

## Runaway 861

### Chapter 861

Irene's voice was hoarse as she began, "Hold me, Isaac."

Isaac did so, leaning in and wrapping his arms around her through the blanket, asking her softly, "Do your hips hurt?"

As Irene stayed silent, Isaac chuckled. "What's gotten into you? Hmm? Tommy's eyes were red and puffy, just like yours. Are you going to cry too?"

Irene sniffled. "Tommy was crying?"

"Oh, he's enjoying himself out in the courtyard now," Isaac said, his expression turning serious. "What about you?"

Irene returned her hug, burying her face over his chest. "I just miss you."

"Me too." Isaac chuckled.

"I love you, Isaac."

That was the only way she could tell him that she cared about him—because she could not tell him about her biochemical pregnancy.

When Isaac lowered his gaze at her, she quickly averted her eyes.

Even as tears trickled off the corner of her eye, she played it down and said, "Don't look at me. I'll get embarrassed."

Isaac pulled the blanket up over her shoulders as he replied, "Yes, ma'am."

She then pulled it over her head. "I'm drowsy. I want to sleep."

Isaac's gaze darkened even as he watched her, but he whispered softly. "Yeah. Sweet dreams."

He soon left, gently closing the door behind him, and headed downstairs.

Heading outside, he called out, "Eagle."

As Eagle made his way toward him, Isaac asked, "Did something happen today?"

“No, sir,” Eagle replied after thinking about it.

“Are you sure?”

Isaac’s sharp gaze seemed to pierce right inside a soul, and someone as stalwart as Eagle had to keep his head down to avoid his gaze. “Yes... I’m sure.”

He thought about it again, but there was nothing weird about today—save from taking Irene to the hospital.

Moreover, she had told Eagle not to tell anyone, so he was not about to make the decision on his own.

Though he was left in a dilemma for a while, he eventually decided to hold his tongue, and instead mentioned Neil. “Actually, sir... Dennis Turner’s boy ambushed her at the entrance of Hotmesh Research.”

Isaac sighed. “Got it.”

It was true that Irene would be frustrated as long as the incident was not resolved.

Was she acting weird because of that? Either way, Neil must be placing some serious pressure on her.

Whipping out his phone, Isaac called James. “Let’s resolve Dennis Turner’s death soon. We’re going to the precinct again tonight.”

“Yes, sir.” James replied.

Returning inside the mansion, Isaac took his car keys, and Sheryl saw that he was leaving again. “You’re leaving? It’s dinner soon.”

“Eat without me,” Isaac replied. “I have something to do.”

“What’s the hurry? You can have dinner before you leave,” Sheryl insisted.

Isaac stayed silent for a moment, and said, “Yeah.”

He left after dinner, while Irene stayed in her room, excusing herself from dinner while sleeping.

Something was clearly weighing on her mind, which motivated Isaac into wanting to kill two birds with one stone sooner.

And he would do that by working on Neil!

...

When Neil was brought to the CEO's office of Twinrise Enterprise, Isaac was sitting behind his desk.

Sending someone to make some coffee, he said, "Please, sit."

Neil asked warily, "Why did you bring me here?"

"Irene Spencer is my wife. What do you think I'd do after you sued her?" Isaac asked bluntly.

Believing that he was in for a beating, Neil scrambled for the door, but he was stopped!

Isaac simply reclined against his chair, crossed his legs and said calmly, "You're not leaving without my permission."

Neil wheeled on him. "What do you want?! I won't settle even if you kill me! Your wife killed my father and I'm not about to withdraw the lawsuit because of your threat. Do you think I'd be an honorable son if I did?!"

Isaac actually raised a brow.

The kid was certainly an honorable son... just a little lacking in brains!

"My wife is not the reason your father died."

Neil almost lost it right then. "If it's not her, then who is it?!"

Chapter 862

Isaac frowned at Neil's short fuse.

"Your father was murdered. The police are building a case as we speak."

Neil did not buy it at all. "You're only making excuses for your wife. Do you think I'd believe something so outrageous? Do I look that stupid and gullible to you?"

Isaac really wanted to tell Neil he certainly was—he certainly was reluctant to speak with Neil's type, who always seemed to lack something in his cranium.

They even discovered that he was working at a Fortune 500 company when they did a background check on him.

How did he even get his job, with that measly bit of intelligence?

And how did he not get fired?

That was when James arrived with a policeman, who was the officer in charge of this case.

Neil was cowed a little right then. "You don't have the right of reason even if you get the cops. I'm not afraid."

James shot him a cool look. "Listen to what Officer Jenkins has to say first before you keep yapping."

"What..." James's eyes flashed, but he stayed silent at that.

Officer Jenkins then explained the entire incident to Neil, while adding, "We have sufficient witness and material proof."

James had found the poisoned glass that Dennis drank from, which meant they had physical evidence.

And it was with such concrete evidence that they could build a case so quickly.

Neil, however, was still skeptical. "You just made that up to avoid responsibility!"

"Then tell me, what reason would Irene Spencer have to hurt your father?" James asked in return.

"Was there a grudge between them? If there was, would he have appointed Irene to be his successor?"

Neil said nothing, because he could not argue against that.

James then added, "The police have already performed an autopsy on your father. There was poisoning."

The private autopsy performed under Isaac's orders was highly irregular, so James told Neil that it was the police. In fact, the police themselves told James that it was not difficult to smooth things over.

Naturally, Neil was left dumbstruck.

"W-What did you do to my father?!" he snapped, pointing an accusing finger at James. "Don't you touch him!"

"The police have to do their investigations, or would you rather your father died with justice denied?"

Neil was silent—he certainly would not want that.

If there really was someone who did murder his father, he would punish them!

“Was what he said true? You’re not bribed, are you?” Neil asked as he walked towards Officer Jenkins, confused as to what was really the truth just then.

“It’s all true,” Officer Jenkins told him dutifully. “It’s not the first time New Suns Pharma is culpable in murder or conspiracy to murder. They actually distributed problematic medication before that led to several deaths, but the families decided to settle instead of pressing charges since they were paid a lot of money. We’ve also received a tip recently and launched an investigation on their company, which revealed more than a few suspicious operations—all I want to say is that they can and will murder your father for money.”

Neil stumbled a couple stacks backward, while asking himself inwardly if it was true.

“Feel free to ask me if you have any questions. I’ll answer everything to my knowledge,” Officer Jenkins said.

“Just... Let me have a moment,” Neil said.

He was certainly confused.

“Of course,” Officer Jenkins replied. “You can come to me anytime.”

And with a nod at Isaac, he left.

James brought Neil a glass of water, saying, “Now think carefully about what you’re going to do.”

Neil gulped, and looked at James anxiously. “You’re not lying, are you? I can’t let my father’s death go unanswered...”

“No, I’m not,” James told him confidently.

Neil suddenly hid his face behind his palms and started to bawl.

Chapter 863

A man—a full-fledged adult at that—was bawling like a child!

As Neil cried a river, James was pursing his lips in disdain.

Still, he became more understanding when he considered Neil’s misery from losing a loved one, even passing him a tissue.

Be that as it may, it still took Neil a long while to calm down.

Wiping his face and looking up at James, he asked, "This isn't a ploy, right?"

James shook his head. "We won't lie to you. Your father was a good man."

Neil nodded. "Okay."

He was about to leave when Isaac called out to him. "I heard that you're working at Hartner Corp. Once you're done with your father's funeral arrangements, you'll be promoted when you return to work."

Neil's eyes widened in shock—he had been working at Hartner for years, but he never had a chance to be promoted.

And now...

"Thank you," he exclaimed happily—a promotion naturally meant a bigger paycheck, but...

Getting skeptical again, he asked, "You're not helping me with the promotion out of guilt, are you?"

James was speechless, whereas Isaac said, "You can turn down the offer if you doubt me."

He was already getting impatient and he rose to his feet, striding away.

Getting through to Neil was just so... difficult.

Even James felt enfeebled, and he could not find the right words to describe Niel.

Still, he clapped the man on the shoulder and said, "The promotion was for your father's sake. Irene Spencer wouldn't be the new director of Hotmesh Research if not for him, and shouldn't we respond in kind? If your father's death really was Irene's fault, and we're actually the villains, we'd just kill you after you harassed Irene so much. Why would we even waste our breath?"

Neil flinched and asked in disbelief, "You mean... You'd kill me?"

James' gaze turned cool and sharp. "Would you like to put that to the test?"

Neil quickly shook his head. "N-No..."

"Then go home. Just wait for updates on your father's case," James told him.

Neil nodded, finally willing to trust James ever so slightly... though he would stop as soon as he noticed anything fishy.

Still, he stopped at the door, and asked, "About my promotion..."

"Don't worry," James assured him. "Mr. Jefferson isn't really upset."

Neil nodded repeatedly. "Okay."

With that, James walked him out of the building.

...

At their hotel, Martin asked Lulu, "When are we going back?"

"Once Irene's case is over," she replied—she could not rest easy until the case was over.

"You're eager to go home, aren't you?" Lulu asked as she sat beside him. "Why don't you head home first?"

Martin seemed to pause for a moment and he stared fixedly at her. "Trying to send me away?"

Lulu frowned. "What's that supposed to mean?"

"Nothing," Martin replied, standing up and shaking his head, but also keeping his back to her. "I'd be worried if you're alone while pregnant. I'll stay."

However, it was obvious to Lulu that he threw a loaded question her way.

Her mood taking a downswing, she rose to her feet and headed to the bedroom.

He lay down on his side behind Lulu, putting a palm on her belly and gently stroking it. "Sorry."

Lulu's eyes were open but she did not reply.

"I was just worried you'd meet the man who got you pregnant, and..."

Lulu suddenly turned around, still lying on her side—a little too quickly.

Martin cried, "What are you doing? Don't you know that you're pregnant?!"

Lulu took no notice, and instead kept her eyes fixed on him. “You knew?”  
Chapter 864

“Know what?” Martin asked.

Lulu pursed her lips. “You know what I’m talking about.”

Martin blinked. “No, I really don’t.”

“Anyway, I’m getting sleepy.” He yawned and wrapped his arms firmly around her. “Let’s sleep!”

However, Lulu felt uneasy and her heart was pounding.

Still, she said determinedly, “I wouldn’t have married you if I was convinced I can reconcile with my ex. I hope you can trust me when I say that you’re my refuge, alright?”

“Yeah, I know,” Martin said, kissing her hair. “I misspoke and made you uncomfortable. I’ll be more careful next time.”

“That’s not it,” Lulu said, shaking her head.

Still, she took a while to prepare herself before saying, “The man we met at the lobby the other day? That’s my ex.”

“I know,” Martin said.

Lulu was not surprised, and she lowered her gaze. “I should’ve known you’d pick up on it. I didn’t tell you because I didn’t want you to feel upset...”

“Cut that out,” Martin said, holding her hand. “I knew you had a past even when I chose you. But I don’t mind—that’s why I asked you to marry me.”

Lulu closed her eyes.

“If only I didn’t have this child... I’d be happy with you.”

Martin frowned. “Where did that silly talk come from? I asked you to keep the child because he’s alive. We could be happy with him too.”

Sighing, he said, “I know you’d feel guilty toward me. But I really don’t mind.”

“Thank you,” Lulu rasped.

“Come on, we’re married,” Martin said, giving her a hug. “Don’t be so formal ever again. You know that I’m a loner without a family, but I have a family again now with you. I should thank you instead.”

“What’s that thing about being formal again?” Lulu pointed out.

“Whatever, let’s sleep.” Martin snorted.

“Yeah,” Lulu replied, nestling in his arms.

Even so, they were caught in their thoughts despite closing their eyes, and pretended to fall asleep even if they could not.

...

Lulu woke up first in the morning, and stared at the face of the man who lay inches away.

He was not that handsome, but he understood her, cared for her, and cherished her.

As she reached out to touch his face, he suddenly opened his jet-black eyes that appeared relaxed after sleep, rasping, “You’re awake?”

“Yeah,” Lulu whispered, withdrawing her hand.

Martin sat up, asking, “Hungry? What do you want to eat? I’ll get breakfast.”

He usually did the same every morning back home, since he was a bad cook.

He did not mind the hassle at all, making it a routine to only buy the stuff she liked.

When he heard from a colleague that the lasagna in Bridge Town was good, he drove thirty miles just to get it for her.

It was nothing rare or extravagant, but he was willing to do it anyway.

That was what made him precious—that he was willing to go so far for her.

Lulu shook her head. “I’m not hungry.”

“Alright. Let’s check on Irene today, then?” Martin asked as he got out of bed and got dressed. “Let’s ask her how things are going now.”

Lulu nodded. “Yeah. It’s a bit early though, so I’ll call her later.”

“Sure,” Martin replied.

With that, she got out of bed as well... when the doorbell rang.

Martin answered it, since the housekeeping team was not usually that early.

He opened the door, and it turned out to be some stewards bringing in breakfast.

While Martin let them in, Lulu happened to finish washing up and she stepped out.

Her gaze darkened at the breakfast cart!

Chapter 865

Lulu promptly wheeled on the stewards who brought the breakfast cart and snapped, “We don’t need this. Take it away!”

Martin turned toward her just then.

What happened? She usually would never get upset this easily...

Still, he did not question her. Instead, he told the stewards, “You can take these away. We’ve actually been having breakfast here for a while...”

“Actually, sir, this isn’t from our hotel,” one of the stewards said awkwardly. “A gentleman had us deliver it.”

Martin promptly understood why Lulu got upset.

The man they met at the lobby must have sent these.

“Alright, just leave it here. You may go now,” he said.

Lulu stared at him in confusion. “Why? Don’t you know who sent these?”

“I do,” Martin replied.

Lulu was even more confused. “If you do, then...”

Martin did not explain, but instead closed the door after sending the stewards away.

Then, he walked up to Lulu, and helped her sit down on the couch.

“Would you change anything if you throw these away?” Martin said patiently, already knowing everything. “These must be your favorites, right? He’s trying to provoke me since I don’t know, but so what? That’s in the past—people, their tastes, and their feelings change with time. Just like you and me.”

As Lulu held his gaze, Martin held her hands and continued. “If you’ve given up on him and have no delusions about him, you should be facing his challenge with composure... and to be frank, I was hoping he wouldn’t affect you at all, if you know what I mean?”

Lulu stayed silent for a long while.

Yes.

If she no longer cared about Zachary Slate, why would she get agitated over this?

He was no longer the man who would affect her mood!

Leaning against Martin’s shoulder then, she said, “Thank you.”

For not berating her over this, and instead comforted her, even guiding her.

As she was enlightened right when, Martin asked, “You must be hungry, right? You should eat before it gets cold.”

“Yeah,” Lulu replied. “I used to like these back in college, but not now!”

Unlike other pregnant women who preferred more lightly flavored food, she preferred food with strong flavor, and could handle anything spicy or sour.

Still, she showed restraint when the doctor told her that eating spicy food would cause reddened skin for her baby, though she would let loose once in a while.

“This stuff is good. The flavor is not strong,” Martin said just then.

Lulu pursed her lips. “Then it’s decided. We’ll have chili tonight!”

Martin was speechless. “Fine, but that’s the last time. You’re due soon.”

Lulu nodded repeatedly, "Yeah, yeah. Just this once."

With that, they had a simple breakfast before Lulu called Irene to meet up.

After they cleaned up and took the elevator downstairs, and ran into Zachary at the lobby... although 'ran into' was stretching it.

Zachary said, "Fancy that."

Lulu held on to Martin's hand and smiled. "Yeah, fancy that."

She knew it was no coincidence, but she did not expose him.

She would no longer lose composure over him, and would instead face him with calmness and composure. "I'm going to meet Irene. Do you want to join us?"

Zachary was actually surprised that she would invite him, and he nodded. "I'm not imposing, am I?"

"You wouldn't have showed up here if you thought you were, would you?" Lulu said. "By the way, the breakfast was delicious, and my husband liked it too. Feel free to send more tomorrow if you're free tomorrow."

With that, she started to head outside, still holding onto Martin's hand, leaving Zachary behind, stunned.

Chapter 866

Zachary did not follow them since he had his pride.

If he still tagged along after everything Lulu said, he would cheapen himself!

So what was he still obsessing about?

Lulu had already started over!

As he stared at Lulu and Martin holding hands, he suddenly hung his head and chuckled self-deprecatingly.

Maybe he had just made himself a joke for them, showing up here?

He strode out of the hotel and drove away.

Since she was happy now, he should not bother her.

He could make amends by offering her his blessing anyway.

...

Irene was meeting Lulu at home.

Mrs. Watson brewed a pot of tea for them, while the rest of the hilltop mansion was quiet—Tommy was still obsessively playing with his Bumblebee walker outside, while Irene's second child was asleep.

"So? How is the case going?" Lulu asked directly.

Irene had yet to ask Isaac for an update, but since he had returned home very late last night, it was probably resolved.

"I think it'll be resolved soon," Irene said, looking at Lulu just then. "Are you in a hurry to get home?"

"No," Lulu replied. "I'd rather wait until your case is resolved, or I'd be worried."

Sheryl Harris then arrived with a plate of sliced fruits, placing it in front of Lulu. "You should eat more fruits while you're pregnant—for your baby's skin."

Lulu looked up at her and smiled. "Okay."

Sheryl then gave her hand a squeeze. "This is good... Getting married, and now having a child."

As Lulu smiled, Sheryl turned to Martin. "Lulu is a good kid, so you have to be good to her. I'll be the first to come after you if you ever bully her—even if she's lost her mother and her father neglected her as a child, she still has us. Irene and I are her family now."

Martin understood right then why Lulu was willing to return and help Irene despite her pregnancy.

They were more than just friends, and Martin was glad that Lulu had someone like Irene in her life.

"Don't worry, ma'am," he said with a grin. "Though you can come knocking on my door and beat me up if I ever hurt her. I won't hit back."

"I'll remember that," Sheryl said.

Lulu felt her nose turn runny just then, and she felt tearful although this was something one could be happy about.

Still, she did her best to hold back her tears and pursed her lips into a smile.

Sheryl patted her head. "Alright, I'll leave you be now. Chat as much as you want."

She headed to the nursery, where the baby had just woken up.

He did not like staying in the house these days, so Sheryl fed him a bottle of milk before putting him into a stroller and headed outside.

After Mrs. Watson left, Martin asked, "Both sons?"

Irene nodded. "Yeah."

"Well, I prefer having a daughter myself. I'd be happy Lulu had a daughter."

As he spoke, he took Lulu's hand in his.

Irene watched them and smiled. "Why do all men prefer daughters?"

Isaac told her he wanted a daughter too.

Still, he did not have such hope, while Martin did.

Reaching out to pat Lulu's belly, she said, "If this one's a girl, I'll have her as my daughter-in-law."

Lulu gave her hand a smack. "Your son's still a toddler, and you're already looking for a daughter-in-law? You're really eager to become a mother-in-law, huh?"

"Can't help it." Irene shrugged. "Too many sons."

"You only have two. Say that when you have five."

"I'll pass," Irene retorted, then turned to Martin. "Have a few more on me."

Martin simply smiled. "Sorry, but she's the boss."

"Oh, you," Irene rolled her eyes, forced to see them being lovey-dovey.

Ding-dong—

The doorbell suddenly rang.

Irene answered the door since Sheryl and Mrs. Watson were out, and she was surprised by the new arrival when she opened the door!

Chapter 867

Despite her surprise, Irene quickly pulled Erin Gooding into the mansion.

“When did you come back?” she asked.

“Just got off the plane,” Erin said, looking inside the mansion. “You have guests?”

Irene pulled her along and made the introductions. “This is Lulu, my best friend, and this is Martin. He’s a cop.”

Erin nodded at them. “Hello.”

Lulu smiled in return, but noticed that Erin was a lot more quiet than before.

She certainly was less adorably energetic after what happened.

Lulu got to her feet. “It’s been a while since I’ve been in Cloud City, and I was thinking I should show Martin around.”

She excused herself since Irene had another visitor, and Irene nodded since she was not sure if Erin had something private to ask.

As she walked with Lulu out of the mansion, she locked arms with her and said, “Come over and have dinner with us. We have yet to catch up even though you’re back.”

“Yeah,” Lulu promised.

Irene had her old chauffeur drive them, since it was inconvenient to travel around these parts without a car.

“I’ll have my chauffeur drive you around for the day, too. Remember, you’re pregnant,” Irene told her.

Lulu accepted her gesture of goodwill. “Thank you.”

“Oh, I should be thanking you—you really saved my skin, y’know?” Irene smiled, and closed the door, watching them leave before returning inside the mansion to Erin.

“Water?” she asked Erin.

Erin was getting thirsty.

“What would you like to drink?” Irene asked.

“Fruit juice would do,” Erin said.

Irene poured a glass of apple juice Mrs. Watson squeezed and kept refrigerated, while she poured herself some cranberry juice.

As she sat, she stared at Erin as she asked, “Did you come back to visit James?”

Erin lowered her head. “Yeah. He’s been busy lately, so I thought I should check on him.”

Irene’s fingers clenched over her cranberry juice, feeling cold inside even as she spoke to Erin.

She felt guilty toward Erin, and that guilt might stay with her for the rest of her life.

Moreover, James had been very busy lately because of Irene as well, and she started to feel that she had always been troubling others.

Still, Erin seemed “What is it, Irene?”

Irene quickly shook her head.

“It’s nothing. I was just thinking about something and got distracted,” she said, sitting beside Erin and taking her hands in hers. “I’m so happy you made up with James.”

Erin pursed her lips. “I really love him... but I also think I don’t deserve him now.”

Irene had no idea how to comfort Erin—words were pale and empty when it came to the pain Erin had gone through.

“Maybe time mends everything,” Irene said flatly.

Erin looked into the distance, her gaze unfocused. “Maybe. I envy you and my brother.”

She believed that Irene and Isaac’s lives were blissful and then some.

Irene certainly agreed that she was happy now.

Even so...

Changing the subject just then, Irene asked, “Will you be staying for a few days?”

Erin shook her head. “I only applied for a day’s leave.”

She would leave once she checked on James.

...

While Erin stayed home and babysat Irene’s baby, Irene and Sheryl left to go shopping—they needed more and better ingredients since they were expecting guests.

While Irene pushed a trolley along, she whipped out her phone to call Isaac.

“Yeah?” His deep voice spoke from the other end.

“Are you busy? Can you come home earlier?” Irene asked.

“Why? Is something the matter?”

“Yeah. I’ve invited Lulu over for dinner, and Erin just returned and she’s at our home too. Please bring James along, so that we can surprise him.”

“Okay.”

Irene then remembered something, and asked, “By the way, what’s the situation with Dennis Turner’s case?”

“I’ll tell you when I come home,” Isaac said, and hung up.

Speechless, Irene was left staring at the screen.

Honestly, this man...

...

Still, when it was 6 PM...

Chapter 868

Isaac brought James home.

James had not been texting Erin much since he had been busy over the last few days, and he planned to go to Minerva once the Dennis Turner case was resolved.

However, Isaac stopped him and told him to have dinner at his house since he had guests.

James had no choice but to put his plans on hold, and he sat down on the couch to text Erin.

[I'll come tomorrow to visit you. I've already booked a flight tonight.]

Erin, who was playing with Irene's baby, whipped out her phone for a look when she felt it vibrate.

She then saw James's text, and the contents left her smiling, but she replied: [You don't have to since you're busy. I'm not that important—just do your job properly.]

James frowned. [Are you upset?]

[Yeah.]

At the same time, Erin was carrying Irene's baby and sneaked behind him before leaning in to blow her warm breath into his ear.

Startled, James sprang to his feet.

"Who the..."

...hell was messing around with him?!

Still, he was left gaping when he saw Erin, unable to believe his eyes.

"W-When did you come back?" he stammered.

"Just did," she replied.

James rubbed his nose. "I thought you were really upset. You scared me to death."

"What? Look, you're still alive," Erin replied.

"Cut that out," he said, walking up to her and taking Irene's baby off her hands.

Then, leaning in to whisper into her ear, he asked, "Did you come to see me?"

"Yeah," she murmured softly. "I know you're busy, so I came instead."

James was certainly emotional.

He would like to hold her hand or hug her, but he restrained himself since this was not the place.

The ladies were still busy in the kitchen.

Isaac, who felt like a third-wheeler in the living room, followed Irene around as she set up the table.

Since she could not cook more than a handful of dishes, Mrs. Watson was the main chef, while Irene and Sheryl helped out.

“Thank goodness our kitchen is huge, or it wouldn’t fit so many people,” Isaac told her just then.

Irene thought nothing of it, while Sheryl told her, “We’re almost ready here. You can go!”

“Yes, yes,” Mrs Watson echoed.

As such, when she was done, Irene dragged Isaac along out of the kitchen, but saw no one when they stepped out to the living room.

They went outside to find everyone in the courtyard, and Isaac took his baby off James’s hands.

It was rare for him to meet Erin, and they should not let babysitting take up their time since they could meet now.

“Mrs. Watson has been doing some gardening in the backyard and the flowers are just starting to blossom. You should check that out,” Irene said.

Still, what she meant was too obvious and Erin got a little embarrassed.

James, however, said boldly, “Alright, I’ll take her there.”

He took Erin’s hand and they headed there.

“Mommy!” Tommy called out to her from his Bumblebee just then, and Irene waved at him.

Lulu and Martin happened to return just then as well, and everyone took a seat on the garden stools since dinner was not ready yet.

Having so many people in the mansion felt festive, though they never really gathered for festivities around here.

As they chatted, Lulu asked Isaac about Irene's case, and Isaac told them that it had been resolved, with Neil accepting his graciousness.

Moreover, New Suns Pharma would face bankruptcy after being linked to so many criminal activities.

With that in mind, Lulu said, "Alright, then I'll be leaving tomorrow."

Irene did not ask her to stay, since she was pregnant and Martin should be going back to work soon. They could not stay for too long.

Still, Irene said, "I'll visit you when the baby arrives."

"Of course," Lulu replied.

When dinner was ready, everyone went inside.

It was fortunate that the mansion was huge, and the dining table large enough to fit everyone with room to spay.

As usual, Mrs. Watson's culinary skills were immaculate, and the dishes she made looked as good as they tasted.

Irene offered a toast since it was a rare occasion, and everyone drank together—naturally, those who were abstaining from alcohol drank fruit juice instead.

However, they were just raising their glasses when Irene's phone rang.

Whipping it out, she frowned when she saw the caller.

After hesitating for a moment, she answered it anyway and whispered, "What do you want?"

Chapter 869

Zachary ignored her question. "Is Lulu with you?"

Irene got up and left the dining room. "Just stop it, Zachary—"

"I'm not messing around—I could've done that at the hotel the other day if I wanted to instead of biding my time. And I'm sure you know that Lulu and that man are close, so I can't separate them no matter what I do. What are you so afraid of?"

“Lulu is pregnant,” Irene retorted. “I’m afraid you’ll hurt her child and affect her life—”

Zachary cut her short right then. “She’s there with you, right? I’m driving there now.”

Irene frowned. “Zachary—”

Beep, beep, beep...

He already hung up.

Irene quickly dialed her number, but he refused to answer, leaving her utterly frustrated.

After thinking about it, she decided that the only option was to tell Lulu and discuss what they should do.

She texted her: [Zachary is coming.]

Lulu saw the text and peered into the living room for a moment before replying: [It’s alright.]

Since Lulu said that, she must have been mentally prepared and perhaps even had a plan.

As such, Irene returned to the dining table with a smile. “Sorry. The research center had some questions.”

While she spoke, she slid a peek at Lulu, but Lulu simply put a slice of beef on her plate.

Although Lulu was not nervous or affected about Zachary’s impending arrival, she was still worried that Martin would misunderstand.

Throughout dinner, Irene’s heart was racing and the food was tasteless although they were supposed to be delicious.

Isaac saw that she was acting weird, and he ladled her a bowl of soup and put it in front of her. “What’s on your mind?”

Irene quickly pulled herself together and shook her head. “Nothing.”

However, the doorbell rang even as she picked up the bowl.

Mrs. Watson got up to answer it, but Irene quickly stopped her. “I’ll go, Mrs. Watson.”

She headed to the porch and opened the door, asking softly when she saw Zachary, "What are you doing?"

Zachary smiled, ignored her question, and sidestepped her, heading inside.

The atmosphere around the entire dining table turned weird when they saw him show up.

James got to his feet, worried that he would cause trouble.

However, Zachary did not seem to consider himself a stranger and asked Mrs. Watson to bring him another plate.

"Am I still a friend, guys? Why weren't I invited?" He smiled.

"You're welcome if you're only here to eat," Isaac growled. "But leave right now if you're up to no good."

Zachary scanned the table just then, where the weird atmosphere still lingered, as if everyone was displeased about his arrival.

Naturally, he felt upset at being ostracized as if he were a villain.

Still, he restrained that feeling and smiled faintly.

"I'm just here to eat," he said, pulling out a chair.

Lulu did not react to his arrival at all, though Martin got up and offered a handshake. "We meet again, though we haven't been formally introduced—I'm Martin York."

Seeing the outstretched hand, Zachary got up to take it. "Zachary Slate."

Smiling, he added, "I just came by to congratulate you as well."

"Thanks," Martin replied, open-minded as ever.

Turning to Lulu, Zachary added, "I'm sure you're leaving soon, so I wish you all the happiness in the world."

Lulu smiled slightly. "Thank you."

Martin put a hand on Lulu's shoulder and said, "I'll take good care of her. Don't worry."

"I'm sure you will," Zachary said, and shrugged nonchalantly. "Well, since I'm not welcome here, I won't impose. I've said what I came to say, so I'll go. Please, enjoy your dinner."

With that, he got up and strode outside.

Irene did not return to her seat, as she followed him out instead. "Let me walk you out."

As she followed him out of the door, Zachary suddenly paused and said, "You should go back. You shouldn't stray off when you have so many guests... I'm sure my presence killed the mood, huh?"

Irene stared at him from the back, and she found a loneliness she could not put to words.

"Are you alright?" she asked softly.

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Zachary stiffened.

He was silent for a while, before saying quietly, "I'm fine."

Opening his car door and getting into his car, he told Irene, "You should go back inside."

However, Irene strode up and put a hand on a window, struggling for a while before eventually saying, "You should give up."

Zachary looked up at her with sadness in his eyes. "I did."

Irene would have liked to offer more comfort, but she could not find the right words.

All she could have said would have been 'there's plenty of fish in the sea.'

But even if Zachary did find someone better, would he love her more than he loved Lulu?

The hardest thing to do was to meet a person you genuinely loved, after all.

"I'm fine, don't worry. I'm not that weak," Zachary said as he started the car. "You should go back inside."

With that, he drove off, and Irene watched as he did.

For some reason, her heart ached a little for him now...

That was when she felt a hand on her shoulder, and she turned to find that it was Isaac.

"I think he's taking it really hard," she said.

"It's his business. Don't worry about him" Isaac told her, and put a hand around her shoulder as he led her back inside.

"You should check on him after dinner," Irene said.

"I know," Isaac replied.

...

Although Zachary did not linger at the dining table, he had curbed everyone's enthusiasm.

The atmosphere was unusually dull, save for the occasional clink as a fork or a knife met the plate.

James broke the silence, raising his glass and toasting Martin. "Thank you for coming all the way here to help."

"Oh, it's what we should do," Martin replied. "Transportation here is convenient anyway."

"Well, without Lulu finding out that Dennis Turner had been poisoned, we wouldn't have resolved the case so soon."

James was unenthusiastic, while Martin could not turn him down.

As such, they had a few more drinks, while the rest finished dinner and scattered.

Irene walked with Lulu to the car, and had her old chauffeur drive them to the hotel.

Erin was driving James since he had drunk a little. "May I have a room here? I'll be back after I send James home."

Isaac was leaving as well, probably to check on Zachary.

He was driving alone, but Irene stopped him. "Let Eagle drive. I'm not going out this late, so he doesn't have to guard me."

"Fair enough," Isaac said, and Eagle drove him out of the mansion.

Returning into the mansion, Irene helped clean up the table, but Mrs. Watson smiled and said, "You don't have to do it. Your mom and I would be done soon anyway."

Irene refused. "Tommy is watching TV, and the baby is sleeping. I have nothing to do, and helping would make things quicker!"

Mrs. Watson gave in, but just as she headed to the kitchen, she suddenly fell.

Crash!

Every plate and bowl she was holding shattered into pieces on the floor!

"Mrs. Watson!" Sheryl cried.

At the same time, Irene was already beside Mrs. Watson and examining her.

Seeing that she had trouble breathing, Irene promptly applied first aid while saying, "We have to get her to the hospital."

"But there's no one around..." Sheryl murmured. "What should we do?"

"Calm down, Mom. I can drive," Irene said, turning toward Sheryl. "We can get her in the car, and I'll take her to the hospital while you stay here."

Sheryl nodded, and they quickly got Mrs. Watson into the car.

"Remember to call me and give me an update," Sheryl said. "You're a doctor. You have to save her."

"I know, don't worry," Irene replied.

...

Mrs. Watson was wheeled into the emergency room once they arrived at the hospital.

Irene had to wait outside, and time seemed to stretch on forever as she did.

Fortunately, Mrs. Watson was still fine when they reached the hospital—it was just fainting from respiratory distress, caused by aortic blockage.

Irene already applied first aid and they managed to reach a hospital in time. They hence easily saved Mrs. Watson, though she would need rest and medication in the future.

Naturally, Irene heaved a long sigh of relief as Mrs. Watson would be fine.