

Mute Bride 301

Chapter 301 He's Seeing a Psychiatrist

"Are you fine?" Justin, who was still in a daze, heard Rachel questioning him. He had a blurry vision in front of him; it felt like she had multiplied herself and wiggled in front of him.

He uncontrollably grabbed her hand hard and asked, "What's going on between you and Julian?" A stunned Rachel's expression immediately changed.

At that moment, his gaze was exactly like it had been five years ago, causing her to shake his hand off reflexively. Stumbling backward, she even bumped into a chair.

With a loud bang, the chair fell down.

Standing up, Justin wanted to hold onto Rachel. However, the instant that he rose to his feet, he was so dizzy as he held his head, feeling as if something was going to burst from his brain as a result of the splitting headache.

As she leaned against a wall, Rachel looked at him from a safe distance. She merely looked at him motionlessly on the floor for a period of time after he had collapsed.

"Justin?"

Rachel called out in a trembling voice.

She had only proceeded to walk over with caution after he didn't respond to her. Then, she called out again and patted his shoulder. "Justin?"

Seeing Justin's pale face made her realize that something was off, so she immediately called the ambulance.

It was late at night when Gloria rushed to the hospital not long after Rachel, who was in the ambulance, arrived.

"How's Justin?"

"He's still inside. The doctor is still checking on him." Peering through the curtains, Rachel continued, "For some reason, he collapsed just like that."

"Collapsed? Suddenly?"

"Yup."

Gloria's reaction made Rachel think that she knew something about all this. Just as Rachel was going to question her about it, the curtains behind her were drawn open to reveal the doctor coming out.

"Who here is a family member of Justin Burton?"

"I am." Gloria immediately stepped up.

The doctor then asked, "The patient has suffered from brain trauma before and we suspect that it's the effect from an old wound. We'll need to conduct a CT scan of his brain to determine the cause. Has he also fainted or exhibit such symptoms like this before? Or, did he have other illnesses? "

"I just came back from abroad a few days ago, so I'm not entirely sure of his body condition, actually." Gloria was saying this as she glanced at Rachel.

Shaking her head, Rachel replied, "I'm not too sure either. This is my first time witnessing such a thing."

The doctor pondered deeply before he said, "I'll run a check on him first. In the meantime, you two don't have to be so worried."

The CT scan showed no abnormalities in his brain, but since Justin was still in a coma, he could only continue to stay in the hospital as they waited for the attending physician to conduct a full body scan on him.

After registering the documents for his hospitalization, Rachel saw Gloria at the entrance to the ward on her way back.

“Are you not entering?”

“Hey, Rachel.” Raising her head, Gloria felt a bit more relieved upon the sight of Rachel.

It was the same five years ago as Justin was on the hospital bed, just like now. Besides Justin, she had no other friends in Riverdale and didn’t know which path to take in her future or who to trust.

As both of them entered the room, Rachel comforted Gloria, “Don’t worry too much. Didn’t they say that there were no problems after checking on him? Maybe it was just fatigue that caught up to him and he would be alright after a good long sleep.”

“I’m only scared, Rachel.”

“What are you scared of?”

“Five years ago, when the doctor said that he would not regain consciousness again, I was terrified every day since he is the only relative I have after all.”

Nobody understood the feeling of one losing their relatives more than Rachel.

Not being able to hold it in any longer, Rachel hugged Gloria and lightly patted her on the back. “This won’t happen again. If he could wake up from that horrific accident five years ago, why wouldn’t he do the same this time, especially when he didn’t even sustain any injuries? Even if something did happen, I’m still one of your relatives too.”

Gloria's eyes immediately welled up with tears.

"He'll be fine."

"It's good that you're back, Rachel." After sobbing on Rachel's shoulder for a while, Gloria continued, "Don't leave this time. He's a changed man."

After being dazed for a moment, Rachel pushed Gloria aside when she remembered how Justin was right before he collapsed.

Coming back to her senses, Gloria knew that she had misspoken when she saw the slightly awful expression on Rachel's face. "I didn't mean anything by that. Judging from his current situation, I was just wondering whether fate might be giving you two another chance. Please stay, Rachel. Charlotte needs you too."

Rachel admitted to herself that she dealt with Justin with intentions of exploiting him, but Gloria was like a sister to her.

"Ria, not everything can be fixed. He will always be Justin Burton."

"Rachel."

Just as Gloria wanted to say something, a knock came from the door. "President Hudson, Miss Hochmann."

The person who had arrived was Frankie with another man in tow.

"This is the psychiatrist of President Burton, Dr. Aurich."

A shocked Rachel asked, "He's been seeing a psychiatrist?"

Frankie nodded.

Allowing the doctor to examine Justin's body in the ward, Rachel and Gloria left the room and followed Frankie to the living room outside.

Gloria questioned, "Why was Justin seeing a psychiatrist? Was there something wrong with him?"

Frankie replied, "It's nothing like that, so don't worry. It's just that President Burton has had an increasing amount of migraines these few years. Suspecting it might be from mental stress, he arranged to see a psychiatrist for counseling. On top of that, the car crash from five years ago had also created a mental block of sorts, as I'm sure you know."

Rachel said hesitatingly, "You mean the fact that he doesn't dare to drive anymore?"

Nodding, Frankie replied, "Yes. However, him not daring to drive was just something he said outwardly. The most important fact was that the trauma caused by the things the president had forgotten five years ago was severe."

"Trauma?" Rachel asked confoundingly, "What trauma does he have?"

"I'm not too sure about this. As Dr. Aurich is President Burton's private doctor, they had signed a non-disclosure agreement, so even I don't know the specifics."

Gloria spoke up, "What trauma could he have? It must have been the fact that Miss Rachel's absence had dealt a huge blow to him. After knowing his own faults, he regretted it. That's the root of the trauma. See, Miss Rachel, I told you that he's changed. He has actually regretted his actions that time. So, please seriously reconsider all this."

A frowning Rachel did not answer Gloria as she subconsciously looked toward the direction of the ward.

Gloria is speaking up for Justin out of sheer habit. The so-called trauma can't be just because of me. She did not believe that Justin became hurt because of her.

Maybe it was because he had been kidnapped as a kid? Or, was it the incident with the fire?

Since Rachel didn't understand the cause, she also did not want to further delve into all this.

As all their attention was focused on Justin's condition, nobody noticed that the door of the ward was not tightly closed. Outside, a figure had been standing there for a long time as they listened to every single word that was being said.

Since it was alright late at night, there were only a few people walking around in the hospital. As the person leaned against the wall, they slightly clenched their fist as they listened in on the conversation.

Who knew that they would accidentally gain valuable information as they came to the hospital?

Justin was actually seeing a psychiatrist?

Chapter 302 Breaking the Law

The next day, Gloria stayed with Justin at the hospital while Rachel went to attend a company meeting. "Hello, Mr. Holt, why are you here?" After having arrived at the company, Rachel ran into Evan at the entrance.

Evan gave a wide smile as he regarded her in the same way that a senior would for their junior while greeting, "I was worried that you could face opposition since you've just taken over the company, so I'm here as backup to see who would dare to bully you. Rachel, you don't look too good. You must have been exhausted by all the events lately."

"I'm ok. It's not that tiring."

"How could you not be tired? I've already said that we should arrange to have an assistant help you so that the workload can be delegated, so don't be this courteous with me. Also, Vivian has been under you for quite a while now. How do you find her?"

Vivian, who was the secretary of Hudson Pharmaceuticals, was the reason why Evan had always been ahead of everyone in terms of information.

“She’s a good worker. You’ve taught her well, Mr. Holt.”

“It reassures me to hear you saying this. How about you allow Vivian to fill in as the role of an assistant for you?”

The difference between an assistant and a secretary was that an assistant had to be on call twenty-four seven with every confidential document that Rachel was looking at passing through their hands.

“It’s fine, Mr. Holt. I already have a person in mind for that position.”

“You have?”

As they were talking, a roar of an engine bellowed behind the crowd as a blue supercar parked at the entrance.

Stepping out of the car, Jolly passed the car key to the valet as he walked toward Rachel in a pair of high heels with a height of 4 inches. “Sorry, I’m late. There was some congestion on the way here.”

As Rachel reached out to take Jolly’s hand, she calmly introduced, “Mr. Holt, let me introduce you to my assistant, Jolly Carter.”

Evan, who came to his senses after a while, answered, “If memory serves me right, aren’t you the precious daughter of the CEO of Carter Enterprises?”

“Do you know my dad, Mr. Holt?”

Removing her sunglasses, Jolly revealed a pair of eyes that had eyeshadow applied on it.

“Acquaintances would be more appropriate. We’ve only met once.”

“Oh, I see.” She wore her sunglasses again.

A smiling Rachel didn’t plan to explain too much at once. “If there’s nothing else, we’ll be heading first. Mr. Holt, will you be attending the meeting later?”

This question had stunned Evan.

Then, she continued, “It’s totally okay if you don’t attend it since Vivian will be reporting the minutes to you, anyway. No time would be wasted, right?”

After that, Rachel and Jolly walked into the building together.

Evan and the others were left standing at the entrance, dumbfounded and speechless.

While holding onto Rachel’s elbow, Jolly asked, “Aren’t you being spunky today? Are you not planning to maintain your facade in front of that old man anymore?”

“I don’t have to. Seeing how obvious he has been planting his people on my side, I would be treated a fool if I didn’t give him a warning.”

“Aren’t you afraid of the retaliation afterward?”

“With the precious princess of the Carter Enterprise luring the fire away from me, what do I have to be afraid of?”

Jolly replied with a smile, “I’ll be showing what I can do, then.”

As a family-owned enterprise, there were a lot of high-ranking personnel in Hudson Pharmaceuticals who were selected through nepotism, which resulted in a lot of parasites in the hierarchy on a long-term basis. What Rachel needed now was a person who would play the bad guy with her.

Jolly had already assumed her position within the company in the afternoon.

While Rachel was looking at documents in her office, Vivian suddenly knocked on the door and rushed in. "President Hudson, there are people from the Riverdale Investigation Bureau looking for you. They're waiting outside."

Rachel was slightly stunned by this.

At the entrance to the office stood two men who sported the gray uniform of the Investigation Bureau.

One of them then showed his identification to her. "Are you Miss Rachel Hudson? You are suspected of being involved in a kidnapping, so please come with us to assist in our investigations."

"Kidnapping? What makes you say that?"

"You are now only a suspect, so I'll have to trouble you to comply with our investigation."

"Let me call Janice first."

"Officer Hawkins was the one who issued the order."

Their words made Rachel stop dead in her tracks as she raised her head with eyes of disbelief.

Then, she was led away by the two officers in front of the company employees.

At that moment, in the hospital ward, Justin had been awake since morning and was now discussing his headache with Dr. Aurich.

"Normally, your case would be a result of your memory being triggered by something impactful in your life. What did you see before the headache happened?"

"I saw a necklace."

"A necklace?" After a brief moment of silence, the doctor asked, "Could you describe its design?"

"I think it had the shape of a cat." As soon as he thought of that necklace, Justin had to press his temples as his head began to hurt again. "Why is it like this?"

"It's normal. The return of a memory could often be described as a burst dam since the impact at first instance would always be strongest. You need a strong stimulus to be able to recall your past."

"A strong stimulus?"

"Justin!" Interrupting their conversation, Gloria suddenly rushed in with a worried expression. "Miss Rachel has been brought in by the people from the Riverdale Investigation Bureau."

"What?" Justin straightened his posture. "When did this happen?"

"It just happened. Jolly called me and said the officers dispatched to Hudson Pharmaceuticals had brought Miss Rachel in under the suspicion of being involved in a kidnapping."

Kidnapping?

With a serious expression, he immediately took off the blanket and jumped off the bed.

"Where are you going?" Dr. Aurich tried to stop him. "You can't be discharged yet."

Justin ignored the doctor's words and immediately left.

At the same time, in the hall of the Investigation Bureau, Rachel had just been brought in.

Janice was already waiting for her in the hall for the longest time.

When she saw Janice, Rachel's expression darkened. "Officer Hawkins, do you know the damage you've done by suddenly sending your people to my company to bring me in?"

Bearing a similar expression, Janice retorted, "Then, do you know the extent of the effect of what you've done?"

"What did I do?"

"Are you really asking me that? Bucky! Didn't you look for him?"

"Is that illegal?"

"Why did you go and look for him?"

"To have a chat."

"Rachel! What kind of attitude are you displaying now?" Raising her voice, the echo of Janice's bellowing tone reverberated across the whole hall, which caused everyone to take notice. However, no one dared to make a sound.

"How many times have I told you that the case involving your grandma had been closed five years ago? Even if there was something suspicious, it would be up to the Investigation Bureau and the Criminal Investigation Department to decide. You can't just take matters into your own hands like this! Not to mention the extreme methods that you employed! Resorting to kidnapping and blackmail? Do you think that our country's laws are inapplicable against you after you've changed your nationality? You're committing an international crime here! We can ask that you be deported to your home country!"

“Officer Hawkins, you should be showing some form of evidence to back up your words.”

“You want evidence?” A livid Janice continued, “Fine, I’ll show you some evidence!”

“Bring her over.”

After Janice left with such an order, she turned around and walked off, leaving the two officers at Rachel’s side. They exchanged a glance with each other before one of them led the way. “This way, Miss Hudson.”

Chapter 303 A Busybody

Rachel followed Janice to the interrogation room. “Officer Hawkins, how about I conduct the questioning to avoid any suspicion from arising?”

While they entered the room, a huge silhouette stepped in Janice and Rachel’s way. The silhouette in question was a cold and stern looking man, looking similar in age to Janice.

“No need. All of you, get out.”

One word from Janice was all it took to clear the room before the depressing mood from the hollow room substituted the personnel.

A calm Rachel said, “So, this is what the interrogation room looks like, huh? Hey, Janice, do you guys keep the criminals here? Is there any surveillance in here?”

“You should sit down.” After pulling a chair, Janice glanced coldly at Rachel. “I’m not in the mood to joke around with you.”

Upon saying that, Janice opened her notebook and began the questioning. “Where were you yesterday afternoon?”

Seeing Janice being so serious caused Rachel's face to disappear as she sat down.

"I was at the Riverdale Penitentiary."

"Why were you there?"

"Don't you know all this? Why are you still asking them?"

As she slammed the table, Janice roared, "Whatever I ask of you, you must answer them! Let me make this clear that you're in the Investigation Bureau and I'm the officer of this place. I'm also the person in charge of this kidnapping case today, and I'm not some relative of yours!"

Clenching her fists, Rachel slowly spoke, "I went to pick Bucky up."

"After that?"

"I asked him about the details of my grandmother's kidnapping five years ago."

"Continue."

"He said that he wanted to blackmail Justin, which was why he kidnapped my grandmother after knowing the relationship between me and Justin. Originally, he wanted to release her after asking for two million in ransom, but an intervention made him ask for five million instead. He threatened Justin to surrender a bid for land back then, to which Justin promised. However, when I asked who gave the instructions to kidnap, Bucky refused to tell me."

"Was that why you kidnapped his sister, Lily?"

"Who said that? Was it Bucky?" Rachel asked in return.

With a slam, Janice placed a picture on the table. "This was given to me personally by Bucky. Arranging for Lily to have a month-long exchange program abroad and using it to threaten Bucky, was that your doing?"

"It was not."

"You're still lying! Rachel, I told you that the case had its odd points, but it was not up to you to interfere!"

When she saw Janice acting like she was in search of justice, Rachel was pissed off. "Not up to me to interfere? Does that mean I shouldn't do anything until the day I die while waiting for you people to investigate the case? Will you guys even do that? After all, my grandmother's death won't mean anything to you all because she's a nobody!"

After that, an angry Rachel stood up whilst being supported by the table.

"Janice Hawkins, I always thought you were a righteous person with a sense of conscience. During the last few years, you've changed into the same as those cold-blooded people who only want to be promoted to the top without caring about people's life or death. Bucky isn't the person who murdered my grandmother!"

"You've no proof on the matter!"

"I am the proof! He admitted it himself after I asked him!"

"Can't you be more rational here?"

"I am being very rational here!"

The sound of them arguing was rife inside the room as the atmosphere inside became tense. In the midst of all this, a knock came from the door.

After somewhat managing to calm herself down, Janice said, "Come in."

"Officer Hawkins."

"What is it?"

"There's someone outside who wants to look for Miss Hudson."

"Can't you see that I'm in the middle of interrogating her? By coming here to look for her, what do they treat the Bureau as?"

The subordinate answered cautiously, "The top brass called earlier and wanted me to release Miss Hudson due to a lack of evidence."

"What?" Janice was full of disbelief as she looked outside and saw a familiar huge silhouette. Justin?

Clenching her fists, she directed a question to Rachel, "Does he know that you're using him?"

After being momentarily stunned by her question, Rachel quickly composed herself. "I don't think that Officer Hawkins should worry about that. Since it was an order from above, I don't think you'll have any more questions for me if you don't want your promotion to be blocked, I suppose?"

"You..."

"I'll be leaving now if there's nothing else."

After stating her piece, she left without sparing an extra glance.

In the hall, Justin ran to her as soon as he saw Rachel coming out. "Are you alright?"

“Why are you here?”

“I told him as soon as I heard that you were brought in.” Standing beside them was Gloria, who was also worried sick. “When Justin heard that you were being charged for kidnapping, he knew that this incident wasn’t as simple as it seemed. If you went to jail after being sentenced, we would have had a real problem on our hands.”

Glancing at him, Rachel then clarified, “That’s why you used your connections?”

Justin replied, “I know you wouldn’t like it, but I had no choice at that time. Janice and I have some bad blood between us, so it would only complicate things if I came here to demand your release.”

As they were talking, the sound of footsteps indicated that it was Janice walking toward them.

Immediately, Justin pulled Rachel behind her as he placed himself between the two people. “Hello, Officer Hawkins, long time no see.”

“It hasn’t been that long yet. Didn’t we meet at your company last time?” While observing Justin, Janice then continued, “I didn’t know that you two had become so close. It was only moments after my subordinates brought her in that my superior called to demand that I release her. I wouldn’t have offended you back then if I knew how well-connected you were, Mr. Burton.”

He rebuked, “If I wasn’t in a pickle, I wouldn’t have used those kinds of methods either. Why should I be afraid of the law when I’ve not committed a crime?”

“So, are you implying that the incident this time is so special that you can simply ignore the law?”

After hearing Janice’s sarcasm, Justin’s expression darkened since neither one of them was going to back down. “Officer Hawkins, you can decide whether I have ignored the law or not after obtaining some evidence. Let’s go, Rae.”

After that, Justin held Rachel’s hand and left.

As Gloria looked like she had something to say to Janice as she looked at Janice, she instead chose to leave after hesitating for a while.

On the way back, Gloria then asked Rachel, "Aren't you quite close with Janice? What happened there? You guys were practically at each other's throat."

Not wanting to answer her, Rachel replied, "Just let me off at the intersection there."

"What?" Gloria was stunned by her request.

Hearing this, Justin commented, "Ignore her and continue driving."

It was after emerging from the Bureau that he had a dark expression.

A frowning Rachel questioned, "What do you mean by this? I still have matters to attend to."

"Matters to attend to? Do you mean looking for Bucky?"

Justin, who was straightforward, looked at Rachel coldly. "Did you really kidnap someone?"

"What does that have to do with you?"

"I bailed you out from the Bureau. How does that make me not have the right to question you about it?"

"I didn't ask for it."

"So, are you suggesting that I'm a busybody?"

"Ria, stop the car here." Not wanting to waste any more words on Justin, Rachel wanted to locate Bucky as soon as possible and ask him what in the world he was thinking.

“No, don’t!” Shouting coldly, Justin grabbed her arm. “Are you crazy? Where is Bucky’s sister right now? Call your people and make them release her this instant!”

Chapter 304 How One Should Fish

The impact of the screeching brakes caused Justin and Rachel to fly forward and nearly slam into the back of the front seats due to the momentum.

“Sorry, there’s a red light. I didn’t notice it in time.” Gloria’s voice came from the driver’s seat. As a result of that, their argument had been interrupted.

Rachel then shook Justin off as she tried to open the car door. “Rie, I want you to open the door now!”

A frowning Gloria responded, “I think you both need to calm down first.”

“I am calm.”

Justin and Rachel said at the same time.

Sweeping her gaze across both of them, Gloria added, “Either you follow my advice wherein we have a nice talk after we’ve found some place to sit or we can all be locked in this car with nobody leaving anytime soon.”

While it was a stalemate on one hand, it was a spectacle for the audience to watch on the other hand.

“Master Jason, there is news from the Investigation Bureau.”

The holiday resort was situated in the mountain located at the western side of Riverdale. Jason was seated in the courtyard while he fished in a relaxing manner, looking nothing like the man who frequented clubs.

“What did they say?”

“The news that Rachel Hudson and Officer Hawkins fiercely arguing is spreading all over the Bureau. Officer Hawkins, who personally interrogated her, slammed the table and stared at her with a bad attitude.”

“How did they deal with her in the end? Did they throw her behind bars?”

“They didn’t. Young Master Justin interfered.”

“Oh?”

“Young Master Justin had given Chief Maxim a ring and explained that Bucky’s so-called proof was hearsay and not physical evidence. So, Chief Maxim could only order Officer Hawkins. to release her, but it can be said that this has caused a huge rift between Rachel and Officer Hawkins.”

Now that he was immersed in his thoughts, Jason clarified, “Justin had actually sought help from the chief because of this woman?”

“Yes, the info was validated.”

Hmph. With a sneer, Jason continued, “He’s still the same as before: soft-hearted. I thought that him forgetting all those things would make him let this woman go. It seems that this weakness of his would be hard to get rid of. No wonder my father wanted this woman gone at all costs.”

“How about we make Bucky—”

Jason raised his hand to interrupt his subordinate. “No need. From this, you can see that the friendship these two women have isn’t that deep. After all, how close could a businessman and an incorruptible commissioner be? Changing our perspective, this woman might just be the key to controlling my nephew, so in the future...”

Although he did not finish his sentence, his long-time followers all understood what he meant.

“Then, about Bucky...”

The fishing pole in Jason’s hand suddenly moved. Raising a hand, he gestured to his subordinates to remain silent whereupon the fish took the bait.

The fish sprung out from the water with a splash.

His subordinates immediately flattered, “What a big fish!”

“When the fish takes the bait, we have to loosen the handle a bit and reel it in when it has no more strength. We can’t forcefully pull it out of the water from the get go...”

While retrieving the hook from the fish’s mouth, Jason sighed. “Look at it, it’s completely exhausted. Under this kind of circumstance, it won’t make for a delicious dish.”

“Then, are you releasing it?”

“Releasing it? I’ve spent so much time catching it and you now want me to release it? On top of that, this fish will emit a warning signal once it returns to the water. When that happens, we’ll only be catching air.”

“I understand Master Jason’s words.”

“Get going now.”

“Yes.”

In the afternoon, Gloria had parked the car in the courtyard of a restaurant.

“This restaurant was opened by my friend. It’s secluded with not many people here, so you guys can talk without worrying about anyone overhearing you. Since it’s coincidentally afternoon, we’re in time for lunch. Have a look at the menu and order.”

Taking the menu, Rachel flipped through the menu distractingly before saying, “I’m not hungry. You guys can eat first.”

“Where are you going?”

Standing up, Justin asked, “Are you going to find Bucky?”

“Sit down, Justin?”

Frustratingly, Gloria pulled on him. “We agreed to talk this out calmly. Did you not understand what I said? Can’t you just talk peacefully?”

Panicking inside, Justin was worried that Rachel, who was blinded by revenge, might do something foolish. But, knowing that going at each other’s now would only amount to nothing, he sat down defeatedly. “If she doesn’t leave, then I can talk in peace.”

“Why does it concern you whether I’m leaving or not?”

Letting her anger flow, Rachel retorted, “I still have a mountain load of things to do. Are you going to stick to me while I’m sorting through them one by one?”

“That actually works. How about this, I’ll let Frankie move my office to your company. This way, I can go to work and clock off together with you. Where you’d be, I’d be there too.”

“Are you insane?”

"I think you're the one that is insane." With a stone cold face, Justin stated, "Look at what you've been doing recently. Who gave the idea to kidnap someone? Was it Jason?"

This stunned Gloria. "You mean your second uncle? What does this have to do with him?"

"This isn't important." Waving her hand, Gloria quickly changed the subject back. "I don't believe that Miss Hudson would kidnap someone innocent, so stop talking now, Justin."

"Please tell me, Miss Hudson, what actually happened?"

Shooting a glance at Justin, Rachel was going to explain her side of the story when a message from her phone caught her attention. With an emotionless gaze, she sat down once again.

"No matter what I say, a certain someone already thinks that I'm in on it with his second uncle, doing illegal things and using unspeakable methods on normal citizens, don't they?"

Justin was slightly shocked by her words.

Rachel explained while taking out a photo from her bag, "This was a photo taken at Montenegro, where Lily has been studying for the past month and a half. I only used this photo for a while to scare Bucky into speaking. Since he couldn't contact her, he really believed that I was the one who kidnapped Lily. He is the one who's acting like he has something to hide."

After all, a bad person always thought others would deal with them in the same way.

"So, what you're saying is that you didn't kidnap her at all?"

"I don't have that capability yet."

Breathing a sigh of relief, Gloria stared at Justin. "What did I say? How about apologizing to Miss Hudson now?"

Before Justin could speak, Rachel had interrupted him. "No need for that. Since he did bail me out from the Bureau, we'll make it even."

With an awkward expression, he asked, "Why are you in such a hurry to look for Bucky, though?"

To this, she replied, "Just because Janice has left me off the hook this time doesn't mean the entire thing is over. Once the Investigation Bureau dispatches someone from the embassy there to check on Lily, they'll quickly learn that she's merely been studying in isolation with no threat to her personal safety. When Bucky finds out about that fact, do you still think that I can get anything out of him?"

Reacting to this, Gloria exclaimed, "Ahhh! Then, why did I drag you all the way to this place?"

"I'll send you there right now, Miss Rachel!"

Upon saying that, she immediately stood up to grab her car keys with the intention of leaving.

Yet, Rachel was wiping her hand with the towel before she spread the tablecloth on her legs. She calmly stated, "There's no need. It's already too late."

A perplexed Gloria asked, "Why?"

Looking at her phone, Rachel continued, "Jolly has just informed me that the quarantine hotel over there has already relayed her current situation to the embassy."

Based on Bucky's relation to Lily, he would have already received the information by now as well.

Chapter 305 The Carrot and the Stick

Still holding the keys in her hands, Gloria blamed herself. "It's all my fault. I insisted on dragging you guys here to eat."

Rachel commented with a calm expression, "I don't blame you. Even if you didn't bring me here, what could I do when a certain individual doesn't want to let me go?"

A speechless Justin had a tense expression.

"Let's just eat." Looking through the menu, Rachel ordered, "The codfish is the signature dish here, right? We'll have one of those."

Upon seeing Rachel act like nothing had happened resulted in Gloria taking her seat as she recommended, "Their prawns here are tasty as well."

"Is that so? One of those too, I guess."

When all the dishes had been served, Rachel ate and drank like a normal person. It was Justin and Gloria who felt uncomfortable instead. He particularly felt like he was sitting on a bed of needles.

At that moment, although he did not want to admit it, reality had revealed the truth to Samuel's words: he was a fool.

He just had to push Rachel's buttons for no reason again.

Looking at the large bowl of peanut soup on the table, Gloria signaled with her eyes at Justin and even kicked him from under the table.

When he finally understood what she hinted at, he immediately filled a small bowl with soup and intentionally gave it to her first before passing a second bowl to Rachel in an attempt to make the scene more natural. "Have some soup."

"Thank you."

What came out of Rachel's mouth was flat and carried no emotion in it.

“Oh, right, Charlotte and Samuel are still at your place, aren’t they? How are they doing now?”

“They are quite obedient. I have left them with my assistant, so you guys don’t have to worry about anything.”

“I can pick them up later today.”

“You don’t have to. Let them play around in the theater group for a few days. Since I’ve discovered that Samuel seems to be musically talented, I was thinking that for the final concert in two days’ time, I might bring him onstage to perform as a final act of thanks to the audience.”

“Samuel?” Rachel thought that she had misheard Gloria’s words. “Can he do it? He hasn’t taken a music lesson before, has he?”

Since Samuel was still young combined with the fact that he had grown up abroad, Rachel had always thought that he needed a relatively free and happy childhood. That was the reason why she never forced him to attend any extracurricular activities.

Then, Gloria added, “Samuel does have a great sense for music. I coincidentally wanted to ask for your opinion on the matter. If you agree to it, I’ll arrange for him to perform onstage.”

“I don’t have any opinion on this. I’m just afraid that he might affect the level of the group’s performance.”

“He won’t.”

Justin, who couldn’t barge into the two women’s conversation, could only helplessly look on.

Although Rachel didn’t express her anger, it was actually more tortuous for him to be ignored like this. He would rather have her scold him thoroughly and be done with it.

Sadly, she treated him as if he was invisible throughout the entire meal.

“Where are you going, Miss Rachel? I can send you there.”

While holding onto her car keys, Gloria and the other two walked out of the restaurant.

As Rachel held her purse, she replied, “No need. I’ll just take a cab and yes, I’m going to look for Bucky.”

“Doesn’t he already know the truth, though? Why are you still going to look for him?”

“I have to know the truth about what happened to my grandmother. If blackmail and threats don’t work, maybe I can try to bait him with something irresistible.”

Justin suddenly commented, “You cannot go.”

As soon as he said that, Rachel’s expression darkened. “What? Even though I’ve clearly explained everything, are you still going to stick your finger in my pie?”

“What I meant was that you cannot go there alone.”

While opening the car door, he said in determination as his deep gaze landed on her face, “Gloria and I will accompany you there.”

“Yeah, Miss Rachel. We can accompany you.”

“It’s just me investigating some private matters, so there’s no need to be this cautious.” A frustrated Rachel then continued, “What do you intend to do with so many people?”

“You can allow Justin to accompany you then. It just so happens that I have something else to do, so I’ll be leaving first.”

After that, Gloria thrust the keys into Justin's hands before turning around and leaving. "I'll just take a cab. Bye!"

"Hey!"

Rachel attempted to call out to Gloria, but couldn't stop her as the woman had quickly left.

The only ones remaining were Justin and Rachel as they stood at the car door and stared at each other.

Then, he broke the silence with a question. "You drive? Or, shall I do it?"

"What do you think?"

Rolling her eyes, Rachel snatched the keys and mumbled angrily, "Can you even drive?"

Even if Justin really dared to drive, she did not have the guts to sit in it. After all, although he might not have any plans to continue living, she still wanted to live her life.

Bucky's home was situated at the west side of the old district. The houses there were all dilapidated and most of them had a demolition sign glued on it. Even though the demolition had already occurred, it did not seem like the residents there had moved after all these years.

Getting out of the car, Justin frowned as he looked at the ruins in front of him. "Are you sure that people are still living here?"

Rachel looked at a faraway point and noted that the houses here had all been demolished with its debris spread all over.

"Young Master Justin, of course you won't know about the sufferings of mere mortals. When a person is truly broke, they would already be thanking God if there was a place that could shield them from the elements."

Passing around the ruin, she walked to an alley, after which Justin immediately followed.

Since it was already afternoon, the sun was scorching the ground with its heat. However, the old houses that were half-demolished had a pathway so narrow that the two of them found it hard to traverse without any sunlight. As a result, it resulted in a depressing atmosphere.

Justin asked, "Have you visited this place before?"

"I haven't, but I have been to similar places like this."

"When was it?"

"It was a long time ago. I still haven't left Riverdale at that time. Victor and his grandmother lived in this kind of place too."

As she reminisced the first time that she went to Victor's house, she had also walked in a similar alley and it was even at night back then. The air was filled with the smell of dust with rubble and rocks underneath her everywhere. Although there was no streetlight, the dim light from within the alley had more warmth than the moonlight itself.

Victor was in the same situation as her—their only relative had already passed on.

When Justin saw Rachel spacing out, he reminded, "Be careful when you're walking. You're wearing heels, after all."

"I know."

Moments after she replied, she screamed in shock and it was his quick reaction that prevented her from falling as he held onto her waist.

Lowering her head, Rachel saw that the heel of her right shoe was stuck inside the mesh of the drain. It refused to budge, no matter how hard she tried.

“Let me try.” After making sure she was standing properly, Justin knelt down and twisted her shoe a few times.

With a crack, she also felt her heart breaking.

As expected, he was holding a shoe that had separated itself from the heel.

The man’s usually stern face had a rare awkward expression. “I didn’t think that it would be that weak.”

Feeling the corners of her mouth twitching, Rachel responded, “It’s fine. Just give it to me.”

“How are you going to wear that?”

Not wanting to waste words on him, she took the shoe from his hand and wore it before limping further into the alley.

As the surface of the road was full of potholes caused by the stones, coupled with the fact that one of her shoes was missing a heel, she wobbled around as she walked with one leg higher than the other. It looked like she would lose her balance at any moment.

“This can’t be done!”

“I don’t need you caring about me.”

Rachel hadn’t even taken two steps when she heard Justin readily approaching her from behind. By the time she exclaimed out of shock, her waist had suddenly tightened as her legs were swept up from the floor.

When she finally realized what had happened, she was already in Justin’s embrace.

The strong scent of pheromones attacked her as she lifted her chin to look at the man in disbelief.

Chapter 306 Used Goods

“Put me down at this instance!”

“Until we arrive at the entrance of Bucky’s house, I will not do that.”

To Justin, who stood at a frame of six feet three inches, carrying Rachel was as easy as handling a cat. As he crushed the stones with his leather shoes along the way, they quickly traversed the alley.

Meanwhile, Rachel’s heart was racing.

“Is it over there?”

She heard a man’s voice from above her, which brought her back to reality..

As Rachel looked at the spot faraway, it was the only house that had windows sealed with old newspaper. On the door were a few ropes with two tattered towels attached to it.

“Looks like it.”

When she investigated Bucky’s background earlier, she found out that he had an old home here, but it was a place most of the residents had moved out from. His unit was the only exception. He only had one sister, who stayed in the school dorm and occasionally returned during the winter and summer breaks.

Since Bucky was recently released, it wasn’t that he couldn’t freely move out. However, since his sister was already staying here, the possibility of him returning to the village was exceptionally great.

“Put me down.”

When they arrived at the entrance, Rachel started to struggle as she wanted to be on her feet. After setting her down, Justin proceeded to knock on the door.

“Is anyone home?”

His voice echoed in the alley.

No response came from the other side.

“No one’s home.”

Rachel frowned because she saw the dripping wet towel at the entrance and said in confusion, “That can’t be possible.”

She stumbled ahead.

He was ready to hold her with a gesture. “Be careful!”

While ignoring him, Rachel reached out and slammed the door.

Just a tap was enough to make the old door creak before it collapsed.

The moment that it fell down, she screamed as she turned around and subconsciously hugged Justin.

“What’s wrong?”

A confused Justin focused his gaze over Rachel’s shoulder and into the house. Upon seeing the scene inside, his pupils contracted.

There was a man on the old sofa at a corner in the dimly lit house. With a wide stare and fierce gaze, he stared at them with a terrifying expression. What was even more frightening was that a knife had been stabbed into his chest whereas the area below his stab wound was drenched in blood.

Hugging the woman in his embrace tightly, Justin could feel her trembling and her heart racing for dear life.

At that moment, he felt that it was out of sheer luck that he accompanied her. If Rachel had witnessed this on her own, or even worse, met the killer face to face...

He did not dare to imagine the consequences.

After half an hour, the perimeter of Bucky's house was surrounded by yellow tape.

Janice arrived at the scene as she personally led people from the Riverdale Investigation Bureau. After photographing the crime scene, the forensic personnel bagged the body and brought it back to perform an autopsy on it.

Sitting in the car, Rachel could not calm down even after a long time.

"Drink some water." Justin's voice came from the side.

As she returned to her senses, she was still pale as she shook her head. "I don't want it."

Whenever she closed her eyes, all she recalled was the vivid scene of Bucky's death.

"Rachel." A familiar woman's voice came from outside the car.

It was Janice.

Justin gently pressed Rachel's shoulders with a frown before he exited the car.

“Is there anything we can help you with, Officer Hawkins?”

“You two were the first witnesses of the crime scene. As such, I have some questions to ask you guys.”

“You can just ask me. I came with Rae.”

A stern Janice answered, “Mr. Burton, you do need to cooperate with our investigation, but I’ll need to question Rachel too. Not only was she the first witness of the crime scene, she had also been involved with Bucky before. So, I can’t eliminate her as a suspect just yet.”

“Officer Hawkins, you should be choosing your words more carefully. After all, you might find yourself regretting what comes out of your mouth.”

“Whether I’ll regret it or not, I’ll know it after the investigation.”

After saying that, Janice was going to bypass Justin to look for Rachel.

“Officer Hawkins!”

As Justin raised his voice, he blocked Janice’s path.

“If you don’t make way, I will charge you with obstruction of an ongoing investigation.”

“You can try.”

Right after Justin said those words, the faint sound of a car door opening came from behind him.

Rachel poked her head out and asked, “What do you want to ask? Just ask away.”

After wounding up the car window, the buzz from outside was somewhat isolated.

Taking the initiative to leave the two women alone, he chose to stand at a nearby spot since he was still wary toward Janice.

“You don’t look too good. Are you traumatized by this?” Observing Rachel’s face, Janice then added, “Luckily he accompanied you here.”

Her concern and gentle tone toward Rachel was a stark difference to the person going after Rachel’s throat at the Bureau earlier that morning.

Rachel struggled to open her mouth. “Who do you think did it?”

With a frown, Janice replied, “There’s no surveillance here and since this area has been designated for demolition, even the highway cameras don’t cover this spot. However, there should be clues at a murder scene. There’s no such thing as a perfect crime.”

“It’s Jason. Jason Burton,” a confident Rachel suggested. “After seeing our fallout, he lowered his guard against me and decided to work with me. Bucky was like a time bomb for him, though, so he had to get rid of Bucky first. I should’ve predicted this all sooner.”

Janice held Rachel’s hands with an even deeper frown. “You don’t have to blame yourself so much. He deserves this after all his complicity. I’ll definitely get to the bottom of this—one day in the future...”

She could not continue with her sentence.

There were many cases in the Bureau where the range of effect was so wide that the cases had turned cold without any new leads. On top of that, numerous people had been sacrificed as a result.

Clenching her fists, Rachel said, “Janice, Bucky was nothing but a pawn for Jason. He was someone fated to be silenced or killed off after serving his purposes. What do you think his next step would be if he wanted to erase all traces?”

Janice's expression froze.

She suddenly released Rachel's hand as she refused to permit that luxury of thinking and reminded with a low tone, "Rae."

As Rachel came around, she looked outside the window to see Justin walking toward them. He must have been restless after seeing us talk for so long.

"We'll end our conversation here. I'll contact you if I have any questions."

While walking over, he could only catch the second half of Janice's sentence as she stepped out of the vehicle.

As she crossed paths with Justin, Janice nodded as a sign of greeting. "She does seem to be in shock, so head home earlier. I'll be keeping in touch."

He replied, "I'll prefer it if you contact me directly, Officer Hawkins."

"I'll try."

After leaving such a statement, she walked toward the police line.

It was at this moment when Frankie arrived at the scene. He was a bit confused when he saw the police line and all the vehicles from the Bureau. "President Burton, what is all this? Did something happen?"

Throwing the keys at Frankie, Justin only gave a single order instead of explaining the situation. "Drive."

Frankie took them home thereafter.

On the way, an absent-minded Rachel continuously stared out the car window.

She did not know whether she had done the right thing. If she hadn't squeezed the words out of Bucky's mouth, would he have been silenced? Or was it precisely the fact that he knew too much that caused his death?

At least it provided one thing—Bucky was merely a scapegoat.

Now that he was dead, the clue to the kidnapping back then would be severed unless they found the person who murdered Bucky.

Chapter 307 A Woman's Motherly Nature

"President Burton, we have arrived." Frankie's voice was heard from the front. Before Rachel could even return to her senses, Justin alighted from the car and walked around the vehicle toward her side. The moment Frankie opened the door, Justin carried her out of the back seat.

As she no longer had the strength to even struggle, she allowed him to carry her. "Put me down." She patted him on his arm when they arrived at the foyer so that she could change to a pair of flip-flops.

She was contemplating about Bucky's matter. Although she was afraid, she had to consider other possibilities, after which she sat on the couch with a distracted mind.

"Are you alright?" Justin poured her a glass of water.

Rachel nodded. "Yeah, I'm fine."

"You don't look well, though. Do you want to get some sleep?"

"I can't sleep."

"I'll sit here and accompany you then."

As Justin spoke, he took a seat opposite her and retrieved a few packets of snacks from under the coffee table and shoving them to her in the process. He seemed to find nothing wrong with his actions.

When Rachel moved in with Samuel, he seemed not to know where the snacks were kept in the house, but last night, he had taken a magazine from the book shelf to read.

Since he didn't bear any intention to explain about his actions, she merely allowed him to have his way.

After mingling with him for such a long time, she had noticed that Justin had one fine quality. Whenever she was with him, they rarely needed to talk; the two of them could each read a book and spend the entire afternoon just like that without any of them finding it strange.

As she used to be mute, reading was her greatest hobby since she was little. Even after Julian had cured her illness, she still retained her old habits and seldom talked whenever there was no such need to do so.

The afternoon soon flew past.

During that period, the Riverdale Investigation Bureau had called them twice to ask questions regarding the crime scene in the afternoon, to which both Rachel and Justin answered in the best possible way.

In the evening, Rachel fell asleep without realizing it.

By the time she woke up with a groggy head, only the kitchen was bright and she heard some clanking sounds of the kitchen utensils. It was those sounds that woke her up.

When she arrived at the kitchen entrance, what she saw made her close to doubting her eyes.

"Are you cooking?"

Justin looked behind him. "You are awake. Did I wake you up?"

"Yes." Then, Rachel directly entered the kitchen. "What are you doing?"

Before him was a pot of noodles on the heated stove. "I thought about it and still find this an easier choice."

She hesitantly asked, "How long have you been cooking the noodles?"

"Twenty minutes."

"Twenty minutes?!" There was an incredulous look on her face.

"What's wrong? Is that not enough?" Justin was confused. "How long does it usually take?"

The corner of Rachel's lips twitched. "Just turn off the stove. It's more than enough."

Talking about cooking with this man, who had barely entered the kitchen all his life, would be akin to casting pearls before swine and she had no intention to waste her time teaching him how to cook either.

It was only when Justin attempted to take the noodles out from the pot that he realized his attempt at cooking seemed to have failed. The noodles had practically become so mushy that it broke when he tried to dish it out with a pair of tongs; he couldn't take them out at all.

"We'll serve it with the pot." Rachel found a coaster from the cabinet and placed it on the dining table. "Just place it here."

This was the first time she ate noodles from a pot and it surprisingly felt refreshing.

As Rachel was starving, she took a fork and spoon to scoop the noodles and blew on it before placing it into her mouth.

“How does it taste?”

“Not bad, but it will taste better with a sunny-side up.”

“A sunny-side up?” A hesitant Justin glanced at the kitchen.

“I was teasing you. A simple meal will suit me fine. Do you want some?”

He unexpectedly replied, “Frying an egg is not hard.”

With that, he took two eggs and returned to the kitchen.

Rachel raised her brow in response and continued to bury her head in the food without even giving him a glance.

Truth be told, she didn’t really crave for a sunny-side up egg; she had merely found an excuse to make Justin leave since the meal tasted better without him in front of her.

Soon, she heard a sizzling sound from the kitchen that was followed by a loud clang. As the sound had startled her, it caused her to drop her utensils into the bowl.

“What happened?” She asked as she turned to the kitchen in shock.

“Nothing.” However, it was obvious from Justin’s voice that something wasn’t right.

Rachel immediately placed her spoon down and headed into the kitchen. As soon as she stepped through the door, she saw the pan sizzling as well as an egg and spatula on the floor. One look at it was enough to tell her that the place was in a mess.

A pale Justin was standing far away from the stove as his left hand held his right hand.

She immediately covered the pan and turned off the stove. "You can't add oil when there's water in the pan. Are you alright? Did you burn yourself?"

"I'm fine."

"What do you mean that you are fine? Let me see." She took his hand and carefully looked at it, whereupon there were a few blisters on the back of his hand which soon swelled up. "Come with me. I'll get you some medicine."

Justin was pulled along for several steps before he finally returned to his senses and his gaze landed on her hand that was pulling him.

The last time she had treated him with such patience was when he had been injured.

Since a woman was known to have a maternal nature, it would be her natural instinct to sympathize with the weak. Is it this part of sympathizing with the weak?

"Don't pop the blister. Be careful when you change your clothes for the next two days. Remember to apply medicine twice a day—once in the morning and once in the evening." Then, Rachel placed the medicine on the table. "Apply it yourself."

After she said that, she picked up the fork and spoon and continued eating noodles.

Justin still hadn't regained his senses as he pointed out, "I'm already in such a state. Aren't you going to apply the medicine for me?"

"What's wrong with you? It's only two blisters; it's not like you broke your hand."

"You—"

"I'm done. I'm going out to pick up Samuel and Charlotte. You can stay at home on your own."

With that, she took the car keys and left the house, leaving a frustrated Justin standing in the dining room alone with an injured hand.

When Rachel arrived at the music room, Gloria was practicing piano while Samuel was singing next to the piano.

It was a French nursery rhyme, which he fluently sang.

Once he finished singing, a warm applause came from one side. "That's awesome! Samuel, you're amazing! I'll get the whole class to attend your performance!" Gloria spoke, "However, I won't buy the tickets; you have to buy them for your classmates."

"Aunt Gloria, you are being petty!"

"What did you say? I dare you to say it another time!"

When Samuel raised his head and saw Rachel, his eyes brightened. "Mommy!"

She pushed the door open and entered the room, whereupon Charlotte and Samuel pounced on her one after another to hug her waist while refusing to let go of her.

A helpless Rachel uttered, "Ria, I'm here to pick them up. Did they give you any trouble?"

Gloria immediately waved her hand. "No, no, Samuel is a good boy; as for Charlotte, she has always been a little mischievous, so I'm used to that!"

"Are you really planning to allow Samuel to perform together with you?"

"Of course, Miss Rachel. Did you think that I was messing with you?" She rose up from the piano bench. "You must have heard how well Samuel sang, right?"

Rachel caressed Samuel's head. "I didn't know that you have such talent in singing. Maybe I should send you to a vocal class so that you are able to learn it systematically."

However, Samuel immediately shook his head. "I don't want to attend classes; I want to learn from Aunt Gloria!"

"You really know how to pick the best, don't you? Do you know how many people are in the line waiting for your Aunt Gloria to teach them?"

Gloria broke into a smile. "The long line won't stop me when I'm willing to teach Samuel."

As they chatted, Rachel suddenly felt a presence at the door but failed to see anyone when she looked in that direction. She frowned, thinking that she might have sensed it wrong.

Chapter 308 Samuel's Background

"Miss Rachel, what's wrong?" Gloria was puzzled after noticing that Rachel seemed to have spaced out. Rachel retracted her gaze from the window and replied, "Nothing."

"Miss Rachel, have you eaten? I was about to take them out to eat." Her question reminded Rachel of the mushy noodles that Justin had made, which made her laugh in her heart. "I have sort of eaten, but I can tag along. It may be hard for you to care for two children."

"Alright, let's invite Jolly too." "Since when are the two of you so close with each other?"

"We shouldn't mix things up. Although our standings are different, it doesn't stop us from being friends," Gloria answered with a raised brow.

Rachel understood what Gloria meant by 'standings' without having to ask. In Rachel's opinion, the 'standings' was merely a childish game because who she chose to be with had completely depended on her own willingness. It wasn't something that those two could change with a word or two.

“Charlotte, Samuel, let’s go.” Rachel waved at the two kids before she walked out of the room. However, after barely taking a few steps out, Gloria suddenly stopped her. “Miss Rachel.”

“What’s the matter?”

“Shhh—” Gloria raised her right hand to place her index finger at her lips to gesture at Rachel to be quiet.

When Rachel followed Gloria’s gaze, she saw a shadow around the corner of the staircase.

Her pupils contracted because it meant that she was right. It wasn’t an illusion; someone was indeed spying on them in secret.

Gloria reached into her bag as she carefully inched toward the corner of the staircase.

Perhaps due to the sudden silence in the air, the stalker seemed to have realized something and the shadow on the floor then started to move.

“Ahhhh!”

She shrieked and aimed her pepper spray at the person’s face.

The man cried in agony as he covered his face and bent over.

Without any hesitation, Gloria pounded the man with her purse. “Serve you right, you stalker and pervert! Pervert! Pervert!”

Rachel initially intended to help out, but before she managed to come closer to them, the man had already been subdued by Gloria.

At that moment, the man's face was covered in bruises and it looked staggering. Rachel carried her two kids and pressed the back of their heads against her body. The scene had escalated to a level of violence that was inappropriate for young children to watch.

Soon, the man collapsed on the ground and tragically cried. Gloria stepped on his back with her high heels and directly called the police. "I've come across perverts like you. I'm calling the police now!"

"No, don't call the police! This is all but a misunderstanding!"

"Misunderstanding, you say? My foot!"

She stepped harder, to which he let out a miserable cry again. "I know that you are trying to stall for time. Just forget about it!"

As she spoke, the call went through.

"Hello, I want to make a police report. I have caught a perverted stalker here! The address is Music Room No. 2 at Lily Avenue."

As they were at the city center, the police officers in charge of Lily Avenue soon arrived at the scene.

The group of people then escorted the terribly beaten 'perverted stalker' to the police station to have their statements recorded.

"Officer, I'm innocent. I didn't stalk them; I was just passing by."

"Passing by? I saw you lurking around outside the music room two days ago."

"I really happened to pass by."

Rachel, who was seated at one side, watched as Gloria argued with the 'stalker'; she vaguely felt that the man seemed familiar, but she couldn't recall where she had seen him before.

The said man was rather handsome and dressed in a formal suit; he looked nothing like a pervert.

"We've checked the security footage. The man had indeed shown up around the music room three days ago, so he was indeed stalking someone." The police officer soon retrieved the security footage. Once the evidence was uncovered, the man instantly seemed dispirited.

Gloria demanded fiercely, "What else you have to say? You are indeed a pervert! Officer, you have to throw this man behind bars for a few years. Otherwise, he will do this again after he is released. This sort of person tends to have the mentality of harming the society."

The man helplessly mumbled, "It's really a misunderstanding."

The police officer coldly responded, "Cut the crap. Follow me and call your family to bail you out after 15 days."

Color drained from the man's face when he heard that.

At this moment, a flustered female voice rang at the lobby of the police station. "Where's the stalker? How dare that pervert stalk my best friend!"

"Jolly." Rachel rose up from the couch.

Upon seeing Rachel, Jolly quickly marched over. "How are you? Are you guys fine? How are Samuel and Charlotte?"

Rachel pouted in the direction of the two kids at a distance away.

Samuel and Charlotte were able to make themselves at home no matter where they were. They didn't make a fuss when they were brought to a police station. As it stood, they were hungry and a few female police officers gave them some snacks; they even took photos together with the police officers.

Jolly heaved a sigh of relief. "Where's the pervert?"

"Over there." She followed Rachel's gaze and saw Gloria before noticing the 'perverted stalker', who had bruises all over his face.

Jolly blurted out, "Mr. Rivers?"

The man's expression instantly changed the moment he saw her as he tried to cover his face.

She then strode up to them. "What happened?"

A puzzled Gloria clarified, "You two know each other?"

"We don't!" He immediately shook his head in denial.

Jolly frowned. "Mr. Rivers, you don't owe me any money. So, why are you avoiding me?"

Gloria muttered in disbelief, "Jolly, this can't be happening! You actually know this perverted stalker?"

"He's the stalker whom you guys talked about?"

"Yes, the police officer has checked the security footage and found that he had been stalking me for the past three days. He lingered around outside the music room and even climbed in through the window. He is going to be imprisoned for 15 days."

Upon hearing that, Jolly's expression immediately fell. "You were stalking Gloria? Who asked you to do so? Was it him?"

Him? Rachel was initially doubtful, but her pupils contracted when she heard that. “Jolly, who is he working for?”

Jolly slowly balled her fist by her sides and muttered a name. “Ryan Sutton.”

Both Rachel and Gloria froze at the mention of the name.

Ryan Sutton was the president of Majestic Corp, which was one of the four major companies in Riverdale. He was a renowned tycoon of the real estate industry and the dream man of most women in Riverdale.

This man works with Ryan?

Before the crowd had even returned to their senses, Jolly broke the silence. “Did Ryan ask you to follow Gloria?”

Edison immediately shook his head as fast as he could. “No, President Sutton has asked me to watch over that kid.”

As he answered, he glanced into the distance before his gaze landed on Samuel.

Rachel was fully aware of Samuel’s background.

No matter how hard they had tried to hide the truth, Samuel was now being targeted.

Jolly’s expression immediately changed when she heard that. Judging by her usual behavior, she would have been engulfed by rage at that point, but she suppressed her temper and growled through gritted teeth instead, “Why did he ask you to stalk Samuel?”

Edison whispered, “President Sutton suspects that Samuel is his son—”

“That’s bullsh*it!” Before he even managed to finish his sentence, she interrupted, “Is he dreaming? Samuel has nothing to do with him!”

While scratching his head, Edison elaborated, “Miss Carter, that’s not a very convincing argument. Samuel looks exactly the same as the photos taken when President Sutton was a kid.”

As soon as he said that, Gloria gaped at him with an incredulous look on her face. This surely is one of the shocking and juiciest news for wealthy families!

Chapter 309 Underhanded Tactics

Meanwhile, Edison seemed blissfully oblivious to one’s mood. The anger on Jolly’s face was rather evident, yet he continued to fuel the flames.

Then, Rachel had managed to stop Jolly in time before sternly reprimanding him, “You must be Mr. Rivers. Based on the words that you just said, I can sue you for libel, you know.”

“I’m Rachel and Samuel’s mom.” Rachel continued to stare at him with a composed look. “This is my business card. I’ve never met President Sutton before, so why did he send someone to follow my son out of nowhere? What are you guys trying to do?”

It was evident that Edison had already conducted the necessary investigation. “Miss Hudson, this is a matter between President Sutton and Miss Carter, so you better stay out of it. You haven’t even sorted out your affairs, right?”

“What has that got to do with you? Ryan Sutton thinks he can do whatever he wants, huh?”

An extremely mad Jolly roared, “Call him now! If he doesn’t show up today, you won’t be stepping foot out of this place!”

At that point, Edison shrank backward and pretended not to hear her as he maintained his silence.

“So, you’re not going to make the call, huh? I’ll do it, then!” After she had said that, she instantly dialed Ryan’s number.

“Hello? Ryan Sutton, you have twenty minutes to get to the Lily Avenue Police Station to pick up your personal assistant. If you’re even one minute late, I’ll make sure he remains in that holding cell for another month!”

Rachel frowned. Is Ryan Sutton even coming?

Meanwhile, Gloria was someone who was fond of excitement and tugged on Rachel’s hand before continuously asking, “What’s going on? I heard that Ryan Sutton is extremely handsome. He founded Majestic Corp and single-handedly developed it. He was once married, but has already divorced from his wife. That makes him the most popular bachelor in Riverdale right now. Is he romantically involved with Jolly? Don’t tell me that he had a divorce because of Jolly?”

“Stop saying all that nonsense.” Rachel frowned again. “Ryan Sutton filed for divorce three years ago. At that point, Jolly and I were still abroad and not even in town, so that had nothing to do with her.”

“Then, is he actually Samuel’s biological father?”

“Gloria.” The frown on Rachel’s face deepened even further. “Just ignore whatever that man said from before and don’t let Samuel know about it.”

Rachel and Jolly had made a lot of effort all these years to keep Samuel’s identity a secret, so Rachel didn’t want their efforts to go down the drain.

Gloria had in fact always found it strange that Rachel had skipped town immediately after giving birth to Charlotte back then. Meanwhile, Samuel was only a couple of months older than Charlotte, so there was no way he could be Rachel’s son.

It was something that Gloria had wanted to ask Rachel about for the longest time.

Right now, it looked like Edison had been telling the truth in which Samuel was indeed the son of the infamous real estate mogul—Ryan Sutton.

“I’ll definitely keep my lips sealed.” Gloria nodded solemnly. “Despite my personal feud with Jolly, I promise I’ll definitely keep such a major thing to myself.”

“That’s great, then.” Rachel heaved a sigh of relief. “If you have something else on, how about you head off first?”

“I don’t have anything else on. I’m not busy at all.”

Gloria remained fixed in position and refused to budge. There’s something exciting going on, so I would definitely spare my time for this.

Besides, she was keen to know how Ryan Sutton, someone reputable for being dashing handsome, looked like.

“Judging from Jolly’s fiery temper, she’s quite likely to come to blows with the other party. So, it’ll make things worse if someone gets hurt. This is a police station after all. I’ll be able to help stop her later on.”

Meanwhile, Rachel was aware of Gloria’s thoughts, so she calmly mentioned, “I reckon that you wouldn’t need to stop her.”

In less than twenty minutes, a black-colored Maybach pulled up and stopped in front of the entrance of the police station.

A man wearing a shiny pair of black shoes stepped out of the car and his attire from head to toe was also in black. His hair was cut short and chestnut brown. With impeccable brows, his glittering eyes were a compliment to his perfectly sculpted features. Indeed, he had lived up to his reputation of being an enchanting man.

Gloria was in shock. “He’s really handsome!”

Jolly, who generally had a fiery temper, clenched her hand that was loosely hanging by the side of her body tightly into a fist. Then, she quickly strode toward him.

Under the dark night skies, the duo stood at opposite ends of each other, which was a distance of about half a meter apart. Neither was it too near nor was it too far.

“Ryan Sutton, did you send someone to track Samuel?”

“Yup.”

“Who gave you the right to do such a thing!!”

“I did that based on the fact that he could be my son.”

“Are you out of your mind?” Jolly’s expression darkened. “You should know Justin Burton from Burton Group, right? He’s the son of Justin and his ex-wife, Rachel Hudson.”

“Take a look at his hair, his pair of eyes, and his face! You could perhaps claim that he’s not my son. However, if you claim that he’s Justin’s son...”

At this moment, Ryan’s lips curled into a slight smile as he moved closer toward Jolly.

Meanwhile, she was forced to retreat.

“Surely, no one would believe that at all.”

His casual words rang out from above her head.

At that point, she clenched her teeth and there was a sound of her knuckles cracking as she tightened her fists. “I don’t care whether you believe me or not, but please just stay away from Samuel from now on!”

“That’s not possible. Since he’s my son, then I’ll definitely apply to have custody of him. After all, we were originally engaged to be married, weren’t we?”

As soon as Jolly heard that, she whipped up her head all of a sudden and stared at him incredulously. “Ryan Sutton, how could you even mention that so nonchalantly?”

“It’s a fact that we were originally engaged to be married.”

“You’ve already married someone else!”

“And I’ve also obtained a divorce.”

Ryan voiced out the simple statement and said that without any hint of emotion. To him, it was as if getting married and subsequently a divorce was as natural as it could be and it was something quite normal.

Then, Jolly took a few steps backward but found her shoulders being firmly supported by someone. She turned and saw that Rachel was standing behind her.

Rachel lightly patted Jolly on the shoulders with a hand to provide some reassurance. At the same time, she glanced toward the man opposite her. “You must be President Sutton from Majestic Corp.”

“Miss Hudson.”

Ryan nodded his head slightly as a manner of greeting Rachel.

However, she wasn’t as polite as he was. “It’s quite embarrassing that our first meeting has to be under such unpleasant circumstances. However, after all of the things that you did to Jolly in the past, I can fully understand why this has occurred.”

“Miss Hudson, what do you mean by that?”

“It’s human nature for one to choose a better path by using underhanded tactics to achieve that. However, it’s no wonder that the people whom you have offended in the past don’t want to approach you at all.”

Meanwhile, Ryan’s expression darkened slightly upon hearing that.

Nonetheless, Rachel maintained a neutral expression. “Samuel’s my son. I can let today’s incident slide, but I’ll be in contact with my lawyers and reserve the right to pursue this matter as well. If anything like this happens again, I’ll definitely file a lawsuit against you.”

As soon as she said that, she turned back and shot a look at Gloria.

Gloria quickly escorted the two kids outside from the police station.

Meanwhile, as soon as Ryan saw Samuel, he attempted to say something when he saw Rachel’s warning look. “Mr. Sutton.”

Everyone within the social circles of Riverdale was well aware that the young lady of Hudson Pharmaceuticals, Rachel Hudson, was ruthless with her tactics. She had personally imprisoned her father and kicked her biological sister out of the family in order to inherit Hudson Pharmaceuticals.

As such, Ryan was reluctant to cross the path of a crazed woman like her.

He could only helplessly watch on as they drove off. Then, he stood at the entrance of the police station as a frustrated look flashed across his eyes.

“President Sutton.” His personal assistant’s meek voice rang out from behind, “Should we still continue to trail after the child? I think Miss Hudson actually means her word and she isn’t just saying that to scare us off. I reckon that she would actually take action against us. If she discovers me again, I’ll definitely be taken into custody.”

“Stop doing it.” Ryan calmly mentioned, “She’s still exactly as how she was back then. She can’t even lie to save her life and it doesn’t take much to make her spill the beans.”

“So, what do you mean?”

“There’s no need to continue investigating Samuel’s identity. Just contact the best lawyer in Riverdale.”

“Do you actually plan to fight Miss Carter in court?”

He then glanced into the distance and realized that the other party’s car was gone, thereafter replying nonchalantly, “I’m just making the necessary preparations to be on the safe side.”

Chapter 310 Shield You Guys From Harm

Gloria drove Jolly’s car and sent them directly back home.

“Mommy, who was that man from before?”

Now that they were inside the car, Charlotte asked Rachel.

Then, Rachel responded, “I don’t know him.”

However, Samuel spoke up, “Before we went on our school break, I ran into that man by the school entrance where he gave me a box of chocolates too!”

“What chocolates did he give you?” Jolly suddenly turned around to look at him from the front passenger seat with an ugly expression.

“It’s the liqueur-filled chocolates that we both enjoy, but you won’t allow me to have too much of it because it’ll make me drunk.”

“Did you eat them? When was that?” She immediately panicked. “Gloria, head to the hospital right now.”

Gloria was significantly shocked.

Meanwhile, Rachel hurriedly elaborated, “Gloria, just keep driving. Jolly, calm down. Samuel’s school holidays had started quite a while ago. If the chocolates were indeed dubious, surely we would have noticed the issue way before this!”

Jolly’s expression remained ugly. “Ryan Sutton isn’t a nice guy. In the past—”

At that point, she swallowed the words that she wanted to say due to the kids’ presence.

However, Samuel was quite confused. “Is that man a bad guy? He doesn’t look like one, though.”

In response, Rachel ruffled his hair. “It’s usually impossible to identify bad guys by their looks. Next time, if you meet this man again, stay away from him to keep me and Godmother at ease, alright?”

Although he couldn’t quite understand the reason, he nonetheless nodded.

Meanwhile, Jolly was preoccupied with her thoughts for the entire journey.

Her face was reflected as she kept her eyes on Samuel with a glazed expression from the rearview mirror.

“We’ve arrived.”

It was at that moment when their car arrived at Jolly's penthouse apartment located in the town center. Then, Gloria prompted, "Do you want us to accompany you upstairs?"

Suddenly, Jolly responded, "I don't want to go home anymore."

"Huh?"

A stunned Gloria clarified, "Then, where are you going to stay?"

Meanwhile, Rachel spoke up, "Are you concerned..."

Concerned about Samuel? Jolly nodded.

"How about this? Why don't you bring Samuel along with you and stay over at your parents' place for the time being?"

"I'm worried that he will come over to seek us out directly."

At that point, Rachel became lost in her thoughts. After all, Ryan and Jolly were originally engaged to be married, so it was plausible that he might head over to seek them out.

After deliberating about the situation for quite some time, she finally spoke up, "Chris, how about this: I'll move over to your place temporarily to stay for the next few days."

"My place? Whereabouts are you talking about?"

"Justin's house." Jolly had suddenly found a solution wherein her eyes immediately brightened. "That b*stard, Ryan Sutton, can disregard me, but I'm sure he would be mindful of Justin, right?"

"It's all sorted, then. Gloria, start the ignition."

Upon saying that, Jolly fastened her seat belt once again as she finished speaking while the gloomy look she had earlier swiftly dissipated.

Gloria was stunned. "Are you being serious? How can you possibly stay over at Justin's place?"

"What's wrong? Are there no spare rooms available for me?"

"This has nothing to do with the number of rooms!" Gloria stared at her for some time before blurting out, "Don't tell me that you're interested in Justin?!"

At that point, Jolly grimaced. "Are you out of your mind or am I the one going crazy here?"

"Fine, I want to move in too."

"Huh?"

"What's there to be confused about? There are plenty of rooms for us." After saying that, Gloria fastened her seat belt and started the ignition.

Neither one of them had asked Rachel for her opinion throughout their exchange and didn't call or text Justin to seek his permission either. They happily decided to move into his house on the spot.

Half an hour later, in the living room of Burton Residence, a dumbfounded Justin stared at the two women walking in with their luggage for what seemed like eternity. "Are you two moving in?"

"Don't mind me. I'll stay in the room downstairs by the back garden," Gloria spoke as she dragged her luggage to head inside.

Meanwhile, Jolly scanned her surroundings. "Then, I'll stay in the room next to her. You don't have to serve me."

Serve her? Who's here to serve her? Justim was angered beyond words.

"So, this is what you went out to do?"

Meanwhile, Rachel expressed her resignation by throwing both of her hands into the air. "It's just temporary."

Jolly was definitely not going to stay for long.

Meanwhile, he took a few minutes to process this fact. "Can I ask for the reason?"

At that point, Rachel hesitated for a moment before replying, "Yes, I would have to start by explaining Samuel's identity. Five years ago, I had just left Riverdale after giving birth to Charlotte and collapsed right after disembarking from the plane. Coincidentally, Jolly, who had just gotten off the same flight, also lost consciousness. The only difference was that I fainted from postpartum weakness whereas she fainted from exhaustion sustained during pregnancy."

Back then, Jolly, who was five months into her pregnancy, was emaciated to the point where her baby bump wasn't even significant. She had gone to Montenegro for two reasons: one was to give birth while the other was for her studies.

"Jolly was completely different from how she is right now. If you had met her back then, you would've realized how miserable she was when she left Riverdale then."

She wasn't born with her happy-go-lucky attitude, but rather, if she didn't maintain this attitude, it would have been arduous for her to get through life.

"We stayed in the same hospital so over time, we became familiar with each other. After that, I helped her to conceal her birth and she assisted me by organizing the process with my migration to Montenegro."

Initially, Rachel had thought that Jolly was some rich man's mistress and went abroad to give birth without the person's wife knowing. Never in her wildest dreams would she have imagined that Jolly was the daughter of the president of Carter Enterprise.

"I only realized afterward that her fiancé had married someone else. Since she couldn't bear to abort the child, she went abroad to give birth. However, her depression worsened as her due date approached."

Depression? Justin frowned but didn't question Rachel. He remained silent and allowed her to continue speaking as he listened.

Rachel then added, "Coincidentally, I saw it when she slit her wrists and after her life was saved, the doctors told me that it was her seventh episode that month. Based on her mental status back then, they preferred her to abort the child, but she was too far along in her pregnancy. There was no choice but to continue with the pregnancy."

Justin couldn't quite imagine someone as haughty and cocky as Jolly to have such a dark past. "What happened after that?"

"After that, she told me that she had been abandoned by Samuel's biological father and he had married another woman..."

"The princess of Carter Enterprise was jilted?"

"That sounds unbelievable, right?" She paused as she tried to come up with the words to explain the rest. "This is quite a long story and it's complicated to explain too. Anyway, it's just a story of how humanity cannot withstand trials. If only Jolly hadn't concealed her identity from the beginning, then she might already be married to Ryan Sutton now and be living a great life."

"Ryan Sutton?" His eyes faintly narrowed.

After that, Rachel nodded her head. "I was just about to tell you about it. I think I might have offended him today. I heard that he's someone who holds a grudge, so I might get into trouble in the future and would need your help."

Justin took some time to comprehend her words and finally understood what she meant. "So, the reason for you patiently speaking to me for so long is because you wanted me to protect you guys from harm?"

At that, she remained nonchalant. "I mean, you've already acknowledged Samuel's identity in public. You can't possibly watch on as someone snatches him from us and him subsequently addressing someone else as Daddy, right?"

That would make him a laughing stock by then. He suddenly felt that he had gone overboard beyond the point of no return.