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*Chapter 132: Different Thoughts*

Samantha's eyes were big and bright, like the most beautiful and vibrant star in the night sky. Those eyes were once his favorite part of her.

His heart often skipped a beat when he saw those jovial, crafty, and sparkling eyes.

Timothy became somewhat entranced.

His Adam's apple moved up and down in his throat and he spoke. "I'm making up for the wedding because..."

'...I wanted to make it up to you and start over with you.' Those were very simple words, but it was a little bit difficult for him to say.

Timothy pursed his thin lips before finally continuing his sentence, but the words that came out were, "...we've publicized our marriage to the public. It's only natural that we have to hold this long-overdue wedding. That would stop any paparazzi from making up stories."

Following his words, Samantha's frantic heartbeat reverted little by little to calmness.

Sure enough, it was not the answer she had been expecting.

At that moment, the question she had not gotten the chance to ask before appeared in her mind. 'Am I the person that Timothy once loved?' She was glad she did not get the opportunity to ask, otherwise the answer might have ended up being a big slap in the face.

Ronald's eager look crumbled instantly after hearing Timothy's words and he immediately clutched his chest.

Praising Timothy was futile, for he turned out to be a disappointment barely moments after Ronald had cheered on him.

The atmosphere was so perfect that it ought to have been a good time to confess, yet all the man could come up with was the crappiest of excuses!

Samantha held back her dejectedness and looked up at him with a smile. "Let's get started then."

She was willing to fulfill his demands because she already promised him that she would keep up appearances as Mrs. Barker.

Timothy was a little puzzled because he could clearly sense that Samantha was somewhat downcast. Why was she in low spirits when they were in the very church and the very island that she had once talked about getting married at?

Could the so-called ceremonious feeling be lacking?

Did she want a grand wedding that the entire world would know? One that involved many distinguished guests?

He based his choice on the initial assumption that she preferred a private wedding, but if she preferred a grand one, it was not impossible for him to accommodate her wish.

As soon as that thought occurred to him, he whispered to her again, "I can make it up to you with an even grander wedding if that's what you want."

Samantha was speechless. When did she say that she wanted a grand wedding?

If the two of them really loved each other and got married, she would be happy regardless of the style of wedding ceremony. However, there was no point making such a grand wedding if its purpose was just to complete a task or tick off a box. It would be exhausting to put on an act in front of so many people!

"No, this is good enough." Samantha smiled half-heartedly. "Let's go through the wedding rites."

She took the initiative to raise her hand and hook Timothy's arm.

Timothy narrowed his eyes slightly but did not say a word. Instead, he held her and walked step-by-step toward the cross.

The pastor came out to officiate their wedding.

"Timothy Barker, do you take Samantha Larsson to be your wife, to live together in matrimony, to love her, to honor her, to comfort her, and to keep her in sickness and in health, forsaking all others, for as long as you both shall live?"

The man turned his face and stared deeply at Samantha for a few seconds. His thin lips parted open slightly and he answered clearly, "I do."

Those two words struck Samantha's heart.

She was reminded of the incredibly lavish wedding two years ago. Back then, those two words were the ones she had been looking forward to the most, but what happened next was a ruthless falling-out.

She was finally able to hear those two words after everything that happened, but her mood was not much better than two years ago.

Samantha would rather not hear 'I do' if it was fake.

“Samantha Larsson, do you take Timothy Barker to be your husband, to live together in matrimony, to love him, to honor him, to comfort him, and to keep him in sickness and in health, forsaking all others, for as long as you both shall live?”

Samantha responded mechanically, “I do.”

The priest smiled. “The bride and groom may exchange rings.”

Ring?

She did not prepare any ring because she only knew that they were going to make up for the wedding ceremony when she came to the church.

However, Ronald then appeared out of nowhere. He walked up to them and carried over a small tray that contained a pair of rings.

Samantha glanced unconsciously at the ring and immediately recognized it. It was the same style from two years ago because its beauty made her do a double-take as she leafed through the magazine.

It seemed that the last-minute wedding really had been held so as not to give the reporters a chance to make up stories, otherwise he would not have been so careless as to just use their old rings for their wedding ring.

In any case, Samantha did not care about it too much. After all, the ring did not really belong to her and was only to be worn temporarily.

Timothy took the women's ring, held Samantha's hand, and slowly slid the ring on her finger. Once that was done, he even stared at it for a few seconds and felt that it looked pretty good.

That was the same wedding ring he prepared for their wedding two years ago, but he did not have a chance to put it on her finger at the time.

He was unsure why he never threw those rings away, but perhaps deep down he was still waiting for the day he could finally put the ring on her again.

Timothy then raised his hand and motioned to Samantha.

Samantha thought to herself, 'I'm someone who keeps my promises.' Only then did she take the men's ring and be done with it by putting it on Timothy's ring finger.

Her movement was extremely quick.

Timothy's keen senses seemed to have picked up on something and he frowned slightly.

Ronald could see that the situation was starting to go south, so he immediately winked at the pastor, who understood it at once and said immediately to Timothy, "You may now kiss the bride!"

Timothy reached forward, hooked Samantha's slender waist, and pulled her into his arms. He then lowered his head and planted his thin lips on hers.

Unfortunately, it lasted only a second before Samantha raised her hand and pushed him away. "That'll do, right?"

Timothy's gaze sank.

Did she dislike the wedding so much after he had worked so hard to prepare everything?

Was he in the wrong even though he wanted to make her happy?

Cold sweat started trickling on Ronald's back and he cheered loudly, "That concludes the ceremony! Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Barker! I sincerely wish you both a happy marriage!"

He then applauded like a madman!

The pastor immediately followed suit and applauded too.

At the same time, Ronald kept winking at Timothy to give the latter a hint that he must, by all means, control his anger. If Timothy got angry, all that effort would have gone down the drain!

The terrifying look in Timothy's eyes appeared and disappeared. In the end, he suppressed it as far down as he could but his voice sounded a bit stiff when he next spoke. "It's done. Let's go back to the hotel."

As soon as Timothy said that, he was the first to walk out of the church.

Samantha stood there for about half a minute before following him out slowly.

...

Samantha got out of the car when it arrived at the hotel entrance, but Timothy remained seated inside and said nothing to her. The car immediately drove off after she got down.

She had gotten used to his unpredictable temper and could not be bothered to try and guess what he was thinking about. She simply turned around and walked into the hotel.

Moments after she stepped into the elevator, the door was about to close when someone called out, "Could you hold the elevator please!"

Samantha immediately pressed the door open button. The elevator door reopened and a woman walked right in.

The woman made eye contact with Samantha and greeted her, "We meet again, Ms.. Larsson."

*Chapter 133: The Weak Suffer When the Powerful Come to Blows*

It was the beautiful woman who was staying in the room next door.

Samantha smiled and said, "Yeah."

The woman stood beside Samantha as the elevator door came to a close. Judging from the reflection on the elevator wall, Samantha was a little surprised when she noticed that her height was almost the same as that woman. Their figure was almost identical as well, possibly making it difficult to distinguish them at a glance when viewed from behind.

Samantha unconsciously looked at the woman's face again and was certain that they looked completely different. Samantha's facial shape was on the cute side—her brows and eyes would turn into arcs when she smiled, which was very adorable to look at. On the other hand, the woman's beauty and temperament were simpler and more elegant.

As Samantha was looking at the woman, the woman seemed to be looking at her too. The woman's gaze landed on Samantha's slender white fingers and she remarked suddenly, "That's a very beautiful ring."

"What?" Samantha needed a second or so to react. She eventually glanced down at the wedding ring on her ring finger that she had just put on, but she did not know what to feel at that moment.

As beautiful as it was, she did not know how long she would be able to continue wearing it.

None of those emotions were revealed on her face though. She merely forced out a resplendent smile and said, "Thank you."

A ding was heard and the elevator had reached their floor.

The two women stepped out of the elevator and walked up to their respective room doors. The woman said softly to Samantha, "See you around, Ms. Larsson."

Samantha thought that the woman was just being courteous and nodded in return. "Goodbye."

She then opened the door and walked into the room.

The woman stood there instead of entering her own room and watched as Samantha's figure disappeared from view. Her lips curled up into an unsettling smile and it was only then that she opened the room door and went in.

...

The car drove leisurely on the road and the atmosphere within the vehicle was so suffocating that Ronald was going to be out of breath.

His boss did not even mention any particular destination and he had already circled the whole of Barrkjaer Island. Was he supposed to keep driving until kingdom come?

Ronald felt conflicted but decided that leaving things as it is was not the way to go. He gulped a few times, mustered up the courage, then bit the bullet and said, "Mr. Barker, are we going to...return to the hotel?"

Leaving Samantha alone in the hotel would bring no benefit to Timothy. His purpose for bringing her to a honeymoon in Barrkjaer Island was to further strengthen their relationship, not to give her the cold shoulder!

Upon posing that question, Ronald could feel his boss's deathly stare without even having to look in the rearview mirror. That stare was sufficient to make Ronald break into a cold sweat.

It was always the weak who had to suffer when the powerful came to blows.

He wondered whether he should have even bothered to give his boss such an idea.

In any case, they were already on the island and the plan was already halfway done. Completing it was the right thing to do, or else ignoring it halfway would only waste all their prior effort and backfire on them.

Ronald had worked under Timothy for so long that he was still enough in his abilities to withstand the pressure. The frustration served as an impetus for his courage and he asked weakly, "Mr. Barker, there's...something I'd like to say but I don't know if it's appropriate for me to say it."

Timothy did not speak.

Ronald braved his anxiety and continued, "Perhaps you should listen to what I have to say, Mr. Barker...?In reality, women are all the same. They like being whispered sweet nothings and enjoy being comforted by others. When you speak to Mrs. Barker, it might be good if you could...be a teensy bit gentler."

Timothy frowned, clearly displeased with that suggestion.

Ronald glanced at the rearview mirror. He more or less knew that his big boss was one of those uber-serious men. He was capable of explaining business trends for a few hours straight but could not even make even the briefest of kind remarks.

To make things worse, the things he said were easily misunderstood in a negative light even if he said them with good intent.

Ronald thought for a moment and said, "Mr. Barker, it actually doesn't matter if you don't say a lot of sweet words, but there's one universal surefire sentence that all girls like to hear!"

That remark finally piqued Timothy's interest and he raised his eyebrows slightly, "Tell me."

"Ahem." Ronald put on a smile and uttered those three words in an impassioned manner, "I love you."

Timothy's handsome face soured instantly.

It gave Ronald quite a fright and he explained hurriedly, "Don't get me wrong, Mr. Barker. I wasn't telling you that I love you. I'm telling you to say 'I love you' to the missus. Of course, I'm in no way saying that I don't love you, I do love you, it's just—"

"...Shut up!" the man could not take it anymore and interrupted at once. "Go with Plan B."

Ronald was speechless.

If Timothy could not even say the simplest sentence in 'I love you', Ronald should not put his hopes up and expect the man to make any breakthroughs in that aspect.

However, Timothy was supposed to be wooing a woman, not participating in some reality show! What was with that Plan B!

Ronald lamented that an uber-serious man like his boss could have a wife when a warm and pleasant little ray of sunshine like him did not even have a woman to date...

Chiding in his heart was all that he could do, and Ronald then pondered seriously over it before saying, "If you can't tell her that, Mr. Barker, sleeping with her is your only option. It'd be better for you to just have a baby with her."

As a married couple who had a marriage certificate and just held their wedding ceremony, it was only a matter of course for them to have a baby.

His parents were an example of a married couple whose feelings developed gradually after his mother got pregnant with him.

After a pause, he unconsciously blurted out a question, "Mr. Barker, you're still going strong in that department, right?"

His expression changed drastically after he finally realized what he had just said.

Men would never say that they were...incapable. What could possibly have gone through his mind when he asked such an implicit question to Timothy? He immediately shut his mouth and kept quiet.

Fortunately for Ronald, Timothy seemed to be lost in thought and ignored whatever remark that had been made.

About five minutes later, Timothy finally spoke up. "Drive back to the hotel."

Ronald could finally breathe a sigh of relief. Sincere advice might not be pleasant to hear, but Timothy seemed to have finally heeded Ronald's words to him earlier.

...

It was almost five in the evening when Timothy returned to the room. Samantha was busy snacking on the mini biscuits provided in the room.

She was more or less relieved to see his return.

After all, if Timothy got angry and decided to go back home without her, she did not know if the remaining money that she had was even enough to buy a plane ticket home.

In addition, it was pretty saddening to be left alone in a foreign country.



Timothy anchored his gaze on her and soon shifted to the mini biscuits in her hand. Samantha noticed his line of sight and explained quickly, "This was provided free of charge."

She wanted to assert that she did not spend his money.

The glow in Timothy's eyes manifested. He was not going to blame her at all. He was just...distressed.

He opened his lips to speak, but in the end, he was still unable to say those words out loud. He decided to just walk up to her and pull her up from the sofa.

Then, he brought her straight out of the room.

"Where are we going?" Samantha struggled instinctively.

Was Timothy really going to do something to Samantha simply because of a few biscuits?

*Chapter 134: First Night as Newlyweds*

Timothy turned his head and glanced at her before uttering two words, "To eat."

Samantha was briefly stunned and stopped struggling immediately. A smile appeared on her face as she said, "Let's go!"

She would never let her stomach suffer.

Timothy could not resist letting out a quiet huff.

She was very obedient when it came to those times.

They were back at the same hotel restaurant. After the two of them took their seat, Timothy slid the menu over to Samantha. "Order whatever you like."

Samantha could not help but feel flattered.

Timothy was obviously upset earlier that morning. Why would he just disappear for a few hours and come back as if nothing happened? He was even so amiable toward her!

He brought her to eat when she was feeling hungry and told her to order whatever she wanted too.

Did he learn the Chinese art of face changing?

“What’s the matter? Can you satiate your hunger just by looking at me?” the man asked in a teasing voice.

The flurry of thoughts in Samantha’s mind disappeared immediately. She returned to her senses, picked up the menu at once, then put it in front of her face to block her slightly flustered and embarrassed expression.

She was not even sure what she ended up ordering because she randomly pointed at the items on the menu. When she finally looked up, the first thing she laid eyes on was the waiter’s surprised look.

Samantha was equally as puzzled and wondered if something was not right.

Timothy’s low voice sounded somewhat amused as he asked, “Are you sure you want to order three huge bowls of soup?”

“What?”

Samantha lowered her head instinctively and looked at the menu again. As expected, all she ordered was soup, and three different ones at that...

Her cheeks reddened uncontrollably.

Timothy was the one to blame! Had it not been for his unpredictable behavior that left her perplexed, she would not have embarrassed herself like that.

It was no surprise that the waiter looked at her as if she was an idiot...

“I think it’s better if I order the food,” Timothy said, then stretched out his hand and took the menu from Samantha’s hand.

He deftly ordered a few of Samantha’s favorite dishes and raised his eyes to look at her, teasing her with another question, “Is that enough?”

Samantha was speechless. Feeling irked from the embarrassment earlier, she just blurted out, “Yes, yes! That’s enough!”

Timothy did not get angry at all. On the contrary, his mood seemed to improve and there was even a little smirk at the corners of his lips.

He then asked the waiter to open a bottle of red wine.

Samantha was doubly curious when she saw that he had requested a bottle of red wine to be opened. What could possibly have happened in those few hours of his disappearance that turned his stormy mood into one that was much more exuberant?

Being with Timothy really put a strain on her brain's ability to process things. It was just too difficult for her!

...

Ronald hid in a small corner and gasped as he watched the infinitely harmonious scene in the distance. As expected, his big boss was much more suited to Plan B—which was all action and no talk.

One could only hope that Timothy could keep it up so everything after that could proceed smoothly!

...

Samantha's mood improved by leaps and bounds after her tummy was filled.

When she saw Timothy paying for the meal, Samantha said sincerely, "Thank you for your hospitality, Mr. Barker."

It was important to show some courtesy and be polite after being treated to a meal.

Timothy smiled and said nothing.

It happened to be sunset by the time the two of them walked out of the restaurant. The huge setting sun was floating just above the sea as it began its slow descent into the horizon.

Samantha eagerly walked to the balcony and gasped, "It's so beautiful!"

She fished out her cell phone right away and snapped photographs of the sunset.

After taking a couple of scenery shots, she wanted to take a photo with the sunset but could not do a full body one if she was the one holding her cell phone. The sun was about to set any time soon, so she turned back to Timothy without thinking much of it and said, "Hey, Timothy, could you help me take a photo with me in it!"

Timothy nodded, "Sure."

After Samantha handed him her cell phone, she was about to strike a pose when he unexpectedly grabbed her shoulder and embraced her in his arms. The next second, he raised his other hand up high and aimed the camera at the two of them.

A click was heard and he took a photo with her.

Samantha was speechless.

She had asked him to take a photo of her with the sunset, not take a photo of her with him!

However, at this time, the setting sun had completely fallen, leaving only a little afterglow on the horizon. Samantha wanted to shoot it but it was too late.

Timothy returned her phone and cocked an eyebrow when he saw her expression. “Are you happy with the picture?”

Could she say no?

Samantha flashed a smile and said, “I’m happy. Super happy.”

“Let’s go.”

...

That night, Samantha came out of the shower and did a simple skincare routine. As always, she called the caregiver and leaned on the bed after ending the call. She tapped into the photo album and looked at the sunset photos she had taken earlier that evening.

She swiped each photo one by one until she finally reached the final one—it was the wefie she took with Timothy.

Samantha did not get a clear look at the photo earlier because she was exasperated, but after looking at it again, it turned out to be a very beautiful photo.

She had a Duchenne smile while the corners of Timothy’s lips curled up in a slight grin.

Taking into account the wedding dress and suit that they wore respectively, she inexplicably felt that the photo was a wedding photo.

Timothy’s appearance inside the photo reminded her of him two years ago. Back then, he always smiled like that in front of her.

His smile was very charming and she was always captivated by it.

That was a far cry from the present...

She moved her fingertips gently and touched Timothy’s eyebrows in the photo, as if she had transcended through space and time to hold the past Timothy.

That Timothy was filled with tenderness.

Timothy happened to chance upon that scene when he walked out of the bathroom. Her finger movement seemed to have tugged on his heartstrings, sending endless ripples into his heart.

Perhaps he could also consider Ronald's second suggestion.

Having children was something that had never crossed his mind before. Despite the countless daily reminders his grandmother gave him, everything she said went in one ear and out the other. However, when that idea came up once more, a chubby little baby appeared in his subconscious.

Its eyebrows were like hers.

Its laugh was like hers.

It even looked like her when it got angry.

He never really liked children because he found them to be a nuisance, but if it was their baby, it somehow seemed...acceptable.

Samantha keenly sensed Timothy's vision. She looked up and shook her hand instinctively, turning off her cell phone screen instantly.

It might bring about unnecessary misunderstandings if Timothy saw her peeking at their wefie.

Timothy walked over, tossed the towel casually at the sofa beside him, then sat on the bed.

Samantha felt a little guilty and did not want to look at him. She calmed her voice as much as she could and said, "Well, I'm sleepy. I'm going to bed now."

She immediately shifted her body to lie down.

However, Timothy stretched out his hand abruptly and grabbed her wrist to stop her from moving.

Samantha was startled. "What is it?"

The man's Adam's apple bobbed in his throat. Words came out of his mouth in a low and slightly magnetic tone, "Tonight is our first night as newlyweds."

Samantha did not get it at first. "So?"

*Chapter 135: Hold Your Hand and Grow Old with You*

The glimmer in Timothy's eyes became dim. Rather than answering her, he exerted some force and pulled Samantha over to him.

The distance between them was shortened and Samantha's body was practically leaning into him.

After a few seconds of stupefaction, she finally realized what he was talking about. Her words became a little flustered and she spoke rather hesitantly, "T-T-Timothy... Don't mess around!"

She was not a naive person. There was no way she could not see Timothy's intentions when things had already reached such a point.

Samantha's intuitive reaction was to stretch her hands forward and place them on the man's chest. She tried to push him away and remarked absent-mindedly, "We... It's not like we're a real couple, we can't..."

Despite their relationship improving much more than it did at the beginning, it was still far from being a normal husband-and-wife relationship!

While factors beyond their control had been at play during their previous intimate sessions, they were completely sober right that moment.

Timothy interrupted her loudly and asked, "Is our marriage certificate fake?"

His sudden question caused Samantha's words to get stuck and she replied instinctively, "It's real..."

When Timothy publicized their marriage certificate at the press conference that day, some of the nosier netizens dug up the government records and ascertained that Timothy's marriage to her was genuine.

"Then what about the wedding ceremony we held today? Is it fake?"

"It's...real too..." Samantha could not refute that either.

"Why then, pray tell, are we not a real couple?"

Those three consecutive questions left Samantha stumped.

"Any other issues?" Timothy stretched out his hand, hugged Samantha's slender waist, then leaned his handsome face nearer to her.

Samantha finally knew why Timothy had been kind enough to bring her to dinner and satiate her hunger. It turned out that she had to return the favor after having her fill.

Was it her turn to satisfy his appetite?

Most men were probably capable of separating feelings from physical needs. Having zero feelings did not preclude them from fulfilling their physical needs. Women, however, were generally unable to separate the two.

When it came to that sort of thing, her previous bad experience made it so she was unable to restrain her psychological resistance.

Samantha immediately leaned her upper body back and was quick-witted enough in the face of impending danger. "I do! There's still one issue!"

The interruption elicited a flash of annoyance in his eyes, but he nevertheless continued to be patient. He raised his eyebrows and asked, "What is it?"

Samantha took a deep breath and ignored her shyness as she said softly, "We...don't have 'that'..."

"That what?" Timothy frowned.

Samantha's cheeks became slightly red and she answered him in an even softer tone than before.

Timothy was speechless.

She gulped and continued, "Don't you think it'll be even more troublesome if I get pregnant and we end up divorcing in the future?"

Samantha thought about how Timothy was a normal man who had needs. There was nothing wrong with that, but he probably would not want her to bear his child...

After all, he had misunderstood her far too often before and it might be possible that he still did not completely trust her yet.

Sure enough, the fire in Timothy's eyes seemed to wane slightly as soon as she asked that question. Samantha secretly breathed a sigh of relief.

A second later, Timothy grasped the tender flesh on Samantha's waist, drawing out a moan from her and prompting her to look up at him.

Timothy's black pupils stared intently at her. His thin lips parted slightly and he emphasized every word in his sentence, "Please listen to me, Samantha. I have no

plans to divorce you after making our marriage public. Don't you ever let me hear you say the word 'divorce' ever again!"

'I have no plans to divorce you after making our marriage public.'

Those words traveled slowly into Samantha's ears. Her black pupils shrank abruptly and she was overwhelmed with disbelief.

She always thought that Timothy made the marriage public as a stop-gap measure to quell the situation. He never struck her as having had such an intention.

If he did not want a divorce, did it mean that he would want to be tied to her for an entire lifetime?

That would be too great a price to pay if it was simply to retaliate against her. Timothy did not seem to be the kind of person who would throw his entire life away just to get revenge.

Could it be because of the Barkers' and the Barker Group's reputation, or could it possibly be due to some other factors?

"Just give birth to the baby if you get pregnant. There's nothing for you to worry about, and..."

After a pause, Timothy's gaze darted slightly. "...Grandma would want that too. She'll be very happy."

Samantha was lost for words. The second sentence came as another shock for her, and that was before she could even react to his first sentence.

What did he mean by 'just give birth to the baby if you get pregnant'?

It was not as simple as going to the market and buying some vegetables! It was a human life they were talking about!

The experience of having parents like Simon and Cynthia instilled in her a deep sense of importance and responsibility when it came to things involving children. If she wanted to have children, she wanted to make sure that the child had loving parents and was born in a circumstance where both parents were looking forward to its arrival.

Children would be gravely hurt if they were born to be used as tools to appease the parents' elders, or if the parents were at odds with each other and only superficially in love, or if the family would eventually become fragmented in the future.

She was unwilling to let her child go through the same pain she experienced.



Moreover, she still bore the responsibility of taking care of the seriously ill Corey. She put all her thoughts on him and had no spare energy to be responsible for another precious little life.

“Timothy, I—”

Before Samantha could even refuse, the man had already given her a passionate kiss. She had no chance to explain and her mouth was sealed shut by his lips.

“Mmmgghh...” Samantha’s eyes widened as she tried to push him away.

Timothy started losing his patience. He pushed Samantha into the soft mattress, clasped her hands, then pressed them to the sides and kissed her even more fervently.

Ronald was right—Timothy was more suited to actions rather than words.

If the conversation continued, they might end up on bad terms again.

Although Timothy’s movements were strong, his kisses were very gentle and relentless, preventing Samantha from getting a chance to escape. Oxygen started to drain from her lungs. Her body turned limp bit by bit and she slowly began losing control over it.

Timothy slowly loosened his grip on Samantha’s wrist and intersected his slender fingers with hers.

When he heard Samantha say ‘I do’ during the ceremony at church, the only thought he had in mind was ‘I want to hold your hand and grow old with you.’

He no longer wanted to think about what the past was like. All he wanted at that moment was to hold Samantha tightly in the present and the future.

It was a long night for the two of them.

...

The next day.

Sunlight illuminated the room and a few rays mischievously shone on Samantha’s eyelids. She sensed the sun on her eyes and strained to open her eyelids.

She gritted her teeth after finally opening her eyes to see Timothy sleeping soundly with his arms around her.

That rascal had flipped her around in all sorts of positions throughout the entire night! She did not even know what time it was when she eventually passed out.

Once Samantha was fully awake, she gritted her teeth again, removed Timothy's hand from her body, then got down carefully from the bed. After taking a quick bath, she changed her clothes and left the room without hesitation.

*Chapter 136: I Don't Want Kids*

Samantha stepped out of the hotel. She followed the directions and walked across two streets until she finally reached a streetside drugstore.

The pharmacist asked her kindly, "Hi there, Miss. What can I get you today?"

Samantha clenched her hands slightly before answering, "The morning-after pill."

After paying the money, Samantha walked out with the pills and bought a bottle of mineral water from the vending machine beside the street. She uncapped the mineral water, placed a pill in her mouth, then drank the water and swallowed the pill.

Even though she was unable to stop Timothy's request, she could not bring herself to have a child when her relationship with him was still open to question.

A child was a human life, not a toy that one could have on a whim and abandon when it was no longer wanted.

...

When Timothy woke up, the first thing he did was tighten his embrace, but he soon realized that there was no one in his arms.

He lifted his eyelids and looked to his side but Samantha's figure was nowhere to be seen. He then sat up and swept his gaze across the entire suite, and still he saw no trace of Samantha.

He looked up at the clock on the wall and wondered where she disappeared to when it was still so early in the morning.

Timothy reached for his cell phone at the bedside table and dialed Samantha's number. Within seconds, he heard her phone's ringtone on the sofa at the other end.

She did not bring her cell phone with her.

Timothy frowned slightly.

He swiped his fingers across his phone and was about to call Ronald when the room door swung open and footsteps were heard.

Did Samantha return?

Timothy put down his phone and strode over to the door.

He happened to make eye contact with Samantha as she walked in.

Samantha did not expect him to be up so soon and was slightly surprised.

“You’re...awake?”

Timothy glanced at her face and finally felt more at ease when he saw that she was alright. Rather than answering her question, he asked her instead, “Where did you go?”

As he spoke, he unconsciously looked at the bag she was carrying. The pill bottle could be seen through the transparent bag, and Timothy’s expression sank right away when he read the words on it.

Samantha never really thought about hiding it from Timothy, but she felt a little guilty at the time and even subconsciously retracted the hand that held the bag.

When Timothy next spoke, his voice had turned much colder than before. “What’s this?”

His body gradually began to exude a terrifying aura, seemingly imparting a chilling sensation to the otherwise warm room.

Samantha tried her best to hold back the dread she was feeling. She looked up at his cold eyes and stressed each word in her sentence, “I’ve already told you yesterday that I don’t want children.”

Taking a pill was the only way she could protect herself.

After a pause, she added a few more remarks, “Timothy, I’m hoping that my future children can be born into a loving environment. I would never want them to experience the same things I have, especially when I’m still not ready to be a mother.”

‘I don’t want children...

‘I’m hoping that my future children can be born into a loving environment...’

Ultimately, she neither wanted to bear his child nor continue to take their relationship to the next level. In her mind, she was still going to divorce him eventually.

Timothy grinned in anger and was practically gnashing his teeth when he spat out, “Perfect!”

He strode over to Samantha, walked past her, then left the room without ever looking back at her again.

Samantha froze and clenched unconsciously.

She did not want to provoke him in the slightest, but she had to be steadfast to her own principles when it came to children.

...

Ronald nearly rolled off the bed after being woken up by an incessant knocking on his room door.

“Who the hell could that be!” Ronald yawned while complaining, “Such a nuisance so early in the morning!”

He opened the door and was about to lash out at the person, but as soon as he saw Timothy’s gloomy face, the fear took his voice away and jolted him awake at once.

Ten seconds later, he finally found his voice and asked weakly, “Mr. B-Barker, what...happened to you?”

Timothy’s voice was so cold that Ronald felt like he was at the north pole. “Book the plane ticket right now! We’re leaving for home!”

“...What?” Ronald was unable to react for a moment. “Why are we going home so suddenly?”

“None of your stinking ideas were useful! I’m canceling your bonus.”

Timothy turned around and left without giving Ronald the chance to even say anything.

Ronald stood on the spot for more than a minute. Once he finally understood what his big boss said, he wanted to cry but the tears did not come.

As if it was not obvious enough, it was certain that Timothy had messed up Plan B. Ronald’s heart ached after the bonus he got was taken away from him. It would have been less painful if he was never slated to get it in the first place!

Furthermore, Ronald’s ideas were not at all stinky. It was Timothy who insisted on being stubborn! Saying ‘I love you’ worked better than anything else, but Timothy was reluctant to say that! Who else could be at fault if not Timothy?

Ronald might have been feeling resentful, but he still booked the plane ticket—albeit begrudgingly.

He could only blame himself for getting a boss like Timothy. There was nothing else he could do except to follow Timothy, even if it meant having to walk on his knees!

...

During the entire journey home, Timothy never said a word to Samantha and treated her as if she was invisible. After disembarking from the plane, he strode forward and left Samantha behind, making the two of them seem just like strangers.

Ronald did not know whether it was better to follow Timothy or Samantha, so he had to stop numerous times before continuing to walk. He had a very worried expression the entire time.

By the time the three of them exited the airport, a car was already waiting at the entrance.

Ronald rushed forward and forced out a smile as he opened the rear car door. "Mr. Barker, Mrs. Barker, please get in."

Timothy narrowed his eyes at him. Rather than enter the car, he said coldly, "Send her back home."

As soon as he gave Ronald that order, he stopped a taxi, got in, and left as the taxi drove away speedily.

Ronald felt extremely awkward when he looked at Samantha. "In that case, I'll send you back then..."

Samantha did not want to make his life even harder and got in the car.

After returning to the villa, Samantha politely bid farewell to Ronald and turned to enter the house.

Ronald looked at her from behind and opened his mouth intending to say something. Unfortunately, he did not know how best to structure his sentences and could only let out a huge sigh.

Why did Timothy and Samantha's path to love have to be such a rocky one?

...

Samantha went into her room, changed into her pajamas, then lay on the bed and closed her eyes.

Sleeping was all she felt like doing, although she did not know whether it was due to the side effects of the pill or whether sleeping was a gateway for her to ignore all her worries.

She initially thought she would not be able to sleep but she ended up falling asleep rather quickly.

Samantha did not know how long she slept, but by the time she opened her eyes, the sky outside was completely dark. She gazed blankly out the window and felt as though she did not know what day it was.

There was a notification from her phone.

She reached out for her phone and tapped on the WeTalk app. Once she saw that it was a message from Rochelle, she clicked into the chat right away.

Rochelle: [What's going on?]

Samantha was at a loss. What did she mean by 'what's going on'? Did something happen yet again?

The nasty rumors about her that had been circulating recently had conditioned her to have a sort of reflex against them.

Samantha sat up immediately, typed out a message, and immediately replied: [What are they saying about me again?]

*Chapter 137: He Likes You*

Rochelle soon sent a burst of messages to her.

[I'm the one asking questions here. Why are you asking me instead?]

[Do you know nothing about your own affairs?]

[Are you living in a cave on top of a mountain?]

Samantha facepalmed. She was not living in a cave on top of the mountain. All she did was sleep! How could she have known that there would be trouble brewing while she slept?

She started to wonder whether all those troubles occurred because it was an unlucky year for her.

Samantha was in no mood to play the guessing game and immediately replied: [Just tell me what's up.]

Rochelle gave a three-word reply: [Go to Waybo!]

Samantha tapped her finger on Waybo and did not even need to spare any effort to find out what was happening. Her name was trending at the very top of the trending searches!

Unfortunately, Timothy was implicated too!

Her heart immediately skipped a beat.

She did not really mind as much if she made the headlines alone, but if Timothy was involved in her problem, she was going to have an even harder time.

Samantha immediately clicked on the trending search.

The top comment was a post by a popular account, saying that Timothy was losing affection for Samantha not long after they got married!

The picture was taken when she and Timothy arrived at the airport. Timothy was walking indifferently ahead of her while she followed him from behind. The atmosphere was awkward and neither of them even interacted with each other while they walked.

After all, their marriage had recently been made public in a rather high-profile manner, and netizens even turned Timothy's declaration of love into all sorts of catchphrases and memes! All that happened not too long ago, so when someone photographed their indifference toward each other at the airport, netizens would definitely take delight in being nosy, causing the news to soar even higher in the trending list.

Some netizens have even launched a Waybo poll to guess how long it would take for them to get a divorce. Ten of thousands of people have cast their vote, and 99% were of the opinion that they would divorce within three months.

Samantha looked at everything and did not know whether to laugh or get angry.

She and Timothy really lived up to the netizens' vote as being the number one couple who was most unlikely to get together again. They were ahead of second place by a mile.

There was another notification on her phone and it was yet another WeTalk message from Rochelle.

Samantha clicked on the WeTalk pop-up.

[What else happened between you and that scumbag? Didn't he already publicly acknowledge your marriage? Why is he now giving you the cold shoulder? Is he making trouble?]

Rochelle had changed her mind a bit about Timothy after he spoke at the press conference and stood up for Samantha. Samantha had not gotten over him completely, but if the two of them decided to live their days with each other in peace, Rochelle would still give unconditional support to Samantha.

After all, her one wish was for Samantha to live a happy life.

Was that the happy life that was awaiting Samantha?

Samantha did not know what to reply to Rochelle because she was just as confused as to her status with Timothy. Her heart seemed to consist of a stringy mess which only became more chaotic with each attempt to sort things out.

Rochelle was a very impatient woman. When Samantha took too long to reply, she sent another message: [Forget about it, let's just meet up and talk. I'm boarding the plane in another hour and I'll reach Imperial Capital at 10. Let's go grab a drink!]

Samantha replied immediately: [Okay.]

She did need someone to talk to and help her understand her own confused thoughts. Many a time, a third party could see things with much more objectivity compared to a person who was party to the issue at hand.

When it came to stuff that she could not make head or tail of, Rochelle might be able to give her some advice.

Samantha got up and went to the bathroom, where she washed her face to freshen herself up a little.

Then, she went downstairs, headed to the kitchen, and whipped up a quick bowl of noodles. Her phone started ringing just as she was eating.

She thought that Rochelle was calling her again, but she grabbed her phone and saw that it was Old Madam Barker.

Ever since the events of the press conference, Old Madam Barker wore her reading glasses and scrolled through Waybo from time to time. She wanted to see if there was any news about Samantha and Timothy. Whenever she saw any netizens making denigrating comments about the couple, she became absolutely incensed and was determined to call that person out even though she was not very skilled at typing.

Old Madam Barker probably saw the trending news and decided to call and ask about the situation.

Samantha quickly put down her cutlery and patted both sides of her cheeks to make her complexion rosier. Only then did she answer Old Madam Barker's video call.



“Hey, Grandma,” she greeted softly.

The faces of Old Madam Barker and Aunt Julia appeared on the screen, and the first thing Old Madam Barker did was look carefully at Samantha. Once the old lady was satisfied that Samantha was alright, she finally breathed a sigh of relief.

One second later, the old lady immediately had an angry expression and started complaining, “That little brat Timothy! Did he start bullying you while I was away? Don’t be angry alright, Sammy. When I’m back, I’ll make sure to teach him a lesson for you!”

If it were any other family, the elders would always side with their own flesh and blood whenever there was any conflict between a married couple. Old Madam Barker, however, was always first to reproach Timothy whenever Samantha was not on good terms with him. That had been the case since the very beginning, and those who did not know their true relationship might assume that Samantha was her own granddaughter.

A warm current began surging up in Samantha’s heart. “Thank you, Grandma. You can rest assured that Timothy didn’t bully me. That photo on the internet is actually... Well, it’s fake. Timothy and I, we’re good. He even brought me out on vacation the other day and he organized a long-overdue wedding ceremony in that church I liked.”

In order to be make everything look more convincing, Samantha found the picture that Timothy took of them and sent it to the old lady through WeTalk

“See, Grandma. Timothy and I are fine. Don’t believe whatever’s written on the internet.”

Unlike before, Old Madam Barker did not just smile and move on from it. She remained silent for a moment and her expression became serious.

She looked intently at Samantha through the phone and remarked solemnly, “Sammy, I know that you and Tim are very filial kids. You both never want me to be worried and have always tried to make me happy. But I’ll have you know that I can clearly see whether the two of you are truly being affectionate or whether it’s all just a charade.”

Samantha pursed her lips involuntarily.

She was well aware that lies were lies regardless of how many times one repeated them. Truth was always bound to prevail.

“I’m sorry, Grandma,” she apologized softly.

Lying was no small burden to bear, and she had actually been feeling guilty whenever she deceived Old Madam Barker.

“Sammy, I’m telling you this not to blame you or anything of the sort,” Old Madam Barker said earnestly, “I genuinely hope for you and Tim to live a happy life.”

“Be honest with me, Sammy. What do you think about Tim right now? Are you really against the idea of being with him?”

It was yet another of those questions.

If she could not answer that when Rochelle asked earlier, she was similarly unable to answer it when the old lady posed a similar question.

“Grandma, I...” Samantha hesitated.

When Timothy initially showed such loathing toward her and treated her coldly, she felt thoroughly dispirited and no longer dared to cling to any hope. Although she thought that things would continue going in that direction, Timothy’s attitude changed all of a sudden recently, and the unpredictable hot-and-cold nature of his character left her very confused.

The old lady saw Samantha’s silence and did not urge Samantha on. Instead, she said, “Sammy, I can’t read your thoughts, but I can read Tim’s.”

Old Madam Barker said in no uncertain terms, “He likes you.”

*Chapter 138: Give Him Another Chance*

Samantha’s breathing stopped abruptly and her knee-jerk reaction was to deny it. “That’s impossible...”

If Timothy liked her, why would he denounce their marriage two years ago? Why would he hurt her all the time and embarrass her so much?

All she saw from him was hatred, and perhaps even resentment...

“Why would it be impossible?!” Old Madam Barker raised her voice all of a sudden. “Sammy, you can be certain that you have a place in Tim’s heart, otherwise he wouldn’t have been willing to make your marriage public. I swear I wasn’t the one who forced him into doing it!”

Aunt Julia quickly agreed from beside her. “I can vouch for that as well. The old madam previously told Mr. Barker that she would allow the two of you to get a divorce if he really doesn’t have any feelings for you. But Mr. Barker didn’t do that. Instead, he made your marriage public! If that isn’t a sign that he likes you, I don’t know what is!”

Old Madam Barker had once told Timothy that she allowed him to divorce Samantha?

Samantha's heartbeat skipped a beat and she could not help but ask softly, "Grandma, when did you talk to him?"

Aunt Julia immediately answered, "There was one night he came back drunk and Old Madam took care of him the entire night. When the next day came, she told him that a divorce would be better if you can't get along with him. At least you'll both have freedom and neither of you will continue wasting each other's time."

Old Madam Barker added, "When I was done with him, he immediately went to the hospital and kept you company. Don't you think he did that because he cared about you?"

"Yeah! That's right!" Aunt Julia continued to reveal even more information. "Do you remember when Old Madam and I went to the hospital and delivered food to you? It was Mr. Barker who called us and requested it."

"...Was it?"

Samantha was dumbfounded when she heard everything that they told her.

She could not believe that the person they talked about was the very same Timothy that she had seen before her very eyes.

Old Madam Barker sighed softly, "Sammy, Tim is the kind of person who keeps a lot of things to himself. He's not willing to let anyone see them and he can be very harsh when he does stuff. I may be his grandma, but I still feel like smacking him sometimes when I hear the stuff that comes out of his mouth. But he's like that because he doesn't know how to express himself. Deep down, he doesn't really mean it.

"If, and I say if, he still has a place in your heart, I'm hoping that you can look at him for who he is and give him another chance."

...

Samantha entered into deep thought as soon as the call ended.

The words from Old Madam Barker and Aunt Julia floated around her consciousness and lingered there.

The drunken night they mentioned was probably the same night that Timothy forced himself on her. Did he actually get himself drunk after that?

He later showed up all of a sudden at the hospital, saying that the old lady was the one who told him to go.

The old lady had even allowed him to get a divorce, but rather than doing so, he disclosed his marriage at the press conference and bound her to him.

When they were on Barrkjaer Island, he had also asserted that he had no plans to divorce!

He did all those things because he wanted to, not because Old Madam Barker told him to. Could the old lady have been a mere excuse for him all along?

Did Timothy really care about her and like her, just as Old Madam Barker said he did?

The shock that Samantha felt was so great that it took her a long time before she could return to her senses.

It was not until she remembered the called-off marriage two years ago that her confused mind started to calm down gradually.

During the time they were together, she was incredibly certain and unhesitatingly confident that Timothy liked her, but sadly, turned his back on her in the blink of an eye and abandoned her just like that.

What was really on his mind? She did not dare to come to a conclusion as of yet.

The notification tone from Samantha's cell phone pulled her back to the present. She glanced over and saw that it was another WeTalk message from Rochelle.

[I've landed. See you later, babe.]

Samantha's lips curled up. She had actually sat there in a daze and spent a few hours being preoccupied with thoughts of Timothy. That man sure was trouble!

She gathered herself and got up.

...

At the bar, Rochelle was already waiting when Samantha arrived. She sat at the bar and waved at Sammy, saying, "Over here, Sammy!"

Samantha smiled and walked over.

As soon as she took her seat on the high stool, Rochelle slid a rainbow-colored cocktail to her. "They have a new drink. Try it, it tastes pretty good."

Samantha picked up the glass and took a sip.

It tasted refreshing and sweet at first, but that was replaced a few seconds later by a sourish and astringent taste. Samantha frowned slightly as a result.

Far from being unpalatable, there was an aftertaste that was worth savoring.

Samantha nodded. "Not bad."

Rochelle chuckled softly. "According to the bartender, it takes someone with plenty of life experience to appreciate this drink."

"...Then I'd rather not be able to enjoy it."

Rochelle answered, "Tell me about it."

Who would choose to grow old if one could be a carefree child forever?

"Alright, time to get serious." Rochelle rested her hands on the bar. Her beautiful eyes swirled over to Samantha before asking, "Tell me. What happened to you and that scumbag?"

Samantha's anxiety came like waves when that topic was brought up.

Before she started talking, she picked up the cocktail glass, raised her head, and drank it all in one breath.

...

They were so engrossed in the conversation that neither of them noticed Penelope sitting on the left side of the round-shaped bar. Her hair was disheveled and she looked like a wreck.

Her father had lost his temper completely after the Summer Group banned all further dealings with the Schmidt Group. He had long despised his wife and daughter, and under Sheena's instigation, he chased both Violet and Penelope out of the house. Violet then brought Penelope to seek refuge with Violet's family, but Violet's parents—who used to love Penelope so much—refused to take the two women in for fear of being implicated with them.

In the end, Violet was forced to rent a house and bring Penelope along. Having grown accustomed to spending extravagant amounts of money, it was undoubtedly difficult for them to adapt to such a poor life. It did not take long for their money to run out, and Violet either spent her days crying or running back to the Schmidts and kicking up a storm. Penelope initially tried to advise her against it, but after persuading her countless times to no avail, she decided that it was better for her mother to be out of sight and out of mind.

That was how she came to spend her days in the bar almost every night.

Being drunk rid her of her troubles, allowing her to continue her delusions of being the Schmidts' darling daughter and Timothy's beloved woman!

All of a sudden, she heard a familiar voice and could not resist raising her head to look in that direction.

The lights were dim, but she was able to recognize Samantha at a glance. That woman could be reduced to ash for all she knew and she could still recognize that those ashes were Samantha!

Penelope sat there and listened to Samantha's words, but her anger and jealousy began building up even more as she continued to listen.

She never expected Timothy to have done so many things for Samantha! To think that he accompanied her at the hospital, took care of her younger brother Corey, brought her to a sacred marriage destination, gave her a wedding ceremony, and even wanted to have a baby with her!

Penelope felt that all of that belonged to her! All of it!

Had Samantha never returned, Timothy would look at Penelope sooner or later, be moved by her, marry her, have children with her, and live a happy life with her.

Samantha was the one who took all that away.

As if having that taken away was not bad enough, Penelope ended up becoming utterly and thoroughly disgraced.

Penelope had no home.. Her father was no longer a father, and her mother was fast spiraling down the path of insanity. She was no longer the rich daughter that she used to be, and was no better than dirt that everyone could trample on!

*Chapter 139: Go to Hell!*

Sheena had humiliated Penelope just a couple of days ago, saying that she would tell Justin to let Penelope come back home if Penelope was willing to be her dog.

When that happened, Penelope got so angry that she reached forward to pull Sheena's hair. Unfortunately, her father rushed over and gave her a tight slap. He protected that heinous woman and the illegitimate son she was carrying, but completely forgot that Penelope was also his biological daughter.

The friends she used to have in her circle—the same one who once surrounded her, cozied up to her, and laughed along with her—had begun ridiculing and mocking her whenever they saw her.

As all those thoughts crossed Penelope's mind, she clenched her hand fiercely until the blue veins on the back of her hand began appearing one after another one.

She really wanted to skin Samantha and drain the latter's blood.

Penelope stared at Samantha resentfully, then grabbed the wine bottle and drank straight from it.

...

Rochelle listened to everything Samantha said and was just as confused as Samantha about the feelings Samantha had for Timothy.

Her relationship with Jonathan was much simpler—she hated Jonathan and Jonathan wanted her dead. It was simple and easy.

However, Rochelle could clearly see that Samantha's biggest concern was her incomprehension of Timothy's thoughts. In other words, Samantha did not dare to try and test the waters again.

As the saying went, once bitten, twice shy.

Therefore, the solution to solving their problem could not be any simpler.

All it took to settle the matter was for Timothy and Samantha to sit down together, be frank with their questions and answers, and make things infinitely clear to each other.

Rochelle touched her chin and narrowed her eyes in thought.

She curled her lips into a smile. From the looks of it, Rochelle had to get Samantha drunk again and unleash that Dutch courage. She previously gave Timothy a scolding only because she had drunk a lot the last time around.

It would be good to get Samantha drunk and let her say what was in her heart.

Rochelle snapped her fingers to call the bartender. "Hey, can we get something a little stronger?"

Samantha's tolerance to alcohol was pretty decent, having developed it during her stint at a bar when she was abroad. Nevertheless, she still had a long way to catch up to Rochelle.

She was already feeling a little tipsy but Rochelle suffered only from a reddened face. There was no reaction at all from Rochelle even though her vision was already starting to blur.

Samantha could not take it any longer and said, "I'm going to have to use the bathroom, Chelle."

"Do you need my help to get there?"

"No, it's fine. I can still walk."

Samantha got out of the chair and felt her feet turn light as she walked to the restroom on the other side of the corridor.

Rochelle rested her chin on her palm and stared at Samantha's figure until it turned into the corridor and disappeared. Her gaze then shifted to Samantha's cell phone on top of the bar counter.

...

Penelope was getting dizzy and she started seeing stars after finishing the entire bottle of wine.

She nevertheless shouted at the bartender, "Gimme more wine!"

The bartender looked at her with disdain. "We don't take credit here, Ms. Schmidt. You have to pay up first if you want more drinks!"

She had been coming almost daily, and although she always paid for her drinks when she started drinking, she refused to pay the bill whenever she got crazy drunk. The manager initially waived her bill a couple of times after seeing who she was, but when he was finally at the end of his patience, he told the bartender not to give her any drinks if she did not pay up.

Penelope did not seem to have heard him. "Are you deaf? I told you to give me another bottle, didn't I?"

'Here we go again...'

The bartender was not at all surprised. He could not be bothered to entertain her and merely said coldly, "You should leave, Ms. Schmidt, or else I'll call security."

Something seemed to finally click in Penelope's mind and she no longer dared to say a single word.



She had been thrown out the previous day and was ridiculed by everyone at the entrance.

Penelope could still remember how a bald and wretched-looking man asked her to spend a night with him in exchange for a hundred bucks.

She had reached a point where any Tom, Dick, or Harry could humiliate her!

Penelope got up and staggered as she headed for the exit. As soon as she reached the door, there was a notification on her cell phone.

She took her phone out and saw a text from an unfamiliar number.

When she clicked in, it contained only an image and had no text.

The image depicted an extremely beautiful church. Inside the church stood a handsome groom with his beautiful bride. The groom was embracing the bride in his arms while giving her a passionate kiss.

The groom and bride were none other than Timothy and Samantha.

She stared at the photo without blinking and her gaze could practically burn a hole through the phone.

Penelope felt that she was supposed to be in Samantha's shoes! She ought to have been the one wearing the wedding dress, getting married to Timothy, and kissing Timothy...

Hearing Samantha talk about the wedding was much less of a blow than seeing the image. Penelope's eyes turned red in a flash.

Everything would be different if Samantha was not around. Sheena would still be Penelope's dog, Violet would still be the haughty Mrs. Schmidt, and Penelope would remain as the Schmidts' darling daughter. Above all, she would be the one that Timothy loved!

Samantha just had to disappear.

All of Penelope's nightmares would disappear if Samantha disappeared.

Madness gradually appeared in Penelope's eyes. She chuckled, then turned around and walked determinedly into the bar.

As she passed by a table, she grabbed an empty wine bottle and smashed the bottom off with a bang. She then walked toward the bathroom.

During that moment, a woman who was sitting elegantly in an inconspicuous corner placed her phone back on the table. She picked up the tumbler glass and took a sip from it.

After watching Penelope disappear past the corridor, she took out some money from her purse, placed it under the glass, then got up and walked away in her high heels.

...

Samantha cupped some cold water and washed her face to get rid of her drunkenness.

When Rochelle mixed two kinds of spirit for Samantha to drink in one go, the alcohol went straight to her head and there was no way to keep it under control.

Judging from the situation, she could not hold on anymore and had to go back and sleep.

Samantha turned off the faucet, took a paper towel, then wiped her face dry before walking slowly out of the bathroom.

Barely two steps later, she saw someone storming toward her in a rage.

The light inside the bar was just too dim and it was difficult to get a clear look at the person because her vision was blurry too. It was not until the person was a few steps away from her that the light above shone on the person's face and revealed them to be...Penelope.

Penelope had a fierce look in her eyes, which seemed to be oozing with malicious intent. She rushed to Samantha, raised her hand all of a sudden, and thrust the broken glass bottle toward Samantha's body.

Under normal circumstances, Samantha was not at all afraid of Penelope and could avoid the attack with ease. Unfortunately, she had drunk too much that day, so her reflexes slowed down tremendously because her mind was not working as quickly.

She could only manage to dodge it by turning her body slightly to one side. Although Penelope was not able to stab her in the stomach, the glass still grazed against her arm and drew blood in an instant.

The smell and sight of blood seemed to stimulate Penelope even more. The look in her eyes became even more terrifying and she grabbed Samantha's arm with an unusual amount of strength.

Samantha was unsure whether she was unable to escape the grasp due to her drunkenness or because Penelope was using too much strength, but that grip left Samantha unable to move a single inch.

Penelope cackled maliciously. "Go to hell, Samantha!"

As soon as Penelope made that remark, she raised her hand and ruthlessly thrust the broken bottle toward Samantha's heart!

*Chapter 140: Bidding Her Farewell*

Samantha's black pupils contracted instantly. Her survival instinct was activated and she used all her strength to give Penelope a fierce kick.

The kick inflicted some pain on Penelope, causing the force from Penelope's hand to reduce a little while at the same time shifting the trajectory of her thrust. When the glass bottle pierced Samantha, it did not strike any vital points.

Nevertheless, Samantha had sobered up half as much as before when the sharp glass penetrated her skin.

Samantha lowered her head and firmly bit Penelope's arm. As soon as Penelope cried out in pain, Samantha pushed the woman away forcefully.

She then clutched the wound and rushed back into the bar.

"Don't even think of running, Samantha!"

Penelope fixed her eyes at Samantha's rear figure and gave chase.

Due to the dim bar lights, the sheer number of people, and the loud music, no one noticed that something was not quite right. Samantha continued advancing through sheer willpower, but her drunkenness and the pain from her wound slowed her down gradually.

On the other hand, Penelope was walking much faster and Samantha could feel that she was about to catch up.

Sure enough, only a few seconds had passed when Samantha's hair was pulled. The force made her scalp numb and she had no choice but to stop walking.

"Go on! Run! Keep on running!"

Penelope grinned so evilly that Samantha felt her hair stand on end.

Penelope raised her arm without so much as another word. She aimed the blood-stained broken bottle at the main artery on Samantha's nape, then plunged it forward as hard as she could.

Samantha could not defend herself in such a short time because Penelope was behind her. Her only reflex was to close her eyes when she saw the sharp glass shard coming right at her.

One second passed.

Then another.

A total of three seconds had passed.

The pain she had been anticipating did not arrive and a tight embrace had taken its stead. Within seconds, she heard a muffled groan.

It was a very familiar voice.

Samantha's long curly eyelashes trembled unconsciously. She opened her eyes, turned her face to the side, and looked behind her.

A man's handsome face was the first thing she saw. His eyebrows were knit in a tight frown, his thin lips were tightly pursed, and there was a look of agony on his face.

Timothy...

Samantha then caught a strong whiff of blood. It was a mix of his blood and hers, the smell of which made her nauseated.

She could not control herself from looking over Timothy's shoulder. The white shirt he was wearing was already stained with bright red blood, spreading slowly from the bottom up.

It scarcely crossed Penelope's mind that a figure would rush toward her all of a sudden and shield Samantha at the most crucial moment. The wine bottle struck not Samantha, but instead penetrated the man's back at the exact location of his heart.

Blood oozed out in an instant and dyed his entire back red.

That figure seemed very familiar...

She narrowed her eyes and looked at the man for only a few seconds before recognizing that it was Timothy...

Why was he willing to throw his life away just to protect Samantha?

Why did he treat Samantha that way?

"Timothy!"

As much as Penelope hated Samantha, she hated Timothy even more at that moment!

“You want to protect Samantha, don’t you??I’ll grant your wish then!”

“If that’s the case, you both can die with each other!”

Penelope retracted the wine bottle in her hand and charged toward Timothy and Samantha once more.

Timothy sensed what was happening and used whatever strength he had remaining to push Samantha aside. He then turned around and kicked Penelope’s knee before the woman had a chance to stab him.

The pain in Penelope’s knees forced her to kneel down, but she strived to get up and rushed toward Timothy yet again.

“Timothy!”

Samantha wanted to stop Penelope, but dizziness came over her and her eyes faded to black before she could stand up.

In the end, the last scene she saw before losing consciousness was Penelope charging toward Timothy.

...

“Samantha.”

Samantha could hear someone calling her name. She strained to open her eyes and looked in the direction of the voice.

Timothy’s slender figure was three steps ahead of her and he was looking right at her. It was one of those rare times that he was smiling at her.

Samantha looked at him anxiously from head to toe and asked worriedly, “Are you alright, Timothy? Were you injured?”

He seemed to be unscathed even though she had clearly seen him get injured earlier.

Could she have been dreaming?

Timothy, however, did not answer her questions. He merely stood still and continued smiling at her.

Samantha had a hunch that something was wrong and asked again, “Come over here, Timothy. Let me check if you’re injured.”

The man still kept quiet and remained motionless.

“Fine. If you don’t want to come over here, I’ll go over to you.”

Samantha gritted her teeth, got up, and walked slowly toward Timothy. However, with every step she took toward him, Timothy took one step away from her. She frowned as a result and decided to run.

Despite her best efforts to run after him, she could never catch up to the man. His speed became even faster, and when they reached the end, his figure turned into a wisp of white smoke and disappeared completely from Samantha’s eyes.

“Timothy!”

Samantha yelled out hysterically and she finally opened her eyes wide.

The familiar smell of disinfectant was picked up by Samantha’s nose. She looked around her stiffly and confirmed that she was in the hospital.

Was it a nightmare she had earlier?

Why did that nightmare feel so real? It was as if...Timothy came to her in her dream to say goodbye to her.

‘Where is Timothy?’

‘Is he seriously injured?’

‘Or could he be...’

Samantha did not dare to consider that possibility.

She could not continue to lie down and got up while enduring the pain. With a yank of the drip needle, she got down from the bed and walked straight out.

As soon as she walked out, she met a passing nurse and grabbed the nurse’s hand. She then asked in a hoarse voice, “What happened to him? How is he? Where is he?”

“Are you talking about the man who was with you? He’s in the ward just next to—”

Before the nurse could finish speaking, Samantha had already dashed into the next ward.

As soon as she entered the ward, it was extremely quiet inside, so quiet in fact, that there was no sound coming from the medical equipment...

Samantha looked over at the hospital bed. A man was clearly lying on the bed, but his whole body had been covered with a white cloth.

When she saw that white cloth, her heart sank and she covered her mouth right away. Her eyes began to redden.

Did Timothy really say goodbye to her in her dream earlier?

Samantha immediately felt faint and she could feel her feet becoming wobbly. Her body rocked from side to side with every step she took toward the hospital bed, as if she would collapse at any second.

Despite being only a few steps away, she took a very long time to finally reach the bed.

Samantha stood by the bed and slowly reached out toward the white cloth. Her fingers trembled violently and blood had all but drained from her fingertips. She had already grabbed the white cloth, but she could not muster the strength to lift it up.

When she finally opened her mouth and spoke, her voice was already filled with sobs. "You can't die, Timothy... You hate me, don't you? Why did you have to save me? Don't die... I don't want you to die..."

Tears flowed down Samantha's cheeks and fell onto the white cloth, resulting in a large moist patch.

#### *Chapter 141: I'll Promise You Anything*

Samantha clutched the white cloth tightly and lifted it slowly while calling out Timothy's name, "Timo—"

She was utterly stupefied when she laid eyes on the person under the cloth, so much so that her words got stuck in her throat.

Ronald was the one lying on the bed at that moment. He had a similarly awkward look on his face and was so mortified that his usually eloquent self could not even say a single word.

The two of them simply stared at each other in silence and there was an atmosphere of speechlessness in the air.

"Ahem." Ronald could not take it any longer and cleared his throat to dispel the awkward silence.

Samantha blinked twice and returned to her senses slowly. “You... R-R-Ronald, why... Why are you here?”

She had clearly been calling out Timothy’s name.

“Well...because I’m here,” Ronald replied weakly. “I... When I... It was already very late when I finished handling everything last night, and someone has to stay in the hospital to keep watch. I decided to rest for a bit in this ward. Is that... Is there anything wrong with that?”

There was nothing wrong with that.

The nurse had probably misunderstood Ronald to be the man that she spoke about, hence the reason she was directed to the next ward.

Although...

“Why did you have to cover yourself with a white cloth when you were sleeping? And... Why...did you keep quiet when I recognized the wrong person?”

She bawled her eyes out—snot and all—through the white cloth earlier, and even said all those words to Roland! It was simply too humiliating for her!

Ronald felt wronged. “I was too tired and I slept too deeply. I probably covered my entire body without knowing it when I was sleeping. It’s not a white cloth though. It’s just a white bedsheet...

“Besides, I was still asleep when you came in and only woke up when you started crying. When you said that stuff, I didn’t think it was appropriate to interrupt you, because then it’d be really embarrassing...”

Samantha scoffed. “And is this any less embarrassing?”

“I didn’t know that you were going to lift the white cloth. I was going to continue pretending to be dead.”

Samantha closed her eyes.

What else could she do after making such a fool of herself?

It was not like she could undo what she did and regain her dignity again.

All of that was beside the point—her main concern was Timothy!

Samantha took a deep breath and stared at Ronald with reddened eyes. She asked in a muted voice, “Where’s Timothy? How is he? Is he... Is he okay?”



When she asked Ronald that question, his expression sank all of a sudden and his eyes turned ashen.

Samantha had a bad feeling and gulped a couple of times. Her hands clenched unconsciously and her voice became a little faint. "Ronald... Timothy's fine.... Right?"

Ronald let out a deep sigh. He got out of bed, stood in front of Samantha, and tried to explain in a very calm tone. "Mr. Barker was stabbed in the heart by Penelope when he tried to save you. After you fainted, Penelope went nuts and wanted to continue attacking you, but Mr. Barker shielded you both times. Later, Mr. and Mrs. Yates then rushed over just in time to stop Penelope. Mr. and Mrs. Yates sent both of you to the hospital. You were ushered into the ward after getting your wounded treated because all you had was a skin injury, in addition to being drunk. Mr. Barker, on the other hand, was in a critical condition. He was sent directly to the operating room.

"He lost too much blood, and..." He paused abruptly, as if there were some things he could not say, and skipped directly to another topic, "...the point is, the operation went on for some time and it wasn't until dawn that it ended. Fortunately, his life is not in danger for now, but he hasn't woken up yet and is still under observation in the ICU."

"I'm still keeping this from the old lady. I'm afraid to tell her because I'm worried that she might not be able to take it due to her old age. I've stopped any news outlets from picking up on this too, otherwise it would only cause panic within the company."

Succinct though Ronald's statement was, it was still capable of shaking Samantha to the core.

After Samantha listened to it, she clenched her hands into such tight fists that her nails sank deep into the palm of her hand. Her voice trembled severely as she said, "I... I want to see... Timothy. Bring me to him."

"Okay."

Ronald started walking and led the way. As soon as Samantha lifted her foot, her body swayed slightly and Ronald had to hurriedly reach out and support her. He asked concernedly, "Are you alright, Mrs. Barker? Perhaps you should go back to the ward and have more rest if you still can't hold yourself up?"

What was he going to do if she collapsed?

"I'm fine. Let's go!" Samantha shook her head and said firmly.

"Let me help you there then."

Ronald supported her carefully and brought her to the intensive care unit.

After putting on their personal protective equipment, Samantha walked into the intensive care unit and saw an extremely familiar scene in front of her.

She had set foot into that kind of ward to visit Corey some time ago, but Corey had not been able to wake up yet ever since that day.

Samantha was immensely worried that Timothy...would end up like Corey and slip into a coma.

She walked slowly to the bedside and saw Timothy lying quietly on the hospital bed. There were numerous different tubes and medical equipment stuck in his body and his face was completely pale.

Never in her life had she seen Timothy as weak and pale as he was then. She always knew him to be someone who could keep a straight face even when a gangster pointed a gun to his heart.

He had always been a powerful man, regardless of the time and place.

He was only lying there because of her.

Samantha sat on the chair next to the bed and reached out to hold his hand. It was very cold to the touch and she shuddered a little as a result, but she continued holding it tighter and tighter in an attempt to warm his hand.

“Timothy.” Samantha’s tears had run dry by then but every word she said was like a tear being shed. “When I saved your life last time and became unconscious, did you sit beside my bed like this? Did you hold me and talk to me just like how I’m doing right now?”

“I don’t know how you felt back then, but right now I’m feeling very scared and very sad. I just dreamt that you came and said goodbye to me. Before my grandfather passed away, I had the same kind of dream at noon. After that, I received a call informing me that he was gone. I’m scared, Timothy... I’m scared the same thing will happen too...”

“I... There’s still a lot of things I have to tell you. I have a few questions too, and I still haven’t gotten the chance to ask you. Plus, don’t I still owe you two conditions? You always told me that capitalists never enter into business deals if it means having to suffer losses. In that case, you should wake up and ask me to fulfill those two conditions, right? Shouldn’t you make sure that I don’t get the better end of the deal?”

The man on the hospital bed still remained motionless, but his pulse rate displayed on the monitoring device was starting to become weaker and weaker.

Samantha became increasingly flustered. Her eyes became foggy and her voice was extremely hoarse. “As it turns out, all those so-called conflicts we had are just so

insignificant and ridiculous when you take life in perspective, Timothy. Please. Don't die. If you can hang in there and survive, I'll promise you the world.

"I... I'll never mention divorce to you again, and I'm...I'm willing to give you a baby, okay?"