

Runaway 501

Chapter 501

Stephen immediately apologized.

"I'm sorry."

Irene could tell that Isaac had done a serious number on Stephen since she saw how Hannah reacted to Isaac—she never would have been so hostile otherwise.

And Irene certainly knew what Isaac is like.

"It's fine," she said.

"Isaac must have bothered you a lot."

Hannah was bringing her tea, and when she heard Irene, she said, "That's putting it lightly—"

"Hannah," Stephen said, cutting her short.

Hannah held her silence reluctantly, and passed the tea to Irene, "Here, have some tea."

She had no idea that Irene was the reason Isaac abducted Stephen— if she did, she would not have let Irene in, let alone made her tea.

Stephen never told Hannah much about his work, and silence was certainly the best policy in Irene's case, giving him even less reason to tell to avoid causing her trouble.

Hannah was certainly no villain either, but she was not about to watch as her own husband was harassed.

"What's your name?" she asked Irene.

Irene smiled.

"I'm Irene Spencer. You can just call me Irene."

As she spoke, she brushed her hair from her ear so that Hannah would not get spooked from her scars.

"I see... What's your relationship with that Jefferson man?"

Hannah asked, and kept ranting before Irene could answer, "Look, you should really stay away from him. He's a real villain, forcing Stephen to retire and making him take the blame for criminal negligence —"

"Hannah."

Stephen cut her short again.

"I need to speak with Dr. Spencer in private. Could you give us the room?"

"Alright, I'll leave you two to it,"

Hannah got up just then, and left the room, closing the door behind her.

Stephen sighed.

"Sorry, she can get a little talkative—"

"Why didn't you tell me?"

Irene felt guilty after hearing what Hannah had to say, and was naturally uncomfortable that Isaac had forced Stephen into retirement.

Nonetheless, Stephen chuckled.

"I'm going to retire eventually."

"But your career. You should have retired as a doctor decorated with honors..."

"Those don't matter," Stephen said.

"As long as you're not upset with me."

After thinking about it, he added, "I let my frustrations get the better of me, since Isaac was threatening me with my family..."

"I get it," Irene replied.

"I know what he's like."

"Anyway, I had no idea what or who tipped him off, but he somehow realized that the body wasn't yours and he came looking for me."

Even now, Stephen was convinced that his plan had been flawless, and he simply could not understand how Isaac found out.

Trene did not either, but it did not matter now.

She showed Stephen the research materials, saying, "These are the data of Mead Clinic's research on a fully artificial heart. I'm sure it would help our country's own research on the subject, but I just don't know who I should give it to."

Stephen looked at her in surprise.

"Shouldn't this be shown at the forum?" Irene smiled ironically.

"It turns out that salvation has borders."

Stephen understood right then, and he told her, "Just leave this to me."

"Yes," she replied.

"I will have ease of mind now—at the very least, Zidonia's medical development wouldn't be so passive."

Stephen's eyes twinkled as he looked at her.

"I was right about you. He was pleased that Irene's ability and vision far surpassed what he expected — it was as if such vigor was not expected of her age group and gender.

"I stole this. I need to return to my hotel soon," she said just then.

Stephen nodded.

"Be careful."

"I know," she replied, but Stephen stopped her again just as she reached the door.

"Did Isaac put you on the spot?"

Irene turned around then, wondering where that had come from.

"I told him that you left him for another man, and that your child was someone else's..."

Stephen said, and quickly explained, "I was just trying to rile him up—he really is too much sometimes.

Irene was not upset, however, and she even smiled.

"No, he didn't," she said, even assuring Stephen, "It's good that you did it, too—he really should be put in his place from time to time."

Stephen sighed.

"Sorry, I only remembered that he might really hurt you if he bought my lies when I came home..."

"I'm fine. You should rest —I'll get going now."

Hannah politely walked Irene to the door, but when she opened it, she saw that Isaac was still standing outside!

Chapter 502

Seemingly worried that Isaac would harass Irene, Hannah told her, "I'll come downstairs with you."

She linked an arm around Irene's, locking the door behind her.

It was as if she was worried Isaac would storm inside and abduct Stephen again.

Irene saw the scowl on Isaac's face right then —given his terrible temper, it would not do if he harassed Hannah too.

Irene smiled.

"I'm fine on my own. You should stay and take care of Dr. Carr—he's sick and shouldn't be left alone."

That was certainly true, but Hannah was still hesitant.

"What about your"

"I'll call the cops if I'm in danger," Irene told her, sliding a peek at Isaac as she spoke pointedly.

"As long as you understand," Hannah told her.

Irene smiled in return.

"I know. You should go inside."

Hannah was smiling ear-to-ear with Irene, but her expression cooled immediately when she glanced at Isaac, as if he were some criminal.

As she returned inside, she reminded Irene before she shut the door, "Watch out. Remember, call the cops right away if you're in danger."

Irene smiled and nodded, "I will."

With that, Hannah warily shut the door, and locked it from behind audibly while Irene was still outside.

Both Irene and Isaac were speechless.

That was when Isaac said, "I'd happily do it again."

Isaac was convinced that he had done nothing wrong —Stephen was the one who made Irene the scapegoat for Yvaine Lynd's death, and he even helped her run away from Isaac.

He should at least do something, right?! Inside the house, Hannah was grumbling as she headed into the bedroom.

Seeing that her husband was sitting while leaning on the headboard, she said, "Honestly, Irene might be in danger."

"Why?" Stephen asked.

"And what danger? She's perfectly fine."

"But that man is with her," Hannah pointed out.

Stephen gave her an enfeebled look.

"That's her husband—no matter how terrible he is, he's not going to lay a hand on his own heavily pregnant wife, is he? Hannah was left speechless for a moment, before her eyes widened in shock.

"What?! I thought Isaac Jefferson wasn't married! When did he get a wife?"

"Beats me," Stephen replied, but he was under the impression that it was a hidden marriage—Isaac never publicly announced it, nor was there a wedding.

"I should have known!"

Hannah exclaimed as she smacked her own lap just then.

"They showed up together and he was willing to wait outside for her. They clearly are a couple, but I stupidly warned Irene that he's a terrible man..."

How awkward that was! She hit Stephen just then.

"Why didn't you warn me?"

"How was I supposed to do that? She was standing right there,"

Stephen pointed out.

Hannah thought about it, and had to agree.

"But Irene looks like a good girl. Why would she marry such a man? I wonder if domestic violence was involved..."

Stephen told her feebly, "Oh, just quit meddling with others' business. I need fresh clothes to go out right now."

"Where are you going? You're still sick,"

Hannah certainly did not agree to it. You should be resting—don't you know what your condition is like right now?"

"I do—that's why I need to leave," Stephen said solemnly.

"You have to listen to me."

His tone made his stance clear, and Hannah left reluctantly to get him a set of clothes.

In Isaac's car, Irene said, "I need to go back to the hotel."

When Isaac's face fell, she explained, "I have something to do tomorrow, and I don't want others to find out that I left the hotel."

"Fine, let's go together," Isaac said.

Irene was going to say that she returned for business when James's phone rang, cutting her short.

James answered it, but they could not hear what he was saying as his brow creased.

After he hung up, he glanced at the rearview mirror.

"We may have a problem, Mr. Jefferson."

Chapter 503

Isaac frowned, because he was hoping that the issue did not require his attention.

"What is it?"

James did not answer immediately, but instead slid a peek at Irene.

Catching the cue, she said, "I should not listen, I guess? You could stop the car, and I'll get myself a taxi."

"No, it's—"

"Just spit it already!" James quickly tried to explain, but Isaac snapped impatiently—it almost looked like he wanted to hide everything from Irene.

He certainly was aware that they had trust issues, or she would not have done everything she could to run away from him just because of something he said.

That was why he would do his best to avoid giving her the sense that he had something to hide from her.

James then explained, "Blue Hill Asylum's director just called, saying..."

It was nothing worth hiding, but Irene might be uncomfortable with what he was going to say.

However, the more secretive he was, the more Irene was interested.

Noticing that Isaac's expression was turning colder, James braced himself and said, "Your grandfather sent a woman in for Ian Jefferson to... make a baby. The director was calling to ask if we should let the woman in."

Isaac laughed with icy disdain when he was finished—it could have been to mock Henry Jefferson's hilarious behavior, or how outrageous the whole thing had been.

Even James felt that it would take a genius to come up with a plan like this.

"I guess they really are desperate. It's actually hilarious how they could come up with an idea as stupid as that."

Turning back to the question at hand, James asked, "So? What should we do?"

Isaac looked up at James.

"Do you really have to ask?"

He had kept Ian locked up in an asylum so that he suffered, not to have a good time.

Allowing him to procreate? Hah! James understood right then.

"No, sir."

"Good," Isaac growled.

They eventually arrived at Irene's hotel and Isaac delighted with her, while James drove straight to Blue Hill Asylum.

Irene had been holding back for a while, but now that James was gone, she immediately asked, "Did Ian Jefferson have a mental breakdown?"

She did hear that Ian was staying at an asylum, after all.

Isaac simply held her hand and led her inside.

"He will soon."

Irene was speechless.

What was 'soon' supposed to mean? Still, Isaac was not inclined to discuss such an inane issue, so Irene did not ask him—she had a general idea anyway.

In fact, she was fine with whatever torture Isaac was subjecting Ian to after he abducted Tommy. However, she could not hide the guilty look on her face as she remembered her son.

"How's Tommy?"

"He's fine," Isaac replied.

"He can speak more words now, and he's been running everywhere since he learned to walk."

That was why he had gone to that auction in Minerva—to buy the castle so that their son had more space to play in.

Their current house was not small, but there was not much space to play aside from the living room — Sheryl had to take Tommy to parks and playgrounds every day.

Irene was at once happy and hurt to hear that, and when Isaac stopped to turn and look at her, she avoided his gaze, afraid to look him in the eye.

"Did you think of him when you left?"

"I did," Irene said quietly.

"But he's your son, and I know you'll do your best to protect and care for him."

Isaac held her gaze for heartbeats before asking quietly, "What about me?"

Chapter 504

Irene answered earnestly, "...I did."

"Do tell," Isaac said, his interest piqued.

"When you told me that you're only staying with me because of Tommy, I decided that I should not use him to shackle you. You have the right to pick who you love, and..."

"And you faked your death to leave me." Isaac's gaze turned dark.

"Should I thank you for your generosity?"

Irene reared her chin at him.

"You're welcome." Isaac said nothing, but his step quickened as she pulled her back to her room.

Once inside, he scooped her up in his arms and carried her to bed, while Irene turned, doing her best to hide her scars.

As he put her down, she leaned on her side and kept one cheek visible, but Isaac hovered on top of her, gently turning her face.

"You don't have to hide from me."

Even so, Irene was still uneasy with revealing her flaw and she was used to hiding it.

Isaac simply lay by her side and nestled against her neck while stroking her bulging belly.

"I love you, Irene," he whispered alluringly into her ear.

As Irene's fingers clenched on her sheets, Isaac brushed his fingers over her cheek lovingly.

"I wouldn't want more children from you if I didn't love you. Just ask me if you have any questions from now on—don't run off again."

Irene hid her face on his chest.

"Okay."

"I missed you so much," he said, and leaned in, his lips brushing over her soft hair to kiss her forehead, her eyelid, her nose, and eventually her lips...

His kiss reached deep as he wrapped his arms tightly around her, and she felt limp and sprawled herself in his arms, unable to resist.

His hands began to go further, his icy fingertips sliding past her neck, to her chest, and down her blouse...

Irene's eyes widened, and promptly caught his hand, shaking her head, "No."

The baby took priority.

However, Isaac's juices were stirring and he wanted to melt into her, because she had always been in her mind.

"I'll be gentle—"

Irene held her gaze.

"Not now."

It was not exactly impossible, but she refused to do it when she looked like this.

Isaac's libido was flaring, and he pursed his lips in silence for a while so that it would pass.

He still felt a little antsy afterward, but he restrained himself and simply embraced her, using conversation to divert his primal instincts.

"Is it a daughter this time?"

"I don't know," Irene replied—she never checked.

"I'll love them whether it's a boy or a girl," she said, stroking her belly—they were her children regardless.

The thought left her sighing, however.

"It's all your fault."

"Yeah," he mumbled as his lips were pressing against her shoulder, but he did not regret switching out her contraceptive pills.

In fact, he wanted more children with her.

At the same time, drowsy and tired, Irene closed her eyes, dozing off soon enough.

On the other hand, Isaac could not—before this, it was because he missed her so much, but now it was because of sadness.

The scar on her face reminded him that she actually believed that he did not love her, and yet, she pushed him away from that bomb with all her strength.

She was so stupid.

And he loved her for that so much it hurt.

As the medical forum began the next day, Irene got herself a makeup artist to hide her burn scars.

She did not want her face to scare people or draw attention to herself, and her clothes covered most of it as well. She was Zidonian, but since she worked at Mead Clinic, she, Dr. Pitt, and another doctor took the front row seats reserved for them.

The other front row seats were reserved for the hosts and the vice- chief of Hotmesh Research.

Soon, everyone took their seats, and it was a grand assembly of cardiovascular specialists.

However, the supposedly academic forum became unfriendly in the name of profit.

Irene took a sip of the water on the table when she noticed a shady figure at a corner.

She walked up to him and realized that it was...

Chapter 505

Mark Wickers was acting all shady and suspicious as he sneaked into the forum, and was craning his neck while waiting for the right timing to get a seat.

"Mr.Wickers," Irene called out to him.

As Mark turned around, he stumbled backward when he saw her face, barely keeping his balance as he quickly kept a hand against the wall.

"A-Are you a ghost?"" he stammered.

Irene remembered that she had mostly healed from her burn scars.

It was natural that Mark would be spooked to see her now, since he would still be convinced that she was dead.

"No, I'm not dead,"

Irene tried to explain.

"What?!""

What was going on? How did she come back to life?! "Look, now's not the time for that,"

Irene quickly said.

"What are you doing here?"

Mark sighed.

"I didn't get an invitation, but I really wanted to be here, so..."

"Got it," Irene replied. "Come with me."

Mark was surprised.

"You can get me in?"

He even tried to pull strings, but he simply could not make it in.

Irene turned and gave him a look, but said nothing.

In her opinion, the worst thing about Zidonia was its strict adherence to a pecking order.

Anyone who wanted to learn about anything should be given the chance, even if they were not professionals.

And even if they did not know a thing on the subject before, they could learn on the go, and they might even offer a better insight.

She had a few words with Dr.

Pitt, who nodded and discussed it with the host.

Mead Clinic did have a say in things since they had the data on the latest development of a fully artificial heart, and Irene soon returned to lead Mark to a seat.

"Thank you," Mark said.

"Oh, wait. Does Mr. Jefferson know—"

He quickly stopped himself, since 'alive' seemed rather inappropriate.

Irene did not mind it, however, and replied, "He knows. I'll be heading back now."

"Sure, sure. You go do that."

Mark smiled. He thought that she was different, though it was probably also because he saw her in a different light after finding out her relationship with Isaac.

The forum soon began with the Zidonian host giving the usual formal speech.

"Thank you everyone for making the journey across the globe. It's my honor to welcome our foreign guests—please give them a warm round of applause."

"The title of our forum is 'Salvation without Borders', and among the main topics is the prospect of a fully artificial heart. I'm sure our perseverance in research would allow us to triumph against death..."

After that, it was another speech from Dr. Pitt, but it was the usual formalities with no actual information offered.

Soon, they began discussion about various issues and all participants were allowed to speak freely.

Everyone naturally came prepared, and as many Zidonian researchers voiced their experiences and ideas for potential development, Irene would quietly make notes—the country had its fair share of talents after all.

Most questions raised had been discussed internally at Mead Clinic, though the Zidonians' ideas were more viable.

Someone then asked the Mead Clinic representatives a question, and Dr. Pitt picked Irene to answer it.

As Irene rose to her feet, her expression was solemn, "As a doctor specializing in cardiovascular diseases at Mead Clinic, I have taken part in many researches and gained considerable progress, but that also means its fair share of problems. My personal opinion is that while medical advancement has

allowed for heart transplants to avert lethal heart attacks, most patients do not get a donor, and being forced to face death despite the equality of all lives is savage. Ww At that point, she paused—she insisted that it was her personal opinion, and that she was not representing Mead Clinic. After all, the hospital had given them scripts that offer long-winded answers without anything meaningful.

Moreover, the so-called equality was hardly maintained.

Heart transplants were denied because of money, even though it was exceedingly difficult to find the right donor.

Now, she was going to narrow things down to the various ideas proposed by the Zidonian researchers, so that there was a greater chance for those ideas to be realized.

Still, there was plenty of jargon involved and it was going to be a long speech...

"I think—" she continued, when someone rushed into the hall!

Chapter 506

It was a worker, who appeared sloppy as he carried a stack of documents and stood outside the door.

Irene's speech was cut short because of his sudden intrusion.

Knowing the abruptness of his arrival, he quickly lowered his head and walked along the wall.

He was here to deliver documents and had to use his elbow to keep the doors open as he entered, since he was holding the stack of paper in his arms.

He just did not expect the doors to swing open so abruptly and loudly, leaving him at a loss.

Still, the distraction was soon over, and Irene remained unaffected as she finished her speech.

Isaac had been sitting at an inconspicuous corner, his gaze bypassing countless others to stay fixed on Irene.

She seemed to sparkle when she spoke about her expertise, her confidence making her glow bewitchingly.

He did not even realize that he was smiling faintly, but he certainly admired her at that very moment. She was no naive, ignorant child, and he could feel the passion in her speech.

And he admired her for that.

The forum was split over two days, and as they were done for the day, Irene slowly left the hall, with a hand clutching her belly.

That was when Mark suddenly appeared before her, giving her a thumbs up.

"I didn't think you were one of the researchers. Your speech left me speechless."

He did not expect Irene to have developed so well in the field, and while he did not know most of the jargon, he was absorbed nonetheless.

"I didn't know that you were working at Mead Clinic. Actually, I've been there myself and was trying to poach a talented young doctor but failed... That said, are you interested in returning?"

Mark was already scheming again, intent on getting his previously unfinished business done—but Irene had no intention of returning soon.

"Why not? But we are lacking talents like yours, y'know? If you're avoiding—"

"Mark Wickers," an icy voice called out just then, cutting Mark short.

They both turned to find Isaac striding toward them, growling, "Do you know who she is?"

Mark nodded.

"Yes..."

"So why are you bothering her?"

Isaac was exceedingly annoyed— Irene was pregnant and the forum lasted the entire morning.

There was no doubt that she was tired, but he was still bugging her with his nonsense! Mark actually smacked himself on the forehead for forgetting it.

Trene was Isaac's lover, and clearly had no need for money! In fact, he should be addressing her as 'ma'am' since Isaac had invested in his company! There was little wonder why Isaac was so upset! Smiling gingerly, Mark said, "Sorry, my bad."

Irene actually knew that Mark had been to Minerva and the reason behind the visit.

She assured him, "Don't worry—our country's medical technology would never fall behind."

"Really? Do you know something that we don't?"

Mark quickly pressed.

Irene looked around to ensure that there was no one eavesdropping, before saying, "Isaac is now a shareholder of Mead Clinic."

Mark's eyes widened.

While he was obsessing over poaching talents, Isaac had outclassed him by directly taking a piece of the pie and becoming a shareholder.

He could not be more impressed—it only made sense that the man always succeeded.

"Let's go,"

Isaac told Irene, putting a hand around her shoulder and asking, "I guess you're hungry now? What do you want for lunch?"

Irene was certainly hungry.

"Curry..."

Isaac narrowed his eyes.

"No," he said in refusal.

That stuff left the body heated and it was unhealthy for her pregnancy.

Pursing her lips, she said, "Then you choose."

"Okay."

He soon brought her to a restaurant offering private cuisine, ordering the place's speciality, and while they waited to be served, Irene watched him and asked, "Have you been in touch with Zachary Slate?"

She was done with work, so it was time to talk about Lulu Adams.

"Mostly at work,"

Isaac said flatly— Zachary might be in charge of Slate Industries, but his abilities as a businessman fell short compared to his abilities as a doctor.

In fact, their so-called business connection was mostly just Isaac helping him.

"Why mention him out of the blue?"

"I need to see him after this," Irene said, when Isaac's phone began to ring.

Chapter 507

The call just happened to be from Zachary.

Isaac raised a brow when he saw the name on the screen, seemingly expecting it.

Speak of the devil indeed.

"I need a favor," the voice from the other end said.

"I'm at the Elegant Dawn. Get over here."

The person on the other end was silent for a moment, before saying, "Okay."

With that, Isaac put away his phone and turned toward Irene.

"He'll be here soon. You can talk to him here." He told Zachary to come over so that Irene did not have to make a trip.

Irene nodded.

After half an hour, Zachary arrived and he was led to the private booth by a host.

"Isaac—"

He was going to speak with Isaac immediately, but froze completely when he saw the person beside him. He thought he was seeing things. He rubbed his eyes and looked again, but she was still there.

"Irene?" he called out tentatively, but soon decided that he must be mistaken—Irene was dead and they even saw her corpse.

How could she still be alive? Did Isaac miss her so much he got himself a woman who looked just like her? Pulling out a chair and sitting, he asked, "Where did you find this lady, Isaac? She looks just like Irene—"

Irene gave him a look.

"I'm not dead."

Zachary sprang to his feet again from shock, disbelief registering all over his face.

"It's a long story."

Irene did not want to go into detail, since it was between her and Isaac.

"I have a question—did Lulu really cause Ember Lindt's miscarriage?"

Zachary was not at all surprised that she asked that, since she and Lulu were close.

Still, he lowered his gaze at the mention of Lulu.

"Yes."

Irene clenched on her fork.

"And you believe Ember?"

"I saw her push Ember with my own eyes," Zachary said.

Even so, disappointment showed in Irene's eyes—even if he saw it, that did not mean it was true.

Moreover, she would never believe that Lulu would do something like that.

Because she would never stoop so low! But if Zachary did not believe her either, how sad and disappointed would she be? "We can discuss this further when I see Lulu again."

Her tone was clearly cold—things would become clear when she met Lulu.

"I don't think you will," Zachary said unhappily just then.

"I'm looking for her too—I'm actually here to ask for Isaac's help to find out where she's hiding, actually."

"Hiding?"

Irene frowned—she did not like that word, because the Lulu she knew would never hide despite such a predicament.

And since Zachary used the term, it goes to show that he never knew Lulu despite the years they spent together.

It was more or less tragically disappointing, considering that they had known each other since medical school.

Still, Irene did not jump to conclusions.

"I'll find her and get to the bottom of this," she said, and turned back to her food without looking at Zachary—even though it was a lot less appetizing now.

"Tell me right away when you find her," Zachary said.

Irene fed herself a spoonful of caviar, keeping her eyes lowered as she chewed slowly.

"Why would you want to see her? To interrogate her?"

"No, I'm just worried—"

"Why pretend to care? You believe that she pushed Ember."

"What do you mean pretend?"

Zachary heaved.

"I lost my child, and I watched as she pushed Ember off the stairs and caused her miscarriage. But I never blamed her, and was actually worried when she suddenly went into hiding. How am I the bad guy here? Because I'm searching for her? Haven't I done enough?!"

Irene simply looked on as he argued his case vindictively, but did not argue.

All she had was her words, and Zachary would never believe whatever she had to say.

However, she would find out how Ember 'fell'.

"Eat," she said flatly.

"No,"

Zachary got to her feet and left. He was certainly upset—his child was gone, and although he never blamed Lulu, Irene was insistent that it was his fault.

Who would understand his woes? Back at the private booth, Isaac had a guilty look on his face.

"Trene..."

Chapter 508

Irene held his gaze just then.

"What?"

"This is good. Try it," Isaac said, putting a chunk of meat on her plate.

She cut a slice and put it in her mouth, but it was not until she started chewing when she realized that something was suspicious.

Turning toward Isaac warily, she asked, "Why are you being weird?" "You're just being paranoid," Isaac told her.

"Here. Have some more."

That only aroused Irene's suspicion further.

"Really? You're not hiding something from me?"

"What do I have to hide?"

Isaac actually sounded confident, because he had nothing to hide.

However, Ricky Spencer had asked to see him before, but he was too busy—now that he thought about it, it might have been because of Lulu. He was therefore feeling guilty, and worried that Irene would get upset because he did not get involved.

"More," he said, and kept pushing more food to her, until there was a small hill of food on her plate.

Irene was speechless —was she a pig or something?

"I can't finish this," she told him.

"Then leave it,"

Isaac said, tucking her hair behind her ear.

The nagging feeling of something suspicious hit Irene again, when a thought occurred to her.

Putting down her knife and fork, she leveled him a serious look.

"Did you hook up with other women while I was gone?"

"What are you talking about?" Isaac replied with a solemn look "I'd never touch any other woman."

"Really?"

Irene doubted that —he had that dream back at Minerva while she massaged him as 'Jane Tanner', and even kissed Jane! If it had not been her, he would have kissed another woman! "Are you doubting me?"

Isaac's expression turned grim.

"I recall you kissing Jane Tanner," Irene told him.

"You didn't know it was me at the time."

Isaac blinked, his thick eyelashes fluttering in turn.

Did he? But he had no recollection of that at all...

"My tastes aren't that poor, Irene Spencer. There was not even a single kissable spot after you put on that disguise. Where should I even kiss you?"

Irene held his gaze for heartbeats, but decided to let it go since he was dreaming and it was hardly reality.

"Fine. I'll let it go this one time," she said magnanimously.

Isaac was not about to take that, however.

"I'd never have kissed 'Jane Tanner'... Unless you're the one who kissed me."

Irene was speechless, and remembered just then that she was the one who kissed him while he was asleep.

Then, perhaps reacting from a dream, he held her in place...

In short, she initiated it.

"Oh, I'm full. Let's go."

She quickly changed the subject.

Isaac read her mind, but did not expose her, and instead left with her.

After they got into his car, Irene put on her seatbelt while saying, "I need to head to Spencer Mansion."

While Isaac started the ignition, he told her, "Your mom is staying at our home."

"I need to see Ricky," she explained, because she knew that Ricky would have all the details, and everything would come clear once they questioned him.

Isaac gave her a look.

"Don't you miss Tommy?"

"I do."

How could she not? However, she knew that Tommy was fine.

On the other hand, she was worried about Lulu's disappearance.

For now, they must find out what happened to Lulu before checking up on Tommy.

Knowing that Irene could get stubborn and he was not about to change her mind, Isaac complied.

Irene opened the doors to Spencer Mansion when they arrived, but it was deathly silent.

Thinking that no one was in, she was about to close the door when she heard a crash!

Chapter 509

It sounded like something shattering, so Irene opened the door again and called out, "Ricky?"

No one answered. She started to head inside, but Isaac caught her.

"Stop," he said, walking ahead of her.

"I'll look inside. Wait for me here."

Things appeared rather dark and creepy inside, and he was worried about potential danger.

Irene nodded and he headed inside, where he found Ricky behind a couch.

The whole house stank of alcohol and there were many empty bottles of alcohol on the floor.

Ricky had drunk so much that he smelled as if he was just scooped out of a vat of alcohol.

While Isaac frowned, Irene walked toward him.

"Is Ricky there?"

"Yeah," he replied.

The curtains were drawn, and there were just a few rays of sunshine spilling in.

There was no telling how long Ricky had stayed within the darkness, and he was holding his hand over his eyes, seemingly uncomfortable with the light.

"Ricky?"

Irene called out as she walked over to him.

Ricky narrowed his eyes, though he did not appear surprised to see her.

"Hey, Irene. You came?"

He thought it was Irene's ghost visiting home and he chuckled.

"You brought Isaac too?"

It was understandable for Irene's ghost to return...but Isaac? He was still alive, the last Ricky checked...

While Ricky scratched his head in confusion, Irene had to pinch her own nose because she could not take the pungent scent of alcohol wafting from him.

"Go take a bath and sober up. I have questions."

"Oh, you can ask me anything. What flowers do you prefer? I'll buy them for your grave..."

Both Irene and Isaac were speechless, realizing just then that Ricky thought that Irene was a ghost.

"Sober up already."

Ricky was really out cold, and seeing him like that left Irene heartbroken and angry.

She left, headed to the washroom to get a small bucket of water, and splashed it from overhead.

The chilly sensation jolted Ricky, and he sprang up to his feet.

"Gah! Brr...!"

He clutched himself and shuddered.

"Are you crazy?! uw "Did that clear your head?" Irene asked.

"Now go take a bath.I'll wait for you outside."

The house was a stinking mess because of him, and she could not stand it.

Finally staring closely at Irene just then, Ricky said, "Y-You're alive?"

"Yes," Irene replied, used to it by now.

"I have questions about Lulu, so clean yourself up and get sober. I need you to tell me where she is and what's going on here..."

While she spoke, Ricky had reached out to pinched her arm, and a little too firmly—Irene gasped in pain in response.

"It hurts? You're...human? You're really alive? Then whose body was it?"

Ricky was left in a daze, unable to make sense of the many questions he had just then.

"Go take a bath," Irene repeated, firmly this time.

"Okay," Ricky replied, puzzled and trying his best to make sense of it as he left.

Irene waited for him outside the bathroom, with Isaac at his side, taking off his jacket and draping it over his shoulders.

"He's drunk —you're not going to get anything out of him.We could go home first and let him sober up."

Ricky's condition was certainly less than ideal.

"Yeah.We also need to hire a housekeeper to clean this up,"

Irene said in agreement—she would not be able to get inside otherwise.

"I'll get James to arrange for that," he said.

Irene knew that he was a busy man, but he was willing to help her with something as unimportant as this anyway.

"Thank you," she said earnestly.

Isaac tapped her on the nose.

"You don't have to thank me."

However, Irene lowered her gaze—although they were about to have two children now, she kept having this feeling that they were not really married. It was probably because they had not been together all that long.

"Let's head home," she said, agreeing with Isaac since Ricky was probably not sober enough to tell a coherent story.

However, they were just about to get into Isaac's car when Ricky stopped outside the mansion!

Chapter 510

There was no telling how long it had been since Ricky visited a hairdresser —his hair was long and unkempt like a bird's nest, and there was uneven stubble growing over his chin.

Grooming was even more out of the question, and he looked just like a homeless bum.

"Don't go."

His head seemed to have cleared considerably, and came running to stop Irene.

"I need you. It's about Lulu."

"Okay, I'll wait."

Irene paused, held his gaze for a moment, and spoke.

Ricky nodded, and promptly ran into his house, taking a bath and even shaving.

Irene did not get impatient either, but standing when heavily pregnant was taxing, and her legs were getting swollen.

Sensing her discomfort, Isaac placed a supporting hand over her back.

"We can wait in the car."

"Okay."

Over an hour passed —it was quite some time, but Ricky was a different man when he came out.

There was not even a whiff of alcohol from his body, only the faint fresh scent of soap.

The mansion was only stinking of alcohol because it had been days since he left the house, and he was still drinking last night with a bath.

It was why he stank of alcohol.

Still, he appeared refreshed after his bath, and Irene gestured for him to get into Isaac's car.

They certainly could not use the mansion since it was still full of alcohol fumes, and the only place to sit was in the car.

Fortunately, Isaac's car was spacious enough.

"Where did Lulu go?" Irene asked impatiently just as Ricky sat.

Ricky shook his head.

"I don't know. I've been looking for her all this time, but I couldn't find her. And Spencer Holdings..."

He had been despondent after Lulu's disappearance and the bankruptcy of Spencer Holdings.

Both issues were a huge blow to him, leaving him overwhelmed.

"I'm sorry, Irene."

Ricky hung his head like a wilting flower.

"Just explain...what on earth happened?" Irene asked, holding his gaze.

Ricky considered his words, and then said, "I'll start from the beginning—you see, Zachary and his mother were sure that Lulu was the one who did those banners at Zachary's wedding. They started by getting Lulu fired from her job, and then that thing with you happened..."

After pausing for a moment, he added, "Everyone thought that you were dead, and Lulu came back to Cloud City. She didn't have a job, so I asked her to stay and work in Spencer Holdings. She agreed to it, saying that I'm your brother, but now that you're gone, she'll help me watch over Spencer Holdings."

Then, his voice turned quiet and rasped, "I don't know why, but she somehow ended up in a meeting with Ember, and then her miscarriage happened. Both the Lindts and the Slates were incensed, and worked together to boycott and sanction Spencer Holdings. I failed to keep things together, leading to its bankruptcy. Lulu disappeared soon after as well—I have no idea where she is, and can't find her anywhere."

"What about Sunny City?" Irene asked.

Ricky shook his head.

"I tried, but she's not there either. Her father and his new wife are living happily and have already forgotten all about her, and the man only gave me a noncommittal grunt after I told him that she's gone!

He even told me that she's an adult and that she's going to be fine, adding that I should stop looking...I've never seen a father as irresponsible as him. I really wanted to kill him right then and there!"

In fact, Ricky still felt violent impulses at the thought of Lulu's father.

He used to find Lionel Spencer Jacking, but it was not until meeting Lulu's father that he realized how low a father could really stoop.

On the other hand, Irene was left pondering.

Lulu would never run away from a crisis.

But what if she did not run away? If so, why did she go missing? She gaped as an idea came to her then.

"This is bad!"

