

The runaway groom (Irene and Isaac)

Chapter 971

Zachary did not argue the point since Lulu was the baby's mother. "If you say so. Come on, just let me go already."

Irene frowned—he was clearly saying what she wanted to hear, and he would not hesitate to go looking for Lulu.

"I won't let you go." Irene's attitude was definitive, and she ignored Zachary's howls this time, closing the door behind her as she left.

Naturally, Zachary was not about to give up. Even when bound, he kept yelling for Irene until the whole house found out that Eagle tied him up!

As Tommy and Sheryl entered the study, Tommy had his palm over his little mouth as he giggled, while Sheryl was speechless! "You're all adults!

What are you doing?"

Zachary quickly tried to play the sympathy card. "Please talk to Irene. She's really throwing her weight around the house with Isaac away."

Sheryl frowned. "Is she really being so unreasonable?"

Seeing that Sheryl was almost persuaded, Eagle spoke up. "Mrs. Jefferson wouldn't tie him up for no reason." Sheryl thought about it

and had to agree. "You're all adults. Irene definitely wouldn't play around."

Zachary shot Eagle a glare and growled through his teeth, "Would it kill you to stay quiet?" Eagle made an

innocent face. "I'm just telling it like it is."

Zachary rolled his eyes!

A burly man like Eagle acting cute? It was just ridiculous!

Still, before Eagle said anything else, Tommy asked, "Should I bring you a bucket?" Zachary was speechless,

while Eagle lowered his head to hide a smile.

Still holding Irene's baby, Sheryl said, "See you around."

The young ones were certainly spirited. She was too old to keep up with them! All she would do was

to care for her grandchildren and not bother with the rest. After all, they were all adults and would at

least think before doing anything.

"Tommy, come on. Let's go play," Eagle held out his hands to carry Tommy just then. "Nope!" Tommy

refused and promptly ran off.

"Slow down," Eagle said even as he chased after Tommy. "I'll let you play as much as you want this time..." "Really?" Tommy stopped

and turned towards him just then.

"I won't lie," Eagle replied.

Tommy then pointed at a large tree nearby. "Go up there and make a swing for me." "Sure!" Eagle agreed to it

without hesitation.

Tommy gaped in disbelief. "Isn't that dangerous?" "I'll be guarding you all

the while," Eagle replied.

Tommy was speechless—where was the fun in that?!

"You're running my childhood," he huffed, putting his hands on his hips.

"You could play something less dangerous," Eagle told him. "I promised your mother I'll protect you from harm. Do you understand?"

"Nope," Tommy said.

Eagle did not explain further either.

Giving in, Tommy asked, "What isn't dangerous?"

Eagle thought about it, but Tommy soon thought of something. He started to tie little

knots on Zachary's head.

Eagle stood by and watched quietly, but eventually could not keep it in and turned to hide his chuckle. Zachary was speechless.

"Irene Spencer!!!" he bellowed.

In the study, Irene thought Zachary was still trying to get her to free him, and she put on her headphones. Tommy blinked at Eagle. "I'm

bored."

Eagle was at a loss for words.

Was the boy really that hard to handle? How long had it been?

"How about some basketball?" he suggested. Tommy happily

nodded. "Okay!"

As Eagle started to leave with him, Zachary snapped, "Eagle! Let me go!" "I only follow orders

from Mrs. Jefferson," Eagle replied.

"Irene!!!" Zachary growled.

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Irene did not leave the study even as Zachary shouted until his voice turned hoarse.

She finally came outside at night and immediately found Zachary had his hair tied up into little knots. It was simply

ridiculous—he looked just like a porcupine!

"What happened here?" She walked up to him, loosening the knots.

"Let me go, Irene," Zachary said then. "I won't go looking for Lulu now—I have a bone to pick with your son and Eagle!"

The runaway groom (Irene and Isaac)

Chapter 972

Irene came to a realization right then. "Tommy did that?"

Still, she soon realized that only a child would do something so

nonsensical. "Let me go already!" Zachary urged.

"Swear you won't go looking for Lulu and I will,"

Irene said. "I swear..."

Irene undid the hair knots while waiting for him to swear it... but that was all

he said. Speechless for a moment, she said, "Swear it."

"I just did," Zachary replied, holding her gaze.

Irene said nothing, and rose to her feet. "You can keep enjoying the couch, I

guess!" "You women are troublesome." Zachary sighed feebly.

"Lulu is a woman too. Why would you like her so much?" Irene asked in return.

Zachary was at a loss for words and frowned. "Fine, I give in—I really can't beat you in an argument. I swear I won't go looking for Lulu, or..."

Irene stared at him. "Or, what?"

Zachary pursed his lips. "I'd choke on my food and drown from drinking..." "What's that supposed to mean? Can't you be more direct?"

Irene pointed out. "Do I have to swear by my death?" Zachary complained.

Irene was stumped but dropped to a crouch to look him in the eye. "I'm not being cruel, but you know that Lulu has a family now. How much did she yearn for a quiet life ever since her mother died and her father basically abandoned her? It took her so much to get the life she wanted, and do you think I'm doing right by her if that changes because of you?"

Zachary listened this time, and his expression was serious. "I just wanted to see her... no, the child. I don't want to affect her, but I just want to look at the child. That's all."

Irene finally released him. "You'll have the chance."

Zachary would agree—but there was no telling how long that would take. "You're a mother, Irene. You should understand parental love—"

"You're not the father, Zachary," Irene told him sternly.

Zachary was silent for a moment and clutched his chest. "You're really hitting where it hurts." "Just wanted to make you see reality," Irene said.

"I always have, alright? Why'd you think so badly of me? Did I harass Lulu the last time I was near her?" Zachary demanded.

Irene turned quiet, so Zachary continued even as he flexed his wrist. "Why don't you trust me at all? Am I that cold and useless? Whatever. I won't hold this against you, but I'm going to murder your son now. Don't you defend him."

Irene blinked, but she rose to her feet and returned to her study, saying, "I won't interfere."

Right now, the only thing she could do was to sacrifice Tommy, all while telling herself that sons were born to be betrayed. Yes, that must be it.

Meanwhile, Zachary tugged at his hair, which was not straightening out so soon after being just tied up. He looked as if he had it permed!

He did not bother with that just then, since he was in his own home and did not have to mind his appearance.

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Meanwhile, Eagle was teaching Tommy basketball.

Tommy was serious for once, since he was actually interested.

Naturally, he was playing with a kid-sized stand, and he certainly had the form.

However, he soon noticed Zachary approaching, and his danger sense promptly

kicked in. "We have to go, Eagle. Uncle Zachary is coming," he quickly said.

Eagle frowned—Zachary was still supposed to be tied up.

Still, he turned and saw that the man was really coming at them, and he quickly picked up Tommy while quickly running away with his incredible physique!

Zachary yelled from behind, "Do you think you can keep running forever?!"

The runaway groom (Irene and Isaac)

Chapter 973

Eagle was confused—he was positive that Zachary would never free himself after with the knots he tied around him. "How did you free yourself?"

Someone must have done it!

Zachary chuckled coldly. "You've been betrayed."

Tommy blinked his big, bright eyes. "By who?"

"Your mommy, of course!" Zachary snapped, not bothered to give chase. "Now get over here like a good boy, and I won't make it hurt. Get stubborn with me, and you'll get a spanking!"

Tommy's little jaw hung open. "You're terrible, Uncle Zachary."

"Only because it's you—or did you forget what you did to me?" Zachary growled, sitting down on the stairs and beckoning, "Get over here."

Tommy, however, turned toward Eagle. "Do you think the two of us can beat him?" "I

can do it myself," Eagle replied.

The exchange left Zachary speechless, while Tommy confidently put his hands on his hips. "Get over here."

"You brat!" Zachary snapped. "You should behave, but you want a fight instead? I see you really want a spanking!"

Tommy simply slid closer to Eagle.

He always thought that Eagle was too strict with him, but standing beside the man now felt safe, since Eagle loomed like a mountain wherever he stood.

"You can't get me," Tommy mocked as he made silly faces at Zachary.

Zachary was at a loss of words.

Was he really being bullied by a child?

This was simply tragic. How far had he fallen?!

"Whatever." Zachary snorted. "I won't get petty with a child."

He got up, dusting his rump before returning inside the house.

Tommy poked at Eagle's leg and said, "Oh, he gave up."

Zachary almost slipped and fell at the boy's words.

Pursing his lips, he wheeled on Tommy and snapped, "Revenge is a dish best served cold."

Tommy promptly hid behind Eagle and stayed around the man ever since, even during dinners. After all, he knew that only Eagle could protect him.

Sheryl found that weird at first, since the boy was really afraid of Eagle.

And now, he was clinging to Eagle more closely than he did with his parents!

"Uncle Eagle," Tommy then said. "Can I sleep with you tonight?"

Everyone around the table was stunned, and Sheryl could not help asking, "What's gotten into you, Tommy?"

Tommy, however, could not care less what others thought, and he tugged at Eagle's sleeve. "Okay?"

Eagle was blinking.

This kid had been constantly hiding from him earlier, but was now calling him 'Uncle Eagle'!

Still, he could not say yes since it was not up to him. "You have to ask your mom."

Tommy quickly turned toward Irene, who shrugged. "Do whatever you like."

Zachary was quiet, but he said then, "I forgot what you did to me anyway. You don't have to be that careful."

"I don't believe you," Tommy replied.

Irene shot the boy a look. "It's been half a day now. Stop it."

"You betrayed me, Mommy." Tommy huffed.

Irene was speechless. "What are you talking about?"

"Uncle Zachary told me."

Zachary was speechless, while Irene turned toward him.

What had gotten into them? It was as if they all had something against him!

"I'm done. You guys do whatever you want," Zachary said with a snort—he really could not afford to challenge them!

Irene called out, "Aren't you going to eat?"

"Not feeling an appetite," Zachary replied.

However, he did not lose appetite over something so simple, or he would be as petty as a child.

In fact, he was sulking mostly because he did not get to see Lulu's baby.

Suddenly, a man barged into the dining room!

The runaway groom (Irene and Isaac)

Chapter 974

Zachary recognized the man—he was one of the protective details Stan had arranged for them whom Zachary stationed outside. He frowned. "Why are you panicking?"

The man shook his head—he was not panicking, but it was

urgent. "There is someone asking for you outside," the man

reported. "Who?" Zachary asked.

"No idea."

Why did he bother asking?

Zachary started to head outside, with the man in tow. "Let's go take a look."

At the gates, Zachary saw that the person looking for him was actually a boy. Standing at a modest five foot four, he looked scrawny and his cheeks were dirty as if he had not bathed for a long time, and he had tied up his long hair.

Zachary felt suspicious since the filth hid the boy's face, but asked, "You were looking for me?" The boy nodded.

"Who sent you?" Zachary asked.

"A Zidonian named James Cross," the boy said, still staring at him. "He told me about this place." Zachary turned serious since James did know about the place.

However, he did not believe the boy immediately, since they had been getting into endless and complicated problems. "Really?"

"Yes." The boy held out his palm to show the number written on it, which was Zachary's too. "He said to call you if I can't find you here."

Zachary believed the boy already but did not lead him into the house.

He told the man beside him quietly in his ear, "Tell the others I'm leaving for the night."

Irene and her children were staying here, and he should not recklessly bring the boy, Barzel, inside without knowing who he was. Taking Barzel to a hotel, he said, "Get yourself cleaned up. I'll get you some clothes."

Barzel nodded.

Zachary left the room, heading to the lobby to buy some clothes.

He then went somewhere quiet and called Stan, who quickly picked up.

"Hello?" "Have you found James yet?" Zachary asked.

"We know who has him, but we haven't gotten him out yet."

Zachary leaned against the wall as he said, "There's this boy who just came to me. He looks around sixteen and local. He said James sent him, but I'm not sure if he's friend or foe."

Stan did not know either, and said, "I'm hanging up. Just wait for a while—I'll call you later." Zachary did so, but he waited a long while without any reply from Stan.

Almost losing patience, he was wondering if he should call Stan again when his phone rang. "So?" he asked impatiently after answering. "How did it go? And what took you so long?"

Stan ignored the last part and said, "Just found out who he is. He's good, but don't bring him into the house." He then gave a summary of Barzel, who turned out to be the son of the couple who saved Isaac.

Barzel had been a hostage and was confined in the same place with James after he was captured.

James helped him escape when he had a chance, telling him Zachary's address instead of Isaac's castle just in case. After

all, if Barzel turned out to have been brainwashed, he would lead the gang straight to Isaac's family.

Zachary had therefore shown composure and wit since he took Barzel straight to a hotel instead of into his own home.

Hanging up later, Zachary headed back to the hotel room, and waited on the couch, prepared to probe Barzel's allegiances. However, Barzel did not leave the bathroom even after a long while, and Zachary checked his watch.

It had been over an hour—Barzel had to be done by

now! What was keeping him?

Zachary walked over to knock on the bathroom door, but Barzel did not respond.

He opened it to find the room still filled with steam, but Barzel was nowhere to be

seen. Where did he go?!

The runaway groom (Irene and Isaac)

Chapter 975

Zachary almost cursed. "Did he bail?"

However, he had just whipped out his phone when he saw Barzel, who had already changed into the clothes Zachary brought.

Barzel's hair was now clean, revealing its original dark blond hue. It was quite long and covered his ears.

His cheeks were fair and speckled, and his bangs dangled over his brows in front of his cobalt-blue

eyes. He was carrying a plate of food and watching Zachary as he said, "Sorry. I was hungry."

He left to find food when he stepped out of the bathroom and found no one around.

Since it was complimentary, he brought some back to his room.

As Zachary lowered his phone, Barzel asked, "Would you like some?"

Zachary shook his head and settled on the couch, while Barzel put the plate on the table and continued eating.

"What's your name?" Zachary asked.

"Barzel," Barzel replied while keeping his head lowered and continued stuffing his mouth full of food. "Just ask me if you have any questions."

Zachary was quite surprised that he was being so candid despite his youth.

Then, before Zachary said anything, Barzel added, "I mean, I found you at your own house, but you brought me here instead of letting me in. It's obvious you don't trust me—but that's fine, because I don't trust you either."

Zachary stared blankly at him for a moment and asked, "You don't trust me, but you still came looking for me?"

Barzel paused for a moment, but he soon quietly returned to his food.

"Why aren't you saying anything?" Zachary asked.

"My parents are dead. I have nowhere else to go," Barzel said

quietly. Zachary rubbed his nose—he should not have asked.

Still, Barzel kept his head lowered as he said, "I don't mind."

Zachary was speechless for a moment and told Barzel, "You can stay here from now on."

As Barzel nodded, Zachary got up to his feet, but the boy stopped him before he left. "What's your name, sir?"

"Zachary Slate."

"Mr. Slate... Can you lend me some money?"

Zachary turned and stared at Barzel for a couple heartbeats, but he reached into his pocket and asked, "How much?" "As much as you're willing to give," Barzel replied—he was penniless anyway.

Zachary gave him all the cash without questions, since Barzel had just escaped. It made sense if he had no money. "I'll return it," Barzel replied.

"It's fine. Just keep it," Zachary told him.

Stan did just mention that Barzel's parents were killed and the boy had no place to go after escaping the gang. Further questions were unnecessary.

Barzel stayed silent, his thoughts unknown.

"I'm going now," Zachary simply said and left the hotel.

When he returned to his house, Irene came to him right away and asked, "Who came looking for you?"

Zachary stared at her for a couple heartbeats.

"Why should I tell you?" he asked a little spitefully, before adding, "I mean, I don't even get to see my own baby." Irene was speechless. The man could really hold a grudge!

"Do you know the difference between love and like?" Irene asked.

Zachary snorted. "Nonsense. How old do you think I am?"

Irene then asked, "Then tell me—do you like Lulu or do you love her?" Zachary was suddenly silent.

He was certainly attracted to Lulu when they first met, and he was convinced she felt the same. And after they started dating, it was mutual liking..

But as time went by and their bond grew, it definitely was love,

no? That was what he understood of their relationship, at least.

Still, he noticed the point of her question. "What are you getting at, Irene? No, to be precise—what are you trying to tell me?"

The runaway groom (Irene and Isaac)

Chapter 976

Irene sat down and told him, "Let's be serious, Zachary."

Zachary sat opposite her in turn, his eyes fixed on her. "I was being serious."

"Then tell me. Are you visiting Lulu to see her baby or were you just lying to me?" Irene asked, looking him in the eye.

Zachary did a double take, though he had to admit that he had been feeling troubled because he was not allowed to

acknowledge his own child.

It was as regretful as it was painful, and he certainly was upset that Irene stopped him.

Naturally, he understood that Irene was doing this for Lulu's sake, but did he not have the right to be informed and to the child's custody?

"I was lying a little," he replied.

Even if he was upset and disappointed about it, he had no genuine intention of ruining Lulu's life now.

"I admit that Martin is good and has done better than I have," Zachary said, knowing that it was his own fault things ended badly between him and Lulu.

If only he had the strength to protect her from harm and from breaking her heart, she would not have given up on him and accepted another man.

Zachary had actually come to understand his mistake in the past, but the point was that there was now a link between them. He definitely would not show up around Lulu if not for his baby.

Sighing, he asked, "What are you trying to say?"

"There's this saying that liking a person is self-indulgent, whereas love is self-restraint," Irene replied. "Which of these do you feel toward Lulu?"

Zachary frowned, unable to answer just then.

However, that was because he disagreed with Irene's statement.

Why did he have to restrain himself for love? Why was he not allowed to indulge himself?

"What do you think about it?" he asked Irene in return.

"I think it's right," Irene said bluntly.

"I can't agree." Zachary shook his head—even if he would not disturb Lulu now, he would not accept that statement either.

Irene stared warily at him then. "So what are you going to do? Go to Lulu?"

"No," Zachary said.

Irene sighed in relief. "So?"

"I just wanted to ask..." Zachary appeared pensive for a moment, but he soon said, "Forget it." Irene frowned. "Just spit it already!"

"Nope," Zachary replied and returned to his room, locking himself inside and refusing to open it no matter how many times Irene knocked.

His reaction left her utterly curious—what was he trying to say?!

That question alone left her worried.

There was also that weird look he just gave her—the one that said 'I know, but I'm not going to tell you'. It left her restless!

She called Zachary's phone and could hear it ringing inside, but he refused to answer it.

As such, she texted him instead.

[What were you trying to say?]

Zachary did not reply, so she pressed on: [Do you know something I don't that you're not telling me?]

[What were you trying to say just now?]

She stared at the screen, hesitating for a moment before typing what she was thinking.

[Does it have something to do with Isaac?]

Zachary replied right then and with two texts in quick

succession! [Getting flustered, aren't we?]

[Oh, you're smart.]

Irene was speechless and really wanted to ask if he was crazy right then.

Still, his response left her pensive.

[What is it about Isaac that I don't know?]

The runaway groom (Irene and Isaac)

Chapter 977

Zachary refused to answer, leaving Irene unable to stay composed at all.

He knew Isaac much earlier than she did, and she scarcely knew a thing about his past. What was Zachary trying to say?

[Explain yourself, Zachary Slate! What were you trying to say?!]

Zachary simply lay in bed, lifting a brow when his phone jingled with a notification, but he did not check it. He knew that Irene was flustered—and certainly had the capacity for it.

As it turned out, no one could stay unaffected when something like that happened to them.

He certainly did not believe in empathy—one had to experience the same anguish as the person to really know how it felt, and those who had never gone through it would never understand it.

Meanwhile, his phone kept jingling, and he finally picked it up for a look. [Zachary Slate!]

[Zachary Slate!!!]

He was being spammed with his own name.

Chuckling, he slowly got to his feet and answered the door.

Irene was actually stunned, since she did not expect him to suddenly open it. But after the initial surprise, she was glaring fixedly at him.

Zachary grinned. "Want to come in?"

Nonetheless, Irene asked bluntly, "What were you going to say?"

"Nothing," Zachary replied flatly.

While she was left stumped, he poured her a glass of water. "Here. You need to cool off—you're still injured, y'know!" Irene took it and entered his room, not at all cagey as she planted herself on the couch beside the window.

"Tell me."

Zachary leaned on the door and said, "You were saying that liking a person is self-indulgent, whereas love is self-restraint. And you believe that to be right?"

Irene nodded. "Yes."

"Then let me ask you this—which of those two is how Isaac feels about you?" Zachary asked, studying her just then.

Irene promptly looked up, her brow wrinkling as she asked, "That's what you wanted to say?"

Zachary nodded—he knew all too well how things were between her and Isaac when they first met. Likewise, Irene would be aware whether Isaac had been self-indulgent or restrained around her.

It was not as if Zachary wanted to drive a wedge between her and Isaac, but they were discussing the question as it was.

Back then, Isaac was certainly not merely being self-indulgent when it came to her.

And according to what she said, Isaac only liked her and was not in love. Irene rose to her feet and walked up to Zachary, holding his gaze.

Just as he thought she would say something to him, she stayed silent and simply left.

Zachary asked, "Why aren't you saying anything?" "What should I say?" Irene asked flatly.

"...Is Isaac in love with you? Or does he only like you?" Irene simply grinned. "What do you think?"

Zachary was speechless for a moment before asking, "You don't care if he loves you?" Irene shook her head. "Nope."

Zachary was speechless for another moment. "You're just pretending, aren't you?" Irene shrugged. "Why should I?"

"That question is complicated, and you're the one who mentioned it first. If you agree that liking is self-indulgent, whereas love is self-restraint, that means Isaac had only liked you before, never loved you."

Pausing, he asked, "You told me all that just to have me admit that I love Lulu and would restrain myself, let her go, and be happy?"

Irene listened to him quietly—that certainly was really her point.

Zachary stared at her then. "I can admit that I love Lulu, but what about you and Isaac?"

The runaway groom (Irene and Isaac)

Chapter 978

Irene remained composed in spite of Zachary's sharp glare and suddenly smiled.

"Look, I was just trying to convince you not to bother Lulu."

"So what was the point of all that?!" Zachary snapped.

"What do you think?" Irene asked him in return.

"I think it's pointless," he replied.

Irene heaved a long sigh and said, "Me too. I mean, if a person likes you, that's basically love, right? Can a person love you without liking you? That's ridiculous."

That was why she remained so composed when Zachary told her that Isaac only 'liked' her—from her perspective, that was good enough, since there was not much difference between liking and loving!

Zachary pouted. "Then why did you bother giving that crap?"

"I'm not," she said, but Zachary pushed her out of her room before she could explain. "Fine, I get it. You don't want me looking for Lulu, right? I won't go."

"As long as you understand." Irene smiled.

Zachary rolled his eyes after closing the door behind her.

Why should he listen to that?

He was not being particularly self-indulgent either, but his life was his own!

He made his decision, and he would see through it instead of listening to others.

His gaze seemed distant then, and there was no telling what was on his mind.

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The next morning, Irene did not see Zachary around the house. She asked, "He's not up yet?"

"He was up when I woke up," Mrs. Watson replied.

"What time did you wake up?" Irene asked, knowing that Mrs. Watson always woke up early, be it here or back in Zidonia.

"Around five, I think?" Mrs. Watson frowned, not quite remembering the specific timing.

Irene frowned, realizing Zachary was behaving unusually right then.

She promptly whipped out her phone and called Zachary. Thankfully, he answered.

"Where are you?" she asked urgently.

"At the airport," Zachary replied bluntly, not bothering to hide.

Irene's fingers clenched on her phone. "What are you doing there?"

"I have something to do back home."

Irene certainly knew what he was up to. "You're going to visit Lulu, aren't you?!"

Zachary stayed silent, which basically admitted as much.

Irene lost composure right then. "What are you doing?!"

"Why ask if you know the answer?"

"Get back here!" Irene snapped.

"If I did what you told me, would I have any dignity left?" Zachary calmly retorted.

Furious, Irene snapped, "You told me you won't go!"

"Calm down. I'm going either way, and you can't stop me—there's no point in getting upset."

"Just get back here," Irene told him. "Whatever you want to say or do, let's talk about this. Don't make a mistake out of a moment of impulse, or you'd regret it!"

Irene tried to speak as calmly as she could, even coaxing to get Zachary to return.

However, he was no child, and he would think things through before he made up his mind.

He was not just following his whims—he was an adult and certainly should not live like a brat who did things without thinking about the consequences!

"Don't worry," he said.

Irene could not stop herself from bellowing at him right then. "Zachary!!!"

"You'll hurt yourself getting upset like that. Anyway, I'm hanging up. I'm boarding my flight now."

With that, he hung up, and he hung up on Irene when she tried to call him again and turned off his phone on her second attempt!

Irene was speechless, but she had been careless, not expecting this move from Zachary.

There was no stopping him now, so she must tell Lulu right away so Lulu had time to prepare.

Irene scrolled through her contacts to find Lulu's and dialed her number...

The runaway groom (Irene and Isaac)

Chapter 979

Lulu's phone was on silent mode since the last time it rang, it woke Jean right after she put her to sleep.

Jean was crying a long while afterward too, so Lulu always put her phone on silent to avoid that from happening again—at least it meant peace for her baby.

Earlier, she left it on the couch while washing the dirty laundry, and she was now in the

bedroom to feed Jean. Lulu did not see or hear her phone vibrating repeatedly.

And after she fed Jean, she folded the laundry and put them in the closet. Once she was done with housework, she lay in bed and took a nap with Jean in her arms.

She did not sleep well, after all—in fact, she had not gotten a good night's sleep after she and Martin consummated their marriage.

He would come on to her every night and for hours!

She therefore needed her nap to recharge during daytime.

Martin returned just then, putting some fish he brought in the kitchen. He was planning to make soup for Lulu since she has not been lactating much, and Jean was mostly drinking formula milk these days.

He worked for quite a while, gutting the fish and clearing the innards before he finally put

everything into the pot. He just bought a recipe book for soups as well, since he understood it

was difficult for Lulu to raise a child alone. Since he was still on leave, he decided to spend

more time taking care of her.

When he left the kitchen, he saw Lulu's phone vibrating on the couch and he went over to pick it up.

Seeing that it was Irene, he headed to the bedroom to hand it to Lulu, but he did not wake her when he saw that she was napping.

The phone started to vibrate again, while Irene was almost losing her mind since no one

was answering. Martin hesitated for a moment, but he eventually answered it.

Before he could tell Irene that Lulu was asleep and could not take the call, Irene quickly cried from the other end, "Why are you only answering now, Lulu?! I must have called you dozens of times—Zachary is flying back today, and he's definitely coming to you. You need to find a way to avoid him."

Martin frowned slightly.

"Hello? Lulu? Are you

listening?!" Irene asked. "She's

asleep," Martin said then.

Irene was speechless, almost suffering a breakdown right then—did she just cause

them trouble?! "Don't worry," Martin assured her nonetheless. "I know about

Zachary and I'll handle it."

Irene was actually not sure how to respond, so Martin chuckled. "Lulu kept her phone on silent while she slept. I wanted to give it to her, but I decided against it since she's still sleeping."

"It's alright." Irene could tell that he cared a lot about Lulu, and she was definitely too impulsive in saying so much because she did not hear her.

"Do you have any other messages you'd like me to pass to her, or are you going to call back

later?" Martin asked. "It's fine," Irene replied. "Though I know Zachary, and he'll be coming

straight for your house."

"Understood."

"Have you fully recovered yet?" Irene asked just then.

"I'm more or less fine now... Now that you mentioned it, I should thank you for saving me. I heard from Lulu that the doctor you sent operated on me."

Martin was grateful, and he knew that Irene only helped because of Lulu.

Moreover, Irene had called urgently about Zachary because she was worried Zachary would affect Martin's life with Lulu. And to assure Irene, Martin said, "Lulu wouldn't have chosen me if she held any sentiment about the past, and I trust her."

The runaway groom (Irene and Isaac)

Chapter 980

"Of course I know you trust Lulu." Irene smiled begrudgingly. "But I don't trust Zachary..."

His move this time definitely left her flabbergasted!

"I'll talk to him," Martin said.

Irene thought then that Martin was an upstanding person and that he loved Lulu to bits.

There probably would not be conflict and he would protect Lulu, right?

It was not as if she thought badly of Zachary.

In fact, she would save Zachary instead of Martin if she had to choose, since she knew Zachary longer and was closer to him.

She was only human, and she was not noble enough to abandon people she was attached with.

If anything, she was only nice to Martin because he was Lulu's husband, which was an undeniable fact.

She would like Martin to protect Lulu because she was concerned that Zachary would harass Lulu for custody of Jean.

She had tried to reason with Zachary endlessly, but it could not be denied that Jean was Zachary's.

He therefore had the right.

But now, things were fine between Lulu and Martin, and everyone around them believed the child was theirs.

What would others think if Zachary took Jean away, and how would they treat Martin or Lulu?

The hearts of people are not that easily read, after all.

"Yeah..." she nonetheless, and asked, "How's Lulu doing lately?"

Martin chuckled. "She's doing fine!"

Hanging up, Martin was about to turn around when Lulu asked behind him, "Who were you talking to?"

Martin simply returned her phone to her and said, "Irene. She called you."

Lulu took it and asked, "What did she say?"

"Zachary is coming," Martin replied flatly.

Lulu paused for a moment before her eyes narrowed and her voice turned quiet. "What's he doing here?"

"I'm not sure," Martin replied.

"When's he arriving?" Lulu pressed.

Martin did not answer then, and instead asked, "Do you trust me?"

Lulu looked up in silence, but she certainly did.

Would she ever give herself to him if she did not?

"Why?" he asked.

"If you do, leave Zachary to me," Martin said earnestly. "You won't have to meet him."

Lulu stared at him for moments and laughed. "Would I marry you if I didn't?"

Martin joked, "Who knows if you were having a stroke at the time?"

Lulu said nothing, but he chuckled when she looked him in the eye.

Even so, she was dead serious and made herself very clear. "I don't decide anything on impulse. I've thought things through before making each choice, and that includes marrying you."

She always believed herself to be calm, too.

Martin turned serious as well. "I was just kidding. Are you upset?"

Lulu nodded, but she walked up to wrap her hands around his neck. "Don't joke around with something like that again. Ever."

"Yes, ma'am," Martin replied.

Lulu kissed him. "You have no idea..."

She did like him—at the moment, at least.

At first, she just thought that he was a nice guy she could entrust the rest of her life with.

But after they lived together for so long, her heart was drawn to his magnanimity, understanding and caring.

Martin wrapped his hands around her waist in turn and gave her a light pat. "I made soup. Care to drink some?"

Lulu shook her head and reared her lips. "I missed you..."

Before Martin could react, she kissed his neck... though one might call it biting too.

Martin frowned and panted, "You'd leave a mark..."

"Exactly. That's my mark on you now," Lulu replied.

"How am I supposed to go out now?" Martin lowered his gaze to meet hers.