

TV Show 611

Chapter 611: Good Luck With That

Nighttime.

Medical Center.

"So, what's the deal?"

Christina and Meredith crowd around.

"What's what?"

Adam looks puzzled.

"How's the chief handling Liz?"

Christina cuts to the chase.

"How'd you guys find out?"

Adam shoots a frown at George.

"They're Liz's friends," George mumbles, guilty. "They deserve to know."

"Hope you're still this chill when the chief fires your ass," Adam snarks.

"..."

George shuts up fast.

At the closed-door meeting earlier, Surgical Chief Richard Webber's face was a thundercloud. His vibe toward George? One line: "Shut it, O'Malley. No talking—just listen!"

"We'll keep it quiet," Meredith says, stepping in for a spooked George. "Just between us."

"That's for the best," Adam nods. "Otherwise, the chief'd go straight for firing Liz, no question."

"So it's not a firing?"

Christina zeroes in on the key word.

"Nope, not a firing," Adam sighs. "We all want her gone, but the reason? Can't make it public."

It's a classic case of holding back to avoid bigger trouble.

Liz is a doctor, part of the union. No solid, public reason means they can't just boot her.

What she did? Oh, it's a 100% fireable offense.

But spilling it would tank the whole medical center's rep and profits.

"You want her fired too?"

Meredith stares at Adam, shocked.

"What's the issue?"

Adam fires back.

"She's your friend!"

Meredith exclaims.

"I don't have friends who care that much," Adam says with a cold laugh. "If we hadn't all stood firm, she'd have dragged me down with her. Maybe the chief'd be firing me too. You want a friend like that?"

"But she's already been punished—she got shot," Meredith falters.

"What's that got to do with her having no ethics and not deserving to be a doctor?" Adam scoffs. "You think the shooter was some vigilante doing the world a favor?"

"..."

Meredith's got nothing.

"Alright, enough," Christina cuts in. "What Liz did was way out of line—no defending that. So, what's the outcome? Not fired—then what?"

"Encouraged to leave," George pipes up. "Whether her hand heals or not, Liz can't keep training as a resident here."

"That's it?"

Christina's surprised. "That's not even harsh!"

"Not harsh?"

George's eyes bulge.

"Come on, think about what Liz pulled," Christina says, shrugging. "If Dr. Burke hadn't raced back with that heart in time, and you'd actually been dumb enough to cut Danny's power cord like she asked, Danny'd be dead.

That's borderline murder.

You thought about that?

Compared to that, 'encouraged to leave' just means she can start over somewhere else.

That's not a good deal?

You seriously think after all this, the chief'd just yell a bit, slap her with a warning, and let it slide?

She's not Meredith!"

"Hey!"

Meredith's not thrilled with that jab.

What's that supposed to mean?!

"Come on!" Christina smirks, giving Meredith a side-eye. "You know the chief's soft on you. It's human nature—connections matter. What's to hide?"

"Ugh," Meredith sighs. "I just hope Liz doesn't pull this kind of stunt at her next hospital."

A faint, chilly smirk tugs at Adam's lips.

The four chat a bit more, with Adam stressing again not to spread this around. Then he heads toward the VIP ward to check on Tatiana.

Juno's already talked to Heather.

Heather's pumped—says she'd love to adopt.

But with her background, passing the child protection agency's screening? Tricky.

So Adam consulted pro philanthropist Caroline and cooked up a plan.

Step one: Caroline's charity fund adopts Tatiana. Step two: Pass her off to Heather.

Problem is, it hinges on the adoption agency's credentials.

Caroline needs time to sort that out.

Plus, Tatiana's health needs some TLC first. So Adam's keeping her at the medical center for now, under the care of sweet Nurse Carol. It's a safe bet.

He's even hooked her up with an English teacher to learn some basics while she's here—make it easier to chat with Heather later.

"Adam!"

Christina jogs up from behind.

"What's up?"

Adam stops.

"It's not that simple, is it?" Christina lowers her voice. "I saw that cold smirk earlier. You don't buy Meredith's take."

"Of course not," Adam chuckles. "People don't change that easy. Liz went full psycho—could you have predicted that beforehand?"

"Nope," Christina shakes her head.

"Exactly," Adam shrugs.

"Nah, there's more," Christina says, locking eyes with him. "That smirk wasn't just that. You're planning something—revenge, right? Making sure Liz can't start over anywhere else?"

"Where'd you get that idea?"

Adam looks surprised.

"Don't play dumb," Christina groans. "You're petty as hell. Liz nearly trashed your career this time. Sure, the hospital's rep means no public firing, but I don't buy you letting it go."

"You're overthinking it," Adam laughs. "I'm a big-picture guy. Liz getting pushed out? That's enough for me."

"For real?"

Christina's skeptical.

"Totally," Adam grins. "But the chief? He's pissed. Consequences are gonna sting. Liz's medical file? The chief's review won't be pretty. He's told Burke and the others—no recommendation letters for her. Good luck finding a new gig with that."

"Shit!"

Christina's jaw drops. "How's that different from firing?"

In the U.S., where records are everything, your resume's gold.

A surgical chief from a big hospital tanks your file and blocks your old bosses from vouching for you?

Every other hospital knows what's up.

Liz isn't some hotshot star. She's a nobody.

Even a legit genius like House—absolute legend—would've been screwed without that dean who adored him and took the heat to hire him.

No skills matter if no one'll touch you.

Hospitals hate headaches.

A top doc's life-saving wins don't outweigh the chaos one troublemaker can cause in a single screw-up.

It's not worth the math.

They're here to make money—why risk a loose cannon?

House barely scraped by. Liz? She's nothing.

"Oh, it's different," Adam says with a smile. "This way, Liz can stomach it better. People need a little hope, right?"

And whether that hope turns into endless despair later?

Well, that's just like the classic line Adam's second sister Teddy recorded for their fourth sister Charlie's Growth video:

"Good luck, Liz Stevenson!" 😊

Chapter 612: A Smile Slowly Freezing

Medical Center. Morning. Emergency Room.

"What's going on?"

Adam looked up as a man struggled to drag an elderly guy through the doors and immediately rushed over to help.

"He was at my restaurant," the man explained quickly. "Just finished brunch, then boom—he collapsed, shaking all over, eyes rolling back. Looked like a seizure or something."

Adam scooped the old man onto a stretcher, checking him over while asking, "You're the restaurant manager?"

"Yup."

The manager fished a business card out of his pocket and shoved it at Adam. "If he's okay, give me a call. I hate to admit it, but he scarfed down a \$35 champagne steak brunch and didn't pay a dime."

"Something's off—this isn't a seizure. Nurse, scalpel!"

Adam had already pieced it together. He shot the manager a knowing glance and shouted the order.

"Yes, Dr. Duncan!"

The nurse caught on quick and played along, darting off to grab it.

The "unconscious" old man on the stretcher freaked out, cracking one eye open to peek.

"Son of a bitch!"

The manager saw it too and instantly realized the guy was faking to skip the bill. Furious, he lunged forward, teeth practically grinding.

"Whoa, whoa, whoa!"

The old man rolled off the stretcher like a ninja, dodging the manager's fist with a goofy grin. "It's just a meal, man, chill out! 😊"

"You old jerk!" the manager roared. "Not only do you stiff me, but you waste my time and energy? I'm not letting this slide!"

On the way over, he'd been genuinely worried—about the restaurant's rep, about whether the food was bad.

"Go ahead, call the cops then!"

The old guy shrugged it off, then glared at Adam. "You little punk, how dare you trick me!"

He'd pulled this stunt a million times—never once had a doctor or nurse seen through it right away, let alone called him out.

"Security!"

Adam wasn't in the mood to argue with this clown and just yelled for backup.

The old guy spotted hospital security heading his way and bolted. If he wasn't scared of cops, he wouldn't have faked a seizure in the first place. Jail food in this TV drama world isn't exactly gourmet. 🤢

The hallway was packed with patients, and the old guy started dodging around, grabbing at people and stuff. Adam darted forward, snagged him, hoisted him up, and handed him off to security.

"Tell the cops he's disrupting hospital order," Adam said to the guard, eyeing the guy's shameless 'I've got nothing to lose' attitude.

"Got it, Dr. Duncan."

The security guy knew Adam well and caught his drift.

"What's that supposed to mean? You trying to get back at me?!"

The old guy panicked. He was sharp enough to hear the hint in Adam's words—cops were gonna throw the book at him. And judging by how security treated Adam, this wasn't just some random doc.

Two guards grabbed him, one on each side, and hauled him off. Dr. Duncan had nabbed the guy and handed him over—if they couldn't handle it from there, what kind of security were they?

"What a freaking jerk!" the nurse spat, glaring after him.

Adam just sighed and shook his head.

People like this? Total waste of medical resources.

But the kicker is, even when doctors know it's fake, they usually have to play along. Nobody wants the hassle. These barefoot, shameless types—once they latch onto you, they're like a bad rash. Gross and annoying as hell.

It's like those silver-tongued junkies who show up demanding painkillers. Docs know what's up, but they still have to give the shot. The pain's real, and if you don't, they'll sue.

Across the U.S., with so many addicts pulling this crap, hospitals get drained dry. One small scam shows you the bigger picture. No wonder this huge empire ends up crippled by a bloated healthcare mess down the line.

"Dr. Duncan, it's ten—seminar time," the nurse called over.

"Thanks, Daisy."

Adam glanced at his watch, gave her a nod, and headed to the seminar room.

Being a doctor means never stopping learning. Big hospitals like this run classes all the time—new tech, new tools—to keep docs sharp.

"You're late!"

Christina, predictably, was already there. She lived for this stuff.

"Ran into a deadbeat..." Adam gave her the quick rundown.

"Why even bother with that? Just pretend you didn't notice," she said casually, then her eyes lit up. "Whoa, check it out—the chief's here too!"

"Chief."

"Dr. Duncan."

"Chief."

"Dr. Yang."

Adam and Christina greeted Surgical Chief Richard.

"You two are hands-down the best interns we've got," Richard said with a grin. "Forget talent—it's that drive to learn that every intern should copy."

"You're here for the class too, Chief?" Christina asked, spotting him pull out a notebook.

"It's a great refresher course. Should be fun," Richard chuckled.

Adam nudged Christina under the table with a subtle look.

"Today, we're diving into laparoscopic surgery—every trick in the book, starting with basic tool handling..."

The instructor kicked things off, then moved to hands-on. "Who wants to go first?"

Before he could finish, Christina's hand shot up like a rocket.

"Alright, Dr. Yang, you're up!"

The instructor pointed at her, all smiles, and waved her forward.

"Nice work, Dr. Yang!"

Christina nailed it, earning a thumbs-up from the instructor.

"Chief, watch your grip—loosen up a bit," the instructor coached, stepping behind Richard.

Adam peeked over and caught the chief's smile starting to stiffen. He smirked and shook his head.

Christina, glued to the practice screen, maneuvered the laparoscopic tools, clipping a marble and sliding it into a tiny slot with precision.

"Done! I'm the first!" she cheered, dropping the tools and throwing her hands up like she'd won the lottery. 🤩

The chief's frozen smile cracked—he went full grumpy cat, lips tight, staring at the screen as he kept at it.

"Dr. Yang, you're not the first," the instructor cut in. "Dr. Duncan finished first. He's just been quietly practicing over and over to get it down pat."

"What?!"

Christina froze, then bolted over to Adam's station. Sure enough, he was running through it again and again—fast, flawless, way beyond her level.

"Speed and precision aren't everything," Adam said coolly. "Basics are what matter. Stop gawking and practice—get it into your muscle memory."

Christina's high from beating the chief crashed hard. Deflated, she trudged back to her station to grind it out.

Lunchtime. Cafeteria.

Adam and Christina were grabbing food when George and Meredith started chatting about Liz. Then Surgical Chief Richard plopped down at their table.

Instant silence. Awkward city. 😬

"Dr. Yang, Dr. Duncan, you two made me look bad this morning," Richard said with a tight smile. "My hands are a little rusty lately."

"Nah," Adam laughed. "Your basics are rock-solid, Chief—that's what counts in surgery."

"Exactly!" Richard pointed at Adam, grinning at the group. "Dr. Duncan's got it—basics are king."

Everyone just stared, like employees scared to talk around the boss. Richard coughed, clearly uncomfortable, and bailed with his tray. "See you this afternoon!"

"Heh, I did make him look bad!" Christina cackled once he was gone, her morning victory vibes rushing back.

"Keep it low-key," Adam warned. "You embarrassed him in front of everyone—watch out, he might start gunning for you."

"I'm just stating facts—wasn't I faster?" she shot back. "And you're just as bad. Wanna go again this afternoon?"

"Nope, I'm skipping it," Adam said, shaking his head.

"What? Why?" Christina yelled. "You're not seriously bailing to spare his feelings, are you? We're doctors—beating the chief with skill is something to brag about!"

"Nah," Adam said with a smug little smile. "I just don't need to go anymore."

Christina: "..."

Chapter 613: Tearful Exit

Medical Center. Cafeteria.

Christina was feeling down after getting hit with another blow from Versailles Adam. She just couldn't muster any excitement. 😞

Then, in the afternoon workshop, she got a stern talking-to from the super serious Surgical Director Richard.

"I did it! I did it! I did it!"

When Director Richard finished his laparoscopic suturing first, he threw his hands up in the air, cheering like a kid—just like Christina had done that morning.

"Flawless, Director Webber. Absolutely flawless!"

The lead doctor didn't hesitate to shower him with praise (total rainbow vibes 🌈). Christina just stared, dumbfounded, then sulked as she turned back to her own suturing.

But Director Richard wasn't about to let her off the hook. Oh no—he'd been humiliated in front of her that morning, and he was ready for payback.

"They call me Director Webber!!!"

He yanked off his latex gloves, spun toward Christina, and shouted with all the energy of a victorious king. Then, swaying a little with smug pride, he strutted over to her, leaned in close, and whispered dramatically, "So I'm the director!"

And with that, he kept repeating "So I'm the director!" while clapping his hands and doing a little wiggle as he strutted out of the workshop. 😊

That's the competitive spirit of a surgeon for you. Even after years as Surgical Director, Richard never slacked off when it came to his skills. He still got bummed out or hyped up over whether he could come out on top.

Christina, though? She was not happy. If it were anyone else, they might've snapped, "You're no match for Adam!" But her competitive streak was just as fierce as Richard's—she wouldn't dare use Adam as an excuse. Losing to the director was losing to the director, plain and simple.

After pushing down her frustration and finishing her sutures, she bolted out to catch up with him.

"Director!"

"What's up?"

Richard was in a great mood. Beating a rising star with his raw skill felt amazing.

"You weren't even looking earlier," Christina said, puzzled. "You had your eyes closed. You didn't even need the monitor to guide you—how'd you do it?"

"You're still no match for Dr. Duncan," Richard replied, tilting his head up with a deliberately smug look. "It's what he told you this morning—basics. Muscle memory from countless procedures. I could do it with my eyes closed. You interns still need more practice!"

"..."

Christina didn't even want to respond. That smug face was way too annoying—she saw it on Adam all the time. 😏

Time flies when you're not bogged down with chaos. A month passed in the blink of an eye.

In that month, Danny finally got his new heart. Not surprising, really. The patient ahead of him—Dr. Hahn's—had recovered, so Danny moved to the top of the list. With so many deaths in the U.S. every day, a matching heart was bound to show up eventually.

It just proved Leeds was totally unhinged. Danny had already waited a year and a half, and his chances of getting a heart were only going up. But Leeds lost it at the worst possible time—convinced that missing that heart meant waiting forever. She even tried to cut Danny's power line to tank his condition and fake her way into stealing it.

Talk about stupid!

She paid a heavy price for it, though. Forget the gunshot wound or the mess in the OR—her physical injuries mostly healed over the month. But mentally? She was falling apart, randomly bursting into tears for no reason.

Meredith and the others said Leeds regretted everything. She'd had a bright future right in front of her but didn't appreciate it. Now that it was gone, she was drowning in regret.

Yup! Holding her trembling hand, watching Meredith and the team pull off one cool surgery after another, their skills visibly leveling up—Leeds was gutted. She missed the feel of a scalpel in her hand so much.

But that shaky right hand of hers? It couldn't hold a scalpel anymore. Even with tons of rehab, the odds of a full recovery were basically zero. It tore her apart.

Even Danny getting his new heart didn't cheer her up much. Turns out, the stuff we imagine we want doesn't always hold up to reality.

Clearly, Leeds forgot why she'd sacrificed everything to get here in the first place. She loved being a doctor—not as devoutly as Christina, maybe, but she did love it. One dumb move, and it was all gone.

Luckily, Danny turned out to be a decent guy. After his surgery, once he was healthy again and heard the full story from Meredith, he went to see Leeds—and proposed to her on the spot!

That lifted her spirits a little. So, Leeds quit the medical center, married into wealth, and it kinda looked like a "happily ever after" ending.

Adam wasn't buying it, though. This isn't a movie—it's real life. Danny and Leeds' future was just getting started.

Two people who'd barely met outside the hospital, who didn't even know each other that well, engaged just like that? One's a newly healthy, rich, good-looking playboy who calls himself a "strong man." The other's a former doctor who's lost her spark, goes crazy sometimes, and expects everyone to bow to her whims.

Yup, Leeds had a major control streak. She didn't want to hear your opinion—she wanted everyone to follow hers. Adam didn't think they'd make it to the wedding.

Not his problem anymore, though. After Alex, Leeds was officially out of his life too. Thinking about how those two had some weird chemistry back in the day, Adam couldn't help but mutter, "Birds of a feather, huh?"

Then there was Tatiana. Once Caroline's Ellis Charity Fund orphanage got approved to take in kids, they adopted Tatiana. Not long after, Heather came by to pick her up.

That adorable little angel, tied to Adam no less, was right up Heather's alley. Kids can tell when adults genuinely care, and with Heather's stunning looks (no chance of an "ugly rejection" here), they hit it off fast.

On the day Heather officially adopted Tatiana, Juno and Karen drove over and threw a celebration party. They wanted Tatiana to know she didn't just have a beautiful, loving mom now—she had two gorgeous, doting aunts too.

Her sweet giggles echoed through the whole party.

Chapter 614: Adam Kicked Out in the Middle of the Night

Three Days Later. Nighttime. Old Friends Bar.

"Adam!"

Lily waved at him from across the bar.

"Just you? Where's Matthew?" Adam asked, plopping down beside her.

Matthew and Lily were practically joined at the hip—seeing one without the other was rare.

"He's got a paper to finish," Lily said with a grin. "Plus, with the wedding coming up, there's a ton to do."

"Congrats! Finally tying the knot, huh? Lovebirds making it official!" Adam cheered.

Matthew and Lily got engaged last year, and their wedding was set for April—two months away. They were in full-on prep mode now.

"Heh."

Lily's laugh sounded a little forced.

"What's up? Pre-wedding jitters kicking in?" Adam raised an eyebrow.

"Nah, it's not that."

Lily waved it off, dodging the topic. "Enough about us—let's talk about you. Word on the street is you got kicked out of bed and tossed out the door at 3 a.m.! Adam Duncan, down bad! How's that feel? 😊"

"Don't even bring it up," Adam groaned, rubbing his face.

"Come on, spill!" Lily leaned in, eyes gleaming with gossip. "I heard Robin chewed you out all night long. Dude, you really pissed her off this time."

"You already know the story—what's there to say?" Adam mumbled, sheepish.

"I wanna hear your side!" Lily grinned. "Maybe Robin got it wrong, you know?"

"You seriously think that?"

Adam rolled his eyes. "You just want more juicy details!"

"Can't I?" Lily shot back, totally shameless. "I deserve it after my ears took a beating from her ranting about you!"

"How's Ted doing these days?" Adam tried to pivot.

"Nope, no dodging!" Lily cut him off. "Start with how you oh-so-casually dropped 'Sorry, it's a habit' on Robin!"

"Ugh."

Adam sighed dramatically. "Lesson learned, okay?"

It all started when Heather came to adopt Tatiana. Juno and Karen threw a party to celebrate the happy occasion, and everyone joined in. Heather stuck around for two days, showing Tatiana all over New York.

After she left, Robin called Adam over that night.

And then, during their usual debate about the future of humanity, things went south—fast. Adam got a little too loud with his opinion, and Robin was caught off guard, totally thrown.

But later? Oh man, she flipped out. She was yelling, digging through drawers like she was about to execute "Plan B"—pretty sure she wanted to shoot him right then and there!

Adam vaguely remembered that Robin, like Monica, had a pretty grim view on humanity's future. Except Robin was next-level—Monica was physically pessimistic but mentally upbeat, while Robin? She was down bad on both fronts.

So, in a moment of not thinking, Adam blurted out, "Sorry, it's a habit..."

And that loaded little line? Boom—it set Robin off like a volcano. She came at him full force, ready to fight to the death.

Uh... like, actually fight to the death! 😬

Realizing he'd messed up big time, Adam knew he'd genuinely pissed her off. He beat a tactical retreat—aka got kicked out in the middle of the night. First time he'd ever lived that rom-com cliché.

It was a wake-up call, though. He'd gotten careless. Heather's visit had thrown him off—he forgot she was the exception, not the rule.

Good thing it was Robin this time, with her body-and-soul despair about kids. If it'd been Peggy instead... well, he wasn't ready to accidentally spawn some genius future king who'd outshine him and steal all the ladies!

"Adam, you're such a jerk," Lily said, shaking her head. "How do you even say something like that?"

"I didn't mean it!" Adam whined. "Going from simple to fancy is easy, but fancy back to simple? Brutal. I'm struggling here!"

"So, got a plan to apologize to Robin yet?" Lily asked, giving him a look.

"Wait for her to cool off?" Adam said, dead serious.

Clap, clap, clap!

Lily slow-clapped, staring at him like he was some rare specimen. "Wow, you really think being hot lets you get away with anything, huh?"

"It's mostly 'cause I'm in good shape," Adam added modestly.

"..."

Lily's mouth twitched. "She's seriously mad this time. Thinking she'll just get over it on her own? Fat chance. Robin's not your average girl."

"I know," Adam nodded.

Robin was no joke—she was like a mashup of Robin Sparkles and Robin Stabby-Stabby, flipping between personas on a dime. That night? Total Stabby mode.

If she'd had a knife, he might've been toast!

"She acts like she doesn't care about relationships," Lily went on. "She knows you're a player and still hangs out with you, but deep down, she's super possessive."

"Uh... is she?" Adam hesitated.

He did recall Robin scrapping with Alice twice—the second time she suggested it.

"Trust me," Lily said, all smug and expert-like. "After we became besties, she even got jealous of me having other gal pals. How could she not be possessive?"

"Fair point," Adam conceded.

Thinking back, that second fight with Alice was more about revenge. Robin trashed Alice, then strutted off without a care. Later, no matter how much Adam hinted, she wouldn't bite. Push too hard? She nearly lost it.

They didn't talk for ages after that. If her little sister Katie hadn't shown up needing a "reliable jerk" role model to scare straight, they might've been done for good.

On the surface, Robin didn't mind his flirty rep—as long as she didn't have to see it. But once she knew? She cared more than anyone.

That "Sorry, it's a habit" slip-up basically screamed he had more "friends" than just Alice. And she knew damn well he'd never had that "habit" with her or Alice before. New grudges plus old ones? She snapped.

"Now you get it—she's pissed," Lily said, nodding smugly. "Waiting her out won't cut it. You've gotta step up and apologize. So, what's the plan?"

"Let it ride," Adam said, totally straight-faced.

"What?!" Lily's eyes bugged out.

"You said it yourself—Robin's got a strong personality," Adam explained earnestly. "Unless I'm ready to take things further with her, you think she'd accept any apology I've got right now?"

"No... but can't you just get closer to her then?" Lily pressed.

"Sorry," Adam sighed. "What she wants, I can't give."

In his mental "lady friends" ranking, Robin didn't even crack the top three. Asking him to drop everyone else for her? No way.

She wasn't some fairy-tale heroine, and he wasn't some lovesick knight.

Plus, he remembered—in the original timeline, Robin once helped Ted chase girls by flexing a sly move: casually implying other women dumped Ted 'cause he was "too much" in bed. Total BS, of course.

But Adam? His "problem" was real.

Karma's funny like that—even across parallel universes.

"So you two..." Lily trailed off, disappointed.

Robin was her bestie, Adam her buddy—she'd been rooting for them.

"Let it play out naturally," Adam said with a grin. "You said she's not ordinary. She doesn't need you worrying. Maybe I'm already just another name on her list—'sweet one second, dead to her the next.'"

"You're such an ass," Lily sighed. "You know your charm's on another level."

"My bad," Adam chuckled. "Alright, enough of that—how're you and Matthew? You two better not be hitting any bumps."

Lily's face froze.

Chapter 615 "Sorry, It's a Habit" – The Director's Cut (Rated R for Ridiculous)

On-call room. 2:17 a.m.

Lights dimmed to "mood" level, which in hospital terms meant one flickering bulb and the faint beep of someone's forgotten pager.

Robin had Adam pinned against the wall, blonde hair everywhere, legs wrapped around his waist like she was trying to win a rodeo.

"Say my name," she growled, nails digging into his shoulders.

"Robin," Adam panted, grinning like an idiot who thought he'd survived the storm. "Robin Sparkles, Robin Stabby, Robin—fuck—yes, just like that—"

She moaned, biting his neck. Things were going legendary. Adam's hands—those famous "surgical precision" hands—were doing things that would've made Dr. Burke blush and Dr. Sloan take notes.

Then Robin shifted, grinding down hard, and Adam's brain short-circuited the way it always did when blood flow relocated south.

"God, Alice, you're so—shit—sorry, it's a habit—"

The room went dead silent except for the drip-drip-drip of the leaky faucet.

Robin froze mid-thrust.

Her eyes went from bedroom to battlefield in 0.3 seconds.

"Alice?" she whispered, dangerously sweet. "Alice?"

Adam's soul left his body. "Wait, no—Robin, baby, I meant—"

"You meant the other blonde you rail when I'm not around?" She climbed off him so fast he nearly dropped her. Naked, furious, magnificent. "I knew it! 'Habit' my ass! You've got a goddamn rotation!"

Adam, still painfully hard and now painfully exposed, raised both hands like he was surrendering to a SWAT team. "It's muscle memory! Like when I call a retractor a 'clamp' in the OR—my mouth just—"

"Your mouth is about to get retracted," Robin snarled, grabbing the nearest thing—a rolled-up copy of Grey's Anatomy (the textbook, ironically)—and smacking him across the chest. "You absolute man-whore!"

THWACK.

"Ow! That's medical literature!"

THWACK.

"Call me Alice again and I'll make you eat it!"

The door burst open.

Cristina Yang stood there in scrubs, hair in a messy bun, holding two coffees like she'd just walked into the wrong OR.

She took in the scene: Adam butt-naked, sporting a textbook-shaped welt and the world's most awkward erection; Robin naked, wielding Grey's Anatomy like a war hammer.

Cristina blinked once.

"...I came to tell you the chief wants you in the pit for a GSW, but clearly you're already performing emergency surgery."

Robin didn't even flinch. "He called me Alice."

Cristina's eyebrows shot up. "Oof. Rookie mistake. Even I know not to do that." She sipped her coffee. "Pro tip, Duncan: next time you're mid-thrust, just grunt. Less syllables, fewer casualties."

Adam groaned, covering himself with a pillow. "Can we not have an audience?"

"Too late," Cristina said, leaning against the doorframe like she was watching her favorite soap. "This is better than Netflix. Continue. I'll time how long it takes her to castrate you."

Robin turned the textbook threateningly toward Cristina. "You want in on this too, Yang?"

"Nah, I'm good. Burke's waiting. But if you need a surgical consult on how to remove his balls without anesthesia, page me." She winked at Adam. "Try not to die, hotshot. We still need you for that lion-syndrome follow-up tomorrow."

The door clicked shut.

Robin rounded on Adam again, eyes blazing. "You have three seconds to explain why your 'habit' involves another woman's name while you're inside me."

Adam swallowed. "...Because my brain is a medical textbook and my dick is a highlighter?"

Wrong answer.

The textbook flew.

Ten minutes later the entire floor heard Robin's victory yell: "That's for Alice!"

And somewhere down the hall, Meredith Grey poked her head out of another on-call room, hair equally wrecked, and muttered, "...I give it a week before they're back at it."

Adam, now curled in the fetal position with a pillow over his head, could only whimper:

"Lesson learned... mostly."

End Omake

(Next time Adam will just say "baby" like a normal degenerate. Or maybe not. We all know he won't.)

Chapter 616: Hurricane Rescue

Old Friends Bar.

"There's really a problem?"

Adam grinned. "Let me guess—you've still got a bunch of dreams you haven't chased, and you feel like getting married means cutting them off for good. So you're kinda reluctant, right?"

"Exactly!"

Lily's eyes widened. "How'd you know that?"

"Besides that, I can't imagine what else could go wrong between you and Matthew—you two are practically made for each other!"

Adam teased, "I mean, with how lovey-dovey you guys are—like conjoined twins—something cheesy like cheating is totally off the table, right?"

"Well..."

Lily hesitated.

"No way!"

Adam's jaw dropped. "You cheated?"

Sure, in his past life, he'd seen Matthew and Lily live a picture-perfect love story. But in this world, with his butterfly effect shaking things up, he couldn't be 100% sure Lily wouldn't stray.

"Not exactly," Lily said with a bitter smile. "You guessed it—I've got all these teenage dreams I never made happen. Back in high school, before college, I had a boyfriend. He laid out our whole future together, and it felt like a cage. I didn't want to be tied down, so I dumped him when we graduated.

Then, on my first day of college, I met Matthew. I told him all about my dreams—I wanted to travel to France, Spain, Italy, just soak up life and paint everything I saw. I didn't care if it meant waiting tables in some rundown café for five years. I wanted to be a painter, a wild, free-spirited artist. Oh, and have an epic lesbian romance.

Last night, while Robin was ranting about you, I spilled my worries to her. She comforted me..."

"Oh, come on, that's it?"

Adam let out a relieved laugh. "Matthew won't care about that!"

"That's not the point!"

Lily groaned. "The point is—what's wrong with me? Where'd that dreamy girl go? I broke up with my high school boyfriend because I didn't want him holding me back from my dreams. Then I met Matthew, fell in love, and now we're about to get married—and I haven't done one of those dreams!"

"But you kinda nailed that last one, didn't you?" Adam said with a smirk.

"A kiss from a friend to cheer me up doesn't count as some grand lesbian love story!" Lily rolled her eyes. 😊

"That's just life, though," Adam said. "Sometimes what you think you want isn't what you really want. Let's break down your big teenage dreams.

First: travel. You and Matthew can totally do that on your honeymoon. Trust me, solo travel's overrated—unless you're looking for a fling on the side.

Second: being a wild, free artist. Come on, we all get it—are you sure it's about being an artist, or just craving that chaotic, no-rules lifestyle artists are famous for?

Third: the epic lesbian romance.

Notice a pattern here?"

"What pattern?"

Lily blinked, not catching on.

"They're all tied to a restless heart," Adam said with a knowing look. "It's normal to have wild, sky-high fantasies as a teenage girl. But there's a huge gap between imagination and reality—and once you cross it, it's hard to turn back. Do you really envy Barney's life?"

"I'm not—"

Lily started to protest. She'd always trashed Barney's messy lifestyle, so realizing her precious teenage dreams kinda mirrored it? Yeah, that stung.

"So it's just pure travel and pure artistry, then?"

Adam skipped the third dream—too tricky to call "pure" without sounding awkward.

"Exactly!" Lily nodded eagerly.

"Pure travel? Easy," Adam said. "You and Matthew can do it anytime—honeymoon or later. No big deal. As for pure artistry? Even simpler. Do you think you've got the talent?"

"I don't?"

Lily wasn't sure.

"Whether you do or not," Adam grinned, "you obviously think you do, or you wouldn't still be hung up on it. Being an artist isn't for just anyone—it's all about talent. What do you think?"

"Yeah..."

Lily nodded. Art's about spotting and capturing beauty, and that takes real skill. (Well, mathematicians might argue they need the most talent—either you get it or you don't, no in-between!)

Artists, though? It's different. A thousand people see a thousand different Hamlets. What's beautiful to an artist might look like random scribbles to regular folks. Most artists are kinda Schrödinger's artists—total geniuses to some, total hacks to others. There's no universal standard, so tons of art students think they're undiscovered gems, just waiting to shine.

But it's usually more like, "I'm invincible until I try" or "If I get serious, I can do anything." Lily definitely had that vibe.

"Easy fix, then," Adam said with a smile. "Since art's all about talent, we can test your 'great artist' dream real quick. I'll hook you up with a master painter to check if you've got the goods. If you do, keep dreaming big. If not, ditch the fantasy and embrace your fairy-tale life with Matthew.

How many people meet the perfect person at the perfect time and place? You and Matthew have a love 99.99% of the world would kill for. Nothing's 100% perfect—don't force it."

"No way, I'm not testing it!" Lily waved him off, lacking confidence. "You'd just rig it so the master trashes me!"

"I swear I won't fake it," Adam said, raising his hands. "But if you don't trust me, take your paintings to Paris after. Find a few masters yourself—just don't ask 'undiscovered talents' or art teachers. They'll either sweet-talk you for cash or something else."

In his past life, Adam saw Lily fly to Paris, get torn apart by a teacher who said her art was garbage, then come back heartbroken to her happy life with Matthew. Total rose-tinted nonsense.

In reality, even if her art sucked, a teacher wouldn't just trash her and kick her out—they'd say it's "nice," tell her she's improving, and encourage her to keep going. For a price, of course. Or maybe a "friendship."

With Lily's "I'll wait tables in a dingy café for five years" determination, she might've actually fallen for it—chasing the dream until she woke up broke and alone. Too late for regrets then.

No one's truly irreplaceable. Time erases everything. As her friend, Adam couldn't let Lily stumble down that path. With his butterfly effect in this mixed-up TV drama world, who knew if she'd still meet that blunt teacher to snap her out of it?

If she got conned into waiting tables for real, that'd be one thing. But if it turned into a Hurricane Rescue situation? Big trouble. 🙄

Chapter 617: Robin Won't Back Down

Old Friends Bar.

"Nah, I'd rather not..."

Lily hesitated, still not sold.

"See what I mean?" Adam grinned. "You think you want something, but do you really? The Lily Aldrin I know—bold, loud, chugging beer and yelling 'You're all trash!' at the room—wouldn't shrink back like some 'little bitch.'"

"That was Ted!"

Lily bristled instantly.

Back when Ted first met Robin, she'd dropped a hint at their breakup that he could kiss her goodbye. But Ted, usually a total player, was in his "hunting for The One" phase and froze up, too scared to make a move. Later, when he told Lily and the gang, even after a million excuses, she still dubbed him a "shrinking little bitch."

Now Adam was throwing that label at her? Oh, she wasn't having it.

Adam just smirked, saying nothing.

"...Fine," Lily grumbled, realizing if she didn't agree, she'd be no better than wimpy Ted. "But what do I even draw?"

"How about your wedding with Matthew?" Adam suggested. "Art's all about real emotion to hit people hard. Your feelings for him are legit—pour that into a painting, and it'll be bursting with heart. If that doesn't impress a master, maybe you've got no talent after all. What do you think?"

"Ugh."

Lily nodded reluctantly.

All her confidence and daydreams? Shattered by Adam's push. Now she was starting to see where that dreamy, artsy girl she used to be had gone.

She hadn't even started chasing the dream before getting stuck at the gap between fantasy and reality. She'd brushed past it, taken a long detour through the real world, and now here she was again—peeking across that gap. The sky was clear, the rain had stopped, and she thought, Hey, maybe I've still got this...

"Can't wait to see your masterpiece," Adam teased. "Oh, and the wedding—need any help?"

"..."

Lily clammed up. He clearly didn't think she'd pull it off. "No thanks."

"You sure I can't hook you up with a booking at the Vansmoot Hotel?" Adam offered with a grin.

The Vansmoot—a gorgeous palace on the Hudson River—was a dream wedding spot for tons of couples, always booked solid. Matthew and Lily adored it.

But their bank accounts? Not so much. Matthew was still in law school, and Lily had racked up a mountain of credit card debt back in the day.

She wasn't like Monica, ready to sell her soul for a perfect wedding. A simple one was fine by her. So even with Adam offering to pull strings at Vansmoot, they'd been waffling.

Adam respected that. Matthew wasn't Chandler, after all.

"We actually got it," Lily said, torn. "I was at work today, and Matthew called out of nowhere—someone canceled at Vansmoot, and a slot opened up two months from now. I was on the fence, but then he mentioned Todd and Valerie, and I got fired up and said yes."

"Still duking it out with those two, huh?" Adam laughed.

"They're the ones picking fights with us!" Lily fumed. "They snatch everything!"

Wedding planning sometimes pits you against other couples with similar taste and budgets. For Lily and Matthew, that was Todd and Valerie.

From dresses to bands to venues—every step of the way, these two pairs kept clashing, going from strangers to arch-nemeses in record time. Nothing bonds you like a good rivalry, right? 😊

"Then you should be stoked!" Adam said. "You snagged the biggest wedding win—the venue—right out from under them!"

"Hell yeah!" Lily beamed, puffed up with pride. "I ditched class, met up with Matthew, and we raced over. Ran into them in the elevator.

Guess who I am?

Matthew took the stairs, and I slid my hand down every button in the elevator. How were they gonna beat us after that?"

"Lily, you're a kindergarten teacher—don't corrupt the kids!" Adam teased. "That's shady as hell."

Think back to *The Big Bang Theory*—Leonard and Sheldon, with their 187 and 173 IQs, stuck outside Penny's building with no key, clueless. Then a pack of cookie-selling Girl Scouts strolls up, slides a finger down the intercom, and boom, the door buzzes open.

In his past life, Adam thought it was some quirky American building trick—too smooth to be random. But now? Nope, it's just annoying kid chaos forcing someone upstairs to buzz them in to shut them up. Seamless, sure, but total mischief.

And Lily, a kindergarten teacher, was definitely the ringleader type for that move.

"What are you talking about?!" Lily waved him off. "I only pull that in emergencies—no way I'd teach my students!"

"Uh-huh, sure," Adam said, dripping with doubt.

They chatted a bit more, and then Adam nudged her to head home and start painting. With the wedding just two months off, the sooner she ditched her artist fantasy, the sooner she'd refocus on the big day.

If she flopped, Matthew would understand, but it'd still sting him. No point in risking that.

Lily wanted to stay and drink, but Adam kept pushing. Annoyed, she flipped it back on him, bringing up Robin and insisting he should apologize and smooth things over.

Adam thought it over. Last night was his screw-up. Even if Robin ghosted him forever, he owed her a proper sorry. No need to turn one fight into full-on enmity—there'd been plenty of good times between them.

Better to part on decent terms.

So he agreed to Lily's plan: she'd tag along while he apologized.

She just wanted to watch the drama unfold.

Adam, though? He had a gut feeling this wouldn't be like last time, when he bet Robin's gun wasn't loaded.

And he was right.

Robin opened the door, gun in hand, calmly loading bullets into the clip while staring him down with icy eyes.

Adam shot Lily a helpless grin and wisely bailed.

He got it, though. Robin didn't know she couldn't have kids. She hated the idea of them, a hardcore "no kids ever" type. Last night, in the heat of the moment, Adam had steamrolled her firm "no"—and it sent her over the edge.

Plan B might work great, but it's not foolproof.

For the next month, she'd be freaking out. Add his smug little "Sorry, it's a habit" bombshell? If that didn't set her off, she wouldn't be Robin!

Adam knew she couldn't conceive, but he couldn't exactly say that. Seeing how dead-set she was, he offered another quick apology and split.

Sure, she wouldn't actually shoot him, but a warning shot in the air? She'd do it without blinking. Then the cops would show up, and that'd be a whole embarrassing mess.

Next Day. Medical Center.

Morning rounds for the interns.

Adam stepped into a patient room, saw a familiar face, and froze on the spot.

Chapter 618: Sheldon's Relatives

Medical Center. Ward.

"Mrs. Cooper?"

Adam couldn't help but blurt it out when he saw that familiar face. "What are you doing here?"

"Mrs. Cooper?"

The middle-aged woman on the hospital bed looked at Adam, confused. "You know Mary Cooper?"

"You're not Mrs. Cooper."

Adam caught on and nodded. "I'm good friends with a few of Mary Cooper's kids. And you and Mrs. Cooper...?"

"I'm Mary's cousin, Beatrice," the woman said with a faint smile. She looked almost identical to Sheldon's mom, but it was clear the illness was taking its toll on her. ☹️

Adam grabbed her chart and skimmed it. Beatrice Forbes, 45, admitted for breathing difficulties. A malignant tumor in her lung, with cancer cells already spread to her bronchi and chest cavity.

"Ms. Forbes..."

"Miss Forbes!" Beatrice cut in. "Since you know Mary, we're kinda like friends. Tell me the truth—do I have any hope?"

"Well..." Adam hesitated.

"Be honest," Beatrice said, her face paling as her voice trembled.

Adam was about to answer when someone walked in. Beatrice quickly waved him off with a look, signaling him to hold off.

"Mom, I'm not eating that cafeteria trash—it's awful! I'm starving here!"

A tall, stunning teenage girl sauntered in, whining playfully. Adam's eyes lit up—she was a mixed-race beauty, with features leaning more toward East Asian. It was the first time since he'd crossed into this world that he'd seen a face like hers, and it felt oddly comforting.

But then he remembered her mom was in the late stages of cancer, with little time left—and she was Sheldon and Missy's aunt. His mood sank. 😞

Yup, at this stage, there was no cure. The best they could do was remove as much of the tumor as possible to ease her symptoms and buy some time. But with Beatrice's condition, even that time was limited—she could go any moment.

Few things hurt more than life-and-death farewells.

"I'll have a nurse grab something for you," Beatrice said with a forced smile. "Doctor, this is my daughter, Emilia."

"Just call me Adam," he replied.

"Alright, Adam," Beatrice nodded.

"Mom, you know him?"

Emilia, the mixed-race girl, plopped down next to her mom, eyeing Adam curiously.

"Emilia, remember how I told you about an aunt who looks just like me?" Beatrice said, stroking her daughter's shoulder with a tender smile.

"Did you?"

Emilia tilted her head, thinking, then gasped. "Oh! You mean that cousin you never got along with growing up, right?"

"Yeah," Beatrice said with a weak chuckle. "She's a bit of a fool—fell for some motorcycle punk who swept her off her feet. She's been stuck in little ol' Galveston ever since, so you've never met her. It's been almost twenty years—I wonder how she's doing?"

"Mr. Cooper passed away," Adam said. "They had three kids: one boy and a set of boy-girl twins. The oldest, George Jr., is a business whiz. He started a tire shop called Tire Doctor, and now he's got three locations.

The middle one, Sheldon, is my classmate and good friend. Total genius—high school at 9, college at 11, PhD by 15. Now he's working on his second doctorate at Caltech.

The youngest, Missy, is super smart too. She's studying at Wharton Business School.

Mrs. Cooper works at the church—you know how devout she is—so she's doing pretty well for herself."

"That's nice, that's nice," Beatrice murmured. "She's doing better than me..."

"Whoa! I've got super cool cousins like that?" Emilia exclaimed, wide-eyed.

"Wharton's in Philly, not far from here," Adam said. "I could call Missy and have her come over. Wanna meet her?"

"Can I?" Emilia perked up, clearly excited.

"Wouldn't that be too much trouble?" Beatrice asked, though her eyes sparkled with hope.

She knew her time was short and was already thinking about her high school daughter's future. As a single mom, she only had friends and family to lean on. Her first choice had been her friend—Emilia's Aunt Sue—but they didn't get along great. It wasn't that Sue didn't care; their personalities just clashed.

With no better options, she'd planned to ask Sue. But now, realizing she had a cousin with such accomplished kids—and a devout believer to boot—she felt a spark of relief. Sure, she and Mary had their spats growing up, but that was decades ago, a lifetime away. If Mary could take Emilia in, Beatrice could leave this world with some peace.

"No trouble at all," Adam said with a grin. "Missy'll love Emilia, and Emilia'll think Missy's the coolest. She's awesome."

"Really?" Beatrice's gaze softened with longing.

"Yup," Adam nodded. "Growing up, Mrs. Cooper focused most of her attention on Sheldon because of how... unique he is. Missy's always wanted a little sister to hang out with."

"Dr. Duncan," Dr. Burke interrupted, walking in for rounds with Christina and the others trailing behind.

"You know each other?" Burke asked.

"Yeah," Adam said. "Miss Forbes is my friend's cousin."

"Oh," Burke nodded. "In that case, you take care of her."

"Got it," Adam agreed without hesitation.

"Alright, Dr. Duncan, fill us in on Miss Forbes' condition," Burke prompted.

"Doctor!" Beatrice raised her voice, turning to her daughter. "Emilia, go grab something to eat."

"Mom, I'm not a kid anymore," Emilia pouted. "I wanna hear this."

"Be good!" Beatrice said sternly.

"Fine," Emilia huffed, getting up and heading out.

"Lina, take Emilia and get her something she likes," Adam instructed a nurse.

"Sure thing, Dr. Duncan!" Nurse Lina replied with a cheery smile.

Once Emilia was gone, Beatrice's face grew heavy. "Okay, tell me now."

"...Right now, we can only remove as much of the tumor as possible to ease things," Adam explained.
"But there's no cure."

"Miss Forbes, any thoughts?" Burke asked.

"How long will I have after surgery?" Beatrice asked, her face pale.

"It depends on the surgery and your body," Burke said carefully. "Best case, maybe a year."

"And worst case?" she pressed.

"It could be any time," Burke admitted honestly.

"Is the surgery risky?" Beatrice turned to Adam. "Can I see Mary and the others before it?"

"I'll call them right now," Adam said, pulling out his phone.

Burke gave Adam a quick nod and left with Christina and the team to check other rooms.

When Sheldon's mom, Mary, got the call, she was floored. Without a second thought, she said she and her mom were coming right over. Adam booked the earliest flights for her and Sheldon's grandma.

Missy was on her way from Philly too.

Chapter 619: Missy: Stay Away from Him!

Philly's just 160 kilometers from New York—a two-hour drive.

So Missy was the first to roll in.

Medical Center. Patient Room.

"OMG!"

Missy gasped the second she saw the woman in the hospital bed who looked exactly like her mom. Even knowing it wasn't her, her heart still jumped into her throat.

"This is Missy," Adam said, stepping in. "Missy, meet your mom's cousin, Beatrice Forbes, and her daughter, Emilia Forbes."

"Hey, Missy!"

Beatrice, still in bed, lit up at the sight of her. That family bond hit her hard, and she couldn't help but call out warmly.

"Hey, Aunt Beatrice!"

Missy, ever the pro at warming up a room, went straight in for a hug, then grabbed Emilia's hand with a grin. "Hey, Emilia!"

"Hey, Missy!"

Emilia beamed back—she was already vibing with her new cousin.

"You're gorgeous," Beatrice said, brushing Missy's cheek as tears welled up. "Way prettier than your mom was at your age."

"Emilia's the real stunner," Missy shot back with a laugh.

These relatives who'd never met before clicked instantly—no awkwardness, just laughter and chatter, thanks to the life-and-death vibes and Missy's killer people skills.

Soon after, Mary Cooper—Sheldon's mom—and Sheldon's grandma flew into New York and hit up the medical center. Cousins split as teens, reuniting in middle age? You bet there were some big feels.

Old squabbles from way back? Forgotten with a smile.

Missy, sharp as ever, dragged Emilia out to give Mary and Grandma some space.

Adam stuck around to field questions from the family.

Family Waiting Area.

"Missy, you and Adam tight?" Emilia asked, curious.

"Adam?"

Missy blinked at her little cousin. "You're already on a first-name basis?"

"Nah, not really," Emilia said, blushing under Missy's stare. "He told Mom to call him Adam, so I just followed along."

"Steer clear of him," Missy warned, fixing Emilia's hair. "He's bad news—especially for a pretty girl like you."

"What, like he's some creep?" Emilia's eyes widened. "A player? He doesn't seem like it. His vibe's clean—not like the boys at school with their pervy stares."

"It's all an act," Missy said, dead serious. "That's what makes him dangerous. He's leagues above those schoolboys—way better at hiding it. Trust me, keep your distance."

"Is it that bad?" Emilia half-believed her, half-didn't.

"You don't buy it?"

Missy grinned and launched into Adam's player chronicles—90% true, 10% spiced up. Predictably, every girl who'd gotten close to him ended up in shambles, take after take.

Missy's storytelling had Emilia hooked, chills running down her spine.

"No way he's that guy," Emilia muttered.

"Can't judge a book by its cover," Missy smirked. "The hotter the guy, the better they lie. Don't fall for their BS. I'll teach you how to spot it—see through men's crap—when we've got time."

"Cool," Emilia nodded.

They dropped the topic and swapped life stories instead.

"Missy, Emilia, you can head back now," Adam called, strolling over. He caught Emilia giving him a weird side-eye and glanced down at himself. "What's up?"

"Nothing," Emilia mumbled, avoiding his gaze, head down as she sidestepped him toward the room.

"Missy!"

Adam wasn't dumb—he knew he'd been slandered. He shot a look at Missy, who was grinning like a cat.

"What's wrong?" she giggled.

"What'd you tell her to freak her out like that?" Adam groaned.

"The truth," Missy said, all smug. "Told her you're a giant perv and to stay away."

"..."

Adam's mouth twitched. "She's still in high school! You're making me sound way worse than I am!"

"Oh, so you did think about it, just held back 'cause she's not legal yet?" Missy's eyes narrowed. "Wait, this sounds familiar... oh yeah, Peggy! Same deal back then! So, spill—what's the deal with you and Peggy?"

"...You're getting cheekier by the day," Adam said, flustered. "Peggy was a fluke—I never meant to—"

"Keep spinning your tales," Missy scoffed. "You and Sheldon both have that HD memory thing. Teenage Peggy was a knockout—you don't need me to paint the picture. Back then, you were the school's legendary player. If you and Peggy never hooked up, I might've given you some trust. But now? You buying your own story?"

"I do!" Adam said, all earnest. "I swear, I had zero thoughts about Peggy back then. Believe me!"

Juno could vouch! If he'd had those thoughts, she'd have roasted him alive.

"See, there it is," Missy shook her head. "Your game's leveled up—lying to yourself first. Last time, you couldn't pull that off with a straight face. Now you're so good, you've convinced yourself." She huffed, indignant. "I still can't believe Peggy fell for a guy like you... what's that look?"

"You're still hung up on Peggy ditching you," Adam said, eyeing her oddly.

"Pfft! Men!"

Missy snapped back to cool, rolling her eyes. "Everything's gotta be about that with you!"

They'd reached the room by now, standing outside and peering through the glass. Emilia sat on the bed, her hand clasped by Beatrice.

Inside the Room.

"...Study hard, boost your grades. Next year, you'll be taking two advanced courses a semester if you want a shot at a good college..." Beatrice was laying it out for Emilia.

"Mom, this is kinda scary," Emilia said. Even as sweet as she was, she knew something was up.

"Listen to your Aunt Mary from now on," Beatrice said, fighting back tears. "Marry a good guy—one who respects his mom. But if he still lives with her, dump him fast."

"Mom, what are you talking about? I'm not marrying anyone now!" Emilia's voice shook.

"You will someday," Beatrice forced a smile. "When that day comes, sip some champagne, then stick to water all night. Nothing's uglier than a sloppy drunk bride."

"Mom, I don't want—" Emilia's tears fell, choking her up. "Why are you telling me this?"

"Honey, I'm really sick," Beatrice said, taking a deep breath. "The doctors say I won't get better."

With Mary here, everything that needed saying was said. Mary's support put her at ease, but before heading into surgery, Beatrice wanted to be straight—just in case she didn't come out.

"No..." Emilia let out a broken sob.

"Look at me, Emilia—listen, this is important!" Beatrice pressed. "One day, you'll have a kid, and you'll feel this heavy responsibility for that little thing. You'll obsess over what to feed them, what school they'll go to—violin or piano lessons?"

You'll wonder if you're doing it right. That's normal.

But here's a secret: none of that matters as much as whether your kid's happy.

So if I'm gone, you'll be sad—but only for a little while.

Promise me you won't stay sad too long.

Promise?"

"I promise," Emilia nodded, tears streaming.

"Good."

Beatrice pulled her crying daughter into a hug, kissed her forehead, and glanced at her cousin Mary with a hopeful look.

Mary—Sheldon's mom—covered her mouth, nodding firmly at Beatrice.

Sheldon's grandma sighed softly, resting a hand on Mary's shoulder for support.

"See that?" Missy said outside, nudging Adam.

"Yeah," Adam sighed, nodding. "I get it—keep my distance."

Chapter 620: Sheldon: "So?"

Medical Center.

Missy had that "caught you" look plastered all over her face.

Adam just avoided her gaze entirely. He knew with "his track record in her eyes," anything he said would be wrong.

The more he talked, the worse it'd get. Silence was his best bet.

Truth is, he'd been genuinely moved earlier and spoke from the heart. Sure, like Howard, he might be the kind of guy Beatrice warned her daughter not to marry. But he totally got where she was coming from.

Erm... Especially Howard—living with his mom at nearly thirty, still dragging her along to the dentist. If he hadn't met his soulmate Bernadette, he'd probably be single forever. 😊

A dying mom giving heartfelt advice to her teenage daughter, full of pure, simple love—it'd touch anyone who values family. Adam's family in his past life—parents, siblings, even cousins—had been super tight-knit. Same went for the Duncan "basketball team" family in this life.

To him, family was way more real and reliable than any romance. Emilia was gorgeous, no doubt, but Adam wasn't some "mine, mine, all mine!" Qin Shi Huang type. Otherwise, Missy—standing right there—would've ended up like her so-called "sisters-in-law" Veronica and Peggy in her eyes.

"Hmm, I really am a good guy," Adam thought, sneaking a glance at Missy and feeling pretty darn proud of himself.

"What're you thinking about?" Missy asked, super attuned to his looks.

"Nothing much," Adam said with a grin. "Just wondering about Sheldon. Did you guys call him?"

"Yeah, we did," Missy sighed. "Told him what's going on here."

"And?" Adam raised an eyebrow, curious.

"What do you think?" Missy rolled her eyes. 😊

"Let me guess," Adam said, picturing Sheldon's reaction. He mimicked Sheldon's deadpan face and tone, turning to Missy: "So?"

"Exactly!" Missy huffed. "I spelled it out so clearly—wanted him to come see Aunt Beatrice—but he just hit me with that one word. Made me wanna punch him!"

"Too many nut shots aren't good," Adam teased.

"What's wrong with that?" Missy smirked. "You think Sheldon's got any use for that down the road?"

"Tsk!" Adam clicked his tongue, chuckling to himself. "If Sheldon's son Leonard Cooper heard that, I wonder if he'd go dark side and get revenge on his dear Aunt Missy..."

After all, Leonard Cooper was the kid Sheldon and Amy predicted before they even met—a perfect mix of two genius gene pools, destined to be brilliant, kind, and lead humanity to a bright future. His odds of turning evil were way higher than his dad's, who once got chased up a tree by a chicken. Especially with half his DNA coming from his sly, sharp-witted mom, Amy.

Maybe Howard was onto something—future historians might curse them all for not taking Sheldon out right then and there, or sigh over Missy not landing enough low blows to stop the rise of "Dark Lord" Leonard Cooper.

"Sheldon can be so cold it's chilling," Missy grumbled.

"At least he loves his mom and grandma," Adam said, shaking his head. "It's not weird he's distant with an aunt he's never met."

"He doesn't love me or Georgie," Missy snapped, annoyed.

"That's easy to get," Adam laughed. "Biologically, you and Georgie are his rivals. His mom and grandma? They raised him. Different roles, different vibes. Genes are selfish like that!"

"So he's just a cold, selfish jerk!" Missy growled through gritted teeth.

Adam shrugged, staying quiet. She wasn't wrong.

If Sheldon didn't have that cute, innocent charm to cover his quirks, he'd have been beaten up a million times as a kid. With his genius brain, who's to say he hadn't figured out his strengths and flaws early on and leaned into the "cute troublemaker" act?

Think about it—Sheldon's favorite animals were always the adorable, heart-melting types. When Leonard and the gang dreamed up their ultimate animal forms—fierce, badass mutants—Sheldon still picked cute critters. Why? Because they're so lovable, no one can bring themselves to fight them. He'd win by cuteness alone, climbing to the top. 🐾🐾

While Missy vented about Sheldon, back in the ward, Beatrice calmly finished comforting her daughter. It was a stark contrast to Sheldon's grandma, who sat there cool as a cucumber, holding a teary, heartbroken Mary—Sheldon's mom.

Mothers really do get tough and strong for their kids. If Beatrice could've lived long enough to see Emilia become a mom and herself a grandma, she might've turned out as carefree and wise as Sheldon's grandma.

Adam pushed the door open.

"I'm ready," Beatrice said with a smile. "I hope I can make it to Emilia's birthday party the day after tomorrow."

"Mom..." Emilia sobbed, barely holding it together.

"Adam, can't the surgery wait?" Mary asked, wiping her tears. "Maybe after Emilia's birthday party?"

"I'm afraid not," Adam shook his head. "Beatrice was admitted for breathing trouble—there's a tumor blocking her bronchus. If we don't remove it soon, she could suffocate any time."

Seeing Emilia's teary eyes on him, he added, "The surgery's got some risks, but Dr. Burke and I are pretty confident. There's a good chance Beatrice can join Emilia's birthday party after."

"Really?" Beatrice lit up with hope.

"Big chance," Adam said. "But the party'd have to be here in the hospital. After we remove as much of the tumor as we can, you'll need bed rest and observation to avoid infection or internal bleeding."

"Right," Mary chimed in. "We'll throw Emilia's birthday right here in this room. Beatrice, you'll definitely be there."

"I can't wait," Beatrice said, stroking Emilia's hair, her eyes full of longing.

She'd love to stay by her daughter's side forever, but she knew that wasn't possible. So her biggest wish was to share one more birthday with her. That was her limit.

Operating Room.

"Sigh..."

When they opened Beatrice's chest and saw the metastatic tumors—way worse than the CT scans showed—Adam let out a heavy breath.

"Not looking great," Dr. Burke said, glancing at Adam. "Even if we clean it up, she's got a month, tops."

"Yeah," Adam nodded. "Let's do our best to give her that month."