

Unconscious 191

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Theodore nodded. “Yes, name your price,” he said again.

“Then I want this much.” Fitzgerald made a gesture and named a shocking price.

Without any hesitation, Theodore took out a pen, and wrote a check for double what he asked for and handed it over.

Fitzgerald took it with a smile and said, “Really, that much? Thank you!”

Theodore smiled back, before putting away his pen and saying indifferently, “That’s not that much. I also buy both of your arms.”

Fitzgerald’s eyes widened. Before he could react properly, he was being dragged away by the bodyguards.

Horace rolled the windows up to stop his boss from hearing the screams.

Then, the car drove away slowly.

Horace couldn’t help but ask, “Boss, isn’t your checkbook in my briefcase? What was that just now?”

“Fake,” Theodore answered briefly and closed his eyes.

Horace smiled in amusement. "What a trick." He seemed impressed.

Then Horace asked, "By the way, Ms. Edwards and others shouldn't have gone far. Would you like me to drive after them?"

After some pause, Theodore said, "No, we go back."

Horace stole a glance at Theodore in the rearview mirror. His boss was frowning and checking his phone frequently. Horace sighed, It seemed Theodore was worried about Ariana. He wondered why his boss was so stubborn, and thought he might lose Ariana if he continued to act like this.

But Horace didn't dare to say anything. He obeyed his boss's orders and drove back to the company.

Learning from previous experience, Ariana was worried that reporters would be waiting for them in the hotel. So, she decided to follow Aziel to his private residence to have a rest.

The apartment was well secured and an outsider wouldn't be allowed in easily. It was surrounded by similar buildings.

Strictly speaking, it was a residential area for rich people.

There was no need to worry about security here, let alone reporters and paparazzi.

After making sure Sarah and Alina were settled in, Ariana and Betsy discussed the luggage. They

wouldn't be able to live in that hotel anymore since reporters might be waiting for them there.

Eventually, they decided that Betsy would go back to the hotel to pack up their stuff and see what the

situation was like there. Since Betsy was new to the company and rarely seen with Sarah, most of the

reporters would be unlikely to be familiar with her.

Betsy soon took a taxi over to the hotel.

Ariana breathed a sigh of relief. She went to the kitchen and poured a glass of water for herself and

Sarah.

Sarah had calmed down and was talking to Alina in a calm voice.

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There was a sound coming from the front door, and Ariana turned toward it.

It was Aziel, who had been out for a while. He came in, his hands full, followed by Molly.

Holding Alina in her arms, Sarah stood up and asked in surprise, "Mom! How did you know I was

here?"

After taking off her shoes, Molly rushed over to Sarah and hugged her and Alina into her arms. "Aziel

took me here. I'm sorry you've suffered." ©

No matter how old someone was, they were always a child when their mother was around.

Finally seeing her mother, Sarah was unable to hide her emotions and she cried out, dejectedly. ©

Rate the book using the stars!

Ariana and Aziel left the living room to give Sarah and her family privacy.

As they entered the study, Ariana stated, "We've met before."

Aziel wasn't taken aback. He smiled softly and replied, "Yes, I remember meeting you too."

Their eyes met and they both smiled, acknowledging their prior encounter.

Ariana revealed with a smile, "Honestly, when I spotted you off the stage before, I thought you were either a fanatic or an outlaw."

Ariana then expressed her sincere gratitude. "Without your help, Sarah's performance in the first episode would not have been released. Aziel, I cannot thank you enough for what you have done for Sarah."

Regardless of his motives, he had saved Sarah twice and Ariana was truly grateful.

Aziel smiled shyly and said, "That's what I should do." He then quickly made his way to the kitchen.

"What do you want to drink? I'll get you something to drink."

"I already had something to drink, but thank you," Ariana replied.

It seemed as though Aziel was uncomfortable with being thanked and wanted to avoid it.

Ariana gazed around the room with a perplexed expression, trying to decipher what she said to cause such an abrupt retreat from Aziel.

Her eyes scanned the room, and she couldn't help but admire the vast bookshelves that took up two entire walls. The bookshelves were lined with tomes about technology, a testament to Aziel's interests. However, to Ariana, the room lacked excitement and seemed to embody the stereotype of a tech-savvy geek.

But as she continued to examine the room, Ariana's eyes suddenly caught a glimpse of something that seemed out of place. Perched on top of a bookshelf, she spotted a pink and adorable garage kit, its bright hue a stark contrast to the dull atmosphere of the room.

As she looked closer, recognition dawned on her. With a gasp she realized it was none other than

Sarah!

Just then, the door creaked open and Aziel walked in, a steaming cup of coffee in hand. As soon as he saw Ariana standing before the bookshelf, he paused, his eyes following her gaze to the pink garage kit.

As Aziel approached Ariana, his cheeks blushed with embarrassment. He put down the coffee, carefully took the pink garage kit and placed it back in its box. With an apologetic tone, he said, "My apologies for bringing you here unexpectedly and not having the chance to tidy up. I'm so sorry."

Ariana's eyes sparkled mischievously as she asked, "It doesn't matter. Everyone has their own dreams and hobbies. Is Sarah your dream?"

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Embarrassed, Aziel's face turned red. "Please don't tell her. I'm afraid she'll be put off," he stammered.

Ariana reassured him with a smile, "Don't worry, your secret is safe with me."

With a smile, Ariana spotted a concealed door behind the bookcase. Considering its location, she assumed it couldn't be a bedroom. She jokingly queried, "Could that be your collection room? Is it filled with Sarah merchandise?"

Aziel didn't respond to her question, but his blushing face spoke for itself.

Amused, Ariana chuckled and shook her head. "I guess my hunch was correct. I was a bit

apprehensive about your intentions, but it seems you're a true fan of Sarah."

Despite Ariana's previous doubts being put to rest, Aziel was still eager to make his feelings clear. He

looked deeply sincere as he spoke, his eyes shining with the fire of his passion. "I'm in love with

Sarah," he declared. "She's my everything, my reason for being. I'll do everything in my power to

protect her to ensure her happiness. I don't ask for anything in return, as long as she's content." ©

Ariana was moved. She said, "I think Sarah will notice your affection."

While they were talking, Aziel received a phone call and had to step away.

After he left, Ariana sat alone on the sofa for a moment, lost in thought. Suddenly, she remembered

someone she wanted to thank and pulled out her phone to make a voice call.

She felt that a text message wouldn't be enough to express her gratitude, so she decided to speak with

Holden directly.

The call was declined, and Ariana was surprised to see a text from Holden pop up.

It read, "What's wrong?"

Ariana wondered why Holden was unable to answer the phone. It was only 9 pm, and surely he wasn't in bed at that hour, right?

She then remembered the few times she had heard Holden's voice and how strange and hoarse it sounded.

And so...

This led her to consider the possibility that Holden's disfigurement might have also affected his throat.

Maybe he didn't like to talk because of that?

As she ruminated, Ariana couldn't help but feel guilty.

Perhaps her sudden call had hurt Holden's pride, as he seemed to be someone who valued their self-esteem greatly.

Sighing, she made a mental note to be more considerate in the future.

Ariana pondered for a moment before typing out a message.

"Thanks for being a lifesaver today! I don't know how to repay you for all your help, but if there's anything I can do to return the favor, just give me the word!"

Ariana quickly hit “send” and waited for a reply. However, a sudden thought crossed her mind, causing her to quickly type another message. “Just to be clear, the help I offer has to be within the boundaries of what is legal and morally right. I won’t agree to any absurd requests, such as that joke you made about me being your mistress. I know it was just a joke, but I want to make it clear that I’m already married and our relationship can only be that of friends.”

Theodore chuckled upon reading Ariana’s words about being married.

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He read the messages multiple times before responding, “At the moment, I can’t think of anything I need. But I’ll keep that offer in mind.”

Feeling a bit uncomfortable with the idea of owing someone, Ariana quickly sent another message.

“How about this—let me treat you to dinner sometime?”

Theodore chuckled when he saw Ariana’s text and replied, “A meal won’t do it. I have something else in mind.”

Ariana knew that he was not easily satisfied. After a moment of hesitation, she still offered, “Okay, I owe you. Let me know when you come up with something.”

Apparently, this satisfied the man as he replied with a dancing kitten emoji.

Ariana felt a mix of annoyance and regret. She realized that she had opened a can of worms by bringing up the subject of repayment. If she had known the outcome, she wouldn't have said anything.

However, she couldn't change the past and would have to deal with the consequences.

Ariana felt a pang of regret and hit her forehead with her hand.

As the time passed without a response from Ariana, Theodore grew increasingly worried and sent a series of questions.

"Have you found a place to stay? Are you still at a hotel? What are your plans for the future?"

Finally, he typed, "Don't hesitate to reach out if you need anything."

Ariana didn't want to be a burden, so she updated Holden on her current situation. "I'm staying at a friend's place for now.

I'll evaluate my options and make some plans tomorrow. I'll be okay. Don't worry about me." ©

After a few seconds, he replied, "Okay."

Ariana noticed Holden's response was a bit delayed and figured he might be a bit upset. She tried to

steer the conversation in a different direction by asking, “How does the BRD Group have such a professional search and rescue team? I’ve never heard of it before.”

Ariana waited for a long time before she got a reply. “The team was established by my maternal grandfather when my mother and I ran away from home. He created it to find us, and never dissolved it even after we were found.”

Ariana felt that there was a lot of family drama and secrets hinted at in his words, and she didn’t want to be rude by asking too many questions. So she came up with a reason to end the conversation.

Afterward, she scrolled through her phone’s newsfeed and found that the video of her altercation with the reporters had become a trending topic.

In the video, Sarah had a breakdown and disclosed her wish to leave the entertainment industry and the variety show.

Many Internet users had left comments on Sarah’s social media accounts, waiting for her response.

Sensing the urgency, Ariana quickly left the study room to find Sarah.

Ariana approached Sarah, who was sitting by herself in the living room, deep in thought. The ashtray on the table was littered with three cigarette butts. Alina and Molly were nowhere to be seen.

Ariana took a seat beside Sarah and showed her the phone screen where the video of Sarah's breakdown and announcement had become a hot topic online. Ariana urged her, "We have to clarify this right away. What should we do?"

Sarah gazed silently at Ariana.

Surrounded by the soft glow of the lamps, Ariana looked at her friend and she noticed something unusual. Sarah's eyes were brimming with tears, and the sight made Ariana's heart race. An uneasy feeling settled deep in her gut.

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Sarah said in a quiet, broken voice, "I'm sorry."

She then reached for her lighter, hoping to distract herself with another cigarette.

But Ariana wasn't going to let her do that. She swiftly grabbed the lighter, not allowing Sarah to light up another cigarette.

"Sorry for what? Let's first clear things up by posting a clarification."

Sarah looked up at Ariana, her expression serious. "No. I didn't say that on a whim. I truly want to quit," she explained, her voice determined.

Ariana was in disbelief, not sure if she heard Sarah correctly.

Sarah spoke with determination, her voice unsteady, as she explained her reasoning. "I'm so sorry,

Ariana. I just can't bring any more trouble to my family. Today's events have shown me that I can't keep going on like this. Alina came so close to danger."

Tears streamed down her face as she spoke, her thoughts consumed with the safety of her child.

Ariana listened, at a loss for words. She tried to reassure Sarah, "We've been working hard for so long.

We're so close to the finish line, just one step away." But her words seemed to fall short in light of

Sarah's distress.

With her head down, Sarah couldn't bring herself to look at Ariana. Her lips quivered as she

apologized, "I'm so sorry. This is all my fault..."

Without a word, Ariana firmly held Sarah's hand and led her toward the study.

Sarah, who was now filled with confusion, asked, "Where are we going?"

Still silent, Ariana took Sarah directly to the collection room of Aziel.

Just then, Aziel came back to the study after ending the phone call and couldn't intercept Ariana and

Sarah in time as they ran into the study.

The door to the collection room was unlocked, and with a gentle push, Ariana opened it.

To her surprise, the walls were covered in posters showcasing Sarah's career, starting from her debut to her current status.

The shelves loomed tall and grand, filled to the brim with collectibles dedicated to Sarah. The cute dolls, adorned with her likeness, stood in rows upon rows, along with various other memorabilia that documented her rise to fame. Each album, arranged in chronological order, was housed within a pristine, transparent box that protected its contents from the wear and tear of time. The absence of any dust or dirt suggested that each item was carefully tended to and maintained with utmost care.

It was clear that every object in this room was a testament to Azriel's unwavering adoration for Sarah.

If someone were to claim that Azriel knew Sarah better than even her own mother, Ariana would nod in agreement, fully convinced of its truth.

Sarah's shock quickly turned to amazement as she took in the sight of the collection room filled with her memorabilia. She turned to Azriel, who had just caught up with them, and asked with amazement,

"Did you collect all of these?"

Blushing, Aziel averted his gaze from Sarah and hung his head, avoiding eye contact.

“Why would you abandon those who have supported you and eagerly awaited your return for so long?

Your singing is your dream, one you once said you wanted to pursue for the rest of your life.

Now, just because you’re facing a setback, you want to give up?

Don’t let Elva win like this,” Ariana implored Sarah, trying to convince her to keep pursuing her dream.

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Sarah was in a state of turmoil, not knowing what to say or do.

Ariana’s voice became more and more passionate as she spoke.

“You can’t just surrender like this, Sarah. You can’t just throw it all away because of some difficulties. If

you do, then you’ll be letting Elva win and proving Lynch’s fans right. We can’t let that happen. We

have to stand up for the truth and clear your name. We can’t let Alina’s suffering go in vain. If we don’t

speak up now, then we’re allowing all the lies and false accusations, including the one about you

cheating, to go unchallenged.”

Sarah couldn’t hold back her sadness and told Ariana, “I need time to think about it. Let me calm

down.” With tears in her eyes, Sarah turned around and rushed out of the room.

As Sarah walked away, Ariana let out a heavy sigh. She approached Aziel and apologized, "I'm sorry, I shouldn't have brought Sarah here without your permission."

Guilt filled Ariana, as she had promised not to reveal the secret, but ended up exposing it.

Aziel dismissed Ariana's apologies and said, "I actually overheard your conversation outside the door. If seeing these collections can give Sarah the motivation to start again, then I am willing to show them to her. It may bring her some comfort.

Not only me but also her numerous fans will always be there for her."

Throughout the night, Ariana and Betsy worked tirelessly to address the rumors and speculation swirling around Sarah on the Internet.

Regarding the speculation that Sarah was going to quit the variety show and the entertainment industry, as long as they didn't issue a statement confirming it, it wouldn't do much harm.

They grappled with how to address the sensitive topic of Alina's background, as Ariana herself was unaware of the truth.

After Sarah retreated into her room, she refused to come out.

With Sarah being the only one who could potentially turn the situation around, Ariana felt the weight of the situation heavily on her shoulders. If Sarah chose to give up, there was nothing they could do.

After a long night of addressing public opinion, Ariana took a break to eat a sandwich, feeling exhausted.

Just as she was about to grab a glass of water, her phone buzzed with a message.

It was from Sarah.

Eagerly, Ariana opened it to find an adoption certificate for Alina and a medical report proving Lynch's infertility.

Ariana gazed intently at the two images displayed before her, studying each detail with a mixture of relief and empathy.

As the truth slowly dawned on her, she couldn't help but feel a weight lifted from her chest. Alina, it seemed, was not Sarah's biological daughter, but had been adopted into the family. This explained why there was no blood connection between Alina and Lynch, and why Sarah had kept the truth from her.

Ariana couldn't help but feel a pang of sadness as she imagined the fear and confusion that Alina must have experienced. To be cast aside by her biological parents at such a young age, and then to be

faced with the reality of her true origins later in life, would be a devastating blow. The thought of the

young girl being branded as an illegitimate child and scorned by society made Ariana's heart ache.

The weight of the situation finally got to be too much for Sarah.

It seemed the words Ariana spoke in the collection room had made an impact. Though Sarah might not

be fighting for herself, she knew she needed to fight for Alina.

With this newfound information, Ariana sprang into action.

Taking control of Sarah's agent's official account, Ariana composed a short but powerful clarification,

including the two crucial certificates as evidence.

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The post was sent out and it didn't take long for it to cause a stir.

Within just half an hour, the clarification was the talk of the town, causing the tides of public opinion to

swiftly turn in their favor.

Ariana declared her intentions in the clarification. She was done tolerating the baseless slanders, and it

was time to take legal action.

She tasked Betsy with gathering crucial evidence while she contacted the company's legal experts to

handle the lawsuit.

Early in the morning, Betsy worked tirelessly and eventually delivered a wealth of information from the media accounts that kept slandering Sarah. Those accounts all had millions of fans.

Ariana eagerly went through the materials and, upon seeing their usefulness, sent a beaming emoji of praise to Betsy, expressing her approval.

Betsy let out a deep sigh of dread, her shoulders sagging. "I'm a little worried our efforts will be in vain," she texted back.

Ariana sent a single question mark, her eyebrows furrowed in confusion, Betsy replied, "What if Sarah still quits?"

The broken-hearted puppy emoji that Betsy sent brought a smile to Ariana's face. She quickly replied to reassure her assistant, "No, she won't. You need to believe in Sarah. She loves performing and music so much, she won't be able to bring herself to leave it behind."

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As Sarah lay beside the sleeping Alina on the bed, her thoughts kept turning to Ariana's words and the

events that had transpired in the collection room.

A feeling of frustration and indecision washed over her as she struggled with the weight of having to make a choice.

She disliked having to make difficult decisions, but she had to for her sake.

But just as she was on the brink of giving in to her tumultuous thoughts, she felt a small hand resting upon her body, patting her gently.

Startled, she turned to find Alina, who had woken up, looking at her intently.

The young girl's small palm rested on Sarah's shoulder, offering comfort through her rhythmic pats.

Although Alina said nothing, she seemed to understand everything, humming a soft melody.

As Sarah listened closely, she realized that the song was her own, one that had only been performed on the earliest stage of the variety show. The song's name was Wind Breaking.

The gentle sound of Alina's voice, combined with her comforting touch, soothed Sarah's mind, bringing her the comfort she so desperately needed.

Alina's childish voice echoed out across the stillness of the night, like a blessing from Santa Claus on Christmas Eve.

Sarah stared in wonderment at Alina. She had only performed this melody once in front of anybody

else. How could Alina know how to sing it so perfectly?

With a tender embrace, Sarah sat upright and gazed into Alina's eyes. "My little angel, how is it that

you know this song?" Her voice was filled with curiosity and warmth.

Alina's gaze met Sarah's as if she was weighing her emotions.

The child's silence was the only answer.

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Sarah gently planted a kiss on Alina's forehead, her voice a gentle whisper as she spoke. "Please tell

me, I really need to know."

As Alina realized Sarah's joy, she continued to sing with even more confidence, her voice shining like a

precious diamond.

The intricate melody, once difficult for even Sarah to perform, was effortlessly hummed by Alina with

perfect pitch and intonation.

It was clear that the young girl possessed a natural talent for music, a gift not bestowed upon everyone.

Some people were born with the gift of a beautiful voice, and Alina was certainly one of them.

Pleasantly surprised, Sarah could only hold Alina close and marvel at her talent.

Just as she was basking in the glory of Alina's singing, a knock on the door interrupted the moment.

Molly entered the room, drawn in by the enchanting sound.

Molly sat quietly on the bed, her eyes soft as she gazed at Sarah. "Do you remember asking me why I

brought Alina to Ivebridge?" she asked, her voice full of emotion. "Well, this is the reason."

Sarah's confusion was palpable as she looked at her mother, searching for answers. "What do you mean?"

Molly let out a heavy sigh, tears glistening in her eyes. "It's not me who wanted to come; it's Alina."

Sarah was stunned, not understanding what her mother was saying.

"Whenever we watched your performance on the show, Alina would pay attention to every part of it,"

Molly said softly. "She would hum your songs for hours after hearing them just once. She loves music,

and she loves your singing more than anything."

Sarah was struck dumb, tears streaming down her face as the reality of her mother's words hit her.

Alina's love for her music was a source of encouragement for her, and Sarah felt overwhelmed by the

love and support she received from the young girl.

“I know you’re exhausted after all that you’ve been through, and as a mother, I feel so sorry for you. But

no matter what, I will always stand by you and support your decisions.” With tears in her eyes, Molly

took Sarah’s hand and spoke from the heart.

“Please, don’t give up on your dreams so easily. Remember, you’re never alone. Alina is here with you

and she loves you so deeply.”

“Mommy, I love you!”

Alina’s words were like a ray of sunshine, filling Sarah’s heart with warmth and love.

Sarah stared in amazement, her voice trembling as she asked, “Mom, what did Alina just say?”

Molly’s face lit up with joy as she hugged Alina tight. “Say it again, Alina. Do you love Mommy?”

Alina shyly looked down at the bunny button on her pajamas, her voice barely above a whisper. “Yes.”

Molly looked over at Sarah, her eyes filled with pride. “You see, Alina loves you so much. That’s why

we came to Ivebridge, to show our support and cheer you on in the final.”

Tears streamed down Sarah’s face as she was overwhelmed by the love and support of her mother

and adopted daughter.

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The day of the final had finally arrived, and Ariana and Betsy anxiously stood at the gate of the venue, waiting for Sarah.

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As the rehearsal time came and went, Sarah still hadn't appeared, causing a flutter of worry in Ariana's and Betsy's hearts.

For the past few days, Sarah had secluded herself in her room, choosing to only spend time with Alina and shunning the company of everyone else.

The production team repeatedly tried to reach Sarah, but it was always Ariana who answered the calls.

Inquiries flooded in, with everyone eager to know what was going on with Sarah. But Ariana's response was always the same, her voice filled with determination and conviction. "Sarah has not given up on the competition."

With just one day left before the final, the production team asked Ariana for Sarah's performance accompaniment. But much to their disappointment, Ariana didn't have it with her.

Faced with no other option, Ariana devised a contingency plan with the crew.

Plan A was the best-case scenario: Sarah would arrive on time and the performance would proceed without a hitch. But in the event of her absence, Plan B would come into effect. Just before the live broadcast began, the host would announce to the already-seated audience that Sarah had withdrawn from the competition.

All the participants had arrived at the rehearsal except for Sarah.

Betsy felt a chill in her nose and tightened the scarf around her neck, burying her nose. She whispered to Ariana, "I went to watch the rehearsal just now. Elva is really putting in a lot of effort this time. Not only did she choose a difficult song, but her dress is also very grand. The dress looks customized. It even has a huge pair of white wings on the back! She looks like a bird woman in that dress. She is definitely aiming for first place."

Ariana laughed at Betsy's comment. Suddenly, she recalled something important and asked, "Did

Sarah mention the song she intends to sing in the final?"

"No," Betsy replied after much thought. Her mood fell at the sudden question. She kicked a pebble by her feet melancholically and muttered, "I'm afraid she wouldn't be coming. The show is already starting

soon.”

Ariana frowned as she watched the cars driving by. None of them stopped. However, she still held on to her hope that Sarah wouldn’t give up so easily.

“I’m sure she will come,” Ariana said firmly, which comforted Betsy.

“Okay, I trust Sarah too.”

Ariana looked at her watch and patted Betsy’s shoulder. “I have something to attend to. You stay here and inform me if anything happens,” she said hurriedly.

“Okay.” Betsy nodded.

Meanwhile, Elva had already changed into her dress backstage

All that was left to do was her makeup.

She was on her best behavior today. She smiled a lot and spoke to all the staff politely.

While waiting for her make-up to be done, she browsed through her social media and looked at the current result on the online poll. She was still in second place. However, she was confident to rise to first place as long as Sarah dropped out.

“Elva, what do you think of this necklace?” the makeup artist asked as she showed Elva a set of pearls

with a beautiful sheen.

Elva glanced at the pearls and declined, "Pearls do not shine bright enough. I want to go with diamonds."

She swept a glance around the room and caught sight of Sarah's exclusive stylist. She beckoned the stylist over and warned her casually while she was doing her hair, "Be careful. I need to look perfect today!"

Elva had practically robbed Sarah's team of stylists while she was away.

Juliet Farley, who was sitting next to Elva, couldn't stand her absurdity and reminded her, "Don't you think you're going too far? If you use all Sarah's stylists, there wouldn't be anyone to help her when she's back."

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Elva knew that Juliet and Sarah were close, so Elva didn't bother being nice to her and replied rudely, "Mind your own business. I guess you're still in the dark. The host will announce that Sarah has to drop out of the competition if she cannot make it here by the time the show starts."

Juliet widened her eyes in shock and glanced at the clock on the wall. It was only ten minutes before

the opening.

Just then, the host came in for a few final touch-ups before opening the show.

Elva was a little anxious that Sarah might arrive soon. She urged, "Should we start now? The audience must be anxious to see us."

"Certainly not. We need to follow the schedule," Juliet interjected hastily.

Elva stepped forward and insisted, "Hear me out. It will be a pleasant surprise for the audience. They always wanted to see more of us."

"That is bullshit!" Juliet lashed out. She was annoyed but helpless. Elva was the most famous star in the room, and no one dared to offend her.

After some thought, the host finally agreed to start the show ahead of schedule.

"Please wait a little longer. Let's start the show on time. Sarah will be here soon," Juliet pleaded. She tried her best to change his mind as the host was busy adjusting the microphone.

Elva laughed at Juliet's persistence and sneered, "Why are you trying so hard? Sarah already quit."

"You're wrong. I'll definitely compete," a voice called out as the door of the dressing room opened.

Betsy appeared through the door first, followed by Sarah, who had been missing for a few days.

“Sarah, you’ve finally arrived!” Juliet exclaimed with delight.

The host’s heart was also pounding with relief and nervousness.

The thought of something going wrong if he started the show ahead of schedule weighed heavily on the host, as _ the responsibility for any mishaps would fall solely on him.

As an emcee, the worst thing that could happen was the unexpected. A single misstep could mean the end of his career.

And with the added pressure of it being a live broadcast, there was no room for error. Every moment had to be perfect.

Elva sneered at Sarah, her expression turning hostile. “Weren’t you hiding? Why bother coming to the final if you just want to make a fool of yourself?”

Juliet wouldn’t stand for it. She shooed Elva away and took Sarah by the arm, leading her inside. “We don’t have time for this. Let’s get you in makeup.”

Elva watched with folded arms, her sneer spreading across her face as if she were relishing a grand performance.

“Makeup artists!” As Juliet called for the attention of the idle makeup artists, they all averted their gaze

and remained motionless, clearly intimidated by the sinister glare on Elva’s face.

The atmosphere was tense, as no one seemed willing to step forward and offer their services to Sarah.

“Elva, your makeup is done. You don’t need all these makeup artists for yourself, do you?” Betsy

fumed, her anger directed toward the haughty young woman.

With four makeup artists and two stylists at her disposal, it would have been easy for Elva to spare one

or two for Sarah.

But instead, she lifted her chin with disdain and retorted, “I never share my people. And who are you to

tell me what to do? You’re just an assistant.”