

The Silent Wife Chapter 56

/ [The Silent Wife](#)

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.

The Silent Wife Chapter 57

[/ The Silent Wife](#)
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

The Silent Wife Chapter 58

[/ The Silent Wife](#)
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.

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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!

The Silent Wife Chapter 59

[/ The Silent Wife](#)

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?"

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"Julian!... 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."

The Silent Wife Chapter 60

[/ The Silent Wife](#)

Chapter 60

"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 (This novel will be daily updated at). "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, (This novel will be daily updated at) "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?"

T 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, (This novel will be daily updaed at)"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. (This novel will be daily updated at) 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. (This novel will be daily updaed at)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?