

## Runaway 521

### Chapter 521

Something must have happened, and Stephen was definitely lying!

"Then do you know that Irene was abducted for stealing Mead Clinic's research data? Tell me-who did you give it to?"

Isaac was doing all he could to restrain his temper.

Right now, what he must do was to get the full picture before coming up with an idea to rescue Irene. He would have flipped out in an instant because Stephen was being secretive, but he ultimately managed to stay calm.

"What?!" Stephen exclaimed in surprise. "That's impossible-the agreement was for Hotmesh Research to keep the data and develop a working prototype for the fully artificial heart in secret before announcing it nationally-"

"Did you know that they already announced it?" Isaac showed him the publication right then. "They now have the attention of everyone else in the business now, too."

Stephen's eyes widened after he scanned through the paper and snapped, "They broke their promise! They're throwing Irene under the bus!"

"At least you get it," Isaac growled furiously, even cursing, "Half-witted inbreds!"

Clandestineness was the best approach for this, and what good was announcing early to steal the limelight for a brief second? It would be a real slap in the face if they failed their development, too!

Understanding the gravity of the situation, Stephen asked, "They took Irene? Is she in danger?"

"You think?!" Isaac was frustrated by the sheer stupidity surrounding him. "Who did you give it to?"

"Tobey Kitsch," Stephen replied. "He's the deputy director of Hotmesh Research."

That was when James returned with the man in question.

Since Tobey was an important man, James was not physically restraining him, instead staying behind him and keeping a keen eye to stop him from running away.

He did not have to worry either, since Tobey was walking in with his hands clasped behind his back, as if perfectly at ease.

Stephen, however, could not hold back and charged at Tobey the instant he saw him, demanding, "You agreed not to leak the data! How do you explain this academic paper?"

"The research is a successful one," Tobey said flatly. "We naturally have to announce it to the public."

"But is it yours?!" Stephen was almost left with a heart attack by the other man's attitude. "This wasn't what you said when I gave it to you!"

"What did I say?' Tobey asked in return.

Stephen's flabby cheeks twitched. Tobey was breaking every promise he made!

"Have you forgotten? We agreed that the data would only be used for research-it must also be kept under secrecy, made only available to key personnel of Hotmesh Research. So why has it been publicized in just a day?"

Tobey held Stephen's gaze for a while and breathed a long sigh. "I did say that, but..."

"But, what? If you don't explain yourself, you won't find me so patient, let alone Isaac here."

That left Tobey perplexed-why was Isaac getting involved?

What did this have to do with him?

"Mr. Jefferson, everyone in Zidonia's medical field is grateful that you brought the forum here, but are you really a part of this?"

"The doctor who brought US the data is an attending physician at Mead Clinic by the name of Jane Tanner, but that's just an alias. She's actually a Zidonian national by the name of Irene Spencer, and the wife of Isaac here. Care to wonder why he's getting involved now? I guess you should know that Mead Clinic personnel had taken her away because of the paper you published, so you really should ask yourself what you're going to do about this."

Tobey might be a person of authority and respected in the medical field, but he was nothing to Isaac.

Tobey was certainly aware of that and why he had a personal stake in all this-he just did not expect things to turn out like this.

"Say something!" Stephen barked.

Tobey went for a last-ditch struggle. "It's a decision voted for by the company..."

Isaac turned to James right then. "Call in their director."

Tobey caved immediately. "Stop! Please, I'll explain..."

## **Chapter 522**

"The director doesn't actually know..."

Before Tobey could finish, Stephen had already cut him short. "You're the deputy director, but you're saying that you don't have the director's approval to publish that paper? Do you take US for idiots?"

"No, you misunderstand-what I meant was that the director does not know about the data," Tobey admitted. "He's at the age where he should retire soon, whereas I must contribute if I want to be promoted..."

"So you published the data and tried to pass it off as your own?!"

Stephen's hands were clenched into fists-Irene had trusted him so much and handed him something so important.

However, it was his own inability to find the right people that her effort went to waste, and now, she was in danger.

"Did you think you were going to make it just because you did this? I'll talk to the director and tell him the truth!"

Stephen was beside himself with rage at Tobey's betrayal and continued, saying, "I trusted you handed you something so monumental on a silver platter, only for you to claim it for yourself! You could have done it while benefiting everyone, but you didn't, did you? You don't deserve to be a director, not with your character and attitude!"

Tobey had been touted by everyone in Hotmesh to be the next director thanks to the publication of the academic papers, and he would be promoted once the director retired.

If Stephen spoke with the director, however, Tobey's career would be over instead.

"Look, I'm sorry about this, Stephen-"

"Do you really think an apology cuts it now?!" James snapped.

After learning the whole story, he only felt anger and disappointment toward his fellow Zidonians.

All they cared about was prestige and profit, and they were so shortsighted they never wondered about potential repercussions.

He certainly felt bad for Irene for going through such great lengths to steal the research data, hoping that she can help Zidonian's medical scene develop, only for one man's selfishness to ruin it all.

Tobey Kitsch deserved nothing!

But even James had to wait for Isaac's approval to destroy him!

"Mr. Jefferson." Tobey quickly tried to salvage the situation. "I understand that I've made a mistake. I'll definitely make it up to you-"

"Make it up to him?" Stephen cut him short right then. "How?! We're facing a crisis because of you! Do you think a few nice words will get you off the hook?!"

His rage was as terrible as Isaac's, and he was certainly convinced that Isaac would not be merciful to a man as short-sighted and as greedy as Tobey. If he ever became director, Hotmesh Research would fall apart under his leadership!

While Isaac had no time to keep listening to their argument, Stephen was right about one thing-he was not going to let Tobey become director.

"James, set up a meeting with Hotmesh's director," Isaac said and strode out of the room.

He then paused at the doorway, turned around, and looked between Stephen and Tobey. Stephen promptly made his standpoint clear, saying, 'I'm culpable for this mess too, but I'll willingly take any punishment coming.

He actually felt guilty toward Irene for putting her in harm's way.

If Isaac wanted his head, it was his just deserts. He could not help shooting Tobey a glare just then, knowing that it was all because of him.

Stephen's attitude was the right one, and since he did not mean it, Isaac forgave him despite his dissatisfaction.

Tobey, however, was still trying to weasel his way out of trouble. "I can make up for this some other way! Please-"

"You?" Isaac scoffed. "Make up for this?"

Tobey panicked. "Look, I know I made a mistake, but please just look over this one time-"

Isaac's lips curled into a cold, dark grin. "If I spared you, I'd be doing a disservice to every other person who has what it takes to become director, and the research data Irene risked herself to bring here, don't you think?"

Tobey was still trying to speak up, but Stephen could not bear to listen to another word.

He stepped up, clapping a hand over Tobey's mouth. "Just shut up, hypocrite-stop wasting Isaac's time. Know this-you're never going to become a director for the rest of your life. Even if Isaac won't talk to your director, I'll make your scandal known to the whole world."

## **Chapter 523**

Tobey was frustrated as he was caught between a rock and a hard place.

However, since there was no way out of this, he simply aimed his crosshairs at Stephen and shot back,

"Did you think you're any better than me? Are you sure you didn't want some goodies from that research data?"

"Unlike you, I understand how important the research data is for our own medical field's advancement. I was hoping it could have been used to its full potential, only for you to ruin everything. I hate myself for being a poor judge of character!"

As both men kept arguing and even looked ready to get physical, Isaac decided that he neither had the time nor the mood to listen.

James received a call just then-their trackers had just finished their search.

"We don't have any details indicating that they left the country, sir."

"I see." James hung up and turned to Isaac. "No news about them leaving the country. Maybe they are still in the country."

Isaac was not as optimistic.

If anything, the first thing they would have done would be to leave Zidonian borders. The lack of records proved nothing too-they could have left by some unorthodox mode of travel.

Still, unable to stay and wait in Zidonia, he said, "Keep an eye on things in the country. I'm going to Minerva."

"Alright, I'll make the arrangements for you," James replied.

Isaac then remembered something else, and he told James, "Don't tell Sheryl Harris about any of this.

Just say that Irene and I went abroad for business, and it will take US a while to return."

"I know what to do," James said.

"Good," Isaac replied flatly.

Ember Lindt was home when Zachary Slate returned, dressed in a skimpy nightdress and smiling when she saw him.

"Welcome home," she greeted him as she poured him a glass of water. ' You look terrible. Trouble at work?"

Zachary was staring closely at her. She looked so docile and understanding.

Did she really hurt Lulu?

"You told someone to put up those banners during our wedding, didn't you?"

Ember's heart skipped a beat-why would he suddenly ask about that?

"W-What are you saying? I don't understand."

She played dumb-not that she would admit to any of it anyway.

Zachary grabbed her wrist, causing her to drop the glass in panic.

Clang!

The glass shattered into smithereens while water splashed, flowing all the way to their feet.

Still, Ember pretended to look afraid. "What's gotten into you, Zachary? You're making me scared..."

"Tell me-where did you hide Lulu?" Zachary's eyes were ablaze.

"I don't understand. Why would I know where Lulu is?" she cried, starting to panic a little just then.

Why would Zachary know to ask him about Lulu?

Did he realize something?

The thought left Ember paling, but she kept appealing to his sympathetic side. "You know me, Zachary. I'd never do something like that... I don't know where Lulu is, and I don't blame her for the child we lost because of her... Like, she didn't mean to, right?"

So, she was trying to keep playing dumb?

Seeing that, Zachary turned to see her phone, which she left on the dressing table and strode over to it.

The screen still showed her inbox and the messages sent from James's phone.

His eyes red as he glared straight at Ember. "How do you explain this?"

## **Chapter 524**

Ember could kick herself right then. Why did she forget to delete the text?

It was now fuel for Zachary to suspect her!

'They were trying to blackmail me, I was just playing along so that we can arrest them-'

"And they had to blackmail you?" Zachary's grip over her wrist became even more forceful. "You knew you did something wrong. That's why they have leverage against you and could blackmail you-"

"No!" Ember kept arguing. "I didn't do anything wrong! I really wanted to arrest them, not because I was guilty and would give them money-"

Zachary frowned. "Stop trying to weasel your way out of this!"

"I'm not!" Ember had to keep denying, or Zachary would hate her and they would be unable to hide what happened to Lulu.

"I swear, I never did anything wrong, and I was really trying to get my blackmailer arrested," she persisted.

Zachary actually hesitated at that.

"We're already married, Ember. I don't want you to hurt Lulu, so tell me already-do you know where she is?"

Ember held his gaze. "That's right, we're married. Why would I want to hurt her?"

Zachary was stumped.

"Bute"

"If you won't believe me, then what must I do for you to believe me? I'll do anything."

Ember had already caught on that Zachary might have been the one who 'blackmailed' her somehow.

However, while he had reason enough to suspect her, he did not have solid evidence, or he would be throwing it in her face instead of questioning her like this.

She had a chance to turn things around, and therefore just needed to stay calm to get through this.

Leveling a miserable look at Zachary, she continued, 'Someone must be trying to frame me. You need evidence for this kind of thing...'

Zachary was silent.

"You responded to the text..."

"Yes, I even promised money, but what does that mean? I said I was just trying to get them arrested, or there might be more people blackmailing me for no reason..."

"For no reason?" Zachary gave her a sharp look, "I have no evidence, but I'm not stupid-you promised money because you were guilty, and you know yourself if you did it. If you want me to forgive you, tell me where Lulu is, and I just might forgive you."

Zachary, not being a complete idiot, foiled Ember's attempts to lie her way out. However, she knew that she must never admit that she knew where Lulu was-it would be equal to admitting she was behind the banners.

So, she put up a wounded look. "You don't believe me?"

"I will if you tell me where Lulu is." Zachary's grip is getting more forceful by the moment. "Is she safe? Is she alright?!"

"I really don't know..." Ember kept refusing.

"What is all this noise?!" Mrs. Slate snapped just then.

She had come upstairs after hearing the commotion, looking the part of a rich housewife with her pearls and tailored dress.

Ember had worked diligently to have Mrs. Slate wrapped around her little finger, and her arrival could not have been more timely for Ember as she quickly leapt behind her.

"You have to help me. Mrs. Slate! Zachary is blaming me for the banner on our wedding and Lulu's disappearance, but I don't know anything!"

In reality, Mrs. Slate was actually working with Ember's parents to make Lulu 'disappear'.

Since Ember pretended that she knew nothing, Mrs. Slate presumed that too.

And in her eyes, Zachary questioning Ember was an injustice.

## **Chapter 525**

Mrs. Slate shielded Ember right then as she glared at her own son. "Have you gone crazy, Zachary? Are you still unable to see Lulu's true colors now?"

Before Zachary could say anything, she continued, "Ember's child-no, your child and my grandchild-was lost because of that woman, or is that not enough for you? Why are you still looking for her now?!"

"She went missing. I'm worried-"

"You should be worried about Ember's health!" Mrs. Slate snapped in disappointment. "How could you ignore your own wife over another woman? Do you even know what you're doing to Ember?!"

Zachary's hands clenched into fists at his sides.

He had no evidence to prove that Ember knew where Lulu was and so, he had no grounds to retort against his mother.

However, James was right-he could only ask Isaac for help now.

"She knows very well what she did. You all disappoint me."

With that, he strode past them and out of the room.

Ember finally came to her senses and cried, "Where are you going, Zachary? m=

She quickly gave chase, but Zachary ignored her.

He was so disappointed in her that he had no trust to speak of.

He felt like his world had fallen apart in no time at all —the people he trusted were all heinous liars.

How horribly ironic!

"Mrs. Slate, you have to talk some sense into him," Ember cried anxiously.

"Just leave him be-he must have heard some stupid rumors out there and came back to throw a fit. Don't mind him now, just focus on recovering. You should get pregnant again soon to shackle him, so that he won't keep obsessing over some dead woman."

Ember had already learned of Lulu's death from her own parents, but Mrs. Slate did not know that she knew.

Naturally, she feigned surprise. "W-What? Lulu is dead? What happened?"

"Don't ask-your parents and I had to do something after she kept getting between you and Isaac. I hope you can make Zachary fall for you soon, or he might otherwise make an issue out of that woman again."

"I'll do my best," Ember said, keeping her eyes lowered.

She was the one who goaded her own parents, who in turn convinced Mrs. Slate to eliminate Lulu.

With her being their only daughter, her parents naturally wanted the best for her.

Lulu's existence was just too much of an eyesore to her, but because Lulu had not much in the way of connections, wiping her out was easy.

Ember quickly acted all miserable in front of Mrs. Slate. "I never had any problems in life before, but my child is lost because of Lulu... It hurts so much, but Zachary actually blamed me for the banners and for hurting Lulu

"Don't worry. It's all over now. isn't it?" Mrs. Slate said, clapping Ember on the shoulder.

"Alright. I won't worry." Ember said tamely. "I'll take good care of Zachary. My dad is even saying that Zachary can take over his business."

"Oh. that's good. You parents are not that young, and they need a well- deserved break-let Zachary take over matters."

"Yeah, I agree."



Ember was certainly smart enough to know what Mrs. Slate wanted. and to whisper sweet nothings for her benefit.

Mrs. Slate was even holding her hand and leading her downstairs, saying, "I've had the kitchen make some chicken soup. Come along-remember to drink lots of it, okay?"

Meanwhile, Zachary managed to reach James. but...

## **Chapter 526**

When Zachary found James, he immediately said, "I need a favor." "Sorry, but I don't have the time." James refused him right then, and gave him a serious look. 'Look, I'm not refusing you for the heck of it, but Irene Spencer is trouble-"

"Lulu might be dead for all I know." Zachary was anxious. "I need to find her soon!"

James helped his gaze in silence for seconds. "You finally understand how serious this is, huh? Don't you think it's too late already?"

Zachary could not deny that he had been careless, even as James continued scathingly, "If Irene didn't return to US and asked to find out what happened to Lulu, you might really have presumed that she was just hiding and let the matter be altogether. It might already be too late now."

Having no retort against that, Zachary knows that he could only count on himself now. "Yeah, I know."

James reminded him. "I'm sure that Ember Lindt is the key for the whole mess."

Zachary snorted. "I thought you can't help?"

James shot him an icy glare. "You're really looking a gift horse in the mouth here."

He was about to leave when a car stopped in front of them.

Ember alighted, and it was obvious she arrived looking for Zachary.

Since she had always played the role of a warm, kind, and understanding wife in front of Zachary's friends, she was already smiling at James as soon as she arrived. "Hello, Mr. Cross."

Unlike Zachary, James was experienced in business and encountered more than his fair share of colorful characters-someone like Ember hardly posed a challenge.

Keeping a straight face, he warmly replied, "Here for Zachary, aren't you?"

Got into a fight recently? He was just ranting at me too, but if he ever bullies you, just tell me-I'll help you give him an earful."

Ember ginned. "Thanks, Mr. Cross-but don't worry, Zachary is always nice to me. He'd never bully me."

As she spoke, she was looking at Zachary as if to say: 'See? Even your friends are on my side.'

"That's good to hear. Anyway, I have to go since duty calls-take your time."

With that, James was gone-he had plenty to do and no time for small talk.

Still, he was worried enough to turn and glance at Zachary, but the man seemed to be too upset to respond.

James sighed-he was not supposed to go full hands-off with the man, especially when Zachary had worked as a doctor for most of his career.

Zachary was still too much of a novice in both business and relationships.

They were close enough to call each other friends, and no matter how dumb Zachary could be, James could not just stand aside and watch him mess up repeatedly.

As he got into his car, he texted Zachary.

[Appeal to her emotionally.]

It was a nicer way to say 'deceive her', and he just hoped that Zachary understood.

Zachary's phone soon jingled and he whipped it out for a look, glancing James's way when he saw that it was a text from James even as he drove off.

"What is it, Zachary?" Ember was glancing between Zachary and the departing car.

Her voice brought Zachary to his senses, and he stared at her just then, seemingly understanding what James meant.

Hence, despite his frustration, he became much more gentle with Ember just then. "Sorry, I think I was in a bad mood. Did I scare you?"

Ember was speechless in confusion. She had come to Zachary hoping to explain herself, but Zachary somehow gave in.

"...N-No! I understand how you feel," she said, keeping her face lowered to hide her expression, because she did not know what Zachary wanted just then.

After all the time she spent with him, she knew that Zachary was a simple, down-to-earth man.

How he felt would always show on his face, and he never minced his words.

"I was getting paranoid because Lulu went missing, but now that I thought about it, that's just it-I was just being paranoid. She must be hiding out of guilt after what she did to you, and I should never have doubted you. You just lost our child..."

Ember handily threw herself into his arms. "I knew you'd understand, Zachary."

As Zachary looked at her, however, there was no warmth in his eyes at all, but he said, "Yeah. I believe you. Let's go home."

## **Chapter 527**

Even if Zachary did not like the idea, both Isaac and James were too busy to help. He could only count on himself to find Lulu-dead or alive!

On the other hand, Ember was at once delighted and doubtful because Zachary had never been this kind to her.

As if afraid that she was dreaming, she pinched herself in the arm.

It hurt-she felt actual pain.

She was not dreaming! Zachary was actually being nice to her!

Holding his gaze, she said, "Thank you for believing me, Zachary. I promise

I don't know anything about Lulu, and I didn't put up those banners..."

"That's enough-you don't have to say anything. I'd just let my frustrations get the better of me, so don't take it to heart," Zachary told her, gesturing for her to get into his car.

"You can tell your chauffeur to drive home first."

"Okay!" Ember nodded enthusiastically, sneaking glances at Zachary as she did.

She was certainly obsessed with his good looks, so much so that she was crazy about him!

Zachary could sense her gaze, and almost asked about Lulu again out of impulse.

However, he was rational enough to restrain himself-he knew that now was not the time for that.

Asking it now would just make Ember wary, and without anyone there to help, he must endure and wait.

On the other hand, Ember was already getting ahead of herself.

She started to sneak a hand to Zachary's side.

He was not happy about it, but he only said, "I'm driving."

However, the fact that he was not shaking her off already left Ember beside herself with joy.

Aside from the time they slept together because Mrs. Slate drugged them, they did not share much intimacy even though they were married.

But now, Zachary was not pushing her away.

It was obvious that he was slowly accepting her!

She thought then that killing Lulu was the smart choice-he would not be so accepting of her otherwise.

"Thanks for believing me, Zachary," she said, and leaned against his arm.

Zachary kept his eyes on the road as he drove without reacting at all.

After James left, he headed to Isaac's home and arranged a protection detail for Tommy and Sheryl.

He also informed Sheryl that Isaac and Irene had both gone abroad since there was something important to attend to at the Remy headquarters.

Sheryl was used to Isaac leaving on short notice and did not doubt it, but was actually puzzled by Irene's departure. She just came back-she would be eager to spend more time with Tommy.

Why did she have to leave as well?

"Mr. Jefferson insisted that she went with him," James explained, and Sheryl showed a look of understanding right then.

They had been apart for so long they would yearn for each other more than newlyweds, and they certainly would want to spend more time together.

Tell them they have nothing to worry about," she told James. "I'll take good care of Tommy."

James heaved a sigh of relief at her words-there was one good thing to report to Isaac now, at least. He then headed to Twinrise.

Stan Hill was holding the fort at the Remy headquarters, but James needed Debbie the secretary's help for something here.

She was not at her desk when he arrived, however, and he had to ask around to find out that she was at the conference room.

It left James perplexed-what was she doing there when there was no meeting? He headed over and pushed open the thick, wooden doors and saw her just then...

## **Chapter 528**

Debbie had a diamond necklace around her neck-the very same necklace Isaac told James to bring.

'What are you doing?" James frowned.

Startled, Debbie quickly turned away, clearly flustered by James's sudden appearance.

Even as she struggled to explain herself, James strode in and saw that the entire set of diamond jewelry in the red velvet box had clearly been touched.

He did not need imagination to know that it was all Debbie.

'This set of jewelry costs a fortune, but Mr. Jefferson procured it by coincidence and has always kept it in his safe. I was just coming to get it for Irene Spencer-how could you put it on yourself?"

James always thought that Debbie was competent and experienced, and yet...

Finally composing herself, Debbie replied, 'Diamonds are a girl's best friend. Complain all you want-1 just couldn't resist it."

She had no other explanation since she was caught red-handed and her only option was to avoid embarrassing herself further.

James stared at her for seconds, exhaled audibly, and said, "Put it back now."

She did so immediately, while James shut the box and sighed. "Mr.

Jefferson was prepared to marry Ms. Spencer, but something came up again. I might be heading to Minerva, so call me if anything comes up over here."

Debbie was naturally dying from jealousy to find out that Irene was alive and returned to Isaac, but she would never show it because Irene had somehow caught on to her schemes already.

If she wanted to keep her job as Isaac's secretary, she must keep her lust for Isaac hidden in the depths of her heart and not let it show at all... or the days of her easy life would be numbered.

'Okay... Wait, why is Ms. Spencer returning to Minerva already?' Debbie asked.

"There's a situation," James replied.

"Mr. Jefferson has to be there for her too." Debbie felt an inward thrill. "Is she in trouble?"

"Yeah," James said, though he noticed her fidgeting and studied her. "What is this schadenfreude I've been sensing from you for a while now?"

"What are you talking about?!" Debbie snapped, pretending to pout just then. "What do you take me for? Am I really that kind of person to you, after all the years we worked together? Yeah, you caught me when I got a little too eager, but so what?"

She added a grumble toward the end, because she knew that would quell James's suspicion.

Moreover, he was just here for the diamonds, and since they needed Debbie to hold the fort, he did not press the issue in spite of his doubts.

'I get it. Ladies always go for the sparkly stuff," he assured her. "I might be leaving today. Again, call me if anything happens here."

"Don't worry, I will." Debbie smiled.

James gave her a look and then turned to leave the conference room without a word.

However, his expression darkened as soon as he turned away, because he realized that she was being suspicious.

Nonetheless, he left the building after putting the diamonds in the safe inside Isaac's office.

But with him and Isaac gone, Debbie was basically in charge now.

She stood before the glass panels, scowling as she watched James leave in his car.

She had been discreet for so long, but now that James noticed, she has to come up with something.

James might not show it, but she could tell that James had changed his opinion toward her already, and it would complicate things if she wanted to stay with Isaac.

There was a flicker in her eyes as an idea came to mind...

Over at Minerva, Mead Clinic officials interrogated Irene as soon as she was brought back.

With solid evidence of her theft of their research data and her having no way to escape the accusations, a lawsuit was filed against her for breach of trust and causing monumental loss to the hospital.

But since it was not just Mead Clinic being affected, the Minervan government got involved as well.

## **Chapter 529**

The research concerned the entire medical development scene of Minerva and their position as a global power.

After the mess Irene caused, there was no doubt they would bring down the hammer on her-especially when her allegiances clearly lay elsewhere.

"We're looking at prison time if things get to worse," Mick Gooding was saying.

Stephen Carr had spoken to him over the phone, and he wanted to help after learning that Irene was in deep trouble. He had even gone as far as to seek out Isaac while asking his friends to discern the damage.

"Pregnancy is inconsequential to the laws here, and since Irene is a foreigner, she might get slammed with espionage and treason," Mick finished, feeling the weight of a very hairy situation already.

As Isaac listened to him dissect the situation over the phone, his expression remained impassive.

However, there was no way he could just do nothing and wait-no matter how grim things looked.

"I have a business relationship with the Raideens. I'm going over to see if there's a solution."

Mick nodded. "If you need anything, just ask."

Isaac did not reply.

After reading Yvaine Lynd's letter and finding out that she had fallen for Mick later in life, he had been unable to accept it at first, but eventually understood that it was just human nature.

Feelings develop over time spent together. It was absolutely normal-he would appear unsympathetic if he kept prying.

Moreover, he had already misunderstood Irene because of Yvaine once, and he would rather not make more mistakes about that.

Erin Gooding had been eavesdropping on Mick's call and learned that Isaac was coming to Minerva, even agreeing to meet at a cafe.

James would definitely be here as well, since he was Isaac's lapdog.

As such, she sneaked to the cafe, pretending as if she was running into him when she saw that he was going to leave.

Smiling in greeting and seeing that it was just Isaac, she quickly asked, ' James isn't with you?"

Isaac, however, did not have time for her, and simply sidestepped to stride past her.

For Erin's part, she would not dare to mess around with Isaac now.

After all, she had neither the right nor the confidence-she was not Yvaine's child, and certainly not Isaac's half-sister.

Running up to him, she asked politely, "Look, I won't bug you-I just want to know whether James came here with you."

Isaac turned to look at her, and said, "No."

"Why not? He still works for you, right?" Erin pressed, but Isaac-clearly impatient-did not answer this time.

Erin wondered if James had avoided coming because of her.

Could he be worried that she would stalk him again?

Cutting in front of Isaac, she asked, "Is he staying away because he doesn't want to see me?"

"That's his business and I wouldn't know. Now, move!"

His tone was cold, and the savagery in his visage was a clear indicator of how he felt at the moment.

Erin stepped aside, grumbling softly, "Petty."

Isaac seemed to hear her, but he did not say anything as he got into his car.

Bzzt—

His phone began to ring, and he answered.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Jefferson, but we have a problem," Debbie said from the other end.

Isaac remained impassive. "What is it?"

### **Chapter 530**

"James got into a traffic accident on the way to the airport," Debbie said worriedly. "The doctors are operating on him right now, but he's not out of danger yet."

Isaac's face fell right then.

James was in trouble? And it had to be now? He could not return at the moment either.

"Got it. Which hospital is he in?"

"Aiken. It's a small hospital nearby, but he needed help urgently."

"I see."

Isaac hung up and quickly called Zachary.

Zachary might have quit his job as a doctor, but he had built a network in his time as one. Isaac would also have peace of mind with him keeping an eye on things.

Zachary was shopping with Ember at a store for luxury goods-since he was supposed to appeal to her emotionally in order to find out what happened to Lulu, it meant spending time and effort to earn her favor.

Ember was naturally basking in the sweet world he fabricated for her, thinking that all her hard work had paid off as she had finally won Zachary's love.

"That looks really nice," she said, pointing at a four-leaf clover bracelet.

Zachary beckoned for a sales assistant. "Could we try that on? We'll buy it if it looks good."

Ember wrapped her hands around his arm, grinning ear to ear. "You're so wonderful, Zachary."

He forced a smile. "As long as you like it. Also, we're married, so don't hold back."

Ember's heart could melt from Zachary's charm then-she had gotten what she wanted!

Suddenly, Zachary's phone rang.

He whipped out his phone, and seeing that it was Isaac, he told Ember, "I need to take this."

Ember nodded tamely. "Okay."

Zachary made sure to get somewhere quiet before answering. "Hello?"

"James was involved in an accident. He's at the hospital now-go check on him."

"What?!" Zachary exclaimed in disbelief.

He had bickered a little with James, but it was inconsequential and they were certainly not at odds.

As such, he asked worriedly, "I just saw him hours ago. How did that happen?"

"I don't know-I'm abroad right now, but I'm worried. Check on him for me, will you? Call me right away if something's up."

"Okay," Zachary replied, pausing before asking, "I heard that Irene is in trouble too. Is she going to be okay?"

"Just take care of James for me," Isaac said quietly-he would not be able to give Zachary the full picture over one phone call anyway, and he would rather Zachary not be distracted.

He could not help them from Zidonia anyway.

"I'll go right now," Zachary said.

Zachary knew Isaac-if Isaac did not want to say it, Zachary would not ask.

Sliding his phone into his pocket, Zachary hurried to the counter, where Ember was still trying out the bracelet.

Seeing him return, she held out her wrist in front of him, asking, "Does it look good?"

"Yeah," Zachary said without looking and whipped out his wallet to take out a credit card.



Handing it to the sales assistant, he said, "We'll take it."

"Very well." The sales assistant was certainly happy about sealing the deal so quickly, and took the card to the cashier counter.

Ember actually became distracted just then and tried to ask casually, "Who was that?"

"Isaac," Zachary replied without a pause.

He obviously was not lying either, so Ember was relieved. "Did something come up?"

"Yeah," Zachary said. "James Cross was caught in an accident and rushed to the hospital. Isaac is abroad and can't come home soon, so he asked me to check on him."

"I'm coming with you," Ember said, adding before Zachary could protest, "Mr. Cross has been very nice to me. I'm worried about him too."

Zachary held her gaze for a moment, but eventually nodded.

The sales assistant soon returned with Zachary's card and the bracelet packed up. Taking both items, Zachary said, "Let's go."