

TV Show 741

Chapter 741: Call Her Out, Call Her Out!

Medical Center.

First experiences aren't always sunshine and rainbows.

If it had been Cristina—or Meredith, who couldn't stand Lexie—delivering the same lesson in the same situation but with a different tone and expression, Lexie probably wouldn't have handled it.

Lucky for her, Adam had the patience of a saint.

Still, after Lexie accepted his reasoning and tearfully announced a patient's time of death for the first time, Adam told her to take a break and regroup.

By the second half of the night, the number of patients trickling in had dropped off a lot. But Adam stuck around, guiding the team through case after case.

It was the 24th hour of their first rotation. A new day had begun.

Adam, still full of energy, led his exhausted crew of four on morning rounds. Lexie, after a few hours of rest, had managed to shove down the discomfort of her first time and rejoined the group.

She wasn't clueless about the reality. She'd chosen to be a doctor, aiming to reach the top of the medical world. If she couldn't handle this first step, that'd be downright laughable. It's not like she'd never seen a dead body before. And technically, this patient didn't even die on her watch—Adam had just set up a simulated scenario for her. The emotional hit was way lighter than if someone had actually died under her care.

She bounced back pretty fast. But the hands-on experience of a life-or-death emergency? That was the real deal—something not everyone gets a shot at. When Adam told Lexie this was her chance, he'd meant it seriously.

Beep beep.

Beep beep.

Adam's pager went off at his waist.

"Another big accident?" George couldn't help but ask.

"Yup," Adam nodded, leading them to throw on disposable protective gear as they hustled toward the ER entrance.

On the way, they got the scoop: a gas explosion in an apartment building.

"I need a resident to help me manage the clinic and keep an eye on the interns while I treat patients," Dr. Bailey said, striding over in her protective gear. She tossed the request at Callie, the chief resident decked out in the same outfit, then brushed past her to join the line of doctors ready at the front.

"Sorry, I can't help," Callie's voice rang out from behind. It didn't just stop Bailey—who'd only meant it as a casual heads-up—in her tracks; it grabbed the attention of every doctor waiting for the ambulances.

"Whoa! Dr. Bailey versus Dr. Torres—this is about to go down!"

"I'm betting on Bailey!"

"Nah, I'm with Torres. She's the chief resident, after all."

"We all knew this was coming. Torres wants to cement her authority as chief resident, so she's gotta take a swing at Bailey—the top resident pick and spiritual leader."

"Pfft! By that logic, she'd have to go after Dr. Duncan next, right?"

"Duncan's a different story."

"..."

The doctors exchanged playful looks and whispered among themselves.

Adam glanced at George.

George immediately dropped his head, pretending he didn't know a thing. One was his respected former mentor, the other his girlfriend—he wasn't about to pick a side.

"You can't help?" Bailey turned around, her eyes sharp.

"Nope, Bailey," Callie said, meeting her gaze without flinching. "The free clinic's volunteer work. As chief resident, I can't force any resident or intern to pitch in—especially not during a mess like this. If you were in the OR, you could have as many interns as you want. But otherwise, you've got to figure out how to juggle your main gig and your side hustle yourself. Got it?"

"..."

Bailey's mouth twitched, her eyes rolled, and her body shifted slightly. Anyone who knew her could tell she was gearing up for a fight.

"Call her out, call her out!" Cristina muttered under her breath, her little eyes sparkling with excitement.

George shot her a death glare.

"Not happening," Adam said with a laugh. "They won't clash."

"Why not?" Cristina asked, confused. "You think Bailey's scared to take her on?"

"It's not about fear—it's about not wanting to," Adam said, shaking his head. "Callie's the chief resident, and she's quoting hospital rules. What's Bailey gonna do, call her out in front of everyone?"

Sure enough, Bailey pursed her lips, held back whatever she wanted to say, and turned to face the direction of the incoming ambulances.

"That's power for you!" Cristina said, shaking her head. "The director told Bailey to focus more on the OR, and she's still an amazing resident. But without the official title, she's at a disadvantage."

"Yang!" Bailey snapped, glaring at her. "Since you're so worried about me, why don't you go manage the clinic?"

"You've got it wrong—I'm not worried about you. I'm just marveling at power," Cristina said, tilting her head up and dodging Bailey's bait.

Yeah, right. To her, the free clinic was worse than the ER. At least the ER had emergencies to diagnose and treat. The clinic? Mostly checking minor ailments and preventing bigger ones—half the time, the patients weren't even sick. Asking her to run it was as good as asking her to drop dead.

She admired Bailey and saw her as a role model, sure, but making sacrifices or stepping up for her? Not a chance.

Bailey almost cracked up laughing at Cristina's attitude, then shifted her gaze to Meredith.

Meredith quickly looked away, avoiding eye contact.

"O'Malley!" Adam spoke up. "You're heading over there later!"

"What?" George froze, stunned.

"You're an intern with resident-level skills—perfect fit," Adam said with a grin.

"Exactly!" Bailey's eyes lit up. "Thanks, Adam."

"No problem," Adam replied, smiling at her before turning to George. "The clinic's a learning opportunity too. If we get a surgery later, I'll think about letting you scrub in—maybe even take the lead someday."

"But Callie..." George's eyes sparkled with interest.

Leading a surgery? Cristina and Meredith hadn't even gotten that chance yet. But his brain kicked in—this was basically slapping his girlfriend in the face. The risk was huge.

"Just go quietly. Don't make a fuss," Adam suggested.

"Alright," George said, clenching his jaw and nodding.

For one, the lure of leading a surgery was too strong. For another, if anything went wrong, he could just blame Adam. He was only an intern under Adam's wing—what else could he do but follow orders? Callie would understand.

Adam smirked. He could see right through George's little plan. But he didn't mind.

Bailey's free clinic was a genuinely good cause, giving people without insurance a chance to catch diseases early and stop small issues from turning into big ones. Adam was the one funding it, so he didn't mind lending a hand here and there.

Would Callie get mad if she found out?

Adam figured even if she did, it wouldn't last long, and she wouldn't hold a grudge. First, he wasn't breaking any hospital rules—George was his intern, under his authority, and he'd gotten George's

consent, making it voluntary. Second, he'd already considered her position by telling George to keep it low-key.

Besides, supporting a cause this noble—if Callie held a grudge over that, she'd be pretty petty and small-hearted. And someone that narrow-minded and unkind... was she really cut out to be chief resident?

Chapter 742: This Is the True "White Scholar"

Medical Center

ER Entrance

Several ambulances screeched to a halt.

Adam was the first to rush forward.

"Mara Christ, 34, female. Abdominal rupture, skull fracture, third-degree burns, at least 40% of her skin directly infected," the paramedic rattled off quickly while unloading the stretcher.

"Got it, I'll take it from here," Adam said, stepping in. "Notify Dr. Shepherd, prep OR 2. Melendez, Little Grey, with me!"

"Yes, sir!" Shorty and Lexie snapped into action, following close behind.

"Dr. Duncan, what about me?" Carter jogged up, eager.

"You stay here, assist Dr. Bailey," Adam said, glancing back at him.

"Yes, sir," Carter replied, reluctantly stopping in his tracks as he watched Shorty and Lexie disappear with Adam toward the operating room.

Dr. Bailey, after training Cristina's crew, was currently short-handed. If she needed residents, she'd have to coordinate with Chief Resident Callie. For interns, she'd go through Cristina's team. If Callie decided to make things tough for her, it could get messy.

OR 2

Adam handled the chest and abdomen, while Dr. Shepherd took the brain. Shorty assisted Adam, and Lexie shadowed Shepherd.

"You're Meredith's sister?" Shepherd asked during a lull in the surgery, glancing at Lexie as she peeked over his shoulder.

"Yeah, half-sister," Lexie said with a smile.

"How are things with you and Meredith?" Shepherd continued, chatting casually while operating.

It was pretty normal for surgeons to talk during procedures. Over in the next room, Dr. House had once performed surgery while video-conferencing a courtroom hearing. Of course, that was a perk reserved for genius doctors in the TV-drama world. For them, these operations were second nature—chatting didn't throw them off; it was a way to unwind.

Take the surgical chief, for example. He could pick up a new suturing tool he'd never used before and, with decades of muscle memory and rock-solid fundamentals, stitch perfectly—fast and flawless—with his eyes closed.

Then there were freaks like Adam. He could engage in intense mental sparring while pulling off complex memory feats. Multitasking was just another day at the office for him.

But for regular doctors? Trying to copy that would be straight-up reckless toward the patient.

"Family stuff—it's awkward," Lexie said with a wry smile. "And I think she hates me."

"She doesn't hate you," Shepherd corrected her.

"Really?" Lexie blinked. "How do you know?"

"Trust Dr. Shepherd," Adam chimed in, smirking as he worked on the patient's chest with Shorty's help. "No one knows Meredith better than him. If he says she doesn't hate you, she doesn't."

"You and my sister..." Lexie trailed off, finally putting two and two together as she looked at Shepherd.

Shepherd just smiled faintly, saying nothing.

"..."

Lexie got the hint. She glanced at Adam, catching his teasing look, and suddenly felt like a stampede of a thousand wild beasts was thundering through her head.

Her sister Meredith... Adam wasn't kidding! It was unreal! Every time she thought a doctor seemed cool, they turned out to have some intimate tie to her sister.

Buy a sturdy belt, don't drink, and don't hook up with senior doctors—Adam's personal advice was starting to feel eerily spot-on.

"Someone remind me what caused this accident?" Adam asked suddenly.

"Apartment kitchen explosion!" The Nurse Who Gets It, Violet, answered right away. "The patient was cooking, set off a blast, blew a hole in the room. Neighbors got hit, and in the living room, her husband, their one-year-old son, and a friend who'd stopped by were all caught in it too."

"Looks like our patient isn't your average housewife—she's a mad chemist," Adam said, using tweezers to pluck a white crystal from the patient's chest and holding it up to the spotlight.

"What's that?" Lexie asked, wide-eyed.

"Adam, are you saying this is..." Shepherd trailed off, equally stunned.

"If I'm not mistaken, it's methamphetamine," Adam said, inspecting the crystal closely.

"She was cooking meth!" Lexie blurted, connecting the chemical name to its infamous TV-drama alias.

Hmm. A synthetic drug with a serious kick to the central nervous system.

Think of that high school chem teacher, Walter White—an absolute legend in the field. Unlike Walt and his dropout ex-student Jesse, this seemed more like a husband-wife duo.

"Yep," Adam said, pulling another white crystal from the patient's abdomen. "These two have slightly different colors. Looks like our patient's a 'mad chemist' with ambition—she's been purifying her product."

In the TV-drama world, making meth was easy. Take Jesse—a total slacker who'd barely learned some chemistry from Walt before dropping out, yet still managed to cook and sell it on his own. Sure, his stuff was low-grade, but it worked.

Or Penny's jailbird brother, who sneered at his sister for being "just a dealer" while he fancied himself an upstream "chemist." With his self-proclaimed "not white trash" attitude and laughable IQ, even he could pull it off. That's how basic the process was.

The trick was purity. Your average "chemist" churned out stuff around 70% pure. A real chem prodigy could hit 96%. But someone like Walt—a near-Nobel-level hidden genius—cranked out 99.9% pure product right out the gate. His blue-tinted byproduct took the world by storm, crushing older competition.

Purity was king in this game. The varying purity of these crystals embedded in the patient suggested she'd been experimenting with new methods, chasing that edge for a competitive product—only to lose control and blow herself up.

Studying "white chemistry" like Walt, pushing the boundaries of research—that's a true "White Scholar"!

"Violet, rush this to the lab for testing," Adam instructed. "And tell security to quietly keep an eye on the patient's husband, the neighbors, and that friend who 'just dropped by' this early. We don't want any surprises."

He'd cross-checked the crystals with his mental database and was pretty damn sure he was right. But without 100% confirmation, you couldn't just call the cops. Still, for the staff's safety, he'd have hospital security stay on alert.

When it came to messes like this, you couldn't be too careful. These people danced on the edge of crime—violence could erupt any second.

"Yes, Dr. Duncan!" Violet replied, snapping to it.

Chapter 743: Sin and Retribution

Medical Center. Operating Room 2.

"Cooking that stuff in their own apartment..." Dr. Shepherd shook his head in disbelief after Adam finished giving instructions.

"It's pretty common," Adam said with a laugh. "Where else are regular folks gonna do it? When you're just starting small, it's always your own place. Once you scale up, then you think about renting some hidden spot for a lab. Or maybe you snag an RV, drive it out to the middle of nowhere every week, cook for a couple days, pack up, and come back to sell."

"Get even bigger, and you might open a legit business as a front—like a laundromat with a real chem lab in the basement. All the raw materials, equipment, ventilation, and distribution? Easy to hide. Go bigger still, and you're heading overseas, staking out land to build a full-on corporate empire."

"..."

Everyone in the OR froze, staring at Adam with their jaws dropped.

"What?" Adam asked, amused.

"Dr. Duncan, how do you know all this so well?" Lexie blurted out, stunned.

"You guys forgot—I'm not just a doctor; I'm a writer too," Adam said with a grin. "Before writing, I always dig into research. I got really into this stuff a while back when I wanted to write a crime novel about it. Did a deep dive."

He wasn't some armchair expert, that's for sure.

"Oh, that makes sense..."

The room collectively nodded in realization.

"Dr. Duncan, you're amazing!" the junior nurses gushed.

"Can we read that novel?" Dr. Shepherd teased. "Lord of the Mysteries ended so abruptly—don't tell me this one's doomed too?"

"I've quit writing," Adam said with a nod. "My goal now is just to be a doctor who saves lives."

"What?!" a nurse gasped. "I thought it was just Lord of the Mysteries you were done with. You're quitting for good?"

"Yeah, I realized some people's brains work in wild ways," Adam said, half-venting. "A good fantasy story can broaden your perspective, but a lot of folks zero in on the dark parts. Even when there's no darkness, they'll twist the fictional world into something grim, attracting all sorts of weirdos."

"Lord of the Mysteries taught me that lesson hard. If I wrote a crime novel about this stuff—even with a message warning people to stay away to avoid ruining their lives—who knows how many oddballs would only see the quick cash and ignore the danger, the damage to society, the innocent lives wrecked? Better to just not write it at all."

"Those people deserve to rot."

"Such a shame, though."

The room buzzed with sighs and comments.

"Dr. Duncan, the samples are sent off. The lab's rushing them, and they'll call the second they've got results," the know-it-all nurse said, returning from her errand. "Hospital security's on it too—every patient's got a guard posted outside."

"Good. How's everyone doing?" Adam nodded, tossing out the question casually.

"The neighbor and the friend who stopped by are in rough shape," she replied, already up to speed and rattling off details like a pro. "The neighbor's a 60-year-old guy—caught in the blast while reading the morning paper at home. Second- and third-degree burns to his chest and upper abdomen, facial trauma, fractured shoulder. The friend who came to visit has serious abdominal bruising—possible internal bleeding. He went into cardiac arrest during a CT scan, but Dr. Yang brought him back."

"My guess accuracy's gone up again," Adam said with a grin. "This guy showing up bright and early? Probably a junkie—heard some of those types hang around dealers' doors, ready to restock the second they can."

"His sudden cardiac arrest—could it be cardiomyopathy from long-term stimulant use?" little Melendez chimed in.

"Exactly," Adam said, giving him a nod before turning back to the nurse. "What about the patient's husband and kid?"

"The husband's fine, just shaken up," she said. "But their one-year-old son—he's not hurt, but he won't stop crying. No amount of soothing works, and it's driving the dad nuts. Poor kid. The explosion must've freaked him out way too much—too young to deal with that kind of trauma."

"Crying nonstop?" Adam frowned. "We've been in surgery for an hour, and they came in right after, yeah? Who's with him?"

"Yup, pretty much back-to-back," the nurse confirmed. "Dr. Grey's handling it."

"Damn it!" Adam's tone turned serious. "Tell Dr. Grey to run a tox screen on the baby, then get him an X-ray. Check if he's addicted to methamphetamine!"

"On it!" The nurse bolted to make the call.

"Adam, you think he's hooked on meth?" Dr. Shepherd asked, floored. "Their own son? He's only one?"

"I doubt they're feeding it to him," Adam said, shaking his head. "They're probably just cooks—not users themselves. Otherwise, her heart and kidneys wouldn't be in such good shape. Controlled people like that wouldn't let their kid near the stuff."

"But they're making it in their apartment. To keep it under wraps, the insulation and ventilation are probably crap. When they heat the meth, the fumes spread everywhere—walls, floors, couch—all coated with invisible particles. A baby crawling around, sticking his hands in his mouth? That's basically like him snorting it. It wouldn't take long to get hooked."

"And since the apartment's loaded with it, when he's craving, he crawls, licks something, gets his fix—acts like any other kid. Plus, with them wrapped up in the illegal gig—focusing on purity, dodging cops, making sales—they're too distracted to notice their precious son's turned into the very junkie they despise, right under their noses."

"Now he's out of the apartment, been here a while, withdrawal's kicking in, and there's no relief—so he's crying nonstop!"

It clicked for everyone.

What a mess! Meth addiction screws up your nerves, heart, kidneys—irreversible damage. Like that junkie who flatlined earlier—could happen anytime. If he hadn't been in the hospital for a save, he'd be gone. And that's an adult.

This is a one-year-old, barely developed, hit with trauma like that. Who knows what his future looks like?

Maybe it's karma for the parents. They've turned other people's kids into wrecks, ruined families left and right. Now it's their turn to feel what those parents went through.

Assuming they actually love their son, that is. Otherwise, it's just a tragedy for the kid.

Chapter 744: I Can't Handle This Kind of Love

Medical Center

OR 2

Ring ring ring.

The phone in the operating room chimed.

Violet, The Nurse Who Gets It, walked over, picked it up, spoke briefly, and hung up.

"What's the update?" Adam asked, still focused on the surgery.

"Dr. Grey got the news and was about to take the baby for a check-up," Violet said, filling him in. "Then the kid's dad started grilling her about what was going on. She couldn't dodge the questions, lost her cool, and turned it back on him."

"What'd she do?" Shepherd paused mid-motion, looking over with concern.

"Listen up!" Adam said, turning to Shorty and Lexie. "Never—ever—face a dangerous person alone without police or security, no matter what you figure out. Keep your mouth shut, don't let on that you know anything weird, and call for help quietly. This is about your life—got it?"

"Got it!"

"Got it!"

Shorty and Lexie nodded quickly.

"Dr. Grey's fine," Violet added, reassuring them. "The dad couldn't believe it when she confronted him. He admitted they were cooking meth. Said he loves his son, that they were just broke and jobless back then. Claims he's a good dad—never touches the stuff himself and would never let his precious son near it. Then Dr. Grey told him your theory, Dr. Duncan. He froze, looked wrecked, and tried to snatch the kid from her and bolt. Security, who'd been watching nearby, took him down. Cops showed up and hauled him off."

"Heh," Adam let out a cold laugh.

"Dr. Duncan, you think he's lying?" Lexie couldn't help but ask.

"He might think he's telling the truth," Adam said, his voice icy. "But does he really love his son? I don't buy it. He says they were broke and out of work, so they had no choice but to take this dead-end road? Give me a break."

They were in their prime back then—no kid yet. If they'd wanted to work, they could've done anything. They got into this because it's easy money, fast. After the kid was born, they must've had some cash stashed. The smart move would've been to quit, get legit jobs, and raise their 'precious son' in a normal, happy home.

What did they expect their boy to turn into, growing up in that mess? And they even let shady characters—like some West Poison Ouyang Feng type—into their house, putting the kid right in front of those people. What if one of those creeps, broke and desperate, got a bad idea? Whether their 'precious son' would even make it to his rebellious teens—or turn into the kind of guy they'd hate—is anyone's guess.

And then there's this: doing insanely dangerous chemical experiments in their own apartment, exposing their kid to that kind of risk. They didn't even notice he'd gotten hooked, and now we've got this disaster. Parents who just say they love their kid but don't think about his safety for a second—that's what they call true love? Don't insult real parental love like that!"

"Yeah."

"He doesn't love his son—he only loves himself!"

"Locking him up and keeping the kid away might be the best shot at hope."

At first, the room had felt a pang of sympathy. Sure, these parents screwed up, but they probably still loved their son. Once the cops came, they'd both be locked up, torn from their kid—pretty tragic, right?

But after Adam's breakdown, it clicked. Real love from parents isn't about sweet words—it's about actions. These two didn't even notice the irreversible damage their "precious son" was suffering. What kind of deep parental love is that?

Adam sighed inwardly, his mind drifting to Breaking Bad's Walter White.

Now that guy started out legit—for his family. Middle-aged, with a pregnant wife, a daughter on the way, and a son with cerebral palsy. When he found out he had cancer and not much time left, he took that dark path out of desperation.

What else could he do? If he died, his wife and kids would be stuck with a mortgage they couldn't pay. No income, kicked out of their home—his wife, jobless for years, holding a newborn, trying to support the family? They'd barely scrape by. And his son, hobbling on crutches every day, about to start college with no money? He'd have to drop out—no health, no degree, no skills. How would he survive?

So Walt calculated it all: how much his son's college would cost, how much his wife needed to raise their daughter, how much to clear the mortgage. He set a number, decided to earn it in his final days, and then call it quits.

But even a guy like that changed once he stepped onto that road.

He stopped coming home, got all secretive. Sure, he made the money fast—way more than he'd planned. But his wife and kids didn't want cash earned like that. His wife, refusing to be an accomplice, pushed him out, even cheated on him to drive him away from her and the kids.

Hmm. Maybe she'd been looking for an excuse to cheat anyway. But Walt sure handed her one.

A happy family, shattered in an instant. And he ended up ruining a lot of good people along the way—including his brother-in-law's family.

Still, Walt had guts. In the end, he owned it: Yeah, it started for his family, but later? It was for him. He was the best in the game, maximizing his life's worth—way beyond what some boring high school chem teacher could ever dream of. Even family took a backseat to that rush of achievement.

By the end, he had everything—money he couldn't spend in ten lifetimes. He could've walked away. But for that sense of purpose, he kept himself and his family in danger.

So, people in this line? Doesn't matter who they say they love. Deep down, they only love themselves.

For a one-year-old kid already battered by life, getting away from parents like that might just be the start of something better.

Ring ring ring.

The OR phone rang again.

Violet picked it up, listened, then said urgently, "Dr. Shepherd, the kid's had a stroke. He's in OR 3 now—needs surgery ASAP!"

"Damn it!" Shepherd swore, unable to hold it in.

A one-year-old with a stroke? That's messed up!

"How long do you need over there, Shepherd?" Adam asked.

"About an hour," Shepherd estimated.

"I'm done here. I'll head over," Adam said.

"Alright," Shepherd agreed, trusting Adam's call.

Adam grabbed Shorty and bolted for OR 3.

Chapter 745: The Evil-Start Version of The Big Bang Theory

Medical Center. Operating Room 3.

Adam and little Melendez were operating on the one-year-old baby boy.

"Poor kid," Adam said, shaking his head as he looked at the tiny figure on the table. He held out his hand. "Scalpel!"

The nurse handed it over right away.

Surgery began.

This baby was already messed up—passive meth addiction had wrecked his nerves, heart, and kidneys. Now they were cutting him open. Talk about stacking debuffs. Most people get a head start in life; this little guy not only lost at the starting line but had his parents dig a pit and bury him in it. His future was going to be rough, no question.

Dr. Shepherd finished his surgery and came over with Lexie and the others.

"How's it going?" he asked.

"Everything's smooth so far," Adam said, glancing up. "How about you guys?"

"Surgery went fine," Shepherd replied, stepping up to the table to observe.

"Little Grey, go take care of the kid's mom," Adam said, nodding at Lexie.

"Yes, Dr. Duncan," Lexie replied quickly.

Meredith, standing nearby, kept her eyes down, acting like she hadn't heard a thing.

By the time the surgery wrapped up, it was noon.

Cafeteria.

"George, come on over!" Meredith called out, waving as she saw him standing there with his tray, looking torn.

"Nah," George said. He glanced at Adam, then at Lexie, Melendez, and Carter at another table. After a long internal debate, he finally headed over to join Lexie's group.

"Looks like you've really got him under control," Cristina teased.

"Poor George," Meredith sighed. "Adam, don't be too hard on him. He's our friend."

"I'm not being hard on him. It's his choice," Adam said with a laugh. "He's an intern now—hanging out with his colleagues and competitors is the smart move. Haven't you heard the saying? Keep your friends close, and your enemies closer. George isn't the top dog among those four interns. Recognizing where he stands is a good thing. Or did you forget that whole mess with him and Dr. Burke?"

"..."

Meredith didn't have a comeback.

Back when George was a newbie, he got chewed out by Burke as a warning to the others because he had zero situational awareness. Day one, he was clumsy and slow, and when Burke called him out, George had the nerve to snap back—right in front of a patient—saying something snarky like, "Bet you were like this when you were an intern too." Later, after spending more time together and bonding a bit through Cristina, Burke warmed up to him slightly.

And then George got cocky. He started chatting with Burke about his relationship with Cristina, acting like he was there to solve the guy's problems. Burke's face dropped instantly.

There's an old saying: Get too close, and they disrespect you; stay too far, and they resent you. It fit "pretty boy" George to a T.

Adam figured George couldn't gauge his own limits naturally—he needed external cues to see where he stood. Otherwise, he'd float right back into that clueless, boundary-free zone. In regular life or some other job, that might not matter. But in a hospital? No way.

The strict hierarchy here exists for a reason: efficiency in saving lives. If people start ignoring rank and causing chaos, the consequences are too big.

"Cristina, how's your patient doing?" Adam asked, shifting to the junkie case.

"Eh, same old," Cristina said with a shrug. "While you guys were in surgery, he coded twice more. I brought him back both times. Big 30-something guy, crying his eyes out the whole time. Kept saying he wasn't always a junkie. Said it started after he turned 30, went to some party. The air was thick with meth fumes, everyone around him looked like they were having the time of their lives. He thought, What's the big deal? One try won't kill me.

"Then came the second time. After that, it was all he could think about. Next thing he knew, he was camped out at the dealer's door at 5 a.m., ready to buy. Now he's in the hospital, heart stopping every other minute. When the cravings hit, he's shaking, scratching, bawling about how stupid he was, saying this isn't him, he shouldn't have ended up like this. Then he gets worked up, the monitor freaks out, heart stops again, and I've got to jump in and save him. Again."

Emmm.

Talk about the ultimate environmental contagion.

"Getting on your nerves?" Adam asked casually. "Hand him over to me—I'll take him off your hands."

"You?" Cristina blinked, surprised. "For real?"

"I want to hear his story," Adam said, covering his real motive.

He couldn't exactly admit he was intrigued by a case that might let him "farm lifespan," right?

"Fine by me," Cristina said, piecing it together with his writer background. She jumped at the chance before he could back out. "Deal! He's all yours—I'm done with him!"

"No problem," Adam said, nodding with a smile.

He was curious to see if this could actually work for stretching out lifespans.

"What about that neighbor?" Adam asked, shifting gears.

"Callie's handling him," Cristina said, sounding a little disappointed. "Burns, fracture—nothing major."

"He's innocent—a real pity," Meredith piped up. "Sixty years old, all alone, thought his neighbors were like family. He'd watch their kid all the time. Even after the explosion hit him too, when he got to the hospital, he didn't care about his own injuries—just kept asking about his 'family' next door."

"Turns out he saw them as family, but they just saw him as a free babysitter," Cristina said with a scoff. "Every week on their little meth-cooking day, they'd dump the kid on him so they could focus on their 'career.'"

"You can't really blame him," Adam said, shaking his head. "Not just a lonely old guy—even regular people wouldn't hand their kid over to someone unless they felt close, right? The parents doing that would make anyone think it's a sign of trust, like being 'family.' Isn't that how it works?"

Anyone who knows a thing about the dark side of American TV dramas gets why you've got to protect kids from everyone—neighbors, coworkers, acquaintances, relatives, friends, even family...

Take *The Big Bang Theory*. Penny meets Leonard and Sheldon on day one and waltzes into their apartment to shower, asking Leonard to bring her a towel. Day two, she hands him her spare key. Either Penny's a total pro, fearless of any shady scenario, or it's wild.

Otherwise, the towel thing—or Sheldon using that key to sneak into her place at night while she's snoring, tidying up her apartment, with Leonard joining in—stops being a quirky comedy. It's either an action flick or a horror movie. Most likely both—an action-horror hybrid.

Or maybe an action-comedy. Picture Leonard and Sheldon actually being evil, but total weaklings. Penny, with those massive hands Sheldon always rags on and Leonard backs up, unleashes some kung-

fu-style grapple move. She grabs them—one in each hand—hoisting a pathetic Sheldon and an overstimulated Leonard, who's wheezing through his asthma inhaler while grinning like a creep. With a wicked laugh, she drags them back to her bedroom and tosses them on the bed...

Chapter 746: If You Can Laugh, I'll Admit Defeat

Medical Center

After Lunch

Ward

Adam took over a sulky "Ouyang Feng" from Cristina.

"Carter, you're on bedside duty," Adam said after finishing his check-up, handing the task to Carter, who'd been staring at him eagerly. "If anything goes wrong again, page me immediately!"

"Yes, Dr. Duncan!" Carter straightened up, chest puffed out, eyes gleaming with determination.

Being back under Adam's wing felt amazing to him.

Adam caught the vibe and smirked. That kind of enthusiasm reminded him of his past life—stuck in an office, relegated to the seat closest to the door, facing away from it. There was a weird sort of familiarity to it.

Sure, he needed to test if this could "farm some lifespan," but Adam couldn't babysit Ouyang Feng forever. That'd raise eyebrows. For something this minor, other residents handed it off to interns—Adam was no exception.

Stepping out of the room, he headed to check on the "Future Madame Curie" to see how she was doing post-surgery.

As he approached her ward, he peeked through the window. The patient was awake, staring at Lexie with a pained expression, desperately asking questions.

The surgery had gone well, but her burns were severe. She was wrapped up like a mummy, only half her face exposed.

"How did I..." she rasped.

"You were heating methamphetamine, and the stove exploded," Lexie said, her voice soft with sympathy.

"Oh..." The woman's memory clicked into place. She struggled to ask, "My..."

"Your husband and son are okay," Lexie jumped in, knowing what she meant. "But your son's addicted from passive exposure. He had a stroke earlier, just went through surgery—it went well. Your husband's been taken by the police. I think they'll come for you next..."

The visible half of the woman's face twisted in agony. Her eyes screamed despair, but she couldn't cry—just opened her mouth as her tightly wrapped body began to tremble.

"Mrs. Christ, are you okay?" Lexie asked, suddenly nervous.

"Breathe!" Adam stepped in, moving to the bedside. He demonstrated a deep breath, urging her to follow. "Come on, slow it down—breathe!"

Meeting her hopeless gaze, he softened his tone. "I know it feels like everything's over, but this is just a hurdle. You can get through it. Think about your son."

"Phew." Mrs. Christ locked eyes with Adam, mimicking his breathing. After a while, she steadied herself from the brink of hyperventilation and managed to croak, "My son... will he..."

"His custody's going to his grandmother," Adam explained.

Once she was calm, Adam left the room, motioning for Lexie to follow.

"Dealing with patients takes skill," he said. "When you deliver bad news, you've got to be careful—stay polite and objective, no emotions, but don't come off cold."

"..." Lexie blinked. "How do you manage no emotions and not cold at the same time?"

"Politeness keeps it from being cold; objectivity keeps the emotions out," Adam clarified. "Look polite, speak factually—that's the balance. If you, as a doctor, slip from that—whether you get teary with them or go too detached—it can rile up a grieving patient or their family. That's when things spiral out of control, and we can't let that happen. Understand?"

"...Yeah," Lexie said with a wry smile.

She was an emotional person—full of empathy for patients and their families, naturally drawn into their pain. Not being cold? Easy—she couldn't be cold if she tried. But no emotions? That went against her very nature.

"I know you don't fully get it yet," Adam said with a nod. "That's fine—it's something you can train. Part of my job is teaching you. Starting tomorrow, you're on diagnosis delivery duty. Oh, and Melendez—you two are a team.

When you can stop cheering for a patient's good news or crying over their bad news—staying polite, objective, and composed—that's when you're done."

"Ah!" Lexie's face fell. "What if I can't do it?"

"Can't do it?" Adam gave her a meaningful look. "I believe you can. Otherwise, while everyone else is busy with surgeries, you'll be stuck handing out results every day. After a while, even if the patients and families are thrilled, you won't be able to muster a smile."

"..." Lexie shuddered.

Usually, only good-news diagnoses got dumped on a single intern to distribute. Bad news? That was for attending or bedside docs to handle personally. Good news brought smiles—anyone could deliver it. Bad news, though? Patients and families couldn't handle it—they'd pepper you with questions about details and alternatives. An intern like Lexie wouldn't stand a chance.

For someone ambitious like her, being stuck with grunt work anyone could do would drain her. Emotional as she was, when she couldn't smile anymore, she'd hit that ideal state: no feelings, yet not cold.

As for pairing her with Shorty Melendez? One, he'd show her what "no emotions" looked like, helping her adjust. Two, it'd force him to work on not being cold. That guy's arrogance? If he didn't tone it down and ran into a patient or family with the same vibe, their grief could turn into resentment—thinking he was too callous. Things could get ugly.

Don't say it's impossible. Look at Dr. House next door—his sharp tongue had earned him complaints and even fists. Regular patients, with no pull, just had to suck it up. But if he ever ticked off someone with power who wouldn't back down? He'd be toast. With all his flaws, they wouldn't even need to overstep—just follow protocol strictly, and he'd be miserable.

House had dodged that bullet so far—pure luck. It's why Adam figured he was a protagonist.

House's cautionary tale was right there in New Jersey. So Adam believed in training his interns right from the start—instill good habits early. In a world this harsh on doctors, non-protagonists had a high chance of crashing and burning.

He hadn't watched much medical TV, so he didn't know the original fates of his four interns. But he'd bet George and Lexie weren't destined for smooth rides. They were probably from Grey's Anatomy—he'd caught a few episodes in his past life. With Meredith as the lead, George and Lexie were sidekicks. Sidekick doctors tend to get the short end of the stick, so their original paths likely sucked.

Lexie being a Grey, though, might mean she could outshine her half-sister and rise up. As for Neil Melendez and John Carter? No clue—they didn't ring any bells.

Ring ring ring.

The phone rang.

"Hey, Rachel," Adam answered, only to freeze at her next words. "...I'll be right there!"

He hung up and bolted for the ER.

Chapter 747: Avengers Civil War

Medical Center. Emergency Entrance.

An ambulance screeched to a halt.

Two taxis pulled up right behind it.

"What's going on?"

Adam had braced himself for something wild, but when the ambulance doors swung open and he saw the scene on the stretcher being wheeled out, his jaw still dropped. 😬

"Brooke Boyd, female, 32 years old. Broken nose, facial injuries, scalp torn off, but vital signs stable," the paramedic reported, clearly trying hard to keep it together.

"And Phoebe Buffay, female, 32 years old. Dislocated shoulder, thigh injury, vital signs stable."

"She ripped my hair out!"

"She broke my shoulder!"

"You pushed me off the platform and broke your own shoulder, idiot!"

The two of them were like mortal enemies. Even with all those injuries, they were still screaming at each other—while lying on the same stretcher, tangled up together, locked in some kind of death grip.

In the middle of it all? A blood-stained white wedding dress, clutched tightly by both of them. Neither was letting go. Nope, not a chance.

"Mike!"

Adam shouted at Phoebe's fiancé, "Ant-Man" Mike, who'd just hopped out of one of the taxis following the ambulance. "What the hell happened?"

"Ugh," Mike sighed, throwing his hands up. He looked totally lost, like he didn't even know where to start.

"Adam, wait, she's your friend?!"

A woman who'd come with Brooke stepped out of the ambulance and spotted Adam. She didn't hold back. "You need to rein her in! She went way too hard—acting like some street thug!"

"Kelly, is this your friend?" Adam greeted her, trying to smooth things over. "Let's not get into that right now. We need to separate them first so I can treat them. You talk some sense into your friend too, okay?"

Kelly Bradshaw was a columnist for a New York city paper. Her column, *Sex and the City*, loved digging into relationships from a woman's perspective.

Ermmm.

No surprise she's a female writer—she clocked Phoebe's vibe in a heartbeat. Just look at Brooke's injuries: broken nose (face-smash), facial scratches (claw marks), scalp torn off (hair yank). Total street-fighter Phoebe signature moves. 🤔

Tsk!

Ripping off a chunk of scalp? Phoebe, the queen of street brawls, didn't mess around!

As for why Adam knew Kelly? Totally normal. They were both big names in New York's literary and publishing scene. You'd have to be living under a rock not to cross paths at some event or another.

Back in the day, Kelly had even tried to pull the "cougar move" on him.

But newbie Adam shut that down fast.

First, even though she called herself a "beauty writer," her looks didn't impress him.

Second, she had this annoying habit—kinda like a certain famous pop star down the road—of turning her love life (or her friends') into juicy, detailed columns.

And with a column name like *Sex and the City*, you knew she wasn't shy about spilling the tea—private convos, bedroom secrets, ex-boyfriend drama, all of it.

That's how she made her name. Real-life stories, spicy as hell, guaranteed to grab attention. Her readers? Not just city gals—plenty of thirsty dudes too.

Barney Stinson was one of them.

His own "playboy diary" was basically a rip-off of Kelly's relationship columns, just flipped to an unapologetic player's perspective. He poached a ton of readers from her fanbase—guys and girls.

They represented totally opposite crowds, so naturally, they were always trading shots in their columns. Kelly was the pro. Barney was the amateur.

But Adam knew they'd already hashed it out in person once. Now, their "feud" was mostly just a gimmick to keep people hooked.

"Let go!"

"No way! She lets go first, or I'm not budging—even if I die!"

The second Adam tried to play peacemaker, the two locked in their standoff started yelling again.

By then, the two taxis had parked, and two groups piled out.

Adam couldn't believe his eyes—all familiar faces.

One group? Rachel, Ross, and Joey, of course!

Monica was eight months pregnant, and after Adam's strict orders, no one dared drag her into this mess. Chandler was glued to her side, so they sat this one out. Phoebe hadn't called them in.

The other group? Kelly's three gal pals: Samantha, Miranda, and Charlotte!

The four of them were a tight crew, kinda like the Friends gang.

Ermmm.

Okay, their bond wasn't nearly as warm and fuzzy as the Friends crew, but it also had less soap-opera drama than some knockoff girl squads from later shows.

Kelly was a newspaper columnist, not some word-obsessed magazine editor's assistant.

Miranda was a high-flying lawyer, Harvard Law grad, though her personality wasn't quite boss enough to be the group's brain trust.

Samantha was a big-shot Manhattan PR queen—outgoing, tough, worldly. She was the brain trust, though she didn't mess with accounting or finance degrees.

Charlotte ran an art gallery, appreciating beauty but not racking up art awards herself.

"This is all your fault!"

"No, it's your fault!"

"Bitch, don't get cocky—wanna fight again?"

"Bring it! My friends don't mess around!"

With their squads rolling up, Phoebe and Brooke got even louder, hyping themselves up like they were ready for a full-on brawl.

Rachel, Ross, Joey, and Mike lined up behind Phoebe.

Kelly, Samantha, Miranda, and Charlotte backed Brooke.

Both sides squared off, tension crackling.

Adam, stuck in the middle, didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

What even was this?

Phoebe's side had baby-faced Ant-Man Mike, while Brooke's crew was all women.

Avengers vs. the Women's League?

Civil War: Avengers edition? 😊

"Okay, seriously, what happened?"

Adam threw his hands up to stop them from getting any closer and turned to a guy stepping out of one of the cars, a badge dangling around his neck.

"Store contest. I'm the ref," the guy said, looking exhausted. "Whoever holds onto the wedding dress last wins."

"Winner gets their dream wedding!"

"My wedding!" Phoebe and Brooke shouted through gritted teeth, powering through their pain.

"Dream wedding?" Adam raised an eyebrow. "So, it covers the wedding costs, right? What's the cap?"

"\$100,000," the ref said, glancing at the gossip-hungry crowd as he dropped the number.

Gasp!

The med staff watching the drama unfold sucked in a collective breath.

Now it clicked why they'd fought so hard.

"Which store's running this?" Adam quipped. "Don't tell me it's Stinson's Bridal Shop or something."

He wouldn't put it past Barney Stinson. Only a rich, bored, chaos-loving guy like Barney would throw that kind of cash at a prize just to watch two brides-to-be duke it out.

"Why not just split the money? \$50,000 each?"

Adam knew it couldn't really be Barney's shop—otherwise, Barney'd be here front-row, popcorn in hand.

"No way!"

"It's not about the money anymore!" Phoebe and Brooke snapped.

"I pitched that idea 14 hours ago," the ref muttered under his breath.

"14 hours ago?" a nurse blurted out. "How long have they been at this?"

"Two whole days!"

"Do you know what it's like standing in a display case for two days straight? The willpower that takes? It's the coolest thing I've ever done—I'm not giving up!"

"Oh, please, you don't even know what real grit looks like, missy!"

Phoebe and Brooke were at it again, trading barbs.

Everyone else: "..."

Chapter 748: The Buff Guy and Poison-Hand Phoebe

Medical Center. Emergency Room Entrance.

Avengers vs. the Women's League!

But let's be real—the Women's League is clearly dominating. 😊

On one side, you've got bride-to-be Brooke, who's got no filter, plus Sex and the City's Carrie, who can talk your ear off, and high-powered lawyer Miranda. Oh, and don't forget Samantha, the elite PR queen whose trash talk is straight-up legendary. Their firepower? Off the charts.

Then there's the Avengers' side.

Aside from maid-of-honor Rachel pitching in and Joey grinning like an idiot while cheering for no reason, it's all on bride-to-be Phoebe to carry the team with her shouting.

"Ant-Man" Mike's just standing next to Phoebe, looking awkward and totally green.

And Ross? He's lurking in the back, practically radiating "I'm just here to fill space and might bolt any second" energy. Total wimp vibes. 😊

But honestly, no one's shocked. This kind of chaos, with Phoebe in the mix, is basically Ross's worst nightmare.

"Enough!"

Adam yells, cutting through the madness. "Do none of you care about money or what?"

"Nope!" x2

Phoebe and Brooke shout in perfect sync.

"Alright then," Adam says, turning to Brooke. "I know Phoebe doesn't care about cash—she's legit fine skipping a fancy wedding. She donated her whole budget to the New York Children's Charity Fund and was just gonna hit up City Hall for a quick 'I do.' What about you?"

Mike hears this and immediately drops his head, avoiding eye contact. His face is burning.

He'd been with Phoebe when she made that donation, and oh man, that scene...

"I don't care about the money either!" Brooke snaps with a smirk. "My fiancé's loaded!"

"Exactly!" Samantha chimes in. "That kind of cash wouldn't even get you a decent band—just some mediocre one, tops!"

"Fine!" Adam grins. "Since you're all so chill about it, why not donate the money to the Children's Charity Fund? No objections, right?"

"Nope, I'm good!"

"Doesn't bother me!"

Phoebe and Brooke lock eyes and shout it out.

Okay, saying they don't care at all is a stretch.

Phoebe did donate her wedding budget to the charity—true story. But then she tried on a veil, felt like a total goddess, and ran back to get the money. She wanted that big, dreamy wedding after all.

Then she regretted it, went back to donate again, changed her mind mid-handover... rinse and repeat. She kept waffling—handing over the cash, snatching it back before they could take it—until the charity staff got so fed up they straight-up refused her donation. 😊

She and Mike scraped together their wedding fund themselves. Mike's a rich kid, sure, but he's not into mooching off his parents. His gig as a pianist is freelance and spotty, so their savings? Not exactly overflowing. Probably less than 50 grand, tops.

Meanwhile, 100 grand? That's tempting as heck.

Only Phoebe could brush it off like that. If this were Monica back in the day, she'd have fought tooth and nail for that 100K to level up her wedding.

In the original timeline, when Monica and Chandler tied the knot, her parents had already blown her wedding fund. It was all on Chandler's savings—which, thanks to his smart money habits, were pretty solid. Monica was thrilled and ready to burn through it all.

Chandler wasn't thrilled at first. Blow years of hard-earned cash on one day? No way—he wanted a future too. But Monica wore him down, and he caved.

Like, fully caved. He even made a budget list to save a little, and she ripped it up and told him to drop dead. 😞

In this timeline, though, Adam's butterfly effect (and his deep pockets) spared Monica that drama.

But now Phoebe's facing the same dilemma.

No way she doesn't care about 100 grand. But with everyone watching, she's not about to admit it and lose face.

Brooke's in the same boat. She might not need the 100K, but an extra 100K for a fancier wedding? That's a no-brainer. Still, she's already said it's not about the money—she can't backtrack now.

A bride-to-be's pride is worth more than 100 grand!

"Alright, since the prize money's settled," Adam says, "can you let go of the dress now? Without the cash on the line, there's no point in this tug-of-war. If you keep going, it's just personal grudges.

Settle that whenever! Wait 'til you're healed up, then duke it out one-on-one. Or, heck, after the weddings, bring your husbands and have a couples' showdown!

But right now? You're both banged up. Drag this out, and those fractures or face bruises won't heal quick. You really wanna walk down the aisle looking like that?"

Phoebe and Brooke glance at each other, hesitating.

Adam catches it and shoots a look at Carrie and Rachel, signaling them to step in and talk some sense into the brides.

"I'll let go," Brooke says, still salty, "but the charity donation's gotta be in my name! I won this thing! I stood in that cabinet for two whole days—otherwise I'm just a clown!"

"No way! It's gotta be my name!" Phoebe fires back, hyped up. "I'm the real winner here!"

"..."

Adam's lip twitches.

Welp, all that convincing? Down the drain.

He gets it now—they both still want that 100K! Whoever's name's on the donation can just go reclaim it later. Sneaky!

As the argument heats up, Adam's eyes narrow. He steps over to Phoebe, checks her dislocated shoulder, and—without warning—snaps it back into place.

"Ow!"

Phoebe yelps, instinctively letting go of the dress.

"She let go! She let go! I win!" Brooke cheers, practically bouncing.

"Noooo!!!"

Phoebe realizes what happened and shrieks louder, glaring at Adam in disbelief.

"Congrats, you won!" Adam says to Brooke, his face turning serious as he checks her over. "But you need surgery—now."

"Huh?" Brooke freezes.

"You've got signs of internal bleeding. We need to check it out ASAP. If it's cranial and severe, you'll need surgery immediately!"

He shoots a look at Phoebe (who's still glaring) and turns to the usually invisible chief resident, Carrie. "Dr. Torres, Phoebe's all yours."

Carrie's an ortho doc—perfect for Phoebe's freshly reset shoulder.

With that, Adam grabs a gurney, ignoring Phoebe's protests, and wheels Brooke into the hospital.

Phoebe's got a mean hand! Brooke's already a mess on the outside, but internal injuries too? If Adam hadn't caught it, a delay could've been fatal.

Phoebe wouldn't have to worry about her stepdad—who stabbed someone in prison right before her wedding and couldn't get bail—any more. She'd be the one behind bars.

The news hits both Phoebe and Brooke hard.

They had no clue it was that bad. Both are shaken.

And Ross, way in the back, hears this and shivers—like he's a kid again.

Outside St. Mark's Comic Shop, little Ross was busy checking out Wonder Woman's latest skimpy-outfit drama, planning to "help her out" later. Then, out of nowhere, a "buff guy" jumped him, grabbed his ear with a pipe, and barked, "Give me your money, dummy!"

Phoebe did confess to Ross ages ago that she was that "buff guy." But only now, in his mind, do those two figures finally merge.

It's her!

It's her!

So scary! 😨

Chapter 749: I Think You're Sick

Medical Center. Hospital Ward.

After the CT scan, it turned out Brooke did have intracranial bleeding from Phoebe's brutal beatdown.

Good news? It wasn't a lot of blood, so no emergency brain surgery was needed—yet. They gave her some hemostatic meds, paired it with basic physical measures, and kept her under close watch.

What's next? Depends on how it goes. If the bleeding stops, awesome. If not, they'd have to consider surgery later.

"I won! I won!"

Brooke's fear finally faded, replaced by a flood of giddy excitement.

"Congrats! You're the champ!" Adam cheered her on, then shot a quick glance at the ref who'd been hovering nearby, waiting for his moment.

"Here's your prize!"

The ref practically tripped over himself to hand Brooke the \$100,000 check he'd been holding onto forever. Poor guy was done with this contest. He'd clearly regretted signing up for this gig.

And who could blame him?

Two brides-to-be duking it out for two straight days—he'd been stuck refereeing the whole time. He'd thought standing in a display case for 48 hours, followed by a bloody brawl with flying scalp chunks and a splattered wedding dress, was wild enough.

But one of them almost dying?

Nope, he didn't sign up for that!

Crazy brides-to-be were next-level terrifying! 🤪

"When I get out of here, I'm gonna donate it," Brooke said, admiring the check for a sec before explaining to Adam, who was busy tending to her facial wounds.

Normally, a job like this would've gone to Lexie or one of the others. But since Brooke was about to get married—and her face was a mess thanks to Phoebe—Adam decided to handle it himself. He wanted to fix her up as best as he could, hoping to avoid any future drama.

"On behalf of the kids those charities help, thank you," Adam said with a warm, genuine smile.

Did he believe her? Didn't matter—he acted like he did. And whether she actually donated later? Eh, no skin off his back. She'd bled and risked her life for that cash, after all.

"I will donate it!" Brooke insisted, staring at Adam's face, doubling down.

"I believe you," Adam replied, pausing his work to meet her eyes with the same sincerity.

That got a satisfied smile out of her.

"Hey, doc, could you check me out too later~?"

Over on the Sex and the City crew's side, after some hushed giggling, Samantha—the boldest of the bunch and a total PR queen—strutted over. She flashed Adam a flirty smile, already in full-on seductress mode.

Kelly and the others watched from the sidelines, smirking like they were waiting for a show.

Adam knew why. His hearing was freakishly good—way beyond normal. Even though they'd kept their voices low, he'd caught every word.

Kelly, Miranda, and Charlotte had been telling Samantha not to embarrass herself. Adam Duncan was New York's most elusive "diamond bachelor"—no exaggeration. Countless socialites had tried every trick in the book and struck out.

If it weren't for the fact that Adam was often seen with top-tier women, proving he just wasn't into the debutante type, people might've started rumors by now.

They didn't think Samantha—looking like she wanted to devour him—stood a chance. They teased that maybe Charlotte, the most reserved of the four, might have a shot instead. But Samantha? She was all confidence, all the time.

"Something bothering you?" Adam asked with a polite, professional smile.

"Right here~," Samantha purred, pointing to her chest with a dramatic flourish.

"You like sweets?" Adam asked casually, still focused on Brooke's wounds.

"Who doesn't love a little sweetness~?" Samantha replied, biting her lip.

"Drink a lot?" he followed up.

"Oh, totally," she teased. "I live for that buzzed feeling."

"Hmm." Adam nodded, then turned to the stone-faced intern standing nearby. "Melendez, take this lady for a checkup. Focus on screening for any lumps."

"Yes, Dr. Duncan," Melendez replied, looking at Samantha. "Ma'am, please follow me."

"Him?" Samantha frowned. "I don't want some intern poking at me—I want you, the pro!"

"Sorry," Adam said with a small smile. "I've got to finish patching up your friend here. Plus, this is a teaching hospital. Everyone gets interns—it's how they learn. Someday they'll be full-fledged docs saving lives. Oh, and fun fact: I was an intern myself just a few days ago."

"Pass, then," Samantha huffed, waving it off, clearly bored now.

She'd only wanted Adam's hands on her. Melendez might be cool in his own way, but compared to Adam? Not her type.

"Ma'am, I'd still recommend getting checked," Adam said, smiling. "Melendez, tell her why."

"Breast cancer rates are climbing every year," Melendez jumped in. "Aside from genetics, there are high-risk factors that stack up—like excessive drinking, high-fat diets, overeating, obesity, you name it. The more you've got, the higher the odds."

Samantha's face darkened.

She was a PR powerhouse with a killer career. That meant erratic schedules, scarfing down greasy junk food to save time, and boozing it up with clients—classic "top predator" moves. Drinking too much? That was just Tuesday for her.

All that fatty food, plus no real physical labor, meant the "overnutrition" part tracked too. But obese? Oh, hell no. She just had a big frame!

Ermmm.

Think Penny vibes—hanging with the nerds, she'd be the muscle. But in the world of American TV? That's not obese!

"Ma'am, early detection, early treatment," Adam added with a smile. "You mentioned chest pain—better check it out. If something's wrong, we fix it. If not, you're in the clear."

"Should we get checked too?" Kelly chimed in, seeing Samantha's mood sour and trying to lighten things up with a joke.

"Regular checkups are a must, especially for women," Adam said, giving Kelly a knowing look. "Kelly, still trading shots with Barney Stinson in your column?"

"What's that supposed to mean?" Kelly froze, a bad feeling creeping in.

"Nothing," Adam shrugged. "Just saying—a full physical wouldn't hurt."

He couldn't spill the beans about Barney's health, of course. But a little nudge? Fair game. Whether Kelly was that unlucky? Only time would tell.

After that, Samantha and Kelly weren't in the mood to flirt anymore. They trudged off with Melendez for their exams, looking grim.

"Were you just scaring them off so they'd stop hitting on you?" Brooke asked once they were gone, smirking like she'd cracked Adam's code.

"Nah," Adam laughed. "We're doctors—we tell it straight. Regular checkups are good for everyone, especially women! Take breast cancer: catch it early, treat it early, and the cure rate's super high.

It's easy too—physical exams, ultrasounds, X-rays, MRIs, whatever. Not like some men's cancers that are a pain to screen for. Most guys won't even bother unless they're desperate."

Ermmm.

Like prostate cancer—rectal exams scare off 90% of men.

Unless you're Sheldon, the overgrown kid who's weirdly cool with it. He'd probably let anyone check him out as long as they've got clean gloves—even a non-doctor!

Chapter 750: Where's the Peaceful Life?

Medical Center. Hospital Room.

Shorty came back quick.

Since it was time for a proper checkup, it made sense to go with a female doctor.

After handing them off, Shorty returned.

"Melendez, you're in charge of Ms. Boyd," Adam said. He'd just finished patching up Brooke and passed the bedside duties to Shorty with a few instructions before heading out.

Out of the four interns, Adam trusted Shorty the most right now. For a case with some personal vibes, Shorty was the obvious pick.

"How's she doing?"

The second Adam stepped into Phoebe's room, Rachel pounced with the question, all nerves. Everyone else turned to look too.

"Intracranial bleeding," Adam said, shooting a sideways glance at Phoebe, who was sneaking a peek at him. "But lucky for her, we caught it early. It's not a lot, so it shouldn't be a big deal. No criminal charges either—some people should be thanking their stars. That was one vicious hit."

"Psh, whatever!"

Phoebe, the tough big sis, shrugged it off. "That was nothing! I wasn't even trying. If I'd gone all out, she wouldn't have had the energy to keep fighting me."

"Oh, right, I forgot," Adam said with a nod, his tone dripping with sarcasm. "Even if you landed in jail, you'd be ruling the place—one hand on each pretty girl's ear, making them scream, 'We're your bitches!' You're the queen bee, huh? No biggie for you."

"Darn right," Phoebe said, puffing up proudly, totally missing Adam's jab.

Rachel, meanwhile, rubbed her ear with a blank stare.

She was flashing back to that time she and Monica got into it. Phoebe, stuck in the middle, couldn't calm them down—so she just yelled, "Big sis is stepping in!" Then she grabbed Monica's ear with one hand,

Rachel's with the other, and yanked until they were both yelping, "Ow, ow!" That ended the fight real quick.

Back then, Phoebe had grinned and said, "If this were prison, you'd both be my bitches..."

Emmm.

Don't ask why Phoebe's so good at that.

Sad childhood, that's all you need to know!

Plus, Phoebe's wild.

Take that time she mugged little Ross as a kid. It only came up years later because Ross and Phoebe were walking together when some guy tried to rob them. Ross handed over his wallet like it was nothing, even squealing when Phoebe hesitated—terrified the guy might shoot him if he got mad.

Turns out the robber was Phoebe's old buddy.

But Phoebe didn't know that at the time.

The dude said he had a gun, and Phoebe didn't even flinch. She was so chill it freaked Ross out—he thought she was about to throw hands and kept begging her, "No, no, no!"

This is New York, people! Crime-central New York!

They were facing a guy bold enough to rob them in broad daylight, claiming he was armed. If Phoebe weren't a legit "live or die, I don't care" tough chick, how could she pull off that vibe? 😬

"Try toning it down next time," Adam said with a helpless sigh. "Sure, you're not scared of jail, but you're not solo anymore. You want Mike sitting at home alone, waiting for you?"

Emmm.

Back when Mike was "Ant-Man," he got out of jail to find his wife and daughter shackled up with some other guy.

If Phoebe ended up behind bars and came out to see Mike with a new family, would she go full big-sis mode and squash "Ant-Man" Mike flat?

"Phoebe!"

Mike gave her the saddest puppy-dog eyes.

This time, her reckless chaos—and almost accidentally killing someone and going to jail for it—really shook him.

"...Fine," Phoebe caved. "I'll watch it from now on. Honestly, ever since I started hanging with you guys, I've chilled out. This time, she just pissed me off too much. Even then, I held back..."

"Then keep holding back—for us, for Mike," Adam said. "You got lucky this time, but next time? No guarantees. If you really want a dream wedding, just tell me. You're our friend—what's a little help between pals?"

"Nah, we're good," Phoebe shot back instantly. "We wanna do this ourselves. Otherwise, Mike's family's loaded—why would we need your cash?"

"Yeah!" Mike jumped in. "We just wanna make it on our own. Like Phoebe said, my parents'll kick the bucket eventually anyway~"

His folks live in a fancy three-story penthouse on Park Avenue in the Upper East Side, complete with servants.

"Heh."

Adam's mouth twitched. He knew Mike had that Chandler-style self-deprecating humor, but he still warned, "Better not let your parents hear that. Either you won't live to see that day, or Phoebe won't."

Parents like that have a trump card: if the main kid's a bust, they'll just start over with a new one.

They've got the cash—easy peasy.

So even if Mike's an only child and the top heir, if he ticks off his parents enough to get cut from the will? He's screwed.

Emmm.

Sure, he doesn't mooch now, living off his piano gigs. But that's only because he's still in the mansion, with servants handling the big expenses. That lets him play the "I'll live off my passion" card.

Piano money's nice when it comes.

No gigs? No sweat.

Worst case, he'd just go back and inherit the billions, right?

But if he's booted from the inheritance, with no safety net, living off piano gigs wouldn't be so "chill" anymore.

"Ha, ha."

Mike laughed awkwardly.

Seeing the air clear, Adam started giving Phoebe another once-over to check Carrie's work.

Carrie's solid, but not Adam solid. Phoebe's a friend—he had to make sure.

Good news: he was impressed. Carrie didn't snag that chief resident spot by luck.

"Got a date set yet?" Adam asked casually.

"Not yet," Phoebe said. "I'm debating whether to wait 'til Monica has her baby."

"Hm, if you're not in a rush, waiting's smart," Adam replied. "Monica's on her first kid, and this one's been a long time coming. Six weeks 'til her due date—she shouldn't be at stuff like this right now."

"Yeah," Phoebe nodded. "That's what I figured. No way my wedding's happening without Monica!"

"Push it back a bit—ten weeks at least," Adam said, doing the math. "By then, Monica might even be your wedding director."

"What?!" Phoebe gasped. "Now I'm thinking I should just get married ASAP!"

"Haha!"

Everyone cracked up.

Phoebe's reaction was classic—because they all knew Monica's OCD would take over. If she ran the show, it'd be her wedding, not Phoebe's.

Everything would follow Monica's rules. Even the bride wouldn't get a say!

"Your injuries need time too—ten weeks minimum," Adam said with a grin. "And Monica directing your wedding? It's not that bad. You think planning a wedding's as easy as it looks?"

Without Monica's obsessive passion, you'd be the one losing it. You'd probably ditch the whole thing before dealing with all that hassle."

"For real?" Phoebe squinted, skeptical. "Monica and Rachel's weddings seemed simple enough."

"..."

Everyone went quiet, all eyes on Adam.

Where's the peaceful life? It's just someone else carrying the load for you.