

Mute Bride 191

Chapter 191

Jolly almost cried. "It's all my fault. I shouldn't have come back so soon. I should have been looking after him overseas."

Rachel said, "Calm down. Samuel was last seen in the hotel, right? Did you check the surveillance camera?"

Jolly froze, and Rachel knew she hadn't looked through it yet. "Calm down. I'll call his teacher." She then called Samuel's teacher.

The whole conversation was done in a language Jolly barely understood. After Rachel asked the hotel's staff to check the surveillance, they told her what they saw a moment later. "The staff said Samuel left on his own. They'll send the video to us in a moment." After she hung up, Rachel calmed her friend down. "I'll go to Astoria tonight."

"I'll go with you."

"No. You wait here and call the cops once twenty-four hours have elapsed." After that, Rachel left with nothing but her handbag and keys.

Just when she was about to get into her car, she heard the sound of someone towing a suitcase, and a young child stood behind the car with his luggage behind him. "Mommy!"

Rachel froze, and she stopped opening the door. When she turned around, she saw a boy in a blue navy T-shirt and suspenders. He wore a cap, and tufts of brown, curly hair sprouted underneath it. His eyes were beautifully dark, like olives.

"Samuel!" Rachel ran to him and gave him a hug. "Where have you been? Jolly and I were worried sick!"

Samuel was coughing from how hard he was hugged. "I can't breathe, Mommy."

Rachel let him go after that, but she quickly asked, “How did you even find this place? Who gave you the address?”

Samuel blinked. “Hernandez!”

Rachel frowned at the mere mention of that name. “Him again! Forget about it. Let’s go back up.

Jolly’s worried sick.”

Rachel then took Samuel’s luggage and took him upstairs. When Jolly saw the boy, she thought she was hallucinating. “How’d you find him so soon?”

“He was downstairs.” After Rachel put her car keys down, she explained, “This boy tricked his teacher into holding a summer camp in Astoria and ran off on his own. I ran into him right after I went down.”

When Jolly heard that, she gritted her teeth. “Someone’s bold.”

Samuel quickly hid behind his mother. “I’m just missing Mommy. Mommy!”

Rachel could never say no to her son, so she squatted and looked him in the eye. “Say sorry to Jolly. And tell her how sorry you are. She’s worried sick for you.”

“Jolly!” Samuel went to Jolly just like his mother told him to.

Jolly crossed her arms, and she looked upset. “Don’t give me that. You don’t care about me no matter what I do. You only go where your mother goes. You never care about me.”

Rachel gave Samuel a look, and Samuel quickly tugged on Jolly’s skirt. “But Jolly, you’re my favorite person.”

Samuel's adorable voice could melt anyone, but Jolly turned away, refusing to see him.

"Jolly, it's not good being angry. It makes you old. You're a pretty lady, so you should smile a lot. Smiling makes you pretty."

"Don't give me that. I'm a sad, old witch. Your mother's the pretty lady here."

"But she's my mommy. She's different. I'm gonna marry you when I grow up, not her. You can't grow old just yet. Wait for me!"

Not even Rachel could hold back any longer, and she chuckled along with Jolly. Then, Jolly flicked Samuel's cap. "You cheeky brat. Who taught you that?"

"Who else?" Rachel shrugged.

"Hernandez, huh? That playboy. He only knows how to flirt. And now he's starting to lead Samuel down his path too?"

"You're not mad anymore, are you, Jolly?" Samuel grinned toothily. "I brought a gift for you."

Jolly touched his nose. "You cheeky brat."

And they laughed away. At the same time, a few people were inside a black car that was in the neighborhood's corner. The one in the backseat was quiet but absolutely furious.

"Sir, this is..." Frankie looked panicked, but he didn't know what to say. Justin suddenly woke him up and told him to drive to Rachel's place, but before he could even get out of the car, they saw Samuel calling out to Rachel. Who is that boy? He's about the same age as Charlotte. And he called the madam "Mommy"? Is he her son?

Justin's expression was dark. "Look into this."

"All right."

Rachel made a few calls to Justin the next day, but nobody picked it up.

"Mommy!" Charlotte called out to her from within the bedroom. "I can't pick my dress. I need your help."

Rachel snapped out of it. "Give me a second. I'll be right there." Maybe he's on a plane, or maybe he's busy. Rachel was still worried, since she left him so abruptly last night. She wanted to explain herself, but he couldn't be contacted.

"The red one or the white one?" Charlotte picked a red dress and a white dress.

"Where are you going, Charlotte? Why are you dressing up all of a sudden?" Rachel asked.

"The amusement park, Mommy. Let's go to the amusement park, all right?"

"I thought you're still sick."

Charlotte froze, but a moment later, she covered her mouth and coughed. "I do feel sick, Mommy." But she averted her gaze, obviously feeling guilty.

She can't even fake her cough. Rachel laughed quietly, but she didn't expose Charlotte. "This one." She pointed at the red dress. "It'll look good on an amusement park trip. You'll heal up faster if you go out

more, right?"

Charlotte's eyes lit up, and she nodded. "Yeah."

At the same time, Justin was in a hotel in Ashcroft, the city next to Riverdale. He was standing in front of a French window, looking at the missed calls coldly.

Frankie said, "I've looked into the company Rachel worked in when she was in Montenegro, and I found her details there. She does have a son that's four and a half years old."

Justin gripped his phone tightly. And I thought she went overseas for a reason. So this is her reason.

The staff was setting up the recording hall, while Rachel's assistant held the interview script. "Chris, this is the script for the interview. We've filtered them, so take a look to see if there are any problems."

"Thank you." Rachel took the script from her assistant.

Her assistant looked around and was about to take a chair for Rachel, but someone shoved her. "What are you doing? Don't you know this spot is reserved for Amber?"

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"Look out!" Rachel stopped her assistant from falling. If it weren't for her, the assistant would have crashed into the lighting prop, and that'd be disastrous. "Are you alright?"

Her assistant paled from the shock. "Thank you, Chris."

The one who shoved her assistant was a harsh-looking young lady. "Serves you right." Then, she picked the chair and left.

Rachel didn't want to get into any arguments, but she wouldn't let her assistant get pushed around like that. "Hold it right there!"

The harsh lady frowned. "What do you want?"

"Apologize."

“What did you say?” The harsh lady couldn’t believe what she was hearing. “Why should I? She tried to take Miss Amber’s stuff. If anyone should be apologizing, it’s her!”

“First of all, I don’t see Amber’s name anywhere on the chair. And I don’t think you brought it yourself.”

“But...” The harsh lady gritted her teeth. “But Miss Amber has been using this chair all this time. Are you a newbie? Don’t you know the rules around here, old lady? Do you know who Miss Amber is? She’s the most popular doctor on the show.”

Rachel ignored her. “And secondly, even if this is her chair, that doesn’t mean you can push anyone however you want. You’re lucky she’s alright, but if she’s not, there’ll be hell to pay,” she said coldly.

“That’s just unreasonable!” The harsh lady glared at Rachel. “I’m not arguing with you. Miss Amber is waiting for me.”

“Take one more step and I’m suing you for battery.”

The harsh lady was finally looking scared.

But just then, a woman said, “I can hear you from the next booth over. Rachel, ever since you can talk, you’ve been quite aggressive. And now you’re targeting a helpless intern?”

Obviously, the woman was Amber the b*tch. She was a guest the channel invited, so she had to come for a shoot every week for her show.

Coincidentally, Rachel was also invited to talk about the mass production of Burton Pharmaceuticals, so they ran into each other.

Amber stood before Rachel and told the onlookers, “This lady here, Chris, used to be a mute. Guess that’s a surprise, huh? But then, she miraculously started talking after twenty years of being a mute. If it were me, I’d talk about your experience instead of the new meds. After all, that’s loads better than some fancy new item, right?”

The crowd was buzzing with excitement.

However, Rachel answered calmly, "If they're interested, then I don't mind sharing my experience, but that's for another day. Your assistant almost hurt someone, but she's still not apologizing."

Amber replied nonchalantly, "Just that? Sophie, just say sorry."

Sophie was surprised, but a moment later, she said reluctantly, "I'm sorry. Happy?" She glared at Rachel and Lisa.

"She said sorry. Can we go now?" Amber asked, then she told Sophie to take the chair away.

The onlookers were about to go on with their own business, thinking that this was the end of it, but Rachel suddenly said, "Amber, you don't need to work today. Just here to inform you."

"I'm sorry?"

"No. Not just today. You don't have to come ever again," Rachel continued calmly.

"Huh? What makes you think you can say that?" Amber scoffed. "You're just Burton Pharm's sales director. Justin might have let you handle the company, but this is the studio. They invited me to host this show. You don't have the right to fire me."

"We'll see about that in a minute." Rachel called someone right there and then. "David, I've thought about it, and I accept your offer."

David? Amber's face fell. "David? Which David?"

Rachel hung up and smirked. "You should know. There aren't many Davids in the studio."

Before Amber could form her thoughts, a production assistant came over from the next booth. "I'm sorry, Dr. Hudson, but a situation popped up. We can't record the show today."

"What do you mean you can't record the show?"

"It's a new notice. Your show is canceled. This week is the last episode. There will be a new show next week."

Amber looked upset, and Sophie was angered. "How can you do this? We've prepared the content, and the rehearsals are done."

"I'm sorry. We'll pay the final sum as soon as possible. Sorry for the trouble."

"Why you..."

"Sophie." Amber stopped her. "Don't trouble them. It's just normal for the studio. We aren't as powerful as a certain someone, and that's on us."

Rachel replied calmly, "Instead of being all sarcastic with me, you should think about your future after your show's cancellation. The company won't tolerate any slackers."

Amber finally lost her composure. First, Rachel's team crushed her team, and now her show-which she worked hard for-was canceled. There was nothing else she could contribute.

"Let's go, Lisa." Rachel then added, "And take the chair."

Amber almost went on a rampage right away.

Lisa took the chair right in front of Rachel and Sophie, but this time, she was confident. "Sorry for the trouble, Chris." She put the chair down and gave Rachel an apologetic look.

"It's fine. It's not your fault. You can't reason with an unreasonable person, so you'll have to take a... different approach, so to speak."

Lisa nodded.

Later, Amber left the recording hall and waited for her assistant in her car, but then she heard the staff members who came out engaging in a discussion.

"Did you see that? One call from Chris and the boss canceled Amber's show. Awesome."

"Who is she? She's just a sales director, right? Amber's Mr. Burton's fiancée. How did she even find the courage to stand up to her?"

"Oh, you don't know? Chris is Justin's ex-wife."

"Wait, what? Really?"

"I have a friend who's working in Burton Group. It's true. Chris is Justin's daughter's mother. She even went to see him in the company, and they had dinner together. I'm sure it's true."

"I see. So she's legit. Amber's just a mistress. No wonder she's scared of Chris."

The discussion went on.

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The more she heard, the darker Amber looked. She did this on purpose. She humiliated me in front of everyone just to get back at me.

A white sports car suddenly stopped before her car, and out came a man and a boy with curly hair. They talked about something, then the man picked the boy up and went into the lobby. Just before they were gone, Amber remembered something. If she was right, she had seen the same car in front of Burton Group before.

On the other hand, the recording took more than two hours, but it eventually came to an end.

“Good job, guys. We’re done.” Rachel told Lisa to give everyone the snacks she bought, then she looked at the time. “I have something to settle, Lisa, so I’m going ahead. Keep an eye on things here.”

“No problem. Go ahead, Chris.”

Rachel left in a hurry with her phone in hand, but she didn’t leave the studio right away. Instead, she went into the pantry on the ground floor and saw Samuel sitting beside the window, drinking his juice.

“Mommy!” Samuel opened his arms the moment he saw Rachel.

Rachel hugged him and gave him a kiss on the cheek. “Sorry for asking you to wait with Samuel,” she told the man beside the boy.

The man was wearing a suit, but he answered politely, “It’s fine, Miss Chris. This is my job.”

“Where’s Jolly? Why’d she suddenly ask you to take Samuel here?”

“She seems to have something to settle, but she told me nothing. Though she said she’d be back by seven.”

Rachel frowned. “She couldn’t have gone to a club again, could she?”

The bodyguard said nothing, but Samuel looked at her. “Mommy, clubs aren’t open so early. Jolly won’t even get to drink if she is there, so she’s safe.”

“You cheeky boy.” Rachel patted his head. “How’d you know the club’s opening hours? Did Jolly tell you?”

Jolly's bodyguard then sent Rachel and Samuel home, but unbeknownst to them, someone kept watching them until the white car was out of sight. Only after that did they leave in the opposite direction.

Rachel noticed the stack of junk food on the coffee table the moment she came back. Jolly was a carefree person; she didn't pay too much attention to the children's food, so they ate what she ate.

"Do you want anything, Samuel? I'll make it for you."

"Egg sandwich, then."

"Sure." Rachel took out two eggs and a bottle of mayonnaise from the fridge. "You don't ask for much, huh?"

Samuel stared at her. "Your egg sandwich is the best, Mommy."

Before she could say anything, her phone rang. When she saw who the caller was, Rachel hesitated before taking it. "Hello?"

"Mommy!" a girl said sweetly, but there was a hurried tone in her voice. "Why aren't you back yet? I'm still waiting for you. It's dinnertime."

"I have something to do here, Charlotte," Rachel answered. "I'll be late, so can you go ahead without me?"

"No! I want you here!"

"Be a good girl, Charlotte. I'll be right there after I'm done."

"I'm not eating if you're not here!" Charlotte replied angrily and hung up.

“Hello? Charlotte?” Rachel looked at her phone and frowned.

“Is that Charlotte, Mommy?” Samuel asked.

Rachel stared at Samuel in disbelief. “How do you know about Charlotte?” I’ve never talked about it with him.

Samuel answered, “I heard it when you were talking with Jolly, but by accident, of course.”

“Why didn’t you tell us then?”

Samuel answered as maturely as he could. “You and Jolly would have told me if you wanted to. Since none of you did, that means I don’t need to find out about it, so I didn’t bring it up.”

“You cheeky boy.” Rachel touched his nose. “What else are you hiding from me then?”

“It’s... a secret!”

“You have your own secrets now, huh?”

The boy grinned. “You should make the sandwiches now so you can go to see Charlotte as soon as possible. She’s going to starve if you aren’t going back.”

“Sure. You go to your room then.”

Samuel obliged. When he heard the water starting to boil, he closed the door and opened a folder in his PC. There was nothing but a man’s photo in it. Samuel stared at the photo for the longest time, mumbling, “He’s ugly. And there’s a scar on his face. Julian’s more handsome than he is. Heck, even Hernandez looks better.” Samuel sighed. Well, he is my dad. What choice do I have?

Someone opened the door after Rachel made the egg sandwiches.

Jolly had changed into her slippers. "Something smells nice. What did you make?"

Rachel crossed her arms and stared at Jolly interrogatively. "Don't change the subject. Where did you go? Why'd you suddenly send Samuel to me?"

"Nothing. A friend asked me out, but it's going to cause a lot of misunderstanding if Samuel was there. Makes it hard to talk, you see."

"A friend? Who is it?"

"You don't know him."

"Is it him?" Jolly was unreliable, but she would never abandon Samuel, unless that man was involved.

Rachel didn't even say his name, but they knew who she was talking about. Thus, Jolly looked away in

guilt. "What are you talking about? There's no way I'd see him."

"I didn't even say who it was. Why'd you get nervous?"

"I-I'm not nervous. I'm not talking to you. Where's Samuel? I want to see him."

"He's in his room." Rachel took her apron off. "Forget it. I'm going to Charlotte's place. The sandwiches are done, so have dinner with Samuel."

"Sure."

Rachel was still worried, so before she left, she told Jolly, "You should think this relationship through."

Jolly waved at Rachel without even turning around. "I know, I know. You're starting to nag. I told you I didn't see him."

"I hope so."

Night was descending on the city, and Justin was still in the hotel. However, he was talking to someone on the phone this time, though a frown creased his forehead.

"She humiliated me in front of everyone! And she canceled my show just because she's friends with the director! You know how hard I worked for it, Justin!"

Justin was getting a headache from Amber's crying. "You called me just for this?"

"This is important! She stopped me from developing any medicine, and now she canceled my show! That's too much! Even the staff members were talking about me behind my back!"

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Justin looked at the time. "It's getting late. Let's talk about this after I go back."

That made Amber stop talking, albeit reluctantly. A moment of silence later, she said, "Sure. Rest early."

Justin hung up, then Frankie handed him a cup of tea. "Sir."

"What is this about the studio?" Justin asked.

"The head director, David, canceled Miss Hudson's show without a reason. And he added a new show in the same slot."

"A new show?"

"It's about Eastern medicine. Chris is the host."

Chris frowned. "She's ambitious. It hasn't been long since she came back, but she's trying to get her hands on everything. Everyone can see through her by now."

"Is she trying to do something here?"

"Yes. Remarrying me."

It was a simple response, but Frankie's jaw dropped. "Huh?"

Justin never joked, and he looked serious about it. "She hid her identity and worked in a Hudson Pharmaceuticals branch nearest to me. Then, she found an excuse to stay at my place and warmed up to Charlotte. Now, she's attacking Amber. Obviously, she's trying to get back together with me."

Frankie smiled awkwardly. "Sir, you lost your memories, so I'm obliged to tell you this. Your divorce didn't go well, to say the least. That's why Master Arthur wanted everyone to hide it from you."

"It has been years. It might have been horrible, but she wouldn't come back if she didn't care." Justin sneered. "But she thinks too highly of herself. She thinks she can come and go as she pleases? She had a baby with someone else overseas, got dumped, and wants to come back to me? I'm not running

a charity here."

At the mention of the child, Frankie said carefully, "Sir, Chris is not that kind of woman. I think there's more to this. I've asked the guys in Montenegro to look into this."

"You don't have to defend her. I only trust what I see." That boy called her "Mommy". There's nothing else to say. She couldn't have given birth to twins in Riverdale and only took away one.

Frankie wanted to say something, but he thought Justin was too angry for him to do so.

Rachel stayed at Justin's place while he was away on the business trip. She only had one final chance at opening the safe box. There were four numbers in her hand, but she couldn't even come up with any combination.

Meanwhile, Jolly was on the phone with her. "It can't be four numbers. It must be a six-number combination. Can you remember which one is more important?"

Rachel tried to recall the search back then. "Zero and two, I think."

"Is it a date?"

"Probably. Looks similar."

"Have you tried your birthday?"

"The numbers don't match. Not even Charlotte's."

"Well, try anniversaries. Everyone uses their wedding anniversary or the day they met as a passcode. Either that, or it's their wife's birthday, their kid's birthday or something like that. Charlotte's the most important person to him, right? Do you think he won't set the passcode as something related to her?"

Jolly kept talking, but Rachel didn't think much about it at first. However, halfway through, she remembered one particular date all of a sudden. "I got it, Jolly." She quickly typed the passcode in, and the box was unlocked with a click.

Rachel looked at it quietly, albeit in disbelief. Not even she herself could believe he used that day as the passcode.

"So, did you open it?"

Jolly's voice snapped Rachel out of it, but she got slightly nervous. "Yes."

"Nice. So what day was it?"

Rachel looked conflicted, but eventually, she answered, "The day I had my first miscarriage."

"Oh?" Jolly said, but then she kept quiet.

"Talk to you later. I'll see if it's here." Rachel hung up and opened the safe box. There were two layers in there. The top layer contained some cash, while the bottom layer had some estate certificates and a sealed leather bag. Rachel unsealed it and took the contents out, but it wasn't the thing she wanted. The proof that he killed Hans isn't here. "It's not in this place?"

After Rachel went back, she told Jolly about it. "So you did all that for nothing?" Jolly was shocked.

"It only proves that it isn't in the box. Doesn't mean it isn't somewhere else in his place."

"Are you going to keep staying there then?"

"I'll move back. He'll be back tomorrow." Rachel leaned back against the sofa, her temples throbbing. All she could think of was the truth behind Hans' death. "I might have to see someone."

For the first time in ages, Jolly looked at her seriously. "Janice?"

"Yes." She was the one who said Justin had the evidence, so she was the one who knew where it specifically was.

Rachel went to work like usual the next day. After the morning meeting, she went to the president's office with the proposal. "I've drafted the proposal for the next quarter. See if there's any problem." She then put it on his desk.

Justin skimmed through it. "Looks good. Let's do it your way, but I have one condition. I want a fifteen percent increase in sales."

"I'll do my best."

"I heard you got the TV station to cancel Amber's show."

Rachel's heart sank. When she looked up, she was greeted with a calm gaze. "So you're interrogating me now?" She pursed her lips.

"You stopped her plans to mass produce Western medicine, and now you canceled her show. Everyone can see you're attacking her."

"I wouldn't have to do it if she actually did her job well." Rachel frowned. "But if you think I'm attacking her just because of these, then I have nothing to say to that." With that, she stood up. "I have work to

do, so I'll be going back to my office now."

Justin stared at her, but before he could say anything, Frankie came in like a wind. "Bad news, Sir!"

"What is it? What's the hurry?" Justin answered unhappily.

"You need to see the news." Frankie couldn't care that Rachel was there. He quickly handed his tablet over to Justin

When Justin saw the content, his face darkened.

"What happened?" Rachel asked out of concern.

“You’re asking me that?” He slammed the tablet down on the table and showed it to her. “See for yourself!”

Chapter 195

Rachel noticed Samuel in the photo right away. Even though he was censored, his curly hair told her who he was, not to mention that she was right beside him, holding his hand. An article with a headline that read, ‘President Burton’s ex-wife returns with an illegitimate son. The shocking truth behind this aristocrat’s marriage, was making waves on the Internet.

It wasn’t a long article, but it managed to make Rachel out to be a cheating woman who was dumped by

Justin because she had a lover out there. The article wasn’t fully made up, since the writer knew Rachel used to be a mute. As there was truth among the lies, it was hard for her to explain things properly. Rachel knew that, so she knew this was trouble.

“When was this posted?”

“This morning,” Frankie answered quickly. “The PR team didn’t think much about it at first, but then it went viral. It’s getting worse by the minute. Sir, our share prices have been dropping ever since this was posted. The Board of Directors has been calling us to talk about this.”

Even though Rachel and Justin were already divorced, the public questioned the decision of hiring her to work in Burton Pharmaceuticals. Now that a scandal had popped up, it was certain that the share prices would drop.

Justin looked at Rachel coldly. “What’s your plan now?”

“A press release, of course. We’ll tell them that the illegitimate child doesn’t exist. As long as we tell the same story, the public can’t say anything about it.”

“What about the truth?”

Rachel was stunned, but she clenched her fists, for she knew what was coming.

Justin asked, "The article isn't important. Are you going to tell me about that boy? Is he your son?" Justin knocked on the tablet's screen, producing two loud thuds.

Veins started popping on her forehead, but she answered calmly, "He is."

"You're quick to answer. I thought you'd defend yourself."

"He's my son. I don't have anything to say for myself." Rachel didn't want to argue about Samuel. Since Justin was looking mad, she told Frankie, "Tell the PR team to get ready for a press release, and make sure they restrict the questions from the reporters. Dispatch a few more bodyguards, and,"

"Enough!" Justin barked.

Rachel was shocked. When she turned around, she realized Justin was looking at her coldly. "You're not in charge here. I'm the boss. Not you."

"But we need to hold a press release. The sooner we silence the public, the better for you and the company."

"I'm not saying we won't, but that's not what we're going to say."

Rachel paused for a moment.

Justin's gaze was as cold and dark as the deep sea. "Frankie, tell HR to come up with a notice of termination and post it on the official website. We'll announce it at the press release," he said coldly.

"Announce what?" Frankie was shocked.

"That we've canceled the contract with Chris. Her personal life's degeneracy is not what we stand for, and tell them we will never employ anyone who's morally bankrupt. Not now, not ever. I'll tell the reporters that we wouldn't have hired you if you hadn't lied about your identity."

Everything Justin said was a shocker for Rachel, and she looked at him in disbelief. "You're really doing that?"

The shock only lasted for a moment though, for she then regained her composure. Her fists were clenched, and her anger was rising.

Justin answered coldly, "If I don't do that, you're going to ruin the whole company. We're not going to pay for your indecency."

"Indecency?" Rachel looked at him calmly. "Is that what you think of me?"

"Isn't it? You have an illegitimate son. What else do you have to say?" Justin glowered. "You'd better work with us and apologize to the public before this gets any worse. Then go back to Montenegro and never show up in front of me again!"

Apparently, Justin was stupid enough to not even leave an exit for himself; even Frankie felt worried. "Sir, we still need to look into this, so-" He swallowed the rest of the sentence when Justin shot him an icy look.

Rachel answered, "If that's what you think, then fine by me. I'll work with you, but I'll only tell them the truth. I won't admit to something I didn't do. I have work to do, so I'm leaving now." With that, she left the office, and the door swung shut.

"Sir, this might be a misunderstanding. The madam isn't a lascivious woman."

"Madam?" Justin looked at him coldly.

Frankie shivered and changed the way he called her right away. "I mean Chris. We'll get the truth soon enough once we look into Chris and her child's details in Montenegro. Do you want to delay the press release, Sir? At least until the recon team is back?"

"No. We'll hold it tomorrow morning."

Frankie wanted to say something else, but Justin slammed the table. "One more word and you're fired as well!"

Frankie paled and kept his mouth shut.

At the same time, Jolly called Rachel the moment she came out of the office. "I saw the news. Are you alright?" There was panic in Jolly's voice.

Rachel put her phone a little distance away from her ear. "Just got out of his office. He wants to fire me so he can face the Board of Directors and the public."

"What? Is that idiot mad? He just believes everything he sees? How can he even run a company like that?"

"That's not important. Jolly, this popped up too suddenly. Something's off. Justin and I aren't public figures, and we've been divorced for five years. Almost nobody has seen me, and no reporters would keep an eye on us at all times."

"You're saying someone's behind this?"

"They can even track down my medical history in Montenegro. They even found out I gave birth there. The enemy is powerful."

"If they're actually powerful, they would have found the real record, not the one we doctored."

Rachel answered grimly. "It doesn't matter which one she found. This is precisely the one she wanted, so she

sold it to the media without even verifying it. That's the best way to rile up the public."

"Wait. You're saying you know who did this?"

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"I don't have many enemies, and there's only one person who's in conflict of interest with me, no?"

Then, it suddenly dawned upon Jolly. "It's Amber, that b*tch!" Angrily, she burst out, "I'm going to call Mom and Dad right now to help me remove all those nasty news! I'm going to block those articles!"

On the contrary, Rachel was surprisingly calm. "There's no need for that. Let's wait."

Then, she continued, "This issue is currently gaining a lot of attention from the media, so it would only be counterproductive if you asked for Mr. Carter's help."

"What should we do, then? How could we just let Justin defame you and use you as a scapegoat so that he could protect the Burtons' reputation?" Jolly cried.

As Rachel held on to her phone, she reassured Jolly, "I won't. I will not take the blame for something I didn't

do."

Five years ago, Rachel had mutism and was unable to speak. As a result, she had been wrongly accused on many occasions, but she could not refute. However, things were different now that she had been given the chance to speak again. She would no longer hold back her anger and stay silent.

As soon as Rachel left, Justin exploded with rage.

Meeting Justin at the wrong time, the head of the finance department was like a sheep in a lion's den as he was yelled at before coming out of the office. He was so startled that he almost banged his head into the door.

"Woah, slow down, Manager Davidson," Frankie cautioned as he escorted Asher out.

Wiping off the sweat on his forehead, he asked, "What's with Mr. Burton today? He rejected the quarterly budget before I even had the chance to speak. What should I do now?"

"It's not your fault. You just came at the wrong time. I suggest you come back in two days."

"What happened?"

"Don't ask. Knowing too much will do you no good."

After sending Asher away, Frankie stood at the doorway for a moment before making a call.

"Hi, it's me. How's it going with the investigation?"

"You need to speed it up because I'll need the investigation report by nine in the morning tomorrow. You must verify the time and all its details."

After putting down the phone, he stared at Justin's office worriedly.

If Justin had not lost his memories, he definitely would not have said those words to Rachel the other day.

That night, Charlotte threw a huge tantrum when she found out that Rachel had moved back home.

When Justin reached home, a glass cup flew toward his head.

Smash! Fortunately, he dodged it quickly, so the cup hit the wall behind him and shattered into pieces instantaneously.

"Sir, are you alright?" the new nanny exclaimed as her face turned pale in fright.

In response, he only furrowed his brow gently as he was already used to this. Glancing behind the nanny, he asked, "Who made you mad this time?"

In her puff sleeve nightgown, the little girl pointed at his nose and fumed, "You!"

"Me?"

"Were you the one who wouldn't let Mommy stay with me? Why did Mommy leave?"

"She has something to do these two days."

At that moment, his face turned dark when he mentioned Rachel.

Though Charlotte was still very young, she was much more sensitive than most children her age. She could see that Justin was trying to brush her off with a glance. "She still needs to eat and sleep even if she has things to do. Call Mommy now. I want her to accompany me."

With a frown, he told her, "It's late. You should go to bed now."

"Daddy, you're lying! I want Mommy!"

Again, she cried, "I want Mommy!"

"Enough!" This was the first time that he had lost his temper with her. Coldly, he continued, "She won't be coming today, nor will she be coming in the future. Do you really not remember, or are you pretending not to? She has never been by your side since you were young, so what do you need such a mother for?"

Terrified, she didn't dare to make a sound. Slowly, her eyes welled up with tears.

Seeing so, Justin regretted being so harsh on her. Just as he reached out to embrace her, she pushed his arms away before turning around and running toward her bedroom.

“Charlotte!” he called her name.

Bang! She slammed the door.

Justin was stunned for a while before getting irritated.

The next day, the Burton Group held a press conference.

All of Belleville’s major media outlets had arrived at the Burton Group’s press conference.

There were only ten minutes left before the commencement of the press conference, yet Rachel still had not arrived.

“I just called her. She’s stuck in traffic.”

Lisa explained in Rachel’s defense, but Justin continued to frown. “Why didn’t she leave earlier when she knew that the press conference was today? She’s obviously doing it on purpose.”

“Sir, she’s not doing it on purpose. She left home very early this morning.”

“Early? It’s already five minutes to nine!”

“She’s running late because she had to make breakfast for Charlotte.”

As soon as he heard this, an expressionless look plastered on his face.

Just then, Rachel arrived. “I’m so sorry for being late!”

As she tried to catch her breath, he could see that her face was flushed from rushing here.

He frowned.

Then, the person in charge of the site shouted, “Mr. Burton, we’re getting ready to start the conference!”

Immediately, Rachel tidied her clothes and tried to slow down her breathing. “Let’s go.”

At the site, camera shutter clicks filled the room as soon as Justin and Rachel made their way in.

“Quiet down. In a while, you can raise questions about the latest news concerning the Burtons.”

Slowly, the shutter clicks died down.

After that, Justin and Rachel sat down.

“Mr. Burton, are the contents of the article online true? Is your ex-wife Miss Hudson, whom Burton Pharmaceuticals just hired?”

“Miss Hudson, did you give birth to the boy in the photo in Montenegro? Who’s the child’s biological father?”

“Did the two of you divorce because of Miss Hudson’s infidelity, or were both of you already on bad terms and the marriage was just a political alliance?”

“Was it true that Miss Hudson was not welcomed by the Burtons when she first married you?”

“Mr. Burton, have you ever confirmed if you and your daughter are related?”

Like bullets, questions came one after another. It was as if the reporters were trying to blow both of them up with questions like gunpowder kegs.

When Justin heard this, his face turned grim.

At the same time, Rachel clenched her fists secretly and dug her nails into her palms.

She thought that she could deal with anything, yet she never thought that the reporters would doubt Charlotte's parentage. She was afraid that she might make things complicated for the children if she said something wrong.

"Are the children half-siblings? Is the boy in the photo Mrs. Burton's illegitimate child?"

"Who's the boy's biological father?"

At that point, things were going out of control.

As Rachel glanced at Justin, she told him, "I'll go with whatever you say, but I hope you won't bring the children into this. They're innocent."

"I'll resign from Burton Group and bear the public criticism alone."

After all, she was the one who caused such a big mess.

Coldly, he questioned, "Are you sure you'll be able to bear it?"

The reporters in the audience were still bombarding them with questions while holding on to their cameras impatiently

“Mr. Burton, Miss Hudson, please answer our questions.”

With her staring at him anxiously, he stood up. “Everyone must have a lot of questions regarding the article

that went viral recently. On behalf of myself and the Burton Group, I would like to announce that...”

Right then, Rachel’s heart stopped.

Then, he paused and glanced at her. “The article was fabricated with blatantly false claims and accusations.”

Chapter 197

Justin’s statement caused an uproar in the crowd.

Rachel was in disbelief when she heard what he had just said.

Holding on to her shoulders, he pulled her up from the chair so that they were facing the reporters side by

side.

“Rachel and I divorced peacefully and on good terms five years ago. Before that, we lived as an affectionate couple and never did anything to betray each others’ trust throughout our marriage. Even after our separation, we still respect each other and remain friends who wish each other nothing but happiness.”

“Even if you’re friends, how do you explain the child in the photo and Miss Hudson’s maternity records overseas?” the reporters pressed.

Upon hearing this, Justin questioned them, “What made you think that the child is someone else’s if he was born after the divorce? Both children are mine.”

With that, it sparked an uproar in the audience, and the camera shutter clicks filled the entire conference hall.

Shocked, Rachel was speechless.

Justin must have gone mad to have said such things.

“Therefore, the Burton Group and I will file a lawsuit against the writer and spreaders of the article. All media outlets that have forwarded or commented on the article are requested to delete all inappropriate

remarks immediately. This rumor has caused me, Rachel, and the Burton Group great trouble. We’ll be sure to conduct a thorough investigation about this!”

At that point, the crowd was in chaos.

Besides a daughter, the president of the Burton Group also had a son. In addition to that, the mother of the child was his ex-wife. This sudden news was like a bombshell.

“I’m sorry, we’re done with the press conference today. Kindly make an appointment if you have further questions.”

Then, the site manager tried to keep the crowd under control while the bodyguards escorted Justin and Rachel out of the hall.

Running up to Justin, Rachel asked, “Why did you say that?”

“I did it for Charlotte, not you.”

Coldly, he added, “What would Charlotte think if she found out that you abandoned her for five years to marry and have children with someone else?”

As soon as she heard that, her face turned pale. "I can explain. It's not what you think."

"I have no interest in knowing who the father of the child is, and you better keep your mouth shut as well. If anybody finds out the truth, I'll see to it that you leave Riverdale and never come back."

She wanted to say something but eventually gave up when she saw how reluctant he was to listen to her.

Besides, she never expected that he would defend her during the press conference.

Just as he left, her phone rang in her pocket.

"How was the press conference? I've already prepared a draft for you to retaliate." Jolly's voice sounded on the phone.

"I'm fine for now."

"Wait, what happened? The reporters and Justin didn't eat you alive?"

"It was not what I expected. I'll tell you when we meet, alright?"

"Sure! I'll post the article first to give them a taste of their own medicine. I'd like to see how brazen that b*tch can be!"

Listening to this, Rachel only kept quiet.

As for Justin, he had already gone back to his office.

As he replayed the video of the press conference earlier, he felt irritated all of a sudden. Immediately, he closed his laptop as he did not want to hear another word.

Suddenly, Frankie knocked on the door and came in with a stack of documents.

“Mr. Burton, there’s news from Montenegro.”

With his palm on his forehead, he asked impatiently, “Who’s that man?”

“What man?”

Justin’s icy stare gave Frankie a good scare. As soon as Frankie returned to his senses, he continued, “The hospital only has the mother’s information and no information about the father. Besides, Rachel never got married in Montenegro.”

“She gave birth out of wedlock?”

Handing the documents to Justin, Frankie explained, “It’s not like that. Things are a bit complicated, so you should take a look at it for yourself.”

Two sets of documents with complete information were prepared.

The first set was the medical report of her hospitalization and childbirth which the reporters had received when news got out. The timestamp on the other set of documents was coincidentally the same as the first—with the only difference being the patient’s name.

“Who’s Jolly? What does she have to do with Rachel?”

“She’s Miss Hudson’s best friend.”

Upon hearing this, Justin frowned and narrowed his eyes. “So, Rachel’s not the child’s biological mother?”

With a complicated look, Frankie nodded.

At that moment, Justin stared at Frankie in disbelief.

That afternoon, the contents of the press conference started to spread online. New topics regarding this overshadowed the contents of the previous articles.

‘My God! I never knew there could be such an incredible man who would still defend his ex-wife even after they’ve divorced!’

‘They had the little boy after the divorce, so that must mean they still have feelings for each other!’

‘Both of them are still single, so they must still miss each other very much. Otherwise, why have they not remarried after five years?’

‘Please get back together! I’m rooting for this couple!’

As Amber read the comments, she fell silent.

The netizens’ comments kept refreshing on top of the searched list.

With a loud bang, she closed her laptop with a pale expression on her face.

She could not believe that Justin would admit that the illegitimate child was his. It was clearly impossible as Rachel had left as soon as she gave birth to Charlotte.

The netizens must have been blind to believe everything. The child had curly hair. Which part of him resembled Justin?

Still in her own thoughts, she logged into her private Twitter account instantaneously to post a few comments.

'The child's obviously illegitimate. How could they be father and son?'

'It's obvious that the company's public relations department said so on purpose. They have no feelings for each other and are on bad terms in reality:

'She's obviously a slut!'

After posting a few comments, her phone rang. It was her friend.

"Hello?" she answered.

"Amber, what are you doing right now? You need to see what's online at this moment."

"I'm looking at it right now, and I've read the news already. These netizens only speak and act on hearsay. They need some good scolding from me. Don't you have a lot of friends from the media? Get me some trolls, won't you?"

"What trolls? You should worry about yourself! Your main Twitter account's in trouble, don't you know?"

"What?" She froze.

All this while, she had been using her private Twitter account to tell off the netizens, so she did not know what was happening on her main account.

"Somebody posted an article titled 'Wealthy Daughter Seduces Brother-in-law and Tries to Claim the Moral High Ground After Forcing Sister to Leave.' It's so obvious that it's talking about you!"

By then, the article had already exploded on the Internet.

Just after the Burtons had issued a statement and Justin had defended his ex-wife at the press conference, people already started digging up dirt on Amber-his fiancée.

From her hooking up with the attending doctor when she was studying medicine abroad to forcing her sister to leave so that she could replace her, every word hit the nail on the head that it made her gnash her teeth in anger after reading the article.

When Amber logged into her main account, she was bombarded with tons of private messages and comments.

‘Homewreckers should die.’

‘How dare you seduce your brother-in-law? How shameless!

‘Let me see what this homewrecker looks like! She doesn’t even look half as good as her sister, yet an ugly person like her is causing so much trouble.

She was utterly speechless.

As she typed, her fingers trembled and her face turned white.

Who did this?

Who the hell did this?

Chapter 198

At that moment, a woman with a bun tied on her head stretched her back and rotated her neck side to side.

“I did it!”

As Rachel poured Jolly a cup of tea, she cautioned, “Don’t exaggerate. You might be sued for defamation if you try to provoke Amber.”

“What do I have to be afraid of? Do I seem like I’m short of money to pay for the litigation fee and compensation? No matter how long it takes—even if I lose the lawsuit, I’ll let that little b*tch have a taste of what cyberbullying feels like! I’m going to return violence for violence!” Jolly exclaimed.

Then, she continued, “She’s the one who always loves to show off on Twitter by presenting herself as a kind daughter from a wealthy family, being a special host to many health TV programs, being a top student who often gets her paper published, and doesn’t mind that her fiancé has a daughter while promising to be gentle and kind to care for her many years forward.”

The more she said, the more she felt disgusted. Then, she spread out her hands wide open and said, “She’s gentle, modest, courteous, restrained, and magnanimous. She’s literally the epitome of righteousness and the light of the universe that everyone worships!”

Upon hearing this, Rachel shook her head helplessly. “Well, half of it is indeed true. However, things started to crumble when people started praising and worshiping her too much.”

Besides, Amber had many skeletons in her closet.

Jolly would get irritated every time at the mention of Amber.

“She acts as if she’s pretty and rich. My arse! The Hudsons aren’t even half as rich as I am!”

Quietly, Rachel asked, “So, are all pretty and rich women like you?”

“What’s wrong with me?”

Casually picking up a piece of underwear from the chair, Rachel dangled it in front of Jolly with her finger. "A pretty and rich woman who leaves her socks and underwear everywhere in the house."

With a sheepish smile, Jolly pushed Rachel's hand away. "I'm a phony, while you're truly smart, gentle, and virtuous. Well, you're here at the right time. Wash them for me, will you?"

As soon as Rachel heard that, she rolled her eyes.

Meanwhile, at the Burtons' villa, Charlotte had been throwing tantrums at Justin for two days. She even locked herself in her own room and refused to come out.

Mrs. Duncan knocked on her door and patiently tried to persuade her to come out of her room, "Miss Charlotte, you only ate very little food during dinner. Come and eat a little something, won't you? I made some hot chocolate."

"No, I don't want to."

Just as she replied, her stomach rumbled loudly through the door.

"Are you hungry?"

"I'm not!"

At this point, Mrs. Duncan did not know what to do anymore.

Just then, somebody opened the door downstairs. Immediately, she said, "I think sir is back."

"I don't care if he's back! Daddy's the worst! I don't want to stay with him anymore!" Charlotte fumed.

Justin was at a loss for words as soon as he saw Mrs. Duncan holding a tray of food outside of Charlotte's room.

“She’s still not eating?”

“I’ve already tried everything, sir.”

Taking the tray from her, he told her, “Go ahead and rest. I’ll do it.”

“Yes, sir.”

After she left, he knocked on Charlotte’s door. “Charlotte?”

“Go away! I don’t want to see you!”

“It’s fine if you don’t want to see me, but you have to eat. Otherwise, how would you meet your mommy if you don’t have enough strength?”

“I know you won’t let me meet her. You’re a bad person!”

After pausing for a moment, he questioned, “Did Mommy come to see you this morning?”

Then, the room fell silent.

From this, he got his answer.

It was very likely that Mrs. Duncan had called Rachel. Knowing that Charlotte was refusing to eat, Rachel made breakfast for her.

Then, Justin said to Charlotte, “I don’t blame you. I’ll bring you to the office tomorrow if you want to see her.”

After a moment of silence, the door finally opened.

“Really?”

At that moment, his heart ached as he saw her grubby face. Caressing her head, he reassured her,
“Really.”

“You need to keep your promise.”

“I will. Quick, be a good girl and finish this hot chocolate.”

The next day, Charlotte woke up early in the morning and turned her wardrobe upside down to look for the perfect outfit before settling with a white dress and leather shoes. Like a princess on a royal progress, she followed Justin to the office.

When they reached the office, he instructed Frankie to give Rachel a call.

“Miss Rachel had gone into a meeting as soon as she came into the office this morning. The meeting just started, and I’m not sure when it’ll end.”

Strictly, he ordered, “Tell her to end it early and place her on leave today.”

“No!”

Jumping off the chair, she stood firmly on the carpet and shook her head at him. “You’ll distract her from work if you do that. Then, Mommy will think that I’m a bad child who doesn’t know any better!”

“Don’t you want to see her?” he asked.

“I’ll just wait for her in her office.”

"I'm not sure what time her meeting will end. Are you sure that you can wait?"

He knew her daughter very well, after all.

As soon as she could speak, she had not been able to sit still. As such, how long could she wait in Rachel's office?

Nodding solemnly, she noted, "I'll be leaving now, so go ahead and do your stuff. Don't look for me because Mommy definitely doesn't want to see you!"

After saying this, the little girl walked away arrogantly.

In the meantime, a little boy with curly chestnut brown hair and a little ducky schoolbag came through the revolving door into the Burton Group building.

"Good morning, miss!"

His sweet voice sounded from below the counter as he was still much shorter than it.

After being stunned for a moment, the receptionist tiptoed and saw the little boy down below. His face was as white as snow and it melted her heart.

"Hey, little guy. Who are you looking for?"

"I'm looking for Mommy!"

"Who's your mom?"

Before he could answer, the other receptionist exclaimed, "Isn't he..."

“Isn’t he what?”

“The one in the news.”

“Huh?”

“This hair and height. I’m pretty sure it’s him.”

“Hey, what’s your mom’s name?”

Unsure of what the two receptionists were talking about, he blinked and responded in a serious manner,
“My mom’s Rachel Hudson. She’s the sales director.”

“It’s him!”

The two receptionists clasped their hands over their mouths excitedly.

The news only exploded two days ago. Therefore, they had never expected to bump into the kid so quickly.

“Miss, could you bring me to my mommy’s office?”

“Of course.”

However, the other receptionist halted her. “Shouldn’t you call the pharmaceutical department to confirm?”

“Silly, he’s Mr. Burton’s son, the heir of the company. Do I need to call to confirm?”

Glancing at the innocent look on his face, the two ladies figured that he did not know anything.

“If I were him, I would die of happiness when I grow up.”

Chapter 199

With an innocent look on his face, the little boy held the receptionist's hand as they went into the elevator. Sweetly, he said, “Miss, this building is so tall!”

“Yes, it is. The company's pharmaceutical branch is on this floor, which is where your mom is,” she replied patiently while pointing at the floor numberings. “The president's office is on this floor, while the other departments are on the remaining floors.”

Mentally taking note of this, he nodded.

Ding! The elevator had finally reached the floor where Rachel's office was.

“I'll go in on my own. Thank you!”

“No, worries, kiddo. Look for me if you have any problems, alright?”

Then, she patted his head before turning to enter the elevator again.

As soon as the elevator went down, he stood on his toes and pressed the button to go upstairs. After that, he entered the next elevator and headed to the floor where the receptionist said his dad would be.

Meanwhile, Charlotte sat down in Rachel's office and opened her laptop to watch some cartoons.

The door to the office was not shut properly, so she could hear the two workers gossiping from their workstations nearby.

Just as she jumped off the chair to close the door, she froze when she overheard what they were discussing.

“Does Mr. Burton really have a son?”

“I heard him say it himself at the press conference yesterday. Why would he lie?”

“I also saw the news. Are those things online about Amber true? Is she really Rachel’s sister? Did she steal Mr. Burton from Rachel?”

Upon hearing this, Charlotte stayed silent.

In the meantime, Justin was in a morning meeting in the boardroom.

Suddenly, Gloria rushed in after knocking on the door and whispered into Frankie’s ears. Right after, he followed her out of the room.

As Justin listened to the business proposal, he looked outside the glass window to find a child standing in between Frankie and Gloria, who were speaking to each other.

He frowned.

After saying a few words, Frankie pulled Samuel to a quiet corner and asked Gloria, “How did he get in?”

“I don’t know. He was already standing right in front of me when I looked up.”

“Why did you bring him here then? Don’t you know where this is?”

“Oh, stop making a fuss, Mr. Beckham. Look at him. He’s clearly Mr. Burton’s son. I’ve seen the news. Where should I bring him to, if not to Mr. Burton?”

For a moment, Frankie could not find the right words to explain who Samuel actually was.

Just then, a voice sounded from behind. "What's the matter?"

Frankie turned his head and saw Justin.

"Mr. Burton."

Then, Justin raised his hand. Understanding what he meant, Frankie and Gloria left.

Finally, when there was no one around, Samuel batted his eyes at Justin before asking in a sweet but clear voice, "Are you Justin Burton?"

"I am. You're looking for me?"

"Yes, I'm here to see you."

From his pocket, Samuel took his phone and unlocked the screen to show Justin. "I saw yesterday's news."

Shown on the screen was a photo of Justin at the press conference yesterday.

"So? You came here to acknowledge me as your dad?"

Samuel shook his head. "No. I'm here to thank you for helping Mommy yesterday."

As he was speaking, he took out an exquisite gift box from his little ducky schoolbag. "This is for you. I bought it with the pocket money I saved for a very long time."

However, Justin did not reach out to receive the gift.

Even if Justin knew that the child was not Rachel's, he felt hostile toward Samuel because Rachel would rather care for someone else's child for years than her own and never even came back once to see Charlotte.

"There's no need. I didn't do it for her."

"You behave just as Mommy described. Stubborn as a donkey."

When Justin heard this, his expression changed. "Is that what she said about me?"

"She even said that you're incorrigibly obstinate, self-righteous, and self-centered regardless of other people's feelings. You rejected my gift when you haven't even seen it. How rude!"

Though he was adorable, he was a chatterbox that talked too much.

"I have no idea what Mommy saw in you. I can't believe you're my dad."

"I'm not your dad."

"Are you trying to take your words back even when you've already admitted it to the press?" Samuel stuffed the gift into Justin's hand. "This isn't for you. It's for my sister. Please give it to her."

Annoyed, Justin fumed, "I already told you that I'm not your dad. Besides, she's not your sister!"

As he spoke, he was trying to stuff the gift back into Samuel's bag.

At this point, Samuel was getting irritated. "I said it wasn't for you! I bought it for my sister!"

“She doesn’t need it.”

As they bickered, Justin was unaware of his strength and caused the gift to fall to the floor.

With a crash, the item in the gift box fell out. The lid and box of the music box which was inside fell apart.

Justin froze immediately.

Crouching in front of the music box, Samuel picked up the shattered pieces with his tiny hands, an aggrieved look plastered on his face

“Samuel!”

At the same time, Rachel’s footsteps sounded on the other end of the hallway. She left the meeting as soon as she received a call from Jolly. True enough, Samuel had come to the office.

“Samuel, are you okay?”

As she saw how terrible he looked, her first reaction was to check if he was injured anywhere.

With a pout, he showed her the shattered pieces of the music box. “Mommy, I don’t like Daddy anymore. He broke the music box that I wanted to gift to my sister.”

Instantaneously, Rachel pulled him into her arms and seethed, “The child did nothing wrong. Why did you do that?”

Only a moment ago, Justin was feeling regretful for what had happened. However, his face darkened as soon as she came up to accuse him. Indeed, the child did nothing wrong. But have you ever considered how Charlotte would feel if she saw him?”

Then, he added, "This is the Burton Group's office and your workplace. Not a nursery!"

After hearing his cold remarks, she covered Samuel's ears at once and carried him. "Let's go."

As she turned around, she saw Charlotte standing there.

Before, Rachel had come running from the meeting room in a hurry, so she did not notice that Charlotte had followed her as she ran up the stairs.

The little girl, who was running out of breath earlier, was still trying to catch her breath.

As Rachel was hugging Samuel, she said helplessly, "Charlotte..."

Charlotte looked at both of them with an alarmed expression.

Walking over quickly, Justin asked, "Charlotte, when did you come here?"

When she came back to her senses, she ignored his question and picked up the music box to turn the lever

twice. However, no sound came out of it, so tears started to well up in her eyes.

Justin's heart ached as he watched her, thinking that she was feeling upset because of Samuel.

"Be a good girl and don't cry, alright? Let's go out and play, okay?"

Just as he was about to embrace her, she pushed him away abruptly to the point that he fell backward to the floor with a grunt. He then looked at her with a look of disbelief.

“I don’t want to play with you! How could you treat my little brother this way?”

Little brother? Justin was shocked.

Rachel was also astonished.

Holding on to the music box, Charlotte complained loudly, “This is the first time that my little brother is gifting me a music box, yet you broke it! You’re going overboard again and again!”

Stunned, he asked, “Charlotte, you’re angry because of this?”

“Why else would I be angry? Besides, you guys never told me I had a brother!” She cried as her voice grew louder and her shoulders trembled in anger.

At that moment, Samuel wiggled out of Rachel’s arms and ran toward Charlotte to hold her hand. Like a little adult, he consoled her, “It’s alright. I’ll get you a new one, so don’t cry, okay?”

Seeing this, Rachel was filled with mixed feelings.

Unlike the complicated thoughts of adults, the hearts of children were so pure.

In the end, it was Samuel who managed to calm Charlotte down. However, there was still a look of disdain in Justin’s eyes as he watched them bitterly.

Then, Frankie brought the two children from Justin’s office to the lounge to have some snacks, leaving Rachel and him to face each other.

“I’m sorry. I didn’t know Samuel would come.”

“Do you think that an apology can undo what you have done?”

He continued with an icy tone, "Well done to you and your son for targeting Charlotte."

Hearing this, she furrowed her brows. Though everything could be explained, she chose not to say too much.

"I'll get someone to pick him up. He won't be staying long."

"Whatever."

After saying this, he turned to look at his laptop and ignored her.

Right after she came out of the office, she called Jolly, yet no one picked up. Perhaps she had gone somewhere to have fun.

Just as she was about to enter the elevator, her phone vibrated in her pocket. Initially, when she answered the phone, she thought that it was Jolly, but was met with a strange yet familiar voice.

"Rachel."

Jefferey's voice had not changed at all even after five years. He always spoke to her harshly and arrogantly. "Where are you now? I want to see you."

She clenched tightly onto her phone before calming down a moment later. "Sure, but I'm not free right now. Let's talk after I'm off from work."

It seemed that he did not understand what she was saying. With a low voice, he told her, "I'll be waiting for you at the café beside the Burton Group in half an hour."

Half an hour?

She sneered as she looked at her watch.

An hour and a half later, she finally went down to the café slowly after seeing more than ten missed calls on her phone.

When she reached, she recognized him almost immediately.

Unsure if it was just an illusion, she felt that he had aged quite a lot seeing that the gray hair on the side of his temples had turned completely white. He also looked very haggard.

Even so, he had a stern look plastered on his face the moment he set his eyes on Rachel. With a grim expression, he chided, "You made me wait here for one hour!"

Unaffected by his behavior, she replied calmly, "It's just one hour. There are people who wait for a day even after making an appointment to meet me. I've already made an exception for you."

"What appointment?" His face went livid. "How could you associate me with them? I'm your father!"

As he was speaking, he looked at her from head to toe. "Don't try to act so brazenly now that you've got your mutism cured. No matter where you go, you still have to come back to Riverdale, to the Hudsons."

"You came all the way here just to tell me this?"

Then, his eyes darkened as he remembered what he had come for. "Were you the one who posted the article about Amber?"

Rachel wasn't surprised at his reply as she had already expected it. "No."

Indeed, it was not her but Jolly who posted the article.

"Who would post things like that if not you? Who else would know so much besides you?"

“What are you trying to say?”

Just as she spoke, he stood up and roared, “What kind of attitude is this? Delete it if you were the one who posted it. Come to me if you have any resentments against me. Why are you taking it out on your sister? She’s marrying Justin soon.”

“What does her marriage have to do with me?” Her fingers circled her cup. Then, she reminded him faintly, “Anyway, she was supposed to marry Justin six years ago, wasn’t she?”

Upon hearing this, he froze.

“Wasn’t the perfect younger daughter of the Hudsons supposed to marry him?”

“You’re clearly back for revenge.” His face darkened immediately. “I’m warning you. Don’t do anything to hurt Amber. Otherwise, don’t blame me for disregarding our father-daughter relationship.”

“What father-daughter relationship have we got?”

Giving him a cold glare, she continued, “For many years, I’ve always wanted to ask you how my mother actually died.”

Suddenly, she stood up with a stern expression on her face. As she got up, the chair scuffed against the floor and made an ear-piercing sound.

Everyone in the café turned to glance at them displeasingly.

At that moment, he looked as though he had seen a ghost. Gazing at him, she spoke calmly while stirring her coffee, “Don’t worry. Even if you did kill my mother, the statute of limitations had already run out. What are you afraid of?”

Twenty years have passed, so nothing would happen to him even if there was sufficient evidence now.

This was the main reason why she was so heartbroken.

“What nonsense are you talking about? Who told you this? Was it that damned old hag?”

Clank! She dropped her spoon all of a sudden which made a sharp metallic sound when it touched the wall of the cup.

Staring daggers at him, she warned, “Say one more word about Grandma, and I can assure you that the criticisms of Amber online will be so great that you won’t be able to do anything!”

“So, you’re admitting that you did it, aren’t you? Amber’s your sister. How could you do this to her?”

“Why didn’t the fact that we are sisters cross her mind when she spread the rumor of me having an illegitimate child? And why did you turn a blind eye to it then?”

“I didn’t know you’d come back!”

“Oh, stop pretending! I wouldn’t have left Riverdale for five years if you really treated me like your daughter. What kind of sister behaves like Amber and treats me this way? So, don’t try to tell me that you’re my father.”

“Or perhaps, I should call you Uncle Jefferey?” She gave him a cold glare.

He narrowed his eyes in disbelief.

“You... What are you talking about? Are you crazy?”

“You know very well what I’m talking about.”

“Do you remember everything that had happened when you were a kid?”

“What do you think?” Her lips lifted into a sarcastic smile as she adjusted her sunglasses.