

The runaway groom (Irene and Isaac)

Chapter 961

Zachary was speechless. He wondered if Stan could stop scaring him—his heart was not strong enough for such a thrill! Stan was literally killing him here!

"W-Well, whose is it?!" Zachary exclaimed.

"Ian Jefferson's," Stan replied, his voice flat just then.

Zachary almost breathed an expletive right then. "Him?! How?!"

It was absolutely unexpected. He would never have thought it possible! "I don't know the details either." Stan sighed.

"Oh, never mind. It's fine as long as it's not James. F*ck me, I almost had a heart attack!" Zachary exclaimed cheerfully. "Alright, I'm hanging up now. I have to tell Isaac about this."

"Yeah," Stan replied and hung up.

Zachary then slid his phone into his pocket but jumped in surprise when he turned to find Erin standing behind him! "W-What are you doing here?!" he exclaimed.

Erin simply stared at him in silence while Zachary felt guilty from the stare. Did she overhear something? He searched his memory but did not find anything suspicious about what he and Stan spoke of.

With that, he confidently returned Erin's gaze and asked, "What are you staring at me for?" "Who were you speaking to?" Erin asked with a serious look.

She appeared so stern just then that Zachary avoided her gaze again and slowly answered, "Stan." "Oh," Erin said, and pressed, "And you were talking to him about James?"

Zachary was speechless.

Was he? Wait, he did do

so... but only once.

"And what did you mean, 'it's fine as long as it's not James?'" Erin asked then. "You misheard," Zachary tried to explain. "I wasn't talking about him—"

"You were," Erin said confidently.

Seeing that he was not going to fool her, Zachary said, "Well, I might have mentioned him once to Stan. What's wrong with that? Aren't you getting paranoid here?"

Erin certainly was.

Even after Irene explained to her that they could not reach James, the whole thing just felt fisher to her. She just could not explain what it was.

As such, she leveled a coercing glare at Zachary and said, "No, you didn't mention James for no reason. There was clearly something up with what you said."

Zachary felt even more exposed right then and made to leave. "Don't ask me!" Erin caught his hand. "Don't you run away from me!"

Zachary wheeled on her and cried, "W-What are you doing, holding on to me like that?! James would be jealous if he sees this! It's sexual harassment, y'know?"

Erin knew he was just making a scene so that she would let go. "Tell me what you said about James and I'll let you go." "What? What are you talking about? I have no idea!" Zachary kept trying to play dumb and give her the slip.

However, Erin was much sharper and less naive these days after what happened before. As such, she did not buy Zachary's excuse at all.

And she was determined! "You know what I'm asking about. You can stop pretending and understand that I won't let you go as long as you don't tell me."

That was when Zachary suddenly looked behind Erin and said, "Irene?"

As Erin turned, he seized the moment to pry his hand off her, and he made a run for it. He might have to tell the truth if she kept bugging him!

Even so, Erin was relentless and promptly gave chase. Zachary had no choice but to ask

Irene for help! "Irene, Irene..." He panted.

The runaway groom (Irene and Isaac)

Chapter 962

Irene was helping Sheryl with arranging their belongings, but she could only use one hand since the bullet wound on her shoulder still hurt.

Hearing Zachary's call, Irene looked up to find him dashing toward her in panic. She frowned. "What?"

Zachary quickly hid behind her, saying, "It's Erin. She was interrogating me about James. I have no idea, but she keeps pestering me anyway."

Erin arrived after Zachary did and snapped, "You were talking about him

on the phone!" Zachary's reluctance to tell Erin left her really uneasy, and she turned to Irene. "Irene?" Irene simply looked away to help Sheryl, pretending as if she never heard a thing.

Zachary tactlessly pulled Irene aside and said, "I'll do it."

While Irene was speechless, Erin kept pestering her, "Just tell me what it is, Irene!" Irene was silent for a moment and started toward a room. "Come with me!"

Erin followed, and after she closed the door, Irene admitted everything, knowing that there was no hiding it now. "After we found Isaac, James had to cover our escape. He was captured afterward."

Erin stood, her expression blank as her hands clenched gradually at her sides! "We're worried about him too," Irene assured Erin.

"Why isn't anyone out looking for him?" Erin asked, more or less accusative.

"We don't even know who those people were," Irene explained. "Isaac has already asked people to find them. Why would we ever abandon James? Who do you take us for?"

Erin stayed silent for a long while for the information to sink in. "Sorry. I was too worried and didn't choose my words..."

"It's alright." Irene understood and therefore did not take offense. "We're worried too, but we didn't tell you in case you get distraught."

"I understand that you hid it from me for my sake," Erin replied. "But to be honest, you should've told me sooner. I'd find out eventually—there's no hiding something like this."

Irene thought about it and

had to agree. "Is there no

news at all yet?" Erin

asked. Irene shook her

head.

Erin then asked, "Where was he captured?"

"I'll go look." She could not just sit and wait!

"No." Irene refused summarily—the gang had guns and were clearly serial criminals. It was too dangerous for Erin, and how would they explain themselves to James if something did happen?

Even now, James's fate was unknown!

Irene reached out and took Erin's hand. "Trust us. We will do our

best. Honest!" Erin was willing to believe them, but she could not

do nothing and wait!

Irene could tell that Erin was anxious. She said, "Wait here for me. I'll ask if

there's news." Erin nodded, while Irene left to find Isaac and saw that he

was talking to Zachary.

She did not approach them but instead listened quietly from a

distance. Zachary seemed confused. "Why would it be Ian

Jefferson's leg?"

Isaac did not seem surprised, since it was not that hard to explain. "Hector bribed those pilots to capture me. Knowing that it failed and I survived the crash, he's now coming for my family."

"You mean Hector was the one who sent it?!" Zachary gaped but he soon understood. "So he's taking his revenge on your family... But he didn't bother to check why Ian was constantly kept under confinement? James only spared him because killing him would sully his hands, while torturing him, was the best way to punish him. But Hector didn't even do his homework and thought that killing him would be payback against you?"

Zachary was amused by the thought!

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Chapter 963

"Well, since Hector killed Ian, he spared James the trouble!" Zachary exclaimed, suddenly finding Hector a pushover. "That's one concern less on our list! And that means it's Hector who knows about the castle, not that gang who's after us."

That gang was definitely the worst of the two!

"Find out where he is now," Isaac told Zachary—Hector remained a time bomb that could inflict serious damage unless they removed him from the equation.

Who knew when he would jump out at them, catching them off guard? Zachary

nodded.

"He's in hiding—even James had trouble tracking him down earlier," he said, though his tone soon changed. "But that doesn't mean he's gone without a chase, especially now that he made a move. There must be clues somewhere."

"Yeah," Isaac said. "Make it fast!"

"Right away," Zachary replied, and he turned to see Irene walking toward them.

"The leg wasn't James's?" she asked—she heard them talking about it but just wanted to confirm it. Zachary

nodded. "It's Ian's."

Irene heaved a sigh of relief. Thank goodness!

Isaac's phone rang just then—he had changed to a new phone since he returned, but kept to his old number and used the same phone model.

He knew where to swipe and answer, and once he did that, he put the phone beside his ear.

The others did not know what was spoken on the other end, but Isaac's reaction changed before he eventually turned calm again.

"Understood."

And with that single word, he hung up.

Irene asked, "Was that news on James?"

"No," Isaac replied. "But I have to leave."

Irene was naturally worried. "I'll come with you—"

Isaac cut her short before she could finish. "You're still hurt. Stay home and rest—I'll be fine going with Stan." "Okay, but you should take Eagle," Irene insisted.

"No. The more people guarding this house, the better," Isaac replied. "You don't have to worry—I'll have Stan arrange for more bodyguards with me and at home."

This was a dangerous time, and they had to be careful!

Irene had more to say, and Isaac beat her to it again. "I'll only have ease of mind if you take care of things at home."

"But your eyes..."

"The people I asked to help are important people," Isaac replied. "I'm friends with them, and I'll stop by the doctor's when I have the time."

Irene could not say anything to that.

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When Erin heard that Isaac was going out, she was certain that he left for James and she suggested, "Let me come with you. I can take care of you since you can't see—you know Stan can get a little clumsy with his fat fingers and all, and he's not that good with taking care of others anyway. I'm way more attentive than him."

Stan was speechless.

Him, clumsy? How dare she!

He lowered his gaze to his hands and spread his fingers.

They were appropriately slim, and he even had fair, delicate skin!

At the same time, Isaac did not respond, so Erin turned toward Irene with a pleading look. Irene

shook her head—she would not ask for something like this lightly.

She did not know what Isaac would be doing, and things were definitely a mess at the moment. "I

don't care," Erin said then, clearly having made up her mind. "I'll follow you even if you refuse."

She would not give up even if they forbade her from going.

"Fine," Isaac said, relenting.

It was better to keep an eye on her directly, since otherwise she would follow them in secret.

"Let's go! Dear brother, I'll take good care of you!" Erin exclaimed sweetly and fawningly, shoving Stan out of the way as she would be Isaac's eyes now.

Isaac frowned ever so slightly.

That was when Irene suddenly said, "Wait."

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Isaac turned around, while Erin turned toward Irene too. "What's wrong, Irene?"

"Nothing," Irene replied. "Just wanted you all to be careful."

"Oh, we will," Erin assured her. "Don't worry, Irene." Irene

nodded, watching them as they left.

She scowled a little, feeling like she could not be of help.

Eagle approached her just then. "Is there anything I can help with, ma'am?"

Irene shook her head. "Let's go back inside—thanks for keeping an eye on things while I wasn't around."

"It's what I should do," Eagle replied, nodding.

Tommy ran up to Irene then, hugging her leg. "Mommy, carry me."

Irene arched her back and tried to pull him up—the move tugged at her shoulder wound, and it was only then that she remembered that she was still hurt.

"Why don't we just hold hands?" she asked mildly.

Tommy shook his head. "Carry me."

Eagle walked up to them. "I can carry you."

Tommy spaced out for a moment and snapped, "Nope!"

With that, he ran away.

After all, Eagle had kept him on a tight leash when Irene was away, stopping him from climbing walls or leaving the castle and insisting that he properly studied Franconian under his tutor.

He would even ensure Tommy had seconds during meals!

There was no way he would want Eagle to carry him after the latter denied him his freedom—Eagle's arms were no different from a prison, devoid of warmth!

That was why Tommy wanted his mommy's warm embrace!

Irene raised a brow as Tommy fled and turned toward Eagle. "He's that scared of you, huh?"

Eagle was actually unsure what Irene was getting at, but he explained, "Maybe I was too strict with him when you were away. That's why he doesn't like me."

Irene suddenly smiled and said, "Good work." Eagle

smiled a little too.

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Over at New Kent, Martin was discharged after more or less recovering.

And since he had scored a major accomplishment, the precinct allowed him time away since he had yet to fully recover, and so that he had time to take care of Lulu's baby since she only delivered recently.

Martin would actually refuse it if it was any other occasion—he never took leave even after working for so many years. This time, he accepted his higher-up's goodwill.

"We keep calling our baby baby. It's time we named her," Martin said at home. Lulu

was arranging some flowers a friend sent into a vase and dressed casually. She

turned around. "Yes, we should. Have you thought of any?"

That never crossed her mind, whereas Martin had already had come up with a truckload, though he was worried if Lulu would like it.

Still, he stayed quiet.

Walking up to his bed, Lulu asked, "Are you getting distant with me now?"

"No way." Martin denied it.

"You are," she arched her back to stare him straight in the eye. "You never thought of anything and can't come up with any on the spot. Is that why you're being silent?"

"I actually did," Martin answered a little too quickly and realized so soon after.

Smiling, he said, "Forget it. Punish me all you want."

Lulu smiled, her eyes arching into crescents. "I get it. You're the only one who accommodates me." Martin

smiled in return, and said, "Well, let's name her Jean. How about that?"

Lulu nodded repeatedly. "I like it. Jean York—it has a good ring to it." Martin

was taken aback. "Jean York?"

"Of course! Why not? You're her daddy!" "I

thought..."

"You thought what?" Lulu's expression was suddenly dead serious!

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Martin quickly averted his eyes. "Nothing."

Lulu certainly doubted that and reached out to turn his face so that he faced her directly. "Tell me. What

was that about?" Martin came clean right then. "Well, you know who the father is. I won't mind if you want

Jean to be named after him..." Lulu glowered right then and turned to leave the room.

For some reason, her heart hurt.

Martin followed her outside.

"Are you upset?" Lulu kept her

back to him. "No."

"You are," Martin said, exposing her right then.

Lulu said nothing to that and kept her gaze lowered.

Martin walked up in turn and wrapped his arms tightly around her waist from behind, and he brushed his cheek against hers. "I misspoke. Please don't get angry, alright?"

Lulu pursed her lips and turned to face him. "I'm not that cold, Martin. I know you've been good to me, so why would you mention him?"

"I was just trying to say that I'd respect whatever you decide on. I wasn't deliberately mentioning it to upset you," Martin explained, and added apologetically, "I'm sorry—"

He was cut off mid-sentence as Lulu suddenly kissed him.

Taken aback, he was left staring blankly at her as she put her arms around his neck and went deeper

with her kiss! Martin's hands remained at her waist, breathing in her faint sweetness and that tinge of

milky smell.

He did not move, however—it was not as if he did not want to respond, but he was not sure if Lulu was

mentally prepared. And he was certainly worried that he would not be able to hold back once he got in the

mood!

Meanwhile, Lulu kissed him until her lips went numb, only for him to not react at all.

She slowly pulled away from her lips, not quite understanding what Martin's intentions were. "Don't you want to consummate our relationship?"

Martin pursed his lips and gulped.

"I'm really into you," he said. "There's no way I wouldn't want that. In fact, I'm restraining myself every moment I'm with you, but I can't do it when you're not ready. I don't want you to think..."

Pausing as if to find the right words, he continued, "I just didn't want you to think that I was helping you just to sleep with you. I would scream how much I love you if I could, but I won't until you're ready to accept me, let alone do anything that makes you feel uncomfortable."

Lulu threw herself into his arms then, keeping her head lowered as her tears gushed. "You big dummy."

Martin held her in return. "I just want to take good care of you, so that you won't have to suffer

from now on." Lulu sniffled and looked up at him with tears in her eyes. "Do I look like I'm

suffering?"

"I mean, I can improve on my shortcomings from now on," Martin said seriously. "You just have to tell me—"

She laughed. "You're making me feel as if I'm charmless as a woman."

Their eyes met, and the room was suddenly silent, as if even air itself

had turned still. Even their breaths could be heard with such clarity!

And in the very next instant, Martin leaned in and kissed her ferociously.

He was so forceful that Lulu frowned from the pain the instant he kissed her, but she embraced him

nonetheless. The kiss grew in passion, as they seemed to be secreting copious amounts of

dopamine into each other!

Martin kept kissing Lulu as he moved her to the couch, inadvertently knocking off a box nearby.

They had put the many gifts they received from their colleagues during Jean's christening in the living room

beside the couch. Lulu turned toward the box.

Before she could reach it, however, Martin scooped her up in his arms, put her on the couch, and moved on top of her!

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Chapter 966

As Martin's hands reached underneath her blouse, Lulu clearly felt the coarse skin on his fingers. There were thick calluses growing over his right index finger from frequently wielding a gun.

And with every inch his fingers moved upward, she seemed to shudder more.

Soon, her clothes were off, baring her fair, delicate skin.

She retained her figure and remained slim despite her recent pregnancy, although her belly was still a little flabby. It has been little over a month since she gave birth, and she would not recover that quickly.

Not wanting Martin to see it, she rested her hands over it.

Martin sensed her intention but for him, loving someone meant loving every part of her—be it her strengths or shortcomings.

They were all things he liked about her from his perspective.

He touched her cheek gently and rasped, "I don't mind."

Lulu refused to let go, however. "I..."

Martin pulled her hands off then and leaned in to kiss her belly.

Lulu bit her lip, and the rest was history.

However, she cried when their bodies became

one. She did not know why she would shed

tears.

Maybe she was being emotional?

Whether it was that or something else, Lulu could not put her finger on it. All she knew was that this was the most unrestrained she had ever been.

She did not feel ashamed or reserved as she got dirty and sweaty with Martin!

They did it everywhere too, starting from the living room and moving to the bathroom, the bedroom, and to the kitchen. It was as if they wanted to leave a mark in every corner in the house, as they did it countless times, and each round lasted quite a while too!

When the skies went dark outside, they fell asleep in each other's arms, exhausted.

Lulu slept like a log, until she vaguely heard Jean crying.

Still, she saw Martin warming up a bottle of milk as she slowly opened her

eyes. Her breast milk was not filling enough, so they usually went with both.

Still weary, she asked softly, "Do you need

help?" "It's fine. You can stay in bed!"

Soon, Martin had warmed the milk and fed little Jean, and she stopped crying immediately.

Finding ease of mind just then, Lulu tossed around, her blanket slipping off her shoulders and revealing her fair shoulders.

However, there were plenty of red marks over it left by Martin.

After a while, Jean fell asleep after finishing her milk.

Martin changed her diapers and gently laid her in her crib, getting ease of mind from seeing her sleeping soundly.

Walking back to bed, he slid under the blanket to hug Lulu around the waist from behind. "Thirsty?"

"No," Lulu replied, feeling too sleepy to bother with anything else.

Her eyes were still closed as Martin's hand slowly moved up, and she was lactating a little since she did not feed Jean just now.

Martin felt the wetness and turned to get some tissues to wipe it for her.

Still, her body was too tempting and he ended up giving it a small peck.

Lulu opened her eyes right then, her body stiffening as she rasped, "Aren't you

tired?" "Nope," Martin murmured softly, and they ended up doing it again.

While they did, she ran her fingers over his scar and said, "You haven't fully recovered. You shouldn't let loose like this..."

"Yeah," he grunted, but his hips were not stopping.

Lulu was eventually left completely limp from the strenuous activity. She felt sore and pain below the waist, while her whole body was sticky and wet.

However, she had no strength to resist, and all she wanted to do was sleep.

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The morning arrived, and a narrow ray of sunshine seeped through the curtains, illuminating the bed!

The clock was ticking, and Lulu frowned as she slowly opened her eyes.

She found herself staring into Martin's obsidian gaze right then!

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Lulu felt her head clearing right then and asked with a hoarse voice, "What time is it?" "Ten,"

Martin replied.

That late?!

Lulu promptly got up to check on her daughter. But when she did so, her blanket slipped off and bore her naked form, leaving her taken aback.

It was only then that she remembered what happened last night, and she blushed slightly.

Martin draped her pajamas over her shoulders. "Get washed up. We'll eat together."

Lulu nodded, and he got out of bed.

His body was muscular. His chiseled pectorals and abdominals gave the sense of firmness and strength.

And Lulu certainly experienced that it did not just look that way—he really was strong!

Her cheeks burned even as scenes of last night played in her head. Never did she expect that she would unleash herself like this!

She got out of bed and headed to the bathroom.

She stood under the shower sprinkler and turned it on. Water gushed and started splashing over her, wetting her hair like seaweed over her fair shoulders.

Wargh!

Jean woke up just then and started bawling!

Lulu promptly turned off the shower when she heard Jean and opened the bathroom door, but Martin stepped into the room just then.

He leveled a meaningful gaze at Lulu, who realized her current condition and closed the door. "Is

Jean hungry?" she asked from behind the door.

"Yeah," Martin replied. "I'll make her some milk—" "No."

Lulu cut him short.

"Why?" Martin asked.

Lulu did not respond, but it had been 24 hours since she last breastfed Jean and her breasts were painfully bloated! Still,

Martin did not ask and rocked Jean gently in his arms.

Despite having a tough guy appearance, he was handy with the baby.

With that, Lulu returned to the bathroom and finished her shower before stepping out in a bathrobe. She

found Martin standing by the window with Jean in his arms.

He was towering and burly, but the way he coaxed the baby was exceedingly gentle.

She walked up to him, hugging his waist from behind and poking her head out to check on the baby. "She's

hungry," Martin said.

Lulu nodded. "Give her to me."

Martin carefully placed Jean in her arms, and Lulu carried the baby to her bed and sat down.

She was going to loosen her bathrobe when she realized that Martin was still there, and she looked up at him. "Can you step outside for a moment?"

"Okay," Martin replied and did not keep staring since he knew that Lulu was embarrassed.

After over an hour and Lulu was done nursing Jean, she helped the baby get changed and played with her for a while.

Like all babies, Jean soon got tired and fell asleep, so Lulu put Jean down and changed into fresh clothes.

She noticed that Martin had already washed their clothes and stood at the doorway waiting.

Eventually, Martin returned inside with a bucket and asked when he saw her, "Are you done?"

Lulu nodded, and he put down the bucket. "Let's go!"

"I should be taking care of you..." Lulu muttered.

"What are you talking about?" He smiled, giving her a look. "I'm willing to care for you, and I won't always have time to do this once my leave is over. Don't feel bad about this since you're not goofing off either. Jean is still very young, and she needs your constant care."

Lulu nodded.

Martin returned inside to get Jean, and Lulu wrapped her hands around his arm as they left the house, relishing this peaceful and quiet time they shared.

As usual, they headed to a cheap restaurant instead of someplace expensive. Still, it was clean and furnished so that the interior was bright and spacious.

Lulu made the order and realized awkwardly that she never found out what food Martin liked despite having lived with him for so long.

"What would you like to eat?" she asked him.

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Martin said, "I'm fine with anything. You order what you like."

Lulu smiled and lowered her gaze. "It seems that I have to pay more attention or I'd still know nothing of your preferences."

"You have all the time in the world you need to learn about me." Martin grinned.

"Yeah," Lulu murmured, pursing her lips.

In fact, she was both hopeful and expectant of the future.

The peaceful life she wanted was right in front of her, and it was both worth remembering and

cherished! As they waited for their food, Lulu rested her chin on her hand and stared at Martin as he

sat opposite. She was staring so intently that a big man like him got embarrassed and averted his

gaze.

"You actually can get shy, Martin?" she asked, smiling when Martin said nothing.

Their food soon arrived, but Martin's phone rang while they ate. He picked it up, responded a couple times to what the other end said, and hung up.

Lulu put a shrimp on this plate while asking, "Who was

that?" "I have to stop by the precinct," he said evenly.

Lulu frowned. "Another case? Didn't they agree to give you leave? It's far from over!"

"Don't jump to conclusions. It might not be a case," Martin replied, picking up the shrimp before peeling it and putting it in his mouth.

"Well, this sure is a taxing job either way," Lulu said—they actually had to disturb him while he was on leave!

"You know what my work is like, don't you?" He quietly assured her while putting a chunk of beef on her plate. "I'll do my best to spend time with you and Jean."

"I know," Lulu said. "I'm just annoyed because you haven't fully recovered yet."

She was worried about his health but he simply smiled.

Lulu stared daggers at him in turn. "Your leave might fade into oblivion and you're still smiling?"

"I'm smiling because you care about me, and that gives me joy in my heart. That has nothing to do with work," Martin said, staring her in the eye.

Lulu could not say anything against that and cleared her throat. "Eat."

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After they ate and left the restaurant, Lulu held out her arms for Jean but Martin did not give her the baby. "I'll take you home before heading to the precinct."

"Won't you be late?" she asked.

"It's no trouble," Martin replied.

"We're not that far from home anyway," she told him. "I can get home on my own just

fine." He shrugged. "I'd like to walk you."

Lulu smiled and wrapped her hands around his arm, gaining a sense of security beside him.

She took Jean off his hands when they reached home, and Martin kissed her on the forehead. "I'll be back soon."

"Yeah," Lulu said mildly.

After Martin left, Lulu cleaned up the house while Jean was asleep.

Then, as Jean woke up in the afternoon, Lulu washed Jean's rump and changed her diapers before nursing her again. Lulu lay in bed on her side and let Jean lean on her chest.

The baby suckled for just a while until she fell asleep.

Lulu straightened her clothes at that and gently patted Jean.

At the same time, Lulu was getting a little sleepy from just lying in bed, probably because she did not sleep well last night. She had no idea how long she slept, and she was still groggy when she opened her eyes to find Martin sitting on the bed. Rubbing her eyes, she asked, "When did you come back?"

"Just now," he replied.

Lulu sat up then and asked, "Did they give you a case?"

"Nope," Martin replied.

At the same time, Lulu got up and walked to the table to pour herself a glass of water while asking, "What were you doing at the precinct, then?"

Martin was watching her as he asked, "Take a guess."

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Lulu said nothing and simply held her glass as she stared at Martin.

"When did you start liking guessing games? And I'd never guess it."

"I was not given a case at the precinct," Martin said then. "I was given a reward for my brave actions."

He waved an envelope at her and handed it to her. "For you."

Lulu opened it to find three grand sitting inside.

But for men like Martin, money mattered less than carrying their honors.

And Lulu knew all too well that Martin earned his with his life.

"How could you give this to me?" she asked.

Martin checked on Jean who lay in bed and reached out to stroke her tender cheeks. "All that I have is yours."

Lulu smiled.

"By the way, shouldn't you call Irene?" Martin told her then. "Ricky will be sentenced in a few days. Even if he had committed many crimes, they might reduce his jail time since he helped us apprehend a major ringleader."

As Lulu's smile faded slightly, Martin looked up. "Just enjoy your own life. Worry less about others."

Lulu mustered her spirit then and picked up her phone. "I know. I'll call her now."

"Okay." Martin nodded.

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Irene was browsing the internet for a good optometrist, since she did not know many of them back in Zidonia.

She made a post on a medical forum, giving a summary of Isaac's condition.

There were soon plenty of replies, and there were many authorities on every subject on this forum site.

However, she needed further research since optometry was not her speciality.

The door suddenly opened with a click, and Irene looked up, frowning when she saw Zachary.

Zachary in turn paused for a moment at the doorway and explained "Sorry. Old habits."

This was his house, and he forgot that Irene moved her entire family here.

"Is there a problem?" Irene asked.

"Nothing—just that I arranged the protection detail with Stan to monitor around the house," Zachary replied. "We're safe here, and I wanted to tell you that so you won't worry."

Irene nodded, but said, "I'm not that worried since we already have you and Eagle. It's Isaac I'm worried about."

Zachary said by her desk. "Want me to check on them?"

"Isaac probably wanted you to stay. That's why he didn't bring you along. We should do as he arranged so that he doesn't have to worry about home while he's outside."

Zachary grinned. "Understanding, aren't you?"

Irene really wanted to roll her eyes at him—she was in no mood for jokes!

Isaac had left in such a hurry and said nothing, so she had no idea what was going on.

Bzzt—

Her phone started vibrating on the desk,

Zachary turned toward it too. "See? Your dearest is..."

His words trailed off, because he saw that the caller was Lulu, not Isaac!

His expression in turn darkened.

Irene quickly picked up her phone and stepped outside to answer it.

"Lulu?"

"Irene, do you have time to come by and attend Ricky's sentencing? It's soon."

Irene was actually reluctant, especially with her two sons here.

Still, Lulu quickly sensed that she was hard pressed and said, "It's fine if you don't come. Martin and I will attend in your stead and tell you what happens after. Just come visit him when you're free later."

"Yeah," Irene murmured softly.

Lulu then said, "I could tell there was a lot weighing on your mind when you came to New Kent."

Irene shrugged. "It's nothing. Just haven't been sleeping well, don't worry. What could happen to me?"

"Yeah," Lulu replied, "I'm hanging up now."

"Okay," Irene replied.

As she lowered her phone and turned around, she found Zachary staring fixedly at her!

The runaway groom (Irene and Isaac)

Chapter 970

Irene cleared her throat, uncomfortable from Zachary's stare.

She brushed past him, asking, "What's with that look?"

"What did she call to say?" Zachary asked in return, his gaze still sharp as if to read something from her face!

"It's about Ricky," Irene simply admitted.

Zachary pursed his lips. "You visited him already, didn't you? He's your stepbrother. How could you be so cold?"

Irene remained unmoved. "I won't change a thing even if I went, and I'm needed here."

With Isaac away, she had to keep watch of their children!

Moreover, she just saw a reply on her forum about a Minervan optometrist. It was alleged that he was the best in the world, and she wanted to make further inquiries and make an appointment.

"If you're not going, I will," Zachary said and turned immediately, striding out of the room.

Irene promptly caught him, asking sternly, "What is this? What are you doing?"

"I did the math," he replied. "Lulu's baby would be at least two months old, and she should be christened, right? What's wrong with sending a gift?"

Irene was speechless. "Are you crazy? You're going to bother Lulu if you do this!"

"Everyone thinks highly of Martin, right?" Zachary shrugged. "He'd be generous enough to not mind me taking a look at the baby."

Irene's eyes twitched. "I'm not letting you go."

Zachary chuckled. "What, you're going to put a leash on me?"

Irene stared daggers at him. "No, but I can have you tied up."

"Where did you get the confidence?" Zachary certainly doubted her.

A delicate woman like her, tying him up?

What was she thinking?

Irene kept staring at him nonetheless. "Do you insist on leaving?"

"Yes..."

"Eagle."

Upon Irene's call, Eagle immediately entered the room.

"Tie him up," she said, pointing at Zachary.

Zachary was speechless. How did he forget about Eagle?!

Still, Eagle asked, "Are you serious, ma'am?"

"Of course I am," Irene replied with a dead serious look. "Tie him up."

Without another word, Eagle went to work.

"Hey, hey, hey!" Zachary cried even as he struggled. "Are you for real?!"

"Sorry, sir. Just following orders," Eagle said, easily subduing Zachary and pinning him on the desk while whipping some rope out of nowhere.

It was thin, but it restrained Zachary solidly, preventing him from moving at all!

With his face pressed against the desk, he cried, "Are you kidding me, Irene?!"

"You're going to make a mess, so I have to stop you," Irene replied, still holding his gaze.

"How am I messing around?!" Zachary bellowed.

Irene did not want to waste her breath, however, and turned to leave the study.

"Irene! Tell Eagle to release me!" Zachary snapped.

As Irene remained unmoved, he said, "How long have you been with Isaac? How did you learn of his unreasonable nature so soon?"

Irene kept ignoring him.

"Stop, Irene. Let's talk about this."

Irene finally paused and turned to look at him. "Promise not to bother Lulu, and I'll let you go."

Zachary groaned. "I just want to see the baby..."

"No!" Irene refused summarily.

Zachary frowned. "I just want to see my—"

Irene strode up and clasped a hand over his mouth!

As Zachary gaped in disbelief at her, Irene released him and dusted her hand, snapping, "The baby is Lulu's, not yours!"