

## TV Show 581

Chapter 581: Kate - "I Beg You!"

It was late at night.

Adam's apartment.

"NYPD!"

A sharp, confident female cop burst in, gripping her gun with both hands and shouting as she stepped forward.

"Freeze!"

But then, a shadow slipped behind her silently, pressing a gun to her back.

"Oh no, I've been tricked!" the cop thought, her heart sinking.

Boom! Thunder rumbled outside, lightning flashing as a wild storm raged on—like the perfect dramatic background music signaling her impending doom.

No one yelled "cut."

Because the director wasn't around.

Good thing they were all pros. This tricky long take, one of the toughest shots in filmmaking, flowed effortlessly in a single, unbroken scene—no editing needed later.

The cop was none other than the badass Kate Beckett. She'd rushed over after getting a call from Adam confessing to something, only to find herself in this crazy, dangerous mess.

Time passed—how long, who knows?

"I beg you!" Kate pleaded.

"No mercy!" Adam shot back, cold as ice, just like some ruthless sidekick might be. "That's what you get for talking smack about me behind my back!"

"I didn't say anything!" Kate protested, then cracked a grin. "I was just keeping it real. You gonna deny it? Don't tell me you called in a fake report for no reason... Did Jesse get it wrong when she called you out?"

"..."

Adam had no comeback.

Kate's nose was too sharp—she could sniff out the truth like a bloodhound. Even though she'd never met Adam's other buddies, she'd already mentally cataloged Robin and the crew, no shower could wash that intuition away.

"So, how'd you and this Agent Peggy become buddies?" Adam asked, eager to change the subject now that the acting bit was over.

"We both enforce the law in New York, and we're both women—getting to know each other isn't exactly weird, right?" Kate replied, stretching lazily with a half-smirk. "Why so curious about Jesse?"

"Just wondering," Adam said with a chuckle. "She's the first FBI agent to show up at my door. As a law-abiding guy, I'm not used to seeing legendary FBI folks—or even you NYPD types. It freaks me out! I can't sleep unless I figure it out."

"Pfft! Sounds like you're mocking us," Kate said, rolling her eyes. "You? Scared of us?"

"Of course I'm scared!" Adam said, dead serious. "You guys have all that discretionary power—traffic control too. You can just hide out anywhere, wait for us to drive by, tail us, and then claim we were speeding to pull us over.

And it gets worse.

We've got to do exactly what you say, even if it's humiliating, or else you can just say you 'felt threatened' and shoot us dead. Even if we follow every rule, if you get some vague gut feeling that we're still a threat, you can still shoot us.

That's you NYPD folks.

The FBI? Even scarier. They don't bother waiting for us to drive by—they just knock on our door. How could I not be afraid?"

"..."

Kate's lip twitched. She was seriously offended but couldn't argue back.

Because Adam was right.

Stuff like that happened every year—way too often.

But they couldn't just strip cops of that discretion because of a few bad apples, could they? In a country where anyone could be packing heat, without that leeway, a cop might not see the gun coming until it's too late.

It was a bloody lesson learned from too many good officers going down.

Still, every group's got its jerks. Some cops used their power to settle personal scores—targeting whoever rubbed them the wrong way. As an honest cop, Kate despised those types too.

"It's not that extreme," she said weakly. "Cops who break the law without cause get held accountable..."

"Yeah, but only if I'm still alive to see it," Adam cut in. "If I'm gone, what's the point of someone chasing justice for me? Plus, knowing my dumb brother Gabe, he'd probably forgive the guy on my behalf.

And even if they prosecute, it's a coin toss—paid leave, a decade-long trial, or a sentence that gets slashed with shady deals. Worst case, they fight for years, finally win, and then the guy gets pardoned before even stepping into jail.

You're NYPD's finest, Kate. Tell me—isn't that all true? Shouldn't I be scared?"

"You're famous, you've got nothing to worry about..." Kate said with a bitter laugh. "Okay, I get your point."

"Hmph!" Adam snorted.

"Quit with the 'hmp' already," Kate teased. "Doesn't it all trace back to the messed-up system you super-rich folks helped create?"

"Fair enough," Adam grinned. "Let's drop the heavy stuff. Tell me more about your buddy, Agent Peggy."

"What about her?" Kate asked, sounding bored. "What do you wanna know?"

"She looks young—got into the FBI that fast?" Adam pressed, curious.

"Yup," Kate nodded. "Jesse got scouted by the FBI before she even finished college."

"Recruited in college?" Adam's eyes widened. "What, does she have some superpower? Or is the FBI just that desperate these days?"

Ten years later, Jesse Peggy would be stuck doing background checks—desk jockey stuff. For an agency like the FBI, the real elites worked the field. Her young recruitment didn't match that vibe at all.

"Classified," Kate said lazily.

"Seriously?" Adam scoffed. "Everything's 'classified' with you. It's just us here—no one else is gonna hear it. What's the harm? You don't actually think I'm a spy using my charm to pry secrets out of you, do you?"

"Ha!" Kate burst out laughing. "Charm? You've got some nerve saying that. Fine, I'll tell you—but you can't blab, and definitely don't mention it to Jesse."

"I swear!" Adam raised his hand with a grin.

"I don't know all the details," Kate said, smirking. "Word is, Jesse was on a college trip when she ran into some deformed cannibal freak. Her group got wiped out, but she kept her cool, took the guy down, and impressed an FBI higher-up who showed up. They recruited her—probably to keep her quiet too."

Some things weren't meant for the public—too messy, too panic-inducing. A little control made sense.

Problem was, "a little" often turned into "total," and people hated that.

Like SHIELD—started with good intentions, but over time, it went sour.

Then again, when your boss is a guy like Nick Fury, how much morality can you expect?

"No way!" Adam said, shocked.

It sounded like a horror movie heroine's origin story.

But then he thought about Jesse Peggy's looks and nodded to himself. Everyone knows horror movie leads have to be hot—it's the first rule of drawing a crowd. If they're not, who's gonna care enough to root for them?

"Yup," Kate confirmed. "Jesse's got this line she repeats—something one of her friends who died there said: 'America's rundown economic zones are breeding grounds for evil.'

Stuff like that happens all over the country. That's why the FBI steps in to handle it."

The U.S. justice system's a mess.

State cops, city cops, county cops—they don't always play nice with the FBI. The feds don't have jurisdiction over them.

But when a big case pops up, the FBI loves swooping in to take charge and grab the glory, while local cops push back. It's a constant tug-of-war.

Cross state lines, though, and it's FBI territory.

Cases with deformed cannibals? Locals know the legends and steer clear. It's usually out-of-state thrill-seekers who stir up trouble—and then die.

A few victims from other states, and it's the FBI's game.

Chapter 582: Bad Seed

It's New Year's Day, 1999.

I spent the day singing with Robin .

Gossiped a bit with Kate too 😊.

All in all, Adam had a pretty great day.

But the next day, January 2nd, things took a turn.

At the medical center, in the emergency room.

"Dr. Duncan!"

A nurse called out urgently.

"What's the situation?"

Adam rushed over, meeting the paramedics head-on.

"Catherine Horn, 36-year-old female, fell down the stairs. Blood pressure 70/50, pulse 45, possible brain hemorrhage, coma score 6. Hematoma on her left leg, lacerations on her right upper body and left thigh, and bruising on her back."

The paramedic rattled off the details quickly.

"Falling down the stairs caused all this?"

Adam smirked, pushing the patient into the treatment room while examining her.

"It hurts... so much..."

Catherine murmured unconsciously.

"She's unconscious, and her breathing's stopped!"

The nurse warned.

"7.0 endotracheal tube, now!"

"Catherine, can you hear me?"

"500 ml of saline!"

Adam barked orders while trying to revive her.

"Get the airbag!"

"Increase oxygen, dilute the CO2 levels!"

"Head swelling's getting worse. Undo her clothes—her abdomen's rigid. Start irrigation."

"Order a CT and chest X-ray."

"Book an OR."

"Call Dr. Shepard."

Adam worked methodically, handling the crisis step by step.

"Has her family arrived?"

"Her two kids are here," the nurse said, glancing outside the treatment room.

Through the glass, Adam saw a boy and a girl—likely siblings, both young.

"Take them to the family waiting area," Adam instructed. "Then call her husband or parents."

"Yes, Doctor," a nurse replied and left.

"Also, contact the Women and Children's Rights Agency," Adam added, scanning Catherine's injuries and her chart. He smirked again. "Three ER visits in the past six months. Fell down the steps, broke her arm—no scrapes. Bumped into a door and fractured her eye socket. Now she's fallen down the stairs again. She's really good at falling, huh?"

"Yes, Doctor," the nurse nodded, clearly agreeing.

Experienced medical staff could tell the difference between injuries from falls and injuries from abuse.

Catherine's body was covered in wounds.

This was 95% domestic violence.

Per protocol, Adam had to report it.

And that's exactly what he did.

After the CT and chest X-ray came back, it was worse than expected.

This wasn't just domestic violence—it was attempted murder.

"She needs surgery immediately."

Adam rushed her to the OR.

Dr. Shepard arrived, reviewed the scans, and agreed with Adam's diagnosis. After scrubbing in, they began the surgery together.

Catherine had brain and chest hemorrhages.

Adam handled the chest, while Dr. Shepard tackled the brain.

It took everything they had, but they managed to save her life.

After leaving the OR, Adam asked, "How's it going?"

He directed the question to "Know-It-All Nurse," one of the surgical nurses today.

"Someone from the Women and Children's Protection Agency is here," she said, her expression a bit odd. "But the investigation results... they're unexpected."

"It wasn't the husband?"

Adam looked at her, surprised.

"Nope."

Know-It-All Nurse explained, "It was her daughter, Mandy. Her brother, David, was the one who reported it."

"...What?"

Adam froze, almost thinking he'd misheard.

Catherine's daughter was only about ten years old—a little girl.

Erm... 🙄

But then again, considering the kind of world this was, Adam calmed down.

Nothing was impossible.

"Take me to see them," Adam said, following Know-It-All Nurse.

Before even getting close, the moment Adam laid eyes on Mandy, he believed it.

It wasn't just the marks on her hands from hitting someone.

Her eyes—they were cold, filled with violence.

This was an incredibly dangerous little girl.

"Call a psychiatrist for them," Adam instructed.

"Already did," Know-It-All Nurse replied. "They're on their way down."

"Ugh..."

Adam sighed, starting to worry for David, Mandy's brother.

David had exposed the truth because he'd watched his mom get wheeled into surgery and overheard the nurses saying she almost didn't make it.

Out of fear of losing his mom, he overcame his fear of his sister and spoke up.

Now the truth was out.

But Mandy clearly hated him for it. The look in her eyes was murderous.

And no, that wasn't an exaggeration.

If she could repeatedly beat her own mother—and nearly kill her this time—Mandy definitely had serious psychological issues.

What's worse, some people are just born bad. Therapy and counseling? Useless.

David's familial ties to Mandy made it nearly impossible for him to escape her.

The best hope now was to have Mandy diagnosed with severe psychological problems and committed to a mental hospital.

But even that wasn't foolproof.

Many psychiatric patients are paranoid.

Unless she was locked up for life, the moment she got out, she'd come after David for revenge.

And if Mandy was smart—which was even scarier—she could adapt quickly in the hospital, pretend to improve, and get released early.

"Dr. Duncan, David said Mandy used his baseball bat to hit their mom," Know-It-All Nurse said, noticing Adam spacing out.

"Hmm."

Adam nodded, wondering if he should step in.

After thinking it over, he decided to wait and see.

If things got really bad, he'd quietly help David and his family disappear—leave town, change their identities, start fresh somewhere else.

Somewhere Mandy couldn't find them.

After all, these were lives at stake.

If he could save them, he would.

It'd only cost him a little effort.

With that decision made, Adam turned to leave.

Since he'd chosen to help, he needed to stay low-key.

Better not to linger around Mandy and draw her attention.

He wasn't afraid of her, but he didn't want to provoke her either.

No need for that.

"Doctor, I've been waiting 40 minutes," a seemingly harmless man approached.

"Where are you feeling unwell?"

Adam glanced at him, noticing police sirens at the ER entrance. "Sir, go find a nurse first."

The man didn't look injured, and he'd waited this long—probably nothing serious.

"Oh, okay."

The man nodded and turned to leave.

"Wait!"

Adam's jaw dropped, stopping him in his tracks. He wasn't rushing to the next ambulance anymore.

This guy clearly needed urgent care too.

Because there was an arrow sticking out of the back of his head.

"How did this happen?" Adam asked, examining him.

"The neighbor's kid was playing cowboys and Indians. I got unlucky and got shot by an Indian," the man said with a good-natured, self-deprecating smile.

"Come with me, quick."

Adam pulled him into the treatment room.

This guy had some nerve—walking around with an arrow in his head and casually waiting 40 minutes.

## Chapter 583: A Gift from God

Medical Center. Morning.

After Adam finished treating that poor guy who got an arrow shot into the back of his head, he stepped out of the exam room. He made a quick round through the ER and then headed to the surgical ward.

As soon as he got there, he caught sight of a classic scene unfolding. Meredith was standing at the nurses' station, holding a patient chart, while a tall, handsome guy flirted with her. Her eyes sparkled, and she giggled like a schoolgirl. Anyone with half a brain could tell she was into him. 😊

But Adam, with his sharp eye, took it a step further. He could tell this guy wasn't just charming—he was a top-tier predator in the game.

Right then, a blur of white zoomed past. In three quick strides, someone merged into two steps and landed a solid punch on the handsome guy's cheek. And who else could it be but Dr. Shepherd?! That punch was so hard that even Dr. Shepherd shook his hand afterward, wincing in pain. Ouch! 😬

"What the hell are you doing?!" Meredith snapped, glaring at her ex, Dr. Shepherd.

Back in the day, she'd given him an ultimatum: her or his wife. He chose his wife. She'd been heartbroken but eventually moved on. Now, here was this good-looking guy chatting her up, and her ex comes in swinging? What's his deal?

"He's Mark," Dr. Shepherd said flatly, dropping the name of the guy he'd just decked.

"..." Meredith froze, turning to look at Mark.

Adam overheard it too. Having already gotten the scoop on Dr. Shepherd's messy love life from Cristina's gossip sessions, he knew exactly who this Mark was—the guy who'd turned Dr. Shepherd's marriage into a sprawling emotional grassland. Tsk tsk! 🌿

Soon enough, the other Dr. Shepherd—aka Montgomery, the "grassland" herself—and the surgical chief, Richard, who'd caught wind of the drama, rushed over. Chief Richard hauled the married couple into his office, while Meredith took the bruised Mark to patch him up.

Adam chuckled and shook his head as he walked off. For your average doctor, throwing punches in a hospital would be a one-way ticket to getting fired. But when it's the neurosurgery chief, the famous Dr. Shepherd? Whole different story. 😊

He caught a glimpse of Chief Richard roaring in his office. Couldn't hear the words, but reading his lips, it was something like: "My neurosurgery chief is throwing punches in my surgical ward?! Damn it, get an ice pack on that hand that makes you two million bucks a year!" Adam smirked. No way Dr. Shepherd was getting in trouble.

Forget the bromance between him and Chief Richard—Dr. Shepherd's annual earnings for the hospital alone were enough to keep him golden. Two million dollars in pure profit in 1999? That's no pocket change. And that's after his cut and all the other expenses. The total revenue had to be in the tens of millions.

Do the math: Joe's last brain surgery cost hundreds of thousands. Dr. Shepherd, being a neurosurgeon, handles complex, pricey procedures. Even if not every surgery hits that mark, they average out to at least \$100,000 each. Ten million in revenue? That's just 100 surgeries. Even at one surgery a day, he'd rack up over 200 in a year. Plus, his reputation boosts the hospital's ranking, drawing in more patients like a magnet. 💰

Noon. Cafeteria.

"The chief's still got his back," George said, dishing out the gossip. "When he found out Mark was the other guy, he went from pissed to asking Dr. Shepherd if he'd thrown that punch with everything he had. When Shepherd said yes, the chief just patted his shoulder and walked off without another word."

"Totally normal," Cristina drawled. "Guys and their bro-code empathy. Lame."

"Oh, like women don't do it too?" George shot back. "You all are worse. Even if it's not your own rival, any other woman's a 'bitch' in your eyes unless she's you."

"Fair point," Cristina nodded, conceding with a grin. 😊

"So, you think Meredith's into this Mark guy?" Izzie chimed in, her gossip radar pinging. "I hear he's hot."

"Who knows?" Adam cut in. "Can we stop with the soap opera and talk shop instead? Izzie, didn't Dr. Montgomery take on a super weird case this morning?"

"Oh, yes!" Izzie lit up, her eyes wide. "They say women don't need men to live, but I didn't think it could be that literal. Spontaneous, heart-pounding ecstasy out of nowhere! God, I'm jealous!" 😊

"Pfft!" George nearly choked. "Spontaneous ecstasy? That's a real thing?"

"Yup," Izzie said, smirking at George and Adam. "No guy, no tools, just boom—bliss anytime, anywhere. If every woman had that, what'd we need men for?"

"Uh, how would you get pregnant without us?" George huffed, indignant.

"That's all men are to you?" Adam teased. "I feel bad for your exes and future husband."

"Don't twist it," Izzie rolled her eyes. "We're talking basic needs here. Don't tell me you're clueless about how few guys actually deliver extreme happiness to women. And even then, half the time we're faking it to keep the peace. Honestly, men can't keep up. Like that saying from the East: 'No field gets worn out, only the ox drops dead.' Ten times a day, 365 days a year—could you handle that?"

"..." George turned red and clammed up. He couldn't.

Izzie grinned triumphantly and glanced at Adam.

"Heh," Adam met her gaze with a cool, confident smile.

"No way," Izzie blinked, stunned.

"For real?" Cristina leaned in, intrigued.

"Okay, enough of that," Adam said, dodging before they could push for proof. "What's Dr. Montgomery planning for treatment?"

"Not set yet," Izzie shook her head. "She got called away earlier, but it'll probably be surgery. Man, what a tough call. If it were me, I'm not sure I could give up a gift from God like that."

"Right?" Cristina nodded, totally getting it.

"Please," Adam shrugged. "If all you women are drooling over it, there's gotta be a huge catch. It's uncontrollable. Unless you're cool with staying home 24/7 to enjoy it, you really want to be randomly blissed out in public? That's not a gift—it's torture."

"Ugh," Izzie sighed. "That's the problem. If it were trigger-based, it'd be perfect. Guess how the patient got here? She took a cab, started losing it in the backseat, and the driver—clueless—stared so hard he crashed the car!"

"Pfft!" George sputtered again. "OMG, it's a life hazard! No wonder she's ditching this 'gift.'"

"Yeah," Izzie said, deflating. "She's from a single-parent home, just her dad. When she got to the hospital, we called her emergency contact—him. Then, right in front of her dad and all of us, she grabbed a pillow and hid her face... It wasn't her first time. You could tell she and her dad were mortified."

Chapter 584: Gynecologist Adam

Medical Center. Cafeteria.

"That's gotta be awkward, huh?"

Adam chuckled, "But like Liz said, it's not like trigger-based cases haven't happened before."

"No way, really?"

"Are you serious?"

Christina and Liz blurted out at the same time, eyes wide.

"Yup."

Adam nodded, "This Persistent Arousal Syndrome isn't exactly rare. There's a case where it started just from touching the soles of someone's feet. And then there's this middle-aged British woman who had it too. Poor thing was tormented, constantly switching boyfriends. Every guy she dated ended up like a worn-out baseball pitcher—completely drained and then benched. That is, until she met a guy with the same condition. That kinda balanced things out for her. They had to... uh, 'cancel each other out' more than ten times a day."

"Oh my gosh!"

Liz gasped dramatically, "Those two are so lucky! I'm kinda jealous, to be honest. It's not fair. I don't even need to have their... abilities. I'd settle for a bestie like that!"

"Why on earth?"

George stared at Liz, totally floored.

"You guys don't get it?"

Liz shot a glance at Adam and George, "It's like when someone starts puking their guts out—everyone around starts feeling queasy too. It's contagious!"

"No way, it works like that?"

George's jaw dropped.

"You're only thinking about the perks," Adam teased with a smirk, "You sure you want a bestie like that? What if one day she decides to 'borrow' your boyfriend or husband for a quick fix?"

"..."

Liz froze mid-thought, then rolled her eyes at Adam and shut up.

Having a friend like that—especially if she's even remotely attractive—would make any woman feel uneasy. No kidding. Because you couldn't trust her self-control, and you definitely couldn't trust your guy not to make the kind of mistake any man might.

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After lunch, everyone went their separate ways.

Adam headed toward the Green Clinic. As he walked down the hallway, he spotted Dr. Montgomery, leaning against the wall, taking slow, pained steps. She looked like she was struggling.

"Dr. Shepherd, you okay?"

"Dr. Duncan."

Dr. Montgomery turned her head, forcing herself to stand up straight with a strained smile, "I'm fine."

But she clearly wasn't. Even though she tried to act normal, her body was twitching slightly, and there was a flash of pain in her eyes.

"Oh."

Adam gave her a thoughtful look. Probably something private, he figured. He smiled, nodded, and started to walk past her.

She was a renowned doctor—she knew how to handle herself. If it was something she couldn't deal with, Adam trusted she'd speak up. Since she wasn't asking for help, it seemed manageable.

"Wait."

He'd barely taken a few steps when she called after him.

"Dr. Shepherd?"

"Adam, could you do me a favor?"

Dr. Montgomery hesitated, "But it has to stay confidential."

Hmmm.

She was just like her husband—'Dr. Duncan' when things were fine, but 'Adam' when she needed something.

"Uh..."

Adam paused, "What kind of favor? If it's something I can do, I'm happy to help—and keep it under wraps, of course."

No need to spell out the perks of staying on Dr. Montgomery's good side. But only if it was something he could actually pull off. Otherwise, it'd backfire big time.

"I'm not feeling well. I need someone to check me out," Dr. Montgomery lowered her voice, "But it absolutely has to stay confidential. Can you help me, Adam?"

"Of course."

Adam nodded.

No problem there.

A chance to gain experience and score some brownie points? Why not?

At her gesture, Adam stepped forward to support her. They found an empty exam room nearby and went inside.

Inside the room, Dr. Montgomery propped herself up on the table, assuming the classic position for a gynecological exam.

"Professional!"

Adam muttered to himself with a little grin. He slipped on a pair of gloves, sat down in front of her, and started the examination.

Hmmm.

Or maybe you'd call it a consultation.

Truth be told, Dr. Montgomery probably had a good idea of what was wrong with her. It was just the awkward location—she couldn't exactly diagnose herself. Normally, she'd have gone to a female doctor for this kind of thing.

But as the newly appointed head of pediatrics, with top-tier perks and all the prestige that came with it, she was strutting around like the queen of the surgical wing—second only to the chief. She had her pride. No way was she about to let someone she wasn't close to see her in such a vulnerable state.

And if word got out?

That'd be beyond humiliating.

As for doctor-patient confidentiality?

Pfft, don't make her laugh.

Sure, doctors are supposed to keep things private, but unless they're truly on your side, they can follow protocol to a T and still screw you over. Just writing up your chart could be enough to spill the beans. The chart talks. The meds she'd prescribe talk. Unless someone's actively trying to keep it hush-hush, there's no hiding it.

And once one person knows, the whole hospital knows.

Her first choice would've been her husband, Dr. Shepherd, obviously. But right now, her old flame—the guy who'd caused her to cheat on her husband—had followed her from Boston to here. Her husband had even punched him out. Now her husband's hand was messed up, and every time he saw her, he'd go stone-faced, like he was back to square one from when she first arrived. He wouldn't even let her get a word in—just turned and walked away.

If Dr. Bailey were around, with her skills and integrity, she'd have earned Dr. Montgomery's trust and respect in a heartbeat. She'd be the perfect choice.

But Bailey was on maternity leave, nowhere near the hospital.

As for Liz?

Sure, she was one of her people, but there was still some distance between them. And in their mentor-student dynamic, Dr. Montgomery was the one on top. Letting her student see her like this? No thanks.

Adam, though?

His skills and character had already earned everyone's respect—no one saw him as just some intern, not even her. There was no baggage about rank or status with him.

The only downside? He's a guy.

But they're both doctors. At a time like this, she had no choice but to trust Adam—and her own professionalism.

"Dr. Shepherd, I'm sorry to say..."

Adam shook his head, "You've got a wild kudzu rash in a spot nobody wants one. And the blisters are growing fast. It's pretty bad."

This whole process? Not exactly glamorous.

In fact, if it were any regular guy—or someone with a phobia of dense clusters—they'd probably look away in horror.

And that's why so few male doctors go into gynecology.

It's rough!

It can really mess with a guy's sense of beauty!

It's like when Sheldon went to his sister Missy's childbirth. Amy had to jump in quick to explain, "Women don't normally look like that!"

Poor Sheldon was already grossed out by the idea of physical intimacy between men and women. Amy had spent years trying to change his mind, bit by bit. Then this happens—Sheldon looked like he couldn't handle reality, and Amy was freaking out.

"Damn it!"

Dr. Montgomery flopped back on the table, closing her eyes in frustration.

"Want me to grab some calamine lotion, gloves, and steroids?" Adam asked.

"Please," Dr. Montgomery grabbed his arm, pleading, "And keep it under wraps, okay? No chart, no records. Get the meds discreetly—don't tell a soul."

"Don't worry."

Adam nodded.

With his connections, getting the meds was a piece of cake.

It's like how a good chef never goes hungry, no matter the era.

In a hospital, if you know what you're doing, you can get your hands on all sorts of restricted stuff. No big deal. Rules might be strict, but they're enforced by people—and people are swayed by favors and relationships.

Chapter 585: Even \*\*\* Would Call Him a Pro

Medical Center. Ward.

Adam grabbed the meds and slipped into the room to secretly treat Dr. Montgomery.

"Ahh!" Dr. Montgomery let out a pained wail.

"Dr. Shepherd, you might wanna tough it out a bit," Adam said with a wry smile. "Otherwise, I won't need to keep this hush-hush for long."

This was just a regular ward—soundproofing was meh at best. Her cries were hardly contained. If secrecy wasn't a thing, no biggie. But it was a thing. If any passing doctor or nurse overheard, who knows what kind of wild rumors would spread? 🤔

Dr. Montgomery's husband, Dr. Shepherd, was already a walking emotional wreck—especially right now. He'd probably assume the worst. If Adam had actually cuckolded him, fair enough—but he hadn't! He was just doing a favor for Dr. Montgomery.

Sure, Dr. Shepherd had forgiven his wife, the original "grassland." But Adam wasn't betting on him forgiving anyone else who stepped on that turf. No way was he taking that blame. In his book, the pediatric chief didn't outweigh the neurosurgery chief. The risk-reward ratio? Not worth it.

"This is karma!" Dr. Montgomery muffled her sobs with her hand, fighting the discomfort before finally breaking down. "It's all payback for cheating with Mark!"

"Did he give you a kudzu rash down there?" Adam asked casually while treating her.

Kudzu rash—named for the patchy, vine-like marks it leaves. Mark, the guy who'd stolen his best friend's wife, was clearly a shameless playboy. Catching something nasty wasn't a shock. But Dr. Montgomery had been here for months, reconciled with her husband for over a month. Then Mark shows up, and bam—kudzu rash?

Here's the kicker: kudzu rash isn't some slow-burn skin condition. It doesn't lurk for months—it flares up fast. Emmm... Adam pieced it together and silently mourned for Dr. Shepherd, the green giant, for a few seconds. That punch this morning? Totally deserved. 😊

Chances are, Dr. Montgomery didn't come home last night, and Mark popping up at the hospital this morning tipped Dr. Shepherd off. Old wounds plus new suspicions—boom, explosion.

Fair. The first time Dr. Shepherd caught his wife and best friend in bed, he didn't flip out. He just stood there, calmly watched for a bit, then quietly closed the door. Xu Wenchang from Homecoming would've tipped his hat and called him a pro.

Too bad Dr. Montgomery wasn't as slick as Zhang Chengcheng from that show. She didn't have the chops to coo "sweetie" at a hot young guy one second, then turn around and sob to her husband the next: "It was a heat-of-the-moment mistake! I didn't plan it! He hit on me, he seduced me—I fought it, I swear, for so long, but I caved. I just made a mistake every guy in the world makes, except I'm a woman. If it's that bad, why don't you go find someone too? You can't just think about yourself—think about me for once!"

Nah, Dr. Montgomery didn't pull that card. But Dr. Shepherd? Way saucier than Xu Wenchang. He didn't give his cheating wife a chance to spin it—shut the door, walked out, hopped a plane from Boston to New York. That night, a totally plastered Meredith picked him up at a bar, took him home, and the next morning, he strutted around crowing about how she'd taken advantage of him. Emmm... No need for his wife to suggest compensation—he'd already treated himself. 🤔

If it weren't for Dr. Montgomery later hitting him with that mind-boggling line—"Even if I'm Satan, even if I cheated, I could still be your soulmate, your one true love"—and him forgiving her, Dr. Shepherd could've gone toe-to-toe with a player like Hong Shixian. But nope, he ended up more like Xu Wenchang after all.

"No!" Dr. Montgomery snapped Adam out of his wandering thoughts, her voice low and strained. "Me and Mark—that was months ago! This is just the fallout from that mess! I left my city, my home, to save my husband and my marriage. Now I'm living in a trailer on a mountainside—with my husband and his mistress's dog! I was walking the dog, threw a stick, and needed to pee. I didn't want to wake my husband, who's already fed up with me, so I squatted right there. And this is what I got! It's karma!"

She broke down again, sobbing into her hands.

Adam kept his head down, focusing on the treatment, avoiding her face. He didn't want to crack up. What a mess! Her rival, Meredith, had pawned off her dog on Dr. Shepherd—said it couldn't stay at her place, but the mountain had space, so they could co-parent it. In the U.S., pets are a big deal. Co-raising one is a bonding milestone—think Sheldon and Amy with their turtle. Huge step!

To play nice, Dr. Montgomery not only had to be civil with her rival but also care for the dog Meredith gave her husband. And then, while walking it, she caught this rash. Living on a mountainside—wild grass everywhere, gorgeous views—sounds dreamy, right? But it's a breeding ground for bugs, snakes, and germs. Anyone who's lived rural knows: summer mosquitoes are brutal, and centipedes are massive. A pristine mountain's even worse. One slip, and you're toast.

Those folks romanticizing raw nature, dreaming of the Amazon? They'd last a day before begging for concrete walls. Look at Dr. Montgomery—a skilled doctor, undone by squatting for a quick pee in the wild. One kudzu rash later, she's a wreck. Emmm... If this were a palace intrigue drama, Adam would bet Meredith orchestrated this as a silent, savage revenge. 😏

Staring at Dr. Montgomery's infection—enough to freak out anyone with trypophobia—Adam couldn't help but sigh. Brutal. This wasn't your average kudzu rash. It was severe.

"Dr. Shepherd, should I grab an ice pack?" Adam dodged her rant, changing the subject.

"Would it help?" she groaned, wincing.

"Should ease it a bit," Adam said. Heat and itching? Ice always helps some.

"Fine," she nodded.

After finishing her treatment, Adam fetched an ice pack. This morning, she'd iced her husband's punch-bruised hand. This afternoon, it was her turn. Now she got why he'd brushed off her help, insisting he was fine.

"Dr. Montgomery, rest here. I'm stepping out—call me if you need anything," Adam said.

He'd done his part. No point in hovering while she iced her wounds in that state. Time to bounce. 🖤

Chapter 586: Try It and You're Done

Medical Center.

Ward.

Adam finished the treatment and was ready to bolt.

"Alright," Dr. Montgomery nodded immediately.

Right now, she was holding an ice pack to her wound, her posture totally unladylike. Earlier, she had no choice. But now that the treatment was done and her professional demeanor had faded, the embarrassment kicked in.

"Adam, lock the door," Dr. Montgomery called out.

"Uh..." Adam stopped in his tracks, giving a wry smile. "I don't have the key."

The key was with the nurse.

"Well, then how about you stick around for a bit and keep an eye on the door for me?" Dr. Montgomery requested.

"Fine," Adam nodded helplessly.

Might as well see it through—go big or go home, right? He'd already done this much; no point half-assing it now. Otherwise, it'd be a total waste.

The ward fell quiet for a moment.

After the treatment and with the ice pack helping, Dr. Montgomery finally felt some relief. She lay there, staring at the ceiling, lost in thought. Adam, after locking the door, sat by the bed, avoiding direct eye contact. Following the "less said, less trouble" rule, he didn't feel like chatting either.

After a while...

"Adam, could you go grab Derek for me?" Dr. Montgomery broke the silence.

"Sure," Adam agreed without hesitation, even though he didn't quite get why.

He wasn't keen on lingering here anyway. The longer he stayed, the higher the risk of people starting to gossip.

He stepped out, found Dr. Shepherd, and brought him back.

"I'm about to show you something, but you better not laugh or gloat," Dr. Montgomery said as she pulled the curtain around her bed, speaking to her husband on the other side.

"Why would I gloat?" Dr. Shepherd replied, sounding a bit annoyed.

"Because I've got a wild kudzu rash," Dr. Montgomery admitted.

"What?" Dr. Shepherd yanked the curtain open and leaned in to see. A smug grin spread across his face. "You really got a wild kudzu rash—and a pretty bad one too."

"So, are we even now?" Dr. Montgomery teased, pouting playfully at his gloating. "Isn't this enough punishment? Haven't I suffered enough karma?"

That's when it clicked for Adam. She was playing the pity card to win some sympathy.

But wait—since when did getting a wild kudzu rash equate to getting payback for cheating and earning forgiveness? Before Adam could piece that logic together, something even more baffling happened.

Dr. Shepherd laughed.

He straight-up laughed.

A genuine, hearty laugh—the kind that only comes from years of marriage.

And then Dr. Montgomery grabbed the pillow behind her and playfully chucked it at her husband, feigning indignation.

"Hahaha!"

"Hahaha!"

The two of them burst into laughter, flirting and teasing like nothing had ever happened. It was all so... carefree and reconciled.

Meanwhile, Adam stood there, invisible, with a giant question mark over his head. It was like that classic meme voice echoed in his mind: "Hey kid, you got a lot of questions, huh?"

What just happened? How did they just laugh it off and make up like that? Adam didn't dare say a word or ask. He just quietly slipped away.

As long as the couple was happy, right?

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Emergency Room

Bang!

The door was forcefully shoved open from the outside.

"Don't ever let me see that filthy thing again!" a pretty paramedic lady shouted, pushing a stretcher in with an attitude.

"What's going on?" Adam asked, curious.

"Who cares?!" she snapped, clearly pissed. She didn't even give Adam the courtesy of an explanation—just left the stretcher and patient there, slammed the door, and stormed off.

"Whoa!"

"Who's that? Pissing her off like that!"

"That's too much—she shouldn't be giving Dr. Duncan that kind of attitude."

"I'll remember her face," the nurses chattered among themselves.

"Carol, can you grab this guy's chart for me?" Adam asked with a smile, turning to the patient. "So, what'd you do?"

This was the first time his charm had failed on a pretty young lady.

Hmph. Women!

You've successfully piqued my interest!

...Okay, maybe that's what a normal guy would think. But Adam's a doctor. What really got his attention was what this patient did to make the pretty paramedic that mad.

Because this wasn't just about her snubbing Adam. As a paramedic, it's her job to quickly and accurately report the patient's condition to the doctor. Storming off without a word, cursing, and slamming the door? That's someone who's completely lost it.

"Nothing much, just asked about her preferences," the patient—a middle-aged guy with a receding hairline and half his face bloodied—replied calmly. He held a notebook and pen in his hands. "No ill intentions."

"Did she do that to you?" Adam asked, growing more curious.

"Nah," the man shook his head. "That was the guy at the newsstand."

"What'd you say?" Adam chuckled as he began examining him.

"Some trash talk about his Middle Eastern roots," the man said casually. "He's got a short fuse."

"Any other injuries?" Adam asked.

"Feels like a cracked rib," the man pointed to his side.

"Newsstand guy again?" Adam moved to check it out.

"Nope, that was the gardener in the park. He's real sensitive about his haircut," the man said with a straight face.

"Let me guess—you're purposely riling people up," Adam grinned. "You're not some burnt-out theoretical physicist looking for a new brain, are you?"

"Close," the man said, giving Adam a surprised look. "I'm a sociologist from NYU, specializing in violence studies. I'm working on a project: I ask people two questions to find their trigger points, then use that info to provoke them until they snap and attack me."

"Pfft," Adam couldn't help but laugh.

"What's so funny?" the sociologist asked, picking up his pen and notebook, ready to analyze Adam.

"I've got a couple of friends—well, two of them," Adam smirked. "One's a theoretical physicist, the other's a neurologist. To them, sociology isn't even a real science. If they heard what you just said—that their science is 'close' to yours—they'd probably lose it without you even trying to provoke them. Though, even at their angriest, they'd just give you a dirty look, not throw punches."

"Arrogant jerks!" the sociologist scoffed, clearly unimpressed.

You look down on me? Well, I look down on you too!

"Fair point," Adam nodded. "But your project's got a flaw. Some people don't even need words—just a glance or a smirk can set them off. Others? You could poke and prod all day, and they still wouldn't snap. People are different. Too many variables."

"Oh?" The sociologist raised an eyebrow, giving Adam a look that screamed, "You don't get it—wanna try me?" "Sounds like you think you're the type who wouldn't snap no matter how much I push. Mind if I ask you two questions?"

"Go for it," Adam shrugged nonchalantly.

Try it and see what happens.

He was pretty damn sure he wouldn't be the one regretting it.

Chapter 587: Come Hit Me!

Medical Center. ER. Exam Room.

"Come at me!"

"Bring it!"

A middle-aged sociologist stood there like some wannabe villain facing off against a legendary duo. Adam didn't mind letting him take a swing—figuratively, of course. He wasn't like Sheldon or Beverly, looking down on sociologists for not being "real" scientists. 😊

"You're young, good-looking, and already a doctor at New York Medical Center—bet you got in through the back door, huh?" The sociologist smirked, clicking the timer on his wrist.

"Good looks? Born with 'em, can't help it," Adam grinned. "But getting into the Medical Center? That's all me. What, you think looks trump talent? That's your take?"

He casually glanced at the guy's receding hairline, his expression screaming, "You've got zero looks and made it as a sociologist on talent alone—shouldn't you value skill over shallow stuff?"

"..." The sociologist's face darkened. "You gotta be honest, or this study's pointless."

"Oh?" Adam raised an eyebrow. "Honesty's the key? Shouldn't you be the one sifting through my answers, picking out what pisses people off? Who even asks dumb questions like that seriously?"

"That one doesn't count," the sociologist muttered, his lip twitching. "You saw it coming and braced yourself."

"Exactly! Too many variables," Adam said, throwing up his hands. "This whole topic's a waste of time. But I get it—scientists, right? I've got buddies who 'work' all day: check emails, send emails, skim news, scam some grants. One even watches full-screen rom-coms—action rom-coms—in his office. Gotta look busy or they're out the door!" 😊

"You—" The sociologist didn't rile Adam up but nearly blew his own top. He caught himself, though, and looked at Adam with surprise. "You're good."

"Nah, I'm not that great," Adam shrugged. "You just haven't met a real master troll. Those guys are born for it. Talent's everything—most people's lifetime grind barely hits a genius's starting line. The news keeps preaching 'hard work's all you need.' Cruel, huh? Especially for folks who buy it. Hope they never meet a true prodigy—shattered dreams aren't easy to swallow."

He locked eyes with the guy the whole time.

"..." The sociologist felt the sting of that shade. But he was ready now—no anger, just fired up.

"Got family?" he asked, resetting his wrist timer with a sly smile.

"Yeah," Adam said, frowning as he sensed trouble. "There's a line with these studies. Don't cross it."

"Can't agree there," the sociologist grinned. "My project's PAI—Provocation-to-Attack Interval, testing negative emotion resistance. Anything to tick you off is fair game. It's like no-holds-barred fighting—for science, not personal."

"Okay, we're done," Adam waved him off. "I'm out."

"Why?" The sociologist perked up. "Is it 'cause family's your weak spot? Can't handle jabs at them? Or maybe you've got some weird family secrets you're scared I'll accidentally hit—"

"Carol!" Adam ignored him, calling the nurse. "Mr. Desmond's just got a scratch. Stitch him up."

"Got it," Nurse Carol stepped in.

"What's wrong? Scared?" The sociologist wouldn't quit, hurling a string of family insults at Adam's back.

Adam glanced at him.

"You mad yet?" The guy beamed, thrilled. "Wanna hit me, huh? Go for it! I won't sue—I've got premium insurance, NASCAR-driver-level premiums. Might as well use it. Come on!"

"Mr. Desmond, you're a riot," Adam smiled. "I'm a doctor—can't go hitting patients."

He turned and walked out.

"I'm serious! It's for science—don't bottle up that anger! Hit me—argh!" The sociologist kept taunting Adam's retreating figure, only to yelp in pain mid-sentence.

"Sorry," Nurse Carol's voice chimed in. "I'm new—still getting the hang of this."

"Ah! Ah! Oh, God!" The sociologist's pained cries echoed.

Adam's lip curled into a smirk. He's a law-abiding doctor—punching a patient? Against hospital rules and the law? Never! 😏 But after that guy trashed him and his family in front of Carol, well, his wish might just come true anyway.

If the sociologist hadn't ignored Adam's warning and dragged his family into it, Adam would've told Carol to go easy—maybe even had John Carter stitch him up instead. Too bad he didn't listen. Stitching a face wound? One slip, and that needle stings.

Still, Adam underestimated his clout with the nurses. After "rookie" Carol fumbled through the stitches and left, word spread like wildfire through the ER.

"That jerk!"

"Unbelievable!"

"He got Dr. Duncan roughed up earlier, and now he's insulting him and his family?!"

"Ugh, I'm pissed!"

"No way we let this slide!"

The nurses huddled, whispering, shooting shady looks at the sociologist's room. He, meanwhile, had no clue.

A few minutes later—

"Someone's here to keep you company, Mr. Desmond," Carol said, wheeling in a gurney.

On it? A hulking Black guy, shirtless, all muscle, rocking shorts. A pro boxer—underground circuit. Emmm... Knocked out cold after three straight losses, sent here in a foul mood.

"This is Mr. Parnell," Carol said, parking him next to the sociologist's bed before bolting.

It wasn't a VIP room—two beds, standard setup. Hospital beds are tight; gotta maximize space.

"Hey there," the sociologist said cheerfully. Bored anyway, right? New research material!

"What's up with you?" he asked.

"Don't wanna talk about it," the boxer grunted, barely glancing at him.

The sociologist's eyes lit up. Perfect.

Outside, the nurses gathered at the station, watching, one of them timing it.

Two minutes later—

Bang!

Ugh!

Thud!

A meaty punch landed, followed by a pained groan. A figure slid out of the room, slamming into the hallway wall. The boxer's cold laugh rang out.

"There's your answer to both those questions."

Chapter 588: The Template for Adam's Daughter

Medical Center.

Emergency Room.

"Dr. Duncan..."

The middle-aged sociologist, Desmond, had his wish granted—only to get knocked out cold with a single punch. A nurse quickly relayed the "unfortunate" news to Adam, asking if he'd come over to diagnose (and maybe enjoy) the situation.

"Mr. Desmond really wasn't careful, huh?" Adam sighed. "I've never met someone with a request like his in all my years."

"Neither have we," the nurse giggled.

"Well, someone finally gave him what he wanted," Adam nodded. "I'll pass on checking him out. Let Dr. Lewis handle it. Hopefully, he stops looking for trouble—otherwise, he'll be done for before his project even gets results."

"Got it, Dr. Duncan," the nurse replied with a grin before heading off.

Adam couldn't help but chuckle to himself. This sociologist's project was interesting, sure, but the variables were just too messy.

First off, people who provoke others come in all flavors. Take Sheldon, for example. From the day he was born, he's been pissing people off left and right for decades. And what's he got to show for it? A punch to the face from Paige, a jab to the nose from Penny, and a slap from Leonard—though that slap was at Sheldon's own request. Penny's punch? That only happened when Sheldon crept up to her in the middle of the night, reaching for her chest like a creep, and she swung in "self-defense." Otherwise, even when she was pissed, she couldn't bring herself to hit him.

Sheldon's daily dose of brutal honesty could drive anyone up the wall, but why was he still kicking? Simple: looks. Leonard and Penny basically treated him like a kid they were babysitting. When they broke up, they even got jealous over who'd take Sheldon shopping or hang out with him. Once, after a long day of fun, Sheldon crashed hard, and as they watched him sleep, they gushed, "Sleeping Sheldon looks like an angel." Without that cute charm and brainy vibe, Sheldon wouldn't have survived to adulthood.

Sheldon once compared himself to a bird that sneaks into other birds' nests, hogging all the resources. Leonard likened him to a baby seal stealing milk from two moms. Point is, Sheldon's got this weird aura that makes people hesitate to lay a hand on him. Well, except for Paige—she's immune to it. With her sky-high IQ and looks that outshine his, she doesn't care about his charm. When she's mad, she swings, no hesitation.

And then there's Missy, his twin sister, a whole other story. She's been fighting Sheldon since they were in the womb—apparently, he "almost absorbed her into a mole." She's his natural enemy, always ready with a swift kick where it hurts. Totally normal for her.

Now, this balding middle-aged sociologist? Zero charm. No matter how much he studies, his data's gonna be skewed—it's not universal. Hmm... maybe they could factor in a "looks correction coefficient" to see just how much this superficial world judges by appearances. ☹

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Night fell.

"Dr. Duncan," a nurse gave Adam a knowing look.

Adam glanced toward the ward and saw a few long-legged high school cheerleaders flailing around, their expressions totally off.

"They on something?" Adam frowned.

"Looks like it," the nurse nodded.

"I'm Dr. Duncan..." Adam started as he approached, but he didn't even get to finish.

"Wow! So hot!"

"I'm obsessed!"

"I wanna %\$#@ you!"

The three cheerleaders, grinning like idiots, lunged at him.

"Asshole!"

The lone tall guy—a jock, clearly—saw red and charged at Adam too. "They're mine!"

"Shit!" Adam cursed under his breath, dodging nimbly. In a few quick moves, he took down the jock and pinned the three giggling cheerleaders to the bed.

"Restraints!"

The nurse stood there, jaw dropped, watching these three flirty troublemakers try to cop a feel. She snapped out of it and called for backup. A few more nurses rushed in, taking over from Adam, pinning the girls down, and strapping them to the beds to keep them still.

"You brought them here?" Adam asked, yanking the jock off the floor by the collar.

"Yeah," the guy admitted, sobered up a bit by Adam's strength. As a football player, he respected raw power.

"What'd you give them? Ecstasy?" Adam stared him down.

"Yeah," the guy nodded.

"No other junk mixed in?" Adam's gaze turned icy.

In this TV-drama version of the US, drugs were everywhere. People often started with one kind, then mixed others for a bigger high—more thrilling, but way more dangerous.

"If you wanna test it, I've still got some," the jock pointed to his backpack.

"Hand it over," Adam ordered, letting go so the guy's feet hit the ground.

The jock stumbled, nearly falling, then shakily pulled out a big box of heart-shaped chocolates from his bag.

"You spiked the chocolates?" Adam's voice grew colder.

Yeah, in this TV-drama high school world, the girls who claw their way to cheerleading aren't usually angels. Cheerleaders and quarterbacks—they're the classic high school power couples. And cheerleaders often mess around with football, basketball, baseball players—sometimes even the whole team. "Team bonding" with drugs isn't uncommon.

But there's a huge difference between taking something willingly and being drugged without knowing. Adam knew plenty of stories—good, innocent girls who went to a party, got slipped something, and spiraled into self-destruction afterward.

Drugging food like chocolates? That's next-level sneaky. In this party-obsessed TV world, you can't avoid social events entirely. But one bite of tainted food or sip of a spiked drink, and you're out of it—dazed, giggling, defenseless. Easy prey for something awful. Afterward, you might not even know how many people took advantage of you. Beyond the emotional scars and judgment, there's the physical fallout: diseases, pregnancy, you name it. Worse, some don't even survive long enough to face those consequences.

"You realize they could have seizures, kidney damage, fall into a coma—or even die?" Adam said coldly.

"Uh..." The jock looked down. "It's not that serious... Can we not tell the cops?"

"No chance," Adam sneered. "Not only will the cops know, but so will your parents—and theirs. And I'll make damn sure they understand every single consequence of this stunt."

The jock's face went pale.

"Take it for testing," Adam gestured to the box of chocolates.

A nurse stepped up to grab it.

Adam sighed, glancing at the cheerleaders still writhing on the beds, giggling uncontrollably. If he ever had a daughter, he'd rather she be a bookworm than a social butterfly.

Hmm... If that day ever came, maybe he'd send her to Juno to be raised. A son might turn out too weird under Juno's influence. But a daughter? In a messed-up world like this, better she learns to be the predator than the prey.

Chapter 589: Is That What You Call Liking Someone?

Medical Center.

Late at night.

After the effects of the drugs wore off, the three long-legged cheerleaders didn't need the restraints anymore. The nurse untied them, and they sat side by side, staring blankly at the TV without moving a muscle.

The tall guy was no rookie at this. The stuff he slipped into the chocolate was just pure ecstasy—nothing else mixed in. He didn't dare give them too much either. But even so, when the girls' parents rushed in and saw their daughters sitting there, dazed and unresponsive, they lost it completely.

Sure, they'd been through similar wild days themselves and kinda knew what was up, but seeing it happen to their own kids? That's a whole different story. The guy's parents nearly got jumped by the angry mob.

The cops showed up to take statements and had to step in hard to stop a full-on brawl. Adam said what he needed to say and did what he had to do. Whatever happened next wasn't his problem.

In the world of American high school dramas, stuff like this happens all the time.

As Adam left the room and walked down the hallway, he suddenly froze mid-step. He turned around to see a nurse standing there, facing the wall like she was staring at something.

Something's off.

This is weird!

"Debbie, you okay?"

Adam walked over and patted her shoulder. With his knack for remembering people, he knew everyone in the hospital—every detail about them stuck in his head. That's why he got along with everyone so well, like they were old buddies.

"What?"

Nurse Debbie kept staring at the blank wall, smiling without turning her head.

"Huh?"

Adam frowned, grabbed her arm, and gently turned her around to face him. Her face was glowing with joy... but it was kinda lifeless, too.

"No way..."

Adam's mouth twitched as he waved toward the nurse's station. "Carol!"

"Dr. Duncan, what's up?"

Nurse Carol jogged over right away.

"Take Debbie to a room. She's acting like she's high."

Adam gave the order, then something clicked. "Wait—where's that box of spiked chocolate from earlier?"

"Oh no!"

Carol got it instantly and gasped. "I saw it in the nurse's lounge a minute ago!"

"Get it out of there and destroy it, now!"

Adam checked Debbie over, saw it wasn't too bad, and let out a relieved but exasperated sigh.

"Yes, yes!"

Carol nodded quickly, helping Debbie toward the lounge.

Adam just shook his head.

This is the danger of tampered food—you never know who's gonna get hit.

Honestly, he could kinda get why the nurses did it. They're swamped all the time. Remember that big nurse strike last time? Sometimes they're so busy they don't even have a second to hit the cafeteria. When they're starving, they'll grab a snack or some fruit from a patient's room to keep going.

No one says anything about it.

Happy patients don't care, grumpy ones don't notice, and the really sick ones? They're past noticing anything.

It's not just nurses—doctors do it too. Dr. House next door loves snagging stuff. His team even raids patients' homes looking for clues and munches on whatever's around.

Emmm... sometimes they even hook up on the patient's bed! 🤔

Talk about guts. Aren't they worried about eating something bad—or that the bed itself might be ground zero for whatever's making the patient sick?

This time, though, some clueless nurse couldn't resist the heart-shaped chocolates, swiped them to the lounge, and bam—down she went.

That football player went all out to trick those three cheerleaders. A big box of fancy chocolates like that? Not cheap!

Two hours later...

After finishing a little "private session" with Alice Grey, Adam was heading out when he ran into Nurse Carol. "How's Debbie doing?"

"Eh, same old."

Carol gave a wry smile. "This one's a total embarrassment. Debbie's not the only one who ate the spiked stuff."

"Not the only one?"

Adam blinked, startled. "Let's go check it out."

Carol led him to the lounge, and what he saw left him speechless.

Six nurses were lined up on a couch, each holding a tub of ice cream, grinning like idiots—slow, blissful idiots. They were eating so painfully slow, not even chewing, just licking it bit by bit, smacking their lips like it was the best thing they'd ever tasted.

Nearby, the male nurses were staring. Some held the same ice cream, glancing between their own tubs and the girls', either zoned out or hunched over with weird looks on their faces, lost in who-knows-what thoughts. 😊

Adam took one look, realized what Carol meant by "total embarrassment," and bolted.

"Officer Beckett, yeah, it's me. I've got another case to report..."

Adam dialed Kate. As a good citizen, he felt obligated to report this messed-up drugging incident to the authorities—and push them to take it seriously.

The fallout was insane!

Look at this chain reaction—six nurses down, acting like total loons. What if someone saw this and thought the medical center was some sketchy dump? Or if these zonked-out nurses kept treating patients and screwed up big time? Or if their weird vibes freaked out the normal staff and caused a disaster?

Adam didn't know about anyone else, but he was pissed after seeing that scene!

He had to do something. If Kate couldn't give him a satisfying answer, he'd go straight to the media—the fourth estate—and spill it all as an anonymous tipster. He knew an ambitious reporter like Robin would eat this up.

"Kate, don't let me down," Adam muttered as he left the hospital and drove back to his apartment.

The next day...

Adam showed up to work with a scowl. Kate had let him down, big time. Even Robin, who'd sniffed out the story and knew it was tied to society's darkest corners, chickened out the second she realized how huge it was.

In the locker room...

"He's not as bad as you guys make him out to be," Meredith was saying, defending Mark—the guy who'd cheated on her ex. "His \$400-an-hour shrink told him that behind his rugged, confident exterior, he's a self-loathing, self-destructive, borderline pathological mess.

"Nobody's perfect. Cheating's wrong, sure, but doesn't the husband bear some responsibility? Was he really such a great husband?"

"Heh."

Adam pushed the door open with a grin. "That shrink's got skills—feeding him exactly what he wants to hear. No wonder he charges \$400 an hour!"

\$400 an hour, 10 hours a day—that's \$4,000. Even with weekends off, that's \$20,000 a week. Fifty weeks a year? A cool million. A top-tier earner dragging up the average for every shrink out there!

"You don't buy it?"

Meredith glanced at him.

"Nope," Adam shot back. "All those fancy theories and buzzwords just boil down to one thing—he couldn't keep it in his pants!"

"Self-loathing? Nah, he's just drooling over her body. Dude's a creep!"

Chapter 590: Who Wants to Join?

Medical Center. Locker Room.

"So, you're saying you're not gonna scrub in for his surgery?" Meredith shot Adam a mocking look, catching him off guard and leaving him momentarily speechless.

"What surgery?" Adam perked up, clearly intrigued.

"A patient just came into the hospital with a severe skull structure developmental disorder," Christina chimed in.

"Lion syndrome?" Adam asked, surprised.

Lion syndrome—pretty self-explanatory, really. The face resembles a lion's.

"Yup," Christina nodded. "This rare condition is a plastic surgeon's dream. If the surgery's a success and they publish the before-and-after pics to the media, that surgeon's gonna be the talk of the town."

"Not just a plastic surgeon's dream—it's the hospital's too," Meredith pointed out. "Mark's the best plastic surgeon on the East Coast. You seriously don't wanna join in on a surgery like that?"

"Oh, I do," Adam admitted honestly.

He wasn't planning on becoming a plastic surgeon himself, but picking up a few extra skills never hurt. Especially since the guy in question was among the best of the best in the field.

Besides, Adam was already shadowing some top-tier docs: Burke, the leading cardiothoracic surgeon; Shepherd, the top neurosurgeon; Montgomery, the best in pediatrics; and then there was Alice Grey, a legendary doctor who was basically a cheat code in human form.

If he added the East Coast's top plastic surgeon to his mentor lineup? Well, Adam's team of teachers would be getting even more stacked. 🤖

"Sounds like he's got some redeeming qualities after all," Meredith said with a grin.

"I never said he didn't," Adam replied, a bit surprised. "Skill level and personal character are two totally different things. I respect his insane talent and wanna learn from him, but that doesn't mean I'm signing off on who he is as a person."

"Exactly!" George jumped in to agree.

Christina and Liz both turned to George, their eyes teasing.

"What?" George asked, clearly annoyed.

"Adam's got a point—he can look down on the guy for legit reasons. But you? Sounds more like jealousy to me," Christina said, hitting the nail on the head.

"Right?" Liz added dreamily. "I mean, with a face like that and a body to match? I'd be all over it too. No wonder Dr. Montgomery couldn't resist. Honestly, she's living the dream—married to Mr. Perfect and sneaking around with Mr. Sexy Beast. Ugh, goals!" 😊

"Meredith, don't tell me you've got a thing for this Mark guy now?" Christina turned to Meredith, asking the million-dollar question.

"No way!" Meredith shot back immediately.

But the real reason she'd been hyping Mark up so much? It was because of something he'd said to her: "I heard about you back in Boston—an intern with a wild streak, messing around with an attending. We're both just dirty little side pieces."

That hit her hard. She got it.

Okay, fine, it also didn't hurt that Mark was hot, built, and had a way of drawing people in.

"So what if I did like him a little?" Meredith snapped, noticing the skeptical looks on everyone's faces. "They went back to their happy little families, living the dream, while the two of us 'side pieces' stick together. What's so weird about that?"

"Not weird at all," Adam nodded. "But are you sure you're over Dr. Shepherd? Last time Mark and Dr. Montgomery were in bed 'discussing life and ideals,' Shepherd just quietly closed the door and left. This time, though? You and Mark were just flirting in public, and Shepherd stormed over and threw a punch. Same setup, but the reactions are worlds apart. Don't you think that's a little telling?"

"But he didn't choose me!" Meredith suddenly shouted.

"Maybe he wants both," Adam said with a shrug, cutting the convo short as he heard someone approaching.

Everyone: "..."

Adam finished changing and headed out, with Christina hot on his heels.

"You were joking just now, right?" she asked in a low voice as she walked beside him.

"Who knows?" Adam grinned, keeping it vague.

That punch versus just closing the door—it was pretty obvious what Shepherd's real feelings were.

Most people in that situation would pick the new, fiery fling over a cheating spouse they barely had feelings for anymore. But Shepherd? His choices were always a mystery. Who knew what was going through his head?

Maybe he didn't wanna lose either—keeping the friendship and family vibe with his wife while stringing Meredith along with some half-hearted romance, playing the 'best friend with benefits' card.

Men, huh? Always trying to have it all. Pretty relatable, if you ask me. 😊

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Morning rounds were done.

Two former best friends, turned love rivals, were now at war again.

The patient with lion syndrome also had a malignant brain tumor. Dr. Shepherd was set to perform a tumor resection, but when Mark Sloan got wind of it, he went straight to the patient and offered to fix his face—give him something closer to normal.

No surprise there: the kid, who'd faced nothing but discrimination and humiliation because of his condition, insisted on the plastic surgery.

Outside the Chief of Surgery's office, Adam and the crew were gathered, peeking through the glass window from a distance.

"What's he saying? Can you read his lips?" Christina asked, tilting her head as she tried to follow Shepherd pacing back and forth.

"Quack doctor!" Adam translated with a laugh.

"Whoa," Liz said, wide-eyed. "Things are heating up in there!"

"He's gesturing now—is he gonna hit Sloan again?" Christina asked, clearly loving the drama.

"Nah, you're overthinking it," Adam chuckled. "For someone like Shepherd, throwing that one punch was already his limit. Getting him to swing again? Not a chance."

Well... maybe not entirely impossible.

If Shepherd came home one day and saw Mark Sloan with Meredith on one arm and Montgomery on the other, flashing him some smug grin... yeah, even someone as chill as Shepherd might snap and go for blood. 😏

Adam couldn't help but picture it—his mind flashing to some classic drama scenes. Gotta hand it to Japanese culture; they really know how to nail those messy human conflicts.

"So, Adam, what's your take this time?" Christina gave up on lip-reading and turned to him. "Just the tumor resection, or both surgeries together?"

"Theoretically, I'm on Shepherd's side," Adam said thoughtfully. "You've all seen the MRI scans of that tumor—it's dangerous. Even with Shepherd operating, the odds aren't great. Best to focus entirely on the tumor resection and save the kid's life first. The plastic surgery afterward shouldn't affect much, but it's still a delicate procedure that takes a ton of time. Doing two intricate surgeries back-to-back means the patient's under anesthesia longer, and the risks go up, even if just a bit."

"And in reality?" Liz pressed.

"Reality?" Adam smiled. "Didn't you see the look on the kid's face? The tumor? Didn't faze him at all. He was joking around, totally unbothered—not like a 15-year-old kid, more like some wise old soul who's made peace with death. But when they mentioned he could have a normal face? He lost it. His parents tried to talk him out of the plastic surgery for now, and he just kept begging them, eyes full of hope. He knows exactly what he wants. And we're doctors—it's our job to try and give patients what they need."

"Couldn't agree more," Liz nodded. "If it were me, I'd choose the same. This world's harsh enough on regular people with all the focus on looks—imagine how brutal it's been for someone with a condition like his. I can just picture all the crap he's had to deal with."

Adam and the others side-eyed her.

You—a tall, blonde, Barbie-faced bombshell—can 'imagine' that? Who're you kidding? 😊

"The Chief's saying something," Adam pointed out, switching to lip-reading again. "He's telling Sloan, 'If the kid's parents sign the consent form, you can do the plastic surgery.' And Sloan just turned to Shepherd and said, 'Round two goes to the jerk.'"

Mark Sloan stepped out of the office then, walking over to the group and scanning them with a smirk. "Any of you interested in joining this surgery? Help me convince the parents, and you're in."

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