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Chapter 332: Intense Hatred

It was a long strand of black hair.

He initially stretched his hand out toward his phone but immediately changed direction and reached to pick up the strand of hair. Pinching the hair between his fingers, he looked at it intently.

The hair could not possibly belong to him on account of its length.

He could tell that it was a woman's hair at a glance!

His suite was cleaned every day by a special housekeeper who could not be more familiar with his penchant for staying clean. Whenever she came to clean, she would be so meticulous in ensuring the room was completely spotless.

The housekeeper could not have left behind even a strand of her hair.

In that case, a woman had sneaked into the place.

He suddenly remembered Rochelle's sudden appearance in front of him earlier that evening. She was spouting a whole load of nonsense as if she was trying to stall him.

Did she do that to buy time for the woman who broke in?

Timothy's lips curled up as he grabbed the handset on the bedside telephone. He dialed an internal number.

As soon as the call was connected, he immediately instructed, "Get me the hotel's surveillance footage for the entire night."

...

Back at the apartment, Samantha was slightly apprehensive when she compared the divorce certificates.

In the end, her heart seemed to be dragged down the nine levels of hell and was immediately engulfed by darkness.

Her divorce certificate was fake and invalid!

Therefore, she and Timothy had not divorced at all. They were still legally married!

She was unable to accept what she saw at that moment and froze in place.

Rochelle was surprised too.

It was something she just could not understand.

When Timothy divorced Samantha three years ago, she was privy to the entire process and had witnessed Timothy's heartlessness with her own eyes.

Logically speaking, that divorce could not have been fake.

However, that fake divorce certificate was right in front of her, which was unequivocal evidence that there had not been any divorce at all!

After a brief silence, Rochelle was the first to say, "I really can't wrap my head around what the bloody hell is that scumbag Timothy thinking!"

She frowned and thought for a moment before saying, "Timothy must know that you guys aren't divorced. He handled everything, after all. Since that's the case, how could he say that he's going to get married to Harmony next month? He can't be that stupid to not realize that he's breaking the law by committing bigamy?"

As powerful as Timothy was, he could not possibly ignore the law.

How stupid could he be to put himself in that situation?

Timothy never portrayed himself as someone who would dig his own grave!

"Could it be that he only intends to marry Harmony on the face of it without planning to get a certificate with her? Harmony definitely won't agree to that, and I've seen how smug she is in front of me. It's like she's already Mrs. Barker! I don't suppose she'll agree to enter into a marriage with him without having a certificate to show for it!"

Samantha slowly recovered from her confusion as she listened to Rochelle's words.

She had been lost in thought too.

Nothing could explain the sheer illogicalness of what was happening, not unless Timothy's brain was kicked by a donkey or filled with water.

However, neither of those assumptions held any water because she had already heard how shrewd he was when discussing business!

Samantha took a deep breath and calmly recalled everything she remembered.

She then said, "I can think of two possibilities why Timothy didn't divorce me for real. First, he might not want to give me his shares, so the question of transferring his shares did not exist without a divorce. Then he could send someone to kill me, which he did, and the shares would remain in his hands while the marriage becomes null because of my death. He doesn't stand to lose anything at all!"

As Rochelle listened, she showed a startled look at first before it immediately changed to one of extreme disgust. "It's exactly what someone as ruthless as Timothy would do."

Samantha continued to analyze further, "The second possibility is that Timothy has a secret, just like what that mysterious person said, which could explain why his behavior was so strange that no ordinary person could understand."

Rochelle did not agree with that guess and snorted coldly. "Did you notice anything unusual with him when you observed him up close tonight?"

'Anything unusual...'

Samantha thought about it seriously.

Except for some tiny changes in his lifestyle, nothing else was out of the ordinary.

The mysterious person was probably spouting nonsense when scaremongering her with remarks such as 'he needs you' and 'he will disappear'!

Timothy had spent just about ten minutes to successfully negotiate another acquisition.

Who would be brave enough to make a person as powerful as him disappear?

She shook her head, "No."

"Then it can't be it." Rochelle shrugged. "The first possibility is probably the most likely one. That scumbag Timothy just doesn't want to give you any of his shares!"

"And since you're now 'dead' even though you're in the country, his marriage to Harmony won't be affected even if he makes a new divorce certificate."

It was somewhat a silver lining.

Even if the divorce was null, their marriage was still nonexistent even if Samantha did not show up.

As for the shares or anything of the sort, Samantha never wanted them to begin with. At that time, she was trying to get justice for herself and simply did that to piss Timothy and Harmony off.

She was not that bothered about having no shares.

She was never a gold digger anyway and would be sufficiently content if her and Matthew's needs were met.

Seeing Samantha's silence, Rochelle could not help looking at her and asking softly, "What do you think, Sammy?"

Samantha's eyes rolled up slowly and she looked straight into Rochelle's eyes.

She pursed her lips lightly before saying, "I wouldn't've just let it go if it was three years ago. I would've wanted to make sure their lives were hell after how sad they made me."

"But there are too many things I have to worry and be concerned about right now. Rather than getting revenge, I'd be happier if I could live safely and healthily with Matt, Corey, you, and Dr. Sherwood."

She had once been stubborn enough to ignore everything and risk it all enthusiastically for a man whom she did not love.

It happened five years ago and again three years ago.

Both those times ended with her emotions battered and bruised.

It was still understandable if she did not learn from her mistakes the first and second time, but would she still fail to do so the third time?

The phrase 'third time's the charm' made a lot of sense!

Although Rochelle still had some resentment for what happened on Samantha's behalf, she still hoped that Samantha could live in peace.

That was more important than anything else.

"Okay, I guess that's it, then. I can't bear to see you go, but I'll get you a plane ticket for tomorrow so you can go back."

Rochelle hugged Samantha. "You won't be safe here and I'll be worried if you continue staying here. Don't worry, I'll find a way to visit you and Matthew!"

Samantha nodded. "Okay."

In the evening, Rochelle wanted to stay with her for one night, but Jonathan called her persistently again.

Rochelle had no choice but to leave, as the last thing she wanted was for him to notice that something was amiss. She said she would come to fetch Samantha to the airport the next day.

Samantha lay on the bed and felt like sleeping after having a video call with Matthew. For some reason, however, she unconsciously picked up the divorce certificate and opened it.

She could not describe what sort of mood she had at the time, but perhaps the late night had inexplicably triggered melancholic, sentimental feelings and caused her to think wildly.

She stared at the photo on the divorce certificate.

If she were honest with herself, the feelings she had for Timothy was hatred—extreme hatred.

She loved him deeply ever since she was still a young girl and spent a large part of her youth loving him deeply.

How could he even bring himself to do it? It was fine if he did not love her, but he had to go so far as to use her and kill her once she lost her value.

Even more saddening for her was the fact that hate could not exist without love. At that moment, her feelings toward Timothy were that of deep hatred!

She was well aware that she should be feeling that way, but it was always difficult for people to be overly rational.

When she thought about it, her fingers subconsciously ripped off the photo on the divorce certificate. She wanted to throw it away and never see it again!

It would be such an eyesore to keep a photo of Timothy and she did not want to have it around!

Samantha curled her fingers and crumpled the photo in her palm. She then opened it and was about to throw it away, but somehow noticed some black writing on the paper.

She frowned and wondered why there were words at the bottom.

Samantha froze immediately, unfurled the photo, and turned it over to look at the handwriting.

Chapter 333: The Secret on The Back of The Photo

The words written in black ink were flamboyant, elegant, and very beautiful. At the same time, that handwriting was one that she was very familiar with.

It was Timothy's handwriting.

When she saw the three words he wrote, her head became a little empty and she was very confused.

He wrote: 'I love you.'

Timothy had handled everything regarding the divorce certificate and even gave it to her, which could be taken to mean that he wrote those three words for her too.

She questioned which one of Timothy's actions conformed to those three words 'I love you'.

Perhaps he was born different from others, and loving her meant having to kill her.

Samantha thought about it for a while, but could not wrap her head around it at all. Timothy's behavior was truly a mystery.

She started to feel some regret.

She planned to get a good night's sleep, leave the past behind, and go back to Emsteldt so she could live a good life with Matthew in the future.

Why did she have to steal the divorce certificate and remove that photo? She would not have seen the words at the back of the photo if she did neither of those things.

All she did was give herself more stumbling blocks.

She knew deep down in her heart that the mysterious emailer's purpose for leading her to the divorce certificate was precisely that.

That mysterious emailer's main purpose was probably not merely to let her ascertain the genuineness of her divorce certificate. The most important thing was to let her see his confession written at the back of the photo.

The emailer wanted her to know Timothy had another reason for doing what he did to her.

It was the same as the first email he sent to her five years ago—he told her that there were other reasons for Timothy's divorce back then too.

Then she was induced into coming back and finding out the truth.

However, she was no longer the same person she was three years ago. At the time, she still did not give up and held on to her extravagantly wishful thinking. That was the reason she braved herself to try again.

Unfortunately, the results were plain to see.

Samantha closed her eyes and took a few deep breaths. She stuck the photo back onto the divorce certificate and then threw it into her bag as if she wanted it out of her sight.

For the moment, she could just pretend as if she did not see anything.

She firmly acted as if she saw none of it!

Come the next day, she would fly back according to her original plan.

Matthew was in Emsteldt and that was where she belonged.

Samantha pulled up the blanket and closed her eyes. She tried hard to put herself to sleep, but her head was a mess and she could not seem to drift to sleep.

However, she did not give up trying and picked up her phone once more to see the videos she recorded on the phone. They were all Matthew's videos from childhood to adulthood.

She recorded the videos of him growing up, such as the first time he turned over, the first time he started crawling, and the time he took his first step...

Her irritable mood had miraculously calmed down when she looked at her chubby-faced son. Even her lips were curling up slightly.

She used to need sleeping pills just to force herself to sleep when she suffered all alone in the past. Matthew had since become her best medicine.

As Samantha watched the videos, she ended up falling asleep at some point and continued to sleep until she was woken up by Rochelle's phone call the next day.

She picked up the phone and asked hoarsely after just waking up, "Chelle?"

"You weren't awake yet?" Rochelle smiled. "You always get up early! If I'd known earlier, I wouldn't have called you so early."

"Don't worry." Samantha rubbed her eyebrows and tried to wake herself up.

"I bought you a flight for this evening, Sammy. I...have to get lunch with Jonathan tomorrow, so I won't be going there," Rochelle said in a somewhat reluctant tone.

She rued not being able to spend more time with Samantha even when there was only so little time left before Samantha's flight.

Samantha chuckled. "Okay, I understand. I'm a grown-up, so you don't need to worry."

Rochelle immediately added, "I'll pick you up in the afternoon and send you to the airport. See you later."

"Sure."

After hanging up the phone, Samantha wanted to sleep a little longer but felt a little weak and dizzy. Her voice was not hoarse from waking up but hoarse because it was a little sore.

She frowned uncontrollably.

It was likely caused by her nervousness in the past few days and the exhaustion from the whole ordeal the past night. She was also worried about a lot of things and did not fall asleep all night. Her body had been very weak ever since giving birth to Matthew, and although she had been slowly recuperating for the past few years, she still fell sick easily.

Unfortunately, it was not the right time for her to be sick.

She had to take a plane in the evening, and it would be difficult for her to endure the long flight if she was not in good shape.

Samantha needed a healthy body for Matthew's sake, so she could take good care of him. In recent years, she had attached great importance to her health and would be quite mindful of any discomfort.

She could not afford to neglect her body as she did in the past when she only had herself to take care of.

Samantha lay on the bed for a while and propped herself up.

Rochelle's apartment was in the city center, just a street away from Cruxwell Hospital. Getting there took only a five-minute walk. Samantha could eat her breakfast and then head over to get some medicine.

She did not think it was important to let Rochelle know about something as trivial as that. Having stayed with her for two days, she could sense that Rochelle and Jonathan had not genuinely reconciled. Rochelle was still very much averse to Jonathan but Samantha did not know why she had to submit to Jonathan again.

She hoped that Rochelle would be able to gain happiness, but she could not give any advice on how to do so. Her feelings were in a mess, and that gave her no right to tell Rochelle how to go about it.

After washing up, Samantha fried two eggs and some bacon, then warmed up a glass of milk and forced herself to finish her breakfast. While still feeling dizzy, she changed her clothes and put on a mask and hat before going to the hospital.

Hospitals were usually teeming with people, but fortunately, the system was automated. Samantha immediately registered on the self-service machine, and then went to the emergency department on the third floor according to the instructions.

More than a dozen patients waited in line to see the doctor. Samantha had to find a seat and sit down while waiting for her number to be called.

Matthew knew that she would be back that day and was thoroughly overjoyed. He used Alan's cell phone to send WeTalk voice messages to her.

He did not say much other than to call out to her from time to time, saying that he missed her and the like.

It felt somewhat pointless, but Samantha's heart softened into a puddle when she heard it.

She hated Timothy a lot, but she could not hate Matthew's face even though he resembled Timothy.

Samantha replied to each of Matthew's messages.

Since she had drunk a lot of water before coming out, Samantha raised her eyes and glanced at the call number. There were five more numbers to go before her turn, which should be enough time for her to head to the restroom.

Samantha put her phone away, got up, then went to the restroom at the end of the corridor.

After coming out, she was walking toward the emergency department when the elevator door in front opened. Two nurses and a doctor pushed a hospital bed out of the room with anxious expressions on their faces. They shouted, "Give way, please! Give way!"

In such a situation, the patient's condition was already very critical and emergency rescue had to be carried out immediately!

She hurriedly stopped walking and let them through.

However, Samantha inadvertently glanced at the person lying on the hospital bed and felt choked when she caught a fleeting glimpse of the pale, bloodless, yet extremely familiar face!

Chapter 334: Mystery

Old Madam Barker!

It was Old Madam Barker!

Samantha's eyes widened suddenly and she subconsciously covered her mouth.

Although the old lady's health had been unwell at times, most of it was caused by her bad mood. It would be fine as long as she was well taken care of.

Essentially speaking, Old Madam Barker's body and bones were still very tough.

Why would she be in such a condition?

From Samantha's experience, the expression on Old Madam Barker's face was practically an extension of death!

She could not control her own thoughts at all and forgot everything in an instant as she raised her feet subconsciously and followed the hospital bed.

The doctors and nurses pushed the bed through the crowd towards the operating room.

Samantha kept pace and her heart was in a complete mess as she stared intently at the unconscious old lady.

The hospital bed was finally pushed into the operating room and Samantha had to stop in front of the door. She watched as the door to the operating room slammed shut and the red light above it came on.

Her feet seemed to be rooted to the ground and she was unable to move.

After about a few minutes, there were footsteps from behind.

Samantha felt as if she had just woken up from a dream and her heartbeat quickened.

Old Madam Barker could not have come alone; she had to have been sent by someone, and any one of those people knew who she was!

She could not let herself be seen by anyone who knew her!

Samantha subconsciously wanted to turn around and avoid it but it was already too late. An extremely surprised voice came from behind, "Ms... Ms. Larsson?"

Samantha's body froze and she neither turned her head nor responded.

Aunt Julia took a few steps forward, got closer to her, and continued to ask, "Is that...you, Ms. Larsson?"

Samantha clenched her hands hard as they hung on both sides of her body. She hesitated and struggled for a few seconds, but in the end, she turned around slowly and raised her eyes to look at Aunt Julia. She greeted her, "Aunt Julia."

After being greeted, Aunt Julia covered her lips with both hands, and her eyes were filled with tremendous shock. Tears soon started welling up.

Aunt Julia moved her lips, but could not say anything and rushed forward and hugged Samantha.

It was as if Samantha was the only piece of driftwood that could be hugged.

Samantha's eyes could not help but turn red.

Old Madam Barker and Aunt Julia treated her with sincerity. They both cared for and doted on her, so she felt no averseness toward them because they truly loved her.

She lifted her arms and hugged Aunt Julia too.

It took a while for Aunt Julia to finally calm down. She released Samantha gently and looked up while wiping away the tears. Still staring at Samantha in disbelief, she then reached out to touch her cheeks and jaw.

Samantha was initially rather sad, but Aunt Julia's actions amused her and she burst out chuckling.

She did not stop Aunt Julia from feeling her either.

After Aunt Julia touched her chin, she lowered her head to look at Samantha's feet to check if there were any shadows below.

Once everything was confirmed, Aunt Julia hugged Samantha again, "Ms. Larsson, you're really alive. I thought... I thought I saw a ghost."

"I was...worried you came to bring the old lady away. Thank goodness..."

The moment she saw Samantha's figure earlier, she was so frightened that her heart nearly stopped beating.

Samantha patted the back of her hand lightly and comforted. "Don't be afraid. I'm not dead at all. I'm living quite well and Grandma will be fine too!"

When the old lady was mentioned, Aunt Julia could not stop her tears again. "I don't know what happened to the old lady."

She straightened up, looked up at the closed door of the operating room, and said worriedly, "If... If..."

"There is no 'if'," Samantha interrupted Aunt Julia's words with a firm tone. She said it to her and herself.

Aunt Julia was so panicked that she doubted her judgment, but when she saw Samantha here, she seemed to have had someone to rely on again and was no longer that chaotic.

Samantha led Aunt Julia to sit down on a nearby bench and took out a tissue from her bag to hand it over. "Take a deep breath."

Aunt Julia nodded, took the tissue and wiped her tears, then finally took several deep breaths.

Seeing that her mood had calmed down, Samantha asked, "Aunt Julia, what happened to Grandma?"

Aunt Julia looked up at her with an extremely saddened expression. "During the past three years, the old lady's health has been getting worse and worse. A few days ago... they had another argument because... Mr. Barker wanted... to remarry. The old lady was so angry that she slipped into a coma and had been taking medicine to recuperate. The doctor also prescribed a special medicine, but it didn't seem to help either. When I wiped the old lady's body today, she suddenly woke up, and I was really glad she did."

"But in the next second, she suddenly started vomiting a large amount of blood and I was so frightened that I called the ambulance and had her rushed to the hospital."

"I don't know what's going on right now, and I'm scared... I'm scared the old lady might not be able to make it."

She clenched her hands tightly in the end.

The more Samantha listened, the tighter her frown became.

She said puzzledly, "How could her health worsen so much?"

Aunt Julia looked at her with tears in her eyes and hesitated to speak.

Samantha's heart sank slightly when she saw that. She had probably been able to guess that the answer was related to her and it was something she did not want to hear.

In the end, she still said, "Please tell me, Aunt Julia. I want to know."

Aunt Julia gulped a few times and said truthfully, "Ms. Larsson... When she heard about your divorce from Mr. Barker three years ago and the news of your death, she went to argue with Mr. Barker but to no avail. At that moment, she seemed to have turned pale in an instant. She has been unable to let go of what happened even after so many years. She felt that...she was the one who murdered you. She believed that you would not have died that miserably if she hadn't insisted on pairing you with Mr. Barker. It was difficult for her to sleep and her mental state has been very poor. Even though she had been taking medicine and getting treated, things have not improved and it became a vicious circle..."

Samantha's fingertips trembled slightly.

It was practically the same as what she had guessed.

She spoke again in an extremely confused tone, "But, doesn't Timothy...care at all when Grandma's like this?"

Timothy loved the old lady deeply, and if she was in ill health, he would be willing to spend all his money to get Old Madam Barker the best treatment.

Although Aunt Julia was nothing but a mere servant who should not be speaking ill of her employer, she could not help it and cried, "Mr. Barker has completely changed. All he thinks about is that vixen, Harmony. He doesn't care about the old lady at all and it's as if she's an outsider. The old lady was so heartbroken, and during the past three years, she rarely met Mr. Barker and spoke to him."

Samantha never expected something like that would happen.

She knew how filial Timothy was. Three years ago, he hated her with such vengeance but was willing to put on a facade with her for Old Madam Barker's sake.

Even if he clashed with the old lady because of his divorce, he would never ignore her poor health!

Why did he have to be heartless to his own grandmother just because he was heartless toward her?

Was Timothy still Timothy?

The more Samantha thought about it, the more puzzling and odd she found it to be. What kind of mystery was shrouding Timothy?

Just as Samantha was in deep confusion, she heard footsteps from the corridor ahead.

When she raised her eyes subconsciously, she saw a man's tall figure walking in her direction.

Samantha's heartbeat sped up when she looked right at his face.

Timothy had arrived!

Chapter 335: A Dangerous Encounter

Timothy was different from Aunt Julia. Samantha was fine with letting Aunt Julia know that she was still alive, but she could never let Timothy know that!

Samantha could not see any place where she could hide in that long corridor and evading him would be impossible.

Seeing as the man was walking closer, she bit her lower lip firmly.

Her only choice was to take a gamble!

Samantha did not have time to explain anything to Aunt Julia and merely said hurriedly, "I can't let Timothy see me!"

She let down her tied hair so it covered her cheeks, and since she had been wearing a mask the entire time, she took out her sunglasses and a cap from her bag and put them on one by one.

Her delicate little face was instantly covered up.

Immediately after that, she stood up when Timothy looked over at Aunt Julia and pretended to be a stranger asking for directions. Her voice was lowered and she said to Aunt Julia, "Hi. May I know the direction to the bathroom?"

Aunt Julia was a little stunned at first but fortunately reacted quickly. She raised her hand and pointed to the corridor outside, "I'm not sure, but I think it should be over there."

"Thanks."

Samantha took a deep breath, then tried to relax as much as possible as she turned around and faced Timothy.

She headed for the exit as he walked over.

With her head lowered and her eyes hidden from view by the cap, she proceeded to walk right out.

As she got closer and closer to Timothy, her heartbeat started beating faster and faster.

After all, she had been together with him for so long in the past that she was worried her figure might be recognized by him even though her face was covered.

It was similar to a situation where she would be able to recognize Timothy at a glance even if his face was covered.

The moment they brushed past each other, Samantha sensed Timothy turning his head around to glance at her.

She almost stopped breathing for a second.

However, Timothy retracted his gaze back coldly the next second and continued to walk forward.

He did not notice anything!

Samantha breathed a sigh of relief.

Before she could even finish letting out that sigh, her cell phone rang suddenly and startled her.

Moreover, the cell phone's ringing caused Timothy to stop walking. He turned around and looked at her again.

Samantha did not dare to look back at all and felt her entire back turn stiff.

She used all her strength to restrain her desire to run away and stiffened her hands as she took out her phone from her bag and muted it.

The man's sharp gaze could be felt on her back.

She could not run though, because while she could still escape if she did not try to run, picking up the pace would only arouse suspicion in Timothy.

Samantha walked forward step by step. The corridor was a rather short one, but for her, it seemed like an endless road at that moment.

Timothy's eyes were fixed on the slender figure in front of him, there was a glimmer of light in the depths of his eyes. He moved his feet slightly and he was about to walk towards her.

When Aunt Julia saw what was going on, she cried out suddenly, “Mr. Barker, you’re finally here.”

As she called out to him, she stood up, rushed towards him, and grabbed his arm while tears streamed down her face. “Mr. Barker, the old lady has been vomiting blood. What are we going to do? I’m really worried, sob...”

Aunt Julia managed to draw Timothy’s attention. He glanced back at her before looking at the red light on the operating room door.

Samantha took the opportunity to speed up. Soon came the corner at the end of the corridor and she finally broke free from Timothy’s line of sight.

She was greatly relieved when she ran into the bathroom.

For a moment there, she felt as if Timothy was about to grab her already.

She was lucky to receive help from Aunt Julia.

Samantha walked to the sink, turned on the faucet, then cupped some cold water in her hands. She washed her face a little to calm herself down.

Once her palpitations and panic were suppressed, she gradually regained her frame of mind.

She took her cell phone out and glanced at the missed call earlier. It was from Rochelle, who was probably done with lunch and was coming to pick her up.

However, she could not just leave like this.

Rather than replying to Rochelle, she searched her contacts for Aunt Julia’s number and sent a text.

[Aunt Julia, call me when you have the chance.]

After about two minutes, Aunt Julia called.

Samantha answered. “Thank you for earlier, Aunt Julia.”

Had it not been for Aunt Julia’s quick thinking, Samantha would probably not be able to escape.

Aunt Julia’s duty was to serve the Barkers, but she turned her back that one time to help Samantha, who was extremely grateful for that.

“Ms. Larsson, please don’t say that, I know you have your reasons. Mr. Barker...has really let you down. I didn’t expect him to be that fickle of a person. I’ve watched him grow up and yet even I can’t understand a single thing that he’s thinking.”

Aunt Julia felt distressed as she continued, “The old lady is undergoing surgery right now and I don’t see a shred of concern from him. It’s really puzzling to me.”

He used to be nervous and took things very seriously even if the old lady had a small headache.

How could Harmony lead him that far astray during those three years?

Samantha had a tense frown.

Even she was puzzled, not just Aunt Julia.

For some inexplicable reason, she felt that things were not as simple as they seemed. Old Madam Barker’s illness, Timothy’s changes in personality, and his unfamiliarity with her were all questions that left her scratching her head.

Although she was relieved that Timothy did not recognize her earlier, it was quite ironic when she thought about it.

In any case, they had been a married couple who lived under one roof for a very long time!

She felt as if a ball of wool had wrapped her mind and she had a brief moment of utter confusion.

For the moment, she could only start by checking the simplest and most intuitive of factors.

After all, she had very limited time.

Samantha calmed down and said, “Aunt Julia, you must stay alert and remain calm. I can’t show myself right now, so you have to keep an eye on Grandma and guard her without ever leaving her side!”

“Notify me as soon as her surgery is over.”

Aunt Julia nodded repeatedly. “Okay, Ms. Larsson, I will listen to you.”

‘Ms. Larsson...’

Samantha corrected her. “Aunt Julia, please don’t call me Ms. Larsson. Just call me by my name.”

“Ah... I’m sorry, I’ve gotten used to it already.” Aunt Julia thought for a moment and replied, “I’m afraid someone might hear me if I call your name. I’ll just call you Sam.”

“Okay.”

Samantha gulped and continued, “Aunt Julia, I have something to ask you right now. You have to answer me truthfully!”

Once again, Aunt Julia nodded repeatedly. “Please ask.”

She might not trust anyone else, but based on the tears Samantha shed for the old lady earlier, she was willing to believe that Samantha had the old lady’s best interests at heart.

...

Rochelle’s car arrived at the entrance to the hospital. Samantha opened the car door and sat in the front passenger seat.

Then, Samantha turned to look at Rochelle with a serious look on her face. She said, “Change of plans, Chelle. We’re not going to the airport.. We have to make a stop elsewhere!”

Chapter 336: This is Life-Threatening!

Rochelle could not contain her surprise. “Where are we going?”

Samantha looked straight ahead and said firmly, “The villa.”

Was that not the place where Samantha and Timothy lived after getting married?

What was her purpose for going there?

Rochelle was very curious. She moved her lips as if to ask why, but eventually decided against it and restrained herself. They then started their journey towards the villa.

When they arrived at the villa entrance, she parked the car at the parking space, got down, then walked to the villa with Samantha.

The door to the house was secured with a combination lock. Samantha had already confirmed with Aunt Julia that the password remained the same, so she swiftly entered the numbers and pushed the door open.

Samantha's goal was very clear. When she entered the house, she walked directly to Old Madam Barker's bedroom, which was still in a complete mess. The sight of dried blood on the ground and blanket was very shocking to look at.

Samantha's heart tensed up.

Rochelle looked at the situation and frowned deeply.

Old Madam Barker's condition appeared very serious, and no one could tell for sure if she would survive that...

Samantha took a deep breath and calmed herself down. She then lifted her feet over the mess and walked to the bedside table, where she lowered her eyes and glanced at the various medicines scattered around.

She stretched out her hand and picked it up one by one to look at and smell them carefully.

Rochelle could roughly guess Samantha's purpose for coming there. She probably felt that Old Madam Barker's illness was fishy and decided that she had to visit the villa to check the old lady's medication.

Rochelle did not know a single thing about medicine and sat quietly aside to avoid disturbing Samantha.

When Samantha moved on to the third medication, her expression became a little solemn. When she picked up the fourth, which Aunt Julia said was a special medication, her expression changed drastically.

"What's wrong, Sammy?" Rochelle looked over.

Samantha held the pill between her fingers, which were trembling slightly. Even her voice was faltering when she said, "This drug won't save lives... This is a life-threatening drug!"

She could not be sure whether her sense of smell had made her overly sensitive to the third medication, although the possibility remained that it might contain trace amounts of harmful substances. However, she was nothing but certain that the fourth was poison!

The harm that could be caused to one's body was immense, and a person could be killed if the dosage reached a certain level!

She had seen such drugs during her dark past.

Rochelle was also taken aback, "Are you sure, Sammy?"

How could anyone have the guts to poison the old lady so blatantly and unscrupulously?

Had Samantha not seen the drugs with her own eyes, she probably would not believe it too. She felt that no one would dare to do such a thing.

Unfortunately, that was exactly what happened.

If her guess was correct, then Old Madam Barker had vomited blood due to that fourth medicine.

However, Aunt Julia also said that the 'special medicine' was only to be taken once. Judging from the dosage, its effects would not have been that strong.

The only possible explanation was that a certain amount of poison had accumulated inside Old Madam Barker's body, the sudden increase would then push her over the edge.

Samantha could not be completely sure that her guess was correct and decided to verify it.

Samantha took out a tissue, wrapped a couple of pills from medications number three and four, then placed them inside her pocket.

"Time to go, Chelle. We'll need to visit somewhere else."

Rochelle nodded.

Back in the car, Rochelle drove to the address Samantha provided.

There was some traffic jam on the road at the moment, so Rochelle had to brake at frequent intervals.

She glanced at Samantha from the side and sighed softly when she saw that Samantha had a tight frown.

After thinking for a while, she asked, "Sammy, if your guess is correct, then who could be so bold as to poison the old lady?"

Was there anyone who dared to lay a finger on her when the Barkers, the Barker Group, and Timothy were all in their prime now?

Even someone like Rochelle could not do anything despite wanting the scumbag to die.

Samantha's eyes were cold and she opened her lips. "I can think of only one person."

As soon as she said that, the first person to appear in Rochelle's mind was Harmony. She asked incredulously, "Harmony's the most likely suspect, but would she dare to do such a thing?"

Samantha sneered and replied firmly, "She would."

Rochelle frowned. Did Harmony really have such courage to go against Timothy? Or had Timothy indulged her that much?

Seemingly knowing what Rochelle was thinking, Samantha added, "It's because...Timothy practically shows no concern for his grandmother. Harmony would be bold enough to do such a thing because it helps in removing her obstacles."

Earlier on the phone, Aunt Julia had recounted to her Timothy's attitude towards Old Madam Barker during the past three years. Hearing everything sent a chill down Samantha's spine.

That he could bring himself to treat his grandmother that way was evidence of his ruthless and cold-blooded nature.

Rochelle did not know what else to say and could only curse unceremoniously, "That scumbag really is a b*stard!"

He was a terrible person, both toward Samantha and his grandmother.

The car arrived at a laboratory.

Samantha sent the medicine in and paid extra to get the results quicker.

The test results finally came out after about an hour. As she expected, the fourth medicine was a high-dosage, dangerous poison while the third was something similar but in a much lower dosage.

The human body could excrete such toxins if they were consumed by accident on rare occasions. However, eating it constantly for many years would cause a snowball-like effect as the toxins accumulated.

Samantha clenched her hands tightly after hearing that.

Rochelle immediately exploded with rage. "That vicious woman Harmony makes me sick to the core.

"She must have wanted to use poison to kill the old lady slowly and stealthily. The sudden increase is probably because of her marriage to Timothy next month! She's afraid that the old lady would do something to stop her and decided the old lady would be better off dead!"

After talking, Rochelle laughed in anger, "Timothy's blind! How could he even like this kind of a woman? On second thought, a b*stard and a pretentious b*tch are a perfect match! They should be jailed."

Samantha held the laboratory report and pursed her lips tightly without saying anything.

Before she knew it, it was already four in the evening.

Rochelle calmed down a little and reminded, "Sammy, we have to go back to the apartment to get your luggage. It's time I send you to the airport."

Delaying any longer would cause her to miss her flight.

Samantha looked up at Rochelle with a conflicted expression. "I feel like...I want to stay behind. At least until Grandma's surgery is over..."

She could never leave with peace of mind otherwise.

Rochelle immediately knew the motivation behind that. "In that case, let's go back to the apartment first. It's not safe for you to be outside too long."

"Okay."

As soon as the car drove back to the apartment, Samantha's cell phone rang.

She glanced at it and saw a call from Aunt Julia, which was probably to inform that Old Madam Barker's operation was over...

Samantha immediately wondered if Old Madam Barker was lucky enough to survive or whether...she did not make it....

Chapter 337: I Can't Leave

When Samantha thought of that, her hand shook uncontrollably while she held the phone. Her fingers were trembling so severely that it was a struggle for her to even tap her finger on the phone and answer the call.

Rochelle looked at Samantha's pale face and reached out to tap her finger on the answer icon. She then tapped the speaker icon and put it on speaker mode.

Aunt Julia was heard crying, "Sam, the old lady's surgery is over."

Just by listening to Aunt Julia's tone, Samantha felt as if her heart was being squeezed by a big hand and she felt a little breathless.

After gulping twice, she tried hard to put her question in words, "How... How did it go?"

Such scenes seemed far too common for her.

She had a strong hatred of such situations.

"Although she was saved in the nick of time, she's still in very bad condition. She's still in the risky period, and the next twenty-four hours are very critical. If the situation improves, there's a possibility she could wake up. If...not, then...we have to be prepared for what comes after."

Aunt Julia could barely utter those last few words because she was sobbing.

Samantha's eyes turned red too.

She already had a bad feeling when she suspected it to be poison, but it felt even more unbearable when she heard the results.

Both Old Master Barker and Old Madam Barker loved her very much, and the old man's death made her so sad that she cried for quite some time.

Then it just had to happen to Old Madam Barker...

Although Rochelle was not that close with Old Madam Barker, she thought well of the old lady due to the sincere care that the latter showed to Samantha.

She felt very distressed too, more so when the old lady ended up in a bad state because of Harmony's viciousness!

Aunt Julia cried for a moment and remembered something all of a sudden. She mustered up the energy and asked in a pleading tone, "Sam, can you come over to keep the old lady company tonight? The doctor said that she had been mentioning your name when they were trying to save her. Her sense of survival is strong, and she might be able to wake up if you come and talk to her!"

'Old Madam Barker...had been mentioning my name...'

Samantha bit her lower lip involuntarily.

Old Madam Barker's condition had been getting worse during the past few years in part because she was constantly uneasy at the thought of having played a role in Samantha's death.

Aunt Julia continued pleading when she heard no response from Samantha.

"Samantha, I know it might be difficult for you to come to the hospital, but the old lady

really needs you right now. Please... Please save her... Remember all the things you did for her and save her... Save her!"

Samantha clenched her phone tightly, so much so that the blue veins on the back of her hand had popped up one by one.

She was bound to miss her flight if she did not go to the airport.

When she had a video call with Matthew the day before, he was overjoyed and expressed his desire to pick her up at the airport with Alan.

Alan was happy too. He told her that he would treat her to a feast when she comes back.

She did not want Matthew and Alan to be stood up, but she could not bring herself to refuse them.

Old Madam Barker was one of the people in the country whom she could not bear to part with.

Samantha closed her eyes heavily and finally answered. "Okay. I'll go."

Aunt Julia thanked her profusely as soon as she heard Samantha's answer.

After ending the call, she leaned softly on the back of the chair as if all her strength had been taken away.

Rochelle reached out to hold Samantha's hand. After a moment's hesitation, she said, "Sammy, are you sure you want to stay?"

"It's... It's still not too late if you change your mind right now."

It was extremely selfish what Samantha said earlier.

Staying behind carried the risk that any unforeseen accidents might happen.

Samantha looked at her and forced a smile. "I'll...leave as soon as I accompany Grandma through this period of danger. I'd be staying for a few more days at most."

Rochelle stared at her intently and spoke straightforwardly, "It's possible that you might not be able to leave this place anymore if you miss this flight."

Samantha kept quiet.

She knew that Rochelle was only looking out for her and it was very much unsafe for her to stay there. If Timothy or Harmony knew that she was still alive, neither would let her go.

Her peaceful life with Matthew would come to an end and there would be danger lurking in all directions.

She understood what was at stake, but she could not bring herself to ignore Old Madam Barker.

Samantha did not worry much in the past because she thought that Timothy would protect Old Madam Barker at all costs, but she did not place any more hope on him after how everything turned out!

“Forget it, I’m not going to lecture you anymore.” Rochelle leaned back in the chair. “This character of yours makes it impossible for you to stand by and watch. Even if you took that flight, you’ll be constantly thinking about this.”

Samantha smiled. “You know me so well, Chelle.”

“Sweet talking me isn’t going to do you any good. You should start thinking about how you’re going to explain to your precious son and Dr. Sherwood!” Rochelle made no secret of her schadenfreude.

Samantha immediately felt a headache coming on.

Headache or not, she still had to make the call.

When they were back at the apartment, Samantha poured herself a glass of warm water. After drinking it all in one go, she took two deep breaths before picking up her phone and making a WeTalk call.

The other side picked up fairly quickly and Matthew’s tender voice called out, “Mommy, Mommy! Are you on the plane? Will I see you soon?”

Samantha pursed her lips lightly and said in a soft, slightly apologetic, and entreating voice. “I’m sorry, Matt. Something happened, and I might have to go back a little later.”

Matthew was stunned and it took him some time before he said angrily, “But you already promised me that I could see you tomorrow! Why did you break your promise?”

“I’m sorry.”

“How much later will you come home, Mommy?” Matthew asked again.

His insistent questioning made Samantha even more speechless.

Since she had failed to keep her promise that time, she no longer dared to promise him so easily when she was not sure of her return date.

“You lied, Mommy. You’re not coming back, aren’t you? You don’t want me anymore!”

“No, Matt. That’s not it...” Samantha anxiously tried to explain, but the other side had hung up before she could finish speaking.

Samantha rubbed her tired eyebrows.

Matthew could not be blamed for his insecurity. After all, he never had a father since he was born and was never separated for long in all his years staying with Samantha.

She wished she could just take the flight back to hold him tight, but Old Madam Barker needed her more at that moment.

All she could do was force herself to calm down and call him again to coax him once she had regained her composure.

As for Alan, she really had not figured out how to tell him yet.

Her phone happened to ring when she was structuring her sentences. Thinking it was Alan who called her, it turned out to be Aunt Julia.

As soon as she answered, she heard Aunt Julia say, “Sam, Mr. Barker is preparing to leave. You can come over now.”

She had earlier agreed with Aunt Julia that she would only show up when Timothy was gone. Aunt Julia probably figured out a way to let Timothy leave.

Samantha responded immediately, “Okay, I’ll go over right now.”

She decided to call Alan after she went there.

Once Samantha arrived at the hospital, she walked in only after making sure that Timothy had left. She changed into some personal protective equipment before entering the intensive care unit, where she sat on the bedside chair and held Old Madam Barker’s hand.

...

Timothy drove out of the hospital and stopped at the intersection when the light turned red.

His phone rang at that moment and he glanced at the caller ID. It happened to be Howard Plummer, the general manager of the Barker Group's security department and one of the world's best-known hackers.

Timothy had gotten someone to send Howard the hotel's surveillance footage. Howard was instructed to check if anyone entered or exited his room, but several hours' worth of footage that night was somehow tampered with.

Nothing could be seen.

He did not believe that it was all just a coincidence and was certain that it was the product of human interference!

He was curious to know who would dare to provoke him like that!

As a result, he left it to Howard and asked him to repair the overwritten surveillance video.

There must have been a result if he was calling at that moment!

Timothy put on his Bluetooth earpiece and tapped it to answer the call.. He spoke first and uttered two words in an ice-cold tone, "Tell me."

Chapter 338: Would You Like Them Dead or Alive?

Howard was the stereotypical engineer-type person who spoke straightforwardly. "I've repaired the surveillance video you tasked me with, Mr. Barker, and I've extracted the time frame you requested. I'm sending it over to you right now."

A grin appeared on Timothy's lips and he said in satisfaction, "Perfect."

Every employee within the Barker Group was a force to be reckoned with.

After the phone call ended, Timothy parked the car on the side of the road and took his laptop from the passenger seat. He then flipped it open and clicked on his email.

Howard had sent the repaired video.

Timothy slid his fingertips across the touchpad and clicked on it.

After watching the videos one by one, he paused somewhere and looked at the figure on the screen.

As he expected, someone pretended to be a housekeeping staff and sneaked into his room.

Unfortunately, there were no cameras installed in his room and the only footage was that of the person entering and exiting.

The person had a slim figure and was undoubtedly a woman.

She had disguised herself well enough and her face was not exposed at all. She seemed to know where the cameras were located and deliberately avoided them, which prevented the cameras from catching her face in the footage.

Timothy's fingertips tapped rhythmically on his knees.

His dark pupils seemed distant and he smiled all of a sudden after staring at the figure for about ten seconds.

His memory was so good that one could describe him as having a photographic memory. That figure seemed very familiar to him.

It was the same figure he passed by in the hospital that afternoon.

How intriguing that the person appeared in his hotel room the day before and at the hospital the day after.

Timothy smiled and he placed his hands on the top edge of his notebook. After closing it shut, he tossed it casually back to the front passenger seat.

He picked up his phone and made a call.

The other side answered immediately and greeted in a cold voice. "Mr. Barker."

Timothy spared all nonsense and merely gave an order. "I have something I need you to deal with."

The answer came at once. "Understood."

Timothy then opened his lips and said something.

The other side hesitated for a second and asked, "Do you want them dead or alive?"

A cold grin appeared on Timothy's lips. His voice was extremely cold but he spoke as if he was talking about the weather. "The usual."

"Understood!" the other person answered.

...

Inside the ward, Samantha's heart tensed up when she looked at Old Madam Barker's pale face. She held the old lady's hands tighter as if doing so would allow her to hold on to the old lady and enable the old lady to persevere.

She could finally understand why Rochelle hated hospitals. At that moment, Samantha hated hospitals with a vengeance too, and particularly loathed her feeling of powerlessness.

The people she cared about and the people she loved always had to face death. They struggled desperately when nearing the brink of death but she could never do anything about it.

Being born, getting old, falling sick, and dying were all normal events in the course of life. Unfortunately, they were also exceptionally cruel events that no one had the power to stop.

Samantha did her best to restrain the soreness in her throat and said in a hoarse voice, "I'm sorry for not being dutiful and filial, Grandma. You wouldn't've ended up like this if it wasn't for me."

Old Madam Barker was actually a very smart and wise old woman. She was old only on the outside and young at heart. She had very keen judgment as well. Her constant self-reproaching in the past three years—which tired her out mentally and physically—turned her into a tiger that had its fangs pulled out. She could not care less about anything else anymore.

Otherwise, Harmony's clumsy methods could not possibly have been successful against the old lady.

During the year in which she survived the drowning incident, she chose not to contact Rochelle and the old lady because she knew that Rochelle had Jonathan's protection and the old lady would at least have Timothy's protection. That what was set her worries at ease.

She scarcely expected Timothy to be such a terrible person.

Aunt Julia told her that the old lady refused to take the pill Samantha left behind because she felt that the pill was the only thing she had of Samantha and she wanted to keep it as a memory.

That revelation practically tore Samantha's heart apart.

Had Samantha known earlier, she would have told Old Madam Barker that she was still alive and gave birth to the grandson whom the old lady had always longed for.

Old Madam Barker would be delighted to hear that.

The thought of that made it difficult for her to contain her tears from falling and Samantha struggled to wipe them off. She could only raise her head and take a deep breath as she tried hard to suppress her tears.

After calming herself down for a moment, Samantha continued, "Please hold on, Grandma. Don't you want to see me again? You'll see me when you open your eyes, and... You'll be able to see your grandson too. He's adorable, handsome, and he's three years old now. I'll bring him to meet you when you wake up, okay?"

"You can't leave us like this when you haven't met him yet. Please answer me if you hear my voice, okay?"

Samantha even told the old lady numerous wonderful things.

She talked about her life in Emsteldt, about the hardships she experienced when Matthew was born, and about all the stuff that happened to Matthew when he was still young. She spoke so much that her voice became slightly hoarse and her mouth ran dry, but she continued to speak without giving up.

She held on to the hope that Old Madam Barker might be able to hear what she was saying. As long as she kept on talking, the old lady might stand a chance of waking up.

Samantha would not give up, not when there was still a tiny glimmer of hope.

She did not know how long she had been talking, but she eventually felt dizzy and fell asleep with her arms on the bed. Before that, she was already somewhat uncomfortable and had a cold, which exhausted her much more because she felt sad and talked so much.

By the time she woke up, Aunt Julia had come in and patted her on the shoulder to wake her up.

Samantha opened her eyes in a daze.

Seeing her exhausted face, Aunt Julia said softly, "You've been with the old lady all night, Sam. Go and get some rest. I'll watch over her."

Samantha took a deep breath. She raised her eyes and glanced at the wall clock. More than ten hours had passed but Old Madam Barker still showed no improvement.

Although she did not want to leave, she knew that Aunt Julia would have another thing to worry about if she collapsed due to the lack of rest.

"Alright then. I'll go out for now and take over from you later."

With that, she got up and walked out of the ward.

After Samantha took off her personal protective equipment, she went to the bathroom and washed her face with cold water. Once she was completely awake, she went to the lounge next to the intensive care unit.

She had asked the doctor for some cold medication and took them with warm water.

Samantha did not feel too sleepy at that point since she had already slept earlier. She leaned on the sofa and took out her cell phone, only to realize that it had run out of battery and shut down automatically.

She dug out her charger from her bag and plugged it in to charge.

As soon as the phone was switched on, notifications for several missed calls began pouring in and all of them were from Alan.

She could not help but feel guilty, but it was still something she had to face.

Samantha rubbed her temples, took a deep breath, then tapped on her phone to dial a number.

The call was answered in a split second and Alan kept a low voice as he tried suppressing his anger. "Why didn't you answer the phone? Don't you know I'd be worried about you?"

He rarely got angry and Samantha knew that he was really angry then.

She replied weakly, "I'm sorry. I... I had to accompany Old Madam Barker."

Then, she took a deep breath and expressed her genuine thoughts to him. "And... And I felt that I...let you down, so I didn't know how to tell you that I wouldn't be going back so soon."

Alan was silent for a few seconds before he suddenly laughed in spite of himself. "I don't know how I'm going to be angry at you when you're so honest."

Samantha did not know what to say and could only follow up with, "I'm sorry."

Alan closed his eyes.

What he wanted from her was never an apology.

After a moment's silence, Alan spoke up and said, "Instead of saying sorry to me, Sammy, why don't you...."

Chapter 339: Cheer Me Up

After a pause, Alan uttered the final three words of his sentence, "...cheer me up."

He rarely said those kinds of words, and as much as he tried his best to be natural, they came out of his lips in a rather stiff manner and it even sounded a bit shy.

Samantha nearly choked on her saliva.

She never expected that a person as gentle and modest as Alan could say such a thing...

After all, Alan frequently maintained a serious and dignified image in front of her and had never said anything teasing or flirtatious.

She was not used to this sudden change and felt...very uncomfortable.

However, her relationship with Alan was more than just friends. She had promised to accept him when she returned?to Emsteldt.

It would mean that the two of them were stepping into courtship territory.

In that case, it was natural for Alan to say such things.

Samantha was the one who did not...adapt and move forward in the situation as much as Alan did.

It was her fault that she did not keep to her promise of coming home, and Alan's request was a very reasonable one too. There was nothing Samantha could say to refuse him.

If she were to try and cheer Alan up...

Samantha frowned but did her best to give herself a bit of mental preparation. She tried to open her mouth and say something nice to coax him, but her lips merely trembled and she could not say a single word.

The more anxious she was, the more confused her mind became. It became increasingly difficult for her to speak up.

Alan waited for a moment but could only hear her breathing becoming heavier. He sighed softly and said, "Forget it."

Samantha felt guilty. She scratched her head irritably and explained, "Dr. Sherwood, it's not that I don't want to, I... Maybe you can...hang on for a bit. I can do it!"

All she had to do was coax him. She used to be able to do so with ease after wooing Timothy for so long.

Then there was also Matthew. Even though she merely teased him childishly when she coaxed him, it was still coaxing nonetheless.

Perhaps it would be easier to imagine that Alan was Matt?

Samantha was still wondering how but Alan had already told her, "It's fine."

He wanted her to coax him, but she was having such a hard time that he might not be happy even after hearing her do so.

He discovered that he was the kind of man who developed genuine feelings for a woman that he liked.

It was the same when he found out that he and Samantha could not be together. He decided to let go of her then. Fast forward to the present, he did not want to force her after knowing that she still could not place her heart completely on him.

Samantha bit her lower lip. She was frustrated at her screw-up at the most crucial moment when she was so talkative during ordinary situations.

Alan adjusted his mood as his tone reverted to normal. He was as gentle as ever when he said, "This is the first and last time, Sammy."

She knew that he was referring to her failure to keep her word.

Alan had accommodated her all the time and she was immediately overwhelmed by a strong sense of guilt.

She really felt that she was a bad person.

"I'll help you to calm Matt down. You don't have to worry about him." Alan then softened his voice, "Come back...soon."

Samantha gulped hard and nodded. "Okay."

Alan spoke again and uttered, "You'll..."

He did not continue his sentence.

Samantha could not help but ask, "I what?"

After hesitating for a moment, Alan did not continue his sentence. He simply smiled and said, "Be safe and rest well."

“I will. You take good care of yourself too. And... thank you.”

On that occasion, Alan was the one who hung up first.

Samantha closed her eyes when she heard the beeping tone.

Regarding Alan's unfinished sentence, she somehow felt that he wanted to ask: 'You'll come back, right?'

However, he held himself back and did not ask, probably because he did not want to pressure her...

Alan had always been considerate and gentle.

She thought about how she would certainly fall for a man like him if Timothy never existed. Only a blind person would fail to appreciate how good he was.

All of a sudden, she heard a rush of footsteps coming from outside the lounge. Along with that was Aunt Julia's wailing.

The mess of irritable thoughts in Samantha's mind disappeared instantly and was replaced by panic. Did something happen to Old Madam Barker?

Samantha immediately got up from the sofa and ran out.

As expected, she saw doctors pouring into the intensive care unit as soon as she stepped out of the lounge. Meanwhile, Aunt Julia was forced out by a nurse, who sternly advised Aunt Julia not to interfere with the treatment. The door of the ward was then closed shut in front of her.

Samantha quickly walked to Aunt Julia's side and helped her up.

Aunt Julia turned around to look at Samantha and grabbed her arm while crying, “Sam, the old lady's heart rate monitor showed a straight line earlier. What should we do! What should we do!”

Although Samantha had already expected some bad news, her heart shuddered violently when she heard that and her vision became a little darker.

Could that be the end of Old Madam Barker's life?

She did not know what to do either and was just as scared as Aunt Julia. Unsure of what to say, she hugged Aunt Julia tightly while repeating, “It'll be okay. It'll be okay. Everything will be fine.”

Samantha could not tell whether she was saying that to comfort herself or Aunt Julia.

Time passed so slowly that Samantha and Aunt Julia were exhausted from all the crying. However, the two of them could not relax at all and kept relying on each other as they stared intently at the door to the ward.

At long last, the door opened and a doctor came out.

Samantha suddenly found herself afraid to go up and ask about the situation. Her greatest fear was that she would hear bad news.

Aunt Julia probably thought the same as her and stayed put without saying anything.

When the doctor saw that, he walked towards them out of his own accord and pulled down his mask to reveal a relieved smile.

“Don’t worry, we’ve managed to save her. The old lady has finally managed to go through this dangerous period. She might still be unconscious, but she will...live.”

Samantha felt as if she had journeyed from hell to heaven in a split second.

She cried tears of relief, although she was still unable to say anything and could only hug Aunt Julia tightly.

Aunt Julia was in tears as well. She returned the hug to Samantha and said emotionally, “She survived! She survived! Sam, it’s all thanks to you! The old lady must’ve been reluctant to part with you and managed to survive this. Thank you, thank you!”

Samantha thanked God in her heart too.

She thanked the Almighty for not taking away Old Madam Barker’s life, and for giving her a chance to make it up to the old lady in the future.

...

The next day, Rochelle came to visit Old Madam Barker and was sincerely happy to see that the old lady’s condition had improved.

Aunt Julia was out buying food, and Old Madam Barker was still unconscious, so Rochelle glanced at Samantha and said straightforwardly, “I learned some very...bad news yesterday.”

Samantha turned to look at her, “What is it?”

Rochelle frowned and said in a serious tone, “Jonathan told me that Timothy requested the hotel for the surveillance footage that night. Even though he won’t find anything because we’ve already overwritten the records in advance, he’s still a very dangerous man and we can’t take this lightly. Better to be safe than sorry, you know!”

“Since Old Madam Barker has already successfully gone through the risky phase, you can consider your mission complete. You should hurry up and leave, Sammy. I’ll bring you to the airport right now!”

As soon as Rochelle said that, she got up and went straight to pull Samantha’s hand.

Samantha, however, sat there without moving.

Rochelle was puzzled. “Sammy, you…”

Samantha clenched her hand little by little and there was a conflicted look in her eyes as she looked at Rochelle and said, “I can’t go yet, Chelle. I have one more thing to do!”

Chapter 340: Crashing A Wedding

Rochelle frowned tightly. “Come on, Sammy. What else do you want to do? Don’t you dare tell me that you’re going to crash Timothy and Harmony’s wedding!”

The latter half of her sentence carried a slightly dissatisfied tone.

Samantha knew that Rochelle was annoyed and only became that nervous because she was worried about her safety. Samantha took Rochelle’s hand and exerted a bit of strength to pull her down so she could sit.

She slowed down and explained earnestly to Rochelle, “Listen to me, Chelle. Grandma’s high-risk period might have passed, but she’s still in a coma and hasn’t woken up yet. Aunt Julia is the only one who’s by Grandma’s side, and being the helpless woman that she is, she can’t possibly be able to protect Grandma.”

“To put it another way, Harmony could easily do something to grandma again.”

Rochelle understood Samantha’s reasoning. Her expression softened a little but she still looked intently at Samantha as she asked, “And?”

“And if I leave now, I’d be ignoring Grandma’s life too. The next time I hear about Grandma would probably be her funeral.”

Samantha spoke in a certain tone because she was 100% sure that it would happen.

There was genuinely nothing that Rochelle could say to refute Samantha’s words.

If Old Madam Barker was healthy and of a sound mind, she really did not need to fear Harmony at all. If only Timothy was protecting her too. Then no one would dare to lay a finger on the old lady.

Unfortunately, neither of those two conditions were met.

Rochelle frowned and thought for a while. She said, "How about...I help you watch over her?"

Samantha sighed. "Chelle, you know that's unrealistic."

Rochelle knew that it was unrealistic as soon as she suggested it. Although she did not want to admit it, her biggest support was still Jonathan.

Jonathan was notoriously cold-blooded and only protected the people he wanted to protect. The life or death of anyone else was of no concern to him whatsoever

.

His brain simply worked differently from that of ordinary people.

He did not have the sympathy or compassion that ordinary people had and was a ruthless person through and through.

However, Rochelle had no right to speak of him either.

There was one thing she shared in common with Jonathan, and that was the lack of sympathy and compassion. She only cared about the people important to her.

Samantha was one of those people. She cared deeply about Samantha and always ensured that Samantha was her top priority.

Seeing Rochelle's silence, Samantha continued, "If Harmony's already brave enough to do all this when she's not yet Mrs. Barker, then she'll be even more reckless when she finally marries him."

Rochelle agreed with that observation.

She had gone head-to-head against Harmony for three years.

Although she despised such heinous evildoers, she could attest to how difficult it was to deal with someone like that.

Harmony was a narrow-minded person who would seek revenge over the most trivial of matters. Once she became Mrs. Barker, it was almost certain that her first target would be Old Madam Barker, who had so vehemently disapproved of her.

Rochelle knew deep down that her biggest difference from Samantha was that Samantha cared much more for those who treated her sincerely and cherished them very much.

Aside from Rochelle, the only other person whom Samantha would find it hard to part with was Old Madam Barker.

Rochelle finally calmed down after being persuaded. She glanced at the old lady lying on the bed and asked, "What are you going to do?"

After a pause, she pretended to tease, "Maybe you can just crash the wedding and object to their marriage. That'll shatter Harmony's dream and stop her from becoming Mrs. Barker. She wouldn't be capable of dealing with Old Madam Barker anymore after that."

Samantha only answered her with a chuckle. "Hehe."

If she still loved Timothy or had any wishful hopes for him, she might really crash the wedding and object to the marriage. Unfortunately, she did not care about him at all!

Timothy and Harmony were in love with each other and it was none of her business!

She was not going to look for trouble.

Upon seeing that, Rochelle had a straight face and said, "Alright, enough with the joking. What exactly are we going to do?"

The word 'we' warmed Samantha's heart.

When it came to Samantha's matters, Rochelle always treated it as if it was her business too, rather than just Samantha's alone!

She could not help but hug Rochelle's arm. "If you were a man, we would've grown up as childhood sweethearts and had a perfect fairytale love story from our school days up until our wedding."

Rochelle nodded repeatedly. "Those two scumbags Timothy and Jonathan wouldn't exist in our lives. People like them shouldn't get married! It'd be best if they stay single for the rest of their lives!"

Samantha was amused.

That was probably the first time she ever relaxed and chuckled after Samantha returned to the country.

She sat up straight again and thought for a moment before saying, "My idea is very simple. I want Harmony to be afraid of hurting Grandma on a whim in the future. I want to make sure there's something to prevent her from committing these acts again! That way, nothing will happen to Grandma even if I'm not here."

Samantha had always possessed a clear line of thought and Rochelle agreed with her idea. "What will that 'thing' be?"

Samantha grinned slightly. Rather than answering that question, she asked, "Do you remember that special medicine?"

Rochelle immediately understood when she heard Samantha's question.

Samantha was hinting at the special medication being physical evidence that Harmony had poisoned Old Madam Barker. All they lacked was a witness.

Where were they going to get that witness?

Rochelle exchanged glances with Samantha and both of them instantly figured out the answer from each other's look.

The doctor who had been treating Old Madam Barker!

As long as that doctor accused Harmony of being the mastermind behind Old Madam Barker's poisoning, they would have evidence of Harmony's intent to murder.

Samantha then said, "I need some brawn, Chelle."

After all, neither she nor Rochelle could do anything to the doctor right away.

Rochelle nodded, "I'll let Blockhead go."

Samantha knew the so-called blockhead was Jonathan's most trusted bodyguard. He was extremely skilled, but...

She shook her head and said, "It's too obvious. Everyone knows that Blockhead serves Jonathan. We need to find someone who's unknown but is just as skilled."

Rochelle shrugged. "Fine. You're my darling, so I'd be more than willing to make a sacrifice to help you get what you want."

Samantha blew her a kiss. "Thanks, Babe."

That night, Samantha asked about the doctor from Aunt Julia and found out that his name was Paul Highton. He had treated Old Madam Barker for many years, and the old lady trusted him a lot. One could hear Aunt Julia's bitterly disappointed tone after knowing that he would suddenly help Harmony poison the old lady.

Samantha lamented to herself.

It was no surprise that an outsider's character would change when Old Madam Barker's own grandson Timothy's could change too.

Not everyone had a conscience.

Samantha informed her findings to Rochelle through WeTalk and Rochelle replied to her with an 'OK' emoji.

...

Three days soon passed.

Samantha had been in the hospital all this time and took turns watching over Old Madam Barker with Aunt Julia. Timothy had never shown up there and he did not even make a phone call to show his concern. Ronald was the one who called Aunt Julia once a day to check on the situation.

Although there was no point putting hope in Timothy, Samantha could not help but spurn him for being worse than his assistant.

She figured that Timothy had played some role in Old Madam Barker's worsening condition during the past three years. How could she not feel heartbroken to see her own grandson being so unfilial?

That day, Samantha was wiping Old Madam Barker's body with a warm towel when the phone rang.

Seeing that it was Rochelle's call, she picked up the phone with a smile on her face because she thought that things had all been settled.

Unfortunately, a frown appeared gradually on Samantha's relaxed forehead after she heard what Rochelle said.

Chapter 341: Do You Work for Timothy?

Samantha initially thought that Dr. Highton had only betrayed Old Madam Barker and did Harmony's dirty work in exchange for money.

Under normal circumstances, such a person would be very easy to bribe into becoming a turncoat.

None of them expected him to be a stubborn person.

Rochelle explained that the thugs she sent out the day before had already captured the doctor. He was then locked in a small dark room for the entire day, with threats and offers both being used on him.

The doctor admitted that Old Madam Barker's serious illness was due to the medicine he prescribed, but he insisted that he did it himself without any behind-the-scenes instigators!

Samantha was very surprised.

If it was just money, there was no way the doctor would protect Harmony like that. It was very unlikely!

It appeared she had to deal with that matter herself then.

Samantha said decisively, "Come and pick me up, Chelle. I'd like to meet him."

It was something she had to do.

She could only go back to Emsteldt with peace of mind and live her life with Matthew once she was certain that Old Madam Barker was safe.

She promised before that she would make it up for Old Madam Barker after the latter weathered the high-risk period since that was the only thing she could do for the old lady at that point!

Rochelle answered very straightforwardly as well. "Alright! I'll come over immediately!"

Aunt Julia took over from Samantha's shift after the call ended. Samantha washed her face a little, freshened herself up, then changed her clothes and went to wait at the hospital entrance.

About 15 minutes later, Rochelle arrived in her car and Samantha hopped in as they drove to the suburbs.

Since neither of them could show their faces, Rochelle asked her hired thug to come out when they reached the door of the little hut. She handed him a laptop, which he brought into the house and switched on before facing the camera to the doctor.

Samantha and Rochelle were sitting inside the car. There was also a laptop in front of them and they were watching the video too. However, their camera was covered in black tape.

While they were able to see the doctor, he could not see them and was only able to hear their voices.

The video call began and the doctor soon came into the two women's view.

He was tied to a chair and his face was badly bruised after being beaten. Clearly, the thugs had not been showing any mercy.

Rochelle frowned when she saw that. "Sammy, do you have any way to get him to tell the truth? I tried to interrogate him last night but his lips are sealed tight and he won't spill even a single word!"

Samantha smiled coldly. "I already thought of a way on our way here."

"What?"

She smirked slyly and said, "Using influence to intimidate him."

Rochelle did not understand right away and had a confused look too.

Samantha was in no rush to explain to her and switched on the voice changer before speaking to the laptop, "Dr. Highton, do you know what'll happen to you if you poison Old Madam Barker?"

The doctor had kept his mouth sealed so tightly since the night before and was on the verge of death after being intimidated and beaten up.

Upon hearing that, Paul said nonchalantly, "Worse comes to worst, my life will be at stake. I was aware of that from the moment I first committed those acts."

Samantha carefully observed his expression through the video to make sure that he was not lying or bluffing.

He would rather die than sell Harmony out.

She did not believe that Harmony could get someone so loyal.

Unless...

There was a glimmer in Samantha's eyes and she asked again, "Dr. Highton, Old Madam Barker has always treated you well. Whenever you encountered any trouble over the years, she almost always lent you a helping hand. How could you be so ungrateful?"

That question made Paul sad for a moment, though that sadness was very fleeting.

Samantha noticed it keenly and continued her efforts, "We'll be honest with you; we already know that Harmony instructed you to do all this. As long as you're willing to

confess that she did it, we won't continue to give you a hard time and you'll be able to redeem yourself in your act of poisoning the old lady."

Paul immediately became anxious when he heard Harmony's name and he denied it without hesitation. "No one else is involved! I did it! It was all me and me alone!"

Rochelle looked at the situation and said, "This same thing happened yesterday. He started denying it like a madman when Harmony's name was mentioned. If I hadn't known better, I would've thought he was so protective of Harmony because he had a crush on her!"

Samantha shook her head. "He's not protecting Harmony. He's just...afraid to rat her out."

"What do you mean?" Rochelle was confused.

Samantha did not answer her but said to the video, "You're not scared of death, Dr. Highton, but you're afraid of confessing that it was Harmony. Is it because...there are other people you're more afraid of behind Harmony?"

As soon as she said that, she could clearly see the doctor trembling violently. He tried his best to restrain it but she still saw through him.

It was exactly as she expected.

Harmony could not have had the influence to gain such loyalty and dedication, which led Samantha to surmise that there were forces behind Harmony who were supporting her.

However, Samantha believed that Old Madam Barker's poisoning was solely Harmony's intention because the only direct beneficiary of Old Madam Barker's death was Harmony.

Samantha calmed herself down and used her trump card.

"Dr. Highton, may I remind you to provide your kindest cooperation with me. Mr. Barker once said that anyone who dare lay a finger on his grandma would have to pay a huge price!"

Rochelle narrowed her eyes slightly.

Was that what Samantha meant when she said 'using influence to intimidate him'? It was rather bold of her to mention Timothy's name.

As expected of the quick-witted, clever, and brave Samantha!

Paul was stunned. “Mr. Barker? The Mr. Barker? Do you...work for Timothy?”

The reason why he kept his mouth sealed was because he could not offend the figure supporting Harmony from behind. Another one of his reasons was Timothy’s impending marriage to Harmony, and so operated under the opinion that Timothy was standing with Harmony.

He had a couple of guesses as to who kidnapped him and thought at first that Old Madam Barker sent them. It never crossed his mind that it would be Timothy!

Samantha sneered. “What’s wrong? Do you expect Mr. Barker to continue watching someone else hurt his own grandmother? Mr. Barker said that he’ll let you live if you’re honest and admit that this was all Harmony’s doing. But if you continue being stubborn, then...he’ll make you wish you were dead!”

Mr. Barker...

Paul’s face turned pale when he heard that name. It was more terrifying than being beaten the entire night.

Although he was afraid of the forces behind Harmony, he was also very much afraid of Timothy.

In particular, he had been by Old Madam Barker’s side for so many years and was more or less familiar with Timothy’s way of doing things. The past three years stood out to him even more.

He did not fear death—he feared living a life that was worse than death!

Paul’s entire body was trembling but he still retained the last traces of clarity in his mind. There was no need for Timothy’s men to sneak around if they were sent over to deal with him.

It was not in line with Timothy’s style.

The interrogator’s words were simply not persuasive enough for him to just rely on what they said. It might still be possible that they were deliberately intimidating him into breaking down his psychological mettle.

As a doctor, his thoughts were meticulous and his fear reduced slightly after considering the possibilities. His thoughts had become much clearer and he said coldly, “Am I supposed to just believe you when you say that Mr. Barker sent you? Not everyone’s an idiot!”

“If you have what it takes, then get Mr. Barker to talk to me!”

Samantha said without blinking. "Do you seriously think you're fit to be talking to him? Since you don't believe me, I can always let you listen in on my conversation with Mr. Barker!"

She immediately picked up her cell phone after saying that.

Rochelle gasped. How was Samantha going to prove it? Was she really going to call Timothy?