

Unconscious 61

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“What’s your name?” Lynch called out after her.

Ariana stopped and turned. Her red lips parted as she uttered, “Brielle Edwards.”

“Brielle...” Lynch repeated the name to himself. He couldn’t take his eyes off her back as she walked into the elevator.

As she left the elevator, Ariana glanced around to make sure she wasn’t being followed. She entered the restroom and began washing her hands thoroughly.

The thought of Lynch touching her made her sick to her stomach.

Urgh! She cursed at him under her breath as she scrubbed her hands clean.

She then removed her mask so she could wash her face. Just as she was about to lean over the sink, the restroom door crashed open. A man with a huge beer belly drunkenly stumbled in.

Ariana stepped back in shock. “What are you doing?” she exclaimed.

The man hurried over and embraced her.

“Let go of me, you pervert! I’ll call the police!” Ariana struggled and was finally able to shove him off.

Jett Gellar chuckled. He looked Ariana up and down like a predator examining its prey. "Drop the act.

You're a prostitute, right? I can tell by the way you're dressed. I know exactly how this world works.

How much for the night?"

Ariana was taken aback. She shook her head and protested, "I don't know what you're talking about.

This is the lady's room. Please get out. Now!"

"Oh please. I just saw you trying to seduce that man His expression turned fierce. "If you're going to

sleep with someone tonight, it might as well be me."

Despite his drunken state, Jett was still much stronger than her. He aggressively pushed her into a

cubicle.

As she tried to get back out the door, he pressed her against it. She was trapped.

This vulgar man leaned into her body, a crooked smile spreading across his face. At the sight of his

balding head and yellow teeth, Ariana felt sick. "Let's get this over with. As soon as you pleasure me,

I'll let you go," Jett whispered into her ear salaciously.

This sent a shiver down her spine and turned her face pale. "You can't do this to me. I'm married to

Theodore. He's the Anderson family's eldest son!"

“You think I’m stupid enough to believe that a lady from such a rich family would work as a model here?” he snorted. With one finger, he lifted her chin. “Even if that is true, I don’t care. I’m Jett Gellar. I am also from a very powerful family. I may have been afraid of the Andersons many years ago but now that Theodore is paralyzed, he’s a sitting duck. Why don’t you just ditch him? You could be my mistress. I have immense power and money. So, what do you say?”

With that, he puckered his lips and brought them to hers.

Ariana squirmed and kicked him hard, crying out, “Help”

“Shut up. The louder you scream, the more I want to fuck you.”

With one hand, he dragged the straps of her dress down, while the other slipped up her leg.

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Just as he was about to bring his hand further up her leg, another hand appeared and grabbed his hair and yanked him off her. Feeling the weight of his body moving off her, she looked up and saw a man’s hand dragging Jett out of the cubicle. The door banged shut after him.

Then the sounds of Jett’s agonized screams were heard. Clearly, someone was giving him a pretty hard beating.

Trembling, Ariana curled up into a ball and covered her ears. Tears formed rivulets down her cheeks.

After some time, the noises finally ceased.

Was it over? Was that disgusting man dead?

Ariana slowly got to her feet and peered through the gap in the door. It felt as if her heart would explode

out of her chest.

Ariana's eyes fell on Jett's body, lying immobile on the floor. His face was covered in blood. She

couldn't tell whether he was dead or alive.

Her mysterious savior was nowhere to be seen.

With bated breath, Ariana waited. But the man.

didn't come back. This struck her as strange. The man had saved her but seemed to have no intention

of revealing his identity to her.

Frozen in shock, she waited some more. When still no one showed up, she slowly opened the cubicle

door.

A dark shadow appeared out of nowhere and loomed over her.

Her skin prickled with a cold sweat. Before she could say anything or see who it was, the man flipped

her over and held a hand over her eyes.

“Who... Who are you?” she asked, her voice trembling Her back leaned against his chest, and she

dared not move.

His other hand was on her neck, like a noose he could tighten at will.

Ariana gulped. “Who are you?” she asked again. “Was it you who saved me? What do you want with

me?”

But her questions remained unanswered. She could feel the man’s hot breath on the top of her head.

His hand slipped down onto her shoulder, before tracing the curve of her spine.

She shivered at his cold touch. “Thank you for saving me. I can give you anything you want to show my

gratitude. But please let me go first.”

“Shh...” the man whispered in her ear.

She did as he said. Her eyes, swollen from crying. filled with tears again. She couldn’t help but assume

the worst. This man hadn’t attacked Jett to save her. He just wanted her for himself. Yet again, she was

the prey.

The man's hand continued slowly grazing against her skin. It felt like he was inspecting her.

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But it stopped when it reached the bottom of her shoulder blade.

Holding her breath, Ariana prayed he wouldn't continue his trajectory down her body.

Suddenly, he grabbed her shoulder and pressed her even closer to his chest. As he held her, he stepped backward, dragging her with him.

She attempted to resist, scratching at his wrist and trying to pry his fingers from her.

Nothing worked. He was simply too strong. His broad arms remained wrapped tightly around her.

Feeling she had no other choice, she yelled out, bursting into tears, "Please, let me go! I'll give you whatever you want!"

The man paused, and then she felt the grip around her loosen, and a small push on her back.

Thrown off balance, Ariana stumbled forward and reached out to the wall to steady herself.

When she turned around, the man had disappeared.

She could feel her legs wobbling under her, but she gritted her teeth and grabbed a broom from the

corner of the restroom. Tiptoeing out, she held the broom as a weapon by her side.

The corridor was empty.

Ariana looked like a mess. Her face was streaked with tears, her hair rumpled, and her dress wrinkled.

She looked down and saw the scratch marks Jett had left on her arms.

She walked down the corridor warily but there was no sight of the man.

He had saved her but he had also aggravated her.

Either way, she had to find out who he was.

Broom in hand, she walked on. Then the sound of wheels rolling came into earshot.

When she turned the corner, she saw Theodore unexpectedly.

At the sight of Theodore, Ariana's eyes widened. "What are you doing here?"

Theodore held up an invitation. "I was invited, of course. Is that so strange?"

It was strange. He hadn't been to an event like this in a long time. But she kept these thoughts to herself.

Theodore scanned her up and down and returned the question. "What are you doing here? And what's with the broom?"

Ariana's heart skipped a beat. Gripping the broom tighter, she replied with another question. "Did you see someone running past just now?"

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"No." Theodore's response was concise. He turned to Horace and asked, "What about you? See anyone?"

Horace shook his head. "No, me neither."

"Why, what happened? You're shivering." Theodore looked at her more closely, his deep eyes unreadable.

Only then did Ariana realize that she was trembling all over. She loosened her grip and the broom fell to the floor. Seconds later, her knees gave way and she too fell.

She felt a warm embrace as she was covered with a coat. She opened her eyes to see Theodore who had taken off his coat and draped it on her.

"Thank you" Ariana forced a smile, acknowledging his kindness. After all, she was in quite a bad state.

For a moment, Theodore silently studied her face. Then, he asked, "Who are you looking for? What did he do to you?"

"Come with me," came her response.

Ariana got to her feet and led them to the ladies' room.

Jett was still splayed out on the floor, unconscious.

Still scared, she stayed as far away from him as possible as she explained what had happened.

Theodore looked at Jett's injuries. With a raised eyebrow, he asked, "You did this? Looks like a couple of his ribs are broken."

"No, it wasn't me. Someone came to my rescue..." Ariana stammered. It was hard to get her mind straight.

"Who was it?" Theodore asked..

Ariana shook her head and avoided his gaze. "I don't know. I didn't see his face."

She felt a little guilty when she thought of that man holding her and touching her.

She lowered her head and missed the mischievous gleam that had appeared in Theodore's eyes!

"Your safety is the most important thing. You're still part of the Anderson family. I will make him pay for what he's done to you, Theodore said. His tone was light.

Ariana recalled what Jett had said. He was from a family with power and influence in the city. He wasn't afraid of the Andersons.

She didn't want to cause any more trouble for Theodore.

Then there was the sound of multiple footsteps thundering down the corridor. Kenny Porter, the building's owner, rushed in, followed by over a dozen bodyguards.

He began profusely apologizing to Ariana. "I'm so sorry, Ms. Edwards. We should never have allowed this to happen. I've called the police and they will handle this. I am so sorry."

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Ariana was surprised that the boss of this place would be so humble. She sensed a trace of alarm in his voice.

Normally, businessmen like this were very diplomatic and liked to handle things themselves. They wouldn't call the police unless they really had to. And usually, they were biased toward wealthy people like Jett. Something felt off.

Maybe Kenny didn't recognize Jett in his current state.

She hesitated for a moment before reminding him, "You might not have realized, but that's Jett Gellar.

Do you really want to hand him over to the police?"

Kenny wiped the sweat off his brow and stole a glance at Theodore. "That doesn't matter. Soon he will be a nobody." He laughed dryly.

With that, he instructed the bodyguards to carry Jett away.

Ariana watched in astonishment. How powerful was this Kenny? She wondered to herself. More powerful than Jett?

"Now that it's been settled, let's get out of here," Theodore declared.

His words brought Ariana back to reality. She nodded and retrieved her purse that was still lying beside the sink.

As she looked up, she noticed a security camera by the door. She called out after Kenny, "Can I have a quick look at your security footage?"

Everyone's eyes looked to Ariana.

"Someone came in and saved me from Jett, but I didn't see his face. That camera must have recorded him coming in and leaving," Ariana explained, pointing at the camera. It was angled to face the door of the restroom. Anyone passing through would be caught.

After taking another glance at Theodore, Kenny smiled. "Of course, Ms. Edwards. Please, follow me."

Kenny led everyone to the surveillance room and pulled up the footage.

"It was around eight o'clock when it happened," Ariana said as she stared at the screen.

Kenny fast-forwarded through the footage of the time she suggested. It didn't show anything except

Ariana going in, followed by Jett, and then Ariana leaving and returning with Theodore.. There was no

other man.

Ariana was incredulous. She watched the footage multiple times before she finally said, "That's

impossible. He had to have left through that door. How could he disappear without a trace?"

Kenny paused before saying, "Maybe you were too scared, so..."

"Do you think I hallucinated?" Ariana cut him off, her face serious. That was no hallucination. The

person who saved her had to be real. Jett's current state was proof of that. She could never have done

that all on her own.

"Okay, how about this? I'll get someone to check all our surveillance footage. Just to be sure that we've

covered everything" Again, Kenny wiped the sweat from his brow. "That will take some time. We have a

lot of cameras, after all. But don't worry, Ms. Edwards. I'll have my men talk to the guests who were here tonight. We'll get to the bottom of this, I can assure you."

He spoke with such earnest she felt she couldn't ask anything else from him. She simply sighed and said, "Well, thank you for handling it."

"My pleasure." Kenny smiled. He seemed relieved.

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Ariana then returned to her dressing room. She got changed and sent Ivan a text explaining that she felt unwell and had to go home.

Theodore kindly offered her a lift back and she accepted.

On the way, Ariana looked out of the window, still in a daze. The events of that evening had really shaken her up.

"Why were you there? Do you want to be a model? Theodore asked, trying his best to sound nonchalant. His eyes were fixed on the book in his hand.

"No, I was doing Ivan a favor." Ariana turned to look at him and after a short pause, she continued,

"Ivan is the designer who cooperates with SJ Entertainment. I'm sure you've heard about what

happened before.”

Glancing up from the book to give her a meaningful look, he said, “That’s good. Show business is like a cesspit. It’s no place for you. And you’re still my wife until the divorce. I hope you can stay away from other men in the meantime.”

Ariana was a little confused by this. “Don’t worry, I won’t have much contact with men, unless it’s for work.”

“Really? Well, that’s good to know.” Theodore chuckled to himself. i don’t want this kind of thing to happen again. You were lucky tonight that you met a good guy. Next time things might end up different”

“I know,” Ariana replied, her voice quiet.

Theodore, still not satisfied, continued, “So, you should keep a low profile from now on. Try to avoid wearing provocative dresses like that if you want to avoid men like Jett.”

Ariana’s mind went blank before it hit her. He blamed her for attracting a pervert by wearing a revealing dress.

Enraged at this accusation, she fired back, “That’s bullshit! Are you seriously blaming me for what happened? I can wear what I like. How dare you!”

Just then, the car stopped and Ariana climbed out, slamming the door behind her.

Theodore rarely found himself being contradicted. He stared at her back as she walked away, slightly displeased.

Horace couldn't keep his thoughts to himself, and asked, "Boss, why don't you just tell her it was you who saved her? Instead, you scared her. You got lucky that Kenny had enough time to alter the video before she noticed the camera."

Theodore snorted, "She needs to learn a lesson."

Horace glanced at Theodore in the rear-view mirror. He wanted to say something but stopped himself.

"If you have anything to say, just say it," Theodore said as he leaned back in his seat.

Horace licked his lips before turning his head toward the back seat. "Boss, could it be that you're jealous? Otherwise, why would you care what she wears?"

Theodore stiffened. Then the photo Adrian had sent him came to mind. His throat became dry all of a sudden. He swallowed.

Horace continued, "Maybe, your problem is not with Ms. Edwards clothes. You just don't want other

men seeing how beautiful she is.” Horace mused, as he studied his boss’s expression.

Theodore sneered at this. “You’re overthinking it.

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She’s simply my possession. You’d better keep an eye on her. I want to know what she’s planning.”

“Yes, boss.” After this, Horace kept silent. He didn’t dare to say anything else.

“Let’s get out of the car,” Theodore said. As he reached for his coat, his eyes narrowed. His left wrist was covered in red scratch marks.

When Ariana got home, she took a long shower, rubbing her skin clean until it was raw. Even after this, she still felt disgusted. When she closed her eyes to try and sleep, her mind filled with images of Jett that she desperately wanted to forget.

Several hours went by, as she tossed and turned, unable to sleep. Her chest felt so tight that she eventually had to go downstairs to drink several glasses of cold water to make herself feel better.

When she did finally fall asleep, she dreamed of that mystery man who had held her tightly, stroking her body. Just as he leaned in to kiss her, she shot awake, doused in a cold sweat.

She glanced at her alarm clock. It was only one am.

With a deep breath, she lay back down, and pulled the quilt up over her face. She felt so helpless.

The image of that man holding her entered her mind once again. When she gave it some more thought,

the man seemed a little familiar. Something was telling her that she had seen him somewhere before.

She didn't understand why he was so afraid of her seeing his face. He had been her hero after all.

Could it be someone she knew?

Lynch maybe?

Ariana felt disgusted at the mere thought of that scenario, and dismissed it immediately.

Lynch was not that tall.

Then Theodore popped into her mind. Her husband did have a similar figure, but being paralyzed, it

couldn't have been him.

She reached out her hand and studied the Band-Aid on her finger. One of her nails had broken off and

she had found it in the shower. It must have happened during her struggle with the mystery man.

If that were the case, he would also be injured. Her nails were long and sharp after all.

Maybe she'd recognize the man if he had scratches on his hand.

But those scratches would no doubt heal quickly, so it might not be of much help. There were way too

many people going to the party. She wouldn't be able to investigate them all.

The only thing she could really use was the footage from the security cameras.

It felt like her thoughts were going round in circles. Frustrated, she reached for her phone. There was a

flirtatious text from Lynch sent three hours before.

She smiled. He had taken her bait. She didn't reply straight away. A good fisherman knew the right time

to reel them in.

The next morning, Ariana and Theodore sat down for breakfast together.

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After their argument the night before, neither of them spoke.

The atmosphere was so tense that even her favorite toast didn't seem appetizing to Ariana.

She sipped on her milk absent-mindedly. Every now and then, she would steal a glance at Theodore.

He ate quietly, each of his movements delicate and elegant.

Some people were simply born with grace.

Ariana snorted to herself. He might be handsome, but that was no disguise for his mean character.

She took a big bite of toast and chewed.

Then she realized that Theodore hadn't been. using his left hand, and his sleeve was pulled down over his wrist.

She thought back to the night before. The mystery man had held her with his left hand.

A suspicion crept in.

She knew it was a long shot, but she picked up the jam jar and held it out to Theodore's left hand. "This jam is delicious," she said with a smile.

Theodore gave her a meaningful look and didn't move.

Then Judy, who had been serving the food, spoke up abruptly. "Mr. Anderson doesn't have much of a sweet tooth."

Ariana smiled dryly, "Oh, my bad."

As she was about to take the jam back, Theodore's left hand reached for it. His sleeve slid up a couple of inches.

Ariana stared down at his wrist with bated breath. It was wrapped in gauze.

"Oh god, what happened to your wrist?" she exclaimed.

"It was my fault. I knocked over a bowl of porridge last night and scalded him," Judy explained, a guilty

look on her face. She turned and picked up a first aid kit. "That reminds me, it's time to change your

bandage, sir. Mrs. Anderson, would you mind giving me a hand?"

Theodore said nothing. His injured hand remained on the table as if accepting Judy's suggestion.

Ariana didn't object. She gently unwrapped the bandage. Her brow furrowed as she saw the state of his

wrist, red and swollen.

She couldn't imagine how painful that must be, but he didn't even blink.

"Does it hurt?" she asked, concerned, as she applied ointment with a cotton swab.

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"No," he replied bluntly and stared at her.

Something flashed across his eyes as he watched the woman treating his wound with care and

patience.

Ariana paused and looked up. "Really? I don't believe that."

Theodore looked away for a moment. "You got me. It does hurt." For some reason, he felt compelled to

tell her the truth.

There was a triumphant gleam in Ariana's eyes. "I knew it! Just sheer bravado."

With his other hand, he picked up his cup and took a sip. He was trying his best to conceal his embarrassment.

This cold attitude of his was not new to Ariana. She continued redressing his wound. "If it hurts, just tell me. You'll feel better about it. And I promise I won't mock you. The wound will take around ten days to heal. In the meantime, don't eat any soy sauce. That should prevent scarring...

The breakfast time passed as Ariana chattered on. For the first time, Theodore patiently listened to everything she had to say.

Once his wound was dressed, he went out.

Ariana watered the flowers in the garden. Just before noon, she finally replied to Lynch's message. She told him to meet her at eight o'clock that evening, giving him a hotel name and a room number.

She guessed that Lynch must have looked up the name she told him the night before and discovered Brielle was a new talent of SJ Entertainment.

The company was backing Brielle completely although she was a new talent. It was easy to tell that she had connections with people in high places.

At this point, Lynch must have figured that Brielle was either rich or powerful. Possibly both.

So Ariana had to strike while the iron was hot. She had to get what she wanted before Lynch got suspicious.

Just a few minutes after she sent the message, her phone rang. It was Lynch.

Ariana fixed her posture, cleared her throat, and answered the call.

After a few seconds of silence, a deep voice came through the phone. "Miss Edwards, I can't believe your arrogance. You waited twelve hours to reply to me."

Ariana grinned to herself at the sound of Lynch's voice. Mimicking Brielle's tone, she said, "Did you like my reply?"

"Well I have to say, if it were any other woman, I would have told her to get lost. But I just didn't have the heart to do that to you. I guess there's something special about you. I've really fallen for you." The sexual subtext of his words was obvious.

Managing to suppress her disgust, Ariana said, "You talk the talk. I hope you can live up to it tonight."

"Prepare yourself for the best night of your life," he said, before adding, "But I pick the place."

Ariana frowned at this. "Don't you trust me?"

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"Of course I do, don't get me wrong I've just been in the industry for a long time and I have my ways of getting rid of the paparazzi. Don't worry, Miss Edwards, I'll send you the address later." Lynch delivered this in a gentle but firm tone.

Ariana cursed silently. He was more vigilant than she had expected. But she had no choice but to accept his condition. "Okay, I'll see you later."

The two talked for a little longer before hanging up.

That evening, just as Ariana was about to leave, having changed outfits, Judy approached her, holding a finely detailed box. "Ma'am, a package came for you."

Ariana took it, surprised. There were only a few people who knew where she lived, and very few of them would be likely to send her a package.

Who could it be from?

Curious, she opened it. Inside was the very necklace that she had worn on the runway the night before.

There was a small card inside too, lines of Lord Byron's poem written on it.

“She walks in beauty, like the night of cloudless climes and starry skies. And all that’s best of dark and bright meet in her aspect and her eyes...

The note was signed with the letter H.

Was this praising Ariana’s beauty?

The necklace paired with the note made the gift feel intimate.

She felt her heart skip a beat as she read it. After

placing the lid on the box, she called Ivan.

He was quick to answer the phone. “Ariana, you’ll never guess how much they bid on the necklace.

Thirty million dollars! Incredible! That’s all because of you!”

Ariana wasn’t sure how to feel about this. “Ivan, that’s the reason I’m calling. Could you tell me who the buyer is?”

He didn’t ask her why she wanted to know. “It was bought by an anonymous buyer.”

Ariana considered this for a moment, and then she told Ivan that the necklace had been sent to. her.

“Oh my God! That’s great. Congratulations!” Ivan was shocked. “I didn’t expect the necklace would make its way back to you, but I think with you is where it belongs.”

She sighed. "The problem is, I don't know who sent it. It's far too expensive. I could never accept such a gift."

"Don't worry. Maybe someone at the party liked it on you and thought you should have it. This kind of thing happens. That's why so many stars love events like this. They would kill to gain favors with the big names who attend them," Ivan said with a playful smile.

But Ariana didn't consider herself to be lucky. Now she was married, and she didn't want this kind of favor. She didn't want to think about how Theodore would react once he found out.