

Unconscious 981

Chapter 981

In Adele's room, Devin and the doctor stood with a sense of helplessness beside the bed, coaxing the little girl to emerge from her hiding spot underneath.

"Adele, it's very safe out here. Can you come out, please?" 2

Witnessing this, Holden's heartstrings tightened. Ever since their return from the company event, Adele's emotions had been unpredictable, marked by sporadic outbursts of tears without apparent reasons. The doctor remained unable to pinpoint the cause, yet today, Adele had retreated beneath the bed, adamantly refusing to reappear.

Recalling the doctor's advice suggesting that Holden's direct comfort might offer solace, he resolved to prepare something dear to her heart.

"Adele, look what Daddy made for you!" Holden's words caressed as he approached her bedside, cradling the slightly skewed pink cupcake adorned with a rabbit's face.

"I know you love bunnies the most."

Although the amateurishly decorated pink cupcake he held bore resemblance to a misshapen rabbit, its essence remained intact.

Adele lay silent and unmoving, ensconced in a fetal curl beneath the bed. 3 Disheartened, Holden set the small cake on the floor and retreated to the hallway for a consultation with the doctor. "It appears that something or someone has greatly distressed Adele," the doctor illuminated.

"Her treatment plan needs adjustment, but medication is not the answer for someone so young," the doctor further explained. He then urged, "As I recommended before, the children's charity I suggested previously has achieved remarkable success with cases like this. I truly believe you should take Adele there."

Holden frowned, mulling over the suggestion. Following his conversation with the doctor, Holden reentered Adele's room.

To his astonishment, she had emerged from beneath the bed and was now kneeling beside the cupcake, her gaze fixed intently upon it.

A mixture of shock and elation flooded Holden as he realized that this approach had indeed yielded results. He had come across a video by a blogger where animal-shaped cakes were employed to engage children, prompting him to try it out.

Approaching cautiously, Holden crouched down beside her.

"Do you like it?" he inquired hopefully.

As always, Adele offered no response, her attention unwaveringly locked onto the treat before her.

As he examined his amateurishly decorated creation, Holden had to concede that the lopsided cake bore a rather pitiable appearance.

Yet, he bestowed a tender smile upon his daughter, his gentle fingers brushing the red, swollen spot on her forehead—a reminder of where she had inadvertently bumped it during a previous episode.

"This was Daddy's first try, so it's not perfect. But I promise to bake you an even better one next time," he assured, his words infused with self-encouragement.

To his astonishment, Adele turned her head to meet his gaze and offered a slight, concurring nod.

Chapter 982

Holden stood frozen, his astonishment palpable. Adele's response had caught him off guard. A seasoned warrior on the battlefield of business, he felt a subtle tremor in his hands, a tremor born of excitement. The urge to embrace Adele was strong, but he restrained himself, not wanting to startle her fragile composure. Instead, he pulled his daughter close in a delicate embrace.

“Easy now, my dear. You must be starving after going for so long without something to eat. Allow Daddy to get you something to eat,” he murmured.

As Holden held Adele close, his words triggered a realization as profound as a deep ocean current. Cooking, he mused, was an artful tapestry.

With utmost care, he settled Adele on his lap, his eyes locked on her as she obediently took each morsel he offered. Gradually, her dainty fingers gripped his, guiding the food to her mouth.

Watching Adele eat like that stirred a warmth within Holden that was satisfying. Patiently, he continued feeding her until the last crumb of the cake had vanished, and her glass stood empty. As her emotions steadied into a tranquil sea, she leaned against him and slipped into sleep’s gentle embrace.

With a slightly awkward grace, Holden held Adele, Lulling her into a deep sleep. Exhaustion stealthily crept on the little girl in the wake of all the turmoil.

As he watched his daughter finally surrender to peaceful rest, Holden exhaled a sigh that seemed to carry the weight of a hundred burdens.

Gently, he laid Adele down on her bed, his steps as quiet as a whisper, and exited the room on tiptoe.

Retrieving his phone, Holden sent an image of the skewed cupcake to the woman with the avatar of a blue flower.

Across the digital realm, Ariana’s device beeped, signaling an incoming notification.

Engrossed in revising the project proposal, Ariana’s attention was momentarily diverted as her hand reached for her phone.

Before her was a photograph from the affluent online friend she had been talking to. Observing the image of the oddly contorted rabbit cake, Ariana couldn’t suppress a soft chuckle.

The ears protruded at peculiar angles, giving the treat a curiously ominous aura.

However, with a desire not to discourage his culinary endeavors, she chose a gracious and encouraging response: "You've done quite well there."

Her friend seemed self-aware of his novice skills, candidly admitting,

"My first attempt wasn't a masterpiece." Accompanied by an embarrassed emoji, his embarrassment was evident in the digital emoticon.

"First tries are often a tad awkward, requiring a certain acclimation,"

Ariana pointed out honestly.

"To craft something like this on your very first try is already a commendable feat."

"Thank you. My daughter loved it too."

As she was poised to type "you're welcome," another substantial sum materialized on her screen. Ariana stared at the notification, rendered momentarily speechless.

It appeared that this individual found solace in lavishing others with gifts of money. She also wondered whether this propensity stemmed from a penchant for extravagant expenditure or an abundance of affluence that defied practical depletion.

Chapter 983

Exasperation compelled Ariana to return the money, accompanied by a stern message promptly.

"I'll have no choice but to block and remove you if this persists!" It was underscored by an irate emoji of a kitten engaged in a petulant display.

The sight of the cartoon feline's animated exasperation tugged at the corners of Holden's mouth, eliciting an involuntary quirk. At this moment, her vexation appeared endearingly childlike and charming.

Perhaps pushed by an uncharacteristically good mood, Holden couldn't resist prolonging the conversation. One exchange led to another, ultimately segueing into a discussion about their children.

"Is the mantle of a single parent an arduous one to bear?" he inquired, recognizing the gaps in his understanding of her life.

Interpreting his question through the lens of his own caregiving responsibilities, Ariana mirrored the question, "And what about you?"

Does the role of a single father prove taxing?"

Without hesitation, Holden responded with genuine candor, "Nothing tiring about it. Embracing fatherhood brings me immense joy, and I aspire to be the best father I can be."

Even before Ariana could formulate a reply, he added, "Though I suppose I don't precisely fit the definition of 'single,' as my daughter's mother is very much present in her life."

Following a contemplative pause, Ariana finally unburdened herself, her words flowing like a river's gentle current, "It's heartening to hear that. Unlike my circumstances, I lost my son's father before his birth. To this day, I haven't found the strength to reveal this painful truth to my son."

"I'm sorry." Holden's reply dripped with empathy.

"I regret broaching this topic.

Ariana faintly smiled as she responded, "It's alright. By the way, what led to your daughter falling ill?"

Holden hesitated for a moment. Then, finally, he gave just a vague answer, "Just a minor issue."

Although he felt that Ariana seemed to be a good person so far, he didn't want others to look at Adele strangely.

Ariana didn't delve further into the matter. She just gave a light advice, "As the seasons change, be extra vigilant to keep your little girl warm."

Absent-minded, Holden typed a "Sure" in response. He was preoccupied by his thoughts at the moment.

Holden and Ariana chatted for a short while again before Ariana ended the chat. She had to get back to revising the project proposal.

Alone in the quiet Living room, elbows on knees and fingers intertwined, Holden was deep in thought.

Shawn soon arrived with a tall glass of water and cold capsules. He looked at Holden thoughtfully for a moment and then said, "Sir, your nasal voice indicates that your cold is persisting. Please pay more attention to your health."

Holden nodded, and took a long sip of the refreshing liquid. After a brief thought, he opened his desk drawer and retrieved a business card which he handed to Shawn.

"Do a background check on this organization," Holden instructed.

"TUL do that right away, sir." Shawn took the card with a bow and then quickly read it. It was the business card of a children's charity foundation.

Two days later, Ariana received a notice from the variety show, requiring her presence for the beginning of the filming scheduled for the following week. She only had a few days to prepare. She immediately began assembling documents and checking personnel. She was doing several things at once.

Chapter 984

Whilst she was busy preparing, her phone suddenly vibrated. It was a message notification from a group chat. The message was from Sarah.

“My last tour date was postponed, so I’ll be back in Eleymond this afternoon! Anyone available to meet up and have fun?” Sonia, who was always up for fun, immediately replied, “Me, me, me!”

These days have been so tiring, | desperately need to have some to blow off steam!”

“Cool! I’ll arrange everything. Consider yourself in for an epic night out!” Sarah replied solemnly.

Ariana read the messages in the group chat but didn’t reply. Of course, she wanted to let her friends know she was back in Eleymond too, but she just couldn’t bring herself to tell them.

Sonia was the only person who knew Ariana was back, but she didn’t say it.

Sarah then sent Ariana a private message.

“You’ve been gone for a long time. When will you finally come back to see us? We all miss you like crazy!” Ariana replied in a few words, “Sometime later, quite busy presently.”

“| see!” Sarah’s reply was followed by a sad emoji. She did not insist on the topic.

Staring at the dejected emoji Sarah had sent, Ariana suppressed a smile. She had surreptitiously acquired Sarah’s flight details, and intended to give Sarah a joyous surprise upon her arrival. But for the time being, she had to take care of the morning’s tasks which required her full focus.

Just as Ariana was about to get back to work, a phone call came in.

It was from Jessie, Ariana’s schoolmate in the child psychology courses.

As soon as Ariana answered the call, Jessie immediately inquired,

“Are you still around Eleymond lately?”

“I am, What’s going on?” Ariana asked calmly, while gathering some paperwork.

“Well, we just received an extremely interesting case here. Would you like to take it on?” Jessie asked.

Before Ariana could utter a word, Jessie forged ahead, “This case is unique, the same as those triumphs you’ve skillfully navigated before with kids. Could you spare a moment to look at it?”

Having secured her certification in child psychology, Ariana dedicated her time to the children’s charity organization overseen by Jessie. When other tasks didn’t absorb her hours, she extended her hand there and took on some cases.

However, her current agenda was tightly packed, leaving scarce space to accommodate this fresh case. She contemplated declining, but Jessie appeared to anticipate her positive reply.

Without a breath’s pause, Jessie appended, “Countless local medics, even specialists in child psychology like Debora Ruiz, have been consulted by that family. Yet, no headway has been etched, for this instance is indeed one-of-a-kind. They’ve voyaged all this distance, seeking a remedy. Coincidentally, you’re in Eleymond. Would you not consider giving it a shot? At the very least, you can help one child.”

Ariana’s plan to rebut found itself precluded by his concluding remark. As she contemplated the child at stake, a tremor of uncertainty pricked her determination.

Observing her silence, Jessie persisted, “My confidence in your prowess is unwavering. Let’s leave no stone unturned. Should we succeed in helping even one more child to burst from their cocoon, it’s progress in the right direction.”

Chapter 985

Undoubtedly, this remained the chief aim of their children’s charity organization. Following some contemplative moments, Ariana acceded,

“Very well then, furnish me with their contact particulars, and I shall reach them when time allows.” With an affirmation, Jessie ended the call and promptly sent the contact information.

As Ariana perused it, her gaze snagged on the name “Mr. Fredrick.”

Well, well, Fredrick? Could this be a stroke of fortune or something?

Swiftly, Ariana messaged Jessie.

“Is this perchance Mr. Holden Fredrick from the esteemed Fredrick Group?”

Jessie appeared somewhat taken aback by her swift deduction and responded, “Indeed, it is none other than Holden Fredrick from the Fredrick Group. I was just about to send the specifics.”

Ariana was somewhat at a loss at the sight of the name Holden. Suddenly, she found herself tilting toward refusal. After all, a certain distaste for that woman, Sadie, resonated within her. Being in her proximity was akin to a recipe for vexation!

Even with her serene demeanor, the thought of Sadie triggered a disconcerting unease in Ariana, and she dreaded the possibility of losing her composure and engaging in a clash.

Ariana had her declination primed, yet abruptly, the endearing face of Adele floated into her thoughts, chiseling a chink in her resolve.

Such a composed child. It would be unfair if she continued contending with autism. Moreover, Adele had shown no aversion to her presence. Ariana wavered for a fleeting moment and erased her intent to decline.

ALL things considered, any enmity shared between her and Sadie was theirs to shoulder; innocent children shouldn’t bear the brunt of it.

Nonetheless, Sadie’s thought still brought on a throbbing headache.

Though Sonia had meted out retribution to Sadie on the deck, Ariana found herself vexed by Sadie for no apparent reason. And Sadie's imperviousness to Adele's condition only fanned her ire.

Many therapies necessitated parental cooperation, but foreseeing Sadie's stance was a slippery slope.

Further, Ariana worried that any discord with Sadie could perturb Adele. She needed a strategy to sidestep face-to-face encounters with Sadie.

At that moment, another message arrived from Jessie.

"By the way, the child's parents are caught in the whirlwind of their obligations lately. They'll reach out when the timing aligns. No need for you to initiate contact."

This tidbit brought Ariana solace. She had time for preparation and wouldn't be confronted by Sadie immediately.

Chapter 986

As the sun dipped below the horizon, a plane landed at Eleymond International Airport.

Sarah stepped out of the jetway, shades on her face.

She hadn't changed much over the past five years. In fact, she seemed even more extraordinary than before. She gave off a vibe of maturity mixed with a dash of newfound confidence.

Her tall frame and elegant neck sent a clear message of self-assurance. Despite a flight delay, a throng of eager fans waited for her. They held welcoming signs and when they saw her, their hands reached out, and shouts filled the air, nearly causing a ruckus among her security team.

Sarah took a moment to engage with some of the excited fans and sign a few things. Out of nowhere, a loudspeaker came to life, booming,

“Sarah, I love you! You're the ultimate super beauty!” Even Sarah, usually so composed, looked surprised. Her hand shook and nearly messed up the autograph she was working on. Turning her head, she spotted a masked and hat-wearing female fan.

She was wrapped up snug, even more than Sarah. With a loudspeaker in one hand and a cardboard cutout of Sarah in the other, she was a one-woman cheer squad.

Sarah felt both amused and perplexed. She'd never seen anyone use a boombox the size of a fridge to show their support. It was like they wanted the whole city to know about it.

Yet the loudspeaker-wielding fan never came over for an autograph. Sarah shrugged it off and after signing a couple more things, she made her exit. The loudspeaker didn't let up though. It kept on belting out declarations of love and cringeworthy pick-up lines.

Amid the airport hustle and bustle, Sarah started to feel the weight of all the eyes on her. She hastened her steps toward the underground parking area.

Her security crew eventually managed to shut the loudspeaker up.

As she sighed in relief and was about to hop into her car, Sarah's eyes caught a figure in the rearview mirror, shadowing her. Sarah's eyebrows knitted together in an instant. Her first thought was paparazzi, and that lit a fire of annoyance inside her.

In recent years, the paparazzi had become increasingly nosy, always finding new angles to snoop into her life. They were pros at snapping pictures when she least expected it.

The last time around, they had caught Azriel holding Alina on camera.

They didn't know the full story but spun it into a headline that launched a sea of criticism.

News outlets had been filled with stories like “Young Boyfriend Morphs into Stepfather,” or “Small Town Man Dates Celebrity,” and “Famous Singer Dates Younger Man.”

It didn't bother Aziel much, but it made Sarah's blood boil.

She had been bottling up her anger for a while. Now, they were following her to this place too?

Chapter 987

With her annoyance reaching a boiling point, a tidal wave of anger swept over her. She lunged forward, grabbing the person hiding behind a pillar.

The person didn't put up a fight. Sarah recognized her instantly. It was the diehard fan with the loudspeaker. She was using the cardboard cutout to shield her face, as if she were playing some kind of spy game.

At first, Sarah thought she was just a hyperactive fan and was gearing up to give her a piece of her mind. But then, she noticed a blue diamond bracelet on the fan's wrist.

Sarah's movements froze. Her eyes zeroed in on that all-too-familiar bracelet. She blinked, processing for a few seconds, and then blurted out in disbelief, "Ariana?"

As she said her name, Sarah couldn't help but snatch the cardboard cutout away from Ariana's face, revealing a broad smile. "Surprise!"

As Sarah stepped closer, Ariana ditched the cardboard and Loudspeaker, opening her arms wide for a warm hug.

Sarah was at a loss for words, while Ariana spoke with a big smile,

"So, how's this for a surprise, superstar?"

For Sarah, it was more than just surprising. Realizing who was behind this spectacle, she pulled Ariana into a heartfelt hug. A grin stretched across her face, though she had to make a small jab.

"You had me fooled there. I was about to have my security escort you out." Ariana let out a laugh.

“Even if you had me kicked out, I would’ve found a way back to you.” Sarah shot her a playful look and gave Ariana’s cheek a pinch.

“You set me up, didn’t you? Made me think you’d be gone for a long time.” Ariana’s grin turned sly.

“So, what do you think? Was it a good act of fandom or what?”

“It was amazing,” Sarah shot back, her voice tinged with excitement.

“But if I’d caught on a few seconds later, my way of showing love might have involved some fisticuffs.”

“Would you really have the heart to hit this delicate face?” Ariana pouted, leaning into Sarah as though she were made of glass. “No way could I.” Sarah chuckled, playfully pushing Ariana.

“Enough messing around. Let’s go.”

And so, the two made their way to Sarah’s car.

Chapter 988

As soon as they were settled inside, Sarah burst out, “Why the sudden return?”

Ariana flashed a smile and began, “Melon is doing better, so I thought it was time to come back and kickstart my career here. I’ve even started a company and been in talks about some collaborations.”

“Really? That’s fantastic!” You could practically see the excitement vibrating off Sarah. She also managed to mix in a light complaint.

“You used to swing by Eylemond and then vanish before we could even catch up. Over the years, we’ve spent more time apart than together. Now that you’re here for work, it’ll be so much easier for us to hang out.”

Sarah’s excitement was impossible to miss as she looked at Ariana.

“Speaking of which, where’s Melon? He didn’t come with you? It’s been ages since I last saw him.”

“He’s not at the airport. It was too packed, so I had Sonia take him to where we’re meeting up,” Ariana explained.

“Oh, so Sonia was your partner in crime, keeping me out of the loop,”

Sarah said with a playful sigh.

“Come on, you’re Sarah, the beautiful and kind-hearted star. You can’t be that mad,” Ariana said, trying to lighten the mood. Sarah shot back with mock anger, “Who says I can’t be? I’ll shower Melon with so many kisses, he won’t know what hit him!” “That sounds like a threat. Melon might just make a run for it,”

Ariana said, letting out a laugh.

Soon, the car pulled up to a high-end spot that was tucked away from prying eyes. They headed up to a private room on the third floor.

Betsy was already there when they arrived.

Five years had done wonders for Betsy. Gone was her youthful naivety, replaced by a sophisticated polish that befitted a competent manager.

There were also a young man and woman in the room, both known musicians from Sarah’s studio.

Betsy’s eyes sparkled as she saw Ariana.

“You’re back! It feels like forever!”

After they exchanged some quick hellos, Betsy looked past Ariana and asked, "So where's Melon? Didn't he come with you?" Just then, Sonia burst into the room, her face etched with worry.

"Have any of you seen Melon? | stepped away to the restroom for just a second and he's gone!"

"What? Melon's missing?" Sarah's voice reverberated with urgent concern.

Chapter 989

Ariana felt her mind go numb. Her usually obedient Melon! How could he have just wandered off? She glanced at Sonia, hoping this was some kind of prank.

"You're joking, right? This isn't something to joke about," she stammered.

"| wish | were," Sonia replied, her face a portrait of genuine anxiety.

Awake of dread washed over Ariana, seeing Sonia's obvious distress.

Quick to act, Sarah said, "We need to check the security footage right away. Melon can't be far." "You're absolutely right," Betsy chimed in.

"The front desk should be able to access all the building's cameras. We'll find him."

"Then let's move," urged Sonia, grabbing Ariana's arm to lead her toward the lobby. Sarah and Betsy followed, their strides filled with purpose.

Angela's Library As they collectively sped to find Melon, they burst into the expansive lobby.

Ariana had planned to ask the reception staff about a young boy wandering alone. But then a crowd of people around a man caught her eye. The man was making his way towards the exit.

In that fleeting moment, as he turned his head, a familiar silhouette seized Ariana's attention, pinning her to the spot. That jawline, that nose. She would recognize them anywhere.

“Theodore!” Her voice involuntarily shouted his name. Ariana lunged after the crowd, but security guards swiftly intervened, blocking her path.

Her eyes reddening, Ariana struggled against their hold, straining to see as the man disappeared into a waiting vehicle.

Finally, her energy spent, she stood still, her gaze fixed on the departing car. After a moment to regain her composure, she asked the guards quietly, “Who was that man?”

Assuming she was just another woman captivated by Holden’s allure, the guards offered nothing more than a curt “no comment” before walking away. Many were captivated by him these days and hoped to rise socially through him.

Sonia arrived, her face fraught with worry. “What just happened?” she asked, taking Ariana’s trembling hands into her own.

Holding Sonia’s hands with a grip that bordered on painful, Ariana whispered, her voice shaky, “I saw him. | saw Theodore. | know it was him. He's alive!”

“You need to calm down and think rationally,” Sonia advised gently, her voice a calming balm.

“You've missed him so much, it’s understandable that your mind might play tricks on you, making you see things.”

Hearing Sonia’s reasoned words, Ariana teetered on the brink of emotional collapse.

How could she have imagined it? She was certain she had seen him.

His familiar profile was etched into her memory. She couldn’t be mistaken.

Almost in a trance, murmuring more to herself than anyone else,

Ariana insisted, "It's unthinkable for two people to look so identical, unless they were twins. But Theodore never had a twin brother."

Observing Ariana's near-hysterical state, Sonia felt a blend of frustration and empathy. In a soft yet firm voice, she said, "Enough. If Theodore is truly alive, why hasn't he reached out to you all this time? You're degrading yourself, chasing his ghost like this."

Look at yourself! Maintain your dignity. Would you want Melon to see you come apart like this? Kids pick up on everything Ariana found a semblance of stability at the mention of her son.

"You're right. Let's focus on finding Melon," she said, forcing her tears back.

With renewed resolve, Ariana straightened her shoulders and walked purposefully toward the front desk, exuding poise. Watching her regain composure, Sonia let out a heavy sigh. Her heart weighed down with concern.

While everyone else had long accepted Theodore's demise, Ariana alone clung to fragile tendrils of hope.

If Theodore were indeed alive, yet had forsaken Ariana so inexplicably, Sonia privately vowed to make him regret it. With that thought, she took a deep breath and followed her friend.

Access to the security footage required authorization, so Sarah and Betsy went off to coordinate that. Growing impatient, Ariana and Sonia searched the club, scouring every corner for any sign of Melon.

After a fruitless lap around the premises, Ariana was about to regroup with the others when she heard a familiar, warm male voice from behind her.

Chapter 990

Ariana turned to see Tyler holding Melon, who looked up and sweetly called out, "Mom." Tyler's eyes crinkled as he smiled at Ariana, saying, "It's been a while, Ariana."

Over the years, Tyler had matured gracefully; his features had sharpened, and he looked even more attractive than before while still exuding a youthful appeal.

“Max Anderson!” Before Ariana could exchange pleasantries with Tyler, a stern voice interrupted. She turned to see Sonia storming toward them, visibly irate. “You little rascal, always running off!”

At Sonia’s scolding, Melon’s body stiffened. He retreated further into Tyler’s arms, his face buried against Tyler’s chest as if mimicking an ostrich. His heart pounded. His godmother was angry, and she had even used his full name.

Ariana kept her face stern, choosing not to interfere, as she felt this would be a good learning experience for her son. Tyler, seeing Sonia’s advance, quickly stepped in to defend Melon.

“It’s not his fault; he wasn’t running around. I found him sitting outside the restroom, and we started chatting. I thought a quick walk would be nice, but we lost track of time.”

Sonia, who had been about to tap Melon lightly on the head, paused as Tyler shielded the child.

“I had planned to take him for a short stroll before bringing him back to you. But when I didn’t find you in the private rooms, I realized everyone had gone looking for him.

The staff informed me, so we came down to find you.”

Angela’s Library

Somewhat mollified, Sonia withdrew her hand. Melon seized the opportunity to apologize.

“Mommy, godmother, please forgive me. I know I was wrong.”

Swayed by Melon’s remorseful expression, Sonia’s features softened and she chuckled. With a resigned sigh, Ariana took Melon from Tyler’s arms. She then asked, “I thought you were on a filming project. What brings you back all of a sudden?”

“Actually, we just wrapped up filming this morning. Since | had no other plans and heard about your gathering, | thought I'd stop by,”

Tyler explained, grinning.

Over the past year, Tyler had clinched the Best Actor award at the Golden Apple Film Festival. With his striking good looks and towering height of over six feet, Tyler had both the appearance and the talent to distinguish himself among young actors.

His calendar was jam-packed with various projects, leaving him Little time to visit home.

Just then, Sarah and the others rejoined the group. Seeing Melon securely in Ariana’s arms, they each exhaled a sigh of relief and playfully chided the boy for giving them a scare.