

Read Once Bitten, Twice Shy online free

Chapter 222: Why Should the Rich Be Allowed to Do as They Please?

Samantha moved her body aside and avoided Opal's attack.

Opal not only failed to land a hit on her, but nearly lost her footing because of that dodge. Her expression became increasingly unpleasant.

She stared fiercely at Samantha and yelled, "You're exactly the kind of crooked media personnel who shows no regret even at this moment. Everyone, don't just stand and look at her! We want her to realize her mistakes, and we'll carry her to Linda and make sure she bows down to apologize!"

At Opal's instigation, the students' emotions were all stirred up and they charged right toward Samantha.

Although she might be able to dodge only one person, it was impossible for her to do so when there were so many people surrounding her.

They attacked in a disorderly fashion by pulling her clothes, yanking her hair, and scratching wherever their hands could reach. To make things worse, they even used whatever they were holding as weapons to hit her.

Samantha resisted their attacks while figuring out a way to escape. She was not that delusional to think that she could fight so many people by herself, and she was well aware that the group of students would tear her apart when her strength gradually weakened.

Since the extent to which they were incited had reached such an extent, they could easily lose their control and end up hurting her using much worse means.

Samantha leaned against the wall as much as she could so only the front of her body was open to the attacks, rather than both her front and her back. She glanced around quickly and saw that most of the girls were on her left while the strong-looking boys were to her right. She immediately chose the left as her escape route.

She feigned an attempt to escape from the right and lifted her leg to deliver a kick at the boys. They quickly realized her intention and dodged the kick, but she changed her trajectory at the last minute and swept her long legs to the left, tripping several of the girls.

"Ahh—"

They did not expect her to attack and collapsed into a heap all of a sudden.

Samantha took the opportunity to escape from them and ran away immediately.

The students went blank for a few seconds before they reacted and said, "How dare she fight back! Come on girls, don't let her escape! We have to catch her! Go!"

Everyone ran after her.

Samantha used whatever strength she had to run forward. Although she did manage to outrun the group of girls, some of the boys had gradually caught up.

They managed to grasp her clothes and bags several times, but she managed to break free and continued to run without pausing for a break.

However, when she was about to reach a sharp corner ahead, she failed to pay attention to the situation in front because she had constantly been wary of the people catching up to her from behind. A discarded wine bottle appeared out of nowhere and she slipped as soon as she stepped on it. Her entire body fell forward and she landed heavily onto the ground with a thud.

Samantha groaned in pain.

Her knees and palms started bleeding as soon as they hit the ground and blood had begun to flow.

She ignored the pain in an attempt to get up again, but she had only stood up halfway when the searing pain in her knees caused her feet to turn limp as she collapsed again.

At the same time, a few male students had chased up to her and grabbed her by the arms to pin her down.

One of the chubbier male students was gasping heavily for air and his eyes had turned red. He shoved Samantha's head forcefully and taunted, "Run! Why aren't you running!"

Opal finally arrived along with her other female classmates and there was a malicious expression on her face. "We gave you a chance, Samantha, but since you didn't cherish it, we have no choice but to show the world your true colors!"

At the end of her remark, she proposed to all her classmates, "How about we write all of her sins down on posters and stick them on her to parade her on the street!"

"Count me in! There's no need to show mercy to an evil person like her!"

"Okay, let's get those posters ready!"

Several female students took out papers and pens and quickly wrote down her various misdeeds. They then placed the posters on her body and used their feet to stamp them down and paste them on her.

Several male students were pressing her down forcefully and she was unable to break free or resist at all.

Her body was almost completely covered with posters and placards. The black words contrasted strongly against the white background and spelled out just how atrocious and evil she was. Opal sneered angrily and said, "Pull her up! There's a business street upfront! We'll bring her over and parade her there!"

Another student said, "I'll record a video! That'll give her some publicity on the internet!"

The second offered, "I brought along a small megaphone! I can stand beside her and yell in protest!"

A third student remarked, "Yeah, she wants to be famous right? Doesn't she want to make a name for herself? We can definitely help her with that and give her the attention she needs!"

Opal nodded in satisfaction. "Alright, let's start!"

The boys tightened their grip on Samantha's arms and lifted her entire body up while several girls pointed their cell phone cameras at her. The girl with the small megaphone cleared her throat a few times and said toward the passers-by, "Hello every—"

Before she could continue any further, she screamed all of a sudden. "Ahh—"

A strong force knocked down the megaphone she was holding.

Everyone was surprised when they laid eyes on the tall and dour-looking man who appeared suddenly before them.

The man had a handsome and chiseled face, but the coldness exuding from his body unconsciously sent chills down everyone's spines and forced them into taking a step back.

There was an endless fluctuation of emotion in Samantha's eyes when she looked up and saw the man.

The boys were the first to react, and the chubby one stepped forward to protect the group of girls. He stretched out his hand to push the man's shoulder and asked fiercely, "Who the hell are you? It's rude to stand in peo—"

His wrist was clenched by the man before he could finish his words.

The next second, the chubby boy's face had a painful expression when the man moved his beautifully slender fingers.

"Was this the hand that touched her?" the man asked and grinned coldly.

Moments later, he twisted the chubby boy's arm and drew out a scream. The boy's arm then turned limp after being completely dislocated.

Everyone started to panic when they saw that.

At that moment, everyone finally recognized the identity of that handsome and ruthless man. It was none other than Timothy Barker, the renowned Barker Group's CEO.

He was also Samantha's husband.

Timothy let go of the chubby boy and glanced coldly across the crowd. His lips then parted open slightly and he uttered a single word, "Scram."

The formidable aura from him would scare even a group of adults, let alone a group of students.

Everyone exchanged glances in fear and immediately wanted to retreat.

Opal was the only one who did not give up. She gritted her teeth while still trembling and said, "Mr.... Mr. Barker, we were just trying to get justice for our friend. All those horrible things your wife has done pushed our friend Linda to attempt suicide! She still hasn't woken up until today! We did nothing wrong!"

"Do you think you can shield your wife just because you're powerful? Do you think you can do as you please without taking responsibility for your actions just because you're rich?"

Chapter 223: Cry

Opal's questions had attracted the attention of more and more onlookers. After all, any conflict between the rich and the poor was bound to arouse public sentiment very easily.

Her confidence returned when she saw everyone looking at Timothy and Samantha with a dissatisfied look.

Although she was afraid of Timothy, she was certain that he would not do anything to her in front of so many people.

Her main goal that day was to make sure Samantha was not let off the hook so easily.

After all, that was the only way she could get justice for Linda, who was still lying unconscious on the hospital bed.

An ordinary person's life was still a life nonetheless.

Timothy's dark pupils stared at Opal with a dark, bottomless, and strongly intimidating look.

Opal could not help but avoid his stare after looking at him for only a few seconds.

The man opened his lips and spoke in a cold voice. "It is the truth that determines whether or not my wife did anything wrong. You don't have the final say, and the same goes for the rest of you present here as well as those keyboard warriors!"

"There's nothing wrong with wanting to seek justice for your friend, but your first step should be to seek the truth instead of blindly telling everyone to attack. This is what's called utter stupidity."

"I believe that my wife—or rather Ms. Larsson—has a clear conscience with regards to all her actions! She will give the public the truth!"

"If that doesn't happen, I'm willing to bear all the consequences and accept punishment!"

Those resounding remarks left everyone speechless.

He even swore by himself that he would bear all the consequences and accept punishment if Samantha really deceived the public and did something unconscionable!

Timothy stood at a much higher level than Samantha in terms of social status and influence, but the remarks he made clearly showed his unwavering trust in Samantha.

Such trust was admittedly very touching.

After all, Timothy represented not only himself, but the Barkers and the Barker Group too.

He was putting everything at stake just to give her a guarantee.

Despite Opal's desire to refute and provoke, she opened her mouth but could not bring herself to say anything.

Timothy opened his lips again and repeated the same statement, "Scram."

Everyone retreated immediately, but Opal froze for a second. No one knew if she was really shocked or whether she was speechless, but she ended up walking away too.

Timothy stretched out his long legs and strode over to Samantha. He knelt down on one knee and stretched out his long arms to support her limp body.

He embraced her tightly and pressed his thin lips against her ears to whisper, "I'm sorry I came late, Sammy."

She would not have suffered so much by herself if he had come back earlier.

Samantha was no longer the fragile little princess who used to cry at every turn, and she did not even feel like crying when she was surrounded, beaten, and dragged around by the group of people earlier. However, the second Timothy whispered that into her ear, there was a sudden bitterness in her throat and she could not even utter a single word.

She raised her arms, put them firmly around his neck, and shook her head while she was still being hugged.

He was not late.

He was not late at all.

Timothy lifted Samantha up in a bridal carry and took large strides towards the car that was parked on the side of the road.

He placed her in the front passenger seat and fastened her seat belt before closing the door and going around to the driver's seat. After getting in, he started the engine and immediately drove off.

Behind the bus stop sign on the roadside was a slender figure, who clenched their hands pensively with a hateful look while watching the car disappear into traffic.

...

The car drove for a considerable distance before Samantha's emotions had gradually calmed down. She glanced at Timothy from the side and somehow recalled what he had just said to her. She could not help but ask, "Don't you have even the slightest doubt over whether I did the bad stuff they accused me of, Timothy?"

After all, the impression given by the available evidence was that she did commit such unsavory acts to get famous, reach the top, and be popular.

How many could resist such huge temptation?

Timothy replied without hesitation, "I don't."

"Why?"

The traffic light turned red and Timothy stopped the car. He glanced at her from the side and smiled. "Remember that night you were working alone in the study? You were so tired that you fell asleep right there on the table, so I carried you up to the room and had a look at the investigations you did."

"You weren't working that night; you were chasing your dream."

A person in pursuit of their dream would never do something that would tarnish it.

Samantha's heart was severely shaken and she felt beyond touched.

Having just one person to trust and rely on was enough for her to die without regrets.

More importantly, he understood her, trusted her, and believed her when everyone else doubted her.

Then there were those words he said in front of everyone earlier.

He stood firmly by her side even though the whole world was against her.

In order to prevent Old Madam Barker from getting too worried, Timothy went to the hotel he frequented rather than driving back to the villa.

At the hotel room door, Timothy asked the waiter to bring in the first-aid box. When Samantha came out of the bath, he led her to the bed and deftly helped her to apply some medicine.

However, his expression sank as soon as he saw the wounds on her body and a murderous aura surfaced.

Samantha saw the change in his expression and gently held his hand to persuade him softly. "I'm fine. I have thick skin! This is just a little skin wou—"

Timothy stared at her coldly before she finished speaking.

Samantha closed her mouth tactfully and acted kittenish toward him while hugging his arm, "Honey, it hurts really bad, but it'll be better if you kiss me."

She even pouted at him on purpose while she spoke.

The next second, Timothy gave her a gentle kiss on her forehead instead of pushing her away in disgust.

Samantha was taken aback.

The man's big palm lightly rubbed her hair, "Don't act tough in front of me if you're clearly in pain and feeling uncomfortable. Shout if you feel pain and cry if you feel uncomfortable, or else what is the use of having a husband like me?"

What was his purpose then if she continued to bottle up all her emotions?

His remark was a direct hit to Samantha's heart. She blinked a couple of times and she could not control herself from shedding tears.

He could always see through her emotions so easily.

None of it was her fault, but it still became so in the end. The hate and anger that everyone directed toward her would crush even a heart of steel.

She bit her lower lip and said in a mournful tone, "You're such a meanie, Timothy."

'Why do you have to see right through me?'

Even so, what she really needed at the time was for him to be 'mean'.

Crying and letting it all out during moments of unhappiness was much more comforting than bottling it up in one's heart.

Timothy rested his big palm on Samantha's head and pulled her gently but firmly to him.. He then urged in a soft voice, "Let it out."

Chapter 224: Don't Go

Samantha did not want to cry because she had long gotten used to keeping her emotions to herself all those years.

None of it was supposed to be a big deal, and she felt as though crying was unwarranted.

At that moment, her defenses were all broken down as she lay in Timothy's arms and listened to his simple words.

Tears began falling like a broken string of pearls and she was unable to say even a single word.

Timothy hugged her even tighter and said nothing when he felt her trembling in his embrace. Words were unnecessary at that moment as long as he stayed by her side.

He patted the back of Samantha's hand little by little in a silent comforting gesture.

Time passed slowly and it was not until much later that Timothy finally felt her trembling stop in his embrace. Even the sobs began to slow down and he lowered his gaze to look at her.

Samantha seemed to have gotten tired from all that crying. Her eyes looked listless, her expression was sullen, and her eyelids were droopy. Even her cheeks had reddened from her crying and her eyes had swollen up too.

Timothy gently loosened his embrace and picked her up to set her down on the big soft bed. He pulled the blanket over her and said, "Go to sleep."

He then tried to get up but his hand was grabbed.

Samantha had grabbed his fingers unconsciously and spoke in an extremely hoarse voice. "Don't leave."

Timothy held her back and said softly, "I'm not leaving, I was just..."

As he said that, he lowered his head and used his chin to gesture to the chest of his shirt. There was a huge moist patch left behind by Samantha's tears. "...going to deal with this."

Samantha looked over unconsciously and felt somewhat embarrassed. "I'll...wash it for you tomorrow."

Timothy did not decline and replied, "Okay. I'm going to take it off for you to wash tomorrow."

Samantha let go of him and he got up to walk into the bathroom.

He returned quickly and changed into a casual T-shirt. He had even brought over a towel and was sitting on the edge of the bed to gently wipe away the tears on Samantha's face.

Samantha was aware of what he was doing and wanted to open her eyes to look at him again, but she was just too exhausted and sleepy from all the crying that she soon fell into a deep sleep.

Timothy wiped away the tears for her and got someone to bring him an ice pack. He placed the ice pack on her eyes for some time, then climbed onto the bed and hugged her as he closed his eyes.

At six o'clock the next morning, Timothy's cell phone rang suddenly.

The man's eyes opened abruptly as he reached for his phone to mute the call. He then turned to look at Samantha in his arms.

He finally breathed a sigh of relief after confirming that she did not wake up.

She probably had a bad dream the previous night and did not sleep too peacefully, so the last thing he wanted was to wake her up after she had finally managed to calm her emotions.

Timothy gently teased Samantha out of his arms and got out of bed.

He went to the balcony outside with his phone and then unlocked it to see who had called him. It turned out to be none other than Ronald.

Normally Ronald would not call him that early especially when it was obvious that he was with Samantha.

The likeliest reason was that something urgent had happened.

Timothy tapped a couple of times and redialed Ronald's number.

Ronald answered within seconds and spoke in a heavy tone, "There's been some trouble, Mr. Barker!"

Timothy's expression remained unchanged as he replied faintly, "What's the matter?"

"Your heroic act of saving Mrs. Barker in public was posted on the internet last night. Things have developed rapidly during that one night alone and public opinion has taken a very negative turn. Everyone says that you were stupidly protecting your wife and using your power to absolve her of the crime. Now their anger is directed at both her and you."

"That's it?" Timothy's expression remained unchanged.

Ronald sighed deeply. "I could've handled it without bothering you if that's all there was to it. There's still more, unfortunately..."

He concisely finished the rest of his words.

Timothy's expression became darker and colder as Ronald spoke and he finally ordered, "Come over and pick me up right now."

"Yes!"

After the call ended, he stood on the balcony for a few seconds before turning around and going back in.

Timothy then walked to the dressing room and changed into a suit.. He later went to the bed, bent down to kiss Samantha's forehead, and walked out of the room.

Chapter 225: Lacking in Virtue

The relatively few vehicles early in the morning made for a very smooth journey to the Barker Group.

Timothy and Ronald went to the top floor of the building and walked straight to the large conference room. As soon as they opened the door, they saw directors and senior figures filling the entire room.

Everyone's face was extremely sour and the atmosphere in the room was extremely suffocating.

Timothy's handsome face remained unchanged and no one could tell what emotions he had at the time. He strode in and sat on the main seat before lifting his chin and saying to Ronald, "Make the call."

"Yes, Mr. Barker." Ronald dialed an overseas phone number and started a video conference.

The picture of Michael and his company's directors appeared on the huge projector screen. Their faces were also extremely ugly and they looked angry, even.

Michael did away with the courtesies and went straight to the subject with a frigid expression. "Mr. Barker, I expect an explanation from you regarding this scandal involving your wife!"

They had reached an agreement for strategic cooperation and both companies had since become inextricably linked with each other. That ought to be exciting news because both parties' estimated market value would stand to double several times over. It was unfortunate that something like this would happen at that kind of juncture.

The news had initially been spreading within the country, but Timothy's act of rescuing Samantha and making those statements in public caused everyone to train their guns on Timothy and the Barker Group.

The business world was a battlefield and there were many people who were jealous of the Barker Group. If something like that happened, it could conceivably form a huge hurdle. Public opinion erupted within the country and the news even spread internationally.

News involving Timothy—including him using his power to bully others as well as his brainless act of defending his vicious wife—had soared to the top of the international hot topics section and made the headlines of all major news outlets!

Timothy represented not only himself but the Barker Group as well. Everyone began to question his behavior, damaging his own image and calling into question his abilities to lead the Barker Group.

It would be utterly disappointing for a man like him to be lacking in virtue!

The directors who were present there agreed as soon as Michael said that.

One of them spoke up and said, "Mr. Barker, we won't comment on your decision to defend your wife. But you went too far this time. What you did was practically a public declaration of war against the citizens. Isn't your action tantamount to making an enemy out of the entire nation?"

The second agreed and said, "Public opinion is now inclining towards the idea that we had been using power to oppress others and there's signs that everyone will boycott the Barker Group! Public opinion is continuing to rage on and the consequences will be unimaginable!"

A third person said, "Your explanation is in order, Mr. Barker!"

As powerful as a company was, it would teeter on the edge of collapse and be vulnerable to the smallest of blows if they failed to properly handle public outrage.

Ronald began sweating when he saw the situation.

It was much, much worse than he thought.

In fact, when public opinion began surging in the early morning, he executed an emergency public relations exercise at once but had been focusing his attention domestically rather than internationally.

He had successfully suppressed public opinion on the domestic side, only to discover that it had already exploded internationally.

Public opinion was like a virus that could not be controlled once it had spread. It leaked out of the country and made headlines internationally during that short period of time, until finally his efforts crumbled to dust.

Ronald later received a call from the directors as well as Michael, who all requested for an emergency meeting to be called for right away.

Timothy sat there silently and had not yet said a single word. Ronald glanced over and sighed to himself, wondering if Timothy could continue the unbeaten streak of overturning crises big and small since he first took over the Barker Group.

Ronald then got up quietly and walked out of the conference room after noticing Timothy rubbing his eyebrows in exhaustion.

He went to the pantry and brewed a cup of black coffee for Timothy. When he carried it and walked out, someone happened to come into the pantry and bumped into him.

He nimbly grasped the coffee cup in his hand to stop it from spilling.

Ronald shot a glance at the person who came in and reprimanded with a frown. "What, are you blind? Watch it!"

That person was a young girl who had an apologetic look on her face. "I'm sorry, Mr. Crawford. I'm so sorry! I didn't see you."

Ronald glanced at her and recognized her as Noelle Walsh, a new intern. He could not help but ask, "You came to work this early?"

It was not yet office hours.

Noelle smiled shyly, "I decided to come early today because I didn't finish yesterday's work. I was about to fetch myself a cup of coffee to get the energy pumping. I didn't notice you were there. I'm really sorry."

It was a logical excuse given that the meeting was scheduled at the last minute. She probably thought it was okay to come earlier because she expected that there would be no one there.

Ronald was magnanimous enough not to take offense with a little lady, especially when she had apologized profusely and was a hardworking employee. He waved his hand and said, "Don't worry about it. Go ahead and have your coffee. There's a meeting in the conference room right now, so could you please get twenty packs of breakfast for them."

Noelle nodded, "Understood, Mr. Crawford."

Ronald walked off with Timothy's coffee. Noelle stayed on the spot and stared at his back for a few seconds before entering the pantry.

20 minutes later, she brought up the 20 packs of breakfast and knocked on the door of the conference room.

The discussion inside was reaching its climax and the atmosphere was very stiff.

Noelle turned a deaf ear to everything and placed the food in front of each person. She then put the tray on the chair by the wall and gently closed the door on her way out of the conference room.

...

Inside the hotel room, Samantha was still fast asleep when her cell phone ringtone started blaring in her ears.

She had not slept very soundly to begin with and woke up abruptly after a few rings.

Her eyes opened wide and she stared at the ceiling for about ten seconds while her consciousness slowly returned to her.

She realized she was in a hotel, and that Timothy had brought her there the night before.

She stretched out her hand and glanced at the caller ID, which startled her somewhat because she was slightly surprised to see that it was actually from Ronald.

Her first thought was that she had grabbed Timothy's phone by accident.

She checked to confirm that it was her cell phone and subconsciously glanced to her side. There were traces of someone sleeping there, but Timothy was nowhere to be seen.

Ronald never called her without a reason, so she wondered if something had happened.

Samantha frowned and slid her finger to answer the call. "Hello?"

No one answered even though she said 'hello' several times. All she heard was some heavily-accented English in the background. The person sounded rather animated.

What was going on?

Did Ronald accidentally dial the wrong number?

She was somewhat familiar with that accent after having lived abroad, and it sounded as though a meeting was being held. Since her principle was not to eavesdrop on company secrets, Samantha decided to hang up.

The next second, however, she heard a heavily-accented man saying, "Mr. Barker, it is half-past nine in your country right now. The stock market is now open, and you can see for yourself how sharply the Barker Group's stocks have dropped after you defended your wife. It might even reach the price limit today! This is bound to have a serious impact on my company as well!"

"I'll give you two choices. Either you step forward and sever ties with your wife to maintain the interests and image of the Barker Group, or I'll terminate our cooperation and demand compensation according to the terms of our contract!"

Chapter 226: Let's Divorce Then

After a pause, Michael added in a more imperative tone, "When I say 'sever ties', I mean it in the literal sense of the words. You, Mr. Barker, will have to formally announce your divorce from Samantha and no longer associate yourself with her anymore. That is the only way for you to completely cut yourself free of her influence!"

'Divorce...'

Samantha heard that word clearly as she clenched her phone unconsciously.

It turned out that Timothy had left early that morning because he had to attend an emergency meeting at the Barker Group. The person who had been speaking all along was probably Michael Holt, the CEO of the EIA Group.

Since the Barker Group and the EIA Group were important business partners, both Timothy and Barker Group had to hold themselves accountable to the EIA Group.

...

Inside the conference room at the Barker Group, the directors' discussions centered around condemning Samantha.

"I really can't wrap my head around why Mr. Barker would fall in love with this scandal-ridden woman. It's one thing after another with her!"

"I agree. Since she's already married to him, she ought to have stayed home to take care of the house rather than try to make a name for herself. As if the trouble she stirred up wasn't bad enough, she just had to involve others too. She's the kind of wife that will bring generations upon generations of bad luck!"

One of them even said directly to Timothy, "Mr. Barker, this kind of woman will bring you and everyone around you down. You should get rid of her as soon as you can, or else she—"

Timothy glanced over and looked coldly at the man, who then felt as though his throat had been strangled by an invisible vine. He found it a bit hard to breathe and instinctively stopped talking.

Timothy stood up, propped his hands on the table, and glanced icily across the crowd. His thin lips parted open and he spoke with crystal-clear clarity. "I will neither divorce nor sever ties with her. It is simply out of the question!"

An uproar soon ensued.

The faces of those on Michael's end became increasingly ugly.

No one thought that Timothy would act so haughtily at that moment.

One of the directors, Claude Kimmel, slammed the table and stood up. "Mr. Barker, are you treating the company's and everyone's interests as something petty and inconsequential? Do you want to let everything be destroyed by your wife?"

Claude has always disliked Timothy's strength and there was no way for him to ascend the ranks when Timothy had always been suppressing him.

He tolerated Timothy in the past because the latter's abilities were so outstanding that it could bring about huge benefits for everyone involved. However, the situation at that moment was related to everyone's interests, as well as the survival of the Barker Group. If he could just ride that wave and bring Timothy down, he could potentially be the one who has the final say in the Barker Group!

The thought of that made him raise his voice again. "Am I not telling the truth, my fellow directors? If he wants to join his vicious wife in ruin, then that's his business. Why should he drag us along with him?"

Ronald gritted his teeth at one side while listening to Claude's incitement.

That man was clearly taking advantage of Timothy's misfortune!

His words attracted everyone's approval.

After all, a world where profits reigned supreme was bound to be the most ruthless.

Timothy's expression remained unchanged after hearing that and even had a cold grin on his face. He said, "I can offer to buy all your shares at twice the original market price. Since you don't want to be dragged down with me, you should take the money, shut up, and get lost."

'Twice the original market price...'

Everyone gasped again.

The stock price had fallen that morning but it had been going strong before that happened. He was even willing to offer twice that amount...

If that was not a sign that he had not lost enough of his sanity to relinquish his power for the sake of his wife, then the only other explanation was that he did not fear the impact of the scandal.

It was like a bolt from the blue for the directors and everyone was speechless for a moment.

The present issue aside, Timothy's ability had always exceeded their expectations during other times. They would have cut their losses temporarily if they took the money and left, but if Timothy turned the tables around and weathered the company through the incident, the losses that they had avoided might not be worth the profits that they stood to gain!

Michael was amazed to see Timothy's words startling all the directors. Such an aura truly was rare and he was undoubtedly a good prospect that was worthy of being the business partner he personally chose.

Be that as it may, he still felt that it was unfortunate for Timothy to act so unreasonably just for a woman.

In his opinion, such obvious weaknesses meant that Timothy would have difficulty in reaching the business world's peak.

Michael spoke again in a serious tone, "I'm sorry, Mr. Barker, but since you've rejected my proposal, then the EIA Group will formally initiate a request to terminate our cooperation in accordance with the contract. At the same time, we'll also proceed with suing you for compensation. Goodbye."

He ended the video conference abruptly after he said that in a show of his resolution.

The directors looked at each other with an extremely sour look on their face.

...

Samantha heard everything and her phone slipped after she failed to hold it properly.

She hugged her knees and buried her face in her arms while recalling what Timothy had said to the directors. He had gone against everyone for the sake of protecting her, and the thought of that made her eye sockets turn red.

He stood firmly by her side like how he did the day before, even as the whole world spurned her.

She felt touched and happy, but...

Samantha sniffled and grabbed her phone to go onto Waybo.

Sure enough, there was no shortage of unsavory comments on Waybo. They made terrible comments about her and spoke even worse about Timothy...

She did not care if netizens scolded her because she could still ignore them, but watching everyone curse Timothy was simply unacceptable, even if all they did was type out an exclamation mark.

Every word seemed to pierce her heart and it hurt her severely.

She went off her profile to avoid reading any further and instead clicked on a webpage to do some further reading.

The stock price had plummeted as mentioned in the meeting. Media outlets that once praised the Barker Group had since written articles to condemn it.

They accused Timothy of being so lovestruck that he was unable to differentiate right from wrong. In turn, that would be the factor contributing to the Barker Group's downfall, and the entire company would eventually be destroyed in his hands!

Although she knew in her heart that the media often liked to sensationalize things for the sake of getting more views, the general public would share the same views as the media too.

Timothy's image would take a severe hit.

Worse still, the Barker Group's contract with the EIA Group was about to be terminated and the former would have to pay the latter a huge amount for compensation.

That alone was enough to rattle the Barker foundation.

Timothy had supported her dream and defended her, so she did not want to be the reason Timothy lost everything and had his dreams destroyed.

...

Timothy finally came home at nine that night.

As soon as he opened the door and walked in, the first thing he saw was a delicious array of food on the table. He cocked an eyebrow, walked up to hug Samantha, and gave her a kiss on the cheek. With a smile, he asked, "Why did you decide to cook all this?"

"Because I wanted to!" Samantha beckoned him to sit. "Have a taste of my cooking."

Timothy and Samantha sat facing each other. He picked up the tableware and finished everything she cooked.

Samantha waited for him to put down his cutlery and pursed her lips lightly before saying, "Let's get a divorce, Timothy."

Chapter 227: Last-Ditch Effort

Timothy's black pupils stared intently at her face. A few seconds later, he reached out and placed his palm over Samantha's hand.

She unconsciously wanted to pull away but failed to do so.

Timothy gently opened his thin lips and asked instead of answering, "Are you serious?"

Samantha looked down and unconsciously bit her lower lip. Her gaze fell on the table and she replied, "Yes, I am."

Timothy did not look affected at all and continued in an indifferent tone, "Look at me and tell me that."

Samantha closed her eyes, took a deep breath, and tried her best to look serious. She looked up at him and stared right into his gloomy eyes before opening her mouth. Lo and behold, the phrase 'let's get a divorce' ended up stuck in her throat and she could not say them like she did before.

She hated her indecision very much at that moment.

There was no reason for her to be so reluctant and hesitant after she had already decided to not be a hindrance to Timothy.

Samantha tried to speak again, but Timothy seemed to know what she was thinking and spoke before she could. "You have three days."

This sudden sentence left Samantha a little confused, but she soon realized what he was talking about.

"Are you saying you want me to find evidence within three days to clear my name?"

"Yeah." Timothy stared at her deeply with a gentle look. "Public opinion reaches its peak within three days. Once it passes that period, it will already be drilled into everyone's mind, any future change of circumstances may not be enough to change it."

Timothy was right.

As far as public opinion was concerned, time was of the essence. They had to do their best to clarify themselves within a certain amount of time, otherwise it would be basically irreversible.

Samantha was both touched and unhappy that Timothy would think of her in such a way.

He had done so much for her.

“What if I can’t find the truth within three days, Timothy?”

It was far worse for Timothy since his image had plummeted because of her. Netizens cursed at him and vilified him, all while his company was facing a huge crisis...

She feared nothing if she only had herself, but she did not dare take risks on everything Timothy had. Even though she was never afraid of losing, she felt very scared...

Timothy smiled in a mesmerizing manner and spoke in a low, somewhat teasing voice. “Guess I’ll have to pay that huge compensation, resign, and just live at home under your care.”

“Timothy!” Samantha frowned. “I’m not joking around.”

She really could not be sure.

Taking a gamble was out of the question!

“Sammy.” Timothy retracted his smile slightly but his expression became gentler. “Remember when you turned the situation around and did a miraculous comeback just because I cheered you on during your debut broadcast?”

“Rather than worry about dragging me down and divorcing me to sever our relationship, you should go and create another miracle for me.”

Timothy got up, walked to Samantha’s side, then pulled her up, and hugged her.

“Timothy...I...” Samantha still frowned.

He placed her fingertips on her lips before she could even say a single word. “Do your best, Samantha!”

Samantha’s determination to get a divorce disappeared completely after what he just said.

Such was the power of love. Looking at him and hearing what he said seemed to be all she needed to clear the obstacles ahead and keep moving forward.

It was as though Timothy was unwilling to give her up despite being persecuted by so many people.

Samantha took a deep breath and raised her gaze once more to look at Timothy. The fear and fragility in her eyes had faded away, only to be replaced by resolution. "Timothy, I... I won't let you go bankrupt."

Timothy seemed to be amused by her adorable appearance and chuckled softly, "Okay."

Samantha lifted her arms and hugged him tightly.

Even though she hoped that Timothy would agree to the divorce, she would probably be much sadder if he did.

However, Timothy rejected it outright. The fact that they could still be together and she could still hug him made her feel as though she had regained a happiness that she had once lost.

...

Reality, however, was still as cruel as ever.

Samantha tried every method possible throughout the entirety of the first day, but sadly found nothing even though she had exhausted all her channels and contacts to investigate Selby's past with his former female student.

Timothy told Ronald to assist her in the investigation, and he found a few leads that seemed promising. Still, he needed time to confirm them, because it would be much more detrimental if they reported the news in the rush without ascertaining the truth.

There was still no confirmation from Ronald by noon the next day, while Timothy's name continued to soar high in the trending topics as the chastising continued. The EIA Group also officially issued an announcement at 12 to state their intention to terminate the contract.

Progress still remained at zero even though they were halfway to the deadline. Samantha put her phone down and went to the bathroom to wash her face with cold water.

Once she came out, she sat on the sofa and clenched her hands little by little.

It was a battle she absolutely could not lose, and her only recourse was...to pull out a last-ditch comeback!

Samantha picked her phone up and changed the SIM card.. Her mind was hard at work as she typed a text and sent it.

Chapter 228: Countdown to Hell

After sending the text, Samantha got up and changed into some loose-fitting sportswear. She then wore a mask, hat, and sunglasses before carrying her bag and leaving the suite.

She requested a taxi and went back to the villa.

Old Madam Barker and Aunt Julia had a worrisome look on their face when they saw her coming back. Samantha hurriedly spoke up before they did, "Grandma, Aunt Julia, I need your help right now. Time is of the essence right now and we can talk about everything else later!"

The two ladies immediately held back their tears when Samantha said that. Old Madam Barker immediately said, "Alright, tell me. I can help you with anything you need!"

That was the first time Samantha had taken the initiative to ask her for help! She could handle even the most serious of things if it was for Samantha, and she would never let anyone bully the young woman!

Samantha let out a little smile. "I just wanted to...borrow a car from the garage."

The two ladies were already prepared to go into battle and Samantha's words left them speechless.

That was it?

Old Madam Barker had even thought about how she would gladly give up her reputation and get her men to spring into action as long as Samantha said the word.

Aunt Julia could not help but ask, "Didn't the old lady give you that jalopy, Mrs. Barker?"

'Jalopy? That eye-catching limited-edition supercar?'

Aunt Julia spoke about it as if it was no big deal.

Samantha laughed dryly and said tactfully, "Well, actually, I just wanted to borrow the kind of...um...sort of a...low-profile, ordinary kind of car."

"This..."

Old Barker and Aunt Julia scratched their heads and felt puzzled. Old Madam Barker thought for a while, "For example?"

Samantha facepalmed and said, "Maybe we should go to the garage and have a look."

She probably would have to take some time to really explain to them.

"Okay!"

Three of them walked into the villa's underground garage.

Samantha walked past the renowned luxury supercars, but none seemed to meet her requirements. Just when she was about to give up, she caught a glimpse of a van-like car parked in the corner that had the brand: Minifroggy.

Her eyes lit up suddenly as she pointed at it and said, "I'd like this please, Grandma!"

Old Madam Barker exchanged glances with Aunt Julia, Aunt Julia then remarked happily. "I didn't expect you to fancy the little car I use to go grocery shopping. It's an honor! You may have it!"

"Thanks!"

Back in the house, Aunt Julia got the car key and handed it to Samantha.

Old Madam Barker held Samantha's hand and sighed, "Sammy, whatever is it that you and Tim are going to do, safety must always come first. You still have me behind if you can't solve it, understood?"

Samantha held Old Madam Barker's hand in response. "Grandma, Aunt Julia, don't go reading all that stuff on the internet. Just sit tight at home and wait for us! We promise to do our best!"

Old Madam Barker did not say anything and merely gave Samantha a big hug.

The old lady knew that the young couple never spoke about the hardships they suffered outside because they were a filial young couple who did not want her to be worried.

Samantha hugged the old lady and turned to leave.

As soon as she got into the van, she received a message on her phone that contained only three words: [Who are you?]

Samantha grinned but did not respond to the message. She immediately removed the SIM card and destroyed it.

Once that was done, she started the engine and drove to her destination.

In about 40 minutes, she arrived at the door of a magnificent house. She surveyed the situation for a moment and parked at a spot that avoided the reach of surveillance cameras.

The house was where Selby's parents lived and it was none other than Cornell's grand residence.

The reason why she came here was because the person who texted her earlier was Selby's mother. The contents of the text read: [I can't watch Selby suffer from all those accusations. I want to expose everything to the public!]

She had sent it under the guise of the victimized girl.

After reviewing all the information that she found from back then and forming her own guesses, she felt that the girl's disappearance was linked to Selby's parents!

It was either that or the girl was under the control of Selby's parents. If that was not the case, then it was likely that they would at least know her whereabouts.

She was betting that her guess was correct.

Samantha wanted to find the girl's location from Selby's parents in order for her to finally get the truth from the horse's mouth!

She installed a small camera on the front passenger seat, lowered the window, then pointed it toward the door of the Cornells' house. That way, she could see anyone who entered and exited.

Time ticked by, and before she knew it, the sky had already darkened. No one came or left just yet.

Samantha munched on the bread she brought along while wondering why it was so calm over there.

Such calmness could only signify one of two possibilities.

The first possibility was that she had guessed wrongly, and that Selby's parents knew nothing about the girl's whereabouts because they had not been in contact for many years.

The second was that they were keeping their composure despite everything that was going on!

The Cornells were not businessmen in the traditional sense, for they had been a family of scholars for generations. They enjoyed a particularly good reputation and were

treated well within the upper-class circle, so much so that many people treated them with the utmost courtesy.

Cultured people could sometimes be less affected by the world around them.

That was partly why she decided to give up finding information from Selby's end.

Dealing with him might prove to be a waste of time, and what she lacked at that moment was time!

If her guess was far off the mark, it was almost certain that she would suffer a resounding defeat in that battle.

Although she did not have any appetite, she still made sure to finish her bread. After all, it was important for her to maintain her strength because she might have to wait the entire night.

As darkness fell, Samantha looked at the time on her phone. Midnight was five minutes away, and the day was about to come to an end.

She would be lying if she said she was not feeling uneasy.

After all, Selby's parents were the only lead she had, and without them, it would practically be impossible for her to find out any information about the girl from the past, firstly because many years had passed and secondly because all information from back then had been deliberately erased.

Even if Ronald could still dig up some more details, it would not be of much help if three days had passed.

The clock finally struck 12.

Samantha lowered her gaze slightly, because the time she had left was now down to 24 hours.

Perhaps that was a countdown to hell between her and Timothy.

When midnight came, Samantha glanced at the door for no particular reason and saw that the house's gates had swung open.

Samantha's gloomy eyes blinked once, then twice.

Worried that she was hallucinating, she immediately looked through her binoculars and saw that a car was driving out of the open gate.

She could see through the car window that there was a middle-aged man and woman sitting in the back seat. She immediately recognized them to be Selby's parents, Brian and Sarah!

The fading glow in the depths of her eyes lit up once more and her sadness was swept away.

Going out in the middle of the night was an unusual decision, and Samantha was excited at the possibility that she really did make the right bet.

Chapter 229: Ruthless

Samantha eagerly started the engine and followed their car from behind.

She kept a certain distance from them and changed lanes appropriately to prevent them from noticing her. It was important for her to be discreet when following them as there were almost no cars on the road at such an ungodly hour.

Fortunately, their car never noticed that Samantha was following them at high speed. As the journey continued, Samantha realized that they were driving in the direction of Arfore City.

Samantha could not help feeling a little surprised that they were going to Arfore City.

At the same time, she became increasingly confident that Brian and Sarah were going to meet the girl from several years prior.

She could not afford to let her guard down and so she followed steadily behind their car.

After driving for more than two hours, the car had driven into Arfore City's outskirts and finally stopped in a remote open area.

Samantha frowned and wondered where she could be.

Although Samantha was confused, she parked her car behind a tree and got out to follow them silently.

Brian and Sarah, along with the burly male driver who doubled as their bodyguard, walked along the path ahead of them. It was probably not their first time there, because they were very familiar with the path in spite of the darkness.

Samantha did not dare use any flashlights and could only tiptoe as she tried to follow the figures before her.

After walking for about ten minutes, they finally reached the door of a large building and walked in.

Samantha walked over about half a minute later and looked at the signboard above. It read: Exalt Medicare Center.

A medical facility?

If Brian and Sarah really went there to meet the girl, and she was in a medical facility, would that not mean that she was of ill health?

Could she have decided to disappear all those years because she was being treated?

Did Selby decide to come forth and shoulder responsibility for everything because he knew that she was ill and did not want to disturb her peaceful life?

Whatever it was, the answers were going to be revealed soon enough.

Samantha gently took a deep breath and walked in.

It was very late in the night and there was only one nurse on duty at the medical facility's reception desk. Samantha saw Brian and Sarah standing in front of the nurse, who immediately recognized them and handed them a key.

Brian and Sarah took the key and walked in.

Samantha could not let anyone discover her presence, because everyone would be alerted even if only one person had discovered her. Samantha was still thinking of a way to stop the receptionist from following in, but the receptionist got up and went to rest at the nearby quarters after seeing that no one was coming.

Samantha immediately walked in and hurriedly towards the direction Brian and Sarah went.

They were heading towards a VIP ward area and their footsteps could be heard clearly due to the silence in the night. Because of that, Samantha did not lose track of them and managed to follow them right to the door of a ward.

The three people in front of her stopped walking and Brian, Brian Cornell, opened the door of the ward with the key. All three of them then walked in.

Samantha trod carefully and walked forward as gently as she could. She leaned by the wall near the door of the ward and secretly took a peek.

Three people stood by a hospital bed, all of whom were staring at a figure on the bed.

The woman on the bed was lying down, but it did not look like she was lying there out of her own accord. Instead, she was strapped tightly on the bed using special straps.

Samantha peered in but did not see the person's body at all. The only exposed part was one side of the woman's face. The light only made her face look even paler.

Brian asked in a coercive tone, "Were you the one who sent us that text?"

Bingo!

Her guess had been spot on!

That was the exact same girl who was involved in a scandal with Selby some years ago!

However, Samantha never expected the girl's situation to be much worse than initially imagined!

Samantha had seen such methods of strapping and knew that it was used to deal with mentally ill patients. Could the girl really have been mentally ill, or did Brian and Sarah use mental illness as a reason to imprison her there illegally?

A chill came down Samantha's spine as she thought of that.

The girl did not answer the man's question and cackled maniacally in an eerie manner. "Who are you?"

Brian and Sarah exchanged a glance at each other.

The girl did not answer them and merely repeated, "Who are you? And who are you? Who? Who? Who are you? Who? Are? You?"

Selby's mother Sarah observed the girl carefully and checked the record book on the bedside table after seeing the girl's pale face and dull eyes. She then turned to her husband and said, "She can't possibly have sent that kind of text to us in her current state of mind."

Brian trusted Sarah's judgment because she was a doctor by trade, but rather than breathing a sigh of relief, his eyes turned cold and his voice sank. "That's not reassuring at all. We've been set up!"

He looked at the bodyguard beside him and said, "Go and check this place!"

The bodyguard understood immediately and rushed out without saying another word.

Samantha did not expect Brian to react so quickly. He immediately surmised that they were being set up and sent his man to investigate.

If the way Brian and Sarah treated the girl was anything to go by, things would not end well if Samantha was caught!

Moreover, even if she managed to evade capture, the mere fact that she was discovered or spotted might cause that girl to be transferred as soon as was practicable. Should that happen, it would be extremely difficult for Samantha to find her again, especially when there was no time to start from zero!

She had to make sure to not let herself be discovered!

Samantha reacted just as quickly and immediately turned around to run off.

When the bodyguard ran out of the ward, his face soured when he saw a dark figure at a corner up ahead and immediately strode forward.

Samantha's heartbeat quickened when she heard the sound of footsteps from behind. Since she was unfamiliar with the building, she could only play it by ear and run wherever direction she thought was appropriate.

Unfortunately, the bodyguard was very familiar with the way. He came closer and closer after identifying the direction of her escape through the sound of her footsteps.

The medical facility was so quiet that even the softest of footsteps could be heard regardless of how softly she walked. Getting caught was only a matter of time if she kept running.

Finding a place to hide was the best course of action.

Samantha ran to the end of the corridor and tried to open several room doors. Unfortunately, she could not open them because they were all locked. With the sound of those impending footsteps approaching even closer, she became so anxious that she opened the door to the power distribution cabinet and closed the door after stepping in.

The bodyguard's footsteps gradually approached the cabinet and she could feel that he was already standing before the cabinet door. Samantha held her breath and even covered her lips with both hands because she was scared of making a sound.

The bodyguard became more cautious. He knocked on several ward doors and waited until someone opened the door. He then took a quick look inside and came out only after making sure that there was no one suspicious inside.

After coming up empty handed, the bodyguard finally decided to walk back.

Just as Samantha was about to breathe a sigh of relief, the cabinet door creaked open audibly because she had not closed it properly. The bodyguard stopped walking and turned around abruptly to look at the cabinet door!

Chapter 230: Falling from Grace and Losing Everything

Samantha's heart leapt to her throat.

She gulped heavily while reaching into her backpack to take a mini stun baton then clenched it tightly and raised it up.

Since things had already reached this point, her only choice was to protect herself and avoid getting caught if getting found was now inevitable.

Otherwise, it was not only her personal safety that would be compromised, because Timothy would be implicated alongside her as well. That was a conclusion she wanted to avoid at all costs!

The bodyguard's every step seemed to stamp right on her heart.

Just as he was about to walk up to the cabinet door, the lights went dark all of a sudden.

The bodyguard was startled by the sudden darkness.

A hand then reached out and grabbed Samantha's wrist. Startled, she instinctively attempted to struggle but the thumb of that hand gently tapped twice on the inside of her wrist.

Samantha's struggle and resistance disappeared at once.

She followed along as the hand quickly led her out of the large power distribution cabinet. All of a sudden, the person grabbed her by the waist and pulled her gently into his embrace.

On the other end, the bodyguard used his phone's flashlight function. Seconds before the light came on, Samantha was ushered swiftly into a nearby room.

The whole process was immensely quick and accurate!

The bodyguard walked up to the power distribution cabinet and shone the light into it. It was completely empty.

Since there was no one there, he frowned and decided to leave after closing the cabinet door.

...

Inside the ward, Samantha leaned into the man's embrace while her heart was still beating wildly. She had yet to calm herself down from that close call.

The man's voice resonated from the top of her head. "Are you alright?"

The familiar voice was like a gentle hand that soothed her nervousness bit by bit. Samantha raised her head slowly and marveled at the man's handsome, moonlit features. Her voice was a little hoarse as she asked, "Why are you here?"

Clearly, she was not dreaming.

"Grandma called to tell me that you went home to borrow a car. I couldn't contact you after that so I could only come to you," Timothy answered truthfully in a deep voice.

"How did you know I was here then?"

Timothy chuckled lightly. "I used my privileges."

He probably hacked into the traffic cameras or something like that. It was one of those times where she had forgotten that her husband was a high-profile businessman.

He could still access some of his privileges.

Samantha hugged him back and pressed her cheek against his chest to hear his steady heartbeat. Her voice was now calm and she even sounded a little happy, "I'm glad you're here, Timothy. If you hadn't come... I might've been captured and beaten up again."

She had faced numerous dangerous moments by herself in the past.

During the time she was abroad, she had experienced getting injured after being caught and beaten up. She lay on the floor the entire night and only forced herself to head to the hospital after recovering somewhat the next day.

Timothy listened to her calm reply and felt as though his heart had been pierced by a thousand needles. He knew bits and pieces about her time abroad and understood what she was talking about.

On the other hand, he was also very happy because she had never said that to him before, nor did she ever complain about her suffering. Slowly but surely, it seemed that she was allowing herself to reveal her heart to him.

He did not ask any further and merely rubbed her head with his big palms. "Don't worry. I'm here."

Samantha looked up and smiled at him before tiptoeing in the darkness to kiss his lips. "Yeah. I'm really glad you're here."

...

The bodyguard did not return to the ward but went straight to the front desk. The nurse had just happened to come back from the ward and immediately explained to him, "I'm really sorry about this. It's probably the unstable electricity supply in the medical facility, but don't worry. The backup power supply has already been switched on and the power will come back soon."

As soon as she said that, a click was heard and the lights came on again.

The bodyguard thought for a while and asked, "Does the power go out often?"

The nurse replied, "It happens sometimes, more often at night when the voltage gets unstable. That is why the medical facility has set up a backup power supply."

After all, there were plenty of patients in the medical facility and the medical equipment there required a large amount of electricity. It was normal for the power to be unstable if the usage was a little heavy.

The bodyguard asked again, "Where were you earlier?"

"One of the patients was feeling unwell earlier and rang the bell. I went to lower his blood pressure. What's wrong?"

The bodyguard pointed approximately at a certain area and asked, "Did you go here?"

The nurse was a little surprised. "Yes. How did you know?"

It seemed that the figure he saw earlier and the footsteps he heard belonged to the nurse. If that was the case, then there was nothing to be suspicious about anymore.

The bodyguard shook his head and did not ask any further. He nodded at her before turning around and going back to the ward.

Once he was inside, he recounted everything to the couple. "Sir, Madam. There was no one suspicious outside."

Brian sat on the sofa and frowned slightly, "Are you sure?"

The bodyguard nodded. "I've checked everywhere."

Brian thought for a while and ordered, "Could you make a call and get someone to find out who the phone number in the afternoon belongs to?"

The bodyguard took his cell phone out and made a call.

One minute later, he ended the call and reported to Brian, "The phone number was discovered to have been reported by many people as a fraudulent number. It's a number used for telecommunications fraud."

Telecommunications fraud...

Sarah found it laughable and said, "There're?quite a lot of fraudsters scamming people through the phone nowadays. We nearly fell for it!"

That answer, although somewhat unexpected, was very plausible.

After all, the stuff that had been happening on the internet made for a perfect opportunity for scammers to try and swindle some money.

Sarah's heart finally calmed down as she said to Brian, "Since there's nothing to worry about anymore, I think it's about time we leave. We have been out the entire night."

She did not want to stay there any longer because seeing the girl gave her the creeps.

Brian stretched out his hand and patted the back of her hand in a comforting gesture. "Okay, let's leave."

The couple got up and walked towards the door.

When Brian walked up to the door, a thought occurred to her and he stopped again. He turned slightly, glanced at the girl on the bed, then turned to the bodyguard and ordered, "I'm still a bit worried, so I'd like you to stay here for the time being and keep an eye on her for me."

"She is not allowed to go out and no one is allowed to approach her! If anything happens, report to me as soon as possible."

The bodyguard nodded respectfully. "Yes, Sir!"

Brian and Sarah then left together.

...

The bodyguard stayed behind. Samantha was unsure about what to do but finally decided to leave. Alerting them of her presence was a bad move, because then the girl would definitely be transferred and something worse might even happen to her. If that happened, then Samantha's chance of approaching the girl would disappear.

On the way back home, Samantha pretended to sleep because she did not want Timothy to worry, but her own mind continued to be plagued with worries.

By the time she and Timothy had returned to Capital City, the sky was already bright and there were only about twelve hours left. They no longer had any more time to make clarifications.

Was she about to watch as Timothy fell from grace and lost everything he had, simply because of her?

She could not bear it.

She would not allow it.

She did not want that to happen!

Timothy had a meeting that morning and so drove right toward the Barker Group. Once they reached the entrance, he woke Samantha up and got out of the car.

Samantha got out as well.

Timothy approached her and bowed down to kiss her forehead, but she suddenly stretched out her hand and slapped him resoundingly.

The crisp slap attracted everyone's attention.

Once everyone saw that it was Timothy and Samantha, they became even more curious and started gathering one by one.. Each person whipped out their cell phone to record while watching the situation unfold.

Chapter 231: It Was Just to Get Revenge on You

Samantha pushed Timothy away in disgust and said coldly, "The only reason I got married to you is to get revenge on you, Timothy. Did you really think I loved you?"

"I've lost interest in you and I don't want to continue playing games anymore. Be a man and divorce me!"

Everyone was shocked to hear those words!

How exciting!

Everyone knew about Timothy and Samantha's 'wedding of the century' in which Timothy mercilessly broke off their marriage in public.

Who would have thought that everything would come full circle?

Two years later, it was Samantha's turn to utter such words out on the street in front of everyone.

The conspicuous five-fingered mark that Samantha left on Timothy's handsome face was a clear sign that Samantha did not spare even the slightest bit of dignity for him.

The man's face sank and there was a gloominess within the depths of his eyes. A profound fridity radiated from his entire body, forcing the surrounding bystanders to back off subconsciously.

Ronald had just arrived and his eyes widened in shock when he saw that scene. He immediately raised his hand and waved over the security guard at the entrance to get him to come along to Timothy's side.

"Timothy, are you... Are you okay?" Ronald glanced at Timothy and asked in a low voice.

Timothy's black eyes stared at Samantha sharply. His thin lips opened slightly and he spoke in a very cold tone. "You're probably acting a little out of order because it's been an exhausting couple of days for you."

He glanced askance at Ronald and immediately instructed, "Send her back so she can get some rest!"

What a commanding tone!

Ronald nodded immediately. He gestured to the two security guards behind him and they immediately walked toward Samantha.

Samantha struggled as expected. "Don't even think about sending me away, Timothy, not unless you explain yourself right here and n— Ounghhm..."

Ronald had rushed forward to cover her mouth while the two security guards immediately restrained her on either side. They dragged her to the car and forced her in.

Ronald hurriedly sat in the driver's seat. After starting the engine, he slammed on the accelerator and immediately drove away.

He was afraid that Samantha would cause irreparable damage if he delayed even a second longer!

As he drove the car, he persuaded bitterly, "Mrs. Barker, I don't know what issues you and Mr. Barker have right now, but...he really does loves you. He went through a lot for

you and even if he did something that made you unhappy, you should have...been a little more considerate of him.”

He has worked under Timothy for so long that he knew the man to possess an extremely rational and calm character. There were times where such rationality made him look like a robot rather than a human with emotions.

The only exception for him would be Samantha.

Timothy knew the decision that benefited him best during the recent serious incident. He usually made the right choices whenever he faced such situations, yet he could ignore all logic for the sake of protecting Samantha.

Ronald saw it all and felt moved despite being a grown man.

Samantha, who was sitting in the back seat, did not answer him. Thinking that she was not listening to his advice, he was about to continue persuading her when his cell phone rang all of a sudden.

Ronald glanced at the phone screen and saw that it was a call from Timothy. He answered it quickly and clicked on the loudspeaker, “Mr. Barker.”

The man’s icy voice came from the other end. “Send her to Exalt Medicare Center and handle her hospitalization!”

The ‘her’ he referred to was none other than Samantha.

Timothy’s mention of Exalt Medicare Center gave Ronald a huge shock.

That medical facility was specially dedicated to serving the rich and powerful—it was well-known among the upper-class as a ‘psychiatric hospital’.

Patients who had been sent there were, politely speaking, receiving treatment and nursed back to health. In reality, however, they were practically being imprisoned.

Ronald was utterly shocked.

He wondered if Timothy was going to break it off with Samantha.

What could possibly have happened that he was unaware of? Why did it happen so suddenly?

Ronald hesitated before asking, “Mr. Barker... Are you... Are you sure?”

“Isn’t this...just a small argument between husband and wife that can be easily settled in the bedroom? There’s...really no need to be so harsh, right?”

He could not help himself from looking up at the rearview mirror and said to Samantha, "Why don't you apologize to Mr. Barker and say something nice to persuade him, Mrs. Barker? That place he's going to send you to isn't very fun."

Leaving that place was not easy.

Ronald was surprised to see Samantha's calm expression. She smiled and even said to him, "Just follow your boss' wish, Mr. Crawford."

That remark left Ronald speechless.

Did Samantha misspeak or did he mishear her words?

Samantha ignored the bewildered Ronald and said directly to the phone, "I knew you'd understand, Hubby! Stay tuned for my good news!"

She needed a legitimate way to go to the medical facility so that she could get a chance to approach the girl.

Moreover, her public falling out with Timothy provided a chance for busybodies and bystanders to spread the news about the quarrel. Although it was not a divorce, the EIA Group's attitude toward the matter would probably tone down a bit since they paid so much attention to ??public opinion. It bought some time for them to observe the situation and refrain from terminating the contract so quickly and eagerly.

In other words, she could kill two birds with one stone.

She did not discuss it with Timothy in the car because she knew the move would draw the ire of netizens once it was uploaded to the internet. Her main concern was that Timothy might disagree out of reluctance to see her be wronged, so she decided to act first and explain things later.

Fortunately, Timothy understood her intentions and cooperated with her.

The man's deep and sweet voice sounded, "Be careful, Sammy. Don't get hurt."

"Roger that!" Samantha replied teasingly.

After a pause, she asked guiltily, "Did it hurt when I hit you just now? Remember to put on an ice compress."

"Don't worry. It doesn't hurt," Timothy replied.

It was nowhere as painful as the suffering she had to endure while abroad.

He accepted that slap wholeheartedly.

He even accepted with an open heart the words she said in public.

Her actions were, at the very least, a small bit of payback for what he had done to her.

Samantha knew how much effort he had put in to make everything look realistic. She thought about it and said sincerely, "I'll make sure to come back and give you a proper apology once this is all over! Mwah!"

"Mm."

A second later, the man uttered rather stiffly, "Mwah."

Ronald was utterly speechless.

As it turned out, the couple had tacitly put on a whole charade and he was the only one who took it seriously.

It was unhealthy for a single man like him to endure their affectionate acts!

Ronald decided to demand a raise from Timothy, or else he might just quit his job!

...

When they reached Exalt Medicare Center, Ronald forcefully ushered Samantha into the medical facility and admitted her there as a patient. He specifically arranged for her ward to be just next to the girl.

Samantha perked her ears and finally found out that the girl's name was Renee Levy.

However, she could neither get to Renee nor enter the room because the bodyguard was constantly guarding her.

Time waited for no one, and before she knew it, it was already noon.

Samantha stared at the closed door to Renee's ward and frowned tightly. She bit her nails time and again while trying to come up with an idea.

A thought then appeared suddenly in her mind as she laid her eyes on a certain something. Her eyes immediately lit up.

Samantha had found a way!