

Read Once Bitten, Twice Shy online free

Chapter 312: Why Did You Call Him Daddy?

Matthew was the first to react. He jumped off the sofa, wiggled his little legs as he rushed to the man's arms, then called out in an infantile voice, "Daddy."

The man squatted down, held the little boy in his arms, and carried the boy up firmly.

At long last, the man could finally be at ease after being worried sick earlier.

Timothy's lips twitched when he heard the boy call out 'Daddy'.

He thought that the boy was a miserable little kid who did not have a father, yet he went around hugging strangers and calling them 'Daddy'! Did the boy enjoy taking advantage of other people's sentiments?

Ronald froze all of a sudden too.

The fantasy he had was instantly shattered. The child could not possibly be Timothy's illegitimate son if he had a father already.

He thanked his lucky stars that he did not put his thoughts into words, otherwise he would make an absolute fool of himself and Timothy would start to question whether there was something wrong with his brain!

However, that man looked somewhat familiar.

Ronald opened his eyes slightly and was surprised to see Alan.

The boy...was Alan's son?

Then again, there was nothing to be surprised about because they were in Emsteldt, where Alan had been living for a long time. Although meeting him was a coincidence, it was not entirely unexpected.

Alan put Matthew down and checked him thoroughly to make sure that he was okay. Then, he picked the boy up and looked at Timothy and Ronald.

The moment he spotted Timothy's handsome face, his expression changed slightly and he unconsciously tightened his grip on Matthew.

Not long later, he held back his emotions and smiled as he walked over and said, "It's been a while, Mr. Barker."

Timothy looked up and glanced at him before nodding his head slightly.

It had been ages since they last saw each other.

Ronald got up politely and greeted. "What a coincidence, Dr. Sherwood."

Alan looked at Ronald and replied, "Yeah, what a coincidence."

After a pause, he said to them in a formal voice, "Thank you for bringing Matt here. I'm really grateful."

As he said that, he bowed slightly and expressed his deepest gratitude.

Ronald waved his hand quickly. "Don't worry about it. You're very welcome."

Timothy stared at Alan for a second and turned to look at the still-angry child, who was hugging Alan's neck and had turned to look the other side without even bothering to look at Timothy.

Timothy sneered to himself.

His lips then parted open and he said, "Since you found your child, please remember to teach him not to wander off calling other people 'daddy' on a whim."

Ronald's face soured instantly.

'Do you have to be so vengeful? You're lucky the boy even called you 'daddy'!

There was a fleeting, near-imperceptible change in Alan's expression. "Thank you for your kind advice, Mr. Barker. I won't let him call anyone else 'daddy' anymore."

Although Alan was manifestly warm when speaking and had a rather cordial attitude, Ronald somehow felt a murderous aura coming from him.

It was as if Alan was saying, 'You won't even get another chance to hear this little boy call you 'daddy' in the future.'

Ronald decided to be a peacemaker.

He interrupted hurriedly, "When did you get married, Dr. Sherwood? I haven't heard a thing and I didn't expect your child to be so big already! Haha."

Alan smiled in response and said nothing.

Ronald scratched his hair embarrassingly.

After all, it was Alan's personal life, and he was not that close with Alan either. There was no need for Alan to inform him about the marriage.

Ronald felt that it would be best for him to say less.

Alan did not want to stay any longer since he had already thanked them. He then said again, "We have someplace to be, so goodbye."

Timothy did not respond.

Ronald answered immediately, "Oh, please, yes. Go ahead."

Alan nodded slightly, then turned around and strode away with Matthew in his arms.

Just as they were about to exit the VVIP room, Timothy glanced casually at the boy and happened to make eye contact with him.

The little kid made a face at him.

Timothy snorted angrily.

He wondered just how 'amazing' the boy's mother was if he had been taught to be an ungrateful little brat.

After Alan left with Matthew, the room became quiet again.

As soon as Ronald sat back on the sofa, he saw Timothy's black pupils staring straight at him and felt a chill come down his spine.

The stare made it difficult for him to sit still and he stood up again while asking weakly, "Mr. Barker, did I do something wrong? Please tell me if I have."

'Just get on with it! Don't make me feel so uneasy.'

Timothy looked at him and was probably bored when he asked cryptically, "What did you want to ask earlier?"

That sudden question stunned Ronald.

After a few seconds, he finally realized what Timothy meant by that.

He felt somewhat awkward because he did not expect his big boss to pay such close attention to every detail of his mistake.

What a man of detail Timothy was!

The Barker Group would not have reached such heights otherwise.

Of course, he could not ask the question in such an excited and eager manner like before. He rephrased it to be less direct, "I just wanted to ask whether you feel that the little boy kinda looks like you."

"Tch," Timothy sneered in an incredibly disdainful look.

'The kid? Looks like me? How so? The boy should be thankful if he looks even the slightest bit like me.'

'My future son would never be a little brat who would only cry and scream until kingdom come.'

Ronald understood at once and shut up.

However, he still felt that it was very similar.

If Timothy's child with Samantha was still alive, they probably would be around that age.

'Enough, enough!' He felt that his thoughts were getting a little out of hand and started to feel as though the baby resembled Samantha too!

Ronald shook his head and chucked aside all those wild thoughts.

...

Alan carried Matthew to his car, opened the rear door, and put him in a special children's car seat.

He then went to the driver's seat and got in to start the engine.

The car drove a long way out before Alan gradually regained his composure. He said softly, "You scared me to death, Matt. If I lose you, the only way I can apologize to your mother is with my life."

Matthew was Samantha's life and blood.

Three years ago, Samantha was on the verge of death after being rescued. She was completely soaked in water and her body was gravely unwell.

At that time, the child had become a burden on her health, so Vincent and Alan both felt that she should give the child up to save her own life.

However, she was unwilling to do so and insisted on keeping him.

She suffered greatly during her pregnancy and nearly lost her life just to give birth.

Her body was extremely weak, and the child was not in good health either. Both of them had to stay in the hospital for a very long time.

The only reason mother and son both slowly came out of the danger was probably due to God's grace.

The name Matthew meant 'gift of God'.

Samantha wanted to thank the Almighty for giving her that child.

Matthew obediently apologized. "I'm sorry, Daddy."

He had let go of Alan's hand after a toy attracted his attention.

"It's alright. As long as you know your mistakes and correct them." Alan could not bring himself to chastise the child.

After a pause, he pretended to act naturally and said, "Matt, why did you call that man 'daddy'?"

Samantha and Timothy never had any contact during the past three years and she did not want to have any further contact with him either.

Based on normal logic, Matthew could not have known that Timothy was his biological father.

Was Samantha's heart still unable to let go of Timothy? Could that be the reason she told Matthew that Timothy was his biological father?

Chapter 313: Miss You

Matthew blinked his eyes a couple of times and answered honestly. "Daddy, I saw someone following me. That man looked very strong and fierce. Everyone was afraid of him!"

Although his words were a bit vague, Alan understood it at once.

Matthew was trying to say that he felt some unsavory characters following him, which was why he found a strong and fierce-looking man in the crowd. By hugging and calling that person 'Daddy', he could escape the danger.

That was the trick that both Samantha and Alan had taught him.

When Matthew was more than two years old, Samantha once took him to the hospital to see a doctor. At that time, he was targeted by human traffickers and was forcibly brought away.

Fortunately, Samantha responded quickly and noticed that something was wrong. It was only after she chased the traffickers that she managed to save the child.

Since then, Samantha and Alan had paid great attention to what happened and repeatedly instilled in Matthew a skill of saving himself.

Although the child was still young, his IQ was much higher than that of ordinary children. He was very smart and possessed a very strong comprehension too.

On that occasion, he managed to avoid danger and come out unscathed.

Even so, Alan could not help but feel a little scared.

It was better to be prepared than to be caught unprepared.

Three years ago, Samantha owed her survival in large part to her baby. Had she not been pregnant with him and bore the burden of two lives, she might not have been able to endure the pain and torture.

Alan let out a gentle sigh and complimented him unhesitatingly. "You did a good job, Matt!"

Matthew raised his chin happily. "I didn't embarrass my mother, did I!"

"Not at all! You're the pride of your mother!"

Matthew loved hearing his mother being complimented much more than he enjoyed hearing himself being complimented. He was smiling so widely that his eyes had curled into little crescent moons.

Alan looked at Matthew through the rearview mirror of the car and could not help but lament in his heart.

There were plenty of men at the airport who were stronger and fiercer than Timothy. Why, among all those men, did he have to pick out Timothy?

Matthew just had to pick out his true biological father.

Was there really a so-called...blood connection between father and son?

That thought left Alan with a strong sour feeling.

Did the fact that Matthew and Timothy were father and son have any genuine significance?

The way Timothy treated Samantha made him undeserving of being called 'Daddy'.

However, Alan could rest at ease knowing that nothing seemed out of the ordinary when Timothy saw Matthew earlier.

In any case, the encounter was simply an accident.

As a precautionary measure, Alan still said to Matthew, "You don't need to tell your mother about what happened today, alright Matt? Keep it a secret, or else she'll be worried sick."

Matthew would always look for his daddy if he got injured from a small knock or had any minor illnesses. He would not tell his mother about it because he did not like seeing her shed tears.

As a result, he and his 'daddy' always kept little secrets and agreements between each other.

He nodded vigorously and covered his mouth with his little hands, signaling that he would not say a word.

As soon as Alan saw that, he was bemused by the boy's cute appearance and could not help himself from smiling.

Since there was a bit of a traffic jam, Alan had to brake at regular intervals.

When he reached the red light, Alan braked fully and casually glanced out the car window. He caught a glimpse of the screen in a large plaza that was playing a replay of the global summit.

It just so happened to be broadcasting an interview with Timothy.

"My wedding will be held on the first of next month."

Tch.

Alan grinned coldly and there was an inexhaustible coldness in his eyes.

The second he laid eyes on Timothy earlier, it took all of his strength to restrain himself from punching that man in the face.

It was fine if he did not love Samantha, but the least he could do was end things on a less sour note since they were already divorced anyway.

He had no reason to be ruthless to the point where he would take Samantha's life.

Alan had seen life and death and indifference ran deep in his bones. However, the sight of Samantha's agony at the time made him feel like reaching for a knife and fighting Timothy to the death.

Although he studied medicine and believed in science, he still believed that there was a God that watched a person's every single deed.

God would one-day hand judgment down on anyone who did evil!

No one would be able to escape that!

The car drove into a residential area and stopped in front of a building.

Alan parked the car, got down, and went around to the back seat of the car. He then opened the door and bent down to carry Matthew out. Then the two of them went into the building.

He took the elevator to the third floor and came to Door 302. He pressed his thumb on the biometric fingerprint lock and the door opened with a beep.

As soon as Matthew walked in, their nostrils were filled with a delicious aroma.

Samantha had come out with some freshly-baked cake. When she saw them return, she smiled calmly, "You came back just in time."

Matthew ran directly to Samantha and hugged her. "Mommy, Mommy! I miss you."

He followed Alan to Vincent's place for a routine physical examination and was separated from his mother for three days.

Samantha missed her little boy too and she placed the cake on the table before hugging Matthew and looking carefully at him.

"Hmm...your complexion looks fine, so I guess there's nothing to be concerned about."

Alan walked over and responded, "That's right. My uncle called Matt's body a miracle. He was a weak child when he first came to the world and Uncle couldn't confidently say whether or not Matt was able to continue growing. He did start growing a little later, but he never spoke until he was two and his complexion wasn't very good either. He even got sick every couple of days."

"Remember when he was kidnapped by the traffickers? We all thought he was traumatized. He came back seriously ill and went down with a fever of more than forty degrees, which was so worrying for us that we had sleepless nights. Then suddenly, his

health returned in the blink of an eye and he even started talking too. He even became extraordinarily lively.”

“We thought it could have been some new issues, but we never found anything after checking every couple of months. At most, he was smarter and more active than ordinary children, which people sometimes describe as socially confident.”

He could not help reaching out and pinching Matthew’s chubby flesh. “You have been a miracle ever since you were born, Matt!”

Matthew could not understand that complex series of words, but he felt that he was being praised and so nodded proudly. “Mommy’s amazing, and I’m amazing too!”

Alan was amused. “Yes, your mother is amazing and so are you.”

Matthew then added, “You’re amazing too, Daddy!”

On hearing that, Samantha frowned slightly and corrected him, “Matt, how many times have I told you to call him Uncle Alan, not Daddy.”

Matthew had always listened to Samantha, but that was the one thing he was unhappy about and immediately pouted reluctantly.

Alan hurriedly said, “It’s no big deal. You can call me whatever you want, Matt.”

Samantha looked back at Alan, “I know you’re just looking out for him. You don’t want other children to make fun of him for not having a father, but we—”

Chapter 314: He’s Getting Married

Before Samantha could finish speaking, Alan interrupted abruptly. “Is something burning?”

Samantha froze and caught a whiff of the burnt smell too. All of a sudden, she remembered that she was still cooking.

“Ah, my food.” She put Matthew down quickly and dashed into the kitchen.

Alan shook his head and laughed.

All of a sudden, he felt his trousers being pulled and lowered his eyes to see Matthew’s luminous gaze. He smiled tenderly, squatted down so their eyes were level, then said, “What’s wrong?”

Matthew frowned conflictedly. "Daddy, can't I call you Daddy in the future?"

He did not want to upset his mother but he also liked Alan very much.

Matthew sighed to himself.

He was a very smart child and was happy on one hand but a little worried on the other.

Since he was an intelligent boy, he could understand the adults' conversation to some extent. For example, he knew that Samantha had a bit of a verbal 'quarrel' with Alan earlier.

Furthermore, that 'quarrel' was caused by him, which led to him feeling conflicted and blaming himself for it.

Alan gently touched Matthew's cheek before asking out of the blue, "Do you like me, Matt?"

Matthew nodded his head without hesitation. "Yes!"

His eyes rolled around in his eye sockets and he added, "But I like Mommy a little more though!"

Alan could not help but feel warm in his heart. He was more than happy to be the second most important person in Matt's heart.

Such was a child's nature. Anyone who treated them well would be gratefully remembered and the care shown toward them would not be in vain.

He gulped and asked again, "Well, do you want me to always be around in the future? Do you want to keep calling me Daddy?"

Matthew nodded without hesitation, but his expression soon turned into a frown after nodding for a few moments. "But Mommy will be unhappy."

"Don't worry." Alan rubbed the boy's little head and gently smoothed his frown. "Leave it to me. I'll make sure to let you call me Daddy all the time, and Mommy won't be unhappy either."

Matthew smiled all of a sudden and clapped his little hands.

In his mind, Alan was a very amazing person who always kept his word.

"Okay. Go and play for a bit. I'll go help Mommy so we can eat soon," he said, then stood up and rolled up his sleeves before heading into the kitchen.

An hour later, Samantha and Alan came out with the food and set everything out on the dining table.

Samantha took off her apron, carried Matthew to wash his hands, then carried him back and placed him on the children's dining chair. Finally, she put a small paper crown on his little head.

Alan inserted some candles into the cake and switched off the light.

Samantha cleared her throat and started singing, "Happy birthday to you..."

Alan joined in as well. "Happy birthday to you..."

It was Matthew's third birthday that day.

After singing the birthday song, Samantha lowered her head to kiss Matthew's fleshy cheek and said softly, "Happy birthday, my baby."

Alan blew the party horn. "You're three years old now, Matt. Happy birthday!"

Matthew giggled happily.

"Make a wish, darling," Samantha said.

Matthew tilted his head for a moment and said loudly, "Mommy, I want to call Daddy 'Daddy' forever."

Samantha was speechless.

She suspected that her little boy did it on purpose but she had no evidence to back it up!

She smiled and said, "You should keep your wishes to yourself because it won't work if you say them out loud."

Matthew had a disapproving look. "But you wouldn't know if I didn't say it."

It made perfect sense and there was no way Samantha could refute him.

Even someone like her who had the gift of gab had absolutely no idea how to respond to him.

Alan hurriedly helped smooth things over. "Are you hungry, Matt? Let's blow out the candles and eat some cake."

"Okay!"

The three of them leaned closer and blew out the candles.

After eating, Samantha tidied the table and went to the kitchen to wash the dishes.

Alan brought Matthew to play in the living room. He bought the boy a set of Gelo interlocking plastic bricks and kept Matthew company as the little boy played.

By 'keeping company', Alan genuinely was keeping company.

Matthew did not need Alan's help at all and could easily put together those complicated bricks and blocks without even having to look at the illustrations. It was almost as if the illustrations were already in Matthew's mind.

Alan and Samantha used to be very worried whether Matthew would have any problems with IQ or whether he might be autistic, given how he was very frail and never spoke.

After suffering a serious illness, however, he recovered immediately and had a rather high IQ, almost like he had become a different person altogether.

They could only chalk it up to how wonderful miracles were.

Samantha finished cleaning and sat on the carpet to watch Matthew play too.

When the clock struck nine, she said, "It's time to bathe Matt."

Matthew had not played enough yet and looked yearningly at Samantha, only to find that she had an unyielding expression. He, therefore, turned to Alan and acted coquettishly, "Daddy..."

Alan did not dare to confront Samantha at that point and surrendered unconditionally. "You can continue playing tomorrow, Matt. Listen to your mother, okay?"

Matthew had no choice but to compromise and said somewhat sullenly. "Okay."

Alan wanted to bring Matthew to bathe but Samantha said, "Please have a seat, Dr. Sherwood. I'll do it."

Her tone was so firm that Alan's outstretched hand froze for a moment. He could only retract it and answer, "Okay."

Samantha carried Matthew to bathe him.

Alan sat on the sofa and unknowingly smiled when he listened to the occasional laughter from mother and son coming from the bathroom.

His hands then reached into his pocket and his expression flickered slightly as he touched the hard ring box.

After Matthew finished bathing, Samantha carried the boy to the bed and coaxed him to sleep. When he finally fell asleep, she switched off the light, walked out of the room, and closed the door gently.

When she walked back to the living room, Alan stood up from the sofa and asked with a smile, "Is Matt sleeping?"

"Yeah," Samantha replied softly.

She bit her lower lip gently but eventually relaxed and said, "Dr. Sherwood, I... There's something I have to tell you."

Some things could not be delayed any longer and had to be cleared up as soon as possible.

Alan was not surprised by that and nodded. "Okay. I happen to have something to say to you too."

Samantha glanced at the door of the room and suggested, "Let's talk on the balcony."

"Sure."

The two of them walked out to the balcony.

The wind outside was blowing gently and it was neither too hot nor too cold.

They stood side by side and looked at the lights outside.

Samantha was the first to speak. "Dr. Sherwood, I'll—"

Before she could finish her words, Alan said ahead of her, "Sammy, Timothy..."

Samantha's sentence stopped abruptly when she heard the name 'Timothy'.

Alan turned to look at Samantha. He looked intently at her face and said, "Timothy is getting married on the first of next month.. Do you know about this?"

Chapter 315: Give Me a Chance

That name...was a name that she had not heard in a long time.

Samantha's expression was faint and did not fluctuate. Even her tone was rather monotonous. "Really? I didn't know."

During the past three years, those around her have deliberately avoided mentioning his name and anything related to him. On her part, she paid no attention to any news involving him too.

It was as if Timothy never even existed.

Furthermore, she had absolutely no interest in his affairs too.

Alan very rarely acted audaciously. He was usually a gentlemanly character who was both caring and considerate of other people's feelings. If a certain subject was out of line, he would stop immediately.

Although it was obvious that Samantha did not want to continue talking about it, he acted as if he did not notice it and continued, "How do you feel, now that you know?"

Samantha frowned slightly.

She turned around, looked directly at Alan, then said, "I don't feel anything. Whether he remarries, gets divorced, or marries and then gets divorced again...has nothing to do with me."

Timothy was already dead to her the moment he came for her life.

He could not be any more of a stranger to her.

Alan observed Samantha's expression and found that she was exceptionally calm, almost as if she was simply talking about the weather or discussing what to eat.

She had left it all behind in the past, it seemed.

If Alan were to be honest with himself, he would say that he was happy—or rather, that he was really happy.

Alan smiled warmly and apologized unapologetically. "I'm sorry. I just wanted to confirm."

Samantha was speechless.

She knew that he was not going to ask such a question on a whim, so she spoke up and asked, "Alan, I—"

However, Alan knew exactly what she wanted to say and interrupted her to prevent her from getting a chance to say anything. "Sammy, please. Just...let me go first."

If she spoke first, he probably would not be able to say what was inside his heart.

Alan took a deep breath to ease his nervousness and said with a smile, "Sammy, this might be a bit abrupt, but..."

Rather than continuing his sentence, he took out a small ring box from his pocket and opened the lid. A bright and beautiful diamond ring was contained inside.

He bent down slightly, knelt on one knee, then held the ring in front of Samantha. He said sincerely, "I like you, Sammy. I want to marry you. I want to be with you for the rest of my life and raise Matt together."

Alan was always simple and direct. He was never one for flowery language or overly sweet remarks.

However, everything he said came from the heart.

It was what he had always wanted to tell Samantha.

The only reason he delayed it so much was because of cowardice and other concerns that he had.

Although Samantha had a hunch that he would say that, her heart still sank slightly when she heard it from his mouth.

She kept quiet and did not seem surprised or happy. Alan was already mentally prepared for it, so it was not too difficult for him to accept her reaction. He stood up again, looked at her tenderly, and said, "Sammy, I thought this chance would forever slip by me, but now that God brought you here to me again, I couldn't just sit around and do nothing."

"I've always regretted missing that chance before, so now that I have this chance, I'm determined to seize it again. I'm not asking you to answer me right now of course. I'm proposing to you just to let you know how I feel about you."

"I hope that you can give me a chance so that I can take care of you and Matt...legitimately."

Samantha knew that each one of Alan's words was genuine and came from the bottom of his heart.

Unfortunately...

She opened her mouth but could not say a single word.

Alan smiled. "Don't let this burden you, Sammy. Think about it slowly. We still have plenty of time, don't we?"

He reached out and then placed the ring box in her palm.

His voice became gentler as he said, "Just keep this ring with you for now, Sammy. Put it on when you're ready and I'll know."

After a pause, he said, "But if..."

He did not continue his sentence anymore after those two words.

He hoped that it would never be the case.

It did not matter how long he would have to wait because he was willing to wait until Samantha saw him for who he was.

He did not fear the wait; what he feared...was never having the chance at all.

Samantha's long, curly eyelashes trembled slightly. She looked at the compassionate man in front of her and could not bring herself to say hurtful words to him.

Alan had saved her life, and without him, both she and Matt would not have managed to survive the past three years.

He truly was kindness personified.

Samantha did not say anything in the end. She raised her fingers slightly and accepted the ring, at least for the moment.

Alan's eyes lit up slightly at the sight of that. When he spoke, he sounded endlessly delighted and it was one of those rare times he lacked his usual seriousness. "Thank you," he said, like a happy little boy.

...

After Alan left, Samantha took a shower and leaned on the bedhead.

She picked up the ring and looked at it as she thought about everything that happened between her and Alan in the past three years.

It would be a lie for her to claim that she had no feelings for Alan at all.

On the contrary, she had all sorts of feelings toward Alan, so much so that she could not even begin to count them all.

However, she thought carefully and realized that the only feeling missing from all those other feelings...was love.

As far as the past three years were concerned, no man could stir love-like feelings in her, not even Alan.

Her heart had died three years ago.

Her thought process at that moment was very simple—earn money by working hard, live well, raise Matthew well, and make sure he was healthy and happy. That was satisfying enough for her.

She did not desire anything else.

Without Matthew around, she might not be willing to accept things as is and would want to make sure that the person who hurt her suffered as well.

Matthew's presence meant that he was her utmost priority, rather than revenge or hatred.

Samantha sighed softly and opened the drawer of the bedside table. She put the ring in it and closed the drawer shut.

Then, she lay down on the bed and closed her eyes to sleep.

However, her mind was unable to calm down and she did not know whether it was because of Alan's proposal or because he mentioned Timothy's name. She tossed and turned for a while but still could not fall asleep.

In the end, she got out of bed.

After putting on a thin coat, she left the room and walked softly into the small room next to hers.

When she walked to the bed and saw her son's soundly sleeping face, her mood inexplicably became calm. She tucked him into the blanket, then lowered her head and kissed his fleshy little face before preparing to turn around and head out.

All of a sudden, Matthew kicked the blanket and turned over while muttering a few words.

Chapter 316: Selfishness

Samantha leaned closer to listen to what he was saying, and her body froze slightly when she finally heard him.

He called out, "Daddy."

After a few seconds, she lowered her eyes and treaded softly out of the room.

She knew that Matthew was unhappy when she told him not to call Alan 'daddy' earlier that evening.

Despite all the love she had showered on him, she was still unable to fill the fatherly hole in his heart.

She remembered when Matthew still did not speak and was a little autistic at the age of two. Many other children in the residential area started making fun of him, saying that he was afraid to speak because he did not have a father.

Even if Samantha could scold those children and get them to leave, Matthew would still be in a bad state of mind.

She wanted to communicate with him during those times but there was nothing she could do if he neither spoke nor responded to her.

When Alan found out about it, he brought Matthew to look for those bullies and told them that he was Matthew's father. He then threatened to beat up anyone who dared to bully Matthew in the future!

From then onward, Matthew became much closer to Alan.

Samantha felt that it was somewhat inappropriate and talked to Alan about it, but Alan told her that it could be considered a form of treatment. If things were not allowed to continue that way, Matthew's autistic tendency might be aggravated.

In the end, she decided to listen to Alan's advice for Matthew's sake.

When he first spoke, the first word he said was when he called her 'mommy', while his second word came when he called Alan 'daddy'.

She corrected him many times and told him that he should be referring to Alan as 'Uncle Alan'. Most of the time he only addressed Alan as 'Uncle Alan' in front of her and continued to call Alan 'daddy' behind her back.

In hindsight, the reason why Matthew so stubbornly called Alan 'daddy' was simply because he wanted a father like any ordinary child.

Other children had a father, but he only had a mother.

Although he did not understand the adult world that much, he still knew that he was different from all the other children.

As a result, he had no friends his age and had only the superhero action figure that Alan gave him as his companion.

He made stubborn remarks, saying that he disliked playing with other children because he found them to be too dimwitted. In fact, he was probably afraid that he would not be able to get along with the other children.

Matthew had reached three years old that day and it would not be long before he had to go to kindergarten. He would have to integrate into normal life sooner or later, and there was always a risk his autism would relapse and cause him to return to his previous state again if he was made fun of by the other kids. If that happened, the blow it would have on Samantha was truly unimaginable.

She...had never viewed that issue seriously.

Although she could do away with love, Matthew still needed a complete family. In that respect, she felt as though she had been...a little too selfish.

...

When the plane arrived at Capital City, Timothy and Ronald walked out of the airport. Harmony was already waiting for them, and her eyes filled with delight when she saw the man's tall and straight posture. She stepped forward, stood in front of him, then smiled and said, "You're back, Tim!"

"Yeah." Timothy raised his head slightly.

Ronald—who was dragging his luggage bag a couple of steps behind—rolled his eyes secretly.

After thinking about it for three years, he could never figure out why Timothy would abandon someone as beautiful, generous, capable, and kind-hearted as Samantha in favor of someone like Harmony.

As a diehard supporter of Timothy and Samantha, he still did not like Harmony even though Timothy's relationship with Samantha had ended badly.

Furthermore, the past three years allowed him to experience Harmony's true character first-hand. It was difficult for him to like Harmony, not even by a little bit.

Reporters, who had been lying in ambush for who knows how long, came charging towards them from all directions and surrounded the three people at once.

Timothy's remarks at the summit had already made its way back to the country, and it was clear that such a hot topic would never slide past the reporters.

One of the reporters went first. "Mr. Barker, regarding the marriage announcement you made at the summit, will Ms. Harmony Johnson be the future Mrs. Barker?"

A second asked, "Mr. Barker, there hasn't been any news about your intention to get married. Why announce it so suddenly? Could there have been...a happy accident?"

The implication in his words was markedly obvious and everyone's attention was drawn to Harmony's lower abdomen.

They were insinuating that the marriage happened in such a rush because she had gotten pregnant.

Harmony's face became stiff but it was rather fleeting.

A third questioned, "Mr. Barker, your grandmother—Old Madam Barker—once publicly stated that she would not accept Harmony. Has she given her approval prior to your announcement of the wedding date?"

The reason for that question could be traced to three years ago, when Old Madam Barker finally found out about Timothy's secret divorce with Samantha that resulted from Harmony's meddling. Samantha was then reported to have died sometime later, and Old Madam Barker kicked up a mighty storm at the Barker Group.

The old lady insisted that Timothy distance himself from Harmony and wanted Harmony to disappear from his side completely.

Her efforts were clearly unsuccessful.

Then came her harsh statement that she would never accept Harmony as a member of the Barkers.

Timothy frowned when he heard those reporters' questions. He was undoubtedly displeased and impatient since he was never fond of gossipy reporters to begin with.

It was even more frustrating when they got in his way just to ask him those questions.

Harmony saw the situation and was afraid that he would get angry. It would be bad if anything untoward happened since she had been doing charity work and established good social relations during the past few years.

Her relationship with those media companies was quite good too. Almost all of them accorded her with the necessary respect.

She smiled sweetly and said to the reporters, "My friends, thank you for showing your concern for myself and Tim. I'll sincerely invite everyone to the ceremony on the first of next month."

Her answer was a positive response that confirmed her marriage to Timothy on the first of next month. By then, she would officially become Mrs. Barker!

"As for any false speculations, I believe that experienced reporters like yourselves will know not to carelessly write news, right? I hope to receive your well wishes, everyone. Thank you."

That remark made it clear to the reporters that they would not be able to ask any further questions. At the very least, they had confirmed the bride and the wedding date: that news was already worth their fare to the airport!

The reporters stopped when they were ahead and congratulated the couple before getting out of the way.

...

After getting in the car, Ronald asked in a low voice, "Mr. Barker, will you be going back to the company?"

Before Timothy could speak, Harmony seized the opportunity and said, "It's been a few days since we last saw each other, Tim. I bought a lot of fresh food today and I'd like to cook something delicious for you. How about you have something to eat?"

By the time they finished the meal and had some post-meal fruit or whatnot, it would already be very late at night.

Ronald was speechless.

Harmony was simply too eager to seize every single moment she could get. Ronald had never seen such a desperate and reprehensible woman before!

Seeing Harmony staring wide-eyed and eagerly at Timothy, Ronald did his best to blink his big eyes at Timothy too.

'Choose me, Mr. Barker! Choose me!'

Timothy raised his gaze and was about to speak when the phone rang. An inexplicable emotion appeared fleetingly within his dark eyes when he glanced at the phone screen..

Chapter 317: Get Out!

A few seconds later, he restrained the emotions in his eyes as much as possible and swiped his finger on the screen. He spoke in a cold tone when he answered, "Grandma."

Old Madam Barker shouted directly from the other end, "Timothy, I want you to come back home right this instant!"

The old lady then ended the call without hesitation.

Timothy placed his phone down and said, "Go back to the villa."

Ronald was more or less happy to hear that. Whether Timothy went back to the company or the villa was immaterial as long as he did not go with Harmony.

Harmony could not hide the displeasure in her face when she heard that.

During the past three years, that old hag had done plenty of things to inconvenience her! When the old lady publicly announced that she would never accept Harmony, the latter was made the butt of jokes for quite some time within the circle.

If Harmony's guess was correct, then it was almost certain that the old lady wanted Timothy to go back after knowing about the marriage. The old lady was probably going to intervene again!

She could not just sit around doing nothing. She had been waiting for too long for the day when Timothy would announce their marriage. That day had finally come, and she was not about to allow anything to destroy her marriage!

At that thought, Harmony took a deep breath to calm her mood before saying softly, "Tim, I haven't seen grandma for a long time too. How about I go back with you? I just think she misunderstood me as a person. Since we're getting married soon and will be a family in the future, we have to set the record straight regarding these misunderstandings, don't you think?"

Timothy glanced at her from the side. "If that's what you want."

Harmony smiled in return.

The car arrived at the villa 40 minutes later.

Timothy got out of the car with Harmony and walked towards the house.

Aunt Julia smiled when she saw Timothy at the entrance but turned cold in a split second when she saw Harmony. She said unkindly, "You're not welcome here, Ms. Johnson. Please leave!"

The old lady only asked Timothy to come back and it came as a surprise that Harmony would have the cheek to follow him along.

Did Harmony not know whose home it was?

It belonged to Timothy and Samantha. A shrew-like mistress such as Harmony was unworthy of setting foot in said home.

Harmony could not help clenching her hands tightly. The fact that the old lady was targeting her constantly was bad enough already, but even the servant never once looked kindly on her.

'Who does this servant think she is?'

'What dog bites their master back?'

Harmony was going to be Mrs. Barker soon, whether they liked it or not. By that time, she could set foot into whatever property Timothy had, not just that villa!

When the time comes, her first order of business would be to demolish this villa so they could all stop treating that place as a sacred area and keep holding onto the memories of a dead person!

Harmony thought to herself, 'Even if I can't afford to deal with that old hag yet, what's stopping me from lecturing this little servant?'

She smiled lukewarmly and replied sarcastically, "Aunt Julia, I'm here to see Grandma. Tim and I are getting married next month, so this'll be my home too. Don't you think it's inappropriate of you to say something like that?"

"You're not the owner of this villa anyway. If a bystander were to see you telling me that I'm unwelcome and told me to leave, they might have thought that you were the owner. Where does that leave Grandma?"

"Or are you simply pointing fingers at me because Grandma's not in good health?"

The flurry of sentences insinuated that she was a vicious servant who usurped her employer!

Aunt Julia immediately became angry after understanding what Harmony was trying to imply. "You..."

'You used to act all humble and sycophantic when you came here, but you're showing your true colors now that there's hope for you to take your relationship to the next level. Am I right?'

Just as Aunt Julia was about to retort with that, an angry rebuke came from behind her. "Get out of here, Harmony!"

Aunt Julia turned around and was delighted to see the old lady coming out of the room with a cane.

The old lady characteristically told Harmony to leave without bothering to say anything else!

Aunt Julia hurriedly walked to the old lady's side and lent her some support.

The smugness on Harmony's face lasted only for a second as it was crushed yet again by Old Madam Barker. She could no longer maintain the smile on her face and did not dare to go against the old lady, so she could only turn around to look aggrievedly at Timothy.

However, Timothy's black eyes were focused on the old lady instead of Harmony.

Seeing Harmony still standing there, Old Madam Barker spoke up once more and in an even fiercer tone, "What's wrong? Aren't you going to leave by yourself? Do you want me to have someone kick you out?"

Harmony knew that the old lady meant what she said and would never show any mercy.

She did not want to make things difficult for Timothy and was therefore willing to give in to the old lady for Timothy's sake.

Harmony bit her lower lip forcefully and whispered reluctantly, "I'll go back to the car and wait for you."

After all, she could not let the old lady chase her out because it would be another huge embarrassment if she were photographed again.

Harmony turned around and went out.

...

In the living room, Old Madam Barker was sitting on the couch, and Timothy was sitting opposite her.

She coughed a few times and did her best to try and stop the coughing. Then, she raised her eyes to look at Timothy and went straight to the point, "I disapprove of your marriage to Harmony!"

Timothy did not even tell her about the marriage. Imagine how laughable it was that she had to see it from the news!

The man looked at her and said in a nonchalant tone, "If that's why you called me back here, then you should continue resting. I'll leave."

He was implying that it was non-negotiable and he would not change his mind.

As soon as he said that, he stood up and patted off some nonexistent lint from his clothes as if he was preparing to leave.

Old Madam Barker looked at him with immeasurable sadness.

Timothy might have been stubborn in the past, but he was a genuinely filial man who hardly ever went against her wishes. Unfortunately, he had started ignoring her more and gradually became estranged from her ever since Harmony returned.

Why did he insist on marrying a viper like Harmony when there was someone as kind as Samantha?

The old lady was heartbroken after thinking about Samantha.

She thought about Samantha's tragic death and how Timothy was already making preparations to marry someone else. It was simply too heartless.

Old Madam Barker closed her eyes and seemed to have aged considerably even in that short moment. She waved her hand weakly and said, "Forget it. It's not like I can control you anyway, so just go ahead and marry whoever you want!"

"However, you're not allowed to live here once you and Harmony get married. You can live anywhere else but here. I don't want her showing up in front of me again, and don't let her get any funny ideas about this villa either. Don't blame me for being ruthless otherwise!"

She did not know whether Timothy heard it or not because he strode off without responding to her.

Aunt Julia had just brought some freshly-brewed tea and could not help but frown when she saw that he had left. "Old Madam, why did Mr. Barker leave so quickly? It's been so long since he came back!"

Timothy hardly ever returned to the villa during the past three years and had only met Old Madam Barker a couple of times.

The old lady did not say anything.

Aunt Julia looked over in confusion and saw Old Madam Barker's body collapsing suddenly on the sofa. The old lady had an agonized expression and spat out a mouthful of blood.

Startled, the tea Aunt Julia was holding crashed to the ground.

Aunt Julia ran over in a panic and helped the old lady up. “Old Madam, are you alright? How are you? You’re scaring me! I... I’ll call Mr. Barker back right now....”

Chapter 318: Conspiracy

Aunt Julia placed Old Madam Barker carefully on the sofa and was about to get up and chase after Timothy.

However, Old Madam Barker pulled her clothes and exhausted all her strength to say, “No... Don’t...”

Aunt Julia was so anxious that tears began sliding down, “Old Madam, why are you—”

“I told you not to go!”

Old Madam Barker’s voice was extremely weak but her tone was still firm, “Are you going to disobey me too?”

She coughed violently, probably due to anger, and her face became much paler.

Aunt Julia would never dare to make decisions without getting approval and shook her head repeatedly. “Please don’t move, Old Madam. I won’t call him. I... I’ll help you into your room.”

She bent down to help the old lady up and slowly walked to the room to place the old lady down on the bed.

Aunt Julia then took the old lady’s regular medications and helped feed her. Aunt Julia then called a doctor and sat by the bed so she could help the old lady calm down by gently patting the old lady’s heart.

Old Madam Barker leaned against the bedhead and took a few deep breaths before slowly reverting to normal.

Aunt Julia whispered, “How do you feel now?”

Old Madam Barker nodded weakly, but she looked unhappy and was evidently still in a bad state.

Aunt Julia still could not stop her tears. “Old Madam, why do you always stop me from telling Mr. Barker when your health getting worse?”

If he knew, then he probably would not leave without a word like he did that day.

Old Madam Barker's lips twitched and she laughed self-deprecatingly, "Forget it. He's had a close relationship with people from the family over these years, but I no longer exist in his eyes."

Ever since the time she kicked up a fuss at the company, she could see that her grandson had changed. Perhaps she was already too old and had never understood her grandson in the first place.

"Old Madam..."

Old Madam Barker's face was ashen. Discomfort and self-blame became increasingly obvious in her eyes. "I really...pity Sammy. If I knew that he was so cold-blooded, ruthless, and had been acting all along, I wouldn't have paired him up with Sammy. She might still be alive right now too, rather than dead in the sea."

"Please don't blame yourself. You wouldn't've known that it'd be like this. You've been blaming yourself too much during the past three years and your health has been getting worse because of that. You can't go on like this!"

Although Aunt Julia was saddened to hear about Samantha's passing, she felt even more distressed to see the old lady's self-punishment.

"Sammy is a filial girl. She wouldn't've wanted to see you ignoring your health."

Old Madam Barker looked at Aunt Julia.

As much as she understood the truth of the matter and the logic behind it, she still felt very uncomfortable.

She watched Samantha grow up and treated Samantha as if the latter were her granddaughter. How could she be able to eat well and sleep soundly when she thought about how she was the one who pushed Samantha into the fire pit?

The more she thought about it, the more painful her heartache became. Then came another surge of warmth and she instinctively covered her mouth as she coughed violently.

By the time she removed her hand from her mouth, there was already a mouthful of bright red blood smeared on her palm.

Aunt Julia could not sit still anymore. She immediately leaped up and dashed to the cabinet, where she opened the drawer and took out a small box from it.

She went back to the bed and opened the box. Inside was a pill, which she took out and persuaded, "Old Madam, please take this. Sammy said that it can save your life. Please take it."

Old Madam Barker's eyes were almost lifeless but she still shook her head when she saw the pill. "This is the last thing that Sammy left to me. I'm not eating it..."

"It'd be good if I left this world. I miss my husband, and I miss Sammy too..."

As the old lady said that, she closed her eyes weakly and fell unconscious.

...

Timothy opened the car door and sat in the car. The atmosphere inside instantly became cold and depressing.

He opened his lips and ordered succinctly, "To the company!"

Harmony saw his icy expression and knew that there was no way she could invite him to her place for a meal. Deep down, she could not help but resent the old lady even more.

Although Ronald was also somewhat fearful when he saw his boss's cold face, he still responded with delight, "Yes, Mr. Barker."

When the car arrived at the Barker Group, Timothy got out of the car and strode off without looking back.

Ronald got out of the car and followed closely behind.

Harmony sat inside the car and watched as the man's rear figure disappeared from her line of sight. She bit down hard on her lower lip and had a resentful look in her eyes.

Timothy's mood would sour whenever he met Old Madam Barker, so much so that Harmony did not dare to do anything for fear of angering him accidentally.

If Samantha was the person she hated most, then Old Madam Barker was a close second!

Despite getting rid of Samantha three years ago, the old lady was still an obstacle who was constantly a thorn in her side.

However, the old lady was different from Samantha in that she was Timothy's grandmother. Even if their relationship had soured, Timothy would never touch even a strand of hair on the old lady's head.

What if that old woman came to stir trouble during their wedding?

As soon as that thought occurred to her, she wanted nothing more than for the old lady to die right that instant!

Harmony did not know if the universe was aligning for her recently or whether her curse took effect, but she had just returned to the apartment when she received a call.

She was informed then that Old Madam Barker had vomited blood in the villa and had since slipped into a coma. The old lady was in a very bad state.

The moment she heard that news, she was stunned at first, but then could not control herself from breaking out in laughter.

When luck came, it was practically unstoppable.

She felt the same way then as she did when she went up against Samantha.

Samantha ended up suffering defeat in her hands and died without even having a proper burial!

Nothing could make her happier than to hear that the old lady was in a coma.

With 20 days to her wedding, the only way to make sure the old lady could not make trouble was to ensure that the old lady stayed unconscious at least until after the wedding!

A cold and murderous aura flashed across Harmony's eyes. She curled her lips and said gloomily, "Give her some strong-acting drugs this time!"

The other side was somewhat hesitant. "Ms. Johnson, the old lady's health has deteriorated very badly in the past three years. If the drug is too strong, I can't guarantee that she'll be unconscious for just twenty or so days."

The person was trying to tell Harmony of the possibility that the old lady might end up dead.

During the past three years, Harmony had bribed him to tamper with the old lady's medicine. Since the old lady's health had been failing because she had always been sad and blamed herself, the medicine he gave her only accelerated her demise.

Had he not done all that, the old lady's health would not be as bad as it was then.

Harmony's original plan was to let the old lady die a slow and natural-looking death. That way, no one would suspect her at all.

The huge risks involved in using such strong medication made her a little hesitant.

However, she could not tolerate even the slightest interference in her wedding with Timothy. Even the tiniest of changes would drive her mad.

There was no reward without risk.

Those who were afraid of taking risks would never succeed!

Harmony ordered clearly, "Do it according to my instructions!"

Chapter 319: He Doesn't Like You?

At the villa, the doctor gave Old Madam Barker an injection and her complexion finally eased.

Aunt Julia stepped forward and carefully pulled the blanket over the old lady before walking out of the room with the doctor.

As they walked, she asked, "Doctor, the old lady vomited blood twice in a row today and fell into a coma. Is her condition particularly serious right now?"

The doctor's face was solemn. "If I'm being honest with you, things don't look optimistic. Her health was never good, to begin with, and she has a lot on her mind too. Not even God can help if she can't let go of the depressing feelings within her heart!"

Aunt Julia immediately covered her lips with both hands. She asked in a choking voice, "In that case...is there any other way?"

"I can only do my best."

Following that assurance, the doctor handed the prescribed medicine to Aunt Julia. "As usual, take them on time and follow the amount stated."

Aunt Julia took it and could not help but feel puzzled when she saw another extra medication. "Why is there another different medicine?"

The doctor replied naturally, "This is a special medication. The old lady is in a grave condition right now so the dosage has to be increased as appropriate. This will have to be taken daily as well. It will further preserve her health."

Aunt Julia nodded repeatedly. "I understand. Thank you, Doctor."

“The old lady will probably regain consciousness soon. Remember to give her the medicine as soon as she’s awake,” the doctor reminded her again.

“Understood!”

...

Early that morning in Emsteldt, Samantha was cooking breakfast for Matthew in the kitchen.

Even though he had lived abroad since he was born, he was very fond of cuisine from his homeland and preferred that compared to an Emsteldtian-style breakfast.

Therefore, she made an exquisitely delicious breakfast for him every morning.

When she was done, she came out with a small plate and placed it on the dining table before looking at the living room.

She initially thought that Matthew was still putting together the Gelo blocks that he did not finish a day before. After all, he had somewhat of an obsessive-compulsive disorder and always insisted on finishing what he started.

To her surprise, he was nowhere near the Gelo blocks and was sitting on the sofa instead. He held her tab in his hand and had a serious expression as he looked intently at the screen.

Samantha called him twice but he did not seem to hear it.

She was a little surprised.

Although other children liked watching cartoons on their tab, her little boy hated childish stuff and rarely used the tab as a result.

Samantha started wondering if the world had turned upside down that day. What could possibly have attracted Matthew’s attention and made him stare so intently at the tab?

Since he did not answer her when she called him, she could only take off her apron and walk over.

“What are you looking at, darling?” she asked, then sat beside him and looked at the screen.

A man’s stunningly handsome face was displayed on the screen. His facial features were so familiar to her that she could feel it even in her bones and a little smile appeared on her lips.

Timothy Barker.

She never thought that Matthew would be looking at him!

She clenched her hand and held her breath before looking at the video again. It was a snippet of the video from the summit, the excerpt of which had been uploaded onto the internet. It was one of the more popular videos as of then.

Did Matt accidentally click on that video?

Samantha squeezed out a smile and spoke to Matthew in as natural a tone as possible, "Do you know this person?"

Matthew unconsciously blurted out. "I don't know him!"

Samantha's anxious heart finally felt at ease.

Her guess turned out to be correct...

The next second, however, he added somewhat disgustedly, "He's a bad person!"

Samantha's heart leaped up to her throat again.

If he did not know who Timothy was, how could he know that Timothy was a bad person?

Did Matthew meet Timothy before?

It seemed unlikely. She was with Timothy almost every day and knew the people he came into contact with. There was no way he could come into contact with Timothy.

Unless...

Samantha had never paid attention to any news involving Timothy, so she immediately took out her cell phone to find out when the summit was held.

She discovered that it was held in Emsteldt the previous morning.

If he went to the airport immediately after the summit ended, he would probably be at the airport at around the time Alan brought Matthew back from Vincent's side.

In other words, the airport was the only place they could meet!

Samantha felt a little chill down her spine.

Genetics was a fascinating aspect of human life. Samantha had seen many photos of Timothy from when he was a child and Matthew was so similar to a young Timothy that he could almost be said to be a carbon copy of the latter.

Would Timothy suspect anything after seeing Matthew?

There was not much she feared, but her greatest concern was whether or not Timothy would do something if he discovered the child's existence.

Matthew was everything to her and she could never lose him.

She unconsciously hugged Matthew with both hands and her voice was a little weak when she asked, "Matthew, can you tell me if you've seen this man?"

Matthew seemed stunned for a moment as if he never imagined her to ask that question in the first place. He covered his mouth with a hand and said, "I can't say."

She was fine with letting him keep some of his little secrets when it came to other things, but on that occasion, she had to get to the bottom of it.

Samantha looked at him calmly and did not pressure him with the same question again. However, she rephrased it into another question and said, "Well, if you can't tell me, then maybe you can tell me who you promised to not talk about it. You can answer that, right Matthew?"

Matthew thought for a moment.

He had only promised Alan not to mention the incident about being lost and there seemed to be no restriction on anything else.

Matthew immediately felt as if the burden in his heart was lifted and he answered decisively, "It was Dadd— I mean, Uncle Alan."

Samantha's tension relaxed by half when she heard that.

The agreement was not made with Timothy after all. In that case, Timothy probably did not notice anything.

She thought for a while and then asked, "Did you..." She pointed to Timothy on the screen and continued, "...talk with that man? Did you say something?"

Matthew's face sank even more. "He thinks I'm noisy, and he says you're a bad mother. He also said he doesn't like me!"

The little boy then had a disdainful look on his face as well. "I don't like him either, Mommy!"

“He said, he...doesn't like you?”

Samantha repeated that sentence. A sense of profound sadness and anger surged into her heart before she knew it.

She did not expect much of Timothy actually and felt uncomfortable because of that sentence alone.

Sure enough, he never wanted children in the first place.

His purpose for having a child was simply to use them as a tool. It was the same ever since the beginning.

At that time, he pretended to be sincere, excited and even browsed through a dictionary so diligently to choose a name.

How laughable.

How utterly laughable!

Fortunately for her, she had been decisive enough to engineer that accident when she was certain that she wanted to keep the baby.

Otherwise, it would be impossible for her to keep the child.

The video was showing a clip of Timothy answering the reporter's question. “The wedding will be held on the first of next month!”

There was a deep sense of sarcasm in Samantha's eyes when she looked at him across the screen.

She turned off the tab display, closed her eyes, then took a deep breath and smiled. “Let's have breakfast, Matt.”

After breakfast, Samantha walked to the balcony and took out her cell phone.. She looked at the screen for a few seconds before finally making a call.

Chapter 320: I'll Be Waiting for You

The call was answered after a few beeps of the dial tone, and Alan's warm, mellifluous voice greeted. “Good morning, Sammy.”

He seemed to answer within seconds whenever she called him.

Samantha smiled slightly and replied, "Good morning."

"What brings you calling so early today?" Alan then asked concernedly, "Did something happen to Matt? Is he alright?"

Alan truly did fulfill the role of Matthew's biological father. His concern and anxiousness for the boy had never diminished ever since Matthew's birth.

Samantha never noticed or thought about it before, but after paying just a little attention, she realized that Alan had done countless things for her and Matthew.

It was supposed to be the responsibility of her husband, Matthew's biological father.

She was still wondering the previous night if she had been a little selfish, but after thinking about it again, she felt that she was too selfish.

Although she decided to keep Matthew, she never thought about giving him a complete home and always believed that she alone could give Matthew all the love he needed.

However, her thoughts could not be placed onto the child.

She thought about herself again: did she not fantasize about wanting her parents' love even after how terrible her parents were toward her?

'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.'

Samantha took a deep breath and suppressed the surging emotions in her heart. She said nonchalantly, "Matt is fine. Don't worry."

"I... I just wanted to ask about what happened yesterday, when you and Matthew met... Timothy at the airport."

Her question was so straightforward that it caught Alan unprepared and left him at a loss for words.

Samantha went on and said, "I can roughly guess what happened. Don't try to lie to me."

A few seconds later, Alan laughed on the other end of the line. "You're too smart for yourself at times, Sammy."

She could detect that something was wrong without the presence of even the slightest clue.

Alan had no choice but to tell the truth. "I didn't hide it from you on purpose. I was simply afraid that you'd be worried. What happened was..."

He recounted what happened the day before.

“Timothy didn’t suspect anything, did he?”

Alan replied, “I don’t think so. I think his assistant Ronald was a little suspicious, but since Matt called me Daddy, they all thought that Matt was my child.”

Samantha finally managed to relax.

Even though Samantha always told Matthew that calling Alan ‘daddy’ was wrong, Matthew did eventually make the best out of that mistake.

If Timothy did not doubt anything and believed that Matthew was Alan’s child, then he would have no interest in Matthew and the boy could successfully evade attention.

That was the best outcome.

“Is that all you wanted to ask? Then you can rest assured,” Alan comforted.

“Yeah,” Samantha replied softly.

Under normal circumstances, Samantha would finish what she needed to say and avoid bothering Alan anymore. She would bid him goodbye and end the call just like that.

Alan heard her ‘yeah’, but she did not hang up and continued remaining silent without saying anything else.

He could not help but ask, “Is there anything you’d like to tell me, Sammy?”

Did she have bad news for him?

Samantha pursed her lips lightly before speaking again. “Dr. Sherwood, are you...free tonight? I’d like to treat you to a meal.”

“A meal?” Alan chuckled. “And I thought it was something super serious. You made me nervous for a bit there.”

“Of course, I am. I’ll always be free if it’s you!”

He thought about it and said, “I remember seeing this restaurant with delicious-looking children’s set meals. It’s been given a five-star rating too. How about we go to that one?”

‘Children’s set meals...’

Whenever he went out to dinner with her, he either placed her preferences or Matthew's first.

Having eaten with him plenty of times, she did not seem to know his preferences because he always accommodated them and seemed fine with anything.

She thought that Alan would be a 'good husband' and a 'good father'.

Although she may not be able to feel any love for him then, she could definitely try her best.

Samantha said, "Don't choose that one. Choose a restaurant that you like."

"But—"

Samantha interrupted him quickly and spat out a few more words, "This meal is just between you and me."

There was a sudden silence on the other end of the line.

Samantha heard the other side breathing heavily.

After about ten seconds, Alan seemed to have understood her intentions and his usual calm voice sounded a little buoyant as if he was walking through a sea of flowers. "Okay, then...I'll make reservations! I'll be waiting for you tonight. See you soon!"

When the call ended, Samantha looked up at the sky.

...

Samantha dressed Matthew neatly and went out holding his little hand.

She drove to the hospital and parked her car there, then took Matthew to a ward. She pushed the door open and walked in along with Matthew.

The young man on the hospital bed turned around and had a happy little smile on his pale face when he saw them.

Matthew moved his little short legs and ran over while calling out to the person on the bed, "Uncle! Uncle!"

Corey stretched out his arm to grasp Matthew's little hand and responded, "Matt! Matt!"

Samantha's heart was filled with warmth when she looked at the two kids, one older and one younger.

Corey has been lying on the hospital bed because of his illness and the total number of hours he was in a coma was much longer than when he was awake. Even though he was already 20 years old, he still looked like a child.

Mentally speaking, his age might only be a few years older than Matt.

That was why the two of them hit it off particularly well. They could talk and play together without feeling out of place with each other.

It was also amazing that Corey woke up at the exact time she was risking her life to give birth to Matthew.

Fate worked in mysterious ways.

They had both become the most important aspects of her life, both of whom she treasured deeply.

Corey could have lived with her and Matthew, but he had to stay at the hospital even after waking up because his condition was unstable.

Samantha would bring Matthew to see him every couple of days.

She stepped forward, picked Matthew up, then placed him on the bed. Matthew then took out his toys one by one from his schoolbag and proudly introduced them to Corey. The two boys then enjoyed their time together.

Samantha served tea and water to them, respectively.

Seeing that it was almost time for her to leave, she said to Corey, "I've got a date tonight, so I have to leave Matthew here and pick him up a little later."

Corey looked up at her all of a sudden. "It's rare of you not to bring Matt along. Is it...a very important date?"

Samantha nodded unreservedly. "Yes. A date with Alan."

"So you've finally come around huh, Big Sis!" Corey expressed his unconditional approval. "You have all my blessings for Dr. Sherwood to be my new brother-in-law!"

He seemed a little excited, even. "Go ahead, go ahead! Leave Matt to me. I'll take good care of him! Hopefully, you'll come back here holding Dr. Sherwood's hand later."

Matthew's big round eyes opened and he yelled kittenishly, "Come and pick me up with Daddy, okay..."

She somehow had the feeling that she had been peddled off by her own family.

Samantha waved her hand and got up to leave.

...

Back at the apartment, Samantha dressed herself up carefully and chose to wear the pink dress that Alan gave her on her birthday the year before.

Then, she walked to the bedside table and opened the drawer to get the ring box. She opened the box, took out the diamond ring, and placed it on her finger.

When she put the ring on halfway, her phone rang all of a sudden.

Could Alan have arrived already and was urging her to hurry up?

Samantha put down the ring and picked up her phone to look at it.. Alan was not the one who called her, but rather, someone whose ID was displayed as 'No Caller ID'.

Chapter 321: Timothy Needed Her

'No Caller ID?'

Under normal circumstances, 11 digits would be displayed even when the caller was unknown. If the words 'No Caller ID' were displayed, did it mean that the person had deliberately hidden their identity?

Samantha's hand moved slightly and tapped the answer icon. "Hello, who's this?"

A voice that was speaking through a voice changer came from the other end of the line. "Samantha Larsson, check your email right now."

The person then immediately hung up after leaving her with that sentence.

Samantha blinked twice and was still stunned.

What could that be? A prank? A scam?

Samantha put down the phone and ignored it. She reached for the ring again and was about to put it on her finger once more.

However, she stopped midway and raised her eyes to look at the notebook on the desk.

After hesitating for a few seconds, she placed the ring down again and walked over.

She had only herself to blame for her damned curiosity!

Being someone who made a living in the media and communications industry, her curiosity and vigilance were inherently strong. What if it was something important? It was better to be safe than sorry.

She was worried about missing out on some trending news.

Samantha pulled out the chair to sit down and dragged the notebook closer to her. She lifted the lid, powered it on, and logged into her mailbox.

Sure enough, there was a new unread email that was sent five minutes ago.

When she saw the sender's email address, her pupils contracted all of a sudden and she could not help but tighten her grip on the mouse.

That email address...

If she remembered correctly, she had received an email from that very same email address two years ago.

At that time, the person wrote: [Timothy's excuse is untrue. Two years ago, he said he was bored of you and broke off the engagement, but there's actually a secret! If you're really interested, you can investigate it and find a big surprise!]

She half-believed it back then, but it turned out that there was no secret at all. She would stand to be a huge joke if she believed something similar again!

'You played me two years ago. Now you're playing with me again, are you?'

'Alright then, show me what kind of lies you made up this time!'

Samantha sneered and hovered the cursor over the email before clicking on it.

The email's contents were very brief: [Timothy is in danger right now. He needs you very much!]

Samantha's first reaction when she saw that was puzzlement. Following that, there was extreme speechlessness and laughter.

Timothy? In danger?

During the past three years, he had expanded his business throughout the entire world and had made the richest persons list almost every year. He was an outstanding businessman with the most net worth and the ideal lover in the eyes of many women! Without a doubt, he was the most outstanding bachelor there was!

His love life was progressing just as well as his career, for he was slated to remarry on the first of the coming month!

To put it more bluntly, he had achieved the three things that most men looked forward to: rising in life, getting rich, and having no wife to answer to.

Him? In danger? Where was the danger in that?

Samantha was the one who was in danger!

She had cheated death numerous times and it was not easy for her to retake control over her life!

That emailer seemed to enjoy corny jokes a lot! Just who could that person be?

Samantha was incredibly upset. She ran to the bedside and picked up her cell phone to try and call the number again.

However, a robotic message told her: 'The number you have dialed does not exist.'

'Does not exist?'

Samantha wondered if a ghost had called her earlier.

She pursed her lips tightly and ran back to the desk. After sitting down, she opened the email and typed out a reply as her slender fingers danced across the keyboard.

[Who are you? Why are you trying to trick me over and over again? Did I offend you or your family in some way?]

When she recalled everything that she encountered after returning to her homeland three years ago, she wanted nothing more than to look for that person and beat them to a pulp! Only then could she rid herself of all the resentment in her heart!

She waited for a few minutes but the sender did not reply.

Samantha laughed mockingly.

The person was probably scared after she called them out.

Did they take her for a fool?

Samantha could not be bothered to pay any more attention to the matter and closed her eyes to take a deep breath. When she finally opened them again, she moved the mouse with her hand and prepared to close her email window.

At that moment, however, a ding was heard and there was a new email in her inbox.

To think that the person had the cheek to reply to her!

Samantha opened the email and read the contents.

Rather than defending himself, he continued and wrote: [Timothy exchanged his life to give you the comfortable life you have right now. If you can live in peace with that fact, then by all means ignore my email. However, Timothy will disappear completely, and at this moment, you're the only one who can save him.]

'Timothy exchanged his life to give you the comfortable life you have right now.'

Samantha could not bring herself to laugh, not even sarcastically.

Was Timothy's life in any way terrible? When did he exchange his life to give her a good life?

'Haha. Don't liars use their brains nowadays? Or do they just conjure up lies from thin air?'

'Who do they think they're deceiving? Are they simply just trying to fulfill their daily lie quota?'

Samantha replied: [Why don't you show your identity if you have the balls? I have no reason to believe a single word you're saying if you're acting all shady and mysterious!]

After sending the email, she opened an IP locating app.

It was a piece of software she bought from a famous hacker because there were certain occasions where she needed to follow the trail of a trending piece of news.

She wanted to try and locate that person's IP address to see if she could find out who that liar was and teach them a lesson!

That software was supposed to be foolproof because few people had abilities that could match the famous hacker.

To her surprise, it took only ten seconds before the app interface went black. A line of red words even popped up: 'Don't waste your efforts.'

Samantha was genuinely very stunned.

It did not take a genius to know who sent that message. The app she used to locate that liar failed to hack into the liar's system and was even counter-hacked by that liar.

The move was extremely ruthless and was an impressive display of the person's sheer skill.

Samantha's face became more or less serious now.

Since that person could have such impressive skill, the chances of him being a liar was probably very low. However, the words he said truly made him out to be like a liar!

She quelled her anger and started to think clearly before sending another email again. [Who are you? Why are you telling me this?]

There was no reply.

Samantha's brows twitched. She thought about it from every angle and felt that everything was just too weird.

'Wait a second... Why am I letting myself be dragged into this?'

Whether or not that person's words were true, what did she have to do with Timothy in the first place? Why was he even worth her effort?

Timothy was supposed to be dead to her three years ago. When her heart died, Timothy had died along with it too.

She was already thinking about starting a new life.

She had already agreed to meet Alan later and start a new life with him.

Timothy's life and death had nothing to do with her.

Coincidentally, the alarm she set on her cell phone was ringing to remind her that it was time for her date.

Samantha calmed her flustered emotions gradually. She did not want to step into the quagmire that was Timothy.

As soon as she got up, another notification sounded to signal a new email.

She opened her eyes indifferently and glanced at it.

Samantha had already made up her mind that she would not respond to the person regardless of what they said. However, the email she received did not contain any words....