

Unconscious 721

Chapter: 721 “Was there anyone here a few days ago?” Ariana asked, staring at the Lights in the house too.

“I don’t think so, but I’m not sure.” The administrator scratched his head in bewilderment. “This place is pretty desolate, so we rarely get any tenants. I don’t come by here very often, either. I’ll drop by to arrange the cleaning once a month, and I won’t come here unless there’s business. To be honest, you’re the first person who’s shown interest in renting this month.”

The administrator sounded quite pleased by this, but Ariana’s attention was still drawn to the house where the lights had mysteriously turned on.

Without taking her eyes off the Lit house, she asked the administrator, “Do you know anything about the owner of that house?”

“There used to be an elderly couple and their young daughter living there. The couple passed away in an accident, and I think their relatives inherited the property. The little girl was taken away not long after,” the administrator explained, continuing to show Ariana around the area.

Seeing that Ariana did not ask further about the house, he moved on.

The remaining Stone Houses the administrator showed her were all quite similar, and since she was only staying for a short while, Ariana didn’t think too much about it and picked one not far from the house with the small garden.

After she chose a house, she went inside. Entering the house, she noticed that the living room on the ground floor was well-kept and clean, without a speck of dust in sight.

Ariana was convinced. She didn’t think twice and paid the deposit for the rent swiftly.

After the administrator left, satisfied with her purchase, she sat on the sofa in the Living room for a while. Then she decided to rest.

But as soon as she went upstairs, she immediately regretted her decision.

She hadn't checked any of the upstairs rooms earlier, which consisted of the bedrooms. Now, when she treaded up the creaky stairs and pushed open the door to one of the bedrooms, a musty smell greeted her

Ariana turned on the light switch, and the scene before her was worse than she could have imagined.

An enormous spiderweb clung to a corner of the room, and the moldy smell primarily came from the bed, covered in stained and yellowed bedding and tousled in disarray, as if someone had rummaged through it.

It was apparent the administrator's claim of monthly cleaning was a complete lie. No wonder he said the neighborhood was desolate and that nobody rented his buildings. He wasn't sincere about the rented properties in the first place.

Ariana tried to convince herself that it was just a fixer-upper. She braced herself to get on the bed and sleep, but the sight of the gross yellowing bedding made her want to run out the door and drive home immediately.

She pulled out her phone and tried calling the administrator to demand an explanation, but he wasn't answering his phone.

Frustrated, Ariana jerked the yellow bedding off the mattress and angrily flung it on the floor. There was no way she could sleep on that. She thought of wrapping herself in her clothes to keep warm through the night, but the damp, musty smell emanating from the room made it difficult to stay in there, let alone sleep. So, she cracked open the window to ventilate the room and stood by it, gazing out and enjoying the view.

The view from the second floor was open and vast, stretching across plains under the clear sky, and the small town's scenery held a unique charm. A small creek trickled peacefully nearby, and the cool breeze had a fresh scent that soothed her irritated mood.

Ariana gazed at the picturesque scenery, and inadvertently, her eyes were once again drawn to the mysterious Stone House by the creek. She wondered which family member had returned to stay there just as she arrived, too. It was quite a coincidence. As she was lost in her thoughts, she noticed the house's door open, and a young man stepped out.

Ariana squinted slightly at the vaguely familiar figure in the distance. The figure was... Theodore!

"Theodore!" Without a second thought, Ariana called out to him.

Yet, the figure over there didn't react. Maybe the distance was too far, or he hadn't heard her.

As the figure started to fade, Ariana dashed out of the door, hurrying down the stairs towards the other side.

Chapter: 722 Panting heavily, Ariana reached the courtyard across the street, only to find no sign of Theodore.

The night was calm, the air devoid of any breeze. The house in front of her stood with its door closed, lacking signs of life and any hint of human presence.

Ariana lingered in the courtyard, glancing back at her lit room, wondering if she'd hallucinated the figure due to her longing. But that figure she saw just now...

Ariana hesitated for a moment and tried knocking on the door next to her.

There was no response.

She persisted and knocked more forcefully. As her hand dropped, the door creaked open slightly.

Huh? It was unlocked?

Ariana was a bit surprised. She gently nudged the door, and it opened up fully.

The room was illuminated and neat, but completely empty.

It seemed Like someone had indeed just departed; it wasn't a figment of her imagination.

There weren't many decorations in the room — just a couple of tables and a sofa. The place was simple, and since there weren't many people coming and going, there was no need to Lock the door.

Ariana hesitated, unsure if she had mistaken another person for Theodore. She considered entering the room to search for evidence, but she felt it would be rude to invade without permission. But if she left, she worried she might lose another chance to validate her suspicions.

She cast her gaze skyward, contemplating that she wasn't particularly tired, so she chose to linger outside, hoping for a positive outcome.

Ariana walked leisurely by the creek, but soon she grew tired. Since the owner of the house was still absent, she decided to find a spot to take a break.

The area was open and wide, the only seating option being a swing in the courtyard.

Ariana ventured into the small garden, observing the finely crafted swing with appreciation.

She thought a momentary rest wouldn't hurt, so she swept the fallen leaves off the swing.

As her fingers traced the wooden seat, she felt etchings at the corner, resembling inscribed words. Though slightly faded over time, the carving was still legible.

Intrigued, Ariana leaned in for a clearer view, only to be struck still upon recognizing the engraving. The name "Marley" was etched into the wood.

Why was it Marley?!

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Ariana found it hard to believe she stumbled upon this name in such a spot, suddenly recollecting the administrator's words. Could it be that Marley was the little girl that the elderly couple had lived with, and that this house was her former home?! Instantly, Ariana was convinced she hadn't been wrong — the figure she saw was indeed Theodore.

Her hand on the swing trembled slightly, and she felt Like Laughing out of frustration.

She had driven for five hours seeking a lead, hunted for nearly an entire day, failed to secure a hotel, and finally found a place to rest, despite the Less-than-ideal conditions.

And what about Theodore?

He had vanished without a trace for over two weeks, only to reappear here, reminiscing about his past love?

The realization left Ariana stunned and enraged, her hand shaking with overwhelming feelings.

She closed her eyes, took several deep breaths to soothe herself, but her patience had worn thin.

She moved towards the open door once more, attentively scanning every detail in the room, her fist unwittingly tightened. With a turn, Ariana was on the verge of abandoning the search for Theodore.

However, spotting footprints on the wet soil by the stream stretching into the distance renewed her resolve.

Upon sighting the footprints, Ariana promptly grabbed the oil Lamp near the doorway and pursued them.

As she strolled along, she couldn't help but berate herself. Though she was angry about Theodore, she still could not let go of her overwhelming desire to locate him.

The footprints led Ariana to a dense forest. The secluded area was eerily quiet, with undeveloped woods behind the forest.

A wave of fear washed over Ariana, prompting her to tighten her coat and shout, "Theodore? Theodore, are you there? Theodore?"

Her calls were met with nothing but the echoing wind.

In the chilling silence of the night and the desolate forest, Ariana felt an escalating sense of foreboding.

She refrained from pushing further into the forest, steadying her emotions and gradually finding her calm. Leaning against a tree trunk, Ariana thought back to Helen's revelations.

She remembered Helen mentioning that Marley was a servant's daughter in Theodore's mother's house, residing there since her childhood.

However, the administrator had mentioned the Stone House by the stream was inhabited by an elderly couple and their daughter.

If that little girl was Marley, it suggested Helen was lying.

Yet, if Helen was honest, there was no reasonable explanation for Marley's name on the swing in the tiny garden.

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And what about the mysterious room on the fourth floor of the Anderson family mansion?

Clashing pieces of evidence clouded Ariana's mind, creating a chaotic web she struggled to untangle. As she grappled with her thoughts, the abrupt echo of a wolf's cry resonated from the forest.

Ariana froze.

Could there actually be a wolf here?!

She remained still, too frightened to move, questioning if she had misinterpreted the sound or if her fear had triggered a hallucination.

A second howl pierced the silence, sending shivers down Ariana's spine. No hallucination — there was indeed a wolf here! Ariana felt her blood run cold, desperate to leave this place as quickly as possible.

She attempted to backtrack her steps, but due to the engulfing darkness or escalating panic, Ariana failed to locate the way out, despite walking a long way.

The boundless forest surrounded her, its shadows morphing into desolate, haunting figures in the moonlight. Ariana grew genuinely scared, her body trembling and her voice quivering uncontrollably. "Theodore! Where are you, Theodore?"

She shouted for Theodore, her trembling voice echoing with fright, praying he would turn up soon and that the wolf had retreated.

However, destiny had a different path carved out, as she discerned rustling from the nearby woods.

Her heart pounded in her chest, holding her breath, her gaze fixed at the source of the noise.

Gradually, a pair of eerie green eyes appeared behind the bushes.

Anxious, Ariana clutched her collar tightly, not daring to break eye contact with the wolf, cautiously taking steps back.

Suddenly, the wolf in the forest Lunged at her!

Ariana let out a terrified scream and reflexively tried to run away, but she tripped, plunging into an abyss. With her heart pounding like a drum, Ariana frantically tried to clutch onto something. Just then, a firm grip rescued her from the void in the nick of time.

Theodore's face emerged into Ariana's line of sight, but any joy she might have felt was quickly overshadowed by the lack of time.

Behind her, a gentle slope awaited, and it was Theodore who caught her just as she was about to stumble and fall.

However, the wolf refused to leave.

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Nervously, Ariana watched as the wolf drew dangerously close to Theodore. It seemed poised to strike, ready to pounce and sink its teeth into his vulnerable neck.

"Theodore, don't concern yourself with me! | won't die from a fall.

Release me and flee!" Ariana cried out in panic.

Yet, Theodore remained composed, simply turning to reprimand the wolf with firmness in his voice. "Rin, cease your foolishness." To Ariana's astonishment, the fearsome wolf emitted a few pitiful whimpers and Lay down. She was dumbfounded.

What was going on?

She gazed blankly at Theodore, struggling to make sense of the situation unfolding before her eyes.

Her gaze shifted between Theodore and the now obedient wolf.

Moments ago, the wolf had exuded a ferocious presence, but now it rested docilely at Theodore's side. Its massive tail wagged contentedly against the ground, and the aggression in its eyes had dissipated entirely. It resembled nothing more than an obedient, oversized dog.

"Rin is my pet. She can be mischievous, but she was probably just trying to scare you. She wouldn't hurt anyone," Theodore explained helplessly, extending his hands to pull Ariana up.

Kneeling down beside her, he carefully inspected her ankle for any signs of injury before raising his eyes to inquire, "Are you hurt?"

Ariana shook her head.

But it wasn't until he personally confirmed her unharmed state that Theodore finally relaxed. Indeed, Ariana had merely been frightened, without any physical injuries.

In that moment, Rin approached Ariana with curiosity, sniffing at her.

Startled, Ariana instinctively jumped in fear and sought refuge in

Theodore's embrace.

Theodore casually draped an arm around her shoulder, offering a smile as he whispered, "Rin is a highly intelligent creature and won't harm people. You can try petting her."

Encouraged by his words, Ariana hesitantly reached out her hand.

Rin wagged her tail and gently nuzzled Ariana's palm.

The soft touch helped dissipate Ariana's wariness to some extent, and witnessing Rin's joyfully wagging tail, she mustered the courage to pet her a few more times.

Noticing Rin's growing excitement, Theodore became concerned that she might lose control and jump on Ariana. In response, he issued a command, "Rin, sit."

Rin seemed initially reluctant, emitting low whines, but eventually complied, moving away from Ariana's hand and settling into a sitting position.

Ariana was further amazed, her gaze fixed on Rin, as she exclaimed, "She's so well-behaved and attentive to your commands."

"I rescued her from a trap when I first came to this place. She got separated from her pack, so she's grown quite attached to me. I ventured into the woods late today to feed her," Theodore explained, all the while continuing to stroke Rin's head.

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With her neck proudly straightened, Rin wagged her tail even more energetically, evoking a growing fondness within Ariana. She couldn't resist petting Rin a few more times, gradually viewing her as a loyal and obedient companion, no longer harboring fear.

However, Ariana's emotions remained somewhat complicated after Theodore's earlier revelation.

As she absentmindedly stroked Rin without glancing at Theodore, she casually inquired, "Do you often come here?" Only the whisper of the wind remained in the depths of the woods.

Theodore took a moment to gather his thoughts before responding with a soft, "Mhm."

"I come here once a year." He spoke gently, as if expressing a casual fact.

Ariana's curiosity piqued as she inquired, "For a vacation?"

Rather than answering directly, Theodore countered, "What brought you here?"

The mention of this made Ariana feel a surge of anger and suffocation, but she managed a chuckle and replied, "It's not as if it's private property. You can come, so why can't I?"

Theodore regarded her with a hint of amusement in his eyes. He opened his mouth to speak, but before any words could escape, Ariana huffed and stormed ahead, leaving him behind.

Undeterred, Theodore followed closely, stepping in line with her as they walked. He couldn't resist asking, "Did you come looking for me?"

Ariana chose not to respond, refusing even to turn her head towards him.

"I thought I heard someone calling me just now. Was that you?" Theodore persisted, his curiosity driving him forward. No matter how many questions he posed, Ariana remained silent, her anger fueling her swift pace.

The night path proved treacherous to navigate, especially the untamed mountain trail they found themselves on.

Ariana, dressed in thin clothes, shivered and wrapped her arms tightly around herself whenever the wind howled. The kerosene lamp she had carried slipped from her grasp earlier, tumbling down the slope and extinguishing its light, making the path even more treacherous to discern.

The ground beneath them was uneven, littered with protruding branches and rocks. Ariana narrowly avoided stumbling multiple times, her feet meeting obstacles along the way.

With her vision obscured, Ariana's face suffered scratches from the unforgiving tree branches that reached out to hinder her progress.

As Ariana's agitation grew, the thought of returning to the damp, moldy room only served to worsen her irritation. Fueled by frustration, she forcefully pushed past the obstructing branches, forging ahead on her journey.

Regret filled Ariana's heart as she reflected on her decision to embark on this ill-fated journey, her search for truth mired in wishful thinking. She had believed there was a hidden motive behind Theodore's actions, only to discover that he returned to this place every year to reminisce about his first love, leaving her to bear the brunt of the consequences.

Lost in her own annoyance, Ariana failed to notice that the person behind her had ceased speaking.

In a sudden turn of events, she found herself unexpectedly lifted off the ground, and instinctively, she let out a piercing scream while clinging desperately to Theodore's neck.

It was then that she realized Theodore had scooped her up in a horizontal hold, an unconventional embrace that left her both annoyed and embarrassed. "What are you doing?"

Theodore's gaze met Ariana's furious expression as she hung in his arms, resembling an angry kitten. Despite her ire, he couldn't help but smile helplessly. "You were heading in the wrong direction," he explained.

With those words, he carried Ariana and veered off in another direction, leaving her face flushed with embarrassment. Determined to maintain her defiance, she stubbornly declared, "I can go wherever I please. It's none of your business. Put me down!"

Chapter: 727 Her voice trembled with a mixture of frustration and vulnerability as she struggled to break free from Theodore's embrace. Helplessly, Theodore let out a sigh and feigned sternness. "If you keep squirming, I might just feed you to Rin as an extra meal."

Rin, faithfully trailing behind them, seemed to grasp the situation and emitted a cooperative howl, its tail wagging happily in tandem.

Momentarily rendered speechless, Ariana found Theodore's reasoning akin to persuading a kid by threatening police intervention.

She wanted to protest further, but Theodore pressed her firmly against his chest, sheltering her face with his shoulder to shield her from any branches that might scrape against her.

Ariana stared blankly, her body pressed tightly against his, her ear attuned to the steady rhythm of his strong heartbeat. ALL her grievances seemed to dissolve, leaving her incapable of uttering a single word.

The world around them hushed, descending into stillness.

The symphony of cicadas, whispering leaves, the caressing wind, and their synchronized heartbeats wove together, creating a tranquil melody.

Leaning softly against Theodore's chest, Ariana embraced the quietude. Their shared yearning for peace kept them locked in silence, their unspoken understanding profound. From Theodore's embrace, Ariana stole a furtive glance at his side profile.

Bathed in the cold moonlight, his chiseled features appeared even more striking, rendering him an ethereal and captivating figure.

Fear, which had gripped Ariana only moments ago, now evaporated, replaced by a profound sense of security and solace. Once confined to a wheelchair, Theodore's tall and robust figure had been the subject of countless daydreams for Ariana. And now, her visions materialized before her.

His arms, enfolding her with unwavering strength, displayed no hint of tremor, even after their long trek. His breathing remained steady, and the bulge of his well-defined biceps offered her a reassuring shelter.

Ariana noticed Theodore deliberately slowing his pace, yet both of them harboured their desire for the road to stretch on indefinitely, yearning for a few more moments in each other's presence.

Emerging from the woods, they were greeted by the lofty moon, casting its radiance upon the path before them. Theodore, steadfastly holding her, navigated straight toward the illuminated house nestled by the babbling creek.

Ariana's gaze wandered toward the swing swaying gently in the garden.

With a subtle gesture toward the adjacent dwelling, she whispered, "That's where I live." Theodore surveyed the house with a furrowed brow and blurted out, "Can anyone truly reside there?" Ariana's words caught in her throat as the image of her filthy, disorderly room stirred her up.

However, it became evident that Theodore was well-acquainted with this place, familiar even with the state of the neighboring house.

Reluctant to return to that unclean, malodorous room, Ariana gingerly withdrew her hand and remained silent as Theodore carried her across the threshold of the house by the creek.

As they ventured inside, Ariana observed their surroundings in silence.

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Theodore ascended the stairs to the second floor, and the refreshing scent of bamboo wafted into her nostrils. It dawned on her that her feet were unharmed, and she couldn't help but wonder why she was still being carried.

"Put me down; I can walk on my own." Theodore reluctantly eased his grip, allowing Ariana to regain her footing and venture forward independently. She stood at the doorway, her eyes scanning the room with a discerning gaze.

The layout was simple yet immaculate. A gentle scent of bamboo incense permeated the air, swirling in delicate wisps of smoke and enveloping the space in a warm, tranquil ambiance.

"I have arranged for a weekly cleaning service, ensuring the utmost cleanliness in this place. You can feel at ease here," Theodore explained, his voice carrying a casual tone. He then inquired, "When do you plan on departing?"

Ariana's irritation flared at his words, and she responded sharply, "What? Are you trying to kick me out already?"

There was a momentary pause as Theodore hesitated, his helpless reply hanging in the air, "I didn't mean that. I simply believe there isn't much to do here, and it's rather secluded."

"If there is nothing enjoyable, why are you here?" Ariana's gaze pierced through him, awaiting a satisfactory answer. Yet, Theodore remained silent, refusing to provide further explanation.

With the realization that he would offer no additional words, Ariana felt annoyance surging within her chest. Frustration compelled her to dismiss Theodore and she settled herself on the edge of the bed.

As she sank into the soft mattress and luxuriated in the plushness of the blanket, Ariana directed her gaze towards Theodore. In a calm and measured tone, she declared, "I have no desire to occupy Marley's room any longer."

After uttering those words, Ariana anxiously fixed her gaze on Theodore, her heart pounding like a drum in her chest. Though a mask of calmness adorned her face, her fingers involuntarily clenched the quilt, betraying her hidden unease.

Ariana's mind raced with conflicting emotions, dreading witnessing a repeat of the last time when Theodore was consumed by a whirlwind of emotions triggered by the mere mention of that name, and yearning for Theodore to say that this place wasn't Marley's.

She would trust him and rest easier if she knew he hadn't returned to this place out of nostalgia for his first love.

A fleeting surprise danced across Theodore's features before he retreated into an impenetrable silence as if conceding to the truth.

Ariana's disappointment welled up within her like a rising tide, threatening to spill over. But she fought back the tears, refusing to expose her vulnerability before Theodore. Summoning every ounce of strength, Ariana struggled to stifle her sobs, but the dam broke, and her voice trembled with a torrent

of uncontrollable sobs as she spoke. "If you still hold onto the memories of your past, why did you have to keep me by your side?"

She choked and was unable to continue. She didn't want to break down in tears and make a fool of herself here. But ever since she found out she was expecting, she had been unable to hold back her tears.

Theodore, his heart heavy with sorrow, approached Ariana, gently wiping away the cascading tears on her face. "Please, don't cry," he murmured softly, his voice a soothing balm. "My ties with her are not what you imagine."

"And what are they, then? What kind of bond do you share?" Ariana's words pierced the air like shards of glass, her tear-filled eyes locking on Theodore's, brimming with a sense of betrayal. "Why can't you just tell me?"

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Cupping her tear-stained face, Theodore hesitated, wrestling with his own inner turmoil. At last, he sighed and embraced her in his arms.

"Give me a Little more time," he entreated, his voice a gentle plea, brimming with sincerity. "Can you wait just a Little longer? Soon, everything will be resolved, and I will reveal my whole self to you-my past and my future."

Ariana buried her face in his chest, her tears staining his shirt, searing a mark on his heart.

Given the path ahead still was a little obscured, Theodore knew that now was not the time for complete disclosure. There was one more step to take, one more veil to lift.

Gradually, Ariana's emotions steadied. Since Theodore told her that, she saw no need to press the matter. She had waited patiently for so long, and a few more days would not sway her resolve.

Having shed tears, Ariana couldn't help but feel a tinge of embarrassment and awkwardness. Pushing Theodore gently away, she retreated to the bathroom to freshen herself up.

Observing her retreating figure, Theodore's gaze softened, finding solace in the adorable expression that graced Ariana's face. A smile curved his lips as he watched her, appreciating her resilience even in moments of vulnerability.

Ariana quickly finished her ablutions, and her mind was now more serene than before. She decided to lie down on the bed in the only available room, and so she no longer harbored the same reservations.

When Theodore returned from his own ablutions, he found Ariana lying on the bed with her back to him. He looked at her for a moment before deciding to make his way to the couch for the night.

Ariana coughed softly and then shifted slightly to make room for him in the bed. Theodore hesitated for a fleeting moment before comprehension dawned upon him.

Gazing at her form sprawled on the bed, Theodore smiled widely. He had missed her lately, and he couldn't deny the pull that beckoned him.

Swiftly drying his hair, he lay beside Ariana, wrapping his arms around her.

Theodore enfolded Ariana in an embrace, nestling his face in her hair.

Its scent brought him solace, washing over him like a gentle breeze, as he drew her closer into the safety of his arms. "Hmm? Have you been eating more lately? You've gained weight!"

Ariana was startled by Theodore's words, her belly now becoming increasingly difficult to hide. She instinctively pushed his hand away, turned her head, and fixed him with a fierce glare. "If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all," she snapped. "Just shut up and go to sleep."

Theodore chuckled softly and rested his head on her back, closing his eyes.

Feeling Theodore grow still behind her, Ariana breathed a small sigh of relief. She gently touched her belly and stole a quick glance at Theodore, trying not to arouse his suspicion.

He appeared to be in a deep slumber, his breathing gentle and steady. Rarely did she see him so relaxed, and Ariana's gaze softened unconsciously. She softly called out his name, "Theodore?" There was no response, confirming that he was truly asleep.

Ariana turned and reached out, lightly poking Theodore's face.

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Who would have thought that the typically serious and aloof Theodore would feel so soft when poked? A heartfelt giggle escaped Ariana's lips before she could contain it.

She quickly covered her mouth, fearing she might wake him.

Once she was certain Theodore remained undisturbed, Ariana felt a sense of ease wash over her.

Taking advantage of Theodore's deep slumber, Ariana carefully stepped out of bed and opened his bag, meticulously searching through its contents.

After thoroughly turning the bag upside down, she confirmed that the medicine bottle was not inside. Relief flooded her senses.

Ariana pondered whether Holden's words held any truth, realizing she couldn't allow Theodore to continue taking the medicine until everything became clear.

Returning to bed and facing Theodore, Ariana snuggled closer to him. She closed her eyes and peacefully succumbed to a deep slumber. Once Ariana had fallen asleep, Theodore, lying beside her, slowly opened his eyes.

He gazed at the woman in his arms with a complex expression, gently brushing her hair behind her ear and planting a tender kiss on her forehead.

Theodore then rose from the bed and retrieved the medicine bottle hidden under the pillow. After taking two pills, he tenderly tucked Ariana in, leaving the room in solitude. The next morning, Ariana was awakened by a distant howling sound.

As she opened her eyes, the first rays of daylight had already pierced through the curtains. She groggily reached out for the space beside her, only to find an empty spot where the familiar presence once lay.

Ariana snapped to attention as if propelled by an invisible force. She hastily abandoned her cozy bed, neglecting even the simplest act of washing up, and darted downstairs with an urgent fervor.

Upon reaching the ground floor, she discovered an empty space devoid of any human presence. However, her eyes were immediately drawn to a conspicuous letter meticulously placed on the table, right at the heart of the room.

Curiosity piqued, Ariana swiftly grasped the letter and embarked on the act of reading its contents.

It was penned by Theodore himself, declaring his pressing need to attend to some urgent affairs that necessitated his departure from town. He entrusted Ariana with the house, reassuring her that no lock was required when she left, for someone would take care of such matters on her behalf.

Holding the letter in her hands, Ariana experienced a turbulent blend of emotions, caught between anger and amusement.

She couldn't help but wonder if Theodore's abrupt departure was motivated by his fear of getting into a heated argument with her if she persisted in her inquiries about the previous day's incident.

Ariana's teeth clenched as she fought the impulse to crumple the letter into a tight ball.

There was no need for such actions. She had already granted Theodore a few more days as promised, and she resolved not to ask again.

With a resigned sigh, Ariana stowed the letter away, realizing that since Theodore had already made his exit, there was no reason for her to Linger any longer. It was time for her to prepare herself for the journey back.

By the door, Rin, the loyal canine companion Left behind by Theodore, sat upright, exuding an air of protectiveness akin to that of a seasoned bodyguard. Ariana knew that Theodore had intentionally left Rin in her care. She tenderly caressed the wolf's head and even managed a small smile as she bid her farewells.