

## **Mute Bride 101**

### Chapter 101

“The police are still investigating exactly what happened. Apparently, he received an anonymous text and left his office in the afternoon. In the end, he was beaten up.”

Hans has a good temper and had just returned to the country. Who could he have offended?

Shaking her head, Janice said, “He’s a lawyer, and it’s very often that they offend someone. It’s not something surprising. We’ll have to wait for the police investigations to know the details.” When she saw the injury on Rachel’s legs, she added, “Let’s attend to your wounds first. I’ll take you there.”

At the debridement department of the hospital, the doctor bandaged Rachel’s wounds and left her with advice such as avoiding contact with water and such, to which she nodded obediently.

After Hans had his surgery done, he was wheeled into a ward, and Rachel stayed with him in the room. Later, Janice received a call and said that she had to leave at the last minute.

Go ahead. I’ll stay here. It’s fine.

“Please keep him company for a while then.”

On the hospital bed, Hans lay there with seven or eight stitches on his forehead, and he was still unconscious because the anesthetic had yet to wear off.

As Rachel tucked him under the blanket properly, her heart was in a mess. Hans had just returned to the country and barely received any cases. Why would he suddenly offend someone who would beat him up so badly?

“Is Hans staying in this hospital?” A familiar voice came from the door.

Jolted away from her thoughts, Rachel turned and saw that the door was pushed open as Justin stormed in in his black suit.

With a bang, the door closed behind him, and Rachel sprang up suddenly. The piercing pain in her knee made her face contorted with agony.

Justin's gaze went past her and fell on the bed behind her. "This is the emergency you told me? It is an emergency... if it's a funeral."

In an instant, Rachel felt as though she had fallen into a pit, and she stepped backward subconsciously until her thigh was pressed against the side of the bed. She held onto the rail at the end of the bed for support.

Looking at her coldly, Justin asked, "Don't you have an explanation for me?"

Hans lost a lot of blood in the surgery and he has a rare blood type. The blood bank in the hospital doesn't have enough, so I have to be here.

"Really? So you jumped off the car like a madman without any regard for your life, just because of a call?"

It was an emergency. I'm sorry. All of a sudden, she felt a tightness in her throat, and her hands stopped mid air as she tried to say something.

With his hand around her throat, Justin gripped her as easily as he was holding a chick. He was looking down at her from above, enveloping her in a dark shadow. She stopped breathing as he hissed, "I've warned you before, Rachel. As long as you're still Mrs. Burton, you have to stay away from other men. Looks like you didn't listen to a word I said, huh?"

No. Rachel shook her head lifelessly and struggled to gesture. Hans and I are only friends.

However, Justin was unmoved. As a man himself, he didn't believe at all that pure friendship could exist between a man and a woman. It seemed impossible to him that a man who was willing to travel

thousands of miles back from abroad for Rachel's sake had no designs toward her.

“So, does this mean that you will drop everything in your hands and come running toward him without a care whenever this friend of yours is in trouble? Is he the most important thing in your life?”

Choked by his grip, Rachel was unable to make a sound, and her face was turning blue. In those innocent eyes of hers, hot tears rolled around before falling down and dripping on the back of the man’s hand.

At that moment, a surprised look appeared in Justin’s eyes because a hand was suddenly grabbing the hem of his suit, and was tugging it downward strongly.

Without anyone noticing, Hans had woken up and had gotten a hold of Justin’s clothes. “Let her go!” he cried in a hoarse, trembling voice.

Rachel’s face was completely drained of color now. She yelled wildly in her mind, Let go quickly, Hans! Let go now!

“You’re asking for it!” Justin growled, his dark eyes narrowed.

Rachel coughed and abruptly lifted her neck, which was held in a death grip, and the last tiny gap in her throat for air was also blocked. In her dizziness, she felt herself being thrown to the side violently.

Then, she heard Justin’s loud voice in her ears as he barked, “Someone, come here and break one of his legs!”

Those words were like a bomb exploding in her head, and she saw two bodyguards barging into the room, but nobody from outside had the guts to stop them.

Like a madman, Rachel lunged forward and flung herself on Hans. Don’t come here! Stay away!

In spite of that, Justin merely spat coldly, “Pull her away.”

“Rae!”

Hans' eyes were bloodshot as he struggled to grab her, but the bodyguards peeled her away from him forcefully and dragged her aside roughly.

Pulling out a chair, Justin then sat down on it and said emotionlessly, "Do it."

One of the bodyguards raised a piece of wood and smashed it into Hans' calf with full force.

"Argh!"

The scream of the man echoed in the ward for a while.

Hans' eyes were about to pop out of their sockets, and his face was covered in cold sweat. Even though he was in so much pain that his veins were popping, he gritted his teeth and spat, "You... will die a horrible death!"

Justin merely lifted his hand and moved two fingers slightly. "Continue."

Blows rained upon Hans' leg like raindrops in a storm once more.

"Ah!"

The blood stain on the bed grew bigger, and Rachel started screaming madly, but all she could make were hoarse, terrible noises.

In the end, Hans passed out completely in a pool of blood on the bed which sent shivers down her spine, and she was released. Slumping to the floor lifelessly, she stared in disbelief at everything she

just witnessed, and she felt as though her heart had been ripped apart into a million pieces and was trampled on the floor.

A moment later, she heard the sound of shoes on the floor. She then saw a pair of shiny leather shoes in front

of her.

Clutching her by her cheeks, Justin forced her to lift her head. The face that had a scar left by a cut looked especially horrifying at this moment. "Did you see it? You caused all of this."

Rachel's eyes were bloodshot, and her face was covered in tears by now. Doctor! Where's the doctor?

Somehow, she managed to break free from his grip with a surge of strength, and she staggered to run outside. She wanted to get the doctor here because he could definitely save Hans.

However, Justin grabbed her hair and caught her back effortlessly. Then, her knees buckled, and she dropped to the ground heavily, sending a piercing jolt of pain through her that almost knocked her out.

"Where are you going?" A vicious voice could be heard above her head. He had his big hands pressed down firmly on her shoulders, pinning her to the floor.

As she knelt there on the floor, all sorts of emotions washed over her simultaneously-humiliation, rage, and despair. Without warning, she grabbed his arm and sank her teeth into it.

"Argh!" Justin grunted, and a look of pain flashed across his face as he released his hold on Rachel. He was already bleeding from her bite; even his white shirt was now stained red from the blood.

"President Burton!" the bodyguards exclaimed and rushed to support him.

Holding his arm, Justin glared furiously at the woman in a corner of the room. The edges of her lips were tinged red with fresh blood, and the look in her eyes was close to insanity as she stared at him with a deep hatred.

He had never seen her like this before.

## Chapter 102

A while later, Rachel stood up by leaning against the wall and staggering away.

The bodyguards wanted to stop her, but he said coldly, "Let her!"

Without Justin's permission, no doctor would listen to Rachel's request, not even if it was an emergency. Hans was crippled now, since there was a comminuted fracture in his left leg.

Later, Justin took her home by force and locked her up for three days. As a protest, she didn't even take one bite of the food the servants sent her. It was only three days, but she was only skin and bones at the end of it.

Riverdale was once again graced by rainfall and lightning. "She's still not eating?" The servant shook her head, looking troubled. Julian frowned when he heard that. "This can't go on." With that, he went upstairs.

"Hey, you can't go, Julian!" Sue tried to stop him, but to no avail.

Julian made a beeline for the bedroom. Rachel was curled up on the bed in her white nightgown, her hair unkempt, and her face pale. If he didn't know better, he would have thought she was dead. "Rachel." He quickly went up to her, but when he came closer, he carefully hunkered down, worried that any sudden move might make her break apart.

He knew better than anyone what not to do, since it was the same situation as last time. Back then, she was also curled up on the bed, and the bed was caked in blood. She looked like a broken, lifeless doll. "Rachel." He carefully held her shoulders. "What happened? Tell me."

But Rachel said nothing. She was shrouded in a deep, dark despair.

Julian felt powerless, but he had to carry on. "You have to live on no matter what happens. Your grandma needs you; don't forget about that. Just eat and keep on living. Everything will get better."

Rachel stared at Julian, but she didn't look like herself anymore. Her mind was blank. On the first day, all she could think of was how Hans' leg got broken. On the second day, all she could think of was everything that happened ever since she was married to Justin. It was maddening, and it almost killed her. But on the third day, she couldn't remember anything.

All she could think of was that she was a jinx; she thought perhaps everyone around her would be better off if she never existed. Nobody would be able to threaten them then. There was nothing in her gaze. Her eyes were lifeless.

Julian panicked. He couldn't take it anymore, so he held her up and whispered, "I'll take you away from this place."

Sue was shocked to see Julian coming out with Rachel. "What are you doing, Julian? What if Justin sees this? Put her back quickly!"

The moment she said that, Justin came in from the entrance with all his fury. When she saw Justin, Rachel quickly curled up further.

"I'm taking her away today no matter what." Julian's face darkened. "I'm not letting her die here."

"And why is she going to die?" Justin looked at him gravely.

"Because of your abuse."

"Is that so? Is that what you told him? That I'm abusing you?" Justin looked at her and came up to them.

All the color was drained from her face, and she gripped Julian's shirt.

"You're denying it?" Julian took a step back, alarmed.

Justin was still looking at Rachel calmly. "Your friend was injured because of you. You've been throwing a tantrum for a few days now. Yes, you blame yourself for this, but I don't think your friend would want to see

this, right?"

When Rachel heard this, she quickly looked up, and she started panicking.

Julian frowned, "What happened?"

"It's a long story. I'll tell you after she heals up."

Julian still had his suspicions, but Rachel tugged on his shirt and signed at him. Put me down.

That surprised Julian, but before he could put her down, Justin was already taking her from him. "You're still injured. Best not touch the ground."

Rachel shivered when she felt his anger, and she tried to break free, but Justin the criminal whispered, "You'd better follow my orders if you don't want me to break his other leg."

Rachel trembled, but Justin took her back up nonetheless. Even though she was in his arms, all she could feel was a terrifying iciness, and all the alarm bells went off in her head, as if any sudden movement might break her down.

"Hans' report is out. Comminuted fracture in his left leg."

Rachel paled. You're a madman, Burton!

"You should have known it's not easy dealing with me the moment you married me. Everything you have comes from me. You have no choice but to follow my orders from now on." Justin the abuser looked at her coldly. "Or I won't mind seeing him wheelchair-bound for the rest of his whole life."



Rachel shuddered heavily.

After he put her down, Justin tossed a document on the table. "Share transfer agreement. Sign this, and you'll be one of the biggest shareholders. You'll have the right to take part in the BOD meetings."

Rachel couldn't bring herself to look at it. If she knew the deal would cost Hans his left leg, she would have killed herself back in the car crash.

"Sign it," Justin threatened her coldly. He gripped her hand tightly and moved it to the signature line.

Rachel gritted her teeth and signed the papers, but every stroke felt like torture for her. Tears started falling on the paper, and along with it, the last remnants of hope within her.

Justin frowned heavily, as if his sorry excuse of a conscience was telling him to stop.

I won't see Hans again. Let him go.

However, Justin's ego was so fragile that one little plea was enough to make him go berserk and engulf his conscience. What replaced it was boundless evil. "Come with me to Tina's engagement banquet this weekend. You'd better stay in line and act your part as Mrs. Burton," he threatened her once again and

stormed off with the agreement.

Rachel plopped down on the carpet and sat there for a long time, all the while holding the edge of the table, trembling in fear.

After the share transfer, Rachel became one of the shareholders of Hudson Pharmaceuticals, and the finance department stopped treating her like garbage. She went into the office to check the accounts, but she found no trouble with it. However, she suspected that the chief had another account in his hands.

On the other hand, Janice ordered a cup of coffee and waited for her below the company.

Sorry. Been busy the last couple of days.

"I know. I saw the news. Congrats." Janice had a dark look in her eyes. She was different from usual.  
"Why did that happen to Hans?"

## Chapter 103

Rachel gritted her teeth as she held her despair in. I don't know.

"You don't know? I was gone for less than two hours, but he was already unconscious when I came back. Blood was everywhere, but you were nowhere to be seen. And you tell me you don't know?"

How is he looking now?

"Take a guess, genius," Janice growled. "Comminuted fracture. The doctor suggests getting his left leg amputated and replacing it with a prosthetic. Do you have any idea what this will cost him?"

Rachel was still gritting her teeth while holding her tears in.

"What on earth were you thinking?"

I'm sorry

"Apologizing won't cut it! What are you doing? You're still helping them even at this point? What are you trying to cover up for those b\*stards?"

I'm still looking into it. Give me some time.

"I can afford the time, but not Hans!" Janice was furious. "Rachel, Hans has gone above the call of duty for you. He tried to get you away from the Burtons! Heck, Riverdale, even! But what did you do? You won't even tell me who broke his leg! If you're a novel protagonist, you'll be nothing but a coward!"

Rachel still wouldn't say it, but her fists were already red from all the clenching. She couldn't say it, for the Burtons were unbelievably powerful in Riverdale. Janice might be a deputy chief, but she still had to be careful, even with the Hudsons. There was no way she could take on the Burtons, who could effectively ignore the law. Rachel was clear that she needed more evidence and a more powerful individual to take Justin out.

"You aren't talking? Fine!" Janice slammed a document on the table. "This here is a formal complaint. I'm sure Justin's behind this. The prosecutor is already looking into the case. I hope you'll be the witness on the day of the trial. I pray that you at least have that shred of conscience left. You'd be nothing but trash otherwise." Janice then stormed off.

Rachel was left alone in the café, looking pale. A while later, she drove to the hospital herself. Before she got into the ward, she heard the doctor saying, "We'll need your family's permission for this surgery as soon as possible. It'll be better for you."

"My father's overseas, so he can't come at the moment. I don't plan on telling them either, so I'll sign it," Hans answered weakly.

Rachel knocked on the door, but she didn't have the courage to go in.

"Rae?" Hans looked up to see who was there.

The doctor said, "Think about it then. I'll be leaving now."

"Yes. Thank you, doctor." Hans patted the edge of his bed. He was listless, but he managed to smile. "Come in. Have a seat."

Hans' left leg was in a thick bandage, and the blanket couldn't cover it. Rachel was heartbroken to see him in this state. She felt a surge of sadness coming up, and she started crying. I'm sorry.

"You don't have to apologize, silly girl. Stop crying though. It'll ruin your makeup." Hans raised his hand, but he realized he couldn't reach her. There was barely any distance between them, but he couldn't

make it. That realization made him despondent. "You can't stay with the Burtons anymore, Rae. Justin is too dangerous."

This is my fault.

"It's not. I might have lost a leg, but we can still make it if we cut our losses right now. Come with me, Rachel. I can't protect you here." That was the most powerless Hans felt after he came back. He used to be a proud young man who thought that a sense of justice alone was enough to destroy the world's injustice. But in the face of the cold, hard truth, his light was swallowed up by the darkness, and what replaced it was an overwhelming powerless feeling.

Rachel clenched her fists, keeping quiet for the longest while. Just drop the case, alright?

Hans was shocked. "What did you say?"

Drop the case against Justin and go overseas to get treated. Never come back. Rachel was holding an enormous pain within her; only her tears could express it. She knew how hurtful it must have been for Hans, but she had to say it.

"Are you scared of him, Rachel? Did he threaten you?" Hans flew into a rage. "You don't have to be scared of him. My firm has the best lawyers in the nation. They said the evidence is enough. If we go to trial, we can send him to prison!"

That won't happen.

"Nothing's impossible! We just have to work for it!" He tried to hold her arm, but the searing pain from his leg forced him back onto the bed.

Rachel quickly held him.

"You have to divorce him, Rachel!"

That can't happen! Just listen to me, Hans! If you're doing this for my own good, then drop the case!

"What if I refuse to?"

They stayed in a stalemate for a long while, and Rachel kept gritting her teeth. I've fallen for him. I can't leave him. Everything will be better if you just leave.

Hans was horrified to hear that. He quickly gripped her arm. "Impossible! You wouldn't fall for a demon like him!"

Rachel was unbelievably calm, and she pulled her arm away. Just drop the case if you're really my friend. Thank you. With that, she stood up. Speedy recovery.

"Rachel!" Hans yelled after her, and he fell off the bed in an attempt to catch up to her.

Rachel's hand trembled, but in the end, she steeled herself and left without turning back. She just pushed away the only man in the world besides her grandmother who actually cherished her. God knew how much that hurt. How did it come to this? She didn't have time to think about that. All she could do now was the next right thing, and the next right thing was making sure the villains got their just desserts; that included Jefferey and Justin.

Tina's engagement banquet was held on the weekend as scheduled. The hall was resplendent and ostentatious, just like how Tina was. Rachel came all alone after sorting out the finance data that morning.

"Rachel!" a familiar voice called out to her, and she could recognize it anywhere.

Gloria was in a sea blue dress that day. She lifted her dress slightly and trotted up to Rachel, a smile plastered on her face. "You're late, Rachel. Justin's right there. I'll take you to him."

Rachel nodded, but just when they were about to leave, they ran into Tina and Amber. Tina was the star of the day, so she was wearing a disgustingly white dress, looking like a villainous princess out of a tacky TV show.

The moment she saw Rachel, Tina rolled her eyes. "I did not have to see her today."

"You're here too, Rachel?" Amber looked at Rachel and Gloria oddly. "And I thought you wouldn't come. Everyone thought Justin only brought his secretary with him. Wow, even a secretary outranks you now, Rachel?"

Rachel clenched her fists, but she didn't have a good comeback for that.

## Chapter 104

As Gloria hated seeing the two, she dragged Rachel and walked away. "Let's go."

Rip! Just then, a sound pierced between the quartet.

"Ah!" Amber screamed. "Gosh, Tina-your dress!"

Unfortunately, it was already too late by the time Rachel realized it. Her heel had been on Tina's dress right then, tearing the white lace apart with an accidental step and causing a big hole in her outfit.

"You did that on purpose, didn't you?!" Tina exclaimed, her face filled with fury.

Meanwhile, Rachel hastily stepped aside. At that moment, they heard another ripping sound. It turned out that her heel was stuck in the hole she had just made on Tina's dress, and Rachel ended up enlarging the hole as she jerked her leg away, and it seemed rather ridiculous.

I'm sorry!

"What are you signing about?" Tina was utterly vexed as she exclaimed. "You must have done it on purpose! You want to embarrass me in front of everyone, don't you?" As she spoke, she shoved Rachel away.

“Be careful, Rachel!” Thanks to Gloria’s swift senses, she quickly held onto Rachel before getting in front of her. She then said, “It’s just an accident. It’s pretty obvious to me that Rachel was trying to apologize. What do you want more from her? It’s just a dress!”

“Just a dress, you say?” Amber crossed her arms. “Oh, little girl! Do you know how much effort was put into making this dress? A craftsman from Italy spent one whole year sewing every single thread with his own hands! This dress could buy an entire city!”

While Amber was adding fuel to the fire, Tina yelled with a dull face, “Security, send her out of the building!”

At once, the security guards rushed over. When the guards grabbed Rachel, she staggered and almost fell, feeling so ashamed that she wanted to dig a hole and hide herself. Upon witnessing this, the people around them had no idea who she was, and they gave her judgmental stares while criticizing her.

Seeing this, Gloria shouted, “How are you all being so unreasonable? Let go! Let go of her!”

“This is my engagement banquet! This is my house! Who are you to give orders?”

Tina proceeded to leer at her guards. “What are you waiting for? Send her out right away!” she yelled.

Tactfully, the security guards tossed Gloria outside the premises as well.

“Ah!” Gloria shrieked as both women fell onto the ground simultaneously.

Out of the blue, a figure walked out from the shadows of the crowd. When he saw that the two of them had collapsed to the ground, Justin hurried over and helped Gloria up before interrogating Tina, “What’s the big deal?”

Once Gloria got up, Rachel, who was still lying on the ground, felt the weight off her. Although her knees were still tingling, she forcefully supported herself against a table beside her and barely managed to stand up, all the while remaining silent.

For some reason, Justin withdrew his extended hand as he looked at Rachel in confusion.

“Did you bring her here to throw shade at me, Justin?” Given Tina’s temper and the fact that she was the highlight of the night, she was remarkably bold. “She deliberately destroyed my dress and ruined my banquet! How is she going to pay for this?”

To that, Justin’s eyes darkened. “So that’s why you had the guards throw them out?”

Immediately, Tina was stunned.

“Who laid their hands on these women?” Justin swept his gaze across the squad of security guards, who instantly lost their uniformity upon the man’s intimidation.

“Perhaps I should break all of your arms!” As he casually spat those words, the room consequently got quiet.

Among the crowd, some stared at each other in a baffled manner while others gasped out of shock. Rachel was stunned as well, for she had never expected Justin to be this outraged.

In the nick of time, Jason and Noah arrived at the scene upon hearing the chaos. “What’s all this about?”

As he held Tina’s hand, Noah then questioned, “Are you hurt, Baby?”

The woman had a long face as she shook off Noah’s hand.

Several people from the crowd quickly ran toward Noah and briefly relayed what had happened earlier in a whisper. At once, Noah chuckled and said, “It’s no big trouble. It’s just a dress, Baby. I’ve got another one prepared just for you. Why don’t you go and get changed?”

Having said that, he turned to Justin and stated, “We’re a family. Justin, so don’t be so hostile. It’s just a minor



quarrel, and it's not like you don't know how Tina's temper is. She's just her stubborn self! But for some reason, there are voices constantly telling her to misbehave!"

Despite fooling around most of the time, Noah was pretty perceptive when it came to determining what kind of personality one possessed. He then proceeded to give Amber a threatening scowl.

At that, the woman's face turned pale. Noah then continued, "The banquet is starting soon. Spare me some pride, will you, Justin?"

When he saw how Justin had no intention of pursuing the matter, Noah asked Tina to go and get changed before he dispersed the crowd, finally keeping the situation under control.

"I'll come and drink with you later, Justin. Hope that's enough for an apology." After he finished speaking, Noah walked away.

Meanwhile, Rachel slowly calmed down as she stood by the side.

"You good?" Justin's voice was heard from the front.

Rachel was momentarily dazed by this, and she raised her head to see Justin holding Gloria's hand, checking to see if she had any injuries. "Let's visit the doctor later."

"I'm fine. Tina's a bullying b\*tch! That's right-Rachel!" As Rachel popped up in her mind, Gloria turned around

and quizzed, "Are you fine, Rachel?"

In response, the woman shook her head.

At the same time, Justin's eyes fell upon Rachel, who was lurching while holding herself up at the table. In that instant, there was a trace of sympathy in his eyes, but it quickly vanished when the woman turned to him.

“Go get rested if you’re hurt.” It was yet another emotionless string of words, but that didn’t affect Rachel since she had long gotten used to his apathy.

Meanwhile, Gloria witnessed the darkness in his eyes and it made her ponder.

Since Rachel was injured, her knees were in so much pain that she couldn’t walk properly. As such, she could only stay still in the resting area while Gloria tended to the guests along with Justin. When she saw the both of them traveling among the masses, Rachel felt even more like a stranger, not knowing why Justin insisted that she attend the banquet. All this stepping on me just for the sake of the Burtons’ dignity?

“Honestly, who’s that Gloria lady?”

A familiar voice sounded from her back, and before she realized it, Amber was already right beside her. At her sister’s presence, Rachel immediately frowned.

“Earlier on, I heard that Justin hired a young, female secretary who’s constantly following him around. I guess seeing is believing, and reality has smacked me in the face tonight. How could you allow her to stick around him so much like a bug?”

As she glanced at Amber, Rachel responded by signing a few words. Aren’t you constantly sticking to him too?

“D\*mn you...” Amber was visibly tilted. “Where is she from?” Earlier on, she had assumed that Justin was only protecting Rachel, but upon careful observation, she realized that the man only cared for Gloria, and the guards were only hesitating because they were aware of Justin’s relationship with the younger woman. Thus, knowing that made Amber on edge.

I have no clue.

“How could you not know? Don’t you work at Burton Group? That’s his secretary! When did he hire her, and where is she from?”

If you want to know it so badly, why don't you go and ask her in person?

## Chapter 105

"Are you trying to start a fight with me? Don't think that you're superior just because you got a spot in the family. If not for Justin, how long do you think you'll be able to stay on the throne? Either way, I'm still impressed." Amber suddenly lowered her body. "Hans already got his leg broken, yet you're still attending the banquet with the assailant himself like nothing happened."

Instantly, Rachel's pupils contracted.

How did you know about it?

Even Julian had no clue that it was Justin who broke Hans' leg, but Amber knew everything about it!

It was you!

Rachel immediately straightened her back.

The whole episode of Hans being beaten up and sent to the hospital-it was all part of Amber's plan!

It must have been her!

To avoid the shares in her hand from getting transferred away, Amber came up with a plan to take Hans out to delay the transfer. Hence, she was always observing the entire incident, and that was also how she knew that Justin broke his leg afterward.

How could I have not seen this coming?!

As she stared straight at Amber, Rachel struggled to stand up by herself.

In response, her younger sister forcibly pressed her shoulder, shoving her back on the couch as she muttered, "Do you really think that Justin's not aware of this? Do you know what he's even more aware of? The fact that I'm the real heir to the Hudsons, and you're but a worthless accident!"

Like a blade that pierced through her chest to the heart, those devastating words hit Rachel's deepest wounds,

At once, Rachel's eyes reddened with tiny blood vessels.

Curse you, Amber!

"Hmph!" Amber replied scornfully. "If curses actually work, nobody would be able to live in this world. Since you're not doing anything about Gloria, I'll do it myself, so you just wait and see!"

As she watched her sister's leaving figure, Rachel couldn't stop trembling as drops of tears flowed down her cheeks.

It's because of me... It's all because of me!

I shouldn't have dragged Hans along in the first place!

Everything is too late now!

At this time, a person in a tailcoat walking across the room came into Rachel's line of sight.

After regaining her senses, she seemed to have an epiphany. She swiftly held onto the couch as she struggled to get up.

After comforting Tina, Noah had exited the dressing room with a delighted face, clearly satisfied with the engagement party.

Although it was merely a business engagement, it was still a boost to his name as his fiancée was known by the public to be exceptional in terms of looks, academics, and capabilities.

All of a sudden, he was blocked by a simple figure.

“You are?”

In front of him was a woman that appeared rather gentle with a pair of eyes that seemed to have wept earlier. Everything about her invoked pity.

Despite his history as a lady charmer, he had never seen one with such a look. At first glance, he had a slight indecent urge, to which he quickly took control of. “Rachel?”

‘I have something to tell you!

Rachel showed him her phone’s screen.

After adjusting his collar, Noah peeked around. “That’s not good, is it?”

‘It’s important, and it’s about Tina.

Upon reading that, he was slightly taken aback.

From the center of the banquet hall, the timbre of the piano graciously resonated throughout the air.

Meanwhile, every guest was awaiting the arrival of the lady of the night.

After fixing his bowtie, Jason, who was among the crowd, joyously waited for the official declaration of the integration between the Burtons and the Hindenburgs. Once that was accomplished, he would be even more respected among the board members in the Burton Group.

On the other hand, Gloria said, "I haven't seen Rachel in a bit-let me go and get her."

"Save it. She doesn't like such gregarious atmospheres."

Gloria peered at the man beside her in a daze. "You seem to know very well about her."

At that, Justin slightly tensed his brows.

Even he himself was unaware that trivial matters had started popping up in his mind, such as her liking for sweet and sour foods, her love for desserts, and her preference for silence over merriness.

"I remember how you didn't know how to read sign languages. Did you learn it for her sake?" Gloria's voice pulled him from his thoughts.

"How do you really feel about her?"

Her volley of inquiries forced him to question his own subconscious, yet after a long time of thinking about it, he didn't have a definite answer either.

"You're in love with her."

"No."

Justin answered rather quickly.

Upon that, Gloria's eyes dimmed. "In linguistics, when people give an answer so quickly without giving the question any thought, the person is most likely telling a lie."

At that, Justin's frown became deeper.

Before they could proceed with the conversation, music thundered across the banquet hall.

When they heard the music, the guests simultaneously turned toward the spiral staircase.

As she donned a snowy engagement dress, Tina appeared like a queen as she walked down the stairs to the platform of flowers, waiting for Noah to come and get her.

Noah, who came out from a door at the opposite side of the room in his ebony tailcoat, appeared as if he was particularly full of energy.

However, his expression was somewhat hideous as he furiously paced toward Tina.

A loud slap soon pierced through the banquet hall, leaving the masses' jaws wide open.

Noah sent Tina falling against the railing with one smack as he yelled furiously, "You b\*tch! Has it been fun toying with me for so long?"

Tina pressed her face and stared at him in disbelief. "How dare you hit me?"

"That's not the only thing I want to do. I'm declaring that this engagement is officially canceled!"

"What?"

Jason rushed toward Noah in a panic. "Are you mental, Noah?"

"Am I mental?" Noah let out a disdainful scoff before he proceeded to pull Tina's hair and violently strangled her neck. "This woman is so shameless! Despite our engagement, she's been seeing another

man behind my back, and she even bore a child for that imbecile! How bold of the Burtons to present such an unfaithful lady to the Hindenburgs! Tell me, who's the crazy one here?"

Immediately, the guests gasped in shock and their whispers started filling the banquet hall.

At once, Jason's face stiffened. "That's nonsense, Noah! Who told you such crap? Don't defame Tina like that!"

"Is that so?" Noah continued to tug Tina's hair. The woman couldn't stop shrieking as she yelled, "Ahh!"

"Enlighten me, then-whose child is it that's inside you? Do you dare to take a DNA test?"

Instantly, Tina's face turned pale as she covered her abdomen, too afraid to voice a word.

After he finished speaking, Noah shoved her away from himself.

When she fell to the ground, Tina let out yet another scream of pain as she held onto the rail of the spiral staircase, unable to help herself up.

Jason was deeply embarrassed by this, and he attempted to stop Noah's frenzy. "Come on, Noah. Let's talk about it properly afterward, okay?"

"Zip it!"

Noah shouted furiously. With a swing of a hand, he grabbed Tina by her face. "This must be the reason you tried so hard to intoxicate me, wanting to f\*ck me so hastily that night, huh?"

As those humiliating words were loudly announced, the Burtons lost every trace of pride they had left.



Upon hearing that, Jason was so embarrassed that he could barely stand still.

If he had known that Tina was indeed pregnant, he would have forced her to abort it even if it was the end of the world. Little did he know, her ballsiness allowed her to conceal the truth even from her father!

Now, how was he supposed to clean such an enormous mess?

“Ah! Blood!”

An anonymous voice shouted just then, to which the crowd redirected their eyes at Tina’s crotch.

Evidently, blood was flowing down her little thighs as her white, silky dress was stained red. The view was rather nauseating.

As the woman’s father, there was no way Jason could leave her alone. Therefore, he ordered someone else to carry her and send her to the hospital. Meanwhile, the situation was getting out of control.

Gloria clutched Justin’s sleeves as her face turned pale. She said, “Oh, dear...”

In response, Justin patted her shoulders to comfort her. His composed mannerism suggested that he was used to such a sight.

It seems that playing with fire eventually got her burned.

“You’re not surprised at all... Have you known this long ago?”

“Yeah.”

“Did you cause all of this?”

“No,” answered Justin as he looked into the distance before asking his assistant, “Where’s the missus?”

With that, Gloria was baffled.

Indeed, they hadn’t seen her for a while.

As if he had thought of something, his face darkened all of a sudden.

“Where are you going?”

“Wait for me here. I’ll be right back.”

After leaving her behind, Justin hurriedly departed.

On the second floor of the banquet hall, Rachel was standing in the corner with the greatest view in the room.

Having witnessed everything that happened downstairs, she gripped the rail tightly. Her hands started shaking when Tina started bleeding and was sent to the hospital.

“Like what you see?”

A familiar man’s voice sounded from behind.

At once, her body froze. When she turned around, Justin’s hand was already on her neck. “Who gave you such balls to look for Noah?”

While being strangled, Rachel was forcefully pushed against the rail as her body was correspondent to the

ground. A release of a hand would drop her to the first floor.

Yet, she gritted her teeth.

I've got no idea what you're talking about.

"Oh, is that so?" Justin took a step forward as he tightened his grip. "Not many apart from you know about Tina and Henry's affair. You swear it's not you?"

Will you believe me if I say it's not me?

Rachel glanced at her surroundings from the corner of her eyes and saw the grand piano on the first floor. If she were to fall, she would be disabled if not dead.

Since she did not dare to shake him off too violently, she proceeded to sign a bunch of words. I don't even know about her pregnancy!

At once, Justin was stunned.

Indeed, even Jason didn't know about Tina's pregnancy, so how could Rachel possibly know about it?

With that, the force on her neck lessened as Justin pulled Rachel from above the rail.

The latter couldn't stop coughing as she held onto the rail.

"It better not be you. If I find out that you were the one who told Noah... You know what's coming for you!"

Stupefied, Rachel shook her head in panic as she staggered backward.

Upon seeing that, Justin was reminded of her injury from earlier, and he couldn't help but frown. "Why are you running around when you're still hurt? Is this not enough chaos for you?"

I just wanted to rest in a quieter place.

"Go home. Your business here is over."

Okay.

As she watched while Justin left, Rachel finally heaved a sign of relief.

Eventually, she was able to hold back her coughs while the anxiety in her eyes vanished and she regained her cool.

Back at the library's pre-construction ceremony, she had caught Tina sneakily swallowing some pills while hiding. From then on, she had been wary of her movements. Later on, she found out that Tina was consuming folate, and that pretty much confirmed her suspicions.

The child certainly did not belong to Noah, or else she wouldn't have to be so shady about it.

After linking to it all the previous incidents, Rachel added fuel to the fire and exaggerated her words while talking to Noah. She was aware that no man in the world would be able to accept the fact that their woman was cheating on them, especially when they were womanizers like Noah.

Without a doubt, Tina's engagement banquet had turned into a troublesome drama.

Meanwhile, Amber was utterly dumbfounded by the exposure. However, as Tina's so-called best friend and the only doctor on the spot, she had to act like it and escorted Tina to the hospital.

Outside the surgery room, she was continuously trying to consult Tina's mother.

"Don't worry, Mrs. Burton-that's Dr. Vidar who's currently operating on your daughter. He's the best in the hospital, so Tina will surely be fine."

As she wiped her tears, Lilian felt upset and perturbed. "Why did she cause such a big feud? Her dad's now trying to apologize to the Hindenburgs. How embarrassing!"

Meanwhile, Amber pursed her lips forcefully.

Now that the connection between Tina and the Hindenburg Family was speculated to be over, Amber wondered if Tina could continue staying in Riverdale. If she were to continue interacting with the latter, she would surely stain her name.

Having come to that, she came up with an excuse and took her leave.

Right when she was entering the emergency exit, a figure suddenly grabbed her and covered her mouth while pressing her against the wall.

Amber widened her eyes and mumbled, "Mmph!"

With a dull face, Noah then interrogated, "You must have known about the affair between Tina and that foul scoundrel, right? You even hid it for her, didn't you?"

After shaking her head vigorously, she started bursting into tears.

Noah obviously had too much to drink as he reeked of alcohol. As he groped her body, he didn't even try to conceal the indecency in his eyes. "I should have known that she's not much of a proper lady since she's always hanging around with you. B\*tches, all of you b\*tches!"

As soon as he finished speaking, he grabbed Amber's cheeks and said scornfully, "She's already had her punishment. What about you?"

Amber cried and pleaded, "I did nothing. Please let me go, Noah, I knew nothing about this! Nothing, I swear!"

"Nothing at all? How do you expect me to believe that?"

With that, the clothes on her shoulder were torn. Before she could scream out loud, a big hand was forced upon her mouth.

In the dark emergency room, all that could be heard were the steps of some medical staff walking around in the building.

Her body was trembling, yet she was too timid to yell.

Who is it? Who revealed the entire thing?

Meanwhile, Rachel put the checkbook back to its spot before leaning against the back of the chair.

After contemplating for a while, she couldn't figure out who her father would have handed the checkbook to for safekeeping. Since the checkbook was hidden, there had to be some reason behind the concealment. Perhaps...

Hudson Vineyard popped up in her mind.

All of a sudden, the door creaked open.

Upon raising her head, Rachel saw Amber crossing her arms at the door with an irksome face. "How devilish can you be, Rachel? Seizing my shares and viewing yourself as a tycoon? Why didn't you answer my call?"

Rachel glowered and took a look at her phone.

I probably missed it. I was busy this morning. You got a problem?

“Of course I have a problem. Do you know that Tina miscarried? She wasn’t able to keep her child, and her chances of getting pregnant naturally has decreased. She’s infertile now!”

Rachel responded with a scowl and gestured. What does that have to do with me?

Chapter 107

“Nothing to do with you? Cut the sh\*t! If you weren’t the one who exposed Tina, who else could it be?”

I have no idea what you’re talking about

As she studied Rachel’s expression, Amber tried to pick out hints of guilt as she skeptically questioned, “It’s really not you?”

What else should I say to prove it?

“It better not be you, then! Let me warn you, if we discover that you’re the snitch who affected the business between the Hindenburgs and the Burtons, Justin will surely give you hell!”

Amber coldly continued, “The Burtons have decided to send Tina overseas for better care, and I guess that’s something worth celebrating for you, huh?”

Rachel stared at her sister in silence. You were the one who leaked the incident back at the Hudson Vineyard, weren’t you?

After reading the signs, Amber’s face stiffened. “What nonsense are you talking about?”

You're standing here furiously because you're concerned about Tina. Or is it because once you lose her, there's no one else to take a bullet for you?

Apparently, Rachel's words hit the bullseye on Amber's unhealthy intentions.

There was no way on earth that she would treat Tina as a true friend; the latter was merely a tool for her success.

Amber was triggered by this, and she bellowed, "So what? Who do you think you are? You think you're worth my while?"

How was he to you?

"What? Who?"

Then, Rachel wrote a name on a strip of paper before pushing it to Amber.

Noah's name was clearly written on it.

At once, Amber's face turned pale.

"You... You..."

Rachel pressed the bell beside her, to which her assistant quickly entered the room. "What is it, Miss Hudson?"

Please see the guest out.

Amber gazed at her sister in dismay. After a while, she regained her senses and clenched her teeth.



“Just you wait, Rachel!”

When Amber was finally escorted away, Rachel leaned against the back of her chair as tranquility filled her eyes.

After the miscarriage, Tina had even become infertile and was so depressed that she was virtually insane; she merely stared into space all day. Since her connection with Noah was thoroughly cut off, Jason decided to send her abroad to heal for the sake of the family and his daughter.

Does Justin not suspect my involvement in this matter?

Who am I kidding? Of course he does.

The cancellation of Tina and Noah’s engagement was completely disadvantageous to the Burtons. On the other hand, the split was nothing but good news for the Hudsons since the Burtons were their competitors.

A simple but unbreakable plan, and all it needed was a push from me!

When evening came, Rachel invited her grandmother for dinner after cleaning up her desk.

Due to her force of habit, Nancy took a look behind Rachel, only to be disappointed.

“How many times have I told you to bring Justin along so I can take a good look at him? There’s not even a strand of hair from him after so long!”

He’s been occupied with work. He’ll come as soon as he has the time.

“Only God knows if that’s the truth,” she uttered with a frown. “I’m not trying to be a typical grandma, but if you’re not happy spending the days with him, you should get a divorce soon instead of wasting your time that you can spend on looking for another man instead.”

As she served her grandmother some food, Rachel simply smiled without a word and let the matter pass.

After dinner, she walked down the stairs alone.

When she was in the neighborhood, she caught someone hiding behind a tree suspiciously.

Rachel became alert at once, and she inserted her hand into her bag and grabbed the self-defense alarm, preparing to draw it out as soon as any sudden movements occurred.

Recently, she had been feeling as if someone was observing her every move.

No... I have to get to the bottom of this!

“Who’s that? Why are you hiding?”

As soon as a man yelled, the figure behind the tree twitched.

The shout had come from a patrolling guard on duty. As such, the figure immediately turned around and rushed toward the neighborhood gates.

“Freeze!” The security guard started chasing after the silhouette.

After being stupefied for a few seconds, Rachel followed after the guard.

Initially, she had chosen this neighborhood for her grandmother to reside in due to its security as all the guards were wary and well-built. As expected, the guard had captured the shady man before he could reach the gates.

Soon, the residents who were walking around the area went over to surround the guard and the so-called thief.

“He must be a thief that has been troubling the neighbors these days, huh?”

“I’m sure of it!”

“He’s quite young. Why is he doing this?”

“Kids nowadays have nothing better to do.”

Among the chatter, Rachel studied what was happening from afar.

It was a young man barely in his twenties. He looked like a delinquent with his hipster, dyed hair that was rather eye-catching.

“What’s happening to him?” Someone shouted among the crowd, to which the crowd started scattering at once.

The young lad that was being suppressed by the security guard suddenly shook violently, and white foam appeared in his mouth while his eyes turned white. The freakish sight immediately scared the crowd away.

Unlike the others, Rachel immediately regained her senses.

He’s having epilepsy.

Swiftly, she hurried over to the man and pointed at the passersby. After kneeling on the ground, she lifted the young man’s head from the back of his head before pulling out a pen and sticking it in his mouth, separating the tongue and his two rows of teeth.

Simultaneously, she made a telephone sign at the witnesses.

At once, someone understood her. “Ambulance, yes?”

In response, Rachel nodded her head.

“Yes, yes. I’ll call for an ambulance right away.”

Very soon, the ambulance arrived. Since Rachel was the first witness and the first person to provide emergency assistance, she was called upon by the medical staff to escort the man to the hospital.

“You handled it pretty well. Have you studied first-aid before?”

In the emergency department of the hospital, the nurse pulled the curtains and came out to talk to Rachel after checking on the patient. “Are you his family?”

After shaking her head, Rachel wrote a line of words for the nurse. ‘I was just passing by and lent a hand as / could. Can I go now?’

“What? If you don’t know him, who’s supposed to sign for him?”

The stunned nurse glanced at the bed in the ward before patting the side of the bed. “Hey, say something if you’re awake. This kind lady here has sent you to the hospital. Are you going to let her pay the bills for you as well?”

Behind the piece of curtain, the young man twitched a little, yet he continued to shut his eyes, acting as if he was dead.

In fact, he had woken up a while ago and was merely pretending to be asleep.

Then, Rachel reached out her hand and took the bill.

‘Give it to me.’

After settling the medical fees, Rachel accepted the receipt.

Meanwhile, the young man was still lying on the bed with his attention-seeking emerald hair on the white pillow.

After standing beside him for a while, Rachel placed the receipt beside him and tore a piece of paper before writing on it and placing it down.

Having done that, she finally left.

When she was gone, the young man opened his eyes, got up from his bed and saw the note beside his pillow. 'Remember to claim your meds when you wake up. I've paid for the bills, so don't worry about it.'

After reading Rachel's clear and elegant handwriting, the young man stared at the exit in confusion.

## Chapter 108

When Rachel exited the hospital, the sky was already dark.

"Rachel?"

A familiar voice from behind her caught her by surprise. Instinctively, she turned around and saw Janice.

The woman was holding a thermal container and had just left the parking lot. She seemed to be walking toward the inpatient department.

"Have you come to see Hans?"

Rachel shook her head and frowned.

There's something I have to deal with here.

"To think I expected you to have thought it through." Suddenly, Janice's face turned gloomy. "What did you say to Hans that made him drop the lawsuit out of nowhere? He's returning for further treatment at the end of the month."

However, Rachel revealed nothing.

Despite the guilt in her heart, she didn't know how to explain things to Janice. Perhaps in this case, saying nothing was the best choice as a late apology could never justify one's mistakes.

"Where are you headed to?"

Home.

Janice nodded her head and said, "I see. Coincidentally, Hans wanted me to hand you something, but since you're already here, why don't you go and get it from him instead?"

Upon hearing that, Rachel was taken aback.

When she saw how the woman hesitated, Janice vented her frustration and said, "He's leaving soon. Aren't you going to see him even for a bit? Where's your heart, Rachel?"

I don't mean it like that.

"In that case, what are you waiting for?"

As soon as she finished speaking, Janice put the container in Rachel's hand.

With that, Rachel entered the ward with the container in hand.

Janice was right-Hans was leaving soon, and it was only right for her to see him for one last time.

In the ward, Hans was seen reading a book by the window while sitting in a wheelchair-the sight pained her deeply.

When she saw him, Rachel zoned out and stood by the door for a long while.

As if he had a detector in his brain, Hans suddenly turned around and saw Rachel by the door. He was stunned, but his eyes lit up. "Rachel?"

In that instant, Rachel felt like she was carrying the weight of ten elephants. Eventually, she started walking into the room.

Janice wanted me to give this to you. She said that you're leaving at the end of this month.

When Hans' eyes fell on the container, they dimmed slightly.

"Yes, the doctor suggested overseas treatment. We've even contacted the hospital I'll be heading to."

That's good to hear.

Hans grabbed a wooden box from a bag beside him and handed it to Rachel. "By the way, I believe this should be returned to its rightful owner."

As she stared at the wooden box, Rachel was devastated inside.

Back when she decided to fake her death and escape, she had gotten Hans to help her safekeep the wooden box as it was the only thing her mother had left behind for her.

Thank you.

“I’ve dropped the lawsuit against Justin.”

She nodded her head and signed some gestures. I heard it from Janice.

“Do you have nothing else to say to me?”

Stay well when you go abroad for your treatment.

As she clutched the wooden box, Rachel turned around and left.

She feared that if she were to stay any longer, she wouldn’t be able to hold back her tears. By then, her emotions would flood the room, and it would be a hassle to control the situation.

Before she exited the room, the voice behind her exclaimed, “Rachel, I don’t believe that you’ve fallen for Justin, nor did you have me drop the lawsuit solely because you love him! Can’t you at least tell me the truth before I go?”

Upon those words, Rachel’s hand that was on the doorknob slightly trembled. However, she simply left the room in the end.

As she made her way home in a taxi, she clenched her teeth while her eyes turned red.

Watching as the hospital faded away from the view, she couldn’t hold in her tears any longer.

The pain in her heart was so agonizing that no words could describe the despair that was surging through every vein in her body-she felt weak.



In this world full of man-made rules, Hans and Rachel were merely a raft that was struggling not to be swallowed by the deep abyss of a sea.

The Burton Family was the enigma, and Justin was the hell.

For Rachel who had been living in hell, Hans was her last ray of light, and she wouldn't mind watching it from afar. She even hoped for the light to be safe as it continued to glow for a long time.

Soon, the sky started pouring as the sound of rain engulfed the city.

When Rachel finally reached home, it was already pitch black.

"Where were you?"

As soon as she entered the house, Justin's voice echoed through the living room.

With that, she stopped taking her shoes off.

I went to visit Grandma.

"Is that so? Until this hour?"

Something happened on the way, and it took some time.

"Did something happen on the way, or did it happen to a person that you couldn't let go of?"

As he stood up from the couch, Justin looked at her with an icy gaze.

Rachel took a step backward as she shivered. I don't know what you're talking about.

“How was your chat with the man? Merry?” Justin started to approach her. His giant body resembled the colossal, grey clouds. Although he wasn’t even close, his appearance alone was enough to suffocate her.

He was angry-exasperated, even.

Rachel started committing herself to work and slowly neglected him. Not only that, she started spending all her free time with her grandmother, and all she did when she got home was to sleep.

Ever since then, Justin had been bearing the frustration. When he was notified that she went to meet Hans again and had also received the files, he could no longer put up with it.

Hans is leaving Riverdale, so I’ll never meet him again. I was only there to retrieve something that was mine. I honestly have no other intention.

As she ignored her grandmother’s advice, she anxiously pulled out the wooden box from her bag.

“What is this?”

It’s something my mother left behind before her death. It was with him, and he returned it to me. That concludes whatever connection we have between us.

“Why would your mother’s inheritance be with him?”

Immediately, Rachel was stupefied.

How could she have forgotten that the wooden box symbolized something significant?

Just then, the thunder roared across the sky as the rain got heavier.

Not only was Justin going to inquire more about the box, he then coldly added, "I heard a joke earlier today, the deputy chief of the Investigation Bureau purchased a corpse from the black market."

At that, Rachel felt the goosebumps on her body and started sweating profusely.

"Since you can't explain why it was with him, why don't I give it a go instead?!"

Suddenly, Justin revealed a dull face as he tossed a folder of documents at Rachel.

Papers of documents fell upon the ground with a whoosh.

Among the papers, Rachel was shocked by a couple of photos.

He knew.

He knew about the faked death...

Justin strangled her ferociously and struck her against the wall. He then growled, "On the day of the accident, why did you drive all the way down the hill? Spill!"

He yelled as if he had forgotten that Rachel was a mute that didn't have the ability to speak.

As his growls echoed in her eardrums, Rachel felt like she was being torn apart inside out as buzzing sounds were all her brain could receive.

"You were slowly setting up your escape plans. I've got to give it to you-they were flawless. Why have I never realized that you're such a scheming b\*tch? Are all your friends like this too? Huh?"

As his grip tightened, the green veins in his hand palpitated violently.

Meanwhile, Rachel's throat was constricted; all she could make were noiseless wails as her face turned purple.

Her eyes seemed as if they were popping out as she was attempting to cry for help.

What was a moment more depressing than death?

Perhaps it was when one was getting strangled by their beloved with no ways to escape.

## Chapter 109

At that moment, Rachel's heart was wretched; she had no idea when she'd fallen in love with this man. Perhaps it was at Tina's wedding banquet, during which she witnessed how he had ignored the rumors and gossip while defending her despite being mad with jealousy himself.

Perhaps it was on the day of her car accident, during which he comforted Rachel by telling her not to be afraid because he was waiting for her. Perhaps it was when he came to her defense and scolded the servants shortly after she married into the Burton Family. Or perhaps it happened even earlier...

When Justin saw how Rachel's eyes slowly dimmed, he felt as though a corner of an iceberg had suddenly broken into pieces. His heart wrenched terribly, and his hands trembled. "I warned you not to test my limits!"

Gasp! Air suddenly filled Rachel's lungs the instant the grip on her throat loosened, and she collapsed onto the ground and coughed incessantly.

Meanwhile, Justin strode out in a huff. "I'm going to break his other leg right now!"

Instead, Rachel clung to Justin's leg with all her might. The latter had broken one of Han's legs before, so she would never let the same thing happen again.

At the sight of this, Justin grew even more irritable. "Let go of me!"

However, Rachel summoned up all her strength and held onto his leg desperately, she couldn't let go of it no matter what. Then, with a loud bang, Justin pulled open the door to the villa. The violent storm instantly burst into view, and Rachel, who was clinging desperately onto Justin's leg, was dragged all the way to the courtyard.

The woman's knees bled from being dragged across the cobblestone path. Then, Justin seized her by the collar and roughly lifted her up. "Are you even willing to risk your life for this man's sake?"

Rachel couldn't make any sound other than a whimper, and she couldn't explain herself. In Justin's opinion, the only bonding that could exist between a man and a woman was a romantic one. Please let Hans off.

Hurt suddenly showed in Justin's eyes as the twinge in his heart made him feel very irascible. "All right, just kneel here if you want me to let him off! The longer you kneel, the longer I'll spare him!" As soon as he finished his sentence, he clutched Rachel's collar and flung her onto the cobblestone path with a loud thud.

Ugh... Rachel gritted her teeth hard and slowly got up. Then, she knelt down at Justin's feet as the ice-cold rain pattered against her face. She could hardly open her eyes in the rain, yet her pallid face wore an

expression that was both vulnerable and stubborn.

Justin slammed the door shut with a loud bang, leaving Rachel to kneel alone in the rain under the pitch-black night.

The night sky darkened, and the rain became heavier. Peals of thunder boomed one after another as if to deliberately keep everyone awake tonight. Just then, a white sedan pulled up in the garage. Julian's expression changed instantly when he came back to see such a scene in the courtyard. "Rachel..."

The woman was kneeling as straight as a ramrod like a statue. Drenched to the skin by the rain, she seemed to have lost consciousness, but she still gritted her teeth hard nonetheless.

"What are you doing, Rachel? Get up," Julian urged as he pulled at her, but he couldn't get her to move.

Just then, Mrs. Duncan hurried out of the house and held the umbrella over Julian's head. "Young Master Peters, y-you'd better stay out of this."

Julian glanced in the direction of the study on the second floor, and his face darkened even more. He immediately walked into the house. "Young Master Peters..." Mrs. Duncan hurriedly went after him.

Julian went to knock on the door to Justin's study, but there was no answer from the inside. "Open the door, Justin! Did you order Rachel to kneel outside? Are you out of your mind? Why do you treat her like this again and again? She is your wife!"

"Julian!" Sue hurried out and grabbed Julian after hearing the noise. "The way I see it, you're the one who is out of your mind. Why do you keep meddling in Justin and his wife's affairs?"

"Justin has gone too far!"

"Even if he has gone too far, it's still a matter between him and his wife. If that mute cannot accept this, she can just ask for a divorce and leave. However, she's continuing to stay at the Burton Residence despite Justin's treatment, isn't she? Has anyone forced her to do so?"

"That's right, Young Master Peters. Please stop adding fuel to the fire. Young Master Justin won't listen to

you!"

However, Julian burned with anger upon listening to Sue and Mrs. Duncan's words. "All right, he won't listen to me, and none of you are brave enough to get around him, right? Great!" He dashed downstairs, took an umbrella, and ran outside.

"Where are you going, Julian?"

Julian took off his coat and draped it around Rachel's shoulders as he stood next to her while holding an umbrella. The umbrella wasn't large enough to cover both of them, and it covered Rachel more than it covered Julian, so it didn't take long before he was partially drenched.

Sue was heartbroken at the sight of this. As she stood in the hallway, she kept stamping her feet while urging, "What are you doing, Julian? Hurry up and come back!"

"Since Justin insists on torturing people in such a way, I'll stay with her! Just think of it as me atoning for his wrongs!"

Julian's words buzzed in Rachel's ears. She glanced up at him and wanted to say something, but her arms were so heavy that she couldn't lift them. She could only shake her head weakly at him, signaling for Julian to

go back.

Julian tucked Rachel's bangs to one side and responded in a mild and yet resolute tone, "It's all right, Rachel. Even if nobody sides with you in this family, I will stay with you!"

Sue's head was throbbing with anger. She couldn't make her stubborn son change his mind, but she didn't dare to talk to Justin.

Meanwhile, in the study on the second floor, a corner of the curtain was lifted by a large hand. Justin's cheerless eyes looked down at the figure standing in the courtyard; no one could describe how affectionate Julian looked as he held the umbrella and protected Rachel. At once, Justin flung the curtain away, his face livid.

Just then, the sound of Sue knocking on the door urgently from the outside could be heard. "Please let Rachel come back in, Justin. Even if she has made a big mistake, you can divorce her and let her return to her family as a last resort. Don't let others accuse us of bullying people."

However, her words were met with no answer.

Sue continued, "Can't you change your mind out of consideration for Julian? Just think of this as a favor to me. You know how kind-hearted Julian is. He can't bear to see this!"

Still, there was no answer from inside the room.

"Justin..." Sue spent ages trying to persuade both Julian and Justin, but she failed to make any of them change their minds. Finally, she plonked herself down in front of the door and wiped her tears.

The rain outside the window showed no signs of stopping until midnight, upon which it was slowly reduced to a continuous pitter-patter of raindrops. When Justin pulled the door open with a loud creak, both Sue and Mrs. Duncan let out a gasp. Their eyes were wide open with fright, and all the words they had originally planned to say froze on their lips.

Justin said in a cold voice, "Tell her to get inside!"

With that, Rachel and Julian were helped into the house by the servants. Both of them were chilled to the bone; the servants wrapped them in towels, but it couldn't stop the biting cold from freezing their bodies inside out as they were soaked to the skin. "Hurry up and bring the ginger tea over! Julian, hurry up and have some ginger tea to warm yourself," Sue urged.

Julian took the cup of ginger tea, but he held it out to Rachel instead.

Thanks. Rachel carefully took the teacup from him.

Just then, a servant's inquiring voice came from behind. "Is this yours, Mrs. Burton?" She was holding a wooden box in her hands. However, the box had gotten so badly soaked by the rain that its surface swelled with signs of chipping. "This box seems to have been soaked through."

Rachel's pupils suddenly contracted.

## Chapter 110

Rachel took the wooden box from the servant and put down her cup of ginger tea without turning a hair. Then,



she gesticulated several words. I'm going upstairs first.

Sue shot a glance at her and grumbled snappishly, "What are you gesturing about?" She almost hated Rachel to death at this moment. Ever since Rachel married into the Burton Family, Julian's relationship with Justin and herself had gotten worse. She's simply a scourge, she thought to herself.

Rachel took a hot bath, during which the wooden box kept floating on the water. The swollen and cracked part of its edges chipped off bit by bit, revealing distinct traces of carving on it. On each of its six faces was a different combination of Arabic numerals. "13, 20, 22, 18..." Rachel mouthed to herself. This wooden box was the only thing left behind by her mother, and she had been keeping it in a safe place before this. She had never found a way to open it, but now, it seemed that this wooden box didn't need to be opened-what mattered were the numbers on its faces instead. What do these numbers mean, though? she thought to herself. "Achoo!" When she sneezed, Rachel finally realized that the water in the bathtub had cooled somewhat.

The rain stopped the following day, and the sky cleared up. After being exposed to the rain for an entire night, Rachel woke up feeling dizzy. Still, she forced herself to get out of bed. She had to take the wooden box and go to Nancy. Perhaps Grandma knows the secret of this wooden box, she thought to herself.

However, as soon as she came downstairs, she came face-to-face with Justin, who was walking down the

stairs opposite her. Since she was startled by this, she quickly gestured without thinking. Where are you going?

A sullen look instantly took over Justin's face. "I'm going to my office!" Is she so worried that I'll give Hans a hard time? he thought to himself. After finishing his sentence, he quickly went downstairs and left by car without having breakfast.

Rachel was deeply perturbed as she heard the roar of the car engine outside. Before leaving the Burton Residence, she made a special effort to send Janice a text message. It read, 'Tell Hans to leave Riverdale as

soon as possible. The sooner, the better.' Justin might not lay a hand on Hans today, but she couldn't guarantee that he might suddenly become irritable one day and strike again.

Janice's reply came soon afterward. 'It's none of your concern.' Her hostile attitude upset Rachel again for a while.

She then took a taxi to Nancy's place. Nancy had just come home from grocery shopping, and her face lit up with happiness when she saw Rachel. "Don't you have to go to work today? Why are you here so early in the morning?"

I want to spend time with you, so I took a day off.

"As it happens, I just bought some groceries, so I'll make fish soup for you at midday. Look at you-you've lost weight," Nancy said while carrying the groceries she had bought into the kitchen. "I met a young man at the food market today, and he helped me to carry the bags of groceries all the way down here. Young men these days are really nice."

Rachel helped Nancy put the groceries away before tugging at the latter's sleeve. Grandma, there's something I'd like to ask you.

"What is it?"

Do you remember this? Rachel produced the wooden box that had been soaked in water last night from her handbag. Right now, it was not so much a wooden box as a rectangular wooden block; it was just that the block had been carved to look like a wooden box to pull the wool over one's eyes.

Nancy was stunned for a moment before she recognized the wooden box. "Is this... what your late mother left behind?"

Rachel nodded.

Nancy wiped her hands and carefully took the wooden box from Rachel. "How did it become like this?"

It became like this after being soaked in water. It's covered in numbers. What do these numbers mean?

Nancy frowned with a stumped expression on her face. "Your mother didn't tell me anything about these numbers back then. She merely told me to give this wooden box to you once anything happens, and she said that the secret of the prescription is all in here. This..."

The prescription? Rachel was perplexed for a moment. What could these numbers have to do with the prescription? Over the next three days, she clutched the wooden block in her hand and scrutinized it carefully. She almost knew all the numbers on its six faces by heart. Still, she couldn't figure out the connection between these numbers and the prescription.

At noon on the third day, she suddenly received a phone call. "Where are you?" Janice's voice sounded chilly, hoarse, and somewhat different from usual.

Rachel was startled for a moment as she didn't know how to answer. Just then, Janice continued, "I forgot that you can't speak. Come here-i'll send you the address."

Is anything wrong? Rachel thought to herself.

"Hans... is dead." Three words came from the other end of the line as Janice spoke with a choke in her muffled voice.

Rachel's hand trembled, and her cell phone dropped to the ground with a thud.

How can that be possible? she thought to herself.

When Rachel stumbled to the morgue, Hans' face had been covered with a piece of white cloth. Meanwhile,

Janice was standing at one side talking to a few police officers. When she saw Rachel, her face instantly clouded over. "I thought you weren't coming."

Rachel's mind was blank. When she lifted the white cloth, Hans' good-looking face appeared under it, and his lips were completely colorless. Rachel fell to her knees with a loud thud. This can't be possible! This is impossible! she thought to herself.

"He was murdered. If I hadn't tracked his location through his cell phone, the police wouldn't have found him so soon." Janice's voice sounded from behind. "He had his throat slit at the western outskirts of Riverdale. Who do you think did it?"

Rachel couldn't hear Janice's voice, nor could she cry out loud. Her kindly and serene-looking face looked like that of a robot as she numbly faced everything before her. She couldn't accept such reality as it was too much like a nightmare.

Janice dragged Rachel to her feet. After a few seconds, she could no longer restrain herself. She thundered, "I'm f\*cking talking to you! Do you know that Hans was deliberately murdered?"

Rachel finally came to her senses and turned to look at her in a daze. Why?

"What do you think? Hans had few acquaintances in Riverdale. Apart from old friends like us, he hardly had any enemies. There's only one suspect I can think of!"

Rachel was stunned. Justin... Turns out he didn't spare Hans' life after all, she thought to herself. No one knew where she got the strength, but she suddenly broke free of Janice's grasp and ran outside like crazy.

Meanwhile, Justin had just finished a meeting at the Burton Group. He took a sip of coffee, looked up, and

saw Gloria sitting on the sofa reading a book.

Just then, a sudden commotion broke out outside. "You can't go in, Mrs. Burton..." Right after that, the door to the office smashed against the wall with a loud bang.

Rachel stood at the door with bloodshot eyes. Her chest was heaving heavily as if she had run an 800-meter sprint, and her whole body was trembling.

“Miss Rachel!” Gloria stood up from the sofa.

Justin asked, “What brings you here?”

Rachel stepped inside. Feeling that something was wrong with her expression, Gloria immediately told the assistant outside to close the door instead of poking their nose into it.

What happened to Hans was your doing, wasn't it? Rachel gestured quickly with her hands as she approached the desk step by step.

“What happened?” Justin's face darkened involuntarily at the thought of Hans' name. He asked icily, “Are you here to question me if I have broken his other leg in secret?”

Rachel was unmoved by his words, though. She balled her fists so that her nails dug deep into her palms, but her face still wore a serene expression. Do you really think you can escape punishment by law after hiring someone to kill him?

“What are you talking about?”

Hans... is dead.