found this situation increasingly perplexing and couldn't resist asking, "But I came here to assess Adele's condition."

Shouldn't | be tending to her illness rather than Mr. Fredrick?"

## Chapter 1020

It was truly puzzling. Ariana wondered why she needed to meet Holden before commencing the diagnosis. Did she have to see him first to treat Adele's ailment?

At this point, Devin realized that he had spoken too hastily and was anxious about the possibility of an encounter between Holden and Ariana. However, he swiftly regained his composure and explained, "It's just that previous therapists who came here were accompanied by Mr. Fredrick."

"But didn't we schedule a specific time?" Ariana furrowed her brows subtly. At this juncture, sending her away would mean that her trip had been in vain.

Devin knew that insisting on her departure at this moment would only raise suspicion, so he didn't press the matter further. Instead, he expressed a mild apology.

"Yes, the diagnosis can commence at any time. My previous suggestion was merely a personal opinion. Miss Edwards, please accept my apologies."

Ariana didn't pursue the matter further and turned her attention back to Adele.

Devin breathed a sigh of relief, hoping fervently that Holden would be too preoccupied to meet her today. After offering a brief word of comfort to Adele, Ariana turned to Devin and stated, "We can proceed now." Devin nodded and arranged for paper and pens. Ariana placed a pen in Adele's hand and smiled warmly. "Adele, let's start drawing something."

Adele obediently began doodling on the paper while Devin lingered nearby, his anxiety mounting.

Just then, his phone rang, and Devin answered it. He listened for a moment before his expression shifted slightly. He asked sternly, "You couldn't handle it?"

Unaware of the other person's response, Devin glanced at the two figures engrossed in their drawings and added, "I'm occupied at the moment and can't leave."

The urgent voice on the other end persisted, and Devin let out a quiet sigh before saying, “I understand.”

He then hung up the phone.

He adjusted his demeanor briefly, exchanged a few words with Ariana, and then left.

In the living room, only Adele and Ariana remained. Suddenly, Adele set down her pen and hurriedly dashed upstairs.

“Adele?” Ariana called out, but Adele didn’t turn back. Her tiny legs propelled her rapidly up the stairs, and Ariana followed closely.

They reached the third floor, passing by a partially open door, and Ariana caught the sound of voices emanating from inside. Among them, one voice struck her as strangely familiar, a voice she had heard frequently in phone calls over the past few days.

Ariana was taken aback. She could discern that this voice was distinct from the others, neither distorted nor artificial. Yet, this was the Fredrick’s residence, and there should be no one else present.

Could it be.. Holden? However, it didn’t add up. Ariana recollected that Holden’s voice from five years ago didn’t sound like this.

She believed she might have misheard, so she moved closer and strained her ears to listen attentively.