

My mute bride

Chapter 531

Rachel became anxious as she heard the commotion. If Shannon noticed anything suspicious, Leroy and even Jolly herself wouldn't be able to escape.

However, Shannon didn't really care about the wedding. Ten minutes before it started, she had left the venue alone to head to the lounge. As she did so, her assistant whispered something in her ear and handed her an elegant-looking box. Her expression tightened at once. "Who's the person who sent this? Also, where are they?"

"It was a young girl."

"How could it be? Wasn't it Mr. Keaton?"

Her assistant frantically explained, "She had an invitation for Mr. Keaton, but she claimed to be his niece. She's acting as his substitute for the wedding, so she brought a gift."

Hearing this, Shannon felt slightly disappointed but also relieved. These emotions seemed to contradict each other yet went well together.

Her gaze sharpened as she stared at the box. This box looked similar to the one Mr. Brook had sent someone to give her husband. She had seen that box in her husband's study when he hadn't fallen ill. So far, she had seen three similar-looking boxes, yet she had no idea what was inside this box.

"Take good care of that girl. I want to see her after the ceremony."

"Yes, ma'am."

Shannon waved her hand to dismiss her assistant, then avoided everyone else as she headed alone to the lounge with the box. She didn't care whether or not the wedding would be celebrated, as long as the ceremony was enough to make everyone in Enistan acknowledge the union between Lush and the Grandeur Group via marriage. After all, the common practice here was to publish newspaper announcements and get officiated. As long as there was a public announcement and wedding ceremony, the couple would be considered legally married and would not even need to get a marriage license.

In the lounge, Shannon placed the wooden box on the coffee table and studied it carefully. It was slightly larger than her palm, with intricate patterns carved all over it. There was a simple copper lock the size of her thumbnail hanging from the latch.

Howard had sent this gift, but hadn't provided a key. She frowned and pulled the lock; it rattled once but did not come off. If she wanted to open the box without damaging it, she would have to find a locksmith.

Her thoughts were interrupted by sounds of urgent knocking at the door. She quickly stashed the box inside the safe in the lounge before answering, "Come in."

"Ma'am, something is wrong."

Shannon frowned at once. "What happened?"

"Miss Frazier's having an episode."

Carmen Frazier was the bride for today. The heiress of the Grandeur Group was also the daughter of Mrs. Bennett's eldest brother. However, she was born with epilepsy and suffered from episodes when overly excited or anxious. If not for her condition, she would have gotten betrothed sooner, and Leroy wouldn't even have a chance.

At that moment, guests inside the venue were talking among themselves. Carmen had been taken away by a doctor as Leroy followed. Jolly had wanted to go after them, but Rachel blocked her way. "Calm down."

"I can't."

Rachel grabbed Jolly's arm and lowered her voice. "Don't be rash, or I will hold you back-1 don't care if someone realizes we know each other."

"Fine." Jolly gritted her teeth. "I'll wait here. Let me go first."

"You have to keep your word."

"Okay

Rachel only relaxed her grip when she was sure Jolly wouldn't go anywhere, and she then created a distance between them. At that point, Justin walked to Rachel's side and frowned. "I just asked around, and it seems that the bride has epilepsy."

Rachel was surprised by this, and she muttered, "So that's why she has never shown her face, even though she is the second heiress to the Grandeur Group. The Enistan media have never taken a picture of her, as her family was extremely protective of her."

"It's related to their family honor. Besides, it's not just epilepsy."

"Not just epilepsy?" Rachel frowned, suddenly remembering some suspicious details. "Something felt wrong when I saw her and Leroy come down the stairs."

“You saw that too?”

“Yes.”

They looked at each other, sharing a knowing look. Justin then looked behind Rachel, suddenly frowning. “Where’s Jolly?”

She turned around at once, but Jolly was nowhere to be seen. Rachel just knew they shouldn’t have trusted Jolly when she said she wouldn’t act recklessly.

“Let’s split up and find her.”

On the other hand, the doctor had given Carmen emergency aid. She lay on the bed and as soon as she calmed down, she opened her eyes while looking confused.

“Carmen, how are you feeling?” Shannon grabbed her hand. “Are you feeling better?”

Carmen shook her head blankly but then nodded as she thought of something. “Ma’am, the guests are still waiting.” The voice of Shannon’s assistant came from behind. Shannon glanced at her assistant. “Alright. Carmen, have a good rest.”

She then rose to her feet. Before leaving, she glanced at the sofa where Leroy was sitting and told him, “The wedding had to stop halfway through but since the marriage has been officialized, both you and Carmen are now legally married. Stay here and take care of her, then come out when you have been told to.”

He frowned and did not say anything. Shannon never did like him anyway, so she just looked at him coolly before leaving. It was now only Leroy and Carmen in the room.

Carmen turned her head to the side and asked him quietly, “Are you angry?”

She looked as helpless as a child who had done something wrong. He forced a bitter smile. “No.”

She was still staring at him. She did not inquire further, yet she studied him as if trying to deduce something from his expression. Her innocent look made him feel bad for her.

Leroy stood up and commented, “Rest for a little while. I’ll get you a cup of water.”

Carmen nodded once and lay down obediently. However, he did not go get water for her; instead, he opened the door, looked left and right then walked straight out.

The resort was huge, and each level had countless rooms like in a medieval castle. Jolly had followed the doctor all the way here, but had gotten lost in the corridors.

F*cking Leroy! Men are disgusting! Jolly cursed internally as she searched. The way he had looked at her uncaringly during the wedding made her yearn to slap him hard when she found him. The man had seen her, yet he pretended not to. If not for the bride suddenly collapsing, would he have completed the wedding ceremony right in front of her?

Voices came from around the corner.

“Ma’am, do you want to reorganize the whole event?”

“There’s no need.”

“But that’s what President Frazier wants.”

“I’ll talk to my brother.”

Jolly leaned on the wall, tilting her head as she searched for the source of the voices. Suddenly, a pair of hands grabbed her from behind and dragged her backward.

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

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Someone muffled Jolly’s scream with their hand before she could make a sound. As she lifted her knee to attack the man in his weakest spot, she stopped in the air immediately when she saw his face. I almost ruined my certain happiness for the rest of my life with a knee strike.

Leroy released her once she calmed down. “Why are you here?”

His words triggered her anger, so she smacked him on his chest, causing Leroy to grunt as he took a step back.

“Why am I here? What do you think? Do I look like I’m here to attend your wedding?”

“You shouldn’t be here.”

“But I am! They allowed me to enter! Didn’t you want the answer to why I’m here? I’m here to steal you from the bride!”

At that, Leroy said bitterly, "We already broke up."

"I don't care! I didn't agree with that decision! I regret it! Who gives you the right to break up with me?"

Jolly, we aren't kids anymore. We can't keep our life going with only enthusiasm. If there is a chance that I might endanger your life in the future, I'd rather we never met each other."

Leroy was gentle and composed like usual, but also determined to cut ties with Jolly. Even though he wanted to rush down the platform and embrace her tightly the moment he saw her at the wedding, he kept calm. He knew he couldn't do that, even if he wanted to keep her in his life. "You can be free without me."

"That's what you think. You think you're doing this for my own good."

"I have one question, though. Are you fine with risking your family and friends' safety because of me, just like what happened to your parents last time?"

Jolly froze at Leroy's question. Her cell phone chose that moment to ring, and it was a call from Rachel. Jolly didn't plan to avoid Leroy as she answered her phone impatiently before him, "Hello?"

"Jolly, where are you?" Rachel sounded worried. "I found Leroy," Jolly said as she raised her head to watch him and croaked, "But he doesn't want to go with me."

"Jolly, listen to me-"

Leroy couldn't hear their conversation, but he could see Jolly's eyes shining as she listened to the caller.

Ending the call, Jolly then took the direct approach as she stared at the man intensely. "You insist on breaking up with me only to protect me and the others around me, right?"

He scowled as she placed her hands on his shoulders and pushed him against the wall to stop him from getting away. "What if I tell you that my parent's disappearance last time has nothing to do with Lush?"

"But that's impossible."

"Ryan did it."

Leroy's eyes widened at the unexpected answer. At the same time, Rachel and Justin were still at the banquet hall.

As the call ended, she turned her attention to him and asked, “Did Ryan really do all these things? Is he even influential in another country? How did he know where Mr. and Mrs. Carter were going for vacation?”

Five minutes ago, Justin received a call from Frankie to report his findings. Frankie had found out that Ryan was the culprit of Jolly’s parents being trapped in the elevator during Springfest.

Once Frankie finished his report, Justin asked Rachel to call Jolly. Justin expected Leroy wouldn’t leave with Jolly easily since he had scruples about putting Jolly’s family in danger, so he wouldn’t risk repeating it.

But what if Mrs. Bennett never thought about setting them up?

“Frankie told me that Julian was in Seranka during the Springfest.”

“Seranka?” Rachel froze before she questioned, “What do you mean? What do Julian’s whereabouts have anything to do with Ryan?”

A thought flashed through her mind soon after she finished her words, and her expression changed. Julian told me he will be celebrating the Springfest in Montenegro.

Justin only spoke calmly. “I remember that President Carter and his wife were having their vacation near Seranka.”

Rachel tightened her fists at her side. “Rae, I understand if you need time to process this. However, I want to remind you that Julian has changed. I don’t know his reasons, but I can tell you that he’ll stop at nothing and go to any lengths.”

She gasped as anxiety flooded her mind. Meanwhile, the order of the wedding was restored after a while. Even though there were discussions about the bride fainting while foaming at the mouth when she was walking the red carpet, most guests knew best not to talk about it.

After all, it was an alliance marriage between the Lush Enterprise and the Grandeur Group. They didn’t want any trouble by gossiping about others’ affairs.

“Brother, I didn’t mean to make a hasty decision, but can you see Carmen? We have to avoid triggering her as she’s not in the condition to face the guests. We can’t force her to face the public again.” Shannon was persuading Carmen’s father, who was both her elder brother and the president of the Grandeur Group, to change his mind.

The man had a serious face. Even though he wasn’t content with her decision, he understood the need. Seeing the determination on his face wavered, Shannon added, “Besides, do you want the others to trouble Carmen with their gossip? However, we can organize the ceremony again if you’re fine with it.”

The man answered after a moment of pondering, "Fine, we'll do as you say."

Shannon sighed in relief. "Brother, you don't need to worry. I'll take care of Carmen when she joins our family. I won't allow anything to happen to her."

Even though Shannon promised to take care of Carmen, the bridegroom was running away. Meanwhile, Frankie sent a message to inform Rachel and Justin. 'We're on the way to the airport.'

Raising her head, she asked Justin, "I suppose we're leaving too?"

"You're right, but it'll only be polite to tell the host family."

"Of course."

Justin put the cup down, and Rachel naturally linked her arm through his as she said, "Let's go."

Shannon didn't mind them staying or leaving. When she heard they were about to catch a flight that night, she was only taken aback for a moment before she expressed her regrets. "I hope that I can see both of you again."

"Of course." Justin and Rachel then headed for the exits. Anyone could see that the pair were a good match even if one were to look at them from behind.

After they passed by numerous guests on their way, Rachel said, "I guess Leroy and Jolly have to leave Riverdale and lay low for a while."

"Don't worry. I've arranged everything."

"I'm worried about Mr. and Mrs. Carter, not them. What if they heard that Jolly came to Enistan to steal Leroy, then elope to a foreign country and won't be back any time soon? Will they be fine with it?"

"You don't think they already knew?"

"They knew it the whole time?" Rachel came to a stop and she was utterly surprised.

Justin only replied in resignation, "A mother knows her daughter best. President Carter called me not long after Jolly broke up with Leroy. He used the name of the business to start the conversation, but he asked about Leroy instead. Do you still think they know nothing?"

Rachel was taken aback by the truth. However, before she could ask anything, she narrowed her eyes as she noticed the person who was standing far away, and she felt her heart skip a beat.

“Rae, are you okay?”

“We have to go!”

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

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“Rae, what’s wrong?” Justin asked as Rachel dragged him along hastily toward the exit. However, she didn’t have enough strength to pull him with her easily. Moreover, she was wearing a gown, which constrained her movements.

She tripped before she could make it to the exit as she had stepped on her dress. Fortunately, Justin reacted in time to grab her from falling and helped her to regain her balance. “Are you okay?”

Nodding her head, she was at a loss for words when she raised her head and found the person she wanted to avoid was watching them.

The person stared at the duo with a gloomy and sharp look in his eyes, much like a bird of prey hovering above the cliff and waiting for an opportunity to feed on the animal flesh. He watched them intensely, his attention glued to them. Rachel shivered as his eyes landed on her.

After she had experienced the smuggling case in Yatruinia last year and returned to Riverdale, the same pair of eyes had been the cause of her frequent nightmares for a while ever since.

She pulled her hand out from Justin’s grip immediately. Scowling at her sudden change, he tried to turn his head to look at the person, but was stopped as Rachel growled in a low voice, ‘Don’t look!’

Rachel then explained, “Listen to me, stay here and wait for Frankie. I’ve got to go.”

“Where are you going?”

“Stop asking!” Rachel almost broke down, and it was as if her mind was on fire. Never in a million years did she think she would see Dillon at the wedding.

Even though she knew Justin had questions, she had no time to answer him. Not wanting to take him down with her, she left the banquet hall without hesitation.

I'm safe if he didn't recognize me or didn't even see me, Rachel mused. However, that's impossible. When Rachel walked out of the banquet hall, someone stopped her.

"Long time no see, Miss Hudson," Dillon called her from behind with a cold tone.

Walking toward her casually, he circled her to inspect her and finally stopped before her. To be exact, he was standing a meter away from her, and between them were three strong men, who looked like his bodyguards. Rachel affirmed that Dillon had become more cautious since the smuggling case.

She clutched her purse to calm herself down and feigned a smile. "What a coincidence, Young Master Porter. I didn't expect to see you here!"

"Exactly what I was thinking," Dillon said with a fake smile plastered to his face. "This is not a place for reminiscing, though. Miss Hudson, may I treat you to a drink as an old acquaintance?"

Rachel took a step back, but one of the buff men stopped her in her retreat.

"Come on. Bring Miss Hudson to the tea house." As if on cue, the other two men stepped closer to her. As they were approaching, she felt that their presence was suffocating her. Dillon watched her. "Miss Hudson, are you going by yourself, or do you need their help?"

Tightening her grasp over her purse, Rachel answered with a pale look, "It's alright. I can go. there by myself."

Deep in the Idyll Vacation Villa that was surrounded by dense forests and winding paths, there was a tiny detached house situated in a multi-style courtyard. It was a private teahouse that didn't entertain just anyone. In short, people who had been invited to this place were no commoners.

The fragrance of tea was permeating the air in the room. A server dressed in traditional dress was making the tea, while someone was playing the piano behind the screen. The overall environment was elegant and relaxing. Rachel was the only one who looked out of place in her gown.

Dillon took a sip of his tea as he murmured, "Take a seat, Miss Hudson. Why are you standing? The others will accuse me for not treating my guests well if they knew it."

She remained on her spot as she spoke through gritted teeth. "Young Master Porter, I think we need to sort things out."

“Sort what out? Aren’t we partners who work happily together?”

“About the ambush, I’m-”

His expression darkened as he smashed the cup. Rachel covered her ears when she heard the cup being shattered, and her face was pale as she was scared.

Dillon then commented, “I’m sorry. My hand slipped. Did I scare you?”

Rachel didn’t dare make a move as she held her breath in front of him. Dillon is no doubt thinking of a way to torture me to ease his anger. After all, I got away with the smuggling case unscathed. He must be suspicious of me.

“Take a seat.” He spoke casually, but Rachel shivered. She wasn’t going to risk disobeying him, so she took a seat as told.

“Have a drink.”

“Thank you.”

“You’re really drinking that?” Dillon observed her from his seat. “Are you not afraid of me poisoning you?”

“I’m here now. There’s no way I can leave without your permission. If you’re killing me anyhow, it’s up to your order. Drinking the tea or not probably won’t change anything.”

“Why would I want to kill you?”

“You affirm that I’m the traitor who has leaked the information of the deal.” Seeing no point in beating around the bush, Rachel laid her cards on the table.

Dillon’s expression sank at her words. Even though it had long passed, he was still mad when he recalled that day. He would have loved to slice the traitor into pieces and feed them to sharks. He even executed a bunch of his lackeys to find out the traitor. However, Rachell was always his top suspect. “It wasn’t you?”

He took a direct approach as he added, “You disappeared since that day. Everyone involved. were being investigated ever since, including. the government of Riverdale. However, you remain unscathed because the investigators never thought that Hudson Pharmaceuticals was involved. Why do you think that was?”

“Young Master Porter, it’s because I’m not close to any of you. They’ll find nothing from me even if they tried. Not even the ledger or our records of dealing could be found.” Rachel spoke with feigned calmness. “Moreover, you accused me of getting away with it, but they have confiscated my goods too. I suffered a great loss due to it, and Hudson

Pharmaceuticals is still having severe cash flow problems. You can ask someone to investigate if you don't believe me."

The room fell into silence as she finished her words. When Dillon raised his hand, the melody of the piano stopped immediately.

The man watched her coldly as he sat opposite her. "Do you think acting all pitiful can help prove your innocence?"

"Young Master Porter, if you're having doubts, then I can't change your mind even if I explain. However, I still believe I can prove my innocence to you eventually."

"Don't you dare pretend you're innocent, Rachel Hudson! Do you think I'm playing around here?!" Dillon rose to his feet and flipped the table, causing Rachel to scream.

In contrast to her response, the waitress only stepped aside with her head hanging low, as if she had seen something similar many times. The way she kept her silence was like how a puppet behaved.

The hot water spilled on Rachel's dress as she couldn't avoid it in time. As the water seeped through her gown, she gasped at the pain of burning skin and turned pale.

At that moment, someone knocked on the door. "Young Master Porter."

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

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"Come in!" Dillon answered impatiently.

One of his men walked into the room. The man whispered something to Dillon, and Dillon's eyes shone before he steered his focus to Rachel. "It's not hard to prove your innocence, though. Perhaps the people around you will know the truth, especially your... significant other."

He even emphasized the term "significant other" as he watched her.

He wondered why her face was pale. Is it because of the hot water or what I've told her?

"Bring him in."

As Dillon finished his words, two of his men escorted another man into the room.

However, it was more like they followed the man than escorted him, as Justin's aura was overwhelming. The men behind them looked like Justin's bodyguards instead.

"Rae." It was only upon seeing Rachel that Justin felt slightly relieved.

On the contrary, Rachel was panicked to see him. "What are you doing here?!"

Dillon interrupted Justin just as the latter was about to answer, "He's here to save the damsel in distress, what else? No man can stand still when he finds that his beloved woman needs saving."

The topic shifted as Dillon remarked, "By the way, you're the first man who dares to rescue a person from me."

Justin only replied with a neutral face, "What do you want?"

"Good question. I would like to find out the answer too. However, it depends on what she did."

"What do you mean?"

"You don't know yet, do you?" Dillon sneered as he turned his focus back to Rachel. With a cold look, he pointed his finger at her. "No one dares take me as a fool like her."

"I'll settle it if it's about business." Justin stated firmly. Although he did not say that in a loud voice, that sentence reverberated throughout the room.

Much to his surprise, Rachel yelled at him. "It has nothing to do with you! Why are you here, though?"

"Rae!"

"Justin, stop meddling in others' business. Who do you take yourself as? You have no right to meddle in my business even if you're the president of the Burton Group. Moreover, you aren't anymore. I'd already be ignoring you if it isn't for Charlotte's sake."

Rachel spoke the harsh words promptly, leaving Justin with no room for discussion. Her words hurt him badly. He was taken aback by them and took time to restrain himself from showing it.

Justin didn't know whether she was being honest or not. Even if Rachel was lying, he couldn't distinguish which part of her outburst was true and which one was a falsehood.

“How interesting.” Dillon studied the two before him and applauded. “What a show! What is this drama about? Are you trying to gain my sympathy?”

He then turned to Rachel. “You can’t fool me with your poor attempt to act. I bet your words don’t work on him too because you can’t even convince me.”

Her expression sank when she heard that. “Believe it or not, I’m not acting. Keep your opinion to yourself because you don’t know what happened between him and I. Do you know he ruined my life?”

“Is that so? Tell me more. I’m interested.”

“Rae, you don’t have to do this. I’m not leaving.” Justin stood firmly as he watched her. “I’ll take you with me. Otherwise, I’ll stay here and not go anywhere.”

Clenching her fists, Rachel spoke against her will even though she was thinking differently. “It’s up to you. If you want to risk your life, be my guest.”

“Enough!” Dillon stopped them at that point, as he was getting rather bored. “Did you have fun at the performance? Stop acting all lovey-dovey! I remember that you’re divorced, so it’s too late to have a love-hate relationship, isn’t it?”

He stared into Rachel’s eyes again. “You’re trying to convince me that you don’t care about him, but every word you said was asking him to leave. Do you think I will believe you?”

“Young Master Porter, I’ll repeat it again. I was never a traitor.”

“Is that so? Let’s have a test if you’ve got nothing to hide.” A lopsided grin formed at the corner of Dillon’s lips as he gestured to the men behind Justin. “Hold him down.”

Before Justin and Rachel could respond, the goons held Justin at his sides and restrained him.

“Let go!” His face scrunched up with anger.

“I will, but not now. Did you know that cutting someone else’s arteries might end up in high arterial pressure, causing the blood to spurt from the body? It’s even possible to leave a stain on the ceiling if the blood spurted high enough.”

Drawing out a knife from the fruit bowl, Dillon pointed it at Justin’s throat as he waited for Rachel’s response. “Do you think I can slash his arteries precisely?”

Rachel looked as pale as a ghost as she muttered, “Young Master Porter, it’s true that I resent him, but I don’t want him dead. ”

“Didn’t you say it’s up to him just now?”

“You’re using him to threaten me.”

“Yes, I am.” Dillon nodded as he pressed the tip of the knife deeper into Justin’s skin. At that, the blood from Justin’s wound slid across the blade and landed on Dillon’s little finger.

He changed the knife to another hand and licked away the blood on his finger. The bloodthirst in his eyes was fearsome.

“Young Master Porter!” Rachel’s voice stopped him from continuing to injure Justin’s throat.

Dillon gave her a dark sidelong glance. “Miss Hudson, how can I help you?”

“I need a word.” She stared at him while clenching her fists at her sides.

Deep in his heart, Dillon was hoping that Rachal wasn’t the traitor. After all, he chose her as a partner by himself. If she was proven to be the whistleblower, it would indicate that he had poor judgment and was incautious of his business. “I don’t have much time. You better talk now.”

“We can continue our dealings.”

He was surprised at her suggestion. “What did you say?”

“We can cooperate again. If you’re interested, we can practice the old trading pattern. I believe that none other than Hudson Pharmaceuticals can provide the goods you need among the factories in Riverdale.”

“Are you trying to betray me a second time?” Not only did Dillon have a cold expression, he was cold-hearted too. He had learned his lesson the last time, so he wouldn’t fall for her lies again.

Rachel tightened her fists. “I won’t force you if you aren’t interested.”

However, Dillon wouldn’t say no to it. His deal had resulted in both a failure and a traitor, which caused him to lose everything. Even his base in Yatruinia was busted. It was all counted as his responsibility.

“How am I supposed to trust you?” Dillon observed Rachel as he continued, “I never make a deal with people I don’t trust, regardless of the temptation.”

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

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“Young Master Porter, I’m speaking the truth that I want to do business with you. Hudson Pharmaceuticals is facing a severe cash flow problem and you’re the only person I can seek help from.”

Rachel attempted to appeal to Dillon’s sympathy by putting herself in a vulnerable position so that he would be less suspicious of her. However, he wasn’t trusting her anymore after what happened.

“C’mom, am I for real the only one who can help you?” He smiled with a cold look in his eyes as he grabbed her neck and forced her to turn her head to look at Justin. “What about him?”

“Don’t touch her!” Justin growled, but the men pressed him onto the table.

Rachel was flushing and breathing hard as she couldn’t break free from his grasp. The words barely escaped her as she said, “I’m only trying to use him. Ask around in Riverdale and you’ll understand he’s not the man he used to be anymore.”

“Use him?” Dillon grinned. “Then, you must resent him.”

“I’ll never forget what he did to me.”

“What about I kill him for you?”

At that moment, Justin tried to resist, as if Dillon’s words were a cue to him. However, his attempt was defused by the goons behind him as they pressed his head harder and both of his hands onto the table.

Rachel screamed when Dillon raised the knife and aimed at Justin’s hand. At last, it landed between Justin’s fingers, which almost sliced his finger off.

She was drenched in sweat as she watched the scene unfold.

“Do it.” Dillon signaled one of his lackeys. “You, cut his fingers off for me.”

Rachel turned pale at his order.

The lackey yanked the knife from the table easily as told. "No!" However, it was too late when Rachel screamed to stop him.

As Dillon's lackeys were used to kill people, the man didn't even blink when he cut off Justin's finger.

After a dead silence of about three seconds, blood began to flow from where Justin lost his little finger.

As Justin listened to the blood dripping from the table, he finally realized what had happened to him. Even if he restrained himself from reacting conspicuously to the pain, his pale face was soon drenched in sweat. He was shaking uncontrollably as he gasped in pain.

"Ah!" Rachel screamed again when she saw what happened to him. Unexpectedly, she struggled out from Dillon's constraint and rushed toward Justin. However, she couldn't think of a way to stop the bleeding and she didn't even dare touch him.

Dillon watched them with a smile like a devil. "Didn't you say you don't care about him?"

"Send him to the hospital now!" Rachel shouted as soon as she came back to her senses.

However, Dillon only chuckled coldly. "There's no need for it. I'll bury him somewhere later. Since the Idyll Mountain has the best scenery in Enistan, you should be honored to be buried here like other rich guys."

"Let her go!" Justin's voice echoed from the direction of the table.

Dillon turned to him with a shocked expression. "You can still talk? You're a real man, aren't you?"

Justin's face scrunched, and it was as if his skin would split open at any time. He was trying to keep silent as he endured the pain. Even though he was perspiring due to the pain, he couldn't stop worrying about Rachel.

He spoke with difficulty as the pain devoured his mind. "You can do... anything to me, as long as you release her."

"Justin Burton!" Rachel screamed, her voice filled with heartbreak. "We're nobody to each other! You don't have to meddle in my business! How many times do I need to repeat myself? I've been using you since the first day I returned to Riverdale!"

He can survive as long as we cut ties with each other. How can a wise man like him not understand the significance of it during a life-or-death situation like now?

Even though Justin lay on the table in pain, he smiled at her to console her. "I know you're trying to help, but I want to stop lying to you."

Justin regretted everything that happened six years ago, regardless of whether they were white lies or straight-up lies. He might not be the cause of her grandmother's death, but he regretted hiding it from Rachel. If I had promised her to try my best from the beginning, maybe she wouldn't be as heartbroken as she used to be even if it didn't end well.

Our lives only last a few decades and nobody can tell what will happen next. I want to cherish every second I spent next to her with honesty, even at the cost of my life.

Dillon dragged Rachel away while Justin could only growl at them. Grabbing her neck, Dillon forced her to sit on the chair, and she could only obey with only tears falling down her cheeks.

"How noble of you both." He sent them a cold look before pulling Rachel's hair to force her to raise her chin. "What do you say? Should I kill him before your eyes or remove your clothes in front of him? Which one is better?"

Dillon's hand slid off her shoulder and stopped near her waist to toy with the sash of her dark green tulle dress.

Rachel shook uncontrollably and tried to get away, but Dillon grabbed her shoulders with force. Seeing what happened to her, Justin struggled on the table as he growled in a raspy voice, "Get your hands off her!"

"He's annoying." Dillon feigned scratching his ear as he ordered, "Shut him up."

The two men next to Justin did as told immediately as they pressed him hard to the table, leaving a trail of blood behind. During the process, more blood flowed out from Justin's wound and reddened the hem of his dress shirt.

Even if his voice was muffled by a rag, Justin didn't stop struggling all the time. He glared daggers at Dillon, and it was as though his eyes could pop out at any time.

"Maybe doing both will be more interesting." Dillon then pulled the sash off Rachel to undress her right in front of Justin.

She shook at Dillon's actions, and a strength filled her body out of nowhere and she slapped him without warning. Others' expressions changed at the scene when they heard the slap. Dillon was pressing a hand to the left side of his face as he glared at her furiously. "You b*tch! You actually slapped me?"

At that, he grabbed her shoulder and slapped her back. "You have a death wish, don't you? Tie her up!"

His goons did as ordered and came back with ropes. They ignored Rachel's attempt to wiggle out of their hold and tied her to the chair.

Dillon picked up the bloody knife and smacked it on her face. The searing pain spread across her face at that.

"You're testing my patience. A woman like you should learn her lesson. Aren't you playing hard to get? Well, I'm looking forward to what you can do."

Dillon had been longing for Rachel for a long time. Back when he was trading with her in Riverdale, he would use the name of the business to take advantage of her, but she could always find excuses to put him off. However, she had chosen to walk right into the lion's den today. As such, Dillon would gladly seize this opportunity to fulfill his wish.

Once he had a taste of her, he would dump her into the sea.

"Let go of me!" Rachel struggled, but her resistance only caused him to become more excited.

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

Chapter 536

The sound of fabric being ripped apart reverberated in the room. As Rachel saw her clothes being torn by Dillon right in front of her eyes, her face paled. She wanted to shout for help, but her voice was so hoarse from all the yelling that she could no longer make a sound.

In the distance, Justin was struggling to move, but he was being pinned down by Dillon's lackeys. He could only watch the woman he loved being humiliated in front of him helplessly. His eyes were red and looked like they were about to burst in the next second—he would kill Dillon a thousand times if he could.

Just as Dillon was about to lean toward Rachel, he heard a creak, and the door was being pushed open from the outside.

"Young Master Porter." It was a familiar female voice and the moment she spoke, Rachel already knew who that was. She hurriedly looked in the direction of the door as if she was grabbing the last chance of survival. Coraline!

"Lila?" Dillon turned to find that it was Coraline at the door. He frowned and looked displeased at being interrupted. "You should've knocked."

"I did, but you were so immersed in your... actions that you didn't hear it."

As always, Coraline had this indifferent expression on her. As her gaze swept across the mess Dillon made in the room, she said emotionlessly, "You need to stop this, Young Master Porter. We're at the forefront of the crisis, and this is not a good time for you to be fooling around. You'll be punished by Miss Porter if she knows about this."

Dillon became impatient and retorted when he heard Coraline's reply, "Do I look like I need a lecture from you? As long as you keep your mouth shut, my sister will never know. Don't ever forget where you stand. I'm her brother and you're merely a dog raised by her, regardless of how long you have worked for her!"

"You said I am a dog; sure, I can be that. It doesn't matter. What matters right now is that Miss Porter has asked for you."

"Oh, really?" Only then did Dillon realize there might be some serious issue at play. His face turned serious as he frowned. "What's the matter?"

"This is not the place to talk." As Coraline spoke, she glanced at the figure underneath Dillon.

It was impossible to see clearly who was on the chair and table. The two figures were far away from her, and the light in the room was dim. Nevertheless, she was apathetic at such bloody scenes. Dillon was a bloodthirsty pervert, and he would commit murder and arson if things did not go his way; these crimes were just part of his routine. Coraline knew that she could not save these people, so she chose to ignore whatever she saw. As the saying went, out of sight, out of mind.

Following her gaze, Dillon knew why she requested to move to another place. Being indifferent to her request, he smiled proudly. "Don't worry; dead men can't talk. You have my word that they won't be able to spread a word of what they hear tonight."

Coraline frowned and reminded him what was at stake, "Young Master Porter, Miss Porter told us that we ought to lie low until the wind blows over. More importantly, don't complicate issues and cause unnecessary trouble. That's the reason why we're staying in Enistan."

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"I did, but you were so immersed in your... actions that you didn't hear it."

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know. Don't avar forgot whara you stand. I'm har brothar and you'ra maraly a dog raisad by har, ragardlass of how long you hava workad for har!"

"You said I am a dog; sura, I can ba that. It doasn't mattar. What mattars right now is that Miss Portar has askad for you."

"Oh, raally?" Only than did Dillon raaliza thara might ba soma sarious issua at play. His faca turnad sarious as ha frownad. "What's tha mattar?"

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"My sister is just being too careful."

"Better to stay cautious and get through this."

"Ah, such nonsense. If you saw who I caught, you wouldn't have lectured me." Dillon reached out to grab Rachel by her neck and position her face under the light, causing her to groan in pain. Even as the light swayed faintly on Rachel's contorted face, Coraline recognized her in that instant and was startled.

Rachel?! Then, the one being pinned on the table...

With the help of the dim light, Coraline squinted her eyes and was finally able to discern who the tall figure was—it was Justin. Never in a million years would she have thought that the once powerful and mighty Justin Burton would be pinned on the table by two thugs with his face almost flattened without the ability to fight back. He looked extremely miserable, not to mention the ghastly sight of the pool of blood on the ground.

Disregarding Rachel's screams, Dillon pulled her by her hair and said in a highly elated manner, "Here, this is the woman who caused our headquarters to be destroyed. Let's slay her. It will act as a deterrent for others."

"Young Master Porter!" Hearing that, Coraline became tense; she slightly clenched one hand down by her legs while the other was already reaching for the gun on her waist. She wanted to kill that b*stard right now and then, but she could not. There were at least a dozen of thugs around the room, all of whom were Dillon's subordinates—she did not stand a chance against these men.

Rachel's pale face was trembling terribly as she was being dragged by her hair along the ground. There was a fleeting stare for help across her eyes, but she knew very well that Coraline would not be able to help her.

Dillon threw Rachel's head onto the ground, acting much like he was holding something disgusting, and then walked toward Justin. "And this filthy rich one here. Let's kill him and have a doppelgänger take over half of his property. Shouldn't be a problem, I reckon." Coraline almost lost her nerve when she heard that.

Dillon must have seen her reaction as he asked suspiciously, "Why? Aren't you happy for me?" His eyes narrowed slightly and he stared at Coraline like a cold-blooded animal staring at its prey. "I remember you swore in front of my sister that you will avenge those who died at that time. Now is your chance." As he was speaking, he signaled a lackey to come near him, and when the lackey did, he pulled a gun from the lackey's waist.

A shiny pistol was seen spinning around his hand with the trigger hung on his index finger. After a few quick spins, Dillon handed the pistol to Coraline. "You came just in time. Pull the trigger and kill them, and I will tell my sister that you have fulfilled your promise."

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"Young Master Porter, this is Enistan, not our turf."

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"Yes, it's Enistan, which is why we can't be made responsible for killing people."

"We are here to lie low, not to cause further trouble."

“Like I said, killing them will act as a deterrent for others. Not sure why you’re so reluctant, though. Unless...” The pistol turned half a circle in Dillon’s hand before he aimed the black muzzle at Coraline. “You are also an undercover agent.”

Even after hearing that, Coraline did not bat an eyelid and merely answered, “I’m not.”

“Then, kill them.”

Coraline knew that she could no longer back down from the situation, and that Rachel and Justin would meet their inevitable deaths tonight. In the distance, Rachel fell to the ground, her body was covered in scars. She was in such excruciating pain that she felt numb all over.

Coraline knew she would need to face such a hostile situation one day—Janice had prepared her mentally when she agreed to be Janice’s informant. Coraline remembered Janice telling her that the hardest choice to make by any undercover agent was not ending his or her own life, but whether to end the lives of his or her comrades who were the apparent enemies. If the agent chose not to kill the comrades, the risk of his or her identity being exposed would increase.

Coraline had already infiltrated the organization for six years, and it was not easy for her to get to where she was today, especially in gaining the trust of the core figures. No matter from what perspective she looked at the situation, the only option was to kill Rachel and Justin so that her previous efforts would not be in vain.

“What are you still hesitating about?” Holding the pistol, Dillon took another step toward Coraline. As her forehead was about to be pressed by the muzzle, Coraline moved in a swift manner. With the speed of the lightning, she folded Dillon’s hand with her backhand. He let out a pained cry while clutching his wrist and gasping for air, subconsciously relaxing his palm. The pistol fell and was caught by Coraline firmly. Before Dillon was able to grasp the situation, Coraline already pressed the muzzle against his forehead.

“Lila, what are you doing?”

“Don’t ever point a gun at me. I’ve said it many times that I. Don’t. Like. It.” Coraline’s voice was powerful and at the same time as cold as an iceberg.

Her voice was so somber that it made Dillon tremble; he knew she was not one to fool around. Under his almost pleading gaze, Coraline slowly retracted the gun and glanced at Justin and Rachel behind her. “It’s not up to us to decide how to deal with this matter. Master Porter has given Miss Porter the full authority to investigate the traitors in the organization. We must hand this woman over to Miss Porter.”

“But of course! Where is my sister now?”

"I'll call her over but before that, you are not allowed to kill Rachel."

"Young Master Porter, this is Eniston, not our turf."

"Yes, it's Eniston, which is why we can't be made responsible for killing people."

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Even after hearing that, Caroline did not bat an eyelid and merely answered, "I'm not."

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Coralina had already infiltrated the organization for six years, and it was not easy for her to get to where she was today, especially in gaining the trust of the core figures. No matter from what perspective she looked at the situation, the only option was to kill Rachel and Justin so that her previous efforts would not be in vain.

"What are you still hesitating about?" Holding the pistol, Dillon took another step toward Coralina. As her forehead was about to be pressed by the muzzle, Coralina moved in a swift manner. With the speed of lightning, she folded Dillon's hand with her

backhand. He let out a pained cry while clutching his wrist and gasping for air, subconsciously relaxing his palm. The pistol fell and was caught by Coralina firmly. Before Dillon was able to grasp the situation, Coralina already pressed the muzzle against his forehead.

"Lila, what are you doing?"

"Don't ever point a gun at me. I've said it many times that I. Don't. Like. It." Coralina's voice was powerful and at the same time as cold as an iceberg.

Her voice was so somber that it made Dillon tremble; he knew she was not one to fool around. Under his almost pleading gaze, Coralina slowly retracted the gun and glanced at Justin and Rachel behind her. "It's not up to us to decide how to deal with this matter. Master Porter has given Miss Porter the full authority to investigate the traitors in the organization. We must hand this woman over to Miss Porter."

"But of course! Where is my sister now?"

"I'll call her over but before that, you are not allowed to kill Rachel."

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

Chapter 537

After giving Dillon a stern warning, Caroline pulled Rachel up from the floor and said, "Don't try anything funny, or perhaps you can die from a better way."

Seeing how she treated Rachel, Dillon expressed his suspicions toward Caroline again. "I have a feeling you're dawdling. Even if you hand them over to my sister, they'll still be dead in the end, so what's the difference between them dying in my hands and my sister's?"

"The only difference is that it gives a more chilling effect if Miss Porter is the one who killed them."

At once, Dillon's expression changed and he looked very irritated. "How dare you mock me!"

"Just being honest."

"Don't forget that you were one of my lackeys before."

"Whatever. Remember, if Rachel's gone missing or being tortured again before Miss Porter arrives, you'll be held responsible," Caroline warned Dillon again. It was evident that Dillon was fearful of his sister; at the same time, he hated her for being so outstanding. Ever since he was young, all the elders would praise his sister for being the wiser and calmer of the two, and no one seemed to have noticed him. He could not deny the truth, and this made him harbor mixed feelings toward his sister—he admired her but had also been living in her shadow for a long time.

Caroline knew that if she used Miss Porter as a delaying tactic, not only would it seem legitimate and non-suspicious, Dillon would also have no choice but to obey. As expected, Dillon gritted his teeth and it was only after a while that he replied, "I can leave her alone for now, but what about that man?"

Caroline glanced at the already bloodied and weak Justin. She knew she could not save both of them at once, so she replied coldly, "Do as you wish." She left after saying that.

As the door closed in front of her, Rachel was once again left alone with Dillon and his lackeys. She shivered terribly on a chair in the corner, and her pale face was covered in fear and panic. "Don't come near me! Lile said... she said you can't touch me!"

Hearing that, Dillon chuckled; there were a ton of ways to torture Rachel without breaking his promise to Lile. "Lile's words aren't worth a penny. You see, while my sister is in charge of everything, she can't control what I do with women." He walked toward Rachel and grabbed her hair forcefully so that he could look her in the eyes while talking in a sinister manner. "After being interrupted, I have no more interest in you. But I'm in the mood of playing a special game right now."

After he said that, Dillon pulled her up, dragged her across, and threw her head on the table. Rachel exclaimed before she uncontrollably bent over the table where Justin was being pinned down. They were so near to each other that she could just reach out her hand and touch his face. However, as she looked up, she only saw Justin's face covered in blood and his eyes filled with pain and distress. Her heart ached, as if it was being pricked by needles.

Before letting go of Rachel's hair, Dillon took a knife out from his waist and plunged it into the table next to her head. "Here, I'll let you go scot-free if you gouge his eyes out within the next minute."

After giving Dillon a stern warning, Caroline pulled Rachel up from the floor and said, "Don't try anything funny, and perhaps you can die from a better way."

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Aftar ha said that, Dillon pullad har up, draggad har across, and thraw har hard on tha tabla. Rachal axclaimad bafora sha uncontrollably bant ovar tha tabla whara Justin was baing pinnad down. Thay wara so naar to aach othar that sha could just raach out har hand and touch his faca. Howavar, as sha lookad up, sha only saw Justin's faca covarad in blood and his ayas fillad with pain and distrass. Har haart achad, as if it was baing prickad by naadlas.

Bafora latting go of Rachal's hair, Dillon took a knifa out from his waist and plungad it into tha tabla naxt to har hand. "Hara, I'll lat you go scot-fraa if you gouga his ayas out within tha naxt minuta."

At once, Rachel paled, and her mind turned blank for a while before she could reply, "You... You're a crazy motherf*cker."

However, Dillon only commented in an unruly manner, "Nope, I'm serious. Just an eye; you can choose the left one or the right one. Doesn't really matter to me." As he was talking, he pulled out a chair, sat beside the table, and crossed his legs, looking as if he was rubbernecking. He even took the glass from the servant and drank whiskey from it.

Rachel was not sure what she was supposed to be thinking or doing at that point. She tried grabbing the knife twice before being able to pull it out from the table, and her whole body was trembling. Due to the numerous open wounds on her arms, the blood dripped down the blade and stained her dark green skirt, making it look thick and heavy in color.

In the meantime, Dillon was utterly excited for the love-hate relationship to unfold in front of his eyes. He attentively looked at Rachel holding the knife with both her hands as she staggered toward Justin before it slipped from her hand and fell to the ground. "I can't do it." As if saying that took the last energy out of her, she slumped to the ground knees first, and could no longer feel her legs.

Truth was, Dillon had predicted the exact outcome; he knew Rachel did not have the guts to gouge Justin's eye out. He sneered at her the moment she fell to the ground. "Poor dear... even I can't help loving you upon seeing the way you cry." Ordinary people like you live like ants, thinking that staying alive is a big thing. But in our eyes, your lives aren't worth anything.

Dillon then turned his gaze toward Justin. "Justin, your woman would rather throw away her chastity than hurt you. How about this? I'll give you a chance. If you gouge out your eye, I guarantee she will be safe. What do you say?"

Justin struggled to raise his head when Dillon was talking to him. Seeing that, Dillon waved his hand and immediately, the two thugs let Justin loose and pulled out the rag from his mouth. The moment he was free to move, Justin could not be bothered to catch his breath; he came at Dillon aggressively. Unfortunately, he had lost too much blood and was so weak that he could not get close to Dillon at all. A big man managed to kick him to the ground.

"Justin!" Rachel hurriedly crawled over and grabbed the big man's leg, trying to stop him from continuing stepping on Justin's back. "Let go of him!" However, the man ignored her pleas and her basically non-existent strength. He continued stomping Justin to the ground, as if he was crushing an ant. It was not only the back that he was stomping on, but also whatever dignity, personality, and freedom that was left in Justin. Seeing that, Rachel could no longer hold herself back. She broke down and yelled at Dillon, "I'm responsible for everything, and Justin does not know anything! Just let him go; let him go!"

"Why should I? If I did, who's going to avenge those who died?"

"It's just a matter of dying. Just kill me and get your revenge!" Rachel looked straight into Dillon's eyes and yelled at him. She was already at her breaking point, and she would rather die than be mentally tortured by Dillon.

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In tha maantima, Dillon was uttarly axcitad for tha lova-hata ralationship to unfold in front of his ayas. Ha attantivaly lookad at Rachal holding tha knifa with both har hands as sha staggarad toward Justin bafora it slippad from har hand and fall to tha ground. "I can't do it." As if saying that took tha last anargy out of har, sha slumpad to tha ground knaas first, and could no longer faal har lags.

Truth was, Dillon had pradictad tha axact outcoma; ha knaw Rachal did not hava tha guts to gouga Justin's aya out. Ha snaarad at har tha momant sha fall to tha ground. "Poor daar... avan I can't halp loving you upon saaing tha way you cry." Ordinary paopla lika you liva lika ants, thinking that staying aliva is a big thing. But in our ayas, your livas aran't worth anything.

Dillon than turnad his gaza toward Justin. "Justin, your woman would rathar throw away har chastity than hurt you. How about this? I'll giva you a chanca. If you gouga out your aya, I guarantaa sha will ba safa. What do you say?"

Justin strugglad to raisa his haad whan Dillon was talking to him. Saaing that, Dillon wavad his hand and immadiataly, tha two thugs lat Justin loosa and pullad out tha rag from his mouth. Tha momant ha was fraa to mova, Justin could not ba botharad to catch his braath; ha cama at Dillon aggrassivaly. Unfortunataly, ha had lost too much blood and was so waak that ha could not gat closa to Dillon at all. A big man managad to kick him to tha ground.

"Justin!" Rachal hurriadly crawlad ovar and grabbad tha big man's lag, trying to stop him from continuing stapping on Justin's back. "Lat go of him!" Howavar, tha man ignorad har plaas and har basically non-axistant strangth. Ha continuad stomping Justin to tha ground, as if ha was crushing an ant. It was not only tha back that ha was stomping on, but also whatavar dignity, parsonality, and fraadom that was laft in Justin. Saaing that, Rachal could no longer hold harsalf back. Sha broka down and yallad at Dillon, "I'm rasponsibla for avarything, and Justin doas not know anything! Just lat him go; lat him go!"

"Why should I? If I did, who's going to avanga thosa who diad?"

"It's just a mattar of dying. Just kill ma and gat your ravanga!" Rachal lookad straight into Dillon's ayas and yallad at him. Sha was alraady at har braaking point, and sha would rathar dia than ba mantally torturad by Dillon.

Hearing that, Justin could no longer stay quiet. "Rae!" He sounded as if he used up all his energy calling for her. She hurriedly crawled toward him and held his hands, but whatever he said next made her at a loss for words. "I can die a hundred times for you. You saved me in the first place, and my death should not be a pity." Heartbroken by what Justin said, Rachel could only shake her head incessantly while tears streamed

down the corners of her eyes. She knew that she could no longer turn things around even though she had the smoothest tongue. Dillon would never trust her again; that lunatic devil just wanted to torture the both of them to death.

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She was not able to contain her flooding emotions any longer as she sobbed, "You never did anything wrong; it was me who dragged you to hell. Everything started because of me. Things you did... taking revenge, marrying me, and treating me badly... they were done to protect the pure me you once knew. I know it. I know everything, but still, I hurt you... and the people who died because of me... Grandma and Hans... I don't blame you. I have forgiven you a long time ago. If you insist that what had happened was your fault, I could only say it was a mistake we made together."

They should have shouldered the mistakes together, but Justin was getting all the blame. Not only was he blamed by the people around him, but his own conscience also bothered him. Amidst all these, Rachel retreated to safety as if she had nothing to do with everything, and this was not fair. From the time they first met in the small and cramped cellar of Somerset Mountain, their lives were inevitably tied together. From then on, they would share weal and woe.

After a moment of silence, Rachel continued, "Justin, I don't hate you. Ever since I could remember things as a child, I no longer hate you. The only person I hate is myself because I couldn't face my own feelings." She left without a word six years ago because she could not accept that their ending would be so unbearable even though they had such a beautiful beginning. How could she ever accept it?

As weak as he was, Justin still held Rachel's hand tightly. Both of them were lost for words at that moment and perhaps, silence was better than a thousand words. "My life has no regrets now, hearing what you just said before I die. Live a long life, Rae."

"No, you won't die!"

Dillon clapped his hands excitedly as he watched the drama reaching its climax. "Now, this is what I call a good show that reveals true feelings! You both should have done that earlier, though. Your dilly-dallying cost us time. Well, well, you want to save her, don't you, Justin? You know what exactly you have to do." As Dillon was speaking, he was leaning down to take a look at Justin who was laying on his stomach next to his

feet. The man had already moved his feet away from Justin's back as he struggled to get up. Justin then took the knife with the hand that was still bleeding from the amputated finger. He was trembling, but he had never been so determined in his life. I know exactly what I have to do.

"No!" In the midst of anxiety and chaos, Rachel tried grabbing Justin's hand but she missed it. "No!!!"

Hearing that, Justin could no longer stay quiet. "Roe!" He sounded as if he used up all his energy calling for her. She hurriedly crawled toward him and held his hands, but whatever he said next made her at a loss for words. "I can die a hundred times for you. You saved me in the first place, and my death should not be a pity." Heartbroken by what Justin said, Rachel could only shake her head incessantly while tears streamed down the corners of her eyes. She knew that she could no longer turn things around even though she had the smoothest tongue. Dillon would never trust her again; that lunatic devil just wanted to torture the both of them to death.

She was not able to contain her flooding emotions any longer as she sobbed, "You never did anything wrong; it was me who dragged you to hell. Everything started because of me. Things you did... taking revenge, marring me, and treating me badly... they were done to protect the pure me you once knew. I know it. I know everything, but still, I hurt you... and the people who died because of me... Grandma and Hons... I don't blame you. I have forgiven you a long time ago. If you insist that what had happened was your fault, I could only say it was a mistake we made together."

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Haaring that, Justin could no longar stay quiet. "Raa!" Ha soundad as if ha usad up all his anargy calling for har. Sha hurriadly crawlad toward him and hald his hands, but whatavar ha said naxt mada har at a loss for words. "I can dia a hundrad timas for you. You savad ma in tha first placa, and my daath should not ba a pity." Haartbrokan by what Justin said, Rachal could only shaka har haad incassantly whila taars straamad down tha cornars of har ayas. Sha know that sha could no longar turn things around avan though sha had tha smoothast tongua. Dillon would navar trust har again; that lunatic daval just wantad to tortura tha both of tham to daath.

Sha was not abla to contain har flooding amotions any longar as sha sobbad, "You navar did anything wrong; it was ma who draggad you to hall. Evarything startad bacausa of ma. Things you did... taking ravanga, marrying ma, and traating ma badly... thay wara dona to protact tha pura ma you onca know. I know it. I know avarything, but still, I hurt you... and tha paopla who diad bacausa of ma... Grandma and Hans... I don't blama you. I hava forgivan you a long tima ago. If you insist that what had happanad was your fault, I could only say it was a mistaka wa mada togathar."

Thay should hava shouldarad tha mistakas togathar, but Justin was gatting all tha blama. Not only was ha blamad by tha paopla around him, but his own conscianca also botharad him. Amidst all thasa, Rachal ratraatad to safaty as if sha had nothing to do with avarything, and this was not fair. From tha tima thay first mat in tha small and crampad callar of Somarsat Mountain, thair livas wara inavitably tiad togathar. From than on, thay would shara waal and woa.

Aftar a momant of silanca, Rachal continuad, "Justin, I don't hata you. Evar sinca I could ramambar things as a child, I no longar hata you. Tha only parson I hata is myself

bacausa I couldn't faca my own faalings." Sha laft without a word six yaars ago bacausa sha could not accapt that thair anding would ba so unbaarabla avan though thay had such a baautiful baginning. How could sha avar accapt it?

As waak as ha was, Justin still hald Rachal's hand tightly. Both of tham wara lost for words at that momant and parhaps, silanca was battar than a thousand words. "My lifa has no ragrats now, haaring what you just said bafora I dia. Liva a long lifa, Raa."

"No, you won't dia!"

Dillon clappad his hands axcitadly as ha watchad tha drama raaching its climax. "Now, this is what I call a good show that ravaals trua faalings! You both should hava dona that aarliar, though. Your dilly-dallying cost us tima. Wall, wall, you want to sava har, don't you, Justin? You know what axactly you hava to do." As Dillon was spaaking, ha was laaning down to taka a look at Justin who was laying on his stomach naxt to his faat. Tha man had alraady movad his faat away from Justin's back as ha strugglad to gat up. Justin than took tha knifa with tha hand that was still blaading from tha amputatad finger. Ha was trambling, but ha had navar baan so datarminad in his lifa. I know axactly what I hava to do.

"No!" In tha midst of anxiety and chaos, Rachal triad grabbing Justin's hand but sha missad it. "No!!!"

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

Chapter 538

The moment Justin picked up the knife, a dim light flashed across the blade's edge and reflected on his cold and unwavering eyes; the same pair of eyes that had been hiding the inexpressible deep love he had for someone.

As Dillon quietly watched Justin's resolution to die for the so-called love, he slowly smiled. Dillon loved drama like this; he clearly remembered he was nineteen when he first witnessed such a scene where his first love kneeled in front of him with another man.

She was the first woman he loved and she cheated on him with his best friend, who did not even possess Justin's courage. The man raised the knife and plunged it into the woman's chest without any hesitation and crawled to Dillon, begging for forgiveness. "Dillon, it isn't my fault. She was the one who seduced me!"

Dillon could still remember vividly how her pair of eyes were filled with disbelief; she naively believed till the last second of her pitiful life that the man would have wanted her to stay alive and committed suicide himself, just like how she was prepared to end her own life to save his.

Of course, Dillon did not spare the man's life. Before killing the man, Dillon whispered in his ear, speaking almost phlegmatically, "Thanks for killing her, but you should also know that I'm planning on avenging my girlfriend."

Bang! The sound of a muffled gunshot was heard in the room; it came from a pistol with a silencer. At that moment, Dillon was pulled back into reality. He glanced down in disbelief; a bullet exploded in his chest and accompanied by the smell of burnt flesh. It was the re-enactment of his memory, but this time, he was the one being shot.

He slowly collapsed from the chair and never got to utter his one last word. The last thing he saw was a woman with a pale face holding a gun—she was obviously terrified, but she did not hesitate when she gave him that fatal shot in the chest.

"Young Master Porter!" It was chaos at that point; gunshots were heard everywhere.

As Justin watched things unfold in the blink of an eye, he pulled Rachel to him and swiftly hid behind the table without a dither. Almost at the same time as the first gunshot was heard, Caroline rushed into the room and killed all of Dillon's lackeys without giving them a chance to react. Obviously, those outside the room were already dead.

"Are you okay?" Caroline directed the question to the only two survivors in the room as she picked up the severed finger on the ground and put it in a sealed bag before handing it to Justin. "Take it with you; perhaps your finger can still be saved."

Rachel, who was having difficulty processing what had happened, was holding the gun and her face was as pale as a sheet. "I killed someone." The moment she spoke, it was as if she realized the severity of her action that her hand trembled and she threw that gun away.

Thud. The gun fell to the ground. Rachel remembered that just before Caroline left the room, Caroline pulled her up from the floor and quietly handed her a gun—things went without saying after that.

At that crucial moment when Justin picked up the knife to gouge his eye out, she shot and killed Dillon. She could not and dared not hesitate; she was gambling Justin's and her life with that shot.

"No, you didn't kill anyone; it was self-defense," Caroline comforted Rachel and turned to Justin. "You should leave now. Use the south gate; that place is not guarded. I can't help you from there on because you're on your own."

“What about this place?”

“Leave it to me.”

Caroline looked around the room to ensure that she had not missed anything. Finally, her gaze fell on the gun Rachel used to kill Dillon. She picked up the gun, wiped it clean, and had Rachel plant her fingerprints on it. “I will attribute everything that has happened to the two of you. This means that you killed everyone here and everyone was already dead when I arrived. You know what this means, right?”

Still badly shaken, Rachel was not able to think clearly, but Justin was clear-headed. He nodded and said, “We will forever be their enemies.”

“Sabrina will hunt you down at all costs. Return to Riverdale as soon as possible and seek protection from Officer Hawkins.” After explaining their next steps, Caroline urged the two of them to leave quickly.

Justin carried Rachel up and left in a hurry. No one would have foreseen so many things could happen on a trip to Enistan. After they left, Caroline looked at the scattered corpses in the room, took out a lighter from her pocket, and lit the curtains.

Meanwhile, Justin and Rachel successfully left the villa via the south gate following Caroline’s instructions.

The villa at Idyll Mountain was surrounded by trees and they chose to escape through the forest; they dared not escape using the big road for fear of being noticed by the enemies. After fleeing for quite some time, they were already deep in the forest. Justin finally let out a sigh of relief and laid Rachel down; no one was chasing them. Rachel was still pale and the dress she was wearing was no longer in one piece. Her feet were bare, but because Justin was carrying her, they were not injured. The temperature in the forest might go down in a few hours, so Justin took off his jacket and put it on her.

“Rae, follow this mountain road and you’ll find the exit.” Justin pointed to the path ahead. “Contact Frankie after that and leave Enistan as soon as possible.”

Rachel had already recovered from the shock by that time and she was alarmed when she heard that. “What about you? Why are you speaking like you’re not coming with me? We’re leaving together.”

He shook his head and said weakly, “I can’t walk anymore.” He raised his hand, wanting to touch her face. This time, she did not dodge; she merely looked at the man who almost died because of her. Yet, Justin’s hand never reached the face he dreamed about day and night; he suddenly fell down to the ground.

“Justin!” Things happened so abruptly that Rachel shouted in disbelief. She grabbed his shoulder and tried shaking him, only to realize that his face was pale and covered in

cold sweat. His amputated fingers never stopped bleeding and blood was all over his hands and even his shoes.

She recalled what happened in the room and her tears came falling down her cheeks uncontrollably. “Don’t die on me, Justin!”

Seeing no response from him, she wiped her tears, grabbed his arms, and repeated sternly, “Don’t die on me! I already forgive you and we will go back to Riverdale together when you wake up. Riverdale! It’s Riverdale! Charlotte is still waiting for us at home! You can’t die here! Get up! I can’t carry you alone!”

It was getting dark. Thick smoke and flames rising from a corner of the villa were visible from afar.

Rachel had so much difficulty dragging Justin through the woods; he was six feet two tall and unconscious. She could still see the place where he fainted no matter how much effort she was putting in to drag him away. Yet, her feet were already full of scars being punctured by dead branches in the forest.

Just when she was desperate, she heard a rustling noise coming through from a distance—someone was walking toward them. Rachel was mortified; she did not think the Porter Family was able to catch up that quickly because at that point in time, they were already far away from the villa.

Suddenly, Rachel caught a glimpse of the blood on the ground and her face paled instantly. Justin’s hand had been bleeding all this time and he was even carrying her all the way. The blood left a trail behind and the Porters could have easily found them just by following it.

It was really over for them this time.

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

Chapter 539

Just as Rachel thought she and Justin were doomed for sure, that black shadow suddenly halted its movement. Then, there was a whisper. “Miss Hudson?” It was a warm and familiar male voice, but it sounded a bit uncertain.

Immediately, Rachel’s eyes lit up when she heard the voice. She quickly wiped her tears away and whisper-shouted, “Nathan! Is that you?” The black shadow did not hesitate to step out from behind the trees when he heard her reply; it was a tall figure

with a lifelike dragon tattoo on his left arm. It was indeed Nathan. to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

“Miss Hudson!” He hurriedly walked toward them. “Are you all right?”

She nodded. “I’m fine, but we can’t stay here for long. I don’t have time to explain now. Nathan, help me carry him. We gotta leave this mountain quickly.” She was grateful that unexpected help arrived and the only thing she wanted was to leave the forest as soon as possible.

“Wait!” Nathan stopped her from leaving in a rush. He tore a piece of his cloth and carefully wrapped it around Justin’s severed finger to stop the bleeding before advising her, “You can’t follow this path anymore. Let’s use the other one right up to the mountain.” After he finished instructing, he carried Justin on his back and walked along the path he pointed.

Hearing that, Rachel glanced at Nathan’s back and followed him. Ah, of course, he must have found us by following the trail of blood. However, it was only after some time that she realized they were walking in the wrong direction. “Up to the mountain? Why? We should be heading down!”

“You won’t be able to leave the mountain; the exits must have been blocked and heavily searched now. Just follow me, okay? I know the way.” As he spoke, he felt that Justin was slipping down from his back, so he lifted Justin up a bit and quickened his pace.

It was nighttime.

Enistan’s nightly news reporter was broadcasting about the fire at Idyll Mountain’s villa. “It seems that the fire first broke out in a room and quickly spread across the villa. Fortunately, no casualties have been reported...”

The old man in the rocking chair snorted coldly when he heard the phrase ‘no casualties’.

“Master.” A young man offered him a glass of whiskey and stood quietly beside him.

The old man took the glass and said, “That’s why we always say, do the right thing. Those who have done so many evil things when they’re alive won’t even be remembered when they die, let alone having someone collecting their corpses.”

The young man did not respond; his eyes were fixed on the TV.

It was early morning. The room at the villa was cordoned off and the firefighters were still doing the final cleanup after the fire was extinguished. Less than a mile away from the scene, no one noticed there was a bungalow with twelve corpses lying next to each other, all charred and unrecognizable.

Slap! A loud slap reverberated in the living room as soon as it landed on Caroline's face—her head was titled and blood could be seen in the corner of her mouth. She straightened her back and wiped away the blood, but Sabrina did not give her any chance to recover. Slap! Another slap landed on Caroline's face. "Useless thing! Had you arrived earlier, this would not have happened!"

"It was my fault. I'm sorry."

"So what if it's your fault? Can you die in my brother's stead?" No matter how doughty Sabrina had always been, she still could not control her emotions the moment she saw the corpses piling up in the living room. The fact that she could not even identify her own brother led her to release her anger on Caroline.

Caroline remained silent. Sabrina, who was in a state of restlessness and grief, continued yelling at her, "Now who the hell set the fire?!"

"I don't have any decisive conclusion just yet, but I noticed the two blind girls who were serving Dillon are gone."

"Blind girls?" Sabrina squeezed her fists tightly upon hearing that. "They had the nerves to do that."

"Not sure if it was their doing, but I found this at the scene."

As Caroline spoke, she handed a sealed bag to Sabrina, who opened it and found a gun burnt beyond recognition. Caroline then continued, "This should be the weapon that killed them."

At that moment, a subordinate who was squatting on the ground to check on the corpses raised his head, looked at Sabrina, and pointed at the corpse in front of him. "Think I found Young Master Porter."

At once, Sabrina's expression changed. She threw the sealed bag back to Caroline, immediately stepped over the corpses in front of her, and walked straight to the subordinate. "Young Master Porter's arm bone had been fractured before; you can see that fracture line here clearly."

"You're right, it's Dillon." Looking at the disfigured corpse in front of her, Sabrina tried her best to suppress her grief, but her bloodshot eyes betrayed her. "Check if there are other wounds."

"Sure." A few minutes later, the subordinate reported, "There is a gunshot wound not far from the heart. It was not vital, so Young Master Porter must have died losing too much blood, plus there was a fire—"

“Not vital,” Sabrina repeated after the subordinate and clenched her fists. “This means that the marksmanship was not very good then.” As she spoke, her gaze fell on the gun in Caroline’s hand. “Send this gun for fingerprint identification.”

“Yes, Miss Sabrina.”

After she left the bungalow, Caroline looked at the gun in her hand and her expression turned solemn. There was not much she could do; if she covered up too much for Rachel and Justin, she would lead the suspicions back to herself and she could not risk that. She must complete her undercover mission no matter what; she could only hope that Rachel and Justin found protection under Janice at Riverdale.

Three days later, Justin finally woke up from the coma. As he opened his eyes, he saw a figure resting half of her body on the side of the bed. Her long black hair was messily draped over her shoulder. Looking extremely exhausted, she was sleeping restlessly with her furrowed brows. He could not resist the urge to soothe the wrinkles between her eyebrows.

It was evening and this was the picturesque view he saw the moment he woke—the warm sunlight was shining and creating a halo around Rachel. Like an angel, she was bathing in the divine and sacred light. He often dreamed of her back in Riverdale, so he thought this was another dream he was having. The moment his hand was about to touch her brow, she suddenly opened her eyes.

Is this real? Rachel blinked really hard. As her drowsy eyes gradually sobered, she realized she was not dreaming. At that instant, she was finally able to release her pent-up worry and concern that she did not realize she was speaking like a machine gun, “You’re finally awake! Is there anywhere you feel uncomfortable? Does your hand still hurt? Are you okay?”

Justin could hear every word she said clearly, but still, he was unable to differentiate reality from his dream. “Rachel, there’s a new dessert shop nearby. How about we go there together after work?” He used to talk to himself and rehearse this line when he was in Riverdale, just to prepare himself mentally for when he could meet her again. Now that he really saw her, he somehow could not utter a single word he rehearsed. In the end, he was only able to say, “Charlotte wants to go there.”

“Are you sleepwalking?” Rachel waved her hand in front of Justin. “Don’t tell me the fever burned your last brain cell.”

At this moment, they heard the sound of the door opening. Nathan, who was entering the room with an infusion bottle, started talking, “Miss Hudson, think it’s time to change the infusion bottle—” As he looked up, he was surprised that Justin was awake. “Oh hello, welcome back to earth.” Hearing Nathan’s voice, Justin turned and stared at him for quite some time; it was not until he saw that realistic dragon tattoo on Nathan’s arm that it sobered him up. “Am I still alive?”

“What nonsense is this? Of course, you are still alive! I took the trouble to carry you all the way and Miss Hudson has been taking care of you the last three days. You merely lost a finger and yet you had a fever for three days. What a delicate thing,” Nathan teased Justin in dissatisfaction and almost had to roll his eyes. However, Justin did not hear a word Nathan said; he seemed to be stupefied. All of a sudden, he called for Rachel, “Rachel?”

“What’s the matter?” A doubt sprang up in her mind when Justin called her name without warning.

He could finally appreciate the fact that he was still alive after hearing Rachel’s reply. As if his spontaneity was not enough, he suddenly grabbed her arm and pulled her toward his chest. Rachel exclaimed before falling and hitting his chest. She groaned and complained, “What are you—” She could not finish her sentence; Justin hugged her so tightly that it felt like they were going to be merged as one. The strength was so huge that it oppressed her heart and she could hardly breathe.

“J—Justin! Let go of me! I can’t breathe—”

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

Chapter 540

Rachel felt like she was suffocating, but it did not seem like Justin was going to let go anytime soon.

When he was hugging her, he felt like he was alive again. As if he was holding onto his life savior, he never wanted to let go.

“Ahem!” Nathan’s cough could be heard from inside the room. “If the IV drip isn’t changed soon, someone’s life might be in danger.”

Rachel tapped Justin on the arm, hinting at him to let go. After a few taps, he finally released her unwillingly.

Watching Nathan approaching, she was so embarrassed that she wanted the ground to open up and swallow her.

However, he seemed unfazed and proceeded to change the IV drip. After he was done, he left the room and closed the door as if nothing happened.

Now, Rachel and Justin were left alone once again.

Justin's gaze was locked on her face even when Nathan was changing his IV drip.

She turned around and their eyes met before she asked, "Are you feeling uncomfortable?"

He shook his head.

After a moment of silence, she stood up. "I'll get you some water." However, he grabbed her hand.

Rachel saw the bandage covering his hand from the corners of her eyes and could not stop herself from feeling sad. Her eyes darkened and she clenched her fist.

"I'm sorry." Her voice was so low it was almost buried by the wind outside.

"You don't need to be sorry," Justin refuted.

"But your finger..." Rachel bit her lips, trying to force the words out. "We missed the optimal treatment period. We can't reattach it anymore."

"I know. It's fine," he assured her. He was not surprised because he knew the condition of his body. The moment he woke up, he knew it was too late.

"How can it be?" Tears filled Rachel's eyes as she held onto his injured hand. "How could you be so dumb? I told you to leave me."

"If anything happened to you, I will never forgive myself. That's why I couldn't leave." Justin looked at her calmly. He was always the rational one; collected and keeping his emotions in check. However, she was his only exception.

"It's okay. Really!" He pulled Rachel to sit by the bed. "It's only a finger, it won't affect my life much." Even though he said that, she still could not accept it.

"Anyways, where are we?" He subtly changed the topic to distract her from wallowing in guilt.

She collected herself and looked out the window. "We're on Idyll Mountain."

Justin was dumbfounded.

Rachel continued to explain, "It was Mr. Keaton who saved us."

Three days ago, Caroline helped both of them escape from Dillon's evil clutches. At first, they planned to follow a small trail down Idyll Mountain to the airport below to leave Enistan, but Justin fainted mid-way.

"Luckily, Nathan found us after following the blood trail and brought us up the mountain. This is Mr. Keaton's private residence atop the mountain. It's not far from the resort."

When the fire broke out at the resort that day, the firefighters took the whole night to put it out. At the same time, people were searching the mountain for them. Those people looked everywhere, but did not dare come into that private residence.

It was the best option Justin and Rachel had. It was the safest place, but unfortunately, they missed the best time to treat Justin's fingers.

She knew some medical knowledge, but it was only enough to sanitize and bandage his hand; she could not reattach his fingers. After that, Justin's wound was infected and he had a fever for three days.

"Had you not woken up sooner, I would have asked Nathan to get us down the mountain and look for a hospital."

"Don't worry, I only slept for a while."

"No, you didn't. It was three days." Rachel still could not forget how Justin's finger was amputated because of her and tears filled her eyes. "I don't even know if there's a way to fix your finger."

"Rachel." He held her hand tightly. "Stop being sad. I have gotten so much more than I have lost."

She was stunned.

Justin looked at her quietly as if he found his lost treasure. "I wonder if there's a parallel universe. When we die, will we still have our consciousness?"

"Why did you think of this so suddenly?" Rachel asked in puzzlement.

"I hope the answer is no. If I can't see you and don't know how you are doing in the other universe, that's worse than death itself."

When they were facing Dillon that day, this was what he thought about when all hope seemed lost.

Rachel was still stunned.

Suddenly, Justin tried to sit up. "Rae, I've been on bedrest for too long. Help me up. I want to head out for a walk."

"Okay. Slowly." She came back to her senses and reached out to help him.

It was already evening. There were two times of the day that were the best. One was at dawn when the sun was about to shine; it was the time of the day when hope was at its highest and anything was possible. The other was dusk when the night fell; no matter what happened that day, if it was good or bad; if it was what you wished for or feared; everything would stop then at the end of the day.

During dinner, Justin asked about the owner of the residence. "Was it Mr. Keaton that took us in?"

Nathan was busy serving the table and glanced up at him. "Master Keaton ordered me to protect Miss Hudson."

Justin and Rachel wanted to know why Nathan addressed her as Miss Hudson. However, no matter how they tried to pry, he would only reply, "Miss Hudson is Miss Hudson; there are no other reasons."

"So, this house belongs to Mr. Keaton?"

"Why do you want to know?"

"Can't I just know?"

"No." Nathan placed the bowl down forcefully and demanded, "Eat your food."

However, he quickly went forward and totally changed his attitude when he saw Rachel walking out of the kitchen carrying some soup. "Miss Hudson, please take a seat. Let me help you with this."

"It's okay. I'm free anyways."

"Please. Let me." Nathan insisted. Without a choice, she could only pass the bowl to him.

"Nathan, come eat with us," she asked.

"It's alright, Miss Hudson. Please carry on without me. I have something I need to tend to," he answered and went into the kitchen.

Rachel scrunched her eyebrows at his words. "What's there to do during meal time?" she mumbled. She stood up, wanting to get him to return, but Justin pulled her onto her seat again.

“Don’t get him. It’s probably his rule.”

“What rule? Are there rules about eating sequences?”

“He regards you as Miss Hudson. Don’t you think it’s weird?”

Even though it was common for rich families to hire maids, especially in families like the Burton and Hudson Families, maids would usually address the children as Young Master, Young Lady, Mister, or Miss. However, it was apparent that Nathan’s “Miss” was not just a title. He was putting himself on a lower rank than her.

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

Chapter 541

“At first, I thought it was strange, but we didn’t see him much at first. Now that we see him every day, it does feel weird now that you’ve mentioned it,” Rachel replied.

During the past three days, all of her energy was spent on taking care of Justin. She could not care less what Nathan was addressing her as.

“So, why is that?”

“I think only you could ask him.”

Justin tried asking, but Nathan did not have a nice attitude. Most of the time, Nathan was impatient with him.

Rachel was deep in thought hearing that.

After dinner, Justin sat in the living room while she went into the kitchen to wash the dishes.

“Miss Hudson, please let me. You don’t need to do these things. Please take a rest.” Nathan blocked Rachel in her tracks, not letting her move.

However, she did not listen to him and insisted, “We’ve been staying here, not doing anything at all while you took care of us. If I can’t even contribute to this little chore, we’d feel really bad.”

“Miss Hudson, you don’t need to be courteous with me. If my master knew I allowed you to do chores, he’d scold me.”

“Why?”

“Because you are Miss Hudson. There’s no reason for you to do the chores,” he contended.

“Let me ask you a question, Nathan.” She changed the topic.

“Please do.”

“Why do you keep calling me Miss Hudson? Who asked you to do that?”

Nathan was stunned at her question.

Yet, Rachel did not stop asking, “Was it Mr. Keaton?”

“Yes.”

“Why?”

“I don’t know.”

“How could you not know? Nathan. Tell me the truth. What did Mr. Keaton tell you? Why are you protecting me?”

He scratched his head. “Miss Hudson, it’s no use asking me. I really don’t know why.”

Even though he was tall and burly, looking like the boss of a gang, he was a simple guy. After spending some time with him, they realized that he was easy to read. He wore his emotions on his face and would not lie.

It seemed like he did not know the reason.

Getting no answer from him, Rachel walked out of the kitchen and shook her head at Justin.

Justin frowned in response.

They could only wait for Mr. Keaton to show up and ask him. Either that or they could ask Mr. Brook, who referred them to meet Mr. Keaton. However, the most important thing now was how they were going to leave Enistan.

“I wonder how Jolly and the rest are doing?” Rachel leaned on the sofa and sighed.

Justin asked, “What about Lush Enterprise? No news from them at all?”

“That’s the weird part. I was sure Jolly took Leroy away during the wedding, but there was no news from Lush looking for him at all. They didn’t even come looking for trouble with us.” She was at a loss.

In theory, if Leroy, the groom, ran away during the wedding, Mrs. Bennett would have been furious. She would order people to look for him no matter where he went, but there was nothing from them. It was abnormal.

“Once we return to Riverdale, it’ll all be clear,” Justin answered.

“When shall we leave, then?”

“As early as possible, this isn’t a safe place.” He knew that the Porters would check the flights. If they could not find Justin and Rachel’s flight information, it was obvious that both of them were still in Enistan.

Enistan was the Porters’ safe harbor and territory, if they both fell into their hands once again, it would not be an easy escape.

At this moment, Sabrina was dressed in all black standing on the Enistan Sun Harbor. After watching a batch of goods leaving the port, she asked coldly, “Any news?”

Caroline’s voice came from behind her. “Nothing on the flights and ferries, perhaps they left using the bridge.”

“Impossible, we have our people at the bridge. If they went through there, we would have gotten them.”

Sabrina clenched her fists. “They must still be in Enistan.”

“Are they, though? It’s been three days. If they killed Mr. Porter, wouldn’t they want to leave Enistan quickly? It’s not safe for them here.”

“Sometimes the most dangerous place is the safest.”

After saying that, Sabrina suddenly thought of something. “Go and search Idyll Mountain again. Don’t let go of every nook and cranny.”

At the end of her words, all her subordinates answered in unison, “Yes.”

Caroline was just about to say something when she was interrupted by a voice. “Miss Porter, the guest is here.”

Guest?

Caroline was surprised. She turned around to see a familiar figure coming down from a black sedan. With polished shoes and rimless glasses, he looked like a gentleman. However, the gentle and elegant person she remembered him to be, now had an aura of indifference.

Julian...

His name sprang to her mind, but she could not believe it.

Is it Julian?

Just when Caroline was deep in thought, Sabrina walked over to the car and got in. They would be talking in the car.

Caroline asked one of the subordinates near her, "What's happening? Who's that person Miss Sabrina is meeting? Why haven't I seen him before?"

"Oh. That person is from Riverdale. He's the current president of the Burton Group."

"How did Miss Sabrina know him?"

"When they found the fingerprints on the gun, Miss Porter sent someone to Riverdale and got in contact with him. At first, they wanted to ask who interrogate him who the murderer is, but he proposed a collaboration instead."

Collaboration? Caroline's heart skipped a beat.

She could not believe that Julian wanted to work with Sabrina. Was he out of his mind?

Anyone who dealt with the devil would have to sell their soul in the end.

At this moment, Caroline had not realized the true reason for Julian and Sabrina's collaboration. Not only was it for business and money, Julian also had some unsettled relations he had to deal with.

The night sky fell quickly. Outside the car window was Enistan's bustling night scene comparable to that of Riverdale's.

"You've got guts. Coming here to Enistan alone to meet me. Aren't you afraid something would happen and you can't return?" Sabrina taunted.

"Miss Porter, I think you've got more guts than I do; getting my car in the middle of the night with only me and my driver. There's no one else here," Julian answered.

"I've got guts cause I know I got the upper hand." Sabrina suddenly wiped out a gun and pointed it at Julian's forehead. "Stop playing word games with me. I like being straightforward and efficient. Have Justin and Rachel contacted you?"

He raised his arms in surrender, showing that he had no intentions to fight back. "Perhaps you've not been notified, but our relationship has been strained recently. Do you think they would still contact me?"

"Then, why did you come to Enistan? Are you playing with me?" she snapped at him.

"Just because they won't initiate contact with me, doesn't mean that I can't contact them." His cool voice reverberated in the car.

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

Chapter 542

"As long as Miss Porter is willing to collaborate, I am sure I will be able to contact them."

"Are you threatening me?" Sabrina let out a cold laugh. "This must be the funniest joke I've heard all year. Do you know what I do?"

"Even if I didn't know what you do, Miss Porter, but I know Mr. Porter and the people he worked with back in Riverdale. I have a good guess."

"Then, you must be looking for trouble."

"No. It is exactly what I want to discuss with you," Julian said without batting an eyelid. He pushed his glasses into place and turned around, looking at Sabrina. "The pharmaceutical company under the Burton Group has always been looking to expand business abroad. I've got the formula and you have the connections. It's a win-win situation. This is the collaboration I'm talking about."

"As I know, the Burton Group does not need to take on such a huge risk to increase revenue."

"No one would think too much money is bad. Of course, I have a personal request to ask of you."

She frowned at his words. "What request?"

"The two people you want to catch, right? I want one of them."

Julian's voice resounded in the car, filled with assurance.

He had enough confidence that Sabrina would agree to his request and choose to work with him.

After Justin woke up, they continued staying on Idyll Mountain to nurse his injuries.

This private residence of Mr. Keaton's was not far from the Idyll Vacation Villa. One could see the main building where the banquet was held from the balcony. However, part of the villa was blocked off for reconstruction.

"Lush Enterprise announced to the public that the wedding is complete. After both families had formed the marriage alliance, Mrs. Bennett started using Lush's resources and worked with the Grandeur Group."

Rachel was holding a magazine with great referencing value, analyzing the recent financial and economic trends of Enistan.

Justin was drinking tea by the window. When he heard that, he glanced at Rachel and said, "It should be safer now. I should try contacting Frankie and ask what happened that day."

"No, you can't."

Nathan's firm voice came from the living room.

He was washing fruits in the kitchen, but now he had half his body poking out from behind the door. He said coldly, "Do not simply contact anyone outside; if not, you would bring danger to Miss Hudson."

In other words, if Justin wanted to look for trouble, he could, but he could not put Rachel in danger too.

He made a wry face. "We've been here for a week now. It shouldn't be a problem."

No matter how powerful the Porter's were, Enistan was not their territory. They were only here to escape for a while. How could they look for Justin and Rachel everywhere?

However, Nathan was adamant. "If you want to contact the outside world, sure, but you must leave this place first. I promised my master that I will ensure Miss Hudson's safety here."

Without a choice, Justin shrugged his shoulders toward Rachel.

He had to admit that it was risky contacting Frankie now, yet they could not keep staying there.

Rachel hesitated for a bit and stated to Nathan in the kitchen, "Nathan, it's time for me to leave."

Stunned, he raised his head from behind the glass windows.

Rachel had been mulling over this last night. She even discussed it with Justin before bringing it up with Nathan.

She and Justin could not stay in Enistan forever. If the Porters wanted to avenge Dillon, they might look for Justin and Rachel's friends and family in Riverdale. They had to return as soon as possible, regardless of whether to warn their loved ones or look for Janice's protection.

Nathan brought out the washed fruits. "Here's some fruit, Miss Hudson."

"Thank you." Rachel's voice was filled with appreciation. "Nathan, I'm thankful for your care. If it wasn't for you, we wouldn't know where to hide. We could have been caught earlier on."

"You don't need to thank me. It was my master's order."

"If I have the chance, I'd like to thank Mr. Keaton personally."

"Master rarely comes here and it's hard for you both to move about now."

"I know."

"I'll send you both to the airport tomorrow morning, Miss Hudson."

Rachel was taken aback by Nathan's words and looked up at him.

He continued with his calm face, "I was about to tell you this. Master said that the hotdog stand is about to reopen. Old customers have been asking when we're opening. I won't have time to take care of you guys anyways," he said those words with such seriousness. It did not seem like a cover-up.

The couple looked at each other. They were sure they had the same thought.

Nathan was a nice guy, but Mr. Keaton was intelligent. Even though Mr. Keaton did not stay with them, he knew what they were thinking about. He had guessed that they wanted to leave tomorrow and told Nathan to reopen the hotdog stand.

He was intuitive.

“Before you leave, you should try my handmade pasta.” Nathan placed the fruits down and went back into the kitchen.

Not long after, Rachel and Justin could hear the sounds of the dough pounding onto the kitchen table.

Looking at Justin, she asked, “Do you think Nathan is clueless with what Mr. Keaton meant? Or he was just faking it?”

“I think he really doesn’t know.”

“But, Mr. Keaton’s such a smart guy, so why would he take Nathan as an apprentice?”

“It could be because still water runs deep,” he reasoned. “People like Nathan are actually smart and he will be useful in other aspects.”

Rachel did not want to think too much about it and just nodded.

The next morning, Nathan sent both of them to the airport.

They left at a good time as they avoided people searching for them in the area around the villa.

At the Enistan International Airport, Nathan brought Rachel and Justin to the security checkpoint. “Miss Hudson, I’ll take my leave here. Master is still waiting for me to go back. The hotdog stand will be reopening tonight.”

Fine, it seemed that he was only concerned with the hotdog stand now. Rachel finally understood that she was not someone important to Nathan. It was Mr. Keaton’s stand about her that influenced his attitude. If Mr. Keaton said he was Miss Hudson, then Nathan would put her as a priority. However, if he told Nathan to reopen the hotdog stand, Nathan would forget about her.

It seemed like the title of Miss Hudson was not of great importance.

Rachel let out a breath at the realization.

She turned to Nathan and said, “Come visit Riverdale if you have the chance.”

“It’s okay. Master Keaton is getting old. I have to be by his side.”

Justin piped in, “Or, you can advise Mr. Keaton to open a hotdog stand in Riverdale?”

That idea swayed Nathan a little. “Let me ask my master about this.”

Rachel laughed and poked fun at him. “Nathan, how could you possibly find a wife being so meek?”

He replied genuinely, “Master Keaton said he would arrange that for me.”

To that, she could not hold back and laugh out loud.

“It’s getting late. We should head in,” Justin reminded her.

They bid goodbye to Nathan and went through the security checkpoint.

At the waiting terminal filled with people, Rachel and Justin walked side by side. Suddenly, she saw someone behind them through the reflection of the glass. Her intuition told her someone was following them.

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

Chapter 543

“There’s someone following us.” Rachel pulled on Justin’s sleeve with her trembling arms.

He held onto her hand and assured, “Don’t worry. I’m here.” His voice was quiet and it calmed her down.

They walked toward the crowd acting like they did not notice the person behind them.

“There’s more than one,” she softly reminded him.

He had noticed that more eyes were on them through the mirror beside him. They were following and getting closer to them.

Still, Justin held his cool. He was sure that the Porters did not dare to catch them in public spaces. Since they were in Enistan, it was their safe harbor and they would not want to garner unwanted attention.

With the amount of people in the airport, those following them could not get too close to them. As a result, they went to different elevators in the airport and went in all directions to shake the majority of them off their tails.

Finally, they found a smoking lounge and ducked in quickly. Justin backed Rachel up against the wall and covered her using his body. The followers passed by without seeing them and they both let out a breath of relief.

“Let’s stay here till we have to go for the security check.” Rachel took a good look around. There were not many people here as only the whiff of tobacco filled the room.

Justin nodded.

Hence, they waited until the announcement for their flight could be heard. They left the smoking lounge and rushed to the security checkpoint and managed to get on the plane at the very last second of its closing.

The airplane took off flying through the skies of Enistan Airport, leaving a white trail of clouds toward Riverdale.

Looking at the clouds outside, Rachel finally felt relieved; her anxious heart had finally settled down.

“Were you scared?” Justin asked with worry.

She shook her head. “I’m okay.”

The only thing that scared her was his hand.

She looked down and her gaze fell on his bandaged hand. His fingers used to be slender and clean, but now they had a defect. It was hard for her to look at it.

He knew what she was thinking though. Using the bandaged hand, he took hold of her hands. “I think it’s perfect now.”

Rachel was perplexed.

He explained, “As long as it doesn’t affect the quality of life, it’s fine. You don’t need to take it to heart. Do you remember the scar on my face?”

She nodded. How could she forget?

He continued, “Twenty years ago during the forest fire, even though we split apart, my face was scarred. However, I refused to accept any treatment for it.”

The scar was meant to commemorate her.

He did not know if Katie was alive. That scar was the only thing connecting him and Katie. So, he had to keep it as a reminder to avenge her.

Rachel did not say anything, but her heart ached for him.

When Gloria first arrived at Riverdale six years ago, she told Rachel about the scar's history. At first, Rachel did not know that she was Katie. She even envied that little girl who died and was touched by Justin's friendship with Katie.

"What about now? I'm still alive and well, but you've lost a finger."

Looking at the situation now, his amputated finger could no longer be reattached.

He held her tightly, "Sometimes, things may get lost, but I've found something much more important."

Rachel was stunned. The man in front of her had always stuck to his belief; never once had he changed.

That day when he fainted in the forest on Idyll Mountain from excessive loss of blood, it was the first time she felt such unbearable fear. It was like her heart had been dug out and her blood was drained little by little. She had never felt such despair.

"Let's stay a little longer in Riverdale this time."

She whispered while looking at his face, "We should stay with Charlotte more."

Justin nodded in agreement.

They were now clear about many things with each other through the hardships they encountered this time. They knew very well it was difficult to overcome the hurdles and stay together. However, if their hearts were together and they knew the other was safe and healthy, life could not be more fulfilling. As such, they were contented with that.

The trip from Enistan to Riverdale was about three hours. After taking a nap, the plane landed.

Once they got off the plane, they switched on their phones and numerous messages bombarded them.

Rachel contacted Janice first. "We've just landed at the airport. We'll come to look for you in a bit. There's something important we need to discuss."

Janice realized the severity of the issue. "Okay, I'll be waiting for you at the Investigation Bureau."

She knew Rachel would not contact her using her private phone if the situation was not grave.

Assessing the current situation, it was obvious their agent had been exposed. Not only that, their safety was at risk too.

But how did Justin get involved?

Janice frowned on the other side of the phone. With no time to spare, she arranged for people to investigate the situation at Enistan.

On the other hand, Rachel and Justin walked out of the airport.

Buzz. It was Rachel's phone.

"It's Julian." She gave Justin a look.

He frowned. "Such a coincidence?"

They just landed and Julian had picked this time to call.

Since they were in Riverdale, they did not think much of it.

Rachel answered the phone in front of Justin. "Hello?"

"Are you back in Riverdale?"

Julian's familiar voice came from the phone.

She furrowed her eyebrows and asked, "What do you want?" She had wanted to settle the account with him regarding what happened with Jolly and Leroy.

"Rae, you're the one person I don't want to hurt the most."

"What are you saying?"

"If you leave the man next to you now, it's not too late."

At the end of his words, Rachel saw several men dressed in black coming toward them in all directions.

"Julian! You—"

They were in Riverdale, so the couple did not expect that they would be in danger. Ironically, they were safe in Enistan, but got schemed by people they trusted back at their territory once they got off the plane.

Moments later, a black van was speeding on the airport highway.

Rachel and Justin had been held captive in the backseat. There was a burly man on each of their sides. The men had a needle in their hands, ready to give them an injection.

“What are you guys doing?” Rachel started to struggle.

“Miss Hudson.” One of the burly men pinned her down by the shoulder. “Even though Mr. Peters had orders not to hurt you, you better comply. Or else, you’re just making it harder for yourself.”

“We just want to know what’s in that injection.” Justin looked coldly at the burly man. “Surely, it wouldn’t go against your rules to just tell us that, right?”

The man nodded. “It’s just something to make you sleep, in case you try something funny on the road. Mr. Peters said that you’re smart people. We won’t be able to outsmart you both. So, we had to resort to this.”

It was true that it hurt the most when the people you trusted backstabbed you. Justin shot Rachel a reassuring look, signaling for her to cooperate.

Since they were Julian’s men, Justin was sure that they would not hurt Rachel regardless. Therefore, he became slightly at ease.

As the injection went into their veins, they both soon fell into a deep slumber.

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

Chapter 544

The contents of the syringe flowed into Rachel’s bloodstream. The effects of the substance were soon evident: her eyelids became heavier and she could hear the sound of brakes echoing in her drowsy state. Her body swayed once before she lost consciousness.

She did not know how long had passed when she woke up. Since the effects had yet to wear off, she could feel her temples aching slightly. After waking from a nightmare, her eyes had shot open to see the intricate patterns above her. There were large passifloras blooming all over the canopy, which made it rather dizzy to look at.

As she breathed heavily, she began to calm down. Soon, she realized that she was on a large bed and felt that the blanket underneath her fingers was silk. It had a soft yet expensive texture.

Suddenly, the door creaked open. She became alert immediately before tightening her fist and shutting her eyes.

“Why isn’t she awake yet? What did you do?” A girl’s voice came from beside the bed, the sound crisp and clear. Her tone was clearly annoyed.

“The doctor checked on her and reported that the effects of the sedative haven’t passed, so we may need to wait for a while. Miss, why don’t we get the doctor to check on her again?”

The other female voice was respectful and addressed the first girl as ‘Miss’. Rachel could not help but frown briefly because she did not know these girls.

At that moment, the first girl suddenly fell silent as if she had noticed something. “Rita, get out of the room.”

“Yes, Miss.”

When the door closed, it was just Rachel and the haughty-sounding girl left in the room. Even though Rachel’s eyes were closed, she could feel the girl studying her; she could even feel the girl bending close to her, blocking out part of the light. Feeling anxious, Rachel could not stop herself from clutching onto the sheets beneath her. She was afraid of the unknown, even if the other person sounded like a girl of sixteen or seventeen.

“I know you’re awake.”

Rachel squeezed her eyes.

“If you don’t open your eyes right now, I will tickle you!”

When she heard this, she was stunned and could not believe her ears. In the next moment, her blanket was pulled away. Before she could collect herself, she felt a wave of itch spreading from her armpit. It immediately made her burst into laughter as she rolled into a pile together with the girl and the blanket.

“Haha... Hahahaha...”

“Here comes the tickle bomb!” exclaimed the girl as she tickled Rachel. Out of desperation, Rachel quickly pleaded for mercy. “Okay, my eyes are open!”

It was then that Rachel saw the girl before her. The girl was like a sunflower, with curly brown hair resting on her shoulders, pale skin, deep-set features that looked foreign, red lips, white teeth, and pretty eyes. The girl's eyes were bright as she blinked twice at Rachel. Rachel's first thought was that if Charlotte saw this girl, she would think she had met Snow White. The girl was only sixteen or seventeen, yet she was already this beautiful. She would be a gorgeous woman when she grew older.

"I warned you to stop pretending to be asleep. I am very good at tickling." At this, the girl wiggled her fingers at Rachel, which made her look adorably menacing.

Rachel was a little confused. "Who are you?"

It had been such a messy introduction and she still did not know what was happening here. The girl did not look like she had any evil intentions, which left Rachel wondering whether this was a kidnapping incident—one planned by her former best friend, Julian, no less.

The girl looked calm as she crossed her legs to sit in a more comfortable position. "I saved your life, you know."

Rachel froze. "You did?"

"Yep. You were kidnapped and sedated via an injection. It was me who sent someone out to save you."

"Where's the man who was kidnapped with me?"

"We took him with us." The girl waved her hand carelessly. "He's fine, don't worry."

The girl had already saved Rachel and she probably would not lie about something like that. The knowledge that Justin was fine made Rachel relax slightly as she looked around.

"What's this place?"

"A hotel, can't you see it?"

Rachel shook her head. After all, she had just regained consciousness and her brain still felt foggy. The fun little altercation she was forced to join before made it worse, and now her mind was full of thoughts. What on Earth is happening?

Night had already fallen. In the Burton Group office building, the lights in the president's office were still on.

When Julian heard the report coming from behind him, he turned around in his chair. "What?"

His expression shifted immediately. "What do you mean by that? Justin and Rachel got kidnapped by someone else during the journey?"

Robin swallowed hard, murmuring carefully, "I don't know."

If only he had known how dangerous these words were. Sure enough, Julian shoved the files off his desk in anger. "It was daytime; both of them were thrown inside the vehicle and even sedated. Are you telling me you don't know who exactly took them?"

Robin's face was pale and he bravely explained, "We didn't even see them coming. The whole group was made up of strong muscular foreigners. They came after us as if they were re-enacting an action car scene by crashing their vehicles into ours! Eventually, we were forced to stop and they took Justin and Rachel away immediately."

As he recalled the scene on the highway, Robin still felt terrified. He had been there, just not in the same car as Rachel and Justin. His car was the one behind the kidnapper's vehicle as he was escorting them to their destination. No one had anticipated that they would get ambushed even before they exited the highway from the airport.

"Spare me those useless details. Go and investigate who took them at once; you have one day to get them back." Julian was extremely furious. "Are you going to bear the consequences if you derail our plans?"

Petrified, Robin did not dare to utter another word. He had not even thought that the plans they had so expected to succeed would end up a failure.

As for Rachel, she pulled open the curtains of her room. From there, she could see the night view of Riverdale. That eventually convinced her that she was in a hotel.

She then turned to the girl beside her. "Why did you save me?"

"You finally thought of asking that question, huh? Well, you could just see me as someone who rescued you from injustice."

"Is that so?"

The girl shrugged. "I am hungry. You should have dinner with me."

As she said that, she walked out of the bedroom without a care in the world and Rachel had no choice but to follow.

The girl had said this was a hotel, yet there were many private collector items displayed inside glass cases in the living room. They all looked expensive; it was immediately obvious that this was a private suite. Even the interior decoration had been customized to the owner's tastes.

The maid was also not local as her hair was styled in a bun, which added to her respectful manner. “Miss Hudson, are you awake?”

Rachel looked dumbfounded. “Both of you are fluent in Spanish.”

The girl’s face was calm. “My father grew up here, actually.”

Rachel did not move toward the girl and stayed where she was instead. She frowned. “I don’t think I have told any of you my last name, have I?”

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

Chapter 545

The maid froze and looked panickingly at the girl. However, the girl was calm as she sat casually by the table. The way she shook her napkin spoke of natural elegance, like that of a medieval-era princess.

“There’s nothing weird about that. Why would I save someone whose name I don’t even know?”

Frowning, Rachel could not formulate an argument. After all, the girl had saved her life. So, she could not be too rude toward her. “Who exactly are you?”

“If I refuse to answer, you won’t feel like eating, will you?”

“Yes.” Rachel nodded as she confessed, “I guess you don’t have any evil intentions toward me. Regardless of the reason, at least I should know who you are and why you saved me.”

“My name is Regina Hudson.”

Rachel was stunned. “Regina Hudson?”

“Isn’t it pretty?”

“It is.” It sounded really familiar too. This is probably just a coincidence. Rachel tried to suppress her confusion.

Regina rested her chin on her hand while looking at Rachel innocently. “As for why I saved you? I think if you were in my place, you would never let your older step-sister be kidnapped without intervening, would you?”

A step—what?

Rachel froze. “What did you just say?” She could not believe what she had just heard.

“You don’t believe me?” Regina asked while touching her face and muttering to herself, “Well, I guess we don’t look much alike. Both of us didn’t seem to inherit much of our father’s features and we looked more like our respective mothers instead.”

“What on earth are you saying?”

“I said, you are my older sister.”

“What do you mean by that? Both my parents are long gone.”

“Who told you that?”

Rachel was speechless. She did witness her mother’s death, so she was sure about that. As for her biological father?

At that moment, there was the sound of the door opening.

“Regina!” A deep masculine voice called as the door opened with sounds of heavy footsteps following.

Rachel turned and saw a tall figure standing in the doorway. He was wearing a suit and his gaze still carried the remnants of his past. Even if the man was over fifty, there were traces of his past good looks. The man seemed refined while the graying hair at his temples made him look warm and sincere.

He did not need to introduce himself. Rachel already knew who he was as she had felt the pull of kinship toward him and recognized his eyes, which were slightly similar to her own. It was Lionel Hudson. I can’t believe he’s still alive...

“Dad?” Regina stood, looking astonished. She glared at the maid with annoyance. “You got here so quickly. Who was the one that spilled the beans?”

Lionel walked into the room and paused when he saw Rachel. Then, he turned to Regina with a stern expression. “You’re the one tossing the blame? Why didn’t you tell me about such a serious matter and chose to deal with it yourself? Aren’t you worried that something might go wrong?”

“How was I going to tell you? Am I supposed to wait until my sister was kidnapped to tell you, hoping for you to save her?”

Obviously, he did not mean to truly put the blame on her. He had lost his temper, which had not happened often in the past, but now he was slightly desperate.

Rachel was still staring at him. "You are..."

She could not continue her words. She refused to believe her father was still alive. How is this possible? Everyone has said that he is dead. Besides, why did he not show up before this if he is still alive? Had he shown up earlier, Mother, Grandma, and I wouldn't have...

"Our dad, of course." Regina grabbed her hand. "I just told you; we are sisters. Dad has been thinking about you all this time. The purpose of this visit is to take you back with us."

"Back? Back where?"

"Yatruinia." Regina spread open Rachel's palm and placed a small finely-made metal badge on it. "Come back with us."

The badge was the shape of the Yatruinian flag carved in elaborate detail. At once, Rachel realized that this was a badge belonging to the Yatruinian royal family. "What do you mean by this?"

"Regina!" Lionel tried to stop his daughter, but could not prevent her frank words in time.

Regina answered, "I haven't had the time to tell you this, but my mom is a member of the Yatruinian royal family though just a distant relative. This badge is proof of that."

All members of the royal family could give two of those badges to people they deemed most important, deeming them a member of the royal family as well. Seeing that Regina had so readily given Rachel one meant that Regina recognized her as her sister, even though they did not share a mother.

However, Rachel did not think the same. After a long while, she lifted her head to look at the man facing her. "So, you have been alive all these years, living peacefully and having a family abroad?"

Lionel's face tightened. "Rae."

"Answer my question."

His silence explained everything.

Rachel added, "How did you manage to live happily abroad the way you did? You can abandon me and my mother, but how could you abandon your parents? You are way worse than Jefferey!"

He clenched his fists as his face paled. "I'm so sorry."

“What’s the use of saying all that now? What are you doing back here?”

“I just wanted to see everyone.”

“To see what? To see that everyone from your family is worse off than you, the fact that Hudson Pharmaceuticals is in danger, or that the daughter whom you never knew existed is currently being hunted down?”

Rachel had been trying to rein herself in, but she could not control herself. Before this, she had considered Lionel to be a refined and responsible gentleman, who was worth everything her mother, Selena, had sacrificed for him. However, that was based on the assumption that he was dead. Now that it was proven he was not, that meant that all the suffering Selena had gone through was a joke.

Selena had carried the mandate of continuing the Hudson Pharmacy business as she fled into the deep forest. All of this happened when Lionel, who was supposed to support the family, had vanished abroad while creating a new peaceful life and family.

Speechless, Lionel knew he could not argue with that as he had truly owed it to them.

Rachel clenched her fists. “I’ll pretend that I never met you.”

As soon as she finished speaking, she walked toward the door.

“Rachel, where are you going?”

“Regina.” He held his daughter back.

Regina was frustrated. “Dad, what are you doing? We finally found Rachel! I finally have a sister and I want to bring her back with us!”

“Regina, you are too reckless!” He was rarely this angry and Regina was scared by it.

To that, her eyes reddened. At the thought of something, she choked out, “Do you really plan to stay here and never return?”

In response, Lionel frowned. They were both his daughters and he loved them equally. He would never abandon Regina after he had found Rachel. It was just that he owed Rachel way too much.

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

Chapter 546

"Of course not." Lionel held his younger daughter's hand. "Your sister has suffered a lot. If I had known about it, I would never have let her grow up alone like that. You see, I owe her too much."

"Won't that be solved if we take her back home with us?"

"It won't be that easy. Of course, it will be best if she's willing to go with us."

Hearing this, Regina's eyes brightened. "You really think so?"

Without waiting for his reply, she let go of his hand. "I'll take care of this. I will make sure that Rachel comes back with us."

As she said this, she ran out of the room.

"Regina!" Lionel could not stop her; instead, he glanced at someone beside him. As such, the bodyguard immediately followed her. Since Regina's status was unique, she had to have bodyguards near her whenever she went out.

His assistant assured him, "Don't worry, sir. Someone will be there with her."

"I'm not worried about her but Rae."

"Miss Rae's current situation is worrying. You are making the right considerations since these issues won't exist if she is willing to return with us."

"I'm just worried that she isn't."

"Perhaps there's someone who can talk to her?"

At these words, Lionel paused as he recalled a person. If there was someone who could convince Rachel, it had to be him.

In the meantime, Justin had been trapped in another room for quite some time. When he regained consciousness, he could only find two men who looked like bodyguards. They were guarding the door, which was the only exit, as they stood as stiff as statues. As soon as they noticed he was awake, they glanced at each other and exchanged some words before one of them left. Justin looked around, but he could not find Rachel as he realized he was lying alone on the couch.

"Where's Julian?" he asked the man still guarding the door. The man frowned briefly, but did not reply.

"Where's Rae?" He rose to his feet immediately. "You took me here; at least tell me what for!"

Seeing him approach with an unfriendly expression, the guard ordered, "Stay there and do not move."

"I asked you—where is the woman who was kidnapped with me?!"

"Stay still!" The guard pulled out his electric baton, looking like he would be aggressive if Justin dared to approach another inch.

At that moment, the door behind the guard opened. As he panned toward the visitor, Justin's eyes narrowed. "Mr. Brook?"

It was Lionel Hudson. To Justin, however, he was Mr. Brook—an American businessman who had helped him tremendously when he arrived in the northern division of Riverdale. He had also given Justin and Rachel plenty of assistance in Enistan as well.

"Sir." The guard replaced his electric baton while moving to the side respectfully.

"It was you who took us?" Justin's gaze was narrowed. That doesn't sound right; it is Julian who has kidnapped us!

"No." Lionel sat opposite him. "Have a seat. I have something to discuss with you."

Justin had many questions and he could not figure them out. However, the man had helped him and Rachel a lot in the past. If he really had been the person who kidnapped them, he would not have wasted this much effort; Justin and Rachel would not have even made it back from Enistan in one piece.

"Well then, where's Rae?"

"She's okay now, don't worry. It was my daughter who saved both of you and she's now with Rachel. They will be fine since they have someone guarding them."

Hearing his words, Justin felt slightly reassured and sat down as well. "Mr. Brook, I've always had a question before I went to Enistan. How did you know I was going there? I don't remember mentioning that to you."

"Rae's going, so obviously you will too."

"Rae?" Justin squeezed his eyes further. "I knew it; you already know who Rae is! So, that's why Mr. Keaton from Enistan said she looked like someone he knew. That's also why Nathan called her 'Miss Hudson'. I was never the person you wanted to help; it was Rae."

“You are a smart man. Even if things didn’t unfold in Enistan, I think you would realize the truth after some time with me in north Riverdale.”

“Why?”

“Since you already guessed that I did it because of Rae, why don’t you try guessing the reason?”

The man before him was past his fifties with graying hair at his temples. He still looked handsome though; it was obvious that he had been good-looking in his youth. There was something in his eyes that felt familiar the first time Justin had met him. Now that the man was here and had mentioned Rachel several times during their discussion, it was hard not to make the connection.

Justin ventured, “Perhaps you know her biological mother.”

“Make a bolder guess.” The man’s voice was deep and powerful, his gaze dark. “I am from Riverdale and Hudson is my family name.”

Stunned, Justin could momentarily see traces of someone from the man’s face before him. He stood in disbelief as he clenched his fist. “You are...”

Impossible. This is not possible.

With such a reaction, Lionel knew he had already guessed the answer. “Have a seat.”

These words made Justin more convinced of his guess. He stood for two seconds, then sat back down.

“Does Rae know?” Justin did not care about anything else. All he wanted to know was whether Rachel knew that her biological father was still alive.

Lionel nodded. “We just met.”

Remembering how serious Lionel looked when he came in, Justin assumed that the meeting did not go as expected. Lionel continued, “My purpose for returning here is to take her away.”

“What do you mean?”

“I am staying permanently in Yatruinia and I hope she will head there to stay with me.”

It was then a vein jumped in Justin’s temple. He knew that Rachel would never leave just like that. Plus, even if she did, they could probably see each other again. However, he did panic slightly at the possibility of that occurring. “She won’t go with you.”

“How are you so sure of that?”

“She still has things she cares about here.”

“Like what? You?” Lionel’s tone was a little annoyed. “I don’t like how confident you are in knowing other people, especially when one of them is my daughter.”

“I confess that I don’t have that ability. Maybe I do have a place in her heart, but what she probably cares more about is her son, friends, Hudson Pharmaceuticals, and even her home in Riverdale itself. She is a stubborn yet committed person.” When talking about Rachel, his tone was relaxed. He had enough beautiful praise for her, the nearly perfect woman he felt so deeply for.

“But if she stays here in Riverdale, even her basic safety won’t be guaranteed.” Lionel looked at him, calm and wise. “Therefore, I hope you can help convince her to come with me.”

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

Chapter 547

Justin was startled. Rachel and he were both well aware of the situation they would face once they returned from Enistan.

She killed Dillon. With that, both Rachel and Justin had put themselves at odds with S, the largest international smuggling organization controlled by the Porter Family. As a result, they knew for sure that both of them would be hunted by S.

“As long as Rae leaves with me, the Yatruinia royalty will protect her. No one will ever dare to touch her,” Lionel said.

After a few moments of silence, Justin responded, “She will not leave with you, and I will not persuade her to do so either. I suppose you’ve heard about the smuggling case last year. I didn’t understand what Rae was doing at first and I, too, assumed that she was risking her life and doing the same thing Jefferey had done all because of Hudson Pharmaceuticals. But when I arrived in Enistan, I realized what she was actually doing.”

He didn’t say it explicitly, but they both knew what he meant.

And that was the exact reason why Dillon hated Rachel to the core.

“Since she has decided to do such a dangerous thing, she is not someone who is fearful of death. She has her own sets of values. There are some things she wants to do, even if it means putting her life in danger.”

Lionel was displeased with what Justin said. “But the situation is different now! She needs to keep her head down for the time being!”

“For the time being? But what you meant just now was for her to stay in Yatruinia indefinitely, no?”

“That, of course, would be the best.”

“I don’t think so. She would not be happy there. As I’ve said, Rae is a resilient and faithful lady, and nothing in Yatruinia deserves both her resilience and faithfulness, at least for the time being. That is why I’m not going to persuade her to leave with you.” Then, Justin stood up and continued, “Thank you for saving my life, but I have to leave now.”

“You’re just being selfish!” Lionel yelled furiously. “Do you think you can hide it from me? I know you just want to keep Rae by your side, but you’ve already hurt her once. You should make amends for that.”

Hearing that, Justin frowned and clenched his fists. However, he left right away instead of refuting Lionel.

Justin had indeed hurt Rachel, and he had been making up to her all this while. But forcing what he thought was good on her wasn’t a way to make amends.

Meanwhile, Rachel grabbed a taxi and headed home after she left the hotel.

“Just stop at the junction, Sir.”

“Sure.”

She then alighted at the entrance of her neighborhood. Just as she was about to close the car door, the driver shouted to her, “Hey, you haven’t paid yet.”

Hearing that, she subconsciously reached into her pockets, but she couldn’t find her phone or any cash.

“I’m sorry; I did not have my phone with me. I’ll get it right now. Please wait for me.”

“What if you did not return? Wouldn’t I be waiting in vain then?”

“That’s impossible. My house is right here.”

“Don’t you have any family or friends? Ask them to come over using the phone in the guardhouse.”

The driver grumbled with his lips pursed as he looked at the guardhouse which was quite a distance away. He appeared to be treating Rachel as someone reneging on the payment and mumbled, “I’ve seen a lot of people like you who ran away as soon as they got out of the car. Just a small amount of fare, but you still want to take advantage...”

Just as Rachel was feeling awkward and unsure of what to do, a female voice echoed from behind. “What are you saying? Isn’t it just some fare? Take this!”

And a stack of cash was handed to him.

The lady spoke arrogantly while glaring at the driver, “This should be enough! There is no need for change!”

“Yes, it’s enough,” the man replied, elated.

“Buzz off now!”

He then quickly drove away, leaving an unpleasant engine odor.

Regina waved her hand in front of her nose as she was disgusted with the smell. Then, she turned around to face Rachel. “Rachel, are you alright?”

However, Rachel merely frowned at that. “You followed me, right?”

“I did not! I can swear to that,” Regina replied with a swearing gesture of her fingers. “I was shouting for you at the hotel’s entrance, but you didn’t hear me. Hence, I can only follow you here to hand you this.”

Looking at the phone that Regina handed, Rachel loosened her fists, which had been tightly clenched earlier.

“Thank you.” She uttered these two words before turning around and walking toward her house.

“Why are you walking so fast, Rachel? Wait for me.”

“Why are you following me?”

“Since I’m already here, please invite me to your house.”

“What do you want?”

Rachel's steps came to a halt in front of her house and she looked with dissatisfaction at the young lady in front of her, as well as the few strong bodyguards behind Regina. "What exactly do you all want?"

"Rachel, my dear sister, are you angry?"

"I am not your sister."

Regina's smile froze the second she heard Rachel's words. Looking at Regina's awkward and aggrieved expression, Rachel felt sorry for her.

Rachel was never someone with a stone cold heart. Though she couldn't accept Lionel's sudden appearance, not to mention Regina, a sister from nowhere, she knew it wasn't Regina's fault.

"I did not mean anything bad. With your special identity, you should not be roaming around outside. Leave now," Rachel said, her tone much gentler than before. Then, she turned around, intending to leave.

Regina immediately shouted, "Rachel, Dad has his own reasons. He only knew about your existence two years ago."

That made Rachel freeze.

...

The apartment was exactly as it had been before Rachel and Jolly left.

Jolly's clothes, which she randomly tossed around, were still on the sofa, though they had been neatly folded by the cleaner, who came around every now and then to tidy up the house.

There was no sign of life at all. After all, Rachel had left for quite some time, but the white roses in the vase on the table remained fresh, as if they had just been placed there.

She felt a sense of calmness when she looked at them.

After pouring Regina a cup of tea, Rachel reflexively looked at the bodyguards, who were standing on the porch. "Do they want some drinks?"

To that, Regina simply waved her hand casually and replied, "You don't have to be bothered about them. I've only seen such a place on television, Rachel. This is amazing."

She then looked around, as if she was in a museum. "Where's the living room?"

“The place you’re having tea with me right now is the living room.”

Rachel found it difficult to explain to this royal princess that commoners lived in such places, and her place was already on the higher end as compared with the others. Even if she tried, Regina would not understand it.

Hence, she cut to the chase. “What do you mean when you say he only found out about me two years ago?” Rachel would not have invited Regina to her apartment if it hadn’t been for this.

“Someone had previously hidden this from him. He always assumed your mother died a long time ago and had no idea you existed.” Regina regained her serious composure and responded.

“Someone hid my existence from him?” Rachel had no idea what this meant.

“My mom was the one who hid your existence.” Regina felt a tinge of guilt when her mother was mentioned, and her tone softened. “She only told Dad two years ago about what happened some twenty years back, and only then did he know that he has another daughter.”

Hearing that, Rachel clenched her fists tightly.

Perhaps that explained why he did not look for her all these years, but she still could not understand him.

“What about more than twenty years ago? Why did he leave Riverdale? Everyone thought he was dead, but he was actually living a good life in another country, raising his family...”

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

Chapter 548

“I don’t know much about the past either. However, from what I understand, Dad has his own reasons. Furthermore, despite the passage of time, he has never forgotten your mother.”

Regina was so anxious to explain that she started scratching her head. “Go back with me and everything will be clear.”

"I'm not leaving with you."

"Don't you want to know why Dad didn't return all these years?"

"No. I'm not interested," Rachel replied firmly.

With her mother's sufferings fresh in her mind, even speaking with Lionel felt like an insult to her mother.

"It's late now; you should leave."

She gestured with her hands, obviously attempting to send Regina off.

However, Regina was stubborn. "I'm not going to leave."

She remained on the sofa, arms wrapped around herself as she continued, "Since you're not leaving with me, I'll follow you everywhere. I'm staying here tonight."

"As you wish." Rachel merely uttered these indifferent words and went straight back to her room.

She slammed her door shut with a bang, while Regina was looking displeased at the living room. After taking off her shoes, Regina laid down on the sofa and said to herself, "I'll sleep here tonight."

In the meantime, Justin intended to look for Rachel as soon as he left the hotel. However, he suddenly remembered something he needed to deal with.

"Frankie, it's me."

"Are you back, President Burton?" Frankie asked in a surprise tone when he heard Justin's voice.

"Yes."

"How about Mrs. Burton? Is she back? Are you both alright?"

"We're all right. Apart from a few minor issues that caused some delay when we stepped off the plane, we're fine."

"I wanted to pick you both up from the hotel after dropping Miss Carter and the others off at the airport on the wedding day. But before I could get to the hotel, Mr. Keaton called and told me to return to Riverdale right away."

Though it was not made clear in that phone call, Frankie did as he was told in light of Mr. Keaton's assistance while they were in Enistan. Since then, he had been waiting worriedly for Justin and Rachel in Riverdale.

"It's good to know that the both of you are fine, President Burton."

Frankie had been feeling uneasy the entire time. "When I returned to Riverdale, I did some investigation and discovered that Julian had arrived in Enistan just minutes after us, but had returned to Riverdale not long after. He keeps his whereabouts very private."

But regardless of how secretive Julian was, the Burton Group previously belonged to Justin. It wouldn't take him long with the help of his inside informants to know where Julian was.

"Okay. Got it."

Justin wasn't surprised by what he heard. "Let's go to the Burton Group, Frankie."

Justin hadn't dealt with Julian yet for forcibly taking him away after he got off the plane.

Meanwhile in the Burton Group, Robin had spent the entire day trying to find out where Justin and Rachel were but to no avail, let alone who that group of men was.

"You can't even complete such a simple task?" Julian reprimanded, his face solemn.

Robin, who stood off to one side, was terrified. Just as he was about to say something, the assistant knocked on the door from the outside and said, "President Peters, President Burton is downstairs. He said he's here to meet you."

"What? Which President Burton?" Robin reflexively asked.

That startled the assistant. "Justin Burton."

"I'm looking for him; good that he shows up!"

But Julian poured cold water on him. "What do you want to do?"

"I'll send my men to apprehend him and bring him to you!"

"You should use your brain, Robin!"

Julian glared at him before continuing, "It is broad daylight now, and we're at the Burton Group. Who do you want to apprehend?"

Julian then instructed his assistant, "Invite President Burton in." Truth was, he never had high hopes on Robin's brain.

"Noted."

Soon after that, Justin entered.

His strong build made the office appear less empty.

The assistant then tactfully closed the door, leaving only Justin and Julian inside.

"It's been a while. I thought you'd stay at the northern division and never return," Julian said, his eyes dimmed as he sat on the leather sofa.

Justin wasn't in a hurry to get to the point as well. "It's really been a long time since we last met," he replied as he swept his gaze across the office. Then, he walked straight to the sofa and sat down before fiddling with the tea set on the coffee table.

But that made Julian uneasy. "I suppose you're not here just to have some tea with me?"

"Why? Since I'm here, can't I drink a cup of tea with you?"

"Of course you can."

"Good to hear that."

The tea leaves were brewing in hot water.

With a tweezer in his hand, Justin used the first brew to wash the teacups.

While he was doing that, Julian noticed his bandaged left hand, and his gaze tightened slightly. "What happened to your hand?"

"It's nothing much; just some minor injury."

"From Enistan?"

"How do you know I went to Enistan?"

Julian's expression obviously froze when he heard that. However, he quickly regained his composure and responded, "Well, it isn't very difficult for me to know about it."

"Why do you want to know about it?"

"The Burton Group in the northern division and Riverdale are competitors; it is, of course, perfectly reasonable for me to be aware of your whereabouts. I'm guessing you have informers on my side as well?"

"Well, you're right," Justin replied calmly. He returned his attention to the tea set he was fiddling with.

Within minutes, the fragrance of the tea filled the entire room.

Justin poured two cups of tea before wiping his hands and raising his head.

"Are you used to this office?"

These nonchalant words of his echoed in the room, and Julian became tense upon hearing that. However, he could only suppress his emotions and pretend to be calm. "Yeah."

"You can replace all these old furniture if they do not appeal to you."

"That's not necessary. You know I don't care about these external things."

"Are you really unconcerned, or are you just afraid of what people will say and thus act unconcerned?"

Such a sentence plucked at Julian's nerves, and he instantly clenched his fists tightly.

They were brothers, and some similarities flowed in their blood. Furthermore, they grew up together, and hence Justin was well aware of Julian's personality.

Since young, Julian has always been concerned about what others thought of him.

He had always wanted to be a perfect man, with the highest moral standards a human being could have.

And that worked. Until now, he had a good reputation in the eyes of the public. The entire Burton Group regarded him as a gentle and considerate superior.

"What exactly do you want to say?"

"Everything here, including where you're sitting now, was built by me from scratch. You most probably are aware of its strengths, but no one knows its weaknesses better than me," Justin replied, his expression not as merciless as before, but neither was it kind.

"If I'm unwilling to, you won't be able to stay here for long."

“Are you threatening me?” Julian clenched his fists even more tightly when he heard that.

“It’s not a threat. I’m simply stating a fact,” Justin responded as he sat there motionless, but the domineering aura he exuded did not diminish even in the slightest. With a firm and stern gaze, he looked directly into Julian’s eyes and continued, “Rae is my limit.”

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

Chapter 549

Julian stared hard at the tea set.

Justin had left long ago, leaving only the two cups of tea that neither of them had drunk.

But Julian couldn’t get Justin’s words out of his head. “Rae is my limit”.

His fists remained clenched. Julian used to hate Justin for not saying what he truly meant or expressing his true feelings to those around him. No one could guess his mind.

However, Julian now hated Justin’s completely different attitude. Julian despised the man’s obvious affection, desperate for everyone to know how much Justin adored Rachel.

How can he so blatantly hurt or love whomever and whenever he pleased?

Given his attitude, all Julian’s previous efforts and compromises seemed like a joke now.

“President Peters.”

Julian was snapped back into reality by his assistant’s voice. He took a look at his watch and said, “It’s time, right? Let’s go.”

He had a dinner appointment tonight to discuss a major project.

His assistant, however, responded, “The dinner is canceled, President Peters. President Jones said that he has something urgent to attend to and will not be able to attend the dinner.”

“Something urgent? How about the contract?”

“The contract...”

Noticing that his assistant was hesitant to continue, Julian instructed firmly, “Just say it.”

The assistant then shuddered and said, “They’ve signed a contract with the northern division just half an hour ago.”

Julian’s expression dimmed the second he heard that.

Is this Justin’s warning?

The next day, Justin went to Rachel’s house early in the morning.

He pressed the doorbell, but the man who answered the door appeared to be a bodyguard.

“Who are you? Why are you in Rae’s house?”

A figure sat up on the sofa as soon as he finished his words. “It’s so noisy!”

After yelling, the lady yawned, her eyes bleary.

“Why are you here so early in the morning?” she asked the moment she saw Justin.

Justin was taken aback. He had no idea who this lady was, but after recalling Lionel’s words from the day before, he was able to connect the dots.

“You’re Regina?”

“It’s none of your business.”

Regina did not like Justin at all. She believed that he was the primary reason Rachel refused to leave Riverdale with them.

This young lady in front of Justin appeared young, and she had a sweet-looking mixed-race appearance. However, her gaze was cold, and she looked at people with a condescending attitude, which contrasted sharply with how Rachel was. It was difficult to believe they were sisters at all.

But that didn’t bother Justin. “I’m here to look for Rae.”

And he went straight into the house after his words.

“Stop him!”

Regina jumped from the sofa and yelled, “Don’t let him in!”

Hearing that, two bodyguards immediately blocked his path with their elbows.

Justin frowned and his gaze turned thunderous in response. The two bodyguards trembled a little when they saw his grim expression, but in light of Regina's instruction, they could only continue blocking his path helplessly.

"Do you think they'll be able to stop me if I insist on seeing your sister?"

"Stop being so arrogant. My sister does not want to see you at all."

"I've something important for her. Stop fooling around."

"I'm not fooling around! Are you treating me like a child?" Regina spoke back, her tone scornful. "My sister is going back to Yatruinia with me. If you continue pestering her, I'll ask them to kick you out."

Justin did not respond to that. Instead, he stared silently at Rachel's room door, as if deep in thought.

Rachel normally had light sleep. After all the commotion outside, she would have awoken by now.

Furthermore, the time had passed far past her normal waking hours.

That worried him. "Were you here the entire night?"

"Of course."

"Rae did not leave?"

"Of course not!"

Regina responded confidently, but one of the bodyguards who had stopped Justin looked hesitant.

"Is that true?" Justin asked him.

And the bodyguard looked at Regina, as if he was in a dilemma.

Regina was stunned. "Why are you looking at me in such a way?"

Justin immediately realized something was amiss. With that, he quickly pushed the bodyguards aside and rushed to Rachel's room.

"What are you doing?! I've said that my sister does not want to see you!"

Amid her yelling, Justin pushed open Rachel's room door, only to find the room empty.

"Where is she?" Justin turned around and questioned Regina.

However, the woman was equally surprised. "Where is she?"

"Lady Regina, Miss Hudson left early this morning," one of the bodyguards behind them cautiously said.

Regina's expression immediately changed to one of rage. "Why did you let her go?"

"You asked us to stay here and keep an eye on the door, but you didn't say we have to stop her."

"Why didn't you shout for me, then?"

"You were asleep..."

"You're all a bunch of sh*t!" Before she could continue to throw her temper, she saw Justin walking outside and immediately ran after him. "Hey, stop right there! Where are you going?"

Justin, on the other hand, was calling Rachel on her phone while waiting for the lift.

"Sorry. The number you've dialed is unavailable."

Rachel's phone had been shut off since morning. Otherwise, Justin would not have come here to look for her.

He then headed straight to the Investigation Bureau after leaving Rachel's house.

"No. Rae didn't come here for me."

Janice happened to be at the bureau's main entrance after parking her car. Faced with Justin's aggressive questioning, she was at a loss. "I hope nothing serious happened?"

"I've no idea."

Justin continued, his brows furrowed, "I thought she'll be looking for you."

"She didn't; Frankie had come under your instructions yesterday. We'll get to Enistan later, but what happened to Rae? Frankie did not say much about it as well."

"I can't put it into a sentence or two. It has something to do with her biological father who returned for her."

“Her biological father?” Janice replied doubtfully. “Isn’t Lionel dead?”

“He’s not.”

“What?”

Janice appeared stunned, as if she couldn’t believe what she was hearing.

At this moment, a chestnut-brown head poked out of Justin’s car window, her curly hair exploding all over her head. “So, is my sister here? If she’s not, why are you chatting with this woman?”

This lady’s voice was clear and sharp, piercing through the air.

Janice was slightly startled. “Who’s this?”

“Rae’s half-sister,” Justin answered.

“Sister?”

“I have to go. Tell me if Rae contacts you.”

“Sure.”

He then quickly got in his car after finishing his words.

Regina, on the other hand, was sitting impatiently on the passenger’s seat. “Do you really know where my sister is? If you don’t, just look for my dad. He can send his men to search in case it’s too late!”

“Your dad is probably the person least likely to find her.”

“Well, how about you? You said you could find her, but all you’ve done is chit chat with that lady here after going to the cemetery. Where is my sister?”

“Either you stop talking, or get out of the car.”

Faced with Justin’s indifferent voice echoing in the car, Regina had no choice but to shut her mouth and she bit at her lower lip.

She wouldn’t not have put up with such grievances if Justin didn’t seem to be the only one who could find Rachel.

Through the car’s windshield, she could see the road sign indicating that they were on their way to the highway.

They had already exited Riverdale, and Justin was clutching the wheels tightly beside her.

About half an hour ago, he saw a bouquet of flowers placed in front of Nancy's tomb in the cemetery. Needless to say, Rachel was surely the one who placed it there. Thus, there was only one place she would go now—Somerset Mountain.

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

Chapter 550

Justin got off his car to get some food and drinks for the journey after he parked it at a service area. When he came back, he threw the large shopping bag on Regina's lap, who was dozing off in the passenger seat. She was startled awake due to the sudden pressure she felt on her lap.

"Huh? Have we arrived?" she asked while rubbing her drowsy eyes, looking all confused.

He had already started the car engine again by the time she was able to collect her thoughts. He merely replied indifferently, "Not yet, but I got you some food."

Hearing that, she glanced down at the shopping bag and immediately refused, "What is this sh*t? I don't want it."

"Whatever. Just so you know, Somerset Mountain is more than 1,000 kilometers away from Riverdale, so we will be driving along the highway until it gets dark." He tried pointing out how far 1,000 kilometers was in practical terms because she seemed to have no idea. Instead of feeling appreciative that he was being considerate, Regina's annoyance grew; she threw the shopping bag to the back seat and wrapped her arms around her body as she cradled herself in the passenger seat. Who do you think you are, making me eat sh*tty food? She turned her head away and looked at the scenery outside the window.

Regina had a perfect plan—she would get rid of Justin when they arrived at Somerset Mountain, and if necessary, she would kill him. Otherwise, she could also knock him unconscious and kidnap him abroad, regardless of whether Rachel liked it or not. Her sister would get used to it eventually. Even though Regina was ruthless, she was still ignorant of worldly affairs.

Just as Justin predicted, it was already nighttime when they arrived at Somerset Mountain, and it was so dark that it gave a sensation of oppression.

Regina kept waking up after falling asleep, especially after the car entered the mountain area as there was no way for her to fall asleep due to the bad road conditions. Hence, she tried to chase the boredom away by talking to Justin from time to time and looking at the scenery outside the window.

“This place is so big! How are you planning to search for my sister?” Regina asked as she felt like he was driving around the mountain like a headless fly. Little did she know that there was a compass in his heart guiding him exactly to where Rachel would be.

Justin was just about to reply when he heard her stomach rumble. Immediately, Regina covered her stomach with her hands, as if that would stop the growling sound from transmitting. She turned to look at him feeling embarrassed, only to see him acting indifferently. Well, he might not have heard that, the princess thought. Giving in to the hunger, she eventually “condescended”; she opened a bag of bread that she disliked, ate it with relish, and drank mineral water. Whatever royal habits she had, they were completely disregarded when it came to satisfying her normal physiological needs.

The car finally stopped. As Justin was pulling the brakes, Regina expressed relief while holding the bread in one hand and mineral water in the other. “Gosh, we have finally arrived.” She had a sore back just from sitting in the car the whole day.

He looked up and glanced at the word “Motel” through the windshield. “We’re staying here for the night.”

“Here?” She followed him out of the car suspiciously. After checking the hotel environment herself, surprisingly she made no commotion.

“Suck it up. It’s just for one night.” Justin handed her the room card. “I’m staying next door. Call me if there is anything.” While she had been an annoying brat for the whole journey, Justin still had to take care of her. She was young, and more importantly, she was Rachel’s sister. That being said, he never expected the phrase ‘suck it up’ to come from his own mouth—he used to be the first to make a commotion for not living luxuriously enough.

“When can we see my sister?”

“Probably tomorrow morning. It’s too late now. She should be staying nearby as well.”

“You ain’t lying at me, are you?” Regina looked alarmed when she heard his reply, as she felt that this might be his delay tactic. “If you dare to leave me alone, I will tell my sister.”

“No, I won’t.” It was rare for Justin, but he still assured her patiently and watched her go back to her room before he went back to his.

Although the motel was quite old, it was still considered clean and did not give off an odd smell. It had been a long journey. Justin merely took off his coat, lay in bed, and closed his eyes to rest. For a person who was usually obsessed with cleanliness all year round, he did not feel like cleaning himself up.

This was the only town at the foot of Somerset Mountain that could be reached directly by bus. Rachel did not drive here; she took a plane and a high-speed train, and both transportation methods required her to make transfers a few times to reach this town. It was also not easy to maneuver alone in the mountain area. After the fire that happened 27 years ago, the authorities relocated all residents to preserve the forest area, and the mountain had since been cordoned off. But no one would know the mountain better than Justin.

It was late at night.

Justin was not able to fall asleep, probably due to the uncomfortable mattress or the warm temperature in the room. He tossed and turned, and finally decided to switch on the light beside his bed and stayed awake the whole night. He was not aware that Rachel had checked into the motel across the street in the middle of the night.

“Thank you. I can do it myself.” Rachel thanked the proprietress who was eager to help her with her luggage. The proprietress was a woman in her forties. She had a friendly look and spoke with a local accent. “You’re welcome! You should be able to find everything in the room, but if you need anything else, feel free to look for me downstairs whenever.”

“Actually, I want to ask you something.”

“Sure.”

“Which path do you usually take to enter the mountain?”

“It would be the main entrance of the scenic spot. The ticket is only 40, which is very cheap. You can also take the shuttle buses; this mountain is quite big, so if you tourists don’t want to hike all the way up, you can take the bus. It is more relaxing.”

“That’s not what I meant. I mean, how do the locals usually enter the mountain?”

The proprietress looked a bit staggered when Rachel asked that. She sized Rachel up and answered, “The locals don’t need to pay for a ticket to enter, but most of them will still enter using the main entrance of the scenic spot.”

“I see...”

“Hmm... It seems like you aren’t here as a tourist?”

“You’re right; I’m not a tourist. Many years ago, I lived on this mountain with my family when I was a child.”

Hearing this, the proprietress was startled. “Really?”

“Twenty-seven years ago, to be exact. I was born on this mountain. At that time, it was not yet a scenic spot but a wild forest area, and there were villages here.”

“I know this best. Our family used to live here too.” When the proprietress heard that Rachel was born and bred here, at once, she was a lot more cordial and her previous vigilance disappeared.

“So, are you here to pay homage to your elders?”

“Yeah.”

“Then, do you know the exact location? This place is huge.”

“I have a bit of a recollection, but I’m not so sure.” While Rachel remembered what it looked like 27 years ago, things were drastically different especially after the big fire. It was almost impossible to find her old address. But still, she came here because of her paranoia.

The proprietress then suggested, “How about this? I’ll guide you into the mountain tomorrow morning.”

“Really? In that case, I really can’t thank you enough!”

“You’re welcome. We’re considered fellow villagers, aren’t we? ”

After the proprietress left, Rachel closed the door and sat down on the side of the bed. The curtains were drawn, and the windows were half-open for ventilation. Through the glass windows, she could see the three-story buildings across the street, which were mostly motels and hostels. Behind those small buildings lay Somerset Mountain. Rachel could not help but think what would happen to her had Jefferey not been able to search for them. Perhaps she would be like the proprietress, owning a small business and living a peaceful life here.

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

Chapter 551

The next day, Rachel followed the proprietress into the mountain early in the morning. The proprietress was wearing boots and carrying a small bamboo basket on her back.

“Perfect time to pick some mushrooms, don’t you think? We’ll make mushroom stew tonight; it will be so delicious!”

The proprietress continued talking without giving Rachel time to respond, “Anyways, everyone in the town knows there are many paths to go up the mountain; after all, this is a large forest, and it is quite impossible to cordon the area off completely. But there was a big fire more than 20 years ago, and nearly one-third of the mountain area was burned. So it took many years for the trees to grow again, so we locals cherish the forest and the mountain a lot.”

After a short pause, she explained the locals’ behavior, “We want to preserve them, unlike the foreign tourists who would try everything they can to enter the mountain using small trails. So, you can imagine why locals had a great aversion toward those tourists. There was even a time when the locals would report the tourists when they saw them strolling in this area.”

Rachel was inattentive until she heard the word “fire” she regained her senses. “Ma’am, do you still remember where the fire first started?”

“I don’t. I mean, who else can remember? It’s been so many years, and the trees have even grown.” Rachel was a little disappointed when she heard that—it would mean that it was almost impossible for her to find her old address.

The proprietress introduced Rachel to the various specialties in the mountain along the way. “This kind of wild matsutake sells for a high price in the market; you’re lucky if you’re able to see one. I used to enter the mountain to pick these mushrooms; all the children in the mountain know how to do that.”

Rachel nodded and said, “Yeah, my mother used to remind me to cover the original position with moss after picking the mushrooms, so we don’t damage the surrounding environment. The mushrooms will grow back in the same position in the coming year.”

“Same! That’s what my mother taught me too! Speaking of which, how’s your mother?”

“She passed away.” Rachel tried smiling politely, but the sadness in her eyes and how her face slightly stiffened at the abrupt question betrayed her.

The proprietress paused awkwardly as she realized that she had accidentally rubbed salt in Rachel’s wound. “I’m sorry, Miss. I shouldn’t have poked into your past.”

“It’s alright; my mother passed away many years ago in that fire.”

“The fire from twenty years ago?” The proprietress was startled at the information. “No wonder you asked about the place where the fire broke out. Are you looking for the place you used to live?”

“Yeah.”

The proprietress sighed. “It’s going to be a difficult one for you.”

“It’s okay. I’ll take a look around myself.”

“Don’t go too far—you will get lost.”

“Okay!”

While the proprietress was busy picking portobello mushrooms, Rachel climbed over a small hillside alone, walked through the lush green forest, and searched for any familiar place from her memory. Rachel just felt a sense of familiarity in the area—she knew it was strange to even think about it because the trees did not look different from one another.

She hiked to the top of a small hill and glanced down. Whatever she saw next left her in a trance—it was 8.00 or 9.00AM, and the sun had already risen very high. She could hear the birds constantly chirping in the woods. From the position she was standing, she saw a group of mountains connected to one another in the distance; the shape of the connected mountains made her think of a rabbit who was fast asleep.

The moment the phrase crossed her mind, she heard her mother’s voice. “Little Bell, can you still find your way back home if you get lost in the mountain after picking mushrooms?”

“Of course, I can!”

“But the mountain is so vast! How can you do that?”

“That’s because my house is right under the bunny ears!” Bunny ears? They’re just right there! I can’t believe my instincts guided me back home.

Rachel hurriedly took a few steps forward to have a clearer look—alas, there was no trace of her former home; the fenced yard and thatched hut that existed in her memory were no longer to be seen. What was left was a small bare slope, though the surrounding trees were very lush. She touched a cedar trunk; slowly, an indescribable feeling brewed in her heart.

“Wait for me!” Suddenly, she heard a crisp female voice, and immediately she thought she was hallucinating.

“What’s the matter with you? I told you to wait for me! I can’t walk anymore!”

It was only when she heard the voice the second time that she realized the voice did not come from her memory. She instantly turned around and saw two figures in the woods walking in her direction. The man’s figure was tall and majestic, and he gave off an aura of familiarity.

“Don’t follow me if you can’t hike. Just go back to the motel first.”

“No, I want to find my sister before you do!”

“Then, you shouldn’t be walking behind me.”

“Why?”

Before Justin could even respond, it was as though he felt something and somehow raised his head—standing right there on a small slope was Rachel. Justin’s eager gaze met Rachel’s through the trees and dead leaves and the chirps of cicadas and birds.

“Rachel!” Justin walked toward her quickly and hugged her tightly, fearing that she was only a mere figment of his imagination. It was freezing in the woods in the morning, but she did not wear many clothes. His hug was like a heater; it warmed not only her arms but also her heart.

She did not expect to see Justin here and certainly never imagined that he would be able to chase after her even though she left without a word. She left for Somerset Mountain on a whim as she made up her mind like a wilful child.

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Rachel's hands were frozen in the air for a few seconds before she finally hugged him back.

At that moment, she understood that they were both ordinary people. Life was too short and had been unkind to her sometimes, but as she looked back, she could not believe that she could withstand so many painful moments and still make it. She and Justin were each other's comfort in a life full of painful memories.

Regina only heard Justin exclaim, "Rachel!" before he disappeared like a gust of wind, leaving her alone, leaning against the tree trunk and resting her palms on her knees.

"Are you crazy? How will my sister—" Before she could even finish her sentence, in the midst of her pants, she saw Justin rush forward and hug Rachel.

Wow, my sister's really here. No doubt, Regina was amazed, but one thing she could never figure out was how he found Rachel. He knew where Rachel would be and even pinpointed her exact location in a huge mountain without needing a single clue from her.

As the pair were sitting on the hillside talking, Regina was wholly ignored; out of boredom, she picked up a dead branch and started beating the tree trunks.

To be honest, Rachel was stunned to see Justin here. "How did you find me here?" After all, she had been living here since she was a child, so it was within the expectation that she could find it somehow. But what about Justin?

Justin replied proudly, "Well, in order to investigate the fire incident again, I ordered my people to have this place checked inside out. I'm afraid I even know where you used to live better than you."

"Really?"

"Of course! Don't believe me?" He pointed in the south-facing direction under the hillside. "There used to be a fenced yard, and you would grow green vegetables on the left and beans on the right. There were also a few chickens in the yard."

"Where was the chicken coop then?"

"Chicken coop?" Justin was taken aback; he clearly did not remember there was such a thing.

Rachel burst out laughing when she saw he was clearly embarrassed. "It was over there."

She raised her arm and pointed to the back of the “green vegetables” area. “When I was a child, I liked hard-boiled eggs a lot. So, the first thing I did every morning was to squat in front of the coop to check how many eggs I could pick up that day.”

As he listened to Rachel’s words and imagined the adorable scene, he felt his anxiety fade away; his gaze softened, and he felt as if he had taken a time machine back to 20 years ago, back when everything was simple and not tinged with one conspiracy after another.

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

Chapter 552

Rachel and Justin were sitting side by side on the slope and talking when they heard a shriek from behind. “Aaaahhhhh—”

At once, they turned, stood up, and hurriedly ran in the direction where they heard the scream, only to see Regina fall into a half-human tall pit screaming in utter terror, “Aaaahhhhh—”

The proprietress could not find Rachel because of how huge the forest was, but Regina’s scream helped her locate Rachel accurately. A few minutes later, the three of them worked together to pull Regina out of the pit as she continued wailing in pain even when she finally sat on the ground safely. “Sis, I think I have a broken leg.”

“Where? I feel like you might have twisted your foot, but let me check.” Rachel sat down next to Regina and started pressing Regina’s ankle gently to see which part of the bone was fractured. No matter where Rachel pressed, she still cried at the top of her lungs.

“No, my leg is broken; it hurts so much.” Regina felt so much pain that she gasped and repeatedly mumbled the same words. However, Rachel thought it was more likely that Regina was still in shock due to the fall.

Rachel had no choice but to let Justin carry Regina on his back. Nevertheless, she planned to have Regina check her foot in the hospital after they arrived at the town.

Even on the way down, they could still hear Regina grunting in pain from time to time. “Is it really that painful?” Justin could not help but ask; in fact, he was not a patient man except toward Rachel and his own children.

Regina was very dissatisfied that he doubted her that she yelled at him, "Try falling into a pit! Then, you'll know if it really hurts!"

"I won't voluntarily jump into a pit; I have eyes," he retorted.

"As I said, the pit was being covered initially!"

As the conversation heated up, Rachel frowned and interrupted, "Okay, that's enough. Stop arguing and rest for a while."

Rachel's response made Regina feel aggrieved, so she pouted and asked, "You're my sister; how can you help outsiders?"

Rachel chose to ignore Regina—she never admitted to being Regina's sister. Instead, she turned to the proprietress and asked, "Ma'am, what's the deep pit doing there?"

The proprietress explained, "Well, it is a hunting trap set by the villagers in town to catch hares and other small animals. That's another reason why we locals don't recommend tourists to get into the mountain—for safety reasons. Also, this area is not developed; if you're unfamiliar with the area, you'll often miss your footing and fall into the pit."

Rachel nodded in response. "I see."

Once they reached the town, the proprietress guided the three to the town hospital. By then, Regina's ankle was already swollen; Rachel was right in her assumption that she had twisted her ankle during the fall.

Justin saw her swollen ankle and was surprised. "So, it's real?" Regina's face turned red in fury due to the surprise in his voice. "Do you really think I would lie about things like this?"

"Don't move." Rachel saw Regina getting agitated, so she promptly held Regina's shoulder to make her stay still so that the doctor could apply medicine to the ankle.

"Done," the doctor said calmly after applying some medicine. "It's not a serious injury, but try not to walk with this foot for the next two days. I have prescribed some medicine to promote blood circulation, so the bruise would fade over time. One is to be taken orally, and the other is to be applied externally. Rest for a week or so."

"Thank you, doctor."

"You're welcome."

The three left the town hospital with an extra wheelchair. After Regina hurt herself, she was listless compared to how she was in the morning; she was sitting in a wheelchair, looking like a wilted flower.

“Where are you both staying?” Rachel asked.

Justin raised his chin in the direction of the motel. “There. What about you?”

Rachel looked surprised. “Seriously?”

Just as he was puzzled as to why she was that surprised at his choice of accommodation, she revealed the reason behind her astonishment. She pointed at the motel opposite Justin’s and said, “I’m staying here.”

“I want to stay with my sis! I want to switch motels!” Regina turned her head to Rachel and voiced her request in a bold and spoiled manner.

Justin silently looked at Rachel and asked for her opinion; Rachel didn’t hesitate to agree to Regina’s demands. “Sure thing. Her foot is injured, and it’s inconvenient for her to live alone.” Regina immediately nodded incessantly at Rachel’s words.

It was Justin’s turn to be unwilling; he didn’t want Rachel to get too exhausted from caring for this so-called sister, but he did not say anything further.

Thus, Justin and Regina checked into the motel where Rachel was staying. It was noontime, and the proprietress asked the three of them to join her, her employees, and her two children for lunch.

“What’s this?” Everything on the dinner table looked new to Regina; she was poking everything on the table with her fork. Being a real-life noble princess who was brought up abroad, it was expected that she had never seen a stew in her life. She did not know why they would differentiate between plates solely for dried side dishes and sauces, let alone recognize any stew ingredients, except for the quail eggs which she thought to be a type of egg.

The proprietress was shocked that Regina had never seen stew. “Have you not had stew before, Miss?” Regina shook her head.

“Are you kidding me? You never had stew!” The employee was equally shocked.

The princess got embarrassed and annoyed at their reactions. “Why? Feeling superior for having eaten stew?” Although Regina was a distant relative of the royal family, she was still considered a noble; therefore, she never had a chance to dine outdoors easily. Instead, she had her own private chef cooking unique recipes for her at home. This trip to Riverdale was the first time she ever traveled like an ordinary citizen, though she was also accompanied by a large group of people, including the cook.

The proprietress smiled as she smoothed things over. “Nothing to be shocked about. We have different customs across the world. Don’t be angry, Miss. Let me explain; this is our local specialty mushroom stew, and it’s known to have great health benefits.”

Even though she still had an arrogant expression, she couldn't help but feel curious about the ingredients in front of her. "How do you eat this?"

"It's simple. Just add the last few ingredients into the stew. Wait for about five minutes or until they are cooked, and you're good to go! Then, you can dip the cooked ingredients into the sauces. The more ingredients we cook with the stew, the better the stew becomes in terms of taste, so remember to serve yourself a bowl of delicious stew." Regina looked as if she found a whole new world when she saw the proprietress dip-boiling the tripe in the pot.

At the same time, the proprietress reminded everyone to start eating. "What are all of you waiting for? Try my mushroom stew!" As everyone at the table began dip-boiling the ingredients in the pot using their own forks, Regina was stunned and immediately questioned, "What is this? Why are all of you eating in the same pot? This is so unsanitary! You're dipping your saliva in the broth!"

The moment she said that, the atmosphere got awkward, and everyone at the table was unsure how to react. Rachel and Justin looked at each other and wished they could bury their heads in the sand. The proprietress kindly asked them to have lunch together, and who knew that this princess would speak as if she was disgusted at everyone else? It was really rude of Regina not to be appreciative of their kind gesture.

Justin tried smoothing things over by saying, "Don't mind her; she grew up abroad and is used to individual serving." Nevertheless, everyone was still embarrassed; they dared not start eating.

"When in Rome, do as the Romans do. Don't be too fussy. If you think it's disgusting, don't eat it." Rachel glared at Regina angrily for causing the awkwardness before turning to the others and tried apologizing to ease the tension, "Don't mind her. Let's eat now, shall we?"

Regina felt wronged and embarrassed after being scolded in public, so she immediately threw her fork away and huffed angrily, "Fine! As if I want to be here!" After she spoke harshly, she turned her wheelchair around, went back to her room by herself, and slammed the door.

Bang! The strength almost trembled the whole building. The proprietress specifically changed Rachel's and Regina's room to the ground floor because she knew it would be inconvenient for Regina to be moving up and down the stairs due to her injury.

As soon as she left, the proprietress said with a worried look, "Let me cook another dish for her." But Rachel immediately stopped her. "Regina can handle herself. She's no longer a kid. But, Ma'am, I'm sorry for the commotion she caused. She has never had the chance to travel around, and sometimes she causes trouble. I hope you don't mind."

The proprietress was an amiable person; she merely smiled and said, "She's still injured, so she gets a bit of leeway when she causes trouble. We won't take it to heart. Plus, she's beautiful; it's normal for pretty girls to have a feisty temper." Her employee nodded in agreement.

Out of nowhere, someone asked Rachel, "What's your relationship with Justin, by the way?"

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

Chapter 553

Caught off guard, Rachel met Justin's eyes.

Before they could formulate an answer, another staff member said confidently, "Don't you see it? It's obvious they're a couple, but their immature sister-in-law wanted to tag along. She wants to stay with her sister now that she's injured."

"But they don't look alike at all. She looks like she's from abroad," the first staff member refuted.

"The pretty lady is called Regina Hudson. Didn't you hear what Miss Hudson addresses her as?"

Rachel checked in yesterday, so the staff all knew her. Also, she introduced Regina to the rest before dinner, so they were obviously family based on their names. Besides, Regina also kept calling Rachel her sister.

The only thing that they were curious about was Regina's looks. She looked like she was from abroad and was as pretty as a doll.

"The barbeque is ready. Let's eat." Justin knew Rachel did not want to stay on the topic, so he changed it.

However, Rachel answered them, "She's my half-sister. We have different moms."

Her candid answer left the staff dumbstruck.

The owner shot daggers at the two staff members in displeasure and chided, "The food can't stop you lot from talking, huh? You know you're not allowed to ask about the customer's privacy."

"It's okay." Rachel smiled.

The owner felt sorry for Rachel as she discovered that Rachel's mother had passed away when she was younger. Considering Rachel's age, she figured that if Regina was Rachel's sister, they were probably half-sisters. That was why she didn't inquire further.

Alas, she did not expect her staff to be so dense as to keep asking.

"Everyone, let's eat."

"Yea, yea. We should eat."

Luckily, Rachel had a good personality. Without Regina by the side picking on the food, the meal went smoothly.

On the other hand, Regina was lying on the bed alone, staring at the ceiling and gritting her teeth. She was sure that Justin was the reason why Rachel did not welcome her with open arms. So, she had to think of a way to get rid of him. Just then, she whipped out her phone and dialed a number. "Hello? When are you guys arriving?"

The person on the other end of the phone tried to answer.

"Hurry up! When you're here, find a place and hide first. Don't come to me yet, or else they'll know." It was better to let sleeping dogs lie. It would affect her and Rachel's relationship if they were discovered.

Kinship was a magical thing. Regina had never met Rachel, yet she felt a natural affinity with her. It could be due to the fact that Regina did not have siblings growing up, so she liked the idea of a big harmonious family. She was determined to bring Rachel back home with her.

Rachel was planning on staying in Somerset Mountain for a bit more.

"There's nothing much happening in Riverdale, and the company's running smoothly. If you're worried, I can get Frankie to help out. It won't be a problem," Justin offered.

"Yea. It's fine. I've talked to Mr. Carter. He'll be helping me supervise the company."

"That's good. Did you manage to contact Jolly?"

"Not yet. It's better not to, in case her whereabouts are exposed."

After lunch, they were strolling in town and casually chatting. Even though he did not mention it, Justin would stay a few more days with Rachel. He didn't feel at ease leaving her alone.

“So, what are you going to do with Regina?” he asked.

“Someone will be coming to pick her up in a couple of days. He won’t let her be alone outside for long,” Rachel answered curtly.

Justin gave a quick nod. She was usually very accepting toward people younger than her, like Jolly and Gloria, and treated them like sisters. Nevertheless, he knew why she was impatient with Regina despite being her biological sister.

As they strolled down the town’s pathway, they eventually reached the entrance of a lookout point. As it was the off-peak season, there were few people on Somerset Mountain. Instead, they saw a few groups of tourists carrying hiking equipment and ambling into the mountain’s entrance.

At first, Rachel was planning to return to the homestay, but Justin gently tugged her hand. “Since we’re here, let’s go up and take a look,” he suggested.

Rachel was surprised, but Justin had gone to buy the tickets before she could say anything.

Walking into the main entrance was a different experience compared to entering from the small trail. It made them feel like a real tourist and lightened the mood.

“The view up here is pretty nice,” Justin said as he held onto her hand while walking along the trail. “You should come out more often and stop worrying about other people’s problems.”

“I’m fine. I don’t worry about people’s problems.”

“Is that true? Let’s see. We have Gloria, Victor, and Jolly. You were worried about them a lot, though. Now that your troubles are here, you don’t seem too bothered by it.”

“Am I not bothered? I’m out here with you now.” After so many years, this was the first time she was doing what she truly wanted.

“The more often, the better.” It was like Justin could read her mind. “Being selfish isn’t a bad thing.”

Rachel nearly missed a step when she heard his words. “Loot out!” Justin warned while holding onto her tightly.

They continued walking and chatting. Some of the things they talked about were trivial, while some were serious, but as they walked in the mountain, nothing seemed to matter anymore.

“I wished Grandma was still here. If she saw Somerset Mountain as it is now, she would go on and on about staying here for retirement.”

After six years, it was the first time Rachel talked about her grandma with Justin.

He could only tighten his hands around hers. He did not have any say regarding what happened with Nancy. He felt guilty because even though he did all he could, if it were not for him, Nancy would not have been kidnapped.

Rachel inhaled deeply before slowly exhaling; with each breath, she could feel the tightly wound stress uncoil. “I wonder if Grandma had anything to say to me when she passed.”

“She had.” An assertive voice came from beside her.

Rachel looked at Justin in surprise.

He continued, “Even though I didn’t see her during her last moments, before that, Grandma had told me to take good care of you.”

She asked in disbelief, “When did you meet Grandma?”

“Grandma was the one who came looking for me.” Justin had never told anyone about this. He planned on keeping it a secret to himself, and even Gloria did not know about this. Yet, as he watched Rachel lament about Nancy’s last words, he decided to tell her.

It was a sunny day, not long before the kidnapping happened. Nancy visited him at the Burton Group before he brought Rachel to a different city.

At that time, Nancy did not have ill intentions toward him. On the contrary, she treated him like family, as her granddaughter’s husband, and advised him on Rachel’s likes and dislikes.

“It’s not easy to become husband and wife. Fate plays an important role in this. But, no matter the reason, you have married her. So, you should take good care of her. She’s a good child.”

Justin could clearly remember being envious of Rachel for having an elder who had her best interest at heart.

The mountain breeze blew past them, and the leaves rustled. Justin held onto her hand tightly and said earnestly, “Grandma asked me to take good care of you.”

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

Chapter 554

The sun was about to set when Rachel and Justin finally returned. From afar, they saw Regina sitting in a wheelchair at the homestay's entrance craning her neck and looking around.

"Sis!"

Rachel frowned but did not answer when she heard Regina calling out for her.

Regina was not angry at her lack of response and kept waving her arms at them frantically.

When Justin and Rachel came closer, she shot Justin a dirty look. "Where did you bring my sister to? Why were you gone the whole afternoon? Look at the time now!"

Justin replied calmly, "The sun's not even set."

"So? It's not safe in the mountains. You must be back before sundown next time, by 5.00PM."

"5.00PM?" Rachel gave Regina a look. "Why does it matter to you when I get back? Also, we're not from the same family."

"How are we not? We were born in the same family!"

"A family divided by the ocean?" Rachel's comeback made Regina lose her temper.

Rachel went into the homestay as she was done dealing with Regina's antics. Justin could not do anything but look at Regina, who had just received a scolding. "Do you need help?"

"I don't need your help!"

"Okay, sure."

He was going to follow Rachel in. Yet, just as he was about to reach the steps, he heard Regina's flustered voice sounding behind. "How will I enter if you don't push me in?"

Justin looked over his shoulder and asked, "How did you get out in the first place?"

"It was obviously the waiter who pushed me out."

There was a local young man among the servers. He had tanned skin and looked like a simple and good-natured lad. He would blush whenever he saw Regina.

Despite being a nitpicker, she was beautiful. So, it was natural that she got special treatment.

Justin glanced down at the steps and saw a board on top of it. It definitely wasn't there when Justin and Rachel left in the afternoon. So, there was a high possibility that the young man put it there for Regina to go up and down the steps in the wheelchair.

It was a pity, though; Regina, the little princess, despised the wheelchair. She did not want to touch the wheelchair at all, so she could only wait for someone to push her around.

"I thought you didn't want my help?"

"Can't I take it back?"

"Sure. Of course." Justin didn't bother arguing with her this time.

He was in a good mood after the walk in the afternoon. Then, when he knew that he would be staying here with Rachel for a more extended period, his mood brightened even more. Then, he pushed Regina into the building.

Alas, Regina was still talking incessantly. "You're not allowed to bring my sister out anymore. If you want to go out, you must bring me along. Or else!"

"Or else what?"

"Or else, don't even think about going out!" Regina's threat did not hold water, but Justin did not challenge her anymore.

The homestay's owner was a lovely lady. After they left in the afternoon, she specially prepared a few more dishes for Regina.

"You guys are back." The tanned staff came out from behind the counter, and as expected, he blushed when he saw Regina. "The food will be ready in a bit. Sis made some fish soup for you."

He was referring to the owner of the homestay as he was her cousin. He looked to be around the age of 15, similar to Regina.

Humph! Regina turned her nose to the sky and did not even say thank you.

"Say thank you." Justin reminded Regina.

Nevertheless, she was unhappy at his reminder. "Are you teaching me how to do stuff? We're paying for our stay here! There's no need to say thank you. Why are you so extra?"

The young man was nice and just shook his hands, saying it was fine. Justin still thanked him but turned around and told Rachel what had happened.

The restaurant was on the first floor, so when Rachel came in, she picked a corner seat by the windows and sat down. It was the perfect spot to watch the beautiful setting sun on Somerset Mountain.

"What happened?' she asked.

Justin told her, "The owner especially made some fish soup for her, but she didn't want to thank them."

She furrowed her eyebrows and probed, "Is that so?"

Regina refused to back down. "We've already paid them, so why do I need to thank them again?"

"They didn't need to go through all the trouble to make you something special. Do you not understand, or are you just acting dumb?"

"They were the ones who offered it."

"So? Does that mean you don't show appreciation to them? Are these the noble manners you've learned growing up? Who taught you this?"

Regina bit her lips and glared at Justin. "You're such a tattler!"

"Now, you're blaming others too?" Rachel reprimanded as she poured a cup of tea for Justin and ignored Regina's cup in front of her on purpose.

Regina could feel her face burning. Despite feeling embarrassed, she knew that she was in the wrong, so she pouted and looked at them with puppy dog eyes. "You guys went out the whole afternoon, and I was alone. I thought you were leaving me for good and left the mountain."

"We're not planning on leaving for the time being."

"Then, how long are you staying for?"

"Not sure, but you can leave first," Rachel said as she picked up her cup of tea. "There'll be someone here soon to bring you home."

Regina immediately insisted, "I'm not leaving. If you're not leaving, then I won't leave too."

"Whatever floats your boat." Rachel did not want to talk about this anymore. Regina was not bothered by Rachel's blatant indifference. Moments later, she bashfully went up to Rachel. "Sis, I know why you don't want to leave. I—"

Before she finished her sentence, she glanced at Justin and prompted him. "Why don't you check when dinner is ready?"

Justin knew she wanted some privacy with Rachel, so he walked away laughing to himself. "Sure. I'll take a look."

Rachel made a face at his compliance. "You don't need to go."

"It's fine," Justin explained. "I needed to tell the owner that we're staying longer anyways."

After he walked away, Regina continued the topic.

"Sis, I know you're worried about leaving your child behind. We can bring her with us. We have our very own Royal Academy, and it's safer there. With numerous programs—"

"Charlotte wouldn't like it," Rachel interrupted and looked coldly at her. "Not everyone will like the things that you like."

"Then, what does she like?"

"She likes Riverdale, Samuel, her teachers and friends at school, her parents, her aunt, and her uncle. Do you think you can give her all those things?"

"But I'm her biological aunt!"

"She doesn't know you." Rachel's words were harsh, but it was the truth.

Regina knew she could not convince Rachel through her child, so she continued, "Are you going to waste your life taking care of other people? Caring after a company that may be bankrupt anytime now and two children as well as that man who hurt you in the past?"

"Sis, I know it's hard for you to accept father and me, but think about it. If you stayed in Riverdale for the rest of your life, would you be able to live for yourself?"

Outside the window, the last rays of the setting sun were hanging over the hills and disappearing in the next second. Then, the dark sky would fall; the moon would rise and bring with it the silent night.

Rachel asserted, “Regina, I won’t be leaving with you. The person you said who could not live for themselves isn’t me. It’s him.”

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

Chapter 555

Him?

At first, Regina did not realize who the man Rachel was talking about was until she noticed where Rachel’s eyes were.

Justin?

“How could it be him?” Regina asked.

“I thought you knew everything?” Rachel did not want to reveal too much to her.

Since she was young, Regina was a pampered princess and had everything she ever needed and wanted. She would not be able to understand what transpired between Rachel and Justin. She would not have said with so much conviction that Justin had hurt Rachel if she did.

After he turned 13 years old, he only had eyes for Rachel. He was the one who truly never lived for himself. Even in the five years that he lost his memory, he was still living for Charlotte and the vague figure in his mind.

Justin was talking to the owner about extending their stay beside the counter of the homestay.

“Sure, no problem. It’s the off-peak season now. The rooms are empty anyways. Make yourself at home. It’s cool if you’re bored and want to change rooms too.”

“Thanks. Please also prepare our daily meals. Rae and I aren’t picky eaters. So we’ll have what you all have. As for Regina, she’ll probably be leaving in a few days. Sorry for the trouble.”

“No problem. We’re not that busy. It’s only a couple more mouths to feed.”

“Oh, right.” The owner took out a thermal bottle from under the counter. “This was what you requested in the afternoon. I’ve heated it up, so you can drink it now.”

“Thank you.”

With that, Justin went back to the restaurant with the bottle.

Rachel asked, “What’s that?”

“Milk.” Justin got a new glass and poured a cup of warm milk for her.

It was early spring but still freezing in the mountains. It was about five or six degrees lower than Riverdale, and the temperature went down to sub-zero degrees at night.

“Where’d you get it from?”

“There’s a farm in the town. So I asked the owner to get some from them.”

“Isn’t it troublesome?”

“It’s fine. You should stop drinking too much tea. Else, you won’t be able to sleep at night.”

As they were chatting, Regina looked on. It was a wonder she did not interrupt and only observed. It seemed like she understood what Rachel talked about, but she wasn’t entirely sure about it.

The night sky fell, and after dinner, the whole town grew silent. Rachel and Justin were strolling in town as the shops were about to close. The locals usually turned in early.

She rubbed her tummy and muttered, “I overate during dinner.”

He looked around. “If you feel uncomfortable, we could get some antacids at the pharmacy up front.”

“It’s alright. I just need to walk a bit more.”

She did not want to rely on medicines too much. Besides, she would rather him accompany her on walks. As they were walking, his phone suddenly rang.

“Hello?” He picked up the phone in front of her. It was a call from Frankie.

Justin slowly furrowed his eyebrows when he heard the news from the other side of the phone. “Are you sure? Is the news reliable?”

Rachel heard Frankie's muffled voice through the phone but couldn't determine what he had said.

"Alright. I got it. I'll be staying in Somerset Mountain with Rae for a while. We won't be returning to Riverdale in the meantime. You'll have to look after the northern division."

Frankie answered Justin and bade his goodbyes.

As Justin hung up the phone, Rachel asked, "Was it Frankie?"

"Yea, I asked him to investigate something yesterday."

"What is it about?"

"Your father, and Yatruinia's royalty."

Rachel's eyes darkened when she heard what he had said. "What did you find out?"

"Regina's mom is called Natasha and was appointed a Countess by the Yatruinia royalty. She has a high position and works in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Also, she was the first female Foreign Service Officer. She's known to be an outstanding female."

"Really?" Rachel clenched her fists by her side.

When her biological mother, Selena, passed away on Somerset Mountain, no one came to collect her body and give her a proper burial. They only set up a cenotaph in the Hudson Family Cemetery back at Riverdale. Yet, the man she died for married another woman in a different country. So, it was not important if the woman was outstanding.

Justin continued, "Natasha died two years ago from cancer."

"What?!" Shocked, Rachel turned and looked at Justin.

Regina had never mentioned this to her.

"Yea. Frankie did the investigation himself. It couldn't be wrong. Natasha's funeral wasn't widely announced. It was done secretly within the royal family, but it's not hard to find out about her death."

"Two years ago?"

"Yes."

Rachel felt a tug in her heart.

Justin knew what she was thinking about and added, "Your father also left Yatruinia two years ago and came back here."

So, this meant that Natasha only told Lionel the truth on her deathbed that Selena was still alive and pregnant with his child. So, all these years, he was kept in the dark.

"I think there's one more thing you need to know." Justin did not hesitate. "After your father went missing that year. He was unconscious when Natasha took him away. He had been in a coma for ten years abroad."

Rachel asked incredulously, "What did you say?"

"Frankie couldn't get hold of the royal medical records, but your father wasn't married to Natasha then. So, his records were kept by a hospital. It was true that he's been in a coma for ten years."

In other words, whatever happened here during those ten years, he did not know and had no way of knowing. Then, after regaining consciousness, he had to deal with muscle atrophy from lying in bed for so many years and rehabilitation. Even if he could complete that quickly, he was faced with the news that Selena had passed a long time ago.

"If my guess is right, Natasha probably really loved your father. It could be due to selfishness or other reasons that she told your dad that your mom had passed and prevented him from coming back."

All these were uncontrollable external factors.

Technology then was not as advanced as it is now. Natasha could only get her hands on so much information because she was royalty and a foreign diplomat.

"So, he didn't even come back to confirm the news?" Rachel countered with a question, "Knowing that your loved one has died, even if it was someone you trusted who told you the news. Shouldn't he have made a trip to see it for himself? Even if it was to look at the tomb."

"Rae."

Rachel could not control her emotions. She felt her mother deserved more than this. Even if her mother had passed, Lionel should have paid a visit. Instead, he stayed abroad for so many years and cut off ties with everything here. He had not been back for 20 years, yet he wanted to make up for his regret now.

How dare he? she thought.

“Why do I need to cooperate just because he said he wanted to make it up to me? Let me put it this way. What would the situation be like if my mom didn’t die in that fire then? Huh?”

Just because of what Natasha said, Lionel accepted it and married that woman and even gave birth to a child.

Rachel was getting worked up, but Justin held onto her hand. “Rae.”

The night was cold, but his warm hands covered the back of her hand. Rachel gradually cooled down, but her eyes were still red. She took a deep breath and looked at the moon in the sky. “If Mom was still alive, what do you think she would do?”

“Maybe she would blame your dad, but if your dad were still alive, she would have been glad too.”

Nothing was more important than the life and death of a loved one. Everything else did not matter.

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

Chapter 556

It was late when Rachel and Justin arrived at the homestay. So, they retired to their rooms to rest.

When Rachel arrived in her room, Regina had just finished her bath and was now sitting on the side of the bed while applying medication to her leg. The room smelled of safflower oil.

“Let me do it.” Rachel noticed how clumsy she was and could not resist approaching her to help. Regina’s eyes brightened. Regardless, she feared she would say something that angered Rachel, so she closed her mouth obediently and stretched out her leg. She hissed as Rachel applied the ointment.

“Does it hurt?”

“No.” Regina shook her head at once. Rachel did not ask further, but her movements became gentler as she massaged the medication onto Regina’s twisted ankle.

"This medicine is for invigorating the blood and releasing stagnation. It's only effective if you massage it onto the spot."

"Is it also Eastern medication?"

"I think so." Rachel nodded. "Most medications currently on the market are no longer purely Eastern, but are mixtures of both Eastern and traditional medication."

"I've heard my dad say that Hudson Pharmaceuticals produces Eastern medication, although their sales aren't good."

"He mentioned that to you?"

Regina nodded carefully. Rachel took a deep breath and let it out slowly. She didn't have any pressure to hide her true self; maybe she wasn't so wary of Regina because they were family.

"The market for Eastern medication hasn't been so good in the last few years. And it's not just Eastern medicine; the market for Eastern medical practitioners isn't doing well either. So except for some middle-aged or older people who still believe in them, the younger generation's more willing to trust Western doctors."

"Why?"

"Part of it is because of the bad market reviews regarding Eastern medicine. As a result, many people have pretended to be Eastern medical practitioners to scam others, leading to their bad reputation. The other part is because the main aim of Eastern medicine is to regulate the health of the body, and thus it doesn't act as fast as traditional medicine. That is why it doesn't fit into the fast pace of modern life."

It was a while before Rachel realized she had said too much. Regina was only sixteen and might not fully grasp what had been said.

"Never mind, I've said enough. Rest early." Rachel placed Regina's leg back onto the bed and placed the medication back before getting up to prepare for bed.

It was already late. The bedroom lights were off, and the room plunged into darkness. Rachel turned over before hearing Regina's voice coming from the other bed. "Rachel, are you awake?"

After a few seconds of silence, Rachel answered, "Mm-hmm."

"Can I sleep with you?"

Rachel didn't reply.

"If you don't say anything, I'll take it as a yes."

"Stop moving around. Doesn't your ankle hurt?"

Rachel's words made Regina pause as she pushed off her blanket.

The room was dark, and Rachel could not see Regina's expression. Nevertheless, she could still feel the girl's disappointment through her silence.

"Are you asleep?" Rachel couldn't help but ask.

The voice coming from the other bed was muffled. "I miss my mom."

Rachel was stunned as she suddenly remembered what Justin had said during their evening walk. Regina's mother, Natasha, had died of cancer two years ago, meaning Regina was only fourteen. She was only a child, then.

After a moment of silence, Rachel moved toward the inner side of the bed to create some space. "Do you want to sleep here?"

Regina froze, but there was immediately the sound of movement as she climbed onto Rachel's, still wrapped in her blanket.

"Sleep." Rachel could not say more than that. Her own mother had died in front of her when she was eight, but she had had a fever and could not remember what had happened. So maybe it was for the best.

She did not know how to comfort Regina; even if she did, she wouldn't. If she did so, it would be an insult to her mother's memory. So, she chose to be quiet.

Regina was still as she leaned on Rachel's arm through the two layers of blankets. "Rachel, don't hate me, please?"

"I don't hate you."

"But you don't like me either." Regina's voice sounded reluctant. "Once you know me for a longer time, you will."

Rachel sighed inwardly. "Sleep."

People in their youth always had this bizarre confidence. They thought that life was too long, so they had plenty of time to attain all their goals. They believed that they could be a billionaire, go up to the moon, save the world, or make everyone like them. Rachel slightly envied Regina's youth and naivety. Maybe if she were Regina's age, she would believe that the future was rife with potential.

A grand private room of a nightclub in Riverdale.

"Is this what you mean when you said you would partner with me and help avenge my brother?"

The woman was clad in a black leather coat with an expression cold as ice. On the table before her were expensive bottles of wine. Julian faced her, sitting rigidly as he frowned. "There were some issues which I didn't expect. We should be grateful that we didn't cause Rachel any real harm."

"What do you mean?"

"Rachel's father is alive and has connections to the Yatruinian royal family."

"What did you say?" Sabrina nearly laughed out loud. "How gullible do you think I am? Find a better excuse if you want the woman you fancy to escape from me alive. The Yatruinian royal family?"

"If you don't believe me, fine. Just don't blame me when anything happens." When he was done talking, he poured some wine into his glass and helped himself with the alcohol.

She didn't want to play around anymore. "Since our partnership has failed, we will deal with everything after this ourselves. I hope you won't stop us, or I won't be kind to you."

As soon as she said those threatening words, she didn't hesitate to leave. While Robin watched her leave, he couldn't help but ask, "President Peters, are we just going to let her leave? We haven't even discussed the terms of our partnership."

"Due to the current situation, it can't be done now. So even if she's willing, we can't do it either."

"Why?"

"Which do you think is worse: crossing her or the Yatruinian royal family?"

Robin froze, then immediately understood. "But President Peters, by now, they definitely know we were responsible for kidnapping Justin and Rachel at the airport. Haven't we already crossed them?"

Julian sipped a mouthful of wine, his brow heavy with irritation. "Let's see how it goes first."

Robin shut his mouth when he sensed how indecisive Justin truly was.

On the other end, Sabrina had just exited the nightclub and entered a black Porsche. “Who exactly were the people who took Rachel and that man? Have you looked into it?”

Her lackey was seated on the passenger seat and answered respectfully, “Mr. Peters’ side replied to us, saying that it was Rachel’s sister from a different mother.”

“How does that relate to the royal family? Have you inquired about that?”

“Well...”

Sabrina had just arrived in Riverdale to work discreetly. She couldn’t just let her people show up all over the place, so they had gotten the information about the airport incident from Julian’s side. However, they still weren’t sure about the details.

She had lost her patience and said coldly, “Investigate who Rachel’s biological father is—as quickly as possible.”

“Okay.”

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

Chapter 557

Sabrina’s lackey quickly dug up information about Lionel Hudson. “Miss Sabrina, he really is a member of the royal family.”

“Isn’t he an Astronian?”

“But his wife is a noble from the Yatruinian royal family. You’re probably familiar with her...” the underling hesitated. “It’s Lady Natasha.”

Her expression changed immediately. “Lady Natasha? Are you sure?”

It was fine if it were anyone else, but why did it have to be Lady Natasha, the most famous female ambassador from the Yatruinian royal family?

“Miss Sabrina, if Rachel ever tells them about us...”

“She will never get the chance.” Sabrina’s face darkened. “I will never give it to her.”

Over the last few days, Rachel had remained at the homestay at the foot of Somerset Mountain. Her daily routine, except for meals, consisted of walks with Justin. Regina's ankle hadn't healed fully, but she didn't stop trying to go with them.

"I'm bored here all alone. Take me along, Rachel!"

"The mountain paths are difficult to walk on. We can't take you because you're in a wheelchair."

"I can walk on my own." As Regina said so, she rose from her wheelchair. Rachel stared at Regina's legs, noting that the girl did not dare to place her hurt leg on the ground.

"No. You have to stay here."

Justin could not let this continue because he knew that Regina would think of how to torment everyone if she didn't get her way. Therefore, he decided on a compromise. "Look, you can come with us. But if we reach a part where the paths are too difficult to walk on, we have to turn back."

"Okay," Regina answered enthusiastically.

"You don't have to listen to her. How can we go hiking when she's with us?"

Justin looked behind Regina. "Bobby's coming too, so we probably don't need to worry."

Bobby, a boy who worked at the homestay, had cared for Regina over the past few days and followed her wherever she went. So when he heard Justin's words, Bobby scratched his head and smiled toothily. "If it's too difficult to walk, I'll carry Little Sis on my back."

"Who's your little sis?" Regina glared at him and said in annoyance. "You stupid boy."

Despite being insulted, he wasn't angry at all as he chirped, "I call anyone younger than me my little sis."

"I'm one year older than you!"

He was only fifteen—younger than Regina— but he had lived and worked here year-round, making his skin very tanned. So, it was true that he didn't look younger than her.

Nevertheless, she was adamant about being the eldest of the two. "You should call me Big Sis!"

He shook his head and refused to change how he addressed her, looking peculiarly stubborn.

“Not talking again? Talking to you is a waste of effort.” Regina rolled her eyes and urged him. “Come on, let’s go. I’m bored as hell after staying in this place.”

Rachel felt resigned as she watched their interaction. Regina had a temper; if not for her good looks, no one would care about her. There was no help for this world that prioritized one’s beauty over everything.

Rachel and Justin had been walking up and down the mountain every morning, afternoon, and evening, so they were extremely familiar with the trail. So naturally, they quickly left Regina and Bobby behind.

“Rachel, wait for me!”

“At least help me up faster.”

“Oh, you are so dumb!”

Rachel could hear Regina’s distant complaints about Bobby, and she was speechless. “Even with how she’s acting, Bobby hasn’t lost his temper. Village children are really well-behaved.”

“She treats him really well, to be honest.”

“Huh?” She was surprised. “How?”

Justin smiled. “Don’t you know? She’s teaching him Latin.”

“Really? When did this happen?”

“I don’t know when it started, but I found out today when I heard her correcting his pronunciation outside earlier this morning.”

She was amazed at this. Somerset Mountain was an autonomous region with a sparse population and remote location. This was why the education resources for the area weren’t sufficient; normal children would stop studying to help out at their homes after graduating junior high. Even with the bonus-point policy, there were very few children who would make it to senior high.

She had heard the homestay owner mentioning that Bobby had the best academic results among the children in their town and had the chance of moving out of the town to study in senior high.

“Maybe she had the spontaneous urge to do so. Nevertheless, I don’t believe that she would continue teaching him.”

“Rae.” Justin’s tone was a little resigned. “You treat everyone else with generosity, so why are you so mean towards her?”

“Mean??”

“Kind of.”

Rachel frowned, then hunched her shoulders and continued walking.

He caught up with her and grabbed her hand from behind. “Are you angry?”

“No.”

“You definitely are.” He couldn’t help but laugh. “Don’t get angry. I’ll show you something before they arrive.”

“What is it?”

“Come with me.”

Justin led her into a small path in the mountains. It wasn’t part of the tourist trail; it was a forest trail only the locals used, with many twists and turns.

“Isn’t that the place where we met?”

“Yup, Regina and I came through this way.”

“I came from the foot of the mountain.” Rachel smiled. “I avoided buying tickets by following the owner of the homestay. You guys bought them, right?”

She didn’t hear Justin’s reply but instead heard the sounds of chickens clucking. Rachel raised her head and froze when she saw the scene at the bottom of the mountain. She stopped where she was and looked at him.

At the bottom of the slope was the courtyard where she, her mother, and her grandmother had lived. The place had been torn down, and weeds had grown in its place. That was what she had seen before.

Yet, what she saw now was a scene from twenty years ago. There were three blocks surrounding a yard. Cabbage grew on one side of the fenced yard while chilies and string beans grew on the other. In the yard, two chickens walked freely in the yard, clucking as they went.

Rachel stumbled as she walked into the yard. She was back here again after more than twenty years, and she couldn’t believe she could see everything from her childhood. Even the string of chilies and garlic hanging from the rafters were the same.

The door creaked as she pushed it open and saw an empty room. From behind her, Justin said, "I ordered someone to restore the place as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, I wanted to make it a surprise, so I had to rush everything a little. Since you haven't said what you had in your home, just tell me all about it, and I'll get someone to make them and place them inside here."

"It's only been a few days. How did you manage this?"

"It wasn't difficult. There were only three blocks to build, so I got more workers to help."

He looked at her with affection. "You have a home."

When she heard him, her eyes turned red-rimmed, and her tears welled up. Everything here was too realistic and reminded her of memories from more than twenty years ago. It felt like she could open the door and see her mother and grandmother again.

Yes, she had a home.

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

Chapter 558

"Thank you."

"You know I don't need you to thank me."

Rachel felt touched and sniffled hard to avoid the tears from falling. Her memories of the place might remain, but they would fade eventually. After all, this courtyard had been the setting for the carefree days of her childhood. Back then, her family was poor, and her happiest moments were when she had meat pierogi. If not for Justin rebuilding this place, she would have lost those memories and never get to recall them ever again.

"All right, stop crying. If Regina sees you, she will think I have mistreated you." Justin handed her a tissue.

She laughed, tears still in her eyes. "I am not."

He looked around at the empty room. "Since we will be in the area, you can spend the next few days recalling what the interior was like here. Then, once the interior is complete, we can probably stay here for a bit too."

"We didn't have much, honestly, just some old furniture. They were all handmade, so they might be difficult to build." She took a deep breath and smiled. "You don't have to recreate everything, of course. It's good enough for me."

"But is it within the rules to construct a house here?" She suddenly remembered some real-life issues. Somerset Mountain was now a tourist attraction; except for villagers living at the bottom, plus tourist-oriented shops and restaurants in more developed areas, no one else was allowed to live here. Moreover, people who had settled here in the past had moved away after receiving monetary compensation. So, she was worried that it was an illegal building.

Justin burst out laughing at her anxious face. "Why are you so worried? Do you think I am the type who doesn't care about the law?"

"Then, what about all this?"

"Burton Group was a generous donor for when Somerset Mountain was being rebuilt. We still have the approval for a village restoration project here from back then, so building a house here is within the rules."

"Really?"

"Really. When have I ever lied to you?"

She finally relaxed after listening to his reassurances. "Good."

"Are you worried that I will get sued?"

"You need to be careful." Times were different now, and Burton Group had split into two sides. Justin wasn't exactly in a desperate situation, but it was better not to show weakness.

"Don't worry," he reassured her. "I'm not that stupid."

As they talked, Regina's voice came from up the slope. "Rachel!"

Rachel was amazed. "The paths are so difficult to traverse. How did she manage it?"

Justin glanced outside the window. "She'll order Bobby around if she wants to follow us."

True enough, the boy was carrying Regina on his back.

"Let me down." The girl patted his back, then jumped back onto the ground. She glanced around in disbelief. "I can't believe my eyes. When did this courtyard appear here?"

Justin replied, "This was where Rachel lived when she was a child."

"Really?" Regina's face lit up. "Rachel, did you live here when you were a child?"

Rachel nodded, and as Regina turned her head to look at the growing plants and clucking chickens, her face dimmed once more. "Rachel, did you live like this when you were small?"

"Is it so bad?" Rachel looked at the faraway mountains. "It has gorgeous rivers and mountains, which makes it an optimum location. Besides, the best place to live is together with your family."

"You're right! What's important is living with your family. Rachel, if you stay with Dad and me, your life will be much better than your childhood." Unfortunately, Regina was too busy interpreting Rachel's answer, so she never noticed that Rachel had been looking at Justin when she said it.

Since they needed new furniture for the home, Rachel and Justin visited the town carpenter personally. Regina followed them insistently, sticking to Rachel's side the entire time.

"These are the specifications we want. Can you build the furniture according to them?"

"The furniture's not difficult to make because these are the most traditional, basic styles around here. We have plenty of available stock in the storeroom, so we can send them over after some customizations."

"Really? That's great!" Rachel was so delighted that she grabbed Justin's hand.

Regina, seeing this, frowned with annoyance and so tripped over her own feet on purpose. "Oops."

"You okay?" Rachel held onto her. "I told you to stay in the wheelchair. So why are you on your feet again?"

"My butt hurts." Regina took advantage of her position and pushed Justin away, then shook her head. "I'm okay, though. But, Rachel, since we're done picking out the furniture, can we go back now?"

"Of course, come on." Rachel checked the time, realizing that it was already late.

The sky began to darken as the entourage made their way back. By the time they arrived at the homestay, night had already fallen. Justin was pushing the wheelchair as Rachel walked beside him. Neither of them was talkative, so they responded only occasionally while Regina talked.

They stopped in their tracks as they were about to arrive at the homestay. Rachel was the first to do so.

The roads of the town, paved with stone slabs, had been narrow in the first place and could barely allow a car to pass. But now, the people lined up on both sides of the street made it look much narrower than usual.

“Dad.” Regina was the first to speak. She sounded surprised, clearly not knowing Lionel would be here. Rachel and Justin, however, remained calm since they had already expected this. He would’ve sent someone to take Regina anyway if he hadn’t been here. After all, her special status meant that there would be severe consequences if she came to any harm.

The owner and her family were hiding in the kitchen at the back, making the lounge on the ground floor look empty.

“I’m not going.” Regina was sulky. “Who allowed you to take me back? I want to stay here.”

“Regina, stop being stubborn. The embassy will be alerted if anything happens to you here, and we can’t trouble them.”

“But Rachel’s here too. So if she’s not going, then I’m not either.”

“Please stop troubling your sister.”

“I’m not.”

“You’re not?” Lionel raised his hand. As he did so, a couple of “tourists” at an opposite stall lowered their heads, afraid to look at them.

Regina looked sheepish while Rachel and Justin shared a look as they realized something. Rachel asked, “Regina, do you know them?”

“No,” Regina denied vehemently.

Lionel betrayed her immediately. “They’re her personal bodyguards who arrived one day later than her. I’m assuming they’ve been staying nearby.”

“Why didn’t they show themselves?”

He looked apologetic when he heard her question. “I’m sorry, Rae.”

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

Chapter 559

"Regina, why aren't you apologizing to your sister?"

Lionel emphasized his tone. "If you are not going to apologize, I'll do it."

"Don't say it!" she replied nervously. She fidgeted as if she was afraid of Rachel being mad.

Rachel was confused. "What exactly is the matter?" she asked.

After Regina hesitated for a bit longer, she lowered her head reluctantly as she confessed her original plan. "I called them over. I also told them to hide and keep an eye on you two."

"Keep an eye on us?"

"I was going to let them drug you guys when you two didn't notice and bring you back secretly."

"What?!"

"I'm sorry." Regina's voice became softer with each word she spoke.

Although she initially wanted to pull such a stunt, she had given up on that thought after spending two days with them.

She realized that merely taking Rachel away would not solve the problem. She couldn't be in one place forever as she had her own dreams and a whole life ahead of her. It was only a matter of time before she was where she wanted.

Rachel was utterly furious by Regina's admission.

If it weren't for Justin, who instantly grabbed her hand under the table, she would have stood up and slammed the table while interrogating Regina the reasons behind her scheme.

Justin gave her a reassuring look as he patted the back of her hand with his palm as a sign of comfort.

Then, he asked Lionel, "Mr. Hudson, since you are here and we have talked these things out, does this mean that you have decided not to take Rachel back?"

Lionel looked at Rachel with guilt and distress in his eyes. "You can lead a horse to the water but can't make it drink. I would be lying if I said I don't want to take Rachel back with me, but I can't allow Regina to forcefully take her away like this."

"I was wrong," Regina apologized. "Sis, please don't be mad at me."

Rachel was still fuming so couldn't be bothered to give Regina any response despite knowing that she was being sincere in her apology.

She was starting to have a good impression of Regina within these two days, thinking that she was a motherless child like her. Who knew that she could plot such a thing behind their backs?

"Now that you know she shouldn't be doing this and we've hashed things out, I think it's time for you to take her and leave," Rachel said coldly.

"Rachel, there's another reason why I'm here besides taking Regina back with me, If you don't mind, I want to visit your mother's grave," Lionel said.

Rachel was stunned by his words and her hands that were hidden under the table slowly balled into fists.

She didn't know what to say.

After a moment, she stood up and said, "That's none of my business."

Justin followed suit and nodded politely toward Lionel. Then, he trailed behind Rachel's steps.

"Rachel!"

Regina called out timidly, but Rachel kept on walking.

Finally, she turned to look at Lionel and said, "Rachel's really mad, Dad."

"You went too far."

"But I had already ordered them to stop."

Regina pouted. "I've already learned from my mistake."

Lionel sighed and said, "It's not your fault. If anyone was to be blamed, it's me."

If he hadn't insisted on returning after hearing that Selena had passed away, it would only take a matter of time for him to learn about Rachel's identity. Then, he wouldn't have been lied to for so many years, not knowing that he still had a daughter.

"Dad, she won't be returning with us, would she?"

"I'm afraid so."

"She lived such a tough life in Riverdale, though. Why is she still insisting on staying there?"

"You'll understand when you're older."

Lionel held her hand and intended to pull her along but he noticed her leg. "Does your leg still hurt?" he asked.

Regina shook her head. "I'm fine."

She just didn't want to give up so quickly.

On the other hand, Justin accompanied Rachel up the stairs.

There was a huge balcony on the second floor. Through the balcony, one could see the countless houses' rooftops of the town.

Various flowers were planted on the balcony, and a swing was placed there. During the peak season of tourism, people would line up at the homestay just to take some pictures. But now, only a few people would come as it was off-season.

"Rachel," Justin called.

"I'm fine." Rachel sat on the swing and looked at Justin while she forcefully squeezed a smile on her face. "I was only mad in the beginning. But after I thought about it, it doesn't seem out of character for her to plan something like this."

Regina was a spoiled princess that had everything she wanted. It wouldn't seem off for her to use some tricks as the only reason she was here in Riverdale was to take Rachel back.

"It's not that. I wanted to talk to you about your father," he said.

"My father?"

Rachel's eyes flashed with a hint of something indescribable as she looked at Justin.

"It seems to me that he had other plans than just coming over and bringing Regina back."

After all, why would he need to come here personally if he just wanted to take Regina home? He could have just sent a few men to escort her back.

"Didn't he say he was here to pay a visit to my mother?"

"Well, will you approve of it?"

Rachel was caught off guard when she heard his words.

Even she herself hadn't properly visited Selena after arriving at Somerset Mountain. During the time Selena was murdered, she was still very young and was brought to Riverdale against her will. If it weren't for grandma, who told her where Selena was buried, she wouldn't even have a clue of where to start looking.

That was because finding a tomb deep in the mountains with trees and rivers was not easy.

How would Lionel be able to visit Rachel's mother if she didn't lead the way?

Rachel made up her mind and said, "He can find it himself if he has the heart to do so."

Justin sighed as he held onto her hands and said, "I know that you are not the kind of person to make things difficult for others. You might hurt yourself by hurting others."

"Do you think I'm being unreasonable?"

"No. You just need some time to face this matter."

"I'm not going to lead the way for him."

"I know."

From the way Rachel was acting, he knew that she was still holding a grudge against her biological father.

But even though she was in this state, he still thought she looked cute. Sometimes, being thoughtful was more heartbreaking to see than being a brat. As for causing those troubles, that seemed like a problem for others. What did they have anything to do about it?

Justin shook off his coat, placed it on her, and sat beside her as he embraced her in his arms. "Then, we shall let them search on their own. What should we do tomorrow?"

"Let's move the furniture and decorate the room."

"Okay, whatever you say."

Every room was occupied when Lionel and his men checked into the homestay.

Because the mayor had personally informed the owner of the homestay of their identities, she was the most well-informed and terrified person regarding this matter.

Early in the morning, she knocked on Rachel's door nervously, asking if there was any food restriction while preparing breakfast for them.

"Food restrictions?" Rachel was at a loss for words as she didn't know about Lionel's food preferences.

Fortunately, Justin had just left his room. He overheard their conversations as he lived right next to Rachel and explained, "There's no need to prepare a huge meal. If I'm not mistaken, they won't eat the food."

Those people that Justin mentioned were those servants and bodyguards. For safety reasons, they would prepare food themselves when going on a trip. As for the food served to Lionel and Regina, they would need to check it thoroughly.

Only then did the owner of the homestay breathe a sigh of relief. "I was just wondering if the food would be enough and was going to slaughter another pig for the meal. Does that mean it's fine now?"

Just as they were speaking, a woman's voice rang from downstairs. "Chris!"

Rachel was leaning against the wooden rail when she heard the voice. She turned her head, and her eyes brightened when she saw the familiar figure downstairs.

"Looks like you still have to slaughter that pig in the end," Justin said.

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

Chapter 560

"Jolly! Why are you here? Didn't you go to Europe?"

Rachel couldn't believe that Jolly, who had been missing for some time, appeared in front of her as if she had fallen from the sky.

"We did, but we went back to Enistan because we were worried about you guys when we heard that something happened back there after a few days of being there. We still didn't hear anything about you at all. We didn't know what happened until we returned to Riverdale."

“You even went back to Enistan? Have you guys gone crazy?!”

“Don’t worry. Things were a little unexpected, but Leroy and I are safe now. I will explain to you later.”

“Is Leroy here as well? Where is he?”

“He is outside.”

Following Jolly’s gaze, Rachel looked outside the French windows of the homestay, and suddenly saw a man and a woman standing in front of a stall selling lollipops that was set up in front of a shop across the street.

Surprised, she asked, “Isn’t that...

“Carmen Frazier? The beloved daughter of the Grandeur Group?”

Justin seemed slightly startled as well upon hearing that before he looked outside.

At this moment, Leroy and Carmen were standing in front of the stall that sold lollipops outside.

“Which one do you want? I’ll buy it for you.”

“The orange-flavored one is delicious. The strawberry one is good, too. Let me think about it.”

Even though the woman who had a simple ponytail and was dressed in jeans overalls was in her twenties, she looked as innocent as a lamb with her waist bent, her face almost sticking to the glass cabinet where the lollipops were sold. Her eyes were wide as she watched the lollipops intently.

“Excuse me.” Leroy smiled helplessly. “We will take both.”

“No, no.” Carmen quickly waved her hand in rejection. “Leroy, I can’t eat two.”

“Don’t worry about it. You can take your time with them.”

She still shook her head, but after hesitating for a long minute, her eyes suddenly lit up when she suddenly thought of something. “Right! We can buy two, and give one of it to Jolly!”

The stall owner looked at her stunned, but after coming to his senses, he had sympathy in his eyes as he bagged the lollipops and handed it to Leroy.

“Thank you!” Carmen cheered with a sweet smile on her face.

Rachel and the rest of them came out of the homestay right then.

As soon as Carmen saw Jolly, she immediately hopped over. "Jolly! Leroy bought me lollipops! What flavor do you want? We have an orange and a strawberry one. I'll let you pick."

Hearing that, Jolly resignedly cooed, "You can go ahead and eat it first. I won't eat it now."

"I won't eat either then. I will eat with you."

Leroy came up from behind and said hello to Rachel and Justin as the women talked.

It was only then did Carmen see them behind Jolly. She then tilted her head and looked at the small group with curious eyes.

"Carmen, this is Chris and Justin. They are both Leroy's and my friends," Jolly introduced.

As realization hit Carmen, she quickly greeted, "Hello!"

"Hello, Miss Frazier." Rachel returned the greeting with a start.

Carmen then waved her lollipop around and said, "You can just call me Carmen."

Rachel and Justin exchanged glances when they heard her words.

That's weird, they thought simultaneously.

Jolly, too, had a complicated expression on her face. "I will tell you later."

Back at the homestay, Carmen, who was attracted by the pig's oink, ran to the back kitchen to watch. After Rachel asked Bobby to help keep an eye on Carmen, the four of them finally had time to sit down and talk.

"What is going on? Why is Carmen Frazier with you?"

All of them saw how Carmen had an epilepsy episode on the day of the wedding. Only then did Rachel and Justin realize that the reason why the Grandeur Group had been hiding Carmen was because they were afraid of her having an attack. However, it seemed like that wasn't the only reason.

Rachel and Justin had their suspicions back then, but there was no way to confirm it.

"Let Leroy explain to you. He knows better," Jolly said, to which Leroy nodded.

“Carmen has neurodevelopmental delay, which is why she may look like an adult, but her mind is only equivalent to a 10-year-old’s. Plus, she has epilepsy. She is prone to fall ill when she gets excited or nervous. She has been kept at home since she was a child, and has rarely gone out.”

Hearing that, Rachel replied thoughtfully, “I see. Then, why is she with you?”

“This was a surprise to us as well.”

“Geez! Let me tell the story.” Jolly was getting impatient. Seeing how much time Leroy was taking but still hadn’t finished speaking, she interrupted again, “Remember how I went to Leroy to take him with me on the wedding day? Carmen saw us when we were leaving. She insisted on coming with us. We had no choice but to bring her to not make things messier than it already was.”

Rachel’s jaw almost dropped from the shock.

This was the first time she had heard of someone taking the bride along when they were there to steal the groom.

She continued to ask about the baffling situation. “Didn’t the Fraziers or Lush come after Carmen after that?”

“We find it strange as well, but we haven’t dared to reveal our whereabouts until now.” Jolly shrugged. “To hell with them, though. Isn’t us being okay a good thing?”

Rachel only gave Justin a look that made him ponder.

“Even though Carmen Frazier is in poor health and has a disability, I heard that her father and brother love her very much. It is indeed strange that they haven’t stirred up a commotion with her gone.”

“Let’s not worry about that for now.” Being the careless person that she was, Jolly whined, “Anyway, she is with us now. She is so energetic every day that Leroy and I can’t keep our eyes on her all the time. I almost pissed my pants when we nearly lost her in Europe. At least we are home now.”

“You both are pretty amazing, aren’t you?” Rachel commented, amazed. “I would stay out of your business as well if I were from the Fraziers. This is the same thing as assigning two 24-hour personal nanny to their young miss.”

“So be it. She is in our hands now anyway. The Frazier Family and Lush wouldn’t dare to do anything rash.”

Jolly then raised her eyebrows slightly as she added, “It is not like we are dumb.”

The corners of Rachel's mouth twitched when she heard that. "I have never seen a kidnapper catering to their hostage," she mused.

Even though Carmen wasn't mentally sound, Rachel could tell that she was a kind lady who was easy to get along with.

The only worry was what was going to happen in the future.

It was something Rachel didn't want to think too deeply into for now.

However, she and her friends had gone through so many ups and downs, and had even cheated death. There was nothing that they were afraid of at this point.

"By the way, I haven't asked, but how did you know we were in Somerset Mountain?"

"Take a guess."

"How am I supposed to guess something like this?"

Rachel stopped Jolly from pouring tea. "Don't keep me guessing. Spill!"

"Nope."

"It was Officer Hawkins, wasn't it?" A deep, rumbling voice of a man rang out from beside.

Justin had casually brought up Janice, which made Rachel freeze.

Jolly was as surprised as Rachel was. "How did you know?" she sputtered.

"Rae came to Somerset Mountain by herself. I didn't tell anyone about my guess that she was here, and you couldn't possibly know Mr. Hudson and the others. Officer Hawkins was probably the only other person who knows about Rae's whereabouts."

Even though Rachel and Janice had an inexplicable relationship, Justin already knew that Rachel must have informed Janice that she was here once she had calmed down even though she had come to Somerset Mountain on impulse, lest Janice couldn't reach her when needed.

"Hold up. Why is this about Mr. Hudson?" Jolly questioned.

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