

Unconscious 971

Chapter 971

Holden was probably unaware as well. Otherwise, given his disposition, he would have dismissed Ariana as a gold digger, thwarting her proximity to Adele.

With these thoughts in mind, Sadie found a semblance of equilibrium, although the flames of hatred still blazed in her eyes.

No, things weren't supposed to go on like this! Sooner or later, their paths would intersect. She had to devise a method to oust Ariana from Eleymond!

Meanwhile, as Holden concluded the meeting and exited the conference room, he saw Shawn waiting by the doorway. Baffled, he inquired,

"What brings you here?"

Shawn covered the distance in a few strides and spoke.

"Mr. Fredrick,

Miss Edwards came to collect Melon; astonishingly, Adele wants to accompany her badly."

"What did you say?" Holden's eyebrow twitched in response to the unforeseen news, a mixture of surprise and delight on his features.

"Adele wishes to go willingly?"

Shawn nodded, further adding, "Not only that, Adele even chose to sit beside Miss Edwards. She then even let her tend to her needs without resistance."

This revelation took Holden aback. He swiftly put aside his ongoing affairs and hastened back to the lounge. He was eager to see the person who had left such a profound impact on Adele.

Holden flung the door open, rapidly striding into the lounge, only to find a psychologist engaged in counseling Adele.

He knitted his brows. Not much time had passed since Shawn's departure, and all appeared well then. Why was Adele now undergoing psychological counseling?

"Where's Miss Ariana Edwards and Melon?" Shawn asked, astonishment tinting his voice.

"They have already left," the bodyguard responded.

"But weren't they meant to await Mr. Fredrick's return?" Shawn's brow creased slightly, perplexed by the situation. However, the bodyguard remained silent.

Holden cast a frosty glare at him and demanded, "What's the meaning of this?"

Under Holden's scrutiny, the bodyguard felt oppressed and was about to speak when Sadie came out of the next room.

Sadie had regained her composure as if nothing had happened. As she walked over to Holden, she looked innocent and worried.

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"When I arrived, Adele was already having a seizure. I have no idea what happened," Sadie said nervously. Holden cast an indifferent glance at her and asked, "Why are you here?"

With one hand resting on her chest, Sadie looked up at Holden, adopting a pitiful and vulnerable expression. She said in a voice so soft it was almost a whisper, "I felt uncomfortable being alone in the hospital, and I missed you and Adele. That's why I came.

As Sadie spoke, she attempted to move closer to Holden. However, he quietly avoided her. He walked over to Adele and crouched down to examine her.

Sitting on the sofa, Adele had already calmed down. The effects of the drug made her look lethargic, and her eyes were blinking incessantly.

When Adele let out a yawn, Sadie was quick to be motherly and caring. "Adele looks tired. I'll take her to bed," she said at once. Holden nodded in agreement, and watched Sadie take Adele to the innermost room.

Once Sadie's figure had disappeared, Holden turned his gaze to the bodyguard and said firmly, "Now, tell me what was really going on."

The bodyguard hesitated, feeling nervous under Holden's intense gaze.

Finally, he reluctantly explained, "After Mr. Williams left, Miss Edwards also left with her child. Then all of a sudden, Adele had a seizure."

Holden thought something was off. Although Adele could have seizures due to external stimuli, she seldom experienced such severe episodes.

Something else must have happened. Holden glared at the bodyguard with a stern gaze and said coldly, "You either tell me the truth or you leave directly."

At this moment, the atmosphere in the room was so tense that it could be cut with a knife. The bodyguard couldn't resist the pressure and confessed, "It was right after Mr. Williams left. Miss Pierre came in and she had a heated argument with Miss Edwards. Adele probably had a breakdown from witnessing the confrontation."

"What were they arguing about?" Holden asked again, with a furrowed brow.

“Miss Pierre claimed that the boy who had bullied Adele on the ship deck was Miss Edwards’ son. She insisted that I drive Miss Edwards away. Miss Edwards was angered by the situation and she left by herself,” the bodyguard explained.

Seeing that Holden's face had darkened, the bodyguard hurriedly added,

“It was Miss Pierre who stopped me from telling you the truth. She threatened to fire me if I said a word about it.”

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Hearing this, Holden’s expression grew even darker. He glared at the bodyguard and said in an icy tone, “Go change shifts.” The bodyguard quickly nodded and left the room.

After the bodyguard left, Shawn finally spoke up.

“I didn’t expect that little Melon was the one who bullied Adele last night.”

“Do you believe it?” Holden asked with a sneer.

Shawn shook his head firmly.

“No, I don’t. Although I only had a brief interaction with the little boy, I can tell that he is well-mannered. Furthermore, he visibly loves Adele and seems determined to treat her like a sister. Why would he bully her? Besides, if he had hurt Adele, she wouldn’t be so attached to him.

Holden seemed to agree with Shawn’s assessment. However, he didn’t say anything and soon fell into contemplation.

As he pondered about the whole situation, he found Sadie’s actions and behavior increasingly suspicious.

Why had Sadie concealed the argument from him? Was she merely afraid he’d discover the cause of Adele’s seizure? After a moment of deep thought, Holden looked up and asked, “Did they find the

surveillance footage from the cruise ship?" "The deck's surveillance footage was deliberately sabotaged," Shawn explained.

"Our contacts backstage are on the case, striving to resurrect the videos. However, it will take time to ascertain the possibility of recovery."

Holden's response was quiet, his expression dark. Suspicion already had cast its net across his thoughts.

The symmetry of events struck an odd chord.

"Furthermore, as per your request, | looked into the woman clad in the Medusa costume," Shawn continued.

"Scrutiny of the guest List yielded no pertinent information about her. It's plausible she came to the banquet in the company of friends. We'll further into it from that point."

Holden nodded.

"| see. You're dismissed."

Sadie bided her time elsewhere, waiting until Adele succumbed to slumber before glaring at her with a pent-up frustration.

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Subsequently, she fixed her hair before a mirror, hiding the bruised remnants on her face with deft strokes of foundation. Elegantly slackening her neckline, she pushed open the door and went to find Holden.

Outside the room, she saw Holden sitting alone on the couch. Silence reigned, with only the two of them present, eliciting excitement within her.

Radiating allure and charm, Sadie walked up and sat beside Holden.

She asked, "When do we leave for home?"

Holden remained still, only turning his head and sending a playful gaze her way. "I've been apprised of the thing with the surveillance."

Panic surged through Sadie, her smile wobbling slightly as she grappled to maintain her composure, barely keeping her facade intact as she stammered, "W-what do you mean?"

Holden's chuckle was slow and cold. The timbre of his voice took on a measured tone as he said, "The bodyguard has unburdened his conscience."

Looking at Sadie, his countenance grew darker. "Why, pray tell, did you lie to me?"

Sadie's discomposure skyrocketed. Her attempts to mask her apprehension faltered, leaving her mystified as to how Holden had uncovered the ruse of the deck surveillance. She had believed her tracks were expertly covered.

Words stumbled from Sadie's mouth helplessly. Casting a glance at Holden, she sighed deeply, striving to steady her nerves, before retorting with a hint of defensiveness, "Is your trust in me so tenuous? I assured you I'd handle this affair. What prompted you to probe into it personally?"

Holden regarded her with a snort tinged with ice. "And you handled it, didn't you? And your mode of handling equated to duping me?"

Seeing his demeanor, Sadie's thoughts raced, torn between the conviction that Holden couldn't have possibly unraveled the web of surveillance deceit and the apprehension that the pervasive influence of the Fredrick family could indeed have unearthed damaging truths.

As she struggled to mount a defense, Holden's words stopped her.

| don't wish for my daughter's mother to be scheming behind my back.

Before Holden could conclude, Sadie's vexation erupted. She interjected with fervor, demanding, "What do you mean, Holden? Are you truly prepared to champion the cause of a stranger? Yes, I did administer a slap to that young boy. And deservedly so! Because of that, are you poised to strip me of my identity as Adele's mother?"

Are you?"

Holden's silence pervaded the room, his gaze icy as it bored into her. Yet, Sadie's emotions refused to be quelled, her outburst persisting as she raised her voice.

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"I obliterated that footage precisely because I foresaw this exact scenario! I had no desire for you to perceive me as wicked and then endeavor to wrest my standing as Adele's mother from me!"

Following her tirade, an enigmatic hush descended on the room.

Holden looked at her for an extended moment, his lips curling into a sarcastic smirk. "Ah, just as I surmised, the verity behind your actions aligns exactly with my suspicions!" Sadie stared at Holden in shock.

Holden slowly stood up and said in a serious tone, "You were the one who destroyed the monitor on the deck. So we couldn't get it. I just lied to you and unfortunately for you, you are so stupid that you told me everything."

As soon as Holden finished his words, Sadie realized what she had just done.

She looked at Holden in shock, with many thoughts flashing through her mind.

Why did he do that? Did he remember Ariana? Or perhaps he had recognized Ariana's child as his son?

However, Sadie quickly dismissed these thoughts. If Holden had really recognized Ariana or Melon, he wouldn't be so calm.

Puzzled and confused, Sadie looked at Holden and asked in a trembling voice, “Why did you do this to me? Do you really want to do justice to a stranger? I’m also injured! As a matter of fact, I am seriously injured!”

Holden glanced at Sadie indifferently and said coldly, “The person who is seriously injured is the one you wronged! You went too far this time. I hate being lied to, especially when it comes to Adele.”

Since she had already lied to him like this, Holden knew she would most likely do it again. He couldn’t stand it. Before Sadie could retort, he stood up and said coldly, “You should reflect on yourself.”

With that, he turned around and went to the lounge, leaving Sadie alone.

At this time, Ariana and Melon were on their way home.

Melon, who was usually very lively, had been silent along the way.

This was so unusual and Ariana frequently turned her head to look at her son who seemed depressed. Alas, she didn’t know how to comfort him.

Ariana felt so powerless. She knew that Melon was sad because of what happened just now, but she had no way to comfort him. After all, it was Holden’s family’s business, and she had no right to interfere.

Suddenly, Melon held Ariana’s hand and asked, “Mommy, can I play with Adele in the future?”

“Of course! The two of you are friends. As long as Adele wants to play with you, I would never stop you,” Ariana replied with a gentle smile.

“But her mother is so fierce. Adele looks so sad,” Melon remarked and he lowered his little head again.

Ariana sighed helplessly. Adele’s beautiful eyes flashed in her mind, and she felt so sorry for the little girl.

Adele was a lovely child who seemed so sad. Ariana was more than willing to stay with the little girl. However, it was a mother's responsibility to take care of her child, and Adele was Sadie's daughter.

Ariana touched Melon's head and said in a soft voice, "The two of you can meet in the future, and you can play together. Adele likes to play with you, doesn't she?"

Melon nodded, but he seemed to still be a little unhappy. Knowing that there was nothing she could do to better her son's mood, Ariana just stroked the Little boy's head silently.

At the same time, Ariana was puzzled about something. Whenever Sadie saw her with Adele, Sadie would be so agitated, as if she was afraid that Ariana and Melon would get close to Adele.

It seemed almost as if Sadie was afraid of something.

Ariana couldn't figure out why Sadie, who was the fiancée of the head of the Fredrick Group, would be afraid of them.

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Before Ariana could think about it any further, Melon suddenly asked, "Mommy, do you like Adele?"

Ariana was caught off guard by the question, and an image of Adele's adorable little face flashed through her mind. The thought tugged a smile on her lips as she nodded, "Of course, I like her."

Her gentle tone carried a hint of wistfulness as there was a pang of melancholy in Ariana's heart at the memory of her own daughter.

How wonderful would it be if she could have protected her daughter back then?

If her daughter were still alive, she would be as lovely as Adele, and she would play alongside her and Melon and share their cheerful laughter.

Then, Melon piped up again, "Oh, by the way, Mommy. The man who helped me with my hurt just now was the same masked man from last night."

Ariana's heart skipped a beat at this revelation, and it took her a few seconds to process it.

What?! Holden had attended the auction last night, too? And she danced with him without knowing?! The mysterious masked man from last night turned out to be Holden, of all people?!

This completely blindsided Ariana and her heart wanted to deny it. "No way. Really? Are you sure?" Ariana's wide eyes gazed at Melon in astonishment. A part of her hoped he was mistaken.

"Absolutely." Melon sat up straight and crossed his arms over his chest in a rather mature manner. He looked quite sure of himself and muttered, "The masked man looked a lot like Daddy."

Ariana was taken aback for a moment when she realized that this wasn't the first time she heard her son say this. Moreover, Melon had seen pictures of Theodore before and, despite his young age, was good at recognizing people.

A feeling of dubiousness came over her as her mind desperately scrambled to find a mental image of what Holden looked like. But then it dawned on her that she had never seen him in person. Did they really look so alike?

However, Melon was unperturbed and raised his chin to look at Ariana with a nonchalant smile, adding, "But I know it's not Daddy. Many people share a resemblance, but my Daddy is a great hero who's not like anyone else. He'll be back soon."

Melon went quiet, a happy grin on his face as he stared at the road ahead.

He suddenly pointed at an upcoming traffic light and urged, "Mommy, it's a red light! Step on the brakes!"

Ariana snapped out of her daze, pressing her foot on the brakes quickly and bringing the car to a halt. She let out a short breath. Getting lost in her thoughts like this while she was driving was dangerous. She shook her head as if she were shaking all of her thoughts and forced herself to stay vigilant and focus on driving.

When they arrived home that night, she put Melon to sleep and then went to bed. But she found herself tossing and turning, unable to fall asleep.

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Melon's astute observation from earlier that day kept echoing in her mind, haunting her thoughts. Her mind racing, Ariana eventually gave in to her intrusive thoughts, and she picked up her phone, typing the name "Holden Fredrick" into the search bar.

There was barely any information about him online other than articles discussing his status as a business prodigy and the head of the Fredrick Group. Being in a position of power and prestige, there were strangely no pictures of him that she could find.

Just like five years ago, she couldn't find any information on him.

After scrolling through her phone and searching for a while, her eyelids became heavy with sleep. Eventually, she put her phone down, yawned, and allowed herself to drift off.

Early the next morning, the doorbell rang, waking her up.

She was about to get out of bed when Melon, who was already wide awake turned to her with a sweet smile and said considerately, "Mommy, you don't have to get up. I'll go answer the door."

He sprang out of bed and bounded out of the room, leaving to answer whoever was at the door. Ariana remained in bed but could hear the front door open, followed by Melon's excited cheer.

"What's going on? Who's there?" Hearing her son's raised voice, Ariana quickly climbed out of bed and wrapped herself in a coat, padding out into the hallway to see what was happening.

As she stepped out, she was greeted by a large, strange object standing in the doorway. It took her a moment to realize it was an incredibly stylish and high-tech robot model nearly 2 meters tall.

Ariana gaped at it. Melon was whooping in joy, but all she could feel was bewilderment as she examined the robot model more closely. The craftsmanship of it was exquisite, and at a glance, she recognized it as a collector's item, easily worth a million or more.

"Miss Ariana Edwards, I presume? Could you please sign for this?" The delivery person held out a form on a clipboard to Ariana, gesturing for her to sign. She snapped back to reality and explained awkwardly, "I think you've got the wrong address. I didn't buy this."

The delivery person smiled and replied, "Mr. Fredrick sent this over personally."

Ariana quickly figured out that "Mr. Fredrick" was undoubtedly Holden. At this realization, her brows furrowed in surprise.

She had no relationship whatsoever with him, so she didn't want to accept his gift.

She couldn't understand why he suddenly sent her this.

Besides, after her recent conflict with Sadie, Holden's image in Ariana's eyes was far from good. Thinking that he had sent this to apologize on behalf of Sadie, Ariana couldn't help but scoff inwardly.

She had no intention of accepting his gift.

"I'm sorry, but this isn't ours. We can't accept it," Ariana told the delivery man.

"But this is a one-way delivery, and I can't take it back," the delivery man explained, glancing at his watch. He seemed to be in a hurry. "Just take it for now. I have to go on with the next delivery," he explained.

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Ariana didn't want to cause any trouble to the delivery guy, so she accepted the parcel, albeit reluctantly! She planned to return it to Holden after talking to him.

She quickly signed the form and took the item inside. As soon as Ariana closed the door, she immediately took out her phone to call Holden.

It took her a while to find Holden's contact details in her contact list.

Ariana chose to take a friendly approach. Because of this, she did not dive directly into the matter of the package. Instead, she first sent a friendly greeting. However, when she pressed "send", the system displayed a message stating that the account had been deactivated.

Ariana was stunned. Why would Holden deactivate his account? No wonder she hadn't received any notifications about him in years.

Luckily, she had taken Shawn's contact information during their last business discussion. So, Ariana decided to message Shawn instead.

"Mr. Williams, | received a parcel today and | need to know if it is a gift from Mr. Fredrick!" Shawn's reply came almost immediately.

"Yes, Mr. Fredrick saw that Melon liked collectible figurines and the like, so he sent this one. This model is from a new collection developed by the subsidiary of the Fredrick Group."

Ariana was about to send another message to Shawn, telling him that she couldn't accept the gift, but before she could do so, another message from Shawn arrived.

"The situation with Simms has been resolved. He will not make any public appearance for some time. Additionally, Mr. Fredrick is now aware of the truth regarding Miss Pierre's actions towards Melon. All our apologies for the inconvenience."

After reading Shawn's message, Ariana deleted the message she was already typing. She sent another message that read, "So, is this model a peace token that Mr. Fredrick sent on behalf of his fiancée?"

Shawn seemed to be taken aback by Ariana's remark as his response didn't come as quickly this time. However, after a few seconds, he replied with a "LOL", followed by a laughing emoji. This was a little awkward.

Ariana noticed that typing indicator on the chat log was still active, so she patiently waited for Shawn's message.

After a while, another message appeared.

"Mr. Fredrick has asked Miss Pierre to reflect on her actions. This gift is just a token of affection for Melon. Mr. Fredrick really likes him and they get along well."

Everybody could brag about receiving a gift from the CEO of the Fredrick Group!

However, Ariana wasn't overwhelmed by the gift and although she appreciated the kind gesture, she still couldn't bring herself to accept it. "This gift is too precious. Please ask Mr. Fredrick to take it back," she messaged Shawn.

Shawn replied quickly in his usual professional tone, "Mr. Fredrick says that once a gift has been given, there's no reason to take it back."

Ariana frowned as she read the message. She couldn't help but wonder why Holden was so obstinate.

Although she was still not reconciled, she couldn't urge Shawn further. So, she asked directly, "Could you please provide me with Mr. Fredrick's contact information? I'd like to talk to him directly."