

Unconscious 811

Chapter: 811

Ariana's mind was already a flurry of questions, and now strangers were flinging even more at her. "Did you agree to the surrogacy for money? If you have undergone surrogacy for money, are you willing to do it for anyone?"

Ariana was completely taken aback in the face of these probing questions. She wasn't prepared for it whatsoever.

The harsh questions endlessly being hurled at her made her stomach turn. Her face became pale, and amidst the pushing and shoving of the crowd, she didn't notice her phone clatter to the ground.

On the other side, overhearing the news, the other reporters interviewing Sarah quickly shifted their target and joined the chaos surrounding Ariana.

The crowd was dense and loud, forcefully surrounding Ariana in a tight group. Ariana was unable to react at first, shocked and frightened. She could feel the air getting thinner and thinner around her, and she felt terribly suffocated by the lack of space.

"What are you doing? I won't do an interview. Get away from me!" Ariana shouted, but her voice was drowned out by the relentless reporters.

They only seemed to close in on her more, trying to press her to answer and throwing shameless questions at her constantly. Ariana staggered and instinctively lifted her hands to protect her belly.

One of the eagle-eyed reporters noticed her movements and immediately aimed his camera at her belly. He thrust the microphone in her face and asked, "Miss Edwards, are you really pregnant? Do you feel anything for this child?"

Ariana couldn't speak at all, her expression becoming increasingly desperate and gloomy. She felt tears stinging her eyes as she shouted, "Stop talking to me like that. Don't crowd me. I'm extremely uncomfortable right now. I can't breathe!"

But they didn't seem to hear a word of what Ariana said and continued to barrage her with questions.

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Ariana suddenly felt faint, the feeling of nausea overtaking her sense.

She could hear Sonia and Sarah somewhere, cursing furiously at the reporters, and she could hear Tyler calling her name.

But everything felt distant, and she could feel her strength fading.

Just as darkness overtook her thoughts and her consciousness slipped away, strong arms held her up.

It was a familiar and reassuring embrace.

The reporters surrounding Ariana were completely shocked at the sight of Theodore, their eyes intently scrutinizing him.

While the Anderson Group had teetered on the brink of collapse, the official declaration had yet to be made. The uncertain future of the Anderson Group left everyone wondering which way the winds would blow.

At least Theodore was still being recognized as the young master of the prestigious Anderson family.

Furthermore, his inherent air of superiority added to the daunting aura that surrounded him, stifling any inclination for others to speak in his presence.

Silently, the reporters watched Theodore Lift the unconscious Ariana into his arms, their microphones poised but their words held at bay.

Then, daring to break the silence, one reporter abruptly mustered the courage to inquire, "Mr. Anderson, is all of this just an elaborate charade?"

Empowered by the bravery of his peer, another interjected, "Indeed, Mr. Anderson, rumors abound that your union with Miss Edwards is nothing more than a cold and calculated business transaction. Can you honestly claim to harbor any genuine affection for her?"

Theodore's countenance darkened as his gaze fell upon the man, a middle-aged individual sporting spectacles. The intensity of Theodore's warning stare sufficed to seal the man's lips, as he meekly lowered his head.

Just as everyone began to resign themselves to an evasive response, a clear voice resonated through the air.

Chapter: 812 "Allow me to state once and for all: my marriage to Ariana is not a mere transaction of convenience."

Theodore's expression remained unyielding, his penetrating gaze sweeping across the gathered reporters. His voice, firm and unwavering, revealed his determination. "The woman in my embrace is the love of my life. Whether it be today or in the future, she is my one and only wife."

The reporters exchanged glances, their surprise evident. Then artificial insemination. .

"I have made my position abundantly clear," Theodore interjected impatiently, his tone cutting through any further meaningless speculations.

Having said his piece, Theodore turned on his heel, cradling Ariana in his arms, and made his exit. The reporters, once buzzing around Theodore, fell into a hushed silence and cleared a path.

They understood that the reason for Ariana joining the Anderson family, whether due to artificial insemination or not, was no longer important.

What mattered was that Theodore had openly declared his love.

However, at this moment, the man fearlessly spoke up again, breaking the silence. “But Mr. Anderson, the Anderson Group teeters on the edge of collapse. How much longer can the title of Mr. Anderson endure? Do you not worry that Miss Edwards may lead a destitute Life and that she will run off with someone else as a result?”

As soon as his words left his lips, he felt a cold blade pressed against his throat. Yet, all he saw were the chilling eyes of Theodore.

As soon as his words left his lips, he felt as if a cold blade was pressed against his throat. Yet, all he saw were the chilling eyes of Theodore.

After Theodore had carried Ariana away, the man found the courage to scold him. “What a charade! Everyone knows that the Anderson Group is on the brink of ruin. How dare he think he is invincible?”

As expected, this matter soon became a hot topic of gossip news. “Mr. Anderson is incredibly handsome. It’s admirable how he protects his wife.” “Wake up. Isn’t it because of the Anderson family? Regardless, artificial insemination is a heartless act, isn’t it?”

“Mr. Anderson never explicitly mentioned artificial insemination. He proclaimed his love. Besides, it’s a private matter concerning their family. It’s none of your business.”

A myriad of comments flooded the comment section, but gradually, those praising Theodore rose above the rest. Nonetheless, there still existed skeptics who refused to believe.

“Have you all conveniently forgotten Darian’s past actions? Did the absurd plotline escape your memory, where the Edwards sisters vied for the affections of the same man?” another comment pointed out.

“In my humble opinion, it all revolves around the intricacies of affluent families. Who can discern the genuine from the pretentious?”

Perhaps they're merely putting on a facade to uphold their social standing," someone opined.

Assorted remarks were exchanged, and for a considerable duration, the video of Theodore carrying Ariana and departing surged to the apex of trending searches, capturing sustained attention.

Meanwhile, within an opulent house, Helen found herself seated in the living room, her hand trembling with anger, poised to tear the delicate fabric of her skirt into shreds.

The television incessantly played, repeatedly showcasing Theodore's declaration of Ariana as his true love, his one and only life partner.

Helen's gaze grew piercing, her face contorted with anguish.

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"Damn it! That woman is so frustrating!" Helen exploded, her voice echoing off the walls. The TV remote in her fist collided with the screen, leaving a jagged crack across Ariana's televised image.

"She doesn't deserve him. Not one bit," she muttered, sinking into the plush comfort of her white couch. A question gnawed at her. "Why would Theodore ever fall for her?"

After a moment, her gaze locked onto Ariana's fractured face on the TV, she found herself moving towards a smaller room. Here, a montage of Theodore's pictures blanketed the walls, a testament to her intense feelings.

She collapsed onto the floor, her eyes scanning the room filled with her candid snaps. "Why did you choose her over me?" While living with the Anderson family, she secretly took those pictures.

Standing up, she approached a beautifully adorned box. Its contents were a museum of Theodore's discarded personal effects, a frayed tie, an empty shower gel bottle, a broken pen, and a notebook with pages torn out.

In a stark contrast, Ariana's pictures were stabbed onto a smaller board. Helen had carved into them with a knife, making her features unrecognizable. Beside the photos, a Little blue teddy bear was impaled with a knife.

Helen yanked out the knife and gripped the bear, a bitter murmur escaping her lips. "Marley, you aren't keen on losing Theodore, huh? Ariana needs to Learn her place."

With a swift motion, she buried the knife into Ariana's photo.

Meanwhile, Brielle was in her dressing room, smearing on Lipstick as a news broadcast ran on her phone. The sight of Ariana squirming under the journalists' onslaught brought a smirk to her lips. She orchestrated this media circus around Ariana's secret to make her life difficult.

But then, Theodore appeared on her screen. His candid confession wiped the smirk off her face. Was Theodore really in love with Ariana?

His revelation felt like a slap to her face. The thought of the usually cold and aloof Theodore falling in Love was hard for her to digest. She tried to deny it, but jealousy wormed its way into her thoughts. How was it possible for him to shower Ariana with such affection?

Why was Ariana the Lucky one when she was stuck with Reilly, a man far from handsome and full of quirks?

Her phone buzzed, breaking her train of thought. An anonymous text blinked on the screen. "I know it's you behind all this. Bet you're pleased she's in the hospital."

Brielle was taken aback, but decided to play it cool, opting not to respond. A second message chimed in, "Want to make her life even more miserable? | have a way to make it happen."

She paused, her fingers hovering over the screen before she responded with a question mark.

When Ariana awoke in the hospital, her gaze fell upon Sarah, who sat nearby, furrowing her brow as she checked her phone. Before Ariana fully regained her senses, she was momentarily bewildered by Sarah's presence.

Sarah looked up and noticed Ariana awakening. Hastily discarding her phone, she rushed over to Ariana and asked, "How are you feeling? Are you all right?"

Ariana nodded, her confusion still evident.

Relief washed over Sarah, and she let out a sigh. "Thank goodness

Theodore arrived in time. Otherwise, those unscrupulous media vultures wouldn't have let you off so easily."

Sarah seethed with anger towards the unscrupulous media. Her hands clenched tightly in frustration.

Through gritted teeth, she spat, "I've identified the person who leaked your location! It was Tyler's assistant. Damn it! That assistant used to work for SJ Entertainment. He would often peddle gossip to fans and the media in private. He expressed interest in working with us, and I foolishly believed he wouldn't stoop to such behavior again."

Sarah's anger intensified. She had sensed that something was amiss after the accident.

Chapter: 814

It was normal for a celebrity who frequently appeared in public to have limited privacy. But why had these individuals set their sights on Ariana?

Only a handful of people were privy to the details of the ribbon-cutting ceremony, making it likely that the culprit resided among them.

Filled with suspicion, Sarah promptly scrutinized the phones of all those in attendance. As she had anticipated, she discovered a record of the transfer from Brielle on the assistant's phone.

Since it was not uncommon for some assistants to engage in selling gossip within the entertainment industry, most individuals preferred to turn a blind eye.

However, Sarah couldn't bear to think of Ariana having to endure being confronted by the media and hospitalized.

Ariana gently massaged her forehead, allowing her senses to gradually return. She remembered the persistent barrage of sharp questions she had been subjected to back then. Obviously, those journalists had been given highly accurate information to ask those pointed questions.

The truth about her marriage to Theodore was known to only a few individuals, and Brielle was one of them.

Sensing Ariana's silence, Sarah offered her comforting words in a soft, reassuring tone, "Don't worry. The doctor has thoroughly examined you and there is nothing to be concerned about."

Ariana's brows furrowed upon hearing this news.

She dimly recalled that Theodore had managed to hold her after she had fainted. So, it was he who took her to the hospital and arranged for a checkup...

Damn it!

Shocked, Ariana scanned her surroundings with wide eyes.

It was Mercy Hospital.

Ariana's heart leaped into her throat, and she nervously questioned Sarah, "Where is Theodore?"

In that moment, her heart raced, and instinctively, she protectively covered her belly. Her initial reaction was one of impending doom.

Mitchel did not work here. If it was Theodore who had brought her to the hospital, she couldn't conceal the truth of her pregnancy.

Just as Sarah was about to mention that she had recently seen Theodore conversing with the doctor outside, the door swung open, and Theodore entered the room.

Sarah silently observed the pair before quietly leaving. Gazing at Theodore in silence, Ariana offered an awkward smile and cautiously inquired, "What did the doctor say? Is there anything wrong with my body?"

"No," Theodore replied, his expression unchanged. "The doctor simply advised you to get some good rest." He appeared completely normal, as if nothing out of the ordinary had occurred.

Didn't she have a general check-up? Just as Ariana was about to let out a sigh of relief, Theodore unexpectedly uttered, "The doctor has scheduled your surgery for the day after tomorrow.

Hearing those words, Ariana felt a chill run through her veins. She was taken aback, her smile frozen in place, as she looked up at Theodore and asked, "What... What do you mean?"

Theodore remained silent, his gaze fixed on her. His silence was telling, speaking volumes even in the absence of words.

He knew, Ariana could tell. However, she chose to feign ignorance, forcing a smile onto her face. "What surgery? | merely fainted from hypoglycemia because | skipped breakfast. | don't need surgery. Let's go home."

Chapter: 815 Attempting to rise from the bed, she was halted by Theodore.

Startled, she spun around, gripping his wrist. A contrived smile pulled at her lips as she asked, "What are you doing? Aren't you happy?"

Theodore continued his silent vigil, prompting panic to flare within her. Tear-filled eyes met his as she clung to his hands, her voice quivering. "You're going to be a father. Aren't you excited?" Looking at the person in front of him, Theodore's face was a whirlwind of emotions that were quickly suppressed.

Seeing his calm, indifferent expression, despair took a stronger hold on Ariana. "How did you find out? Did you look into Mitchel's medical records?" she asked, her voice wavering.

Her desperate words seemed to steel his resolve. He hardened his expression, his lips pressing into a tight line. Despite his efforts, he found himself saying, "Aria, we can't keep our babies."

"why?" The single word escaped Ariana in a whisper, her voice trembling. A lone tear slid down her flushed cheek. She clung to his hand, pleading, "Why abort them? They are your children too!"

His hand gently brushed away the tear on her face. In a husky voice, all he could muster was, "We can't keep them."

"But give me a reason!" Her demand echoed in the room. She wrenched her hand away from him, her nails scratching harsh red marks on his arm.

Caught off guard, Theodore swiftly grasped her hand, his mouth opening, yet no sound emerged. She stared at him, her eyes pleading. "Please, don't abort our babies. We can handle whatever comes our way. Please, don't abort them."

Theodore clung to her hand, wrestling with his thoughts. Ariana's pleas seemed to bring Marley's shrill voice to his ears. She declared that the children would become a madman like him, that they would hate him for their existence.

Theodore felt a surge of despair. Struggling to ignore the voice in his head, he gathered his composure.

Gazing at Ariana, his voice steady, he declared, "We can't keep the children. They're not developing well. This could cause severe harm to your health. If you want a child, we can adopt one."

His expression solidified his decision.

Ariana studied him, her gaze distant. Her eyes welled with tears as she pushed his hand away. “Huh? You want to abort our children?!” she spat out, disbelief lacing her voice.

Before he could respond, she interjected, “I am the one who's pregnant. This is my body. I decide whether or not to have an abortion. If you're adamant about it, we can get a divorce. I can raise the babies myself. It's none of your concern.”

Theodore's heart pounded in his chest. He spoke solemnly, a shadow crossing his face. “I won't divorce you. I've already told you that we won't separate.”

His words spurred Ariana into a desperate plea. “Then let's keep the children. I don't want to abort them. If you're willing to adopt, why can't you raise your own children?”

He fell into silence once more. Ariana's patience wore thin, her voice rising, “Answer me, Theodore. Why can't you just tell me what you're struggling with?”

Theodore opened his mouth to respond, but was interrupted by his phone ringing. He cancelled the call without checking the caller ID, only for it to ring again immediately. Frowning, he answered impatiently. The conversation had his expression darkening further.

Chapter: 816 After ending the call, he stood, addressing Ariana, “I have some business to attend to. You should rest.” She ignored him, turning her back to him without a word. Sighing, he exited the room, leaving Ariana alone.

Once the door closed behind him, Ariana's resolve crumbled. Overwhelmed by the situation, she couldn't hold back her tears. She had expected Theodore might suggest an abortion, but the reality of it was harder to accept than she'd anticipated. She loved him, and these children were a product of their love, not a pawn to be used. She had been looking forward to the birth of their children.

Theodore's ruthlessness was something she couldn't reconcile with.

She felt a sharp ache in her heart. She had told herself that if Theodore didn't want the children, she'd leave with them. However, the thought of leaving him was equally painful. She was lost, unsure of what to do next.

Meanwhile, Theodore arrived at a private mansion where Devin awaited him at the entrance. It was the day Aldus was to return to Mistlyn, but he had been ambushed en route.

Upon seeing Theodore, Devin walked up to him. "Mr. Fredrick is safe. He's in shock but resting after taking some medication." Hearing this, Theodore nodded. "I'm going to see him." He then went to check on Aldus.

After ensuring that Aldus was unharmed, Theodore exited the room.

"What happened?" he asked. He'd rushed over after receiving the call but was still unaware of the details.

Devin explained, "We were scheduled to fly to Mistlyn today. On our way to the airport, several cars chased us, seemingly intending to ram us. It looked like they were trying to stage a car accident."

"Have you looked into it?" he asked calmly.

"Yes, Darian was behind it. However, we don't know who tipped him off about Mr. Fredrick's flight details and our route," Devin admitted.

He then added, "Mr. Fredrick traveled with minimal security to keep a low profile."

Seated on a sofa, Theodore sank into his thoughts. Devin continued, "Darian is behaving like a madman now. He's hell-bent on fighting us."

"Well, he won't even be able to put up a fight," Theodore sneered.

Devin knew Theodore's capabilities, but he still felt the need to caution him. "Darian has managed to bail Jasper out of jail. He's pulling all the strings. Young master, you need to be careful. He'll probably come after you soon."

As evening descended, Theodore concluded his affairs and returned to the hospital. Upon reaching the sixth floor, he noticed a nurse stationed outside Ariana's room. Filled with concern, he approached her, and

she promptly relayed the distressing news.

"Miss Edwards has not eaten or drunk anything for an entire day. She's been confined to her bed. Every time we try to approach her, she becomes aggressive and throws objects. To prevent further agitation, we've been maintaining a distance. When the doctor came for rounds earlier, she was already asleep," the nurse explained.

Theodore's heart clenched as he absorbed the information. Nodding silently, he gently pushed open the door to Ariana's room. There she lay, her back turned to him, her figure curled up on the bed.

Quietly, Theodore approached, making his way towards her until he reached the bedside. Tear stains glistened on her eyelashes, evidence that she had fallen asleep while crying.

Even in her slumber, she instinctively shielded her stomach with her hand. Theodore's heart ached profoundly at this sight, piercing him with a mix of emotions. His fingers reached out tentatively, aching to caress her cheek, but he hesitated, his hand retreating.

Awake of guilt washed over him as he realized the cruelty of his past actions. He had never given her the opportunity to make a choice, and now he understood that she likely resented him for it.

Desolation etched across his face, the weight of his pain almost suffocating him.

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Doubt began to creep in, insidious and persistent. Maybe his unwavering persistence had been misplaced. Perhaps their children didn't have to be terminated after all.

Maybe the situation wasn't as dire as he had imagined. Theodore lingered by Ariana's side for a while longer, his presence a silent plea for forgiveness

As the door gently closed behind him, Ariana's eyes began to flutter open. Slowly, she propped herself up, her searching hand fumbling beneath the pillow in a desperate quest for her phone.

Earlier that afternoon, the doctor had presented Ariana with a consent form for the abortion procedure. However, she adamantly refused to affix her signature to it, causing a tumultuous commotion that eventually led to the departure of everyone involved.

Deep within her, Ariana felt convinced of Theodore's unwavering stance, leaving no room for compromise.

Yet, beneath the surface, a truth lingered. Ariana had never truly harbored the intention to terminate her pregnancy. Her resolve, fortified by an unyielding determination, pushed her to seek a way out of this confining place.

Nevertheless, her current predicament posed a formidable challenge.

Theodore's watchful eyes seemed to monitor her every move, making it exceedingly difficult for her to slip away unnoticed. She needed to come up with a solution.

Under the shroud of night, in front of a modest villa, two figures became entangled in a struggle. It was Brielle and Reilly. Reilly's hand found its place upon Brielle's hip, a gesture laden with a sinister leer.

Troubles had plagued him incessantly as of late, with the elusive root cause perpetually eluding his grasp. The company's accounts bore unsightly gaps that demanded filling, yet the flow of cash remained insufficient. Consequently, he contemplated leveraging his connections to procure a loan.

After careful consideration, he set his sights on Brielle.

“Brielle,” he uttered, his voice laced with a mix of suggestion and desire, “spending just one night with Mr. Barrack will grant you access to all the resources you desire.”

Reilly’s eyes remained fixed on her. Though he had subtly alluded to engaging in such relationships with influential individuals in the past, the directness of his proposition left Brielle taken aback.

“What are you suggesting? I’m a celebrity! How could you expect me to do such a thing?” she retorted, her voice laced with disbelief.

Reilly’s expression contorted with disdain as he sneered, “Celebrity? Let’s be frank here, you’re nothing more than a whore.”

In the realm of today’s entertainment industry, how many top stars hadn’t resorted to similar means to ascend the ladder of fame? Even Brielle had fallen victim to Jasper’s manipulation and disregard. In fact, Reilly held a deep-seated loathing for her

Nonetheless, he found himself in need of her assistance, so he softened his approach, attempting to coax her. “Just this one time. Once it’s done, all the resources will be at your disposal, and I’ll even marry you.” Internally rolling her eyes, Brielle grasped the delicate nature of the situation and couldn’t afford to offend him. Feigning

consideration for his proposal, she managed to dismiss him as he departed in his car.

Standing at her front door, a forced smile on her face, Brielle immediately dropped her facade and vented her frustration through a string of curses.

To her astonishment, when she opened the door without turning on the lights, a hand emerged from the darkness, pulling her inside.

“Ah! Help!” Terror engulfed Brielle as she screamed, convinced she had come face to face with a deranged stalker.

However, as she surveyed her surroundings, utilizing the faint glow emitted by her phone, she soon recognized the familiar countenance of Jasper.

Brielle's terrified scream echoed through the silence, but Jasper quickly hushed her with a hand pressed to her mouth.

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His countenance transformed into a tempest of fury as he spoke in a hushed, intense murmur. "I've only been locked up for a few days and you're already seeking shelter in someone else's arms?"

With his other hand, Jasper's grip around Brielle's throat tightened.

Her fear muddled her thoughts as she stumbled through an explanation, her words tripping over each other. "No, it's not what you think. He hunted me down relentlessly. I couldn't shake him off. I haven't betrayed you."

As Brielle attempted to make sense of her plight, Jasper's anger surged like an untamed wildfire. The confinement had left him forlorn and disheartened, but Brielle's apparent betrayal added a darker shade to his despair.

The media closely followed the Anderson family, so even if he was freed, he would have to stay in hiding and avoid attracting any unwanted attention.

Seeking Brielle in this covert haven he had procured for her was both for his safety and for a hidden agenda.

However, he was taken aback to find her cozying up to another man so soon after his arrival. It was evident that their bond was more than a mere dalliance; Brielle had evidently discovered herself a new patron.

Jasper's fury seethed like a tempest. Ariana's actions were understandable, but Brielle's betrayal cut deep into his heart.

Unintentionally, his grip around her throat intensified, and Brielle found herself gasping for breath, her strength waning, teetering on the edge of oblivion.

Summoning her last reserve of energy, she managed to gasp out, "I had no choice! | was merely seeking information. | discovered Ariana's deceitful charade; she is pregnant!"

Struggling to voice those words, Brielle's face flushed red as she fought for air. At the mention of Ariana's name, Jasper instinctively eased his grip, making Brielle collapse to the floor, gasping for air. "She's pregnant? How did you come by this revelation?" Jasper asked, incredulousness Lacing his tone.

After regaining her breath, Brielle cautiously distanced herself from Jasper, raising her hands as if in surrender, her voice hoarse and unsteady.

"The source doesn't matter. What's important is the truth-the surrogate was successful, and Ariana fooled everyone, including Theodore!"

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"Including Theodore?" Jasper arched an eyebrow, a mysterious smile playing on his lips. He advanced toward Brielle, cornering her against the wall, and tenderly grazed her trembling cheek. "Are you absolutely certain Theodore is oblivious to this?"

Brielle nodded emphatically. "If Theodore knew, he'd protect Ariana and never let her slip away."

Jasper pondered for a moment, then chuckled softly as he pulled Brielle into an embrace. "You've provided me with valuable information. Well done. You're not entirely ineffectual!"

Brielle dared not move, forcing a strained smile as she inquired, "So, what's your plan for revenge against Ariana and

Theodore?"

“That’s not something you need to concern yourself with. Just understand that | won't allow them to escape my wrath this time. For now, behave,” Jasper replied, his fingers gently tracing Brielle’s quivering cheek. Leaning in, he kissed her with fervor before swiftly pushing her to the floor, quenching his desires.

Within the dimly lit room, their breaths intertwined, creating an atmosphere of dark intimacy. Brielle thought to herself that Jasper was a step above that old man.

Yet, as her excitement surged, Jasper inadvertently let slip Ariana’s name.

Brielle froze, consumed by envy and resentment.

Even at this moment, Jasper couldn’t shake his obsession with that wretched Ariana?!

Chapter: 819 Gritting her teeth, Brielle couldn't help but wish that fucking Ariana would suffer for the rest of her life!

Ariana had scarcely managed to catch a few winks throughout the night in the hospital, as weariness enveloped her Like a heavy fog.

Restlessness and anxiety took root in her heart, churning her emotions into a tumultuous storm.

At the crack of dawn, Ariana rose from her sickbed, yearning for a breath of fresh air downstairs. When she opened the ward’s door, there stood Horace, ever vigilant, like a steadfast sentinel.

Seeing Horace stationed there didn’t surprise her at all. With a casual glance, she asked, “Care to accompany me downstairs for a little stroll?”

Horace, bound by Theodore’s explicit orders to be by Ariana’s side at all times, nodded his consent.

The duo meandered through the ground-floor garden. Noticing Ariana's pallid complexion, Horace spoke up timely. "Boss might appear aloof on the surface, but he's not as heartless as he seems. He's always been thoughtful and considerate towards you."

Ariana remained calm, her emotions hidden beneath a serene mask.

Observing her demeanor, Horace grew increasingly uneasy, fearing that if Theodore persisted in this manner, he could perhaps reach a point of no return with Ariana.

In a hurry to explain, he added, "Boss has his own struggles too."

Ariana responded with a derisive, icy laugh, "There's no need to make him look good. If he's facing difficulties, why can't he confide in me instead of choosing to end our children?"

Witnessing the distress in both Ariana and Theodore, Horace was torn. He intended to speak but ended up saying nothing.

He desperately wished to reveal Theodore's concerns about hereditary illness as the reason for wanting to terminate the pregnancy. But he knew it was Theodore's private matter, forbidden to discuss on his behalf.

With a sigh, Horace offered a comforting thought, "Your health is of utmost importance. You both need to have an honest heart-to-heart."

Ariana knew that Horace couldn't divulge much, so she remained silent. After circling the garden twice, Ariana's mood remained melancholic.

On one hand, fury toward Theodore consumed her. Yet, a part of her yearned to see him and confront the struggles they were facing. If they truly loved each other, why couldn't they conquer these difficulties together? Why did he have to keep things from her?

But Ariana also feared that Theodore was resolute in his decision to terminate the pregnancy, which could lead to a heartbreaking breakup.

With an inaudible sigh, she took two more turns around the garden before returning to her ward.

Theodore didn't show up at all that day.

In the evening, Sonia paid Ariana a visit at the hospital. As she entered, she saw Ariana lying listlessly on the sickbed, her complexion sallow, and her spirits low. The vivacity that once defined her was gone, leaving her like a walking corpse.

Sonia's heart swelled with both sympathy and anger. She gently helped Ariana into a sitting position and looked around before asking, "Why are you alone? Where's Theodore?"

A wan smile graced Ariana's lips as she softly shook her head. "I wish I knew," she murmured.

Sonia's anger grew, and she exclaimed indignantly, "Unbelievable! He hasn't been here at all? Paparazzi caught him and Helen going in and out of the hospital at noon. I thought it was a misunderstanding, but it turns out he's not by your side?! That scoundrel! He must be cavorting with that little damn vixen! Just yesterday, he was publicly professing his love for you, and now he can't wait to rendezvous with his mistress! I utterly had the wrong impression of him!"

Ariana was momentarily taken aback by Sonia's words. Yet, with a moment of composure, she gathered her wits.

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It dawned on her that Helen had previously made extensive efforts to sow seeds of doubt about Theodore and Marley's relationship. Ariana could easily discern Helen's intentions.

Theodore had been forthright with her, explicitly explaining that there was nothing inappropriate between him and Helen. Ariana chose to trust him implicitly, believing that their connection was nothing more than a sibling-like bond.

She surmised that this situation was probably no different from before — Helen had concocted some excuse to manipulate Theodore into accompanying her.

Shaking her head, Ariana replied with conviction, “Theodore has already clarified the nature of their association to me. Helen suffers from a heart condition, and Theodore sees her as nothing more than a sister.”

Sonia’s temper was always on a short fuse, and now she was in a state of high dudgeon, firmly rejecting Ariana’s explanation. Without hesitation, she produced a photograph from her purse, holding it up for Ariana to see.

In the photo, Theodore and Helen were shown embracing each other as they left the hospital together. The photographer had captured them from a distance, making their facial expressions unclear, but the intimacy of their posture was undeniable.

Although Ariana knew in her heart that there was no true romantic connection between Theodore and Helen, the photo still managed to inflict a painful stab. She felt a mix of emotions, anger and hurt, coursing through her veins.

Sonia’s words were sharp and pointed. “Those two have returned to the apartment and Likely haven't left each other’s side since then.”

Involuntarily, Ariana’s grip tightened around the photo, as she tried to put on a brave front and forced a smile. Her voice quivered slightly as she assured Sonia, “I trust Theodore completely, and I am certain he would never betray me in such a fashion.”

As Sonia observed Ariana’s strained smile, a surge of empathy welled up inside her, understanding the distress Ariana was going through. “But you're still in the hospital — how could Theodore abandon you to frolic with another woman?” she said in a glum tone.

Ariana’s smile tightened, her eyes Locked on the image she clutched in her hand.

She knew Helen’s true nature all too well, just as she believed in her heart that Theodore would never be unfaithful. Nevertheless, her heart ached incessantly at the sight before her.

Sensing Ariana's unease, Sonia wisely chose to steer the conversation in a different direction. Gently, she retrieved the photo from Ariana's tense grip, offering an awkward little laugh. "Let's not dwell on this any longer. Have you eaten yet? What would you like for dinner tonight?"

Gathering her composure, Ariana mustered a feeble smile for Sonia. "I have no particular cravings; order whatever you think is best."

Sonia playfully reproached her with a click of her tongue. "That won't do at all. Even if you won't admit it, I know your tastes perfectly well. Come on, let's get you out of bed, and we'll go dine together."

With an encouraging smile, she linked her arm with Ariana's to help her up. After placing an order for several of Ariana's favorite dishes, Sonia remained by her side throughout the meal, providing much-needed company. Witnessing Ariana's mood slightly improved, Sonia sensed it was time to give her some space to rest.

Now alone, Ariana sat quietly for a long moment, contemplating her feelings. Finally, she decided to reach out to Theodore and dialed his number on her phone.

The call connected instantly, but no voice greeted Ariana before she was redirected to voicemail.

Her brow furrowed in concern, prompting her to hit redial.

Once more, no response came from the other end. Undeterred, she persisted, dialing repeatedly over a dozen times, yet still met with silence. Finally, as she attempted once more, the phone had been completely switched off.

As she made more attempts, Ariana's agitation and unease grew.

Theodore's assurances did little to quell her anxiety about the possibility of him being with Helen.

Jealousy churned within her as her calls continued to go unanswered.

Determined, she set out to find Horace, only to discover he was nowhere to be found near her door. She searched the corridors as well, but her efforts yielded no results.

Surprisingly, the bodyguards made no move to impede her, likely assuming she was merely stretching her legs after a meal.