

# My mute bride

## Chapter 431

“Drive faster!” When Rachel was talking to Julian, she had a pale look, and her voice was shaking. He was already driving at the maximum speed limit as he consoled, “Rae, don’t worry yourself too much. Things might not be as bad as you think.”

“I don’t know what I’m supposed to think.” Clenching her cell phone tightly, she had her gaze fixed on the screen as she read Jolly’s message over and over again. She couldn’t imagine what the worst thing could be.

Half an hour later, they stopped outside the hotel. The police had handled the scene and set a perimeter around it. The crowd forming outside the hotel room was talking about the incident. “The police arrested a man this morning.”

“Why?” “I heard that he was trying to get his hands on a minor. I saw that girl this morning. She looks like she is around sixteen or seventeen. What a rotten guy.” “The pervert has no shame.”

The crowd fell into silence as they learned the truth. The room had limited access as outsiders were not allowed, and no police were guarding the scene while they left with the evidence. Rachel was desperate as she grabbed the first person she saw on his arm in a strong grip, and she asked, “Where’s the girl you’re talking about?”

The person was surprised by her sudden outburst. “Who are you?” “I’m her older sister! Where is she now?” “Rae.” Julian caught up with her and made an apology to the person. “We’re truly sorry about that.”

Shooting Rachel one last glance, the person walked away from the scene hastily. Seeing her eyes turn red and puffy, Julian held her hands to comfort her. “Don’t worry. Let me ask around first.”

“Chris!” Jolly’s voice echoed across the hallway. while they were talking. “Chris.” “You’re finally here!” She made a beeline to Rachel. “The police have left.”

“Where’s Jess?” “I don’t know. She wasn’t here ever since I arrived. I asked the police officer, but they didn’t tell me anything due to the policy of privacy.” Rachel struggled free from Julian’s grip and turned on her heels toward the exit.

“Rae! Where are you going?” “The police station.” The police were already half done with recording the statements for the investigation when Rachel made it to the police station. “You’re Jessica Egerton’s older sister?”

"I know her older brother. I've been looking after her since she came to Riverdale." "I see. The police officer flipped through his notes. "I'm sorry. We can't disclose her condition to you. The record here shows that the suspect and you were husband and wife."

"We had a divorce! Besides, he's not the kind of person who will do this!" Rachel wouldn't believe that Justin would really harm Jessica.

Thinking that she was defending the suspect, a frown formed between the officer's brows. "We will rely on evidence. A few words aren't helping us to solve the case. You can leave now until we summon you for further investigation." She clenched her fists on her sides. "I want to see Officer Hawkins."

The police officer was taken aback. "You know her?"

"Where is she now?" "Officer Hawkins left Riverdale to attend a meeting due to the order. She isn't available for the time being." "Impossible! We were talking to each other a few days ago. "At that, she took her phone out and made a call for Janice.

"Sorry, the number you've dialed is not available." "Miss Hudson, Officer Hawkins is attending a meeting. For safety measures, she needs to turn in her cell phone."

Rachel's hopes were gone by the harsh truth. "How's it going?" Jolly greeted her outside the police station and held her hands in concern. Rachel shook her head. "They won't tell me about Jess' whereabouts."

"Don't worry. 'No news is good news. Julian is asking around for the information. None of us actually believe Justin would do this." Rachel didn't want to think, and she was at a loss for words. "Jolly, what if something happened to Jess? What am I supposed to do?"

Not only had she caused Hans' death, she had also endangered Jessica's life. "I should have asked Justin to leave Riverdale earlier! I shouldn't agree with Jess when she asked for Justin to look after her! He's a man, after all! A grown man!"

"Chris! Calm down. Do you really think Justin would do that?" "I don't know what to make of it! I don't know!" Leaning on the car, Rachel slowly slid down into a crouching position as a lot of thoughts were burdening her.

It wasn't a matter of her believing it or not; it concerned Jess' well-being. Rachel would never forgive herself if anything bad happened to Jess.

Jolly felt sympathy for her, but they couldn't do anything until the results were out. The next morning, Julian showed up at the apartment with the news. "I got the test results from the police."

Rachel could already guess the answer from his serious expression, but she still had high hopes. However, Julian's words were against her hopes. 'Justin fits the suspect's description for the analysis result of the hair and seminal fluid retrieved from the victim.'

At that moment, Rachel fell onto the sofa as her heart sank. The statement struck her hard, and she couldn't pull herself together from the lingering feelings.

"No way!" Jolly refused to believe. "Justin hurt Jessica? Is he out of his mind?" Julian said calmly, "They also performed a blood test on him; the result shows that he was drugged with a powerful dosage of aphrodisiac. "He was drugged? By who? Is it Jessica?" She had no doubts about Jessica. "It must be her! She wants to frame Justin!"

Julian shook his head, disagreeing with her theory. "It isn't her. The culprit is a former employee of Burton Group. Even though he was arrested, I believed that someone was behind all of this. It isn't the first time our former opponent tried to set him up, but I didn't expect Jessica to be dragged into this mess." "I don't follow." Jolly was confused. "If it wasn't Jessica herself, then how would Justin-

"To put it simply, someone set Justin up. Another woman was supposed to be sent to his room. I investigated her background and found that she is a club hostess. She had been hesitating outside the hotel for a long time when Jessica suddenly showed up."

"Furthermore, someone made an anonymous call to the police. It wasn't Jessica." "All these things can't be a mere coincidence." Jolly had her doubts. "Why did Jessica go to the hotel?"

"It's because of me." When Rachel rejoined the conversation after a long silence, they both turned their attention to her. Grabbing her own hair with force, she spoke with agony. "I told her my plan to send her back.

That's why she went to him after that. It's all my fault! I put her in danger!" "Don't take the blame on yourself." Jolly embraced Rachel to comfort her. "It isn't your fault!"

She shook her head in disbelief, as she couldn't accept herself as the cause of everything. It was even more difficult to accept that Justin had wronged Jessica, no matter what the reason was. She blamed herself. If she had revealed the truth of Hans' death to Jessica, everything wouldn't have come to this point. Rachel sobbed. 'Where's Jess?'

Julian shook his head regretfully. "We haven't found her." Jolly frowned at her condition, then suggested cautiously, "Chris, something's off. We shall see Justin first and hear his story."

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 432

Rachel was taken aback by Jolly's words. It had been hours since the incident. However, she hadn't thought about anything other than finding out Jessica's whereabouts to the point where she had neglected to find out more about Justin's condition, especially now that he was in custody.

"I will do it." Julian's voice came from the side as he consoled them, saying, "A lot of things are going through Rae's mind now. I don't think she's in the best condition to ask him for the details, so I'll go instead."

As Justin and Julian were cousins, having him as the visitor could save them much time in the visitation process. Meanwhile, in police custody, Justin was brought to a private room. There was only a table and two chairs in the room, which served as an interrogation room.

"Julian?" Justin stopped at the door when he saw the person in the room, but he regained his composure soon after. "What brings you here?"

"You looked disappointed." Julian stared at him and stated the obvious, "You're hoping it's Rae instead, isn't it?" A bitter laugh escaped from Justin's mouth before he replied, "I wouldn't want her to see me. in this state."

"Take a seat. We only got fifteen minutes, and I have something to tell you."

Justin's fists tightened beside him as he walked over to sit down at the opposite table. Their eyes locked in the air across the table.

It was the first time they had a conversation face to face since Julian inherited the shares of Burton Group. It could be perceived that they were casually making a light conversation while ignoring the place. Julian was the one who spoke first. "Tell me what happened."

"I want to see my attorney."

"Why? Am I not trustworthy as your attorney?"

"It depends." Julian's expression darkened. "Your attorney. isn't in Riverdale. He's unable to make it here right now. If you need one, I will look for a defense attorney." "Defense attorney?" Justin stared at Julian intensely. "I haven't confessed anything. Why are you assuming it will involve the court?"

Others might have had their doubts, but Justin didn't do anything and insisted on his innocence. However, Julian was assuming and jumping to his own conclusion instead.

"Making a move on a minor? I take it you understand the seriousness of the matter. Justin, the protection from the Burton Family isn't for you to do whatever you want. "I didn't do anything."

"You can say anything you want, but the police will need evidence." Justin stared into Julian's eyes for an answer, as Julian's attitude was troubling. "Is it how you show your help?" "Of course. I'm here to help you. We're cousins, after all, so I'll help you as much as I can no matter what you do."

Julian held onto Justin's stare. "Once you are convicted, you shall seek political asylum in Montenegro. Forget about your past and start over with your new life there."

"Montenegro?" "Only if you're marrying Ginny. She can find a way to apply for political asylum for you, and you can leave Riverdale." Justin's jaw tightened. "You're in touch with each other?" "She came to me as soon as she heard about your situation. This is also her suggestion. You see, she's caring about you."

"I appreciate her help. However, thanks but no thanks. I believe that I can prove my innocence." "I suggest you reconsider it because it isn't only about you. You'll also need to consider the future of Burton Group."

"What are you trying to say?" "Assaulting a minor is a serious matter, and rumors are spreading fast. You're the image of Burton Group, but the negativity of it is causing the share price of Burton Group to decline rapidly at the time."

"I'm no longer in Burton Group." "Don't forget, you're one of the shareholders." Suddenly, there was a knock on the door, and someone reminded them, "There are three minutes left."

Julian took out a contract and pushed it toward Justin. "This is an agreement of share transfer. To save the reputation of Burton Group, I'm representing them to repurchase your shares."

Justin took a look at the contract before he stared at Julian. "This is what you came for, am I right? Julian, had I wronged you for once?"

Justin was aware of how he kept his distance from strangers, as he used to be reckless and rash when he first inherited Burton Group. He would do anything to ensure he would succeed in business, and he treated his opponents without mercy. However, he never did anything wrong to his family. Julian was aloof at his answer. "It's nothing personal. I'm merely striving for a better future. for everyone. Take your time."

At that, he strode for the exit, leaving Justin in the room alone with mixed feelings as he grasped the agreement. At the same time, Rachel was busy searching for Jessica.

Janice wasn't answering her call. Just as the officer had told her, Janice was out of town for a confidential meeting, and it wasn't certain when she would return. "Don't stress yourself out. You need to eat something."

Jolly ordered two sets of pizza. One set for the kids to eat in their bedroom, and another was left on the table, and she handed Rachel a pair of disposable plastic gloves..

"I don't have the appetite. You can have it yourself." Rachel was pacing the room with the cell phone in hand, as she couldn't calm down. "I should've asked Janice for Jess's father's number if this was going to happen."

"She's fine. You see, as the police are involved, they would settle her in a safe place. Our focus, for the time being, is to find out if anything truly happened between them."

Rachel had a blind spot as the case concerned two people that she cared about, but Jolly was seeing everything as a bystander. "Even though they found Justin's hair on Jessica, it isn't solid evidence to prove him guilty." Rachel wasn't in the mood to discuss. "Let's see what Julian says."

At the same moment, someone rang the doorbell. "Coming." Jolly went straight for the door and opened it to reveal Julian. "Speak of the devil. You finished your business?"

"We were given fifteen minutes only, so I asked him what was important. I don't want to make you wait any longer, but a phone call isn't proper, so I came here as fast as possible."

"How did it go?" Rachel couldn't wait any longer. "What did he say?" "Rae." Julian had a frown on his face, and Rachel had never seen him this serious. "I hope you're ready for it."

Her heart skipped a beat as she had a bad feeling. "Justin wasn't cooperating, and he's waiting for his attorney until now. I asked him for clarification, but he avoided them. And... there's one more thing."

"What is it?" "His attorney is applying for political asylum in Montenegro for him in private." Both women weren't expecting this as their expressions changed. Clenching her fists, Rachel began saying with a shaky voice, "If he's innocent, he wouldn't need to migrate. So, he really hurt Jess..."

Julian said, "Things won't end well for him, no matter the truth. The rumors are spreading fast at the moment, and they're getting worse. His image is ruined; he can no longer stay in Riverdale."

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Read Chapter 433

### Chapter 433

Rachel had been tossing and turning since she went to bed as Julian's words kept echoing into her mind. At midnight, she heard a knock on the door before someone poked their head in. "Charlotte? To her surprise, her daughter wasn't asleep at this time. "Why haven't you slept?"

Charlotte stepped aside and revealed another figure behind her. "Samuel isn't either." As soon as Rachel saw that the children hadn't slept, she knew something was going on. "Jolly Carter. Show yourself."

The children would be sleeping at this moment if they weren't entertaining Jolly's idea, or else they wouldn't come to Rachel's room at midnight.

At that, Jolly pushed the door open with a grin on her face. "You got me." "What are you up to this time? You even brought the kids with you! Don't you remember they have school tomorrow?"

"Well, they don't! Tomorrow's a Saturday. Look at yourself. Your mind is a mess right now, isn't it?" Jolly urged the kids. "Get on the bed. I don't want you guys to catch a cold."

Both kids began running to the bed at her words as each of them clung to a side and tried to get themselves on the bed. Jolly closed the door behind her before she strode for the bed and shared half of the blanket with Rachel. Rachel's bed wasn't small, but it wasn't intended for two adults and another two kids either.

"Scooch over. The cold wave's coming. We're sharing to keep warm." Jolly was having Charlotte in her embrace as a source of warmth while Charlotte was hiding under the blanket, with only her eyes peeking out to urge Rachel to join them.

Rachel lay down in silence. She appreciated Jolly's kindness for not wanting her to dwell on the negative feelings by keeping her company.

"Do you really think Justin is guilty?" Jolly didn't bother to beat around the bush. Rachel shot her a look of disapproval. "This isn't the time for this." They shouldn't talk about Justin in Charlotte's presence.

However, Jolly had nothing to hide. "Children are clever, after all. Hiding the truth from them. will only worsen the situation. Charlotte, am I right?" Charlotte nodded beneath the blanket. "My daddy is not a bad guy."

Rachel patted Charlotte's head. "Of course, Daddy isn't. Mommy knows that." She believed that Justin wouldn't do anything to harm Jessica in the first place. However, he had a positive result on his drug test.

Jolly continued, "The public opinion isn't in his favor as the majority of the netizens are accusing him. Even the Burton Group is in the center of the storm, so it's understandable for Justin to make the decision to leave Riverdale."

"We're certain he is framed, but we don't know anything about the culprit. Have you ever thought about the reason why Jessica looked for him on the same day? Furthermore, why isn't she showing up?"

Rachel squinted. "What are you trying to imply?"

"Something doesn't add up." "Justin's attorney is seeking political asylum for him. Julian told us about that." Pondering for a while, Jolly led the topic on Julian. "Don't you think Julian has changed at lot?"

"What do you mean?" Rachel scowled.

"He has changed so much since he took over the Burton Group. Not only was Justin forced to resign from the board of directors, he even allowed Robin the jerk to fill the role of president, and lastly, where on earth is Sue?" Her heart skipped at Jolly's bold hypothesis..

After a minute of silence, Rachel broke the silence by defending Julian. 'First, Justin resigned from the board of directors of his own will. Second, Robin is the acting president of Burton Group for the time being because Julian doesn't have a say among the board of directors. Lastly, Sue was sent away because of me. Julian doesn't want to see Sue making things difficult for me."

Sue and Rachel had never seen eye to eye. Not only did Sue hinder Justin and Rachel's relationship, but her buttons were also being pushed when she saw that her son, Julian, had feelings for Rachel. "I met Frankie this afternoon."

Jolly's statement had Rachel in a daze. "He's back?" "He handed me the autopsy report. Do you know Old Mr. Burton was poisoned to death?"

Shocked to learn the truth, Rachel raised herself on her elbows as she sat up. The children were woken from their slumber by Rachel's commotion. After she settled them back into their sleep, she led Jolly to the living room. "I want to see the results."

“Wait here.” Before heading to the fridge for two cans of beer, Jolly went into her room to grab the report first and passed it to Rachel. Jolly pulled the ring to open the can while Rachel perused the copy of the autopsy report.

Jolly explained to her when she was digesting the report. “Old Mr. Burton died of cerebral infarction because someone had been poisoning him for a long time. Has anyone else. with the opportunity and the reason to poison him come to your mind now?”

Rachel paled as she recalled. “Sue.” If Julian was only Sue’s son and had no ties with the Burton Family, Rachel wouldn’t ever link Sue to Arthur’s death. However, Julian was Jason’s son, one of the Burtons. Once old Mr. Burton passed away, Julian would no doubt inherit Burton’s property.

“Do you still believe that Julian sending Sue away is a sign of peace?” Jolly passed her a tin of beer. “Let’s finish this first. Once you’ve calmed down, we’ll plan for the next move.”

People would change from time to time, even if the Julian they once knew was indeed a gentle person who never hesitated in showing his kindness to everyone around him.

However, none of them could be certain if someone could still maintain his conscience when he had stared into the abyss for too long; the abyss would most likely come to haunt the person and make the person one of them. That night was quiet, with the silvery white moonlight sprinkled across the city.

“When will he get convicted?” In a unit of the apartment, Jessica was standing in front of Julian to confront him. Her tone was showing a hint of impatience. “You promised to sentence him!” “The case is still in progress, but it won’t take long. I’ll send you home first.”

“Don’t take me as a fool. I heard your call with another woman. You’re asking her to apply for political asylum for Justin. You’re going to let him leave!” Julian lifted his head, his spectacles reflecting a cold light. “What else did you hear?”

“You’re using me as a scapegoat! You used me to drive a wedge between Rachel and Justin. Now, you’re kicking me away when I’m not useful! You’re not getting what you want easily!” Jessica insisted through gritted teeth, “I’m not going anywhere unless he’s convicted.”

“The evidence isn’t enough to convict him! We can only hope for him to leave Riverdale with a bad reputation for the best. Isn’t it enough for your revenge?”

“I want his life for my brother’s! I want him. dead!” Jessica had an obstinate mind, as she wouldn’t give up her goals until she had Justin dead. Julian lost his temper because she wouldn’t back off. “You’re leaving tomorrow afternoon.. Dakota will come to pick you

up at that time. Remember to focus on your studies once you are back there. You shall forget about these and start a new life.”

She wasn't ready to give up. “You're kicking me away once I did the dirty things for you? What if I tell Rachel the truth? Do you think she would still stay by your side?”

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 434

Julian suddenly raised his head and the chill in his eyes was enough to make Jessica tremble. Then, he rose to his feet.

“What are you doing?” Jessica reversed in panic, but Julian had caught hold of her wrist. “If you want to peacefully leave Riverdale and to your parents, I highly recommend you to keep quiet and not say anything to anyone. Otherwise, I wouldn't mind sending you to accompany your brother.”

He glared at her with frigid eyes. It took him what seemed like an eternity to release his grip on her hand. “It's getting late. You should be heading home to rest and not being outdoors.”

Bang! The sound of the door closed was heard moments after Julian said those words. Jessica's face paled as she collapsed onto the couch. News of the former president of Burton Group assaulting a minor was once again trending on the news the next day.

People stood in front of Burton Group with banners to boycott the corporation for the entire week, which left the precinct with not choice but to send their officers to mediate the situation. Riverdale Charity Foundation had to remove Justin from the position of vice president.

It was the pressure of public opinion that resulted in the Burton Group holding an emergency board of directors meeting. Although the older shareholders trusted in Justin's character, Julian caved into the public opinion and insisted on expelling Justin from the Burton Group's board of directors.

Such a decision would result in a chain reaction because those closely associated with Justin immediately took a stand and distanced themselves from him. It did not take long for Justin's hard work to perish.

The most exaggerated part was that even Rachel, who had been divorced from Justin for many years, was not spared from the netizens' taunt and became a trending topic herself. As a result, all kinds of people gathered at her apartment. There were all kinds of curses written on her main entrance- 'Conniving person', 'A pervert's friend', 'Accomplice'

The Carter Family did not feel safe for Rachel to continue living at her place and immediately made arrangements for her and Jolly to move back to the Carter Residence.

Justin's hand slammed on the table in disbelief as the newspaper rustled under his palm. "In order to make me leave Riverdal, you have resorted to them suffering such misery?!"

"Your tactics were way worse back then, wasn't it? I just found the right time to return the favor." Julian still had the same expression as he pushed the share transfer agreement toward Justin. "Even if it is not for them, consider it as planning for your future life. Once you have signed this, leave the Burton Group and Riverdale. You can start afresh abroad." Justin held onto the table as he trembled.

"A few days ago, the incident where a senior member of the Burton Group was alleged to have assaulted a minor has been brought to trial. According to the prosecution, the accused, Mr. Burton, was drinking with his subordinate, Ms. Egerton, on the night of crime. Based on what we know of Mr. Burton's drug test result, it has been established that there was a significant amount of aphrodisiac in his bloodstream while Ms. Egerton was suspected to have been heavily drugged..."

The news was now playing the legal segment. When Jolly returned to her office, she noticed. that Rachel was watching the same news and immediately took the remote control to switch off the television.

"Why are you watching it? I mean, we already know what the news is reporting. It's already been clarified that someone held a grudge against Justin and decided to set him up. It just so happened that Jessica was there at the wrong time." Rachel frowned and refused to discuss the topic any longer. 'Aren't you off work? Why did you return?'

"To get my keys. Oh, right, there's something that I want to let you know. The latest from the bureau is that Justin's trial is about to end and I heard that his application for migrating abroad to seek political asyly has been approved. The bureau is negotiating with the embassy on this, so once that's done, there is a high likelihood of Justin leaving Riverdale."

"He's really leaving?" "The situation has already arrived at this stage and even involved you. If he doesn't leave Riverdale, is he asking to be whacked?" Rachel was deep in thought as Jolly took her keys. "Oh, Julian has invited you for dinner, right? When are you leaving?"

“In a short while.” “Okay. Have you contacted Jessica, though? I haven’t seen her around town even though the trial is coming to an end.”

“Nope.” “Don’t worry. Maybe her parents have brought her home.” Jolly was in a rush to leave and she failed to notice Rachel being absent-minded. Had she been more observant, she would have realized that something was bothering Rachel, especially for the past few days.....

The sound of the violin was melodious as it rang throughout the restaurant while the waiter helped to pour the wine for the two diners that night.

“I’ve been busy lately, so I didn’t have much time to swing by to see you. Why don’t we bring the kids out this weekend? I’ve heard that the suburbs are gorgeous during the autumn.”

“That sounds lovely. I’ll ask Jolly and her boyfriend to come along as well.” “Rae, have you ever thought about us going on our own? You know, like an actual family?” Rachel took a sip of the wine. “There’s something that I want to ask you, Julian.”

Julian was slightly startled. “Of course.” “Have you ever considered withdrawing from the Burton Group’s board of directors to become a shareholder instead?”

“Why?” I’d rather see you being a doctor and treating patients.” Julian’s eyes narrowed and after a long silence, he finally asked, “Rae, is it because you feel that I’m inferior to Justin?”

Such a statement had left Rachel silently clenching her fists. Then, she shook her head. “I didn’t mean it in that way.” “Rae, let’s get married once this is all over.”

When she heard that, she was momentarily stunned and didn’t know what to say at that moment. He added, ‘I know that you won’t be able to: accept this now, but I’ll let you fully consider it. You don’t have to feel burdened into agreeing.”

After a moment’s worth of silence, she suddenly commented, “If we want to get married, don’t we need your mother’s permission? When is she coming to Riverdale? Do I have to meet her?”

Julian was obviously stunned by her words. Then, he frowned. “I can decide on my own marriage. There’s no need to see her since I don’t want you to worry about this.”

“Julian, are you scared that I’ll be worried or that I’ll stumble upon something that I should not know about?” As a result of Rachel’s question, Julian ended up spilling the red wine in the decanter due to his abrupt action..

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 435

A server came and did a quick wipe on the table, and by the time they were done, Julian had visibly calmed down. "Rae, did someone tell you something? Or, was there some hearsay?"

"No one said anything. But she's your mother, anyhow. No matter what she has done, leaving her overseas just like that is not a good idea. People will criticize you for it in the future."

Her words relieved Julian. "Rae, after my identity has been publicized, my mother's position in Riverdale will be made awkward. It's also in her will to leave for abroad. That's all there is to it."

"Really?"

"Really." Rachel nodded with acknowledgment and no longer pressed on the topic. However, what Julian didn't notice was her dimming gaze when she lowered her head. The exquisite food in front of her also instantly turned bland. People could change; anything in this world would. After dinner, Julian sent Rachel back to the Carter Residence.

"This is it." "Things should be over soon, but no rush because I think it's good that you stay with the Carter Family. At least you have someone watching your back. Go on now."

"Yeah, you too. Drive safe." After entering the mansion, Rachel went straight into her room and to her balcony. Despite having drunk some wine, she was absolutely clear-headed and the cold wind blowing on her took away some of the alcohol. With that, she dialed a number. "Have you found Sue Parham?"

Silence began filling the air as Rachel listened to the person on the other end of the line. Meanwhile, at Riverdale Airport, a plane flew across the sky, shrieking as it left. The flight schedules were being broadcasted inside the airport. Justin, with a face mask over his mouth and nose, lowered his baseball cap after taking his boarding pass.

"Let's go." Ginny's voice came from beside him. "Riverdale is seriously too small. I can't get used to living here. It'll be a fresh start after we get there. I'm sure you'll like it." He took a gander at Ginny. "There was this one thing I could never quite figure out while I was in the detention center."

“What was it?” “When did Julian start contacting you, and when did you two begin collaborating to set me up?” “Have you figured it out now?”

Before Justin could answer, a figure came to them before it was followed by a familiar voice. “Ready to go?” “President Peters. Ginny smiled upon seeing who it was. “Thanks for seeing us off personally. You shouldn’t have.”

Julian wore a dark gray cashmere coat with both hands habitually shoved in his pockets. Right then, some of the gentleness and kindness he had while he was a doctor was replaced with utter aloofness. “Well, who knows when will be the next time we see each other after this? So, why not?”

“Yeah, right. You just don’t feel at ease unless you watch me board the plane.” Julian didn’t justify himself and Justin continued, “I’ve always wondered who called the police that morning.”

“The victim, of course. Who else?” “Jessica? But she was still out cold when the police arrived.”

Justin remembered it like it had just happened yesterday. Jessica was still lying in bed when the police barged into the hotel room where the evidence lay bare, leaving no room for doubt. Julian narrowed his eyes. “You were conscious at the time?”

“I was conscious that whole night.”

“Impossible.” The next second, a group of plain-clothed police surrounded the three of them, and one of them announced, ‘Hello, Mr. Julian Peters. We’re from the Riverdale Investigation Bureau. Someone has reported you for incrimination and defamation. Please come with us.”

Instantly, Julian looked toward his cousin grimly. “There must be a mistake.” Ginny fretted. “No mistake. Miss Ginny Tuscan, is it? I’m sorry, but you’ll have to come with us as well.”

“And why should I do that?” It was Ginny’s turn to become grim. “Because someone provided evidence of you bribing the hotel manager and a former employee of Burton Group. We suspect you had conspired with Julian Peters.”

“This is slander!” Ginny pulled her phone out. “I won’t go with you guys. I’m going to call my lawyer. You guys talk to him.” “Mr. Julian Peters-”

Justin raised his arm. “Hold on. I’d like to have a word with him.” After exchanging a glance with his colleague, the officer nodded in agreement. “Pfft.” Julian snorted disdainfully. “I thought you would leave Riverdale for Rae and her mother’s sake, but it looks like I’ve overestimated your kindness. Do you think slandering me will do anything?”

"I wasn't drugged that night." Julian's countenance turned awful after he heard Justin's concise revelation. "When did you discover it?" "The moment Jessica showed up."

Julian clenched his fists and recollected all that had happened in the last few days. He couldn't believe it was all under Justin's control. Moments later, he said coldly, "Even so, what can you do about it? If you didn't do anything to Jessica, then this case doesn't hold up. More importantly, you have no proof that this has anything to do with me,"

He was prudent, for he had been well prepared when he initiated his plan. The worst-case scenario would just be that Stefan guy being a scapegoat.

Right as Julian finished his words, a figure dashed in their direction and slowed down upon seeing them. It was none other than Rachel. His face froze for a split second before returning to normal. 'Rae, what are you doing here?"

Meanwhile, Rachel looked at the officers behind. Julian with mixed emotions. "It's just a regular civilian inspection. Don't worry," Julian explained, leading Rachel to look at him with a blazing gaze. "Julian, I know all I about it. Jessica has told me everything."

Julian turned grim after he heard her. "What did she tell you?" Just then, an officer came forward. "It's time. You guys can talk after this. We have to take. them away for questioning now."

After taking a gander at Julian, Rachel handed a piece of document to an officer right before his eyes. "This is Jessica Egerton's application for withdrawal. She has dropped the charges for the previous case and hopes that you guys will release a statement to clear Justin's name."

"We will. Even without this application, we've already gotten to the bottom of it. This has nothing to do with Justin Burton."

"Thanks."

"Rae, what's the meaning of this?" Julian's face was beyond grim at this point. "What in the world did Jessica tell you? You've never told me you're also digging into this. Don't tell me your believe in a pathological liar!"

"Julian, let's break up."

"What did you say?" However, just as Julian wanted to say more, the police stopped him. "Mr. Peters, please." Julian clenched his fists, leading the veins in his arms to throb as he fought back all his emotions. "Rae, calm down first. We'll talk after I make things clear with them."

Rachel's nails sank into her palms as she watched Julian being taken away. Moments later, she turned to Justin. "You've long known that Julian was plotting against you."

“Sorry for keeping it from you all this while.”

“Why?” Justin fell silent for a long while before he finally spoke up, his voice laced with hoarseness. “I thought between him and me, you would trust him far more than you would me.”

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 436

Rachel rushed to the investigation bureau as soon as she got the application for withdrawal Jessica had faxed to her, hoping to overturn the verdict on Justin. But midway, she heard Justin would be leaving Riverdale on this day, so she rushed to the airport instead.

What she didn't expect was that Justin long suspected Julian, and he fooled everyone into thinking he was down to nothing when everything was actually according to his plan.

“So you thought you didn't need to tell me because I won't believe you anyway?” “Your number one priority would definitely be Jessica's well-being if something happened to her. So I didn't say anything to you.”

Rachel's deep concern for Jessica would cloud her judgment, leading the situation to probably aggravate. When the incident happened, Justin only suspected it was Julian's doing. But he didn't have any hard evidence that pointed directly toward Julian, so he could only play along. More importantly, Justin had never seen Rachel since the incident, so he couldn't explain to her that he had never done anything to Jessica.

Rachel was pissed. Not that she was mad about Justin but herself. For the longest time, Justin never did any wrong while she was the one who dwelled in the past, presumptuously thinking people never change, either distinctively good or evil.

“Sorry.” Rachel apologized softly, taking Justin aback. “You didn't do anything wrong. I should be the one apologizing.”

“No, you're right. I wouldn't believe you even if you told me in the first place.” Rachel looked up, taking pains to utter her next words. “I have indeed placed too much trust in Julian. So much so that I nearly became an accomplice and railroaded you, making you the subject of public criticism.”

“Don’t worry about it. I’m okay, aren’t I?” “Rae, I’m really okay,” Justin explained with utter patience. “I won’t leave Charlotte behind and walk away no matter what happens.” He only mentioned Charlotte and not the young woman before his eyes. Meanwhile, flight schedules were still being broadcasted in the airport terminal.

The plane Justin was supposed to board had already landed, but he no longer needed to leave anymore, and thus, he chucked the boarding pass in his hand into a trash can. “Let’s go.” He smiled at Rachel.

As Rachel drove, she was the one who sent Justin back to summer villa, where Frankie had long been awaiting. “You’re the one who told Rae everything?”

“I didn’t tell her anything, I swear.” Frankie hurriedly defended himself. “Oh? You didn’t say anything?” Frankie chuckled awkwardly in response. “I might or might not have accidentally let slip about Old Mr. Burton when I bumped into Miss Carter.”

Justin frowned upon hearing so, and Rachel jumped in. “It’s not Frankie’s fault. Jolly was the one who told me your grandfather’s death was suspicious. So I sent someone to Montenegro to look for your aunt.” “You had someone look for my aunt?” Justin looked surprisingly at Rachel. “What did she say?”

“Nothing.” She shook her head. “She’s in a poor mental state right now. The guys at the sanatorium said she would never answer Julian’s calls, so I suspect some irreconcilable conflict must’ve happened between the two. But I told them to stop digging when she’s in that state.”

“Thanks,” said Justin after a moment of silence.

“What for?” “For stopping your investigation. Aunt Sue’s getting on in years. Whatever mistakes she had made in the past, since she has been sent abroad, let her spend the rest of her life peacefully there.”

“You’re not going to prosecute your grandfather’s cause of death?” Justin took a deep breath in response because it seemed to be a difficult decision for him.

Aside, Frankie couldn’t help butting in. “President Hudson. The dead cannot rise from the grave. I’m sure all of us already have a good idea of the truth. Prosecuting will only implicate even more loved ones. Also, about Old Mr. Burton being given slow-acting poison, Dr. Peters was a representative. Do you think how likely it was that he hadn’t noticed it?”

“What will you do if this really has to do with Julian?” Rachel asked. Justin raised his eyes. “It’s already in the past. Grandpa died of natural causes.”

His decision stumped Rachel for a second. It wasn’t that something had passed but that it had to pass. Rachel still had to rush downtown, so she didn’t linger in the summer villa

for long. "I'll see you out." Justin walked out with Rachel. "Are you in a hurry to get to the investigation bureau?"

"No, Jess didn't suffer any real injuries, so this can't be considered a criminal case. Hence, the worst-case scenario is probably that Julian will be released after a few days of detention." Justin shook his head, disagreeing. "Someone will take the blame for him."

Rachel was taken aback. "Really?" "The guy who spiked my drink, Stefan, used to be a senior executive in Burton Group. You probably don't know him, but before you entered Burton Group, he was already fired for misappropriating the company's public fund to pay for his gambling debts. Because he holds a grudge against me, it wouldn't be difficult for Julian to use this to pull Stefan to his side."

Rachel didn't know how to feel about this. Justin knew everything, and if he wanted it, he could completely prosecute this matter to the end. There would be nothing Julian could do no matter how many Stefans he rallied, and yet Justin still spared his cousin.

"Why are you still willing to spare Julian when he has already schemed against you to this extent?" "He's my cousin, and everyone makes mistakes. He's still young: he still has a long way to go."

If this had happened six years ago, he definitely wouldn't have tolerated such betrayal. But six years had passed, and he had also made some irreversible mistakes. So, putting himself in Julian's shoes, he would hope his cousin could turn around soon.

While leaving summer villa, Rachel got an international call. "It's me." A young woman's voice came from the other end of the line, somewhat hoarse, no longer assertive. "How did it go? Is he out yet?"

"He's out. Everything's sorted out now. Don't worry; I've already handed your application for withdrawal to the investigation bureau."

It was one thing to discover Sue had noticed Julian was suspicious, but what really led Rachel to the truth was that she managed to get hold of Jessica's father through Janice.

Rachel explained Hans' cause of death to him. in detail, and as soon as Jessica landed home, Jessica's father picked her up at the airport, clearing everything up..

Rachel waited for three days before she finally received Jessica's faxed application of withdrawal as well as an email stating how Julian had lied to her. Who'd have thought Julian actually told Jessica Justin was the one who killed her brother? For that, Julian even made up a story, lying to this young woman who already held a grudge against Justin. I'm really sorry for causing you guys trouble, Rachel."

“No need to apologize. You didn’t know the truth. If anything, I’m the one to be blamed for over worrying and not telling you the truth sooner. Everything’s fine now that it’s all cleared up.”

“Don’t worry; my dad and I will keep it a secret.” “I’ll give you a proper tour the next time you come to Riverdale.” “I plan to go to college in Riverdale and also pay my brother a visit while I’m at it.”

“Sounds like a plan.”

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 437

Rachel felt much more relaxed after hanging up the call. Hans was a sunny and gentle guy, so his beloved sister naturally wouldn’t be wicked. She was just led down the wrong path. Everybody made mistakes; the most important thing was to do something about it.

At that, Julian came to Rachel’s mind, and her eyes narrowed. The investigation bureau promptly released a statement announcing Justin’s innocence and the case’s reinvestigation.

But even so, public opinion still didn’t alleviate it, as everyone only wanted to believe in what they believed. ‘That’s what money and capital get you. He sure has a strong backer.’ This is definitely a government and business collusion. Poor girl.’ ‘But I heard he’s been kicked out of Burton Group’

‘Please, that’s only for show.’ And many more shared similar opinions. Rachel had thought things wouldn’t move in the direction Justin had predicted. But who’d have thought just after two days, Julian was released unscathed while Stefan became the scapegoat and bagged all the charges? The entire time, neither the news nor public opinion mentioned Julian, the true prosecutor behind the scenes.

“Julian won’t answer my calls. His assistant said he’s in a meeting. A meeting that lasts for a whole day? As if anyone would believe it! I’m now starting to believe all that you said is true, Chris.”

Inside the Carter Residence’s living room, Jolly put her phone down and slumped onto the couch. “Why is he doing this? I mean, you’ve already agreed to date him. Is it necessary for him to do all this and destroy Justin?”

"I don't know.' Rachel couldn't give her an answer either. Sitting on the side, Richard was reading the newspaper, and he took a gander at the two young ladies. "What's so baffling about it? Not everyone has the will to resist the temptation of power and money, what more when he obtained the entire Burton Group overnight. It's normal for someone to get complacent when everyone starts sucking up to them."

Owning Burton Group meant having absolute discourse. Who in the entire Riverdale wouldn't want to kiss Julian's a\*s? "Well, be complacent all he wants, but why does he have to destroy Justin?" Jolly was still baffled.

"Own it once, and you'll be afraid of losing it. I won't be surprised that many of Burton Group's founding members still support Justin." Richard flipped his newspaper to the next page, speaking confidently of the ever-changing situation in the business world. "This is the threat Julian senses."

Only when Justin disappeared from Riverdale for good could Julian be Burton Group's number one shareholder with peace of mind. The whole time, he hadn't planned on destroying Justin just to get Rachel or any similar reason for the fact. The proportion of this reason compared to the man's ambition. was far less significant.

"He's not the Julian Peters you guys know anymore. Better watch your backs, cautioned Richard after taking a gander at the two young ladies.

Jolly frowned upon hearing so. "He can't actually turn into a monster, can he? Anyhow, I'm going to ask him what exactly is up with him. If it's really his doing, then he has to admit his mistakes and apologize. Am I right, or am I right, Chris?"

"Westhill Racecourse has a grand opening tomorrow. Julian will probably show up, said Rachel thoughtfully. 'Burton Group should be on the guest list,' Richard added Jolly instantly decided. "We have to go!"

"We should." Rachel nodded in agreement. No matter what others said and what she dug up, she still wanted to hear the truth from Julian. Also, she had something to return to him. As predicted, Rachel found Julian during Westhill Racecourse's grand opening.

He was dressed in a light gray tailored suit with gold-framed glasses, talking away with other businessmen, no sign of ever being detained.

"It's been a while, President Hudson." Someone beside Julian greeted Rachel enthusiastically upon seeing her. "I was just asking President Peters. I heard a celebration is on its way. You have to invite us to your wedding reception."

Rachel smiled in response. "You flatter me, Mr.. Howard. But my girl is already in kindergarten, and my wedding reception was held ages ago." At that, everyone exchanged glances while Julian turned somewhat grim..

“Um, I, uh, I think I see a friend. Please excuse me. I have to go and say hi.”

“Me too, me too.” The group dispersed at that. As shrewd as everyone was, they could naturally tell Rachel and Julian’s relationship had raised a red flag. Thus, they began whispering after moving far away. “Let’s talk somewhere else.” Rachel shot at glance toward the patio, leading Julian to pull a forceful smile. “Sure.”

It was already late autumn, and the maple leaves in the racecourse’s avenue were scattered all over the place, giving the path a blazing effect from afar.

The chilling breeze constantly blew at them on the patio, sending hints of coolness beneath their outfits. A server came offering a blanket. “It’s cold out here. We’ve prepared some blankets. You may wrap it around you, miss.” “Allow me.” Julian took the blanket from the server.

However, just as he wanted to drape it over Rachel, she stopped him. “It’s fine. I’m not cold.” Meanwhile, many in the banquet hall had their eyes on the two behind the glass door.

Julian put the blanket down. “Rae, I know there’s a misunderstanding between us. I swear I hadn’t answered your calls lately because I was swamped with things in Burton Group, and also, I’ve been thinking about how to explain it all to you. A lot of people are watching, and they all know we’re seeing each other. Please don’t make me look bad.”

Rachel furrowed her brows upon hearing so, trying her best to sound calm. “You think I’m making you look bad? Since when do you care what other people think?”

“Things are different now. I’m Burton Group’s shareholder. These sorts of interactions are necessary.” Rachel finally truly understood all Richard had said the day before when she saw how supercilious Julian was behaving. Money and power could change a person so quickly that they wouldn’t even realize it.

“Julian, we’re not right for each other. With or without all of this, it’ll never work out between us. I’m grateful for all that you’ve done for me in the past, and I will continue to think so. But you can’t force love.” With that, Rachel pulled out the ring she had brought with her. “I should return this to you.”

Julian didn’t look surprised, perhaps he had long expected it. But he didn’t take the ring from her. “The investigation bureau had gotten to the bottom of Jessica’s case. It’s Stefan Sawyer’s doing. I had nothing to do with it. Do you still want to break up with me?”

“This isn’t the only reason I’m breaking up with you.” Rachel clenched the ring. “Seeing that we’ve been friends for years, be honest with me. Have you ever regretted doing all this?”

"I don't know what you're talking about," Julian blurted matter-of-factly without hesitation, leading Rachel to clench her fists. "Do you know why your cousin would suspect you so early on?"

"He's paranoid, of course. He's always been like that." "No. It's because Old Mr. Burton's autopsy report states he has slow-acting poison in his system."

Julian's gaze sharpened in response while Rachel continued, "Do you really think he's oblivious? Despite so, he still spared you. He never prosecuted the matter back then, and he's not planning to in the future either."

With that, Rachel put the ring on the iron table, making a soft 'clink' as it drowned in the sound of the breeze. "You're really no longer the Julian I knew. In that case, I wish you all the best, and most importantly, good luck."

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 438

As Rachel returned to the banquet hall, Julian's voice came from behind. "Rachel, the reason you don't want to be with me isn't because of everything I've done but because Justin has never left your heart. Have you forgotten how he hurt you in the past?"

"Do you think what you're doing now is any different from what he had done back then?" Rachel asked without looking back at him. Alas, those blinded by greed always had their heads in the cloud.

Later, the chauffeur drove Jolly and Rachel away from the grand opening, and during the ride, Jolly sighed. "How has Julian ended up like this?" "People change." Rachel had her gaze out the window, already able to accept all the changes openly.

Perhaps everything changed from when Julian realized he would have the entire Burton Group in his hands, and it was also then that they no longer belonged in the same world. "Chris, are you sad?" Jolly asked out of the blue.

"I am," Rachel answered. How could she not be? In the past, she had thought even if she and Julian didn't end up marrying, they would still be comrades and even family.

At that, Jolly held Rachel's hand. "I don't know how I can comfort you, but I was sad too when my bestie and I went our separate ways. My mom once told me that everyone comes to this world alone and will also leave alone. Be it a friend or a loved one, they

can only accompany you for a part of this journey called life. The distance might vary, but as long as the journey together is a merry one, then it's worth it."

"Yeah." Rachel nodded in agreement. No matter what Julian did or would do, it couldn't eradicate how well he had treated her in the past. That, she was well aware of. "Let's talk about something else." Jolly smiled.. "Victor and Gloria are getting engaged, aren't they? Have they picked out the engagement venue?"

"Not yet. It's still early. Gloria can only come back from her nationwide tour by the end of the year." "Well, it's not that early; only a few months left. Also, didn't you tell Victor to prepare a proposal?"

"That's the plan." Rachel took a deep breath and forced a smile. "So many things have happened lately that I've thrown it to the back of my mind."

It had been a while since Gloria left Riverdale. When Justin was caught in trouble, her manager did everything to hide it from her. Later, Gloria and her manager had a terrible fight about this matter after it was over, and even now, she was still upset.

Judging from this situation, Victor deemed it a good time to propose. Later in the evening, Rachel ran into Justin at the school gates when she came to pick the kids up.

"Huh? It's not a Friday today." Rachel checked her phone in surprise. "What are you doing here?" "Frankie said you're attending an event at Westhill. I thought you'd be occupied."

"Well, as occupied as I am, I can't just leave the kids in school, can I?" At that, Rachel coughed with a guilty conscience. "Even then, it's sporadic. Also, their homeroom teacher's Victor. It won't be too much of a problem for him to take care of the kids every now and then, either."

Justin smiled in response. "I'm not blaming you in any way. I don't have anything better to do, so if you ever can't make it in time, I can come and take them for a snack or something before sending them back to your place at night."

"But won't it be too much trouble for you?" So be it if it was just Charlotte, but there was Samuel as well, and the two had no relations at all. "No trouble at all. I have all the time in the world."

At that, a thought came to Rachel. "I heard from Frankie that the chairman of Riverdale Charity Foundation came to see you in person, and a few times at that. But you turned him down every time?"

Justin was an influential figure in Riverdale to some extent, so he had always served as the charity foundation's vice-chairman. However, because of the Jessica scandal, Riverdale Charity Foundation kicked him out. Now that the truth had come to light, the

chairman came to apologize in person, which Rachel thought was already considerably sincere.

Too bad Justin kept his doors shut. "I should just be a loafer. Besides, my position in the charity foundation was just nominal; I barely did anything. So why not let someone else take on the role."

"Honestly, I think you can think it over. I heard the Riverdale Charity Foundation manages all of Riverdale's various charity foundations, and it can benefit many. I even heard they built a school for a group of deaf and mute children last year."

Justin froze for a split second. What was he reminded of? Only he knew. Just then, Victor brought Charlotte and her classmates out, bringing their conversation to a halt.

Meanwhile, Charlotte was rendered flabbergasted when she found both her parents had come. "Mommy, Daddy, why have both of you come?" The little girl threw herself at the pair after taking a long time to come to her senses.

"Are you not happy that we've come to pick you two up?" Rachel ruffled Charlotte's hair. "Of course, I'm happy! Mommy, I got a gold star today!"

"Really?" This time, it was Rachel's turn to be surprised. With how mischievous Charlotte was, she hadn't gotten a single gold star despite having attended school for about half a year. Samuel, on the other hand, would bring one home nearly every day. There was even a box at home dedicated to his gold stars.

"Really, Mommy! Look." With that, the little girl pulled out a crinkly gold star from her bag, leading Rachel and Justin to exchange a glance, shocked. Rachel picked her daughter up at once and praised, "That's wonderful, Charlotte! Let's make you sticky ribs for dinner."

Charlotte was Justin's biological daughter, after all, so he knew her personality far better than Rachel did. Thus, he turned to Victor. "Did a teacher really give her the star?"

"Not really, but she did win it on her own merit," Victor answered helplessly. Stumped, Rachel asked, "What do you mean?" "Charlotte won the bet with Zack in the afternoon during gym class, so Zack gave her his only gold star of the week," Samuel explained. "Won it from a bet?" Rachel's eyes widened. "She can do that, Victor?"

"We encourage the kids to use their gold stars as an exchange between themselves however they want. Provided that it's not obtained through violence or force. You can see it as an early form of asset management for the kids."

"Mommy, have I done wrong?" Charlotte rested her head on Rachel's shoulder. "I didn't snatch the gold star. He gave it to me." Helpless, Rachel asked, "Then can I know what bet you've made with Zack?"

Charlotte giggled at that, announcing righteously, “I bet him our arts and crafts teacher’s panties are red, but he insists it’s black. I won!” In an instant, Rachel’s as well as the surrounding parents’ countenances became awful after Charlotte revealed what happened.

The arts and crafts teacher was a new intern, and she happened to be standing behind Victor, helping to escort the kids out. Immediately after hearing Charlotte’s words, blood drained from her face as she stared at Rachel and the gang for quite some time before running away in tears.

Oh, how difficult children could get at times. Alas, the hardship of being a teacher. Meanwhile, Rachel was mortified, and she turned to Justin. “Well, we’re not going anywhere now. I have to bring Charlotte to her teacher and apologize.”

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 439

“Why are you crying, Miss Molly?” In the teacher’s office, Charlotte stood in front of the arts and crafts teacher’s desk with her hands behind her back, blinking her big, gorgeous eyes. ‘Please don’t cry anymore.’

“I’m not crying.” Molly faced away and wiped her tears away, telling herself to be strong. However, she still couldn’t stop her tears from falling like pearls of a broken string. Meanwhile, Rachel stood outside. She could feel the teacher’s distress even just looking through the window.

The young woman, who had just graduated, confidently thought she would be facing a bunch of angels when lo and behold, reality sent her little devils, torturing her to burnout every day. Who could take that?!

“Miss Molly, look. This looks pretty, doesn’t it?” “What?” Molly turned around to find Charlotte swinging a red string with a tiny ornament hung on one end in front of her. to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

The twilight rays shone in from the windows, enveloping the child with a soft purplish-orange filter, making her smile even brighter. “Can I tell you a secret, Miss Molly?”

“What is it?”

“Mr. Clyde said he likes girls who like to smile.” Molly’s face flushed crimson at the comment, and she became incoherent. “Why are you telling me this? What does his preference for girls have to do with me?”

“Mr. Clyde’s single.” “What does that have to do with me?” Molly’s face turned even redder, and it took her quite some time to finally ask, “Really?”

“Of course, it is. I’ve been here longer than you have. And Mr. Clyde and my uncle are really good friends. My uncle even said he’d introduce some girls to Mr. Clyde.”

“He can’t!” blustered Molly, wide-eyed, when she had been crying her eyes out a second ago. Immediately realizing she had reacted out of proportion, she cleared her throat awkwardly and said, “I mean, the school is where we teach and learn. It’s not right to think about dating.”

“I think so too. I’ll tell my uncle some other time.” “Forget about that. Do it today.” At that, Charlotte blinked at Molly. “Miss Molly, don’t cry anymore, okay?”

“What for? I wasn’t crying at all. I’m a teacher.” “Hehe. Charlotte pulled a lollipop out of her pocket and put it on the desk. “Here, Miss Molly, this is for you. We’re good friends now.” Following that, the two chatted a little while more.

Meanwhile, Rachel watched the entire thing from behind the door and couldn’t help feeling impressed. The little girl hadn’t said a word of apology, and yet she managed to coax this interning arts and crafts teacher. What a talent!

Aside, Victor beamed. “What did I tell you? You don’t need to worry. This little rascal might be naughty, but she looks adorable as well. Also, she can manage to sweet-talk her way out of just about any trouble she has caused. Forget about reprimanding her; her teachers’ hearts would melt as soon as she smiled.”

“But she still has to apologize for her screwups. “Don’t worry about it. Newcomers are a little more fragile, so it’s normal that they cry from the students’ bullies. She’ll toughen up in about half a year.”

While the two were chatting, Molly had brought Charlotte out. “Alright, I’ll let you take Charlotte home. I’ll leave after I’m done with my lesson plan.” “Forget about that. I’ll drive you home. I have something to talk to you about in the car,” said Rachel after checking the time.

“What is it?” “Your thing with Gloria.” Victor was taken aback for a second. While Victor was packing up, Rachel took Charlotte to look for Samuel, only to see Justin and the boy sitting on the swing in the playground. From afar, they actually looked like a genuine pair of father and son.

Children's swing was far too low for Justin, for his legs were nearly stretched straight out in front of him as he swung at a barely noticeable. degree.

"My mommy seemed to have broken up with Mr. Peters, Samuel said, to which Justin hummed in response, unfazed. Rachel might look soft, but she was actually really opinionated, and he knew she had already thought long and hard when she told Julian they were over at the airport..

"Shouldn't you be feeling happy? I mean, your chance is back." Samuel sized Justin up with his head tilted. "Do you not like my mommy anymore?" Justin shook his head in reply. "I'm sure it's anybody's chance but mine."

"How could you be so depressed?" Samuel looked at the man with disdain. "What happened to your ambitions?" Justin looked at him with a chuckle. "You know what depressed means? You have a large. vocabulary."

"I'm gifted. This is nothing for me." "I used to think so too, and I got conceited." Justin suddenly felt somewhat remorseful as he looked at the twilight afar.

Before he turned thirty, he was high-spirited and a legend in Riverdale. Everyone would say he was young and promising, but only he knew a price had to be paid if some things were obtained too early on.

After being despotic and obstinate for years, he ended up with nothing but his beloved and family gone one after another. "You're too despondent." Samuel shook his head as he looked at Justin. Could one blame a child for not understanding a middle-aged man's frustrations?

"Daddy!" Charlotte's exclamation came from behind the two gents, leading them to turn their heads around. Rachel walked toward them, with Charlotte waving excitedly in her arms at them while the little girl's sweet, childish voice echoed in the air. "I want to eat sticky ribs."

Justin fell into a trance, for he thought he was experiencing a déjà vu like he had seen this scene in a long-lost dream. Suddenly, he grabbed the swing's rope, protected Samuel as the boy hopped off the swing, and extended his arm to Samuel. "C'mon, we'll have sticky ribs for dinner."

"Are you cooking?"

"Yes, I am. We're eating at yours." He had come to realize one thing lately. Though it was impossible for Rachel to remarry him, and the possibility of them ever getting back together was next to none, he didn't feel comfortable leaving her in any other man's car.

Just how many other men were truly reliable if even Julian could become unrecognizable and filled with nothing but schemes? So he decided no matter what

would happen in the future, he would only do what was within his limits and take care of them as best as he could. At least make sure nothing like this would happen again while he was around.

“How did you get here? Do you want me to give you a ride?” Rachel asked when they arrived at the school gates. “I took the cab. I’ll pass up your offer. Didn’t they say they wanted to eat sticky ribs? I’ll take a detour to the supermarket. You guys head back first.”

Being a quick-witted child, Charlotte hurriedly asked, “What? You came in a cab, Daddy? Can you carry all the groceries by yourself?”

“With some difficulty, no?” Rachel chimed in. “How about this? Since Victor’s joining us for dinner, I’ll ask Jolly to come as well. The more, the merrier. I should go to the supermarket with you when we’re getting a couple more things.”

“Sounds like a plan.” After getting into Rachel’s car, Justin shifted his gaze out the window, taking a plain gander somewhere. If Rachel had taken a second look, she would’ve discovered Justin’s Mercedes-Benz parked in the temporary parking space across the road. His parking meter had expired at this point, and he was given a ticket. Standing next to his car was a parking enforcement officer. If he didn’t move his car away in the next twenty minutes, it would end up towed away.

However, to Justin, heading to the supermarket with Rachel in one car was more important right then.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 440

Victor ended up being asked by Rachel to head straight to her home and set the table, as well as calling Jolly and the others, telling them to come home as soon as possible. While riding his electric motorcycle, a thought suddenly hit Victor. “Wait a minute. Didn’t Rachel say to give me a ride? How did it end up being Justin? Would he not have driven if he came to pick the kids up?!”

After figuring that out, Victor tightened his grip on the handlebar as indignation enveloped his face beneath the helmet. Justin Burton, you shameless f\*cking son of a b\*tch! How dare you scheme against Rachel again!

Meanwhile, Rachel and Justin had already arrived at the supermarket. While Justin pushed the shopping trolley, the kids ran far ahead. Rachel, on the other hand, urged

the kids to slow down and don't run off too far while getting what they needed from the racks.

"Laundry detergent, shampoo... Rachel listed off what they were running out of at home on the top of her head. "We're running out of hand soap too. I think. Have you used this before?" She suddenly turned to Justin as she grabbed a bottle of hand soap from the rack. Justin shook his head in reply. "I don't normally pay attention to these things."

"Touché. You've never paid attention to these kinds of details anyway." With that, Rachel grabbed a different bottle of hand soap and compared it to the one already in her hand.

Justin never really cared about the trifling things in life because to him, it was fine as long as it worked. Normally, his assistant or housekeeper would've had everything sorted, so he would never take notice. However, seeing how serious Rachel looked right then, he suddenly had an unusual interest in these details.

"Is there a difference between these two?" he asked. "Of course. The scent is the obvious difference. Then, there's the nozzle. This one comes out as foam, and this one comes out as just liquid. The foam ones also come out differently with different nozzles."

"I'm sorry, what?" Rachel's eyes lit up as a thought crossed her mind. "Let me show you something fun." She put the two bottles back onto the rack and grabbed a sample bottle. "This is Charlotte's favorite. Can you guess why?"

Justin took a gander and found a flower printed on the outer packaging. "Because of the scent?" "Well, you're half right. Give me your hand." Rachel froze for a split second right after saying so, regretting her words. Justin, on the other hand, was unruffled, extending his hand to Rachel.

After pausing for a couple of seconds, Rachel pumped the hand soap once against his palm, and out came pink flower-shaped foam, looking dainty and cute. "This is the reason Charlotte likes this one. Looks good, doesn't it?"

"Does it?"

"Does it not?" Rachel shot Justin a glance. "How can you not react to that?" She was in utter awe when she first discovered foam pump nozzles could form shapes, but who'd have thought Justin was unfazed?!

Then, she remembered his old-fashioned, dispassionate, unromantic temperament, and she didn't dwell on it any longer, shaking her head. "Why am I telling you all this..."

Just then, Charlotte's voice came from the racks a little further away. "Mommy, help me take this chocolate! I can't reach it!" "Coming." Rachel put the bottle of hand soap back

at once and made her way to her baby girl, leaving Justin standing there alone with his palm still upright as the edges of the flower- shaped foam slowly popped away.

A hint of warmth laced Justin's eyes as he glanced at the rack. Then, he placed a bottle of Charlotte's favorite hand soap into the shopping trolley before making his way to the two ladies.

When they arrived at the seafood section, Rachel did a mental calculation on their dinner guests. "Two kids, five adults. We're going to have to double the ingredients. What else are you making apart from sticky ribs?" "How about grilled turbot and baked scallops with cheese? I can just chuck them into the oven."

"You've been spending your time experimenting with recipes, haven't you?" Rachel took a surprising glance at Justin. Though she had already seen how much Justin's cooking had improved, she didn't expect him to even know how to make these now, saying it like it was normal for him. "We should get a few cuts of steak," he added. "There's quite a few of us. The steak can come out sooner."

"Sure." Though they had only been shopping for a while, their trolley was already nearly filled to the brim.

"I was thinking of getting some flowers. But it looks like we're going to have trouble carrying it," mumbled Rachel as her gaze landed on the bucket of white roses in the fresh flower stand.

"You should get a bouquet, miss. These white roses had just flown in today. They're at their freshest." The middle-aged lady staff recommended it strongly. "You can keep it in a vase for a long time. It'll look pretty too, if you turn it into dried flowers."

Just as Rachel wanted to turn her down, Justin's voice came from behind. "We'll take a bouquet." "No, don't." Rachel hurriedly stopped him. "Buy some if you like it. It's not like they're some kind of rare treasure."

"The thing is, neither Jolly nor I have the time to care for them. We might just leave it as it is and only remembers a year later." At that, Rachel smiled. "Thanks, but really, no."

While speaking, she caught Samuel grabbing a toy from the rack out of the corner of her eyes, and she went over to him at once. "Why do you want to buy another Optimus Prime, Samuel? There's no more space for you to put another one in your room. Have you forgotten what you've promised me?"

Though the boy was far more precocious than the others his age, he surprisingly shared an obsession for Optimus Prime like the other boys. He had hundreds of the figurines alone at home. "This one's different. Samuel attempted to justify. However, Rachel still shook her head.

“Okay.” The boy put it back with acquiescence. “Thank you, Samuel. We had a deal-you can only get one every Christmas. You have to keep your word.”

“Mm, I’ll keep my word.” “Keep an eye on Charlotte for me, please? I’m going there for a bit.” At that, Rachel turned to the produce section. Meanwhile, Justin glanced at the crestfallen boy, took the Optimus Prime Samuel had his eyes on, and hid it beneath all the food in the shopping trolley.

Samuel’s eyes lit up upon seeing so, and he tugged on Justin’s hand, whispering, “I now pronounce us friends.” “Haven’t we always been friends?” “Not for some time in the past.”

“And when was that?”

“When you made my mommy sad.”

The revelation stumped Justin. “When?” “When we were in Montenegro, and also when we just returned to Riverdale. I can often find Mommy drinking alcohol by the balcony alone when I come out for a pee at night. I can tell she’s sad.”

With that, Justin took a gander at Rachel, who was focused on picking out vegetables. Her long, raven-black hair was hung loosely around her shoulders, making her look demure and gentle from afar. “Is your mom happy now?”

Samuel nodded gravely. “She is. I can feel it.” Though he didn’t know when it started, he could tell his mom wasn’t forcing her smiles like she would back when they were in Montenegro. “Samuel, you have to tell me at once if anything happens, alright?”

“Alright.”

“Let me ask you this, then. What is your mom’s favorite kind of flower?”

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 441

The sky was turning dark by the time they arrived home from the supermarket. Jolly, Leroy, and Victor were already inside the house, playing poker in the living room out of sheer boredom.

When they saw Justin, Jolly waved at him and greeted, "Leroy and I skipped his movie's appreciation dinner and rushed over when we heard that you'll be cooking tonight. Are we your friends, or are we your friends, eh?"

Ever since Justin saved Leroy, Jolly's impression of the man had changed entirely, becoming all chummy with him as though wishing they could have met sooner.

Meanwhile, Justin was carrying all their shopping in his hands. "If you're a friend, you'd come and help me with the groceries."

"I'm a girl, though. Girls are all weak and frail. I won't be able to carry them." Having said that, Jolly still went over and helped him out while taking a look at the things they got, mumbling, "Let me see what we're having tonight. Turbot? Not bad, I like it! Huh?" After moving the groceries in the entryway to the kitchen, Jolly looked up to find Rachel entering empty-handed, leading her to stand with her arms akimbo. "Do you have to be so discriminatory, Justin? How dare you twist me around your little finger?"

"Twist whose finger?" Rachel was at a complete loss, for she hadn't a clue what happened when she just arrived after parking her car.

"Nothing, Justin answered plainly. "Miss Carter voluntarily brought the groceries into the kitchen and even offered to help wash the vegetables, am I right?"

Jolly rolled her eyes at Justin after being screwed big time. "Pfft, I didn't promise anything. I'm already pooped from a full day's work, so I'm not going to do anything but eat. Whoever wants to help out in the kitchen, feel free to be my guest."

With that, she dashed to the couch, looking as though she feared she'd be dragged into the kitchen. "Come on, guys. Where were we? F\*ck, which one of you stole my cards? Where's my King?"

"What King?" Victor rolled his eyes at her. "Don't go around slandering people. All of them are with me." Jolly shrugged at that. "Alright, my mistake.. Well, where were we?"

Beside them, Leroy couldn't stop chuckling to himself. Victor was an idiot. With just a couple of words, he already revealed what he had. Needless to say, they didn't need to waste much brain juice. playing poker with him.

Meanwhile, Rachel helped to prepare the ingredients in the kitchen. On the other hand, Samuel grabbed onto the edge of the kitchen island and popped half of his head out while looking at Justin.

In response, Justin looked behind his shoulder at Rachel, pulled out the Optimus Prime action. figure when she wasn't watching, and hurriedly handed it to the boy.

“What’s your plan with these tomatoes?” Rachel suddenly turned around with a tomato in her hand. ‘Soup? Roasted?’

Samuel reacted super quickly, squatting down behind the island as soon as Rachel turned around. He thanked his kid-sized body, or Rachel would’ve likely caught him.

The things I have to do to get an Optimus Prime action figure. Justin, on the other hand, was unfazed. “Make borscht with it. It’ll help to cleanse the palate.” “Okay, I’ll prepare some carrots and celery then.”

It wasn’t until Rachel turned back around that Justin tapped on the island top. Samuel understood instantly and crawled out of the kitchen, pressing his body against the island as he made his way into his room.

In actuality, the only blindspot was inside the kitchen. Anybody in the living room would’ve seen everything.

“Hey, check out the sneaky little thief.” Jolly gave Leroy a nudge with her elbow. Leroy looked over reflexively and found Samuel crawling into his room with his beloved Optimus Prime in his arms, looking like a thief.

Unbeknownst to Leroy, while his eyes were focused on the boy, Jolly blatantly took one of the cards they had thrown out onto the coffee table and shoved it into her deck. Victor was rendered gobsmacked. What the heck?!

“Hey, it’s your turn,” Jolly reminded Leroy. “I’ve already thrown an Ace out. Isn’t it Victor’s turn?” “I’ll pass.” Victor shook his head with a complicated gaze. Sure enough, Jolly shamelessly threw the card out. “Joker.”

“Hold up.” Leroy was stumped for a second. “How is there another colored Joker? Wasn’t it thrown out earlier?”

“What are you talking about? It has always been with me.” “Don’t mess with me. Victor threw the colored Joker out, didn’t you, Victor?”

However, Victor said nothing, only watching the drama. He finally had it all figured out. It was no wonder he had been stifled for a good few rounds. These two were definitely working as a team to cheat him.

“Dude, say something!” Leroy got anxious. However, it only got Victor to roll his eyes at him. “I didn’t see you saying anything when she stole my cards.”

Leroy instantly turned awkward upon being exposed, but Jolly took her shamelessness to the extreme. “You two pass, right? A pair of three from me it is! Game over! Come on, give me the money, both of you!” Jolly shot right up, forcing the guys to pay up..

The guys were originally pretty glum, but Leroy suddenly said, "You want us to pay up? Fine. Let's play another round. Are you going to join us?"

With that, he exchanged a glance with Victor, who had his arms crossed in front of his chest. As though the two were telepathically linked, Victor got what Leroy was thinking in an instant. Sensing something wasn't right, Jolly immediately shoved the cards away. 'Let's stop at this. We've played quite a few rounds.'

As she tried to make a run, Leroy grabbed her. "You're going to run away as soon as you win, huh? That's terrible sportsmanship. Sit down. We're playing a couple more rounds."

"Me? Terrible sportsmanship? Excuse me! You guys are the ones with the lousy skills. You guys will continue to lose horribly no matter how many rounds we're playing!" "In that case, just come at me!"

Though there were only three of them in the living room, it sounded like a few tables were playing simultaneously. Just then, Rachel shouted from the kitchen, "I'm not going to stop you guys from playing, but don't make big bets."

She was worried Victor's measly wage wouldn't be enough against the two big spenders, namely Jolly and Leroy.

These two wouldn't even bat an eyelid when they lost a couple of million a night when they gambled in places like Las Vegas. After all, one had her parents supporting her while the other could earn a fortune every day. Someone like Victor, a simple school teacher, couldn't afford to go this far.

Justin saw through her worries at a glance and comforted her by saying, "Don't worry. Judging by how things are looking, Leroy will help Victor to win enough money to buy a good house if Jolly doesn't yield."

"That woman is extremely shrewd, and she'd even go as far as to cheat. As if she would lose." "That's because you're underestimating Leroy."

"Leroy?" Rachel was bewildered. "That guy's an angel! He's just pissed off right now and is deliberately messing with Jolly. As if he'd really go against her."

"Trust me, Rae. He's no angel. Want to bet? If he wants to, he can decide who wins the game. Not only that, he's able to determine the amount of money won or lost on the table for each person."

It sounded so absurd to Rachel that she thought Justin was only joking. At that, she rolled her eyes at him. "Why don't you just say he's the king of all gambling kings? As if I'd believe that kind of bullsh\*t."

Justin shifted his gaze to the living room, looking at Leroy's back with profound shrewdness. Jolly's parents must've had a clue about Leroy's background, which was why they were so against their daughter dating him. The question now was when Leroy would finally come clean with Jolly. If he failed to handle it well, Ryan might get another chance at winning Jolly over.

To be honest, Justin couldn't be bothered with gossip like this. However, Jolly was Rachel's best friend. If things didn't go well with her, Rachel would worry for her as well. It seemed that he would have to mull over this seriously.

to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.  
Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 442

Rachel was setting up the dining table after cooking, and she shouted in the direction of the living room, "Stop playing! Come and eat." At this moment, Jolly's eyes were reddened in disbelief. "This doesn't make sense at all! It's impossible! You two are definitely cheating!"

Victor rolled his eyes at her and said, "Don't blatantly accuse people when you can't afford to lose. We're just playing poker as usual, and I didn't do anything. Not everyone will cheat like you."

"You're saying that you're just playing poker as usual when both of you keep winning? I've lost more than ten thousand, you know!"

Jolly's parents had brought her to casinos since she was young, so she had picked up the habit of gambling a little. She was just messing around with them when she cheated earlier. In fact, her skills and luck were always on the good side. Although she had lost a few million within a night before, their bets here were quite small for Victor's sake. If this was in the casino, she had already lost ten million.

Anyway, she just couldn't accept this fact. "This is impossible." "There's nothing impossible on the table." As soon as Jolly heard that, she frowned and started studying Leroy. "Why do I feel like: something is up with you?"

He was stunned for a moment and suddenly felt guilty. "What is up with me?" Then, she went near to his face and said, "Tell me. Did you look at my cards?"

When he heard that, he heaved a sigh of relief. "Do you think I need to look at your cards? I can already guess what you have in hand."

"Whatever. You looked at my cards!" As she said that, she jumped on him, forcing him to admit it. Meanwhile, Victor was busy opposite them as he received the transactions. He reminded Jolly, "You owe me one thousand and two hundred for this round, Jolly. Don't forget it."

"Do you guys still want to eat or not?" From the dining room, Rachel shouted again, "I'm not going to treat you guys well anymore if you: don't stop!"

"Coming!" Jolly behaved herself instantly. "Let me wash my hands first." When Victor noticed the feast on the table, he couldn't help praising Justin despite disliking him all this while. "Wow! It's such a waste not to open a restaurant with such cooking skills."

"It'd be a waste if he did." Following the topic, Rachel asked Justin, "The Riverdale Charity Foundation has already started calling me, saying that they'll be doing the election polling within Riverdale. Do you want to give it a second thought? If you run for the election, the vice president's place would definitely be yours."

In fact, many people hoped that Justin could take the vice president's place within the charity foundation again since the reputation of the foundation's partner companies had been extremely good throughout his term. Not only that, the socially vulnerable groups that garnered attention were getting the most reliable protection and the charity businesses were becoming more influential. This was a win-win situation for society and the companies.

Also, the partner companies still felt guilty for misunderstanding Justin regarding Jessica's matter. No matter if it was the foundation's partner companies or the public, all of them hoped that Justin would take up the position. once more.

While putting food on Charlotte's and Samuel's plates, he said calmly, "I thought you were going to talk about Victor and Gloria."

"What about them? Jolly's words made Justin successfully change the topic. The matter about the charity foundation was put aside. again and Rachel could only swallow the advice that she was going to give him.

Meanwhile, Charlotte answered Jolly excitedly. "Mr. Wade is going to propose to Aunt Gloria!" "Really? Are you finally enlightened, Victor?" Jolly looked at Victor in surprise.

Hearing that, he scratched his head and said, "Gloria's only coming back to Riverdale at the end of the year after she finishes her tour, though. There are still a few months left. Isn't it too early to talk about the proposal?"

"You should propose before it's too late. Why are you waiting until the end of the year?" "It's not like I want it, but she can't come back so soon." "Are you dumb?" Jolly glared at him. "Why can't you look for her if she can't come back?"

Victor didn't think of that at all, and he was stunned by this. Throughout all these years, he had only left Riverdale a few times, let alone traveled abroad.

The others were stunned too. Not only was he unaware, even Rachel didn't think of this alternative too. "That's right, Victor. You can head abroad to find Gloria and propose to her right away. I think this is a good plan."

However, Victor was still hesitant. "I think it's okay. I can wait until she's back. There's no need to rush it, after all."

"Are you serious?" Jolly wanted to punch him in the face. "There are so many young, successful, and handsome guys in her band. Not only that, she has so many avid fans following her around the world. Do you really have no idea, or are you just pretending not to know?"

The fans of musicians like Gloria, who were well-known globally, were typically elites since ordinary people wouldn't have such musical virtuosity. In other words, her admirers were all wealthy people. Victor would be nothing in front of any of them.

"You should know that you're extremely lucky to get such a good woman. You'd better hold onto her tight."

Rachel was afraid that Jolly was being too straightforward and that it would make Victor lose his confidence, so she said to him, "Although her words are harsh, what she said makes sense, Victor." "I still have classes to teach, though."

"Oh, come on. Don't you get to take annual leave?" Jolly rolled her eyes at him. "Or, are you just afraid to go alone?" "Who are you talking about? Who's afraid?" Instantly, his face turned red. It was obvious that he was becoming angry from embarrassment after Jolly spoke his mind.

Only then did Rachel understand that people would normally fear unknown situations. It was especially so for people like Victor, and asking him to go overseas alone was actually quite difficult for him.

"Cut it out. If you're not afraid to go, why wait more than two months until she's back? Aren't you afraid that trouble will come up if you keep delaying it?"

"I'll go then!" Unexpectedly, he was prodded by Jolly. "You said it yourself. She smiled joyously. "Let's not delay any further. I think you should go next Monday. You can take a five-day leave and combine it with the weekend to get a one-week holiday."

"Fine. I'll apply for leave tonight when I head back home." "We're going with you." As Rachel said that, the others were in shock. However, her face showed that she was serious about it. "Why are you all looking at me? Don't you guys want to be a part of such a blessed moment? Also, you guys have nothing to do either. Aren't you free,

Justin? We're talking about Gloria, the person you grew up with. She's going to be taken away by this guy beside you, yet you're not going to be there at the proposal?"

When he heard that, Justin said, "Let me know when the date is confirmed. I'll book the flight tickets." Meanwhile, Jolly looked at Rachel and asked, "That's your little brother's proposal. Aren't you going to be there?"

In fact, Rachel was just worried about Victor's safety if he went overseas alone. Now that she was asked to join, there was no reason for her to say no. As such, she said with a smile, "I'll be there. Of course, these two little guys are going to be there too. They can just skip one week of school, right?"

When Charlotte heard that they were skipping school, she jumped down from the chair while cheering, "Hooray!"

As for Leroy, Jolly just gave him a glance and he immediately understood. He took out his phone instantly. "I'll call my manager now and ask him to decline all my schedules for the next week. I'm going with you guys too."

"Well, it's settled." Jolly raised her wine glass.. "Let's toast this proposal trip! Cheers!"

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 443

That was exactly Jolly's personality; she would do whatever was in her mind in haste. Meanwhile, Rachel would need to plan everything out in detail, such as how they were going to prepare the proposal when they reached there. She wanted to have every tiny detail under control. However, if it were up to Jolly, it would just be a spontaneous trip.

"I've checked Gloria's tour. She'll be performing in Switzerland for three continuous days from next Friday to Sunday. They should be there at least two or three days earlier, which means she'll likely be there by Wednesday. I think we should go to Switzerland on Monday and decorate the place first."

"Don't you think it's too hasty?" Rachel was still having second thoughts. "We still haven't planned anything yet."

"Even if we have a plan, things are always changing. We can just go first and discuss it on the way. It's decided then." Before they ended the meal, Jolly had already called the shots and made the decision. After sending the guests out, Jolly immediately plopped down on the couch and started playing. games.

Rachel couldn't stand looking at her like this. "You should get up and do something since you always say that you want to stay fit."

"What can I do? You can see it for yourself." Jolly didn't even lift her eyelids. "Those three men are even more attentive than the both of us. They cleaned the kitchen after eating and even took the trash out. What more is there for me to do?"

Hearing that, Rachel looked around and realized the trashcan was indeed cleaner than her face. As they were talking, a knock came from the door. "Did someone forget something?" she muttered while walking to open the door.

When she opened the door, a big bouquet of white roses dazzled in front of her eyes. Instantly, she was shocked. Just then, the face of the delivery boy in a helmet appeared from the back of the bouquet. "Hi, is this Miss Hudson? There's a bouquet for you. Please sign here."

"I didn't order any flowers, though." "Please check whether the phone number and the house number are correct." Rachel took the delivery receipt and checked the details on it. After making sure that they were all correct, she nodded in confusion.

"It's yours, then." The delivery boy gave the bouquet of roses to Rachel. "Have a good night."

With the flowers in her arms, she stood at the door as something came to her mind all of a sudden. She was stunned for a moment, but she felt that it wasn't possible. As she thought about it while walking into the house, she could hear Jolly sitting up from the couch. "Where's this from? Who gave you that?"

Before Rachel could answer, she was cut off by the ringing of her phone. She was shocked when she saw the caller ID. Below the unit building, a black Maybach was parked on the opposite, and Julian was leaning against the car door in a beige wind coat.

When he saw Rachel coming out, he quickly stood up straight. With the fall wind blowing and the street lights shining in the dark, the view was seemingly desolated.

She had just met him this morning at the opening banquet of Westhill Racecourse. When she saw him in the morning, he had a superior look which made her feel strange. But now, he looked like he was back to his old self. "Did you send me those flowers?" Rachel broke the silence. "Why are you here all of a sudden?"

Julian was stunned for a moment when he heard that, but he immediately answered her last question, "I was too busy when we met out there in the morning as I had many things to handle. The things I said might have made you uncomfortable, so I'm here to apologize."

Hearing that, she calmed her tone a little. "I was too harsh on you in the morning too. I'm sorry about that. If you really admit your mistake, you should apologize to him. He'll forgive you for sure. We are friends, but he's your brother. You shouldn't be plotting against him."

"I came here to apologize to you, Rachel. This has nothing to do with him." When Rachel heard that, she drew her brows together slightly. Perhaps the matter between Julian and Justin needs some time to be resolved. She couldn't say much as she was just an outsider.

She was already grateful when Julian was willing to admit his mistake. They had been friends for such a long time, after all. Thus, she didn't want to be on bad terms with him more than anyone else. "I'm here to ask you for a favor, Rachel."

"If it's something that I can help with, I'll be more than happy to." "I hope you can veto if Justin proposes Robin's dismissal as the president during the Burton Group shareholders' meeting at the end of the year."

Hearing that, Rachel froze in disbelief. Justin had given her a part of Burton Group's shares to her under Charlotte's name, so she had the right to participate in the shareholders' meeting and vote on the proposals. However, she didn't want to use this entitlement since it was still Justin's right in her eyes.

"Did you come all the way here for this?" She looked at the man in front of her in disbelief. "You're not here to apologize."

"I do feel sorry for you. If you're willing to, I still hope that you can be on the same side with me." As Julian said that, he reached out his hand to Rachel. However, Rachel took a step back immediately, dodging him.

Julian's hand was left hanging in the air for a few moments before he brought his hand to the side of his body. "I'm telling you the truth, and I'm serious about you too. It's just that you don't treat me the same."

"I'm serious about all of my friends." Rachel snapped her brows together. "If what you're doing is right and not some dirty trick, why would I not support you? Do you realize that you're getting carried away, Julian?"

"You're just biased against me, thinking that I can only be a feckless doctor for my whole life." "I've never thought of you that way before. Also, what's so bad about being a doctor?"

"I deserve half of the Burton Family!" Julian raised his voice all of a sudden and clenched his fists beside him. "He's hogged the Burton Group for so many years, and it should be my turn now. From the outside, it looks like he has left the Burton Group, but he still has his henchmen inside the company. What's more, he's going to drag Robin

down from the president's place at any time. He's just doing everything under the table."

"Robin is just not fit to be the Burton Group's president!" Rachel was growing anxious as well. "From the beginning, I have never quite understood something. Why must you support Robin? He's such a cunning person!"

"That's because he listens to me. No matter if he's doing it for the money or power, he'll listen to me and work under my orders as long as I have both."

At this moment, Rachel felt as though she was looking at a stranger when she stood in front of Julian. There had never been a moment like now when she felt like she didn't know this person at all. "Julian, if your happiness needs to be achieved by money and power, I guess we belong to different worlds."

Rachel took a deep breath and felt that her fingers were hurting as she clenched her fists. Saying such resolute words to a good friend whom she had known for many years was like stabbing herself with a knife. "I won't be involved in any matters related to the Burton Group, and I'll renounce my vote. You're on your own now."

This was her second time saying such words. While looking at her from behind, Julian knitted his brows gradually. All in all, he had achieved his purpose.

On the other hand, Rachel saw the bouquet of white roses on the table as soon as she entered the house. She wanted to put it into a vase in the first place, but when she recalled what Julian said, she took the bouquet of roses and put them in the corner of the balcony.

"What happened?" Jolly leaned against the back of the couch with surprise written on her face when she saw Rachel, who had just come back from outside. "Why are you putting the flowers on the balcony? They'll wilt by tomorrow. I thought white roses were your favorite. Who is it from?"

At this moment, Rachel had mixed emotions. 'A stranger. In her eyes, Julian was just a stranger now.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 444

On Sunday afternoon, Rachel and the others took off from the airport. The plane flew across the sky above Riverdale Airport, separating the sky into two and leaving a long white trail.

Victor sat beside Rachel on the plane. When they were taking off, he was frozen in his seat and didn't know where to put his hands.

When she noticed that, Rachel comforted him by saying, "Don't be nervous, you'll be fine. If your ears are feeling uncomfortable, just cover them and exhale."

"I'm not nervous about that." He looked at the clouds outside the window and said softly, "I'm thinking about the possibility of Gloria rejecting me."

"Don't worry." She patted his shoulder and comforted him just like a gentle sister. "I'm sure that Gloria will be very happy if you propose to her."

"Really?" "You'll need to try it yourself to know whether it's real or not. Are you not going to propose to her if I tell you that she won't say yes?" It might hurt his pride if he was rejected, but he would definitely regret it for the rest of his life if they were separated because he didn't take the initiative to propose.

After being encouraged by her words, Victor nodded and replied, "I get it."

Across the aisle, Jolly stuck her head out from Leroy's shoulder and watched the fun. "If Gloria rejects you, just take this trip as our holiday trip together." Hearing that, Victor said, "In that case, I might as well go to school."

Jolly was just being kind by comforting him. Who knew that he would give her a cold shoulder? "Seeing how she fell for you, Gloria sure has weird taste in men." "Alright, don't tease him anymore. He's already nervous enough." Rachel looked at Jolly resignedly. "Shh-"

It was already nighttime when the plane was flying smoothly in the sky, and they still needed another day before they reached Switzerland.

They had five adults and two kids, and they took up all the seats on this flight's business class. Samuel took two seats for himself behind Jolly and Leroy, and he was looking at his tablet attentively. Across the aisle was Justin, who was telling Charlotte a story. 'There are three little pigs...'

At the same time, in Riverdale, the office lights were still on in the Burton Group's building. Julian was using hot water to wash the tea cups on the tea table and was taking his time making tea, whereas Robin sat opposite him.

"If we're sure that Rachel will renounce her vote, then we'll have a better chance of winning. There are still a few oldies in the shareholders' meeting who are still clean. We just need to dig out some dirt on them."

Julian said indifferently, "You should figure it out yourself. I've done all I can to help you." "I know that you've already done a lot to keep my position. There are plenty of fish in the sea; many women out there are gentler and prettier than Rachel. I can introduce some of them to you."

When he heard that, Julian just gave him a blood-curdling stare. Robin immediately shut his mouth and didn't dare to say anything else. Julian didn't want to say anything extra to him. "What else do you need to discuss with me?"

"Right, we need to talk about the charity foundation. Isn't there a vacancy for the vice president of Riverdale Charity Foundation? They kept asking Justin to go back, but he was so arrogant that he didn't even let the president in when he personally went there to offer him the position. Thus, the foundation is going to do an election and do a democratic vote. I've also received the invitation for the election polling."

As he said that, he took out the invitation and put it on the table. "There are three candidates for the election right now. Who do you think we should vote for?"

"I'm not interested in charity. You can decide for yourself." Just as Julian said that, a knock came from the door.

The office's door was actually open, and Julian's assistant entered. "President Peters." Julian didn't even look up and just continued doing what he was doing. "What have you got?"

"I've asked Miss Hudson's assistant, and she told me that Miss Hudson and Miss Carter went overseas for a holiday trip together. Thus, they won't be in the office for now."

"Just the two of them?" "I think Miss Carter's boyfriend went with them too. I noticed that he has declined all of his schedules today. There was a birthday party that he needed to attend, but he wasn't there. He was trending because of this too."

"Any other people?" After a moment of hesitation, his assistant said, "I've checked their flight details, and the President is on the same flight..." She didn't mention the word 'Burton', for everyone knew that the word 'President Burton' was taboo in the Burton Group. In fact, no one dared to mention it in front of Julian.

When he heard this, Julian lowered his head with melancholy written on his face. Robin, who was watching from the side, flinched and didn't dare to say a word either.

At this moment, Julian glimpsed at the invitation from the corners of his eyes and gathered his gaze. "Has the registration for the charity foundation's election closed yet?"

After Robin was stunned for a moment, he answered, "No, it hasn't. The registration will be closed next week." "Prepare for it. We're running for the election."

"Us?" Robin was startled. "Are you saying that you want to run for the vice president position in Riverdale Charity Foundation? That's an unrewarding job. More importantly, most of the people in the foundation are Justin's people. It's really unnecessary to fight with him for this. Even a worm will turn. Just let him torture himself with this..."

"There are no permanent friends in front of interest." With the exquisite little teacup in his hand, Julian said calmly, "After all, there's not supposed to be any positions for him in Riverdale in the first place."

Had it not been for Robin's reminder, Julian almost forgot that Justin's prestige stemmed primarily from his connections and achievements in the Riverdale Charity Foundation. Julian wanted to see who else would support Justin without the foundation.

The flight from Riverdale to Switzerland would take one day and one night. Everyone on the plane was adjusting to jet lag and had already fallen asleep by then.

Rachel wasn't sleeping very soundly because of the bumpy flight when the plane encountered turbulence. As such, she was awakened when she heard cries. She opened her eyes vaguely and saw Justin patting Charlotte's shoulder, putting her to sleep.

Before she slept, she had changed her seat to the one beside Samuel, and she was just an aisle across from Justin. Charlotte was probably having a nightmare; perhaps she wasn't feeling well either, for she whimpered in her sleep.

"Is she okay?" Rachel stuck out her body and asked. Hearing that, Justin waved his hand to her and said softly, "She's fine. She's probably just having a nightmare."

"You didn't sleep at all?"

"I'm not tired." Rachel looked at her watch and saw that it was already 5.00AM. "You won't be able to adjust to jet lag like this when we reach there."

"Don't worry. I'm used to it. I'll nap for a while before we land." After hearing that, only then did Rachel remember that Justin was a workaholic. He was flying here and there around the world within a year, so he was used to adjusting to jet lag quickly; unlike the rest, they still needed time to adjust. However, such frequent changes in the body clock could cause serious harm to the body.

"You still need to take care of your body," she reminded him. At this moment, the air stewardess, who was in the rest cabin, probably heard a child crying. She pulled the curtains open and came over to ask attentively, "What happened to the child? Do you need any help?"

"It's okay. She's just having a nightmare, Rachel replied. "Can you give me a cup of water?" "Just water? We have wine here, Madam. If you can't sleep, perhaps you can have some wine to help you rest. What do you think?"

Rachel nodded after hesitating for a moment. She was indeed a light sleeper and needed some alcohol to help her sleep better.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 445

"Here's the red wine you asked for," the air stewardess announced pleasantly as she arrived between Rachel and Justin's respective rows with two glasses of red wine in hand.

Rachel was a little taken aback by this, she had only asked for one, but just as she was about to say something, Justin reached past her and said to the air stewardess, "Thank you."

"You're welcome. Call me if you need anything else," the air stewardess replied with a smile. When she was out of earshot, Justin gave Rachel an amused look and pointed out, "I'm guessing the airline is used to situations like these."

"Huh?" Rachel looked confused. "Most parents have a hard time relaxing after getting their kids to sleep during a long-haul flight, so they'll usually ask for a glass of wine to help them unwind," he explained patiently.

This made sense, seeing how the air stewardess had handed them the wine in a manner that suggested she had done this for a better part of her career. It was only then that Rachel snapped out of her daze, and she smiled as she acknowledged his point. "I guess you're right."

The cabin was silent save for the whirring of the plane engines, and the lights had been dimmed as well. Everyone else on the flight seemed to have fallen asleep, leaving Justin and Rachel as the only ones awake. They did not want to wake everyone with their chatter, so Justin raised his glass and muttered quietly, "Goodnight."

"Goodnight," Rachel whispered. They each turned to look at the child next to them in their individual seats and slowly sipped their wine. When they had finished the last drop of wine, warm drowsiness washed over them. Just like that, they slept through the night.

After a whole day and night of flying, they finally touched down in Geneva, Switzerland. They decided that they would stay here for a night so that they could go over the details of the proposal before they had to leave for Zermatt, which was their final destination.

They had only just arrived in the hotel lobby when a tall figure approached them with his arms spread wide open, greeting them with a loud, "Surprise, my dear friends!"

Hernandez rushed up to pull Rachel into a hug, but Justin effectively blocked his advances. Seeing this, he turned to hug Jolly instead, but Leroy had already anticipated this and quickly pulled her behind him.

In the midst of this awkwardness, Hernandez decided to lift Samuel off the ground to twirl instead. "Merry Christmas, Samuel!" "Hernandez, you're squishing me!" Samuel cried out in protest, kicking his little legs. "Let me go!"

"Aw, why aren't you guys excited to see me?" Hernandez complained, looking wounded. "I haven't seen you guys in ages, and this is the response I get?"

Jolly yawned, clearly feeling the effects of jet lag as she said, "It's not much of a surprise when we already know you'd be here. Besides, you've been spamming us in the group chat for the last two days. Dude, don't you ever sleep?"

Two days ago, she had created a 'Team Proposal group chat and accidentally invited Hernandez. It had been an honest mistake, but upon seeing that a proposal was in the works, he got excited and demanded to be in on it as well. To prove that he was dedicated to the operation, he even arrived in Geneva half a day earlier than the rest of them, though, in all fairness, he lived close to the city.

Presently, having heard Jolly's remark, he feigned exaggerated sadness and sighed as he said, "Fine, I'll hug myself."

Rachel laughed at this. "Okay, Hernandez, stop being so dramatic. We're all happy to see you, and we're glad you're part of the plan too. You're like our mascot."

"You're a girl after my own heart, Chris," he said, beaming. "Come on, I've already booked us a suite so we can all bunk in together. We should check in at reception."

"Alright." They made their way toward the counter with their baggage. Justin fell in step behind the rest of them, and when Hernandez spotted him, he clapped a hand on his shoulder and said, "Hey, man. I haven't seen you in a while. You holding up okay?"

Justin was impassive as he bit out, "Better than you think." "You're not wrong there. I honestly thought you would fall out with Chris and the others after the lawsuit, but I guess you were more chivalrous than I gave you credit for."

"This has nothing to do with chivalry. Plus, I think I'd be considered a calculative prick to others, especially to free-spirited souls like you and the rest of your people." "Now you're just being biased." "I won't deny that," Justin said as he walked ahead in long strides.

Unbothered, Hernandez turned to grin at Victor, who was now the last of the group. He patted him on the shoulder consolingly and said, "Relax, buddy. I'm sure she'll say yes."

Victor nodded solemnly, but he was still undeniably anxious. Hernandez had booked the suite on his own accord so that everyone could bunk in together. The hotel was historical with European-gothic architecture which blended with the rest of the beautiful city. The suite even came with a built-in fireplace that kept the room warm from the wintry Genevan weather.

"Ria's agent said that the band will be arriving tomorrow, and they'll be staying in this hotel as well," Rachel reported after getting off the phone with Gloria's agent.

Jolly chimed in, "It's a five-hour drive from here to Zermatt, and there won't be a single car there. How will Gloria get there on time?"

"That's going to be a problem," Rachel agreed gravely, frowning. They had planned on using their tourist status as an excuse to lure Gloria over to the skiing resort at the foot of the Alps, where they would spring the surprise proposal on her. However, to get there would take half a day, and Gloria supposedly had a show in Geneva on Friday. All things considered, she might decline meeting them at the Alps altogether.

They were still fretting over this when Justin came out of his bedroom after putting Charlotte to sleep. Having overheard their conversation, he interjected, "Ria loves a good time, so she'll show up for sure."

"Are you sure?" Rachel pressed. He nodded. "Tomorrow's a Tuesday, which means they'll be staying here for the night. If she were to leave for Zermatt on Wednesday morning, then she'll get to the Alps by noon, and if our plan turns out well, we can come back to Geneva with her on Thursday. She'll get her rest for the night and the following day without disrupting her show on Friday evening. I don't see how things won't work out if we stick to that schedule."

"I guess that works," Rachel said with a nod. "I'll text her now and let her know I'm in Geneva." "Okay," everyone else said in unison. She texted Gloria at once, but much to her surprise, her phone started buzzing with a video call from the girl.

Rachel gave everyone a measured look. "Video call, she announced. Jolly immediately put a finger to her lips to shush the rest of the team. It was only when the suite was so quiet that one could hear a pin drop that Rachel put the call through.

“Hi!” The phone screen lit up as Gloria appeared with a face mask and a pair of shades. She was in the airport, and she had her back to the glass wall beyond which was an idling plane. “I didn’t know you were in Geneva, Rachel! Are you there on business? Did you know I have a show there this week? Look, that’s my plane right there! I’m at the airport right now, in case you couldn’t tell, and I’ll be in Geneva this time tomorrow!”

There were barely any pauses in between Gloria’s words as she said all this to Rachel excitedly. It was her cue to act, Rachel realized, and she feigned surprise as she exclaimed, “What a coincidence! Yes, I’m here on business. Did you say you’ll be arriving tomorrow?”

“Yeah! How long will you be in Geneva? Can we grab a cup of coffee before you go back? I haven’t seen you for ages! Which hotel are you staying at?”

Hotel? Rachel’s eyes widened by a fraction, and her throat ran dry. She had not thought about that. She was just about to answer when suddenly, Jolly started coughing violently.

“Wait, is there somebody else with you?’ Glorial asked, bewildered when she heard the noise.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 446

The initial cover story pivoted on Rachel pretending to have to come to Geneva alone and thereafter inviting Gloria to go skiing with her at Zermatt. However, Jolly’s violent coughing fit had obviously blown that cover. Thus, Gloria would now know that Rachel had not come alone.

Thankfully, Jolly thought of a brilliant way to continue the bluff. She cleared her throat loudly and said, “It’s me!” She scooted over to where Rachel was, popping up on the screen. “As if I’d let her travel without her trusty assistant!”

At the sight of Jolly, Gloria rolled her eyes and scoffed. “You’re a lot of things, but trusty isn’t one of them. You keep getting caught by the paps when you and Leroy are on your dates. I bet you even brought him along to Switzerland so that you can have a couple’s trip!”

“Whether or not I’m on a couple’s trip is none of your concern. Anyway, we’ve pretty much concluded the work part of our trip, so we’ll be having fun for the next few days. We’re heading to Zermatt tomorrow morning for skiing. I can’t tell you how much I’ve missed skiing with Chris. I think the last time we did that was two years ago.”

Upon hearing this, Gloria said at once, “I wannal go!” Rachel froze. She couldn’t believe the girl would rise to the bait so easily.

Jolly’s triumphant gaze flickered over to the others who were crowded on the other side of the room. She and Gloria had been fighting over the position of Rachel’s best friend since the first day they met, and there was nothing scarier than when two women had their eyes set on a goal.

“Why are you going?” Jolly asked, the challenge clear in her tone. “You don’t even know how to ski, and the slopes at Zermatt aren’t kind to amateurs. Don’t torture yourself, little maestro. Wouldn’t want you getting hurt and canceling your show in Geneva.”

“Don’t patronize me! I had professional training on skiing too, you know!” “Yeah, I’m not convinced. You can’t fake your way down the slopes in Zermatt-not even if you did hire a professional coach at the very last minute.” to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Desperate to prove herself, Gloria almost shouted, “You girls have to wait for me! You can’t go to Zermatt without me! We’ll go to Zermatt together as soon as I get off the plane in Geneva. Rachel, you’ll have to be the judge and see which of us is better at skiing!”

When Rachel heard the panic in the girl’s voice, she nearly sputtered. “Okay, calm down. We’ll head to Zermatt in the morning, so why don’t you stay a night in Geneva before you join us the following day? It isn’t safe for you to drive all the way there at night, especially while it’s snowing.”

“Aren’t you going to wait for me?” Gloria asked, looking wounded. “We’ll wait for you in Zermatt,” Rachel said soothingly.

Gloria’s agent added helpfully, “Miss Hudson is only looking out for you, so don’t be stubborn about this. Besides, there aren’t any trains servicing Geneva and Zermatt at night.”

Trains were the only way one could get to Zermatt from Geneva; no other motor vehicles were allowed to traverse between the two points. Considering this, Gloria reluctantly acceded. “So, it’s just the two of you right?”

Jolly and Rachel exchanged a brief look with the others. The former smirked as she gloated, “Of course, it’s just the two of us. It’s a girls’ trip, after all.”

Meanwhile, the four men in the room each wore different expressions. One looked anxious about the next step of the plan; one was practically buzzing with excitement; one looked entirely indifferent, and the last one was mesmerized by his girlfriend's smooth lying skills. As things were, the operation was well and underway.

When the video call finally ended, Rachel let out a huge sigh of relief and gulped down a whole glass of water. "Oh my gosh, I was so nervous I thought my heart was going to leap out of my throat!" She had come so close to blowing their cover. Had Jolly not interfered in time, she would have given away the name of their hotel.

There were plenty of hotels in Geneva. If Gloria found out that Rachel was staying in the same hotel she would be checking into tomorrow, she would undoubtedly grow suspicious of her.

"Whew, that was close! Thank goodness our cover wasn't blown!" Jolly looked immensely pleased with herself as she added, "I deserve an award for that incredible improv. Aren't you glad you brought me along?"

"Yes, totally. I'm so glad, Rachel humored her with good-natured exasperation. "You're our lucky star."

Rachel went on to praise the girl for her quick wit. After a while, she looked at the clock hanging on the wall above the fireplace. "Okay, everyone, we should turn in for the night. We'll be leaving for Zermatt early tomorrow morning, and we've got plenty to do when we get there."

Save for Victor, who was a bundle of nerves, everyone else was exhausted and obediently shuffled into their rooms. It was in the early hours of the morning when Justin woke up and padded out of his room to order room service.

However, he had only just gone into the living room when he saw another figure sitting there. "Did you get any sleep at all?"

Victor snapped out of his reverie when he heard the cool and crisp voice sounding from behind him. He turned and registered Justin's presence, then said, "I did, but I couldn't stay asleep for long, so I got up and came out here. Why are you up so early?"

"I was going to order room service. I figured we could all use some breakfast before we head up to Zermatt."

"How thoughtful of you," Victor commented. Upon seeing how nonchalant the other man looked, Justin decidedly pulled up a seat across from him. The only thing that separated them was the corner of the rug, which kept them at a pleasant distance.

Justin gave Victor a measured look, then broke the silence by pointing out, "You know, it isn't too late to change your mind now if you're having second thoughts about proposing."

Victor was shocked to hear this, and he gaped at Justin incredulously as he accused, 'Are you asking me to back off and recognize my place?'

"Sure, if that's how you interpret it." A grim look passed over Victor's face, and he bit out angrily, "You just don't like the idea of me and Gloria being together."

"What makes you think that?" "Because you think Gloria can do better than someone of my background, and my job is far less impressive than anyone might expect of a great pianist's boyfriend. Also, you've been on my case after all that has happened that year. I'm probably the one person you wish Gloria would never choose to be with."

Justin did not deny any of this. Instead, he asked indifferently, "So? Are you going to give up?"

Victor blinked at him. He was not expecting this, but for some reason, the words 'give up' made him contemplate the possibility that he and Gloria might separate. His heart tightened at the thought of losing her, and his fists clenched as well

He glowered at Justin darkly as he retorted, "If giving up were part of my plans, then I'd never have gotten together with her in the first place."

"In that case, what I think of you wouldn't matter, right?" Justin went on to point out. "Are you going to give up on a future with her just because everyone else is against you?" "Of course not."

"Then whatever you said to me earlier is completely meaningless." Justin's gaze was calm, and he gave Victor a pointed look before fixing his eyes on a spot above the fireplace. "You shouldn't be too concerned about what others think of your relationship with Gloria. If you guys want to make things work, then no one else's opinion matters as much as your own. As long as the both of you are in this together and continue to choose each other, then whatever the rest of the world says is just moot."

"You're not asking me to give up?" Victor was incredulous.

"Have I ever? You've made it this far. If you don't pull yourself together and continue to wallow in self-pity, I can't imagine the mess Gloria would be saddled with for the rest of her life if she says yes to your proposal. In fact, you'd back. out of the marriage before I even asked you to."

"No, that won't happen, not unless Ria changes. her mind about me." "Whether or not she changes her mind about you does not depend on her, but on the both of you."

This was the first time Justin had had such a serious conversation with Victor, particularly on the point of his relationship with Gloria.

It was as if everyone else had forgotten that he and Gloria had grown up together. Justin was like a father and brother to her, and she meant more to him than anyone could imagine. It was hard for him to step down and let someone else take care of her.

“Victor, Ria is a musician. Playing the piano and performing all around the world will be a lifelong career for her. She will continue to take her place on the stage and shine before an adoring crowd. Furthermore, she’ll only gain more fame along the way. You’ll probably always be in the shadows, supporting her while she basks in the limelight. Both of you are self-centered, and you have some self-esteem issues you need to work on too.”

Victor wanted to deny it but frowned and said nothing in the end. He knew Justin was only pointing out the truth.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 447

“You are right.” Dejection flashed in Victor’s eyes. While he was not a particularly romantic man, he was also not a very rational one either. In fact, he was rather impulsive.

He had gone down the wrong path as a young man. If it had not been for Rachel, who knew which gutter or prison cell he would be in now?

“The more time I spend with Ria, the more I start to wonder. Sometimes I talk myself into trying, just once. If I do not try, I will never know if I can make her happy. In reality, our time as youths was not meant for testing things out. If I made a mistake, I would have ruined her.”

This was the first time Victor had ever told anyone what he truly thought. Sure, he might have a bad temper and act a little impulsive, but he truly loved Gloria. As such, he had thought about every possibility. “As long as you are true to her, no matter what, doing your best would be the best outcome.”

Justin's comment stunned Victor. However, Justin did not elaborate further and merely patted him hard on the shoulder. "It is getting late, and you still have two hours. Go take a nap and freshen yourself up."

He then grabbed the menu from the table and headed toward the door, intent on calling the receptionist to book their breakfast.

When he was about to open the door, he heard Victor say, "Thank you, but I still have one more question-do you think what you have with Rachel right now is the best ending?"

Justin immediately stopped in his tracks and slowly curled up his fists. "As long as you are true to her, anything that came out of doing your best would be the best outcome, Victor parroted.

Justin froze. To him, what was currently going on was the best he could make out of the situation. However, that was not the case for Rachel. He did not do his best for her.

Everyone had eventually forgiven him for what happened back then. He could feel their kindness directed at him now. So, perhaps Rachel would let it go one day. Oh, how he longed for that day.

He did not want her to let go because he was hoping it would mean she could accept him back in her life; rather, he wanted her to do so. because that was the only way she could live a better life.

Honestly speaking, he would be willing to be hated by her if that meant she would lead a better life. As soon as the sun rose, the group woke up. "What a nice hotel this is. They even have breakfast ready for us."

Jolly had immediately parked herself before the dining table as she said that. Victor glanced at Justin. When he saw the silent affirmation on Justin's face, he kept quiet after some hesitation.

By the time they arrived at Zermatt, it was already noon. Even so, none of them were exhausted by the trip. After storing their luggage bags in their rooms, they headed straight toward the ski facility located at the highest point of the snowy mountain.

"Aah!" Jolly let out a scream as she ran through the snowy field. "This is where we will be tomorrow. We will make a giant heart shape with red rose petals. Victor, you will stand here. When Gloria skis down over, you will pull out the ring, get down on one knee, and propose!"

"I bet that she would be crying from joy. I will be the videographer tomorrow, so I will be sure to film every single one of our genius pianist's ugly looks! It will be my blackmail against her!"

Out of everyone involved in the plan, Jolly was having the most fun. "If you like helping others propose, just start a matchmaking service," Hernandez grumbled.

"That is a good suggestion!" Jolly actually took his grumblings seriously. "Why not? We can think about it!" she shouted to Rachel.

"Your matchmaking service would only receive complaints from your customers, and you will definitely break down over them," Rachel brutally said.

She could already imagine what would happen when Jolly tried to organize a marriage for someone with an average income level. If the groom refused to splurge on every single one of her suggestions, she would fly into a fit of rage. She might even ruin the couple's relationship out of spite. There would be a lot of trouble then.

Meanwhile, Jolly had gathered up some snow to make a snowball. After all, she was just joking when she said that. She then hurled the snowball at Charlotte's head.

Charlotte had been calmly building a snowman throughout the conversation. She was dressed in a pink ski suit and a knitted hat with bunny ears. When the snowball suddenly hit her, she was sent sprawling to the ground.

"Aah!" She let out a cry of surprise. Rachel hurried over to help her up and dusted the snow off her. "Are you okay? Did the snowball hurt you?"

"Who did that?!" Charlotte angrily huffed as she looked around with her hands over the back of her head where she had been hit. Samuel pointed at Jolly, betraying her without a second thought.

"Godmother!" Charlotte shouted. "That was mean!" She then pouted. "What is it?" Rachel thought Charlotte was. actually injured." "Why are you crying?"

At that, Jolly panicked as well. "I did not throw it that hard, and the snowball was not packed tightly. In fact, I did not compress it at all!" "Waah!" Charlotte cried, covering her eyes with her hands. "You just hit me! You do not like me anymore!"

"No, no. That is not it. Have you never had a snowball fight?" Jolly hurried over to comfort the girl, kneeling down as she apologized profusely. Charlotte shook her head.

Justin walked over to check up on her. "She has never been in a snowball fight," he said with a little sigh in his voice. How could she have been in one? She never knew anyone around the same age as her, just the deadly beasts of the Hudson family.

"I am so sorry, Charlotte." Jolly felt so bad. "I did not know. I am sorry. Please do not cry. How about I get you a delicious treat? Oh, poor dear."

“What is a snowball fight?” Charlotte asked while sobbing as she rubbed her eyes. Rachel gave Samuel a look, which he understood.

He swiftly made a snowball and handed it to Charlotte. “In a snowball fight, we will all try to hit other people with snowballs. As snowballs do not hurt unless packed very tightly, everyone will have fun. She did not throw the snowball at you because she does not like you.”

“She did it because she likes you!” Rachel gently said. She placed a hand on Charlotte’s head.

After hearing their explanation, Charlotte’s eyes went wide as she stared down at the snowball in her hands. There were a few moments of hesitation before she suddenly threw it at Jolly.

“Aah!” Jolly was caught off guard as she was hit by the snowball Samuel created. The impact made her fall on her behind as she shrieked in surprise. Before she realized what happened, she heard Charlotte calling out to her, “Godmother, I like you too!”

For a second, everyone was stunned. Then, they all began to laugh uproariously. Hernandez was leaning against a tree that trembled with every laughter that rang through him, causing snow to dance in the air. “Haha. Hey, have you shot yourself in the foot by telling her that?”

Jolly was furious, but before she could get back on her feet, she was hit in the back of her head once more. “Who did that?!”

She turned around to see Hernandez. Somehow, during the time they spent laughing, he had built up a huge “wall of defense” with piles of ‘ammo’ beside him. As he tossed a snowball up in the air, he shouted at the group, “Snowball fight! The war is on!”

“Run!” Samuel grabbed Charlotte to flee. Before Rachel realized what was going on, someone tugged her to the side, and the snowball aimed at her head smacked against Justin’s back. Snow was scattered everywhere, splattering all over Jolly’s face.

Leroy went to defend her but could only last through the first wave of attacks. By now, Jolly was seething. “Just you wait, Hernandez! You are dead!”

Snowballs flew through the air before exploding into clouds of white.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 448

Bursts of powdery snow filled the air as the battle raged on. During their “escape”, Justin and Rachel carried a child each. They darted to hide behind a great tree that was far away from the “danger zone” caused by the ‘gunfire’ of others.

Victor had not planned to join the battle, but after an accidental shot by the berserk Jolly, he was forced to wade into battle. He naturally joined Hernandez. Now that it was obvious who belonged to which team, the two teams began frantically lobbing snowballs at each other.

Using the camera she brought, Rachel took a photo of them. With a snap, the sight of the two teams baring their teeth ferociously at each other was immortalized forever. She could not help but let out a sigh when she looked at the picture. “If I sell this photo to the press, I will likely earn more money than the matchmaking service ever could.”

“Not joining in their fight is the smart move,” Justin said, nodding. She absolutely agreed with that statement. Just as he finished speaking, a loud smack echoed through the air as a snowball was flung at his back.

“We got him, Samuel!”

“Hide!” At some point in time, Charlotte had released Rachel’s hand. She and Samuel then hid behind the tree. One of them was in charge of making the “ammo” while the other focused on attacking. The two kids were currently cheering with joy at their successful attack.

Justin was about to lecture them, but Rachel stopped him. Rachel recalled that Charlotte never had a snowball fight before, so she would likely be eager to have one. The two adults had nearly taken the joys of childhood away from her.

Before Justin could respond, another snowball came swooping down at him, showering the area inside his shirt with snow. Immediately, a rather intense look flashed across his face then. Having never seen his eyes bulging this wide before, Rachel burst out laughing.

This time, his attacker was Hernandez, the person who started this whole battle. His six-foot-tall form dressed in all white could be seen standing not far away from them, and he was laughing like a madman. “Why are you guys just standing there? Chris, your teammate is just weak. Come join us!”

Of course, Justin was not one to back down from a challenge. “Did you forget how you lost in the boxing match, Hernandez?” Justin retorted as he angrily dusted himself off.

“That was an accident. You will surely lose in this fight!” Another snowball was sent flying toward Justin. “Chris, join my team, quick! We do not want to hit any innocents!”

Rachel, however, was already running toward Charlotte and Samuel. “I’ll be with the kids!” she shouted at Hernandez. “You guys take care!”

As soon as she said that, Jolly joined in the fight with a flying snowball. It had been aimed. at Hernandez, but she missed and hit Justin instead. With that, Justin had now been hit four times by accident. “Sorry! My target was not you!” Jolly shouted.

“Can’t you aim properly?!” “Well, you are the ones being distracted! All is fair in love and war!” she replied without any guilt at all.

“All is fair, yes?” Then, Justin, who thought the game was too childish for him, struck back with a snowball of his own. After swiftly moving across the battlefield to a better position, Rachel and the two kids joined in the fight as well.

The sky slowly darkened. Furthermore, the snowy land seemed especially cozy and warm as the glows of the setting sun shone down on it. It was evening by the time the fight was finally over. After the sun had set, the group had dinner while Rachel looked up the weather forecast for the next day.

“It says there might be some snow tonight, but we don’t need to worry because it will stop by tomorrow morning. When the storm is over, we will set up the decorations. Gloria will only be arriving at two in the afternoon, so we have time.”

“Let us hope there won’t be a blizzard tomorrow,” said Jolly. “It is not likely” Rachel glanced out the window. “Zermatt never experiences blizzards during this time of the year.”

As it was getting late, the group then split off to head into their own rooms. “Are you not sleeping, Rachel?” Just as Victor was about to head into his room, he saw Rachel setting up her laptop in the living room. Curious about her answer, Justin paused in his steps.

“I have an email to send,” replied Rachel. “For some reason, the reception here is so bad that it never was sent. I am going to search for a spot with a better signal. Go to sleep; I’ll be fine.”

Zermatt was a tiny town that could be described as desolate. This was a place where cars could not even drive to. As such, the reception in the area was extremely bad. They were also currently staying at a local bed-and- breakfast. Hence, if the line had problems, no maintenance team could help them at this hour.

Justin frowned. When he closed the door to his room, he made sure to leave it slightly ajar. Then, he sat down on his bed and looked at his phone. There was no reception.

A few minutes later, he heard a door closing. When he stepped out of his room, he found the living room empty while Rachel's thick jacket was gone from where it was hung. Meanwhile, it was already dark when she was running around outside, looking for some reception. She had to send the email before tomorrow morning and it was a pertinent email to Hudson Pharmaceuticals.

Their bed-and-breakfast was located in the middle of nowhere. Over a mile away was the foot of a snowy mountain, which was the location of their snowball fight. The moon was bright and round that night. It made the mountain seem as if it was covered by a layer of shiny, translucent, white snow. It looked so much more beautiful than it did during the day.

The only bad part about being in such an area was that the land stretched out too far. It was possible to search for hours without finding another sign of civilization.

Rachel walked along the path for a long time. When she saw artificial lights in the distance, she perked up with hope and stumbled toward the blinking lights. When she got closer, she found it to be a double-story villa with an antenna installed.

She immediately whipped out her phone. As expected, there was a signal, but it was poor. With her phone raised up high, she began to slowly walk toward the antenna.

Bam! Suddenly, she tripped before she accidentally stumbled and crashed into the fence. Someone instantly began shouting from within the house, and it did not sound like Latin.

Soon, someone appeared in the doorway. There stood a large, bearded man dressed in a red fur coat. He warily looked at Rachel and mumbled something she did not understand. "I'm only trying to look for reception," she hurriedly said in Latin.

She waved her phone to emphasize her point. However, she had somehow switched to her camera app. Her wave resulted in a loud 'snap' echoing through the air as she took a photo of the man. The man's face clouded over. He grumbled and another man suddenly appeared from within the house, holding up a gun and shouting at her.

Her face went pale and she could not even speak another word out of fear. She was in Zermatt, a place that allowed its citizens the right to bear arms. Since she was on their land, these men had the right to shoot her for trespassing into their private territory.

There was a grave misunderstanding happening, and none of them could communicate with each other. No matter how much she wanted to explain herself, there was nothing she could do.

When she heard the safety of the gun unclick, all strength fled her. She screwed her eyes shut in preparation but was soon forced to the ground by someone pouncing at her from behind.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 449

Bang! The bullet seemed to graze past the top of Rachel's head. She then heard Justin's familiar voice speak from above her. Even though the situation was dire, he still spoke in calm, fluent Italian as he communicated with the two men. Soon, she was helped to her feet. "It's fine now."

It was only when she saw Justin's face that she regained some sense of security. It made her clutch tightly to his arm. The strangers walked back out again. This time, though, they were not as wary of her. They even looked apologetic.

Whatever Justin told them, it was enough to make them pull open the gates and welcome them into the villa. However, Rachel instinctively took a step back.

"Don't be scared," said Justin. "They mean you no harm. They only fired at you because they thought you were a thief. As an apology, they would like to invite us into their home."

"It's fine," she hurriedly denied. She was still frightened by the experience. As he understood her fear, Justin then explained the situation to the men. The two men made gestures of apology at her and did not push her to head in.

She only felt safe when the men were inside the house and had locked the door behind them. She then took a deep breath, but nearly choked on air.

"I was terrified." She was so afraid that she even forgot to breathe. As for Justin, there was an unpleasant look on his face. He was also terrified for her life. If he had arrived a second later, things might have been really bad.

"Oh, so you do know fear. Did you not think this might have happened when you came out all alone in the middle of the night?"

"There was no signal in the building, and I have an urgent email to send." "Which is more important; your life or the email?" She was stunned and her fingers trembled. "I'm sorry. I nearly got you killed as well."

If he had not been there, she would have died That shot had barely missed her. Seeing the pale look on her face, he forced himself to calm down. "Do not do this ever again. This is not our home. It is not safe at night."

In response, she hung her head like a guilty kid and hummed in response. "Do you still need to send the email?"

She looked up, startled. He sighed. "You took a huge risk just to find somewhere with good reception. Now that you are safe, why are you not sending the email?" It was only then that she snapped back to her senses and sent her email.

The two then walked back to their bed-and- breakfast. Although there were not many streetlights along the road, the moon was sol bright that when it reflected off the snowy ground, illuminating their path ahead.

"You have a lot of guts to wander so far all alone. What if something happened?" "Were you following me the entire time?"

He paused. "Yes." Although she had expected that answer, she was still surprised. It was a cold night, and she had been walking for about two miles in her search. Even though he had been following her the entire time, she heard nothing.

If she had not been in trouble, she would never have known that he had been following her this whole time.

"Thank you." "No need for thanks. Just pay attention and take care of yourself next time."

"Okay," she replied. Then, they went quiet. They were never talkative people in the first place. Even though they had been through a lot, they would never have spoken another word to each other if not for the kid that they were tied to.

If Gloria and Victor had not gotten together, Justin and Rachel would not have gone on at trip together either. At that thought, she found herself conflicted on how to feel about it.

Just as they were arriving back at their bed- and-breakfast, Justin said in an urging manner, "We're here. Hurry back inside. We don't want you to catch a cold." She turned and looked at him. "If I am ever stuck in the same situation, please do not do that again."

He narrowed his eyes. "You owe me nothing," she continued. "Even if you did, we are even now. Charlotte made sure of that. So, please do not do things just for my sake. It is all in the past."

She had hated him for years, but she learned to be rational about it. Everything that happened back then was destiny. Fate had decided her eight-year-old self would meet him when he was kidnapped. There was no avoiding that disaster.

"I've thought things through, Justin. Six years ago, even if I never met you, even if you never developed a grudge against the Hudson family, even if I did not marry you by accident, Jefferey would still sell me off for profits. He would abandon me after squeezing every last drop he could out of me. It had only seemed like everything started because of you, but frankly speaking, it was all because I was weak. I just accepted what was thrown at me."

One's personality was the biggest determiner in one's life. "Rae." He clenched his fists tight and frowned. "No matter what, you are Charlotte's father," she said, forcing a smile to her face. "We can't be total strangers, so let us leave the past in the past."

In their silence, the eternal ice that had hung around them gradually melted. The emotions they felt about their past seemed to have calmed down.

Even though they knew those emotions would never disappear and linger on as wounds forever, they knew that pain could be put aside. No matter how much they suffered, they accepted it.

"Thank you." Those words softly lingered in the air after he spoke. "It is what I should do," she said, looking into his eyes.

Justin would forever be Charlotte's father. If he kept trying to make amends for the past, Charlotte would not grow up a happy child. Now that they had talked it out, they felt much better about the situation. "Let us head in. It is cold," she said..

"Yes." However, he soon stopped in his tracks. She had already stepped into the building, but when she saw that he was still standing outside, she turned around and poked her head out in confusion, finding him frozen at the doorway.

"Why aren't you coming in?" He frowned and held out his hand; a few snowflakes landed on it. "It's snowing."

"Is that not normal?" She did not understand why he commented on it. "The weather forecast did say it was going to snow tonight. It should be over by tomorrow morning." "Something is off about this weather." to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

He turned to look at the mountain in the distance. It was covered by a thick fog of dark clouds that seemed like they would swallow the moon whole. A moment ago, the sky was clear with the moon shining bright. Now, there were so many dark clouds in the air that it almost felt suffocating.

The time before a normal snowstorm should not look so gloomy and threatening. He remembered seeing something like this before. It happened ten years ago in Zurich. Immediately after, an extremely severe blizzard happened.

Hence, a blizzard was coming.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 450

“This is the weather forecast for Zermatt. Due to the winds from the North Atlantic Ocean, the Federal Office of Meteorology has issued a yellow alert for blizzards this week. People living in Zermatt should make preparations with sufficient supplies. Avoid going out...”

The reporter was currently conveying the updated weather report in the weather forecast segment. Although it was still dark outside, everyone had begun to wake up and gather by the fireplace in the living room.

Although Victor did not understand what was being said on the television, he was able to make an educated guess by looking at the swathes of yellow on the map and the ghastly snowstorm slamming against the windows.

A blizzard only happened once in a hundred. years, yet they were unlucky enough to be here for it. “We are so cursed.” Jolly dejectedly sighed. “Why is there a blizzard going on right now? From how bad the storm is, the train will not be able to get here at all, so Gloria won’t be coming.

“Even if the train can get to us, the ski resort will not open with this weather,” said Leroy. “Since the excuse you guys used was that you wanted to go skiing, she will never come now.” Rachel sighed as well, at a loss on how to comfort the rest of the group.

“Don’t be so down,” Hernandez said while patting Victor on the shoulder. “You still have other chances. This is not your only chance to propose to her. As the saying goes, the road to happiness is strewn with setbacks.”

That drew a chuckle from Jolly. “Your Spanish has improved. You know the proverbs now?” “I know more, like ‘where there’s a will, there’s a way’.”

“Amazing. Let me test you on another.” “Test away.” Hernandez was a certified lawyer in multiple countries. If he took a test for Spanish proficiency, he would definitely ace it. There was no way Jolly did not know that, but she was merely trying to liven up the air..

When Victor slipped out of the room, Rachel followed out of worry. She then saw him trying to take a picture of the fridge full of red roses.

“Victor.” “Rachel,” he acknowledged, turning back to look at her. “Don’t be upset. You will have other chances. This is just an accident.” to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

“I am not upset.” He smiled. “Everyone has helped me so much that I practically did nothing. Frankly speaking, I came here empty handed. I only thought it was a waste that the flowers were bought for nothing, so I wanted to take a few pictures of them.”

The walk-in fridge was stuffed full of roses. They were to be used in the proposal, but they were unexpectedly trapped here, like everyone else. Hearing that, she found it wasteful too.

“It is the intent that matters. When Ria knows about this, she would be so touched.” She then held out her hand. “Come, let me take a photo of you with the roses.”

“It’s fine.” Victor was the stereotypical guy who did not like having photos taken of him. Thus, his face went pale with fear.

“Fool,” she said, snatching his phone away instead of just waiting. “If you are not in the photo, how will Ria know you did this? How would she know you actually prepared all this?” “She knows I will never lie to her.”

“Enough with the excuses. Stand still.” She soon ran out of patience and snapped a photo of him before he could even try to block his face from the camera. With a loud snap, his stiff expression was immortalized.

“This won’t do. You do not look like you are going to propose. Instead, it looks like you were forced to get married.” Rachel swiftly switched back to the camera app. “No way. Let us take another.”

“How about we just leave it at that?” “What sort of secrets are you two whispering to each other?” Jolly and the others had heard sounds coming from the fridge, so they came to check it out. When they were told what Rachel was going to do, they immediately joined in the fun.

Jolly insisted Victor got dolled up. She even had her makeup kit ready. The sight made him go stark white. “Spare me, please! Rachel!”

“Cry all you want. This is all for Gloria. If you guys ever get into a fight, you can use these photos as protection. We are helping you! Stop being so ungrateful.” “Can I not want protection?” he sighed..

"No way." Although the storm raged on outside the building, it was cozy and warm inside because of the fireplace. Rachel stood back and watched as the group bickered and chattered. Although it was a pity that Gloria was not here, they were all here because of her. There was nothing to regret about this trip.

After a while, the group then split off to do whatever they wanted. Some played video games while some played card games. It felt as lively as a Christmas party. When Rachel realized Justin was missing, she went looking for him. In the end, she found him in his bedroom.

Charlotte had woken up sometime in the morning. She was sitting on the bed, blearily looking at everything around her as she held onto the glass of warm milk Justin had prepared for her. With a few big gulps, she soon finished most of her milk.

"Daddy, I want to have a snowball fight today." "That's not possible. He glanced out at the storm raging outside. "Just look at the storm. If you try to run around outside, you will be gone in a few seconds. How can we throw snowballs at each other then?"

"You just don't want to play with me." Charlotte huffed and pouted. "Samuel said he would always have snowball fights in the winter. You never once do that with me."

Tears soon began to well up in her eyes. Guilt rose in him. He smoothed her hair back, tucking it behind her ears, before patiently saying, "I am sorry for that. I will be living with you, Samuel, and Mommy in the future. We can have snowball fights whenever we want in the winter."

"You just don't want to play with me! Hmph! I am ignoring you!" Charlotte then buried herself in the blankets and stopped speaking to Justin. At once, exasperation filled him..

Just then, he noticed Rachel coming into the room. However, when he was about to speak, she put a finger to her lips and silently moved toward the bed.

He shifted to give her space to sit. Then, Rachel tried to tear the blankets away from the bed. However, Charlotte was quite strong and insisted on staying in bed. "I don't want to talk to you! Go away!" the kid under the blanket wailed.

"Let me see," Rachel said, patting the blanket. "Which little piggy is angry and hiding under the blanket?" Charlotte froze. "When the little piggy gets angry, her nostrils will grow big. Let me see, where are her nostrils?" Rachel's hands began wandering across the top of the blanket, patting it every so often.

As Charlotte feared being tickled the most, she immediately squirmed out with a giggle before pouncing at Rachel.

"I am not a piggy!" Charlotte's kiddy voice echoed through the air as she wrapped her arms around Rachel's neck. "Mommy!"

For some reason, the sight brought a watery shimmer to Justin's eyes.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 451

"Mommy, the snow is so heavy." "I'll take you for a snowball fight when the snow stops, okay?" Rachel combed Charlotte's pigtails to comfort her glum mood. "Will Daddy come with us too?"

"Of course. Didn't Daddy also come with us yesterday? Samuel, Mr. Wade, Godmother, and Mr. Hernandez are coming too..."

"And Leroy!" Rachel intentionally missed out on Leroy, but Charlotte could never forget about him, so she exclaimed, her face flushed. "You always remember to take him wherever you go, huh?"

Rachel glanced at Justin next to her and uttered, "Watch out. Your daughter will probably fall for good-looking men in the future. A handsome boy will win her heart!" "Well, there aren't many people who look like Leroy," replied Justin calmly.

"What if there is?" "If there is, she isn't at a loss if he has good looks." Rachel was surprised to hear that. "Are you sure Charlotte is your own daughter?"

When other people raised their daughters, they would usually be afraid that their daughters would get married to an indecent man, but why was Justin so confident that his daughter would not suffer at all?

Did having good looks mean they would be able to earn a living to support her? If someone was good-looking in an ordinary way, that might not be the case, but for someone as good-looking as Leroy, opportunities would come to him instead of him having to fight for them. "Okay, let's look for Samuel. He must still be asleep."

After Rachel was done braiding Charlotte's hair, she put her down from her lap. Charlotte kissed her and Justin on the cheek before happily running out to play.

Rachel looked out the window and exclaimed, "It's snowing so heavily outside. I wonder how it is in Geneva. Ria didn't text me last night about whether or not she landed safely. Did she contact you?"

"Don't worry. She went with a group of band members. Nothing will happen," reassured Justin. Rachel nodded. "I wonder when the snow will stop and when we can go back."

"Do you have a lot to do in the company?" Justin thought about how she risked her life to get a signal last night. "Are you in a hurry to go back?"

"Yeah, I have a lot of work on my hands. If there are trustworthy people over there, I won't have to rush back. It won't be a problem for me to work remotely, but I'm worried that there will be fluctuations among Hudson Pharmaceuticals' board of directors."

Evan headed the board of directors of Hudson Pharmaceutical, and he had been pulling tricks behind the scenes recently.

After all, Hudson Pharmaceutical started as a family business, and she was the only one left in the eldest son's family to fight alone. Today, the survival rate of family businesses in the market was low. Other family members within the Hudsons or outsiders were starting to think that they might have the opportunity to take over Hudson Pharmaceutical.

Justin uttered thoughtfully, "I heard that Evan is holding proxy equity. If he starts controlling from this aspect, you may be able to plan ahead."

"Proxy equity?" Rachel, as a major shareholder of the Hudson Family, was aware of that. However, Evan had always regarded himself as merely a shareholder to the public. So how did Justin find out?

"Evan's mother is actually his stepmother, and he has always been at odds with her. In order to force him to be filial, his father left all his assets to his widow, so even if Evan doesn't like her, he still has to visit her during the holidays.. The proxy right of the shares is also acquiesced to by Old Mrs. Holt," explained Justin.

"If you can win the support of Old Mrs. Holt, then no matter what Evan does in the future, it will be useless." Rachel was amazed at his knowledge of information. "How do you know all this?"

This was all new information to her. Justin hesitated for a while and clenched his fists, which were hanging by his sides. "Evan was able to get those share proxy rights in his early years because of me." Rachel was taken aback by the new information. Early years?

In order to seek revenge, Justin took into account everything related to Hudson Pharmaceuticals.

If it weren't for the accident, perhaps Hudson Pharmaceuticals would have been in decline by now, or it might have been eliminated by the market, or acquired by Burton Group. Moreover, the Hudsons would have fallen apart.

After all, Justin was capable of doing that. Justin took his leave, and Rachel kept pondering about it. She hesitated for a long time before sending a message to the company secretary, 'When did Chairman Holt's father pass away?

After a while, a reply came, '20 years ago it seems.' Rachel's eyes widened in surprise before quickly typing, 'Are you sure?'

'It should be right. Two days ago, I happened to hear that Chairman Holt is planning to hold a memorial service for his father's 20th death anniversary. I was going to ask you if you were going to attend.'

Rachel clenched her phone tightly in disbelief. She knew that Justin had approached the Hudson Family step by step in order to take revenge and had already incorporated the entire Hudson Pharmaceuticals into his plan, so he must have known everything about the company better than she. However, what she never thought about was the time span in between.

Twenty years ago, not long after Old Mr. Holt's death, Evan received the right of proxy for the shares and officially joined Hudson Pharmaceuticals' board of directors. At that point, Justin was already plotting revenge. However, at that time, he was only nineteen years old, a young adult!

For more than twenty years, he had been avenging someone he thought died because of him. That person was just a chance encounter with him, yet he sacrificed his entire life for her. How miserable must that have been for him over twenty years? How many twenty years did a person have?

Why had she never thought about it before? Rachel was not able to calm down for a short while. Her hands on the couch slowly tightened. She grabbed the blanket over her body, suppressing all the thoughts in her heart.

After some time, a loud noise came from the living room. Rachel opened the door to see four people at the coffee table playing poker, with Jolly leading the game.

Justin sat on the couch, looking after the two children beside him. He flipped through the magazines with a cup of steaming tea in front of him, looking like a retired veteran cadre.

Just as Rachel thought he wasn't paying attention to the rest, and Jolly and Hernandez's exaggerated movements almost overturned the roof, he reached out in time to move the teacup placed at the corner of the coffee table without a trace. Only Leroy noticed him.

"Jolly said I cheated, but I'm just lucky! Come on, Justin. Get down here and take my place!" "Bring it on! Pfft, how dare you say it's all luck?! If he loses, you have to admit that you cheated."

“You better not screw things up, Justin. You have to prove my innocence.” Justin had always been out of tune with the hustle and bustle, and he rarely took the initiative to join their fun, so everyone thought that he despised these childish games, just like what happened with yesterday’s snowball fight.

Surprisingly, when Leroy insisted on pulling him into the game, he did not show any resistance. Rachel leaned against the door frame and saw this side of Justin for the first time. It was as if she was learning something new about him again.

At that moment, she suddenly understood what. Gloria had told her before. “Justin has never been an indifferent person, but everyone around him is scheming, so he can only do the same.”

In fact, he was lonelier than anyone else all these years.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 452

“Ugh, how come I don’t have any luck?!” After a few rounds of poker, Jolly lost her cool. “I’m not playing anymore. It’s your turn, Chris.”

“What’s with that attitude?” Amid the contemptuous boos from everyone, Jolly resolutely quit the game and declared confidently, “My dad told me that whether we win or lose in the game of poker, we should be free to leave the table whenever we want. That is called good attitude!”

Rachel took Jolly’s seat and said calmly, “I’ve known Mr. Carter for so long, but I haven’t heard him say that before.”

Jolly glared at her. “He said that a long time ago!” “I don’t want to argue with you people anymore. I’m going to cook some pasta.”

“Cook a plate for me too!” Hernandez immediately raised his hand. “I want it with a lot of cheese!” “Dream on! I’m not cooking it for you!”

Jolly rolled her eyes at him and walked straight toward the kitchen. The homestay owner was kind enough to bring some food to them despite the heavy snow at noon, as he was afraid that they would lack supplies while being trapped here. Most of the food he delivered was instant food.

While the pasta was being cooked, the doorbell rang. It rang for a long time, but no one went to open the door.

Jolly was cooking the pasta as she leaned half of her body out of the kitchen to scold someone. When she saw the group playing cards intently, and the two children running around the room, she could tell that nobody would hear her scolding since it was so noisy out there.

Stomping to the door, she went to open it. Not to mention that she lost some money during the game of poker, but now they were also expecting her to be a nanny?!

When she opened the door, the anger on her face hadn't disappeared. The moment she saw the person in front of the door, her pupils dilated because she could not believe who she saw.

"You... Oh! Oh! Oh!" After screaming at a high pitch, she managed to attract the attention of the rest in the living room. "What's wrong?"

Leroy rushed out first, for fear that she might be in danger, but he was stunned to see the visitor. Rachel, Justin, and the rest came out. The last one to come out was Victor, who was still holding a handful of cards. "Who is..."

The word 'it' did not manage to escape his mouth for a long while. The wind was howling outside, and the blizzard was raging. Throughout the morning, almost half of the town was submerged in snow, and the stairs were also covered with knee-high snow.

At this moment, the figure standing outside came out of the snow one step at a time. Besides a blue parka, she also wore a scarf, a hat, and a pair of gloves. Only her sparkling eyes were exposed, and when she saw them, her eyes went misty.

"Ria?" Rachel exclaimed, "Oh my goodness!" Gloria's gaze scanned them all and finally landed on the last person to come out. She questioned, "Didn't you tell me you were in school? Why are you here? Care to explain?"

Victor was instantly speechless. As if they were all communicating through telepathy, the rest avoided the couple and returned to the room, giving them some private space at the entrance. The bouquet of roses in the refrigerator might come in handy now.

Gloria took off her scarf and hat, revealing her flushed, delicate face that was either due to the tight cover or the cold. She looked like an innocent girl next door right now, which was a huge contrast to her usual princess vibes on stage.

"How did you get here?" Victor brushed the snow off her body and hung her coat on the rack. "Took the train, of course. It just so happened that the one I took was the last, and all the trains behind it were out of service."

“Why did you lie to me on WhatsApp saying that you were in Geneva then?” “Didn’t you lie to me too?”

Gloria looked at him calmly. ‘I’ve been here for so long now. Do you have something to tell me? For example, explain why you’re not in school. but here with Miss Rachel and the others.’ Victor froze for a while before stammering, “I... I didn’t mean to lie to you. I... I...”

“Where are my flowers?” Gloria reached her hand out to him. “My roses.” Victor was startled before asking, “You knew?”

“Know what?”

“Know that I want to propose to you!” The moment Victor blurted it out, the air suddenly became quiet. Gloria put on a generous and honest expression, waiting for Victor’s next words. Instead, Victor panicked. “I thought you wouldn’t come, so I planned to prepare again next time. I...”

He struggled to form a coherent sentence. At the same time, his stammering appearance was recorded by someone with a camera.

Jolly was lying at the entrance of the living room, peeking while holding the camera that she had prepared beforehand. She was getting anxious while taking pictures. “What’s wrong with this brat? Why did Gloria go through the huge blizzard if she didn’t know? Could she be here just to ski, silly?!”

“Exactly. Why isn’t he taking out the ring yet? What is he waiting for?” “But how did she know that Victor was here?”

Did we expose him in our videos?”

“I didn’t tell her.”

“Me neither.”

“Not me.” Leroy and Hernandez stood behind Jolly, and the three of them denied that they were the ‘spies’. Rachel was far away from them, occupying a favorable spot to watch the show. Therefore, she instantly knew who the ‘spy’ was after hearing the denials of the three..

Except for Justin, no one else in this room would tell Gloria about it. However, no one expected that Justin had told Gloria about Victor’s proposal the night before.

Firstly, he hoped that Gloria would think about it, and secondly, he also hoped that there would be no accidents that would cause her to temporarily cancel the trip because she was not keen on skiing.

Sure enough, there was a big blizzard. If the original plan was to come skiing, she would have ditched them long ago.

Rachel turned around and saw Justin standing in the living room, stretching his neck hard toward the door, like a father trying to watch the show.

When their eyes met, Justin coughed dryly and avoided her gaze. Rachel motioned for him to come over, in a lowered voice, “How about you come here to watch?”

Justin shook his head. “No. I don’t want to watch.” “You don’t want to? Then why are you stretching your neck so hard? Are you doing stretches?”

After being exposed, Justin froze, feeling embarrassed. Rachel suddenly took a sniff and wondered aloud, “Is something burning?”

While Jolly was lying on her stomach to record a video, she suddenly heard Rachel’s words, so she sniffed and leaped up at the sudden. thought of something. “Oh no! My pasta!”

At this time, Victor, who had already taken out the ring box, was so nervous that his hands trembled. With a snap, the ring box was opened, but the ring fell to the ground. The diamond ring, visible to the naked eye, spun around on the ground, rolled down the steps, and slipped out through the crack of the door.

Gloria quickly opened the door and was staggered by the blowing blizzard, almost falling over. “Be careful!” Victor supported her from behind. “Forget about me. The ring! Where’s the ring?”

Everyone ran to the door except for Jolly, who went to the kitchen to clean up the mess. At that moment, the snow outside was higher than the steps. How could they possibly see where the ring went?

Gloria turned her head sharply and glared at the culprit. The most important moment in her life was ruined by a scream.

“Jolly Carter!”

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 453

Jolly ran around the room with a spatula and was chased by Gloria. "I didn't mean it! Can't I pay you another one? I'll buy a new one for you! You can pick the biggest diamond!"

"Nobody wants you to buy it! Am I going to marry you? What kind of ring should you buy me?" "I won't even marry you even if you wanted to!" "Get out and look for the ring!"

Gloria's hair was about to stand on end due to anger. It was a marriage proposal that she had been looking forward to for a long time. Ever since she alighted from the plane last night and received the photo of the rose from Justin, she had not slept well all night. Even the blizzard did not stop her from coming..

Moreover, Victor did not earn much, but the diamond ring was big! He must have spent half a year's salary to get it!

Gloria got even more furious the more she thought about it. Standing at the door of the bedroom, she banged it several times while shouting, "Jolly Carter! Come out of there!"

"I don't want to! It's minus 20 degrees Fahrenheit outside. Are you trying to freeze me to death if I head out to search for it? Can't I buy you an identical one?"

"I don't want it. I want that one!" "Help!" Jolly could feel Gloria's breakdown even through the door, so she urged, "Victor, take care of her! Can't I just pay you back?"

"Ria." Victor's voice came from behind. Gloria halted her movements and slammed the door. All of a sudden, she felt aggrieved. She turned around with red eyes and explained, "I'm not losing my temper. I just think that the ring is really important."

She was about to cry. Victor stretched out his hand toward her and slowly spread it out to reveal the ring on his palm. "I found it. It's not lost."

When Gloria was scolding Jolly, he kept searching for the ring outside, but it actually fell inside the door frame. It was just that they didn't notice it at first. "You haven't answered my question just now," he insisted.

Gloria looked at the ring in his palm as she hadn't recovered from the joy of having found it. The moment she heard that, she clenched her fists.

In front of everyone, she picked up the ring and wore it herself. "You idiot! Of course I do! It's too late for you to regret now!"

While Victor was still stunned, the door behind Gloria opened and Jolly leaned out halfway with the camera in her hand to snap the picture. She even started booing and imitating Gloria's tone, "You idiot! Shouldn't you give me a sweet kiss right now?"

Victor suddenly blushed. “Jolly!” Gloria turned around, motioning like she wanted to beat Jolly up. However, she was greeted by a door slam.

Jolly’s proud voice came from inside. “Look, you found the ring, but she’s still so fierce. Open your eyes wide, Victor. Make sure to consider her temper one last time before you officially register your marriage.”

“Well, I’m still way better than you!” Gloria kicked the door angrily. Victor was initially nervous, but after Jolly’s little incident, they had a happy ending, even though it was rough. Suddenly, he grabbed Gloria’s hands and said, “I have something to show you.”

The red roses that filled the house were all for her! After watching the show for a long time, the audience finally settled down.

Hernandez was a sentimental man. He wiped his tears with a handkerchief and expressed emotionally, “Oh, my heavens, this is like a romance movie. They run into each other regardless of the snowstorm.”

Like a drama king, he turned around to look at Rachel with an exaggerated affectionate expression, “Chris, if it is to see you, I’ll be there, regardless of rain or shine.”

Justin retorted with an expressionless face, “You should keep an eye on the weather forecast. It is best to depart from the seaside cities in the south of the country in summer.”

“Why?” “There are many typhoons.” Once those words were spit out, Hernandez glared at him. Leroy laughed out loud at their bickering and supported Justin by teasing Hernandez, “There are many torrential showers of rain in summer too.”

Hernandez was ruthlessly ridiculed and could only seek Rachel for comfort. “Chris, I am sincere to you. How can they say that to me? I feel so hurt.” Rachel held back her smile and agreed with them instead. “Well, they’re not wrong.”

“You’ve changed, Chris. You used to be kind to me.” “That’s my obedience to the boss,” she corrected. She picked up the spatula on the ground and said, “It seems that Miss Carter won’t dare to come out for a while. I’ll clean up the mess in the kitchen. Does anyone want pasta? I’ll cook for you.”

“Me!” Someone who had just said that his heart was hurt was the first to raise his hand. “I want more cheese, please!” Leroy was on a diet, so he decided not to eat. At this moment, Justin stood up and offered, “I’ll help you.”

Although there were some accidents in the process, the result was quite satisfactory, so they decided to have something good to celebrate in the evening.

Facing the limited ingredients in the kitchen, Rachel and Justin cracked their heads, exercised their hands, and even managed to bake the cakes themselves. While decorating the cake, he chopped onions and prepared pasta while she casually asked about him being the 'spy'.

"We thought you were the most tight-lipped person among all of us. We didn't expect you to leak it to Gloria, but that's fine. She still managed to catch the last ride."

"If she had enough time to think about it, it would be safer that way. If she comes, it means she agreed. If she doesn't come, at least it won't be too embarrassing."

Jolly had prepared such a grand gesture because she was sure that Gloria was willing to marry, but what if she was not?

Justin still knew a thing or two about Victor's character. It would not be nice if the situation turned out to be awkward at that time.

Rachel was surprised to hear that. When she heard Justin and Victor talking about their relationship that night, she was quite shocked to hear that he not only considered Gloria's future happiness but also cared about Victor.

"I just have to slice this onion and fry it, right?" Justin's voice pulled Rachel out of her thoughts. "Yeah. Fry it, then pour the sauce in... Hey, don't touch your eyes."

Since Justin was an amateur at cooking, he did not know much about the characteristics of some of the ingredients. As soon as his hands that were handling the onion earlier touched his eyes, his sight turned foggy. It was so uncomfortable that he started blinking rapidly, letting tears roll down his cheeks instantly. "Go to the bathroom and wash up," urged Rachel.

"I'll take you there. This way." She put down what was in her hand and dragged Justin out by the arm. Unexpectedly, they ran into Charlotte head-on.

"Daddy, you're crying!" The little girl might not be big in size, but her voice was loud and clear. When she shouted, everyone in the room heard it.

Everyone was stunned. Jolly poked her head from the couch and her jaw dropped in shock. "No way! Are you heartbroken that Gloria is going to get married?"

Seeing him like this, Gloria was deeply moved. "I understand. I can understand how you feel. Don't worry about me. I'll live a happy life!"

Justin was completely speechless. This incident was so obscured that many years later, when Gloria's daughter brought it up with her daughter, she would tell her daughter how reluctant her uncle was to marry her off, to the point that he cried on the spot, and no one was able to calm him down...

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 454

After the cake was brought to the table, Victor and Gloria blew out the candles. "Congratulations to Victor for your successful marriage proposal, as well as for finally finding love." Rachel took the lead and congratulated the couple.

"Let's raise our glasses."

"Thank you, everyone."

"Cheers!" "Samuel and I would like to join in too!" Charlotte mimicked the adults and clinked her glass that was filled with fruit juice, and she even asked the reluctant Samuel to join in..

The blizzard that went on for one day and one night finally stopped. Since Geneva had been badly hit by the blizzard, Gloria's performance had to be postponed. Because of that, she didn't have to rush back. Instead, she took her time and went back to Geneva in a car with the others.

"Are you really planning to take such a long vacation? Did the school agree to it? Why don't you go back with them?"

Inside Geneva Airport, Jolly looked at Gloria's sassy expression and couldn't help but exclaim, "Gloria, he has already left his luggage in your hotel room, so why are you making him leave?"

Stop complaining. You should be glad that he is willing to accompany you!" "Mind your own business!" Gloria shot a glare at Jolly. to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

When she heard that, Jolly lifted her hand helplessly and said, "Alright, I'll not argue with you anymore. Let's go, Chris."

After the brief argument, Gloria was reminded that she was there to see her friends off. She quickly grabbed onto Rachel's arm and said, "Miss Rachel."

"I'll wait for your return at Riverdale." Rachel hugged her. "Alright." "Victor, you should stay put here and accompany Gloria. Don't you dare go back if you make her angry again," Rachel purposely reminded him before she left. "Mommy, Daddy said it's time to go."

Charlotte's voice could be heard from afar, which caught the attention of the tourists at the airport. Both children stood next to Justin while he donned a khaki wool coat, and they looked so adorable that the passersby couldn't help but take another look at them.

"I'm coming," Rachel answered. She hugged Gloria before leaving. While Gloria looked at their backs, she leaned on Victor's shoulder and asked, "Do you think Rachel and Justin would get back together?"

"I don't know." "Hm?" She raised her head puzzledly. "Previously, you said that it isn't possible without any hesitation."

"Did I?" "Of course you did. Why is there a change in opinion? Did something happen?" "Nothing happened."

"Something must have happened! Tell me!" Victor was speechless as he looked at the relentless Gloria. Meanwhile, the flight landed at Riverdale after one day and one night.

Everyone was so exhausted from all the traveling that they fell asleep while on the plane. Besides having short chats during mealtimes, they mostly slept throughout the flight. All of them were exhausted after all that had happened, and it was already evening when they got off the plane. Both children were still sleeping when they went to collect their baggage. One of them was in Justin's arms, and the other was holding onto Rachel's hand as he took small steps while still in a daze.

"How are you going back later?" Rachel asked Leroy and Jolly, but her question was mainly targeted at the former. After all, Leroy was a celebrity, so precautions had to be taken whenever he traveled.

As Jolly yawned, she answered, "His driver will be picking us up, and I'll get a ride from him. I'm not sure why, but my parents want me back home."

"Alright. Please let me know when you're home." Rachel nodded. "No worries. Will you be taking the children with you?"

"Yes. Since my car is parked at the airport, I'll send them back on my way home."

Out of the group, Justin's summer villa was the furthest away from the airport since it was located on the outskirts, and he had to drive to the airport himself. As night fell, the streetlights along the highway were brightly lit.

Both of the children were fast asleep in their respective safety seats behind. Meanwhile, Rachel felt rather drowsy too.

When he noticed this, Justin adjusted the temperature of the air conditioner and told her, "You should get some sleep. I'll wake you up when we reach."

"It's fine. I'm not tired." Even though she insisted that she wasn't tired, the next moment, she let out a yawn. She felt so embarrassed that she immediately sat up straight and tapped on the car monitor, trying to play some songs.

"I see that you're a big fan of Gloria since you have all of her piano music saved here." "It must have been Ria or the driver who downloaded it. I rarely listen to songs because I don't really drive."

"All these songs would make me sleepy. Let me connect my phone via Bluetooth and play some songs from there."

"Sure." As Rachel swiped her phone, a ding was heard after her phone connected to the car's Bluetooth. She then played a song from her song library. It was a song called 'I Have A Date With Spring' sung by Alice Lawson. The gentle melody of saxophone playing in the background was perfect for the night. The timeless English song would somehow make the listeners remember the good times. It ended with the following verse, 'If there is still love, I believe that both of us have a date with spring...'

Soon after, the car drove into a dimly lit tunnel. With his hand on the steering wheel, Justin glanced over at the woman who was sound asleep on the passenger seat and slowly let go of the accelerator. He reduced the car's speed so that the car would drive smoothly. All of it seemed surreal to him as the scene of him driving the kids with Rachel was something that he could only dream of, but at that moment, it was actually happening to him.

When Rachel woke up, they had already reached the apartment some time ago. "Are we here already?" She slowly opened her eyes. "Why didn't you wake me up? When did I fall asleep?"

"You fell asleep not long after playing that song." When she heard that, Rachel felt embarrassed and replied, "Turns out the song that I played is quite hypnotizing."

"It's actually quite nice." "Let's not hold you up any longer. Can you please wake the kids up for me? I'll bring them upstairs."

Rachel couldn't do it all by herself since she only had a pair of hands. "I'm afraid they are too sound asleep that it'd be hard to wake them up. I'll carry them upstairs."

Looking at both of the sleepyheads, she wasn't confident that they would wake up too. "I'm sorry for troubling you."

"No worries." Both of them went up to her unit as Justin carried the kids in his arms. After putting the kids down in their bedroom, Rachel gave him a glass of cold coconut water. "This will help you stay awake. Please be careful while driving; it's already dark, after all."

“Got it. Well, I’d better get going.”

“I’ll see you out.” As they reached the elevator, Rachel suddenly remembered something. “By the way, I saw some news about embezzlement in a charity organization on the plane this morning. The money was supposed to be used to fund those poor skinny children...”

She continued, “Why not give some thought to the Riverdale Charity Foundation? I really think that you’re the most suitable candidate for the role. It will be a good thing, I promise.”

Seeing how encouraging she was, he contemplated for a while and finally responded positively, “Okay, I’ll think about it.”

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 455

“This is the election invite sent over by Riverdale Charity Foundation. The following day, the secretary handed over an invitation to Rachel at Hudson Pharmaceuticals.

“How many candidates are running for the election?” Rachel asked as she glanced at it. “There were three candidates before you went on leave, but there’s four now.”

“Is their support rate high?” “Initially, it was a tight race between the three candidates since they were quite influential within Riverdale. However, after the fourth candidate joined, I heard that a lot of people switched sides and decided to vote for him. If everything goes well, he will probably win the position of vice president during this election.”

“Is that so? Who is that capable?” Rachel asked in surprise. The secretary paused before answering, “It’s President Peters from the Burton Group.”

Hearing that, her gaze widened in astonishment as she thought, Julian is running for vice president of the charity foundation?

“Miss Hudson, are we going to cast our votes for President Peters?” the secretary asked carefully, Everyone in the company didn’t know what the exact relationship between Rachel

and Julian was. Rumors had it that they were getting married, but since they hadn't met in a long time, everyone speculated that the wedding might have been called off. "When is the election?" Rachel furrowed her brows.

"It's 2.00PM this Friday."

"I got it. Let me think about it." After her secretary left, she leaned into her leather chair while deep in thought. Suddenly, her phone sounded as a reminder she had previously set appeared on the screen. Then, Jolly, who was holding some pastries in one hand, walked in and saw Rachel grabbing her coat and keys, seemingly ready to head out.

"Are you leaving? I've bought some cake and was thinking of sharing it with you." "No, thanks. I need to make a trip to St. Ignatius Church."

"St. Ignatius Church? Why so sudden? Wait, are you a Catholic?" "What are you talking about? I'm going over there to meet Diana." Justin was the one who told her that Evan's stepmother resided near St. Ignatius Church.

"I'll be leaving now since I also have to do some shopping." Rachel left her office right after that..

St. Ignatius Church was the most famous church within Riverdale for fulfilling people's wishes. However, Rachel couldn't confirm it since none of her family members were Catholic. She had only been there once when she was younger, and Nancy was the one who brought her there because she often got sick easily. Hence, they went over and tried their luck. Oddly enough, Rachel's condition improved after they visited the church, and Nancy became a devout Catholic since then.

Rachel thought that Diana was probably a Catholic since she stayed within the mountains near St. Ignatius Church. Thus, she wouldn't be fond of tacky jewelry. After wandering around the mall for some time, she finally decided to buy a purple clay tea set and went home to get some of the finest tea leaves. She believed that those would make a good gift.

It was 3.00PM when she almost arrived at St. Ignatius Church, which was the perfect time for visiting. Her phone also rang at the same time. Rachel answered the phone. "Have you arrived?"

"Yes, I have," Justin responded from the other line of the conversation. "I parked my car in the parking lot outside the church. It's pretty spacious, so you can easily park your car here."

"Alright, I got it."

"Drive safe. I'll wait for you here."

“Alright.” After the call ended, Rachel reset her navigation system and set the destination to St. Ignatius Church’s car parking lot.

Justin was the one who had arranged this meeting. After all, it might seem rude if she went to see Diana directly without prior notice. Besides, Diana might not be willing to meet her. Thus, when he suggested this meeting, Rachel didn’t refuse since she wasn’t in the position to do so due to Hudson Pharmaceuticals’ current situation. She would find a way to return his favor later on..

Soon, Rachel had arrived at the car park in front of St. Ignatius Church. She spotted a familiar figure dressed in casual outerwear, and he blended in with the towering ancient trees around him.

“Get in the car,” she said after winding down her car’s window. “Over there.” Justin pointed in a direction, guiding her to look for a parking spot.

After making a few rounds, they finally found a spot at the far end. When she got out of the car, she looked around and curiously asked, “There are so many cars here. How did you manage to get a spot?”

“I managed to find one after making several rounds.” “What time did you arrive? Have you been waiting long?”

“Nope, I haven’t,” Justin replied nonchalantly as he looked far away. “This area is frequented by tourists, especially in the morning. There isn’t much of a crowd during this time of the day.”

When Rachel heard that, she nodded and suddenly remembered the gift that she had bought after taking a few steps. “Ah, I left Diana’s gift in the car. I almost forgot about it.”

“What did you get her?”

“A tea set and some tea leaves.” Hearing that, he furrowed his brows. “What’s wrong? Is it a bad idea? Or do you think that it’s nothing special?” She believed that it was a decent gift.

“Not really. It’s just that the Holt Family has been involved in the purple clay teapot business for generations.” “What? Would it seem like I’m trying to teach a fish to swim?” “No worries. Let’s not bring the tea set for now) I’ve brought some pastries, which Old Mrs. Holt fancies.”

“It might seem rude if I don’t bring anything for our first meeting, though.” “Old Mrs. Holt wouldn’t mind. You can see for yourself when you meet her.”

“Alright.” Diana’s house was a ten-minute walk away from St. Ignatius Church. Since it was the beginning of winter, the snow-capped mountains looked depressing. However, compared to Riverdale, it was considered vibrant.

Meanwhile, Rachel could see Diana standing in front of a white wall from afar. Her gray hair was perfectly combed, and she was dressed in blue clothing. Although she was old, she was standing upright with her hands behind her back and she seemed to be in high spirits.

The scene in front of her made her remember how Nancy would stand in front of the door every weekend, waiting for her to return after she moved out from the Hudson Residence.

When Diana spotted them, she waved her hand and beamed. However, just as Justin stood in front of her, her expression changed as she scolded, “I’ve been waiting for you all afternoon! What took you so long, and where is my apricot Danish pastry?”

“They are here, but you shouldn’t eat too much of them.” He raised his hand, showing her the pastries. “I have to say that you are naggier than the old madam from my family.”

The next moment, Diana’s gaze fell on Rachel as Rachel stood behind Justin. “Is this the lady that you want me to meet?”

“It’s nice to meet you, Old Mrs. Holt. I’m Rachel Hudson,” she greeted Diana. Diana looked at Rachel carefully before saying, “Not bad. She looks beautiful. When are you planning to get married? By then, invite me to your wedding and I’ll give you a big wedding gift.”

Hearing those words, Rachel was stunned while she looked at Justin in surprise. Did he not tell her about their relationship? Meanwhile, Justin furrowed his brows slightly, and it seemed like he wanted to say something.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 456

“It’s too cold outside, Old Mrs. Holt. We should talk inside.” Justin changed the subject. However, Diana waved her hand and said, “Don’t try to fool me, Brandon. It’s already August. How can it be cold? Are you bullying me because I’m senile?”

Brandon? August? Rachel felt her heart skipping a beat. After a lot of persuasion by Justin, only then did Diana enter the house. to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

There was a nanny in the house. When she saw Justin, she greeted him respectfully and made them tea. Just then, Diana said, "The chef has made peanut brittle today. Wait here, and I'll get some for you."

"Wait, Madam." The nanny wanted to stop her, but she failed to do so. She could only sigh resignedly. "I'm sorry, Mr. Burton." Noticing that, Justin asked, "Did Old Mrs. Holt's condition worsen?"

"Yes. As you can see, when she's having an episode, she'll mix everything and everyone up. She even called me her aunt this morning." As they were talking, Diana's voice resonated from outside, and the nanny quickly answered her. "I should go and take a look before she hurts herself. You should sit down with Miss Hudson."

When Justin heard that, he nodded slightly. Only when the nanny left did Rachel ask, "What happened to Old Mrs. Holt?"

"She has Alzheimer's. When I came here previously, her condition wasn't this serious. At the very least, she was always clear-headed around this time. However, it seems like her condition has worsened." "No wonder you asked me to come at this time."

"I think I've wasted your journey here." Justin's tone was apologetic. "I don't think this is going to work. I'm sorry."

"Why are you apologizing? It doesn't matter whether it'll work or not; I know that you just want to help me. Besides..." Rachel looked out of the window.

"What is it?" "Nothing," She put on a smile. Besides, Old Mrs. Holt makes me think of my grandma. For some reason, she's giving me a sense of familiarity. "I heard how Old Mrs. Holt called you Brandon just now. Who's that?"

"It's her biological son, but he has already passed away." "What?" Rachel was startled. Evan was only about fifty years old, and Diana was his stepmother. As such, her biological son should. be younger than Evan, so why had he passed away?

"He died at a young age. He was about eight years old at the time."

"I see." "Old Mrs. Holt has lived a tough life. I heard that when she was married to Old Mr. Holt, it was precisely when Hudson Pharmacy fell into trouble. During that time, Old Mr. Holt was still the Hudson Family's butler. As such, he had put his entire fortune into it. Old Mrs. Holt even had to help people do laundry to help out with the family expenses."

Everyone knew that the Hudson Family's Butler Holt was a loyal person back then, but only a few of them knew how much his wife at home had to suffer to fulfill his loyalty.

"Everyone knows that Evan wasn't on good terms with Old Mrs. Holt since he was young. She tried so hard and finally had her own biological child, but he died at such a young age."

Rachel felt pitiful after hearing that. 'No parent should ever have to outlive their child.' Meanwhile, outside the house, the nanny was talking to Diana earnestly. However, Diana was growing impatient and waved her hand, showing that she didn't want to hear it anymore. Then, she entered the house right away.

"Susan ate all the peanut brittle that I left for you two, and she's not admitting it." Diana was unhappy. "I'm going to ask your dad to send her back tomorrow. I don't need her here anymore."

"Mr. Burton." The nanny followed behind Diana with an apologetic and resigned expression. Justin just smiled and said, "It's okay. If there's no peanut brittle, we still have the apricot Danish pastry."

Only then did Diana remember the pastries. "That's right, I still have the apricot Danish pastry." As she said that, she sat on the couch and started to open the pastry box that Justin had bought her.

At this moment, Justin turned around and told Rachel, "Why don't you go back first? I'll let you know when Old Mrs. Holt is clear-headed next time."

"What about you?" "I'll stay here with her for a while. She'll lose her temper if we leave together."

Before Rachel could say anything, Diana seemingly heard them and raised her head sharply. "Who's leaving? You two just came here. Am I not treating you well?" With an alarmed and upset look, she said, "Here, have some of these apricot Danish pastries."

Seeing that made Rachel feel her heart ache. "We're not leaving. No one is leaving," Rachel quickly said to comfort Diana.

How many elderly people living alone really wanted a quiet environment? All of them wanted their children to come and visit them often. It was impossible for people like Evan, who only cared about their own interests, to take care of others. Moreover, he was on bad terms with his stepmother. He was probably just hoping for her to pass away as soon as possible so that he could inherit her fortune.

Startled, Justin looked at Rachel and couldn't find any trace of her despising Diana. On the contrary, she was patiently opening the wrapper of the apricot Danish pastry for Diana. "Here, take a bite."

"It's delicious. Your dad doesn't know you're here, right, Nat?" Nat? Rachel was stunned for a moment and suddenly recalled that Evan had a daughter named Natasha. Diana probably had a good relationship with her, and she was thinking that Rachel was that kid.

"Why aren't you calling me Granny, Nat? Your dad's not here. He won't know." After hesitating for a moment, Rachel complied and said, "Granny."

"Yes." Diana smiled joyously. "Have an apricot Danish pastry. It's really yummy." Rachel and Justin only left when the sun was setting and Diana was getting drowsy. Before they left, Diana had fallen asleep on the couch with her hand holding Rachel's.

"I'm sorry for all the trouble, Mr. Burton." The nanny sent them to the door and didn't stop thanking them. "It's nothing. We don't feel troubled at all. You can contact me at any time when Old Mrs. Holt needs any help."

"I know. It's better to count on you than Madam's son. Throughout all these years, you've come to visit Madam more often than him." Justin didn't say much upon hearing that. He just told her to take care of Old Mrs. Holt well before leaving with Rachel.

While they were walking to the parking lot, Rachel asked Justin, "You've been coming here to visit Old Mrs. Holt throughout the years?" "Yeah. When she still had part of the shares in her hands previously, I frequented her place..."

"I don't think that's the only reason you're doing this. If it's really for your interest, you would think of ways to let her transfer her shares to Evan." After all, Justin had left some leeway for Diana since he knew that Evan was unfilial. If she didn't have the shares with her, she would have had no place to go in the future.

Justin was startled for a moment, and he didn't admit to it. "I've come to realize that you're really kind. However, you just don't talk much, making people think that you're a cold person. If you'd told me about the things about my grandma during those days, perhaps..." She didn't continue her sentence.

When she met his appalled and complicated gaze, only then did she realize what she had said, and she was startled too.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 457

Rachel didn't finish her words, but half of her sentence was echoing within the woods. At this moment, Justin froze for a moment before taking his next step, which was nearly at the same time when Rachel became stunned. However, he didn't turn around and just let the weird atmosphere persist for a few seconds before changing the subject.

"Be careful. It rained a few days ago, so the cobblestone path is a little slippery." Only then did Rachel snap out of her daze. "Oh, okay. Thanks."

Then, they walked together in the direction of the parking lot. Just then, Rachel asked, "Old Mrs. Holt's condition comes and goes. Is it really suitable for her to stay here alone?"

"When she was clear-headed, I talked to her about letting her stay in a nursing home, but she rejected the idea. She said that it's quiet in the woods, and there are too many people in the nursing home, so she refused to move."

"She looks quite friendly, though. Does she not like the liveliness?" "People tend to have their own thoughts when they age. She's really stubborn, so I'm not sure either." Hearing that, Rachel nodded and looked as though she had something on her mind.

Justin thought that she was worried about the shares of Hudson Pharmaceuticals, so he comforted her by saying, "Don't worry, Old Mrs. Holt said that she's going to make a will. Since Evan doesn't treat her well, I guess the shares won't likely go into his hands."

"That's not what I'm thinking." She shook her head. "I'm just thinking that she has worked her whole life for others, but she doesn't have any children beside her in the end; she's just like my grandma." "Perhaps they don't regret it."

Rachel was startled by his words. Then, Justin continued, "Although Old Mrs. Holt doesn't have a child of her own, her husband showed a lot of affection toward her when he was alive. Even when he made his will before his death, he was thinking about her. I think it's already sufficient to have a person always having you in their mind like this in your life. Just like Grandma, she treated your mother as her own daughter, right?"

It didn't necessarily mean that a person's life would be happy even if they got married and had a child. Sometimes, a good relationship with family and friends could embellish a person's life. When compared to the lives of those married couples who were always arguing and having unfilial children, the complacency that the former achieved was real happiness.

"If Grandma is still alive, she won't regret not having her own biological child. What she'll hope for the most is for you to live a good life. Am I right?"

When Rachel heard that, she answered with a nod, "Yeah, you're right." The thing that Grandma hoped for the most was for Rachel to live a good life. She was trying hard to get over it too. "By the way, what's your decision regarding the charity foundation?"

"I've thought about it. I have quite a lot of free time now, and I think it'll be good for me to find something to do. Also, there's a charity fundraising campaign that I've been in charge of, so I decided to listen to your advice."

"In that case, do you know that... Julian is running for the election too?"

"I heard that." "You should've heard about his approval rating, then." "Yeah, Frankie told me about it." Looking at his rock-solid poker face as usual, Rachel took the weight off her mind as well.

"You seem like you have your own thoughts about it already. I'll wish you luck, then." From an objective point of view, Justin had the experience and connections in charity, so he could carry out the duty handily. If this was a fair election, he would get the vice president's seat.

However, there was never complete fairness in this world. Sometimes, people had to give in to Machiavellian maneuvers. Justin was someone who had been through such principles, so Rachel believed that he had prepared himself for it. When Rachel returned from St. Ignatius Church, it was already nighttime.

As soon as she entered the house, she could smell pizza. She put down her car keys and walked into the house while taking off her coat before ranting, "Jolly, did you feed the kids junk food again? Is it so hard to just make pasta?"

Jolly was lying on the couch, watching a drama as though she was stuck on the piece of furniture. There was still unfinished pizza and drinks on the coffee table. Rachel simply took a piece of the pizza and put it into her mouth..

When she saw that, Jolly rolled her eyes at Rachel. "You're enjoying it too, so you can't scold me for it." "By the way, you've already declared your relationship with Leroy publicly, so when are you moving out? Why are you still staying here?"

"Why? Do you not like it now?" Jolly turned over. "We split fifty-fifty to purchase this house, so I have the right to access half of it."

"Fine. You're saying like I'm chasing you away. I'm just afraid that you're always away from Leroy, and there might be an appearance of another woman."

"That's funny. Even before another woman appears, I think my parents are going to separate us first." A startled Rachel asked, "Mr. and Mrs. Carter still haven't agreed to your relationship?"

"Yeah." Jolly nodded and sighed resignedly. "I don't understand. I never knew there was a rule about not dating people from the entertainment industry in my family. My parents just don't like everything about Leroy. What's wrong with them?"

“Even his face? Don’t they like his face?” Jolly nodded. “They said that it’s a flaw for men to have pretty faces.” “Ryan is good looking too.” Rachel used the best son-in-law candidate in Jolly’s parents’ eyes as a benchmark.

“That’s exactly what I said. Do you know what my mom said? She played along and said that his face was just right. She even asked me to think about marrying him again.”

“Really? He has already been married two times. Are you sure she doesn’t mind?”

“God knows!” Jolly was rolling her eyes to the back of her head. “I don’t even want to go home now. Ryan is like a plaster sticking to the living room of my house. I get annoyed every time I see him.”

Rachel shook her head upon hearing that. She was really impressed by Ryan as he hadn’t given up yet after receiving the cold shoulder from Jolly for such a long time. As expected, a son was more important than anything else in men’s eyes, and the mother’s status would only rise after giving birth to a son.

As they were talking, she looked at the vase on the dining table from the corner of her eye. “Did you buy flowers?”

In the vase was a bouquet of gorgeous, budding white roses. Under the yellow light, they looked extra beautiful. The flowers were not there yet when she left the house this morning.

“Oh, that? Mrs. Gibson brought it here.”

“Mrs. Gibson?” Rachel had surprise written all over her face. Since they didn’t have time for chores, they hired a permanent cleaner once a week to clean the house. Mrs. Gibson was a great worker since she was serious about her job, but Rachel had never heard of a cleaner growing flowers.

“Yeah, I saw her putting the flowers into the vase quite professionally. She said that she saw the vase and found it beautiful when she came here previously. Since it would be a waste if it was left empty, she bought a bouquet here.”

Hearing that, Rachel seemed to have something on her mind. “She’s really attentive. We should increase her pay next time.” “You decide. I have no comment.”

After she showered, Rachel came out of the bathroom and grabbed her phone by the bedside. Immediately, she saw an unread message. ‘President Hudson, are you free tomorrow night? Let’s have dinner together.’

There was only silence at her end.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 458

When Rachel saw the caller ID, she knitted her brows together and looked outside of her bedroom subconsciously. The message was from Ryan.

“Is President Sutton asking me out for dinner? Did he send the text to the wrong person?” She considered herself a stranger to Ryan since she didn’t have any interactions with him. Having his contact number was solely because of Jolly, and she hadn’t contacted him before since she just added him out of courtesy.

However, Ryan called her on the phone right away. After a moment of hesitation, Rachel picked up the call. “Hello?”

“Don’t get me wrong. There’s a dinner gathering with the Riverdale Chamber of Commerce tomorrow night. There will be more than ten people attending. It’s a chance for us to exchange our resources, so it’ll be mutually beneficial for everyone.”

“I don’t think there are any business dealings between Hudson Pharmaceuticals and your company, President Sutton.” “That’s just for now. Who knows if there will be one in the future?”

“If you’re trying to approach Jolly through me, I’m afraid that this will not work. You can’t force someone into a relationship, and I won’t provide Jolly with any advice when she’s choosing her other half.”

“I think I know Jolly’s personality better than you, President Hudson.” Ryan’s tone remained indifferent. “If she knows that I’m buying the people around her so that I can approach her, I think she’ll hate me even more.”

“Why try if you know?” “It doesn’t matter whether you believe me or not. I’m just pulling strings for the Chamber of Commerce gathering. It just so happens that a close partner of mine is asking for my help to find a reliable supplier for medical supplies and devices in Riverdale. .

I just think that Hudson Pharmaceuticals would be a suitable candidate, both professionally and personally. I heard that Hudson Pharmaceuticals has lost a few big clients and is probably having a liquidity constraint, am I right?”

When she heard that, Rachel frowned a little. “Thank you for your concern, President Sutton. However, I’m not sure where you heard such a rumor since Hudson Pharmaceuticals is doing fine.”

“Well, just take this as me putting a cherry on the cake for Hudson Pharmaceuticals. As for the gathering tomorrow, you can decide for yourself whether you want to be there or not. I’ve sent you the address.”

“Thank you, President Sutton.” After hanging up the phone, Rachel held her phone in her hand and sat at the side of the bed.

In truth, Hudson Pharmaceuticals was experiencing a liquidity constraint. The news about Jefferey’s imprisonment for smuggling goods had caused Hudson Pharmaceuticals to be the key inspection target of the Commerce Bureau. Even when the partners were clean, no one would want to be marked all day. This caused a decrease in the number of collaborations Hudson Pharmaceuticals had.

If what Ryan said was legitimate, this could be good news for the company. However, when Rachel recalled the hatred Jolly had for him, she frowned and gave up on this idea. The next afternoon, Rachel and Jolly were having lunch in the office.

Just then, Rachel’s assistant rushed into the room with several documents in her arms. “President Hudson, Miss Carter.” Rachel raised her head. “Didn’t I ask you to rest? What’s making you so flustered?”

This new assistant of hers was really active. He wouldn’t rest during break time and always continued working after having two pieces of bread. Even Rachel, who was the president, couldn’t compare herself to him..

The assistant said, “It’s good news. There’s a medical device company in Shans, and their president will be here in Riverdale for two days. Their branding is really good, but there’s a technical deficiency in their production since they lack professionals in R&D technology. If we can invite them to collaborate with us, we’ll have a continuation in the capital chain.”

“Why didn’t you mention such good news earlier? Which company is it?” Jolly put down her utensils immediately. “Quick, spit it. If this works out, you’ll play a huge part in it.” Then, the assistant replied, “It’s Star Medical.”

“Star Medical?” Jolly’s eyes sparkled as soon as she heard that. She then turned to look at Rachel. “This company is not bad. It was listed in Enistan three years ago, and it has a great reputation. I heard that their president was very particular about details. In fact, he has a strict benchmark for all of its partner factories and companies. If we can collaborate with them, it will indirectly prove our competence.”

Rachel looked delighted as well. “Did their president come here in person? Which hotel is he staying at? What’s his schedule?”

"I've checked everything. President Sanchez has an appointment tonight at Nertonham Palace Hotel. It's a dinner gathering with the Riverdale Chamber of Commerce. They start at 7.00PM, and the event is expected to end around 9.00PM."

As soon as Rachel heard the address, she furrowed her brows. However, Jolly didn't realize her anomaly and told the assistant excitedly. "You should prepare all the documents and go ambush him with me tonight. I believe that he'll work with us," she said. "Okay, I'll prepare them now."

"No, wait." Rachel cut them off all of a sudden and stopped the assistant. When they heard that, the assistant and Jolly were both stunned. "What is it?" Jolly looked at Rachel in confusion. With a frown, Rachel looked at the assistant. The assistant understood immediately. "I'll be outside."

When the office door was shut, Jolly asked Rachel puzzledly, "It's such a good opportunity, so why are you rejecting it? Hudson Pharmaceuticals is in a terrible financial situation. If we can find a stable partner to help us, our reputation will certainly improve."

"There's no such thing as free lunch in this world." Rachel didn't plan to hide it from Jolly and gave the woman her phone. "Look, this is what Ryan sent me yesterday."

"Ryan?" Jolly's expression changed at once. She took the phone and saw the text on the screen. "He asked you out for dinner?"

"It's a gathering with the Chamber of Commerce. Look at the address." "Nertonham Palace?" Jolly frowned. "Why is it the same place?"

"If I'm not mistaken, Xander probably came across President Sanchez, who happens to be the partner that Ryan wanted to introduce to me last night. He said that he was trying to pull strings and help Hudson Pharmaceuticals get through this crisis."

"What did you reply?"

"I rejected him." Jolly hugged Rachel at once. "Good job! I hereby announce that you're my real sister! You are not even moved by such a temptation in front of you."

"You can praise me, but can you not strangle me?" Rachel coughed a few times and explained, "I don't have any interactions with Ryan in the first place. Although he said that it's just business to help me pull strings, there are so many pharmaceutical factories and companies in Riverdale, and we're not the only reliable one. I don't think that he'll offer me such a good opportunity without any reason. I couldn't think of any other reason other than you, so I rejected him just in case."

As she held Rachel's hand, Jolly tried to calm her joyous feelings. After calming down, she said, "Why don't you go and take a look, Chris?"

“What? Have you put aside your differences with him already?”

“No way, it’ll only happen in his dreams.” Jolly had a disdainful look on her face. “I just think that since we know what’s on his mind, we don’t have anything to be afraid of. Even if it wasn’t for his invitation, we’d still be contacting President Sanchez anyway. Why should we waste this chance because of him?”

When she heard that, Rachel put on a surprised look. “Is that really what you think? You won’t be angry if I go?”

“Angry? Perhaps a little, but I’ll be angrier if we lose a deal because of him.” As Jolly said that, she patted Rachel’s hand. “Thus, you have to take down President Sanchez!”

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 459

“Are you serious?” Rachel was surprised. “Last time, I remember you saying that we need to stick together when it comes to issues with your relationship. Otherwise, you wouldn’t be friends with me anymore.”

When she met Jolly overseas, the latter had talked to her about this seriously. No matter what kind of choices they faced in the future, they had to stick together if it was related to their friendship. Otherwise, Jolly would fall out with her for sure. But now, Jolly was asking her to attend the dinner that Ryan had pulled some strings for when she was on bad terms with him.

“I’m not who I used to be anymore.” Jolly put on a proud look. “When I was just idling through life back then, I thought that how could all these men have a better life than me? How could he get over the relationship so quickly and start all over again? I hated him so much at that time that I wanted to kill him and feed his corpse to dogs.”

“But after that, I got over it myself too. Do you know that I rarely think about him anymore? I’m not saying that I’ve moved on completely since I was really devastated for those few years, but I just feel that I’m having a good life now, so I don’t have to waste my time hating him. He’s nothing anyway!”

As she said that, she heaved a sigh of relief as though she had lifted the weight off her shoulders. “Simply put, you shouldn’t give up on this opportunity because of me. This is business, after all. More importantly, do you think that people like Ryan will give up on

their own interests to help others? Wake up! He's not a God who'll benefit everybody, he's just a human who never does things without purpose."

After thinking for quite some time, Rachel nodded. She felt that what Jolly said was reasonable. If Ryan was doing this just for Jolly, he didn't have to embarrass himself over and over again. It was just because he was too greedy and wanted everything. Jolly knew him too well, so that was why she was tired of him.

This would not be a simple dinner, and the collaboration with President Sanchez would not be easy either. Rachel pulled herself together. "In that case, I'll go to the dinner tonight."

"I'll take you there and wait for you outside." Jolly acted on what she said. She didn't mind, but she was just worried about her safety.

At 7.00PM in the suite of the Nertonham Palace Hotel, Rachel had just gotten off the elevator. When she was about to send a text to Ryan, she saw him standing at the entrance of the suite. "Here."

"Thank you, President Sutton. You didn't have to come out to take me in." "I should. After all, I'm the one who pulled the strings and whatnot. You're also the only lady here tonight, President Hudson. Naturally, I should look after you."

When she heard that, Rachel gave him a glimpse and said indifferently, "From what I remember, you didn't treat me like this previously, President Sutton."

When she was investigating the case earlier, Ryan was always mean mugging her since he felt that she was taking risks with Jolly.

"I'll have three glasses of wine later as a penalty to apologize for those unhappy episodes previously." "It's fine. If you can make this deal a success, I should be toasting you instead."

When the waiter opened the suite's door, Ryan gestured for her to enter first and introduced her to everyone in the suite. "Let me make the introductions. This is Hudson Pharmaceuticals" President Hudson."

There was a big round table in the suite, and everyone inside was a member of the Chamber of Commerce. They treated Rachel with courtesy when they saw her. "Seeing for myself is better than hearing from others. Indeed, she's a beautiful lady."

"Not only is she beautiful, but she must also be extremely talented as well to carry the whole Hudson Pharmaceuticals on her shoulders. She's even better than most of the men out there."

After making small talk, Rachel finally sat down when Ryan gave her the signal. "This is President Sanchez of Star Medical." The man seated on his right was around forty years old and was a little chubby, giving people the impression that he was simple and honest. After he shook hands with Rachel, he let go of her hand right after. "Owen Sanchez."

"Rachel Hudson," Rachel introduced herself politely too. Ryan then said, "Owen, didn't you ask me to find a suitable pharmaceutical factory in Riverdale to collaborate with you? The person in front of you is the most suitable one."

"Is that so?" Owen asked in surprise. "Is Hudson Pharmaceuticals doing spare parts for medical devices now?"

Rachel nodded calmly. "Of course. Right now, the competition in the medical industry is so fierce that expanding into new markets is the only way to survive. Hudson Pharmaceuticals has put a lot of effort into hiring professionals in R&D to refine our medical devices."

When Owen heard that, he showed interest immediately and started asking her questions. As Rachel had previously discovered, President Sanchez of Star Medical was a careful person. He had a high benchmark for product quality. If Rachel wasn't as omniscient as she was, she wouldn't be able to answer his questions for sure.

"If you're interested, you can come and visit our factory some other day. You're welcome at any time." "Sure, I'll definitely be there."

As they were talking, there was someone outside of the suite. "President Peters, you're finally here." Although she didn't know who had said that, Rachel felt her heart skipping a beat before she lifted her head. It was Julian indeed.

"I'm sorry to keep everyone waiting. The road was a little congested. I'll drink a cup of wine later as penalty for being late." Julian saw Rachel as well, but he wasn't surprised. "You can sit here, President Peters."

"No, this seat is more suitable for him." Ryan's voice came from her side. When she heard that, Rachel clenched her fists and knitted her brows slightly. Meanwhile, Ryan stood up and gave his seat to Julian.

"Long time no see," Julian greeted Rachel softly as soon as he sat down. However, she remained silent with her brows furrowed. She had no idea how to face a former friend in such a situation.

When he noticed that, Julian said, "We're going to meet each other during occasions like this in the future. If you keep hiding from me, how can you help Hudson Pharmaceuticals?"

After saying that, he waved his hand and asked the waiter to change the wine glass in front of her into juice. Everyone in the room had different looks on their faces upon witnessing that, and they stared at each other awkwardly.

For the sake of their friendship in the past, Rachel didn't want to embarrass him publicly either. Hence, she forced a smile and stepped back quietly, watching them toast each other while they drank glass after glass at the table.

"President Peters, I heard that the final list of the candidates for the election has been released. Justin is on the list as well."

Rachel was unsure of who said that, but she felt her heart sinking all of a sudden. At this moment, Ryan said, "His approval ratings are not very high anyway. We're all going to vote for President Peters on that day, right?"

Rachel immediately stared at Julian upon hearing that, and she wanted to know the real purpose of this dinner.

When Julian noticed her gaze, he glimpsed at her before saying, "After all, the establishment of the Riverdale Charity Foundation is a success mostly because of the strong support from the Burton Group. Justin merely borrowed the Burton Group's name. Ultimately, the vice president's seat is Burton Group's and has nothing to do with him."

Rachel was in disbelief when she heard that. After putting all his heart and sweat into the charity business for so many years, Justin's hard work was nullified with just a few words by Julian. She couldn't believe that the kind Dr. Peters could say such a thing.

There could be many tactics in business rivalry, but taking credit for the kind acts of others was just despicable.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 460

Rachel was in shock as she clenched her fists. Then, Ryan's voice resonated from the table as he wore a mere smile and asked, "President Hudson is going to vote for President Peters too, right?"

She just had a deal with President Sanchez. If she embarrassed the host now, how could she continue with the collaboration? Certainly, Ryan did this on purpose to land her in a difficult position.

She immediately recalled Jolly's comment about him—he never did things without a purpose. How could he be so kind to help Rachel pull strings and save the ruptured capital chain of Hudson Pharmaceuticals? This was obviously a trap that he set up with Julian for her. It went without saying how many of the Chamber of Commerce's members here were bribed, as well as how many of them had their weaknesses in Julian's hand.

"I don't feel so well. I should head back first." Rachel stood up all of a sudden without batting an eyelid at the surprised expressions of the others and she left right after saying so.

"Sorry, everyone. You guys should continue while I go after her." Julian followed behind the woman. With the thought of staying out of trouble, she rushed out of the place but was stopped by him. "Rachel."

Rachel bluntly swung his hand off. "I really have something to do. Jolly is waiting for me outside." "Are you holding up your guard against me? Do you think I'd do anything to you?"

"I wasn't before this; I was simply being cautious of Ryan. I didn't think that I'd need to be guarded against you now, though." She had a complicated look on her face. "I don't understand how you ended up like this, Julian."

"How did I end up?" When she heard that, she just gave him a gaze without saying anything. At this moment, Julian looked at her calmly and said, "I'll say it for you if you don't want to. I've become a greedy, despicable, and avaricious person that you despise and scorn."

Rachel could feel her brows ticking. Even when she had some of those thoughts, she would keep them to herself and wouldn't really comment on a person in this way since her mannerisms didn't allow her to do so. However, she didn't feel delighted at all when he said it out loud. She just felt worse. "You don't have to do this, Julian."

"Why not?" Julian looked at her. "If I don't do this, would I be able to hold onto my status in the Burton Group? Do you know that since the day I received the will, there's been no turning back for me anymore?"

Jason had committed adultery with Julian's mother and made him into an illegitimate child. In fact, they even drugged Arthur and killed him. "Do you think that I don't know how they talked about me in private despite not saying it in front of me? In their eyes, I'll forever be an illegitimate child who appeared out of nowhere."

"You can just ignore what they say." "Then, what? Ignore them and continue to be a mediocre surgeon? Should I just pretend I never heard all those rumors?" He was getting hot-tempered all of a sudden. It was probably because he had drunk a few glasses of wine, and there was a trace of him being drunk on his face.

He stared at Rachel and sassed, "I want to replace Justin completely. Not only that, I want to outperform him and have a higher status than him so that those people who hold grudges against me wouldn't dare to say a word in front of me anymore!"

When she heard that, she had mixed feelings. Rachel looked at the man in front of her, her gaze turning pitiful. "If that's really what you want, I'm not in the place to interfere with you either." She turned around and left right after she said that.

"Wait." Julian stopped her. "Who are you going to vote for during the election?" "I'll vote for whoever is fit for the position."

"Justin? Just say it. He's the most suitable candidate in your eyes, isn't he?" Julian was becoming clear-headed. He then said coldly, "However, you've seen it with your own eyes too. Half of the people who are going to vote are here today, and the result is already obvious."

Then, he continued, "I purposely invited President Sanchez here when I heard that Hudson Pharmaceuticals was in trouble. Rachel, I told you that I'd help you out. I will never go back on my word."

Rachel took a deep breath upon hearing that. "Had you not become who you are now, I would've happily accepted your favor. However, I don't dare accept anything from you anymore when you're like this. People should keep to their boundaries, Julian. Where's yours? Where's your boundary?" After leaving that sentence in the air, she gave him a stare and left.

As Julian saw her figure disappearing from the elevator, he turned around and landed a punch on the wall with a ghastly expression on his face. At this moment, a tall figure slowly approached him from behind. "Are you okay?"

When Julian heard the voice, he raised his head and saw Ryan. "I'm fine." "Do you still need President Sanchez to keep in touch with Hudson Pharmaceuticals?"

"There's no need for that. Julian had a gloomy look. "Let her suffer a little. Only then she'll know that no one can help her except me."

Ryan didn't express his opinion as he looked at the elevator far away and raised his brows. "Well, just don't regret it later. Not everything needs to be honed, you know."

Never underestimate a woman's resilience. When she's capable of solving a problem on her own, that's when you'll really lose her. However, it was obvious that Julian didn't

understand this right now, just like how he hadn't back then, On the other hand, Rachel left the hotel. As soon as she entered the car, Jolly jumped up from the reclined seat. "Why are you out here: so soon? I didn't even finish playing two rounds of my game." "Ryan's not the one who organized this gathering."

"What? Who organized it, then?"

"Julian," Rachel answered bluntly. "What the hell?" Jolly was stunned for a moment after that. "When did they come together?"

"Didn't you say that Ryan's someone who wouldn't do things without a purpose? He has the voting invitation for the election this time, so Julian naturally drew him in. It's mutually beneficial for them, so they'll surely band together."

"How despicable." She was filled with indignation. "Are you okay? Did he do anything to you since he tricked you into coming here?"

"Of course I'm fine. There are so many people inside, after all."

"I mean, did Julian say anything to you?" When Rachel heard Julian's name, she still felt a little upset on the inside, and her voice became heavy too. "He didn't say much. I think he just wanted to show me how good his life is now and how many people are flattering and buttering him up. Also, he's hoping I'd understand his actions."

"Well, how did that turn out?" "We're parting ways." These concise words made Rachel ambivalent. Jolly sighed upon hearing that. "What is he doing? Why can't he just focus on inheriting the Burton Group? Why does he need to be involved in the Riverdale Charity Foundation? Great, he's fallen out with you again."

"I've decided to vote for Justin in the election two days later." Jolly was in total shock after hearing what Rachel said. "You're going to do a one-eighty on Julian?" After all, many people in their circle thought that they were going to get married soon.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.