

Unconscious 1041

Chapter 1041

Sarah sent a bunch of angry messages, to vent her frustration. The others also consoled Ariana. For her part, Sonia was fully aware of Sadie's intense jealousy and hatred towards Ariana. Her friends' unconditional support warmed Ariana's heart and raised her spirits somewhat.

Sonia's comforting text helped her brace herself mentally. It was just the first round. She would have no problem outmaneuvering a petty schemer like Sadie.

Just then, a private message popped up on Ariana's phone. "Free to talk?"

It was her mysterious online wealthy friend. She hadn't talked to the person since visiting the Fredrick estate and realizing he was most likely Holden Frederick.

Thinking about Holden inevitably made Ariana think of Sadie, fueling her burning anger. She replied laconically, "What's the matter?"

Holden's message didn't come before a short while.

"How's Melon been recently?"

However, Ariana was too irritated to indulge in a chit chat with him.

She simply replied, "Not bad," and ignored any further messages.

Sensing she was in a bad mood, Holden sent another message.

"Okay to call?"

Ariana wanted to decline, but his call already came through.

Ariana found herself hesitant, staring at her phone screen, a whirlwind of emotions within her.

“Hello?” When she finally made up her mind to answer, a soothing voice greeted her from the other end, causing her heart to take an unexpected emotional rollercoaster ride. It was a voice that tugged at her heartstrings, making her grip her dress’s hem in an unconscious display of her inner turmoil.

In the depths of her mind, she whispered reassurances, “It’s not Theodore, but Holden.”

Ariana’s racing heart calmed somewhat, and she replied, “What’s up?”

The man on the other end seemed to have caught wind of her somber mood. After a moment of heavy silence, he gently probed, “Something wrong? What’s got your goat? What happened? Do you need my help?”

His gentle tone carried an air of caution that left Ariana feeling flustered.

She had been managing her composure until this moment. However, when he spoke, his voice resembled Theodore’s so much, and her grief burst like a tidal wave.

Her hands clenched involuntarily, and she had to remind herself to keep calm. Sniffing back her emotions, she mustered a composed response.

“No, thanks.”

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But the man detected the tremor in her voice, and for a fleeting moment, panic crept into his own tone as he inquired, “What’s the deal exactly?”

Ariana gathered herself, wiping away a stray tear from the corner of her eye, and retorted coolly, “Nothing much. Just some work stuff.”

The man attempted to dig deeper, but Ariana didn't afford him that opportunity. She said, her tone ice-cold, "If it's nothing, I've got to go."

Ariana terminated the call after allowing two seconds for a response.

Holden's countenance darkened in the car as he stared at the phone screen displaying the abruptly ended call. His brow furrowed, and he turned to Shawn with a troubled expression.

"What's happened during my absence these past few days?"

Upon reflecting on the boss's question, Shawn concluded that Holden was primarily concerned about Adele's well-being. Thus, he reported truthfully, "Adele is fine, sir. Her ailment hasn't reared its ugly head recently."

Holden nodded in acknowledgement and then probed further, "What about Ariana? Is she in a tight spot?" This took Shawn by surprise, as it marked the first time his boss had displayed such keen interest in Adele's physician. After briefly recalling the day's events, Shawn chose his words carefully.

"Today marked the grand premiere of the company's entertainment show. Miss Edwards' team led the charge, and they put on quite a show. However, things got a tad dicey when they clashed with the celebrity judge, Miss Pierre."

Shawn refrained from discussing Sadie in too much detail, as avoiding sensitive topics involving the boss's fiancée was best. Instead, he presented a video clip showcasing Sadie's heated exchange with Tom.

Having reviewed the footage himself, Shawn couldn't help but notice that Sadie was specifically targeting Ariana's team. While others might not have fully comprehended the situation, he was well aware of the personal animosity Sadie held toward Ariana.

Sadie, again, was Holden's fiancée. Even if Shawn had an opinion on Sadie's behavior, he couldn't express it in front of his boss, so all he could say was, "Miss Edwards' team is at risk, according to the program's guidelines. They could get eliminated if they fail to secure a high score in the next round."

Holden remained quiet and kept his face expressionless. He did nothing except staring at the paused video displaying Ariana's side face.

After handling some backstage matters, Ariana decided to head home.

She didn't have anything important to do there, and most importantly, she didn't want to run into Sadie.

When she arrived home, she saw that the lights inside the villa were on.

She had sent Melon to Sonia's place before she went to work. Did she send him back already? Feeling confused, Ariana quickened her pace and pushed open the door.

As she peeped inside, she saw a tall man with his back to her.

"Mitchel?" Surprised, she exclaimed, "You're back?"

Both Sonia and Mitchel were close friends of Ariana, and they both knew the passcode to her house. Also, when Ariana was in Melcorn, Mitchel was the one who often helped her take care of her son.

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Recently, he had been attending medical seminars and had to leave the city. He had just returned to Eylemond today and came straight to Ariana's house.

Hearing her voice, Mitchel turned his body around, and there was Melon hanging on him from his neck, laughing heartily. The little one clung to Mitchel's neck tightly and playfully exclaimed, "Mommy, welcome home!"

Mitchel nodded at Ariana and swung Melon left and right, making him laugh even harder.

"Yes, the seminar was wrapped up this morning."

Seeing Melon clinging to him as if he didn't want to come down from Mitchel's arms, Ariana couldn't help but smile and shake her head.

She went up to Mitchel and playfully pinched her son's nose.

She knew that Mitchel doted on Melon immensely to the point of spoiling him. Whatever the little one asked, he would still fulfil her son's wishes.

"We haven't eaten yet. How about going out to eat? You just got back from work, so don't bother cooking," Mitchel suggested as he gently placed Melon on the floor.

As soon as Melon's feet touched the floor, he raised his hands in the air and excitedly yelled, "Yay! Let's go! Let's go!" Ariana was very tired and wasn't in the mood to cook. So, she nodded at him in agreement. The three of them left the villa together, and Mitchel then drove them to a nearby restaurant.

Throughout the journey, Melon was filled with excitement and enthusiasm. His little mouth was constantly babbling, as if he couldn't stop talking to Mitchel. It was as though he wanted to share every detail of what he ate daily with Mitchel.

Ariana listened quietly to her son, feeling amused and slightly embarrassed at the same time. At that moment, she realized that her son was quite a chatterbox, sharing everything with those close to him.

Suddenly, Melon exclaimed to Mitchel in his high-pitched voice, "And Daddy called me!"

Coincidentally, the car was stopped at a red light as Mitchel abruptly slammed on the brakes. Then, Mitchel turned to look at Melon.

He wondered if Holden had recovered his memory.

Seeing Mitchel's surprised expression, Ariana started coughing, signaling to him with her meaningful glances.

Mitchel understood her hint right away and played along with Melon's words. He asked, "Are you happy about it?" "Yes! I'm very happy! Daddy said that he would come back after he was done with his mission!" Melon replied happily.

Mitchel smiled and continued listening and responding to Melon's babbling. Soon, they arrived at a shopping mall and parked the car in an underground parking lot.

It was evident that Melon was in high spirits. As soon as he got out of the car, he clung to Ariana, holding her hand tightly, and said, "Mommy, Let's play swinging."

Before Ariana could respond, Melon grabbed Mitchel's hand with his other hand and fluttered his eyelashes, acting cute and lovely.

Ariana and Mitchel exchanged a knowing glance, and both grabbed one of Melon's hands and lifted him up. Melon immediately screamed with joy, shouting, "More swinging, more swinging!"

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Both of them laughed helplessly. Holding one of Melon's arms, they started swinging him and headed into the mall.

Laughter and joy filled the air around the three of them. Indeed, they were happy and completely unaware of a luxury car behind them.

The car window was lowered slowly, and the cold face of Holden was revealed. He stared at the figure of Mitchel. As far as he could remember, the man who was holding Melon's hand was the famous medical genius from the Jovanni family.

Holden's reasonable thoughts told himself that he had no right to interfere with Ariana's personal life. However, an inexplicable sense of anger welled up inside him, and he couldn't suppress it.

All he could do was grit his teeth and watch the three enter the mall.

Holden stared at them for a long time and only turned away when they disappeared from his sight. He couldn't help letting out a cold snort.

This woman.. He had been concerned about her, for she might be upset over the show's issues, but she had left the work and gone on a date with another man and even brought Melon along.

After a patient wait in the car, Holden ultimately chose not to follow them upstairs. With a slow retraction of his gaze, he wound up the car window and had Shawn drive away.

On the third floor in the restaurant quarters, Melon abruptly felt the urge to visit the restroom. Consequently, Ariana and Mitchel remained outside, waiting for him.

During this time, Mitchel asked, "Melon did bring up his dad's calls earlier, didn't he?"

Ariana responded wryly, "He was insistent on conversing with his father. I handed him Theodore's contact number but never anticipated his sly maneuver to make the call. When he later discovered it was disconnected, I had no choice but to turn to an online acquaintance I'm acquainted with. Presently, he's convinced it's his father."

Mitchel fell into a brief silence before articulating, "But falsehoods have a limited shelf life. Sooner or later, Melon will learn the entire truth."

Ariana wore a rueful smile as she voiced her concern, her tone tinged with melancholy.

"I understand, but I cannot break the news to him. Given his tender age, perhaps he isn't equipped to grasp the notion of death fully. For now, let's take this step by step."

Hearing her words, Mitchel didn't say anything more. When he glanced at Ariana's sad countenance, he felt a confusing combination of emotions.

Over the past half-decade, every instance where he watched her wrestling with her grief, every moment she bore her burdens in solitude, he yearned to divulge the fact that Theodore still lived, particularly after confirming the truth of the matter. He was none other than Holden!

Mitchel grappled with this decision for an extended duration.

Initially, he had entertained the notion of spilling the beans when he got wind of her return. However, he subsequently learned of Holden's engagement and the fact that he had a child, leading him to forget about that idea unequivocally.

Holden had forgotten everything, leaving Ariana to grapple with the aftermath for these five years.

The unrelenting cruelty of reality was far harsher than any falsification. Rather than subject her to the knowledge that the person she held dear had cast her aside and embarked on a new chapter in life, it felt prudent to allow her to continue her life unfettered.

It was difficult for her to fight her feelings of despair. He didn't want to see her in pain. Ariana lifted her gaze at this juncture and noticed Mitchel lost in thought. She approached him quizzically, about to question him.

However, before she could utter a word, a passerby brushed past her in haste, sending her reeling off balance and into the arms of Mitchel.

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Swiftly, he reacted, extending his hand to steady her. Once Ariana regained her balance, she got out of Mitchel's embrace.

She cleared her throat, striving to mask her shame, and inquired, "What were you thinking just now? Something weighing on your mind?"

"It's nothing," Mitchel replied before continuing, "I wished to inquire if you'd do me the kindness of accompanying me this forthcoming weekend. My granddad's marking another year on this Earth, and there's to be a party. I've yet to secure a companion, so I'd be honored if you'd accept my invitation."

"Of course, no trouble at all," Ariana readily assented.

Mitchel had rendered her invaluable help, saving her and Melon during those trying times. Serving as a companion for such a straightforward affair was a small favor. She would willingly wear many hats for his sake, even that of a caretaker.

After their repast, Mitchel dropped Ariana and Melon off at her house and left. Shortly after Ariana got home, she received the new schedule and song options from the show organizers.

This time, those at the top of the pecking order were given the privilege of selecting their songs first. Alas, Ariana's squad found themselves at the bottom of the list, leaving them with the doughtiest one to tackle.

Ariana informed her team members about the song choice in the group chat, and before long, a chorus of lamentations echoed through the virtual space.

Ariana made an effort to console them, remarking, "Fear not. We can enlist guest vocalists for our next performance, and I shall endeavor to procure a splendid guy for you."

Having experienced Ariana inviting Julio, the six rookies were now intensely intrigued by her proposition, all eagerly awaiting the revelation of their mystery guest.

Shrouding herself in an air of intrigue, Ariana declined to disclose any further details. She merely replied, "You shall have your answers during tomorrow's rehearsal."

The next day, Ariana got to the training room, only to find the Chamberlain brothers and another member of their team standing outside, looking puzzled and refusing to go in.

Approaching them with a perplexed look, Ariana inquired, "What's happening? Why are you standing outside?"

Woodrow met her gaze and explained, "Someone took control of the practice room, and they won't allow us entry."

Ariana frowned as she heard this.

The practice rooms were assigned by the production team, and there shouldn't be a situation where someone was denied entry. It was clear that this was a conscious act against them.

Ariana didn't hesitate as she entered the room. What had initially been designed for ten people now had only three people practicing vigorously to blaring music.

She immediately recognized these dancers as contestants signed by Rollingrock Media. She walked over and turned off the music.

As the music stopped, all eyes in the room turned in her direction. Among them, a young man with fiery red hair and wearing a sleeveless T-shirt walked towards her. He exuded an air of arrogance. Ariana vaguely recalled his name from the program list. It appeared to be Carl Manny.

"Do you want something? If not, kindly refrain from disrupting our rehearsal," he mocked.

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Ariana responded calmly, "This practice room belongs to my group. You should vacate it immediately." "It belongs to you?" Carl scoffed and sneered, "It was yours. Now it's ours. Is there an issue with us using it?"

Ariana stood her ground and retorted, "The production team has designated practice rooms for each team. We shouldn't share or lend them out."

Carl sneered, "Do these doomed teams still bother practicing for the next round? What's the point guys?" He glanced at his buddies behind him, and they nodded in agreement.

"Who is saying such nasty words this early in the morning?" A strong voice came from outside the door, and Ariana turned to find an irate Tom bursting through the door.

Having just arrived and heard the situation from Woodrow outside, Tom's temper flared when he heard Carl's remark, prompting him to charge in.

Carl appeared to pay him no mind and continued to taunt, “You couldn’t humiliate yourself enough on stage yesterday, now you're here for a brawl?”

“Say that again?” Tom grabbed Carl's collar.

“You want to fight? Bring it on! I'll show you what I’m made of!”

Carl snapped and threw a punch. People from both sides immediately stepped in, and chaos ensued. Ariana rushed to break up the fight, but Carl shoved her away.

“Ariana!” Jim yelled as Ariana’s head collided with the sharp corner of the sound system, causing her forehead to bleed and her to lose consciousness.

The young fighters were shaken. Tom pushed Carl aside, picked up the bleeding Ariana, and rushed her to the hospital in terror.

Other contestants from different practice rooms heard the commotion and peeked out to check what was going on. They saw Tom rushing out, carrying the bloodied Ariana.

Some contestants made a video of the incident and shared it online.

In the hospital ward, a row of young men with various styles stood silently with their heads bent.

Ariana had awakened and sat on the hospital bed, her face drained of color. Her forehead was wrapped in bandages, to prevent further blood loss. Her pale lips made her appear even more fragile and pitiable.

Thankfully, there was no damage to her nerves, just some minor injuries.

Upon learning about the incident, Calvert hurried to the scene and offered a sincere apology, “Miss Edwards, I’m deeply sorry. It was all my fault.”

Ariana lifted her head and gently shook it. "You didn't push me. You needn't apologize." Calvert smiled and continued, "Then, I apologize for my team member's thoughtless actions."

Tom couldn't help but mock, "Is he still a child? He made a mistake and expects others to apologize for him? Shouldn't he act like an adult and take responsibility?"

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Carl's expression changed, and he glared menacingly at Tom. "This wasn't just my fight. You were all involved. If apologies are needed, we should all offer them together." Tom responded with a sarcastic chuckle and fixed an odd gaze on Carl.

"Weren't you the one who instigated this by taking control of the practice room? You initiated the disagreement, and you were the one who pushed her. How does it make any sense for you to expect us to apologize first?"

"So what if we used your practice room? It was your decision to fight in the first place." Carl was equally irritated as he retorted. "You initiated this whole conflict. Do you still believe you're justified?" Tom's temper flared, and he shot a fierce glare at Carl.

Both of them were on the verge of resuming their argument as their voices grew louder. This caused Ariana to develop a headache. She massaged her temples and shouted, "Stop arguing!"

Finally, the two fell silent.

In that moment, Calvert said, "Miss Edwards, if he offers an apology, would you be open to resolving this issue? If we can sort it out appropriately, there's no need for it to escalate into a bigger issue."

Ariana grasped that Calvert was merely an agent, and stirring up trouble wouldn't benefit them. However, before she could reply, Carl voiced his disagreement, "Why do I need to apologize?"

He then got louder as he went on, "If we all fought, why am I the only one apologizing? If we're talking about apologies, okay, but they should apologize too. Let's all say sorry together."

Carl's demeanor remained stubborn, and he showed no remorse.

He believed that even if things escalated, he wouldn't really be affected. Ariana was merely an agent of a lesser known company, and even if she managed to bring in Julio, it wouldn't change much.

In their industry, who lacked connections?

Moreover, Carl had already gained fame as an internet celebrity with millions of followers even before joining the show. He had a vast network, and he firmly believed he had no obligation to offer an apology.

Also, judging by Tom's attitude, Carl didn't think that he would apologize either.

However, he never saw it coming when the four members of Ariana's team swiftly admitted their mistake upon hearing Carl's words.

"We are sorry and we deeply regret our impulsive actions," they sincerely apologized as a group, bowing in unison to Ariana. Without saying a word, their collective gaze shifted towards Carl, clearly implying that it was his turn to apologize.

Carl was taken aback by their candid response. He hadn't anticipated their straightforwardness. But he still hesitated to apologize.

Just as he contemplated reasons to avoid an apology, the hospital room's door swung open, and a man dressed in a suit entered.

Carl couldn't believe who walked in. It was Shawn, the special assistant of the CEO of the Fredrick Group.

Carl's family had some social connections. He'd crossed paths with Shawn at gatherings with older relatives.

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Ariana was also taken aback by Shawn's presence. She inquired, "Mr. Williams, what brings you here?"

Wearing a serious expression, Shawn replied, "Your injury made the news, and Mr. Fredrick sent me to see you." The room fell into an uneasy silence despite Shawn's composure.

Ariana had just learned that her injury had made headlines. She quickly took her phone to check.

As expected, she found a flood of messages, especially in the group chat. Sonia and Sarah had sent numerous messages, and Ariana responded briefly to them before diving into the news.

Among the top trends was a headline: "Agent Injured in Internal Conflict."

A picture of Tom rushing her to the hospital was attached to it, and the comment section was filled with comments from onlookers.

"Ariana's team never ceases to make a drama. They're giving us entertainment even before the show airs," one comment read. "Her injury looks pretty serious. Is she okay?" "What's the story? Share the details so we can join in the fun."

Ariana was perturbed by the public's interest. She realized that her predicament had garnered widespread attention and was seen as an internal issue within her team.

Shawn began investigating the incident. Tom and the others, unaware of Shawn's intention, recounted the incident to him.

Seeing Carl about to argue, they hastened to mention, "There are security cameras in the training room. We'll get to the bottom of this once we review the footage."

Then Carl's shoulders dropped. Shawn didn't seem interested in checking the surveillance footage.

Instead, he stated, "I've already looked into this matter before coming here. It's negatively impacting our program's reputation, Carl."

You need to withdraw from the competition.”

“What?! Why? What are you saying?” Carl exclaimed, his face turning red with anger.

“Because you've harmed people,” Shawn replied with a cold tone.

Carl was furious but didn't push further.

This show was sponsored by BRD Group, and Shawn represented Holden, leaving Carl with no option but to quit. Suppressing his urge to challenge Shawn, Carl silently cursed him.

Then he slammed the door and left.

Chapter 1049

Ariana had never intended to meddle with Rollingrock Media, but now that the damage was done, she had to face the consequences.

Calvert exchanged a few polite words with Shawn before he left with his team. “You guys can return to practice,” Ariana told Tom and the others.

Shortly after, just Shawn and Ariana were left in the room.

Ariana expressed her gratitude to Shawn, and he brushed it off.

“No need to thank me. I was just following Mr. Fredrick's instructions.”

Ariana was taken aback by this but soon realized that Holden must have been aware of the situation. Otherwise, Shawn wouldn't have visited her.

“Get some rest, Miss Edwards. You can cancel your appointment with Adele this week. Resume her treatment after you've recovered,” Shawn advised.

Ariana nodded and engaged in a conversation with Shawn for some time before he took his leave.

Ariana sat on the bed, lost in thought. She felt remorseful for her indifference towards Holden the previous day and appreciated his support today.

Despite Sadie's annoyance, Holden didn't cause her any trouble. She shouldn't have poured out her anger on him the previous day.

With that in mind, Ariana took her mobile phone and opened Holden's account on the video platform. She couldn't directly convey her gratitude to him, and Holden might not be aware that she already knew the account belonged to him.

After careful consideration, Ariana transferred him 666, 666.66 dollars.

At this moment, Holden was in a meeting. He was listening to reports while also keeping an eye on Shawn's messages. One notification caught his attention, displaying the message, "Miss Edwards is in good health."

Subsequently, he turned his phone screen-down on the table, to fully concentrate on the meeting.

After the meeting ended, Holden finally picked up his phone. He discovered a money transfer from Ariana that left him bewildered.

He stared at the transaction, pondering the unexpected payment.

After a moment of hesitation, he responded with a simple question mark.

The response came immediately. "As a token of gratitude." Moments later, she added, "Thank you for calling Melon."

Holden's initial reaction wasn't joy, but an inexplicable sense of anxiety. He clenched his phone, fearing Ariana might be distancing herself from him, possibly ending their connection.

For some reason, he began to panic. No, this can't happen.

Holden stared at his phone screen, his mind drifting to the man from the previous night.

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Did she find someone new, making him unneeded in her Life?

Suddenly, Holden was consumed by anger, uncertain whether it was aimed at himself or the mysterious man. His expression darkened, and without delay, he sent the money back.

"Who once said repaying a favor with money is crass?"

Seeing his reply, Ariana recollected her words. He was using her words against her.

Awake of embarrassment washed over her, and she tried to downplay it with a playful emoticon.

He quickly sent another message.

"I'd prefer anything other than money as compensation, please."

Ariana remembered saying something similar while talking about payment, so she was left with no choice but to send an emoticon to show she understood.

Their chat went on, and soon, Holden found a reason to ask, "What have you been doing today?"

Ariana read his message and couldn't resist a chuckle. She mused to herself that he was rather adept at feigning ignorance regarding her activities, even though he sent Shawn to her.

Amused, Ariana responded with a whimsical exaggeration, “Oh, I engaged in bungee jumping in the Arctic.”

The Arctic? Bungee jumping? Holden saw these two unrelated words and was somewhat bewildered. Grasping it to be a quip, he replied, “Well, take it easy then.”

Ariana responded with a grinning emoji, and they talked about different subjects.

While discussing Melon, Holden thought again about the man from the previous night. He hesitated, typing and deleting messages repeatedly but was unable to make himself ask.

When they finally ended their conversation, Holden had reached home.

At that moment, Shawn came back with a gift box in hand.

Spotting Holden, Shawn approached and said, “Mr. Fredrick, this delivery arrived at the company, and it’s addressed to you.”

Upon receiving the gift box, Shawn felt it was unusual. Holden rarely received deliveries at the office, prompting Shawn to meticulously inspect it for potential threats before bringing it home. Folded inside was an elegant wedding gown.

The gown had a captivating mermaid-style design. It was adorned with intricately embroidered pearls and gemstones, exuding a charming appeal.

However, Shawn hesitated, uncertain whether it truly belonged to Holden. Consequently, he decided to bring it home.

Holden collected the gift box and opened it. As he gazed upon the exquisitely crafted wedding gown, an inexplicable wave of familiarity enveloped him.

In his mind, a blurry image surfaced — a magnificent silhouette standing before him, wearing this very wedding gown, poised to gracefully turn and reveal itself.