

My Mute Bride Chapter 51-60

My Mute Bride Chapter 51-Rachel entered the study at night to serve Justin with some tea.

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

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

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

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

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

She shook her head.

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

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

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

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

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

He...

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

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

“Drugs?” Justin frowned. “What kind of drugs?”

Rachel made a few hand gestures with slight embarrassment.

As he hadn’t learned sign language for a long time, he was completely unable to read the specialized term. Since he was close to losing his patience, he tossed a pen and a piece of paper onto the table before he instructed, “Write it down. What kind of drug was it?”

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

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

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

“Jefferey wanted you to drug me with it?”

She felt both embarrassed and terrified as she nodded again.

He snorted coldly, “And where is it now?”

Rachel pursed her lips. I threw it away.

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

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

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

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

He subtly nodded.

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

A startled Rachel looked over her shoulder in confusion.

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

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

She was alarmed—slightly fearful and repulsed, even—to the point where her shoulders shook as she nodded, as if she was afraid he would do something harmful to her in the next second.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rachel concluded that was the most likely explanation.

The next day, she went to work as usual.

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

‘Morning.’

‘Do you usually come to work at this hour?’

She thought, Come?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Are you okay, Rachel?” Hans asked.

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

What are you doing? she signed.

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

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

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

“What do you mean by the Burton Family? Your cousin? What are you talking about? Don’t be afraid, Rachel. We’ll call the police. This woman must be mad.” While he still protected Rachel, Hans pulled out his cell to call the cops.

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

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

Meanwhile, the crowd around them was gossiping.

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

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

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

My Mute Bride Chapter 52-Facing Hans’s surprised look, Rachel could only force a bitter smile. Yes, I am indeed married, but for rather embarrassing reasons.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

She shook her head. I’m fine, thank you.

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

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

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

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

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

She nodded and took a seat on the sofa, and soon, he appeared with a pack of ice. Thank you. She took the ice pack and carefully pressed them against her cheek.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Once he asked the question she feared the most, she tightened her grip around the ice pack and tried to keep her calm. Then, she gave him a slight nod. It’s an undeniable fact after all.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Rachel!”

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

Meanwhile, Tina had hopped on an army green supercar.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"What does that have to do with me?"

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

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

Hearing that, Tina finally released her foot on the accelerator, after which the car finally settled into a steady and normal speed.

"Continue," she ordered coldly.

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

“Do you think she’s cheating on Justin?”

“Who knows? It’s suspicious no matter how you look at it. No one really knows for sure.”

Tina gave it some serious thought and shot a look at Amber through her sunglasses. Then, she smirked. “You’re really something! With that, you are trying to turn her into a scapegoat. To make Justin divorce her, you have the heart to trample over your own sister.”

My Mute Bride Chapter 53-Amber grinned at Tina’s comment. “That’s one of the reasons. Humans are self-centered, aren’t we all? Still, compared to my relationship with her, our relationship is more solid! Who does she think she is? She could never compare to you! I don’t know what the bad blood between you two is, but as your bestie, I choose to stand by your side.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

'Grandma, I have been quite busy with work lately. I won't be visiting you for now. Take care of your health and eat your meals regularly.'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Tell her to come down for dinner."

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

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

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

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

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

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

"I just wanted to check on her."

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

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

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

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

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

Before she could react, he had walked up to her and lifted her chin between her fingers. When he noticed the injuries, his face fell. "Who did this to you?"

She pursed her lips.

Nothing. I was careless and got into an accident.

“Do you think I’m blind?”

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

It’s Tina.

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

“Do you know the reason behind this?”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“I believe you’re not that foolish.” His face scrunched up into an unfriendly expression.

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

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

I'm sorry for giving you trouble again.

She looked at him uneasily. Her doll-like face was badly swollen, bruised, and bloodied. In her dark and clear eyes, he saw anxiety and vulnerability like a fragile porcelain doll.

Plagued by a mix of annoyance and perplexity, he coldly reprimanded her, "I told you to follow the rules, but I didn't tell you to take abuse! Do you not understand my words?"

His sudden temper took her by shock.

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

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

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

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

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

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

My Mute Bride Chapter 54-"Keep your injury away from water, or it might get infected."

Thank you, Doctor Peters.

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

She nodded obediently.

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

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

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

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

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

She nodded at him.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Arrange for two men to follow Rachel around.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A male voice rang out from behind, causing her to pause in surprise. She whipped around to find Hans standing there. She had known that he’d be here

because he had texted her in the morning to inform her about having something to tell her.

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

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

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

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

What's wrong with you?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I have nothing much to say to you.

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

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

How did you find out?

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

Muffled groans suddenly escaped from her throat.

Hans!

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

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

Follow me to the hospital.

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

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

“I know what your concerns are. I will help you to take care of your grandma. If you’re worried about the reach of the Burton Group because of their influence, I could arrange for your grandma to settle down overseas. I am going to take up your divorce case, and I promise you that you could leave the Burtons unharmed.”

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

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

Thanks, but I can't leave just yet.

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

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

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

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

She nodded solemnly and stared calmly but firmly at him.

It is important.

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

Knowing that Rachel was as stubborn as a mule, Hans could only come clean. "I don't know who that person is. Last night, I received an anonymous text, but when I called back, the number was already invalid." As he spoke, he handed her his phone. "Look."

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

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

Hans, do you really want to help me?

My Mute Bride Chapter 55-Hans replied firmly, "Of course!"

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

If so, you should just stay out of this.

"Why?" He frowned in utter disbelief.

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

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

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

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

Hans' question took Rachel by surprise, and a bold guess popped up into her mind. She started to suspect that all the scheme was merely Amber's plot to make her leave the Burtons.

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

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

She shook her head.

I am not staying at the Burtons for their sake.

"Who are you doing this for?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yes.

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

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

I will bring you to the hospital.

...

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

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

“Dad, did you call for me?”

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

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

“With whom?”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lately, he had gotten used to drinking the tea she made for him. In comparison, the tea prepared by Mrs. Duncan was too unrefined, according to his complaints. Therefore, if Rachel had the time, she would bring him a pot of tea at the same time every day.

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

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

She reflexively touched her cheek.

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

She shook her head at him.

Nothing serious.

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

She was taken aback and asked him cautiously.

Do I really have to go?

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

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

When she met his inquisitive eyes, she quickly explained.

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

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

Surprised by his words, she stared at him blankly.

Can I?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

My Mute Bride Chapter 56-Frankie paused for a while before reacting and hurriedly took apart the wrapper. Then, he took out the item enclosed in bubble wrap.

Looking confused, he reported, "It's a bottle of cough syrup."

There was a label for cough syrup on the bottle, and it carried the logo of Hudson Pharmaceuticals. One could clearly read the manufactured date and ingredients. It was a product that Hudson Pharmaceuticals marketed.

However, Justin's gaze turned slightly heavy at the discovery of the bottle, for he believed that the Hudsons would not have posted a bottle of cough syrup to Rachel. That is impossible!

At this point, Frankie also picked up on Justin's uneasiness and trod carefully. "President Hudson, is there any problem?"

Justin looked calm and did not give away his emotions, after which he instructed Frankie in a low voice, saying, "Get someone to test the contents of the bottle."

"Sure." Frankie nodded and secretly guessed that the bottle of medicine must be problematic. After that, the business sedan left the neighborhood and traveled to the building of Burton Group.

On the way, Frankie brought up the topic of the shareholders meeting. "President Burton, I think your uncle might create trouble in the meeting over the Brentwood New City project."

Jason Burton?

Justin's face was as expressionless as usual. "Huh. Ever since he formed connections with the Hindenburgs, he appears more confident than before."

"It seems so. The internal issues that surfaced from the project this time are closely related to him."

"Have we dealt with those involved?"

"Yes. We left one unharmed, according to your orders."

Justin gave a light nod and changed the topic. "Tina is going to attend the meeting, isn't she?"

After all, she also holds some company shares.

Frankie nodded. "If everything goes smoothly, all the shareholders will show up."

Although Justin remained silent, his steely gaze, as seen from the rearview mirror, was as deterring and unapproachable as a steep cliff to climbers.

The day of the family banquet was arranged so that it coincided with the annual shareholders meeting.

All the shareholders of Burton Group would normally show up. Since the Burton Group was a family business, their shareholders were the Burton family members and some old business friends who had helped build the company into its empire.

“Burton Group has invested more in the Brentwood New City project compared to the sum of the other two major projects from last year. Do you think that’s reasonable?”

In the meeting, Jason aimed the question directly at Justin, but the latter did not look disturbed at all.

“The new project’s estimated return is five times of last year’s projects. In other words, by launching this project, we will receive the same amount of profits as all the projects combined from last year.”

“What about the risks? Are you disregarding the risks as well? Our industry is currently going through a change due to the tightening of federal policy. This is not the time to expand our investments.”

“Policies are only there for show. If everyone is as timid as you, what is the point of investing?”

The air of the meeting room froze after Justin left his unreserved remark. As anticipated, Jason’s face turned ashen after being attacked by his nephew.

In the end, the other shareholders had to interject to spare Jason from the humiliation so that the meeting could be continued.

After the meeting, Jason scoffed and left the room fuming without as much as taking a look at Justin. As for the remaining attendees, none had the guts to talk more than needed, and they dispersed right after.

Only Tina was lingering in the room. She leaned sideways against the meeting table as she confronted, “Justin, you humiliated Dad in front of everyone. Don’t you think you’ve crossed a line?”

He glanced at her and leaned back into his chair with clasped hands. "Not all businessmen need to play nice and charitable to get around. Speaking of which, Uncle Jason seems to be very charitable toward the Hindenburgs. Too bad I am not going to do the same to him."

Tina's expression fell. "Are you mocking me?"

It was a known fact that Jason had attempted to arrange a marriage with the Hindenburgs in order to forge business connections. To most people, such action was normal for the elite families, but Tina took offense and felt humiliated.

"That was a reminder." His gaze was as cold as ice, sending out warning signs. "Clean your own mess. Don't involve the innocent."

"The innocent? Who are you referring to?" The corner of her lips lifted into a smirk. "Ah, that mute, Rachel?"

The way she referred to Rachel as 'that mute' was surprisingly jarring for him, and his displeasure was evident from the look in his eyes.

She whipped around and pressed her hands on the table. With a mocking expression, she fired back at him, "Justin, I am reminding you out of kindness as well: take control of that mute of yours. And don't keep your own family at arm's length. Today, she could only be meeting with her first love that shows up from nowhere, but who knows she'd carry his child someday down the road? You'd get cuckooed."

He calmly rose up and questioned with a low and dismissive tone, "Do you think every girl acts like you?"

Her expression darkened at his insult.

Standing up, he buttoned his coat and replied casually, "If you keep finding trouble, I don't mind sending an address to the Hindenburgs. I believe that Noah Hindenburg would love to take care of that lover of yours."

"How dare you!" She gritted her teeth in resentment. "My marriage to Noah is arranged by Grandpa! How dare you interfere?"

"What do you think?"

His reply was curt but explosive.

She felt a shiver across her body, knowing very well that Justin had the ability to do almost anything she could imagine.

“Wow, look at you acting all protective, threatening me because of her! Could you have fallen for her?”

He was already at the door when he heard Tina’s fuming interrogation. His pupils wavered.

The insolent girl went in full force and fanned the fire. “Do you really believe that she’s a prim and proper young lady? Do you know who she met and what she did behind your back?”

“Don’t be a busybody.”

With that, he marched out of the meeting room.

Frankie had been waiting for him at the door. The moment he saw his boss walking out with a chilling expression, he got goosebumps from the fear.

“President Burton, shall we head directly to the villa or...”

Justin cut him off with a sour look, demanding, “What has Rachel been up to lately?”

“Miss Hudson goes to work and comes home as usual.”

“How about today?”

Frankie felt his heart sink; he did not arrange for the men to follow Rachel around on weekends.

The thought of Rachel’s words from last night troubled Justin. “It’s been quite some time since Grandma was discharged from the hospital. Send her some tonics as a token.”

Frankie was taken aback by the random request. “Now?”

“Now.”

The icy tone sent a chill down Frankie’s spine. “Sure, I will get it arranged.”

Night descended on the city, and the streets were lit up with warm lights.

A cab came to a stop in front of Burton Residence. Rachel paid her fee and looked up at the second floor from the entrance, from where she could see the brightly-lit study.

Justin is home.

When she stepped into the living room, she was greeted by Mrs. Duncan's bizarre remark. "Mrs. Burton, could you please inform me if you are coming home late? I have been thinking if I should deliver tea to the young master!"

Rachel forced an apologetic smile at her. She put away her belongings and immediately went to prepare tea.

Upstairs, Justin had been waiting for a long time in the study.

When he heard her soft knocking on the door, he announced, "Come in."

She pushed the door open and instantly spotted his face that was calm as usual. Next, she glided toward him with the tray of tea in her hands.

"Where did you go today?" His voice was low.

She carefully placed the teacup on the table.

I told you last night that I would be visiting my Grandma.

"How's her health?"

She's doing pretty good.

"Is that so?" He lifted his head without warning. "Has she taken the tonics I sent her?"

She turned to him with a thunderstruck look.

Tonics? What tonics? She thought to herself.

My Mute Bride Chapter 57-The next moment, Justin had already stood up, prompting Rachel to instinctively take a step backward.

Closing the distance between them, Justin spoke in a cold voice. "Why? Is it not to your grandmother's liking? Has she not taken it yet? Or... do you not know anything about it?"

Justin closed his hands around her neck and... Bang! She ruthlessly slammed against the closet. Scared out of her life, Rachel yelped, but her hoarse voice only made her look even more pitiful.

Even though he watched the woman's facial features distort in pain, moisture clouding her beautiful innocent eyes, he felt nothing in his heart.

The one thing he hated the most was people lying to him, and even more so if the lie was particularly crude.

"Was I too lenient with you? Is that why you are so fearless to do these things under my nose?"

Rachel shook her head and sobbed, her face turning red.

"Tell me, where did you go today?"

I never went anywhere.

"Is that so? If you didn't go anywhere, that means you disappeared into thin air for a whole day?"

Justin tightened his grip, causing Rachel to throw her head back in pain, her hands clinging on to Justin's arms and making frantic motions.

That was her survival instinct.

"You're plotting something with Jefferey behind my back, aren't you?"

That's not true.

Rachel shook her head furiously, and with a mighty wave of his hand, Justin swept the tea set off the study desk onto the floor.

Crash! the cups and saucers shattered into pieces, and the scalding tea splashed onto Rachel's feet. She screamed in pain, her hoarse voice resounding eerily in the room.

Justin pinned her down on the desk violently, then proceeded to scoop up a medicine bottle from the mess. His expression was cold as he asked, "Is this the medicine?"

There was a label on the brown bottle stating that it contained cough medicine from Hudson Pharmaceuticals. The liquid within it rippled under the lamp, a cold light shimmering within.

Rachel's expression went stiff.

What is this?

She had never seen this object before.

"This is the medicine Jefferey sent to you. How would you not know anything about it?"

Mr. Burton, this bottle of medicine contains hallucinogens, and if consumed over a long period of time, it would cause blindness and even kidney failure. This medicine isn't even supposed to be on the market. Frankie's words still rang in Justin's ears, and he tightened his grip around the woman's neck.

Rachel's already weak voice was completely distinguished in her throat, leaving only her eyes that still had a deathly stare, as if threatening to fall out from their sockets.

Justin's expression was terrifyingly dark. "You're so obedient to Jefferey. If you died here, do you think he would come and take care of your corpse?"

He didn't even give Rachel any chance to explain as his hand clamped harder, intent on strangling the woman. However, her struggles to be freed from his grip only proved to be futile.

The woman's face turned purple and tears fell from the corners of her eyes. She was in an obvious panic, and Justin's eyebrows were also knitted tightly together.

After a while, he let go of her.

The force pressing against Rachel's neck disappeared, and her instinct to survive propelled her to break free from Justin's death grip. She fell onto the rug, coughing incessantly.

Justin stooped down in front of Rachel with the medicine bottle in hand. “Drink it.”

Rachel put a hand over her neck and whimpered. There was no strength left in her to explain.

“Didn’t you say that this is an aphrodisiac?”

Raising Rachel’s chin, Justin forced her to look up at him. With his other hand, he put the bottle to her mouth, “Drink it.”

Rachel’s shoulders trembled violently as her body went cold. She shook her head helplessly, trying to move back and escape.

Justin grabbed her cheeks forcefully and didn’t wait for her to swallow as he poured the liquid into her open mouth.

The bitter medicine flowed down her throat with no signs of stopping, and even her nasal cavity was flooded.

Rachel struggled desperately; the brown medicine spilled all over her body, but a large amount was already in her stomach.

She coughed and sputtered and even tried to throw up.

The bitter sting of the medicine conquered her mouth, and the fishy stench caused her stomach to turn. She kept coughing and retching, but nothing came out of her mouth.

Soon, a burning sensation invaded her stomach, leading her to fall onto the floor in agony and curled up into a ball.

Justin looked coldly down at her. “Next time Jeffery sends another bottle over, you’ll have to finish it as well. This is what you get for being arrogant.”

Rachel’s ears were still ringing, so she couldn’t make out what Justin was saying. Her eyes couldn’t focus, then everything faded into darkness.

She didn’t know how much time had passed, but she did feel that someone was carrying her, after which she heard someone arguing.

The next time she woke up, she found herself in a hospital ward. The blinding white greeted her when she opened her eyes.

“You’re awake?” An unfamiliar girl’s voice sounded.

Rachel took a long time to adjust so that she could see the nurse clearly.

“She’s awake. Go get Dr. Peters.”

Rachel sank into thought.

Dr. Peters?

Is that Julian Peters?

Rachel rested her head on the pillow, remembering what had happened to her before she passed out. Justin had forced her to drink the medicine.

Soon, a set of hurried footsteps sounded outside the door. Julian had arrived.

After the checkup, Julian had Rachel lean against the bed. “You’ll have to be hospitalized for two days. Don’t move around too much because your body is still quite weak. You’ll also get drips every day.”

Rachel was pale.

You’re the one who saved me?

Julian nodded.

The night before, he was downstairs when he heard noises coming from the study and suspected that something was wrong. When he barged in, Rachel was already lying on the floor, unconscious.

“About that medicine you drank, its contents have already been analyzed. It is a chronic medicine not found anywhere on the market, and if you take too much of it, it will cause kidney failure. It’s a good thing that we discovered it earlier; you would’ve died otherwise.”

So it wasn’t an aphrodisiac? Rachel thought.

She gripped the blanket tightly, the ringing in her ears now singing in her mind. If she remembered correctly, last night Justin said that Jefferey had sent her the medicine.

Dad wants me to poison Justin's food with the medicine so that he would die? So this is why Justin was so angry, she realized.

Seeing Rachel's pale face, Julian prodded, "Rae, tell me the truth. Was it my brother who forced you to down the medicine?"

Rachel didn't have time to nod before a cold and low voice sounded from the other side of the door.

"The label on the medicine bottle belongs to Hudson Pharmaceuticals. Julian, I'm afraid you have the wrong idea on who was forcing who to drink it."

When she realized who it was, she froze.

The anger still remained on Justin's face. As soon as he made it through the door, he threw Rachel a cold glare. "I can sue you for intentional homicide based on this bottle of medicine alone."

Julian frowned as he looked at Justin, then turned his gaze toward Rachel. After a long while, Rachel gritted her teeth.

I drank the medicine myself.

"Why?" Julian's face was full of disbelief.

"Now that things are cleared up, Dr. Peters can leave and mind his own business now." Justin chased Julian out unapologetically as he locked his eyes on Rachel. "I still have something to talk to her about."

Hearing that, Rachel had her face turned as pale as ashes. Julian wanted to say something, but Frankie had already opened the door. "Young Master Peters, please."

Once the door closed with a click, the ward went so silent that one could even hear the sound of a needle dropping.

As she watched Justin walk closer to her, her breaths became labored. She had her back against the headboard, so there was nowhere to run.

"Scared now?" Justin sneered, and his dark eyes looked like cold blades. "You should've been scared when you joined hands with Jefferey to poison me."

My Mute Bride Chapter 58- I didn't.

Rachel shook her head furiously to deny.

"You didn't join hands with Jefferey, or you didn't poison me?"

Justin gave another snort. "Ah, I forgot. You didn't have time to poison me, did you?"

Rachel leaned against the headboard with helplessness reflected in her eyes. She couldn't do anything except shake her head and deny it.

I really don't know what that bottle of medicine does. It wasn't the medicine I got before.

Justin grew impatient. "You don't have to rush to deny it. It doesn't matter anymore. By the way, did you forget about something? Our deal is still ongoing."

Rachel froze.

I already did as you told me to. I went to the vineyard.

"Yes, but what of the end result? You didn't get the prescription, did you?"

At the mention of the prescription, Rachel gave her own palm a mighty pinch in an attempt to calm herself.

Will you let me go if I give you the prescription?

Justin's cold gaze bore into her. "You know the prescription?"

Jefferey took me to the vineyard and showed me the prescription.

"Why would he suddenly take you to the vineyard?"

It's part of a deal. I agreed to help with his work at the Burtons.

Justin's eyebrows scrunched up as he examined her, trying to judge if her words were real.

After a while, he grabbed a notebook from the bedside table and tossed it on the sheets. Then, a cold command came from his thin lips. "Write it down!"

Rachel took the pen with her slender yet pale fingers. She recalled the contents of the prescription she saw in the study that day and replicated them on the notebook stroke by stroke.

Angelica...

After writing down the first ingredient, Rachel's hand paused for a while. Out of the corner of her eye, she glanced at Justin, who was staring at her. Her heart trembled a little, and then she gritted her teeth as she wrote two words. Three ounces.

"Done?" Justin took the notebook offered to him suspiciously while she gingerly nodded.

The ingredients in the prescription were all traditional medicine and their amounts, which were beyond Justin's professional knowledge.

"If this were the real deal, then we'll let bygones be bygones. But if you dare lie to me..." Justin threw her a cold glare, then finished his sentence while putting the prescription away safely, "Be ready for a permanent stay in the hospital."

Rachel shivered, then unconsciously gripped the blanket tighter.

After obtaining the prescription, Justin left in a hurry, for he needed to verify it as soon as possible. It was not until after the door clicked shut when Rachel gradually relaxed and stopped pinching her palm.

Phew! She must not stay in Riverdale any longer, and she dared not imagine what would happen to her if Justin found out that the doses in the prescription were incorrect.

Presently in the MPV that was leaving the hospital and heading toward Burton Group.

"Mr. Burton, do we go straight to the company or—"

"To the research institute."

Justin held the prescription Rachel wrote, deep in thought. After a while, he ordered, "Have someone check if Rachel went to Hudson Vineyard after Jefferey's birthday celebration."

Frankie was stunned for a moment. “Understood.”

The car soon arrived at the medical research institute owned by Burton Group that was located on the west side of the city.

Burton Group’s intention to purchase Hudson Pharmaceuticals wasn’t something new. Even before this, Justin had planned its execution for a long while, but Burton Group had never entered the medical field before. Hence, many things had to be built from scratch.

The medical research institute was one of the crucial starting points.

“Mr. Burton! What brings you here?” A middle-aged man in a white coat greeted Justin as he walked out of the laboratory.

Justin handed the prescription to him. “Professor Collins, I’d like you to take a look at this prescription.”

“Prescription?” Professor Collins pushed his glasses and studied the contents on the paper for a long while, his expression serious. “Isn’t this the prescription for the sleeping pill manufactured by Hudson Pharmaceuticals?”

“Sleeping pill?” Justin suddenly remembered the medication he saw when he was going through the list of contract breaches, and the Burtons’ ancestral sleeping pill was one of them.

He then asked, “Can you really concoct the medication based on this prescription?”

“Of course. The prescription isn’t that rare, since the ingredients are already listed on the package. The key is in the dosage. Every company has their own doses and usage, and those must never be announced to the public, or others would copy them.”

At that, the look in Professor Collins’ eyes turned curious. “Mr. Burton, how did you get this prescription? It should have been one of the trade secrets of Hudson Pharmaceuticals.”

Justin had no intention of answering. Instead, he looked at the laboratory behind Professor Collins. “I heard that there’s a newcomer in the lab?”

“Ah, yes. Tommy is my student, and he’s an intern here. Still, the professional tasks are left to the professionals only. Oh, right, Tommy was the one who analyzed the medicine Assistant Beckham brought over yesterday.”

“Right, the medicine. I took a look at it too, and I wanted to ask you. The medicine is unable to save or harm anyone, so why would Hudson Pharmaceuticals produce something like that?”

At that, Justin frowned ever so slightly. “What do you mean by ‘the medicine is unable to save or harm anyone’?”

“It’s a bitter medicine with a stinging smell to boot. However, it’s a chronic medicine that would only take effect if taken over a long period of time. No one in this world would be foolish enough to take this medicine for that long.”

“What if it was mixed in with the food?”

“That’s impossible.” Professor Collins shook his head. “If that medicine is mixed in with any food at all, it would be detected almost instantly. The taste is so weird that no one would be fooled.”

Justin’s frown deepened at those words.

In the afternoon the next day, Rachel had slept drowsily for a whole day in the hospital, and she didn’t even have any lunch. It was almost evening when she woke up, and the vibration of her phone had roused her.

“Hello? Rachel, is that you?” Hans’ panicked voice sounded from the other end of the line.

Rachel knocked twice on the back of the phone to indicate that it was her.

Hans immediately relaxed, and his relief was felt on the other side of the line. He complained, “I sent you so many messages, but you didn’t reply. Okay, since you’re here, I’ll hang up now. I’ll tell you on WhatsApp.”

Rachel found a number of unread messages and missed calls on her phone, all from Hans.

‘I’m passing by the library later. I’ll bring you something to eat.’

‘You’re not coming to work?’

‘Why aren’t you replying? Is this an inconvenient time?’

‘The people at the library said that you took the day off. What happened?’

Rachel checked the timestamps. The first message was sent in the morning, and the last one was sent 12 minutes ago. Almost a whole day had passed without any replies from her. No wonder Hans was worried.

‘I’m fine. I just felt a little unwell and had to stay in the hospital for a few days.’

‘You’re hospitalized? Is it that serious? Which hospital is it?’

‘It’s not serious at all. The doctor just said I had to stay in the hospital to recover. Don’t worry, and you don’t have to come.’

After a while, Hans sent another message. ‘Tell me the truth. Did Justin do anything to you?’

Rachel’s hands trembled as they held the phone. Even the mere sight of Justin’s name invoked fear in her. The terror he incurred in her had seeped into her very being.

It took a long while before she sent the simple message. ‘No.’

‘Which hospital are you staying at?’

Hans was persistent in his questioning, and his attitude was resolute. ‘I’m coming over to visit you.’

My Mute Bride Chapter 59-Seeing the continuous stream of incoming messages, Rachel made a decision and replied, ‘I’m really fine, just a little tired. I’m going to sleep now.’

After that, no matter what Hans sent, she refused to reply. After a while, Hans sent one last message. ‘Rest well.’

Then, Rachel’s phone finally went inactive, allowing her to sigh in relief, but her emotions at that moment were unbearable.

If Hans came at this hour and bumped into Justin, or if anyone else witnessed his visit, it would only cause more trouble. Rachel put down her phone and got down from the bed to pour herself some water.

It was then when she heard the sound of the door opening, and a set of high heels screeched against the floor. “Mrs. Burton! Why are you pouring water on your own? Could it be that Justin didn’t even bother to hire a care worker for you?”

Rachel didn’t even have to look up to know that it was Amber.

It was a great chance for Amber to ridicule Rachel now that the latter was hospitalized, so Amber wouldn’t pass it up so easily.

Why are you here?

“Don’t get so wary. I heard that you’re hospitalized, so I came over to visit. After all, you’re my sister, right?” Amber’s cynicism was unmistakable right from the start. “Even Dad asked me to treat you better, so apparently, the Hudson Family has to rely on you in the future.”

Amber walked up to the table. “Allow me to pour you some water; it’s just a little matter you shouldn’t concern yourself with.”

With that, she poured out a glass of water in front of Rachel and handed it to her. “There. Drink up.”

The water was still boiling hot and emitting vapor.

Rachel nodded slightly in thanks, but she never believed that Amber would be so kindhearted all of a sudden.

Just as expected, right before Rachel was about to take the glass, Amber let go.

The glass went crashing on the floor, and as it shattered, the hot water splashed in all directions.

Rachel didn’t manage to dodge in time, so the hot water scalded her feet and caused her to inhale sharply in pain. She had to use a corner of the table as support in order to stabilize herself.

“Oops! I’m so sorry. I thought you’d hold it better.”

Amber feigned surprise at Rachel. “Did you get scalded? Come on! I told you not to drink water that’s boiling hot. I’ll go get another glass of cold water for you.”

What do you want?

“What do I want? Don’t you know already?” Amber’s expression changed faster than lightning. “Did you think I forgot about the time you pushed me into the water? You good-for-nothing dummy!”

Rachel’s face went pale as her pupils contracted rapidly.

How could she forget? Amber wasn’t one to let someone off the hook so easily. Rachel had made a fool of Amber in front of the guests at the birthday celebration, so she wouldn’t let it go just like that.

While Rachel was wrapping her head around that fact, Amber had already fetched a cold glass of water.

The warm sunlight shone in from outside the window, and it lit the glass up like a lantern. However, the light in Amber’s eyes was stone cold.

Rachel instinctively put up her arms to cover her face.

“Aaah!”

The chill Rachel had braced for didn’t come. Instead, Amber’s scream shocked her, and as she raised her head to look, she saw Amber’s arm pinned behind her by a short-haired woman. Amber’s back was forced into a bend to accommodate the posture, and she was still screaming when the glass in her hand was taken away from her.

“Who are you? How did you get in?”

“It’s no wonder that the relationship between doctors and their patients is so tense; it’s thanks to doctors like you who abuse their patients.”

The woman’s voice was cool and lacked emotion, and she seemed to be pinning Amber’s arm effortlessly. However, no matter how much Amber struggled, she couldn’t break free.

“Ah!”

Amber shrieked. “Let go right now, or I’ll call the police!”

“Struggle any more, and you’ll have to bid your arm goodbye.”

“Don’t bluff me; I’m a doctor, and I—”

Amber was still prideful at first as she tried to move a little, but a crisp sound of something cracking filled the space when she moved, as if it were the sound of celery being broken in half. She was stunned for a while, and then another horrifying scream escaped her mouth. “Argh!”

Rachel’s heart was beating wildly as she witnessed the scene. She frantically gestured, pleading with the short-haired woman to let Amber go.

Amber was the apple of Jefferey’s eye. If anything happened to her, no ordinary person would be able to handle the consequences.

“What are you doing?”

A man’s voice came from the door. Rachel quickly looked up to see Julian at the door.

Julian walked hurriedly in. At the same time, the short-haired woman had already tossed Amber to the side.

Amber staggered a little, and Julian hurried over to support her. “What happened?”

“Julian! I... I think my arm is broken.” Amber was in so much pain that beads of sweat rolled down her forehead, and she was close to tears. She leaned into Julian’s embrace and kept shouting, “It hurts so much!”

Julian spoke to the short-haired woman coldly. “Who ordered you to do this? Do you know how long you’d be in jail for assaulting someone?”

It’s not like that!

Rachel immediately stood in front of the short-haired woman and shook her head furiously in Julian’s direction.

She helped me.

Julian was slightly stunned in disbelief.

At that moment, Amber sobbed even louder in Julian’s arms. “Julian, it hurts so much that I’m going to die! Take me to the orthopedics and ask for Doctor Edwards! I think my arm is really broken.”

“You should take a trip to the psychiatry first.”

Rachel was still bewildered when a hand grabbed her. The short-haired woman had pulled her behind her, and she spoke with a poker face. “So you call a crazy lady who splashes hot water on her patients a doctor?”

“Hot water?”

Out of the corner of his eye, Julian saw the mess under the table and noticed that Rachel’s feet were swollen and red from the scalding. In an instant, he understood the events that transpired, and he pushed Amber away with a livid expression.

“Ah!” Amber shrieked as she supported her dislocated arm, tears streaming down her face. Still, she gritted her teeth and said, “Julian, don’t believe them! They’re working together to lay the blame on me!”

“I’ll be the judge of that.” Julian sent her a cold glare.

Ever since he witnessed Amber’s wickedness at the pond in the Burton Residence, he knew then that Amber was no kind soul. He guessed that the incident today must also be Amber’s doing.

Seeing the futility in covering the truth, Amber was so pissed that she started crying. “Julian, how could you!”

“If you have time to yelp here, you’d be better off getting a doctor to join your bones back.” The short-haired woman glanced at Amber and said meaningfully, “If you drag it out, there might be side effects even if they were joined back.”

At that, Amber was so frightened that she went pale in the face. She could only manage to stutter, “Y-You just wait! You’ll get a lawyer’s letter in no time!”

After saying that, she ran away in haste, shielding her ‘broken’ arm, and even her silhouette looked panicked. As soon as she was gone, Julian took Rachel’s hand. “Let me check for any injuries.”

Rachel sat by the bed and carefully lifted the legs of her pants. There was a large swollen area on the exposed surface, and blisters were already forming on her skin. Julian frowned in compassion. “Hang in there. I’ll go get some medicine.”

Following that, Julian left as quickly as he had come.

After the door slammed shut, Rachel was left alone in the ward with the short-haired stranger, allowing her to finally have the time to observe and register her appearance.

The stranger was a great deal taller than Rachel. She had a slender figure and was clad in army green overalls and leather boots. The features on her face were bright and bold, and she looked cool yet spirited at the same time.

She said, "My name is Janice Hawkins. Hans sent me."

Her reply caught Rachel by surprise.

Janice walked over to the corner where she had placed the gifts and picked up the fruits and flowers. She held them higher for Rachel to see. "He said that you got sick and were hospitalized. He thought he shouldn't make an appearance, so he asked me to visit you in his stead."

My Mute Bride Chapter 60- On the Run "Try to avoid water around your injured area, and take care not to burst the blisters."

After Julian applied the ointment on Rachel's injury, he told her, "The weather is too hot, so I won't bandage it. Don't let the blanket touch it when you're sleeping; just stick your legs out as much as possible."

Thank you.

Rachel expressed her thanks as she looked at Julian, but still, the latter was worried. "If Amber comes again, you have to press the bell to call for a nurse. I've relayed the matters to the hospital, and they'll get her transferred as soon as possible."

Rachel's pretty forehead wrinkled ever so slightly.

It'll be fine. You don't have to go to such lengths for my sake.

The tension between Amber and Rachel went beyond the hospital, so no matter where she went, as long as they saw each other, Amber would never give up on humiliating her sister.

"Don't worry. It's not solely for your sake. Her character is ill-suited for a doctor." At that, Julian frowned and glanced at his watch. "Just rest up first."

Rachel's gaze was soft as she nodded in response. When Julian was leaving, Janice was in the corridor making a call.

"I'm already at the hospital, and I'm right outside her ward now. I met her just now too."

"She seems to be fine, so she must be all right. I'll ask later."

As she was talking, she saw Julian leaving the ward. They exchanged glances and gave each other a nod in place of a greeting.

"I'm hanging up. The doctor just left, so I'll go in now."

In the ward, Rachel invited Janice to take a seat.

How did Hans find out that I'm staying here?

After signing, Rachel realized that the latter might not understand, so she was about to take out her phone when Janice replied, "He didn't know either. I simply made deductions, and I only told him where you are just now."

Rachel was stunned. You understand sign language?

Janice seemed to be at ease. "A little."

"Hans mentioned that your grandma underwent surgery here before, and coincidentally, I have a friend in this hospital."

After hearing her reply, Rachel nodded.

Sorry for all the trouble you took to come here. I'm all right.

"It's not much trouble. Also, there's something about you that I'm quite interested in."

Rachel was bewildered.

What about me?

"The matter with Hudson Pharmaceuticals."

Janice remained calm as she looked at Rachel in silence. However, her calm gaze caused Rachel's heart to squeeze in panic.

What do you want to ask me about?

Janice asked, "Do you know anyone by the name of James Baker? Your father Jefferey might know him."

Rachel thought for a while, confusion apparent on her face.

"Or should I say, he also goes by the nickname 'Gunny'."

At that, Rachel immediately nodded.

'Gunny' was one of Jefferey's assistants. He used to drop by the Hudson Residence often, and he was also on good terms with Amber. Amber, too, used to call him 'Uncle Gunny'.

"Have you seen him recently?"

I haven't seen him in a long while.

"When was the last time you saw him?"

Rachel tried to recall. Around half a year ago. I remember it was winter, and it was snowing. It was right before New Year's.

"Half a year ago?" Janice repeated the time, then asked, "Then do you remember what he brought to the Hudson Residence? What he said, what he did, anything of the sort?"

To Janice's dismay, Rachel shook her head. It had been too long, and she never liked to be in contact with such people. Every time they came, her grandmother would pull her aside and avoid them as much as possible, so she didn't have much of a chance to see anything.

Seeing Janice's serious expression, Rachel couldn't hold back her question.

Why are you asking about him?

Janice came to her senses and looked at Rachel. "Nothing, we just suspect that he's a murderer on the run."

Rachel was stunned, and her pupils constricted quickly.

Murderer? she thought.

Still emotionless, Janice changed the topic. "Right, other than asking me to visit you, Hans also asked me another thing."

Rachel was still in shock and wasn't able to come around; she simply stared at Janice in bewilderment.

"Hans told me that you suspect that your mother was murdered. If it were true, then it wouldn't be too far-fetched to assume that James was involved."

Who exactly are you?

Rachel forced herself to calm down and stared intently at Janice.

"Oh right, I forgot to tell you what I do for a living." Janice lowered her head and retrieved her credentials from her pocket. "I am the vice leader of the Riverdale Investigation Bureau."

Investigation Bureau? Rachel thought as she looked at the credentials in disbelief.

Meanwhile, at the Burton Group Headquarters. Frankie rushed into Justin's office with a document and a recording in hand.

"Mr. Burton, after the birthday celebration, Miss Hudson really did go to Hudson Vineyard with Jefferey, and someone actually witnessed Jefferey taking Miss Hudson to the study."

The recording was played on Justin's computer, and it showed footage from the CCTV at Hudson Vineyard. The screen showed Jefferey and Rachel getting out of the car together and walking into the residence.

At the computer, Justin's slender fingers were propped up against his chin, and the shadow cast on his face hid the scars out of view. Only his cold side profile was visible, and it was obvious that he frowned as he watched the recording.

Looks like she wasn't lying.

Frankie handed the document to him. "Another thing. You asked me to investigate matters regarding Miss Hudson's mother, and I found something that might need your immediate attention."

Justin calmed himself down, took the document, then leaned against the chair as he flipped through it casually. Seeing the large words 'Missing Persons' printed on the document, he had his gaze darkened. "What is this?"

Frankie replied, "Not long ago, you asked me to investigate Miss Hudson's background, but I found out that Miss Hudson had zero records before she returned to the Hudson Family. I got someone to dig deeper, then found out that... 8 years ago, Miss Hudson was trafficked."

Trafficked?

The expression on Justin's face changed as he looked more closely at the files in the document.

The word 'trafficked' was almost a taboo to Justin.

Caution was written all over Frankie's face.

"Even though we still haven't figured out the exact situation at that time, we can infer from the timing of the report that Miss Hudson went missing at birth. 28 years ago, Jefferey filed a report at the police station in person, and he had been looking for her since then, until he found her again 20 years ago."

Justin knew all too well what it was like to be trafficked by human traffickers. His hand held the papers with a little more force, and he tightened his grip until his knuckles went white. He couldn't believe that Rachel was trafficked as well, and it lasted for 8 whole years.

"Mr. Burton," Frankie called Justin gingerly. "Are you all right?"

Justin came to his senses, but still, he looked at the document in his hand, lost in thought. After a while, he ordered, "Get someone you can trust and ask them to pay Hudson Vineyard a visit."

"Go take a few pictures."

After Frankie left, Justin found that his gaze kept going to that document. He read the records time and again, and he still couldn't calm down after a long while. He didn't expect that Rachel went through the same experience he did.

So, 20 years ago, when Jefferey set fire to everything, Rachel hadn't been taken home to the Hudsons yet, and she was living in extremely difficult conditions. She must have been around Katie's age then.

For unknown reasons, when Justin connected all this to Professor Collins' words, his frown deepened.

Could it be that Rachel really had no idea that there was something wrong with the medicine from Jefferey?