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Chapter 112: Domineering Response

The marriage certificate—which bears the government’s seal—contained the names of Timothy Barker and Samantha Larsson, the bridegroom and bride respectively.

The marriage certificate was effective proof of their marriage.

Everyone was shocked, and Samantha, doubly so.

She looked at the marriage certificate on the big screen and her black pupils continued to shrink even more. When she got married, she never went to any government department and merely signed a document. As a result, she never saw her marriage certificate with Timothy.

She originally thought that there would not be a marriage certificate at all since Timothy hated her so much. It was therefore a surprise that they ended up having one.

Mr. Cheadle’s face became extremely ugly but he continued to make a last-ditch effort. “Don’t believe them, all of you! I’m Samantha’s newly married husband. This marriage certificate has to be a forgery too!”

Timothy’s dark gaze fell lazily on Mr. Cheadle. That faint glance alone scared Mr. Cheadle into having his hair stand on end. He then unconsciously retreated a couple of steps back.

That man was too dangerous!

“Lies can never be true. And the truth can never be a lie!” Timothy said this sentence slowly, and then looked at the reporters. “You’re welcome to check the government records and verify the certificate’s authenticity! Then you’ll know who Samantha’s real husband is!”

Mr. Cheadle was immediately lost for words.

He initially thought that Timothy might be just as fake as him. After all, the person who hired him stated that Samantha’s husband was someone that could not come to the public eye, and therefore could not have been Timothy. As long as he could be more convincing, Timothy’s statements would not be able to hold water either.

Unfortunately, Timothy’s words were the clearest indication that he and Samantha were a rightful couple who have received the marriage certificate!

Mr. Cheadle's face turned red and he was unable to squeeze another word out.

The reporters inside the conference room were all experienced individuals, so once they quickly digested the news, eagerness started pumping in their veins and they began to ask questions.

"Mr. Barker, did you know that Ms. Larsson went out and got involved with different men after your marriage?"

"Mr. Barker, you broke off the marriage publicly two years ago. Why did you marry Ms. Larsson now? Was it true that news about you spending the night with her, making her force you into marrying her?"

"Mr. Barker, you married Ms. Larsson but kept it under wraps. Are you unhappy with this marriage?"

"Mr. Barker, what do you think of the mess in Ms. Larsson's private life before and after marriage?"

At that moment, the reporters' questions were getting sharper and more direct. They did not seem to mind whether or not they would offend Timothy. After all, every single word that Timothy said was of great importance, especially when it involved such a huge issue.

One could say that such news would definitely hog the headlines.

There were no reasons why they should not ask more questions if they were able to!

Samantha's face paled slightly as the reporters started firing away.

Although she did not know why Timothy came to the rescue, she knew very well that the topic of other men was Timothy's trigger.

His anger stemmed from repeatedly misunderstanding that there was something going on between her and other men. If Timothy became angry in public right then and there, she could not imagine what kind of result would happen!

Samantha wanted to stay calm, but the reality was that her body trembled uncontrollably. Little by little, her hands and feet started to turn cold too.

Timothy sensed the change in Samantha's body. He glanced at her from the side and saw her still trying to maintain a calm expression. Even so, he could clearly see a near-imperceptible fear and fragility in her eyes.

His heart tensed up suddenly, as if someone had delivered a strong blow to him.

The fearless Samantha who disregarded her own life in the past and rushed out to block the gunshot seemed to have developed a sense of fear when she was beside him.

Did she put on too good an act before, or was he unable to see her true emotions because he always viewed her with bias?

Timothy's big palm could not help but squeeze Samantha's hand, trying to transmit his warmth over to her.

His movements caused Samantha to snap back to her senses. She unconsciously looked at him and met those bottomless eyes of his.

Ever since they got married, Timothy's eyes were cold, derisive, angry, and hateful. That was the first time that he looked at her with such gentle eyes.

It was as if he was saying silently to her: 'Don't be afraid. I'm here.'

Samantha's long curly eyelashes trembled uncontrollably. She entered into a trance, as if she had returned to the moment where they were madly in love.

At that time, Timothy would always protect her and help her clean up her mess. It did not matter what happened to her or what trouble she caused. At that time, Rochelle teased her and said that it was quite a good deal to save such a devoted boyfriend just from giving up her life!

Seeing Timothy's silence, the reporters thought that they had been telling the truth about their marriage. Each one wanted to dig up even more information from the couple's mouths and so posed questions even more loudly.

"Mr. Barker, could you please provide a proper response!"

"Mr. Barker, are you and Ms. Larsson a fake couple? Did you come and rescue her today out of your own volition, or are there other reasons for your actions?"

"Mr. Barker, does Ms. Larsson have something against you that can be used as blackmail? Please elaborate!"

Some of the more radical reporters had no qualms jumping over the railings in front of the stage, rushing straight toward Timothy and Samantha.

Once one reporter rushed up, the other reporters were not about to let themselves look like little weaklings. The entire crowd rushed forward like a pack of hungry animals.

The scene turned chaotic instantly.

The reporters did not dare to do anything to Timothy, so they pointed the microphones and cameras at Samantha's face.

Timothy's black eyes sank and he wrapped his long arms around Samantha's slender waist. He pulled her right into his embrace to keep the microphones and cameras away from her.

He swept his gaze coldly across the crowd and the reporters felt choked all of a sudden. Their frenzied movements froze instantly and they stepped back unconsciously to avoid getting closer.

It was only then that Timothy moved his thin lips and spoke. His voice was cold, resonant, and clear. "I'll only say it once, so listen up!

"I'm the only man my wife, Samantha, has both before and after our marriage. Our marriage is a happy one, and there are no affairs or cheating!"

As soon as he finished his words, everyone exclaimed and sighed. Some of the female reporters showed looks of envy and hatred.

Those words called into question all the scandals in a very direct manner. It was also very domineering and incredibly sweet!

It was the real-life version of 'domineering CEO falls in love with the girl next door'!

Everyone knew that there was nothing more they could dig out from Timothy and felt reluctant to just things end like that. A reporter turned to Samantha, who had not yet to snap back to her senses, and asked unexpectedly, "Ms.. Larsson, is Mr. Barker's response true?"

Chapter 113: Mutual Love and Affection

"What?"

Samantha's expression was still blank. She was much, much more shocked at everything that happened compared to the group of reporters. At that moment, her mind was blank and she could not move at all.

The reporter's eyes brightened, but just as he was thinking of following up on his earlier question, Timothy held Samantha tightly before him, hooking his slender fingers over her delicate chin. Her head was tilted up as he lowered his.

His thin lips covered Samantha's scarlet lips and he forcefully gave her a deep kiss, as if there was no one else beside her.

Screams and gasps abounded.

Samantha's eyes widened and her eyes were filled only with Timothy's handsome face. She did not know whether she was cooperating with the acting or whether it was her instinct, but she threw her hands around Timothy's neck and closed her eyes slowly.

She kissed him back in the same manner, as if there was no one else around her.

Despite the huge crowd in the conference room, Timothy and Samantha seemed to have entered a world of their own, with anything out of that world having little to no effect on them.

No one would suspect that the relationship between them was fake.

It was clearly a show of mutual love and affection!

Samantha's head started spinning after the kiss. She was out of breath and her legs were still a little limp. Fortunately, Timothy still had his arms around her waist, stopping her from feeling unstable.

The passionate kiss had replaced the need for an answer. Timothy has always disliked such scenes, so he lifted his eyelids and cast a glance at Ronald, who had been standing on one side of the stage.

Ronald understood at once and immediately made a gesture. A group of well-trained black-clad bodyguards entered the conference room and forcefully separated the group of reporters.

Timothy's thin lips were practically pressed against Samantha's ear when he whispered, "Let's go."

After that, he took large strides and walked out while still maintaining his grip around Samantha to protect her.

When the reporters decided to continue chasing after them, Ronald stepped onto the stage, picked up the microphone, and cleared his throat before saying, "My dear friends, may I have your attention! I have something to say on Mr. Barker's behalf!"

'On Mr. Barker's behalf!'

Those four words prompted everyone to freeze.

Was there still some inside information to be revealed?

The reporters' all moved simultaneously, pointing their microphones and cameras at Ronald onstage. Each and every one of them was looking forward to it!

Ronald curled his lips and spoke with grandeur, "As for all those official accounts or cybertroopers spreading rumors on the internet regarding Ms. Larsson—or rather, Mrs. Barker, you have until the end of the press conference to apologize to her and delete whatever blogs or postings you made. Otherwise, the Barker Group's lawyers will be having a one-on-one talk with you regarding some legal issues!"

After a half-minute pause, he waited until the reporters digested that sentence before smiling and opening his mouth again, "As for the reporters present here, news reports are to disseminate truth, not for creating rumors and fostering unhealthy trends. If any of the media companies you represent are found to have fabricated facts and false reports, the Barker Group's lawyers will have a nice talk with you and the organizations you represent!"

The reporters looked at each other in silence.

They thought Ronald was going to reveal something juicy, but in the end, he was simply warning them. In fact, he wanted to use them as the media to warn those who spread rumors on the internet...

The epitome of blood-sucking capitalists alright! That double blow killed two birds with one stone and none of them were able to get any benefit out of it!

Even so, no one dared to say a word.

Everyone knew that the Barker Group's lawyers were sure-win people.

There was no lawsuit they could not win and their appearance alone made the case a sure-win.

The reporter's media organizations could not afford to offend the Barkers and neither could the reporters.

One had no choice but to bow in the face of power!

The reporters forced a smile and could only nod their heads in response. "We will, we will!"

Ronald scanned the crowd and nodded in satisfaction. "Today's press conference has come to a close. Thank you, everyone!"

The reporters were practically crying. The only person who had come out of it unscathed was Samantha. The reporters had all attended the press conference in vain and the headlines that they already had in hand were all gone...

Upon seeing that, Mr. Cheadle squatted down and tried to sneak away in the chaos. Unfortunately, he had only taken two steps when the back of his collar was grabbed all of a sudden.

Startled, he looked back and saw the mild-mannered Ronald grabbing him. In his anger, he scolded, "What are you doing? Let me go!"

Mr. Cheadle struggled hard and even tried to attack Ronald!

Ronald sneered and did not bother to say anything at all. He kicked Mr. Cheadle's knees from behind and the latter knelt directly on the ground while letting out a painful cry. "Aghh—"

His eyes were filled with shock, for he never expected Ronald to have such a character. Ronald might look like a weak little bookworm, but the kick was so painful that Mr. Cheadle started to sweat.

As expected, the people around Timothy should not be underestimated!

A black-clothed bodyguard then came and Ronald handed Mr. Cheadle over. After Ronald dusted his hands, he straightened his clothes, and lifted his feet to leave.

All of a sudden, Ronald felt a grip on his thigh.

He stopped and looked down.

It was Simon who was latching on with a shocked and mind-boggled expression. He trembled and asked, "Mr. Crawford, is Samantha really married to Mr. Barker??"

He could not believe it at all!

He clearly married Samantha off to a crippled rich man that did not show their face in public. How could that person have been Timothy?

Was he dreaming?

Ronald frowned and looked at him in utter disgust.

What Simon and Cynthia did that day had disgusted Ronald thoroughly. It also made him pity Samantha very much for having such parents. Had Samantha not been strong enough, she would have been wrecked.

He opened his mouth to speak, but rather than answering Simon's question, he coldly spat out two words, "You fool."

Simon had a chance to genuinely become Timothy's father-in-law, but after all that had happened, that chance would never come!

Sinners never win!

Ronald kicked him unceremoniously and walked out!

...

At the conference room.

When Alan rushed over and saw Samantha's figure coming out, he did a quick look at her and felt relieved after seeing that she was not injured.

He originally intended to show up at the scene that day, but since he was one of the men rumored to have an affair with her, he would cause even more misunderstanding if he arrived at the scene and was seen by the reporters. As a result, he stayed in the hotel to watch the live broadcast.

However, the live broadcast got stuck midway and he bounced out of the feed. When he tried entering again, the screen was black and nothing could be seen.

He was very much worried that Samantha would be besieged by the crowd of reporters and her own parents as well. Fearing that something happened to her, he did not think twice and immediately drove out, slamming the gas pedal all the way. He even ran through several red lights just to rush over.

Thank goodness she was alright!

Alan had just managed to breathe a sigh of relief when he subconsciously lifted his feet and walked toward Samantha.

Chapter 114: You Personally Begged Me!

After taking only two steps, Alan saw the man guarding Samantha. His vision focused and his footsteps had unknowingly stopped.

He had not seen Timothy's arrival because the live broadcast was stuck earlier. Therefore, it was Timothy who had managed to deal with the group of reporters and brought Samantha out safely...

It was unknown whether Timothy had sensed Alan's gaze, but his dark eyes glanced at Alan, who then noticed that the arm around Samantha's waist had tightened slightly.

That act was both a silent warning and a display of exclusive possession.

With a group of black bodyguards escorting Timothy and Samantha, the two of them walked out of the hotel quickly, got in the car, and left.

Alan stood at the door and watched as the car left.

A reporter walked out of the conference room while chatting with their comrade, "I really didn't expect Samantha to marry Mr. Barker again. I still haven't recovered from the shock of finding out."

"You don't say. The incident where he broke off the marriage in public two years ago is still fresh in our minds. At the time, there was a vote on which rich couple was the most unlikely to get together again, and everyone voted Mr. Barker and Ms. Larsson for first place. Now that I think about it, I feel like I'm dreaming."

'Marry.'

Alan's fists clenched unconsciously as his arms hung on either side of his body.

Samantha was actually married?

That man was her husband?

...

Samantha was still in a dazed and hazy state of mind even after the car had driven off for some time. She merely stared forward blankly.

Beside her, Timothy glanced at her side profile and curled his lips up slightly. He did not say a single word and allowed her time to digest everything.

The car drove out of the bustling urban streets and onto the highway, where the road conditions were much less congested.

Samantha finally recovered from the series of shocking events. She turned her face to the side and looked at Timothy in the driver's seat.

Her gaze shifted from his sexy and graceful jawline to his thick eyebrows, tall nose bridge, and thin lips. She stared at him for about half a minute just to confirm that the man in front of her really was Timothy.

If he was not at the wheel, she would have wanted to reach out and pull on his face just to see if anyone else was wearing a 'Timothy' mask.

Why would he come to help her?

Timothy seemed to have guessed what she was thinking and uttered somewhat teasingly, "Have you sufficiently confirmed my identity?"

That voice belonged to Timothy alright.

Samantha pursed her lips gently and hesitated for a few seconds before saying in a low voice, "Timothy... Why did you come here and help me today?"

Timothy had helped her in the past, for example when she was ill or when she was at the police station, but the impression he gave her was that he always did so for Old Madam Barker.

Was Old Madam Barker the reason he helped her yet again?

Timothy had sufficient means to suppress everything and was more than capable of doing so. Nevertheless, there was no necessity for him to take into account her reputation, much less disclose their marriage publicly.

As Samantha thought about that, her heartbeat quickened uncontrollably. Her eyes stared at Timothy's face without blinking and she was determined not to let any of his expressions slip past her.

She was both anxious and eager.

Timothy's fingers tightened unconsciously on the steering wheel. He curled the corners of his lips and replied in an ambiguous manner, "I can't just stand and watch after you begged me like that. After all, I'm your husband."

That answer had gone over and beyond Samantha's expectations.

She stared at him in disbelief and blinked several times before she could find her voice. "Me? Begging you?"

After a brief pause, she could not help but raise her voice a little. "When did I beg you?"

No such memory was present in her mind!

Timothy did not seem at all surprised that she would say that. The corners of his lips curled even more, but rather than answering directly, he said, "Think about it yourself."

'He expects me to think?'

Samantha's delicate brows frowned uncontrollably as she tried to remember everything that happened in the past few days.

Each and every frame passed through her mind.

The incident first started two days ago. It was the same day she went to Rochelle's apartment. After that, she drank with Rochelle in the apartment, got drunk, and slept until the next day.

She then gave her parents a phone call, went out to collect all kinds of evidence, and ended with the press conference that day.

She had not called Timothy nor contacted him at all!

Could Old Madam Barker have known about it and therefore called Timothy to ask him for help on Samantha's behalf?

The more she thought about it, the likelier that possibility seemed to be.

Samantha unknowingly uttered what was in her mind.

On hearing that, Timothy raised his eyebrows, tapped his gracefully slender fingers on the steering wheel, and spoke up. "It has nothing to do with Grandma. It was all you. You're the one who personally begged me!"

He emphasized the last few words.

Samantha became confused once more.

Was she the one who personally begged Timothy?

She could not help but scratch her head while her eyebrows were knit in a frown. She began to wonder if she had amnesia or whether her memory had been taken away because she really did not have the slightest impression of what happened!

The car had reached the villa and parked at the entrance.

Timothy unfastened his seat belt and glanced at Samantha from the side. Seeing her still in deep thought, a look of glee flashed across his eyes and he leaned toward her.

With his handsome face approaching so suddenly, Samantha immediately returned to her senses as she held her breath a little.

What was he going to do? Did he want to kiss her again?

The next second, Timothy's hand landed on the seat belt buckle and unlocked the seatbelt for her with a slap.

A bashful flush appeared immediately on Samantha's cheeks.

Seeing Timothy's teasing smile, her face turned red and she unconsciously raised her hand to push him away. Then, she opened the door and got out of the car.

The man's low and deep chuckle was heard from behind her.

Timothy got out of the car and came over to her. When he walked to her side, he said to her, "Think about it again."

...

Timothy and Samantha walked into the villa one after another.

On seeing their return, Old Madam Barker came over right away to greet them. She directly walked past Timothy and rushed up to hug Samantha.

Her voice contained distress and pity. "You'll be okay, Sammy. You still have me and Tim. We both love you!"

Aunt Julia also interjected from the side, "Mrs. Barker, I love you very much too!"

Samantha's body trembled uncontrollably, and there was a burst of astringence in her nose and eye sockets.

She did not cry at all when facing her parents' vicious remarks and those aggressive reporters. However, a simple sentence from Old Madam Barker and Aunt Julia had sent her bursting into tears.

Samantha turned out to have a vulnerable side too.

It turned out that there were still people who worried about her and loved her...

Samantha's eyes turned slightly red and tears began to well up in her eye sockets.

Chapter 115: All Fired Up

Everyone longed to be loved and Samantha was no different.

She was not asking for the love of a thousand people. All she wanted was for at least one person to stand on her side and fight against the evils of the world.

She could not help but stretch out her hand and return Old Madam Barker's hug firmly.

"Sob! I want a hug too!" Aunt Julia also stepped forward, opened her arms, and hugged the two women.

The three of them seemed quite childish but their acts were just so comforting and warm.

Timothy inadvertently directed his gaze to Samantha's face, watching as her tears streamed down the corner of her eyes and slid down her cheeks.

He raised his hand unconsciously.

By the time he had realized what he did, his fingertips had already touched Samantha's eyes and wiped her tears away.

Samantha was stunned and so was Timothy.

Her teary eyes were exceptionally glimmering and shiny. Samantha looked at Timothy and his figure was reflected clearly in her eyes.

Timothy's fingers stiffened slightly and he retracted them quickly before spitting out harshly, "Exceedingly ugly!"

Everyone was silent.

After that, he stretched his legs and headed upstairs without taking a second look at Samantha.

Samantha blinked a couple of times.

He could have just looked away if he thought that she looked ugly when she cried. It was a needless attack coming from him!

Old Madam Barker could not bear to hear such a thing and yelled at him from behind, "You little brat. Can't you speak nicely? If you have nothing nice to say, don't say anything at all!"

Timothy disappeared up the flight of stairs without turning around.

Old Madam Barker scoffed angrily and complained to Aunt Julia, "Just look at him. I thought he could finally act like a decent husband from his actions today, but it turned out that his good character lasted only for a short time!"

Aunt Julia nodded her head in acknowledgment. "What a waste of his good looks! He really shouldn't talk because he ruins the atmosphere whenever he opens his mouth!"

In such a sympathizing situation, he ought to come over and hug Samantha as well as comfort her. Only then could their feelings improve by leaps and bounds.

Samantha was amused when she listened to their complaints.

Great minds think alike it seems. She shared the same opinion that Timothy—as handsome as he was—would have been better off keeping his mouth shut!

“Forget about him. Just ignore what he said!” Old Madam Barker wiped away the tears on Samantha’s face and said kindly, “Sammy, go back to the room, wash your face, and get some rest. Julia and I will cook a delicious meal for you to welcome you into your new life!”

‘New life.’

She had to continue moving forward and go on with life.

Looking back and wallowing in past suffering was uncondusive for a good life. It would be better to erase all those memories and keep moving forward.

“Thank you, Grandma. Thank you, Aunt Julia!”

...

Seeing Samantha heading upstairs, Aunt Julia was about to turn around and head to the kitchen when the old lady pulled her over.

Aunt Julia was confused. “What’s wrong, Old Madam?”

Old Madam Barker squinted and said mysteriously, “Didn’t I tell you to bring that thing back here when we went to the old mansion?”

For a moment, Aunt Julia could not remember what that thing was and ended up at a loss. It soon occurred to her what it was and her eyes widened suddenly. She unconsciously lowered her voice and said, “Old Madam, are you talking about that medicine that has been passed down for generations?”

“That’s exactly it!” Old Madam Barker’s smile turned cryptic. “Find it, and add it to all the dishes we cook tonight!”

Aunt Julia covered her lips. “A little bit of this medicine is enough to fire people up and get them all excited. It’s very...strong. Eating too much at one go will make the body too heaty, and that would be bad for health!”

“You dummy. That heat is exactly the effect we’re looking for!” Old Madam Barker glanced upstairs and sighed. “That brat can never live up to my expectations, so as his grandma, the only thing I can do is add a little spark for them!”

Since Timothy would never speak, Old Madam Barker might as well just say it and do it.

That was also the best way to foster his husband-wife relationship with Samantha!

Aunt Julia understood. "I shall follow your orders then, Old Madam!"

...

Samantha returned to the room, washed her face, then changed into some comfortable home clothes before sitting on the sofa.

Once her body started to relax, she became a little sleepy and drowsy.

Never before had the villa given her a sense of home. She maintained a constantly detached state of mind and never really allowed herself to relax there, but for the first time ever, she felt a sense of belonging there.

After falling asleep on the sofa for some time, Aunt Julia went upstairs and told her to go down for dinner.

Samantha opened her eyes, tied her hair neatly, then tidied her clothes before getting up and going downstairs.

When she entered the dining hall, Timothy and Old Madam Barker were already sitting there, and she made a conscious decision to sit beside Timothy.

Old Madam Barker smiled and said, "Bring out the dishes, Julia."

"Okay!"

Julia brought out the dishes one by one, each of which was steaming hot and deliciously fragrant.

"Go ahead and tuck in, Sammy. Make sure to eat up!" Old Madam Barker instructed, then glanced at Timothy and said, "You made some contributions today as well, so eat more too!"

"Alright," Samantha answered, then picked up some food using her cutlery. Then, she said in a very flattering expression, "It's delicious!"

Timothy also held up his cutlery. Although his expression was as insipid as ever, he still uttered two patronizing words, "It's delicious."

Old Madam Barker was not expecting to hear anything nice from that mouth of his, but she nagged him again, "This is a gesture from Julia and me, so you two have to finish it all!"

Seeing the old lady not having any cutlery in hand, Samantha could not help but ask, "Grandma, aren't you going to eat too?"

“Ah...me? Well, I’m going vegetarian today!” Old Madam Barker said very naturally. “Julia has already prepared some vegetarian dishes for me. I’ll eat a little later.”

Samantha knew that the old lady had the habit of being vegetarian and so nodded without suspecting a thing.

After dinner, Timothy had company matters to deal with and went to the study. Meanwhile, Samantha took a walk with the old lady before returning to the room.

Samantha did not know if the room was a little stuffy or whether she was just feeling a little hot after the walk, but she took some clothes and went to the bathroom to take a bath.

After taking a shower, she happened to see Timothy returning to the room.

He had probably returned after taking a shower in the guest room because his hair was slightly damp. A few drops of water dripped from the tips of his hair and slid down his body’s contours before being absorbed by his clothes.

He wore a simple T-shirt that revealed his muscles slightly as he moved about. Simply looking at them could easily cause a person to be lost in thoughts...

Samantha did not specifically look at him and merely glanced over out of habit. She had already cooled down after coming out of the bath, but she somehow felt her body heat up again!

She looked away hurriedly and gulped a couple of times.

‘What’s going on with me? Am I sick? Do I have a fever?’

She exhaled heavily, and—in order to divert her attention—opened her mouth suddenly and asked, “Timothy, when you said that I begged you...”

Samantha bit her lower lip lightly, seemingly having some difficulty speaking. Nevertheless, she eventually spat out each and every word, “...could I have called you when I was drunk?”

Chapter 116: In Drunkenness Lies Truth

Samantha had given it some thought and felt that it was the only possibility.

She had really drunk too much that night and an entire chunk of her memory had been wiped off. She had been under the impression that she fell asleep after getting drunk.

Timothy was wiping her hair with a towel when he raised his gaze and glanced at her. He then said, "You finally remembered."

Although she had been mentally prepared for it, her emotions crumbled a little at that moment and she could not help but feel a little flustered.

Did she say something she ought not to after getting drunk and losing control over herself?

Did she, for example, tell him her heart's truest feelings toward him or something of the likes?

Samantha's expression changed dramatically once those thoughts appeared in her mind. She tried her best to control her faltering voice and maintained a calm tone while asking, "Then, did I... Other than begging you for help... Did I say anything else?"

Timothy's wiping motion paused and he threw the towel casually onto the sofa armrest. He curled his lips with intrigue and responded without answering the question, "Do you want to know?"

His expression made Samantha even more nervous.

She pursed her lips and said softly, "Well, tell me."

Even though that was the death of her, she still wanted to get a clear idea of why and how she came to face her demise!

Timothy's handsome face sank all of a sudden and his thin lips opened slightly. His tone was cold and he said each word clearly, "You called me... a b*stard!"

Samantha was silent.

"And a scumbag!"

Samantha felt at a loss.

Timothy took one more step toward her and narrowed his dark eyes. "You said I didn't deserve to be your husband!"

Samantha unconsciously took a step back and gulped.

It turned out that she still failed to resist Rochelle's instigation after getting drunk and really ended up calling Timothy to scold him...

The fact that she took the initiative to mention it was nothing more than digging her own grave!

Samantha forced a wry smile and explained, "I... I got drunk. All that was nonsense. Can't you be the bigger man and not take it to heart?"

"Heh." Timothy then retorted coldly, "All I know is that there's truth in drunkenness!"

Samantha was extremely upset at why she was not able to hold it back then...

She licked her dry lips and struggled to decide whether or not to continue justifying it or admit to her mistake. She ended up choosing the latter.

"I... I'm sorry." She scratched her hair awkwardly. "I really did drink too much."

'Sorry...'

The glow in Timothy's eyes intensified.

Samantha was all things arrogant and unreasonable, but she never said sorry to him.

Her apology was not something he wanted.

Seeing Timothy turning quiet all of a sudden, Samantha raised her eyes furtively and glanced at him. His expression was a little gloomy and unclear, and he did not look like he was happy.

Was he still upset even though she had apologized? Timothy had become really hard to please.

During their past romance, Timothy was the easiest to coax. A soft little sentence, a coy little action, or even a kiss on the lips would get him to accede to her again.

She thought for a while and opened her mouth to say, "Maybe you can scold me, Timothy? Just say whatever you want to me until you feel better?"

Timothy returned to his senses and looked at her with disdain. "Do you think I'm like you?"

Samantha could not help but chide to herself, 'Even though you never scolded me like that before, your ironic and mocking comments in the past were much more hurtful than the things I said when scolding you.'

Unfortunately, she was the one in the wrong. There was nothing else she could do other than smile, put her hands together, and said to him, "In that case, I'd have to thank the great Mr. Barker for his magnanimity in forgiving a little girl like me!"

After a few seconds' pause, she remembered that she had not gotten to the main question yet and tentatively asked again, "Timothy, I... didn't say anything else, did I?"

Timothy finally kept her in suspense and asked, "What else do you think you said?"

A slight crack appeared on Samantha's face.

He was implying that she said other things in addition to cursing and begging!

She wondered whether she had turned into a talkative blabbermouth after getting drunk. She used to be a good girl who never went off the rails after getting drunk and fell asleep instead. How was it even logical that she had spoken so much at the time?

Samantha's expression turned bitter and her delicate facial features were all scrunched up. "I really can't remember, Timothy. What else did I say to you exactly?"

If she really did say something embarrassing, she might probably have to dig a hole and bury herself in it.

Timothy's black pupils stared fixedly at her. His long legs stretched forward and he reduced the distance between them. Then, he leaned over slightly and moved his thin lips to her ears. In a low and sonorous voice, he said, "You said that as long as I am willing to help you, you'll..."

Having said that, he dragged out the final syllable and paused deliberately.

Samantha gulped several times and asked nervously, "I'll what?"

"You'll...unconditionally accept three of my conditions in exchange!"

For a moment, Samantha did not know whether she should breathe a sigh of relief or continue feeling anxious.

At the very least, she was fortunate not to have confessed to him or anything of the sort, although agreeing to Timothy's three conditions was hardly any better!

What if the first thing Timothy asked was for her to disappear on her own? Was she supposed to take her own life then?

What if he wanted her to commit a crime so she would be jailed for the rest of her life?

Even if she was drunk, she could not have agreed to something that would forfeit her own liberty, right? Could Timothy be hoodwinking her?

Timothy seemed to have seen through her thoughts. His cold and indifferent voice resonated through the air and he said, "Don't worry. You won't be asked to commit any crimes. Can't expect you to do that with your IQ."

Samantha was speechless.

It would do Timothy well not to speak up because doing so would make a person feel like smacking him.

She had been so lovestruck back then that his handsomeness clouded her judgment. Were that not the case, she would not have fallen for him despite his handsomeness, considering how volatile and annoying he was when he spoke!

Samantha had no memory of those three conditions and would not be able to deny anything even if he claimed that she had agreed to three thousand conditions.

After all, he really did rescue her from dire straits that day.

If Timothy had not shown up, things would have either ended very badly for her, or she would have been dragged down along with her worthless parents.

There was no such thing as a free lunch and she understood the law of equivalent exchange.

Samantha raised her head and Timothy's handsome face was reflected in her dark eyes. Her lips moved slightly and she said, "I won't go back on my word since I've already agreed to it. What do you want me to do? Tell me, and if it's something I'm able to do, I give you my word, I'll do it!"

Timothy lowered his gaze and looked at Samantha, whose figure was reflected in his eyes as well. A glimmer streaked across his eyes and he started to speak, "The first condition is...."

Chapter 117: Honesty

"Since our marriage has been made public, you're now rightfully and legitimately Mrs. Barker. You represent not only yourself, but also the reputation of the Barkers and the Barker Group.

"Therefore, it is important to get rid of any other men out there!"

Samantha, though speechless, agreed with his first sentence. Even if making it public was not what they wanted, Timothy had already done so to help her. As a result, she most certainly knew what was good for herself and would therefore pay special attention to her words and deeds before getting a divorce.

As for the following sentence...

Timothy had already come forward and said, 'I'm the only man my wife, Samantha, has both before and after our marriage. Our marriage is a happy one, and there are no

affairs or cheating!' However, could it be that deep down he still did not truly believe her?

Samantha had written everything off as hopeless after the way he hurt her and no longer cared whether or not he believed her.

After what happened earlier that day, however, she no longer wanted to be misunderstood again for whatever reason.

Old Madam Barker treated her with such sincerity and Aunt Julia cared for her a lot too. Timothy, on the other hand, had at least stepped up to help her that day, and the villa finally felt a little like home. Samantha wondered if it was okay for her to want more.

"Timothy, whatever clarification I made at the press conference today is true. There really isn't anything going on between me and those men on the name!"

Before she could finish her sentence, Timothy interrupted her outright and said bluntly, "I'm talking about Dr. Sherwood."

Samantha was stunned for a moment and did not know whether to get angry or laugh out loud.

Having misunderstood her and Alan some time ago, he did not believe her explanation since that time and continued not to believe her ever since then.

However, she was overly upset and angry last time because of her sadness, hence the countless harsh and wrathful remarks she spat out.

Samantha thought to herself for a moment in order to try and structure her sentences. She then said calmly, "Timothy, Dr. Sherwood and I are just friends, and at most our relationship can be described as being slightly special. What I mean by that is...he's my savior. I suffered a serious injury when I was abroad and he was the attending doctor who treated me. He's also the one who helped with Corey's condition and asked the little saint for help on my behalf. That was why the little saint was willing to treat Corey. That's all there is to our relationship."

She raised her eyes to look at Timothy and saw no expression on the man's handsome face. His dark eyes seemed distant and there was no discernible emotion from then.

Samantha bit her lower lip slightly and said, "Everything I said is the truth. Whether you believe it or not is up to you."

The bedroom fell silent all of a sudden after her sentence ended.

The hopeful glow in Samantha's eyes faded little by little as time passed.

Just as she thought Timothy would not speak again, he asked out of the blue, "In that case, you said before that the man you like isn't Dr. Sherwood. Who is it then?"

Samantha was a little surprised and speechless. She did not expect that the question had been playing in Timothy's mind all along.

It was not that surprising because a man like Timothy would not allow any potential affairs to exist, whatever the reasons for their existence might be.

Samantha curled his lips and answered honestly, "That man doesn't exist, Timothy. I don't have a man that I like. I only came up with that excuse to try and convince Grandma against playing matchmaker for us."

Had she known that it would cause such a serious misunderstanding, she would not have said that in the first place.

"You don't like any man at all?" Timothy muttered those words while a convoluted amalgamation of emotion filled his eyes. He looked at her and asked solemnly again, "Is there really...no one that you like?"

In order to completely eliminate that misunderstanding, Samantha raised her hand without thinking and swore, "I swear. I don't like anyone. No one, none!"

'No one...'

In that case, Samantha definitively had no feelings for him two years ago.

The corners of Timothy's lips twitched but he could not force out a smile.

After Samantha finished speaking, she looked at Timothy's face again, thinking that he would believe her at long last.

However, the expression on his face left her stunned. He did not look even half as happy, but seemed to give off a sense of sadness instead.

She blinked instinctively. Could it have been her illusion?

Samantha wanted to get a clearer look, but Timothy did not give her that chance as he had already turned around and strode out of the room.

She could only look blankly at his rear figure.

The atmosphere had clearly been quite good earlier. She even thought about how good it would be if their relationship became more cordial and therefore allowed them to get along better.

He was indecipherable in the past and even more indecipherable then.

Samantha stood there for a minute and felt her body getting hotter. She came to her senses at once and walked quickly to the window, opening it so the breeze could be let in.

After drying her hair and doing her skincare routine, Samantha walked to the side of the bed, pulled the blanket, and lay down to prepare for a good night's sleep.

Barely seconds after closing her eyes, she heard footsteps at the door and subconsciously looked over to see Timothy's return.

He was still expressionless as he walked straight and went up to the other side of the bed. He then lifted the blanket and laid down.

The light was switched off with a snap and the bedroom suddenly became dark.

Sensing that he was in a bad mood, Samantha did not dare to say anything since it was not as though they had never slept together. The bed was huge anyway, and there was no problem for them to keep to themselves and sleep.

Samantha closed her eyes.

She was very tired, very sleepy, and wanted nothing more than to sleep. Unfortunately, her body was unusually hot, causing her to toss and turn over and over again.

Although she moved in a very delicate manner, she seemed to have bothered Timothy because he soon asked, "Are you going to sleep or not?" The darkness seemed to amplify his hoarse and resonant voice.

Samantha immediately did not dare to move and said hurriedly, "Yes, I'll sleep. I'm sleeping! I'm going to sleep!"

After a pause, she explained weakly, "It's just... It feels a little hot."

The man was silent for a few seconds before opening his mouth. "It is."

"Ah, so you think so too? Then I'll— Aghh—"

In the darkness, Timothy got up suddenly and grasped Samantha's wrist. The next second, his body covered hers and he planted a kiss on her lips.

The rest of Samantha's sentence, which was '...turn on the air conditioner', had been completely cut off by Timothy.

His kiss was very strong and he had started to venture further while Samantha was still confused. His big palm had slipped in the hem of her clothes...

“Mmgghh...”

Samantha struggled. Did Timothy misunderstand her? When she mentioned being hot, it was purely to describe the temperature, not some kind of ambiguous hint!

In fact, she had slept with Timothy in the same bed before, but Timothy had always viewed her with disdain and never went so far as to become so...ravenous!

Could it be...

Samantha thought of something all of a sudden.

It had to be the dinner earlier!

No wonder Old Madam Barker did not take a bite when they were eating and insisted that they finish the food! There was a reason behind that action.

As soon as that thought occurred to Samantha, she pushed Timothy forcefully away and panted slightly as soon as she managed to distance herself from him a little.. She then said quickly, “Timothy, you’re only like this because Grandma probably put something in our food. Snap out of it!”

Chapter 118: Becoming Gentle

Samantha’s words failed to nip Timothy’s intentions in the bud, and to make it worse, he even grabbed her wrists and locked them above her head.

She could feel his body getting hotter and hotter even when there were clothes in between them. Even the breath that he exhaled was searing hot.

Her heartbeat sped up uncontrollably and she struggled hard, but all her efforts failed to snap Timothy out of it. On the contrary, her body heat increased in proportion to her struggles, making her feel as though her entire being was about to burn.

If things went on like that, Samantha knew that there was a possibility she might not even be able to control herself, much less Timothy...

She gulped a couple of times and said without thinking, “Timothy, I know you’re uncomfortable right now, so if you really need it, maybe you can go—”

Timothy seemed to have predicted what she was going to say and pinched her chin all of a sudden before she could say it.

The next second, he kissed her forcefully with a passion so intense that it seemed able to swallow everything.

It was more like punishment rather than a kiss!

Samantha could not help but groan. As soon as his ruthlessness acted up, his brutality from the other night appeared out of nowhere in her mind, draining her face of color instantly.

Her pupils contracted uncontrollably and her body trembled spontaneously.

Timothy noticed the change in her mood and his movements stiffened for a moment. Then, he raised his head slightly and looked into Samantha's black eyes.

There was an obvious look of fear and resistance.

Samantha did not want to display such a fragile side of her in front of Timothy, but fear was as difficult to hide as cold. She could only bite her lip and look away.

She was powerless to stop Timothy's actions.

He moved his fingers after about half a minute, forcing her to turn her face and look at him. He then lowered his head once more and kissed her lips.

Samantha's heart sank. She knew that he would do what he wanted without caring how she felt...

However, it did not take long for her to feel that something was amiss.

Timothy's kiss was not as rough as before, nor was it purely to vent himself as it was the last round. His kiss had become very delicate and soft, as if he was treating someone extremely precious to him.

That kiss was strange yet familiar to Samantha.

Timothy was so cautious when they had their first kiss. He tried everything step by step and his movements were extremely gentle, making her dizzy and drawing her deeper into him.

Samantha's eyes widened all of a sudden and she wondered if the man on her was Timothy. Why did he suddenly become so gentle?

The moonlight shone in from outside the window and she had a clear look at Timothy's face under the dim light—it really was him.

His gentleness eased her tension and fear a little bit. Before Samantha's brain had time to process everything, she became dizzy due to the kiss. Her mind had turned blank while her vision became a blur.

Timothy eventually led her into another world, but she did not know whether it was her inability to resist her own heat or whether there was some other reason behind it.

They had a long night.

...

Early the next morning, Samantha woke up slowly according to her biological clock and strained to open her heavy eyelids. After a few seconds, she felt as if her body had been disassembled and reassembled again, for there were aches and soreness everywhere.

She frowned severely and could not help but inhale sharply.

Memories from the previous night flooded suddenly into her mind, and Samantha's cheeks turned hot all of a sudden.

She turned her face subconsciously and looked at the other side of the bed. No one was there anymore, suggesting that Timothy had already left.

Samantha finally heaved a sigh of relief. She was glad he was gone, otherwise she really did not know how else to face him.

The phone rang suddenly.

She wrapped her body with the blanket and sat up slowly, following which she reached out for the phone on the bedside table. After picking up the device, she saw that the caller ID was 'Dr. Sherwood'.

Why did he call her so early?

Although Samantha was puzzled, she nevertheless moved her fingers slightly and prepared to press the answer button.

It was then that the room door was pushed open all of a sudden and Timothy came walking in.

Samantha looked up instinctively and felt her heart skip a beat upon laying eyes on Timothy's handsome face. Her hand trembled uncontrollably and the phone fell from her hand after she failed to grasp it steadily.

The device fell to the floor with a clatter.

Samantha rushed out of bed to pick it up, but Timothy was even quicker and picked it up before she could. He glanced at the phone screen and narrowed his eyes slightly.

Samantha saw the situation and immediately knew that things were going south.

Although she had explained it very clearly yesterday, she was still confused as to whether Timothy believed her because he never gave her a straight answer.

She was afraid he might lose his temper again...

Samantha was just about to panic when Timothy handed the phone to her all of a sudden. He opened his lips and said in a monotonous manner, "Answer it."

Samantha's round eyes blinked several times in disbelief. She wondered if she had heard wrongly because she had heard him allowing her to answer it.

What was going on? Did he believe what she said the night before?

Samantha looked at him suspiciously, then slowly reached out to take the phone from him. She pressed the answer button in an equally slow manner.

"Good morning, Sammy." Alan's voice was as gentle as ever on the other end of the line.

Samantha glanced at Timothy and saw that he had not walked away. Furthermore, his expression did not seem to be unhappy and she could not figure out what was in his mind. As a result, she had no choice but to first answer Alan. "Good morning, Dr. Sherwood. What brought you to call me so early today?"

"The final plan for your brother's treatment has been prepared. I have to arrange a time to examine him with you and the attending doctor, just like before. We can commence treatment if there aren't any further problems!"

"Really?" Samantha could not help but cover her lips with her hands. Her eyes then brightened with excitement as she answered, "We'll go whenever you're free then. I'm available anytime."

"I didn't expect the final plan to be devised so soon. You must've put a lot of time and thought into it. I'm thankful to you and the little saint for all your hard work!"

Alan could not help but chuckle when he listened to Samantha's happy voice. "It's my duty to fulfill the promise I made to you."

"You were under no obligation to do so, but I'm really thankful to you and the little saint!" Samantha's tone was filled with deep gratitude.

Alan smiled. "See you later."

Samantha was still thrilled even after hanging up and she unconsciously said to Timothy beside her, "Timothy, I'm so happy that Corey will be saved! He might even be able to wake up soon!"

After speaking, she suddenly realized that they did not seem to be in the kind of relationship where she could just share her happiness like that.

Samantha licked her lips and was about to say something to remedy the situation, but Timothy merely responded in a soft voice. "Mm, that's good."

She looked at Timothy in amazement.

Was she still in dreamland? Why was Timothy so easy to talk to that day?

She did not dare to pinch Timothy, so she pinched her leg quietly and immediately frowned in pain.

She was awake...

Timothy seemed to be in a good mood that day and it seemed to be a good opportunity for Samantha. She pursed her lips before opening her mouth again and saying, "Timothy, I'd like...."

Chapter 119: Conscious of Her Status as Mrs. Barker

Samantha hesitated for a couple seconds before finally mustering the courage to finish her sentence, "...I'd like to treat Dr. Sherwood to a meal."

Timothy's black eyes narrowed slightly. "Reason?"

His voice did not fluctuate at all and Samantha could not tell whether he was angry. However, she was not going to back down easily because she had already raised the subject.

She structured her sentences in her mind and said, "I told you before that Corey wouldn't have been treated by the little saint if it weren't for Dr. Sherwood. I told him that

I'd treat him to a meal and thank him, but since it was delayed because of...some issues, I'd like to make it up to him with this meal."

After a pause, she added, "I think this is something I should be telling you about."

After all, their marriage had just been made public the day before and she had to live up to the reputation of being Timothy's wife. She had also promised Timothy not to do anything that would shame the Barkers or the Barker Group.

She was free to meet her friends for a meal, but because Alan was once the subject of her scandals, it was better to tell Timothy beforehand to avoid any misunderstandings.

It was something she ought to tell him...

The dark glow in Timothy's eyes gradually disappeared because of those words and his lips curled up into an imperceptible smile. Samantha, at long last, was finally conscious of her status as Mrs. Barker.

However, she wanted to have a meal with Alan...

Scenes from all of Timothy's previous occasions with that so-called 'Dr. Sherwood' appeared in his mind, prompting him to frown slightly.

Men knew other men best, and he could see that there was more than meets the eye with the way Alan looked at Samantha.

Upon seeing his prolonged silence and lack of expression on his handsome face, Samantha unconsciously bit her lower lip.

If Timothy disagreed with letting her treat Alan for dinner, would she then have to think of another way to thank him?

The next second, however, Samantha heard Timothy's cold and indifferent voice. "Okay."

Samantha was speechless and could not react at all for a few seconds. 'Did you say, 'Okay'? You're saying you agree?'

Could Timothy really be capable of such magnanimity?

Timothy seemed to have seen through her thoughts. He looked askance at her and said, "Dr. Sherwood has been of such great help to Corey that it's only right to treat him to dinner as a token of gratitude."

That was justifiable and reasonable, but the way he became so considerate all of a sudden somehow made Samantha feel that something was not quite right. She could feel an inexplicable chill on her back.

She asked again in a low voice, "Timothy, are you really...allowing me to treat Dr. Sherwood to dinner?"

Timothy lowered his gaze, looked right into her big round eyes, then affirmed, "Yes, but..."

She knew that things were not as simple as they seemed, but amazingly, she breathed a sigh of relief and her tone became calm. "But what?"

"As Mrs. Barker, it's imperative that you show your utmost sincerity when you treat him to a meal. You mustn't embarrass yourself," Timothy said casually.

Samantha frowned. She understood him to say that she had to find a restaurant that was worthy of her status as Mrs. Barker.

Her initial idea was to look for a restaurant that she could afford. It was not because she was unwilling to spend that money, but because those restaurants which were worthy of her status as Mrs. Barker were simply too expensive. She would not be able to get that kind of money even if she sold her organs!

"I..." Samantha hesitated before continuing, "I... You know that I don't have much money. I can only try my best not to be impolite."

The whole nation had probably known what little balance she had left in her bank accounts...

Timothy narrowed his eyes at her once more and showed a dissatisfied look.

Samantha felt doubly embarrassed. It was not her fault that she was poor! A rich man like him would never experience the pain of having no money!

"How about this," Timothy said, seemingly having thought of something.

Samantha looked at him abruptly and wondered if he wanted to lend her money?

She then heard the man saying word for word. "You can invite Dr. Sherwood to our home for dinner."

"Home?" Samantha was stunned. "You mean here?"

Timothy cocked an eyebrow. "What's wrong? Is this villa not worthy enough for Dr. Sherwood to be invited over for dinner?"

“Of course it’s worthy,” Samantha immediately denied.

The villa was much more luxurious than those high-end restaurants and she could not possibly find it distasteful.

However, Samantha felt awkward. “Grandma’s here, and so are you. Wouldn’t it be inappropriate if I invited Dr. Sherwood over for dinner in my personal capacity?”

Timothy looked as though he had long expected that kind of response from her and so replied lazily, “Grandma and Aunt Julia will go back to the mansion for a banquet in another two days and they won’t be here for some time. I, on the other hand, will be very busy at work and I won’t be back. You can do as you please.

“Besides, each and every single one of your movements is being watched now. I don’t want to make the headlines of the entertainment news because of you.”

Although Timothy’s words sounded harsh, it was not something Samantha could refute.

Timothy aside, even she did not want to make headlines on the entertainment news anymore. Being the subject of everyone’s daily conversation was not fun at all.

Since Old Madam Barker would not be around and Timothy would not be home, she would be the only one left in the villa. It was therefore a good idea to invite Alan over and treat him to a meal at home.

She could personally cook him a delicious meal to express her heartfelt thanks.

Samantha nodded and spoke with a touch of appreciativeness in her tone. “Thank you for your understanding, Timothy. And thank you...for giving me the space.”

A glimmer flashed across Timothy’s eyes, though there was no emotion on his face. He remained as cold as ever as he said, “Mm.” He then turned around and went to the dressing room to change his clothes.

Samantha looked at his handsome figure and could not help but think to herself, ‘Timothy’s mood is pretty good today...’

Was it the first time she had such a harmonious conversation with him ever since they got married?

What could possibly make him so happy?

Inside the dressing room, the phone rang and Timothy glanced at the caller ID while buttoning his shirt. He then grabbed his phone and switched it off.

...

Timothy exited the villa and saw Ronald waiting for him by the car door.

Ronald opened the rear door for Timothy as the latter strode over to the car. Timothy bent down slightly and was about to get into the car when a sudden thought occurred to him and he froze while glancing at Ronald from the side. "Have you gotten it out of him yet?"

Ronald understood what Timothy was talking about and replied bluntly. "That Mr. Cheadle has already confessed it all. Someone paid him a huge amount of money, telling him to act as Ms. Larsson's new husband and testify against her at the press conference."

Timothy tapped his finger twice on the car door frame. "It was Violet and Penelope?"

It sounded more like an affirmation even though it was actually a question.

Those same words had just reached Ronald's lips. He could only swallow it all back and nod his head. "Yes. Everything was instigated by the two of them, including using Simon and Cynthia as their tools."

Timothy lips twitched. Simon and Cynthia were themselves, worthless people.

Once Ronald finished reporting, he saw Timothy looking at him continuously and could not help but get nervous.. He asked softly, "Mr. Barker, did I...not do my job right?"

Chapter 120: Give Me Another Chance

Timothy kept quiet while his dark pupils stared at Ronald.

That one look caused Ronald's hair to stand on end and he swiftly started to recall where exactly he had gone wrong.

After giving it a lot of thought, he felt that he had already done what Mr. Barker ordered and there was absolutely nothing wrong with what he said.

When Ronald finally could not handle his own boss's death stare, he decided to bite the bullet and ask weakly once more, "Mr. Barker, what have I done wrong? Please tell me directly. I'll definitely change!!"

A few seconds later, Timothy finally opened his mouth and asked, "What did you call her?"

Ronald was even more confused at that sudden question. However, he soon had a lightbulb moment after having digested that question thoroughly. "Mr. Barker, I

misspoke. I shouldn't have called her Ms. Larsson. I should've addressed her as...Mrs. Barker."

After saying that, he secretly glanced at Timothy and saw the man's lips curling up. He then retracted his gaze before bending slightly to get into the car.

It was only then that Ronald breathed a massive sigh of relief. He was lucky to have guessed it right.

Moments ago, he nearly died of fright. His big boss had looked at him in such a way that he thought he had leaked the company's high-level secrets. In the end, it was nothing more than the issue of addressing Samantha.

Then again, Timothy never seemed to take offense when Ronald called Samantha 'Ms. Larsson' in the past, yet for some reason Timothy suddenly could not bear to hear him addressing Samantha as 'Ms. Larsson.' Perhaps Timothy's domineering act of saving the damsel in distress and succeeded in warming up Timothy and Samantha's relationship!

Ronald could not help but feel happy for them. Sweet mother of God! He was just super overjoyed to see them finally being a couple!

...

The car arrived at the entrance of the Barker Group.

Timothy had just opened the car door and exited the vehicle when a slender figure rushed up to his side all of a sudden. The figure tried grabbing his arm, but he dodged it easily, causing the figure to grasp nothing but thin air and end up falling onto the ground.

Timothy lowered his gaze and looked at the woman coldly.

Penelope had a mournful expression as she looked at Timothy pitifully. There was a very strong hint of weeping in her voice. "Timmy, ssnfff..."

She immediately started to grumble, "I came to look for you but the two security guards at the entrance refused to let me in. They said something about having to make an appointment. Do I still need to make an appointment? You should fire them, Timmy. They have terrible judgment!"

Ronald had already gotten out of the car too. He tried hard not to laugh when he listened to her.

Penelope was and always been a good-for-nothing rich daughter. She was clearly the one with 'terrible judgment'!

Ronald walked to Timothy's side and asked in a low voice, "Mr. Barker, should I deal with her?"

They were at the company entrance, after all. It would leave a sour taste in people's mouths if Penelope was allowed to bawl her eyes out there.

Penelope saw that Timothy was quiet and noticed that his handsome face was very icy too. In addition, the way he looked at her did not seem to contain even the slightest bit of warmth, unlike the indulgence he showed her in the past. Her heart tightened and she did not dare to be impudent anymore. She stood up and said tearfully, "Timmy, I... I have something to tell you. Can you spare me some time?"

The corners of Timothy's lips twitched. "Sure."

Penelope was immediately overjoyed. She knew that Timothy's heart would melt as long as she shed tears. As long as she admitted her mistake and used a bit of cajolery later, Timothy would definitely stop being angry at her and forgive her. It worked so many times before that she was confident of her success for the next one too.

...

At the CEO's office, Timothy walked in first, followed by Penelope.

She was wondering how best to cry and start her wheedling when she heard the man's cold and indifferent voice. "You have five minutes."

Penelope was so stunned that she quickly returned to her senses. Her lips twitched and tears began streaming down again. "Timmy, don't be so cold. I..."

"Four minutes."

The affectionate and coquettish sentences she had prepared immediately became stuck in her throat. Penelope knew that Timothy kept to his words, and once her five minutes were up, he would probably throw her out for real!

Her father, Justin, had received news earlier that morning regarding the Barker Groups' intentions of canceling all cooperation with the Schmidt Group. The Schmidts' were relying on her and she did not dare to mess around anymore.

Penelope sniffled, raised her hand to wipe the corner of her eyes, then said, "Timmy, I'm here to admit my mistakes to you. I was the one who did all that to Samantha and I didn't expect to get you involved. I'm sorry. This is my mistake. I really didn't mean it! I just...didn't know that you and Samantha were already married."

It was her mother who taught her that trick. Compared to grumbling and grouching, admitting one's mistakes would be more successful in getting the pity of a man like Timothy.

Moreover, the blame had to be shifted to Samantha.

Her mother had analyzed that there were probably unavoidable circumstances at play when Timothy married Samantha, which was why such an identity was fabricated and kept under wraps for so long. Everything probably only happened because Samantha wanted to absolve herself of the situation and use some underhanded means to make Timothy come forth and make the marriage public.

In short, they were certainly not as loving as they said they were.

"Timmy, I only did this because Samantha came for us first. She was jealous of my relationship with you. She joined hands with Sheena, who then seduced my father and wrecked my entire family. We're breaking apart and all I want is an eye for an eye!"

"Timmy, Samantha isn't as simple as you think she is. Her schemes and plots are dirty and vicious. Don't be fooled by her!"

Timothy's gaze finally landed on her face. His lips curled up slightly but there did not seem to be any joy in his eyes.

His gaze was evidently very indifferent, but Penelope was unable to say a single word and felt as though her throat had been strangled.

Timothy's face was expressionless and her words seemed like air to him. He raised his hand to glance at his watch before opening his lips and saying, "Your five minutes are up."

It was a simple and direct order for her to leave.

Penelope's eyes widened in disbelief. She said so many things but he did not have any reaction nor any response. He should not have treated her like that or act in such a way toward her!

"Timmy, how could you treat me like this? Did you forget your promise to 'her'? You said you'd treat me well!"

Timothy scoffed softly. "If it weren't for 'her', do you think you could still stand here?"

That sentence caused Penelope to stagger back a couple of steps, as if she had been struck by lightning.

She always thought that Timothy had developed feelings for her after their interaction during the past two years. She had previously leaked out rumors saying that they were in a relationship and followed up by teasing how there was good news in store. Timothy was not angry at all, and he always indulged her by giving her whatever she wanted. She really thought he did all that because he fell in love with her, but...was all of that simply because he had promised 'that woman'?

Penelope was extremely saddened but could not help using 'her' to plead with him once more. "In that case, Timmy, can you...give me and my family another chance? For 'her' sake?"

It was either that, or the Schmidts would suffer the same fate as the Larssons....

Chapter 121: Who Is 'Her'?

Penelope was born with a silver spoon, and over the past two years, had lived with increasing extravagance and unbounded glory as 'Timothy's girlfriend' and 'Timothy's fiancée.' One could imagine just how she would end up if she lost Timothy's support.

The reality in that circle was that a person would be held in high regard during their time of prestige. However, a fall from grace would entail being trampled into the mud!

Furthermore, she had offended numerous people during the past two years. None of those people dared to show their anger due to Timothy's reputation, and she dreaded imagining the kind of retaliation she would have to suffer if everyone wanted to get back at her in the future!

Simply thinking about all that was enough to make her increasingly fearful, so much so that the color on her face started to disappear bit by bit.

Timothy had already lost his patience. He took large strides over to the desk and pressed a button on the internal line. When the other side finally answered, Timothy said coldly, "Send her off, Ronald."

"Understood, Mr. Barker."

Ronald casually opened the office door, walked in, then stood in front of Penelope and said politely, "Ms. Schmidt, please."

Penelope was unable to accept that Timothy was being so ruthless to her. Even if he had never felt anything for Penelope during the past two years, he could not have forgotten 'her' affection, could he?

“Timmy!” She looked straight at Timothy and practically gritted her teeth when she protested, “Are you being so mercilessly to me because of Samantha? Even to the point of abandoning your promise to ‘her’? Has Samantha blinded your eyes? How can your actions be worthy of ‘her’!”

One of her words seemed to have irked Timothy because his expression sank all of a sudden.

“Leave.” Timothy spoke in the iciest of voices. “Before I change my mind.”

Penelope had never seen Timothy act that way before and was instantly shocked. The remainder of her sentences were stuck in her throat and she was unable to utter even a single syllable.

When Ronald saw that, he ditched his gentlemanly demeanor and grabbed Penelope’s wrist, pulling her forcibly out of the office.

Penelope had regained some of her senses and began struggling vigorously. “Let go of me, I’m not leaving. I still have some things I haven’t sa—”

“Ms. Schmidt!” Ronald interrupted her coldly. “I’d advise you to leave without making a fuss. If you continue to stir up trouble, the consequences would not be as simple as merely ending all cooperation with your family!”

Penelope had always thought nothing of Ronald and she was therefore very shocked when he ended up being the one warning her!

“Why do you think you are? Are you in any position to be speaking?” Penelope still maintained her high and mighty demeanor as a rich daughter. “I’ll have you know that Timmy simply can’t think straight because he’s in a fit of anger. Once he’s no longer angry, I’ll make sure to have him fire you!”

Ronald had undergone professional training and would never laugh under normal circumstances, not unless he really could not help it.

At that moment, he really was amused by Penelope.

Things had already come to a head, and it was bad enough that she lacked any desire to repent. The arrogance and naivete she displayed were simply appalling.

In the past, Ronald never understood what his big boss even saw in that idiot of a woman. It was not until then that he found out it had nothing to do with Penelope at all. His big boss only indulged Penelope because of his promise to ‘her’.

Penelope understood that well enough, yet she still continued to lose herself in her fantasies and believe her own lies. It was as if her brain existed for nothing else but to complete her appearance as a human.

Ronald had endured her outbursts countless times in the past two years and could no longer be bothered to show her any courtesy. He smirked sarcastically and said unceremoniously, "Wakey, wakey, Ms. Schmidt! Mr. Barker won't show you any mercy after you offended the Mrs. By the way, do you remember Tiana Reece, the secretary?"

Tiana Reece worked in the secretarial department of the CEO's office. She had a smoking hot figure and always dressed well.

Penelope remembered who Tiana was, of course. She had—in private—frequently made life difficult for Tiana, warning the latter not to overstep her bounds with Timothy. Penelope even pretended to complain to Timothy, saying that Tiana bullied her and requesting—albeit unsuccessfully—for Timothy to dismiss her.

"Why are you bringing her up?"

Ronald had a little smile. "No reason in particular. I just wanted to tell you that Tiana was fired a few months ago and has completely disappeared from her line of work."

After a pause of about half a second, Ronald's voice became increasingly cheery. "The reason for her dismissal was because she did not know her place and offended Mrs. Barker. Mr. Barker then disposed of her without so much as another word."

"...How?" Penelope shook her head once, then did so again. "Impossible! It's impossible!"

She complained so many times and failed to accomplish what she wanted. How, then, was Samantha able to persuade Timothy like that?

The two of them were supposed to not have a real relationship at all, right? Was it not Samantha who forced Timothy to marry her? Even after all that happened, she was still convinced that Timothy was angry because he was implicated in the whole ordeal, rather than because of Samantha!

His explanation could not be any clearer, yet she continued to hold firmly to her delusions. There was nothing else for Ronald to say.

After all, no one could wake a person who pretended to be asleep!

The security personnel just so happened to have reached the floor and Ronald shoved Penelope directly over to them. "Send her out."

"Understood!"

The security guards held Penelope on either side, suppressed her screams and struggles, then dragged her away by force.

The screams faded into the distance and Ronald could not help but massage his ears. He turned around and returned to his desk to sit down.

His attention shifted inadvertently to the CEO's office and he could not help but feel a little curious as to who the 'she' that his boss and Penelope were talking about.

Could there actually be someone who could influence his big boss?

The faces of all the women who had shown up around Timothy in recent years flashed through Ronald's mind, and one particular face finally came to the fore.

Ronald froze for a moment. Could that person be the 'her'?

A sense of dread came over him. He had just cheered for Timothy and Samantha after the two of them showed signs of improvement in their relationship. Could he have been cheering on the wrong couple?

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For three days after that, Timothy did not return to the villa. Meanwhile, Old Madam Barker had set off to the old mansion with Aunt Julia for a banquet that very day, just as Timothy said they would.

The so-called old mansion referred to the Barkers' ancestral home, which was located in Zed City.

The Barkers were a huge family and Old Master Barker had four siblings. The Barkers' internal policy was that anyone who showed promise and capability would be able to become the heir. It was through sheer ability that Old Master Barker became the heir despite being the third eldest.

Old Master Barker's business grew exponentially thereafter. He eventually married his wife Nancy—the daughter of one of Capital City's wealthy families—and chose to settle down there for her sake.

Each year, however, they went back regularly to maintain familial ties.

Samantha sent off Old Madam Barker and Aunt Julia, telling them to be careful on the road. She watched them get in the car but did not go back into the house even after the car drove away.

She had an appointment with Alan and would later go to the hospital to see the final treatment plan.

Samantha then walked to the luxury car.

In order to live up to her status as 'Mrs. Barker', she had to be mindful whenever she left the house, and so was obliged to use the luxury car that Old Madam Barker gave to her.

She opened the car door, got in, then started the engine and drove out.

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After discussing the treatment plan, Samantha walked out of the office with Alan and seemed to have remembered something all of a sudden.. She looked at Alan before opening her mouth to speak.