

TV Show 291

Chapter 291: 48 Hours

Medical Center – Interns' Changing Room

After finishing his speech, Chief of Surgery Richard Webber left the room.

The group headed to the changing room, where they put on blue scrubs and white coats, stethoscopes hanging around their necks, officially stepping into their roles as surgical interns.

In a hospital, hierarchy is strict—even attire follows specific rules.

Interns and residents wear blue scrubs, while attending physicians wear dark blue ones.

"A 48-hour shift right off the bat? That's insane."

Bianca whispered to Adam, "It's way easier in internal medicine."

"That's surgery for you," Adam replied with a grin as he adjusted his coat.

"Only six women out of twenty surgical interns? That's a bit unfriendly," Meredith commented, glancing around the room.

"Has Harvard Medical School reached a 1:1 gender ratio already?" Adam asked curiously.

"..." Meredith was momentarily speechless.

In most industries, men still dominate—and the medical field is no exception. Male students still outnumber females significantly. A 14:6 ratio was already considered relatively inclusive, especially since this was general surgery, not gynecology.

Her complaint was more of an instinctive feminist reaction, but Adam's bluntness caught her off guard.

"That's nothing. One of the six women is even a model," Cristina scoffed, glancing toward Alice. "Seriously though, are we supposed to be impressed by that?"

"Alice isn't the model," Adam said with a smile. "If anyone here fits that description, it'd be her."

Following Adam's gaze, the group saw a tall, curvy blonde adjusting her hair.

"No way," Cristina said, surprised. "Aren't models supposed to be skinny and frail-looking?"

"Depends on the kind of model," Adam explained. "Those edgy high-fashion models, sure. But mainstream models usually have that classic 'tall blonde bombshell' look—it's more in line with conventional beauty standards."

"And how do you know so much about this?" Meredith asked with a teasing smile.

"I dabble," Adam replied modestly.

"Of course, he would know. Billionaires always do," Cristina remarked, her gaze shifting from Alice to the blonde bombshell, then to Bianca, Meredith, and finally herself in the mirror. Her tone turned a little sarcastic.

"Our group's really something. A billionaire turning doctor, a bunch of gorgeous women—it's like we're starring in a medical drama, *Our Days* or something."

"You watch *Our Days* too?" Adam asked, raising an eyebrow. "So, what do you think of Dr. Derek Lamore?"

At the mention of Derek's name, Meredith froze for a second.

"He's hot but kind of dumb. I mean, let's be real—he'd never cut it as a doctor in real life," Cristina judged.

"Ha!" Adam couldn't help but burst out laughing.

"The actor who plays Derek Lamore is Adam's friend—Joey Tribbiani," Bianca explained.

"Really?" Cristina looked genuinely surprised. TV actors always seemed so far removed from regular life, but considering Adam was a billionaire author, it made sense.

"Can I ask you something about Joey?"

"Go ahead," Adam replied with a grin.

"When he's talking and suddenly stops, tilting his head like he's deep in thought—did he forget his lines?"

"That's called the 'Smell-the-Fart' acting technique," Adam chuckled. "It's what actors do to buy time when they blank on their lines."

"I knew it!" Cristina smirked. "How'd he even land the role? You'd think an important supporting character could at least memorize his lines."

"Hehe." Adam dodged the question with another one. "You think he came up with the technique on his own? Nah, he learned it from the pros."

How did Joey get the role? Connections, of course—but that wasn't something he needed to share.

"Okay, Martin, Robinson, Bond, Hawkins!"

A hospital staff member began assigning interns to groups.

Four interns quickly stepped forward and followed instructions to meet their resident supervisors.

"Who are you assigned to? Meredith and I are with Bailey," Cristina asked.

"You too? I'm with Bailey as well," a slightly chubby guy interrupted before Adam or Bianca could respond. "At least we'll suffer together. I'm George O'Malley."

When Meredith and Cristina ignored him, he turned to the smiling Meredith. "We met at the bar last night. You were wearing a black dress with a slit and Roman sandals... And, no, I'm not gay, by the way."

"You sure about that?" Adam teased. "Most straight guys don't notice those details."

Sure, men check out women from head to toe—but remembering the exact style of her dress and shoes? That leaned a bit too far into meticulous territory.

"O'Malley, Yang, Grey, Stevens!" the staff member called out.

The chubby intern quickly followed Meredith, while the tall blonde model also caught up with them.

"He's got some serious lady luck," Adam remarked to Bianca, watching the four walk away. "Surrounded by women—it's like being in a harem."

"You're overthinking it," Bianca chuckled. "Too many women can be a bad thing. He might not be gay now, but give it time."

"True," Adam nodded with a grin. "If everyone starts treating him like 'one of the girls,' he might just get absorbed into the sisterhood. O'Malley seems a little soft—could be dangerous."

"And if it were you instead?" Bianca gave him a playful side-eye.

"Heh." Adam just smiled knowingly. "If it were me, I'd have them joining my team, not the other way around."

"Duncan, Samson, Turk, Fowler!"

Another set of names was called.

"Let's go," Adam motioned for Bianca to follow.

"Hey, I'm Chris Turk," a bald African-American guy greeted them enthusiastically. "Looks like we're all under the same attending—the Compassion Doctor."

"Adam Duncan."

"Bianca Samson."

They both shook his hand.

"Compassion Doctor? You mean Dr. Sydney Heron's nickname?" Adam asked.

"Yep," Chris grinned. "Total opposite of Bailey. Dr. Heron's super kind—loves to care for patients and colleagues alike. We're lucky."

Chapter 292: Killing the Chicken to Scare the Monkey

Medical Center.

"Hah, isn't this my group of interns?"

A female doctor in her thirties, with an average appearance and a bright smile, looked at the four of them. "Let me guess—you're Adam, you're Bianca, you're Chris, and you must be Stu, right?"

"That's right, that's right."

Adam and the other two nodded with a smile. The last one, a chubby white guy, had an ingratiating grin on his face, looking both comical and slightly creepy.

"I'm Stu Fowler. It's an honor to learn under you, Dr. Sheeran. Your smile is like the warmest sunshine, truly heartwarming. May I call you Sheeran?"

"Of course."

Dr. Sheeran Hiran's smile grew even sweeter. "We're all colleagues here. I just started three years ahead of you. From now on, we're friends—let's get along and improve together."

"That's fantastic, Sheeran!"

Stu cheered sincerely.

Adam and the others exchanged glances, looking at each other speechlessly.

Where did this guy come from? He was stealing the spotlight like crazy.

"Dr. Hiran, please assign us our tasks," Adam reminded her.

"Okay."

Sheeran glanced at Adam and smiled. "I've heard you love to learn, Adam. Here's the trauma department's handbook, a list of doctors' contact numbers, and your pagers. The nurses will call you whenever you're needed, and you must respond immediately. It's best if you run—sometimes, a few seconds can mean the difference between life and death for a patient. The sooner you arrive, the greater their chances."

Beep beep. Beep beep.

"Speak of the devil—follow me."

Sheeran's pager went off. She glanced at it and immediately started running.

The four interns quickly followed.

Rooftop

A medical helicopter slowly descended.

"What's the patient's condition?"

As soon as it landed, Sheeran stepped forward.

"Brian Tucker, 38 years old. Cardiac arrest. He's undergone CPR but remains unconscious..."

The paramedic quickly reported the situation.

"I know him—he was scheduled for a coronary bypass surgery with Dr. Green this Friday."

As she guided the others to wheel the stretcher into the building, she observed the patient. "Adam, go notify Dr. Green."

"Got it."

Adam responded and immediately ran downstairs.

"Holy shit!"

Chris, the bald one, and Stu, the chubby one, were stunned by Adam's speed.

Adam rushed to the nurse's station and had the nurse page Leonard.

Leonard arrived swiftly.

"Brian Tucker?"

Upon hearing the name, Leonard took the case seriously and hurried to the patient's room with Adam—Brian was part of his patient group.

The Complex and Interesting U.S. Healthcare System

The U.S. healthcare system is both complex and fascinating.

The relationship between hospitals and doctors is somewhat like that between department stores and brand counters or platforms and online writers—it's a partnership.

Doctors provide medical expertise, while hospitals supply facilities, equipment, residents, nurses, and other support staff. The two parties collaborate to generate revenue.

Of course, this only applies to attending physicians who have obtained independent medical practice licenses—doctors like Leonard.

Interns like Adam and residents like Sheeran, though they work under Leonard, are actually employed by the hospital and assigned to attending physicians.

Once residents complete their training and pass the attending physician's licensing exam, they typically have two options:

Stay at the hospital as a salaried attending physician. Hospitals employ a limited number of full-time attending physicians to ensure coverage when partnered doctors are unavailable. Since these partnerships aren't exclusive, a doctor might choose to work at another hospital when needed. Newly licensed doctors often lack their own patient base, so staying at a hospital allows them to build one before eventually opening their own practice. Open their own practice either inside or outside a hospital. If they have established a solid reputation and a patient base, they can rent office space in a hospital or elsewhere and operate independently. Leonard, for instance, rents a room in the hospital and runs his own practice. Over the years, he has built a loyal patient group, making him a business partner rather than an employee of the hospital. This setup means his income is significantly higher than that of a salaried doctor.

Because of this, doctors like Leonard strive to provide the best service to every patient in order to maintain and expand their patient base.

Back to the Case

"Adam, you'll be the primary doctor responsible for this patient's bed."

After stabilizing the patient, Sheeran began assigning tasks.

"Bianca, you handle the rounds."

"Chris, write the report."

"What about me?" Stu asked eagerly.

"Stu, the rectal exam unit is backed up with patients—you can go help."

Sheeran smiled sweetly.

"..."

Stu's face instantly darkened.

Adam found it amusing.

He understood exactly why he was assigned this case—since the patient was scheduled for a coronary bypass surgery on Friday, as the primary doctor responsible, Leonard could justifiably allow him to assist in the procedure.

Participating in an open-heart surgery right off the bat? That was something to brag about.

Six Hours Later – Hospital Cafeteria

Adam's group of four sat together with Meredith's group of four at a table.

The fierce blonde model-like woman, Elizabeth Stevenson—nicknamed Liz—was covering her nose, looking like she was trying hard not to vomit.

"This shift is like a marathon. You better eat something, or you won't last," said George O'Malley, a chubby intern with a slightly effeminate demeanor.

"I can't. I just can't."

Liz shook her head, looking miserable.

"What happened?" Adam asked curiously.

"Try doing 17 rectal exams in a row and see if you can eat afterward."

Liz looked devastated.

Adam's group immediately turned to look at the chubby Stu.

"You were doing rectal exams too?"

Stu, still stuffing his face with greasy food, looked up, his eyes shining. "Of course! I did 23!"

"..."

Liz immediately covered her mouth and ran off.

"Wow."

Stu remained unfazed. Watching Liz's figure as she ran, he grinned in a particularly sleazy way. "Heh heh heh... Who knew Liz and I had such a strong connection?"

Everyone else averted their eyes in discomfort.

"You guys hear about the attending physicians picking the best interns for a surgery on the first shift?" Christina chimed in, changing the subject. "I wonder which one of us will get chosen."

"With four of us, our chances are pretty good," Adam said with a smile. "Now we just have to see who gets picked first."

"Your group will definitely pick you," Christina shot him a glance.

"Not necessarily."

Adam shook his head. "Each attending has their own style. I heard your attending, Dr. Preston Burke, likes to 'kill the chicken to scare the monkey'—he picks the weakest intern or the one he finds most annoying and absolutely crushes them to make an example of them."

"Pffft!"

George, mid-bite, immediately spat out his food, his face turning pale.

Chapter 293: The Honor of the First Surgery

Medical Center – Indoor Cafeteria

"Is Dr. Burke really like that?"

George, the slightly chubby guy with a soft demeanor, was visibly anxious.

"That's what I've heard, but who knows if it's true."

Adam raised an eyebrow. "Why? What happened?"

"I think I offended him," George stammered, panicking.

"Man, you've got some guts," Adam said, giving him a thumbs-up. "It's your first day as an intern, and you already managed to piss off your boss's boss."

"George, what exactly did you do to offend him?" Christina asked, curious.

"It was about Tony, the patient I was assigned to. I couldn't get the IV needle in properly right away, so Dr. Burke took over and did it himself," George explained, frustration in his voice. "I just said, 'I bet you made mistakes when you first started too...'"

Clap, clap, clap!

Before George could finish, Adam started applauding.

"What's your problem?" George glared at him.

"Dude, you just threw shade at the attending physician in front of the patient. That's bold as hell!" Adam praised sarcastically, giving him two thumbs up.

"George, you shouldn't have done that," Meredith said, shaking her head. "Medicine has a strict hierarchy. You can't challenge a senior doctor's authority—especially not in front of a patient."

"Yeah," Adam added, twisting the knife. "And considering you couldn't handle the situation yourself, insulting the big boss was just asking for trouble."

Top surgeons like Leonard usually have their own clinics and partnerships with hospitals. Dr. Burke was no exception—he was even more well-known than Leonard and was close to the Chief of Surgery. There were even rumors that Burke would become the next Chief himself.

In medicine, skill and authority are everything. If an intern disrespects a senior doctor in front of a patient, any attending physician would be annoyed.

Who else would they take their frustration out on if not you?

"George, you're screwed," Christina said, shooting him a sympathetic look.

"Really? It can't be that bad..." George's face went pale. "I only made an offhand comment. Dr. Burke wouldn't hold a grudge over something so small, right?"

"Wouldn't he?"

Liz, who had just come back from vomiting, glared at him. "Dr. Hahn just dislikes me, and she's already made me clean bedpans 17 times—and she's just a resident supervising us. You, on the other hand, pissed off her boss. Think about it."

"I bet George will be the first among us to perform surgery," Adam said, smirking.

Dr. Burke was a renowned cardiothoracic surgeon and a rival of Leonard's.

Leonard had mentioned him to Adam plenty of times—especially the fact that both Dr. Burke and the Chief of Surgery, Richard, were African American and had their own tight-knit circles.

While Leonard had been overshadowed by Richard before, now the younger Dr. Burke was following closely behind, making it seem like they were systematically excluding the white doctors.

Based on what Adam had heard, he was sure Dr. Burke was going to give George a hard time.

Speak of the devil!

"Good afternoon, interns,"

A tall, well-built Black doctor approached them. Under George's horrified gaze, he made a beeline for him, folding his arms and smiling.

"Word spreads fast, but I wanted to deliver this good news personally," Burke said. "As you all know, the honor of performing the first surgery goes to the intern with the most potential. I have a procedure later today, and I need someone for it."

Christina, Meredith, and Liz all straightened up, trying to look as eager as possible, even though they knew this was probably Burke's way of getting back at George.

That's the power of surgery—irresistible, no matter the circumstances.

"You, George O'Malley!" Burke suddenly clapped George on the shoulder.

"Me?" George trembled.

"Yes," Burke replied with a sly smile. "You'll be performing an appendectomy this afternoon. Congratulations—enjoy it."

With that, he left, looking very pleased with himself.

"How is that a punishment?" Christina grumbled.

"Yeah, an appendectomy is super easy," Liz agreed. "If that's what it takes, I should've pissed him off too."

"Difficulty is relative," Adam said, nodding toward George. The soft-spoken intern was already sweating and staring blankly into space.

"Sure, an appendectomy is easy if everything goes according to plan," Adam continued. "But what if something unexpected happens, like sudden bleeding?"

Everyone fell silent.

In surgery—especially for rookies—unexpected complications are the worst.

They didn't have the experience to think things through on the spot. If something went wrong, they'd have to react instantly, or they could lose a patient's life right there on the table.

That pressure could crush a newbie. The fear of going completely blank or panicking was real.

This was why interns and even residents weren't allowed to operate without supervision from an attending surgeon.

If you performed well, your attending would let you do more on your own. It was both a sign of trust and a heavy responsibility since the attending was ultimately responsible for the outcome.

So, even if Burke's goal was to punish George and send a warning to the rest of the interns, he wouldn't risk giving him anything more complicated than an appendectomy.

Because if something went wrong, Burke was confident he could step in and fix it immediately.

But if it were a more complex surgery, things could get messy fast—and that risked making Burke himself look bad.

Why not give George a slightly more challenging procedure? Simple: Burke had done his homework. He knew George barely made it into the program and had a soft personality.

For a rookie like him, even a "simple" appendectomy would be enough of a challenge.

After lunch...

The interns went back to their hectic routines.

As the common joke among them went:

"We're interns—the bottom of the surgical food chain. We run tests, write reports, and pull all-nighters. Even if we drop from exhaustion, we can't complain. We've still got to buy coffee for the boss and smile while we're at it. It's brutal..."

"Adam, you're up for the next appendectomy," Leonard announced, walking over. "Come with me and get ready."

"What?!" Adam was stunned.

"Burke's not the only one doing appendectomies today," Leonard said, grinning. "The honor of performing the first surgery should go to the best intern, not someone caught up in a petty revenge game."

Chapter 294: The Bet in the Observation Room

Surgical Observation Room.

The transparent glass gallery was already filled with intern doctors.

They had all heard the news and made time to come and watch.

"Wasn't George supposed to perform the first surgery?"

Ruthless Liz frowned as she looked down at Adam, who was scrubbing in and changing in the operating room. "Why is it Adam instead?"

"I heard that Dr. Green and Dr. Burke don't get along," Christina whispered. "In order to let Adam perform the first surgery, Dr. Green rearranged the schedule, catching Dr. Burke off guard."

The hospital had a limited number of operating rooms. To ensure the most efficient scheduling, a blackboard was placed in the hallway. It used time as the X-axis and operating rooms as the Y-axis, dividing it into slots.

A designated person would arrange the surgeries accordingly, writing down the details—what time, which operating room, which attending surgeon, and which assisting doctors—all at a glance.

Dr. Burke had checked the board and confirmed that he could assign George O'Malley his first surgery. However, he had never expected Leonard to switch the schedule on him.

"Dr. Burke must be furious," Ruthless Liz clicked her tongue. "And that means Adam will be on his bad side, too."

"So what?"

Christina scoffed. "If an attending surgeon treats me like that—no, even if I offend the head of surgery—who cares? I'll just follow a different attending to another hospital."

"George, pay close attention. In an hour, it's your turn."

Ruthless Liz reminded him.

"Mm-hmm."

The slightly effeminate, chubby George sat in the front row, staring intently at the operating room below.

"Meredith, are you okay?"

Christina nudged Meredith, who had been silent and lost in thought the entire time.

"I'm fine."

Meredith forced a smile.

She was still in shock.

The epileptic girl she had been assigned was a neurology case, so her supervising resident, the strict Miranda Bailey, had handed her over to the neurosurgery attending—Dr. Derek Shepherd.

Then she realized—Dr. Derek Shepherd was the same man she had hooked up with at the bar last night and kicked out of her place that morning.

And he looked at her like she was standing there naked, even openly suggesting they continue their "relationship."

She had, of course, refused and expressed her deep dissatisfaction. But deep down... she felt conflicted. He was handsome, humorous, and authoritative—completely captivating.

The Betting Begins

"Ten bucks says he can't finish the surgery."

"Fifteen says he cries."

"Twenty says he has a complete meltdown."

Some of the interns started placing bets.

"I bet he succeeds—against all of you, with no limit on the amount."

Bianca stood up, turned around, and looked at the male interns making bets.

They were momentarily stunned.

"What? Afraid to bet?" Bianca smirked.

"Fifty bucks!"

"Seventy-five!"

"A hundred!"

One by one, the male interns raised their stakes. Being challenged by a beautiful female colleague—especially over a male intern they were already envious of—was something their pride wouldn't let slide.

"Can I bet on Adam succeeding?"

Christina raised her hand.

"Of course. We'll split the winnings evenly," Bianca nodded.

"Then I'm in, too," Ruthless Liz raised her hand.

"Count me in," Meredith, pushing aside her complicated thoughts, joined them.

In the corner, Alice curled her lips and glanced at Steven beside her. Her fingers twitched, but in the end, she didn't raise her hand.

If they were betting a million, she might have taken the risk of upsetting Steven to side with them.

She knew Adam's skills best.

He was excellent—beyond exceptional.

An appendectomy? He would succeed without a doubt.

Seeing that several female interns were betting on Adam, the male doctors who initially didn't plan to participate got fired up. They placed their bets on Adam failing.

It was no longer just a game—it was a battle of pride.

After all, they were all men. Why should Adam be the exceptional one?

The Surgery Begins

"Let's get started."

Leonard finished scrubbing in outside the operating room. Wearing a mask, he walked in with his hands up, allowing the nurse to help him put on his surgical gown. He smiled at Adam, who was already prepped and ready.

Adam nodded. Looking at the patient, whose body was draped except for the surgical site, he reached out steadily. "Scalpel."

The surgical nurse repeated his request. "Scalpel."

She handed it to Adam with practiced ease.

Adam took the scalpel and made a decisive incision. His confident and skillful movements instantly silenced the rowdy crowd upstairs.

A true expert only needed one move to show their skill.

"Forceps."

"Forceps."

Adam reached out again.

"Clamp."

"Clamp."

Before long, the appendix was removed. Adam expertly inverted the stump into the cecum, secured it, and proceeded to close the incision.

"Shit! How is he that skilled?!"

"Look at his suturing speed! His technique is insane! Is he really just an intern and not a fellow?"

The observing interns buzzed with disbelief.

Then, they all fell silent.

Dr. Burke was standing at the corner, watching. His gaze met Leonard's.

"Good technique," Dr. Burke muttered before walking away.

Aftermath and Consequences

"Dr. Duncan, that was amazing."

"Yeah, with suturing skills like that, you could make a fortune in cosmetic surgery."

The nurses praised Adam.

"George, you're in trouble."

Christina grinned as she collected her winnings with Bianca and the others. "The better Adam does, the more pressure on you. If you mess up even a little, Dr. Burke is going to tear you apart."

"..."

George looked like he was about to cry.

If he had known this was going to happen, he would never have talked back to Dr. Burke.

Now, all he could do was hope that his surgery went as smoothly as Adam's.

Unfortunately, the gap between people could sometimes be devastating.

One hour later—

Dr. Burke unleashed his fury on George.

"Get out of my sight, you idiot!"

"Somebody take him away—I don't want him in my OR!"

Chapter 295: A Real Man Never Looks Back

Observation Room – Operating Room

A few minutes earlier...

Unlike Adam, who performed surgeries entirely on his own while Leonard simply observed and exchanged looks with Dr. Burke for fun, things were different for George O'Malley, the chubby, timid intern. Taking a deep breath, he began performing an appendectomy under the guidance of attending physician Dr. Burke.

This was the standard process—an attending physician instructs, the intern operates. If they handle it well, they proceed step by step. If they struggle, they step aside. How much they're allowed to do depends entirely on how much the attending is willing to let go.

Leonard knew Adam's true capabilities, so he had no reservations about letting him operate solo, not even offering a single word of guidance.

Dr. Burke, on the other hand, had intended to use this surgery as a warning to others, so he didn't trust the timid, chubby George one bit.

"Use more force. Human muscle is tough—cut through it," Burke instructed.

However, as George successfully removed the appendix, Burke's expression became complicated.

According to his original plan, George was supposed to struggle, fail, and then be reprimanded harshly.

But with Adam setting the bar so high earlier, if George performed too poorly, it would make Burke's team look bad in comparison.

Worse yet, it could raise the question—why did the hospital assign the best intern to Leonard while giving him a weaker one? Was the hospital showing favoritism?

Even though Burke knew that wasn't the case, others might speculate.

This left him in a dilemma.

"Careful not to rupture the cecum."

Seeing George getting a little overconfident after successfully removing the appendix, Burke decided to give him a heads-up. He couldn't afford to let Leonard outshine him too much.

There would be plenty of other chances to make an example out of someone—this time, he'd let it slide.

George nodded in acknowledgment, but he didn't slow down at all. In his mind, he saw Adam's smooth, confident surgical movements and Meredith Grey's unwavering support for Adam.

"If Adam can do it, so can I!"

"Meredith, watch closely—I, George O'Malley, am a real man!"

A confident smile formed under his mask.

And then...

"You ruptured the cecum!"

Burke's expression darkened instantly.

He had initially planned to patiently guide George, but now? A lost cause.

Time to make an example out of him.

"He's bleeding now, and fecal matter is leaking out. What's your next move?"

"Uh... uh..."

George froze, completely stunned.

"My technique was just as smooth as Adam's... how did this happen?"

"Think!" Burke barked. "Start suctioning! Before he loses too much blood, locate the sutures!"

Turning to the nurse, he ordered, "Get him a clamp!"

"Blood pressure is dropping!" the nurse alerted.

George stood frozen, unable to move.

This kind of paralysis was common among rookies—extreme anxiety and fear shutting down their ability to function.

"Bury your fear and act! What are you waiting for? Start suctioning!"

Burke, despite his frustration, still upheld his duty as a mentor and gave George one last chance.

Unfortunately, George remained frozen.

The blood pressure monitor alarm went off.

"Dr. Burke?" The nurse's voice carried urgency.

"Get out of my way, idiot!"

"Someone take him out of my OR—I don't want to see him!"

Burke shoved the stunned George aside and swiftly took over, stopping the bleeding, stabilizing the patient's vitals, and suturing the wound.

George stood there with his hands still raised, shame washing over him as he glanced at his fellow interns observing from the gallery.

Moments ago, he really thought he could do this...

"He's a 007!"

"Yeah, 007!"

"What's a 007?"

"A license-to-kill agent for the Queen of England—he legally kills people!"

A murmur spread through the room.

Adam, who had just been enjoying his system rewards, glanced at the first person who spoke—an intern who got up and left without looking back, exuding a cool, aloof demeanor.

"Could he be a worthy rival?" Adam mused.

But as the intern disappeared from view, Adam quickly lost interest and returned to admiring the notification on his system panel:

+0.001 lifespan.

For the past 11 years, Adam had studied how the system worked. He had learned that performing good deeds himself earned him merit points, which converted into extra lifespan.

This was the first significant breakthrough in his plan to lead a simple yet extraordinary career in medicine.

+0.001 years might seem small, but this was just an appendectomy.

Back when he helped an elderly woman cross the street or massaged an old man's back for months, he had only earned +0.05. Even saving a reckless kid from running into traffic had only given him +0.01.

By comparison, a non-life-saving surgery granting +0.001 in under 30 minutes? That was an incredible deal.

If he could perform 50 surgeries, that would add up.

At a rate of 10 minor surgeries a day, in just five days, he could earn the same as months of minor good deeds.

Of course, there was no way an intern would get to perform that many surgeries.

But even at a rate of one surgery per day, working 300 days a year, he could earn 0.3 extra years annually.

At this stage, since he couldn't yet perform major life-saving surgeries, this reduced his lifespan consumption rate from 1 year per point to 0.7, significantly slowing down his losses and extending his life.

With more effort and more support from Leonard, by the time he became a full-fledged resident, he might just break even—gaining as much lifespan as he consumed.

That way, he wouldn't have to worry about dying young.

Now, the only question was—how much lifespan would he earn from assisting in surgeries?

Luckily, he was about to find out.

In a few days, Leonard had arranged for him to assist in a heart bypass surgery.

Adam predicted that participating in such a procedure should count as "personally doing good" and would likely grant points.

Probably not as much as performing a solo minor surgery, but over time, it would add up.

After all, there was no such thing as too much lifespan.

The First 48-Hour Shift Continues...

Late at night.

Bianca yawned deeply, shaking her head in an attempt to stay awake.

"If you're tired, take a quick nap," Adam suggested. "Doctors, especially residents, need to learn to grab rest whenever they can, or they won't last."

"Then how are you still so awake?" Bianca asked enviously.

"I have great stamina." Adam gave a reserved smile. "I can handle 48 hours without sleep."

"I can do it too! I'll grab some coffee." Bianca yawned again.

"Go easy on the coffee," Adam warned.

He remembered that in the future, Bianca's life spiraled out of control after she was diagnosed with cancer.

Of course, coffee itself wasn't the culprit, but excessive caffeine was a central nervous stimulant—too much of anything was bad, especially stimulants.

"Thanks," Bianca said gratefully, her eyes gleaming.

Suddenly, she didn't feel so tired anymore.

Chapter 296: A Bronze Disguised as a King

Medical Center.

The first round of the 48-hour shift had entered its first deep night.

Bianca's eyes became misty from just a single concerned remark from Adam. She stared at him, suddenly no longer feeling sleepy.

Adam chuckled silently, shaking his head in a wordless refusal.

This was a hospital—there were no secrets here.

He had no intention of leaving behind any leverage against him.

"Hey, Adam, guess who almost hit a home run in the on-call room just now?"

Bald Chris spread his arms wide, wiggling his body as he walked over.

"Almost? So, it didn't actually happen," Adam teased.

"Uh..."

Bald Chris's grin stiffened for a moment, but he quickly recovered, boasting, "That's only because she got paged. Otherwise, I definitely would've hit that home run. We only met less than twelve hours ago, and I already had my pants off."

"Who is she?" Bianca asked curiously.

"Kara, a nurse from Internal Medicine," Bald Chris replied eagerly. "She's Hispanic—absolutely gorgeous. At first, I was worried we were moving too fast and that I might scare her off, but then she shut me up and told me to take my pants off. That kind of confidence? So damn attractive."

Bianca glanced at Adam, a flicker of something unreadable in her eyes.

"I'm going to do rounds," Adam said, turning to leave.

He was in the hospital pulling long shifts to extend lives—not to gossip about nighttime escapades. Besides, he wasn't some divine being who could miraculously eliminate all diseases with a touch. It was best to stay out of these kinds of conversations.

"Dude, wait up!"

Bald Chris, still not done chatting, chased after Adam, leaving Bianca, whose excitement faded into drowsiness once more.

Nurse's Station.

"The patient in bed 4-B has post-op pneumonia. Administer antibiotics."

A cocky male intern was giving medical orders. Adam, suspecting this guy was a strong competitor, paused to listen closely.

Lu Xun once said: Keep your friends close, but your enemies closer.

"Are you sure about that diagnosis?" the nurse questioned.

"I don't know—I'm just an intern."

Without even looking up from the chart, the cocky intern scoffed, "I have a great idea. Why don't you go to medical school for four years and then let me know if the diagnosis is correct?"

The nurse fell silent.

Even though nurses often said, *Doctors diagnose, but nurses actually treat patients—nurses run the show!*—without that shiny medical doctorate, it was hard to argue back when a half-baked intern spoke with such arrogance.

"She has rapid breathing and a fever. It's a post-op complication," the intern declared confidently, seeing that he had "silenced" the nurse. "Go ahead and administer the antibiotics."

The nurse shot him a cold glance and walked away without a word.

Their job was to carry out orders. Doctors gave the directives, but they also bore the responsibility.

Who's afraid of who?

"Oh God, I hate nurses," the intern muttered, full of smug superiority.

Adam, witnessing the scene, couldn't help but chuckle.

At first, he thought this guy was a king—turns out, he was just a bronze.

"What are you laughing at?" The intern frowned.

"You might end up hating them even more," Adam said with a smirk. "Because if the nurses who didn't go to med school for four years turn out to be right, and you—who did—are wrong..."

"That's impossible."

The intern's expression changed.

"What's impossible?" Adam asked curiously. "The symptoms you just listed could also point to diaphragmatic inflammation, pulmonary embolism, or other unknown conditions. That nurse is experienced—she didn't get that way overnight. Yet you dismissed her without even examining the patient. Are you really that sure?"

The intern's face darkened.

If it were another doctor questioning him, he might have shrugged it off or even fired back with another jab.

But Adam's skills had been widely acknowledged since his flawless performance in his first surgery. Stories of his medical school brilliance and legendary internships had spread everywhere.

Even someone as arrogant as this intern wouldn't dare claim superiority over Adam—let alone mock him as a mere "nurse."

And if Adam was saying he was wrong... then there was a good chance he was wrong.

But admitting that in front of the nurse? No way.

The more he had just enjoyed belittling the nurse, the more humiliating it would be to backtrack now.

And just because there was a high chance he was wrong didn't mean he definitely was.

What if his diagnosis was correct?

With a scowl, the intern stormed off.

"That was awesome."

A pretty young nurse looked at Adam with admiration in her eyes.

"Thank you."

The older nurse nodded at Adam in gratitude.

"You're welcome," Adam said with a smile. "My mom is a nurse."

After building some goodwill with the nurses, Adam left the station.

"Adam, why do that?" Bald Chris asked, catching up.

"What do you mean?" Adam raised an eyebrow.

"Doctors stick together, nurses stick together," Bald Chris said. "That's just how it works. Even if Alex was wrong, we should've acted like we didn't notice. How could you call him out in front of the nurses?"

The cocky intern's name was Alex—one of the twenty surgical interns in this batch, though assigned to a different team.

"Kara, there you are."

Adam suddenly smiled and looked behind Bald Chris.

"...You were absolutely right, Adam!" Bald Chris did a complete 180, nodding righteously. "Nurses deserve respect! They're not beneath doctors—no way! Every role is essential. Hospitals couldn't function without nurses!"

He turned around—only to find no one there.

"You scared me," Bald Chris grumbled, catching up to Adam again.

"Are you scared?" Adam asked casually, flipping through a patient chart.

"I... yeah."

Bald Chris had been about to say "no" but hesitated, glancing around nervously. He had just started hooking up with Nurse Kara, and he definitely didn't want to ruin his chances over some dumb comment about nurses.

"Good," Adam patted his shoulder. "Don't think you can badmouth nurses just because Kara isn't around. Hospitals have no secrets. Anything you say about nurses will reach her ears eventually. Then you can forget about that 'home run.'"

On the flip side, Adam's stance in defending the nurses would also spread. It would undoubtedly earn him goodwill from most of them.

With Dr. Leonard backing him, Dr. Sherry watching out for him, and the nurses willing to support him wholeheartedly, why should he worry about offending some bronze-tier intern who could be dismissed at any moment?

Chapter 297: The Grim Reaper Kid

Medical Center.

24 hours into a 48-hour shift.

Hospital Cafeteria.

Everyone sat together, looking exhausted—everyone except Adam.

"They call me 007, huh?"

George, the chubby guy with a slightly whiny voice, muttered bitterly.

"No one calls you 007," one of the female interns responded weakly, eyes closed, barely able to muster any energy.

"Don't lie to me. I heard them whispering in the elevator."

George had an expression that said, I know the truth, so stop trying to comfort me—but actually, I'd love it if you kept comforting me.

"Don't let it get to you," Adam said with a smile. "That guy Alex, the first one to call you 007, is actually a textbook example of a 007 himself."

"What?"

George was stunned.

The other interns, including Cristina, perked up, their exhaustion momentarily forgotten as they eagerly listened.

Adam recounted the incident where Alex had misdiagnosed a patient.

"That bastard!" George fumed. "He's so careless, and yet he had the nerve to make fun of me first?"

"I didn't expect him to be that kind of person."

Meredith sounded disappointed.

Women have an almost supernatural intuition when it comes to spotting guys who treat them as backup options. Alex had always looked at Meredith with a certain sleazy glint in his eyes. Yet, because of his bad-boy charm, she hadn't found him entirely repulsive—until now. His unprofessional behavior, though, was a deal-breaker.

"Haha."

Seeing Meredith's reaction, George suddenly laughed.

Everyone turned to look at him in surprise.

Cristina was blunt as always. "George, have you lost your mind?"

"Lost my mind?" George shook his head, still smiling. "Sure, I botched my last surgery and got stuck with the 007 nickname. But Alex is also a 007—that's hilarious! Compared to him, what do I have to be upset about? Besides, I just finished comforting one of my patients. Their happiness is my happiness."

"How exactly did you comfort them?"

Adam looked at him suspiciously.

"You know Tony? The one getting a coronary bypass?"

George explained, "He and his wife were worried, so I told them Dr. Burke is incredibly skilled and that the surgery would be totally fine. I even guaranteed—"

"You what?! Seven times over?!"

All seven people at the table shouted in unison.

"What?"

George blinked in confusion.

"Are you related to the hospital director?" Adam asked, intrigued.

"Uh, no?"

George was baffled. "Why would you think that?"

"Because if you're not, then how the hell did you even get into this program?" Adam sighed. "No matter how skilled a doctor is or how confident they are in a surgery, there's always risk involved. That's why, as a doctor, you never guarantee an outcome to a patient or their family. That's basic common sense! You didn't know that?"

"Mrs. Savage was so worried... I just wanted to reassure them," George stammered. "And Dr. Burke said the risk was minimal, so I figured—"

"Don't stress. You probably won't be that unlucky," Liz, the tough one, reassured him.

"Yeah, if Dr. Burke says the risk is low, then it really is low," Meredith added.

"Wouldn't be so sure about that."

Cristina smirked. "007s bring death wherever they go. And have you noticed how unlucky George is? If it were anyone else, nothing would go wrong. But since it's George..."

She trailed off as everyone turned to glare at her. Seeing the clear annoyance in their eyes, even Meredith looked displeased. Cristina had no choice but to sigh and apologize.

"Sorry, George. I get cranky when I'm tired."

George forced a smile but was clearly sinking into an existential crisis, now convinced he might actually be a harbinger of death.

"Dr. Nazi hates me even more now," Liz suddenly spoke up, bringing up her own frustrations. "Mr. Jones has fragile blood vessels and needs an IV for antibiotics. I should have done a central venous catheter. I knew I shouldn't wake her up, but I'd never done one before..."

"So you woke her up anyway," Adam guessed, amused.

"Yeah." Liz sighed. "She did it for me, then told me that next time, unless Mr. Jones is literally dying, unless his toes are curling up for a toe tag, I'd better not wake her up again."

Liz propped her head up with one hand, looking utterly drained. "She already hated me. Now she definitely hates me. I'm probably going to get stuck doing rectal exams every day for the rest of my internship."

"No complaints here."

Cristina raised a hand.

Interns rotated rectal exam duties, so if Liz got stuck with them permanently, that meant less work for the rest of them.

But it also meant Liz would probably get a humiliating nickname.

Poop-Scooper?

Butt-Gremlin?

For a female doctor, such nicknames would be devastating.

"Meredith, how's your epileptic patient doing? I heard she had a seizure in the middle of the night."

Adam asked casually while eating.

Doctors needed to share information. No one could see every case firsthand, so learning from each other's experiences was crucial.

But only through discussion—no unauthorized involvement.

For instance, Liz had mentioned the central venous catheter earlier. Adam could have done it easily. If it had been George or another doctor, they probably would have jumped at the chance to help, especially in front of a female colleague. Showing off was practically a male instinct.

But Adam hadn't even offered to help.

Because it wasn't his place.

Liz's supervisor was Dr. Miranda Bailey, aka the "Nazi." Her superior was Dr. Burke.

If Liz had an issue, she had to report to Bailey. If Bailey couldn't handle it, then she would escalate it to Burke.

Adam, despite his skills, was just another intern in a different group. If he interfered, it would be a serious violation of protocol.

And if something went wrong? He'd be in deep trouble.

Thinking you're too skilled to mess up?

That was the kind of mistake only a suspected nepotism hire like George would make.

Adam wasn't that reckless.

Besides, he didn't need to show off to impress women. More often than not, the opposite was the problem...

"Don't even bring her up!"

Meredith scowled. "It was like the Boy Who Cried Wolf. First, she faked a seizure to get me to fix her hospital room's TV because she couldn't watch some stupid pageant.

Like, seriously?

I'm a doctor, not a repairman!

Then, when she actually had a seizure, I thought she was faking again and showed up late. Almost didn't save her in time."

She clenched her fists. "And then Dr. Shepherd scolded me for not monitoring her more closely.

I hate patients like that!"

There was something else she didn't say out loud.

She hated Dr. Shepherd even more.

Just yesterday, he had been making flirty, borderline inappropriate comments, practically devouring her with his eyes. But the moment things went wrong, he turned on her instead of offering any support.

The high-stakes pressure had nearly broken her. Even though she'd ultimately saved the patient, the sheer terror of what almost happened had been so overwhelming that she'd run outside and thrown up.

Damn men.

Not even a shred of decency.

Beep! Beep! Beep!

Suddenly, every pager in the room started going off at once.

Chapter 298: Competition, Competition!

Medical Center

Cafeteria

The beeping of pagers filled the air.

"What's going on?"

Christina asked in surprise.

"Something big must be happening. Let's go."

Adam got up and motioned to the others.

The surgical interns scattered throughout the cafeteria were already moving as well.

As they passed the nurses' station, Adam once again spotted Alex, the cocky intern who acted like a top-tier surgeon but was anything but.

"Did you page me again?"

Alex asked, a mix of guilt and annoyance in his tone.

"Yes."

The senior nurse reported expressionlessly, "The patient in 4-B is still experiencing shortness of breath."

"Antibiotics take time to work."

Alex had a bad feeling but stubbornly insisted.

"They should've already taken effect."

The senior nurse countered.

She knew the effectiveness of these common medications even better than some doctors.

"She's old, practically an antique."

Alex, clearly irritated, caught the skeptical look in the nurse's eyes and noticed Adam and the others watching him. He coldly added, "If she's still breathing, she should be grateful. I have patients downstairs, ones who aren't from the Civil War era. So stop paging me."

With that, he shoved the chart back into the nurse's hands and walked off with an air of nonchalance.

"How can he be like that?!"

Liz, fierce as ever, couldn't accept it. She stepped forward, ready to confront Alex.

"Don't."

Christina pulled her back, advising, "We need to get to the meeting. This isn't our problem. If something goes wrong, someone will take care of him."

"Let's go."

Adam called out and headed toward the meeting room.

"Adam!"

Liz quickly caught up to him, blocking his path with wide, disappointed eyes. "Shouldn't we do something about this? That's a patient's life on the line."

"She's experiencing shortness of breath, not a life-threatening crisis."

Adam frowned. "If her condition worsens, Alex's attending physician will handle it. We're in a different team. We don't have the authority to interfere."

"But..."

Liz's sense of justice flared up. She knew Adam was right, but she was still unwilling to let it go.

"There's no 'but.'"

Adam said calmly, "If you're really concerned, go talk to Alex's attending or their superior."

Liz hesitated.

Snitching in the workplace was a major taboo. No one liked someone who did that.

She was already not in her attending's good graces. If she went over her team's boundaries to report Alex, she'd completely ruin her reputation.

She had a strong sense of justice, but she wasn't stupid. She had hoped Adam would step up instead.

But to her surprise, he didn't buy into it at all. Instead, he deflected it back to her, hitting her right where it hurt.

"Come on, let's just get to the meeting."

Meredith pulled Liz along, trying to calm her down. "Alex already made it clear he doesn't want to be paged again. If the patient's condition changes, the nurse will page his attending directly. It'll be fine."

"I just hate how they're treating her. Just because she's old, does that mean she doesn't matter?"

Liz vented as she reluctantly followed. "We're all going to get old one day. Would we want to be treated like that?"

Adam glanced at her, suddenly feeling a strong sense of aversion toward this beautiful, fierce, and seemingly kindhearted blonde.

He had studied psychology and had seen many cases like this before.

People like Liz, who acted like saints, often lacked principles and boundaries.

Today, she despised Alex for treating an elderly patient like she was already dead.

Tomorrow, she might fall hopelessly in love with him. And by then, everything that happened today would be completely forgotten.

This wasn't just speculation.

Self-righteous people always felt a need to "save" others. But good people didn't need saving. So, they often found themselves drawn to bad ones. The worse the person, the stronger their urge to "fix" them.

And in that process, the first person they lost was always themselves. To save one "bad" person, they'd abandon all their previous principles—even sacrifice good people if necessary.

Meeting Room

Everyone gathered.

"Does anyone know what this is about?"

"No idea."

"It's probably not bad news. After all, they can't punish all of us at once."

"Good point."

The room buzzed with speculation.

Adam sat there, flipping through patient files.

Christina pulled out a banana and started practicing her suturing technique on it.

"You've got some real skills there."

Stu, the chubby intern, grinned lecherously.

"You want to try?"

Christina stabbed the suture needle deep into the banana, lifting a single eyelid as she stared at him blankly.

"There'll be a chance."

Stu smirked, completely unfazed by the implied threat.

As a doctor, he was used to people practicing sutures on bananas. It didn't trigger any uncomfortable associations for him.

"First shift is almost over. Want to grab a drink later?"

"Oh, come on."

The female interns rolled their eyes in unison.

Adam chuckled. He knew that in the past 24 hours, Stu had asked every woman in the program the exact same thing.

His strategy was simple: cast a wide net, hope for the best.

The outcome? Obvious.

With his short, chubby build and borderline creepy demeanor, he had definitely left an impression.

Even Liz, the self-proclaimed savior of all, couldn't be bothered to "redeem" him.

"Heh."

Stu just laughed it off, taking their eye-rolls as encouragement. His persistence was truly something.

"Good morning."

Just then, a handsome middle-aged doctor walked in and greeted everyone. It was Dr. Derek Shepherd, the attending neurosurgeon.

"Good morning."

Everyone responded, though Meredith's expression immediately shifted.

"I'm about to do something surgeons rarely do," Dr. Shepherd said as he walked toward the group, his gaze sweeping across them. "I'm asking you interns for help."

The room fell silent.

"I have a patient, a little girl named Katie Bryce. I still can't figure out what's wrong with her. The medication isn't working, and all the tests and scans have come back normal. But she keeps having sudden, severe seizures."

He paused before continuing, "She doesn't have much time left. If I don't find the cause soon, she's going to die."

His words hung heavy in the air.

"That's why I need your help. My perspective alone is limited. I need fresh eyes—different ways of thinking—to crack this case and figure out what's making Katie sick."

The interns exchanged glances, their competitive instincts kicking in.

"I know you're all busy and exhausted, so I'm giving you some motivation."

Dr. Shepherd smiled.

"Whoever finds the answer gets to be my surgical assistant."

The room instantly charged with energy.

"Katie will need surgery, and the winner will get a chance to do something no other intern gets—assist in a high-level operation."

Excitement surged through the group. Eyes gleamed with determination as they silently communicated the same thought:

Competition. Competition!

Chapter 299: The Demeanor of a Great Doctor

Conference Room.

"Dr. Bailey will send you all Katie's medical records. Time is running out, everyone."

Dr. Shepherd gestured for the assistant to place twenty copies of the medical records on the table for everyone to take. "If we want to save Katie's life, we need to act fast."

With that, he turned and left.

The interns immediately rushed forward, each grabbing a copy of the medical records.

Adam was the fastest, securing his copy first and quickly flipping through it.

Just as Dr. Shepherd had said, if this surgery were to proceed, it would be an advanced procedure—far more complex than the coronary bypass surgery Leonard had been planning to have Adam assist with.

This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, extremely rare.

"Meredith, let's work together."

Cristina, the most ambitious of the group, whispered to Meredith, "You're Katie's primary doctor. You've been taking care of her from the start, so you definitely know more details. If we work together to find the answer first, our chances of getting into the surgery will each be 50%..."

"I can work with you, but I don't want to do the surgery."

Meredith looked completely uninterested. "You go ahead."

"You're joking, right?"

Cristina was both shocked and excited, unable to believe what she was hearing.

For a surgery of this caliber, even resident doctors would be envious, let alone interns. That was why Dr. Shepherd used it as both a temptation and a motivator, pushing the exhausted interns to rack their brains for a solution.

Yet, here was Meredith, a surgical intern herself, willing to give up such a rare opportunity just like that?

"I don't want to operate with Dr. Shepherd."

Meredith said with obvious distaste.

"What's wrong with Shepherd?"

Cristina immediately sensed something was off between them and shot Meredith a questioning look.

"If we find the answer, you do the surgery. Deal?"

Meredith asked impatiently.

"Deal."

Cristina was overjoyed. She grabbed Meredith's hand and pulled her toward the library. "Let's go right now."

With a case this complicated, there was no way to solve it without digging through books.

Adam closed the medical record and also walked out of the room.

Cristina glanced at Adam and, without hesitation, pulled Meredith into a run.

Among the twenty interns, she had always considered herself the best.

But when it came to Adam, that confidence disappeared instantly.

Now, she had to catch up.

This rare, high-level surgery was a crucial turning point.

And she had the advantage—at least for now.

As they reached the hallway corner, Cristina suddenly stopped and turned around, only to see Adam standing before Dr. Shepherd, smiling confidently.

"Dr. Shepherd, I have an idea."

"Come on, you've got to be kidding me."

Cristina couldn't believe Adam had already figured something out. But an unsettling feeling crept over her, and she found herself frozen in place, anxiously watching their conversation unfold.

"Let's hear it."

Dr. Shepherd's expression was somewhat intrigued.

He hadn't expected someone to come to him with an answer so soon after he had just given them the task.

If it were really that easy, what did that say about him?

"Based on the patient's records, we can rule out hypoxia, kidney failure, and acidosis. The CT scan came back normal, so we can largely rule out a tumor."

Adam spoke steadily. "Her white blood cell count is normal, there's no fever, and the spinal tap showed no abnormalities, so we can also rule out an infection."

"I know all that."

Dr. Shepherd interrupted. "Tell me your conclusion."

"I suspect an aneurysm."

Adam said.

"The CT scan showed no bleeding, the patient has no headaches, no neck pain, no history of toxin exposure, no pregnancy, and no recent trauma."

Dr. Shepherd shook his head. "Medically, there's no evidence to suggest an aneurysm."

"But she enjoys gymnastics, and her records mention a past fall and sprained ankle."

Adam explained. "A fall could potentially cause an aneurysm to rupture."

"Yes, but the chances of that happening are one in a million—and even then, it's only theoretical."

Dr. Shepherd countered.

"Is a one-in-a-million chance really that small?"

Adam smiled. "Isn't it still bigger than zero? Right now, we have no explanation for her condition. If every test has come up empty, then even the smallest possibility is worth considering. What harm is there in running another scan to confirm?"

Hospital diagnostic procedures require medical justification.

Tests can't be performed arbitrarily because every scan ends up on the patient's bill.

This system prevents hospitals from conducting unnecessary tests just to overcharge patients.

And when the cause of an illness remains unknown, even running a test may not help—minor abnormalities can be so subtle that they go unnoticed.

A small aneurysm rupture was exactly the kind of condition that could be easily overlooked.

Dr. Shepherd stared at Adam, momentarily dazed.

For a brief moment, he saw the shadow of someone else in Adam.

MRI Room.

"Damn."

Dr. Shepherd had brought Adam to run a scan. When the image appeared on the screen, revealing a tiny fissure, he blurted out, "Subarachnoid hemorrhage. It's small, but it's there—she's bleeding inside her skull."

A smile spread across his face.

As a top-tier neurosurgeon, he wasn't afraid of intracranial bleeding—it was just another surgical challenge. The real problem was when they couldn't find the cause.

"Adam, how did you figure it out?"

Dr. Shepherd looked at Adam with a complex expression.

"I listed all possible causes and eliminated them one by one."

Adam smiled.

When he first opened the medical record, a 3D model of the human body had formed in his mind, allowing him to reference the vast medical knowledge he had absorbed from books. Through constant mental simulation and elimination, he quickly arrived at the most probable conclusion.

"Well done."

Dr. Shepherd nodded.

As a top surgeon, he understood the level of talent and effort behind Adam's seemingly casual explanation.

"Thanks."

Adam reminded him, "So, about assisting in the surgery?"

"That's yours, of course."

Dr. Shepherd closed the file and grinned. "I'll go inform Katie's parents now. The surgery is scheduled for this afternoon. See you in the OR."

"See you in the OR."

Adam beamed.

Dr. Shepherd took a few steps before turning back. "You remind me of someone."

"Who?"

Adam asked curiously.

Dr. Shepherd simply smiled and walked away without answering.

Earlier, when he had told Katie's parents that he was out of options, they had threatened to seek another doctor—someone who wasn't easy to get an appointment with.

That doctor's reputation and status far surpassed his own, particularly in solving rare and difficult cases.

If the patient had transferred, he wouldn't have felt too embarrassed—it was understandable when dealing with a doctor of that caliber.

Now, however, Katie would likely stay under his care.

But the solution had come from an intern.

It left him with a complicated feeling.

He wasn't sure whether to be grateful for having such a talented intern or to wish Katie had indeed gone to that legendary doctor instead.

He had never seen an intern this skilled before.

Perhaps that great doctor had once been just as extraordinary in his youth.

Chapter 300: Dr. House

Medical Center.

News spread rapidly throughout the hospital that Adam had come up with a solution, which was recognized by Dr. Sheppard, and that he would be joining an advanced neurosurgery procedure in the afternoon.

The surgical interns, who had just started studying Katie's medical records and were preparing to make their own breakthroughs, were left completely stunned upon hearing this news.

Even the most well-educated among them could only express their shock with a single expletive.

Green Clinic.

"Well done!"

Leonard had also received the news. Around noon, he called Adam over, his face beaming with delight.

Everyone in the hospital knew who had connections and who had been brought in through personal relationships—it was no secret.

For example, the surgical director's incompetent brother-in-law worked in the hospital's administrative department, often embarrassing the surgical director.

But out of respect for the director, most people in the hospital turned a blind eye as long as things didn't get out of hand.

Although Adam's relationship with Leonard wasn't as blatant, it was clear to everyone that Adam was one of Leonard's people.

If Adam failed, people would undoubtedly accuse Leonard of favoritism.

But if Adam proved to be exceptionally talented, it would also bring Leonard a great deal of prestige.

"Burke is probably going to be upset again," Leonard said with a schadenfreude-filled smile.

"Why?" Adam asked, puzzled.

"Sheppard was once a renowned physician in Boston," Leonard explained. "Do you know why he came to the Medical Center?"

"Family reasons?" Adam guessed. "Or career-related?"

"I don't know about any family reasons," Leonard said with a chuckle. "But in a few years, Richard is set to retire."

"You mean Dr. Sheppard is here to compete for the position of Surgical Director?" Adam suddenly understood. "Dr. Burke was originally the only candidate for the role, but now a strong competitor has appeared—and that competitor just successfully solved a difficult medical case..."

"Guess who invited Sheppard here?" Leonard asked with an amused expression.

"The Surgical Director!" Adam blurted out.

"Exactly!" Leonard praised. "Adam, how did you figure that out?"

"The only people with the authority to invite Dr. Sheppard are the Surgical Director, the Dean, or members of the hospital's board of directors," Adam analyzed. "I haven't had much interaction with the Dean or the board, but I can tell that the Surgical Director isn't the type to willingly relinquish power.

"I've also heard that in recent years, Dr. Burke's reputation has been growing, and everyone assumed he would be the next Surgical Director—even he believed it. But the current director still has several years before retirement."

"Retirement?" Leonard scoffed. "The hospital and the surgical department are his entire life. Here, he has control over everything. Do you think he can handle such a drastic change? I bet he can't even bear the thought of it.

"When the time comes, even if Burke is ready to take over, the director might not step down. As long as his health allows and the board doesn't force him to retire, he could keep working indefinitely."

"So, he brought in Dr. Sheppard to create competition and keep Burke in check. That way, his own position remains secure," Adam concluded.

This kind of power play had been repeated countless times throughout history between emperors, crown princes, and royal family members.

"But isn't Dr. Burke one of the director's people?" Adam was still a bit confused.

"Sheppard is also one of Richard's people," Leonard explained. "Richard mentored him, and they have a close relationship."

Adam nodded in understanding.

Both candidates were "insiders," so no matter who ultimately got the position, the power would stay within their own circle—just like a royal court maneuver.

"Putting aside Burke's frustration, this is a great opportunity for you," Leonard said with a smile.

"Sheppard is a renowned neurosurgeon. You'll learn a lot from this advanced surgery, and in the future, it will be even easier for me to get you involved in major procedures."

"I'll do my best," Adam said with a smile.

They continued chatting for a while, mostly with Leonard explaining the hospital's complex power dynamics.

Before leaving, Adam suddenly remembered something and asked, "Earlier, Dr. Sheppard mentioned that I reminded him of someone. Leonard, do you know who he meant?"

"Someone you resemble?" Leonard was momentarily stunned. After asking for more details, he immediately blurted out, "Dr. House!"

"Dr. House?" Adam was surprised. "You mean the famous Dr. House?"

"That's right," Leonard confirmed. "He's the Head of Diagnostics at Princeton-Plainsboro Teaching Hospital in New Jersey. He specializes in medical deduction.

"His diagnostics department gets an annual budget of three million dollars, and he personally hires three highly skilled doctors to solve complex medical mysteries.

"Any one of their cases, with a little write-up, could turn into a high-impact medical paper. Anyone who trains under him can easily become a department head in another hospital—it's a dream opportunity for many doctors."

"What are the requirements for getting in?" Adam asked, intrigued.

"Interns and residents can apply as assistants, and attending physicians can also join if they're highly capable," Leonard said with a smile. "But it all depends on Dr. House's interest.

"He's known for being eccentric, but with your talent, if you applied, you'd likely get in. That said, I wouldn't recommend it."

"Why not?" Adam asked curiously. "Is there a problem?"

He knew Leonard wouldn't discourage him unless there was a serious issue.

"Of course there's a problem," Leonard said with a laugh. "Dr. House is brilliant, but he's also extremely unconventional.

"He's willing to do whatever it takes to solve medical mysteries—even if it means breaking the rules. He's been taken to court multiple times and has nearly lost his medical license on several occasions.

"If he weren't so famous and valuable to the hospital, he would have been fired long ago. Even so, Princeton-Plainsboro sets aside fifty thousand dollars every year just for his legal expenses, in case they need to defend him in court.

"We often joke that Dr. House must be blessed by God—his luck is just that incredible. Any other doctor doing what he does would have been ruined instantly."

After hearing that, Adam immediately dismissed the idea of training under Dr. House.

With his abilities and the platform Leonard provided, he could advance quickly without taking such a risk. There was no need to gamble his medical license for the sake of an internship.

From what Leonard described, Dr. House had all the hallmarks of a "main character."

Adam might also be a protagonist in his own story, but since his life wasn't being filmed as a TV drama, he wasn't about to bet on having the same plot armor.

As for just tagging along with House, hoping to learn from him while staying out of trouble?

No way. Even if House had a protagonist's luck, that only applied to himself. The people around him were the ones who suffered collateral damage.

The risks far outweighed the rewards—Adam would have to be crazy to train under a "main character" like that.

No matter how brilliant Dr. House was, it wasn't worth considering.