

Runaway 571

Chapter 571

As the photo landed on the floor, Irene looked down on it.

She did a double take when she saw the face in the photo, and was left staring blankly for a long while.

Why was Isaac keeping a photo of her in his notebook?

Irene picked it up and double-checked, but there was no mistaking it.

Nonetheless, she quickly stopped staring and returned the photo into the notebook, then put it back on the desk.

Turing and leaving the study, she was in such a hurry that she did not notice Sheryl standing by the door.

'What's wrong, Irene?' she asked in concern. "What's the hurry?"

'N-Nothing." Irene quickly composed herself when she saw Sheryl.

"Oh... Anyway, there's someone asking for you."

Irene was going to ask who it was when she found Zachary standing in the living room. He said, "I left work early, so I came immediately."

Irene told Sheryl to take Mrs. Watson and Tommy on a stroll around the block. "I need to talk to Zachary alone."

Sheryl did so, and after everyone left, Irene took a seat on the living room couch. "Sit."

They traded glances in silence, and Irene spoke first, "You have to change hospitals for James Cross, but do it quietly so that no one knows."

"Why? I thought Central Hospital was good enough..."

"I'm afraid that someone is after his life, so changing hospitals is necessary. I can ask Stephen Carr if you can't think of any place, but the important part is to keep him somewhere hidden. He probably won't have any issue--"

'I can do it," Zachary said, cutting her short as he stared at her seriously.' Anyway, I wanted to meet you because of Lulu."

"You found her? Where has she been? I have to see her-] mean, Ricky basically burned through the Spencer family fortune just to find her. She's definitely getting an earful from me... Honestly, why would she hide herself? We're all so worried!" Irene was at once thrilled and accusative.

"The Spencer family fortune?" Zachary repeated.

He knew that Spencer Holdings had gone bankrupt, but Ricky threw away his family fortune as well?

"Yes-he sold everything our father left US that's worth anything." Irene explained.

She did not actually want to tell how much losses the spencer family had suffered or just how much Ricky had put on the line.

While she thought that a relationship between Ricky and Lulu was unrealistic before given the age gap between them, she saw now how far Ricky would go for her.

She was therefore willing to support her half-brother if he wanted to pursue a relationship with her when she returned.

As for Zachary, Irene only found disappointment in his behavior.

Zachary slowly hung his head-he certainly did a lot less than Ricky had, and blamed himself for indirectly causing Lulu's death.

If only he refrained from constantly seeking her after she left her...

At the very least, he would have avoided that tragedy.

"Lulu... Lulu is..."

He tried to speak but kept choking on his own words, while his eyes welled with tears.

Irene felt an ominous sensation right then.

Keeping her eyes on him, he asked, "What are you trying to say?"

"S-She's not coming back..." Zachary eventually rasped.

"Don't lie to me!" Irene snapped in denial.

Zachary kept his head down. "I'd never... I wish it was a lie too, but it's real." Bang!

One of the bedrooms suddenly opened violently and Irene turned toward the racket, her eyes widening.

"R-Ricky? I thought you left!"

I would still be in the dark if I did!"

Chapter 572

Ricky was glaring furiously at Zachary, his eyes opened so wide they were bulging as if they would pop out.

In a split second, he rushed forward, grabbed Zachary by the collar, and launched a lightning quick jab on his face!

Pow!

There was a dull thud and Zachary tasted blood on his lips.

Ricky did not loosen his grip, however, and shoved Zachary to the floor as he kept clobbering him.

Stunned for a moment, Irene quickly came to her senses and ran up to pull him away. "Calm down!"

'How could I?!' Ricky bellowed in rage. "He's a married man, but he had to keep bugging Lulu! That's

why she was killed. It's him. It's all because of him..."

He had lost all rationality right then. All he wanted to do was to murder Zachary!

'Get off me!' he cried and shook Irene off.

As she lost her balance and fell on the couch, she grimaced in pain as she felt a pull on the scar over her belly.

Ricky did not notice her discomfort, however, and was still punching Zachary relentlessly.

Zachary did not resist—he actually thought that Ricky was right.

After all, if he had stayed away from Lulu after getting married, Ember would not have set her sights on Lulu, and this tragedy could have been avoided.

He admitted as much, too. "You're right. I did kill her."

"You think that look of regret would get you off the hook! Absolutely not!" Ricky cried even as he throttled Zachary. "If you want penance, I'll send you to her right now. Kneel and beg her for forgiveness!"

Irene finally got to her feet despite much difficulty just then, and snapped, 'That's enough, Ricky! Killing him won't change a thing!

What you should be doing is to find the real culprit!"

Ricky froze as Irene's words brought him to his senses.

'The real culprit? As in the people who killed Lulu?"

Yes." Irene walked up to him, ignoring the pain in her belly as she placed a gentle hand over Ricky's back. "No matter what

Zachary did, he wasn't the one who killed Lulu. It's those murderers."

Zachary stared at them for a while before he said, "You're looking at him.'

After all, his mother had ordered Lulu's death. How was it different from him doing it himself?

'Don't think I wouldn't touch you!" Ricky snapped, convinced that Zachary was just provoking him.

"I know you would, but give me time," Zachary said calmly. "There's something I must do, and you can do anything you want to me once I'm done."

Irene pulled Ricky away just then. "Yeah. We are all in grief, but that is all the more reason we must work together to destroy Lulu's murderers."

Ricky stared at Irene for a moment.

He gradually calmed down, giving Zachary one last glare before releasing him.

Irene helped Zachary up. "Are you alright?"

Zachary wobbled a little as he got to his feet. "I'm fine.'

"I'll get the first aid kit. Your face..."

Zachary caught her wrist. "I'm fine. Don't worry."

Irene held his gaze for a moment before sitting down.

"How did you know that Lulu's dead?' Ricky asked.

Irene was eager to find out as well, and they both stared fixedly at Zachary. "Maybe there's a mistake? Or you were being lied to?" Irene held on to hope. Zachary wiped the blood oozing from the corner of his lips and growled, ' My source is... very accurate.'

'Who is it?' Ricky was clenching his fist, ready for another fight already.

Zachary, however, learned his lesson-fighting fire with fire never worked. Watching Ricky, he told him, "I'll get you answers. I just need some time.' Seeing that Zachary had a plan, Irene spoke before Ricky could. "We'll give you time, but it had better be worth it."

'Yeah," Zacahry replied with staunch determination.

With that, Irene got to her feet. "I'm tired. You two should go do what you should be doing."

She returned to her room, leaning on the door as she closed it behind her, her eyes welling with tears right then.

Bzzt-

Her phone was suddenly ringing and she took it out to see that it was a call from Isaac.

She quickly wiped her face and composed herself before answering, " Hello?"

Chapter 573

Despite Irene's best efforts in hiding her feelings, Isaac immediately heard the tears in her voice.

"Are you crying?" he asked quietly.

Irene did her best to keep her voice in check while denying it. "No, I'm fine."

There was silence on the other end. "Alright, you totally weren't crying."

Irene hung her head right then, staring at her toes as she said, "I missed you.'

Learning what had happened to Lulu had left her feeling as if she was punched in the gut.

She did her best to keep herself in check, but with Isaac, she suddenly wanted a shoulder to lean on, and to feel vulnerable.

There was a long silence from the other end. "You should go to bed."

Irene asked, "Weren't you supposed to come home once you're done over there?"

"Something came up."

Irene felt despondent.

"I see," she murmured, lowering her head as teardrops trickled over her eyelashes. "You called to tell me that you're not returning soon, right?"

"Yeah," he said quietly.

Heaving a long sigh, she mustered her spirit and said, "I'm fine. Just do what you have to, but tell me as soon as you have something."

"Yeah."

Irene's fingers clenched over her phone. "I'm hanging up if there's nothing else."

"Yeah."

She put away her phone and stared blankly at nothing for a long while.

Late at night, while Irene was sound asleep, the door opened as Isaac's towering frame entered.

His jacket was slung over his hand, while his collar was loose, baring his muscular chest. There was stubble on his chin and fatigue showed in his eyes—a far cry from his former exuberant self.

If anything, he was gloomy.

Still, he did not wake anyone up as he tiptoed into the house, gently opening the door to their bedroom, illuminating by silver moonlight. He stood by the door, watching Irene curling into herself on her bed and sound asleep.

He left the room without waking her, then washed off his travel weariness before putting on fresh clothes and returning to the bedroom.

Irene was unable to fall asleep until it was very late, so she was now sound asleep, unable to sense that someone was in the room.

Walking up to the bed, Isaac quietly lay down beside her and wrapped his arms around her.

Although there was an emergency, he became worried when he heard Irene's tearful voice over the phone and returned ahead of schedule.

Irene felt the warmth and snuggled against him.

Isaac gave her a peck on the forehead, patting her gently on the back, afraid of waking her up.

As Irene woke up in a daze the next morning, she rubbed her eyes when she saw someone in front of her, before her vision cleared up.

"Isaac...?" Her raspy morning voice sounded quite surprised. "Y-You're home?"

As she spoke, she reached out to touch his face as if to test if it was a dream.

His cheek was warm, and felt real to the touch.

It was no dream.

"What are you doing here? I thought you're busy and won't come back so soon..." she murmured.

Isaac tightened his embrace over her. "I've missed you."

Irene's heart turned to mush just then and she leaned meekly in his arms, greedily reveling in his searing embrace.

After a while, he finally asked, "Why were you crying?"

Irene had lost control after learning what happened to Lulu and her heart clenched with phantom pain at Isaac's question.

"S-Something bad happened to Lulu," she murmured softly.

Isaac's brow furrowed.

He did not know Lulu all that well, but the string of tragedies lately threatened to overwhelm Irene.

Having no idea how to comfort her, he simply kept holding on to her to offer her warmth.

At the same time, Irene worked hard to calm herself, lifting her cheek slightly. "Is this going to set you back?"

"Nope," Isaac replied, his fingers darting over her cheek as he brushed her hair behind her ear. "I'm staying here with you. You can sleep in."

Irene closed her eyes, and perhaps feeling secure with him around, actually fell asleep soon enough.

It was nine when she woke up again, but Isaac was still there.

Chapter 574

As Irene got out of bed, Isaac left the room first to check on Tommy.

Everyone else apart from Irene and Isaac already had their breakfast, so they went to the dining table together.

'I will have to drop by the office later," Isaac said.

Irene nodded-there definitely would be work waiting to be done since he just returned. I am..."

She wanted to ask Isaac about the photo in his notebook.

"What is it?"

As Isaac stared at her for a moment, Irene shook her head. "No, it's nothing."

She should be trusting in Isaac-he would eventually tell her if there was anything she needed to know.

"Stay home and get some proper rest," he told her before he left for work.

It just so happened that Irene was feeling spirited for the day.

Tommy was sitting on the floor and playing with his little dog, and she walked up to pat his little head. "Are you having fun?"

Tommy looked up and beamed at her, and she scooped him up in his arms and gave him a peck on the cheek.

Sheryl soon walked up to her and took Tommy off her arms. "Scoot. Back to your room."

After all, Irene was not sticking to her postpartum recovery routine at all, and it was as if she could not help being busy every day.

Irene understood that Sheryl was concerned, and hence returned to her room obediently.

Unable to fall asleep, she picked up a book.

Bang, bang, bang!

However, she had barely flipped through a few pages when someone rapped on her door.

Irene opened the door to find Sheryl standing there with Tommy in her arms. "Look! There's this red rash all over Tommy's body. I think it's some sort of allergy..."

Irene quickly checked, and saw that the rash was growing all over

Tommy's hands and chest... but while it resembled an allergic reaction, it somehow was not.

"Get the car ready. I'm taking him to the hospital."

"Mrs. Watson and I will go. You stay home," Sheryl said-Irene was going to hurt her body, running around constantly less than a month after giving birth.

"No, I'm worried." Irene shook her head. "I'll just dress in layers—I'll be fine." Seeing that Irene was determined, Sheryl had no choice but to let her go. After they rushed Tommy to the hospital, a dermatologist examined the toddler and said, "This is a viral infection, commonly found in animals with long fur. Would you happen to be rearing a pet?"

Irene nodded. "A dog."

"Has he been in close contact with it?"

Yes."

"Does the dog have a proof of health and vaccination?"

"I think so!" Irene said-she had instructed the chauffeur to make sure that the dog is healthy.

If anything, this should not have happened at all.

"You should get the dog checked at a vet for diseases. Animals tend to be a vector of diseases, so you have to be watchful."

Understood," Irene replied.

"I'll write a prescription for your kid—it's an ointment for the skin. Also, keep him away from the dog.

Irene nodded.

Once they got home, Irene had Sheryl take Tommy to his room and apply the ointment, while she called for Mrs. Watson, asking, 'The chauffeur bought the dog, didn't he?'

Mrs. Watson nodded hesitantly. "Yes, ma'am."

'Tell him to come," Irene said, glowering.

"Is there a problem, ma'am?" Mrs. Watson asked gingerly.

"I said to get a healthy dog, but is it really?"

She was certainly skeptical.

Mrs. Watson's face fell right then.

'Get the chauffeur," Irene urged again.

Rubbing her hands, Mrs. Watson finally told her, "Actually, Debbie bought the dog."

Irene sprang to her feet. "What?!"

Chapter 575

Irene could hardly believe her ears. "Debbie bought the dog? How could it be her?!"

It was hardly a surprise if there was something wrong with the dog Debbie bought, given her heinous natural

Mrs. Watson quickly admitted, "Debbie overheard me asking the chauffeur to buy a dog, and offered to do it instead, saying that she knows a lot about animals. I agreed to it, since she had always done well at her job..."

Irene was frustrated, but after how Mrs. Watson had taken care of her for so long, she understood that Mrs. Watson did not mean harm.

Working hard to keep her emotions in check, she said, "Take the dog to a vet right now for a full body checkup. Found out if it's sick."

Seeing that she was flustered, Mrs. Watson asked, "Was it the cause for Tommy's rash?"

Irene nodded. "Wait, nevermind-ri! go with the chauffeur."

She was worried that something would happen in between again, and she gave Sheryl a head's up before she left. "Don't go anywhere, Mom."

"Okay," Sheryl said-Tommy was feeling very uncomfortable with the rash anyway, and he was now throwing a tantrum in contrast to his usual quiet nature.

At the vet, the dog was found to carry a virus after a thorough examination.

"A virus?" Irene was dumbstruck, and quickly pressed, "Is it infectious?"

Tommy had been hugging the dog a lot, and it had been with them for a few days now.

It was likely that the adults' immune system was strong enough to fend off the virus, whereas Tommy remained vulnerable since he was just a child, hence the rash.

The veterinarian did not appear to have all the answers, however. "I think you should go to a better hospital that can perform blood tests on the dog to determine the nature of the virus-whether it's infectious, and if so, how quickly it spreads."

"Okay," Irene replied, since the veterinarian did not have the equipment to test the virus.

Before they headed to a hospital, she bought a cage to keep the dog in, calling Isaac along the way, which he quickly answered.

"Isaac?" she called out urgently.

"Yeah."

"Would you believe me if I told you Debbie was the one behind James's accident?"

"Yeah."

There was tension in Isaac's voice, but Irene was too preoccupied to notice it, let alone think why.

In fact, she did not appear surprised at all.

"Would you believe me if I told you she is trying to hurt Tommy too?"

"Yeah."

Finally coming to her senses then, she exclaimed, "What? Are you saying you see her true nature now?"

At Isaac's office in Twinrise, Debbie was standing before Isaac's desk, rearing her chin at him with her chest puffed.

For once, she was utterly confident as she stood before him.

"I'm the only one who can save your son," she said with naked lust in her eyes. "I've loved you all this while, and I'm the only one who earnestly does. Irene Spencer? All she did was bear your child-that's not love, just your sense of obligation and responsibility for Tommy."

Isaac remained impassive as he leveled a cool look at her. He had never expected Debbie's treachery.

Chapter 576

Although Isaac had now seen Debbie's true nature, he asked, "Why would you hurt James Cross? He was the one who got you recommended to this job. Shouldn't you be grateful?"

He wanted to know if James found out about some sort of secret she had, that forced her to silence James.

"I really liked that diamond necklace you plan to give Irene Spencer, and I put it on as I fantasized that you gave it to me-James caught me red-handed, and I knew right then that he saw through me. So, I tried to silence him... permanently."

Debbie then paused for a moment before adding, "Oh, I'm grateful that he got me this job, but he became my obstacle after he saw what I did. Hesitation is the worst thing to do, so I had to do what I did... who knew that he would've survived that instead."

"Since you wanted to keep things quiet, why dispense with your disguise now? Are you really that confident that I'll bend to your whims?" Isaac leaned against his chair, but every nerve in his body was stiffening despite his nonchalant appearance.

"Well, after working for you for so long, I know how ruthless you can be, but I don't mind telling you that I've done my homework."

Pursing her lips, she said, "I wouldn't have carried out my plan this early, but I noticed that Irene knows about my secret. She was definitely worried that I would try to murder James for good, so she told Zachary Slate to hide him."

"That's not the worst either-Ricky Spencer was actually the one who forced my hand after I discovered that he was the one who had been keeping me tailed and blackmailing me. If he told you that I was the one who hurt James, I'd be killed. It's the reason I did not hesitate, and was forced to strike first."

Fortunately, it turned out that she was not too late, and this situation was exactly what she wanted.

"Either way, I hold the lives of your son and Ricky Spencer in my hands. Deny me, and I promise you that you'll save neither."

Debbie's lips then curled up in a smile. "I worked for you-I know you best. That's why I have been meticulous and never cut corners. Understand that you'd never get another antidote, and the only way to save your son is to marry me."

Isaac's gaze darkened like an impending storm.

Even though she was mentally prepared and had seen him getting furious, Debbie still took a step back in fear.

Isaac's phone rang just then.

It was Irene's call, and he naturally believed everything she said now that Debbie had revealed her true colors, even giving a noncommittal grunt when Irene asked if he knew about Debbie's true nature.

Irene's words only serve to confirm Debbie's threat.

He was already fatigued with his other child, who was still missing and her fate unknown... only for Debbie to hurt Tommy now.

All he knew just then was that he must kill Debbie for this.

It was absolutely necessary!

His fingers clenching over his phone, he said, "I'm breaking up with you, Irene..."

Still in the car, Irene was left dumbstruck.

"I'm going to marry Debbie," he finished, bringing her to her senses.

Her mind raced.

Was Debbie threatening him with Tommy's life? Coercing him into saying that?

Irene kept her voice quiet and said, "Debbie would never allow US to find an antidote. I know that you're trying to save Tommy here, and I know what I must do."

"I trust you," she said firmly.

Chapter 577

Irene's words did not offer Isaac relief.

Even if she did not misunderstand him and trusted him, it only strengthened his resolve to murder Debbie!

He had never felt such bloodlust or the impulse to claim another life without regard to the consequences!

Just then, Irene quietly said over the phone, "I'll do my best to find a cure."

"Yeah," Isaac said quietly.

It was not that much of a conversation, but both knew what each other were thinking.

Irene stared outside the car window, her hands sliding feebly to her lap while she watched the passing scenery.

The car was driving steadily, but her heart could not calm down at all, and felt as if it was struck repeatedly by a raging tide.

As the car came to a stop, Irene shelved her thoughts so that she could examine the current situation with calm composure and determination.

She knew that Isaac would deal with Debbie-right now, she must find out what virus was embedded on the dog, and her best chance was Hotmesh Research.

It was the best research center in the country, after all.

Unsure if the virus was infections, she told the chauffeur to wait in the car while she spoke to the staff there.

"I wish to see the director. Could you contact him for me or give me his number?"

The receptionist at the front desk studied her from head to toe just then.

Irene had worn layers to avoid people staring at her scars and she was still in the postpartum period, so it only made her look weirder.

Eventually, the receptionist said politely, "I'm sorry, but our director doesn't see anyone just because they ask."

Irene whipped out her Mead Clinic staff ID, proving that she was both a researcher and an attending physician there. "I'm a doctor and a researcher. I really need to speak with your director."

"I'm sorry, but you're just making this worse," the receptionist retorted stiffly, even showing slight disdain

just then. "I mean, is this stuff even genuine? If you are that high-ranked, what business do you have with our director?"

Irene frowned, surprised by the receptionist's attitude.

She had no choice but to take out her phone, and hesitated as she tried to decide if she should call Stephen Carr or Zachary Slate.

They would both be able to help her get in touch with the director.

However, the receptionist took her hesitation for posturing, and chuckled loftily. "Why are you hesitating? Why don't you call whoever you're going to call?*

Irene shot her a sharp, cool look just then. "You're a receptionist, and that means you should be assisting everyone who stepped through those doors. What's with your attitude? Do you think you're above the rest? And how so?!"

She was incensed that a major research center would hire a receptionist like this woman.

She was utterly disappointed!

Naturally, her snide remarks left the receptionist glowering in turn. "Who do you think you are? Is this research center supposed to receive every piece of shit who steps inside?

Why don't you take a look in the mirror, bitch?!"

While Irene was left stupefied that the receptionist would stoop to the level of such profanities, Stephen happened to step inside the lobby and he called out, "Irene?"

Chapter 578

Stephen was there mainly because of the research paper incident before.

Though Tobey Kitsch, the deputy director, had since been fired for his duplicity and Irene was also caught in the subsequent fallout, Stephen was still hoping that they could continue using the research data to develop a fully artificial heart for the sake of the country.

Dennis Turner, the director, naturally agreed with the idea.

At the same time, he blamed himself for not seeing Tobey's true colors until it was too late, leaving a huge mess in his wake.

After their discussion, Dennis was escorting Stephen out when he noticed Irene in the lobby.

Knowing Irene's health, Stephen hurried to her and asked in concern. "What are you doing here? You should be resting at home."

Irene sighed feebly. "I'm in trouble."

"What is it? Do you need my help?"

Irene smiled begrudgingly. As a matter of fact, I do."

"Alright, shoot—I'll help you as best as I can within my power," Stephen said.

He still felt like he owed her, and his offer was therefore sincere.

"I have a dog carrying an unknown virus," Irene explained. "I need research equipment and personnel-urgently."

Stephen had never seen her being so antsy before, but said, "It's no big deal, w

Turning to Dennis, he said, "She's the doctor who got the research data for us. She was captured and confined because we leaked the data, and she would not be here if Isaac Jefferson-her husband-was not well- connected and was ruthless in his methods."

"Really?!" Dennis was at once surprised and impressed, and he shook Irene's hand enthusiastically. "So you're the one-1 must apologize for our oversight in allowing such a leak, causing you so much pain. Truly, you and your husbands have hearts of gold.

The forum would never have been held in our country if he did not push for it... Also, your problems are our research center's problems too. All you need is just say the word."

Irene studied with Dennis for a while. Deciding that he was no rotten apple, she said, "Thank you."

"Oh, you really don't have to thank US. We owe you too much for that," Dennis insisted.

Nearby, the receptionist watched as everything unfolded.

Not only was Irene a returnee from Mead Clinic, but she was married to Isaac Jefferson, too?!

"I'm so sorry!" she apologized profusely. "So you really are from Mead Clinic!"

Irene glanced at her, but did not press the issue-right now, she must find out about the virus that the dog carried, and had the chauffeur bring the dog in.

"Try to keep your distance," she told them. "I'm not sure if the virus is infectious."

As they headed to the labs, Irene's phone rang.

It was Sheryl, calling to tell her that Tommy had caught a fever now.

Irene felt a gripping pain over her heart, but she did her best to stay calm. "I know."

"When are you coming back?" Sheryl was beside herself with worry, as the rash and now the fever made things look very dangerous.

"Soon."

Hanging up, she caught Stephen's wrist firmly as she said, "You need to help me. Dr. Carr."

Stephen could tell that this was serious-Irene would not be this somber otherwise.

"I'll do my best," he assured her.

"Find out the virus the dog carries."

'Just leave it to US." Dennis told her.

"I'll be staying here too." Stephen added. "We'll call you once we have something."

Irene nodded in gratitude and left the research center to hurry home, urging the chauffeur to floor the gas pedal along the way.

When she reached home. she had just stepped through the front door when she heard Sheryl snapping. "Who do you think you are, Debbie? What right do you have to tell US to move out of this apartment?!"

Chapter 579

Debbie leveled Sheryl a look of disdain. "You're the one who has no right here. Did you think I came to mess around? Issac sent me to chase you out of this house!"

'Don't give me that crap!' Sheryl naturally would not believe Debbie." Tommy is sick. He's not going to make US leave at a time like this..."

"I'm marrying Isaac, so you are all leaving-get it?"

Debbie planted herself on the couch like she owned the place. "You have one hour, or I'll have all your belongings thrown out.

Sheryl almost fainted right then-her feet turned to jelly and she stumbled backward, and Mrs. Watson had to catch her.

Then, turning to glare at Debbie for a second, Mrs. Watson then charged at her and started clawing her face!

You witch! You brought US that diseased cure to make Tommy sick! And now you've come here to brag?! Mr. Jefferson would never love that black heart of yours-wake up already!"

Debbie was caught off guard and she felt the flaring sting on her face before she realized what was happening.

Pushing Mrs. Watson off, she snapped, "I'll kill you!"

How dare she lay a finger on her face!

Mrs. Watson was knocked to the floor, but she did not give up-scrambling to her feet, she charged toward Debbie again, but that was when Irene entered.

She stared at Mrs. Watson and Sheryl for a moment before saying, "Pack our belongings. We're leaving."

Both women froze, unable to believe what they were hearing.

"What was that, Irene?" Sheryl asked in disbelief.

Mrs. Watson certainly did not think Irene should back down either. Ma'am -you're Mr. Jefferson's wife and the mother of his son.

Debbie is the one who should be leaving. What was it she said? That Mr. Jefferson is going to marry her?! What a joke! She must have never looked in the mirror to see that hideous face of hers!"

'I'll have Isaac fire you, believe it!" Debbie glared at her, even as she flushed from being ridiculed by a mere housekeeper!

I doubt it-I've served Mr. Jefferson longer than you ever could. What, did you think that you're some ravishing goddess who could bewitch men? I'm sorry, but you really should stop overestimating yourself, you shameless slut!"

Debbie actually could not muster a retort, and her face turned dark.

Her knuckles clenching at her side, she then spotted a cup on the table and picked it up. Before she could throw it at Mrs. Watson, however, Irene hurried to her and took it off her hands, saying, "We're leaving right now. There's no need to get violent with an elderly woman."

Debbie's eyes were bulging. "Didn't you hear what she said?"

"She's been staying here for so long, and you're chasing off at the drop of a hat," Irene pointed out. 'Don't you think it's reasonable that she had a little complaint?"

Debbie laughed smugly at that. "They don't believe Isaac would marry me. Why don't you tell them, Irene?"

Both Sheryl and Mrs. Watson turned toward Irene at the same time.

Irene knew what Debbie wanted to hear and she decided to play along, telling them, "Isaac is breaking up with me, and he's going to marry Debbie. Let's pack our things..." is he blind?!" Mrs. Watson cried in frustration, not particularly caring about her words.

Debbie was incensed that she kept questioning her looks.

Even if she did not hold a candle to Irene's beauty before, Irene had since been disfigured!

"What would you know?! No matter how ugly you think I am, I'm a lot less

uglier than that!" Debbie snapped while pointing at Irene. "Also, men aren't all about looks-they want women who can hold their own. Isaac needs a woman who can stand with him not as an equal, not a plague like her who keeps causing him trouble. As for me, I'm both his hands at the workplace and someone who could take care of his personal needs too. Does she even hold a candle to me? Hmm?!"

While Mrs. Watson was glaring furiously, Sheryl had calmed down to think arguing with Debbie now was pointless, because she would never strut like this without Isaac's approval.

"Stop, Mrs. Watson. We're leaving."

With that, she left to pack up.

Since Irene and Sheryl were not fighting, Mrs. Watson did not have the confidence to keep it up, and she left grumpily to pack up as well.

“Wait”

Debbie stopped Irene before she could leave. "Do you know how much I hate you, Irene?"

Irene paused, turning slowly and leveling her a cool glare. 'I've hated you ever since you married Isaac. Remember that accident he had?'

Irene's memory failed her just then, so Debbie reminded her, "I sicked our men on you instead of Ricky Spencer, even though he was the driver who caused the accident."

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Irene remembered then-she had lost one of her twins at the time.

Debbie smiled. "Actually, I knew everything, including the fact that Ricky was the driver... But since the vehicle was registered under your name, I sent our men after you instead."

Irene's hand slowly clenched into fists at her sides.

Whitney Cox's amniocentesis did not cause a miscarriage at the time, but she had suffered one after those men attacked her.

She had always held that grudge against Whitney, but it turned out that Debbie was the real culprit.

If she did not send those men after her, both twins would have survived.

She glared at Debbie then, truly realizing how far her treachery goes just then.

"Now you got what you wanted. You've won-I lost."

"I always get what I want," Debbie gloated.

"Yeah. Good luck," Irene flatly said, and turned to leave.

They were soon done packing since they were just taking some clothes and necessities, and Irene was carrying Tommy, while Mrs. Watsons and Sheryl carried their luggage.

Debbie was sitting on the couch, her hands folded over her chest as she declared, "This will be my bridal chamber with Isaac."

Mrs. Watson lost her temper and was about to start another fight, but Sheryl stopped her.

It was pointless to argue with Debbie now that Isaac had her back.

At the same time, Irene turned to glare at Debbie with murder in her eyes!

Debbie had killed one of Irene's children, and had now hurt Tommy too.

Irene would not allow those grudges to stay unanswered!

When she left the apartment, her phone started ringing.

She took it out to see that it was a text from Isaac. [Any place that Debbie knows is not safe. I've arranged for you to stay elsewhere-the chauffeur will take you there.]

As a matter of fact, he immediately agreed when Debbie demanded the Rose Garden apartment.

For starters, she knew that place, and it would therefore not be safe for Irene or Tommy.

Moreover, Debbie would get full of herself, and her conceit would make it easier to destroy her.

Irene did not answer Isaac's text, however, and simply got into the car to leave.

Peter Lindt had taken out all the available funds he could to buy Tim Goldman's silence.

He was still short, however, and attempted to make it up with business.

"Look, these businesses are long-term profits. It would make you more money than money," Peter said as he pushed the papers to Tim. "Sign it, and it's all yours-naturally, the condition is that you destroy all the evidence against me."

Tim read through the papers, and mused to himself that Peter was certainly a sly, if not prudent, old fox.

After ensuring that there were no issues, Tim signed the agreement and destroyed all the evidence that he had of Peter's conspiracy right before Peter's eyes.

However, Peter could barely breathe easy when Tim said, "Oh, by the way, I got this curious email for some reason. You should take a look."

Tim plugged a USB drive into his laptop, and showed Peter the video inside.

Peter's face first turned pale, and then dark!

His pupils dilating, he stammered, "What... How..."