

Mute Bride 211

Chapter 211

Since the senior president of the Carter Enterprise, Richard, rarely showed up in public, it was Marilyn who often socialized with the elites of Riverdale. This was the reason why Sue and Amber only knew her and not her husband.

“What do you mean that she is your goddaughter?” Sue was in disbelief. “How did Rachel become your goddaughter?”

“What’s so surprising about it? She and my daughter have been best friends for many years. Why would I need the Burton Family’s permission to acknowledge her as my goddaughter?”

Goddaughter? Sue quickly explained, “That’s not what I meant.”

“I’m not interested in what you’re trying to say.” Marilyn wasn’t in the mood to explain to Sue. Instead, Marilyn turned toward Rachel and held her hand. “I’m sorry for what you had to experience. Don’t worry. With me here, I don’t believe that these two outsiders are qualified to stop us from joining the Burton Family’s banquet.”

Rachel softly replied, “I’m fine, Mrs. Carter.”

“What do you mean that you’re fine? This isn’t the first time that Amber has insulted you with her vicious tongue. Aren’t you disgusted that she is spreading nonsense about you and my dad?” Jolly growled.

Immediately, Marilyn and Richard’s expressions darkened as they showed their displeasure.

However, Sue quickly read the situation and smiled apologetically. “Mr. and Mrs. Carter, this is all just a misunderstanding. Amber is still young, so she always speaks without thinking about it.”

“Does that give her an excuse to slander other people? If this spreads to the public, it will affect our families’ business. Can she afford to make such a mistake? Or, will you be responsible for it?”

Amber's face paled as she didn't know what else to say.

"We want an apology!" Jolly stared at her. "You must apologize to Rachel." "An apology?" Amber gritted her teeth. She wants me to apologize to Rachel? Never! Then, Justin emerged from the hall when he heard the commotion outside. As his imposing figure stood tall among the crowd, he furrowed his brows and walked straight out. Since they had not seen each other for a week, Rachel's gaze was calm when she saw him. Let's see what he is going to do about this.

"Justin." As soon as Amber saw him, she immediately wore a weak facade and hid behind him with an aggrieved face. "They are bullying me."

While he furrowed his brows, he exchanged glances with Rachel for a second, but she looked so calm that it felt like nothing had transpired between them. "What happened?" "Why don't you ask your Aunt Sue?" Rachel gently asked as her gaze landed on Sue. "President Burton, your fiancée was speaking without using her brain earlier.

I believe your Aunt Sue clearly heard it all." It would have been easy for Sue to direct the blame at Rachel if it was just her alone, but now that Rachel had the entire Carter Family backing her, Sue quickly explained with a tense expression, "Justin, this is Amber's fault. She has crossed the line with her words and offended Mr. and Mrs. Carter. Luckily, they're generous enough to forgive her. Tell her to quickly

apologize.

Meanwhile, Amber glared at Sue in disbelief while she clenched both her fists. After five years, she was already used to Sue always prioritizing her own interest above everything else. "What is it, President Burton? Are you planning to protect your woman?" Jolly sneered.

Before he could speak, Amber grabbed his arm and she stood up while gritting her teeth. "I'll apologize, so please stop troubling Justin since this is my fault. I'm sorry." However, just as Jolly was about to say

something, she was halted by Rachel, who then responded, "Since she has apologized, we should just forget about it.

I hope that you can be careful with your words in the future. Otherwise, you'll only embarrass both the Burton and Hudson Families again." Rachel's words were so harsh that they had embarrassed Amber in front of the surrounding crowd, but Amber knew that she needed to endure it, so she could only grit her teeth.

"Let's not stand here at the entrance." Sue quickly urged the crowd, "You can all enter. The party is about to start."

After glaring at Amber, Jolly was reluctantly dragged inside the hall by Rachel. On the way inside, Jolly murmured, "How could you let her off the hook with such ease? This is such a rare chance for us to properly teach her a lesson."

"We can't be too harsh on her; otherwise, it'll affect your parents' reputation. That's enough to teach her a lesson," Rachel replied.

"My parents are here to back you up. Otherwise, they wouldn't attend a party like this. Am I right, Mom?"

The moment Jolly's words came out, Marilyn rolled her eyes. "Yes, we are here to give Chris some backing, but you should be more mature with your actions. Why did you start a fight with her?"

"Mom, you should know that people like Amber don't deserve any politeness from us."

"Mrs. Carter, please don't blame Jolly. She is only doing this for me."

Then, Marilyn held Rachel's hand and said lovingly, "How can I blame you? I can see that you have suffered a lot during your days in the Burton Family. They really didn't appreciate you at all. Don't worry,

though. From now on, we will always be here for you."

Upon listening to Marilyn's words, Rachel was moved. She didn't have any relatives, but it was after moving abroad that she met Jolly and her parents afterward. For the past few years, Jolly's parents had treated Rachel like she was their own daughter. Although they rarely met, they would often video call

Rachel to ask about her well-being. On the other side, Amber followed Justin from behind. "Justin, I promise you that I didn't do it on purpose.

I thought that she found herself another man, so I became angry. I didn't expect that person to be Mr. Carter." "You don't need to explain it to me. Since it doesn't affect our collaboration with their family, it's fine. Just be careful from now on." "Justin—" "I have something else to attend to.

You can do whatever you want." After that, Justin disappeared among the crowd, leaving Amber with a gloomy face. Even though he had mentioned that he didn't care about the matter earlier, his indifferent attitude clearly illustrated that he was dissatisfied with her.

Seeing the scene where the Carter Family and Rachel were surrounded as if they were celebrities, Amber clenched her fists and sank her nails into her palms, bringing about waves of pain. Does she actually think someone like her can turn around her life in such a short period of time? In her dreams!

"Mr. and Mrs. Carter, both of your daughters are really beautiful. I wonder who is lucky enough to marry them in the future." "Mr. Howard, are you trying to set up a blind date for them?" "That's great. If you know anyone suitable, you should introduce them to my two daughters."

"I will. I definitely will." Wherever the elders were present, no matter the occasion, it would always turn into a large-scale blind date. While they were at a loss, Rachel and Jolly were inexplicably stuck with two young men, who claimed that they only wanted to make friends.

"In the past, I heard that Mr. Carter only has one daughter, so I didn't expect him to bring another beautiful daughter along

today. "You're too kind." Rachel grinned awkwardly while her mind quickly thought of a way to leave.

Chapter 212

"I'm usually in Riverdale. If you have the time, we can catch up with each other. Do you like to play golf?"

"I'm not good at it."

“Don’t worry, I can teach you the game. Why don’t we exchange our Whatsapp?”

As Rachel had already expected him to ask for her digits, she resignedly took out her phone.

She made an excuse to leave once they had exchanged their Whatsapp. “I’m sorry, but I need to use the washroom.”

As she carried the train of her dress and walked out of the hall, she finally escaped the ‘blind date’. However, she didn’t notice the pair of eyes watching her all along from the corner of the hall.

After Rachel breathed a sigh of relief, she looked around the place and envisioned it based on her memory.

The banquet was held in a four-story villa at the center of Summer Villa where Arthur usually lived. Rachel also resided here for a period of time 6 years ago, so she was familiar with the paths in the building. Since Janice mentioned that the evidence is situated inside the villa, then it is most likely in this building.

Even though she couldn’t point out exactly where the evidence was, the most secretive place in the building was his study room, so it was logical to start from there.

After she passed through the corridor and arrived at the side hall, the noises from the banquet gradually faded from her ears.

Across the door, Rachel could hear voices coming from the study room.

“Great uncle, we still need you at the hall.”

“I thought Justin was already there to help out?”

“This is still your banquet. So, everyone is waiting to meet you.”

"Alright, I'll go and take a look."

Rachel leaned against the wall to hide and waited for Arthur to emerge before she headed to the study room. However, the room was locked. As she held the doorknob for a while, she furrowed her brows. He really is a calculative old man. This study room contains lots of important information about the Burton Family, so he definitely won't allow anyone to enter with such ease. While Rachel thought about it, a series of footsteps were heard behind her.

"What are you doing here?" The man's voice was so cold and powerful that it gave her a shock. When she turned around and saw Justin, it was already too late for her to walk away. "I... was just looking around." "So, you just happened to come here? You really don't see yourself as a guest at all."

He took a step toward her. "However, I'm impressed that you are able to be the goddaughter of the Carter Family in such a short period of time. How does it feel to abuse your power now that you have their backing?" "You're thinking too much into it. Jolly is my best friend and her parents treat me well. It's that simple. As for you, don't you think that you are the one abusing your power by protecting your fiancée like that?"

"You didn't receive any invitation, which means that you are able to come here because of the Carter Family." Justin took another step closer toward Rachel. "Rachel, why are you really here?" "I came to attend the banquet." Her eyes were strangely calm as she stretched a finger to stop Justin's chest from approaching her.

"Do you really think I came here for you? Didn't you see how many people were rushing to introduce a new boyfriend to me?" His eyes immediately darkened. "Don't you have any shame?" "I can see that you rather enjoyed it." She tapped his shirt with a seemingly weak and numbing force. When she lifted her head, the hair that brushed her chin felt extremely amorous. "Are you jealous?" Upon listening to her, Justin grabbed her hand. "You are thinking too much. I hate women like you the most! There seems to be no boundaries when it comes to changing the men beside you."

"Then, why are you following me?" Rachel lifted her head and met his gaze. "Don't you want to see what I'm doing?" Justin's face darkened once again as it seemed to be filled with a sense of gloom. What he hated the most was how confident this woman looked when she knew every thought that surfaced in his mind. How dare she!

"I was afraid that you were looking for Charlotte. I'm warning you, you are not allowed to see her from now on."

"She is my daughter. Why can't I see her?"

"Don't you already have a son that was given to you? Since you would rather take care of someone else's son instead of your biological daughter, it doesn't matter whether you see her or not."

Rachel's eyes darkened. "What are you talking about?"

"You can stop pretending. Is this why the Carter Family accepted you as their goddaughter? After all, you helped their only daughter to avoid the embarrassment of a premarital pregnancy. I'm surprised that no one knows that the godmother is actually the biological mother—"

Before Justin could finish his words, Rachel immediately covered his mouth.

"Mm..."

With great strength, she hurriedly pushed him against the wall as her hand around his mouth almost suffocated him.

"How did you know about this?"

Rachel furrowed her brows while she nervously looked around.

Then, Justin angrily pushed her hand aside. "Are you crazy? What do you think you are doing?" She pointed at him. "I'm warning you. I don't care how you are aware of Samuel's true identity, but you are not allowed to speak a word of it to anyone else!"

"Are you threatening me?" "I don't care what you think, but please don't involve others in our grievances. Samuel and Jolly are innocent bystanders." after Justin tidied his suit, he answered

resentfully, "Then, does Charlotte deserve this?" "I'll try my best to make it up to her." "How? How are you planning to make up for five lost years in just a few days?"

Rachel remained silent with furrowed brows. The grudge between her and Justin was one thing, but her guilt for her daughter was another matter. As he appraised Rachel, he realized how beautiful and slender her fair swan-like neck was in contrast to her dark green off-shoulder dress. When he remembered the lustful eyes of those men at the banquet earlier, he was suddenly filled with jealousy.

While he clenched his fists on both sides, he added, "I can give you a chance. From today onward, I want you to move over to accompany Charlotte." Rachel immediately looked confused. "I thought you wouldn't allow me to be near her." "I've changed my mind. Since she likes you and you are also her biological mother, there isn't anyone more qualified than you to be her nanny. Therefore, you are responsible and obligated to take care of her."

The moment the word 'nanny' landed on her ears, she furrowed her brows for the umpteenth time. "I'm willing to accompany her even if you didn't make this request. I can visit her every weekend or

whenever I'm free, but I just can't move over there."

"No, you are not in a position to argue with me." "Justin, don't forget that you have a fiancée whom you are engaged with! Aren't you afraid of people gossiping because I'm living in the same house as you?"

"Who said that you'll be living in the same house as me?" While Rachel was startled, Justin suddenly took a step forward and pressed his upper body toward her. As her entire body was engulfed by his massive shadow, she could only hear a cold voice coming from above her. "It seems like you are looking forward to living in the same house as me."

Her mind was at a loss, but he released her the next second as he coldly uttered, "If you don't want the entire Riverdale to know that the daughter of the Carter Family has asked you to look after her son, I suggest that you do as you are told!"

"You..."

Rachel clenched her fists and her eyes were locked on Justin. He is threatening me.

Justin then scoffed and roared, “Also, make sure that the brat doesn’t ever appear before me! I don’t wish to see him making any contact with Charlotte. He thinks that they are siblings, huh? Who does he think he is?” Then, he tidied his attire and left in a huff.

The words that Justin said right before he left echoed in Rachel’s ears, causing her to tighten her fists. She was well aware that the main reason he had her stay at the Burton Residence had never been to take care of Charlotte—something must have raised his suspicion.

“What? He asked you to stay there?” When Jolly returned to the hall and heard the news, she instantly stomped her foot in anger. “How could he do this? Isn’t this no different from sending you to a lion’s den? You will be staying under the same roof as that man; what if he does something to you?”

Upon hearing that, Rachel shook her head. “That isn’t his motive. The reason he wants me to stay there is so that he can keep an eye on me.”

“Keep an eye on you? What do you mean?”

“He suspects something. He saw me when I entered Old Mr. Burton’s study, not to mention the incident about the safe at the Burton Residence. So, he must be trying to find out what I’m looking for and the reason I returned to the country.”

In order to conceal his real motive and to prevent alerting Rachel, Justin had asked her to stay at the Burton Residence using the excuse of taking care of Charlotte.

Jolly frowned in response. “If that’s the case, that’s all the more reason for you not to go there. Since the evidence is not there, there isn’t a need for you to even go over.”

“No, I must go there.” Rachel held her wine glass and gently clinked it against Jolly’s. “There is always an advantage of being in a favorable position—I’ll get more chances to come here when I’m close with him, no?”

Many might not know this, but Rachel was very well aware that Arthur definitely would not sit back and watch her getting close with Justin.

Meanwhile in the study, the butler of the Burton Residence played the security footage on the screen. "Sir, here it is."

Playing on the screen was the footage caught by the security camera, in which Rachel and Justin appeared one after another in the living room.

Arthur's expression became cold in the blink of an eye. "Is she here to look for something? Perhaps I should ask if the whole reason for her sudden return to the country is actually to look for something." "Do you mean that thing?" "I never expected that she is a rather sentimental person—she still held on to that even after five years have gone by."

"Should I remind Young Master Justin about this?" "There's no need. Forgetting her is better for Justin. The less he knows about the events back then, the better it is for him." At the banquet, Jolly was called away by her parents, leaving Rachel on her own. There were quite a number of people who tried to strike a conversation with Rachel, but she maintained a polite yet distant attitude, which further piqued the interest of the gentlemen at the scene.

"It's impossible to transform from a peasant into a wealthy person over the course of one night. If these men knew that you have a kid, would they still be so courteous to you?" Amber's voice was heard coming from behind Rachel. Holding a wine glass, Rachel turned to cast her a glance. "You never change, do you? Have you forgotten what happened during the press conference? The fact that I'm Justin's ex-wife is well-known all over Riverdale. Do you think that they don't know that I have a kid?"

Amber's expression sank when she heard this. "That's because they don't know that you have an illegitimate child. How did you make Justin believe you? That b*stard can't possibly be his child!"

"Doesn't your face hurt?" Rachel remained impassive as she warned Amber, "I suggest that you watch your mouth and never let me hear the word 'b*stard' again." "You—" In fact, Amber's face still stung. The slap on her face not only shattered her status among the socialites of Riverdale but also humiliated her before the Burton Family. If Arthur ever found out that she had offended the Carter Family, he definitely would not forgive her easily.

When Rachel was going to say a few more words to warn Amber, she caught sight of a figure, which instantly made her skin crawl, and her hand that was holding the wine glass trembled.

“Rachel, you—” Before Amber managed to finish her words, Rachel suddenly turned around, picked up her skirts and ran off without the slightest hesitation. It was obvious that she was in a fluster.

Upon seeing that, Amber was livid with rage. Now she ignores me?

However, after a brief moment of anger, she spotted a familiar figure as well. In the distance, a man was clinking glasses and having a good chat with the guests at the banquet. The moment she saw the plump figure that could hardly fit in the suit, the reason for Rachel’s sudden strangeness dawned on her. Now I understand why Rachel dashed off from the banquet so suddenly!

“What happened? Did something happen?” Jolly chased after Rachel from behind. It was only when she saw Rachel’s blanched face upon entering the car did she realize how serious the matter was.

And so, she held Rachel’s hand. “Why are your hands so cold? What happened?”

After a while, Rachel finally returned to her senses and it was as if she had had a nightmare. Even so, she shook her head at Jolly. “Nothing happened. I’m just a little tired. I want to go back and rest.”

“Let me keep you company. Anyway, the banquet is ending and my parents are still there.” With that, she instructed the driver to drive away.

“Sleep if you don’t feel well; I’ll wake you up when we reach home.”

“Okay.” Rachel then leaned back against the car seat and watched as the night scene outside the window rapidly retreated backward. However, she couldn’t fall asleep and she could feel her temple pulsing the moment she shut her eyes. When she thought of the man she saw at the banquet, she felt her body shudder involuntarily, and her mind kept on replaying the incident that happened in that house six years ago.

Those degrading and devastating moments when her whole world fell apart before her had been eternally engraved in her mind. Rachel herself thought that she had moved on from that incident but even after so many years had gone by, the past still came back to haunt her the moment she laid eyes on that man. Every detail was as vivid as ever and it was as if it had 'ust happened yesterday.

The long night went by but Rachel did not manage to get a good night's sleep, so she felt rather lethargic at work in the morning. fter the morning meeting, Justin asked her to stay. "Other than Chris, the rest may leave." Everyone in the meeting room looked at one another with a profound gaze. In the end, the crowd dispersed and Frankie shut the door from outside, leaving Justin and Rachel alone in the spacious meeting room.

"Is there anything I can help you with?" Rachel asked, to which Justin replied, "Have you forgotten what you promised me yesterday? When are you going to move to the Burton Residence?" "I'm quite tied up these two days, so I'll head over in a couple of days." A s if he didn't hear what she said, Justin then ordered, allowing no room for rejection, "You will move to the Burton Residence today.

I'll have Frankie help you to move your things." She fell silent for a few seconds before she gave in and muttered, "There's no need for that. I don't have much belongings." However, Justin coldly stated

before leaving the meeting room, "Charlotte is looking forward to your return. Bear in mind not to bring anything or anyone that you shouldn't." Upon hearing that, Rachel frowned.

Chapter 214

In the afternoon, Rachel intentionally packed up and went home an hour earlier than usual.

"Mommy, why are you back so early today?" Samuel asked as he hopped off the couch with a surprised look on his face.

Rachel then picked him up. "Samuel, I would like to discuss something with you."

"What is it?"

"I will be staying with Charlotte for some time. Can you live with Jolly for the time being?"

"Sure." Samuel immediately agreed, which surprised Rachel. She fell silent for a moment before she added, "Samuel, I may be gone for quite some time, though."

"You can stay there as long as you need to. I'm sure Charlotte must have missed you. Since you have never stayed by her side for a long time before, I don't mind lending you to her for the time being."

His words warmed Rachel's heart and she praised, "Samuel, you are really my good baby."

Jolly, who returned rather early that day as well, helped Rachel to carry her luggage into the car. "I know that whatever I say won't be of much help to you since you have always been a more careful and thorough person than I am. Anyway, please be careful."

"I understand. Please take good care of Samuel."

"You can rest assured. Of course I will take good care of my son."

Before Rachel got into the car, however, she asked rather hesitatingly, "Jolly, do you think that I will stand a chance to get Charlotte's custody if I were to take this to court?"

"You wish to take Charlotte away from him?" A surprised look appeared on Jolly's face. "Have you thought this through? Charlotte not only has Justin behind her, but the entire Burton Family as well."

Rachel's brows were knitted into a tight frown and she murmured, "I know that this will be tough and in fact, it sounds like a fantasy. I'll drop this for now. It's time for me to leave."

"Hold on." Jolly suddenly stopped her, and the former was wearing a stern expression that seldom appeared on her face. "If you really wish to take this to court, my parents and I will definitely help you."

"Thank you, Jolly."

Although Rachel knew that Jolly meant what she said, she did not wish to drag the Carter Family into her private matter, so the thought of taking the case to court remained merely a thought. Jolly watched as Rachel's car slowly drove away, and a rare grim expression replaced her usually bright smile as she dialed an international number.

The phone rang for some time on the other end before it was picked up.

A sexy male voice then purred down the line, "Hello. Why did you call me all of a sudden, my sweetheart?" The man spoke in an American accent. "Stop messing around, Hernandez. I have something important to ask you. Aren't you a lawyer? I would like to ask you regarding a custody lawsuit."

"Sweetheart, I'm now on leave. If you wish to talk about work, let's talk in two weeks' time." "On leave, you say? So, are you giving up on dating Chris now?" "What do you mean?" The male voice on the other end of the call suddenly sounded serious. Through his voice over the phone, Jolly could even imagine how Hernandez straightened up from his lounging position in a beach chair. She then continued, "If you manage to pull this off, Chris will certainly be impressed by you."

Hernandez, however, did not reply. Meanwhile, Rachel drove her car into the garage of the Burton Residence. After she closed her trunk, she raised her head and noticed Justin at the garage entrance. "Are you here to welcome me personally?" She put down her luggage, flashing him a playful smile as she murmured, "I guess I'm pretty important to you."

"What are you thinking? I'm here to make sure that you don't bring anyone that you are not supposed to bring." "Who is this person that I'm not supposed to bring?" "Stop asking the obvious."

A hint of impatience crept across his brows and he muttered, "Since you have agreed to keep Charlotte company, don't think that you can have that brat occupy her time." "Charlotte kind of likes Samuel and they can be good friends even if they are not biological siblings, so there is no need to make a fuss out of this."

"Friends?" He scoffed and muttered, "There's no need. Charlotte doesn't need to share any of her belongings with anyone and she doesn't need anyone to share anything with her as well!"

Belongings? A line appeared between Rachel's brows as she thought to herself, I'm just a thing in his eyes.

"Dictatorial!"

"What did you say?"

Rachel, however, dragged her luggage and shot back, "I said that you are in my way! Move!"

As soon as she stepped foot into the house, Charlotte pounced on her. "Mommy! You are really back! Daddy didn't lie to me!"

Rachel picked her up. "Yes, I'm here to stay with you, Charlotte. Are you happy?"

"I am!" Charlotte cast a look behind Rachel and asked, "Where's Samuel? Why didn't he come with you?"

At the mention of Samuel, Rachel turned to look at Justin and under his forceful gaze, she had no choice but to lie. "Samuel prefers sleeping in his own bed and he prefers to stay where he is used to."

Charlotte blinked at her in response. "We could just move his bed over here, no?" Then, she turned to Justin and said, "Daddy, ask Mr. Beckham to get some men and move Samuel's bed over to our house. Samuel should live with us."

Justin was speechless when he heard that. Rachel, on the other hand, deliberately avoided his gaze and ignored him despite him trying to make eye contact with her.

"Daddy, hurry up and call Mr. Beckham!" An anxious Charlotte got out of Rachel's embrace and ran over to him, tugging and shaking his arm. "I want Samuel to come over to accompany me."

Meanwhile, Rachel leisurely watched their interaction with her arms crossed. Justin shot a sharp look at her and spoke in a light voice. "Samuel has his godmother to keep him company, so we have to get her

permission before we take him here, understand?" Rachel clenched her fists and her expression fell while she muttered, "Charlotte, let me help you to take a bath. Your face is dirty and it's almost bedtime." "Samuel—" "Samuel is busy.

He will come over after he is done with his things." "Okay!" Rachel then darted Justin a glance before holding Charlotte's hand and leading the child to the bathroom. After putting Charlotte to bed, Rachel exited her room, only to find Justin gone. Surprisingly, he kept his word—she was indeed here to keep Charlotte company only.

For the next couple of days, Justin did not even come over to stay. Even if he came back for a meal during the day, he did not stay the night. At noon, the sun was hanging high in the clear sky. Sitting on the indoor swings of The Bilingual Elementary were Charlotte and Samuel, each occupying a swing.

Charlotte heaved a heavy sigh and mumbled, "Daddy hasn't been coming home to sleep. I wonder what happened." "It's fine." Samuel bit on the straw of the milk box while his short legs dangled mid-air. "I don't like when he spends time with Mommy, anyway." "Are you still holding grudges?

Have you forgotten what I told you? Only your biological parents make the best family." "I remember, which is why I'm being cooperative, but there's nothing we can do if he doesn't return home." "How about I pretend to be sick so that he comes back?" Samuel shook her head in a seemingly mature manner.

"If you do that, your daddy would think that Mommy didn't take good care of you." "He's our Daddy!" Charlotte corrected him seriously. At that moment, their homeroom teacher's voice rang from a distance, "Charlotte, Samuel, the outdoor activity session has ended. Why are you guys still out here?"

The man who entered the sports hall was rather young. He had short black hair that made him look refreshing, and the contagious smile on his cute face made him appear especially amicable to children who had just entered elementary school.

Chapter 215

"Mr. Wade!" Charlotte and Samuel immediately hopped off the swings.

The teacher held their hands, one on each side. "I knew that the two of you would be here. I've told you two multiple times that you have to return to the classroom right away after the outdoor activity session ends. Also, why didn't the two of you finish your homework properly in the last two days?"

Charlotte had never attended elementary school before this, while Samuel had been raised abroad. Thus, they were unlike most children who grew up in this country where respect for teachers formed part of the culture. On top of that, because of their wayward personality, they didn't take any criticism to heart.

Upon seeing their unfazed attitude, the good-tempered teacher added resignedly, "Forget it. I'll speak to your parents during the parent-child activity next week."

Meanwhile at the Burton Group, Rachel received a call from the nanny of the Burton Family as soon as she finished the task at hand. "Miss Chris, I have something to attend to at my hometown tonight, so I would like to take leave today. Can I trouble you to go and pick Charlotte up from school?"

"Of course, no worries."

After Rachel hung up the call, she realized that she forgot to ask which school Charlotte attended but when she called the nanny again, all she heard was the busy tone.

As it was almost the dismissal time of elementary schools, she decided that she couldn't afford to wait any longer, so she gave Justin a call.

"Hello?" Justin's cold and indifferent voice was heard from the other end of the line. "What's the matter?"

"Which school does Charlotte go to?"

"Why are you asking this question?"

"Martha has gone back to her hometown to tend to some business, so she asked me to go and pick Charlotte up from school. If you are free now, would you like to go instead?"

After a brief moment, he simply uttered, "The Bilingual Elementary."

The Bilingual Elementary? Stunned, Rachel squeezed the phone in her hand. "The Bilingual Elementary located on Sunnysouth Road?"

"What's wrong?"

Rachel was shocked when he confirmed his reply. This is such a coincidence; Samuel was transferred to that school as well.

...

It was time for the school to be dismissed when both Rachel and Justin arrived.

On their way there, Justin asked with a livid expression, "Why did that brat happen to study in that elementary school? Aren't you going to give me a reasonable explanation?" "That's exactly what I wanted to ask you. Samuel's transfer procedure was completed a long time ago."

"Don't tell me that the two kids colluded on this?"

Rachel darted him a look and replied indifferently, "You don't know Charlotte well, do you? It's not at all surprising if this is really their doing." Charlotte was quite mischievous and Samuel was no better. There was nothing the two of them couldn't pull off when an imaginative kid and a daredevil joined forces, let alone when it was merely a small arrangement of studying in the same elementary school.

"First grade students have been dismissed," Frankie reminded them before Justin and Rachel alighted from the car. Headed by a student holding a card that indicated their classes, the students queued up in lines according to their classes and exited the main gate of the school. The homeroom teachers were leading the queues and handed the children to their respective parents one after another.

"Samuel's mother?"

“Here!” Upon hearing the name Samuel, Rachel reflexively raised her hand to show her presence. The teacher raised his head and saw Rachel but the very next instant, his expression abruptly changed. “Rachel!” The male teacher suddenly dashed out from the crowd and stared at her in a daze for a long time. Rachel froze for a moment as well.

Although a name popped up in her head, it seemed to not belong to this man with a refreshing look before her—in fact, he looked completely different from the person she recalled. Before she could respond, she was taken into a firm embrace. “Rachel, I knew that you would come back!

I missed you very much these years!” Both Samuel and Charlotte’s eyes widened. The very next instant, Justin tugged Rachel out of the teacher’s embrace and pulled her behind him, pushing the male teacher away in the course. He then reprimanded, “What are you doing?” “Justin?”

The male teacher’s expression fell as soon as he saw the other man and he immediately grabbed him by his collar. “Why are you still pestering Rachel?” “Daddy! Mr. Wade!” Samuel and Charlotte surrounded them anxiously, while the crowd raised their phones to record them. It was a complete mess at the scene. However, when Rachel heard the name ‘Wade’, she recalled who he was. “Victor!”

Victor had actually become a teacher of a private elementary school. His blond hair had been replaced by refreshing, dark hair that accentuated his clean and gentle features, which made him look much younger.

“Rachel, is he still pestering you now?”

“Let go of me!” The minute Justin said that, he was greeted by a whooshing punch to the face.

“You b*stard!”

Before Justin managed to react, he felt a pang of pain on his face that made him cover his eye as he fell onto the ground.

Upon seeing that Victor was about to land another hit, Charlotte rushed up to him. “Stop hitting Daddy!”

Rachel quickly stopped Victor, for fear that he might hurt the child. "Victor, stop!"

At that point, someone from the crowd shouted, "The police are here."

The crowd gave way to the policeman who hurried over from nearby.

"Who is making trouble? Come with me to the police station."

They then arrived at the police station. One of Justin's eyes was swollen due to the impact, and the bruise that circled his eye made him look rather ridiculous.

"Why did you guys fight?" The policeman asked as he took notes.

As there were security cameras at the entrance of the elementary school, the footage clearly revealed that it was Justin who made the first move.

Justin, however, felt that he was in the right. "I didn't start the fight. Isn't it a normal reaction to pull him away when a stranger suddenly hugged my daughter's mother in broad daylight?" The policeman furrowed his brows and asked Rachel. "What is your relationship with him?" "He is my ex-husband," Rachel answered.

The policeman then pointed at Victor and asked, "What's your relationship with him, then?" "He is my younger brother." "Your biological brother?" "No, a friend whom I treat like my biological brother." "Okay." The policeman nodded thoughtfully before asking Justin, "The two of them know each other, so why did you claim that he is a stranger?" "I don't know him."

"What are you saying?"

"You don't know me?" Victor, who was off to one side, raised his brow and countered, "Are you pretending that you have lost your memory just because we did not meet for five years?"

“Quiet! Did I allow you to speak?” The policeman shot a glare at Victor.

“Sir, this man is prone to committing domestic violence. Rachel had a hard time when they were filing for divorce back then, but now he is still pestering her. If you were in my shoes, would you be able to speak with him calmly?”

“Domestic violence? Is this true?” “Nonsense!” Justin was in rage. “Rachel, why do you know this kind of a person?” Rachel, on the other hand, had a complex look on her face.

“Sir, this is a long story. Let’s settle today’s issue first. How should we resolve this?”

“At least there’s one reasonable person among you guys.” The policeman then handed them two forms. “What we usually do is mediate between the two parties.

If the two of you agree to reconcile, you two can leave after filling in the forms and you will settle the dispute on your own. If you two refuse, both of you can have your injuries examined and go through the litigation process.”

“We will go through the litigation process.”

“I refuse to reconcile with him.” Turned out that Justin and Victor both had the same opinion. Justin glanced at his watch and announced, “My lawyer will be here anytime soon.” Upon hearing that, Victor snapped, “Do you think that I’m afraid of you?

Let’s take this to court then!” “Enough! Are the two of you done yet? The kids still haven’t had their lunch!” Rachel snarled. “They will reconcile.” She then shoved the two reconcile forms toward each of them and curtly added, “Sign them.”

Chapter 216

It was already dark outside when everyone came out after signing the documents. “Let’s have dinner together, Rachel.” Victor was still delighted. “I haven’t seen you for so many years, and I have lots of stuff to tell you about.”

“No!” Before Rachel could respond, Charlotte suddenly sprang toward them from Justin’s side, clinging onto Rachel’s leg while eyeing Victor with hostility. “Mommy is going home with me. She’s not going to dinner with some bad teacher.”

Victor was startled for a moment before he recalled that Rachel had given birth to a daughter before leaving back then. “Rachel, could Charlotte be...”

Rachel gave him a slight nod with tenderness in her eyes.

“Then what about Samuel?”

“It’s a long story. I’ll tell you about it some other day when there’s an opportunity.” Rachel then glanced behind her. “It’s already getting late today, and I may have to go to the hospital, so let’s meet up some other time, Victor.”

Victor was somewhat disappointed. Still, he replied, “Okay.”

“Why don’t we exchange our contact numbers?” Rachel took out her cell phone first.

“Sure.” After that, Victor hailed a taxi and left. However, he warned Justin before he left by saying, “If you dare to harm a hair on Rachel’s head, I will never let you off!”

Justin’s face darkened at Victor’s words, whereas Rachel quickly urged the taxi driver to drive. When Rachel, Justin, and the two kids were the only ones left at the police station’s entrance, Rachel shot a glance at him. “Let’s go.”

However, Justin was as cross as a bear. “Are you letting him off just like that? I haven’t gotten round to examining my injury yet.”

“Are you coming or not?”

“Where are we going?”

"To the hospital" Rachel shot back icily. "Don't you want to have your injury examined? Let's get it done. I'll take the responsibility if there's anything wrong with it."

When Rachel registered Justin at the hospital's emergency department, she ran into Julian, who happened to be on duty today. He asked, "Why are you here in the hospital? Are you unwell?"

"It's not me; it's your cousin." Rachel threw a glance at the waiting area in the distance. "Victor is the teacher in charge of Samuel's class. He and Justin ran into each other at the school's entrance, and they came to blows."

"Victor?" Julian was very surprised. "What a small world."

"It's a long story."

"Just give it to me. I'll check on him." Julian took the medical card from Rachel and took Justin right away to the debridement room, whereby he examined Justin's eye injury with the aid of a flashlight. "It's not a big deal. You'll be fine once we apply some medicine on it."

"Are you sure that I'm completely fine?"

"Who is the doctor here, Justin-me or you?"

Justin answered back coldly, "I'm afraid that you might shield that brat on purpose. Who knows if you're on his side?"

"I have no leisure for that." Julian shot him a disdainful look. "You completely deserve to be punched in the face."

"What do you mean by that?" Justin knitted his brows. "Could there be bad blood between me and that brat as well?"

“This has nothing much to do with him, but he regards Rachel as his own sister, you know.”

“Is this about Rachel again?” Justin looked annoyed.

Julian slammed the tweezers down onto the porcelain dish. He then replied coldly, “The fact that you don’t remember it doesn’t mean that it never happened. Rachel has never been unfair to you; you’re the one who has been unkind to her the whole time.”

Justin’s face darkened, for it wasn’t the first time he had heard this. “What do you mean by saying that I’ve been unkind to her? The responsibility of a failed marriage should fall on both sides at the very least, yet you speak for her unconditionally and shift all the blame onto me. You have such a close relationship with her, don’t you?”

“Well, won’t believe me? Let me tell you what you did back then.”

“That’s not necessary! I’ll find out about the truth myself. I don’t need you to tell me about it,” Justin replied before he picked his overcoat and stormed out of the room.

Rachel and the two kids were waiting outside the door when they saw Justin coming out in a huff. “Daddy!” Charlotte ran toward him.

However, instead of hugging Charlotte, Justin said coldly to Rachel, “Take Charlotte home. I have something else to attend to, so I won’t be giving you all a ride.”

Rachel was baffled as she watched him storm off in a great rage. “What has gotten into him again?”

“He’s pissed off because something’s hit a nerve in him, I guess,” Julian answered with an apathetic expression. He didn’t believe that Justin was totally uninterested in what had happened back then. When he finds out the truth and figures everything out he’ll realize how cruel he was to Rachel back then.

The night was dark, and the dim yellow light shone on the French window. At that moment, a woman’s figure reflected upon it. The woman’s body was wrapped in a pink silk slip dress as a pair of arms hugged

her from behind. "What are you thinking about by yourself here? Did you dress in such an attractive manner because you knew that I'd be coming today?"

Amber shuddered. "When did you arrive?"

"Just a moment ago." Noah seemed impatient as he lowered his head and kissed her neck.

Amber suddenly grabbed his hand and kept it from moving about. "I'm not in the mood today."

"What's wrong?"

"Are you going to keep carrying on with me on the sly like this? Will you marry me if I break off my engagement with Justin?"

In an instant, Noah lost all his interest; he let go of Amber and sat down alone on the sofa nearby. "Why are you talking about this? You're only saying so simply because you've sensed danger upon your sister's return, am I right? You talk as if you're willing to give up on Justin for my sake." Just forget about scheming against each other. We're both wily foxes, after all, he thought to himself.

"What does that girl think she is? How could she pose a threat to me?"

"Is she not posing a threat to you?" As he sat with his legs crossed, Noah pulled off his tie, revealing a large part of his chest in a raffish demeanor with a half-smile on his face. "Why did I hear that she's

moved into the Burton Residence, though?"

"What did you say?" Amber's expression changed.

"Don't you know that yet? No wonder you look so unperturbed."

"When did this happen? This is impossible!"

“Why don’t you make a phone call and ask about it yourself? Not only has that woman moved back with feverish haste after Old Mr. Burton’s birthday banquet, she’s even taking the kid to and from school with Justin. The way I see it, you’ll cease to be Justin’s fiancée very soon, much less marry into the Burton Family.” Noah snorted coldly while flicking some cigarette ash away. “I’d advise you to stop indulging in wishful thinking and serve me well. Even though I won’t let you be a part of my family, I’ll give you your due.”

Amber’s shoulders were trembling as Noah’s humiliating words hit her eardrums one after another. Rachel has actually established herself as the lady of the house just like that! / worked hard for five years, yet I didn’t manage to do that. How did she do it upon her return? she thought to herself. “Young Master Noah, I have been

carrying on with you for so many years. I won’t be asking too much of you if I beg you to do something for me, right?”

“Tell me about it.”

“Mr. Wayne of Golden Herbs Enterprise seems to be on good terms with you.”

Noah’s pupils contracted slightly. “What do you want to do?”

Amber lifted a corner of her mouth and sat astride Noah’s lap. “You just need to introduce me to him. It won’t do you any harm.”

Noah was rendered speechless by her words.

The next morning, Frankie was startled to see Justin when he clocked in at the company as usual. “President Burton? What brings you here at such an early hour?”

Justin looked up from behind the computer. He was still wearing the clothes he had been wearing yesterday.

“What’s up with your eye, President Burton?”

Chapter 217

“It’s all right.” Justin pushed the processed documents on his desk to the side. “Hand these out to the departments.”

It took a long time before Frankie came to his senses. “Yes, President Burton.” Since he was still worried, he asked while taking the documents, “Is your eye really all right, sir?”

Justin gave him a frosty look.

Frankie shuddered instantly. “I’ll deliver the documents now.”

“Wait a minute,” Justin called out to him. “Find another school for Charlotte.” He was worried. Since that brat named Victor held a grudge against him, it was not a good thing for Charlotte to be in his class.

Soon after Frankie left, there was a knock on the door. “Come in,” said Justin.

“Hey, Justin.”

Justin looked up when he heard Amber’s voice.

As she hurriedly stepped toward him, Amber exclaimed, “Oh, gosh! What’s the matter with your eye, Justin?”

“I knocked into something by accident.” Justin frowned as he didn’t want to elaborate much. “What brings you here?”

“I have a lecture on medicine this afternoon, so I came to get something and bring you breakfast while I’m at it.” Amber waved the breakfast bag she was holding. “It seems pretty bad. Let me look at it.” She put down the breakfast bag before immediately searching the office for the first-aid kit.

Justin hadn't had time to take any ointment when he left Julian's place hastily last night. Since the bruise around his eye was left untreated, it had gotten so bad at the moment that he couldn't even hold this morning's meeting.

Amber had been a doctor before, so her skills were more than sufficient to treat such a minor bruise. "It may hurt a little, so please bear with it, Justin." She dipped the cotton swab in the ointment and applied it around Justin's eyes. Then, she patiently blew on the bruise to relieve the pain.

Justin was somewhat moved inwardly when he saw how meticulous and attentive Amber was. After all, she was at his bedside when he regained consciousness after the car accident back then, and she had always been by his side over the last five years. Even though he was indifferent to her, she never made a fuss about it. She had a meek disposition, for which she should be given credit.

After treating the bruise, Amber lowered her head and packed the first-aid kit back up. "It's done. Try not to let the bruise come into contact with water over the next few days. I'll tell Frankie which medicine to buy."

"Are you here expressly to bring me breakfast?"

Amber was startled for a moment before her eyes reddened slightly. "I can't hide anything from you, can I? I just want to see you since I haven't seen you for a long time. I know I shouldn't disturb you while you're working."

"It's all right. I'm not busy today."

"Really? I didn't bother you?" Amber was pleasantly surprised at Justin's rare display of patience.

"No, you didn't." Justin had a thoughtful expression on his face. "Since you're here, I'd like to ask you something."

"Sure, just go ahead."

“Rachel is your sister, so you should know very well why I married her and divorced her back then, right?”

Amber’s smile froze on her lips in an instant. It seems like he’s asking about Rachel, she thought to herself. “Why are you asking me this all of a sudden?”

“Julian said I had done a disservice to your sister back then, but no one can tell me what happened at the time.”

Amber pinched her palm as she tried to calm herself down. “Why would Julian say that? How could you possibly have done a disservice to Rachel? Had she not gotten in the way back then, I would have been the person who married into the Burton Family as your wife.”

Justin frowned with a puzzled look in his eyes. “What do you mean?”

Meanwhile, when Rachel left home early in the morning, she received a text message from Victor asking her out for dinner. After five years of separation, it surprised her that the delinquent teenager back then was now a primary school teacher-and Samuel’s class teacher at that!

They met up at a hot pot restaurant for dinner that evening, during which Victor kept filling Rachel’s bowl with blanched ingredients. “Try this, Rachel. My colleagues and I often visit this hot pot restaurant.”

“All right, that’s enough. I can’t finish everything here.” Rachel felt helpless since she couldn’t stop Victor. “By the way, the fight didn’t affect your job, did it?”

“No, it didn’t. Charlotte didn’t come to school today, though. Did something come up?”

Rachel was startled. “Didn’t Charlotte go to school?” The girl had gone downstairs for breakfast when Rachel was about to go out early this morning. The servants even had Charlotte’s school bag and school uniform ready in preparation before taking her to school.

“Is she upset because of the fight I had with Justin yesterday?”

“No, it’s all right. I’ll find out why once I go back and ask her about it tonight.”

“Rachel, are you staying under the same roof as Justin?”

“That’s a long story. I have just come back from overseas, after all.” Rachel decided not to tell Victor too much about the details since she thought he and Justin had little opportunity to meet each other. Moreover, Justin’s amnesia was too complicated to explain in a few words. “Don’t worry about these things. Now that you have become a teacher, I can put my mind at ease since you’re doing well.”

“What about you, Rachel? How have you been doing these years? Why are you suddenly able to speak? Was it Dr. Peters who cured you? Also, what about Samuel? Are you married?”

Victor fired so many questions at Rachel in rapid succession that she didn’t know which question to answer for a moment. She threw her hands up helplessly and replied, “You’ve asked me so many questions. Which of them should I answer first?”

“I’m sorry, Rachel. I was too excited.” Victor scratched his head. “It’s okay, just take your time and tell me about it. We’ve got plenty of time for that, anyway.”

“You’ve become a sensible man, Victor. Your Grandma must be happy to see you like this right now.”

“My Grandma passed away the year before last.”

Upon hearing this, Rachel looked visibly stunned. After a long time, she reached out and held Victor’s arm. “I’m sorry. I didn’t know that.”

“It’s okay.” Victor replied with an anguished smile while trying hard to put on a look of relief. “Grandma had been senile for many years. In the end, she passed away quite peacefully without suffering from much pain. Luckily, Miss Janice was there to help me with Grandma’s funeral at the time. Let’s not talk about this

anymore. Have some more of the food, Rachel-you’re skinnier than you were back then.”

“You too.”

The clouds of steam enshrouding the hot pot restaurant seemed to transport them back five years in time to the days when Nancy was still alive and Victor often came to her place to help her make pierogies. As Rachel recalled these memories, she suddenly felt a twinge of anguish in her heart.

Night soon fell, and it was already late when Rachel returned to the Burton Residence. As soon as she came home, she heard the sound of something being smashed in the dining room. A priceless piece of bone china bowl flew directly out of that area. Luckily, she dodged it quickly enough, and it instantly smashed into pieces at her feet.

“I’m not transferring to another school! Who told you that I’m going to do that?!” The girl’s shrill voice nearly pierced Rachel’s eardrum. At this moment, Charlotte was like an angry little bird; her face was red with anger as she pounded the table with her tiny fists. One had to say that she definitely inherited Justin’s hot temper and irritable disposition.

On the other hand, Justin looked imperturbable. “Your teacher isn’t a good person, and your school isn’t that great either. I’ve already gotten someone to find a new school for you.”

“I’m not going to a new school! I want to go to the same school as Samuel!”

“Is this why you insisted on going to school?”

Chapter 218

“I’m not transferring to another school! I want to go to school with Samuel.”

“Haven’t you had enough? I’m doing this for your own good, Charlotte.”

“You’re not!” Charlotte suddenly caught sight of Rachel and instantly burst into tears. She stretched out her arms toward Rachel while saying, “Mommy, Daddy’s bullying me! He wants to transfer me to another school!”

Rachel promptly held her in her arms. "There, there. Stop crying, my dear Charlotte."

Charlotte cried even louder in an instant. "Daddy won't let me go to the same school with Samuel."

Justin, who was the last person on earth who could bear to see Charlotte cry, immediately furrowed his brows.

Rachel promptly asked, "Why would you do that? Charlotte is finally willing to go to school. Besides, the school is pretty nice. I have done an on-site survey of the school, and the teachers there are quite responsible. How could you transfer her to another school at whim?"

"Are all teachers there responsible? Are you talking about the teacher who hit me?"

"That was an accident."

"An accident?" Justin let out a cold snort. "A school that has such a teacher mustn't be a nice school. That brat is on good terms with you, so you'd definitely feel easy about sending your son there. I don't feel easy about letting Charlotte go to that school, though."

"Can't you take Charlotte's own wishes into account for once? Say it yourself, Charlotte. Does Mr. Wade treat you well?"

Charlotte nodded her head while crying. "He's very nice to me! He's nice to Samuel and me... I don't want to go to another school!"

"You heard that, didn't you?"

"So what?" Justin sounded so resolute that he wouldn't take no for an answer. "I have already made a decision on this matter, and I'm not asking for anyone's opinion. You'll transfer to another school as I'm telling you to."

"I won't!"

“Don’t go to school then. Just stay at home and learn from your private tutors like you used to. No one can change my mind on this!” Justin said. After finishing his sentence, he slammed down his cutlery, shot Rachel a cold glance, and stormed out of the dining room without looking back.

Rachel instantly clenched her fists as a shudder suddenly swept over her. The look Justin shot at her just now was so chilling as if it instantly swept her back six years in time to those days where she was left at his disposal and the nightmares that terrified her. She couldn’t help feeling there was something different in the way he looked at her.

The next day, Lisa knocked on the door and came in soon after Rachel arrived at the office. “Miss Hudson, the President’s office just called to inform us that we’ll be receiving a herbal supplier at 10.00AM. They told you to get ready and go upstairs before that for a meeting.”

“Haven’t we always ordered herbs from the same supplier? Is President Burton planning to order from someone else instead?”

“I’m not sure about this, but the supplier seems to have quoted a price lower than the market rate.”

“Okay, I got it.”

Rachel was deep in thought after Lisa left. Why the sudden change of the herbal supplier? Not only that, Justin

even bypassed me and ordered the change. As the acting sales director of Burton Pharmaceuticals, I haven’t gotten wind of this at all.

Before 10.00AM, Rachel went to Justin’s office with the medicinal product catalog. “Hi, Miss Hudson.” Frankie stopped her at the door.

“What’s wrong?” Rachel was baffled. “Isn’t President Burton inside?”

“Uh, nothing. President Burton is waiting for you. The supplier has arrived as well.”

Rachel replied with a straight face, "Then I'll go inside right now."

"Miss Hudson..." Frankie hesitated for a long time as if he wanted to say something.

"Is there anything else?"

However, he shook his head in the end. "Nothing. Please go inside."

With that, the office door was pulled open from the outside. Rachel straightened her clothes and came in to

see Justin and the supplier sitting on the sofa, having a nice conversation. However, the instant the supplier raised his head, Rachel's face was instantly drained of color. She finally realized why Frankie had hesitated to speak just now-the man chatting happily with Justin in the office was a nightmare to her.

"Allow me to introduce Mr. Wayne, the president of Golden Herbs Enterprise." Justin sat erect on the sofa. "Mr. Wayne, this is Chris, the sales director of Burton Pharmaceuticals."

Mr. Wayne turned to look at Rachel. As he gave her a nod, he greeted, "I have heard long ago that Miss Chris is very professional, but I didn't expect you to be so beautiful."

Rachel's hands were covered in a cold sweat. Her face was as white as a sheet, and her ears were buzzing. Six years ago, when she first tried to ask Justin for divorce and requested that she be allowed to leave the Burton Family, Justin took her to a nightclub and left her at the disposal of the man before her eyes. The dazzling purple light in the private room, the man's greasy and glowing face, the various 'instruments of torture' hung on the wall, and the sound of the clothes being ripped apart hit her suddenly like a surging tide, instantly overwhelming all her senses.

"Chris?"

Justin's voice brought Rachel back to her senses somewhat. Like a marionette, she stepped toward the sofa in a daze, not knowing how she took the steps.

Mr. Wayne straightened up and extended his hand to her. "Hi, Miss Chris. Nice to meet you."

Nice to meet you? An overwhelming fishy smell suddenly surged up Rachel's throat. Before Justin and Mr. Wayne could speak, she suddenly covered her mouth and ran into the restroom. She nearly vomited up the dinner she had yesterday as her stomach churned over and over again. Is Justin doing this on purpose? Is he using Mr. Wayne to disgust me and remind me of that embarrassing past?

Just then, she heard someone bang at the door. "What's wrong with you, Rachel?"

After a long time, Rachel regained her composure, forcibly suppressed the feelings of resentment and shame within her, and pulled the restroom door open. Justin's hand was still outstretched. When he saw that she opened the door, his hand naturally fell to his side. "What's wrong?"

"I should be the one who asks you this question instead. Is Mr. Wayne the new herbal supplier?"

"Well? What's wrong with that?"

Rachel secretly clenched her fists as she studied Justin's expression. She asked probingly, "It's not that Burton Pharmaceuticals hasn't worked with him before. Our company put him on a blacklist and vowed to

never work with him anymore, so why would we suddenly start working with him again?"

Justin glanced at her in surprise. "You know quite a lot, but do you know there are no permanent enemies in business? Golden Herbs Enterprise has had a nice reputation in the market in recent years. Since our collaboration would be a win-win situation, no one will care about some past misunderstandings."

"Misunderstandings?" Rachel clenched her teeth. "Don't you even remember that incident?"

"Remember what?"

Rachel was too ashamed to tell Justin what had happened. She replied coldly, "He's a person of disreputable character. One just needs to ask around a little in Riverdale to know that he is a tough nut to crack. I'm not taking this project. Let someone take over it instead." After finishing her sentence, she walked past Justin as if to leave. She would never get in touch with a disgusting person like Mr. Wayne unless she was out of her mind!

"Stay where you are!" Justin grabbed her arm effortlessly with his large hand. His chilling voice could be heard saying, "What place do you think Burton Pharmaceuticals is? I'm not paying you to act dignified- I'm paying you to work for me! What right do you have to choose your projects?"

Chapter 219

"Anyone can take up the project. I can take up any project except this one!" As Rachel failed to struggle free of Justin's grasp, she gritted her teeth and said, "Since this project is such an easy job, let someone else take it up instead. Lots of people would want to work on this!"

As soon as she finished her sentence, a gust of wind brushed against her ear. Justin slapped his hand against the door frame behind her ear, trapping her in a huge shadow by forming an enclosure with his arm and the wall in the corner. "I'm not consulting with you. This is a notice-either accept it or resign," he asserted in a peremptory tone with a frosty look in his eyes.

Rachel glared at Justin; the feelings of resentment that had accumulated for many years surged in her chest, causing her to tremble involuntarily. She had thousands of reasons to say no to Justin's threat, but she nevertheless replied, "I'll accept it." She agreed to take up the project only for one reason-she had to stay at Burton Pharmaceuticals by Justin's side to find the evidence linked to Hans' death. "I'll accept it. Can you let go of me now?" She gradually calmed down while looking at the man fearlessly with an extremely cold look in her eyes.

Justin let go of her with a frown.

When Mr. Wayne saw them returning to the office, he asked with concern, "Chris, are you all right?"

Rachel managed a forced smile. "I'm fine; perhaps I ate something bad. Sorry for being impolite just now, Mr. Wayne. I'll consult with you later about our collaboration. If you have any questions regarding our medicinal materials, you may ask me directly."

“No problem. Naturally, someone recommended by President Burton must be reliable.” Mr. Wayne pushed his glasses. The greasy face behind his glasses looked as lewd as it had been back then, so much so that it disgusted Rachel just to take another look at it.

Justin watched their interaction the whole time, but he didn’t notice anything wrong with Mr. Wayne, who spoke and conducted himself in a very polite manner. However, Justin was puzzled by how alarmed Rachel looked. Could they have known each other before?

Rachel was hypervigilant at first, but Mr. Wayne didn’t overstep any boundaries at all. All he talked about was the collaboration between his company and Burton Pharmaceuticals, and this caused her to suspect that Mr. Wayne had forgotten her. After all, six years had passed since then, so it shouldn’t be surprising for him to forget a woman whom he had met just once in those six years. As Rachel thought of this, she slowly relaxed.

After the introduction, Mr. Wayne got up and said his farewells. Rachel said, “As for the matters regarding our collaboration, I’ll have my assistant draw up the contract and send it for you to look over.”

“Won’t you see me out, Chris?”

As soon as Mr. Wayne finished his sentence, Rachel unconsciously curled up her fingers.

Justin frowned at one side before shooting her a warning glance.

Rachel pinched the palm of her hand and forced a smile. “This way, please, Mr. Wayne.” As the elevator door slowly closed, she pushed the button to the first floor. “Mr. Wayne, if you are dissatisfied with any of the details we have just discussed regarding our collaboration, please come right out with it. We can talk about them.”

“You look more seductive compared to when I last met you six years ago, Chris. If President Burton hadn’t introduced us to each other, I wouldn’t have dared to recognize you.”

When Rachel heard Mr. Wayne’s words, her mind went black at once, and her temples pulsed.

Mr. Wayne then continued slowly, “However, compared to you, who can now speak, I prefer the little mute who couldn’t even cry out when being whipped back then. She was exciting and interesting enough-”

Rachel stepped back; she went so weak at the knees that she could hardly keep her feet. “You recognized me from the beginning.”

“How could I forget you, Mrs. Burton?” Mr. Wayne grabbed Rachel’s arm. “I still remember your smell very well in the past six years!”

Rachel’s head was buzzing as if she had gotten an electric shock. The arm that Mr. Wayne grabbed was so stiff that she couldn’t move it at all. She tried to make a sound, but she couldn’t make any when she opened her mouth.

The elevator reached the first floor with a ding. Before the elevator door slowly opened, Mr. Wayne had let go of Rachel’s hand. “Hi, Miss Hudson,” those waiting for the elevator outside greeted her.

Only then did Rachel come to her senses and brace herself to say to the staff, “This is Mr. Wayne from Golden Herbs Enterprise.”

“Hi, Mr. Wayne.”

“Hi, everyone.” Mr. Wayne shot a glance at Rachel. “Let’s go, Miss Hudson.”

Rachel’s face was so strained that she couldn’t manage a smile as she pinched the palm of her hand.

Meanwhile, the computer screen in Justin’s office showed the surveillance footage of the elevator, allowing him to hear every word of the conversation between Rachel and Mr. Wayne. As I expected, Rachel and Mr. Wayne have known each other before.

His eyes gradually darkened as those disgusting words still reverberated in his ears. Soon, a look of deepening anger crept over his face. Rachel didn’t dare to take up this project not because of Mr.

Wayne's character but because she was feeling guilty, he thought to himself. As the words 'your smell' resounded in his head, he instantly clenched his fists. No wonder... No wonder I divorced this woman back then! How many other scandalous things is she hiding from me?

"Here's the new proposal, President Burton."

Frankie's voice snapped Justin out of his thoughts. After coming to his senses, he glanced at Frankie and asked, "What did you want to tell me about Mr. Wayne before this?"

Frankie was stunned for a moment. "I wanted to say that Mr. Wayne is a notorious womanizer, so it isn't appropriate to let Miss Hudson take up this project. If anything bad happens, we'll lose more than we gain."

"In that case, who do you think should take up the project instead?"

"I think Ronald Weiss of the sales department is a nice candidate. After all, he's also a man, so he won't be taken advantage of." Frankie studied Justin's expression. Then, he immediately suggested, "It's not too late to let another person take up the project right now, President Burton. Would you like me to inform Miss Hudson right away?"

"Did I say that I want to let another person take up the project?" Justin darted a look at Frankie. Then, three words came out of his thin lips coldly and resolutely. "There's no need." She deserves to solve the trouble she's gotten herself into.

Mr. Wayne's appearance made Rachel feel blue all afternoon. When it was finally time to clock out, she heard her cell phone vibrating on her desk. Her face tensed the instant she saw Mr. Wayne's name displayed on the phone's screen. "Hello?"

"You should be getting off work by now, right, Chris? I have asked several friends to meet up for dinner this evening. Come and join us for a bit."

"I'm sorry, but I have to work overtime tonight."

“Meeting clients is considered overtime, right? Or do you mean that I am a petty herbs dealer who’s dispensable and of no importance to Burton Pharmaceuticals?”

“That’s not what I mean.”

“See you at 7.00PM at Golden Hill Nightclub then. Be sure to be there.”

Golden Hill Nightclub? Rachel’s face froze at once. The call had disconnected, and the phone’s main interface was displayed on the screen after a few beeps.

Rachel clutched her cell phone for a long time as she slowly calmed herself down. Why should I be afraid? Times are different now; I’m no longer under Justin’s coercion, nor can Mr. Wayne do anything to me. Why should I be afraid of joining the dinner?

Chapter 220

Rachel drove to the nightclub alone after work. As soon as she entered the private room, she saw the men inside with the nightclub’s hostesses in each of their arms. Mr. Wayne beckoned to her enthusiastically as he said, “Come over here, Chris. Let me introduce her to you guys. This is Chris, Burton Pharmaceuticals’ sales director. She’s a knockout, isn’t she?”

“Burton Pharmaceuticals’ sales director? Aren’t you President Burton’s ex-wife?”

“You were on the news some time ago.”

The atmosphere in the private room livened up at once. These men were in the same circle, so they knew almost everything about the Burton Family.

Rachel forced a smile at everyone.

Mr. Wayne waved his hand. “Why are we talking about this? Friendly relations should exist between buyer and

seller even if they fail to clinch a deal. Despite their marriage ending with divorce, they still have to run the business. Just look at how magnanimous Chris is—isn't she still working at Burton Pharmaceuticals? It's just that she's put to a little inconvenience by having to work under her ex-husband."

"Wow, your heart is aching, Mr. Wayne! What are you waiting for, Chris? Have a drink with him!"

Rachel frowned as a glass of wine was shoved into her hand. "I drove here, so I can't drink alcohol."

"What's the problem with that? You can just hire a chauffeur to drive your car. There are plenty of them everywhere."

"Sorry, but I don't drink."

The room instantly went silent. Mr. Wayne put down his wine glass and leaned back against the leather sofa. He then asked, "It's not like I have to collaborate with Burton Pharmaceuticals. There are so many people here; it doesn't make a difference for me to sign the contract with any of them. Sincerity is best expressed by one's willingness to drink, don't you think so?"

Rachel was very hesitant as she looked at the wine glass before her. She knew very well that once one drank a glass of wine in such a social engagement, they would end up drinking even more. Moreover, Mr. Wayne was deliberately trying to make her drunk. Then, as her eyes flickered, she suggested, "Mr. Wayne, do you mean that you'll sign the contract as long as I finish this glass of wine?"

"That's not a problem, of course. Am I the kind of person who goes back on his word?"

"That's right! What kind of person do you think Mr. Wayne is?"

"Mr. Wayne feels sorry for you, so he's taking you out to help you relax. You'd better not do it the hard way," said the toadies around them as they made a fuss.

Rachel raised her glass. "In that case, thank you, Mr. Wayne. Here's to you." Then, she downed the wine in one gulp in front of everyone. The strong smell of alcohol spread in her mouth, but she showed everyone the emptied glass without letting her face show any emotion.

“You can drink a lot!”

“Come on, let’s drink another glass.”

“Mr. Wayne, about the contract,”

“Since I’ve promised to sign the contract, I’ll definitely sign it. The contract hasn’t been drafted yet, right? Have your assistant send it to me tomorrow morning, and I’ll sign it right away.”

“It’s not necessary to go through so much trouble. I brought the contract with me,” Rachel replied. As she spoke, she took a document out of her handbag, uncapped the felt-tip pen, and handed the pen and the document to Mr. Wayne.

The room fell silent once again, whereas Mr. Wayne’s greasy face twitched. Obviously, he didn’t expect Rachel to have such things prepared. “It really is rather professional of you to bring the contract along while coming out for drinks, Chris.”

Rachel replied, “Opportunities are for those who are well-prepared, right?”

“Great! You’re simply great. As expected, you’re a clever woman who deserves to work beside Justin Burton.” Mr. Wayne pulled off his tie. Suddenly, he stood up and looked around him. “Get out, everyone.”

Everyone in the private room looked at each other, but none of them dared to say anything as they left, knowing what to do in such situations.

When the last person left the private room, Rachel stood up as well. She asked warily, “What do you mean by doing this, Mr. Wayne?”

Mr. Wayne threw his tie at Rachel right away with a sneer. “Stop pretending. Why play this trick on me when you don’t even bother to pretend? Let’s get even with one another today for what happened back then, shall we?” As he spoke, he unbuckled his belt right away and stepped toward Rachel.

Rachel took two steps back while reaching for her cell phone in her pocket. "What are you doing? This is a public place. Aren't you afraid that I'll call the police?"

Mr. Wayne sneered. "Call the police? You can try to. This nightclub is now under my name, and the signal jammers have been switched on. I'd like to see how you're going to call the police."

Rachel's expression changed when she saw the words 'No signal' on her phone's screen.

"God knows how long I have been waiting for this day. Do you know how much trouble the incident back then caused me? I haven't been able to sleep at night all these years because I'd been waiting to find you!" said Mr. Wayne as he stepped closer and closer toward Rachel.

Meanwhile, the latter kept backing away until she reached the door. She pushed the door handle, only to realize that the door couldn't be opened as it had been locked from the outside. "Let me out of here!"

"Let you out of here?" Mr. Wayne responded as if he had heard a joke. Then, he picked up the remote control, aimed it at the wall opposite him, and pressed a button.

The wall automatically split in two and opened up with a loud noise, revealing the hidden bedroom inside. The sight of the whip and the 'instruments of torture shining on the wall under the purple light made one shudder, but Mr. Wayne's spirits soared. With a look of excitement and perversion on his face, he asked, "How is it? Do you remember it now? Is it the same as the room back then?"

Rachel's face turned as white as a sheet as a tingling sensation mixed with feelings of nausea instantly spread all over her body. What a pervert Mr. Wayne is-he's simply a lunatic! He actually had an identical replica of the room back then hidden in the nightclub's private room! she thought to herself. The instant she came to her senses, she banged the door desperately. "Open the door! Let me out!"

"It's too bad that the only difference is that you're no longer mute now." Mr. Wayne eyed Rachel up and down. "However, it doesn't matter as long as you bite into this!" Then, he grabbed Rachel's shoulder while holding a spherical object in his hand.

The night was already dark. After having dinner with Charlotte, Justin coaxed her to sleep since Rachel had yet to return home.

Charlotte could hardly keep her eyes open, but she insisted on waiting for Rachel to come back. "Daddy, why isn't Mommy home yet?"

"Mommy is too busy with work. You should sleep by yourself today, Charlotte."

"In that case, tell her to give me a kiss when she comes back. I'll know it in my sleep."

"All right, my dear Charlotte."

It wasn't until he heard the even breathing next to him that Justin got up and left the room. "Sorry, but the number you've dialed is currently unavailable. Please dial again later." It was already 11.00PM, but he still couldn't reach Rachel on her cell phone. As he recalled what had happened during the day, his face slowly tensed up, and he called Frankie. "Where is Rachel right now?"

"Hasn't Miss Hudson gone back yet? I heard from Lisa that she received a phone call from Mr. Wayne before getting off work. He asked her out to discuss the contract."

"Send me the address," Justin uttered before leaving home at once.

The air was sultry in the midsummer night as Justin stood in front of the garage door with the car keys in his hand. After standing for half a second, he pulled the car door open and got into the driver's seat. As he

gripped the steering wheel, his large hands trembled visibly for a moment, but he clenched the steering wheel and forcibly suppressed the feelings of unease soon afterward. With that, the sedan drove out of the villa area and disappeared into the night.