

## TV Show 591

Chapter 591: Kinda Get It, Kinda Get It

Medical Center.

"Me!"

"Me!"

Adam and Liz raised their hands at the same time.

George, meanwhile, hung his head low. Clearly, he was still salty about his goddess Meredith getting cozy with this jerk in front of him so fast. Stubborn as ever, he was showing his displeasure in his own quiet way.

As for Cristina?

She was currently Dr. Shepherd's golden girl, always tagging along with him for surgeries.

And her bestie Meredith? Naturally, she was following her boyfriend, Dr. Burke, into the OR.

A perfect swap!

Obviously, Dr. Shepherd hadn't given up on Meredith. This was his sneaky way of looking out for her from afar.

Dr. Burke, of course, knew what was up but played it cool.

Now, this kid with lionitis? Dr. Shepherd had assigned Cristina as his bedside doctor.

"Great."

Mark Sloan glanced at the two volunteers. His eyes skimmed right past Adam and landed on Liz, a dazzling smile spreading across his face.

Emmm.

Adam was 100% sure that was the smile of a total player.

Don't ask him how he knew! 😊

Liz, under that gaze, blushed a little. But no matter how hard she tried, she couldn't hide the grin tugging at her lips—a classic "I'm saying no but meaning yes" vibe.

Clearly, when she'd said before that she wouldn't mind a handsome, buff lover like him, she wasn't kidding.

"Come with me."

Mark Sloan waved them over—mostly Liz, of course—and walked side by side with her, flashing that killer smile. "Dr. Liz Stevenson?"

"Just call me Liz," she said with a shy little laugh.

"Looks like you're out of luck," Cristina muttered to Adam as they trailed behind.

"Not necessarily," Adam replied with a sly smile.

"It's all up to the attending," Cristina said, shaking her head. "He picks who he wants, and clearly, he's a pro at this game. He only wants to take hotshots like Liz."

"You're looking at it too surface-level," Adam chuckled.

"What do you mean?" Cristina shot him a confused look.

"Did you see how they were arguing earlier?" Adam grinned. "Dr. Sloan was obviously begging Dr. Shepherd to forgive him."

"So?" Cristina blinked, totally lost. "That's normal, right? It's not like Dr. Shepherd would beg Sloan for forgiveness."

"You're missing the key point," Adam hinted. "When Sloan said it, he sounded so confident, like it was supposed to be this way. It was all, 'Alright, stop sulking already. You've been mad long enough, right? I didn't mean to break up you and your wife—I just wanted to join the party!'"

"..."

Cristina just stared at him, dumbfounded, her brain scrambling to replay the scene. "Wait, what? Was it really like that?"

"Think about it. Chew on it!" Adam teased.

"Hiss..."

Cristina mulled it over for a sec, then gasped. "Okay, yeah, it kinda was!"

"And that's not all," Adam added in a low voice, smirking. "This surgery—did it really have to happen together? Sloan could've just waited for Shepherd to finish, then taken over. With his rep and the trust he's already built with the patient by giving them a fresh perspective, no one could've stopped him.

But nope!

He insisted on clashing with Shepherd, demanded they do it together right now—even if it meant dragging it to the surgical chief or dealing with the patient's parents freaking out.

And after it worked? He even threw in that line to Shepherd: 'Round two goes to the jerk.'

Who's the jerk? Him, obviously.

Calling himself that shows he knows he screwed Shepherd over, but he's still so smug about it and keeps poking the bear. What's that all about?"

"'I'd rather you hate me than not see me at all...'" Cristina murmured, piecing it together.

"Now you're getting it," Adam said with a playful grin.

"Yeah... wait, huh?" Cristina nodded at first, then froze, exasperated. "Getting what? Even if Sloan's some love-everybody type, what does that have to do with him picking Liz over you? Unless you're saying... ew, no way!" 😬

"Stop overthinking it," Adam said, giving her a light tap. "I never said this was about him choosing between me and Liz. I'm just debunking your 'Sloan only likes hot girls like Liz' theory.

Unless a miracle happens, yeah, he's probably sticking with Liz this time."

"..."

Cristina rolled her eyes hard. "So you're calling yourself a miracle now?"

"He didn't totally shut the door at first—gotta keep his options open, right?" Adam smirked. "Makes sense, though. If he'd picked Liz right away and she wasn't into it, that'd be embarrassing. The East Coast's top plastic surgeon can't afford to lose face like that!"

"You seriously think you can turn this around and make him pick you over Liz?" Cristina asked, genuinely curious.

"Can't say for sure," Adam said modestly. "But I can give it a shot."

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In the patient's room:

"I don't agree!"

After Dr. Shepherd's nudge, the patient's parents were super against the idea of doing two complex surgeries at once.

"Dad!" the lionitis teen called out.

"Jack, we're not rushing this," his dad soothed. "Let's do the tumor surgery first. Once you're better, we can talk about the plastic surgery later."

"Yeah," his mom chimed in. "You're already handsome enough in my eyes. We just want you to live."

"Doing both surgeries together is actually safer," Mark Sloan stepped in, trying to convince them.

But the parents? They couldn't get past the bruise on Mark's face from earlier. Compared to the polished, gentle Dr. Shepherd, their trust in him was shaky. They just wouldn't sign the consent form.

Mark sighed and glanced at Liz.

"Mr. and Mrs. Burton," Liz started, "Dr. Sloan's the best plastic surgeon on the East Coast. He's the only one who can guarantee a successful surgery for your son. This is a rare chance—Dr. Sloan doesn't even work at our hospital. He could leave any day. Missing this would be such a shame."

"Dr. Sloan, could you leave us your card?" Jack's dad asked, turning to Mark. "If this surgery goes well, we'll come find you later if we need to. You'd do it for Jack then, right?"

"Of course," Mark said, meeting his gaze with a forced smile.

"Dad, Mom, I want to do it now," Jack finally burst out. "I trust Dr. Sloan. I'm not scared of the risk. I know you think I'm handsome enough, but that's your job as parents. Other people don't see it that way—and neither do I. I need this surgery."

"Jack, you don't even know what the outcome will be," his dad reasoned. "It probably won't be as perfect as you're imagining..."

"I don't need to know," Jack said firmly. "Whatever happens, I'll take it. Look at me—what's worse than this?"

His hand trembled as he pointed at his face.

"Wahhh..."

His mom covered her mouth, tears streaming down. She knew this was her son's deepest pain.

He was usually so funny and chill, but saying this now? It hit hard.

"Mr. and Mrs. Burton," Adam piped up, stepping forward. He'd been quietly scribbling on a chart off to the side. "You can know what the plastic surgery will look like ahead of time. Check this out."

He slid a piece of paper in front of them.

On it was a sketch of an ordinary-looking teen, smiling softly.

The Burtons instantly recognized it—it was Jack.

So spot-on!

"Is this me?"

"Can I really look like this?"

Jack and his parents gasped in unison.

"Dr. Sloan?" Adam didn't answer them, just turned to the stunned Mark Sloan.

"Y-Yeah..." Mark stammered, staring at Adam. "That's exactly what I had in mind for the surgery. How'd you do that?"

"I know a bit about human anatomy and plastic surgery," Adam said with a humble smile. "Plus, I've got a decent memory, some imagination, a knack for math... oh, and I can sketch a little."

Everyone: "... 😊"

Chapter 592: Adam's a Bit Petty

Medical Center

As soon as Adam's sketch came out, it instantly won over the patient's family. They kept looking at it, flipping it over in their hands, and finally nodded in agreement. 😊

No surprise there.

It's just like when you're decorating a house—companies that can show you a preview always beat out the ones that just talk big. Why? Simple. Most people don't have that great of an imagination. You can ramble on forever, but without something concrete, it's all just vague nonsense to them.

But whip out a 3D rendering? Boom—everyone gets it. They can see exactly what their house will look like. Uncertainty breeds worry, but when people understand something, they're quick to accept it. 💡

The patient's mom said her son was already handsome enough, but she wouldn't mind him looking even hotter like in Adam's sketch.

"You can sketch too?" Christina whispered, raising an eyebrow.

"Just picked it up," Adam grinned. "We're doctors, Christina. We can handle a scalpel—how hard can sketching be? As long as your hands are steady enough, it's like 'printing' the image from your brain onto paper. Easy peasy." 🤖

Christina had no comeback for that. She just shot him a look that screamed, "You're ridiculous—and I respect it."

"Alright, let's get ready," Mark Sloan said, his eyes glinting as he clapped his hands. "Dr. Stevenson, you're with me in the OR."

"Me?" Liz blinked, totally caught off guard.

"You don't want to?" Mark smirked.

"No, I do!" Liz glanced at Adam, who was still smiling calmly, and nodded in a daze.

"Great. Prep up then," Mark said before strutting off.

Adam, Christina, and Liz stepped out of the room after him.

"You're not mad?" Christina asked, eyeing Adam's chill vibe. "You turned this whole thing around with that sketch and convinced the parents. By all rights, you should be the one scrubbing in."

"Why would I be mad?" Adam chuckled. "You said it yourself—it's the attending's call. What am I supposed to do, throw a tantrum in front of the patient and their family and argue with the lead surgeon?" 😊

"But..." Christina couldn't let it go. "You're way too calm about this!"

"Adam, I didn't mean for this to happen," Liz said, looking guilty.

"It's not about you," Adam replied with a smile. "This is totally normal. Don't overthink it. I'm just gonna take it as Dr. Sloan giving me a compliment."

With that, he nodded at them and walked off.

"A compliment?" Liz muttered, even more confused.

Christina frowned, then shouted after him, "Wait, seriously? You're not that full of yourself, are you?"

"What's full of himself got to do with it?" Liz asked, puzzled.

"He thinks his performance put so much pressure on Sloan that Sloan didn't want him in the OR," Christina explained, cutting straight to the point.

"Is he joking?" Liz gaped. "Adam putting pressure on Dr. Sloan? That much pressure?"

"Why not?" Christina shrugged. "To be a top plastic surgeon, you need a few key things: knowledge of anatomy and plastic surgery, killer memory and spatial imagination, a sharp eye for aesthetics and creativity, and steady, precise hands. Oh, and tons of experience."

Except for the experience part, Adam just showed off all of that with one sketch. Didn't you see Sloan's face when he saw it? Total shock. Adam's a newbie in plastic surgery and clinical medicine, yet he whipped up a sketch that matched Sloan's years of expertise—using what he calls 'basic plastic surgery skills and a little math.' And it was spot-on! You know what that means?" 🗨️

"It means Adam's talent outshines him..." Liz murmured.

"Not just outshines," Christina corrected. "It's leagues ahead. And here's the kicker—plastic surgery's different from fields like cardiothoracic or neurosurgery that save lives. It's more cutthroat. The siphon effect, winner-takes-all vibes? Way stronger.

The high rollers who bring in the big bucks only want the best surgeon working on them. They don't care where the doc's at—they'll hop on a plane if they have to. Right now, Sloan's the top dog on the East Coast. But if Adam gets into plastic surgery? With his insane talent, it won't take long for him to steamroll Sloan." 🐾

Adam's sketch alone was enough to leave Sloan speechless. Sloan's big edge is his experience, but Adam's got that "little bit of math" thing going on. No clue how he does it, but it seems like he can skip years of trial and error and nail a perfect result through calculations. Makes sense, though—plastic surgery's all about aesthetics, and math's the backbone of beauty. Golden ratios, perfect proportions—it's all numbers!" 🗨️ ✨

"No way it's that extreme, right?" Liz said, still reeling.

"Who knows?" Christina shrugged again. "I didn't think this way at first either, but think about it. Adam was the game-changer here. He should've been the one in the OR. So why didn't Sloan even mention him and just picked you instead? You don't seriously think he's got a crush on you and threw his word out the window for it, do you?"

"..." Liz had nothing to say. She wasn't that delusional.

"So, what, Adam's actually perfect for plastic surgery?" she asked.

"Looks like it," Christina nodded. "But Sloan's lucky—Adam probably won't go that route."

"Why not?" Liz frowned. "Plastic surgeons rake in cash and have it easy..."

"Does Adam strike you as someone who cares about money?" Christina shot her a look. "Look at how hard he works. You think he's chasing 'easy'? After all this time, haven't you noticed what he really wants is to heal people?"

Liz froze, then let out a wry laugh. Fair point.

"Plus, sure, he's a genius at plastic surgery," Christina sighed. "But what about other fields? Don't tell me you forgot he's an intern pulling off senior resident-level work. While we're begging to assist attendings, he's practically leading surgeries every day!"

"Shit!" Liz's lip twitched. "I totally blanked on that! Getting to assist a big-shot surgeon? We'd kill for it, but to him, it's probably no big deal. Ugh, and here I was apologizing to him! He really doesn't care!" 😊

"Well, not exactly," Christina said quietly. "Apologizing was still the right move. He might not care, but you know Adam—he's petty. Skip the apology, and one day he might casually screw you over. Remember what happened with Joe?"

"..." Liz nodded solemnly, totally convinced.

Chapter 593

Adam: "Got any pointers?"

At the medical center, in the observation room.

Adam strolled in and plopped down next to Meredith and George.

"Has it started yet?"

Adam asked casually.

"Any second now," Meredith replied, glancing at him. "Wait, you actually lost to Liz?" 😏

"Isn't that pretty normal?"

Adam chuckled, eyeing the two groups downstairs who weren't exactly chatty. "Nobody wins forever. Honestly, if you'd been there, we wouldn't have stood a chance."

"...What's that supposed to mean?"

Meredith raised an eyebrow, feeling a little called out.

"Just complimenting you," Adam said, dead serious. "It's all about chemistry, right? You've always had Sloan's back. If he'd picked you, none of us would've blinked. Didn't you notice George didn't even wanna join in?"

"I don't like him!" George huffed, puffing out his cheeks.

Adam just shrugged.

Meredith got the hint and dropped it, turning her gaze away. She knew why George wasn't a fan of Mark Sloan. But she couldn't give George what he wanted—especially not after seeing her estranged dad again after over a decade. That door was slammed shut for good. George, with his looks and vibe so much like her dad, was perfect as a friend or a confidant, but a boyfriend? Way too weird. 🙄

Down in the operating room, the surgery kicked off.

First up: removing a malignant brain tumor.

Dr. Shepherd cracked open the patient's skull.

"Plate!"

"Damn it, hand me a sponge—grab another unit of blood!"

"There's so much blood."

"Hook it up to the transfusion regulator."

"No pulse in the cranial artery."

"Ventricular fibrillation!"

"Try the CPR machine!"

"He's bleeding out—use the defibrillator!"

Dr. Shepherd had barely opened the skull when he realized the brain was in worse shape than the MRI had shown. Chaos erupted. Mark Sloan took over the defibrillator, following Shepherd's orders to shock the patient and get the heart going again. But the condition was too critical—nothing worked.

The少年 with lion syndrome didn't even make it to the plastic surgery he'd dreamed of.

"Time of death: 10:23," Dr. Shepherd announced flatly, checking the clock before walking out. Mark Sloan followed suit.

Up in the observation room, the surgical director shook his head, disappointed, and left. No press conference for him today. The rest of the staff trickled out, leaving Cristina and Liz to handle the aftermath.

Adam, though, headed downstairs and pushed open the OR doors.

"Cristina, Liz, wanna do a plastic surgery with me?" 😊

"You mean..."

Both of them turned to the deceased少年 on the table.

"Yep," Adam nodded. "Come with me to talk to his parents. Let's get their okay and do this together?"

"Why not ask Dr. Sloan?" Liz hesitated. "He's the best fit for this, right...?"

She trailed off as Cristina shot her a look.

"Leave the small stuff an undertaker could handle to us—don't bother the top plastic surgeon with it," Adam said coolly. "The three of us can't manage? Relax, if you're worried after we're done, you can call Sloan over to check it out and give us some 'pointers.'"

"Fine," Liz said with a wry smile.

Yup, Cristina was spot on. Adam's petty as hell. 😊

One little slight, and he's already plotting his comeback. Pointers? Please. This was a flex—a big "Hey, Sloan, East Coast's top plastic surgeon? Lion syndrome surgery's no big deal!" move.

Realizing Adam's grudge game was strong, Liz gave up overthinking it. Whatever. They'd do it. Worst case, they'd call someone to fix it later. Plus, she was dying to know—was Cristina right? Did Sloan pick her over Adam because he was threatened by his talent?

Hmm. She'd drag Sloan over after and watch his face closely. That'd spill the tea.

The trio went to the grieving parents, who'd already gotten the news. Adam explained the plan. Thanks to a sketch he'd drawn earlier, the parents felt their son had passed with hope in his heart. Grateful, they didn't hesitate to sign off. They wanted Jack's funeral to show the world what he could've looked like.

"Alright, let's do this!"

Back in the OR, Adam, Cristina, and Liz grabbed the tools, wheeled Jack's body to the morgue—hospitals don't let dead patients hog operating rooms, after all. So, the plastic surgery would happen there. No biggie. No life support needed, just the right gear. Undertakers do it all the time.

"Adam, you're seriously doing this yourself?" Liz couldn't help but ask again.

"What do you think?"

Adam slipped on gloves and gave her a look. "After all this effort, you think we're messing around?"

"But you've never done it before," Liz fretted. "Jumping straight into the toughest plastic surgery? That's wild!"

"Let's find out," Adam grinned. "It's not as hard as you think. I've got this."

"Chill, we're here now—stop overthinking," Cristina teased. "You know Adam. He doesn't wing it without a plan. Remember when he blocked that critical patient from admission on a hunch, and it turned out he was right? Could you even imagine pulling that off?"

"You're really sure?" Liz stared at Adam, still unsure.

"Not 100%, but like 95%," he said with a laugh. "I trust my hands and my head. Worst case, Sloan bails us out and I eat some humble pie. No sweat. We good? Any more questions?"

Liz shook her head.

"Scalpel!"

Adam held out his hand.

Liz passed it over.

And just like that, the three of them got to work in the morgue—Adam leading, Cristina assisting, Liz playing nurse.

Chapter 594: This Isn't Plastic Surgery, It's a Slap in the Face!

Medical Center. Elevator Entrance.

"It's not your fault..."

Mark Sloan reached out to pat Dr. Shepherd on the shoulder, but Shepherd dodged it without a word, brushing past him and leaving Mark's hand hanging awkwardly in the air.

"Dr. Sloan?"

Liz approached at that moment, calling out to him.

"What?" Mark frowned.

Being brushed off by his best friend wasn't exactly putting him in a good mood.

"Jack's lion syndrome reconstruction..." Liz reminded him gently.

"Oh." Mark paused, then nodded. "Got it. You go prep everything. I'll get the family's consent and perform the surgery so Jack can look his best at the funeral."

"No, that's not it," Liz said with a wry smile. "Dr. Duncan already got Jack's parents' approval and did the reconstruction."

"What?!" Mark's expression darkened. "That's ridiculous! Where are they?"

"In the morgue."

Liz led Mark that way, adding as they walked, "Dr. Duncan actually did a solid job. We're just waiting for your final approval before notifying the family to come see him."

"Plastic surgery isn't that simple..." Mark muttered, his face cold as he stepped into the morgue.

Then he saw Adam smiling at him. Just as Mark was about to chew him out, his peripheral vision caught Jack lying on the table—and the words stuck in his throat.

Jack looked exactly like the sketch Adam had drawn earlier. The stitching was so flawless it gave Mark chills—seriously, next-level stuff!

That fleeting unease he'd felt when he first saw Adam's sketch, the one he didn't want to admit, now hit him full force. This kid is terrifyingly good. Is he really just an intern? For the first time, Mark understood how others must've felt watching him back in the day.

"Dr. Sloan, any pointers?" Adam said with a polite smile. "This is my first time doing reconstructive surgery. Sure, it's easier on someone who's passed, but I'm sure there's room for improvement. You're the expert here—teach us! Let's make sure Jack looks perfect for his parents, to give them some peace."

"..."

Liz and Cristina exchanged a look, their lips twitching. This was the first time they'd seen Adam come on so strong.

But watching Mark Sloan, the East Coast plastic surgery legend, turn red and speechless? Oh, they couldn't help but imagine themselves in Adam's intern shoes—and it felt good. "That's so satisfying! Way to go!" they thought. 😊👏

"It's... decent," Mark finally said, swallowing a string of curses and forcing himself to play the mentor.

He wasn't about to let some intern show him up. He was Mark freaking Sloan, top-tier East Coast surgeon! So he started nitpicking—except, on this case, Adam had every theory and technique locked down. Mark couldn't trip him up no matter how hard he tried. His face just got darker and darker.

"Dr. Sloan, anything else to add?" Adam asked, still smiling. "If not, we'll go get Jack's parents."

"That's it," Mark snapped, storming off.

He couldn't find a single flaw. Staying any longer would just be humiliating himself.

"Adam Duncan, I'll remember you," Mark said, pausing at the door to shoot Adam a long, hard look.

"Dr. Sloan, you've taught me a pretty memorable lesson today too," Adam replied with a grin.

Once Mark was gone—

"OMG!" Liz burst out. "Adam, you actually outdid a top-tier surgeon—and in plastic surgery of all things! That's insane!" 😲

"It's just one case," Adam said, waving it off modestly. "If we're talking all of plastic surgery, I wouldn't stand a chance against him. I've still got a lot to learn."

"Come on!" Liz groaned. "I know that, but—wait, you've seriously thought about taking him on in the whole field?"

"Gotta have dreams, right?" Adam chuckled. "What if it happens one day? Besides, it doesn't seem that hard, does it?"

Liz stared at him. That smug little smile—suddenly she got what people mean by a "Versailles grin." So annoying yet so impressive!

"Adam, something's off with you," Cristina said, crossing her arms and studying him calmly.

"How so?" Adam turned to her.

"You're usually pretty humble," Cristina pointed out. "Even when Dr. Bailey rags on you, you just take it. But this time, you went straight for an attending—and a famous one! That's not like you."

"I'd love to stay humble," Adam said, throwing his hands up. "But he didn't give me a chance! Bailey's tough but fair—she doesn't make it personal. This guy? I felt like he was targeting me. And honestly? I just don't like him."

"Pfft!" Cristina smirked. "Didn't peg you for the emotional type."

"I get it now!" Liz snapped her fingers. "Opposites repel! You and Sloan are both players, so you clash—like you did with Alex back in the day."

"Totally!" Cristina's eyes lit up. "People hate seeing their own flaws in others. Adam's a flirt, Mark's a flirt—except Mark's worse, hitting on his best friend's wife. Adam, are you scared you'll turn into him someday?"

"No way I'd stoop that low," Adam said, shaking his head with a laugh. "Trust me, I've had plenty of chances to let my hormones win, but I've never crossed that line. I know what's okay and what's not—better than you two do.

Scared I'll become him? Ha! Never crossed my mind. All that self-destructive nonsense, that 'sick mentality' excuse—it's as ridiculous as blaming a crime on being drunk. If you're that drunk, you can't even function, let alone commit a crime.

And if you're truly self-destructive, why not just ruin yourself quietly? Why drag your friend's life down while you're having a blast? It's all excuses.

I didn't want to make it about character—I'd have been happy to keep it professional, learn a few tricks from him. But he made it personal and went back on his word.

Anyway, I'm not planning to be a plastic surgeon, and he's not sticking around here. Once he's gone, it's over. No point in holding onto this little grudge, right?"

"..."

Liz and Cristina were speechless. You're saying you don't care, but you're still ranting about it? Not petty, huh?

"Alright, let's go get Jack's parents," Adam said, dropping the subject.

"He looks... handsome. Peaceful..." Jack's mom said tearfully, running her hand over his restored face, no longer marred by deformity.

Jack's dad pulled his wife close, thanking the trio over and over. "Thank you, thank you!"

"You're welcome," Adam said with a warm smile.

Chapter 595: Please Get Out!

Medical Center. Emergency Room.

"Liz, what are you doing here?"

Adam spotted Liz waiting outside the ER in her surgical scrubs and asked, surprised.

"I don't know, someone paged me," Liz said with a shrug.

"Carol," Adam called, turning to the ER nurse.

"Dr. Duncan, an ambulance is on its way," Nurse Carol jumped in to explain. "The patient's a 35-year-old male—difficulty breathing, rapid and irregular pulse. His chart says he's got acute arrhythmia and congestive heart failure. He's Dr. Burke's patient."

"Oh my gosh! 😱" Liz gasped. "It's Danny!"

"Yeah," Carol nodded. "The patient's name is Danny."

"The Danny waiting for a heart transplant?" Adam asked, glancing at Liz.

"Yup," Liz nodded heavily, her voice thick with worry. "Last time he came in for a transplant, I was his attending. Sadly, he didn't get that heart."

"You okay?" Adam frowned, noticing her tone.

"Huh?" Liz blinked, snapping out of her daze.

"I mean, I'll take this patient," Adam said kindly. "You don't seem in the right headspace to be his doctor right now."

"No way!" Liz snapped. "He's my patient. I can take care of him!"

"You sure about that?" Adam gave her a long look. "Your emotions are all over the place—not exactly the vibe a doctor should have with a patient. It's not good for you or him."

"I've got this!" Liz locked eyes with him, determination blazing.

"Fine," Adam shrugged. "I'm just trying to help. If you think you're good, go for it. I don't need another heart transplant case—and I definitely don't want a spiked bat to the head."

"A what now?" Liz relaxed a bit, then tilted her head, confused.

"A joke. You wouldn't get it," Adam said with a small grin.

This Danny guy? Adam knew him. Looked exactly like Negan from *The Walking Dead* in his prime. Yup, the flirty dude with the barbed-wire bat who smashed delivery guy Glenn's head in. Poor Glenn—total tragedy. First, he's driven nuts by his roommate Sheldon and bails, only to still not escape that brutal fate.

Adam figured if Glenn had a choice—death by bat or mental breakdown via Sheldon—he'd be torn. Maybe a 60-40 split? Bat's the 60. When Leonard and Sheldon watched *The Walking Dead* later, wonder if they recognized him? Sheldon probably didn't care, but Leonard? He'd owe Glenn big time—and kick himself for ignoring the guy's warnings.

Flashback: Leonard's checking out Sheldon's apartment, and Glenn's bolting out, yelling, "Run! Run as fast and as far as you can!" If Leonard had listened, he'd have dodged decades of torment. Then again, Leonard might secretly enjoy the pain—surface-level misery, inner masochistic glee? Who knows! ☹️

As Adam's mind wandered, the ambulance rolled up.

"It's really Danny!" Liz rushed forward. "What'd you do on-site?"

"Until he's handed over, he's my patient," the paramedic shot back, clearly annoyed by her tone.

"I know him," Liz fired back, unfazed. "He's high on the transplant list—our surgical patient. Dr. Burke's on his way. Hand him over now. What'd you do on-site?"

"Gave him 40 units of a diuretic and 6 units of adenosine," the paramedic grumbled, reluctantly handing him off after hearing Burke's name.

"What's the situation?" Dr. Burke strode in.

"It's Danny," Liz said urgently.

"Irregular heart rate, heart failure," Burke said, already checking him.

"Bisoprolol could lower mortality," Liz blurted. "Maybe try BP meds or digoxin—yeah, give him digoxin!"

"Hold up!" Burke waved off the nurse mid-motion and turned to Liz, his face stern. "Dr. Stevenson, he's my patient. I know his condition. He can hold on."

"But we can do something, right?" Liz took a deep breath, pleading.

"What we can do is get him to the ICU and monitor if his heart stabilizes," Burke said firmly.

"I'll be his attending. I'll look after him," Liz volunteered eagerly.

"No," Burke shot her down, then turned to Adam. "Dr. Duncan, you're on Danny."

"What?!" Liz's voice cracked with emotion. "I can do it! I was his attending last time!"

"Dr. Stevenson!" Burke's tone sharpened. "Are you questioning me?"

"No," Liz said, still rational despite her frustration, her eyes begging. "I just want to see it through. I know Danny better."

"We're doctors, not lovers," Burke snapped. "We do what's best for the patient—not some 'start-to-finish' romance arc. And how many relationships even last these days? You think you're better than Dr. Duncan?"

"No..." Liz's face flushed red.

"Any other issues?" Burke stared her down.

"No..." Liz muttered, defeated.

"Danny's been my patient for years," Burke said, turning to Adam.

"Got it," Adam smiled. "I'll keep a close eye on him."

"Good. I trust you," Burke nodded.

ICU.

"Liz, don't you have anything else to do?" Adam shook his head as Liz buzzed around Danny's bed.

"Nope," Liz said softly, staring at the unconscious Danny without turning.

With Dr. Bailey on maternity leave, her interns were like wild horses—chasing surgeries, dodging their temp supervisor, sunny-and-sweet Shani, who couldn't rein them in.

"It's so unfair," Liz murmured.

"Huh?" Adam asked.

"We fix idiots every day, patch them up, send them off—whether they deserve it or not," Liz said with a bitter laugh. "But Danny? He's a good guy with a bad heart, and all we can do is wait. And wait. Who knows if that perfect heart will ever come?"

"Nikki, keep an eye out," Adam said to the nurse. "No one lets Dr. Stevenson in without me or Dr. Burke's say-so."

"Yes, Dr. Duncan," the nurse replied.

"What?!" Liz froze, staring at Adam in disbelief.

"You heard me, Dr. Stevenson," Adam said flatly. "This is Dr. Burke's patient, not yours. You're not family. You've got no reason to be here. Please get out!"

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Chapter 596: I Don't Agree!

Medical Center. ICU.

After Adam insisted, Liz stormed off in a huff.

Not long after, Meredith and a few others showed up.

"Adam, what's going on?" Meredith asked, totally confused. "How did things get this messy? 😞"

"What have you guys heard?" Adam replied, keeping it cool and neutral.

"You kicked Liz out and told her she can't go near the patient," George said, clearly ticked off. "Do you have any idea how bad this looks for her? 😞"

"And do you know what she did?" Adam shot back.

"She... what did she do?" George faltered, his anger fizzling out under Adam's glare.

"She's gotten emotionally attached to the patient, Danny," Adam said, shaking his head. "That kind of attachment is seriously clouding her judgment as a doctor. It's dangerous! When the patient first came in, she rattled off three different treatment plans, desperate to wake him up right away. Sure, it looks like it could lower his mortality rate, but that's just textbook theory. The real, solid option? Wait patiently."

"She's lost her cool and her professionalism. She's acting like a patient's family member who's read a couple of medical blogs," Cristina chimed in with her usual sharp tone.

As doctors, the last thing they wanted was some half-informed patient or relative stirring the pot. With the internet blowing up with info, it's gotten way too common. Everyone's Googling their symptoms, and the ones who really dig in can sound like they know what they're talking about—enough to question the doctor's every move.

It's exhausting. Doctors end up spending extra energy dealing with these "expert" challenges from patients and families. And half the time, the stuff they find online is either kinda right or flat-out wrong. If every patient and their mom pulled this, the workload for medical staff would skyrocket. Explaining basic medical facts over and over? Anyone would lose it.

Plus, if this keeps up, being a doctor might mean adding "debate champ" to the job description. Can't convince the patient or their family? Good luck moving forward with treatment. But the best doctors aren't always the best talkers—or the most patient when it comes to arguing medical 101 with someone's aunt.

Anyone who's tutored a kid knows the drill. Sometimes you explain the simplest thing a million times, and they still stare at you like 😏. Then, if they hit you with a barrage of random "whys" and weird questions, it's enough to drive you up the wall. Bad-tempered folks might just snap—rain or shine.

Doctors, though? They're not parenting. They can't vent that frustration—they just have to suck it up. So yeah, they hate this kind of thing.

Adam remembered a time from his past life when he'd asked his sister—a doctor—a medical question. He'd Googled it first, thinking he'd get a pro's take. But his sister, usually the chilliest person ever (yep, his real sis), got super annoyed. "Where'd you hear that?" she'd snapped. When he admitted it was from online, she went off: "That's not even how it works..." Turns out, she'd answered that same question a million times at work and was just done. 😊

"Exactly," Adam said, his voice heavy. "The kicker? She doesn't even have the skills to back it up. She's just an intern! She's freaking out, trying to throw every treatment she can think of at the patient. That's not medicine—that's chaos. Dr. Burke put the patient under my care. I'm his attending intern now, and I'm responsible for him. I can't have Liz jumping in during a crisis, doing whatever she thinks is right. What if she screws up? Then what?"

"No way it's that bad, right?" George said, hesitating.

"Not that bad?" Adam gave a cold laugh. "You guys might not know this, but Liz—who used to be so caring with patients—actually said, 'We treat idiots every day, fix them up, send them off, whether they deserve it or not. Danny's a good guy, and all we can do is wait.' Can you believe that?"

"Whoa!"

"No way!"

"That's nuts!"

Cristina, George, and Meredith couldn't believe their ears. 😲

"Those were her exact words," Adam said, locking eyes with them. "Now you see how over-the-top Liz is acting. With her like this, I wouldn't be shocked at anything she does. Would you let her near your patient?"

"How did it come to this?" Meredith muttered, looking like her whole world just flipped. "I thought Liz had only been this patient's attending once before."

"Danny's a smooth talker," Cristina said, thinking back. "Last time, he had her blushing the second they met. Guy's got charm for days."

"And he's a patient with that whole brooding vibe," Adam added, shaking his head. "Liz eats that stuff up. Love at first sight? Totally her thing."

"Maybe we should talk to her," Meredith sighed.

"You go ahead," Cristina said, clearly not interested.

"Did I just hear Liz's name?"

Right then, Danny—the patient who'd been out cold—slowly woke up, a faint smile tugging at his lips. He glanced around. "Huh, Liz isn't here? I thought I'd open my eyes and see her first thing. 😊"

Meredith and the others exchanged looks, like, "Okay, no wonder Liz is losing it. This guy's half-dead and still flirting like a pro. I'd cave too."

"I'm Dr. Adam Duncan," Adam said, stepping up to check him over. "Dr. Burke assigned me as your attending intern."

"What about Dr. Stevenson?" Danny asked with a weak smile. "I remember her being my attending last time."

"She's tied up," Meredith jumped in.

"I'm old-fashioned," Danny said, struggling to get the words out. "I'd really like Dr. Stevenson to be my attending. No offense, Dr. Duncan."

"No worries," Adam nodded. "I'll let Dr. Burke know. It's up to him how we handle it."

Dr. Burke showed up fast. Danny wasn't just a long-time patient—he came from money, so Burke was all about giving him top-tier care.

"Danny," Burke said after hearing him out, "Dr. Duncan's the best intern we've got. Honestly, I'd say he's the best in the whole damn world. Having him on your case is a win for you. Dr. Stevenson's too emotional—it's not good for you or her."

"I get it," Danny said with a faint, tired smile. "I know all that. But I don't care. I've been waiting forever for a heart, and I'm not holding my breath anymore. All I want now is for Dr. Stevenson to take care of me. Can you make that happen, Dr. Burke?"

"Here's a deal," Burke said, meeting his gaze. "How about Dr. Duncan and Dr. Stevenson both be your attending interns? Sound good?"

"I don't agree!" Adam cut in before Danny could even nod.

Chapter 597: Now That's Professional!

Medical Center. ICU Ward.

"No way, I'm not cool with that!"

Adam didn't hesitate to voice his opinion.

"You're not cool with it?"

Dr. Burke blinked, his face darkening a bit.

"Nope," Adam said firmly. "I'm fine being the attending or not—doesn't matter to me. But I'm not teaming up with Dr. Stevenson to look after Mr. Dugget. And honestly, Dr. Burke, I'd suggest you don't let her take care of him either.

Mr. Dugget's a patient, and we're doctors! This is a top-tier teaching hospital, not some playground for flirty doctor-patient cosplay! 🙄 Mr. Dugget—no offense to you personally—but please respect our roles here. Once you're discharged, feel free to ask Dr. Stevenson out all you want. But here? Let's keep it professional!"

"Is it really that big a deal?" Danny Dugget asked with a wry smile.

"Dr. Duncan's right," Burke said, his expression turning serious. "Hospital rules are clear: doctors can't date patients. Danny, if I let Dr. Stevenson be your attending, could you handle that?"

"What happens if we break the rules?" Danny asked, still smiling weakly.

"If Dr. Stevenson crosses that line, she'd be fired on the spot," Burke said, locking eyes with him.

Back in the day, if no one had called it out, Burke—as Danny's old pal—might've turned a blind eye to keep him happy. But now that Adam had laid it out so plainly, ignoring it wasn't an option.

In the wild world of American TV dramas, teacher-student or doctor-patient romances? Still a no-go. It's all about protecting the vulnerable—students and patients. Imagine if there were no rules: a teacher dangling grades as bait or a threat over some impressionable kid. Even Penny, the high school queen bee, got lured into a fling by her teacher promising an A!

Doctor-patient stuff's the same vibe. Patients come in at their lowest, and the doctor saving them? They start looking like a superhero. It's easy to catch feelings—but it's not exactly rational.

And don't get me started on shrinks—pros who can spot every flaw in your head. If they wanted, they could PUA you into next week. Without limits, it's a disaster waiting to happen. Ever notice how many villains in shows and movies are therapists? Not a coincidence!

Even a regular doc like Liz, a surgeon crushing on her patient, can lose it. She'd go full rogue in a crisis—rules be damned—to save her "lover."

Okay, sure, Dr. House next door breaks rules all the time to save people, but that guy's a genius with cheat-code-level skills. He pulls it off because he's that good. Liz? She's no main character—just a pretty sidekick with zero plot armor. Copying House would be a total mess: patient dead, others screwed, game over.

That's why Adam's digging his heels in so hard.

"Guess Dr. Stevenson can't be my attending then," Danny said, shaking his head with a bitter chuckle. Then he turned to Adam, all charm and grace. "Dr. Duncan, any chance I could have the honor of you staying on as my doc?"

Clearly, he wasn't letting go of his instant spark with Liz. Most people would've been ticked at Adam for calling it out, but Danny? No bad vibes. Guy's got some serious class—or maybe he's just playing it smart. After all, Burke did say Adam's the best intern in the country. Survival trumps romance right now, right?

"That's up to Dr. Burke," Adam said, keeping it neutral. "But if I stay on, you won't see Dr. Stevenson around here. I'm not risking any slip-ups—love makes people crazy."

"Danny, this is what a top intern's professionalism looks like," Burke said, glancing at him. "What do you think?"

"Do I even have a choice?" Danny laughed dryly. "I just wanna get out of here ASAP, then stroll back in as a regular guy to sweep the lovely Dr. Stevenson off her feet. By then, I'm hoping Dr. Duncan might even give us his blessing?" He shot Adam a meaningful look.

"Sure," Adam met his gaze, unfazed.

No kidding—he's not blocking this out of jealousy or some claim on Liz. She's a tall, blonde bombshell, sure, but her looks? Meh. Plus, her personality and coworker drama? Instant turn-off. Not his type.

Still, he gets Danny's angle. Guy's got charm and probably a fat bank account—total playboy back in the day. But those glory days are gone. He can barely walk, let alone... well, you know. At rock bottom, he's like Tony Stark post-arc-reactor: less about cheap thrills, more about soul connections. What else can he do when the body's checked out?

So, a gorgeous doctor swooping in, smitten and saving his life? To Danny, she's a glowing saint—irresistible! 😊

Beep beep!

The monitor blared.

"Atrial fibrillation! His heart's racing—we've gotta slow it down or it'll fail!"

"Let's try cardioversion!"

"Alright, 5 units of morphine," Adam said, glancing at Burke for a nod. He grabbed the defibrillator from the nurse. "Danny, we're gonna send a jolt through you. Hopefully, it'll get your heart back to normal."

"Will it hurt?" Danny asked, voice frail.

"Not gonna lie—it's not fun," Adam warned. "Ready? Here we go—hands off!"

Once everyone stepped back, he hit the button.

"No change," the nurse said.

"Up it to 100! Hands off!" Adam ordered, pressing the pads again.

"Heart rate's normal," the nurse confirmed.

"Nice work," Burke nodded.

"Dr. Duncan, you're the real deal," Danny said through gritted teeth, tears streaking as he forced a smile. "I've been in and out of hospitals for years, and watching you? It's like seeing a seasoned resident—cool and collected. I picked the right guy."

Chapter 598: Miss, This Is the Men's Bathroom!

Medical Center.

Once Danny's condition stabilized, Dr. Burke took off, officially handing the attending duties to Adam.

And then Liz set her sights on him.

She couldn't even get into Danny's room anymore. Whether Adam was around or not, the nurses inside and outside the ward watched her like she was some kind of terrorist. Forget chatting with Danny—even standing by the glass window, staring at him in silence with tears streaming down her face, wasn't allowed. The second she got close, a nurse would block her.

She'd bet her life the Director's orders never got followed this strictly. It was driving her nuts.

Danny's words had reached her ears, and that subtle spark between them had taken root in her heart, growing fast. How could it thrive without a little sunshine and rain? Sure, his condition was serious, so she wasn't planning anything wild. But seeing him face-to-face, flirting a little, scratching that unbearable itch in her heart—surely that was fine, right?

But Adam was playing the villain, setting this cold, shameless, ridiculous rule that barred her from getting anywhere near Danny. She couldn't take it.

The nurses were a brick wall she couldn't break through, so she went straight for the source—Adam. Problem was, he shut her down in two sentences flat. His logic was crystal clear:

Doctors and patients can't date.

Adam was doing this for Danny's good and hers.

Everyone wins when things stay professional.

How could she argue with that?

But emotions don't always play nice with logic—especially for someone like Liz, who's all heart. When words failed, she switched tactics, pulling a move she'd picked up from George: wear Adam down with sheer persistence. She didn't say a word—just stuck to him like glue, shadowing his every step, hoping he'd cave under the pressure.

"This is the men's bathroom," Adam finally said, breaking the silence.

"You won't let me see Danny, so I'm sticking with you," Liz replied, barging right in after him like it was no big deal.

A male doctor inside caught sight of this, froze mid-stream, awkwardly zipped up, and bolted. 😊

"You're really not worried about getting fired?" Adam asked, glancing at her.

"I'm not doing anything!" Liz shot back, crossing her arms as she stood behind him. "And I'm not Danny's doctor anymore, so the 'no doctor-patient romance' rule doesn't even apply. Why can't I just see him?"

"Because I don't trust you," Adam said, unfazed, taking care of business like she wasn't even there.

"After all this, you still don't trust me?" Liz couldn't believe it. She'd expected him to squirm, but now she was the one feeling awkward.

Damn it! she thought. Isn't it supposed to be that guys can't pee when someone's watching? That it's super uncomfortable? Her whole plan hinged on grinding Adam down with this. So why was he so chill about it? 😊

"Because you haven't earned my trust," Adam said with a mocking edge. "Don't ask 'why' again—just look at what we're doing right now. You're already this unhinged. Who knows what you'd pull next?"

"I swear I won't do anything! I just want to see Danny," Liz said, her voice breaking a little.

"Sounds like you've got too much free time," Adam said with a grin. "Don't worry, though—you'll be busy soon."

Beep beep.

Beep beep!

Before she could respond, her pager went off.

"What the hell did you do?!" Liz yelled, pulling it out. It was the nurse's station calling her, and her face dropped.

"Nothing," Adam said, washing his hands and smirking at her reflection in the mirror. "You reap what you sow. Now, I'd say you'd better answer that—unless you're ready to quit."

"Damn it! I forgot about your little fan club!" Liz cursed, clutching her pager as she bolted off.

Doctors have to carry pagers 24/7 and respond ASAP—it's life-or-death stuff. No one dares slack off. So even though Liz had a hunch what was coming, she had no choice but to sprint over.

Nurse's Station.

"Dr. Stevenson, these are for you," a nurse said, handing her a stack of charts with a half-smirk. "Please handle them quick—lots of patients waiting."

Liz took one look and turned pale. It was a mountain of grunt work—rectal exams, oozing sores, diarrhea and vomit cleanup, dead skin removal, catheter insertions—the dirtiest, most exhausting jobs.

Cristina had been hit with this kind of thing before after pissing off the nurses big-time. But this? Was this payback for clinging to Adam? Overkill much?! 😏

"This isn't my job," Liz protested.

"Aren't you an intern here?" the nurse countered. "Someone's gotta do it, and I can't think of anyone with more free time than you, Dr. Stevenson."

"Yeah, with Dr. Bailey on maternity leave, her interns are so bored they're following people into the men's bathroom. Who's got more time than that?" another nurse muttered "quietly" from nearby.

"..." Liz was speechless.

Should've never followed him in there, she thought. Her plan was to pressure Adam into giving in, but she'd poked the wrong beehive. Adam didn't crack—his nurse posse did.

The nurses' glares were dripping with disdain. A leggy blonde with a big chest hovering around Dr. Duncan, acting all flirty and cheap? It was already an eyesore—especially since Adam clearly wasn't into it. And now she'd followed him into the men's bathroom?

What's your game, huh?

Trying to cop a feel under some flimsy excuse?

Dream on!

Did you even ask us first?

Oh, and that "it's for Danny" line? Please. Who's she kidding? For all they knew, Danny was just a convenient pawn—some sad-sack side character in her real plot to get cozy with Adam. Classic soap opera move. No way were they letting her pull this off under their noses.

Got nothing to do? Fine—they'd make sure she couldn't catch a break.

"That's brutal!"

"Don't mess with Dr. Duncan."

"Poor Dr. Stevenson."

"Huh? What?!"

The nurses watched Liz scramble around, buzzing with gossip. One male nurse, feeling bad for the blonde bombshell, piped up in her defense—only to get a collective side-eye from the group. He backpedaled fast, survival instincts kicking in like he was on some wilderness reality show.

"Uh, I mean, she brought this on herself! Dr. Duncan's just looking out for her, and she can't see that. Had to keep bugging him—well, now she's got what she wanted, right?"

Chapter 599: Single Life Makes You Stronger

The Next Day. Medical Center. Ward.

"Heard last night was pretty intense?"

Dr. Burke strolled in, glancing at the updated chart from the night before.

"Yeah," Danny said with a weak smile. "Good thing I picked the right guy. Thanks to Dr. Duncan pulling me through a few times, I'm still here instead of chilling in heaven. I mean, I'm sure heaven's great and all, but I'm not exactly dying to check it out just yet!"

"Nice work, Dr. Duncan," Burke said, nodding approvingly at Adam's rescue notes.

If any other intern had been on duty, Burke would've been yanked out of bed by a frantic call. Only someone like Adam had the chops to handle it solo first, then decide if the boss needed to know. Having an assistant this solid? Burke had to admit—it felt pretty darn good. Well, most of the time. That one surgery where he got stuck playing second fiddle to Adam? Not so fun.

"Things still don't look great," Adam said. "Danny's got acute pulmonary edema. I switched him to congestive heart failure meds and hooked him up to a BiPAP machine. He's stable for now, but he needs a new heart—and fast."

"A new heart, huh?" Danny murmured weakly. "Been waiting a year and a half already. Kept missing out by this much. How long do I have this time?"

"Not long, and we can't bank on miracles," Adam replied. "I'd recommend a left ventricular assist device—LVAD. It's a battery-powered gadget that helps your heart pump. Could buy you a couple extra years."

"Yep," Burke nodded. "Dr. Duncan's spot on. We can't just sit around hoping for a rare win. No clue when that heart's showing up, so we need to stretch your timeline."

Organ transplants? All about connections and luck. Connections—well, obvious stuff. Take Dr. House next door: he snags organs meant for others all the time. Why? His fangirl dean pulls strings for him, and his insane track record gives her the clout to do it.

Danny, though? No such luck. Sure, he's probably loaded—maybe a multimillionaire—but not billionaire-level loaded. If he were, he wouldn't still be waiting after 18 months. Real big shots either pay up or call in favors to get a heart ASAP. No sitting around twiddling thumbs 'til death!

Adam, as his attending, could pull some strings too. But nah—not worth it. A tiny +0.01 boost to lifespan? He gets that saving random ER folks. No need to jump through hoops, waste time, energy, and cash for Danny. Plus, it's shady and illegal. Danny's just a regular patient—not family or anyone special enough for that kind of effort.

So, it's down to luck. And luck? That's a numbers game—you need time to stack the odds.

"Battery-powered?" Danny quipped with a faint grin. "I knew it—you guys are turning me into a robot! Step one of your evil hospital takeover plan, right?"

"Heh," Burke chuckled along.

"Nah," Adam grinned back. "Think positive! Picture this: you're kinda like Tony Stark—Iron Man. Battery keeping the heart going? Same deal. It's just a plot twist in your story. Could make life even more epic!

And you've got an edge over him—no fighting bad guys or sweating through some dramatic transformation to ditch the battery. Maybe today, maybe tomorrow, you wake up to good news: new heart, fresh start! All you need now is to buy yourself that extra time."

"Man, you're good at this," Danny laughed. "No clue who this Iron Man dude is, but I get it. Thanks, Dr. Duncan. So, sticking this battery thing in me—turning me into a robot—it's all smooth sailing, no risks?"

Real-life Iron Man movies weren't out yet, and in Marvel comics, Tony was still a B-lister—not exactly a household name. Still, Danny caught the vibe.

"There's some risk," Burke stepped in. "It can mess with your platelets, increase bleeding. If you go for the LVAD, you're stuck here 'til you get a transplant—gotta stay close for emergencies."

"Any other options?" Danny asked with a wry smile.

"Nope," Adam shook his head. "Everything's a trade-off. Nothing's perfect. Right now, staying alive's the priority. And trust me, hanging out in the hospital isn't as boring as it sounds.

Us interns practically live here—so much that they had to make rules to kick us out sometimes! Point is, you've gotta find your thing. Use this time to dive into something you're into. Get lost in it, and the days fly by.

Look at Hawking—Parkinson's, wheelchair-bound, no hope of recovery, talking through a synthesizer. Didn't stop him from exploring the cosmos and inspiring tons of people. Sickness can trap your body, not your mind.

You've even got a shot at getting better! Maybe by the time you hit your goal, that new heart shows up—double win! Isn't that worth looking forward to?"

"Me, compare to Hawking?" Danny smirked, self-deprecating. Then he looked at Adam. "But you're right, Dr. Duncan. A double-win future? That's worth betting on. Before I decide, though—can I see Liz?"

"Why?" Adam cut in before Burke could respond.

"Cause seeing her gives me hope—something to fight for..." Danny faltered, caught off guard.

"I wouldn't," Adam said, shaking his head. "You're gonna push through this just for a crush? That's not enough! This surgery? Could be a day, a year, two years before hope shows up.

You really think a spark from one meeting's gonna carry you through that long? Love—especially the love-at-first-sight kind—is just hormones doing their thing. But your body? It's not exactly in the game right now.

Leaning on that for motivation? Over time, it'll hurt more than it helps. A strong guy stuck in a weak body, all look-no-touch? That's torture.

So, whatever you pick to keep you going while you wait, skip the hormone trap. Aim higher—something mental, spiritual. That's how you stay chill through the grind.

Trust me, you've got this. Stay single long enough, and those hormones dull out anyway. Plenty of folks go their whole lives solo and thrive—science backs it up! We believe in science, right?"

Danny: "..."

Burke: "..."

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Chapter 600: The 3-7 Death Line

Medical Center. Ward.

"Dr. Duncan, you..." Danny trailed off, speechless, managing only a wry smile.

He knew Adam was right, though. Before getting sick, Danny had been a tough guy—always pushing boundaries, breaking rules. Those wild days were now fond memories amid his year-and-a-half struggle with illness. He'd been on the verge of breaking.

He'd thought no one could understand the pain of a strong man trapped in a failing body. But this young, good-looking Dr. Duncan? He got it—maybe even more than Danny did. Adam had already thought ahead, picturing Danny's situation perfectly. What could he even say to that?

Flirting with pretty doctors was just his nature. But surviving? That was his deepest instinct.

For some reason, Adam's words sparked a flicker of hope in him—a day when he'd get a new heart and start fresh. The peaceful waiting, the double dose of good news Adam painted—it was almost too good to imagine.

"As your attending intern, I'm just sharing my take," Adam said with a grin. "Up to you what you do with it."

"I'm with Dr. Duncan," Dr. Burke said, giving Adam a long look—this intern was stealing his thunder. "You've got to live first before anything else matters, Danny. If you're strong enough inside, you've got a future."

"Thanks, both of you," Danny said sincerely. "I'll do the surgery. But I've got one condition."

"Still about seeing Dr. Stevenson?" Burke asked, glancing at Adam.

Adam shrugged, like, I've said my piece—his call now.

"Nah," Danny said, shaking his head with a small laugh. "Dr. Duncan's right. I'm in no shape for a fling right now. No heart, no love, right? I'll wait. When I'm at my best, I'll ask out the best version of Liz. For now, though—I don't want the surgery today."

"You've heard that legend too?" Adam and Burke exchanged a quick look, catching on fast.

In the American hospitals of TV drama land, there's this quirky superstition: the number of patients who die on the operating table each day is either under 3—or hits exactly 3 or 7. The story goes that if more than 3 die, it won't stop at 4, 5, or 6—it'll jump straight to 7.

And today? The medical center had barely started the shift, and 4 patients had already died in surgery.

"I believe in science," Danny said with a grin. "But I believe in God too!"

"It's just something the morgue staff cooked up," Adam explained. "It's more about probability than some cosmic rule."

"I get that," Danny said, his smile turning bitter. "But you've gotta admit, my luck's been garbage. Bad luck plus bad timing—think I'd risk the table today?"

"Sorry, Danny," Burke said, shaking his head. "Your body can't wait. It's got to be today."

Danny looked at Adam, who nodded in agreement.

"Alright, fine," Danny sighed, giving in. "If God really wants to meet me that bad, I can't say no to the big guy. But if He's not ready for me yet, I'll wake up and live right, like you said, Dr. Duncan."

"Love that positivity," Adam said with a laugh. "You can't lose with that vibe."

"Dr. Duncan, get Danny prepped—we're heading to the OR," Burke said, a smile tugging at his lips.

This 3-or-7 death thing was a bit superstitious, sure. But even the brainiest, top-tier doctors—like Burke—bought into stuff like this. He'd never operate without his favorite, comfiest surgical caps, for instance.

A patient's mindset before surgery matters too. No will to live? Death rates spike. Confidence and hope? Success rates soar. It's all a little mystical—mind over body stuff—but Burke was thrilled to see Danny so upbeat.

Prep went smoothly.

Nurse's Station by the OR Board.

"Here, Adam," Dr. Montgomery said, handing him a cup of hot cocoa. "It's our tradition. Four surgeries today, four deaths already. I hear you're heading into the OR soon—we could all use a little good luck charm."

"Hot cocoa's a good luck charm?" Adam asked, raising an eyebrow.

"Hey, hey, hey!" Montgomery waved a hand. "Don't knock the cocoa!"

"Alright, alright," Adam said, chuckling. He didn't buy it, but she was so earnest—and it was a nice gesture—so he wasn't about to be a jerk. He raised the cup. "Thanks!"

"Go get 'em," she said with a smile.

Ever since Adam treated her poison ivy rash, Montgomery had warmed up to him. No more of that hot-and-cold "Adam when I need you, Duncan when I don't" vibe she'd picked up from her husband, Dr. Shepherd.

"Meredith!" Montgomery's voice rang out a few steps later, calling for Adam's rival.

Curious, Adam glanced back—just in time to see her hand Meredith a hot cocoa too. Wait, Meredith was heading into surgery too? She got the "charm" as well?

"Here, Nikki, you take it," Adam said, passing the cocoa to a nurse. He'd gotten paranoid about food and drinks from others lately—better safe than sorry. Plus, seeing Montgomery give Meredith the same thing? Nope.

"Thanks, Dr. Duncan!" Nikki beamed, taking it as her coworkers shot her jealous looks.

"Adam!" A tall figure came running over.

Adam turned and booked it. Rounding a corner, he caught Meredith tossing her cocoa straight into the trash. He smirked—great minds think alike. 😊

"Meredith, stop Adam for me!" the tall figure yelled, closing in.

"What'd you do to Liz this time?" Meredith sighed, stepping in Adam's path.

"Me? She's the one always starting stuff," Adam said, rolling his eyes. "When have I ever gone looking for trouble with her?"

"Let's hear her out first," Meredith said, playing peacemaker despite her own exasperation.

Adam stopped, giving a nod to Meredith—daughter of his biggest asset, Ellis Grey, and his guardian of sorts.

"Whew!" Liz panted, finally catching up, leaning against the wall. Her dramatic sprint had been quite the show, and Adam watched with mild amusement.

"What are you doing?" she demanded, still catching her breath.

"Nothing?" Adam said, spreading his hands.

"You're operating on Danny today?" Liz snapped, a mix of shock and anger. "Don't you know about the death number legend?"

"Yeah, I know," Adam said, deadpan. "But I also know if Danny doesn't get surgery today, he's not even rolling the dice—he's headed straight to the morgue."

"It's gotten that bad?" Liz's face went white.

She'd been shut out by Adam's no-contact rule, then swamped by the nurses' petty revenge for "stalking" him—constant pages keeping her on her toes. She'd only just spotted Danny's surgery on the board while rushing by.