

Runaway 171

Chapter 171

At first, Irene's enthusiasm had clouded his mind.

However, now that Isaac thought about it, she had been cold to him just this morning.

Suddenly, she was getting eager, even inviting him to a hotel.

It was clearly not logical.

"I just wanted to thank you. Is that so wrong?" Irene asked.

"What?"

"Stan taught me a lot today and helped with many decisions," she explained. "I know that he did his best only because of you, so I want to thank you."

"That's it?" Isaac's voice turned quieter.

It was not because she loved him, and wanted to be with him—she just wanted to repay him for helping her?

"Hah!" He snorted coolly and darkly. "So you're giving yourself to me in return?"

Those words hurt Irene profoundly, but she repressed her pain and leaned against his arm, saying, "I love you."

Isaac jammed his foot on the brakes, stopping the car by the road.

His expression stiffened for seconds—her words certainly resounded in his mind!

"Do you know what you're saying?" he asked quietly.

"I do," Irene replied, and it was the truth: she had no choice but to do this.

Lifting her eyes to meet his, she said, "I do this willingly."

Isaac realized then that he was not himself around her, and a single word or a smile from her could

make him angry or sad.

“Oh, you.” He smiled, helpless and captivated.

He knew then that he had fallen within her control!

After he drove them to the hotel, Irene shoved him toward the bathroom once they arrived at their suite.

“Go on, take a shower.”

Isaac’s hand was around her waist, his brow lifted in eagerness as he leaned in to whisper into her ear, “Can’t wait?”

Irene lowered her gaze and urged, “Go on.”

Isaac kissed her between the brows and quietly said, “Wait for me.”

“Okay,” she replied.

As Isaac turned and headed inside the bathroom, Irene’s smile vanished the instant he closed the door behind him.

She walked up to the table where a bottle of red wine was placed, hesitating as she reached for it.

Nonetheless, the thought of her son gave her the resolve to pop the cap, and she poured the drug in as well.

Money Penny had prepared both the red wine and the drug, and she just had to wait for Isaac to come out of the bathroom.

Half an hour later, he appeared in a bathrobe, drying his hair with a towel. “Your turn.”

Irene stood up and gave him a glass of the red wine. “I ordered this, but I haven’t had a taste yet.”

Isaac took it. “Everything here is always up to standard.”

He did not seem to hesitate because Irene had poured it for him.

“Wait here. I just thought of something I should get,” she said, and headed for the door.

Isaac caught her wrist. "What is it?"

"You'll know when I bring it up," Irene smiled and pried his fingers away. "Just stay put."

With that, she left the room without looking back, her hand flinching the instant she closed the door.

She headed for the elevator, and was just about to get in when Kathy York stepped out.

She had dressed up elaborately in a red dress, and her makeup was immaculate—it was obvious she had spent a lot of time on it.

She was not surprised to see Irene. After everything that happened today, she knew that she would be claiming Isaac for herself and was hence smiling smugly. "Henry Jefferson chose me as the next Mrs. Jefferson. Thank you for giving up your place."

Irene quietly entered the elevator and pushed the button to head down, but Kathy placed a hand on the door to stop it. "Henry is sick of you, so know your place and stay away from Isaac."

Irene simply pushed her hand away, and before the doors closed, she said, "That man has a bad temper—you should be thinking about how to appease him instead. Why bother wasting your breath with me?"

As she left the hotel, she wandered aimlessly on the streets.

The myriad colored lights flashed overhead and around her, but it all seemed dull in her eyes!

Moreover, she felt a coldness within her heart even though the weather was warm.

She did her best to take deep breaths and calm herself, and after she composed herself, she tried to stop a taxi, intending to head to Jefferson Manor to get Tommy from Henry. That was when someone grabbed her by the waist from behind!

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Irene cried out in surprise!

"Help—Oof!"

Her assailant had clasped a hand over her mouth, even as she struggled wildly!

Even so, he was too strong for her, and she was dragged into a car... when she suddenly caught a glimpse of the driver.

It was Stan!

Her pupils dilated, and she turned to find Isaac.

But how could it be him?

He should be in the penthouse with Kathy, and he must have drunk the drugged red wine by now!

She stopped struggling then, and murmured gingerly, "What..."

The myriad colored lights outside flashed as their car zoomed along the highway, but Isaac remained shrouded in the darkness as he spoke, "Trying to give me off to another woman, were you?"

His voice seemed to boom with a dark edge!

Irene exclaimed, "I didn't want to do it!"

Isaac was not in the mood for her explanations, however—she had done it, and should therefore admit to it!

His silence left her heart all strung up. "I..."

Meanwhile, Stan had stopped the car at the basement parking lot of the Light Group office building and left!

"How did you find out?" Irene asked.

However, Isaac was so silent she could hear him breathe.

Irene knew that he must be furious, and yet his breathing was even—she was actually doubtful that Isaac drank that wine now.

"You didn't drink it, did you?" she asked.

"Are you really so eager to have me sleep with other women? You'd even coax me and drug me,

because you're afraid that I won't?"

Irene stared at him in the darkness. "Would you believe me if I told you that I did not want to do it?"

"Hah!" He snorted. "Did you really think I would still believe you?"

Before he finished, he had pushed her down and moved above her, and there was no warmth in his eyes—only frustration and rage!

She was actually giving him off to someone else! Who did she take him for?!

"You didn't have to drug me—you're perfectly capable of enticing me!"

With that, he tore open the collar of her blouse.

The interior of the car was hot and stuffy. She did not feel cold from the heavy breathing.

Her throat seemed to have tightened and was ablaze, and the words from her mouth were bitter.
"Stop..."

"Stop, what?" He laughed, and Irene could feel the coldness even without seeing his face.

"You have one chance. Tell me, why did you do it?"

Irene closed her eyes. The whole thing had gone south.

Did that mean Tommy was in danger?

Henry was determined to make her leave Isaac, and abducting Tommy was just the start.

What would he do to Tommy if she stayed with Isaac?

She did not dare to think about that.

"I have no explanation. I planned everything—did you know that I asked your grandfather for help as well? He actually helped me with the divorce—"

Before she could finish, Isaac grabbed her by the throat, pinning her down with a vice-like grip while he ripped off her clothes.

There was a thick layer of vapor on the car windows.

He had been very violent.

Irene sobbed, "Do I have to die for you to let me go?"

Suddenly, she started laughing miserably and maniacally.

Isaac then grabbed her chin.

"What are you laughing at?" he growled, and leaned in to whisper into her ear, remember the man you were with on the night of our wedding?"

"Do you

Irene certainly did, and her lips trembled as she rasped, "How could I not? He was the first man I had, and I cheated on you with him--"

"That was actually me." Isaac pulled her by her hair so that she was looking straight at him. "I was your first."

Irene shuddered in disbelief. Her mind seemed to short out right then, and she could not think.

As she stared blankly, Isaac released her.

"I was being nice to Whitney Cox because she told me that it was her at the hospital that night, but you actually stood in for her, didn't you? I never told you because I thought you hated me for causing the

loss of our children, only for you to betray me time and time again. Did you really think I can't live without you, Irene Spencer?"

Buttoning his shirt, he growled, "You want a divorce? Fine. I'll grant you your wish."

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With those words, Issac got out of the car, slamming the door with a loud bang.

Irene flinched.

"Isaac?"

That night...

It was him?

She dragged her sore body out of the car and tried to give chase, only to realize suddenly that she was buck naked.

Pulling a shirt to hide her chest, she yelled, "Get back here, Isaac Jefferson!"

There was only darkness in the underground parking lot, and the echoes of her own voice were her answer. The hazard lights were flashing, but he was nowhere to be seen.

He was gone.

Irene laughed, and soon tears covered her face.

She was no slut—she had only been with one man, and it was Isaac!

She suddenly had a slight desire for him... to be with him!

She sniffled loudly, and ignored her pain as she picked up her own clothes.

She had decided that she would go to Henry, and tell him that Tommy was no bastard, but was Isaac's son!

After putting on her clothes, her knees suddenly caved and she almost slipped, but managed to catch the car door in time.

She tied her disheveled hair behind her head, and her footsteps echoed within the vastness of the parking lot in the night.

She left and hailed a taxi by the road.

On the top floor, Issac was standing before the curtain window of his own office. There was a river in the distance, illuminated by rows of street lights that reflected faintly off his face, keeping his visage indistinct.

Knock, knock

"Come in," he growled.

Stan entered. "Mr. Jefferson."

Isaac had one hand in his pocket as the other straightened his collar. "Head to the security room and delete the footage from the basement parking lot. You don't have to go to Spencer Holdings from now

on, and tell Mrs. Watson to throw every single one of Irene Spencer's belongings from my mansion. I don't want to see any traces of her."

Stan lowered his head. "Sir..."

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"Do it." Isaac refused to listen to reason.

He had believed that Irene would eventually see that he was sincere, but it turned out that she had a heart of stone.

She refused to fall for him no matter what he did, even persistently shoving him to other women.

Even so, Stan could not help asking, "Because of Kathy York?"

Isaac himself had ordered Kathy's sacking, only to arrange a job for her later.

She must be special to him, or Isaac would not have broken his own rules.

However, Isaac actually only remembered Kathy when Stan mentioned her, and said, "That reminds me. Head over to the manor tomorrow, get the silver crucifix, and give it to Kathy York-

"But that's very important to you, Mr. Jefferson!" Stan could not stay calm just then.

Was Isaac really moving on? Had his passing fancy for Irene already expired, and he now had his eyes on Kathy?

"It's not important now. I'm just returning it to the rightful owner," Isaac said flatly.

Stan understood right then. "The silver crucifix... belongs to Kathy York?"

Isaac was silent, but he might well have said yes.

While he was aware that his grandfather had arranged for Kathy to show up in his life from the very start, he did not know that Kathy claiming ownership of the silver crucifix was Henry's ploy as well.

One must say that Money Penny's idea was perfect—at the very least, Isaac never caught on to their plans on that front.

Irene stormed into Jefferson Manor once her taxi arrived.

Money Penny was not around, so she went straight to Henry.

The old man was mulling over his chessboard, and had yet to retire to bed.

Irene's sudden intrusion actually left him puzzled. "Why are you here? And this late at night?"

She cut to the chase. "Give me back my son."

That actually left Henry confused. "What?"

"You took my son, and threatened me to drug Isaac so that he would sleep with Kathy York. Those were all done under your orders, no?" Irene said icily. "Also, know that the child is I-

"But I never took your son," Henry said, putting down the chess piece he was holding.

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Irene doubted that. Money Penny clearly stated that Henry was behind everything.

Keeping herself as calm as possible, she said, "Tommy is Isaac's son. Do a paternity test if you doubt me."

Henry frowned, appearing doubtful. "What?"

"My child is Isaac's too." Irene snarled every

word.

Henry almost slipped just then—a servant reacted quickly to catch to stop him from falling.

“Go! Get me Moneypenny right now!” he barked.

“Yes, sir.” The servant promptly left to look for the butler as soon as he helped Henry to a chair.

Irene was actually confused just then. “You... didn’t take my child?”

“Why would I lie to you?” Henry retorted. “Yes, I was hoping you’d get Isaac to fall for Kathy York, but I didn’t know about your child. Hell, I would’ve taken the boy away from you at the mansion when we ran

into you last time—even after all that has happened, I’m not that cold that I’d forget the fact that your grandfather saved me.”

Irene was still doubtful, however. “Then why would Moneypenny take away Tommy, while acting as if it was your orders?”

Suddenly, the servant who left to find Moneypenny ran back into the room, exclaiming, “I’m sorry, sir, but Moneypenny has gone missing!”

“What?!” Henry sprang to his feet, losing his composure right then. “Then, start looking!” Irene’s face turned ashen in fear, and she stumbled backwards, almost falling over.

If Henry did not know as well... then her child was in grave danger!

This would not do! She must look for them!

But just as she made to leave, Henry called out, “Where are you going? You don’t even know where they are!”

Irene could not help yelling, “What, am I supposed to wait here?!”

Henry might be old, but he was far from senile—he doubt that Moneypenny would betray him.

Something sinister was afoot!

“Give me time. I’ll have my people look for him,” Henry told her.

Irene could not calm down, let alone stay there and wait.

“I’ll help with the search!”

Henry gestured for his servant to stop her. "You think that'd help?"

"I have to do something!" Irene's tears welled in her eyes—she could not do nothing when her child was missing!

"My people will return with Moneypenny, and we'll get to the bottom of this!" Henry assured her. "Rushing into things does nothing—you'd be no different from a headless fly crashing blindly everywhere. Give me time so that we can find Moneypenny and get to the truth!"

Irene knew that she was just being impulsive and unable to stay calm.

After all, the fate of her son was unknown.

She started to wobble, unable to stand straight.

"I promise you, I'll find them," Henry said he certainly knew Moneypenny thoroughly after the man had served him for so long

Irene did her best to take deep breaths and calm herself.

Everything was far beyond what she could have expected.

After looking at Henry for a while, she could tell that he was not lying.

But in that case, who was the mastermind behind Moneypenny?

Henry thought of the same question, and his first thought was Ian Jefferson and his wife- they did attack Isaac before.

He had warned them to stay in line, but there was still a chance that they were up to no good!

"Does Isaac know about Tommy?" Henry asked tentatively then.

"He doesn't," Irene replied—she did not have the time to tell him.

"Don't tell him for now," Henry said quietly. "With your child's fate unknown, he'll rush into things once

he finds out. You don't want him to do anything dangerous, do you?"

"No, I don't." Irene pursed her lips—she certainly knew Isaac's temper.

If he knew that their child was still alive but missing, he would not just sit and wait.

"Sir, Moneypenny's family is gone. They must have left earlier," one of the servants reported. just then.

Henry's expression turned grave and he rose to his feet. "Let's go."

Remembering Irene just then, he told her, "Stay here and wait for me."

Irene was silent, but she decided that she could not wait—she would leave and start searching.

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Irene decided that she could not sit and wait!

As Henry left for Ian's home, Irene left Jefferson Manor, though she lingered at the gates, wondering as to who would want to abduct her baby...

Bzzt-

Her phone suddenly rang.

When she answered, Sheryl was crying urgently from the other end. "Irene? Please come home quickly!"

"What's wrong?" Irene asked.

"It's the people who took Tommy. They're asking for you!"

Irene became spirited the instant she heard that there was a clue about Tommy's whereabouts.

"I'll be there as soon as I can," she replied, and quickly used her phone to summon a taxi.

That was when a car drove up to Jefferson Manor.

Stan alighted, but averted his eyes when he saw Irene.

For her part, she was actually confused why he would come at this hour. "Why are you here?" she asked.

"There's something I have to get," Stan replied, and headed into the manor.

Irene did not press the subject since she could not spare a thought for anything but Tommy- nothing was more important than her baby.

Still, Stan soon stepped out with a chest, and Irene remembered seeing it.

Henry had also told her that before that the chest was very precious to Isaac.

"Why are you taking that?" she asked in curiosity.

"Mr. Jefferson told me to get it and give it to Kathy York," Stan admitted.

Irene did a double take, and asked, "Isn't it supposed to be very precious to him?"

Stan appeared afraid to look into Irene's eyes. "It's just an object, no matter how precious it is. Also, I don't think I'll be visiting your company from now on—you should consult someone else if you need help."

With that, he got into his car.

Irene quickly ran up to him, asking, "Stan, please explain! What was that supposed to mean?"

"I'm just doing what Mr. Jefferson told me to do," he said as he started his car. "If there's anything you're confused about, just ask him yourself."

"Isaac? He told you to do it?" she pressed.

Stan sighed. "I'll be honest—he adores you very much, and has been most patient with you. And yet, you keep running away or try to fix him up with other women, so I think he's truly giving up on you this time..."

"So he's into Kathy York now?" she rasped. "He's even giving her what was most precious to him?"

"I'm not sure," Stan replied. "I'm just following orders, and again—if there's anything you're confused about, just ask him yourself."

With that, he sped off.

Irene's face was ashen.

So Isaac was serious when he said he would divorce her?

He was already wooing another woman as well, and not shying from giving away his most precious object?

Her lips curled up in a bitter smile.

He had kept saying that he loved her, but he never gave that to her.

It seemed that Kathy was more important, did it not?

As those thoughts crossed her mind, icy tears trickled down her cheeks, but she wiped them away firmly!

Men were volatile, and a man like Isaac even more so!

He was probably sick of her now—she was stupid to think that she could make up with him!

After drying her tears, she reared her head and decided that she did not have to mourn losing a man like him.

He certainly did not deserve to be the father of her child!

Moreover, she had no time to shed tears now—what she must do now was find her child soon.

Her taxi soon arrived after, and she hurried back to Spencer Mansion, asking the instant she stepped through the door, "Who is it? Who took Tommy?!"

Sheryl did not have time to answer when the man in the living room stood up and said, "It's me."

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It was only then that Irene saw the man in the living room.

“You?!” She gaped, but at the next instant, she had bounded forward and grabbed Harvey Gooding by the collar, bellowing, “Why did you take my Tommy?! Give him back!”

“That can be arranged, under one condition,” Harvey replied, calmly looking at her.

“What is it?”

“Marry me.”

“You’re crazy!” Irene’s eyes were red.

“After Isaac did me dirty,” Harvey replied, breathing every word with weighted purpose, “I’d be a failure if I did nothing!”

“Go mess with him all you want!” Irene laughed icily. “What does my child have to do with that? Hell, your proposal is even more ridiculous! Did you take the wrong meds, or did you finally lose your mind?”

“Neither. Right now—no, my mind is clear the instant I took your child,” Harvey breathed with rising agitation. “I knew Isaac Jefferson loved you the instant he spent millions on that painting, and what do you think he would do if I took you from him?”

Irene did a double take, and then laughed so hard she was shedding tears. “You’re really mistaken there he doesn’t love me at all. I would suggest that you abduct Kathy York instead of messing with me. Now, give me back my child!”

“Irene Spencer!” Harvey bellowed. “Do you think I’m an idiot?!”

He had been keeping an eye on Isaac and Irene for a while now. Things had clearly been amicable

between them—he would no longer believe Irene’s claims that Isaac hated her.

Even so, Irene shook her head. “I’m not lying to you. Go abduct Kathy York yourself and threaten him—he’ll pay you anything to get her back. You’re barking up the wrong tree here.”

“That’s fine with me. I like you anyway, and having you as my wife suits me fine even if it doesn’t upset Isaac.”

Harvey seemed to cool off at the thought, and he lowered his voice as well. "I'll advise know your place if you want to see your boy again. You have one day to make up your mind before you come to me tomorrow."

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With that, he strode outside, but Irene promptly ran up to him, begging, "Please, just give Tommy back to me--"

"Marry me." He cut her short with a determined tone.

Irene's temper flared again. "Why? I don't love you, and I won't be an obedient wife even if I marry you.

And you also know that I had a child with someone else I'm not worth your attention."

"That's not up to you to decide, and you having someone else's child doesn't matter. I want you, and that's it." With that, he pried his hands off her. "I'll await your goodness, and make it fast so that your son won't suffer."

"I'll kill you if you hurt him, Harvey Gooding!" Irene cried, grabbing his shirt so hard she clipped her own fingernails—however, she felt no pain, and all she could think about was getting Harvey to return Tommy to her.

"I won't hurt him for now, but I wonder if that stays the same if you don't agree to marry me," Harvey replied.

He was not relenting at all—not until he got what he wanted!

"Give Tommy back, or I'll kill you! Believe it!" Sheryl shrieked.

She had taken a cleaver from the kitchen, and was aiming it straight at Harvey!

She was putting everything on the line—Lionel was dead, meaning that she, her daughter, and her grandson only had each other.

And she would protect them!

Irene had never seen her mother acting so rashly. "Mom..."

“We know he has Tommy, and that’s enough for me! I’ll kill him if he doesn’t release Tommy!

As Sheryl clenched on the hilt of the cleaver, her veins were bulging and her hands shaking.

After all, she was nervous too.

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Sheryl knew that her weakness had caused her daughter many problems in the past, so she must not be weak now.

She would stand before her, and shield her from everything!

Irene’s eyes were red.

“Mom,” she sniffled. “Please calm down.”

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Murder is a crime—Sheryl would be imprisoned if Harvey Gooding died, and she did not want that.

Harvey then added, “I won’t hurt the child, woman. I love your daughter, and will be a better husband to her than Isaac Jefferson when she marries me.”

Sheryl, however, was not so easily fooled. “Don’t bother sweet-talking me—you wouldn’t coerce Irene if you loved her, let alone threaten her with her child. You only see what you want, and you call that love?”

Harvey was taken aback—he actually had no comeback for Sheryl.

Hence, he simply gave up on defending himself. “Kill me, and you’d be in prison. You’ll never see your

grandson again, but your daughter will be worse off because she’ll lose you and her son. Who knows if she’d lose her mind from grief?”

Sheryl stiffened, but Harvey was right—what would happen to Irene if the worst happened to her and Tommy?

Irene went up to her and held her hand then, assuring her, “There will be a way, Mom. Just calm down for now.”

Sheryl's eyes welled with tears as she turned to her daughter. "I'm so sorry... I failed to protect you and Tommy."

"It's not your fault," Irene told her as she carefully took the cleaver off Sheryl's hands. "And I'd rather you and Tommy both be fine."

Then, turning to Harvey, she said, "My answer is yes, Harvey Gooding, but you either promise that Tommy will be fine, or it won't be my mom—I'll kill you myself!"

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"Don't worry I'll take good care of him, since I'd rather you not hate me. Once our wedding is done, you'll see him again," Harvey said, straightening his collar. "I'll decide on a date tomorrow, and I'll grant any requests you have."

"I won't ask for anything. I only said yes because I don't want any harm to come to my child, not because I love you. That's why I'm fine with the wedding, however it goes."

As she spoke, her eyes were glaring fixedly at Harvey, while her tone was cold and stiff.

Harvey thought nothing of it—he was the one who coerced her in the first place.

"Nothing matters, as long as I have you."

With that, he left Spencer Mansion.

Sheryl held Irene's hands then. "If you don't love him, you won't be happy after you marry him... Moreover, you haven't divorced Isaac, have you?"

Irene now understood what was going on.

Money Penny had sided with Harvey, either by coercion or the lure of riches!

"Mom, stay at the mansion and don't go anywhere," Irene told Sheryl just then. "I need to go somewhere."

"Where?" Sheryl was worried.

“Don’t worry. I can look after myself.” Irene started toward the front gates, and ran headlong into another person who was entering.

Irene saw him, but was going to quietly walk past him when he caught her wrist!

She scowled. “What are you doing?”

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Ricky Spencer did not release her, however. “I know that your son was kidnapped. Is there anything I can help with?”

“No,” Irene replied. “Just stick to your lessons on managing the company.”

“Tommy is my nephew even if you won’t admit it. I’m actually worried that he has been taken away, and I just want to help.”

Ricky’s tone was sincere, making it awkward for Irene to brush him off.

“No, I’m serious,” she said patiently. “It’s a great help if you’ll do your best to learn how to manage Spencer Holdings.”

Something changed in the way he looked at her then. “I will do my best,” he replied.

“Good. I have something urgent to do, so please let go,” Irene said urgently.

Ricky did, and Irene hurried outside when she suddenly stopped and turned toward him again. “Listen—the reason our father did not pass down Spencer Holdings to you directly was because he knows that

you’re not ready to lead yet. He may have entrusted Spencer Holdings to me for now, but understand that he loves and cares about you... As for your mother, there’s no question that she made many

mistakes, and I hope you can let go of past grudges and concentrate on studying.”

“What are you saying?” Ricky smiled. “I know that Mom deserves what’s coming to her

“You may be the only one who knows what you are thinking, but don’t take others for idiots.”

With that, Irene hurried off.

Ricky had always been well-behaved around her, even speaking harshly of Samantha White just to curry her favor.

She was not that naive, however.

She understood that Ricky was trying to bridge the distance between them, most likely to take control over Spencer Holdings.

That was why she told him all that—the company would eventually be his anyway, and she had no intention of keeping it from him.

Furthermore, she would rather not have him hold Samantha's imprisonment against her, and stab her in the back in retaliation.

She was already exhausted, and certainly did not need another person added to her list of enemies.

She hoped that Ricky would have a change of heart, even if it was for the sake of past sentiments.

Ricky, however, was left spacing out.

Samantha was his mother and the nicest person to him in the whole world. There was no way he would be unmoved to see her jailed.

Naturally, he was trying to win Irene's trust by being nice, after which he would take over the company and try to save his mother.

However, Irene's words made it clear that she knew what he was up to, and that he must now regard his stepsister seriously.

She was smart, and it was not surprising that the father trusted her so much.

Putting away those thoughts, he entered the mansion to find Sheryl sitting on the couch, and went over to assure her, "Irene will definitely get Tommy back. You don't have to worry."

Sheryl was neutral toward the boy, even though Lionel wanted her and Irene to take care of him, even passing down everything he had to them just for that.

Still, Sheryl was not about to harass Lionel's only son—children should not be made to suffer for their

parents' crimes.

Moreover, Lionel had since passed away, and all grief and hate departed with him.

"I know. You should get some rest," Sheryl told Ricky.

"Okay. Call me anytime you need me," Ricky replied.

Sheryl nodded, and the boy headed upstairs as she stayed at the living room couch.

She could not sleep—her daughter would not be coerced if she had protected Tommy!

Henry had yet to return when Irene arrived at Jefferson Manor, so she waited in the living room for a while.

The old man only returned when it was almost sunrise, and Irene was about to go up and greet him when she saw Money Penny being shepherded into the manor.

He extended a hand, and Irene took it to help keep him steady.

"It's not Ian—I've checked," he said.

The fact was comforting to him.

After all, he had been fearful that Ian's family was involved. If they did, not even Henry himself could shield them from Isaac's wrath.

"By the way, do you know a man named Harvey Gooding?" he asked.

Irene nodded. "Yes. He has beef with Isaac."

"Ah. So he's after Isaac?" Henry asked.

"I don't know," Irene replied.

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In spite of everything that Harvey told her, she really had no idea what he was up to.

Henry breathed a long sigh and said feebly, "This is on me too. I should've noticed that Money Penny

was acting weird, and none of this would have happened.”

Irene asked, “So he was bribed?”

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Henry shook his head. “I trust that man, especially after he served me so many years—no, can’t be bribed. We found out that Harvey abducted his wife and coerced him into advising me so that I finalize

your divorce with Isaac. Now that Harvey has abducted your child as well and forced you to marry him... I have to ask, what’s your plan here?”

Right now, Irene did not want anything to do with the Jeffersons, and a divorce suited her fine.

“You’re unhappy with me, and Isaac is interested in Kathy York. There’s no need for me to stay here—as for my child, I’ll save him on my own.”

Her tone was calm, devoid of rage or indignation.

Having made up her mind, she was certainly relieved.

“But isn’t the child Isaac’s too? He is a Jefferson, and therefore he’ll never be abandoned.”

“Isaac is very much alive, and he can give you as many great-grandchildren as you want. But Tommy is my baby.”

Henry frowned then. “Hold on... Isaac has taken a liking to Kathy York?”

Irene smiled. “He’s probably head over heels for her, too—he gave her his most valued possession, after all.”

“What?”

“Remember the chest I dropped, which left him furious?” she calmly said. “He gave that to Kathy York—just goes to show how much he loves her now.”

Right now, her mood was serene. Even if she did feel a little unpleasant, she refused to show it. Henry glanced at Money Penny just then, and came to a realization.

Although Isaac had seen through his intentions to make him take a liking to Kathy, Isaac had failed to see that they had arranged for Kathy to recognize the silver crucifix as well.

“Irene...”

“Anyway, I just came to tell you that I know where Tommy is, and I won’t breathe a word on whatever you told me not to say. Likewise, I hope you’ll keep Tommy a secret from Isaac—I won’t impose now

that he has a new lover. Feign ignorance, or take it to your grave!”

Henry frowned. “Tommy is a child of our family. How could I feign ignorance?”

“Then what do you want?” Irene asked in retort.

That silenced Henry for a while.

“Why didn’t you tell me earlier that your child is Isaac’s?” he eventually asked. “I would never have kept Kathy away from Isaac if you did...”

“I was lying. Isaac is a perfect match for Kathy York,” she said, and sharply changed her tone. “What are you going to do with Moneypenny now?”

Henry, however, was studying Irene—he was sure that she was not lying, since she was confident enough to let him have Tommy go through a paternity test.

But she was denying it now... could it mean that it irked her that Isaac was with Kathy now?

Moneypenny’s influence had certainly pulled the wool over his eyes, confirming Isaac and Irene’s divorce.

“Irene, please know that you can come to me if you ever need my help. As for Moneypenny, he’s chosen to return even if he could have escaped, and has been very frank with me since- my punishment would therefore be light, but what do you think?”

Irene would naturally not tell Henry what to do. She certainly had grievance against Moneypenny, but he had been coerced like herself, and holding it against him would just make her a petty person.

It would not help her out of her current dilemma either.

“Just deal with him however you see fit. I’m leaving.”

As she strode out of the manor, Henry called out, “I was wrong about you.”

But such words did not matter to her now—she waved, gesturing that she did not mind it, and stepped out of the front door.

She wanted to return to Spencer Mansion, but remembered that she still had some possessions left at Isaac’s mansion, so she headed there instead.

When she entered, she found a suitcase placed right outside the door.

Mrs. Watson did not throw her things all over the place, and instead packed everything tidily into that suitcase.

When she saw Irene return, she stepped out of the mansion and greeted her. “Mrs. Jefferson...”

She appeared hesitant to speak, and seeing that, Irene asked, “My stuff is inside, right?”

Mrs. Watson sighed and nodded.

“Isaac told

you to do this?” Irene knew how nice Mrs. Watson was to her—she would never throw away her belongings.

Mrs. Watson nodded again.

Irene sneered that man was truly heartless, and changed lovers as quickly as he changed clothes!

He was just forcing himself on her last night, and he was now chasing her out of the mansion.

She reared her head and said quietly, “I understand.”

“Mrs. Jefferson... What is it this time?” Mrs. Watson finally asked.

“Mrs. Watson, don’t you think you’re mistaken? I’m no longer Mrs. Jefferson.”

Chapter 180

Kathy was strutting as she walked toward them, her heels clicking in her wake as she passed a lunchbox to Mrs. Watson. "I've made this for Isaac. Take it inside."

When Mrs. Watson did not take it, she smiled, "I'll be the lady of this house soon, Mrs. Watson. How will we get along when you're being this hostile now?"

Mrs. Watson reluctantly took the lunchbox then, her face falling as she turned and headed inside the mansion.

Once she left, Kathy's smile faded. Glancing at the suitcase lined up against the wall, she then turned to Irene. "I hope you never show up around Isaac after you leave. He must have gotten sick of you and

told Mrs. Watson to throw away your things, didn't he?"

Her words actually left Irene agitated.

Yes, Isaac must have gotten sick of her and told Mrs. Watson to throw away her things, did he not?

She reared her head with an impeccable smile just then. "I don't think I'll be the last person thrown out

of here, though. I hope you'll prove to be an evergreen and never get thrown out, Ms. York."

Kathy's face fell. "Are you trying to jinx me?"

"I'm not, but I should tell you that men are prone to change. Did you think he won't dump you just because he dumped me? What goes around comes around, y'know."

With that, Irene giggled and pulled her suitcase along to the gates.

Kathy bit her lip. "What are you getting smug about?! You're being dumped!"

Irene was not bothered to respond—even if Kathy thought that she had hit the jackpot, she would end up like Irene with a volatile man like Isaac.

Also, she was only showing Kathy sympathy, and not getting smug. What was there to be smug about being dumped?

She just did not want to become a laughing stock, and retained what dignity she had left.

Kathy was seething. "Irene Spencer! Did you hear what I said?!"

"What?" Irene turned and asked.

"Don't ever show up around Isaac!" She snarled every word.

"Oh, sure." Irene laughed.

Her smile left Kathy sickened, and she snapped, "You're being dumped, and you're still laughing? Are you even human?!"

Irene simply pretended she never heard her and stopped a taxi, putting her suitcase in the trunk before leaving.

As she returned to the Spencer mansion and dragged her suitcase through the front gates,

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Sheryl came out to help her. "You're moving out from Isaac Jefferson's mansion now?"

Irene nodded, and her weary look left Sheryl with a heartache. "Eat something before you get some sleep."

"Okay," Irene said, just so that Sheryl did not worry.

Irene took a nap after a light meal, but she was not sleeping soundly, and woke up when she heard something.

Rubbing and opening her eyes, she saw that it was Zachary Slate and Lulu Adams, and she sat up.

"Irene,"

terrible."

Lulu said as she sat beside Irene and checked her face. "Are you okay? You look

Irene shook her head. "I'm fine."

“Are you still mourning your father? My condolences.” Lulu comforted her.

Irene smiled, but did not tell her about her current situation.

“Anyway, I’m visiting to tell you that I’ve bought a train ticket back to Sunny City today. I have to go back,” Lulu said then.

Irene turned toward Zachary and asked, “Splitting up again?”

Lulu smiled bitterly. “His mother won’t accept me so soon. We need time to work on it, but I can’t stay here either—I need to get back to work.”

Irene understood where she was coming from.

“Well, I’ll go to the station with you guys,” she said, but Lulu kept her on the couch.

“You don’t look too well, so just stay home and rest. I just need Zachary to see me off.”

Irene was certainly exhausted, and she smiled. “True. And I’m excess baggage when Zachary is around anyway.”

Lulu gave her a good-natured smack. “Oh, you.”