

Read Once Bitten, Twice Shy online free

Chapter 122: First Confrontation

“Are you free tomorrow, Dr. Sherwood?”

Alan stopped walking and turned to make eye contact with her. He smiled gently and said, “I am. What’s up?”

Samantha smiled back. “I just wanted to make it up to you and treat you to the meal I still owe you.”

“Oh, you want to treat me to a meal?”

Alan paused for half a second before he said, “Sure. Let me know the location and I’ll be there on time.”

“Sure.”

Samantha sent Alan off at the entrance of the hospital and waved goodbye. “See you tomorrow, Dr. Sherwood.”

“See you tomorrow!”

The driver drove off slowly after Alan got into the car.

He looked at Samantha’s figure through the rearview mirror, watching as she became further and further away until she was no longer in sight. It was only then that he withdrew his gaze.

After pondering for a moment, he said to his driver who was manning the wheel, “Hey, Martin, could you order a bunch of flowers tomorrow?”

Martin was stunned, but he soon recovered and asked aloud. “Okay. What kind of flowers do you want me to get?”

Alan looked out of the car window and narrowed his eyes slightly, as if he was trying to recall something. Half a minute passed before he answered, “Pink roses.”

...

The villa was empty. Instead of going back, Samantha stayed in the hospital that night and spoke to Corey.

She told him to hang on because he would soon receive treatment from the little saint.

She was waiting for him to finally open his eyes and wake up. Once he recovered, she could finally bring him home.

The next morning, Samantha woke up early to wipe Corey's body and massage his limbs to relax them. She then had a very simple breakfast before driving out of the hospital.

She had invited Alan over for dinner that evening. In order to express her gratitude to him, she decided that she would show off all the cooking skills she learnt throughout her life.

Samantha had already figured out what she wanted to cook since the previous night. When it came to dishes that she was not too confident in cooking, she sent a WeTalk message to Aunt Julia, who then went all out in teaching her on the assumption that she was going to cook for Timothy.

Samantha drove to the grocer on the ground floor of a huge shopping mall, then pushed a shopping cart and filled it with high-quality ingredients.

When she returned to the villa, she went upstairs to change into some comfortable home clothes before heading down to the kitchen to start prepping.

While there were some dishes that she could cook a little later, the double-stewed soup she planned on making had to be boiled long enough or else it would not taste as flavorful and delicious.

After boiling the soup and leaving it to simmer on low heat, Samantha exited the kitchen to tidy and clean the villa a bit.

At around four in the evening, Samantha took out her cell phone and shared the location of the villa with Alan through a WeTalk message.

Alan replied swiftly: [Okay, see you later. :)]

He even added a smiling emoji at the end of his message.

Samantha estimated that Alan would arrive at half-past seven, so by six she went into the kitchen and started cooking.

Her actions were nimble and skillful, allowing her to prepare all the dishes with ease. She looked up at the time and saw that it was ten minutes past seven.

Samantha went out of the kitchen, went upstairs, and headed into the bedroom. She changed into a more formal dress, combed her messy hair, then stood in front of the

full-length mirror to make sure that she looked decent. Only then did she leave the room and head back downstairs.

As soon as she walked to the ground floor, she heard the sound of a car outside the villa and could not help but raise an eyebrow. Alan had arrived rather early.

She unconsciously tidied her appearance again and walked over to open the door.

As soon as she looked up, however, the man whom she saw was not her guest Alan, but Timothy!

Samantha blinked her eyes a couple of times and wondered if she was seeing things.

The man strode over and came closer to her with each step that he took. That face of unparalleled handsomeness was reflected clearly within her eyes.

“You...” Samantha’s eyes widened in disbelief. “Didn’t you say that you won’t be back these few days?”

Timothy’s black eyes made eye contact with her and his expression was as insipid as his tone. “The meeting today has been canceled at the last minute. Am I not allowed to come back and rest?”

“Ah...” Samantha shook her head quickly. “No, of course you can. It’s just... I... I invited Dr. Sherwood over for dinner today.”

A hint of surprise flashed through Timothy’s eyes. “What a coincidence.”

Was it really a coincidence? There were plenty of other days he could have chosen to rest. Why did it have to be that day, of all days?

Samantha was just about to open her mouth and say something when another car drove in.

Timothy and Samantha looked over together and saw that the car’s rear door opened up. Alan had gotten out of the car with a bunch of pink roses in hand.

Timothy glanced at Alan and curled his lips slightly when he saw the pink roses.

He retracted his gaze and turned to Samantha, saying, “Your guest is here. Better welcome him in.”

His voice was neither too loud nor too soft, but it was clear enough to reach the ears of everyone present there.

Alan was there. Samantha was no longer worried about whether Timothy being there was a coincidence. She calmed down and with a gentle smile on her face, said to Alan, "Dr. Sherwood, you're here."

Alan was stunned for a moment when he saw Timothy but smiled faintly in the blink of an eye. He then stepped forward and responded, "Yes, I am."

Timothy let out a gentle cough at just the right time and said, "Aren't you going to make any introductions, Darling?"

Samantha was speechless and felt goosebumps forming all over after hearing him call her 'darling'. She forced herself to calm down and said calmly, "Dr. Sherwood, this is my...husband, Timothy. Sorry for not being forthcoming last time."

She was referring to their encounter at the hospital.

Alan shook his head and replied in an understanding tone. "Don't worry about it."

Samantha smiled, then said to Timothy, "H-Honey, this is Dr. Sherwood."

Timothy's lips curled up ever so slightly and his black pupils looked straight at Alan. He stretched out his hand in an amenable manner and said, "It's a pleasure to finally meet you at last, Dr. Sherwood. My wife mentions you very often and she tells me she's very grateful to you."

Alan reached out and shook hands with Timothy. "Hello, Mr. Barker. The pleasure's mine as well."

The two men greeted and shook hands in quite a friendly manner, but Samantha somehow sensed a certain hostility between them, almost as if they were engaged in an invisible sword fight.

There seemed to be a hidden meaning behind their sentences and it gave her the chills.

She started to suspect that Timothy had a reason for telling her to invite Alan to the villa for dinner. She also felt that Timothy returned to the villa on purpose...

Were they able to have a decent, proper dinner?

Samantha was worried that something untoward might happen and so said immediately, "Come in and have a seat, Dr. Sherwood."

Timothy let go of Alan's hand, casually hooked Samantha's slender waist, and turned her body slightly. He then said to Alan, "Yes, come in and have a seat."

The man's attitude spoke volumes.

Alan's hand clenched unconsciously on the bunch of roses, but his expression remained calm and as gentle as always. He looked into Timothy's eyes and responded, "Sure."

Alan then lifted his feet and walked right in.

Chapter 123: Showing Affection

Timothy's eyes lit up as he raised his eyebrows slightly. He then drew Samantha closer to him and walked in.

When the three of them walked to the living room, Samantha asked Alan, "Would you like anything to drink, Dr. Sherwood?"

"Just water will do."

"Okay, make yourself at home."

After saying that, she glanced somewhat worriedly at Timothy. He just so happened to be looking at her as well and the two of them made eye contact.

The man smirked, as if he had already read her mind.

Samantha felt a little embarrassed to have her thoughts read like that, but as a precaution, she bit the bullet and said, "Well, Dear, could you entertain Dr. Sherwood for a moment..."

Whether she liked it or not, they were in a situation where both sides had a common interest. If she wanted to maintain her reputation as Mrs. Barker, it was only natural that Timothy would not undermine her in front of an outsider.

Timothy seemed to have been waiting for her to say that and raised his head slightly before answering, "Sure."

Samantha walked back to the kitchen very hesitantly.

When her figure disappeared completely from Timothy's vision, he looked at Alan and opened his mouth to offer, "This villa is where Sammy and I have been staying after our wedding. Would you like to take a tour?"

Alan maintained a gentle smile on his face and did not refuse. "I'd like that."

"Right this way."

Timothy led Alan and gave the latter a tour of the huge villa.

The villa occupied a large area and was very lavishly decorated. With mountains gracing the view behind the villa, the scenery was very pleasing to the eyes and the air was very fresh too.

The two of them walked to the outdoor courtyard and saw shrubs of pink roses blooming in the flower patch, producing a pinkish sea of flowers.

Timothy gazed at the pink color and opened his lips. "Sammy had always been the kind who likes flowers since she was a child. Her favorite flower is pink roses. She says that her mood will always improve whenever she sees these vivid-colored flowers in full bloom.

"The reason I bought this villa was because of this little sea of ??pink flowers. I thought that Sammy would like it, and sure enough, this is her favorite place in the entire villa."

Alan knew that Samantha liked pink roses.

Samantha was initially reluctant to be hospitalized when her leg was badly injured back then. Alan told her that she was more than welcome to leave if she did not want her leg anymore. Once she walked out of the hospital, her leg was no longer his responsibility and it was up to her whether or not she would still be able to walk or run normally in the future!

She finally compromised and accepted to be hospitalized, but she chose the cheapest and most standard ward that accommodated nearly twenty people in a ward.

Most of the other patients were visited by family or relatives, who brought them flowers and fruits.

The bed next to her was also a young woman, whose boyfriend visited every day and bought different kinds of fresh flowers for her whenever he came.

When Alan was doing his rounds at the wards, he chanced upon Samantha looking blankly at the flowers in other people's vases. There was a faint sense of longing in her eyes.

Samantha was still a young girl who was just barely over 20 at the time, but she seemed to lack the vitality of a young girl whenever Alan saw her. Instead, the impression she gave him was that she had gone through a very hard life.

It was the first time he ever saw her yearning for something, just like an ordinary girl.

When he later went to check on her condition, he asked in passing, "What flowers do you like?"

Samantha did not think much at the time and answered him casually, "Pink roses are my favorite."

"Oh? Why pink roses?" He asked curiously, "Don't girls generally like big red roses more?"

"It's because the first flower my boyfriend gave to me was a pink rose!" Samantha blurted out.

As soon as she finished speaking, the smile on her face suddenly stiffened for a second and acted as if nothing had happened. "They're...pretty. That's why I like them."

He could see that she was uneasy at the time but did not ask any further. However, he bought a lot of pink roses the next day and asked the hospital's janitor lady to put some in every ward.

That way, Samantha would see them and cheer up a little.

Alan's reminiscing stopped there and his dark pupils shifted to Timothy's handsome profile. It turned out that the boyfriend Samantha mentioned was none other than Timothy.

Pink roses were never Samantha's favorite. It only became her favorite because it was the first flower that Timothy gave her.

...

Samantha poured tea and sliced some fruits. When she carried everything into the living room, Timothy and Alan had just returned from their tour of the home.

She glanced unconsciously at the two people and saw that the both of them were still neatly dressed and in one piece, without any indication that they had come to blows. It was only then that she could set her worried heart slightly at ease.

With a smile on her face, she said, "Come over and sit down, guys."

Timothy and Alan each sat on a different sofa. Samantha hesitated for a few seconds but nevertheless decided to sit beside Timothy.

She picked up the glass of water and handed it to Alan, "Here's your water, Dr. Sherwood."

"Thank you."

Timothy glanced at her from the side.

Samantha put the coffee she brewed for Timothy in front of him and forced out a smile, "Have some coffee, Honey."

"Thanks, Darling."

Timothy sat up straight, turned his face around, and pressed a kiss on Samantha's cheek before taking the cup and sipping on some coffee.

Samantha smiled a little stiffly and could not help but glare at Timothy.

She suspected Timothy of deliberately putting on a public display of affection but she had no evidence to prove it!

From a third person's point of view, the look in her eyes seemed more like a rebuke.

Alan could tell that Timothy's interaction with Samantha was not very natural, yet it seemed to have some kind of barrier that disallowed anyone else from getting involved.

The water he drank ought to have been tasteless, but it somehow tasted inexplicably bitter.

Seeing that it was almost time for dinner, Samantha said, "The food is ready, Dr. Sherwood. Shall we have dinner now?"

"Okay."

The three of them went to the dining hall.

Samantha initially thought that Timothy would be up to no good during the meal, but as it turned out, they ended the meal in a rather peaceful manner.

The only issue was that the meal was too quiet.

Alan ate politely and never said anything, while Timothy ate in his usual elegant manner and kept quiet too. As a result, she did not say anything either and only immersed herself in the meal.

The tranquility made her feel increasingly uneasy. She had this lingering fear that it might be calm before the storm.

Fortunately, Alan said that he had other things to take care of and would have to leave after the meal, though not before expressing his thanks to her and Timothy for their hospitality.

Samantha did not want to keep him there for too long either. After all, it would be good to end the day with the meal so as to avoid any mishaps occurring.

Timothy followed her to send Alan off.

When they reached the car, Alan stared intently at Samantha and—without even looking at Timothy—handed her the pink roses he had brought with him. “These are for you, Sammy.”

Samantha’s first reaction was, ‘Crap....’

Chapter 124: You Won’t Get That Chance

Samantha had thought that she had survived the trials of that day, but little did she expect that something like that would happen at the very end...

Samantha instinctively turned to Timothy. He did not look at her at all, but instead reached out and directly held the bunch of pink roses. He said, “My wife and I appreciate this gift for our home. Thank you.”

Just like that, the flowers meant for Samantha had transformed into flowers meant for both husband and wife.

Alan did not let go right away. His dark pupils continued to look at Samantha while Samantha looked at Timothy.

His hand only loosened little by little after half a second.

Timothy held the flowers and said, “By the way, Dr. Sherwood, I’m really thankful for your help toward Sammy and Corey recently. I know that your medical team is currently conducting some major research, so I shall donate a set of Exwy-Sea medical equipment to your team under my wife and I’s name. I hope it will be of help.”

Exwy-Sea...

Samantha’s eyes widened suddenly. Exwy-Sea was the newest technology in medical equipment. They were hard to come by and one might not necessarily be able to obtain them even when one had money. Amazingly, the first thing that came out of Timothy’s mouth was his desire to donate them...

Although she had always known that Timothy was affluent, she could not help but feel shocked at that moment.

There was even some fluctuation in Alan’s emotions.

He would have felt it beneath him if Timothy thanked him with money, but no medical team could refuse an Exwy-Sea. Having a batch of that would enable their research to proceed faster and smoother, which would be a giant favor for mankind.

Timothy's stance was very clear as well. As Samantha's husband, he has repaid Samantha's favor on her behalf. If Alan accepted that gesture, he and Samantha would no longer owe each other anything.

It was no surprise that Samantha liked Timothy. After all, Timothy was not that simple a character.

Alan kept quiet and had a hesitant look on his face.

Timothy did not urge him either, but then turned to Samantha and said, "You can head back in, Darling. I want to have a few words with Dr. Sherwood in private."

A few words? In private? Or was a fight about to happen?

Samantha hesitated. She did not dare to walk away just like that because she felt that she would have let Alan down if Timothy were to lose his temper!

However, Alan then said, "It just so happens that I have something to say to Mr. Barker in private too. It's fine. You can go in."

Samantha was speechless and nearly thought that she had heard it wrongly.

Was she the superfluous one all along? Did she end up being the odd one out?

Since both men had already said so, Samantha had no choice but to leave even if she did not want to. She responded dryly, "Okay then, you guys...have a good chat."

She turned around slowly and walked just as slowly back into the house.

The two men stood tall and looked at each other, with both of them keeping quiet for a brief moment.

After about half a minute, Alan took the lead and said, "Mr. Barker, forgive me for being blunt, but I've read about your past with Sammy. The both of you were initially separated because you publicly broke off the marriage with her. My question is, are you treating Sammy sincerely right now?"

When Alan learned that Samantha and Timothy were already married during the day of the press conference, Alan could not control himself after returning to the hotel and immediately did an internet search on them.

One search was all it took to reveal every piece of information.

That was when he found out about such an insufferable past between Timothy and Samantha. The reason why Samantha went abroad was because she had been chased away. It was no wonder then that she lived in poverty abroad and had such a terrible life there.

Even though Samantha remarried, she did not seem to have been ever happy. Instead, she was always by herself when she did all kinds of things for Corey.

If there were any other reasons for their marriage, Alan was determined to follow his heart.

As a doctor, he was able to swiftly and accurately identify a patient's condition. That was how he was able to clearly discern his own feelings for Samantha after things had reached a certain point.

He liked the fragility and strength that came to characterize Samantha as a woman.

It might even be possible that he had already developed feelings for her since she was abroad. After all, he would not have gone so far as to find out the details of her address and look for her when he no longer heard anything from her.

That was why he decided to follow his heart, accept Samantha's invitation, and personally give her the bunch of pink roses. He wanted to tell her that he was willing to wait for her.

It was unfortunate that an uninvited guest, Timothy, appeared.

Timothy seemed to have expected well in advance that he would make that kind of remark. His tone was indifferent and he replied with a question rather than an answer, "In what capacity are you asking me this, Dr. Sherwood?"

Alan looked up and made eye contact with Timothy. There was an additional hint of incisiveness to his ever-gentle gaze. "I'm asking as a man, and as a suitor."

"Heh." Timothy's tone became colder. "You're frank, I'll give you that."

After a pause for half a second, he curled the corners of his lips, "To have Little St. John telling me to my face that he admires my wife... I wonder if you're too confident in your own ability or whether you...look down on me?"

The light in Alan's eyes flickered slightly.

After interacting with Timothy for over two hours, he knew that a man like Timothy possessed an ability that was beyond measure. However, Timothy seemed to be much stronger—and much more terrifying—than he imagined.

One must not make an enemy out of a man like that.

However, Alan was not actually afraid because he was doing it for Samantha.

Unfortunately, Alan had seen all too clearly during the meal that he had no place in Samantha's heart. He thought of her as more than a friend, but that was not the same for Samantha.

There was no point going further unless both parties felt the same way.

Worse still, Timothy probably still had a place in Samantha's heart regardless of whether or not he actually had any feelings for her.

Anyone else around her probably did not stand a chance at all.

Alan's heart could not help but feel a little ache when he thought of that, but he nevertheless opened his mouth and spoke with an emphasis on each word, "Mr. Barker, Sammy is a very, very good woman. I hope you'll treat her well. Don't let her...suffer as much as she did when she was abroad."

'Suffer...abroad?'

Timothy's black eyes narrowed suddenly.

Alan forced a smile. "I'm telling you this as a friend.

"But..."

He raised his gaze and looked straight at Timothy once more, with his tone taking an extremely serious turn. "Mr. Barker, if you treat her badly and abandon her on a whim like before, I'll take Sammy away from you even if it means I'll become your enemy."

Timothy snapped to his senses and curled his lips slightly. "You'll have no such opportunity."

Alan stretched out his hand to him again, "Then on behalf of my medical team, I'd like to express my thanks to you for your generous donation, Mr. Barker. Your contribution will be felt by every patient treated by our team in the future."

Timothy stretched out his hand and returned the handshake. "It's a joint contribution from Sammy and I."

"One more thing, Little St. John. You can always look for me if there's anything you need in the future."

Alan replied without hesitation, "I surely will."

He had no reason to refuse sponsorship from a tycoon like the Barker Group.

...

Timothy walked back into the house and glanced from the corner of his eyes at the figure who thought she had hidden herself well on the other side of the window.. He smiled and walked in.

Chapter 125: Her Past

Samantha caught a glimpse of him coming over and immediately wanted to flee, but Timothy's actions were much quicker than hers. He grabbed her by the back of her collar and pulled her back toward him in an effortless manner.

She felt more or less embarrassed after getting caught peeking. Her eyes flickered and she explained, "I'm just a little worried. But I didn't hear a word of what you guys said!" Not that she did not want to listen. She was simply just too far away.

It was impossible to hear what the two men were talking about, and she initially felt that the atmosphere between the two of them was tense. When she was starting to worry that they might come to blows with each other, the two of them shook their hands all of a sudden. She was stunned to see such a sudden change.

Timothy snickered. "What's wrong? Afraid I'd hit him?"

When did that scumbag put a chip in her brain? How could he have known what she was thinking?

Samantha laughed dryly and said flatteringly, "Of course not, Mr. Barker, you're a gentleman!"

'Mr. Barker...'

Timothy frowned slightly. Hearing her calling him 'honey' was much more pleasing to the ears.

As he thought of what Alan said to him earlier, he gazed intently at Samantha as emotions fluctuated within his eyes.

That stare sent chills down Samantha's spine and she gulped unconsciously, wondering if he was about to get angry again.

After a few seconds, Timothy asked softly, "When you...were out of..."

He paused halfway, then continued, then paused again.

Samantha blinked and waited for him to finish, but he paused yet again. She asked in confoundment, "When I what?"

Timothy's expression seemed to suggest that he was grappling with his emotions but gloominess soon ensued. "It's nothing."

After saying those two words, he released his hand from Samantha's collar and turned around to head straight upstairs.

Samantha looked blankly at his rear figure and was thoroughly confused.

What was he trying to say?

'You...were out of...'

Out of where?

Samantha pondered about it for a moment but eventually decided not to bother herself with it since she could not seem to figure out what he was talking about. It was good enough that the meal concluded peacefully that day, and she could finally breathe a sigh of relief after Timothy and Alan seemed to come to amicable terms.

It was getting late, so Samantha walked into the kitchen and washed all the dishes before heading upstairs to the bedroom.

Timothy was inside the study rather than the bedroom, and she could take things a little easier as a result. After grabbing her clothes, she went to take a relaxing hot bath in the bathroom.

Once she was done bathing, she did a simple skincare routine and leaned against the bedhead. A brief conversation was exchanged with the caregiver on the phone. After making sure that Corey was alright, she made sure to advise the caregiver again before hanging up.

Having gone through a laborious day, Samantha yawned spontaneously as soon as she relaxed. She glanced at the wall clock, saw that the time was already past 11, then glanced unconsciously at the room door.

It did not look as though Timothy was coming up to sleep.

As soon as she realized the thought that she had, she froze for a moment and shook her head abruptly.

She ought to just go ahead and sleep if she was feeling sleepy! There was no point fretting over when Timothy was going to come and sleep, or whether he was even going to!

Samantha immediately laid down, pulled the blanket over her body, and closed her eyes, as if she was trying to avoid something!

...

In the study, Timothy sat behind his large desk and leaned lazily against the back of the chair. He placed his arms on the tabletop and held a lit cigarette between two slender fingers.

Wisps of smoke rose into the air.

He puffed on the cigarette and exhaled clouds of smoke, but that seemed to do nothing to alleviate his frown.

Timothy then put out his cigarette in the ashtray, switched on his computer, then clicked the mouse several times. A login page for an email provider appeared on the screen.

He was fixated on it for a few seconds. After seemingly making up his mind, his slender fingers nimbly typed in the correct password and he finally hit the enter key.

With the email logged in successfully, he discovered many unread emails in the inbox. The interval between each email was constant, that is, once every week.

The total duration for all the emails he received started from the day Samantha went abroad and ended on the day she returned.

He glanced through them and immediately knew what Samantha had experienced during her past two years abroad.

He had assigned people to watch Samantha and report on her situation at regular intervals, but he had never opened any of those emails. Truthfully speaking, he was unsure whether he had refrained from reading them because he simply did not want to, or whether some other factors were at play.

Be that as it may, he still somehow took to heart what Alan said to him.

Was Samantha's life really that difficult during those two years?

Timothy kept his hand on the mouse and moved the cursor slowly to click on the first email.

Once he finished reading the first email, he clicked on the second, then the third...

The farther back he read, the more his fingertips started to tremble unconsciously.

Even though Alan had given Timothy a heads-up of sorts, reading those emails first-hand impacted him in a way that was much more direct and disconcerting.

Samantha, who was once the apple of his eye, had suffered far too much when she was in a foreign country. Being unfamiliar with the place led a taxi driver to take plenty of detours just to get her to pay extra. On another occasion, she once slept on a flight of stairs by the street after renting a room from a dishonest person and ending up being chased out in the middle of the night.

When she looked for a job, her pay was either very low or her hours were too long. In the beginning, she cried until her eyes turned bloodshot because of the bullying she suffered, but as time passed, her cries became lesser and lesser until they disappeared altogether.

Her body did not get used to the foreign environment at first and she got sick all the time. She slept through her illnesses at home insofar as it was possible for her to do so and only went to the hospital's emergency department if she really could not handle it anymore. However, she always asked to be prescribed the cheapest medications. When her leg suffered that severe injury, she was only hospitalized for a mere three days, after which she went home on crutches.

Dining out was a rarity for Samantha. Instead, she bought near-expired food and cooked them at home. Those two years abroad likely trained her to develop the cooking skills she had since acquired.

The house she rented was too cheap and she had been robbed several times. As a result, she became extremely sensitive and cautious, so much so that she usually did not sleep well at night.

Once Timothy reached the last email, his breathing had become a little unstable and he had to close his eyes in order to take a deep breath.

Samantha had betrayed him two years ago and he ought to feel happy to see her having a bad life. Did she not deserve it?

As he read those emails at that moment, the agony he felt in his heart was akin to being shot with ten thousand arrows.

He really wanted to know whether Samantha had ever regretted the things she did after experiencing that kind of suffering.

Timothy's hands trembled as he closed the webpage. He got up slowly, exited the study, and walked back to the bedroom.

The bedroom was silent and the only source of light was a small lamp beside the bedhead.

Timothy unconsciously trod more lightly as he walked toward the bed. In the meantime, his eyes were looking right at Samantha's sleeping face.

He stretched out his hand toward her with the thought of waking her up and getting a clearer answer from her, but he stopped just as he was about to touch her shoulder.

In the end, he felt reluctant to disturb her sweet sleep.

...

Early the next morning.

Samantha had a good night's sleep and did not have any dreams throughout the night. As she slowly regained consciousness, she suddenly became aware of an intense stare. Her senses perked up immediately and she opened her eyes all of a sudden.

Her hand instinctively formed a fist and she swung it immediately to her front.

The next second, Samantha saw Timothy sitting by the bed and looking at her.. It was already too late for her to retract her punch and it landed right on the man's cheek.

Chapter 126: I'll Kiss Your Booboo

Samantha's mind went blank. She retracted her hand abruptly and hid it behind her, saying, "I... I thought you were..."

After a pause, she refrained from continuing her sentence and saying 'a bad guy'. Instead, she changed her sentences and said, "Sorry, I didn't see you clearly."

Timothy could discern that all of her earlier movements were a conditioned reflex. It was the same with the special needles she used to protect herself.

The ache in his heart intensified even more.

Samantha started to worry a little when she saw Timothy's silence and sour expression. She stretched out her hand hesitantly and stroked his cheek gently. "I didn't hurt you, did I? I'm sorry if I did... I didn't mean it at all."

Her punch did not hurt that much but she stroked him in such a gentle manner that Timothy inadvertently blurted out, "It hurts."

Samantha was speechless and a little guilty, but she could not keep herself from muttering, "Why didn't you dodge then?"

Timothy was skilled enough to be able to dodge it instantly, yet he ended up being hit by her punch.

Then again, a big man would not have been that affected by a single punch, right? Did he actually say that it hurt?

She murmured, "Do you want me to kiss the booboo?"

Timothy said in an ever-calm manner. "Kiss the booboo."

He even turned his face deliberately to her and leaned his upper body over toward her.

Samantha felt that she was surely still sleeping, because why else would she have such an absurd dream?

However, she blinked a few times and Timothy was still sitting in front of her. He was still there, waiting for her to kiss his booboo.

She gulped and asked hesitantly, "Are you serious, Timothy?"

The man stared at her and responded with a question, "Isn't that what you suggested. What's wrong? Did you just say that without intending to do it? Are you all talk and no action?"

"Of course not!" Samantha retorted loudly. "I'll kiss the booboo!"

She grabbed Timothy's collar and yanked it hard, pulling his handsome face close to her. Even though she had seen it countless times already, seeing him up close left her feeling a little dazed.

The Creator seemed to have a soft spot for Timothy.

How could a man's eyelashes be so thick and long? He was generally never seen using any skincare products, yet his skin was as smooth as a baby's bottom. Those facial features were so three-dimensional that not even the greatest of sculptors could not carve out something so beautiful...

It really made her feel envious!

Samantha gulped unconsciously.

Timothy turned around and looked abruptly at her, curling his lips as if he had seen through her thoughts.

Samantha looked away immediately and blushed. Her attempt at an explanation only ended up revealing the thoughts she had been trying to hide. "I wasn't looking at you. I don't think you're that good-looking either!"

As soon as Samantha finished her sentence, she chided herself for making all those unnecessary remarks and wanted nothing more than to bite off her own tongue!

Timothy smiled even bigger and he spoke in a carefree voice, "Sure. You weren't looking at me and you don't think I'm good-looking."

Speaking too much was a mistake.

Samantha sealed her lips shut and made up her mind not to speak.

She took a deep breath and gave Timothy's cheek a teensy little peck before letting go of him. "Done!"

Timothy looked at her silently.

Fearing the possibility that he might demand more, Samantha said without being prompted, "Why were you sitting beside me on the bed so early in the morning? Wait a minute..."

She finally noticed that Timothy did not seem to have just woken up. Rather, he looked as though he had not slept at all the entire night.

Samantha looked at the little bit of stubble around his lips and asked, "Did you...go the whole night without sleeping?"

"Yes."

"Huh? Why?" Samantha lowered her voice. "Were you busy all night because you had a lot of work?"

"No."

"Then..."

She observed his expressions carefully once more and saw that he was frowning slightly, as if something was bothering him. She asked once more, "Do you have some kind of problem that you just can't figure out?"

Timothy raised his gaze to look at her and answered, "Yes."

Samantha wondered just what kind of problem could perplex Timothy and cause him to lose sleep just from thinking about it.

Her curiosity was immediately piqued and she hesitated before saying, "What problem are you having? Maybe you can tell me and I can try giving you some advice?"

Timothy's eyes sank and he stopped talking.

It looked as though she did not deserve to know!

Samantha smoothed her hair awkwardly. "Now that I think about it, if you can't figure it out, there's no way I can be of any help. In that case, you can continue thinking about it. I'll go wash up."

She was just about to get down from the bed when Timothy grabbed her wrist and pulled her back down to her original position.

Samantha was surprised and she raised her eyes to look at him. "What is it?"

Timothy moved his lips and uttered, "You..."

He had waited the entire night for her to wake up because he wanted to ask her if she ever felt any regret during the past two years for doing what she did to him back then.

However, he was also afraid to get answers that he did not want to hear.

It was actually quite amusing, because there was little, if any, that Timothy feared in his life. What he feared was the possibility he might not be able to bear Samantha's answer.

"It's not an issue."

Samantha was speechless and she clearly felt that something was amiss!

Timothy had been hesitant to talk to her the night before and ended up acting the same way the following day too. What was going on with him? Was he feeling unwell?

Samantha wanted to ask further but Timothy spoke before she could. "I'm tired."

She had no choice but to halt her intention to ask him. After all, he had not slept the entire night. Being the understanding person that she was, she said, "Well, in that case, you should go to bed and catch up on your z's."

"Okay."

Timothy immediately tumbled onto the bed and dragged her along to lie down with him.

Samantha froze for a second and blurted out, "I told you to sleep, not me..."

She had already slept her fill!

“Hush,” Timothy said in a deep voice. He used her as a bolster, wrapping his long arms around her and resting his chin on top of her head. Only then did he close his eyes.

Samantha tried to struggle, but the more she tried, the more Timothy’s strength intensified. In the end, Samantha could not move at all.

She opened her eyes, stared at the ceiling, and wondered just how she had provoked him.

Timothy really did live up to his reputation as Mr. Barker! His narcissism was so great that he needed someone to accompany him just so he could catch up on his sleep!

Samantha originally thought that she would have to suffer by staring at the ceiling, but she did not expect to actually sink back into slumber. Her body could not help but relax after hearing Timothy’s steady heartbeat and gentle breathing, and she soon fell asleep as her eyelids closed little by little.

...

When she next woke up, the sun was already up in the middle of the sky.

Samantha looked at the time and saw that it was almost one o’clock in the afternoon. Timothy was no longer with her on the bed.

After getting up and freshening herself up in the bathroom, she headed downstairs and was surprised to see Timothy sitting on the living room sofa.

She thought he had already gone to the company...

At that point, Timothy was holding his cell phone and was in the midst of a video call with someone. The voice vaguely sounded like a female one.

Samantha went over stealthily..

Chapter 127: How Much Did He Dislike Her?

As soon as Samantha approached Timothy, he happened to have hung up already. He put his phone away and looked at her.

Samantha froze. Realizing that she had wanted to come over and see who Timothy was calling, she felt a little embarrassed and could not help but laugh dryly at herself.

“Why...are you still at home? Don't you need to go to the company today?”

Timothy smiled. “I'm skipping work today.”

Samantha was lost for words. Hearing a statement like that from a workaholic like him made her feel as though the sun had risen from the west instead of the east.

She unconsciously turned and looked out of the floor-to-ceiling windows.

“Time to eat,” the man then said.

“What?” Samantha snapped back to herself and answered without thinking, “I haven't cooked yet.”

Aunt Julia was not around and there were no other servants in the villa.

“Food's already ready,” Timothy uttered those three words and got up to head straight to the kitchen.

Samantha stared at the man's rear figure in surprise. It took her a full ten seconds to realize what he had just said. ‘The food was ready? Who could've cooked it? Timothy?’

She followed along.

An array of dishes was laid out on the dining table, consisting of three dishes and one soup that was being kept warm. Surprisingly, all of them were her favorite dishes.

The presentation of the dishes was rather pleasant and it smelled delicious.

Samantha blinked several times and was a bit skeptical after sitting down. She looked at Timothy and asked softly, “Timothy, did you...order takeout?”

She had recalled how Timothy was born with a silver spoon and was the kind of high-bred man who steered clear of the kitchen and never cooked before.

Timothy glanced at her and said emphatically, “I cooked them.”

“Really?” Samantha did not hold himself back and asked right away. “When did you learn how to cook?”

Timothy's hand tightened slightly as he held his cutlery.

Back when Samantha regained consciousness after being shot, she had always been staying in the hospital to recuperate. At that time, she had no appetite for the bland and tasteless hospital food, finding it to be especially unpalatable. That was one of the things she inadvertently complained about to Timothy.

He remembered hiring a dietitian specifically to create some customized meals. Of course, he could have told the dietitian to cook it every day, but he felt that he should learn to cook it himself. Samantha was a big eater, and it would be good if he could cook whatever food she wanted to eat in the future.

That was how he started to learn the tips and tricks of cooking nutritious meals for her every day.

His pride stopped him from telling her that he had rolled up his sleeves and cooked all the food for her, so Samantha always thought that the nutritious meal was prepared by a nutritionist. She even praised the food several times in front of him and extolled the nutritionist's skills in preparing such sumptuous food. Timothy did not know whether to be pissed or to laugh when he heard that.

She still had not noticed anything at all, even until the present day. Just how little was his place in her heart?

Timothy's tone became half as warm compared to earlier. "I learned it long ago."

Samantha wondered just how long ago that could be.

She thought carefully about her relationship with him in the past and seemed to realize that she had never seen him entering the kitchen before. Could he have learned how to cook within the past two years?

"Why would a man like Timothy learn to cook for no apparent reason?"

She unconsciously said what was in her heart.

Timothy's voice became even frostier and he asked instead, "What do you think?"

"What do I think?"

Samantha bit her lower lip and frowned in thought.

Most men only start learning to cook because of a woman. Could it be for Penelope? Or perhaps one of the other women around him?

Samantha felt a little uncomfortable in her heart when she thought of that.

She had been with Timothy for so long and yet he never learned to cook for her. It was with other women that he learned to cook...

Just how much did he dislike her!

She would be lying if she said she was unconcerned about what happened in the past. A woman's instinct was to compare various aspects of herself with other women.

Talking about that subject was bound to make her feel even more stressed and annoyed. Samantha, therefore, decided to end it right then and there. "I don't know. Let's eat. I'm getting hungry."

She picked up the cutlery, scooped the food, and ate it right away. Her attitude suggested that she was going to keep quiet throughout the meal.

Timothy's gaze came into focus and he lamented how she was not even willing to guess...

There was a slight ache in his heart.

Although their relationship has improved, that little bit of improvement seemed to be the farthest that they were going to go...

Timothy lost his appetite. He ate a couple of bites and got up to leave the dining hall.

Samantha heard his footsteps heading upstairs. About five minutes later, he then came back down, went out, and drove off.

She stopped eating as well.

Samantha, too, had lost her appetite.

...

Over at the Barker Group, Ronald was stunned to see Timothy walking over and thought that he was seeing an apparition.

Timothy called earlier that morning to inform Ronald that he would be staying with his wife at home for a few days and would not be going to the company. Ronald was told not to disturb him if there was nothing important and to postpone anything that was important!

In the end, barely one morning had passed and his boss somehow came to the company again!

Could the company be facing some huge emergency? It was unlikely because he would not have missed the news if something went awry at the company!

In that case, could his boss have had some conflict with the missus?

It was a bolt from the blue for Ronald. He really would rather have something major happen to the company than see friction between Timothy and Samantha!

Judging from the way Timothy walked blankly into the office, Ronald felt that the latter possibility was more likely. He wondered why life had to be so cruel to him...

He did not even have the chance to spend a few days in peace.

Nevertheless, his first priority as a special assistant was to solve problems for his boss. Even though Ronald did not want to end up like cannon fodder, he still got up and bit the bullet as he headed into the office.

He stood at his desk, pondered over the kind of language he should use, then spoke in the softest of voices. "Mr. Barker, did you...come over so suddenly because you...had a falling-out with the missus? There's actually...a knack for husband and wife to interact with each other..."

Timothy looked up and glanced coldly at Ronald.

The air conditioner was working well enough inside the office but Ronald's back was sweating profusely.

He forced himself to stop speaking and said weakly, "I'm sorry, Mr. Barker. I overstepped my line. I'll go out and continue my work right now."

Ronald turned around immediately as soon as he finished speaking and lifted his feet to exit the office.

However, Timothy's voice sounded the next second, "Come back here."

He stopped instinctively and turned around immediately. His expression was miserable and he begged for mercy, "It was my fault, Mr. Barker. I shouldn't have talked so much. Please give me another chance..."

Timothy shot back impatiently. "Shut up!"

Ronald closed his mouth and did not dare to speak anymore.

Timothy leaned against the back of the chair and massaged his eyebrows using his fingers. He had a briefly strained expression before he opened his lips, "Are you married, Ronald?"

Ronald was startled by that question but he responded promptly and answered truthfully, "No."

"Have you ever been in a relationship?"

“Uh... Once? During kindergarten...”

Timothy sneered. “What kind of advice do you think you can give me if you’ve never been married nor been in a relationship before?”

Chapter 128: Honeymoon

Ronald was choked by Timothy’s words and could only remain silent for a long time.

Sadness soon ensued.

When it came to relationships, it was not as though he was disinterested or lacked the financial capability to be in one. He would be much sought after, considering his good looks and status as a well-paid member of the upper class.

Unfortunately, his workload piled up after Timothy took over the Barker Group a few years ago. As Timothy’s assistant, he naturally got busier and was unable to squeeze out even a little bit of time to meet women.

When Timothy and Samantha were preparing to get married, Ronald’s initial thought was that Timothy would need to balance work with family after getting married. After all, Timothy had to make time to be with his wife. That way, Ronald would also be able to free up some time and try his luck at a relationship. What he never expected was for Timothy to break off the marriage.

Worse still, Timothy turned into a workaholic and spent most of his time at work.

Whenever he could finally spare a little bit of time to go on a coffee date or a drinking date with a woman, Timothy’s intimidating and repeated calls came at the most inopportune times.

As time passed, no women were willing to date him and he ended up remaining single until then. Whenever his mom and dad chatted with him, a great majority of their conversation centered around exhorting him to get married.

He had the sudden urge not to give up on his boss just like that!

Whether it was for Timothy’s happiness or his own, it was imperative that he helped Timothy to foster a good relationship with Samantha.

Ronald adjusted his emotions, raised his eyes, and braved himself to look at Timothy. He then said, “Even though I don’t have any experience myself, I’ve seen enough to know a thing or two about it!”

“Oh?” Timothy cocked an eyebrow slightly. “Do tell, then.”

“Ahem.” Ronald pretended to clear his throat before saying, “I’ll be honest with you, Mr. Barker, my parents are the most loving couple in the entire village. This reputation of theirs extends far beyond the village and no one else can compare to them!

“But I heard from my mother that she met my dad on a blind date. At that time, the two of them did not take a liking to each other, but their respective elders were happy with them. It was only on their family’s insistence on their pairing that the two of them got married. In the beginning, my parents just could not stand each other. Big arguments happened on occasion but smaller ones were more frequent. The worst one caused my mother to pack up and head back to stay with her own family!”

Timothy’s gaze seemed to come into focus even more. “What happened after that?”

Ronald noticed Timothy’s intrigue and said even more enthusiastically, “After that, my dad’s family forced him to persuade my mom into coming back. My dad wasn’t happy at all and neither was my mom, so my mom’s mother—my grandmother—felt that she could not let the young couple go on like that any longer. She wanted their relationship to improve, so she paid for them to travel.

“You’ll definitely feel better if you go sightseeing and eat some delicious food. My parents got much closer when they were traveling.

“More importantly, when they came back from their trip, my mother had just conceived me. My mother was calmer because of her baby and my dad felt a sense of responsibility as well. Their life then became so sweet that they never quarreled anymore in the next few decades! Until today, I still have to endure watching them get all lovey-dovey with each other!”

His parents had told him that story for years on end, brainwashing him with it every single day. Whenever his father finished telling the story, his mother picked up from where her husband left off. It had reached a point where he could recite the entire story backward without having to take a breather in between.

Timothy remained silent for a few seconds before asking, “Traveling?”

“Exactly!” Ronald nodded. “Mr. Barker, if you really want to get along well with Mrs. Barker, you shouldn’t have a fall-out with each other all day long. If conflict can chip away at a couple’s feelings, it’ll be even worse with you two bec—”

Timothy’s frosty gaze swept over.

Ronald felt coldness around his neck and immediately changed his sentence, “What I’m trying to say is, when you and Mrs. Barker got married, all you did was sign an agreement, right? Don’t all women look forward to weddings and stuff like that? If you

ask me, it'd be good for you to bring the missus on a trip. Treat it as a long-overdue honeymoon. You can also buy her a diamond ring. I'm sure she'll be very happy."

After a pause, he winked cheekily, "It'd be even better if you travel with her and come back with the future little Mr. Barker. That way, Mrs. Barker won't always think about getting a divorce."

"You..." Timothy uttered coldly.

Panic appeared in Ronald's eyes. 'Crap, I couldn't control myself and ended up touching the boss's sore spot!'

The next second, however, Timothy said, "...are pretty good. Your bonus this month will be doubled."

That was Ronald's first time experiencing sudden joy after grief!

Ronald was so excited that he immediately responded, "I'm eternally grateful, Mr. Barker!"

Timothy ignored him and immediately ordered, "Postpone all of next week's work."

Ronald's words might have been harsh, but none of what he said seemed to be wrong.

Samantha really liked all that fancy stuff and Timothy was reminded of it when he proposed to her. At Zachary's suggestion, he used a drone to spell out the proposal in the air and she was incredibly happy at that time.

Women were probably all like that.

Many women described such things as giving it a ceremonial feel.

...

Samantha thought that Timothy would disappear for nearly half a month after leaving the villa. After all, that was what he did in the past. To her surprise however, he returned after a mere couple of hours.

Timothy strode in and went straight upstairs. He came back down a few minutes later, then walked up to her and held her wrist before dragging her out.

Samantha was startled and wondered what was going on.

"Where are you taking me, Timothy?"

Rather than answering her, he led her out of the villa and walked to the car. He went to the front passenger seat and opened the door before shielding her head with his hand and forcing her in.

After closing the door, he went to the driver's seat and got in. Once the engine was turned on, he stepped on the gas pedal and drove the car out.

Samantha could not help but glance at him from the side and ask, "Did something happen?"

Timothy still did not answer.

Samantha frowned. "Where are you taking me?"

The man finally glanced at her and said solemnly, "You'll know when we reach."

After a pause, he said, "Don't worry, I'm not going to sell you off. Besides, you're not worth the money."

Would it kill him to speak nicely?

Samantha was so incensed that she did not want to talk anymore. Engaging in a conversation with him would only shorten her life span.

The car was driven not into the city, but deeper and deeper into the suburbs. Samantha started to feel a little uneasy. What was Timothy going to do, exactly? If his intention was not to sell her off, could he be intending to bury her alive?

After about an hour and a half later, the car finally came to a stop.

Samantha stared blankly at the airport in front of her. Why did Timothy bring her to the airport for no good reason? Was it to pick someone up? It was not as if Old Madam Barker was coming back that day!

As her thoughts started to run wild, Timothy had gotten out of the car and went to her side. He grabbed her wrist after opening the door and unfastened her seat belt, helping her out of the car and bringing her into the airport.

He took her to a place and left her there, saying, "Wait here."

Then he walked away.

Samantha's first instinct was to chase after him. "Timothy, where are you going—"

All of a sudden, Samantha bumped into someone by accident, sending the person's ID card and plane ticket fluttering from their hand to the ground.

Chapter 129: Pretty Woman

“Ah, I’m so sorry!” Samantha apologized right away.

“It’s fine.”

The person’s voice was exceptionally mellifluous, flowing into her ears like a clear spring flowing through the mountains. It was very pleasant to listen to such a voice.

Samantha could not help but look up.

An extremely petite and delicate face was the first thing Samantha laid eyes on. The woman’s lush hair, which was left untied, added an extra layer of personality.

Samantha had seen no shortage of good-looking people since she was young. The benchmark for men was Timothy, while for women it had to be Rochelle. Few people could amaze Samantha at first glance, but that unknown woman was one such person. Samantha’s eyes lit up resoundingly when she saw the woman.

There was a certain pure and unadulterated charm to that woman, unlike Rochelle’s high-profile and in-your-face kind of beauty. Simply looking at that woman made one feel as though the entire world had turned quiet, almost like there was an eternal calmness.

That was probably the kind of face that man’s first love would possess.

Samantha gawked for a second before realizing that her actions were impolite. She immediately stopped looking and squatted down to pick up the ID card and plane ticket, which she handed over as she apologized once more. “I’m really sorry. You’re not injured, are you?”

“Not at all.”

The woman smiled and shook her head. Her slender fingers tucked a wayward lock of hair behind her ear and she reached out to take the ID card and ticket. “Thank you, Ms. Larsson.”

Samantha could not hide her surprise.

She had no idea who the woman in front of her was. Such beauty would almost certainly leave a lasting impression on Samantha if they had met before.

How did that woman know that Samantha’s last name was Larsson?

“You, how do you know my name?”

A hint of trepidation, fleeting though it was, appeared in the woman’s eyes. However, she replied in a very natural manner, “I know because Mr. Barker revealed his marriage to you in a rather high-profile manner a few days ago.”

“Oh, so that’s how it is.”

It was logical, considering how Samantha’s marriage with Timothy had spent a few days making the headlines of all the news outlets.

The woman smiled at Samantha again. “Goodbye then.”

“Ah, okay, goodbye.”

The woman dragged her luggage and turned around to leave.

Samantha looked at the woman’s rear figure and gasped in awe at such elegance and beauty. The woman was very unlike her because she had been a carefree and spirited girl ever since she was a child.

That so-called ladylike temperament was instilled into her by her mother in order to make her more marriageable to a wealthy family in the future. A teacher had once been hired to teach her, but that was the one thing she was never able to pick up on, despite being a quick learner when it came to other things. For that reason, she often had to bear the brunt of her mother’s scolding.

It was only after she got together with Timothy that her mother finally did not care about that anymore and stopped forcing her to learn it.

“What are you looking at?” Timothy’s voice rang suddenly in her ears.

Samantha came to her senses right away and looked up to see Timothy’s dark pupils.

She replied without much thought, “I accidentally ran into a really pretty woman earlier!”

“Oh.”

Timothy responded indifferently and showed little interest. He could not even be bothered to look in that direction and merely said to her, “Let’s go.”

Go? Go where?

Samantha no longer talked about the woman and turned her attention back to him. She did not move from her spot and merely stared at Timothy while asking, “Can you tell me now, Timothy? Where are you going to take me? What do you want to—”

Before she could finish speaking, Timothy had already lost his patience. He grabbed her wrist again in a manner that was slightly more forceful than earlier and dragged her to the VIP boarding gate.

Since Timothy was a top-tier VIP, he was allowed to go through a special lane. Samantha had already been dragged onto the plane and seated down inside before she could even manage to figure out what was going on.

The flight attendant walked over and asked politely, “Mr. and Mrs. Barker, is there anything you’d like to drink?”

Timothy responded carefreely, “Coffee for me.”

He glanced at still shell-shocked Samantha and said to the attendant on her behalf, “Lemonade for the wife.”

“Alright, one moment please.” The flight attendant walked away.

Samantha finally regained her ability to think and turned to look at Timothy. “Can you tell me now?”

Timothy casually gave a two-word reply, “A vacation.”

“...Why are you bringing me on a vacation so suddenly?” Samantha was speechless. “And I didn’t even bring anything either.”

She did not pack any luggage nor brought her bag. All she had was her cell phone.

He ignored her first question and only answered her second one, “You can buy whatever you need there.”

Samantha frowned. “But Corey—”

“The caregiver will take care of him.”

Timothy then leaned over all of a sudden, prompting Samantha to step back slightly. However, she merely saw him stretching out his hand to buckle her seat belt.

Did he just go ahead with everything and before even getting her approval?

He got angry all of a sudden that morning and left, but by the time he came back in the afternoon, he immediately dragged her to go on a vacation. Just how divergent were that man’s thoughts?

Samantha was still very puzzled and asked again. “Why are we going on vacation all of a sudden?”

“Keep it down.”

Timothy muttered those three words in a low voice, then leaned back against his chair and closed his eyes for a nap.

“You...”

Samantha felt a little annoyed. Why did he always do things according to his whims and fancies?

However, she forcibly put a halt to whatever words she was about to spit out after seeing the faint greenish rings under his eyes.

She would never be able to coax Timothy into saying something he did not want to say, and besides, she might even get pissed off if he opened his mouth and spoke.

There was nothing she could do other than to accept it. After all, she was already up inside the plane.

Samantha had slept well the night before and Timothy forced her to sleep with him the entire morning. As a result, she was very energetic at the moment and did not feel sleepy at all.

She flipped through the magazines and read the newspapers until she finally became bored.

As she glanced at the peacefully asleep Timothy, the beautiful woman she ran into earlier popped up suddenly in her mind.

She seemed to have heard that woman’s voice before.

It sounded like the female voice in Timothy’s video earlier that morning.

Samantha could not help but shake her head as soon as that idea popped up. She probably only made that kind of association because she was too bored.

Samantha ignored it, switched on the television, then put on her earplugs and watched a random movie.

...

It took more than ten hours before the plane landed.

Samantha was already tired from all the sitting and stretched her waist as soon as she unfastened her seat belt. Meanwhile, Timothy opened his eyes with perfect timing, as if he had a built-in alarm clock in his sleep.

The two people got off the plane and went through the exclusive lane. They exited the airport in no time and got into the car that was waiting for them.

It was already evening there and it just so happened that the afterglow of the setting sun was shining on the horizon, making for a beautiful sight.

Samantha looked out the window for a while and felt that the place was a little familiar. A thought suddenly occurred to her and she looked back at Timothy. After a few seconds of hesitation, she asked, "Are we on Barrkjaer Island, Timothy?"

Timothy looked askance at her and replied faintly, "Yes."

Unable to hold back the shock and astonishment, Samantha's eyes widened in utter disbelief.

Chapter 130: Proceed as Planned

There was a very beautiful legend surrounding Barrkjaer Island. A pair of gods were said to have gone through tremendous hardship in order to finally become lovers and lifelong partners. After pledging their eternal love to each other, they came to the island and sought refuge there ever since.

That was the reason the island made its name as a destination for weddings and honeymoons.

Samantha first knew of the island because the name Barrkjaer sounded similar to Timothy's surname Barker. Having read the legend, she once told Timothy that she wanted to get married and spend her honeymoon there.

Samantha had everything planned out two years ago and wanted to have her honeymoon on the island after the wedding ceremony was over. That plan was not to be because the marriage was unfortunately broken off.

She originally thought that she would go her whole life without ever getting a chance to visit the place, but she never expected Timothy to actually bring her there.

Did he choose the destination at random or was it chosen on purpose?

Timothy was becoming more and more of a mystery to her.

...

The car drove for more than an hour before arriving at their hotel. It had been rebuilt from an old castle and looked particularly magnificent.

Timothy and Samantha got out of the car and walked into the building. In an instant, they felt as though they had stepped into one of those medieval oil paintings.

All else aside, the beautiful scenery was enough to lift Samantha's mood. After all, she had been longing to visit the place a long time ago.

Timothy glanced at Samantha from the side and smiled when he saw that her dark eyes had lit up as she looked all around her.

Ronald's proposal seemed to be quite good and the double bonus was warranted.

Once the two of them checked in at the front desk, they proceeded to head upstairs.

Timothy booked a presidential suite that offered a spectacular field of view. The vast ocean in front of the hotel could be seen when standing on the balcony.

Samantha could not resist closing her eyes and taking a deep breath of fresh air. Doing so invigorated her instantly.

Someone then walked out onto the balcony beside.

Samantha unconsciously looked over and was startled to see who it was. "Ah... It's you?"

The person happened to be the beautiful woman she bumped into at the airport.

The woman saw Samantha as well and smiled gently after getting over the initial shock. "What a coincidence, Ms. Larsson. Are you here on vacation too?"

"Yes, and it looks like we were on the same flight."

The woman smiled as she replied, "I guess our paths were destined to cross then."

Samantha heard footsteps behind her and turned around to see Timothy coming over.

His gaze landed at her and he asked lazily, "Who were you talking to?"

"The beautiful woman I told you about, the one I bumped into at the airport." Samantha whispered to him, "I didn't expect her to come here on vacation and stay right next door to us."

Following her remark, Timothy looked toward the balcony next door but so no one was there. The balcony was completely empty.

"There's no one there."

“...That’s impos—” Samantha looked over and halted her sentence midway when she saw the empty balcony.

She then muttered, “She was there just now. Maybe she went in?”

Timothy was not interested in that at all. He raised his wrist and glanced at his watch before saying, “Let’s get something to eat.”

Samantha had not eaten much at home and she was absolutely famished after the ten-hour flight. She immediately nodded and said, “Let’s.”

She particularly disliked the feeling of being hungry because she was often like that due to her impoverished life abroad.

Timothy took her hand naturally and led her out.

Samantha stopped walking all of a sudden as her gaze landed on them holding hands.

“Why? Don’t you want to go?” came the man’s monotonous voice.

Samantha snapped back to her senses. “Ah, no, it’s nothing. Let’s go.”

It was just a little difficult for her to get used to Timothy’s sudden change, more so because she did not know whether Timothy’s behavior was to maintain their husband-and-wife image or because of something else.

Timothy brought Samantha to the hotel restaurant for dinner.

The restaurant was a five-star establishment recommended by travel journals and Samantha remembered having once mentioned to Timothy about her desire to eat there.

She had the curious feeling that the arrangements Timothy made for the vacation were incredibly similar to the honeymoon she had imagined for herself.

Could Timothy have brought her to that destination for a long-overdue honeymoon?

As that thought ran in Samantha’s mind, she unconsciously stared at Timothy and forgot to eat her meal.

“Eat your food,” came Timothy’s sudden, low-voiced reminder.

After a pause, he lowered his voice and spoke in a slightly naughty tone, “You’d have to wait until we go back to the room if you want to look at me. Then you look as much as you want.”

Samantha's cheeks became hot in an instant. "I, I didn't."

"Sure you didn't," the man teased.

Samantha shut her mouth. In any case, he would only assume that she was making excuses out of embarrassment if she tried explaining it to him. All she did was lower her head in silence and continue eating.

Once they were done with their meal, the two of them walked out of the restaurant.

Samantha remembered that none of them had brought any luggage, so she turned to Timothy and asked, "Should we go to the mall and buy some clothes?"

Wearing the same outfit all the time was out of the question.

Timothy did not refuse. "Sure."

The next second, however, a sense of worry came over Samantha and she said, "The expenses here are very high aren't they, Timothy? I don't think I'll be able to buy any clothes. I wonder if there are any cheaper malls around here..."

Timothy was silent.

Seeing his silence, Samantha suddenly realized what she had just said. A trace of embarrassment flashed across her face but she soon recovered her composure.

She might be poor, but being poor was nothing to be ashamed about. After all, it was not against the law to be poor.

"I'm tired. Let's go back to the room." Timothy took her hand again and walked straight to the stairs.

"But the clothes..."

"I'll have someone send over whatever we need."

Rich and overbearing people were simply different from the rest!

...

After taking a shower, Samantha put on her pajamas and walked out of the bathroom.

Timothy was talking on the phone while standing by the floor-to-ceiling window. He seemed to be explaining something to Ronald. Thinking that it was probably some work-related matter, she decided to tread softly so as not to disturb him.

She leaned against the bedhead and texted the caregiver like usual. Once she made sure that everything was fine, she scrolled through her phone for a while until her eyelids turned heavy and she felt sleepy.

After Timothy ended the call, he turned around and saw that Samantha was nodding off and her eyes were already closed.

He could not help but smile.

She was getting increasingly relaxed and at ease around him...

He walked over slowly and bent down to pick her up with his long arms. After laying her down on the bed, he got onto the bed and sat there.

His dark eyes looked at her sleeping face for some time and he eventually lowered his head to plant a kiss on her lips. "Good night and sweet dreams."

Then, he took out his phone and typed a text: [Proceed as planned.]

Timothy then hit 'send'.

Chapter 131: Wedding Ceremony

Early the next morning, Samantha woke up to the sound of rolling waves outside. She opened her eyes slowly, wrapped herself in the blanket before sitting up, then looked out to see an ocean spanning as far as her eyes could see.

"You're awake?"

Timothy laid eyes on her after walking out of the bathroom and raised his chin to draw attention to the sofa. "The clothes are there. Go and freshen up. We need to head out."

Samantha was speechless for a moment and she then asked, "Is there anything we need to do?"

"Yes."

Timothy walked straight to the dressing room after answering her.

Samantha blinked a couple of times. They were supposed to be there on vacation, right? Did they have a schedule?

She got out of the bed, walked into the bathroom, and had a quick wash before walking over to the sofa. There was a box on it, which she opened to take a look.

There was a simple white dress in the box, although it did seem to look more like a wedding dress...

What was going on? Were the wrong clothes bought? Or did Timothy have something on his mind?

Timothy walked out of the dressing room amidst Samantha's confusion and she intended to ask him about the clothes. However, her words ended up stuck when she turned to look at him and saw the extremely formal suit he was wearing.

He directed his dark gaze to Samantha and frowned when he saw that she had yet to change into her clothes. "Aren't you going to change your clothes?"

"Well, no..." Samantha finally managed to find her voice. "Why are we dressing like this, Timothy? Are we going to...some kind of banquet or a wedding?"

Simple and comfortable clothes were undoubtedly much more suitable if they were going out sightseeing!

Timothy looked into her eyes and replied curtly, "A wedding."

A wedding made so much more sense.

After all, the island was a sacred place for marriage. Could Timothy's so-called vacation be to attend a friend's wedding? The most probable explanation as to why he brought her along was because she held the title of Mrs. Barker.

"Oh, okay."

Samantha took the dress out of the box and unknowingly considered changing into it on the spot. However, she then had the sudden realization that Timothy was still standing there, so she quickly turned around and walked toward the bathroom. As she ran over, she said to him, "I'll be done soon! Just give me five minutes!"

She changed into the dress as soon as she entered the bathroom and walked out once she was done.

Unfortunately, the hemline of the dress was a bit too long and she had to lift it up to walk.

Timothy glanced at her and said to her, "Come over here."

Samantha walked over slowly and spotted yet another box lying on the sofa. Timothy opened it right away and took out a pair of diamond-studded crystal high heels.

It sparkled beautifully under the light.

“Sit.”

Samantha sat down as told and stretched out her hand to put on the heels. Timothy, however, was a step quicker than her and had already knelt on one knee in front of her. His palm reached for her left ankle.

Her eyes widened all of a sudden and she wondered if he intended to help her put on her shoes.

She retracted her feet by instinct. “I... I’ll do it myself!”

Samantha would never dare to inconvenience him!

Timothy exerted a slight force to pull her foot back, telling her calmly, “Don’t move.”

He reached for one heel with the other hand and put it on for her in a slightly awkward manner.

Samantha watched dazedly as the entire scene unfolded before her. Even her breathing was starting to become erratic and she wondered why everything felt so...strange.

Ever since Timothy publicized their marriage at the press conference, his entire character had turned somewhat bizarre.

Rather than making snide remarks to embarrass or hurt her, he actually became slightly similar to the time when they were in a relationship.

Despite that, Timothy’s actions only made her worry even more. She had no idea what was going on in his mind, for he could be warm one instance and cold the next. All that did was take her heart on a roller coaster ride.

Timothy helped Samantha to wear both heels and finally looked up at her. Seeing the frown and the convoluted look she had, he could not help but ask, “What’s the matter? Did I put them on incorrectly?”

Samantha snapped back to her senses. She obviously could not tell Timothy what she was thinking about! The only thing she could do was force out a smile and said, “No, you did it right! Thank you.”

“Let’s go then.”

Timothy stood up, held her hand, and led her out of the room.

...

After half an hour, the car finally arrived at a very spectacularly constructed church. Its general motif used the colors blue and white, seemingly allowing it to blend with the sky and the sea.

That was the same church that Samantha liked most back in the day.

It would never have crossed her mind that the first time she set foot there would be to attend someone else's wedding.

A long red carpet began at the church entrance. Colorful balloons and vividly-colored pink roses adorned both sides of the carpet, making for an absolutely wonderful atmosphere.

Timothy and Samantha walked down the red carpet and into the church.

Surprisingly, there was no one inside the church at all.

Samantha looked at Timothy in surprise. "Did we come too early? Or...did we go to the wrong church?"

Timothy looked at her again and gazed deeply at her. "We're on time. And it's the correct church."

"Then why isn't there anyone here? What about the bride and groom? Where are the guests?"

Timothy turned around and looked at her. "The bride and groom are you and I."

Samantha was thoroughly dumbfounded. "Aren't we here for a wedding?"

"We are. For our wedding."

Samantha's eyes widened and more than ten seconds passed before she opened her mouth again. "So... Is this...sort of...a long-overdue wedding?"

She finally realized why the entire sequence fit perfectly with what she used to have in mind.

"Yes."

Samantha was confused and at a loss. "Is this...what Grandma wanted?"

That was the only reason she could think of.

'Grandma...'

A trace of dissatisfaction flashed through Timothy's eyes but he immediately suppressed it. He then opened his lips and spoke emphatically, "It's what I want!"

Samantha could not help herself from covering her mouth and even her pupils had contracted to the maximum due to shock.

Ronald was hiding in a small prayer room, and the second he heard what Timothy said, he pumped his fist excitedly and whispered silently to himself, "Yes!"

Hearing Timothy restraining his temper, and confessing his intentions so boldly, completely overwhelmed Ronald with excitement. The joy he felt was as if he had finally seen his own son being mature!

That was how it ought to be! One must always speak one's mind directly! Dark and broody men were so last year!

His effort of coming over before dawn to work on the decorations was not in vain! His big boss Mr. Barker had, at long last, finally become the man he was always destined to be!

Timothy was imminently going to carry a damsel home!

Simple as those four words were, they made Samantha's long eyelashes tremble and caused her heartbeat to accelerate uncontrollably.

She gulped a few times and asked almost unhesitatingly, "Why...did you want to make it up for this wedding?"

As soon as Samantha finished her question, she bravely looked Timothy in the eye and waited for his answer.