

My mute bride

Chapter 591

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"You did this to yourself!" She glared at him. "You should have just gone home. Why'd you hide in the car park? We thought you were some pervert."

"Hey, I was just worried for you ladies. Coming back home from a remote place like that screams danger. I just had to wait," Steven complained. He covered his eyes with his hands, grumbling, "You went really too far with this, you know that?"

"Stop rubbing your eyes." Rochel looked into the rear-view mirror and saw Steven's face. His eyes were puffy from the spray. It was impossible for him to even open them.

"Calm down. The hospital is right ahead. Don't rub your eyes." Rochel was already driving right at the speed limit and felt extremely apologetic about what had happened to Steven.

Steven quickly stopped gasping. "It's alright, Roch. Take your time. I'm fine."

"Stop faking it, you idiot!" Jolly snapped at him, but she was colling her friend, who happened to be a doctor from that hospital they were heading to. "How much longer, Chris?"

"About ten minutes." They were back in the town area. So, the hospital couldn't be far away.

Jolly's friend had been waiting in the emergency department the moment he got the news. Right after Rochel and the others came, he led them to the ophthalmology department to check on Steven's eyes.

"What'd you spray him with?"

"This." Jolly handed him the pepper spray.

The doctor looked at the components closely. "It's alright. It's mostly made up of chili peppers. He'll just have to get his eyes washed and place some saline to soothe the pain." He told the nurse to get the liquid needed to wash Steven's eyes.

Jolly heaved a sigh of relief. "Thank you so much."

"No prob. We're high schoolmates. It's not every day that I get a call from you, Jolly."

"I owe you one." Jolly smiled. "Oh, and this is my best friend, Chris. Chris, this is Wolloce, my high school friend. He's an ophthalmologist."

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"Hello."

"Hello," Rachel said. "You can call me Chris, just like Jolly does. Or you can call me Rachel."

Wallace smiled. "Sure."

Their conversation was interrupted by a scream coming from the other room.

Jolly rolled her eyes. "Come on. That won't kill him."

"It's not a great feeling, getting your eyes washed. Besides, he's hurt." Wallace asked, "Pardon me, but how'd he get hurt?"

Jolly felt a little awkward. "Well, um... He was trying to save a lady from the thugs. That's all you need to know."

Steven would love it if that were true, but he was beaten up because Jolly thought he was a pervert. Once they washed Steven's eyes, Jolly dragged Rachel outside.

Before they could continue to talk about Julie, Rachel's phone rang. She looked at the screen and realized that she had forgotten about the movie date with Justin. She quickly answered the call. "Hello? Justin?"

"Where are you?"

"Sorry. Jolly and I are at the hospital. Something came up. I forgot to tell you."

"The hospital? Are you hurt?"

"No. Jolly's cousin did." She looked at Jolly and Steven, then she sighed. "I'll explain everything when I get home. Sorry I have to cancel the date. We'll have to reschedule. I have to take them home."

"I see. Be safe, alright?"

"Okay." Rachel hung up.

Jolly slipped Steven. "Now look at what you've done."

Steven thought he was down on his luck, but the fact he ruined Rachel's date delighted him. "There aren't any good movies lately. I'll take Rachel to the movies once I get better."

"Dream on. The movie isn't the point. The guy she goes with is."

"She can go with me." Steven refused to give up, but all he did was mutter under his breath, "I bet I'm better than her boyfriend. It's true, isn't it?"

"To be honest, no. He's better by a long shot."

"Impossible!"

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"Just get in the car." Jolly pushed his neck down and shoved him into the car.

Steven still wouldn't keep quiet after that. "I'm fine, Rachel. I can just get a ride home. I don't want to trouble you."

"It's alright. It's our fault you're hurt. Call me anytime if something else comes up."

"Really? Can I really call you anytime?"

"Of course."

"What about your boyfriend?" he lowered his voice. "I ruined your date. I can tell him what really happened if he's angry about it."

Jolly looked shocked, and the corner of her lips twitched. Wow, he's a b*tch. Is he some sort of professional at stealing other guys' girlfriends? It sure sounds like it.

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Steven said, "I think I can be great friends with him. Why don't you call him out next time?"

"Sure."

Steven looked at Jolly with his slits-for-eyes. There was a weak but smug glimmer in them.

Jolly shook her head. "I never knew you could be so cunning."

Steven shot her a glare, warning her not to say anything.

Rechel took them to the Carter Residence as Steven was staying there temporarily.

Her eyes shone when she arrived at their garage. When she saw the men who were waiting at her, she smiled.

Jolly saw it, and she teased, "Great. The couple is at it again."

Steven's eyes were too puffy for him to see clearly. "Who?"

Jolly answered, "Oh, who else? Chris and her boyfriend."

"What?" Steven gasped.

Rechel got out of the car and made her way to Justin. She had a look of delight on her face. "What brings you here?"

Justin said, "Here, your popcorn. You said you wanted them, didn't you?"

"Oh, you even got us popcorn? I'm really sorry I forgot. I was swamped."

Justin smiled. "It's alright. They're fine, I hope." Jolly and Steven got out of the car, and Justin looked up just to see Steven glaring at him with hostility. Well, as much enmity as the guy with puffy eyes could muster.

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

Chapter 592

Steven and Jolly approached them once they left the car.

Rachel immediately introduced Steven to Justin, “This is Steven. He’s Jolly’s cousin.”

Justin looked at him and greeted him politely.

Steven didn’t greet him back, though. Instead, he crossed his arms and shot Justin an appraising look. Then, he started interrogating Justin, “You’re Rachel’s boyfriend?”

Justin nodded. "Yes."

Steven kept staring at him, and then he suddenly extended his hand. "Hi, I'm Steven."

Wow, pretending to be an adult is so juvenile. Justin smiled at him and looked at Rachel, then he played along and shook Steven's hand. "Hello."

Steven said. "I just landed in Riverdale. We're going to be seeing each other often. Call me if you need anything. Don't be shy."

"Is that so?"

"Rachel's problems are my problems."

Justin cocked his eyebrow. "Hm?"

Jolly caught up to him and smacked the back of his head. "Stop embarrassing yourself. Get inside. Now!"

"Ow!" Steven gasped. "That hurt!"

Jolly pushed Steven's head down and apologized, "I'm so sorry that my stupid cousin ruined your date with Chris, Justin."

"It's alright."

"Are you here to pick her up?"

"Yeah."

"I guess I can't ask you to stay for dinner, then." She wiggled her eyebrows suggestively at Rachel. "It's still early. You can still go on your date if you want."

"It's late. This is no time for dates. It's time to go home," Steven interrupted. "Come with us, Rachel. Let's have dinner together."

"Shut up, you!" Jolly would stuff his mouth up with something if she could. "We'll be leaving now." She immediately dragged Steven inside despite his protests.

They had already gone quite far, but Steven was still shouting, "You should go home now, Rachel. I bet he's a perv. No decent man would ask a girl out for a date at this hour. Be careful. Don't drink anything he gives you. Call me if you need anything. I'll pick you up anytime!"

He kept shouting until the door slammed shut, and the air was finally silent.

His antics amused Rachel.

Justin said, "It looks like I came in time."

"How so?"

"Someone might steal my girl away if I didn't."

Rachel laughed. "Stop it. He's just fooling around. We just met for the first time today."

Justin cocked his eyebrow. "Love at first sight?"

"Are you jealous?" Rachel regarded him closely.

Justin admitted to it, "A bit. But I don't think I have to be, now that I've seen the kind of guy he really is."

Rachel laughed. Anyone could see how childish Steven was. It would be shocking if Justin actually were jealous of him. "It's a bit odd, though. He went to the race course because he was invited. Not even Jolly knew. It was a shock."

"He was invited?" Justin frowned. "Get in the car. We'll talk later."

"Yeah."

Their car left the residence, leaving nothing but their tail light, and the darkness eventually swallowed up even that. Steven was leaning against the window in the living room, staring outside as if he could still see Rachel.

"You can stop staring now." Jolly kicked him. "They're long gone. If you have the time, why don't you help Mrs. Lancaster serve the food and get ready for dinner?"

Steven turned around and plopped down on the sofa. "That's just a geezer. He's not so tough."

"He's not so tough?" Oh crap. This guy actually told Justin to call him if he needed anything. Justin, of all people. She rolled her eyes. I guess I have to crush his confidence now. "Do you know who he is?"

"I don't care who he is."

"You didn't even ask for his name." She heaved a sigh. "Well, since you're here, I guess I need to teach you a life lesson. You know the Burton Group, don't you?"

"Yeah. Everyone knows that. Especially their boss, Justin Burton. My roomie idolizes him. He told me about his legend in the business world. He's a pretty awesome man."

Jolly nodded. "Didn't expect you to call someone awesome."

"Hey, it's an objective opinion. He's awesome."

"So what do you think about him now that you saw him in person?"

Steven froze. "What? Who did I see today?"

Jolly cocked her eyebrow. "Your roomie's idol. He just left our place."

Steven's eyes widened in shock. "He's Justin?"

"You don't believe me?" Jolly chomped down on her peach. "Google him, then."

"There's no way he's Justin! The entertainment news says he's super ugly!"

"And you believe them? You wouldn't have said something so stupid if you had just read some finance magazines. He did plenty of interviews. Do you have any idea how many women would kill to date him?" She rolled her eyes. "Stop looking so mad. Compared to him, you had a happy childhood."

Steven was still annoyed that his crush had a boyfriend, but the fact that he was Justin shocked him. There was a finance magazine on the table, and one of the columns detailed an interview with Burton Group's boss. There were no pictures, but words alone depicted how wise and calm Justin was.

Jolly looked at the magazine. The reporter invariably started asking some private questions. Relationship questions, to be honest.

"Mr. Burton, everyone is interested in your relationship status right now. I heard you had a fiancée of five years, but the marriage is canceled. Is that true?"

"We both agreed on the cancellation."

"Are you single now, then?"

"No." His curt answer was printed on the next line.

Jolly could imagine how aloof he must have looked during the interview. Suddenly, she realized that this magazine wasn't a new one. It was an old one dating back to the last half of the year. He hadn't made up with Rachel yet back then, and he was already telling everyone he wasn't single. Not many men could refuse the ladies' advances, especially not when he's a successful one. Justin can have any woman he wants, but he only wants one. "You don't have a chance, Steven." She looked up at him. "Not a chance in hell," she said seriously.

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

Read Chapter 593

Chapter 593

The next day, Rachel and Jolly returned to the office after their morning meeting in Hudson Pharmaceuticals. “We’ve managed to settle the project funds for now, and it’s all thanks to Mr. Carter! But I don’t think this can go on for long,” Rachel uttered.

“The Carter Family are part of the shareholders as well, so you don’t have to feel bad for getting my dad’s help,” Jolly replied as she pulled her phone out and scrolled through the news. Her eyes lit up all of a sudden. “There’s news from our men, Chris.” Jolly made a phone call in front of Rachel as she spoke.

“Hello? What’s the situation?” Jolly asked.

The person on the other end of the line said something that Rachel couldn’t hear. “A veil? Okay. I got it. Thanks,” Jolly replied with a frown.

“What is it?” Rachel asked after the call ended.

“It’s like you said—the staff we sent to keep an eye on Mrs. Bowman reported that she had left Westhill Racecourse and headed to a private bank,” Jolly explained.

“A bank?” Rachel frowned.

“Yeah. She kept something in the safe box of that bank,” Jolly said.

“Would someone as cautious as her keep something in a bank’s safe box if she knows we’re looking for it?” Rachel wondered. After all, if the Investigation Bureau ran an investigation at the bank, the bank would be sealed, and Julia wouldn’t have the time to take her things and escape the authorities.

“It was a veil,” Jolly stated.

“A veil?” Rachel was stunned.

“Do you remember the wedding dress we saw? It didn’t have a veil to go with it,” Jolly said thoughtfully. Rachel immediately understood what was going on. “Is the item in the veil?” Since the wedding dress had been lined with diamonds, it was likely that the veil

had the same design. Furthermore, since the diamonds on the wedding dress that had been given to Jolly were already highly pricey, the veil was probably worth more than that. That was why it hadn't been handed to Jolly.

Jefferey's money was probably there regardless of what was hidden in the veil. "The staff we sent over claimed that Mrs. Bowman had taken the veil away. She even told the people at the bank that her friend's daughter was getting married and that the veil was a set with the dress that she had to send over to them."

"That does sound like a logical reason she could use to pass the customs," Rachel commented. "So, do you think the veil would show itself if a wedding happened right now?" she asked thoughtfully.

"We'll host a wedding then," Jolly declared as she met Rachel's gaze.

Everyone was shocked when Jolly announced the news of her hosting a wedding. "Didn't you say that you didn't want a wedding?" Marilyn was puzzled. "What sneaky plan do you have up your sleeve this time?"

Jolly gave her mother a cheeky look as she tugged on her mother's arm. "Oh, I just suddenly felt like having a wedding. Don't they say that a wedding is one of the greatest highlights of one's life? I want my family and friends to witness our marriage."

"Well, that's true. But you were the one who said you didn't want to organize one because of how troublesome it was! I didn't prepare anything at all. If you want me to start preparing now, the invitations, the hotels, the schedule, and the planning of the whole wedding will take up to six months. When do you want the wedding to happen?" Marilyn asked.

"There's no need for so much trouble. I've thought about it. We'll host the wedding in Tahiti one month from now," Jolly announced.

"One month?" Marilyn nearly jumped to her feet. "Why are you in such a rush?"

"One month is enough, isn't it? We don't have to make it too complicated. I just want a simple wedding," Jolly said.

"What's up with you, Jolly?" Marilyn asked before turning to Leroy. "What are you guys thinking? How could one month be enough?"

Leroy threw his hands up in the air. "To be honest, I just got the news too." Fortunately, Jolly had always been a rather eccentric and unpredictable girl, so Marilyn didn't suspect anything, even after this whole conversation. "Well, are you sure about this, Jolly? If you're sure, then I'll get people to start preparing. I don't want you to change your mind after I've started working on it, do you hear me? I won't let you hear the end of it if that happens," Marilyn grumbled.

“Of course. Don’t worry about it, Mom. You can go ahead and prepare for your precious daughter’s gorgeous wedding!” Jolly cheered. Even though Marilyn didn’t sound too impressed by this decision, she was actually jumping with joy on the inside. After all, every mother wanted to see their daughter as the star of a grand wedding, right? Previously, when Jolly refused to host the wedding, Marilyn had claimed that she was okay with the decision, but she was actually really disappointed about it. This time, Marilyn finally had her wishes come true!

After they departed from the Carter Residence, Leroy sent Jolly back to Hudson Pharmaceuticals. While he drove her back, he asked her about the wedding. “You probably discussed this matter with Miss Hudson, right? So what are you guys scheming?”

“What do you mean? I might just genuinely want to have a wedding—why can’t you believe that?” Jolly asked.

“I know you too well. You’d climb mountains and cross oceans for others, but you’d try to make everything as simple as possible for yourself. Someone like you would never want to have a wedding overseas. You’d probably find it a hassle just to put on the wedding dress!” Leroy exclaimed.

“Women are fickle-minded creatures,” Jolly muttered.

“Well, there are some things that never change. You’ll always be someone who tries to avoid trouble. So, I want you to be honest. What’s going on?” Jolly knew that she couldn’t hide anything from Leroy, so she decided to come clean. “It’s about that wedding dress again,” Jolly told Leroy about how Hudson Pharmaceuticals’ funds might potentially be in the veil of the wedding dress.

“Are you guys sure about this? What if it isn’t here?” Leroy frowned.

“Even if the funds aren’t there, this wedding will still be a really great excuse for the club to transfer its funds. They’ve been eyeing me for a while now,” Jolly replied.

“It sounds dangerous.”

“Are you scared?” she asked him.

He looked deeply into her eyes before holding her hand tight. “No.” They both knew that Rachel wasn’t just going after the Hudson Pharmaceuticals’ funds. She also wanted to help Janice get rid of such thugs so that Riverdale would be a better place.

“By the way, the wedding dress is with Ryan. So I’ll have to meet him for a while,” Jolly told Leroy.

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Meanwhile, Rachel's secretary knocked on her door at Hudson Pharmaceuticals. "There's someone here for you, President Hudson." Rachel had been looking through her documents and was puzzled when she heard her secretary's words. "Who is it?"

"It's me." A figure popped out from the side of the door. "Steven!" Rachel was stunned for a while before she smiled. "What brings you here?"

"I'm here to see if your eye has gotten better," he said. Then, he walked over to Rachel's office desk and sat on the chair before leaning close to inspect her face.

"It's better than it was a few days ago, but it's still a little swollen," Rachel told him. "Anyway, you should be resting at home. Why are you here?" she asked.

"I'm here for you," he replied.

"What? Is anything the matter?" she asked.

"It's the weekend tomorrow, so I was wondering if you'd be free to watch a movie with me," he said.

She smiled in return. "I'd love to, but I've already made plans with someone else tomorrow."

"Is it Justin?" Steven asked.

"Yeah," she replied.

He stuck his lips into a pout. "Isn't he the president of Burton Group? Why does he have so much free time?"

"Well, a president still has the time to watch a play, I guess," she told him.

"Are you guys going to watch a play?"

"Yeah."

Steven blinked a few times upon hearing this. "I just arrived in Riverdale, and I'm not too familiar with the place. My sister and her husband aren't here tomorrow, so I'll be alone..." No one could possibly resist the puppy-eyed look on a handsome young man's face. When Rachel thought about Steven's relationship with the Carter Family, she figured that she did have some duty to care for him. "How about this? We could watch it together tomorrow if you're interested in the play."

"I'm interested!" Steven cried. "It's set. I'll see you tomorrow."

“Hey—” Rachel wanted to tell him that she had to ask Justin about it first, but she didn’t get to finish her words as Steven walked out of the room. Hence, she simply let out a resigned smile. She could already imagine the gloomy look on a certain someone’s face after hearing about this news.

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

Chapter 594

After work that day, Justin came to pick Rachel up at the office. “Have you been waiting for a long while?” Rachel wore her seatbelt before turning to give the man an apologetic look. “I’m so sorry. We had an emergency meeting about the product’s launch, and we lost track of time after a while.”

Justin started driving with a calm look on his face. “It’s fine. I just reached a while ago.” Rachel glanced at her watch. “It’s nearly 8.00PM now. I wonder if Charlotte and Samuel are asleep.” They had agreed to video call the two kids. Even though they had only been separated from the kids for a few days, they missed them and wanted to see them. They had agreed on the video call that morning, which was why Justin offered to pick Rachel up.

“I don’t think they’re asleep yet, but I think Gloria and Victor probably can’t stay up for long,” Justin replied.

“I feel pretty bad for troubling them. We promised to head over with them, and I can’t believe we haven’t made a move until now. They were supposed to be on their honeymoon, yet they had to bring the kids with them.” Charlotte and Samuel had followed Gloria to Tahiti for her honeymoon. Initially, Rachel and Justin were supposed to join them after the first two days, but they couldn’t seem to leave their work in Riverdale. So, they hadn’t been able to travel to Tahiti at all, and the couple on honeymoon had to deal with the kids instead.

Gloria and Victor had initially intended to leave everything in Riverdale behind to enjoy some quality time in Tahiti. Still, they hadn’t expected to bring another two kids along with them. “I don’t think I’ll be able to finish my work anytime soon. I’m afraid I’ll only be able to go over during Jolly’s wedding,” Justin announced. Rachel thought about his words for a moment. “That’s one month from now. Gloria is probably annoyed at this. If she knew that Jolly’s wedding was in Tahiti as well, she probably would have gotten Victor to delay their honeymoon for a month.”

“Well, I don’t think that’s much of an issue. We’re not sure what might happen one month from now,” Justin commented.

“That’s true. I hope everything goes well,” Rachel replied. Once they arrived at Rachel’s condominium, she hurriedly pulled her laptop out before making the video call. Justin went to the kitchen to pour them some water. He was familiar with the place, so his actions were swift and practiced. The ‘connecting’ sign popped on the laptop screen for a while before Gloria’s face appeared on the other end of the call.

She looked surprisingly fresh and energetic—Rachel had expected her to be more drained. With the different time zones that they were in, Gloria’s place was still bright and sunny. There were palm trees and blue skies in her background, which made the area seem serene and pleasant. “Did you just get off work, Rachel?” Gloria asked.

“Yeah. I just got home.” Rachel waved into the camera. “Charlotte!”

“Mommy!” Charlotte immediately threw aside the toy shovel in her hand before running over to the laptop. She was wearing a pink, one-piece swimsuit and ran over to give the screen a firm kiss. “Muacks!”

“Muacks,” Rachel replied with a smile. “Are you having fun, Charlotte?”

“Of course! When are you guys coming? Samuel and I found a lot of pretty seashells yesterday, and Mr. Victor said that we could use them to make a windchime!”

“I can’t believe you’re bringing this up!” Gloria rolled her eyes at the child before complaining to Rachel about what had happened. “Rachel, did you know that Charlotte got into a fight with some other kid over a seashell? I didn’t even know what to say!”

“I was the one who saw the seashell first. He wanted to snatch it away from me!” Charlotte protested.

“Is that a valid reason to get into a fight?” Gloria grabbed the girl’s arm and pulled her closer to the camera. “Look at that, Rachel. She got into a fight and has a red mark on her neck now.”

“How did you injure yourself?” Rachel felt her chest tightening. “Is it a serious injury? Let me take a look at it.”

“Don’t worry about it. The mark is barely visible. However, the other kid was a little unluckier. As they were fighting, that kid stepped into one of the crabs’ hideouts, and his toe was bleeding after he got bitten by the crab’s pincers,” Gloria explained. Rachel frowned as she heard this story. She could already picture how gruesome the wound would be and imagine how worried and awful the other kid’s parents would feel.

“Did you apologize to the kid?” Rachel asked.

"I did. Their family was there for vacation too, and they were pretty nice about it. They didn't hold it against us, and they apologized as well. We wanted to leave a contact number just in case something happened to the kid's foot. But their family already had plans to leave that night itself, and the kid didn't seem too interested in playing after getting injured," Gloria explained.

Charlotte was squatting down by the sand pit and playing with her fingers. She clearly knew that she was in the wrong, considering how she was avoiding her. But, since her child was so far away from her, Rachel decided not to give Charlotte too much of a scolding. "Thanks for everything, Gloria. We're still not done with our work here, so we don't know when we'll be able to go over," Rachel uttered.

Gloria brushed Rachel's statement off. "Hey. It's no problem at all. I watched this naughty kid grow up, and I've seen her do worse. I know how cheeky she can get. You did a great job parenting Samuel—he's so much more obedient."

Rachel wasn't surprised to hear this. Samuel was quiet and obedient until he wanted something. When he really wanted to do something, he'd kick up a fuss greater than Charlotte, making the adults more helpless than ever in the face of his tantrum. For example, when Rachel and Jolly first returned to Riverdale, Samuel had actually managed to trick his whole class into traveling for a summer camp. Then, he took a bus on his own to travel to Riverdale. Just the thought of what happened still made Rachel shudder with stress and worry.

"Mommy, aren't you guys coming over?" Charlotte rested her head on Gloria's arm. Even though Rachel had just lectured her, she didn't seem afraid of Gloria at all. "When are you guys coming?" Charlotte asked in a whiny tone.

"We'll come after we're done with work, but we don't know when that'll happen," Rachel replied.

"What about Daddy?" Charlotte seemed to finally recall the existence of her father. Rachel turned to look at the man boiling water in the kitchen. "Your daughter is asking for you." He lowered his cup before making a short and curt statement. "What a rare occasion."

Then, he sat down beside Rachel before waving into the camera. "I heard you caused trouble," he said to Charlotte.

"No, I didn't." Charlotte chuckled. "Daddy, Mommy said that you guys aren't coming over. Are you guys enjoying your alone time at home?"

"What nonsense are you saying?" Rachel felt somewhat embarrassed. Nevertheless, Charlotte was on a roll. "Mommy, didn't you ask me what I wanted for my birthday? I have an answer now."

“Okay. What do you want?” Rachel asked.

“I want a baby sister!” Charlotte cried.

Rachel froze after hearing this, and she felt blood rushing up from her face to the back of her ears. Even Gloria seemed rather stunned for a while. “Well, I think having a younger sister is a good idea. With a mother like Rachel, I bet she’d turn the child into a sweet and loving one,” Gloria commented.

“What are you guys talking about?” Rachel couldn’t seem to argue against them, so she just handed the laptop to Justin. “You can talk to them. I’m done talking. I’ll go see if the water’s ready.” Rachel got up and left the laptop in Justin’s arms. There was a slight smirk on his face. It was too early to talk about having another child. Just the fact that he had managed to build this relationship with Rachel was already a huge achievement to him, and he didn’t want to get his hopes up too high.

“Where’s Samuel? I don’t see him at all,” Justin said.

“He went out with Victor to get some ice cream. So you guys can wait for a while—they’re almost back,” Gloria said.

“Why is the connection so bad, Aunt Gloria?” Charlotte asked while winking at Gloria. Gloria seemed to get the child’s message immediately. “Oh. The connection is terrible here. Can you guys wait for a while? I’ll fix the Internet before calling you guys again. Don’t go home just yet, Justin.” Their actions were to make sure that Justin stayed around for a while longer.

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

Chapter 595

By the time Rachel prepared some fruit tea and brought it back to the hall, the computer screen had already turned black. “Where did they go?”

Justin responded in an exasperated tone. “They said that the connection was bad and told us to wait for a moment. They are going to go back to the hotel and check if there’s an issue with the Internet,” he said.

“How long are we supposed to wait then?” she asked.

"I don't know," he answered truthfully. She checked the time only to see that it was already 9.00PM. "You haven't had anything to eat, right? I'll cook something for you," she offered.

"Let me do it," he said.

"It's fine. You can just sit around and wait for a while. I'll just make you some noodles." She urged him to sit down before she rolled her sleeves up and entered the kitchen. "It's been a while since I've cooked anything. This feels rather strange now," she said as she tied an apron around her. Even though she told Justin that she didn't need his help, he still came over to help out with preparing the ingredients.

"I'll make some egg noodles with tomatoes, okay?" she asked.

"You call the shots," he replied.

"By the way..." Rachel recalled what happened in her office earlier that day, and she turned to look at Justin with tomatoes in her hands. "Weren't we supposed to watch a play together tomorrow? There's something that I'd like to talk to you about."

"What is it?" he asked.

"Jolly's cousin wants to join us," she said.

Justin was surprised to hear this. "Does he want to watch the play with us?"

"Jolly and Leroy are going with Mr. and Mrs. Carter to pay respect to their ancestors tomorrow, so there won't be anyone home. Steven must be pretty bored to be alone in Riverdale. Technically speaking, he's my younger brother, so I was wondering if it'd be okay to bring him along just for tomorrow." Rachel batted her eyelids at Justin. "Just one day," she said as she held one finger up.

"Fine. Just one day," Justin replied exasperatedly.

"I knew you wouldn't mind!" she said.

"I didn't say that I don't mind him coming." Justin raised an eyebrow as he stood directly in front of Rachel. "This is a one-time thing. I don't want this to happen again."

"Hey, step aside. I need to cut these tomatoes," she protested.

"Are you going to ignore me now that you're done talking to me?" he asked.

"I'm about to make you a meal, aren't I?" she retorted. Justin crossed his arms in front of his chest as he leaned against the kitchen counter. He was beaming as he stared at the woman's back figure. He had witnessed this scene more than a hundred times in

the past, but it had always been in his dreams. Now, this wonderful scene was real, and he didn't want to even bat an eyelid as he was afraid that he'd open his eyes to realize that it was just a dream. He wasn't even bothered by the petty matters that Rachel had brought up—he was too immersed in this dream come true.

After Rachel finished cooking, they still hadn't received any news from Gloria's end. Gloria didn't even respond after Rachel texted her. "Did she forget about it?" Rachel wondered.

"They might be having a meal now, and they might only go back to the hotel after their meal," Justin suggested.

"I guess that makes sense. Let's wait for a while more." Rachel yawned as she flicked through different channels on the TV. One of the channels was screening an action film, yet even the sound of guns and bombs couldn't seem to keep Rachel awake. Before she knew it, she had fallen asleep on the couch.

Justin had just cleaned up the kitchen when he walked out to find Rachel's tiny figure curled up into a ball on the couch. The blanket on the sofa had fallen onto the ground. For some reason, he felt a sharp pain in his heart when he saw this scene. If I'm not around, and if Jolly gets married and moves out... I'm sure the two kids can't be with Rachel all the time, either. She probably spends her whole life like this. She probably just makes herself some noodles or orders some food delivery after getting off work. She doesn't go out of the house during weekends either... At that thought, Justin realized how his decision to hold on to her had been right.

Perhaps they would never be able to completely let go of the mistakes that they had made in the past, and maybe these mistakes would haunt them every now and then. However, as long as they had a future together, then they had all the time in the world to create more joy between them. Justin picked Rachel up from the couch and brought her to her bedroom. He stayed with her and ensured she was fast asleep before he walked out and shut the door behind him. Things were good the way they were—Justin didn't need much more than what he had right then.

At the same time, in the faraway land of Tahiti, the four people on honeymoon were enjoying their dinner in the hotel restaurant. They had a gorgeous view of the sunset by the beach—the clean ocean and the clear skies made them feel like they were in heaven. Gloria used a spoon to dig out the meat of an oyster as she spoke. "I wonder what both of them are doing. Justin probably won't head back to the summer villa at this hour," she said.

Charlotte was excited to hear this. "I'm about to have a sister soon!"

"Don't get excited just yet. We can never be sure," Samuel said with a calm expression. "If they were to have another child, I hope it's a boy." That way, he'd have someone to play Lego with him. Unfortunately, Charlotte was an impatient girl who only caused a

mess instead of actually building anything. Because of that, Samuel often had Lego parts that were misplaced before he could create a proper figure.

The four of them had high hopes for the couple back home. The actual situation wasn't bad, but it was the complete opposite of what they had expected. Justin spent the night sleeping on the couch. The following day, Rachel woke up to the strong aroma of coffee outside her room. She stretched her limbs as she walked out to find Justin making coffee. "Woah. That smells good."

"Try it." Justin placed a freshly brewed cup of coffee in front of her. "There's some cake on the table as well. So you can get ready, and we'll head out after that."

"That's so sweet of you." Rachel held the cup of coffee with both hands as she felt a warm sensation spreading across her chest. "Wait... Where did you sleep last night?"

"The couch," Justin muttered exasperatedly. "I waited the whole night, but they didn't video call us at all. It seems like they really forgot about us."

"I thought the two devils would've tortured Gloria, but it seems like she's having quite a lot of fun with them," Rachel commented. to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

"Well, Mr. Wade is there and is good at taking care of many kids. It's just two kids now, so it's probably a piece of cake for him," Justin said.

"That's true. But I feel pretty bad for disrupting their honeymoon," Rachel mumbled. Justin continued to prepare some salad in the kitchen without making any more comments. After breakfast, they headed out to watch the play. They had just arrived at the theatre entrance when they saw Steven jogging over to them.

Rachel was puzzled to see the formal suit that he was dressed in. "Why are you dressed in such a formal outfit?" she asked.

"I'm on a date—of course, I have to dress formally. It shows respect for my lady." Steven took a glance in Justin's direction as he spoke. Justin raised an eyebrow but didn't bother to respond to the other man's provocative statement.

"This isn't a musical, and there's no dress code. But I guess you look pretty fresh and smart in this outfit," Rachel said with a smile.

"Yeah? I think I look pretty good in formal suits." Steven beamed as he looked at Rachel. "By the way, I got this for you." A red rose surfaced in his hand out of nowhere—it was as if he had just pulled a magic trick.

"Why did you get flowers?" Rachel was surprised as she took the rose into her hand.

“Jolly told me you like flowers, so I got them just for you,” he replied. Justin felt rather displeased by the other man’s actions, but he kept an emotionless look on his face. “You should try getting white roses next time. That’s Rachel’s favorite flower.” Just last night, Justin had claimed that he wouldn’t get jealous.

Rachel pressed her lips together before making a statement to trigger Justin. “I think red roses are nice, too.”

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

Chapter 596

Justin was oddly calm, probably because he knew that Rachel was doing it intentionally. “Sure. I guess white roses may seem a little too simple when placed at home. I’ll get someone to send different flowers over tomorrow,” he said.

“I don’t have the time to take care of the flowers,” she replied.

“It’s fine. You won’t have to take care of them. If the flowers were to rely on your care, they probably wouldn’t have lived for that long,” he teased. Healthy roses could last up to 20 days after blooming; some could even live up to a month if they were well taken care of.

When Steven saw how the two people were starting to chat with one another happily, he quickly interrupted them. “Aren’t we going to go in yet, Rachel? The play is starting soon.”

“It’s about time. Let’s go,” she replied after taking a look at her watch. There were many people in the theatre, and there were practically no empty seats by the time they got in. This play was extremely famous, and it would tour around the country every year. Rachel had watched it once in the past, but she wanted to watch it again with Justin.

“I’ll sit here!” Steven plopped himself in a seat between Rachel and Justin. Rachel shot Justin an exasperated look before hinting at him to be more accepting of the situation. Even though Justin wasn’t too happy about it, he knew that it wasn’t nice to seem petty over such matters, so he kept his mouth shut. However, deep down, he made a mental note to hold a grudge against Steven. I’m going to get back at him someday.

Steven took a glance at his surroundings before turning to Rachel. “There are quite a lot of people here. This play seems pretty famous—I did my research before coming.”

"It's written by a director whose plays I really enjoy. This play has been going on for years," she replied.

"Well, if you like this director's work, I can always come to watch more plays with you," Steven offered. Rachel scoffed in response to his words. "Have you watched any plays in the past?"

Steven scratched his head before responding honestly. "No. But I like everything that you like. So I bet this will be an interesting play," he said with a laugh.

Rachel laughed along with him, but she didn't believe his words at all. It was rare for youngsters to enjoy watching plays, and Steven had just graduated from university. He was in his early twenties, which was the perfect time to get involved in more exciting activities. It was unlikely that he would enjoy a play like this. Rachel's assumptions were correct—Steven had already started yawning about ten minutes into the play.

Meanwhile, Justin seemed a lot more alert and engaged as he watched the people on stage. All of a sudden, he felt something weighing down on his shoulder. He turned to glance at what was going on, and his lips twitched with annoyance when he saw Steven sleeping on his shoulder. When Rachel saw this happening, she covered her mouth and giggled before giving Justin a look. "Shh..."

Justin hated it when others touched him, so it felt impossible for him to allow Steven to just sleep on his shoulder for the rest of the play. It felt too weird and uncomfortable. When Rachel wasn't paying attention to him, Justin used two fingers to poke Steven's forehead before lifting Steven from his shoulder. Justin kept pushing Steven away until Steven's head was straight and resting against the seat's headrest.

Nevertheless, the very next moment, Steven's figure began to tilt toward the other side. When Justin saw Steven's head falling toward Rachel's shoulder, he quickly tugged on Steven's jacket to pull Steven back in his direction. In the end, Steven spent the rest of the play sleeping on Justin's shoulder. When the play ended, Justin instantly got to his feet. Steven felt a sudden drop as his head no longer had any support, and the sudden disappearance of his 'pillow' finally woke him up.

"Is it over?" Steven rubbed his eyes with a dazed look on his face. "How did it end just like that?"

"You've been asleep for two hours. What do you think?" Justin mocked him without hiding behind a thin veneer of politeness. Steven responded with another yawn. "I slept a little too late last night," he said.

"Well, if you're so tired, you should just head home and rest," Justin suggested.

"I'm not sleepy anymore. I just took a two-hour nap." Steven gave Justin a side-eye before turning to beam in Rachel's direction. "I bet you're hungry, Rachel. Let's go have lunch!"

"I am rather hungry. Let's go." When Rachel realized how Justin was still some distance behind them, she turned and tried calling out to him. Yet, Steven quickly pushed her forward. "Let's go, Rachel. Everywhere's really packed on a Saturday afternoon."

Even though Steven didn't seem like the most trustable person, he provided a pretty good recommendation for their lunch. He brought them to one of the famous restaurants in Riverdale. They wouldn't have gotten a table at all if he hadn't booked the place earlier. Nonetheless, there was one issue with their meal. It felt rather odd for three people to have a meal in a restaurant with such a romantic ambiance.

"You have to try this roasted goose with cherry sauce, Rachel. It's one of their signatures," Steven said.

"Let me try it." Rachel took a mouthful of the meat, and she could feel it melting in her mouth as she chewed on it. "It is pretty good. How did you find out about this place? Jolly told me that you just came to Riverdale a while ago and that you seldom came here in the past," she said.

"Well, I did some research. If you follow me back to my hometown, you'll get to try even better food! By the way, I recall Jolly telling me that you like fruits. My family has an orchard, and you can head over to pick some fruits once autumn is here," he offered.

"I'll have to go there during autumn! My children love visiting orchards too," Rachel replied.

"That's great. I'll bring them around in autumn." Steven didn't forget about the other man on the table even as he was chit-chatting with Rachel. "Don't be shy, Mister. You should eat more!" he said in a 'welcoming' tone.

Mister? Justin's pupils shrank for a moment. "What did you just call me?"

"Mister! Jolly told me that you're nearly 16 years older than me, so I thought I'd refer to you in a more respectful manner. Am I wrong?" Steven replied.

"Well, if that's the case, you should call me Madam too. I'm ten years older than you, after all," Rachel chirped in. "That's different! When we walk on the streets, no one would be able to tell that you're older than me. You look even younger than Jolly," Steven replied.

"You sure are good at sweet-talking. I bet there were a lot of girls who were interested in you at school," Rachel teased.

“Well, I’m not interested in them at all,” he replied.

“Jolly told me about this. So, you have pretty high standards, huh? Do you have a preference? I’ll keep a lookout for girls who may fit your liking,” Rachel offered.

“That’s fine. I believe in fate, so I want to just go with the flow.” Steven smiled while shaking his head. Then, he took a glance in Justin’s direction. “Don’t you think so, Sir? You’re not married even at this age, so I assume that you enjoy going with the flow as well, right?”

Justin responded without any change in his calm expression. “My daughter’s already six years old, though.” Steven felt like his efforts to offend Justin were washed down the drain at that moment—Justin’s simple statement felt like an arrow directly into his heart.

Halfway through their meal, Steven excused himself to go to the toilet. Rachel was worried about Justin’s feelings, so she quickly checked on him. “Are you okay? You weren’t bothered by what Steven said earlier, right?”

“Do I look like someone so petty?” Justin asked.

“You’re not, but I’m afraid you might overthink it,” she replied.

“What’s there to overthink? Should I be thinking about how he destroyed our rare date or how he intentionally commented on my age and spoke to me like an old man well on my way to retirement?”

Rachel rested her arms on the table before using her palm to support her chin. “Well, I already told you about Steven’s plan last night, so you shouldn’t get mad over that. As for the second point you made...” She blinked as she glanced at Justin. “What do you feel about it?” Rachel knew that it didn’t feel good to be referred to as an old person. It felt almost like the younger generation was demanding the previous generation to age faster.

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

Chapter 597

Justin straightened his figure before he leaned forward and edged closer to Rachel. “An old man like me has seen enough of the world. Do you think I’d be bothered when a young man tells me that I’m old?” Justin spoke in a soft voice, and there was the sound

of a violin playing in the restaurant, so he and Rachel were the only two people who could hear what he said. At that moment, it felt like they were in a bubble separated from the whole world. They had a private space all to themselves.

Rachel saw the clear and bright look in Justin's eyes and felt her heart skip a beat. Right then, Steven returned from the washroom. Rachel cleared her throat before taking her arms off the desk and pretending as if nothing had happened at all. Steven was still in high spirits when he returned to the table. "Where should we go in the evening?" he asked.

"There's a reservoir in the outskirts of Riverdale, and the view there is pretty nice," Justin said.

"Sure. I'll get the bill, and we can leave," Steven offered before holding his hand up. "Bill, please!"

The waiter walked over with a smile. "This gentleman over here has already gotten the bill," the waiter explained. Steven froze for a moment before frowning at Justin. "Didn't I say that I would buy you guys a meal? So why did you pay for it?"

"You're the guest in our city. If you really want to buy us a meal, you can do it the next time," Justin said. Steven was about to protest when Rachel patted him on the shoulder. "Alright. Jolly told me to take care of you, and you just graduated, so how could we get you to pay for anything? Come on. Let's go explore the city a little more," she suggested.

"Fine. It'll be my turn to buy you guys a meal next time," Steven insisted.

"Sure," Rachel replied.

It was the perfect time of the year to visit the reservoir on the outskirts of Riverdale. The weather wasn't cold, and the cooling breeze felt nice against one's skin. The skies were clear, and the sound of water filled their ears as they walked along the pathway. The view was terrific. Justin drove them to the reservoir, and Steven sat in the backseat.

As Justin was driving, Steven noticed a part of Justin's left pinky that looked like it had been amputated. This wasn't the first time Steven had seen it, but the more he looked at it, the more it didn't seem like a congenital disability. "What happened to your hand?" Steven was a straightforward person, and he asked whatever question he had in mind.

Rachel, who had been smiling and chatting before that, frowned upon hearing Steven's question. Her gaze darkened a little. "I accidentally broke it. It's no big deal," Justin said.

"How did you accidentally break your finger?" Steven said without paying any attention to the look on Rachel's face. "That's so careless of you. How will you take good care of others in the future?"

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“Steven.” Rachel interrupted their conversation. “You have a license, don’t you? Why don’t you drive us back later?”

“Of course. I got my license after my first attempt. My driving teacher called me a genius!” When it came to the topic of Steven’s driver’s license, he had a lot to say, and he went on and on about it. Even though Rachel had managed to change the topic, she couldn’t help but take a few more glances at Justin’s pinky. The wound that he got from his pinky being chopped off in Enistan had healed a little, and the scar wasn’t too hideous. However, his pinky would never look the same as before.

Justin knew how bad Rachel felt whenever someone brought this topic up, so he reached over and squeezed her hand to comfort her. Steven had been talking about his license when he suddenly caught the two people in front holding hands. Steven was stunned for a moment. “Hey, you should keep two hands on the wheel when driving. It’s illegal to drive with one hand, you know?” Steven uttered intentionally.

“It seems like you really studied for your driving test,” Justin voiced with a scoff. Rachel’s cheeks turned pink, but she didn’t say much after that. Since they were completely free that week, Justin drove for more than 30 miles to get them to the reservoir. In the past, this place used to be less well-known to the public. Alas, now that more people had heard of the area, the crowd grew larger than before, and there were already many people by the time they arrived.

“There’s an ice cream truck there! I’ll get some ice cream. You can wait here, Rachel.” The moment Steven got out of the car, his sharp eyes spotted the ice cream and hot dog trucks nearby. So he hurried over to queue for them. Meanwhile, Rachel and Justin strolled behind him while chatting with one another.

“I’m worried that the construction at the free trade port might not go well. Have you thought about how to deal with that?” Rachel asked.

“I’ll think about it as we go. As of now, I don’t know what Julian wants. If he’s doing this just for his own benefit, I don’t think we should take action. We’re technically partners, after all. We either live or die together,” Justin said.

“Isn’t Genevieve also involved in this? When did Julian even get to know the Yatruinia royalty?” Rachel wondered.

“I’ve always thought that this was rather odd, Rachel,” Justin said.

“What are your thoughts on this?” she asked.

“You just found your biological father and learned he’s part of the Yatruinia royalty. Then, Julian gets someone who’s also from the Yatruinia royalty to support him right after that,” Justin said.

“How do you think these two events are related?” she asked.

“I’m not too sure about the details. Anyway, did you get anything from Mr. Hudson’s end?” he asked in return.

“Not yet. He just settled down there, so I’m sure he still has a lot of matters to handle,” she explained. Justin nodded with a thoughtful look in his eyes. Lionel had just returned to Yatruinia a few days ago. He felt rather suspicious of Genevieve’s identity, so he returned to the country to do some of his own research. Therefore, he wanted to find out where this woman came from and what she wanted from him.

“Hey. I was here first. Why are you jumping the queue?” Steven’s voice came from a distance away, and it sounded like he was starting a fight with someone. Justin and Rachel exchanged glances before they hurried over to him. There was a group of people gathered around the ice cream and hot dog trucks by the time they got over. It seemed like Steven had gotten into a fight with another girl. The girl had ice cream in one hand and spoke in a firm tone. “I didn’t jump the queue. I simply walked away for a while. I was standing in front of you earlier! I’m two spots ahead of you!” she cried.

“Who’s going to prove that? Am I supposed to take your word for it?” Steven retorted.

“Do I have to lie about such a thing? Hey, are you just trying to pick a fight with me?” she hissed.

“Do you think I’m picking a fight? It seems more like you’re the one who wants to fight,” he replied.

“Steven.” Rachel hurried over to find Steven confronting another girl in front of the food trucks. The girl looked about the same age as Steven. The girl already had an ice cream in her hand, but she and Steven were holding onto a bag of sausages, and neither looked like they wanted to let go of it. It was almost as if they were having a tug of war between them, and the bag of sausages looked like it was about to be torn apart.

“What’s going on here? Let go of the bag, Steven,” Rachel ordered. Her words were proven to be useful, for he let go of the bag almost immediately. The girl’s eyes widened as she stumbled backward when Steven stopped tugging on the bag. She tried to maintain her balance but ended up falling bottom-first onto the ground. “Ahh!” She let out a loud cry. Her bottom hurt so badly that tears started brimming in her eyes.

“Are you okay?” Rachel hurried over to help the girl up. “Did you injure yourself?” The girl’s ice cream had fallen to the ground, and the bag of sausages had flown out of her hand. Mini sausages were rolling all over the floor, and they were no longer edible. The girl was fuming—she pushed Rachel aside before charging toward Steven. “I’m going to fight you!” she cried.

Moments later, Steven let out a cry of agony. Three red marks formed on each side of his smooth and fair cheeks. From afar, the marks on both sides seemed almost proportionate to each other. “That’s what you get for pushing me!” the girl cried.

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

Chapter 598

“Are you alright? Are you hurt?” Justin helped Rachel up.

“Steven!” She was shocked to the core the moment she saw blood.

At that moment, Steven had gotten into a fight with the girl; instead of a fight, it was more appropriate to say that she was riding on top of him, which left him no openings to counter.

“Let go or I won’t hold my punches back!”

“How dare you!”

“You’re crazy!”

Rachel stepped forward to help him but was thwarted by Justin, who grabbed the girl’s hand afterward. “Stop it!”

It was obvious that the girl had learned martial arts, yet she could not free her hand out of his grasp. Thus, Steven seized the chance to shove her away and get up before hiding himself behind Justin.

Steven covered his face and shouted, “I’m calling the cops!”

“What? I should be the one doing that to report you, pervert!” She was about to charge toward him, but Justin quickly stood in between them.

“Are you guys trying to win against me with numbers? I’m not afraid! Wanna call the cops? I’ll call it for you. We’ll see whose side the police are on!”

“Hold on,” Rachel interrupted. “Let’s talk, girl. We don’t mean to harm you. Can’t you see that we’re just pulling the both of you apart?”

Looking at Rachel's amiable face, the girl gave in before pointing at Steven. "This dumb*ss says that I've jumped the line, but I just left the line for a while. He kept picking on me by saying that I'm rude."

"Steven, did you really say that?"

Steven was still covering his face. "She's lying. Don't listen to her nonsense. It is true that she cut the line."

"Sorry, who? Why don't you repeat that, huh?" The girl had her hair tied into a ponytail and was clad in a green sweater. Whenever she jumped, her ponytail swayed, and she looked as fierce as a wolf.

Meanwhile, the ice cream truck owner could not bear the dispute anymore as he craned his neck out of the window. "I can vouch for the girl. She was in the line first while helping someone to look after their child. She's just returned after sending the kid back to the parents."

Finally, the truth had been revealed.

"Do you hear that loud and clear?" The girl placed her hands on her waist with a formidable aura.

Steven responded, "If everyone cuts the line after leaving the place for a moment, it'll be a total mess."

"You!"

"Okay, stop." Rachel was worried that another fight would arise again. "Objectively speaking, both of you are neither right nor wrong. Steven, you shouldn't blame someone else without getting to the bottom of it and make her ice cream fall off on purpose. Apologize to her."

His unwillingness was written all over his face. Still, it would be petty of him to not apologize since she had put it that way. Thus, he offered his apology in a perfunctory manner. "Sorry."

Rachel cast her gaze onto the girl. "I think violence isn't right either, isn't it?"

After all, she could not be too dour to a stranger, so she could only hope that the girl had a good upbringing.

The girl still remained firm with her attitude as she said, "I'm wrong for being physical, but I wouldn't have done that if you did not run that big mouth of yours. Behave when you're outside and stop asking trouble for yourself."

A helpless Rachel eventually became the middle person. "I guess we can get over the matter now. I'll buy you a new ice-cream."

"No, I can buy it myself." The girl fished out some notes from her pocket while saying that. "Take it and pay his medical bills for me."

Rachel was slightly stunned to see the stack of money proffered by the girl whereas Steven's face turned crimson in rage. "What the hell? Do you think that these five and ten dollars notes are enough to compensate for it? You've scratched my face, dude!"

The girl shot daggers at him. "Then buy yourself some band-aids. Are you perhaps planning to go to the hospital because of such a scratch? Are you even a man?"

She stuffed the money into Rachel's hand and turned around to leave the scene.

"Hey!" Rachel held the money while calling the girl, but to no avail.

Even after the girl was long gone, Steven was still hiding behind Justin, who questioned, "Can you let me go now?"

Steven was baffled as he finally realized that he had been grabbing onto Justin's arm. This is embarrassing!

Steven cleared his throat. "A real man should never hit a woman. I despise that kind of man the most."

He then hissed and touched his face. "That maniac must be out of her mind."

"Are you okay?" Rachel approached him to take a closer look at the scratches on his face. "They're kinda deep, though. Is it painful?"

"It hurts." His face scrunched up in pain. "Rae, could you blow on it?"

Before Rachel could respond to his request, Justin pulled her away. "Which part of it hurts? I can do it."

Watching the man's rigid countenance, Steven gulped. "Nevermind."

Rachel then thrust the money into Steven's hand. "Take it. It's meant to pay for your medical bills anyway."

The ire in him flared up at the mention of that. "Don't let me see that mad woman again."

Despite the unforeseen episode, the whole journey went smoothly. Since they were here to let their hair down, they strolled along the route by the reservoir with Steven taking pictures of them at times; it was a relaxing walk.

Steven looked funny with the three spongebob band-aids on his face, which were given by the ice cream truck owner.

"I'm sure your sister will be blabbering on and on after seeing your face," Rachel said helplessly while sliding her arms into Justin's. "I think we're jinxed because he's always hurt whenever we're together."

"Maybe. Let's go to the church in Westhill and pray. It'll probably get better after that."

"You believe in that? I was just saying, though."

"I would like to believe that something like that does exist, so let's not bring him along next time."

Rachel chuckled at that. "Are you jealous?"

"I'm not jealous of him, but he keeps getting in the way when we're supposed to be dating. I'm kinda bothered by it. Can you understand how I'm feeling at the moment?"

"Yeah, yeah." She was wreathed in smiles. "You are magnanimous."

"Why are you walking so fast?" Steven yelled behind them as he caught up with them while holding his camera. "I've been taking so many pictures of you guys. I want a few of myself too. Here, take a picture of us together."

With that being said, he shoved the camera into Justin's hands before pulling Rachel over.

"Let's stand here. The scenery is great. Don't forget about the lighthouse behind me. Rae, smile."

She was turning her head to look at the lighthouse when the camera shutter clicked.

"Let's take some more."

Steven kept changing his postures by forming a heart with her and making faces. However, if he had checked the taken photos, he would find out that he was not in any of them despite all the effort. Not even the hem of his shirt was in the photos, for there was only Rachel with the scenery in Justin's shots.

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

Chapter 599

In the evening, when the trio was going to return home from the reservoir, the men were fighting over whether Rachel should be sitting in the passenger seat or the back seat.

Steven claimed, "If Rae sits behind, I'll be the only one in the front row. Am I your driver, Sir? Rae took the passenger seat when we first came, but why is no one going to take the passenger seat when it's my turn to drive?"

"This is my car," countered Justin.

"You!" Steven glared at him in rage. "Rae, where are you going to sit?"

They turned their gazes to Rachel, who was feeling helpless by the situation. After a moment of contemplation, a lightbulb lit up in her head. "It's inappropriate for us to sit behind when Steven takes the wheel. As he has said, he's not our driver. We're just hanging out and the trip back will be tiring. Someone should take the passenger seat to accompany him."

"That's right!" Steven's eyes glistened almost instantly.

"So, Justin, you should accompany him." Their expressions fell at her suggestion due to unwillingness.

Yet, it was the best solution they could come up with given the circumstances. The only thing that irritated Steven was that he should have let her taken the back seat while he sat in the passenger seat when they first came.

Rachel kept yawning on the way home.

"Get some shut-eye if you're tired." Justin noticed her yawning in the rearview mirror. "It'll take a while to arrive in the city. Just take a nap."

"I'm not sleepy." She yawned again as soon as she finished her words.

He turned around to tease her. "Why are you yawning then?"

"I'm fine." Following that was another yawn. It seemed like she had underestimated herself as she exclaimed in helplessness, "I'm feeling my age. I'm already exhausted after having fun the whole day. I can't even withstand it before reaching home."

He responded, "You're younger than me by five years. If you're feeling like that, I must be old."

Steven took a glimpse at him. "That is a true fact, though. Look at our age gap. I can even call you my uncle."

The brazen mocking was way too scornful. However, a successful man like Justin had never been perturbed by his age; he had everything that he needed, so what did he have to worry about?

Right then, the car came to a halt suddenly, causing Rachel to lean forward. She almost bumped into the front seat, and she was shocked. "What's wrong?"

Steven pointed to the right. 'Look, isn't that the crazy woman?"

It was the girl Steven got into a fight with this afternoon. She was ambling along that road and heading toward the highway.

Is she going to cross the highway by foot?

Rachel ordered, "Steven, stop the car."

Once the car slowly stopped next to the girl, Rachel unwound the window. "Hey, where are you going?"

The girl turned around to see the amiable woman craning her neck out of the car window. Realizing that it was the same person who had stopped the fight in the afternoon, the girl paused momentarily before nodding. "I guess."

"What a coincidence! We're returning to the city too. We can give you a lift."

"Really?" The girl's eyes brightened. Just when she was going to accept the offer, she noticed the driver was Steven, and her face turned grim. "Nevermind. I can just walk. I don't have the guts to share the same car with you guys. What should I do when someone takes revenge on me by taking me to a deserted mountain?"

"Excuse me?" Steven was vexed. "It pains my heart to waste my money on the petrol just to bring you to a deserted place. Stop that wild imagination of yours, please."

She frowned. "Did I ask for your help? Shut that squeaky mouth of yours."

"Fine. You can walk if you like. Rae, let's just mind our business." He started the car engine while saying that, but the car stopped again after being driven forward for a few meters.

This time, Rachel alighted from the car and came up to the girl. Feeling the wind brushing against her cheeks, she cooed, “Just come along with us. As long as I’m here, no one will bring you to a deserted place.”

Looking at Rachel, the girl was obviously wavering. Rachel continued, “If you don’t trust us, why don’t you send a text to your friend? It takes an hour at most to reach the city from here. Tell her to call the cops if she doesn’t receive any message from you an hour later. What do you say?”

The girl thought for a while before agreeing to Rachel’s suggestion. “I believe that you’re a good person, but that brat seems unreliable.”

“He’s still a kid. Don’t mind him.”

“Big baby,” the girl commented before entering the car.

Fortunately, the two words did not reach Steven’s ears, or there would have been a ruckus if he threw a tantrum by not letting her get in the car. The car engine started and they hit the road again with the girls sitting in the back seat.

“I’m Rachel Hudson. This is my boyfriend and the one driving is my younger cousin.”

“So, he’s your cousin.” The girl shook her head as though she was quelling the urge to make fun of Steven.

“What’s your name?” said Rachel.

“I’m Sandra Huges,” answered Sandra briskly. “Nice to meet you. Can I call you Rae?”

“Sure. My younger siblings call me by that name too.” Rachel smiled and questioned further, “Do you live in the city? Why did you come to the reservoir all alone on the weekend? It’s hard to find a cab home.”

“I live in the suburbs. It’s not that far from the reservoir. It’s just that I have an urgent errand to run, so I have to go to the city. I’ll return home as soon as I’m done. My grandmother is still waiting for me at home.”

Rachel nodded before grabbing two packets of snacks from beneath the seat. “Want some?”

Sandra was baffled and she hesitated for a moment before taking one of it to fill her stomach. It was easy for girls to befriend each other, be it through a girl’s day out to the nail salon, going to the restroom together with their hands held, or sharing snacks together. All of these scenarios could easily be the starting point of a friendship.

“Thank you, Rae. I’ve fought with your cousin and yet, you don’t mind bringing me along to the city with you guys.”

“It’s Steven’s fault. I’ll be grateful if you don’t blame him.”

“It’s alright. I don’t mind.”

“Can’t you read between the lines?” Steven, who was driving, grew irritated the more he listened to the conversation. “Rae is just being nice and polite. Are you seriously thinking that it’s my fault for what had happened?”

“It is your fault.” Sandra was one stubborn girl, and she would never go easy on him.

He was seething. “Keep up with that attitude of yours and I’ll dump you here at this instant.”

“Rae invited me for the ride, not you,” she retorted with an attitude. “Oh, and you can drop me off before entering the city.”

Rachel was confused. “Why?”

“I have something to do at Westhill Racecourse, which is not exactly in the city.”

Westhill Racecourse?

Rachel could vaguely sense that something was wrong. “Why are you going there?”

“My grandmother’s sick. I need someone to help her.”

“You’re going to Westhill Racecourse to ask for help?”

Sandra nodded. “My mother works there.”

Hearing that, Rachel slightly clenched her hands. She could also see Justin’s equally confused expression in the rearview mirror.

Sandra’s mother is working at Westhill Racecourse?

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

Chapter 600

Westhill Racecourse was a very sensitive topic to Rachel. After all, it was the club's headquarters and the place where most of the daily events were held.

Such a massive racecourse came with a huge number of employees, which comprised all sorts of individuals. Even if it was surprising to hear that from a stranger, it was not weird to know that Sandra's mother was working over there.

Rachel proposed, "We can take you there."

Sandra waved her hands hastily. "No, it's alright. Just drop me off along your way back."

"We'll have to pass by the place anyway. It's along the way." Rachel then asked Steven, "You know the way to the racecourse, do you?"

He pouted. "Yeah, yeah."

Sandra received a call during the drive. Her brows furrowed the moment she saw the caller's ID, after which she faced the window to answer the phone in a soft voice. Nevertheless, her words were heard loud and clear by others in that small space.

"I know. Please help me look after my grandmother. I'll foot the bills after getting the money. Please. Just bear with me for another day. I'll make sure to pay tomorrow."

Once the call had ended, Rachel inquired, "Is your grandmother sick?"

Sandra nodded in reply.

"Why are you buying ice cream when your grandmother is sick?" Steven took a glance in the rearview mirror. "You must be super 'worried'."

"It's none of your business." Sandra's softened gaze turned sinister once again.

"Steven, focus on the road," Rachel quickly interjected.

Due to his tender age, Steven was being tactless with his words and kept judging the situation based on a brief encounter with another person. The bad habit would only cause him more problems in future.

After that, Rachel asked, "So, are you going to ask your mother for money? You could have just called her."

Furthermore, there were many ways to transfer the money online. Why make a girl, who did not own a car, walk by foot just to get the money when it was getting late?

Sandra frowned, and her expression indicated that she did not want to continue the subject any further. Rachel and Justin exchanged glances and kept quiet. Every family had their own difficult times. Hence, there was no need to pry into it when the person involved refused to talk about it.

Once they arrived at Westhill Racecourse, Sandra alighted from the car and stood before it to express her gratitude. "Thanks for the ride."

"Don't sweat it. Here, take this." Rachel handed Sandra her business card. "Feel free to hit me up or come to me if you need help."

Sandra was nonplussed, for she did not believe that a stranger would show such kindness to her.

Rachel stuffed the business card into Sandra's hand. "I grew up with my grandmother, but she's no longer here. I understand how it feels for you right now. Just take it."

With that being said, she hopped into the car whereas Sandra instinctively took two steps forward in an attempt to return it. However, the car door was closed immediately, and the black car was driven away from the entrance.

Sandra's gaze landed onto the business card, and on it were the words, 'President of Hudson Pharmaceuticals, Rachel Hudson'.

She frowned

She must be lying.

Before entering the racecourse, she simply threw it into a trash can.

There aren't that many nice people in this world.

On the other hand, it was already late at night when the trio arrived in the city. They dropped Steven off at Carter Residence first, in which he asked after getting out of the car, "Where are we going tomorrow?"

Rachel looked at the band-aids on his face. "Instead of worrying about that, you should worry about your face. Is it still painful?"

"I'm a real man. These scratches are really minor, and they don't hurt. It won't be a problem." Steven pulled her hand. "I don't care. I'll go to you first thing in the morning tomorrow. You must not abandon me."

Feeling helpless, she turned to take a glimpse at Justin, who was calm as though he was not bothered in the slightest.

Hmm? Has he built up his coping mechanism after hanging out with Steven the whole day?

Then, Justin sent her home. Once the car was parked at the entrance, he got out of the car as well. Rachel stopped him. "Are you not going back? It's dark already. Charlotte and Samuel won't be video calling us today."

"What's wrong? Are you driving me away in case I'm up to something?"

She was slightly baffled by his words. "I don't mean it like that."

"Rae, I'm hungry."

She heaved a sigh of relief upon hearing that. "I'll make something for you."

"Okay. Instant noodles should be enough."

"That won't be enough. I'll fry two eggs for you."

"Alright."

Justin watched her back with mixed feelings. Even though they were officially going out, where Rachel did not hide it and acknowledged it when others asked about their relationship, it was obvious that she was steering clear of certain things.

It was true that he was not in a hurry, yet he could not let the wall between them stay there forever, for big problems always started from small ones.

In the meantime, Sandra was stopped by someone as soon as she stepped into Westhill Racecourse.

"Show me your ID, please."

"I didn't bring it."

"How dare you walk in the place shamelessly without bringing your ID card? Don't you know where this is?" The security guard at the entrance was swaggering as he noticed that she was in cruddy clothes, which gave him more reason to believe that she was just a girl who had lost her way, and hence the impatience.

"Only members are allowed to enter this place. What are you doing here so late at night?"

“I’m looking for someone.”

“Who?”

Sandra could not care less about him as she simply asked him to dial a number. He did as he was told and his expression changed immediately upon hearing the order from the other side of the line.

“Understood.” After terminating the call, he sized her up. “Who are you?”

“What did the person say?”

“Uhhh...” He seemed uneasy. “The manager told you not to go. Would you like to have a seat inside?”

“No. I’ll wait here.” In a green hoodie, she stood upright by the security booth beneath the night sky.

Before long, there was a shuttle cart approaching them from the racecourse. Not only was the manager in it, the head of security tagged along too.

The sight of them sent the security guard into a panic. “Sir, what brings you here?”

The manager glared at him in return. “Why did you stop Miss from coming in and let her stand in the cold wind? You had one job!”

“Miss?” The security guard was bewildered.

This rustic girl is from a rich family? No way!

The manager didn’t want to waste his breath, and he said directly, “You’re fired.”

Sandra’s brows furrowed. “Why? It’s true that I didn’t bring the ID card. Is he considered responsible to allow someone to enter without it? He has done nothing wrong.”

The manager was stunned. “Y-Yes, you’re right. Hurry up and thank her.”

Only then did the security guard regain his senses and thank her profusely.

She waved her hand and told the manager, “I’m here to take something. I’ll leave once I get it.”

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

