

Runaway 741

Chapter 741

4-5 minutes

"Shush."

Yolanda King put a finger on her lips.

Irene frowned when she saw who it was.

"What are you doing?"

What was Yolanda being so hushed about? She could just say it directly, whatever it was—why drag her to this quiet place? Irene almost thought it was a villain.

"I'm worried we'd be seen!" Yolanda grinned.

"Anyway, I just wanted to thank you."

Irene straightened her clothes and asked, "What for?"

Yolanda actually felt awkward just then.

"You know what for." Irene actually did not.

"I'm going if you won't say it."

"Oh, don't be in such a hurry!" Yolanda exclaimed, catching her.

"It's work hours," Irene said flatly.

Yolanda smiled in embarrassment.

"Well, it's for you not to reveal that it was me last night. I know you did that for my sake."

Irene brushed nonexistent dust off her clothes.

"It's nothing. Having one person being ostracized in the building is more than enough, and the rest of you would at least be able to get along. The big picture, right?"

There was further meaning in her words, and Yolanda naturally understood. She was certainly chagrined—they had ostracized Irene from the start.

Irene was also right that everyone should get along for the sake of the big picture.

Moreover, most who just joined Hotmesh Complex usually showed a messiah complex, thinking that they could save the world, but reality always proved that it was not that easy.

"We actually have solidarity."

"I think so too." Irene smiled faintly.

"And that we can carve a bright future going forward, hand-in-hand."

Yolanda changed her opinion toward Irene ever so slightly then.

Irene was not worthless, and she endured everyone's harassment without getting back at anyone despite having every right as the next director.

"Alright, I won't impose now. You should go."

"Don't slack off on working hours now," Irene joked.

"I'll have you know I'm the most diligent employee in the building!" Yolanda retorted.

Irene was summoned to the director's office as soon as she entered Hotmesh Research.

Dennis Turner was packing his things, and since the door was open, Irene entered.

Seeing her, Dennis beckoned, "Over here."

As Irene went over, he said, "My personal effects have been packed and sent away, so anything left is just reports and data on research. I'll still return over the next couple days, so you can ask me any questions you have when I do."

Irene nodded.

"Honestly, I'm a little reluctant to leave now that I really have to," he mused to himself then.

"I've been here for so long it's like my home."

"You can come in for an inspection anytime. Don't hold back on criticism either—give it to me straight," Irene said.

Dennis laughed heartily.

"I'd never dare, not with the one who has your back. In fact, you're the only person I'd never upset."

His joke enlivened the atmosphere, and Irene smiled too.

Soon, all the records and documents from the last few years were stacked, filling the wall shelf.

"What you urgently need to see right now is on the top right shelf. The rest are employee files, so prioritize that—you can take your time with the others."

Dennis left as many words as he did instructions, and Irene listened attentively.

Soon, he got a call and had to leave.

"Check it out on your own, and just call me if you have questions. I have something to do for the rest of the day, so I won't be staying."

"Okay."

Irene nodded.

After Dennis left, Irene put the files she wanted to read on her desk.

She then paused as she stared at the box labeled human resource for a moment, before opening it!

She did not have clearance to read any of it before, but now she did.

And to find out about them quickly, she could start with their dossiers! She sat down behind her desk after putting everything on the table, and took the file on top when she inadvertently knocked over a stack of papers beside her hand, causing everything to fall in a flutter.

She quickly picked them up, only to notice a diagnosis report, which left her hands shaking!

Chapter 742

Irene was still staring at the diagnosis report as she murmured softly, "How could this be...?"

So, Dennis was in a hurry to retire...because of his condition? She was a heart surgeon who had been researching artificial hearts and knew best when it comes to heart conditions.

While Dennis's malignant arrhythmia sounded less scary than heart failure, it was dangerous regardless! Arrhythmia—especially malignant cases— posed danger because it meant the distortion of the heart's regular rhythm, causing it to beat irregularly or just stop abruptly.

Patients might suddenly lose consciousness out of the blue and faint, which required emergency resuscitation right away or it would mean death! And judging from the diagnosis data, Dennis's condition was very serious.

Benign cases or early discovery might be curable, but it was not the case for Dennis —all he could do was control the symptoms to control the symptoms.

But should the worst strike...

Irene found it ironic that Dennis would have a heart condition despite his research into curing heart diseases.

Still, she did her best to calm down, and she quickly did thanks to the composure she had as a medical professional.

She put the diagnosis report in a drawer, took a deep breath, and continued her work for the day.

Zachary Slate had his assistant, Juan, find him a new home near his office.

Although he paid someone to find Lulu Adams, he spent his and attention time at work to alleviate his yearning for her.

After getting him a place to stay, Juan brought Zachary the keys.

"Brocade Apartments is quite close by.It's quite small, but the environment is nice."

"It's enough for myself, "Zachary replied, and nonchalantly put the keys in his drawer.

"Also, there's an appointment with Mr.Watson in the afternoon at Gradient Hall," Juan added.

"Understood."

It was past 3 PM when Zachary arrived at Gradient Hall to discuss a partnership with Jeb Watson.

He was early, while Mr. Watson arrived after over ten minutes, and in the company of a beautiful woman.

Zachary recognized her, because it was Ember Lidnt!

"Sorry to keep you waiting," Jeb said, holding out a hand.

Zachary ignored Ember's presence right then and shook his hand.

"I just arrived myself."

"This is my secretary,"

Jeb introduced Ember then.

Zachary merely gave her a slight nod without showing any recognition, as if she were a stranger.

Jeb and Zachary had met because of their business before, so the talk was pleasant, and they immediately signed an agreement after coming to an understanding.

Zachary kept things brief, and excused himself soon enough.

Juan was darting looks from the rearview mirror as he drove, and spoke after hesitating for a while, "She's Mr. Watson's secretary in appearance only, sir...She's actually her mistress."

Zachary looked up coolly.

"What does that have to do with me?"

"Even after all that, she was your wife—"

"was."

Zachary cut him short, refusing to listen to another word.

After the Lindts were destroyed and Peter Lindt jailed, it was understandable that Ember had to go that far just to survive. But no matter what she did, it had nothing to do with Zachary.

After returning to the office, Zachary had another meeting that lasted until the evening. He ate something at the cafeteria then before resuming work.

It was past eleven when he took out his apartment keys, and he took the elevator down to the basement parking lot.

The car's headlights flashed as he pressed on the button and he got in.

However, he had just driven to the exit when someone suddenly jumped in front of his car!

Chapter 743

Zachary managed to jam his foot on the brake pedal in time and his car barely missed the person in front of the car.

As he frowned, Ember called out to him from the front of the car.

"Zachary."

She was not throwing a fit or being hysterical—she merely watched him calmly.

Even so, Zachary did not want anything to do with her.

"Move, or I'll call security."

Ember held his gaze for a while from across the windshield, but she said, "Call them if you want, and if you don't mind me coming again. Because I'll do it if you refuse to talk to me."

Zachary narrowed his eyes.

"Are you threatening me?"

"No, I just want to talk to you," Ember replied.

"Do you think that you're in a position to discuss terms?" he asked icily.

"I'm not discussing terms. Can't I just talk to you?"

"No." Zachary refused determinedly.

"I don't want to see you, and I don't want to know a thing about you."

"You're really being merciless even though we were once married," Ember murmured.

"I've never hated you for destroying my family, I know."

She certainly understood many things after going through so much, and most of all was that what goes around comes around.

"If anything, you should have taken it out on me, but my parents should have been spared. It's all because I fell for you and married you, or I'd still be an heiress. How could I be so stupid and so obsessed with you back then? You're just human, albeit a little better-looking than most, but that should never have counted. If I could start over, I'd rather be with someone who loves me even if his looks are average. Shame that I won't even have that chance— my life has become a tragedy since I fell for you."

"It's a tragedy because you were possessive," Zachary replied.

"Probably." Ember simply smiled.

"You heard about me, haven't you?"

Zachary did not answer, though his silence was almost affirmative.

Ember laughed bitterly.

"I'm pathetic, aren't I? After you destroyed my family, my mother became sick and I was penniless. How else could I save my mother?"

"Is there a point in telling me all this?"

Zachary certainly was not interested in listening to her story.

"There isn't. I just wanted to see if you could feel any sympathy for me, but I was just delusional. You're now so cold you'd disown your own family, right?"

Ember straightened her clothes and stepped aside then.

"Sorry for bothering you."

Zachary did not hesitate to jam his foot on the gas pedal and leave right then.

Ember remained there, watching as his car sped into the distance with various emotions flooding in her eyes.

Zachary glanced at her from the rearview mirror, and saw that she was no longer capricious or spirited like before, and looked away.

Irene had read through all the files on every employee, as well as the organizational structure of Hotmesh Research, more or less having a general idea then.

Her work would not go smoothly if she did not make interpersonal relationships work at the office, and the first thing she must do as director was to make peace with them. She called Finn Crowe to her office, but he arrived with another man.

Irene did not recognize him and she was unsure if he was an employee.

"He's looking for you," Finn told her.

Irene raised her brow.

"Me?"

"Yeah. He was asking for you at the walkway, so I brought him here."

Irene studied the man from head to toe.

"You're looking for me?"

The man handed her an envelope.

"Are you Irene Spencer?"

"Yeah?"

"I'm a courier. Please sign on this sheet of paper to acknowledge you have received this item."

"Who's the sender?"

"I don't know."

Irene signed on the paper then, and opened the envelope to find a letter inside.

Even as she wondered if it was Lulu Adams making contact, she noticed that it was not Lulu's handwriting, and she took out the letter.

Chapter 744

The letter read: [Dear Irene, I will be leaving. Don't come looking for me—I'm an adult who can take care of myself.]

[I'm sure this letter would surprise you, but I have to tell you that I've thought this through.]

[I've actually heeded your advice, and I found it to be true. I've also read that chasing after butterflies never work—one should instead plant flowers to draw it to you, and it was more or less the same as what you said: be successful, and draw that butterfly I love to me.]

[I don't know if I would actually make it, but I just wanted to tell you that I'm determined to make something for myself, and I won't be coming back before I succeed.]

[I know that I would have a better chance if I stayed with you, especially with my brother-in-law's help—but I don't want to be helped. I want to see how far I can go myself, if I'm a person who has what it takes to build something for himself.]

[I just might be too ashamed to return if I fail, but you have nothing to worry about. I would keep living regardless, and become a worker if I have to instead of giving up on myself.]

[I'd rather not call or text because I wanted to leave you something, and I've always wanted to tell you that I feel lucky that I have you, sis.]

[Maybe we would have been closer if we shared the same mother.]

[Farewell.]

[Yours sincerely, Ricky.]

Irene did not react for a while after she finished reading it, while Finn became impatient.

"Why did you call me here?" he asked.

Coming to her senses, Irene folded the letter and returned it into the envelope.

Then, mustering her spirit, she asked, "Do you know Mr. Turner's address?"

"Why?" Finn asked warily.

Irene shot him a cool look.

"What do you think? I just want to meet him to discuss certain matters. Don't give me that look."

Finn pursed his lips.

"And I was starting to appreciate you. Here you are, flexing your authority as soon as you're promoted. There's a reason everyone hates you."

Irene did not bother to explain—she was already in a bad mood and did not have any intention to play nice, even with Finn.

"Cut the crap and tell me!" Finn said reluctantly, "506, Block 2, Bliss Homestead, Bliss Mile."

Irene noted the address and said, "Sort all of this, and arrange them on top of my desk."

Then, she took off her lab overalls, slipped the diagnosis report into her bag, and started to head outside.

Pausing at the doorway, she turned to look at Finn.

"Clean everything up today. I want my office to be clean and tidy when I arrive tomorrow." Finn frowned.

"Everything?"

"Yes"

"How am I supposed to do it? This is a huge mess." Irene raised a brow.

"Use the strength you tap into whenever you're glib with me."

Finn was left speechless, feeling like Irene was messing with him, but he did not have any evidence to show for it.

When Irene arrived at Bliss Homestead, she stood outside, musing if she should enter. She did not know if Dennis's family knew about his condition, and she would cause trouble for him if she went in without knowing.

Just as she hesitated, someone called out to her! She looked up.

Chapter 745

Dennis Turner was just alighting and heading to his apartment.

"What are you doing here?"

"Mr. Turner," Irene greeted him in return as she walked up to him.

"Is there a problem?" he asked.

Irene nodded.

"Alright, let's talk at my place. You can eat with us tonight," he said.

"No, we should keep this outside. And somewhere quiet," Irene said in refusal.

Dennis stared at her for a moment, noticing that she looked like she had something important to say.

"Alright. There's this restaurant nearby, and I often go there since the pasta is good. It's my treat."

With that, he started to walk, while Irene followed.

"I shall take you up on your offer."

"Of course," Dennis said with a chuckle.

"You don't have to hold back with me."

The restaurant was beneath one of the apartment blocks, and they reached it in a couple of minutes. It was no luxury establishment, but everything inside was squeaky clean.

Dennis ordered two pastas along with other side dishes.

"Why don't you tell me what it is?" he asked while they waited for food to be served.

Irene took the diagnosis report from her bag and handed it to him.

"you left this in your office. I saw it by chance, so I'm returning it to you."

Dennis smiled when he took it and saw what it was.

"I was afraid my family would see it, so I kept it in my office inside some file no one would look at. I forgot where it was when I packed my things, so I thought I lost it...but I actually didn't." Irene held his gaze.

"Is this why you're in a hurry to retire?"

Dennis seemed at peace.

"More or less. I was worried that Hotmesh Research would be a mess if I suddenly died without setting things straight. I won't rest in peace that way."

Irene felt her chest tighten at the mention of death —being unable to help a patient was the worst feeling for a medical professional.

Still, Dennis patted her hand.

"Come on, I'm still looking good, aren't I? I'm fine, so don't get upset over me. I was the director of a research center at the forefront of heart diseases, but even I am helpless against this. Could you imagine how much worse it would be for the average Joe? How desperate and helpless they'd be? So don't worry about me—just focus on your research, and it's the best thing you can do for me. I'll be resting in peace when my time is up."

The pasta was served just then and he said, "Let's eat. Food tastes better while it's hot."

Irene watched him then, realizing that she should not get melancholic when Dennis was being so optimistic.

As a child, Irene dreamed of becoming a fine doctor who saved people, as well as of contributing to the nation's medical field.

But Dennis was right, and what she could do was to not let him down.

After she had a forkful, Dennis asked, "Is it good?"

Irene nodded.

"Yeah."

She had been worried before she met Dennis, but cheered up after she did.

Before she left after dinner, Dennis told her, "Don't tell anyone."

He did not want to trouble others, and he certainly did not need their anxiety or sympathy.

Irene nodded, understanding where he was coming from.

After Irene returned to her car, she did not head straight home, and instead headed to a mall.

It has been a while since she went home early, and she wanted to get some fruits.

The mall was crowded, with parents bringing their children out to shop, and she realized that she and Isaac never brought their sons out to shop like them.

She walked past a children's boutique and remembered how she did not care much about her children even after becoming a mother —Isaac would send his people to get everything they needed.

Standing at the storefront, she thought that she really was the worst mother in the world.

It was simply difficult juggling work and family, and she had to prioritize one.

She entered the store, and then...

Chapter 746

Irene was puzzled to see Erin Gooding in the children's boutique, holding a pink baby jumper and finding it pretty. She admired it for a while, and was surprised to see Irene standing at the doorway when she put it down.

"Hey, sis! What are you doing here? Getting some clothes for the children?" Irene entered.

"I was just passing by, so I came in." Erin actually thought that she came expressly.

"I see..."

"I'll buy some if I find something that suits them, though," Irene added.

Erin started to help eagerly right then, picking several that fit Irene's second son.

"I think these look good."

Irene liked them too—Erin certainly had good taste.

Hesitating for a moment, Irene then asked, "Are you here alone?"

Erin lowered her head and murmured softly, "Yeah."

"Are you pregnant?" Irene asked tentatively.

"Yeah." Irene smiled.

"Congratulations."

Still, Erin appeared unhappy.

"I want to marry, but James says that he's busy and we can only get registered. I want a wedding and get registered in Minerva, since my father is still there. I'd rather James and I walk down the aisle since I don't want to disappoint my father."

Irene agreed with Erin's idea.

"Can I help?" Irene asked.

Erin pursed her lips.

"I don't want to trouble you. James did not want me to come to you either."

"Why?" Irene asked.

"He's busy and refuses to apply for leave."

Irene became quiet for a while.

"Why don't you hold off for a moment? I'll see what I can do for you."

She had to ask Isaac first, since she should not decide on anything on her own.

Naturally, Erin was left in a dilemma since she was worried James would blame her.

Irene said, "How about this? I'll let you know if I manage to get something, and then you can talk to James about it."

"That's good."

Erin beamed.

Soon, they left the children's boutique and headed to the grocery department for fruits, with Irene picking Tommy's favorites.

When they were done, Irene asked, "How did you get here?"

"By taxi. I wanted to come out for a stroll since being home alone is boring."

After getting into the car, Irene had the chauffeur drive Erin home first. They soon arrived, and Erin alighted.

"Thanks for the ride."

"I'm your sis, right?" Irene grinned.

Sheryl was surprised to see the things Irene had the chauffeur carry inside when she reached home.

"You went shopping?"

"I left work early, so I went to the mall," she replied.

Sheryl saw the baby clothes and teased, "You finally remembered that you're mommy, huh?"

Still, she knew that Irene was busy with work and would not have time for her children.

Still, she supported Irene's job, although she usually returned so late she did not have time to spend with her children. She and Isaac should spare some time for them, taking them outside on trips a couple times per month.

Irene naturally understood what Sheryl was getting at.

"When I'm done with my tasks on hand."

She could not spare any time since she had just taken over as director and had too many things to do.

Later, Sheryl sorted out everything she bought, while Irene washed the fruits she bought and sliced them before taking them to the kitchen.

Tommy was playing with building blocks while her younger son was sleeping.

Putting the fruit on the soft carpet, she sat cross-legged to play with Tommy, who was focusing on piling the blocks into a huge ship.

He would keep playing even as Irene fed him slices of fruit, not sparing time to glance at her.

Irene did not impose and looked on as she waited for Isaac.

It was not until eleven that he finally came home, unbuttoning his sleeves as he said, "I need to tell you something."

Irene was just about to tell him about Erin and James Cross, but she paused when she heard him.

"What is it?" she asked.

Chapter 747

Isaac said, "I have to take a trip to Franconia."

He just received word from Stan Hill that Harvey Gooding had been found. He happened to have work to do over at Remy as well, so the trip was inevitable.

"I might have to travel to Minerva too, so I'm not sure how long it'd take."

"Work?" Irene asked.

Isaac mused to himself for a couple seconds and said, "Yeah."

He did not mention Harvey, leaving Irene to think that he really was busy. It was not surprising that James would not ask Isaac for leave...

But were they really so busy that they would not have time for a wedding? Having money gets things done, however.

Maybe they could just arrange for everything first, and then all it takes was for the bride and bridegroom to show up at the wedding hall! Erin could decide on the details herself, too—she did not have to work, so she had all the time she needed.

Helping Isaac out of his jacket, he said, "I ran into Erin today."

Isaac narrowed his eyes, but he did not react otherwise.

Irene watched his reaction as she said, "She's pregnant."

Isaac looked up then, so she asked, "She wants to get married, but James said he only has time to get their marriage registered, but not for a wedding. Are things busy at work now?"

Isaac knew what she meant right then, and he asked, "What do you want me to do?"

"Give James time off for a wedding," Irene quickly said.

"I mean, if things aren't too busy..."

"Got it. I'll discuss it with him."

"Actually, what do you think about Erin?"

Irene asked, trying to probe Isaac's standpoint, or if he considered Erin his sister.

Isaac leveled her a cool thing.

"What are you getting at?"

"I mean, under what capacity are we going to attend the wedding? As the bride's family, or the bridegroom's friends?" Isaac said nothing and headed toward Tommy's room, but Irene told him that he was asleep.

Pausing then, he said, "Just do as you see fit. I'll check on Tommy."

He entered Tommy's room anyway, but Irene smiled—even if he refused to say it, he was probably willing to accept Erin as his sister.

The next day, Irene arrived at her office to find everything tidied up, with every document labeled by type and sorted on top of her desk, making reading convenient.

Finn Crowe then appeared with dark circles under his eyes.

"Satisfied?"

"Good work," Irene said, giving him a good look.

Finn pursed his lips.

"I didn't get to sleep." Irene said nothing.

She quickly changed into coveralls and took a piece of paper out of her bag, and gave it to Finn.

"Inform everyone that we will be having a meeting at three, and purchase everything listed here. Get them before three, and bring them back to this building without anyone knowing." Finn frowned.

"Everything on this list? And why without anyone knowing? I'm no thief."

Irene sat down and took out one of the documents.

"You're not— I'm not telling you to steal, and I've already transferred you the money."

"I'm your assistant, not your errand boy. Helping you would be for work—not as a lapdog."

"Yes, you are my assistant, meaning that you should be assisting me. I need everything in that list, so what's wrong with having you get it for me?"

To Finn, it somehow sounded both right and wrong at the same time.

"So? Aren't you going to do it? If you fail, that just means that you don't even have what it takes to be an assistant."

"It's 3 PM, right? It's still morning right now, so that makes almost a day. Why can't I get everything? Just watch."

As Finn headed outside he was grumbling, "I'll get it done even if I don't eat."

Irene smiled, finding him ever amusing. Soon, it was 3 PM, and time for the meeting...

Chapter 748

No one arrived at the conference room punctually, but Irene was not puzzled. She would be if they actually came on time without trying to mess around.

That was when the door to her office suddenly opened, and Finn entered, wheezing, "It's done." He barely made it.

"Good work. You can take a break now," Irene told him.

"Just bring the stuff to the conference room when I text you."

"Okay," Finn nodded, but turned around just as she was about to leave.

"By the way, when are you going to forgive me? I really don't want to be your assistant—I mean, I don't mind how difficult my work gets, because I won't complain. You, on the other hand, are just making me run personal errands for you."

Irene put down the document she was holding.

"Patience. Your time will come."

"When?" Finn pressed.

Irene simply glanced at the clock on the wall.

"Just take a break for now. The meeting is starting soon."

"Meeting?!" Finn exclaimed coolly.

"What meeting are you talking about? Meeting yourself? I walked past the conference room on my way here—no one was in there. No one cares about what you say."

"Have you ever considered that you talk too much?"

Irene made a face.

Finn shrugged.

"Just stating facts. They don't like you, and you won't even let me say that now..."

"That's enough," Irene growled, impatient now.

"Good luck!" Finn said, shooting her a look before leaving and closing the door behind himself.

Irene rubbed her temples — it was as if none of them were willing to grant her respite.

After sitting for a while, she straightened her coveralls and did some stretches before heading to the conference room.

There was still no one inside when she entered, and it was not until half past three when the rest finally came in, one after the other.

None of them appeared to be paying attention even though they were late, using silence and perfunctory attitudes as a way of defiance.

Irene was not in a hurry to speak, however, and simply idled in her seat like they did.

"Everyone is probably hungry now, right? I've brought tea and snacks."

She texted Finn then, and he entered, distributing everyone's portion.

It took him almost a day to get all that because they all had different tastes, and everything he bought catered to all of them.

Naturally, it meant a long-distance journey for Finn just to get some, so he was no different from a logistics worker, running everywhere across the city.

It would be no exaggeration to say that he suffered more than a pizza boy.

And now, everyone around the meeting table did not dare say a word, because they felt as if Irene had leverage against them.

"I took your respective tastes into consideration, or is it not satisfactory?"

Everyone traded glances, as if wondering how much she actually knew about them. How did she find out about tastes too?

"Aren't you violating personal privacy here?" someone asked.

And with someone taking the lead, everyone else promptly joined in.

"What he said!"

"You investigated us without our consent! We demand you take responsibility!"

"Do you have evidence that I did?" Irene asked unhurriedly.

Silence ensued, so Irene continued, "You've all been working here for a while, and know each other well enough. I could tell because I've been working here too, and I just have to pay attention from time

to time if I want to know you. For example, Raven there likes her coffee pressed, which is made by mixing boiled water and coarse ground coffee beans. It's purer and tastes stronger."

Leveling her gaze at the woman sitting on the row to her right, she asked, "Or am I wrong?"

Raven Yew had certainly been constantly at odds with her, and the one who just suggested that Irene violated everyone's privacy. It was only natural for Irene to name her.

Though Irene's gaze was nonchalant and her expression impassive, it projected a pressure regardless.

Everyone then quietly turned toward Raven, who lowered her gaze.

She was just discussing pressed coffee with a colleague last month and had explained the production process when her colleague asked.

Being named by Irene left her feeling cornered.

Irene did not push here, however, and instead smiled and asked, "Well, do any of you know how I take my coffee?"

Chapter 749

Before anyone could respond, Irene spoke.

"I like my coffee sweet," she said, pointing at the black coffee before her.

"I appreciate coffee since it keeps you awake, but not its excessive bitterness, which is why I always add in milk or sugar. Anyway, I just learned yesterday that someone important to me has malignant arrhythmia, and everyone would probably be aware that it could kill at any moment. I've always believed that our job is to save lives, and from a certain perspective, it makes our job more noble than a regular doctor's. After all, we develop parts that would save a life, so I don't get it...how did such a noble workplace become so vulgar?"

After she had spoken, everyone else became much quieter.

Even those who disliked her had to agree—their mission was to develop technology that could keep a heart going.

And yet here they are, ostracizing a person just because they did not like her.

What was that if not a mistake? Yolanda King spoke up then.

"Allow me to voice my support for you, Director Spencer. I had harassed you when you accidentally stepped on my toes, but now that I've thought it over, I was the one who had been petty and intolerant. I

should've had faith in our former director's judgment, after he had worked so hard for almost his whole life. I'm sure he would not simply give it off to someone else on a whim—he must've had his considerations before he picked you as his successor."

Resigning to her feet, she added, "Please accept my sincere apologies."

Irene's hands twitched over the table.

"I did not take it to heart."

Finn, who had been standing in a corner, was stirred from Irene's speech.

If she really was useless, why was Dennis Turner so determined to name her his successor despite everyone's protests? Was it really just because of her sugar daddy? Even if she had one, she had never asked for Isaac's help to harass anyone, and it was them who kept trying to mess with her.

He voiced his support for her then.

"I will stay as your assistant, and do anything you ask and do well. Even if you had me play errand boy today, I don't mind doing it again."

"Thank you," Irene replied, feeling emotional from their support.

Still, she did not want to show it, because she was not actually using emotional blackmail—she just wanted them to understand their duty.

"Now, let's formally begin our meeting... Though it might be more appropriate to call it a discourse."

She then turned on the projector, which displayed a picture of a pumping heart.

"Most would claim that the human heart is fragile, but I disagree," she began.

"I believe it is the strongest organ in the body, pumping stalwartly the instant it forms without rest. We should actually learn from its example."

The next picture was a diagram of the different parts of the artificial heart, which consisted of four parts:

a pump, a motor, an energy source, and a monitor.

She tapped on one—the motor, which they ran into a roadblock. She had a solution, but that would take verification, experimenting, and most of all, everyone's hard work...

The first meeting after Irene's promotion was more or less amicable, with everyone putting aside their differences and focusing on work.

It lasted until 7 PM, but no one complained, since Irene did prepare them the tea and snacks around 3 PM.

While everyone was thrilled at the prospect of potential development, the door to the meeting room suddenly opened, interrupting everyone's discussion.

Everyone turned toward the door right then...

Chapter 750

Erin Gooding poked her head into the door, and sensing that she had been intruding, she apologized.

"Sorry. I was looking for..."

She turned toward Irene, who caught the look and glanced at the time.

"Ten minutes," she said.

Erin nodded in response and closed the door, standing outside as she waited.

Soon, people filed out of the meeting room, with Irene the last to exit, carrying stacks of papers in her arms.

"Is something up?" Irene asked.

Erin nodded, so she said, "Let me return these to my office first."

Erin waited once more as she did, and once Irene stepped out this time, she came up to Irene with a smile.

"James called me, telling me to pick the date. I think I should return to Minerva to tell my father too."

"As you should."

Irene agreed—getting married was a big deal, and Erin should tell her father about it.

"Your work is really busy, huh? You must not have had dinner since that meeting lasted for a while, right? It's my treat."

Though Irene was going to head home, she agreed to it since she did not want to disappoint Erin.

"Sure!"

"I know this place that has sweetened lamb racks, and it's quite close. Let's go!"

Irene asked, "You liked sweet food?"

"Yes...though I'm worried. They say that craving sour food means it's a boy, while spicy food means it's a girl...Does that mean my baby would be something else?"

"Don't say that!" Irene exclaimed.

Erin smiled—she was just joking anyway.

Like everyone else, all she wanted was a healthy, adorable baby!

"If I had a daughter, does that mean we can have her betrothed to your sons?"

Irene glanced at her sideways.

"Aren't you their aunt?"

"We're not related by blood at all."

"I was hoping my sons had an aunt," Irene said, though she was mainly being thoughtful about Isaac, since he had no other family.

Erin was a good person, and having her as a sister was good.

Her sons having an aunt also made it more a family too.

"Alright, I'll be an aunt to your children. Your sons can pamper my daughter...Actually, you should have more sons, so she would be pampered even more."

"Or you can just have a son after your daughter," she said.

"I'd rather I had a daughter too."

"You can," Erin said, locking arms with her then.

"You're young!"

Irene pursed her lips. She had three reasons not to do it, with the first being that her body would not allow it, and the second being her wish to live up to Dennis's hopes for her.

And there was still the lingering trauma from the mess with Harvey Gooding.

Deliberately changing the subject, she asked, "Where's the restaurant? Are we there yet?"

Erin pointed opposite the road.

"It's just right there—"

Before she finished, an MPV screeched to a halt in front of them, and the door opened to seven men leaping out, surrounding them.

Irene became guarded right then and shielded Erin behind herself since Erin was pregnant.

Glaring at them right then, she said, "Who are you?"

"Which of you is Irene Spencer?" the man in the lead asked—he was lanky, had a long scar over his face, and appeared utterly intimidating.

Erin squeezed Irene's arm before she could speak, gesturing for her to stay quiet since those men were clearly after her.

"What business do you have with Irene Spencer?"

Erin reared her chin with feigned composure.

"You'd better leave or I'll shout for help."

The lanky man narrowed his eyes.

"You're Irene?"

"I am. What about it—"

The men charged forward and grabbed her before she could finish, and Irene quickly cried, "Let her go! I'm Irene!"

"Dream on! We're supposed to take her!"

The lanky man pried her hand off right then.

"Sis! Sis—"

Erin cried in terror.

"You've got it wrong. I am Irene,"

Irene once again told the lanky man.

"Really?"

The lanky man glanced between her and Erin.

Having no way to be sure, he told his goons, "Take them both."

But before he could reach out to grab Irene, a blur bounded forward, launching a kick at the lanky man with lightning speed!