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Chapter 51

Rachel entered the study at night to serve Justin with some tea.

At the sound of the door being opened, he instructed her without looking up, "Put it down."

Even though she did as he asked her to, she stood there without leaving.

Finally, he looked up at her. "Did you need something else?"

Rachel hesitated for a moment before she signed. *Do you have a solution for the medication formula?*

While keeping his gaze on her, Justin answered, "We previously missed our chance, (This novel will be daily updaed at)so it'll be difficult for us to go back to Hudson Vineyard. We might be able to head there on the pretext of discussing the wine business, though. Why? Do you have a solution?"

She shook her head.

For now, Rachel didn't plan on telling him that she had seen the formula.

Since the dosages weren't listed, she was worried that even if she informed Justin about it, he would think she was hiding something from him.

Justin asked in a careless manner, "I heard Jefferey took you to the vineyard last week. What were you doing there?"

It was right after he dropped the question that Rachel's heart raced loudly.

How could she have forgotten that he knew her whereabouts like the back of his hand?

He...

Upon seeing that she was unable to explain herself, his gaze darkened. "Did he ask you to do something else?"

As her expression tightened anxiously, she nodded. *He gave me a packet of drugs.*

"Drugs?" Justin frowned. "What kind of drugs?"

Rachel made a few hand gestures with slight embarrassment.

As he hadn't learned sign language for a long time, he was completely unable to read the specialized term. (This novel will be daily updated at)Since he was close to losing his patience, he tossed a pen and a piece of paper onto the table before he instructed, "Write it down. What kind of drug was it?"

Her face reddened. Even after she had picked up the pen, she hesitated for what seemed like eternity before she finally and carefully wrote the word-LSD.

The drug Jefferey gave her was actually researched and developed by Hudson Pharmaceuticals itself. LSD was merely a similar drug that was available on the market.

After having worked in the market for many years, Justin was long accustomed to the darker side of human nature. Drugs like these were always accessories in places like nightclubs and he instantly understood Rachel's meaning.

"Jefferey wanted you to drug me with it?"

She felt both embarrassed and terrified as she nodded again

He snorted coldly, "And where is it now?"

Rachel pursed her lips. *I threw it away.*

In truth, she never even brought it back to Burton Residence as she had discarded it outside the house as a precautionary method.

"He doesn't even consider you a person." The mocking tone stung as it came from behind the desk and reached her ears.

Although what Justin said was the truth, Rachel neither had the wish nor the method to deny it. Yet, it was still humiliating to be ridiculed like that.

If there's nothing else, I'm going back to my room now.

He subtly nodded.

As he watched her walk away with such fragility that a slight gust of wind could knock her over, he suddenly asked, "Were there enough wedding favors to share with your coworkers?"

A startled Rachel looked over her shoulder in confusion.

Now that he was separated from her by the length of the study and the huge desk, Justin's severe face was softened by the soft yellow light above him, which made him suddenly look friendlier-even with

that terrible scar on his face.

As she stared absent-mindedly at the scar, she suddenly returned to her senses and quickly nodded. Yes.

She was alarmed-slightly fearful and repulsed, even-to the point where her shoulders shook as she nodded,(This novel will be daily updaed at)as if she was afraid he would do something harmful to her in the next second.

It was in that moment when any cordiality that Justin felt dissipated into thin air, although he himself couldn't describe what he was expecting.

What gratitude could he have hoped for from a woman who was forced by her family to marry him and spend her life walking on eggshells by his side?

Once she returned to her room, Rachel let out the breath she had been holding.

When she recalled Justin's sudden change in expression, she felt a tad bit of the lingering fear.

As the man's mood easily changed from one moment to the next, she had no idea on how to read him.

However, it was likely that he asked someone to drop off the wedding favors to make it clear to her coworkers that she was married and to prevent anything untoward from happening to her.

Rachel concluded that was the most likely explanation.

The next day, she went to work as usual.

The moment she stepped off the subway, she received a text from Hans. 'Good morning!

'Morning!

'Do you usually come to work at this hour?'

She thought, *Come?*

As the word flashed before her eyes, Rachel stopped in front of the library and looked up from her phone only to spot a figure with a straight posture, standing by the door and waving at her from a distance. *Hans?*

Her eyes brightened as she quickened her footsteps toward Hans while she clutched her phone. Yet, before she could even take two steps, a shrill voice shouted behind her, "Rachel Hudson!"

The people around Rachel who were heading into work halted in their steps and she was no exception. As she turned her head to look at the source of the voice, a loud slap descended fiercely upon her cheek.

Before Rachel could even see who the culprit was, the other woman had already caught Rachel's shirt and unceremoniously threw Rachel to the ground before hurling her fists.

"You *b*tch*, you're trying to destroy someone else's happiness just because you're unhappy! I'll kill you!"

"Rachel!" Hans sprinted down from the steps and he forcefully separated the two women before warning, "I'm calling the police if you hit her again."

"Go ahead!" The woman retorted shrilly. "Do it. I want to see whether anyone in all of Riverdale would dare to arrest me."

However crazed the woman was acting, her arrogant tone was familiar.

While Rachel was being protected behind Hans' back, she was shocked to discover who her visitor was-it was Tina.

"Are you okay, Rachel?" Hans asked.

At this moment, Rachel's ears were still ringing and as she clutched the cheek that was slapped, she stared at Tina in bewilderment.

What are you doing? she signed.

What on earth had happened to cause Tina to lose her marbles when Rachel had no quarrel with her?

"I've really underestimated you. I can't believe you're still trying to act innocent! Who do you think you are? You're just some *b*tch* that your family sold to my cousin. Didn't my cousin tell you that the Burton Family matters are none of your business?" A furious Tina glared at Rachel as she continued, "I'm telling you that I'll never forget this. You made life difficult for me and Henry, so I'm returning the favor!"

None of the barrage of accusations had made any sense to Rachel, but she understood one thing, which was Tina must have misunderstood her.

"What do you mean by the Burton Family? Your cousin? What are you talking about? Don't be afraid,(This novel will be daily updaed at) Rachel. We'll call the police. This woman must be mad." While he still protected Rachel, Hans pulled out his cell to call the cops.

Rachel quickly caught hold of his sleeve. *You can't call the police*, she signed.

A long time ago, Justin had already warned her to mind her place and not cause any more trouble for him. Since Tina was a member of Burton Family, the only one who would be hurt was Rachel herself if she allowed the situation to escalate.

Meanwhile, the crowd around them was gossiping.

“Wasn’t it just yesterday when Rachel came to work to give out wedding favors? What’s going on here?”

“I don’t know! ‘Destroying someone else’s happiness’? Is her husband cheating on someone else with her?”

A shocked Hans looked at Rachel. “*You’re married?*”

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Facing Hans’s surprised look, Rachel could only force a bitter smile. *Yes, I am indeed married, but for rather embarrassing reasons.*

The library security guard hurried over but was blocked by Tina’s bodyguard, and the two parties were at a standstill.

Hans was calm in the face of the ruckus. “I don’t care about your background. We are living in a civilized and lawful society now. Do you really think you’re beyond the law?”

“Who do you think you are?” Tina snorted mockingly and turned to Rachel. “I underestimated you. I have heard that you have a complicated relationship with Julian Peters, and now, there’s another man! Does Justin know that you are spending his money on men?”

In the face of public condemnation, Rachel clenched her teeth and was about to stand up for herself when Hans shielded her behind him.

She looked up with a shocked expression. The next second, he confronted Tina, commenting, “Battery and assault of others in public places will result in five to ten days of jail. As for slander and defamation, serious cases will warrant a maximum of three years’ prison sentence.”

His words were confident and persuasive. Even Tina, who was used to having her own ways, was secretly taken aback by the seriousness of the offense.

Just then, a bodyguard stepped in and advised her in a whisper, “Miss Burton, if this gets out of hand, (This novel will be daily updated at) I’m afraid that it’d be hard for us to explain to Mr. Burton. Let’s leave now.”

Tina was recently released by Jason after being grounded for a while. If the Burtons got hold of her misdemeanor, she might be grounded again. By then, it would be harder for her to regain her freedom.

"You stupid girl! We shall see. This thing between us is not settled yet!" After glaring at Rachel, she immediately scurried out of the building with her bodyguards.

"Nothing to watch here. Ladies and gentlemen, please disperse." The security helped to disperse the crowds that had gathered.

Hans turned around to check on Rachel. "Are you alright? I'll bring you to the hospital for a checkup."

She shook her head. *I'm fine, thank you.*

He took a better look at her and said with heartache, "Look, your face is swollen. Your injury must be quite serious. Since my place is not far from here, I'll bring you home to dress your wounds."

Indeed, Tina did not hold back at all when she delivered that slap. As a result, Rachel's right cheek was awfully swollen, and she looked disheveled, with a head of messy hair.

She knew that she couldn't head into work in her current state. She did feel uncomfortable when the crowd gossiped about her just now, so she accepted his kind offer. To be honest, she cared less about how the others perceived her than how Hans saw her. Therefore, she wanted to use the opportunity to explain herself.

He rented a duplex one block away from the library. His place was decorated in a simple fashion, and his living room was full of boxes of various sizes.

"Take a seat for now. I haven't had the time to tidy up my place."

She nodded and took a seat on the sofa, and soon, he appeared with a pack of ice. *Thank you.* She

took the ice pack and carefully pressed them against her cheek.

The chilliness of the pack contacting the burning sensation on her cheek resulted in a sharp pain that shot through her, turning her cheek numb from the coldness.

"Have some water." He poured her a glass of water. Steam from the hot water rose in the transparent glass and dissipated into the air in no time.

Across the coffee table, he took a seat facing her and asked out of concern, "Are you sure you don't want to lodge a police report? She assaulted you in a public space, and there are multiple witnesses. Cases like these are sure wins."

Even after hearing his question, she shook her head slowly. Since he was an attorney, she knew that he'd definitely help her if she asked. Still, considering that the perpetrator was Tina, a member of the Burton Family, she could only endure it all.

She is the cousin of Justin Burton, the president of Burton Group.

“The Burton Group?” His face went blank. “How did you get into trouble with the people from Burton Group?”

When he connected the dots with clues from Tina’s words, he suddenly came to a realization and gave Rachel a shocked look. “Are you really... married?”

Once he asked the question she feared the most, she tightened her grip around the ice pack and tried to keep her calm. (This novel will be daily updated at)Then, she gave him a slight nod. *It’s an undeniable fact after all.*

A look of disappointment flashed across his eyes, but he forced a smile. “Well, I should wish you a happy marriage!”

His wish-though well-intended-sounded like piercing sarcasm when it landed on her ears.

“When was it? Have you had the wedding?”

She shook her head slowly. *Why would the Burtons want to hold the wedding for their mute daughter-in law? They’d only make a joke out of themselves.*

More than that, she was well aware that Justin only kept her around to use her. Once she had no value to him, he’d kick her aside.

Hans followed up, “What is your husband like? Is he good to you? You’re not put into any difficult positions, right?”

She was caught by surprise and felt a lump in her throat. *Everything’s pretty good. I still have things to do. I need to head back to work.*

Lowering her head to dodge his gaze, she hurriedly picked up her bag to leave.

“Rachel!”

She heard him calling from behind, but she dared not turn around lest he saw tears streaming down her face. Things had changed over the eight long years, and the same went for relationships. Even though he would always be the light in her life, they could never be the same again.

Meanwhile, Tina had hopped on an army green supercar.

“I don’t need you guys following me around.” Dismissing her bodyguards with a few words, she finally took off her sunglasses.

After a loud revving of the engine, the supercar sped through the street. Amber’s gentle voice was heard from the direction of the front passenger seat. “You alright, Tina?”

Tina answered with silence and a sullen expression. Although the sunglasses shielded half of her face, it was easy to tell that she was sulky.

A clever twinkle flashed across Amber's eyes. "Tina, I know the man who protected Rachel just now."

In the morning, Tina had called her to ask for the address of Rachel's workplace. At that time, she knew that things were going to turn into a dramatic mess, which was why she happily followed along to witness the drama. However, it was beyond expectation that she got juicier gossip from the trip.

"Don't beat around the bush." Without as much as taking a look at Amber, Tina stepped hard on the accelerator and brought the car onto the freeway.

Shocked, Amber hurriedly clutched at her seatbelt, suppressing the nausea in her. (This novel will be daily updated at) "The man is called Hans Egerton, and he is Rachel's first boyfriend. He attended the same high school we attended."

"What does that have to do with me?"

The car was speeding too fast, and they even had a couple of close calls, where they almost crashed into the divider when Tina changed lanes. In the passenger seat, Amber was scared out of her mind. *Tina Burton is a madwoman!*

She quickly added, "Hans and his family migrated overseas early on. Recently, he suddenly returned, and the first thing he did was to look for Rachel. There must be something fishy between them. Don't you want to teach her a lesson?"

Hearing that, Tina finally released her foot on the accelerator, after which the car finally settled into a

steady and normal speed.

"Continue," she ordered coldly.

When Amber composed herself, she explained, "You can't teach Rachel a lesson by assaulting her like what you did today. Anyway, her relationship with Hans is definitely a valid concern. If Justin hears about that, I bet Rachel is going to have a tough time."

"Do you think she's cheating on Justin?"

"Who knows? It's suspicious no matter how you look at it. No one really knows for sure."

Tina gave it some serious thought and shot a look at Amber through her sunglasses. Then, she smirked. "You're really something! With that, you are trying to turn her into a scapegoat. To make

Justin divorce her, you have the heart to trample over your own sister."

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Amber grinned at Tina's comment. "That's one of the reasons. Humans are self-centered, aren't we all? Still, compared to my relationship with her, our relationship is more solid! Who does she think she is? She could never compare to you! I don't know what the bad blood between you two is, but as your bestie, I choose to stand by your side."

In the matter of a few words, she slyly absolved herself from any responsibility in the incident today.

To her, Tina was nothing more than a foolish daughter of a wealthy family who had given up a potential match with the eldest son of the Hindenburg Conglomerate and went with a chauffeur! Wasn't that pure foolishness?

As expected, Tina did not doubt her words at all, still appearing rather glum. "I want that mute to suffer ten times the humiliation that Henry had gone through! I'm only driving her out of the family-that's considered going easy on her!"

Amber moved her gaze away. A malicious gleam appeared in her eyes when she looked down with glee.

Night descended on the city. After work, Rachel went home to the Burton Residence and headed straight to the bathroom. Staring at her swollen and red cheek in the mirror, she tried to touch it but only ended up inhaling sharply from the pain.

The injury was obvious, and it was hard to miss. Apart from the red marks, she suffered a couple of scratches that were probably the product of Tina's diamond nail art.

After an afternoon, scabs started to form on the scratch marks, which made them look even more terrifying

I guess I can't meet Grandma today with this face of mine.

At the sudden thought of her grandmother, she reluctantly took out her phone to text her.

'Grandma, I have been quite busy with work lately. I won't be visiting you for now. (This novel will be daily updaed at)Take care of your health and eat your meals regularly

Grandma's reply came fast. 'Are you off on weekends then?'

She hesitated for a moment and decided that her injuries would have healed by the weekend. 'Yes, I'm off this weekend!'

'Great. Visit me on the weekend. I'll make you some delicious gnocchis.'

Rachel beamed warmly at the text from her grandmother and replied, 'Sure!

At the same time, she heard car engine sounds from downstairs, and she immediately knew that Justin was back.

Sue was busy leading Justin to the dining hall. "Justin, you're home! Julian's home early today as well. Dinner's ready, so get your hands washed and join me. It's so rare to have the whole family back for dinner!"

Justin took off his coat and handed it to the attendant. First, he scanned the living room, where he found Julian seated on the sofa. Next, he stole a look at the stairs and asked, "Where's Rachel?"

"She went straight into her room after coming home."

"Tell her to come down for dinner."

With that, Justin went into the living room, leaving Sue standing there. She stole a glance at Mrs. Duncan and reluctantly had the latter go upstairs to get Rachel.

Right as Justin seated himself on the sofa, Mrs. Duncan walked down from the staircase. "Young Master Justin, Mrs. Burton says that she's feeling sick. She will skip dinner and sleep."

"Why is she so fussy?" Sue rolled her eyes and mocked Rachel out loud, saying, "It's just her first day of work. Was it that tiring for her? Why is she acting so dramatic?"

"Mom." Julian gave her an impatient look, turned to face Mrs. Duncan, and asked, "Why is she sick? I'll check on her."

"It's fine." Justin spoke all of a sudden, and Julian's movements froze. Across from the coffee table, she met his icy glare that came with a hint of warning.

He wanted to say something more, but Sue's glare made him hold his tongue. "Go on without me. (This novel will be daily updated at)" He left an emotionless comment and turned to walk up to check on his wife. His mom stared as he left and grabbed Julian before hissing, "What were you thinking just now?"

"I just wanted to check on her."

"Why check on her? Julian, this is the last time I'm telling you this: do not get involved with Rachel's business in the future. If not, don't blame me for being hard on her."

In the guest bedroom on the second floor, Rachel had just turned off the lamp on the desk and was about to go to bed when the door creaked loudly behind her.

Shocked, she quickly spun around, only to find a slender figure standing straight at the entrance. The bright lights in the corridor lengthened his shadows that were cast onto the floor and so happened to end at her toes.

Almost as if it was reflexive, she took a few steps back and gave him a terror-stricken look.

His eyes narrowed at the sight of the ice pack in her hands and the swollen cheek. "What's the matter with your cheek?"

Before she could react, he had walked up to her and lifted her chin between her fingers. (This novel will be daily updated at) When he noticed the injuries, his face fell. "Who did this to you?"

She pursed her lips.

Nothing. I was careless and got into an accident.

"Do you think I'm blind?"

The marks on her face were clearly from a slap. Under his cold stare, she knew that lying was futile and decided to come clean.

It's Tina.

The answer was unexpected, and Justin had a look of shock in his eyes.

"Do you know the reason behind this?"

Rachel nodded, but after some hesitation, she shook her head.

She only had two encounters with Tina: once at the summer villa and once at the underground wine cellar of the Hudson Vineyard. Although she did not know the exact reason behind Tina's hostility, she guessed that it must have had something to do with that incident at Hudson Vineyard.

Justin fell into deep thought as he connected the dots between the incidents that had happened during the week. He mumbled in a low voice, "Her relationship with the chauffeur has been brought up to Grandpa. She was grounded until today. Do you think that was the reason?"

While speaking, he stared squarely at her with a chilling look.

Wait, has Tina's affair with the chauffeur gotten out? Is she angry because the cat's out of the bag?

Her hands that were holding the ice pack turned numb. A heavy silence later, she nodded and confessed to him. *At the underground cellar of Hudson Vineyard, I accidentally bumped into her and the chauffeur together.*

When she confessed, she cautiously observed the change in his expression and explained.

But I promised her that I wouldn't tell a soul about it.

"I believe you're not that foolish." His face scrunched up into an unfriendly expression.

Indeed, Rachel telling on Tina and the chauffeur would not benefit her at all.

It was all a misunderstanding because the birdbrained Tina thought that Rachel was the only person that knew the secret. That was why she immediately believed that Rachel was the rat after the affair was exposed.

I'm sorry for giving you trouble again.

. She looked at him uneasily. Her doll-like face was badly swollen, bruised, and bloodied. In her dark and

clear eyes, he saw anxiety and vulnerability like a fragile porcelain doll.

Plagued by a mix of annoyance and perplexity, he coldly reprimanded her, (This novel will be daily updated at) "I told you to follow the rules, but I didn't tell you to take abuse! Do you not understand my words?"

His sudden temper took her by shock.

"As long as you are my wife, you don't have to tread carefully around anyone in Riverdale, including

Tina."

His expression darkened even more. After that, he flung the door open and yelled down the staircase, "Julian, bring the first aid kit to me!"

The door to the guest room remained open. She looked on as Justin's figure wandered further away, and it took her a long time to recover.

This was probably the first time she had enjoyed his kindness first-hand. Was he caring for her?

She frowned at that notion. Even if he was truly caring for her, that was no reason for her to change her perception of him.

After all, he and Dad are the reasons behind my suffering now.

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"Keep your injury away from water, or it might get infected."

Thank you, Doctor Peters.

"Just drop the formalities around me." While packing the first aid kit, he took a look at the ice pack at the side. "Don't use that anymore. An ice pack is good for reducing swelling, but you have external injuries as well."

She nodded obediently.

From the start, she had only been using the ice pack as a pain killing measure. After putting on the cooling medical ointment, her burning skin felt more relieved. Since the pain was reduced, she didn't need the ice pack anymore.

"By the way, I haven't asked you this. How did you get injured?"

She shook her head. *It's nothing. I was just careless.*

As it was already late, but Julian was still hanging around, she dared not keep him around for long, even though he was technically helping Justin out.

When Julian noticed Rachel glancing at her watch, he picked up the hint and knew that she wanted him to leave. (This novel will be daily updaed at)Forcing a smile, he said to her, "You should get some rest for now. I'm leaving."

She nodded at him.

On his way back to his room, he walked past Justin's study. Be it intentional or unintentional, the room to Justin's study was kept slightly ajar. In it, Justin was seated at the study table and pouring over documents as usual.

Julian went up and knocked lightly on the door. Only when Justin looked up did Julian say, "Justin, Rae's injury isn't serious. You don't have to worry too much about it."

"Thanks." Justin stared at him and corrected, "You should call her Rachel."

Julian tightened his grip on the first aid kit and replied with a serious expression, "Justin, instead of finding fault with me, why don't you show her more care?"

"That's between me and her. None of your business."

Then, he turned his gaze to the documents in his hands and added, "Shut the door when you leave."

Hearing that, Julian had his eyes darkened, and soon came the sound of the door closing.

Regardless of his emotions, Julian would always remain rational and mannered, a quality that marked the greatest difference between him and Justin.

After the footsteps faded away, Justin tapped on his phone screen and made a call.

“Arrange for two men to follow Rachel around.”

Frankie paused over the phone and said in confusion, “I thought you said not to track her anymore.”

Justin merely answered, “This is for her personal safety.”

In the next two days, Rachel had no choice but to go to work with a face mask on.

The incident at the library entrance went viral, and her coworkers all knew about it, but no one brought it up in front of her. Still, people were gossiping behind her back.

Standing in front of a bookshelf, she was organizing the books according to their codes as usual when she overheard familiar voices a row of shelves away.

“I never heard about her dating, and now she’s suddenly married. Who knows? She might have had an affair with a married man, got him to divorce the wife and marry her!”

“Right? I heard what happened that day! She was beaten up badly, but she didn’t even fight back!”

“I bet the man who protected her was the husband. He’s rather hot, not gonna lie.”

Rachel clutched the books tightly and silently pressed herself against the bookshelf that hid her well. It wasn’t until the two coworkers left that she straightened up and continued arranging the books.

“Why didn’t you explain yourself when they spread the rumors?”

A male voice rang out from behind, causing her to pause in surprise. She whipped around to find Hans standing there. She had known that he’d be here because he had texted her in the morning to inform her about having something to tell her.

They have their freedom. I can’t control what they want to say about me anyway.

“What about your husband? Is he going to watch on as you get bullied?”

Hans's brows were knitted in a fury. "Last time, it was his cousin who hit you. Today, your coworkers were talking behind you. Is this what you mean by *doing well?*"

Rachel had no idea what prompted him to blow up right as he met her, and she frowned worriedly.

What's wrong with you?

He looked as if he had nowhere to release his pent-up anger. (This novel will be daily updated at) He wanted to say something, but he could not speak freely in the quiet atmosphere of the library. Frustrated, he took her arm and said, "Follow me out. Let's talk."

Just like that, she followed him all the way to the courtyard between the two library buildings.

"Rachel, tell me truthfully. Did you willingly marry Justin?"

At this point, he had let go of her hand, and a serious expression crept up his refreshingly handsome and clean face.

She was huffing and puffing, and her chest rose and fell with it. His words made her heart sink as she turned her face to the side in an attempt to escape his gaze.

Despite that, he could sense her guilt and said sternly, "Look at me in the eye. Don't lie."

She pinched her palm and forced herself to calm down when she lifted her face to look at him.

I have nothing much to say to you.

"Jefferey forced you to marry Justin, didn't he?" Hans did not want to go in circles anymore. "To finance Hudson Pharmaceuticals, he sold you to Justin Burton!"

His words were direct and firm, and he gave her no chance to explain herself, leaving her staring at him in shock.

How did you find out?

He took a sharp breath, and his face looked ashen. "Ah, so that is the case."

Muffled groans suddenly escaped from her throat.

Hans!

She exclaimed in her heart, but she failed to stop him. She could only look on as he cursed. "That son of a b*tch!" Then, he whipped around to punch on the wall. The next second, his glaring red blood trickled down from the white wall.

Eyes widened, she hurriedly grabbed his hand to check on him. The skin of his knuckles was torn; the white debris from the wall was mixed with his blood, looking scarily messy.

Follow me to the hospital.

Instead, he tugged at her. "Rachel, get a divorce and leave the Burtons."

She stopped in her tracks with her back facing him, having no courage to turn around. Of course, she was dying to get a divorce so she could leave the Burtons alongside that scary man whom she called her husband.

"I know what your concerns are. I will help you to take care of your grandma. (This novel will be daily updated at) If you're worried about the reach of the Burton Group because of their influence, I could arrange for your grandma to settle down overseas. I am going to take up your divorce case, and I promise you that you could leave the Burtons unharmed."

Since Hans was an attorney who had made his name in the industry, he had the confidence to make the promise.

A long silence later, she mustered up the courage to turn around and face him.

Thanks, but I can't leave just yet.

"Why?" His expression fell, and he fumed. "What are you waiting for? I heard that Justin Burton is a cruel man who'd do anything to get his way. He's also a greedy person. What kind of life are you leading with the Burtons?"

She narrowed her eyes upon hearing that. *Who told you so?*

As Hans had just returned to the country, he wouldn't have known the details if no one had revealed insider information to him.

"Is that important? Aren't those facts?"

She nodded solemnly and stared calmly but firmly at him.

It is important

She had an inkling that someone must have set up a trap behind her back and somehow got Hans involved.

Knowing that Rachel was as stubborn as a mule, Hans could only come clean. "I don't know who that person is. Last night, I received an anonymous text, but

when I called back, the number was already invalid." As he spoke, he handed her his phone. "Look."

The text was short, but it succinctly explained the background of how Rachel married into the Burton Family. On top of that, it mentioned the grievances she suffered in the family: facing the dismissive attitude of the servants and getting framed for things she did not do...

After reading the text, she had a better idea of the mastermind behind this plot.

Hans, do you really want to help me?

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Hans replied firmly, "Of course!"

Without a doubt, he'd love to help her out so that she could live well. If not, he wouldn't have decided to return to work in the country.

If so, you should just stay out of this.

"Why?" He frowned in utter disbelief.

If my guess is correct, the text was from Amber.

Amber's warning was still fresh in her mind. If the Burtons and the Hudsons were a pool of mud, she was already knee-deep in it. She had no wish to get Hans involved in the mess.

"Amber Hudson?" His frown deepened. "Why would she do that?"

Back in high school, Amber was a grade lower since she was younger. Because of that, Hans did not interact with her much, and his only knowledge of her was her being Rachel's sister.

Hans' question took Rachel by surprise, and a bold guess popped up into her mind. (This novel will be daily updated at)She started to suspect that all the scheme was merely Amber's plot to make her leave the Burtons.

I don't know. Still, she kept the idea to herself.

"Rachel." After calming down, Hans attempted to persuade her. "No matter who sent me the text, the content is a fact. Am I right? If the Burtons are unfair to you, you don't have to stay with them and endure the sufferings."

She shook her head.

I am not staying at the Burtons for their sake.

“Who are you doing this for?”

At this point, Hans did not get her at all.

Since Rachel’s grandmother had been discharged from the hospital after a successful surgery, as long as she agreed to it, she could totally leave the city that brought her sorrows with her grandma.

A short hesitation later, she finally confessed the real reason behind her insistence on staying put.

I need to look into my mom’s cause of death

Next, she told him about the incident at the Hudson Vineyard, to which he responded with shock. “Are you suspecting Jefferey for killing her?”

She gave him a heavy nod, and a stifling silence later, he composed himself and returned to the topic. “So, are you going to leave the Burton’s after you get to the bottom of your mom’s death?”

Yes.

With a grave expression, he vowed, “Great. I will help you with the investigation.”

To that, she reacted with a frown and a serious stare. Initially, he wanted to add something, but she was staring at his hand as she signed.

I will bring you to the hospital.

When dusk arrived, the skies of Riverdale that extended into the distant mountains were decorated with gorgeous colors.

Once Amber was home, she was immediately called to the study.

“Dad, did you call for me?”

She was in a great mood and had been smiling ear-to-ear since she stepped into the house.(This novel will be daily updaed at) In contrast, Jefferey had a serious expression on his face as he interrogated her, asking, “Where were you last weekend?”

“Last weekend?” She went blank for a moment before answering, “I played golf with some friends. Why?”

“With whom?”

She was taken aback again, and guilt crept onto her face. At this point, she was talking in a cautious whisper. "My college mates."

"That was Tina Burton! She is Justin's cousin and Jason's daughter!" Jefferey's expression fell. "Jason and Justin have never seen eye-to-eye. Look, the Burtons have a very different family dynamic than ours-theirs are super complicated, and trust me, you can't handle it. Don't hang out too much with her."

His warning earned her protest. "Oh, if I can't handle their family dynamics, how is that mute going to handle it better?"

Jefferey raised his voice. "How could you compare yourself to Rachel? I only need her there as Mrs. Burton. As long as she is still Justin's wife, we could borrow the prestige of the Burtons to run our business. As for the life she's leading at the Burtons... That depends on her luck."

Amber paid no attention to his words. "Dad, have you ever considered this? She isn't even close to us. If she has firmly established herself as Mrs. Burton, do you seriously think she'd bother to help us out?"

Jefferey's heart sank at the possibility, and the wrinkles around his eyes scrunched up.

"Before this, she had to listen to us because of Grandma. Now that Grandma's out of the hospital, that is no longer an effective bargaining chip for us. If Rachel manages to capture Justin's heart, do you really think she'd bat an eye at us?"

Jefferey fell into deep thoughts after the somber reminder from Amber.

Even after she left, her words were still echoing in his ears, prompting him to revisit Rachel's unusual behavior lately. After some thought, he started to feel that something was wrong.

In Rachel's twenty years of living at the Hudsons, she had never once brought up the past. Why did she suddenly bring up the topic of some herbal medicine formula after a mere few days of marrying into the Burtons?

His expression hardened as he walked around the sofa to pull out a drawer from a side dresser, from which he took out a brown-colored pill bottle.

He glared at it for some time before he made a call.

"Tomas, come over tomorrow morning. I need your help to deliver an item to the Burtons."

During the night, Rachel prepared some tea and delivered it to the study for Justin.

Lately, he had gotten used to drinking the tea she made for him. In comparison, the tea prepared by Mrs. Duncan was too unrefined, according to his complaints.

Therefore, if Rachel had the time, she would bring him a pot of tea at the same time every day.

The tea delivery was also one of the rare moments in the day when she would meet with him.

He looked up and rested his gaze on her right cheek. Then, an almost unnoticeable frown appeared on his face. "How's your cheek?"

She reflexively touched her cheek.

The red marks and the swelling were basically gone, and thankfully, the scabs from the nail scratch were already falling off, leaving two pinkish scars that were jarring on her pale skin.

She shook her head at him.

Nothing serious.

He nodded and changed the topic. "Can you come with me to Old Mr. Burton's summer villa tomorrow?"

She was taken aback and asked him cautiously.

Do I really have to go?

"Why? Are you busy?" He stared at her again. "There's a family banquet tomorrow."

She fell deeper into thoughts. *Wait, is Justin attending the banquet with me? But I have agreed to meet up with Hans tomorrow.*

When she met his inquisitive eyes, she quickly explained.

Oh, no, nothing important. I have agreed to spend the weekend with Grandma and make some gnocchi. That's okay. I will update her and change the date.

Her uneasy expression reminded him of her conflict with Tina, and he interpreted her reluctance as her unwillingness to meet Tina. (This novel will be daily updated at) "Since you have agreed to meet your grandma, just go ahead with the plan. There's no need to cancel."

Surprised by his words, she stared at him blankly.

Can I?

He replied emotionlessly, "It's a family banquet tomorrow. There will be a lot of attendees, and your absence won't be felt. You're not that important, anyway."

Despite his icy tone, she felt relieved to be excused from the event and nodded in silence.

Indeed, she was a nobody to the Burtons. More precisely, her absence at the family banquet would be the best for everyone involved.

The next morning, the driver and assistant picked up Justin from the residence very early.

There was a shareholders meeting in the morning. After that, they would travel to the summer villa.

Arthur rarely visited Riverdale, and the only time he returned was during July or August when he'd enjoy a short stay at the summer villa. Therefore, the family decided to hold the banquet around that time.

"President Burton." Frankie was waiting for him beside the car. When he saw Justin, he immediately went up with a package in his hands. "A delivery person stopped by just now and handed me a package for Miss Hudson, so I signed it for her."

Justin took a quick glance and was surprised to find out that the sender was Hudson Pharmaceuticals. He frowned and questioned, "Who delivered this again?"

"Uh, he was just an ordinary delivery person." Frankie quickly glanced in the direction in which the delivery person left. "There's nothing odd about him."

On the other hand, the look in Justin's eyes hardened. He curtly ordered while eyeing the package, "Open this."