

Unconscious 151

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So far, he had no bumps in his life or career. He was a proud man and didn't want his reputation to change now.

At this point, he had worked for Guava Broadcasting for half of his life. How could he lose his job so easily?

He walked along in a trance, and tried his best to comfort himself.

He had worked very hard over these past few years, and he had a close relationship with many of the senior executives. In the worst-case scenario, he might be transferred to a small program team for the time being.

People on the Internet were so forgetful. No one would remember what he had done and he would be able to make a comeback in no time.

Nervously, he walked into the Guava Broadcasting office in Ivebridge, hoping to have a meeting with his superior.

But as soon as he stepped through the gate, a police officer approached him and held up his ID. "Josh

Hanson, someone has reported you for bribery, embezzlement of public funds, and rape of a minor.

Now come with us.”

Before Josh could react, he was handcuffed.

Josh was dumbfounded. How did they know about that all of a sudden? It happened so many years ago!

He looked over at the TV director in a panic. “Help me, sir. I’ve done a lot for this company over the years. You can’t give me up,” he pleaded.

“Josh, we have treated you well for so many years. But this is your own fault. No one can help you this time.”

How was this possible? Josh racked his brains, trying to figure out how this could have suddenly come out.

The director sighed heavily. “You’d better think about who you have offended recently.”

He was about to say that he hadn’t offended anyone but paused, and thought of Ariana. She had told him he would regret it.

Could it really be her?

How could that be possible? She had no one to back her up. Or was she only pretending to keep a distance from Adrian?

Soaked in sweat, Josh slumped to the ground. Now he was doomed.

More and more people were talking about the matter with Sarah, some even shipping her and the man with the pseudonym Sarah's Fan 11029.

At first, the netizens hadn't taken it too seriously, thinking that Sarah's Fan 11029 was just a fan of Sarah, but later on they felt something was wrong and began to focus more on the user behind it.

They started discussing the pseudonym. It seemed too perfunctory, just a string of numbers after Sarah's fandom name.

And the account seemed to be seldom used, just to occasionally like and repost news about Sarah.

The latest thing the account had liked was the news that Lynch had been arrested.

So, people began questioning if Sarah's Fan 11029 was actually a plant from the inside. People on the side opposing Sarah joined the discussion saying that, not only were outsiders not allowed on the recording site, but electronic equipment was also not permitted. So, they asked, how could Sarah's Fan

11029 have recorded the performance?

The theory that Sarah's Fan 11029 had been arranged in advance by the program team was becoming

more popular

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Sarah's fans started fighting with those that believed this, until someone decided to investigate the

person behind Sarah's Fan 11029.

It turned out the account holder was called Aziel Carrillo, who was 25 years old and the owner of a new

tech company called Saziel Technology.

"He's not a member of the program team, so anti-fans can shut up about it now."

"Oh my God! It's Aziel. Saziel Technology just got a huge investment from the BRD Group some time

ago. It looks like it's going to have a bright future."

"I ship Aziel and Sarah!" ©

"No wonder he could get into the site so easily. His company won a big prize at the international

technology competition for a new kind of chip."

"Really?"

“Is that really Aziel’s account? As a CEO, he can’t be so careless.”

“Why do I feel like the more I think about it, the stranger it is?”

There were all kinds of comments all over the Internet. Sarah’s haters constantly mentioned Saziel

Technology, hoping that the company would refute the rumors.

But before long, the company made a statement admitting that their CEO had sneaked into the

shooting site. They apologized and said they were willing to pay a compensation.

In addition, they promised to provide the program team with the most advanced devices from their

company to ensure that such a thing wouldn’t happen again.

They sounded very sincere.

Everyone on the Internet immediately began investigating Aziel’s past.

It seemed to match the article posted by Sarah’s Fan 11029.

“Saziel Technology has an impressive marketing strategy. This way, they’re marketing their own products.”

“They should get together

“Aziel is so handsome. He and Sarah are a perfect match.”

“He’s Liked her for eight years!”

“Even his company’s name is his name joined with hers!”

“Ahhh!” Betsy exclaimed in excitement when she read the comments.

She quickly typed out a message to send into the group chat which had been set up to talk about

Sarah and Aziel.

Someone sent photos of him into the chat.

Betsy clicked on one of them and showed it to Ariana. “Ariana, look. It’s Aziel! Isn’t he handsome? He

and Sarah are a perfect match!”

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Ariana looked at it for a few seconds and frowned. The more she stared, the more familiar he seemed.

She cast her mind back to the tall, thin man she had spotted at the recording site.

This was definitely him!

Ariana was still feeling a little wary about the sudden appearance of Aziel. No matter how much praise

he received, she could only believe what she saw.

She didn’t want to jump to conclusions before seeing Aziel first.

“Shipping them is just a bit of fun. Don’t take it too seriously,” Ariana reminded Betsy, patting her on the head.

Betsy smiled and nodded. “I know. In real life, I will stay rational.”

“Okay, good. We should still thank Aziel for his help. Without him, it wouldn’t have been easy to change the public opinion,”

Ariana said. “Besides, we can’t focus our energy on shipping them. The most important thing is getting the program team to apologize, and promise they won’t edit Sarah’s scenes so randomly again.”

Just as she finished speaking, her phone rang. It was an unknown number.

She stood up and went out onto the balcony to answer the call.

“Hello, Ms. Edwards. I’m Jerome Holmes, the new director of the variety show.” A young man’s voice introduced himself from the other end of the line.

“What happened to Josh?” Ariana asked curiously.

“He has been fired,” Jerome said matter-of-factly.

Ariana’s eyes widened. How could Josh get fired when he had Jasper’s protection?

Jerome sensed Ariana's shock and explained, "The senior leaders of our TV station found out about the matter with Sarah. This isn't the first time Josh has done something wrong. Besides, public opinion has a huge impact on the company this time, so after a lot of consideration, they decided to terminate the contract with Josh."

"I see," Ariana said, still trying to figure it out.

"So, when are you free to come in and talk about a solution? We are going to release the complete version of Sarah's interview and her performance later." Jerome seemed to have a much better attitude than Josh. He spoke with a polite tone, as he continued, "We did handle this matter wrongly. The contract will be adjusted to demonstrate our apology. I hope you will be willing to cooperate with us when we send out the clarification on the official account later."

Hearing this gave Ariana a real sense of satisfaction. He had shown his sincerity, so there was no reason to argue.

"Of course. I'll text you a time when we can meet," Ariana said, smiling into the phone.

"Okay, thank you, Ms. Edwards."

Once they had agreed, Jerome changed the subject. "By the way, Josh wasn't just fired. He was

arrested too.”

“Why?”

This came as a shock to Ariana. Had Josh done other bad things?

Someone must have reported him. Who could that be?

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“I don’t know all the details. We can discuss it further when I know more.”

“Okay.”

After hanging up, Ariana told Betsy about what had happened to Josh.

Betsy grinned. “He deserves it!”

That night, to celebrate Josh’s downfall, Betsy had an extra bowl of noodles, and Ariana, whose

appetite had grown with the good news, drank a lot of soup.

Afterward, Ariana leaned back on the sofa, her mind wandering.

She stared at her phone for a while, and wondered whether she could tell Theodore that the matter had been resolved.

In fact, when she had learned that Josh had been arrested, Theodore was the first person she thought

of.

It was too much of a coincidence. Realistically, he was the only one who could've made it happen with that perfect timing.

After thinking about it for a while, she finally plucked up the courage to call him.

"Hello. Theodore is busy right now. If you have a message, I can pass it on to him."

The voice that answered the phone was soft, gentle, and female.

Ariana was stunned, She tried to move her lips to speak but couldn't say anything.

"Hello? Hello? Are you there?"

Ariana realized she recognized the voice, which brought her back to her senses. "Where's Theodore? I have something to tell him myself."

There was a few moments of silence, before the woman spoke again. This time, her tone was a little colder. "He's taking a shower. He can't answer the phone right now."

Then she hung up.

Ariana gripped the phone tightly for a while.

Betsy started humming a song and walked over, holding a bag of chips. She sat on the sofa and turned on the TV.

Coincidentally, the news was on, and they were talking about Theodore. They were reporting that he had been seen being intimate with a young woman, and it appeared that the two were dating.

Betsy was so surprised to discover Theodore's romantic affair that she couldn't keep her mouth shut.

"Oh my God! That's gossip about Theodore! Everyone knew he was rich but single. I didn't expect him to find a girlfriend so quickly after the car accident."

Without saying a word, Ariana watched the TV quietly. She was depressed, finding it difficult to breathe.

"Judging by the girl's back, she doesn't look half bad. No, she ought to be a stunner. Otherwise, why would Theodore be interested in her?" Betsy bit the chips with her eyes still fixed on the TV and muttered, "Unfortunately, he's a disabled man stuck to a wheelchair with useless legs. And yet, she's still with him. I guess the girl loves him very much. It seems that he'll marry her soon."

Depressed, Ariana lowered her head. Her once bright eyes were now clouded with sadness. The screen of the phone in her hand was still on, with the first number on her call log being Theodore's.

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She flashed a bitter smile. It appeared that her position as Theodore's wife would soon belong to another.

That girl... It must be Helen.

Although she only managed to view her back, Ariana was certain it was Helen judging from the girl's long hair that reached all the way down to her waist.

It appeared that Helen had been discharged from the hospital after the operation.

Thinking back on the intimate interaction between Helen and Theodore, she had no doubts that

Theodore had been by Helen's side during her operation. Helen must be very important to him;

otherwise, he wouldn't have indulged her and tried his best to protect her.

Ariana's heart sank like an anchor being dropped into a bottomless ocean. How could she be so naive

and call him? It was ridiculous. Maybe he was happy in Helen's company at the moment and no longer

had time to think of Ariana, let alone help her.

Maybe the matter regarding Josh had nothing to do with him.

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Meanwhile, at the Anderson family's residence, Theodore and Horace were talking in the study room.

Helen sat in the living room and swiped the phone screen.

Stubbornness and dissatisfaction swam in her round eyes. It wasn't until she deleted the call log three minutes earlier that she stopped frowning and started smiling.

Fortunately, Theodore left his phone. Otherwise, some bitch would've succeeded in contacting him.

Helen didn't want other women contacting Theodore.

Her face fell as she stared at the number appearing on the screen, hesitant on whether or not to blacklist it. Besides, there was no caller ID. Biting on her index finger, Helen thought for a while before deciding to blacklist the number.

Theodore couldn't care less about who called him anyway.

When Helen was about to do so, Theodore happened to see her holding his phone and demanded coldly, "What are you doing with my phone?"

Helen was startled but quickly calmed down before handing over the phone to him. "I saw it near the sofa's edge so I picked it.

Theodore's face softened. He took the phone and asked indifferently, "Did anyone call me?"

He casually swiped the screen of his mobile phone, without looking at Helen.

Despite having a guilty conscience, she was mentally strong. She flashed him an innocent smile. “No. I found it just now.”

“Well, next time you see my phone, put it away. I don’t like others touching my things.” Theodore raised his eyes before shooting her a faint smile, despite the smile being disingenuous.

“Okay, I know.” Her eyelashes fluttered as she spoke in a soft voice slightly tinged with fear.

Although Theodore didn’t blame her, Helen still felt uneasy.

“Theodore, are you mad at me?” Helen looked up tentatively, her voice soft.

Theodore placed his phone in his coat pocket and turned to her his face remaining calm. “I’m angry,”

he said, in a slightly reproachful tone. “I’m angry that you didn’t take better care of yourself. Now you’ve failed the re-operation physical examination, and you can’t have the surgery as scheduled.”

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Helen was relieved he didn’t pursue the matter about his phone.

“I was all alone in the hospital and I was scared. Why didn’t you come to see me?”

“That’s not a good enough reason to risk your health,” Theodore answered helplessly.

“Well, I don’t care about that. I want to move in and stay here for a while. Is that okay with you, Theodore?” Helen blinked her big bright eyes, pleading with him.

She had had this vulnerable and innocent look about her since birth, It easily roused people’s protective instincts, and Helen was acutely aware of how to use this to her advantage.

Theodore smacked his lips together, trying to come up with a way to gently refuse her.

Noticing his hesitation, Helen started pouting. “The hospital food is terrible. I miss Judy’s cooking. I want to eat the coq au vin cooked by her. When I was still at school, Judy would cook that dish every weekend when I visited your home.”

Theodore felt dazed by this trip down memory lane. It was one of the rare warm memories he had, but also one he would like to forget.

“Please? It wouldn’t be the first time I lived here anyway.”

Helen placed her hand over her heart and pleaded again.

“Fine, you can stay for a while.” Theodore resigned with a sigh.

“You’re the best!” Helen exclaimed in glee, and began to pick out a bedroom for herself.

Seeing her happiness, Theodore felt relieved. He promptly asked Judy to prepare a room for Helen.

Helen shook her head when she heard this. "No need to bother Judy. I want to choose myself."

"Well, Judy will do as you ask her." After taking a look at his watch, Theodore continued, "I have to go now. Let Judy know if you need anything."

"Yes, sir. I won't be any trouble." As she said this, Helen brought her feet together and made a salute gesture to him.

As soon as he was out of sight, she stopped smiling. She then sauntered around the house, mulling over which room she would like to spend the subsequent days in.

When she reached the third floor, Helen stopped outside a room which had a sign hanging from the door. It had a kitten pattern on it, and read, "Secret Garden. Keep Out."

Helen glanced at Judy, and said, "I want this one."

Feeling uneasy, Judy replied, "Miss Clarke, I'm sorry but this is Mrs. Anderson's room."

Helen exclaimed.

"I will have this one"

In Ivebridge, Ariana walked out of the hotel alone, and hailed a taxi to take her to the hospital.

Her belly had been feeling a little uncomfortable, and now she finally had some free time to go to the hospital for a checkup.

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The hospital wasn't very busy, so her examination was over fairly quickly. The doctor then told her the results.

"Ms. Edwards, I'm afraid your fetus isn't stable. You should take better care of yourself. Make sure you're having enough rest and take some dietary supplements. I will also prescribe some medication."

The doctor delivered the report and advised her earnestly. ©

After some hesitation, Ariana finally made up her mind and said in a hoarse voice, "I don't need the medication. I want to book an appointment to have an abortion."

The doctor remained calm when hearing that Ariana wanted to have an abortion, Without asking any further questions, she wrote something down and handed her the note.

"Go and have a thorough check-up first. Once the results come back normal, then we can arrange the surgery. I will text you the results."

Ariana took the note in a daze, and her heart tightened painfully in her chest. It was so excruciating that

she could hardly breathe.

She had given this a lot of thought. She spent her nights tossing and turning, unable to sleep, her mind filled with jumbled thoughts. Every time she thought about keeping the baby, the reality would slap her in the face and tell her to stop dreaming.

She felt like a child craving candy she had never tasted. Even a tiny crumb of an unrealistic dream was enough to satisfy her.

But, she had to be strong enough to get close to the candy she craved, knowing she could never get it from anybody.

Ariana slouched her shoulders. The doctor noticed her change in demeanor and the dismay in her eyes. "There's still time. Think it over when you go home," the doctor reminded her kindly.

"Thank you," Ariana said, nodding.

She put the note in her pocket and said goodbye to the doctor before leaving.

Her check-up was over quickly, and afterward she found a restaurant to eat in.

While she was there, Betsy texted her the latest news.

The program team had issued an apology to Sarah on its official account of Twitter, and announced

that Josh had been fired.

An exclusive video of Sarah's stage performance was also released.

As she had promised, Ariana logged onto Sarah's Twitter account.

Generally, an artist's agent would take over their social media accounts. Before this recording, Sarah had given Ariana all of her account passwords.

The program team's apology was trending now. Ariana found the article, liked it, and shared it.

She wrote, "I'm glad this misunderstanding has been cleared up and I look forward to our ongoing cooperation."

When Sarah's fans saw this, they stopped cursing the crew.

By the time Ariana had returned to the hotel, Sarah's stage performance had become the second hottest topic on the Internet.

The viewership for the video was through the roof. Fans reposted it over 10, 00 times within the first hour

"I knew it! You're the best! The music genius never fails."

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“This song strikes just the right note. It’s perfect.”

“Singing with no accompaniment adds even more challenges, but she delivers it so perfectly. We’re so lucky to be Sarah’s fans!”

“Oh my God, this brings joy to my ears! Please sing us one more. Release some behind-the-scenes content!”

“The crew might be evil, but they had good taste if they invited Sarah in the first place.”

“Fuck! This is amazing! It’s always good to find new music you love!”

The popularity of the show and Sarah continued rocketing up. It was a win-win situation.

Ariana changed to her own account and liked several comments that were praising Sarah.

Just as she was about to find Betsy, Sarah called.

A strange, deep voice came through from the other side of the phone, “Ari-a-na...”

Not sure how Sarah would react to the news, Ariana shivered. She said quickly, “Honey! You finally got your phone back. No one has been bragging in our group chat recently. I’ve been so bored.”

Sarah smiled wickedly, “Oh, you’re bored? Bullshit!”

Then she raised her voice and asked anxiously, "Why didn't you tell me about it? How could you fight with those monsters all alone? What if they had bullied you? I didn't find out until I saw the picture of me rolling my eyes on a staff member's phone!"

"Sorry, I didn't want to distract you, so I didn't tell you,"

Ariana apologized, keeping her voice low.

Sarah snorted and continued, "I've had a look online. It must have taken quite a bit of work for you to solve this problem."

"Never mind that. The process was slightly torturous but the end result is great." Ariana didn't really think it was too much trouble. Although it was partly due to luck, she did still feel a great sense of accomplishment.

"Well, I'll be back this afternoon. We can talk about it more in detail," Sarah said with a smile.

Ariana's eyes widened. "Have you already finished recording the program?"

"No, not yet. But since the director is being replaced, the crew needs some time to adjust. We've been given three days off."

"Then let's go out to celebrate!"

“Okay!”

After hanging up the phone, Ariana promptly turned to Betsy to let her know.

She was delighted, and dragged her away to get ready for the celebration.

They went to a popular restaurant in the city center. The restaurant had a live band performance every evening.

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While recording, Sarah had been on a strict diet. She decided to take this chance to indulge a little.

Ariana didn't stop her and just murmured, “Just this once.”

Sarah ignored her completely, her mind completely fixed on all the delicious food before her.

After everything arrived, Sarah ordered even more, and Betsy also ordered some dessert.

Shaking her head in amusement, Ariana sipped her orange juice.

“You know that fan who came to your defense? He's Aziel Carrillo, the CEO of Saziel Technology. A 25-year-old hotshot.”

“And he's very handsome!” Betsy interjected, her enthusiasm startling Sarah. Over the previous few days, Betsy had been reading fan novels online. She had now become their biggest shipper.

“Everyone’s saying that you two would make a perfect couple and I think so too,” she said to Sarah

excitedly. ““Aziel seems like a good man. He would be loyal to you. Otherwise he wouldn’t have been watching you and protecting you for seven years.”

Sarah took a gulp of beer, and put a couple of peanuts in her mouth. “Don’t judge a book by its cover,”

she said indifferently. “Even if he is a fan of mine, he’s seven years younger than me. Not to mention

I’m divorced with a daughter. I have been through it all and I’ve lost interest in romance.”

“But what if he’s the one? Give him a try. Maybe it’ll be true love,” Betsy said encouragingly.

Sarah clicked her tongue and patted Betsy gently on the head.

“Little girl, what do you know about love? Passion fades with time and you get left with nothing but all the trouble to solve.” ©

Sarah let out a sigh. Her cheeks had become red from all the beer.

“He’s only 25. He’s so young, with a promising life ahead of him. Men like that don’t fall in love easily.

Eventually he’ll succumb to the temptations around him.” With a self-deprecating smile, she said, “I

don’t think Aziel actually likes me. It was probably just a publicity stunt to win his company some

popularity.”

Betsy fell quiet after hearing this. With her head in her chin, she sighed, “Maybe you’re right.”

“Yes, that’s my girl. Cheers!”

Sarah clinked her glass against Betsy’s. Out of the corner of her eye, she noticed Ariana with a sullen expression. Leaning over, she pinched her cheek and asked curiously, “What are you so worried about? You look miserable.” ©

After a pause, Ariana decided to get it off her chest. “I have this good friend, who is married. But there’s this other woman who is very close to her husband. The woman would even answer his phone for him.

And my friend’s husband refuses to tell her about their relationship.”

“Maybe it’s a relative. Does he have a sister?” Betsy suggested, in between bites.

“Bullshit! The woman has to be his mistress,” Sarah exclaimed, pounding her empty glass on the table.

“A phone holds private information. A man wouldn’t hand his phone over to just any woman. She must be very good at this.”

“Men are all the same! Your friend needs to see his true colors.” Betsy sounded bitter.

“Yeah! Totally agree. Guys are the worst. Divorce is the only way.” With that, Sarah refilled her glass

and downed it in one go. "Look at me. I'm divorced and free. I can do whatever I want and I'm so happy."

Ariana hesitated. "My friend is also pregnant. Do you think she should get an abortion?"

Betsy thought about it calmly. "If she's planning to get a divorce, she shouldn't keep the baby. It's hard to raise a child as a single mother."

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Ariana fell silent.

There was a sudden pounding on the table, and Sarah, now very drunk, stood up and shouted, "No! No abortion! Alina is the best thing that's ever happened to me."

Moved by this, Ariana touched her belly with one hand. There was a faint echo of a heartbeat inside her belly.

This baby was her own flesh and blood.

"Sarah, you're drunk. Sit down." Betsy rushed over to Sarah and guided her back to her chair. The two began to play rock paper scissors.

After dinner, Ariana and Betsy took Sarah back to their hotel, and booked her a room.

It was clear that Betsy had an incredible capacity for alcohol.

Despite drinking a lot, she hadn't got drunk. She stayed to look after Sarah, and Ariana went back to

her own room. On the way, she considered what Sarah had said. The more she did, the more she

found herself agreeing. "What a playboy! A wife and a mistress! The bastard!" she muttered to herself.

She felt much better after cursing, but when she turned the corner, she was faced with the man who

was the subject of her cursing.

"Who were you cursing just now, Ariana?"

"No, I wasn't cursing anyone," Ariana said, feeling flustered that she had been caught berating

Theodore behind his back.

He raised his eyebrows at her dubiously, and looked her up and down. This made her feel incredibly

nervous.

Casting her mind back, she wondered if she had said his name as she cursed. Thankfully, she hadn't.

Sighing, she forced a smile and said, "I watched this soap opera last night. The hero was so bad that I

couldn't help cursing about him."

Worried he would ask more questions, Ariana quickly changed the subject. "What are you doing here?"

She was genuinely surprised to see him.

"I'm on a business trip. All the hotels except this one are fully booked. My room is the one next to yours," Theodore explained.

"What a coincidence!" Ariana flattened her hands against her dress nervously, and licked her lips. His presence made her feel twitchy and uneasy. Her heart was racing.

"Yes," Theodore said simply. Not wanting to continue with this particular topic, he asked the question that had been bothering him for almost four hours. "Where have you been? It is three am."

His tone was acidic. "Your phone has been turned off and you stink off alcohol. Seems like you've been having a lot of fun here in Ivebridge."

Theodore failed to suppress his anger. She had only called him once during this time, and it was all about work; worse, she even hung up on him. Now, when he did find a reason to check on her, she had been out until past midnight.

She was all dolled up. He pictured how other men had tried to hit on her all night, while he had been

waiting at her door for several hours.

The more he thought about it, the angrier he got. His grip on the armrest of his wheelchair tightened.

“My phone’s turned off?” Ariana said, scratching her head. “I didn’t know.”