

## **Mute Bride 311**

### **Chapter 311 Staying Loyal to Only One Man**

“Are you going to watch Ryan keep sending his men to stalk Samuel and do nothing? Samuel’s the one being stalked now, and he might do the same thing to us next time.” Rachel stared at Justin in silence. Her clear gaze and innocent expression made anyone unable to turn her down.

Justin furrowed his brows. Although Burton Group and Majestic Corp were not in any partnerships, he had met Ryan in several social gatherings before. The fact that Ryan had managed to make his company thrive in just a few years suggested that he was someone intelligent. If he was really coming at Jolly, Rachel would also be affected as she was Samuel’s mother on paper. “Don’t worry. I’ll handle this.”

Rachel’s expression immediately softened. “I’ll say thanks on Samuel’s behalf.”

“Rachel, you know that your gratitude is not what I want.” Justin stared at her with a serious expression. “I hope that you’ll immediately seek my help whenever you come across any danger in the future, be it a work-related or private matter. As for my uncle—”

Pretending not to understand him, Rachel uttered, “I’ll check on Jolly and Gloria before getting the bedsheets in the guest room changed.”

She left the place right after she finished speaking, leaving no chance for Justin to continue his words.

Those from Hudson Pharmaceuticals had been in frequent contact with Jason. As Jason’s nephew, Justin was certainly aware of this. It was understandable that he wanted to stop Rachel from getting into contact with Jason, but she couldn’t obey him whatsoever.

Meanwhile, Gloria and Jolly had already put down their luggage in the guest room. At the moment, they were having a discussion on what to order for dinner.

“Jolly, why are you ordering Surströmming for dinner? Do you want to make the room stink?”

“Look at what you’re ordering. Does Parmesan cheese smell any better?”

“I’ll also add some Brussels sprouts.”

Rachel overheard their conversation as soon as she arrived at the room. The corners of her mouth twitched as she uttered, “What are you two trying to do at this hour?”

“We’re going to have our dinner,” they said in unison. Not only were they in sync, they also spoke in an unabashed manner.

Gloria uttered, “We haven’t had our dinner either.”

“That’s right. We were unable to eat anything because of that incident.” Jolly waved her hand. “No more arguments. Dinner is on me.”

A helpless Rachel said, “Please stop messing around. If you’re really going to order the food you just mentioned, the entire house will stink since we always close the doors and windows at night.”

Then, she rolled up her sleeves. “I’ll prepare dinner for you.”

Jolly pretended to be bashful. “There’s no need for that. It’s very late.”

“It won’t be just for the two of you; Samuel and Charlotte haven’t had anything as well. I’ll prepare some noodles for everyone.”

“Alright.” Jolly became energized instantly. “I want two poached eggs on my noodles. One of them should be fully cooked and the other has to be half-cooked.”

“What about you, Gloria?”

“I’ll have some tomatoes and eggs on my noodles. I don’t like heavy food, so please cut down on the salt.”

“Alright, I’ll get them prepared for you guys right now.”

Rachel took a glance at Gloria, who got her hint and took Jolly’s arm. “Let’s go down as well. It’s so boring up here.”

“Just head down on your own. Why are you making me go with you?”

“I can’t take care of two kids by myself, you know.”

“Justin will also be downstairs.”

“A man like him doesn’t know how to take care of kids. Come with me right now! Aren’t you their godmother?”

Gloria directly pulled Jolly away from the bed.

Upon seeing that Jolly still went downstairs despite her reluctance, Rachel heaved a sigh of relief. She was worried that given her temperament, Jolly would become too agitated after seeing what Ryan had done to Samuel. Hence, it was a great idea that she also moved into this place. With so many people watching over Samuel, it was a relief for both sides.

The usually quiet villa became bustling with noise once the two ladies moved in. Shortly later, all of them were seated at the table to have dinner together. Upon seeing that Justin was getting a bowl, Jolly shot him a glance. “Haven’t you already had dinner?”

“Why can’t he have more food after having dinner?” Gloria responded with an annoyed expression. “Rachel is adept at cooking, so it’s expected that men love the food she prepares. I don’t think it’s too much to ask for. Also, don’t forget that you’re living under his roof, Jolly.”

Upon hearing that, Jolly became exasperated. “Living under his roof? I’m just giving him a chance to prove his worth in front of Rachel.”

"I'll have to thank you on his behalf then."

"Can't he speak? Why does he need you to thank me on his behalf?"

Unable to take it anymore, Rachel snapped, "It seems that even food can't shut your mouths. If you dare utter one more word, stay away from my dinner table."

It was then the two of them kept their mouths shut. Unlike Gloria and Jolly, who basically wolfed down the food, Justin was much slower and more elegant when having noodles. In fact. The two women were already on their second bowls while the man was only halfway through his first. After the meal, Samuel and Charlotte went to the living room and started watching some cartoons.

Justin said, "Don't worry about Ryan. I'll deal with him."

The sudden mention of Ryan caught Jolly off guard.

"Yes, we do need your help with this." Gloria nodded. "After all, this matter has implicated Rachel as well. How dare the man named Ryan send his men to stalk Samuel?"

"I'll tell Frankie to handle this." As he spoke, Justin took a look at Jolly. "There's one more thing I'm not supposed to say, but you're very beautiful, Miss Carter. You can easily find a brilliant man to be your partner, and there's no point staying loyal to only one man."

"What do you mean?" Jolly was puzzled.

Justin explained, "I heard that you tried to kill yourself for the man who dumped you. It's not worth it."

What does he mean that I tried to kill myself? Jolly was dumbfounded. "What on earth are you talking about?"

"Didn't you cut your wrists for Ryan?"

What? Jolly choked on the spices and started coughing violently. Her eyes were covered in tears. When did I ever cut my wrists?

Rachel immediately passed her a cup of water and patted her shoulder. At the same time, she shot a signal with her gaze. Upon seeing that, Jolly immediately understood what was going on.

“Are you alright?” Justin asked with concern.

Jolly straightened up and coughed a bit more. “I’m fine.”

“What’s wrong? Did I say anything wrong?”

“No, but I hope that you’ll never bring up this kind of embarrassing incident again. Thanks for your concern.” While nodding, Jolly forcefully pinched Rachel under the table. This is embarrassing! How could she lie to Justin that I cut my wrists for Ryan? I’m a straightforward woman who has the courage to love and hate. There’s no man that I can’t leave behind. Why would I try to kill myself for a man who uses others to gain benefits for himself?

A flabbergasted Gloria said, “You tried to kill yourself for that b\*stard? I can’t believe that you’ve been acting tough all along, Jolly!”

Jolly put on a hollow laugh and replied, “I wasn’t myself at that time.”

As she endured the pain coming from her thigh, Rachel sported a nonchalant expression and uttered, “Let’s drink some juice that I’ve just squeezed. I’ll get it from the fridge.”

With a hideous smile, Jolly demanded, “Please get me more of the juice. My throat is burning.”

Chapter 312 Leroy Bennett

Rachel had lied to Justin back then. Jolly never suffered from depression, nor did she try to cut her wrists for any man. She never told anyone how she got pregnant with Samuel, but when Rachel met her in a foreign country, she had several meals every single day, and she seemed to be in a truly jolly mood.

Then, she aggressively persuaded Rachel to be Samuel's mother on paper by offering to help her obtain permanent residency in Montenegro.

At that time, Jolly wasn't ready to be a mother while Rachel had just left Charlotte. Rather than Charlotte needing Rachel, it was the other way round.

The reason Rachel lied to Justin was because she wanted to arouse his sympathy to help her fend off the scoundrel named Ryan.

The next morning, a meeting took place in Hudson Pharmaceuticals.

"The sports drink developed by our R&D Department has been tested and confirmed to be safe. Now, we have to talk about endorsement. Our colleagues from the Advertising Department have selected three potential spokespeople. Please have a look, President Hudson."

"There's no need for that." Rachel waved her hand. "I know nothing about celebrities. Tell the Advertising Department and Marketing Department to have a joint discussion and show me the final proposal."

Upon hearing that, the director from the Advertising Department immediately picked out one of the proposals. "President Hudson, we've had some discussions before, and we all agree that this person is the most suitable candidate."

"Do all of you share the same sentiment?" Rachel took the proposal and went straight to the endorsement part. Within seconds, the introduction to the potential spokesperson came into her sight. However, what attracted her were the photos attached.

There were photos of the spokesperson swimming half-naked, riding a bicycle in a white shirt, and skateboarding in a t-shirt. Just by looking at his photos, one could feel how young and energetic he was.

“Leroy Bennett?” Rachel uttered his name.

The director from the Advertising Department said, “Yes, he’s the hottest celebrity in recent years. Ever since he debuted in a reality show three years ago, he has remained popular until this day.”

However, Rachel frowned. “Such a young celebrity has a very specific target audience, though. Once his fans lose interest in him, they’ll stop buying the things that he endorses. That’s a risk we’ll have to bear.”

“We have taken that into consideration as well, but the most important thing for us to do now is to popularize this sports drink. Since there’s no problem with the quality, it’ll become reputable in no time.”

“You’re right. In that case, just go ahead with him.”

“Okay.”

Before Rachel closed the document, she couldn’t help but take one more glance at the photos.

In fact, he wasn’t a typical handsome male celebrity. His facial features were pretty angular, and his eyes were piercing. However, his face was still slightly chubby due to his young age, so he looked rather harmless.

Furthermore, his athletic appearance perfectly matched the sports drink they were going to promote.

“I’ll handle this endorsement project.”

Jolly’s voice was suddenly heard in the meeting room as all of them shifted their attention to her.

Jolly was always by Rachel’s side since she was the latter’s assistant. Supposedly, she didn’t have a right to say anything during office meetings. Nevertheless, all of them knew that she was a young lady from Carter Enterprise, so no one dared to refute her.

“You?”

“Yes, I’ll do it. Our colleagues from the Advertising Department are swamped with work, and I have some free time anyway. It just so happens that I have some connections in showbiz, and I have some experience negotiating with celebrity agents as well. I’ll help you handle this.”

While Rachel was doubtful, the director from the Advertising Department uttered, “President Hudson, I’ll work with Miss Carter and deal with this endorsement task.”

Left with no choice, Rachel could only agree to it first. “Alright, let’s end the meeting here. All of you have done a great job.”

After the meeting in the morning, Jolly and Rachel returned to the office together. As soon as the door was closed, Rachel questioned, “What’s wrong with you?”

“What do you mean?” Pretending not to understand her, Jolly started watering the plants.

“You’re killing the plants.” Rachel rolled her eyes at her. “Are you going to harass the male celebrity by using the endorsement deal as an excuse?”

Evidently, she was fully aware of Jolly’s temperament. The woman was someone who would go crazy over handsome men.

“I swear that it’s not the case. Even though I love handsome men, I’ll never harass them. I have a friend who loves Leroy, so I’m going to get her a signed autograph.”

“A friend? Who is it?”

“You don’t know her.”

“I don’t think you have any friends that I’m not aware of. Don’t tell me she’s an acquaintance—she’s probably not important enough to make you get a signed autograph from a celebrity.”



A guilty Jolly hesitated for a long time. Upon realizing that the secret couldn't be kept hidden, she said honestly, "It's Estelle Dolton."

"Estelle Dolton?" Rachel appeared to be in disbelief. "Didn't you stop contacting her five years ago?"

"Calm down. I can explain."

"Go on then." Rachel suppressed her anger and took a seat. "I'd like to know how you're going to explain the rationale behind getting a signed autograph for a woman who snatched your fiancé five years ago."

"Leroy is Estelle's ex-boyfriend."

Upon hearing that, Rachel was startled. I guess I have to get this matter sorted out. "Is Estelle, the one you're talking about, the person who got married to Ryan?"

"Yes." Jolly dipped her head. "She was also my roommate in university and my best friend. You've heard me right; it's her."

Rachel could hear a hint of resentment in her voice.

"I just want to find out why Estelle dumped Leroy and got married to Ryan."

"You don't believe she's after money?"

"I don't know."

"Alright." Rachel stopped asking further. "Go ahead, but make sure that your emotions won't affect your work."

She decided to stop asking because they had been as close as real sisters over the years, so she understood Jolly as much as she understood herself. Jolly would never get over the incident if the knot in her heart wasn't untied.

Meanwhile, a moved Jolly wrapped her arms around Rachel's shoulders. "Thanks. You're the most amazing friend in the world."

"Get off me! I'm going to puke."

"I'll never let you go."

While they were messing with each other, Rachel's phone that was placed on the table started ringing.

As soon as she saw the name on the phone's screen, Rachel narrowed her eyes and motioned for Jolly to keep quiet. A moment later, she picked up the call.

"Mr. Burton."

A mature voice was heard speaking on the other end of the line. "How are you, Miss Hudson? I heard that you've been in trouble recently."

"I'm amazed at your ability to gather information, Mr. Burton. However, I've never been short of trouble, so I'm not sure which case you're talking about."

"Of course I'm talking about your argument with Officer Hawkins from the Investigation Bureau. I also heard that the person who kidnapped your grandmother had been killed."

"Did you call me to have a good laugh, Mr. Burton?"

"Of course not. If you need my assistance, I have some friends from the Investigation Bureau who can help ease the tension between you and Officer Hawkins. You still have a business to run, so you're not supposed to offend those from the Investigation Bureau."

“Thanks for your concern, Mr. Burton. However, I’m not interested in having anything to do with the Investigation Bureau.” Rachel turned him down steadfastly and frowned. The reflection of her expression on the window appeared haughty.

After a moment of silence, Jason uttered calmly, “What if I say I’m going to introduce some friends to you, Miss Hudson? Are you interested?”

### Chapter 313 The Party on the Golden Cruise

Rachel scowled at Jason’s words. “I’ll see you at the Deluxe Hall of the Golden Cruise at 7.30PM. I’m sure you’ll meet the people you’re interested in at the cocktail party.”

“I’ll go.” After hanging up the call, Rachel traded glances with Jolly.

“Jason told me to join a cocktail party with him on the Golden Cruise.”

“The Golden Cruise?” Jolly became startled. “Is it an event organized by the Jockey Club?”

“Do you know anything about it?”

“My dad was one of the founders of that club. When I was a young kid, he used to bring me to the events organized by the club. For some reason, he stopped attending them one day and quit watching horse racing altogether.”

“Did anything happen?”

“I’m not sure. I was already in the university when that happened, so I wasn’t home most of the time.”

Upon hearing that, Rachel fell into her thoughts. Just then, someone knocked on the door from outside.

“Come in,” Rachel uttered.

The person who came in was the secretary to the director of the Advertising Department, Linda Cook. “The director told me to send you this, President Hudson. It is Leroy Bennett’s latest schedule.”

A puzzled Rachel asked, “What do I need his schedule for? Why can’t we contact his agent directly?”

Linda explained, “The director has already come to an agreement with Leroy’s agent regarding the contract. However, Leroy is different from other celebrities—he likes to take things into his hands. Therefore, the contract has to be sent to him and signed by him.”

“Can’t we just meet up with his agent?”

A helpless Linda uttered, “Leroy is the hottest celebrity now, so he has a tight schedule. If we want to book a time slot with his agent to have a meet-up, that will be two months later.”

Upon hearing her explanation, Rachel said, “In other words, you’re saying that we have to fit into his schedule and look for him to get the contract signed wherever he is.”

“That’s right.” Linda appeared embarrassed. Since she was worried that Rachel would be displeased, she quickly explained, “That’s how things work in showbiz, President Hudson. Brands have to cooperate with the hottest celebrities to get them to endorse their products.”

While Rachel was silent, Jolly uttered, “Let me handle this. You can do your own work first.”

“Alright.”

After taking the schedule, Jolly flipped through it and lamented, “It’s all easy money in showbiz, huh? It just proves that these brands are right to look for these celebrities to endorse their products. These celebrities are basically giving themselves airs, but their fans are still willing to support them.”

Rachel knitted her brows. "You should meet up with Leroy. If there's a problem with his personality, I don't want him to be our spokesperson. We're in the market for the long term, not just to sell something quick."

"I get it. Don't worry." As she spoke, Jolly suddenly saw something and frowned. "The Golden Cruise? Leroy is going to the Golden Cruise as well, Chris."

"What? Is he also a member of the Jockey Club?"

As Jolly went through the contents of his schedule, she said, "I don't think so. It's mentioned here that he's attending an event, so I think he's been invited to the cruise."

"Can you get all the information regarding the Jockey Club?"

"I'll look into it."

Jolly ran a quick search about the Golden Cruise and the Jockey Club, but she realized that there wasn't anything useful. "Why don't I call my dad and ask him about it?"

"Wait a minute." Rachel raised her hand to stop her. "There's no need for that right now."

Something was probably off since the event on the cruise ship had something to do with Jason. Rachel reckoned that she'd better not inform the older generation about it so that they wouldn't be worried. Regardless of the purpose of this event, Rachel had to attend it.

"I'm going with you," Jolly said with the schedule in her hand. "I have to look for Leroy anyway."

"I only have one invitation card. How are you going to get in?"

"I'll just go home and get it." Jolly smiled smugly. "Even though my dad no longer attends these events, those from the club still insist on sending him the invitation cards to all the functions, and I know where he places them."

Some people would scramble to get their hands on the invitation cards so that they could attend the event on the cruise ship, but to Jolly's parents, the event was like a plague that had to be avoided at all costs.

Soon, darkness descended upon them in the evening.

Clad in evening dresses, Rachel and Jolly arrived at the harbor in Riverdale.

When the attendant took the invitation card from Jolly, he became startled. "You are..."

"This is my dad's invitation card. He told me to come here on his behalf."

Upon hearing her explanation, the attendant said, "You're Miss Carter. Welcome, and this is your room card."

"Thanks."

"Don't mention it."

Rachel and Jolly boarded the cruise ship in an arrogant manner, and it wasn't until they stepped into the elevator that they breathed a sigh of relief.

"If my dad finds out that I came here with his invitation card, he'll kill me."

"Why? The attendant was pretty respectful when he saw your dad's name." Rachel examined Jolly's room card for a bit. "It seems that your room is a suite."

Jolly wasn't surprised at all as she had already expected it. "My dad is one of the founders, so they have to show him enough respect. The other founders are also my dad's friends, but they quit contacting each other a long time ago."

“Who are they?”

“They were my dad’s classmates at university. One of them is named Baxter—I always called him Mr. Baxter. The other person is a woman named Bowman, and I’d call her Mrs. Bowman.”

After a pause, she went on to say, “I don’t think you know them as their entities are not in Riverdale, and I have no idea the nature of their businesses. My dad fell out with them eventually. I remember mentioning Mrs. Bowman at home one day, and my dad immediately blew his top.”

“Your dad is a mild-tempered person. I can’t believe he blew his top because of this.”

“That’s right. I also find it inconceivable. As far as I’m concerned, he rarely throws a tantrum.”

“There’s something off about it.”

Just as Jolly wanted to say something, Rachel suddenly took her arm and uttered in a grim voice, “Let’s get into our room first.”

The Golden Cruise was a large cruise ship where many events could be held at the same time. This time round, the Jockey Club had booked the entire cruise ship. Since the event had yet to begin, the vessel was still parked beside the harbor as they awaited the guests’ arrival.

Upon entering the room, Rachel examined everything thoroughly.

“What are you looking for?”

“Shh.”

Rachel shut the curtains and scanned the room with her phone’s torchlight. Upon making sure that there were no hidden cameras, she turned on the light as the room became illuminated.

“Someone was stalking us in the corridor just now.”

Jolly’s expression changed. “Are you sure?”

“Yes.”

Jolly immediately dashed toward the door and looked out through the peephole. Presently, only other guests were walking along the corridor, so she wasn’t sure whether they were being stalked.

Rachel uttered, “Stop looking. The stalker wouldn’t stay right outside our room.”

“Who could be stalking us?” Jolly frowned as a name sprang into her mind. “Could it be Ryan? He must be insane! I’m calling him right now.”

“Wait a minute.” Rachel pulled the other woman’s arm. “We’re on the Golden Cruise now. Are you sure Ryan’s men can get in here?”

Upon hearing that, Jolly was startled.

Chapter 314 This Place Is His Territory

“Haven’t you noticed yet? All the guests here are not accompanied by their assistants. If Ryan wanted to stalk you, he’d have to personally come over.”

Upon hearing Rachel’s analysis, Jolly asked, “If it isn’t him, who else can it be?”

“Perhaps it has something to do with your invitation card.”

Their gazes fell upon the table where Jolly’s invitation card and a spare room card were placed.



The entire cruise ship was shrouded in mystery—or to put it in another way—strangeness.

“Is that the case?” Jolly was never afraid of anything. However, when she caught a glimpse of the cellular connectivity on her phone, she became startled. “Is there no connectivity on the cruise ship?”

Rachel took a look at her phone and realized that it was the same. It’s no wonder he asked me to meet him here. There must be something wrong with this cruise ship.

Jolly directly pressed the call bell.

A respectful woman’s voice was heard coming from the other end of the line. “Hello, Miss Carter. How may I help you?”

Jolly asked, “Why is there no cellular connectivity in the room? Do you guys have Wi-Fi?”

“I’m sorry, Miss Carter. Privacy is very important on this cruise ship, so all personal communications devices are not usable here. If you need to contact your friends on the cruise ship, you can use the interconnected phone in your room.”

Jolly frowned and complained, “What’s wrong with this place? We can’t even use our own phones!”

Unfortunately, it was too late for her to get off the ship.

There were two old-fashioned black phones on the table that couldn’t even be used to take photos. In addition, one could only contact other people through the phone.

After hanging up the call, Jolly continued her rant as she said, “Is this a place where criminals gather together? Are they worried that I’ll contact the police to arrest them?”

“Since we’re already onboard, just be at ease.” Rachel examined the phones for a moment before passing one of them to Jolly. “If we part ways later, use this to contact me at any moment.”

“Alright. Just by looking at this phone, I feel a headache coming on.”

The cruise ship left the harbor at exactly 7.00PM.

Rachel and Jolly shuffled toward the banquet hall together.

“There are so many people here. How am I supposed to look for him?” After looking around, Jolly randomly stopped a waiter and asked, “Excuse me, do you know where Leroy Bennett is?”

The waiter shook his head to show that he had no idea.

On the other hand, Rachel could already see Jason in the distance.

“Keep looking for him, Jolly. I see Jason over there.”

“Go ahead then.”

“Keep in touch and be careful.”

“Alright.”

After they parted ways, Rachel walked past the crowd in the banquet hall. When Jason saw her, he put on an amiable smile as though he was truly pleased to see the young woman.

“How are you, Rachel?”

“Hi, Jason.”

Rachel remained polite to him. Outsiders would usually call him Mr. Jason, but she could call him by his name like how Justin usually did.

“Is everything alright? Did anyone make things difficult for you?”

“It’s all good. However, I didn’t expect privacy to be so important on this cruise ship.”

There was a faint smile on Jason’s face. “If the privacy here wasn’t strong, I would’ve not invited you to come here.”

“You didn’t tell me clearly over the phone, Jason. I don’t think you’ve invited me to this place just to introduce some friends to me.”

“I sent some samples over some time ago, and the other party was pleased with it. They have offered a very attractive price, and the person wants to meet you. The way I see it, I think they’re going to purchase your goods in bulk.”

“You invited me over to have a discussion with them?”

Rachel finally understood his intention.

Jason had obtained some benefits through selling the goods back then, so he wanted an even bigger business deal. Apparently, the other party didn’t believe that he could easily get his hands on a large amount of medicine, so they wanted to meet the supplier herself—Rachel.

Every detail in this kind of underhanded business deal was important. If any news was leaked by accident, they’d be in trouble.

“Haven’t we already collaborated for a long time?”

When Jason looked over the woman’s shoulder and saw the figure in the distance, his gaze brightened. “He’s here.”

Rachel became startled for a moment before she turned her head and followed his gaze. There was a young man being surrounded by a group of people, and he was accompanied by a lady.

“Mr. Porter!” Jason scurried over and called out in a respectful manner. Rachel had never seen this side of Jason before.

He was Arthur’s son, after all. Even though he played second fiddle to Justin in the Burton Family, he was still an important figure who was born wealthy. He was arrogant wherever he went, so it was surprising to see him being so subservient to someone else.

The man named Mr. Porter was a clean-looking man in his thirties, and his brown eyes gave off a gloomy feeling for some reason.

“Are you Miss Hudson?”

Mr. Porter’s gaze fell upon Rachel. The moment he saw the woman, a light suddenly lit up in his gloomy-looking eyes, to which she found pretty unsettling.

“I’ve always heard that you’re a resolute businesswoman, but I never expected you to be such a stunning beauty.”

Rachel replied with a smile, “Why can’t a beautiful lady be a resolute businesswoman? Are only ugly people allowed to do business? You’re basically belittling yourself, Mr. Porter.”

As soon as she finished speaking, all of them fell silent.

A horrified Jason snapped, “What on earth are you talking about, Rachel?”

Right then, Mr. Porter suddenly burst into laughter. “Interesting. I love people who are humorous.”

All of them exchanged glances and breathed a sigh of relief.

Rachel thought, Why are they so afraid of him? It's not like he's a beast that will eat them alive. Do they have to be so anxious?

Worried that she would say anything inappropriate again, Jason quickly uttered, "Let me introduce you guys to each other. This is the president of Hudson Pharmaceuticals, Rachel Hudson. Rachel, this is Dillon Porter. Most people call him Young Master Porter."

The man extended his hand toward Rachel. "My name is Dillon Porter. Just call me Dillon."

Rachel shook hands with him and realized that his palm was rather warm. When she tried to withdraw her hand, she discovered that the other person had no intention of releasing her.

A shocked Rachel looked up, and as their eyes met, Dillon uttered, "You haven't introduced yourself, Miss Hudson."

An unfazed Rachel exerted more force with her hand and struggled out of his grip. "I don't think an introduction is needed anyway. If you hadn't looked into my background, you wouldn't have let me board the cruise ship."

Dillon slightly narrowed his eyes. "You're indeed intelligent, Miss Hudson. You should be aware that not anyone can board this ship."

"Of course."

"I don't think you're showing enough sincerity. I have some personal questions for you, so why don't we go to a private room?"

Certainly, Rachel was clever enough to realize that he had some ill intentions.

However, she was surprised that this man didn't seem to have the intention of concealing his lascivious motives right in front of so many people. Needless to say, this place was his territory.

Who is this guy named Dillon Porter? I know many big shots in Riverdale, but I've never heard of this name before.

"Let's go, Miss Hudson." Dillon gestured for her to make a move, whereas Jason didn't seem like he was going to stop him anytime soon.

Rachel balled up her fists with a grim expression.

### Chapter 315 The Upper Class and the Underground Circle

After Dillon finished speaking, he wanted Rachel to follow him to a private room. Just as Rachel was about to reject him, a woman's voice was heard coming from behind Dillon. "Young Master Porter, the banquet is about to start."

Finding the voice familiar, Rachel looked at the source of it and saw a young woman standing among the crowd. Her appearance wasn't outstanding, but no one could neglect her when she spoke.

Rachel felt her heart skipping a beat as she stared fixedly at the woman.

She sported a short, clean-looking hairstyle while her body was clad in a black one-piece dress. Her tanned-skin appeared rather out of place in a hall where most women had fair skin. Furthermore, she looked like someone who was supposed to be practicing pistol-shooting in a shooting range instead of a woman clad in an evening dress in a banquet hall.

An impatient Dillon refuted, "Can't you see that I'm busy?"

"All of them are waiting for you to open the champagne bottle."

Her attitude was neither arrogant nor subservient. After a moment of deadlock, Dillon eventually gave in. "Alright, we'll do that first."

Then, he turned to look at Rachel. "Come with us, Miss Hudson."

Rachel came to her senses and nodded with a polite smile.

After that, Dillon shuffled forward while the woman merely walked alongside him. Looking at her straight back, Rachel felt that she must have met her before.

"Who is she, Jason?"

"Lila Hart. She's Mr. Porter's bodyguard."

"What?" Rachel was startled. "A female bodyguard?"

"Of course. Do you think she looks like a man? However, I heard that she's better at fighting than most men, so don't offend her. Even Mr. Porter has to listen to her."

His words puzzled Rachel.

"Why? Isn't she just a bodyguard?"

"Rather than a bodyguard, she's actually a mole."

"A mole?"

All of a sudden, Jason started coughing.

Rachel looked up and saw Lila staring at her. She shuddered as the woman seemed to be warning her with her cold-looking eyes.

While Rachel was in a dazed state, the woman slowly retracted her gaze.

On the side, Jason uttered in a small voice, “Stop asking and stay away from her. She’s someone that even Mr. Porter has to be wary of.”

Upon hearing that, Rachel dipped her head. It was apparent that Jason knew little about Lila as well.

Presently, the center of the banquet hall was filled with people. Rachel and Jason were slow to arrive, so they could only stand in a place that was far away from the center.

Just then, someone was heard speaking over a microphone. “Hi, I’m Randall Baxter. Thanks for coming to this event organized by the Jockey Club. I’m truly honored. I especially have to thank Mr. Porter for making the effort to come here despite his busy schedule...”

Randall Baxter? Rachel recalled what Jolly had said to her.

“That’s Randall Baxter—he’s one of the founders of the Jockey Club.”

Rachel snapped back to reality upon hearing Jason’s voice. “Does Mr. Porter have anything to do with him?”

There was a faint smile on Jason’s face. “Well, the reason the Jockey Club has so much influence is all thanks to Mr. Porter. You see, all of the guests here are the wealthiest people in Riverdale. It’s easy to become a part of the upper class in Riverdale, but it’s extremely hard to join the circle you’re seeing now.”

“What do you mean?”

“The underground circle.” Jason gave her a meaningful look. “Do you think it’s just a normal event on this cruise ship?”

Rachel’s eyes darkened. “Are you saying that these people are here for trade deals?”



“Of course not.” Jason lowered his voice. “We do have some outsiders here to conceal the nature of this event.”

As Rachel gazed at these people, a realization suddenly dawned upon her.

It was an annual event that wasn’t what the organizer purported it to be, and the risk they had to bear increased year by year. If this cruise ship was inspected by the authorities, the outsiders who

scrambled to attend this event would be used as a cover-up. If those who engaged in illegal trades couldn’t flee, they would hold these people captive.

Once they had the captives in their hands, those from the Investigation Bureau wouldn’t dare to make a move.

Rachel felt her heart sinking as the bustling banquet turned into something else in her eyes. These people with bright smiles on their faces were like moving captives to her now.

After Dillon was done with opening the champagne bottle, the crowd dispersed as the banquet hall became lively again.

Rachel and Jason were standing in a spot that was far away from the stage. When Jason saw Dillon beckoning to them, he immediately understood his hint.

He then said, “Let’s go. Mr. Porter wants us to head to the private room.”

Upon hearing that, Rachel came to her senses. When they reached the private room, two male bodyguards stopped them and uttered, “We’ll have to inspect you.”

Rachel subconsciously took a step back. It wasn’t that she wanted to refuse their inspection, but the bodyguards were men.

Just then, someone opened the door from inside and said, “I’ll do it.”

Lila took a glance at the bodyguard nearest to Rachel, whereupon he meekly stepped aside. It seemed like he was afraid of her.

While staring at Rachel, Lila said, "This is our rule, Miss Hudson. Please raise your hands."

Rachel became startled for a moment before raising her hands as she was told.

Lila went on to carefully inspect her, including all the accessories Rachel was wearing.

Since they were in such close proximity, Lila's face magnified before Rachel's eyes. At that moment, she had a feeling that she had met this female bodyguard before.

"Have we met before?" she subconsciously spurted out.

However, Lila denied with a frown and said, "It's our first encounter, Miss Hudson."

Meanwhile, Jason was being inspected as well. In the midst of Rachel's doubts, he said, "Miss Hart rarely comes to Riverdale, so it isn't likely that you've met her before."

An astounded Rachel replied, "Perhaps I've mistaken her for someone else."

"Alright, you can come in now," Lila uttered.

After thanking her, Rachel shuffled into the private room with Jason.

As soon as they entered the place, Dillon asked, "What were you talking about outside the room? I heard you saying that you've mistaken someone for somebody else, am I right?"

Before Rachel could speak, Jason enthusiastically went over and explained, “It was Rachel. She said that she might have met Miss Hart before, but I told her that it wasn’t likely. There’s no way they’d come across each other before.”

“Oh?” Dillon’s gaze fell upon Rachel. “Have you met Lila before, Miss Hudson?”

A startled Rachel subconsciously took a glance at Lila, who directly headed toward Dillon after entering the place. Presently, she was also looking at Rachel. As Rachel examined her, she increasingly found her facial features familiar.

I must have met her before. Where did we meet, though? All of a sudden, all the dots connected as she recalled something.

“Miss Hudson?”

Dillon’s voice pulled her back to reality as she quickly denied by saying, “No, I’m just mistaken.”

“Really? What’s wrong? Do you know a person who resembles Lila? Tell me about it.”

“She was a classmate, but we haven’t met for ages.”

Rachel took one more look at Lila as she believed that her speculation was right.

Even though Lila’s face was different from that person five years ago, her voice sounded familiar to Rachel. Also, her gaze never changed one bit.

Rachel could still remember climbing on the window of the hotel where she had been confined to. A woman gestured with her hand while telling Rachel not to be afraid, and she looked truly valiant back then.

Chapter 316 Lila Hart Is Coraline Harper

Lila Hart is Coraline Harper. Rachel's mind instantly flashed to that hair-raising night five years ago. She didn't even have time to thank Coraline at the time. Unfortunately, they never met each other again afterward. Why is she here? Why did she become Dillon's bodyguard?

Thinking of Coraline's identity in the Riverdale Investigation Bureau, she suddenly understood the situation, and her hand trembled uncontrollably. Afraid that somebody might notice, she quietly shifted her hand behind her back.

"What? Are you old classmates? What a coincidence!" Dillon looked like he wanted to get to the bottom of this matter.

Rachel was trying to think of a way to gloss over this incident when 'Lila' said, "Young Master Porter, let's get back to business."

Clearly unhappy, he glanced sideways at Lila. "I was kindly asking on your behalf. Who knows? Maybe you have a long-lost twin sister or something out there. You should get to know your family as soon as possible so that you won't be alone for the rest of your life."

"Thank you for your kindness, Young Master Porter. Compared to being alone for the rest of my life, I'm more worried that you won't be able to provide the higher-ups with a satisfactory explanation if this matter does not go well."

He was reminded of the situation with a single sentence. Having been embarrassed in front of Rachel, his expression turned even more sour.

Jason said, "Young Master Porter, you came all the way to Riverdale. I'm sure things will go beautifully. Look, I've already brought this person here. It only takes one sentence from her to prepare however

much goods you need."

The conversation was finally brought back on track and Rachel sat down.

On the opposite side, Dillon looked her up and down. "I'm sure you're already aware of the reason I came here, Miss Hudson."

She smiled. "Mr. Jason only gave me a rough explanation regarding the matter. Having only been notified of the banquet this afternoon, I did not have time to learn more."

"Don't worry. This is normal in our line of work. You will gradually get used to it." Now that the conversation was much closer to the main topic, his expression became serious. He put away his playboy attitude and continued, "The quality of the drugs we received last time was good. Compared to the other supply channels where the quality is non-standard, what you supplied was way more excellent than the rest. Truly what you'd expect from a family of pharmaceuticals."

"You're too kind, Young Master Porter."

"You don't need to be humble. I would not have set up a meeting with you if your goods were substandard. I will only say that we are very satisfied with your goods, so we hope to build a long-term relationship with you. In the future, we will need a larger quantity of goods."

"A larger quantity? Can you be a little more specific?"

"Ten times more than the last."

Her eyes narrowed slightly. "The amount last time had already been very noticeable. With such a large barge of goods, it will be very difficult to ship them out in secret. What if something goes wrong?"

"You don't need to worry about that." He cut her off with a single sentence. "You only need to tell me this: are you going to accept this order?"

She looked hesitant.

Next to her, Jason urged, "What are you hesitating for? Why are you hesitating when there's such a great opportunity to make money? Do you know how much the remaining tariffs and miscellaneous fees cost?"

“The risks are very high after all. They’ve been very stringent with their investigation recently.”

“Doing business always comes with risks. Don’t worry, Miss Hudson. You will not be involved in anything else aside from providing the goods for our first official cooperation. Our people will be in charge of everything starting from the shipment of goods.” While speaking, Dillon pushed a document on the table over to Rachel. “This is the price we are offering for the drugs. You can have a look yourself.”

Rachel flipped through the document and clenched her fingers around the edges of the document when she saw the price they offered. Without the costs of the various customs duties and miscellaneous fees, the price he offered was the actual income. The profit was still several times higher than the market price even after deducting the original cost. This is just from a single order, but the income is already so high. It’s no wonder Dad took such a risk back then.

“You still have time to turn back if you are hesitating, Miss Hudson.”

“No.” She raised her head. “When will you make payment? I am in urgent need of money.”

He roared with laughter. “I knew you’d be a straightforward person, Miss Hudson. 30 percent of the deposit will be credited to your account within the next two days. The rest will be transferred to you once the goods have been safely received.”

“No problem.” She closed the document. “I need a month to prepare the amount you want.”

“A month?” He shook his head. “I can only give you half a month.”

“What’s the rush?”

“Undue delay may bring unwanted trouble.” Those concise words highlighted the risk tolerance value in this transaction.

She nodded slightly. “I will do my best to make the factory work overtime.”

Now that the business talks were over, all that was left was to enjoy the banquet.

“Miss Hudson, if you’re not in a hurry, you should stay on the boat tonight. The banquet is only just starting.”

She took a sip of tea. “With pleasure.”

Let’s agree for now. It will only ruin the mood if I say that I want to leave immediately.

After walking out of the private room, Rachel took out her phone from her bag to give Jolly a call. All of a sudden, she caught a glimpse of Lila avoiding the crowd in the banquet hall and walking toward the bathroom. Thus, she hurriedly followed.

She cautiously walked into the bathroom but did not see anybody inside. Is she inside the cubicle?

“Miss Hart?” She tentatively called out to Lila.

There was no response from the cubicles.

She frowned. She had only taken several steps forward to take a look when somebody suddenly dragged her backward from behind and pressed her against the wall. “Miss Hudson, can you explain why you’re following me?” Lila glared at her coldly.

Rachel could barely breathe from the pressure of being pressed against the wall. Struggling, she gasped out. “Caroline, it’s me...”

“Who is Caroline?”

“Aren’t you Caroline Harper? It’s impossible for me to mistake you for somebody else. You saved me five years ago.”

"I don't know what you're talking about. You've gotten the wrong person." The look in Lila's eyes was extremely cruel. It was not something Caroline from five years ago would have had.

Rachel suddenly recalled what Janice once said when she questioned Janice about Caroline's whereabouts in the past. Janice claimed that Caroline had vanished after failing in an undercover mission. The Riverdale Investigation Bureau had been unable to contact Caroline until now.

The conversation had taken place in front of Hans' grave. She had voluntarily offered to work undercover beside Jason and become an informant for Janice.

Janice had said, "Those who work as undercover informants either die in duty or come back alive. Most people believe that these are the only two outcomes, but it's not."

"Then, what else is there?"

"Identity disorientation. They forget who they are."

When you stare into the abyss for too long, the abyss stares back at you. In the end, you will be swallowed by the abyss. You will forget who you are or why you're here, unable to return to a normal life ever again. It is a common occurrence.

At that thought, Rachel felt her heart thump in fear.

Caroline had been missing for nearly five years. If she had been safe and sound during these five years, then she would have had the chance to contact Janice during that period. However, she obviously had not.

Is this the third outcome Janice meant? Rachel did not have time to wonder. Nevertheless, the strength pressing down harder and harder on her shoulders confirmed her conjecture. There was nobody here, but Lila had no intention of releasing her whatsoever.



“Speak. What is your true purpose for following me? Who sent you here? If you refuse to speak, then I don’t mind adding an extra person dying on this ship today. You only have five minutes to talk.” Lila’s voice echoed in Rachel’s ear like a basin of cold water pouring down on her head and chilling her heart. “Five... Four...”

## Chapter 317 Mysterious Woman

The countdown of the warning echoed in Rachel’s ears. She lowered her voice and said, “Are you afraid of being discovered? I checked before I came. There’s nobody following me.”

As soon as the statement came out of her mouth, a gun pressed against her forehead. The cold touch of metal spread out across her forehead, causing her to shudder. She finally understood that Lila was not joking around with her.

Lila questioned, “I’m curious now. Just who is the friend that you speak of?”

The blood drained out of her face, little by little. “I followed you here because you look like a friend of mine. I don’t have any other intentions. If I’ve offended you by mistaking you for somebody else, then I apologize.”

Lila studied her expressionlessly. Her gaze was extremely sharp, almost as though she could pierce a person’s heart.

Rachel did not know how long passed before the pressure on her shoulder eased and the cold feeling of metal against her forehead disappeared.

Putting away the gun, Lila stepped away from Rachel and coldly said, “Before you act, you had better consider first whether or not you can bear the consequences for every word you speak and every action you take on this ship. The ship will eventually come to shore, but a person may not be able to walk off the boat on their own two feet.”

Rachel jerked in surprise and subconsciously clenched her fingers. It was not until Lila left the bathroom that she leaned against the wall and clutched at her chest abruptly. Her heart was beating

wildly through the layer of her dress. When Lila held the gun to her head just now, the cold gaze in those eyes had indicated no hesitation to kill her.

She isn't Coraline? I don't believe it. Although there are some differences in their appearances, it's impossible for me to mistake those eyes and that voice which belong to Coraline. Nevertheless, she did not have the time to ponder over this matter. She felt like she was sitting on a bed of pins and needles on this ship. Since the business talks are over, I should leave this place as soon as possible.

When Rachel walked out of the bathroom, a waiter suddenly stopped her. "Are you Miss Hudson?"

"Yes, I am." She glanced at the waiter in front of her warily. "How can I help you?"

"Please don't be so nervous. It's like this. The Madam wishes to talk to you."

Madam? "Who is this 'Madam'?"

"You will know once you've met her, Miss Hudson."

She frowned slightly. "Does this Madam go by the surname 'Bowman'?"

The waiter nodded and said nothing else.

Be that as it may, that response gave her a rough grasp of the situation. "Fine. I'll come with you."

While following the waiter, she sent a message to Jolly to say that she was going to meet an old friend of Jolly's father.

They arrived at a private room and the waiter opened the door. "The Madam is waiting for you inside."

Rachel nodded and walked straight into the room. The room was very luxuriously furnished. If she had not known that she was currently on board a ship, she would have thought that they were the furnishings of a villa. A golden chandelier illuminated the entire room with a golden brilliance.

“Miss Hudson.” A woman’s voice came from behind. She spun around and saw a middle-aged woman.

The middle-aged woman was dressed in a sky-blue traditional dress. She looked elegant and graceful. Although her skincare was so good that she appeared to be in her forties, the weather-beaten and calm gaze in her eyes betrayed her actual age.

“Hello.” Rachel observed the woman. “Are you Mrs. Bowman?”

“Do you know me? Did Richard mention me to you?”

Richard Carter was the name of Jolly’s father.

Rachel was in no rush to refute that statement. Instead, she countered with a question of her own. “Didn’t you bring me here to confirm whether or not Mr. Carter has told me about you?”

A bitter expression appeared in the middle-aged woman’s face. “I knew he had not mentioned me to you before. If he did, you would not have agreed to meet me in the first place.”

Rachel looked at her in confusion.

“Sit.” The middle-aged woman raised a hand and indicated for Rachel to take a seat.

A Hermès blanket was draped over the genuine leather sofa. All the furniture in the room were very delicate and elegant. It didn’t look like a temporary residence. Rachel looked around and asked, “Do you usually live here?”

“How can you tell?”

“Few would have the leisure to arrange flowers in a hotel, especially if they’re only going to stay for a short while. Isn’t that right?”

Following Rachel’s gaze, the middle-aged lady turned to look behind her. There were fresh cut flowers and plants scattered across the table behind her. Moreover, they were next to a half-finished vase.

Then, she looked at Rachel with a measuring gaze. “No wonder Richard took you in as his goddaughter. You are smart and meticulous. I’m sure you’ll be of great help to Jolly in the future. I brought you here because I wanted your help to pass something to Jolly.

“What is it?”

“This.” In front of Rachel, the middle-aged woman opened the pink gift box at her feet to reveal the white gown inside.

“What is this? A wedding dress?” Rachel was confused.

The middle-aged woman noticed her doubts and explained, “This is what I promised Richard in the past. At the time, Jolly was still very young and there were no disputes over business matters between Richard and I. After I won the award in the Maynie Designer Competition, Richard told me that he wanted me to design his daughter’s wedding dress in the future. According to my calculations, Jolly should be nearly at the marriageable age by now.”

The Maynie Designer Competition was an international-level fashion design competition. Only the most popular fashion designers could win any awards in this competition.

“Are you a fashion designer?”

“I was. This wedding gown is the last piece that I worked on. This way, it can be considered that I’ve fulfilled the promise between Richard and I.” The middle-aged woman sounded sincere. “I hope you can help me with this.”

Rachel furrowed her eyebrows and did not answer immediately. "Jolly is also onboard this boat. You can hand it to her yourself."

"I wouldn't have needed to trouble you if I could hand it to her myself, right?"

"I'm sorry. I can't help you with this."

"Miss Hudson, I don't know who else I can ask for help aside from you. You don't need to tell them that this wedding dress was designed by me. You can just claim that you're giving it to Jolly. Only you and I need to know about this. This is my thank-you gift for you." The middle-aged woman took out a black suede jewelry box and opened the box in front of Rachel without further ado. Then, she pushed the box over to Rachel.

There was a jade bangle inside the jewelry box. Judging by the quality of the bangle, it was worth quite a lot.

Rachel immediately got to her feet and the scowl on her face deepened considerably. "What do you mean by this?"

"Don't misunderstand me. This is just a small thank-you gift."

"I have not promised to help you, but I can no longer help you because of this thank-you gift." Rachel glanced at the box containing the wedding dress. The feeling that this situation was very odd became stronger.

"I'm sorry. I'm leaving now." Just as Rachel hurried to the door, somebody threw open the door from the outside. "Chris!"

It was Jolly.

Jolly had rushed over as soon as she saw the message. At this moment, she looked very anxious. "Are you alright?"

"I'm fine." Rachel shook her head. "Let's go."

For some reason, she wanted Jolly to leave this place as soon as possible.

Jolly's gaze slid past Rachel's shoulder to land on the middle-aged woman behind them. However, she withdrew her gaze after a brief glance. "Yeah. Let's go."

"Jolly." The middle-aged woman suddenly called out to Jolly.

Chapter 318 They're Here for a Rendezvous

"You must be Jolly." "Who are you?" Jolly furrowed her eyebrows and stared at the middle-aged woman behind Rachel with a wary expression.

"I'm Mrs. Bowman! I used to take care of you when you were younger." The woman seemed inexplicably emotional to see Jolly. Her eyes reddened as she spoke. "It's been so long since I last saw you."

Jolly frowned, reacting in a surprisingly rational and clear-headed manner. "Wait. Don't move. I know about Mrs. Bowman who established the club together with my father, but why did you summon Chris here alone?"

The other party was clearly taken aback for a moment. "I..."

Rachel said, "She claimed that it would be bad to meet you. She was also scared that you might be unwilling to meet her. That's why she called me here."

"Why would it be bad to meet me?"

Jolly was a straightforward person who had always been blunt with her words. Meanwhile, Mrs. Bowman looked like a person who would beat around the bush. She was far from her gentle and demure appearance.

“Jolly, your father and I have some misunderstandings between us. That’s why we have not been in touch with each other for many years. Didn’t your father tell you anything?”

“My father has never mentioned you to me.”

Rachel wanted to stop Jolly, but Jolly blurted out those words and gave up the game.

Sure enough, the middle-aged woman’s expression relaxed considerably.

Rachel tugged at Jolly. “Let’s go.”

However, Jolly was no longer in a hurry. She asked the middle-aged woman bluntly, “Spit it out. Why are you looking for me?”

The middle-aged woman was stunned for a moment before she recovered from her shock. “It’s like this. I have something I wanted to give you.”

“What is it?”

“A wedding dress that I designed myself. I promised your father that I would make this wedding dress for you, so I...”

“You want to give it to me?”

Interrupted mid-sentence only for her sentence to be finished by Jolly, she was taken aback again. “Yes.”

“This is the dress, right?” Jolly glanced at the gift box by the middle-aged woman’s words.

“That’s right. Do you want to have a look?”

“No need. Since you’re giving it to me, then hand it to me.”

When Jolly’s words rang out, both Rachel and the middle-aged woman were startled and caught off guard.

It took the middle-aged woman a long while to come back to her senses. Seemingly afraid that Jolly might regret her decision, the middle-aged woman placed the gift box back in the bag and handed the bag to Jolly herself. “Jolly, I’m so glad that you’re willing to accept this.”

“No worries. Please come to me directly for these kinds of things in the future. Don’t look for Chris again.”

“Your outspoken temper is exactly like your father’s.” The middle-aged woman walked the two of them to the door. As she watched Rachel and Jolly’s departing backs, her gentle expression gradually returned to calmness. Then, she turned around and returned to the room.

At this time, Rachel and Jolly were walking back along the corridor.

Rachel scolded Jolly. “Why did you accept stuff from other people so nonchalantly? Didn’t you say that the relationship between Mr. Carter and his two friends is very tense?”

“Are you stupid? Won’t it be fine as long as we don’t say anything when we go back?” Jolly sounded very righteous. “If you and I both stay silent, then how will my father know?”

“A secret can only be kept for so long!”

“As long as your mouth is shut tight enough, the secret won’t be revealed.”

Rachel couldn’t be bothered to argue with Jolly. Out of the corner of her eye, she watched as Jolly carried the bag joyfully. “What do you plan to do with this wedding dress? It’s not like you’re getting married soon. Do you really plan to keep it until you’re married?”



“Wear it? Do you think a wedding dress is something that can be worn so casually?”

“Then, why did you accept it?”

“It’s such a waste not to accept it. I’ll sell it once we get off the boat. Didn’t you mention that she is a famous designer? This wedding dress should be quite valuable. Let’s find out how famous she is later.”

Speaking of this, Rachel suddenly realized something. From the start to the end, neither of them had bothered to ask the woman for her name.

After returning to the room and putting the bag away, Jolly dragged Rachel out to search for Leroy. “I heard that Leroy is staying on the same floor as us. He seems to have been invited by a rich woman.”

“A rich woman?”

“It’s exactly what you’re thinking of.” Jolly clicked her tongue and said in disgust, “He used to be the male idol who swept the entire school off their feet, but he has fallen to become a plaything in the entertainment industry.”

“Why do you make it sound so creepy? Will we accidentally see something we shouldn’t see if we go over now?”

“It’s better if we see something. That way, I will have a weakness that can be used to negotiate his endorsement fee a little more.”

“Why are you still thinking about work at this time? Should I give you a raise?”

“Forget it. The pitiful salary you pay me won’t even buy me a handbag.”

At the exact moment the elevator doors closed, Rachel looked up and saw the doors of the elevator on the opposite side closing at the same time. A familiar figure entered her vision, causing her to freeze in surprise. "Noah."

"What did you say?"

"I just saw Noah and Amber."

Jolly was taken aback for a moment. Then, she calmed down and said, "Noah is a playboy. He must be one of the members of the Jockey Club. It's quite normal for him to participate in this event. As for Amber... isn't she having an affair with him? But, why did he openly bring her here?"

"He didn't do it openly."

Dressed in casual clothes and a hat, Amber had been wrapped up very inconspicuously. If Rachel had not noticed Noah first, she would not have recognized Amber. It was obvious that Amber's getup was meant to hide her identity—she did not wish to be seen.

During their conversation, the elevator arrived at one of the floors.

Rachel saw that the elevator on the opposite side had arrived on the fifth floor. Thus, she headed straight toward the stairwell. "Jolly, go and look for Leroy on your own. I have something to do."

"Hey, what are you doing!?"

"I want to see what Noah and Amber came here to do."

Jason mentioned that there were two types of people in this boat, so she wanted to know which type Noah and Amber belonged to. Do they know or not know? Or, are they aware but have not participated? Did they simply come here in search of an opportunity?

Unable to stop Rachel, Jolly could only follow Rachel up the stairs.

“Why are you following me?”

“To join in the stalking. How can I not participate in something so exciting?” The flames of gossip blazed on her face. “Who knows? Maybe they came here for a secret rendezvous.”

“Shh.” Rachel covered Jolly’s mouth to signal the other party not to talk nonsense.

Ding. The sound of the elevator arriving on this floor rang out from outside the stairwell. Rachel pulled the stairwell door open by a fraction in time to see somebody coming out of the elevator.

Noah and Amber were mostly likely trying to be stealthy. They did not walk out of the elevator together. On the contrary, they took turns to come out of the elevator and headed down the depths of the corridor. The entrance to the terrace was located in that direction on every floor of the ship.

“Let’s go!” Rachel reminded Jolly. Then, she took the lead and followed after them.

Unbeknownst to them, there were two people on the boat who were on the verge of going crazy from searching for the two women. The presence of these two men drew a lot of attention in the banquet hall on the second floor. In just a few minutes, several women had already tried to flirt with them. However, they both had sullen expressions and didn’t even bother to glance at those women.

“Didn’t you say those two were here!? Well!? Where are they!?”

“Are you interrogating me!? That’s what I want to ask you! Your uncle is the one who brought them here!”

Ryan’s expression was very ugly, and he glared at Justin coldly. “I don’t care what kind of shady business the Burton Family is involved in. But, you had better watch that woman called Rachel carefully! Don’t let her drag Jolly down with her!”

Justin responded in a cold voice. "It takes two to tango."

"I don't have the time to debate this with you. Hurry up and search for them!" Ryan looked around. Unfortunately, he only met Jason a handful of times before and did not recall how the other party looked. There was no way he could easily spot Jason from among the crowd, so he could only glance back at Justin.

Justin glanced at a spot in the distance. "There."

Following Justin's gaze, Ryan saw Jason standing by the bar in the distance. Jason was holding a glass of wine in his hand while gaily chatting with the people around him.

Ryan was about to head there when he was stopped by Justin. "You don't need to go there."

Upon hearing those words, he became pensive for a moment and immediately understood what Justin meant. The two of them were not very familiar with the situation on this ship. If they acted together, then it would be over for both of them if they were to encounter any danger. Not only would they lose everything, but they wouldn't even have a corpse to bury.

"I'll wander around."

"Okay." After watching Ryan leave the banquet hall, Justin finally turned around and walked toward Jason.

Jason was discussing 'business' with his friends. During this time every year, he would make a lot of money through this banquet. It was also his highest and most triumphant time of the year.

He was savoring his triumph when he suddenly noticed a familiar figure coming toward him out of the corner of his eyes. The sight startled him.

"Jason." Justin's expression was frosty and his manner of speech was rather aloof. "Long time no see."

Jason was very puzzled. "Why are you here?"

"Don't you know, Jason? Don't you know why I came here?"

He quickly snapped back to his senses and studied Justin pensively. "You came to find Rachel. Don't worry. She is safe and sound. She is only accompanying me for some events at the banquet after all. We are business partners now. Don't you think you are making a huge fuss out of a molehill?"

"Then, where is she right now?"

"After our business talks, she returned to the room to rest. This ship is so large that it's possible that she is taking a stroll on her own. What's wrong? Can't you contact her?"

He was asking this question despite knowing the answer. It was impossible for a personal phone to send out any messages on this ship. Likewise, the phones specially provided on the ship were as useless as scrap metal if one did not have the other party's contact information.

At present, he was the only person who knew Rachel's whereabouts and whether she was safe.

Justin had no choice but to mediate with Jason. "Jason, I have no interest in knowing what kind of business you've been doing over the years in the name of the Burton Group. However, I will not sit idly by if you drag Rachel into this mess."

"Those words displease me. Did you think I dragged her into these affairs? I'm afraid you've underestimated her abilities."

"It has not been long since Rachel returned to the country. No matter how capable she is, she won't be able to board the Golden Cruise. Isn't that right?"

The invitation came from Jason. If Rachel had not heard about the news from the secretary, Justin would not be going crazy right now because he could not get in contact with her.

“Jason, you had better tell me now. Where is Rachel?”

“What kind of attitude is that?” Jason’s expression was astonished. He observed Justin’s anxious and impatient appearance, then he immediately said coldly, “Didn’t you grow out your own wings? Find her yourself!” After saying that, he glanced at his watch. “I still have friends to meet.”

He had long since been dissatisfied with Justin when Arthur indiscriminately withdrew all funding previously. There was no need to think to know that Justin was the one who mentioned something to Arthur. How dare he take this attitude with me! What can he do even if he knows Rachel’s whereabouts?

Justin watched as Jason left without another word and clenched his fists tightly. Unfortunately, there was nothing he could do. If it were anybody else, he would have his ways to pressure them into answering his questions. But, Jason was his uncle.

His thoughts turned in a different direction. If Jason is currently cooperating with Rachel, then he won’t harm her for the time being. She should be safe at the moment. It’s just that I don’t know where she is. Nevertheless, the Golden Cruise is a place beyond the law. We can’t stay here for long. I have to find her and get her off the ship as soon as possible.

It was already late at night by this time. The luxury cruise ship stopped on the river, facing the most prosperous business district in Riverdale.

At this moment, almost all the people on the cruise ship were gathered in the banquet hall on the second floor. There was barely anybody else on the other floors and the terrace on the fifth floor was even more quiet.

Rachel and Jolly secretly followed Noah and Amber onto the terrace.

“Where are they?” Jolly looked around. “Didn’t they come this way just now?”

“Shh.” Rachel indicated for Jolly to be quiet.

Jolly spread her arms wide. "Look! Do you see anybody here?"

Rachel furrowed her eyebrows slightly. I clearly saw Amber and Noah entering this place, one after another. How can they just vanish into thin air? Could it be... This thought had barely formed when she felt something cold pressing against the back of her neck. A woman's voice entered her ears. It was a fierce warning. "Don't move!"

It was Amber. Sure enough, she had been hiding behind the door.

At this moment, there was a knife pressed against Rachel's neck. The sharp edge of the knife slid against her skin. It was followed by a stinging pain. She jerked in surprise and did not dare to move a single muscle. "Did you notice me a long time ago?"

"Chris, who are you talking to? I don't think those two are here..." Jolly turned around only to see this scene. Her expression immediately changed and the rest of her sentence trailed off. She couldn't even utter a single word.

"Stand there and don't move!" The words had only just left Amber's mouth when Rachel felt something cold against her neck. Bright red blood trickled down her neck and her collarbone. It was a particularly shocking sight against her fair skin.

How could Jolly dare to move after that? She was so scared that her face turned pale with fright. "I won't move. Let go of Chris."

"Let go? It wasn't easy for me to finally get this opportunity. Do you think I'll let her go?" Amber's expression was gloomy and her voice was extremely chilling.

Rachel forced herself to calm down. "You knew we were following you. You did this on purpose."

"Of course. You are dressed so conspicuously. All the men in the banquet hall were crazy about you. How could I fail to notice you? This worked out fine though. It saves me the effort of searching for you instead."

“You want to kill me?”

“Everything started because of you! You are a jinx! You ruined my entire family! My mother passed away the moment you arrived. And now, my father is gone. My fiancé and my company... All of them are gone!”

As Amber became emotional, her hand trembled uncontrollably. As a result, the edge of the knife sliced through the flesh on Rachel’s neck. It hurt so much that Rachel was drenched in cold sweat. Nevertheless, she gritted her teeth and did not dare to make a sound, lest she made Amber even crazier.

Unfortunately, Amber was already deranged.

“If I kill you now, everything will be over.”

“Amber Hudson, do you really believe that killing me will solve all your troubles? Will the people in Hudson Pharmaceuticals obey you? Will Justin listen to you?”

“As long as you’re not around, they will! I am the only daughter of the Hudson Family! You’re just a wild sprout!”

“They won’t! Did you think that Evan Holt supported me and allowed me to manage the company just because I’m a daughter of the Hudson Family? That’s not true at all. It’s because of the formula! Have you gotten the formula?”

At the mention of the formula, Amber’s expression immediately darkened. It was precisely because of that damned formula that she had fallen so far from grace.

Chapter 320 She’s Really Gone Crazy



“You don’t have the formula yet, right?” Rachel’s words undoubtedly agitated Amber, and the latter’s expression was as dark as could be. Her eyes were so gloomy that she looked like she could slice Rachel to bits in the next moment.

“You’re mocking me!” The knife around Rachel’s neck tightened slightly, forcing Rachel to stand on her tiptoes. Her entire back was tense, but she continued to grit her teeth and bravely say, “No. I’m trying to tell you that nobody else will ever tell you the formula if you kill me. What makes you think that Evan and the others will let you be the President of Hudson Pharmaceuticals then?”

“What do you mean?” “Let me go. I’ll give you the formula. That way, you and I will have the same bargaining chip.”

“Do you think I’m stupid? How do I know whether the formula you give me is real?”

Although Amber claimed that she didn’t believe Rachel, Rachel could clearly feel the stinging pain on her neck easing slightly. The edge of the knife had moved away from her neck.

“I can give you the password to connect to the pharmaceutical factory’s computer.”

“The password?”

“I’m sure you have your own people in the pharmaceutical factory. You can ask your men to operate backstage. The factory is working overtime right now to produce those very medicines. I can’t waste so many medicinal materials just to deceive you.”

Amber looked pensive. “Alright. Give me the password now.”

She continued to hold the knife but shouted behind her, “Why are you still hiding? Come out and call the people at the pharmaceutical factory. Ask them to verify her statement.”

There was no need for Rachel to turn around to know who Amber was talking to. It was Noah.

Nobody knew better than Rachel as to when these two got together. Five years ago, Noah had vented all his rage and resentment on Amber when an accident occurred at Tina's wedding. However, she turned out to be very adaptable. It was hard to say how she managed to mediate with him, but they were now using each other.

Sure enough, a male figure stepped out of the shadows. "Miss Hudson, it's been a while."

"Did you plan this together?"

Jolly was impatient. "Noah, are you not afraid that my parents will never forgive you once we get off this boat if you do this? I'm telling you. If you dare to let that crazy woman touch a single hair on Chris' head, my parents will not go easy on Hindenburg Conglomerate."

Noah snorted coldly and glanced sideways at Jolly. "Miss Carter, you can't even save yourself right now. Do you still have the time to worry about your friend?"

"Don't touch her!" Rachel's expression changed. "Let Jolly go first. Otherwise, I won't say a single word. You won't get the formula even if you kill me."

"I'm not leaving!" Jolly was furious. She had never been threatened in this manner before.

Rachel ignored Jolly and glared at Noah coldly. "You should know just how valuable the Hudson Pharmaceuticals' formula is. But, the two elders of the Carter Enterprise will never forgive you if you harm Jolly in this place. Did you think you can keep your actions here a secret? Paper cannot contain fire."

Noah scowled. "You're threatening me."

"I'm not threatening you. It's a warning. A sincere warning."

After pondering for a moment, he glanced at Jolly. "Miss Carter, please leave."

Rachel was nothing more than Richard's goddaughter. On the other hand, Jolly was the only precious daughter of the Carter Family. If anything were to happen to her, the husband-and-wife of the Carter Family would surely use all their resources in the Carter Enterprise to locate the murderer. It would be very troublesome by then.

Jolly was reluctant to leave Rachel alone, but she would only cause more at this time if she refused to leave. Thus, she gritted her teeth and left.

When Rachel saw Jolly leaving, she finally breathed a sigh of relief.

Noah said, "You can give us the password now, right? Miss Hudson."

"Young Master Noah, it's not hard to tell you the password. But, are you sure you want me to tell this woman the password as well?"

He was taken aback by her words.

The words had just left her mouth when then the knife sliced deeper into her neck. A wave of pain immediately washed over her.

Amber pressed the knife against Rachel's neck and snarled fiercely. "Even at a time like this, you're still trying to instigate us!? The formula belongs to the Hudson Family in the first place! You should have told me a long time ago! Speak! What is the password!?"

"Young Master Noah!" Rachel cried out in pain. "Think this over carefully! If you don't mind, then I'll tell you right now. The password is 6..."

"Wait!" Noah interrupted just in time. "Amber, why don't you go out first?"

Amber couldn't believe her ears. "What do you mean by that?"

"I think it'll be safer if less people know about this formula. You don't have a single person by your side to help you. I'm afraid you will attract a lot of unscrupulous people if you obtain the formula. I'm doing this for your sake."

"For my sake?" She gnashed her teeth. "Young Master Noah, you might actually be able to fool other people with your lies. However, I've been with you for nearly six years now. Do you think you can still fool me?"

His expression immediately turned grim. "Amber, follow my orders or face the consequences! Don't forget who has been helping you all this time! If it weren't for me, do you think you'd have a place to stay in Riverdale?"

The stalemate between them continued and she panicked. When she saw him approaching, she immediately dragged Rachel backward. "Don't come over! What do you want to do!?"

Rachel had bled a lot from her neck by this time. The moment she was dragged backward, she immediately felt the world spinning around her. She suppressed her discomfort and worked with Amber to move backward, lest she got hurt by accident.

There was no way she could give out the formula, for it was extremely rare and valuable. Moreover, the Hudson Family's formula was only valuable because it only belonged to the Hudson Family. If the

formula were publicized, then anybody could produce the medicines and the formula would become worthless.

At this moment, there was no other way except to provoke a dispute between these two people.

"Amber Hudson, hand her over to me! I will guarantee you a comfortable life in Riverdale."

"Forget it. Do you think I don't know how you are? Noah Hindenburg, you're a deranged lunatic! Haven't you tortured me enough all these years!? I've had enough of you a long time ago!"

Rachel staggered backward and caught a glimpse of the deck railing behind her out of the corner of her eye. "Amber!"

Amber was already leaning against the railing. She subconsciously looked back when she heard Rachel's cry. It was also at this moment that Noah suddenly grabbed Rachel's arm. Rachel screamed in surprise. Her entire body fell forward, pulled by his strength. The edge of the knife narrowly missed her ear. It could be seen with the naked eye as a strand of hair was cut off in the process.

The corners of his eyes lifted in a smug grin. Unfortunately, his smile didn't even last for a moment before it froze with a cold flash of light.

Amber seemed to have been prepared in advance. The moment Rachel was pulled away, she didn't retreat but lunged forward instead. A dagger glinting with a cold light stabbed hard into Noah's chest, then she immediately pulled the knife out again. Blood splattered everywhere, splashing onto Rachel's face.

"Ugh..."

The grip around Rachel's arm loosened. She watched helplessly as Noah backed away and stumbled over to the railing. He was clutching at his chest and trying to stop the bleeding. However, Amber was a

medical student. She knew about the vital spots of a human's body better than anybody else. That attack had cost him his life.

Meanwhile, Rachel's eyes were filled with a blood mist. She could barely see what was happening in front of her. This is insane! Amber has gone crazy!