

Unconscious 661

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Could it be a tumor? She had been paying attention to her diet, ensuring she ate nutritious food and avoided anything unhealthy.

Would the baby suffer from illness after it was born?

Ariana was worried.

Finally, Mitchel spoke. "You're carrying twins."

Twins! The unusual shape was in fact a second child?!

Ariana's eyes widened in shock, and before she could revel in the excitement,

Mitchel's following words chilled her to the bone.

"However, one is significantly weaker and is being overshadowed, even absorbed, by the other."

Ariana was stunned.

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Mitchel glanced at her before continuing, "Should this situation persist, the baby may be born with birth defects or a disability."

Reclaiming the report from her grasp, he wore a grave expression. "At this point, you have two choices. If you wish to keep both, the likelihood of delivering two healthy babies stands at merely 10%.

Alternatively, you could opt to terminate the weaker one, though that carries its own risks. The decision rests with you.”

Awake of cold washed over Ariana as Mitchel’s words sank in. She grabbed the report from his grip, scrutinizing the images as her fingertips and lips trembled. All traces of joy were erased.

Seeing her distress, Mitchel offered, “I suggest you have a talk with your husband before coming to any conclusion. Decide before the embryo forms completely.”

She nodded and her gaze remained vacant. She studied the paper for a long while before rising from her chair. “Thanks, Dr. Chadwick. I’ll tell you my decision later.”

Mitchel gave a nod in response and went back to his work as she left his office.

Ariana’s complexion was ghostly as she stepped outside. Spotting her, Horace, who had been patiently waiting, quickly approached her and asked, “Mrs. Anderson, what did the test say?”

Jolted back to reality by Horace’s voice, she pulled together a forced smile and replied, “It’s nothing major. Just a required surgery for my foot. The explanation of the procedure spooked me a bit. It sounds painful.”

Her face betrayed no hint of deceit, leading Horace to sigh in relief. “Rest assured, we’ll secure the best surgeon for you and plan the most effective operation.

Everything will work out.” Ariana responded with an absent-minded nod, her thoughts centered on her unborn children. She found herself tangled in indecision.

Mitchel’s counsel was sound. After all, Theodore was the father. She was uncertain whether he would welcome the news of her pregnancy, let alone his reaction if he were to learn about their babies’ condition.

Chapter: 662 Ariana sighed internally, wondering what she was supposed to do. “Would you like to see Mr. Anderson?” Horace’s voice drew her back to reality.

Noticing his puzzled expression, she realized she must have inadvertently whispered Theodore's name while lost in her thoughts.

Regaining her composure, she asked, "Where is he?"

"He may be occupied at the moment—" Horace hesitated briefly before continuing, "But if you wish to see him, I can contact him immediately. I'm certain he'd be delighted to hear from you."

Ariana lowered her gaze, took a moment to think, and then shook her head. "Never mind. If he's busy, I don't want to interrupt. It's nothing urgent."

With that, she headed back to her room, leaving Horace standing there, staring thoughtfully at her retreating figure.

Meanwhile, Theodore was a few floors above, in a ward. He was confronted by Zayden, who had just been wheeled out of surgery after having a bullet extracted.

Zayden, pale and his leg heavily bandaged, was flanked by five of Theodore's security guards, all dressed in black. His handsome face devoid of emotion, Theodore stared down at him, filling the room with a suffocating silence.

Zayden was at the mercy of Theodore, who had put him in the wheelchair. But in his current condition, any form of retaliation was out of the question.

"She wasn't injured, was she?" he demanded, his grip on the wheelchair's armrests tightening. Instead of answering, Theodore fixed him with an intense stare, sending chills down Zayden's spine.

Despite the discomfort of Theodore's penetrating gaze, Zayden forced himself to meet his eyes. "If she's unharmed, when are you planning to release me?"

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"Release you?" Theodore's voice dripped with disdain as he sneered, "I've told you before, if any harm befalls her, I'll make you pay ten times over. Seems like your memory is seriously lacking."

"You bastard!" Zayden felt the urge to leap up and grab Theodore by the collar, but he knew he was outmatched. Frustration filled his eyes as he glared at Theodore.

"You already shot me in the leg, what more do you want?" Stark contrast to Zayden's seething anger, Theodore remained eerily composed, picking up the medical report from the table. Regret flashed across his face as he said, "Such a shame. It's been ages since I last fired a gun. My aim might be a bit rusty."

Casually, he tossed the report in front of Zayden, each word landing with the weight of a stone. "Otherwise, your leg would be completely ruined."

"You!" Zayden's veins protruded in anger. His words got caught in his throat and his eyes almost popped out in fury.

Theodore chuckled, his hands casually tucked into his pockets as he leisurely circled around Zayden. "You wanted to know what it feels like to be in a wheelchair.

Well, now you get to experience it firsthand. How does it feel?"

Zayden trembled with anger, but he dared not retort. Who knew what this lunatic would do next?

Chapter: 663 He cursed Theodore in his heart, and at the same time wished he hadn't provoked the maniac.

"I'm contemplating your next punishment," Theodore taunted, his voice echoing in Zayden's ears. "Should I break one of your hands, or make sure you never rise from that wheelchair again?"

Despite the fact that Zayden was cursing him in his heart, he couldn't shake off the feeling of dread. Madman! Utterly insane!

He had assumed that Theodore would have the sense not to lay a finger on him, not to risk losing his inheritance over a woman. But reality told a different story, he must have been crazy or just plain stupid.

Moreover, that woman was fine now!

"[I should probably break both your legs." Theodore's cold voice broke through Zayden's thoughts, jolting him back to reality. Before he could utter a word, Theodore added, "But that might be too easy for you."

Cold shivers rushed down Zayden's spine.

He had underrated Theodore's madness. Now, he wondered if Theodore had stopped taking his medicine, his mind clouded and unsteady.

"Tie him to the bed." Theodore commanded coldly, and several black-suited bodyguards moved forward to seize Zayden.

Zayden fought vigorously, shouting at Theodore, "You've lost your sanity! You are doing all this for a woman, huh? If you do anything to me, you know grandfather won't let you get away with it!"

Theodore disregarded his protests. Just then, footsteps echoed in the corridor outside, and a group of people appeared at the hospital room door.

Asperry man in his fifties led the group. His outfit was perfect. "Young master," he respectfully greeted Theodore with a bow. "Devin." Theodore raised an eyebrow in acknowledgment, and politely invited him into the room.

Seeing Devin Mason sparked a glimmer of hope in Zayden's eyes.

After all, Devin was Aldus's butler, deeply loyal to Aldus, and Theodore would at least show him some regard.

Theodore knew that Devin had come here because of Zayden, but he decided to play dumb. “Why did you come all the way to Eleymond, Devin?”

Devin smiled, without looking Zayden’s way. He then gave a phone to Theodore. “Aldus misses you. But since you didn’t pick up his calls, he sent me over.” “Devin, tell him to put me down. Now! Holden has already lost his mind! He’s ready to kill me, his brother, over some bitch!”

Stuck on the hospital bed, Zayden hollered at Devin, making a scene without any concern for how he might look.

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Devin looked like he’d lost his way in a sentence. Meanwhile, Theodore was giving Zayden the cold shoulder, not even a look in his direction.

Squirming like a fish out of water, Zayden was peeved. He shot Theodore a warning. “You better uncuff me quick, or grandfather won’t let you off easy.”

When Devin passed his phone to Theodore, Theodore simply nodded at a guy next to Zayden. In a flash, the guy gagged Zayden’s mouth.

This was a first for him: no one had ever dared to embarrass him like that, especially not in front of Devin. As a spoiled young rich guy, he was used to being treated with deference and respect.

Trying harder than ever, Zayden wrestled to get free, but the security guys had him pinned. He whimpered, craning his neck to catch Devin’s eye.

Devin, the ever-so loyal follower of Aldus, brushed him off, considering Aldus seemed to favor Theodore. So, he just gave Zayden a sorry look, turned on his heel, and left him hanging. Seeing that, a bitter taste of hatred filled Zayden’s mouth.

Theodore, on the other hand, didn't seem to sweat about any fallout from Aldus. He even had the guts to turn on the speakerphone right in front of Zayden.

A voice they all knew too well came from the phone. "Done making trouble now? You need to head back to Mistlyn soon, kid. I'm running out of patience, you know."

Aldus' voice came through the phone, steady and powerful, but with a hint of firmness. Theodore knew it wasn't out of anger. With a sense that Aldus was still energetic, his spirits lifted and his voice softened.

"Grandpa." Theodore called to the man on the other end of the line. His icy gaze warmed, and the stern facade he had maintained towards Zayden began to dissolve.

"I'm almost done here, as long as—"

He shot a thoughtful glance at Zayden. "As long as there aren't any unnecessary distractions."

Aldus caught the implication behind 'unnecessary distractions'. He let out a sigh and spoke with patience. "Once the troublemaker is brought back this time, he won't be leaving Mistlyn again."

Theodore stayed silent, taking in Aldus' words.

Aldus knew Theodore's nature well enough to recognize that silence was a sign of disapproval.

Handling this kid could really be a handful. He sighed inwardly, his feelings towards Theodore a complex cocktail of fondness and frustration.

Still, since Zayden was the one stirring up trouble, Aldus decided to bend a little.

"I'll take back the 5% stake in the family business from Zayden. It'll be a welcoming gift for your wife when you return."

Chapter: 665 At this, Zayden's face turned crimson, and he struggled with all his might, nearly breaking free from the men restraining him.

He let out a grunt, lunging towards Theodore's direction. His efforts, however, were met with apathy, even if he ended up ripping the bed apart.

Theodore was content now. After all, the shares that Zayden owned were significant pieces of the family business. The 5% dividend alone would be enough for an ordinary person to live a life of luxury for generations. It would serve as a protection for Ariana when he couldn't be there for her.

His mood visibly improved, a small smile even graced his lips. Recollecting something, he switched off the speaker and stepped out of the room.

He leaned against the corridor wall, cleared his throat with a grin, and then told Aldus in a serious tone. "Grandpa, her name is Ariana."

The moment Ariana's name passed through Theodore's lips, his voice carried a tenderness that couldn't be disguised.

This caught Aldus off guard. He had never witnessed Theodore care for a woman to such an extent. From the other end of the phone, he found himself repeatedly voicing his approval with hearty "greats," feeling a surge of joy within him.

Aldus had been aware of Ariana for a while, even sending someone to dig into her past discreetly.

When Theodore was involved in that car accident, the Anderson family was too quick to give up on him, declaring him vegetative without even considering intensive treatment.

But Aldus, with his foresight, had placed his trusted men at Theodore's side long before the accident. They had arranged for doctors to treat him in secret, a decision that played a significant role in his recovery.

His health prior to the accident had been stellar. With that and the secret medical attention, he was able to regain consciousness in a little over a month.

Both he and Aldus suspected there was more to the accident than what met the eye.

After his recovery, Theodore continued to act like he was still in a vegetative state, a ruse designed to throw the Andersons off their game. Meanwhile, he had someone investigate the true nature of the accident on the sly.

The Andersons, Darian in particular, were notorious for their ruthlessness. Darian, in his blind greed and conceit, had repeatedly allowed Jasper to attempt Theodore's life.

Theodore, however, was no easy prey. He laid out a business snare for Darian, savoring the anticipation of his enemy's impending doom. Noticing Theodore's calculated plan, Aldus chose to step back, despite his instinct to wipe out the Anderson family entirely.

When Darian and Jasper were on the brink of falling into Theodore's trap, the Anderson family pulled a marriage card, resorting to artificial insemination. This made Theodore drop his charade earlier than planned.

Initially, Aldus didn't think much of Ariana. He had her background checked, preparing to confront her and the Andersons after Theodore's plan came to fruition.

Aldus had zero trust in the Anderson family, and Ariana, dispatched by them and being Jasper's ex-girlfriend, seemed even less trustworthy.

He saw the marriage as a farce, a temporary entry in the family register, ready to be erased when the time was right.

Aldus assumed Theodore was on the same page. But as time passed, Theodore's actions started to puzzle him.

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His deep affection for Ariana was unexpected, even willing to throw his own plan off the rails. He even put his life on the line for her and stood up to Zayden on her behalf.

Aldus was willing to overlook some things as long as Theodore remained unharmed. But now, as Theodore introduced Ariana so earnestly, Aldus realized her importance to Theodore.

He felt a growing curiosity to meet the woman who had significantly impacted Theodore's life. "I haven't met her yet," he said thoughtfully.

Realizing that Theodore's current situation made a meeting impractical, he added, "[understand, you don't want to come to Mistlyn right now. That's fine. I can sneak over to Eleymond to meet her."

Theodore massaged his forehead, pondering Ariana's existing resentment and coldness towards him. He was yet to reveal to her the situation with the Fredrick family, nor that he himself was the man known as Holden.

"Let's be patient for a while longer, Grandfather," Theodore sighed softly, "I haven't informed her about the Fredrick family's situation yet. I don't wish to cause her unnecessary distress."

Aldus managed to contain his excitement upon Theodore's reply. Recalling some rumors he had heard, his tone grew more serious as he asked, "I heard from Horace that you've resumed taking medicine, is that true?"

"Huh?" Theodore retorted reflexively, his brows knitting together before he quickly denied, "No."

Aldus hesitated a bit, not completely certain about the news he had heard, so he decided not to press further. Instead, he cautiously brought up another topic, saying, "Our family's medical team has made significant advancements in treatment plans over the years. We have managed to reduce surgical risks, and we've even found a highly esteemed and talented neurosurgeon. He..."

Before Aldus could complete his sentence, Theodore abruptly interrupted him, "Grandfather, spare your words. I am not undergoing the surgery."

Aldus realized that there was little he could do when Theodore firmly declined. Knowing Theodore's stubborn nature, he simply sighed and chose not to pursue the matter any further.

"Fine," Aldus relented, "But under no circumstances should you continue taking medicine. If you do, don't blame me for resorting to tough measures and forcing you into surgery."

Theodore grasped Aldus's concerns. He didn't utter another word, simply mumbling in affirmation.

Then they conversed about mundane matters for a bit longer before ending their call.

In the ward, Zayden, his mouth covered, managed to give Devin an angry glare while making muffled whimpering noises. It was only when Theodore entered that he quieted down.

Devin's gaze shifted to Theodore, but neither of them broke the silence.

Theodore paid no attention to Zayden and merely nodded at Devin, who understood the signal and motioned for his men to escort Zayden out of the room.

Observing the situation, Theodore's men decided not to intervene any further and allowed Zayden to be assisted to his feet.

As Zayden walked past Theodore, he paused for a moment and cast a menacing glare at him. His voice carried a strong sense of bitterness, "You better watch out. | won't let you off the hook so easily."

Theodore didn't bother paying him any attention, simply gesturing for them to get him out quicker.

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Once Zayden and Devin had departed, Theodore requested the remaining people to leave too.

In the quiet ward, with only a faint beam of light filtering through the window, he sat alone in a chair, seemingly lost in thought. His gaze shifted to the white curtain dancing in the gentle wind, as if he perceived a familiar outline within it'

A sudden wave of intense pain overwhelmed his mind. Theodore grimaced, his skull pounding as if under a hammer's strike. The agony was so severe that he found himself silenced.

Instinctively, he groped for his medicine in his pocket, but the echo of Aldus's parting words restrained him from taking them. At that moment, the room's door creaked open. Theodore looked up to see it was Horace. Surprised, his brow furrowed and anger surged, "Didn't I assign you to accompany her? What are you doing here?!"

Horace, accustomed to Theodore's temper, maintained his cool, promptly reporting, "Mrs. Anderson is resting, and I've arranged someone to monitor her. I am here to relay a message; it appears that she wishes to meet you."

Hearing the last sentence, Theodore froze. His somber eyes noticeably lit up, his voice laced with disbelief, "Really?" @ Recalling Ariana's behavior, Horace wasn't fully certain about his understanding of her wishes. Yet, the moment Theodore learned of Ariana's readiness to meet him, it somewhat alleviated his throbbing headache.

Observing Theodore's reaction, Horace paused briefly before conveying Ariana's precise response and concluded, "Considering the circumstances, it appears that Mrs. Anderson expressed a desire to meet with you."

As Horace unfolded the story, the spark in Theodore's eyes slowly faded. His faintly creased forehead indicated his uncertainty. He was worried that Horace might have misunderstood Ariana's intentions and that his presence might upset her.

Horace, scrutinizing Theodore's mixed feelings of anticipation and apprehension, couldn't help but be astounded. It was indeed a surprise to see Theodore, usually firm and decisive, display such caution.

Meanwhile, in the room below, Ariana found herself alone, holding the prenatal examination results. As she stared at the image of the fetuses, her heart was consumed by profound pain.

These were two lives — hers and Theodore's children.

Now, she was forced to contemplate whether to end one of them.

The dilemma was brutally painful for any mother, and she felt cornered.

Ariana was utterly overwhelmed.

Her eyes welled up with unshed tears, her gaze cloudy and desolate.

Mitchel was right; she couldn't bear this burden alone. At that instant, she yearned for Theodore's presence more than ever; she needed him to shoulder this weight as the father of their children.

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A knock interrupted her thoughts. Hastily wiping her tears, she instinctively hid the report beneath her blanket and said, "Come

in." Ariana anticipated a nurse or perhaps Horace. So, when a familiar figure appeared, she was genuinely surprised. It was Theodore.

She stared at him in surprise.

It wasn't his presence that startled her, but rather the fact that Theodore did not break in without her permission. He usually would employ a courtesy knock before entering. This time, however, he waited patiently outside, demonstrating an unusual level of respect for her response.

The sight of Theodore made Ariana feel a sudden discomfort. Instinctively, she held onto her blanket a little tighter, her emotions swirling as she met his gaze.

Their exchanges had been cold, with their argument still hanging in the air. But after experiencing such danger and being rescued by Theodore like a personal savior, how could she remain unaffected?

Suddenly, Ariana was unsure of how to face this man standing before her.

She averted her gaze, evading his eyes, and whispered, "Horace mentioned you were busy."

"Uh-huh," Theodore responded with a muffled hum, moving towards her, "Horace mentioned you were looking for me?" Ariana didn't answer immediately, which made him slightly uneasy. He paused, his hand balling into a fist behind his back. Did Horace get it wrong? Did she not wish to see him?

This possibility made his heart heavy.

Just as he began to think she'd deny his claim, a faint "uh-huh" filled his ears.

The sound was subtle, yet unmistakably clear.

Theodore immediately loosened his tight grip, heaved a sigh of relief, and, with a heart lightened, continued his approach.

Drawing nearer, he caught sight of the remnants of dried tears on Ariana's face.

His relief was swiftly replaced with concern. His hand instinctively cradled her face, his voice a shade colder, "Why have you been shedding tears? Who hurt you?"

Theodore's hands lacked delicacy, bearing the marks of years spent in the realm of public affairs and physical training. A thin layer of calluses graced the pads of his fingers and the base of his thumbs. As those rough hands made contact with Ariana's smooth face, a tingling sensation coursed through her.

At the sound of his question, a ripple disrupted the peace within Ariana's heart.

Particularly, the large hands caressing her cheeks imparted a profound sense of safety, yet it also unleashed an uncontrollable cascade of tears.

Before Ariana could utter a word, tears spilled down her cheeks, descending in solitary drops. Contemplating the children growing within her belly, with the man before her as the main culprit, she suddenly voiced her grievance, imbued with a sense of injustice: "It's always you, from the very beginning to the bitter end. You've been tormenting me relentlessly. Ever since I married you, every tear I've shed has been because of you."

Chapter: 669 Theodore's hand became moistened by the weight of her teardrops, the sensation of warmth emanating from his fingertips.

Each tear that fell pricked at Theodore's heart, yet he found himself at a loss for what to do. He hastily enveloped Ariana in his embrace.

His heart ached, and he made several attempts to speak, but found himself lacking the words to console her. All he could do was hold her tightly and repeat, "I'm sorry... it's my fault..."

Ariana stood frozen, stunned by Theodore's direct apology. It was the first time she had witnessed him in such a vulnerable state, causing her tears to momentarily cease. Sniffing, she inquired, "What did you do wrong?"

"I... I shouldn't have spied on you, interfered with your freedom... shouldn't have made you cry," he muttered, his voice muffled by Ariana's neck.

At his words, Ariana's heart constricted, and she clasped Theodore's hand with greater intensity. "So, these past few days, were the people you sent to follow me for surveillance or protection?" she questioned.

Theodore fell silent for a moment before finally responding, "The fire was intentionally set, and we have yet to uncover the mastermind behind it. However, there's a possibility that they might strike again."

As he straightened himself and locked eyes with Ariana, he continued, "They're targeting me, but it might involve you." Though he didn't explicitly state it, his explanation resonated clearly—it was for her protection.

Ariana fixed her gaze upon him, searching his eyes for any trace of anxiety. She detected a hint of worry, as if he still feared her reaction to whatever troubled him.

It tugged at her heart, leaving her with a bittersweet ache.

When had the esteemed Theodore ever exhibited such vulnerability? She never asked him to lower himself for her sake. She loved him just the way he was, flaws and all.

Clasping Theodore's hand tightly, Ariana felt a newfound conviction. Whatever had transpired outside the hospital had been a misunderstanding. She believed now that he didn't wish to keep an eye on her, but to protect her.

With unwavering determination, she peered into Theodore's eyes, as though a decision had been made within her. "Theodore, I have one more question for you.

Do you truly love me?"

"I love you."

This time, Theodore didn't hesitate for a moment. His voice held firmness and determination, yet his eyes revealed an even deeper, unwavering love.

"Okay." Leaning against his hand, her soft skin caressing his palm, Ariana locked eyes with him, refusing to break their connection. "Theodore, let's leave the past behind us. I can accept your stubbornness, your dominance, your possessiveness. If you wanted to place a GPS on me, I would comply."

Her words caused Theodore's eyes to tremble slightly, a blend of joy and restraint. Ariana's response and willingness to compromise filled him with overwhelming happiness, yet her words also weighed on

him. He no longer desired to confine a free bird within a gilded cage. A caged canary could never experience true happiness.

Before Theodore could utter a word, Ariana pressed on, her voice steady. “However, all of this hinges on one condition. I need to understand what you're hiding from me. Who is Helen, and who is Marley? As long as you tell me, I will believe you.

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Clarify it, and from now on there will be no secrets, no deception, no betrayal between us, okay?”

The room fell quiet as Ariana sat, her expectation hanging in the air.

She had prepared herself for any response, her fingers tenderly brushed her abdomen. Her decision was made.

In the silent corners of her mind, she murmured, “Theodore, when you find your words, I'll let loose the secrets I've kept.” But the prolonged quietness, heavy and suffocating, hadn't been on her list of anticipations.

Time stretched on, with Theodore's silence pushing Ariana towards the edge of frustration. At last, he found his voice, “Marley— she is my—”

His breaths came in short gasps, his lips trembling, unclear whether from the act of speaking or something else.

“she is—” Theodore tried again, yet his voice faltered halfway. A deep breath attempted to steady him; it was to no avail. “Marley—is—”

And again, his words hung incomplete.

After his numerous failed attempts to conclude his sentence, Ariana felt a strange sensation. It was then she noticed the hand she held was deathly cold, trembling subtly, devoid of any warmth.

A sense of uneasiness swept over her. Turning her gaze to Theodore, she found him ghostly white, his eyes devoid of any spark, his lips carrying a hint of a purplish hue.

“Theodore? Theodore!” Fear seized her at the sight of him like this, an apprehension creeping in that something wasn’t right. She clutched his hand and softly tapped his cool cheek, her voice trembling with dread. “Theodore, what’s going on? I won’t question any further, alright? Respond to me, Theodore!”

But he remained still, seemingly oblivious to her pleas, his voice mechanically repeating Marley’s name. Darkness seemed to consume Theodore.

There he stood, his mind a void, his nerves taut, seeming as though he might shatter at any given moment.

A shrill sound echoed in his ear, akin to tinnitus, or maybe the scream of a woman. A figure emerged beside him.

Marley’s pale, lifeless face smiled creepily, lacking any signs of life and casting an eerie glow as if she had clawed her way out of the underworld.

“Tell her,” Marley whispered, her lips curved upward in a smile that stretched beyond imagination.

She danced around Theodore, her words sounding like a demonic incantation from the abyss. “Let her know, let her know who I

am.

“Reveal it!” Marley’s voice steadily grew in volume, her tone intense, punctuated by bouts of manic laughter. “Tell her! Tell her! Theodore! Can you admit to the crimes you’ve committed? You’re nothing more than a despicable murderer!”