

The runaway groom (Irene and Isaac)

Chapter 991

Martin was staring at Lulu. "I'll feed her."

"No, it's fine," Lulu said, walking over to him and getting out of bed. "Give her to me."

Martin pursed his lips and stared at her but Lulu kept her hands outstretched toward him without moving, and both of them remained in that position for a while!

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Zachary returned in a bad mood.

Irene did not ask him anything, while James was still bedridden.

The house was therefore gloomy, and only Erin would be moving around. Since she

had been learning to cook, she had to buy a lot of food ingredients.

Zachary was half-reclined on the couch when Erin left the kitchen with soup she just made, but he called out to her just as she was about to bring it to James in his room. "Is James the only person living around here? There's others here too, y'know?"

Erin shot him a look. "You're nuts."

Zachary chuckled. "Come on. I just wanted to try that soup you made." "There's

more in the kitchen," Erin replied. "Get it yourself."

"I want the one you're holding," Zachary said.

Erin ignored her and headed to James's room, but Zachary rose to his feet and followed her. Glaring

at him, she asked, "What do you think you're doing?"

"Just checking if you fattened up James," Zachary said, keeping one hand in his pocket, while the other reached for the doorknob. "Want me to open the door for you?"

Erin said nothing, but she was left wondering if the man forgot his meds.

"Well, you're not saying anything, so I'll consider your approval," Zachary said and opened the door. James

was shirtless, as there were many interweaving cuts and bruises from being lashed.

He was trying to apply some ointment on it as well, but naturally could not reach his own back easily. Zachary

headed over and took the ointment. As a doctor, something like that could not be easier.

But just as he was doing it for James, James suddenly caught his wrist and murmured, "Erin..." Both Erin

and James were speechless.

James turned around then and saw that it was actually Zachary behind him.

He then looked down to see that he was holding Zachary's hand and promptly flung it away as if it were a cockroach! "What are you doing here?!" James frowned.

Zachary glanced at his own hand and asked, "Was my hand that soft?" "Get out!"

James snapped, having every intention to be much harsher.

After all, only Erin ever came in, and he was surprised Zachary came in, and so quietly at that!

Erin would usually help him with applying ointment where he could not reach, and he thought it would be her... only for it to turn out to be Zachary!

This was outrageous!

At the same time, Zachary blushed flirtily at James. "You always loved me, but you didn't want to admit it, did you?" James

was utterly speechless and would have kicked Zachary out if he did not have trouble getting up! "Out!"

Zachary chuckled. "You'd never beat me in a fight right now."

James glared at Zachary in turn—Zachary just came to mess with him, didn't he?! "Just you

wait," James huffed. "It's a duel!"

Zachary knew that he would never win in a fair fight, so there was no way he would say yes. "Alright, alright—I won't bother you two flirting. That said, you're still hurt..."

James's expression turned very stern, while Zachary did not finish that sentence. "Take care of yourself." With that,

Zachary turned towards Erin and smiled. "I'll get the soup myself."

She said nothing but closed the door after he left.

Then, she picked up a baggy shirt and helped James put it on. "Your friend's a comedian."

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James shrugged. "He's just messing around—that's just what he's like, so just ignore him. He's not that bad either.

"I know," Erin replied while helping James button his shirt. "If he were that terrible, you wouldn't be hanging out with him." As

James looked at her, Erin smiled. "And you're not that bad either."

James brushed her hair with his fingers then. "Aren't you going home yet?"

"My leave isn't over yet," Erin said, and she picked up the bowl of soup to hand it over..

James always humored her and would finish the food she cooked whether it tasted good, while never forgetting to praise her. "Your cooking is getting better. I don't think I can eat anyone else's cooking soon."

However, Erin was staring at him seriously. "I think I should resign. You're hurt, and you need someone to take care of you..."

James put the bowl down to look at her then.

He naturally wanted Erin to stay at his side, but he was unsure if she just wanted to take care of him or if she had gotten over her trauma.

Erin met his gaze and knew what he wanted to say.

She was in turn honest. "If you don't mind it... I can love you like I did before."

"Of course I won't mind," James replied and gathered her into his arms. "Silly."

The ones who should be dead were, and he had long since gotten over it too.

He heard that even Ian Jefferson succumbed to his injury after Hector Vaughn chopped off his leg, which was good news to him.

While Isaac told everyone that he went to Minerva to get his eyes treated, he was secretly investigating Hector's whereabouts— they would find him eventually.

It was also why Isaac refused to bring Irene along to Minerva. With Hector still in hiding and bent on exacting revenge upon Isaac, Irene would definitely be in danger if she stayed with him. Naturally, Isaac did not tell Irene that so that she would not worry.

As Erin leaned on his chest, she asked, "Would you like to come to Minerva with me?"

As James was left quiet in bemusement, she explained, "I'm not telling you to resign. I just think it'd be the same if you went to Minerva with me, since you'd be staying home to recover."

She certainly knew that James would never leave Isaac and therefore would not ask that. Still, she would like to have more time with him while he was recovering.

"Sure," James replied.

Erin beamed happily and said, "I'll tell Irene."

However, James suddenly caught her wrist, and Erin wheeled on him. "Regretting it already? Don't you dare!"

"No, I'm not," James grinned as he pulled herself to him, holding the back of her head as he leaned in and kissed her lips. "I'll go wherever you go."

"Okay." Erin smiled in turn and left the room.

She found Zachary in the living room, and he actually took a bowl of soup and was sitting there as he drank.

Erin went over and asked, "Is it good?" Zachary

nodded. "It's very sweet."

Erin was speechless—there was really something wrong with him!

She had added certain herbs while she cooked it to help with James' recovery.

She had tasted it herself, and it was definitely bitter.

"You need to get your tongue checked," Erin told him.

Zachary looked up at her then. "Come, sit. Let's have a chat." "I'm

busy. I need to talk to Irene," she replied.

"She left with her children. She's not at home," Zachary replied.

"I see," Erin said and went to sit on the couch, staring at Zachary as she asked, "There's something weighing on your mind, right?"

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Zachary smiled. "How'd you know?"

"You were acting very strange," Erin replied. "There's either something bothering you, or you're just crazy." Zachary was speechless. "You're just a girl. Don't you have any respect for your brother?"

Erin could roll her eyes right then. What even made him her brother?

Zachary remained serious as he broke it down for her. "Isaac, James, and I are as close as brothers, right?" Erin nodded.

"Yeah."

She knew that all too well.

"And of us three, Isaac is the eldest and a brother to you, but I'm older than James. Whether it's because of your connection to Isaac or to James, I'm a brother to you and should be addressed as such."

Erin was speechless.

The man made sense, but having to call him 'brother' was too cringeworthy! "Can I call you something else?" Erin asked.

"What then?" Zachary asked in return. Erin thought about it.

Brother was definitely not going to cut it, just as 'uncle' was wrong. "I think I'll just stick to 'Zachary'," Erin said.

Zachary waved in refusal. "I've already explained everything to the letter. That definitely won't cut it!"

"Well, I'm not going to address you as my brother," Erin said, refusing to discuss it—somehow it felt like he was getting one over her!

"Then respect like you would Isaac..."

"You don't hold that much weight in my mind," Erin said, not giving an inch at all.

Zachary was speechless and deliberately put a hand on his chest as if his heart hurt. "You're just a kid, but you really know how to break a heart."

He was already lost in love and was now being abused by a kid. Life was suffering!

Probably because Zachary appeared very miserable and was not actually feigned, Erin asked, "What's weighing on your mind? Care to tell me? I could help you find a way."

Zachary said nothing and simply stood up to leave. "Forget it. You'd never understand."

What, was he supposed to tell her how depressed he was right now? That his biological daughter would be calling someone else 'dad'?

He was positive Erin would laugh at him if he did, and that was why he refused!

"Why aren't you saying anything? Are you so sure I wouldn't get it?" Erin caught his wrist, her curiosity piqued. "Tell me before you go."

Zachary was left wondering about this life of his just then. Why did it have to

be so tragic?

And why did he have to talk to Erin and now have no way of getting out of this? "I was just

kidding," he said then. "You thought I was serious?"

Erin simply rose to her feet. "It's fine if you won't say. I just have to ask James—he'd definitely tell me." This time, it was

Zachary's turn to stop her.

If James did it, he would definitely spice it up, emphasizing how stupid Zachary was to lose his woman. And when that

happened, Erin would not show sympathy, even call him useless.

The noble impression he had in her mind would crumble!

That said, if Erin knew what he was thinking, she would tell him in no uncertain terms that he never appeared noble to her! Zachary cleared

his throat and said, "Do you really want to know? I can tell you, but you have to call me 'brother' first."

Even as he spoke, he wondered what sort of a story he should give her... "Brother," Erin

said then.

Zachary was left gaping.

He finally knew how James managed to bewitch Erin—she was just too naive, believing him just like that!

As he suddenly smiled, Erin stared at him and asked, "What's that smile for? You were dumped, weren't you?" "He wasn't

dumped—his brain is just malfunctioning," someone scoffed coolly behind him.

The runaway groom (Irene and Isaac)

Chapter 994

Zachary turned to find James standing nearby, and he smiled awkwardly. "You're still hurt. Why did you come out here? You should be staying in your room."

"If I did, I won't be able to listen to you embarrassing yourself," James said, scowling. "Over here, Erin." Erin

quickly walked to his side, blinking. "Are you upset?"

"Not at you," James replied.

Zachary reclined against the couch and asked, "Then, at me?" "Who else

is there?" James snapped while Erin helped him sit.

Zachary pouted. "You're a cripple, man. Why don't you stay in your room instead of coming out here?" "Watch your

language!" Erin snapped, unhappy with the personal attack.

James clapped her on the shoulder. "Calm down. Don't you know why he doesn't have a girlfriend? It's because of that rotten mouth of his."

Zachary was speechless. "Your personal attacks are worse than mine." James

chuckled. "Pot, meet kettle."

Zachary clicked his tongue. "Whatever you say."

He got to his feet, ready to leave since he obviously was not winning here. "Stop,"

James told him.

"What?" Zachary stared at him warily.

"Remember, she's your sister-in-law," James reared his chin. "You know that I'm older." Zachary

was speechless—he was just messing with Erin!

Still, he licked his lips and flashed a meaningful smile. "Fine, you're older, old man." James

really wanted to hit Zachary right then—it was almost impossible not to. "Say it," he

snapped, glaring at him.

Zachary, however, could not bring himself to acknowledge Erin's seniority when she was so young. Looking at

James then, he smiled evilly. "I'll say it if you go back to your room."

"Screw off!" James snapped. "Don't you dare bully her again while I'm not around. I'll cut your balls off." Zachary

pouted. "Oh, how protective of you. I was just joking—why so serious?"

Erin came to a realization then—James was actually older than Zachary, but Zachary had manipulated her into calling him 'brother'!

"How could he be so shameless?" she huffed. "Exactly.

Shameless," James echoed.

"Tricking a kid like me is just heinous," Erin added. "Exactly.

Heinous!" James echoed again.

Zachary was speechless. "You really deserve each other. Two peas in a pod, a nest of vipers, all of that." "Well,

why don't you look at your miserable self first?" James retorted. "Such a lonely soul. Tut, tut..." "I'm not talking to

you," Zachary snapped and started to leave.

Irene happened to return then while holding Tommy's hand. Seeing

Zachary, she asked, "Where are you going?"

"Back to his kennel, since there's no place for him elsewhere," James replied.

Irene entered the house then and sat down. "You boys really can't stop horsing around. So, what is it this time?" Tommy lay

sprawled over her lap while Mrs. Watson brought the boy fresh juice.

Erin pointed at Zachary and said, "He was messing with me."

Zachary paused at the doorway. "Who was? Don't fib—James would misunderstand." "You told

me that you're my brother, but you're actually younger than James."

"I'm not older than James, but I am older than you," Zachary retorted before turning toward Irene. "You shouldn't get ahead of yourself either, since I'm on first-name basis with Irene here."

The runaway groom (Irene and Isaac)

Chapter 995

Irene blinked.

"Well, it would be weird if I called you something else," she admitted.

Getting the advantage right then, Zachary puffed himself up. "See? I'm her senior." "How so?" Irene asked.

"I'm younger than Isaac, but you married him," he explained, pausing for a moment before continuing, "Since I'm your upperclassman, he should defer to me too, right?"

James and Erin were speechless, with the former rising to his feet. "Come on. Let's go back to my room."

The way Zachary kept talking, he would have to defer to Zachary too!

"Stay here. You should listen to see if I'm right," Zachary grinned smugly. "Honestly, my junior is really the best!"

James really wanted to punch him right then—that face definitely needed one.

"You're right," Irene suddenly said. "But you'd have to ask Isaac first to see if that applies."

James stared at Zachary in turn. "You heard her."

Zachary was speechless—Isaac would throw him out of his own house if he so much as breathed that. Yes, that was definitely not going to happen!

"I'll pass," Zachary said, knowing that he would never win against Isaac. He simply gave up on the issue.

Erin sat down beside Irene in turn and said, "I need to talk to you about something, Irene."

"Tell me," Irene watched her.

"I'm thinking about taking James to Minerva with me. Is that alright with you?" Erin asked. "As long as you both agree on it," Irene replied.

She believed that she had no right to meddle in their relationship, but if they feel that they could, they should. "Where are you going, Aunt Erin?" Tommy asked, suddenly tugging at Erin's sleeve. "Please stay here."

This place was far smaller than the castle, and there were not many places to play.

And when he asked his mother to go back to the castle, she told him that they could not go back just yet, so they had to stay here.

If his aunt left too, he would have no one to play with.

Irene picked him up so that he sat on his lap. "You have to behave. Aunt Erin needs to work—I can play with you anyway." "But Grandma always stops us. She says you need to rest." Tommy pouted in complaint.

"That's right," Zachary echoed, not willing to let James leave either. "It's a little small here, but having so many people makes it lively. Moreover, Irene and I are doctors—we need good doctors since James was seriously hurt."

Tommy flashes a thumbs up at Zachary. "Well said, Uncle Zachary."

Zachary, however, told him, "You have to do your part too." "What part?" Tommy asked.

"Cry a hissy fit, and Erin would definitely stay," Zachary said.

Irene stared at Zachary for heartbeats. "You're really being strange. Did something upset you over at Lulu's?" He was being all mysterious with a kid too!

Zachary was speechless while Irene got up and pulled Tommy along. "Time to study."

"Can we not?" Tommy asked.

"Nope," Irene summarily refused—they hired a private tutor to teach him Franconian, but they had to call it off since there was not much space here.

And with Tommy taken away, Zachary had no way of asking James to stay, so he left tactfully. That was when James stopped him. "Wait."

Zachary wheeled on him. "What?"

The runaway groom (Irene and Isaac)

Chapter 996

James placed a hand on Erin's shoulder to direct her to his room, and she nodded. After she left,

James turned toward Zachary. "Sit."

"What is it?" Zachary asked, eyeing him skeptically.

"I can tell you're in a bad mood. Anything you want to say to me?"

Zachary smiled but said nothing despite taking his seat. "Come on. Don't jinx me like that." James did not press him, probably sensing that Zachary had trouble talking about it.

Zachary then added, "Let's go get a drink when you're feeling better." James nodded.

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In his room, Tommy was writing his own name on a notebook. Irene told him to learn it by the day and to make it look nice.

While he did, she stood by the bed to call Stan, but no one answered.

She put down the phone and returned to the table to check on Tommy's handwriting. Around an hour later,

her phone started ringing.

It was a return call from Stan, and when she picked it up, she asked, "Why weren't you answering?"

On the other end, Stan shot a look at Isaac before lying, "Mr. Jefferson is with the doctor. He can't answer right now." In reality, they were not at the hospital.

Isaac had paid a huge ransom and given off a major business from Remy to save James, and he had his phone on silent as they were just discussing it.

The matter was resolved and they were now on their way to the hospital, while Stan himself would be in charge of looking for Hector.

They had no idea where that cowardly wretch was hiding even now. "Really? What did the doctor say?" Irene asked.

Stan was speechless for a moment, wondering what he should say just then. "Give me the phone,"

Isaac suddenly told him.

Stan went over and handed it to Isaac. "It's the missus, sir." Isaac certainly knew, which was why he asked for it.

Taking it from Stan, he said, "The doctor said that I'm fine. Don't worry."

Irene then complained, "You told me not to follow you, and now I can't even call you to ask after you?" Isaac lowered his gaze. "I didn't say that."

Irene's fingers clenched over her phone. "I miss you. Come home soon." "Yeah," he replied softly.

Irene did not want to keep him either and hung up. Isaac then handed the phone back to Stan. "Let's go."

"Yes, sir," Stan replied.

Their car was already waiting outside and Stan helped him get in, and they headed to the hospital. They had already made the arrangements and would arrive on time as they traveled there now.

After they did, the doctor first performed a comprehensive examination of Isaac's eyes and determined that it was indeed an external factor causing retinal damage and loss of vision.

The doctors offered several suggestions, but each option would take at least a month.

As such, they filed the paperwork for Isaac to be admitted, and he lay down in bed after taking his medicine. After running around for a long while, he was definitely exhausted.

Stan stood guard outside alone.

The hospital was quiet in the night when a trio of men in white coats approached. Stan rose from the bench and asked, "Who are you people?"

"We're doctors. We're doing rounds at the moment," one of them replied.

Since they were pushing a cart of equipment, Stan opened the door. "Come in."

However, the instant he stepped inside, one of the men grabbed him from behind and restrained him while pressing a scalpel against his neck and threatening, "Don't move, or I'll slit your throat!"

The runaway groom (Irene and Isaac)

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Stan pretended to be absolutely afraid. "Okay, I won't move. Please don't hurt me." Hector pulled off his face mask then.

"Piece of sh*t," he snapped at Stan in disdain, before walking up to Isaac's bed, watching him as he said, "Your lackeys are just so incompetent."

Isaac did not answer as he calmly opened his eyes.

His vision was still dark, but he could imagine how savage and smug Hector's face would look right then.

"How lucky can you get, surviving a plane crash?" Hector said as he pulled a chair over to sit beside Isaac's bed. "I wonder how you're going to escape now, what with your blindness and an incompetent subordinate."

Isaac remained nonchalant. "Do you think you can stop me if I want to leave?"

"Still talking tough in this situation?" Hector laughed and licked his parched lips. "I've lost my life's work because of you! I'll take you down with me even if it kills me, get it?!"

Isaac simply ignored him as if he had completely expected this.

After all, Hector had been biding his time, waiting for the chance to strike. And Isaac gave him that chance!

Stan snorted coolly just then. "Business is war. You lack what it takes, and that's why you don't deserve anything." Hector wheeled on Stan, narrowing his eyes.

"Don't you see what's going on here?! I have you! You've got some balls, yapping at me!" Hector barked and turned toward his lackey. "Lil'A, straighten him out! The adults are talking here!"

"Yes, sir," Lil'A raised a hand, ready to slap Stan in the face... only for someone to catch his hand, just as his fellow lackey and Hector were all subdued by figures that sneaked out of the dark!

Isaac never once reacted even as Hector felt the barrel of a gun pressing on his skull, and he listened as everything unfolded with apathy—as he had from the start.

"You're such a fool, Hector," he said. "Did you think I'd let you hurt me twice?"

In fact, Isaac had deliberately brought only Stan with him to give everyone else the impression he had no one else with him. At the same time, he had arranged for many other bodyguards to protect him in secret.

"I was deliberately leaving an opening, and you really came because you really think I'd make it that easy," he continued evenly, but it was plenty intimidating to anyone listening!

It was only then that Hector realized he had fallen for a trap.

But he had no choice—how long would he be able to hide when he has nothing?

Even so, he was aggrieved—forget losing everything, he could not murder the person who made him suffer!

"Don't you get so smug, Isaac! What goes around always comes around!" Hector bellowed, his face contorting with hatred and savagery. "My only regret in life is not killing you with my bare hands!"

Isaac raised a brow nonchalantly. "Well, you're not doing it in this life. Even if I'll suffer for my actions as you put it, you're never living to see it."

Hector sprang to his feet, but before he could move further, the one aiming a gun on his head warned, "Not another move." At the same time, he felt the barrel pressing deeper into his skin.

"Fine, I admit I was lacking, but I doubt you'd really kill me!"

Hector was aware that Isaac was ruthless and outstanding for a businessman, but he would never kill. Isaac simply laughed. "Do I even have to?"

The runaway groom (Irene and Isaac)

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Hector's eyes widened. "What are you talking about?"

Isaac spoke calmly, as if he was just talking about the weather. "How did the pilots in that plane crash die?"

Hector was dumbfounded.

Even if he had only murdered the flight captain, he knew that Isaac had what it takes to have him charged for the co-pilot's death too.

However, he was not exactly innocent—he was planning to kill both pilots after they killed Isaac anyway, but his plan failed.

He killed the captain so that anyone searching for Isaac would presume his death and give up on searching while he searched secretly.

He thought he would reach Isaac first and kill Isaac without anyone knowing, while staging his death as if he died from the crash.

It was only regrettable that the plan failed!

"It's a life for a life," Isaac said flatly, leaving Hector clenching his knuckles and glaring at him so hard he could bore a hole in him!

"I'll haunt you forever, Isaac Jefferson!" Hector cursed Isaac. "You'll die horribly!"

Isaac did not even bat an eye as he grinned. "Do you know how much like a woman you're behaving, screaming hysterically like that? You're acting like a fishwife—if you're a man, act like it and don't be a sore loser!"

However, there was no way Hector would even bother after he had fallen so far. What was dignity when he was on the verge of death?

Isaac then chuckled. "By the way, I heard that you killed Ian Jefferson. I really wanted to thank you for eliminating the one I hated the most."

Even Hector's cheek was shaking from rage.

He wanted revenge against Isaac, to make him suffer... only to end up helping him!

"That's a lot of people you killed. It's definitely a death sentence, no?" Isaac said and turned toward Stan. "Take them away."

"Yes, sir," Stan said and marched the three men out of Isaac's ward, where they would be moved to the embassy and deported back to Zidonia.

Hector's crimes would undoubtedly earn him the death penalty, and Isaac would make sure of that even if it was not the case.

After everyone else left, Isaac remained seated on his bed motionlessly.

Hector's arrest was definitely a load off his mind, and he closed his eyes.

Later, Stan returned after settling the matter with Hector. "He's been deported. With the police and our people escorting him, he's never getting away."

Nonetheless, Isaac said, "There's always a chance as long as he's not dead. Don't let your guard down."

"Yes, sir," Stan replied.

At the same time, Isaac's attending physician came over to check on his eyes, "We will prep you for laser therapy later."

"Okay," Isaac replied.

"Are there any preparations required?" Stan asked.

"None. The patient just has to be there," the doctor replied.

Isaac had a simple meal in turn and took a break before going to therapy.

Stan stayed by his side constantly.

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Irene and Zachary sent James and Erin to the airport, since they would be heading back to Minerva together.

Zachary sighed—he had to admit that Erin had been very nice to James despite the latter's grievous injury.

He felt jealous even looking at them!

After their flight left, and Zachary headed with Irene, he asked, "Aren't you going to ask me what happened at Lulu's place?"

"That's your business, not mine," Irene replied. "Moreover, you made up your mind before you went, so why should I ask?"

The runaway groom (Irene and Isaac)

Chapter 999

Zachary then asked, "Isn't Lulu your friend? Aren't you going to ask after her?"

Irene shot him a look. "She's having it better than me, with Martin taking care of her." In fact,

Irene felt like things were a mess for her right now.

There was no telling how Isaac's treatment was going, and he was not letting her visit.

Eyes were so important to humans, after all, which left her with a nagging worry even though the doctors claimed that the condition was treatable.

Zachary could not deny what she was saying either. Irene

turned toward him and asked, "Finally giving up?"

Zachary reclined against his seat, looking nonchalant as he softly muttered, "Yeah."

"That just means you have nothing tying you down when you find someone you like," she told him. Zachary

chuckled, however, suddenly finding love pointless.

Once things changed, it would simply not feel the same way again.

Irene watched his despondent reaction in return. "As long as you understand." Zachary said

nonchalantly, "Love is pointless."

Irene was speechless, while their car returned to Zachary's mansion.

That was when Irene saw from the distance that someone was being restrained just as Zachary's phone rang. He

looked up after listening to it and saw that Barzel had returned.

He frowned slightly, wondering if the boy had spent all the money he gave and came to ask for more. Soon,

the car stopped, and Irene turned toward him.

Zachary said, "Take Tommy inside. I'll handle this."

Irene nodded, since she did not have the strength to get involved in others' troubles. She

alighted while holding Tommy's hand.

Barzel suddenly smiled when he saw the boy, but Zachary moved to block him out of view. "Did you spend all your money?" "No,"

Barzel said and handed Zachary a stack of notes. "Actually, I found a job."

Zachary frowned. "So soon?"

Barzel shrugged, saying earnestly, "That's the money for the hotel room after I've checked out." Staring

closely at him, Zachary asked, "Where are you staying, then?"

"My workplace has lodgings," Barzel replied.

Zachary studied him for seconds—he certainly had pride at a young age. Taking back

the money, he told the boy, "Just come back if you need more."

"But you don't trust me at all," Barzel replied. "Won't I trouble you, coming here?" "If you

knew that, why did you come here?" Zachary shot back.

"Would I find you if I didn't?"

Zachary raised his brow. "Don't ever come here if it's not important."

Barzel glared at him with a boyish stubbornness but said nothing else as he turned to leave.

Zachary watched as he left, thinking to himself that he would not even have bothered if Barzel's parents did not save Isaac. It was

obvious that Barzel was quite the rebellious child!

Zachary headed back inside his house, and the instant he did, he heard Tommy complaining, "Mommy, you said you'd keep me company! Why am I studying Zidonian and poems?"

"What else would we do? Do you think you can survive without Zidonian?" Irene asked in return. "Why

poems?" Tommy asked grumpily.

"Because it's traditional. Surely you have to know that much when you're an adult," Irene replied.

Zachary had had enough just then—opening the door, he leaned on the doorway and said, "Why are you pushing him? He's just a kid."

The runaway groom (Irene and Isaac)

Chapter 1000

Irene said, "Learning starts from childhood. Teaching him when he's as old as you are is pointless."

Zachary was speechless for a moment. "Who do you think you're talking to, Irene? It's a little disrespectful."

Irene shot him a look. "Not even Isaac would interfere with me educating my child."

Zachary was speechless again, and he remembered how his own mother had forced him to study when he was a child.

If his father had tried to say something, his mother would scold him too!

'Mothers all have high hopes for their children, do they not? And could I get upset about it?'

He remembered how kind and mild-mannered Irene used to be, too—how did things turn out like this?

"You're not adorable at all now, Irene," he said.

"I don't need you to feel that way," Irene shot back.

"But Isaac won't like it either," Zachary retorted.

Tommy smartly echoed, "That's right! I love Mommy when she's kind, and Daddy wants a domestic goddess."

Irene stared at her own son, speechless. "Where did you learn that?"

Zachary beat Tommy to it. "You know how advanced the internet is. Did you ever restrict his access?"

Irene could not say anything against that, knowing very well that she did not spend much time with her own son and family before.

But she had already resigned from work to spend more time with them, and she was now doing her best.

What more did she want?

Turning toward Zachary, she asked, "Could you not butt in while I'm educating my son?"

"Look, I'm not meddling," Zachary said, "but I should point out that you're already planning to live here permanently. Even the private tutor you hired was meant to teach him Franconian, which means he's attending a local school, isn't he? That begs the question—would the schools here teach him Zidonian poetry? Clearly not—"

"Even if he studies here, he should not forget his Zidonian roots," Irene retorted. "I'll teach him everything, from poems to idioms from our country, and it's not like we migrated here because I like it here. I'd admit this is a great place, but he's Zidonian and shouldn't be ignorant about his homeland's culture."

Zachary was left dumbstruck.

Shrugging and pursing his lips at Tommy, he said, "Do your best and listen to your mommy. She's right, and I can't save you. Just study well."

And with that, he left without a care, leaving Tommy alone and staring into Irene's eyes.

Tugging at Irene's sleeve, Tommy said, "Okay, Mommy. Let's study."

He had certainly learned to be nice, but that is children for you—once they realize no one has their backs, they become docile and compliant!

Irene sat down. "I told you to practice writing your name yesterday. Now, show it to me."

Tommy tamely did so, but it was not at all nice since he just started out.

Irene therefore did not criticize him. "Good, you can write your own name. It's not that pretty, but I'm sure you can do better soon enough."

Tommy's eyes lit up from the praise. "You think it's good, Mommy?"

Irene patted his little head. "Of course."

Tommy smiled happily.

On the other hand, since Irene had not brought any books over from Zidonia, she copied some poetry online and had them printed and laminated so that Tommy could refer to it just like a book while she taught him how to read and memorize the poetry.

"Is there anything you want to learn, Tommy?" Irene asked.

She personally believed, as an adult, that what she was teaching Tommy was necessary, but she would also respect the boy's opinion, supporting whatever it was he wanted to learn!

Tommy tilted his little head in thought.