

## TV Show 401

### Chapter 401: A Miracle Descends

Half an hour later, Dr. Bailey, having finished arranging care for her other patients, walked past the room and stopped in her tracks, surprised.

"Huh? They're still trying to save him?"

"Because he still has a chance to live," Adam replied, continuing chest compressions.

"Another unit of epinephrine!" he called out.

"Yes, Doctor," the nurse responded, quickly injecting the dying patient.

"How long has this been going on?" Dr. Bailey asked, glancing at Adam. She could sense something emotional in his movements as she stepped forward to check the patient herself.

"Dr. Duncan's been at it for 34 minutes," the nurse replied, checking the time.

"How many rounds of epinephrine and atropine have you given?" Dr. Bailey pressed.

"This is the third round," the nurse said, casting a quick look at Adam.

"Dr. Duncan, stop," Dr. Bailey said, shaking her head.

In the standard protocol, if one round of meds didn't work, you declared the patient dead right then and there. Anything more was just a waste of resources.

"He's still got a shot," Adam insisted, still pressing down rhythmically as he looked at Dr. Bailey. "You said it yourself—only when we say he's done is he really done."

"Do you know him?" Dr. Bailey asked, frowning slightly.

"No," Adam shook his head. "But I want to save him."

He knew what Dr. Bailey was getting at. If this were a friend or family member of a staffer, bending the rules and burning through resources like this would be quietly tolerated. They wouldn't give up until the very last second.

Three rounds of meds? That's for regular families. But if it were someone important—or their loved ones—it wouldn't matter if it took six rounds, ten, or even twenty. As long as there was hope and no one was ready to throw in the towel, they'd keep going.

How else did Adam come across that four-hour resuscitation record? Ordinary people didn't even get a chance to be part of something like that!

And why did Leonard pretend not to notice Adam cozying up to him, even playing along happily? Simple—Rachel and her three daughters were a handful, and not one of them had any interest in medicine or taking over his network of connections.

Think about it: in a situation like this, whether you're one of the hospital's own makes the difference between life and death! Leonard, fully aware of this, was tearing his heart out for his girls.

"He's your patient, Dr. Duncan. It's your call," Dr. Bailey said after a pause, giving Adam a look before heading out.

She didn't push back any further. Truth be told, if she didn't have a stack of surgeries waiting for her, she'd probably have stayed to help Adam see it through to the end—a doctor's final duty.

She'd had moments like this herself once. A sudden pang of emotion, a desperate need to save a patient she didn't even know, despite everyone telling her to let go. Protocol said to give up, but she wouldn't. Couldn't.

Over time, after seeing so much life and death, that spark had faded, nearly vanished. But watching Adam now—this familiar scene—stirred something in her. That last "Dr. Duncan" she called out was her quiet way of saying she finally saw him as the real deal.

An hour later.

"Still going?"

"Still going! It's been 98 minutes straight."

"Dr. Duncan hasn't stopped for a second."

"They should've called it ages ago. This is just wasting resources."

"Yeah, what, does he think he's God's eldest son, the savior of the world or something?"

"Or maybe he's just showing off his stamina?"

Word of Adam's ongoing efforts spread through the hospital like wildfire. Most people were whispering about it in corners.

"My husband Bob's a great driver," the crash victim's wife said from her hospital bed, rambling on as Cristina examined her. "This pickup cut us off. He saw something in the road and tried to swerve—it all happened so fast. We were having such a perfect morning, and then, just like that..."

Cristina didn't even bother responding.

"How's my husband Bob doing?" the woman asked for the umpteenth time.

"He's in surgery," Cristina said flatly, her face blank.

"You've got a problem with me?" the woman pressed.

"No," Cristina replied. "I just wish you'd stop with the stories and rest. I'm not a cop."

"What's that supposed to mean? Everything I said is true—you don't believe me?" The woman's voice rose.

"It's the police's job to figure out the truth," Cristina said, still expressionless. "But no, I don't buy it. Your son next door told a completely different story."

"What did Scotty say?" the woman asked, suddenly tense.

"He said you two fought over breakfast. Your husband was in a rotten mood, blew through three red lights on the highway, got passed by someone, lost his temper, and started chasing them down. It wasn't about dodging something in the road—he was trying to ram the car in front of him. They kept evading, but when he finally caught up, he yelled and slammed right into them."

Cristina gave a cold laugh. "Now the guy he hit is basically dead. And you—those injuries on your back, your collarbone, humerus, third and fourth ribs—all those healed fractures? Plus that big yellow bruise over your kidney and the hematoma around it? No way that's from 'just now' in the crash or 'falling last week' like you claimed. The evidence is crystal clear. The truth is right there—you can't just spin a story and make it go away. Your son says your husband had it coming. That he abused you. Right?"

"No!" the woman cried out in despair. "It's not like that!"

"He's been hurting you for years, killed someone today, and nearly got you and your son killed too. Why are you still defending him?" Cristina asked, genuinely baffled.

"Doctor, have you ever been in love?" the woman shot back instead of answering.

Cristina froze for a second.

Seeing her reaction, the woman perked up, tilting her head. "Have you ever loved someone?" Her expression screamed, If you had, you wouldn't ask that.

Cristina sighed inwardly. Pitiful people always have something hateworthy about them. "Love has its limits," she said, her face still a mask.

The woman fell silent. Clearly, her love for her abusive husband hadn't quite crossed into no-limits territory.

Back in the room, Adam's resuscitation efforts pressed on.

Cristina, Meredith, George, and Izzie, done with their own tasks, wandered over one by one.

"I've never seen him like this," Izzie said, marveling.

"This is his moment," Meredith murmured.

"He's trying to pull off a miracle," Cristina said, her tone detached. "But miracles are miracles because they're not supposed to happen."

"I hope Adam makes it happen," George said. "Someday, we might need a miracle too."

"There's a heartbeat!" the nurse shouted, staring at the monitor as the numbers jumped from zero and kept climbing.

The crowd watching erupted in gasps and chatter.

A miracle had descended.

Chapter 402: What a Shout! Medical Center

A miracle unfolded.

"Unbelievable."

"He's actually alive..."

"Let's not get ahead of ourselves. After being comatose and near death for so long, even if he's saved, he's either brain-dead or a vegetable. We poured so much effort and resources into this, and this is the result? Might've been better to just let him go."

"That's true in most cases, but there's still a chance he could wake up and be normal. What happened to him was a miracle, after all. And how do you know he doesn't want to live?"

"Yeah, isn't survival the strongest human instinct?"

"Easy to say until it's you in that situation. Then you'd be praying for a doctor like Duncan to show up."

"..."

The crowd around them started buzzing with chatter. Sure, a few had their doubts, but most people gave Adam's life-saving efforts a thumbs-up. On top of his looks, wealth, stamina, strength, charm, and medical skills, Adam's ethics as a doctor now earned him widespread respect.

As someone pointed out: no matter what people said out loud, deep down, everyone had their own scale of judgment. If they ever faced a situation like this, Adam Duncan would be the doctor they'd all hope to have.

"Page Dr. Shephard."

After listening to the patient's chest with his stethoscope, Adam let out a long breath. He'd actually done it. But this wasn't the time to celebrate just yet. The patient's heart was beating again, and now

the focus shifted to the brain. After such a prolonged coma and near-death state, the big question was whether the patient's brain function was still intact.

And in that area, Dr. Shephard, the hospital's top neurosurgeon, was the expert they needed.

Word of the dramatic scene spread fast. Dr. Shephard, summoned by the page, arrived in no time. After a thorough check, he smiled. "So far, things look promising. But we still need to run a transcranial Doppler, EEG, evoked potential tests, a CT scan, and an MRI. If everything comes back clear, then we just wait for him to wake up on his own."

"Got it," Adam nodded.

"Great work, Dr. Duncan!" Dr. Shephard clapped Adam on the arm, then started applauding. Clap, clap, clap! The nurse who'd been by his side throughout the ordeal joined in, clapping hard, tears streaming down her face as she beamed with joy. She felt like she'd earned a piece of this victory too.

Clap, clap, clap! Outside the room, the doctors, nurses, and curious patients who'd gathered to watch finally joined in the applause.

Adam began running the brain function tests on the still-unconscious patient. The staff at the testing stations—who usually bent over backward to rush his requests—had already heard the news and worked even faster than usual.

By noon, Adam had all the results in hand and couldn't help but smile.

"Dr. Duncan, is it good news?" the nurse asked.

"Yeah, it's good news," Adam said with a grin. "Barring any surprises, once he wakes up, everything should be back to normal."

"That's amazing!" the nurse exclaimed. "This really is a miracle!"

"It sure is," Adam chuckled. "He's in your hands now—keep a close eye on him."

"Don't worry," she assured him. "I won't leave his side for a second. The moment he wakes up, I'll call you."

"Great, thanks," Adam said before heading out.

Cafeteria

"Well, if it isn't our miracle doctor!"

"Adam, you're incredible!"

"You're the real deal!"

"..."

Liz, Meredith, and the others showered him with praise. Bianca's eyes sparkled with a look that practically screamed, "You're not getting out of letting me come over tonight." Good thing Alice hadn't picked today to spring her "revenge plan," or it'd be a total showdown later.

"Luck!" Adam said modestly.

"Luck?" Bianca shot back. "Sure, some might call it that. But would any of them keep fighting for over an hour to save someone already declared dead? Without that kind of pressure and persistence, would this miracle even have happened?"

"Exactly," the others chimed in. "Adam's effort and determination are what made this miracle possible."

"How's he doing? Brain function okay?" Christina asked, keeping her cool as always.

"All the tests are pointing in the right direction," Adam said with a smile. "I think he'll wake up and be just fine."

The group let out a collective sigh of awe.

"What are you all doing?" Adam suddenly leaned back in his chair.

"Huh?" Everyone blinked, confused.

"Someone just pulled off a miracle," Adam said, dead serious. "Shouldn't that someone get a little more praise?"

"..."

The group couldn't help but laugh at Adam's blatant, "I'll play humble, but don't you dare stop complimenting me" vibe.

Bianca, unfazed, snapped out of her daze and burst out laughing before launching into a full-on rainbow of flattery. Liz and Meredith pitched in too, though their praise was less over-the-top. Christina, meanwhile, rolled her eyes so hard they nearly got stuck.

It took a while for things to calm down.

"It's all that drunk driver's fault," George piped up. "The guy's a total alcoholic—drank himself into cirrhosis and got on the transplant list. No liver for him, though. Now his son might have to give up half of his own."

"Might?" Liz jumped in. "Scotty still hasn't decided? The liver regenerates! Even if he gives up half, it'll be back to normal in two months. That's his dad—how's that even a question?"

"Not so fast," Adam countered. "Donating's a choice, not a must. Yeah, the liver can grow back, but the surgery's risky. And even if it regenerates, is it really the same as before? His overall health would still take a hit. In a loving, tight-knit family, sure, it's a no-brainer. But with a dad like that? It's normal he's hesitating."

"He said his dad deserves what he got," Christina added quietly.

"Liz, you're handling his dad's surgery, right?" Adam asked.

"Yeah, why?" Liz paused, then laughed. "Wait, you don't think that's why I said what I did, do you?"

"You tell me," Adam said, giving her a long look. "You only talked up the perks of the surgery, not a word about the downsides. Sounds like a sales pitch. You sure there's no bias there?"

"No way!" Liz protested. But when everyone turned to stare, her next denial just wouldn't come out.

Beep, beep.

Beep, beep.

"Is that him?" All eyes went to Adam's waist.

He checked his pager, grinned, and bolted toward the patient's room. Christina and the others followed close behind. This was the moment to witness the miracle—how could they miss it?

Patient's Room

"Dr. Duncan, he's starting to respond!" the nurse said, thrilled.

"Got it." Adam stepped up to the bed, checked the patient, and gently called out, "Mr. Dean? Mr. Dean?"

"S... S..." The patient's eyelids fluttered, his mouth opening slightly as he mumbled.

"What're you trying to say?" Adam leaned in to listen.

Liz and the others held their breath.

"S~o~n..." Mr. Dean struggled to get the word out.

"He's thinking of his son!" Meredith thought she'd cracked it.

But she was quickly proven wrong.

"Son, of..."

The group's expressions turned weird.

"Son, of, the..."

Finally, Mr. Dean opened his eyes, weak but furious, spitting out, "Son of the bitch!"

That must've been his last thought before the crash knocked him out...

Chapter 403: The Flexible Neck

Medical Center.

Ward Room.

As Mr. Dean, the patient, let loose a colorful string of curses, the shouts of this "Son of the Beach" echoed through the room.

Everyone broke into smiles.

That spirit!

His brain function was clearly just fine!

"Some people were saying it'd be better to just let him go," Liz quipped. "But if they heard this, they'd know exactly how much he wants to stick around."

"With something like this, how could anyone leave without letting off some steam in person?" Meredith said with a laugh. "Maybe it's that fire that's kept him going this whole time."

"I never thought I'd find someone cussing so... delightful," George muttered.

"Pretty normal," Cristina chimed in. "Because here, it's the sound of life—the voice of the soul!"

"What about that jerk?"

After a good venting session, Mr. Dean finally calmed down enough for Adam to run more tests. Still, he couldn't stop grumbling about the road-rage guy.

"He's still in the OR, waiting for his son to decide whether to save him," Liz blurted out, quick as ever.

Mr. Dean froze for a second, then snarled, "Serves him right! If you ask me, why drag his kid into this mess? Even if they save him, he's spending the rest of his life in prison—I'm suing him for attempted murder!"

Out on the highway, weaving recklessly, trying to ram other cars, and causing a crash? Yeah, that's attempted murder alright.

Adam didn't say much, just kept his focus on the exam, staying unusually low-key.

A doctor's job is to heal and save lives.

Anything else? Best to steer clear.

Once you start picking sides or mouthing off, there's a good chance the opposing side might hold a grudge—or worse. Even if it doesn't get that far, stuff like this happens way too often in hospitals.

No point wasting time or energy on it.

Leave God's work to God and Caesar's to Caesar.

Attempted murder? That's for a judge to decide.

Beep beep.

Beep beep.

Liz glanced at the pager on her hip, said a quick word, and hurried off.

"Scotty's decided to donate his liver to save his dad."

Cristina followed her out—she was handling the culprit's wife.

The group scattered, each with their own pile of work to tackle.

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2:00 PM

Adam's phone rang out of the blue. It was Rachel.

"Of course I can help. What's up—something wrong with the baby?"

Rachel had asked him to book her an OB-GYN appointment and keep it hush-hush from Leonard. Adam agreed, but his tone was laced with concern.

Normally, she'd go to her family doctor for routine checks. Only if they couldn't handle it would they refer her to a big hospital.

"No, no, everything's fine..." Rachel rushed to explain over the phone. "It's just that those OB-GYNs aren't exactly... friendly."

"Come over now then. You good on your own? Alright, stay safe. Call me when you get here."

After hanging up, Adam's lips twitched into a smirk.

All the OB-GYNs weren't friendly?

Translation: Rachel was the unfriendly one.

But hey, pregnant women and big tempers? Par for the course.

Rachel showed up soon enough. Four months pregnant, her belly just starting to show.

Adam greeted her with a grin. "Rachel!"

"Adam!"

Her eyes lit up when she saw him, and she threw her arms wide open.

Adam sighed inwardly and went in for the hug.

But then something felt... off.

Rachel wasn't letting go. And was that... weird breathing near his ear?

"Ahem," Adam coughed lightly. "Alright, Rachel, let's not squish the baby."

"Oh, it's fine. The doctor said to just be careful..." she replied, her tone dripping with subtext.

"..."

Adam's mouth twitched again.

He was starting to see why those OB-GYNs weren't "friendly."

The awkwardness was thickening, and Rachel still hadn't let go. Adam had to pull out the big guns.

"Rachel, keep this up, and Leonard's gonna walk in any second."

"Ah!"

She jolted, eyes snapping open as she released him, glancing around nervously.

"What's really going on?" Adam asked.

"What do you mean?" Rachel's eyes darted away.

"All the OB-GYNs aren't friendly?"

He wasn't letting this slide. If he set her up with another doctor and something awkward happened, it'd be his embarrassment too.

"Um..." She tried to dodge.

She turned her head. He followed.

She turned it again. He kept up.

After nearly twisting her neck off, she finally caved under Adam's relentless, 360-degree neck-tracking stare—paired with his "just come clean" look.

"Fine, fine! I'm four months pregnant, and lately, I've been really... you know..."

"They were all male OB-GYNs?" Adam cut in.

"Yeah, all hot male OB-GYNs~" Her eyes glazed over dreamily.

"Got it. Totally normal—hormones going wild," Adam said, half-laughing, half-exasperated.

"Ha! You're a doctor, you get it, right?" Rachel beamed, relieved. "Lately, everything feels like spring's in the air. Last weekend, I hit up every store, sat on the lap of every mascot in a cartoon costume. Then I went to the OB-GYNs, and every single one made me want to... flirt like crazy."

"And then they kicked you out, huh?" Adam grinned.

"Yeah!" Rachel huffed. "What, am I not attractive to them at all? So heartless!"

"You're a patient. A pregnant patient. They're doctors," Adam said, deadpan. "What did you expect?"

"Alright, forget them."

Rachel shook her head, grabbed Adam's hand, and gave him a suggestive smile. "So... how you doing?"

"..."

Adam was now 100% sure her hormones were off the rails.

"Ow!" Rachel yelped. "Adam, what the heck?"

"Just snapping you out of it. You're Rachel, not Joey!"

He gently swatted her hand away. "If you keep this up, how am I supposed to refer you to an OB-GYN? Forget male doctors—I'm not even sure female ones are safe now!"

"I don't mean to!" Rachel pouted, genuinely upset. "It's all these stupid hormones! You're my friend and a doctor—you should help me. Like Phoebe—she's a mess, but at least she tried."

"What'd she do?" Adam asked, curious.

"She sent some 40-year-old creep to my place to 'fix my problem,'" Rachel said.

"And then?" Adam's jaw dropped.

"I kicked him out, obviously!" Rachel snapped. "I don't even know him! Plus, he was hideous. I'm not that desperate! I don't need a boyfriend right now, and I don't want one. I just want one perfect night—no strings, just... you know, with someone I like who gets how to handle it. Simple as that."

She locked eyes with him. "So, Adam... how you doing?"

"..."

Chapter 404: A Chill Through the Heart, Heart Tossed Away!

Art comes from life.

Adam was starting to get a deeper appreciation for that saying now.

A flirty pregnant woman was throwing him sultry looks while tossing out some classic, cheesy pickup lines.

This scene...

It was very artistic!

But too bad Adam wasn't that kind of guy.

"Sorry, Rachel."

Adam shook his head. "I'm good. My love life's pretty stable, so I can't help you out with that."

"Seriously? For real?"

Rachel wasn't buying it.

"Of course it's real."

Adam nodded firmly.

Monday through Saturday, he spent most of his time privately discussing medical stuff with Bianca.

Now Alice was jumping in with some serious enthusiasm, demanding to join the party.

Sundays were for giving Peggy plenty of inspiration.

End of the month? Heather would fly in from Texas, and they'd either hang out in New York or hit up Boston to catch up with good friends Juno and Karen.

Occasionally, Max would even bug him for advice on Peppa Pig plotlines.

And when charity work popped up, Caroline was always super eager to invite him to Ellis Manor to oversee things.

His love life was solid.

No way was he about to stir up trouble just for a little temptation.

Rachel claimed she only wanted something "indescribable."

But Adam didn't believe her for a second.

Alice was a walking cautionary tale right there in front of him.

Rachel wasn't some kid who couldn't pick a side—she'd definitely want it all in the end.

Adam had zero interest in being the dad to Ross's kid.

Plus, he was good friends with both parents. No way was he going to hurt the kid—not even unintentionally.

The spark in Rachel's eyes dimmed instantly.

"What about the baby daddy?"

Adam changed the subject. "He's the one who started this mess. What's he up to?"

Work as a doctor had been so hectic lately that he barely kept up with Chandler and the gang, let alone Ross.

All he knew was that Rachel and Ross had no plans to tie the knot. Leonard's push for a wedding had flopped, and now he had to watch his first grandchild grow up as a "bastard."

Leonard had ranted to Adam more than once about what a jerk Ross was.

"I asked him already," Rachel said, annoyed. "He's all hot and heavy with that Monica chick. Now they're even sending holiday postcards together."

"No way!"

Adam's jaw dropped. "How long have they been a thing? And they're already at that stage?"

In the U.S., relationships have pretty clear boundaries.

First date? A goodbye kiss.

Second date? You can dig into deeper topics and get a little closer.

Third date? That's the unofficial home run.

After that, you hang out for a bit and figure out if you want to take it further—like officially becoming a couple.

Then it's moving in, engagement, marriage, divorce, remarriage, divorce again, remarriage...

It's like the stages of some epic cultivation journey—early, mid, late, peak, perfection, grand perfection, half-step whatever, and a dozen more titles.

Even before moving in, there are little milestones.

Like meeting each other's friends.

Or sending holiday cards as a couple.

That's a big, obvious sign.

"Two months, tops," Rachel griped.

"Monica brought it up?" Adam asked with a grin.

"Of course she did," Rachel scoffed. "Ross nearly freaked out. He stammered through some rant about what stage their relationship was at, and in a sweaty panic, he just handed over his apartment key to Monica."

"Ha!"

Adam chuckled.

What started as something short of living together was now barreling straight toward it.

"You know what the funniest part is?"

Rachel unloaded on Ross—the guy who "got her knocked up"—with sharp, gleeful venom, almost overpowering the hormones practically spilling out of her.

"The key he gave her? It was his only one. Sure, it got him out of the mess for a sec, but then he was locked out of his own place!"

"Haha!"

Adam couldn't help but laugh out loud.

Ross was something else.

Take Ted, for example—another guy who went from sweet kid to total player. Ted could charm a girlfriend into forgetting everything, even after dumping her via voicemail on her birthday in front of all her friends and family. Then he'd win her back, only to dump her again on her next birthday.

What kind of game was that?

Ross, though? He gets spooked by a simple "Where are we at?" and falls apart.

No talent there.

No wonder his ex-wife—who swung the other way—used him like a total tool. Even now, he was stuck helping raise her and her wife's son. He couldn't even buy the kid a G.I. Joe without them chewing him out.

What's that?

Your son can't play with Barbies?

What are you scared of?

You looking down on us or something?

"But wait, it gets better," Rachel said, getting more fired up. "He had to call someone to change the locks just to get back into his apartment. And right as they're doing it, Monica shows up..."

"Oof, that's brutal!"

Adam could already picture Ross's mortified face.

"Nope, still not the worst of it," Rachel said, cracking up. "When Monica questioned him, Ross froze. Out of options, he blurted out the one thing he never wanted to say: 'I love you.' Pushed their relationship even further."

In the States, "I love you" is a big deal.

It's usually something you say after moving in together, right before getting engaged.

Once it's out there, the relationship either moves forward or crashes.

Like that one night Leonard randomly dropped it on Penny.

Or when Ted met Robin and blurted it out on the spot.

"I'm guessing that's not the end of it, huh?" Adam said, grinning.

"Hahaha, nope!"

Rachel, belly out and hand on her hip, kept going. "You know why he said it? Because he asked us for advice first, and we told him to! He didn't even want to—originally, he was just gonna say he loves being with her."

"I love you" versus "I love being with you."

Totally different vibes.

"Monica warned him not to say that second one," Rachel said, still laughing. "Because to a woman, if she's ready to take things further and you hit her with that? It's like slapping her across the face."

"Then what?"

Adam stepped up to steady her, playing along.

"The absolute funniest thing happened," Rachel said, covering her mouth until she could stop laughing. "So he forces this awkward smile and says, 'I love you,' right? And Monica's response? 'I love being with you too.' Can you imagine Ross's face? He totally misread the room! Hahaha!"

It's like when you're not into someone, but they keep saying stuff.

Eventually, you start catching feelings, confess, and then realize you were way off.

Ouch.

That sting? A chill through the heart, heart tossed right out.

"You feeling better now?" Adam asked with a smile.

"Yeah, I'm good."

Rachel reined in her laughter, rolling her eyes. "What, you think I'm like that all the time? I've got this under control, okay?"

"I believe you," Adam said with a nod, though he still figured he'd take her to see an OB-GYN.

Yup, preferably one who wasn't too good-looking.

Chapter 405: Creepy When You Think About It  
Medical Center.

After dropping Rachel off with the OB-GYN, Adam stepped out.

"Head to Eighth Avenue—there's a specialty shop there."

"Got it."

"What color? Whatever, just pick what you like."

"Make sure it's wrapped up tight—no peeking from the outside."

"Yeah, and hurry!"

After hanging up with his assistants—Aida, Lisa, and the ever-reliable "Tool Guy #3"—Adam shook his head and muttered to himself, "Only in a TV drama world, right? Anywhere else, I'd probably get decked for this..."

But hey, a sickness needs a cure, and you've gotta treat it right.

Rachel, you're lucky you've got a friend like me!"

While Adam was over here hyping himself up, an organ donor from Wicks Hospital rolled in on the other side.

George was on intake duty.

"Family been notified?"

"Yeah, they're an hour out. Should I page you when they get here?" Nurse Olivia asked, her face blank as ever.

Yup, that Olivia—the one who hooked up with Alex, passed the "charm bug" to George, and made things awkward.

But they're coworkers. Can't avoid each other forever. These moments were bound to happen.

And why was Olivia, the one who messed up, the one giving the cold shoulder? Well, she'd apologized, then hinted at wanting to pick things back up with George—only to get blatantly ignored by him in front of everyone.

"Fair enough. Do they know what's going on right now?" George asked casually, checking over the organ donor.

This one was brain-dead—heart and other organs still good to go. They'd signed a donation agreement beforehand, so here they were, prepped for harvesting. Multiple organs, including the heart, were headed to six patients across three states.

George's job? Routine check, then call the time of death.

"They just know we're still 'trying to save them,'" Olivia replied, clearly uninterested in the patient. She brushed it off and pivoted back to their drama, her tone pointed. "I think it's better to hear the bad news upfront—helps you move on faster, don't you think, George?"

George played dumb, pressing his fist into the patient's chest. He wasn't expecting a reaction.

But holy crap—he got one.

The "brain-dead" patient moved.

"Did you see that?" George shot a look at Olivia.

She didn't react, so he tried again, pressing his fist down. The patient twitched again.

"She's got involuntary brain responses! Her brainstem's still active! She's not fully brain-dead!"

"We'll take it from here. Thanks," said the surgeon in charge of the extraction, strolling in with an assistant.

George explained what he'd seen, even showing them.

"Probably overlooked," the surgeon said dismissively. "But once the cortex is gone, the brainstem follows. Death's inevitable—it's just a matter of time. We'll wait, of course."

"But don't you think—"

George started to suggest maybe they could still save her, but the middle-aged surgeon cut him off.

"She was already dead when she hit the OR."

George stood there, stunned, watching them wheel the not-quite-brain-dead patient away. "But she's still alive right now..." he mumbled.

No!

This isn't right!

Adam had fought for over an hour to save a patient, pulling off a miracle. And here George was, knowing this patient wasn't fully gone, just watching her get rolled into the OR to have all her organs yanked out?

No way!

His mind screamed it, but his feet wouldn't budge.

The guy was a senior doctor. George was just an intern—what could he say? The surgeon would shut him down in two seconds flat. Chasing after them wouldn't change a thing.

Sweat beaded on his chubby forehead as he wrestled with himself.

"Adam!"

Out of the corner of his eye, he spotted a familiar figure and yelled.

"What's up?"

Adam heard him and turned.

"Get over here, quick!" George waved frantically.

Adam's eyes widened. He bolted over at full speed.

In a hospital, speed is life. Running's just part of the gig.

Forget Running Man—they should make Running Docs!

George spilled the story fast.

"You sure?" Adam locked eyes with him.

"I'm sure," George nodded.

"He's not lying," Olivia added, dropping her attitude for once.

"Alright. George, go grab Dr. Shepherd. I'll stall them," Adam said, then took off after the team.

A patient who wasn't fully brain-dead—someone they might still save—getting treated as a done deal and wheeled into the OR for organ harvesting?

Just because she'd signed a donor agreement?

Just because she wanted to do some good?

Why not try harder to save her?

Was it really hopeless?

Or did they just not want to—ignoring the obvious signs on purpose?

And why? Oh, maybe because six patients across three states were waiting for her organs!

The more you think about it, the creepier it gets!

"Hold up!"

Adam caught up and blocked them. "Mind if I take a look?"

"Yeah, I do," the surgeon snapped. He clocked Adam as George's backup. If it were another attending, he'd have stepped aside, no questions. But Adam? Just an intern.

"What are you doing?"

The surgeon glared as Adam hooked his foot around the gurney's wheel, stopping it. His assistants kept trying to push.

"I'm checking her," Adam said, leaning down.

Sure enough, just like George said, she still had neural responses. Not fully brain-dead.

"Don't make a fuss. Yeah, she's twitching, but she's in an irreversible coma. Dr. Hans at Wicks already checked her," the surgeon sneered. "Relax—we'll wait for her to flatline in the OR. We know the drill."

"But Dr. Shepherd hasn't checked her yet," Adam said calmly, still blocking the wheel. "We've called him. He's our neurosurgery attending here. Since you're doing the extraction in our hospital, he needs to sign off. Dr. Hans might've missed something. He's a doctor, not God."

"I'll be filing a complaint with your hospital!" the surgeon barked, glaring at Adam.

"Name's Adam Duncan," Adam replied, meeting his stare without flinching.

The standoff froze right there.

Until George rushed back with Dr. Shepherd in tow.

"Sorry to interrupt. Derek Shepherd, neurosurgery attending. Mind if I take a look?"

Shepherd nodded at Adam, glanced at the surgeon, and didn't wait for an answer before starting his exam.

The surgeon: "..."

Chapter 406: Escape from Get Out Town

Medical Center

The middle-aged doctor felt a little insulted.

But, well, tough luck.

Dr. Shepherd checked the patient's pupils, tested her response to external stimuli, and glanced at the chart on the stretcher.

"She's got a tumor on her brainstem, right? I don't see an MRI here. We'd need an EEG to confirm brain death."

"Yeah, Dr. Hans said he already did it," the middle-aged doctor said, trying to defend himself.

His tone wasn't exactly confident, though.

You talk differently depending on who you're dealing with.

Basic survival skill.

"I don't know any Dr. Hans," Dr. Shepherd cut in. "They've already ignored the brain's involuntary responses. Who knows what else they've overlooked!"

"There are six patients across three states waiting for this woman's organs," the middle-aged doctor pointed out.

"If those organs come from someone who's brain-dead, I'm sure they'd be thrilled. But she's not dead yet," Dr. Shepherd shot back sarcastically.

"No one touches her while she's still alive."

The middle-aged doctor dropped the act and laid his cards on the table.

He just wanted to stall until the patient was completely gone.

Because if she got resuscitated, not only would his organ extraction plan fall apart, but his buddy Dr. Hans might be in hot water too.

After all, Hans hadn't even bothered with an MRI and ignored the patient's involuntary brain activity before declaring her brain-dead.

If the family dug into it later, it'd be a massive headache.

But if they could just drag this out and let her slip into full brain death, their approach would be flawless.

No one could prove she could've been saved.

And the whole thing would probably blow over.

"Everything okay here?"

George walked in with Dr. Burke in tow.

Adam had already clocked the middle-aged doctor's stalling game. When George got back, Adam had tipped him off to grab Dr. Burke.

As the acting surgical chief, Dr. Burke had the final say around here.

"This donor isn't fully brain-dead yet. I want to run an MRI and an EEG," Dr. Shepherd explained.

"That's a waste of time," the middle-aged doctor said, making one last ditch effort.

"I insist," Dr. Shepherd said firmly.

"You insist?"

Dr. Burke flipped through the chart and gave him a look.

"Yes!" Dr. Shepherd nodded.

"If my top neurosurgery attending says he needs an MRI and an EEG, then he's doing it," Dr. Burke said, snapping the chart shut and making it final.

"But we've got other patients—"

The middle-aged doctor thought he could still salvage this.

"Don't care," Dr. Burke interrupted, hands on hips. "Who gets the organs? That's up to the organ-sharing network."

Who donates them? That's up to her and her family.

I've got someone in the OR waiting for a liver—maybe they don't even deserve it, but that's not my call either.

So what do I control?

Everything else!"

Faced with that kind of badass energy, the middle-aged doctor gave up entirely.

It's not that he didn't try, man.

"She's all yours, Dr. Shepherd," Dr. Burke said.

"Thank you, Dr. Burke."

Dr. Burke smirked, soaking in the middle-aged doctor's helpless silence and his rival's gratitude.

This was the taste of power.

Better than anything else.

It reminded him of what Richard's wife had said when she came to pack up her husband's stuff and move him home to recover. She'd stared at him sitting in the chief's office chair and laid it out:

"I hope he's forced to retire. That's tempting for you, isn't it? We all want that. This job fits you, Preston. You're independent, a workaholic— the hospital and this gig are enough for you, right?"

He hadn't answered her.

But the answer was obviously "yes" to all of it.

"Dr. Duncan, want to assist with the MRI?" Dr. Shepherd asked, glancing at Adam and George.

"Absolutely," Adam said with a nod.

Mr. Dean hadn't been brain-dead, and now here was a case teetering on the edge of it— a golden learning opportunity handed to him on a platter.

George looked a little down but didn't argue.

Sure, he'd been the one to take the case and run around getting Adam, Dr. Shepherd, and Dr. Burke, but it was Adam and the others who'd actually made the difference.

He'd chickened out when it mattered.

Just then, a chart caught his eye.

"O'Malley, you're in too," Dr. Shepherd said, handing it over and clapping him on the shoulder.

"Yes!"

George lit up.

What's better than a pat on the back from a senior doc?

Adam grinned from the sidelines.

He got it.

It was like back in his old life, writing web novels and obsessing over his editor's every move— caring more about her than a girlfriend.

He wouldn't dare bug her unless something was up, and even then, he'd tiptoe around it.

Is she online?

Maybe I'll wait till 9 to message her.

Nah, 10's safer. Don't wanna bother her.

How do I word this?

Why hasn't she replied?

Should I follow up?

Still no reply...

Oh! She's back! She's back! She's back!

She's kinda cold, but man, she's a great editor!

Yeah... that level of humble.

MRI Room

"See that tumor on her brainstem?" Dr. Shepherd said with a smile.

"Looks rough," George said, staring at the scan.

"But her brain's still alive—and treatable," Adam added.

"Exactly! Remove the tumor, and she's got a solid shot at recovery," Dr. Shepherd said, nodding. He turned to the organ retrieval team hovering nearby. "You guys can head out. I'm the only one operating on her today."

The middle-aged doctor's team grabbed their coolers and shuffled off, defeated.

"Dr. Duncan, you don't seem too happy?" Dr. Shepherd said, noticing Adam's serious expression.

"No, I'm happy for her," Adam said, shaking his head. "Just thinking about something."

"What's that?" George blurted out.

"When she wakes up, will she tear up that organ donor agreement on the spot?" Adam sighed.

Dr. Shepherd and George froze, their smiles fading.

People who sign up to donate organs are, in theory, good folks.

Their organs can save thousands suffering from pain or facing death— a pretty selfless, noble act.

But once you sign that "donate after death" form, the risk of dying somehow spikes for reasons no one talks about.

And if crap like this keeps happening, who's gonna keep signing up?

OB-GYN Department

Rachel finished her checkup.

"What'd the doctor say?" Adam asked.

"Everything's good," Rachel said with a smile. "Hey, what's this?"

"A gift for you," Adam said, handing her a wrapped box.

"The right medicine for a speedy recovery?" Rachel read the note he'd written, grinning. "Aw, thanks, Adam!"

"No problem," Adam said, straight-faced. "Hope you like it."

"I'm sure I will," Rachel said, fiddling with the box. "What is it?"

"Open it at home. More fun that way," Adam said, stopping her.

"Give me a hint at least!" Rachel shook the box. "What color?"

"..." Adam's lip twitched. "Uh... black?" he guessed.

He hadn't bought it himself, so he had no clue.

But as a psych grad who'd read his share of psych books, he figured Tool #3 picked something based on "your preferences"—and he made an educated guess.

After all...

Escape from Get Out Town, anyone?

Chapter 407: That Doctor's Side Profile Is Seriously Handsome!

Wardroom

After seeing off a delighted Rachel, Adam took a moment to check on Mr. Dean before heading into surgery for a female patient with a brainstem tumor who'd narrowly escaped death.

"How're you feeling?" Adam asked.

"Pretty good," Mr. Dean replied, leaning back in his bed. He had a pen and paper in hand, sketching something. When he saw Adam walk in, he set them down, looked up, and gave a heartfelt, "Dr. Duncan, I heard everything. I can't thank you enough—you saved my life."

"No need to thank me," Adam said with a smile. "It's just what us doctors do."

He meant it, too. The little +0.01 notification from his system was reward enough. Not to mention the noticeable boost to his reputation around the hospital.

"Mr. Dean's been drawing the moment Dr. Duncan saved him," a nurse chimed in, unable to hold back her excitement.

"Oh?" Adam's curiosity piqued, and he glanced at the paper resting on Mr. Dean's lap.

"It's just a hobby," Mr. Dean said with a chuckle. "When I heard the crazy story of what happened to me, I got this overwhelming urge to sketch it out."

"Can I take a look?" Adam asked.

"Of course." Mr. Dean handed over the sketch.

"Wow, this is really good," Adam said, genuinely impressed.

It must be the difference in upbringing—some random amateur artist could whip up something this skilled. Or maybe it was the near-death experience. That kind of shift in perspective could infuse a drawing with real emotion, making it hit you right in the chest.

Hmm... The doctor's side profile in the sketch? Seriously handsome!

"Dr. Duncan, I'd love for you to keep this when it's done," Mr. Dean said.

"Oh, uh..." Adam hesitated.

"It's fine, Dr. Duncan," the nurse jumped in, quick to reassure him. "Mr. Dean's not a professional artist. He's never sold his work. It's just a little gift—no big deal."

American doctors can't accept bribes—at least not openly. It's like letting teachers run private tutoring gigs. Once you open that door, most teachers would half-ass their regular classes, saving the good stuff for the paid sessions. Students who don't shell out? Good luck keeping up. Same deal with doctors. If the floodgates opened, you'd have to grease their palms just to get decent care. And the truly unethical ones? They might let savable patients die if the "tip" wasn't fat enough.

Word gets around fast. Who'd dare go under the knife without slipping a hefty gift first? Even the good doctors with a conscience would get dragged into the mess eventually. It'd be a vicious cycle.

"Thanks, then," Adam said after a moment's thought, deciding not to turn it down.

The sketch was just an amateur's casual work—no big value attached. Plus, it depicted Adam saving the guy's life. Accepting it wouldn't cross any lines. Down the road, when Adam opened his own practice, he could hang it up in the office as a badge of honor. Pretty standard move for doctors stateside. Some even chase autographs or selfies with famous patients. The less scrupulous ones ask celebs to keep

signatures vague—think "Thanks!" instead of "To Dr. Duncan"—so they can flip it online later. Most celebrity patients catch the hint and play along without a fuss.

Then there are the weirder ones. Some doctors collect stuff they pull out of patients—like that guy from *The Big Bang Theory* who kept Steve Jobs' gallstone as a prized trophy, making Leonard and the gang jealous. Or the patients who swallow random junk—or shove it where the sun don't shine—only for docs to fish it out of their rectums. Those treasures end up in a basket at the nurses' station, affectionately dubbed the "Ass Basket." Newbies who don't know better might snag something shiny or valuable from it.

Take Bald Chris, for example. He pulled a stunt like that. When things got serious with Kara, a nurse from Internal Medicine, she asked him for a gift that showed he really got her. Problem is, Chris—bald as he was—couldn't scrape together an original idea beyond flowers or chocolate. Desperate, he turned to the expert: Adam.

Adam didn't let him down. "A fancy pen," he said without missing a beat. Kara loved writing—every letter she sent was handwritten because it felt more personal. Solid idea, and it worked like a charm. Kara adored the gift so much she told Chris right then and there, "You've touched my soul. Tonight, don't treat me like a person—just go for it!"

Chris, though? Too busy to follow through. By the time Kara's deadline rolled around, he'd forgotten to buy anything. Then he spotted a gorgeous pen in the Ass Basket at the nurses' station. Clueless about the tradition, he thought it was a lost-and-found stash and asked the nurses if he could grab it for an emergency. They love pranking rookie docs, so they grinned and nodded—naturally, they didn't spill the beans.

So, Chris gifted his girlfriend this stunning, very seasoned pen.

Afterward... well, yikes.

God could be a girl, Buddha could be Black—anything's possible, right?

After checking Mr. Dean's vitals—all perfectly fine—Adam headed to the OR, buzzing a little from his first gift of this kind.

"Duncan, O'Malley, come with me to meet the patient's family in a bit," Dr. Shepherd called out. "And remember: don't mention how she wasn't resuscitated and almost got sent straight to organ removal."

"Why not?" George, ever the justice warrior, piped up.

"The patient just needs to know we're doing everything we can," Shepherd said with a sigh. "And we are, aren't we?"

"Yeah, we are!" George shot back. "But that Dr. Hans from Weeks Hospital and the other guy earlier? They didn't give a damn—they almost killed her!"

"We can't let this blow up," Shepherd said, rubbing his temples. "It'd tank the reputation of every doctor and the whole medical field. One less organ donor means multiple patients miss out on life-saving treatment."

"But it's wrong!" George's face was all defiance. "Adam, what do you think?"

"I'm with the hospital on this," Adam said coolly.

George stared at him, floored. "Adam, you—!"

Adam met his gaze, unfazed.

Sure, he knew it wasn't right. But was this the only injustice in the world? If you charged headfirst into every wrong, guns blazing for justice, you'd burn out fast. Adam wasn't some invincible hero—just a regular guy with a mediocre system, scraping by as a (time-traveler) for nearly a decade, barely making it to billionaire status. Even if he were some OP protagonist, society would smack him down in a heartbeat.

The dark underbelly of American healthcare? Even the mighty U.S. of A couldn't tame that beast. All Adam could do was the good within his reach—nothing more, nothing less. That's the rule he'd figured out to stretch his lifespan with the system. Charity with his millions could save countless lives, but if he didn't get his hands dirty himself, the system wouldn't give him a single point.

Mr. Dean? Adam met him, saved him. This woman teetering on death's edge? Same deal. But that's where it stopped.

Chapter 408: I Am God!

Medical Center

In the end, Dr. Shepherd only took Adam to meet the female patient's family.

George's sense of justice was practically bursting at the seams right now.

This place couldn't handle that kind of righteous glow.

The patient's family, of course, had no idea about all the twists and turns behind the scenes.

They'd originally been told there was basically no hope—hurry over to say their last goodbyes and confirm the organ donation while they were at it.

Who could've guessed a miracle would drop from the sky?

She could still be saved!

Naturally, they were all sobbing with joy.

Of course, part of that was because organ donation here is completely unpaid.

Otherwise, Adam would've probably gotten another front-row seat to the flaws of human nature.

Haven't you heard?

There was this one guy whose older brother—minding his own business at home—got randomly killed, like some cosmic "disaster from above." And what did the younger brother do? He stood there, representing his "ascended-to-heaven" big bro, forgiving the murderer. Completely ignored his crying parents next to him and went straight to hug the killer.

Why? Because he knew his brother was a devout believer—life and death were God's will, so obviously they had to forgive the murderer.

That's the only way the world gets redemption!

That's the only way the world gets true love!

Emmm.

And in his hand? A fat check.

Moved himself to tears with his own nobility.

Now, if organ donation did come with a paycheck, imagine one—or all—of the patient's family members bawling, "She's already suffered so much! Stop torturing her—let her return to God's embrace in peace. Saving so many lives with her final act would be her blessing!"

If that happened, Adam wouldn't even blink.

And if it did go down like that?

That'd be the real twist of human nature, the collapse of morality!

Because let's be real—humanity can't stand up to any real test.

And honestly, it shouldn't have to.

Luckily, Adam didn't have to deal with that mess. All he saw was the patient's family crying tears of joy and showering him and the team with endless gratitude.

And that's the power of rules—the kind of thing all those "freedom-loving" types and superhero wannabes love to scoff at!

No rules, no order.

But if you're gonna break the rules, there have to be rules to break in the first place, right?

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Operating Room – Scrub Area

"Stop staring. We've got surgery coming up, and you need to be looking at the patient's brain, not mine," Adam said to George, who was gawking at him while they scrubbed in.

"I just wanna know what's going on in that head of yours," George shot back. "You're the one who fought tooth and nail to save Mr. Dean. You're the one who backed me up without hesitation to stop the organ removal team. But you're also the one who chose to hide the truth from the patient's family! Which one's the real you?"

Adam smirked. "Oh, let's flip that around. You're the one who went all out to expose Dr. Tyler, the anesthesiologist, for showing up drunk. You're the one who fought to stop the removal team. But when Meredith was dozing off, didn't trim her nails, and accidentally punctured a patient's heart—you told me to be 'kind' and not rat her out. So, tell me, which one's the real you?"

"..."

George froze, totally thrown off. The light of justice in his eyes couldn't quite reach Adam anymore.

Yeah, he was a pretty righteous guy—most of the time.

But when it came down to "human justice" versus "pretty-face justice," and those two collided?

He picked Meredith's looks every time.

Adam didn't bother with George's famous double-standard meltdown. He finished scrubbing in and stepped into the operating room.

Brainstem tumor resection—now that's what he was here for.

He didn't have time to play George and wonder what was ticking in other people's heads.

Unless, of course, that "other person" asked him to cut their brain open for research.

The surgery went off without a hitch.

---

"Duncan, after your internship, any interest in neurosurgery?"

Dr. Shepherd always had a bit of a reflective vibe after operating with Adam. This time, though, he outright threw out an offer.

In the U.S., once your one-year internship is done and you pass the exams, you get your medical license.

Not the full-blown attending physician license, mind you—it's more like a starter pack. You can write some basic prescriptions, nothing too specialized.

Then, as a resident, you pick a specialty: neurosurgery, cardiothoracic surgery, plastics, ophthalmology, dermatology, you name it.

You train under an attending in that field, honing your skills.

Take Bailey, for example—she went for cardiothoracic surgery, the most ambitious, challenging, and prestigious specialty out there. Her mentor? Dr. Burke, a legend in the field.

Technically, Burke's her real boss. Dr. Shepherd might be an attending too and can give her orders, but only if they don't clash with Burke's.

So when Dr. Shepherd—a neurosurgery rockstar—asked Adam this, the implication was clear:

"If you want, pick neurosurgery, and I'll take you under my wing."

"I've always been really interested in neurosurgery," Adam said with a hint of apology. "But after my internship, I'm planning to go for cardiothoracic first. Once I finish that training, I'd love for you to give me a shot at learning from you in neuro."

"You picking that route makes sense..." Dr. Shepherd started, a little miffed at the soft rejection but gracious enough to roll with it. Then he did a double take. "Wait, what? You're gonna do cardiothoracic and then neurosurgery?"

"Yup," Adam said with a grin. "The two most important organs in the body—the heart and the brain—I'm fascinated by both. I figure I've got the brains and the energy for it, so why not go for both?"

"..."

Dr. Shepherd was speechless.

If it were anyone else, he'd have warned them not to bite off more than they could chew.

Becoming a top-tier expert in any specialty isn't a walk in the park. Even if you make it to the top, there are still diseases that'll stump you—pushing you to keep leveling up your skills for a lifetime.

Double-specializing? For most, even geniuses, it'd just mean being mediocre in both.

But this was Adam saying it.

Dr. Shepherd couldn't bring himself to say it was impossible.

Their little exchange didn't just throw Shepherd off—everyone else in the room, George included, was giving Adam these weird, sideways looks.

What a wild ambition!

Adam just smiled modestly.

He was an adult now—no multiple-choice questions for him. He wanted it all.

Heck, after cardiothoracic and neurosurgery?

Infectious disease, immunology, oncology—he was curious about those too.

Back when he first started med school, the goal was simple: become a great doctor for a stable, safe way to extend his life.

But now that he was on this path, Adam had slowly morphed into one of those "surgeons with a God complex" the nurses always whispered about.

In the OR, scalpel in hand, he was unstoppable.

Every word, every move, decided if a life hung on or slipped away.

Beggar or president—they were all just patients, waiting for his verdict.

Everything was in his control.

That kind of power? It's intoxicating.

That feeling? Better than words can describe.

Because, really—who doesn't want to be God?

Chapter 409: Everything Is Just Too Difficult

The surgery was over.

"Duncan, go inform the family," Dr. Shepherd instructed before walking away.

"...Alright."

Adam forced a smile.

Of all the responsibilities that came with being a doctor, informing the family was one of his least favorite tasks.

Bad news meant facing a family on the verge of collapse.

Good news meant facing a family so overjoyed they wanted to hug him.

And for someone like him—a young male doctor—the number of hugs, and the length of those hugs, far exceeded what other doctors experienced.

Sometimes, even when delivering bad news, people still clung to him, sobbing in his arms.

Emmm...

Lu Xun once said: "A man must learn to protect himself when he's out in the world."

But as a mere intern, Adam had no choice in the matter. When a senior doctor assigned you a task, it wasn't just a sign of trust—it was an order. There was no refusing.

The most he could do was try his best to avoid being hugged.

And if he couldn't avoid it, at least he had to make sure no one took advantage of him.

Sigh.

For someone like him, who was always at risk of being tackled in public, when would he ever be able to stand tall?

---

Turns out, Adam wasn't just being paranoid.

As soon as he shared the good news, the patient's younger sister—a teenage girl—practically lit up and launched herself at him.

She was so fast that even Adam barely managed to dodge.

But he could only evade once. He couldn't very well play a game of dodge the hug with the patient's sister.

In the end, he had no choice but to surrender to her persistence and accept the hug.

And once the rest of the family finished hugging each other and shedding happy tears, it was finally Adam's turn to be thanked.

That's when they noticed something odd.

Their little sister, Mindy, was still clinging to Adam.

No matter what, she refused to let go.

"Mindy?"

"Mindy?"

"MINDY!"

The other family members, realizing their daughter had gone overboard, called out awkwardly.

"I'm just so happy!" Mindy clung to Adam, burying her head against his chest as if she were crying tears of joy.

But there wasn't even a hint of sobbing in her voice—only unrestrained excitement.

Realizing she might've overdone it, she quickly added, "For Cindy!"

That poor attempt at justification only made her family even more embarrassed.

It took several people working together to finally pry Mindy off of Adam.

Adam shot them a helpless smile—then promptly escaped.

This is just too much.

---

### In the Hallway

"Tsk tsk."

Meredith, holding a CT scan, ran into Adam and clicked her tongue in amusement.

"What now?" Adam asked irritably.

"People say you're a ladies' man, but I always thought that was just gossip." Meredith smirked. "But I guess I was wrong. Broad daylight, on the clock, and you're already getting cozy with someone? Look at that—there's a huge lipstick mark on your chest."

She meant the first part sincerely.

After all, she'd flirted with Adam herself—more than once, in fact.

And he ignored her every time.

Given her lifelong confidence, she refused to believe it was because she wasn't attractive enough.

She also knew about Adam and Bianca, so she knew it wasn't because he couldn't be with someone.

That left only one explanation: Adam wasn't as much of a flirt as people claimed.

And she understood that all too well.

If no one gossips about you, you're a nobody.

If no one spreads rumors about your love life, you must not be attractive enough.

She, too, had always had a bad reputation.

No one understood this better than she did.

Adam glanced down and—sure enough—there was a bright red lipstick mark on his chest.

His face darkened.

No wonder Mindy's family had looked so awkward when he left.

"It's not what you think," Adam muttered.

"You don't have to explain."

Meredith, ever the composed female doctor, wasn't interested in giving him the chance.

Adam decided not to take the bait. Instead, he changed the subject. "What's that you're holding?"

"Oh, this?" Meredith handed him the CT scan with a smirk. "I always thought it was just a myth, but turns out, some people really are this stupid."

Adam held the scan up to the light.

His expression changed immediately.

"Wait, this patient isn't named Ruth, is he?"

"Ruth?"

Meredith didn't get the reference. "No, his name's Mr. Harper."

Adam counted the objects in the scan and sighed. "Any one of these breaking open inside his stomach could kill him, and yet he swallowed ten of them. That's ten times the risk. Are drug smugglers really this desperate these days?"

"If the packages break inside him, he'd die—he wouldn't turn into a superhero," Meredith scoffed, reaching for the CT scan.

She needed to bring it to Dr. Bailey to decide what to do next.

But just then, Adam squinted at the scan, tilted it slightly, and made a surprised noise.

"What?"

Meredith frowned, thinking he was messing with her.

"This isn't drugs," Adam said, handing the scan back. "Those are doll heads."

"...What?!"

Meredith stared at him in disbelief.

"You think drug smugglers would be dumb enough to package their stuff into tiny human-shaped heads?" Adam pointed at the faint outlines of female faces visible in the scan. "He must have unscrewed the heads off some dolls and swallowed them one by one."

His brows furrowed.

He'd seen plenty of patients who swallowed indigestible objects.

But ten doll heads?

That was next-level disturbing.

Because, psychologically speaking, doll heads had some level of human resemblance.

Which meant Mr. Harper wasn't just some guy with an eating disorder.

He was likely seriously disturbed.

Today, he's swallowing doll heads.

Who knows what he'll do in the future?

And this wasn't just any world. This was the combined universe of multiple TV dramas.

Adam hadn't forgotten about all the infamous serial killers from those shows.

"Yeah, we should probably make sure he doesn't see a psychiatrist," Adam muttered.

In TV worlds like this, a lot of people started out somewhat disturbed but weren't that dangerous.

But the moment they started therapy?

It was like opening Pandora's box.

They'd go from "harmless weirdo" to "full-blown psychopath" in no time.

Because:

1. Therapy offices were like support groups for the mentally unstable—if you weren't crazy going in, you'd definitely meet someone who'd inspire you.

2. You never knew if the therapist themselves was more messed up than their patients.

Some of the worst serial killers in TV history?

Were therapists.

And given this guy's "hobby"...

If he ended up with a certain professor as his therapist, would he turn into a full-fledged gourmet?

The thought alone sent chills down Adam's spine.

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Chapter 410: Everyone Cleans Out the Intestines Together

Medical Center.

"What's wrong? You look terrible."

Adam snapped out of his train of thought and noticed that Meredith looked visibly upset. He was a little surprised.

Could it be that Meredith had also heard about that 'famous foodie,' psychology master, and professor's story?

"Mr. Harper..."

Meredith looked like she had just swallowed a fly. She hesitated before continuing, "He said my features are too perfect, too delicate, like porcelain. He also said he didn't want to tell me what he swallowed because it might be offensive. And the way he looked at me..."

At first, she just assumed Mr. Harper was attracted to her.

It was normal. A tiny part of her even felt a little flattered.

After all, she was stunning.

That was the typical reaction men had when they saw her.

But now that Adam pointed it out—

She actually felt violated.

"Oh, I see."

Adam said seriously, "In that case, I suggest you talk to Dr. Bailey and hand this case over to someone else. Preferably not a woman."

"Thanks for the advice."

The moment Meredith heard the words hand the case over, her eyes sharpened. "But no need. I can handle it."

"Are you sure?"

Adam chuckled. "Guys like this? They either have pica, a curtain fetish, an unusual preference, or they just like it."

"I think he just likes it."

Meredith grabbed the CT scans and went to find Dr. Bailey.

"You won't think that for long."

Adam quickly caught up with her and walked by her side. "Do you know why he enjoys doing this? Either he likes the feeling of swallowing and passing it later, or this is just the beginning of some twisted fetish."

"I don't want to hear this!"

Meredith let out a loud groan and picked up her pace into a jog.

Tsk.

Even after all that, she still wouldn't give up the surgery?

Adam sighed. What a shame.

But he quickened his steps to keep up.

Jokes aside—

Meredith was still kind of a friend. He didn't actually want her dealing with a guy like that alone.

At the very least, he should take a look and make sure everything was okay.

After spending so much time with Juno and studying psychology seriously, plus his mental enhancement after becoming a super genius, Adam had developed a pretty good sense of danger.

He wasn't on Juno's level of seeing right through people—

But his instincts were fairly accurate.

### Imaging Room.

"The results are in?"

Dr. Bailey glanced briefly at Adam before turning her attention to Meredith. "Foreign object?"

As an experienced senior resident, she had already made her own assumptions.

"No."

Meredith handed her the CT scans. "It's... the head of a doll."

"What?"

Dr. Bailey looked shocked. She grabbed the scans, slid them onto the lightbox, adjusted the brightness, and leaned in for a closer look—

Then immediately gasped.

"Holy crap! That's a Judy Doll!"

"You can tell the brand just from the scan?"

Adam raised an eyebrow at Dr. Bailey.

"I know what you're thinking."

Dr. Bailey rolled her eyes. "Why wouldn't I be familiar with Judy Dolls?"

"Of course, of course."

Adam nodded quickly. "Every woman has a little girl inside her. It's perfectly normal for you to love Judy Dolls, Dr. Bailey."

Meredith immediately gave Adam a massive eye-roll.

Seriously?

Dr. Bailey? A soft-hearted Judy Doll lover?

Which part of her looked like she had a 'girly side' to him?!

Suck-up!

Adam ignored Meredith's judgmental glare and smiled sincerely.

Sure, Dr. Bailey wasn't exactly attractive. She was short and stocky—

But she had a warm heart.

And hey, plenty of men had a soft spot for Judy Dolls, too.

Why shouldn't Dr. Bailey?

Adam's words were absolutely genuine.

Definitely not just an attempt to earn some extra points with her.

Nope. Not at all.

"I love Judy Dolls. I collect Judy Dolls."

Dr. Bailey looked at Adam expressionlessly, but her tone had noticeably softened.

For someone who never talked about personal stuff at work, she had just voluntarily shared a little more than usual.

Meredith, who had worked under Dr. Bailey for a while, found this completely shocking.

Adam's flattery was so obvious—

And yet, Dr. Bailey still enjoyed it.

She knew it!

Nobody was completely immune.

Not even Dr. Bailey!

Meredith threw Adam a disdainful look.

Adam simply glanced back at her, as if saying, You're one to talk.

After all—

Hadn't Meredith, on her second shift, proudly brought Dr. Bailey a latte in front of everyone?

What was that if not blatant bootlicking?

### Back to Business.

"Meredith, how are we handling this?"

Dr. Bailey quickly shifted back into professional mode.

"Complete bowel irrigation!"

Meredith answered seriously.

"Details."

Dr. Bailey pressed.

"We need to remove all 36 feet of Mr. Harper's intestines from his abdominal cavity, manually locate all the doll heads, cut open the intestines, squeeze them out one by one, then suture everything back together."

Meredith responded quickly and efficiently.

"Okay. Meredith, book an OR. Harper's condition is critical—we need to operate today."

Dr. Bailey nodded approvingly, then started assigning tasks. "See if George, Yang, and Liz are available. If they are, bring them in."

"Got it!"

Meredith responded enthusiastically and shot Adam a triumphant look.

Trying to steal my surgery?

Keep dreaming!

Adam just smiled.

"Adam, go to Psych and bring someone in to evaluate Mr. Harper. We need to figure out what's wrong with him."

Dr. Bailey turned to him. "And if you're free, you can assist in surgery. We'll need extra hands—this is a lot of intestine to work through."

"Absolutely, Dr. Bailey."

Adam's smile grew even more sincere.

### Hallway.

"Suck-up!"

Meredith muttered.

"Are you questioning Dr. Bailey's fairness?"

Adam raised an eyebrow.

"Of course not..."

Meredith immediately shut up.

She worked under Dr. Bailey. No way was she admitting to that.

"Exactly."

Adam grinned. "So your accusations are completely baseless. Now go book the OR."

With that, he walked off toward the psych department.

Leaving Meredith behind, gritting her teeth.

### Patient's Room.

Adam followed a psychiatrist into Mr. Harper's room.

The moment he laid eyes on the patient—

His gaze sharpened.

That smile.

That look.

It wasn't the same as that professor's kind of perversion—

But this guy was standing at a crossroads, looking around.

And down one of those paths...

He could definitely see shadows of that professor.

For a moment, Adam's thoughts raced.

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