

My Mute Bride Chapter 7

Chapter 7, My Mute Bride

Amber told Sue the entire story from A to Z in an innocent demeanor, labeling Rachel as a vain and scheming woman who had coaxed her younger sister. As she stood beside them, Rachel watched Amber's pretentious act coldly with an expressionless face. She didn't defend herself under Sue's disgusted and contemptuous gaze, for she knew it was unnecessary to do that. Since Sue didn't like her, she would never believe her.

As she expected, Sue looked askance at her as though she was looking at something filthy. "No wonder you don't want to leave—you're after the Burtons' family fortune. What a vain and scheming b*tch you are!" Amber smiled smugly upon seeing this. Then, she moved close to Rachel and whispered in a voice audible to only both of them, "Dad said you must go along with me."

Rachel turned her head suddenly, and her pupils shrank. *What do you want to do?* Naturally, Amber could understand Rachel's sign language. She smiled and replied in a whisper, "You don't have to care about that. You just have to go along with me, or else... I'll tell Dad about it."

Seeing how the sisters were communicating, Sue looked at Amber and asked in puzzlement, "What did she say to you?" Amber acted worried as she sighed and said, "Rachel hates me now. I'm apologizing to her since I didn't do it on purpose." Sue let out a cold snort. "What a disgusting woman you are! I have seen many scheming b*tches who try to climb the social ladder by marrying above their station, but it's my first time seeing such an annoying mute."

Rachel's heart had gone numb after hearing so many hurtful remarks. In the ensuing time, Sue softened her attitude toward Amber, and they soon talked and laughed while chatting. After all, compared to the mute Rachel, Amber was more to Sue's liking. Moreover, she had a silver tongue and made Sue happy with just a few words.

On the contrary, Rachel seemed like an unconcerned outsider. In the evening, Justin came back. Apart from being dressed scrupulously in a black suit with no creases, he had his short hair slicked back neatly which revealed his attractive forehead. He looked very much like a business tycoon; despite the scary scar on his face, the way he pursed his thin lips looked very masculine and noble.

Amber was stunned the instant she saw him. Rumor had it that Justin was an extremely ugly man, and Amber believed it, but she didn't expect him to still be so handsome even with a scar on his face! Amber was overwhelmed with regret. She couldn't reconcile herself to this; had she known earlier that Justin was so masculine, she would have never let Rachel marry him back then!

However, she then remembered what Jefferey had asked her to do... She was in a dilemma, but her own idea got the better of her in the end. *I will have both Justin and Julian to myself! As long as these two men fall deeply in love with me, Dad's objective will be achieved in a different fashion,* she thought to herself.

"You're back, Justin." She approached him while assuming a veneer of maidenly shyness, feeling indescribably smug at the thought that this excellent man had proposed marriage to her back then. To everyone's surprise, however, Justin looked at Amber very coldly. The woman was puzzled, and even Sue herself was in disbelief. Justin had personally proposed marriage to Amber back then, so he definitely liked her. Why was he reacting like this?

Is it because Rachel married him in my stead? Is that why he's angry with me and giving me the cold shoulder on purpose? Amber thought to herself. When she became convinced of this, she felt relieved at once. "I have something very important to talk to you about, Justin." The man paused, knowing that Amber had come because of Jefferey.

"Come with me." She hurriedly followed Justin with a hint of joy on her face. On the other hand, Rachel stood beside the sofa with her eyes fixed on him the whole time, yet he went straight to the second floor without looking at her. Sue darted a look at Rachel, who had always been practically non-existent, and sneered.

"Do you see it? Amber is the one Justin loves, and there is no place for you here. If you're smart enough, you should leave as soon as possible. Don't end up in misery and bring disgrace upon yourself." Rachel had gone numb after hearing a lot of Sue's taunts. However, there was one thing that she couldn't figure out.

Before the wedding, the Burton Family had always believed that it was Amber who was going to marry Justin, but why weren't there any wedding ceremonies or wedding guests? After all, Justin was the one who had asked for Amber's hand on his own initiative. Nonetheless, she didn't want to think about this.

However strange this was, it had nothing to do with her. When Rachel returned to her room, she suddenly found that her cell phone had registered several missed calls. When she looked at it carefully, she found that these calls were from Riverdale General Hospital, and she immediately called them back. "Is this Miss Hudson speaking?"

"There's something wrong with the patient, so please come to the hospital as soon as possible," said the person on the other end. *Did something happen to Grandma?!* Rachel thought to herself.

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Rachel panicked at once, and she went downstairs before running out in a hurry. The servants were about to stop her, but Sue stopped them from doing so since she thought that Rachel had run away in a fit of pique after being irritated by the scene of Amber and Justin getting along. She said, "Ignore her. It's good that she's leaving!" On the other hand, Rachel took a taxi to the hospital downtown. Fortunately, her grandmother was already out of danger—a new resident doctor of internal medicine had operated on her. Lying on the sickbed

with her eyes closed was a gray-haired old woman whose faint breaths proved that she was still alive.

Rachel's tears fell in drops as she kneeled before the sickbed while holding her grandmother's hand. She didn't cry when her father forced her to marry into the Burton Family, nor did she cry whenever Sue gave her a hard time or whenever the servants looked down on her.

However, her grandmother, who had treated her most kindly, was the only thing who could tug at her heartstrings; she would break down if her emotional anchor collapsed. Just then, there was a knock on the door. Rachel looked back subconsciously and saw a young and handsome man in a white coat.

"Hello. I'm Julian Peters, the patient's chief surgeon. You must be the patient's family. I need to talk to you about her condition." Rachel was grateful to the doctor who had helped her grandmother. She wiped her tears, made a few gestures, and gave him a sincerely grateful smile. Julian was stunned by the lady's smile. Her eyes, which had been washed with tears, were as extremely beautiful as the rainbow after the rain.

"Ahem, you're welcome." He didn't understand sign language, but he somehow understood what Rachel meant. "The old madam's condition is only stabilized for the time being, and she still needs to undergo another major surgery. In the meantime, please try your best to speak to her ear and spend more time with her.

Soothe her emotions and tell her not to be nervous; it will be good for the surgery's effects." Rachel pursed her lips and nodded slightly. Since she knew that the doctor didn't understand sign language, she merely listened quietly to him while smiling politely from time to time. Julian felt very well-disposed toward this beautiful lady at first sight, so he made a special effort to tell her some safety precautions. Just as he was about to leave, Rachel stopped him.

She took a pen from her handbag, wrote an IOU with her name and phone number on it, then handed the paper to him with both hands. Julian looked at the beautiful handwriting on the IOU, then at her fair and elegantly beautiful face. He shook his head with a smile and replied, "That won't be necessary." He knew that the old woman's granddaughter had financial difficulties at present, so he had no intention of taking it.

However, Rachel didn't agree and stubbornly shoved the IOU into Julian's hand. Julian turned her down repeatedly but failed, so he had no choice but to accept it. However, he now had a different understanding of this lady's character and felt increasingly well-disposed toward her.

After he left, Rachel breathed a sigh of relief with a clear conscience. Her grandmother had a tumor in her brain, but no one dared to operate on her since she was too old. She had been comatose for a long time, and a large amount of money was needed to keep her alive. Rachel learned from the nurse that the Hudson Family had stopped paying for her grandmother's medical expenses.

With no one paying the medical bills, her grandmother's medication was naturally cut off, which was why her grandmother's life had fallen in danger.

If it weren't for Julian's help, her grandmother could have died today. This showed how cruel Jefferey was. Not only did stealing the document cause her to offend Justin, even her father stopped paying for her grandmother's medical expenses.

Since that's the case, why should I go back to the Burton Residence? Since Dad won't pay for Grandma's treatment, there's no need for me to go back anymore, Rachel thought to herself.

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Rachel stayed in the hospital the whole time. However, Jefferey called her again at 10.00PM. She stared at the phone for a long time without answering it, but the screen continued to flash rapidly. In the end, she gritted her teeth and answered the phone. Jefferey's voice was unusually cold.

"I heard from Amber that you left the Burton Residence this morning, so I figured that you must be at the hospital with your grandmother. You should know why I stopped paying the hospital bills, right?" Rachel pressed her lips together, knowing it was because she had failed to accomplish what he previously told her to do.

Then, she heard Jefferey sneer. He threatened, "Do you not want to go back to the Burton Residence anymore? I'm telling you, Rachel—you must go back! If you refuse to return, I'll make all the hospitals in the city afraid to take your grandmother in. You know that I can do so. Of course, if you don't believe me, you can give it a bold try.

If your grandmother dies unexpectedly, you'll be the one killing her." Rachel's expression changed; she held her cell phone tightly and breathed rapidly in fear. At this moment, she wished she could speak and vent all the resentment she harbored against this father of hers. Having achieved his goal, Jefferey smiled in satisfaction.

"You'd better be obedient, or else you won't be able to bear the consequences." After Jefferey hung up, Rachel looked at her grandmother as she continued to lie on her sickbed. She thought bitterly to herself, *Had I been a little more successful in life, I wouldn't have been at Dad's disposal, nor would Grandma's illness have dragged on until now.* Soon, it was 11.00PM. After taking a deep breath, Rachel took a taxi back to the Burton Residence.

The servants had gone to rest by then; since Rachel hadn't had anything to eat since this morning, she walked lightly to the kitchen to grab a quick bite. However, as soon as she reached the living room, she was startled by a dark silhouette leaning against the wall in a corner. Apparently, the man had spotted her as well.

Why is Justin here? Where's Amber? she thought to herself. When he saw her looking around, Justin narrowed his eyes and asked, "What are you looking for?" Rachel took out her pen and paper and wrote, 'Amber.' Justin's eyes darkened. Staring at the woman's face, he then asked, "Aren't you afraid that I might replace you with her?"

Rachel was stunned by Justin's question. For a moment, she didn't know what to say. Justin lightly flicked the cigarette butt between his fingertips that hadn't burned to the end with his fingers, and the cigarette butt fell to the floor, its sparks dying out bit by bit. Then, he raised his eyes and looked at her.

"Amber is staying at the Burton Residence. I hope you'll understand what to say and what not to say in front of her in the future." Rachel was startled. Was he warning her not to make Amber angry? She slowly dropped her eyes upon recalling how Amber looked like she was determined to win Justin's heart during the daytime. Her sister had always bullied her over the years, so why would Rachel cross Amber on her own accord?

If possible, she wished she had no dealings with Amber forever. Unfortunately, things turned out contrary to her wishes. As it turned out, Amber knocked on the door of Rachel's room the next morning. "Rachel, I heard from Madam Parham that the pond in the backyard is quite a fun place. Would you like to go with me to have a look at it?"

She looked at Rachel expectantly like a vivacious and harmless little girl. Rachel looked around imperceptibly and found that Mrs. Duncan and the other servants were keeping a close eye in their direction. *Perhaps the Burtons might say something about me again if I refuse to go*, she thought to herself. Therefore, she nodded in agreement.

The two sisters walked together in the Burton Residence's courtyard. It had to be said that the Burton Residence was simply too magnificent, for even Rachel sighed to herself. It was said that Arthur stepped down from his position ten years ago and had been recuperating physically and mentally at the Burton Residence since then, whereas Justin managed everything and was even more powerful than Arthur had been back when he was in his prime.

No one could take advantage of Justin in the commercial world, and numerous people were eager to ingratiate themselves with him. The pond in the backyard of the Burton Residence—the residence of a family with an abundance of manpower and wealth—was as large as an Olympic-sized swimming pool, and there were all kinds of precious fishes swimming in it.

Rachel stood on the classical-style bridge with Amber as they looked down and appreciated the scenery. For the next one or two hours, Amber happily enjoyed the scenery, and both sisters got along well enough without any trouble. However, as they were about to leave, Rachel—who had been walking ahead of Amber—was suddenly pushed by the latter from behind.

She nearly tripped, but when she steadied herself and looked back, Amber had fallen into the fish pond with a *splash*. "Help! Help—" Rachel was stunned on the

spot as Amber's cheap trick was too obvious. How could the large Burton Residence not have any surveillance cameras installed?

Amber would give herself away once the surveillance videos were checked. However, she had always been a clever one. Could she have not thought about this?

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Before long, Amber's cries for help had drawn a group of people from the front hall. As Rachel had expected, the first thing Amber did after being rescued from the pond was to question her tearfully, "Why did you push me, Rachel?" Rachel frowned at the sight of the reproachful eyes from the people around her. However, with so many people watching, what ought to be explained had to be explained. She shook her head while explaining with sign language.

I didn't push her. Amber, the only person at the scene who could understand what she was signing, snickered in her heart. She pretended to look shocked and replied loudly, "Did you say that you hate me? Rachel... Why would you hate me? We're blood sisters... How could you be so cruel?" Rachel's expression turned cold, for Amber had wilfully distorted the meaning of her explanation.

Judging from the peculiar expressions of those around her, they obviously believed Amber's lies. Thanks to the lies that Amber deliberately spread, everyone in the Burton Residence knew that Justin loved Amber but ended up marrying Rachel—the one who had schemed to get married to him.

As a result, they loathed Rachel and sympathized with Amber. Moreover, the latter won their favor with her honeyed words. "The way I see it, she did it because she's envious of Miss Amber." "What a vicious woman she is! She even laid a hand on her sister." "She looks pitiful on the outside, but she has such a wicked heart."

Amber felt smug deep down inside upon hearing the comments around her, yet she pretended to look aggrieved as she turned to Sue. "What happened isn't what you think it is, Madam Parham. My sister didn't do it on purpose!" Sue's eyes were as piercing as knives as she scolded Rachel harshly, "What a dishonest and vicious woman you are! A woman like you doesn't have to stay at the Burton Residence anymore!" Amber even added fuel to the fire as she said, "Please let my sister off, Madam Parham."

I understand her; if it weren't for my sudden visit to the Burton Residence, she wouldn't have been provoked to the point of doing this to me." Rachel looked even colder upon hearing what everyone had said. How could she not understand Amber's purpose in doing this? She simply wanted to drive her away from the Burton Residence, and Sue, who happened to have the same idea in mind, played along with her.

The two women clicked instantly as they took advantage of each other. Nonetheless, how could Rachel let herself be made a scapegoat? She took out

the pen and paper that she had brought with her in her handbag and wrote, 'I'd like to request to have the surveillance videos checked to prove my innocence.'

However, Amber didn't get nervous at all; instead, she was emboldened by Sue's support. "I really won't blame you, Rachel. Just admit it; even if you have the surveillance videos checked, you'll only get humiliated even further." Just then, Mrs. Duncan chimed in, "The surveillance camera is broken, Madam."

Sue glanced at Mrs. Duncan and nodded. She lied through her teeth, "That's right. It has been broken for several days, and the repairman will be coming to fix it tomorrow." All of a sudden, Rachel wanted to laugh; this was clearly the crappiest set-up. These women were from wealthy and distinguished families.

Crafty as they were, they couldn't have possibly been unable to tell what actually happened, yet they deliberately ignored the truth. They probably had the surveillance cameras switched off in advance, which was why they didn't have anything to fear. It wasn't that Amber had succeeded in setting her up; it was just that everyone here never accepted her.

To them, it didn't matter whether she was right or wrong. All that mattered was that only Amber was worthy of Justin, and she—a mute—was not! Rachel initially thought that Amber was the only person behind this set-up, but she didn't expect that everyone in the Burton Residence would gang up with her sister and target her. *Perhaps this has been premeditated?*

she thought to herself. As it turned out, Rachel was right. Sue took advantage of the situation and demanded, "Now that you've done something so wrong, it is useless no matter how you explain it.

You must apologize to Amber!" Rachel's hands clenched into fists at her sides. After all, an apology would be an admission of wrongdoing in a different form. Right now, she was enduring everyone's scornful and contemptuous gazes like a universally condemned vicious woman.

She took a deep breath, looked at everyone in a dignified manner, and wrote down her stance. 'Why should I apologize for something that I didn't do?'