

Unconscious 731

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With her departure imminent, Ariana reached out to the administrator, ensuring that the necessary arrangements were made for her checkout.

Just as she was about to voice her grievances regarding the less-than-satisfactory conditions of her room the previous night, the administrator, upon seeing her looking presentable and content, couldn't help but boast about the house's overall appeal. He casually inquired about the quality of her sleep.

Suppressing an inward roll of her eyes, Ariana chose to maintain a dignified silence, unwilling to waste further time on him. She swiftly completed the checkout process.

As she was prepared to depart, the administrator unexpectedly interjected, his voice laced with a touch of excitement, "Oh, by the way, I overheard you inquiring about Lilyana yesterday. She has returned to town today."

Ariana was taken aback, yet filled with joy at this unexpected news.

Her immediate response was to inquire, "Do you happen to know the whereabouts of Lilyana? Where can I find her at this moment?"

The administrator replied, his voice tinged with assurance, "She departed for her shop early this morning. If you make your way there promptly, you should find her still present."

Without wasting another moment, Ariana hastened towards the tailor shop, her heart pounding with anticipation.

As she approached, she noticed the door, once shut tight, now wide open. A surge of eagerness coursed through her veins, propelling her to quicken her pace and rush towards the entrance.

Inside, the store exuded simplicity and cleanliness. However, the front counter stood vacant, with only a scattering of items and several sewing machines adorning the space.

Ariana's eyes fell upon a gentle-looking elderly lady, meticulously tidying up something. Determined, she knocked on the door and inquired politely, "Hello, may I have the pleasure of speaking with Lilyana?"

The old Lady, engrossed in organizing fabrics, turned around and beamed at Ariana. Her voice, filled with warmth and grace, greeted her, "Are you the young Lady who undertook a long journey to seek me out, as mentioned by Lynn next door?"

Lilyana's amiable disposition immediately resonated with Ariana, forging an instant connection between them. She nodded earnestly and offered a sweet smile in return, affirming, "Yes, indeed, it is me."

Returning the smile, Lilyana kindly but regretfully remarked, "I regret to inform you that our business has ceased to exist here. I'm afraid your trip has been in vain."

Ariana felt a tinge of guilty upon hearing this, realizing that her purpose for coming here extended beyond mere clothing.

She scratched her cheek sheepishly and sincerely apologized, "No, no, please forgive me. I am the one who should express remorse. In truth, I came... primarily seeking your insight on a certain matter."

Unperturbed and displaying no signs of surprise or anger, Lilyana maintained her gentle smile as she inquired, "What is it that you wish to know?" Ariana hesitated momentarily before voicing her query, "Do you happen to be acquainted with a girl named Marley?"

Anxiously, she awaited Lilyana's answer. Without hesitation, Lilyana recollected slowly. "Oh, Marley, you mean the young Lady who resided in the Stone House across the creek?"

Ariana nodded.

"I know her," Lilyana said, her smile radiating warmth. "I have witnessed Marley's growth. She is a beautiful girl. In her youth, I crafted all her garments, and she used to visit every year to procure new ones."

As Lilyana uttered these words, doubt began to creep into Ariana's mind.

The details she heard did not align with Helen's account.

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Suddenly, Lilyana's tone shifted, imbued with regret. She sighed, "It's a shame that her family was involved in a hunting accident, and Marley lost her parents during her teenage years."

Ariana's heart clenched at these words, and she hurriedly inquired, "What happened to Marley?"

Lilyana shook her head. "I am unaware of the events that followed.

Marley was taken away by relatives and never returned."

This corroborated the administrator's earlier statement.

A mix of emotions swirled within Ariana. "Do you have any knowledge of who took her away and where they went?" she asked. Lilyana shook her head pensively. "I cannot provide any certainty on that matter. It has been over a decade since those times."

As she spoke, her gaze drifted towards the window, seemingly conjuring Marley's visage. In a nostalgic tone, she remarked, "Marley should be around 23 or 24 years old now. She was an enchanting child, and I am certain she has blossomed into a stunning beauty."

Ariana's heart ached upon hearing this. She observed Lilyana's wistful expression, yearning to convey the truth but finding herself unable to disclose Marley's untimely demise.

Ariana listened intently, her mind drifting along with Lilyana's reminiscence. She refrained from interrupting, allowing the story to unfold before her.

“Alas, my traditional clothing business has been on a steady decline. I finally closed the shop two years ago. Since my child has found stability in the city, I decided to move there as well.” Lilyana spoke with a touch of sadness, coughing twice before reaching for a cup of water to quench her parched throat.

It appeared that Lilyana had been absent for quite some time, so why had she suddenly returned and opened the shop today? The timing seemed too coincidental.

Lost in curiosity, Ariana couldn't help but inquire, “What prompted your return today? Is there something going on?”

Lilyana laughed softly as she met Ariana's gaze. “There's an old customer, you see. Starting eight years ago, this customer would come back every year around this time to order clothes from me. Previously, I would make the clothes and leave them in the shop for the customer to pick up. But this year, due to a family trip, I got delayed on my way back. Luckily, the customer was still waiting and came to pick up the clothes just two hours ago.”

Ariana's mind raced, thinking about the clothes tucked away in the wardrobe on the fourth floor of the Anderson family's house. She couldn't forget Helen's mention of Theodore preparing a special piece of clothing for Marley every year on her birthday.

As Lilyana finished speaking, the realization dawned upon Ariana—the old customer she referred to was none other than Theodore.

So the urgent matter Theodore mentioned in the letter was to pick up Marley's clothes?

Mixed emotions swelled within Ariana, an amalgamation of various feelings intertwining and causing a slight ache in her heart. After a brief moment of silence, Ariana mustered a soft voice and inquired, “The customer you mentioned, did he buy the clothes for his girlfriend?”

Though bitterness clouded her heart, she forced a smile. “Buying clothes for eight years without interruption, their relationship must be quite strong.”

Unaware of the subtle loss in her own tone, Ariana's attention remained fixated on Lilyana, awaiting her response.

Lilyana regarded her with a smile, her eyes filled with affection and a trace of regret. Shaking her head gently, she replied, "Having made clothes for so many years, I have developed a sense for these things. When he comes to buy clothes, it doesn't feel like he's purchasing them for a lover. It's more akin to buying for a family member. Perhaps, he's buying them for his sister."

Upon hearing this, Ariana's heart stirred, and the bitter feelings within her began to ease. However, before she could fully embrace the notion, a question nagged at her thoughts: How could there be a sister when the Anderson family was known to have only two sons?

Ariana's mood sank as she dwelled on the matter once again.

It was true, as far as she knew, that everyone had always spoken of the Anderson family having solely two sons.

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Given the family's abundant resources and extensive connections, it seemed inconceivable that the existence of a daughter could remain a secret, with no news or whispers circulating about her.

Furthermore, if there truly was a sister, why had Ariana never heard a single mention of her from anyone? Not once had Jasper or Theodore alluded to such a sibling. Even the longstanding servants in the Anderson household appeared unaware of a Miss Anderson.

Yes, Miss Anderson. If Marley was indeed Miss Anderson, then why did she bear the surname "Deleon"? No other individuals within the Anderson family carried that name.

And if Marley truly belonged to the Anderson lineage, why was she residing here, far away from the opulent family estate? No matter how Ariana pondered the matter, the notion that Marley was Miss Anderson simply defied reason and logic. Ariana's mind wandered as she pondered the things she had learned.

Suddenly, Lilyana's voice broke through her reverie. "That young man mentioned he won't return, and there's no need for me to keep this shop open. So, I've contacted an agent to sell it. If you had come a bit later, we might never have met again."

Lilyana wore a gentle smile as she tidied up the fabric scraps scattered across the table.

Ariana couldn't help but feel fortunate for embarking on this journey.

Though many questions remained unanswered, Lilyana had managed to dispel a significant portion of her doubts. Finding Theodore and discovering his purpose for coming here had left Ariana content.

However, as noon approached, she realized she shouldn't prolong her stay and disturb Lilyana any further. Ariana bid her goodbyes, preparing to take her leave, when Lilyana halted her in her tracks.

"Young lady, you might be the last person to come looking for me. I feel a connection with you. Just wait a moment," Lilyana insisted, disappearing into the inner room.

Puzzled yet intrigued, Ariana remained where she stood, patiently awaiting Lilyana's return. Before long, Lilyana emerged, pushing a mannequin before her.

The sight immediately captured Ariana's attention.

On the mannequin stood a flawless white fishtail gown, a breathtaking vision to behold.

At first glance, one could discern the intricate hand-embroidery, the pearls and tiny diamonds adorning its surface. Even to Ariana, who possessed no expertise in such matters, it was evident that this gown was nothing short of extraordinary. The pearls and diamonds seemed to mimic exquisite scales, transforming the dress into something a mermaid princess would wear. The sheer amount of time and effort required to create such a masterpiece was unimaginable.

Ariana stared at the dress in awe, her voice tentative as she asked, "Is this a wedding dress?"

To her surprise, Lilyana's face lit up with joy. "I didn't expect you to recognize it. This wedding dress possesses certain distinctions from the typical ones," she replied.

Lilyana regarded Ariana with a kind and smiling gaze. "A client personally designed and commissioned this dress. However, it has been in the store for eight years, and no one has come to claim it. I haven't been able to contact the person either. Now that I am departing and the store is on the verge of closing, it pains me to abandon this dress in eternal seclusion within the confines of a warehouse. As my eyes beheld your presence, an overwhelming sensation arose within me, affirming that this dress was made for you. Our connection today compels me to offer it as a gift, a token of our bond."

Lilyana's words resonated in Ariana's ears, prompting an immediate shake of her head. "No, no, I cannot possibly accept this. Its worth is immeasurable, and I cannot receive it without having offered anything in return."

Lilyana insisted on bestowing the dress upon her, but Ariana stood resolute in her refusal. "This dress embodies someone's genuine emotions and your unwavering efforts. I truly cannot bring myself to accept it."

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Witnessing Ariana's unyielding determination, Lilyana let out a sigh and uttered, "In that case, do me a favor and indulge me by trying it on. This creation stands as my proudest achievement, yet it has merely adorned a lifeless mannequin. It saddens me greatly to have never witnessed it adorning a living being."

Ariana, upon hearing Lilyana's plea, could no longer deny her request and agreed to slip into the dress.

Taking hold of the garment, she made her way toward the fitting room, but a faint trace of cigarette smoke abruptly filled her senses.

Surely, only she and Lilyana remained within the confines of the store.

Why, then, did the scent of smoke infiltrate the air?

Moreover, this particular smoke carried an unusual essence, reminiscent of Theodore's distinctive aroma. Ariana furrowed her brow and looked forward. The source of the scent seemed to emanate from the inner room. Ariana hesitated for a moment, her body involuntarily turning towards the enticing inner chamber.

But before she could take another step, Lilyana intercepted her, pointing in a different direction. "Miss, you're going the wrong way.

The fitting room is over there."

"Oh, I'm sorry," Ariana apologized, snapping out of her momentary trance. It dawned on her that barging into someone's inner chamber without invitation was impolite. Besides, the Lingering scent of smoke had dissipated, perhaps a figment of her imagination.

She offered a slight nod of appreciation to Lilyana and obediently entered the fitting room.

Once inside, Ariana found herself even more enamored with the dress.

Its craftsmanship was nothing short of exquisite, and the fabric caressed her skin with unparalleled softness.

As she slipped into the gown, Ariana marveled at its perfect fit.

The waistline, neckline, and shoulder line harmonized flawlessly, as if the dress had been tailor-made exclusively for her.

She couldn't help but gaze at her reflection in the mirror, captivated by the sight. After making a few minor adjustments, Ariana emerged from the fitting room.

"My goodness, it fits you perfectly! | knew my judgment wouldn't be wrong." Lilyana's eyes lit up with admiration the moment she laid eyes on her.

“Miss, you look absolutely stunning,” Lilyana gushed, her voice tinged with genuine awe. “I’ve been a seamstress for so long, and I’ve never seen anyone more suited for this wedding gown than you. Wearing it, you’ll undoubtedly be the most beautiful bride.”

Ariana blushed at the shower of compliments, feeling a touch of embarrassment .

Lilyana carefully examined her from head to toe, a smile playing on her lips. “Miss, this wedding gown and you must share some fate. You should take it. It’s a shame for such a beautiful dress to gather dust here,” she urged, her voice filled with earnestness.

Although Ariana was deeply smitten with the dress, she politely declined, shaking her head.

“I can’t accept it. I can tell that the person who designed this wedding gown put a lot of effort and love into it. They wouldn’t want their sincere feelings to be taken by a stranger, so I cannot claim it for myself.”

Observing the look of helplessness in Lilyana’s eyes, Ariana quickly added, hoping to provide some solace, “But he hasn’t come to pick it up in eight years. Maybe he encountered some accident. Let's wait a bit longer.”

As she voiced her thoughts, Ariana had a sudden realization. Turning to Lilyana, she proposed, her mind buzzing with the possibility of reuniting the gown with its rightful owner, “By the way, I work as an agent, and the accounts I manage have decent traffic. I can take a picture of this dress and promote it online to help find the owner.”

Chapter: 735 After a moment of consideration, Lilyana nodded in agreement.

Just as Ariana was about to change back into her own clothes, Lilyana stopped her, an idea twinkling in her eyes. “My dear, since you've already put it on, let me take a picture of you. You can use the photo for promotion. A wedding gown always Looks more Lively on a person than on a mannequin.”

Ariana didn’t refuse the request, thinking that she could easily blur out her face later. With a faint smile, she allowed Lilyana to capture the picture.

After taking the photo, the two exchanged phone numbers and became friends. As soon as they added each other, Lilyana sent the photo over.

Ariana opened the image and found herself mesmerized by Lilyana's talent for capturing beauty. In that photograph, she appeared radiant, an ethereal vision she had never witnessed before.

The photo deeply resonated with Ariana, and she cherished it dearly. After saving the image, she changed out of the dress and returned it to Lilyana's care. "I'll contact you if there's any news," Ariana assured with a warm smile as they bid farewell at the door.

Lilyana nodded, her concern evident as she reminded Ariana to be cautious on her way. Though their meeting had been brief, their connection seemed to transcend time.

Once Ariana disappeared from sight, Lilyana closed the door to her shop, sighing softly. "She's gone. You can come out now," of the door to the inner chamber. she uttered, prompting the opening Stepping out from the hidden sanctuary was Theodore.

Lilyana fixed Theodore with a stern gaze, her hands clasped firmly behind her back, as if accusing him. "I warned you to quit smoking a long time ago, and yet here you are, still puffing away in my shop. You nearly got caught by that young lady."

"Sorry, thank you for covering for me." Although Theodore apologized, his attention had already shifted to Lilyana's phone, which rested on the counter. The screen still displayed the photo Lilyana had just taken of Ariana.

Lilyana, ever perceptive, caught onto his wandering thoughts and playfully teased him with a smile, "If you want to look, then look openly. It's nothing to be ashamed of."

Theodore snapped back to reality, expressing his gratitude with a nod to Lilyana, before picking up the phone to examine the image more closely.

In the photograph, the subject donned an exquisite and resplendent wedding gown, a subtle smile gracing her lips. The ethereal glow from above bathed her in a breathtaking beauty.

Beside him, Lilyana let out a wistful sigh. "This dress is truly perfect for her. It's such a pity that she refused it."

A tinge of regret tinged her voice as she glanced at Theodore, who wore a smile in his eyes. "She must be the wife you always speak of."

Otherwise, why would you go to such great lengths to design this one-of-a-kind wedding dress?"

Though Theodore might not have noticed the glimmer of joy in his eyes, he remained fixated on the photo, choosing silence as his only response - a tacit admission.

Lilyana couldn't resist sighing. "It hasn't been in vain that I've toiled on this for nearly two months. Its impact on her is simply stunning. You should have witnessed it firsthand just now. It's even more enchanting than in the photo."

Merely by gazing at the picture, Theodore could envision Ariana in that very moment. A warm smile crept onto his face as he said, "I hope I'll have the opportunity to see it in person someday."

As he spoke, deftly manipulating Lilyana's device, he effortlessly sent the photo to his own phone. With a nonchalant air, he picked up a piece of paper and began inscribing a contact number and address upon it.

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"When I reach out to you later," he uttered in a composed manner, "kindly dispatch this exquisite wedding dress to the indicated address."

Lilyana's gaze momentarily grazed the paper, its contents revealing a name foreign to her. "Ariana," she murmured, her voice tinged with curiosity. "Is that the young Lady's name? It possesses such a delightful melody."

Caught in the gentle sway of her own thoughts, Lilyana couldn't help but recall Ariana's apprehensive countenance upon their initial encounter. Nudging Theodore's recollection, she voiced her observations,

“Upon her arrival, Ariana seemed burdened by numerous thoughts, particularly regarding Marley. Her concern was palpable.”

In that instance, a sigh escaped her lips, laden with empathy.

Fervently, she implored, “Since your bond is undeniably founded in ‘love, why not divulge your identity as Marley’s brother to her?”

Theodore’s countenance wavered upon hearing the mention of that name. A fleeting falter and subsequent silence enveloped him. After a contemplative pause, he finally mustered the courage to respond, “I do not deserve to bear the title of Marley’s brother. | have failed her.”

“Ah, child, Let go the burden that binds you.” Lilyana, overcome by a profound sorrow, sighed deeply. “Marley’s demise was an unfortunate accident, not your fault. Cease tormenting yourself with past missteps and embrace the precious soul who stands before you.”

Clearly averse to further discussion on this matter, Theodore discreetly stowed away his phone, his eyes evading direct contact. In hushed tones, he whispered, “I have pressing matters to attend to, so | shall take my Leave.”

Lilyana refrained from pursuing the conversation, simply acknowledging his departure with a nod.

Guiding Theodore to the doorway, Lilyana suddenly recalled a crucial matter and felt compelled to offer a gentle reminder. “By the way, | couldn’t help but notice a certain unease in your wife’s demeanor earlier. It would be wise to grant her your unwavering attention and care.”

Lilyana wanted to express something else, but Theodore swiftly interrupted her, his words cutting through the air, “Alright, | understand. Thank you, | will.”

Without giving her a chance to utter another word, he hastily slipped into the car parked by the roadside. Helpless, Lilyana sighed, her eyes fixed on Theodore’s gradually retreating car. What she had wanted to say was that Ariana might be pregnant.

In the shop, she had observed Ariana instinctively cradling her belly multiple times, displaying the telltale signs of a pregnant woman.

With two children of her own and the responsibility of caring for her two pregnant daughters-in-law, Lilyana possessed a keen instinct and could instantly discern that something was amiss with Ariana.

So when Ariana retreated to change into her wedding dress, Lilyana paid special attention, and there it was! A slight bulge in her belly, visible to Lilyana's discerning eyes.

Sighing, she recollected her earlier conversation with Theodore, realizing that he seemed oblivious to Ariana's pregnancy. He had not taken it into consideration when designing the wedding dress either. The memory of their exchange resurfaced in Lilyana's mind.

Prior to Ariana's arrival, while tidying up the sewing room, Lilyana stumbled upon some old photographs of her children. She eagerly shared them with Theodore, remarking, "Look how time flies; my two Little ones are about to become fathers themselves."

Theodore, ever the man of few words, simply smiled and nodded in Lilyana's presence.

"And my two daughters-in-law are about to give birth too. How wonderful," Lilyana continued, her eyes twinkling with warmth as she regarded Theodore. "You mention your wife all the time. You must love her very much. When do you two plan to have a child? With your good looks, the child would undoubtedly be gorgeous."

A soft smile played upon Theodore's lips as he responded, his voice gentle, "Right now, I don't want to have children."

"Why not? It would be such a pity not to have children."

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However, Theodore remained silent, swiftly changing the topic as if purposefully avoiding any discussion regarding their decision about having children.

Lilyana heaved a sigh, her comprehension of the couple's situation limited. Her suspicion regarding Ariana's pregnancy remained mere speculation, leaving her unable to express it directly. Instead, she could only offer subtle hints and reminders to Theodore, unsure if he would grasp their significance.

As an outsider, Lilyana knew it would be inappropriate for her to meddle too deeply in the couple's affairs. With a gentle shake of her head, she closed the door behind her and left.

Meanwhile, Ariana had undertaken a grueling five-hour drive back to Eleymond.

Although she hadn't felt tired during the journey, the weight of newfound knowledge and her encounter with Theodore had left her utterly exhausted once she allowed her guard to drop.

With weary steps, Ariana made her way back to the rented apartment, her body pleading for respite. After appeasing her hunger with a hastily cooked bowl of noodles, Ariana sought solace in a quick wash before surrendering to the embrace of her bed.

Little did she anticipate the profound slumber that would claim her until the following day.

Her phone had been on silent mode throughout her peaceful repose. As Ariana gradually awoke and reached out for her phone, a wave of surprise washed over her when she discovered an array of unread messages that had accumulated during her sleep.

Blinking away the remnants of sleep, she swiped through the notifications, finding that they all centered around a single topic. Trending topics, go check them out!

Ariana saw several messages cursing Jasper and immediately felt uneasy.

She hurriedly opened the trending topics.

The top three topics dominated the screen, all revolving around a common theme that instantly sent a chill down her spine. "Anderson family's second young master announces his wedding date.

Ariana and her sister vie for the same husband!”

“With the engagement settled, who is the real mistress?”

“Shocking! The secrets of the wealthy family: The older sister interferes in her younger sister's marriage.

Ariana’s senses snapped into alertness. She held her phone, her fingers clicking on the trending news.

The most popular article contained a captivating collage of pictures.

The content of the article portrayed Brielle and Jasper as a loving couple who had shared many years together. It even showcased examples of the tender gestures that lovers did for each other, providing proof of their deep affection.

Ariana felt a tinge of nausea at the pretentious display.

Following their staged performance, the article swiftly shifted its focus to Ariana.

It insinuated that she harbored jealousy and suspicion, envious of Brielle’s blissful marriage, and attempted to seduce Jasper to undermine Brielle and Jasper’s relationship.

Not content with twisting the facts, the article even delved into Ariana’s past, unearthing old photos of her and Jasper during their dating days.

These media outlets seized upon those few photos, weaving imaginative narratives. The selected images depicted interactions between Ariana and Jasper that were not overtly intimate, yet cunningly insinuated Ariana’s Lingerin attachment to him

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Exploiting the timeline, they brazenly claimed these events occurred while Brielle and Jasper were still dating, presenting this concocted evidence as the definitive proof of Ariana's deliberate seduction.

Ariana simmered with fury but couldn't help but chuckle. As she scrolled further down, a chorus of voices emerged, each claiming to possess inside knowledge or to be close friends with Brielle. They all asserted that Brielle and Jasper had a longstanding relationship, with Ariana cast as the intrusive third party meddling in their affair.

Moreover, many proclaimed themselves to be employees of the Anderson Group, insiders privy to the situation. "Ariana has perpetually exploited Brielle's fame to suppress newcomers and seize all available resources for herself."

"Indeed, Brielle and Jasper have endured Ariana's presence for the sake of family harmony, but now she has finally crossed the line."

"Ariana's actions are utterly repulsive, attempting to steal her own sister's fiancé." "Poor Brielle, burdened with such a sister. She has stood by Sarah's side since Sarah rose to prominence."

Ariana was left baffled by the onslaught of these comments. The orchestrated efforts of these paid commenters were no less skillful than the media outlets in their distortion of the truth.

Ariana reported the comments. There were, of course, a few level-headed netizens who suspected that Brielle was manipulating public opinion.

But amidst the chaos, someone decided to further fuel the fire by posting photos of the recent conflict between Ariana and Brielle.

Several photos were posted, first showing Brielle and Jasper handing out wedding candies at the company, followed by a scene where Ariana and Brielle confronted each other.

These images, seemingly unrelated at first, when presented together, painted a picture that implied Ariana was the troublemaker, driven by jealousy. And to make matters worse, Brielle's pitiful expression in the photographs only intensified the sinister narrative surrounding Ariana.

As soon as the photos were posted, a swarm of paid commenters swiftly joined the discussion, further solidifying Ariana's "guilt". The accompanying text, cleverly twisting the truth, swayed public opinion overwhelmingly against Ariana.

In a sudden realization, Ariana understood why Brielle had acted so strangely that day — she had been waiting for this moment. At the sight of these developments early in the morning, Ariana's anger flared.

Turning her attention back to the trending news, she discovered that Brielle's new movie release date had surged to the top as well. It became evident to Ariana that Brielle had malicious intentions, leveraging this controversy to promote her film. By discrediting Ariana through the court of public opinion, Brielle was not only gaining exposure but also boosting the movie's popularity.

While Ariana was left to grapple with the arduous task of debunking the rumors and contacting various parties to prove her

innocence, Brielle could effortlessly ride the wave of publicity. Regardless of the outcome of Ariana's efforts, Brielle stood to benefit from this situation, while simultaneously causing Ariana immense distress.

Ariana found herself in the eye of a public opinion storm, not just for herself, but also for the artists under her management. Especially Sarah.

The trending square was abuzz with mentions of Sarah's name.

They all attributed her rise to fame to her promiscuous endeavors utilizing Ariana's resources. Detractors claimed that Sarah had ridden on the coattails of Ariana's escapades, suggesting guilt by association.

The situation was far from positive, with a flurry of criticism engulfing them.

To exacerbate matters, the previous scandal involving Tyler's diva-like behavior resurfaced.

Now, Tyler had a smaller fan base compared to Sarah, and his online comments section became a breeding ground for accusations of diva behavior and perfunctory fan interactions due to filming fatigue.

Adding fuel to the fire, the previously suppressed shippers took advantage of the situation, viciously slandering Tyler while raising Cole to a pedestal.

It seemed that anyone even remotely associated with Ariana became a target of public scrutiny. After taking a long while to calm down, Ariana composed apology messages to her cherished artists, extending her heartfelt guilt.

She suddenly remembered that the wrap-up special and promotional materials for Tyler's movie were supposed to be released today, but the storm had swept away their chance to do so.

The winds of public opinion had turned against them, and the prudent decision was to withhold any releases. And Sarah had to delay the release of the new album as well.

Sarah immediately called Ariana once she received her message. "Why bother apologizing, Ariana? It's clear as day that they've orchestrated this whole ordeal."

Her voice sounded hurried, as though she were in a haste. "No need to let it weigh on your conscience. If anyone should be apologizing, it's Brielle. Don't let anger consume you. Take care of yourself during your pregnancy. Brielle can only relish in her temporary victory. Just wait and see how | deal with that little wretch!"

Taking a moment to catch her breath, Sarah continued, "Also, there might be a lot of company gossip today. Tyler and | are out doing promotions, so we can't return. | worry about you going to the company alone. Why don't you take a day off, stay home, and tend to yourself?"

"Why should | hide away? | have a clear conscience in this matter,"

Ariana defiantly retorted. "If | show up, they won't dare utter a word to my face. If | don't, who knows what malicious rumors they'll concoct behind my back, turning the world topsy-turvy?!"

Recognizing the futility of persuading Ariana otherwise, Sarah sighed and offered solace before ending the call.

Soon after, a message from Tyler came in, overflowing with reassurance and comfort. Like Sarah, he feared for Ariana's peace of mind at the company, urging her to stay home and seek respite.

Yet Ariana's spirit refused to retreat to the confines of her home. She knew that giving in to seclusion would only amplify the delight of her adversaries, Brielle and Jasper.

With a brief reply to Tyler, Ariana readied herself to venture out. Stepping out of the elevator, Ariana's phone rang once more. It was Sonia. Ariana slipped on her shoes and answered, "Hello?"

"Goodness gracious, please, I implore you, do not leave your residence at this moment! A horde of paparazzi is on your doorstep. They've even sold your address to unscrupulous media outlets, and they're all converging on your location."

Ariana stood frozen.

Sonia's words had arrived too late. She had already pushed open the security door downstairs, venturing into the unknown. Within an instant, she found herself swallowed by a swarm of paparazzi, leaving her no way out!

In an instant, a sea of cameras and microphones swarmed Ariana, their lenses and microphones like hungry predators closing in for the kill.

The relentless clicking of shutters and blinding flashes nearly forced her eyelids closed against their intensity. "Miss Edwards, have you truly meddled in your sister's marriage as word has it?"

"Miss Edwards, what led you to the treacherous path of becoming a mistress?"

Chapter: 740 “Miss Edwards, how do you see Mr. Jasper Anderson's engagement? Will you persist in sabotaging their love affair?” The questions cut like sharpened blades, aimed to wound and twist the truth.

Ariana attempted to address a few milder inquiries, but the reporters paid little heed to her words. They persisted, hoping to shape her into a scandalous mistress and fuel the flames of sensationalism.

Ignoring Ariana’s rebuttals, they twisted her words and hurled even more audacious questions. Aware that reasoning with them was futile, Ariana fought against the throng, desperately trying to break through. But she stood alone, a mere sapling amidst a relentless storm.

The reporters acted as elastic bands, relentlessly pushing her back each time she tried to move forward. Her feet faltered, threatening to send her crashing to the ground.

Instinctively, Ariana shielded her stomach, not trying to make any sudden moves.

As the reporters relentlessly pursued her, anger and frustration welled within Ariana. Yet, she understood that defying them in this manner wouldn’t provide a solution. As she contemplated a strategic retreat, a jarring car horn blared.

The crowd turned as one, watching the car hurtling toward them without any intention of stopping! Fear gripped the people surrounding Ariana, scattering them in a panic.

Pressed against the door, Ariana braced herself. Simultaneously, a flicker of hope ignited within her, longing for it to be Theodore who swooped in to rescue her.

The car screeched to a halt right before Ariana.

With a surprising twist, Mitchel emerged from the vehicle.

His gaze briefly met Ariana’s as he said, “Get in!”

Without time to think, Ariana swiftly entered the car.

When the door shut, the car seamlessly turned and accelerated away.

Perhaps caught off guard, the reporters failed to give chase in time.

Ensuring no one followed, Ariana finally released a sigh of relief and expressed her gratitude to Mitchel. "Thank you, Dr. Chadwick. But how did you end up there?"

"I just happened to stumble upon the scene," Mitchel replied, keeping his eyes fixed on the road, not turning his head.

His explanation sounded far-fetched, but Ariana refrained from prying further. Instead, she conveyed her concern and apologized, "Earlier..."

"I hope they didn't capture any pictures of you. I'm sorry for involving you in this..."

Mitchel appeared unperturbed. "The car windows have one-way privacy glass. They cannot see inside. Even if they did manage to capture anything, they wouldn't publish the photos."

His tone remained calm, neither anxious nor boastful, as if that would be nothing!

Ariana's surprise heightened as she realized that Mitchel's background could be far more intricate than she had originally presumed.