

## **Mute Bride 371**

### Chapter 371 Change in Julian

“My plans?” Rachel asked. Julian’s confident eyes were quite intimidating as he said, “I would like you to head back to Montenegro with me.”

Rachel was stunned. In all the years she had known Julian, he had always been agreeable and gentle. It was rare for him to act so stubbornly, as if rejection was unacceptable to him.

“Julian, I can’t go just yet. I love the five years I spent in Montenegro, and I had so much fun. I want to go back too, but I can’t.”

To her, there were some duties and obligations she had been destined to bear since the moment she was born; they were her responsibilities. After running from them for over twenty years, she decided it was finally time to shoulder them.

Her parents’ deaths were caused by the six formulas of Hudson Pharmaceuticals. Ensuring Jefferey and Amber Hudson get their deserved punishments was just the start of Rachel’s plan. She believed her parents, and even her grandma, would wish for her to restore Hudson Pharmaceuticals back to its former glory. Why else would her mother give her those formulas back then?

“Julian, I know you’re doing this for my sake, but I really can’t go yet.”

“I see.”

With a nod, he then put his spectacles back on and smiled. “It’s fine. I was just asking. I’ve been under a lot of pressure from work lately. Don’t mind me.”

Rachel let out a sigh of relief at that. “Good that you’re not angry.”

“Why would I be angry with you?”

“Say, when do you plan on going back to Montenegro?”

“I don’t know yet,” he replied. There was a conflicted expression on his face. “It’s not my only choice after all.”

Then, just as Rachel was about to speak again, Julian’s phone started ringing. “I have to take this,” he said. “You can keep eating. I’ll drive you home later.”

“Okay.”

However, after Julian left the room, Rachel suddenly lost her appetite.

When Julian’s phone rang just now, she had glanced at it, and the number displayed on the screen looked rather familiar. If her memory wasn’t wrong, it should be Jason’s number.

Why was Julian in contact with Jason?

Perhaps she was wrong, but something felt different about Julian this time.

Later that night, Rachel went home in Julian’s car.

“How are your feet? Do you need me to help you up?” Julian asked when they arrived at Rachel’s home.

“I’m fine,” Rachel replied with a wave of her hand. “Drive carefully. I’ll talk to you later.”

“Sure,” hummed Julian. “You stay safe too.”

In response, Rachel nodded. She then turned and walked into her building.

While she was still wearing the pair of slippers Julian gave her, her feet were still covered in minor injuries. And so, it was rather difficult for her to walk.

Rachel forced herself to push through the pain and walked into the elevator. As soon as the door slid shut, she immediately collapsed against one of its walls. After a sharp inhale of pain, she pressed the intercom button that connected the elevator to the apartments, and said, "Come and help me."

Jolly, who had been worriedly waiting in the apartment, hadn't gone to bed yet.

She made her way to the elevator. When the doors opened to reveal Rachel slumped against one of the elevator walls, Jolly hurriedly helped Rachel up to her feet. "What happened to you?"

"Your feet are raw," said Jolly.

"Is Robin that big of a pervert?" she continued to ask.

"Just what goes on in your mind? My feet are raw because I was walking!" Rachel sighed.

"Didn't Justin go pick you up? Also, why are you back so late?" Jolly questioned.

When Justin's name was mentioned, Rachel's face clouded over. "You were the one who called him and told him I was meeting with Robin?"

One of Jolly's greatest fears was Rachel turning hostile against her. Upon hearing that, Jolly felt a little guilty.

She helped Rachel to the couch and obediently handed Rachel a glass of water. "I was worried about you. No one could reach you, so who wouldn't worry?"

Jolly continued to explain, "Ever since the incident at Golden Hill, I have been extremely cautious. I couldn't get in, so I had to ask Justin for help. After all, the place belongs to his uncle, Jason. The guards can't stop him, right?"

“You think you’re so sensible, but what can he help with?” Rachel scoffed. “Your parents can also help me, but I didn’t let them step in.”

Rachel knew better than anyone else that Hudson Pharmaceuticals had to restore its reputation if it wanted to dominate the market once more. It was useless relying on connections. One had to build a structure brick by brick. Otherwise, when all connections were broken, a structure would collapse overnight no matter how tall it had been.

And Jefferey was the best example for this.

“From now on, do not ever ask Justin for help when it comes to me. We are through. I don’t want to owe him anything.”

“Fine.” Jolly shrugged. “So, was he the one who drove you back tonight?”

“No. It was Julian.”

“Julian’s back from his trip?”

Jolly was shocked, and she asked, “When did that happen?”

“He said he came back yesterday.”

“And he didn’t even contact us? Damn him! I’m going to call him right now and make sure he pays for it by treating me to a meal.”

“Jolly,” Rachel called out. “Julian’s exhausted. Call him tomorrow.”

“Oh? Feeling bad for him?”

Jolly kept teasing, “No wonder you didn’t want me to ask Justin for help. Dr. Peters is about to take Justin’s place.”

“That’s nonsense.”

After a pause for thought, Rachel continued, “I have a question for you.”

“What is it?” asked Jolly.

“Do you know where Julian went for his business trip?”

“Didn’t he go to Montenegro? Initially, he was going to fly with Hernandez, but then something strange happened to him. Hernandez waited for Julian at the airport for what seemed like forever, and when he finally called the guy, he said he had left on an earlier flight! Hernandez was so pissed off.”

Rachel frowned hard. For some mysterious reason, the call Julian received from Jason suddenly bothered her a lot.

“What are you thinking about?”

Jolly’s question snapped Rachel back to her senses. “Nothing much. Anyway, it’s getting late. Go to sleep. We still have to think about what to do about the approval for the project in Northlane tomorrow.”

“My head hurts just thinking about it. If we really have no choice, I’ll ask my father for help.”

“If we can’t come up with an idea, that’ll be our last resort.”

Once Rachel said that, Jolly let out a yawn, pointed at Rachel’s feet, and said, “I’ll help you into your room.”

"It's fine," Rachel said. "I'm going to sit here for a while. You head to bed first."

"Okay," agreed Jolly.

After Jolly's bedroom door closed, the only light turned on in the living room was a floor lamp stationed next to the couch.

Rachel sat on the couch with a cushion in her arms as she ruminated. The more she pondered, the deeper her thoughts were.

After the Jublen smuggling case was solved, Interpol worked with the Riverdale Investigation Bureau to investigate all members involved in the smuggling case. In the end, many people in Riverdale were found to be involved in the case. Some were arrested while others were put on house arrest. However, Jason disappeared without a trace.

Janice had said the investigation was still kept a secret to avoid scaring anyone off. Searches of the cities Jason frequently visited were intensified, but nothing had been found yet.

Logically speaking, Jason should be more cautious if he wanted to avoid being hunted by the investigation bureau. Why would he call Julian using his personal phone number?

Rachel just couldn't get it. Then, after looking around, she bent down and opened a secret compartment underneath the couch. Inside the compartment was an old phone taped to the bottom of the couch.

After grabbing it, she stumbled her way over to the balcony before making a call with the old phone.

"Hey, it's me."

"Why the sudden phone call? Didn't I tell you to hide for now? This is dangerous," said the person over the phone.

"I have a lead on Jason Burton. He called Julian Peters about an hour ago. I'm worried he'll threaten Julian to save himself."

By now, Rachel's brows were locked in a frown.

She could think of no other reason for Jason to contact Julian.

## Chapter 372 Heartless

A week later, Rachel's foot injury had finally healed.

Early in the morning, Rachel went to Gloria's residence to pick up Charlotte and Samuel.

Due to her foot injury, she didn't have time to take care of the two children for the whole week. Jolly was also too busy with the approval of the Northlane project, so both children were entrusted to Gloria.

"Charlotte, your mommy is here to pick you up for school. Go wash up and come have breakfast."

Gloria shouted outside the bedroom, but there was no response.

"This brat."

Rachel smiled before uttering, "That little piglet must still be asleep. Samuel, go and wake Charlotte up."

"Okay!"

As expected, after Samuel went into the bedroom, he dragged Charlotte, who was still in her pajamas and seemingly still in slumber, out to wash up.

When Rachel and Gloria saw them, they exchanged an amused smile.

"Take a seat. Do you want a drink?"

"I'm fine with anything."

"Is coffee okay?"

"Yeap."

With that, Gloria brewed a cup of coffee for Rachel.

"You could've saved the trouble of coming over. I can send Charlotte to school, and you can pick her up afterward."

"I came here not just for Charlotte."

"What else are you here for?"

Rachel blinked her eyes. "I heard Victor made you upset?"

Taken aback by her question, Gloria turned her head to avoid Rachel's gaze. "Nah. That's not true."

"If there's nothing going on, why would he call me, asking how you're doing lately? And you didn't answer his calls either. Even the security guards at the music room aren't letting him in."

"That's because he's dumb!"

Gloria accidentally made a slip of the tongue due to anger.



Rachel looked at her and waited for her reply, so Gloria had no choice but to cough awkwardly and explained, "Well. Hear me out. The other day when it was pouring heavily outside, I invited him to dinner and offered to pick him up, but he..."

Last week, there was a heavy rainstorm in Riverdale.

Victor was on duty at school that day, and he happened to get off work a little late. Gloria had just finished practice in the music room, so she drove to the school to pick him up. Since she wasn't driving a school-owned car, she had no choice but to park her car in the temporary parking space across the road. Fortunately, she brought two umbrellas, so she brought them down the car and looked for Victor.

"Guess what he did, Rachel?"

"What?"

"He gave his colleague the umbrella I brought for him."

"Didn't you say there were two umbrellas? Isn't it enough for both of you to share one?"

"If that was what happened, I wouldn't have said that he was dumb. He..." Gloria complained through gritted teeth. "After giving the umbrella to his colleague, he said he didn't want to have dinner together anymore because it was raining. He said he had to stay back and prepare for his lessons, so he decided to stay overnight in school and told me to have dinner by myself."

The more she storied, the angrier Gloria became, and she put down her mug heavily on the table.

"Seriously, Rachel, why does someone like him exist? We promised to have dinner together, and I even went all the way to pick him up. Why didn't he tell me sooner if he had to work overtime? How dare he stand me up? Who does he think he is?"

When Rachel heard that, she furrowed her brows. "Did he really say that?"

"I told you what he told me word for word. I finally understand now. That b\*stard had never seen me as a friend, not to mention a woman."

"That's not entirely true. Victor is quite a straightforward person. If he didn't want to be friends with you, he wouldn't even have talked to you."

"Whatever. You don't have to defend him. I swear I'm just going to ignore him from now on!"

Gloria was so irritated that she downed the coffee in one go. The bitterness of the coffee made her face scrunch.

At the same time, Rachel felt helpless. "Why are you behaving like a child in an adult's body?"

While they were talking, Samuel came out of the washroom and climbed onto Gloria's dining chair by the table with the help of all his limbs, exclaiming, "I want this!"

Gloria adored Samuel, so she immediately pushed the sandwich in front of him and uttered, "Here you go. Eat up."

"Where's Charlotte?" inquired Rachel.

"She's changing."

Gloria glanced down at her watch. "I think she won't be able to make it to school after breakfast. Let me just pack her some food so she can have it in the car."

Before this, she just seemed like a child being sulky with Victor, but now, she looked like a responsible adult running up and down for Charlotte.

All of a sudden, Rachel thought of something. One would usually show their most childish side in front of their crushes.

After changing, Charlotte still looked groggy as if she wasn't fully awake yet. Hugging Rachel's thighs, she yawned continuously, mumbling, "Mommy."

"We need to go now, little piglet. Say bye to Aunt Gloria."

"Bye, Aunt Gloria."

"Bye, Charlotte."

Gloria then sent them off downstairs, but before they left, she suddenly recalled something. "Rachel, have you heard about what happened in the Burton Family?"

"What happened?"

"Old Mr. Burton has been hospitalized."

"Huh?"

Rachel was stunned to hear that. "When was he hospitalized?"

"Last Saturday."

Rachel thought about it. Wasn't last Saturday the day Old Madam Sutton almost took Samuel away?

On that day, Justin was having dinner with them but eventually lost Samuel.

Gloria replied, "Old Mr. Burton has a cerebral infarction, and it seems to be quite serious. He has been in the ICU since the surgery last week. Oh, and Julian is the doctor who treated him. Didn't he tell you?"

In response, Rachel shook her head. "I just met Julian last Sunday but didn't see him anymore recently."

Since Julian only came back last Saturday, didn't it mean that he immediately treated Arthur's cerebral infarction right after he returned?

Was that why Jason contacted him? Was it because of Arthur's surgery?

But Julian didn't even mention Arthur's condition to her when he treated her wounds last Sunday.

All of a sudden, Rachel was in confusion.

"Are you okay, Rachel?"

Gloria's voice brought Rachel back to reality.

Tilting her head up, Rachel inquired, "Has Justin been in the hospital for the whole week?"

Gloria shook her head in return. "Nope. Once Old Mr. Burton's condition became stable, he was dispatched overseas by Robin, but Julian is in the hospital, so he isn't all that worried."

"Robin is such a heartless man."

Rachel grabbed the steering wheel as her eyes darkened.

The reason behind Robin's success today was the Burton Family. If it weren't for Arthur who recommended him as the new president of Burton Group, how would he have achieved what he had today?

How could he send away the closest family to Arthur overseas during this time?

“Don’t worry. Justin will be back within these two days. I just wanna remind you, Rachel. If Old Mr. Burton kicks the bucket and Burton Group falls into Robin’s hands completely, he will be a difficult person to deal with.”

“Yeah. I got it.” Rachel nodded lightly.

After sending the two kids to school, Rachel drove to the hospital.

She had to know about Arthur’s current condition.

“Hello, may I know which room is Old Mr. Burton in?”

“And you are?”

The nurse in the reception scanned Rachel from top to toe.

“My daughter is the great-granddaughter to Old Mr. Burton. I’m just here to see him and will bring the kid over later,” replied Rachel.

Only then did the nurse inform the ward.

Just when Rachel was about to head over, the nurse called out to her. “Um, wait a minute.”

“Yes?”

Chapter 373 No One Can Visit

“You’ll need Dr. Peters’ signature to enter the intensive care unit. If you’re visiting, you still need to look for Dr. Peters first.”

“Really?” Rachel was taken aback. “Yes. Mr. Gunson came to the ward earlier to visit, but he was stopped by the security guard. He’s still making a fuss at this moment.”

Mr. Gunson? Robin?

Rachel immediately walked toward the elevator. As soon as she got out, she heard a noisy sound coming from the ward in the distance.

“I am the president of Burton Group, personally selected by Old Mr. Burton. Why do I still need the attending doctor’s signature just to visit my grandfather? Are you out of your mind?”

“Sir, this is the instruction left by Old Mr. Burton’s family, so we can’t change it without his permission.”

“Who left the instructions? Now that my godfather is not in Riverdale and Old Mr. Burton is sick, the entire Burton Family listens to me.”

“Listen to you? What is your relationship with the Burton Family?”

Just as Rachel was still standing in a daze, she heard Julian’s voice coming from behind her. He had rushed over without her noticing. Julian nodded toward her as a greeting before he walked toward Robin.

“Robin, just because Jason is your godfather doesn’t mean that you are from the Burton Family. It doesn’t matter if Old Mr. Burton recognizes you or not. Our hospital only looks at the opinions of the patient’s family and the patient himself.”

When Robin saw that it was Julian, his face sank. “How are you worthy of telling me what to do? You and your mother leached off the Burton Family for so many years and plan to do so for the rest of your life, and now you’re acting as Justin’s dog?”

“Watch your words, Robin Gunson.”

“Watch what? Am I not telling the truth? That woman, Sue, took you to live in the Burton Residence for more than 20 years. Who can’t tell that she wants to rise in status? Now that Justin is also useless, you should stay away from him if you know what’s good for you! Then, I’ll consider feeding you!”

Rachel didn’t expect that Robin would be so arrogant to the point where he would just run his mouth. At this point, even if Jason was present now, he wouldn’t be able to control him anymore.

Julian had always had a good temper, but he was not a pushover either. He took out his phone and made a call. “Hello? I’d like to call the police. Someone is causing trouble in the hospital here.”

In an instant, Robin’s expression changed. He stretched out his hand to snatch Julian’s phone away, but Julian stopped him with one hand. As Julian often conducted surgery, he had much more strength in his hands than a pampered young man like Robin. He grabbed Robin’s wrist effortlessly, causing the latter to wail in pain.

“Julian, let go, let go of me! If you don’t, I won’t hold back anymore! Argh!”

Julian threw him away in disgust and said coldly, “The police will be here soon. If you continue to cause trouble here, I’ll send you to the police station.”

Robin was still about to rebuke when the assistant next to him helped him up. “President Gunson, let’s just leave first. We can come back another day.”

Robin held his arm with one hand and gritted his teeth. “Julian, just you wait!” Saying that, he leaned on his assistant and walked away quickly.

Julian looked around. “Everyone, go and continue your work. Don’t gather around here.”

After the crowd scattered, Rachel walked over and asked, “Are you okay?”

Julian replied in a soft voice, “I’m fine. Justin expected Robin to come over a long time ago, and he was afraid that something would happen, so he asked me to keep a close eye on the ICU. If I don’t give my signature, no one can enter.”

Rachel nodded. "How is Old Mr. Burton?"

"He's still in a coma. Currently, his body is fine and he still has a chance of waking, but if he doesn't wake up after this month, he would most likely..."

Even if Julian didn't finish his sentence, Rachel already knew what he meant.

"Does he still need surgery?"

"There isn't a need for that at the moment. Old Mr. Burton's age is too old to bear the physical burden of undergoing so many operations."

Rachel nodded slightly.

Julian asked, "By the way, why did you come to the hospital all of a sudden? The news of Old Mr. Burton's hospitalization was blocked from the Burtons to prevent any chaos from happening."

"Gloria told me."

Understanding her words, Julian nodded. "Let's talk about it in my office."

"Okay."

They had just taken a seat in the office when a nurse knocked on the door. "Dr. Peters, the Burton Family's housekeeper is outside, saying he wants to see Old Mr. Burton."

"Just tell him that Old Mr. Burton's condition is unstable and he can't see anyone at the moment."

"Understood."



After the nurse left, Rachel couldn't help but ask, "Julian, Dennis has stayed with Old Mr. Burton for a long time. Can't he visit either?"

"I'm just doing my duties as a doctor. This request was made by Justin as a family member of the patient. No one can see Old Mr. Burton unless he comes back."

"Does he have to be that harsh? If Old Mr. Burton's condition worsens, how will he say his last words?"

"A lawyer will be there, and I will also be present as a witness. If it involves the distribution of assets, I will notarize and disclose the contents of the will recording."

"You've really prepared everything."

At this point, Rachel stopped questioning him.

All things considered, Arthur was regarded as a hero in Riverdale, but in his final days, he couldn't even have any grandchildren around to send him off. His eldest son died early, his second son was missing, his granddaughter had mental problems and was abroad, and his grandson was away and couldn't rush back. It was a sad sight to see.

Rachel said, "I wanted to take Charlotte to see Old Mr. Burton at first, since she is his great-granddaughter. But looking at the situation now, I won't trouble you anymore."

"It's fine to bring Charlotte along. I don't think Justin will stop you."

Julian handed Rachel a cup of tea. "Well, Old Mr. Burton has been in the ICU for the past two days, so it really isn't convenient, but his condition should stabilize by this Friday. You can bring Charlotte and look for me when you come, and I'll let both of you in."

"Will that be all right?"

“It’s fine.”

Only then could Rachel relax. Although Arthur wasn’t friendly to her and had even threatened her many times, he was kind to Charlotte. As it seemed like Arthur’s illness couldn’t be cured, she had to let Charlotte see him off before he died.

“By the way, I don’t know if Jason knows about Old Mr. Burton’s condition or not.”

At her words, Julian paused slightly while in the midst of drinking tea. “Why did you suddenly bring him up?”

“He’s Old Mr. Burton’s only remaining son, after all. If Old Mr. Burton is still conscious, he’d probably want to see him again.”

Rachel looked at Julian and hesitated for a while, before she asked bluntly, “Julian, has Jason contacted you before?”

Julian raised his head. “No. Why would he contact me?”

Rachel’s eyes dimmed, but she still held a glimmer of hope. “You’re right, but I just thought if he hears that Old Mr. Burton is critically ill, he might contact you.”

“He wouldn’t. I’m not close to him in the first place.”

Hearing that, Rachel felt as though Julian was hiding something on purpose.

## Chapter 374 The Truth About the Abduction

That day, she had clearly seen Jason’s number appear on Julian’s cell phone. After leaving Julian’s office, Rachel went to the cemetery in the suburbs. It was located in a remote area, and no one visited this place except for their family’s death anniversary, so this was the best place to meet Janice.

“Is there any news on Jason?” As soon as she saw Janice, Rachel asked. Janice nodded. “The team has located his location. A week ago, he was in Belleville.”

“Then why haven’t you dispatched a search team yet?”

“Belleville is not our territory. To search for him, we need to submit an application to the higher ups. I’m afraid that someone might leak the news in the process.”

“Then do we have to just wait like this? What if he runs away?”

“He won’t. Isn’t Old Mr. Burton seriously ill and hospitalized? Even though Jason has cut ties with the Burton Family on the surface, he has hoped to gain the old man’s recognition all his life. He’s a filial son.”

“What do you mean?” Rachel didn’t understand. “What does this have to do with whether he’s a filial son or not?”

Janice elaborated, “He will come back to Riverdale within the next two days.”

Rachel jolted a little. “Are you sure?”

“If he didn’t care about Old Mr. Burton, he wouldn’t have taken such a big risk to call Julian.”

“You have a point.” Rachel fell into her thoughts, but she still had something she couldn’t figure out. “But why did Julian hide it from me?”

Although Julian had lived in the Burton Residence with Sue since he was a child, they were not a part of the Burton Family. Except for Justin, he had only ever come into contact with Arthur. Julian only followed Justin’s example and called Jason his uncle out of politeness, and they never really talked to each other.

Besides, even if they had contact, because Justin and Jason had a bad relationship with one other, there would not be any good interaction between Julian and Jason.

Janice could not understand it either. "That is indeed strange. Did you ask Julian about it?"

"I didn't dare to ask too much, so I broached the topic vaguely, but he denied it." Rachel frowned. "I keep getting this feeling that Julian has changed a lot after returning from this business trip. It seems that he has a lot on his mind."

Janice had no time to take into account Julian's changes as she still had a lot of things to attend to.

"It's been two days since Jason returned to Riverdale. The first thing he has to do is to confirm the safety of the hospital, and then go to see the old man. If you are in the hospital at that time, we can support you from the outside while you give us inside intel."

"I understand, but I'm worried that Jason won't show up until the last moment."

After a brief pause, Janice suggested, "I have a plan, but I need your cooperation."

"Tell me."

Janice leaned closer and whispered her plan in Rachel's ear.

Rachel was taken aback for a moment before she fell into thought. "Wouldn't this be too much? If Justin knew about this, he would definitely come back as soon as possible, and everything would be in his presence—"

Rachel didn't finish her sentence; she stopped herself halfway through. After hesitating for a while, she said, "I'll cooperate with you. I'll take Charlotte to see the old man in the next two days."

Janice didn't say much and patted Rachel on the shoulder. "Okay, then we'll leave it at this."

Saying that, Janice left, while Rachel lingered in the cemetery for a while. There were some weeds growing in front of her grandmother's grave. She pulled out some by herself and wiped the tombstone to make the picture on it clearer. In the black and white photo, her grandmother was smiling tenderly and lovingly. Although they were not related by blood, her grandmother had brought up her mother, saved their lives, and took care of her until she grew up. If she had any regrets, it was that she failed to make her grandmother happy.

"Grandma, I'm sure you'd agree with what I'm doing. When Jason kidnapped you back then, he caused you to have a heart attack and not be treated in time. Besides, he did so many hurtful things, so everything is his retribution. People like him should be sent to jail before they cause even more harm."

As night fell, it was already very late when Julian finished his shift and returned home from the hospital.

Sue hadn't slept yet. As soon as she saw Julian coming back, she immediately asked, "How is the old man today? I heard that imbecile Robin caused trouble at the hospital. Are you hurt?"

"I'm fine," Julian replied coldly, obviously unwilling to talk to Sue.

Sue grabbed him suddenly. "Julian, until when will you be angry with me? Don't you know that everything I do is for you?"

"Is it? You're doing it for yourself, and for glory and wealth!"

With a loud slap, Sue's hand landed on Julian's face. Her hands trembled slightly in the air. She couldn't believe she had hit her son. However, she had already done so, and she still had to say what she had to say. She gritted her teeth. "Julian, I'm telling you, anyone can say that to me, but you can't. I'm doing it for myself, but I'm also doing it for you! For twenty years, I've been hated by the Burton Family. Those people flatter me in person but look down on me in private. Do you think I don't know what they say about me behind my back? They say that I've found a good nephew to ensure an easy life, and I'm clinging to the Burton Family like a parasite!"

Sue calmed down and said, "But what about it? They're just jealous. If such an opportunity is presented before them, would they not seize it? They'd pounce on it faster than me!"

Julian couldn't bear to listen anymore. "Since you've benefited from him, then you should treat him well. But why did you sell him to a trafficker? He was only thirteen years old at that time! He wasn't much older than me. How could you bear to do that to your own nephew?"

Sue's expression changed. "Didn't I tell you not to bring this up again?"

"If I don't bring it up, do you think that no one would know?"

Julian's shoulders were trembling. If it hadn't been for Sue's phone call that day, he might never have known that the "abduction" that affected Justin's life was actually his mother's doing.

More than twenty years ago, Sue was not satisfied with just being a nanny in the Burton Family. For her own selfish desires, she bribed human traffickers to abduct Justin, who was only thirteen years old then, and sell him to a remote area. Until now, Justin had no idea that the aunt he trusted so much was the demon who pushed him into hell.

Julian glared at Sue intensely, his eyes blazing like torches. "Did you also sell my cousin to a human trafficker for my sake?"

Sue panicked. "Do you think I wanted to? At that time, Old Mr. Burton couldn't stand listening to the rumors about me. He didn't want me to stay in the Burton Residence and continue to take care of Justin. I worked hard to raise him. How could he ask me to leave just like that?"

"So you took revenge on him? A thirteen-year-old child?"

Chapter 375 You Are My Son

"You're still not willing to repent until now?" Julian pushed Sue away. "You should turn yourself in." Sue's face paled in an instant. She couldn't believe what she just heard.

Julian continued, "This happened more than twenty years ago, and though the prosecution period has passed, you still owe Justin an apology. The law will not hold you accountable, but you must repent."

“Are you crazy? I am your mother!”

“It’s precisely because you’re my mother that I don’t want you to live your life with your sins. Doesn’t it hurt your conscience? You keep saying you did everything for me, but you’re just doing it for yourself!”

Just as he finished speaking, a middle-aged man’s voice suddenly sounded from behind Julian, interrupting him. “It’s true that your mother did it for you.”

Julian’s hands that were hanging by his sides suddenly stiffened, his expression turning awkward. He didn’t even look back and was about to leave home as if he hadn’t seen or heard anything.

“Hold it!”

Julian clenched his fists and said through gritted teeth, “Jason, I didn’t call the police to catch you for my mother’s sake, so don’t get ahead of yourself. This is a matter between my family and it has nothing to do with you!”

The man who was standing by the door of the study was Jason.

Two weeks ago, Julian was supposed to leave Riverdale on a business trip, but he had forgotten to bring something and went home, where he ran into his mother in a middle-aged man’s arms. Because Sue had been widowed for more than 20 years, as a son, he had always hoped that she would

remarry, but she remained alone for many years to raise him and his cousin, Justin. Although she was a little grumpy, she was still dedicated to her children.

However, just as Julian was about to leave, he found that the man was Jason, Justin’s uncle. At that moment, Julian’s mind went blank. It was then that he finally found out Sue and Jason had been together for many years. All this time, taking care of Justin was just a cover for why Sue continued to stay at the Burton Residence, unwilling to leave. Her real purpose was to cover up her identity as Jason’s lover.

As Julian had received good moral upbringing since he was a child, he simply could not accept this. Moreover, Jason was involved in a smuggling case and was being looked into by the investigation bureau, so his first instinct was to call the police as soon as possible. However, it was his mother who begged him not to call the police that made him compromise.

For the past two weeks, Jason had been living here. He was going to turn a blind eye to this until he found out the truth about Justin's abduction that year. It was as if he had been struck by lightning over and over.

Jason glared at Julian. "Where do you think your food and clothes came from for the past twenty years? Your mother stayed at the Burton Residence for herself? Bold of you to say that!"

"I'd rather not have all of that!"

"But you already did. Your comfortable life for the past thirty years, your studies, respected occupation, and even your current so-called morals were all given to you by your mother."

Jason's every word was like a stab to his heart, and Julian had never been so aggrieved as he was now. He called the two people in front of him demons, but he was raised by these two demons.

"Also, I have to tell you that you had a part in Justin's abduction back then."

"Jason." Sue hurriedly stopped him. "Don't say it."

However, Jason ignored her interruption and said coldly, "Julian, have you forgotten why Justin went out alone that year?"

Julian's expression gradually dropped. How could he not remember? Justin was Arthur's favorite grandson, the boy who always had several bodyguards escorting him whenever he went out; it was impossible for him to be abducted and sold by human traffickers. The reason why he went out alone that day was entirely because of a phone call he had made.

"Justin, did you forget that my birthday is the day after tomorrow?"



“How could I forget? I’ve prepared your gift already.”

“Really? My mom has been in a bad mood recently and won’t talk to me. You’re the best, Justin.”

“Aunt Sue is probably in a bad mood because she has to move away. I’ll find a way to tell Grandpa. Don’t worry, Julian. How about this, the day after tomorrow, I’ll secretly take you to the waterpark.”

“Really?”

“Of course. When have I ever lied to you?”

Julian was delighted.

“You brat, why are you looking for your swimming trunk in the middle of the night?”

“Justin is taking me to play at the waterpark the day after tomorrow!”

“How is he taking you? Does Old Mr. Burton let him out?”

“Justin said that he’ll sneak out. Shh, don’t tell anyone, Mom.”

On the day he went to the water park, he waited alone at the entrance of the park for a long time, but Justin never showed up, and he even grumbled inwardly about being stood up by his cousin. However, in the evening, when the Burton Family showed up at his house, he found out that Justin had gone missing.

When Justin was found, half a year had already passed. He came back with a long scar on his face, and after his injury was healed, it was like he had turned into someone else. He became withdrawn and didn’t like to be close to others. He didn’t even speak much to Julian, his own cousin. The events of that year were still vivid in his mind, and he would never forget it in his life.

“So what if I remember?”

Jason said, “If it weren’t for you telling your mother that Justin would come out alone to take you to play, how could we have had this opportunity to arrange for someone to take him away?”

Julian was unfazed. “That’s just an excuse! Even if I didn’t tell anyone back then, and even if I didn’t go out with Justin that day, as long as you wanted to do it, you would’ve done whatever it took to wait for an opportunity or create one yourselves.”

He firmly believed that he had done nothing wrong twenty years ago, which was why he was not swayed by Jason.

“Is that so?” Jason sneered. “But have you ever thought about why your mother would work with me to harm her own nephew?”

Julian jolted violently.

“My old man favors men over women, and only a man can become the heir of the Burton Family. If it wasn’t to pave the way for our son to inherit the Burton Family in the future, why would we try to harm

Justin, a thirteen-year-old brat?”

“What are you talking about?” Jason only had one daughter, Tina. Where did a son come from?

“Stop it.” Sue suddenly turned pale and grabbed Jason’s arm in a panic. “Please stop talking. Enough is enough!”

“He isn’t a child anymore. He should’ve known these things earlier.”

“Jason, Julian doesn’t need to know!”

“What the hell are you talking about?” Julian revealed a rare annoyance and panic.

“Are you still trying to lie to yourself after everything? I know that you’ve thought about it before.” Jason’s cold eyes bore straight into Julian’s as he said, “You’re my son. My biological son.”

His words were like a knife, stabbing directly into Julian’s heart.

## Chapter 376 Omen

“Impossible!” Julian’s first reaction was denial. How could he be Jason’s son? He looked at Sue and immediately rushed up to grab her shoulder, asking, “Mom, tell me this isn’t true. It’s all a lie!”

Sue turned her face away, unable to answer. “Is it that hard to admit this? Son, this is a chance for you.” Jason’s voice sounded from behind him. “What’s so good about being a doctor? You can only get unlimited power and success as the heir of the Burton Group.

I’ll transfer the shares under my name that Robin is holding over to your name. As long as you can get the old man’s will, the entire Burton Family will be ours in the future.” Julian’s mind was abuzz.

...

Early in the morning, a white porcelain plate fell on the floor with a crash and broke into several pieces in an instant. A loud noise echoed in the room, and Rachel hurriedly crouched down to clean it up.

Jolly leaned out from the bathroom with a toothbrush still in her mouth, and asked in a muffled voice, “What happened?”

“It’s nothing. I just accidentally broke a plate.”

“Are you hurt?”

"I'm fine."

Rachel quickly picked up the broken porcelain pieces on the ground, but when she got up, her vision spun. With a thud, she violently slapped her hand onto the dining table and clung onto it, barely maintaining her balance.

"Are you really okay?" Jolly peeked out again.

When she saw Rachel's dazed appearance, she strode out with a mouthful of toothpaste and helped her up, asking, "What's the matter? Here, sit down."

Jolly poured a cup of water for Rachel, who felt better after drinking some.

"What's wrong? Are you sick?"

Rachel shook her head. "I suddenly felt dizzy."

"Then you have to go to the hospital."

"It's not a big deal. I'm probably just tired."

For some reason, ever since she got up in the morning, her eyelids never stopped twitching, and she kept feeling as if something big was about to happen. However, it was a strange thing to say, and even she felt that it was ridiculous.

"You've always had a weak build, so don't just brush it off. This won't do; I'll take you to the hospital."

"It's fine. I was going to take Charlotte to visit Old Mr. Burton in the hospital anyway. I'll go and ask Julian to have a look."

“That works.” Jolly finally relaxed. “Then you just have to bring Charlotte along with you. I’ll have to take Samuel away tonight.”

“Why?”

“I still think that I have to tell my parents about Samuel’s real identity in case someone tries to make a move on him.”

“That’s a good idea. With your parent’s protection, Old Madam Sutton wouldn’t dare to do anything to Samuel.”

“That’s what I thought too. I should send Samuel to stay with my parents for a while, but I’ll decide about this later.”

“That’s all right.” Rachel gave her a look. “What about Leroy? You gonna tell him?”

“I’m planning to tell him today.”

“Oh, no wonder you woke up so early.”

“That’s because he’s so busy. He has to film a commercial later, so he’s only free during breakfast time.” Jolly suddenly glanced at her watch. “Ah, I’m going to be late. I’m gonna go change.”

Rachel grabbed her and pointed to her mouth. “Give it a wipe!”

Jolly had rushed out of the bathroom without washing the toothpaste from her mouth. It was a wonder that a quiet and gentle person like Leroy would take a fancy to someone fiery like her. Was it because opposites attract?

After that, Jolly drove to the studio alone and bought breakfast on the way.

“Jolly.”

“Morning.”

“Good morning, Jolly. Leroy’s inside.”

Ever since Leroy announced Jolly as his fiancée, his staff had known her and called her by her name whenever they met. With breakfast in her hand, she had just opened the door of the dressing room when she was hugged by someone.

“Eek!” Jolly yelped in surprise and hurriedly pushed him away. “Hey, there are people watching.”

“Let them watch. There’s nothing wrong with me hugging my fiancée,” Leroy said, showing no intention of letting go of her at all.

Jolly had always been thick-skinned, but as she watched the staff in the dressing room hide their smiles and walk out considerately, she couldn’t help but blush. She buried her head in Leroy’s arms and breathed the faint scent of his cologne, feeling inexplicably relieved. The biggest difference between Leroy and Ryan was that his love was always blatant. He would let everyone know and give her a sense of security in the easiest way.

Leroy dangled around with her in his arms, and the two of them wandered around the room like roly-polies.

Jolly couldn’t hold back her laughter. “Hey, stop fooling around. The coffee is going to spill.”

“Let it spill, then. It’s rare for you to spend time with me.”

“What do you mean it’s rare? It’s because you’re too busy.”

“So are you, Miss Carter.”

“Are you complaining about me? I guess I’ll go and feed the sandwiches I brought to the dogs.”

In an instant, Leroy let go of her and snatched the bag from her hands, giving her a cheeky smile.  
“Woof!”

Jolly jolted in surprise before she burst into laughter. “You’re so childish!”

Leroy’s childish innocence was what attracted her the most.

She was watching Leroy eat when her phone rang.

“It’s my mom.” She told him, then made a shushing gesture. “Shh.”

After that, she answered the call in front of him. “Hello? Mom?”

“Jolly, where are you?”

“I’m outside. Why?”

“Come home now. There’s something important we need to discuss with you.”

“What is it?”

“You’ll know when you come back.”

Marilyn was rarely ever this serious, and she hung up right after she finished speaking.

Jolly was dazed for a while before she suddenly realized the seriousness of the matter. She said, “I have to go.”

“What’s wrong? Did something happen?”

“I don’t know. Something might’ve happened at home. I need to go back.”

“I’ll go with you.”

“It’s fine.”

Jolly turned around and hurriedly left without saying anything else. With a sandwich still in his hand, Leroy chased after her, but he was blocked by his agent at the door. “The filming is starting soon. Why aren’t your hair and makeup ready yet? Hurry, hurry!”

A large group of people swarmed in, flooding Jolly’s retreating back at once.

On the other hand, Jolly immediately drove home. The last time her mother talked to her like this, it was when her father had surgery. She didn’t take it seriously at first, and was forced to take a charter flight home overnight. When she saw her father lying in the ICU, she cried on the spot.

“Mom, what happened? Did Dad get sick again?”

As soon as she entered the house, Jolly asked anxiously. When she saw Richard sitting on the sofa unharmed, she breathed a sigh of relief and immediately hugged her father’s arm. “Dad, you’re okay? You scared me to death!”

Richard frowned and patted her gently on the shoulder, while Marilyn remained silent. The atmosphere in the living room was a little odd. It was only then that Jolly realized there was another person sitting opposite them—Ryan.

Chapter 377 I Am Here to Fulfill the Engagement



“What are you doing here?” Jolly’s face sank as soon as she saw Ryan. Ryan sat upright and said indifferently, “I am here to fulfill the engagement.”

“Is there something wrong with my ears? Since when did I get engaged to you?” “Six years ago, when my father was still alive, he made an agreement with Mr. Carter. At that time, Mrs. Carter also agreed, and they gave us a token as a testimony.”

There was a mahogany box on the coffee table with a bright yellow satin bottom and a glistening jade bracelet inside that was clearly extremely valuable at one glance. Jolly also owned a jade bracelet that was exactly like this one.

“We did get engaged before, but I’ve never heard of two parties that are engaged to each other where one of them married someone else and divorced, then tried to resume the previous engagement. What do you take me for, a backup plan?” Jolly was furious. “Mom, did you call me back just for him?”

Ever since she entered the house, her parents hadn’t said a word. At that moment, she felt that something was not right.

Marilyn looked at her seriously. “Jolly, I’m going to ask you a question. You have to answer me honestly.”

“What question?”

“Is Samuel really Chris’ child?”

Jolly’s expression stiffened.

As a mother, Marilyn immediately confirmed her doubts when she saw Jolly’s reaction. “How dare you hide something so important from me and your father for so many years? Jolly, do we even mean anything to you?”

Jolly panicked. “Mom, I... I wanted to tell you about this at first.”

However, she knew very well that if she came clean to her mother back then, there would only be two outcomes. Either Marilyn would go to the Sutton Family and make Jolly fulfill her engagement to Ryan, or if she refused to marry, with her mother's personality, she would definitely not allow her to keep the child and would force her to get rid of it.

"Do you know how difficult it is to be a single mother? Are you a fool? Jolly, do you even want to marry in the future?"

"Mom, I know that the person I want to marry wouldn't mind."

"Who wouldn't mind? That small-time celebrity?"

The news about Jolly and Leroy was blowing up, so it was impossible for her parents not to know.

"Mom, he's a good person."

"He probably has other motives!" Marilyn had been dabbling in business for many years and had had a lot of contact with the entertainment industry. Hence, she knew very well about the industry and had always looked down on these new stars. Without waiting for Jolly to defend herself, she immediately dismissed, "Today, I'm making this clear. You have to break up with Leroy immediately."

"I don't want to." Jolly was used to being stubborn and immediately refused. She glared at Ryan opposite her angrily. "I can't believe you're this despicable. Snitching on me to my parents? You can't bear seeing that I'm better off than you, right?"

"That's enough. This time, he's here to propose a marriage."

Marilyn's words made Jolly's expression fall. "Mom, have you gone senile too? Have you forgotten how much shame he brought to our family when he married Estelle back then?"

"That's because you didn't marry him first!"

"I did that because..."

"Because what? You already have a child with Ryan, and you're still being so childish. Now that things have already come to this and Ryan has already apologized, you should also rein in your temper. There's a limit to how much of a grudge you can hold."

Jolly couldn't argue with her. She couldn't believe that her mother would favor Ryan to this extent.

"Mom!"

"It's settled."

Saying that, Marilyn turned around and left, clearly not wanting to say another word to her daughter.

"Dad!"

Richard got up from the sofa and spread his hands helplessly, indicating that he was not the one in charge in the family, before he got up and followed his wife.

"Ryan, what did you feed my mother?"

As soon as her parents left, Jolly vented her anger on Ryan.

Ryan said carelessly, "I didn't feed her anything. It's just that your parents will never allow you to marry Leroy. Plus, you have a child with me, so I am your best choice."

"Just because Leroy is a celebrity?"

"That's not the only reason. Do you even know where Leroy came from?"

“How wouldn’t I know? We were classmates in the same college!”

“Classmates?”

Ryan’s questioning suddenly made Jolly come back to her senses. She and Leroy were not classmates in college—she and Estelle were. It was only because he was Estelle’s boyfriend at the time that she subconsciously thought he went to her own school.

“Jolly, if you really were doing well, your parents wouldn’t be objecting so much. This Leroy is definitely not as simple as you think.” Saying that, he moved the jade on the table toward her. “Marrying me is the best choice not just for you, but also for Samuel.”

Jolly was silent for a while as she looked at the table in front of her thoughtfully.

“Fine, I’ll think about it.”

As he hadn’t expected her to agree so easily, Ryan jolted slightly.

At the same time, Jolly’s parents stood in the corner of the hallway on the second floor, watching everything that was happening downstairs.

Marilyn said, “Look, what did I say? Jolly isn’t heartless. She must still have feelings for Ryan. Otherwise, why did she give birth to Samuel back then? It’s the best choice for the two of them to be together, whether it is for Samuel or for her.”

Richard frowned slightly, showing a look of disapproval. “If you ask me, I don’t think Ryan is suitable for Jolly.”

“Why not? He’s skilled, young, and promising. Besides, wasn’t it you who got them engaged to each other back then?”

“That was because I was drunk. Didn’t you scold me when I came back? I had thought about canceling the engagement then, but the Sutton Family was declining that year. If we’d canceled it, others would’ve scolded us for kicking them when they were down.”

Thinking of what had happened back then, Richard felt remorseful. Although everything had already passed, their daughter’s suffering in the past few years was not something they could dismiss easily. As her parents, they should be ashamed for only finding out now.

“Let’s watch and see. I still want to respect our daughter’s decision.”

“By respecting her decision, do you mean that you’ll let her marry Leroy?” Marilyn’s brows furrowed. “Don’t you know what our daughter is like? If he were an ordinary man, I wouldn’t have any objections. I would’ve asked him to take our surname at most. But he just had to have such a special identity. If Jolly married him, she wouldn’t be able to handle that and would get into trouble one day.”

“Maybe it’s not as bad as we think.”

However, he did not receive a reply.

At this time, Jolly had already sent Ryan away. As soon as he left, she fished out her cell phone and made a call.

“Hello?” The female voice on the other end of the phone was very surprised.

“Estelle, we’ve been friends for so many years. Is it so surprising that I would call you?”

“Do you have business with me?”

“Of course.” Jolly bent over and picked up the jade bracelet, holding it up to the sun and looking at it as she said lightly, “You know that Ryan’s family has a jade bracelet heirloom, right? It’s here with me.”

Hearing that, the person on the other end of the phone immediately burst into anger. "Jolly, what are you trying to imply? Are you showing off to me that you guys are getting back together?"

The corners of Jolly's lips curled up as her gaze turned sly. "No, I want to do you a favor and give this bracelet to you."

## Chapter 378 Lying in Wait

"Are you really going to give Estelle the bracelet?" In the evening, Rachel picked up Charlotte and Samuel before heading to the hospital. Jolly was originally going to send Samuel home, but her plan was temporarily stalled due to unforeseen circumstances.

At that moment, she only wanted to avoid her parents. When she drove to the entrance of the school, she immediately ditched her car on the side of the road and got into Rachel's car, nestling in the passenger seat.

Jolly said, "Do I look like I'm joking? It's just a useless bracelet. Did Ryan think I'd care?" "Still, it's a family heirloom. Are you sure it's appropriate for you to give it to someone else so casually?"

"That's his fault for dumping it at my house!"

Dumping? Rachel asked helplessly, "How did Estelle react?"

Jolly replied carelessly, "Of course she got angry, but this bracelet is so important, and it's a free reason to get between me and Ryan, so she has to accept it even if she's angry. I bet a buck that after she accepts it, she'll immediately tattle to Ryan."

Rachel replied, "I'll bet you a hundred that you'll win."

Rachel and Jolly both knew very well what kind of person Estelle was. Ever since they returned to the country, it was clear from that woman's actions that she was a lowlife.

If Ryan found out about this, he would definitely explode with anger.

“But why is Godmother so against you being with Leroy?”

“She probably has a bias against him because he’s a celebrity. How lame. I never thought that my parents would be like this.”

“I don’t think so. I feel like they’re not those kinds of people.”

To Rachel, Jolly’s parents were quite open-minded and intelligent, which was rare among the wealthy. They were understanding toward their daughter and rarely interfered with her choices, and were also tolerant of others.

“Did Ryan say something to them?”

“Him?” Jolly hummed in thought until she remembered what Ryan said to her before he left. “He did ask me something.”

“What?”

“He asked me how much I knew about Leroy.”

“Leroy?” Rachel hesitated for a while before she suddenly realized that all she knew about him came from their background checks during the company’s endorsement activities. Besides, most of the information in those investigations was shared online, and she had never verified its authenticity.

“Isn’t he Estelle’s ex? You knew him since you were in college.”

“I think that Ryan is just being overdramatic too. Even if Leroy didn’t go to the same school as me, he debuted so early and lived in Riverdale for so many years. He can’t be a criminal, can he?”

Rachel laughed out loud. "If Ryan knew that, don't you think he'd send him to jail immediately?"

"Of course I do." Jolly looked confident. "It's something he would do."

Thinking that, she eased up a lot. "As long as he didn't do anything illegal, what kind of dark past could he have, right?"

Rachel nodded.

As they talked, Charlotte interrupted from the back seat, "Leroy is so handsome. How could he be a bad guy?"

Rachel glanced at her from the rearview mirror. "It's not right to judge people by their appearance. Leroy is handsome, but isn't Mr. Ryan also very good-looking? You even said that he was a bad guy before for stealing Leroy's girlfriend."

"He is a bad guy." Charlotte hugged her arm with a stubborn expression. "Mr. Ryan looks fierce, so he is not as handsome as Leroy. I am going to see Leroy's concert next week."

Samuel, who was playing a game beside her, couldn't help but sigh. "Women are so scary when they start fangirling."

Rachel and Jolly exchanged a glance and laughed.

They quickly reached the hospital, and after parking the car, they went to look for Julian together.

"Please wait for a moment. Dr. Peters is still making his rounds."

The nurse recognized Rachel and arranged for them to wait in Julian's office. Soon, Charlotte became restless, so she began pleading with Jolly to take her to buy some food.



Rachel said, "You can take them and I'll wait here. When Julian comes back, I'll give you a call."

"All right."

After Jolly took the children out, Rachel became bored. She happened to see a book lying upside down on the table, and she picked it up, looking at it casually. However, as soon as she took the book, she suddenly saw a medical record pressed underneath it. There was a large scribble on it and the paper had been pierced through. Next to it, there was a string of cuss words written on the paper. Seeing that, Rachel was taken aback. She had known Julian for so many years, but she had never seen him curse before.

Suddenly, she heard the sound of a door opening from behind her. She immediately put the book in her hand back in place and covered the damaged medical record before turning around to see Julian walking through the door.

"Rae? When did you get here?"

"Just now. Jolly took Charlotte and Samuel to buy some stuff."

"Are you here to see Old Mr. Burton?"

"Yeah. If you're free, let's have a meal together."

Julian glanced at his watch. "I'm afraid that I won't make it. I have an operation in 30 minutes."

"Really? Then it's fine. Let's leave it for next time."

"Sure."

"Then I'll send Jolly a text and ask her to bring Charlotte and Samuel back. We won't bother you and we'll leave right after seeing Old Mr. Burton."

"It's fine." Julian turned around to pour a cup of tea for Rachel.

After Rachel sent a text message to Jolly, Julian handed her a cup of tea, which made her think of her previous discussion with Janice. "Julian, there's something I need your help with."

"What is it?"

Rachel glanced at the office door and confirmed that it was closed, but she still lowered her voice as she said, "It has something to do with Jason."

Julian's face suddenly stiffened. "How can I help with something related to him?"

"You know he's being suspected for smuggling and the investigation bureau is currently investigating him. Janice hasn't had any leads on him for a long time, so she wants to lure him out of hiding and use Old Mr. Burton's illness to make a fuss. After all, Jason is a filial son, and the only thing that can make him show up now is Old Mr. Burton's illness."

Unbeknownst to Rachel, Julian breathed a sigh of relief. "So that's how it is. What exactly does Janice need me to do?"

"Make a notice of critical illness. The more urgent, the better."

If Arthur was in a critical condition, Jason would definitely show up. By then, the investigation bureau only needed to lie in wait and capture him in one fell swoop as soon as he showed up.

Julian didn't speak for a long time, seemingly contemplating something, as if his soul had wandered elsewhere.

"Julian."

"Huh?" Julian came back to his senses and raised his head, meeting Rachel's eyes.

Rachel said, "I know that this is against your professional ethics, and you have a close relationship with the Burton Family, so I can understand if you refuse. Janice said that it isn't necessary, and if it really isn't possible, they will negotiate with your hospital's heads. You wouldn't need to do anything."

After a moment of silence, Julian suddenly said, "If you work with the heads of the hospital, wouldn't it be easy to alert him?"

Rachel jolted in surprise.

### Chapter 379 Notice of Critical Illness

"I'll do it." Julian said, his eyes firm. Rachel was taken aback. For some reason, she thought about the piece of torn medical record on the table. Soon, Jolly came back.

"I won't be tagging along. I'm not related to Old Mr. Burton anyway. I'll just wait for you here with Samuel." "Okay."

However, Charlotte was puzzled. She looked at Samuel who was playing games next to Jolly and asked, "Mommy, why isn't Samuel going to see Great-grandpa?"

Rachel explained, "Samuel is different from you. He's never seen Great-grandpa."

As Charlotte was still young, she didn't think much about it and obediently followed after Rachel.

Arthur had now been transferred to a general ward, but he wasn't awake yet. A nurse took care of him at all times, and the rules were still the same—no one could visit him except the hospital staff.

Julian said, "Although he is unconscious, in theory, he can hear people's voices."

Rachel nodded slightly and patted Charlotte on the shoulder, motioning her to step forward. "Charlotte, go and talk to Great-grandpa."

Charlotte stepped forward obediently and took Arthur's bony hand, speaking in a cute voice. "Great-grandpa, are you sick? If you're sick, you have to listen to the doctor to take your medicine and eat your food. Mommy said you'll only get better if you behave. I'm still waiting for you to celebrate my birthday with me..."

Charlotte was still young and didn't understand the truth of life, old age, illness, and death. Hence, she didn't feel sad when she saw Arthur lying in the hospital bed and only thought that his illness was just

like a common cold or a fever, not realizing the seriousness of the problem.

As Rachel looked at Arthur, her heart swelled with emotion. He was regarded as a legendary hero, but now he was lying here and could pass at any time without a single relative by his side.

After they were done visiting Arthur, Rachel bid Julian goodbye.

"I'll contact Janice later, within these two days."

"Okay. I'll take care of the hospital's matters."

Seeing Julian's lack of hesitation, Rachel felt a huge burden lifted off her shoulders.

As soon as Rachel left, Julian returned to his office and sat down. He opened the book that was upside down on the table and put it aside. The scratch on the medical records was particularly clear. With a tearing sound, his slender fingers ripped the two pieces of paper on it open and threw it into the trash can without hesitation. Everyone should always leave a way out for themselves, right?

At the same time, more than 300 kilometers away from Riverdale, in a hotel room in Belleville, Justin rubbed his sore shoulders and handed the documents in front of him to Frankie. "We'll negotiate with them tomorrow according to this, and you can lower the price a little more. They haven't made a solid decision yet."

"Understood."

“By the way, what did Robin’s lawyer say about the stock transfer?”

“What else can he say? He couldn’t be any happier, of course.” Frankie said angrily, “He was originally only a shareholder proxy for Jason, but now that you’re willing to sell a part of the shares to him, he’ll become a true shareholder. Aren’t you afraid that this will backfire on you? President Burton, please

reconsider this. Getting Robin’s help isn’t the only way to help President Hudson solve the development site approval issue.”

“You don’t need to tell me more. Of course I know that there are other ways, but I’m not just transferring the stocks just for that.”

“What do you mean?”

“I’m going to add a clause to the agreement. Starting from the transfer of shares, he can no longer use any means to threaten or endanger any benefits related to Rachel, or the shares transfer agreement will be voided.”

“Are you trying to help President Hudson completely get rid of Robin?”

“She’s had a difficult life. She lost her parents at a young age, and now she has to take care of Hudson Pharmaceuticals alone.”

“However, does President Hudson know that you’re doing this?”

“She doesn’t need to know. If she finds out, she won’t want to accept this favor.”

Saying that, Justin got up from behind his desk. His shoulders ached faintly and he couldn’t help but move them around, causing his bones to make a cracking sound as if they had loosened.

“President Burton, you have to take care of your body as well. You don’t need to rush the negotiation so much.”

"I want to finish this early. Grandpa is still waiting for me to go back." Justin looked out the window, a blurry outline of his cold face reflected on the glass as he said, "It's getting late. You should go back and rest."

"Understood. You should sleep early too."

Three days later, Hudson Pharmaceuticals successfully obtained the approval for the continued construction of the Northlane development site, and both Rachel and Jolly could finally breathe a sigh of relief.

"Thank god it was resolved before that old coot held a meeting with the board of directors, or he would've definitely never let go of this matter." Jolly was ecstatic, and began to openly complain in Rachel's office, not caring if anyone was listening or not.

Rachel shot a glance at her. "Keep your voice down. We can't just dismiss his pride so blatantly."

"What are you scared of? We've already given that old coot enough respect. He secretly colluded with that brat Robin, and we're already being benevolent by not reporting him to the board of directors. Chris, if there's a next time, don't hold back anymore."

"Of course."

"Still, something's weird. Why isn't Robin chasing after us anymore?"

Rachel was calm in the face of Jolly's doubts. "Maybe he's lost interest in messing with us. After all, he's got tons of work lined up for him as the Burton Group's president. Besides, Old Mr. Burton is now in the hospital, so he would want to seize this opportunity."

"To be brutally frank, if Old Mr. Burton really passed without leaving a will behind, wouldn't Robin become the chairman of Burton Group?"

“Yes. If there isn’t a will, the first heir to Old Mr. Burton’s shares would be Jason, and Robin is his only proxy shareholder.”

“No wonder he’s been making a fuss at the hospital recently. I think he just wanted to know if Old Mr. Burton had made a will.”

As they were talking, a secretary suddenly knocked on the door and entered. “President Hudson, Miss Carter, do you need me to order a meal for you?”

Jolly glanced at the time. “Oh, it’s getting late. It’s time for us to get off work.”

Rachel instructed, “You don’t need to order anything for us. We’re not working overtime today. We’ll be leaving soon, so you can get off work too.”

“All right.”

After the secretary left, Jolly rose from the sofa. “Let’s go home.”

“I still have some things to do. You can leave first.”

“Weren’t you not working overtime?”

“I’ll leave in a moment. You can go.”

“All right, all right. I’m not a match for workaholics like you.” Jolly picked up her handbag. “I’ll be going first, okay?”

“Okay.”

Once Jolly had left, Rachel looked at the text message she had just received.

It was from Julian. The text message read, 'I've already made the notice of critical illness and sent the news out. If Robin can get in touch with Jason, he'll definitely contact him immediately.'

She replied, 'Got it.'

The investigation bureau would make their move that night with Julian's cooperation from the inside. Should everything go smoothly, they would be able to successfully catch Jason.

On the other hand, Julian received a text as soon as he finished sending the news. He looked at the sender—it was Sue. He tapped open the message unhurriedly.

'Julian, what happened to Old Mr. Burton? I don't really believe what Robin says.'

#### Chapter 380 Declaration of Death

'Julian, you have to tell me the truth. Jason wants to go to the hospital to see Old Mr. Burton, but I stopped him. He can't show his face unless he really has to.'

Looking at the texts from Sue, Julian was about to reply when a hand held him on the shoulder. Janice's voice sounded from beside him. "Don't reply."

A moment later, the office phone suddenly rang.

Janice glanced at it and motioned to her subordinates to pick it up. A female staff member next to her immediately pressed the answer button. "Hello, this is Tran-Q, Director Peters' office."

The phone was on speaker, and Sue's anxious voice came from the other end. "I need to talk to Dr. Peters, please. I'm his mother and I have some urgent business with him."

"Ma'am, Dr. Peters is currently in an operation, so he can't come to the phone at the moment."



“Operation? May I know what kind of operation it is?”

“It’s an emergency operation for a patient with cerebral infarction. After Dr. Peters is done, I will immediately tell him that you have called.”

The other end was silent for a long time before she hung up.

As soon as the call ended, the female staff looked at Janice. “Officer Hawkins.”

Janice nodded slightly, and dropped her hand from Julian’s shoulder. “You are in an operation now, so you can’t return your mother’s call.”

“I understand.” Julian breathed in deeply before he slowly said, “Janice, can I ask you for a favor?”

“Go ahead.”

“Once everything is over, please don’t tell Rachel about him and my mother. I don’t want too many people to know.”

“I understand. We’ll keep it strictly confidential.” Janice agreed, “Thank you for telling us about this. It will be really helpful for our search operation.”

Before that, Robin was the only person that the investigation bureau could confirm was able to contact Jason, but even he could not pinpoint Jason’s location accurately. Julian cooperated with her actively and let her know the relationship between Sue and Jason, which made things much easier.

Janice said into the intercom, “Everyone, be on high alert. Focus on monitoring the hospital and all surrounding networks. We will capture Jason tonight.”

In the middle of the night, darkness completely enveloped Riverdale, but Rachel was still in the office and hadn’t left. She stood in front of the window and looked out quietly. Once she felt that the time was

almost up, she took her car keys and went downstairs. With a roar of the engine, she drove onto the streets and toward the direction of the hospital.

As it was autumn, the night wind was strong, blowing the fallen leaves wildly. Right after she had parked her car, a familiar voice suddenly sounded.

“President Hudson?”

Rachel jolted in surprise and looked back, only to see Frankie. Immediately afterward, she saw Justin who had just got out of the car. Why did he come back?

When he saw Rachel, Justin was taken aback as well, his expression turning astonished.

“Weren’t you away on a business trip? Is everything settled?” Rachel blurted.

Frankie replied, “Of course not. We still have to continue negotiations early tomorrow morning, but we suddenly got a notice of critical illness from the hospital, so President Burton rushed back. President Hudson, you’re also here because of this, right? See, President Burton? I told you that she’s also concerned about Old Mr. Burton’s illness.”

Justin’s expression was tense right now, and he wasted no time talking. “We can talk about this later. I have to go to the hospital first.”

“Wait—” Rachel couldn’t stop him, and she watched as his figure rushed past her hurriedly.

Frankie hurriedly said, “President Hudson, please forgive President Burton. He was raised by Old Mr. Burton, so he feels the same as you do to your grandmother. He had been in pain for a long time when Old Mr. Burton fell ill, and he hasn’t been well recently. He just had to see Old Mr. Burton one last time... Anyway, I’ll be taking my leave now.”

Saying that, Frankie hurriedly caught up with Justin’s figure, leaving Rachel standing alone. Her hands that were dangling by her sides tightened slightly as her mind was inundated with mixed feelings.

She wanted to hold Justin back and tell him the truth, but it was too late to say anything now. After the night ended and all the dust settled, what would happen when Justin found out the truth? Rachel pinched her palm fiercely.

As soon as Justin arrived at the hospital, he ran in the direction of the operating room. His tall figure was particularly eye-catching in the hospital's hallway. Time did not wait for anyone, and four hours had already passed since the notice of critical illness had been sent out. Just as he was about to reach the operating room, he was suddenly stopped by several men.

"What are you all doing?"

"You can't go over there."

The two men were wearing headsets on their ears.

Before Justin could react, he suddenly heard a shout from a distance. "At the stairway! Stop him!"

Suddenly, the two men who were blocking Justin let go of him, and turned around to block the stairwell next to him. They tackled a figure running out, pressing the person to the ground. The man struggled in their grasp, but when he saw Justin, his pupils suddenly shrank and his movements stopped.

Half of his face was pressed against the ground, but the moment his face mask was torn off, half of his wrinkled face was exposed. He glared at Justin with bloodshot eyes and gritted his teeth, blood splattering out as he spoke. "Was it you who set me up?"

Justin's expression changed. "Jason?"

One of the men holding Jason glanced at Justin in surprise, then took out his walkie-talkie and said, "Boss, we've caught him."

As Jason was handcuffed and dragged up, he was furious and wanted to rush up to Justin when he looked at him. "What the hell happened to the old man? You b\*stard!"

“Stop moving!”

“Officer Hawkins.”

At that moment, Janice rushed over, followed by Julian.

Janice glanced at Jason and showed her ID. “Jason Burton, you are suspected of smuggling drugs, so we need you to come with us and cooperate with the investigation.”

Jason gave Julian a death stare, and his clenched fists made a cracking sound. “Even you had a part in this?”

Julian stared at him coldly, not saying a word.

“Great, how great.” Jason scoffed coldly, his gaze stormy. “You better keep this in mind: some things just can’t be changed.”

Julian’s expression stiffened, and his hands that were dangling by his sides slowly clenched into fists.

“Take him away.” As Justin was present, Janice knew what Julian was worried about and immediately asked the men to take Jason away.

However, Jason didn’t seem to have any intention of talking much and only asked before leaving, “Where is my dad?”

Hearing that, Justin came back to his senses all at once and echoed, “Where is my grandfather?”

Since it was a setup by the investigation bureau for Jason, Arthur should be fine.

However, Janice’s brows furrowed and she glanced at Julian.

Dressed in a white coat, Julian had the calmness of a doctor as he announced, "Two days ago in the afternoon, Arthur Burton died of cerebral infarction at the age of 82. The time of death was 18:00 sharp on the 21st."

Justin's face immediately paled in disbelief.

"What did you say?"

Jason was about to rush up again, but he was held down by the investigation bureau's officers who were dressed in civilian clothes and directly marched into the police car.

After the people in the hallway gradually dispersed, a flurry of footsteps came from the stairwell. Rachel had arrived just in time to hear Julian announce the time of Arthur's death.

With Julian in between them, she and Justin met eyes. Although he didn't say anything, she saw a wretched pain in Justin's eyes that was like a whirlpool, fiercely pulling people into it. Yes, she had already known two days ago in the afternoon that Arthur had a cerebral infarction and needed to see Justin one last time, but she chose to be silent.