

Mute Bride 121

Chapter 121

After seeing his client, Justin hurried to the hospital.

Upon entering the ward, he saw Gloria sitting on the bed while having her meal. "You're early today. Have you eaten? Want to share?"

"I'm good. I had lunch with a client just now."

"I see. If you had come even earlier, you would've met Rachel. Look, she made some chicken soup for me. It was fish soup yesterday. Though fish soup helps with recovery, she said it's better to switch to other flavors

at times."

Justin was baffled by this, and he promptly asked, "She's been coming every day?"

"Yeah. Ever since I got hospitalized, she visited me every single day with various kinds of meals. She even insists on preparing them herself because takeaways are too greasy and it's best I avoid them."

"Why have I never seen her?"

"Perhaps she's avoiding the time that you would come."

Gloria looked into his eyes and continued, "You truly went overboard last time. If I were in her shoes, it would've been hard for me as well. Why don't you take the chance to talk about it with her?"

"There's nothing to talk about."

"Justin, you're always holding back your thoughts and behaving like you're the coldest man in the world."

“Eat up. I’ll go get some fruit.”

Having said that, Justin exited the ward.

Upon his exit, Gloria turned to the piling baskets of fruit and snorted.

Get some fruits? Does he think I’m a child?

On the other hand, Rachel was cleaning the vegetables in the kitchen while Nancy was watching TV in the living room.

Suddenly, the doorbell rang.

“Victor! He’s always forgetting his keys!”

Nancy nagged as she walked to the door.

Since she feared that her grandmother would fall victim to more accidents, Rachel had given Victor a duplicate house key.

“Excuse me?”

“Do you still remember me, Madam Tiller? I’m Frankie. I visited you once before.”

In the kitchen, Rachel was stunned momentarily when she heard the familiar man’s voice. She cleaned her hands and rushed out from the kitchen, only to see Frankie standing by the door with several bags in his hands.

“Mrs. Burton.”

While Nancy was still in a daze, Frankie had the men behind him start moving things into the house.

“President Burton heard that Madam Tiller was injured some time ago, so he decided to provide some self care products to her.”

“T-There’s no need for this. I haven’t even finished using the things you gave me last time.”

“It’s merely his token of appreciation. There’s no need to take it too seriously. Do you mind stepping aside, Madam Tiller? We don’t want to injure you.”

Behind Frankie were four men carrying a massage chair into the living room.

At once, Rachel went to move the furniture in the living room to prevent any unwanted crashes.

“Where’s your young master, then?” Nancy interrogated Frankie. “It’s been so long since he’s married Rae, yet I’ve never even seen him once.”

To that, Frankie responded, “He’s right downstairs. There are still things left to move up here.”

Downstairs?

Upon hearing that, Rachel could feel her heart thumping, and she immediately stopped her grandmother from exiting the house.

Stay here, Grandma. I’ll go down for a bit.

However, Nancy did not notice Rachel’s anxiousness and she yelled as the latter was walking out the door, “Tell Justin to come up and eat!”

When she reached downstairs, Rachel saw Justin just getting out of the car. His hands were tucked in the pockets of his slacks as he observed the neighborhood's atmosphere.

Why are you here? There was nothing on Rachel's face but alertness.

After glancing at Nancy's unit, Justin then queried, "Did you like the things I sent you?"

I don't remember having crossed your boundaries lately.

At this moment, Rachel behaved like a wary wolf that was showing its teeth to predators when it was being threatened.

Suddenly, the warmth in Justin's eyes vanished. "I'm just sending some gifts to your grandmother. What's the big deal?"

Oh, is that so? Is it as simple as that? Nothing like a warning?

Rachel signed rather hastily as she was strung tight.

She was aware of the fact that Justin knew about her weaknesses. After losing Hans, the person that she cared about most in the entire Riverdale would be her grandmother. Thus, rather than 'sending gifts', it felt more like he was hinting at her not to do anything rash or have any foul ideas.

Instantly, Justin's joyous mood disappeared into thin air. "You're overthinking it, Rachel."

With that, he immediately pulled open the car door, seeming like he was about to enter the vehicle.

When she saw that he was leaving, Rachel heaved a sigh and was about to go back upstairs. However, she was stopped by a shout of her name.

"Rae!"

Sporting the neighborhood security guard's outfit, Grandpa Irwin was grabbing a fish by its tail as he walked over to her with a bright smile on his face. "Fresh fish from the market. I heard you wanted to make some fish soup, so I got it for you!"

Rachel suppressed her perplexed emotions. Then, she nodded her head and thanked him.

Having hopped onto the car, Justin saw the old man conversing with Rachel the moment he shut the door. At one glance, his eyes narrowed and twitched.

As Rachel was walking up the stairs with Grandpa Irwin, they bumped into Frankie who was talking on the phone.

"Yes. Got it. I can see them."

As he made eye contact with Grandpa Irwin on the narrow staircase, Frankie's eyes instantaneously turned darker as he signaled two of his henchmen. "Go."

Before she realized it, Grandpa Irwin screamed as two men pinned him down.

Meanwhile, the fish that was once in his hand fell to the ground and jumped as it struggled.

What are you doing?

"My apologies, Mrs. Burton. It's Mr. Burton's order."

Meanwhile, Grandpa Irwin yelled in pain, "What is this about? Let go of me!"

At the sight of that, Rachel's face immediately turned pale. As she expected, Justin would never visit with simple intentions.

Since she knew that Frankie would need to use the stairs, she blocked his path downstairs. Upon catching sight of Justin as he stood downstairs, she immediately gestured, What the hell are you doing?

He was an innocent old man that barely had any relationship with her, yet Justin wouldn't even let him go.

Meanwhile, he revealed an expression that was terrifying as ever.

"Do you know who he is?"

He's merely a security guard for the neighborhood! Have you gone insane?

"He's a human trafficker!" Justin growled and grabbed Rachel's wrists that were making signs. "What are you waiting for? Get the man out of here!"

When Justin shouted toward the back of her, Frankie was slightly stupefied and quickly had the men send Grandpa Irwin to the car.

Meanwhile, Rachel was trying to shake Justin off, though everyone knew she didn't have the strength to repel him.

It was this helpless sensation again-one that resembled an avalanche, pushing everything to the ground. It was the same feeling Rachel had in the hospital ward back then, when Justin had his men press her down, making her watch as he broke one of Hans' legs.

No... Not again...

Instinctively, she bit Justin's wrist.

"Argh!"

He loosened his grip after letting out a cry, allowing Rachel to escape his grasp and charge toward Grandpa Irwin.

Since she could not shout, she could only tug on the henchmen's arms forcefully.

As one of the men was growing impatient, he shoved her away with a swing of a hand.

"Ah!"

"Mrs. Burton!" Frankie rushed over to help her up after seeing her fall, only to have his face turn pale.
"What's wrong, Mrs. Burton?"

Justin was pressing his hand when he heard Frankie's question. Then, he turned to Rachel as she collapsed on the ground. Fresh blood was flowing, staining her skirt crimson.

At once, his eyes opened wide.

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Blood spread through Rachel's skirt as a stabbing pain came from her abdomen. She pressed a hand to it, her face pale.

My child, my child.

Justin shoved Frankie aside and scooped Rachel up. "What are you standing around for? Get driving to the hospital!"

It was then that Frankie snapped out of it, and the car sped down the streets of Riverdale while running several red lights.

After making it to the emergency room, Julian stepped out once Rachel had been checked over.

“How is she?”

Julian confirmed that the door had been shut tight before he allowed his expression to fall. At the same time, he stopped Justin from going in.

“Are you concerned about her?”

“Stop asking me things like that. What happened to her?”

“She’s pregnant!” Julian raised his voice, his low tones reverberating through the corridor, shocking the few medical staff nearby until they had looks of bewilderment on their faces.

Why was the usually even-tempered Dr. Peters so furious?

Instantly, Justin’s head was filled with a buzzing sound. “What did you say?”

“I said that she’s pregnant. She’s already more than two months along.” Julian’s expression was dark. “I wanted to tell you about it a few days ago, but you were busy taking care of Gloria. Not only that, you

never asked once about Rachel. So, I thought that there was no difference whether I told you at all.”

Justin was still stunned. He stared dumbly at the door to the ward, seeming as though he hadn’t heard Julian.

Rachel was pregnant all along? Am I going to become a father?

“Justin Burton!”

At the thought of Rachel’s condition, Justin quickly snapped back to reality. “How is she now?”

“You’re only asking this now? What were you doing before you thought of that?”

“What exactly is going on with her?”

“She’s fine for now. The baby is also doing okay. However, her condition isn’t stable. The first three months of pregnancy is the time when you should be at your most careful.”

Having heard that, Justin let out a breath.

Meanwhile, Rachel leaned against the headboard of her bed inside the ward. She was already awake, and her mind was wandering as she stared out the window. Just then, the door behind her opened up. She could tell from the sound of the footsteps that it was Justin, and her back stiffened at that.

“Are you still unwell? I know that you’re awake.”

After a long moment of silence, Rachel finally turned around.

What did you do to Grandpa Irwin?

Justin’s face darkened slightly at the mention of the elder man. “That is none of your concern.”

He’s an old man. Just think of it as my plea to you, so please let him go. Take all of it out on me- whether it’s your resentment toward me or the Hudsons. Don’t hurt anyone who’s innocent! Now that Hans is in your sight, is that not enough for you?

Rachel was on the verge of a breakdown, her eyes completely bloodshot as though they would burst the next moment. Her gaze was fixed right on Justin.

“Are you saying that he should avoid punishment just because he’s in his twilight years? He’s a human trafficker!”

Upon hearing that, Rachel's despair grew. She ended up letting out a chuckle as she looked at Justin.

You can't even make up a convincing excuse. Grandpa Irwin, a human trafficker? In that case, why didn't you hand him over to the police?

Justin grew impatient. "Think what you want, but I must have him arrested!"

At the thought of the incident from 20 years ago, he couldn't wait to chop all of those involved into little pieces.

Jeffrey Hudson and the gaggle of traffickers who sold him were the true culprits-none of them had better think of escaping.

However, what about the police? More than 20 years had passed since then. Even if the police could find proof, the statute of limitations on the case had already been reached. Didn't that mean that the culprits would still go free?

Justin was in the middle of his tirade when he got a phone call. After glancing at Rachel, he left the room with his phone in hand.

After the door shut with a bang, the room descended into silence.

Rachel clutched the bed sheets tightly, her face as gray as ash.

"Yes?"

"Mr. Burton." Frankie's voice rang out over the phone's speakers. "I've gotten hold of some news. The man recently came to Riverdale. He said that he went to a friend for shelter, and that he's an old acquaintance of Rachel's grandmother."

"An old acquaintance, you say?"

Justin's forehead tightened into a frown. He recalled that Jefferey had razed the forest around Somerset Mountain back then; Hudson Pharmaceuticals had seemingly bought that forest for development. Hence, it was reasonable for the people who lived there to know Rachel's grandmother.

"What else did he say?"

"Nothing-his lips are sealed. He won't admit that he's been an errand boy for traffickers. The documents at the police station have long since been destroyed as well. We won't be able to dig up anything from them." Frankie's tone was troubled. "Mr. Burton, it's been 20 years. Could you have been mistaken about the people involved?"

"That's impossible!" Justin's voice was eerily cold, and one could sense the iciness from it.

He would never forget that day from 20 years back. It had been swelteringly hot, and the loathsome old man who had locked him up cracked open a corner of the cellar and warned him savagely through the opening-if

Justin did not obey him, he would let the boy starve to death inside the cellar.

The cellar had been dark and damp, and he hadn't been able to see anything. All he could smell was the stench of pickled vegetables.

If Katie hadn't saved him back then, he would have died down there.

"What should we do with him now, Mr. Burton?"

"Lock him up until he confesses to all his crimes. Then... send him to the police." Justin paused a bit there. If it wasn't for his concern toward Rachel and the child in her belly, he would have gone over to deal with the old man personally.

The next day, Rachel continued to rest in her room at the hospital. Julian told her that she needed to stay in bed for the next few days, or she would have difficulty keeping her baby.

Tap, tap, tap.

She looked up from her book and saw Gloria slowly entering the room with a cane in one hand.

Rachel immediately got up.

“Don’t move. I can walk by myself.” Gloria hastily waved a hand. It was somewhat of an arduous task for her to make her way over to the bed with her cane. “Are you all right?”

‘I’m okay. Why are you here?’

“I heard that you were admitted here. I was worried you’d be bored out of your mind, so I came over to chat with you.”

Rachel was stunned.

Gloria pressed her lips together before she reluctantly admitted the truth. “All right, I was actually bored, so I came to see you. I’ve already asked the doctors about you, and Dr. Peters said that you’re pregnant.”

‘That’s right:

“That’s good news. Justin is already at that age, and it’s about time for him to have children of his own.” Happiness showed in Gloria’s eyes.

Rachel didn’t understand it, though. ‘Don’t you like Justin?’

If a person liked someone, how could they be so magnanimous to the point of allowing their beloved to have a child with another woman?

“Yes.” Gloria said in a straightforward manner with a shrug. “That still doesn’t stop me from staying by his side. I think that even if he has eight or ten kids, none of them would be more important than me. It’s just like how I don’t think anything has changed even with you being around him.”

The corners of Rachel’s lips twitched up. ‘You don’t have to worry about that. I don’t intend on keeping the baby!

“Huh?” Gloria froze as she stared at the phone’s screen. “Why not? This is your first child with Justin!”

Rachel felt a bitterness in her throat. She didn’t know how she should explain to Gloria, nor did she feel any need to

Neither of them realized that someone had been standing by the door all this while.

Upon hearing Gloria’s question, the person clenched his hands tightly while his expression darkened.

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Clack. The sound of the door knob turning could be heard loud and clear.

Gloria and Rachel froze for a moment, and the former’s words came to an abrupt halt. She was surprised by this, and she looked at Justin as he walked inside. “When did you arrive?”

Meanwhile, the man’s expression was cold.

“Gloria, go back to your room for now.”

Gloria stiffened up and eyed Rachel worriedly. She only left once the latter signaled that she would be fine.

Justin and Rachel were now the only ones left in the room.

“You don’t intend to keep the child?”

His cold voice resounded throughout the room.

Now that Gloria had left, it felt as though the temperature in the room had dropped by several degrees.

Rachel gripped her blanket tightly. Yes.

Since the baby was fated to live a tragedy if they were born, it would be better if they never got to start their story. They would be born to a mute mother who wouldn’t have the ability to protect them, and to a father who did not love them at all. Who would be able to bear such a childhood?

Rachel’s composed expression incensed Justin. “And who let you make such a decision by yourself?”

A shadow loomed over her. The sudden assault of pain from her arm made Rachel suck in a breath. Her face, which was already pale, completely drained of color then.

Most frighteningly, she was surprised to find that she could feel a faint sense of happiness.

At the very least, Justin wanted the baby.

“Listen up carefully-you will keep this child. You don’t have the right to decide otherwise. Your job includes giving the Burtons children, and they will bear the Burton name. You don’t have to care for them; all you need to do is birth them. Once they’re born, someone else will take care of them.”

Those words of his were like cold water from a bucket, drenching Rachel and making a bone-deep chill settle inside her.

Did Justin not intend for her to raise her own children?

She stared at the man before her in disbelief, her heart lurching violently.

Justin whipped her hand away, his gaze frosty beyond comprehension. "Do not make me remind you of your place again-you are just something that Jefferey Hudson gave us. I do not have that much patience for you!" He even delivered another whammy before he left. "Take a guess as to whether that old man can live the rest of his life in peace if something happens to that child?"

Rachel's face was an ashen color.

The door slammed shut, and the walls vibrated from the impact.

All of a sudden, she felt nauseous. With a hand on the wall, she ran over to the bathroom and repeatedly dry heaved.

Everything before her disgusted her.

All the good people were either dead or being threatened. Meanwhile, the evil people who were left were living their lives out in the open with no restraints despite all the evils they had committed. In a

mid-sized city

like Riverdale, people were used to dirtying their hands for an advantage, and they stepped on others to get ahead in life.

After Justin stepped out of the room, he looked at his hands. He had used too much strength when he closed the door, and his hands had felt the impact. His ears were buzzing as well.

In reality, he was feeling quite regretful.

"Are you all right, Mr. Burton?" Frankie had been waiting outside all the while. "Miss Hochmann has been worried sick."

Justin frowned. A brief silence later, he spoke. "Let the old man go for now."

“Huh?”

“Send someone to keep an eye on him.”

“Understood.” Frankie didn’t dare to ask too much. As he followed Justin out of the building, he gave a report on the company. “We have some results from the investigation on that foreign account. Each time a huge sum of money was credited into it, Amber just so happened to be abroad.”

Justin’s brows furrowed.

It turned out that the foreign account was tied to Amber.

Nonetheless, he had already figured that out. Jeffrey treasured that daughter of his; it was impossible that he would not give her anything to do and just let her be a regular doctor.

“She’s been lying low recently. What has she been doing?”

“I was about to tell you that-it seems that Jefferey has recently gotten involved with a family business from abroad. Both parties have been pushing hard for a union, and it seems that they intend to have Amber marry into that family. By the way, they’re called the Albrights.”

Justin’s eyes darkened at that.

After Rachel was discharged, Frankie took her back to the Burton Residence so that she could rest.

Sue’s face turned green when she received news of Rachel’s pregnancy. “When was this? How long has she been pregnant?”

Frankie stopped her. “Madam, Mr. Burton has made it clear to let the young lady rest. Do not disturb her for no reason.”

“No, that wasn’t my intention. This is Justin’s first child, after all. I should get a clear picture of the situation, shouldn’t I? That way, Mrs. Duncan can make the appropriate arrangements as well—we want to find out what she wants for her meals.”

“There’s no need for that, Madam Parham. Mr. Burton has asked me to hire a nutritionist, and this professional will be in charge of her dietary requirements from today onward.”

“Does he need to go to all that trouble? Don’t we have enough servants in this household to wait on her considering how many we have?”

“I’m not too sure about that. Mr. Burton highly values this child.” Frankie knew that there was no use elaborating. “If there’s nothing else, I shall take my leave. Goodbye, Madam Parham.”

As she looked in the direction of the master bedroom, Sue’s expression quickly darkened. Despite all her best-laid plans, the unexpected happened—the mute had gotten pregnant.

Things were harder now.

After Frankie left, she ordered the servants away and returned to her bedroom to make a phone call.

“Hello? It’s me.”

“What is it?” The voice who answered her belonged to a man, raspy the way that most middle-aged men’s voices were. “What is it?”

“Would I be calling you for idle conversation?”

Her question was returned with silence.

“Fine. You’re always like this,” Sue muttered impatiently. “I’m calling you because there’s something I want you to do. Do you know that the mute is pregnant?”

“What?”

“I only found out about it today too. Let me remind you out of the goodness of my heart-if you don’t do something, everything so far will go to waste!”

The waiter poured the red wine with perfect precision, having already placed white napkins down.

Justin automatically picked up his glass. “I heard that you’re a connoisseur when it comes to wine. Why don’t you try this then?”

However, Amber’s tone was bland, a departure from her usual enthusiasm and gentleness. “You can’t possibly have called me out here just for a wine tasting session, right?”

Justin’s expression did not change. “I’ve been busy with work recently, so I haven’t had time to ask about you, How have you been doing since you started work at your new workplace? The others at the research institute haven’t been giving you a hard time, have they?”

“Why would they? Who doesn’t know that you’re the one who got me into the Burton Medical Research Institute?” Amber changed the topic. “However, I was going to talk to you about this-I might not be able to stay at the research center.”

“Why is that so?”

“My father still wishes for me to go abroad to further my career.”

Justin fell silent. Then, he lifted up his wine glass and took a sip.

that staying here won’t achieve anything either. You’re my brother-in-law, and people talk about me behind my back since I frequently have lunch with you.”

Justin suddenly brought out a small, black velvet box and slowly pushed it over to her. "I initially wanted to give you this. Since you're about to leave the country, this is probably no longer of any use."

The lid of the box opened with a light click before Amber's eyes, and a diamond glittered brilliantly under the lights once the box opened up.

Similarly, the woman's eyes lit up. "This is... Justin, is this..."

It was a diamond ring.

Chapter 124

Night came, and Rachel leaned against the headboard of her bed as she read her book. There was a bowl near the bed, and its contents-a concoction to keep her energy levels up during her pregnancy-was already finished. As Rachel read her book, she unconsciously caressed her belly.

Although she wasn't at a stage where her belly would show yet, she could already sense the presence of this new little life. This was probably what they called the bond between mother and child.

Rachel had spent the last few days alone, and as the days passed, she grew even more fonder of this child. She recalled that Justin had also grown up without his own parents as well. As long as the child in her belly had the Burtons' blood flowing in their veins, no one would mistreat them. After all, the child was innocent.

Just then, the door opened with a creak. The light footsteps that Rachel then heard were different from how they usually sounded. She froze, and when she turned around, she saw an unwelcome guest.
Amber?

Why are you here?

"Why are you so surprised?" Amber paced around her room. "I heard that you're pregnant, so I came all the way to see you. After all, that kid in your belly is my nephew."

Amber then stretched a hand out, and the diamond ring glinting on her ring finger was especially radiant. "Take a look. What do you think this is?"

Rachel frowned. What exactly is your motive?

A document then fell onto Rachel's blanket with a smack.

"Sign this."

Rachel stiffened, having seen the words 'divorce agreement' written on the paper. She then looked up in disbelief.

Amber was absolutely smug. "Justin wanted me to bring this to you. He's already signed it. As soon as you sign the papers, you won't have any more ties with him."

That's impossible.

"Impossible?" Amber chuckled coldly. "You really thought that your position as the lady of the Burton family is secured just because you've got a bun in the oven? Let me tell you this-all I need to do is make some little scheme, then that child in your belly will become utterly worthless." The Albrights overseas? It's all just a cover.

Amber had begun putting her plans together ever since she heard about Rachel's pregnancy. After all, she didn't believe that Justin felt nothing toward her. Men were the embodiment of jealousy, so if Amber showed signs that she would leave, Justin would certainly find a way to stop her from doing so-even if that meant kicking Rachel out of the picture.

"This is an ambitious gamble. If I lose, then the only thing I can do is go abroad. However, it's clear that I've won this gamble." Amber showed off her ring, a pleased look plastered on her face. "I love the ring that Justin has given me. We're about to get engaged, so don't blame me when I show you the door if you insist on continuing to embarrass yourself."

Rachel clutched the paper tightly, and her face was awfully pale. This was impossible. Justin has said before that he wants me to keep this child. I won't believe you.

"Who cares if you keep that kid? Don't worry, I'll help you take good care of the baby as long as it isn't a stillborn!"

Amber's hand reached over, and Rachel whipped the former's hand away in fear. As a result, the sharp edges of the diamond on the ring sliced across Rachel's face. Instantly, she felt a deep pain worming its way through her flesh.

Amber let out a surprised shriek and glared at her balefully. "What did you do? You've dirtied my ring!"

Rachel pulled her blanket off and got out of bed.

"Where are you going?"

Move. I'm going to look for Justin and get the answers straight from him. Evidently, Rachel did not believe a

single word of what Amber said.

"Stop right there. Justin doesn't want to see you at all. How can you be so insolent?"

As they tussled, the bowl fell to the floor with a crash before shards of porcelain flew everywhere.

"What is going on?" A commanding voice could be heard coming from outside the door. Justin then entered the room with wide strides.

Amber promptly feigned a weak, soft look before making her way over. "Justin, I spoke nicely to her when I asked her to sign the papers, but she lost her temper and threw stuff at me. I've gotten hurt."

Justin glanced at Rachel. The latter's eyes were red-rimmed as she stared at him in a stunned manner.

"Where did you get hurt?" Justin withdrew his gaze and picked Amber's hand up to check for injuries right before Rachel's eyes.

In truth, Amber wasn't hurt at all. The sole patch of blood on her hand was also from Rachel when the

"Get the servants to patch you up. It shouldn't be serious."

Justin's worry and concern toward Amber felt like stabs to Rachel's heart.

"Leave this to me." Justin wrapped an arm around Amber's waist and patted her back. "Don't let your mood be affected by this."

"What about the divorce agreement?"

"Okay."

After Amber left, Justin's eyes quickly chilled. "Didn't I tell you to rest well? What were you doing?"

Was what she said true? You want a divorce?

"Isn't this what you've been waiting for since the beginning? I'm just fulfilling your wish."

At that, Rachel's mind went black. She staggered backward, but she ended up stepping on a porcelain shard. A sharp pain shot up her foot, but she didn't flinch at all-it seemed as though the pain would make her mind clearer, letting her realize that this was reality and not a nightmare.

Justin's eyes darkened. Just as he was about to approach her, he noticed a figure standing near the door through the corner of his eyes.

“You will leave once the divorce is finalized. Once the child is here, you are free.”

Those cold words made Rachel feel like she had been plunged into an icy bath. She didn’t even have the energy to sign her response, seeming as though something had sucked all the strength out of her in an instant.

“Sign this.” Justin walked over to her side and placed the papers and a pen before her. There were two copies of the divorce agreement, and Justin had already signed both of them.

Rachel’s eyes instantly teared up, but she forced back her tears as she accepted the papers. However, she

couldn’t stop her hands from shaking. The only sounds that could be heard in the room was the scratching of the pen as she signed her name.

The freedom that she yearned for was finally in front of her. Once she finished that last stroke, she would no longer be Justin’s wife, nor would she have any more ties to the Burton Family. However, that last stroke felt astronomically difficult. No matter how she tried, she couldn’t bring herself to fully finish her signature.

Justin suddenly grabbed hold of her hand and roughly finished it for her. “That will do. Keep this copy for yourself. Frankie will bring someone over to help you move your belongings tomorrow afternoon.”

Rachel fell and sat on the bed upon hearing those cold words tossed at her. Meanwhile, her foot continued to bleed. The shard embedded in her flesh was like a thorn, digging deeper and deeper into her foot. It even felt as though it would dig all the way to her heart and open up all those old wounds that never got a chance to properly heal, causing them to bleed again.

On the other hand, Amber’s cheers drifted up from downstairs.

A gust blew in from the balcony. The copy of her divorce agreement flipped over from the wind, plastering itself to Rachel’s foot. With that, blood soaked into the paper,

The words 'divorce agreement' were stark. It was as though a hole had suddenly opened in her heart, and a storm raged on within it. She asked herself this-didn't she actually wish to escape from this place?

That day had come at last. However, why did she feel so awful about it?

Rachel pressed a hand to her chest, and her bony fingers clutched her pajamas tightly while creating wrinkles in it. Still, she couldn't stop the pain that assaulted her like a raging wave. She felt as though she was about to pass out and die, for even breathing was a task.

Chapter 125

Rachel moved straight back to Nancy's place without bringing much with her. When Nancy saw her coming back with all her luggage, she immediately realized that something was wrong. "Why are you moving back suddenly, Rachel? Did something happen?"

However, Rachel gave her no response. She washed her hands as she stood in the bathroom, rubbing soap on her palms again and again as if to wash something away.

"Are you trying to worry me to death, Rachel? If you keep doing this, I'll give Dr. Peters a call."

Suddenly, the woman came to her senses and stopped Nancy. Let's move away from Riverdale, Grandma.

Nancy looked dumbfounded and stunned upon hearing this.

The next day, Victor put the suitcases into the trunk before clapping the dust off his hands. "Remember to give me a call when you and Madam Tiller arrive at the new place, Rachel. Tell me your address, and I'll go to visit you two when I'm free."

Rachel forced a smile while pointing at his unkempt blond hair. A student should behave like a student. Dyeing your hair back to black would suit you better, you know.

Victor scratched his head. "I'll keep that in mind." As the car slowly drove away from the neighborhood, he ran after the car, waved his hand, and shouted, "You have to call me, Rachel! I'll definitely dye my hair black when I see you next time!"

The car soon disappeared at the neighborhood's entrance, and Victor walked back in dejection. There were still some belongings in Nancy's apartment, all of which Rachel had given to him.

As soon as Victor reached the entrance to the apartment building, he bumped into someone in a moment of inattention. "Hey!" The lady's shrill voice was somewhat harsh to the ear. He frowned in

displeasure and looked back, only to see a young lady hopping backward on crutches. Turns out that she's a cripple, he thought to himself.

The lady glared at Victor. "Are you blind? Why don't you watch where you're going?"

Victor was miffed in the first place, so the lady's words enraged him even more. He snapped, "Who are you accusing of being blind? Don't you know how to speak properly?"

"What's wrong with you? You look like an undesirable person. Are you really a resident of this neighborhood? Are you here to steal things?" Gloria asked. Suddenly, she realized something and immediately reached into her pocket. "Where's my cell phone?"

"Me? Steal things?" Victor's face was livid with rage. "Are you here to fake an accident to blackmail me?"

"Just you wait! If I can't find my cell phone, it means you're the one who stole it! It was still here just now! Stay where you are!" Gloria fumbled about for a while before suddenly finding her cell phone in her trouser pocket.

Upon seeing the change in her expression, Victor let out a sneer. "Well? Aren't you going to call the police? Do you want me to lend you my cell phone if you don't have one?"

Gloria looked embarrassed.

Victor shot her a disdainful look before turning around and going upstairs. It just isn't my day today! he thought to himself. After going upstairs, he took out his keys and unlocked the door. Just as he was about to close the door, an arm suddenly stopped him. "Hey! Wait a minute!"

Victor flew into a rage when he saw that it was the lady from just now. "Are you done yet? Why are you following me to my house?"

"Your house? Is this your house?"

"Surely this isn't your house even if it isn't mine, right?"

Gloria was startled for a moment. She then muttered, "I must have remembered it wrongly. Didn't Frankie say that Rachel and her grandmother live in Unit 201?"

Victor was about to close the door at first, but he paused upon hearing Gloria's words. "Are you looking for Rachel?"

"Do you know her?" Gloria's eyes lit up.

Victor sized her up warily and asked, "What's your relationship with her?"

"Me?" Gloria thought it over for a moment. "You may consider me her sister-in-law."

"Are you Justin's sister?" Victor blurted.

"Do you know me?"

Victor's face hardened at once. "Get lost at once! Stay as far away from here as possible!" Then, he slammed the door shut right away with a loud bang. When he helped Rachel pack up her belongings, he saw her blood stained divorce agreement, and various news reports of domestic violence flashed before

his eyes. Moreover, Justin had such a bad reputation, so it wasn't difficult to imagine what Rachel had suffered.

The sound of someone banging the door could be heard outside. "Are you done yet?" Victor pulled the door open with an impatient expression.

Gloria nearly punched him in the face. "Why did you become so hostile all of a sudden? I'm here to look for Miss Rachel, not you! Where is she?"

"She isn't here."

"That's impossible. She just moved here yesterday!" This time, Gloria was smart enough to prop the door open with her crutches, making Victor unable to close the door. Then, she hopped into his house and yelled as she entered, "Miss Rachel! I know you're home, Miss Rachel!"

"Stop yelling! Were you a duck in your previous life?" Victor bellowed to stop Gloria as his head was throbbing because of the noise she made. "Can't you see that yourself? Rachel has moved away."

"Moved away?" Gloria hopped into the room inside to see the belongings packed neatly on the floor. There didn't seem to be anyone living here. "Where has she moved to?"

"How would I know that? Rachel left in a hurry without telling me anything. She drove away by herself; anyway, she's going to leave Riverdale."

"What?" Gloria's expression changed. "How could she drive by herself? She's pregnant!"

"Pregnant?" Victor's expression changed as well.

"When did she leave, and in which direction did she head off to?"

Victor was stupefied. "She left just a moment ago."

Gloria immediately took out her cell phone and dialed a number. Victor wanted to make a dig at her about her cell phone at first, but he shut up upon seeing her expression.

“Justin, Miss Rachel has moved away!”

On the other end of the line, the person was at the Burton Group’s quarterly summary meeting. As he held his cell phone, Justin slowly clenched his large hand with veins pulsing on the back of it. He thought to himself,

She actually ran away just like that. Who gave her the nerve to do so?

The expressway was brightly lit with street lamps as night drew in. Rachel pulled up at a rest stop. I’m going to buy some stuff, Grandma. Wait for me inside the car.

Nancy nodded with a yawn. “Okay. How much longer will it take for us to get there, Rachel? You haven’t told me where we’re going yet.”

Soon. We’ll be there very soon.

It was easy for an old person to be fatigued by a long journey, and Rachel was worried that Nancy might not be able to bear it. Therefore, she hurried along the way and didn’t dare to waste too much time. She wanted to get off the expressway and find somewhere to take a rest as soon as possible. She didn’t know where she was going, nor did she dare to tell anyone about it. She feared that Justin would come after her for the baby’s sake, but she was even more afraid that someone with evil intentions might want to kill her to root her out. Without the protection offered by the title of Mrs. Burton, she couldn’t establish herself in Riverdale at all. Not only that, many wanted to kill the baby in her womb. Rachel shuddered at the thought of what Amber had said the other day.

“Welcome. Your total is 103 bucks.”

Rachel walked out of the convenience store with the shopping bags in her hands. Just then, the convenience

store worker suddenly called out to her from behind, "You forgot your sour plums, miss!"

Rachel was startled for a moment. As soon as she turned around, her head was suddenly covered from behind with a piece of black cloth. The next second, everything went pitch-black before her eyes.

"Mmm--"

The large shopping bags containing all the stuff she had just bought dropped to the ground, scattering biscuits, milk, and some chocolates everywhere. Rachel struggled desperately while attempting to call for help, but she could only let out faint, hoarse cries. Then, as she felt a sharp pain in the back of her head, she saw stars and passed out.

Chapter 126

Rachel regained consciousness soon afterward. When she came to her senses, she found herself surrounded by complete darkness as her head was still covered with a piece of black cloth. Meanwhile, her hands and feet were tied as she was thrown into the back seat of a van.

The van sped along the expressway for a long, long time before finally reaching its destination. "Get her out of the van and into the house."

Rachel tensed up all over. Right after that, she was carried out of the van by two men. The black cloth covering her head was pulled off with a swoosh, and a bright pendant lamp overhead shone on her eyes. The light was so blinding that she lowered her head and kept averting her eyes, unable to adjust to it for a while.

"Don't untie the ropes for her lest she doesn't stay still."

"Yes, sir."

Rachel didn't even have enough time to see who her abductors were. When she finally adjusted to the light in the room, those people had left, leaving her alone in the spacious living room. As her hands and feet were tied, she sank into the sofa. It was with great difficulty that she turned over and sat up. When she looked around her surroundings, she found this place somewhat familiar. However, before she could remember which place this was, the roar of a car engine sounded outside the villa.

The door opened with a beep. "She's inside, President Burton."

Rachel looked up from the sofa, and her heart shuddered violently when she saw the person who entered.

Dressed in a well-pressed pitch-black suit, Justin stood at the door and saw Rachel with her hands and feet tied. At the sight of this, his black eyes were instantly ablaze with anger. He turned around and

gave the man at the door a loud slap that resounded around the door. "Who did this?"

The man was slapped so hard that the corner of his mouth bled. As he covered his face with his hand, he shook like a leaf and responded, "President Burton,"

"President Burton, the ones he brought with him are newcomers. They didn't realize it was actually Mrs. Burton," Frankie quickly said in the man's defense. Then, he glared at the group of men. "Can't you guys do a good job of such a petty thing? Will you bear the responsibility if Mrs. Burton gets hurt?"

Justin entered the house and locked eyes with the woman sitting on the sofa. The atmosphere was tense for a few seconds as they were locked in a standoff. Then, he untied the ropes on her hands and feet, revealing bruises on her fair skin.

Frankie hurried to get the first-aid kit.

"Give it to me."

"Yes, President Burton."

At the sound of the door being closed, silence befell the room. Soon enough, Rachel and Justin were the only ones left.

Justin took out the salve and reached for Rachel's hand, but she retracted her hand and averted her eyes. He said with a frown, "Amber has information about the Hudson Family's offshore bank account."

Just set your mind at rest and give birth to the baby. Don't think about anything else. Once the matter is over, you'll still be Mrs. Burton."

However, Rachel remained unmoved.

As he grew impatient, Justin grabbed her wrist and forcibly applied the salve to her bruises.

Suddenly, Rachel struggled and pushed him away with all her strength. She tried to run to the door, but unfortunately, she was dragged back and flung onto the sofa before she could even take a step.

Justin gripped her cheek. "Where are you going?"

Rachel's eyes were red as she stared hard at Justin. She wanted to look for Nancy. He had her abducted from the expressway, but Nancy was still there. Nancy couldn't drive alone, nor did she know her way around the place, so Rachel didn't dare to imagine what would happen to her.

However, Justin thought Rachel wanted to flee from him. "Don't make me lose patience with you! Do you think you can simply run away with your grandmother? Don't you care about the old name named Irwin anymore?"

What did you do to Grandpa Irwin?

Justin's cold eyes darkened. "Guess what will happen to him if anything happens to our baby."

Rachel's face turned deathly pale. Why? Why must those around me be put under threat like this one after another? I have never thought of hurting anyone, but why is fate never on my side? Why must be tortured in such a way, so much so that even my friends and relatives have to suffer as well?

Tears streamed quietly down Rachel's face before it splashed onto the back of Justin's hand. His tightly knitted eyebrows twitched, and he unconsciously relaxed his grip on her. After a moment, he let go of the woman. "You will stay here from today onward until you give birth to the baby."

Rachel lay prone on the sofa and coughed with her hand clutching her throat. Will you let me go after I give birth to the baby? She no longer wanted to get involved in the conflict between the Burton Family and the Hudson Family, nor did she want to continue being a part of the divorce-and-remarriage drama. Right now, she just wanted to leave Riverdale and stay out of trouble with her grandmother. Since Justin wanted the baby, she would give him the baby. In fact, she didn't want the baby anymore.

Justin's face darkened at once. She's still bent on leaving! he thought to himself.

Just then, a commotion was heard from the outside. "What's the matter?" Justin yelled impatiently toward the door.

Frankie hurriedly pushed the door open and entered. "President Burton, they caught someone sneaking around outside."

"Who is it? Bring him in."

Several bodyguards came in while twisting a young man's arms. "Let go of me! I can walk by myself!" The blond-haired young man's black T-shirt was stained with mud, and his ripped jeans had been washed multiple times; one could no longer tell its original color. Even though anyone could tell at a glance that this slovenly young man was unlearned and incapable, he looked unruly and rebellious with a fearless expression while being held down by the bodyguards.

Rachel's expression changed at the sight of him.

"Are you all right, Rachel?"

"Shut up and behave yourself!" A bodyguard kicked the young man in the back of his knee.

The young man fell to his knees with a muffled moan. Rachel quickly went over to him anxiously, but she was stopped by Justin.

"What are you doing? Let go of Rachel!" The young man still looked ferocious as he kneeled on the ground.

“Do you know each other?” Justin shot a glance at Rachel.

He is innocent! Rachel responded. Then, she quickly gestured to the young man. What are you doing here?

However, Victor couldn't understand sign language, and he thought Rachel was asking him for help. “Don't worry, Rachel. I'll get you out of this place. What an asshole! When I get out of here, I will sue him until he

spends the rest of his life in prison for imprisoning you illegally!”

Just then, Frankie hurriedly trotted to Justin's side and whispered something to him.

Justin shot a cold glance at the young man. “Are you Victor Wade?”

Victor frowned. “Do you know me?”

“Since you're already here, just stay here and keep Rachel company.”

“Why should I stay just because you're telling me to?”

“I heard that your only family member is your senile grandmother, right?”

“What do you want to do?!” Victor's expression changed. He began to struggle, only to be pinned fiercely to the ground by the bodyguards. With his cheek pressed against the floor, he glared furiously at Justin. “Whatever you want to do, direct it at me. If you dare to touch my Grandma, I'll kill you and your entire family!”

Rachel's face instantly turned as white as a sheet, and she staggered to Victor's side to cover his mouth.

“Mmmm! Rachel, let go... Mmm...”

Justin responded, “Why don’t you ask Rachel if I have the guts to touch your grandmother? Just behave yourself and stay here. Don’t play any tricks. Otherwise, it’s easy to make a person vanish in Riverdale.” After finishing his sentence, he shot a glance at Rachel and strode off.

Justin’s voice continued to reverberate throughout the room. Rachel’s hands and feet were as cold as ice, and her arms were trembling as she helped Victor up. She thought to herself, His words are directed at both Victor and myself.

Chapter 127

Once Justin left, Rachel helped Victor up from the ground.

“I’m fine, Rachel. Are you good?”

As she shook her head, her eyes remained dull.

‘I’m sorry for getting you involved!

“Justin’s simply not human! How could he do that to you? You have a child inside of you!”

Rachel peered at him in shock. ‘How did you know?’

“Well, it’s a long story. I only knew Justin was coming for you thanks to that crippled lady.”

That crippled lady?

Victor explained the entire incident to Rachel, to which she finally understood what went down.

“She claimed to be Justin’s sister, and she acted in such an overbearing manner the entire time. She’s just like Justin, for both of them are very difficult to interact with. After I got to know about it, I hid in the Burton Group’s parking lot the entire evening. When Justin finally showed up, I followed his car all the way here, and that’s how I found you. Don’t worry, Rachel-I’ll take you with me tonight.”

However, Rachel shook her head and brushed the grass off his clothes.

‘We can’t leave just yet.’

“Although they look tough, there’s no way they’ll be guarding the place the entire night. I’m certain that we’ll find a way out!”

Victor was pretty confident with his deduction.

As she peered out of the living room’s window, Rachel saw three to five bodyguards standing in a disorganized manner outside. They looked into the house from time to time and safeguarded every entrance and exit

Alas, Victor is only a young boy.

As expected, while Victor was on guard in the living room for the entire night, the gang outside stayed around for the same amount of time. When dawn came, he was letting out continuous yawns as his eyes reddened while new batches of guards arrived for the next shift.

“F*ck!”

He clenched his fists and uttered, “These b*stards!”

When the sun rose, Frankie sent a maid over.

Victor quickly recognized him, and he asked vigilantly, “Why are you here? Where’s Justin?”

Since he had no intention of debating with the kid, Frankie simply signaled for the maid to do her job.

“This is Madam Mary. She’ll be responsible for taking care of Mrs. Burton from now on.”

However, Victor did not give up and continued, “Do you intend on locking Rachel up in this sh*tthole?”

“This is entirely for Mrs. Burton’s safety.”

“What a load of crap! Do you lock a prisoner up for their own safety?”

Upon seeing how Victor was significantly dumber, Frankie realized that he couldn’t be reasoned with, yet he

could do nothing to send him out of the house.

Just then, he suddenly remembered the young master’s order and placed a few books on the table. “If you have nothing better to do, you can read these.”

“What are these?”

“These are books on sign language. It’ll help you communicate better with Mrs. Burton.”

“You think I’d need a lesson from you guys? Why should you care how I communicate with Rachel?”

“Well, it’s entirely up to you!”

Frankie couldn’t be bothered with such nonsense, and he glanced upstairs. He knew that Rachel was already awake but refused to come downstairs, so he shouted, “Mrs. Burton!”

“Do give me a call if you need anything, Mrs. Burton. Mr. Burton will come whenever he’s free.”

However, he received no response from upstairs.

Victor crossed his arms and scoffed, "Seems like you've been ignored, you imbecile."

Frankie shot him a warning glance and said, "Here's a friendly reminder-don't try anything stupid, and don't even think of escaping with Mrs. Burton. Otherwise, she'll meet the same agonizing fate as you."

At once, Victor charged toward the door and yelled, "You'd better run, you spineless scum!"

Once Frankie left, the door from upstairs could be heard being pushed open.

"Rachel!"

After he rushed up the staircase with big strides, Victor went to support Rachel. "You're awake."

Her face seemed pretty messed up with the pair of dark circles around her eyes.

'Help me, Victor

"What is it?"

I need to know how Grandma is. Can you go check on her for me?'

"Okay, I'll go right now."

After taking a few steps, Victor turned around and asked, "Will you be fine here alone, Rachel?"

I'll be fine!

Upon being reminded of her grandmother's condition, Rachel couldn't sleep well the entire night. After all, her grandmother's health was one of her biggest concerns.

"I'll be back as soon as possible."

When Victor walked out the door, the guards didn't care to look at him as their assignment was to keep Rachel under their watch, so Victor's departure was rather smooth.

At Tran-Q, Gloria held her cane and pushed the servants that were trying to help her away. "I don't need your help. I can walk just fine by myself. Where's Justin? I need to talk to him."

"Your leg has yet to fully recover, Miss Hochmann. Mr. Burton has specifically ordered for you to stay put in your bed."

"Stay put? What makes you think I can do that? Get me discharged by today!"

As she spoke, she pulled the door open and exited the ward.

However, she carelessly bumped into Julian and staggered as the latter dropped a stack of books in his arms.

In a flash, all the magazines and newspapers scattered on the floor.

"I'm sorry, Dr. Peters."

As she was about to help him pick up the books, the cast on her leg hindered her from squatting down.

"It's fine." Julian stopped her and proceeded to pick them up.

Gloria initially wanted to express her apology, but she was distracted by the headline in the newspaper that was on the floor. Instantly, she frowned and asked, "What is this?"

After picking up his magazines, Julian followed her line of sight and answered, "That's today's news. Don't you know about it?"

At once, she grabbed the newspaper.

'JUSTIN BURTON, PRESIDENT OF BURTON GROUP AND AMBER HUDSON, FACE OF HUDSON PHARMACEUTICALS TO BE ENGAGED THIS WEEK. ALLIANCE OF THE CENTURY...

As if the gargantuan font size wasn't enough, the editor of the paper had to bold the texts as well.

Gloria was shocked by the news, and she frowned even more bitterly. "Is he really getting engaged to Amber? Let me call him."

As she stood in front of Julian, Gloria dialed Justin's number on her phone.

"The number you have dialed is unavailable..."

On the other hand, Julian had anticipated the missed call. He revealed a calm face with an underlying hint of anger. "I've been trying to call him these few days, but he hasn't picked up once. It seems like he's not going to explain anything to me as well."

"No way. I have to talk to him! He's not the unfaithful man he appears to be. He even got Rachel pregnant!"

As she finished speaking, Gloria clutched her phone with a heavy expression. "I'll go and find him!"

Watching as she furiously walked away, Julian stood still, experiencing countless mixed feelings in his heart.

At that very moment, he realized that he could never bring change to the world as if a person's destiny was solidified at the beginning of their life. How Justin was always protecting Gloria; how Rachel was always bullied since she was a kid, and the boastfulness of Tina and Amber.

All of a sudden, he received a call from a foreign number.

"Hello?"

"I've given it some thought. There are still some things that need to be taken care of, though. I'll go as soon as I'm done with them."

Riverdale was no longer what it used to be.

"Here are some antivirals, Mrs. Burton. Do consume them before each meal."

As she stared at the bowl of ebony, medicinal soup in front of her, Rachel chugged them down without any

questions.

While the bitterness quickly lingered in her throat, the smell from her exhalation almost made her throw up. Nonetheless, she was able to endure it and swallowed everything down.

"Please enjoy your meal. I'll go and clean up the place."

Except for Rachel and her food, the dining room became hollow.

Meanwhile, accompanying her was the news that was being broadcast on TV.

"Yesterday, Burton Group and Hudson Pharmaceuticals announced that Justin Burton, the President of Burton Group, has proposed to Hudson Pharmaceuticals' Amber Hudson!"

Upon hearing that, Rachel jerked her neck and swiftly lifted her head, peering at the TV as her face turned pale.

Chapter 128

When Victor finally returned, the sky was already pitch black.

“Grandma is fine, Rachel.”

Upon entering the house, he relayed everything to her and said, “While you were being sent here last night, they picked Grandma up and brought her back to her place as well.”

Rachel, who was sitting at the dining table, regained her senses after being stunned for a few seconds.

‘That’s good to hear.’

“I’ve done what you told me to do, Rachel. I told Grandma that you got into a fight with Justin, but you’re currently resting at home right now and can’t go visit her for the time being. Grandma bought it and had me bring some fish soup to you.”

As he spoke, he placed the thermal container on the dining table. “Come and have some while it’s still hot.”

However, Rachel simply pursed her lips. She seemed to be rather exhausted.

‘I don’t have the appetite. Why don’t you eat up instead, and I’ll go get some rest!’

After grabbing her phone, she walked out of the dining room.

Victor watched her leaving back, and he couldn’t stop worrying.

“What’s wrong with Rachel, Madam Mary?”

As she grabbed a new pair of cutlery, Madam Mary shook her head and replied, “I have no idea. She looked fine earlier.”

From the corner of his eyes, Victor glanced at the remote control on the dining table as he thought about it.

After returning to her room, Rachel never showed herself again.

Later on, Madam Mary prepared a glass of hot milk and went upstairs. She knocked on her door, but there wasn’t any response. “I’m coming in, Mrs. Burton.”

“Aaaaah!”

Upon hearing the shriek from the second floor, Victor sprung up from his seat at the dining table and stormed upstairs in a flash.

Rachel was sitting on the carpet, and her bottoms were full of blood.

“Rachel!”

“Hurry up and call Mr. Burton!”

Madam Mary had fast reflexes, and she quickly said, “This is a sign of a miscarriage. The baby is doomed if we delay any further!”

“Get the phone. Where’s the phone?”

Victor searched for his phone anxiously. "I don't have that b*stard's phone number!"

"I have it. Let me, let me."

Meanwhile, Justin was having dinner with Amber.

"Justin, now that the entire Riverdale knows about our engagement, even my father cannot do anything about it even though he's against it."

Justin answered curtly, "Mr. Hudson was planning to send you abroad. What's going to happen to the business over there if you stay here?"

"Nothing. There's no business over there except for some minor things that my dad doesn't want any outsiders to handle, so I'll have to visit there once or twice every year. It's not like I'll have to stay there for extended periods."

"Is that so? Will you be going this year as well?"

"Yeah."

"When are you going? Give me an estimate."

Upon hearing that, Amber was visibly skeptical as she studied his face. "Why are you asking me all this,

Justin?"

He maintained the same expression and explained, "Didn't you say that you wanted an engagement ceremony? I'm just fearing that your trip might clash with our engagement plans."

Amber was overjoyed upon hearing his words. "Are you serious?"

“Of course I’m being serious. As long as you like it, I’ll do anything to make you happy.”

“You’re so nice to me, Justin.”

Just as he was about to ask something else, his pocket started vibrating.

“Hello?”

“Mr. Burton, Mrs. Burton is bleeding profusely, and the child may be at great risk. Where are you? There’s no hospital nearby.”

At once, Justin’s eyes sank.

“What happened?” Amber’s concerned tone came from across the table.

However, Justin regained his senses and answered, “It’s nothing.”

“Hello? Mr. Burton?”

After yelling at the phone for a long time, Madam Mary realized that the call had already been disconnected.

As Victor helped Rachel up, he was enraged and growled, “What did Justin say?”

“He hung up on me...”

“What the f*ck? That motherf*cker!”

Just then, Rachel made a sudden movement in his arms as she clutched his sleeves.

“Rachel!”

Julian

She wrote the name in Victor’s palm.

“Julian? Dr. Peters?” He quickly acknowledged her message. “I’ll call him right away!”

Since it was already getting late at night, Julian put everything he was doing on hold and rushed to the house from the hospital. His heart palpitated at the sight of Rachel’s worn-out body after she had been

bleeding out profusely.

“What happened?”

“I don’t know either...”

“Forget I asked. Please get out. I need to stop her bleeding.”

After hauling Madam Mary and Victor out of the room, Julian helped Rachel stop the bleeding and disinfected her wounds.

As the hemostat crashed into other medical tools, it produced a cold clank.

Rachel grabbed his arm and moved her light-toned lips, but she couldn’t make a sound.

Upon seeing that, Julian comforted her by saying, “It’s okay. Everything will be fine once I stop the bleeding. It’s okay...”

Then, Rachel loosened her hand as tears started falling from the corner of her eyes, moistening her pillow.

When she remembered how Justin wanted to keep the child and insisted that she stay by his side, all the while telling her that his relationship with Amber was merely a facade, yet he was nowhere to be found at

such a critical moment.

How did I let a man like this be the father of my child?

As the anesthesia was delayed, the tingle in her abdomen quickly numbed her.

In that instant, nothing orderly was in her mind.

She couldn't figure out how she had led her life into such a situation.

All the possibilities in life, yet she managed to find herself in the abyss, unable to crawl out of the darkness. Instead, she found herself sinking even deeper into it.

Soon, the sound of a car engine was heard coming from the yard.

Upon seeing Justin's arrival, Victor bellowed, "I thought you'd forgotten about Rachel."

Before he could approach Justin, the latter's bodyguard caught him.

Victor struggled as he shouted, "Let go of me! All you shameful dogs, does it feed your pride suppressing a pregnant woman?"

Disregarding the young man, Justin went straight upstairs.

Just as he got upstairs, Julian came out of the room with a dull face.

“How is she?”

“The situation is bad.”

After shutting the door, Julian revealed a scowl. “She’ll need a better bed to rest in. If this happens again, the child will be gone for good.”

At once, Justin tensed his brows.

“I can’t comprehend how you’re able to neglect and hurt her so heartlessly simply for the sake of business, money, and influence. She’s forgiven you countless times, yet you constantly cross the line again and again. Do you realize what you’re doing?”

Julian continued in a more solemn voice, “You’re getting engaged to Amber while you lock her up in here. You’re forcing her to be the third wheel in your relationship. Have you ever considered how she actually feels

about the situation?”

Based on what he knew about Rachel, this was much more agonizing than being murdered.

While her pride was downright shattered, the boundaries of morality had gone over her head. How could anyone not be worried about her?

In response, Justin uttered, “There are some things you don’t understand. I’ll explain everything to her.”

“Indeed. There are many things that I do not understand.”

After grabbing his first aid kit, he walked toward the staircase. "Nor do I intend to. I'll be overseas very soon, so it's best you hire a private physician to tend to her. Otherwise, you're going to regret it if anything happens again."

Among the footsteps descending the stairs, Justin twisted the doorknob.

After pushing the door open. Rachel was seen quietly resting on the bed in the dim light of the room. On the ground was an uncleaned carpet that was stained with her blood; it sent shivers to anyone who saw it, and that included Justin. He was dumbfounded at the sight of the carpet.

When he saw how she had no reaction when he walked in, he assumed that she was asleep.

Then, he walked to the bed and sat down beside her. After raising his hand in the air for a while, he placed it on her cheek.

Only if you weren't Jefferey's daughter; if you weren't one of the Hudsons, things wouldn't have turned out this way...

Chapter 129

Rachel's face was soft and tender to the touch. Although she was pregnant, she was much skinnier than she was before.

At this moment, the initial cold gaze of the man had a flash of pity in it. His gaze was fixated on her for a very long time, and it seemed that he had no plans to leave.

The sound of vibration coming from the phone was exceptionally loud and clear in the house.

After taking a look at the caller ID on the phone, Justin covered the blanket over her before leaving with his phone.

At the sound of the door closing, she opened her eyes. She could hear the sound of a phone call going on from outside the door.

“Have you gotten home?”

“Alright, I’ll bring you to try the gowns out tomorrow.”

Lingering in the air was a hint of alcohol from his body.

After hearing the phone call, she could roughly guess who he met before coming over.

At the thought of that, her eyes turned red as tears started cascading down her cheeks.

Meanwhile, Amber, who was in a car, had a dark face after she hung up the phone.

From the window of the car, she could clearly see the vehicle parked at the entrance of a villa some distance away.

Before he finished eating with her, he left saying that he had an emergency. As she had a gut feeling that something was off, she decided to tail him, only to see what she wished she didn’t.

Rachel, why are you always in the way?

At once, Amber’s grip on the car’s steering tightened, and her eyes were clouded by a shade of coldness.

Julian had told Rachel to rest in bed more. To avoid mishappenings, Mary had cleaned and organized the bedroom on the first floor so that Rachel didn’t have to get off the bed much. Not only that, Rachel was also

served with all sorts of nutritional supplements every day.

At this moment, Gloria came to visit with bags of items. Rachel didn't even know how Gloria knew that she was here.

"Rae, I've brought you some presents!"

After saying that, she started taking out everything in the paper bag and placed them on the bed. "This is a piece of clothing for the baby. It's pink and super cute! This is a small dress. Maybe she can wear it when she grows up. Oh, and this! It's a dinosaur onesie. She can wear it when you want to bring her out during winter. There's also a baby pram that I left outside!"

Gloria was showcasing all the items she bought on the bed like she was running a store.

At this moment, there was a knock at the door.

Holding a rattle drum, Gloria flashed Rachel a smile before saying, "Isn't this rattle drum adorable? The baby will surely like it."

With the blanket covering over half of her body, she caressed her stomach; her complexion was pale yet peaceful.

'How are you so sure that it's a girl?'

Everything Gloria bought was for a girl.

"Call it a gut feeling. I think a girl will be adorable. Justin has such a cold personality, so it's not the best if you get a son like him. Thus, a girl will be better since she will be as gentle as you are."

Hearing that, Rachel forced a smile.

"What's going on? Are you opening a boutique?"

With a bowl of soup in his hands, Victor walked in to see that Gloria had placed a number of goods on the bed. At once, his face turned sour before he complained, "Are you here to make a mess? Go along, get out. Don't disturb Rachel from resting."

"Who's here to make a mess? Can't you see that I've bought some stuff for the baby?"

"All I know is that Rachel can't use these right now, so you can keep them and scram!"

"Say that again!"

Seeing that the situation was getting tense, Rachel quickly tugged on Gloria's hand before she shook her head at the both of them.

Upon Rachel's persuasion, Gloria suppressed her anger as she gave Victor one last glare.

"Rachel, try this chicken soup."

After he set the small table onto the bed, he placed the bowl down while kicking the bunch of items along with the rattle drum away purposely. The goods that were initially placed on the bed then fell to the ground with some clacking noise.

After witnessing that, Gloria was so angry that she could glare a hole into his face. If it wasn't for Rachel, she might have fought with him head-on.

'Alright, you two should cut it out and go eat too.'

"Rachel, remember to drink the soup. I'll come to pick it up in a bit."

Nodding her head, she patted Gloria on her hand. 'Alright, go ahead.'

Though Gloria wasn't in her most active state since she was in crutches, she didn't forget to bump into him hard enough to make him stagger. With that, she strode out of the room with satisfaction plastered on her face.

Rubbing his arm, he sucked in a deep breath before he followed suit. "We didn't prepare your share. You can eat outside if you want to."

"Do you think you can tell me what to do?"

At this moment, Gloria sat at the dining table before she spoke in the direction of the kitchen. "Mary, I'd like to have half a bowl of rice."

Mary was the caretaker who previously took care of Gloria at her apartment. She was meticulously chosen by Frankie from a pool of candidates. Due to the suddenness of this incident, they didn't manage to find someone suitable, so Mary was lent over to help out for the time being.

That explained how Gloria knew that Rachel lived here.

With her teeth gritted, Victor was fuming at this point.

Rolling her eyes at him, she purposely took a bite of the braised pork right before his eyes as she happily munched on it. "Why? Do you want to bite me? Let me tell you, not only do I want to eat here,

I'm even planning to stay here!"

"What did you just say?"

"If you have the power, then kick me out of the house. Oh, do you own this house?"

With a scoff, she continued, "Silly kid, do know your place. You're just a maid that's taking care of Rae. Who do you think you are? You're the one who should scram!"

At once, Victor's face turned pale.

As her initial plan was to get him to walk away, she didn't expect that his next move would be to pull the chair back and sit down. He didn't waste any time before picking up the utensils and started to eat at a fast speed. In no time, there were not many pieces of braised pork left.

"Are you mad? Is there nothing for you to eat after you leave this place? Why are you stuffing yourself up before you leave?"

After he finished eating, he wiped his mouth before roaring, "Who said I'm leaving? Let me tell you. I will be here as long as Rachel is here. Don't even dream that you can make me leave!"

"Y-You..."

"What you? You can ask Justin. He told me to stay and read more of these books."

As he said that, he picked up a book about sign language and flipped it open to a page that he hadn't read yet. He then waved it in her face with a triumphant look.

Pouting her lips, she replied, "Can you even understand its content?"

As the door of the bedroom wasn't closed shut, Mary heard the commotion outside when she came in to send Rachel some side dishes. With a frown, she offered, "Mrs. Burton, I'll shut the door for you."

It's okay. Let it be.

At this moment, the corners of her eye crinkled slightly.

Listening to Victor and Gloria bickering downstairs, Rachel felt as if the atmosphere of the big house became less lonely

After Mary left, she fished out her phone to take a look at the recent news.

All of Riverdale was well informed about the engagement of Justin and Amber. Due to the various news outlet interviews, pictures of the two kept coming up.

After scanning through several pages, she saw a picture of Justin putting on a jacket for Amber. Her pupils shrunk on instinct as she placed her phone face down on the table.

She didn't want to look at it anymore.

After some time, she picked up the spoon before forcing herself to eat the rice, dishes and drink the soup.

One spoon after another, she filled her mouth with the food that was given to her. At this point, she was struggling to munch and swallow.

Although her abdomen pain was awful, she had to give birth to the baby and think of a way to leave Riverdale.

Everything will get better.

However, she suddenly felt that something was stuck in her throat and she couldn't even swallow the rice.

At this moment, she coughed.

Droplets of tears streamed down her face, falling into the bowl of soup.

Chapter 130

After Mary came into the room to tidy the small table, Gloria came in hugging a big box.

Initially, Rachel was trying to figure out what fancy new toy Gloria brought along; she was surprised to see her taking out an old CD player to put on the cupboard opposite the bed.

“The music played by an old CD player makes people feel calm and peaceful. I heard from Dr. Peters that you have insomnia, so you can try this out.”

After Gloria inserted a CD into the player, music with a historical tone started playing out of the speakers.

Rachel enjoyed it as she felt much more at peace in her heart.

Taking a seat by her bed, Gloria asked, “How is it?”

‘Thank you.

“You don’t have to thank me. I’m not the one who got this. I’m just a runner.”

Hearing that, Rachel was stunned.

The player seemed to be an authentic vintage item that wasn’t designed to just look old. Hence, it must be an antique with a hefty price. With that information, she could roughly guess the source of this CD player.

‘Turn it off.

As she typed the three words on her phone, the light in her eyes dimmed.

Looking at Rachel’s expression, Gloria was caught off guard. “Don’t be like that, his intentions and thoughts are good. It’s not that I want to side with him, but he’s really not a bad person. Though he’s

cold on the outside and he may do wrong things at times, he has his reasons.”

As Rachel held onto her phone, her face turned sour.

She couldn't accept what Gloria said of him. Rachel only knew that Justin was the one who broke Hans' leg, captured Grandpa Irwin, and decided to marry Amber. Nobody forced him to do any of that.

To put it simply, he was just a possessive scumbag who'd do anything to reap benefits from it.

"Rachel, do you know how Justin got the scar on his face?"

'How did he get it?'

"His parents died in a car accident, and he was the only one who survived the crash. After that day, the scar was left on his face when he was ten years old. Since then, he had gone through various horrifying

experiences like being kidnapped, blackmailed, and human trafficked. The fear from everything that you can or cannot possibly think of has been haunting him for over twenty years and counting. Do you know that he has really bad insomnia? He can only sleep with the help of medication, but he doesn't take them usually as he is afraid that he'll end up at a different place when he wakes up."

Looking at Gloria dumbfounded, Rachel asked, 'How do you know all these?'

Taking a deep breath, Gloria replied, "Haven't you always been curious about how I got to know him?"

'Yes.'

"He was in a fire when he was young. A firefighter sacrificed himself to save him. That firefighter was my father."

Upon hearing that, Rachel seemed to be more stumped.

She had never imagined that they had such a relationship.

Gloria continued, "I was born on the day my father sacrificed himself. Since then, I lived alone with my mother, but she left when I was three. I became a burden to everyone, living in a relative's house for a few days before moving to another. That was when... Justin found me."

Though Gloria didn't elaborate much, Rachel could imagine how dark it was for her back then.

Before Justin appeared, she was a young girl who couldn't take care of herself. Not only that, she was pushed away by relatives who didn't care much for her. It was plain painful to even think about it.

No wonder...

At that moment, Rachel understood why Gloria relied on him so much. Moreover, it also explained why he treated Gloria with all the love and patience that he had.

They had salvaged each other when they were in a dark place; they were a god-like presence to each other.

At this moment, Gloria's eyes turned red.

Rachel quickly held her hand as if telling her with the warmth of her plan that everything was over.

Pursing her lips, Gloria said, "Rachel, I'm fine. After that, he helped me with my tuition fees and sent me to piano classes. I got to do whatever I wanted, and nobody ever bullied me anymore. I've become happier, but he still seems to be the same after all these years. Nobody has ever been concerned about his happiness, or if he was well. Everyone only wanted to use him, or sabotage him—including his relatives. He's actually a good person, but he has to make difficult choices at times because of his position."

Hearing that, Rachel fell silent.

Gloria then held her hand. "Rachel, believe me. He'll be a good father!"

At this moment, Rachel's brows furrowed.

Gloria's gaze seemed so sincere like she wanted Rachel to agree with her.

Perhaps, she's right—he will be a good father.

Meanwhile...

Justin and his assistant had arrived at the restaurant early. They were waiting for a foreign couple to discuss business with

At this moment, Frankie spoke up, "Miss Hochmann has settled down in the suburbs. She said that she's not planning to return to the city for the time being. What do we do—"

"Let her be. Moreover, her leg injury hasn't healed completely. Let her rest and heal her injury well. Have you

"I've already arranged it with the school."

"Mr. Burton, did you arrange for her to go over on purpose so that there will be someone to keep Mrs. Burton company? Though Miss Hochmann may be a little capricious at times, she's joyful and kind. You must trust Miss Hochmann a lot."

Hearing that, Justin furrowed his brows. "Why do you have so much to say today?"

At once, Frankie flashed him a smile before shutting his mouth.

Outside the privately reserved room, Amber was holding her bag as she came over to attend the business discussion with Justin. Coincidentally, she heard the conversation that was going on inside. As such, the smile on her face fell.

So, he indeed still cares about Rachel.

Well, she was pregnant after all. No matter what, he had to take care of her.

But what if the child is gone?

At the thought of that, a cold look crept up her eyes.

It was a Saturday with lovely weather.

Early in the morning, Julian came over to the suburbs to give Rachel a checkup.

“As I said before, it’s better to stay in bed. Try to not do out-of-bed activities more than an hour a day. Another thing to take note of is to maintain a good mood.”

I’ll keep that in mind!

At the mention of the word ‘mood’, Julian silently let out a sigh.

A person’s mood was not something one could always control.

Suddenly, a loud noise came from the outside, and the sound of the piano halted abruptly.

Victor’s voice could be heard coming from the living room as his disgruntled tone was hard to miss. “How many times have I told you to not play the piano here? Are you trying to show off? Rachel needs to rest quietly in a peaceful environment. Do you understand that? You’re so noisy!”

At once, Gloria rebuked, "Who's being noisy? Quiet means her heart has to be at peace. You're the one who doesn't understand that!"

"Whatever it is, you're not allowed to play the piano here anymore!"

"This is called antenatal training! Do you even understand what that is?"

"To be trained into someone like you?"

At this moment, Julian caught hints of a smile at the corners of Rachel's eyes. He then asked, "It seems that having the two of them around is a good thing."

While Rachel caressed her abdomen, she leaned against the headboard with a gentle gaze.

"Gloria is a very kind person. I hope that my child will become like her in the future.'

"Right, do you know that today..."

Julian seemed to be hesitant to speak.

As Rachel's gaze met his, she asked, 'What happened?'