

Runaway 371

Chapter 371

Irene did want to weasel her way out of that and deliberately miss the point.

Judging from Isaac's reaction, however, she was not getting out of this if she did not explain herself.

Clearing her throat, she said, "So... Lulu and Zachary were fighting because Zachary cheated on her. Lulu was feeling terrible, so I drank with her... and ended up having too much to drink."

"Why was Harvey with you?"

That was what Isaac cared most about, so Irene continued, "Lulu wanted to get drunk, but I couldn't think of any places. Harvey suggested that nightclub, and we used his private box..."

Her voice trailed off at the last part.

"And?"

"And I kept Harvey outside, while Lulu and I drank inside. Check the cameras if you don't believe me."

She might have drunk too much yesterday, but she still remembered everything before she got drunk.

Bzzt-

Isaac's phone suddenly vibrated on the table, and he picked it up to see that it was another photo from Harvey.

It was from one of the nightclub's cameras, and it showed Harvey having his hands around Irene.

At the time, she was heading to the washroom but tripped, and Harvey caught her in time.

However, in the absence of context, it was a photo of them being very close. Moreover, from that angle, it looked more like he was just hugging than keeping her on her feet.

As Isaac scowled visibly, Irene kept quiet and craned her head for a look... time seemed to freeze right then, just as she scowled too.

"I just tripped over a table, and he caught me in time," she quickly explained, while cursing Harvey in her mind.

Why would he send that to Isaac? Was he crazy? Had he not messed with her enough?

"I was drunk..."

As she kept trying to explain, however, Isaac suddenly got out of bed.

"Isaac..."

"I'll get to the bottom of this."

With that, he took off his sleeping gown right in front of Irene, revealing his chiseled, muscular chest. His figure was like a sculpture by a master craftsman—flawless and impeccable.

He kept her back to Irene as he changed in silence.

She would actually have felt more secure if he had flipped out at her or argued.

His silence simply showed that he was really upset and concerned about the matter.

Irene pursed her lips—she did not mean to do it, not to mention that she had no idea he had already returned to the country.

“You never called when you went abroad. Did you know how much it hurts?” she snapped as she stared at

Chaos in

him from the back.

*And did you call me?” Isaac asked in return.

Was he not hurting too?

Irene was silenced right then—he had a point.

“I was busy... And I just discovered something important-”

“I know you are. You don’t have to keep telling me—it’s annoying.”

With that, Isaac strode out of the room, even as he remembered what she told him: she could set him aside for the sake of her career, and that she believed that he only cared about money and power.

What did she take him for? Why did she keep emphasizing that she was very busy as if it only applied to her? Did he look like he had been goofing off?

Irene was left at a loss for words, and stood where she was for a while and wondered what he meant.

Nonetheless, she quickly got changed and left for work without breakfast.

She had done nothing wrong, and she could not do a thing if he still doubted her.

Explaining would also be futile, and he can investigate as much as he liked.

Naturally, Irene was feeling grumpy as she left, and it showed on her face.

When she arrived at the hospital, she inadvertently knocked into someone.

“Sorry,” she said in apology without even looking up.

“Wait,” the other person told her, and she finally looked up.

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Irene’s face fell when she saw who it was.

Whitney was glaring at her viciously. “Irene Spencer—I don’t know how your chief managed to persuade Chad’s father to not pursue the matter, but I won’t let this slide.”

Irene backed two paces away to keep her distance.

“You know very well how you lost your child. Keep obsessing and you’ll only hurt yourself further.”

“You’re the one who hurt me. Do I have to suffer like this now if not for you?!”

Whitney’s eyes were scarlet—she believed that Irene was the cause of all her suffering, and she definitely would have stayed at Isaac’s side if not for Irene.

Irene was the reason Isaac hated Whitney now!

On the other hand, Irene did not want to keep talking with Whitney because she clearly was less than sane now.

“Greed, wrath, and ignorance. You ticked all the boxes of evils,” Irene coolly retorted. “Keep being stubborn, and you’ll lose Chad too—remember, you’re the one who denied him a child.”

However, Irene had also deliberately said that out loud because she spotted Chad himself approaching them nearby.

Whitney, who had her back toward him, did not know that he was there—she had her eyes fixed on Irene, her gaze one of fury.

“So what if I aborted the child? Chad is completely convinced that you pushed me down the stairs and caused my miscarriage. You’re the one he hates, and he’ll definitely want payback. Don’t think you’ll ever get away from this!” Whitney growled.

Irene smiled. “Oh, I can’t do anything to you... But I’m confused—how could you bear to abort your own child? It’s your flesh and blood—”

“So what? I never wanted a baby, and aborting it while framing you just so that you’d suffer? Worth it.”

Whitney clearly showed no remorse, while Irene shook her head—Whitney really was as crazy as she was beyond saving.

Anyone who would want to be with her must be so out of luck!

“You don’t want the baby, but Chad does. Have you not considered his feelings at all? Or the fact that he’d be hurt? You’re even married now...”

“No, you’re the only one he hates. Even now, he’s convinced that you’re the reason for my miscarriage—”

“Whitney Cox!” Chad bellowed right then.

Whitney froze at his voice, and quickly came to a realization.

“You baited me into confessing...?”

Irene was not bothered to respond at that point, and strode past Whitney into the hospital.

Whitney did not stop Irene, because she knew that her priority was to keep Chad at her side.

Every crime she committed was only possible because of him!

“You misunderstand, Chad. Don’t listen to Irene, she’s the reason our child was lost-”

“Shut up!”

Chad’s eyes were red even as he grabbed her wrist so hard he could snap it.

Whitney’s face contorted in pain. “You’re hurting me, Chad...”

Even so, Chad tightened his grip instead of letting go. “I heard everything. You didn’t want the child, and you’re now trying to say otherwise? Have I done anything wrong? Why did you do this to me?! You murdered our child!”

Whitney shook her head. “It really wasn’t me! It was Irene, I swear to God!”

At this point, all she could do was deny it, repeatedly explain and even pretended to swear just so that Chad would believe her.

However, Chad was not in a mood to listen. The instant he learned that Whitney was the one who killed their child, he was incensed, scarcely able to accept that reality just then.

“You’re coming home with me right now,” he growled as he dragged her to the car.

Whitney was crying a river. “Chad, please believe me. You have to believe me!”

Although Chad used to give in to her demands whenever she started crying before this, he was not doing that this time, and forcefully shoved her into the car!

Meanwhile, Irene was feeling a headache and rubbed between her brows.

She had to run into Whitney of all people this early in the morning!

It just so happened that Harvey arrived at the hospital with his mother’s breakfast and saw Irene in the hallway.

He was actually surprised that she showed up at work today.

“You’re actually working? Wasn’t Isaac upset with you?” He beamed.

Irene glared at him. “Why did you send him those photos? Did you lose your mind?”

Harvey was not upset with her reaction—she had reason to be angry, and he could actually understand where she was coming from.

“Do you remember how many times Isaac messed with me? It’s just a little payback.” Harvey then glanced at her sideways. “Is he upset with you? Was he furious?”

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Irene said, “No, Isaac isn’t furious, but I am—are you trying to drive a wedge between us? I didn’t take you for such a person.”

Harvey only wanted to upset Isaac, and did it in the knowledge that he would make things difficult for Irene.

He naturally could not argue now that Irene was upset with him, and smiled apologetically. "Come on, don't think of it that way! If he becomes distrustful and gets angry at you, it's a sign that he only loves you that much."

"Fuck off," Irene cursed at him right then.

This was neither about love or trust—she would be uncomfortable if Isaac had ended up drunk and then shared a room with another woman.

That was why she understood why Isaac was grumpy over that.

As for trust? Their relationship only began recently, and it was no flaw that they did not have unconditional trust in each other.

However, she was confident that they could do it as time went by.

Suddenly, she said, "You'd better hand over all of last night's security footage to Isaac."

Harvey stayed silent, and she frowned. "What, are you refusing? Don't you forget that I saved your mom, or is this how you repay me?"

Harvey quickly said, "No, but..."

"But, what? Don't dilly-dally." Irene was getting impatient.

As such, Harvey came clean. "I deleted all the footage except the part where I had my arms around you, and you tripped me..."

Irene's face turned dark from frustration. "You did that on purpose."

Harvey nodded. "Well, yeah. I was going to show that to Isaac too."

"Go to hell, Harvey Gooding." Irene growled in rage.

It was the first time Harvey saw her losing composure, and finally realized the gravity of the situation. "You're really upset?"

"What, do you think I'm faking it? Also, get out of my sight—I don't have time for you." Irene was glowering, so furious at a person for the first time that she was at a loss for words.

Composing herself, she headed toward Stephen's office, though Harvey was following her. "Sorry, I didn't

mean to="

"Stop following me," she snapped.

Harvey stopped in his tracks. "Are you really angry?"

Irene was not bothered to respond.

Stephen was having a discussion with a man when someone knocked on his office door.

He answered the door himself, and seeing that it was Irene, he said, "Come in."

Irene did not do so right away. "You have a guest?"

"It's a patient's family member and a friend. Come on in." Stephen said.

Irene nodded, though the man sitting in front of Stephen's desk never turned around.

Looking from behind, he projected a cold and stern presence, as if he was hard to get along with.

"Mick, allow me to introduce you to Dr. Spencer. She might take over my practice in the future."

Stephen told the man, and he finally turned around.

When Irene saw her face, she realized her hunch was right—he had the air of a stern man, and his chiseled facial features carried a sense of grimness.

Stephen then told Irene, "I'll be having a consultation with an old patient of mine tomorrow and you'll be assisting."

"Stephen." Mick Gooding was clearly reluctant to involve Irene.

Even so, Stephen told him, "Don't worry. She is trustworthy, and she'll be my stand-in if I happen to be indisposed for a surgery."

When Mick appeared to be hesitant, Stephen continued. "Her condition can't wait. I really hope you can make a decision as soon as possible. Also, you have nothing to worry about—there won't be a leak from our end. Can't you trust me? Haven't we been friends for years?"

Mick turned toward Irene thoughtfully then.

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Since she entered the room, Irene had shown no interest in their conversation.

After all, everyone had secrets.

Seeing that she was not prying and that she was quite composed, Mick said, "Alright, I'll bring her in tomorrow."

"And I'll have everything prepared and waiting," Stephen replied. "She'll be the first one to be examined tomorrow—I know you're concerned, but I'll do my best to keep her away from the public."

"I'm counting on you then," Mick said, rising to his feet.

Stephen escorted him out, and soon returned.

Since Irene still did not ask anything, Stephen nodded in approval. "You're not curious at all?"

"I actually am," Irene admitted. "But I shouldn't pry, especially when patient confidentiality is concerned." Stephen smiled, and pulled out a patient's file.

It was the patient from last time, whose photo bore a striking resemblance with Isaac's mother. Irene's eyes widened when she saw it—this was the person Stephen and Mick were referring to? She then noticed that there were no medical conditions listed on the file.

"What's her condition?" Irene asked.

"She's not sick," Stephen replied.

"What?" Irene's curiosity was piqued once again—why would the woman need a consultation if she was fine?

And there was a file of her as well, even though it was likely that this was the only copy, and Stephen was keeping it to himself without making any digital copies in the hospital databases.

Stephen said. "It's personal. I can't tell you unless it's necessary, but I hope you won't pry."

Irene nodded. "Understood."

"Check with the admin. Find out who is handling CT scans tomorrow—and you'll join me for surgery in the afternoon."

"Okay," Irene replied, and kept her hands in her lab coat as she headed to the CT scan room.

There, she spotted Henry and Moneypenny having a conversation as they headed to the patients' wards.

They must be visiting Greg, and when Irene overheard them mentioning Isaac, she hid herself to eavesdrop.

"Master Isaac returned from Minerva yesterday, sir...but do you really think Yvaine Lynd is alive?"

Even as he said it, Moneypenny clearly sounded skeptical. "There's no one surviving in her family... Maybe it's just a doppelganger?"

"Honestly, who knows? By all accounts, she should not have survived, and that woman might just be at doppelganger as you've put it, and not Yvaine."

Henry had no clue either, but he did not care if his own daughter-in-law was alive, since he was basically rejoicing. "Thank goodness we managed to protect Ian. Even if Light Group is basically bankrupt, we still

stand a chance now."

"That's true." Moneypenny sounded emotional. "If Master Isaac had refused the deal, it would be game over and Master Ian would be crushed by debt."

"Oh, I also made sure that Quincy Moore's marriage to Master Greg was annulled before her execution. She's no longer a member of our family now, so the Moores collected her body."

Henry listened but stayed silent—now, they had pruned what had to be done away with, and saved what they needed.

Either way, their dynasty was going to suffer a decline.

Even so, Henry pinned all his hopes on Ian. "I can only hope that the child can make me proud."

Isaac certainly had before, but he would never serve the Jeffersons now that things had gone far beyond the point of no return.

"Can Master Greg be discharged now?" Money Penny then asked.

"I think so." Henry said.

The thought that one of his sons being dead and the other crippled left Henry blaming himself considerably. "It's all my fault."

His decisions only made things worse.

"No, sir," Money Penny assured him even as they walked off into the distance.

Irene emerged from hiding just then.

They had mentioned Yvaine Lynd... were they referring to Isaac's mother?

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Judging from the photo she stumbled upon on Isaac's desk, as well as the patient's file she saw, Irene realized that the two seemingly unrelated events were actually inextricably connected.

She might be meeting the woman in question tomorrow, too...

In the past, she would not have eavesdropped about others.

However, this concerned Isaac, so she wanted to find out if the patient was Isaac's mother.

And who was Mick Gooding? Why would he be so attached to her?

Also, his reluctance to let others find out about the patient meant that there was something fishy involved.

Making up her mind, she headed to Admin to finish her errand, and returned to Stephen's office.

Stephen was not around, and she stood by his desk, hesitating for a moment before picking up the patient's file

Opening the folder, she was stunned when she saw the note that Stephen had performed a craniotomy on the woman named Layla Gooding.

Craniotomy? But Stephen's specialty was cardiovascular diseases!

Moreover, there was no record of Layla having any cranial medical conditions, only the procedure itself.

And as Irene was about to read through the key points, she heard someone outside say, "Dr. Carr."

That meant Stephen had returned, so she quickly put the file back where she found it and made sure it looked like it was not touched.

Then, she pretended to be idling and waited until Stephen entered, flashing a smile, “Dr. Carr. Where were you just now? Anyway, I’ve spoken to Admin—Dr. Lohan will be at the CT scan room tomorrow morning.”

Stephen glanced at the table, and nodded when he saw that nothing was out of place. “Alright. Be here early tomorrow—you can go back to work now.”

As Irene turned to leave, Stephen sat behind his desk and stared at the document folder in front of him for a while.

There was something strange about that look in his eyes, as if he could tell that Irene had read it, but he did not expose her.

On the other hand, Irene heaved a huge sigh of relief once she got out of Stephen’s office.

It was the first time she snooped around like this!

That was when her phone suddenly rang, startling her.

Patting her chest to calm herself, she then whipped out her phone and answered it.

It was Lulu.

“I’m right outside your hospital. Are you free right now? We need to talk.”

“Okay,” Irene replied—she just happened to be free, and quickly headed outside once she hung up.

She saw Lulu standing at the main entrance from afar, and Zachary behind her.

She stopped in her tracks.

No way... Had they made up already?

But she knew Lulu—she should be unable to accept Zachary’s duplicity.

Moreover, Lulu appeared tired.

Irene took a moment to compose herself before going to them. “Zachary, Lulu.”

Lulu was not smiling, but did so when she saw Irene.

“You came together?” Irene asked before they said anything.

Lulu nodded and asked, “Are you free right now? There’s something we have to tell you.”

Irene nodded. “More or less.”

“Let’s go somewhere quiet,” Lulu said and pointed at the garden behind Melville Hospital—there were not many people there at the moment.

“Sure,” Irene replied.

As they walked, Zachary remained silent and kept his distance from Lulu.

They appeared more like strangers than lovers now—even friends would be a stretch.

Irene had a foreboding feeling just then, and it soon came true.

“Irene, we’ve decided to break up and stay friends from now on,” Lulu said.

Irene turned toward Zachary. “Hey...”

Zachary stayed silent, but the look on his face was horrible.

Irene decided that she could not say anything about that—this was their relationship, and their own issue.

The problem was their disparity in family backgrounds, and Zachary’s mother’s obstinate protests.

She understood that Lulu could not compromise, because as a woman, she needed contingency.

As for Zachary, he was caught in between his beloved Lulu and his own mother, and it hurt him to stay stuck in between.

“We came together to tell you because you’re our friend,” Lulu said just then.

Irene nodded, knowing that she could say nothing or meddle—they were adults with their own mindsets and considerations.

“We’ve made peace—we didn’t argue, and if we do see each other again, we’re still friends,” Lulu said, and turned toward Zachary. “Right?”

Zachary turned away, still silent.

“Alright, I’ve said all I needed to say, so I’ll get going now. You should get back to work, Irene.”

Lulu appeared unemotional and unaffected—she was way past hysterics, and it was time she learned to let go.

-As she left, Zachary was going to follow suit but Irene stopped him. “Zachary.”

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Zachary stopped in his tracks but did not turn around. “Don’t ask. Everything she said is right—I’ve done her dirty.”

He was very clear about it, affording Irene no space to argue.

“Take care of yourself, Zachary.”

Zachary heaved a deep sigh then, and left, while Irene returned to work.

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Over at Spencer Mansion, Lulu was packing her belongings.

Sheryl Harris was helping her, and she told Lulu, “You can visit anytime you want if you miss Irene. Think of this place as your home, and we have more rooms than we need. I’ll save one so you can come here anytime.

Lulu’s toughness crumbled from Sheryl’s warmth.

Tears welled out of Lulu's eyes right then, and she firmly wiped it away. "Thank you."

"It's no issue, Sheryl said, patting her on the back of her hand and adding mildly. "You're like a sister to Irene and you've helped her a lot. From where I'm standing, you're both my children."

Lulu could not say anything then, because she was already choking with tears and would not be able to hold it in.

Once she was done packing, Sheryl was walking with her to the front gate when Ricky just happened to

return.

It appeared that he left something at home, and his eyes widened when he saw Lulu holding her suitcase. "Where are you going?"

"Back to Sunny City." Lulu forced a smile. "Come visit me when you can. I'll buy you some good food."

Ricky tugged at her. "Don't go."

Lulu gave him a look. "This isn't my home, so I can't stay forever. Even so, I'm grateful that you took such good care of me. I'll remember your grace, and if I have the chance, I'll be offering you lodging instead."

She then added jokingly, "I hope you wouldn't have to do that, though."

Even so, Ricky said, "Come on. You can stay a little longer."

"I've stayed long enough," Lulu replied. "And I still have a job."

Ricky gave up then. "Can I at least offer a ride?"

"Sure, thanks."

Ricky helped her put her suitcase in the car trunk, and align the way to the station, Ricky asked, "You seem in a hurry. I'm guessing you broke up?"

Lulu turned to study him. "Why do I get this feeling that you were eager for that to happen, brat?"

"Oh, come on—a man who hurts you doesn't deserve you."

Lulu almost laughed in amusement. "Do you even understand how relationships work, kiddo? It's like you're Dr. Romance or something."

"I'm not a kid," Ricky countered. "I actually manage a company, and I have been in relationships myself."

"Oh, really? Do tell—how many girlfriends have you had?" Lulu asked in curiosity just then.

"A handful."

"Who do you think you're kidding?" Lulu was skeptical—Ricky had just recently become an adult.

Was he saying that he started dating at school?

As such, she did not take him seriously.

Nonetheless, the car soon turned quiet, and neither of them spoke.

Ricky was sneaking glances at Lulu from time to time.

For Lulu's part, she was still too despondent over her breakup with Zachary to notice that Ricky was watching her.

No matter how much of a tough front she put up, their relationship had lasted, only for it to end in a break up.

She would be lying if she said that it did not hurt.

"The one who doesn't stay with you until the end just isn't the love of your life," Ricky assured her just then. "The one who does is.

Lulu giggled. "Eloquent, aren't you?"

"Of course." Ricky reared his chin rather proudly.

However, once they arrived at the station, Ricky could only walk her to the ticket booth.

He then waved her goodbye. "Remember to call me when you get home."

"Okay," Lulu replied.

Meanwhile, Isaac arrived at the exclusive nightclub only to find that the security footage was all gone.

Someone had clearly meddled beforehand.

When Harvey was told that someone was asking for the footage, he instantly knew it was Isaac and rushed to the scene.

Irene was really angry at him, and he should really do something about it.

Even though he was eager to have Irene fight with Isaac, actually doing that was despicable.

When he arrived, Isaac was just stepping out the front door.

"Are you here for the footage?" Harvey smiled—it was rare for him to be one up on Isaac.

Nearby, Stan wanted to beat Harvey up the instant he saw him, and was eager to do so at any moment.

"Feeling guilty, are you?" he snapped. "Is that why you had the footage erased? Because you did something that must not be seen?"

Harvey had every intention to defend Irene, but was left incensed by Stan's words and snapped, "Yes, I deleted it on purpose, because I was afraid Isaac here would get a heart attack if he saw what actually happened last night."

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Harvey's words were a barenaked challenge.

“Really?” Isaac smiled faintly in response, his tone clear and rumbling as if emitted out of his chest.

Harvey stared warily at him. “Yes, you’ll definitely get upset if you saw—there’s nothing between me and Irene, and I had the footage deleted because I don’t want you to misunderstand.”

However, it would have been better if he did not explain.

The more he did, the more others would feel like he had done something shady last night.

“I think you’re just guilty that others would find out,” Stan growled—his distaste toward Harvey did not happen overnight, and he had always thought Harvey shameless.

Even Harvey himself felt that his attempts at explanation turned out badly.

Stan now seemed certain that he did something wrong, while Isaac glowered intimidatingly.

Could he really keep talking, given the situation? Or maybe he should show Isaac the videos he had... but would that not worsen the misunderstanding?

Whatever.

“Believe what you want. I didn’t take advantage of Irene when she’s drunk, and that’s the truth.”

With that, he turned and ran, because he was afraid of being caught.

Naturally, that response made him appear guilty to Stan and Isaac.

“He’s definitely a rogue, sir. We can’t take his word at face value,” Stan said just then.

On the other hand, Isaac had wiped Irene’s body, and was certain that her body had not been touched.

However, Harvey was acting evasive and suspicious.

Either way, if he did save the footage, they were going to find it.

“Find a way to hack his computer.”

“I’ll do my best.” Stan replied—since their target was Harvey, he did not mind going the extra mile!

Bzzt-

Isaac’s phone suddenly started ringing, and he answered it.

“Sir,” James greeted from the other end.

“Yeah. Is the result out?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Tell me.”

“Layla Gooding is your parent,” James replied. “Our people are watching them now, and they just sent word that she’s flying into the country.”

Isaac remained still, his chin clenching just then. "Got it."

Layla, Yvaine... Both names meant 'night'.

It was no coincidence.

"Also, identify the man she's with," he added calmly.

Those who knew him were aware that the calmer he was, the more restless he was inside.

After all, no one would be calm if they learned that a family member who they presumed dead over more than a decade was actually alive.

"Yes, sir," James acknowledged, and hung up.

As for Isaac, his expression darkened as he pocketed his phone, and there was no emotion to be observed from his calm visage.

Even Stan, who usually was not as attentive as James, knew that Isaac was in a bad mood and did his best not to upset him.

"I'll hack Harvey's computer," he carefully said.

"Yeah," Isaac replied coolly, and Stan promptly made himself scarce.

Alone, Isaac headed home. Finding Tommy lying in his crib, Isaac scooped the infant up in his arms.

Tommy was excited and happy to be carried, and started flailing his little hands.

"Mah-mah-

The baby babbled—it was the entirety of his vocabulary.

At the same time, Isaac carried him over the couch, his mood calming thanks to Tommy.

He thought to himself that no parent would bear to abandon their child—if Yvaine Lynd had indeed been hiding abroad, she must have had her reasons. She would never have done that on purpose or forgotten about him.

"Mah-Mah..." Tommy's mushy voice was utterly adorable, and Isaac could not resist pinching his cheek. "Say Dah-Dah."

Tommy giggled and snuggled his little head up against Isaac, drooling all over his neck.

Mrs. Watson arrived with Tommy's dinner just then, saying, "It's time for little Tommy to eat."

"I'll feed him," Isaac said.

"Okay," Mrs. Watson handed the bowl of baby oats to Isaac, along with a tiny spoon.

Isaac had yet to master feeding a baby, but he definitely could do it, and there was a gentleness despite a slight clumsiness. Moreover, Tommy being a glutton helped matters.

Usually, the baby would be sleeping right after he was done eating, but he seemed especially spirited today. He may be reluctant to sleep because he was in his father's arms.

Isaac kept carrying him when Stan suddenly arrived.

He was certainly efficient with his task.

"I found the footage on Harvey's computer..." Isaac looked up.

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Stan was suddenly afraid to show it.

Harvey did not encrypt his computer because he probably did not expect it to be accessed by someone else. He even kept it on his desk, which was why Stan did not even need to really have to hack anything.

After getting the footage, however, Stan took a look at it himself beforehand and knew that Isaac would definitely get upset after he saw it, and was suddenly unwilling to show it.

Stan suggested, "It could just be a misunderstanding, right?"

Isaac scowled right then—he might have accepted that if Stan had not said it, but now that he did, it clearly meant that there was something fishy.

"Mrs. Watson," he called out.

Mrs. Watson quickly hurried to him. "Yes, sir?"

"Take Tommy to his room."

"Okay."

Mrs. Watson was usually carrying Tommy around anyway, so the baby was used to her touch.

After they left, Isaac turned back toward Stan. "Give it to me."

Stan hesitated for a moment, and put the USB flash drive that he copied the files into on the table.

"I'll get going if there's nothing else," he said.

Isaac shot him a look. "Are you really that scared?"

Stan quickly shook his head. "No... I have to keep an eye on Remy, don't I? Oh, and there's a video conference at 4 p.m."

"Got it," Isaac said, picking up the USB flash drive.

Stan lowered his head, "Then... I shall get going?"

Isaac did not respond, but it was basically a silent approval.

With that, Stan left the mansion and heaved a sigh of relief after he did—he had somehow managed to escape!

On the other hand, Isaac headed to his study and plugged the USB flash drive into a port as he sat down, working nonchalantly to check its contents.

However, the photo Harvey had had all been processed, clipping selected moments. out of context.

For example, when Irene tripped Harvey and fell on top of him, she also vomited right in his face.

Harvey, however, only kept the part where she fell on top of him, because he wanted to use it to provoke Isaac.

When Irene flipped out at him, however, Harvey did not send it to Isaac—but he was now watching anyway, along with the clip of him catching Irene when she almost fell.

Without context, the angle itself made it look like an actual hug, and there was also the part where Harvey carried her to his room.

Any man would definitely be uncomfortable seeing such physical intimacy between their woman with any other man, let alone Isaac.

Naturally, he was furious, especially considering his pride.

He deleted the clips right after he watched them—he was certainly not going to keep it for posterity.

It would just make him angry.

He whipped out his phone and stared at it, thinking to himself that her heart was honestly made of stone, leaving the mansion so quickly this morning without so much as a phone call.

Did she actually love him?

Rubbing the spot between his brow, he realized that Irene was all he could think about, which only left him frustrated and powerless.

He wanted to call her, but his pride would not allow it.

After all, Irene was clearly in the wrong—she got drunk and got frisky with another man. She should be apologizing, right?

Calling her would make him look desperate, would it not?

With that, he put down his phone.

Over at Melville Hospital, Irene left the operating room after another surgery and checked her phone.

There were no missed calls or messages.

It left her a little annoyed. Even if Isaac was really angry at her, could he not reach out?

She bit her lip—she tried so hard to explain, but he refused to listen.

She then checked her schedule and saw that she had no surgeries planned, so she could leave work early.

Who knew? Isaac might have calmed down after a day.

Sigh...

Maybe she should relent and go home early to make him dinner, while explaining what had happened last night.

Bzzt-

Her phone started ringing, and she answered it to find that it was Ricky.

"I need to talk to you. What time are you leaving work?"

"Five," Irene replied.

"I'll be waiting at the entrance."

"Sure."

Once it was five, Irene stepped out of the main entrance and immediately saw Ricky's car.

"Get in," he said as she walked up to him.

"Where are we going? I need to get home early. I'll leave if it's nothing important."

"It's important. Get in."

Irene did so, and Ricky soon brought her to a luxury diner.

Irene asked, "Why did you bring me here?"

A deep voice spoke then. "I asked him to bring you here." Irene turned toward the voice.

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Irene's face fell the instant she saw that it was Harvey, and she wheeled on Ricky. "Is he why you've brought me here?"

Ricky had no idea why she was upset, and so quickly explained, "He came to me and asked for a favor. I thought it's no big deal since he just wants to meet you, so I said yes. I can't refuse him since he promised to gather evidence that Whitney Cox killed my mom, so..."

Harvey quickly walked up to them and apologized, "Look, I've realized my mistake, so I know that you're angry with me and would refuse to see me. That's why I had Ricky set up this meeting, so that I have a chance to say sorry. Is that alright?"

"I just hope you won't do anything so childish again, and I'm not angry with you. You don't have to apologize, and I'm leaving if there's nothing else."

After all, Irene could not care less about him now, and walked up to the curb to hail a taxi.

Harvey quickly rushed up to her and caught her wrist. "You're already here—how about dinner together? This isn't your typical diner—"

Irene glowered. "Don't touch me."

He could talk as much as he wants, but touching?

Harvey gingerly let go. "Why are you so cold? Weren't we getting along just fine?"

Irene thought that he must be having a laugh right then, or perhaps suffered brain damage!

"Isaac and I are fighting because of you—am I supposed to thank you for that? If you really are sorry, just stay away from me."

Harvey was speechless, and looked utterly wounded. "Aren't we friends?"

"I'd rather not have a friend who keeps getting me into trouble," Irene shot back.

Harvey was left speechless again—he just wanted to mess with Isaac a little. Was it even that serious?

"I actually met Isaac today. I was going to tell him the truth, but Stan Hill kept yapping at me, and I didn't get a chance to talk—"

"Wait." Irene cut him short. "You met Isaac?"

Harvey nodded. "Yeah. I was going to explain it to him."

"Did anyone tell you to do that?!" Irene felt like she could die right then—Harvey showing up around Isaac would only cause more trouble!

"Come on, I was doing it for you..." Harvey groaned.

Irene waved him off right then—she was frustrated beyond words.

"I'm not having dinner with you."

Irene's mind was clear—right now, she should be going home to sit Isaac down and talk to him, and not stay here to waste her breath with Harvey.

"Do this again, and we won't even be friends!" she snapped.

"Alright, I got it," Harvey said feebly—he was the one who messed up anyway.

"I'll drive you home," Ricky said, walking up to Irene.

"Okay," Irene said. "And don't hang out with people like him from now on."

Harvey was speechless. People like him?

Feeling like he was being treated unjustly, he complained, "Look, I messed up here, but I didn't do anything when you were drunk, right?"

He was just trying to get Isaac jealous and nothing else, and he was now some sort of villain because of that?

“If you did, I’d be the first one to come after you,” Ricky said then.

While Harvey was left speechless, Irene spoke without turning to look at him. “We’re leaving.”

There was no need to waste time here.

Harvey suddenly said, “I’m sorry.”

Irene did not respond as she and Ricky got into the car.

As Ricky drove steadily along the highway, they were both silent for a long while until he suddenly said, “Irene, since Lulu just broke up, you should talk to her more, or ask her to come over from time to time.”

Irene looked at him then, and said pointedly, “She prefers mature men.”

Ricky was speechless for a moment, but quickly said, “I’m just worried about her. You’re being paranoid.”

“Maybe,” Irene admitted. “But you can show her your concern yourself too.”

After all, the best way to recover from a relationship was a rebound relationship.

Irene leaned against the car window then. Her own private life was a mess now, and she certainly had no mood to care about others.

The skies were getting dark, but Irene clearly saw a certain woman as they drove past a hotel.

She suddenly yelled, “Stop!”

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Ricky quickly stopped the car beside the road and asked, “What is it?”

Irene, however, was staring at the woman as she entered the hotel.

She quickly alighted, leaving Ricky mystified. “What are you doing, Irene?”

Irene was heading straight to the hotel and told him, “Find a place to park your car and join me.”

Ricky had no idea what was happening, but did as he was told anyway.

He stopped the car at the hotel parking lot before heading inside as well.

Irene was already at the front desk, saying, “We’re taking a room next to the lady just now.”

“Which lady?” the receptionist asked.

“The one who just came in. Layla Gooding.”

“Oh,” the receptionist exclaimed in understanding. “She shares the room with a certain gentleman...”

“Mick Gooding, I presume?” Irene said.

“You’re acquainted?” the receptionist asked—why else would she know their names?

“Yes,” Irene replied, and the receptionist started to make the booking.

She then asked, “They are staying at the presidential suite, and it’s 2,500 dollars per night. Are you sure you want the room?”

“Yes,” Irene said, and the receptionist quickly got her their keys.

“Come with me,” Irene said, pulling Ricky along.

“Why would you take a suite, Irene? That’s 2,500 dollars, y’know!” Ricky asked. “And who are the people you were talking about?”

“I have no idea.”

“Wait, you have no idea, but you’re stalking them?”

“It’s exactly because I have no idea that I need to find out,” Irene told him.

Ricky was speechless, but since he had no idea what Irene was doing, he had to stick with her for the time being.

hart–380

They had already paid for the suite anyway, and he should at least see what 2,500 dollars looked like.

He had never stayed in a luxury hotel like this, either!

And once they were inside, Ricky began to study everything, and the place was certainly worth the money. It was vast and spacious, and it was clear they spared no expense on every piece of furniture or decoration.

Irene, however, had no interest in the room. She just wanted a chance to talk to the lady the next day, and to get close enough to unravel her secret.

Suddenly, she had an idea.

“Over here, Ricky.”

Ricky walked up to her. “We’re staying the night here, Irene?”

Irene was not in the mood for jokes. “Let’s pretend that we’re in a fight. Hit me-

“What are you talking about?!” Ricky almost flinched. “I can’t do that!”

“We’re just pretending,” Irene told him seriously. “I’ll knock on the next door and act as if I’m calling for help, and I’ll get in easily.”

Ricky blinked as he considered her proposal.

So, she booked this room to spy on the woman next door?

“Alright.”

Acting was easy.

“Are you sure you can do this?” Irene asked.

“Don’t worry, I’ve got this,” Ricky said confidently.

Irene smiled. “Fine. I feel assured now since you’re this confident.”

But how should they get started?

Glancing at a glass on the table just then, inspiration struck Irene and she picked one up before throwing it at Ricky’s feet.

Ricky flinched. “What...?”

“I didn’t mean to...” Irene said, and then quickly ran out of the room.

Ricky swiftly caught on, and began bellowing as he gave chase. “Where do you think you’re going, Irene Spencer?! I’ll kill you!”

Irene almost wanted to flash a thumb up at him. He was such a great actor!

After hesitating for a moment, Irene knocked on the next door, even as Ricky ran up to her.

“Don’t you run away from me!” Feeling like catching her wrist was not convincing, Ricky grabbed her ponytail instead, while telling her softly, “Don’t worry, I won’t hurt you.”

Irene, however, was too focused on the door to care about what he was saying.

Anticipation and nervousness seized her... and then, the door opened!

And Irene saw her!