

Runaway 731

Chapter 731

It was not just Isaac inside

Zachary was there too, and the pungent scent of alcohol struck Irene's nose once she stepped inside! She had no idea how much Isaac had drunk, but it was obvious that Zachary had drunk a lot too, as he was sprawled limply on the couch, his cheeks clearly flushed even under the dim light.

He had already taken off his jacket and thrown it to a corner, while his collar was unbuttoned, revealing his reddish skin.

Irene was frowning as she entered, and she went to check on Isaac first.

He was not dead-drunk like Zachary, and his cheeks were not red-it was likely that he was not the type who got flushed from alcohol.

Still, there was an unfocused look in his eyes as he watched her, and he held out a hand at her.

"You're here."

Irene put her hand on his palm and sat beside him right then.

"How much did Zachary drink?"

Isaac did not respond but merely leveled her a meaningful look.

Getting the creeps from his stare, she averted her eyes and asked, "What's that look for?"

"You'd ask about another man first, then show me some concern?"

"...You're really drunk," she said, giving him a look-he would never talk like that while sober.

Linking arms with him just then, she told him, 'Let's get you out of here.'

However, she was too scrawny to really carry him, so James came over with a suggestion.

"How about I get someone to send Zachary home, and then I'll come back to help you?"

Seeing that Zachary was really drunk, Irene said, "Sure."

With that, James called in a waiter who helped carry Zachary out of the private room, leaving just Irene and Isaac.

"Can you walk?" she asked him-she was presuming that he would need other's help to leave the room even if he was not drunk.

"I'm not drunk."

He squeezed her hand just then, and leaned toward her, his lips brushing against her ear.

"Irene..."

Irene sprang to her feet right then. She would not usually overreact like this—it was a knee-jerk reflex.

Even as she felt him inch closer with his alcohol-scented breath, she abruptly remembered Harvey kissing her.

She felt disgusted, though not at Isaac—she simply could not bring herself to be intimate with him ever since that incident.

Isaac appeared taken aback, though he soon appeared drunk again.

"Come here," he said, holding out a hand.

Irene pursed her lips.

"I didn't mean to do that."

Isaac understood, and therefore did not get upset or take offense.

In reality he did not drink that much to be drunk, and was just there to listen to Zachary complain—all the empty bottles were Zachary's.

He was feigning drunkenness to try to get intimate with her, but she had yet to get over her trauma.

Even being too close would trigger an overreaction.

"Let's get you home. Can you walk?" Irene asked just then.

"I want to hold you," Isaac said, tugging at her hand.

Irene stared at him for seconds before eventually walking toward him—he took her hand and pulled her in, allowing her to drop on his lap, and he gathered her dainty figure within his arms.

From that close, she could clearly smell the fresh scent he seemed to carry, now added with a tinge of alcohol.

She worked hard to control her emotions, but she started to tremble a little.

All she could think about was the scene where she was defiled, and veins throbbed over her pretty neck from anxiousness.

"I..."

Her voice was hoarse when she tried to speak.

Isaac simply pressed her head against his chest.

"Forget it, Irene. It's not your fault."

Irene did not think so, however—if she knew what had happened, she would try to convince herself or selectively forget.

However, not knowing what had really happened only left her imagination running wild about what Harvey did to her while she was unconscious! Working hard to control her emotions, she said, "I have a question. You have to be honest."

Chapter 732

Isaac replied, "Okay. Mustering her courage then, Irene asked, "Did you watch the whole video?"

She never dared to ask that question all this while.

"Yes."

"Was I, really...?"

"No," Isaac told her assuredly.

"He just wanted to upset me. He didn't really do anything to you."

In reality, the video was incomplete and he had no idea how far Harvey went, but he told her with such assurance anyway just to get her to let it go.

"Really?" Irene asked expectantly.

"Yes," Isaac replied with assurance.

She lowered her head then, her shoulders shaking-she did not want to cry, but her nose was getting runny anyway.

Ever since what happened, she felt inferior to Isaac from the depths of her heart, as if she was filthy.

Naturally, she felt much better after she received such assurance from him, and was smiling despite her tears.

"Thank you."

Even if he said it just to comfort her, she felt confident again.

She sniffled.

"Sorry. I'm pathetic."

Isaac ran his fingers through her hair.

"Just cry if you want to. There's no need for disguises with me."

Nonetheless, Irene wiped her face and raised her chin.

"I'm not going to cry. She was strong, proud, courageous, and invincible. However, that left Isaac with a dark look in his eyes. Was she refusing to let herself be vulnerable around him, even for just a moment? Still, he wrapped his arms around her.

"Let's go home."

"Okay," she replied, and they left with his hand around her shoulder.

When they stopped outside, however, they ran into a couple with their hands wrapped around each other as they kissed each other fiercely-as if there was no one around them! Irene was left speechless and she averted her eyes as she blushed.

Isaac lowered his gaze to study her red cheeks, his lips curling up-she was still so innocent.

They soon left the nightclub and got into the car.

Irene was driving, but before she started the ignition, she realized something and turned toward him.

"You aren't drunk, are you?" She realized with a start when Isaac said nothing.

"You trick me," she grumbled.

"I won't believe you ever again, liar."

"Who would you believe in, if not me?"

Isaac held her shoulder so that she faced himself, and said, "I'm actually really drunk."

He leaned toward her as he spoke, and Irene watched as his lips inched closer, and worked hard to restrain her misgiving so that she would not avoid him.

His warm lips gently touched hers and he pulled away without staying too long.

He did not push his luck, because he knew that it was a gradual process if he wanted Irene to recover to her original state.

Irene lowered the window, allowing fresh air into the car.

As her head cleared, she started the car and drove off.

She suddenly remembered the mess at Hotmesh Research.

"Are you still upset?" "About what?"

"That I didn't leave Finn Crowe to you," Irene said.

"I am," Isaac growled, reclining against his seat.

"Well, that's because my work is different from yours," Irene explained.

"You're an executive and everyone under you must work hard, so it's no issue if you have strict standards. On the other hand, my job requires teamwork-experiments have to be carried out in pairs or trios. If I can't get the people at the research center to willingly work with me, I'd have a hard time getting any work done in the future. Do you get it?"

Isaac certainly did not think that far, and he then understood that his job and work environment entailed different things from Irene's.

"I do."

"So? Are you still upset now?" Irene asked.

Isaac cast her a sideways glance.

"I'll calm down if you agree to a condition of mine."

"Shoot."

Isaac mused to himself for a moment and said, "Sleep in bed from now on."

Chapter 733

Irene was speechless, and her fingers clenched over the steering wheel.

Even so, she softly replied, "Yeah."

Isaac clearly heard her despite her tiny voice and he smiled faintly.

As they arrived home and got in bed, he wrapped his arms around her, and she stiffened so badly he felt like he was holding a warm rock.

Hence, he spoke to her to distract her.

"Did you know what I did to Tobey Kitsch's family?"

"What?" Irene asked.

"Tobey has only one son, so he and his wife dote on him a lot. So, I got him fired, and set it up so that the company he worked at filed a lawsuit against him for leaking company secrets. I then leaked the information that it was me, and that led to Mrs. Kitsch coming to meet me earlier, begging me to spare her son. I told him that I would destroy her son utterly the next time she messed with me, and she was so scared she promised to never do it again." Irene turned to look at him, saying nothing for a while.

"Or did I make a mistake?"

"No."

Irene shook her head.

"So?"

Isaac was puzzled, but Irene simply wrapped his arms around his waist and leaned her cheek against his chest.

She remembered Henry Jefferson and what she said earlier that day—that Isaac's personality was shaped by his environment.

"I love you, Isaac."

And she would offer him warmth, as well as a real family.

Isaac stiffened from her sudden declaration and he lowered his gaze.

"What's gotten into you?"

"Nothing." Irene replied.

He tightened his embrace around her in turn.

"I love you too."

Dennis Turner was retiring, and Hotmesh Research's employees had organized a party for him-they did so on their own, although he wanted to keep things quiet.

However, none of them wanted to tell Irene, even making an effort to hide it from her.

Still, everyone left when work hours were over, leaving her and Finn Crowe alone.

Somehow, Dennis managed to persuade him to be Irene's assistant- despite his reluctance, and was following her everywhere these days.

"Is something going on today? They usually won't leave work until it's time, but they're all gone early today."

"Is this about work? Can I refrain from answering if it isn't?" Finn asked in return.

Irene gave him a look.

"You don't have to answer." Finn glanced at his watch.

"It's just ten minutes until work hours are over."

"You're my assistant-you only leave work when I do."

Irene told him, watching him as she added sternly, "This is work-related?"

Finn became anxious.

"No, they're celebrating the director's retirement today. It won't do if I was the only one absent-"

He paused and clasped a hand over his mouth, knowing that he had just let the cat out of the bag.

Irene raised a brow.

"Oh, so it's Mr. Turner's farewell party."

Finn pursed his lips.

"They warned me not to tell you."

"You didn't-I just overheard it. Now, tell me where it is."

Finn shook his head-he was not about to make another mistake.

"I'll find them even if you didn't tell me," Irene told him patiently.

"When that happens, I'll just tell everyone that you told me about the party and the address."

Finn protested right then.

"But it's not me..."

"Do you think they'd believe you?"

Irene countered, clapping a hand on his shoulder.

"I can just call the director and find the place. Your stubbornness doesn't work with me at all."

With that, she whipped out her phone.

"Stop, I'll tell you...It's at Hibiscus Garden."

Finn never did get one over her.

Satisfied, Irene stopped working and said, "Let's go."

Arriving at the venue, she asked the front desk, but they were not there.

Irene turned sharply toward Finn.

"You tricked me?"

That was when a certain someone showed up!

Chapter 734

Finn stepped away as soon as Yolanda King arrived.

Yolanda, who was keen on getting on Irene's good side, told her, "They gave Finn the wrong address. They knew he would talk and they wanted you to make the trip for nothing."

Irene realized that she had been careless—they certainly planned ahead.

She smiled.

"I see."

Yoanda hesitated for a moment, and asked, "Could you forget what I said that one time?"

"I never took it to heart," Irene replied.

Relieved, Yolanda told her, "They're at Azur Coast. You should go now!"

Irene held her gaze as she said, "Thank you."

"You're welcome," Yolanda replied, getting embarrassed from Irene's politeness.

As Irene strode off, Finn followed her and asked, "You're not going to let her come with us?"

Before Irene could say anything, Yolanda told him, "You should go first. I'll head over later since I have something to do here."

In reality, she did not want to go to Azur Coast with Irene—if she showed up with them, it would be apparent that she was the one who told Irene.

Finn was not sharp enough to understand that, but Irene was, so she left with Finn first.

Giving him a cool look, she muttered, "You're such a nerd."

Despite his good grades, he was really lacking when it came to interpersonal relationships.

Finn did not take it lying down, however.

"Says who? You're the one who doesn't accept Yolanda's kindness. It's not surprising that no one likes you."

Irene was actually left speechless from amusement.

"Just stick with me from now on," she said.

Finn could not care less.

"I'd rather not. Did you think I would if the director didn't threaten me?"

"How did he threaten you?"

Irene was curious.

"That he would fire me if I didn't work as your assistant,"

Finn grumbled.

"I thought you told him he could fire you if he wanted?"

Finn was stumped, and slowly said, "Mr. Turner told me that it would be a shame if I had to leave, since making it in wasn't easy. I would also be letting down Mr. Kitsch, who instructed me..."

Irene raised a brow, noticing that she had leverage against him now.

"That's why you should work hard and make something of yourself. That's the only way for you to repay Mr. Kitsch."

"Of course," Finn said determinedly, while Irene smiled.

Azur Coast was a 5-star hotel, and Hotmesh Research employees had booked an entire hall for Dennis's farewell party.

The decorations were exquisite, including a large banner that stretched over the center.

The party must have started.

Dennis was in the middle of the crowd, taking photos of the commemoration and conversing with everyone.

It was obvious that they all liked him and were reluctant to see him go- Irene found him worthy of respect as well. As she entered, no one noticed her arrival as they were all looking at Dennis.

"Director, I heard that Irene's sugar daddy is Isaac Jefferson, but I thought you won't be cowed by bigwigs...?"

"Of course not. I personally picked her because she is the right person and shows ability,"

Dennis retorted right then, leaving them stumped.

The air seemed to turn tense and everyone was trading glances-sudden silences were always terrible.

Someone eventually spoke up.

"She's so young. Is she going to do well?"

"Yeah," someone chimed in.

"Even if she has the ability, she still needs experience. It's not good if you suddenly entrust her with such a heavy responsibility, right?"

"Who knows if her accomplishments were actually hers, or all thanks to Isaac.

You shouldn't be tricked by appearances, director- "You shouldn't talk behind someone's back,"

Finn snapped, disgruntled since their words were very harsh.

His voice drew everyone's attention, and they turned to find Irene standing nearby!

Chapter 735

Irene's appearance surprised everyone.

They were all briefly stunned, but they soon turned toward Finn.

"How did you know it's actually here?"

None of them told him, after all.

Finn was just going to say that Yolanda told them, but Irene spoke before he could.

"Is it really that hard for me to find out?' Yolanda just arrived, and heard her-she realized right then that she should not have spoken in front of Finn.

After all, the boy did not understand the politics involved and would admit the truth straightaway.

If everyone else found out that she was the one who talked, they would definitely give her a wide berth.

Meanwhile, Irene slowly approached the crowd, her gaze sweeping across those who just spoke nonchalantly.

"You know who Isaac is to me. Of course he'll find out what I want to know."

Dennis walked up to her then.

"Come, Irene. Sit with me."

Irene sat beside him naturally, while the people who were quite enthusiastic moments ago stopped moving and stayed silent.

Irene smiled.

"Why are you standing there? Come on, sit."

They appeared cowed, but sat down nonetheless.

"I know you all doubt me, and as such, I'll accept any challenge. I'll give up my post if I lose," Irene said.

Dennis turned toward her.

"Are you that confident?"

Irene shook her head-she was not, but proving herself was the only way to make them shut up.

She had nothing to lose if they beat her anyway, since it just proved that her ability was lacking and that she should not take the post.

"Are you serious?" someone asked.

"Of course," Irene replied.

"You can pick the date, too-anytime except today."

"Fine.Tomorrow it is."

They had numbers on their side, and each of them had their own specialty.

"Only three of you get to compete," Dennis said just then.

He knew his employees best, and that Irene would definitely lose if they all got to challenge her.

Three, on the other hand, would not be difficult.

Since no one spoke, Dennis said, "What, you all want a go at her? Don't you get embarrassed, bullying one person while you're many? Three is already plenty, so why are you being quiet? Do you think you can't win?"

"No."

"Then, what is it?"

"...Fine."

"Good.Then that's decided,"

Dennis said, smacking the table.

"It's the director's farewell party, so we should all be celebrating," Irene said, rising to her feet and offering Dennis a toast.

"Thank you for acknowledging me.I'll work hard so that you won't be disappointed."

"Of course, of course," Dennis chuckled.

"I trust you, or I wouldn't have sought you up."

After they clinked glasses and Irene put hers away, more people came to speak with Dennis.

He would have to drink a lot if they came one-by-one, and so, he called for a toast collectively as the atmosphere eased up.The farewell party ended at midnight, and it was not an occasion where one left early.

Irene's chauffeur arrived to get her when she left.She only drank one glass, but her cheeks were red even if she was not drunk.

The chauffeur also told her that Ricky Spencer left the hospital after he woke up.

"I see," she replied as she got into the car.

"Let's go home."

Ricky needed time to calm down anyway.

After they reached home, she suddenly got a call, and she answered it to a stranger's voice! "Come over right now!"

Chapter 736

Irene frowned at the man's snappy voice.

"Who are you?"

"We're at Aerial Vision right now."

"What's that supposed to be?"

Those words only Irene left confused.

An unfamiliar voice and an unfamiliar address? She naturally would not go there recklessly!

"Let me go..." A voice spoke from the other end then.

Irene frowned —it sounded a little like Zachary Slate.

What was going on over there? However, whether it was due to a bad signal or something else, things began to turn noisy and choppy over there.

Unable to hear anything, Irene hung up and alighted.

Isaac had reached home just then, and she stood there waiting for him to go in with her.

"Did you just come back?"

Isaac asked as he walked up to her, giving her a gentle hug when she nodded.

Before they could enter, however, Irene's phone rang again. She frowned as she answered, and Zachary soon spoke from the other end.

"Irene, please help me..."

Irene was confused, but asked tentatively, "Zachary?"

"Yeah, it's me...You have to hurry..."

"Alright..." The call was cut off shortly after, and she only heard beeping.

"What is it?" Isaac asked—why was she frowning now? "] think it's Zachary."

"You think?" Isaac did not get it.

Trene nodded.

"I'm not sure, but I think it's him."

"Why would he call you?"

Isaac growled, furrowing his brow just then— Zachary was bugging him to drink with him yesterday.

What did Zachary want now? Irene wondered if Zachary was in a bad mood because of Lulu Adams, and it sounded like something had happened to him on the other end.

Looking up to Isaac, she asked, "Could you go with me? I'm worried."

Isaac pursed his lips, but he put a hand over her shoulder.

"What could happen to him anyway? Let's go in already."

"I really think we should go," Irene said.

Isaac stared at her for a couple heartbeats before he eventually relented.

"Fine."

They both got into his car, and he asked, "Where is he?"

Irene thought about it for a moment.

"Aerial Vision, I think it was."

Isaac had no idea where that was either, and turned on the navigator to find it.

They arrived around half an hour later.

Several men had subdued Zachary outside and there was bruising on his face—he had clearly been beaten up.

Irene and Isaac alighted then, and Zachary grinned when he saw them.

"Hello there."

"What is it this time?"

Isaac asked —it was as if there was no end to his mess.

"Nothing, really,"

Zachary chuckled, clearly in his right mind now.

"Who are you to him?" a bald man asked, stepping forward just then.

"His guarantor," Isaac said, cutting to the chase.

"Just tell us what he did, and what it would take you to release him."

Upon hearing Isaac's words, someone promptly showed Isaac a painting covered in puke, saying, "He came to our art exhibition and threw up over one of our paintings. He definitely has to pay."

"How much?"

"Thirty grand," the bald man said.

"That painting is worth thirty grand? I can paint something better with my foot!" Zachary said, struggling but failing to free himself.

"Let me go already!"

"You never learn, do you?" the bald man growled, shooting Zachary a warning look.

"You'd better watch yourself!"

Even Irene told Zachary to stop talking for a moment, but Zachary refused.

"I'm just telling the truth! A piece of crap like that is worth thirty grand? It's daylight robbery!"

Isaac shot him a glare right then, as if telling him that he was the one who messed up.

Zachary understood that and he pursed his lips in silence.

Moreover, since art was subjective and pricing was as well, Isaac wrote a check for thirty grand and handed it to the bald man, not wanting to wrangle.

"It's not the work of anyone important,"

Irene whispered to Isaac just then.

Even art pieces varied in importance.

Something that neither drew interest nor was the work of anyone important would have zero demand, and was therefore of no value.

Isaac should not waste his money even if he was rich.

Isaac gave her an assuring look.

"I'll handle it."

Irene believed that too, and stayed silent.

"Now let him go," Isaac said.

The bald man gestured for his boys to do so after getting the money.

With that, Zachary started to wobble toward Irene and Isaac, and there was no telling if he was hurt elsewhere aside from the face.

"What happened here?" Irene asked.

Chapter 737

However, Zachary wobbled in front of her before dropping to the floor with a thud.

Left dumbfounded, Irene promptly dropped to a crouch to check on him the next instant.

However, she found Zachary winking at her away from the others' gazes.

Irene was speechless. He was pretending? Why? While she was still confused, the bald man beckoned for his thugs to leave.

Zachary quickly tugged on her sleeve and mouthed, "Com—pen—sa—tion."

Irene realized with a start and sprang to her feet.

"Stop! Are you trying to leave just like that after you caused injury?"

The bald man wheeled on her with a vicious glare.

"Are you trying to swindle me?!"

"No, but he's unconscious and needs the hospital. You have to foot his bill," Irene said.

The bald man strode toward her right then, but Isaac stepped in between, his presence calm but intimidating.

"What do you think you are doing?"

"She's trying to swindle me."

The bald man naturally knew how far they went, since they did not hit Zachary anywhere else aside from the face, and not so hard that he would be knocked out.

Irene was naturally confident with Isaac around, and she kept insisting that Zachary was hurt.

"He's already unconscious. Anything that happens next, including disability, is on you. Also—"

The bald man's cheeks twitched and he pointed at her.

"Don't fuck with me—argh!"

He screamed before he could finish, while Irene did a double take too.

She was staring at Isaac's hand, as he had grabbed the bald man's index finger and twisted it when the bald man began to snap at her.

There was a crunch—the crisp sound of bone breaking, and it was now pointing at himself.

Irene frowned, while the bald man kept screaming.

"Are you people idiots?!"

He then barked at his thugs, "Get over here! Kill him!"

However, his thugs had been staring at their phones, having been googling about Isaac.

They naturally would not lay a finger on a man as rich as powerful as him.

After all, most of them were more or less involved in crime, and once word of this got out, said record might surface, and they would lose way more than what they would gain.

Naturally, none of them would want to end up in jail.

"Should we just bail?" someone suggested.

"No. Baldie won't want us back if we do, and he might even get back at us for this."

"Then, what?"

Meanwhile, the bald man was kicked away and he was down on the ground, curling into a ball and clutching his hand as he screamed.

At the same time, he was still snapping at his thugs, "You pigs! I feed you for nothing!"

With that, someone withstood the pressure and snuck up to him, whispering, "You really should return the check, boss —that's Isaac Jefferson, and he'll come for us if he knows the painting is worthless and we conned him off thirty grand."

The bald man's eyes flashed.

"What the hell are you talking about?"

"I won't lie to you. Just look at his car, boss... And he also whipped out thirty grand like it was nothing. It's obvious that he's rich."

The bald man glanced at the car then, and then at Isaac. He seemed to forget the pain from his finger and shuddered.

Pushing himself to his feet, he took out the check and said, "Sorry, I didn't know who you were... It's all my fault, so please spare me?"

Zachary got off the floor right then and promptly took the check.

"Don't bother swindling people from now on," he said, whipping out his wallet and throwing him all the cash.

"That's all that painting was worth."

One of the bald man's thugs picked it up—it was just around 150 dollars, but the bald man said repeatedly, "It's plenty, it's plenty."

With that done, they let the bald man and his thugs go.

Isaac then took Irene's hand and started to leave, so Zachary followed.

"Wait up—"

Isaac suddenly wheeled on him with a sharp glare.

"Fuck off!"

Chapter 738

Zachary was left puzzled by Isaac's sudden outburst.

"What? How did you upset you now?"

He puffed his chest confidently, his usual fear of Isaac gone since Irene was here with them.

Isaac really wanted to kick Zachary right then.

"Clean up your own mess from now on! What were you thinking, asking for her? What can a woman like her do?! If I didn't happen to get home at the same time, she would have come alone.

Who knows what would happen then? Maybe you did not think before you did? Or maybe your brain is just mush?!"

"It wasn't me—they took my phone,"

Zachary quickly explained.

"They called her."

Isaac was skeptical.

"How many contacts do you have on your phone? And they had to call her?"

Zachary hung his head guiltily then, afraid to look Isaac in the eye.

"Say something!" Isaac barked.

"I wanted to call her, but I didn't even though it was on display. I just slipped my phone back in my pocket, and they saw it when they unlocked the screen."

He wanted to ask Irene about Lulu, but stopped himself from calling her because he wanted to let it go.

As such, he quickly apologized.

"Look, I know it's my fault. This won't ever happen again."

Isaac was glaring at Zachary straight in the eye.

"We won't be friends if it does."

With that, he got in his car with Irene, while Zachary braced himself and followed suit.

Taking the backseat, he poked his head between the front seats.

"Come on, you don't have to be so cold. I apologized, and you'd still cut ties with me just like that? It's like our relationship doesn't matter to you—" Isaac narrowed his eyes.

"Relationship?"

"Brotherhood, I mean."

Zachary switched gears right then.

Still, Isaac was not forgiving Zachary so soon.

"I thought you learned your lesson, but you're still such a hothead."

Zachary hid his face behind his palms.

"Had a bit too much to drink."

He had yet to sober up from last night and had gone drinking again today, which led to all that mess.

With that, the car turned silent as it drove steadily onwards, and Isaac was silent for a long while before he said, "The same goes for you. Do you have to mess about like him?"

Irene was caught off guard and left speechless.

Was he talking to her?

"You mean me?" she asked, pointing at herself.

Isaac kept his eyes on the road as he continued, "You can tell that the bald man and his boys are common thugs, and those types really hold grudges. You knew that you were stepping on his toes when you demanded money, and I told you not to talk too because IT could handle it myself. Why did you have a go too?!"

Irene was silent and did not answer, but there was no doubt that she had been reckless.

"You weren't impulsive before. What's with you today?"

Isaac turned to glance at her then.

Irene reclined against her seat.

"Might've been the alcohol."

"Were you drinking?"

Isaac's voice became louder.

"It's the director's farewell party," Irene explained.

"It's just the one glass." Zachary leaned toward her and tried to gossip.

"Does he usually keep such a tight leash on you?"

"Shut up!" Isaac snapped.

Zachary rubbed his nose in turn.

He could keep his secrets as much as he wanted—who cares?! Soon, they returned to the hilltop mansion, and they alighted.

Irene snuggled up to Isaac then.

"I'll watch out next time. I wasn't thinking straight."

Isaac did not want to scold her, but he really did not want her to get involved in another person's mess, nor allow her to get hurt—he would not be able to take it. He gave her hand a squeeze.

"I'll tell James to keep an eye on things."

"Yeah," Irene murmured, just as they entered and saw the man standing in the living room.

As she turned in reflex to look at who it was, she became worried...

Chapter 739

Since Ricky was impulsive and easily got into conflicts with others, he was naturally on edge when he saw Zachary.

Irene quickly turned to Zachary.

"It's late. You should head straight home."

She barely finished when a blur darted toward them and punched Zachary in the face.

Irene quickly caught Ricky.

"What are you doing?! Both of you are hurt!"

On the other hand, Zachary wiped his lips and looked at Ricky askance.

Still, he said.

"It's fine...I'll be giving up on Lulu, Ricky. Just do what you will with her—you don't have to be hostile with me now."

Although he did not hit back, Ricky snorted.

"You're despicable, Zachary Slate. Playing goody two shoes now after what you did? She wouldn't have left if you'd let go of her sooner!"

"Left? Where to?"

Zachary, who was completely in the dark, was naturally surprised by what Ricky said.

After all, Lulu did not have relatives, and her only connection was her best friend, Irene. He quickly turned toward Irene and asked, "Where did she go, Irene?"

"I don't know," Irene admitted.

"When Lulu regained her memory, she told me she wanted to start over and would marry if she finds the right person."

Zachary turned flustered, his tone urgent.

"How could you just let her? You could have called me..."

"She made up her mind, Zachary, and I think it's the right choice.

Do you really think you still have a chance with her? How is she supposed to stay with your mom? Just let her go!"

Neither Zachary nor Ricky spoke—a curiously similar reaction.

"Anyway, it's time you both left. Don't make a ruckus when my children are sleeping," Irene said, but neither moved.

Ricky then spoke.

"Look, she left because of us, and it's clear she's determined because she didn't tell Irene. She's probably never coming back."

"So?" Zachary asked.

"Whoever finds us gets to be with her. The other stays away."

Though Ricky spoke his mind, Zachary stayed silent.

After all, he believed that they must respect Lulu's decision instead of making their own call.

What if she did not like the first person who found her? Turning toward Irene, Zachary said, "You should get some rest. I'm going home now."

"Hey, Zachary —"

Ricky was going to press him if he was agreeing to it, but Irene stopped him.

"I need to talk to you."

Ricky stayed despite his reluctance, while Isaac headed upstairs.

Sitting at the living room couch, Irene rubbed her eyes to ease her exhaustion.

"What did you want to talk about, Irene?" Ricky asked.

Irene stared at him for a couple seconds before asking, "How's work lately?"

"What? I'm not working," he answered without hesitation.

He certainly had no intention of working since Lulu's departure left his heart a mess.

"What about you would Lulu have to be interested in?" Irene asked.

"Does she need a reason to like me?"

"Doesn't she?" Irene asked in return.

"You can't even focus on one job, so how long do you think you can stay loyal? Lulu is a mature adult and she would definitely think further than you. You have no house, no career, and you're impulsive—what part of you could she possibly like?"

Pausing for a moment, she continued, "On the other hand, Zachary has a solid job, and that's at least one reason for her to like him: she would have a steady life where she doesn't have to worry about money. What would she get if she chose you?"

Ricky turned silent in turn, genuinely taking Irene's words to heart —she was making sense, after all.

What happiness could he offer Lulu? Irene passed him the check again.

"Resume your job or start anew business."

Ricky thought about it briefly and took the check, calmly saying, "I understand now, Irene."

Irene saw him out, though she sat on the couch for a moment before heading upstairs. She opened the door but found the room empty.

"Isaac...? She was just about to speak when a pair of hands wrapped around her! She stiffened, unable to help exclaiming, "Who is it?!"

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"It's me," Isaac whispered softly into Irene's ear. She turned and smacked him on the chest in annoyance.

"You scared me." Isaac held her hands down.

"I'll be more careful next time."

Irene took a moment to calm down then—her heart had almost leapt out of her throat just now, as she thought someone had broken in.

Still, she became worried anyway.

"I wonder how Lulu's doing. Where would she go? She's all by herself..."

Isaac frowned slightly and asked, "Aren't you tired?"

Irene flexed her neck in response— it had certainly been a long day, and it was very late.

"Yeah," she replied with a yawn.

"So why bother?"

Irene realized then that he was not concerned, but complaining that she was being a busybody instead.

"They're family," she grumbled.

"I can't do nothing—"

"Yeah, now go to bed."

Isaac wrapped his arms around her then.

She sighed.

"I haven't bathed..."

"It's fine to skip for a day. Go to bed."

Irene fell in bed and closed her eyes as she spoke.

"Fine. I'll do it tomorrow..."

She was so drowsy that she fell asleep soon enough, and Isaac tucked her under the blanket, before putting a hand around her to sleep as well. She shifted to make herself comfortable and slept soundly.

Zachary left looking for Lulu soon after learning that she left, and he searched every place where she might be.

However, she was nowhere to be found, and she left no clues or anything as she upped and left. He strode alone on a street aimlessly, remembering the time he kept her with him while she lost her memory.

Even if she had been vengeful, he had the solace of keeping an eye on her.

Now, all he felt was grief and self-blame. He was the reason for all of her suffering.

The night was quiet, and the moon's glow bathed the bleak trees overhead.

The streetlights shone dimly, throwing long shadows as a gust of night breeze blew.

Zachary walked for a long time, and he only got home as the first rays of dawn appeared.

Worried about his absence, Mrs. Slate was going to start a search, and she breathed a sigh of relief when she saw him come home.

"Where have you been?" she asked, before noting the sadness on his face.

"Did Lulu refuse to come home with you?"

Not wanting to talk, Zachary headed upstairs right away.

"You don't even have the resolve of a woman," Mrs. Slate said then.

"If she can be so determined to leave you, why can't you do the same?"

Zachary stopped in his tracks and wheeled on her with an icy glare.

Feeling guilty from his look, Mrs. Slate averted her eyes but continued regardless.

"You know I'm right. Or are you saying that you're less than a woman?"

Zachary breathed deeply and said, "I'm going to be busy from now on. I'll get a place near my office."

"No." Mrs. Slate immediately protested.

"Stay here with her, so that I can at least keep an eye on her to stop her from hurting you again—"

"She's gone, so don't worry. She's never coming back."

With that, he left.

Mrs. Slate did a double take, but a smile soon crept over her lips.

Lulu was never coming back.

Still, she had her people look into it just to confirm what Zachary said.

On the other hand, Zachary paused when he arrived upstairs and turned to look at the room Lulu used to stay in.

Still, he soon turned away and returned to his room.

Irene arrived at work punctually.

As she mustered her spirit to walk the stairs to the entrance, someone caught her by her jacket and pulled her firmly to a quiet hallway! Stunned, she exclaimed, "Who is it?!"