

TV Show 641

Chapter 641: The Worst Time a Surgeon Got Roasted

The date was a total success. 🤔

Ted's 500 bucks? Worth every penny.

If he wasn't too lazy to hit up the singles' hangout again, Ted might've even tipped Bell Duncan for setting it up.

Anna Taylor? Oh man, she's exactly his type.

Emmm.

Future Mrs. Mosby? No doubt about it!

He told Adam and the gang that when he and Anna tie the knot, he's definitely inviting Bell.

Funny how he's already forgotten that girl who played La Vie en Rose in the rain outside the hospital.

Fair enough, though.

What's this "one true love" nonsense anyway? It's just about meeting the right person at the right time and place on this crazy journey called life.

Out of billions of people, there's more than one "right" match—maybe not a ton, but definitely not just one either.

This time, Adam didn't tease Ted.

Mostly because he didn't want to remind him.

Letting that girl fade out of their world? Yeah, probably for the best.

There are plenty of jerks out there, sure.

But none quite match the Ted-and-Barney combo when it comes to playing the field.

Here's hoping Barney doesn't suddenly decide Anna Taylor is his "true love" and pull that stunt again—you know, suggesting she's with him until 40, then Ted can take over.

Yup!

Barney's version of "true love" comes with rules.

It's only "true" when she's young and gorgeous.

Once she hits 40 and the skin starts sagging, that "true love" dies in Barney's book.

That's when Ted swoops in with his sappy, emotional "true love" playbook.

It's Barney's secret little dream, tucked away in his messed-up head.

That sweet girl playing the piano in the rain to mourn her lost boyfriend? She's better off steering clear of guys like Ted and Barney.

Emmm.

Oh, and Adam too, let's be real.

The Next Day

Medical Center

"Morning, Dr. Shepherd!"

Adam ran into Dr. Montgomery outside the building and flashed a big grin.

"It's Dr. Montgomery," she corrected with a forced smile. "Adam, don't get it wrong—I'm divorced from Derek now."

"Wait, seriously? You're done?"

Adam's jaw dropped.

Last time, when Dr. Montgomery washed Meredith's panties and pinned them to the surgical bulletin board, it was pretty clear she knew her husband Derek was cheating with Meredith.

But Adam figured, with her chasing him all the way from Boston to New York, she'd never give up on him no matter what.

What was that line from that drama *Housing Agency*? "I just made a mistake every guy in the world makes—except I'm a woman. If it's really that bad, why don't you go find someone too?"

Emmm.

"I cheat once, you cheat once, we're even, right?"

Before Dr. Montgomery showed up, it didn't count.

This time, they'd patched things up—or so it seemed. Derek sneaking around with Meredith was the real betrayal in her eyes.

And then... that was it.

Back when Derek insisted on the divorce, she'd thrown out a killer line: "Even if I'm Satan, even if I cheated, I could still be your true love. Think about it."

Talk about badass!

But even Satan can't outmatch the Hulk, apparently.

"Divorced!" Dr. Montgomery barked, then strutted into the hospital like she owned the place.

She's awesome!

She's not some reject!

She's gonna live her best life!

Just yesterday, a guy whose wife was giving birth wouldn't stop hitting on her—ignoring his wife's labor pains to tell her she looked like a big celebrity.

At lunch, he even tracked her down in the cafeteria and showered her with compliments the whole time.

"Dr. Montgomery!" Adam called after her.

"What's up?" She turned, puzzled.

"Your neck!"

Adam casually pointed to the spot where Robin had once bitten him, adding, "There's a red mark. You might wanna cover that up."

"...Thanks."

Her face froze, and she gave him an awkward smile. Tugging her collar up to hide the obvious hickey, she bolted off.

That guy from yesterday had boosted her confidence big time.

So much so that she'd dolled herself up that afternoon, channeling that celebrity vibe, hoping for more praise.

Too bad the guy's wife had the baby, and now he was all about his happy little family.

The dude who couldn't stop flirting before? Didn't even glance her way anymore.

Talk about a letdown.

So, she caved and called Mark Sloan—the ultimate homewrecker—and had him fly in overnight.

After round one, her husband showed up out of nowhere, apologizing, saying he felt awful and guilty.

Then Mark strolled out of the hotel bathroom in a towel, and her husband just... laughed.

He grabbed the champagne from her hand, took a sip, said, "I feel better now," and walked out.

That's when she knew their marriage was toast.

She signed the divorce papers right then and there.

"City folks sure know how to play," Adam muttered, chuckling as he watched her go.

His stamina meant Robin's bite marks had long faded, leaving his skin flawless.

But that hickey on Dr. Montgomery's neck? With his expertise, he clocked it at less than six hours old.

No way it was from some divorce breakup sex with her ex.

Adam's gossip radar kicked in. He mentally matched the hickey's shape and—bam—case closed.

He nailed it: Mark Sloan was the culprit!

Those kinds of marks—technically called mechanical purpura—take 4 to 7 days to fade.

But with Adam's heads-up, Dr. Montgomery, a top pediatric surgeon, had the know-how to zap it quick and keep the rumors at bay.

Adam headed into the hospital too.

And then he got hit with a full-on PDA show.

"I dreamed about you last night."

"Did I bring you coffee in the dream?"

"Nope, definitely not! ~"

"I hear dates usually start with a casual coffee invite. I'm being pretty chill right now—how about dinner tonight?"

"So, we're going on a date?"

"Yup! I'll pick you up at 8!"

Down the hall, Meredith and Dr. Shepherd were flirting up a storm.

Just when Adam thought that was peak "show-off," Meredith took it to another level.

"Finn?"

Meredith, still giddy from Derek's charm, turned and spotted her vet boyfriend Finn stepping off the elevator.

"I was just in the area... Okay, fine, I came here specifically for you."

Finn was all sweet and gentle.

"I dreamed about you last night," Meredith blurted out, unsure how to handle this.

"Pfft!"

Adam's coffee sprayed everywhere.

At the same time, Cristina—standing next to Meredith—did the exact same thing.

"What was I doing?" Finn asked, beaming.

"Ahem, yeah, Meredith, what was he doing?" Cristina chimed in, echoing Adam's thoughts.

"...What's that?"

Meredith dodged the question, her eyes lighting up as she spotted the paper bag in Finn's hand.

"Coffee cake," Finn said, handing it over. "The best kind. Try it. I was thinking we could grab dinner tonight."

"Dinner..."

Meredith just stared at him, grinning like an idiot, totally zoned out.

"Dinner? Tonight? You free?"

Cristina shot her friend some frantic eye signals, worried she'd blow it.

"Oh, right, no, I'm not free tonight," Meredith snapped back to reality.

"Lunch then?"

Finn was chill as ever.

"You'd eat hospital cafeteria junk just for me?"

Meredith looked touched.

"I love junk food. So, it's a plan?" Finn gazed at her, all lovey-dovey.

"1 o'clock."

"I'll be there on the dot."

After Finn left, Meredith couldn't wipe the goofy smile off her face.

"You dreamed about both of them?" Cristina asked, dumbfounded.

"That's what I wanna know too," Adam added, stepping closer.

Meredith didn't answer, but her face said a million words—like she could write a bestseller on some women's fiction site.

"Does Finn know?" Adam couldn't resist asking.

"He does," Meredith said, still grinning. "He said we hadn't officially agreed to be exclusive yet, so he's mad but gets it. And he's not giving up."

"So what's your plan now?" Cristina asked, incredulous. "Date them both?"

"They're both great guys. I can't choose that fast," Meredith giggled. "So I thought, hey, we're surgeons! We dream up wild, impossible surgeries and make them happen. Why not try dating them both for a bit before I decide?"

"..."

Cristina was speechless.

Adam's mouth twitched as he quipped, "This has gotta be the worst time a surgeon's ever been roasted!"

Chapter 642: A Chance Encounter with a Superpowered Girl

Medical Center

After saying goodbye to Meredith, the little cow who loves standing on her head (adorable, right? 🐮), Adam headed to the ER.

"Dr. Duncan," a nurse said, handing him a chart. "This patient's been here four times in three months. Something's up."

Adam glanced at it. The patient was a cute little girl, maybe five or six, with a pretty nasty gash on her leg. Yikes. 🤢

"Call Child Protective Services and have a chat with her parents," Adam instructed, then walked over with the chart in hand. "Hey there, I'm Dr. Duncan."

"I'm Megan Cleaver," the girl piped up, brushing past her parents like a total pro. "It's not as bad as it looks, honest."

"She fell at the playground," her mom explained, gently stroking her head. "There was a ton of blood, and the cut's pretty deep."

"We know it looks awful," her dad added, a bit sheepishly. "She plays rough sometimes. Here's her full medical history, including before we got her."

"You're her foster parents?" Adam asked casually as he took the thicker file and flipped through it.

"Yeah," her mom said, stepping closer with a sincere look. "Megan's a great kid, just a little wild. We love her to bits."

"I believe you," Adam replied, giving them a quick glance and a nod. "Could you head to the nurses' station and let them photocopy these files? I'll check out Megan's leg in the meantime."

"Sure," her foster parents agreed with a helpless little shrug. They knew what Adam was getting at.

"Be right back, sweetie," her mom said.

"Okay," Megan replied, waving them off sweetly. But as soon as they were gone, she turned to Adam, her expression stubborn. "It's not what you think. They're the best parents I've ever had."

"Don't worry," Adam said with a knowing smile. "I believe you. This is just routine stuff—nothing to stress about. Now, let's stitch up that leg. You don't want an ugly scar, right?"

"Nope..." Megan blinked her big, pretty eyes at him. "You know what I'm worried about?"

"Of course," Adam said, grabbing the suture kit the nurse brought over. As he cleaned her wound, he grinned. "I've got two good friends. One's adopted a whole crew of kids like you, and the other's got just one. So I get how you feel. They both pour tons of love into those kids, but I know every kid dreams of a full family—one with parents who dote on them a little extra, yeah?"

Back at the orphanage, whenever someone came to adopt, all the kids would doll themselves up, staring hopefully with the brightest—and saddest—smiles, practically begging: Pick me, pick me! They're just little ones, but they've already learned the harsh rules of the world way too early.

"Fine," Megan said after studying him for a moment. She finally relaxed, flopping back on the bed with a little sigh.

"Huh?" Adam paused, noticing something. There were scars on the inside of her arm too. He gently pulled up her sleeve and frowned. "What's this?"

Her left arm had a four-inch gash, stapled shut with three literal staples—like from a stapler. 😬

"I did it myself," Megan said with a shrug, totally unbothered. "Didn't wanna come back to the hospital, so I handled it. No biggie."

"You don't feel pain?" Adam asked, his tone turning serious.

It looked painful to him, but Megan didn't even flinch. She'd just gone snap, snap, snap with a stapler on her own arm like it was nothing.

"Nope, not at all," she said, then beckoned him closer with a little wave. "C'mere."

Adam's lips twitched. That sounded weirdly awkward, but he leaned in anyway.

"I've got a superpower," she whispered in his ear, all mysterious-like. "I don't feel pain no matter how hard I get hit. Don't believe me? Punch me in the stomach—go for it!"

"You really don't feel anything?" Adam asked, obviously not about to punch her. He just needed to be sure.

"Not a bit!" Megan said proudly. "The kids at school didn't believe me either, but I let them try. They punched me 25 times—wore themselves out! Even used a baseball bat, and I still didn't feel a thing!"

"A baseball bat?" Adam's eyes widened as he pointed at her stomach. "They hit you there?"

"Yup!" she nodded, like it was the most normal thing ever.

Adam carefully lifted her shirt and froze. There were some serious bruises. "I'm taking you for a CT scan. Now."

He scooped her up and hightailed it to the CT room.

"Sorry, cutting the line!" he called out to the doctor and patient about to go in.

"Go ahead, Dr. Duncan," the other doctor said kindly, calming down the grumbling patient.

CT Room

"There's internal bleeding," Adam muttered, staring at the scan. He let out a relieved breath. "Good thing we caught it early."

If you know it's there, you can fix it. The real nightmare is when it goes unnoticed—like that train derailment case last time. The guy seemed fine, chatting and laughing on the phone with family, but he was bleeding out inside and slipped away quietly in the ER.

"Tell Megan's parents," Adam said to the nurse.

A minute later, they rushed in.

Adam pointed at the CT screen. "Megan's got internal bleeding. We need to operate right away. I'll take care of her other wounds during the surgery too."

"We didn't hit her, we swear," her parents said, looking helpless.

"I believe you," Adam said with a nod. "Megan's likely got congenital insensitivity to pain—a super rare genetic condition. It means she doesn't feel pain when she gets hurt."

"Oh my God!" her foster mom gasped, hand over her mouth. "That's why she plays so rough and keeps getting injured."

"Exactly," Adam said. "We'll need a gene test to confirm later, but right now, the priority is surgery to stop the bleeding... Wait, Megan, where are you going?"

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw her bolting for the door. He dashed after her.

"I don't want surgery!" Megan yelled, squirming. "It's too expensive! They can't afford it, and if you keep telling my foster parents I'm defective, they'll send me back!"

"They won't," Adam said softly, meeting her pleading eyes. Her words hit him hard. If he was right about her condition, it should've been caught when she was tiny. But from what she said, it was clear she'd bounced between homes. No foster family bothered to get her properly checked—once they suspected something was "off," they just dumped her back at the orphanage. That's why she'd never been diagnosed or protected.

"Sweetie!" Her foster mom ran over, tears streaming as she hugged her tight. "We'd never send you back. You're our daughter!"

"Exactly!" Her foster dad joined in, wrapping his arms around them both. "Don't worry, Daddy can pay for it. We're family—together forever."

Adam watched the scene with a warm smile. There are still good people in this world, after all. 😊

Chapter 643: Bald Sheldon

Medical Center

Little Megan had bounced between multiple families, unknowingly teetering on the edge of death time and again. Finally, just before an accidental demise, she found parents who didn't care about "her flaw" and were willing to love her wholeheartedly.

In that sense, she's way luckier than most orphans out there. 😊

Operating Room

"Is this from a baseball bat? Seriously?"

John Carter followed Adam into the room, buzzing with excitement. He stood off to the side, awkwardly glancing around, staring at the severe wound on Megan's abdomen. He couldn't believe someone could be cruel enough to hit such a pretty, adorable little girl with a baseball bat.

"Who would be that heartless?"

"Kids can be wild and don't know how to hold back—it's pretty normal. That's why they need discipline," Adam said casually while operating. "But this time, Megan asked them to hit her."

"What, because she thinks she has superpowers?" Carter said, dumbfounded.

"Nope!" Adam explained. "She wanted to save the other girls—the ones those brats were bullying. She wanted to be a superhero, protecting the weak. So she bravely stepped up and told them, 'Let that girl go. If you're gonna hit someone, hit me. I'm not afraid.'"

"What a sweet kid," a nurse said, gazing at Megan—now under anesthesia and looking like a sleeping angel—with eyes full of affection.

Pretty, cute, and so brave and righteous.

Goodness, she's something else!

If this were an Eastern drama, she'd have a halo of divine light shooting out of her head, blessed with a body tough as steel despite her young age. Give her half a chance, and she'd soar like a dragon! 🐉

"Those boys are just too naughty," another nurse said, her heart aching. "How could they hit such a cute little girl so hard? I hope they never get girlfriends!"

Adam's lips curled into a smirk.

Those brats are definitely the Doctor Doom type—straight-up, iron-clad jerks through and through. If someone recorded this and it followed them around, they might actually end up single for life. 😊

25 punches!

A full swing with a baseball bat!

So brutal!

Wonder if they shouted some cheesy, over-the-top lines while swinging that bat, like, "I'll never need a girlfriend anyway!"

"So what's next for her?" Carter asked. "Surgery can fix the internal and external damage, but this painless condition—there's no real treatment for that, right?"

"Exactly," Adam nodded. "It's all about self-protection. Everyone wishes they didn't feel physical pain, but if you really can't, it's the start of a whole lot of emotional pain."

Without pain as a warning signal, it's way too easy to get hurt. And often, those injuries are permanent.

Then the mental suffering just never stops. 😊

The surgery was straightforward and went perfectly. Adam didn't let Carter stitch her up; instead, he meticulously sewed every wound himself—her abdomen, arms, legs, and even the old scars she'd carried for who-knows-how-long.

What kid doesn't care about looking good?

Little girls, little boys—they're all the same. Their pursuit of beauty is even more obvious than adults'.

In his past life, Adam often heard relatives and friends talk about kids: "Wow, kids these days are something else. They're so young, but they already know who's pretty and who's not. They spot a beautiful teacher and swarm her!"

Emmm.

A lot of elementary teachers are fresh-out-of-college women—young, gorgeous, and a little dolled up. Kids have zero resistance and all want to get close to them. Same goes for pretty classmates or desk buddies.

It's gotten to the point where some moms get jealous and start asking their sons the ultimate trap question: "Who's prettier, me or so-and-so?"

At first, the boys—being honest little goofs—would blurt out, "My classmate, my desk buddy, or my teacher!" Then, after Mom flipped out once, they learned fast. From then on, whenever she asked, the standard answer became: "Mom, you're the prettiest!" 😊

Megan's wounds were huge and ugly. She'd even stapled them shut with a stapler three times, making them look worse.

Did she not care about beauty?

No way!

She just cared about surviving more.

But now, she's lucky enough to have found parents who genuinely love her. From here on out, she can be like any other girl—free to care about looking pretty and primping herself up.

Adam wasn't about to let her start life at a disadvantage.

Surgery Complete

"Dr. Duncan?"

Megan's adoptive parents, who'd been waiting outside, rushed over with hopeful eyes.

"Don't worry, the surgery went great," Adam said with a smile.

"Thank God!"

Her parents hugged each other, overcome with relief.

"Thank you, Dr. Duncan!"

After thanking God, they turned their gratitude to Adam.

Emmm.

Always coming in second place after God. If this were Dr. House next door, he might've snarked something about God not existing, but Adam didn't mind.

Lots of people don't really mean they're thanking God—it's just a reflex. Besides, as someone who'd crossed worlds, Adam couldn't exactly rule out the possibility of a higher power.

The latest novels are first released on 69 Book Bar!

This is someone else's turf, after all. He's not some hotheaded, rebellious Adam yelling, "No gods above me!" He's not trying to ascend dimensions or break free either—just keeping a little reverence, that's all.

"Megan's injuries are fine now," Adam said. "But her condition—congenital insensitivity to pain—needs extra care. She'll have to focus on protecting herself, so please keep a close eye on her."

"We will," her parents nodded earnestly.

Adam could see the sincerity in their eyes, and it warmed his heart.

After seeing so much ugliness in the world, stumbling across a flash of true kindness and beauty like this was genuinely touching. ☺

"I know this might be a bit forward, but I'd like to suggest something..." Adam said carefully.

"Dr. Duncan, go ahead. We trust you," her parents replied.

So Adam shared his idea.

In short: he wanted to introduce Megan to a friend—Sheldon!

If Megan could pick up even a tenth of Sheldon's cautious, play-it-safe vibe, her condition's nasty side effects wouldn't stand a chance of ruining her life.

Seriously!

Sheldon's the guy who dodges a sneeze like it's the plague, then sanitizes everything and checks his temperature obsessively. He logs his bathroom habits in a lifelong series of "first base" notebooks. He wears gloves to shake hands with family and scrubs with sanitizer ASAP.

To avoid getting sick, he once hid in his room and sent a clunky robot with a screen showing his face to work at the university instead.

Picture him in a Flash costume, walking with Batman, Green Lantern, Aquaman, Wonder Woman, and Superman—DC's Justice League, all six of them. Then they spot some guys stealing a car. Without a word, Flash Sheldon turns and bolts.

Who's got cowardice that smooth and natural?

Well, okay—Leonard's Green Lantern, Howard's Batman, and Raj's Aquaman are just as bad. They're all Sheldon's rare buddies, after all.

Even Penny—once tough and bold—hung out with Sheldon long enough that, in her Wonder Woman gear, she took off running with him.

And Zack, the musclehead who barely knew them, rocked a Superman suit, glanced at the "S" on his chest, thought it over, and still followed Sheldon's lead.

That's Sheldon's influence for you!

Megan Wakes Up

After going over what she'd need to watch out for, Adam smiled. "Megan, I'm gonna introduce you to a friend. Think of him as Professor X from the X-Men. You should learn from him, okay? If you pick up his skills, you won't have to worry about your condition anymore, and your parents can relax too."

Her parents nodded eagerly. Adam had sold them on it.

"Okay," Megan said, always considerate. "But will he want to be my friend?"

"You both love comics and superheroes," Adam said with a grin. "And you're both my friends. Chat about comics over the phone or through letters—I'm sure you'll hit it off."

Would Sheldon befriend a little girl?

Pfft! Adam wasn't worried one bit.

In the future, if Leonard hadn't dragged him away from staring at a camera, he'd have naturally bonded with a little girl already.

Ten, twenty years from now, he'd still be a kid at heart anyway!

Chapter 644: Professor Cooper and Painless Girl

Medical Center

After Megan gave her okay, Adam dialed Sheldon's number.

"No way!"

Sheldon shot back without a second thought from the other end of the line.

Megan's eyes dimmed a little. 😞

Her adoptive parents let out a sigh of relief, though a hint of anxiety crept in too. They trusted Adam, especially after he'd explained how this friend named Sheldon could be good for Megan. Still, the idea of their six-year-old daughter befriending an eighteen-year-old? Yeah, it's tough to not feel at least a tiny bit worried about that.

But hearing Sheldon flat-out refuse? In their eyes, that pretty much ruled out the chance he was some kind of creep. With that big worry off the table, they started hoping—really hoping—that this Sheldon guy could bring some life-changing awesomeness to Megan's world.

Congenital insensitivity to pain isn't something you can cure; it's all about prevention. And judging by how rough Megan used to play, relying on her to protect herself? Easier said than done. So, Adam's vision of what could be sounded like a dreamy fairy tale to them. ✨

"Hold on, don't say no just yet," Adam said, raising a hand to Megan's family with a chill-out vibe, shooting them a reassuring wink. He grinned into the phone. "If I've got this right, it's Wednesday today, and you're probably at the comic store picking up new issues, huh?"

"Of course!" Sheldon replied, like it was the most obvious thing ever. "Everyone knows Wednesday night is new comic day. Where else would I be?"

"Any X-Men updates?" Adam asked with a smirk.

"Yup!" Sheldon chirped back but then paused. "Don't worry, I won't spoil it for you."

"If memory serves, isn't someone over there the Chewing Crusader?" Adam teased, laying his trap. "Didn't he conquer his fears with the help of the X-Men comics and become a superhero himself?"

"That someone is me!" Sheldon declared without missing a beat. "I am the Chewing Crusader!"

"Mm-hmm." Adam's grin widened. "And didn't a certain someone idolize Professor X? What would Professor X do if he found a kid with newly awakened powers?"

"He'd track them down, take them in, teach them to control their abilities, and turn them into a proper X-Man," Sheldon said, his voice starting to waver.

"So, picture this: there's a little girl who's awakened a 'painless' superpower, but she can't control it. She keeps getting hurt because of it." Adam chuckled. "What would Professor X do? Or better yet, what would the Chewing Crusader, heir to Professor X's ideals, do?"

"...He'd help her," Sheldon muttered, his voice dropping low.

"You catching my drift?" Adam said playfully.

"Yeeeessss..." Sheldon dragged out the word, sounding totally deflated.

How could he argue with himself, right?

"Great! Then, Chewing Crusader, why don't you say hi to Painless Girl?" Adam directed like a pro.

"Hello, I'm Sheldon Cooper, the Chewing Crusader," Sheldon said reluctantly over the phone.

"Hi! I'm Megan Clover, Painless Girl!" Megan glanced at her parents, then at Adam, before cheerfully greeting Sheldon. "From now on, we're teammates—protecting the weak and saving the world together!" 😊

"No, no, no!" Sheldon protested. "We're not teammates. You're my superpower apprentice! You should be calling me Professor Cooper!"

"Sheldon got his first PhD at 15 and is working on his second. He's just as brilliant as Professor X from the X-Men," Adam explained smoothly. "Calling him Professor Cooper? Totally fair."

"Exactly!" Megan's adoptive parents chimed in, grinning ear to ear. They were already sold.

If they'd had even a sliver of doubt left, it was gone now. This Sheldon Cooper kid on the phone? Total child at heart—maybe even less mature than their Megan! A super genius who could guide their daughter, and only over phone calls and letters? They were all in on this friendship for her.

"Fine," Megan huffed, puffing out her cheeks before chirping, "Professor Cooper!"

I wanted a teammate, but you're trying to be my professor? Rude!

Even as mature as she was for six, Megan couldn't help feeling a little miffed at big-kid Sheldon.

"Excellent, Painless Girl," Sheldon said, clearly getting into the role now, his tone perking up. "From now on, Professor Cooper will help you master your powers!"

"I've got an idea," Adam cut in with a smile. "Professor Cooper, I'll send you all the info on congenital insensitivity to pain—stuff to watch out for, the works. How about you whip up a daily schedule for Painless Girl and draft a supervision agreement? You'd be her official overseer. Sound good?"

"A daily schedule? A supervision agreement?" Sheldon practically squealed with glee. "All by me?"

"If you don't want to, I could—" Adam teased.

"No! I'll do it!" Sheldon shouted. "I love drafting stuff and bossing people around! Don't you dare take this from me!"

"I won't steal it," Adam said, winking at Megan while messing with Sheldon. "But I'll need to see results. You know how dangerous an out-of-control painless power can be for Megan—it'd be a disaster.

I'll be checking that schedule and agreement for practicality and effectiveness. Don't just load it with stuff that only benefits you, or you won't deserve to draft it—or have Megan call you Professor Cooper."

"Ughhh," Sheldon groaned dramatically. "Not even a little? I'm doing this for free—free drafting, free supervising! Letting me have some fun is only fair!"

"Alright, a little then," Adam said, tossing him a carrot after the stick.

"Awesome!"

The classic stick-and-carrot trick—works like a charm every time. Sheldon was cheering in no time. ☺

Adam gave Sheldon a few more instructions before handing the phone to Megan so she could chat with him.

"Dr. Duncan, what's this 'fun stuff' you're letting Professor Cooper sneak in?" Megan's dad asked, still curious despite knowing Sheldon was basically a big kid.

Adam chuckled. "Relax, it's just silly, childish stuff—things like 'respect him,' 'no mocking him,' 'laugh at his jokes,' that kind of thing."

"Oh, got it," her parents said, laughing along.

"With Megan's condition, there's no cure—just prevention. And someone with Sheldon's OCD-level attention to detail? He's perfect for helping her build the best self-protection habits," Adam explained with a grin. "But since he's not here in person, I'll need you two to team up with him at first. Make sure Megan sticks to the schedule he makes until she's got those habits locked in.

Trust me, when it comes to schedules and supervising, Sheldon's the champ."

"We're on it," Megan's parents nodded eagerly. "We trust you, Dr. Duncan."

The three of them watched Megan chatting away with Sheldon, her little voice bouncing back and forth with his in a totally kid-like way. They couldn't help but smile, feeling all warm and fuzzy inside. 😊

"OCD curing painless syndrome? I'm a freaking genius!" Adam thought smugly to himself.

Chapter 645: Intern Doctor Lectures the Attending

Medical Center

Adam had compiled the most detailed info and precautions about congenital insensitivity to pain and sent them to Sheldon. Then, at Cristina's nagging, he headed off to Alice Grey's office for some one-on-one tutoring.

"So, Meredith really went?" Adam glanced at Cristina.

With a few people suddenly gone, it was just him and Cristina facing Alice Grey now. The room felt a lot emptier all of a sudden.

"What do you think?" Cristina shrugged. "At lunch, she was eating with Finn when Dr. Shepherd walked in, snagged her with a surgery right in front of Finn's face, and dragged her off. No way she'd ditch him tonight after that."

"She's playing with fire. She'll regret it eventually," Adam said, shaking his head.

Cristina just gave a helpless look.

Meredith's mom, Alice Grey, couldn't care less about her daughter's drama. She tapped her desk, her face cold as ice, and said, "Let's get started!"

Cristina straightened up instantly, notebook in hand, her eyes locked on Alice Grey—and Adam—as they dove into medical discussions.

No choice, really. With her skills, Cristina could only sit in and listen.

Even that was enough to make her stand out above the rest. Most people didn't even have the chops—or the chance—to be in the room.

The Next Day, Morning

When a familiar figure showed up at the hospital, it kicked off a gossip storm in no time.

"Isn't that Mark Sloan? What's he doing back here?"

"Didn't you see him in the white coat? Word is, he quit his job in Boston—just like Dr. Shepherd and Dr. Montgomery—and officially joined the medical center."

"Wow! Is this true love or just pure soap opera drama?"

"Look, look! Dr. Shepherd's heading over—oh, it's about to go down!"

"Nah, they won't fight. Last time was a fluke, and Shepherd hurt his hand. The chief chewed them out big time after that. If it happens again, he'll lose it completely."

"Yeah, a famous doctor's hands are the hospital's goldmine. Can't risk those getting messed up."

"I heard Dr. Yang's all about authority figures. That's why she's with Dr. Burke—those hands of his are her whole world, huh? 😊"

"You're weird, heh."

"You're weirder, heh."

"Geez, you girls—I don't even know what to say. Your imaginations are wild!"

"Enough dirty talk—look! Dr. Shepherd's chasing down the chief for answers now!"

"No chance. To the chief, business is business. Shepherd's neurosurgery might be prestigious, but it only brings in half as much cash as plastic surgery. No way the chief's siding with him."

"Half? That's insane! If Shepherd pulls in 2 million a year for the hospital, does that mean Sloan's raking in 4 million?"

"Yup, that insane! If Mark Sloan couldn't make that kind of money, you think he'd get away with strutting around just because he's tall and hot?"

"Tall and hot? Please, he's got nothing on Dr. Duncan!"

"Right? Dr. Duncan's just too straight-laced. With his looks and charm, he could outshine Mark even without the big bucks."

"Ugh, such a shame. I'd love it if Dr. Duncan took a page from Mark Sloan's book—just a little!"

"Mm-hmm, yes please!"

A gaggle of nurses huddled together, whispering and giggling.

"This has to be a nightmare," Dr. Montgomery muttered, rubbing her forehead when she spotted Mark Sloan. She marched up to confront him, but it ended in a huff, and they parted ways.

Noon

Adam was heading from the ER to the cafeteria when he caught something bizarre in the hallway.

"Get out! Get out! GET OUT!"

A woman's frantic shouts echoed as Dr. Montgomery trudged out of a patient's room, looking defeated.

"Did I just see that right?" Adam said, stunned. "Since when do you get kicked out by a patient?"

"Clearly, I'm not on my game today," Montgomery replied, leaning against the wall and closing her eyes, exhausted.

As a top neonatal specialist, she was used to patients and families bending over backwards to win her favor. It'd been ages since she'd faced a moment this humiliating.

"What's the patient's deal?" Adam asked. He could guess why she was off her game—thanks to all the Mark-related drama—but he didn't bother digging into that. He was more curious about what case had her so rattled.

Because unless it was a tricky one, even a distracted Montgomery wouldn't flop this hard.

"Pregnant woman, cervix fully dilated, three contractions so far, but the fetus is still 2 cm above the pelvis with no sign of dropping," Montgomery said, eyes still shut.

"Then she needs a C-section, like, now," Adam said, flipping through her chart and frowning. "The longer this drags on, the more contractions she has, the slower the fetal heart rate's gonna get. Could turn into late decelerations—"

"I know that! You think I don't?" Montgomery snapped, opening her eyes in frustration. "But she's dead-set on a natural birth. Says she's not a weak woman, won't back down from danger, and has her whole birth plan laid out. She wants to 'feel the pain of childbirth,' told me to stop scaring her, then screamed at me to get out!"

"Are you?" Adam asked, closing the chart and looking at her.

"What?" Montgomery blinked.

"Addison Montgomery, MD!" Adam said firmly. "Are you a weak woman? What are you doing right now? Letting the patient call the shots? What does she know about the risks?"

Sticking to some natural birth plan at a time like this, bragging about not backing down from danger and wanting to feel the pain—she's gambling with her life and her baby's!

You're her doctor!

Drop all this messy love drama crap and tell me, with your top-tier experience and gut instinct, what she needs right now."

He'd seen the chart's numbers. This was urgent—no time to waste.

"She needs a C-section immediately," Montgomery said instinctively.

"Then what are you waiting for?" Adam pressed, his voice steady but intense. "Every minute you stall, the risk to her and the baby jumps tenfold!"

You're her attending—the best of the best. Act like it! Stop being soft and take charge of their lives!"

Some patients are stubborn as hell. If a doctor doesn't project enough authority, they'll just do whatever they want.

Montgomery's experience and instincts screamed C-section—fetal size, all the data pointed to a tough natural delivery. Drag it out, and the baby's heart rate could drop fatally slow. Even the mom could be in serious danger.

Even in a modern hospital, losing both mother and child isn't unheard of.

Childbirth is a life-or-death ordeal for women—no joke. That's a truth carved out of countless tears and blood.

But this patient was pigheaded, and Montgomery, distracted by her soap-opera love triangle, wasn't exuding confidence or authority.

The woman picked up on it fast and threw it back in her face: "Late decelerations might happen? Are they happening now? No? Then shut up! I'm not weak—I won't run from danger. I've got my birth plan!"

Maybe she'd succeeded in some other field, convincing herself that sticking to her guns always wins.

Too bad not every path to victory works everywhere.

When it's a pro's job, leave it to the pro!

Chapter 646: What's Meant to Come Always Does

Medical Center

Ward

"Rebecca..."

After getting an earful from Adam, Dr. Montgomery snapped out of it. She realized now wasn't the time to let a pregnant woman call all the shots. Taking a deep breath, she walked back into the room with Adam by her side, ready to talk some sense into her.

But trust and authority? Once you lose those, they don't come back easy—or fast.

"I've got a plan!" Rebecca snapped stubbornly. "You can't be 100% sure there's no hope, and as long as there's even a tiny chance, I'm sticking to my way! I'm not about to miss out on the full experience of giving birth just to make things easier for you or dodge some legal mess!"

"This isn't about convenience or lawsuits—it's a professional call..." Adam chimed in, trying to help.

"And who are you?" Rebecca cut him off sharp. "You're so young—probably just an intern. Even Dr. Montgomery can't say for sure, so what gives you the right to talk about 'professional judgment'?"

No matter how much Adam and Dr. Montgomery tried after that, she wouldn't budge. She ended up yelling again, shooing them out of the room with a hoarse roar. 🗣️

"Now what?" Dr. Montgomery glanced at Adam, almost on autopilot.

"Up to you," Adam said with a shrug. "We've done our job as doctors—our consciences are clear. She wants to do it her way? Fine. Like she said, we can't be 100% certain."

"Guess that's all we can do," Dr. Montgomery sighed.

Adam gave her a quick look before heading off to the cafeteria. Their bond had gotten tighter since that wild gooseberry rash incident—closer than your average coworkers. Plus, with the situation being so urgent and no outsiders around, he'd felt okay giving her a little heat earlier. Still, she was the head of neonatology. Even if she'd dropped the ball big-time here, she had her pride.

Cafeteria

"I can't take this anymore," Meredith groaned, clutching her hair like she was about to lose it.

"Who told you to go all wild and double-book dates?" Cristina quipped. "What, you think you're Adam or something?"

"Hey, leave me out of this!" Adam laughed as he plopped down at their table.

"She's complimenting you, dude!" Cristina teased. "Meredith said earlier that this whole crazy idea came from thinking surgeons are supposed to dream up insane, reality-defying procedures—turning the impossible into possible.

And yeah, it kinda makes sense.

But not for her! She's not some top-tier surgeon, and she doesn't have that elite-level talent. So, of course, she's burned out already.

But swap her out for you, Adam Duncan? It fits like a glove. You make it look easy—'cause you're the best!" 😊

"..." Adam just stared, speechless.

Because, uh, yeah, that surgeon-trashing logic did kinda apply to him...

"Here comes Mr. Passion," Cristina said, leaning back with a smirk, ready to watch the show.

"Congrats!" Mark Sloan strode up to their table, glancing at Adam before locking eyes with Meredith. "I knew you'd pull it off. How about drinks tonight? Celebrate our little 'dirty mistress' victory?"

"Get lost," Meredith said, rolling her eyes hard. 😊

"Dr. Duncan," Mark turned to Adam, "looking forward to working with you as colleagues."

"Same here, Dr. Sloan. Can't wait to learn from you," Adam replied with a polite smile.

Mark's grin faltered for a sec, probably flashing back to that lion syndrome kid—Adam had really put the pressure on him that time and left him reeling.

"Dr. Sloan, how's Mr. Sullivan doing?" Cristina jumped in, playing peacemaker.

"Who are you?" Mark gave her a quick once-over.

"I'm Cristina Yang," she said, blinking in disbelief. "We met this morning—I'm Mr. Sullivan's resident."

"Don't need a resident for this case," Mark said, his arrogance practically dripping off him.

His charm and flirty vibe? Reserved for beauties only. Cristina didn't make the cut in his book.

"I'm not asking to be his resident," Cristina snapped, fuming. "I just want to know how my patient's doing!"

"He's not your patient anymore," Mark said coolly, then turned and walked off.

Beep beep. Beep beep.

Adam's pager went off. He checked it and bolted toward the ward without a word.

Hallway

"Dr. Duncan, hurry! Dr. Montgomery needs you!" a nurse shouted the second she spotted him.

"Where?" Mark, who'd been ahead, spun around to ask the nurse before sprinting toward the room too.

Outside the Delivery Room

"Ahh! Ahh!" Rebecca's pained cries echoed from inside.

"Breathe, breathe! I love you, babe—I love you so much!" her husband chanted, trying to cheer her on.

"Shut up!!!" she screamed back, all that earlier stubbornness about "experiencing natural birth" gone. She wasn't toughing it out anymore—just wailing at her poor encouraging husband.

It hurt that bad! 😞

"What's going on?" Adam asked as he arrived, taking in the chaos.

"The baby's head is out, but it's stuck—shoulder dystocia!" Dr. Montgomery yelled, cradling the emerging head.

"He's too big," Adam said, getting it instantly.

The baby's shoulders were caught on the pelvic bone, jamming everything up.

"Do something!" Rebecca's husband barked.

"McRoberts maneuver—flex her thighs!" Dr. Montgomery instructed, still holding the baby's head.
"Adam, help me realign the shoulders!"

"Got it!" Adam didn't hesitate. After the nurses lifted Rebecca's legs, he pressed on her abdomen, syncing up with Dr. Montgomery's moves.

"Damn it!" Dr. Montgomery tried a few times, sweat beading on her forehead. "It's not working!"

"Episiotomy—widen the opening!" Mark suggested, stepping in.

"Scissors!" Dr. Montgomery called out.

A nurse handed them over fast.

"Ahh!" Rebecca let out another gut-wrenching scream.

No anesthesia for natural birth—every ounce of pain hit her brain full force.

"I'll try the Woods maneuver," Dr. Montgomery said after widening the cut, giving it another shot.

Still no dice.

The baby's size was turning into a literal death sentence.

"It's not budging!" Dr. Montgomery's face darkened.

"We've got to use the Zavanelli maneuver—push the baby back in and do an emergency C-section," Adam said urgently. "If we don't get him out in five minutes, he'll suffer brain death!"

"Right!" Dr. Montgomery turned to Rebecca. "Rebecca, I need your consent!"

"Yes, yes! Just get him out—please! Ahh!" Rebecca sobbed, all traces of her earlier defiance gone.

"No time for the OR—grab the C-section tray now!" Dr. Montgomery ordered.

"I'm on it!" Adam shot off like a gust of wind.

Every second counted. Sure, Rebecca had been a pain earlier, but the baby in her belly? Totally innocent. As a doctor, Adam had to give it his all.

Chapter 647: I'm a Plastic Surgeon, Not a Seamstress!

Medical Center, Delivery Room

Despite the doctors' repeated warnings, the pregnant woman stubbornly stuck to her natural birth plan. Now, facing a difficult labor and half-dead from exhaustion, she'd come full circle back to a C-section.

But there was no prep time. It was an emergency—too late for general anesthesia, so they went with a local.

Adam grabbed the C-section tray as fast as he could.

"She's starting to seize!"

"4 mg of sedative!"

"Alright, I'm starting!"

Dr. Montgomery took the scalpel. Despite the less-than-ideal conditions—risking infection and potential complications for the mother—she sliced into the woman's abdomen.

A 5-minute countdown loomed over everyone's heads.

Adam and the team didn't want this baby to miss their first breath just because of their mom's stubbornness.

"Ready to deliver! Wow, he's huge!"

Montgomery, a top-tier neonatal specialist, safely extracted the baby at lightning speed.

The infant was bigger than average.

"Umbilical clamp!"

She cradled the baby, giving him a puff with a tiny air bag, but there was no response. Even after clamping the umbilical cord he'd shared with his mom, still nothing.

"He's not breathing! Adam, take the mother!" Montgomery's face darkened as she snipped the cord with scissors and shouted.

"Got it."

Adam nodded calmly and took over the mother's surgery.

Montgomery, far more experienced in neonatal emergencies, carried the lifeless baby to the side for resuscitation.

"Should I step in?" Mark Sloan said, stepping forward to take Adam's place.

As a top attending, he wasn't about to back down—and it was a chance to smooth things over with his lover, who wasn't thrilled about his sudden arrival at the medical center.

"No need," Montgomery barked, mid-rescue. "Adam's got this! He knows this surgery better! We'll talk stitching later!"

"..."

Mark Sloan's face turned black as coal.

Him—a top plastic surgeon, earning twice what neurosurgery brings in, sitting at the pinnacle of the doctor paycheck pyramid—getting dissed?

And in a head-to-head with an intern, no less, shot down by his equally elite lover.

So he's just a glorified seamstress now?!

It'd been ages since he last felt the sting of the medical hierarchy looking down on plastic surgeons.

In that moment, he suddenly got how his ex-best-friend Derek Shepherd felt when he caught him messing around with Addison.

Back then, Mark didn't care. He was the one stabbing backs, and morals? Pfft, who needs 'em?

They were all buddies—keeping it in the circle, spicing things up. Fight a little, make up, and it's all good!

But now, in the one area he took the most pride in, getting jabbed like this by a fellow top-tier doc—his lover, no less—hit him hard. Pain and rage bubbled up.

Is this what betrayal tastes like? Green and bitter?

Mark stood there, dazed.

But Adam and Montgomery didn't have time for his pity party.

Montgomery was busy saving the breathless baby, while Adam faced a new crisis: the mother started hemorrhaging from an artery after all that chaos.

Mark's eyes flickered. Let's see if this intern's got what it takes.

A life-or-death situation like this? Even he'd be scrambling—and he wasn't exactly a pro at saving lives.

But to his disappointment, Adam stayed cool as ice, directing the nurses like a pro. He stabilized her fast, gave Montgomery a quick heads-up, and wheeled the mom to the OR.

The delivery room couldn't handle this anymore.

Meanwhile, Montgomery revived the baby, popped him into an incubator, and sent him straight to the neonatal ICU for monitoring.

"You did it," Mark said, stepping up to congratulate her.

"Stay away from me!" Montgomery snapped, brushing past him. She headed to the frantic husband, explained everything, reassured him a few times, then rushed to the OR.

Her patient wasn't out of the woods yet.

Mark showing up unannounced at the medical center had thrown her off her game—stripped her of her usual confidence and decisiveness. They'd nearly lost both mother and child, and she was mortified.

Adam's scolding echoed in her head.

She was Addison Montgomery, MD—a top neonatal attending. That was her pride, her identity.

And what was she doing now?

Getting lost in this soap-opera nonsense, nearly throwing it all away!

Her jerk of a lover, Mark, swore he loved her most, and for a while, she'd fallen hard.

Then he turned around and cheated on her—blatantly—with other women.

That's why, after a few months, she'd come back to her husband, ready to start over.

She'd genuinely wanted to make it work with Derek. Compared to Mark, even her cold, distant husband seemed worth it.

But now, with Derek cheating with Meredith, that ship had sailed.

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Today's case shook her to her core.

She wasn't some desperate nobody—why was she drowning in this mess with these two men, losing herself and shattering her pride?

Right then, she decided: she was done with the two most important men from her past. Time for a fresh start!

Operating Room

"Adam, how's it going?" Montgomery asked as she stepped in.

"Don't worry, she's completely stable now," Adam replied, mid-surgery.

Montgomery let out a relieved breath, stepping up as first assist to help Adam save the mother.

As they wrapped up:

"Should we call Sloan in?" Adam teased. "Time for stitching!"

"What for? You've got this," Montgomery chuckled. "I know your suturing's just as good as his—no need for him!"

"Alright, I'll stitch her up then," Adam said with a grin, not denying it, and finished the job.

Outside the OR, Montgomery and Adam delivered the good news to the husband, who thanked them endlessly before they said goodbye.

"That was way too close today," Montgomery sighed, leaning against the wall by the elevator. "Thanks, Adam!"

"No problem," Adam quipped. "As long as you don't hold it against me for challenging your attending authority."

"What authority? My drama's probably the talk of the hospital by now," she said with a bitter smile. "You were right, Adam. I shouldn't be tangled up in this love-life garbage. I don't care what the other doctors or nurses think of me, but I can't stop caring about my patients' lives! This was a hell of a wake-up call. Without you, that mom and baby might've died."

"Learn from it," Adam said with a sigh.

He knew better than she did—it wasn't a "might've." Without his quick save, they would've died.

The system's +0.01+0.005 reward made that crystal clear.

And why'd it happen?

The mom's stubbornness was 50% of it, sure—but Montgomery's emotional slip-up was the other 50%!

An attending has to be confident and decisive, making patients with zero medical knowledge trust their expertise—not letting them cling to dumb luck or reckless whims.

The elevator dinged.

Adam and Montgomery stepped in.

"What's this?" Adam asked, surprised, as she hit the button for B1—the morgue.

"Gonna do some reflecting down there," she said with a small smile.

Adam grinned back.

He saw the seriousness in her eyes and got it.

If he hadn't stepped in with perfect timing and a bit of luck, the mom and baby would likely be lying in the morgue right now.

They'd dodged that bullet, but she still wanted to go down there, face the bodies, and think hard about what'd happen if she kept spiraling like this.

She was serious about changing.

Chapter 648: Heart Stitching and Nightclub DJing

Medical Center

Surgical Wing

Hallway

"Nice work, Adam!"

Cristina spotted him and immediately started gushing. "You really showed 'em what real doctors are made of—saving lives like a boss!"

"Okay, Cristina, chill," Meredith cut in, exasperated. "Plastic surgeons are doctors too. Don't trash the whole specialty just 'cause he ticked you off."

"Did I say anything wrong?" Cristina fired back with a smirk. "Real doctors save people. Mark Sloan? He just makes bank. Let's see him save a life!"

Guys like him? In an emergency, they just stand around gawking—like today.

Not surprising, though.

What's he gonna do, stitch a flower on someone's heart or paint a masterpiece with brain nerves to save them?"

"Pfft!" Adam burst out laughing, throwing Cristina a big thumbs-up. "Cristina, your sass is lethal! Absolute legend!" 👍

"What can I say?" Cristina shrugged dramatically. "When someone acts like us little people don't exist, I've gotta leave an impression—make sure he knows who Cristina Yang is!"

"You're actually mad, huh?" Adam said, eyeing her in surprise.

Plastic surgery might sit low on the medical prestige ladder, but in a money-driven world, those cash-raking plastic surgeons still have clout.

Hmm.

Cristina's got her heart set on cardiothoracic surgery, so from that high perch, she's roasting plastic surgery—the bottom rung of the academic snob chain. It's like a cultured bookworm mocking a flashy millionaire: jealous of the cash but sneering at the lack of class.

Thing is, she's just an intern, while Mark Sloan's a top-tier plastic surgeon—walking in as the head of plastics at the medical center. The status gap? Massive.

She wouldn't be out here real-name roasting him this hard unless she was seriously pissed.

"Wouldn't you be?" Cristina shot back, rolling her eyes. 😊

"Heh, I bet he'll never forget Cristina Yang after this," Adam chuckled.

For a crazy-talented, proud surgeon like her, being ignored in her field is a no-go. Doesn't matter if it's an attending she barely sees, a boyfriend, husband, or even her parents—she's not having it.

So what if Cristina Yang mocks Mark Sloan? It's not even her first rodeo! Back when she started, she group-roasted pediatricians as "brats" and psychiatrists as "nutcases."

Her people skills suck. So what?

As long as Burke, the cardiothoracic god and her boyfriend, keeps teaching her, she's golden.

Unlike Adam—who's chasing every surgery from ER to OB, neonatal, ortho, plastics, you name it, aiming to master everything—Cristina's laser-focused on cardio. She couldn't care less about rotating elsewhere.

Two more months, her intern year's done. Pass the resident exam, and she's officially a cardiothoracic resident.

Plastic surgery chief? She doesn't give a damn what he thinks of her!

"And you're egging her on," Meredith grumbled, glaring at Adam.

"I'm just stating facts," Adam said with a grin. "Cristina's not planning to cozy up to Mark Sloan anyway. What's a little teasing?"

"..." Meredith's face darkened.

She totally felt like Adam was throwing shade at her. What's with that "not planning to" jab?

Adam caught her look, smirked, and took off.

Today was Aunt Beattie's discharge day—Sheldon's aunt. As her resident and a family friend, he had to see her off.

VIP Ward

"Mrs. Cooper, Beattie, Emilia," Adam greeted each of them with a smile as he stepped in. Under their eager stares, he did a thorough check-up, then grinned. "Congrats, Beattie—you're good to go!"

It'd been two weeks since her surgery. The incision had healed up nicely, and she could move around freely now.

Cancer had already handed her its final notice.

Beattie clearly didn't want to waste her last days stuck in a hospital. Even if she wasn't about to hit the clubs to DJ and dance, she wanted to live her final weeks big. ✨

"Thank God!" Mary, the devout believer, praised the big guy upstairs first.

"Mom, wherever you wanna go, I'm there," Emilia said, beaming.

"You're discharged, but don't go too wild with the exciting stuff," Adam couldn't help but warn.

"I know," Beattie said with a gentle smile. "I just wanna see the world a bit."

"Emilia and I will tag along," Mary chimed in, laughing. "Perfect chance to live out that travel dream we had as kids!"

"Sounds good," Beattie agreed.

She knew Mary and Emilia wouldn't let her wander off alone even if she wanted to. Plus, they were her closest people left in the world. Who else would she spend her last days with?

"You could visit Wharton Business School—see Missy," Adam suggested with a grin. "She can show Emilia and you guys around, give you a taste of college life early. If I remember right, Mrs. Cooper's first college trip was a blast."

"Oh, you bet!" Mary's eyes lit up like fireworks. "First time I took Sheldon to college, he didn't want me tagging along—thought people would treat him like a kid if Mom was there. So I waited outside.

Lucky me, I ran into Sam, his high school physics classmate. She bought me a school T-shirt and showed me around campus.

Such a sweet girl... even if her goal was to make Sheldon miserable seeing me rock that T-shirt.

But still, sweet girl!

And get this—it gets better.

I put it on, and this guy Jason came over, inviting Sam to a homecoming BBQ. She told him I was her friend, and Jason legit thought I was a freshman too!

Can you believe it? He thought I was a college girl!

Hahaha!"

Even years later, Mary couldn't stop cracking up about it.

"Sounds like a riot," Beattie said, giggling too.

She and Mary were practically twins—talk about relatable!

"Oh, it was," Mary said, waving her hand as she laughed. "Everyone was so nice. When they found out I was a mom of three, they were all 'Whoa, you're so cool!' I freaking love college!"

"Alright, let's swing by home first, check in with friends, then head to Missy's Wharton for stop one," Beattie said with a smile. "She can give us the grand college tour."

"Missy's not Sheldon—she'll treat you right," Adam teased. "Oh, by the way, I never asked—where are you guys from, Beattie?"

Emilia quickly named their small town.

"Whoa!" Adam blinked in shock. "You're from there too? That's wild!"

"What's up?" Emilia asked, curious. "You know it?"

"Yeah!" Adam said, amazed. "My best friend's family lives there, and another friend's new perfect girlfriend? She's an elementary teacher from your town!"

"What's your friend's name? And the teacher?" Beattie asked, grinning. "We might know 'em."

"My friend's Monica Geller, and the girlfriend's Anna Taylor," Adam replied.

"The Gellers?" Beattie chuckled. "You mean that super-competitive Geller family with the son and daughter who ended up in the hospital over a football fight?"

"That's them!" Adam laughed. "Guess the Gellers are pretty famous around there."

"Ms. Taylor taught me!" Emilia piped up. "What a coincidence!"

"No kidding," Adam nodded. "Small world, huh?"

They all chatted and laughed a bit more. The nurses had already handled the discharge papers, so Adam walked them out, told them to call if they needed anything, and headed back to the hospital.

Then he spotted a familiar figure—and couldn't help but gasp in surprise again.

Chapter 649: Turns Out, I'm the Clown

Medical Center, Lobby

Adam caught sight of a familiar figure.

Though he'd only met the guy once, this wasn't someone you'd forget—a rugged, stoic man with a mix of grit and tenderness, like some kind of war hero.

Yup!

It was none other than Elliot Deacon—the small-town funeral home director and mortician Monica and Rachel swooned over in their teenage years. The guy who played the ultimate rescue-dad in a bunch of shows.

Mr. Elliot Deacon himself!

According to Monica, he'd lost his wife young and was the most eligible bachelor in their area. But he loved his late wife so much that, despite tons of women chasing him, he never budged. He kept his distance, staying single—lonely yet oh-so-romantic.

Last time, when Monica's grandma passed, Adam asked her about this supposed war-god of a man, and her face turned red in a heartbeat.

Tsk tsk!

If Monica could see her teenage crush now—the quiet, gentle, brooding heartthrob—flirting with a woman he'd probably just met, wonder how she'd feel?

Adam stepped closer, locking eyes with the war-god-esque Deacon.

He flashed a smile.

Deacon smiled back, clearly remembering him too.

"Adam, you know him?" Dr. Montgomery asked, surprised.

Yup—turns out, the woman chatting up a storm with Deacon was none other than Montgomery herself!

"Long time no see, Mr. Deacon," Adam said with a grin. "I'm Adam Duncan, a doctor here."

"Nice to see you, Dr. Duncan," Deacon replied with a warm nod. "I recall you're a friend of the Geller family, right?"

"Spot on," Adam nodded, still smiling.

They exchanged a few pleasantries before Deacon excused himself. He was there to pick up a body for burial, and lingering too long would've been awkward.

"Adam, spill everything you know about Elliot!" Montgomery yanked him aside, her voice urgent.

"Seriously?" Adam blinked at her. "You just met him, right? And weren't you just down in the morgue reflecting on life?"

"Yeah..." Montgomery's cheeks flushed, but she powered through the embarrassment. "Adam, do you believe in love at first sight?"

"Nope," Adam said, pulling a classic Leonard-from-Big Bang Theory deadpan face.

"..."

Montgomery faltered, then laughed awkwardly. "Well, most people do—and I do too! Back when I met Derek, it was like that. We were glued to each other, the envy of everyone—'the happy Shepherds,' they called us.

Sure, it didn't end great.

That was my mistake.

But those early years? We were head over heels."

"And Deacon's giving you that vibe again?" Adam asked, dropping the teasing since she owned her past.

"Yes!" Montgomery's face lit up. "Even stronger than before! I was down in the morgue, staring at those bodies, reflecting on everything, when he walked in to collect a patient. His smile just... pierced right through my gloom. I couldn't help but smile back."

"Really?" Adam raised an eyebrow, surprised.

"What's up?" she pressed, eager.

"In my head, he's not that kind of guy," Adam mused. "I met him at my friend's grandma's funeral. She told me that after his wife died young, he never got over her. Never remarried, never even got close to any of the women chasing him. Seeing him like this with you—it's wild."

"That's love at first sight!" Montgomery's eyes sparkled. "He's gentle, romantic, and so devoted! My gut's right—he's nothing like Derek or Mark!"

Adam chuckled.

Mark's a sleaze—anyone's better than him.

As for Dr. Shepherd? Yeah, he cheated and pulled some baffling stunts, but that was after getting double-stabbed in the back by his best friend and wife.

Turning into the Hulk from all that green-eyed rage? Understandable.

Still, understandable or not, when it comes to character and devotion, he doesn't hold a candle to Deacon, who's stayed solo for a decade or two out of love.

"Well, congrats in advance then!" Adam said, grinning at her.

The latest novels drop first on 69 Book Bar!

Deacon's rock-solid good-guy image in Adam's mind definitely outshone Montgomery's two exes. If they ended up together and she found some emotional stability, she'd be a better doctor for it—a win-win.

Since Monica was pregnant, Adam decided not to tease her with this juicy update.

A Few Days Later

Adam spotted Deacon at the medical center again.

This time, Mark—fuming that Montgomery hadn't picked him or Shepherd—was glaring at his "true love" sparking it up with this classy dude. Without a second thought, he stormed over to confront them.

"Here comes the drama!" Cristina slid up next to Adam, her eyes gleaming as she stared at the showdown. She was one popcorn bag away from kicking back to enjoy the show.

"Let's hope they fight! Mark messes up his hand and tanks his career forever!"

"Wow, he's really pissed you off, huh?" Adam tilted his head at her, channeling Leonard's vibe when Raj insists on dissecting a rom-com mid-watch.

"Uh-huh!" Cristina shot him a "duh" look.

Over there:

"Mark Sloan, head of plastic surgery here at the medical center," Mark said, thrusting out his hand.

"Elliot Deacon," Deacon replied, shaking it but keeping his intro short and his expression neutral.

Emmm.

Deacon was pushing fifty, looking a bit weathered.

Mark and Montgomery, both in their thirties, were in their prime. Mark worked out religiously—face, income, physique, the full package. Without that, how else could he swagger around, stealing his best friend's perfect wife?

So, flexing his brawn, Mark went for the oldest trick in the book: a handshake power play. He squeezed hard, aiming to put this "old man" rival in his place.

But his smirk froze fast.

The "old guy" in his eyes? Strong as hell. No matter how hard Mark gripped, Deacon didn't flinch—just stared back calmly.

The real pro was right here all along.

The clown? That's me.

Facing a rival who looked unfazed and could clearly crank it up a notch, Mark started sweating.

Those hands were his money-makers!

"Mark!" Montgomery clocked his game the second the handshake dragged on, snapping furiously, "Let go!"

Deacon smoothly released his grip.

Montgomery rushed over, grabbed Deacon's hand, and checked it with a worried frown.

Mark's face turned a sickly shade of green.

Adam narrowed his eyes, watching it all unfold.

Chapter 650: For Surgery, I Only Trust Adam

Medical Center

The showdown between the ultimate war god and the flirtiest doctor ended with the flirty one—Mark—getting totally crushed.

Mark was fuming. Not only did he lose to his "old man" rival, but Dr. Montgomery had called him out in front of everyone, making it sting even worse.

Adam, though? He noticed something else.

Mr. Deacon looked calm on the outside, but there was a coldness in his eyes that set off alarm bells in Adam's head.

Sure, Adam had jokingly called him a "war god" before—a guy who'd seen countless battles and didn't blink at death. But after coming back from the war, thanks to the world's (or, uh, script's) influence, he'd mellowed out. To regular folks, as long as his daughter wasn't living in a doghouse, even a guy who'd stolen his girl was just an annoyance he could shrug off—not a life-or-death enemy.

But Adam's sharp instincts caught something off. That fleeting, icy look in Deacon's eyes? It was dangerous—so intense it even rattled Adam, a bystander just munching popcorn on the sidelines.

Something wasn't right.

Had this big-eyebrowed, war-hero dad gone dark? Evil, even?

Adam filed that thought away, keeping it on his radar.

The drama wrapped up quick. Mark Sloan, having lost both pride and dignity, stormed off back to the hospital. Mr. Deacon left too, with Dr. Montgomery escorting him out. The crowd of onlookers buzzed with "oohs" and "aahs" before scattering back to their posts.

Hallway

"Meredith, you okay?"

Adam and Cristina strolled over after the show, only to find Meredith pale as a ghost, hunched over and weakly leaning on the wall. Cristina rushed up, touching her forehead. "You're burning up!"

"I'm fine," Meredith said, brushing off her bestie's hand with a weak smile. "Just not used to mixing two different... dishes at once. Bit of a stomachache."

Adam and Cristina swapped a look, both smirking weirdly.

"It's not what you think!" Meredith snapped, catching their expressions. "I mean actual food! Finn and I haven't gotten there yet."

"There?" Cristina teased, wiggling her eyebrows.

"Poor Finn," Adam said, shaking his head. "Dude's a contender but lost before the race even started."

"..." Meredith swayed—either from the fever or Adam's jab, who knows?

"Haha!" Cristina cracked up.

"You're laughing?!" Meredith glared at her friend.

"I mean, Adam's got a point," Cristina said bluntly, as always. "If you're picking between Mr. Dreamy and Finn, you can't play favorites. Don't tell me these past few days with Dreamy have just been chit-chat and doorstep pecks?"

Meredith went silent.

Yeah, right—like that was happening!

"Thought so!" Cristina grinned. "Why're you even stressing? Your body's already made up its mind. Finn's kinda pitiful—didn't even know he was doomed from the jump."

"No..." Meredith tried to argue, but Cristina's eager grin and Adam's half-smirk stopped her cold. She'd been dating Finn but cheated with Derek—how could she even deny it?

Just then, Dr. Montgomery strutted over, looking radiant.

"Adam, I've got a case booked for tomorrow—super rare. Wanna swing by and check it out?"

"Absolutely," Adam said, jumping at the chance.

Cristina's eyes sparkled with envy.

Sure, she was dead-set on cardiothoracic and usually scoffed at other fields like neonatal or OB. But a rare surgery—and Adam's VIP treatment? She was jealous.

It hit her hard: when Adam first started, it was just Dr. Green backing him. Now? Burke, Shepherd, Montgomery—pretty much every big-name doc at the center, except newbie Mark Sloan, had his back.

Good surgery? They called Adam first. Tough case? They wanted him in on it.

It was drool-worthy.

"Blech!"

As Dr. Montgomery passed by, Meredith hurled—splashing right onto her shoe.

"You..." Dr. Montgomery frowned, glancing at her puking ex-rival. "You're not pregnant, are you?"

"I'm not pregnant!" Meredith shot back instantly.

"Whatever," Dr. Montgomery shrugged and walked off.

A woman in love had clearly moved past the mess of her ex and his fling.

"Stomach pain, fever, vomiting," Cristina said, helping Meredith into a room. "Trust me, classic pregnancy signs!"

"Lucky for us, no need to play 'guess the dad,'" Adam quipped. "Unless your 'not there yet' scale is way different from ours~"

"Hahaha, yeah, Meredith, your standards are always a little... looser than most," Cristina laughed. "We're doctors—we know even low bars come with risks. So, you worried about who the dad might be?"

"..." Meredith slapped a hand over her eyes, done with their glee at her expense.

"Adam, take a look," Cristina said after a quick check, nodding him over.

"Sure."

Adam didn't hesitate. This kinda exam was routine. Back in school, classmates like Bianca even grabbed his hand to check their "hearts" for practice—purely professional, of course. Strip away the nonsense, it's just fat. No biggie.

"Congrats... probably not pregnant," Adam said, dragging out the words with a grin.

"Not pregnant?" Cristina blinked, surprised.

"Nope," Adam chuckled. "Looks like appendicitis."

"Appendicitis?!" Meredith and Cristina yelped in unison.

"I'll do it for you," Cristina said, grinning at her bestie.

"No way," Meredith shook her head. "I want Adam to do it."

"You don't trust me?" Cristina huffed.

"It's not that," Meredith said with a wry smile. "Adam's just the best. I've only got one body, and you've got plenty of small surgeries to practice on, right?"

"Fine, I'll do it," Adam said, laughing. "I was gonna suggest George, though—you know, 'get back up where you fell.' He's not the same old George anymore!"

"No!" Meredith shouted. "George is my buddy, but there's no way I'm letting him near my appendix!"

Back when they all started as interns, the first surgery was supposed to be George's—a punishment from Dr. Burke to make an example of him. But Adam swooped in, aced it, and stole the show.

George got the second case—an appendectomy. Total disaster. The newbie froze, got mocked as "007" by Alex, and flopped hard.

Meredith had defended him back then, but now, facing it herself? Even with George leveling up, she wasn't risking it. Not even Cristina, the tech wiz, made the cut.

She wanted the best. Plain and simple.