

Runaway 411

Chapter 411

Mr. Townsend shot Mr. Little a look. "Isaac may have left Light Group, but he hasn't left commerce. What, are you interested in a partnership with him?"

Mr. Little was left wanting to hide himself even as blushed, his cheeks scarlet as if he had too much to drink. "I would love to, but I don't think Mr. Jefferson would need one."

Mr. Townsend was naturally experienced enough to tell what was going on. His shrewd eyes darted between Mr. Little and Isaac, and he grinned broadly as he surmised what happened just then. "Well, Isaac is involved in too many megaprojects to pick up small businesses."

Then, turning back to Isaac, he asked, "By the way, what is this I heard about you acquiring Silverpond?" Mr. Little was left thunderstruck right then.

Silverpond? That bank had been in business for over a century!

"You have sharp ears, Mr. Townsend," Isaac said as he clinked glasses with him again.

"Honestly, the way your empire has expanded..." Mr. Townsend sighed in awe, and flashed a thumb up at Isaac.

Meanwhile, the bride's parents had made their grand entrance into the wedding hall. They were among the most important figures present for the day, and there were naturally many guests who approached them in greeting and brief exchanges.

Isaac did not want to get involved, but they would go to him even if he did not go to them, meaning that socializing was inevitable.

On the other hand, Irene was worried that Ricky would cause a scene, so she told Isaac quietly, "Ricky is here. I think he's up to something, so I'll go look for him."

"Okay," Isaac said, leaning in to whisper into her ear. "You watch out too."

He was very close, and his warm breath was sprinkled over her neck, causing her heart to skip a beat.

For a split second, she felt warmth—even if Yvaine's death had set them apart, he still cared about her.

"Okay," she said meekly.

Mr. Townsend glanced at Irene just then, but did not say a word—which bigwig these days did not have a lover?

In fact, Mr. Townsend himself had four mistresses when he was young, along with dozens of girlfriends.

As such, he would avoid asking any question or make the acquaintance of another man's companion as long as the lady was not their legally married wife.

Irene was naturally unaware that she was less than a mistress in the eyes of others, and left the lively wedding hall to head backstage.

Whipping out her phone, she texted Ricky again.

[Where are you? Let's meet.]

This time, there was no reply.

She was about to cail him when she spotted Zachary. Although he certainly looked the part in his tailcoat, there was no happiness one would expect to find from a bridegroom—in fact, he was sulking.

“Irene,” he called out, walking up to her when he saw her. “What are you doing here?”

Irene thought about it, and told him, “I’m looking for Ricky.”

Zachary’s brow furrowed. What was he doing here?

Every guest in the wedding today had been invited, but no one invited Ricky if his memory served him well. Still, Irene did not hide the truth. “He and Lulu slipped in. I was looking for him because I don’t want him to cause trouble for you.”

“Lulu?” Zachary’s brow furrowed further, and he said, “I’ll help you look.”

“No, you should stay,” Irene told him. “You’re the bridegroom—you won’t have the time.”

Zachary refused anyway. “I don’t think I can get married with peace of mind if she’s here.”

“Are you saying that you would if she’s not here?” Irene shot back.

Zachary turned silent. “It won’t bother me, at the very least. I have to take responsibility for Ember and our respective families after what happened.”

Irene breathed a long sigh—Zachary had it hard to, and he might actually be reluctant to get married today.

“I’ll take care of her in your stead, don’t worry,” she assured him.

Zachary smiled feebly. “Well, I don’t have the right to meddle in her affairs anyway.”

Someone suddenly spoke behind him right then, “In that case, get hitched and don’t bother her ever again!

Chapter 412

Zachary turned around to see Ricky standing nearby, with Lulu beside him.

Zachary’s face fell as his gaze lingered on Lulu, and Ricky could actually feel her trembling.

Reaching out, he held her hand and whispered, “It’s alright. I’m with you.”

Zachary saw that, and he immediately balled into a fist.

Irene naturally noticed that Zachary was already holding back, and quickly walked up in front of Lulu to block his line of sight. “Found you. Now, it’s time for us to leave—you can go about your business now, Zachary.”

Zachary did not leave, however, instead strode toward them, stalking past Irene. “I need to talk to Lulu.”

Lulu held his gaze, and said calmly and impassively, “There’s nothing to talk about. You’re the groom, so stick to your business. I won’t be imposing—in fact, I wouldn’t be here if I’d known that it’s your wedding today. Ricky tricked me, saying that it’s a friend’s wedding and insisted that I accompany him., so believe me when I tell you that I’m not here to sabotage your wedding or to add to your troubles.”

With that, she pulled Ricky along. “Let’s go.”

However, Zachary ran up to them, pried her hand away from Ricky’s, and shoved Ricky aside. Naturally, as Ricky was a friend to Lulu, she snapped at Zachary right then, “What are you doing, Zachary Slate?! Shouldn’t you act the part of a groom? Is this how you show hospitality, by hurting and bullying?”

Zachary did not respond, and simply grabbed her by the wrist and dragged her away.

“Let me go!” she snapped.

“Let her go!”

Ricky bounded towards them to try to separate them, but Irene moved to stand in his way, leaving him fuming. “Why are you stopping me? Can’t you see what he’s doing? What if he-”

“He won’t do anything to her. Let them clear the air,” Irene told him.

“What is there to clarify? They already broke up!” Ricky yelled.

“What would you know?” Irene retorted—those two had gone through so much, but despite separating and reconciling only to end up breaking up, they must still hold each other in their respective hearts.

Even as she sighed, Ricky snapped, “No, I have to go to them.”

Ignoring Irene’s protests, he started to run after them as he did not want Lulu to have anything to do with. Zachary.

Naturally, Irene could not stop Ricky since he was a full-fledged adult now, and had to lift her skirt to run after him. “Ricky!”

That was when Ricky suddenly stopped in his tracks, and Irene slowed down in turn. As he walked up to his side, he saw Zachary pinning Lulu against the wall and kissing her, having not a care of the people around them.

He reached out to tug at Ricky, whispering, “Come on, Ricky. Let’s go.”

Ricky was silent, staring fixedly at Zachary and Lulu for a while before lunging forward, grabbing Zachary and clobbering him!

Irene was left speechless, but even as she wanted to talk him out of it, she noticed someone’s reflection.

on the glass door, and turned to find a woman in a wedding gown.

That would make her the bride, and she saw Zachary kissing Lulu...

Irene panicked right then, and quickly walked up to Zachary. “What are you doing, Zachary? You got the wrong person!”

She tried to shove her way between them to pull Lulu away, just as Zachary turned to see Ember Lindt.

He slowly released Lulu, even as the air around them turned icy!

Chapter 413

Time seemed to stand still for several seconds until Ember spoke.

“Lulu Adams, I presume? Zachary told me about you. Did you come to attend my wedding too?”

She was smiling as if nothing ever happened.

On the other hand, Lulu was frowning.

Zachary told Ember about her? Like a boyfriend would tell her girlfriend about his ex?

Humiliated, Lulu snorted.

“I’ve just come to congratulate you on your wedding. I wish you the best today and always,” she said, before turning toward Zachary. “Your husband is such a playboy that you’d better keep him on a tight

leash, or he’d get restless whenever he lays his eyes on another woman,”

“He’s not like that,” Ember said, lifting her dress as she walked toward them and wrapped her arms around Zachary. “It’s our wedding today, so we have many guests to greet, and the ceremony is starting soon. Do feel free to take a seat at the hall—it’s time we leave.”

From the very start, she never raised her voice or got upset. Her calmness and tolerance was certainly unmatched—not even Irene could do it.

After all, if this was her and Isaac’s wedding, she would certainly lose her mind if she found him holding another woman and kissing her!

And at the moment, Zachary did not even look at Lulu as he left with Ember.

Ricky was certainly unable to stand it—Zachary was the one who came on to Lulu, and now he was dumping her after kissing her? Who did he think he was?!

Charging forward, he grabbed Zachary by the collar and punched him squarely in the face. “You piece of shit!”

Ember was livid. “What are you doing?! How could you do this to him?”

Ricky snorted. “He can’t even own up to his own actions!”

“He’s more of a man than you are, and he does own up to his own actions. What would you know?” Ember snapped, and quickly turned toward Zachary in concern, wiping the blood off his lips and looking hurt as she did. “Are you alright, Zachary?”

"I'm fine," Zachary said, shaking his head and shooting Ricky a glare. "I won't hold this against you since. This is my wedding, but you're not welcome here. Security!"

Soon, several security guards entered. "Mr. Slate?"

Zachary pointed at Ricky. "Get him out of here."

Ricky snorted. "I can leave on my own. You don't deserve any respect even from someone like me."

He then turned toward Lulu, who avoided looking at Zachary and took Ricky's hand. "Let's go."

Zachary watched her as she left, her expression turning dark.

Noticing his gaze, Ember moved to stand in front of him. "We should go, Zachary—the ceremony will start soon. Our parents are waiting, and we shouldn't disappoint them."

Her meaning was clear: Zachary had no choice.

Nodding, he said, "Yeah. Let's go."

Then, remembering Irene, he turned to her and said, "You should head to the hall too, Irene."

Irene nodded.

Ember asked, "And you are...?"

"I'll introduce you later," Zachary said, cutting her short.

Ember smiled sweetly. "Okay."

As Irene returned to the wedding hall, Isaac was being mobbed and fawned over, and he was undoubtedly the center of attention.

She did not join him, but instead, merely found a seat in a corner and drank some juice.

An attendant approached her just then and asked, "Excuse me, are you Irene Spencer?"

Irene put down her glass and asked, "Yes, I am."

The attendant held out a piece of paper to her then. "Someone asked me to pass you this note."

Chapter 414

Irene took the note and asked, "Who was the sender?"

The attendant shook his head, because he had instructions beforehand. "I can't say."

"Alright, thank you." Irene said, refraining from making things difficult for him.

After the attendant left, Irene unfurled the piece of paper and read it.

[26th floor, Room 502. There's something you must know.]

Once she read it, she crumpled it into a ball and threw it into a trash can nearby, but did not land.

Something mysterious and unsigned like that would be nothing good—she was not stupid enough to answer such a call.

At the same time, the ceremony was starting.

As the mob around Isaac dispersed, he went to sit beside Irene.

“You’re a busy man,” she said.

He was just here to attend a wedding, but he was the one who got mobbed.

She took another sip of her juice and then put her glass down rather heavily.

Isaac glanced at the glass and asked, “Are you upset?”

Irene shook her head firmly—she certainly would not dare to get upset at him now, just as she had no reason to because he was just socializing.

Even so, she felt so tiny as she stayed at his side.

Looking up on stage, she said, “The bride is young and pretty.”

Isaac’s eyes were fixed on her, and did not even look up. “You’re prettier.”

Irene stared at him. Was he teasing her?

Remembering the note then, she hesitated before saying, “Just now, someone asked me to head to Room 502 on the 26th floor, saying that there’s something I need to know.”

“Really?” Isaac frowned.

“I thought it might be a trap, so I didn’t go,” Irene said.

She is actually quite curious about what awaited her there, even as the emcee spoke. “Please rise for the arrival of the bride.”

At this voice, the main doors opened as Ember stepped inside the wedding hall to thunderous applause, pushing excitement to great heights.

Eventually, once they were done going through the motions, the presiding priest said, “You may now kiss the bride.”

Zachary did not move.

On the other hand, Ember seemed to have expected this, and smiled when she saw Zachary’s hesitation without complaint or indignation. “I know you’re not used to this,” she said softly. “I feel the same.”

Though Zachary felt grateful, he was wary that everyone was watching them, and time seemed to stand still just then.

Beneath the stage, Mrs. Slate frowned. She wanted to prod her son, but could not speak out loud with their in-laws nearby, and so became antsy as she watched.

Ember's parents were puzzled too. "What is Zachary doing?"

Still, the emcee was experienced and something as simple as this was no trouble for him to smooth over. "I'm afraid our bridegroom is feeling shy," he said light-heartedly, "I'm sure he's saving that sweet first kiss for our bride under more romantic circumstances. Now, beloved guests, please raise your glasses to a toast in honor to these newlyweds, and wish them that their blissful union shall last eternally!"

After the toast, Ember retired to change while the luncheon began.

Irene did not have an appetite.

Reading her mind, Isaac said, "Come on. Let's go check it out."

Irene was actually confused for a moment. "Where are we going?"

"To the 26th floor."

Irene pursed her lips. "Isn't it a little rude to leave right now?"

"We'll be gone for just a moment. Won't be long," Isaac said.

As such, they trotted along the corner and left the hall, then took the elevator to the 26th floor. Soon, they found Room 502, and the door was ajar!

Chapter 415

A gentle push, and the door was open... But there was nothing inside.

Irene frowned. "Could this be a prank?"

Isaac said nothing, but he had a hunch—it was probably not a prank, but since Irene did not fall for their trap, the people behind cleaned things up thoroughly and left no trace behind.

"Let's go back," she said.

It was not their wedding, and running off like this was impolite.

"Yeah," Isaac agreed.

While they stood waiting for the elevator, Irene leaned against him, but just as she was going to hold his hand, the elevator arrived with a jingle.

As the doors opened, Irene quietly pulled away, but Isaac took her hand, catching her by surprise.

In the instant their skin touched, her heart began to pound.

She had no idea why—especially after they had shared their bed for a while now.

Nonetheless, she followed Isaac into the elevator, with the doors soon closing behind him. As she pressed the button to the first floor, the doors closed, confining them within.

Irene looked up at his face and neck, which combined to form an alluring image.

He was the most handsome man she had ever seen.

Ought she not be rejoicing that he was hers?

She smiled faintly at the thought, and inadvertently glanced at the elevator doors in front of her.

She was left dumbstruck right then—the doors were made of stainless steel, and clearly reflected their faces.

Isaac clearly saw her ogling him, did he not?

Oh, this was so embarrassing!

She hung her head, wanting a place to hide just then..

Isaac watched as she kept her head buried like an ostrich and smiled so faintly one would never notice if they were not looking for it.

Soon, they returned to the wedding hall, and Zachary came to them with Ember.

Ember had a babyish face, and had changed into a red gown encrusted in various gems, which glittered under the chandeliers overhead. She also had a corset that accentuated her figure, but she did not appear encumbered despite the weight of the gown, as she was actually gliding gracefully as she moved.

The mischievous—even lively—outlook of the gown certainly matched her looks.

Even if Ember's beauty was not eye-catching, the dress and the way she wore it did, and she certainly drew stares as she moved along, holding Zachary's arm as she did.

After drinking a few toasts with their elders, Zachary brought Ember along and made a beeline for Isaac.

He told Ember that he would introduce her to Irene, and among his friends, Isaac ranked at the top—he

1/2
had every reason to go to him first.

"You're both my best friends. You have to drink to congratulate me," Zachary said as he poured a drink for Isaac, while Ember handed the glasses to him.

"This is my brother from another mother, Isaac Jefferson—he expressly returned from abroad to attend our wedding."

"Thank you for making time even though you're so busy." Ember naturally showed no signs of stage fright -she was from a rich family herself,

Isaac respectfully drank to their toast, while Zachary poured another glass for Irene. "She's my junior and a good friend."

“We’ve met.” Ember smiled enthusiastically. “Thanks for attending my wedding. I hope we can be best friends.”

Irene smiled faintly but primly. “Any friend of Zachary’s is a friend of mine.”

As for best friends, she would not agree to it so easily—in fact, she was keen to distance herself from Ember because of Lulu, not to mention that she did not know Ember that well yet.

If anything, she was just trying to be respectful to Zachary.

Suddenly, a man barged in and cried, “Mr. Slate!”

Zachary frowned and turned towards him. “What’s the matter? Why the commotion?”

“Outside... You have to take a look at this!”

Zachary put down the wine bottle and told Irene and Isaac, “I think I should go check it out.”

“Yeah,” Irene replied.

Ember followed Zachary. “I’m coming too.”

They all arrived outside when they all saw it.

Chapter 416

There was a crowd gathered outside, staring up at Central Tower.

Zachary and Ember did the same, and saw several banners dangling over the glass walls of the tower.

[Zachary Slate is a bastard!]

[Zachary Slate, kiss my ass!]

[Ember Lindt is a whore!]

[Ember Lindt is a bitch!]

Zachary was not upset at first, but glowered when he saw that Ember was dragged into it.

“Where’s security?” he snapped. “Why isn’t anyone taking those down?!”

“Right away, sir!”

Nonetheless, the Lindts were already alerted—Ember’s parents stepped out as well, and their faces fell when they saw the banners.

“You’d better have an explanation, Zachary.”

As a family with a reputation to uphold, the Lindts were certainly embarrassed that something like that happened at their daughter’s wedding.

Mrs. Slate quickly explained, “It must be a prank—”

“Everyone knows our families’ standing in this city, but they mess with us despite knowing that!” Mr.

Lindt barked, and turned toward Zachary. "It's obvious that it must be a former flame. Didn't have a clean break, did we? Who else would go this far?"

Mrs. Slate immediately thought of Lulu.

Convinced that Lulu did this because she was upset about Zachary breaking up with her, Mrs. Slat's spite toward Lulu grew!

"There'd better be an explanation for this," Mr. Lindt growled. "Ember is our only daughter, and yet she has to suffer this on her wedding day? Outrageous!"

"Don't worry. We'll get to the bottom of this." Mr. Slate naturally felt embarrassed too.

Mrs. Slate quickly tried to smooth things over so that things were less awkward.

"It's a day to celebrate—we shouldn't let a trifle ruin the mood," she said, and pretended to rebuke Zachary. "You have to give your wife and in-laws a reasonable, satisfying explanation for this, you hear me?"

Zachary lowered his gaze. "I know."

"Don't worry, I'll talk to my parents," Ember told him softly just then. "They're not so petty that they'd pursue this matter, and I don't think it's Lulu either."

Zachary looked up at her. "No, it's not like her."

Ember's expression stiffened for a fraction of a second, but she soon smiled again. "Yes, it's not like her. Let's go in the others will take down those banners, and it's still our wedding day. Let's not ruin the mood over something like this."

Turning toward her own parents and her in-laws, Ember said, "Everyone, there is no need to get upset-

1/2

this is nothing significant. Someone is just jealous of Zachary and myself, and trying to make us unhappy over this. It's just not worth it to play to their tune."

Mrs. Slate was certainly pleased with Ember—the wife she had personally chosen for Zachary. "Oh, Ember. You are as beautiful as you are understanding! It's Zachary's good fortune to marry you."

At first, she thought that Ember was just another sweet girl who mainly coveted her family's influence. It turned out today that she was mature and understanding as well, and Mrs. Slate loved her even more.

After Ember calmed both her parents and Zachary's, everyone returned to the wedding hall.

Soon, the wedding luncheon was over, and everyone began to leave.

Thanks to the Slat's and the Lindt's influence, news of the banners never got out. Though the guests were aware as well, they only spoke of it in private and refrained from making it public.

Irene caught wind of it as well, but did not suspect Lulu at all since she was not that childish.

But if it was not her, then who...?

That was when she remembered Ricky.

That brat really was capable of something like that!

“What’s on your mind?” Isaac asked.

“Nothing,” she said, coming to her senses just then, though she told him what she thought soon anyway. “I think Ricky must be behind those banners.”

“What?!” A surprised-even furious-voice exclaimed behind them just then!

Chapter 417

Irene turned around to find Zachary standing there and she quickly explained, “It’s just a hunch.”

She only wanted to tell Isaac what she thought, and did not expect Zachary to be listening!

Zachary had actually hurried to them to see them off and had inadvertently overheard Irene.

He did not believe that it was Lulu, and was quickly convinced that Spencer was responsible.

Ricky was young and impulsive—it certainly looked like something he would do.

“It’s your wedding. What are you doing here? Aren’t you supposed to be busy?” Irene asked, changing the subject.

“I was going to see you off,” Zachary said, hesitating for a moment before continuing, “Also, please pass a message to Lulu.”

“What is it?” Irene asked.

“Tell her...” Zachary’s voice trailed off, and then said, “Forget it.”

It was pointless to say anything now—there was no question that he was the one who let her down.

Jimmy the chauffeur was the one who brought Irene to Central Tower, so she sent him home while she got into Isaac’s car.

“Irene,” Zachary said as he stood before Isaac’s car. “I won’t press the issue against Ricky, but I won’t be so kind the next time. He can throw insults at me all he likes but Ember is innocent—she shouldn’t suffer

such humiliation.”

“Like I said, it’s just a hunch,” Irene repeated.

“No one else would do something like that,” Zachary insisted, showing no doubt that it was Ricky.

Irene did not like him being so assertive. “Sure.”

She wound up the window, and Zachary did not ask anything although he could tell that she was a little upset.

As their car drove off, Isaac asked, "Are you upset?"

Irene shook her head. "No, I just didn't like Zachary's attitude. I just wanted to tell you that it could be Ricky, but that was just a hunch. You wouldn't jump straight to conclusions, but Zachary was so sure that it's Ricky without any evidence. I couldn't stand that."

"Yeah," Isaac replied softly.

Irene suddenly turned toward him. "Are you coming home with me?"

Isaac's eyelashes twitched, but he did not look at her. "I still have work to do."

In other words, he was telling her that he could not go home with her.

It left Irene utterly disappointed, but she feigned nonchalance.

"I know," she murmured as if in understanding.

With that, the car turned silent as neither of them spoke, and they soon reached Isaac's mansion.

Irene was going to open the door when Isaac caught her hand—it was cold to the touch, and she was

12

sweating from her palm.

"..."

He tried to talk about Yvaine Lynd, but could not muster a single word. Knowing that he was hesitant to speak, Irene replied, "I know. I can wait."

Smiling brightly at him, she suddenly leaned forward to kiss him on the lips.

"I know it hurts," she rasped as she pulled away. "I feel the same."

With that, she alighted without looking back, striding into the house with her head held high.

Isaac was staring at her dainty figure, his dark gaze somehow darkening further.

James Cross, peeking at Isaac with the rearview mirror, said gingerly, "She's hurting."

And yet, she feigned composure.

"Don't you think you should give her a chance to clear the air?"

James was convinced they could get along well because they cared about each other—but they were now just tormenting each other.

Isaac simply ignored him. "Drive."

She had every chance to tell him that she was innocent, but she kept her silence.

Was he supposed to live with the woman who killed his mother, as if he had no conscience and felt no pressure doing so?

Inside the house, Irene was standing by a window, quietly lifting the curtain to peek at the car outside. Isaac never got out, and the car simply reversed and drove away.

Suddenly struck by a spell of dizziness, she collapsed.

Mrs. Watson quickly rushed to her side. "Mrs. Jefferson!"

Chapter 418

Irene woke up to the faint scent of antiseptic.

It was such a familiar scent that she immediately knew that she was in the hospital.

As she slowly opened her eyes, the lights on the ceiling were so bright that they hurt her eyes.

She closed her eyes, rested for a while before opening them again.

Mrs. Watson had Tommy in her arms. Relieved to see Irene open her eyes, she exclaimed happily, "You're awake, ma'am!"

Irene wanted to get up, but she suddenly found herself too weak and unable to muster any strength. "The doctor said that you're very weak and shouldn't move. You should rest," Mrs. Watson told her.

Irene glanced at Tommy just then and held out her hands. "Can you give Tommy to me?"

Mrs. Watson put Tommy on her bed, and Irene said, "Let me have a moment."

Knowing that she wanted to be alone, Mrs. Watson asked, "Is there anything you want to eat? I'll get it for you."

Irene had no appetite at all, and told Mrs. Watson as much.

Mrs. Watson sighed and tried to reason with Irene. "You should at least eat something—the doctor is saying that you're fatigued. Do it for Tommy if not for yourself... I mean, can you even carry Tommy now?"

"Okay," Irene said, giving in.

"Take your

time to rest," Mrs. Watsons said as she left the room, closing the door behind her.

"Mah—mah..." Tommy blabbed as he leaned in Irene's arms, his little hands flapping, grabbing her hair one. moment and her clothes the next.

It was now autumn, and Mrs. Watson had dressed Tommy in the overalls Irene recently bought him—it looked adorable on him.

"Mah—mah... Mah—mah..." he repeated. His fluffy voice could melt any heart, though that was all he could manage for now.

Irene lay on her side and put a hand around him, gently caressing his little cheek.

Tommy seemed to accept it without fussing, though he was not content with lying down, and started to roll around, his little feet kicking.

With Mrs. Watson gone for a while now, Irene decided that she really was exhausted, and called Sheryl Harris, who asked instantly when she was told, "Are you sick?"

"No. I think I'm a little fatigued from work, so I can't help Mrs. Watson take care of Tommy. She'd probably get overwhelmed."

"Alright. Which hospital are you staying in? I'll be right there," Sheryl replied.

Irene told her, "Melville."

Once she hung up, Sheryl hurried to Irene at top speed, and asked the instant she saw her daughter, "What did your doctor say?"

Irene did not even know who her doctor was, but smiled to assure Sheryl. "I'm fine."

"Not when you're bedridden." Sheryl was at once worried and annoyed that Irene was not taking care of her own body.

Irene smiled. "Take Tommy home with you. The hospital is no place for a baby to stay."

"Alright, but what about you?" Sheryl asked.

"Mrs. Watson will return soon," Irene replied.

"Okay," Sheryl nodded, and walked over to pick up Tommy.

The baby was asleep but holding on to Irene's hair, and Sheryl had to gently pry his little fingers off.

"Uh..."

Tommy was almost woken by the touch, and Irene whispered, "I'll do it."

Sheryl sat beside her bed and watched her. "I could tell that you were tired days ago, and now you're losing weight. Be honest—you had a fight with Isaac, didn't you?"

Irene kept her eyes on Tommy to avoid looking at Sheryl. "You're really imaginative."

"Am I? I just want the best for you, or do you not want me to?"

"Things are fine with Isaac. We're not fighting," Irene told her.

"That would be for the best. Also, you're a woman, so you shouldn't be so eager to get ahead in life—try to pay Isaac more attention instead of your career. Family comes first, career second..."

"That's what you did, and were you happy?"

Irene snapped in her reluctance to listen to Sheryl drone on, but regretted that as soon as she said it. "I'm sorry..."

However, Sheryl did not blame Irene—she did mess up her own marriage, though it still hurt that her own daughter hit her in her Achilles' heel.

Picking up Tommy, she said, "Don't worry, I'll take good care of Tommy."

"Mom..." Irene murmured guiltily.

"That's enough. I'm not upset, alright?" Sheryl said, cutting her short. "Now, rest."

"Okay," Irene replied.

Soon after Sheryl left, the door opened again, and Irene looked up.

Chapter 419

It was Stephen Carr.

"Feeling better yet?" he asked.

Irene sat up. "Much better, Dr. Carr. Though, why are you here?"

"I was present when they brought you in," Stephen replied. "I did the initial checkup, followed by the Head of Gynecology..."

"Wait, do I have a gynecological disorder?"

No way... She knew her own body well enough.

"I was just losing sleep for a while, and a little tired from work. I'm not--"

"You might be pregnant," Stephen said, cutting her short.

Irene did a double take. "What?"

She had been taking contraceptive pills. How could she get pregnant?

"There must be a mistake *"

"Not if it's the Head of Gynecology," Stephen countered.

Irene was dumbstruck "No way."

"You can check yourself if you don't believe me," Stephen said, holding her gaze. "It should work to your benefit too, since it can ease tensions between you and Isaac."

Irene did not think so.

She and Isaac barely saw eye to eye with Tommy, and even after they finally started to develop a bond, Yvaine's death drove them apart again.

Isaac needed time. If he had to return because of another newborn, it meant that he was not doing it for her, but rather, for the child.

Moreover, she did not want to push Isaac. She was willing to give him time instead of binding him with the prospect of another child.

She did not want their relationship to be like that.

"I understand. Could I ask you for a favor?" Irene asked just then.

Stephen nodded. "Tell me."

"Don't let anyone know that I'm pregnant," she said, holding his gaze.

"Of course," Stephen replied. "My lips are sealed—I'll speak with Gynecology as well. Now take a proper rest, and you don't have to come in for work tomorrow if you don't think you can."

"I'm fine," Irene said, though she was spacing out a little already.

"Oh, right," Stephen suddenly read. "Mick's daughter took him back to Minerva."

"He recovered already?" Irene asked offhandedly.

"No. There's no way he can when he was so grievously hurt. I just sent him home early to spare him from reprisals."

Irene knows that Stephen was referring to Isaac, but did not offer any comment because she knew what Yvaine thought about Mick.

"Now, rest. I'll be going now, but call me if you need help with anything," Stephen told her.

Irene nodded.

After Stephen left, Irene lay in bed for a long while, and took out her phone to call Mrs. Watson, "When you come over, could you bring along the bottle of vitamin pills on my dressing table?"

"Of course."

Hanging up and putting away her phone, Irene lay in bed.

Feeling a rush of messy emotions, she closed her eyes as she gently rested her hand on her belly.

Mrs. Watson arrived around an hour later with her food and the bottle of vitamins.

"I made chicken soup. Do drink some."

Irene got up as Mrs. Watson served her a bowl of soup.

Mrs. Watson was a good cook as always, and the warm, steamy liquid whetted her appetite.

"I've also made some shrimp balls. Have some too."

"Okay," Irene replied.

Mrs. Watson then hesitated for a while, and asked, "Mr. Jefferson hasn't been home for a while... Is everything fine between you two?"

"Of course. He's just busy with work, and his company's headquarters is abroad. It's not easy for him to travel back and forth too," she said.

Mrs. Watson nodded. "What about Tommy?"

“My mom will babysit him for the time being. I was worried that you’d be overwhelmed.”

“Oh, of course.” Mrs. Watson smiled. “It won’t do to keep traveling from home to here carrying him... I can stay the night here too, since he is away.”

“You don’t have to,” Irene quickly said. “I’m fine on my own—my doctor said that it’s just fatigue.”

“Very well then.”

After Irene finished her food and Mrs. Watson cleaned up and left with the lunchboxes, she picked up the

bottle of vitamins.

She poured out the pills—they were shaped just like the contraceptive pills she stowed inside, and the scent was more or less the same as well.

However, after she took one, she noticed something unusual.

Contraceptive pills were usually bitter, and she always had to wash it down.

As she developed a habit of doing that, she did not notice that Isaac had swapped her pills.

Now that she took it, she felt a fruity taste instead of the usual bitterness.

She remembered that Isaac had previously formed a partnership with a pharmaceutical company, and getting his hands on pills could not be easier.

It seemed that he really wanted a daughter, going that far.

As she laughed bitterly, her phone suddenly rang.

She picked it up... and saw that it was a call from Isaac!

“Hello?” she answered immediately.

Chapter 420

Irene was actually surprised that Isaac would call her first—he never did that after he went abroad twice.

Naturally, it surprised her that he would call her.

“Why...”

“Mrs. Watson told me that you were sick.”

Irene’s fingers clenched on her phone—he only called because Mrs. Watson told him that she was ill, not because he missed her?

Hanging her head, she said, “I’m fine. I just fainted from fatigue.”

“Are you feeling better now?”

“Yeah, much better. You don’t have to worry.”

“Yeah.”

Silence ensued, and it was so quiet that both could hear each other’s breathing.

Neither of them spoke, but they were not hanging up either.

Eventually, Irene broke the silence. “You must be busy. I’ll hang up if there’s nothing else.”

“Yeah,” he replied.

However, neither did.

More silence.

Eventually, Isaac said, “Let’s just hang up.”

“Yeah,” Irene said, and did just that.

As she put away her phone, however, she felt unusually calm—as if all her pent-up frustrations and grief

all left her.

Perhaps because she worked here, she was not repulsed by the scent of antiseptic.

As she lay down, she groggily closed her eyes.

The night was dark, and the hospital was silent aside from the occasional footsteps.

Irene was sleeping soundly when the door to her opened, but she did not sense the presence of the towering figure at the door.

He entered, pausing for a second before gently closing the door behind him, and walking straight to her bed.

He watched her sleeping soundly, lifting a brow as he wondered how she was able to sleep so soundly in a hospital.

-Unbuttoning his jacket, he lay in bed behind her, wrapping his arms around her.

Irene vaguely sensed his presence in her sleep, but soon dozed off again.

“Mrs. Jefferson...?”

Irene was woken by Mrs. Watson’s voice the next morning.

“Yeah,” she murmured as she slowly opened her eyes, rubbing them as she asked, “What time is it?”

“It’s past eight. I was worried that your breakfast would get cold,” Mrs. Watson said.

Irene suddenly did not feel sleepy at all. “It’s already eight?”

“Yes,” Mrs. Watsons replied.

Irene promptly sat up, but Mrs. Watson told her, “You should rest—you don’t have to get up so soon.”

“I have to get to work,” Irene said hastily.

“You’re going to be late anyway.” Mrs. Watson pointed out. “You should take another day off.”

In her mind, she was rebuking Irene for her skewed priorities—after all, her health was far more important

than her career!

As Irene checked the time and saw that it was just 20 minutes to nine, she paused and decided to take another day off.

She called Stephen to apply for leave before starting breakfast.

After Mrs. Watson, she started to discharge herself—while she was a doctor working at this very hospital, she was admitted according to standard procedure, though Stephen must have arranged for her to be admitted into the VIP ward.

Since she did not have to work, she called Ricky to meet up.

It turned out that he spent the entirety of last night with Lulu at a bar, and Lulu was still sprawled over a table when Irene arrived.

There were many empty bottles in front of her—she clearly drank a lot.

Ricky was a little better. Aside from his clothes being wrinkled and reeking of alcohol, he was at least conscious.

“Hey Irene,” he chuckled, his voice raspy.

Irene popped a bottle of mineral water for him, and he chugged half of it, easing his throat which was parched from alcohol.

Irene stared at him. “I have a question. You have to be honest.”

Ricky giggled. “Why so serious?”

“I’m not joking here. Be serious,” she said.

Ricky straightened his face. “Ask away. I’ll tell you everything I know.”

Irene watched as he blabbered, wondering just then if he was actually sober.

“Were you the one who hung those banners on Central Tower yesterday during Zachary’s wedding?”