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Chapter 182: I Miss You a Little

Samantha sipped some tea to get rid of her nausea before standing up to leave.

She looked up at the blue sky when she walked out of the restaurant. The sun was shining brightly, but she could not feel any warmth in her heart.

Nausea, anger, and grievance... All sorts of emotions tumbled in her body and flowed to her limbs.

She knew that those emotions did nothing to help her solve the issue, but emotions were emotions. After all, she was no robot, and it was impossible for her to remain calm and unfeeling in the face of such unfair treatment.

At that moment, she wanted to find someone to talk to.

Samantha could not help herself from taking out her cell phone to dial Timothy's number.

It rang for a long time and was only answered when the ringing tone was about to reach the end. A familiar voice sounded, "Hey."

Samantha had so many things she wanted to tell him, but she swallowed it up after hearing the man's low and somewhat tired voice.

She did not want to complain to him or ask him to help her solve any problems, and all she wanted was to listen to his voice and talk to him. However, she also knew that Timothy was extremely perceptive, and a casual remark or a slightly-off tone from her might arouse his suspicion that something was wrong.

Samantha pursed her lips lightly, gulped a few mouthfuls of saliva, and tried her best to suppress her dejection. She spoke as naturally as possible, "Are you busy?"

According to the time in Axlelland, it was probably past nine at night.

"Yes. I'm in a meeting."

"Ah, you're still in a meeting even though it's so late?" Samantha sounded apologetic. "Did I disturb you? You should continue with your meeting. I—"

"It's fine," Timothy interrupted. He sounded like he was getting up from his seat. "What's the matter? Why are you calling me so early?"

“Nothing.” Samantha lowered her voice and pretended to be kittenish. “I just miss you a little bit.”

“Really?” The man seemed to let out a gentle and gratified smile. “I miss you too.”

“Make sure to take care of your body there. You must take time to rest no matter how busy you are. I’ll be waiting for you to come home.”

“Okay.”

“That’s it for now, I guess. You should go back to the meeting. Don’t let them wait too long. See you. Bye.”

Samantha ended the call soon after.

Once he heard the beeping tone that signaled the end of the call, Timothy removed the phone from his ear and stared intently at the phone.

Although Timothy was happy to hear her call, it was not Samantha’s style to call him for no apparent reason and tell him that she missed him for no reason...

As he was thinking about it, Ronald came over and urged respectfully, “Mr. Barker, the ALE Group’s Mr. Marti is still waiting for you.”

“Yeah,” Timothy responded indifferently but did not walk back to the conference room. He asked, “Are the competition results out yet?”

“What?” Ronald did not understand what was going on for a moment, but after a few seconds, he realized what the big boss Timothy was asking and nodded. “Oh yes, I took some time to check it a few hours ago.”

“And?”

Ronald sighed slightly. “Mrs. Barker didn’t win the competition. She got second.”

Second place.

Did she call him because she was in a bad mood after losing the competition and wanted him to comfort her?

Timothy stood on the spot for about half a minute and said nothing. He then strode over toward the meeting room.

...

Samantha went to a fruit shop and chose a basket of delicious fruits. Her next stop was a florist, where she bought a bunch of beautiful flowers. She then finally went to a hospital.

When she walked up to the door of the child's ward, she straightened her clothes up slightly and raised her hand to knock on the door.

Footsteps could be heard from the other side of the door. When the door was opened, a middle-aged woman looked at her and asked, "And you are?"

Samantha knew the woman in front of her to be the mother of the child she rescued the other day. She had glanced in passing at the mother when the kid's parents dashed into the studio the other day.

The situation turned out just as Samantha expected. The mother was too worried about her own child that she did not see Samantha's face clearly and was therefore unable to recognize her.

Samantha smiled and said, "Hello, you're Billy's mother I assume? I'm an employee of Lychee TV. I'm here to visit Billy."

Billy was the name of the kid that she rescued that day.

Billy's mother was slightly surprised. "Didn't Lychee TV already send people over to visit? Why are you back here again?"

Samantha's expression remained unchanged. "Our senior figures are very concerned about Billy's recovery, so they specifically asked me to come over again."

"I see. That's very considerate of you guys. Please come in." Billy's mother opened the door.

Samantha walked in and handed the fruit basket and flowers to Billy's mother. "This is a gesture from us."

"Thank you. Just your presence here is good enough already. You don't need to bring all these," Billy's mother said politely before taking the fruits and flowers.

After putting it aside, she said, "I'll pour you a glass of water."

Billy's mother went to pour some water while Samantha went to the bed and looked at Billy.

He was sitting against the bedhead with white gauze wrapped around his neck. He had a slightly dull expression and was watching cartoons on his tablet.

Samantha spoke first and greeted him softly. "Hello, Billy."

Billy did not seem to have heard her. He appeared to be immersed in his own world and never once raised his eyes.

Billy's mother came back with a glass of water and sighed deeply when she saw what was happening. "I'm sorry, Miss. Billy hasn't spoken or responded to anyone since that day. Please excuse him."

Samantha shook her head. "Don't worry. I understand. What did the doctor say?"

"The doctor said that this is a stress response to his young age. The initial terror and bloody scene that came after made him completely overwhelmed with fright. That's why he's reluctant to speak right now and has to take it slow."

Samantha felt extremely distressed to see Billy's gloomy expression.

That was also the reason why Lychee TV was so confident. Billy's reluctance to speak was tantamount to severing her sole hope of making a clarification.

The mother's cell phone rang suddenly and she apologized. "I'll have to take this call. I'm sorry to trouble you, but could you please take care of Billy for a moment?"

"Sure."

Billy's mother walked out of the ward.

Samantha sat by the bed, rubbed Billy's hair gently, and said softly, "You have to get well soon, okay? You're a very brave man."

Even if he could not testify for her, she still hoped that he would be well. After all, she had paid the price of cheating death to rescue the child alive.

Billy raised his eyes slowly and looked at her.

Not long later, he lowered his head again and continued to look at the tab in his hand.

Billy's mother returned a few minutes later after taking the phone call, so Samantha got up and said goodbye.

The mother nodded, "Thank you for coming to see Billy. Your company invited Billy and I to the awards dinner in three days. See you then."

Samantha curled her lips slightly.

Walter really took great pains to put Harmony on a pedestal.

Having Billy and his mother appear at the awards would increase the attention to the awards party, in addition to adding another layer of aura to Harmony and building her momentum.

Samantha took a deep breath and said, “See you then.”

Chapter 183: You're Not the Lady Who Saved Me

Samantha turned around, raised her hand again, and rubbed Billy's head gently. “See you, Billy. I'll visit you again some time.”

Billy still did not react. It was as if the moment he raised his gaze and looked up at her was nothing more than an illusion.

“I'll excuse myself then.”

“Okay. Take care of yourself.”

Samantha walked out of the ward and spent a few seconds standing there in silence. She then took out her cell phone and dialed a number.

...

During the next three days, Samantha did not go anywhere and merely stayed at home with Old Madam Barker. She never even set foot outside the house.

During that time, Walter called her to inform her that she could start work at Lychee TV at any time since he had already notified the human resources department.

He probably felt that she was content with what she had and decided to ask in passing, “Will you be coming over to the awards party?”

Walter initially did not invite her because he was worried that she might feel uncomfortable. However, he still felt like having her join in after seeing her come to terms with everything.

After all, Harmony and Samantha—with their superb abilities—were both talents that could be nurtured.

Having another ally was always going to be better than having another opposer.

Samantha spoke as if she was honored that he asked her that. “How could I refuse such a personal invitation from you, Mr. Schuck? There will be senior figures and other

colleagues at the party too, right? Including other media companies too? It would be nice to meet some of these people. After all, I'd have to interact with them in the future."

Walter smiled in satisfaction. "Don't worry, Sammy. You're a very thoughtful and tactful person, and I'm sure you'll achieve great things in the future. Alright then, I'll get someone to send you an invitation letter. See you then."

"Thank you very much."

Time went by in a flash. The awards dinner was soon upon them at eight in the evening.

The competition attracted no shortage of attention, so the awards dinner was organized at a similarly grand scale. The venue booked by the television station was the stadium located at the heart of the city. Almost all the well-known individuals from the media industry were invited to join the merriment in the event.

Samantha dressed up beautifully at the insistence of Old Madam Barker, who even told her driver to chauffeur Samantha to the stadium.

It was important to show up in a style and maintain her reputation.

When Samantha got off the car, Harmony just so happened to have gotten off from another car as well. Harmony dressed even more spectacularly that night, doing away with the pure and slightly plain makeup she used to apply. The gosling-yellow dress she wore was particularly eye-catching and contrasted beautifully against her fair skin, making her look like a demoiselle who just stepped out of a painting.

As soon as Harmony got out of the car, the reporters who had been surrounding the car pointed their cameras at her and clicked their shutter button non-stop. They even praised her while taking photographs. "I've photographed plenty of women in the entertainment industry, but Harmony is the most beautiful of them all."

"Very beautiful, indeed. She looked just like everyone's first love when she dressed simply and modestly, but when she pulled out all the stops today, that aura she has is just breathtaking. She rocks both the fancy look and the simple look. Don't you just love that!"

"Most importantly, she's kind-hearted and good-looking. You know that video of her saving the child? I watched it over and over again. Honestly, if I were on the scene, I probably wouldn't have the guts to rush forward. She almost got stabbed right in her heart."

"Yeah! That's right! I was at the edge of my seat when I watched the video. Harmony looks so delicate that I never would've expected her to be so brave. She deserves to be called the most beautiful new generation anchor. I think she has the potential to succeed Ms. Goldman."

“That’s a given. Isn’t Ms. Goldman attending the dinner today too? Rumor has it that she specifically came to meet Harmony. Perhaps she really might accept a protege on the spot.”

“Amazing. She would have a bright future if Ms. Goldman approves of her and mentors her personally.”

“We can only dream of something like that. It’s unfortunate that we neither have Harmony’s good looks nor her ability and courage...”

Harmony’s smile became even brighter after hearing the crowd’s comments. At the photographer’s request, she allowed them to take photos of her from every angle. Once they were done, she said sweetly, “Thank you for everything. I’ll be heading in now.”

She stepped on the red carpet and walked in.

When she spotted Samantha from the corner of her eyes, she stopped for a moment and walked over.

Samantha did not ignore Harmony when the latter stood in front of her. She stopped walking as well and raised her eyes to look at Harmony.

The first person to speak was Harmony. “I didn’t expect you to come today, Sammy. Thank you for your understanding and acknowledgment.”

‘Understanding.’

‘Acknowledgement.’

Samantha seemed intrigued as she looked at Harmony’s smile. She smiled slightly and said, “I hope tonight’s awards dinner will be a wonderful one. Keep that smile going until the very end.”

“Thank you for your wishes.” Harmony was greatly relieved. “Let’s continue to get along with each other in the future, like we always have.”

Samantha smiled but did not answer.

Harmony did not press further. “I have to go backstage and prepare, Sammy. See you later.”

“Of course.”

Harmony turned and left.

As soon as she headed backstage, Walter pulled her aside and said, "Both the general manager and Ms. Goldman are here, so I'll bring you over to meet them. Ms. Goldman made a point to attend today and it's up to you to make an impression."

Harmony smiled and nodded. "Okay."

Walter led Harmony to a VIP lounge. When he opened the door to enter, the general manager was sitting on the sofa with Victoria, chatting with each other.

When Walter and Harmony walked forward, Walter was the first to greet them. "Sir, Ms. Goldman."

He then introduced Harmony to them. "This woman here is Harmony Johnson, the winner of the competition. She has a lot of potential."

Harmony greeted them kindly, "Sir, Ms. Goldman. I'm pleased to meet you. My name is Harmony."

Both the general manager and Victoria looked up simultaneously at her.

The general manager nodded. "You made a good impression. Keep up the hard work."

"I will, thank you for your encouragement."

Victoria was dignified, majestic, and always had a look of seriousness on her face. She looked at Harmony and opened her lips slightly, "Do you have time to spare after the award's dinner?"

As soon as Victoria asked that question, there was a flash of light in Walter and Harmony's eyes.

Victoria's willingness to take the initiative and offer an invitation was a sure sign that she was willing to give a chance.

Harmony was over the moon, but she remained calm and said, "I do."

Victoria looked admiringly at her and said softly, "Then let's have a cup of tea together."

"I'd be happy to."

...

After the guests were seated one by one, the dinner officially began.

Once the emcee said some opening remarks, the senior figures each came onstage to say a couple of words. Finally, it was time to hand over the awards.

The emcee said, "Next up, let us all invite our champion, our winner, the gorgeous anchor Harmony Johnson to come onstage."

Applause erupted throughout the entire venue.

When the spotlight shone on Harmony as she walked onto the stage, her graceful steps made her look like a superstar in everyone's eyes.

The general manager presented Harmony with the award and Harmony held the golden trophy up with a smile on her face.

The emcee then said, "For this momentous occasion, the boy whom Harmony saved will come on stage to present her with a flower. Let us welcome Billy!"

With that announcement, Billy—who was wearing a little suit and had his hair combed neatly—held the flower and walked onstage with his mother.

Billy walked to Harmony and raised the flower in his hand to her.

Harmony smiled, bent down slightly to approach Billy, and reached out to take the flower.

Just as Harmony was about to come into contact with the flower, Billy's face changed suddenly and he pushed her hand away forcefully.

Then he cried out in a small voice. "You're not the lady who saved me!"

Chapter 184: Is She Being a Sore Loser?

Billy's words resonated throughout the entire venue due to the microphone attached to his collar.

Everyone could not help but gasp in surprise. No one expected the boy to say something like that so suddenly.

Samantha was the only one who did not seem shocked. She had a little smirk as she looked nonchalantly at Harmony, whose smile had suddenly stiffened onstage.

Billy's mother was elated that the child was finally willing to speak, but a second later, she could not contain her shock and whispered, "What are you talking about? Harmony is the one who saved you! You shouldn't be so rude to someone who saved your life."

Harmony reacted quickly and forced another smile as spoke in a very understanding tone, "I'm really happy that Billy can finally speak. He must've misspoken after finally

coming out of that severe trauma. Don't worry about it. I'm still very thankful that he came today and gave me a flower."

She knelt down and stretched out her hand to Billy. "Thank you for the flower, Billy."

Billy, however, took a step back. He hugged his mother's leg in fear and insisted, "She's not the lady who saved me. She smells different."

"Smell? What do you mean smell different?" Billy's mother frowned and was a little embarrassed too.

A gleam of cold light flashed in Harmony's eyes. She did not expect the little kid to expose her at such a critical moment. Walter had clearly told her that the kid had been receiving treatment because he could not speak. Why was he capable of speech at such a time?

If he was allowed to speak any more nonsense, all of Harmony's glory that night would be ruined! She must ensure that she would never be embarrassed.

Harmony still maintained a smile on her face and looked tenderly at Billy. "Hey Billy, maybe you can't recognize me because I changed my clothes, put on some makeup, and used some perfume today. It's okay. I'm happy enough that you've recovered and are able to talk again."

She turned to Billy's mother again and smiled, "Thank you so much for coming today."

Billy's mother was afraid that her child was not feeling well, so she nodded and said, "I'm sorry. Congratulations by the way. I'll take Billy down now."

"Okay."

Billy's mother bent down to carry Billy up. "Come one, Billy. Let's go down."

Just as she was about to carry Billy up, he started crying. "Mommy. It's not her. She didn't save me. It's not her!"

Everyone could not help murmuring to themselves after the child denied it three times and burst out in tears.

"What's going on? Could it be that Harmony isn't the one who saved the boy? Why would the boy resist her that much otherwise?"

"Isn't the child just traumatized and in a bad state of mind? Maybe he's just talking nonsense?"

“I don’t think so. Children’s reactions are very genuine. They develop affection for anyone who treats them well. If Harmony saved him, he ought to be more affectionate toward Harmony.”

“Then who else could it be if it isn’t Harmony? Why would the person keep quiet even after getting their credit robbed of them? Is that person a modern-day saint or something?”

Harmony was starting to have difficulty maintaining her expression.

Everyone was looking at her and the cameras were all pointing toward her too. It was a live broadcast after all, and despite her anger and desire to stuff a sock in that little boy’s mouth, there was nothing she could do about it.

In the audience, Walter felt cold sweat run down his spine when he noticed that the general manager’s expression had soured.

He organized the dinner on a grand scale and specifically invited Billy over to put up a front. Little did he expect that such an accident would happen, and if he messed it all up, his bright future would be popped just like a bubble.

He got up immediately, rushed onto the stage, then held the microphone and said, “My deepest apologies to everyone in attendance. I failed to consider Billy’s mental state and it seemed he uttered some nonsense because he hasn’t fully recovered yet. We will now escort the child to get some rest for the sake of his health.”

Billy’s mother was far from happy when she heard that. Although she was worried about her child’s health, she was driven to protect him when his mental state was called into question. “My child won’t talk nonsense. He’s recovering very well and is well-behaved too! There’s nothing wrong with his mental state!

“Perhaps the anchor who saved my boy really wasn’t Harmony.”

Billy’s mother paused for a moment and seemed to remember something. “Oh yes, I did meet the anchor who saved my child that day, but I was so anxious that I didn’t see her face clearly. Her body shape was similar to Harmony, but... I...remember she was injured at the time. Her waist was bruised. I saw it clearly because she took off her coat to bandage the wound on my child. Harmony’s waist doesn’t look injured...”

When she said that, everyone unconsciously turned to look at Harmony on stage.

It just so happened that her dress was designed in such a way that her waist was exposed. The skin on her waist was as fair as snow and there were no bruises whatsoever.

The discussion became even louder at that moment.

Harmony clenched her hands firmly and instinctively lowered her arms to cover her waist.

Cold sweat continued to drip from on Walter's forehead but he still explained insistently, "It's been more than half a month and the bruises have already healed. This isn't how you should treat the woman who saved your child's life."

Harmony maintained her smile and blinked her eyes pitifully. She did not speak up to defend herself because it was better to stay silent.

While it was true that the mother did not see the anchor clearly, she could not accept it when they accused her child of having mental problems. In the end, she could only freeze for a moment.

It was then that Billy moved his little legs and dashed off stage all of a sudden.

Everyone was surprised at first but they soon turned their gazes and followed him. Even the videographer pointed the camera at Billy, curious to see where the boy was going.

In one breath, Billy darted across the audience, walked up the bleachers to the fifth row, and finally ran to a particular seat.

He lifted the flower he had been holding in his arms and said to the woman in the seat, "This flower is for you, Miss. Thank you for saving me."

The videographer aimed the camera right at the woman's beautiful face.

The woman was none other than Samantha.

Samantha smiled at Billy and reached out unhesitatingly to take the flower. She replied, "Thank you, Billy."

She then bent down and hugged Billy. He even stretched out his short arms and placed them around her neck, rather than avoiding the hug and showing an aversion to her.

There was an uproar in the audience.

"What's going on? I'm lost here. So the woman who negotiated with the madman alone and saved the child wasn't Harmony? It was Samantha?"

"It can't be it, right? Are you serious? How could it be Samantha? Did she use her wealth as Mrs. Barker to bribe the mother and the child into putting on a show?"

"Samantha's being a sore loser, isn't she? Did she decide to humiliate someone powerless like Harmony just because she didn't win the competition?"

As the negative conjectures were getting louder and louder, a picture appeared on the big screen onstage.

Chapter 185: She Destroyed His Everything

Two contracts were shown; one was a non-disclosure agreement while the other was an employment contract from Lychee TV.

The clauses within them were clearly presented before everyone's eyes, and the entire venue turned silent for about a minute or so before there were murmurs in the crowd.

It turned out that Samantha really was the anchor who dealt with the madman and saved the child, but Harmony took credit for it silently and won the competition on the back of Samantha's good deeds.

In order to continue supporting Harmony, Lychee TV did not hesitate to offer a position to Samantha as a condition to keep her quiet about it.

It was an eye-opener indeed for such a scandal to happen in a big-name television station that was so well-represented.

Walter's expression changed drastically when he saw the two contracts appearing on the big screen. Even Harmony could no longer maintain her elegance and staggered back slightly.

The mutterings below grew even louder.

"Harmony doesn't look like the kind to take away what isn't hers, so I'm surprised to find out that a malicious heart lies underneath her pure facade. She just lied in front of everyone without batting an eye! How impressive."

"You've got to be kidding me. Did I actually fail to see that Harmony is a two-faced woman? Looks really can be deceptive. I still sided with her when the kid said that she was not the lady who saved him, but now I feel like I've been slapped in the face."

"I'm heartbroken. I thought she was an angel, but she turned out to be an angel in devil's clothing."

"Samantha has to be the one who has it worst in this entire fiasco, don't you think? I thought she wouldn't get bullied because her husband is Timothy Barker and she had the backing of the Barkers. But to be forced to sign this non-disclosure agreement and be robbed of her rightful throne? If this matter hadn't been exposed, she would've had to suffer all that pent-up anger."

“This incident made me look at Samantha in a whole new light though. If she really did use her influence to bully others, why would she end up being bullied to such an extent? At the end of the day, she’s standing here today because of her own ability and strength. I can officially declare myself her fan now.”

“Do you wonder if Harmony feels guilty about winning the competition? Isn’t it ridiculous for her to still hold the competition trophy? She takes away the glory from others rather than relying on her own strength, but even if she wins this time, will she be able to continue stealing credit for the rest of her life? Sooner or later her true colors will show!”

Harmony stood on stage and did not fully understand what the audience was talking about, but she had a clear view of the contemptuous looks that everyone shot at her.

The trophy in her hand suddenly felt very heavy, making her feel somewhat unsteady.

She had excelled in everything ever since she was a child. People had nothing but praise for her and she had never faced such an embarrassing situation before.

Despite her excellent mental fortitude, she could not control her eyes from turning slightly red at that moment.

The scene was already in a state of chaos, and the general manager sitting below had an extremely sour look.

Victoria looked disappointedly at Harmony on stage. She had earlier been very optimistic about Harmony after watching the rescue video several times. While professional acumen and technical skill could undoubtedly be honed, character and morals were more important than anything.

Harmony’s ability to stand up in times of crisis and keep a level head in the face of danger was proof of courage and resourcefulness. Such qualities were rare, and Victoria was more than willing to take someone like that under her wing.

Unfortunately, Harmony was not worth that at all.

Victoria got up unhesitatingly and said to the general manager, “That’s it. I’m leaving.”

As soon as she said that, she got on her feet and left immediately.

The general manager massaged his temples and got up. He picked up the microphone and said, “Settle down, everyone.”

Everyone still accorded respect to the esteemed general manager and the venue became silent.

The general manager said in a deep voice, "I'm terribly sorry that all of you have to leave disappointed after coming here with high spirits. Regarding the truth of the matter and the question of the rightful winner, we will reassess the situation and discuss it internally. An explanation will definitely be given to all of you. This marks the end of the awards dinner today. Thank you everyone."

After that, the general manager handed the microphone to a staff member beside him and narrowed his eyes at Walter and Harmony who were standing there. After letting out a cold snort, he immediately turned away.

Walter's face paled in an instant.

The general manager's words and that final look were the clearest sign that he was done for.

The big screen was switched off and the lights came on again. The audience knew that there was no follow-up to what happened and so had no choice but to get up and leave.

Billy's mother rushed over to Samantha and looked embarrassedly at her. "I'm sorry for not recognizing you before this, Ms. Larsson. I almost ended up acknowledging someone with bad intentions as a savior. Thank you very much for saving Billy that day."

Samantha smiled and shook her head. "Don't worry about it. I must thank Billy today too. If it weren't for him, I wouldn't have been able to get justice."

She rubbed Billy's head lightly with her hand. "Thank you, Billy."

Billy shook his head. "You were the one who brought a doctor to cure me. It was the doctor who made me speak again. I should be thanking you!"

Billy's mother was surprised. "Something like this happened?"

The mother looked at Samantha with an even more thankful expression. "I don't know how else to thank you, Samantha."

"To tell you the truth, the doctor was not a hundred percent sure at the time but I thought that I might as well bring him to Billy and give it a try. I didn't tell you in advance because I didn't want to disappoint you. In the end, it was Billy whose willpower was strong enough to break past that psychological barrier."

The mother hugged Billy right away. "Atta boy, Billy."

"It's time for us to go back to the hospital. When Billy's is fully recovered, I'll pay you another visit with my husband."

Samantha nodded. "Sure. Be careful on your way back to the hospital."

After Billy left with his mother, Samantha was about to leave when a figure appeared in front of her and blocked her.

Samantha looked up and saw Walter with a fierce expression on his face.

Her expression did not change at all and she even stopped walking. She opened her mouth and said nonchalantly, "What can I do for you, Mr. Schuck?"

Walter's fists cracked and he wanted to kill her right then.

She ruined everything!

With a trace of reason being the only thing restraining him, he looked at her gloomily and gritted his teeth while saying slowly, "You ruined me, Samantha. You can't escape. You've signed a non-disclosure agreement, so now that you broke it, I'll make sure to pursue this until the very end! Don't think you can enjoy yourself after ruining my life!"

Samantha smiled and even her eyebrows formed little arcs. She looked so beautiful that anyone who laid eyes on her would feel their heart throb.

She took one step closer to him as her red lips parted open as she spoke, "You seem pretty interested in playing with the lawyers of the Barker Group?"

"You..." Walter's eyes widened suddenly.

"Why are you so surprised? Didn't you enjoy swaying public opinion on the internet and getting everyone to call me a bully? I guess I should show you how I use my power to bully you."

Samantha fiddled with her hair lazily. "You may contact my lawyers if you need anything, Mr. Schuck. Goodbye."

After saying that, she walked across him and headed toward the door on her high heels without looking at him again.

Harmony stood at the door and looked straight at her.

Samantha walked right past Harmony as if there was no one there.. Harmony did not stop her like Walter did, but merely uttered a soft sentence when she passed by.

Chapter 186: Don't Regret It!

“Are you happy now?”

Samantha initially just wanted to ignore Harmony, but those words amused her because they painted Harmony as being the victim.

Samantha stopped walking and stood in front of Harmony. Since she was about half a head taller than Harmony, she looked down at Harmony slightly and opened her lips, “Are you finally going to stop pretending?”

It was each person for themselves since they were facing each other in their truest colors. Samantha looked straight at her and uttered each word clearly, “Don’t do bad stuff if you don’t want people to know about it. What doesn’t belong to you will never be yours.”

‘Where did you get the confidence to steal someone else’s results and think that you can hide it for the rest of your life?’

Harmony’s eyelashes trembled slightly.

However, she did not look as embarrassed and miserable as she had just been on stage. At that moment, her expression was extremely calm and she even repeated the words Samantha said to her, “What doesn’t belong to you will never be yours.”

After uttering that sentence, she even curled the corners of her lips into a smile. “Well said.”

She finally lifted her gaze and looked straight at Samantha. “Samantha Larsson...”

It was the first time Harmony ever addressed Samantha by her full name. Harmony spoke in a low and oddly uncanny tone, “Don’t regret it.”

That was Harmony’s true nature...

At that moment, her beautiful and pure face looked a little eerie, making Samantha feel somewhat uncomfortable.

A person’s character was derived from their nature.

Samantha thought Harmony was personable and charismatic before, but that view had since changed. It was such a shame that Harmony was so beautiful.

A beautiful exterior was pointless if the insides were rotten.

Samantha was not going to back down if Harmony declared war. Her lips twitched and she raised her chin. “We’ll see.”

As soon as she said that, the two of them turned around almost simultaneously and walked away with their backs against each other.

The wind outside was slightly cool when Samantha exited the stadium. She could not help but wrap her arms around herself because her dress was a little thin.

A black car stopped suddenly in front of her and the rear window was lowered slowly.

Samantha looked over and saw a man's handsome face. He looked up and stared at her with a dense soft light at the bottom of his eyes.

She was completely stunned because she never would have expected that Timothy—who clearly should have been abroad on a business trip—would appear so suddenly in front of her.

She blinked and muttered in disbelief, "You... How... Why are you..."

The rear door was pushed open from the inside and Timothy's long legs appeared. He stepped off, wrapped his long arms around her slender waist, then dragged her into his arms and blocked the cold wind for her. "You can either get in the car and talk or stand outside here and enjoy the wind. I'm fine either way."

Samantha snapped back to her senses and scanned the surroundings instinctively.

Timothy's handsomeness and aura was just too strong that everyone's attention was attracted to her direction as soon as he appeared. Some of the guests had not yet left, and she spotted those people looking at them, even using cell phones to snap pictures of them.

Those people were all in the media industry and it would probably take only a few minutes for her to hit the entertainment headlines with Timothy.

"Car!"

Samantha bent down and got into the car first, then grabbed Timothy's arm and dragged him into the car.

She did not know if Timothy was unable to steady himself when sitting or whether he was just acting, but when she dragged him in, his entire body fell on her body and the two of them ended up being very close.

The man's dark eyes stared deeply at her and his breaths were caressing her face lightly. He opened his thin lips slightly and spoke in a low, slightly teasing voice, "Mrs. Barker, you seem to miss me a lot, don't you? Very enthusiastic, are we? Hm?"

That was not the case at all!

Samantha's cheeks reddened profusely and she glared at him angrily. There was no time for her to explain herself, so she just turned her head and said to Ronald in the driver's seat. "Start driving, Ronald. First thing we should do is leave this place."

Ronald pursed his lips to hold his laughter and responded. "Okay, Mrs. Barker."

The car drove into traffic.

Samantha only breathed out a sigh of relief after the car drove off for some time and she made sure that there was no one else.

Upon seeing the situation, Timothy raised his eyebrows. "What's the matter? We're a rightfully married couple, not secret lovers. Why are you afraid that they would take pictures?"

"It's not that." Samantha looked at him. "You're well aware that you turn heads wherever you go. I don't want news about you to overwhelm news about tonight's awards dinner."

"That's the highlight. We don't want you upstaging that."

Timothy smiled and pinched the tip of her nose with his long fingers. "You're quite vengeful."

"Of course I am. I've been trampled on by other people." Samantha was confident in her convictions. "I'm no angel, and I'll never be one either."

Her kindness was exclusive. She would respond in kind if other people respected her and would never take it lying down if she was bullied.

Kindness might, at times, leave others with the impression that one was a pushover. That would make the perpetrator go even further.

In such cases, kindness would only leave one with bruises all over.

When Timothy looked at the glow in Samantha's eyes, he could not help but think of the emails he read about her unfair treatment abroad. His heart immediately felt as though they were pierced by a dense mat of thin needles.

Those were the experiences that hardened her heart.

She used to be a very carefree little princess...

"Why didn't you tell me about this?" Timothy lowered his voice as his black eyes looked luminously at her.

Had he not noticed that something was off about her, it would have long been over by the time he knew about it.

“Ah...” Samantha touched her nose unconsciously. “Aren’t you...busy? Your project is very important and I didn’t want to disturb you. Plus, I can handle this by myself too. I can’t depend on you for everything, right?”

She was already used to it anyway. When it came to certain situations, there was only one person she could rely on—herself.

Nevertheless, she felt that it was inappropriate to make that remark.

However, Timothy seemed to be able to see through her mind. His gaze became even more penetrating as he said, “Sammy, you... You won’t be alone in the future anymore. You can rely on me.”

After a pause, he added another sentence, “I’m hoping that you’d be willing to rely on me too.”

They had become much closer to each other, but Timothy knew that deep down in her heart was a very thin barrier keeping him out. He was never completely allowed to enter.

‘Sammy...’

Samantha’s heart skipped a beat.

During their sweetest time together in their past relationship, Timothy would always call her like that in a very clingy manner.

He never seemed to have called her that after she came back.

That was the very first time...

She wondered if she could really rely on Timothy for everything in the future?

That Timothy showed up there was a sign that he was worried about her, and was willing to rush back in the midst of such an important project...

That should be enough to show his sincerity toward her, right?

Samantha lowered her gaze. There was a flash of light in the depths of eyes and soon raised them to look at Timothy. She asked in a soft voice, “Timothy, will you.... Will you always side with me?”

Chapter 187: Learning to Rely on You

Samantha knew that her cautiousness was not because she did not want to believe in Timothy. It was simply because of the human heart's natural defense mechanism.

She had experienced being abandoned by Timothy before, and from then onward she never dared to ask him about it and get an answer from him. As a result, that was the one door in the recesses of her mind that she never dared to open.

She did her best and put in tremendous effort, but as much as she tried doing so, she could not help but probe around to try and increase her sense of security.

Timothy stared deeply into her eyes and could see the deep anxiety hidden behind the twinkle in her eyes. He could not stop himself from pursing his lips.

When all was said and done, he was the one who did not do enough to prevent her from entrusting herself to him wholeheartedly.

He stroked her hair with his big palm, opened his lips lightly, and said hoarsely, "Of course."

Those two simple words were like a small stone that broke the calm surface of a lake and produced layer after layer of ripples.

Samantha curled her lips slightly and looked back at him with her black eyes. She nodded gently but seriously. "Okay. I... I will learn to rely on you in the future."

She then blinked teasingly. "When the time comes, I hope you don't complain that I'm too troublesome or annoying."

Seemingly amused by her words, Timothy rubbed her head even harder. "You can annoy me however you want."

Ronald, who was driving the car, was so excited that he nearly mistook the brake pedal for the gas one.

Lovey-dovey couples were just so annoying!

'Hmph! When I get my holiday and return home to see the woman my mother is trying to set me up with, I'll be the one to start the trend of refusing public displays of affection!'

...

At the villa, Timothy walked in while embracing Samantha. When they saw that the living room was still lit, they exchanged glances with each other and Samantha was the first to ask confusedly, "It's pretty late already. Is Aunt Julia still watching her TV series?"

Aunt Julia was a loyal fan of those romantic television series and dramas. She often stayed up late to watch them.

Timothy and Samantha took off their shoes before walking over, but it turned out that both Aunt Julia and Old Madam Barker were awake.

Rather than watching television, they sat on the sofa with their heads leaning against each other. Both of them were wearing reading glasses and were laughing as they watched on their cell phones. Neither seemed to notice that Timothy and Samantha had returned.

Samantha became more curious as to what was going on.

She coughed lightly and said, "Grandma, Aunt Julia, what are you both looking at?"

Upon hearing that, Old Madam Barker and Aunt Julia raised their heads in unison. When the old lady saw Samantha, she was childishly elated and immediately gave Samantha a thumbs up. "You're back, Sammy! Tonight's comeback was awesome! You're amazing!"

Aunt Julia also nodded her head repeatedly. "I'm proud of you, Mrs. Barker! You gave a big fat slap to those shameless crooks! I saw plenty of people complimenting you on Waybo while cursing at Mr. Schuck and Harmony!"

It turned out that they were reading all that...

She had not gotten the time to read Waybo, but it seemed her counterattack that night had succeeded in returning her reputation in addition to regaining her achievements. All in all, the entire incident could be considered a stunning comeback.

"That's my granddaughter-in-law!" Old Madam Barker said proudly, but there was a little bit of distress when she next continued, "Although, you shouldn't keep it to yourself if you ever encounter something like this in the future. You must tell me! I might be old, but I'm still useful. I'll never allow anyone to step on you!"

Samantha replied kindly, "It's no big deal, Grandma. I won't trouble you if I can handle it by myself, but if it's something I can't deal with, I'll be sure to tell you."

Even though the old lady knew that Samantha was just coaxing her, she still smiled and said, "Alrighty then."

She then saw Timothy standing beside Samantha and had a somewhat gratified look when she smiled. "You snotty boy. Since you do know to rush back and protect your wife, I'll let you off the hook this time and spare you the nagging."

Timothy's lips twitched and he was too lazy to refute.

Whether he liked it or not, he had gradually accepted the fact that his status in the family was at the lowest end of the food chain.

Old Madam Barker's gaze returned to Samantha and she looked at Samantha's waist. She frowned slightly and asked concernedly, "Is your injury fully healed, Sammy? Are you okay?"

"It is, it is. Don't worry, Grandma," Samantha replied hurriedly.

"Then...will there be any future...complications?"

"What?" Samantha was a little confused. "The bones have all healed. There won't be any complications."

"Sigh, that's not what I'm talking about. I'm asking whether it will...affect your future pregnancy or anything like that..."

Samantha's cheeks were stained with red. She unconsciously glanced at Timothy and said weakly, "That's completely unrelated, Grandma."

She hurt her waist, not her stomach...

"You still have to be careful!" The old lady was still worried. "How about I ask my personal doctor to come over and give you a full-body examination tomorrow? You can get your stomach checked while you're at it and some medication can be prescribed to strengthen your body..."

Samantha understood that the old lady was eager to hold a baby. That was why she wanted Samantha's body to be examined, and a more important point was the prescribing of medication to strengthen her body.

She then remembered the so-called 'medication' that Old Madam Barker gave, which produced a restless and fiery effect after it was consumed. Such medication might be good, but it was far too torturous for her.

Samantha felt that it would be impolite to refuse the old lady outrightly, so she looked at Timothy blankly and hinted at him to help her.

Timothy happened to be looking at her too. He had received the 'save me' message from her, but all he did was lick his lips and turn a blind eye.

Samantha knew that he did it on purpose and gnashed her teeth secretly. She then stretched her hand to his back and pulled his collar gently with her little fingers, following which she mouthed the three words 'please help me'.

Timothy smiled contentedly and answered lazily, "You don't have to do that, Grandma. Her injury has recovered and she's free of any complications, both now and in the future."

"As for the rest..."

His words trailed off into the void, but he then carried Samantha up all of a sudden. He turned around right away and began walking toward the stairs.

Samantha's eyes widened in surprise when she felt her body leave the ground all of a sudden. She steadied herself by instinctively wrapping her arms around his neck.

Old Madam Barker hurriedly said, "I haven't finished talking with Sammy yet! Where are you going?"

Timothy paused for a moment, then turned his head slightly to the side. "You want to hug babies, don't you, Grandma? I'm going to bring my wife back to the room right now and do my best to give you a big chubby baby."

Samantha's cheeks reddened even more because she never expected him to be so direct.

Old Madam Barker smiled suddenly and her attitude did a 180-degree turn. "Well now, you guys should go upstairs and rest! Go on, go on!"

Timothy smiled and continued making his way upstairs.

Seeing the silhouette of the young couple disappearing at the top of the stairs, Old Madam Barker could not help but put her hands together and plead, "Hey, Hubby. Send your blessings to Timmy and Sammy so they can hurry up and give birth to a little Timmy or a little Sammy. Let me have a chance to see my great-grandchild before I go up there and meet you again!"

After the old lady finished muttering, she turned around and saw Aunt Julia frowning while looking at the cell phone. She could not help but ask, "What are you looking at? Why do you have that expression?"

Chapter 188: Prolonged Separation Beats Being Newly-Weds

Aunt Julia raised her head, looked at the old lady, and opened her mouth slightly as if there was something she wanted to say but could not.

Old Madam Barker knew Aunt Julia well, and the latter's expression gave the old lady a bad feeling. "Julia! Just tell me what it is! I'm old enough not to be scared by anything!"

As she was talking, she could no longer wait for the answer and immediately moved her head over to look at Aunt Julia's cell phone screen.

There were only photos of Harmony at the award show.

Old Madam Barker thought it was something unspeakable, but that was all it turned out to be. She therefore asked in confusion, "Did you get yourself in a twist just because of this?"

She thought that someone was badmouthing her lovely, beautiful, and kind-hearted Samantha again.

"That's not it, Old Madam." Aunt Julia tapped on the screen and zoomed in on the photo. "Look carefully. Don't you think this Harmony Johnson looks very familiar?"

When Aunt Julia said that, Old Madam Barker adjusted the presbyopia glasses on her nose bridge and took a closer look. It was then that there was some fluctuation in her expression.

"This... This Harmony Johnson... Could it... Could she... Is she that little girl who used to always be by Tim's side when they were young?"

Aunt Julia nodded. "Looks like her to me."

"Didn't she already go abroad?" Old Madam Barker frowned. "Could we have mistaken the two of them because of their similar looks?"

Aunt Julia was not entirely certain due to two factors; the little girl's surname was not Johnson and so many years had passed that it was impossible to tell whether they were the same person.

"Should I get someone to investigate?" Aunt Julia asked.

Old Madam Barker glanced upstairs. The young couple's relationship had just started progressing well and the last thing she wanted was for untoward incidents to happen. Being cautious was the only way to go.

She nodded. "Do it."

That was the best course of action.

If it was the same person, then what was their intention to return to the country at such a time and show up next to Sammy?

The glow in Old Madam Barker's eyes sharpened little by little.

...

Timothy carried Samantha into the room and placed her down on the big soft bed. He then leaned over her and towered right above her.

Samantha subconsciously raised her hands and pressed them against his chest as she exclaimed in surprise, "Timothy, you...?What... What are you going to do?"

There was a fiendish look in the man's eyes and his voice became hoarse. "Didn't you hear what I said? I said I was going to work hard and make a big chubby baby with you!"

"... Wait... Didn't you say that just to trick Grandma?"

"Who said I was tricking her?" Timothy grasped her wrist and locked her hands to one side. He lowered his handsome face and touched the tip of his nose against Samantha's, saying, "I really...really want to have a big chubby baby with you..."

His straightforward sentence, coupled with the tumbling emotions in the depths of his black pupils, made Samantha's cheeks as hot as fire.

She could not break free from his grip and her gaze darted away a couple of times, but all she could do was curse in shame and anger, "You rascal."

The first thing he did when he came back was bully her.

Timothy looked at her reddened cheeks and could not help but plant a kiss between her eyebrows. He then opened his mouth and said, "I miss you, Sammy."

He was heartbroken to find out that she did not dare to tell him about the injustices she suffered. His only recourse was to complete all his work in the shortest amount of time possible and rush back as soon as he could.

He did not care what she wanted to do. Even if she poked a hole in the ozone layer, he would be happy to patch it up for her again.

No one was allowed to wrong her and make her feel dejected, not when he was unable to bring himself to do that.

Samantha had not been genuinely rejecting Timothy's advances, but the moment she heard him say 'I miss you', her heart skipped a beat and her body turned limp.

She raised her eyes and looked at him intently. That was when she realized that he had probably rushed back overnight. There was a little bit of stubble on his lips that made him look travel-worn.

As she looked at him, she unconsciously raised her hand and gently stroked his beard with her fingertips. It felt a little prickly to the touch.

Timothy allowed her to continue touching but cocked an eyebrow. "What's the matter?"

Samantha remembered the time she called Timothy. His voice sounded exhausted, which clearly showed how busy he was with work. He was frequently so busy that he had little, if any, sleep for days on end.

He must have worked his head off to come back ahead of schedule.

Her heart melted instantly and she became a mess.

"Timothy..." She pursed her lips lightly but eventually told him the most genuine words from the bottom of her heart. "You just asked me in the car if I really miss you.

"My answer is yes. I miss you. I really miss you."

She always felt that the bed was empty whenever she went to bed at night. Whenever something happened, the first thing she did was think of him, and listening to his voice would have been good enough.

With him by her side again, she felt happy. Truly, genuinely happy.

She had been alone for a long time, but that did not mean that she did not enjoy the feeling of being with someone. If she could be with someone that she loved and who loved her back, she would be more than happy to be together with them.

There were conversations to be held, a person to rely on, and there was no need to worry about being abandoned or left behind. She could place her wholehearted trust in him, and even though the whole world was against her, she would have the courage to face everything as long as Timothy was by her side.

"Oh? How do you miss me?" Timothy planted a kiss on her lips. "Like this?"

Samantha stared at him intently and a gleam of light flashed under her eyes. She raised her neck and kissed him back, all while admitting with a blush, "Yeah, just like this."

Timothy was briefly stunned to see her behave like that. His black pupils contracted slightly.

After a few seconds, he snapped back to his senses.

A blazing flame suddenly rose from the bottom of his eyes. He hooked his lips and whisked his tie off directly. His voice was hoarse and magnetic as he said, “Mrs. Barker, have you ever heard the prolonged absence beats being newly-weds?”

Samantha could feel that a storm was brewing.

All she wanted was to express her feelings, not...do anything that was happening right then...

Timothy’s look, coupled with those words and his immense physical stamina... Samantha laughed dryly and stammered, “I... Well... T-Timothy, I feel a little tired today... Sleepy, I would like to sleep— Mmgghh...”

The man kissed her without further ado and swallowed all her words.

It was set to be a long, long night...

...

Samantha was only embraced by Timothy and fell into a dazed sleep when the sky was starting to light up faintly outside.

She had difficulty opening her eyes when she woke up, feeling as though she had slept for an entire century.

When she thought of everything that happened the previous night, she could no longer view the phrase ‘prolonged absence beats being newly-weds’ in the same light again.

After spending some time getting accustomed to waking up, Samantha picked up the phone and checked the time.. It was almost three in the afternoon, and her phone’s lock screen showed that she had received plenty of WeTalk messages as well as a few missed calls.

Chapter 189: Resolution

Samantha cocked her eyebrows slightly and wondered what else could possibly have happened.

She wrapped the blanket around herself and sat up against the bedhead. After finding a comfortable sitting posture, she tapped on Waybo.

Her 999 and more unread private messages were again displayed in big red numbers.

It seemed to have something to do with her too...

Samantha clicked directly into the Waybo trending searches, and sure enough, the top searches were all related to her.

#WalterShuckapology #LycheeTVannouncement #Samanthaistherightfulwinner #theanchorwhosavedthekidisSamantha

She clicked on the first one and saw that the number one trending post was Walter's latest upload.

He had posted a video and looked rather miserable as he sat down. It seemed as though he had not slept the entire night and his stubble was starting to appear.

His voice was low and he lowered his gaze while saying very slowly, "First of all, I must offer my apologies to the audience who have trusted and supported me. The situation became the way it was because of the mistakes I made during the course of my duty as well as due to some private correspondence. Hiding the truth was my personal decision. It has nothing to do with anyone else. I was the one who made a mistake and I can only apologize to everyone. I have let down the very TV station who have once placed their trust in me and nurtured me. I have let down Ms. Larsson more so than anyone else, so I once again offer my sincerest apologies to her. I'm sorry."

With that, he stood up and gave a 90-degree bow to the camera.

He then continued to look right at the camera and said, "I will take full responsibility for this and tender my resignation. This is a lesson for me to reflect on. This incident has taught me to be honest and act honestly. Thank you, everyone."

The video ended just like that.

Samantha clicked on Lychee TV's official account and saw an official explanation of the situation. The entire responsibility lay with Walter.

Walter and Harmony had both been chastised on Waybo the day before, but it seemed to shift to one person only. The scolding was directed at Walter and Harmony had successfully become invisible.

After reading everything, Samantha did not know what to say.

Walter protected Harmony and took all the blame himself, but Harmony seemed to have gotten off lightly from the ordeal.

Walter did not look like the kind of selfless individual and neither did Harmony have some kind of backing, or could it be someone guarding her from behind?

Samantha exited Waybo and clicked on the missed call. It turned out to be an unfamiliar number that made several calls to her.

She tapped to dial the number.

The call was answered after barely a couple of rings. Samantha asked politely, “Hi, this is Samantha. There were a couple of missed calls from this number. May I kindly ask who I am speaking to?”

“Hello, Samantha! I’m the general manager of Lychee TV. Do you remember me?”

She had met the general manager briefly once and did not expect that he would be calling her.

Samantha responded immediately. “I do, I do. Hello, Sir. Is something the matter?”

“I’d like to talk to you about something if that’s alright. Is it convenient for you to come over to the station?”

Samantha thought that he probably just wanted to explain things to her, so she replied happily, “Sure. I can come over now.”

After ending the call, Samantha got up and went to the bathroom to wash up.

She reached Lychee TV more than an hour later. The general manager’s assistant was already waiting for her in the lobby on the ground floor and led her directly to the general manager’s office.

The general manager still had that amiable smile and greeted her cordially when he saw her. “Sammy, you’re here.”

Samantha smiled in return. “Sorry to keep you waiting, Sir.”

“Come and have a seat. Would you like some tea? Come and taste this new blend I bought.”

“I’d be happy to.”

The general manager and Samantha both sat on the sofa. He personally poured a cup of tea for her and set the teacup in front of her. “Please try it, but be careful. It’s hot.”

“Thank you.” Samantha held the teacup, blew lightly on the tea, and took a sip.

The tea was truly of exceptional quality, for it tasted mellow and left a fragrant aftertaste.

“Mm, it’s delicious.”

The general manager could not help but smile. “Do have some more then.”

After the initial pleasantries, the general manager straightened up slightly and got down to the serious business. "Sammy, this has been a severe injustice to you, but I promise you that this is purely Walter's idea. Other Lychee TV top brass are unaware of his actions and Lychee TV will always continue to carry itself with dignity."

Samantha would have eaten it all up if she was just a young girl in her 20s, but having experienced plenty of things, she would have been an idiot to believe that.

How could Walter have possibly shut the mouths of all the staff present at the time without having any help?

He must have consulted his superiors, although Samantha did not know which level he asked for instructions.

However, she believed that he would not have involved the general manager, otherwise the latter would not have been so surprised and angry the day before.

In any case, the general manager made it very clear that he hoped for the matter to end at Walter. He then dismissed Walter to preserve Lychee TV's image and reputation.

The general manager specially invited her over that day and treated her with extreme courtesy, so she was more than willing to accord him the respect, considering how he was never involved with the entire incident in the first place. After all, she knew to separate right from wrong and was not the kind of person who poured scorn on those who showed her kindness.

Samantha picked up the teacup again and finished it all in one gulp. She then nodded and said, "I understand, Sir."

Upon seeing that, the general manager smiled with satisfaction.

She drank the cup of tea to show that she was willing to reconcile. The general manager's judgment was proven right and she turned out to be a clever girl who understood the bigger picture.

The general manager filled her teacup again and said, "Harmony's victory in this competition doesn't reflect the truth. We've decided to disqualify her as the champion. The victory and the glory that comes with it are rightfully yours. If you're willing to accept this victory, we'll present the award once more to you. At the same time, we'll also make a sincere invitation for you to join us in Lychee TV and become one of us.

"What do you think about that?"

Samantha was really disappointed with Lychee TV because of Walter's approach, but the general manager's stance came as a relief.

One rotten apple might spoil the whole barrel, but if that apple could be removed before the rot spread, all the other apples inside that barrel might still remain fresh and delicious.

Lychee TV stood tall for many years and had become a benchmark for industry players. She could not refuse her dream of working in Lychee TV because of Walter alone.

Moreover, the victory and glory that came with it were hers to begin with.

She accepted the explanation as well as the way in which the situation had been handled.

Samantha smiled and said, "Alright. I accept it."

"Very well! Lychee TV welcomes you!"

The general manager got up and stretched out his hand toward her. Samantha got up as well and reached out to shake his hand.

...

At the apartment hotel, Harmony had a gloomy expression after answering the call from Lychee TV. She clenched her phone tightly until blue veins popped out from the back of her hand.

She closed her eyes, took a few deep breaths, then picked up the phone again and gave the '1' shortcut a long press.

The name 'Tim' was displayed on the cell phone screen.

Chapter 190: Her Traces Had Disappeared

Samantha was in a buoyant and bubbly mood when she stepped out of Lychee TV.

Justice did exist in the world, and what was rightfully hers would always belong to her. No one could take that away from her regardless of how they plotted against her.

Whenever she was happy, her first thought was to share that happiness with Timothy.

She picked up the phone and glanced at the time, noting that it was almost five in the evening.

It would take roughly 40 minutes for her to reach the Barker Group from Lychee TV and her arrival would be just in time for dinner.

She could go for a candlelight dinner with her husband.

Samantha acted on her thoughts and booked a taxi through her ride-hailing app. Her car arrived in due time, and after she got in, she sent a WeTalk message to Timothy.

Unfortunately, Timothy did not respond to her message. She figured that he was busy and so did not bother him anymore.

When the car arrived at the gate of the Barker Group, she got out of the car and walked straight in.

Samantha entered without being stopped because both the doorman and the receptionist recognized Samantha as the wife of the CEO. She then took the CEO's exclusive elevator up to Timothy's floor.

Ronald had been notified by the front desk and came over to greet her. He smiled and said, "Hello, Mrs. Barker. What brings you here today?"

"Oh, I just happened to be running some errands nearby so I came over to have dinner with Timothy. Is he busy?" Samantha explained and asked.

Ronald nodded. "He's in a meeting right now."

He looked at his watch and continued, "It'll take probably another half hour before he's done. You can wait for a moment at his office, if that's alright."

"Sure."

Ronald led Samantha to the CEO's office. Samantha could see that Ronald was very busy, so she did not keep him around and stayed in the office by herself.

"Let me know if there's anything you need."

"Okay."

Ronald exited the office and closed the door gently.

Samantha used to be very familiar with Timothy's office because she went there often during their relationship together in the past. She was in her university days at the time but Timothy had already begun to take charge of the Barker Group.

She was considerate of his heavy workload, so the majority of their dates were held in the office because she wanted to see him.

While Timothy was hard at work, she sat on the sofa to read, took video lessons, or laid down to watch television series.

Spending time with each other even without talking was already sweet enough for them, although they did look up and glance at each other on occasion.

As time passed, more and more of her belongings were left at the office and it practically became her second home.

That explained the various cute objects that looked markedly out of place with Timothy in the office. For example, when a guest sat on the sofa to drink coffee, they would be surprised to see a stuffed doll in the corner of the sofa.

Another example were the all-pink curtains. When they were drawn closed, the entire room looked very dreamy...

A couple of years have passed since then and the layout of Timothy's office changed a lot. The color became much colder, and the furnishings were more refined, cold, and stiff.

All traces of her seemed to have disappeared...

Samantha felt hints of unease in her heart. She got up from the sofa and looked around in an attempt to find something that was related to her.

In the end, she walked over to his desk and saw various papers scattered all over. Timothy's cell phone was also there.

That would explain why he did not reply to her WeTalk message.

She then glanced across the tabletop, only to find that the photo of them which she once placed on his desk was all gone.

It was not really that big a deal.

After all, they were both starting anew. If the stuff from the past was gone, all she had to do was make new ones. It could form the symbol of a new beginning.

Samantha remembered the photo she took with Timothy on Barrkjaer Island and decided that she would get it printed. Then she could choose a beautiful photo frame for it and place it on his desk.

Thinking of that improved her mood.

Samantha started to feel a bit thirsty, and since she did not want to bother Ronald, she decided to go out of the office herself and walk toward the pantry.

After returning with a cup of warm water, she heard Timothy's phone ringing on the desk.

She glanced at the device and hesitated.

Neither she nor Timothy were the kind of people who looked at each other's phones, but Samantha was a little worried that it might be a work call that involved something urgent...

After some hesitance, she walked over and looked at the screen.

The caller ID above wrote: Bunny.

Such a contact did not remotely look like it had anything to do with work matters. It sounded more like the nickname of someone close.

Samantha recalled the names of Timothy's friends and could not seem to place her finger on anyone that had a name like 'Bunny'.

'Bunny... ..ny... ..mony... Harmony?'

Samantha's heart skipped a beat when that thought appeared briefly in her mind.

That was impossible. Was her imagination so vivid that she associated completely unrelated things?

She had once paid a surprise visit to the office to try and confirm her suspicions, but there was nothing to be found. Could it be yet another episode of overthinking?

Samantha could not help but purse her lips as she stared at the phone screen without blinking.

The easiest way to stop thinking about it was to answer it. Listening to the caller's voice would answer her question once and for all.

However, it was inappropriate for her to answer Timothy's calls like that.

Despite her conflicted feelings, Samantha's heart eventually prevailed over reason. She stretched out her hand slowly and picked the device up.

The call, however, hung up automatically a second before she swiped to answer.

When that happened, Samantha did not know whether she felt more relieved or whether her curiosity was piqued even more.

The sudden sound of footsteps was heard from the direction of the door, so Samantha quickly hid her emotions and placed the phone back down.

As soon as she looked over, she saw Timothy pushing the door and walking in.

Samantha smiled at him and asked, "Have you finished the meeting, Timothy?"

"Yeah." The man strode over and reached out to embrace her slender waist. He planted a gentle kiss on her forehead before gazing down at her and asking hoarsely, "What's the matter?"

Samantha placed her arms around his neck and raised her head slightly to look at him. "Lychee TV's general manager called me this afternoon to inform me that I'll be crowned as the winner of the competition. He also invited me to join Lychee TV, and I agreed. So, I was thinking, if...you have time to have dinner together tonight?"

Timothy frowned slightly when he heard that. "There's another meeting later."

"I see..." A flash of disappointment streaked through Samantha's eyes. "Well, work is important. We can always do it next—"

Before she finished speaking, Timothy had already picked up the landline and dialed an internal number. He ordered right away, "Postpone tonight's meeting, Ronald. I've been invited to a very important dinner at the last minute."

Ronald was surprised. "What dinner is that?"

Who could have the power to compel Timothy into postponing the meeting?

Timothy replied solemnly, "Mrs. Barker's celebration dinner."

Ronald was speechless.

He knew he should not have asked. Asking was a surefire way to get himself drowned in all those affectionate lovey-dovey acts.

Ronald hung up the phone silently.

Timothy put down the handset and looked back at Samantha with a smile. "No matter how busy I am, I will always have time to accept my wife's invitation."

Samantha's eyebrows curled into little arches as she smiled. She then tiptoed and kissed him on the lips.

...

As the car drove out of the Barker Group, Samantha glanced at Timothy from the side. He was paying attention to the road ahead as he manned the steering wheel and drove. All of a sudden, the question of who 'Bunny' was popped up inadvertently in her mind.

Samantha wondered to herself, 'Should I just ask about it?'

Chapter 191: Who Could Love You as Much as I Do?

Samantha pursed her lips lightly and cleared her throat before her red lips parted open. “Timothy, when I was at the off—”

The ringing of the man’s cell phone interrupted her words before she could finish them.

Timothy placed his cell phone on the car dashboard. Samantha glanced unconsciously at the screen and saw that the caller ID was Ronald.

She then looked away stealthily.

Timothy put on his Bluetooth earpiece and pressed to answer. “Yes.”

Ronald chatted with Timothy about work matters and Samantha had no choice but to shelve her question. After all, she had to be considerate of Timothy after he postponed his work to have dinner with him.

Timothy seemed to be really busy because he had been talking with Ronald throughout the 30-minute drive. He only ended the call once they arrived at the destination.

He parked the car and was the first to get down. He then walked over to the front passenger seat and opened the car door while protecting Samantha as she got out.

After tossing his car keys to the parking valet, Timothy walked into the restaurant with his arm around Samantha.

They used to patronize that restaurant frequently because Samantha enjoyed the food cooked by their chefs. It just so happened to pique her taste buds.

The restaurant manager welcomed them personally. Upon seeing Timothy and Samantha, he smiled and said, “Mr. Barker, Ms. Larss— Forgive me, it should be Mrs. Barker now. I’ve already reserved a table for both of you. Right this way, please.”

The manager had been working there for a very long time. He had witnessed the entire process of Timothy and Samantha’s relationship from being boyfriend-and-girlfriend to getting married, minus those two years’ separation of course.

The couple took their seat at their usual table.

When Samantha looked at the decor, the location, and the face in front of her, the familiarity of all those little details immediately dispelled the depression in her heart.

Even if her traces were no longer in his office, the fact that Timothy brought her to that restaurant was a clear sign that he remembered her preferences.

Him remembering all that was all she could ask for.

Samantha could not help but stare at the man's handsome face. She smiled all of a sudden and even her eyebrows were shaped like little round crescent moons.

Timothy looked up at her when he sensed her stare and cocked his eyebrows lightly when he made eye contact with her. "What's wrong? Why are you looking at me like that?"

Samantha held a glass with both hands and sipped her lemonade. With a grin, she said, "You're my husband and I just feel like looking at you. Can't I?"

After Timothy returned from Axlelland, he discovered that his wife's words had become sweeter and bolder. She was practically teasing him at every turn.

There was a naughty little smirk on his lips. He lowered his voice slightly but his response did not answer her question at all. "It looks like I didn't work hard enough last night to satisfy my beloved wife. That's why you're staring at me right now...because you want to satisfy your cravings."

'Last night...'

Those words caused the previous night's indescribable scenes to appear in Samantha's mind. Her cheeks immediately turned red as a result.

If there was a shamelessness contest, Timothy would have won. Her shamelessness was not nearly half as much as his.

She glared at him angrily and drank a few more sips of lemonade to calm herself down.

The manager could not help but smile as he looked at the couple's interaction from one side. He always held the opinion that they were the sweetest little couple, so it came as a big surprise when news about their broken-off marriage broke out two years ago.

Then, when news about their marriage was made public some time ago, he felt that it was the best and most proper conclusion for their story.

He was very happy for them when he saw them interacting just as sweetly as they used to.

Timothy looked at the manager and ordered without even looking at the menu. "The usual. You may also serve any new dishes you would like to recommend."

The manager nodded. "Very well."

There was a snow-white grand piano in the center of that restaurant. Guests who wanted to listen to music could either hire a pianist or play the piano themselves.

Whenever they came to the restaurant in the past, Samantha occasionally acted kittenishly and asked Timothy to personally play the piano for her. She was reminded of that when she saw the piano and could not help but ask, "I'd like to listen to some music, Timothy."

"What would you like to hear?" He lifted his chin and gestured for a waiter to come over.

Samantha blinked her eyes and looked at him with extreme eagerness, "I want to listen to your playing."

Timothy's dark pupils stared right back at her and he remained silent for a moment.

Samantha then hurriedly said, "I was just saying that. You're now the Barker Group's CEO and you have to pay attention to your image. It's okay, you don't need to play the piano for me."

"It's been a long time since I've played," the man said faintly, "but since my wife wants to listen to my playing, then I—as your husband—am obliged to grant your wishes."

He stretched out his hand and touched her nose with his fingertips, adding, "I'm not the CEO right now. I'm merely...Samantha's husband."

Samantha's heart thumped wildly against her chest several times.

That one sentence had caused her emotions to overflow. Whoever said that Timothy was incapable of sweet talk? He had clearly shown how adept he was at doing so!

She was screaming in her girly heart!

Timothy got up and strode over toward the small round stage in the center of the restaurant.

He took his seat at the piano before placing his slender fingers on the black and white keys. A smooth and melodious tone began filling the air.

Samantha rested her head on both hands while looking over.

The light shone down from the top of Timothy's head and illuminated his entire body. The area surrounding his body was glowing brightly, while the contours of facial features were just breathtakingly handsome, as if he was an angel that had descended from the sky.

The song he played was titled 'How Do You Love Me'.

That was Samantha's favorite song too.

She previously wanted to put on that song at her wedding with Timothy because there was another meaning to the lyrics: 'Who could love you like I do?'

'Who could love you as deeply as I do?'

It was her implicit expression of love for Timothy.

Unfortunately, their wedding two years ago was not to be, and she had no opportunity to put that song on.

Samantha was surprised that he would play that song for her in the restaurant, and it somehow fulfilled that little dream of hers in a way.

She was completely mesmerized as she looked at him and even could not resist humming along. However, the smile on her face soon disappeared.

Timothy was so eye-catching that everyone in the entire restaurant had their eyes on him. The women, in particular, seemed to have an extremely excited look and were almost ready to pounce on him at any time.

After ending the piece, Timothy got up and walked off the small round stage.

A beautifully dressed-up and spellbinding woman walked over and stood in front of him. She tucked her hair seductively before Timothy and offered, "Hey there, Handsome. I'd love to treat you to a meal."

Samantha clenched her hands suddenly. That woman had crossed the line by flirting with her husband right in front of her!

Before Samantha could even do anything, she saw Timothy speaking but could not hear what it was he said. The woman's expression changed dramatically and she walked away dejectedly.

When Timothy returned to his seat, Samantha glared at him and asked curiously, "What did you say to that woman, Timothy?"

Timothy took a sip of water as a little hint of glee flashed under his eyes.. His thin lips parted open and he said a single word that kept her in suspense, "Guess."