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Chapter 272: There Was Hope

Samantha had already asked Alan to give Vincent a heads-up and so immediately said, "Doctor, I'd like to know whether it's possible to treat lifelong infertility resulting from accident-sustained damage?"

She only chose to ask Vincent because he was a top doctor in the field of gynecology and would be able to provide the most authoritative answer.

Vincent was a little surprised by her question and reached for his teacup to sip some tea. Rather than answering her question, he said in a relaxed tone, "Given your physical condition, Mrs. Barker, I don't think there's any need for you to ask a question like that."

Samantha smiled and said openly, "I'm just trying to rid myself of some doubts. Your answer to this question is very important to me."

She then added sincerely, "I hope you can dispel those doubts for me, Dr. Jameson."

Vincent put down his teacup and raised his hand to adjust the spectacle frame on the bridge of his nose. "All I can say is that anyone with such a condition would be very lucky to meet me."

Samantha's fingertips trembled slightly. She could not help but raise her voice a little and one could hear the panic in her voice. "Does that mean...you can heal it, Dr. Jameson?"

"Medical science has been progressing rapidly and miracles are happening all the time. I've devoted myself to researching this after retiring from medical practice and have since made great breakthroughs in recent years."

Vincent spoke about his field of expertise with pride and confidence. "...and there have already been successful cases amongst our volunteers."

Samantha was gloomy after hearing his words. "That...might be a huge blessing to women and mankind, but..."

After a pause, she smiled bitterly. "...I don't think that's good news for me."

Vincent stretched out his hand to pat her shoulder and comforted her, "You're my patient now. I only accept one patient at a time and I'll leave after a week. Does saying that make you feel better?"

He was implying that he would not agree if anyone else requests to seek his consultation, and once he left, it would be a mountainous task to get him to come out again.

It allowed her to relax a little.

Samantha understood and smiled in relief.

After finishing their afternoon tea, Samantha took the elevator upstairs with Vincent and went back to their respective rooms.

...

At Lychee TV, Timothy's affection towards Samantha was still being enthusiastically discussed even though Samantha had taken a day off and did not come to work.

Harmony had to listen to that subject as long as she was in the office, when she had coffee at the cafe, when she used the restroom, and even when she was eating at a restaurant outside. The gossip buzzed in her ears like an annoying swarm of flies. She was getting angry and bitter because she could not avoid it regardless of however hard she tried.

She even wondered whether Samantha had spent money to hire those people and plant them around her just to deliberately talk about it and annoy her!

After languishing through the workday, Harmony packed her things and had prepared to leave when her phone started ringing.

When she reached for her phone to glance at the caller ID, her gloomy expression cleared at once and she answered immediately.

The other side said something that sparked joy in her eyes. "Really? Okay, understood."

After hanging up the phone, she replayed what she had just heard and could not help but feel her heartbeat quickening.

Timothy had succeeded in inviting the renowned Dr. Vincent Jameson, a doctor who could treat women who were unable to conceive due to physical damage.

Harmony had never given up in all those years, but despite consulting many doctors, everyone shook their heads at her and said that there was nothing they could do about her.

Despair gradually sank in and she soon gave up.

Unexpectedly, medical techniques advanced with time and what was impossible to treat in the past had now received a glimmer of hope.

Harmony could not help but caress her stomach.

If she could be treated and get pregnant on her own, then the obstacle between her and Timothy would be completely resolved. Why would she need another woman's child, especially when the child came from someone as vile as Samantha?

Samantha's remark—that bearing Timothy's child made her inextricably linked to him for the rest of her life—had pierced Harmony's heart like a needle.

She even said that her child would never acknowledge a homewrecker as a mother and might one day be the death of Harmony!

Despite those unpleasant words, Harmony had to admit that Samantha was telling the truth!

A baby who was born from another woman's womb would most likely turn out to have a different mindset.

Worse comes to worst, the child might grow up ungrateful despite being raised with care and love! All that effort would then go to waste!

In any case, she had to find a way to get Vincent to treat her, and she would fight for it until the very end, even if there was only a ten percent chance of success!

Needless to say, time was of the essence because Vincent would only be staying in Capital City for a short period.

Harmony thought to herself for a moment and picked up her bag to leave.

...

At seven o'clock in the evening, Vincent brought his assistant Leah to the hotel restaurant.

Halfway through their meal, the restaurant manager came over with a bottle of fine quality red wine and presented it to Vincent. He respectfully said, "Hello there, Sir. This is courtesy of a young lady."

The wine was Vincent's favorite.

He cocked an eyebrow and asked. "Who is it?"

The restaurant manager looked to a table at the far right, behind him, "That young lady there."

Vincent turned around and looked over.

There sat a demure and beautiful woman. She smiled slightly and raised a glass to him from afar when she spotted him looking over.

Vincent turned around again and said a few words to the restaurant manager, who then brought the wine back and walked to the woman.

He put down the bottle of wine and said respectfully, "I'm sorry, Ms. Johnson. Dr. Jameson wanted me to tell you that he can't accept it because he didn't earn it. He says you should enjoy this good wine by yourself."

Harmony did not appear unhappy despite hitting a wall. She nodded and said, "I understand."

On the way to the hotel, she had asked some people to do a thorough investigation of Vincent's background since it was beneficial to have a good understanding of who she was dealing with.

All geniuses had their unique temperaments.

It was inevitable that Vincent would be hard to convince.

Still, she was confident that she would eventually succeed in persuading him to treat her.

For the record, so far, Harmony was able to get whatever she wanted.

She did not dwell too much on it and waved to a waiter. After footing the bill, she got up and left.

Half an hour later, Vincent and Leah finished their meal and footed the bill before walking out of the restaurant.

The moment they stepped out of the door, someone suddenly shouted, "Hold on, Dr. Jameson!"

Chapter 273: Regaining Her Fertility

Vincent stopped walking and turned around.

The restaurant manager rushed up to him and handed over a bag while saying, "Ms. Johnson insisted that I deliver this to you, Doctor. She hopes you'll accept it."

Vincent lowered his eyes and looked at the bag.

The contents were undoubtedly that fine-quality bottle of wine from earlier.

Even though she did not get a chance to talk to him and had her invitation declined, she still told the restaurant manager to give the wine away...

There was a hint of intrigue in Vincent's expression.

He then hinted at Leah, who understood immediately and reached out to accept the gift.

After Vincent left with Leah, the restaurant manager found the phone number that Harmony left behind and informed her of it.

...

At eight the next morning, Harmony walked into the hotel again.

She went to the front desk and requested the receptionist to call Leah's room. Leah was then asked to inform the doctor that Harmony wanted to see him and would be waiting in the lobby downstairs.

Harmony then went to the lounge and sat on the sofa to wait.

An hour later, Leah knocked on Dr. Jameson's room door and relayed Harmony's request after entering. Vincent refused without a second thought. "I'm not meeting any visitors. Tell her to leave."

"Yes, Doctor."

Leah went downstairs, walked to Harmony, and said politely, "Hello Ms. Johnson, the doctor is very busy today and won't be seeing anyone. You should go home."

Harmony was not surprised by that answer and her expression remained the same. She even said with a smile, "Please let him know that I'm willing to wait until he's free. Let me know too if he changes his mind."

There was nothing much Leah could say after seeing Harmony's stubbornness and nodded politely before going back upstairs.

Harmony meant what she said and sat patiently on the sofa to wait. She waited from morning until night and only got up and left once the clock struck midnight.

On the third day, Harmony similarly went to the hotel at eight in the morning and sat on the sofa to wait.

Leah could not help her amazement after receiving the call from the front desk. Harmony was quite determined considering how she had been snubbed twice.

She walked into Vincent's room and stood at one side after seeing him on the phone.

The call ended a minute later and Vincent placed his phone down. He turned to look at Leah and asked, "Is Ms. Johnson here today?"

Leah nodded. "She's been waiting downstairs for an hour."

"Tell her to come up."

Leah was somewhat surprised by that.

Although Harmony showed resolve, many people have shown the same resolve in recent years just to seek treatment from Vincent. He, however, had never once given in to them.

Why did he treat Harmony so specially?

Although Leah was very curious, she did not dare to ask and did as she was told. "Yes, Doctor. I'll go now."

...

Inside the suite, Vincent and Harmony sat on either side of the sofa.

Harmony reached out to tuck a lock of hair behind her ear and smiled before initiating the conversation, "Thank you for meeting me, Dr. Jameson."

Leah brought them some freshly-brewed coffee and left.

Vincent took the coffee cup and sipped some coffee before curling his lips into a smile. He said ambiguously, "You've not only waited three days but have also shown your sincerity, Ms. Johnson. The least I can do is meet you."

The phone call in the morning was from his research institute.

A batch of medical equipment had been donated to the institute in Harmony Johnson's name.

It was the same kind of medical equipment that Timothy had donated.

Harmony was making it amply clear that she was related to Timothy.

Vincent had been swayed by Timothy's actions and since he had already accepted Timothy's gesture, there was no reason for him not to meet Harmony.

Furthermore...

Vincent narrowed his eyes but set aside the thoughts in his mind and looked at Harmony again. "You can be upfront with your reasons for seeking me, Ms. Johnson."

"Dr. Jameson, I'm now unable to conceive due to an injury, and I know that only a gynecologist of your level can treat me at the moment. I'd like to ask you to treat me!" Harmony had a hopeful look in her eyes and her imploring tone was rather clear.

He laced his fingers together and tapped his fingertips lightly as he placed his hands on his knees. "I sympathize with what you've been through, Ms. Johnson, I really do. But I already have my hands full with patients, and my rule is to treat patients one-on-one. I can't spare any time for you because I'll be leaving in a few days."

"Please, Doctor. I'm begging you." Harmony's eyes turned red. "Doctors are like parents to their patients, and I'm sure you know how sad it is when a woman can't get pregnant and bear children for her beloved. I can't be with the man I love because of this and I'm forced to accept other people's children. Treating me might just be a matter of snapping your fingers, but for me, it's my path to happiness in life. Please...reconsider it."

Vincent frowned but did not refuse outright.

Harmony noticed that and knew that her pleas were working. Tears welled up immediately in her eyes and slid down her cheeks. "Dr. Jameson, I'll kneel to ask you for help..."

She immediately stood up and knelt with a thud.

Vincent and Leah watched from one side and were astonished when Harmony went for that, m... Leah hurriedly went to help her up, "Please don't be like that, Ms. Johnson..."

Harmony ignored Leah and looked tearfully at Vincent.

After a brief deadlock, Vincent sighed, stepped forward, and personally reached out to hold Harmony's hand. "Okay. I'll help you."

Harmony stood up, wiped her tears, and said gratefully. "Thank you, Doctor. I'm really grateful. Thank you."

...

Due to time constraints, Vincent brought Harmony directly to the hospital for a comprehensive health examination.

Almost four hours had passed after three examinations were done and the results were analyzed. It was not until eight that evening that Harmony received a call from Vincent.

He explained to her, "Based on the results of your physical examination report, your fertility can be restored after treatment."

Harmony broke out crying right away.

She cried crocodile tears in front of Vincent earlier that morning, but the tears she shed after hearing his words were genuine.

Of course, Harmony was crying because her suffering was finally over and her good times were just beginning!

She no longer needed the child in Samantha's womb and she might even venture to say that it became a thorn in her side. How she wished she could destroy that baby soon!

Harmony's baby must become the Barkers' heir if she was finally able to get pregnant. Timothy would certainly be very happy too.

Harmony could not wait to share the good news with Timothy.. She picked up her phone, gave the number '1' a long press, and then dialed the number.

Chapter 274: Why Won't She Give Me A Break?

A dial tone was heard as Harmony was happily wondering how she should tell Timothy about the news. All of a sudden, however, her expression changed slightly as a sudden thought occurred to her.

She swiftly swiped her fingers to end the call.

She could not let Timothy know about it.

Although she could be certain that Timothy did not like Samantha, the child in Samantha's womb was still his and it might be possible that he still wanted it.

The Barkers were an influential family who valued the passing down of their bloodline. Samantha was an insignificant person if she was not pregnant, but there was already a baby in her belly and Harmony had to face that problem head-on.

Harmony had gone through so much just to reach that stage with Timothy, and she did not want to argue or have any conflict with him for any reason whatsoever, even if the chance of that happening was only one in ten thousand...

With that thought, she held her phone up again and decided to call 'him'.

A second later, she shook her head again.

She had to keep it secret from 'him' too.

Her past failures had led 'him' to be extremely unhappy with her, and 'his' impression of Samantha was so high that Samantha was now on the verge of surpassing her.

If she told 'him' about her plan and he happened to have other ideas, it would only be a tremendous hindrance to her.

Taking into account the situation as a whole, the only way her plan would be foolproof was if she destroyed the child in Samantha's stomach without any outside help.

Once that was done, she would naturally be together with Timothy.

Getting rid of Samantha and becoming Mrs. Barker would be equivalent to completing the deal with 'him'. Finally, 'he' would look at her with admiration.

She no longer needed to fear anyone if she had both 'his' backing and Timothy's love.

That included the old hag!

It was not as though Harmony was determined to go against Old Madam Barker and never tried getting on the latter's good side. Unfortunately, the old lady had poor judgment and preferred a vile woman like Samantha over a better granddaughter-in-law like Harmony.

Old Madam Barker never showed her any respect despite her untiring efforts to please the old lady, so she decided not to waste her time on it anymore.

By the time Harmony became Mrs. Barker, she would not need to worry about not being able to handle that bag of bones!

Harmony could not resist smiling when she fantasized about the beautiful future in front of her.

The next day, Harmony drove to Northred Prison where Penelope was serving her sentence.

A prison guard walked into the visiting room and brought Penelope along, who was wearing a gray prison uniform. Harmony glanced through the transparent glass and looked at the sorry state of the girl who used to be pampered while growing up.

The prison uniform looked huge as Penelope's thin arms extended out of the armholes. One could visibly see that she was just skin and bones, while her eyes were fragile, dull, and had a touch of craziness.

Harmony was not too surprised by that. She sat on the chair expressionlessly and waited for Penelope to sit down before slowly picking up the telephone handset.

She then raised her hand to knock on the glass and motion to Penelope.

There seemed to be a brief lag in the speed at which Penelope reacted as she finally reached for the handset. She placed it against her ear but did not say anything.

Harmony did not mind and said lazily, "I'm sorry for not visiting you sooner, Penny. I've been very busy recently. How are you doing?"

Penelope kept quiet as if she had not heard a single thing. Her eyes remained fixed at the desk and no one could decipher her thoughts.

"Your mother is doing pretty well, by the way." Harmony continued.

'Mother.'

Penelope's stiff eyes moved slightly. She looked up and made eye contact with Harmony while asking in a hoarse voice, "How's Mommy?"

Harmony smiled. "I promised you I'd take good care of her, so I did. She has a place to stay after I got someone to rent their place to her, and I gave her just enough living expenses every month. You don't have to worry about her."

There was a hint of gratitude in Penelope's eyes. "That's good. Thank you. You're the only one who's willing to help me."

All those so-called friends who once surrounded her were the same ones who trampled over her after her downfall. Harmony was the only one willing to help her, from the past up to the present.

However, Harmony sighed deeply and had a sad look.

Penelope frowned slightly. "What's the matter?"

Harmony bit her lower lip gently and hesitated for a moment before beginning her words, "Penny, Tim already has...a child with Samantha. Samantha is scared of Tim's

relationship with me and is using the child as leverage. She insists that Tim distance himself from me and even wants him to send me abroad again without ever allowing me to return.”

“I can still take care of your mother because I’m in the country right now, but there are many things I can’t do if I’m abroad. I’ll be too far to help if something happens to your mother. If it comes to that, then...”

She kept quiet and sighed once more, but that sigh had conveyed everything she wanted to say.

Once she was kicked out of the country, she would no longer be responsible for Penelope’s mother.

Penelope grasped the microphone tightly and spoke in a sharp voice. “Why... why does Samantha want to kill every last one of us? She snatched everything from me and she has everything. Why is she still not letting me go?”

Harmony immediately showed concern after seeing Penelope’s agitation. “Don’t get too worked up, Penny, this is just a worst-case scenario. It hasn’t come to that yet, so don’t worry. I’ll continue to take good care of your mother as long as I’m still in the country.”

None of her words seemed to get to Penelope, who became more frantic and asked, “Why does Samantha have to treat me like this? Why can’t she just give me a break? What on earth does she want?”

“Calm down, Penny!” Harmony’s voice changed suddenly. It became icy, sullen, and uncanny. “Look at me. Look into my eyes. Hey! Look at me!”

Penelope subconsciously looked into Harmony’s eyes.

Harmony stared deep into her eyes and spoke sincerely. “We’ve been friends for many years, Penny, and I do sincerely hope that you’ll be well. I introduced Tim to you back then because you liked Tim, and Tim has a good impression of you too, hence why I paired the two of you up. You almost had everything too, if it hadn’t been for Samantha who reappeared all of a sudden and disrupted everything.”

“I don’t understand why Samantha still had the nerve to continue pestering Tim even though he already broke off the marriage with her... You, or I for that matter, could never bring ourselves to do such a thing, which is probably why she succeeded...”

Harmony said regretfully, “But things have already reached this point. Tim and Samantha have a child now, and all you can do is accept reality. Be well here. I’ll take good care of your mother. You must be tired today, so make sure to get some rest. I’ll visit you again some other time.”

Penelope's emotions calmed down a bit as she nodded gently.

Harmony got up and was about to leave, but a sudden thought occurred to her and she added one final remark.

Chapter 275: Reminiscence

"By the way, have you gotten sick recently? You must be mindful of your health and eat your medication on time. Take care of yourself, alright? Don't let me get worried about you."

"Okay," Penelope responded.

Harmony's glanced across her face and smiled. "I'm leaving then. See you next time."

After leaving the prison, Harmony tilted her head backward and looked at the blue sky.

A bright future that belonged to her was soon forthcoming.

Her dark days would forever be in the past.

Those who looked down on her in the past and present would be stomped under her feet and cleaned up one by one!

...

After receiving a week of treatment from Vincent, Samantha's morning sickness had improved significantly. Her vomiting and discomfort had almost disappeared, while her appetite had returned and her sleep saw considerable improvement.

Nightmares were a thing of the past and she could now sleep soundly until morning.

Timothy made a point to arrange another meal for Vincent. In addition to thanking the doctor, Timothy also proposed that the doctor stay a while longer to help Samantha until her fetus reached the first trimester.

On balance, the fetus would be much more stable after the first trimester.

Vincent frowned because it would be very difficult to accommodate this arrangement.

Samantha's pregnancy was only about a month along, which meant that he would have to stay behind for more than a month, at the very least. His research was still underway and that was a matter of racing against time.

Timothy knew that would be difficult for Vincent so he smiled and said, "If you don't mind, Dr. Jameson, I can provide you with a research institute that's equipped with all the materials you need for your research. That way you can work in synchrony with your team from the other side and your research would not be delayed."

One could only acknowledge Timothy's ability to understand what a person wanted.

The conditions he promised were an offer that one simply could not refuse.

Vincent could not help shaking his head and chuckling. He joked and said, "I suppose it'll be very ungrateful of me if I decline, right Mr. Barker?"

Timothy knew that Vincent had agreed to it and picked up his glass of red wine to raise a toast to him. "Thank you, Doctor."

Vincent picked up his glass of red wine and clinked glasses with him.

Once the meal ended, Ronald drove Timothy and Vincent back to the hotel.

Ronald went back into the car and could not help but feel awe at how much Timothy loved Samantha.

His boss was a businessman whose very motivation should be to make a profit. He could always force Vincent to stay using other means, but he was willing to do anything for the sake of his wife even if it meant drawing upon his wealth without getting any financial return.

Ronald had always been cheering for Timothy and Samantha, and with the couple poised to have a happy life along with a cute baby Timothy or Samantha in the future, he really could not ask for more!

...

When Timothy returned to the hotel room, Samantha was hugging a pillow sitting on the sofa watching some variety shows.

She laughed uncontrollably when a funny segment came on. Her eyebrows turned into little arches and her voice was beautifully sweet.

Timothy could not help but slow his footsteps and lean slightly against the cabinet. A satisfying feeling swelled in his heart as he watched lazily at her smiling face.

In the past, he spent his days merely existing in the world.

He worked like a robot day in, day out and repeated the same routine over and over again.

There was a time when he thought that he would spend his entire life like that.

Then, Samantha showed up.

It was strange that he did not like her at first, even when his grandfather droned on and on for almost all his life about the story of her grabbing him during her one-year-old catch.

That was probably why he ended up feeling the opposite way.

His feelings had been relatively cold since he was a child and nothing seemed to excite him. He had no objection toward the school courses and development plans that his grandfather had arranged for him, regardless of how arduous they were.

When it came to that little girl known as Samantha, he acted a little more rebellious.

It was probably the first time he ever had a different outlook on his life.

When they met later, he felt that Samantha looked better than the photos he had seen of her, but that was pretty much it.

He was even a little disappointed to see the way she looked at him with unconcealed awe.

Nothing about her stood out from the other girls.

They either liked him for his looks or coveted his family background.

What happened next was no surprise to him. She started chasing after him, creating some 'by chance' encounters, struck up conversations when there was nothing to talk about, and looked at him with such fanatical devotion even though she thought she was hiding it well.

She never once felt discouraged despite him giving her the cold shoulder.

There were also times when he wondered where she got her shamelessness from, although that was the extent of his curiosity.

However, there were good things about Samantha too.

In addition to her obsession with chasing him, she was also obsessed with her studies.

Many people in the upper-class circle ridiculed her because she could not keep up with her studies. After all, she had just moved to the city from a small place.

Everyone derided her because she was only able to enter that circle by relying on the Barkers. They laughed at her for being a good-for-nothing who could only enter the school through her association with the Barkers.

At that time, she never refuted them and simply left silently.

On a certain night, Timothy was sleeping when the noises outside woke him up

He got out of bed and walked to the balcony to peer out.

A little girl was running around in the yard next door while memorizing her subjects out loud.

Upon getting a better look, that little black shadow happened to be none other than Samantha.

When he saw her turning around and leaving silently earlier that morning, he thought she was going to hide somewhere and cry. He did not expect her to put in the extra effort to become better.

It really came as a surprise for him.

He was curious to know just how long a finicky little princess like her could keep at it.

One day? Two? Perhaps three at most?

The result? That was the very first time in his life he had been so shocked.

He was awakened by that little girl's memorizing every single night for about three months. At the end of that semester, Samantha aced the exams and came out on top of everyone in her year.

When she gave her speech at the assembly, she said to all those rich kids who laughed at her, "Thank you for your encouragement back then. I'll keep working hard to continue coming out on top!"

What she really meant was, 'As long as I'm around, you scumbags can kiss goodbye to your hopes of ever coming out on top in our year!'

She did as she said and came out on top whenever she took her exams. All the other students were incensed but could do nothing about it.

That tenacity might be the reason she dared to give chase by herself when she witnessed his kidnapping.

She was even brave enough to rush out and block the gunshot, seemingly without a care in the world.

He remembered the exact moment she rushed into his arms and was hit by the bullet. The shock he felt was unlike anything he ever experienced before.

Timothy had always felt that Samantha was no different from other girls, but that was the exact moment he found out what separated her from all the others.

Chapter 276: Timothy Barker Will Be Yours

Samantha fell into his arms after being hit by the bullet. He held her and had blood all over his hands.

He watched as her face drained of all color and turned tense because of the pain. Cold sweat was beginning to form all over her forehead.

Panic was a word that did not exist in his dictionary ever since he was young, and he felt no such emotion even when the kidnapper pointed the gun at his forehead.

At that moment, however, he was inexplicably flustered.

There were simply too many girls around him, all of whom said they admired him. Even so, he knew deep down that they admired not Timothy, but the power and financial recourse that he represented.

That was his impression of Samantha as well.

It was why he had never expected a girl like her who constantly blabbed about how much she admired him would be so brave as to rush out and save him with such disregard for her own life.

Samantha had lost consciousness at the time, but she still clutched his clothes tightly and muttered something.

He lowered his head to listen.

She did not say things like 'I'm just glad you're fine' as almost everyone says in television dramas.

Instead, she said genuinely, "It hurts! It bloody hurts, damn it! Gahhh... I'm only eighteen! I don't wanna die! I'm still young! And I haven't had the chance to hold Timothy's hand yet! Argh... It's so unfair!"

Then, her hand tightened its grip on her clothes and she said weakly, "I saved you, Timothy. You must promise to devote yourself to me and return the favor in your next life!"

She then collapsed completely.

As for his thoughts at that moment, he felt that she really was one-of-a-kind, seeing as her little mouth could blab on so noisily even at such a time.

More importantly, she was true to herself.

She asked for something in return immediately after saving his life and did not even bother to feign righteousness.

He could agree to her request, but the conditions had to be changed.

She did not need to wait for the next life. He would grant her wish in their current life.

Before she was pushed into the operating room, he held her hand while he whispered to her and agreed, "Timothy Barker will be yours if you come out of this alive."

...

Samantha noticed the man's gaze and happened to make eye contact with him when she turned her head.

She blinked and asked curiously, "Why are you standing there instead of coming in?"

Timothy came to his senses and walked over. He leaned over and kissed her gently on the cheek before asking softly, "How do you feel today?"

"I feel quite good." Samantha looked up at him and caught a whiff of a faint alcoholic smell on his body. She could not help but ask, "You were drinking?"

"Yes. I just had a meal with Dr. Jameson, so I drank a little," Timothy replied. "He'll stay here until the baby is three months old."

Samantha's heart skipped a beat.

Everything Timothy did since finding out about her pregnancy was truly flawless and she could not find fault in him at all.

She would have fallen for him more and more had she been oblivious to the truth.

No one could resist such thoughtfulness.

Her nose felt a little tingly and her emotions became a little uncontrollable due to the hormonal changes brought about by her pregnancy.

To prevent Timothy from noticing something was amiss, she hurriedly nudged him and said, "I can't take the alcoholic smell. Take a shower as soon as you can."

"Okay."

Timothy retreated a couple of steps and turned around to head for the bathroom.

Ten minutes later, Timothy came out of his shower.

He dried his hair quickly and went to sit down at the desk without disturbing Samantha who was still enjoying her television show.

She originally thought he was dealing with some unfinished documents and glanced over when it was a commercial break. To her surprise, she saw Timothy flipping through a thick book.

What could he possibly be reading?

Samantha was a little curious and looked at him several times.

Although Timothy did not look up, he seemed to have sensed her gaze when he curled his lips and said, "Come over here."

Samantha did not pretend she did not look at him and got up to walk over.

The man placed her on his lap and let her lean against his chest. Samantha glanced at the book and realized that it was a dictionary.

She cocked her eyebrows and wondered if he was that studious.

Seconds later, she realized it was not the case because she saw that some words had been circled in black ink.

She could surmise what he had been doing but did not mention it outright. Rather, she turned to look at Timothy and asked, "What are you doing?"

Timothy took the pen and circled a word while replying, "Finding inspiration for a name."

He was choosing a name...

He placed his lips right next to her ear and spoke in a casually pleasant tone, "Any ideas?"

Samantha unconsciously clenched her hands.

Choosing a name was usually a very ceremonial thing to do.

Naming something was the start of attachment and expectation toward that certain thing.

An example would be a cat or car that was purchased and brought home...

Unfortunately, she could not bring herself to expect the child.

In a situation where she neither had control over the child's fate nor could be responsible for it, she did not want to form any attachment or expectation toward the child.

Otherwise, she would suffer if she ever lost it.

The suffering she was bound to go through would be excruciatingly painful.

She would rather not have the child to begin with, than have it and lose it. Her greatest fear was that she would crumble if she could not bear the weight of all those emotions.

Samantha shook her head and said in the calmest tone possible. "It's still early, and we don't know if it's a girl or a boy. We can settle on a name later."

"Better to be prepared." Timothy looked at her tenderly. "You can choose one name for each gender."

"Then... we'll have to put a lot of thought into it."

Samantha yawned deliberately and put her head on his shoulder before saying coquettishly, "Your baby and I are feeling sleepy. Leave the naming aside for now and come sleep with us!"

Timothy smiled and patted her head. "Okay. Let's go to sleep."

He carried her tightly, got up slowly, and walked toward the big bed.

...

Harmony was overjoyed to hear that Vincent was going to continue staying in Capital City for another month or so.

She was originally rather worried about having her treatment postponed if the doctor went back abroad. If that happened, she had to first deal with things in the country before freeing up some time for treatment.

Since he was staying behind, she could start the treatment first.

During that period, she could get double the happiness if she could get rid of Samantha and the baby.

There seemed to be no stopping her stream of luck once it started pouring in.

She received a call early that morning as soon as she woke up.

The person on the other end said, "Penelope suddenly came down sick during the past few days. She passed out a couple of times after vomiting and having diarrhea. Her condition is unclear, but she applied to be released for medical treatment and her application has been approved. She'll be escorted to a hospital today."

Harmony laughed instantly.

Penelope might be stupid, but she could still understand indirect hints when it came to critical moments.

After nurturing her for so many years, it was finally time for her to be put to good use on one final occasion.

Harmony replied, "There's something I'd like you to do..."

Chapter 277: Bitterness

At the hospital, a nurse wearing white clothes and a mask pushed a small cart through the corridor and stopped at the door of a particular ward.

Two police officers stood at the door and reached out to stop her.

The nurse showed her work badge and said, "I was asked by the doctor to check the patient's blood pressure."

The policemen confirmed that she was telling the truth before letting her pass.

The nurse opened the door, pushed the cart in, and gently shut the door behind her.

Inside the room was Penelope, who was laying on the hospital bed with one of her hands cuffed to the bed's iron railing.

The nurse stepped forward and said softly, "Ms. Schmidt, I'm here to check your blood pressure. Could you raise your arm please?"

Ten minutes later, the door opened again.

The nurse lowered her head and pushed the cart out of the room. After closing the door, she nodded at the two police officers and walked away.

...

Samantha went to work as usual since her physical condition had improved during that period.

After all, it was important to stay active in life lest one get sick by lying in bed every day.

Timothy would send her to and pick her up from work whenever he had the time, but a lot of his work was delayed because he had spent weeks taking care of her. The accumulation of many important, long-overdue projects left him with no choice but to deal with them.

As a result, Samantha refused to let him drop her off and pick her up. She frequently took a taxi to and from work.

Driving was a big no because she was pregnant and accidents might happen.

In recent days, however, she wondered if her hormones were on overdrive because she constantly felt as though someone was watching or following her.

However, she never noticed anything unusual.

She raised her eyes and glanced at the clock on the table. There were another ten minutes before it was the end of the workday, and since it was a Friday, many other colleagues were already getting into the weekend mood and called their friends to plan a meal or a karaoke session.

Time passed in a flash, and just as everyone was packing up and preparing to leave, Victoria walked out of the office suddenly.

Her face was extremely serious as she said sternly, "Breaking news. I've sent the link to the group chat."

That sentence caused everyone to halt what they were doing and their expressions immediately became tense. Everyone reached for their cell phones to see what was going on.

Samantha clicked into the chat group and saw the link shared by Victoria.

A big explosion occurred about five minutes ago in Doublecross Industrial's factory. The fire was spreading and the situation was critical, but the entirety of the situation was as

yet unknown. On-site anchors and reporters were required, while cameramen were also needed to arrive immediately at the scene and provide support.

Victoria said sullenly, "You've read it all, right? Our team needs to send over two anchors, two reporters, and a cameraman."

As soon as she said that, Annabelle—the temp secretary—had a worried look on her face. "Ms. Goldman, we have enough reporters and cameramen, but the only anchor we have now is Ms. Carol Hooper. The other anchors are on duty outside and won't be able to rush back in time."

Victoria glanced across the hall and finally looked at Samantha. She opened her lips and asked, "Can you do it?"

Samantha was not qualified to perform such an assignment as a rookie anchor, because the rules state that she must accumulate at least one year's worth of experience in the station. Once she passes the review, she can then be put on the list of anchors who can be assigned to field tasks.

However, exceptional circumstances call for exceptional measures.

At the end of the day, rules were meant to be broken.

Samantha did not shirk from the critical situation and nodded without hesitation. "Yes."

Victoria curled her lips in satisfaction. "Very well. Get yourselves ready and set off immediately."

Samantha and Carol answered in unison, "Understood!"

Lychee TV's bus arrived at the scene about 30 minutes later and the group proceeded to get out of the bus.

The scene was already extremely chaotic by then. There were firefighters, police officers, and doctors, with a few wounded individuals thrown into the mix. Although the explosion had stopped, the fire was so great that it continued to spread to the surrounding area.

Samantha and Carol were each assigned a reporter and a cameraman to gather information on the situation and do a live report of the situation from different locations.

Since there were many workers in the factory when the explosion occurred and plenty of them got wounded, their family members all rushed over after receiving the news. Everyone was so heartbroken that they rushed madly to the scene and caused even more chaos.

Samantha had to back off repeatedly when the horde of people rushed over. She covered her abdomen with one hand and continued to fulfill her duties in the live broadcast, all while doing her best to maintain her breathing and body temperature.

However, the crowd started to swell and everyone was so concerned for their own family that the scene was in complete chaos. The police had their hands full too, and it did not take long for the crowd to overwhelm both the reporter and cameraman who followed Samantha.

“Ms. Larsson...”

The reporter called out to her anxiously but could only watch helplessly as the crowd separated them more and more.

Samantha was forced to pause the broadcast and covered her abdomen with both hands to avoid the crowd.

She then tried her best to reassure the impulsive family members.

Although she understood their urgency, their panic-stricken frenzy added to the chaos and would cause more trouble to the fire and rescue personnel.

Her words slowly but surely calmed the emotions of the victims' family members who were surrounding her.

She then said, “Everyone, please clear the area and give way to the fire and rescue personnel. That would allow your relatives and friends to be rescued as soon as possible.”

Everyone nodded and followed her instructions as they turned around and walked out.

Samantha let out a sigh of relief and followed them out.

Only one person from the crowd stood there to stare at Samantha instead of walking out. The person then walked over to her and suddenly delivered a blow to Samantha's neck.

Samantha had a bad feeling the moment the person attacked, but she reacted quickly enough and leaned back to dodge the person's hand.

However, Samantha's neck was not the target and the person swiftly directed their other hand toward her lower abdomen.

The next second, Samantha felt a sharp object pressing against her stomach.

Her heart skipped a beat as she glanced down.

It was an extremely sharp blade.

Samantha's movements stopped abruptly and she glanced from the side to see her attacker.

The person was wearing a black windbreaker and was completely covered. Donning both a hat and a mask, the only exposed part of that person's face was their eyes.

However, that was enough for Samantha to recognize who it was.

The attacker was Penelope, who ought to have been in prison at that moment.

Penelope was staring at her with deep-seated resentment that was as frightening as a viper's stare.

She placed her hand around Samantha's neck once again while still pressing the dagger in her other hand against her stomach. Without saying anything more, she forcibly dragged Samantha away.

Penelope's strength was surprisingly great and Samantha had no choice but to go along because she was worried about the child in her stomach and was being dragged away forcefully.

Chapter 278: Two for The Price of One—What A Deal!

Penelope could conceal the dagger easily due to her wide sleeves. The crowd was massive too, so many did not notice the two women because everyone was concerned only about the disaster in front of them.

Samantha was starting to panic because she was afraid of hurting her child. However, panicking was a useless reaction at that moment and she had to calm down if she wanted to protect herself and her baby.

It seemed that she was not being overly suspicious when she felt that someone was watching or following her during the past few days. That person had turned out to be Penelope.

Judging from the situation, Penelope had been planning the attack for a long time now.

She decided to attack her at the exact moment when there was a huge crowd and everything was chaotic!

Samantha tried her best to keep up with Penelope's pace without confronting or provoking her.

She gulped and reminded in a soft and gentle voice, "There are plenty of people here, Penelope. You can't run away."

"Tch." Penelope was not afraid at all and even smiled oddly.

Samantha turned her face slightly to look at her and saw a touch of madness in addition to the resentment.

That expression seemed familiar.

Samantha searched her memories and finally remembered.

Penelope had the same look of madness in her eyes when she attacked Samantha at the bar. She had the same unexpected strength then as she did now.

Based on Samantha's previous altercations with Penelope, the latter was nothing more than a pampered little rich daughter who had little strength. However, Penelope had practically turned into a different person during the two occasions in which she attacked Samantha...

Samantha felt that the contrasting change was familiar. Penelope looked as though she was under some kind of mind-control or drug influence.

Samantha frowned lightly and keenly noticed that something was off.

She asked out of the blue, "Who's controlling you from behind, Penelope?"

Penelope seemed surprised that Samantha would ask such a question and had a fleeting expression of shock. In the blink of an eye, however, she acted as if nothing had happened.

Samantha still noticed that brief change.

Her guess might not be entirely correct, but she was not that far off the mark either.

Penelope was in a very bad frame of mind.

That was not good news for Samantha, because it meant that Penelope was a very dangerous person to be around at that moment!

Samantha then realized that Penelope was dragging her further and further away from the crowd.

Rather than going to a safe area, Penelope was heading towards the fire without so much as a second thought.

Samantha's expression sank and she finally understood why Penelope had that weird smile earlier.

Penelope...was planning to commit murder-suicide.

Samantha took a deep breath and asked calmly, "What is it that you want, Penelope?"

Samantha's expression had changed and she could no longer hide her faltering tone. Penelope probably caught on to that and spoke contentedly without answering the question, "You get scared too, don't you Samantha?"

She spoke with her face nearly pressed against Samantha's nape. Her voice was cold and she exhaled all over Samantha's nape, causing the latter to get goosebumps all over.

Samantha clenched her hands tightly and continued to remain calm. "You don't have to go this far because of the grudge you have against me. You're being made a scapegoat by someone else, Penelope!"

"If you and I die together, that person would be smiling because they're the one who stands to gain the most from our deaths!"

Unfortunately, Penelope continued to grin uncannily, either because she did not listen to Samantha or because she did not care at all even after hearing what Samantha said. "You were the one who couldn't let go of me. You snatched Timmy from me, helped that b*tch Sheena seduce my father, made my mother lose her mind and threw me in jail. What more do you want? How much more ruthless do you have to be?!"

As she was talking, she snickered and said, "You're just lucky I didn't manage to kill you the last time around. There's no way in hell I'd let you escape again!"

She looked down from Samantha's face, stared at Samantha's stomach, and exerted more pressure on the blade.

"Two for the price of one... what a steal!"

"Let's go to hell together, Samantha!"

After saying that, Penelope dragged Samantha more forcefully and walked quickly towards the fire.

As soon as they approached, the heat crashed against Samantha's face and she turned pale due to the choking, suffocating feeling.

She immediately felt an onset of physical discomfort.

Samantha knew that her physical response and stamina were at an all-time low due to her pregnancy. Once Penelope dragged her into the fire, she would not be able to protect herself or her baby.

There was nothing more she could do in that situation other than to give it her best shot.

Samantha looked up, scanned the surrounding area, and discovered that the nearest police officer was about 50 meters away.

She closed her eyes, summoned all her strength, and bit down hard on the hand that was holding her neck.

Penelope retracted her hand immediately once she felt the pain.

Samantha seized the opportunity to grab the arm that held the blade and twisted it in the opposite direction to direct the tip away from her stomach.

She then opened her mouth and yelled at the top of her lungs at that policeman.
“HELP—”

Before she could yell a second time, Penelope had already return to her senses. She grasped Samantha’s hair firmly with one hand and pulled her head back.

Samantha groaned in pain.

Luckily for Samantha, the policeman had heard Samantha’s cry for help and noticed that something was wrong after looking over. He quickly called his comrades, “Hey! There’s a situation here! Come over quick!”

Penelope became flustered when she saw that the police were starting to gather there.

She could not go back to that prison again.

She spent her days there being insulted, beaten, and bullied.

She was never able to sleep and was losing her sanity due to the nightmares she had daily!

She would rather die than be captured and stuffed back into that hellhole!

The reason why she experienced all that was because of Samantha! If Samantha had never existed, she would have been married to Timothy and had children by now.

She would have become the respectable and venerated Mrs. Barker!

Sadly, that had all been taken away by Samantha!

There were many things she did not get, and she would make sure that Samantha would never be allowed to get them either. She would gladly destroy everything and die together with Samantha!

Penelope's strength increased explosively in an instant and she forcefully dragged Samantha by the hair to the edge of the fire.

Samantha could already feel the scorching fire right behind her. It was so hot that she felt as though it could melt her skin from behind.

The police quickly surrounded Penelope and Samantha. Their chief used a megaphone to yell at Penelope, "Young lady, please let go of your hostage and surrender at once!"

Penelope sneered but could not care less. She continued dragging Samantha towards the fire.

After the policeman abided by the protocol to issue the earlier warning, he ordered his sniper, "Shoot!"

While the bullet was traveling straight towards Penelope, she seemed to have expected that would happen and used the last of her strength to push Samantha into the fire.

Penelope collapsed to the ground in an instant, while Samantha was engulfed by the sea of flames!

Chapter 279: The Child Is Gone

Inside one of the Barker Group's conference rooms, Ronald strode in and slammed the door open. His expression had changed drastically after receiving a call earlier.

Everyone seemed surprised and displeased as they all turned to look at him.

Ronald could not care less about them and went straight to Timothy's side. He leaned over to Timothy's ear and briefly explained the situation.

Timothy's calm and indifferent expression sank instantly. He stood up abruptly and walked away without so much as an explanation.

Everyone exchanged puzzled glances when they saw him leave.

They have never seen Timothy with that kind of expression before. What could have happened that made him lose his composure and ignore basic manners?

Was the Barker Group on the brink of collapse?

Then again, he did not even remotely show such emotions when there was a crisis last time.

What was going on?

...

Timothy broke the speed limit all through the drive, but by the time he reached the hospital, Samantha had already been pushed into the operating room.

Since Samantha was pregnant, it was not only Samantha's life that had to be rescued but that of the child in her womb too. The risk, along with the difficulty, was much greater.

The situation did not look good.

Timothy clenched his hands tightly when he listened to the doctor's analysis. He turned to Ronald and instructed coldly, "Call Dr. Jameson and ask him to come over immediately."

Ronald nodded. "Yes, Mr. Barker."

When the doctor heard the name 'Dr. Jameson', his eyes lit up suddenly. "The chances will be much better if Dr. Jameson is here."

Timothy stared at the doctor and said with crystal-clear clarity, "Whatever the case is, I have to save my wife's life."

The doctor nodded repeatedly. "Yes, Mr. Barker. We'll try our best."

Vincent arrived ten minutes later.

Timothy stepped forward to greet him. "Please do your best, Doctor."

Vincent nodded. "I rushed over as soon as I saw the news, Mr. Barker. I will try my best to save Mrs. Barker and the baby."

"Thank you."

Vincent entered the operating room too.

Timothy looked up at the red light shining on the operating room and felt his heart sinking into a bottomless swamp. Despite his best efforts to struggle and crawl out, he could only sink deeper and deeper.

He stood by the window and hung his hands feebly on both sides of his body.

The operation lasted for a long time and nightfall came. The night sky made it a little difficult for him to breathe.

Ronald came back after buying some dinner and urged Timothy softly, "Perhaps you should eat something, Mr. Barker."

After all, there was no telling how long the operation would last.

Timothy did not appear to have heard him and stood there quietly without moving.

Ronald could not help but sigh, he did not persuade the man any further.

He was just about to set down the food when Timothy suddenly called out, "Ronald."

Ronald stopped moving and was starting to feel optimistic. "Will you be eating now, Mr. Barker?"

Unfortunately, Timothy merely ordered, "Don't let Grandma know about this."

That was all.

Ronald could do nothing except put down the food and reply, "Don't worry. I've stopped the news from circulating."

Old Madam Barker was in poor health, and she might collapse too if she was told that something had happened to Samantha.

Each second that passed felt like an agonizing eternity.

It was already past midnight and the hour hand was pointing to two. Ronald could not stay awake and dozed off while sitting on the chair.

Timothy lit a cigarette, but he did not smoke much and simply held it between his fingertips. The cigarette butt burned away until the embers reached his fingers, jolting his fingertips awake all of a sudden and causing him to regain his senses.

A bad feeling came over him all of a sudden.

It felt as though a piece of him had left abruptly.

The operating room's lights finally went out. Vincent opened the door and walked out.

Timothy turned around suddenly and looked right at the doctor.

Ronald had woken up from his sleep after hearing the sound and immediately stood up.

Timothy walked to Vincent and stared intently into the doctor's black pupils. He asked hoarsely, "How's my wife?"

Vincent took off his mask and had a weary look. "Mrs. Barker is safe."

The dullness in Timothy's eyes faded a little.

Even Ronald could not help but put his hands together and say, "Thank God."

After a pause, Timothy asked again, "What about the baby?"

Vincent's eyes sank slightly.

...

Samantha did not know how long she had been sleeping, but the only thing she felt when she regained consciousness was a searing pain throughout her body.

She moved her arm subconsciously and felt even more painful.

Two hands pressed down gently on her arm and spoke in a soft voice. "Don't move."

Samantha strained to open her heavy eyelids.

A ray of light shone into her eyes and she subsequently saw a man's familiar face coming into view. Samantha's blurry vision came into focus and she moved her dry lips to call him, "Timothy..."

"Yes, I'm here." Timothy held her hand gently and kissed the back of her hand. "I'm here."

Feeling the tremors in his voice, Samantha tried her best to smile. "Don't worry, the grim reaper won't take away my life that easily."

"Don't talk about that anymore."

Timothy seemed unwilling to discuss that topic and changed the subject right away. "Would you like to drink some water?"

"Okay."

Timothy let go of her hand and poured her a cup of warm water. He then lifted her head carefully and placed the cup to her lips.

Samantha's throat felt much better after she took a few sips.

Timothy laid her down again, tucked her into the blanket, and caressed her face gently as he said, "The doctor said that your injuries are mostly skin burns. The only serious injury was the part where you were hit by a burning pole, but you don't need to worry because it'll go back to normal once you recuperate."

His words triggered Samantha into remembering the situation during the fire.

After she was pushed in, she tried her best to run out but a burning pole suddenly came crashing down. She instinctively protected her lower abdomen but then fainted and did not know what happened after that.

She was alive, but what about her baby?

Samantha could not help but glance down in the direction of her lower abdomen. She looked at Timothy all of a sudden and asked in a soft voice, "How's the baby, Timothy? Is everything fine?"

Timothy's hand clenched suddenly.

Seeing his reluctance to give her an immediate answer, Samantha still asked despite knowing in her heart what had happened. "How's the baby?"

Timothy looked at Samantha's black pupils and was silent for half a second before answering, "Sammy, we... we can always have more children in the future."

He did not answer straightforwardly, but that response told her everything she needed to know.

The child was gone.

Samantha gulped once, then a second time.

She blinked her eyes vigorously but tears still welled up in her eye sockets.

Samantha pursed her lips tightly and restrained herself for a moment before speaking again.

Chapter 280: Reversal

"How is Penelope?"

At the mere mention of her name, Timothy's expression soured and his voice was terrifyingly cold. "She was rescued, but she hasn't woken up yet. Her injuries were

serious and coupled with the other injuries she had received in prison, all her complications were now acting up and no one knows for sure when she'll wake up."

Penelope had never considered living past that day and wanted to drag Samantha to die together with her.

Samantha's expression turned stiff but she did not speak.

"That's enough. Don't think about it for now," Timothy comforted. "The doctor said you have to rest well and not overexert yourself."

Samantha sniffled and closed her eyes slowly.

...

At the apartment hotel, Harmony picked the phone up when it rang and sneered when she heard the report from the other side. "I didn't expect Samantha to be lucky enough and survive this! Penelope too! I'm surprised she's still breathing."

Harmony felt a little begrudging because she had planned to kill not two but three birds with one stone. The result was only one dead fetus.

However, the death of Samantha's baby meant that one of her biggest threats had been removed. Penelope was still somewhat useful, it seemed.

She no longer had any value and would only be a loose end if allowed to continue living.

Harmony then said, "Make sure you tie up the loose ends."

The other side responded and ended the call.

Harmony got up and walked to the television cabinet to turn on some music. She could not resist humming a song since she was feeling rather buoyant.

Then, she took out the supplements she bought and ate them one by one.

She was going to take supplements regularly from then onward to nourish her body in tandem with Vincent's treatment. That way, she could make preparations to bear Timothy's child once her infertility was treated.

...

The sun was shining outside when Samantha woke up. The light shone right in and bathed the entire ward in a warm light.

Her stiff eyes looked around.

Timothy had fallen asleep beside the bed while holding her hand.

He had probably been staying by her side without leaving and his expression looked fatigued. There was a bit of stubble on his chin and even his shirt was slightly wrinkled.

Samantha felt a complex series of emotions when she looked at him silently.

The child was gone, and if he only cared about the child, there was no need for him to keep up the charade anymore.

Did he care about her too, rather than just for the child?

Could she trust him a little more?

He probably sensed her gaze when he opened his eyelids slowly and looked deeply into her eyes.

Samantha blinked and quickly retracted the emotions in her eyes.

“You’re awake?” Timothy’s voice was hoarse after waking up and he touched her forehead. “Do you feel better?”

“My body is a little better, yes.” Samantha then added truthfully without hiding it from him, “But my heart doesn’t feel too good.”

Her eyes reddened uncontrollably as soon as she said that.

Timothy squeezed her hand tightly as if to give her strength and comfort, but instead of continuing the depressing topic, he said softly, “Would you like to get up and have something to eat? Dr. Jameson will come to check on you in another minute.”

Samantha knew that he was distracting her and took a deep breath to restrain her sadness. “Okay.”

The nurse delivered the meal and Timothy fed Samantha spoon by spoon. Once she was done, he wiped the corners of her lips and helped her to lie back down on the bed.

A knock was heard on the door of the ward and in came Vincent with Leah.

Timothy stood up. “You’re here, Doctor.”

Vincent nodded at him. “Mr. Barker.”

He then looked at Samantha and asked concernedly, “How do you feel, Mrs. Barker?”

Samantha forced a smile.

Vincent let out a gentle sigh and did not make any small talk. He went straight up to her and said, "I'll be conducting a comprehensive inspection now."

Samantha nodded, "Thank you for the trouble."

Timothy quietly retreated to the door without disturbing them.

Vincent and Leah conducted a detailed examination that took just over half an hour. The doctor then took the medical file and jotted down the pertinent information.

Timothy came forward when he saw that and asked, "How are things, Doctor?"

Vincent closed the medical records and handed them to Leah beside him. He looked up at Timothy and said, "Every cloud has a silver lining. The baby couldn't be saved, but Mrs. Barker's body did not suffer much damage."

"Mr. Barker, you and your wife are still young. Once her body is nursed back to health, she can still have children in the future."

Timothy said hoarsely, "Thank you."

Vincent looked at Samantha again and saw tears dripping from her eyes. He stretched out his hand, gently patted her shoulder three times, then comforted her, "I understand how you feel, Mrs. Barker, but your body is still weak and you shouldn't let yourself be overly sad. Depression isn't conducive to recovery."

Samantha's curly eyelashes trembled as she said softly, "I understand."

Vincent said again, "I'll prescribe some medication for you, which you must take on time. It'll help your body to speed up your recovery."

"Yes, I will."

After making sure to tell them everything, Vincent bid them goodbye. "Rest well. I'll be leaving now."

"Please see the doctor off, Timothy," Samantha said.

Timothy glanced at her and did not refuse. "Okay."

The three of them walked out and the ward fell silent.

Samantha's hand stroked her lower abdomen gently. She closed her eyes and the corners of her lips curled up in a shallow arc.

Vincent had patted her three times on the shoulder.

He was telling her that everything went according to her plan. Her baby...had been saved.

After all, her enemy operated from the shadows and she could not entirely predict Harmony's plan. To protect herself and her baby, she had been wearing a special vest for the last couple of days.

The vest could block even the most fatal of blows.

All that was left was for Vincent to reinvigorate the baby's fetal health.

Samantha and her baby were both safe.

Harmony had shown her hand and it was Samantha's turn to do so next.

She wanted to make sure that her grudges with Harmony were duly settled!

Samantha stretched out her hand to pick up her cell phone from the bedside table. She speedily made a call that was answered just as quickly.

She spoke briefly with the other person and hung up.

...

Five minutes later, Timothy returned to the ward.

Samantha did not lie on the bed to rest, but sat up and leaned against the bedhead to scroll through her phone.

Her face was pale, and there was anger and hatred in her eyes.

Timothy could not help but frown as he was walking over. Samantha looked up at him and emphasized every word of her sentence. "Timothy, our baby was killed by Harmony!"

He stopped walking at once.

Samantha's dark eyes stared unwaveringly at him to make sure that not a single expression escaped her attention. She then repeated, "Our baby...was killed by Harmony!"

Chapter 281: Confrontation

Timothy's black pupils looked at her faintly and expressionlessly. He stretched his long legs and walked up to her before asking, "Why are you saying that all of a sudden?"

Samantha's heart sank slightly when she heard his question.

Based on what she knew of his character, he should not have reacted that calmly.

He was questioning her even.

Samantha's hand clenched tightly on the blanket. She had chosen to face it, so she would not back down regardless of the outcome.

She blinked and said, "Harmony likes you. Her feelings for you have never changed. She's the same then as she is now. She came back this time because she wanted to be your wife. She wanted to be Mrs. Barker."

"But you're already married to me, so I have become an obstacle to her. She's been going all out to undermine me from the shadows, frame me, and try to get the better of me, but she hasn't succeeded."

"When I got pregnant, my baby became a thorn in her side and she couldn't stand it unless we were out of the picture. I was nauseous not just because of the morning sickness I had some time ago, but also because she repeatedly provoked me. Just looking at her was enough to make me vomit!"

Samantha looked at Timothy's unchanged emotions and clenched her fists even tighter. "Timothy, when Penelope held me the other day, I could see that there was something wrong with her mental state. It was like when she attacked me at the bar. Penelope turned out to be just a pawn. The person controlling her from behind... the one who wanted to kill me and my baby...was Harmony all along!"

"But I survived. I was lucky to survive. But our child...was killed by her!"

At the end of her tirade, Samantha's eyes were filled with uncontrollable sadness.

Her emotions were genuine, rather than an act.

Had she not taken precautions in advance and sought Vincent's help, she would not be able to confidently say that she would succeed in protecting her baby.

After all, no one could be certain that the plan would be flawless.

Simply thinking about it again was enough to make her feel a little traumatized.

Samantha looked at Timothy again and bit her lower lip tightly when saw the lack of expression on the man's handsome face.

Ten seconds later, the man finally spoke up. "You're just guessing, Sammy."

'Just guessing?'

Samantha had never imagined that he would say something like that.

He denied her outright without even bothering to come up with an excuse.

Samantha found it laughable. The corners of her lips started to curl up but she could not muster even the smallest of smiles. The tone of her speech remained the same as she gave him a rational, level-headed breakdown of her accusation. "I asked Chelle for help to investigate Harmony. She told me that Harmony went to the bar on the day I was attacked."

"Penelope was supposed to be serving a sentence in prison, but Harmony went to visit her just a few days ago. Penelope then suddenly fell sick and applied to be released from prison for medical treatment. She later showed up before me and wanted to commit murder-suicide."

"If those two factors aren't enough, Chelle found out that Harmony was taking care of Penelope's mother, Violet, while Penelope was still in prison. Violet is the only family Penelope has left."

"Do you actually think these are all coincidences, Timothy?"

Timothy's expression sank even more but he remained quiet.

The atmosphere in the room became suffocating and the air seemed to have turned stale.

A sudden knock was heard at the door of the ward and brought some respite to the tenseness.

Timothy turned around and said, "Come in."

The door was pushed open and Ronald walked in.

He could keenly sense that something was not right about the atmosphere and he too became tense. He looked at Timothy, then at Samantha, and swallowed his words silently even though he had something to tell them.

Did Timothy anger Samantha just moments after she woke up?

Given that Samantha had just lost her baby and was already heartbroken, what on earth did Timothy do to her again?

Timothy narrowed his eyes at Ronald and asked, "Yes?"

His chilly voice made Ronald's heart tense up and he felt as though Timothy had caught him silently complaining.

He hurriedly forced out a smile and began telling them what he went there to tell, "Mr. Barker, Mrs. Barker, the hospital has just notified us that, that...Penelope's vital signs fell sharply this morning. They tried to save her, but it was a lost cause... she's dead."

"Understood." Timothy's voice did not fluctuate at all. "You may leave."

Ronald did not dare to make any further remarks after seeing the situation. He turned around and swiftly walked out of the ward before closing the door.

Samantha had expected Penelope to end up like that.

Penelope never wanted to continue living. The only reason she would kill Samantha along with the baby was that Harmony had offered her a deal that would see her mother live well.

Harmony just never factored in the possibility that Penelope would survive the gunshot instead of dying on the spot.

If she woke up, she would be investigated and questioned by the police. If Penelope could not bear the pressure and ratted Harmony out, Harmony's entire plan would fall short.

That was why Penelope had to die.

Only dead people tell no tales.

Samantha closed her eyes and took a deep breath before opening her eyes again. She looked up at Timothy who was standing in front of her and said emphatically, "Now that Penelope died all of a sudden, do you still think I'm just guessing? Do you still believe everything is just a guess, Timothy?"

Timothy's pupils trembled slightly and he finally looked into her eyes. Their figure was reflected in each other's pupils.

Samantha could not see any emotional fluctuation in him, only...a ruthless calmness.

He replied, "None of this can be used as evidence against Harmony."

"Heh."

Samantha's lips curled up and she laughed suddenly.

She chuckled out loud, then realized just how ridiculous it was and laughed a few more times.

As she laughed, tears began to well in her eyes so much so that the face of the man before her had become blurred and slightly distorted.

Once she was done laughing, she raised her hand and wiped away her tears. Even though she was doing her level best to restrain herself, her voice still faltered as she said, "I've always chosen to believe in you, Timothy."

"Don't you know? Even after all those disgusting things Harmony said to me, even when she showed me that you gave her the trophy I gave to you, even when she could get you to meet her and forget your promise to me simply by giving you a call...I still believed you. I still want to believe you, even now!"

"But... she killed our baby and nearly killed me! When I accused her and laid out all the information I gathered in front of you, you still excused her actions!"

Tears streamed down her face again. She wiped those tears furiously but could not completely wipe them off.

Samantha raised her hand all of a sudden and grabbed Timothy's hand. She stared at him firmly.. "I really, truly cherish how we were able to start over after losing out on two years together. I thought...you felt the same as me and cherished it too, but was it all...just wishful thinking on my part the whole time? From those two years ago up until today?"