

## Runaway 811

### Chapter 811

As Finn dropped to a crouch beside Dennis to check his vitals, Irene started to apply first aid since she knew Dennis's condition.

However, she noticed that something was amiss when she checked Dennis's heart rate.

Still, she calmly looked up at Finn and said, "Call an ambulance... Never mind. That would take too much time—just carry him out of here."

"Okay." Finn fully trusted Irene now and quickly did what he was told.

Irene helped him move Dennis over his back before running ahead and arranging for Eagle to get the car ready. Soon, Finn got Dennis in the car, while Eagle drove all of them to the hospital.

Thanks to Irene's quick response, Dennis was rescued in time.

"Is Director Turner going to be alright?" Finn asked.

Irene simply stayed silent, her expression somber.

After all, she knew that Dennis was in bad shape—his life was at risk.

"Why aren't you saying anything, Director Spencer?" Finn asked, staring at her just then. "Is it serious?"

Irene remained silent—she must stay calm, and her mind must be rational.

Finally turning toward Finn, she told him to bring the artificial heart they developed, leaving him stunned.

"Is it that serious? And the artificial heart is still in the test phase. It shouldn't be used in humans..."

"It's just in case, and I'm worried that Mr. Turner is going to need it."

Irene certainly knew that there was no telling if Dennis would survive this.

"But—"

“Just go,” Irene said, cutting him short—she did not have time to explain, and Dennis’s chances of survival depended on every second they had!

When Finn still hesitated, Irene urged, “Go. I’m here to keep an eye on things.”

Finn lingered for another moment before turning and starting to run.

Irene called out from behind him, “Take my car. Tell Eagle to drive you.”

Taxis would take too much time.

That was when the sliding doors to the operating room opened and a nurse stepped outside. “Is the patient’s family here?”

Irene approached her. “I am.”

“The patient’s condition is serious. The doctor will be with you shortly to explain his condition. Please wait here in the meantime.”

Irene nodded. “Okay.”

Around ten minutes later, the doors opened again. This time, a doctor in green scrubs, face mask, and surgical cap appeared, taking off the mask when he saw Irene. “Are you the patient’s family?”

Irene nodded. “Yes.”

“The patient’s heart rate accelerated past 170 beats per minute, which in turn led to low blood pressure. He’s in pretty bad shape since cardiac arrests are exceedingly dangerous, and it was fortunate that you got him here in time, or he would have been beyond saving.”

Irene was aware of Dennis’s condition, so the doctor’s diagnosis was not surprising.

“Is there any method of treatment?” she asked calmly.

“Not at the moment...”

“Wouldn’t an artificial heart resolve the patient’s condition, as an equipment that takes the place of an organic heart for blood circulation?”

“Yes, but that technology is not at a viable phase in this country. It’s a different story abroad.”

Irene helped the doctor’s gaze. “I’m from Hotmesh Research. Would you perform the surgery if I

provide an artificial heart?"

The doctor shook his head. "Wait, was the development successful? I haven't heard about it."

"It's in the test phase," Irene admitted.

"Wait..." Studying her then, the doctor asked, "Are you saying you want to implant it in the patient while it's still in the test phase?"

"With the lack of others, that's the only option," Irene replied.

"Absolutely not." The doctor refused right away, waving her off. "That is against regulations and unreliable. We're doctors, and we don't play around with a person's life. Moreover, I've never performed such a surgery myself, so it's not going to work."

The doctor just finished when a nurse came running out of the operating room. "Dr. Hall? Dr. Clegg is calling for you. The patient is in serious condition."

Ray Hall turned and was about to leave, but Irene stopped him. "Wait. I will perform the surgery!"

Ray turned around again, staring at Irene in disbelief!

Chapter 812

The look in Ray's eyes was basically saying: Are you kidding me?

Surgeries were not a game!

"Even if you're a medical research staff, surgeries are only to be performed by doctors with the proper certification and training. Do you have those?"

"I do," Irene replied.

Ray stared fixedly at her in silence, surprised despite himself.

Still, she had remained calm since the start, and that was proof enough—the average person would be losing composure once they found out that their family was facing mortal danger.

"But you're not a doctor of this hospital. Even if you are a doctor, you're not allowed to perform the surgery here," Ray told her.

Irene had more to say when Finn and several Hotmesh Research personnel arrived together, having heard about Dennis's condition.

"How is it going?" Finn asked.

"Not good," Irene replied.

"What?" everyone exclaimed at once.

Irene stayed silent, but Ray explained, "If you're his family too, I'll make it clear—you need to prepare yourself."

"What?!"

"Was it really that serious?!"

Finn realized right then that was why Irene had him get the artificial heart—she knew about Dennis's condition already.

"Our doctors are saving him right now. Just be ready," Ray said.

However, Irene stopped him again when he started toward the operating room again. "The artificial heart is here, doctor. I'll do it if you don't dare to do it."

Ray looked Irene in the eye. "I've made it very clear..."

"The rules are inflexible, but people aren't."

"I won't let you perform the surgery no matter what you say." Ray was clear, because he would never be able to assume the responsibility if anything were to happen.

"Dr. Hall? Dr. Clegg is calling. The patient is going into shock."

Ray turned to leave right then—he did not have the time to waste his breath with Irene.

"Shock?" Finn could not help turning toward Irene. "The director..."

Irene actually was not confident if she had to perform the surgery either, and she would have to assume responsibility if anything were to happen!

Even so, she did not hesitate.

Taking the artificial heart from Finn, she followed Ray, who shot her a solemn glare, into the operating room. “You can’t just barge in here!”

“The patient matters more right now,” Irene calmly replied.

Ray sighed. “Fine. I’ll make an exception, but you’re only allowed to look. Do not interfere—nurse? Help her scrub up.”

“Thank you,” Irene said gratefully. She then followed the nurse to get changed.

When she returned to the operating room and the doors opened, she heard Mark Clegg say, “No, it’s not working...”

Irene ignored all else as she rushed to the table, scanning every vital reading right then and deciding that Dennis could still be saved.

Taking the defibrillator from Mark, she told a nurse to adjust the wattage. “Give me two hundred!”

“What...”

“I’ll take responsibility for anything that happens,” Irene said as she calmly proceeded.

Ray could tell that she was certainly a doctor and a remarkable one at that.

Seeing that she was so determined, he almost felt guilty—but he still retained his rationality as a doctor and told a nurse to record a video.

That would serve as evidence. If Dennis died on the table, the other doctors and the hospital would assume no responsibility.

The nurse whipped out her phone and aimed it at Irene. “Please repeat what you just said.”

Irene continued to work while stating solemnly, “I’ll take responsibility for anything that happens! The doctors here have no responsibility for any mishaps!”

She certainly was putting everything on the line to save Dennis.

Once the nurse saved the video, Ray directed everyone to work with Irene.

They managed to revive Dennis's heart thanks to Irene's perseverance, but they were not out of the woods yet.

He would fall into another shock without surgery, and a second shock would make it further difficult to save him.

Irene had no time to think now. "Prep him for surgery!"

Chapter 813

Ray had the nurse prepare the surgical equipment and assist Irene with everything she needed.

"Since you're a member of the patient's family, sign the surgery consent form. This is an essential procedure in any hospital, and we wouldn't be able to take the responsibility if anything happens. So..."

Irene understood—every doctor feared reprisals.

If Dennis died, his family would press the issue on this hospital.

But she wanted to perform the surgery, so she must therefore assume that responsibility.

"Give it to me," Irene said.

The nurse did so, and Irene quickly signed it before turning to Ray. "I will need your assistant."

Ray nodded. "Of course."

"You know the people here, Dr. Hall. I'll be counting on you now."

"Just leave it to me."

Having taken the Hippocratic Oath, Ray did his best to assist Irene.

She opened the box and took out the artificial heart that Finn brought, then took a deep breath.

"Are you sure about this?" Ray asked.

"No," Irene replied.

"...Then why are you doing it?"

“Is there any other choice?” Irene asked calmly in return.

That left Ray stumped.

There certainly was no choice, it was either surgery, which would give the patient a hanging thread’s chance at staying alive, or no surgery, and his death assured.

“Just do what you have to. You can count on me for the rest,” Ray told her.

Irene nodded, just as Dennis was prepped for surgery.

Irene picked up the scalpel and made an incision through his chest.

She had done it many times, but this was the first time she felt this way.

It was not as if she was afraid of taking responsibility—she was just worried that Dennis’s lifelong research failed to save himself.

And that would be tragic!

It was Irene’s first time transplanting an artificial heart, and she would be lying if she said that she was not nervous.

Still, the training she had, as well as the prudence and composure she honed from being a doctor, kept her ice cold.

Telling herself to keep it together, she then said, “CPB.”

Everyone worked in perfect tandem with Ray’s assistance.

Beep, beep...

One could almost hear the scalpel slicing through tissue.

But while the average person would feel the creeps from that sound, everyone in the operating room was used to it—some would even hear it every day.

For Irene’s part, the research on the artificial heart had been simulated many times, and they had experimented on donated cadavers as well.

The test on the goat was the only living test subject they had.

Still, she was slowly getting into it.

Soon, there was blood build up in the chest and she could not see the veins.

“Suction.”

After that, she looked up, checking and ensuring the blood pressure reading was normal before continuing the surgery.

...

The surgery lasted over four hours, and it counts as a success—the artificial heart’s transplant was a success, and Dennis’s vitals were improving.

The next 48 hours would determine his survival, depending on whether he woke up.

“Take him to the ICU,” Ray said after the surgery.

Irene quietly watched as Dennis was wheeled out, her thoughts inscrutable.

“Good work,” Ray told her.

“Everyone helped.” Irene pursed her lips—the surgery would not have gone that well if not for Ray.

“Thank you.”

“You’re welcome.”

But even as Irene stepped out of the operating room, she still did not feel relief.

She changed out of her scrubs and watched her hands at the disinfection zone.

She left the operating room without work.

“Director.” Finn quickly approached her anxiously. “Is the surgery finished?”

“Yeah.” Irene nodded.

“And you did it?” a cold voice demanded behind Finn right then!

Irene turned toward it to find an unfamiliar face.

Who was he?!

Chapter 814

However, Irene quickly noticed the man's resemblance to Dennis and thought right then that the man was his son.

Finn gave Irene a look, hinting that they should go because Neil Turner appeared agitated.

He was certainly worried that Neil would say something that upset Irene, since she was not Dennis's family and had no authority to sign the consent forms for the surgery.

It would be ideal if the surgery was a success, since Dennis's family had no issue to pursue and they would even be grateful to Irene.

But if Dennis died, they would have every reason to pursue responsibility.

Irene was not about to hide, however.

Whatever happened had happened, and she did what she did—hiding would not solve anything.

Neil stormed toward them with a furious glare. "Who do you think you are? You have no right to give the surgery a green light."

"Director Turner was in danger. There was no time to think," Irene explained.

"That still doesn't give you the right to decide for my father," he growled sharply. "Not when you have no familial connection to him. You have my thanks if he's alright, but if anything bad happens, it's on you! Where is he now?"

"He's placed in the ICU after surgery," Irene said. "You're not allowed to see him for now."

Neil started glaring again. "What? The ICU? How bad is he doing?!"

Ray had just left the operating room then, and he helped Irene out of the bind. "The surgery was a success. We just have to wait and see if the patient goes through the next 48 hours without issues."

"Fine, I will believe that my father is fine for now."

The other employees of Hotmesh Research knew Neil.

All of them assured him that Irene meant no harm to Dennis, and that the surgery was performed without Neil's family's consent because he was facing serious risk.

Since they spoke on Irene's behalf, Neil did not pursue the issue further for the time being.

Finn then leaned in to whisper into Irene's ear, "Our own people contacted Director Turner's family, since we shouldn't hide it from them."

Irene naturally knew that, and she therefore did not blame anyone or argue.

In fact, she knew very well that Neil was upset because she had disregarded the procedure.

Ray told Irene then, "You must be worn out after the surgery. You should get some rest—I've spoken to ICU, and they'll contact me if anything comes up."

"Thank you," Irene said, turning toward him then and whipping out her phone. "You can have my number. Give me a shout if there's something."

"Okay," Ray replied.

After getting Ray's number, she put away her phone and told Finn, "I won't be going back to Hotmesh Research. Just call me if there are any problems."

"Okay," Finn replied.

Irene glanced at Neil then, who was still surrounded by Hotmesh employees.

She was pleased to hear that everyone was speaking on her behalf—no matter what happened, she now had their confidence.

She turned away and headed out then.

Eagle, who was waiting outside, opened the car door for her when he saw her arrive.

Getting inside, she said, "Home."

"Yes, ma'am," Eagle said and he went to the driver's seat.

At the same time, Irene closed her eyes from exhaustion.

...

Lulu Adams and Martin York got married, though there was no grand ceremony.

They simply put together a small feast, inviting friends and family.

Lulu was dressed in white while Martin looked imposing in his military uniform.

They were formally wed amid the blessings of friends and family.

As they retired for the night, Martin handed her a chest.

She opened it and was stunned when she saw what was inside!

Chapter 815

Staring at Martin with disbelief, Lulu asked, "What is this?"

"I know it took you a lot of courage to marry me, and that you didn't marry for love," Martin told her.

"But

whether it's impulse or recompense, I'm happy. So, even though I'm not rich enough to afford you an extravagant lifestyle, all I have is yours."

Holding her gaze, he continued, "My father was an officer, but he died in the line of duty when I was twelve. My mother never remarried and raised me on her own, but she died from stomach cancer when I was 24. They left me with this house—the same one I grew up in—and I want to give it to you. That's why I registered you as a co-owner of this house."

Picking up a yellow card, he said, "Here's the savings my parents left me. It's worth over ten grand."

Picking up another card, he said, "This is my personal savings. There's up to 40 grand, and I have that much because I don't use it much."

Lulu stared at everything in the box.

They were so simple, yet precious and held immense sentimental value.

She rasped, "It's too much, I..."

"You married me, and that makes you family." Martin smiled. "What's mine is yours, and although I don't spend too much, I'm not great with money either. That's why I'm leaving it with you."

"No." Lulu still could not accept it.

“Play nice now—take it,” Martin said, putting the box in her hands. “I’m on duty tonight. Get some rest soon.”

And with that, he left the house.

Lulu was still in her bridal gown, holding everything that Martin owned.

It was their wedding day, and they were supposed to consummate tonight.

However, he was tactful enough to excuse himself, so that she would not feel awkward since she did not love him.

She sat down and put the box on the table.

She then looked around at the bridal room that their colleagues decorated for them—heart-shaped balloons and ribbons filled every corner of the room, building a picture of celebration.

Even so, Lulu could not feel happy.

She married Martin, but she could not love him with all her heart—she had already failed a wife.

Naturally, she could not sleep soundly in the large bridal bed, decorated elaborately with velvet sheets.

...

When Lulu woke up the next morning, she was cleaning up the house when the door opened.

Martin entered with boxes of food, which he then placed on the table. “I bought you breakfast. I don’t know what you like, so I bought everything. See if there’s anything you like.”

Lulu said, “I’m not a picky eater.”

“Then, sit,” Martin said, taking the balloon she was holding. “I’ll clean the house, so eat. Sorry, but I’m not much of a cook since I’ve always been alone, but I’ll learn from now on.”

Lulu held his gaze. “I can cook.”

“No, you’re pregnant—I’ll cook for you once I’ve learned how to.” Martin said, placing a small pie in front of Lulu. “This one’s from a good restaurant that’s been in business for ten years. They really make it aromatic.”

Lulu put one in his mouth, relishing the crisp skin but lack of greasiness, along with the fresh onions inside.

"It's good," she said with a smile.

"Then have some more. Get changed and get to work when you're done—I'll be going to bed, and I'll clean up the house later."

Lulu watched for a while from behind as he cleaned up, and quietly turned away.

She finished the entire box of pies, since it was Martin's goodwill.

Although she was pregnant, she could eat everything since she was not suffering from morning sickness and everything tasted good.

"You've been out the whole night, so get some proper rest," Lulu said, rising to her feet. "You didn't have breakfast either, right? There's too much for me to finish anyway, so have the rest. Don't let it get cold."

"Okay," Martin said as he sat down at the table.

Lulu cleaned up her end and got changed to work.

Still, she paused at the doorway and turned around to look at Martin.

Chapter 816

Lulu told Martin, "You don't have to clean up. I'll get it done when I get home—I don't think men like you are that good with housework."

Martin simply smiled and waved her off. "You underestimate me—I'm perfect with housework, save for cooking. Now go, or you'll be late."

Lulu stared at him then, wanting to speak but unable to do it.

There were three rooms in the house, and she wanted to tell him that he could sleep in another bed instead of leaving.

But how could she tell Martin that? And what would he think of her after that?

She married him, but she could not even play the role of a wife!

Asking her newlywed husband to sleep in another bed was proof of her failure.

Turning away, she strode out and closed the door behind her.

...

Irene fell asleep on the couch with Tommy in her arms.

She was home early, and Isaac thought it weird to see her at this hour.

Lately, she had been coming home later than he did.

As he walked over to her, Irene opened her eyes.

As she was just taking a catnap, she woke from the slightest noise.

Isaac arched his back and took Tommy from her arms. "Sleep in the room if you want. Things get noisy in the living room."

"I'm not sleepy," Irene whispered—she was playing with Tommy for a while until she got drowsy.

She got up and went to get a drink, while Isaac carried Tommy to his room and put him to bed.

When Isaac returned to find Irene spacing out, he approached her and asked, "What's on your mind? Why do you look so out of it?"

Irene came to her senses and put down her glass before turning to look at him. "I... I did something rash today."

Isaac loosened his neck tie and took off his jacket as he sat down on the couch, watching her as he said, "Do tell."

Irene told him everything that happened today, and Isaac frowned slightly afterward. "That was rash—you've already done all you're supposed to do after you sent Dennis Turner to the hospital. The surgery performed without his family's consent, and with that untested artificial heart? What if he died? How would you take responsibility for that?"

Irene was actually nervous too, but she just did not let it show.

"The surgery was a success, but he's still under observation. Whether Director Turner lives is... unknown."

Staring at her for a couple heartbeats, Isaac asked, "Would you do it again if you were allowed to choose again?"

"Yes," Irene answered without hesitation.

She did not regret her own choice, because not doing it meant death!

If others did not understand that, then so be it.

Even so, she was hoping that Isaac would.

"Since you've done it, then don't dwell on it. I'll help you should anything happen," Isaac told her.

Irene felt a little relieved even as she watched him.

She felt warm inside, and so much more secure!

She walked up and sat beside him, leaning into his arms as she said, "You're amazing."

"You only think that now?" Isaac asked, raising a brow.

Irene looked up, immediately seeing his strong chin and his chiseled jawline.

"I always did."

She smiled, fiddling at his collar as she fawned over him. "You've always been amazing."

She succeeded in amusing him, as his eyes narrowed from his grin.

He pinched her cheek lovingly and tenderly just then. "Fine."

Irene raised her lips to give him a peck on the chin and started to move up to his lips when she unwittingly noticed the person standing at the doorway.

She jumped from surprise, her cheeks flushing immediately!

Flustered, she leapt to her feet in reflex!

Chapter 817

Irene complained, "What are you doing sneaking around, Mom?!"

“You were too busy to notice me,” Sheryl Harris retorted. “Also, I’ve always been quiet here at home.”

Irene was speechless.

So, her own mother saw her kissing Isaac? She could die from embarrassment!

Sheryl certainly knew that her daughter was easily self-conscious, and she smiled. “I didn’t see a thing.”

Irene was speechless again.

That just meant Sheryl did see! Why else would she say that?

Turning around and heading to her room, Sheryl continued, “You guys keep doing what you were doing. Just pretend I was never here.”

Irene was speechless again.

While people embarrassed themselves away from home, she somehow ended up doing it... in her own home!

Shooting Isaac a look, she snapped, “It’s all your fault.”

Isaac was speechless.

Why was she blaming him? She was the one who kissed him! How was that his fault?

Nonetheless, Irene turned and headed upstairs, jumping into bed and hiding herself beneath the blanket.

Isaac followed her and stood by the bed as he said, “It’s alright. It’s your mom, and not some stranger. And it’s just a kiss.”

Irene ignored her, so he moved on top of her, with the blanket between them.

Irene shoved him right then. “I can’t breathe.”

Isaac smiled, and reached underneath the blanket...

Irene poked her head out then, and blinked. “What are you doing?”

“Just doing what you’re doing,” Isaac said quietly and unhurriedly.

“And what did I do?” she asked.

He leaned in to kiss her and moved downward to gently bite her chin, speaking through his teeth, “Kiss me.”

Irene wrapped her hands around his neck then and gave him the kiss she did not!

She then moved down and tugged at his shirt, unbuttoning it..

Isaac lowered his gaze, rasping slightly, “Are you in your right mind?”

Irene replied, “I am...”

She proved it with action as well, wrapping her legs around him.

Isaac put one hand around her waist and then held her thigh with the other, carrying her to the bathroom.

They stayed there for a long while before coming out.

Irene was utterly limp, and Isaac put a towel on as she carried her out.

“Go to sleep. I’ll come get you for dinner later,” Isaac said, pulling the blanket over her.

Irene was too tired to even open her eyes. “No, just let me sleep. I don’t think I’d fall asleep again if you wake me.”

“Alright,” Isaac said, gently patting her on the back. “Now, sleep.”

Isaac headed downstairs alone during dinner.

Sheryl did not ask a thing, but Mrs. Watson did since she did not know what happened. “Didn’t Mrs. Jefferson come home early today?”

Isaac helped Tommy to his highchair while answering, “She’s been working hard and didn’t really get any rest. I’m letting her sleep, but keep some food warm just in case she wakes up later and feels hungry.”

“Okay.” Mrs. Watson nodded.

Tommy pouted. "I want Mommy to feed me."

Isaac gave him a look. "Do it yourself."

That only left the boy pursing his lips further, his eyes welling with tears.

Sheryl came over. "Here, I'll feed you."

Isaac stopped her, however, and carried him away from the dining room.

They soon returned, and whatever Isaac told Tommy, the boy started eating by himself after Isaac brought him back.

"He's just a toddler. It's normal if he acts spoiled..." Sheryl began, but soon realized she spoke out of turn.

Modern people had their own ideas about their children's education and she should not interfere.

Quickly changing the conversation, she said, "Alright. Let's eat!"

...

Irene woke up at past one in the morning and she could not fall asleep again no matter what she did.

As she tossed and turned around, she woke Isaac.

"You're awake? Are you hungry?"

Irene shook her head and got out of bed to get changed. "I need to go."

Isaac frowned. "Where to? It's the middle of the night."

Chapter 818

Irene soon found the right clothes and got changed while telling him, "Just sleep. I'm going to the hospital."

However, Isaac was suddenly wide awake and sat up. "Why? Are you worried?"

"Yeah, I am," Irene admitted.

Isaac got out of bed in turn and wrapped his arms around her from behind. "Be nice. It's the middle of the night—just sleep, and don't think anything about it."

Irene turned and looked at him then. “Did you know that I was being that eager today?”

Isaac blinked his thick lashes a couple times. “Why?”

“To distract myself.”

She did not want to keep thinking about Dennis Turner, but she had yet to receive a call, which meant that Dennis’s life was still in the balance—it could still be either death or good news.

Isaac furrowed his brows so hard his brows almost knotted together.

What did she take him for?

He suddenly scooped Irene up in his arms.

She smacked him on the shoulder. “What are you doing?! You scared me.”

That came out of the blue!

Isaac simply carried her to bed. “I need you to distract me too.”

Irene was speechless.

“Stop it,” she murmured softly. “You know I’m under a lot of pressure.”

Isaac lowered his gaze at her. “I’ll make you relax.”

Irene was too flustered for that. “Don’t need it.”

Her legs were still sore!

Even so, Isaac simply put her in bed and pinned her beneath himself.

“Urgh...” she murmured as she kept both hands against his chest. “I’m tired...”

“Really? But you can go to the hospital just fine.”

Irene tried to cajole him. “Please, just let me go to the hospital for a look. I’d be less worried—”

Isaac’s lips were on hers before she could finish.

Unable to get away, she was at his mercy as he lorded over her heart and body!

Soon, things spiraled beyond primal passion!

...

It was past 3 AM when they finally stopped, with Irene basically left feeling like a puddle—she was not going to make it outside today.

As Isaac cleaned her up, he told her, “Sleep.”

Irene shot him a complaining look, but he simply chuckled in his alluring voice. “Hmm. You can still glare at me? Guess I haven’t gone all out.”

“Isaac... Jefferson...” She grunted his name even as she shoved at him with her foot.

He simply caught her by her fair ankles. “Still have the strength to kick me? Yeah. It seems I need to go harder next time.”

“Shut up,” Irene said, and pull the blanket over herself. “I’m going to sleep.”

“Good,” Isaac murmured and leaned in to kiss her on the calf before tucking her leg under the blanket too. “Just sleep. I’m washing up.”

“Whatever,” she snorted.

...

James Cross’s work efficiency and mood both improved after he returned from Minerva.

Zachary Slate, who was having a discussion with a potential partner at a diner, spotted him eating there alone.

The man was looking at his phone, smiling from time to time.

Zachary was eventually finished with his discussion and he made his way toward James.

Since the other man was too focused on his phone, Zachary managed to sneak around him and look over his shoulder at his phone screen.

He saw James typing in the chat box at lightning speed: [I miss you.]

Then, he sent it.

A reply came immediately after.

[I miss you too.]

“Yo, that’s cringe,” Zachary could not help saying out loud.

James quickly put away his phone and turned to find Zachary watching himself gleefully.

He was speechless for a moment.

Screw this guy!

“Are you some sort of voyeur?”

Chapter 819

Zachary clicked his tongue twice. “You look like you have something to hide, but you’re calling me a voyeur? You’re the pervert here.”

“I can tell my lady whatever I like. Why do you care?” James snorted coolly. “You’re just obviously jealous that others are doing fine.”

“Hah! I’m jealous?” Zachary said as he sat opposite him. “You’re the brazen one, flaunting your lovey-dovey relationship in public.”

James held his gaze for a few moments and said, “I think you’re losing your mind from jealousy.”

Zachary gave him a clever-girl look. “You can tell?”

James was speechless for a moment. “Buzz off!”

Zachary chuckled as the other man rose to his feet. “What are you doing here?”

“I’m in a diner. Do you think I’m taking a bath here instead?”

James was speechless again and he really wanted to tell Zachary to buzz off just then!

“Let’s go together. I was here for a business meeting and I’m done now,” Zachary said, looking serious just then.

James shot him a look. “You’ve been busy for a while now, huh?”

Zachary certainly did not deny that—in fact, he was busy right now.

Keeping himself buried in work afforded him a fulfilling life, since he would not have the time to let his thoughts wander.

“Are you free? How about a drink?” James asked.

“Sure,” Zachary replied.

James put a hand on his shoulder then. “How have you been?”

“What do you mean?” Zachary asked.

James snorted. “You know what I mean. How have you been doing lately? I mean, why would I ask you about your love life when it’s just a pile of shit now?”

Zachary was speechless. “Can’t you act more civilized?”

“What, am I not civilized?” James asked innocently. “I actually think I am.”

“Fine!”

With that, the duo bickered as they left the diner and drove to a bar.

They danced, drank, and talked.

Time flew as they did, but they started to drink more as they talked about the unhappy stuff.

In reality, James felt pressured too.

He still felt bad about Erin Gooding—not from aversion, but sympathy.

Before what happened, she was such a good kid and she always seemed to glow.

He felt as if he did not take good care of her, and that led to losing their child and her torment.

Zachary was complaining about how things ended with Lulu in turn.

They were separated, reunited only to separate again... there was no way he could just forget about it

after so much.

As they drank glass after glass, Zachary suddenly slammed his glass on the table and scoffed. "Isaac is the happiest among us now, isn't he?"

James nodded.

That was certainly undeniable that Isaac was living on cloud nine these days.

"It's just unfair," Zachary growled.

They were all men.

And yet, some like him had to lead a dull life, while others like Isaac lived in such bliss one could not help but get envious!

...

Isaac had just fallen asleep when he got a call.

Worried that he would wake Irene, he answered it outside the room.

"Isaac? I'm outside," Zachary said drunkenly as soon as Isaac took his call.

Isaac scowled. "Do you know what time it is?"

"Hehe... What?"

Isaac was speechless, but simply hung up and turned off his phone in one swift stroke before returning to his room and going to sleep with Irene in his arms.

He woke up at eight, by which he completely forgot about Zachary's call, simply treating it as drunken babble!

"Have some more. You didn't have dinner last night," Isaac said as he passed Irene his scrambled eggs.

"My stomach can only take that much," Irene protested. "I can't finish it even if you throw it at me."

She returned the scrambled eggs to his plate, which got even more scrambled as they moved it around.

Isaac had no choice but to do it then.

Still, he said, "I'm taking you to the hospital."

"Alright," Irene replied.

They headed out after breakfast, only to find the two men lying outside when they opened their door!

Chapter 820

The two men's clothes were disheveled as they lay flat on their backs.

Isaac was left scowling and speechless.

"Why are they out here?" Irene asked, crouching as she did and frowning when the stench of alcohol hit her in the nose. "Were they drinking?"

"Probably," Isaac said, and he called Eagle along with the chauffeur. "Bring them inside."

Once the chauffeur did so, he drove out with Mrs. Watson for her routine shopping for the children.

Irene told Mrs. Watson, "Get them some pick-me-up too. They drank a lot."

In fact, they were still unconscious.

"Okay," Mrs. Watson replied. "Don't worry—just leave them in the guest rooms, and I'll tend to them."

Irene nodded and told Isaac, "Let's go."

"Yeah."

Isaac drove out of the mansion first, with Eagle following in another car.

Seeing that they were not heading to the hospital, Irene said, "You're going the wrong way. Take a left up ahead."

"You're going to work," Isaac told her.

Irene was speechless. "No, I'm going to—"

"If not the research center, my office it is," Isaac cut her short before she could finish.

Irene was adamant on going to the hospital nonetheless. "Look, I'm worried if I don't visit."

“What good would that do? You won’t change a thing,” Isaac said, refusing to listen. “What you can do right now is wait. You’d make things worse if Dennis Turner’s family were there—they’d just start wrangling you.”

In fact, Irene should not show up as long as Dennis had not cleared this dangerous phase.

Soon, Isaac started heading toward his office. “Now is the time for restraint.”

Irene shot him a look and snorted coolly. “So you were lying when you said you’d take me to the hospital.”

“Would you have gotten in my car if I didn’t?” Isaac chuckled smugly. “Be nice and listen for once.”

But it was not as if Irene had a say in the matter—Isaac would not take her to the hospital no matter how many times she asked, and it was not as if she could jump out of a running car.

She was at his mercy now, since she had underestimated him.

“You’re despicable!” she snapped, pursing her lips. “I should have known this would happen. You’d never take me to the hospital!”

Forced to listen since she would never win, she huffed, “I won’t go to the hospital, but I’m not going to your office either.”

“Hmm?” Isaac spared her a glance.

“What would I do while you work? I can’t help, and I don’t know a thing about your work.”

She might even be laughed at, since Isaac already left her humiliated at Twinrise before.

“Then what do you have in mind?” Isaac asked.

Nothing came to Irene’s mind even as her mind worked furiously... although she would not have left the house if she knew Isaac would stop her from going to the hospital.

“Just drive me home. I’ll stay with Tommy.”

“Your mind will wander in the silence.”

Irene gave up right then.

“Fine. I’ll go wherever you take me.”

Isaac raised a brow. “Are you sure?”

“I’m not a schemer like you. I’d never win.”

“Why does it sound like you’re just pouting?”

“I’m not.”

And she certainly was not—she had actually given up on resisting.

With that, Isaac started to drive to the suburbs, and Irene did not ask where they were going.

It was very far, too, since he drove a long while before stopping.

As they alighted, all Irene saw was a boundless meadow.

“I didn’t know there’s a place like this...” Irene murmured as she turned toward Isaac. “What’s this place for?”

“You will know when you’re inside,” Isaac said, putting a hand around her shoulder.

There was a building nearby, and the person standing at the door quickly approached him when he saw Isaac.

“It has been a while, Mr. Jefferson.”