

## Unconscious 1081

### Chapter 1081

They chatted for a while, catching up on each other's past experience. Realizing that she had left Melon alone for a while, Ariana exchanged numbers with Judy, promising to reconnect soon.

Back in the banquet hall, Melon sat alone, his gaze lingering on the tantalizing spread. However, due to health reasons, he couldn't partake.

Catalina, spotting the lonely child, felt her heart soften.

Approaching him, she inquired gently, "Why are you all by yourself?"

And where's your mother?"

Melon, with impeccable manners, replied, "I accidentally spilled juice on my Mommy's dress, so she went to freshen up." Catalina noticed Melon's longing glance at the food but his resistance to touch any. "Aren't you having any?" she asked.

Melon responded with a sigh, "I'm unwell, and there are many foods I can't eat." ANGELA'S LIBRARY

Compassion swelled in Catalina's heart.

"Well, let me help," she said kindly.

"There must be something here you can enjoy. Come with me."

"Thank you, Mrs. Chadwick," Melon replied with appreciation. However, his brow furrowed slightly as he added, "But Mommy told me to stay put. She might get worried if she doesn't find me here."

"We won't be far, and I'll ensure someone lets her know you're with me," Catalina reassured him.

Catalina whispered to one of her aides to locate Ariana and apprise her of Melon's whereabouts. She then guided Melon to a more secluded part of the hall.

But upon entering, Catalina's heart sank. There, reclining on a chaise lounge, was Rodney, attempting to take a brief respite from the evening's festivities.

Catalina's internal alarm bells began to ring. All she could think about was that this situation wasn't ideal at all. With age, Rodney's quirks had become more pronounced. He was notoriously impatient and had a well-known aversion to young ones.

She quickly tried to steer Melon away, hoping to avoid any potential confrontation. But just as they were about to retreat, Rodney's once shut eyes opened.

"Hold on," he commanded.

Caught in his gaze, Catalina hesitated, recognizing the intense scrutiny with which Rodney regarded Melon. With a beckoning hand, Rodney motioned, and said, "Come closer."

Catalina raised an eyebrow at her father's peculiar behavior, given he never really liked kids.

She shot a concerned look towards Melon.

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Yet, Melon didn't seem nervous at all. He strode over confidently.

People knew Rodney as a no-nonsense guy, always leaving behind an aura of seriousness. He gave Melon a long, hard look. Then he asked Catalina, "Who's this bold little fella?" Before she could answer, Melon said in a gentle tone, "I'm not bold.

Mommy calls me her little gem."

That caught Catalina off guard. She laughed. Nobody ever answered back to her dad like that before. Smiling, she messed up Melon's hair a bit and nudged him closer to her father.

"He's the son of one of Mitchell's buddies."

Angela's Library

Rodney's face turned thoughtful for a moment.

"He reminds me of.

Lost in her dad's sudden shift, Catalina asked, "Reminds you of who?"

Rodney just shook his head.

"Never mind. Just getting nostalgic in my old age."

Just then, a maid came over.

"Ma'am, the banquet menu needs your approval."

Catalina hesitated, worried about leaving Melon alone with her dad.

But Rodney seemed rather taken with the youngster. He chuckled.

"Get on with it. What, you think I'd snack on the kid?"

Reassured, Catalina went on her way, leaving the two of them alone.

The room echoed with silence for a bit. Then, filled with childlike wonder, Melon peppered Rodney with one question after another.

Rodney, with his formidable presence, took his time to answer every curious query from Melon. Suddenly, Melon popped a question. "How come you never smile? Mommy says lucky folks always wear a grin."

With a dismissive snort, Rodney said, "Poppycock."

#### Chapter 1083

Right at that moment, a servant rolled in with refreshments for them.

Melon's sweet tooth didn't let him wait. He cooled his portion a bit and sipped away. Finding it perfect, he looked over at Rodney, who hadn't even started. Melon asked, "Too hot for you? Want me to cool it down?"

Trying to reach Rodney's bowl, Melon made a move to get up. But his little legs betrayed him, and he landed with a thud on the floor.

Rodney, surprised, was on his feet in a flash, pulling Melon up.

Though pain flashed across Melon's face, he managed to hold back the tears, trying to act tough. It was a sight that would make anyone's heart skip a beat.

He blinked away the wetness in his eyes and tried to reassure Rodney. "I'm fine. Truly."

Seeing this little trooper's spirit, Rodney carefully set him back on the chair. Noticing Melon's lost smile and tear-streaked face, he paused.

"Remember asking me about my missing smile?" Melon looked up, curious. And there it was. Rodney was smiling, albeit with a tooth missing. His usual strictness vanished.

He meant to cheer up Melon with that smile, but instead, the boy's eyes brimmed again. Reaching out, Melon said, "If fixing that tooth costs too much, I'll give you my savings when I'm home."

That simple, innocent offer melted Rodney's heart. The stern man was no more. He began to speak softly, trying to soothe the child.

From the entrance, Ariana's voice rang out.

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"Melon!"

When Melon heard Ariana's voice, he jumped up and scampered towards her, shouting, "Mommy!" Rodney watched Ariana walk in. Taking a good look at her, he observed.

"Your boy sure has your Looks."

Ariana, a bit bemused by the obvious statement, held her tongue.

With a gentle smile, she said, "Everyone says he's got my eyes."

She then noticed Melon's reddened eyes, a look of concern crossing her face. Tenderly touching his face, she asked, "Honey, why the tears? Were you upset?"

Trying to be brave, Melon replied, "I took a little tumble earlier. But I'm okay. Mr. Chadwick helped."

Ariana gave Rodney a grateful nod, to which he just shrugged, then asked, "I know you're friends with Mitchell, but how come we've never met?"

Catching the underlying curiosity in Rodney's tone, Ariana kept her cool.

## Chapter 1084

"I'm Ariana Edwards. Used to be in the Edwards circle. | got to know Dr. Chadwick just a few years back."

A light bulb went off in Rodney's head; he remembered the Edwards, who faced some tough times. He decided not to dive deeper into that topic.

Although curious about Rodney's sudden interest, Ariana chose to steer the conversation elsewhere.

"Thanks for looking after Melon," she said gracefully.

"We should be on our way."

As Ariana and Melon made their exit, Rodney watched them leave, whispering to himself, "So much alike.. way too much." After the big dinner, as Ariana and Mitchell were gearing up to leave, Rodney decided to give them a personal send-off. "You're always welcome back. And bring the kid too," said Rodney, his face giving nothing away.

From her spot, Catalina's eyebrows shot up in surprise. Rodney, being warm? That's new. Ever since his quiet retirement years began, he didn't really like having company. The big feast tonight was only because she had twisted his arm into agreeing.

"Thank you," Melon said with a sweetness that made everyone's heart melt a little. Watching him, Catalina found herself sighing. Oh, how she wished the charming boy was Mitchell's. That would've made her day.

After saying their goodbyes, Mitchell left with Melon and Ariana to retire the day. ANGELA'S LIBRARY

As soon as they arrived, Ariana settled her things down to massage her sore shoulders. She took a refreshing shower and took care of Melon's needs before finally resting in bed.

The next morning, she set out to arrange a visit in Holden's residence together with Shawn for Adele's therapy session. Before that, she handled Melon's needs first and made sure everything was in order before venturing out into Holden's place.

She already spent quite a bit of time with Adele this morning, but Holden was nowhere to be found. No matter how much she brushed it off, her disappointment was palpable.

All she wanted was answers to her curiosities. The uncanny resemblance of his voice and her late husband's was far too creepy to be ignored, and she wasn't one to ignore such surreal experience.

Initially, she planned to meet him and get a closer look at his appearance to confirm her suspicions via the energy project proposal, but that was still far from materializing. Everything about it was postponed because of the long process of approvals and documents.

Ariana only managed to let out a sigh, then proceeded to keep herself occupied with Adele's recovery.

As the therapy session concluded, and Adele was about to follow Ariana along like last time, they heard a sharp scream that rang from the entrance of the residence.

"What are you doing here?!"

The loud voice reverberated like an announcement bell. As Ariana turned to see who it was, she saw Sadie, standing there menacingly.

Sadie never wavered in glaring at both Ariana and Adele, who were holding hands together.

Ever since the incident of her pulling strings from the background regarding the show, Holden had been purposely avoiding her. He blocked her in all possible communication platforms and would always evade her even when she reached out to Shawn.

Those instances of silent treatment took a toll on her, for obvious reasons. She couldn't bear being left alone with her thoughts, so she rushed over to Mistlyn for her own peace of mind. But what she didn't

anticipate was Ariana's presence in that very residence, even holding on to Adele like they were pretty close.

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Sadie was having steam coming out of her ears. Her breath raced and she was now fully fueled by rage as she reached out to grab Adele's arm, trying to break away the latter's hold on Ariana.

Sadie's ire ignited, causing Adele to whimper in pain as Sadie's grip on the child's fragile arm turned it red. Despite the searing pain, Adele clung tenaciously to Ariana's clothes.

Seeing this, Sadie's fury surged to new heights, and she seemed to teeter on the precipice of losing all self-control. She persisted in tugging at Adele's arm with a ferocity that suggested a desire to remove it from the young girl's body, leaving all of it red.

Ariana, alarmed and determined, promptly intervened to quell Sadie's frantic behavior. She rebuked Sadie with a voice that rang like thunder, "Have you taken leave of your senses?"

With forceful resolve, Ariana swatted at Sadie's hand, her aim to coax the woman into releasing Adele. But Sadie remained unyielding, holding fast to Adele.

Shawn stood aside, momentarily taken aback, before rushing to intervene. He struggled to get Sadie away from Adele, a battle of wills that demanded every ounce of their strength.

Nevertheless, Sadie appeared utterly unhinged, her voice now a piercing scream directed at Ariana. "Leave my house this instant!" Her bloodshot eyes bored into Ariana, brimming with malice.

Ever since Ariana's arrival in Eleymond, Sadie's nights had been bereft of reprieve. Every time she closed her eyes, Ariana's infuriating visage haunted her. She lived in constant fear that Ariana would cross paths with Holden, stealing him away. The revelation of Adele's true identity also gnawed at her.

To compound her woes, the recent incident on the talent show, where Sadie had manipulated Live audience voting, had somehow come to Light.

While the situation had eventually been contained, it had cost her a substantial portion of her fan base.

Her reputation lay in tatters, a bullseye for online abuse and hatred.

Sadie couldn't help but suspect Ariana's involvement in this downfall.

With seething intensity, Sadie grilled Ariana, her words laced with accusation.

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"Why are you here? Speak! What machinations are you weaving here?"

"Could you kindly cease your clamor? Damn!" Ariana retorted, her anger now at a boiling point as she held Adele.

Sadie's relentless grip had left the child's arm red and in pain, but Adele clung steadfastly to Ariana. Witnessing this, Sadie's fury reached a crescendo. She bellowed, "Begone! Do you still seek to abduct my daughter?"

Shawn, attempting to mediate, interjected, "No, Miss Edwards is a psychologist hired by Mr. Fredrick to attend to Adele."

But Sadie lent no credence to his words, accusing Ariana with a pointed finger, "Psychologist, you say? This woman harbors ulterior motives. How can someone from the entertainment realm exhibit such professionalism? | am certain she aims to scale the social ladder through Holden!"

Following her impassioned tirade, she cast a malevolent glare at Adele, issuing a menacing threat, "Why won't you come here, my dear?"

Be cautious, for this woman could trade you off!" Adele, terrified by Sadie's outburst, sought refuge behind Ariana, shivering in fear.

Ariana, her patience wearing thin, shielded Adele with her body and challenged Sadie, “Why are you acting like a rabid hound? This is your own daughter. Why subject her to such brutality? Is this how a mother should behave? Her arm is hurt because of your recklessness.

Are you truly her mother?”

Unable to restrain herself any longer, Sadie forcefully shoved Shawn aside, advancing toward Adele.

Ariana, frantic to protect the child, endeavored to thwart Sadie, but in her agitated state, Sadie managed to wrest Adele from Ariana’s grasp.

However, in the process, she exerted excessive force, causing the child to slip from her hold and hit the stairs, resulting in a bleeding head injury. Ariana gasped in horror, attempting to rush to Adele’s side, but Sadie blocked her path.

In a state of panic, Shawn urgently called for the family doctor before hastily carrying Adele upstairs. Ariana, deeply worried, wanted to follow, but Sadie forcibly barred her way.

Sadie’s face contorted with hatred as she charged at Ariana, her voice laced with venom.

“You vile woman! This is all your doing!

Leave the Fredrick family this instant! Are you feigning virtue just to ensnare Holden? Are you so fond of being another man’s paramour?

Well, I can.”

Sadie’s acrimonious words were abruptly silenced, as Ariana, no longer able to tolerate her venomous accusations, delivered a resounding smack across Sadie’s face.

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Sadie stood there, her senses ensnared, unable to muster a response as Ariana's scathing rebuke echoed in the room. "Rather than tending to your wounded daughter, you've chosen to slander me? You're not fit to wear the mantle of motherhood!"

Still reeling from the stinging slap she'd received, Sadie found herself too stunned to react. By the time she finally summoned her voice to retaliate, Ariana had already seized her wrist in an unyielding grip.

With fiery rage blazing in her eyes, Ariana clasped Sadie's hand and hurled her to the ground. She sneered down at the crumpled figure before her, saying, "Why do you quake in fear every time our paths cross? Is it concern for Adele, or is there a shadowy secret lurking in your conscience that you'd rather keep concealed? Perhaps you've harbored some shameful deeds?"

Sadie tumbled to the floor, her emotions in turmoil, a potent blend of panic and rage bubbling within. Her chest heaved violently as she pointed a trembling finger up at Ariana. Through clenched teeth, she spat out, "You impudent wretch! Go away, and never darken my doorstep again!"

Ariana remained thoroughly unmoved by Sadie's frenzied outburst. With an icy chuckle, she countered, "And on what grounds do you presume to banish me?"

"Guards!" Sadie cried out, her madness now evident in her eyes. "Remove this interloper from my house!"

With a crimson haze clouding her vision, she yelled at Ariana, "Let me warn you, should you dare to return, I shall have you arrested for trespassing!"

Weary of the ceaseless clamor, Ariana opted to exit rather than endure any more of Sadie's histrionics.

Sadie continued her torrent of curses as Ariana departed, her facade of a dignified actress completely shattered. Shortly after, Holden rushed home upon learning of the incident.

As he stepped inside, he found Sadie putting on a dramatic display of sobbing in the foyer. Impatient with her theatrics, he strode right past her and ascended the stairs in search of Adele.

Seeing her beloved's return, Sadie scurried after Holden, whimpering and reaching for an opportunity to explain herself. Before she could utter a single word, his icy glare silenced her. "You had better pray Adele is okay!" he cautioned.

Upstairs, Adele sat in stunned silence on the bed. Gauze was wrapped around her forehead, and her arm bore the mark of red ointment. Her eyes remained swollen and bloodshot from her earlier tears.

The doctor delivered his instructions to Holden in a hushed tone when he arrived, saying, "It's nothing grave; just keep the wounds dry."

Holden nodded, a pang of anguish piercing his heart at the sight of Adele's condition. He moved with great care to the bed and settled down beside her.

"Is there pain elsewhere, my dear? You must tell Daddy if you're feeling unwell."

Adele simply sat in a daze.

Holden retrieved some toys from beside the bed, hoping to provide Adele with a much-needed distraction. Gradually, she began to respond, engaging in the play.

The tranquility of the moment was shattered when Sadie suddenly entered the room. At the mere sight of Sadie, Adele let out a frightened wail and sought refuge in Holden's embrace.

Holden swiftly enfolded Adele in his arms, casting a withering glare in Sadie's direction

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"Get out!" he commanded briefly. The severity of his tone took Sadie aback. Disturbed as she clearly was, she had no option but to comply and exit the room.

But the damage had already been done — Adele had been deeply distressed by Sadie's presence and continued to sob in Holden's chest.

Observing Adele's flushed complexion and her tear-streaked face as she cried, Holden's heart ached. He gently lifted her into his arms, swaying gently to provide her solace.

After he had patiently soothed Adele for some time, her cries gradually began to subside.

Just then, Shawn knocked and entered, conveying to Holden, "Miss Pierre appears to be experiencing some heart trouble outside."

Already seething over Adele's injury and the subsequent trauma, Holden was pushed to his breaking point by Sadie's latest antics. He snapped irritably, "If she's indeed having a heart attack, call an ambulance!"

Beyond the door, Sadie, always one for theatrics, overheard and swiftly backtracked, saying, "Oh, I'm perfectly fine now. I was just distraught seeing Adele in such a state."

Unable to enter the room, she was compelled to make her case through the closed door. But hearing her voice only deepened Holden's vexation; he had no desire to engage with her melodramatics at this moment.

At that very instant, his phone chimed twice. While cradling Adele in one arm, he checked the incoming messages with the other. It turned out to be Ariana who sent him some recipes for complementary foods to help in Adele's recovery.

Ariana's unexpected message momentarily calmed Holden's inner turmoil. However, it also left him confused. How come she suddenly sent him the recipes?

He would usually ask her for baby food recipes when he needed to cook something for Adele. She would never send him recipes on her own. Why did she do so now? Could she have guessed his true identity?

This thought made Holden shiver, and for the first time, he was scared. He was scared that she would discover his identity as Holden Fredrick.

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However, after thinking it through, he quickly dismissed this idea.

It was highly unlikely that Ariana could figure out his true identity.

If Ariana had actually known his true identity, she wouldn't be so calm and definitely wouldn't have casually sent him recipes. After pondering for a while, Holden ultimately decided not to dwell on it any longer. He typed a few words in the chat window to express his gratitude, then he returned to coaxing Adele.

With Holden gently coaxing her, the little girl's sobs gradually calmed down and she eventually fell into a deep sleep.

Holden gently placed his daughter on the bed and quietly walked out of the room.

Once out of the room, Holden rubbed his forehead and frowned. He looked at Shawn who was standing in the hallway and demanded an explanation of the events that had occurred.

During their previous phone call, Shawn had just given Holden a brief summary of the situation, without going into detail.

This time, Shawn recounted everything in detail, clearly explaining to Holden how the confrontation happened. When Shawn finished, he noticed that Holden's expression had darkened considerably. Shawn cleared his throat nervously, visibly confused by the whole situation.

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"I don't understand why Miss Pierre reacted so negatively to Miss Edwards. Miss Edwards did nothing wrong," he remarked. Holden shared Shawn's confusion, feeling that something was amiss. Why did Sadie react so violently every time she saw Ariana? Did they already know each other?

But Holden had checked Ariana's background and found nothing that would suggest she had any prior connection or conflicts with Sadie.

This situation was quite perplexing and it was eating Holden up. He didn't like having to deal with a mystery that was impossible for him to solve.

Back at home, Ariana's anger grew as she reflected on recent events.

She regretted not giving Sadie a few more slaps today. Ariana couldn't understand Sadie's simply unreasonable behavior! Every time they met, it seemed like Sadie was afraid that Ariana was going to steal Adele from her, and because of that, Sadie targeted her without rhyme or reason.

Thinking about this, Ariana was both furious and perplexed. She didn't understand why Sadie treated her like a sworn enemy. Did they have any previous conflicts or grievances?

But as far as she could remember, she hadn't known Sadie before. There wasn't even anyone remotely like Sadie in her memory. With her mind filled with doubts, Ariana decided to search Sadie's information on the internet.

However, she was disappointed by how little information she could find on Sadie. Besides Sadie's identity as Holden's fiancée, there was only standard information about Sadie as there was of other public figures. As she read the information about Sadie that she was able to find online, Ariana was confident that Sadie was well protected by the Fredrick Group, as there were no significant scandals or controversies about her online. Even the behind-the-scenes vote manipulation incident was hushed up.

ANGELA'S LIBRARY

Frustrated and perplexed, Ariana reached out to Sonia via message to vent her anger over the day's events while sharing her confusion over the situation. She also wanted to get Sonia's opinion on Sadie's motivations.

Sonia was soon to reply, and she first sent a surprised emoji. The next second, Ariana received a phone call from Sonia. As soon as Ariana picked the call, Sonia's voice came through.

"Could she have adopted Adele or something? The way she behaves is so suspicious. Or maybe she's hiding something about the kid. It may not just be you she's preventing from getting closer to Adele, but just anyone. Why else would she be so afraid of you approaching Adele? | mean, you've never met before!" There was clear astonishment in Sonia's voice.

Lying on her sofa, Ariana shared her friend's perplexity.

"| can't say for sure. It's just speculation, and I'm not a detective either.

| can't pretend that everything | think is correct. Besides, it's their family issues, and | have no right to interfere."

"That's right," Sonia agreed firmly. Clicking her tongue, Sonia added in a serious tone, "But her behavior is just too suspicious. | mean, the way she treats Adele doesn't seem at all like how a mother will treat her daughter."

Recalling how indifferent Sadie had been to Adele's cries earlier today, Ariana nodded and said seriously, "That's right. Doesn't she like Adele? She didn't seem bothered at all when Adele was crying today."

"That doesn't make sense. Think about it, her fame and fortune all entirely rely on the influence of Fredrick Group. Why won't she love the child she has with Holden Fredrick? She should pamper Adele and shower her with love in the hopes that she can use the little girl to string Holden along, right?"

"You're right. Holden cares deeply about his daughter. Besides, Adele is the only grandchild of the Fredrick family. Sadie's attitude is indeed puzzling," Ariana said. Her furrow deepened as they discussed the matter.

"Maybe there's something wrong with these members of the upper class,"

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Sonia muttered with a hint of exasperation.

They continued to discuss for a while, but could not pinpoint the exact problem. Still, they shared a nagging feeling that something was wrong.

After a while, Sonia patted her chest and said reassuringly, "Leave it to me. I'll discreetly investigate Sadie and find out what's going on. Trust me!"

Ariana then received another call while she was still on the phone with Sonia. Seeing that it was her assistant, she promptly answered.

Ariana had barely answered the call when her assistant's anxious voice was heard.

"We have a problem. Tom was caught using drugs. We need to go to the police station to sort things out. And online trending topics are blowing up right now!"

Upon receiving the news, Ariana found herself momentarily stunned.

With a swift click, she opened the trending topics online, determined to assess the situation firsthand.

As expected, the top three trending topics all revolved around this incident.

Ariana's gaze swiftly scanned the content, seeking to glean a clearer understanding of the unfolding events.

The root cause seemed to be a police raid, resulting in the abrupt closure of an underground bar. Numerous individuals, celebrities and socialites alike, had been apprehended, and among the published photographs, she spotted one featuring Tom, caught in the act.

Scrolling further down, Ariana couldn't help but notice that the comments were overwhelmingly negative, with many harshly criticizing Tom.

ninjanovel.com " | can't believe he fell from grace so swiftly. My trust was utterly misplaced." "He's not even a household name yet, and he dares to commit such audacious acts. Unforgivable."

“Just look at his appearance; he clearly resembles someone who indulges in drugs. I can’t fathom he’s actually an addict. He’s quite the actor.”

Amidst the stream of derogatory comments and personal attacks, Ariana resolved not to dwell on them. She promptly ended the call and made her way to the police station.

Upon arriving, Ariana noticed a substantial crowd, including several familiar entertainment agency representatives.

After a thorough search, she finally located Tom, squatting against a wall in a waiting room, preparing for a drug test.

Tom, who once stood over six feet tall, now appeared as a diminished figure, hunched in the corner, emanating an air of pitiful helplessness.

He seemed remarkably agitated, and upon spotting Ariana, he hastily rose to explain, “I didn’t use drugs, Ariana, please, believe me, I truly didn’t.”

Before he could elaborate, a nearby police officer tapped the table, signaling him to resume his posture. Tom had no choice but to return to his spot against the wall, obediently crouching down.

There was a hint of distress in his eyes as he attempted to speak, but before he could continue explaining, the door to the testing room swung open. A police officer called out, “Tom Rivas, come over for the drug test.”

Upon witnessing Tom’s apprehension, Ariana sought to reassure him, her words carrying a weight of trust, “It’s okay, Tom. Go for the drug test. I believe in you. Don’t be afraid. We’ll handle this together. I’ll be waiting for you outside.”

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Touched by Ariana’s unwavering faith, Tom nodded in agreement and stepped into the testing room. As she waited outside, a deep sense of certainty enveloped Ariana.

Tom's demeanor and appearance didn't align with that of a drug user but rather someone wrongfully accused and frustrated. Additionally, an unsettling intuition told her that something was amiss about this situation.

Contemplating the unfolding events, Ariana couldn't ignore the rapid release of high-quality photos, an unusual occurrence after an arrest.

She also pondered her interactions with Tom over the past weeks.

Despite occasional temperamental outbursts, he maintained a healthy and disciplined lifestyle, with regular sleep and fitness routines.

ninjanovel.com He showed no signs of seeking thrills and spills.

Pulling out her phone, Ariana delved into news and comments related to the incident. Among all the images, Tom's stood out, appearing frequently from various angles, resembling paparazzi shots more than typical police evidence.

While scrolling through the comments, she stumbled upon a post from an alleged informed source.

This source claimed Tom had been consistently using drugs and had frequented their establishment multiple times. The post even included a close-up photo of Tom holding drugs.

Ariana knew this was false.

The entire situation reeked of suspicion. Her initial instinct told her the photograph looked too staged. Normally, underground bars were dimly lit, yet this particular image was exceptionally clear and well-lit. Moreover, the quality resembled that of a camera photo rather than a smartphone snapshot, hinting at possible manipulation.

Determined to dig deeper, Ariana clicked on the profile of the supposed informant, discovering it was an alt account with limited following. She scrolled through their followed accounts and eventually found Carl Manny's profile among them.

Upon seeing Carl's account, Ariana's brows furrowed in concern.

She immediately wondered if this incident had any ties to Rollingrock Media.

Ariana decided to dig deeper and began gathering information about the underground bar that was at the center of this incident. Her research quickly revealed that the founder of this particular underground bar was a minor shareholder in Rollingrock Media.

This discovery heightened Ariana's suspicions that there might be a connection between the media company and the incident. Taking swift action, she instructed her assistant to arrange for comment management. She then posted a concise public relations message, explaining that nothing had been confirmed yet, and they were eagerly awaiting the results of Tom's drug test. She expressed hope that everyone would have faith in Tom and the rest of them.

Within a short time, the post was flooded with thousands of comments, the majority of which were negative in tone.

As Ariana read through the comments, she noticed that most of them were highly critical of Tom and their team. Among the comments, there were both hired internet trolls and netizens seemingly influenced by the negative narrative.

Ariana remained composed as she continued to read through the comments, well aware of the considerable impact of public opinion in the entertainment industry.

Finally, Tom's drug test was completed. He seemed to be aware of the dire public opinion online, as his demeanor had changed significantly.

He appeared visibly disheartened compared to his earlier confidence.

The test results were expected to take another hour, so Ariana chose to remain with him outside the testing room.