

Unconscious 1021

Chapter 1021

When Ariana approached once more, the voice utterly changed. It seemed as though another person had started to speak.

Ariana stood at a crossroads, grappling with the decision of whether to knock on the door, but Adele tugged at her clothes, leading her forward by the hand.

Ariana clutched Adele's hand firmly, following her lead with the determination. Adele led Ariana to her room.

Ariana redirected her focus back to Adele, watching as Adele took the incomplete drawing and ventured into its depths, providing her with a psychological estimation.

Adele obediently held the pen, bringing closure to the unfinished artwork. Ariana patiently steered her course, yet the more she observed, the deeper her unconscious furrowed brow became.

Adele's condition turned out to be a thornier maze than Ariana had originally anticipated.

She had initially believed her speechlessness, self-harming tendencies, and episodic outbursts to be the apex of her problems. However, the current situation unveiled hidden depths.

These behaviors were merely the tip of the iceberg, concealing deeper and more unpredictable emotions beneath like a submerged iceberg lurking beneath the ocean's surface.

It was a far graver situation than Ariana had ever envisaged. She couldn't help but sympathize with the young girl before her.

Moreover, her pathological deductions led her to conclude that Adele's condition was not congenital autism but rather an acquired affliction.

Ariana clutched Adele's artwork, feeling an inexplicable surge of anger.

She had always abided by the ethical tenets of a physician, ensuring that her emotions did not taint her treatment or judgment of a patient's family. Nevertheless, Adele's plight stirred an indescribable fury within her.

She struggled to imagine what traumatic ordeal had befallen such a tender soul to bring about this state. Ariana inhaled deeply to quell her emotions.

From what Jessie had shared, it was evident that Holden had gone to great lengths to seek treatment for Adele, trying myriad methods. He apparently cared deeply for her and would never harm her intentionally.

Ariana tentatively initiated contact with Adele. Noticing Adele's lack of resistance, she gently caressed her head and commenced interactive games and storytelling to exercise basic reasoning.

After about half an hour, Ariana paused to allow Adele a respite.

The household staff also brought some refreshments.

Adele's eyes locked onto the snacks the moment they came. Her full attention was now drawn to the delectables, and she eagerly seized them, launching into a spirited feast.

Ariana silently handed her a cup of tea and wiped her mouth, sitting beside her while drifting into contemplation. She couldn't help but recall the voice she had overheard near the study earlier.

The voice felt eerily familiar, and there couldn't be so many strikingly similar voices around, could there? If the person in that room turned out not to be Holden but the affluent online admirer, did it imply that this online admirer had some connection to the Fredrick family?

Chapter 1022

Ariana was speculating but couldn't assert with certainty, so she resolved to inquire directly. She got her phone and went to the social media account of that online friend, opening the chat window.

However, a sense of unease crept over her as she did so.

The profile picture of this wealthy friend's account was a young girl who, strangely enough, bore a striking resemblance to Adele! Ariana found it hard to believe, but she zoomed in on the profile picture for a closer look.

Though it was merely an image of the back of someone's head, the silhouette bore an uncanny likeness.

She glanced at Adele's back and then shifted her gaze back to the magnified photo on her phone.

The previous images the person had sent also featured a child's silhouette, remarkably akin to Adele's.

In an instant, Ariana's intuition whispered that this man was, in fact, Holden himself.

She struggled to accept this revelation, particularly considering she had heard Holden's voice five years ago. How could he have undergone such a transformation?

His voice even resembled Theodore's.

Pondering his voice, Ariana experienced a curious blend of perplexity and intrigue. She hesitated momentarily, unable to resist her inner curiosity, and concocted an excuse to leave.

Drawing on her memory, she pretended to saunter past the study, pausing at the door.

At that very moment, she overheard Shawn's voice. She was on the cusp of eavesdropping further when suddenly, a hand tapped her on the back.

Ariana nearly jumped out of her skin when a voice spoke up behind her. The weight of guilt she felt already had her on edge. Spinning around, she met the eyes of a round maid eyeing her with a hint of doubt.

"Why are you here?" the maid asked, sizing her up with a careful glance.

Ariana's gaze darted here and there, searching for a quick answer.

"Lost my way to the bathroom," she fibbed.

The corners of the maid's mouth turned upwards, but her eyes continued to size Ariana up. With a voice as sweet as southern tea but dripping with disbelief, she said, "Bathroom's downstairs. Let me show you."

Ariana laughed, a bit too loud and a tad too forced, feeling the weight of her lie. Keeping the act alive, she trailed behind the

maid.

Reaching the door, Ariana offered a thankful smile and whispered her gratitude. She ducked inside, shutting the door, and let out a long sigh, her back pressed against it. She was cross at herself for being so easily found out. Lost in her thoughts, Ariana didn't catch the soft sound of a lock clicking outside.

With her cheeks aflame from embarrassment, Ariana patted herself on the cheek. When she looked up, it hit her: the bathroom was draped in shadows.

Her hands traveled the walls, trying switches and buttons, but nothing lit up. Could it be busted?

She gazed up, puzzled by the unlit bulb above. The Fredrick family were loaded. A light glitch in their lavish home? And wouldn't a mansion like theirs have more than one bathroom on each floor?

Chapter 1023

Worry washed over Ariana. Something was off. She approached the door, thinking she'd get the maid's attention. But the door stood firm, not giving way even a little.

She pulled and yanked, but it was a no-go. Panic bubbled up as the truth settled in. She was trapped. Heart pounding, Ariana hammered on the door, hoping her voice carried beyond it.

“Hey! Can anyone hear me?”

The maid outside smirked, hearing Ariana’s distant yells and wild thumps against the door.

Miss Pierre had hit the nail on the head. Lately, there were quite a few cunning ladies aiming to tie their fate to the well-heeled Fredricks. Claiming to be a doctor? Probably just a sneaky ploy to cozy up to Mr. Fredrick.

Such nerve. Well, she had snagged this sly one in the act. A little lesson might be just the thing to quash any silly ideas she had about the man of the house.

But then, footsteps. Another staff member, curious about the commotion from the bathroom. Not in the mood to be caught in the act, the maid zipped over and redirected her colleague, spinning a tale about a busted light and a sticky door. She said she was about to ring up the repair crew and nudged her coworker to join her.

Throwing one last doubtful look at the bathroom, the other maid shuffled on. The moment they were out of whispering range, the maid booked it, leaving Ariana in her makeshift prison.

Back in the bathroom, Ariana’s voice wore thin with no answer. A sinking feeling took hold. It was clear. The maid had probably locked her in on purpose.

Feeling around her pockets, she remembered. Her phone? Upstairs, doing zilch. She let out an annoyed huff. Now and then, she gave the door a whack and hollered, but getting noticed was looking like a lost cause.

Thinking back, she had taken such a maze-like route in this mammoth of a house. Who would be around often enough to catch wind of her calls?

Trying to be smart about it, she yelled in bursts, resting between. Yet, an eerie quiet seemed to wrap around her in that windowless chamber, only pierced by her own racing heartbeats.

In the pitch dark, Ariana strained to see, but shapes remained ghostly. Initially, panic had her in a vice grip. But as time dragged on and her own ragged breathing was the only sound, a bone-chilling fear settled in her heart. It was as if the shadows were pressing down on her.

Years had passed since her last dance with claustrophobia. Yet, in this moment, her thoughts were a blank slate. Cold dread tightened around Ariana. Her heart raced as memories crashed in like tidal waves. She remembered that time, as a

little girl, when her wicked stepmother had shut her in a dark room. The echoes of her own past cries seemed to bounce around in her head, making her shiver.

Suddenly, another memory: the harrowing car crash from half a decade ago. She felt trapped, like back in that mangled car. She could almost taste the sharp tang of gasoline, feel the sticky warmth of blood, her own mixed with Theodore's, dripping down. The raw desperation she had felt, holding onto his lifeless form, chanting his name like a mantra, engulfed her again.

"Theodore," she whispered, tears carving pathways down her cheeks. Leaning heavily against the door, she felt the world fading to black.

But maybe, just maybe, some cosmic force took pity on her. Because, at that moment, the door slowly swung open, letting in a hopeful ray of light.

Chapter 1024

Ariana jerked her head up, and even with her eyes clouded with tears, she thought she saw Theodore standing there. ALL the pent-up feelings of fear, sorrow, and longing came rushing out like water escaping a broken dam.

Was this just another cruel trick played by her mind? Why did this vision feel so sharp, so tangible?

If her mind's escape was to weave these delusions and let her see him again, maybe that wouldn't be so bad.

The buzzing in Ariana's ears was deafening, making the man's words a distant murmur. When he knelt down next to her, she couldn't help but wrap her arms around him, releasing a sob that seemed to come from her very soul.

“Is that you? Why’d you take so long?” Her voice was raw, reflecting the chaos inside.

Holden paused, his hand almost reaching hers. He’d just wrapped up his duties and was looking forward to meeting the new child psychologist. But all he found was little Adele munching on snacks alone.

He spotted her phone left behind. She couldn't be too far. Following the faint sounds, he stumbled upon the bathroom door that refused to budge.

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But when he finally got it open, there she was. Ariana’s face, stained with tears, caught in the faint light. For a second, he wondered if he was seeing things. But her unmistakable voice and the scent he remembered so well made him realize she was really there, and she was in distress.

Holden’s instinct was to distance himself, to get a better look at her face, but Ariana wasn’t letting him. She held on tight, her cries echoing softly in the room as she whispered, “Don’t ever leave me again.” She felt so fragile as she shuddered in his embrace.

Tears soaked through to his shirt, giving him an unexpected twinge of pain in his chest. Holden’s frustration started to evaporate. He began to lift his hand, aiming to comfort her, but her next words stopped him in his tracks.

“Theodore.. | miss you so much,” Ariana said, her voice trembling with grief.

Holden’s hand stopped mid-air, a sharp burst of anger surging in him, powerful and wild. His brow creased, and he let out a scoff of disbelief.

This Theodore must be her late husband, the name he’d caught in passing conversations.

A part of him wanted to push Ariana away, but propriety held him back. Before he could make a move, Ariana’s head tilted back, and she went limp in his arms.

Suddenly, Shawn appeared, catching sight of Holden and saying, "I've looked everywhere, and I can't find the doctor." His eyes landed on Ariana, and he paused, wide-eyed. Was Ariana the psychologist they were talking about?

Holden's expression turned thunderous. Without a word, he gently lifted Ariana's unconscious form. He shot a stern look at Shawn and said, "Don't just stand there. Find the doctor. Now." Shawn shook off his surprise and darted away.

In a nearby guest room, Holden placed Ariana on the bed, but he found he couldn't move away. He just stood there, almost hypnotized, unable to tear his gaze from her.

Holden struggled to understand the whirlwind of feelings he was experiencing, sensations that pulsed and electrified his heart. Seeing her in person was different from glimpsing her in photographs or videos. The emotions were stronger, more intense.

His eyes caught a stray strand of hair clinging to her cheek, wet from her tears. Without even thinking, Holden's hand reached out, as if drawn to brush it aside.

Chapter 1025

It suddenly, he pulled back as if jolted awake. Regaining his senses, confusion and frustration welled within Holden. A deep breath was his attempt to re-anchor himself to the moment.

It dawned on him just how profound her unconscious influence over him was. He felt irresistibly drawn to her, a sensation he couldn't reconcile with.

This unfamiliar lack of control was unnerving. Holden recalled similar entrancements he'd felt around her before.

He distanced himself, choosing a seat on the sofa by the bed, deliberately avoiding Ariana's tranquil face. Yet, even out of sight, she was not out of mind. Her presence was pervasive, dominating his thoughts.

No past experience came to mind that could explain this magnetism. He was certain Ariana hadn't bewitched him; the turmoil was entirely his own doing.

But why? What about her elicited such a reaction from him? Doubts and questions swirled within.

The accident had stripped him of his memories. His grandfather's recounting of his past always felt like tales of another person's life.

He had come to terms with that detachment, chalking it up to the aftermath of memory loss.

However, his body's innate reactions to Ariana raised unsettling questions. Was there a forgotten bond between them? A connection his mind couldn't remember but his very being still felt?

His turbulent reflections were disrupted when the family doctor entered the room. After a quick examination, the doctor said, "It's just a fainting spell due to stress. She should come around soon."

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Holden exhaled softly, relieved by the doctor's words. He gave a curt nod of acknowledgment.

Spotting an opportune moment, Shawn interjected, "Sir, we've found the person responsible for locking the door." With a gesture, the bodyguards brought forth the plump maid, who looked visibly apprehensive.

She hadn't anticipated her actions reaching Holden's attention.

Flustered, she hastily tried to defend herself.

"I only told her the light was broken, but she insisted on going in. I promise I don't know who locked the door!" Shawn, having already seen the evidence on security footage, remained stoic, waiting for Holden's verdict. The maid's eyes darted around nervously, regretful of her oversight.

She had mistakenly assumed Holden, often absent from the estate, wouldn't get involved.

Previous psychologists had been short-term visitors, and she had believed Ariana would follow suit, hence her harmless trick to deter Ariana.

She hadn't imagined the severe consequences of her prank. She regretfully looked at Ariana's still form on the bed.

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Chapter 1026

k, especially given the rewards she hoped to receive from Sadie. However, Holden's chilling stare silenced her explanations. "Effective immediately, you are dismissed. You have one hour to leave."

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Begging desperately, she cried, "Please, I meant no harm!" But the bodyguards swiftly ushered her out.

With her departure, Holden pressed his fingers to his temples, taking a deep breath to steady himself amidst the emotional tumult.

Suddenly, Shawn's voice broke the silence.

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"Adele?"

Holden looked up to see Adele hesitantly standing at the doorway. His countenance warmed immediately. "Did the commotion bother you?" he inquired gently.

However, Adele's attention was solely on Ariana. Without a word, she climbed the bed, snuggling close to Ariana, seeking solace in her presence.

Holden observed Adele with puzzlement, perplexed by her sudden attachment to Ariana.

Approaching her, he tried to lift Adele gently, but the child clung fiercely to Ariana. Each time he reached out, Adele evaded him, clearly not wanting to be parted from Ariana.

Silently, Adele nestled her head against Ariana's side, wrapping herself up close to the unconscious woman. Such behavior was unprecedented for Adele. During his time with her, Holden had never seen her form such an immediate bond.

A mix of emotions washed over him: happiness at the possibility that Ariana might be instrumental in helping Adele, and curiosity about what drew the child to Ariana so intensely.

Recollection struck. Ariana was a child psychologist. However, he hadn't been made aware of this earlier. He turned to Shawn, seeking answers.

"Didn't the background check reveal Ariana's occupation as a psychologist?"

Shawn responded promptly, "She used an alias during her tenure at the institution. Our probe emphasized the institute and her professional history, not her personal details."

Nodding, Holden absorbed this information silently.

Devin chose that moment to step into the room. Catching sight of Ariana on the bed and Holden nearby, he paled.

Concern buzzed in his mind. Had Ariana and Holden crossed paths too soon? As anxiety welled up, Devin discreetly eyed Holden for any telling signs.

Had Ariana recognized Holden and lost consciousness due to the shock?

However, gauging Holden's demeanor, Devin found it as stoic and unruffled as usual, showing no hints of recognizing Ariana or any abnormal developments.

Chapter 1027

"Is something wrong, Devin?" Quick to mask his worry, Devin replied, "No, I just came here in haste. Nothing more." Relieved to see Holden remained unaware, Devin regained his composure.

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"Sir, there's an urgent matter in Mistlyn requiring your personal attention. We should set out for Mistlyn at once."

Normally, Holden would have prioritized company affairs and left immediately. But a glance at Ariana's inert form made him pause.

After a contemplative silence, he instructed Shawn with a subdued tone, "Stay and watch over her."

Caught off guard by this unexpected directive, as he had intended to travel with Holden, Shawn surmised how deeply Holden was involved in Ariana's well-being.

Maintaining his professionalism, Shawn queried, "Do we proceed with Adele's therapy in your absence, or await your return?" "Why delay?" Holden replied with conviction. ninjanovel.com

"Having gone through Ariana's records, I'm confident in her capabilities. And given the bond Adele has already established with her, it's an avenue of treatment we must explore."

Acknowledging this, Shawn voiced his main apprehension. "But there's Miss Pierre. Their previous encounters were far from amicable. Another confrontation could distress Adele."

Mulling over Sadie's potential to cause upheaval, Holden rubbed his temples. He looked at Adele's peaceful countenance and softly brushed her hair back.

Turning to Shawn, determination clear in his eyes, he said, "Adele's well-being is paramount. Ensure Ariana and Sadie don't cross paths."

During my absence, extend full cooperation to Ariana concerning therapy."

Holden meticulously listed out instructions, emphasizing Adele's daily habits and routines. His care for every nuance regarding Adele was evident.

After passing on his directives to Shawn, he departed with Devin.

Shawn stayed behind, vigilantly watching over Adele and anticipating Ariana's return to consciousness. In between, he mulled over the responsibilities Holden entrusted to him.

As he paced the room, a particular challenge preoccupied his thoughts:

Miss Pierre's frequent visits. Even in Mr. Fredrick's absence, she seemed to always be around. With Ariana in the picture, the likelihood of their paths crossing was high.

An inspired solution suddenly dawned on Shawn.

Chapter 1028

Knowing Miss Pierre's penchant for basking in the limelight, he realized that even as Mr. Fredrick's fiancée, she wouldn't pass up opportunities to stay in the public eye.

Why not immerse her in engagements, ensuring she remained too preoccupied to visit Holden's residence? Confident in this approach, Shawn quickly set his plan into motion.

Some hours later, Ariana began to stir.

The room's brightness momentarily blinded her as she blinked awake.

She squinted, trying to adjust to the light, making out the silhouette of a suited man beside her.

The fragments of her earlier vision flashed through her mind, sending her heart racing.

With heightened alertness, she strained her eyes to identify the figure.

“Miss Edwards.”

The familiar voice belonged to Shawn. The fleeting hope she'd felt deflated instantly, replaced by profound disappointment. She replied with a brief nod, not in the mood for conversation.

“If you require anything, just let me know,” Shawn remarked, setting a glass of water nearby. She acknowledged him with a raspy “Thank you,” but her thirst was overshadowed by the vividness of her previous vision.

Could it truly have been mere illusion? She questioned her sanity, haunted by the recurrent glimpses of Theodore at the most unexpected moments.

A delicate touch on Ariana's arm drew her attention. She looked down to find Adele nestled close. Offering the child a tender smile, Ariana gently stroked her hair.

Shawn, sensing her distress, approached with concern.

“Miss Edwards, are you experiencing any discomfort?” He took a moment to fill her in.

“We've sorted out the matter. A servant was responsible for locking you in the bathroom. Mr. Fredrick has taken appropriate action, and she's no longer with us. We deeply regret this incident.”

Sitting up, Ariana's pallor reflected her troubled state, and she appeared deeply affected by the events. “You found me in there, didn't you? Thank you,” she murmured gratefully.

Shawn promptly corrected her misconception.

Chapter 1029

“Actually, it wasn't me. It was Mr. Fredrick who discovered you in the bathroom.”

This revelation left Ariana momentarily perplexed. She remembered the illusion she experienced when the bathroom door finally swung open, the familiar voice echoing through the room, and Melon's recurring observation about the striking resemblance between Holden and Theodore.

Gripping the edge of the bed, Ariana tried to process the flood of thoughts, emotions, and potential scenarios racing through her mind.

After some time, she ventured, “Where is Mr. Fredrick now? | should express my gratitude.” “He had urgent business in Mistlyn,” Shawn responded without evasion.

Ariana's myriad of suppositions remained unresolved, casting a shadow of disappointment over her. The thought of requesting Holden's social media profile crossed her mind, but she hesitated to voice it.

She doubted Shawn would share such details, and broaching the topic could invite potential misinterpretations. Regardless, Ariana resolved internally to find a way to unveil the truth. She felt it best to leave the Fredrick estate for the time being.

Given her current state, she believed she wasn't in the best position to continue Adele's therapy. After taking a brief respite, she made arrangements to depart, planning to return on another day.

Shawn courteously walked her to the door. As they approached the exit, Ariana realized that Adele was tagging along closely, even making an attempt to join her in the car.

“Sweetie, I promise I’ll be back soon and we can spend time together then, alright?” Ariana tried to reassure the little girl. But no amount of gentle persuasion seemed to change Adele’s mind.

Feeling at a loss, Ariana searched for a solution. It was then that Shawn, after mulling over the predicament, made a suggestion, “Given Adele’s reluctance to let go, would you consider taking her home with you? I can come by and retrieve her tomorrow.”

“What?” Ariana stared at Shawn, taken aback by the proposal. She wondered if she’d misunderstood him. The implications were vast: if Sadie discovered that Adele was with her, it might ignite an immediate uproar.

Recognizing Ariana’s hesitation, Shawn sought to allay her concerns.

“Mr. Fredrick has given the directive that decisions benefiting Adele’s therapy rest in your hands.”

Ariana’s brow knitted in apprehension. “But what about Sadie?”

From what Ariana had witnessed, Sadie, despite being Adele’s mother, often seemed neglectful. The therapist worried about potential repercussions on Adele should Sadie discover the arrangement.

Shawn gestured dismissively.

“Leave Miss Pierre to me. I’ll ensure she understands. Mr. Fredrick’s decisions are not to be contested, and she won’t pose any challenges.”

Although he projected calm, internally Shawn was well-aware of Sadie’s general indifference towards her daughter, especially when preoccupied with her own affairs. It was unlikely Sadie would even notice Adele’s brief absence. And even in the off chance she did and raised objections, Mr. Fredrick’s mandate would prevail.

Chapter 1030

After a moment of reflection and looking into Adele’s hopeful eyes, Ariana finally conceded. “Okay, I’ll bring Adele with me for tonight. Please reach out when it’s time to return her.”

Shawn gave a nod of affirmation. Ariana leaned down to scoop Adele into her embrace, and the child snuggled contentedly against her.

Upon arriving at Ariana's residence, before Ariana could even announce her arrival, she heard the familiar voice of her son. "Mommy, is that you?"

The door swung open to unveil Melon's radiant face. His eyes sparkled with delight at the sight of Adele, whom Ariana gently set down.

Eagerly, Melon took Adele's hand, thrilled about his new companion.

Curious about the noise, Sonia emerged from the kitchen, her eyes widening in surprise upon seeing Adele in the living room. "My word, how did she end up here? Has something happened with Sadie?"

Ariana chuckled softly as she closed the door behind her, watching Melon excitedly introduce Adele to his favorite toys.

"No, Sadie didn't abandon her," she began, gently guiding Sonia away from the children's excited chatter.

"Remember the child therapy client I mentioned? That's her. Adele didn't want to leave after our session today, so it was decided she'd stay with us temporarily."

As Ariana relayed the day's events, Sonia's face softened with compassion.

"Such a young child, surrounded by luxury, yet facing so much." She moved closer to the couch, lightly patting Adele's head, feeling an unexpected surge of warmth towards the girl.

Suddenly, the aroma of something burning wafted into the room. "Sonia, did you forget something on the stove?"

Sonia gasped, smacking her forehead in realization.

“Oh no, my stew!”

She dashed back into the hazy kitchen.

With a playful roll of her eyes, Ariana removed her jacket, teasing, “Trust the Culinary Catastrophe to torch my supplies.” In the midst of the chaos, Sonia hastily turned off the stove, mockingly saluting Ariana.

“Your kitchen, Chef!” She then scampered off to rejoin the children, leaving Ariana chuckling to herself.

Awhile later, as Ariana masterfully maneuvered the wok, Sonia rushed back in, her face alight with enthusiasm.