

## Unconscious 791

Chapter: 791 Theodore, mostly indifferent to others' affairs, asked curiously, "What's the matter?"

"It's nothing major. Sarah expressed her desire to have a child with Aziel." As Ariana said this, she felt a twinge of guilt. Using Sarah as a pretext was her only recourse, considering she was the only one in a committed relationship in their circle.

"And?" Theodore was still at a loss to see the relevance of Sarah and Aziel's decision to their conversation. He regarded Ariana silently before asking, "Do you want a child?"

Ariana fell silent once more. Theodore's ambiguous reaction made her hesitant. Instead of a direct answer, she ventured, "I am fond of children."

Upon hearing this, Theodore remained unruffled. He nodded and suggested calmly, "We could consider adoption." Ariana's heart fluttered with astonishment. She peered up at Theodore and blurted out, "Can't we have our own child?" Theodore remained silent this time; his gaze softened as he gently caressed her head, offering no verbal response. Ariana's heart sank, and she refrained from pressing further.

Cradled in Theodore's arms, a whirlpool of emotions surged within her.

Her instincts told her that Theodore might not react favorably if she revealed her pregnancy at this moment.

Ariana opted not to continue the discussion. Nestling her head deeper into the pillow, she murmured, "I'm weary. I wish to slumber now."

Subsequently, she closed her eyes, bringing the conversation to a close. Her mind was in a state of turmoil. The exhaustion of the day had taken its toll, and before long, she was sound asleep.

The following day, Ariana didn't wake up until noon. Waking groggily, she found Theodore absent and a note left for her on the bedside table.

She picked it up. It said, "I am off to the company to address some issues."

Upon reading the note, she set it aside. Her thoughts were instantly drawn to her pregnancy, prompting her to nervously rake her fingers through her hair.

Bewildered and apprehensive, Ariana was at a loss.

She had to make a decision soon, lest the window for intervention close.

Yet Theodore's response left her feeling unnerved.

Sighing deeply, Ariana caressed her abdomen and whispered, "Little ones, what should I do?" Her fear was that Theodore, upon learning of her condition, might insist on them being aborted. She was carrying Theodore's offspring, and the thought of terminating them was unbearable. Snapped out of her reverie by the buzz of her phone, Ariana, sitting on the bed, picked it up.

The screen displayed a message from Sonia, not a word but rather punctuated by a flurry of exclamation marks.

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Puzzled, Ariana responded with a question mark. This was followed by a lengthy voice message.

Sonia's excited voice dominated the message, and after a while, Ariana grasped what she was conveying.

"Aria, there's a rumor swirling around that Anderson Group is on the brink of bankruptcy!"

On the topmost floor of the Anderson Group's headquarters, Darian paced the office, his bandaged hand trembling. Anxiety marked his steps. He was nervously anticipating a call.

Upon being released from the cemetery the previous day, he had deployed people to prevent the news from spreading. But given the significant turnout at the funeral, leaks were inevitable.

In the span of a night, several partners had pulled their investments from projects aligned with Anderson Group. Now, Anderson Group stood at the precipice of becoming a hollow entity.

Darian couldn't resist wiping the sheen of cold sweat off his forehead.

Within a single day, his world seemed to be spiraling downward, and he found himself on edge within his office. Even at the cemetery, he hadn't felt this level of fear.

Back then, anger consumed him, fueling his disdain for Theodore and Aimee, but now only fear echoed within him. Recalling Aldus's words at the funeral, Darian's heart pounded, and a sense of unease overwhelmed him.

His assistant caught wind of a piece of news this morning.

The Olympic Village project seemed amiss and was currently under investigation.

Hearing this set Darian's heart racing, and a cold sweat broke out.

He had staked everything on that plot of land, tying it to the future of Anderson Group. All of Anderson Group's operating cash was tied up in it, and should something go awry with the Land, the fallout would be catastrophic.

Once more, Darian wiped his forehead, clasping his hands in fervent prayer, almost on the brink of begging for divine intervention.

Just as he was engrossed in his desperate plea, his phone chimed. "Hello! What's the status of our investigation? Is the intelligence valid?" Darian, teeming with anticipation, instantly lifted the phone and fired off a volley of inquiries.

"I've ascertained the matter," the assistant on the other end of the line paused momentarily before stating, "There seem to be complications surrounding the Olympic Village project."

Breaking out in a sweat, Darian's hands trembled. "What's the matter? Unveil it!"

"The groundbreaking was imminent, yet officials from the Geological Bureau intervened with an inspection revealing the land's substandard quality. The plot lies on the western fringe, adjacent to the ocean, rendering it susceptible to coastal erosion."

Once the assistant completed his report, Darian was gripped by a fusion of shock and fury. He roared into the phone, "Why was there no mention of this predicament when the project was publicized? Why was I left in the dark until after my complete investment?"

Frustration trickled into the assistant's reply, "Sir, even the Geological Bureau's authorities were taken aback. Evidently, whispers about this issue emerged a week prior to the auction. Didn't we conduct any due diligence before entering the bidding?"

Chapter: 793 The assistant dared not relay the Geological Bureau's demeanor.

Their glances at him suggested a fool, perplexed at how such a significant project could proceed without prior comprehensive checks.

The ridicule infused in their tone hinted at Darian being an aging, witless man who'd recklessly squandered his fortune on worthless Land.

It was an utter farce. Upon hearing this, Darian's fury flared. He had undoubtedly performed diligent checks!

All indications, including geographic location and proposed governmental infrastructure, pointed to this as an exceptional investment, not to mention the stiff competition he faced!

How could a hurdle of this magnitude have abruptly surfaced?

The only plausible explanation was that someone had deliberately withheld this crucial information from him, leaving him unaware of the problem.

So incensed was Darian that his assistant on the other end attempted to soothe him. "Sir, given the vast expanse of land, if we cannot convert it into an Olympic Village, we can transform it into a resort. We can opt for the next best alternative."

Darian's rage escalated upon hearing this. He hammered his fist on the table, berating, "Fool! The resort wouldn't yield even a fraction of the cost in returns. I shouldn't have hired such a brainless person like you!"

Following his tirade, Darian slammed the phone down.

It was almost inconceivable that the golden opportunity within his grasp had devolved into a fiasco. Why, then, had the BRD Group opted to invest?

The BRD Group, indeed!

The mere thought of the BRD Group infused Darian with loathing. He hoisted the computer from the table and hurled it onto the floor.

The BRD Group was the Fredrick family's enterprise. They must have conspired against him. It was entirely Theodore's doing!

Surveying the contents of his office, Darian launched into a destructive frenzy, cursing, "Despicable wretch! She should've never birthed him! Ingrate! Merciless scoundrel! All are damned, all are damned!"

In the midst of his rampage, faint knocks echoed at the door. Shortly after, a female secretary timidly pushed open the door to find a livid Darian wreaking havoc in the office. She meekly said, "Sir, there's a mob gathering downstairs, clamoring about the project funds they're owed."

Upon learning that the Anderson Group was confronting a crisis, a wave of concern washed over Ariana. The conglomerate's prosperity had been an outcome of Theodore's efforts, but she couldn't shake the suspicion that he might also be the architect of the current turbulence.

She had dispatched a message to Theodore, inquiring if he was the catalyst behind this turmoil, but she had yet to receive a response.

Agrowing unease gripped Ariana at the thought of Theodore embroiled in the quagmire that the Anderson Group was presently ensnared in. She promptly extricated herself from the bed, dressed, and dashed to the company's headquarters.

Upon crossing the threshold of the Anderson Group, she was struck by an all-pervading gloom.

Previously, an air of discipline and structure had prevailed here, with everyone focused on their individual tasks in their assigned spaces, the corridors undisturbed by footfall.

Now, the scene has drastically altered. Clusters of people congregated in separate huddles, their conversation echoing through the hallway.

The entrance was besieged by a throng of individuals, whose purpose was unclear.

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Access to the elevator leading to the offices was blocked. As Ariana edged closer to the crowd, snippets of conversations about the company floated to her, coaxing her to draw nearer.

"Did you catch the Latest headlines?" "Why bother? Weren't we all witnesses to yesterday's events?" "I heard payroll won't be met today. They're calling it a delay, but the truth is, they're short on funds."

Upon closer inspection, Ariana spotted several uniform-clad individuals at the reception, bellowing, "We're here for our dues. We won't budge until you settle today!"

She then approached a girl in the crowd and queried, "What's the situation?"

The girl shrugged, letting out a sigh. "I don't have all the details. I only heard Mr. Anderson is deep in debt due to the project. Some folks are apprehensive that he might abscond if the company goes under, so they demand immediate payment."

The reception desk reverberated with loud voices, threatening to escalate into a conflict with Darian.

Ariana, retreating to a corner, was swamped with growing concerns about Theodore. It appeared the Anderson Group was headed for doom.

She yearned to locate Theodore and discuss the unfolding situation, but every access point was barricaded. Her anxiety escalated, haunted by the fear of Theodore vanishing once more without a trace.

Suddenly, the entrance was abuzz with activity. Ariana's gaze fell upon Adrian, who was striding in with an entourage, the screaming crowd parting to make way for him.

Adrian had overlooked Ariana in several previous encounters, so, sensibly, she melded into the crowd, feigning obliviousness. However, to her surprise, Adrian halted his stride as he passed her and queried, "What brings you here?"

"Excuse me?" Ariana was taken aback. She hadn't anticipated any interaction with him. Flustered, she replied, "I'm searching for someone."

Despite her reluctance to name the person, Adrian was acutely aware that she was there for Theodore. His suspicion that she might be pregnant had somehow been aroused by a cursory glance at Ariana's oversized attire.

Suppressing his astonishment, he arched his eyebrows, cleared his throat, and advised, "The Anderson Group is in quite a bit of turmoil currently. It would be prudent for you to avoid visiting unless absolutely necessary to prevent any unwarranted involvement."

Before Ariana could respond, Adrian was already a considerable distance away, his entourage in tow.

Ariana contemplated tailing him into the elevator to find Theodore. As she was about to advance, her phone chirped.

Upon inspection, a message from Theodore appeared on the screen.

“Do not fret. ILL see you at home tonight.”

The moment a message from Theodore illuminated her screen, a sigh of relief escaped Ariana’s lips.

As long as he remained within reach, she felt secure.

Having responded with a brief “okay” and pocketing her phone, she discarded the thought of accompanying Adrian upstairs.

Nevertheless, observing the palpable tension seeping through the Anderson Group, worry gnawed at her.

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Despite Theodore and Darian’s strained relations reaching a breaking point, Theodore’s affiliation with the Anderson Group was unshakeable.

Should the group crumble, Theodore would undoubtedly face repercussions. Aside from him, everyone who worked here was shackled to this shared destiny.

What if desperation drove Darian to harm Theodore? Watching the crowd swell, Ariana brushed aside her perturbing thoughts and resolved to return home.



Simultaneously, Adrian stepped into the elevator, his expression unaltered. As soon as the doors slid shut, he promptly pulled out his phone, his fingers dancing on the screen.

“| spotted your wife at the Anderson Group. | couldn't help but notice a certain roundness to her figure. Could she be expecting? Are you soon to be a father? Get back to me quickly! | am curious! Are you indeed about to embrace fatherhood?”

Theodore's retort was instant. “Mind your business!”

Atop the BRD Group's building.

Acrease of annoyance formed on Theodore's forehead as he read Adrian's message. A mental image of Ariana surfaced, coaxing a fond smile onto his face.

Indeed, she seemed to have filled out a little recently. However, he considered it a positive development. Her prior thinness was a matter of concern, and now she radiated a charming aura with her added fullness.

When she was slender, her waist was devoid of any softness. He often harbored the absurd worry that a sudden gust could carry her away.

Her weight gain was subtle, barely noticeable unless he paid extra attention. He only truly registered the change when he cradled her in his arms.

This line of thought led him to question how Adrian discerned Ariana's slight weight gain. His smile evaporated instantaneously, replaced by a frown.

Picking up his phone, he retorted, “My wife, in any shape or form, is stunning. Sadly for you, she belongs to me. Do you have a wife?”

Adrian, upon reading Theodore's comeback, was rendered speechless. He shot back with an ellipsis, a rolling eyes emoji, and a grumbling remark, “Childish.”

Just as Theodore was about to counter, a cough reverberated in the room, followed by a stern, elderly voice, "We seldom convene like this Please set aside your distractions and turn off your mobile device."

Theodore promptly settled into his chair, placing his phone on the table and rubbing his forehead. "Grandpa." Aldus grumbled in response, "You impertinent lad, why haven't you visited me? I journeyed all the way from Mistlyn, and you didn't even bring my granddaughter-in-law to meet me."

A look of helplessness clouded Theodore's features. He wasn't prepared to disclose his true identity to Ariana, while Aldus was eager to formally acquaint himself with her.

Noticing Aldus's brewing irritation, Theodore had no choice but to placate him, "I'll arrange a visit soon." Aldus, however, was not easily appeased. He demanded, "I wish to meet her at once." Without further ado, he retrieved his phone and dialed a number.

"Grandpa, wait!"

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Startled, Theodore snatched the phone out of Aldus's hand with quick urgency. Shaking his head, he said, "Not right now. I'll handle it later."

"Why?" Aldus questioned, a sea of confusion washing over him. Theodore's response was a choked silence, his subconscious frown mirrored his struggle for words. Observing this, Aldus ceased his questioning and instead pivoted his gaze towards Horace.

Horace, maintaining a stoic expression, pushed his glasses up his nose and explained, "Because Mrs. Anderson remains in the dark. She has no idea Holden is actually the boss."

"What?!" Aldus was so startled that he almost lost his false teeth.

With a forceful thump of his cane against the floor, he voiced his concern for Theodore. "You stubborn boy, she will slip right through your fingers if you don't change your ways."

Horace concurred silently, yet kept his peace.

In a tone laced with worry, Aldus commanded Theodore, "The Anderson Group teeters on the brink of bankruptcy. It is vital that you reclaim your identity as Holden as soon as possible."

Theodore remained silent. His blinking eyes were the sole indicators of his inner turmoil.

His worry was palpable. Would Ariana feel deceived when he revealed his secret? What if she couldn't forgive him and decided to part ways?

Perceiving Theodore's hesitation, Aldus let out a weary sigh. "The Anderson Group matter is nearing its end. As the heir to the Fredrick family, you must step into the limelight and intimidate any potential troublemakers."

With relief that Aldus didn't press him to divulge the truth to Ariana, Theodore nodded.

Lunch concluded and Aldus made his exit. Theodore proceeded to the underground parking lot, and as he was about to slide into his car to journey home, Darian jumped out of nowhere and blocked Theodore's path.

The aggrieved look on Darian's face suggested he had been waiting there for quite some time.

The desperation in Darian's eyes was obvious. "Son, I wronged you, I know," he pleaded, "I didn't mean to. Forgive me this time, for old times' sake."

Theodore had no desire for discourse. He frowned, icily commanding, "Get out of my way."

Darian's expression shifted subtly, yet he persisted in his effort to hold Theodore at bay. He countered, unabashed, "Don't be so cold-hearted. After all, your investment in the Anderson Group is substantial. We can reposition the Anderson Group as a subsidiary of the BRD Group. We can prosper if we join forces."

Theodore had no patience for Darian's rambling. He coldly retorted, "Your failed investments are your own. I'm not obliged to rectify your blunders. I'll say it once more. Leave."

Observing Theodore's resolute stance, Darian's features twisted into a mask of fury. "Do you really think you're untouchable now? If not for me, you wouldn't even exist. How ungrateful!"

Darian's tirade was cut short by the sudden arrival of Adrian.

"Mr. Anderson," Adrian greeted Darian as he leisurely made his way towards Theodore. "You willingly signed the two billion IOU note, and the money was lent under my name, not the BRD Group. I'm not interested in your interest. Just pay back the capital."

As Darian saw Adrian and Theodore standing side by side, realization dawned on him. The rage made his head spin. "Brilliant! You two are in cahoots. It's all a grand scheme! This is all your scheme! The alleged two-billion-dollar Olympic Village project was nothing but a ruse you both cooked up!"

Theodore had had enough. As Darian lunged at him, he deflected the attack with a swift kick, jumped into his car, and drove off without a word.

Darian Lay sprawled on the ground, his gaze following the disappearing car with undisguised malice.

Chapter: 797 "Theodore, you've backed me into a corner," he hissed. "Don't blame me when I drag you down to hell with me!" Departing from the headquarters of Anderson Group, Ariana received a phone call from Sarah.

From the other end of the line, Sarah excitedly informed her that they had located a suitable place for the studio, inviting Ariana to visit the place.

Delighted, Ariana agreed and promptly hailed a cab to the address shared by Sarah.

Sarah had been eagerly anticipating Ariana's arrival, standing at the doorstep. Upon spotting Ariana, she darted over, arms wide open for an enthusiastic embrace.

However, mindful of her pregnancy, she abruptly halted before reaching Ariana, resulting in a humorous flailing of arms mid-air.

Ariana, witnessing this spectacle, was seized by a fit of laughter. The mirth worked wonders, as it dissipated her stress, injecting a fresh wave of positivity into her.

Her Laughter brought a sense of relief to Sarah, who responded with an even wider grin. Brimming with enthusiasm, she took Ariana's arm and started the tour of their potential studio.

The villa, a colossal six-story structure, boasted a garden abundant with blossoming flowers. It emanated a serenity far more gratifying than the towering commercial structures.

As they explored the villa, both were visibly pleased with the premises.

Sarah continuously spoke about their future plans.

She elaborated extensively, extending an invitation to Ariana to join them. They required an experienced agent like her. Ariana was touched. Yet she declined, stating, "I can't join you at present."

"Why?" Sarah's voice held a hint of disappointment as she clasped Ariana's hand. Unwilling to give up, she continued in a cajoling tone, "Both Tyler and I rely on you. We would be lost without you. With your assistance, our studio can flourish and attain recognition in the entertainment world!"

Sarah patted her chest, her voice laced with confidence.

Witnessing Sarah's joyous demeanor, Ariana hesitated to dampen her spirits. While she was keen to join them, she had a myriad of commitments to attend to first.

Furthermore, the ongoing upheaval at Anderson Group restricted her availability. Observing Ariana's reticence, Sarah lowered her voice to ask, "Your reluctance to join us stems from Theodore?"

"That's partly correct. The main reason is my pregnancy." Ariana confessed with a sigh.

“Don't fret about that. You won't need to work until post-delivery,” Sarah assured her, continuing, “You can bring your child to the studio.

If it's a girl, I'll buy her a lovely dress. Oh, and if it's a boy, I'll also purchase dashing clothes for him. Plus, I'll happily be the godmother.”

Sarah's enthusiastic plans, however, seemed to deepen Ariana's despondence.

Despite being generally oblivious, Sarah noticed the change in Ariana's demeanor. A thought struck her, leading her to ask in disbelief, “You haven't informed Theodore about your pregnancy, have you?”

Ariana managed to nod affirmatively, revealing Theodore's perspective on the matter.

Chapter: 798 “What?” Sarah was incensed by the news. “Your condition is apparent. Concealing it isn't an option. Moreover, this isn't solely your concern.”

Sarah's anger escalated with every word. She pledged, “If he doesn't wish for a child, I'll adopt your baby! I'm capable of supporting you and both kids. I'm serious!”

Sarah's declaration left Ariana conflicted between tears and laughter.

Despite the whirlwind of emotions, she felt an overwhelming warmth from Sarah's words.

Simultaneously, Ariana realized she couldn't delay the inevitable. For the sake of her unborn children, she had to gather courage. If Theodore decided against keeping the baby, she would depart with her children.

Ariana resolved to convey her decision to Theodore once the crisis at Anderson Group was resolved in the upcoming days.

As the sun slipped beyond the horizon and twilight approached, Ariana was yet to return. Theodore and Horace had already made themselves at home in her apartment.

The duo had taken over the kitchen. Horace, with an iPad clutched in his hand, read aloud the instructions for stewing beef with red wine, maintaining an impeccable poker face.

As he watched Theodore, heavy-handed with the salt, he sent a silent prayer to the heavens for Ariana's well-being and contemplated if a preemptive call to the doctor might be in order.

Upon observing Theodore's struggle with a piece of steak, Horace cautiously proposed, "Boss, perhaps we could have the hotel send over some prepared dishes?"

To his surprise, Theodore responded solemnly, "No. It is said that the most sincere way to express love is through a well-cooked meal.

Furthermore, hotel food lacks a certain wholesome quality. | need to ensure she's well fed."

Confronted with Theodore's earnestness, Horace glanced at the unfortunate steak once more. He toyed with the idea of offering further advice but ultimately opted for silence. He put on a professional smile, secretly feeling sorry for Ariana.

Suddenly, Horace's phone buzzed. It was a call from Mercy Hospital.

After a brief conversation, Horace relayed to Theodore, "Mercy Hospital just informed me that the medication we submitted has been tested. We can pick up the report at our convenience."

Theodore, engrossed in his culinary endeavor, merely nodded. "Alright. You can handle that and then head home. | have everything under control here."

"Understood."

A short while after Horace departed, Ariana returned.

The sight of the table spread with a veritable feast left her pleasantly stunned. She was amazed at Theodore's quick evolution from a novice at three dishes and a soup to an adept steak chef.

Each dish, to her surprise, was her favorite.

Atush of joy overwhelmed Ariana. She ran over and enveloped Theodore in a warm embrace, pressing her face into his chest. "How did you know I'd return famished?"

Grinning, Theodore leaned in to plant a tender kiss on her forehead. He then playfully ruffled her hair, saying, "Let's eat."

They settled down to a delightful, candlelit dinner, their Laughter filling the room. They tactfully skirted the contentious issue of the previous night: having a child.

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Ariana understood that regardless of Theodore's anger or disappointment, the fact of her pregnancy was irreversible. The most critical task at hand was to handle the situation effectively.

Staring at Theodore in the warm glow of the candles, she acknowledged his significant transformation for her sake. She chose to believe that his reluctance to become a parent stemmed from deeply personal reasons.

Once the Anderson Group matter was resolved, she would have a thorough discussion with him.

Reflecting on the tense atmosphere at the Anderson Group that day, Ariana inquired, "Did you take some action against the Anderson Group?"

Unflinchingly, Theodore nodded. "Yes, I did. I'm pushing the Anderson Group toward bankruptcy."



He paused, then turned to Look at Ariana. “Do you think I’m heartless? After all, Darian is technically my father.” His eyes, fraught with nervous anticipation, held Ariana’s, awaiting her verdict.

Ariana merely shook her head.

“He deserves it. He’s committed numerous unethical deeds,” she comforted him, yet a hint of worry crept into her voice. “But if the Anderson Group goes bankrupt, you too will face repercussions. Have you considered that?”

Relieved at her understanding, Theodore smiled broadly. “Don’t worry. One way or another, I’ll take care of you.”

Ariana was rendered speechless by his assurance. She wasn’t helpless, but she couldn’t resist teasing him. “And how exactly do you plan to do that? Surely you’re not suggesting some sort of secret identity. One powerful enough to send Darian into despair?”

Caught mid-slurp of his spaghetti, Theodore choked, erupting into a fit of coughing.

“Take it easy,” Ariana hastened to gently pat his back, querying with a twinkle in her eye, “What’s causing such fervor? Could it really be...”

Attempting to cloak his discomfort, Theodore swiftly altered the subject. “No, it’s merely that the spaghetti turned out to be too salty.”

“Really?” Ariana’s eyebrow quirked as she scrutinized him. “Are you wrestling with some guilt?” Theodore found it difficult to meet her teasing gaze, his secret teetering on the edge of his tongue.

Holden’s name nearly slipped out, but Theodore’s rationality reined him in. He resolved to bide his time and let the Anderson Group’s matter settle before divulging the truth.

Just a few more days, he told himself.

Quickly recovering his poise, Theodore lightly nudged Ariana away, averting his gaze. “No, don’t read too much into it,” he declared.

Ariana, merely ribbing him, shrugged and settled back into her seat.

Without overthinking, she resumed her meal.

She sampled the spaghetti, chewing thoughtfully before swallowing.

Offering her compliment, she said, “Your cooking skills shine this time. Keep it up next time.”

Theodore’s face lit up with her few words of praise. Watching Ariana relish the food brought him immense joy.

Indeed, he mused, he possessed a flair for cooking. Horace’s dismissal had been sorely misguided; his culinary prowess was on par with any five-star chef.

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Theodore’s spirits were lifted by his accomplishments. Yet, just then, his phone interrupted the pleasant scene. Noticing Horace’s name on the screen, he frowned.

Why would Horace call him now? Didn’t he make it clear that it was his day off?

Theodore’s frown deepened. Horace had left to collect the test report earlier. Could there be an issue with it? Alarmed, Theodore promptly took the call.

Horace, however, offered little information over the phone. He simply stated he was downstairs and requested Theodore to join him.

Judging by his tone, Theodore sensed the report held disconcerting news, his worry creasing his brow further. "Anything wrong? Who's on the line?" Ariana queried.

Snapping back to the present, Theodore quickly composed himself.

"Horace. I need to step out for a moment. Enjoy your meal," he reassured her, picking up his jacket before stepping out.

Once Theodore had departed, Ariana, with a thoughtful expression on her face, put down her fork and reached for her glass of water.

The meal was overly salty. Had Theodore lingered a moment longer, the saltiness would've overwhelmed her.

Based on Theodore's recent attempts at cooking, his dishes veered between bland and excessively salty. Her praise was designed to stoke his enthusiasm, not to critique his culinary prowess.

She understood that Theodore was a novice in the kitchen with potential for growth. With a little more encouragement, Theodore might soon become the household's designated chef. All she'd have to do then was sit back and savor the meals.

Theodore, who'd hastily exited, made his way downstairs and slid into the car, addressing Horace directly, "What's the urgency? Why are you calling me down?"

Horace remained silent, his expression grave. He extended a report to Theodore. Skimming through the medical test data, Theodore's heart pounded. Breaking the silence, Horace announced, "The tested components are indeed a health supplement."

He paused briefly before adding, "But it's a prenatal supplement, not vitamin Cc."

Theodore faltered, grappling with disbelief. Was he mishearing things?

He asked in a trembling voice, "Are you certain there's no mix-up with the report?"

Horace adjusted his glasses, his tone unyielding. "Boss, there's no mistake. The test indicates prenatal medications." Ashadow spread across Theodore's face as he flipped through the medical report before him.

It was a tough pill to swallow, but the contents of the report were undeniable. Several of the ingredients Listed were renowned for their use in staving off miscarriages. The report was irrefutable.

Horace sat, silent, avoiding Theodore's gaze. Ariana's audacity took him aback. Her secret pregnancy was one thing, but the deception added another layer.